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Title Page

# Resolving The Hype of Luxury Brand Experience In Social Media: The Integral Role of Customer-to-Customer Interactions

By:

Doa'a Said Hajawi

Thesis Submitted In Fulfilment Of The Requirements For The Degree Of Doctor Of Philosophy

Durham Business School

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## Abstract

Like never before, we are witnessing the cutting-edge advancement in the typology of the business environment. The emergence of social media has dramatically transformed customer- brands relationships. Billions of people are connected, interacting in real-time. Thus, brands presence on social media has become ubiquitous to maintain a competitive pace and deliver a superior customer experience. However, luxury brands were reluctant to accede to the social media world due to the contradictions with its nature of exclusivity and uniqueness.

Despite that, the luxury industry has been exponentially growing. It captured practitioners' interest, and the popularity of brand fan pages has increased. Yet, there is a scarcity of academic research on luxury brand experience within social media platforms. The brand experience is a promising concept, which emerged in consumer research. However, unlike other brand-related concepts, it has not been addressed explicitly across various contexts and practices. The online design element is isolated. Therefore, there is a need to adjust the experience to reflect the characteristics of the brands' categories and understand how customer-to-customer interaction might enrich the brand experience. Thus, this thesis explores luxury brand experience types formulated in response to brands social media activities and community actors' interactions.

The thesis employs a sequential exploratory multiple-method research design. It consists of two studies addressing three research questions. The first study adopts qualitative methods using a grounded theory approach to compare and analyze social media data of luxury and high street fashion brands activities and customers responses, resulting in a conceptual framework including new constructs to luxury experience literature. The second study adopts quantitative methods drawing on the first study's framework. It uses a survey approach to collect data from (609) luxury brands customers and followers to test the relationships in the conceptual framework. The findings reveal that all social media marketing activities (curiosity creation, sensory marketing, and trendiness) directly affect the luxury brand experience occurring on social media platforms, namely fandom, immersive, informative, and aesthetic experience. Meanwhile, customer to customer interaction (socialization) mediates these relationships. The valance of exchanged

information moderates the mediated relationship between social media marketing activities and fandom experience.

Therefore, this thesis is contributing literature stream through firstly, extending the luxury brands marketing literature in social media platforms by identifying the customer brand experience types towards luxury brands activities. Thus, it highlighted the most critical emerging concept, “fandom experience”. Secondly, extending the experiential marketing literature through exploring brand experience in the lens of customer dominant logic approach in response to social media marketing in a luxury fashion context. Thirdly, developing a luxury brand experience framework clarifies the integral role of customer-to-customer interactions in enhancing experience. Final, luxury marketers can preserve the brand unique positioning in social media by offering quality content strategy, reinforcing the customer-to-customer interactions and delivering a superior brand experience.

**Key Words**: Luxury Fashion Brand Experience, Social Media Marketing, Customer to Customer interactions, Customer-Dominant Logic CDL.

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## Declaration and Statement of Copyright

I, Doa'a Said Hajawi, declare that the ideas of this thesis, research work, analysis and conclusions are entirely the product of my efforts, except where otherwise indicated and cited. This work has been completed under the guidance and supervision of Professor Sarah Xiao.

Chapter three was accepted at the 48th European Marketing Association Conference, Hamburg, Germany, in May 2019. It was presented under the title "Luxury Brand Experience in Social Media: An Exploration and Comparison with High-Street Retail Brands".

The copyright of this thesis is associated with the author. Therefore, any quotation should be published with prior consent, and information derived from it should be acknowledged and cited.

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# Chapter 1. Introductory to Experience Marketing and Luxury Brands on Social Media

## 1.1. Introduction

Customer experience has become a serious concern for business executives globally (Deloitte, 2019), and brands consider it a fundamental determinant of long-term customers-brands relationships and brand success (Martín-Consuegra et al., 2019). This term has increased the importance of marketing research over the last decade, especially with the emergence of modern marketing channels, such as social media platforms, that enhance customers' willingness to engage with brands and share their brand experience with others (Pentina et al., 2018). Consequently, this led to the creation of an increasingly competitive and dynamic marketplace for many industries. Fashion brands are evolving and booming, specifically luxury brands (Kefi and Maar, 2020). Luxury brands' presence on social media has disrupted their classical view of being rare and exclusive equates to a particular social status (Dion and Borraz, 2017). Although existing research is blossoming, there is a gap in the literature concerning emerging luxury industry practices. Knowledge remains limited regarding the nature of brand experience and the appropriateness of current best practices and contexts, which need an intriguing research direction.

Fashion is "conceptualised both as an object and a behavioural process" (Vieira, 2009, p.180). Customers are concerned about fashion brands distinguishing themselves from others and directing their group affiliations (Solomon and Rabolt, 2004). Apparel reveals cultural and material characteristics of society and has prominence in economic and social terms (Workman and Lee, 2011). The expressive nature of clothing makes it particularly important in societies where status-seeking is becoming a priority (Tian et al., 2001). Moreover, the pursuit of hedonism is another underlying motivation for customers while purchasing fashionable brands (Miller and Mills, 2012).

The apparel fashion is one of the most critical sectors of the economy in terms of investment, trade and market shares (Phau et al., 2015; Fionda and Moore, 2009), and the fashion sector is contributing to the global market, which has flourishing since the last two decades and impacts the trades and consumer behavior. For example, in the last decade, the fashion industry has shown a value transition. For example, China’s apparel market has escalated from 237 to 615 billion USD,

followed by European countries' apparel market, which rose from 350 to 390 billion USD and the United States' apparel market from 315 to 385 billion USD, with an influence of two per cent on the world's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Fashionunited, 2018; Statista, 2018).

Fashion market competitiveness has increased, and customer socio-economic conditions have further improved (Giovannini et al., 2015). Thus, the fashion business is classified as luxury and fast or (high-street) fashion brands. Luxury fashion brands are exclusive with supreme quality, prestigious, and premium prices (Kapferer and Bastien, 2009). Therefore, customers' experience of these brands and their symbolic roles is a sign of wealth, status and perception (Ko et al., 2016; Joy et al., 2014). In contrast, fast fashion (high-street) is described by short production and distribution, low price, long-lasting range cycle, reachable and trendy products that imitate the latest luxury fashion brands' designs (Amatulli et al., 2016).

Compared to high street fashion brands, luxury brands were reluctant to enter the social media world. It is because the accessible and available of social media platforms contradicts the core exclusivity of luxury brands. Thus, there is a concern about diluting their prestigious image (Dion and Borraz, 2017). Since 2009, however, luxury brands have commenced joining social media platforms, becoming an indisputable channel (Okonkwo, 2009). As a result, their existence on social media has exponentially increased and is expected to be more dynamic. Furthermore, younger generations represent one-third of luxury customers, and 85% of the industry growth rate is fuelled by Millennials and expected to signify 45%–50% of the global personal luxury market by 2025 (Forbes, 2019; Shin et al., 2017). In line with this, Deloitte (2017) reported that social media signifies the most crucial source of information for millennial generation luxury customers, followed by other digital sources, which radically changed luxury markets.

Social media platforms have transformed the relationships between customers and luxury brands. Luxury brands' presence in a larger scale forum acknowledges customers, encourages their interaction with the brand and boosts their participation and desire to purchase more than ever before (Tsimonis and Dimitriadis, 2014; Gensler et al., 2013; Kim and Ko, 2012). Customers' online participation entails a different understanding than offline, where the subjects of participation are limited to customer and brand versus mass interaction with all brand community actors (Chae et al., 2015; Laroche et al., 2012). Thus, numerous fashion brands have sought the

use of various social media platforms to engage with customers and enhance their experience (Atwal and Williams, 2017).

Given these previous facts, luxury brands have realised the great potential of adopting social media to connect with customers (Kim and Ko, 2012). Therefore, an overarching business question arises: How do luxury brand companies enhance the consumer social media experience of their brands without losing the nature of luxury on social media platforms? It is pivotal to recognise how luxury brands can employ their social media presence to involve and influence customers through the strategic usage of social media platforms (Koivisto and Mattila, 2018). It is also fundamental to know how customer luxury brand experience is formulated on social media platforms (Kefi and Maar, 2020; Ko et al., 2019; 2016) in line with customer-to-customer interactions on these brand communities (Qucah et al., 2020).

This thesis sheds light on the customer brand experience of luxury fashion brands within social media platforms. This chapter introduces the main argument of the thesis. Section 1.2. provides a preface on the growing interest in customer experience and social media. Section 1.3. highlights the research initiative, particularly the literature gaps. Section 1.4 identifies the research questions and objectives. Followed by Section 1.5 presents the research methodology. While Section 1.6 addresses the thesis's prospect contributions. Sections 1.7;1.8 summarises the chapter and includes the thesis's structure.

## 1.2.The Significance of Brand Experience on Social Media Platforms

Since the 1980s, a paradigm shift has occurred in consumer behaviour. The emphasis diverted towards the hedonic facts of consumption instead of focusing only on the utilitarian aspects of products and services (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982). As a result, the experience economy emerged to propose the economic offering associated with value and memorable events that brought enduring happiness for customers, giving rise to consumption from commodities to experience (Pine and Gilmore, 2011).

However, Schmitt et al. (2014) criticise this view for being narrow. They argue that customer experience might form at every customer-company interaction, independent from its nature of being either materialistic or experiential and from the form of an object (i.e., product or service). Thus, new consumers' perspectives are towards achieving a stage of experience full of feelings,

fun and fantasies (Becker and Jaakkola, 2020; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016; De Keyser et al., 2015; Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982).

As a response to this shift, the marketer's responsibility increased to adapt to the new challenges in the business environment. As a result, differentiation has become more prominent (Carbone and Haeckel, 1994). Thus, experience marketing began to operate as a driver to build a long-lasting competitive advantage and managing customer-brands relationships has become a priority (Ko et al., 2019; Alalwan et al., 2017; Kumar et al., 2017; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016; Gentile et al., 2007). In contrast, the experience became a fundamental motivator for purchase decisions, brand satisfaction and loyalty (Brakus et al., 2009).

Furthermore, marketers' lens shifted from monitoring customers transaction to building and managing customer relationships (Fournier, 1998). Meanwhile, branding has flourished to effectively send signals of products and service identities (Keller, 2009). Brands became more interested in creating feelings and fantasies, emphasising shifting from functional features to experiential value (Atwal and Williams, 2017). Thus, this utilises the importance of delivering a superior experience to the customers (Koivisto and Mattila, 2018).

Customer experience has multiple definitions in the literature (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016; De Keyser et al., 2015). Generally, however, practitioners and scholars have a consensus of considering customer experience is "a multidimensional construct that involves cognitive, emotional, behavioural, sensorial, and social responses to a firm's offerings during the customer's entire purchase journey" (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016.p.70). In the same line with previous studies (Brakus et al., 2009; Verhoef et al., 2009; Schmitt, 2003;1999). Meanwhile, a specific experience might relate to particular aspects of the offers, such as brands or services (De Keyser et al., 2015). In this thesis, the focus is on brand experience, defined as "a subjective, internal consumer response (sensations, feelings, and cognitions) and behavioural responses evoked by brand-related stimuli that are part of a brand's design" (Brakus et al., 2009, p. 53). Though this definition of brand experience is general, this thesis will emphasise brand experience in social media platforms.

Social media emergence has transformed the power of brands to consumers. Consumers are not passive recipients of information anymore; they become active participants in creating, contributing and consuming brand content (Pentina et al., 2018; de Varies, 2017; Gensler et al., 2013). Social media platforms attract enormous consumers globally. Statistics show that active

users grow each month, almost representing a 21% increase from year to year (Zephoria Digital Marketing, 2018). Facebook active users have exponentially increased, with a record of 1,712 million users in 2016 increasing to 2,740 million in the first quarter of 2021, while Twitter's active users increased from 310 million users in 2016 to 353 million (Statista, 2021).

Furthermore, Social Media Examiner 2021 report shows that businesses use social media platforms to promote their brands' products and services. As a result, they enhance brand exposure by 88%, boost website traffic by 79%, develop loyal fans by 61%, increase sales by 60 % and gain superior market intelligence all at once (Stelzner, 2021). Similarly, KPMG (2020) reports that customer experience is a new reality. It needs to be immersive and emotionally connective. That entails the companies connected where each ability is associated and digitally supported to convey an intentional customer experience.

Social media has become a prime promotional channel of brands' integrated communications (Mangold and Faulds, 2009). Therefore, the exponential growth of social networking platforms plays a transformative role in brand-customer communication (Goh et al., 2013). Social media allows customers to generate content, engage and interact with other community members (Calder et al., 2016; Hollebeek et al., 2014; Brodi et al., 2013), which increases the business value through cost-efficient advertising' (Zhang and Katona, 2012), facilities building solid relationships with consumers, in return enhance benefits for businesses (Gensler et al., 2013; de Vries et al., 2012). Furthermore, a deep connection can be developed between customers and brands when their brand experiences stimulate and engage them through multiple senses environments, such as social media. Thus, it strengthens cognitive brand associations in customers' minds (Wallpach and Kreuzer, 2013). However, the marketers' mission goes beyond simply conveying customers' buying and consumption behaviour, exploring, establishing bonds with them, and delivering a superior experience (de Kerviler and Rodriguez, 2019; Pansari and Kumar, 2018).

The crucial importance of brand experience is consistently recognised in managerial practice. The latest survey by Freeman (2017) with chief marketing officers reports that brand experience is considered a valuable approach to creating sustainable relationships with customers expected to make up 21-50% of marketing budgets. In the same vein, Richardson (2010) states that the era of business environments has shifted into customer experience, which is how customers engage with the company and the brand, not just once in a time but throughout the entire journey. Despite

practitioners' recognition that customer experience can make radical transformations in the modern marketplace (Diamond et al., 2009; Pine and Gilmore, 1999), existing brand experience academic research plays a marginal role in the marketing literature (Ko et al., 2019; 2016; Atwal and Williams, 2017; 2009; Schmitt et al., 2014), giving rise to a gap in the literature, which will be discussed in the next section.

### 1.3.Research Initiative

Although luxury brands' presence on social media platforms was late and resilient, managing the luxury brand community is necessary (Pentina et al., 2018; Dessart, 2017). Social media activities can generate a trustworthy customer experience, embrace brand involvement, enhance interactivity, strengthen brand loyalty, and expand purchase behaviours (Martín-Consuegra et al., 2019). Luxury brands main characteristics are heritage history, exclusive image, unique characteristics, high quality and premium price (Fionda and Moore, 2009; Kapferer and Bastien, 2009; Vigneron and Johnson, 2004). The unique nature of luxury brands required distinct marketing strategies from other products categories (Liu et al., 2017; Han et al., 2010). Therefore, maintaining the exclusive image of luxury brands on social media platforms is the biggest challenge facing luxury brands managers. Furthermore, as customers' interaction and engagement are indisputable (Pentina et al., 2018), and control is not with brands anymore, customers are becoming more powerful (Gensler et al., 2013).

Previous research into brand experience had built on the theoretical view of brand experience originated from Schmitt (1999) and Brakus et al. (2009). However, they primarily concentrated on incorporating the relationships among brand experience and other branding variables and not on underlaying what “an experience provided by brands” exemplifies (Zha et al., 2020). Furthermore, this founded brand experience construct is mainly embedded in a stimulus-response paradigm derivative from psychological research. The current view of how brand experience is formalised is objective to the sequence of influence amongst brands' stimuli and brand experience (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016; Hatch, 2012). Thus, this imposes burdens on marketers and overemphasises their ability to design appropriate brands' stimuli to generate extraordinary brand experience and link it to desirable outcomes (Brakus et al., 2009; Schmitt,1999).

Consequently, over the last decade and since the key brand experience research by Brakus et al. (2009), fundamental changes have occurred in consumer behaviour, markets and consumptions context, such as the digitalisation of markets, the strong emergence of social media platforms and co-creative relationships between brands, customers and other network actors (Andreini et al., 2018; Pentina et al., 2018; Ashley and Tuten, 2015). Thus, brand experience is becoming a socially created phenomenon formed and co-created throughout interactions amongst community actors (Zha et al., 2020; Brodie, 2017; Merz et al., 2009; Arvidsson, 2006) than only a reaction to brands' marketing activities.

It is worth noting that studies did not criticise the work of Brakues et al. (2009) and even tried theoretically to elaborate further their concept (Zha et al., 2020; Andreini et al., 2018; Ko et al., 2016; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016). Indeed, several studies highlight the potential of brand experience across different contexts (Zha et al., 2020; Andreini et al., 2018). That enhances the necessity for a border view of brand experience amongst contemporary business context and practices, such as luxury brands in social media platforms (Ko et al., 2019; Schmitt et al., 2014) as the norms of customers interactions in the brand community is needed to be explored, and the co-created experience needs to be identified (Creevey et al., 2021).

Furthermore, most studies that undertake brand experience can be criticised for: being conceptual by nature (Ko et al., 2016), focusing only on relative concepts, such as brand commitment (Shukla et al., 2016), purchase intention (Gabisch, 2011) and brand loyalty (Ramaseshan and Stein, 2014), examining online brand experiences generally (Keng et al., 2013; Morgan-Thomas and Veloutsou, 2013; Rose et al., 2012; 2011; Ha and Perks, 2005), focusing on customer motivation to engage with the luxury brand community (Athwal et al., 2019; de Kerviler and Rodriguez, 2019; Liu et al., 2019).

Focusing on the experience's experiential aspects rather than on holistically what customer experience is (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016), and exploring only the antecedents and the consequences of the experience (Khan and Rahman; 2015; Shamim and Butt, 2013). Thus, the field of customer experience is relatively dynamic and multidisciplinary but still at a nascent stage. Therefore, an emphasis on exploring brand experience within modern communication channels across business contexts is urgently needed (Creevey et al., 2021; Zha et al., 2020; Andreini et al., 2018; Koivisto and Mattila, 2018; Batra and Keller, 2016; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016).

Experience influences customer emotions (Palmer, 2010). What enhances customers' valuation and prediction of what is considered essential to them. Therefore, emotions play a fundamental role in customer experience (Oliver, 2014). In the same line, there is an agreement that hedonic motivation and associated experience are more prevalent in luxury settings than in any other industry (Holmqvist et al., 2020; Husic and Cicic, 2009). This fact can have implications for luxury brand experience management (Klaus, 2020). Also, customer sense of belonging can result from their interaction with such brands on social media pages, which motivates brand experience that influences the connection between brand satisfaction and engagement (Kim and Drumwright, 2016). Brand experience occurs through customers' expressions of their personalities and needs on social media platforms. Thus, a sense of affinity emerges with other brand consumers through interaction (Laroche et al., 2012).

Similarly, Schmitt (1999b) states that effect follows the imagination of a consumption and purchase situation, which can be considered an outcome of information exchange among consumers. Therefore, brand communities substantially enhance consumer experience (Mittal and Tsiros, 2007). De Vries et al. (2012) argue that a positive product experience allows customers to engage with brand pages. Koivisto and Mattila (2018) highlight the importance of understanding the luxury brand experience in social media by adopting brand and customer perspectives. Thus, social media platforms constitute an excellent vehicle for creating the experience and reinforcing relationships with customers.

Though few studies focused on customer brand experience in luxury fashion brands, scholars began to emphasise that customers' understanding of luxury brands is more than individual and personalised (Roper et al., 2013). In the same line, Vigneron and Johnson (2004) state that luxury brands contain individual and social attributes towards the brand. Similarly, Kapferer and Bastien (2009) acknowledge that customers perceive luxury brands as a personal pleasure and social success. Whereas Atwal and Williams (2009) suggested the main experiential zones of luxury brands are aesthetic, escapist, education and entertainment, Berthon et al. (2009) note that luxury brands consist of what means to customer value, either experiential or symbolic. Thus, luxury customers are influenced by brands marketing activities and how other customers respond to the luxury brand (Chandon et al., 2016).

There is also a group of studies that focused on the influence of luxury social media marketing activities on different outcomes overlooking brand experiences, such as those by Kim and Ko (2012; 2010), which found that the five dimensions of luxury social media marketing activities (trendiness, entrainment, interaction, word of mouth and customisation) influence brand equity and brand relationship quality. Other scholars, such as Godey et al. (2016) and Liu et al. (2019), adopted Kim and Ko's framework (2012) and applied it to their studies. However, since then, there has been no further investigation done to explore more luxury activities.

More recently, Zollo et al. (2020), a study that adopted Kim and Ko's perspective (2012), found that emotional and relational dimensions of brand experience mediate the relationship between luxury social media marketing and brand equity. Moreover, Yu et al. (2020) found that dynamic brand experience positively influences customer equity in luxury social media pages. Similarly, Jhamb et al. (2020) found that the brand experience dimensions, namely, sensory, intellectual, behavioural, and affective, formulate customer attitudes towards luxury brands on social media platforms.

Previous research indicates that the luxury brands sector is exponentially growing and rooted in a solid foundation of brands knowledge (Zollo et al., 2020; Deloitte, 2019; Godey et al., 2016; Kim and Ko, 2012). However, understanding and serving the luxury customer have led to ever-increasing importance on the luxury experience (Klaus, 2019; Koivisto and Mattila, 2018; Ko et al., 2016). Exploring what constitutes the luxury experience in social media is a challenge (Ko et al., 2016; Schmitt et al., 2014) and still limited (Klaus, 2020). Thus, studying the designing of appropriate luxury marketing strategies that deliver a superior experience to customers within social media platforms is necessary (Creevey et al., 2021; Arrigo, 2018; Atwal and Williams, 2017; 2009; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016; Khan and Rahman, 2015a; Schmitt and Zarantonello, 2015; Schmitt et al., 2014; Kim and Ko, 2012).

Indeed, apparent research gaps can be identified regarding brand experience in luxury fashion brands' social media settings. Firstly, luxury social media marketing activities were investigated in quantitative studies (Zollo et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2019; Godey et al., 2016; Kim and Ko, 2012) without any furthered detailed qualitative exploration while also neglecting that different luxury brand experience types as an essential outcome.

Secondly, scholars argue that brand experience in Brakus et al. (2009) is solid, but the core branding experience activities are absent from his work (see, e.g., Merrilees and Miller, 2010; Merz et al., 2009). Furthermore, brand experience is a compound construct that encompasses diverse knowledge insights within its ideological structure. Therefore, due to the multidimensionality of brand experience, it is difficult to consider it as a rigid, heuristic, hedonic and symbolic, or each at a time. Moreover, a general operationalising into "sensory, affective, cognitive and behavioural dimensions" take off the concept from its "symbolic, hedonic, embodied and socialised" qualities. Thus, the current brand experience definition is sufficient in neutralising the positivist investigation between variables, but it is not equipped enough to describe the distinction and sensitivity of the dynamic and multidimensional appeal of the brand experience concept across different contexts and practices (Zah et al., 2020; Andreini et al., 2018). Therefore, it is the case in a luxury setting and has been known to have specific sociological characteristics different from other brand categories (Pentina et al., 2018; Dion and Borraz, 2017), which implies that the luxury brand experience on social media platforms might be distinct and have further insights.

Finally, despite the recognised demand aimed at a profound understanding of brand experience in luxury settings (Creevey et al., 2021; Seo and Buchanan-Oliver, 2017; Ko et al., 2016), limited research has investigated how experience is formulated and how it allows customers to develop a relationship with brands (de Kerviler and Rodriguez, 2019). Furthermore, experience is boosted in social media and value co-created and formed on individual, community, and brand levels. Thus, it is vital to comprehend how luxury customers interact with their favourite brands on social media and how such interactions may affect the brand and them (Pentina et al., 2018; Alexander and Jaakkola, 2016). In addition, understanding the involved network actors' influence in the brand experience formation is necessary (Creevey et al., 2021, Andreini et al., 2018; Arrigo, 2018; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016).

Luxury brand literature calls for further research to explore luxury brand experience in social media platforms. For example, Kim (2012) suggests that personalised social media interactions can create a strong brand experience within consumers and need to be addressed. On the other hand, Ko et al. (2016) confirm that luxury brand experience on social media is overlooked. In the same line, Seo and Buchanan-Oliver, (2017) assert that a profound clarification of brand

experience in the luxury domain is necessary. At the same time, Ko et al. (2019) propose that luxury brands' social media marketing strategy should be different from other brand strategies and the traditional marketing strategy. De Vries et al. (2017) state that luxury brand in social media is not like other brand categories; they need to be addressed. Also, Lemon and Verhoef (2016) pointed out that brand experience with modern comminutions should be investigated.

Furthermore, recent studies continue to call for scholars to fill the gap. They emphasise the importance of exploring customers' co-creation of luxury experiences dimensions, calling for more than one luxury brand investigation to reveal promising results (Kefi and Maar, 2020; Pantina et al., 2018). Also, Holmqvist et al. (2020) produce the same call to understand better the essence of what luxury does for consumers, not only by defining what luxury brand is but also by analysing to what extent luxury represents a desirable form of experience for consumers. Finally, Klaus (2020) states that customer experience is becoming more relevant in the luxury social media field. Thus, research should explore how customers use and embrace new channels.

Similarly, Zha et al. (2020) anticipate the emergence of new insights because social media platforms will expand and extend brand experience. Moreover, Quach et al. (2020) call for scholars to determine the brands' factors that can stimulate a strong customer interaction and create a memorable brand experience in social media. Thus, this thesis responds to previous research gaps and future calls. The following section discusses the relevant research questions.

### 1.4.Research Aims, Questions and Approach

This thesis is motivated by the previously identified research gaps and calls. It has the following objectives: (1) Exploring consumer brand experience types towards luxury brands on social media platforms systemically and theoretically. (2) Identifying types of marketing activities used by luxury brands on social media. (3) Exploring how these experiences are formulated based on brand activities and dynamic community environments. (4) empirically investigating the role of customers interactions in reshaping the relationships between types of marketing activities used by brands and luxury brands’ experience within social media platforms. (5) discovering the possible outcomes that may enhance the body of knowledge at both customers and brands levels.

As a response to previously identified gaps and research calls, this thesis attempts at answering the following overarching business research question: “How do luxury brand companies enhance the consumer social media experience of their brands without losing the nature of luxury on social media platforms?”

for answering this question, this thesis investigates three interrelated questions:

(1) What is a luxury brand experience on social media platforms, and how it is formed?

(2) How do luxury social media marketing activities types influence consumers’ brand experiences types?

(3) How do consumer-to-consumer interactions influence the relationship between luxury brands' activities and types of consumer brand experiences on social media platforms?

Existing fashion literature focuses on a single research stream, either investigating luxury brands category (Liu et al., 2019; Godey et al., 2016; Kim and Ko, 2012) or high street fashion brands (Ngobo, 2011). In this thesis, the first study uses qualitative methods to compare the marketing activities of luxury vs fast fashion brands on social media and customers' responses to them. This process is done by shedding light on fashion brands' main pages, which records the highest number of followers in the United Kingdom (UK). The second subsequent study uses quantitative methods to explore the customers' luxury brand experience within social media platforms.

Since the UK is one of the European countries with almost all fashion brands in its market, it is considered an international shopping destination. Furthermore, previous luxury brand studies call for research in Europe, for the most existing studies look into Asian and American markets (Ko et al., 2019; 2016; Pentina et al., 2018; Kim and Ko, 2012).

### 1.5. Research Methods

This thesis employs sequential exploratory multiple methods in research design (Saunders et al., 2009). The process for collecting and analysing both quantitative and qualitative data is to understand a research problem entirely and comprehensively, where research may employ quantitative and qualitative methods and combine both primary and secondary data (Curran and Blackburn, 2001).

The rationale for employing both research approaches is that neither quantitative nor qualitative techniques are adequate to understand the inclinations and details of this phenomenon (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003). However, when combinedly applied, quantitative and qualitative approaches counterpart each other and make the analysis more vigorous than employing a particular method. Therefore, both textual and numerical data, collected sequentially or concurrently, can better understand the research problem (Sekaran, 2016). Thus, detailed methodological and philosophical approaches are explained in each part of the intended study.

### 1.5.1. Study One (A Qualitative Approach)

Due to the lack of clear luxury brand experience within social media contexts, a qualitative approach is needed and appropriate for an exploratory study (Sekaran, 2016; Saunders et al., 2009). Hence, the first part of the study employs a grounded theory approach to compare luxury brands with high street fashion brands on both social media platforms, Facebook and Twitter. Therefore, social media data are gathered using related professional software. Social media data facilitates the exploration of brands' social media marketing activities, customers' responses, and interactions. Meanwhile, the data analysis procedure consists of three simultaneous flows of activity: data collection, data screening, and the reduction and analysis patterns and relations between the data elements.

Meanwhile, content analysis is used to investigate the content of brands' efforts on social media. Previous studies have confirmed the usability of this method in comprehending the content of print ads, television social media and websites (Ashley and Tuten, 2015). All procedures are discussed in chapter three.

### 1.5.2. Study Two (A Quantitative Approach)

Based on the results of the first study, a conceptual framework emerges in this thesis. The second study develops and tests luxury brand experience in social media framework using a quantitative approach. This study targets a representative sample by sending online questionnaires for customers actively tracking brands on social media platforms. The online questionnaire is advantageous, for it facilitates data flow, and participants could answer anonymously and freely.

In addition to its simplicity, it is less costly and elicits faster responses, and is geographically unrestricted (Sekaran, 2016).

Furthermore, the developed hypotheses of the conceptual model will be tested using PROCESS conditional procedure SPSS v.26/ Release 3.4 (Hayes, 2018). Thus, a quantitative study assists in reaching statistically significant conclusions about the population and increases the external validity of the research. Thus, all procedures will be present in chapter four.

## 1.6.Prospect Contributions

This thesis is expected to contribute to the literature streams of the brand experience, luxury marketing and social media marketing. Therefore, potential contributions will extend the current academic knowledge and enhance managerial implications.

This thesis is the first to develop a luxury brand experience framework on social media platforms. It uses an abductive approach that identifies and classifies discrete luxury brand experiences manifested as concrete consumer actions. In addition, it explores fashion companies' activities in response to previous research calls. Where scholars such as Schmitt (1999) and Brakus et al. (2009) emphasise brand-related stimuli as a vital factor in enhancing the brand experience, they neglected the core of such stimuli. Nevertheless, Merrilees and Miller (2010) and Merz et al. (2009) argue that discussion of activities of the core branding experience is absent from the approach of Brakus et al. (2009). To date, research lakes empirical studies that investigate the luxury brand experience in social media. Thus, brand experience in modern communication channels needs to be explored (Creevey et al., 2021; Ko et al., 2019; 2016; Arrigo, 2018).

Traditionally, when customers search for shopping and consumer brands, they are open to functional brand attributes. In addition, they are exposed to a diverse brand-related stimulus, such as brand-identify colours, shapes, design features and brand characters (Mandel and Johnson, 2002; Keller, 1987). However, in social media platforms, due to both brands' activities and brand community dynamics, customers are bombarded with visual, textual and interactional information consisting of all brands' elements and other content, which may confirm their functional attributes, further enhance their hedonic attributes and gained experience (Kefi and Maar, 2020; Yu et al., 2020; Goh et al., 2013).

As opposed to previous literature in consumer experience, the thesis is the first to study how customer-to-customer interactions influence luxury brand experience formation on social media by shedding light on how interactions in the brand community on social media platforms transform the relations between brands and customers. Thus, studying the brand experience in the lens of the customer- dominant logic approach C-DL (Heinonen and Strandvik, 2015; Heinonen et al., 2013), where value is determined in both internal and interior subjectivity, this thesis suggests that experience can originate from personal experiences, social contexts and practices that may involve diverse community actors (Rihova et al., 2018; Heinonen and Strandvik, 2015). Meanwhile, it is still possible for brands to get involved in consumers' value creation (Tynan et al., 2014). Underlying this disposition customers' related activities, determined by thoughts, emotions and associated ones' experiences, is the new perspective by defining the lexicon of customer-dominant business logic and capturing the shift in attention that reflects the current dynamic business environment customer role is crucial.

In contrast, only a few studies looked into customer behaviour with luxury brands on social media, and they are fragmented and rely on varied theories. A group of studies employ motivational theories, such as Uses and Gratification theory, which are primarily adopted in branding and social media (e.g., Yu et al., 2020; Athwal et al., 2019; Liu et al., 2019; Koivisto and Mattila, 2018; Azar et al., 2016; Muntinga et al., 2011). Some studies had adopted the frameworks of Kim and Ko (2012) and Brakus et al. (2009) (e.g., Zollo et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2019). Other studies adopted different social theories, such as construal level theory, appropriate to their study context (e.g., Kefi and Maar, 2020). However, customer; interactions were neglected (see the literature review chapter for more details).

Furthermore, luxury brands' presence on social media platforms is inevitable, but what matters is having a proper communicative strategy (Heine and Berghaus, 2014). Thus, the concern is about managing the brand image. A balance between the intense exposure of social media and exclusive luxury is needed to remain prestigious while being available for the mass markets (Koivisto and Mattila, 2018). Thus, this research emphasises the distinct typology of luxury brands' activities in comparison to the high street fashion brands, which may enhance their presence on social media with well-crafted detailed strategies that maintain that exclusivity and prestigious image.

Simultaneously, this thesis is expected to provide managerial and practical implications. For example, Schmitt (1999) stated that marketing managers need to consider new practical approaches to customer experience, benefit from new business opportunities opened by social media and experiential marketing (Atwal and Williams, 2017). Furthermore, industry reports emphases the emerging role of customers' interactions in luxury brands' experience formation in social media, which needs to be considered from a participatory communicative perspective (KPMG; 2020; Deloitte, 2019; Forbs, 2019). Therefore, this research provides insights into the importance of dynamic customers' interactions in formulating luxury brand experience in social media, a signifier of value co-creation for all community actors.

Additionally, identifying the luxury brand marketing activities helps managers to focus on the fundamental activities while designing fashion campaigns. Understanding customers' interaction motives and formalised experience simultaneously assist in building brand customers' relationships. Thus, delivering a superior luxury brand experience through social media platforms needs to be considered, especially when companies formulate overall marketing communication strategies. This fact is particularly promising in transformative role in the business environment today (Pentina et al., 2018; Alalwan et al., 2017; Phua et al., 2017) (see a detailed discussion of the academic and managerial contributions in chapter five).

## 1.7.Thesis Structure

This thesis consists of five chapters that demonstrate the systematic stages of the research process given the research questions and objectives.

Chapter one introduces the core research idea, with a glance into the main arguments and methods. It also addresses the significance of experience marketing, social media and luxury brands in today's business environment and academic knowledge. Furthermore, it identifies the research gaps, questions, objectives and potential contributions.

Chapter two provides a comprehensive literature review of relevant studies in customer experience, social media marketing activities and luxury brands. Relevant theories into the brand experience phenomenon are explained, and the Customer Dominant Logic approach (CDL) is deliberated.

Chapter three provides the methodological and philosophical approaches for the qualitative study and illustrates the procedures for social media data collection, analysis and findings. Chapter four provides the conceptual framework of luxury brand experience within social media platforms and hypotheses development of the relationships between model variables in detail. It also discusses the methodological and philosophical approaches for the quantitative study, the procedures for survey data collection, analysis and findings.

Finally, chapter five concludes the thesis, offering a general discussion, followed by the theoretical and managerial contributions, in addition to the limitations of this thesis and future research directions.

## 1.8. Chapter Summary

This introductory chapter highlights the primary basis of the thesis. It looked into the significant role of experience marketing in consumer behaviour, particularly the importance of social media in transforming the relations between brands and customers. Furthermore, it also considered the scope of fashion and the growing presence of luxury brands on social media. Meanwhile, a summary of previous research was discussed. This summary assists in determining research gaps, which gave rise to the proposed research questions in line with the research objectives. The chapter also discussed research methods employed and the potential academic and managerial contributions.

# Chapter 2. Literature Review

## 2.1. Introduction

The luxury market has developed into one of the fastest-growing industries globally and is expected to remain dynamic for the following years (Zollo et al., 2020; Pham et al., 2018). This fact is supported by the luxury industry report issued by Boston Consulting Group and Altagamma (2019) that luxury experts reveal the luxury global consumer insights. The luxury market has reached USD 960 billion in 2018, expected to have 4-5% annual growth until 2025. Millennials are the most prominent target market, and it is predicted to grow from 32%-50% of personal luxury compared to Generation Z, which represents only 4%. In addition, social media is the most used channel to interact with luxury brands, bloggers, and social media peers, with almost 95% of customers using it. Thus, the scope of the luxury market has been tripled over the past twenty years (Bain and Company, 2016).

In this regard, the increase of wealth in the middle class in emerging markets, the rising purchasing power, and the appearance of social media (Jhamb et al., 2020; Fionda and Moore, 2009) have led to consumer changes. However, traditional perspectives of luxury brands face challenges, which stigmatise luxury as a conspicuous marker of prestige, and exclusivity, hence drawing on social status ideas (Kumar et al., 2019). Thus, scholars assert that marketers need to build symbolic and emotional connections with consumers of luxury brands (Dubois and Paternault, 1995) beyond mere conspicuous consumption (Han et al., 2010).

The emergence of social media platforms creates opportunities for marketers to link with customers and foster more significant relationships with them (Kumar et al., 2017; Gensler et al., 2013), empowering them to create and share content with one other, where they can engage and exchange brand experience (Chu et al., 2019). Therefore, luxury social media marketing has an affirmative effect on consumers' favourable perceptions, craving for luxury, enhancing acquisition intentions and customer equity (Yu et al., 2020; Chu et al., 2013; Kim and Ko, 2012).

Therefore, customers' participation in brand-related activities and their partaking with brand activities and other community participants give rise to experiential value (Small et al., 2019; Basa-Martinez et al., 2018; Rosenthal and Brito, 2017). Furthermore, customer experience is further enriched by their contribution and interaction in social media (Fernandes and Remelhe, 2016). Indeed, customers have become "active co-producers" of social media development and

experiences. This behaviour can be credited to their role as participants in firm-initiated activities, conveying their preferences and socialising with other community members (Quach et al., 2020; Boujena et al., 2019).

However, the luxury brand social media marketing faces challenges, such as the type of activities that influence the brand success (Ko et al., 2019; 2016; Schultz and Peltier, 2013), dealing with the mounting quantity of customers' brand information (Harrigan et al., 2017), pinpointing mechanisms to improve the brand pages to attract and engage consumers (Gómez et al., 2019) and delivering extraordinary brand experience (Wallpach et al., 2020; Koivisto and Mattila, 2018).

Earlier studies have exhibited that brand-related experiences could encourage consumer-to-consumer communications and involve them in co-creation with brands' activities (Choi et al., 2016; Tyne et al., 2010). Nevertheless, these findings lack an explicit effort on how these behaviours are formulated. Many aspects of the brand experience have been explored, specifically brand relationship experience (Merrilees, 2016) and novel brand experience (Lin, 2015). Though exploring the diverse implications is bold and encouraging, there is a shared consensus that the core of brand experience still suffers from an insufficiency in conceptual work (Zha et al., 2020; Andreini et al., 2018; De Keyser et al., 2015), precisely in the luxury brands literature (Arrigo et al., 2018; Atwal and Williams, 2017; 2009).

More recently, Andreini et al. (2018) noted with the discontent that since the initial conceptual models suggested by Schmitt (1999b) and Brakus et al. (2009), there are no studies had contributed a critical perspective or theoretical assessment of the core of the brand experience construct. Research has mainly focused on externalising the relationship amongst brand experience and how it relates to other brand variables, not on exploring what an experience offered by brands truly represents.

After reviewing the streams of literature, namely, luxury fashion brands, the activity of the social media marketing and consumer experience research, there arises three inter-linked sub-questions: (a) What is a luxury brand experience on social media platforms, and how it is formed? (b) How do luxury social media marketing activities types influence consumers' brand experiences types? How do consumer-to-consumer interactions affect the relationship between luxury brands' activities and types of consumer brand experiences on social media platforms?

This chapter reviews previous studies: the first section illustrates the emergence of social media marketing and its activities as a modern marketing channel. The second section presents the origins and dimensions of customer experience. Brand experience in the lens of theories and experience in consumer research influences varied consumer behaviour outcomes. The third section addresses the definitions, characteristics and theories of luxury brands and luxury brands presence on social media. The final section presents the luxury brand in experience marketing. Thus, research gaps are highlighted throughout the chapter sections.

## 2.2. The Emergence of Social Media as a Modern Marketing Channel

Over the past twenty years, social media and mobile applications reshuffled communication channels. The rapid growth of digital marketing has altered the perspective of marketing for both practitioners and scholars (Gómez et al., 2019; Lamberton and Stephen, 2016; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016). With more than 3.5 billion smartphone users by mid-2020 (Statista, 2020), social network sites (SNSs) are becoming an integral part of society (Rowley and Keegan, 2020; Zhu and Chen, 2015). Social media networks have rapidly increased from 2.86 billion users in 2016 to 3.60 billion users in 2020 (Statista, 2020). Husson et al. (2013) speculate that firms will dump and invest most of their resources in these channels. Hence, it will facilitate their marketing operations to interact with customers (Wang and Kim, 2017), believing that this will be a vital part of companies' marketing mix (Peters et al., 2013).

The increasing interest in social media has captured the attention of marketing scholars (Alawan et al., 2017; Lipsman et al., 2012; Naylor et al., 2012; Kietzmann et al., 2011). That led to the emergence of many definitions of social media. The most cited definition in marketing research is the one introduced by Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), i.e., social media as “a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technical foundations of Web 2.0 that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content” (p. 61). Thus, Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) argue that two elements are the basis of social media classification: media-related elements and social processes. The theoretical perspectives in media-related research are the social presence theory and media richness theory (Daft and Lengel, 1986; Short et al., 1976). In contrast, theoretical perspectives of social processes are (self-presentation and self-disclosure) considered the two main elements of social media.

Given the fact of complex social media typology, existing research divides it into different categories. For example, Zhu and Chen (2015) stated that social media could be separated into content-based social media and profile-based, depending on the characteristics of connection and interaction. Profile-based social media highlights the interests of single consumers and encourages participation in the related topics, while content-based social media targets information and discussions (Zhu and Chen, 2015; Goh et al., 2013).

According to Batra and Keller (2016), social media platforms that facilitate customers' engagement with brands and other customers have three main types: blogs, online communities and forums, and social networks. For example, applications comprise blogs and microblogs (i.e., Twitter), virtual worlds (i.e., Second Life), collaborative projects (i.e., Wikipedia), social networking sites (i.e., Myspace and Facebook), content community sites (i.e., YouTube, Flickr), and most recently visual content (i.e., Instagram and Snapchat) (Phua et al., 2017; Chan and Guillet, 2011; Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010; Mangold and Faulds, 2009). Recently, Voorveld et al. (2018) advanced the literature by contributing insightful, diverse types of consumers' responses for each social media platform within eight social media platforms (YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, LinkedIn, Pinterest, and GoogleC). Thus, they concluded that each social media platform's varied functions and characteristics delivered distinctive consumer experiences and proved that each platform is perceived uniquely.

It is necessary to distinguish between two aspects of generated content on social media platforms (Alves et al., 2016). First, firm-generated content (FGC) or marketer generated content which is created by firms enabling them to build a long relationship with customers, communicate brands' messages with the audience customers and spread promotional communication (Kumar et al., 2019; Yang et al., 2019; Goh et al., 2013). In addition to the user-generated content (UGC), the public is willing to create and disseminate content facilitated by new media characteristics (Goh et al., 2013). Therefore, social media platforms allow customers to generate various responses, such as liking, commenting, sharing, reacting, tagging names and much more with multimedia visual content (de Versie et al. 2012). Therefore, it is important to distinguish between the role of each content on customers as Goh et al. (2013) postulate, most existing studies concern one type of content but not the effect of both on customer behaviour, which lacks the significance of recurrent engagement by consumers and marketers in such a community. At the same time,

Müllerb and Christandl (2019) found that the content disseminated by customers has more influential power on customers than the sponsored content, which might cause a negative attitude towards the brand.

The emergence of these platforms enhances the pace of content creation for all community parties. Customers gained active roles by creating and interacting with each other and with the brands (Pansari and Kumar, 2017; Hollebeek et al., 2014). As a result, brands are privileged with an enormous impact on brands' performance, loyalty, and relationships with customers (So et al., 2014; De Vries and Carlson, 2014). At the same time, facilitating customers to customers' interactions enhances their purchase behaviour, decision making and brand experience (Park et al., 2021; Yu et al., 2020).

Despite the previously mentioned facts, social media marketing literature is vastly growing but still fragmented (Rowley and Keegan, 2020; Alawan et al., 2017; Alves et al., 2016). For example, the first stream of literature considers the firm side (Firm Generated Content), focuses on brands' benefits and presence on social media, such as the brands content, degree of use, facilities of using social media (i.e., Ashley and Tuten, 2015; Gensler, 2013), and optimisation and measuring the impact of social marketing strategies (Kumar et al., 2013; Kumar and Mirchandani, 2012; Kozinets et al., 2010). However, according to Chief Marketing Officer's survey (CMO) (2018), most marketers struggled to measure the impact of social media on business performances quantitatively. Therefore, the second stream of literature focuses on the consumer side (User Generated Content). That includes studying the benefits and motivation of increased consumptions and type of usage and sharing of information (i.e., Chang et al., 2015; Bilgihan et al., 2014), attitudes towards the brands (i.e., De Vries et al., 2017; 2012; Chen et al., 2015; Lee et al., 2015; Kim and Ko, 2012) and influence among other customers (i.e., Liu and Park, 2015).

Although the functionality of social media is widely expanded in influencing customers and firms, previous research has shed light on the controversy between the two complicated roles of consumers and marketers (Bleier et al., 2019; Müllerb and Christandl, 2019; Goh et al., 2013). In addition, some research has attempted to evaluate the role of UGC in combination with FGC or other marketer actions. Thus, empirical evidence on the relative efficacy of UGC and MGC in provoking consumers is still unclear (Soylemez, 2021; Zhao et al., 2021; Trusov et al., 2009).

There have been several vital gaps identified in the experience marketing literature relating to the approaches of how these generated contents might formulate customers' brand experience and how to manage customer experience over the bombarded content (Zha et al. 2020; Andreini et al., 2018; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016; De Keyser et al., 2015; Schmitt and Zarantonello, 2015). Firms can only create the customer experience by designing and managing a wide range of stimuli that affect and formulate diverse experiences (Becker and Elina, 2020). Moreover, a deeper understanding of people's responses to social media content and the impact of different platforms on their behaviour is needed (Lamberton and Stephen, 2016). It is also essential to study how actively participating and networking with customers affect them (Hollebeek et al., 2014; Gummerus et al., 2012) and facilitate their interactions with one another (Shi et al., 2016; Adjei et al., 2010).

Thus, in this thesis its fundamental to distinguish between the FGC (fashion brands generated content) and UGC (the customer-generated content) on their brand community. The objective is to evaluate both types in a social media platform. This evaluation will assist in understanding how the customer brand experience is formulated in light of brands social media marketing activities and customers interactions with the brand community by analysing the aspects of UGC and MGC and viewing them at the individual consumer level, clarifying their impacts under directed and undirected communication modes. Thus, more facts about the customers' presence on social media platforms and how they interact within brands communities will be addressed in section 2.5 of this chapter.

## 2.3. Consumer Experiences Research

### 2.3.1. Origins and Definitions

Generally, the consumer experience has been investigated from different perspectives. Within sociology and psychology, experience is viewed as a cognitive, affective procedure and activity. It is considered a means to create reality and represent it (Richardson, 1999; Moscovici, 1988). Further, looking at anthropology and ethnology, experience points to the way in which people live their lives as part of a specific culture (Throop, 2003).

These disciplinary approaches have manipulated how marketing researchers conceptualise experiences. Some research emphasises how experience occurs as a result of direct observation and participation. In contrast, other research focuses on memories and knowledge that has shaped

the experiences. While some consider experience as an accessible direct action that experiments can measure, others view it as a subject that needs to be explained and interpreted in the subject world of consumers or as a part of the societal, cultural, and psychological aspects of consumer behaviour (Schmitt and Zarantonello, 2015; 2013).

In the early stage of consumer behaviour, research focuses on cognitive aspects over other aspects such as emotions. They utilised rational perspective theories (microeconomics and classical decision theory), neglecting the values of consumption (emotions and hedonism). However, Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) emphasised the importance of the hedonic perspective, conceptualising experiential marketing in consumer behaviour research. This importance was first addressed by Abbott (1955) and Alderson (1957) through the concept of consumer experience. Their research concluded that: "What people really desire are not products but satisfying experiences" (Abbot, 1955, p. 40). However, "consumer experience" was not the subject of an investigation until the early 1980s when it formally emerged, becoming the scholar's interest towards consumer behaviour and marketing research.

The origins of the experiential marketing approach can be drawn back to Holbrook and Hirschman (1982). They proposed a broader view of human behaviour that the emotional value of consumption must be evaluated as much as the rational value of decision making. Their approach investigates consumer replies to symbolic, imaginative, aesthetic, and fantasy meanings of products, highlighting the part of multi-sensory experiences, not only the functionality. Thus, this view develops the information processing perspective, enriching it with an experiential perspective.

A group of consumption studies investigated a wide range of experiential products, including, sports, games, and other leisure activities (Holbrook et al., 1984), such as the high-adrenalin experience of white-water rafting (Arnould and Price, 1993) and the scary experience of skydiving (Celsi et al., 1993). At this research stage, the focal point was understanding consumption experience via the vantage point of unusual activities. Thus, this focus was basically product-neutral and brand-blind (Hirschman, 1987; Holbrook et al., 1984). However, the stimulating side of consumption activities, for example, marketing mix, was neglected compared to the behavioural response resulting from consumption events (Zha et al., 2020; Brakus et al., 2009).

At this stage of consumer experience research, the absence of branding factors led to a narrow and homogeneous view founded on exchanging singular market resources (Hirschman, 1987). Thus, the term of brand experience as a marketing construct remained scarce. However, the only two exceptions are by Ortmeyer and Huber (1991), who studied the moderating outcome of brand experience on the negative influence of promotion, and by Kim, and Sullivan (1998), who examined how experience with a parent brand had a predictive effect on consumers' expectations. Hence, these studies were generic concerning the meaning of brand experience investigated.

Over time, a new vision emerged in consumer experience research, namely the experiences economy introduced by Pine and Gilmore (1998), who disputed that experiential value had been gradually growing. In the experience economy, businesses stage memorable experiences for customers, entertaining and educational experiences rather than functional and utilitarian (Pine and Gilmore, 1998). At this stage, studies motivate brands to consider the consumer as mutually rational and emotional (Pine et al., 1999; 1998; Schmitt, 1999a).

The study of customer experience arose during the 1990s with the seminal study of Schmitt (1999), who completed the work of Pine and Gilmore (1998). Schmitt (1999) posited that experiences transpire when a customer encounters, endures or lives through things that provide relational, emotional, behavioural, sensory, and cognitive values. Hence, what attracts consumers' attention is creating a product experience that appeals to their senses and emotions more than its price and quality (Schmitt, 1999a).

Thus, the experiential marketing approach flourished by the early 2000s, boosting the industry and academic interest in this area. For example, academic research by Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004) emphasised that the symbiotic relationship between the brand and customer experience highlighted co-creation throughout experience formation. Likewise, practitioners Berry et al. (2002) and Moore (2002) suggested that the conveyance of brand features was best facilitated by delivering a brand-related experience.

During the previously mentioned stages of research, different terms were applied in empirical studies interchangeably, referring to brand experience, customer experience, consumer experience, and consumption experience, neglecting the nuances that happen between these concepts.

However, Caru` and Cova's study (2003) was the first to tackle these typological ambiguities by establishing a schema to differentiate consumer experiences from consumption experiences. This concept was accomplished by defining customer experience based on the undertaken transaction in the marketplace. Nevertheless, the "branding aspect" remained not fully manipulated in the experience marketing literature.

Furthermore, close to Pine and Gilmore's view, Caru` and Cova (2007) recognised consumer experience as a continuum of consuming experiences. The parameter ranged from experiences constructed through the consumers to experiences developed mainly by companies. Hence, Caru` and Cova (2007) consider the experiences as opportunities for firms to flourish, creating solid and enduring customer experiences. Simultaneously, Gentile et al. (2007) support their colleagues in the economic stream that explains "experiences" as a fresh economic offering and proposes a co-creation stage, where a company provides customers with the platforms to obtain their own experience.

The increased momentum of the experiential marketing approach enhances the need to integrate and conceptualise the experience. That leads to diverse conceptualisations of customer experience, meaning that its operationalisation differs based on the context. For example, scholars described experience as an extraordinary reaction and derives from a set of interactions among a customer and a product, a company, or part of its offering, which trigger a reaction (Shaw and Ivens, 2005; LaSalle and Britton, 2003). Thus, this experience is strictly particular and implies the customer's participation at different levels (rational, emotional, sensorial physical and spiritual) (LaSalle and Britton, 2003; Schmitt, 1999).

Furthermore, in the retail context, the experience was viewed from a holistic perspective. It was defined as "a multi-dimensional construct and specifically stated that the customer experience construct is holistic in nature and involves the customer's cognitive, affective, emotional, social, and physical responses to the retailer" (Verhoef et al., 2009, p. 32). Similarly, Grewal et al. (2009) depict customer experience as customer responses to price and promotions in the retail setting. Thus, the experience evaluation relies on the comparison between a customer's anticipations and the stimuli coming after the interaction with the company and its contribution gave the different instants of contact or touchpoints (Becker1and Jaakkola, 2020; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016; Shaw and Ivens, 2005; LaSalle and Britton, 2003).

Moreover, as a theoretical answer to experiential marketing call, a cornerstone study that has an exact definition of brand experience and a valid measurement scale was done by Brakus et al. (2009). In this study, the brand experience was defined as "subjective internal consumer responses (sensations, feelings, and cognitions) and behavioural responses evoked by brand-related stimuli that are part of a brand's design and identity, packaging, communication, and environments" (Brakus et al., 2009, p. 53). At this point, Brakus et al. (2009) has put forth the branding factor to consumer experience and set up a route of brand experience. However, the study did not present a new type of experience based on a new logic (Merz et al., 2009) for there is still a great deal of ambiguity in brand experience to be further explored (Zha et al., 2020).

More recently, the context of technological interactions has been put forward. For example, McCarthy and Wright (2004) deem customer experience as a mixture of the emotional, the sensual, the spatiotemporal, and the compositional experiences that help customers think beyond and clearly about technology. Similarly, De Keyser et al. (2015) defined customer experience as being "comprised of the cognitive, emotional, physical, sensorial, spiritual and social elements that mark the customer's direct or indirect interaction with (an) other market actors (s)" (p. 23). Although differences in points of view still exist, there is a consensus that customer experience discusses customers' multi-dimensional answers to direct or indirect interaction with the stimuli provided by the firm (Becker and Jaakkola, 2020; Waqas et al., 2020).

Furthermore, Lemon and Verhoef (2016) stated customer experience as a "multi-dimensional construct focusing on a customer's cognitive, emotional, behavioural, sensorial, and social responses to a firm's offerings during the customer's entire purchase journey" (p. 3). Accordingly, the multidimensionality of customer experience is widely recognised. Furthermore, many scholars agree that good experience could be holistically and consistently involved at different levels (Batra and Keller, 2016). Thus, the base analysis of consumer experience depends on the psychological and behavioural approaches, which distinguish three basic levels: sensation, affect and cognition (De Keyser et al., 2015; Homburg et al., 2015; Schmitt and Zarantonello, 2013; Brakus et al., 2009; Verhoef et al., 2009; Gentile et al., 2007; Schmitt, 1999). Nevertheless, Gentile et al. (2007) prove that customers hardly recognise such a kind of structure.

Considering all the above brand experience research, Andreini et al. (2018) detected with displeasure that since the first conceptual models proposed by Schmitt (1999b) and Brakus et al. (2009), and no studies had critically assessed or theoretically evaluated the essence of brand experience construct. In the period since then, research has primarily concentrated on externalising the relationship between brand experience and additional brand variables, such as measuring the influence of brand experience on brand loyalty (Japutra et al., 2018), brand attitude (Dolbec and Chebat, 2013), brand value (Kumar et al., 2013) and brand equity (Iglesias et al., 2019), but not on internalising what an experience provided by brands really represents.

In this thesis, experience is investigated through the lens of the sociology and psychology perspective of brand-customer and customer to customers' interaction over social media platforms. The focus is on brand experience within the social media context and extends the definition of Brakus et al. (2009) to introduce stimuli provided by social media activities and customer interactions.

### 2.3.2. Brand Experience is a Type of Customer Experience

Compared with brand experience, customer experience signifies a higher-order construct, which can be described as an umbrella construct with service experience, product experience, retail experience and brand experience under its conceptual side. Thus, the multidimensionality of the consumer experience constructs shares commonalities with the brand experience concept (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016; De Keyser et al., 2015).

Brand experience includes “subjective, internal consumer responses sensations, feelings, and cognitions and behavioural responses evoked by brand-related stimuli that are part of a brand's design and identity, packaging, communications, and environments” (Brakus et al., 2009, p. 53). Consumers tend to develop an evident brand perception after they experience a brand in terms of many brand stimuli like logos, name, colour, packaging, and advertisements. However, experience is distinct from attitudinal concepts, such as brand evaluation (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). It mainly comprises four dimensions: (1) the effective that apprehends emotions, (2) the intellectual that corresponds to the brand's ability to stimulate thinking, i.e., analytical and imaginative thinking, (3) the sensory that relates to both aesthetic and sensory qualities that appeal to the senses, and (4) the behavioural that parallels actions and bodily experiences with a brand (Nysveen et al., 2013; Zarantonello and Schmitt, 2010).

While customer experience research has gained significant attention lately, it was not the case for brand experience. Previous studies did not fully develop the brand experience and how it has been created across different environments. It is evident that customer experience research did not articulate much clarity of the unique influence of brand experience on the overall customer experience, neither has any outstanding effort been invested in the addition of brand experience opinions into customer experience management models (Kranzb¨uhler et al., 2018; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016; Verhoef et al., 2009).

Furthermore, brand experience is deep-rooted in the stimuli-reaction paradigm resulting from psychological studies (Andreini et al., 2018). Studies agree that consumers' engagement and contribution to the brand give more meaning to their experience (Black and Veloutsou, 2017; Brodie et al., 2013; Carù and Cova, 2015). However, there is little on how experiences are developed or are determined by brand meanings.

### 2.3.3. Brand Experience Antecedents and Consequences

Brand experience is considered a collective phenomenon continuously enriched by consumers' contact with the multiple appeals, associations, cues, and use events of a specific brand (Schmitt et al., 2014). Brand experience is structured around different interactions alongside the brand (Brakus et al., 2009). Because consumers cooperate with the holistic offering of the brand, possibly for a long time, they develop a convergent observation of brand experience (Iglesias et al., 2011).

Furthermore, brand experiences occur due to many different consumer relations with a brand at various points. It relates to the full imprint of the brand as a whole, not only the subcomponent (Schmitt and Zarantonello, 2015). Brand experience is partly related to but also conceptually different from other concepts in the branding and consumer behaviour literature, especially, as argued by Brakus et al. (2009), that brand experience construct varies from branding construct, such as evaluative (i.e., attitudes), affective (i.e., involvement, attachment) and associative (i.e., brand association). Thus, brand experience does not necessarily incorporate a motivational state. It can even occur when customers do not have curiosity or a personal connection with the brand (Schmitt and Zarantonello, 2015). Brand experience affects another brand construct, as shown in the next section below.

### A. The Antecedents of Brand Experience

The antecedent and outcomes that affected and resulted from brand experience in offline and online environments vary based on the context. The following section demonstrates the main antecedents and consequences of brand experience across all levels.

First, an influential antecedent of brand experience is event marketing, defined as "the practice of endorsing the interests of an institute and its brands by relating the organisation with a specific activity'' (Shimp and DeLozier, 1993, p. 8). Thus, it enhances customers' involvement in the brand, provides initial brand experiences (Whelan and Wohlfeil, 2006), and could be seen as an opportunity to offer brand equity and increase sales over brand experience (Zarantonello and Schmitt, 2013; Akaoui, 2007), and enhance customer engagement that creates a long-lasting experience (Fransen et al., 2013).

Another vital antecedent of the brand experience is the brand-related stimuli, as Schmitt (1999) and Brakus et al. (2009) state that these stimuli can be brand design, packaging, identity for the related context. In addition, it can be related to any inherent characteristics that distinguish the brand presence or absence (Morrison and Crane, 2007). It includes brand name (Srinivasan and Till, 2002), simple touchpoints, such as order and application forms (Coomber and Poore, 2012), and physical infrastructure (Hanna and Rowley, 2013). Thus, these stimuli are vital in managing experiences evoked throughout the entire buying process (Berry et al., 2002). In the same vein, marketing communications can be considered a stimulus that affects customer experience (Brakus et al., 2009) to foster customer relations. For example, Palmer (2010) identifies the interpersonal relationship and brand relationship as antecedents of brand experience. However, Merrilees and Miller (2010) debate that the core branding experience activities are lacking from Brakus et al. (2009).

Storytelling is a newly coined term (Lundqvist et al., 2013) that produces positive considerations in customers' minds and is a more convincing tool than articulating facts (Kelley and Littman, 2006; Kaufman, 2003). Furthermore, brand stories can fascinate people and facilitate customer memory and can be used to strengthen brand associations by proposing brand experience (Lundqvist al., 2013). Thus, stories grasp customers' interest (Escalas, 2004) and plea to their dreams and emotions, thereby generating experiences.

At the online level, prior experience and previous knowledge of the brand would influence future customer experiences. Previous literature of service and product is a vital factor in effective search, for it provides the foundation for the customer's evaluation of new, upcoming information. In addition, it is useful when customers experience a retail context (Verhoef et al., 2009; Hamilton and Thompson, 2007), brand atmospherics (Nsairi, 2012), and information credibility (Hsu and Tsou, 2011). Moreover, Ebrahim et al. (2016) argue that brand knowledge and attributable perception shape the brand experience and enhance purchase intention.

A critical study that undertakes the online customer experience in e- retailing was done by Rose et al. (2012), who developed a model built on Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) approach. Rose empirically tested the relationships amongst antecedents and outcomes of online consumer experience and found that interactive speed, telepresence, skill, and challenge are the antecedents of cognitive experience. Furthermore, while ease of use, customisation and contentedness, aesthetic and perceived benefits are antecedents of affective experience, they led to online shopping trust and satisfaction, resulting in online purchase intention. However, this study undertakes the general concept of online consumer experience within the retailing website but not specific brands or industries.

Furthermore, in the lens of communication theories, many factors are considered as brand experiencers' antecedents. For example, according to Chen (2012), there are four antecedents of brand experience at the online level: performance expectation, effort expectation, social influence and facilitating circumstances that are based on the four antecedent constructs of the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) model (Venkatesh et al., 2003). Additionally, numerous studies have viewed trust, ease of use and perceived worth as antecedents of brand experience in online context through applying the technology acceptance model and flow theory to online consumer behaviour (Chen et al., 2014; Morgan- Thomas and Veloutsou, 2013; Koufaris, 2002). Thus, the latest antecedent found based on social capital theory is the social currency that states that positive customers interactions impact the four dimensions of brand experiences: sensory, behavioural, affective, and intellectual experiences (Trudeau and Shobeiri, 2016).

At the social media level, only minor studies investigated brand experience antecedents within this context. For example, Smith et al. (2012) tried to conceptualise and measure the public's

experiences among brands' content on social media and state the value of customers' behaviour around such content to brands. They concluded that experience stimulates consumer curiosity, suggesting that the emotions experienced by people throughout different brands are prone to be varied and play a key role in their actions. In turn, this may enhance their purchase intentions, allowing them to play as an advocate for the brand.

Furthermore, Chen et al. (2014) suggested that customers are swayed by the technical characteristics of a Facebook brand page, such as the comfort of use and usefulness. Combining the uses gratification and social identity theories concluded that customer energy influenced brand experience and, therefore, loyalty to Facebook brand pages and E-WOM. Moreover, Chen et al. (2014) considered brand love as an antecedent of brand experience.

Prior experience of the brand within social media platforms may help potential customers adopt sharing behaviour. As customers explore social media through interaction over time, through the lens of user gratification and self-identification theories, studies indicate that consumers may experience more benefits when they have prior experience (Rossmann et al., 2016; Lee and Ma, 2012). Additionally, a positive product experience allows consumers to engage with brand pages and liking posts and commenting on brand posts reflect brand popularity and enhance customer experience (Alalwan et al., 2017; Gensler, 2013; De Vries et al., 2012). However, prior experience is a double-edged sword, i.e., it could be building or destroying trust, especially in the online context. Hence, Bolton and Lemon (1999) argue that former experience influences current satisfaction, which, in turn, impacts future consumer behaviour.

A controversial factor that confuses scholars is trust. Previous studies investigated whether the trust is an antecedent or a result of brand experience (Morgan-Thomas and Veloutsou, 2013; Ha and Perks, 2005). In their model, Jin and Park (2006) see trust as a product of the purchase environment that ends in loyalty. On the other hand, Tan and Sutherland (2004) view trust as an essential factor that enhances discrete engagement with online brands and impacts brand experience. Similarly, Lee and Turban (2001) hold a similar opinion and perceive trust as an antecedent of online brand experience. Also, Morgan-Thomas and Veloutsou (2013) examine trust as an antecedent of brand experience and support the concept of apparent usefulness as an antecedent of brand experience in an online context.

## B. The Consequences of Brand Experience

The outcomes of brand experience differ depending on the studied brand experience across contexts. Thus, it is less controversial than the antecedent. However, previous studies show consensus on the influence of brand experience on business and consumer outcomes. In this sense, the brand experience can influence either consumer behaviour cause consequences on different levels, such as behavioural, relational, and cognitive/emotional together, or brand performance (Andreini et al., 2018).

Brand experience may influence customers on a behavioural level. The main consequences of brand experience are enhancing purchase intentions (Morgan-Thomas and Veloutsou, 2013; Gabisch, 2011), repurchasing intentions (Sahin et al., 2012), word of mouth (Chen et al., 2014; Sahin et al., 2012), and customer gratification (Brakus et al., 2009). On the relational level, the most affected factor by brand experience is brand loyalty (Kim and Ah Yu, 2016; Ding and Tseng, 2015; Shim et al., 2015; Chen et al., 2014; Francisco-Maffezzolli et al., 2014; Ramaseshan and Stein, 2014; Nysveen et al., 2013; Ishida and Taylor, 2012; Iglesias et al., 2011), brand attachment (Ramaseshan and Stein, 2014), brand commitment (Ramaseshan and Stein, 2014; Jung and Soo, 2012; Sahin et al., 2012), brand- relationship value (Francisco-Maffezzolli et al., 2014; Jung and Soo, 2012), brand trust ( Kim et al., 2016; Rahman, 2014), and customer experiential worth (Keng et al., 2013). On the cognitive/emotional level, the results of brand experience start from brand attitude (Roswinanto and Strutton, 2014; Fransen et al., 2013; Shamim and Muhammad, 2013), brand awareness (Cleff et al., 2014), brand credibility (Shamim and Muhammad, 2013), brand distinctiveness (Roswinanto and Strutton, 2014), brand character (Khan and Rahman, 2015a, 2015b; Kim et al., 2015; Morgan-Thomas and Veloutsou, 2013; Sahin et al., 2013; Brakus et al. 2009), brand recollection (Bauman et al., 2015; Fransen et al., 2013).

Brad experience can influence the brand performance level, with significant consequences of brand experience are brand equity (Lin, 2015; Kumar et al., 2013; Shamim and Muhammad, 2013; Zarantonello and Schmitt, 2013; Chen, 2012), price-quality (Sahin et al., 2013), and customer-based brand equity and customer equity (Hultén, 2011).

### 2.3.4. Brand Experience in Lens of Theories

Since the experience concept is diverse, the factors influencing brand experience depend on the context of the study, such as retail, service, brand, either offline or online experience (Batra and Keller, 2016; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016). Furthermore, previous studies investigating brand experience have borrowed theories from psychology, sociology, technology, communication, and other theories from different contexts (De Keyser et al., 2015). In the existing literature, experience is connected to the experimental marketing theory as a focal basis of the brand experience foundation. However, experiential marketing is proficient in articulating the experiential narrative (what is experience?) but is not enough armed to articulate the branding narrative (what is brand provides?) (Zha et al., 2020). Since there is no solid theory that explains brand experience, it should be conceptualised in a realignment of a brand-centric approach. Thus, further explanations are provided in the following sections.

Previous studies proved that two main experiential frameworks serve as a foundation base for most brand experience studies. Firstly, Schmitt's framework (1999a) suggests that a plush experience contains five strategic experience dimensions, including sensory (sense), affective (affect), behavioural (act), intellectual (think), and relational (relate) dimensions. Secondly, the framework of Brakus et al. (2009) posited that brand experience is a subjective, internal consumer reaction (sensations, cognitions, and feelings) that contains behavioural responses which are induced by brand-related stimuli that are part of a brand's design and uniqueness packaging, communications, and environments. Thus, Brakus et al. (2009) consider the brand experience in the lens of personality trait theory to measure customer satisfaction and loyalty, providing a solid scale of measuring brand experience dimensions. However, these frameworks did not receive any criticism from marketing scholars; instead, most studies adopted the definitions of these frameworks (Zha 2020; Andreini et al., 2018).

Previous studies that build on Schmitt's framework (1999) proved different outcomes in varied contexts. For example, customer satisfaction is a significant outcome of brand experience in department stores (Srivastava and Kaul, 2014). Nsairi (2012) also states that brand experience enhances satisfaction in the context of cosmetics.

Other studies that adopted Schmitt’s framework (1999) proved that brand experience relates to brand image and identification. For instance, Chen et al. (2014) show that brand experience affects

the brand image of restaurants, brand experience affects brand identification in the retail sector (Jones and Runyan, 2013), brand experience affects brand behaviour, brand attitudes, brand associations, image, and consumer-brand relationships at coffee shops as well as influences emotions (Chang and Chieng, 2006).

Furthermore, Mathwick et al. (2001) found that brand experience influences retail preference and patronage intentions in retail and e-retail. Similarly, brand experience affects the behavioural intentions in shopping malls. Overmars and Poels (2015) found that brand experience enhances purchase intention in e-retail, even more through blogs (Hsu and Tsou, 2011). Where Keng and Ting (2009) also showed that brand experience affects attitudes toward blogs.

Other streams of studies adopted the framework of Brakus et al. (2009), which extended the work of Schmitt (1999), a co-author of Brakus et al.'s study'. In the lens of personality traits, outcomes of brand experience found brand loyalty customer satisfaction. Many studies investigated brand experience's stream of influence in different sectors, reaching almost the same results. For example, studies in the service sector (Barnes et al., 2014; Nysveen and Pedersen, 2014; Nysveen et al., 2013), shopping malls (Kim et al., 2015), online-based marketing (Ha and Perks, 2005) and online brands (Lee and Jeong, 2014; Morgan- Thomas and Veloutsou, 2013) found that brand experience affects customer satisfaction and enhances brand loyalty. Furthermore, other effects surfaced, for example, affective commitment towards a brand (Iglesias et al., 2011) and brand attitude and brand distinctiveness in advertising (Roswinanto and Strutton, 2014).

It is worth noting that although the frameworks of Schmitt (1999) and Brakus et al. (2009) are the cornerstone work that first formalised brand experience as an only construct apart from related-branding ones. Therefore, it can be seen that it did not convey the changes in the branding modality and consumer behaviour, as Merrilees and Miller (2010) debate that the core activities of branding experience are not considered in the approach of Brakus et al. (2009). Thus, these frameworks introduced the brand factors but are still ambiguous, for they did not offer new types of experience based on the brand logic (Merz et al., 2009). Moreover, due to the massive reliance on these frameworks, there is a non-appearance of a diversity of branding notions that might enhance the experience (Andreini et al., 2018).

Furthermore, these frameworks neglect the role of customers in formalising the brand experience. Even though Prahalad and Ramaswamy's view (2004) that the co-creation experience and the brand experience become intersect, it was neglected in the brand experience studies. Indeed, the multidimensionality and dynamics of brand experience cannot be restricted to the definitions and dimensions provided by Schmitt (1999) and Brakus et al. (2009) (Becker and Jaakkola, 2020; Zah et al., 2020; Andreini et al., 2018; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016). In addition, the emergence of modern communication channels, such as social media platforms, transformed the experience from being embedded in each customers' lifeworld and interpreted by that customer (Helkkula and Kelleher, 2010) to being exposed to all network actors, such as brands activities and other customers interactions in the community (Becker and Jaakkola, 2020; Quach et al., 2020).

Recent studies in branding literature agree that customers add to the creation of brand meaning through experience (Ramaswamy and Ozcan, 2016; Carù and Cova, 2015; Payne et al., 2009). However, what this experience is and how it is developed are still not reasonably answered (Andreini et al., 2018). Therefore, Merz et al. (2009) identify three main theoretical streams implicitly contributing to the brand experience, namely, relationship theory (Fournier, 1998), consumer culture theory (CCT) (Arnould and Thompson, 2005; 2015) and Service-Dominant Logic (SDL) (Vargo and Lusch, 2004, 2008). Thus, these theories progressive the understanding of brand experience from the customers' point of view (Becker and Jaakkola, 2020; Andreini et al., 2018). Though these theories did not touch brand experience explicitly, they still explain the co-creation brand experience as a socially constructed concept.

In the lens of relationship theory, a new framing of brands had been introduced beyond the firm's prerogative, focusing on the way customers can retrieve brand meaning and form self-identity that strengthens the customer-brand bonds (Fournier, 1998). For example, consumers tend to evaluate brands as entities that can build relationships at the level of distinct "lived experience" (Fournier, 1998; Aaker and Fournier, 1995). In addition, customers developed reactions and relational expectations during brand encounters and experiences (Frow and Payne, 2007).

Past studies extensively employ a quantitative approach to validate the casual relations between consumer-brand relationship and brand experience defined by Brakus et al. (2009). The influence of brand experience has been studied mainly as a mediator variable on brand relationships in different contexts, such as the shared experience of coffee chain stores influencing consumer-brand

relationships (Chang and Chieng, 2006). Positive experiences generate gratification and behavioural intentions that lead to online brand relationships (Morgan-Thomas and Veloutsou, 2013). According to Jung and Soo (2012), brand experience influences the quality of the brand relationship and even it is evaluated as brand trust and brand commitment, while Morgan-Thomas and Veloutsou (2013) proposed that brand trust is predicted brand experience. However, it is proved that there is no direct impact between brand experience and brand loyalty in perfume and soap usage (Francisco-Maffezzolli et al., 2014).

However, previously mentioned studies failed to prove a consistent causal effect of brand experience on consumer-brand relationships, and it is clear that the link between them is unpredictable. Therefore, brand experience is still essential in creating a relationship between brands and consumers (Fournier, 1998) as consumers experience brands differently, and the type of relationship between brands and consumers is subjective (Zarantonello and Schmitt, 2010; Addis and Holbrook, 2001). Also, some consumer-brand relationship studies have not explicitly mentioned brand experience construct and infer experiences once consumers encounter brands, such as during individual rituals, experiments, brand habits, and repeated usage (Fournier, 1998; Wallendorf and Arnould, 1991; Rook, 1985).

The second theoretical stream that contributes to brand experience is customer cultural theory (CCT). This theory tackles the relationships between consumer behaviours, cultural values and the marketplace (Arnould and Thompson, 2005), viewing culture as the fabric of experience (Thompson et al., 2013). CCT considers consumption as a social activity going beyond the mere acquisition of goods and services to encompass immersive experiential practices (Carù and Cova, 2007). Through the lens of consumer culture, the possibilities created experience makes more sense with alignment to peoples' culture, which helps them develop and preserve their self and social identification (Arnould and Thompson, 2005; Kozinets, 2001).

Past studies which applied CCT contributed to brand experience implicitly, rarely mentioning the construct of brand experience as formalised by Brakus et al. (2009) (Andreini et al., 2018). On the other hand, CCT studies have interpreted the brand experience to be naturally bounded in the consumption phenomena permeated by experiential principles and meanings (Holt, 2002), thus focusing on particular cultural contexts affecting the complex manifestations of consumption.

However, the brands perform the role of the vehicle used by customers to achieve their identity in a social and cultural context (Ibid). That inflated the social context, where brand meanings are established, unifying the psychological desires related to consumer self-identity and social desires related to particular cultural contexts, especially in subculture consumption (Hietanen and Rokka, 2015). Moreover, brand community (Iglesias and Schultz, 2013; Cova and Pace, 2006; Muniz and O'Guinn, 2001), where then brands are considered essential to access specific social structures and social interactions.

The third theoretical stream that shed light on-brand experience is the Service-Dominant Logic (SDL). This logic focuses on a product to be methods in which services are provided. Thus, service-for-service exchanges resources, especially those related to knowledge and skills that multiple actors provide, such as (companies, consumers, and business partners) whose aim is to co-create mutual value (Vargo 2011; Vargo et al., 2008). Therefore, SDL adopts that actors in these exchanges are resource integrators, service providers, and value co-creators (Vargo and Lusch, 2004). Thus, the two fundamental types of resources guiding actions and interactions among actors are operant resources, such as knowledge, skills, and competencies and operand resources, such as financial and material resources (Vargo and Lusch, 2008). However, studies established that operant resources are more critical in today's business environment and are essential to creating value and competitive returns for companies (Chandler and Vargo, 2011; Vargo and Lusch, 2004).

The brands' role as operant resources is used or re-used by consumers succeeding actor-to-actor interactions. Therefore, the underlined importance of observing the interaction of consumers, brands, and other stakeholders as operant resources lies in mutually created and integrated resources irrespective of actual market exchanges (Merz et al., 2009). The context is not static but interrelates with other contexts, affecting the method of value co-creation and the creation and growth of holistic experiences (Payne et al., 2009). Thus, experiences occur when actors interact at multiple levels, triggering resources (such as brands and customer interaction) and co-creating significance that made brand experience be understood as part of a multi-level dynamic ecosystem (Akaka et al., 2013; Edvardsson et al., 2011).

The SDL's contribution to brand experience was indirect. For example, Brodie et al. (2013) found that consumer engagement in the process includes a range of sub-processes echoing consumers'

interactive experience in online brand communities and value co-creation among community contributors. However, brand experience in SDL studies gains implicit benefits, such as permitting the procedure of brand experience creation to be studied at the firm level beyond the modest design and deployment of stimuli that aim towards consumers (Andreini et al., 2018). However, the definition of brands experience, SDL studies have approved that the context acts as an agent, influencing experiences (Jaakkola et al., 2015; Gummerus, 2013; Vargo et al., 2008). Therefore, the brand experience can be observed as a series of contexts defined by unique actors and their relations (Chandler and Vargo, 2011). Moreover, the brand experience can play a role in a contextual ecosystem, interacting inside and outside the system to co-create value and activate new resources (Merz et al., 2009).

This thesis adopts the Customer Dominant Logic (CDL), which is an extended ontological position of service-dominant logic (Rihova et al., 2018; Heinonen et al., 2015; 2013) to explain the phenomenon of luxury brand experience with social media platforms (see details in the last section of this chapter).

## 2.4. Luxury Brand Research

### 2.4.1. Luxury Brand Definitions and Characteristic

Some scholars debate specific "codes of luxury" consistent throughout disciplines and ages (Larraufie and Kourdoughli, 2014). Others emphasise the point that luxury is a relative concept (Mortelmans, 2005). Thus, there is not a generally accepted definition of what constitutes a luxury brand. For instance, the American Marketing Association's dictionary of terms does not contain a definition of "luxury", "luxury brand", or "luxury marketing" (Ko et al., 2019). Consequently, scholars across several disciplines have attempted to state what constitutes a luxury brand without a clear consensus (Miller and Mills, 2012).

Originated from the Latin word "Luxus", "luxury" implies gratification of senses, irrespective of price (Kapferer, 1997). However, some difficulties compose a definition of luxury brands because luxury is a relative concept (Mortelmans, 2005). Also, perceptions of what constitutes "luxury" have altered over time (Cristini et al., 2017). Previous research shows that "luxury" is characterised by an absence of clarity on definition, operationalisation, and measurement of brand luxury. Thus, the lack of clarity in definitions exists for reasons like adaptability in approaches, terminology,

and the number of dimensions (Miller and Mills, 2012; Tynan et al., 2010; Atwal and Williams, 2009).

This observation is coherent with previous calls by researchers for a further precise definition of luxury goods marketing (Berthon et al., 2009; Atwal and Williams, 2009; Christodoulides et al., 2009; Fionda and Moore, 2009). While luxury is not an inherently subjective construct, it has been stated that the definition and measurement of luxury have been exceedingly subjective (Godey et al., 2012; Miller and Mills, 2012). Thus, the luxury brand literature lacks consensus concerning what a luxury brand is (Ko et al., 2019).

Luxury brands are considered divisive. Previous studies tried to clarify the definition of luxury, studying it from varied perspectives, contributing to its contentiousness. For example, from an experiential perspective, Atwal and Williams (2009) view luxury as empirical and varied in customer contribution and connection stages. In the same vein, Tynan et al. (2010) debate that luxury is at one end of a continuum with the ordinary, that is, where the ordinary ends, luxury starts—it is a matter of level that consumers do judge. They define luxury brands as "high quality, expensive and non-essential products and services that appear to be rare, exclusive, prestigious, and authentic and offer high levels of symbolic and emotional/hedonic values through customer experiences" (Tynan et al., 2010, p.1158). This definition is adopted in this thesis.

Alternatively, Nueno and Quelch (1998) utilise an economics view to define luxury brands, while Silverstein and Fiske (2003) introduce a "New luxury" term, defined as "products and services that possess higher levels of quality, taste, and aspiration than other goods in the category but are not so expensive as to be out of reach" (p.7). Vickers and Renand (2003) suggest a more psychological approach, finding the prime value of luxury versus non-luxury as an individual psychological judge. From a semantic perspective, Kapferer (1997) characterises luxury in reasonably broad terms by asserting that "luxury defines beauty; it is art applied to functional terms; like light, luxury is enlightening, luxury items provide extra pleasure and flatter all senses at once, luxury is the appendage of the ruling classes" (p. 253).

Similarly, Phau and Prendergast (2000) suggest that "luxury brands compete on the ability to evoke exclusivity, a well-known brand identity, brand awareness and perceived quality" (p. 123). While a luxury brand product and service can offer consumers both functional and psychological benefits, the psychological aspect is more prevalent (Li et al., 2021). It can enhance the esteem of the owner

or impresses others (Vigneron and Johnson, 2004). Thus, the scholars contend that whether a brand is seen as a luxury ultimately depends on consumer assessments.

Nevertheless, the symbolic luxury role of status and social achievement has ever become more significant. Customers found themselves able and prepared to afford the luxury, considering such consumptions an essential way of reaching and maintaining their status in society (Kapferer and Bastien, 2009). Despite the richness of diverging views on luxury in the literature, a primary characteristic that can be traced throughout much research is that luxury is indubitably extraordinary related to all ordinary products and brands in the marketplace (Heine, 2012).

Meanwhile, prior studies identified similar key characteristics of luxury brands. For example, Dubios et al. (2001) state that six luxury facts define and structure their concepts: excellent quality, scarcity and uniqueness, high price, aesthetics and poly sensuality, ancestral heritage, and personal history superfluousness. Consistent with Keller's general perspective (2003) of the brands' benefits, it provides consumers with the personal value and meaning that attach to the brand's product attribute. Such as symbolic, functional, or experiential consequences generated from the brand's acquisition or consumption.

Furthermore, Keller (2009) define ten characteristics of luxury brands: (1) preserving a premium image, (2) formation of intangible brand associations, (3) aligning with quality, (4) symbols, logos, packaging as drivers of brand equity, (5) secondary links from connected personalities, events, countries, and other entities, (6) meticulous distribution, (7) premium pricing strategy, (8) wisely managed brand architecture, (9) generally defined competition, and (10) legal protection of trademark. Similarly, Berthon et al. (2009) state three components of luxury: (1) the objective (material), (2) the subjective (individual) and (3) the collective (social). Thus, their argument refutes a single definition of a luxury brand, but it is beyond a characteristic or set of attributes.

Recently, Ko et al. (2019) suggested five elements recognised as essential to any luxury brand. For them, a luxury brand is "a branded product or service that consumers perceive to be high quality; offer authentic value via desired benefits, whether functional or emotional, has a prestigious image within the market built on qualities such as artisanship, craftsmanship, or service quality, be worthy of commanding a premium price; and be capable of inspiring a deep connection, or resonance, with the consumer" (p. 406).

However, there is a worry that while growth in the luxury domain positively influences awareness of luxury brands, it may also negatively influence desirability (Kapferer and Valette-Florence, 2018), making it critical for luxury marketers to understand better the luxury consumer-brand relationship and customer to customer relationships within the luxury context (Kefi and Maar, 2020). Thus, many scholars highlight the dilution of conventional luxury brands and increased consumer needs for subtle designs and exclusivity (Arrigo, 2018; Ko et al., 2016; Eckhardt et al., 2015).

### 2.4.2. Consumer Behaviour Towards Luxury Brands in Lens of Theories

A group of different theories have been employed to understand consumer behaviour towards luxury brands. The majority of these theories explain people's motivations behind luxury consumption. Furthermore, most theories are socially oriented (Ko et al., 2019), thus, emphasising the basic idea of "motivation" based on why a consumer would own a luxury brand.

The most popular theory is Veblen's (1899) conspicuous consumption theory. He posits that customers seek high visibility that signals wealth to others and which indicates power and status. As a result, studies adopted measurements that included conspicuousness as a primary dimension of luxury brands consumption (e.g., Dubois et al., 2001; Vigneron and Johnson, 1999).

Another motivation centred theory is the social comparison, which explains that the motivation behind consuming luxury brands is to infer perceptions of others (Festinger, 1954). It predicts customers' tendency to fit the popular opinion of their reference groups that they might use a luxury brand to meet social standards (Wiedemann et al., 2009). This theory is used in luxury brands in social media to illustrate the materialistic attitudes of consuming luxury brands (Kamal et al., 2013).

Furthermore, the uniqueness theory posits that customers need luxury brands for developing a unique status of themselves from others when there is significant similarity in their social environment (Snyder and Fromkin, 1977). In contrast, self-concept theory suggests that motivation to consume luxury brands relates to how people feel about themselves. Thus, consumers find joy and happiness through possession or gifting (Shukla and Purani, 2012) (see Table 2-1 below summaries of theories and related studies).

Additionally, another stream of literature focuses on understanding how customers perceive the luxury brand. The main argument of these studies revolves around customers' perceived value and

value co-creation with luxury brands. For example, Vigneron and Johnson (2004; 1999) classify motives types behind seeking luxury brands including “Veblenian motive” linked to conspicuous value, “Snob motive” where customers look for unique value, “Bandwagon motive” linked to social value, “Hedonist motive” linked to emotional value, and “Perfectionist motive” linked to quality value. Furthermore, personal and social symbolic brand meanings relate to symbolic/expressive value received by customers (Vickers and Renand, 2003). Furthermore, to a new source of value, such as craftsmanship as a utilitarian value and the notion of signs, uniqueness (Kapferer, 2014), status or esteem (O'Cass and McEwen, 2004), and prestige (Dubois and Czellar 2002).

More recently, few studies examining how consumers perceive luxury brands in social media also employ motivational theories. For example, Kefi and Maar (2020) employ uses gratification theory (Kates, 1973) with a service-dominant logic perception (Vargo and Lusch, 2008; 2004) to explain the motivations and values that drive customers to be a part of luxury brands community. Similarly, Athwal et al. (2018) employ uses gratification theory to explore the customers' needs of connecting to luxury brands' activities, which lead to the gratification of affective and cognitive needs. Also, Martín-Consuegra et al. (2019) employ content value theory (Lee et al., 2015) to discover customers' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation on luxury brands social media pages and found that hedonic and utilitarian values stand behind their behaviour. Finally, de Kerviler and Rodriguez (2019) employ the self-expansion theory (Aron et al., 1992) to explore how millennials' luxury experiences boost their sense of self.

However, none of these studies across different theories considers the emerging part of customers as co-creators of luxury brand experience on social media platforms (Pentina et al., 2018; Alexander and Jaakkola, 2016). Therefore, the customer-dominant logic approach (Heinonen et al., 2013) assists in understanding customers' interactions in formalising luxury brand experience on social media platforms. Thus, Ko et al. (2019) conclude that existing studies employ motivation-centred theories most frequently. Therefore, they posit that other theories from varied disciplinary backgrounds should be employed and examined in luxury contexts. They assert the vital role played by social media marketing to distinguish luxury brands from other brands categories.

**Table (2-1) Key Theories of Luxury Brands**

| Theory and Key Author | Concept of theory | Studies adopted theory |
|---|---|---|
| Conspicuous Consumption<br>introduced by Veblen (1899) | conspicuous consumption signals wealth to others and infers status and power. | Wang and Griskevicius (2014); Han et al. (2010); Christodoulides et al. (2009); Wiedemann et al. (2009); Vigneron and Johnson (2004; 1999); Dubois et al. (2001); Phau and Prendergast (2000); Eastman et al. (1999); Bearden and Etzel (1982) |
| Social Comparison Theory<br>introduced by Festinger (1954) | Customers look to their memory through evidence of similarities/differences between the others and the self. Therefore, social referencing and the construction of one-self are determinants of luxury brand consumption. | Lee and Watkins (2016); Schade et al. (2016); Kamal et al. (2013); Zhang and Kim (2013); Hung et al. (2011a); Wiedmann et al. (2009; 2007); Mandel et al. (2006) |
| Uniqueness Theory<br>introduced by Snyder and Fromkin (1977) | Customers seek luxury goods to distinguish themselves from others. | Kauppinen-Räisänen et al. (2018); Stokburger-Sauer and Teichmann (2013); Bian and Forsythe (2012) |
| Self-concept theory<br>introduced by Sirgy (1982) | Consumers seek luxury brands to enhance their self-concept, demonstrate a personal orientation in consumption of luxuries emphasising hedonic, utilitarian, and self-communication goals. | Roy and Rabbanee (2015); Kastanakis and Balabanis (2012); Shukla and Purani (2012); Gil et al. (2012); Berthon et al. (2009); Wiedmann et al. (2009; 2007); Dubois et al. (2001); Vigneron and Johnson (1999) |

### 2.4.3. Luxury Brands Presence on Social Media

Social media platforms have developed into the communication channel amongst marketers across industries. Such social platforms are constructed on the ideology and technical foundations of Web 2.0, which allows for the creation of user-generated content (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010; O'Reilly, 2005). Luxury brands were reluctant to incorporate social media but have tried to maintain their presence at least on a single platform, like Facebook, YouTube, or Twitter (Phan et al., 2011). These platforms enable communications between consumers and brands and between consumers (Farmaki et al., 2021). Statistics show that social media usage is one of the highest popular online activities of humans. During 2020, over 3.6 billion people use social media worldwide, a number projected to surge to almost 4.41 billion in 2025 (Statista, 2021). This fact parallels the exponential

value of the personal luxury market rise in the last two decades. Thus, the worth of the personal luxury goods market worldwide was 281 billion USD in 2019 (Statista, 2019).

Luxury brands approached online platforms with inquisitiveness and scepticism despite the previously mentioned facts (Okonkwo, 2010). This initial reluctance of luxury brands in the digital context was described as a "love/hate relationship" (Chevalier and Gutsatz, 2012; Kapferer and Bastien, 2012). Luxury brands' traditional favourites created brand value over in-person experiences, maintaining authenticity, exclusivity, and prestige (Koivisto and Mattila, 2018; Ko et al., 2016). However, the accelerated notion of social media has changed the game. It minimised the distance between luxury brands and customers, built more close attention, elicited consumer emotions toward brands, and stimulated customer desires for luxury brands (Kefi and Maar, 2020; Kim and Ko, 2012). Thus, social media marketing has altered the way that luxury brand content is developed, circulated, and consumed. It has reassigned the power to shape brand image from marketers to online links, content, and customer co-creation (Koivisto and Mattila, 2018; Hamliton et al., 2016; Tsai and Men, 2013).

Luxury fashion brands' existence on social media constructs a personality with unique characteristics to attract customers (Sheth and Kim, 2018). The brand page is not the official page that provides information but a group community that influences customers' attitudes and consumption preferences (Ashley and Tuten, 2015). Thus, fashion brands often utilise varied content to get customers involved in discussions on their pages (Wolny and Mueller, 2013). However, luxury brands rarely integrate with customers on social media platforms for many reasons, such as the variety and complexity of these platforms and confusion of interactive effects (Arrigo, 2018). in addition to keeping a psychological distance that maintains the prestigious image of luxury brands (Kefi and Maar, 2020), the perception of luxury as "exclusive" and the nature of social media "widespread" are incompatible (Dubios et al., 2021).

Furthermore, luxury brands' presence on social media expanded the margins from luxury to mass markets, facilitated reaching middle-class and mass consumers (Vickers and Renand, 2003). Exposure to social media can spread luxury brands' awareness (Rambourg, 2014). However, this exposure overrides the exclusiveness and rarity that defines them (Kapferer, 2014). Therefore, luxury brands challenge aiming for mass consumers to expand their market share without diluting the luxury values of uniqueness and rarity (Kastanakis and Balabanis, 2014). The visually pleasing

brand messages on social media can prompt perceptions of luxury and exclusivity yet also promote consumers' attraction to brands (Phua, 2017; Phan et al., 2011). Nevertheless, the obtainability and affordability of more masstige luxury have become ubiquitous, and the denotation of luxury has become progressively contested and transformed (Wallpach et al., 2020).

Luxury brands on social media attempt at delivering brand experience by permitting customers to enter the brand's space through stories about its heritage, emotional stimulus, and sensorial discoveries (Yu et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2019). For example, in 2009, Louis Vuitton was the first luxury brand to provide an online engagement chance for consumers (Hennigs et al., 2012) by creating a Facebook fan page, broadcasting fashion show videos, and adding background information, photos, and stories about the brand's history (Kim and Ko, 2012). In the same year, Burberry launched a novel social network site called "Artofthetrench.com" to invite attention to their designs (Hennigs et al., 2012). Furthermore, Chanel incorporated a catalogue of stories on social media linked to its website as a window "Inside Chanel", giving visitors the chance to learn about the history and trends of the brand (Kim et al., 2016). However, luxury brands did not utilise the fullest potential of social media platforms for their strategic benefits, thereby not delivering a superior customer experience (Ko et al., 2019; Arrigo, 2018).

Compared to other business sectors, social media marketing activities in the luxury fashion industry have distinctive characteristics. Practitioners like Kierzkowski et al. (1996) state that social media frameworks that lead to successful marketing must include critical actions, such as relating, attracting, engaging, retaining, and learning. However, academics like Kim and Ko (2012; 2010) define the social media marketing of luxury brands in five activities: interaction, entertainment, customisation, trendiness, and word of mouth.

Social media offers consumers a rich environment for discussions and the exchange of ideas. Firstly, interaction has changed relations between brands and customers (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). This interaction simplifies customers' role in contributing to brand-related social media platforms, for instance, by meeting like-minded customers, interacting, and communicating with them about specific brands/products (Kim and Ko, 2012; Muntinga et al., 2011).

The second activity is entertainment. Agichtein et al. (2008) state that entertainment is the product of the fun and enjoyment that people might experience through social media interaction. This fact

is extensively linked to the hedonic perspective that people who seek pleasure and enjoyment are well-entertained (Manthiou et al., 2013). Social media participants consume brand content for enjoyment and leisure and pass the time (Muntinga et al., 2011). In addition, it influences consumers' attitudes to brands and increases their intention to revisit brands' pages more often (Brodi et al., 2013). Thus, this increases the brands' challenge to post unique content, be more active and open in discussions, and practically enhance and promote interactions (Godey et al., 2016).

The third activity is trendiness, which is the competitive advantage of social media platforms among other communication channels. Consumers have turned to diverse types of social media to seek data, for they have become a more dependable resource of information rather than corporate-traditional promotional activities (Mangold and Faulds, 2009). Moreover, trendy information on social media consists of sub-motivations, such as notifications about the latest development within people's social environment and details about brands' consumer experience. Such information also incorporates brand reviews and rates for brand communities, thus assisting in purchasing decisions and inspiring fashion brands ideas (Muntinga et al., 2011). Hence, luxury fashion brands must constantly update the design to reinforce displaying personality and distinctiveness (Bain and Company, 2016).

The fourth activity is customisation, that is, creating a difference in the consumer-brand relationship. Can brands relay individuality and build a more solid brand affinity? Moreover, loyalty by personalising their sites (Martin and Todorov, 2010). In social media platforms, customisation indicates specifying the intended audience of the posted message (Zhu and Chen, 2015). Customised content should correctly reflect consumers' preferences and requirements (Goh et al., 2013). Furthermore, Godey et al. (2016) state that customised information search and customised services are a form of customisation on luxury social media pages. It is supposed that customisation contributes to consumers' attractiveness and loyalty to the brand.

The last simultaneous activity of social media marketing is word of mouth. Previous studies have shown high interest in E-WOM due to the better credibility, empathy, and significance for customers than firm-created sources of information (Kumar et al., 2019; Kim and Ko, 2012). Consumers actions on social media can be classified as seeking, giving, or passing opinions (Phua et al., 2017). They usually tend to hunt for information and advice when making a purchase

decision from other consumers. A significant influence on consumers' behaviours and attitudes (Chu and Kim, 2011).

Following the work of Kim and Ko (2012; 2010), most studies on SMMA validated their conceptualisation and further examined its impact on brand equity, thus, neglecting other outcomes. For example, the focal purpose of luxury SMMA is to develop customer equity drivers through strengthening customer-brand relationships and enhancing purchase intention. As a result, SMMA shows a significant favourable influence on brand equity, particularly brand awareness and brand image (Godey et al., 2016; Kim and Ko, 2012). Hence, more substantial brand equity contributes to increased brand preference, readiness to pay a premium price, and customer loyalty (Kim and Lee, 2019).

However, Kim and Ko (2012) can be criticised for concentrating on the impact of social media marketing on brand equity, overlooking the properties and characteristics of social media marketing activities. Therefore, limited customer outcomes linked to these activities and the properties of social media activities could be further investigated to understand what sort of other activities that luxury brands can engage in and how these new activities might influence customers (Creevy et al., 2021; Ko et al., 2019; Arrigo, 2018). Furthermore, it is interesting to look into how each activity could be managed independently and affect customer–customer interactions (Pentina et al., 2018). Moreover, target customers in other countries except for Korea (Kim and Ko, 2012; 2010), China, India, Italy and France (Godey et al., 2016) could be reached in studies on social media activities, which may deliver a broader cross-cultural overview.

A group of studies shed light on luxury activity, and customers have emphasised purchase targets. For instance, Phan et al. (2011) state that luxury social media marketing affects consumers' perceptions and behavioural responses. Similarly, Chu et al. (2013) pointed out that luxury advertisements on social media resulted in positive customer behavioural attention and enhanced purchase intentions. Furthermore, Wang et al. (2012) found that when consumers are engaged in luxury brands' social media activities, their interest in the brand's product increases. However, these studies lack details on luxury brands' expanding activities' and how they would shape other customers behaviour outcomes or how customers would benefit from being in such an interactive community.

The growing literature on luxury brands looks into social media marketing influence on customer engagement in social media. Limited studies have explicitly argued the conceptualisation of or customer experience in social media (Creevey et al., 2021; Kim and Lee, 2019; Liu et al., 2019; Kefi and Maar, 2020; Pentina et al., 2018; Dhaoui, 2014). However, with limited studies that did so, there is inconsistency amongst the operationalisation and conceptualisation of customer experience while adopting the work of Kim and Ko (2012) without further investigations. Furthermore, studies have explored luxury brand's social media activities as antecedents of customer engagement (Dhaoui, 2014; Kontu and Vecchi, 2014; Ng, 2014; Phan et al., 2011), with the main focus being on identifying customer-related features (e.g., motivations for engagement or satisfaction with the brands, gratification of the brand) that influence engagement behaviours of customers (Pentina et al., 2018; Quach and Thaichon, 2017; Jahn et al., 2012; Jin, 2012). However, these studies did not provide a deeper understanding of customer response.

Therefore, limiting the study of luxury social media marketing activities offers little analysis on the phenomenon of customer experience (Kefi and Maar, 2020; Kim and Lee, 2019; Jahn et al., 2012; Jin, 2012). Thus, luxury firms must develop a clear understanding of what social media might provide and, consequently, define a clear strategy to advance customers' experience and observations of their brands on social media (Phua, 2017; Phan et al., 2011). Furthermore, the adoption of social media to involve and retain customers' needs to be further explored to comprehend how social media platforms are altering the luxury customer experience.

In other words, it is necessary to examine the effect of luxury activities on refining the customer experience. Primarily that sensory perception of luxury brands is richly provided on social media platforms. Thus, customers' luxury experience is infamously multisensory (Andreini et al., 2018; Barnes et al., 2014; Lundqvist et al., 2013; Nysveen et al., 2013; Hultén, 2011; Zarantonello et al., 2007; Andersson and Andersson, 2006). This can be justified by the power of visual and audial content created by luxury brands on their pages, enhancing the overall customer experience because sensory has the ability to combine experiential, relational and transactional approaches (Hultén, 2015) as consumers' senses mark their perception, judgment and behaviour (Krishna, 2012). Thus, Pine and Gilmore (1998) study were the first that emphasised the importance of the five senses in designing a personal and extraordinary brand experience.

**Table (2-2) Key Themes of Social Media Marketing Activities (SMMA) and Luxury Brands**

| Key Themes | Main factors | Theory | Methods | Main finding | Study |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Types of SMMA (entertainment, customisation, interaction, word of mouth and trendiness) and its impact | Explore effects of SMM on customer relationships, involving intimacy and trust, and purchase intention. | Conceptual framework | Questionnaires with visual stimuli of (Louis Vuitton's) | Social media marketing influence both customer relationships and purchase intentions, and entrainment is the most effective activity. | Kim and Ko (2010) |
| | Identify attributes of SMM activities and examine the relationships among those perceived activities, value equity, relationship equity, brand equity, customer equity, and purchase intention. | Build on Kim and Ko (2010) | Questionnaires with luxury customers (Louis Vuitton's) | Social media marketing positivity influences value equity, relationship equity, and brand equity. | Kim and Ko (2012) |
| | How social media marketing activities influence brand equity creation | Build on Kim and Ko (2010) | Questionnaires targeting consumers and followers of luxury brands (Burberry, Dior, Gucci, Hermès, and Louis Vuitton) | Social media marketing positively influences brand equity, which, in turn, affects brand loyalty and customers' preference and willingness to pay a premium price, respectively. | Godey et al. (2016) |
| | Explore SMMA in driving consumer engagement on social media platforms | Build on Kim and Ko (2010) | a 60-month period on Twitter analyses 3.78 million tweets from the top 15 luxury brands with the highest number | entertainment, interaction, and trendiness dimensions of a luxury brand's social media marketing efforts significantly increase customer engagement, while the customisation dimension does not affect engagement | Liu et al. (2019) |

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | of Twitter followers | | |
| | Explore the consumer benefits of being a member of the luxury brands community on social media platforms by testing the effect on consumer brand equity | On uses and gratifications theory and brand experience, and Kim and Ko (2010) | Online Questionnaires for students following a luxury fashion brand on social media | Findings show that SMMA influence consumer brand equity by the mediating role of brand experience and consumer benefits. | Zollo et al. (2020) |
| | Examine the impact of social media marketing (SMM) efforts, including entertainment, customisation, interaction and trendiness via WeChat, on consumers' online brand-related | Kim and Ko (2010) | Online survey | The study testing a theoretical model of SMMA including (entertainment and interaction)– are critical factors in driving customers for consuming, contributing and creating behaviour on social media brand communities, | Cheung et al. (2020) |
| | Examine the influence of perceived social media marketing activities (SMMAs) on the consumer-based brand equity and brand love via the mediating role of e-brand experience | S-O-R model Kim and Ko (2012) | Structured questionnaire | E-brand experience meditates the relationship between SMMA and brand love. But insignificant meditation on brand equity. | Chen and Qasem (2021) |
| The influence of SMMA Content | Explore the effects of luxury fashion visual complexity of social media images on consumers' brand perceptions | Experiential marketing | Experiment | Visual complexity affects behavioural intention (purchase and share) with sequential mediating effects of perceived luxury and product attitude. Thus, it | Lee et al. (2018) |

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | increases positive perceptions of luxury brands and the degree of familiarity with the brand. | |
| | Examine how video blogs influence consumers' perception of luxury brands | Parasocial interaction (PSI) and social compariso n theory | Experiment | Luxury brand perceptions and purchase intentions for the experimental groups, who watched vlogs reviewing luxury products, were higher than the control group, who did not watch the vlog. Thus, the use of YouTube increases positive perceptions of luxury brands. | Lee and Walkins (2016) |
| Luxury brands managing social media impact | Understand the strategic use of social media in western luxury branding and Chinese consumers' perception | Grounded theory | Triangulation methods with content analysis of seven Western luxury brands and interview with 17 luxury females' customers | Western luxury brands use rich media to build social presence, focus on the social meaning of self-presentation, and allow low-level consumer engagement. Meanwhile, consumers perceive Western luxury brands' social media advertising as conservative, distant, and inactive. | Chen and Wang (2017) |
| | Explore how luxury brands use social media to connect with middle-class customers in China | Attitude theory | Case study of Coach, content analysis | Coach using social media platforms to build a relationship with the customer and deliver values, such as functional, financial, symbolic, and hedonic value to their customers | Ng (2014) |
| | The study aims at exploring luxury brand SM activities. | Uses gratificatio n theory | Online data were gathered from five top luxury brands' Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter accounts and thirty in- | User activities, ranging from reading and following the branded content to writing comments on the branded content, motivated by information gathering and entertainment needs | Athwal et al. (2019) |

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| | | | depth interviews with millennials. | | |

## 2.5. Luxury Brand in Experience Marketing

The request and demand for luxury products have grown globally, for example, in Europe and the USA, and it is more demanding in Latin America, India, China, and the Middle East (Kim and Ko, 2012; Chadha and Husband, 2010). Therefore, emerging markets have experienced significant growth in the luxury market over the earlier few years, leading to diverse social classes and new generation demand (Seo and Buchanan-Oliver, 2017). Thus, creating a luxury strategy has become even more challenging due to the constant growth of the luxury market and the equivalent increase in the number of competitors (Kefi and Maar, 2020; Quach et al., 2020; Ko et al., 2019; Quach and Thaichon, 2017). Thus, the main characteristic of the postmodern customer demand is an experienced-oriented marketing that emphasises interactivity, connectivity and creativity (Atwal and Williams, 2017; Cova, 1996).

Traditional luxury strategies, such as raised brands' status, an extraordinary level of service quality, and a brand name, are no longer effective alone in the luxury industry (Kapferer and Laurent, 2016). The marketing of luxury products has become increasingly complex, trying to sell an experience by connecting it to the lifestyle constructs of consumers (Holmqvist et al., 2019). The features of luxury products suggest that marketing in the sector is different from many other industries (Atwal and Williams, 2009; Tynan et al., 2010). Consumers have begun to focus on values, unique experiences, and differences (Zha et al., 2020; Lemon and Verohf, 2016; Schmitt, 1999b).

Experiential marketing is the core of a product and elaborates it into a set of tangibles, physical experiences and interactive experiences that reinforce the offer. Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) recognised the following experiential aspects of consumption: feelings, fantasies, and fun. It has evolved as a reaction to a perceived transition from a service economy to one that is embodied by experiences in which consumers contribute (Petkus, 2002). As argued by Tsai (2005), increasingly, consumers are involved in the processes of both defining and creating value, and the co-created experience of consumers through the holistic brand value structure becomes the very basis of marketing.

According to Pine and Gilmore (1998), there are two bipolar constructs through experiences: (customer participation and customer connection). Atwal and Williams (2009) modified this notion to become (customer involvement) and (customer intensity) constructs across experiences (p.342). Further, they identified four luxury experiential zones: education, aesthetic, entertainment, and escapist (Atwal and Williams, 2017; 2009). They assert that "customer involvement" means the communication between the supplier and the customer, whereas "customer intensity" refers to the strength of feeling in the interactions between customers and suppliers (Atwal and Williams, 2017).

Numerous practitioners and academics have investigated experiential luxury marketing approaches. For example, Smith (2003) stated that there are five stages in the experiential luxury marketing strategy. First, to start with evaluating the recent experience of the brand. The second is to revise a brand position. The third step is to design the brand experience, which involves the brand processes and products against the brand proposal. The fourth step is the brands' communication between the external and internal. The last step is to confirm that the strategy is completed and meets the intended objectives.

Moreover, Hogan et al. (2005) postulate that there are steps to achieve brand experience in luxury marketing, identifying the customer segment considered the first of them. This step will aid brand-marketing managers to choose the maximum profitable target given the altering consumption of luxury brands (Tsai, 2005). Then, the process is to develop a touchpoint. A touchpoint is a communication between the brands and their target customer at pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase journeys (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016). This is followed by a conversion of the findings into project priorities. The last step is to implement and manage the strategy. Hence, Hogan et al. (2005) state that the touchpoints can differ according to consumers' behaviour.

The flagship store is considered a luxury experiential marketing strategy. It has turned ubiquitous since luxury brands became prominent and evident in society (Dolbec and Chebat, 2013; Manlow, 2013). The flagship store concept was introduced by Carusone and Moscove (1985), who mentioned the flagship store as a method of storefront decoration to encourage the consumer to enter. Additionally, those flagships provide the chance to experience these within distinctive, frequently unique and in places unique, physical environments. Therefore, Riewoldt (2002) mentioned that a luxury flagship store purposes of stimulating customer experience by sensory

experience (image) and affective experience (emotion); therefore, a luxury product provides a hedonic consumption. Manlow (2013) demanded that the luxurious environment of the flagship store produces desire and positive emotion in the shopping experience for consumers.

More recently, the advance of technology has enhanced the potential for experiential marketing in the luxury sector. Okonkwo (2007) stated that luxury fashion brands need to generate a memorable, compelling, positive, and enjoyable customer experience for online customers. Similarly, scholars confirm that the luxury retail environment needs to go beyond mere sales by competing based on memorable brand experiences (Grewal et al., 2009; Pine and Gilmore, 1998).

Then, consumer interactions with touchpoints, such as the brand stores' physical and non-physical elements, eloquently shape consumer brand experiences, defined by Brakus et al. (2009) as the feelings and emotions that are evoked by brand-related stimuli. Brand experiences play a fundamental role in luxury retail, enabling luxury brands to connect with their customers on an emotional level and, therefore, distinguish themselves from the primarily functional features of brands' value and beyond the mere purchase (Brakus et al., 2009; Hagtvedt and Patrick, 2009).

Dubois and Paternault (1995) also noted that marketers should generate symbolic and emotional connections with consumers of luxury brands. Thus, the brand experience increases consumers' knowledge of a particular brand, knowledge established from exposure to that brand (Ha and Perks, 2005; Braunsberger and Munch, 1998). Different to attitudes, brand experiences cannot be generic judgments related to a particular brand; instead, they involve various behavioural responses that are outcomes of the brand marketing stimuli (Brakus et al., 2009). Thus, customers provided experiences for multisensory perspective and responded to and interaction with the brands, placing interaction at the heart of the experience (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982).

The new area of social media has boosted the experience of the luxury brand, making it more available to customers and non-customers. Such a digital revolution affects luxury brands and enhances interaction in many ways (Kapferer, 2014). It permits firms to provide brand content via promoting their heritage and values (Liu et al., 2019). However, luxury is frequently centred on scarcity, rarity, and discretion; hence, full availability and accessibility of content on social media contradict the exclusiveness and status of luxury brands (Hennings et al., 2012), which may dilute the brand experience for current customers (Dion and Arnould, 2011) or increase the risk of perceiving the brand as intimidating or even obsolete (Lassus and Freire, 2014).

Thus, luxury brands challenges are the digital presence and the ability to manage, produce and maintain a presence without spoiling the essence of luxury brands (Athwal et al., 2019). Accordingly, the following section explores the influence of social media on luxury brands.

### 2.5.1. Luxury Brand Experience in Social Media

Despite the logical inconsistency that luxury brands must maintain exclusivity yet also be accessed on social media, brands' presence on online platforms enhances the luxury brands' exposure and awareness (Kefi and Maar, 2020; Okonkwo, 2009). Social media helps develop customers' trust, relationship, and equity with luxury brands (Goday et al., 2016; Kim and Ko, 2012; 2010), leading to brand evangelism (Dhaoui, 2014), though most brands have previously developed a social media presence, and effectively communicating with customers (Gómez et al., 2019). The steep rise of social media forces marketers to create a strong psychological and emotional attachment with customers (de Kerviler and Rodriguez, 2019) to overcome new challenges.

These challenges vary at many different levels. For example, on the branding level, brands have to confront the invasion of market changes, such as the trend for affordable luxury (Quach and Thaichon, 2017), the competition for a successful presence on social media platforms (Liu et al., 2019; Athwal et al., 2018), the ability to elicit a positive attitude from consumers towards luxury brands (Kessous and Valette-Florence, 2019), deciding consumers' degree of familiarity with the brand (Lee et al., 2018), and, fundamentally, the ability to beat competitors and increase sales (Kim and Lee, 2019; Gautam and Sharma, 2017).

On the customer level, the challenge can be summarised in the paradigm shift that happened in the customer's orientation. For example, Atwal and Williams (2017) stated that postmodern luxury consumers desire self-indulgence, which is changing the luxury market from its traditional evident consumption model to a modern, individualistic kind of luxury consumers, who might be motivated by new needs and desires for experiences.

Furthermore, industry reports anticipated profound target customer challenges, such as the new luxury target of that millennial generation that grew up while the digital world is growing (de Kerviler and Rodriguez, 2019). For example, Deloitte's report (2017) found that social media symbolises the most crucial intelligence source for millennial luxury customers, followed by other digital channels. Moreover, one-third of luxury customers are millennials and are estimated to

exceed 50 % of the luxury customer by 2024 (Forbes, 2019). Thus, they seek higher expectations, experience, and interactive customer-brand relationships.

Indeed, the intended experience is accompanied by a set of values. For Mathwick et al. (2001), the value resulting from experiences is conceptualised as "experiential value". Customers are hedonically driven actors with a deep-rooted want for sensory, emotional, and social stimulation because of the interaction with a brand (Addis and Holbrook, 2001; Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982). For example, by offering customers enjoyable, meaningful, and pleasurable experiences, brands can meet customer needs and induce positive responses, such as customer engagement and attitudes toward the brand (Beig and Khan, 2018; Tafesse, 2016).

Previous studies that looked into the value co-creation emphasise the importance of experience being co-constructed by exchanging skills and knowledge with customers (Vargo and Lusch, 2004) and co-producing unique experiences (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004). The value of co-creation is the value generated by the relationship with the brand (Fournier, 1998) and the interaction with the brand community (Veloutsou and Moutinho, 2009; Kozinets, 2002; Cova and Cova, 2001; Muñiz and O' Guinn, 2000) and the service supplier (Grönroos, 2006). Thus, value stems from the experiences that involve communication between company- and consumer-based operand and operant resources (Tynan et al., 2010; Payne et al., 2009; Vargo and Lusch, 2004).

Similarly, luxury brands formulate authentic, unique experiences vital in transmitting the essence of luxury (Tynan et al., 2014; Atwal and Williams, 2009) and enable value co-creation. Tynan et al. (2010) assert that the key identifier of the luxury brand is the experiential dimension, which is deemed to co-create value rooted in a service-dominant logic perception (Vargo and Lusch, 2008; 2004). However, they did not determine whether those values generate engagement on social media. Thus, customers perceive and generate value when using luxury services or goods, while the firms' part is to provide customers with resources to use (Grönroos, 2008).

Social media platforms provide customers with a convenient way to co-create and interact values with the luxury brand (Quach et al., 2019; Rosenthal and Brito, 2017). Customer contribution in social media activity is a simultaneous process of sharing, co-operating, and generating new materialistic or symbolic values. Thus, this contribution of multiple actors results in mutual benefits (Quach and Thaichon, 2017; Vargo and Lusch, 2016), supporting the notion of positive customer experience of a brand, which would favourably influence brands attitude (Kudeshia and

Kumar, 2017). However, brand fan pages or brand communities are mediums that allow followers to develop content either as social values or self-related values (Jahn and Kunz, 2012). Moreover, they seek mutually entertaining and informative content (De Vries et al., 2012; Cheung et al., 2011).

Consequently, luxury brand-related stimuli might be considered relevant to affording intense experiences compared with low-involvement brands. Hence, the unique features of luxury brands in terms of heritage, style, quality of materials, authenticity, exclusive and prestigious expertise (Kapferer and Bastien, 2009; Okonkwo, 2009) may explain how and why luxury brands trigger peak experiences and a profound sense of meaning (Arnould and Price, 1993). Thus, luxury brand characteristics by nature contain the experiential aspect; however, luxury brands' presence on social media might provoke different types of brand experience (Chu et al., 2019; Ko et al., 2019). given the nature of interactivity importance on brand relationship outcomes (Kim and Lee, 2019; Godey et al., 2016).

Schmitt (1999) stated that experience marketing can convey emotional, sensory, cognitive, behavioural, and relational value to customers from an experience-centric point. Hence, the experience intersects with the brand, and co-creation evolves through personalised experiences in which the customer is an active partner (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004). Furthermore, Poulsson and Kale (2004) mentioned that experience marketing should provide personal significance for the customer, offer novel elements, produce learning, and engage the customer. This evidence that the brand by itself does have an experiential component, though luxury brands do (Kapferer and Laurent, 2016) and that the experience of the brand involves an interactive process between the customers, suppliers and other networks, contributing to an acceptance of the co-creation of value, which has been enhanced with the emergence of social media platforms that facilitate interaction between all actors (Qucah et al., 2020).

Despite previous facts, the phenomenon of luxury brand experience in social media platforms is still nascent. More recently, only a few studies examined the brand experience by adopting Brakus et al. (2009) and empirically testing it in the context of luxury social media through the lens of varied marketing theories. For example, Tafesse (2016) presents an experimental model of custom interaction on Facebook pages by combining the work of Brakus et al. (2009) with gratification theory (Katz et al., 1973). Similarly, Zollo et al. (2020) found that emotional and relational

dimensions of brand experience facilitate the relationship between luxury social media marketing and brand equity. Moreover, Yu et al. (2020) employed the involvement theory with the previous theoretical approaches and found that dynamic brand experience positively influences customer equity in luxury social media pages.

Furthermore, Koivisto and Mattila (2018), by combining Brakus et al. (2009) the service-dominant logic approach (Vargo and Lusch, 2008; 2004), found that experiential marketing events provide brands with the chance of co-creating content alongside customers to engage them and to disseminate the brand value suggestion on social media platforms. Jhamb et al. (2020) found that the four-brand experience dimensions, sensory, intellectual, behavioural, and affective, formulate customers' outlooks towards luxury brands on social media platforms (see Table 2-3).

Those past studies add to the luxury brand experience in social media, with their employed theoretical approaches being considered solid in marketing—such as that of Brakus et al. (2009). However, it overlooked those co-creation activities as critical brand-related stimuli with the potential to develop brand experience. Moreover, given the contradictory natures of luxury brands and social media platforms, the brand experience might go beyond Brakus et al. (2009); it might influence customers' interaction with the brand, offers, and other brand community members.

Similarly, the Service-Dominant (S-D) logic suggests an opportunity to produce together thinking on experience marketing. The S-D logic of marketing (Vargo and Lusch, 2008; 2004) conceptualises value co-creation in interactive processes amongst the customer and the service provider. However, not sufficient attention is given to co-creation that takes place as customers interact with one another. Traditional exchange-based outlooks in marketing (Vargo and Lusch, 2004) are insufficient to recognise the new dynamics of creation through interactions. Callon (2016) argued that such organising practices go beyond the predictable view of markets as economic exchanges of goods and services. Although Vargo and Lusch (2004) comment that "marketing inherited a model of exchange from economics" (p.5), their SDL is limited to an exchange paradigm, as service is exchanged for service.

Nowadays, customers are considered personified, experiencing being, with the ability to engage in diverse interactions with others. This engagement view recognises customers as "experiencers" of creation over interactions (Ramaswamy and Ozcan, 2018; 2016; Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004a) and engaging with an interactive environment in specific contexts of time and space, such

as luxury brand community (Pongpaew et al., 2017). Thus, through dialogue and relationships, customers construct value for the firm and other customers (Hamilton et al., 2016).

The potential impacts of co-creation on experience have been deliberated in the literature (Chakravorti, 2011; Verhoef et al., 2009; Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004a). However, empirical studies of such effects are limited. Studies that integrate co-creation and experience have mainly focused on the significance of stimulating co-creation experiences (Füller et al., 2011; Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004b). Nonetheless, there has been a lack of credibility of the impact value of co-creation on brands (Galvagno and Dalli, 2014), specifically the part of human experience (Rihova et al., 2018; Rihova, 2013; Ramaswamy, 2011) in brand building or enhancing brand experience. Thus, brand value co-creation throughout human experiences has considerable implications for luxury brand managing.

In particular, socially intense consumption contexts, such as social media platforms. It is essential to study experience through the lens of Customer-to-Customer co-creation processes. Previous studies have revealed that luxury brand-related experiences might effectively encourage customer-to- customers communications (Klein et al., 2016) and engage consumers in co-creation (Choi et al., 2016; Tynan et al., 2010). Still, these studies need an explicit focus on how these behaviours are formulated in social media content. See the next section for more details related to customer-to-customer interactions.

Given the fact that brand experience provides critical touchpoints for multisensory stimulations that attract customers to a brand, several studies on luxury brands within social media did not consider the unique nature of luxury brands (Kefi and Maar, 2020; de Martín-Consuegra et al., 2019; Liu et al., 2019; Kim and Ko, 2012). Furthermore, little efforts are devoted to identifying how customers themselves interact in the given luxury brands activity. However, what type of experience would social media offer to luxury brands' customers, with perceived customers interactions (Kefi and Maar, 2020; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016; Schmitt, 2013; Brunk, 2012; Brakus et al., 2009). Thus, intensifying the typology to encompass luxury grounded theoretical foundations requires further research (de Kerviler and Rodriguez, 2019; Ko et al., 2019; Arrigo, 2018; Atwal and Williams, 2017).

This thesis focuses on the combined enactment of interactional creation of value through engaging actors in the brand community (Ramaswamy and Ozcan, 2018; Heinonen et al., 2015). Brand

experiences in luxury and social environments are now progressively co-created through the function of skills and knowledge, enabled through interaction, activated customer participation, predicated upon co-creation determined by the customer (Koivisto and Mattila, 2018). Therefore, this thesis asserts the notion of value in use around that of value in exchange, so addressing many of the critical characters of experience marketing in light of customers' participation in luxury brands' community. Thus, the following section will explore more details.

### 2.5.2. Customers' Interactions on Luxury Brand Community

Traditionally, customer-to-customer interactions are essential in the luxury context. For example, the entertainment received in the shopping mall is deemed to be the result of the social interactions amongst customers, which consequently deliver experiential value. Furthermore, customer to customer interactions' in luxury service occurs when customers get involved in discussions with other customers whilst viewing products, seeking ideas and complementing each other (Han et al., 2010). However, luxury customers are different in interactions; either they show off consuming luxury or want to blend in socially (Kastanakis and Balananis, 2012). Therefore, some customers are interested in interacting with peers only, while others prefer not to interact to keep their prestigious image (Han et al., 2010).

This view is consistent with what Wirtz et al. (2020) termed luxury as "social exclusivity", for some luxury customers prefer not to interact with other customers or to only interact with others of similar or superior social status (Holmqvist et al., 2020). The possession of luxury goods that signal status is no longer the focus but the status game that emerges in social interactions (Dion and Borraz, 2017).

Contrary to offline retail settings, modern forms of communication channels emerged. Several platforms become available, and the diffusion of smart technological devices enhances interactivity and urges individuals and groups to share, co-create, and progress user-generated content (Davis et al., 2014; Laroche et al., 2012; Kietzmann et al., 2011). That led brands to communicate with their customers by establishing a community and fan page on social media platforms called "brand community", well-defined as "specialised, non-geographically bound community, based on a structured set of social relations among admirers of a brand" (Muniz and

O' Guinn, 2001, p. 412). These brand communities facilitate engagement between brands and customers through real-time interaction (Bazi et al., 2020).

This convenient way of interactions leads to establishing bonds between brands, customers and fellow customers (Vargo and Lusch, 2016), enhancing value co-creation for all actors in the community (Quach et al., 2020). Thus, the traditional business model has changed, where the customers are becoming active participating in the marketing development, getting control over the brands (de Vries et al. 2017; Gensler et al. 2013).

Within the brand community literature, Laroche et al. (2012) argue that social media brand communities can improve brand trust and loyalty through enhancing customer relationships with the brand, the firm, other customers, and products. Indeed, fans may actively or passively contribute to online fan pages (Kefi and Maar, 2020). Consequently, these communities stimulate deep customers' relationships that are richer than ever before (Brodie et al., 2013). Furthermore, rapid mobilisations occur in an online community for a specific event, such as business promotion or enhancing customers' knowledge (Gensler et al., 2013). Moreover, the knowledge generated by members is accumulated into the brand community that is frequently updated and amended by other members, intensifying the brand involvement and propensity of social media engagement (Dessart, 2017). In the same line, interactions in the community are not solely for business purposes (Fournier and Avery, 2011) but also for connection, for participation minimises the psychological remoteness between the consumer and the brand (Kefi and Maar, 2020).

Previous studies perceive customers' participation and interaction over a service setting or a brand community as "word of mouth" (WOM). This term was used to describe interactions, typically verbal feedback among customers. However, the rising diversity of customer-to-customer interactions, particularly in online environments, deserves a broader multi-dimensional interpretation of such interactions (Pandey and Kumar, 2020; Pentina et al., 2018; Libai et al., 2010). In addition, the dynamics of social platform structure impose new challenges to understanding how customers affect each other and create new forms of relationships with brands (Ko et al., 2019).

Customer-to-customer interactions are the scope of how different customers influence each other’s in various ways, even sometimes unintentionally. A broader definition of customer-to-customer interactions is “the transfer of information and conversations from one customer (or a group of

customers) to another customer (or group of customers) in a way that has the potential to change their preferences, actual purchase behaviour, or the way they further interact with others" (Libai et al., 2010, p. 269).

The main difference between word-of-mouth and customer-to-customer interactions relies on the direction of communications and the community actors involved. The classic WOM research has typically studied dyads, consisting of a message sender and a receiver, as the element of observation (Babic´Rosario et al., 2016). In contrast, conversations commonly happen amongst groups of people. Furthermore, online social media platforms introduce new forms of group conversations with vast numbers of participants intrigued by distinctive roles beyond the mere consumption behaviour and products' reviews (Pentina et al., 2018). At the same line, Lemon and Verhoef (2016) postulate that the available raw data of social media encompassed in all direct or indirect interactions that customers are exposed to combined together as an experience.

It is noteworthy that Kim and Ko (2012) stated that brands' activities on social media platforms generate interaction among users, leading to word-of-mouth outcomes related to fashion and trend elements. Indifference to existing marketing activities that appeal directly to the value of actual products or services, a luxury fashion brand's social media marketing activity concentrates more on hedonic and empirical values that might be reached by indirect brand experience. However, how such brand experience is formulated still need further investigation (Creevey et al., 2021; Li et al., 2021; Arrigo, 2018).

The brand-generated messages on social networks can induce customers' enthusiastic communication, change their attitudes, and influence decision-making (Godey et al., 2016; Constantinides, 2014). These interactions are the product of frequent behavioural manifestations of customer engagement with brand community members (Brodie et al., 2011; Van Doorn et al., 2010). Moreover, these exchanges can be offline and online as initiated by potential, actual, or former customers of a particular brand (Quach et al., 2019; Vivek et al., 2012; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). Therefore, they build opportunities for growing participatory engagement.

Engaging customers and creating customer interactions are deemed a paramount outcome of brand success in the social media environment. For example, some scholars focus on how to engross customers in brands' social media marketing activities (e.g., Gómez et al., 2019; Islam and

Rahman, 2016b; Tafesse, 2016; Ashley and Tuten, 2015) through developing interactive brand pages on that attract customers (e.g., Luarn et al., 2015; De Vries et al., 2012). Thus, firms' facilities their customers' interactions to successfully exploit novel forms of marketing communications (Rihova et al., 2018; Adjei et al., 2010). In contrast, customers prefer to interact with other customers and engage in a community for varied reasons, such as psychological, social and beneficial needs (Laroche et al., 2012; McAlexander et al., 2002). For example, Brodie et al. (2013) state that customers get involved for an authentic, interactive experience concerning consumers and the brand and reach other community individuals. Psychological states are characterised by shifting intensity levels that happen within dynamic, iterative engagement processes, In a dependent context (Jahn and Kunz, 2014).

During consumer-to-consumer interaction, individuals may experience affiliation, social interaction, proximity, and bonding over virtual communities (Hoffman and Novak, 1996). Moreover, in satisfying beneficial needs, social media brand communities permit customers to participate in the marketing, comparing, buying, selling, and sharing of products and services experiences (Zhou et al., 2013). Hence, the number of social media interactions increases visits the brand's website, which in turn maximises customers' lifetime value (CLV), which ensures customer loyalty, retention, recommendation, and influence (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2010). Thus, as Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) stated, what motivates customers to engage in the online community is ending negative feelings, worry for other consumers, social benefits, economic benefits, and self-enhancement advice-seeking, and platform assistance.

The emerging customers' interactions' power influences the brand's image, reputation and presence on social media platforms, forcing brands to transform creating, delivering and consuming brand messages (Muntinga et al., 2011). Thus, customer- brands relationships development, in turn, enhances brand equity (Hamilton et al., 2016b; Malthouse, 2013). Moreover, brands' perceptions depend on customers' direct and indirect experience with the brands' offers and the relationship established with the firm during such interactions (Binder and Hanssens, 2015). However, this experience is not restricted to interactions with the firm but also involves interacting with other customers and peers in the brand community (Li et al., 2021; Yadav and Pavlou, 2014).

Accordingly, contribution in brand fan pages or community is crucial in determining customers' brand evaluations and behavioural intentions (Perez-Vega et al., 2018). In a study, Harrigan et al.

(2017) argue that participation ought to be a process that influences behavioural responses, namely satisfaction and loyalty, for it is incredibly driven by the benefits derived as a result of the interactions (Kang et al., 2014) including brand equity (Schivisnki et al., 2015). As a result, power has moved from brands to consumers (Tsai and Men, 2013), with brands no longer having complete control over the content of their brand messages (Fournier and Avery, 2011). This switch leads to numerous challenges and prospects opportunities for brands.

Luxury brands are challenging their existence on social media platforms (Arrigo, 2018; Ko et al., 2016;). Although social media provides luxury brands with the opportunity to expand their exposure, its effects remain unclear (Dion and Borraz, 2017; Okonkwo, 2009). The contradictory argument relies on that social media may potentially damage and dilute luxury brand prestige. Luxury brands used to be known for their exclusivity and scarce availability, keeping a psychological distance between brands and customers (Kapferer and Bastien, 2012; Wiedmann et al., 2009). Meanwhile, social media engender intimate and close relationships between customers and brands (Hudson et al., 2016), which may reduce the aspiration and uniqueness of the luxury brand. However, evidence shows that social media communication is inevitable and positively affects consumer engagement and co-value creation (Creevey et al., 2021; Roper et al., 2013). Thus, an in-depth understanding of the correlation between social media activities, luxury brand experience and consumer to consumer interaction is necessary.

In the brand community, followers or customers can participate actively (by commenting or liking posts) or passively (by observing or watching posts) (Gerson et al., 2017). However, specific research exclusively concentrated on active followers' engagement (Kefi and Maar, 2020; Kang et al., 2015). Thus, scholars' debate that this type of engaged customer is precious, for they produce content, foster trust, and build bonds with the brand and other customers in the brand community (Quach et al., 2019; Habibi et al., 2014; Adjei et al., 2010). However, in luxury brands situation, repeated interactions with a luxury label overactive or passive contribution on a fan page could lower followers’ psychological away from the brand, thus fostering a greater level of personal connection with the brand and strengthening customers’ emotional connections with luxury brands (Kefi and Maar, 2020; Kang et al., 2014; Jahn and Kunz, 2012).

Luxury brand-related activities frequently differ in the energy that customers must exert during their participation (Quach et al., 2019). However, Solem (2016) recognised that customers' participation positively influences customers' gratification and brand loyalty. Hence, it is expected that when consumers' input level is high, customers' experience increases, influencing brand attitude and purchase engagement (Becker and Jaakkola, 2020). This evidence is consistent with the view of Bolton et al. (2018), who combined the social and digital realms of the customer experience to understand how new digital channels facilitate conspicuousness in peer-to-peer communications. Since luxury is a social construct (Roper et al., 2013), the central part of luxury branding is its use in social contexts and social hierarchies (Dubois and Ordabayeva, 2016). Thus, it is vital to understand how customers' participations degree influences luxury customer experiential value and brand attitude (Ko et al., 2019; Atwal and Willams, 2017; Rishika et al., 2013).

In line with the experience notion, interactions are essential to shaping a desired luxury brand experience, further enhancing customer participation in social media communities (Fernandes and Remelhe, 2016). However, the interactions in the luxury market are multi-layered, complex, and are not simply limited to interactions between the brand and the customer (Ramasamy and Ozan, 2018). They also comprise interactions with other luxury brand proprietors, the informed and biased brand community, idea leaders, owners, employees and customers of other non-competing luxury brands (Tynan et al., 2010).

Previous studies considered followers' engagement with brands' pages as a signifier of benefits and values gained by followers as part of the fan page community (Kang et al., 2014; Jahn and Kunz, 2012). However, the significance of experiential value and the prospect pathways need further investigation (Atwal and Williams, 2017; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016). Especially the online experiential value, given that it is a fast-evolving phenomenon and has not been sufficiently recognised in the field (Fan et al., 2020).

A group of studies that explored the customers' interactions with brands emphasised the co-creation value generated from such interactions, which originally stems from the human experience. However, the existing review has adopted the service-dominant logic perspective (Vargo and Lusch, 2004). However, it postulates insight into the dynamic change of value creation within luxury (Holmqvist et al., 2020a). Many aspects of brand value are no longer created merely

by marketers but steadily are persuaded and co-created by consumers (Pandey and Kumar, 2020). Therefore, the customer-to-customer co-creation perspective is emerging as (Customer- Dominant logic CDL). A new ontological position introduced by Heinonen et al. (2015; 2013) and applied by Rihova et al. (2018) is an extension of service-Dominant (S-D) logic in marketing (Vargo and Lusch, 2008; 2004). Thus, there are some differences in the foci and scopes of each theoretical perspective.

The primary concern for each perceptive is value co-creation. For example, the Customer-Dominant Logic (CDL) deems the importance of value formed in experiences and practices positioned in and influenced by customers' own social contexts (Heinonen et al., 2013). Thus, emphasising business-to-customer co-creation of service-related value from the firm's standpoint (Heinonen and Strandvik, 2015; Holttinen, 2014). Whereas, in Service-Dominant logic (SDL), consumers are perceived as operand means (resources that an operation or an act is performed), as operant resources (resources capable of causing advantage by directly acting on other resources), or both to create an advantage in co-production of service (Ramaswamy and Ozan, 2016; Vargo and Lusch, 2008; 2004). Thus, the focal point is the value in the formation process; initially, the service logic refers to the value in usage, and SDL is a more vigorous advocate of value co-creation (Grönroos and Voima, 2013; Vargo et al., 2008). Meanwhile, CDL indorses value formation added to value-in-use by customers (Rihova et al., 2018; Heinonen et al., 2013).

Throughout resource interactions and incorporations in activities (Ramaswamy and Ozan, 2018), such as relationship building, communication, and customer knowledge improvement, value creation is permitted (Merz et al., 2018; Ballantyne and Varey, 2006). However, some studies claim that brands do not provide value to customers but instead support value creation in their value-generating procedures (Grönroos, 2006a; 2006b).

Consequently, both perspectives can be accommodated by considering co-creation as brands creating value with customers and customers creating value with brands (Ramaswamy, 2009; Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004a). However, what is missing, most fundamentally, is a clear recognition of individual humans as “experiencers", i.e., having conscious experiences in outlining the nature of value creation. Therefore, there has been very few insights on experiential value in social media platform offerings and customer experiences, especially considering service logic in the space of brand value co-creation (Merz et al., 2009), a significant gap in the literature.

In this thesis, the proposal of a customer-dominant logic adds interesting insights to comprehending the value in acknowledging the brand experience as an intricate and dynamic process, which is not uniquely associated with the service offerings of service providers (Atwal and Williams, 2017; 2009; Tynan et al., 2014). Fundamentally, this approach employs a phenomenological epistemology to gain a deeper understanding of customer observed value related to various events embedded and formed in the broader domain of the cumulated realism and ecosystem of the customer (Heinonen et al., 2013). Therefore, in this thesis, customer brand experience can be defined as direct or indirect customer response to brand stimuli and other community actors' interactions within social media platforms, representing the processes of creating and perceiving features of value grounded in the customer's daily experience through various interactions.

**Table (2-3) Recent studies of luxury brand experience on social media platforms**

| **Brand experience dimension** | **Context** | **Approach to brand experience** | **Findings** | **Study author** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Brakus et al. (2009) model affective, sensory, social, intellectual | Luxury brands SMMA, brand experience, brand equity | Uses and Gratifications theory (Uand G) (Katz et al., 1973) | The study investigates the relationship between luxury social media marketing and brand equity, mediating the role of consumers benefit and experience. Findings show the cognitive, personal integrative, and integrative social benefits. The emotional and relational dimensions of brand experience mediate the relationship between SMM and brand equity. | Zollo et al. (2020) |
| Brakus et al. (2009) model affective, sensory, social, intellectual | Dynamic Brand experience on social media in general | Involvement theory, the uses and gratifications theory, | It examines the role that dynamic brand experience can play as a marketing tool for firms in the context of social networks. The influence of dynamic brand experience on customer equity investigates the moderating role of electronic word-of-mouth (E-WOM) in the relationship between dynamic brand experience and customer equity motivation of value co-creation, which positively affects the dynamic brand experience. A positive association is found between dynamic brand experience and customer equity, with E-WOM acting as a moderator in the relationship between dynamic brand experience and customer equity. | Yu et al. (2020) |
| Brakus et al. (2009) model affective, sensory, | Luxury on Social media | cognitive dissonance theory, balance theory, Masstige theory | It studies the post-purchase behaviour of shoppers to understand their experience with the brand. The empirical results indicate that sensory, intellectual, behavioural, and affective experience play a significant | Jhamb et al. (2020) |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| social, intellectual | | | role in building the attitude of consumers towards luxury brands | |
| Brakus et al. (2009) model affective, sensory, social, intellectual | Luxury in general | self-expansion theory | It sheds new light on consumers' motivations related to broadening their sense of selves. Luxury brands offer more than mere conspicuous or hedonic benefits; they can also represent opportunities to enlarge an individual's perspective and self-content | de Kerviler and Rodriguez (2019) |
| Brakus et al. (2009) model affective, sensory, social, intellectual | Luxury on Social media | Brakus et al. (2009) model | The results showed that content sharing and interaction significantly impact sensory, affective, behavioural, and intellectual experiences. | Beig and Khan (2018) |
| Vargo and Lusch (2004) values stem from the experience that involves interaction between customers and the company. | Luxury on Social media | Service dominant logic in marketing (Vargo and Lusch, 2004) | The study explores how consumers co-produce branded content on SM for luxury fashion brands. Luxury branded content is co-created in four frames: luxury, art, high life, and self. The study provides a framework as to how luxury brand events can enhance the co-creation of branded content. | Koivisto and Mattila (2018) |
| Brakus et al. (2009) model affective, sensory, social, intellectual | Experience in social media platforms | Uses and Gratifications theory (Uand G) (Katz et al., 1973) | To propose an experiential model of consumer engagement on Facebook brands' pages. Results indicate that the brands that facilitate a more significant deal of experiential affordance generated higher customer engagement on Facebook brand pages | Tafesse (2016) |
| Tynan et al. (2010) | Co-creation of luxury brand experience | Social resource theory<br>(Foa and Foa, 1980; 1974) | To examine the processes of value co-creation and co-destructions between luxury brands and consumers from the customer perspective. Results customers have varied expectations, defining which way would use their resources in interaction with the brand. In addition to the co-creation and co-destructions of the luxury, the brand experience contains conversations and complicated interactions between all parties, such as the brand, staff, customers, and other related social groups. | Quacha and Thaichn (2017) |

## 2.6. Chapter Summary

This chapter presented an extensive review of three streams of existing literature: customer experience, luxury brands, social media marketing. It revied and critically analysed the advanced definitions, theories and central studies in these streams.

Social media is the modern communication channel that transformed the business environment and marketing activities. There is sufficient evidence in earlier studies that prove the value of social media marketing influencing consumer behaviour and enhancing brands' performance. Nonetheless, social media marketing has different conceptualisations and classifications across different contexts and business practices. Brand experience within social media platforms can be considered a nascent research area, especially in the luxury fashion industry, given that luxury

brands' exclusive and rare nature contradicts the prevalence of social media, which merits detailed analysis (Ko et al., 2019; 2016; Arrigo, 2018; Pentina et al., 2018; Alalwan et al., 2017; Atwal and Williams, 2017; 2009; Lamberton and Stephen, 2016; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016).

There is a lack of research for the luxury brand experience within social media platforms. More precise, how this experience is co-created in light of luxury brands' marketing activities and other brand community members' interactions. There are three main research gaps identified from the previous studies. First, previous studies explored brand experience from a theoretical perspective, adopting a single framework, such as Schmitt (1999) and Brakus et al. (2009) and neglecting the branding activity factor. Thus, few theories explain brand experience; thus, previous studies employ varied theories across disciplines that serve their study context to explain the brand experience.

Second, brand experience has been mainly studied as a mediator factor in consumer research studies instead of exploring how experiences are formulated, especially in the emerging social media platforms. The underlying relationships between brand experience and social media marketing activities were rarely examined, particularly in luxury fashion. Thus, scholars have called for further explanations to clarify the part of social media and customers interactions in shaping such brand experience (Creevey et al., 2021; Zha et al., 2020; Godey et al., 2016; Kim and Ko, 2012; Ko et al., 2016; Lamberton and Stephen, 2016; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016).

Third, most studies that investigated social media marketing activities build on the work of Kim and Ko (2012; 2010), exploring consumer perception of given activities by using social media activities as a general construct consisting of five factors (trendiness, interaction, entrainment, customisation, and word of mouth) in almost ten years ago employing survey methods. However, this thesis argues that luxury brands' unique nature and quality concerns are deemed to have dynamic and rejuvenating activities. Thus, investigating actual luxury marketing activities and customer responses on social media is necessary, for doing so clarifies what sort of luxury brand activities are used across different brands and how customers respond and co-create their experience (Hamilton et al., 2016; Ko et al., 2016). The next chapter presents the qualitative study of this thesis and discusses the adopted research methodological approach and the research philosophy behind it. In addition, it addresses the data collection and analysis procedures and highlights the key findings.

# Chapter 3. Fashion Brands Social Media Marketing Activities and Customer Response – A Qualitative Approach

## 3.1. Introduction

The former chapter has outlined the literature review and recognised a lack of knowledge about the luxury brand experience in social media contexts. Social media's exponential growth has created multiple routes of interactions in the modern communication era, providing an unparalleled opportunity for marketing activities (Zheng et al., 2015). However, contrary to other industries, luxury brands were reluctant to engage in social media (Kapferer and Bastien, 2012; Okonkwo, 2010). Since the last decade, luxury brands such as Chanel, Burberry and Louise Vuitton have shown a strong presence on social media platforms, having millions of followers (Statista, 2018; 2017). However, few studies have been devoted to the marketing possibility of social media activities for luxury brands.

Current research that explores social media marketing activities consist of five dimensions (trendiness, interaction, entertainment, word of mouth and customisation) focus on specific outcomes, such as brand equity, brand relationship quality, purchase intention, customer satisfaction and loyalty (Zollo et al., 2020; Godey et al., 2016; Gao and Feng, 2016; Kim and Ko 2012; 2010). Furthermore, previous studies examined customers' motivations and the benefits of being engaged in luxury brands' communities on social media (Athwal and Harris, 2018; Gensler 2013; Kozinets et al., 2010), a specific aspect of social media activities (Hughes et al., 2016; Godey et al., 2016), or sole firm cases (Ng, 2014; Phan et al., 2011).

Nevertheless, luxury firms must improve a deep understanding of social media potential to outline a rich strategy that delivers a premium customers' experience and insights into their brands within social media (Ko et al., 2016; Phan et al., 2011). Hence, Soliday (2017) reported that luxury brands indicate signs of isolation; it exists on diverse social media platforms but does not make the fullest use of these channels' potentials. Moreover, there is a dearth of research on the customer experience within social media contexts (Zha et al., 2020; Triantafillidou and Siomkos, 2018) and a lack of attention to the relationships between customer experience and other brand concepts in social media (Lundqvist et al., 2013; Van Noort et al., 2012; Zarantonello and Schmitt, 2010).

This thesis purposes of developing a framework of luxury brands experience and study the role of social media marketing activities and customers' interactions in forming varied types of

experience. Thus, the objective is to address the following research question: what is a luxury brand experience in social media platforms and how it is formed? (Waqas et al., 2020 ; Arrigo, 2018 ; Pentina et al., 2018 ; Choi et al., 2016 ; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016).

In order to answer this question, a qualitative approach is fundamental in providing an in-depth analyst of a social phenomenon (Ashley and Tuten, 2015; Saunders et al., 2009). It is designed to understand the phenomenon's actors and serve as a basis for designing a quantitative study framework. The main reason behind conducting the qualitative study is the lack of empirical studies and theoretical frameworks of luxury brand experience with social media platforms (Creevey et al., 2021; Zha et al., 2020; Ko et al., 2019; 2016; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016). Moreover, none of the existing studies had shed light on the importance of brands' stimuli and customers to customers interactions' role in formulating brand experience (Quach et al., 2020; Pentina et al., 2018; Libi et al., 2010).

Therefore, a comparative analysis of luxury brands vs high street fashion brands across social media platforms is overlooked (Facebook and Twitter). The necessity of qualitative study pertains to understanding the uniqueness of luxury brands communities and how all actors interact differently towards brands' activities and customers-to-customers interactions in a real interactive environment. Thus, the main objectives of the thesis's can be achieved. Thus, this chapter includes the qualitative study's procedures and findings. Section 3.2 provide the research methodology and philosophy selected for qualitative study. Section 3.3 provides the study design and procedures. Section 3.4 presents the descriptive and analytical findings of the study, followed by an illustration of finding from section 3.5-3.10, and section 3.11 provide the chapter summary.

## 3.2. Research Methodology Selected for Qualitative Study

### 3.2.1. Grounded Theory Approach

Qualitative studies refer to any research that employs techniques that produces nun- numerical data (Saunders et al., 2009). It yields findings extracted from real-life surroundings, wherever the phenomenon of interest evolves naturally (Patton, 1980), different from quantitative research that pursues causal resolve, projection, and mainly advantageous of presenting larger certainty in the generalizability of the results (Vidich and Shapiro, 1955). Qualitative research methods include five main approaches, namely case study, ethnography, grounded theory, narrative, and

phenomenology. The choice of a particular methodology is challenging, for it is contingent on the context and the research gap of the studied phenomenon (Saunders et al., 2009).

Employing a qualitative approach has advantages, such as the rich amount of data and the depth of interpretation compared to other research tools (Bryman and Bell, 2011; Pettigrew, 1990). Also, it gives the researcher a great deal of flexibility in steering the research (Saunders et al., 2009). Thus, a qualitative researcher pursues illumination, understanding, and extrapolation to related situations and investigates research questions, such as why and how a phenomenon had happened (Frels and Onwuegbuzie, 2013).

The potential of social media researches is overgrowing, and there is an urgent demand for scholars to make sense of the latest dynamics opened by social media and move beyond defining towards more theorising such contemporary contexts and related exercises (Creevey et al., 2021; Li et al., 2021; Ko et al., 2016). This research aims at addressing luxury brand experience on social media platforms, for it is a nascent and growing field of research (Gensler et al., 2013; Schmitt and Zarantonello, 2013), and there is a lack of theoretical foundation that explains brand experience in social media (Zha et al., 2020; Andreini et al., 2018; Choi et al., 2016; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016).

Therefore, the importance of employing qualitative research, specifically grounded theory, can be justified by the following reasons. Firstly, there is a dearth of research undertaken concerning the luxury brand experience in social media. Thus, this research aims at proposing a preliminary conceptual framework of luxury brand experience within social media platforms to reveal the understanding embedded in marketing practices. Furthermore, the aim is to understand how luxury customers' interactions with their favoured brands and others in the brand community form their experience on social media platforms. Nevertheless, current research did not investigate specific behaviours that represent consumers' participation in the process of brand co-creation in the social media community (Creevey et al., 2021; Andreini et al., 2018; Alexander and Jaakkola, 2015).

Secondly, the deep analysis and categorisation of luxury consumers' responses to brands on their social media pages will help managers develop brands' content and design premium stimuli that deliver a superior customer brand experience. It contributes to the body of knowledge in the evolving field of social media and its role in co-creating brand experience. This study addresses

literature gaps by adopting a qualitative exploration to discover specific types of luxury consumers' experience, their respective interactions, and their potential for brand co-creation.

Therefore, grounded theory is the most appropriate approach to fill the current research gap and answer the research question. The availability of firm and user-generated raw data and the related combined data entails the grounded theory approach (Strauss and Corbin, 1998) to analyse social media content. Thus, by identifying the underlying aspects, customer brand experience can be interpreted clearly. Customers' perceive luxury brands as a subjective contextual understanding of live experience contrary to the only embedded meaning within its offering (Kauppinen-Räisänen et al., 2018). Luxury brand-customer communications on social media are still fragmented, and there is little direction on how luxury brands can design efficient strategies and deliver a superior experience to customers (Mandler et al., 2019).

Grounded theory is a methodology focused on clarifying the human social behaviours in a functional zone to develop a "theory grounded in available data" (Bryant and Charmaz, 2010, p.328). Glaser (1992) defines grounded theory as "a general methodology of analysis linked with data collection that uses a systematically applied set of methods to generate an inductive theory about a substantive area" (p. 16). Thus, it is an approach that uses inductive reasoning to develop a theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

Glaser and Strauss (1967) state that scientific "*truth*" could not be comprehended as echoing on a separate reality, nonetheless as it emerges from observations and building on a consensus that making sense of such observations (Bryant and Charmaz, 2007; Pidgeon, 1996). Thus, the development of the grounded theory was an alternative to the positivism idea and the principle of the grounded theory would include all behaviours (Suddaby, 2006).

Grounded theory devours to embrace a set of approaches that assist researchers progressively in building the theoretical foundations that are intensely supported in the empirical context investigated (Charmaz, 2006; Suddaby, 2006; Gasson, 2003). Indeed, the foundering authors' definitions of the theory are valuable to find a sense of the broad array of theoretical motivations of grounded theory research. According to Glaser and Strauss (1967), "the form in which a theory is presented does not make it a theory; it is a theory because it explains or predicts something" (p. 22). Recently, for Strauss and Corbin (1998), "theory denotes a set of well-developed categories

(e.g., themes, concepts) that are systematically interrelated through statements of relationship to form a theoretical framework that explains some relevant social phenomenon" (p. 22). Thus, it is expressly suitable for improving such procedure theories that abstract what occurs overtime in certain socio-technical circumstances (Corbin and Strauss, 1990). Thus, the Straussian Grounded Theory approach (Strauss and Corbin, 1998) is employed in this study. This approach initiates that the research idea starts from the existing gaps in the body of related literature. Thus, a conceptual framework is originated from the grounded theory in the data interpreted by the observer or researcher. The rigorous of used methods will deliver intended credibility while the theory is discovered by structuring the data. It is noteworthy that this approach allows the usage of existing literature at the beginning to identify the research problem and is also used as data to assist the researcher to identify the area of comparison (Corbin and Strauss, 2014; Urquhart and Fernández, 2013). Thus, the coding procedure includes three steps: open coding, axial coding and selective coding (see further details in the next section).

Whilst employing the grounded theory approach, an essential stage is the theoretical sampling, defined as "the process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes, and analyses the data and decides what data to collect next and where to find it, in order to develop a theory as it emerges" (Glaser,1978,p.36). The theoretical sampling is essential for researchers who employ grounded theory, for it shows the sophistication of data collection and analysis and continuously refines the observations and match data collection to the emerging conceptualisation. Thus, the emerging theory organises this data collection procedure (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

The systematic opinion of Glaser and Strauss (1967), where groups change is subject to be minimised or maximised, and sampling reveals with conception development. Glaser and Strauss recommend that sampling alongside different concepts rapidly improves the theory and defines the scope of the theory. However, this systematic mode is underutilised in the research. Sampling operates both different and similar cases and also considers the direction in terms of conceptual development, which means developing a profound theory, a more grounded theory, with an in-depth grasp of the phenomena examined (Vasst and Geoff, 2013).

In addition to the theoretical sampling, a constant comparison is a crucial stage. Constant comparison is defined as "continuously contrasting new, notable observations with previous ones

for similarities and differences" (Corbin and Strauss, 1990, p. 9). Hence, the constant comparison provides an amount of precision and consistency concerning the developing concepts and similar, key, and relevant observations and dimensions developed links with a distinct concept. In contrast, different observations and dimensions get constructed in the emerging theoretical relationships between constructs (Vasst and Geoff, 2013). Thus, constant comparison gives flexibility over time to explain, mark, and then purify the concepts relevant to the research focus.

Furthermore, reporting several stages of the coding procedure aids the researchers to determine the analysis validity and credibility (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011; Strauss and Corbin, 1998; Miles and Huberman, 1994). Therefore, it is essential to report the coding process to include consequent stages throughout which the themes and conceptions are steadily recognised, and their relations are examined. This process provides hints for readers on how the researcher extended a profound understanding of this contemporary context and created conceptual relations amongst observed constructs during data interpretation.

It is noteworthy that only a few studies applied grounded theory to investigate customer behaviour in social media. For example, Gambetti and Graffigna (2012) applied grounded theory to investigate the reasons behind consumer brands' engagement based on interviews with brand managers. Similarly, Kumar et al. (2016) interviewed managers from fifty companies in twenty-two industries to reveal the importance of understanding applications of intelligent agent technologies. In the same line, Lai and To (2015) highlighted the importance of using social media data as a basis for a grounded theory in consumer research.

### 3.2.2. Interpretivism as Philosophical Paradigms

The prominence of philosophy is not whether research would be philosophically-informed but how it can replicate upon philosophical selections and represent them instead of other options that might be adopted (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). The core element of research is the combination of a philosophical stance with the philosophical paradigm that determines the entire research methodological design (Hussey and Hussey, 1997). Thus, research paradigms are well-defined as "a set of linked assumptions about the world which is shared by a community of scientists investigating the world" (Deshpande, 1983, p. 101). Thus, it performs as guidance for experts in a particular discipline.

Research paradigms differ in terms of stances, including ontology, the researcher's opinion of the kind of reality. Epistemology is the researcher's opinion concerning what establishes adequate understanding and axiology related to how a researcher's view the position of values in research. Thus, the main philosophical approaches are positivism, realism, interpretivism, and pragmatism (Saunders et al., 2009). Previous studies in marketing and consumer behaviour usually adopt positivism, post-positivism, interpretivism, and pragmatism as the most common research paradigms to guide the research. As this thesis conducts two studies with diverse objectives and methodologies, each adopts a philosophical position.

In this study, the interpretivism paradigm is used as an appropriate philosophy to understand the nature of luxury brand experience within social media platforms, including brands' activities, customer response, and customer to customer interactions in a natural environment. Interpretivist predicate the assumption that "the reality is not objective and exterior but is socially constructed and given meaning by people" (Easterby-Smith et al., 2009, p. 29). It essentially pertains to approaching an individual's meaning to comprehend the examined phenomena (Orlikowski and Baroudi, 1991). Thus, it allows the researcher to comprehend, interpret, and investigate peoples' behaviour from the actual context (Bryman and Bell, 2011; Walliman, 2011; Saunders et al., 2009), particularly in consumer behaviour research, since humans' behaviour can be irrational and unpredictable. As a result, the interpretive paradigm provides more insights and understanding about customers' complex psychological status (Guba and Lincoln 1994). However, gathering qualitative data from a small sample size guides the researcher to analyse data from a subjective perspective (Saunders et al., 2009). Consequently, generalisable knowledge and patterns may not emerge adequately (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

There are three paradigm adaptations of the grounded theory method: the original version by Glaser and Strauss (1967) exists as suitable in the postpositivist paradigm, Charmaz's version (2006) suitable with the constructionist paradigm, and the last version by Corbin and Strauss's (2008) suitable with the interpretivism paradigm.

Adopting an interpretive paradigm as a relative ontological position with a subjective epistemological stance is associated with postmodern thoughts. Interpretivist research "is guided by the researcher's set of beliefs and feelings about the world and how it should be understood and studied" (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011, p. 22). In the explanatory paradigm, realisation is qualified

to circumstances, histories, temporalities, cultures, subjectivities and endures in multiple forms as demonstrations of reality (clarifications by individuals) (Benoliel, 1996). Interpretivism acknowledges several meanings and customs of knowledge (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). The interpretive paradigm focuses mainly on identifying and telling the sense of human experiences and actions (Fossey et al., 2002). Thus, it is helpful for this study, particularly in addressing research questions and achieving research objectives.

### 3.2.3. Abductive is a Reasoning Logic

The process of constructing an idea of things, employing logic to induce conclusions, making expectations, or constructing clarifications is known as reasoning. There are three main methods of reasoning in social science research: the deductive, inductive and abductive approaches. The deductive builds on theory, develop logical deductions after this theory, forms hypotheses and tests theses' settings empirically. Conversely, the inductive does not follow the comprehension of a generic frame or the essential literature; instead, notes concerning the world leads to emergent proposals and the generality in a theoretical frame (Danermark, 2001). Finally, the abductive produces the “best possible explanation” for the set of observations based on the most significant available evidence (Lundberg, 2000).

This study adopts an appropriate logic to explore the brands' activities and customer experience using the abductive (or retrodiction) approach. The abductive is a logical implication that leads from a real-world observation and reaches a hypothesis that adds to the observation (Dubois and Gadde, 2002). The abductive reasoning represents a reasonable but not all logical conclusion that its predicted rule is right (Danermark, 2001). It can be structured as creativity or perception in research to improve novel comprehension (Taylor et al., 2002; Andreewsky and Bourcier, 2000). Creativity provided by abductive reasoning is essential to overcome the limits of conclusion and institute relationships between previously known concepts. Therefore, intriguing abductive reasoning leads to novel insights about current phenomena by investigating these from an original perspective (Kova´cs and Spens, 2005). Therefore, new factors emergent into a framework is possible to generate the best explanations of the phenomenon.

The prominence of the abductive logic acknowledged in grounded theory research by Strauss and Corbin (1998) advised for moving between induction and deduction reasoning, which seems to be right associated with the idea of abduction. Thus, research at the abductive conclusion of the field

is based on postulating the relations amongst categories and progress suggestions that clarify a new occurrence (Vasst and Geoff, 2013).

## 3.3. Empirical Study 1: Brands' Activities, Customer Responses, and Interactions

### 3.3.1. Social Media Data

Social media networks have become a top-rated source of big interactive data (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). Moreover, due to the rapid increase of active social media users from 2.68 billion in 2017 to 4.57 billion by July 2020 (Statista, 2020), the digitisation of information has prepared prosperity of textual data readily available (Berger et al., 2020). However, by the situation, all this is only data; for data to be valuable, a researcher should have the ability to measure, understand, and interpret the underlying insights of specific data that elicit behaviour (Gandomi and Haider, 2015).

This study will determine specific luxury social media marketing activities, explore customer interactions, and how they influence brand experience within social media platforms. The text content of firm generated content and customer-generated content extracted from brands' fan pages on Facebook and Twitter is deemed to be the most appropriate data source.

Social media data are advantageous for many reasons. First, As illustrated by Berger et al. (2020), text data can be employed to estimate and understand certain phenomena, gaining insights into who generated a given text and how such a text can influence individuals and firms that use it, as well as providing real-time data that can focus on customer needs or preferences. Second, the main focus is on a target population having some shared identity or social interest. Third, researchers are considered it to be an innovative and cost-effective method of data collection. Fourth, it is suitable for studying social processes requiring in-depth analysis (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Fifth, it provides a logical and objective approach to compare content for an enormous sample of customer-generated content insights. Finally, it highlights differences in customer-generated content wherever brands proactively direct social media (Smith et al., 2012).

As a rich source of information, it provides varied content and distinguishes direct communication with brands or other communication with fans (Goh et al., 2013). However, this method has limitations, such as relatively recent, short, and often temporary (Berger et al., 2020). Additionally,

although textual information can regularly include large samples, such samples might not be representative. For example, Twitter users are pretty much young and educated.

### 3.3.2. Brands and Social Media Platforms Selection

Reflecting on current trends of social media, enormous brands established their social media pages across different platforms. In this study, the selection of brands is mainly based on the following criteria. Firstly, the brand's value in the fashion industry; according to the global brands' index, these brands have the highest brand equity, such as Chanel 13.7B USD, Louise Vuitton 16.48B USD H&M value 15.88B USD, Victoria Secret 6.8B USD (Statista, 2020; 2017; Brandirectory, 2017). Secondly, the excellence in social media engagement, these brands are considered as the most active companies. Recording the highest number of fans on their official social media fan pages, e.g., Chanel has the 15.9M, 13.29M followed by Victoria Secret 23.12M, 11.7M, Louise Vuitton 20.58M, 6.4M, H&M has 36.3M 8.56M on Facebook and Twitter respectively (Statista, 2017).

Accordingly, the top two fashion brands are selected from each category. Luxury brands (Chanel and Louise Vuitton) and high street fashion brands (Victoria Secret and H&M). Thus, fashion categories were chosen to explore the similarity and differences between brands' social media marketing activities and how customers interacted and responded simultaneously across different platforms and categories. Hence, the reason for choosing the high-street fashion brands was to provide a deep comparison for the analysis, as it brings out characteristic elements unique to luxury brands.

Facebook and Twitter platforms were selected as they are privileged for having longer existence as social media platforms (founded in 2004 and 2006, respectively). Therefore, these platforms were the first choice of luxury brands to communicate with their customers and accumulate more content. In particular, Smith et al. (2012) suggested that customer engagement (e.g., after a brand in SM) inspired by needs mostly took place on Twitter and Facebook. Thus, luxury brands usually use both platforms for social media marketing activities and have the highest number of followers (Statista, 2017; Godey et al., 2016; Kim and Ko, 2012). Furthermore, in addition to their unique technical structure, Facebook, a social network platform, and Twitter, a microblogs platform, provides rich text data (Kaplaen and Helen, 2010). Thus, these platforms enable brands to gravitate with customers through channels with the highest customer engagement. However, such other

media marketing communications, the clutter and psychological interference might already be presented among social media channels (Rumbo, 2002).

Although Instagram is a highly dynamic platform and has enormous followers for fashion brands, it excluded it from this study. Due to the core focus of analysis as text data rather than visual posts (Beiler et al., 2018), it makes sense that language can be observed as a pattern or signature of content (Pennebaker, 2011).

### 3.3.3. Data Collection and Sampling

Luxury and high street fashion brands usually have more than a single fan page on social media platforms, often varied across different countries. To be precise, the researcher in this study checked the official website for each brand and followed their official page on social media, the page listed on the company's website in the UK. For example, the LV official website list the official social media platforms at the bottom page of the website; the same criteria are also used for the rest of the brands.

The data was gathered through supported software. Data extracted from Facebook using Netvizz v1.45 software established within the Facebook platform generated companies' posts content, time, and customer response statistics (likes, shares, views, reactions, and comments). Twitter data was extracted using an API formula coded within the R statistics program, which extracts likes, retweets, and comments. Thus, data was extracted in excels sheets, including posts by brands with the date and time of publishing. In the same sheet, the customer responses to each post were in a row under the post. Thus, the analysis was executed manually line by line with highlighting the codes in different colours to categorise them (see further details in the analysis section below).

Although visual data is essential in social media, it was excluded because the study focuses on customers' experience as they expressed it themselves in text rather than visual response, and the limited time and resources to support visual data. Furthermore, the data collection period was the festival period. Both brands' posts and customers' responses were collected daily during Charismas and New Year holiday season from the 1st until the 31st December 2017. Since this is the holiday season, post-Thanksgiving weekend and the pre-Christmas season, companies and consumers are more active in the market (Warner and Barsky, 1995).

As stated by Kozinets (2012), an online data sample should serve as purposive sampling, defined as "a strategy is non-random approach of ensuring that particular categories of cases within a sampling universe are represented in the final sample of a project" (Robinson, 2014, p. 32). Therefore, the justification for employing a purposive sampling scheme is that the researcher adopts built on previous theoretical understanding of the studied area. Thus, clear categories of individuals may have unique and diverse perspectives on the intended phenomenon (Mason, 2002), allowing the researcher to obtain insightful and meaningful results to emerging factors (Patton, 1990).

Furthermore, before the data collection process, the researcher conducted two weeks of observation to gain a primary understanding of the brands' profiles, the diversity of the activities and briefly browsing customer-generated comments from the brand posts. Thus, the time devoted to these initial observations provided the basic information of the selected brands and active customers. For qualitative research data quality assurance, it is recommended to verify and check data to proactively accomplish the rigour of a study (Adjei et al., 2010; Morse et al., 2002).

### 3.3.4. Inclusion, Exclusion Criteria and Sample Description

Given that social media data is unstructured and has huge content, customary inclusion criteria or exclusion criteria or a mixture should be identified for the intended study (Luborsky and Rubinstein, 1995; Patton 1990). Inclusion criteria mean specifying attributes that qualify dominant cases of the study, whereas exclusion criteria should require attributes that eliminate any case out of the study. Collectively, these standards set a borderline throughout the sample community (Robinson, 2014).

In this study, the researcher has extracted the data and revised it line by line to check which data will be included in the analysis and which may be excluded and verified that it is suitable to address the research question. Although it is a one-month period, it can be considered a rich data set to explore the brands' activity and customers' response in the year's busiest season.

Technically, the researcher extracted the brand-generated posts, comments, and customers-generated comments and conversations directly from the selected official brand pages on Facebook and Twitter. The researcher checked the user's name before approving selected comments.

Moreover, the images produced by customers were excluded, for the analysis focuses only on the text.

To address ethical concerns and avoid issues that may appear in online consumer studies, the researcher in the current study checked that both high street and luxury fashion brands' pages content are entirely public on the particular social media platform. Furthermore, social media platforms offer access to everyone who can read and use content generated by the users and require no prior permission from users. This check is in line with Kozinets's (2012) suggestion that researchers need to consider whether the online community or online social platform selected is private or public. Informed consent is needed if they choose a private online platform.

The amount and frequency of activities shown for company posts are varied based on the brand categories, and the customer responded differently. The total data collected during the month for all brands summarised as follows: luxuries brand (Chanel and Louise Vuitton) shows fewer posts: Chanel (58 posts) and Louise Vuitton (47 posts) during the month on both platforms. Conversely, the high street fashion brand is more active in posting Victoria secret (174 posts) and H&M (113 posts) on both platforms. The total customers' responses for all brands were accurately around 10,726 comments. Based on those statistics, the most used channel by brands was Twitter. The data were analysed manually.

However, interestingly the number of followers on Facebook is much higher, and so are their interactions. Another interesting fact is that although luxury brands' activities are less than high street fashion brands, customers responses and interactions are much higher on luxury brand pages. It is noteworthy that the comment numbers shown on brands pages differ from the actual ones that appeared in the downloaded data file. This fact means that some customers chose to have their comments privately, not being part of data that is eligible for analysis (see Table 3.1 below). More facts are discussed in the analysis and findings sections.

**Table (3-1) Companies Activities Frequencies and Customer Response Statistics (Sample Description)**

| **Companies' Activities type** | **Chanel Facebook** | **Chanel Twitter** | **Louise Vuitton Facebook** | **Louise Vuitton Twitter** | **Victoria Secret Facebook** | **Victoria Secret Twitter** | **H& M Facebook** | **H& M Twitter** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No of total posts | 16 post | 42 posts | 16 posts | 31 posts | 66 posts | 108 posts | 53 posts | 60 posts |
| No of posts per week | 3-6times/ week | 15-19time/ week | 4-6times/ week | 9-10 times/ week | 16-18 times /week | 18-20 times/ week | 7-9 times/week | 10-12 times/week |
| Type of posts | Multi | Multi | Multi | Multi | Multi | Multi | Multi | Multi |
| Text and Video | 9 posts | 9 posts | 14 posts | 22 posts | 17 posts | 46 posts | 10 posts | 6 posts |
| Text and Photo | 6 posts | 33 posts | 2 posts | 9 posts | 49 posts | 57 posts | 42 posts | 54 posts |
| Text and Link | 1 post | non | Non | Non | Non | one post | One post | Non |
| Others (GIF) | Mon | Non | Non | Non | Non | 5 Gif and word | Non | Non |
| Customer Response | Chanel Facebook | Chanel Twitter | Louise Vuitton Facebook | Louise Vuitton Twitter | Victoria Secret Facebook | Victoria Secret Twitter | H&M Facebook | H&M Twitter |
| Customers likes | 378,750 | 48,214 | 124,231 | 24,784 | 8,988 | 84,819 | 4,892 | 13,075 |
| Customers shares | 25,078 | 12,018 | 4,258 | 4,725 | 365 | 11,515 | 427 | 1,610 |
| Customers views | 6,946,000 | 1,917,300 | 1,865,267 | 390,376 | 157,163 | 901,800 | 380,719 | 60,345 |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Comments Platforms stats | 4819 | 406 | 4,327 | 244 | 721 | 916 | 2776 | 131 |
| Actual analysed comments | 3787 | 244 | 3413 | 140 | 709 | 600 | 1724 | 109 |

### 3.3.5. Methods of Analysis (Grounded Theory Approach Through Qualitative Content Analysis)

Here, the qualitative content analysis is employed to analyse the data gathered from brands' social media marketing activities and customers' responses. Content analysis is a typical technique for systematically comparing the communications content (Kolbe and Burnett, 1991). This approach has been confirmed helpful for understanding the content found in print ads, television commercials, outdoor advertising, product placement, and websites and social media content (Ashley and Tuten, 2015; Gensler et al., 2013, Goh et al., 2013; Turley and Kelley, 1997). According to Mayring (2014), the effectiveness of content analysis over other qualitative techniques includes the fact that it has a solid foundation in the communication disciplines, and the content is continuously understood as connecting to a specific context of communication. The interpreter has to identify which portion of the communication process can convey the needed conclusions out of the analysed material. Furthermore, Schreier (2012) defines that qualitative content analysis techniques are extensively based on researchers' elaborations. However, the research should consider all material in the content analysis even if it is not related to the research question, and that its time and effort are consuming (Mayring, 2014).

In this study, the data analysis practice follows the procedure of Grounded Theory. The researcher focuses on coding content and categorising the collected brand-generated posts and customer-generated comments. This procedure needs three consequent phases of coding: the first step of the analysis, called *open coding*, suggests a primary identification of notions appropriate to data. A second analysis step, called *axial coding*, involves the radical accumulation and strengthening of codes into more comprehensive categories. The final analysis step, called *selective coding*, involves the abstracted data and the interpretative detection of links amongst categories in direction to find the core categ*ory* (Saldaña, J., 2014; Strauss and Corbin, 1998).

In the first step, by travelling back and forth between the data and an emerging structure of theoretical constructs in an iterative fashion, the researcher conducted an open coding procedure by reviewing the data line-by-line and using different colours to highlight the keywords related to the identifying connection with the literature. Colours categorically marked all similar themes, the codes were named, the categories were classified, and the data were revised to guarantee that all were organised into the most appropriate category. For example, for luxury brands' activity, the meaning of the post was labelled first as “attract customer attention to seasonal gifts”, “new product line”, “gift ideas” (see table (2-3) for further details). Meanwhile, the customers' responses to each post were labelled in different colours, and each one was given a meaning grouped into categories. For example, “Customer writes social circle names”, “Customer expresses their emotions for the brand post”, “Customer express their emotions for the brand designer and brand in general”, “Customers recall their experience with the brands” (see table (3-3) for further details). Hence, the open coding approach aims to identify the keywords in the text that are creative and relevant to the literature. Thus, this procedure was executed for both brands' social media posts and customers' comments.

In the second step, the researcher applied the axial coding approach to analyse the text's content further. This step compares the highlighted text to the themes from the initial templates and categorises this content into the correct theme group. The researcher also identified the sub-categories that constitute the brands' activities and customer experience during the axial coding step. This analysis stage allowed the researcher to compare the emerged categories leading to new themes during this process.

In the concluding step, the selective coding developed theoretical categories generated a new template by removing, revising the identified themes, and establishing new ones. At this stage, concepts that portrayed the distinct features of the brand’s activities, customer experience type, and customer interaction were compound and aggregated into the next level of conceptualisation.

As explained in the section of the grounded theory approach, this study theme was identified based on the literature review and researchers' understanding of the phenomenon. The generated codes reflect precise characteristics appropriate for distinguishing brands' activities and customers' brand experience. Simultaneously, fashion brands' activities and customer response themes were coded differently based on the core of meanings. Hence, customers' responses' is a reaction to brands'

social media marketing activities. The codes categories are linked to each other in light of the existing psychological and behavioural theories. Thus, results were compared and considered, while the final improved coding sheet was provided to the external researchers (Bryman and Bell, 2011), who revised and analysed content independently and concluded categories as explained in the next section of research verifications. Thus, the data were re-examined to ascertain the most well-matched agreed constructs.

During this procedure, it turns out that the previous research on social media marketing activities and brand experience did not capture the aspects of these concepts. Therefore, new luxury brand experience types such as fandom, immersive, aesthetic experience are formulated in response to the emerged luxury bands' social media marketing activities, such as sensory marketing activity and curiosity creation activity (see further details in the results section).

Furthermore, to confirm the validity and reliability of the coding and categorisation through content analysis, the researcher reviewed the data twelve times to ensure that the text had been coded and categorised into the appropriate categories. The identified and confirmed brand activities and the customer experience types are explained in the following sections, and these relationships will be tested in the next chapter, which offers a quantitative study. (Table 3-2) shows the Code protocol of luxury fashion brands' social media marketing activities. Followed by (Table 3-3) shows customers' responses to luxury brands' activities. (Table 3-4) shows the Code protocol of high street fashion brands and (Table 3-5) demonstrates customers' responses to high street fashion brands' activities.

**Table (3-2 )The Code Protocol of Luxury Brands' Social Media Marketing Activities**

| **Representation of Luxury Brands Post** | **Open coding** | **Axial coding** | **Selective coding** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ready for the New Year? Count down in style with Louis Vuitton. There is still time for Gifts at http://on.louisvuitton.com/6188DHUCK | Increase attention to holidays | **Latest fashion collection and gift suggestion** | **Trendiness activity** "providing the newest information about products or service " Kim and Ko 2012. p.1483" |
| A Louis Vuitton Pochette will please all travelers on your list. More Gifts at http://on.louisvuitton.com/6188DHpT4 | New trends bags product line | | |
| The Art of Giving: from chic jump-ropes and notebooks to on-trend ping-pong paddles find the perfect Louis Vuitton gift at http://on.louisvuitton.com/6186DGcPK | New trends/ sport product line | | |
| Take a beauty break with SUBLIMAGE La Brume and restore your skin s vitality and radiance. Discover more on chanel.com/-Sublimage -La-Brume | New trends/ cosmetics line | | |
| EXQUISITE GIFTS To celebrate the season CHANEL has selected iconic emblematic and timeless creations. Discover more on chanel.com/-End of Year | Gift ideas | | |
| The first CHANEL flagship store in Tokyo, newly designed by Peter Marino, is re-opening on December 1st | Store renovated | **Information provision** | |
| As the ski season begins, CHANEL returns to its ephemeral Courchevel boutique with a brand-new setting, showcasing\xe2\x80\xa6 https://t.co/X7OyK1bISF | Store opening news | | |
| Decked out and sure to delight. Louis Vuitton windows showcase holiday magic this season. Find a store at http://on.louisvuitton.com/6187DHpWN | Store outline | | |
| Lady in Red. Alicia Vikander models the timeless Capucines, named for the Rue des Capucines in Paris, where\xe2\x80\xa6 https://t.co/5ZQprWhMzU' | Model of collection | **Collections' Celebrity news** | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Under the lens of Karl Lagerfeld, German model Anna Ewers introduces the #CHANELinHamburg 2017/18 collection that w\xe2\x80\xa6 https://t.co/p7ns3hnMH5' | Model of fashion show | | |
| Lily-Rose Depp wearing the #CHANELCruise 2017/18 collection, photographed by @peterlindbergh in the January issue o\xe2\x80\xa6 https://t.co/CeF3g97kx8' | Model of magazine | | |
| Twisted braids embroideries inspired from the sailors codes were made by Maison Lesage s craftsmen for the Paris-Hamburg 2017/18 MÃtiers d art collection. More details on chanel-news.com/-T-RTW | Design artistic | **Description of characteristics of design; colors, fabrics, craft ship** | **Sensory marketing activity,** "marketing activities that attract the consumers' senses, lead to engage them via affects their perception, judgment and behavior" |
| Jewel in the Crown. A testament to fine leather craftsmanship  the pure lines of the Louis Vuitton Cappuccinos contrast with the sparkling Monogram flowers. More at http://on.louisvuitton.com/6189DGcRd | Design martials | | |
| Eternally elegant  the emblematic Cappuccinos by Louis Vuitton is available in a rainbow of colours from the delicately understated to the boldly daring. Discover more at http://on.louisvuitton.com/6185DGzaJ | Design colours | | |
| Hand painted feathers striped dress made by Maison Lemari\xc3\xa9 for the #CHANELMetiersdArt 2017/18 collection.\xe2\x80\xa6 https://t.co/X7LTfiGfmN' | Design H&Made | | |
| The Museum of Arts and Crafts of Hamburg will present the first retrospective of Austrian fashion photographer Mada\xe2\x80\xa6 https://t.co/dcfvqNPBHj' | Fashion venue | **Artistic fashion venue and music** | |
| The colours of Hamburg and its tangle of streets, canals, bridges and brick warehouses inspired the #CHANELinHamburg\xe2\x80\xa6 https://t.co/jIXVOPxkmo' | Fashion venue | | |
| 'Mademoiselle will open on January 13th in Hong Kong â€" until February 10th. More information about the exhibition on the Mademoiselle app and on mademoiselleprive.chanel.com" | Fraction of information | **A glance of future event** | **Curiosity Creation Activity: "**trigger the customers intrinsic desire for new information that stimulate interest and/or remove uncertainty" |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Preview of the Spring-Summer 2018 campaign by Karl Lagerfeld. The collection will be available in boutiques from March 2018 | Fraction information | | |
| The Maisons d'art at work for the #CHANELMetiersdArt collection, to be presented on December 6th. #CHANELinHamburg https://t.co/JraeBB1FbK' | Fraction information | | |
| A closer look at the ateliers where the craftsmen gathers their unique know-how behind the MÃtiers dâart collection. More details about the Paris-Hamburg MÃtiers dâart 2017/18 collection on chanel.com/-RTW_MDA2017-18-SF | Exclusive workshops | **behind sense workshops and collaboration** | **Curiosity Creation Activity** |
| Making-of the #CHANELinHamburg collection in the #CHANELMetiersdArt workshops. See more on https://t.co/ph9nOqukW9 https://t.co/ZXIzodFOmn' | Exclusive workshops | | |
| In the backstage of the #CHANELinHamburg 2017/18 show at the Elbphilharmonie. #CHANELMetiersdArt More photos on\xe2\x80\xa6 https://t.co/IH19Spj7fz' | Behind sense | | |
| Contemporary embroidery's workshop based in Paris, Montex realizes exclusive motifs and new creations every season\xe2\x80\xa6 https://t.co/UJFjoRnNmD | Exclusive workshops | | |
| In the steps of the shoemaker Maison Massaro, one of the #CHANELMetiersdArt workshop. Read more on\xe2\x80\xa6 https://t.co/QJGbBXnXmG' | Exclusive workshops | | |
| Maison Lognon\xe2\x80\x99s expertise in the art of pleating, working closely with the CHANEL ateliers for the\xe2\x80\xa6 https://t.co/XsAJSzqzwZ' | Exclusive workshops | | |
| 'Warmest wishes of Happy Holidays from #LouisVuitton. Visit the World of Wondrous Gifts at https://t.co/zc4OAcmQJQ https://t.co/1NlCOge4og | Greeting holidays | **Christmas and new-year greeting** | **Entertainment Activity** deliver the fun and play of online content to amuse customer and enhance the hedonic feelings more than the mere function of products and service |
| Wherever you are Louis Vuitton wishes you Happy Holidays. Last-minute await at http://on.louisvuitton.com/6186DHU4Q | Greeting holidays | | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| The story of the Paris-Hamburg MÃtiers art 2017/18 show at the Elbphilharmonie. More about the show on chanel.com/-RTW_MDA2017-18" | Live podcast of fashion event | **Story giving** | |
| Finale of the #CHANELinHamburg 2017/18 M\xc3\xa9tiers d\xe2\x80\x99art show at the @elbphilharmonie #CHANELMetiersdArt https://t.co/7oV29Hxvom' | Live podcast of fashion event | | |
| ' Les Journ Particul¨res LVMH returns in 2018! Following the resounding success of the previous three editions Les JournÃes Particulires LVMH will be back in 2018! Save the dates October 12 13 and 14 2018 for an unforgettable visit behind the scenes at LVMH Group Maisons. https://www.lvmh.com/news-documents/news/journees-particulieres-2018/ #JPLVM | Fashion contest | **Competition** | |
| RT @LVMHPrize: LVMH Prize 2018 is on \xe2\x98\x85 Apply on https://t.co/aM62YyxSt9 https://t.co/Z0JCOobyDn | Fashion contest | | |
| For all posts and activities types its combine with them | Link connected with activities | **invitation to official website and APP** | **Trendiness** |

**Table (3-3) The Code Protocol of Luxury Customer Response**

| **Representation of Customer Response to Luxury Brands** | **Open coding** | **Axial coding** | **Selective coding** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Customer response names only “Lauren Wong” “Charlotte Haslam”/ “Brittany Chan hkhk” | Customer write social circle names | **Mention friends, family, fan names** | **Fandom Experience** |
| " Wonderful collection”/ “Died 100 times”/ Chanel, always beautiful”/ “gorgeous”/ “SUPERB”/ Beautiful/ “Incredible”/ “Absolutely stunning”/ “Magnifique!”/ “/ “Chanel is the best”/ “Chanel forever”/ Love the SUBLIMAGE/ “So nice”/ “ Classy”/ “elegant”/ “amazing” | Customer express their emotions for the brand post | **Brand love and admiration** | |
| I am in love “ / “ love everything by this designer” “Extraordinary”/ “The King of fashion”/ “I feel....Breathtakingly beautiful”/ a highly skilled Artist designer/ Hats off to Chanel designer / “Brought me to tears | Customer express their emotions for brand designer and brand in general | **Designer and celebrity love** | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| “Myself, my Sister Pat Corbin and friend Deb Vines loved it in London. Fantastic!”/ Hope one day our dreams become true/ “ I can remember. My mother wore #5 for years.”/ “I loved it in London”/ Loved your biggest store in the world. Had a great time Christmas shopping/ have enjoyed Chanel since I was 16 now 62 | Customer recall experience with brands | **Customer memory, nostalgic to brand** | |
| CHANEL Wonderful, my inspiration 😍”/ “some inspiration/ideas for the next fashion show”/ It's a dream working like this with CHANEL/ “Thank you very much Chanel for the creativity, inspiration and elegance”/ My Inspiration! My Dream | Customers feel the creativity of brand | **Inspiration** | **Immersive Experience** |
| All on my wish list”/ “n 5 favourite”/ I love my Chanel I think I'll increase my collection now/ I want mademoiselle perfume/ “I wrote to Santa”/ Chanel was always my favourite/ I'II BUY TO | Customer dream about brand and forget themselves | **Preference and wish list appeared** | |
| “love this almost transparent serenely water coloured ’¦divinely gorgeous bag!!! Cant wait to see it in March! Way better than the Rainbow Caviar collection!!! / Loved this show / The party at the end / what a wonderful place for a fashion show / OVE how they've set it to a live orchestra! / The first song was beautiful/ is one of my favourite songs | Customers express admire the colors and fancy of event | **events authenticity** | **Aesthetic Experience** |
| Customer response “beautiful HAUTE COUTURE”/ love the simplicity, elegance and beauty with which each dress and accessory’’/ “That suit is fabulous / his is why designer clothing is so expensive! There is so much intricate detail | Customers express admire the desire and colors | **Designs beauty** | |
| Customer response “When in Europe?” / “Hi can i get the price for Chanel fraiche perfume at Kuala Lumpur boutique? Please go to the Chanel's store for pricing. And click here to see the product details ðŸ | Customer request information | **Exchange information** | **Informative Experience** |
| Customer response “CHANEL is it Fragrance Free? Love your Le' Fluid but I can't wear it because it has too much perfume in it, I hope CHANEL will makes more skin care products in the future without fragrance” | Customer suggest developing brands quality | **Suggestion of improving** | |
| Customer response “happy holiday my from L.v”/ yes PLEASE Coco Chanel! Merry Christmas to all! | Customer celebrate holidays | **Greeting brands and other fans** | **Customer to Customer interaction** |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Customer response “Sandy Katzen Huterin you are right this line not my favourite but Louis Vuitton and Chanel my favourite...;-/ “Alex Cummings - hey mate, some really interesting styles here! Love”/ “ Shannon Moore go see this for me please”/ Gilbert Ganda do u know whether they have in | Customer’s dialogue | **Conversations about the brands' products and details of posts** | |
| Customer response “ Eiser Awakijuf she can’t sleep since yesterday wants to buy Chanel” /”Plenty rewards every year to pay the credit hahahhaha” | Customer’s dialogue | **Conversations includes jokes and personal talks** | |
| Cool, thumps up ), (Laugh, happy, joking 😂🤣😀😅😇 ) | Express enjoying and happiness | | |
| ( (Love hearts, love face, kissing, roses 💝💝/ 🌹❤️/ 😍/ 😘), | Express love | | |
| (Wishing and crying 😢😢😢😭😭😭😭,) (amazed 😅😁). | Express wishing | **Emojis** | **Emojis** |

**Table (3-4) The Code Protocol of High Street Brands’ Social Media Marketing Activities**

| **Representation of High Street Fashion Brands Post** | **Open coding** | **Axial coding** | **Selective code** |
|---|---|---|---|
| This season trashed denim and power pastels come together in a perfect balance of cute and edgy. Shop in store and online at http://hm.info/1aevp #HM | New trends | New season collection | Trendiness "providing the newest information about products or service " (kim and Ko, 2012, p.1483) |
| All we want for Christmas is...this week s editor picks. Shop the look now at>>>http://hm.info/1ac9b | New trends by professionals | Editor’s Style Advice | |
| You can't lose with gifts like these via Victoria Sport | Gift choice/ sport line | Gift ideas | |
| Don’t know what to give your BFF for Christmas? We asked artists Anajah Hamilton and Gabrielle Richardson for some guidance! #HMMagazine http://hm.info/19c18 | New trends by celebrity | Gift suggestions Celebrity endorsement | |
| Novelty Christmas jumpers or sultry Santa dresses? We asked @nickiminaj 10 | New trends by celebrity | Gift suggestions | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| questions â€“ you don’t wanna miss the answers! Read the full story at http://hm.info/1a6qf #HMMagazin | | | |
| A sneak peek of the exclusive VS x BALMAIN installation feat. Punk Angel from the Fashion Show! Head to the New Bond Street store to see it IRL. Limited time | Brands collaboration | Co-branding | |
| Fashion meets music with this rapped studded and sensuously sexy collection designed by Balmain s Olivier Rousteing | Brands collaboration | | |
| CLUB MEMBERS GET MORE! Get an extra 15% off SALE with H&M Club in store and online* Redeem the offer and start shopping now: http://hm.info/1aeug *Offer cost 75 Club points | Sales and points | Club member discount | Sales promotion and remuneration defined as temporary and tangible monetary or nonmonetary incentives intended to have a direct impact on consumer behavior (Chandon et al. 2000. P. 65) |
| **BOXING DAY REDUCTIONS*** Sale just got even better with New Styles Added at up to 60% off! Shop now at http://hm.info/1advo Sale continues in store. Find your nearest store and opening times here >>> http://hm.info/1advp #H | Boxing day sales | Seasons sales and discount | |
| kick cold temps with a cosy blanket ”yours FREE with a Â£50 purchase! Exclusions apply in stores only. | Free gift | Free product and services | |
| Entire store: buy 2 get 1 free end today! Head to a store now. Exclusions apply see store for details | Free gifts | | |
| ***FREE NEXT DAY DELIVERY WHEN YOU SPEND Â£40*** Don t miss out! There’s still time to get your gifts in time for Christmas. Choose NEXT DAY DELIVERY by 9pm tonight and we ll guarantee delivery by 23rd December. Plus spend Â£40 and it will be FREE! * Plus don t forget our stores | Delivery service free | | |
| We wish you a Merry Christmas (and so do all the Angels)! Victoria secret | Greeting Christmas | Greeting holidays | Entertainment<br>deliver the fun and play of online content to amuse customer and enhance the |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | hedonic feelings more than the mere function of products and service |
| **H&M KIDS COMPETITION*** We're feeling festive and to celebrate the season of Gift Giving were offering one lucky follower a chance to win a Â£50 Gift Card to spend on H&M Kid swear. Simply LIKE and COMMENT below with #hmkids and tell us the funniest or strangest thing your little ones have ask you for this Christmas ðY Find our Christmas Gift Guide here: http://hm.info/1aacf *Full Tand Cs available on our Facebook page (notes) | Contest for wing gifts | competition | |
| Celebrating H&M Design Awards in London with our lucky #HMClub winners! #HMDA18 Not an H&M Club member yet? Sign up today at http://hm.info/1aa17http://hm.info/1aa17 | Fashion contest | | |
| Hi, Julie. We're so very sorry that your Granddaughter's mist is not working properly. Check out our return / exchange policy with the link below. We hope this helps! http://bit.ly/2pXnJak | Reply customer complain | Apologies customer complaint | Complain Handling Service the range of organizational responses to complaints include timeliness, facilitation, redress, apology, credibility, and attentiveness that will affect post-complaint consumer behavior" Davidow (2003, P. 232) |
| We'd like to speak with you further regarding this, Lyn! Please send us a Private Message with your order number when you have a moment. H&M | Reply customer enquiry | Provide customer solutions | |

**Table 3-5 The Code Protocol of Customer Response to High Street Fashion Brands**

| **Representation of customer response to high street brands** | **Open coding** | **Axial coding** | **Selective coding** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Statement about: " absolutely disgusting quality "/ " still have no idea where is the secret"/ "It doesn't like me anymore, not since last time" | Customer complain | **Complain product quality** | **Customer complaint Experience** |
| Statement about: " the item on sale in store and full price online"/ "same item on online will be different price in store"/ I cant believe you have different price from stores and online" /" you are not consistent" | Customer complain | **Complain fake sales** | |
| Statement about: " posted here as you are not reply message on SM, calls and emails"/ "I have email 3 time no response" / "no items on website" / no refund on time" / "Corpulent agree more! Worst service ever" | Customer complain | **Complain lake website and social media commination** | |
| Statement about: "don't bother yourself and go to store" service means nothing"/ "you mislead customer "? "Don't pay double at store" / "Their customer service is very poor" | Customer complain | **Complain customer service In store** | |
| Statement about: " paid extra for delivery before Christmas and no response /" incorrect information" / " wrong order number " item not found " order not received since two weeks | Customer complain | **Complain shipment and delivery service** | |
| Statement about: " do this Item available in UK" / "need Link for boots please"/what time you open | Seek information | **Exchange information** | **Informative experience** |
| Statement about: "Nice dress"/ "the blue dress is gorgeous" / "this look looks fine"/ " this black dress though | Express preference | | |
| Statement about: " H&M Kids; My son asked for curmptes" "My nephew is asked for pejames"/" My little one asked for bourger"/My 5 year wants John Cena | Subscribe in competing | | |
| Statement about: "Kite get looking"/ "how convenient" /"I'm just sying"/ Jan free delivery" / " already get it hun " Amy Pollard no doubt me and you will look exactly like this Christmas day!" | Customer dialogue | **Functional conversations** | **Customer to customer interaction** |
| Statement about: "fantastic clothes"/ "love it"/ "I love this brand stores" " I need those "/ this collection is really good"/ | Customer dialogue | **Preference conversations** | |

### 3.3.6. Verification of the Qualitative Research

In the qualitative research, to proactively reach the accuracy of a study, a verification procedure should be secured (Morse et al., 2002). This procedure is defined as "a process of checking, confirming, making sure, and being certain to ensure the rigor of a study" (Morse et al., 2002, p. 17). Moreover, it should check different aspects, such as the coherence of methodology, data sampling, collection, analysis, and theoretical insights. Thus, the typical procedure for content-analytical reliability test is to carry out the entire analysis process by several researchers and then to compare and contrast their results throughout inter-coder agreement (Mayring, 2014). However, Kozinet (2012) confirmed that it is unnecessary to conduct member checks when the data was collected entirely unobtrusively.

For this study, content analysis was made by the researcher to address the research question and establish a rigorous framework for brand experience within social media platforms. Although social media content is huge, the timing and the pages chosen proved to be a rich data set as an appropriate sample that can explain the phenomena and draw a clear relationship.

Regarding the quality agreement, secondary two independent researchers (coders) were involved. The first coder is an assistant professor in marketing specialized in online retail experience from the University of Jordan, Marketing Department. The second coder is a Ph.D. candidate in luxury brands from Newcastle University, Marketing Department. These coders received a coding sheet as shown in the tables in the previous section and a copy of the data extracted from social media as examples of each specified category. They checked if the process allows the researcher to confirm that the comments cited from the data set have the same meaning that intended by the user. Finally, the results were compared, and ambiguities were addressed through discussion. Inter-coder reliability was calculated based on a 95% percentage of agreement, then the researcher resolved coding discrepancies.

## 3.4. Findings

This section presents the interpretation of the main data. The objective of a qualitative study in this research is to identify types of brands-organized social and customer responses. It aims at furthering the understanding of how luxury brands experience is formulated in social media platforms, what customer to customer interactions create when bonding with a luxury brand and other fans, and whether those co-creation activities assist in the experience formulation.

### 3.4.1. Data Description

The analysis revealed that luxury brands and high street brands have differences in the type of activities, even common activities between them have varied categories. It also showed that customers' responses to such activities are interestingly diverse. Thus, a general explanation of the main format and frequencies are presented in this section; more insights are discussed in the following detailed sections.

Regarding luxury brands activities, both brands Chanel and Louise Vuitton publish few posts on both platforms Facebook and Twitter. For example, Chanel posted 16 times on Facebook and 42 on Twitter, while Louise Vuitton posted 16 times on Facebook and 31 on Twitter during the month. Furthermore, the format of activities for luxury brands includes texts with short videos or abstract photos, and the most commonly used platform is Twitter. Conversely, high street fashion brands are more active in posting. For example, Victoria Secret posed 66 times on Facebook and 108 on Twitter, while H&M posted 53 times on Facebook and 60 on Twitter. Regarding the format, high fashion street brands are more into posting on their pages' texts combined with style photos activities, rare texts and videos. Their most commonly used platform is Twitter, and their posts vary across platforms, the similar content contains different images, videos, or texts.

It should be noted that customer responses were surprising, and more interactions happened on luxury pages. Although luxury brands were less active in posting than high street fashion on both platforms, they record a higher number of customer interactions in all forms of reactions (likes, shares, views, and comments). Though high street fashion brands are more active, customers show lower interest in their activities. For example, customers leave more than 4000 comments on luxury brands' pages, while the maximum comments for high street fashion brands' reach around 1700 comments. Thus, this difference is also showed in platforms; posting on Twitter is much more common than on Facebook, but customers engaged more on Facebook pages.

There are four types of customers' responsive comments: first, customers' individual comments, which contain experience, emotion, and reaction to the brands' activity. Second, customer interactions with their reference group (e.g., friends, family, peers). Third customer interactions with other customers (other fans), and finally, customer interactions with the brands. Thus, Chu and Kim (2011) found that customers who provide assistance or share information with their social groups (i.e., friends, peer's family) are more likely to share their opinions and experiences.

Moreover, there are other customers and brands involved in the online social community that have the same interests (Nambisan and Baron, 2009). Hence, there were customers' responses in different languages more than those were in English, such as French and Dutch (the researcher used Google and Oxford online translators to understand the comments' meanings).

### 3.4.2. Types of Brands' Social Media Marketing Activities

The analysis reveals six social media marketing activities engaged in by the companies e in the fashion industry. These are: two common activities between luxury and high street fashion brands (Trendiness and Entertainment), two activities presented only by luxury brands (Curiosity Creation and Sensory Marketing Activity), two activities presented only by high street fashion brands (Sales promotion and Remuneration and Customer Service and Complain Handling Activity).

### 3.4.3. Consumer Response Towards Brands Marketing Activities – Consumer Experiences

Customers' responses towards the brands' activities varied. Responses to luxury brands, as well as engagements and interactions with them were higher than those found in high street fashion brands. However, luxury brands, considered as a counterpart for social exchange, rarely respond to customers. Meanwhile, high street fashion brands reciprocate as much as customers do. More insights are provided in the following sections.

## 3.5. Luxury Brands Social Media Marketing Activities

### 3.5.1. Curiosity Creation Activity

The analysis revealed a "curiosity creation activity", defined as an activity that triggers customers' "intrinsic desire for new information that stimulate interest and/or remove uncertainty, which is aroused by novel, complex, or ambiguous stimuli, and motivates exploratory behavior" (Litman et al., 2005, p. 384). In line with this definition, previous research reveals that interest arousal is an essential factor in inspiring people to use digital content (Ho and Dempsey, 2010), acquisition products throughout mysterious promotions (Hill et al., 2016) or develop memory for advertisements (Bakalash and Riemer, 2013).

In this study, this type of activity is often used by luxury brands to create a mysterious atmosphere for online consumers and to attract their engagement and increase suspense. This activity includes offline future fashion events and behind the scene workshops of preparing the fashion products and shows. Hence, this activity can be hocked to the theory of curiosity, for perceptual curiosity is

stimulated by visual, auditory, or tangible stimulus, which provokes behaviors, like visual check, to obtain new information (Berlyne, 1954). Epistemic curiosity is stimulated by conceptual puzzlers and information gaps, which stimulate enquires or filling the gaps of knowledge. Thus, this is mainly the embodied message behind luxury curiosity creation through maintaining a sense of enigma and distance regarding their invention practices (Kapferer, 2012). Though, their social media activities provided supporters a glimpse of the magic of doing so.

The content provides very fractional information aimed at leaving imagination spaces for consumers. A glance of information combined with abstract cartoon videos or photos about fashion events includes fashion exhibitions, fashion shows. Chanel extensively used connectedness, such marketing activities within this seasonal month accounting for 15 posts across two platforms that lead to having huge customer response (for example, Chanel gave a hint for Hong Kong exhibition).

*"Mademoiselle PrivÃ will open on January 13th in Hong Kong â" until February 10th. More information about the exhibition on the Mademoiselle PrivÃ app and on mademoiselleprive.chanel.com"*

Furthermore, content includes short statements, links, and "*behind-the-scenes*" online videos. To present an exclusive luxury image by sharing the making of "*handmade*" collection with customers means to acknowledge customers with brand value and efforts in producing such authentic pieces of fashion. For example, Chanel shared behind scene papering for the Hamburg fashion show:

*"A closer look at the ateliers where the craftsmen gather their unique know-how behind the MÃtiers art collection. More details about the Paris-Hamburg MÃiers dâart 2017/18 collection on chanel.com/-RTW_MDA2017-18-SF"*

On the other hand, high-street brands' content seems to be more into trendy rather than creative information, such as luxury posts. Thus, such mirroring of offline communication activities of luxury brand's authenticity allows companies to continue to uphold their exclusive characteristics. This leads to a large variation of consumers' responses and to more engagements with such luxury activities (see more facts in the customer response Section).

### 3.5.2. Sensory Marketing Activity

Sensory marketing activity can be defined as "*marketing activities that attract the consumers' senses, lead to engage them via affects their perception, judgment and behavior*". The analysis indicates that this activity is the most commonly used by luxury fashion brands as a dissemination

tool via social media platforms. Its carefully created imagery, symbols, sounds and works have been applied to have an impact on customers' experiences and preferences (Hultén, 2015; 2011) It also refers to the extent to which a consumer finds vision, novelty, sublime, and fantasy elements in the sensory stimuli (King, 1981). Hence, the social media platforms' technical structure helps brand to inform consumers about brands' multi-sensory appeals (e.g., its texture, colours, lights, and sounds) that are simply not available on other web pages (Petit et al., 2019), especially in the field of luxury brands. Luxury brands are known for defining beauty; art applied to its useful items that provide extra desire and flatter all senses at once (Kapferer, 1997).

Luxury brands performing sensory marketing activities on social media platforms by combing visual and auditory stimuli aligned with describing them in words. The high-quality and attractive visualization is a vital emotions-eliciting factor, as greatest information transmission happens through the human eyes (Okonkwo, 2007) besides color mixture, which is a component of great symbolic value and displays differentiations in influencing human's perception. Moreover, auditory stimulus can be sparked by music and sounds, that provide a pleasant and excitement vibe (Grewal et al., 2003). Diverse sounds may subconsciously move consumers' emotions and moods, unintentionally and intuitively (Blood et al., 1999). Thus, sensory marketing is about handling customers through sensorial strategies to achieve a supreme customer experience (Hultén, 2011)

For example, Louise Vuitton focused on characteristics of design; colors, fabrics, craft ship, materials through the presentation of text combined with video and photos of the fashion collection, such as:

*"Jewel in the Crown. A testament to fine leather craftsmanship, the pure lines of the #LouisVuitton Capucines contra\xe2\x80\xa6 https://t.co/ezScp8fSv1"*

Chanel, at the same, time highlighted the artistic fashion venue and music used in fashion venues as well as the importance of music as they hire a special musical band.

for example, products' materials details L.V post, fashion venue description as the following:

*"The colors of Hamburg and its tangle of streets, canals, bridges and brick warehouses inspired the #CHANELinHamburg\xe2\x80\xa6* https://t.co/jIXVOPxkmo*"*

*"The @elbphilharmonie grand concert hall hosted the #CHANELMetiersdArt 2017/18 show. #CHANELinHamburg* https://t.co/CIdm6ro0VJ*'"*

*''Following the #CHANELMetiersdArt show, the #CHANELinHamburg after-party was hosted at the Fischauktionshalle.* https://t.co/uW336M0K9c*''*

On the contrary, high street fashion brands content is more static and traditional. The posts include texts with photos presented as a catalogue or magazine, not in a lively way that would elicit sensory stimuli, as do luxury brands. Thus, as asserted by Joy et al. (2014), luxury brand spaces are like art institutions.

### 3.6. Common Social Media Marketing Activities of Fashion Brands

This section illustrates common activities used by both luxury and high street fashion brands. Although brands have the same theme of activity, the nature of the activity, the content language, format, and the purpose are different between fashion brands.

#### 3.6.1. Trendiness

Trendiness "refers to a company attempting to provide the newest, up-to-date information about product and services" (Kim and Ko, 2012, p.1483). The importance of trendiness activity is used to be connected with the emergence of social media as it is a source of information that provides the latest news, the hub of hot topics, and core product search channels (Naaman et al., 2011). In this study, trendiness is the most important component of social media marketing activities for both luxury brands and high street fashion brands and is used extensively across social media platforms. However, the luxury brands' trendiness activity is used more to express the prestigious value and present the complexity of brands' nature (Kapferer and Bastien, 2009).

Luxury trendiness consists of sub-activities, such as holiday seasons, collection announcements, gift ideas, new store openings, brands designers' collaboration, and collection of celebrity news. Trendiness thus presented promote the feeling of being special and unique when having the luxury product. Thus, luxury brands use short videos and embedded messages that nurture the relationships with customers through a decent approach of value informing about the collection, rather than provoking the idea of selling the products (Dion and Arnould, 2011).

For example, Louis Vuitton frequently used this activity in social media over 24 posts across two platforms, an activity that featured the use of short video presentations with special Christmas time music with L.V mono logo. For example, the new collection gift idea:

*"Make an impression with a Parfum #LouisVuitton. More holiday #LVGifts inspiration at https://t.co/DI6C5dJk7N* https://t.co/3l6nyONQli*'"*

Chanel expressed the designer's collaboration to produce the collection of the brand such as:

*"Specialized in knitwear, the Maison Barrie makes the finest cashmere, offering a range of exclusive designs' and col\xe2\x80\xa6* https://t.co/KhXehw10G6*"*

Or opening a new Chanel store in the season of holidays and ski time:

*"As the ski season begins, CHANEL returns to its ephemeral Courchevel boutique with a brand-new setting, showcasing\xe2\x80\xa6* https://t.co/X7OyK1bISF*"*

And lunching the new collections combined with celebrity news dressed by them. Thus, celebrities influence social media as an interactive field whereby they involve with fans and also use it as a marketing tool for indorsing newly fashion trends (Jin, 2018), For example, Chanel new collections presented by celebrity models, such as:

*"Under the lens of Karl Lagerfeld, German model Anna Ewers introduces the #CHANELinHamburg 2017/18 collection that w\xe2\x80\xa6* https://t.co/p7ns3hnMH5'*"*

Furthermore, an important sub-activity of trendiness pertains to inviting customers to check more details on the official brand's website with a recommendation combined with all luxury brands' posts. Thus, customers rely on the information from social media rather than from official brands' websites, as they are more complicated, with information spread throughout them compared with the combined and easy display as in a single page on Facebook or Twitter. For example, Chanel and L.V include the link even when greeting people:

*"Wherever you are, #LouisVuitton wishes you Happy Holidays. Last-minute #LVGifts await at https://t.co/QEY9h4KMUR* https://t.co/qkISe9oRcs*'*

Although social media has altered fashion habits by offering them new channels of searching information, buying products, and assessing the experiences even without owning the product, Brands should always include web links linked to their official websites and visual signs to enhance brand recognition (Dimitriu and Guesalaga, 2017). Thus, this feature was greatly used to maintain relationships on websites, despite the fact that most websites do not provide tools that allow consumers to profoundly connect and participate with brands and other customers, for example commenting and sharing, promoting interactive and engaging activities.

In contrast, high-street brands' trendiness is the most commonly used activity. However, compared to luxury brands, trendiness in high street is more likely to use static images with recommended groups of products and direct text. Thus, the message of activity is persuasive or promotional to enhance customers' purchase behavior and increase sales. For example, H&M posted 61 times, and Victoria's Secrets posted 42 times during this seasonal month. The trends for these brands, such as H&M, are more into promoting a variety of collection products lines, mainly including educating the customer about a particular lifestyle based on fashion editors' choices or celebrities' choices.

*"Update your wardrobe for with this week s top picks from #HMMagazine* http://hm.info/19c18*"*

and promoting new look outfit suit the season.

*"Elevate your winter look with statement knitwear and metallic flats #HM Available in selected stores and at* http://hm.info/1acjs*"*

A list of suggestions, such as Victoria Secret:

*"You can't lose with gifts like these via Victoria Sport"*

Host celebrity in the fashion interview talking about her brand's anecdote choice of outfit for the season:

*"Novelty Christmas jumpers or sultry Santa dresses? We asked @nickiminaj 10 questions "you don't wanna miss the answers! Read the full story at* http://hm.info/1a6qf *#HMMagazine"*

Similarly, Victoria Secret posts brand collaboration to announce that it is a limited-edition product, such as:

*"LACED and READY: The limited-edition VS x BALMAIN collection. Shop it tomorrow!*

Also, the high street fashion brand, H&M, combined some links recommendations of product model numbers and invites to store, while Victoria Secret used to invite customers to visit stores with limited offers there without any link to the website.

H&M posed for example:

*"Wear this season s It print with blue denim and timeless accessories. Get the look in store and online. Find your favourite by entering the below article number in search at: http://hm.info/1aesa #HM Leather Ankle Boots 0537076004 Pile Jacket 0542730002 Long-*

*sleeved Top 0584449001 Handbag 0597975001 Long Earrings 0615722001 Skinny Regular Jeans 0626581001"*

Victoria Secret invites customers to the store as follows:

*"Want this VS x BALMAIN look for yourself? Shop it in stores tomorrow 6.12!*

### 3.6.2. Entertainment

Entertaining content is defined as *deliver the fun and play of online content to amuse customers and enhance the hedonic feelings of having the brand more than the mere function of products and service*. An entertainment content does not mention any product information or promotion to persuade customers to buy the items but mainly focuses on amusing the customer (Cvijikj and Michahelles, 2013; Lee and Ma, 2012). This amusement includes the sharing of influential stories, events' content, fun games, and competition through explaining the videos and photos. These were found but not discussed in detail in the literature (Enginkaya and Yilmaz, 2014; Godey et al., 2016).

Social media platforms become a source of entertainment and amusement for customers. As speculated by Katz and Foulkes (1962), the mass media serves people's needs to separate themselves from their real lives and escape into dream world. In this essence, previous studies show that customers are motivated to engage information seeking and entertainment needs on brands' social media pages (Athwal et al., 2019; Logan et al., 2012). Consumers browse brands' social media for content that is funny and/or entertaining (Hamilton et al., 2016). They search for content that feeding the hedonic needs (Gao and Feng, 2016). Furthermore, entertainment is a primary driver of customers' generated content, including likes, shares and comments on brand communities on social media platforms (de Vries et al., 2017). Thus, this enjoyment leads consumers to perform an activity for itself, more likely will drive consumers to engage in the identical activity in the future (Ryan, 1993).

In this study, luxury brands are shown to present stories of fashion in live events, podcasts, fashion competitions and other entertaining content, such as greetings and festival wishes.

*"Warmest wishes of Happy Holidays from #LouisVuitton.* https://t.co/zc4OAcmQJQ https://t.co/1NlCOge4og*"*

For example, Chanel reports the live podcast fashion show from the Hamburg event as follows:

*"The story of the Paris-Hamburg MÃ©tiers dâ€™art 2017/18 show at the Elbphilharmonie. More about the show on chanel.com/-RTW_MDA2017-18"*

*"Finale of the #CHANELinHamburg 2017/18 M\xc3\xa9tiers d\xe2\x80\x99art show at the @elbphilharmonie #CHANELMetiersdArt* https://t.co/7oV29Hxvom'*"*

While Louise Vuitton mention the LVMH fashion design competition such as

*"RT @LVMHPrize: LVMH Prize 2018 is on \xe2\x98\x85 Apply on https://t.co/aM62YyxSt9 https://t.co/Z0JCOobyDn'"*

On the other hand, for high street fashion brands, the use of entertainment is quite different from luxury brands. It includes the same activity in concept (greeting and wishes, contests and competitions), but the activity is mixed with other types of activities, such as usual discounts and remunerative. For example, H&M posted a contest for customers, who have a club card. To subscribe, customers have to buy some products and register their club cards that will give extra points to make customers eligible to patriciate in the contest. This is therefore an activity that leads to dialogic co-creation that attracts customers to engage and buy products.

*"H&M Club has teamed up with Kidzania London to give you the chance to win tickets for you and your family! Spend some family time with your kids this New Year and enter the chance to win a set of 4 tickets for Kidzania London. Designed for children aged 4-14 Kidzania blends learning and reality with entertainment. Read more and apply here:* http://hm.info/1aeqc*"*

Victoria Secret reporting the fashion show:

*"The show goes on. Rock Sexy Illusions" the official bra of the Fashion Show" off the runway with the limited-edition robe."*

A hedonic viewpoint views social media employer as pleasure strivers who are being entertained and pleased and who experience pleasure (Manthiou et al., 2013). Previous studies indicate that amusement is a strong motivator for social media use (Muntinga et al., 2011; Park et al., 2009). Furthermore, entertainment can be strong motivator for utilizing user-generated content. As Park et al. (2009) state that entertainment drives contribution in social networks to some point. Thus, social media consumers brand-related content for delight, relaxation, and as pastimes (Muntinga et al., 2011)

## 3.7. High Street Fashion Brands Social Media Marketing Activities

### 3.7.1. Sales Promotion and Remuneration Activity

Sales promotion activity can be defined as "*temporary and tangible monetary or nonmonetary incentives intended to have a direct impact on consumer behavior*" (Chandon et al., 2000, p. 65). This was the most frequent activity only used by high street fashion brands. This activity includes club member discounts and points, seasonal sales, free delivery service and free products.

For example, Victoria's Secrets heavily promoted their product lines and deals over 69 posts on both platforms during the month, followed by H&M over 14 times. Through economic incentives, discounts, and other types of future rewards, customers are more attracted to contribute to related activities. Thus, remuneration content is one of the most attractive topics on social media (Muntinga et al., 2011). For example, H&M post

*"CLUB MEMBERS GET MORE! Get an extra 15% off SALE with H&M Club in store and online* Redeem the offer and start shopping now: http://hm.info/1aeug *Offer cost 75 Club points valid until 06.01.18"*

*"***SALE STARTS TODAY*** Christmas has come early! Shop up to 60% off selected items in store and online. Visit your closest store or shop now at >>> http://hm.info/1acxg"*

In this study, posts of discounts show more engagement rates on the part of customers. They were fast to engage at the remunerative activities and willing to contribute a generated content and create conversations with others under the brand post to perceive monetary or intangible benefits in few minutes after the brand post, such types of activities. Hence, other types of rewards include free products, samples, and gift cards, supported in previous studies (De Vries et al., 2017; Azar et al., 2016). For example, Victoria Secret post runs as follows:

*"Ends today! Buy one get one FREE robes slipper and more. In stores only."*

### 3.7.2. Customer Service and Complain Handling Activity

Complaint handling signifies the tactics that companies apply to undertake failures of services to manage customers' post, purchase displeasure (Tax et al., 1998). However, handling complaints appropriately can give a prospect for companies to go beyond solving the problem to transforming it into a pleasing interaction with customers (Istanbulluoglu, 2017). Therefore, in this study,

Victoria Secret and H&M had a huge number of negative comments, such as customers complaining about the customer service in-store, online, delivery, quality, and price of products, return policy, and poor communication responses on social media channels. Thus, the brands tried to solve the complaints, answer customers enquire and even appreciate their feedback. Based on analyzed data, customers' feedback with high street fashion brands was not pleasant. Although some customers show love and emotions, the majority are more into expressing negative or bad experiences. High street fashion brands show efforts in dealing with customers' complaints. Compared to luxury brands, high street fashion brands are considered much more responsive in handling complaints. Thus, brands' response to customer complain (e.g., Victoria secret record 26 times, while H&M record 70 times on Facebook and Twitter). For example, H&M respond to customer as follows:

"*Hi ladies! The dress will be available soon, please keep checking back on the New Arrivals section of the website! Happy New Year to you all!"*

H&M apologizes to customers as follows:

*"Hi there Kelly! We're so sorry if the art no isn't working; since we can't see the picture, is there any way to provide the items number? You can always reach us here: http://bit.ly/1NompgJ for a quicker reply. Cheers!"*

Victoria Secret replies appreciating customer feedback:

*"Thank you, so much, for taking the time to share your wonderful experience with us, Kelly! We're happy to hear Mickey was of great help in finding your perfect fit! We appreciate your feedback regarding our associates training and have made sure to pass along your comments to our team leaders. We look forward to shopping with you again soon!"*

Victoria secret replies to a customer' enquiry:

*"We're sorry for any confusion around shipping, Justine! We do ship to the UK; however, there are shipping restrictions on items that contain alcohol. Items such as, perfumes and body mists, cannot be shipped overseas. For more details, please visit us online here: http://bit.ly/2l0qipT Thank you!"*

On the other hand, luxury brands neglect customers' complaints about for example online orders and return policies. There is no response from the luxury brands on the fan page. For example, Chanel recorded zero response, L.V had two responses, occasionally re-directing complaints to a specific Facebook /Twitter account. Some evidence suggests that luxury brands deliberately avoid

using social media channels for customer service to portray an aloof image (Deloitte, 2018). Thus, it can keep the prestigious and authentic image on the main fan pages.

## 3.8. Consumer Response Towards Luxury Brands Marketing Activities – Consumer Experiences

Customers receive knowledge and learning through sharing experiences and ideas and social interaction on social media. Previous literature lacks identifying such experiences. This study therefore identifies deep insights into customers' brand experience. The main types of luxury experiences are identified as fandom, informative, immersive, aesthetic. Other responses emerged as customer to customers interaction in forms of socialization. However, for high street fashion brands, the only types identified are informative experience, complaints, interaction and emojis.

### 3.8.1. Fandom Experience

Fandom is a new experience that emerged from the analysis of this study. It simply refers to being a fan. The concept of fandom is usually mentioned in sport marketing literature and is defined as "that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership" (Tajfel, 1978, p. 63). But in this study, for the first time in the luxury context, fandom experience is defined as *the state of entire connection to the brand reflects one's feeling, loyalty, and desire to be closer with the brand and other members in the brand community who share the same interest to the fullest degree*.

As previously discussed, luxury brands focus more on nurturing a consumer culture and their brand connection with consumers. Fandom often refers to a subculture of fans characterized by an emotion of empathy and camaraderie to others who have a shared interest. Fandom experience occurs when companies' social media content has associated cues and novel content, then customers start responding, including mentioning friends and family names, retrieving nostalgic stories and experiences about themselves with the brand, expressing love, admiration, and emotions for the brand designer and love for the brand itself. Such an experience was only observed as a response to the luxury brand's social media content. Thus, fandom experience suggests the importance of consumers' cherished memories that are generated in the offline context. The contents of the customer's memory were included the brand/product information or customers' previous shopping experiences (Barrutia and Gilsanz, 2013).

In this study, customer-generated content reveals the customer's ability to remember product information and details during customer journeys or prior shopping experiences. It enhances the idea that customers usually provide specific product reviews. For example, after Chanel's Facebook post

*"The finale of the Paris-Hamburg 2017/18 Métiers d'art show at the Elbphilharmonie."*

*"See more on chanel.com/" Consumers has expressed their immediate response following each other's comments: "I LOVE CHANEL EVER SINCE I WAS 15 AND I AM 59" (Consumer A)*
*"Me too.." (Consumer B)*
*"Yes me too l love Chanel (Consumer C)"*

Customers' discover aspects of themselves connected to luxury brands are interesting. For example, Chanel's customers express their personal experience with Chanel perfumes, connecting them to emotional life occasions, such as a wedding day or an anniversary, while others are self-reflecting on the brand's feel that it is a part of their personality. Being a fan also brings customers' attention to mention by names their beloved friends and family, as well as start conversations about the brands' details, beauty, classy and creativity. For example, when LV greets people on Christmas, it announces the world of gifts:

*"Warmest wishes of Happy Holidays from Louis Vuitton. Visit the World of Wondrous Gifts at* http://on.louisvuitton.com/6182DHUfI*"*

*"Customer response were "Consumer A: Natasha Sachs why am I not surprised"/ "Consumer B: Ralph Mortlock but I was allowed back in and walked out with 3 wonderful pieces!"*

Furthermore, customers express compliments for brands, celebrities, models, a common type of content shared by customers in their individual comments. Previous studies stated that social media subscribers might make a compliment or complain about the firm's social media platform to express their intrinsic psychological feeling (Barreto, 2014). Thus, customers are willing to express their praises to the brands even if they did not give any replies. These compliments are about the brand's products and product lines, and some about the celebrities that model the product. According to Centeno and Wang (2017), celebrities' performances in the public area influence their fans' thoughts and choices. When a celebrity endorses a brand, branding identity is created for the customers. Thus, customers are more excited and persuaded to imitate their idol's fashion style and purchase the same items as this celebrity had done (Holmes and Redmond, 2014).

However, some customers show a negative response when they hate the celebrity hired and criticize even the products of brands.

The brand-generated posts related to celebrity endorsement received a mass response of customers' comments, likes, and shares. Amongst the customers' responses, there were huge admiration and love expressions towards the brands' products, designers and celebrities who appear in both videos and photos. For example, Chanel's designer, Karl Lagerfeld, is famous in Chanel's posts:

*"Under the lens of Karl Lagerfeld, German model Anna Ewers introduces the #CHANELinHamburg 2017/18 collection that w\xe2\x80\xa6* https://t.co/p7ns3hnMH5*'" " Consumer A: ICONIC <3" "Consumer B CHANEL @elbphilharmonie Omg* 😍😍 😘💋💥💣*Love them* 💜

In this study, fandom experience is the most important and frequently recorded experience. Previous studies stated the benefits associated with being a fan. Fans are moved to contribute to the fandom interest for many purposes. For example, fans of music and media are more likely to utilize characters, stories, or obvious individuals within their fan interest as a hub for self-reflection to match with their own behaviors, world opinions, and as a platform for emulation (Click et al., 2013). Thus, fans' motivations stress relief let them seek entertainment and escapism (Hirt and Clarkson, 2011; Fisher and Wakefield, 1998). It should be noted that fandom in social media is a relatively new concept.

### 3.8.2. Immersive Experience

Immersive experience is originally defined as **"**an implies becoming one with the experience and therefore conveys the idea of a total elimination of the distance between consumers and the situation, the former being plunged in a thematized and secure spatial enclave where they can let themselves go" (Carù and Cova, 2006, p. 5). More precisely, in social media contexts, it is defined as **"**a psychological state in which consumers are fully engrossed within the social media environment and exclusively fixated upon the brand interaction" (Hamiltion, 2016, p. 124).

According to Gentiel et al. (2007), providing immersive experiences, where a consumer dives into an experience that is fully advanced in detail by an enterprise, passes through a co-creation phase, in which a company offers the consumer with the elementary platform and raw resources that are

then being used by the consumers to mold and attain their own experience. Thus, experience is considered as a social activity that goes past the mere acquisition of products and services to include experiential immersive practices rooted in social, historical, and cultural contexts. (Carù and Cova, 2007).

In this study, the luxury social media marketing activity eliminated the distance between customers and brands, which runs against luxury's image of exclusivity and uniqueness (Atwal et al., 2018). Thus, it gave customers the chance to express their attitudes towards the brands at the same time. Customers' responses to the luxury brands' activities go beyond entertainment to encompass leisure, having fun and enjoyment (Krause et al., 2014). The aim of luxury social media activities is similar to that of luxury retail environment, which is intended to provide more than encouraging sales (Dion and Arnould, 2011), but to selling *the experience* or *the dream* (Martineau, 1958) to engage customers on social media platforms and let them forget themselves (Hamilton et al., 2016).

Immersive brand experience in social media is different form immersive state of flow (Novak et al., 2000). Flow is defined as knowledge raised from one's total involvement in a specific activity or situation (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Also, the flow concept is concerned with the websites more than social media platforms. Senecal et al. (2002) found that postulating flow-inducing and immersive content on e-commerce website is an ineffectual strategy. Unless when employed in combination with other qualities satisfying customers' consumption needs and providing a functional shopping value. However, social media platforms are different from e-commerce websites, which are premeditated with the major goal of motivating customers to purchase products. The main difference relies on the immersive state involving characteristics of the interactive experience with the hedonic and psychological aspects of brands activities and community (Quach et al., 2020). This becomes valid because of the interactive nature of social media beyond the mere technicality of the flow of information. Immersive experience formulated on social media because of the daily intense interactional level that customers are exposed to. Thus, this potential critical difference emphasizes the need for particular research into experience in social media (Hamilton et al., 2016).

Analysis reveals that customers' responses were dreaming about luxury brands, get inspired by them, forget by brands. For example:

"customer A *"CHANEL Wonderful, my inspiration 😍"* customer B *"Thank you very much Chanel for the creativity, inspiration and elegance".*

"Dreaming and wish list preference of luxury goods, *for example* customer A *"All on my wish list"* customer B *"I wrote to Santa Chanel was always my favourite".* Customer c *"each garment is an art, a dream! Chanel is Chanel".*

In the same line for L.V customers are more dreaming about having the product as a:

"charismas gift *Customer D L.V incredibly tremendous items are ready. always on top brand grabbed my soul. sound is crisp and dreamy as well".*

Moreover, customers engaged in conversations about their wishes:

customer A *"I sooooo want an invite or ticket to a Chanel show!! It is a dream of mine!! One day it'll come true!!"* customer B *"You should became a regular clients first!.. Then they invite you. Its works like that"* customer c *"I hope one day that your dreams come true Amargo Crenshaw. That's what everyone hopes for".*

Thus, this experience is a response to varied brands' activities.

### 3.8.3. Informative Experience

Informative experience is defined as "the extent to which a website provides consumers with resourceful and helpful information" (Lim and Ting 2012, p. 51). It is the main reasoning for the online brand experience. It apprehends a particular page's contribution to increasing the customer's knowledge, including thinking, rational intellectual processing, and, problem-solving (Gentile et al., 2007). Thus, informative builds the customers' practical aspects and values of the experience (Verhoef et al., 2009) and is mostly objective and outcome-oriented (Schlosser et al.,2006). This element relates to the information that stays after networking on the platform, which can advance attitudes toward brand.

In this study, social media offers low barriers for luxury brands marketing activities, lead customers to obtain, process, and share information about those brands. Thus, social media make brands more accessible, though they are known for being ironically exclusive.

Gaining brand-related knowledge stands out in the data. This is identified through the exchange of information between customers, seeking information from brands and offering suggestions to brands to improve some service and products. Thus, customer cognitive efforts for sufficient

product information, product categories, and characteristics are varied. Informative experience occurs as a response to all luxury brands marketing activities.

For example, seeking information from brands, such as by following quotes, was a response to a curiosity creation activity of Chanel:

customer A *"When in Europe?"* customer B *"how to buy Chanel Coco Mademoiselle in Ph, when I'm not in Philippines?"* seeking information from other fans such as customer C *"Gilbert Ganda do u know whether they have in Melb or Singapore?"*

While others show some suggestions to brand to develop their quality, such as:

customer A "*CHANEL is it Fragrance Free? Love your Le' Fluid but I can't wear it because it has too much perfume in it, I hope CHANEL will makes more skin care products in the future without fragrance*"

Or asking about price such as customer B *"please can you help me with the price of mademoiselle perfume? thanks)*

This was a response for a trendiness activity. Giving opinions such as:

customer C "*And this is why designer clothing is so expensive! There is so much intricate detail, hard work, and passion that goes into it!"*

This was a response from behind scene workshops of Chanel. Thus, customers' cognitive mind interacted with the stimuli of social media activities and had a subjective response as they browsed content and contributed to it, leading to the formulation of informative experience.

### 3.8.4. Aesthetic Experience

Aesthetic experience is defined as "the extent to which a person gives evidence of responding to relevant stimuli in some consistent and appropriate relation to the external standard of art" (Krishna and Schwarz, 2014, p.5). It refers to the intensive experiences that qualitatively differ from everyday experience, transcending from extrinsic to intrinsic value (Markovic, 2012). Aesthetic experience is accompanied by fascination, by watching what is taking place and how it is created. It engages customers more as they understand more about the brand (Atwal et al., 2018).

In this study, aesthetic experience emerged when luxury brands' curiosity creation activity and sensory marketing activity were presented on social media. When companies announce fashion shows at specific places, new product announcements that have unusual (i.e., chic) novel artistic

and visual elements designs and authentic presentation, they usually have a low degree of customer involvement. For example, Chanel's Facebook post runs as follows:

"*Preview of the Spring-Summer 2018 campaign by Karl Lagerfeld. The collection will be available in boutiques from March 2018".*

Consumers expressed 6.4K likes and made specific comments on their experience of art objects and expressions of arousal, and displayed specific attention to autunitic beauty details. For example, two of the immediate responses suggested:

(consumer A) *"Love this almost transparent serenely water colored 🫧divinely gorgeous bag!!! Can't wait to see it in March! Way better than the Rainbow Caviar collection!!! 🌈"*

*consumer B "Oh nice💋💋 Oh so Nice ❤️❤️❤️"*

Also, the aesthetic experience emerged from behind-the-screen or subtle-secrete cues, the background music, the video scenes, such as historical places or fashion show venues, and background pictures of brands, which gave followers a glimpse of the magic and discovery towards what cannot be seen every day: "*LOVE especially KL's photography!".* Although aesthetic experience also existed in high-street fashion brands, it was much less used than in luxury brands to the extent that it can be ignored. In this study, the social media luxury brands experience had aesthetic nature mirroring traditional luxury brands' authentic image.

The findings supported by previous studies recognized unity and prototypicality as significant visual features of product package design that generate aesthetic responses in consumers (Veryzer and Hutchinson, 1998), how the use of visual art on goods influences consumers' perception and evaluation of products (Hagtvedt and Patrick, 2008), and consumers' preferences for aesthetic color combinations (Deng at al., 2010).

### 3.9. Common Consumer Response Towards Fashion Brands Activities

#### 3.9.1. Customer-to Customer-Interaction (Socialization)

Customer to Customer Interaction is defined as "the transfer of information from one customer (or a group of customers) to another customer (or group of customers) in a way that has the potential to change their preferences, actual purchase behavior, or the way they further interact with others" (Libai et al., 2010, p. 269).

In this study, the customer-to-customer Interactions were the largest portion of produced comments. The interaction includes customers greeting Christmas and holidays wishes for brands and other fans, customers engaging in conversations about details of the brands' posts, discussing future plans for purchasing a brand's product or attending a brand's event, complaining about a brand's products and services and making personal jokes and talks. Thus, customer to customer Interaction refers to dialogues and conversations between two or more customers.

Therefore, it was proven in previous studies that customer engagement behaviors on social networking platforms are reflected in the action of like, comment and share brand contents (Dessart et al., 2015; Gummerus et al., 2012). Thus, Dessart et al. (2015) explicated that customer-generated comments on social media platforms can reflect customer's intrinsic level of enthusiasm towards the brand. Similarly, Ashley and Tuten (2015) stated that a customer's cognitive involvement in branded social media is associated with a customer's logic and emotion.

Accordingly, customer to customer interactions is the largest portion of customer responses shown up on social media platforms, which leads customers to build experience. More importantly, the dialogic created among the groups of fans shows that they formed social connections. Therefore, it is obvious that customers are more eager to interact with other customers who have similar interests, attitudes, or shopping experiences. When a customer writes a comment as a response to a brand-generated post, other customers join the discussion if the topic is related to them. Thus, this is consistent with previous studies, such as those of Libai et al. (2010) that emphasized the importance of customer-to-customer interactions on social media marketing activities in shaping the customer experience. As well as enhance the socialization among them (de Verise et al., 2017).

Moreover, customers may develop discussions from one topic to another distinctive topic in one co-created conversation. Thus, sometimes, a sling topic involves over 20 customers and attracts a hundred pieces of customer-generated comments. This was the case of L.V when it posted, for example, about the new ping-pong paddles:

"*The Art of Giving: from chic jump-ropes and notebooks to on-trend ping-pong paddles find the perfect Louis Vuitton gift at* http://on.louisvuitton.com/6186DGcPK"

For this post, around 2339 customer comments were generated on LV Facebook page; most of which are conversations between friends and fans about the product idea, holiday gifts, and plans. Although the majority of customers would like to interact with other customers as:

customer A *"Need who will give me iTunes gift card am in need of it" customer B reply "I don't mind buying a $5000 purse but $2000 for ping-pong paddles ðŸ˜,"*

others make Jokes about it:

*customer A "Reuben Amdur I knew there was something missing from my life and a Louis Vuitton skipping rope is definitely it" customer B reply "Brooke Holterhaus in case you're looking for a present for me, I'll take the jump rope this year. Ping pong paddles for B next year;-)"*

On the other hand, customers' interactions on high street fashion brands are more consensus complaints about the brands quality or services (see the complaint experience in section 3.10). Thus, there are only a few responses about the style's ideas:

Such as on Victoria Secret pages customer A *"rose gold victoria secret!!!!!! <3"*

*Customer B "OMG I want everything! Lol"*

H&M Customer *A"*Why *is your sale so inconsistent? I have bought some things in the shop but when I have checked your site to get them, the prices are higher. Some sale items are still showing at full price online but sale prices in the store".*

Customer B *"agree I got a skirt in sale yesterday in store for Â£9.99 and wanted another one store don't have it but online its £16.99 in the sale why? And that's excluding delivery"*

However, on H&M's page, customers were more into the conversation about the styles, specifically those suggested by the fashion editors and specialists:

Customer A: *"Samina Malik black shoes"*

*Customer "It looks so fine"*

### 3.9.2. Valance of Exchanged Information

Valance of information is defined as "the extent to which the information exchanged reflects positively or negatively on the product in question" (Adjei et al., 2010, p. 639). On social media fan pages, customers frequently like to share and convey their product experiences with other members of the brand community; they express their views and feelings (Algesheimer et al., 2005).

In this study, all customer responses are of two scenarios: either customers are pleased with a brand products' lines, expressing positive attitudes and affirmative sentiments toward it, or they distaste

the brands' product for an unpleasant experience, exhibiting negative attitudes or experience. Thus, valence embedded in customer-generated content can be understood as evaluations of a brand (Clemons et al., 2006; Liu, 2006).

Thus, positive and/or negative valence of customer-generated content drives consumer purchases (Pavlou and Dimoka, 2006). However, the brand generated content may exhibit a weaker convincing effect compared to the customer-generated content. Particularly, in the last decade, customers have established a trend to disbelieve or be doubtful about brand messages (Escalas, 2007). They feel that marketers would deceive them in order to increase purchases. Conversely, other customers have no reason for doing so; they lean to trust customer-generated content as they have similarities in the brand community such as interests, identities, and preferences for certain brands (Goh et al., 2013).

In this study, data analyzed indicates that both luxury and high street fashion brands received both positive and negative customer responses. The majority of positive valence is more towards the luxury brands; for example, only 129 negative comments were out of over 3K on Chanel pages. These include some customers complaining about services and the scarcity of communication on social media, and others expressing negative feedback about product quality less compared to old days collections. Similarly, on L.V pages, only 292 negative comments were out of almost 4K responses on both platforms. Thus, the negative comments were comparing L.V product quality with other luxury brands like Gucci and Chanel; an interesting negative conversation was criticizing L.V for exaggerating in producing silly products for a high price, such as key chains, card games, and ping pong paddles.

On the other hand, the negative valence is much more for the high street fashion brands. For example, Victoria Secret received around 155 negative comments. They mainly relate to comparing price, quality, and customer service. Similarly, H&M received the highest number of negative comments. Interestingly, friends' and crowds' comments made a difference; only friends' positive reviews and crowds' negative review were found to enhance posting from customers, as it was confirmed before by (Pan et al., 2018).

## 3.10. Consumer Response Towards High Street Brands Marketing Activities – Consumer Experiences

### 3.10.1. Customer Complain

Social media as a dynamic platform offers customers the opportunity for timeless complaining, which shapes their expectations towards communication with companies (Istanbulluoglu, 2017). In this study, in contrast to luxury brands customers' responses, customers' responses to high street fashion brands were upset about the brands' products and services. Customers' complaint experience includes complaining about the product quality, describing the sales as fake and deceiving. Also, it includes complaints about the lack of communication on the part of brands either on social media platforms or on the official website.

For example, on an H&M platform:

customer A "*Don't bother going to a store, your pay more for it ðŸ˜¡ and H&M don't care, Customer Service means nothing! Retain customer loyalty HA, they clearly have no understanding of this!"*

Customer B *"No reply still? Do you actually care about your customers??"*

Customer C *"Angry customer here. Your miss leading your customers, DO NOT BUY IN STORES as you pay double yet go online you pay half, manager said it to cover staff costs! I will be contacting trading standards".*

Customer D *"Exactly the same situation here - parcel due before Christmas and extra paid for delivery. Consistently chasing and receiving incorrect information. Maybe sort these orders out first"*

Similarly, Victoria Secret customers wrote:

Customer A *"Appalling!! I will never order on-line from them again. The returns process is shambolic and to be denied returning an order to store in this day and age with all this technology is ridiculous not customer friendly at all and a very poor customer experience!!"*

customer B *"Victoria's Secret I have messaged you with all of the details, my customer number, order date and number and the item numbers in question. Apparently, you reply 'almost instantly' but this is clearly not the case when can I expect to receive a helpful response? or better still a refund?!!!"*

It should be noted brands try to manage customers' complaints. Studies uncovered that when companies reply to consumer protests on social media, they naturally use multiple approaches,

such as directing the customer to another department or communication tool or requesting for further information (Einwiller and Steilen, 2015; Istanbulluoglu, 2017). However, such approaches are not usually valued and often annoy consumers.

### 3.10.2. Informative Experience

Informative experience is the essential cognitive dimension of customer online experience (Bleier et al., 2019). It assists consumers in making a purchase decision, which involves thinking and mental processes (Gentil et al., 2007). Furthermore, it was proved that in social media, informative and persuasive interactions from customer content equally influences consumers' purchases only when the persuasive interaction from brands' activities influences consumers' purchases (Goh et al., 2013).

In this study, customers acknowledge high street fashion brands' activities, which involve seeking information related to the product's availability, price and expressing style preferences. For example,

Customer A: on Victoria Secret "*Where can I get this skirt from?"*

Customer B*: "The red lace is sexy and lovely.How much please?"*

H&M customer A "*I am a 14 what size would u recommend buying? I am Ordering online*

Customer B *"Can you confirm whether you have sold out of this jumper in xs. I search the website, find it but then when I click on it to buy it says no items found??? Thanks"*

Therefore, even though social media pages provide customers with trendy information about the latest fashion collections and styles, customers' responses to luxury brands are totally different from those made to high street fashion brands. This proves that the brand nature, characteristics and customers interactions play an integral role in how customers view brands (Pentina et al., 2018; Desert et al., 2015).

## 3.11. Chapter Summary

This chapter presents the first study of this research. A real social media data was analyzed containing 392 post for luxury and high street fashion brands' on both Facebook and Twitter platforms, and almost 10,726 customers' responses to both brands categories. Using a qualitative study employing a grounded theory approach and abductive reasoning, data were analyzed manually line by line. The aim was to determine and provide an accurate understanding of customer brand experience within social media platforms. The comparison between fashion brands' categories enhances deep insights into the luxury brands uniqueness. This might be detrimental to luxury brands' image, which pertains to the creation of rare and exclusive brand experiences. Conversely, high street fashion brands try to elicit customers' purchasing behavior. Therefore, the analysis provided a deep understating of the brands' social media marketing activities, customer responses and interactions role in forming brand experience.

Existing studies are inconsistent in conducting consumer brand experience research, especially on social media platforms. Majority of studies are using brand experience construct of Brakues et al. (2009) without further investigation into what would an experience be like within social media. Moreover, studies considered experience as a mediator variable that influences the relationship between social media marketing activities and other behavioral outcomes (Yu et al., 2020; Zollo et al., 2020; Kafi and Marr, 2020). Others sometimes acknowledged brand experience as an antecedent of customer engagement and at times as a consequence of it (Ko et al., 2019; 2016; Lemon and Verhof, 2016; Brodie et al., 2013; Hollebeek, 2011).

This study for the first time identified and classified discrete luxury customer brand experience within social media types; demonstrated as specific consumer actions and their individual characteristics. Pervious literature that undertakes consumer participations in generating online content did not balance the composite motivational and evaluative combinations that explain specific behaviors and formulate the customer experience (Becker and Elina, 2020; Zha et al., 2020; Andreini et al., 2018; Muntinga et al., 2011).

In this study, the analysis of co-occurrences of brands activities and customer responses assists in identifying how luxury brand experience is formulated in light of brands activities and brand community actors' interactions. In the luxury context, prior studies examined singular behaviors and did not offer a categorization of social media experience or analyze how variety of activities

and diversity of community actors' interactions, effort, and creativity might affect the potential for brand experience cocreation.

The findings of this study contribute to luxury social media marketing and customer experience literature in different aspects. Firstly, it shows that brands' social media marketing activities are dynamic and vivid but also differ in relation to the brands' typology. Secondly, brand experience in social media platforms was identified for the first time and also differed in relation to the brands' typology. For luxury brands, fandom, aesthetic, immersive and informative experiences emerged, whilst for high street fashion brands, only informative and compiling experiences emerged. Furthermore, customer to customer interaction through dialogues and conversations largely stood out.

Thirdly, the results show that trendiness is the most frequent used activity of luxury brands, while the most frequent experience occurred is the fandom experience and the customers' interactions. Moreover, the new founded marketing activity, such as luxury curiosity creation and sensory marketing activity, have trigged customer experience. Although entertainment is considered a fundamental activity that motivates customers to engage with brands on social media, results show it is less frequently used on luxury and high street fashion brands pages. This might be because customers do consider brands' social media pages as entertainers, and more diversity in activities already embodied entertainment and attracts customers the most. Thus, it is important to mention that more than a single experience could occur as a response to one activity on a given post. This makes it more complicated to decide which is the most influential activity on generating experience. Finally, this study assists in building a conceptual framework of luxury brand experience on social media platforms.

Although this study's results provide useful insights into the brands' social media marketing activities and brand experience literature, understanding the specific influence of social media marketing on luxury brand experiences requires a quantitative approach to yield more insights into the current knowledge and practices. Moreover, developing a framework of luxury brand experience in social media will assist brands' communications strategies and proactively manages the consumer experience in the emerging omnichannel environment. More discussion of the study findings is provided in chapter five section 5.2.

# Chapter Four: Luxury Brand Experience in Social Media Platforms: A Quantitative Approach

## 4.1. Introduction

In the last decade, the presence of luxury brands on social media has gradually grown; as a result, doubling brands' revenues (Deloitte, 2019). Previous studies showed the impacts of social media on luxury brands, such as enhancing brands' equity, developing purchase intentions and customers' relationship with brands (Zollo et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2019; Godey et al., 2016; Kim and Ko, 2012). It was also shown that social media adds a positive value to luxury brands' strategy, which provokes customers' motivations to engage with their favourite brands, thus satisfying their affective, cognitive needs and pursuing enjoyment (Athwal et al., 2019; Phan, 2017; 2011). However, compared to other industries, the luxury sector still lacks a study of the full potential of social media.

In earlier research, several attempts have been made to address the influence of luxury social media marketing activities on consumer behavior. However, these can be criticised for many reasons, such as the consumer perceived activities and brands provided activities have not been exhaustively identified or distinguishably classified their role (Pentina et al., 2018; Hollebeek et al., 2014). Limited knowledge about how the perception of a brand on social media formulates brand experience (Ou et al., 2017). Less considerations have been devoted to the unique nature of luxury brands, such as luxury hedonism (i.e., aesthetically attractive) (Duong and Sung, 2021).

Existing studies focus on luxury marketing activities in general. Consequently, they neglect to explain specific customers' responses. Moreover, these responses are not empirically examined and nor represent the particular luxury brands typology. Thus, the literature has been too general, combining various contexts on social media and brands (Liu et al., 2019; Martín-Consuegra et al., 2019; Kefi and Maar, 2020; Kim and Ko, 2012). Therefore, there is scarce information on empirical and causal relationships that explain the phenomenon of luxury brand experience (Creevy et al., 2021; Pentina et al., 2018; Atwal and Williams, 2017; Batra and Keller, 2016; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016). the existing literature overuses students as samples for the study of luxury marketing (Kapferer and Valette-Florence, 2016).

In the previous chapter, the qualitative study of this thesis provided valuable insights into identifying the luxury social media marketing activities and emerging experience types. However, this chapter presents a quantitative study that aims at developing a framework to examine the

causal relations between the luxury brands' social media marketing activities and brand experience types. It empirically demonstrates the impact of customer-to-customer interactions on luxury brand experience, which incorporates the valance of exchanged information as a moderator. As the rapid proliferation of social media provided a new means of communication and interaction among customers and between customers and brands (Kefi and Maar, 2020; Pentina et al., 2018; De Versie et al., 2017), customers have demonstrated interactive, collaborative, and personalized interactions, which have recently changed the business game.

This chapter represents the design of the quantitative study of this thesis. Section 4.2 explains the development of the model hypothesis. Section 4.3 provides the research methodology and philosophy selected for the quantitative study. Sections 4.4 and 4.5 present the empirical study design, percipients and procedures. Section 4.6 and 4.7 discuss preliminary data screening and the measurement validation techniques. Section 4.8 outlines the method of analysis, hypothesis testing and data interpretation. Finally, Section 4.9 summarizes the chapter.

## 4.2. Integrated Model of Social Media Luxury Brand Experience and Hypothesis Development

Previous studies urge that further research efforts are needed to investigate luxury brand experience within social media platforms (Waqas et al., 2020; Zha et al., 2020; Ko et al., 2019; 2016; Arrigo, 2018; Pentina et al., 2018; Atwal and Williams, 2017; 2009; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016; Schmitt et al., 2014; Kim and Ko, 2012). Accordingly, the previous chapter conducted a qualitative study to explore the fashion brands' social media marketing activities across various brands levels and customers' responses on both Facebook and Twitter platforms to respond to these calls. As a result, insightful results emerged.

The findings of the qualitative study identified four types of luxury brands' social media marketing activities: curiosity creation, sensory marketing activity and trendiness. Moreover, the results specified four types of luxury brand experience on social media: fandom, immersive, informative, and aesthetic experience. Hence, customer-to-customer interactions in the form of conversation, socialization, and valence of exchanged information frequently emerged. Therefore, this study addresses the following research questions: (a) How do luxury social media marketing activities influence consumers' brand experiences? (b) How do consumer-to-consumer interactions influence the relationship between luxury brands' activities and types of consumer brand experiences on social media platforms?

Existing studies investigating brand experience have mainly focused on customers' sensations, feelings, cognitions, and behavioral responses concerning the brand evoked by brand-related stimuli, such as designs, colors, and communications (Schmitt et al., 2014; Iglesias et al., 2011; Brakus et al., 2009). The brand experience was shown to vary in strength and length (Brakus et al., 2009), and that the formulation of brand experience has elements of phases and consistency across contexts (Zha et al., 2020; Gabisch and Gwebu, 2011; Mascarenhas et al., 2006). Brand experience within social media platforms might include more than a single phase of the customer journey (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016; De Keyser et al., 2015). Some brand experiences can be perceived as ordinary and common (Carù and Cova, 2003), while others may be perceived as more robust and memorable (Pine and Gilmore, 1998).

The research proposes that value co-creation, a sort of collaboration executed by both company and customer jointly (Vargo and Lusch, 2014; Tynaan et al., 2010), might extend the brand-themed interactive experience of customers in the context of social media (Romero and Molina, 2011). However, it did indicate the value that customers add to other customers. Palmer (2010) advised that brand experience has non-linear features. Thus, customers could have a positive brand experience for novel stimuli in the social media environment since experience is unique to each actor who encounters the brand. The social media marketing activity of luxury fashion brands elicit values that can be reached by direct and indirect brand experience (Pentina et al., 2018; Kim and Ko, 2012)

In line with the luxury brands' definition by Tynan et al. (2010), luxury is viewed as "high quality, expensive and nonessential products and services that appear to be rare, exclusive, prestigious, and authentic and offer high levels of symbolic and emotional/hedonic values through customer experiences" (p. 1158). Thus, in their assessment of luxury brand value, Tynan et al. advocate the psychological continuum with luxury brands and the common at its extremes. However, they did not determine whether those values generate engagement on social media. The experiential aspects of this definition convey a service-dominant logic perspective (Vargo and Lusch, 2008; 2004), giving to which consumers recognise and create value when consuming products or services. In this essence, the firms' position is to provide consumers with resources for usage (Grönroos, 2008).

An extension to the previous background, customer-to-customer interactions explained in the Customer Dominant Logic (CDL) presented by Heinonen et al. (2013) as a new ontological view

of the Service-Dominant logic theory. The CDL concerns the significance of value formed within experience and practice positioned in and affected by customers' own social settings, reasonably than firms-to-customer co-creation of service-related value from the business's perspective only (Heinonen and Strandvik, 2015; Heinonen et al., 2013). Thus, Rihova et al. (2018) posit that online contact can accelerate mediating customer to customer co-creation and urge the emergence of a social community that is more encouraging to functional and networking value outcomes.

In this essence, it is justifiable that brand communities or brands' fan pages are becoming the rich source that allows followers and customers to derive content and co-create value (Gho et al., 2013; Leeflang et al., 2013; Libai et al., 2010). However, that led brands to lose the power of control over the content being produced on their pages (Gensler et al., 2013). Therefore, the content created by customers is becoming much more influential than the brands' content itself (Alexander and Jaakkola, 2016). Furthermore, the role of consumers in co-creating brands through social media platforms is elevated by social media's availability and accessibility, relative continuation, and the exponential chance to the messages to be viral (Hennig- Thurau et al., 2010). Thus, customers' behaviors that are creative, powerfully participative, and more social might reveal stronger and unique associations attributed to the brand (Pentina et al., 2018).

Social media assists in presenting the brand and demonstrates its value to customers, evoking a multi-dimensional experience that turns beyond a mere transmission of information (Zha et al., 2020; Atwal and Williams, 2017; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016). Thus, a clear strategy is needed to improve customers' experience and perceptions of luxury brands on social media. The experiential marketing approach facilitates planning the marketing strategies by connecting customers and considering how social media platforms change the luxury brand experience (Arrigo, 2018; Phan et al., 2011).

Drawing on the literature from the consumer experience, luxury brand, and social media marketing, this thesis tries to develop a luxury brand experience framework, particularly the role of consumer-to-consumer interactions in forming a luxury brand experience.

### 4.2.1. Social Media Marketing Activities and Luxury Brand Experience

Social media platforms facilitate marketing activities that enable brands, customers, and fans to share and exchange ideas, information, and emotions. It gives brands a prospect to reduce misinterpretation and prejudice toward them, which may elevate the brand value (Kim and Ko,

2012). Meanwhile, customers' brand experience is anticipated to be influenced by their view of the brand's utilitarian and hedonic values (Ko et al., 2019; Atwal and Williams, 2017) and other community actors (Pentina et al., 2018). Thus, the predominant exchanges between luxury brands and community actors are facilitated through utilising the interaction, which is default technical features provided by social media platforms, such as likes, shares, comments, that lead maintain customers to be acknowledged with the brand's daily updates (de Varies et al. 2017; Hamilton et al., 2016).

Brand-related components comprise brand identity, design, marketing communications and retail environments at each moment of customer contact with a brand (Yu et al., 2020). The multi-dimensional and complex nature of luxury brands made communications strictly controlled by the firms as they traditionally target high-class society members and emphasise exclusivity and uniqueness (Okonkwo, 2009). Luxury brands face an imperative situation of having an active presence on social media platforms due to consumer input interaction and integration (Pentina et al., 2018). However, luxury brands' integrity must be maintained in an era where consumer-generated content plays a dominant role (Kwon et al., 2017).

Traditionally, customers create a brand experience when they expenditure a brand and tell others about their expectations and experience related to brand information, campaigns, and events (Mathew and Thomas, 2018). However, in the era of social media, the brands' purpose is to bond with the customers as they learn about the brand based on a positive customer experience (Ha and Perks, 2005). Thus, Muntinga et al. (2011) suggest different levels of brand-related interactions on social media. Firstly, people may simply ingest content provided by brands, such as brands' posts. Secondly, they feed the brand-related content by conversing with other community members by liking or commenting on its posts. Thirdly, they create brand-related content by generating their own branded content, such as reviews and preferences. These three social media stimuli from both companies and consumers often simultaneously influence consumer decision-making processes, either consciously or unconsciously (Kotler and Keller, 2016). Schmitt (1999) argued that experiential marketing explains customers' direct and indirect interaction with varied stimuli to convey the customer's sensory, emotional, cognitive, behavioural, and relational values. A multisensory brand experience facilitates customers' value creation and indicates how they respond when interacting with the brand (Hultén, 2011). Hence, the experience might have varied types across contexts and business practices.

Furthermore, interpersonal interaction is the primary reason for value co-creation (Trudeau and Shoberiri, 2016). When customers interact with one another on brand communities on social media platforms, they build a consistent experience. These interactions are the reference point of the value co-creation process among customers, where the brand experience is created (Yu et al., 2020; Elliot et al., 2013). Thus, in the social media context, brands and customer roles are jointly equal, informing and constructing the experience through constant interactions and cooperation with one another and with other community actors (Holmqvist et al., 2020b; Reanjan and Read, 2016).

Luxury brands have the capacity to provide an outstanding experience, for the unique characteristics of luxury brands, such as poly-sensuality, heritage and prestigious (Dubois et al., 2001), allow luxury brands to offer a rich opportunity for cultural diversity, status enhancement and aesthetic pleasure and emotions (de Kerviler and Rodriguez, 2019). Noteworthy that it is not one-to-one equivalence that a particular stimulus mode would only elicit a specific experience type and a particular dimension (Brakus et al., 2009).

### *Curiosity Creation activity and Luxury Brand Experiences*

In human psychology, people tend to escape boredom to new forms of stimulation and strive to encounter new experiences (Berlyne, 1950a). Causal an impulse to avoid boredom lies a variety of activities highly cherished by society. Thus, natural curiosity is the basis of humans' achievements. Thus, the reaction to novelty stimuli can solve the curiosity of issues (Berlyne, 1950b), which could deliver a new experience (Okazaki et al., 2019). However, the stimuli prompting curiosity must be attractive to humans to arouse their curiosity efficiently (Loewenstein, 1994).

Curiosity triggers an individual's assessment for acquiring new information. It reveals an intrinsic human desire for different information to excite interest or resolve uncertainty, provoked by novel, complicated, or ambiguous stimuli, thus motivating exploratory behaviours (Collins et al., 2004; Litman et al., 2005). People with superior curiosity tend to pursue more stimulating experiences (Litman and Spielberger, 2003). Furthermore, Litman and Jimerson (2004) claim that there are individualistic disparities in emotions that humans' experience when their curiosity is being provoked. Some reflect on the pleasant feeling of interest, and others could have an unpleasant experience because of uncertainty. Furthermore, curiosity could be formed as a stable trait in

humans, which varies depending on people or can occur due to a situational cue (such as a particular stimulus might trigger it) (Gerrath and Biraglia, 2021).

Social media is characterised by an extreme information stream and a rich and dynamic market universe (Morgan-Thomas and Veloutsou, 2013). This fact is contradictory to the nature of luxury brands, which are categorised as scarce, exclusive, and maintaining a distance between the brand and customers, presenting an interesting gap (Holmqvist et al., 2020a; Athwal and Harris, 2018; Kapferer and Bastien, 2009; Dubois and Paternault, 1995). The perceived rarity of a luxury brand is why brands are perceived as valuable by consumers, thus enhancing experience towards the secretive nature of these brands (Athwal et al., 2019; Ameldoss and Jain, 2005).

In the qualitative part of this thesis, findings have shown the discrepancy between the luxury exclusivity and the brands' presence on social media platforms simplified in a novel stimulus. The activities generated by luxury brands on social media are perceived as visually complex and ambiguous stimuli. These include, for example, providing incomplete information (i.e., mysterious future fashion events) or fractions of information in a series of steps (i.e., the behind senses workshops) ( Müller et al., 2017; Hill et al., 2016). These activities induce curiosity and motivate customers to have the desire for exploration of these novel activities (Jirout and Klahr, 2012), for customers seeking novelty check when confronting new objects and then evaluate if there is a mystery, contradictory, or unpredicted element; in doing so, they become more curious (Silvia, 2005; Scherer, 2001). The more curious consumers are, the higher their explorative behaviour becomes, for they desire different experiences. Furthermore, Berger and Packard (2018) found that surprising, strange brands content is preferred and admired more common ones, especially when difference matters to customers. Hence, inquisitive customers desire new experiences (Silvia, 2005).

Previous research proposes that when a consumers' curiosity is aroused, it initiates affective and cognitive processes. Studies agree that curiosity arouses positive emotions (Noordewier and Van Dijk, 2017; Hill et al., 2016) and a positive mood (Ruan et al., 2018), while cognitive results can be solved by exploring, information-seeking (Menon and Soman, 2002), and curiosity resolve processes (Noseworth et al., 2014). Thus, consumers consider curiosity a motivating state when mystery cues are given (Menon and Soman, 2002). Furthermore, when customers are unaware of evaluating ambiguous and novel stimuli (Forgas, 1995), they depend on the affective state of

curiosity provoked by the mysterious appeal to value their experience with the appeal more than merely exploring information.

This study argues that luxury brands' activities with a mysterious appeal stimulate customer affective and cognitive states. Therefore, the gap of given information triggers customers to search more and get immersed into the brands' activity, well-crafted imagery and even joyous to spend time on this gap and forget oneself while surfing social media. This activity influences their immersive brand experience of luxury brands; the immersion state would be mainly distinguished when customers become absorbed into a novel stimulus. Thus, immersion is the critical element of consumers' intensity perception and imagination of the experience-driven by a particular context. It reshapes the reality perceptions of human beings and causes consumers to suspend their knowledge.

At the same time, customers try to evaluate the expectations towards luxury brands and the fragmented information by sharing and challenging them with their peer fans on social media platforms. As brands' fans are highly affected by other fans, and their shared posts become more popular (de Vries et al., 2017; 2012), luxury brands' activities, which have mysterious stimuli, will trigger customers and the curiosity of somewhat familiar customers with items is likely to arise. This evidence posits that posted information by a customer belonging to a membership group will be more likely to elicit others' curiosity. Thus, curiosity leads to an enhanced fandom experience of luxury brands.

This study argues that luxury brands' secretive and authentic activities are perceived as curiosity-creation activities that trigger and enhance the brand experience. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

*H1: A curiosity creation marketing activity has a positive effect on consumer (a) fandom experience (b) informative experience (c) immersive experience (d) aesthetic experience*

### *Sensory Marketing Activity and Luxury Brand Experiences*

Sensory marketing is characterised by combing experiential, relational and transactional approaches (Hultén, 2015). It focuses on humans' senses and affects their perceptions, judgments, and behaviours (Krishna, 2011). Hirschman and Holbrook’s (1982) study proposed that the factors activating experience are two: the exteroceptive when the external environment stimuli evoke

human senses and the interoceptive when the internal body-mind processes multisensory images, fantasies and feelings aroused. Therefore, the external environment stimulus can be considered a code of brand meaning that aims to communicate customers' senses (Hultén, 2011) and is a crucial element in how the brands are perceived and experienced.

Consequently, a deep connection between brands and customers can be developed when their brand experiences are stimulated through multi-senses, strengthening the cognitive brand connections in their minds (Wallpach and Kreuzer, 2013). Therefore, marketers deploy sensory stimuli to trigger customers' experiences, which convey the brand to be closer and retained in the consumer's memory (Hultén, 2011). For memory subconscious, sensory stimuli transfer the abstracted notion of the brand, such as classiness, quality, and elegance, to customers (Krishna, 2011). Thus, customers perceive visual and audio stimulation and create a reflective attachment to the brand (Brakus et al., 2009; Schmitt, 1999). In this essence, the base of all consumer experiences integrates sensory inputs that influence further judgment and behaviour (Krishna, 2012).

Social media enables luxury brands to create content that features the details of their products. This critical interactive feature of social media facilities brands management and comminutions (Kefi and Maar, 2020; Chu et al., 2013). Therefore, a primary luxury brands' communicative strategy is providing sensory cues, including brands' beauty of designs and colours, the authentic history of brand presence combined with symbolic values over functional characteristics (Dubois et al., 2001; Lee et al., 2018). All of these provide consumers with unique brand associations. Furthermore, these sensory cues differentiate brands, enhancing premium prices and inferring competitive advantages (Elder et al., 2017). Moreover, sensory appealing luxury brand messages formulate perceptions of luxury and exclusivity, elevating consumers' affinity with brands (Phan et al., 2011; Keller, 2009).

It is noteworthy that the online brand environment is an extension of the offline embodiment, where interaction between brands, customers and other actors occur virtually. In this online environment, senses are still affected, and customers' cognition still operates the pattern of the sensory system (Niedenthal et al., 2005). The simultaneous response of the sensory receptors can significantly connect customers more emotionally with the given brand (Turley and Milliman, 2000). Thus, perception of a pleasant aesthetic stimulus is part of the sensory attractiveness (Schmitt, 1999). While the online environment limits the fullest sensory capacity, still sensations

can be aroused through imagery and auditory content (e.g., pictures, videos, music) (Elder et al., 2017).

The superior advantage of luxury brands over others is providing consumers with an emotional, distinguished, entertaining and overall positive experience through multisensory communications (Kapferer and Bastien, 2012; Okonkwo, 2009). In fact, within social media, the fashioned images, symbolic, and sounds have been indicated to influence consumers' preferences and experiences at the neurological level (Hultén, 2015; 2011). Thus, luxury brands on social media present an exclusive image and protect it (Atwal et al., 2018).

Furthermore, sensory stimuli can influence all experiences at once (Kapferer and Laurent, 2016). For example, the sensory stimulus is foundational to aesthetic experience, with a cognitive elaboration (Krishna et al., 2010). In addition, Berlyne (1974) stated that feeling with a sense leads to forming an aesthetic experience blending sensory perceptions, emotions, and judgments. Thus, the sensory cues embedded in brands products and services provide a value proposition.

Similarly, previous research indicates that well-crafted visual characters could shape the online experience immersive, pleasant, and more amusing (Rose et al., 2012; Varadarajan et al., 2010; Childers et al., 2001). Consumer perceptions towards the brands' effectiveness increase with the perceived impact of the sensory stimuli. Chu et al. (2013) stated that luxury activities on social media that consumers perceived positively result in a positive behavioural outcome (e.g., clicking and seeking more information). Consequently, experiential stimuli increase customers' sensory quest for more. Thus, using multisensory cues could overstimulate consumers senses (Carù and Cova, 2006), for assessing brands designs is performed with consumers' acumen and experience (Bloch, 1995).

Similarly, Schmitt (1999) states that experiential attributes entailing value can reward the inferiority of products' function (Brakus et al., 2009). It includes the sensory clues of the brand, such as colours, smells and shapes (Degeratu et al., 2000; Bone and Ellen, 1999; Veryzer and Hutchinson, 1998). Meanwhile, luxury brands' designs are originally artistic and authentic**,** and social media presentations. Luxury art is connected with the cultural heritage and includes associations of refinement, and luxury characterises an extraordinary pursuit for excellence and improved creativity and inspiration. Thus, it can be argued that sensory marketing enhances all luxury brand experience types on social media platforms.

*H2: A sensory marketing activity has a positive effect on consumer (a) fandom experience, (b) informative experience, (c) immersive experience (d) aesthetic experience.*

### *Trendiness Marketing Activity and Luxury Brand Experiences*

Social media is becoming the trendy communication channel that facilities exchanging knowledge, which is the primary motivation for customers' engagement and interaction (Hollebeek et al., 2019b). People have the opportunity to gain infinite information from all community actors, including brands, other customers, and even celebrities (Choi et al., 2017). Therefore, consumers frequently perceive social media as a trustworthy and low-cost resource of information more than other communication channels (Boardman, 2018; Mangold and Faulds, 2009), for they can be exposed to both firms and customers content (Godey et al., 2016). Thus, the more customer is provided with attribute information, product evaluations and purchase decisions are more likely to increase

Trendy information on social media platforms provides the recent brands' news. Customers are motived to follow such news, with their motivations consisting of surveillance, knowledge, pre-purchase information, and inspiration (Muntinaga et al., 2011). Surveillance refers to customers' observations to remain up to date with the social environment. Knowledge indicates the brand-related information that customers gain from others' experiences. Pre-purchase information include brands' reviews or threats produced by others on brand communities. Finally, inspiration occurs when consumers obtain new ideas. Thus, brand category matters in the perceived experience that consumers gain through this available information.

Experiences and information are two faces for the same coin. Experience can consider the basis for elaborative information processing, resulting in brand-related connotations (Keller, 1993). Throughout the experience, customers are encompassed by external reference points (e.g., brand environments, other customers, peer influences) that may affect the process of experience formation (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016). Thus, this conjunction of obtained information can be combined into a brand experience (Brakus et al., 2009). Furthermore, during the process of sharing information, customers evaluate the experience through gaining knowledge and then generating new value calls, and brands produce new opportunities out of these value co-creation cycles (Payne et al., 2008).

The advantage of social media is providing long-term brand information exposure. When customers gain information consistently, their brand experience and confidence in brand attitudes are escalated. Conversely, inconstant brand experience produces conflicting information and responses (Yu et al., 2020). Thus, fans' willingness to share and discuss a common topic with others can be enhanced when the information is helpful to them and their friends (Huang and Chen, 2018).

In the qualitative study of this thesis, findings indicate that trendiness is a common fashion brands activity for both luxury and high street fashion brands. However, this luxury brand activity enchants the value of luxury more than persuading customers to buy products, often such as “latest fashion collection” “holiday season gift” “brands news” and “celebrity presenting the brands latest outfit ideas” and presenting innovative, high-quality videos, photos and music. Therefore, luxury brands have a unique personality on social media platforms, just like offline stores. This fact is in line with Lee et al. (2018), who state that the content of the brand's personality increases customers' engagement more than the merely informative content, which might be associated with lower levels of engagement. Hence, people gain information through their senses, which then is coded into a familiar pattern independent of the form in which the information was initially obtained (Krishna et al., 2014). enhances customers' perception of the arts and the fascination stimulus of brands' trends, which formulate their aesthetic brand experience on social media platforms. This obtained knowledge enhances customers' informative brand experience.

Luxury brands provide consumers and non-consumers with trendy information on social media, thus assisting them in shaping their brand experiences, such as being among the first to recognise brand updates and fashion trends, being aware of specific product information before the purchase and enjoying hot community conversations about the brand (Penatia et al., 2018). Therefore, instant trends conveyance and easy accessibility to various perspectives might confirm customers prior expectations, leading to a positive effect (Park and Lee, 2005). Thus, the trendiness activity on social media plays a key role in creating experiences and promoting positive attitudes toward luxury brands (Arrigo, 2018).

Given the importance of trendiness, this study hypotheses the following:

*H3: Trendiness activity has a positive effect on (a) informative experience and (a) aesthetic experience compared to (c) fandom experience and (d) immersive experience.*

### 4.2.2. The Mediation Effect of Consumer Socialization

Brand social media communications are interactive and experiential in nature, allowing consumers to establish a dialogue with brands and others in the community (Muntinga et al., 2011). Over the last decade, research focused more on the critical role of social interaction and firms' engagement with consumers through social media platforms (Lin et al., 2015; Habib et al., 2014; Hollebeek et al., 2014). In the luxury context, studies focused on addressing customers' motivations to interact on such brands pages or show particular behaviours, such as retweeting brand messages (Kim et al., 2014) or repeatedly visiting the brand's page (Jin, 2012). However, they did not shed light on customers' conversations on these pages, significantly influencing customers and other community actors.

Previous research investigated motivations and ways that luxury customers are usually involved with brands on social media platforms. For example, Pentina et al. (2018) explored distinctive customer engagement behaviors directed to a brand, such as "following main pages" or directed to other customers (e.g., sharing posts). Also, Kwon et al. (2017) initiate the expression of "social media advocacy behavior's" that meaningful interactions with the brand content (i.e., liking, commenting, and sharing) and focus on the essential provocations that lead people to engage in SABs (e.g., self-enhancement, community identification). Furthermore, social media platforms have given the power to people to involve more with brands through dynamic co-creators' roles or demolishers of firms' value (Van Doorn et al., 2010; Verhoef et al., 2010). Thus, this made it necessary for businesses to comprehend customers' experiences through customer-brand interactions on social media (Zah et al., 2020; Ko et al., 2019, 2016; Choi et al., 2016).

Based on the findings of this thesis's qualitative study, customer-to-customer interactions frequently emerge in the form of customers' conversating and socializing about the brands' activities, products and services, personal information and experience. Thus, socializing might be considered a contributing activity, for it postulates an outstanding means for customers to interact with others by chatting about the brand (de Vries et al., 2017) and express themselves and their experiences. Furthermore, customer socialization refers to "staying in touch or communicating with people with the same interests as well as feeling connected to others" (de Vries et al., 2017, p. 274). Thus, social interactions are related to knowledge sharing behaviors (Chiu et al., 2006). Moreover, people interact with others to achieve a sense of belonging (Phan et al., 2011). Thus,

fans formulate social ties in social media platforms and consider them an interpersonal form of communication.

Previous luxury studies paradigms are oriented towards how brands activities can attract customers, influence their behaviors and improve the brands' performance (Liu et al., 2019; Godey et al., 2016; Kim and Ko, 2012). However, the emergence of Customer-Dominant Logic (CDL) provides a new perspective to marketing literature, emphasizing the importance of a consumer-centric view, which can assist in understanding customers' logic, customers' value formation processes, and customers' presence in an ecosystem (Rihova et al., 2018; Heinonen and Strandvik, 2015; Tynan et al., 2014; Heinonen et al., 2010). Thus, firms should reevaluate their role, and their core activities should involve customers in a purposeful dialogue (Ramaswamy and Gouillart, 2010). Thus, this study sheds light on the impacts of customer socialization on the relationships between luxury brands' activities and consumer brands experience on social media platforms.

There are complex motivations behind initiating conversations and exchanging opinions, which constitute informational, social, and self-expressions needs (de Vries et al., 2017; Belk, 2013). Consumers require feedback from other community members to assure themselves that the social reference shares their experience of the brand, thus satisfying their desires for trendy information, social support, self-presentation, feeling of belongingness and identification within the social group (Mandler et al., 2019; Pentina et al., 2018; de Versie et al., 2017). For example, when customers are interested in the luxury brand’s social media activities and communicate with the brands and peers, their interest in its purchase intentions increases (Kim and Ko, 2012; Wang et al., 2012).

Furthermore, Pentina et al. (2018) state that luxury brands' benefits from the continuous informal conversations of consumers on social media are indisputable. These include building and maintaining relationships, generating new product ideas, spreading marketing messages widely, and improving customer service. That leads to a deep understanding of the target market. However, brands’ limited power of controlling user-generated content might be dangerous for the brand’s image (Gensler et al., 2013), where luxury brands are concerned about their prestige and psychological distance with customers (Dion and Borraz, 2017).

Also, interactivity in social media platforms offer opportunities to customers. Openness to brands’ information enables customers to gain deep knowledge and develop emotions. According to Chu

et al. (2019), consumers could post product features, exchange opinions, and share their brand experiences with other customers. Thus, most customers highly value peer advice, as they believe that peer customers have similarities in thoughts and beliefs (de Versie, 2017). Through these interactive experiences, consumers build their preferences and purchasing decisions (Phua et al., 2017; Chen et al., 2014). Thus, facilitating customer-to-customer interactions is an effective technique to deliver a superior brand experience.

However, managers must ensure that the brand's core identity is safe and that no harmful effect results from these interactions (Trudeau and Shobeiri, 2016). Furthermore, contributing to firm-initiated activities in social media frequently needs the effort to interact, which could influence the customer perception of values (Quach et al., 2019). However, prior studies failed to explain the influence of customers in a broader network, including friends, family or other potential customers (Ko et al., 2019; Atwal and Willams, 2017; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016; Rishika et al., 2013; Van Doorn et al., 2010).

Interactions amongst brands communities are a fundamental feature of the multi-actor service encountering (Alexander et al., 2018; McColl-Kenned et al., 2015). However, this aspect is almost totally overlooked in luxury literature. Luxury brands lean to be precautious towards customers' interactions in their boutique's stores (Dion and Borraz, 2017). However, prior research pointed out the remunerations of typical hedonism in luxury (Holmqvist et al., 2020) and joyfulness in customer-to-customer interactions could enhance the experience (Ludwig et al., 2017). Thus, social media platforms allow the marketing of luxury brands to evolve extensively and give rise to the *masstige* phenomenon, which stems from the aggregative democratization of luxury consumption (Quach et al., 2019; Chandon et al., 2016; Roper et al., 2013).

This study argues that the luxury brands' activities with curious cues and ambiguous appeals provoke the social influence of community members to enhance each other's curiosity. Thus, related information posted by other customers or fans of the brand community may increase customers' curiosity, as people belong to a brand community, which supports them in constructing their self-concept and facilitates their decision-making (Giakoumaki and Krepapa, 2020; Thomas and Vinuales, 2017). Simultaneously, customers engage in social media to satisfy a curiosity about others (Urista et al., 2009). Therefore, curiosity is contagious among customers; for example, in

study one of this thesis, findings show that customers share thrilling feelings and excitement to learn about the mysterious luxury brand events and dream of being a part of it.

The luxury curious novel content provokes customers' attention and triggers information processing in customers minds' (Kashdan et al., 2009). Thus, the curious behavior leads to restoring customers' cognition and perceptual coherence. Simultaneously, the novelty of luxury properties may challenge customers' existing knowledge, for they become more enquiring and fascinated in exploring beyond when the stimuli do not convene their expectations, or they perceive it as new (Gerrath and Biraglia, 2021). Therefore, the context communicated by the properties symbolically matters (Blijlevens and Hekkert, 2019) for customers utilise brands to express something about themselves and derive social information about their relationships with others (Kleine et al., 1993).

The sensory marketing activity can enhance customer interactions differently. Dhaoui and Webster (2020) state that photos and videos of brands prompt customers to reply on social media platforms and give rise to more customer engagements and interactions. Brands' sensory stimuli can capture individuals' attentiveness and decreases other provocations from attaching to the customers' mind (Biocca and Delaney, 1995), which can affect the customer more on the individual's level, and may postulate aesthetic pleasure and enjoyment (Schmitt, 1999). These sensory stimuli distinguish the brand in consumers' minds and affect consumers' emotional states (Hultén, 2011). This argument aligns with Baumgartner et al. (2006) that harmonious visual and audio stimuli spontaneously arouse durable feelings and experiences.

Luxury brands' trendiness marketing activity can increase customers' socialization. Dolan et al. (2016) argued that trendy brands' information content on social media could drive consumers to engage. Luxury brands can foster customers levels of engagement in brands' pages by designing content features, such as the amount of information, vividness, and interactivity (Pentina et al., 2018; de Vries et al., 2012). Thus, Jahn and Kunz (2012) argue that content might be varied and impact different levels. For example, this content can be functional/hedonic oriented, enhancing informative and aesthetic experiences. Alternatively, it can be relationship-oriented, such as interactions with brands and other brand communities, or self-oriented content that leads customers to express themselves, enhancing fandom and immersive experience. Thus, consumers' evaluation

and purchase intention are based on brand information obtained through multiple experiences (Rovai, 2018).

When customers get involved in a luxury brand community, this process includes the actions of sharing, learning, co-creating, advocating, and socializing (Leban et al., 2020; Brodie et al., 2013). The mutual characteristics can increase the tendency of customers of the same interest to connect in the social relations that might formulate their experience in brand pages. These customers might consistently visit the page to privilege all social, informative, and symbolic available resources. Thus, people participate in brand communities that they experienced through the brand, and they want to share their experience with them, perceive them as complected, and learn more about them from all community actors (Wirtz et al., 2013). These facilities prospect relationships and deliver emotional attachment towards the brands, thus enhancing a customer desire to develop a closer relationship with it, eventually enhancing the customer brand experience. Therefore, this study hypothesizes the following relationships:

*H4: Customers' socialization strongly mediates the relationship between curiosity creation activity, (a) fandom experience and (b) immersive experience.*

*H5: Customers' socialization strongly mediates the relationship between sensory marketing activity, (a) fandom experience and (b) immersive experience.*

*H6: Customers' socialization strongly mediates the relationship between trendiness, (a) fandom experience and (b) immersive experience.*

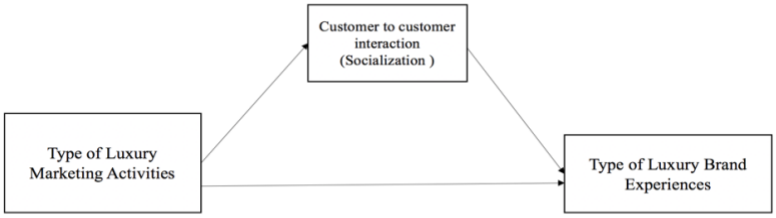



**Figure (4-1): The Study Framework of Luxury Brand Activities on Brand Experiences**

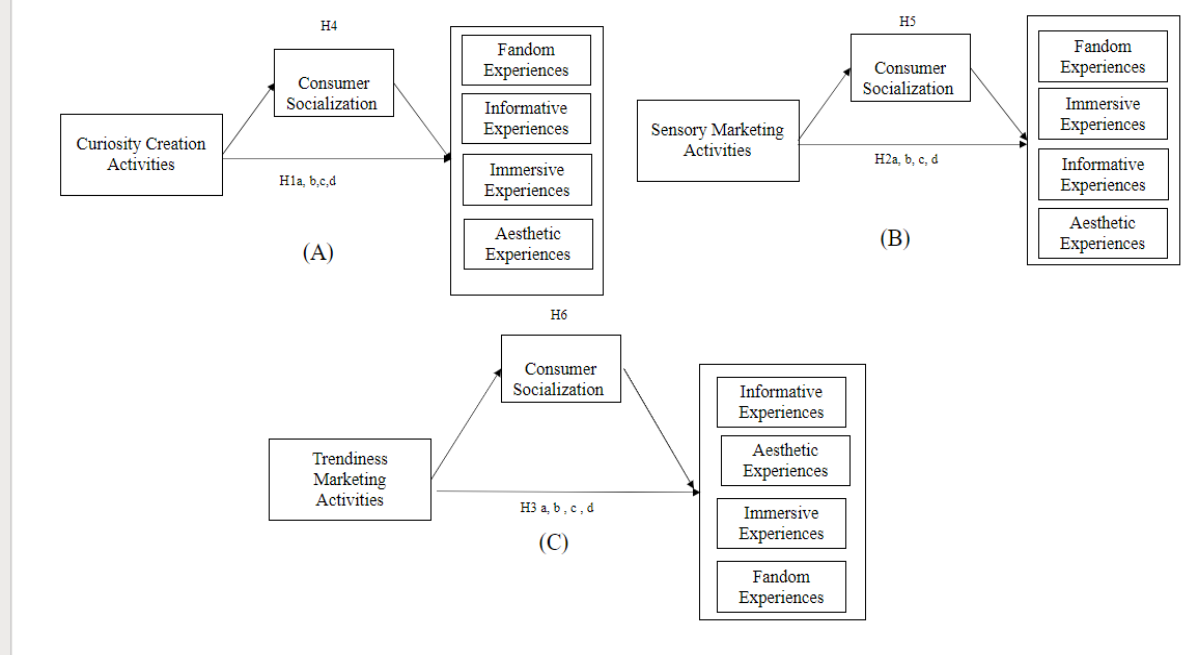



**Figure (4-2): The Mediation Model of SMM Activity Types on Luxury Brands Experience**

### 4.2.3. The Effect of Valence of Exchanged Information in Consumer Brand Experiences

Furthermore, the valence of exchanged information stood out during conversations on luxury brands' fan pages in the findings of the qualitative study of this thesis. Both positive and negative conversations were frequently exchanged. Valence can be defined as "the extent to which the information exchanged reflects positively or negatively customers' judgment of the product or service in question" (Adjei et al., 2010, p. 639).

Previous studies found that consumers are more likely to share their opinion when they have positive sentiments about products (Adjei et al., 2010). Message valence (positive vs negative) focuses on the customer's persuasive motivation to post, which will affirm the efficiency of the message for varied audiences. That leads to the ability of the content message to generate psychological effects, such as enhancing interests or emotions (Friestad and Wright, 1994). However, message valance will be less important when individuals expect other community members to accommodate contradictory views (Mathwick et al., 2008)

Furthermore, Message valence is a highly explored content variable in online communities (Godes and Silva, 2012; Moe and Schweidel, 2012). Whether the customers' message is positive or negative is affected by consumption experience, social community, and personal objectives. For

example, message valence can replicate satisfaction (Athwal et al., 2019; Anderson, 1998), the others' evaluations on the platforms (Moe and Schweidel, 2012), or self-enhancement aims (de varies et al., 2017). Thus, people pursue to reach out to similar companions with the ones who feel a sense of belonging as community members. However, Bronner and de Hoog (2010) found that sentiment frequencies may differ considering factors like the type of consumers sharing their opinions.

Consumers often share and convey their experiences with others in the brand community, articulating their opinions, feedback, and feelings (Algesheimer et al., 2005). The customer judgment is based on their experience with the brands; if they are satisfied, they may express favorable attitudes. On the other hand, if they have disappointed, they could express negative attitudes. Hence, this valence rooted in customer-generated content can be interpreted as their general brand appraisals (Liu, 2006). Thus, it either drives or impedes customers' purchase decisions (Goh et al., 2013).

The massages valance (positive vs negative) differs from messages' volume (frequencies) are summarized in the motivation and the effect of each of them. Previous studies concentrated on the quantitative properties (e.g., review volume and rating) of customer-generated content, which is motivated by remuneration and influences aggregate economic outcomes. (Goh et al., 2013). However, understanding the modes of social communications, what matters is the message valance, which is motivated by persuasion and influences customers' experience (Kumar et al., 2016). Thus, this matches the reaction with the luxury brands content strategy, which is more in nurturing relations with the audience through high-quality content than selling brands products.

Furthermore, in social media, messages valence gives rise to emotional contagion among the brands' community members, leading them to express their experiences. Ferrara and Yang (2015) suggested that a communal mechanism of social contagion exists, regulating negative and positive emotions. Thus, there is a direct relationship between the average emotional valence of a stimulus to which customers are exposed and the responses that they produce on social media platforms.

In luxury settings, the attributes of the brand value could match the consumers' needs, which, in turn, drive consumers to participate in the luxury brand community. Thus, consumers' experience of the brand is being actualized (Das et al., 2019). Furthermore, Tynan et al. (2010) confirmed that

personalized brand experiences and further interactions between brand community actors assist in differentiating the luxury brand and co-create superior value propositions.

After outlining the prospective benefits of customer-to-customers interactions, particularly socialization in the luxury brands setting, this study argues that social media can boost and further enhance these interactions. The valance of exchanged information interactions can be more critical in luxury contexts. This leads to the following hypothesis:

*H7: Valence of exchanged information is differently moderating the mediation effect of socialization on the relationship between (a) curiosity creation activity, (b) sensory marketing activity, and (c) trendiness marketing activity and fandom experience .*

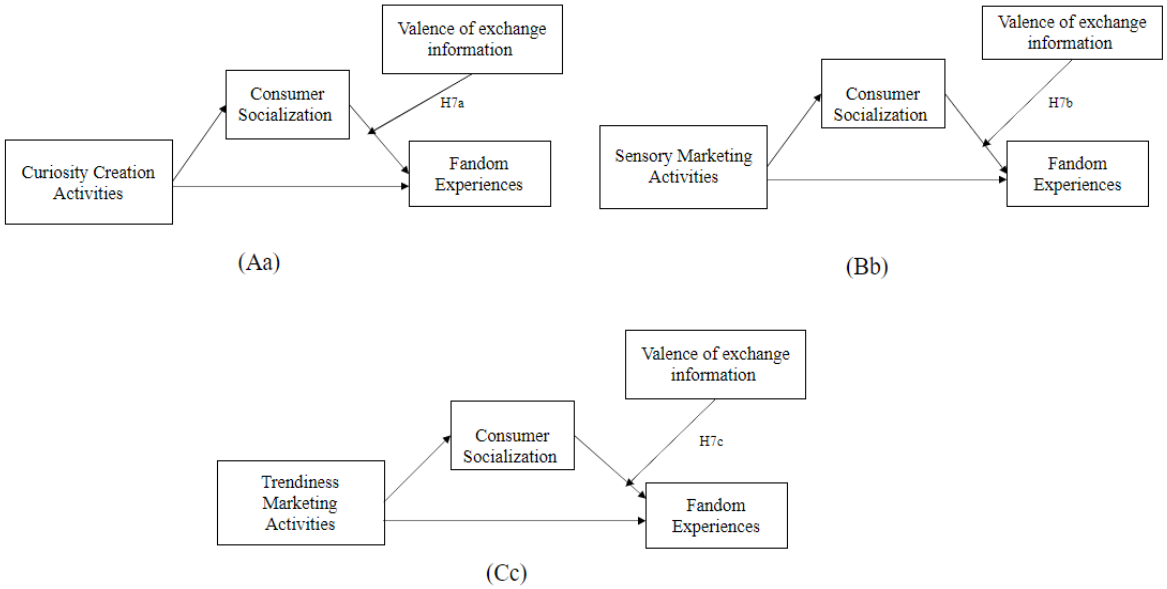



**Figure (4-3): The moderated mediation model of SMM activities types of on fandom experiences**

## 4.3. Research Methodology Selected for Quantitative Study

### 4.3.1. Positivism as Philosophical Paradigm

Positivists believe that social reality is ruled by universal laws and discovered truths (Saunders et al., 2009). Therefore, the positivism paradigm is direct to test theories through observable variables to gain accurate data. For example, Hunt (1991) argues that positivism assumes that consumers' behavior can be detected and predicted by measuring the affected variables.

Positivism is based on deductive logic since such studies begin with proposing the conceptual model, formulating propositions, hypotheses testing, quantified measures of variables using a laboratory experiment or field survey that test existing theoretical foundations. The aim is to derive generalizable inferences from a particular sample to an entire population under examination, where a particular phenomenon is tested (Orlikowski and Baroudi, 1991).

Furthermore, positivist research requires a high degree of objectivity in methods, regardless of the phenomena nature (Easterby-Smith et al., 2009). Accordingly, a positivist researcher should not be affected or influenced by the research subject; researchers must hold their thoughts and beliefs when investigating and measuring a phenomenon. In the same line, in the lens of positivism, the epistemological perspective relies on the assumption that social phenomena can be objectively observed and measured using statistical and quantitative data.

The positivist paradigm has been criticised for some issues, such as the inseparability between facts and values, people and their real-life experiences, and it overlooks participants' ability to replicate the situational problem and act upon such reflections (Robson, 2002). It also assumes that consumer behavior can be detected and predicted by measuring the affected variables based on theories (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Hunt, 1991). Moreover, scholars suggested that the social phenomena must reflect the process of actual science, and the research should be executed objectively and independently (McGregor and Murnane, 2010; Nagel, 1989).

### 4.3.2. Deductive as Reasoning Logic

Deductive reasoning separates phenomena from general laws in specific cases, while valid deductions guarantee firm conclusions (Taylor et al., 2002; Andreewsky and Bourcier, 2000). Deductive research reasoning inferring testing existing theories through a rigorous process rather than finding something *new* (Saunders et al., 2009). Thus, the primary notion of this method is the

“hypotheses falsification” that initiates research problems in the explicatory rule of current theories and makes projected alternate theories articulated as hypotheses (Saunders et al., 2009). However, theory-based research has limitations regarding the power of falsification, such as exercising a false reflection sentence may be directed to an incorrect rejection of a given theory and may hold defective theories unchallenged (Walliman, 2011).

#### 4.3.3. Survey Approach

Survey research is defined as “a research design strategy about which data are collected predominantly by questionnaires which are then examined to detect a pattern of associations” (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 144). Social researchers employ the survey approach to examine phenomena or examine attributes and behaviors in an empirical and systematic procedure. Consequently, it allows researchers to collect a large amount of data from representable samples, which can be analyzed quantitatively utilizing descriptive and inferential statistics (Bryman and Bell, 2016).

Survey methods have the advantage of explaining the relationships between the variables under examination; also, it is more applicable when investigating descriptive and explanatory research (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Moreover, the use of online questionnaires in data collection assists the researcher to collect data from large community’s participants and reaching them conveniently (Bryman, 2016). Thus, presenting great confidence in results generalizability of (Vidich and Shapiro, 1955). However, survey credibility that is yielding a large amount of data could, in many cases, be suspicious and lacks internal validity, and researchers cannot claim valid casual inferences (Robson, 2002). Thus, this method is widely used in social media research studies on consumer behavior in luxury settings (see, e.g., Quach et al., 2020; Yu et al., 2020; Gómez et al., 2019; de Vries et al., 2017).

### 4.4. Questionnaire Design

#### 4.4.1. Questionnaire Items Adoption

A well-designed questionnaire should comminute the participants as the researcher proposed, and the response to such enquiry should be comprehended by the researcher in the same means deliberated by the respondent (Foddy, 2001). Constructs' items of this study survey were adapted from previous research because of adaptive design producers (Singh et al., 1990). Thus, the steps

include: first, a comprehensive literature review of articles in leading journals was conducted for empirical studies in customer brand experience, customers' interaction, and luxury fashion within social media platforms. Second, an operational definition of the construct was identified to delineate the acuter meaning of the concepts that emerged from this thesis's qualitative study. Thus, adapting questionnaire items from previous research is a common practice in consumer research (i.e., Godey, 2016; Kim and Ko, 2012), though with a condition of the item's loading with its construct must be $\geq 0.708$ (Hair et al., 2019a), for it guarantees the development of robust answers to research questions, enhancing the results to be generalized (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Third, items were revised to cover all the constructs' dimensions, and the items pool was edited, adjusting the wording to suit the context to study luxury brand experience within social media platforms.

Luxury brands social media marketing activities include curiosity creation (Kashdan et al., 2018; Collins et al., 2004; Nayloer, 1981), trendiness (Godey et al., 2016; Kim and Ko, 2012), and sensory marketing activity (Jiang and Benbasat, 2007; Bleier et al., 2018). Items were developed in accordance to measure the four experience types identified: aesthetic (Lavie and Tractinsky, 2004; Bloch et al., 2003), immersive (Schaufeli et al., 2002), fandom (Chadborn et al., 2017; Reysen and Branscombe, 2010), and informative (Bleier et al., 2018; Luo, 2002). In addition to the vital role of mediator construct customer to customer interactions (socialization), items adopted from (de Vries et al., 2017) valance of exchanged information (Adjei et al., 2010). Thus, it should be noted that entertainment is excluded in this study because it was less frequent in the qualitative study findings and because it shows some validity issues, as will be explained later in Section 4.7.3.

Furthermore, a 7-point Likert scale is employed as a rating scale for all attitudinal measurements. This is a relatively popular procedure used in consumer research (Dawes, 2008; Corbetta, 2003). Numerical descriptors are used where participants select a number that corresponds to their level of agreement, from [strongly agree (7) to strongly disagree (1)] (Dawes, 2008). Thus, the responsive design is a function of single characteristics and the stimulus, the questionnaire items and the format design (Weitjters et al., 2010). Expect for the valence of exchanged information were measured through the semantic scale of consumers' answers to a set of three items, adjusted from the work of Adjei et al. (2010), i.e., answer by ranking: (1) positive, (2) natural, and (3) negative. Thus, demographic and screening questions following the convenient format for these variables were nominal.

The outline of the study survey was organized in four parts: the first part is an introduction that illustrates the study purpose, confidentiality, the time elapsed to answer the questions, and gives the researcher e-mail for any inquiries. At this point, the participant is required to give consent to the questionnaire information sheet; if s/he does not, it will end automatically. The second part offers a definition of the luxury brand and a list of the top 18 luxury fashion brands chosen based on the luxury brand index (2019) and their highest number of followers on social media platforms (Statista, 2019). The participants are then instructed to rank the brand list based on their preference; there is also a blank option to write their preferred brand if it is not listed. Finally, a checkpoint of the preferred brand asks if participants follow and purchase from this preferred brand on social media platforms and the type and frequency of visiting social media platforms.

The third part consists of the items measuring all the study constructs. The fourth section includes the demographic variables, such as age, gender, income, marital status, education, nationality, and country of residence (see the survey in Appendix D). In this study, an online survey was designed to collect data, for it facilitates reaching participants, offers lower costs, and is more convenient for participants (Bryman, 2016). The study survey was designed through a market research company in the UK named "Qualtrics website". Participants were able to access the survey from any electronic device as Qualtrics provide a smartphone view option. Then survey is connected to "Prolific Academic", which is a participant recruitment crowdsourcing platform. Thus, this study is cross-sectional, limited to a period of customers' interactions with luxury brands on social media platforms.

### 4.4.2. Pre-Test and Pilot Study

A pre-test and a pilot study are indispensable in data instrument development. It is a prerequisite to conducting a questionnaire to guarantee an adequate level of validity and reliability in the questions employed to measure the underlying constructs (Sakran, 2016) and to highlight important issues, such as the given instructions to participants, cover letters' language, the questionnaires' length, the questions' order, and the quality of statements items in terms of the accuracy and unambiguity, and scales format (Saunders et al., 2009). Thus, although the questionnaire items were adopted from high-ranked journals' studies in this study, adapting questions to the study context and confirming that the projected meaning communicated by the researcher delivered are necessary steps.

A pre-test was carried as a face validity check. Face validity is defined as "a subjective agreement among professionals on whether the questions of the survey appear to make sense or not, and on whether the scales capture the measured concept accurately" (Hair et al., 2019a, p. 90). Thus, a pre-test requires a sample of 5 to 30 participants (Hair et al., 2019a). The pre-test of this study survey was checked by a group of marketing academics: two assistant professors in marketing at the University of Jordan, an associate professor in marketing at Durham University, and a marketing PhD student at Newcastle University. Furthermore, it was revised by four PhD students from Durham Business School. The reviewers described the questionnaire as direct and exciting. However, they also provided some suggestions to improve the wording and the layout of the questions to enhance insights on data collection. For example, it was recommended to specify the list of luxury fashion brands with the highest number of followers on social media platforms and high brand value in the index (Statista, 2019). It was also suggested to restructure the demographic questions to the end of the questionnaire instead to start with it, to lower the mental drain, as the logical flow of the questionnaire outline is anticipated to minimize the participants' tiredness and advance collected data quality (Lavrakas, 2008).

After the pre-test stage, the pilot study is the critical stage prior to the entire data collection. It is the refinery strategy in which the researchers try to remove the potential problems when answering questions before publishing it to target participants in the field (Saunders et al., 2009). The number of respondents needed to participate in the pilot test differs based on the time, the resources availability, questionnaire design and the project size. Hair et al. (2017a) advised that the pilot study sample can consist of 50-100 participants. Thus, conducting a pilot study aims to evaluate the measurement scales and check the data collected reliability.

Consequently, using the Prolific academic website (www.Prolific.ac), the questionnaire was answered by 100 participants. However, only 69 surveys were accepted, which is clean from missing value. The target sample was reached in a single week (15/5/2019 to 23/5/2019), and the participants met the following criteria: participants must (1) be over 18, (2) follow and buy the luxury brands on one or more social media platforms, and (3) be British or residents living in the UK. The participants were taught to answer the questionnaire, and they were requested to emphasize any confusing questions by sending an e-mail to the researcher. Thus, after completing the questionnaire, no serious problems were raised about questionnaire.

The data were extracted and analyzed using SPSS statistics software version n. 26 to certify the questions' quality in terms of validity and reliability. Hence, no indication for any concerns regarding wording or layout had emerged. The results show a varied percentage for the social media platform being used for tracking luxury fashion brands. The highest score goes for 44.57% of respondents following their favorite luxury brands on Facebook. The reliability statistics for the construct's items were acceptable and considered relatively high. For example, the Cronbach's Alpha for the items ranged from .80 to .95 significance level, as shown below. Consequently, based on the adequate representationally of questions, the primary study data collection took place in June 2019.

**Table (4-1) Cronbach's Alpha Results of the Pilot Study**

| Constructs | Number of items | Cronbach's Alpha |
|---|---|---|
| Curiosity creation (CC) | 5 | .895 |
| Trendiness (TRD) | 3 | .832 |
| Sensory Marketing (SM) | 3 | .904 |
| Informative experience (INFO_EXP) | 3 | .820 |
| Aesthetic experience (AEST_EXP) | 11 | .934 |
| Immersive experience (IMMR_EXP) | 4 | .867 |
| Fandom experience (FAN_EXP) | 14 | .951 |
| Socializing (SOC) | 12 | .866 |
| Valence of information (VAL) | 2 | .901 |

## 4.5. Participants and Procedures

### 4.5.1. Target Population and Sampling Technique

A population is a group that encompasses individuals or any other unit of analysis (i.e., customers) that possesses features that the researcher is interested in examining. Meanwhile, the first step in the sampling process is selecting a target population from which the research sample is drawn. Hence, generalization considerations joined with the feasibility purposes infer the need to determine the target population. In this study, population refers to the luxury brands followers and buyers on social media marketing platforms and is considered immense, counted in millions.

Statistics show that luxury brands consumer population, combing Millennials, Gen X and Baby boomers, is approximately 390 million customers (D'Arpizio et al., 2020; Delloitte, 2019). However, there is no clear statistical data defining the total number of customers who follow luxury brands on social media platforms except for each specific brand (Statista, 2019).

Therefore, the target is the luxury brands' followers/customers who buy or/and follow luxury brands on one or more social media platforms. However, since the target population is large and is limited to a time frame and cost, it is difficult to identify the probability of selecting participants. Thus, nonprobability sampling is the appropriate selection for this study. It is defined as "sampling designs in which the probability of selection of each sampling unit is not known" (Hair et al., 2019a, p. 140). Thus, the sample size determination is subject to the nature of the study, e.g., exploratory (Hair et al., 2019).

In this study, the required sample size should be reasonably large. Thus, convenience sampling is found the appropriate sampling method. Convenience sampling (or haphazard sampling) involves selecting the more accessible participants in the target population (Saunders et al., 2009). It has been remarked as one of the most prevalent and frequently used techniques in the organizations and consumer behavior studies (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Moreover, convenience sampling highlights generalizability (i.e., confirming that the gained knowledge represents the population). Therefore, it is adequate when the research aims to identify occurrences of a phenomenon and outline its boundaries (Miller et al., 1993). Although convenience sampling has been criticised for failing to represent the population, it postulates valuable information for the research if the study sample is well-representing the population and no source of bias in the selected sample (Cherkassky and Mulier, 2007). The samples were active on luxury social media platforms in this study, which qualified participants to represent the studied phenomena.

This study adopts convenience sampling through the online crowdsourcing platform Prolific. This platform assists in clarifying the sample representation as participants have some characteristics to identify participants in a community. Thus, options such as "a luxury customer, a follower on social media platforms" were available on Academic (www.prolific.ac) to reach the targeted participants online. Thus, it should be noted that Prolific is a reliable and transparent platform (Palan and Schitter, 2018). This survey was designed and presented on the Qualtrics website

(www.qualtrics.com). The selection criteria of participants were arranged and decided by the researcher as follows:

(1) The age group is 18 years old or over.
(2) Participants follow and/or purchase a luxury fashion brand on one or more social media platforms.

### 4.5.2. Sample Size Determination

Identifying the sample size is essential, for it indicates the cases number selected from the collected data set (Lenth, 2001). It specifies the sample size, facilitates more generalizable inferences on the target population, and enables the researcher to conduct a proper statistical analysis that guarantees reliable results (Saunders et al., 2009). Scholars' point of view on sample size determination connected to the type of the statistical analysis will be employed in the intended study (Kline, 2005). However, there is no general agreement regarding identifying an optimal sample size level (Muthén et al., 2002). There is only a consensus that sample size should be considered according to (i) the complexity of the proposed model; (ii) the accessibility of the targeted population; (iii) the distribution of variables; and (iv) the effect size of some variables on others (Kline, 2005; Muthén et al., 2002).

In consumer research, the required corresponds is about 200 cases, which is the estimated median sample size in a questionnaire of published articles (Kline, 2015). More precisely, the use of Hayes's process condition analysis (2018) needs a large size sample. As advised by Hayes (2018), if all other things are equal, R and $R^2$ will tend to be larger in small samples, but the association between sample size and multiple correlations rabidly levels off if the sample size increases.

There is no rule of the sample size and model complexity. However, the smallest sample size must be computed in relation of cases ratio (N) to the numeral of model parameters (q), whereas ratios of "(N/q=20:1, N/q=10:1, and N/q=5:1)" are respectively considered idyllic, less ideal, and small (Kline, 2011).

This study is based on the previous formula where (Q= 52), the sample size would be (1,040) cases if the ratio is ideal, (520) cases if it is excellent and (260) cases if it is small. Therefore, based on the formula results and the available budget for data collection, an excellent sample of 700

respondents were collected. After data screening and cleaning, the sample size stood at 609 (see further details in Section 4.6).

### 4.5.3. Data Collection Technique

In this study, data collection was conducted in June 2019 through an online crowdsourcing platform named Prolific Academic. Crowdsourcing is defined as "the paid employment of an online, objective global workforce serves the work neutrally on a precisely defined task or set of tasks'" (Behrend et al., 2011, p. 801). Prolific is considered a reliable and efficient online research platform compared to others (Palan and Schitter, 2018). It is mainly equivalent to them in terms of the psychometric properties of traditional data collection (De Beuckelaer and Lievens, 2009). In addition, it offers an extensive sample pool access, a diversified sample at a relatively low cost (Mason and Suri, 2012). Thus, it has been used to collect data in marketing studies (Golossenko et al., 2020; Holmqvist et al., 2019).

Prolific has groups that represent participants' interests in different areas. For example, one of these groups represent a sample of luxury goods' customers; the sample consisted of around 5,024 participants who follow luxury brands on social media platforms and made their purchase decision for luxury after viewing it on social media.

It was therefore selected as a target sample, for it matches the conditions of the study. The survey was designed and hosted in Qualtrics software and is linked with Prolific Academic. Eligible participants were able to see the invitation letter that includes the study's title (Luxury brand experience on social media platforms), the confidential data statement, the estimated time of completing the survey (10-15 minutes), the researcher's name and e-mail (Doa'a Hajawi/ doa'a.hajawi@durham.ac.uk). In addition to the consenting bottom and a symbolic incentive amount (£1.70/participant), the average rate of Prolific. This amount paid prevents the participants from seeking monetary compensation and eliminate bias. Therefore, if the participants are qualified to participate, they could select the study to view its description; if they are interested in participating, they click on the "Start Now" button that directs them to the survey in Qualtrics platform supports smartphone access.

### 4.5.4 Ethical Considerations

There are some ethical issues and considerations during the process of data collection. These include the participants' right to be knowledgeable about the research goal, the privacy and confidentiality of responses and the participants have the right to leave at any point, partly or totally from the study (Saunders et al., 2009).

Initially, the ethical consent was authorized from the "Research Ethics Committee" at Durham University Business School. This step guarantees that the University's Code of Research Ethics and professional and academic principles were preserved while conducting the study. Consequently, related to the "Code of Research Ethics", there was no requirement to get explicit consent from participants. However, since they were anonymized and unable to be tracked online thus, they were asked to consent online.

The introduction of the online questionnaire includes the participants' information sheet, the purpose of the research, response confidentiality and the needed time to complete the survey. Furthermore, respondents were requested to consent to the information; if they do not, the survey exits automatically. According to Prolific, respondents will be paid after completing the survey, and they have the right to end the survey at any point (see the survey of the study in Appendix D). Thus, in line with the "Code of Research Ethics", a bottom age-restricted to (18 years) was observed.

## 4.6. Preliminary Data Analysis

### 4.6.1. Data Preparation and Missing Data

After the end of the data collection period in the Prolific Academics website, the participants' responses were redirected to the Qualtrics website, where there is a survey option to download the raw data into files. Next, data was downloaded into IBM SPSS statistical program version .26. Finally, all measurement items were coded.

For ensuring the survey answers quality, a scan check was executed. First, regarding the response rate, during the process of designing the survey on the Qualtrics website, there was an option called "forced response" not to allow participants to proceed into the next question if they did not answer the current one. In the received 700 surveys, 12 participants recorded incomplete answers, i.e. participants left the survey before completing all questions; these were discarded. They exceeded

the acceptable threshold of missing data; for below 15%, incomplete answers should be ignored (Hair, 2019a). Thus, 688 cases were accepted.

Second, regarding the completion time of the questionnaire, as recommended by Hair et al. (2017), the average time to complete a survey was a minimum of 5 minutes and a maximum of 15 minutes. Therefore, any responses answered in less than 5 minutes were excluded from the data set. Thus, 13 responses were excluded, making a total of 675 cases accepted.

The final check is the condition for participation. Participants should be followers and/or buy luxury brands on one or more social media platforms. 6 participants' responses were considered as outliers, as they wrote in the preferred brand box in the survey (they are not interested in any luxury brands), and the value of their recorded answers was 1= strongly disagree. Furthermore, 39 participants' responses completed the questionnaire, but they chose (non-luxury brands, high street fashion brands, i.e. Zara, and non-fashion brands, such as Apple, Audi and loreal). Therefore, 630 participants' responses were accepted and became ready for the preliminary data analysis.

### 4.6.2. Outliers

The outlier is well-defined as an "observation or subset of observations, which performs to be inconsistent with the rest of that set of data" (Barnett and Lewis, 1978, p. 4). Thus, it is essential to deduct the outlier as it could affect either simple statistics or advanced statistical tests and cause bias (Hair et al., 2019a). The tests to detect outliers in a data set are univariate, bivariate, or multivariate levels based on the variables, numbers or characteristics been reflected (Hair et al., 2019a). The univariate outlier is the case that has substantial standardized $z$ scores that drop on the highest or the lowest range of the distribution (Hair et al., 2019a).

In this study, to identify the (univariate) outliers in the data set, box plots were generated in SPSS for every single item. Examining the cases determines that none of these cases transcends the threshold recommended by Hair et al. (2019a), which is ±4 values of standard deviation for larger sample sizes, deliberating that the sample size of this study is 630 cases. Expect for Trendiness activity [TRD1], nine outliers case numbers were recorded (498, 507, 514, 515, 523, 537, 556, 580, 623). For Aesthetic experience [ASTH1], eleven outliers case numbers were recorded (159, 245, 266, 478, 490, 498, 503, 535, 608, 615, 629). Thus, those outliers were deducted to ensure the quality of the next statistics procedures. Nevertheless, eliminating these outliers' cases can

improve the multivariate analysis, and the generalization of results might be negatively replicated by doing so (Hair et al., 2019a).

The next step is deducting the multivariate methods. Scatterplots were created to determine the outliers of composite available, including independent variables social media marketing activities [curiosity creation, trendiness, entertainment, and sensory marketing] and mediation [socialization], and moderation [valence of exchanged information]. Also, the dependent's variables are experience type [informative experience, aesthetic experience, immersive experience, and fandom experience]. Four scatterplots represent the cooks' distance test between all independent variables, mediation, moderation and informative experience, immersive experience, aesthetic experience, and fandom experience, respectively. Results show that three observations were outside the 95% of the confidential number of interval cases (596, 541, 606). Removing them helps prevent adverse outcomes in further analysis. Thus, after data screening, 609 were responses accepted

### 4.6.3. Normality

Normality testing is a fundamental procedure in empirical research and several parametric tests grounded in the normal distribution (Field, 2013). Thus, to avoid any violation of normality and ensure that the data obtained is normally distributed, it is necessary to investigate data distribution through symmetrical tests (Hair et al., 2019a; Kline, 2005). Therefore, in this study, skewness-kurtosis descriptive statistics in SPSS 26 was applied to test normality for each variable as mentioned in the study framework (Hair et al., 2019; Kline, 2005), in addition to the P-P/Q-Q plot recommended by field (2013). Therefore, skewness and kurtosis values showed an acceptable value with an acceptable range between ±2.58 ($P \leq 0.05$). Furthermore, the graph shows that there is no visible collecting of points, most of them accumulated around the diagonal line. Consequently, the notion of normality is reasonable.

### 4.6.4. Linearity

The assumption of linearity is essential prior to undertake statistical techniques, such as factor analysis and structural equation modelling (Hair et al., 2019). Thus, the relations between the two variables should be linear, and their scores on the scatterplot are represented by a straight line, not a curve line, then the assumption is met (Pallant, 2013).

In this study, a comparison refers to a test for normality executed between each dependent [informative experience, aesthetic experience, immersive experience, and fandom experience] and independent variable social media marketing activities [curiosity creation, trendiness, entertainment, and sensory marketing]. The results indicate that the relationships between independent and dependent are greater than 0.05. Thus, the role is that if the significant value for "Deviation from Linearity" is less than 0.05, the relationship between the independent variable and dependent variable is not linear.

### 4.6.5. Homoscedasticity

The validation sample's homoscedasticity was checked through the Levane test. That was performed through one-way ANOVA in SPSS.26 software. Specifically, the focal variables were the composites variables for all study variables, with each related measurement item. Significant p-values ($P \leq 0.05$) were attained for each composite variable; thus, each construct was heteroscedastic.

### 4.6.6. Multicollinearity

Multicollinearity explains the position when the independent variables are highly correlated ($R \geq .9$) (Pallant, 2013), and the absenteeism of multicollinearity must be attained beforehand progressing with the related multivariate test. Considering multicollinearity may be achieved through two processes: the tolerance and variance inflation factor VIF (Hair et al., 2019a). Tolerance reports the volume of changeability in the independent variables that are not supported or clarified by the other independent variables. Then the tolerance must be high enough to reduce the volume of shared variance with the other independent variables (Hair et al., 2014). Whereas VIF is the reverse of the tolerance value (VIF=1/tolerance), its square root √VIF signifies the degree to which the standard error has been enhanced due to multicollinearity (Hair et al., 2019a).

To ensure the nonappearance of multicollinearity, the researcher iteratively executed the linear regression tests for the independent variables in SPSS.26 (Field, 2013), where a particular independent variable is inserted into the model as a dependent variable each interval. This procedure is frequently repetitive N/ times, where N=4 is the number of independent variables. Hair et al. (2019a) recommend that a cut-off threshold is a tolerance value below 0.1, corresponding to a VIF value above 10. Inspecting the last two columns of the table validates that

for all the four models, the values of tolerance are above 0.3, and all the values of VIF are below 3, which is far below 10, the threshold for VIF values. no multicollinearity issues stood out

**Table (4-2) Testing the Assumption of No Multicollinearity**

| Model | Dependent Variable | Independent variable | Collinearity Statistics | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Tolerance | VIF |
| 1 | Curiosity Creation Activity | Trendiness Activity | .382 | 2.618 |
| | | Sensory Marketing Activity | .409 | 2.445 |
| 2 | Trendiness Activity | Curiosity Creation Activity | .387 | 2.584 |
| | | Sensory Marketing Activity | .420 | 2.381 |
| 3. | Sensory Marketing Activity | Trendiness Activity | .373 | 2.681 |
| | | Curiosity Creation Activity | .368 | 2.718 |

### 4.6.7. Sample Demographics

Researchers employ descriptive statistics to gain the numerical descriptions of the sample in terms of the central predisposition theory and the distribution (Saunders et al., 2009). According to Pallant (2013), whenever the study targets human applicants, the demographics information of the studied sample should be reported, (e.g., gender, age, educational level) and any pertinent information that serves the propose of study.

**Table (4-3) Sample Demographic Descriptive**

| Demographic profile | Number | Percentage % |
|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | | |
| Male | 260 | 42.7 |
| Female | 346 | 56.8 |
| Prefer not to say | 3 | .5 |
| Total | 609 | 100 |
| **Age group** | | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 18-25 | 188 | 30.9 |
| 26-33 | 191 | 31.4 |
| 34-41 | 120 | 19.7 |
| 42-49 | 62 | 10.2 |
| 50 and above | 48 | 7.9 |
| **Education level** | | |
| High school | 115 | 18.9 |
| College | 140 | 23.0 |
| Undergraduate | 186 | 30.5 |
| Postgraduate | 140 | 23.0 |
| PhD or DBA | 21 | 3.4 |
| Others | 7 | 1.1 |
| **Occupation level** | | |
| Senior management | 46 | 7.6 |
| Trained professionals | 108 | 17.7 |
| Skilled Workers | 52 | 8.5 |
| Junior middle management | 96 | 15.8 |
| Consultant | 14 | 2.3 |
| Administration staff | 74 | 12.2 |
| Support staff | 38 | 6.2 |
| Researcher | 18 | 3.0 |
| Apprentice | 21 | 3.4 |
| Self-employed or free lancer | 142 | 23.3 |
| **Annual Income level** | | |
| Less than £ 10,000 | 104 | 17.1 |
| £10,000 - £19,999 | 113 | 18.6 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| £20,000 - £29,999 | 121 | 19.9 |
| £30,000 - £39,999 | 101 | 16.6 |
| £40,000 – and above | 116 | 19.0 |
| Prefer not to say | 54 | 8.9 |
| **Nationality** | | |
| Austria | 1 | .2 |
| Belgium | 4 | .7 |
| Canada | 15 | 2.5 |
| Chile | 3 | .5 |
| Czech Republic | 1 | .2 |
| Denmark | 1 | .2 |
| Estonia | 2 | .3 |
| Finland | 1 | .2 |
| Germany | 9 | 1.5 |
| Greece | 6 | 1.0 |
| Hungary | 2 | .3 |
| Italy | 12 | 2.0 |
| Latvia | 2 | .3 |
| Mexico | 15 | 2.5 |
| Netherlands | 2 | .3 |
| Norway | 1 | .2 |
| Poland | 21 | 3.4 |
| Portugal | 9 | 1.5 |
| Slovenia | 1 | .2 |
| Spain | 12 | 2.0 |
| United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | 350 | 57.5 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| United States of America | 134 | 22.0 |
| Total | 609 | 100.0 |
| **Frequency of checking social media** | | |
| Daily | 50 | 8.2 |
| 2-3 times a week | 70 | 11.5 |
| 4-6 times a week | 40 | 6.6 |
| Once a week | 293 | 48.1 |
| Once a month | 114 | 18.7 |
| Twice a month | 42 | 6.9 |

**Table (4-4) Customers' Brand List Choices**

| Brand name | Frequency | Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|
| Chanel | 62 | 10.2 | 10.2 |
| Burberry | 53 | 8.7 | 18.9 |
| Coach | 50 | 8.2 | 27.1 |
| Armani | 48 | 7.9 | 35.0 |
| Dolce and Gabbana | 46 | 7.6 | 42.5 |
| Dior | 37 | 6.1 | 48.6 |
| Gucci | 34 | 5.6 | 54.2 |
| Hermès | 34 | 5.6 | 59.8 |
| Louboutin | 34 | 5.6 | 65.4 |
| YSL | 32 | 5.3 | 70.6 |
| Marc Jacobs | 27 | 4.4 | 75.0 |
| Jimmy Choo | 26 | 4.3 | 79.3 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Louis Vuitton | 26 | 4.3 | 83.6 |
| Prada | 25 | 4.1 | 87.7 |
| Ralph Lauren | 21 | 3.4 | 91.1 |
| Michael Kors | 18 | 3.0 | 94.1 |
| Versace | 18 | 3.0 | 97.0 |
| MaisonValentino | 14 | 2.3 | 99.3 |
| Others | 4 | .7 | 100.0 |
| Total | 609 | 100.0 | |

## 4.7. Scale Purification

### 4.7.1. Principal Component Analysis (PCA)

Generally, factor analysis is a statistical procedure utilized to determine which variables form reasoned subsets that are independent of one another comparatively in a set of variables (Hair et al., 2019a). Furthermore, the correlations amongst variables are measured as signs of the primary structure, which is demonstrated by factors or components (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2013).

Principal component analysis (PCA) and exploratory factor analysis are primarily utilized as a statistical process that has a communal purpose of decreasing a “set of p observed variable to a set of new m” variable that reports for most splendid of the variability in the pattern of correlations (Hair et al., 2019a). These two techniques are used interchangeably in research; however, some scholars debate that PCA is superior (Hair et al., 2019a; Guadagnoli and Velicer, 1988). The difference between them relies on the variance consideration, PCA pursues to embrace the total variance and small proportions of unique variance and error variance of the variables, and its core concern is data reduction. On the contrary, in factor analysis, the efforts only on the ordinarily shared variance, and its main goal is to recognize the latent dimensions in the variables data set (Hair et al., 2019; Dunteman, 1989). Hence, PCA has the advantage of preventing harmful problems and facilitating further statistical analysis (Hair et al., 2019a).

Before running a factor analysis, two conditions involving the suitability of factor analysis were considered: the sample size and the strong relationship among the variable's items (Field, 2013). Hence, recommended that five observations for each item are sufficient in most of the studies. In

this study, the total items are 52 and require a least the sample size of 260; while the total sample size for this study is 609 participants; consequently, it is satisfactory for the PCA analysis.

The factor analysis was in executed SPSS.26. The total variance clarified resulted in 76.824%, which is deliberated as an acceptable level, as the threshold is above 60% as recommended by Hair et al. (2019a) for societal research. All the commonalities, common variance inside every variable, range between (0.652 and 0.867) (Field, 2013).

In the PCA test, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is regularly executed for defining sampling competence. It inspects if the observed correlation matrix diverges significantly from the identity matrix (Hair, 2019a). It tests the extent to which the data deviate from the reference situation $|R| = 1$. The PCA must be executed only, if the null hypothesis of independence was refused, with a significant level ($p < 0.05$) for the factor analysis is acceptable (Dziuban and Shirkey, 1974)

Another approach of sample size assessment is Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin test the sampling adequacy KMO (Kaiser, 1974). It is an index with the same perspective as Bartlett's Test, evaluating sampling competence. The Bartlett's Test is definite whether the variables are correlated or not. However, the correlation among two variables might be inclined by others. The KMO compares the associated values between the variables and those of fractional correlations' values within the statistical range between (0 and 1) (Pallant, 2013). Thus, the threshold value of this statistic is greater than (0.5), which means that the sample size is suitable; if the value is greater than (0.9), then the sample size would be excellent (Field, 2013). Therefore, in this study, test KMO and Bartlett's test of sphericity results suggest great fitting, as shown in the table (4-5) below.

Regarding factor rotation, two main rotation types can be classified: orthogonal and oblique (Ho, 2006). Orthogonal rotation indicates the independence of factors, while oblique rotation permits correlation amongst the factors extracted (Ho, 2006) as the intended phenomenon is happening in the real world, which correlation might exist naturally oblique rotation suits more deliberating that general effects are correlated in nature. Consequently, this type of rotation signifies the nature of the study more accurately (Hair et al., 2019a; Ho, 2006). Thus, in this study for 609 participants, oblique rotation is employed with a Promax technique as it is advantageous for big data sets (Field, 2013).

Afterwards, the commonalities of individual items were higher than the threshold value of 0.50. Also, examining the loading of each item showed that several items are cross-loading with a

significant amount (≤.40) on more than a single factor. Consequently, this case commands revising the model, which is considered based on the following options: discounting the problematic items, employing another rotation method, specifying the extracted number of factors, operating a diverse factor analysis models (component or common), or removing the significantly cross-loaded items (Hair et al., 2019a). This study eliminates the items loaded significantly on more than one factor and extracts the factor based on a fixed number of factors (9) with coefficients supers small with absolute value below.30. Thus, this procedure was taken to present items in the factor resolution accurately. The items that were removed are [ASTH EXP 3,6,7,8,9,10,11], [FAN EXP 3,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,13,14], [CC ACT 3,4,5], and [SEN ACT 1].

Re-specifying, the model illustrated in the table (4-5) shows the rotated factor-loading matrix sorted in size. Again, the loading value of all items was acceptable; it was larger than (.40), which is acceptable according to (Hair et al., 2019a). Furthermore, the first row of the table presents values of Cronbach's Alpha, which were computed for all the preserved factors and enduring items. Again, all were precisely acceptable, ranging between (0.65 and 0.94).

**Table (4- 5): Principal Component Analysis KMO and Bartlett's Test**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.** | | **.954** |
| **Bartlett's Test of Sphericity** | **Approx. Chi-Square** | **11635.706** |
| | **df** | **406** |
| | **Sig.** | **.000** |

**Oblique (Promax) Rotated Factor-Loading**

| | **Component** | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **SOC** | **FAN** | **ASTH** | **INFO** | **IMR** | **TRD** | **VAl** | **CC** | **SEN** |
| **α** | **.93** | **.89** | **.83** | **.89** | **.82** | **.81** | **.75** | **.80** | **.74** |
| **INFO_EXP1** | | | | **.949** | | | | | |
| **INFO_EXP2** | | | | **.794** | | | | | |
| **INFO_EXP3** | | | | **.922** | | | | | |
| **IMR_EXP1** | | | | | **.888** | | | | |
| **IMR_EXP2** | | | | | **.913** | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **IMR_EXP3** | | | | | **.586** | | | | |
| **IMR_EXP4** | | | | | **.676** | | | | |
| **ASTH_EXP1** | | | **.811** | | | | | | |
| **ASTH_EXP2** | | | **.790** | | | | | | |
| **ASTH_EXP4** | | | **.837** | | | | | | |
| **ASTH_EXP5** | | | **.812** | | | | | | |
| **FAN_EXP1** | | **.815** | | | | | | | |
| **FAN_EXP2** | | **.903** | | | | | | | |
| **FAN_EXP4** | | **.784** | | | | | | | |
| **FAN_EXP12** | | **.808** | | | | | | | |
| **VAL_INT1** | | | | | | | **.905** | | |
| **VAL_INT2** | | | | | | | **.865** | | |
| **SOC_INT1** | **.927** | | | | | | | | |
| **SOC_INT2** | **.953** | | | | | | | | |
| **SOC_INT3** | **.932** | | | | | | | | |
| **SOC_INT4** | **.711** | | | | | | | | |
| **SOC_INT5** | **.790** | | | | | | | | |
| **CC_1** | | | | | | | | **.801** | |
| **CC_2** | | | | | | | | **.873** | |
| **TRD_1** | | | | | | **.765** | | | |
| **TRD_2** | | | | | | **.765** | | | |
| **TRD_3** | | | | | | **.843** | | | |
| **SEN_2** | | | | | | | | | **.650** |
| **SEN_3** | | | | | | | | | **.926** |

**Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.**

**Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization.** [a]

**a. Rotation converged in 7 iterations.**

### 4.7.2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

After conducting the PCA, the CFA is required for further statistical examination of the variables. CFA is a prior model measurement analysis that identifies the number of factors and related indicators (Kline, 2015). CFA demands an empirical or theoretical foundation to lead the requirements of the factor model (Hoyle, 2000). Furthermore, CFA assesses the extent to which constructs suit the data (Hair et al., 2019a).

Confirmatory factor analysis is different from exploratory factor analysis. Factor analysis supports extracting a specific number of latent factors, and each item or variable is connected with a particular loaded factor (Hair et al., 2019a). On the contrary, confirmatory factor analysis commences from several indications from previous theories around the same numeral of necessary factors existing in the data set, and loading value is constructed for every variable in the data set on each factor deprived of cross-loading (Hair et al., 2019a; Brown, 2015). Therefore, the principal drive of CFA is psychometric assessment, such as the inspection of scales' reliability, model fitness. If the statistical results signify that the measurement model did not adequately fit the observed data, additional adjustments and retrial must be created on the measurement model (Hair et al., 2019a; Kline, 2005).

SPSS AMOS V.26 software was employed to perform the CFA steps. Figure 4-1 presents the model in the SPSS AMOS sheet. The SPSS data file (N= 609) was associated with the AMOS model file. Maximum Likelihood (ML) estimation was selected as the estimation technique for the model among the different estimation techniques. Since ML could "be applied to the whole range of structural equation models", ML relies on "the derivation of parameter estimates" (Kline, 2016).

The estimates are the elements that increase the likelihood of the data (the observed covariances) that were generated from the study population, and it assumes multivariate normality for the joint population distribution of the endogenous variables, given the exogenous variables (Hair et al., 2019a). However, the drawback of Maximum Likelihood is the inability to perform effectively in the non-normal data (Kline, 2016). Meanwhile, this study data was identified to be normally distributed, as mentioned in the preliminary analysis section.

When considering the assessment model fitness, three types of fit indices tests are recommended to measure the model fitness, including all parameters "absolute fit indices, parsimonious fit indices, and incremental fit indices" (Hooper et al., 2008). Additional discussion concerning all tests adopted with the average cut-off values is explained in the following section.

Firstly, absolute fit indices, which assess the fit of the model with the data. These include Chi-square ($\chi^2$), Normed Chi-Square, Goodness-of-fit (GFI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), Root Mean Square Residual (RMR), and Standardized Root Mean Residual (SRMR). Secondly, parsimony fit indices, which advice on the appropriate model between the rivalled models. They include the Adjusted Goodness-of-fitness Index (AGFI) and Adjusted Normed Fit Index (PNFI). Finally, incremental fit indices, which compare the estimated model with other baseline models. They include Normed Fit Index (NFI), Tucker Lewis Index (TLI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI) (Hair et al., 2019a; Kline, 2016). Therefore, the CFA tests were executed based on the results of the PCA. Model fit indices (see below Table 4-6) indicate that the measurement models for study data have met the requirements and they are a good fit.

**Table (4- 6) Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results**

| Fit indices | Cut-off point | CFA measurement model |
|---|---|---|
| **CMIN/DF χ 2** | **≤3.000** | **2.349** |
| **GFI** | **≥ 0.90** | **.912** |
| **AGFI** | **≥ 0.80** | **.887** |
| **NFI** | **≥ 0.90** | **.932** |
| **CFI** | **≥ 0.90** | **.960** |
| **RMSEA** | **≤ 0.08** | **.047** |

χ 2 : Chi Square ,DF: Degrees of Freedom ,GFI: Goodness-of-Fit AGFI: ,Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit ,CFI: Comparative Fit Index ,RMSEA: Root Mean Square Error of Approximation

### 4.7.3. Reliability and Validity Assessment

The checking step for model accuracy minimizes the measurements' error is scale reliability (Field, 2013). It is well-defined as "the extent to which a set of measured items accurately reflect the latent theoretical constructs they are designed to measure" (Hair et al., 2019a, p. 675). Thus, it

signifies an estimate of the correctness of a score achieved from a scale (Weiss and Davison, 1981). It includes four types of validity checks.

First, item-factor loading, or "path estimates". Path estimates is an indispensable assessment of the measurement model; it involves the relationship between the latent variable (construct) and the indictor (measurement item) (Hair et al., 2019a). This path is estimated to be high loading. The cut-value should be ≥ 0.5 or ideally 0.7 (Hair et al., 2019a), which equals minimum item communality value, which should not be less than 0.50 as shown below in the table:

Second, construct reliability, or what is called the "internal consistency reliability", is well-defined as "the degree to which responses are consistent across the items of a measure" (Kline, 2016, p. 91). The traditional criterion for measuring construct reliability is Coefficient alpha (Cronbach's alpha); while testing the EFA, the CR for each construct is reported, and all of them are above 0.7, which is acceptable (Cronbach, 1951).

Nevertheless, Cronbach's alpha has limitations, such as considering that all items have equal loading construct and having an inferior bound can undervalue the accurate reliability in the results (Raykov, 2001a). Consequently, a robustness measure is adopted in SEM models named Composite Reliability (CR), well-defined as a "measure of reliability and internal consistency of the measured variables representing a latent construct" (Hair et al., 2019a, p. 659). Composite reliability considers the different item factor loading and calculates the reliability based on this. Hence, Cronbach's alpha underestimates the reliability while CR overestimates it. Thus, Hair et al. (2019a) advise on reporting both criteria. Composite reliability is shown in the table.

Concerning discriminant validity, that is "the extent to which a constructor variable is truly distinct from other constructs or variables" (Hair et al., 2019a, p. 676), two types of validity are considered: face validity and construct validity. Face validity is how the items' content is coherent with the constructs' meaning (Gravetter and Forzano, 2015). Thus, in this study, all the scale items are borrowed and adjusted from previous research published in highly ranked academic journals and tested for diverse research settings; the scale items are reasoned to have adequate face validity to be used.

The construct validity ensures the uniqueness of construct from another construct in the model. Thus, validity is evaluated through three tests: (1) cross-loadings which assesses the cross-loadings between the indicators (items). The item's cross-loading with the other items must be less than the

item's loading with the related construct (Hair et al., 2019a). (2) The Fornell-Larcker criterion assesses the square root of the construct's AVE with another construct correlation (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). The square root of the construct's AVE should be more significant than any other constructs' correlation.

Although many scholars adopted the previous test approaches in consumer behavior research, both approaches have been criticized by Henseler et al. (2015), who claim that cross-loading and Fornell-Larcker criteria failed to measure the discriminant validity when items' loading is slightly different. (3) Through the Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT), introduced by Henseler et al. (2015), which relies "on a comparison of the heterotrait-hetero method correlations and the monotrait-hetero method correlation" (p. 128). That means that HTMT assesses the means of all indictors' correlations measuring the same and the different constructs in the model. The acceptable correlation ratio among any two variables should not exceed 0.85 (Henseler et al., 2015).

In this study, all the above tests were executed by AMOS.26. it was using Gaskin plugins to measure validity, compost reliability and HTMT (Gaskin, 2019). There was a discriminant validity issue in the first trial of the test as the squared root of the AVE for trendiness activity is less than its correlation with sensory marketing activity and entertainment activity. In HTMT, a warning message showed that trendiness and entertainment are statistically indistinguishable, sensory and entertainment are statistically indistinguishable. Even though tests were clean and significant during preliminary data analysis, specifically multiculturality and principal component analysis did not show any major concerns related to social media marketing activities.

Meanwhile, this validity issue was expected as all those scales measure social media marketing activities, addressing them as a whole construct or a second-order construct adopted from Kim and Ko (2012). Further, Kim and Ko (2012) removed trendiness and customization constructs from the SMMA model because of validity issues (Kim and Ko, 2012, p. 1484). Thus, as the problem arose from the entertainment activity in this study, the decision was to remove entertainment from the model with the three other activities. In addition, as recommended by Anderson and Gerbring (1988), factors with statistical issues can be removed from the study model.

Altogether standardized loading estimates were considered significant and ranged from (0.656 to 0.912), and the (AVE) average variance extracted for individual variables remained larger than the commended (0.50) threshold. Thus, representing satisfactory convergent validity (Fornell and

Larcker, 1981). Additionally, the composite reliabilities stood greater than the (0.70) cut-off (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994). Thus, the square roots of AVE of every construct stood higher than the corresponding correlations of every pair of constructs and the maximum shared variance (MSV). Except for trendiness and sensory were slightly close to the AVEs. However, HTMT is more rigorous; it shows no validity concerns, which made them accepted for further analysis procedures. Furthermore, employing the PROCESS conditional analysis will consider each independent factor at the time of the analysis (Hayes, 2018).

**Table (4-7) Scales Items Measurement Used After Purification**

| **Item abb** | **Statement** | **Measurement** | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **TRD** | **Trendiness Activity** | **α** | **CR** | **AVE** |
| | | .81 | .82 | .60 |
| TRD_ACT 1 | [X luxury] posts of collaboration with experts (designers, brands) are fashionable | .789 | | |
| TRD_ ACT 2 | Browsing [X luxury] product news posts on social media platforms is very trendy | .795 | | |
| TRD_ACT 3 | [X luxury] posts of gift suggestions on social media platforms is the newest information | .747 | | |
| **SEN** | **Sensory Marketing Activity** | **α** | **CR** | **AVE** |
| | | .74 | .74 | .60 |
| SEN_ ACT2 | [X luxury] posts on social media platforms contain fashion venue information exciting to senses | .808 | | |
| SEN_ ACT 3 | [luxury] provide product on social media platforms different form other sensory channels. | .729 | | |
| **CC** | **Curiosity Creation Activity** | **α** | **CR** | **AVE** |
| | | .80 | .81 | .68 |
| CC_ ACT 1 | Ambiguous location of fashion event of [X luxury] on social media platforms always makes me curious to know more | .848 | | |
| CC_ ACT 2 | [X luxury] behind sense workshop posts on social media platforms arouse my curiosity | .801 | | |
| **SOC** | **Socialization** | **α** | **CR** | **AVE** |
| | | .93 | .93 | .72 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Based on the interaction other customers on [X luxury] community on social media platforms, I would say that | | | |
| SOCI1 | I can stay in touch with people with the same interests | .871 | | |
| SOCI2 | I can communicate with people with the same interests | .845 | | |
| SOCI3 | I can meet new people with the same interests | .851 | | |
| SOCI4 | It makes me feel connected to others | .828 | | |
| SOCI5 | let me stay in contact with like-minded people | .870 | | |
| **VAL** | **Valence of exchanged information** | **α** | **CR** | **AVE** |
| | | .75 | . 75 | . 61 |
| | Based on the interaction with other customers on [X luxury] community on social media platform, I would say that | | | |
| VAL1 | collectively the replies I received were: Positive, Neutral, Negative | .759 | | |
| VAL2 | collectively the replies I received were: Pleasing, Neutral, Displeasing | .798 | | |
| **INFO_EXP** | **Informative Experience** | **α** | **CR** | **AVE** |
| | | .89 | .90 | .75 |
| INFOR_EXP1 | Information Obtained from [X luxury] page is useful | .856 | | |
| INFOR_EXP2 | I learned a lot of form using the [X luxury] page | .826 | | |
| INFOR_EXP3 | I think the information obtained from [x luxury] page is helpful | .912 | | |
| **FAN_EXP** | **Fandom Experience** | **α** | **CR** | **AVE** |
| | | .89 | .90 | .68 |
| | Being a FAN of [X luxury] community on social media platforms, provides me with | | | |
| FAN_EXP1 | An opportunity to grow and discover more about aspects of my self | .833 | | |
| FAN_EXP2 | Answers, information, and guides I need to face situations in my life | .852 | | |
| FAN_EXP4 | A sense of fulfilment as I feel like something is missing when I am not involved | .828 | | |
| FAN_EXP12 | An opportunity to share with my family and brings us closer | .795 | | |
| **IMR_EXP** | **Immersive Experience** | **α** | **CR** | **AVE** |
| | | .82 | .82 | .54 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Related to your brand interaction on [X Luxury] community on social media platforms, please state your level of agreement with the following statements: | | | |
| IMR_EXP1 | Time seems to fly | .694 | | |
| IMR_EXP2 | I forget everything else around me | .656 | | |
| IMR_EXP3 | I feel enthusiastic | .767 | | |
| IMR_EXP4 | I became immersed in the social medias' interaction | .814 | | |
| **AESTH_EXP** | **Aesthetic Experience** | **α** | **CR** | **AVE** |
| | | .83 | .84 | .57 |
| | Activities content of [X luxury] social media platforms | | | |
| AESTH_EXP1 | Is a creative design | .793 | | |
| AESTH_EXP2 | Is a fascinating design | .796 | | |
| AESTH_EXP4 | Is an original design | .733 | | |
| AESTH_EXP5 | Is a sophisticated design | .692 | | |

**Table (4-8) Discriminant Validity and Composite Reliability**

| | **CR** | **AVE** | **SOC** | **FAN** | **AEST** | **INFO** | **IMMR** | **TRD** | **VAL** | **CUR** | **SEN** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **SOC INT** | 0.930 | 0.728 | **0.853** | | | | | | | | |
| **FAN EXP** | 0.896 | 0.684 | 0.655*** | **0.827** | | | | | | | |
| **AEST EXP** | 0.841 | 0.570 | 0.474*** | 0.464*** | **0.755** | | | | | | |
| **INFOEXP** | 0.899 | 0.749 | 0.527*** | 0.549*** | 0.575*** | **0.865** | | | | | |
| **IMMEXP** | 0.824 | 0.541 | 0.648*** | 0.726*** | 0.626*** | 0.658*** | **0.735** | | | | |
| **TRD** | 0.821 | 0.604 | 0.632*** | 0.557*** | 0.691*** | 0.631*** | 0.698*** | **0.777** | | | |
| **VAL_INT** | 0.755 | 0.606 | 0.578*** | 0.434*** | 0.453*** | 0.492*** | 0.563*** | 0.581*** | **0.779** | | |
| **CUR** | 0.809 | 0.680 | 0.630*** | 0.703*** | 0.577*** | 0.597*** | 0.704*** | 0.768*** | 0.492*** | **0.824** | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **SEN** | 0.743 | 0.592 | 0.653 | 0.650 | 0.669 | 0.608 | 0.721 | 0.846 | 0.559 | 0.757 | **0.770** |

**Table (4- 9) HTMT Discriminant Validity and Composite Reliability**

| | **SOC** | **FAN** | **AEST** | **INFO** | **IMMR** | **TRD** | **VAL** | **CUR** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Socialization_** | | | | | | | | |
| **Fandom Exp** | 0.663 | | | | | | | |
| **Aesthetic Exp** | 0.479 | 0.468 | | | | | | |
| **Informative Exp** | 0.542 | 0.568 | 0.573 | | | | | |
| **Immersive Exp** | 0.636 | 0.730 | 0.619 | 0.656 | | | | |
| **Trendiness Activity** | 0.633 | 0.560 | 0.696 | 0.636 | 0.684 | | | |
| **Valence_ INT** | 0.577 | 0.435 | 0.459 | 0.507 | 0.553 | 0.585 | | |
| **Curiosity Creation Activity** | 0.626 | 0.701 | 0.586 | 0.612 | 0.700 | 0.774 | 0.490 | |
| **Sensory Marketing Activity** | 0.660 | 0.659 | 0.673 | 0.619 | 0.708 | 0.844 | 0.564 | 0.759 |

**Note: Fornell-Larcker criterion (HTMT); ***: significant value (p < 0.001).**

### 4.7.4. Common Method Variance and Remedies

A typical research problem in consumer behavior research is the “common method variance”. The variance is qualified to the extent measures more than the concepts of interest (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Conceptually, the common method bias refers to “the amount of false covariance distributed amongst independent and dependent variables that are measured at the same range in time” (Podsakoff et al., 2003, p. 889).

Measurement errors are classified into two components: random and systematic errors. Random errors are inaccuracies in dimensions that cause a discrepancy in measure’s values when repetitive measures of a continuous element or number are acquired (Streiner, 2003). On the other hand, the common method variance is a procedure of systematic error variance, and it might sort the observed correlations amongst variables that vary from actual population values. Hence,

systematic error is not detected accidental (Doty and Glick, 1998). In this study, a specific medium was employed to get the responses. Thus, the researcher checked both procedural and statistical tests to inspect the common method bias.

Firstly, procedural Remedies include procedures that were instructed to the participants that ensure the quality of the intended answers, including the participants' answers, which were secured to be anonymous to decrease appraisal concern and freedom of withdrawal, where each participant was acknowledged that there is an option to withdraw from the answering questionnaire at any time without any penalization or consequences. Technically, the questionnaire instructions, statements, and scales' items were presented simplest and most clear forms. Thus, the ambiguous expressions were determined in the pre-test and explained for the participants' best understanding.

For data quality insurance, the instructional manipulation check was executed. As respondents in a study may not continuously have full attention to instructions, as Krosnick (1991) pointed the problem is indifference in the survey responses. Consequently, respondents may be pleased with the first acceptable option rather than discover the optimum answers (Narayan and Smith, 1996). In this study, the instructional manipulation check measures pertain to whether the participants read the instructions, particularly asked in question number 33, which relates simply to the preferred fashion brand. It was like the other questions in length and had the same response format (e.g., Likert scale, checkboxes). Hence, it confirms that they have read the instructions as requested (If {name of the brand chosen by the participant} is your favorite brand, choose strongly agree).

Secondly, as statistical remedies, as mentioned above, procedural checks reduced the potential common methods variance. Therefore, it is necessary to execute statistical checks to control common method biases. One of the best popular procedures utilized in examining common method variance is "Harman's single-factor test" (Podsakoff et al., 2003). This practice encompasses each item in the study, leading to investigative factor analysis and testing the unrotated one to decide the numeral of elements that considered interpretation for the variance in the variables (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

In this study, Harman's single factor test was executed to inspect any possible issue with the common method bias. In line with Harman (1976) and Podsakoff et al. (2003), the data would be free from any concerns of common method bias if the variance accounted for by the first factor is not higher than (.50) and that no single factor emerges. Consequently, all the items shown in the

questionnaire were loaded into the exploratory factor analysis and inspected through an unrotated factor resolution. In this respect, the statistical results reveal that no single factor has emerged. Moreover, the first factor accounted for (44.163%) of variance, and even common biased methods had been tested after EFA and CFA using the retained factors of the questionnaire, results indicate (43.852%) of variance, also is less than the cut-off value of 50% as recommended by Podsakoff et al., (2003). Therefore, in this study, the data set is satisfactory, and no concerns related to the common method bias.

### 4.7.5. Scale Basic Measurement

**Table (4-10) basic measurement scales' statistics**

| Construct | Mean | Variance | Std. Deviation | Number of items |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Curiosity Creation Activity** | **9.05** | **7.422** | **2.724** | **2** |
| **Trendiness Activity** | **15.05** | **11.090** | **3.330** | **3** |
| **Sensory Marketing Activity** | **9.19** | **5.451** | **2.335** | **2** |
| **Socialization** | **22.67** | **40.627** | **6.374** | **5** |
| **Valence of exchanged information** | **5.13** | **.917** | **.958** | **2** |
| **Fandom Experience** | **14.00** | **35.485** | **5.957** | **4** |
| **Aesthetic Experience** | **21.36** | **14.895** | **3.859** | **4** |
| **Immersive Experience** | **16.88** | **24.271** | **4.927** | **4** |
| **Informative Experience** | **13.83** | **14.881** | **3.858** | **3** |

## 4.8. Methods of Analysis

### 4.8.1. Conditional Process Analysis

Conditional process analysis is a methodical strategy applicable when the research objective is to examine and test propositions related to how phenomena factors differ as a function of contexts or distinct differences (Hayes, 2018). Thus, it describes a conditional nature that is more logical when it comes to studying social phenomena. It is worth noting that conditional process analysis is considered a newly used phrase introduced in 2008 by Preacher and Hayes (2008) and Hayes (2018a). Thus, the idea of mediation and moderation analysis is solid in the existing literature and had been addressed by leading scholars (e.g., Baron and Kenny, 1986; James and Brett, 1985; Judd

and Kenny, 1981; more recently MacKinnon, 2008; Preacher et al., 2007). However, few of these studies deliberate combining both mediation and moderation variables in the same study model. Thus, the work of Hayes (2018) facilitated the mediation and moderation process by introducing the Marco process models combined with statistics software programs, such as IBM SPSS, SAS, and R.

Hayes et al. (2017) and Hayes (2018) documented a wide range of suggested models. Every model has a number and a set of relations; researchers must specify the arguments based on literature and theoretical foundations to identify independent variables, moderators, mediators, or covariates. Therefore, PROCESS executes discrete ordinary least squares regressions combined with a bootstrap procedure to get inferential statistics for the direct and indirect effects.

Therefore, simple mediation analysis is convenient to measure and inspect the direct and indirect paths throughout a predictor variable (X) transfers its influence on an outcome variable (Y) across one or more intermediate variables. It answers the “how” question. However, moderation analysis is executed to inspect how the influence of the predictor variable (X) on an outcome (Y) depends on another variable or set of variables. It answers the "When" or "whom" questions. Thus, conditional process analysis includes these types and emphasizes the estimate and explanation of the conditional nature of the moderation factor or the mediation factor of X's indirect or direct outcomes on Y in a causal relationship (Hayes, 2018).

This study aims at developing a theoretical framework to examine the luxury brands experience within social media platforms. It extends the luxury marketing literature by identifying types of luxury brand activities that impact brand experience types in light of the customers' socialization and valence of exchanged information. Consequently, understanding how each variable is associated differently justifies the rationale to use process analysis. Though previous studies examined the luxury brand activities as a single construct behind the possible outcomes (Liu et al., 2019; Godey et al., 2016; Kim and Ko, 2012), more insights will be generated to understand the luxury brands activities on brand experience types.

The investigation of the mediation analysis (Hayes, 2009; MacKinion, 2008) had been a subject of debate among scholars. While Baron and Kennys' approach (1986) argued for four steps of meditation, emphasizing that the strength of meditation exists when an indirect effect is significant without direct effect between X and Y, Hayes (2009) argued that the mediation strength is

deliberated by the amount of indirect effect adequately than the weakness of direct effect. Thus, the direct effect can merely indicate the possibility of mediators, and for the mediator to be efficient, the indirect effect should be significant (Heyes, 2018).

This study uses PROCESS procedure model 4 for testing direct effect and simple meditation and model 14 for moderation mediation test through SPSS v.26 Release 3.4 (Hayes, 2018). In particular, examining the mediation effect of socialization on the relations among luxury brands social media marketing activities and the experience types received by customers as shown in panels of hypotheses. Thus, the bootstrapping procedure was executed to inspect the indirect mediation effect by 5000 bootstraps and 95% confidence interval (Hayes, 2018).

The "PROCESS" procedure assesses both effects "conditional and unconditional" "direct and indirect" and provides the needed results for interpretation. It distinguishes which are direct effects or conditional ones and accordingly generate the results output. While the indirect or direct effect is significant, it creates a table including the "conditional effect" for multiple values of the mediation. For interpretation, macro-PROCESS produced output (p-values, standard errors, confidence intervals for direct effects and bootstrapping confidence intervals for conditional indirect effects) (Hayes, 2018).

This methodological approach is suitable when the study aims to comprehend and define the mechanisms throughout a variable transfer an influence on another variable. Furthermore, this study is the case when the study variable transformations on the variables' nature of these effects. Moreover, traditional methodical approaches that examine mediation, such as Baron's and Kenny's, have numerous theoretical and arithmetical limitations. Thus, social psychological studies have recently adopted PROCESS analysis tools in marketing and consumer behavior (Das et al., 2019; Martín-Consuegra et al., 2019).

The PROCESS is considered an excellent analytical approach for mediation estimation and conditional processes. Presenting regression-based models with single-item observable variables and considered accessible to scholars. However, it has certain limitations, such as that only a single X variable can be listed in the X part of the line command. Moreover, it overlooks the weight of measurement errors (Sarstedt et al., 2020). However, comparing mathematical models would have the same results (Hayes, 2018). The only difference relies on the construal of the additional variables sending arrows to M and Y as either covariate and not of substance interest or as

additional casual influences whose effects are very much of interest. Therefore, to evaluate the direct and indirect effects of all *k*X factors, PROCESS must be performed *k* times, every time inserting one *Xi* in the model as X and the staying *k*-1 X variables as covariates.

### 4.8.2. Hypotheses Testing and Results

Using OLS regression-based path analysis, the simple mediation model illustrates how the effect of a variable (X) type of luxury social media marketing activity on the outcome (Y) brand experience type can be partitioned into two paths of influence, direct and indirect. The general figure (4-4) below shows the direct relations of the simple-mediation model. In this model, there are two paths by which X can affect Y. These routes are found by drawing the lines from X to Y while never strained in the opposed direction. One path passes from X to Y without crossing through M and is called the direct effect of X on Y. This is (c ′) path calculate the direct effect of brands' activity type on experience type. A typical description of the direct effect is that two cases can vary by one unit on X but are equal on M and are projected to fluctuate by c ′ units on Y. The second path is called the indirect effect of X on Y through M (Path ab) from brands' activity to experience type through customers' socialization. It firstly starts from antecedent X to end by consequent M and then passes from antecedent M to consequent Y. thus, the indirect effect signifies how Y is affected by X through a causal order in which X affects M, which in turn affects Y. While (C Path) called the total effect of X on Y is equal to the entirety of direct effect. The indirect effect of X, such as c= c′ + ab (Hayes, 2018), theory and solid argument, are the foundation for making a causal claim (Hayes and Rockwood, 2020). Therefore, each hypothesis panel analysis will be reported in the next section.

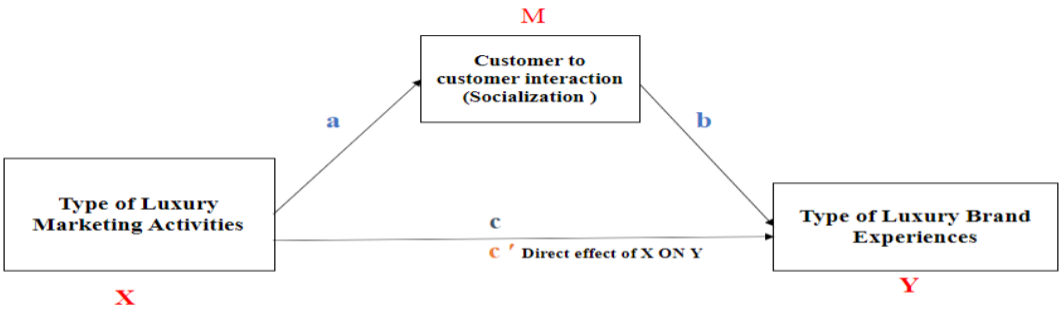
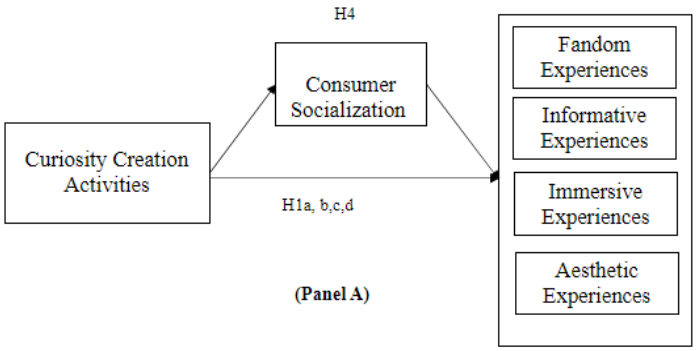



**Figure (4-4) Statistical Diagram of The Study Framework of Luxury Brand SMM Activities on Brand Experience Types**

This study's panels are explained in the next section, which includes the hypothesis testing and results' interpretation according to Hayes (2018) procedures for reporting process analysis output.




Panel (A) represents the hypothesis H1a, b, c, d and hypothesis H4a, b, c, d, as follows:

H1: A curiosity creation marketing activity has a positive effect on consumer (a) fandom experience, (b) informative experience, (c) immersive experience (d) aesthetic experience.

H4: Customers' socialization strongly mediates the relationship between curiosity creation activity, (a) fandom experience and (b) immersive experience.

**Table (4-11) Model coefficients for the Panel A (H1a and H4a)**

| Consequent | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **M (Socialization) OLS** | | | | | **Y (Fandom Experience) OLS** | | | |
| | Path | Coeff. | SE | *p* | | Path | Coeff. | SE | *p* |
| Antecedent | | | | | | | | | |
| **X (curiosity creation)** | a | .504 | .032 | <0.001 | | c ′ | .446 | .039 | <0.001 |
| **M (socialization)** | - | - | - | | | b | .412 | .041 | <0.001 |
| Constant | | 2.295 | .152 | <0.001 | | | -.406 | .182 | .0265 |
| **$R^2$ = .287** **$F$ (1,607) = 244.207, $p$ < .001** | | | | | | **$R^2$ = .448** **$F$ (2,606) = 245.781, $p$ < .001** | | | |
| Direct effect of curiosity creation on fandom experience<br>Effect se t p LLCI ULCI<br>.446 .039 11.4083 .0000 .3691 .5226 | | | | | | | | | |

| Indirect effect of curiosity creation through socialization fandom experience | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Effect | BootSE | BootLLCI | BootULCI |
| Socialization | .2081 | .0254 | .1617 | .2599 |

| Total effect of curiosity creation on fandom experience | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Effect | se | t | p | LLCI | ULCI |
| .654 | .036 | 18.389 | .000 | .5841 | .7238 |

Table (4-11) demonstrates the direct effect of the curiosity creation activity on fandom experience and the indirect effect through socialisation. The variance explained (R2) of the path coefficients for models is (R2 = .287/R2 = .448) considered high and indicates an appropriate predictive power. Findings indicate that curiosity creation activity (c'= 0.446, $p < 0.001$) have a significant direct effect on fandom experience. Thus H1(a) is accepted. More positive curiosity creation activity (a = 0.504, $p < 0.001$) guides to higher consumer socialization interaction, which, in turn, leads to fandom experience (b = 0.41, $p < 0.001$). The indirect effect of curiosity creation on fandom experience via socialisation interaction (ab = 0.208) is significant. Based on 5000 bootstrapping samples, it is estimated to lie between lower limit (LL): 0.1617 and upper limit (UL): 0.2599 with 95% confidence. Thus H4 (a) is accepted.

**Table (4-12) Model coefficients for the Panel A (H1b, and H4b)**

| Consequent | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **M (Socialization) OLS** | | | | | **Y (Informative Experience) OLS** | | | |
| | Path | Coeff. | SE | *p* | | Path | Coeff. | SE | *p* |
| Antecedent | | | | | | | | | |
| **X (curiosity creation)** | a | .504 | .032 | <0.001 | | c ′ | .347 | .037 | <0.001 |
| **M (socialization)** | - | - | - | | | b | .289 | .039 | <0.001 |
| Constant | | 2.295 | .152 | <0.001 | | | 1.710 | .173 | <0.001 |
| **$R^2$ = .287** **$F$ (1,607) = 244.207, $p$ < .001** | | | | | | **$R^2$ = .332** **$F$ (2,606) = 151.135, $p$ < .001** | | | |
| **Direct effect of curiosity creation on informative experience** **Effect se t p LLCI ULCI** **.3479 .0371 9.3791 .0000 .2751 .4207** | | | | | | | | | |
| **Indirect effect of curiosity creation through socialization to informative experience** | | | | | | | | | |

| | Effect | BootSE | BootLLCI | BootULCI |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Socialization** | **.1458** | **.0274** | **.0960** | **.2027** |

**Total effect of curiosity creation on informative experience**

| Effect | se | t | p | LLCI | ULCI |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **.4937** | **.0327** | **15.1169** | **.0000** | **.4296** | **.5578** |

Table (4-12) demonstrates the direct effect of the curiosity creation activity on informative experience and the indirect effect through socialization. The variance explained ($R^2$) of the path coefficients for models is ($R^2$ = .287/$R^2$ = .332) considered high and indicates an appropriate predictive power. Findings indicate that curiosity creation activity (c'= 0.347, p < 0.001) have a significant direct effect on informative experience; thus H1(b) is accepted. More positive curiosity creation activity (a = 0.504, p < 0.001) guides to higher consumer socialization interaction, which in turn leads to informative experience (b = 0.289, p < 0.001). The indirect effect of curiosity creation activity on informative experience via socialization interaction (ab = 0.145). Based on 5000 bootstrapping samples, it is estimated to lie between lower limit (LL): 0.0960 and upper limit (UL): 0.2027 with 95% confidence. Thus H4 (b) is accepted.

**Table (4-13) Model coefficients for the Panel A (H1c and H4c)**

| Consequent | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **M (Socialization) OLS** | | | | | **Y (Immersive Experience) OLS** | | | |
| | Path | Coeff. | SE | *p* | | Path | Coeff. | SE | *p* |
| Antecedent | | | | | | | | | |
| **X (curiosity creation)** | a | .504 | .032 | <0.001 | | c ′ | .359 | .033 | <0.001 |
| **M (socialization)** | - | - | - | | | b | .309 | .035 | <0.001 |
| Constant | | 2.295 | .152 | <0.001 | | | 1.721 | .157 | <0.001 |
| **$R^2$ = .287** | | | | | | **$R^2$ = .399** | | | |
| ***F* (1,607) = 244.207, *p* < .001** | | | | | | ***F* (2,606) = 201.838, *p* < *.001*** | | | |

**Direct effect of curiosity creation on immersive experience**

| Effect | se | t | p | LLCI | ULCI |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **.3597** | **.0337** | **10.6731** | **.0000** | **.2935** | **.4258** |

**Indirect effect of curiosity creation through socialization immersive experience**

| Effect | BootSE | BootLLCI | BootULCI |
|---|---|---|---|

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Socialization** | **.1563** | **.0232** | **.1137** | **.2041** |

**Total effect of curiosity creation on immersive experience**

| Effect | se | t | p | LLCI | ULCI |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **.5159** | **.0301** | **17.1177** | **.0000** | **.4567** | **.5751** |

Table (4-13) demonstrates the direct effect of the curiosity creation activity on immersive experience and the indirect effect through socialization. The variance explained (R2) of the path coefficients for models is (R2 = .287/R2 = .339) considered high and indicates an appropriate predictive power. Findings indicate that curiosity creation activity (c'= 0.359, p< 0.001) have a significant direct effect on an immersive experience; thus, H1(c) is accepted. More positive curiosity creation activity (a= 0.504, p< 0.001) guides to higher consumer socialization interaction, which in turn leads to immersive experience (b= 0.309, p< 0.001). The indirect effect of curiosity creation activity on immersive experience via socialization interaction (ab= 0.156). Based on 5000 bootstrapping samples, it is estimated to lie between lower limit (LL): 0.1137 and upper limit (UL): 0.2041 with 95% confidence; thus, H4 (c) is accepted.

**Table (4-14) Model coefficients for the Panel A (H1d and H4d)**

| Consequent | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **M (Socialization) OLS** | | | | | **Y (Aesthetic Experience) OLS** | | | |
| | Path | Coeff. | SE | *p* | | Path | Coeff. | SE | *p* |
| Antecedent | | | | | | | | | |
| **X (curiosity creation)** | a | .504 | .032 | <0.001 | | c ′ | .260 | .029 | <0.001 |
| **M (socialization)** | - | - | - | | | b | .164 | .031 | <0.001 |
| Constant | | 2.295 | .152 | <0.001 | | | 3.410 | .136 | <0.001 |
| **$R^2$ = .287** | | | | | | **$R^2$ = .268** | | | |
| ***F* (1,607) = 244.207, *p* < .001** | | | | | | ***F* (2,606) = 101.025, *p* < *.001*** | | | |

**Direct effect of curiosity creation on aesthetic experience**

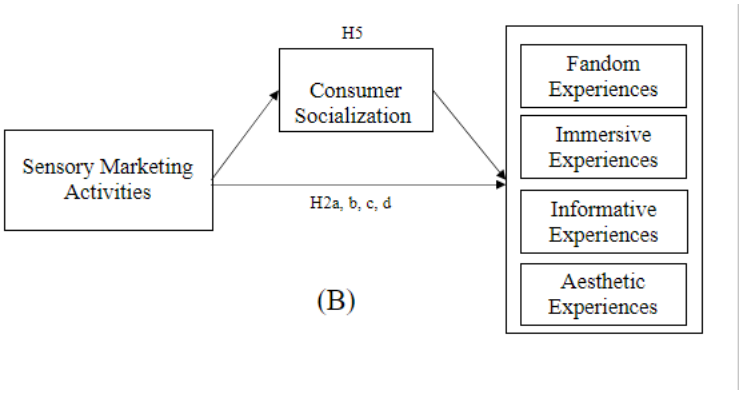
| Effect | se | t | p | LLCI | ULCI |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **.2600** | **.0291** | **8.9191** | **.0000** | **.2027** | **.3172** |

**Indirect effect of curiosity creation through socialization on aesthetic experience**

| | Effect | BootSE | BootLLCI | BootULCI |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Socialization** | **.0828** | **.0187** | **.0472** | **.1201** |

| Total effect of curiosity creation on aesthetic experience | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Effect** | **se** | **t** | **p** | **LLCI** | **ULCI** |
| **.3428** | **.0252** | **13.6246** | **.0000** | **.2934** | **.3922** |

Table (4-14) demonstrates the results of the direct effect of the curiosity creation activity on aesthetic experience and the indirect effect through socialization. The variance explained ($R^2$) of the path coefficients for models is ($R^2$ = .287/$R^2$ = .268) considered low and indicates a less predictive power. Findings indicate that curiosity creation activity (c'= 0.260, p < 0.001) have a significant direct effect on aesthetic experience, thus H1(d) is accepted. More positive curiosity creation activity (a = 0.504, p < 0.001) guides to consumer socialization interaction, which in turn leads to aesthetic experience (b = 0.164, p < 0.001). The indirect effect of curiosity creation activity on aesthetic experience via socialization interaction (ab = 0.082). Based on 5000 bootstrapping samples, it is estimated to lie between lower limit (LL): 0.0472 and upper limit (UL): 0.1201 with 95% confidence, thus H4 (d) is accepted. Although there is a mediation effect, it is every week compared to other experiences.




Panel (B) represents the hypothesis H2a, b, c, d and hypothesis H5a, b, c, d, as follows:

*H2: A sensory marketing activity has a positive effect on consumer brand experience, regardless of the experience types.*

*H5: Customers' socialization has a strongly mediates effect on the relationship between sensory marketing activity and (a) fandom experience, (b) immersive experience, (c) informative experience, and (d) Aesthetic experience*

**Table (4-15) Model coefficients for the Panel B (H2a and H5a)**

| Consequent | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **M (Socialization) OLS** | | | | | **Y (Fandom Experience) OLS** | | | |
| | Path | Coeff. | SE | *p* | | Path | Coeff. | SE | *p* |
| Antecedent | | | | | | | | | |
| **X (sensory marketing)** | a | .587 | .037 | <0.001 | | c ′ | .410 | .047 | <0.001 |
| **M (socialization)** | - | - | - | | | b | .466 | .043 | <0.001 |
| Constant | | 1.880 | .178 | <0.001 | | | -.520 | .206 | .012 |
| **$R^2$ = .286** **$F$ (1,607) = 242.901, $p$ < .001** | | | | | | **$R^2$ = .403** **$F$ (2,606) = 204.685, $p$ < .001** | | | |
| **Direct effect of sensory marketing activity on fandom experience** **Effect se t p LLCI ULCI** **.4103 .0474 8.6615 .0000 .3173 .5034** | | | | | | | | | |
| **Indirect effect of sensory marketing activity through socialization to fandom experience** **Effect BootSE BootLLCI BootULCI** **Socialization .2741 .0317 .2150 .3392** | | | | | | | | | |
| **Total effect of sensory marketing activity on fandom experience** **Effect se t p LLCI ULCI** **.6844 .0437 15.6625 .0000 .5986 .7702** | | | | | | | | | |

Table (4-15) demonstrates the results of the direct effect of the sensory marketing activity on fandom experience and the indirect effect through socialization. The variance explained ($R^2$) of the path coefficients for models is ($R^2$ = .286/$R^2$ = .403) considered high and indicates an appropriate predictive power. Findings indicate that sensory marketing activity (c'= 0.410, p < 0.001) has a significant direct effect on fandom experience, thus H2(a) is accepted. More positive sensory marketing activity (a = 0.587, p < 0.001) guides to higher consumer socialization interaction, which, in turn, leads to fandom experience (b = 0.466, p < 0.001). The indirect effect of sensory marketing activity on fandom experience via socialization interaction (ab = 0.274) is significant. Based on 5000 bootstrapping samples, it is estimated to lie between lower limit (LL): 0.2150 and upper limit (UL): 0.3392 with 95% confidence, thus H5 (a) is accepted.

**Table (4-16) Model coefficients for the Panel B (H2b, and H5b)**

| Consequent | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **M (Socialization) OLS** | | | | | **Y (Immersive Experience) OLS** | | | |
| | Path | Coeff. | SE | *p* | | Path | Coeff. | SE | *p* |
| Antecedent | | | | | | | | | |
| **X (sensory marketing)** | a | .587 | .037 | <0.001 | | c ′ | .389 | .039 | <0.001 |
| **M (socialization)** | - | - | - | | | b | .325 | .036 | <0.001 |
| Constant | | 1.880 | .178 | <0.001 | | | .942 | .1733 | <0.001 |
| **$R^2$ =. 286** **$F$ (1,607) = 242.901, $p$ < .001** | | | | | | **$R^2$ = .384** **$F$ (2,606) = 189.015, $p$ < .001** | | | |
| **Direct effect of sensory marketing activity on immersive experience** **Effect se t p LLCI ULCI** **.3892 .0398 9.7789 .0000 .3110 .4673** | | | | | | | | | |
| **Indirect effect of sensory marketing activity through socialisation to immersive experience** **Effect BootSE BootLLCI BootULCI** **Socialization .1909 .0271 .1400 .2450** | | | | | | | | | |
| **Total effect of sensory marketing activity on immersive experience** **Effect se t p LLCI ULCI** **.5801 .0358 16.2183 .0000 .5099 .6504** | | | | | | | | | |

Table (4-16) demonstrates the direct effect of the sensory marketing activity on immersive experience and the indirect effect through socialization. The variance explained ($R^2$) of the path coefficients for models is ($R^2$ = .286/$R^2$ = .384) considered high and indicates an appropriate predictive power. Findings indicate that sensory marketing activity (c'= 0.389, p < 0.001) has a significant direct effect on immersive experience; thus, H2(b) is accepted. More positive sensory marketing activity (a = 0.587, p < 0.001) guides to higher consumer socialization interaction, which, in turn, leads to immersive experience (b = 0.325, p < 0.001). The indirect effect of sensory marketing activity on immersive experience via socialization interaction (ab= 0.190). Based on 5000 bootstrapping samples, it is estimated to lie between lower limit (LL): 0.1400 and upper limit (UL): 0.2450 with 95% confidence; thus, H5 (b) is accepted.

**Table (4-17) Model coefficients for the Panel B (H2c and H5c)**

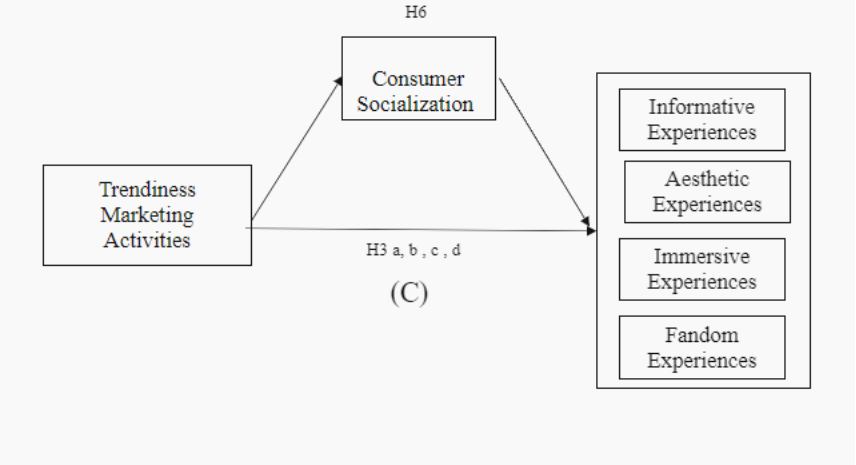
| Consequent | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **M (Socialization) OLS** | | | | | **Y (Informative Experience) OLS** | | | |
| | Path | Coeff. | SE | *p* | | Path | Coeff. | SE | *p* |
| Antecedent | | | | | | | | | |
| **X (sensory marketing)** | a | .587 | .037 | <0.001 | | c ′ | .379 | .043 | <0.001 |
| **M (socialization)** | - | - | - | | | b | .302 | .039 | <0.001 |
| Constant | | 1.880 | .178 | <0.001 | | | 1.481 | .190 | <0.001 |
| **$R^2$ = .285**<br>***F* (1,607) = 242.90, *p* < .001** | | | | | | **$R^2$ = .320**<br>***F* (2,606) = 143.008, *p* < *.001*** | | | |
| **Direct effect of sensory marketing on informative experience**<br>**Effect se t p LLCI ULCI**<br>**.3793 .0436 8.6919 .0000 .2936 .4650** | | | | | | | | | |
| **Indirect effect of sensory marketing activity through socialization to informative experience**<br>**Effect BootSE BootLLCI BootULCI**<br>**Socialization .1776 .0297 .1207 .2385** | | | | | | | | | |
| **Total effect of sensory marketing activity on informative experience**<br>**Effect se t p LLCI ULCI**<br>**.5570 .0386 14.4389 .0000 .4812 .6327** | | | | | | | | | |

Table (4-17) demonstrates the direct effect of the sensory marketing activity on informative experience and the indirect effect through socialization. The variance explained ($R^2$) of the path coefficients for models is ($R^2$ = .285/$R^2$ = .320) considered high and indicates an appropriate predictive power. Findings indicate that sensory marketing activity (c'= 0.379, p < 0.001) has a significant direct effect on informative experience; thus, H2(c) is accepted. More positive sensory marketing activity (a = 0.587, p < 0.001) guides to higher consumer socialization interaction, which, in turn, leads to informative experience (b = 0.302, p < 0.001). The indirect effect of sensory marketing activity on informative experience via socialization interaction (ab = 0.177). Based on 5000 bootstrapping samples, it is estimated to lie between lower limit (LL): 0.1207 and upper limit (UL): 0.2385 with 95% confidence; thus, H5 (c) is accepted.

**Table (4-18) Model coefficients for the Panel B (H2d and H5d)**

| Consequent | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **M (Socialization) OLS** | | | | | **Y (Aesthetic Experience) OLS** | | | |
| | Path | Coeff. | SE | *p* | | Path | Coeff. | SE | *p* |
| Antecedent | | | | | | | | | |
| **X (sensory marketing)** | a | .587 | .037 | <0.001 | | c ′ | .357 | .033 | <0.001 |
| **M (socialization)** | - | - | - | | | b | .138 | .031 | <0.001 |
| Constant | | 1.880 | .178 | <0.001 | | | 3.065 | .144 | <0.001 |
| **$R^2$ = .286** **$F$ (1,607) = 242.90, $p$ < .001** | | | | | | **$R^2$ = .306** **$F$ (2,606) = 133.344, $p$ < .001** | | | |
| **Direct effect of sensory marketing activity on aesthetic experience** **Effect se t p LLCI ULCI** **.3573 .0331 10.7937 .0000 .2923 .4224** | | | | | | | | | |
| **Indirect effect of sensory marketing activity through socialization to aesthetic experience** **Effect BootSE BootLLCI BootULCI** **Socialization .0812 .0204 .0425 .1235** | | | | | | | | | |
| **Total effect of sensory marketing activity on aesthetic experience** **Effect se t p LLCI ULCI** **.4385 .0284 15.4209 .0000 .3827 .4944 .4545** | | | | | | | | | |

Table (4-18) demonstrates the direct effect of the sensory marketing activity on aesthetic experience and the indirect effect through socialization. The variance explained ($R^2$) of the path coefficients for models is ($R^2$ = .287/$R^2$ = .306) considered high and indicates an appropriate predictive power. Findings indicate that sensory marketing activity (c'= 0.357, p < 0.001) has a significant direct effect on aesthetic experience; thus, H2(d) is accepted. More positive sensory marketing activity (a = 0.504, p < 0.001) guides to consumer socialization interaction, which in turn leads to aesthetic experience (b = 0.138, p < 0.001). The indirect effect of sensory marketing activity on aesthetic experience via socialization interaction (ab = 0.081). Based on 5000 bootstrapping samples, it is estimated to lie between lower limit (LL): 0.0425 and upper limit (UL): 0.1235 with 95% confidence; thus, H5 (d) is accepted. Although there is a mediation effect, it is every week compared to other experiences.




Panel (C) represents the hypothesis H3a, b, c, d and hypothesis H6 a, b, c, d, as follows.

**Table (4-19) Model coefficients for the Panel C (H3a and H6a)**

| Consequent | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **M (Socialization) OLS** | | | | | **Y (Informative Experience) OLS** | | | |
| | Path | Coeff. | SE | *p* | | Path | Coeff. | SE | *p* |
| Antecedent | | | | | | | | | |
| **X (trendiness activity)** | a | .629 | .039 | <0.001 | | c ′ | .461 | .045 | <0.001 |
| **M (socialization)** | - | - | - | | | b | .269 | .039 | <0.001 |
| Constant | | 1-422 | .202 | <0.001 | | | 1.058 | .203 | <0.001 |
| **$R^2$ = .296** **$F$ (1,607) = 255.877, $p$ < .001** | | | | | | **$R^2$ = .347** **$F$ (2,606) = 161.534, $p$ < .001** | | | |
| **Direct effect of trendiness activity on informative experience** **Effect se t p LLCI ULCI** **.4618 .0453 10.1911 .0000 .3728 .5508** | | | | | | | | | |
| **Indirect effect of trendiness activity through socialisation to informative experience** **Effect BootSE BootLLCI BootULCI** **Socialization .1695 .0329 .1077 .2369** | | | | | | | | | |
| **Total effect of trendiness activity on informative experience** **Effect se t p LLCI ULCI** **.6313 .0394 16.0122 .0000 .5538 .7087** | | | | | | | | | |

Table (4-19) demonstrates the direct effect of the trendiness marketing activity on informative experience and the indirect effect through socialization. The variance explained ($R^2$) of the path coefficients for models is ($R^2$ = .296/$R^2$ = .347) considered high and indicates an appropriate predictive power. Findings indicate that trendiness marketing activity (c'= 0.461, p < 0.001) has a significant direct effect on informative experience; thus, H2(a) is accepted. More positive sensory trendiness activity (a = 0.629, p < 0.001) guides to higher consumer socialization interaction, which, in turn, leads to informative experience (b = 0.269, p < 0.001). The indirect effect of trendiness marketing activity on informative experience via socialization interaction (ab = 0.169). Based on 5000 bootstrapping samples, it is estimated to lie between lower limit (LL): 0.1077 and upper limit (UL): 0.2369 with 95% confidence; thus, H6 (a) is accepted.

**Table (4-20) Model coefficients for the Panel C (H3b, and H6b)**

| Consequent | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **M (Socialization) OLS** | | | | | **Y (Aesthetic Experience) OLS** | | | |
| | Path | Coeff. | SE | *p* | | Path | Coeff. | SE | *p* |
| Antecedent | | | | | | | | | |
| **X (trendiness activity)** | a | .629 | .039 | <0.001 | | c ′ | .432 | .034 | <0.001 |
| **M (socialization)** | - | - | - | | | b | .108 | .029 | <0.001 |
| Constant | | 1.422 | .202 | <0.001 | | | 2.673 | .152 | <0.001 |
| **$R^2$ = .296**<br>***F* (1,607) = 255.877, *p* < .001** | | | | | | **$R^2$ = .346**<br>***F* (2,606) = 160.566, *p* < .001** | | | |
| **Direct effect of trendiness activity on Aesthetic Experience**<br>**Effect se t p LLCI ULCI**<br>**.4326 .0340 12.7114 .0000 .3658 .4995** | | | | | | | | | |
| **Indirect effect of trendiness activity through socialization to Aesthetic Experience**<br>**Effect BootSE BootLLCI BootULCI**<br>**Socialization .0681 .0214 .0273 .1117** | | | | | | | | | |
| **Total effect of trendiness activity on Aesthetic Experience**<br>**Effect se t p LLCI ULCI**<br>**5007 .0288 17.3622 .0000 .4441 .5573** | | | | | | | | | |

Table (4-20) demonstrates the direct effect of the trendiness marketing activity on aesthetic experience and the indirect effect through socialization. The variance explained ($R^2$) of the path coefficients for models is ($R^2$ = .287/$R^2$ = .346) considered high and indicates an appropriate predictive power. Findings indicate that trendiness marketing activity (c'= 0.432, p < 0.001) has a significant direct effect on aesthetic experience; thus, H2(b) is accepted. More positive trendiness marketing activity (a = 0.629, p < 0.001) guides to consumer socialization interaction, which in turn leads to aesthetic experience (b = 0.108, p < 0.001). The indirect effect of trendiness marketing activity on aesthetic experience via socialization interaction (ab = 0.068). Based on 5000 bootstrapping samples, it is estimated to lie between lower limit (LL): 0.0273 and upper limit (UL): 0.1117 with 95% confidence; thus, H6 (b) is accepted. Although there is a mediation effect, it is every week compared to other experiences.

**Table (4-21) Model coefficients for the Panel C (H3c and H6c)**

| Consequent | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **M (Socialization) OLS** | | | | | **Y (Immersive Experience) OLS** | | | |
| | Path | Coeff. | SE | *p* | | Path | Coeff. | SE | *p* |
| Antecedent | | | | | | | | | |
| **X (trendiness activity)** | a | .629 | .039 | <0.001 | | c ′ | .423 | .042 | <0.001 |
| **M (socialization)** | - | - | - | | | b | .314 | .0363 | <0.001 |
| Constant | | 1.422 | .202 | <0.001 | | $i_Y$ | .652 | .188 | <0.001 |
| **$R^2$ = .297** **$F$ (1,607) = 255.877, $p$ < .001** | | | | | | **$R^2$ = .389** **$F$ (2,606) = 193.390, $p$ < .001** | | | |

**Direct effect of trendiness activity on immersive experience**

| Effect | se | t | p | LLCI | ULCI |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| .4238 | .0420 | 10.0929 | .0000 | .3413 | .5062 |

**Indirect effect of trendiness activity through socialisation to the immersive experience**

| | Effect | BootSE | BootLLCI | BootULCI |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Socialization | .1980 | .0295 | .1429 | .2571 |

**Total effect of trendiness activity on immersive experience**

| Effect | se | t | p | LLCI | ULCI |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| .6218 | .0373 | 16.6699 | .0000 | .5485 | .6950 |

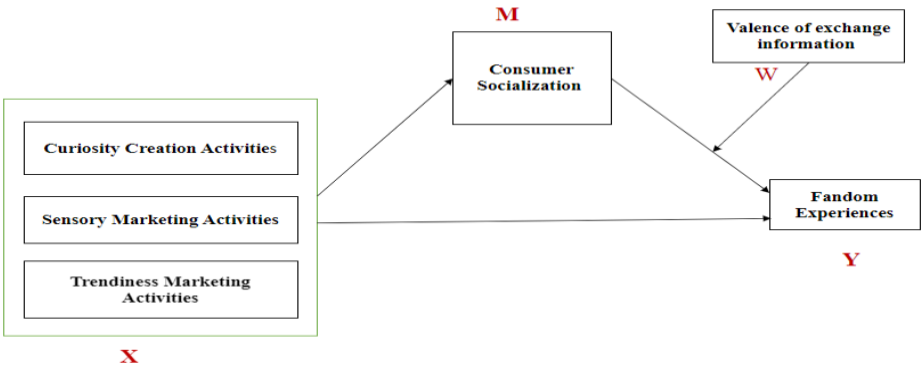
Table (4-21) demonstrates the direct effect of the trendiness activity on immersive experience and the indirect effect through socialization. The variance explained ($R^2$) of the path coefficients for models is ($R^2$ = .297/$R^2$ = .389) considered high and indicates an appropriate predictive power. Findings indicate that trendiness activity (c'= 0.423, p < 0.001) has a significant direct effect on an immersive experience; thus, H2(c) is accepted. More positive trendiness activity (a = 0.629, p < 0.001) guides to higher consumer socialization interaction, which, in turn, leads to immersive experience (b = 0.325, p < 0.001). The indirect effect of trendiness activity on immersive experience via socialization interaction (ab = 0.198). Based on 5000 bootstrapping samples, it is estimated to lie between lower limit (LL): 0.1291 and upper limit (UL): 0.2301 with 95% confidence; thus, H6 (c) is accepted.

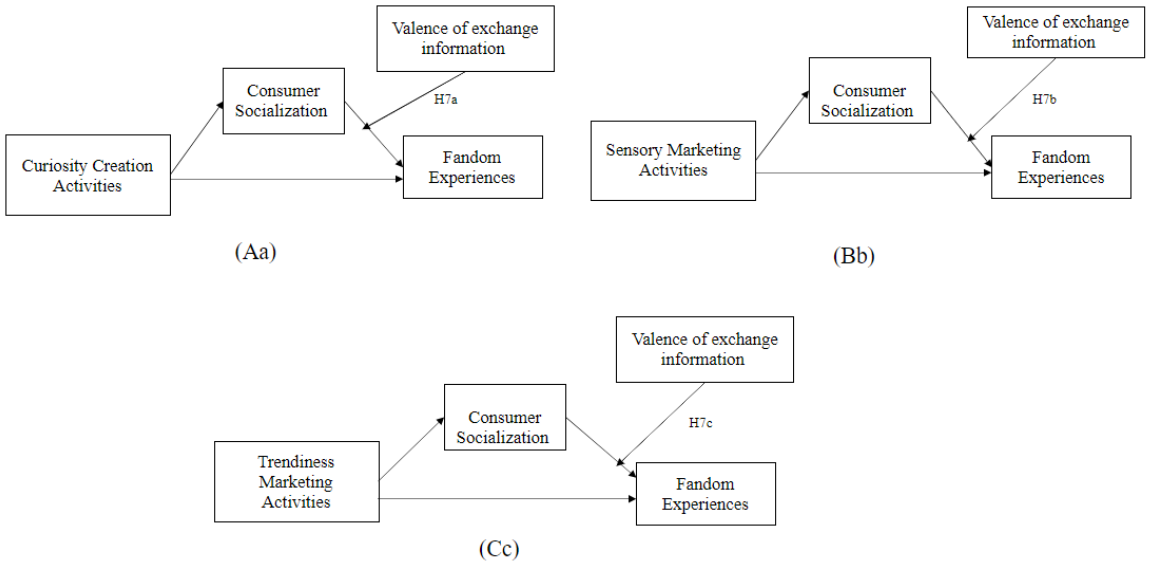
**Table (4-22) Model coefficients for the Panel C (H3d and H6d)**

| Consequent | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **M (Socialization) OLS** | | | | | **Y (Fandom Experience) OLS** | | | |
| | Path | Coeff. | SE | *p* | | Path | Coeff. | SE | *p* |
| Antecedent | | | | | | | | | |
| **X (trendiness activity)** | a | .629 | .039 | <0.001 | | c ′ | .322 | .051 | <0.001 |
| **M (socialization)** | - | - | - | | | b | .514 | .044 | <0.001 |
| Constant | | 1.422 | .202 | <0.001 | | | -.4509 | .231 | .042 |
| **$R^2$ = .297** **$F$ (1,607) = 255.877, $p$ < .001** | | | | | | **$R^2$ = .367** **$F$ (2,606) = 177.855, $p$ < .001** | | | |
| **Direct effect of trendiness activity on fandom experience** **Effect se t p LLCI ULCI** **.3222 .0516 6.2475 .0000 .2210 .4235** | | | | | | | | | |
| **Indirect effect of trendiness activity through socialization to fandom experience** **Effect BootSE BootLLCI BootULCI** **Socialization .3237 .0383 .2529 .4031** | | | | | | | | | |
| **Total effect of trendiness activity on fandom experience** **Effect se t p LLCI ULCI** **.6459 .0477 13.5335 .0000 .5522 .7397** | | | | | | | | | |

Table (4-22) demonstrates the direct effect of the trendiness marketing activity on fandom experience and the indirect effect through socialization. The variance explained ($R^2$) of the path coefficients for models is ($R^2$ = .297/$R^2$ = .367) considered high and indicates an appropriate predictive power. Findings indicate that trendiness marketing activity (c'= 0.32, p < 0.001) has a significant direct effect on fandom experience; thus, H3(d) is accepted. More positive trendiness activity (a = 0.629, p < 0.001) guides to higher consumer socialization interaction, which, in turn, leads to fandom experience (b = 0.314, p < 0.001). The indirect effect of trendiness marketing activity on fandom experience via socialization interaction (ab = 0.198) is significant. Based on 5000 bootstrapping samples, it is estimated to lie between lower limit (LL): 0.1429 and upper limit (UL): 0.2571with 95% confidence; thus, H6 (d) is accepted.

After testing the direct effect and the mediation effect of socialization between luxury brand marketing activity types and consumer experience types, it can be seen that the socializations strongly mediate the relationships between luxury activities and fandom experience. Thus, testing the moderation effect of the valence of exchanged information on these mediated relations adds more insights to the activities and experiences. Panel portrays a model in which the M → Y effect is moderated by W. using the conditional process model 14 by Hayes (2018). In the following section, the panels, hypothesis testing and results interpretation are presented.






Panels (Aa, Bb, and Cc) introduce the moderated effect of the valence of exchanged information on the mediating relationships between luxury curiosity creation activity, sensory marketing activity and trendiness marketing and fandom experience in social media platforms. They also Represent hypotheses H7 a, b, and c.

**Table (4-23) Model coefficients for the moderated mediation effects of the valence of exchanged information panel (Aa, H7a)**

| Consequent | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **M (Socialization) OLS** | | | | | **Y (Fandom Experience) OLS** | | | |
| | Path | Coeff. | SE | *p* | | Path | Coeff. | SE | *p* |
| Antecedent | | | | | | | | | |
| **X (curiosity creation)** | a | .504 | .032 | <0.001 | | c' | .432 | .039 | <0.001 |
| **M (socialization)** | | | | | | $b_1$ | .421 | .044 | <0.001 |
| **W (Valence of exchanged information)** | | | | <0.001 | | $b_2$ | .172 | .108 | .112 |
| **M x W** | | | | | | $b_3$ | .244 | .078 | <.001 |
| Constant | | -2.282 | .152 | <0.001 | | | 1.471 | .1843 | <0.001 |
| **$R^2$ = .287** ***F* (1,607) = 244.207, *p* < .001** | | | | | | **$R^2$ = .458** ***F* (4,604) = 127.821, *p* < *.001*** | | | |

**Direct effect of curiosity creation on fandom experience**

| Effect | se | t | p | LLCI | ULCI |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| .4327 | .0394 | 10.9839 | .0000 | .3553 | .5100 |

**Conditional indirect effects of X on Y:**

**INDIRECT EFFECT:**

**CURUISTY -> SOC_INT -> FAN_EXP**

| VAL_INT | Effect | BootSE | BootLLCI | BootULCI |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| -.4788 | .1537 | .0288 | .1005 | .2116 |
| .0000 | .2125 | .0274 | .1629 | .2699 |
| .4788 | .2712 | .0350 | .2047 | .3440 |

**Index of moderated mediation:**

| | Index | BootSE | BootLLCI | BootULCI |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| VAL_INT | .1228 | .0345 | .0586 | .1918 |

Table (4-23) shows the effect of the curiosity creation activity on fandom experience through the mediation effect of socialization moderated by the valance of exchanged information between customers on luxury brand social media platforms. It describes the variance explained ($R^2$) and the path coefficients for the model. This model has appropriate predictive power, having a high average explained variance ($R^2$ =.278, $R^2$ =.458). The effect of the valence of exchanged information moderates the mediated relation between curiosity and fandom experience through the moderation index of socialization (β =.128, SE = 0.034, 95% CI = [.0586, .1918]. Furthermore, conditional indirect effects were more remarkable for the fandom experience of customers who socialized and exchanged information (β =.271, SE = 0.035, 95% CI = [.2047, .3440]. Thus, hypothesis H7a is accepted.

**Table (4-24) Model coefficients for moderated mediation effects of the valence of exchanged information panel (Bb, H7b)**

| Consequent | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **M (Socialization) OLS** | | | | | **Y (Fandom Experience) OLS** | | | |
| | Path | Coeff. | SE | *p* | | Path | Coeff. | SE | *p* |
| Antecedent | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| **X (Sensory marketing activity)** | a | .587 | .178 | <0.001 | | c' | .389 | .048 | <0.001 |
| **M (socialization)** | | | | | | $b_1$ | .477 | .046 | <0.001 |
| **W (Valence of exchanged information)** | | | | <0.001 | | $b_2$ | .170 | .114 | <0.001 |
| M x W | | | | | | $b_3$ | .236 | .079 | .002 |
| Constant | | -2.698 | .178 | | | | | | |
| **$R^2$ = .286** **$F$ (1,607) =242.901, $p$ < .001** | | | | | | **$R^2$ = .413** **$F$ (4,604) =106.281, $p$ < .001** | | | |
| **Direct effect of trendiness activity on fandom experience** **Effect se t p LLCI ULCI** **.3891 .0484 8.0414 .0000 .2940 .4841** | | | | | | | | | |
| **Conditional indirect effects of X on Y:** **INDIRECT EFFECT:** **SENSORY -> SOC_INT -> FAN_EXP** **VAL_INT Effect BootSE BootLLCI BootULCI** **-.4788 .2140 .0371 .1419 .2849** **.0000 .2804 .0338 .2162 .3476** **.4788 .3468 .0434 .2658 .4362** | | | | | | | | | |
| **Index of moderated mediation:** **Index BootSE BootLLCI BootULCI** **VAL_INT .1387 .0463 .0538 .2359** | | | | | | | | | |

Table (4-24) shows the effect of the sensory marketing activity on fandom experience through the mediation effect of socialization moderated by the valance of exchanged information between customers on luxury brand social media platforms. It describes the variance explained ($R^2$) and the

path coefficients for the model. The model has appropriate predictive power, having a high average explained variance ($R^2$ =.286, $R^2$ =.413). The effect of the valence of exchanged information moderates the mediated relation between sensory marketing and fandom experience through the socialisation moderation index shows (β =.138, SE = 0.046, 95% CI = [.0538, .2359]. Furthermore, conditional indirect effects were more remarkable for the fandom experience of customers who socialized and exchanged information (β =.346, SE = 0.043, 95% CI = [.2658, .4360]. Thus, hypothesis H7b is accepted.

**Table (4-25) Model coefficients for the moderated mediation effects of the valence of exchanged information panel (Bb, H7b)**

| Consequent | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **M (Socialization) OLS** | | | | | **Y (Fandom Experience) OLS** | | | |
| | Path | Coeff. | SE | *p* | | Path | Coeff. | SE | *p* |
| Antecedent | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| **X (Trendiness)** | a | .629 | .039 | <0.001 | | c' | .301 | .053 | <0.001 |
| **M (Socialization)** | | | | | | $b_1$ | .524 | .047 | <0.001 |
| **W (Valence of exchanged information)** | | | | <0.001 | | $b_2$ | .199 | .118 | .092 |
| M x W | | | | | | $b_3$ | .270 | .080 | <0.001 |
| Constant | | -3.155 | .202 | <0.001 | | | | | |
| **$R^2$ = .287** ***F* (1,607) =255.877, *p* < .001** | | | | | | **$R^2$ = .383** ***F* (4,604) = 93.760, *p* < *.001*** | | | |
| **Direct effect of trendiness activity on fandom experience** **Effect se t p LLCI ULCI** **.3011 .0531 5.6677 .0000 .1968 .4055** | | | | | | | | | |
| **Conditional indirect effects of X on Y:** **INDIRECT EFFECT:** **TRDENIES -> SOC_INT -> FAN_EXP** **VAL_INT Effect BootSE BootLLCI BootULCI** **-.4788 .2483 .0416 .1702 .3308** **.0000 .3298 .0394 .2583 .4119** | | | | | | | | | |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **.4788** | **.4112** | **.0493** | **.3205** | **.5139** |

**Index of moderated mediation:**

| | Index | BootSE | BootLLCI | BootULCI |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **VAL_INT** | **.1702** | **.0480** | **.0812** | **.2692** |

Table (4-25) shows the effect of the trendiness activity on fandom experience through the mediation effect of socialization moderated by the valance of exchanged information between customers on luxury brand social media platforms. It describes the variance explained ($R^2$) and the path coefficients for the model. The model has a fitting analytical power, having a high average explained variance ($R^2$ =.296, $R^2$ =.383). Results the effect of the valence of exchanged information is moderating the mediated relation between curiosity and fandom experience through socialization moderation index shows (β =.170, SE = 0.048, 95% CI = [.0812, .2692]. Furthermore, conditional indirect effects were more remarkable for the fandom experience of customers who socialized and exchanged information (β =.411, SE = 0.049, 95% CI = [.3205, .5139]. Thus, hypothesis H7b is accepted.

### 4.8.3. Findings Interpretation

This study contributes to consumer behavior literature by offering a pioneered framework that studies the effect of a company's social media marketing activities on the luxury brand experience in social media platforms. The luxury fashion sector is the core of the study; previous research found out that luxury brands appear to have effective and approachable techniques of reaching and engaging their consumers and/or fans through social media channels (Kim and Ko, 2012). Furthermore, with the developing trends of social media influence on customers, luxury brands would invest more in marketing social media activities. Thus, this anticipated a positive contribution to them through delivering a superior experience to customers (Andreini et al., 2018; Pentina et al., 2018; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016). Thus, this customer experience can be attained by nurturing consumer engagements and interactions, which is anticipated to create enhanced customer satisfaction and loyalty (Brodie et al., 2013; Brakus et al., 2009).

This study highlights that social media platforms play an integral role in shaping luxury brand experience through customers to customer interactions. The brand and customers related socialization and conversations on social media might arise between a brand's existing or previous customers and include nonpaying customers (Groeger et al., 2016). Hence, this execution has

added an extra complex level in social media interactions. This prevalence of social media facilitates innovative modes of interacting with customers (Yu et al., 2020). Developing trust amongst customers and watching customers' enthusiastically sharing brand-related views have a significant perspective to enhancing consumer communications and relations (Hollebeek et al., 2016b; Malthouse et al., 2013). Indeed, customer experience is formed not only from the brands but also from other community actors.

Moreover, this study is the first to explain the moderating influence of the valance of exchanged information of customers on the relationship analyzed. The prominence lies in the possible effects: positively (negatively) valanced shaping behavior could be promising to determine the long-term consequences in terms of finance, social relations and reputations of the brands or firms (Creevey et al., 2021; Keiningham et al., 2018; Kumar et al., 2010). Therefore, customer partaking may formulate the relations between customers' experiential value and the possible outcomes, such as brand preferences and engagement behavior. Thus, this study extends the luxury social media marketing and brand experience literature in different ways, such as the following.

Firstly, given the growing position of social media platforms in luxury brands marketing tactics, this study is an answer to the request for the effect of those activities on customers-to-customers interaction and luxury brand experience (Waqas, 2020; Zha, 2020; Arrigo, 2018; Harmeling et al., 2017; Khan and Rahman, 2017; 2015a; Lemon and Verohef, 2016; Schmitt and Zarantonello, 2015; 2013). In contrast, previous studies shed light on how the customers' role in perceiving the luxury brands activities on social media might produce beneficial business results, such as brand loyalty, brand equity and purchase intentions (Schivinski and Dabrowski, 2015; Laroche et al., 2012). This study encompasses this research stream by developing a comprehensive framework of social media activities as a driver for customer-to-customers interactions that affect their luxury brand experience. Furthermore, in contrast to previous studies, this study tested the identified luxury brand activities as an individualistic construct, not as a second factor.

Findings reveal that all social media marketing activities (curiosity creation, sensory marketing, and trendiness) directly affect the luxury brand experience occurring on social media platforms, namely fandom, immersive, informative, and aesthetic experience. Meanwhile, the results obtained emphasize the importance of customers' conversations and the valance of exchanged information. Mainly, this study delivers a significant implication that these activities are a real

stimulus for the development of customer to customers' interactions within social media in the luxury setting. Furthermore, the results show that these consumers involved with brand activities are more prospective to interact with other luxury brand customers. This finding is consistent with the work of Kefi and Maar (2020), Yu (2020), and Quach et al. (2020). Since such relationship's bonds are started upon social interactions, this study perceived customers' interaction as a driver of fandom, immersive and informative experience but not the aesthetic experience.

Secondly, brands' social media marketing activities and customers' interactions were proven to synergies the brand experience that customers have towards a luxury brand. For example, the most affected experience is the fandom. The more customers interact and exchange information, the stronger the fandom experience they have. The mediation moderation effect varied between the activity's trendiness, sensory marketing, and customer creation, respectively, has a higher-order effect on the fandom experience.

On the other hand, the immersive experience and informative experience get influenced only by the mediating role of customers' socializing. The aesthetic experience only formulated by the influence of luxury brands activities, trendiness, sensory marketing, and curiosity creation, respectively, is weakly affected by socialization. Thus, the customers' interaction did not affect the aesthetic experience for luxury brands activities. More insights will be presented in the final chapter discussion and conclusion.

## 4.9. Chapter summary

This study extended luxury fashion brands' social media marketing activities and examined their effect on luxury brand experience. SMM activities organized by firms were significantly efficacious when there are customers to customers interactions leveraging the experience. Thus, insights from this study enhance brand experience formulation and understanding. Accordingly, the controversial nature of the luxury industry and the popularity of social media leads the study to agree that the fashion context is idyllic for the studied phenomena. Moreover, the other factors, such as unique industry setting and increased customers involvement, differ across domain contexts and might be critical.

These study findings are significant for marketing managers throughout contexts. Marketers can classify discrete customer interactions, either crowd or individualistic, into experiences, including conversations, consumptions, complaints or service experiences. As customers are exposed to both

firm, and other customers generated content on brands social media pages. As a result, customers repeatedly check social media to express reactions to customers or firm-related interactions. Firms usually create high-quality content to attract people to their social media pages, keep related content to all brands offline and online activities.

The exploration of firm generated content and customers' response facilities experience formation. Consumers' active social existence, interactions, and shared personal information affect the forming luxury brand experience. The research lends empirical support to the works of Lemon and Verhoef (2016), Ko et al. (2019; 2016), Atwal and Williams (2017), and Creevey et al. (2021) that call for distinguishing luxury brand experience from other consumer behavior outcomes within social media platforms. While fandom and informative experience involve customers' reactions, such as sharing brands' news with other community actors on social media, immersive and aesthetic experience incorporates sensual or emotive content linked to the brand's mental illustration or primary offering in customers' minds. Thus, experiential initiatives could reinforce any experience-related positive influence and enrich customers abstract demonstrations of a given brand (Meire et al., 2019). More discussion of the study findings is provided in chapter five, Section 5.3.

# Chapter Five: General Discussion and Conclusion

## 5.1. Introduction

Over the last decade, digital media has transformed the standard business practices among all industries. This transformation challenged both researchers and managers to revaluate existing paradigms and find more innovative strategies (Li et al., 2021). The vast popularity of social media platforms has led luxury brands to increase their presence after years of being reluctant to enter this world.

Previous research pointed out fundamental gaps in this area despite the growing interest in luxury social media marketing. These include exploring the customer-centric view rather than only the marketing view of firms (Creevey et al., 2021; Ko et al., 2019; Pentina et al., 2018). In addition, luxury brands' strategies design lacks guidance and remains fragmented (Mandler et al., 2019). the different conceptual and measurement issues (Li et al., 2021; Rowley and Keegan, 2020) made social media marketing challenging for such activities. Moreover, luxury literature is inconsistent about building relationships with consumers, overlooking the fundamental value of customers' interactions and the brand experience that customers might receive. Thus, a further necessary scope is to investigate how luxury experiences may be formed within social media activities and embedded in brand community actors' interactions how it also co-creates values (Creevey et al., 2021; Becker and Jaakkola, 2020; Holmqvist et al., 2020b; Rihova et al., 2018; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016; De Keyser et al., 2015).

The importance of this research relies on resolving the hype of luxury brand experience in social media. This gap is resolved through developing the nomological framework that identifies new brand experiences that emerged in response to new luxury brands activities stimuli and customers socialisations. Furthermore, by extending the experiential marketing literature through exploring brand experience through the lens of the customer dominant logic approach, it was found that fandom experience is the most affected experience and might be the new trend in today's business world. Thus, an efficient luxury marketing strategy is provided for managers to create and trigger more sophisticated marketing activities that use the fullest potential of available interactive media and deliver a superior customer experience (see more details in the next Section).

This chapter consists of several sections to summarise this thesis. Section 5.2 addresses the first research question, discussing findings for fashion brand social media marketing activities and

customers' response towards them. Section 5.3 discusses the second and third research questions, highlighting the influence of customer-socialisations interaction on the relations between luxury brands activities and customer brand experiences. Section 5.4 provides the theoretical contributions of this research. Section 5.5 addresses the managerial and practical implications useful for luxury brand managers. Section 5.6 highlights the research limitations and future research directions. Finally, Section 5.7 offers a summary of the chapter, while Section 5.8 offers an overall thesis summary.

## 5.2. Discussion of the First Research Question

The first research question concerns exploring the consumer experience of luxury brands on social media platforms in light of brand community actors' interactions. Given the idea that luxury brands are exclusive and unique contradicts the mass prevalence of social media platforms, as clarified in Section 2.4, although brand experience on social media might have a crucial role in luxury marketing research (Creevy et al., 2021; Li et al., 2021; Pentina et al., 2018; Atwal and Williams, 2017; 2009; Schmitt et al. 2014). However, the existing literature is still fragmented and overlooked what a luxury brand experience is and how it is formulated within social media platforms (Kefi and Marr, 2020; Zha et al., 2020; Ko et al., 2019, 2016; Arrigo, 2018). Therefore, a qualitative study of social media data was conducted to answer this research question, comparing social media marketing activities used by luxury and high street fashion brands and customers' responses to them during the peak times of the year, Christmas and holidays.

This thesis employed a grounded theory approach that has assisted in understanding the dynamic environment, where the types of luxury brand experience were formed. The social media content represents brands' posts, and customers' comments were examined. The study reveals that brands' social media marketing activities vary based on the brand category, luxury vs high street. Even common brands' activities are different in sub-activities, which is expected due to the luxury brands' status and value. Also, customers responded to luxury brands in experiential, emotional, social and artistic ways, while their response to high street fashion brands was somewhat functional and remunerational. Moreover, customers-to-customers interactions have primarily emerged in forms of socialisations and conversations that have a various valence of information, which enhances experience formation.

The originality of this exploratory study is rooted in profoundly identifying real-time brands' social media marketing activities and customer responses, where the complexity of brand community has exponentially increased, and customers have become more actively powerful than ever before. Moreover, given the current business environment, it has become challenging for brands to differentiate their capabilities and marketing activities that might influence customers. Thus, this thesis's findings provide deeper insights into the existing literature, revealing four types of luxury brand experience: fandom, immersive, aesthetic and informative experience, and only two types of street brand experience, informative and customer complaint experience. Furthermore, it was revealed that there are six types of brands social media marketing activities, mutual for luxury and high street fashion brands. These include common activities and exclusive activities: the common one's trendiness and entertainment. Luxury brands use curiosity creation and sensory marketing activities, whereas high street fashion brands use sales promotions and customer complaint handling services.

The common brands' activities include trendiness and entertainment, and the luxury literature also highlights both activities. Previous studies pointed out that trendy and entraining activities are a part of social media activities construct, which influence value equity, relationship equity and brand equity (Godey et al., 2016; Kim and Ko, 2012; 2010), customer engagement with luxury brands (Liu et al., 2019), rational and emotional brand experience, which influence the brand awareness, loyalty and perceived quality (Zollo et al., 2020). However, in this study, trendiness is an independent construct, which includes deeper sub-activities identified, as latest luxury activities as the latest fashion collection, season gift ideas, brands' store news and collections' celebrity news. While luxury entertainment activities focus on global fashion competitions, contests and stories of the fashion collections, which incites customers into socialising and expressing their experience, trendy high street fashion brands are more into educating styles via the fashion editors' picks of the season and the seasonal latest outfits, as well as entertainment through clubs' cards competitions and extra points. Hence, the core of the activities has sometimes presented a mixture of activities, such as entertainingly mixing the new trends.

There are activities found only in high street fashion brands, such as sales promotion, remuneration activity and handling customer complaint services, a point that also raised in exiting studies and which justifies customers' following of brands on social media for financial and social benefits (Gómez et al., 2019; Ashley and Tuten, 2015).

On the other hand, a new luxury brands activity has emerged, called curiosity creation, by providing fractions of information about future events and a glance from behind scene workshops. Thus, the importance of curiosity in enhancing the human experience was raised in consumer psychologies studies (Okazaki et al., 2019; Berlyne, 1950a). Therefore, the ambiguous stimuli used by luxury brands trigger customers to interact and engage more in the brand community and create conversations to satisfy their knowledge and emotions. Thus, this study responds to the call of Penatina et al. (2018) about exploring luxury activities that lead customers to interact more and form their experiences. That is consistent with Giakoumaki and Krepapa (2020) work, which posits that information posted on social media brand communities enhances other fans' curiosity.

Another luxury activity that has been defined is sensory marketing, which emphasises characteristics of collection design, colours, fabrics, craftsmanship and abstract descriptions of the fashion venues heritage and authentic values presented in high-quality videos and photos. It is plausible that in luxury fashion apparel, consumers perceive visual and auditory stimulation and create a profound attachment to a brand (Brakus et al., 2009; Schmitt, 1999). Moreover, it determines how customers experience the brand (Hultén et al., 2011; Okonkwo, 2007).

The study's findings reveal that four customer-luxury brand experience types emerged from the customers' responses to brands' activities and other customer interactions, alongside individual comments and conversations between more than two customers or fans. Formulate brand experience types, fandom, informative, aesthetic, and immersive. Informative and complaint experiences emerged as customer-high street fashion brands experiences. Thus, more than a single experience emerged as a response to the same brands' activity. It is noteworthy that brand experience does not necessarily assume relevance or personal connection with a brand, nor is it formulated after specific consumption or is associated with a prior expectation (Brakus et al., 2009). It can be formed at any level of interaction with brands' elements (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016).

These findings confirm existing branding literature, as brand experience is deep-rooted in a stimulus–reaction paradigm derivative from psychological studies (Andreini et al., 2018). Therefore, the manner in which experience is formulated leans to subjectify the series of effects among brand stimuli and customer response (Schmitt et al., 2015; Brakus et al., 2009; Schmitt, 1999). However, this study extends this view and considers brand experience a "socially formed"

phenomenon produced and co-created through interactions between marketplace actors, including brands, customers, and other brand community actors (Ko et al., 2019). This perspective is in line with recent studies (Zha et al., 2020; Black and Veloutsou, 2017; Brodie, 2017; Carù and Cova, 2015; Merz et al., 2009). Thus, this view overcomes the implicit bias (e.g., Hatch, 2012) towards overemphasising the capability of brands to design and utilise brand stimuli to generate a particular brand experience and link it (positively) to anticipated outcomes (Brakus et al., 2009; Schmitt, 1999). Rather than emphasising the role of brands to enhance and manage customers' interactions, to have greater effectiveness and facilitate customers' communication of their views and values (Choi et al., 2020). Luxury brands' conscious customers probably have positive perceptions about the brand content (Chu et al., 2013).

Thus, customer brand experience in previous studies was presented as a general concept throughout the four dimensions presented by Brakus et al. (2009), i.e., "sensorial, affective, intellectual, and behavioural" insights in customer–brand interactions (Zarantonello and Schmitt, 2010, p. 53). However, Brakus's work mainly applies brand experience as a mediator variable rather than elaborating what precisely is experience or extending these dimensions' appropriateness to unique contexts (Das et al., 2019; Iglesias et al., 2019; Merrilees, 2016), such as a luxury context where experience is expected to be different (Kefi and Maar, 2020; Atwal and Williams, 2017).

Interestingly, customers' existence on social media affects them, other customers, and brands' behaviours. Customers in their comments criticised and provided new suggestions to correct the brands' behaviour. Customers are becoming active recipients and producers of brand experience; they identify their favourite fashion styles and explain the reasons behind their preferences. Moreover, customers are very active in sharing their opinions and reviews regarding the product's design, price, quality, and function through text explanation. They even provide an elaborative analysis of the brand's future development and the critical evaluation of its marketing strategies and customer service management strategies that may satisfy them.

The original value of this study lies in the fact that it offers exploratory outcomes based on the investigation of brands and customer perspectives in natural environments. It serves as a basis for developing a conceptual framework of luxury brand experience in social media to extend shared knowledge about this phenomenon.

## 5.3. Discussion of the Second and Third Research Questions

After conducting the first study, consumers' luxury brand experiences in social media platforms were identified in response to luxury brands' activities, customers' socialisations and exchanged information. The second and the third research questions help clarify how brands' activities influence these brand experiences and how socialising, and the valance of exchanged information play an integral role in forming these relationships. As illustrated in Section 2.6, the impact of luxury brands social media marketing activities has been studied widely on varied outcomes, such as customer engagement (Pentina et al., 2018), purchase intention (Kim and Ko, 2010), and relationship quality and brand equity (Liu et al., 2019; Kim and Ko, 2012). However, none of the existing studies investigated brand experience in-depth, except a few recent studies using the concept as a mediator variable developed by Barkus et al. (2009) such as (Yu et al., 2020; Jhamb et al., 2020; Zollo et al., 2020) or independent variable (de Kerviler and Rodriguez, 2019). Thus, most studies in branding literature called for more efforts to understand brand experience within social media activities and customer interactions.

The conceptual model was developed in the literature and the first study's results, building on a customer dominant logic approach. Including seven hypotheses for the relationships between variables, as shown in figures (4-1, 2, 3) in Section 4.2 for answer these research questions, a quantitative study using an online survey was conducted, data were collected from customers and followers of luxury brands on one or more social media platforms. The findings conclude that luxury social media marketing activities types significantly affect luxury brands' experience types (see table 5-1 for the direct effect hypotheses supported).

The findings reveal that new luxury brands' curiosity creation activity significantly affects fandom experience more than the informative, immersive and aesthetic experience. Previous studies have proven that curiosity often leads individuals to an anticipation of a reward, value or resolved uncertainty (Wiggin et al., 2019; Kang et al., 2009), implying that people expect at least more information about which they were more curious about (e.g., Marvin and Shohamy, 2016; Kang et al., 2009). Thus, this study extends this view by manifesting that customers’ evaluations result from them being curious, directly imposing a positive effect on their luxury brand experiences.

This result aligns with Litman and Spielberger (2003), who held that the more humans are curious, the more stimulating experience they will have. Therefore, the mysterious appeals that trigger

customers' curiosity by luxury brands are considered a motivational state (Menon and Soman, 2002). Brands elicit customers' feelings and memories, enhancing attachment which reflects customers' desire to connect and have a closer experience with the brand and social group that relates to it and that form the fandom experience; this was found in sports' fandom phenomenon (Stavros et al., 2014). It was found that curious customers who seek ways to resolve the ambiguity of arousal formed informative experiences. This fact is consistent with Loewenstein (1994), who stated that information shortage that induces curiosity drive individuals' genuine and inherent desire to bridge the gap.

Also, when customers feel the imaginative state and forget themselves and the surrounding environment while resolving their arousal, an immersive experience is formed. This result aligns with Hill et al. (2016), who held that curiosity initiates customers' affective and cognitive processes. These processes also stimulate the aesthetic experience, for luxury brands stimuli are authentic and artistic in nature, which seems to trigger specific positive responses in consumers. This aligns with Leder et al. (2004), who found that aesthetic experience is formed when perceptual analyses of the stimuli occur, underlying memory integration, precise classification, and appealing emotions.

The second luxury activity revealed is the sensory marketing activity, which has a significant positive effect on each experience type; fandom, informative, immersive and aesthetic experience. The technical structure of social media combining text, videos and photos facilities the mission for luxury brands to disseminate the authentic and beautiful characteristics of their product designs and picturesque historical venues of fashion shows. To the amass customers, which enhances customer experiences types. Previous studies confirmed that sensory cues, including videos combined with auditory, serve as signs to stimulate human attention and influence sensory attractiveness perceptions (Roggeveen et al., 2015; Moon, 2000). While combining colours is a component of elevated symbolic value and indicates differences in the influence on human's perception, sensory dispensation and retrieval happens spontaneously and drive preferences (Krishna and Schwarz, 2014; Hultén, 2011). In the same line, Schmitt (1999) found that the view of beauty and artistically attractive stimulus is a part of the sensual appeal, forming the aesthetic experience. Also, Weathers et al. (2007) assert that online pages that call human senses are beneficial for experiencing brands, where evaluation entails sensory information. Thus, the functional aspects and values are received from their informative experience (Bleier et al., 2019).

Moreover, luxury brands focus on eliciting customer emotions and feelings by using multi-sensory cues through eye-catching visualisation, this is consistent with Okonkwo (2007), generating the special brand aura and vivid reality to the senses of customers, where they experience an immersive state about the thematic surroundings rather than the mere purchase of product (Carù and Cova, 2006). Thus, combining messages with multiple sensory appeals are expected to stimulate customer simultaneously (Lindstrom, 2005).

The findings reveal that luxury brands' trendiness activity significantly affects informative, aesthetic and immersive experiences more than fandom experience. The luxury brand presence on social media platforms removes psychological barriers for both customers and fans and allows them to be up to date with the latest trends and learn more about brands' products, services and events that contain the heritage and speciality of a luxury brand. This finding is consistent with previous studies where trendiness is studied as an element of social media marketing activity contract introduced by Kim and Ko (2012; 2010) and has an influence on brand equity, relationships quality and customers' brand engagement with luxury brands on social media (Zollo et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2019; Godey et al., 2016).

Moreover, previous studies indicate that customers connect with the brands' community on social media to acquire new knowledge (de Vries et al., 2017; 2012), discuss hot topics, and generate branded content (Li et al., 2021; Muntinga et al., 2011). Thus, brand news on social media platforms is considered easy access to brand content and more convenient than other sources of information (Bazi et al., 2020). Thus, this study considers the trendiness activity as an individual construct and examines its influence on customer brand experience. Thus, it positively influences each experience type. Nevertheless, each encounter with luxury brands trends on social media leads customers to acquire a brand value that provokes multidimensionality of experience, turning beyond a conveyance of factual information to become a dream experience (Atwal and Williams, 2017; 2009; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016).

**Table (5-1) Hypothesis Supported of SMM Activities Direct Effect on Luxury Brand Experience types**

| HYP.ID | Hypothesis statement | β | Results |
|---|---|---|---|
| H1 | H1: A curiosity creation marketing activity has a positive effect on consumer (a) fandom experience (b) informative experience (c) immersive experience (d) aesthetic experience. | | |
| H1a | Curiosity creation activity → Fandom experience. | .45 | Supported |
| H1b | Curiosity creation activity → Informative experience. | .35 | Supported |
| H1c | Curiosity creation activity → Immersive experience. | .36 | Supported |
| H1d | Curiosity creation activity → Aesthetic experience. | .26 | Supported |
| | | | |
| H2 | H2: A sensory marketing activity has a positive effect on consumer (a) fandom experience (b) informative experience (c) immersive experience (d) aesthetic experience. | | |
| H2a | Sensory marketing Activity → Fandom experience. | .41 | Supported |
| H2b | Sensory marketing Activity → Informative experience. | .38 | Supported |
| H2c | Sensory marketing Activity → Immersive experience. | .39 | Supported |
| H2d | Sensory marketing Activity → Aesthetic experience. | .36 | Supported |
| | | | |
| H3 | H3: Trendiness activity has a positive effect on (a) informative experience and (a) aesthetic experience compared to (c) fandom experience and (d) immersive experience. | | |
| H3a | Trendiness activity → Informative experience. | .46 | Supported |
| H3b | Trendiness activity → Aesthetic experience. | .43 | Supported |
| H3c | Trendiness activity → Immersive experience. | .42 | Supported |
| H3d | Trendiness activity → Fandom experience. | .32 | Supported |

Furthermore, findings highlighted a strong effect of customer-to-customers interaction in particular socialisations between luxury brands' social media marketing activities and brand experience types. This study points out the moderating effect of consumers' valence of exchanged information on the mediated relationships of brands activities and fandom experience analysed, as shown in tables (5-3; 4) below. It is the first of its kind in luxury literature to address these issues.

Findings indicate that socialisation has the most substantial mediation effect on the relationship between luxury brands' curiosity creation, sensory marketing activity, trendiness activities, and fandom experience, followed by immersive and informative experience, respectively. However, it had almost no effect on the aesthetic experience. Primarily, these results provide a significant association that customers' socialisation is a crucial indicator for the formation of consumer-luxury brand experiences within social media platforms.

Previous studies have shown some indications that justify how these activities might boost customer interactions and socialisation and, in turn, form their experiences. For example, curiosity is considered a state of elevated activation and positive valence that uncertainty is believed to be conveyed, which forms feelings of psychological stimulation (Litman and Spielberger, 2003; Loewenstein, 1994). Therefore, people strive to reduce the ambiguous and uncertain cues through socialisation with other people in the brand community, where they feel a sense of belonging to resolve their curious states (Giakoumaki and Krepapa, 2020).

Similarly, luxury brands sensory marketing activity presents chic designs and high quality visual and auditory content and provokes customers' responses about such presentations, prompting them to generate content and discuss it with other community members (Dhaoui and Webster, 2021). Moreover, social media enable brands to produce trendy content that beats other marketing communications channels (Ashley and Tuten, 2015). When consumers follow brand-related information, they gain new ideas and inspiration and enhance up-to-date customer interaction on luxury brands' pages (de Varies et al., 2017; 2012). Thus, online customer interactions can arouse affective responses and might be pleasurable by themselves to them, without concerns about functional aspects of brands (Bleier et al., 2019).

It is noteworthy that the customer-to-customer interactions on social media always presume responses from the other, such as favourable comments on the brands' exquisiteness and quality, answers to other customers' brand inquiries, evaluations and discussions about photos and videos posted by brands. Therefore, customers and fans are more likely to formulate a dialogue that would initiate new connotations related to the brand or their personal concerns. Furthermore, the tactics of text communication among customers offer a chance of being reached and reacted by/to other broader members of the brand community, as responses are apparent to all actors involved in the conversations, including the brand. Thus, this leads to rising the virality of customers' responses

and encourages them to participate more in the brand community, influencing customers' diverse brand experience types.

These feelings of belonging, accomplished through the amassing a sense of community, facilities forming experiences within consumers, asserting that interactions enable customers to replicate their personalities and get involved in social combination that forms their fandom experience for the luxury brands (Giakoumaki and Krepapa, 2020). Furthermore, the benefits obtained from these customers' content exchanges offer content, which delivers value for all communities that form their informative experience (Heine and Berghaus, 2014). Moreover, an implicit sense of immediate response and a sense of total elimination of the distance between consumers and the situation of these interactions lead customers to dive into a secure social sphere, where they can let themselves go into forming their immersive experience (Carù and Cova, 2006). Thus, aesthetic experience is not affected by socialising as it might be perceived based on an individual level of processing stimuli of brand activities directly, more than how other people will interact and talk about these stimuli. However, these interactions can be beneficial or impede the brand as the potential viral, and positive or negative consequences are considerably high (Pentina et al., 2018).

These findings are in line with previous studies, which highlighted that customers who participate in brand-related content postulate socialisation changes, which will have a positive impact on their brand perceptions (Barreda et al., 2015) and stimulate the members of a brand community to contribute with others in generating content (de Vries et al., 2017). Moreover, having interactive experiences assists consumers in shaping their preferences and purchasing decisions (Phua et al., 2017; Shi et al., 2016). The shared joy in customer-to-customers interactions could enhance the experience. Findings also answer the call of previous studies (i.e., Pentinia et al., 2018), which assume that value creation and co-creation might lie in conversations and socialisation among luxury customers. Thus, luxury brands should focus more on such interactions. In this sense, customers socialisation is considered ground-breaking in building consumer-brand experiences in social media environments.

Furthermore, findings reveal that the valence of exchanged information between customers positively moderates the mediating relationship between luxury brands' social media marketing activities and fandom experience. A higher level of exchanged information results from socialising may also lead to a higher level of fandom experience.

It is noteworthy that the nature of social media as an interactive environment affects consumers, who are subject to social influence. They may be curious about the content posted by other community members, which stimulate similar behaviour. The valence of exchange information concerns the persuasive motivation for customers to interact and contribute to such a community. This interaction can enrich community feelings and increase co-creation value with the brand and other customers (Quach et al., 2020; Choi et al., 2016). This fact is in line with Adjei et al. (2010), which states that asymmetric outcomes of the valence of information influence customer evaluations. The positive one reduces feelings of uncertainty, and the negative influences customers firmly, for they are likely to be stored in human memories. Thus, this emphasises the greater sense of psychological possession of luxury brand interactions by consumers.

As a result, the luxury brand experience is critically formed. It can be considered an idiosyncratic view aroused by brand-related experiential stimuli and customer to customer interactions. As such, experience is reliant on external stimuli to activate clues embedded in customers' memory. This evidence is postulated because these stimuli provoke high arousal in fandom, immersive, informative and aesthetic luxury brand experience in social media platforms. In line with Atwal and Williams (2017; 2009) suggestion, a mindset changes how luxury is valued, explicitly considering it a transactional relationship to a holistic experience.

**Table (5-2) Hypothesis Supported of Mediation Effect of Socializations on Relations SMMA and Luxury Brand Experience**

| HYP.ID | Hypothesis statement | β | Results |
|---|---|---|---|
| H4 | H4: Customers' socialization strongly mediates the relationship between curiosity creation activity, (a) fandom experience and (b) immersive experience. | | |
| H4a | Curiosity creation activity → Socialization → Fandom experience. | .21 | Supported |
| H4b | Curiosity creation activity → Socialization → Informative experience. | .15 | Supported |
| H4c | Curiosity creation activity → Socialization → Immersive experience. | .16 | Supported |
| H4d | Curiosity creation activity → Socialization → Aesthetic experience. | .08 | Supported |
| | | | |
| H5 | H5: Customers' socialization strongly mediates the relationship between sensory marketing activity, (a) fandom experience and (b) immersive experience. | | |
| H5a | Sensory marketing activity → Socialization → Fandom experience. | .27 | Supported |
| H5b | Sensory marketing activity → Socialization → Informative experience. | .18 | Supported |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| H5c | Sensory marketing activity → Socialization → Immersive experience. | .19 | Supported |
| H5d | Sensory marketing activity → Socialization → Aesthetic experience. | .08 | Supported |
| | | | |
| H6 | H6: Customers' socialization strongly mediates the relationship between trendiness, (a) fandom experience and (b) immersive experience. | | |
| H6a | Trendiness activity → Socialization → Informative experience. | .17 | Supported |
| H6b | Trendiness activity → Socialization → Aesthetic experience. | .07 | Supported |
| H6c | Trendiness activity → Socialization → Immersive experience. | .20 | Supported |
| H6d | Trendiness activity → Socialization → Fandom experience. | .32 | Supported |

**Table (5-3) Hypothesis Supported of Moderated Effect of Valance of Exchanged Information on Mediation Effect of Socializations on Relations SMMA and Luxury Brand Experience**

| HYP.ID | Hypothesis statement | β | Results |
|---|---|---|---|
| H7 | H7: Valence of exchanged information is differently moderating the mediation effect of socialization on the relationship between (a) curiosity creation activity, (b) sensory marketing activity, and (c) trendies marketing activity and fandom experience. | | |
| H7a | Curiosity creation → Socialization→ Valance of exchanged information →Fandom experience. | .12 | Supported |
| H7b | Sensory marketing → Socialization→ Valance of exchanged information →Fandom experience. | .14 | Supported |
| H7c | Trendiness activity → Socialization→ Valance of exchanged information →Fandom experience. | .17 | Supported |

## 5.4. Theoretical Contributions

Social media platforms are exponentially becoming an imperative dynamic source for customer decisions and behaviours and an important channel for promoting and managing brands- customers relations in modern business environments. As a result, an unprecedented opportunity has been facilitated for customers to participate in the brand-related discourse. Thus, the core of brands creation has shifted from brands to customers. As a result, customer experience is evolving like never before.

Therefore, understanding customer experience, particularly *brand experience*, has become a top priority for Marketing Science Institute from 2014 until 2022 (MSI, 2020; 2014). It also captured

the interest of marketing practitioners (KPMG, 2020; Deloitte, 2019; Forbs, 2019). Furthermore, by exploring luxury brand experience within social media platforms, this research provides several insightful theoretical contributions to the literature of luxury social media marketing (Creevey et al., 2021; Li et al., 2021; Zha et al., 2020; Ko et al., 2019; Kim and Ko, 2012) and customer brand experience (Atwal and Williams, 2017; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016). Moreover, this research provides precious managerial implications for luxury managers.

Firstly, this research extends the luxury social media marketing and brand experience literature by identifying the brand experience types towards luxury brands activities. Findings reveal new emerging types of luxury brands activities, namely, curiosity creation and sensory marketing activity; these activities are new to luxury social media literature, even though they were mentioned in consumer psychology studies. It should be noted that existing trendiness activity was addressed differently from previous studies, such as the influence on the emerging luxury brand experiences.

Furthermore, findings reveal luxury brand experience types: *fandom*, *immersive*, *informative*, and *aesthetic* experience. Fandom experience is the most frequent experience and considered a new concept to the luxury and customer experience literature, though it was mentioned in sport marketing studies. Immersive, informative and aesthetic experiences are a part of customer experience literature. It should be noted that these experiences were studied sole and scattered in the literature, not in social media or luxury contexts. Nevertheless, these experiences emerged in the qualitative analyses of actual social media data from customers' responses to luxury brands' activities and customer-to-customer interactions in this research.

This study identifies new marketing activities of luxury brands within social media platforms in response to calls made by prior studies that explored luxury brands' marketing activities (i.e., Cheung et al., 2021; Zollo et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2019; Godey et al., 2016; Kim and Ko, 2012). However, there remains room for further inquiry on the various activities' effectiveness in brands' communication strategies, which essentially resonates with the diverse audience segments and may reflect strategic brand values and ideal consumer perceptions in a dynamic business environment.

A typical research stream identified offline experience as an entailing multi-separate but related dimension (cognitive, affective, sensory, social, and physical) (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016; Brakus

et al., 2009; Verhoef et al., 2009; Schmitt, 1999). Still, the research considered online experience more straightforwardly, as a priori limited to acquiring more information (Novak et al., 2000). According to the essential human structures, including cognition, affection, and sensations are frequently deliberated in psychological and sociological studies (De Keyser et al., 2015).

However, this research conceptualises luxury brand experience within social media platforms as consisting of four dimensions that are separated but related: *informative* (cognitive), *immersive* (affective), *fandom* (social), and *aesthetic* (sensory). These are consistent with the multidimensional perspective of experience (De Keyser et al., 2015). Thus, there are no expectations for a one-to-one association among any particular stimuli and experience type. Instead, a single stimulus can influence more than one experience at a time (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016; Brakus et al., 2009). This idea was proved in the quantitative study of this thesis. Another theoretical inference is the validation that brand experience does not postulate motivation, and an *experience* can happen while customers do not have personal experience or prior expectations but interactions with brand elements and other customers on social media.

It is essential to clarify that brand experience is different from brand engagement, although both concepts have some intersection in their main dimensions. In the last decade, scholars have shown more interest in both concepts, brand engagement (Hollebeek and Macky, 2019; Hollebeek et al., 2019a; Hollebeek et al., 2014), and brand experiences (Zha et al., 2020; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016; Brakus et al., 2009). Nevertheless, both concepts remain disparate and confusing.

The fundamental difference lies in the core of the concept. Consumer brand experience is an evaluative notion against postulating a motivational state (Brakus et al., 2009), while customer brand engagement is a motivational state construct (Hollebeek et al., 2014). However, differentiating the difference is challenging as the original dimensions of cognitive, affective, and behavioural intersect, and their measurement items are almost identical (Hollebeek et al., 2014; Brakus et al., 2009). This fact may predict a high overlap between constructs. Therefore, this research extends the brand experience concept by identifying the main experience types in social media: fandom, informative, immersive, aesthetic, that is formed as a response to brands' activities as well as customer to customer interactions.

Secondly, this research provides a pioneering framework that examines the effects of luxury brands social media marketing activities on luxury brand experiences. The findings reveal that

luxury social media marketing activity has a strong positive direct effect on brand experiences types. Advancing the relationships between luxury social media marketing and brand experience types by revealing the mediating effect of the customer-to-customer interactions (socialisation) may require brands to consider customer-to-customer interactions in detail, for it plays an integral role in shaping customers brand experience. Moreover, the importance of the moderated effect of the valance of exchanged information in forming fandom experience is new to literature, which is significant on the most frequent emerged experience, *fandom*, that empowers customers to open their spheres and gain new perspectives in the luxury domain.

Thirdly, this research extends the brand experience concept into luxury brands on social media platforms through the lens of customer dominant logic theory. Previous studies investigating brand experience employed varied theoretical lenses suiting the study contexts, as mentioned in Section 2.5. Moreover, luxury social media marketing studies mainly were evaluated through the lens of marketing theories perspective. Even when it comes to the concept of customer engagement, most studies have explored the antecedents and outcomes of customer engagement in social media but overlooked how this process is formulated (e.g., Claffey and Brady, 2014). Other studies have examined the relationship between the antecedents and diverse types of customer engagement but without reflecting on customers' benefits outcomes (e.g., Hollebeek et al., 2014; Tsai and Men, 2013) but mostly looking into influence on the brand equity or at best customer-brand relationships.

Therefore, as the study context of luxury brands and the focal outcomes are customer-brand experience, this research concerns the integral role of customer-to-customer interactions that emerged to formulate the experiences. Therefore, customer dominant logic (C-DL) is the basis for further exploring and engaging in empirical investigations.

C-D logic is an evolutionary marketing theory that extends previous service-dominant logic and existing value formation considerations by adopting the customer's perspective. Although the tendency of customer empowerment and customer-centricity in value co-creation developments has been emphasised in S-D logic (e.g. Lusch and Vargo, 2011), the initial point in this marketing paradigm claims that value is commenced and oriented by service providers. However, according to C-D logic, customers are the dominant value creators and formers during value-building

experiences, whilst service providers simply play the role of value co-creators or value facilitators (Rihova et al., 2018; Heinonen et al., 2015; 2010).

Moreover, previous studies grounded on S-D logic emphasise that value is created when customers get involved in the provider-facilitated process and collaborate with the service providers (e.g., Ramaswamy and Ozcan, 2016). However, C-D logic highlights that the service providers (e.g. luxury brands pages on social media) only act as value facilitators, and service providers should garner more efforts into organising services and facilitating activities in customer's daily life (Heinonen and Strandvik, 2015).

The findings of this study recognise the C-D logic, considering the customer's perspective in forming a customer-brand experience. The aspects related to the five characteristics of C-D logic are clarified as follows: First, value co-creation or formation is not just limited to customers and service providers exchanges and interactions, but it can also be formed in a customer ecosystem, which refers to the customer sphere that involves other actors and customers (that is, all actors in the luxury brand community in this study).

Second, service providers do not constantly produce value creation or co-creation practices (e.g., luxury brands activities) but also naturally emerge in customer interacted experiences (like the socialising and the conversations that customers establish on luxury brands pages). Third, value creation or co-creation are driven by customer logic more than the typology of available recourses (tangible vs intangible). Thus, customer brand experience is formed in the luxury brand community regardless of whether they are loyal customers or simply fans. Additionally, luxury brands never provide offer sales or remunerational benefits like other brand categories. Forth, value formation processes can be recognisable as a socialising co-creation process or an interactional practice within the social media platforms. Fifth, received value-in-use is not exclusive to customer behavioural experiences but also includes the mental activities that customers acquire and can actuate at any time.

In conclusion, the luxury brand experience in this research is extends Tyne et al. (2010) work. It is defined as "*an evaluation state of several interactions between the customer and community actors including company's activities (certain brand), and other customers interactions at various levels, thus, customer responses evoked by constant exposure to diverse community stimuli*" Therefore, this research responds to the previous studies' calls for further investigation of the

luxury brand experience in social media platforms (Zha et al., 2020; Andreini et al., 2018; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016) and calls for further investigation of luxury brands social media marketing activities and the importance of the customer-to-customer interactions in such communities (Creevey et al., 2021; Arrigo, 2018; Pentaina et al., 2018; Atwal and Williams, 2017; 2009; Kim and Ko, 2012), and to Ko et al. (2019)'s call for building a new theoretical perceptive to understand customer behaviour in the luxury brands community. Also, scholars called for extending brand experience construct beyond the existing frameworks and theoretical lenses (Zha et al., 2020; Andreini et al., 2018; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016; Brakus et al., 2009).

### 5.5. Managerial Implications

This thesis contributes insightfully to the luxury retail industry. Several practical implications and directions will assist luxury marketing managers and practitioners. Thus, the findings of research offer guidelines for designing optimal social marketing strategies that promote customer to customer interactions and deliver a superior customer experience within modern media.

First, this study equips brands' managers with the tools and tactics to design strategic social media marketing campaigns. The emerging new activities, such as curiosity creation, sensory marketing, and trendiness activities, are promising concepts that fit the nature of luxury brands' exclusive and prestigious status. The same holds for attractive mysteries cues of the future events, collections, and collaborations, the ambiguous related stimuli of the behind scene fashion materials and events. They are moreover employing heritage and history cues to create brand culture experiences, where customers acquire new knowledge and deepen their connections with brands, designing the finest and sophisticated inspiring content that indicate quality, with an emphasis on stimulation and perfection, presenting high-quality, multi-sensory content (text, photography, videos and music). These activities will urge customers to interact and interconnect with others. However, the status, prestige's and exclusive value of luxury brands should be maintained to be distinguished from other fashion brands categories.

Second, marketers can control facilitating brand-related stimuli and customer interaction simultaneously by observing how content elevates customer level of exploration. This action may guarantee that the stimuli arouse fandom, informative, immersive, aesthetic experiences. Moreover, the focus should be diverted towards providing customers with opportunities to obtain

new trends and skills, adding positive valence to the community. Thus, ruling their conversations and socialising will be easier, which in turn generates the fandoms experience.

Third, due to the emerged importance of fandom experience, strategies used by luxury brands should simulate up to date information. Thus, the influence on fans interactions and responses will be more significant. If the activities are relevant to the daily life of the fan, which will boost the hype of the brand, the pertinent content will elevate the brand positioning and will be the vehicle for the anticipated brand messages. Thus, leading fandom experience in the right direction is preferred by the brand. However, luxury brands should post less frequently and enhance the thrill elements in customers' mindsets, as social media data bombard customers in today's environment. As a result, more content can be absorbed; on average, 1,500 stories show in the news feed every time humans log in to social media platforms (Boland, 2014).

Forth, more efforts should be put forward to understanding differences in customer logic. Customers nowadays are more powerful; the old framing of customer reactions concerning their needs is over. Instead, they are more into forming superior experience and sharing it with the community. Thus, these experiences fuel the modern digital community; therefore, brands must know how to invest in this and make use of the fullest available potentials.

### 5.6. Research Limitations and Future Research

This research has provided an insightful contribution to knowledge by answering the research questions and achieving research objectives. However, it still has some limitations. First, this study's brand choice relied on recent statistics for the most valuable and active brands on social media platforms (Brandirectory, 2017; Statista, 2017). However, hundreds of brands are operating social media to connect with customers, and this study did not encompass any group of them. Therefore, future research may embrace a deeper analysis of a random sample, including more brands categories, which have a strong presence on social media.

Second, the choice of the selected social media platforms was limited to Facebook and Twitter as the most used and oldest platforms. Modern channels, such as Instagram, Snapchat and TikTok, became quite competitive and active channels in the fashion industry. However, they were excluded as their image-based platforms with fewer customer interactions, as the focal point of this research is text interactions. Future research should involve varied social media platforms and compare customer-to-customer interactions and experiences with brands across all platforms. In

addition, it would benefit from using experiment research method designs appropriate for examining customers' responses to images and videos.

Moreover, the data collection of the qualitative study was restricted to produced content during a specific period of the year, Christmas and the festive month. The studied brands may have different activities among other seasons of yeas and, therefore, customers behaviour may change in social media channels prior to or even after the data collection period. Future research has the chance to data collection at a diverse time frame, for it would be advantageous to compare how activities would change over time. Regarding the second study, data were collected in a particular period, meaning cross-sectional data. Thus, people's interests in luxury brands may fluctuate over time. Thus, research with longitudinal data will assist in investigating how customers interact and form their experiences. At the same time, the sample of participants can be extended to other cultures, tailored to target specific age groups, as Millennials are primarily interested in luxury brands, and they are the human of social media as well.

Third, this research explores the customer-luxury brand experience as an outcome of luxury social media marketing activities and customer to customer socialising. Future research could adopt this research framework and examine the consequences of these luxury brand experiences, such as purchase intention, customer-brand relationship quality and social capital. They could also examine brand experiences effectiveness in improving companies' performances since companies of varied sectors are increasingly adopting social media (Rowley and Keegan, 2020; Colicev et al., 2018).

Finally, the emergence of social media micro-influencers, who hugely influence customer behaviour lately, should be considered. If brands work with them, they will gain more opportunities to engage fans in interactive experiences. In addition to hiring celebrities who are perceived as role models for fans, this can be great in stimulating fans to interact and express themselves in more social interactions with other fans and brands.

## 5.7. Chapter Summary

This chapter deeply discussed and concluded each research question and objective regarding the qualitative and quantitative study's findings. Fascinating insights were devoted to understanding customers' logic and experience formation of luxury brands social media marketing. The findings highlight the main theoretical and managerial contribution of this research concerning previous

studies and literature gaps. Furthermore, the direction of future research is derived from the limitation of current research. Thus, a road map is facilitated for scholars to extend the body of knowledge and business practices.

## 5.8. Thesis Summary

This thesis tries to resolve the hype of luxury brands experience on social media platforms. In doing so, systemic research phases and stages have been conducted. These are done over five chapters: Chapter one introduces the experience marketing, luxury brands and social media importance in today's dynamic business environment and to the main argument of research. This is followed by a comprehensive literature review that identifies the main gaps that assist in articulating three interlinked research questions about luxury brands experience in social media platforms.

Chapter three presents the qualitative study of this research, including the philosophical stances and the methodological choices. Then the study design procedures for data collection, analysis and findings. Concerning the literature review, based on qualitative study results, and lens of customer dominant logic, a theoretical model and hypotheses have been developed in Chapter 4, which includes the philosophical stances and the methodological choices for the quantitative study, as well as the study design procedures, data collection, stages of analyses (preliminary data analyses, scale purification and hypotheses testing), and data interpretation.

Chapter five discusses the findings and how they answer the research questions and achieve the research objectives. Sections accompany this discussion on theoretical contributions, managerial implications, research limitations of the study, and venues for future studies.

## List of Appendices

### Appendix A: Ethical Approval for Data Collection

Please do not reply to this email.

Dear Doa'a,

Your supervisor has reviewed your ethical review form, and confirmed ethical approval for the following project:

Title: Luxury brand experience in social media
Supervisor: XIAO, SARAH H.
Start Date: 01 October 2016
End Date: 01 October 2020
Application Reference: DUBS-2019-10-06T16:00:09-jlxj85

Please be aware that if you make any significant changes to your project which mean that ethical approval may be required, you should complete and submit a revised ethical review form.

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If you have any queries relating to the ethical review process or requirements for review, please contact your supervisor in the first instance. If you have any queries relating to the online system, please contact research.policy@durham.ac.uk.

## Appendix B: Study One (Qualitive) Data Coding Sheet

**Table (B-1) Fashion brands social media marketing activities summary**

| company name and platform | Chanel Facebook | Chanel Twitter | Louise Vuitton Facebook | Louise Vuitton Twitter | Victoria Secret Facebook | Victoria Secret Twitter | H&M Facebook | H&M Twitter |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **No of total posts** | 16 post | 42 posts | 16 posts | 31 posts | 66 posts | 108 posts | 53 posts | 60 posts |
| **Type of posts** | Multi | Multi | Multi | Multi | Multi | Multi | Multi | Multi |
| Video + words | 9 posts | 9 posts | 14 posts | 22 posts | 17 posts | 46 posts | 10 posts | 6 posts |
| Photo + Words | 6 posts | 33 posts | 2 posts | 9 posts | 49 posts | 57 posts | 42 posts | 54 posts |
| Link + words | 1 post | non | Non | Non | Non | one post | One pots | Non |
| Words only | Non | Non | Non | Non | Non | Non | Non | Non |
| Others ( Gif ) | Mon | Non | Non | Non | Non | 5 Gif and words | Non | Non |
| **Type of activities and frequency** | event & new collection Announce ment / high engagement /cultural activity **(12 times )** | event & new collection Announce ment / high engagement /cultural activity (**18 times )** | seasonal Campaign bags, jewellers, cosmetics lines (new year and Christmas gift suggestions **13 times )** | seasonal Campaign bags, jewellers, cosmetics lines, sport and accessorise (new year and Christmas gift suggestions **22 times**) | seasonal campaign greetings customers **( 4 times)** | seasonal campaign greetings customers **(3 times)** | seasonal collection inspired by charismas and new year's vibes **(15 times)** | seasonal collection inspired by Christmas and new year's vibes **(18 times)** |
| | new fashion line collect ion 2017/2018 launch time/ product ad vertising **(1 time)** | event & new collection announcem ent /quality of martials **(7 times )** | New collection announcem ent (**2 times)** | | new collection / new line sport wear **(4 times)** | new collection / new line sport wear / bestselling **(16 times)** | new collection, winter 2017/2018 **(16 times)** | new collection, winter 2017/2018 **( 40 times)** |
| | new cosmetics line collect ion /product advertising **(2 times)** | Celebrity endorsemen t **(5 times)** | New collection announcem ent customizati ons service **(on e time )** | New collection announceme nt customizatio ns service **( 4 times)** | sales promotion semi-annual sale ( discount/ free gifts/ limited offers **12 times**) | sales promotion semi-annual sale ( discount/ free gifts/ limited offers **(45** | sales promotion ( discount / free gifts / free services) **1 8 times** | sales promotion ( discount / free gifts / free services **(8 times)** |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | **times)** lim ited in some countries | | |
| | seasonal gift collection / Jewellery and watches line **(1 time)** | seasonal gift collection / Jewellery and watches line **(2 time** ) | Seasonal new collection limited editions **(O ne time)** | Seasonal new collection limited editions **(2 times)** | sales promotion (gift cards + loyalty cards) **2 times** | sales promotion (e-gift cards + loyalty cards) **3 times** | sales promotion ( loyalty club cards ) **8 times** | sales promotion ( H&M Mobile application lunching ) **one time** |
| | Invite customer to Chanel website **(12 times )** | invite customer to Chanel website **(20 times )** | Invite customer to LV **website (16 times)** | Invite customer to LV website **(29 times)** | seasonal collection ads + gift suggestions **(23 times)** | seasonal collection ads + gift suggestion s **(23 times)** | apparel look suggestion s by profession als **(20 times)** | apparel look suggestions by professionals **( 43 times)** |
| | | retrieving memories/ cultural activity (**one time)** | prestigious fashion competition events announcem ent+ cobranding (**One time)** | prestigious fashion competition events announceme nt+ cobranding (2 **times)** | event fashion show /cultural activity **(5 times)** | free service (shipment and rewards cards, competitio n) **(4 times)** | | retrieved fashion designs from 70s **( one time)** |
| | | work shop announcem ent **(one time)** | | Celebrity news **(one time)** | event fashion show /limited collection **( 12 times)** | event fashion show / cultural activity ( **one time )** | fashion events and competitio n) activities **( 7 times )** | fashion events and cultural activities **(3 times)** |
| | | cobranding / focus on quality of materials **(7 Times)** | | | limited collection / cobranding **(12 times)** | limited collection / cobrandin g **(one time)** | co-branding **( one time )** | |
| | | new branch opening / new country **(on e time)** | | | new collection ads **(6 times)** | Invite customer to VS website **(1 03 times) limited offers for USA and Canada** | invite customer to go for H&M website and H&M Magazine **(40 times)** | invite customer to go for H&M website and H&M Magazine **(5 2 times)** |
| | | | | | invite customers to visit stores **(16 times**) | invite customers to visit stores **(12 times)** | invite customers to visit stores **(11 times)** | invite customers to visit stores **(23 times)** |
| | | | | | Celebrity endorsemen t **(2 times)** | Celebrity endorseme nt **(3 times)** | Celebrity endorseme nt **(one time)** | Celebrity endorsement **(9 times)** |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Summary of activities** | **Mixed** | **Mixed** | **Mixed** | **Mixed** | **Products advertising (new collection + Seasonal+ new lines)** | **Products advertising (new collection + Seasonal+ new lines)** | **Products advertising (new collection + Seasonal+ new lines)** | **Products advertising (new collection + Seasonal+ new lines)** |
| | | | | | **Co-branding** | **Co-branding** | **Co-branding** | memorial collections |
| | **High interaction with customers (sharing )** | **High interaction with customers** | **High interaction with customers** | **High interaction with customers** | **encourage consumers to go to the shop** | **encourage consumers to go to the store + visit VS website** | **encourage consumers to go to the store + visit VS website** | **encourage consumers to go to the store + visit VS website** |
| | **Events and cultural activities** | **Events and cultural activities** | **Events and cultural activities** | **Events and cultural activities** | **Events and cultural activities** | **Events and cultural activities** | **Events and cultural activities** | **Events and cultural activities** |
| | | **Celebrity news** | **Limited edition products** | **Limited edition products** | **Limited edition products** | **Limited edition products** | **professional's advice** | **professional's advice**<br><br>**Educational** |
| | | Behind scenes workshops | | | **sales promotions + limited offers** | **sales promotions + limited offers colours inspired by season** | **sales promotions + limited offers colours inspired by season** | **sales promotions + limited offers colours inspired by season** |
| | | | | **Celebrity news** | **Celebrity news** | **Celebrity news** | **Celebrity news** | **Celebrity news** |
| | | | | | **loyalty program** | **loyalty program** | **loyalty program** | **loyalty program** |
| **company reply to customers** | Nothing shown | Nothing shown | Reply One time for customers compline, | Reply 2 times for customers compline, | 28 times, answering customers enquiry and reply complains , and encourage shopping | 13 reply | 324 times reply<br><br>Complain handling and Service activities | 13 reply |

**Table (B-2) Customer response to Chanel on Facebook and Twitter**

| **Chanel Facebook (9 videos + words post)**<br><br>**9 out of 16 post** | **Positive response (2,975)** | **Negative response (70)** | **Chanel Facebook (7 out of 16) photos and word posts total 32 photos)** | **Positive response (717)** | **Negative response (22)** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Seek information (11) | complain online customer services and social media and communication service (9) | | Seek information (7) | complain online customer services and social media and communication service (2 |
| | Provide information (15) | Ask for social responsibility and hate the fancy of brand (3) | | Provide information (17) | customer complain about channel customer services in store (2) |
| | Love emotions for brand, collection. Designer, events and videos (1451) | complain about Chanel intensive disturbing ads on you tube (4) | | Love emotions for brand, collection. Designer, events and phots (351) | complain about Chanel intensive disturbing (4 |
| | Mention friends name and friends' conversations about brand and events (1471) | Deny using historical place for silly fashion events (6) | | Mention friends name and friends' conversations about brand and events (282) | customers complain about new collection quality & ask for the old one (2 |
| | Share personal experience with Chanel (11) | Regret buying Chanel (1) | | Share personal experience with Chanel (9) | customers hate Chanel brand, designer, celebrates, new collection, events and parties (7 |
| | retrieved memories link to Chanel (3) | complain about Chanel unethical work of production (3 | | retrieved memories link to Chanel (2) | Wondering why amazon sell Chanel (1) |
| | Planning to attend events and purchase intention (27) | Customer sarcasm of Chanel ad (1) | | Planning to attend events and purchase intention (39) | Complain high unaffordable price (3) |
| | Advocate for brand and justifying high price (12) | customers complain about new collection quality & ask for the old one (16) | | Advocate for brand and justifying high price (2) | Hate self after seeing model (1) |
| | Wish to work with Chanel and imitate designs (18) | Customer complain quality compared to Louise Vuitton (1) | | Proud employee (2) | |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Self and other reflection linked to Chanel (6) | customers hate Chanel brand, designer, celebrates, new collection, events and parties (15) | | Self-reflection (1) | |
| | | Complain high unaffordable price (10) | | | |
| **Chanel twitter (9 videos+ words posts)**<br><br>**9 out of 42 post** | **Positive response (116)** | **Negative response (16)** | **Chanel twitter 33/42 photos and words posts total phots 47)** | **Positive response (101)** | **Negative response (11)** |
| | Seek information (4) | complain online customer services (1) | | Love | Customer complained bad quality (1) |
| | Love emotions for brand, collection. Designer, events and video (98) | customers hate Chanel brand, designer, celebrates, new collection, events and parties (10) | | Love emotions for brand, collection. Designer, events and photo (85) | Sarcasm from celebrity she is not representative (2) |
| | Mention friends name and friends' conversations about brand and events (5) | Complain high price (5) | | Mention friends name and friends' conversations about brand and event (6) | get disappointed with collection (5) |
| | Share personal experience with Chanel (1) | | | Seek and give information (4) | hate the designer and his work (3) |
| | Purchase intention (1) | | | Personal ads (5) | |
| | Wish to work with Chanel (3) | | | Retrieved memory (1) | |
| | Proud of Chanel designer (2) | | | | |

**Table (B-3) Customer response to Louise Vuitton on Facebook and Twitter**

| **Louise Vuitton Facebook (14 videos + words ) 14 out of 16 posts** | **Positive response (910)** | **Negative response (107)** | **Louise Vuitton Facebook photos + words (2 out of 16)** | **Positive response (2,218)** | **Negative response (153)** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Seek information (39) | Disappointed, expect more from L.V (4) | | Seek information (1) | |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Provide information (4) | Products out of stocks in store (1) | | Share personal experience with L.V (15) | bad customer service and online shopping experience (4) |
| | Love emotions for brand, collection, Designer, celebrity events and videos (258) | bad customer service and online shopping experience (34) | | Love emotions for brand, collection. Designer, events and photos (167) | hate the collection and ask for new designs (33) |
| | Mention friends name and friends' conversations about brand and events (468) | bad shopping experience and bad staff in stores (3) | | Mention friends name only (569) | Brand exaggerate in producing silly products (24) |
| | Share personal experience with L.V (24) | Complain about high price (16) | | Friends conversations to buy and go back to sport and play games (1246) | Complain high price and claim low value (80) |
| | retrieved memories link to L.V (3) | Complain about bad quality (3) | | retrieved memories link to L.V and make jokes (73) | Complain about bad quality (5) |
| | Planning to attend events and purchase intention (5) | bad delivery and shipping service and cut LV (14) | | Dreaming and wishing LV as holyday gift (22) | annoying communication ads (1) |
| | friend's conversation makes jokes on price (18) | fake LV Same original are available (3) | | Greeting L.V back for charismas and new year (1) | complain shipment and delivery service (2) |
| | Greeting L.V back for charismas and new year (54) | Feeling bad can't have LV (1) | | Friends conversations planning games and trips (102) | prefer other brands like Gucci (4) |
| | Dreaming and wishing LV as holyday gift (31) | hate the rich people and brands devoted to them (4) | | Self and friend's reflection (22) | |
| | brand advocate (1) | deny greeting charismas and remind that other customer not Christian (3) | | | |
| | Self and friend's reflection (5) | Complain refund policy (12) | | | |
| | | Hate the collection and brand ( 8 ) | | | |
| Company reply | | 2 reply apologise for | | | |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | bad service and offer help on private messages on video | | | |
| **Louise Vuitton** (videos+ words post)<br><br>22 out of 31 posts | **Positive response (88)** | **Negative response (26)** | **Louise Vuitton**<br><br>**twitter photos 9 out of 31 posts** | **Positive response 33** | **Negative response (6)** |
| | Seek information (10) | Dislike LV and no greeting (1) | | Seek information (4) | Complain about refund service (2) |
| | Share personal experience with L.V (4) | Bad words about brand (1) | | Share personal experience (2) | Complain customer service (1) |
| | Love emotions for brand, collection, Designer, celebrity events and videos (52) | Complain about the customer service (5) | | Love emotions for brand, collection, Designer, celebrity events and photos (17) | one compline the price and it's just for rich (1) |
| | Mention friends (8) | complain about LV Products Quality (6) | | mention friend (4) | complained the products quality (2) |
| | Greeting L.V back for charismas and new year (2) | Complain about refund services (5) | | purchase intention (5) | |
| | Dreaming and wishing LV as holyday gift (3) | complain about price and deny they don't do social responsibility (7) | | Seek social responsibility (1) | |
| | Personal ads (7) | Hate the celebrity (1) | | | |
| | Purchase intention (2 | | | | |
| Company reply | | Company reply and apologise 2 times and offer help and suggestions | | | |

**Table (B-4) Customer Response to Victoria Secret on Facebook and Twitter**

| **Victoria Secret Facebook videos (17 out of 66 post)** | **Positive response (92)** | **Negative response (21)** | **Victoria secret Facebook photos (49 photo post out of 66)** | **Positive response (366)** | **Negative response (78)** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | love brand, collection, model, video (23) | Hate models behaviour and wondering (5) | | Seek information (20) | Devalue Victoria secret Bad impolite words (4) |
| | mention friends name and friends' conversations about products (66) | Hate the perfume and hate brand ads (2) | | Provide information (2) | Fake look and hate the model (3) |
| | Sharing memories (1) | Hate new collection and Ask for the old quality and designs (1) | | Love emotions for brand, collection. Designer, events and photos (56) | disappointed and hate collection designs (13) |
| | seek information (1) | Customer complain about the delivery and shipment service (1) | | Mention friends name and friends' conversations about brand and events (271) | complain unfordable price (11) |
| | Share positive experience with customer services team (1) | Complain about customer service (1) | | Share personal experience and memories with VS (7) | Complain small sizes it not logical (2) |
| | | disappointed with cobranding with Balmain (1) | | Excited about offer (1) | Complain about delivery services and its cost (8) |
| | | Consider this brand unethical (2) | | Planning to attend events and purchase intention (6 ) | Complain customer service (12) |
| | | Friends conversation about models and styles in bad way (7) | | Self and other reflection (2) | Complain customer service at store form staff (1) |
| | | Hate the designer (1) | | value and thank company reply (1) | Complain bad quality (1) |
| | | | | | Hate the models and designer (3) |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | Customer complain that discount didn't apply online and missed offer (4) |
| | | | | | disappointed with cobranding with Balmain (3) |
| | | | | | Friends conversation how bad and hating the collection (13) |
| **Company reply** | Apologize for the poor service and ask for private mgs to solve problem (1) | Company reply thanks sharing experience (1) | **Company reply** | Company replay about the shipment and available product | Apologises for bad services and ask for private massage |
| | company reply one customer compliment (1) | company reply to enquiry (give information (1) | | Company reply answer and encourage customer for shopping (3) | Apologize for the poor quality and ask for private message to solve problem (2) |
| | | | | Company reply to enquiry and apologize for less availability | Apologise for the disappointment and clarify the offer time availability (2) |
| | | | | Company reply to enquiry and give information (3) | reply apologise for the late service and offer help and explain the situation (5) |
| **Victoria secret** (videos+ words post 46 out of 108) | **Positive response (349)** | **Negative response (19)** | **Victoria secret** twitter **photos** | **Positive response (288)** | **Negative response (36)** |
| | seek information (21) | Disappointed to miss the offer (1) | | Seek information (13) | Customer complain on online shopping (1) |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Love emotion for brand, collection, model, ads (184 ) | Customer complain on VS website down (1) | | Love emotion for brand, collection, model, ads (191) | Dislike the way of ads on social media (1) |
| | Greeting back and wish happy new year (29) | Wondering why offer just in USA (3) | | Greeting back and wish happy new year (13) | Fake photo by Photoshop and hate design (3) |
| | Mention friend (27) | Feel bad and self under estimation- compared to model (2) | | Mention friend (23) | Hate the model (17) |
| | Friends conversation to buy and start sport (8) | Ask company to reply the enquiry with anger word (1) | | Friends conversation love model and want to date (8) | Complain high price (3) |
| | share shopping experience and love VS and feel grateful for them (17) | Complain about all comminutions tool, phone. Email and social media for the brand (1) | | Personal ads (49 | Hate VS and bad words on brand (4) |
| | Personal ads (46) | Hate the model (5) | | Purchase intention (7) | Complain that offer done in store only (1) |
| | Ask to work with VS (2) | Hate the brand and try to push them support kids instead of high price (1) | | Personal experience (1) | Customer complain on VS website down (1) |
| | Purchase intention and plan to attend (12) | Hate the perfume smell (1) | | Wish list (6) | Feel bad when see this kind of unethical photos (1) |
| | Wish list (3) | Hate VS company unethical behaviour towards their labour (kids abuse ) (1) | | | Complain products out of stock (1) |
| | | Complain about delay shipping and bad delivery service (1) | | | Complain on custom service and bad staff service (1) |
| | | Complain about the quality of VS company (1) | | | Complain on shipment and delivery service (1) |
| | | | | | Complain about new |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | collection and ask for old (1) |
| Company reply | Company greeting and customer and wish enjoying and keep stock of product (1) | Company apologise and offer help (2) | Company reply | Company reply encourage customer to use the e offer | Company reply , apologise for delay and offer help |
| | Company reply once to welcome and encourage customer to shopping during sales (3) | | | Company replay give direction | Company reply apologize and will work on complain |
| | Company reply enquiry (1) | | | | |
| | Company reply give thanks and answer (1) | | | | |
| | Love customer and appreciate shop with VS | | | | |
| **Gif 5 out of 108** | Positive response (31) | negative response (4) | | | |
| | Love emotion for brand , collection, model (17) | Describe VS as race seam against josh , will stop buying vs | | | |
| | Seek information ( 2) | Hate the collection | | | |
| | Share personal experience (2) | Hate VS and stop shop because of models politics | | | |
| | Personal ads (4) | Wondering why nice underwear just for woman | | | |
| | Mention friend (1) | Company reply to enquiry and report to the team | | | |
| | Advocate brand (1) | | | | |
| | Wish list (4) | | | | |

**Table (B-5) Customer Response to H&M on Facebook and Twitter**

| **H&M Facebook videos 10 out of 52** | **Positive response (24)** | **Negative response (12)** | **H&M Facebook photos 42 out of 52** | **Positive response (1585 )** | **Negative response 83** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | love brand , collection, model, video ( | Customer complain the price difference between online and store , and they don't care about customer loyalty (1) | | love brand , collection, model, photo (27 | Customer complain the price difference between online and store , and they don't care about customer loyalty (15) |
| | Mention friends name (16) | complain refund service (1) | | | Complain shipment high fees (1) |
| | Friends conversations to buy ( 3) | complain bad customer service (8) | | Mention friend ( 50 | complain customer online and in store service (16) |
| | Seek information (4 | Complain receiving the wrong order (1) | | Share personal experience (3 | Complain bad quality (2) |
| | Greeting ( 1) | Complain Old fashion style (1) | | Seek information ( 45) | complain shipment and delivery service (26) |
| | | | | Give information (9) | Complain expired gift card (1) |
| | | | | Appreciate company reply (5) | ask for personal money (1) |
| | | | | friends conversation to buy (44) | complain refund policy (4) |
| | | | | friend reflection (7) | Disappointed no size available (4) |
| | | | | Friends shared their kids story participate in H&M competition (1150) | complain bad mobile app (6) |
| | | | | Mention the competition hashtag (245) | switch to another brand (1) |
| | | | | | Complained miss the competition (1) |
| | | | | | Closing account with H&M (1) |
| | | | | | hate celebrity and it's not representable (4) |
| Company reply | | company reply apologise and offer help (4) | Company reply | Company give information and direction to have products (15) | company explain the price difference (5) |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | company give direction to solution (2) | | company encourage customer to buy (2) | company apologize and offer help refer to certain department (14) |
| | | | | Company appreciate participating in competition (2) | Company apologise and ask for private conversation give solution (11) |
| | | | | Company announce the winner and congrats (1) | |
| | | Total reply (6) | | Company reply appreciate customer feedback and shred experience (2) | **Total reply (52**) |
| **H&M Twitter** ( videos+ words posts) 6 out of 60 | Positive response (1) | Negative response (1) | **H&M** twitter **photos 54 out of 60** | Positive response (63) | Negative response (20) |
| | Love video (1) | Surprising the ads so bad (1) | | love emotions brand , model , collection and photo (34) | Complain bad customer services (7) |
| | | | | Seek information (9) | Hate the look (2) |
| | | | | Mention friend (2) | Complain delivered the wrong size (1) |
| | | | | Ask for working with H&M (2 | Hate the company and cut shopping (1) |
| | | | | Personal ad (2) | Seek compensation for the delay order (1) |
| | | | | | Complain shipment and delivery service (3) |
| | | | | | Complain bad quality (2) |
| Company reply | | | | Company greeting customer and encourage to buy (1) | company reply for wrong delivery and offer help (1) |
| | | | | company reply give information, help, recommendations (12) | Company reply apologise for inconvenient and offer help (4 |
| | | | | Company reply give information to communicate H&M and apply to work (1) | Total 21 reply |

Appendix C Study Two Items Scales, Factor Loading and Resource

| Item abb | Statement | Loading factor (α) | Reference |
|---|---|---|---|
| **TRD** | **Trendiness Activity (CR .83)** | | **(Kim and Ko (2012)** |
| TRD_ACT 1 | [X luxury] posts of collaboration with experts (designers, brands) are fashionable | .93 | |
| TRD_ ACT 2 | Browsing [X luxury] product news posts on social media platforms is very trendy | .75 | |
| TRD_ACT 3 | [X luxury] posts of gift suggestions on social media platforms are the newest information | .74 | |
| **SEN** | **Sensory Marketing Activity (CR. 93)** | | |
| SEN_ ACT 1 | [X luxury] product presentation posts on social media platforms are lively | .95 | |
| SEN_ ACT2 | [X luxury] posts on social media platforms contain fashion venue information exciting to senses | .91 | |
| SEN_ ACT 3 | [luxury] provide product on social media platforms different form other sensory channels. | .93 | |
| **CC** | **Curiosity Creation Activity (CR. 80)** | | **(Kashdan et al 2018)** |
| CC_ ACT 1 | Ambiguous location of fashion event of [X luxury] on social media platforms always makes me curious to know more | .69 | |
| CC_ ACT 2 | [X luxury] behind sense workshop posts on social media platforms arouse my curiosity | .78 | |
| CC_ACT3 | [X luxury] s' limited-edition collection intrigue my interest | .82 | |
| CC_ACT4 | [X luxury] posts on social media leads me to probe deeply into the brands' official website for new things | .79 | |
| **SOC** | **Socialization (CR .93)** | | (**de Vries et al 2017)** |
| | Based on the interaction other customers on [X luxury] community on social media platforms, I would say that | | |
| SOCI1 | I can stay in touch with people with the same interests | .83 | |
| SOCI2 | I can communicate with people with the same interests | .86 | |
| SOCI3 | I can meet new people with the same interests | .84 | |
| SOCI4 | It makes me feel connected to others | .86 | |
| SOCI5 | let me stay in contact with like-minded people | .86 | |
| **VAL** | **Valence of exchanged information (CR. 93)** | | (**Adjei et al 2010)** |
| | Based on the interaction with other customers on [X luxury] community on social media platform, I would say that | | |
| VAL1 | collectively the replies I received were: Positive, Neutral, Negative | .79 | |
| VAL2 | collectively the replies I received were: Pleasing, Neutral, Displeasing | .84 | |
| VAL3 | collectively the replies I received were: - Upsetting, neutral Not upsetting | .89 | |
| **INFO_EXP** | **Informative Experience (CR. 89)** | | (**Bleier, et al 2018; Luo 2002)** |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| INFOR_EXP1 | Information Obtained from [X luxury] page is useful | .86 | |
| INFOR_EXP2 | I learned a lot of form using the [X luxury] page | .83 | |
| INFOR_EXP3 | I think the information obtained from [x luxury] page is helpful | .91 | |
| **FAN_EXP** | **Fandom Experience (CR. 91)** | | **(Reysen and Branscombe, 2010; Chadborn etal (2017)** |
| | Being a FAN of [X luxury] community on social media platforms, provides me with | | |
| FAN_EXP1 | An opportunity to grow and discover more about aspects of my self | .91 | |
| FAN_EXP2 | Answers, information, and guides I need to face situations in my life | .80 | |
| FAN_EXP3 | provides me with - An experience of captivating beauty and inspiration | .80 | |
| FAN_EXP4 | A sense of fulfilment as I feel like something is missing when I am not involved | .74 | |
| FAN_EXP5 | provides me with - An opportunity to express my unique-self | .73 | |
| FAN_EXP6 | provides me with - An outlet for my creativity | .70 | |
| FAN_EXP7 | provides me with - A focus or sense of purpose | .69 | |
| FAN_EXP8 | provides me with - A break from life stress | .90 | |
| FAN_EXP9 | provides me with - An engaging and entertaining experience | .84 | |
| FAN_EXP10 | provides me with - A good laugh and /cry | .56 | |
| FAN_EXP11 | A chance to retreat form difficult life situations | .57 | |
| FAN_EXP12 | An opportunity to share with my family and brings us closer | .82 | |
| FAN_EXP13 | provides me with - An opportunity to share with my existing friends and with ways to stay connected | .67 | |
| FAN_EXP14 | provides me with - A chance to expand my circle of friends | .53 | |
| **IMR_EXP** | **Immersive Experience (CR .85)** | | **(Schaufeli et al. 2002; Hamilton et al 2016)** |
| | Related interaction on [X Luxury] community on social media platforms, please state your level of agreement with the following statements: | | |
| IMR_EXP1 | Time seems to fly | .95 | |
| IMR_EXP2 | I forget everything else around me | .95 | |
| IMR_EXP3 | I feel enthusiastic | .88 | |
| IMR_EXP4 | I became immersed in the social medias' interaction | .96 | |
| **AESTH_EXP** | **Aesthetic Experience (CR.93)** | | **(Bloch et al 2003; Laviea and Tractinsky 2004)** |
| | Activities content of [X luxury] social media platforms | | |
| AESTH_EXP1 | Is a creative design | .76 | |
| AESTH_EXP2 | Is a fascinating design | .83 | |
| AESTH_EXP3 | Is using special effects | .59 | |
| AESTH_EXP4 | Is an original design | .84 | |
| AESTH_EXP5 | Is a sophisticated design | .77 | |
| AESTH_EXP6 | Sometimes seems to reach out and grab me | .75 | |
| AESTH_EXP7 | Really “speaks” to me, I feel that I must buy it | .56 | |
| AESTH_EXP8 | When it has a really great design, I feel a strong urge to buy it | .55 | |
| AESTH_EXP9 | Browsing [X Luxury] on social media platforms which have superior designs makes me feel good about myself | .77 | |
| AESTH_EXP10 | I enjoy seeing displays of [X Luxury] on social media platforms that have superior designs | .73 | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| AESTH_EXP11 | [X Luxury] (activities /products) design on social media platforms is a source of pleasure for me | .66 | |

Appendix D: Study Two Participation Information Sheet shown on Survey

Durham University
Business School

Dear Participant

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research. Which investigates how consumer experience luxury fashion brand on social media platform. This survey is a part of research project in business school at Durham University.

Your response is anonymous and will be kept confidential. The data will be stored and used according to the General Data protection Regulation (GDPR).

It will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete the survey. please answer all the questions to the best of your knowledge and keep in mind there is no right or wrong answer, its your own experience

If you have any questions or comment, please don't hesitate to contact the researcher

Doa'a Hajawi
doa'a.hajawi@durham.ac.uk

by continuing, You agree to take part in this study.

- Yes, I consent
- No. I don't consent

Durham University
Business School

"A luxury brand defined as : a branded product or service that consumers perceive to be high quality; offer authentic value via desired benefits, whether functional or emotional; have a prestigious image within the market built on qualities such as artisanship, craftsmanship, or service quality; be worthy of commanding a premium price; and be capable of inspiring a deep connection, or resonance, with the consumer"

The following luxury Fashion brands list is the top brands active on the social media platforms for 2019 (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram), **please drag and drop to rank your preferred brand from the best (1) to the least (15)**, if your favourite luxury brand is not in the list, You can write it in the "others box" keep in mind it should be luxury fashion brand

Armani

Burberry

Chanel

Coach

Dior

Dolce & Gabbana

Gucci

Hermès

Jimmy Choo

Louboutin

Louis Vuitton

MaisonValentino

MarcJacobs

Michael Kors

Prada

Ralph Lauren

Versace

YSL

Others

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Please write ONE PREFERRED Luxury brand that you have experience one of these options or both of them:

*Follow this brand on one or more social media platform

*Purchased this brands' product after you browse it on social media platform

←

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Which social media platforms do you follow X, you can choose more than one

Facebook | Twitter | Instagram | SnapChat | WeChat | YouTube | Pinterest

How frequent you check X on social media platforms

Daily | 2-3 times a week | 4-6 times a week | Once a week | Once a month | Twice a month

←

→

Durham University
Business School

Information Obtained form X page is useful

| Strongly agree | Agree | Somewhat agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

I learned a lot form using the X page

| Strongly agree | Agree | Somewhat agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

I think the information obtained form X page is helpful

| Strongly agree | Agree | Somewhat agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

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Related to interaction on Xcommunity on social media platforms, please state your level of agreement with the following statements:

| | Strongly agree | Agree | Somewhat agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Time seems to fly | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I forget everything else around me | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I feel enthusiastic | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I became immersed in the social medias' interaction | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

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Activities content of X social media platforms

| | Strongly agree | Agree | Somewhat agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Is a creative design | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Is a fascinating design | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Is using special effects | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Is an original design | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Is a sophisticated design | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

The way X presents product on social media platforms

| | Strongly agree | Agree | Somewhat agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sometimes seems to reach out and grab me | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Really "speaks" to me, I feel that I must buy it | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| When it has a really great design, I feel a strong urge to buy it | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Browsing X on social media platforms which have superior designs makes me feel good about myself

| Strongly agree | Agree | Somewhat agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

I enjoy seeing displays of X on social media platforms that have superior designs

| Strongly agree | Agree | Somewhat agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

X (activities /products) design on social media platforms is a source of pleasure for me

| Strongly agree | Agree | Somewhat agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

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Being a FAN of X community on social media platforms, provides me with

| | Strongly agree | Agree | Somewhat agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| An opportunity to grow and discover more about aspects of my self | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Answers, information, and guides I need to face situations in my life | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| An experience of captivating beauty and inspiration | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| A sense of fulfillment as I feel like something is missing when I'm not involved | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| An opportunity to express my unique-self | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| An outlet for my creativity | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| A focus or sense of purpose | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Being a FAN of X community on social media platforms, provides me with

| | Strongly agree | Agree | Somewhat agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A break from life stress | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| An engaging and entertaining experience | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| A good laugh and /cry | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| A chance to retreat form difficult life situations | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Being a FAN of X community on social media platforms, provides me with

| | Strongly agree | Agree | Somewhat agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| An opportunity to share with my family and brings us closer | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| An opportunity to share with my existing friends and with ways to stay connected | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| A chance to expand my circle of friends | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

If Xyour best brand choose strongly agree

| Strongly agree | Agree | Somewhat agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

←

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Based on the interaction with other customers on Xcommunity on social media platform, I would say that collectively the replies I received were:

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Positive | ○ | ○ | ○ | Negative |
| Pleasing | ○ | ○ | ○ | Displeasing |
| Upsetting | ○ | ○ | ○ | Not upsetting |

Based on the interaction other customers on X community on social media platforms, I would say that

| | Strongly agree | Agree | Somewhat agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I can stay in touch with people with the same interests | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I can communicate with people with the same interests | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I can meet new people with the same interests | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| It makes me feel connected to others | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| let me stay in contact with like-minded people | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

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Ambiguous location of fashion event of X on social media platforms always makes me curious to know more

| Strongly agree | Agree | Somewhat agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

X behind sense workshop posts on social media platforms arouse my curiosity

| Strongly agree | Agree | Somewhat agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

Xs' limited edition collection intrigue my interest

| Strongly agree | Agree | Somewhat agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

X posts on social media leads me to probe deeply into the brands' official website for new things

| Strongly agree | Agree | Somewhat agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

X posts of collaboration with experts ( designers, bands) is fashionable

| Strongly agree | Agree | Somewhat agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

Browsing Xproduct news posts on social media platforms is very trendy

| Strongly agree | Agree | Somewhat agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

Xposts of gift suggstions on social media platforms is the newest information

| Strongly agree | Agree | Somewhat agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

X product presentation posts on social media platforms are lively

| Strongly agree | Agree | Somewhat agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

X posts on social media platforms contain product information exciting to senses

| Strongly agree | Agree | Somewhat agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

X provide product information on social media platforms from different sensory channels.

| Strongly agree | Agree | Somewhat agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

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**Gender**

| Male | Female | Prefer not to say |
|---|---|---|

**Age**

| 18-25 | 26-33 | 34-41 | 42-49 | 50 and above |
|---|---|---|---|---|

**Education level**

| High School | College | Undergraduate | Postgraduates | PHD or DBA | Other |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

Appendix E: Study Two Common Bias Methods

**Total Variance Explained**

| | Initial Eigenvalues | | | Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Component | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % |
| 1 | 12.279 | 43.853 | 43.853 | 12.279 | 43.853 | 43.853 |
| 2 | 2.072 | 7.401 | 51.254 | | | |
| 3 | 1.627 | 5.810 | 57.064 | | | |
| 4 | 1.291 | 4.612 | 61.676 | | | |
| 5 | 1.105 | 3.947 | 65.623 | | | |
| 6 | 1.035 | 3.695 | 69.318 | | | |
| 7 | .926 | 3.307 | 72.625 | | | |
| 8 | .699 | 2.498 | 75.123 | | | |
| 9 | .605 | 2.159 | 77.282 | | | |
| 10 | .543 | 1.940 | 79.222 | | | |
| 11 | .514 | 1.836 | 81.058 | | | |
| 12 | .472 | 1.686 | 82.744 | | | |
| 13 | .433 | 1.548 | 84.291 | | | |
| 14 | .422 | 1.509 | 85.800 | | | |
| 15 | .398 | 1.421 | 87.221 | | | |
| 16 | .391 | 1.396 | 88.616 | | | |
| 17 | .352 | 1.258 | 89.874 | | | |
| 18 | .333 | 1.190 | 91.064 | | | |
| 19 | .330 | 1.179 | 92.243 | | | |
| 20 | .312 | 1.116 | 93.359 | | | |
| 21 | .291 | 1.041 | 94.400 | | | |
| 22 | .279 | .998 | 95.397 | | | |
| 23 | .262 | .936 | 96.333 | | | |
| 24 | .247 | .881 | 97.214 | | | |
| 25 | .231 | .826 | 98.040 | | | |
| 26 | .195 | .698 | 98.737 | | | |
| 27 | .183 | .653 | 99.390 | | | |
| 28 | .171 | .610 | 100.000 | | | |

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

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