CONSUMERS' ACCEPTANCE OF LUXURY FASHION RETAILING THROUGH E-COMMERCE IN INDIAN METRO CITIES

Dr Sunita Kumar

Associate Professor, School of Business and Management
Christ (Deemed to be University), Bangalore
ORCID No: 0000-0002-0628-1873

Co-author:
Dr. Sridharan. A,
Free-Lance Researcher
Phone No: +91 9741717374
E-Mail: shrishri8@gmail.com
ORCID No: 0000-0002-0753-3585

Abstract

A luxury brand translates to high-quality craftsmanship, exclusivity and heritage. fashion brands and most do not have shops in India but retail through e-commerce. Brands that want to be luxury brands need to have a strong identity and give their customers a great in-store experience. Many brands have trouble doing this online because it's hard to replicate the feeling of being in a store. Part of the luxury appeal is being exclusive and not accessible to everyone, and online shopping is the opposite. Moreover, current online retailing cannot reflect other factors affecting the luxury appeal and image. The Indian luxury market is an emerging market for global luxury

This study thus researches if Indian consumers accept luxury fashion retailing through e-commerce, especially in the metro cities. Whether they get the similar feelings associated with an in-store experience whether they get the luxury appeals, and what factors contribute to the incongruency between online retailing of luxury fashion brands and the in-store experience. This study also researches which of these factors is most prominent so that future retailers can find optimal solutions using technological advancements.

Keywords: Luxury Brand, heritage, fashion, consumer experience

1. Introduction

Luxury is something that is special and shows creativity, intelligence, and thoughtfulness. It is something that is meaningful, not just useful (Dumoulin, 2007). Luxury fashion is a type of fashion that is influenced by people's desire to express their individuality. This means that people want to wear clothes that show who they are. This can be termed as a tendency of projection of self, consistently changing the image to suit modern culture and fashion (Kaiser et al., 1995).

During the course of the last few years, there have been significant changes in the manner in which luxury brands are being sold, with the advent of e-commerce, which is playing a crucial part in influencing buyer decisions, for the simple reason consumers have the facility to choose from a variety of products based on quality and quantity. It also gives them the comfort of selecting brands sitting at home without getting stuck in traffic chaos.

As a result of the growing number of rich individuals in the nation and the expansion of the country's middle class, there is an increased clamour and demand for luxury brands. To understand better the popularity of luxury brands, especially on online platforms, we need to understand the context in which this transition is occurring. Several international and domestic luxury brands have built shops (brick and mortar) in India's metropolitan cities including Mumbai, New Delhi, Bangalore and Chennai, after recognising the enormous potential of the Indian market. This expansion not only made the luxury brands accessible to a greater number of individuals, but it has also provided consumers with more alternatives to choose from. It is also very important to understand that better and faster internet in the country is making consumers do their shopping online since it is convenient, quick and easy to do.

Offline and online retailing both have advantages and disadvantages, such as the absence of human service in the Internet environment or the limited product assortments and opening hours in brick-and-mortar stores. Alba et al. (1997) predicted that people will buy more things online instead of in stores, except for products that they need to experience in person, like luxury items. Endowment Effect." Some people don't like to switch to online shopping because they don't trust e-tailers, or because they're used to the way things are. (Mitchell V. , 1999). There are some risks associated with shopping online that people should be aware of. These include things like giving out personal information or credit card numbers, and not being able to see or touch the product before buying it. (Ko et al., 2004; Eggert, 2006; Kwon & Lennon, 2009): the fact that you can't see the person you're dealing with online. This can be a problem when people are trying to buy things because they can't be sure what they're really buying. (Shim & Lee , 2011); When you buy something online, there is always a chance that the product will not be delivered or that you will have to return it. The prices for things online can also change a lot, which means there is always a financial impact while buying luxury goods online. (Ha & Coghill, 2008). Some people are unsure about how to buy things online, so they prefer to do it in person. (Liang & Huang, 1998) or refuse to switch from the store to the website (Gupta, Su, & Walter, 2004). The pandemic has also changed the customer experience factors completely, and many researchers are re-evaluating these. Luxury is a lifestyle and not a mere product or service.

What is luxury? It's design, exclusivity, and more than anything, it's emotion.

First, the design-minded will appreciate Aesop's toothpaste as aesthetic. From the packaging to the product page, it gives off a refined, polished, and design-conscious vibe.

Second, its distinctive ingredients set it apart: Sea Buckthorn, Cardamom, and Wasabia Japonica promise the customer a more exclusive experience than standard toothpaste.

And third, the most important thing about Aesop's product is that **it makes a statement about the buyer.**

De Barnier et al. (2012) in their research mentioned that, despite some idiosyncratic differences, they converge on the following seven factors, ranked in order of decreasing discriminatory power:

1 Elitism (very few people can buy it; it is very expensive);

2 Creativity (it is magical, very creative; high craftsmanship);

3 Uniqueness (rare; unique);

4 Distinction (for refined people; it shows who one is);

5 Refinement (attractive, dazzling);

6 Quality (superior; top quality);

7 Power (known, leading brand).

Types of Luxury Consumers:

Just because a consumer is a buyer of high-end products doesn't mean, you will like or buy all high-end products. This is particularly important to remember when organisations do conversion optimisation for high-end brands because each brand will attract completely different segments that need an entirely different marketing approach. There is no ideal brand page template for luxury brands when organisations' marketing and sales rely heavily on evoking emotions.

There are four sets of luxury consumers:

1. Internalized luxury, comprising the search for an authentic experience. It's almost an art of living, and very exclusive;
2. Luxury of self-expression through strong creativity and singularity;
3. Luxury of certain values, of prestigious institutions, for those who seek status; and
4. Luxury of self-affirmation relative to others through the display of wealth, and the visibility of consumption famously reserved for a lucky few.

This segmentation is very important to marketing organisations as they should understand that luxury buyers in different segments have different wants, desires and needs and these should be addressed independently and differently. Also, it is pertinent to note that organisations cannot afford to address one type of customer and need to communicate (like Louis Vuitton) with all types of customers, using various methods to attract all of them.

2. Literature Review

Indian Luxury market

According to a report from the IMF, "India is the only major economy predicted to have double-digit growth in 2021". A recent McKinsey report validates, "300 international fashion brands are eyeing to enter India in the next two years." (Jain, 2021). The five things you need to do to win the Indian luxury market are:

1. Be aware of your brand and make it visible

2. Understand and target the right consumers

3. Connect with Indians by adapting your product

4. Give customers a great experience

5. Make sure your product and pricing is competitive

The Indian luxury market has sustained even during the Pandemic. This is mainly because of many factors like the development of the economy, online penetration, reforms of policies of

Government, every growing middle-class population and their increasing aspirations in the hyper-connected metaverse (Shah, 2022).

2.1 Luxury Brand Definition

Kapferer and Bastien (2009) in their research study said that luxury goods are fundamentally different from other products, which is why they require a different kind of marketing and distribution than basic consumer goods. They mention luxury products as objects accompanied by a service. They interestingly mention that when consumers purchase luxury products, they not only pay for the object but for a whole new experience.

While basic consumer products are meant to meet the basic needs of consumers, luxury brands correspond to a dram. Kapferer and Bastien (2009) point out two dimensions on which the dream concept of luxury is based; a social dimension and a personal, emotional dimension. The social dimensions relate to social status and class, while the personal dimensions give consumers a sense of intrinsic pleasure thanks to the intangible and symbolic values that the product represents. Marketing organisations, if the product is to succeed, will have to promote the dream aspect of luxury items from their functionality aspects. Kapferer and Bastien said that what the product represents is more important than what it really is. They further describe luxury brands as "superlative" and not "comparative". The brand image is an essential aspect of the luxury firm, and marketing should focus on deeply integrating this image into the brand.

2.2 Luxury and Need for Presence in Online Retailing

The luxury-purchasing decisions people make may be broken down into two categories: private and public. While celebrities, and influencers' thoughts, messages, comments and ideas may help to form one's own non-personal perception of luxury, one's own thoughts, perceptions, images, ideas, concepts and emotions provide the foundation of one's personal experience of luxury.

Perceptions of luxury outside of the individual, as studied by consumers' minds (1) The impression that those who can afford luxury are more prominent members of society (2) feeling of exclusivity as conveyed by a brand's perceived uniqueness, is often associated with the high cost of luxury products. Thus, notions capture an individual's conception of opulence: (1) one's "perceived extended self" is a part of oneself that one uses to interpret and categorize the world via symbols. (2) Perceived hedonism is associated with the enjoyment of sensual delight and pleasure as a result of affluence.

McKinsey's (2014) research shows that shoppers now insist on interacting with brands digitally. Brands that provide the right experiences and information to luxury customers at the right time will gain a larger share of growth and outperform competitors. Deloitte (2016)

The study found that people like the feeling of luxury and exclusivity when they are shopping for luxury items. Hence, it is imperative for luxury brands to have an online environment to make people mentally comfortable.

Consumers have developed a more favourable attitude toward online shopping as a result of the excellent experiences they have had on various e-commerce websites. These positive experiences range from the ease of return policies to the usefulness of personalised advice. It has satisfied demand in the online luxury shopping experience by informing clients that the things they are buying are authentic, which has made the experience more enjoyable for them.

Consumers who use e-commerce websites have the advantage of looking at and purchasing luxury brands whenever and wherever they are, thanks to the portability of online shopping. Time is precious and the essence of metropolitan consumers, this online shopping is of the essence Kannan, P. K., & Li, H. (2017). Digital marketing: A framework, review, and research agenda. International Journal of Research in Marketing, 34(1), 22-45),

While brick-and-mortar shops normally have a limited assortment of luxury brands, due to space constraints and high-cost rent in metros, e-commerce websites offer more varieties and a diverse range of brands, allowing consumers the opportunity to evaluate and choose brands as per the quality and cost before making a purchase. It is a win-win situation for both brands and consumers (Kapur, A., & Sridhar, S. (2019). The Rise of Luxury Fashion E-commerce in India. The Indian Journal of Management, 12(3), 24-30).

2.3 Consumer Behaviour:

In this section, we explore how purchase decisions are made by consumers and how the demand for certain brands will change, depending on circumstances.

2.3.1 AIDA

In the late nineteenth century, St. Elmo Lewis created the classic marketing model, AIDA (attention, interest, desire and action), with the intention of helping the sales force improve sales by understanding the customers better. While this works very well for basic consumer goods, the purchasing process for luxury items totally differs. Luxury purchases have a three-phase process; pre-purchasing behaviour, purchase decision and post-purchasing behaviour.

The first phase, the pre-purchase behaviour, represents the time before purchase and corresponds to the attention, interest and desire in the AIDA model. This phase is long, and the consumer gains insight into the values and the dream that the product represents. The dream is closely linked to the craftsmanship and the history associated with both the product and the brand. Since luxury products are primarily about fulfilling a dream, price and utility are secondary, although the customer may perceive some form of risk at a very high price

The second phase treats the purchasing decision, where the aesthetic and human environment is a vital factor. This suggests that an essential part of selling a luxury item is related to the service being provided by the organisation. Finally, there is the post-purchase behaviour when the purchase has been completed and the dream has been replaced by ownership, consumers feel they have made the right decision. It is onerous on the part of the company to ensure that the consumers should always feel that they own the brand as a dream, and consumers need to carry in their minds that the product is exclusive.

2.4 In-store Atmospherics and Implications

In the study of Lunardo & Roux (2015), they found that a stimulating in-store atmosphere can induce specific emotional outcomes. This is because when a store environment is stimulating, it can make people feel more positive emotions like pleasure.(Kaltcheva & Weitz, 2006).

2.5 In-Store Experience and Implications

Moore et al., (2010) The study found that there are three types of flagship store models - the "staged experience", the "branded house", and the "Maison". Each of these models creates a different luxury experience. The study also found that there are four main reasons for adopting a flagship store as a form of foreign market entry - to build the brand, to increase visibility, to

create an experience, and to access new customers. "A commercially inactive space signals exclusivity, luxury and an extravagance that is at the heart of luxury," said one marketing director from one of the 12 luxury companies taken into study.

The Mehrabian-Russell Model is a model that predicts human behaviour based on the environment. Fung and Tai (1997) tested the model by measuring the emotional states and approach-avoidance behaviour of shoppers in two different types of stores in Hong Kong. The results showed that the model was a good predictor of human behaviour.

FIGURE 1: ORIGINAL MEHRABIAN RUSSELL MODEL
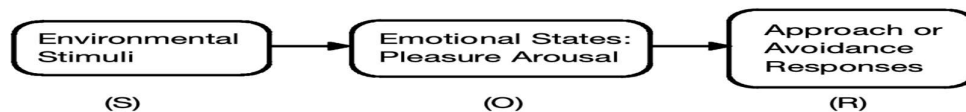
Source: (Fung & Tai, 1997)

The results reveal that in-store environment stimuli reported in terms of information rate are related to the enjoyment felt in the brick and mortar stores. In turn, in-store emotional states created by the surroundings are linked to in-store shopping behaviour. As a result, changing the store's atmospheric factors can be used to create favourable shopping behaviour. It was also found that the in-store environment is dynamic, and the model is not as simple as that predicted by Mehrabian and Russell; in a one-way direction, the model has changed as in Figure 2.

FIGURE 2: MODIFIED MEHRABIAN RUSSELL MODEL
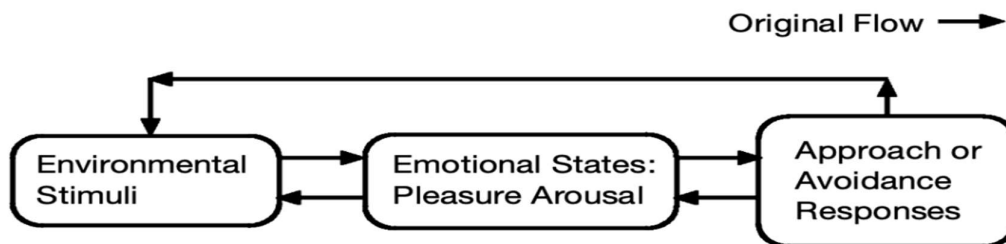
Source: Adapted from (Fung & Tai, 1997)

2.6 E-Commerce and Luxury Retailing

When you open an e-commerce online service, you need to be able to respond to customers twenty-four seven around the world from Italy to China to America or India - there is no real-time zone. So, if you are not replying in time, that can be considered as a bad service. Once you open an e-commerce website you are open twenty-four-seven.

Luxury brands are supposed to be really good quality and safe to buy from. But sometimes people don't trust them because they're worried about things like security and transparency (Seringhaus, 2005).

Mir-Bernal et al., (2018) saw that many famous luxury brands use e-commerce only for the sake of internationalization, as in the study conducted by ISEM Fashion Business School, Spain. This article discusses how the late integration into e-commerce (selling online) has severely affected the performance of Spanish fashion multi-brand retailers.

2.7 Online Vs. In-store behaviour with respect to Multichannel Retailing

Wölbitsch et al., (2020) explored how customers of a prominent multinational fashion company buy things online and in stores and found substantial discrepancies between the two.

Consumers who shop online tend to buy things from a single category, but customers who shop in brick-and-mortar stores tend to buy a wider variety of products. Customers who bring their things into fitting rooms are more likely to depart from and complement their purchases

2.8. How Online Retailing is Affect Offline Retailing?

Rietbergen & Weltevreden (2009) The study found that e-commerce is more likely to replace in-store shopping in city centres than in any other type of shopping centre.

2.9 Online Vs. In-store behaviour with respect to Luxury goods

Liu et al. (2013) The article is about how people shop differently for luxury goods depending on whether they are buying them online or in a store. Online shoppers are more concerned with things like price and reviews, while people who shop in stores place more value on things like the experience and being able to see the product in person.

The article talks about how Generation Y consumers (people born between 1980 and 1999) are expected to spend a lot of money on luxury items in the future. By 2025, they will make up half of the global luxury market. (BCG, 2019; Shin et al., 2017; Deloitte, 2019).

3. Methodology

Research Objectives

- To understand the attitude among consumers toward the purchase of luxury products on the internet
- To understand the perception of consumers on the online sales of luxury products

Data collection:

For this study, the data has been collected using a survey made using Google Forms and has been circulated to Indians living in or who have travelled to metro cities to buy luxury goods. The data thus collected has gone through a statistical analysis which was done using SPSS.

Sampling size and sampling technique

The population of the study is made up of consumers living in the metro cities - Bangalore, Chennai, Delhi, Hyderabad, Kochi, Kolkata and Mumbai. If the census had been taken in the year 2021 as intended, then the population would have been finite; however, since it was not taken and the last available official data is from 2011, the population is thus classified as infinite. Infinite population calls for non-probability sampling and convenience, and snowball sampling is a form of non-probability sampling.

4. Data and the sources of data collection

The final sample consisted of 198 respondents. The samples were collected using a survey method. Surveys are easy to develop using the online solutions available. The tool used to survey this study was Google Forms.

RELIABILITY TEST

Cronbach's alpha is the most common measure of internal consistency ("reliability"). It is most commonly used when you have multiple Likert questions in a survey/questionnaire that form a scale, and you wish to determine if the scale is reliable.

TABLE 1 : RELIABILITY ANALYSIS

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items

.893*	.890		16

Note: Survey data

* The Cronbach's Alpha must be >0.7.

The Cronbach's alpha for the data collected is **0.893**, indicating a high internal consistency for our scale with this specific sample. This means that the data is reliable, analysis and further study can be conducted.

H1: Income decides whether luxury fashion good is bought online or offline.

An ANOVA was run to see if income affects the consumers' behaviour of buying luxury goods online or offline.

TABLE 2: MEAN DIFFERENCE OF INCOME AND ONLINE/OFFLINE PURCHASE

ANOVA

Online or Offline

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.709	5	.142	.799	.552
Within Groups	27.892	157	.178		
Total	28.601	162			

Source: Survey data

The significance value is 0.552 (i.e., p = .552), which is way above the criteria of 0.05 (confidence interval 0.05) which means there is no statically significant difference in the mean impact on consumers' behaviour of buying of luxury goods online or offline between different income groups as the null hypothesis is accepted, Post hoc tests were not run since the significance level was >0.05.

H2: In-store experience is essential to Indian consumers for purchasing Luxury Fashion goods.

TABLE 3: MEAN DIFF BETWEEN THE IMPORTANCE OF PHYSICAL EXPERIENCE RATING AND NORMAL RATING

One-Sample Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Importance of Physical experience in purchasing of luxury fashion goods	198	3.99	1.066	.076

One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 5						
	t	df	Significance		Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
			One-Sided p	Two-Sided p		Lower	Upper

Importance of Physical experience in purchasing of luxury fashion goods	-13.330	197	<.001	<.001	-1.010	-1.16	-.86

Source: Survey Data

A one-sample t-test was run to determine whether the importance rating in recruited subjects differed from normal, defined as an importance rating of 5. The mean importance rating (M = 3.99, SD = 1.066) was lower than the normal importance rating of 5.0. Statistically significant difference between means (p < .05) and which means the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted, which means that the In-store experience is essential to Indian consumers in purchasing Luxury Fashion goods.

H3a: Indian consumers feel that there is no sense of security in online shopping for luxury goods

TABLE 4: MEAN DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE SENSE OF SECURITY IN ONLINE SHOPPING FOR LUXURY GOODS RATING AND NORMAL RATING

One-Sample Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Does online shopping give a sense of security and pleasure like offline shopping with respect to Luxury fashion goods?	198	3.44	1.160	.082

One-Sample Test

			Test Value = 4				
			Significance		Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	t	df	One-Sided p	Two-Sided p		Lower	Upper
Does online shopping give a sense of security and pleasure like offline shopping with respect to Luxury fashion goods?	-6.742	197	<.001	<.001	-.556	-.72	-.39

Source: Survey data

A one-sample t-test was run to determine whether the consumers feel that there is no sense of security in online shopping for luxury goods in recruited subjects differed from normal, defined as a rating of 4 (not really). The mean importance rating (M = 3.44, SD = 1.160) was lower than the normal rating of 4. The null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative

hypothesis is accepted as there was a significant difference between means (p<.05), which means that Indian consumers feel that there is no sense of security in online shopping for luxury goods.

H3b: Indian consumers feel that online shopping for luxury fashion goods is not better than offline.

A one-sample t-test was run to determine whether the Indian consumers feel that online shopping for luxury fashion goods is better than offline in recruited subjects differed from normal, defined as a rating of 4 (not that better). The mean importance rating (M = 3.13, SD = 1.235) was lower than the normal rating of 4. Due to a statistically significant difference between means (p < .05), the null hypothesis can be rejected and thus the alternative hypothesis is accepted, which means that Indian consumers feel that online shopping for luxury fashion goods is not better than offline.

5. FINDINGS

From the descriptive analysis, it was found that the respondents preferred buying goods online because of the convenience followed by discounts and other offers and offline for the experience. They also responded that luxury purchase experience was important to them. The level of security and pleasure that one gets in offline shopping is not found in online shopping with respect to luxury fashion goods is what the majority of the respondents believe. The respondents also felt that the fear of fake items and poor website quality deterred their choice to buy luxury fashion goods online. the presence of physical contact and in-store atmospheric appeal contributed to their choice of offline purchase. On the corollary, respondents believe that personal connection, touch and confidence in purchase are the missing factors in online retailing that deter them from purchasing luxury fashion goods online.

The study found that gender does not have a significant impact on impulse buying of luxury fashion goods due to the store's atmospherics, which means that, as found from descriptive analysis, people get influenced by the store's atmospherics and make impulse purchases regardless of their gender. The gender was skewed towards the women. Similarly, the income also did not have any effect. This shows that despite certain independent factors like gender and income, Indian consumers are influenced by store atmospherics, which shows the critical role atmospherics plays in retailing.

It was also found that most Indian consumers feel that there is no sense of security or pleasure while shopping online for luxury goods and they also feel that online shopping for luxury fashion goods is not better than offline. Moreover, the main factors that were found to deter online shopping of luxury goods according to Indian consumers are fear of fake products, No trust in the website and lack of language options (some global brand websites are in French only). The lack of sales assistance in online retailing also affects the consumers' preferences.

Indian consumers also felt that hedonism derived in an offline setting is missing online, and this factor intensely affects their decision to purchase luxury fashion goods offline rather than online. Hedonism acts together with services offered, atmospherics, personal connection, and physical touch, which are also missing in online retailing deters Indian consumers' choice of buying luxury fashion goods online. Hence Indian consumers feel that store retailing is better than online retailing for global luxury fashion brands.

5.1 SUGGESTIONS

Since store atmospherics play a massive role in influencing consumers to make purchases, and to have a successful luxury website that appeals to Indian consumers, the visual set-up of the website should be great. It is not possible to bring in olfactory or tactile appeals, but audio can be done by giving a pleasant background sound to the website. The flow of the website should also be pleasing, and the website's loading speed should be great.

Luxury fashion brand websites must increase their security and make sure that there are warranties and other services that will reduce the fear of fake products. (Liu et al., 2013) The study found that people who buy luxury goods online trust online ratings and reviews more than people who buy luxury goods in stores. So, if organizations want to get more people to buy their luxury goods online, online forums should be created on their websites and encourage former purchasers to post reviews about their goods and services.

Sales assistance can be given in online retailing by incorporating various AI tools and using the device cameras and artificial reality to construct a virtual shop that incorporates visual and audio appeals. The audio can explain the features of the good, like material and craftsmanship. Chatbots, Machine learning – to suggest products, Voice recognition and communication, Facial Recognition, Virtual Try-On and Visual Search can enhance online shopping for luxury fashion goods experience.

If you want to improve customer experience, it is important to collect data from multiple channels (online and offline). This can be challenging, but it is worth it because it can help you understand what people want and need while shopping. (Mir-Bernal et al., 2018). Global luxury brands must reproduce their websites in many languages, at least English, to attract consumers worldwide.

5.2 PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

Why do these results matter? They matter, mainly because online retailing (e-commerce) is becoming increasingly popular for almost all goods, but they do not fit the concept of luxury very well. So, this study helps to see exactly what factors are missing online and what inherent risks of online shopping affect this incompatibility (Bezes, 2016). Indian Consumers are also worried about the security and fake products present in online retailing. As previous studies have shown, there are many risks associated with online retailing, and this study shows that it is more prevalent when it comes to luxury fashion goods.

The luxury brand is an expression of the dynamics of open societies, in which consumers seek to climb the social ladder and show they belong to that society, with an attention-seeking attitude and an expression of intent. This sector is like no other. However, marketing companies of luxury brands will have to remember that price is not a consideration and they cannot sustain luxury brands on the principle of pricing alone. Luxury brands must be purchased by the right persons, those who create a taste hierarchy, a value by their choice. Marketing companies cannot rely on classical marketing paradigms and programmes. In an extensive benchmarking study of the most profitable luxury brands, Kapferer and Bastien (2012) identify important features of luxury brands, such that they build their successes slowly, by trial and error. They suggested rather invented alternative marketing approaches, radically different from regular FMCG rules.

> ➢ Forget positioning; think brand identity only (due to the intrinsic incomparability of luxury brands)
> ➢ Increase average prices to grow demand (one reason being a steady increase in the purchasing power of the middle class)
> ➢ If a product sells too much, discontinue it (otherwise the brand will become a fashion brand)
> ➢ The role of communication is not to sell the brand, but to refuel the "dream".
> ➢ Unlike FMCG brands for which purchases boost loyalty, repeat purchase dilutes the luxury dream and this dream must be constantly created and re-created.
> ➢ Communicate to non-buyers, a consequence of "luxury for others". If the luxury brand is not known beyond the core target group, it cannot create status value.

5.3 SCOPE FOR FURTHER STUDY

Further studies can be done to study precisely what can be done to bring luxury appeal to online retailing. They can study how AI and other new technologies like chatbots, machine learning to suggest products, voice recognition and communication, facial recognition and virtual try-on, etc., can be integrated to increase the viability of online retailing concerning luxury fashion retailing.

More exploratory studies can be done by studying the behaviour and acceptance of Indian luxury consumers, which will give a much more concrete look at the luxury scenario in India.

It could be interesting to investigate if millennial luxury consumers' perception of reality affects their willingness to buy luxury online. Younger generations do not make the same distinctions between the e-commerce and brick-and-mortar shops thus it is plausible that the desire for a luxury experience in a physical store would decrease among future generations of luxury consumers. Furthermore, much research also remains to be done on whether increased trust in luxury brands facilitates e-commerce or whether there is a relationship between them. It could be that people are more prone to buy luxury products online if they can feel confident that the company will deliver a product that will meet all of their expectations.

Tynan et al. (2010) argue that consumers actively co-create the value of luxury brands, recognising the phenomenological nature of brand value that is created by consumer experiences. We do believe that this emerging consumer-centric paradigm shifts attention away from brands and focuses on the consumer will make marketing companies ponder on how consumers co-author luxury brand meanings and redefine their marketing strategies.

6. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

One major limitation is that the researchers have not taken into account the opinions and perspectives of marketing companies of luxury brands to understand their attitudes and strategies towards e-commerce. Future research should seek to explore how e-commerce influences the strategy and the brand image of luxury brands.

7. CONCLUSION

Luxury is not what it used to be because people can now get what they want with a click of a button. The younger generations have become more critical buyers of high-end goods challenging the traditional notion of luxury. (Kapferer & Valette-Florence, 2016). It's important to have a clear target market and pricing strategy when starting a fashion line, as

this will determine how the brand is marketed and priced. So when online emerged as a retail channel, luxury was seen to be incompatible, but much research has been done to show what can be done to improve this situation (Kluge et al., 2009). This study specifically studied Indian consumers' acceptance of the retailing of luxury fashion goods through e-commerce to study what was missing and how to bridge the gap.

In accordance with the research questions, it can be concluded that Indian consumers feel that factors like services offered, hedonism, personal connection and physical touch hinder getting the superlative in-store shopping experience that luxury shopping provides on an e-commerce platform. They do not mind purchasing luxury fashion goods online, but they feel that the luxury appeal is low. Many consumers chose to buy from the store when asked to choose according to the luxury appeal of 11 global luxury fashion brands. The main reasons for this were identified as the absence of personal services, hedonistic pleasures, personal connection and physical touch the presence of fear of fake products, the lack of sales assistance, the lack of language options and the lack of trust in the online retail set-up.

Since consumers feel that the in-store experience is essential and it was found that atmospherics affect their purchase behaviour, luxury fashion brands must establish standalone shops or in malls so that customers can access the shops in the metro cities as a market entry strategy

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