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The Impact of Attitude Functions on Consumer Desire to Share: A Generation-Z Perspective on Luxury Brands

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Abstract

Generation Z has emerged as a key consumer segment in the luxury market, making it essential to understand the psychological factors driving their engagement with luxury brands. This study examines the impact of attitude functions on consumers' desire to save and share luxury brand experiences. Drawing on the Functional Theory of Attitudes, the study investigates the influence of social-adjustive, value-expressive, and hedonic functions on consumer behaviour. Using an exploratory-cum-causal research design, data were collected from 165 Generation Z luxury consumers in Delhi-NCR. Exploratory Factor Analysis and multiple regression analysis were employed to test the proposed relationships. The findings reveal that all three attitude functions significantly influence save-and-share behaviour, with the social-adjustive function exerting the strongest effect, followed by value-expressive and hedonic functions. The study extends the application of the Functional Theory of Attitudes in the luxury consumption context and offers valuable insights for luxury marketers seeking to enhance consumer engagement through socially driven and experiential marketing strategies.

Keywords: Luxury brands, Generation Z, attitude functions, save-and-share behaviour, consumer engagement.

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1. Introduction

According to Cambridge, the meaning of luxury is, “great comfort, esp. as provided by expensive and beautiful possessions, surroundings, or food, or something enjoyable and often expensive but not necessary.” A luxury brand is one that is famous for and distinguished by great quality, exclusivity, and high prices. The major differentiating feature of luxury brands is exclusivity, of course, luxury goods are of excellent quality, but so are premium brands, which offer great quality and aim to sell to everybody who can afford it. Scarcity is essential in luxury segment. Generation Z, born between late-1990s and early 2010s, have particular traits that sets them apart from prior generations, their social consciousness, digital nativism, and knack for real and personalised experiences. Young generation is the fastest-growing demographic of luxury/ premium brand buyers. According to Halpert, 2012, they have surpassed every other demographic group in terms of spending on luxury products. More than a dozen luxury brands are entering India ahead of the festive season, hoping to lure customers in a market fueled by the increasing wealth of higher-income Indians, which is driving increased discretionary spending even in small cities. According to latest news, the trend is being driven by young adults purchasing luxury products, more exposure to global trends, and a "post-pandemic boom", all generating interest from Western luxury brands.

According to Credit Suisse, the millionaires in India is expected to grow by 105% by 2027, it is no surprise that global luxury firms are optimistic about the promising Indian market and want to enter and expand here. Aditya Birla Fashion Retail recently established a partnership with Galeries chain, Galeries Lafayette, which is a French luxury department store chain. Over two hundred luxury brands will be represented at the flagship showrooms in Delhi and Mumbai. Reliance Brands Ltd. has introduced luxury brands, Valentino and Balenciaga to India, this interest of luxury brands in India depicts the future potential of India being a luxury market. Moving towards ‘attitude’, according to Fishbein and Ajzen (1975, p. 6) attitude is “a learned predisposition to respond in a consistently favorable or unfavorable manner with respect to a given object.”

Attitudes play a crucial role in shaping consumer behaviour by serving as calculative/ evaluative judgments or predispositions towards items, ideas, or people. The concept of

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attitude functions offers a comprehensive perspective on the various roles attitudes play in shaping customer responses. This study examines four basic attitude functions: social-adjustive, value-expressive, hedonic, and utilitarian, each of which contributes unique motivating variables that influence consumer decision-making processes. Attitude functions influence consumer responses to luxury brands, notably among Generation Z. Luxury brand items' features, such as originality, aesthetics, exclusivity, and symbolism, have a positive impact on brand attitude and response. According to a study conducted by Roland Berger Strategy Consultants, 2012 report, young consumers are acquiring a more favorable attitude towards luxury consumption. Considering attitudes are a fundamental variable that influences behaviour (e.g., consumer behaviour), "Functional Theories of Attitudes" are appropriate for our study (Katz, 1960; Shavitt, 1989; Smith et al., 1956). Previous studies have demonstrated the importance of attitude. Grewal et al. (2004) used functions (social-adjustive, value-expressive, hedonic, utilitarian) to describe consumer behaviour. Several scholars have demonstrated the applicability of "Functional Theories of Attitudes" as a conceptual framework in the context of luxury brand consumption (e.g., Bian & Forsythe, 2012; Seung-A, 2012; Wilcox et al., 2009).

Literature Review

Generation Z, born between late-1990s and early 2010s, has particular traits that set it apart from prior generations. Their digital nativism, social consciousness, and knack for real and personalised experiences are well documented (Twenge and Campbell, 2018; Venter et al., 2020). Understanding these traits is critical for determining how attitude functions manifest in consumer response, particularly for luxury brands.

Functional theories of attitudes:

The "Theory of Planned Behaviour" (TPB), which states that attitudes guide or influence behaviour, also applies to luxury brands. Fishbein and Ajzen (1975, p. 6) define attitude as "a learned predisposition to respond in a consistently favourable or unfavourable manner with respect to a given object." Similarly, attitudes are considered an important variable in "Functional Theories of Attitudes."

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Grewal et al. (2004) employ attitudes to explain consumer behaviour and categorise them based on the psychological roles they play (Katz 1960; Shavitt 1990; Smith et al. 1956; Wang 2009; Wilcox et al. 2009). While the Theory of Planned Behaviour provides a framework for the interaction between attitudes and behaviour, "Functional Theories of Attitudes" supplement the model by separating various aspects of attitudes (Wang, 2009).

As a result, our study employs the "Functional Theories of Attitudes" conceptual framework to examine various aspects of attitude that are pertinent to components that influence consumer response. Social attitude functions are distinct from individual-oriented ones such as hedonic and utilitarian (Shavitt, 1990). Individuals express central ideals, establish their identity, and win social acceptability through these roles (Katz, 1960; Shavitt, 1989; Smith et al., 1956). Grewal et al. (2004) distinguish two dimensions of social functions: social-adjustive and value-expressive.

a. Social-adjustive function

The social-adjustive function has been defined as the drive to acquire and use brands in order to get social acceptance and retain relationships (Bian & Forsythe, 2012; Wilcox et al., 2009). This function is especially crucial for consumers who want to meet the expectations of their peers and achieve favour in social situations (Grewal et al., 2004; Wilcox et al., 2009). Bearden, Netemeyer, and Teel (1989, p. 474) contend that the social-adjustive function is essential for persons who have a "tendency to live up to the expectations of others." Consumers with this tendency prefer to buy the "right brands" that are acknowledged by their peers. Luxury brands are frequently "the right brands" in Western societies and are used as a status symbol (Vigneron & Johnson, 2004; Wilcox et al., 2009). Following the "Identity Development Process," especially generation-z/young people (16-25 years) sense the urge to align with their peer group (Belk, 1988; Erikson, 1963; Wooten, 2006), which includes buying "the right brands" that their peers consume (Gil et al., 2012). As a result, the social-adjustive function offers a high predictive value for assessing young adults' attitudes toward luxury products.

b. Value-expressive function

A value-expressive function can be described as the tendency to purchase and use brands in order to convey one's self-identity (beliefs, attitudes, values) with others. (Bian and Forsythe,

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2012; Wilcox et al., 2009). Consumers with a value-expressive attitude toward products or a brand are encouraged to purchase it as a form of self-expression (Wilcox et al. 2009). As a result, the value-expressive function is critical for people wanting to communicate their self-identity to others, even if it goes against the expectations of their social circle (Grewal et al., 2004; Shavitt, 1990; Wilcox et al., 2009). These buyers want to acquire companies with characteristics that reflect their individuality (Bian & Forsythe 2012).

c. Hedonic function

Consumers that buy luxury products for hedonic purposes experience sensory pleasure, aesthetic beauty, or excitement, activating sentiments and emotional states, and gaining personal rewards and fulfilment as a result. According to Dubois and Laurent (1994), the hedonic function is critical for luxury brand consumption since it expresses fulfilment and sensory pleasure based on product experience.

When studying customer responses to luxury brands among Generation Z, it is critical to understand the subtle dynamics dictated "The desire to Save and Share (DSS) Behaviour"

Desire to Save and Share (DSS)

As digital natives, Generation Z frequently expresses their engagement with luxury brands via social media. The desire to save and share (DSS) is a complex idea that describes young adults' need to not only experience luxury things but also share these experiences with their social groups. This concept manifests itself in various ways, such as:

Social Media Engagement: Young people have a strong urge to showcase their experience with luxury companies on popular social media sites like Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. They use these platforms to share their experiences and demonstrate their connection to the company to a larger audience.

Visual Documentation: The need to save and share goes beyond virtual interactions to material manifestations. By clicking pictures and recording videos, generation Z consumers document their interactions with luxury brands. These serve as personal testimonials, adding to the larger story of brand engagement.

Research Methodology

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The present research study is directed to the buyers of luxury products of Delhi-NCR (Noida, Gurugram and Delhi). The study is divided into two parts, first, the attitude functions and consumer response towards luxury product buying is explored and second deals with checking the impact of attitude functions over consumer response.

Research Design: This study has used exploratory cum causal research design. Exploratory research investigates a study that is not well-defined or understood. In exploratory study the exploration of factors of Attitude functions is performed. Exploratory research is also known as interpretive research, which assists in answering the questions like what, where, and how. It is an unstructured research which makes it flexible.

Causal research is a form of conclusive study that seeks to demonstrate the cause and effect relationship between two variables or more.

Hypothesis

H_0 : There is no significant impact of Attitude Functions over Consumer desire to save and share in Luxury Brands.

Questionnaire construction: This research aims to study the impact of Attitude Functions on Consumer Response towards Luxury Brands. For this, a survey was conducted using a semi-structured questionnaire. The statements regarding the attitude function have been taken from Schade, M., et al. (2015); Gil, L. A., Kwon, K.-N., Good, L. K., & Johnson, L. W. (2012), and statements for consumer response were taken from J. Kim et al. (2020); Haidt J. & Keltner, D, (2001). The scale is further modified using the result of previous studies and expert opinions. To administer the scale, google forms is used and responses were collected form the target audience which comprise of Generation Z specifically, i.e. people that are born between late 1990's and early 2010's further which will be elaborated below.

Sampling Design:

The target population for this study comprises of residents from the Delhi NCR region (Noida, Delhi and Gurugram). The survey was distributed among shoppers from all three regions especially people who were visiting the luxury stores in the malls. Out of the many malls in the region like, Select City Walk, Saket, New Delhi, DLF Promenade, Vasant Kunj, South Delhi, Ambience Mall, Vasant Kunj, South Delhi, DLF Emporio, Vasant Kunj, New

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Delhi, MGF Metropolitan, MG Road, Gurugram, DLF Mega Mall, DLF Phase 1, Gurugram, Sahara Mall, Sector 28, Gurugram, Ambience Mall, Gurugram, DLF Mall of India, Noida and many others, the survey was distributed to visitors in Noida; DLF Mall of India, in New Delhi; Ambience Mall, Vasant Kunj, South Delhi, DLF Emporio, Vasant Kunj, and in Gurugram; Ambience Mall, Gurgaon, and responses were collected. So, multi-stage purposive sampling is used.

Sample Size: For the exploratory study the sample size should be four to five times the number of statements, in this case 23 statements are used to explore the attitude function and consumer response towards luxury products. So, any sample more than 92 i.e. four times 23 statements is good enough. But in the present study, the scale was distributed to 310 target respondents out of which finally 184 respondents have reverted, which makes the conversion rate 59% and after scrutiny the final sample used for analysis was 165 (19 responses were rejected).

Sampling Technique:

The sampling techniques used for this research is Multistage Purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is a type of non-probability sampling in which units are chosen because they possess traits that you require in your sample. In other words, units are chosen "on purpose" in purposive sampling. It is also known as judgmental sampling which focuses on the researcher's judgement to identify and pick people, cases, or events that will provide the most information to accomplish the study's objectives. In the case of this study, shoppers of luxury brands were approached as they possess the required traits.

In multistage sampling, the population is divided into clusters and few clusters are selected in the first stage. Subsequently the clusters are repeatedly divided into smaller clusters and the process is repeated until we reach the last step. Finally, only a few members are selected from each cluster for the sample. In this case, from a list of malls in the Delhi NCR region (Noida, Delhi and Gurugram), a few malls were selected for the distribution of the questionnaire among shoppers. In the final step the biased responses were rejected and the analysis was done on the remaining responses.

Analysis and Findings

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Table no. 1: KMO and Bartlett's Test

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.881
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2296.277
	df	253
	Sig.	0

Source: Primary Survey

KMO test is used to indicate sample adequacy. As per Chawla and Sondhi (2022), the sample should be at least four times the number of statements. In this case 20 statements were administered hence any sample more than 100 is a good sample for Exploratory Factor Analysis and we have administered data of 165, meaning it is a fit. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy is 0.881, which shows that the results of the analysis are good. “Bartlett's test of Sphericity” also comes under significance level.

Communalities are the part of each variable's variance that can be described by the factors. The statements which have communalities of less than 0.3 should be deleted, but in our case all the communalities are more than acceptable value.

Table no. 2: Total Variance Explained

Total Variance Explained									
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	9.46	41.135	41.135	9.46	41.135	41.135	3.73	16.202	16.202
2	1.98	8.616	49.751	1.98	8.616	49.751	3.16	13.727	29.928

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3	1.53	6.641	56.391	1.53	6.641	56.391	3	13.05	42.979
4	1.44	6.266	62.658	1.44	6.266	62.658	2.86	12.43	55.408
5	0.99	5.11	67.767						
6	0.97	4.209	71.977						
7	0.73	3.162	75.138						
8	0.66	2.859	77.998						
9	0.61	2.668	80.666						
10	0.54	2.324	82.99						
11	0.52	2.264	85.254						
12	0.5	2.16	87.414						
13	0.41	1.775	89.189						
14	0.38	1.666	90.855						
15	0.37	1.618	92.473						
16	0.31	1.336	93.808						
17	0.28	1.199	95.007						
18	0.27	1.151	96.158						
19	0.22	0.965	97.124						
20	0.21	0.906	98.03						
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.									

Source: Primary Survey

Factor extraction is done with Varimax rotation method and it extracted 4 factors with 55.408 percent of total variance.

Table no. 3: Rotated component matrix

Items	**Factor Loadings**				Nomanclature
	1	2	3	4	
S9	0.767				Social Adjustive
S10	0.761				

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S8	0.683				
S6	0.607				
S7					
S15		0.848			Value Expressive
S17		0.775			
S14		0.765			
S16		0.619			
S5			0.678		Save for future
S1			0.674		
S18			0.638		
S3					
S4					
S11					
S20				0.689	Hedonic Function
S13				0.682	
S12				0.659	
S19					
S2					

Source: Primary Survey

Rotated factor matrix is synonymous with rotated component matrix. Factor loadings in a rotational factor matrix enable understandable combining of statements in several factors. The Varimax rotation method was used for factor extraction, which yielded 4 components accounting for 55.408 percent of total variance. According to Malhotra and Dash (2016), the minimal degree of factor loading that should be considered in a study is not well defined. However, factor loadings greater than 0.5 should be considered for future analysis in the study. The smallest factor loading was 0.607, and the maximum factor loading was 0.848, according to the research. Table no. 3 also shows the nomenclature of Factors of Attitude Functions and Consumer response. The nomenclature depends on the statements which are clubbed in a single factor.

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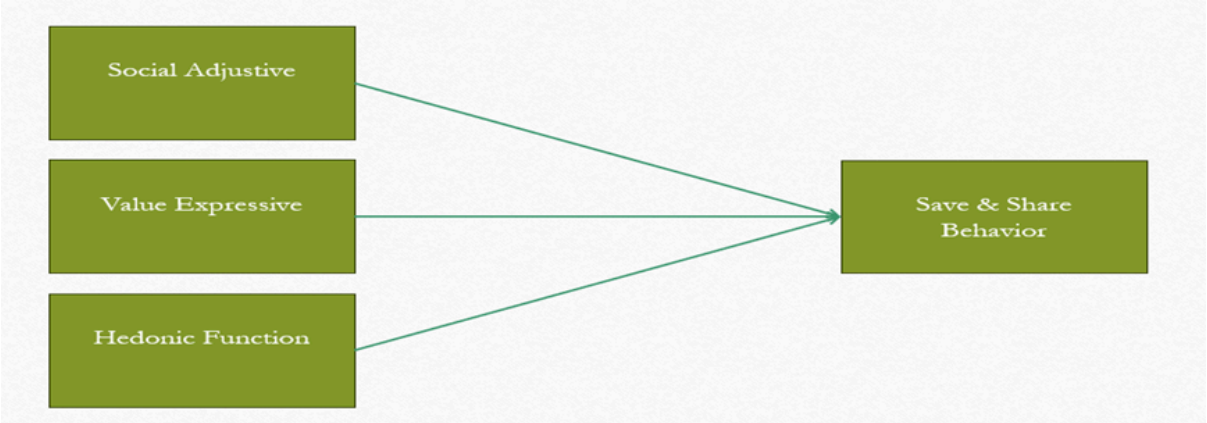

Fig 1.: Proposed model

To analyze the impact regression analysis is conducted in which dependent variable is consumer response and independent variable is attitude function. After exploration of the antecedents of attitude function, the independent variable is sub-divided in three factors that is Social Adjustive, Value Expressive and Hedonic Function and consumer response can be measured as save and share behaviour. Regression analysis was conducted, where Dependent Variable (DV) is Save and Share behaviour and independent variables are Social Adjustive, Value Expressive and Hedonic Function.

Table No. 4: Regression Analysis

Model Summary[b]							
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson	F-value	Sig.
1	.834[a]	0.696	0.693	0.45762	1.975	244.33	.000[b]
a. Predictors: (Constant), Social Adjustive, Value Expressive, Hedonic Function							
b. Dependent Variable: Save & Share							

As per the table no. 4 the value of R Square comes out 0.696 and adjustive R square comes out 0.693. As per Cohen (1998) the R square values more than 0.26 will be considered Substantial. The value of Durbin-Watson is also in acceptable range. The regression model is significant with F-Value 244.33; P= .000)

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Table No. 5: Relationship between Consumer response and Attitude function

Coefficients[a]						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	0.21	0.121		1.233	0.062
	Social Adjustive	0.348	0.045	0.342	6.307	0.001
	Value Expressive	0.263	0.043	0.239	5.12	0
	Hedonic Function	0.286	0.039	0.202	4.017	0
a. Dependent Variable: Save & Share						

It is witnessed from the above table that Social Adjustive function of attitude shows maximum impact on the consumer response of Save and Share, followed by value expressive and least by hedonic function.

Consumer Response (Save & Share) = 0.21 + 0.342 (Social Adjustive) + 0.239 (Value Expressive) + 0.202 (Hedonic Function)

So, the null hypothesis is rejected as there is a significant impact of Attitude Functions over Consumer Response in Luxury Brands.

Conclusion

This study delved into exploring the various functions of Attitude and their impact on Consumer Response of save and share towards Luxury Brands from a Generation-Z perspective. Luxury brands do not aim to serve the public, nor do they want the products to be extensively available, even at premium rates. Scarcity is essential in luxury marketing because that is what makes it so desirable and attractive in the first place, the young generation is the fastest-growing demographic of luxury/ premium brand buyers and are

acquiring a more favorable attitude towards luxury consumption According to Halpert, 2012, they have surpassed every other demographic group in terms of spending on luxury products.

For the research, KMO test was used to indicate sample adequacy. As per Chawla and Sondhi (2022), the sample should be at least four to five times the number of statements. In this case 20 statements were administered hence any sample more than 100 is a good sample for Exploratory Factor Analysis and we have administered a data of 165, meaning it is a fit. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy is 0.881 which shows that the results of the analysis are good. "Bartlett's test of Sphericity" has a significance level of 0.000, indicating a high degree of correlation between the variables.

Rotated factor matrix is synonymous with rotated component matrix. Factor loadings in a rotational factor matrix enable understandable combining of statements in several factors. The Varimax rotation method was used for factor extraction, which yielded 4 components accounting for 55.408 percent of total variance. According to Malhotra and Dash (2016), the minimal degree of factor loading that should be considered in a study is not well defined. However, factor loadings greater than 0.5 should be considered for future analysis in the study. The smallest factor loading was 0.607, and the maximum factor loading was 0.848, according to the research.

In case of consumer response (Save and Share), Social Adjustive function of attitude shows maximum impact on the consumer response of Save and Share, followed by value expressive and least by hedonic function.

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