Enhancing Young Consumers' Trust and Engagement in M-Commerce Through Brand Value Perceptions of Secondhand Luxury Goods

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Introduction. The secondhand luxury goods (SLGs) market is defined as the market for pre-owned high-end products associated with prestigious brands. This market has experienced significant growth in recent years, driven by shifts in consumer lifestyles, a growing awareness of sustainable shopping practices, and rising demand. The SLG market size reached $34.2 billion in 2023 and is expected to grow to $72.3 billion by 2032 (Claight Corporation, 2024). The market is expanding as consumers become more environmentally conscious. For instance, luxury brands such as Neiman Marcus, Gucci, and Burberry are launching their own resale programs (Cormack, 2024). This consistent growth in the SLG market is primarily driven by Millennials and Generation Z (Globe Newswire, 2025). Furthermore, the increasing use of the Internet, the rise of numerous social media and e-commerce platforms, and advanced technologies (i.e., virtual try-on or product transparency) have facilitated access to powerful online tools for brand management in the pre-owned market. The perception of luxury brand value on online platforms can significantly influence consumers' purchasing decisions (Chu & Liao, 2010). The rapid growth of mobile commerce (M-commerce), as part of the next-generation e-commerce business model, is remarkable, contributing significantly to the surge in sales leads among young consumers (Globe Newswire, 2025). Despite the expanding pre-owned market for luxury goods among young consumers, little research exists to understand their perceptions and purchase intentions in SLG platforms through M-commerce.

Conceptual framework. The literature reviews on SLG highlighted several research gaps. First, while prior research has examined the motivations behind purchase intentions for luxury products (Lou et al., 2022; Tangri & Yu, 2023) and customer experiences (Liu et al., 2023; Rathi et al., 2023), limited research has explored how young consumers engage with the SLG market through social media and advanced technologies (e.g., virtual try-on, 3D views, and product transparency). Secondly, there is a lack of research within M-commerce that examines the impact of social media and advanced technologies on SLG platforms. Third, while some studies have addressed negative perceptions in the pre-owned market, such as trust issues, concerns about counterfeit goods, and perceptions of low quality, few have investigated how immersive technologies can enhance consumer trust in SLG platforms. Furthermore, most existing research has primarily employed a quantitative approach, relying on surveys. This study

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aimed to understand the perceptions and purchase intentions of young consumers regarding SLG platforms in M-commerce. By adopting a qualitative approach, particularly in relation to various SLG website features and manipulations, this research aimed to provide valuable insights into marketing and consumer behavior strategies for entrepreneurs and start-ups in the pre-owned market. The four research questions (RQs) were:

RQ1. How can M-commerce platforms enhance young consumers' trust and drive engagement in the pre-owned market?

RQ2. What roles do advanced technologies play in mitigating counterfeit concerns and enhancing young consumers' trust in the pre-owned market?

RQ3. What key factors influence young consumers' trust and purchase decisions on SLGs through M-commerce platforms?

RQ4. What strategic approaches can start-ups/entrepreneurs adopt to build trust and differentiate themselves in the competitive pre-owned SLG market?

Method. Based on the literature review and research questions, 23 interview questions were designed. In this study, our research team created five mock SLG platforms: (1) a basic website (control), (2) social media, (3) social media with virtual try-on, (4) social media with virtual try-on and product transparency, and (5) social media with product transparency. A qualitative approach was employed through in-depth interviews with 41 young consumers (n = 29 female, n = 12 male; Mean age = 21, SD = 1.24) who frequently shop online, averaging 3–4 purchases in the past month. Among them, 27 participants had purchased SLGs, but only 11 had both purchased and resold SLGs in the market. Participants were recruited via snowball sampling (i.e., referrals from their social network). Each interview was conducted via Zoom and lasted approximately 20–30 minutes. The interview reports were thoroughly reviewed multiple times, and qualitative content analysis was employed to organize the data into codes inductively, following the taxonomy developed by William and Ramaprasad (1996). Moreover, the research questions guided content analysis was conducted using NVivo software to identify the main themes.

Results. The study identified four key themes: trust, social media, advanced technology (engagement), and M-commerce (utilizing a phone). Participants were most willing to purchase bags, followed by accessories, clothing, and footwear in the pre-owned market. Building trust with young consumers is essential, which can be achieved by enhancing M-commerce platform interfaces and integrating advanced technologies. SLG platforms should prioritize clear return policies, detailed product information, authentication, brand and price filters, and reputable reviews. Most respondents (88%) indicated that a positive website experience, a user-friendly interface, and competitive pricing would motivate them to purchase SLGs. Implementing product transparency barcodes, authenticity checks, and verification tools can further enhance trust. While respondents found advanced technologies, such as virtual try-ons or 3D product views, appealing, these features were unlikely to significantly impact their purchasing decisions. Social media played a significant role in influencing purchase decisions, with

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respondents favoring Instagram and TikTok over platforms like LinkedIn and Facebook. The majority (83%) believed that social media, along with endorsements from friends, family, and influencers, were powerful advertising tools for SLGs. Key factors driving secondhand purchases included fair pricing, authenticity guarantees, verified sellers, reviews, and a secure shopping experience. To differentiate themselves, start-ups should incorporate product transparency features (e.g., condition, manufacturing year, authenticity verification) to build consumer confidence. Integrating online platforms with physical stores and hosting engagement events such as pop-ups and collaborations could further strengthen consumer interest and trust.

Conclusion/Implications. This study highlighted the importance of trust, social media, and engagement in shaping consumer purchasing decisions through M-commerce in the pre-owned SLG market. Start-up retailers may also consider enhancing the connection between their websites and physical stores by establishing brick-and-mortar locations to attract and retain young customers, such as by offering pop-ups or authentication services. These findings will contribute to the development of a conceptual framework for future studies in the M-commerce and E-commerce industries. Further research should adopt a quantitative approach to generalize these findings to a larger group of consumers and better explain the phenomenon. A future study will provide more profound and more measurable insights into consumer purchase intentions, behaviors, preferences, and marketing strategies in the pre-owned market.

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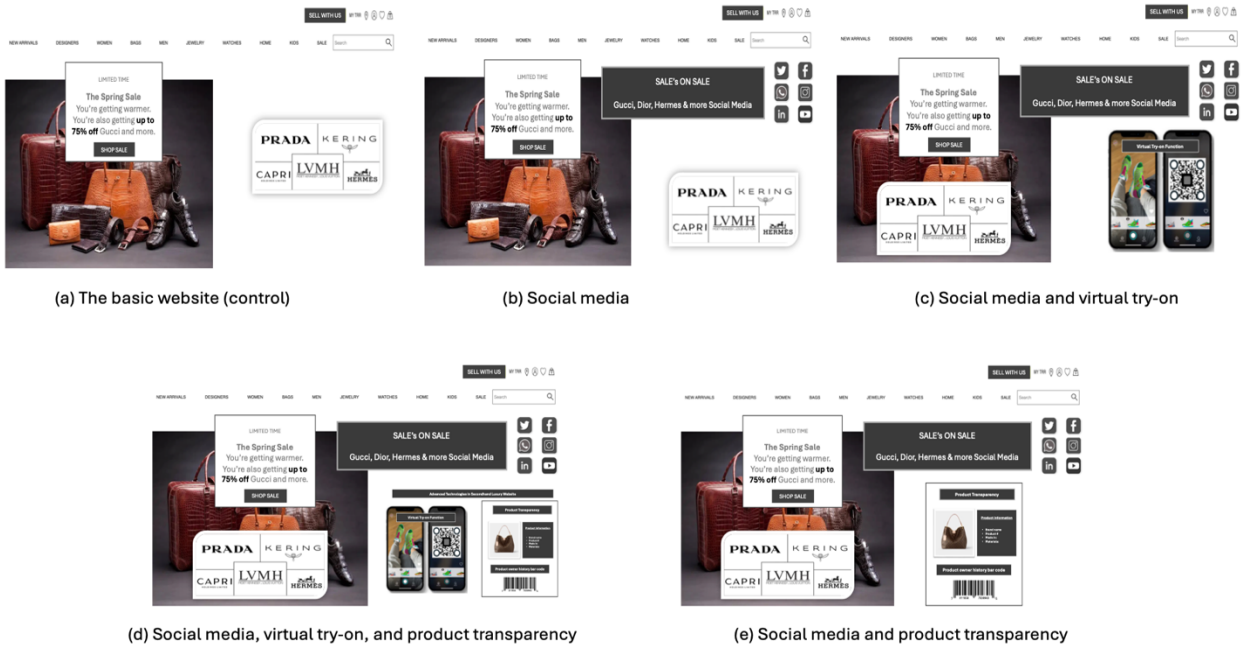

Figure 1. Five Mock SLG Platforms Created by the Research Team.

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