

Why Do Consumers Buy Sustainable Luxury Products? From the Perspective of Consumption Value and Environmental Concerns

Yui An*, Naeun (Lauren) Kim

Department of Design, Housing, and Apparel, College of Design
University of Minnesota Twin Cities, USA

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Introduction. Sustainable luxury refers to embedding sustainability values and practices into a luxury good or brand to reduce damage to the environment (Kunz et al., 2020). For example, in an effort to reduce the carbon footprint by 40% over the product life cycle, Chanel launched the Gabrielle Chanel fragrance in a glass bottle that is lighter than the typical 50ml perfume bottle (Goldsworthy, 2020). Sustainable initiatives in the luxury industry are on the rise in response to key societal issues: environmental challenges and the demand for sustainable consumption (Kunz et al., 2020). However, the effectiveness of sustainable luxury strategies on consumer behavior is limited due to barriers such as high prices, low availability, and lack of information (Cernansky, 2021). Academic research on sustainable luxury consumption is also scarce as previous research has mainly focused on the issue of compatibility between luxury and sustainability (Kunz et al., 2020). Therefore, this study aims to identify the consumption value of sustainable luxury with varying degrees of environmental concerns by applying the luxury value model in a sustainable context.

Theoretical Background and Hypothesis Development. According to the luxury value model (Wiedmann et al., 2007), consumers perceive the utility of luxury products in terms of four value dimensions: financial, functional, individual, and social values. *Financial* value refers to the direct monetary aspects of what one has to give up or sacrifice in order to acquire a luxury product. *Functional* value is the core product benefit from the characteristics or attributes of a luxury product. *Individual* value refers to a consumer's personal orientation toward luxury consumption such as materialism, hedonism, and self-identity. *Social* value is related to the utility, such as conspicuousness and prestige, within their social group as they acquire luxury. Each consumption value makes a different contribution depending on the context and determines the attitude and behavior of consumers (Sheth et al., 1991). Accordingly, this study integrates diverse aspects of sustainability products into the luxury value model to predict attitudes toward sustainable luxury. First, given that the high cost of premium quality and the expected performance of sustainable products influence consumption behavior (Cernansky, 2021), this study conceptualizes (1) economic, (2) quality, and (3) usability dimensions as sustainable luxury values. This study also incorporates (4) self-expressive, (5) self-improving, and (6) self-satisfaction dimensions, considering that satisfying self-concept and pleasure through sustainable products determine purchase decisions (Tezer & Bodur, 2019). Lastly, (7) conspicuous dimension is included as more and more people are paying attention to the symbolic significance of sustainable product adoption (Lee, 2018). Consumers' environmental concerns are also

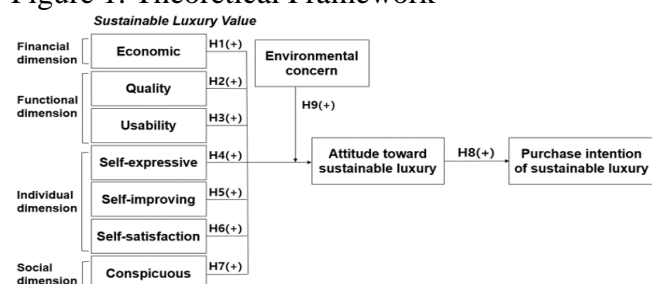
included as a moderator as those who are deeply concerned with the environment may show greater propensity to consume sustainably (Bang et al., 2000). Taken together, we hypothesize that,

H1. The economic, **H2.** quality, **H3.** usability, **H4.** self-expressive, **H5.** self-improving, **H6.** self-satisfaction, and **H7.** conspicuous values of sustainable luxury positively influence consumers' attitudes toward sustainable luxury.

H8. Attitudes toward sustainable luxury positively influence purchase intentions.

H9. Environmental concern positively moderates the relationships between sustainable luxury value and attitudes toward sustainable luxury.

Figure 1. Theoretical Framework



Methods and Results. Data from 177 U.S. adults who had made at least one luxury purchase in the past five years was collected through an online survey. Participants read the descriptions of sustainable luxury and looked at five product examples of sustainable luxury brands selected from the Global Power of Luxury Goods List 2020

(Deloitte, 2020). Then, participants completed questionnaires of values, attitude, purchase intention, and environmental concern (a 7-point Likert scale). Collected data were analyzed using SmartPLS. Reliability and validity were confirmed across all latent variables ($CR > 0.7$, $AVE > 0.5$, $HTMT < 0.9$). The goodness of model-data fit showed satisfactory values ($GoF = 0.779$). Results indicated the significant positive effect on attitudes from economic ($\beta = 0.205$; $p < 0.05$, supporting H1), quality ($\beta = 0.092$; $p < 0.10$, supporting H2), usability ($\beta = 0.197$; $p < 0.05$, supporting H3), self-expressive ($\beta = 0.180$; $p < 0.05$, supporting H4), self-satisfaction ($\beta = 0.305$; $p < 0.05$, supporting H6) values. However, self-improvement ($\beta = 0.012$; $p = 0.876$, rejecting H5) and conspicuous ($\beta = -0.055$; $p = 0.361$, rejecting H7) values had no significant effect on attitudes. Attitudes positively affected purchase intentions ($\beta = 0.848$; $p < 0.01$, supporting H8). Environmental concern only moderated the relationship between self-satisfaction value and attitude ($\beta = 0.173$; $p < 0.05$), partially supporting H9.

Discussion and Implications. Amid the growing concerns about environmental issues, the study investigated how diverse values of sustainable luxury affect consumption behavior based on the luxury value model. The results showed that self-satisfaction value has the greatest impact on positive attitudes toward sustainable luxury, suggesting that pleasure and enjoyment derived from sustainable luxury consumption strongly drives purchasing behavior. This is in line with the moderation result that for consumers with a high (vs. low) level of environmental concern, self-satisfaction value was increasingly influential in building the positive attitudes. The findings further implied that luxury brands need to deliver value for money and signal high-quality while being practical. It is noteworthy that the motivation to communicate one's identity through sustainable luxury (i.e., self-expressive) also played a crucial role in consumption intentions.

However, the motivations to improve oneself or impress others did not affect attitudes. Interestingly, environmental concerns showed no moderating effect except for self-satisfaction value, which indicates that the diverse values of sustainable luxury influence consumption decisions regardless of one's level of environmental concern. The findings of this study contribute to the development of the luxury value model by identifying the different consumption values of sustainable luxury (e.g., self-satisfaction) from the traditional motivations behind luxury consumption (e.g., conspicuousness). The study also provides practical insights into effective sustainable luxury marketing, such as creating advertising messages that emphasize self-satisfaction or economic value.

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