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SEEKING SELF THROUGH FASHION: HOW SELF-DETERMINATION DRIVES LUXURY APPAREL PURCHASES IN EMERGING ECONOMIES

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ABSTRACT

Luxury brands are gaining popularity in both developed and emerging economies. Recent research has advocated wider use of self-determination theory (SDT) in marketing studies, suggesting that it has high predictive accuracy for understanding consumer motivations. Underpinned by this particular theory, this study aims to measure the impact of intrinsic motivations (brand commitment, hedonic motivation, and self-congruity) and extrinsic motivations (social motivation) on the purchasing intention of luxury fashion apparel brands in a developing country. Data was collected from 490 luxury apparel brand users, utilizing both offline and online modes via survey questionnaires. The proposed relationships were analyzed using PLS-SEM. Intrinsic motivations (brand commitment, hedonic motivation) and extrinsic motivation factor (social motivation) positively impacted purchase intention of luxury fashion apparel, while the impact of self-congruity (intrinsic motivator) was insignificant. This study adds to the body of knowledge about luxury branding by reassessing and expanding SDT with a new set of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations in collectivist society. The present study is among very few studies in marketing science that explicitly applied SDT. The uniqueness of this study is that it empirically examines consumer behavioral differences towards luxury buying in the luxury fashion apparel segment, utilizing SDT. Therefore, it is a major addition to the body of literature in the area. The findings of the study provide marketers with practical insights into luxury customer behavior, enabling them to target consumers in a growing economy, making them a high-potential market.

Keywords: Brand commitment, hedonic motivation, social motivation, self-congruity, India.

INTRODUCTION

Luxury brands primarily cater to the upper classes, offering consumers aesthetic appeal, exclusivity, and superior value. Key motivations for purchasing luxury goods include the desire for higher status, the intention to impress others and the fulfilment of personal and hedonistic interests (Shukla et al., 2016; Lim & Ting, 2010). The luxury goods market is poised to experience remarkable growth in 2024, with sales expected to soar to new heights between €360 billion and €380 billion—a 5 percent to 12 percent increase from 2022 (Sharma et al., 2024). Among the BRICS markets, India and China are advancing faster than South Africa, while Brazil and Russia have shown stagnation. India's tech-savvy younger generation has significantly boosted the country's luxury market, with double-digit growth since 2011 (Euromonitor International, 2022). The country's apparel market is expected to surge globally (McKinsey Report, 2019), and it was valued at \$8.5 billion in 2022, positioning India as a promising long-term player. The market's largest segment, luxury fashion, is anticipated to generate US\$115.90 billion in revenue by 2024 (Statista, 2024). Popular luxury fashion brands include Da Milano, Cartier, Emporio Armani, Prada, Louis Vuitton, Burberry, Chanel, Salvatore Ferragamo, Christian Dior, Hermès, Guess, Rolex, Rolls-Royce, Versace, and Dolce & Gabbana. The luxury segment in emerging markets presents both opportunities and challenges, such as cultural nuances and shifting consumer perceptions. Leading brands like Gucci, Canali, Dior and Hermès have curated collections to honour Indian traditions, showcasing the potential of the "Think local, win global" strategy in catering to these markets.

Research indicates distinct cultural differences in luxury consumption across Asian countries; for instance, Japanese consumers buying luxury products to "fit in" socially (Zhang et al., 2020), while Chinese consumers aim to "stand out." In contrast, Indian buyers often view luxury items as "status goods" (Shukla & Rosendo-Rios, 2021). Understanding socio-psychological factors is crucial for firms to effectively target and understand buyers' purchasing intentions (Pino et al., 2019). In India, there is a growing trend toward a materialistic lifestyle and conspicuous consumption, similar in Western societies. Consumers are becoming more aware of fashion trends and staying updated with new styles, driven by their strong emotional connection with brands (Rajput et al., 2020). However, understanding the motivations behind luxury brand purchases in India is complex due to the interplay of cultural and personal factors (Canguende-Valentim & Vale, 2023). India's class-based society places a high value on luxury fashion apparel, with the upper middle-class particularly eager to showcase their wealth and social status (Gupta & Banerjee, 2019). The country's diverse culture—encompassing various religions, festivals, colours, tastes, and traditions—further enhances its appeal as a promising global market for luxury goods (Devanathan, 2023).

The luxury market model is gaining popularity in developing economies (Shahid et al., 2023), with Indian consumers displaying a more collectivist orientation—a factor shown to significantly impact on luxury purchase intention (Devanathan, 2023). Hedonistic motivations, social incentives and personality traits significantly shape buyers' engagement with luxury goods (Bazi et al., 2020). While self-congruity helps explain consumer behavior through luxury purchases, existing models may not fully capture these nuances (Devanathan, 2023). Indian consumers exhibit unique luxury consumption behaviors, blending elements of local culture with modern trends (Husain et al., 2022). Investigating the key factors driving luxury purchases in India could provide novel insights and potentially challenge existing models. Luxury brands provide psychological advantages that distinguish them from competitors (Donvito et al., 2020). A comprehensive study on consumer behavior study is essential to gain a holistic understanding on luxury purchase intentions in emerging markets (Donvito et al., 2020). Although understanding consumer attitudes and intentions toward luxury fashion apparel purchases is

crucial, the complexity of factors influencing luxury consumption has often been overlooked (Kautish et al., 2021; Li et al., 2022).

Luxury manufacturers must continuously innovate to enhance consumer perceptions and justify premium pricing. Emotional, social and brand values are crucial factors in shaping consumer decision-making behaviour (Sharma et al., 2024). Understanding the underlying consumer motivations in luxury consumption is equally essential (Gilal et al., 2019). However, there is a lack of research regarding Asia-Pacific-specific factors influencing global luxury brand consumption (Li et al., 2022). This study utilizes the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (Deci & Ryan, 1985) as a theoretical framework to explore the motivational factors that underpin luxury product purchases. SDT, developed by Deci and Ryan, is a theory of human motivation designed to explain and predict a person's engagement in specific behaviours (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Deci & Ryan, 2000). Since its inception in the 1980s, SDT has been widely applied in fields such as healthcare and education (Ryan & Deci, 2017). However, it has received limited attention in marketing research (Gilal et al., 2019). Gilal et al. (2019) emphasized SDT's efficacy in predicting consumer behavior and called for broader adoption by marketing researchers. Despite its potential, limited studies have applied SDT in the context of emerging economies to investigate luxury apparel purchase intentions (Gilal et al., 2019). Despite the importance of both extrinsic and intrinsic motives in marketing objectives, there remains a lack of consensus on their relative significance (Cassia & Magno, 2024). India, is a collectivist society and most consumer behaviour studies predominantly focused on extrinsic motivations such as social motivation, conspicuous consumption, and displays of affluence (Singh et al., 2022). However, with evolving cultural dynamics, particularly among millennials and Gen Z, intrinsic motivations are increasingly prioritized, including beliefs, values and hedonic experiences (Jain, 2019). This empirical study, grounded in SDT, seeks to enhance our understanding of the factors driving luxury goods purchases. Specifically, it aims to investigate the influence of intrinsic motivations (brand commitment, hedonic motivation and self-congruity) alongside extrinsic motivations (social influence) on purchasing intentions for luxury fashion apparel brands in a developing country.

With emerging markets becoming new growth engine of luxury goods and services, there is a pressing need for comprehensive research in this area (Hung & David, 2020). The observed gaps in existing studies highlight the importance of examining consumer attitude, particularly in the Indian context, where there is a growing demand for affordable and customised luxury brands (Sreejesh et al., 2016). Based on these identified gaps, the first objective of this study is to investigate the impact of intrinsic motivations—brand commitment, hedonic motivation and self-congruity—on the intention to purchase luxury fashion apparel in India. The second objective is to investigate the impact of extrinsic motivations, specifically social influence, on luxury fashion purchase intentions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Purchase Intention

According to Ajzen (1991), purchase intention is a driving force behind consumer behavior, reflecting the level of effort and determination consumers have in trying something new and engage in a particular behavior. In this study, purchase intention is defined as the probability and willingness of users to buy luxury fashion apparel, influenced by both intrinsic motivations (brand commitment, hedonic motivation and self-congruity) and extrinsic motivations (social motivation). Wu et al. (2011) defines purchase intention as the likelihood that customers will intend to or be willing to buy a specific product or service in the future. Magistris et al. (2008) describes it as a key step connected to actual purchasing

behavior, or serving as an intermediary antecedent in the consumer decision-making process. Research has shown that the probability of making a purchase increases with buying intention. Purchase intention can be seen as an attitude indicator that helps predict future purchasing behavior (Raza & Zaman, 2021). It reflects a customer's personal preference for a brand and their subjective evaluation of its worth (Osei-Frimpong et al., 2019). In the context of luxury goods, the subjective assessment of luxury labels is influenced by individual preferences, psychological needs, and other influencing factors.

Self-Determination Theory

Deci and Ryan (1985) introduced the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) in the 1980s, providing a comprehensive framework for understanding human motivation. Over time, SDT has evolved into six mini-theories: Cognition Evaluation Theory, Organismic Integration Theory, Causality Orientations Theory, Basic Psychological Needs Theory, Goal Contents Theory and Relationships Motivation Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2019; Tang et al., 2020). The first two mini-theories, Cognitive Evaluation and Organismic Integration (Ryan et al., 1985), suggest that human behavior is shaped by a combination of both internal and external factors. According to Cassia and Magno (2024) and Ryan and Deci (2019), intrinsic motivation is defined as the innate tendency of individuals to participate in activities purely for their interest and enjoyment, without the need for external prompts or rewards. Activities that fulfill basic needs for competence, autonomy and relatedness are considered intrinsically rewarding (Ryan & Deci, 2019). Extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, is driven by external factors and refers to activities aimed at achieving outcomes separate from the behavior itself (Gilal et al., 2019). More precisely, extrinsic motivation is defined as "external regulation," that drives individuals to perform certain behaviors to satisfy external pressure or gain rewards, such as monetary incentives (Van den Broeck et al., 2021). While intrinsic motivation is characterized by interest and enjoyment, extrinsic motivation is defined by its instrumental nature (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Both types of motivation are essential for an individual's well-being and success.

Recent studies have utilized SDT to examine intrinsic and extrinsic consumer motivations in various contexts. For instance, Cassia and Magno (2024) explored consumer perceptions of anti-food waste apps using SDT, while Tandon et al. (2020) investigated consumer behavior related to organic food. These studies concluded that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations are necessary, serving as key triggers for consumption. Likewise, Gilal et al. (2019) indicated that satisfying intrinsic motivations provides the "emotional security" necessary to form strong emotional attachments, which in turn drives further purchases.

Consumer products are generally classified as hedonistic, utilitarian or symbolic. Utilitarian products focus on functionality and practical benefits, while hedonistic products focus on emotions and experiences (Lim & Ang, 2008). Customers often select brands that align with their self-perception or the way they aspire to be seen (Sirgy, 2018). A study by Aggarwal et al. (2024) identified three types of values experienced by luxury brand consumers: experiential, symbolic and functional values, each serving as distinct motivations. Experiential values relate to the experiences, sensations and emotions a product or service evokes. Symbolic values measure the influence of symbolic elements such as social status and self-expression, on the decision to purchase luxury goods. Functional values measure the perceived utility of a product in terms of quality, service and functionality (Aggarwal et al., 2024). This study adopts these three values—functional, experiential and symbolic—to serve as key motivational factors. Recent studies have shown that brand commitment often results from fulfilling both functional and experiential values (Furukawa et al., 2019). Additionally, hedonism is identified as an intrinsic motivation, with experiential value as its outcome of experiential value (Cassia & Magno, 2024). Islam

et al. (2019) found the presence of self-congruity, a form of symbolic value, acts as an internal motivator. Several studies have highlighted that, consumers driven by social status perceive symbolic value through ownership of luxury brands (Garcia et al., 2019; Han & Kim, 2020; Aggarwal et al., 2024). Building on this body of work, and consistent with Cassia and Magno (2024), this study applies SDT to examine luxury fashion purchase intentions. This study considers brand commitment, hedonic motivation, and self- congruity as intrinsic motivations, and social motivation as an extrinsic motivation (Table 1).

Table 1

Key Motivational Factors Influencing Intention to Purchase Luxury Fashion Apparel

Value experienced by users of luxury fashion apparel (Aggarwal et al., 2024)	Motivation for building intention to purchase luxury fashion apparel in this study	Type of motivation (intrinsic / extrinsic) according to SDT
Experiential & Functional	Brand Commitment	Intrinsic
Experiential	Hedonic Motivation	Intrinsic
Symbolic	Self- Congruity	Intrinsic
Symbolic	Social Motivation	Extrinsic

HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Brand Commitment and Luxury Purchase Intention

Brand commitment refers to an internal drive that enhances consumer loyalty towards their preferred brand (Hess & Story, 2005), encompassing both behavioral and attitudinal dimensions. Internal incentives such as emotional connection and self-expression towards the brand, drive brand commitment (Tong et al., 2018). This emotional connection often leads to feelings of satisfaction and contentment. Affective commitment, in particular, refers to the customer's emotional attachment to the brand, fostering a long-term relationship. According to Shimul et al. (2019), brand commitment cannot be developed without forming strong attitudinal bonds with the brand. Given that luxury brands offer enhanced social status and typically come with higher costs, customers exhibit a greater degree of commitment compared to regular brands (Shukla et al., 2016). Brand commitment reflects a consumer's preference for maintaining an ongoing relationship with a luxury brand, primarily driven by emotional bonds (Tong et al., 2018). Establishing strong attitudinal ties can lead to a heightened sense of brand love and loyalty (Schade et al., 2016). Research shows that customers who are loyal to their preferred brand are more likely to continue purchasing from it and are less inclined to switch to rival brands (Kumar, 2020). Brand commitment enhances brand confidence, supports premium pricing (Jamshidi & Rousta, 2021), and fosters customer intimacy through social media engagement and positive word of mouth (Kim et al., 2012). It is a process that fosters both emotional and cognitive bonds with the brand, acting as an intrinsic motivator within the framework of SDT (Tong et al., 2018). Based on this understanding, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H₁: Brand commitment is positively related to luxury purchase intention towards fashion apparel brands.

Hedonic Motivation and Luxury Purchase Intention

Hedonic motivations are considered intrinsic, as they arise from a consumer's inherent desire to experience contentment. Consumers naturally seek enjoyment and delight when purchasing luxury items, which reflects emotional fulfilment associated with engaging with luxury brands (Shahid & Paul, 2021). Luxury goods offer superior value, contributing to personal satisfaction, excitement and a sense of aspiration (Amatulli et al., 2020).

Hedonic motivation is recognized as a key predictor of consumer behavior, especially in response to multisensory stimuli, highlighting the emotional satisfaction derived from purchasing and interacting with luxury products (Shahid & Paul, 2021). This motivation stems from a consumer's positive attitude towards the product (Marsasi & Yuanita, 2023), which in turn enhances the intention to purchase. Hedonic motivation involves both tangible aspects, such as the sensory appeal of the product, and intangible elements such as wishful thinking and psychological desires, ultimately leading to hedonic consumption. According to Wiedmann et al. (2007), consumers are driven by motives related to self-pleasure, self-reward and self-concept, all of which are elements of hedonic motivation. Hedonic motivation enhances both the emotional and cognitive dimensions of the customer experience and acts as an intrinsic source of motivation within the framework of SDT. Based on this understanding, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H₂: Hedonic motivation is positively related to luxury purchase intention towards fashion apparel brands.

Self- Congruity and Luxury Purchase Intention

Self-congruity refers to the relationship between a brand's perceived personality and the customer's own self-concept, reflecting aspects of self-image and symbolic consumption that influence luxury purchase intention. Luxury purchases often arises from a consumer's desire to align with the ideals and personality traits represented by the brand. Self-congruity in luxury brand consumption is associated with both the current self-image and the aspirational self-image of the buyer. According to Sirgy (2018), a strong link between a consumer's self-concept and the brand's personality enhances positive attitudes, enabling individuals to express their uniqueness and influencing their decision to purchase luxury items.

Self- congruity reflects the connection between a consumer's personality and their emotional response towards a product or service. It is closely linked to concepts like self-identity, intention, attitude and personal preferences (Aaker, 1999). Consumers often seek out unique and distinctive products that align with their personality traits, which satisfy their symbolic value needs (Coelho et al., 2020). Several studies have explored how individuals align their self-image with a brand's image (Wiedmann et al., 2007). Recent research found the self-congruence positively influences attachment to luxury brands (Donvito et al., 2020). This study also indicated that self-congruence fosters intrinsic motivation and that its impact may vary across countries based on the maturity the luxury market. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H₃: Self-congruity is positively related to luxury purchase intention towards fashion apparel brands.

Social Motivation and Luxury Purchase Intention

In this study, social motivation is considered as an external motivator. Social motivation refers to customers' desire to achieve social superiority through luxury goods, aiming to enhance their social image and status (Butcher et al., 2016). External influences play a significant role in shaping user behavior, as buyers often seek to meet societal expectations. Consumers may prioritize external criteria such as social standing when purchasing luxury items (Muca & Zeqiri, 2020). According to Butcher et al. (2016), consumers prefer to flaunt their social status and wealth by buying luxury brands. Moreover, luxury buyers' purchase intentions are influenced by social representations and the opinions of others (Islam et al., 2022).

Social motivation involves the desire to adhere to social norms, gain approval, or avoid criticism. It is found to satisfy symbolic value needs and lead to positive buying behavior towards luxury brands (Garcia et al., 2019). Social motivation also enhances conformity, specifically for goods that are consumed conspicuously, such as luxury brands (Wiedmann et al., 2007). Luxury goods are often purchased to display wealth and social status (Sanyal et al., 2021). Engaging with luxury brands allows customers to feel unique, proud, and esteemed, thereby maintaining a positive social image (Bazi et al., 2020). As previously noted, customers aspire to buy luxury fashion apparel to align with societal standards, often going beyond typical expectations to achieve this (Kautish et al., 2021). A recent study (Sanyal et al., 2021) confirmed the link between social consumption and luxury purchase intention, identifying social motivation as a key extrinsic motivator. Based on this, the following hypothesis is proposed:

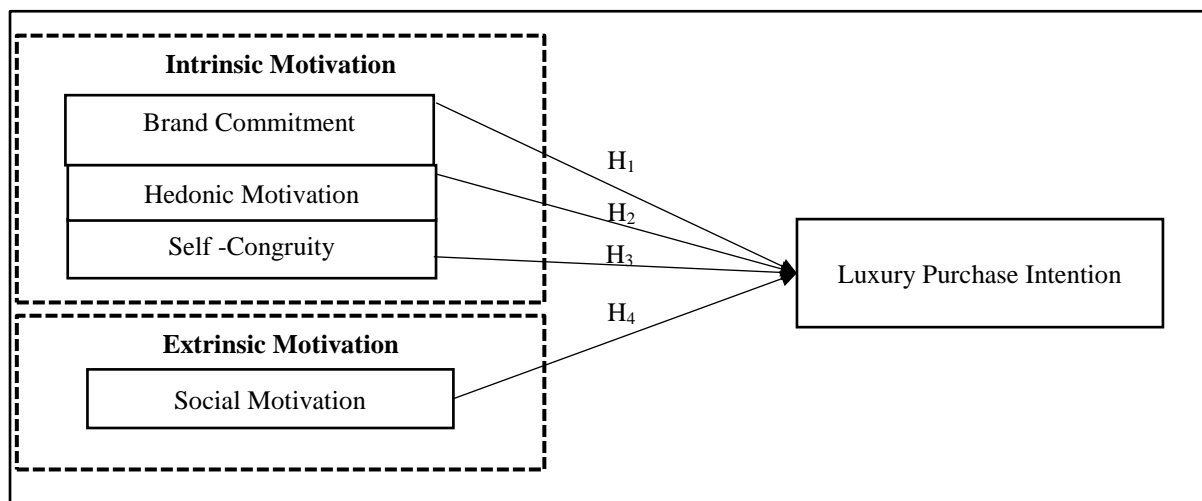
H₄: Social motivation is positively related to luxury purchase intention towards fashion apparel brands.

Framework of the Study

The conceptual framework presents a comprehensive review of the determinants influencing luxury brand purchasing behaviour. Underpinned by Self-Determination Theory, it is posited that all of the independent variables, namely brand commitment, hedonic motivation, self-congruity, and social motivation, have a significant and positive relationship with luxury purchase intention. Figure 1 depicts the conceptual model of the current study.

Figure 1

Conceptual Model



RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Sampling and Data Collection

The study examines consumer spending patterns on luxury fashion apparel brands in India, one of the world's fastest-growing economies (Ajitha & Sivakumar, 2019). India has the largest millennial population globally (Jain, 2019), with substantial spending power as a key driver in the growth of the country's luxury sector (Deloitte Report, 2019).

Data for this study was gathered using a questionnaire survey, employing two methods: mall intercept interviews and emailed questionnaires, consistent with methods used in branding research (Monfared et al., 2020). The mall intercept interviews were conducted at shopping malls in New Delhi, Noida and Gurugram, which feature numerous branded clothing stores and attract a diverse customer base. The online questionnaire was sent to respondents from various cities, including Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, and Ahmedabad, through email and the WhatsApp app using a Google Form link. Screening questions about prior experiences with branded apparel were included to ensure relevant participants. The study used purposive and snowball sampling techniques, which have been proven effective in previous research on luxury consumption (Bazi et al., 2020). The choice of the Delhi-NCR region as a focal point was based on its status as India's capital and its strong market potential for luxury goods among metropolitan areas. Delhi- NCR accounts for 11 percent of affluent individuals with high purchasing power and contributes to 40 percent of luxury sales in India (Agarwal, 2014). Gathering data from various cities across India enabled the study to obtain a more representative sample.

The study incorporated brands such as Armani, Louis Vuitton, Gucci, Hermès, Stella McCartney, and Cartier, as these are considered among the most popular luxury fashion brands (McKinsey Report, 2019). Participants unfamiliar with any of these brands were excluded from the survey. In total, 560 responses were collected—180 from offline mall intercept interviews and 380 via Google Forms. After data cleaning, 490 responses were retained for further analysis, resulting in an 87.5 percent response rate. The survey was completed within an eight-week period. Based on the PLS-SEM model, a minimum sample size of 100–150 is recommended (Rigdon, 2016), thus a sample size of 490 is deemed satisfactory. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents.

Questionnaire and Scale Development

The questionnaire consists of three sections. The first section captured demographic-related information, while the second section included a filter question to confirm that the respondents had experience using branded fashion apparel from the specified list. The third section comprised scale items (indicators) adapted from previously validated scales (Appendix 1). To ensure content validity, minor modifications were made to the order and phrasing of questions based on input from five subject-matter experts (Zaichkowsky, 1985). A pilot test involving 50 participants—approximately 10 percent of the total sample size—was conducted to ensure that both the researcher and respondents interpreted the survey questions consistently and without ambiguity (Converse & Presser, 1986). Cronbach's alpha was used to assess the reliability of scales, with a threshold value set at 0.70 (Hair et al., 2010). During this process, three items with low factor loadings (below 0.7) were excluded from the questionnaire: two items from the construct brand commitment [BC3 (0.521) and BC4 (0.456)] and one item from the construct hedonic motivation [HM4 (0.372)].

The study assessed five constructs: brand commitment, hedonic motivation, self-congruity, social motivation and luxury purchase intention. A scale developed by Knox and Walker (2003) was used to measure brand commitment. Sample items included: "*I am very much committed to particular luxury fashion apparel brands*" and "*When my preferred luxury fashion apparel brand is not available, I tend to buy a different brand.*" The hedonic motivation construct was assessed using a scale adapted from Hausman (2000) and included items such as: "*I purchase luxury fashion apparel brands to be entertained and relaxed.*" The self-congruity construct was measured using a scale adopted from Tsai et al. (2015). A sample item included: "*I believe other people judge my personality concerning the luxury fashion apparel brands I use.*" The social motivation construct was assessed using a scale adapted from Bearden et al. (1989). It featured items such as: "*If I want to be like someone, I often try to buy the same brands they buy.*" The luxury purchase intention construct was measured using a scale adapted from Pierre et al. (2005) and Schlosser et al. (2006). Sample items included: "*I have a strong possibility to purchase luxury fashion apparel brands*". The selected scales were chosen for their established reliability and validity. Participants rated their level of agreement with each statement using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Disagree) to 5 (Agree).

RESULTS

Demographic Profiles of the Respondents

The demographic characteristics of the respondents are as follows. The majority were aged between 26–35 years (36.74%) and 46–55 years (24.49%). In terms of gender, females constituted 56.36 percent, while males accounted for 43.64 percent. Unmarried respondents represented 57.56 percent, while married respondents constituted a smaller segment at 37.95 percent. Respondents were highly educated, with 56.80 percent being postgraduates and 30.00 percent graduates. The sample included a diverse range of income levels, with the business class (42.65%) forming the largest portion of high-income earners, followed by middle-class earners (31.84%). Evaluation of the research model involved a two-step process: (i) measurement model assessment—the reliability and validity of the constructs were examined. (ii) structural model assessment—hypothesized relationships were evaluated.

Measurement Model Assessment

Indicator reliability, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity and composite reliability (CR) were used to examine the outer model first (Hair et al., 2011). As per Table 2, Cronbach's alpha value for all the constructs yielded the threshold value of 0.6 (Hair et al., 2011). In order to assess convergent validity, the average variance extracted (AVE) was also calculated. The $AVE > 0.5$ and $CR > 0.7$ followed the criteria prescribed by Hair et al., (2017). All latent variables in this study had factor loadings, AVEs, and CR values above the recommended levels.

Table 2

Measurement Statistics of the Constructs

Construct/Indicator	Mean	SD	Indicator Loading	Composite Reliability	Cronbach's α	AVE
Brand Commitment (BC)				0.919	0.824	0.850
BC1	4.051	0.959	0.925			
BC2	4.179	0.712	0.919			

Construct/Indicator	Mean	SD	Indicator Loading	Composite Reliability	Cronbach's α	AVE
Hedonic Motivation (HM)				0.83-----=	0.705	0.625
HM1	4.41	0.869	0.713			
HM2	4.179	0.873	0.793			
HM3	4.538	0.711	0.858			
Social Motivation (SM)				0.885	0.741	0.794
SM1	3.641	1.51	0.894			
SM 2	4.436	0.955	0.889			
Self-Congruity (SC)				0.922	0.888	0.747
SC1	3.897	1.105	0.858			
SC2	4.077	1.047	0.842			
SC3	4.154	1.001	0.851			
SC4	4.205	1.136	0.905			
Luxury Purchase Intention (LPI)				0.927	0.882	0.808
LPI 1	4.385	0.625	0.924			
LPI 2	4.385	0.537	0.864			
LPI 3	4.256	0.775	0.908			

Source: Analysis output

Discriminant validity was evaluated using three criteria: cross-loadings, the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait Monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations. Table 3 highlights that each indicator showed higher outer loadings on its designated latent variable compared to its cross-loadings with other latent variables.

Table 3

Cross-Loadings of Items across Latent Variables

Construct/ Indicator	Brand Commitment	Hedonic motivation	Social motivation	Self- congruity	Luxury purchase intention
BC1	0.925	0.327	0.285	0.367	0.601
BC2	0.919	0.344	0.315	0.236	0.579
HM1	0.140	0.713	0.498	0.242	0.351
HM2	0.379	0.793	0.651	0.585	0.555
HM3	0.297	0.858	0.713	0.519	0.532
SM1	0.283	0.663	0.894	0.486	0.477
SM2	0.296	0.759	0.889	0.629	0.467
SC1	0.276	0.672	0.661	0.858	0.443
SC2	0.397	0.646	0.526	0.842	0.513
SC3	0.18	0.276	0.398	0.851	0.328
SC4	0.231	0.376	0.536	0.905	0.409
LPI 1	0.653	0.644	0.62	0.467	0.924
LPI 2	0.479	0.436	0.292	0.353	0.864
LPI 3	0.572	0.57	0.467	0.518	0.908

Source: Analysis output

Table 4 reveals that the square root of the AVE of each of the latent variable exceeded its correlations with other latent variables (Chin, 2010).

Table 4

Fornell-Larcker Criterion

Constructs	Brand commitment	Hedonic motivation	Social motivation	Self- congruity	Luxury purchase intention
Brand Commitment	0.922				
Hedonic motivation	0.364	0.890			
Social motivation	0.325	0.698	0.891		
Self- congruity	0.328	0.598	0.624	0.864	
Luxury purchase intention	0.64	0.623	0.529	0.503	0.899

Notes: Highlighted numbers represent square roots of the AVEs

Source: Analysis output

Henseler et al. (2015) proposed a threshold value of 0.90 for HTMT ratio, where values greater than 0.90 indicate a lack of discriminant validity. Additionally, Henseler et al. (2015) recommend utilizing the bootstrapping technique to generate a 95 percent confidence interval from 5,000 random subsamples. The values in brackets show the lower and upper bounds of the 95 percent confidence interval for the HTMT ratio. If the confidence interval includes the value of 1, it indicates a lack of discriminant validity. Conversely, if the value of 1 is outside the interval range, it confirms that the two constructs are empirically distinct (see Table 5).

Table 5

Heterotrait Monotrait (HTMT) Ratio with Confidence Interval

Latent construct	Brand Commitment	Hedonic Motivation	Social Motivation	Self-Congruity
Brand Commitment				
Hedonic Motivation	0.451 (0.240, 0.968)			
Social Motivation	0.416 (0.124, 0.785)	0.880 (0.841, 0.962)		
Self-Congruity	0.364 (0.158, 0.687)	0.682 (0.533, 0.912)	0.756 (0.470, 0.954)	
Luxury Purchase Intention	0.740 (0.461, 0.932)	0.755 (0.577, 0.875)	0.632 (0.285, 0.962)	0.545 (0.327, 0.772)

Source: Analysis output

The Structural Model

The inner model was assessed to test the proposed hypotheses (see Table 6). A 95 percent confidence level was used to determine the statistical significance of the relationships. The results supported H₁, confirming a significant relationship between brand commitment and luxury purchase intention ($\beta=0.461, p < 0.001$). H₂ also showed a positive and significant relationship between hedonic motivation and luxury purchase intention ($\beta=0.384, p < 0.05$). The effects of self-congruity (H₃) and social motivation (H₄) on luxury purchase intention were also evaluated. The results indicate that H₄ is supported ($\beta=0.41, p < 0.001$); however, H₃ is not supported, as self- congruity does not significantly impact luxury purchase intention ($\beta=0.125, p > 0.05$).

Table 6

Structural Model

Notation	Hypothesized relationships	β Coefficient	t-value	p values	Result
H ₁	Brand Commitment → Luxury Purchase Intention	0.461	3.169	0.000***	Yes
H ₂	Hedonic Motivation → Luxury Purchase Intention	0.384	2.530	0.011**	Yes
H ₃	Self- Congruity → Luxury Purchase Intention	0.125	1.187	0.235	No
H ₄	Social Motivation → Luxury Purchase Intention	0.410	4.550	0.000***	Yes

Notes: Significance level: ***p-value < 0.001; **p-value < 0.05

Source: Analysis output

Table 7

Model Fit

Construct	R ²	Adj.R ²	Q ²
Luxury Purchase Intention	0.595	0.547	0.428
F- square values			
	Brand Commitment	Hedonic motivation	Social motivation
Luxury Purchase Intention	0.445	0.123	0.233
VIF (Inner)			
	Brand Commitment	Hedonic motivation	Social motivation
Luxury Purchase Intention	1.179	2.945	3.032
			1.748

Source: Analysis output

As shown in Table 7, the constructs' R² value is found to be 0.595, indicating that 59.5 percent of the variance in luxury purchase intention is explained by brand commitment, hedonic motivation, self-congruity and social motivation. This meets the R² value requirement of 0.10 or higher (Falk & Miller, 1992). According to Chin et al. (2010), F-square represents the change in R² when an independent variable is removed from the model. All constructs fulfil the minimum f-square criterion of 0.02 (Cohen, 1988). The f-square values reveal: a relatively high impact size for brand commitment (0.445) and social motivation (0.233), but a modest effect size for hedonic motivation (0.123) and self-congruity (0.042). No critical collinearity issues were identified. The model's predictive relevance was assessed using the

Q^2 score, which was 0.428 indicating significant predictive relevance as it exceeds zero. The goodness-of-fit index was evaluated using the standardized root mean square residuals (SRMR). The study found an SRMR value of 0.058, which is below the critical value of 0.08 (Hair et al., 2019), confirming a good model fit.

Furthermore, Table 8 shows the PLS predict values for the model. Based on a comparison of the root mean squared error (RMSE) values of the PLS-SEM model and the linear regression model (LM), it can be inferred that the model has high predictive power for the dependent variable, luxury purchase intention. This conclusion is supported by the finding that all RMSE-PLS values are lower than the corresponding RMSE-LM values (Hair et al., 2019; Shmueli et al., 2019).

Table 8

PLS Predict

Construct	Indicators	Q^2 predict	PLS-SEM_RMSE	LM_RMSE	Difference PLS- LM	Predictive Relevance
Luxury	LPI1	0.488	0.460	0.552	-0.092	High predictive Relevance
Purchase	LPI2	0.159	0.505	0.532	-0.027	
Intention	LPI3	0.325	0.656	0.824	-0.168	

Source: Analysis output

DISCUSSIONS

This study examines the behavior of Indian consumers towards luxury fashion apparel brands through the lens of Self-Determination Theory (SDT). It suggests that buyers' behavioral intentions towards luxury brands are driven by intrinsic motivation—brand commitment, hedonic motivation, and self-congruity—and extrinsic motivation, specifically social motivation. The focus on buyers' luxury purchase intentions for fashion apparel is significant as these intentions have broad implications and directly influence actual purchasing behavior.

The first objective of this study was to evaluate the impact of intrinsic motivations (brand commitment, hedonic motivation and self-congruity) on intention to purchase luxury fashion apparel. The findings confirm a significant relationship between brand commitment and luxury purchase intention (H1). The results highlight the pivotal role of brand commitment in fostering consumer confidence and strengthening the relationship between the customer and the brand, thereby positively influencing purchase intentions (Ilicic & Webster, 2014). The findings highlight the importance of brand commitment as an internal motivator that influences luxury purchasing behavior. Consumers demonstrate loyalty not only due to favorable brand preferences but also because luxury brands fulfil their functional and emotional needs, leading to brand commitment. The results imply that a higher level of brand commitment increases the likelihood of purchasing luxury brands, consistent with previous findings by Kim et al. (2012).

Hedonic motivation encompasses pleasure, positive affect, or self-satisfying emotion (Shahid & Paul, 2021). Our findings support H2 demonstrating that hedonic motivation significantly influences luxury purchase intentions, acting as an intrinsic motivator (Marsasi & Yuanita, 2023). Indian luxury brand consumers are primarily driven by the desire to satisfy hedonic needs such as experiential satisfaction

through luxury consumption (Cassia & Magno, 2024). The findings align with prior research emphasizing the role of hedonic motivations in driving luxury purchases (Sharma et al., 2024).

Self-congruity refers to the alignment between a brand's characteristics and the customer's self-concept (Shukor, 2012; Schade et al., 2016). Sirgy (2018) asserts that buyers tend to purchase brands whose personalities resonate with their self-concept. Previous research has emphasized the impact of self-congruence on consumer behavior towards luxury brands (Tong et al., 2018). H3 tested the relationship between self-congruity and luxury purchase intention. While our findings indicate a positive relationship, they also reveal that the impact is not statistically significant. The result contradicts earlier studies, such as Monfared et al. (2020), which reported a stronger association. A possible explanation for this discrepancy could be the collectivist nature of Indian consumers.

The second objective of this study was to evaluate the impact of extrinsic motivations, specifically social motivation, on the intention to purchase luxury fashion apparel. Social motivation encompasses factors such as recognition, identity and social standing (Sanyal et al., 2021). It aligns an individual's self-image with symbolic values. Numerous researchers have highlighted that, within the fashion industry, social motivation represents extrinsic symbolic values, connecting outer appearances to self-identification, through traits such as self-esteem, societal acceptance and acknowledgment (Bazi et al., 2020). Social motivation helps explain why consumers acquire luxury goods—not only to reflect their status but also to embrace other social connotations symbolized by the luxury products (Garcia et al., 2019). Our findings support H4, confirming a significant and positive relationship between social motivation and luxury purchase intention. Social motivation is a significant external motivator, particularly in collectivist cultures like India. Indian culture emphasizes community and social harmony, making social motivation particularly relevant (Shahid et al., 2023). Luxury products are often purchased to create a favorable impression in society, with consumers showcasing their affluence during family gatherings and social events. Millennials in India, the reference group for this study, exhibit a strong desire to align with higher social classes and adopt their lifestyles, further motivating luxury purchases (Garcia et al., 2019). These findings align with SDT reaffirming that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations significantly impact purchase intentions for luxury fashion apparel brands.

THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

This study highlights the interplay between rational attitudes and emotional self-concept in consumer decision-making. By empirically applying SDT, the study offers a fresh perspective on the intrinsic (brand commitment, hedonic motivation and self-congruity) and extrinsic (social motivation) factors influencing luxury purchase behavior, providing valuable insights for academics and marketers.

India's burgeoning middle-class represents a critical emerging segment within the Indian luxury market, aspiring to own luxury brands. The study's findings shed light on the key motivators that influence luxury fashion apparel purchases in the Indian context. Among intrinsic motivations, brand commitment emerged as the most critical internal motivation factor, followed by hedonic motivation. Self-congruity, however, was found to be an insignificant determinant, highlighting a cultural distinction. Indian consumers prioritize recognition within their communities over personal ownership or self-expression. Social motivation, an extrinsic driver, plays a pivotal role in influencing Indian consumers' luxury purchase decision. Social status and membership in elite groups remain critical considerations, with luxury brand serving as social markers (Jain, 2019). These findings align with prior research emphasizing symbolic values as key determinants of purchase intention (Aggarwal et al., 2024). Unlike

Western markets, where luxury brands symbolize self-expression and uniqueness, luxury branding strategies in India must emphasize social attributes. Brands should convey how their products can enhance consumers' standing in social settings and facilitate connections with elite social groups.

There is a notable lack of empirical studies exploring the Indian luxury market through the lens of SDT. This study contributes to filling that gap by examining consumer motivations in this emerging luxury market segment, offering valuable insights for market practitioners targeting Indian consumers. By including samples from both younger and older generations, this study broadens the understanding of generational differences in luxury brand engagement. Marketers should focus on building connections between luxury and millennials' sense of identity. Given that 83 percent of Gen Z and nearly two-thirds of millennials actively follow brands on social networks (Forbes, 2022), maintaining a strong digital presence is crucial. Enhancing hedonic experiences through simulating physical stores with virtual showrooms, interactive content, and collaborations with bloggers, influencers and opinion leaders can amplify positive word-of-mouth and deepen brand loyalty. Promotion strategies should focus on storytelling that reflects collectivist values and shared traditions, celebrating community milestones and experiences.

the study provides a holistic perspective of the cognitive and emotional factors influencing luxury purchase behavior. in the Indian context, social comparison orientation significantly impacts luxury purchase intention, underscoring the importance of collectivist cultural values (Pillai & Nair, 2021; Singh et al., 2022). Luxury brands that effectively incorporate these collectivist-focused factors—such as emotional satisfaction and social status—are better positioned to succeed in such markets. A "Think Indian" approach offers multinational luxury brands a strategic pathway to capitalize on India's vast market potential. By prioritizing authentic relationships with Indian consumers and guiding entry, brand positioning and expansion strategies to local preferences, brands can achieve sustainable growth. The ongoing re-evaluation of customer experiences is necessary to ensure that luxury brands and messaging resonate effectively in India's evolving market landscape. Ultimately, luxury fashion brands can position themselves as global leaders by showcasing their adaptability to diverse cultural contexts, creating transferable lessons that strengthen their appeal in other markets as well.

CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS, AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

This study highlights that brand commitment is the most critical internal motivator for Indian consumers of luxury fashion apparel, followed by hedonic motivation while self-congruence does not significantly influence purchase intentions. Indian luxury customers value community recognition over individual self-expression, making social motivation, including the desire to be part of elite groups, the most significant extrinsic motivator. Consequently, luxury brands in India should emphasize their social attributes and establish connections with elite social groups to enhance customer loyalty and commitment.

The study has several limitations, presenting opportunities for further research. In terms of sampling, the study used purposive and snowball sampling and was restricted to the Delhi-NCR region of India. As a result, the findings are not fully generalizable. Future research could address this by using probability-based sampling techniques and including cities from other regions across India to provide a more comprehensive understanding. Furthermore, data collection relied on a structured questionnaire, which may have limited respondents' ability to express subjective views. Incorporating a qualitative approach, such as in-depth interviews or focus groups, could provide richer insights into consumer

motivation. Additionally, this study focused on selected intrinsic and extrinsic motivators within the framework of SDT. Given the breadth of SDT, future studies could explore other mini theories under SDT to uncover other drivers of luxury purchase behavior.

Therefore, building on the importance of brand commitment, future research should examine other brand-related constructs, such as brand trust, brand image, brand loyalty and brand love, to provide a more holistic view of consumer brand relationships in the luxury segment. Besides this, while intention and behavior are often correlated, the link between purchase intentions and actual behavior in the context of luxury brands remains underexplored. Thus, studies validating this relationship could provide further depth to the findings. Future research could also explore the motivations of luxury consumers across different countries and cultures to shed light on how cultural differences influence the factors driving luxury purchases. Apart from this, with the rise of gender-neutral luxury being regarded as a significant trend in the future of luxury fashion, investigating consumer perceptions and acceptance of such offerings could provide valuable insights for brands aiming to appeal to a wider audience.

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