Identifying the Factors Influencing Consumer Behavior in Purchasing Luxury Brands: A Mixed-Methods Research Approach

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Abstract: Consumer behavior refers to a set of activities, decision-making processes, and emotions that shape the purchasing and consumption of goods and services. In today's world, luxury brands are recognized as symbols of status and quality of life, and their selection and purchase are influenced by multiple factors. Therefore, the objective of this study is to present a model of consumer behavior in purchasing luxury brands by considering the role of brand equity and brand identity using a mixed-methods approach. The statistical population of this study in the qualitative section includes managers, professors, and experts who have made significant scientific or practical contributions in the field of consumer behavior and marketing. In the qualitative phase, twelve experts participated in interviews, forming the sample for this section. The data collection tools in the qualitative phase consisted of semi-structured interviews and interview protocols, while in the quantitative section, the statistical population comprised customers who had experience purchasing luxury brands in shopping centers and malls. In this phase, the researcher used a questionnaire as the data collection tool. The researcher categorized the results of the qualitative research and coding process into six components: causal conditions (reducing marketing costs, leveraging commercial power, attracting new customers, creating engaging advertisements), contextual conditions (brand personality, brand name, brand attachment, uniqueness), central phenomena (brand influence, recall and recognition, efficiency, social image, value, trustworthiness), strategies (brand meaning, brand evaluation, brand attitude, brand knowledge, brand awareness), intervening conditions (functional applicability of the product, symbolic applicability of the product, functional applicability of the brand), and outcomes (brand image, brand awareness, corporate awareness, advertisement awareness, loyalty, and quality). In the quantitative section, the proposed paradigmatic model was evaluated. Findings from the questionnaire indicated that all identified factors in the qualitative section significantly impact the researcher's proposed model. Consumer behavior in selecting and purchasing luxury brands is influenced by multiple factors. Understanding these factors can help brands design more effective marketing strategies and establish better connections with their customers. Additionally, consumers, by being aware of these factors, can make better decisions when purchasing luxury brands.

Keywords: Grounded theory, consumer behavior, brand identity, mixed-methods approach, brand equity

1. Introduction

In contemporary branding literature, luxury brands refer to those that offer high-quality products and services with unique designs and premium pricing. These brands are commonly associated with concepts such as exclusivity, quality, and prestige, attracting consumers who are drawn to these characteristics. The general assumption about consumer behavior is that it explains how individuals purchase goods and services. However, consumer behavior extends beyond mere purchasing and encompasses the processes of acquisition, consumption, and disposal of products and services over time [1].

The final decision of a consumer in selecting a luxury brand is influenced by various stages of decision-making, including acquiring, consuming, and disposing of goods, services, time, and ideas. While the purchase phase is crucial for marketers, consumer behavior is not limited to buying alone. Instead, it consists of three primary activities: acquisition, consumption, and disposal [2]. Acquisition refers to the process through which an individual obtains a product or service. While purchasing is one of the most common acquisition methods, other means such as borrowing, bartering, and leasing are also utilized by consumers [3].

Consumption, which refers to the use of a product or service, has been the core focus of consumer behavior research. This is because consumption carries implicit symbolic messages that individuals communicate to others. For instance, the type of car someone drives, their clothing style, and recreational activities all serve as indicators of their personality and social identity [4]. Additionally, consumption influences the behavior of other individuals. Negative experiences with a product or service may be shared with others, potentially discouraging them from making a similar purchase.

Disposal, the final phase of consumer behavior, involves eliminating a previously acquired product. However, disposal is not merely discarding an item. It also includes methods such as exchanging the product for another, donating it, or repurposing it for a different use [5]. Research indicates that consumers express dissatisfaction with a product when searching for their ideal alternative. Personal perception plays a significant role in brand selection, and consumers who have a positive perception of a brand tend to repurchase it. Furthermore, the likelihood of a favorable brand experience increases when companies focus on providing customer satisfaction [6].

Luxury brand consumer behavior serves multiple functions, including motivation, social influence, and psychological impact. Motivations for purchasing luxury brands typically include a desire to showcase social status, trust in product quality and durability, and the pursuit of unique emotional experiences. Social factors such as peer influence, family expectations, and cultural norms also shape consumer decisions regarding luxury brands. Additionally, psychological elements such as brand perception, personal identity, and the sense of belonging to a particular group significantly impact purchasing behavior. Consumers often prefer brands that align with their values and self-concept [7].

The selection and purchase process for luxury brands generally follows several stages: need recognition, information search, option evaluation, purchase decision, and post-purchase evaluation. Consumers first recognize the need for a luxury product, then search for information about various brands. After evaluating different options based on features, price, and brand image, they make a purchase decision. The post-purchase phase involves assessing the overall experience, which influences future purchasing decisions [7, 8].

Effective consumer behavior management allows businesses to achieve profitability and cost reduction. Key benefits of understanding consumer behavior include increased customer loyalty, improved service repurchase rates, the creation of competitive advantages, and enhanced market leadership [9]. The experience a brand creates

in the consumer's mind is one of the most powerful factors influencing repeat purchases and word-of-mouth recommendations. Consumer behavior provides businesses with three main advantages: retaining and improving relationships with existing customers through positive experiences, fostering long-term customer loyalty, and creating competitive differentiation [10].

The theoretical foundation of consumer behavior research incorporates both internal and external factors that drive purchasing decisions. According to Kolanska-Stronka and Krasa (2024), motivation is the core determinant of consumer behavior and consists of internal factors such as personal traits, behaviors, attitudes, learning, perception, self-image, and semiotics. External influences include technological advancements and public policies [11]. Filtering elements such as privacy, trust, and security also shape consumer behavior. Awareness of consumer behavior is essential for marketing decisions, as purchasing patterns are influenced by economic, psychological, and sociological factors [12].

Initially, consumer behavior was studied predominantly through economic theories that focused on utility functions, which described income allocation to maximize satisfaction. Price and income variations were analyzed using these models. However, later developments integrated insights from social psychology, sociology, and anthropology to create a broader understanding of consumer decision-making [7].

Consumer behavior is a vast field of study that examines how individuals make purchasing decisions. Many consumers are unaware of the factors influencing their choices. Understanding these influences is critical, as they can be categorized into individual, psychological, social, and economic dimensions. Consumers' purchasing behaviors are shaped by personal, cultural, economic, and psychological factors. Solomon et al. (2006) define consumer behavior as "the study of the processes individuals or groups use to select, purchase, use, or dispose of products, services, ideas, or experiences to satisfy needs and desires" [13].

Personal factors such as age, life stage, occupation, personality, lifestyle, and values all influence purchasing decisions. Consumer preferences change over time due to life cycle stages, including marriage, having children, retirement, and other major life transitions. Businesses often tailor marketing strategies based on these demographic shifts [14]. Occupational status also impacts purchasing behavior, as different professions exhibit varying consumption patterns [15]. Moreover, personality traits affect brand choices, as individuals tend to select brands that align with their psychological characteristics [16].

Lifestyle choices further shape consumer preferences. Lifestyle refers to an individual's way of living, encompassing activities, interests, and opinions. It influences consumption patterns and brand selection, as consumers often associate with brands that reflect their desired lifestyle image [17]. Psychological factors, including motivation, perception, learning, and memory, play a crucial role in consumer decision-making [4].

Luxury branding has its roots in the Latin word *luxus*, meaning abundance, extravagance, or a display of wealth beyond actual needs. Historically, luxury has been viewed as both a sign of economic and social success and, conversely, as an unnecessary indulgence [15]. The concept of luxury evolves with time, influenced by cultural and societal shifts [2, 16, 18]. Luxury brands offer symbolic value, often commanding significantly higher prices than standard products due to exclusivity, heritage, and craftsmanship [19].

Throughout history, luxury has been associated with status, privilege, and power. Ancient civilizations such as Egypt and Rome offered luxury goods as divine tributes. While some cultures celebrated luxury as an expression of success, others criticized it for fostering excessive materialism [20]. Today, luxury is still a debated concept, with perspectives ranging from viewing it as a sign of human weakness to seeing it as a justified reward for success [21].

Several scholars have attempted to define luxury brands. Luo et al. (2018) describe luxury as an experience characterized by exclusivity, aesthetics, and authenticity [22]. Other researchers highlight key attributes such as high quality, prestige, rarity, and price premium [16]. Luxury brands serve both functional and symbolic purposes, influencing consumer identity and status perception [23].

Given these discussions, the central research question of this study is: How can a consumer behavior model for purchasing luxury brands be developed, considering the roles of brand equity and brand identity?

2.   Methodology

The present study employs interviews and qualitative data collection and analysis to develop a model of consumer behavior in purchasing luxury brands, considering the role of brand equity and brand identity, using a mixed-methods approach. The aim is to bridge the existing theoretical gap in this field. This study is fundamental-developmental in terms of its objective and non-experimental and descriptive in terms of data collection. Given that the study seeks to describe and explore the examined phenomenon, the use of qualitative research tools—including open and semi-structured interviews, archival studies, literature review, and observations—significantly contributes to a better understanding of the research problem and facilitates the development of a conceptual model, particularly by incorporating expert insights. After a comprehensive description of the phenomenon and its expansion to the target population, efforts will be made to capture the broader perspectives of the entire community regarding the examined subject.

In the qualitative phase, the study applies grounded theory methodology to develop a conceptual model. The statistical population in this phase comprises managers, professors, and experts who have made significant scientific or practical contributions in the fields of consumer behavior and brand identity. Accordingly, twelve experts were selected for the qualitative sample. The primary data collection instrument in this phase was semi-structured interviews.

The sampling strategy in the qualitative approach followed the snowball (chain) sampling method, with theoretical saturation serving as the criterion for determining sample sufficiency. To ensure reliability, the study employed test-retest reliability (stability index) and inter-coder agreement (repeatability index) to evaluate and calculate the reliability of the conducted interviews. The coded interview analysis resulted in a test-retest reliability index of 84% and an inter-coder agreement index of 77%, confirming the reliability of the coding process, as both values exceed the minimum threshold of 60%. Moreover, validity in the qualitative phase was assessed through a step-by-step verification process, including topic determination, interview design, interview conditions and setting, note-taking, data analysis, and final confirmation.

In the quantitative phase, the sampling strategy was random sampling, and the sample size was determined using Cochran's formula for an infinite population, resulting in a sample of 320 participants. After data collection, 300 valid responses were used for statistical analysis. The collected data were processed using SPSS software and analyzed using Amos software.

To assess reliability in the quantitative phase, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used. The Cronbach's alpha value for the questionnaire was 0.886, which, according to empirical statistical studies, indicates a high level of reliability, as any Cronbach's alpha above 0.7 is considered acceptable for measurement instruments. The results of this test are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Results of KMO and Bartlett's Test

Test Parameters	Test Values

KMO for Sampling Adequacy	0.801
Chi-Square Value (χ^2)	2.780
Degrees of Freedom (df)	136
Significance Level (Sig.)	0.000

As shown in Table 2, the KMO value is 0.801, which is well above the acceptable threshold (KMO > 0.6), indicating that the sample size is adequate for factor analysis.

To assess validity, the research findings were shared with participants for review, and the results were further examined and revised by experts to ensure accuracy. Reliability in research refers to the repeatability of findings.

The coding reliability check revealed that the total number of recorded codes by both the researcher and a collaborating coder was 249, with 95 agreements and 32 disagreements, resulting in an inter-coder reliability score of 76%, which exceeds the 60% threshold, thus confirming the reliability of the coding process.

Table 2. Results of Inter-Coder Reliability Analysis

Row	Interview Title	Total Data Points	Agreements	Disagreements	Test-Retest Reliability (%)
1	First	90	35	7	77%
2	Second	107	42	15	78%
3	Third	52	18	10	69%
Total	-	249	95	32	76%

Table 3. Frequency Distribution of Participants' Areas of Expertise

Area of Expertise	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Frequency
Marketing Professors	4	33.3%	4
Management Professors	4	33.3%	8
Retail Store Managers	4	33.3%	12
Total	12	100%	-

These findings confirm that the research methodology ensures high reliability and validity, reinforcing the robustness of the collected data and the developed conceptual model.

3. Findings and Results

In this study, following the grounded theory strategy, the researcher conducted open coding immediately after each interview, extracting 100 key points from the qualitative interviews. The stages of coding in grounded theory include:

1. Open coding
2. Axial coding
3. Selective coding

In axial coding, categories and subcategories are interconnected to form the conceptual model of consumer behavior in purchasing luxury brands, considering the roles of brand equity and brand identity.

The qualitative phase identified causal conditions, contextual conditions, intervening conditions, the core phenomenon, strategies, and outcomes related to luxury brand consumer behavior. The details of these categories and their corresponding subcategories are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Integrated Categories and Concepts in the Grounded Theory Model

General Category	Subcategory
Causal Conditions: Brand Loyalty	Reducing marketing costs, Commercial leverage, Attracting new customers, Creating engaging advertisements

Contextual Conditions: Brand Awareness	Brand personality, Brand name, Brand attachment, Brand uniqueness
Intervening Conditions: Brand Functionality	Functional applicability of the product, Symbolic applicability of the product, Functional applicability of the brand
Core Phenomenon: Consumer Behavior	Brand influence, Brand recall and recognition, Efficiency, Social image, Value, Trustworthiness
Strategies: Luxury Brand Management	Brand meaning, Brand evaluation, Brand attitude, Brand knowledge, Brand recognition
Outcomes: Enhancing Brand Identity	Brand image, Brand awareness, Company awareness, Advertisement awareness, Brand loyalty, Quality

The quantitative data analysis shows that 64% of respondents were female, while 36% were male. The highest percentage of respondents were aged 30–35 (52%), while only 6% were above 40. 75% of respondents held a bachelor's degree, and 68% were single.

Table 5. Summary of Means, Standard Deviations, and Variances

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Variance
Luxury Brand	4.15	0.79	0.63
Enhancing Brand Identity	4.02	0.80	0.73
Brand Awareness	4.16	0.72	0.52
Brand Functionality	5.01	0.78	0.65
Consumer Behavior	4.10	0.74	0.55
Brand Loyalty	4.03	0.80	0.75

To assess the normality of the data, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was conducted. According to Table 6, the significance level for all variables was below 0.05, confirming that the variables do not follow a normal distribution, allowing the researcher to proceed with non-parametric tests.

Table 6. Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test Results

Variable	Significance Level	Status
Luxury Brand	0.121	Normal
Enhancing Brand Identity	0.235	Normal
Brand Awareness	0.325	Normal
Brand Functionality	0.427	Normal
Consumer Behavior	0.079	Normal
Brand Loyalty	0.057	Normal

The reliability of the questionnaire items was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, as shown in Table 7. The obtained coefficients indicate a high level of reliability for the measurement instrument.

Table 7. Cronbach's Alpha for Variables

Variable	Source	Cronbach's Alpha
Luxury Brand	Researcher-developed	0.81
Enhancing Brand Identity	Researcher-developed	0.81
Brand Awareness	Researcher-developed	0.87
Brand Functionality	Researcher-developed	0.85
Consumer Behavior	Researcher-developed	0.85
Brand Loyalty	Researcher-developed	0.89

As shown in Table 8, since the t-values for all variables and hypotheses exceed 1.96, all hypotheses are statistically significant, confirming the proposed research model.

Table 8. Research Path Coefficients

T-Value	Path
2.13	Consumer Behavior → Brand Loyalty
2.03	Luxury Brand → Consumer Behavior
3.03	Enhancing Brand Identity → Luxury Brand
2.16	Brand Awareness → Luxury Brand

Table 9 presents the model fit indices, confirming that the proposed research model is well-fitted to the data.

Table 9. Model Fit Indices

Fit Index	Type	Threshold	Obtained Value
CMIN/df	Parsimonious	< 3	1.623
RMSEA	Parsimonious	< 0.08	0.752
PNFI	Parsimonious	> 0.5	0.676
GFI	Absolute	> 0.8	0.986
AGFI	Absolute	> 0.8	0.958
NFI	Comparative	> 0.9	0.991
TLI	Comparative	> 0.9	0.939
CFI	Comparative	> 0.9	0.947
RFI	Comparative	> 0.9	0.874
IFI	Comparative	> 0.9	0.948

The R^2 values for the research variables indicate that the model explains a substantial portion of the variance in consumer behavior and brand-related constructs.

Table 10. R^2 Values for Latent Variables

Latent Variables	R^2 Value
Luxury Brand	0.635
Enhancing Brand Identity	0.780
Brand Awareness	0.356
Brand Functionality	0.823
Consumer Behavior	0.816
Brand Loyalty	0.863

As observed in Table 10, all R^2 values exceed 0.67, indicating that the research variables are well-defined and that the model provides a strong predictive explanation of consumer behavior in purchasing luxury brands.
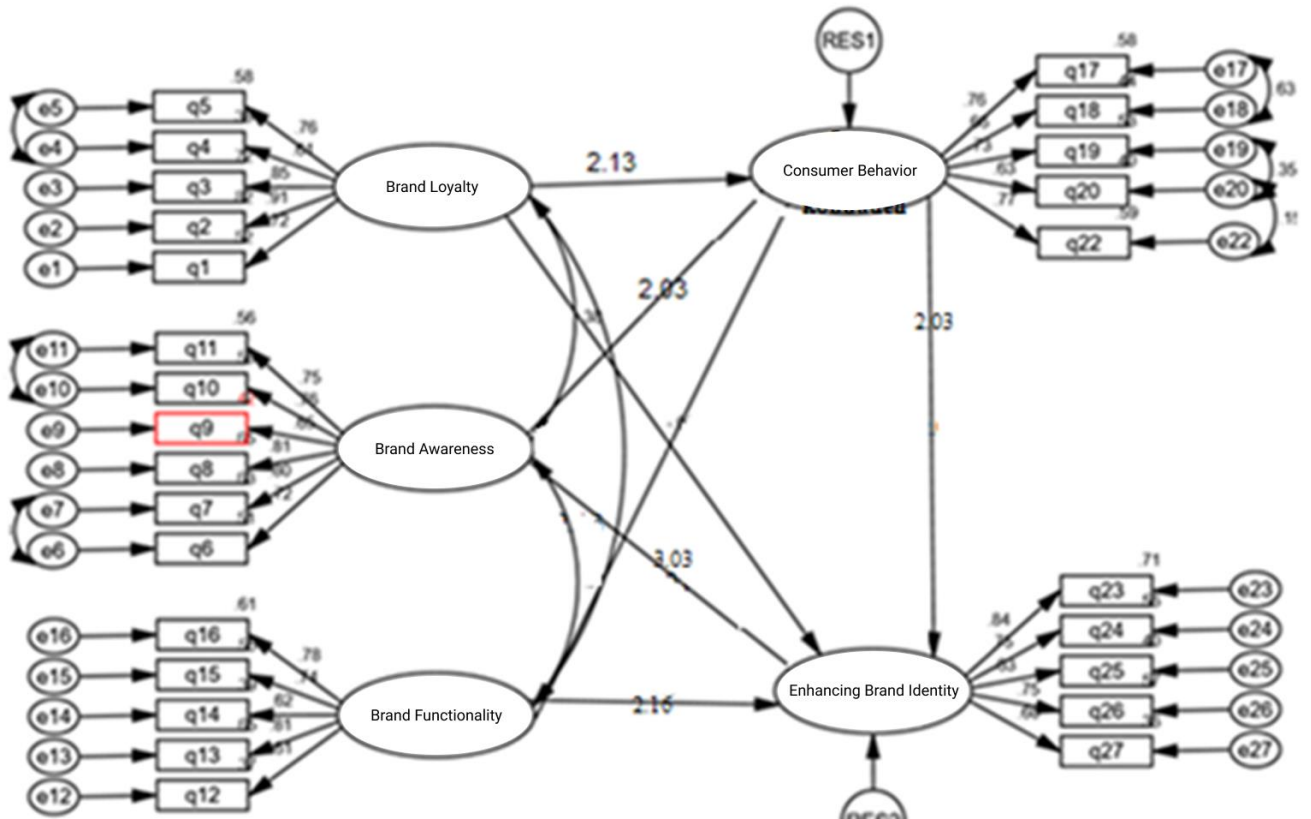
Figure 1. Final Model of the Study

4. Discussion and Conclusion

Companies seeking success in the luxury market must first understand consumer behavior. Luxury brands are currently a growing and influential segment, estimated to become a primary target demographic in the near future. Considering this, major brands must identify the underlying motivations driving consumer purchases, preferred distribution channels, and the factors influencing their decisions.

Solomon (2017) refers to luxury brands as "powerful trendsetters" that shape the behavior and expectations of those around them. Customer engagement before and after sales has been increasing. The acceleration of information and the expansion of new technology processing capacities have created an industry where design, production, distribution strategies, and even inventory management align with market demand in real-time. This complexity requires companies to invest significant human and financial resources. Reducing the gap between brands and consumers has not only increased market entry points and accelerated transformations but has also necessitated transparency in product characteristics, production processes, and overall brand perception. As a result, quality has evolved from being a mere competitive advantage to an expected standard, ultimately becoming a commodity.

In today's market, strategic brand management is essential for achieving objectives such as customer loyalty, consumer orientation, and profitability. Ignoring the market share of strong and influential brands leads to challenges in customer retention and loyalty. This finding aligns with prior research [19]. The primary reason for consumer disloyalty is the lack of emphasis on branding as a means of increasing profitability and establishing a distinct market position.

The concept of brand identity was first extensively introduced by Kapferer, who asserted that identity means being true to oneself. He defined the dimensions of brand identity in the Brand Identity Prism, including physique, personality, relationship, culture, reflection, and self-image. In essence, brand identity is not just what marketers create, but also how consumers perceive it, a notion supported by the prior findings [20].

According to Zikrowski, brand identity is the external representation of a brand, encompassing all aspects of its name and visual elements. It serves as the primary means of brand recognition and conveys differentiation from competitors, representing a unique set of associations that influence how consumers interpret and experience a brand. This finding is consistent with prior research [24].

Kapferer defines brand identity as what a company presents to consumers. In his view, brand identity embodies the meaning and essence of a brand, created and communicated by the company. It represents the core and authenticity of the brand. If a company aims to establish a lasting brand image, its first step should be developing a strong brand identity. Based on this identity, the brand can then shape its perceived image. Companies that offer a distinctive brand identity can gain a competitive edge, enhance the perceived value of their products and services, and achieve pricing leadership advantages.

Research has confirmed that brand identity originates from the brand sender and precedes brand image, which is ultimately a composite perception formed by various brand messages. According to Zaichkowsky, brand identity is closely linked to consumer perception and consists of visible components, including brand names, logos, symbols, typography, colors, shapes, and product benefit descriptions used in advertising. These elements define the public relations aspects of brand identity, a finding that aligns with the research of Montoya and Schwarz (2020).

Due to time constraints, this study is categorized as a cross-sectional study, and due to spatial limitations, the research was conducted among store managers in Tehran. One of the defining characteristics of qualitative research is its focus on examining phenomena within their natural contexts. However, this characteristic also limits the generalizability of findings, as in-depth exploration of a phenomenon restricts access to diverse and varied environments. Nevertheless, this limitation does not diminish the value of qualitative research.

This study is cross-sectional in nature, with data collection and analysis conducted between December and January 2025. Moreover, the study was limited to store managers in Tehran.

Future researchers may consider the following:

1. The moderating variables identified in the qualitative phase can be further examined using structural equation modeling (SEM) software to test hypotheses.
2. Future research could explore additional factors influencing brand equity and brand identity, such as economic income levels and gender, as moderating variables in consumer behavior studies.

Authors' Contributions

Authors equally contributed to this article.

Ethical Considerations

All procedures performed in this study were under the ethical standards.

Conflict of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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