

Trash as treasure – Push and pull motivations of second-hand luxury consumption

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Abstract

Prior discussions of luxury consumption and motivational background behind consumption and purchase behavior have mainly focused on brand-new luxury goods, and in conventional channels. The emergence of markets for used luxury products has been largely neglected, although the second-hand market represents an interesting and growing arena for consumers to buy and sell luxury fashion products. This paper sheds light on the purchase and consumption of second-hand luxury fashion brands, identifying the motivations behind the behaviour: what fascinates consumers in previously used and owned luxury fashion goods? The drivers will be explored in both purchasing situation as well as actual usage and consumption.

The empirical data consists of 20 in-depth interviews conducted in Finland. All participants are female, and they have purchase luxury fashion goods both as brand new and as second-hand. The interviews were analyzed by means of qualitative content analysis. The findings are structured through push and pull motivations: push motivations consist of experiential and social drivers (e.g. thrill of hunt, sustainable values, need for uniqueness), whereas the pull motivations relate to product characteristics (e.g. accessible price, nostalgia, patinated condition). Based on the motivational background, two different kinds of second-hand luxury consumer types can be pointed out: the belongers who put value on the product and end-result, and the differentiators who enjoy the journey of a treasure hunt.

This study contributes to the field of luxury consumption, particularly in fashion field by bringing novel viewpoints on the complex motives when it comes to alternative shopping channels and previously used goods. It is vital to have knowledge of secondary channels through which luxury brands have indirect – and also potential future – consumers. This study provides an understanding about contemporary contexts where luxury fashion brands become available and are purchased, i.e., the luxury second-hand context. In addition, by understanding contemporary consumers and their alternative meanings and motivations related to consumption of luxury branded products, such as searching for sustainable choice, investments in oneself or purchasing products as investments, i.e., not being end-users, help to target the marketing and additional services to better serve consumers' desires.

Keywords

Second-hand consumption, disposal activities, luxury fashion goods