

ADVANCED INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF
BUSINESS, ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND SMES
(AIJBES)www.aijbes.comTHE DETERMINANTS OF LUXURY BRAND STORIES ON
ONLINE REPURCHASE INTENTIONS AMONG GEN Z IN
CHINATianyang Zhang¹, Khai Loon Lee^{2*}, Puteri Fadzline Muhamad Tamyez³¹ Faculty of Industrial Management, Universiti Malaysia Pahang Al-Sultan Abdullah, Malaysia, Hebei Minzu Normal University, China

Email: candice425607@163.com

² Faculty of Industrial Management, Universiti Malaysia Pahang Al-Sultan Abdullah, Malaysia

Email: leekhailoon@umpsa.edu.my

³ Faculty of Industrial Management, Universiti Malaysia Pahang Al-Sultan Abdullah, Malaysia

Email: fadzline@umpsa.edu.my

* Corresponding Author

Article Info:

Article history:

Received date: 27.01.2025

Revised date: 20.02.2025

Accepted date: 20.03.2025

Published date: 30.03.2025

To cite this document:

Tianyang, Z., Khai, L. L., Tamyez, P. F. M. (2025). The Determinants of Luxury Brand Stories on Online Repurchase Intentions Among Gen Z in China. *Advanced International Journal of Business, Entrepreneurship and SMEs*, 7 (23), 261-268.

DOI: 10.35631/AIJBS.723020

This work is licensed under [CC BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

Abstract:

The rise of Gen Z as a dominant consumer segment and the rapid expansion of e-commerce have prompted luxury brands to adopt innovative storytelling strategies to engage and retain this digitally savvy audience. This study explores the impact of luxury brand stories on online repurchase intentions among Gen Z consumers in China, emphasizing the role of narratives in shaping emotional connections, trust, and loyalty. Using a qualitative research approach, this study conducted in-depth interviews with Gen Z consumers who have previously purchased luxury brands online. The findings reveal that authentic and emotionally engaging brand stories significantly influence repurchase intentions by fostering a sense of trust and alignment with personal values. Narratives that highlight sustainability, inclusivity, and cultural relevance were found to resonate strongly with Chinese Gen Z consumers, who prioritize both ethical considerations and social identity in their purchasing decisions. This research contributes to the literature by offering nuanced insights into how luxury brand storytelling drives consumer loyalty in the digital age, particularly within the unique socio-cultural context of China. The study provides practical recommendations for luxury brands seeking to refine their storytelling strategies to cultivate lasting relationships with Gen Z consumers and enhance their competitive positioning in the online market.

Keywords:

Luxury Brand, Brand Story, Online Repurchase Intention

Introduction

The rise of e-commerce has revolutionized the luxury industry, providing unprecedented opportunities for brands to connect with consumers in the digital sphere. Among these consumers, Generation Z (Gen Z)—comprising individuals born between the mid-1990s and early 2010s—represents a dynamic and influential market segment. With a global population estimated at over 2 billion, Gen Z is characterized by its digital nativity, social consciousness, and distinct consumption behaviors (Vardeman, 2024). This generation's affinity for online platforms and preference for personalized experiences make it a pivotal demographic for luxury brands.

One of the most effective strategies luxury brands employ to establish emotional connections with consumers is storytelling. Brand stories, defined as narrative frameworks that convey a brand's heritage, identity, and values, play a critical role in shaping consumer perceptions and fostering brand loyalty (Kim, 2019). In the luxury sector, storytelling serves as a means of reinforcing exclusivity, authenticity, and aspirational appeal, aligning with the symbolic value consumers often associate with luxury products (Merlo et al., 2024). Previous research highlights that emotionally resonant narratives can influence purchase intentions by strengthening consumer-brand relationships (Huang et al., 2022). However, the role of brand stories in driving online repurchase intentions among Gen Z remains underexplored.

Online repurchase intentions are a key indicator of customer loyalty in the digital marketplace. Unlike first-time purchases, which may be influenced by promotions or novelty, repeat purchases often signal deeper trust and engagement with the brand (Mandagi & Sondakh, 2022). For Gen Z consumers, whose purchasing decisions are influenced by values such as transparency, inclusivity, and sustainability, luxury brands must craft narratives that resonate on both emotional and ideological levels (Ganassali & Matysiewicz, 2021). This generation's preference for meaningful, authentic, and purpose-driven brand interactions underscores the importance of leveraging storytelling as a strategic tool.

This study aims to investigate the impact of luxury brand stories on the online repurchase intentions of Gen Z consumers. Specifically, it examines how the dimensions of brand story shape consumer attitudes and behaviors in the digital context. Grounded in established theoretical framework, which is the narrative communication theory (Ganassali & Matysiewicz, 2021), this research seeks to elucidate the mechanisms through which brand stories influence online repurchase intention.

By addressing the intersection of brand story and Gen Z consumption behavior, this study contributes to the growing body of literature on luxury branding in the digital age. Furthermore, it offers practical insights for luxury brand managers and marketers striving to cultivate long-term relationships with a generation that values both tradition and innovation.

Literature Review

There are five points will be discussed in LR, which are luxury brand, brand story and online repurchase intention.

Luxury Brand

Luxury brands have long been associated with exclusivity, high quality, and symbolic value. Defined as products or services that provide more than functional utility, luxury brands offer consumers an experiential value that reflects prestige, status, and self-expression

(Jebarajakirthy & Das, 2021). According to previous research, luxury brands are characterized by six key attributes: craftsmanship, exclusivity, heritage, premium pricing, iconic design, and a strong brand identity (Creevey et al., 2022). These attributes create a unique value proposition that distinguishes luxury brands from non-luxury counterparts and fosters emotional attachment among consumers (Atkinson & Kang, 2022).

In the context of luxury branding, emotional and symbolic dimensions are pivotal. Unlike utilitarian brands, luxury brands rely heavily on their ability to evoke emotional responses and create aspirational lifestyles. This emotional connection often stems from the perceived rarity and superior quality of luxury products, as well as their ability to serve as a marker of social distinction (Kumagai & Nagasawa, 2022). Research indicates that consumers perceive luxury brands as a means to enhance self-image and convey social status, particularly in emerging markets like China, where luxury consumption is deeply intertwined with cultural and social norms (Khan et al., 2022).

The proliferation of e-commerce has transformed the way luxury brands interact with consumers, presenting both opportunities and challenges. Digital platforms have become critical for luxury brands to maintain their relevance and appeal, particularly among younger generations. Studies show that luxury consumers now expect a seamless omnichannel experience that combines traditional brand values with modern digital convenience (Bao et al., 2024). However, the digitalization of luxury retailing has raised concerns about maintaining exclusivity and brand integrity in an environment characterized by mass accessibility (Banister et al., 2020).

China has emerged as a global leader in luxury consumption, accounting for a significant share of the market. This trend is driven in part by the rising purchasing power of younger generations, particularly Gen Z. Known for their digital fluency and affinity for online shopping, Chinese Gen Z consumers have become a key demographic for luxury brands seeking to expand their presence in the e-commerce space (Jain et al., 2023). However, engaging this cohort requires brands to balance tradition and innovation, ensuring that digital strategies align with the aspirational values central to luxury branding (Manfreda et al., 2023).

Brand Story

Brand stories are a fundamental element of modern marketing, defined as narrative frameworks used to communicate a brand's identity, values, and heritage (Kaczorowska et al., 2024). Unlike conventional marketing messages, which focus on promoting product attributes, brand stories aim to evoke emotional engagement and foster a deeper connection with consumers. They provide a cohesive narrative that not only enhances brand recall but also humanizes the brand, making it relatable and memorable (Hong et al., 2022).

The digitalization of luxury branding has significantly transformed how brand stories are communicated and consumed. Digital platforms, such as social media and brand websites, offer unique opportunities for storytelling through immersive and interactive formats, including videos, live events, and user-generated content (Woodside & Fine, 2019). Studies indicate that digital storytelling enhances consumer engagement by making luxury brands more accessible and relatable, particularly to younger generations like Gen Z (Dessart & Pitardi, 2019). Gen Z consumers, who are digital natives, demand authenticity and purpose in brand narratives. Luxury brands are increasingly integrating themes of sustainability, inclusivity, and innovation into their storytelling to align with the values of this generation (Dhote & Kumar, 2019). For

example, campaigns that highlight sustainable sourcing or charitable initiatives not only enhance the brand's image but also foster a sense of shared purpose with consumers (Bendell & Kristal, 2023).

Online Repurchase Intention

Online repurchase intention refers to a consumer's willingness to make repeat purchases from an online retailer or brand. This concept has become a critical focus of e-commerce research, as retaining existing customers is more cost-effective than acquiring new ones (Phan Tan, 2023). Online repurchase intention is influenced by various factors, including customer satisfaction, trust, perceived value, and the overall quality of the online shopping experience (Sun et al., 2022).

Studies have identified trust as a cornerstone of online repurchase behavior. Trust mitigates the inherent risks of online transactions, fostering confidence in the brand or retailer. Research highlights that when consumers perceive a brand as trustworthy, they are more likely to engage in repeat purchases, even in a highly competitive online marketplace (Hasan & Pattikawa, 2022). Satisfaction, derived from positive prior experiences, also plays a pivotal role in driving online repurchase intentions. Satisfied customers are more likely to develop loyalty and exhibit lower price sensitivity, further enhancing their likelihood of returning to the same brand (Anshu et al., 2022).

Research Methodology

This study aims to deeply analyse the impact of luxury brand stories on the online repurchase intentions of Gen Z consumers in China. Gen Z, having grown up in a digital era, exhibits distinctive and complex consumption behaviors shaped by multicultural influences and the internet. Compared to quantitative research, the interview method enables researchers to delve into Gen Z's perceptions, understanding, and emotional responses to luxury brand stories. This approach uncovers the deeper motivations and thoughts underlying their behaviors, providing rich and detailed firsthand data, which is crucial for uncovering the underlying mechanisms of the research problem.

The target participants were Chinese Gen Z consumers aged 18–25 who had purchased luxury goods online at least once in the past year. This criterion ensures that the participants have direct experience with online luxury shopping and can provide valuable insights based on their real-life experiences. A combination of purposive sampling and snowball sampling was employed. Initially, potential participants meeting the sampling criteria were identified through social media platforms (e.g., Weibo, Xiaohongshu) and luxury brand-related forums. These individuals formed the initial sample and were interviewed. Subsequently, recommendations from the initial participants were used to expand the sample, ensuring a more diverse and representative group. Ultimately, 30 participants were selected for the interviews. A semi-structured interview guide was meticulously developed based on an extensive review of domestic and international literature and in-depth discussions with experts in luxury brand marketing. The guide covered topics such as Gen Z's sources of awareness about luxury brand stories, memorable brand story content, the role of brand stories in shaping brand image, the influence of brand stories on online luxury purchases, and their impact on repurchase intentions. The open-ended nature of the questions encouraged participants to freely express their views. The interviews were conducted via online video conferencing and facilitated by professionally trained interviewers. Before each session, participants were given a detailed explanation of the research objectives, process, and confidentiality principles to ensure their

full understanding and voluntary participation. Each interview lasted 60–90 minutes, was audio-recorded with consent, and transcribed within 24 hours to ensure the accuracy and completeness of the data.

Results

This chapter presents the findings derived from the thematic analysis of interviews conducted with Gen Z consumers in China. The analysis reveals several key themes that illustrate the influence of luxury brand stories on online repurchase intentions. These themes include authenticity and trust, emotional engagement, cultural relevance, and digital storytelling impact.

Authenticity and Trust

Luxury brand stories build trust through authenticity. Participants consistently emphasized the importance of authenticity in brand narratives. Stories that showcased the brand's history, craftsmanship, and values were perceived as more credible and trustworthy. For example, Participant A stated: "When a brand shares its history, like how it started and grew, I feel connected and trust the quality more."

Authentic narratives were found to enhance consumers' confidence in the brand, reducing perceived risks associated with online shopping. Trust, in turn, was a significant factor influencing their decision to repurchase.

Emotional Engagement

Brand stories evoke emotional connections that drive loyalty. Emotional engagement emerged as a powerful driver of repurchase intentions. Participants described how compelling stories made them feel valued and inspired, creating a sense of attachment to the brand. Participant B noted: "I remember a campaign where they shared stories about their artisans—it made me feel proud to own something so unique."

The findings suggest that emotional resonance fosters a deeper relationship with the brand, encouraging repeat purchases despite premium pricing.

Cultural Relevance

Narratives that align with Chinese cultural values resonate deeply with Gen Z consumers. Participants highlighted the appeal of brand stories that reflect traditional Chinese elements or celebrate cultural heritage. For instance, Participant C shared: "I loved how the brand incorporated Chinese motifs in their designs and explained the meaning behind them—it made me feel connected to my roots."

Furthermore, participants valued stories that aligned with contemporary values such as sustainability and inclusivity, indicating that culturally relevant and socially conscious narratives enhance consumer loyalty.

Digital Storytelling Impact

The medium of storytelling significantly influences consumer engagement. Participants emphasized the importance of how luxury brand stories are delivered. Gen Z consumers, being digital natives, preferred interactive and visually engaging formats such as short videos, social media posts, and live streams. Participant D explained: "When I see a story unfold in a video

or live stream, it feels more real and exciting—it makes me want to engage with the brand more."

Digital platforms were found to be critical in amplifying the reach and impact of luxury brand stories, making them accessible and relatable to younger audiences.

Integration of Themes and Repurchase Intentions

The interplay of authenticity, emotional engagement, cultural relevance, and digital storytelling creates a holistic impact on online repurchase intentions. Participants indicated that when brand stories embody these elements, they are more likely to feel loyal to the brand and repurchase online. Participant E summarized this sentiment: "A brand story that feels genuine and meaningful stays in my mind. It makes me want to support the brand again, especially if the story aligns with my values."

Acknowledgement

The successful completion of this research would not have been possible without the support, guidance, and encouragement of numerous individuals and organizations. I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to all those who contributed to this study in various capacities. I would most like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Khai Loon Lee, whose invaluable expertise, constructive feedback, and unwavering support have guided me throughout this research journey. His insightful suggestions and critical discussions have significantly enriched the quality of this study and enhanced my understanding of the research field.

References

- Anshu, K., Gaur, L., & Singh, G. (2022). Impact of customer experience on attitude and repurchase intention in online grocery retailing: A moderation mechanism of value Co-creation. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 64. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2021.102798>
- Atkinson, S. D., & Kang, J. (2022). New luxury: defining and evaluating emerging luxury trends through the lenses of consumption and personal values. *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, 31(3), 377–393. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JPBM-09-2020-3121>
- Banister, E., Roper, S., & Potavanich, T. (2020). Consumers' practices of everyday luxury. *Journal of Business Research*, 116, 458–466. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.12.003>
- Bao, W., Hudders, L., Yu, S., & Beuckels, E. (2024). Virtual luxury in the metaverse: NFT-enabled value recreation in luxury brands. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijresmar.2024.01.002>
- Bendell, B. L., & Kristal, E. K. (2023). Five naming strategies to help tell your organization's story. *Business Horizons*, 66(3), 387–404. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2023.02.004>
- Creevey, D., Coughlan, J., & O'Connor, C. (2022). Social media and luxury: A systematic literature review. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 24(1), 99–129. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijmr.12271>
- Dessart, L., & Pitardi, V. (2019). How stories generate consumer engagement: An exploratory study. *Journal of Business Research*, 104, 183–195. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.06.045>
- Dhote, T., & Kumar, V. (2019). Long-duration Storytelling: Study of Factors Influencing Retention Ability of Brands. *Journal of Creative Communications*, 14(1), 31–53. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0973258618822871>

- Ganassali, S., & Matysiewicz, J. (2021). Echoing the golden legends: storytelling archetypes and their impact on brand perceived value. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 37(5–6), 437–463. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0267257X.2020.1831577>
- Hasan, G., & Pattikawa, S. N. (2022). The Effect of Online Trust and Repurchase Intention on Consumer Behavior in Online Shopping at E-Commerce (Vol. 2, Issue 1). <https://journal.uib.ac.id/index.php/conescintech>
- Hong, J. H. (Jenny), Yang, J., Wooldridge, B. R., & Bhappu, A. D. (2022). Sharing consumers' brand storytelling: influence of consumers' storytelling on brand attitude via emotions and cognitions. *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, 31(2), 265–278. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JPBM-07-2019-2485>
- Huang, C., Zhuang, S., Li, Z., & Gao, J. (2022). Creating a Sincere Sustainable Brand: The Application of Aristotle's Rhetorical Theory to Green Brand Storytelling. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.897281>
- Jain, S., Mishra, S., & Saxena, G. (2023). Luxury customer's motivations to adopt gamification. *Marketing Intelligence and Planning*, 41(2), 156–170. <https://doi.org/10.1108/MIP-05-2022-0207>
- Jebarajakirthy, C., & Das, M. (2021). Uniqueness and luxury: A moderated mediation approach. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 60. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2021.102477>
- Kaczorowska, K., Conduit, J., & Goodman, S. (2024). Engaging through storytelling: the interplay of engagement with a story, cause, and charity. *Journal of Brand Management*, 31(3), 265–292. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41262-023-00343-8>
- Khan, S. A., Al Shamsi, I. R., Ghila, T. H., & Anjam, M. (2022). When luxury goes digital: does digital marketing moderate multi-level luxury values and consumer luxury brand-related behavior? *Cogent Business and Management*, 9(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2022.2135221>
- Kim, J. H. (2019). Imperative challenge for luxury brands: Generation Y consumers' perceptions of luxury fashion brands' e-commerce sites. *International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management*, 47(2), 220–244. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJRDM-06-2017-0128>
- Kumagai, K., & Nagasawa, S. (2022). Hedonic shopping experience, subjective well-being and brand luxury: a comparative discussion of physical stores and e-retailers. *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*, 34(9), 1809–1826. <https://doi.org/10.1108/APJML-04-2021-0256>
- Mandagi, D. W., & Sondakh, D. K. (2022). Exploring the Multi-Dimensionality of Tourism Destination Brand Story. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, 11(6), 2128–2142. <https://doi.org/10.46222/ajhtl.19770720.346>
- Manfreda, A., Melissen, F., Presbury, R., Richardson, S., & King, J. (2023). A model of luxury lodge experience quality. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 54, 486–499. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2023.02.007>
- Merlo, O., Eisingerich, A. B., & Hoyer, W. D. (2024). Immunizing customers against negative brand-related information. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 52(1), 140–163. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-023-00929-3>
- Phan Tan, L. (2023). Customer participation, positive electronic word-of-mouth intention and repurchase intention: The mediation effect of online brand community trust. *Journal of Marketing Communications*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13527266.2023.2177709>
- Sun, Z., Zhao, H., & Wang, Z. (2022). How does group-buying website quality for social commerce affect repurchase intention? Evidence from Chinese online users. *Asia*

Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics, 34(10), 2109–2129.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/APJML-04-2021-0231>

Vardeman, C. (2024). Advertising to Gen-Z college students with memes? A focus group study. *Qualitative Market Research*, 27(1), 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1108/QMR-05-2023-0073>

Woodside, A. G., & Fine, M. B. (2019). Sustainable fashion themes in luxury brand storytelling: The sustainability fashion research grid. *Journal of Global Fashion Marketing*, 10(2), 111–128. <https://doi.org/10.1080/20932685.2019.1573699>