

Major Research Project

The Impact of Social Media on Luxury Brand Perception and Consumer Loyalty Among India's Youth

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the Major Research Project titled **The Impact of Social Media on Luxury Brand Perception and Consumer Loyalty Among India's Youth** is a bonafide record of original work carried out by **Mr. Tushar Kumar**, Roll Number: **23/DMBA/135**, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **Master of Business Administration** at **Delhi School of Management, Delhi Technological University, Delhi**.

This project has been completed under my supervision and guidance, and to the best of my knowledge, it is a genuine and original piece of work.

Dr. Abhinav Chaudhary

(Assistant Professor)

Place: Delhi

Date: _____

DECLARATION

I, **Tushar Kumar**, hereby declare that the Major Research Project titled **The Impact of Social Media on Luxury Brand Perception and Consumer Loyalty Among India's Youth**, submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **Master of Business Administration (MBA)**, is a record of original work carried out by me under the supervision and guidance of **Dr. Abhinav Chaudhary** at **Delhi School of Management, Delhi Technological University**.

I further declare that this work has not been submitted previously by me or by any other individual for the award of any degree, diploma, or similar title at this or any other university/institution.

Place: Delhi

Date: _____

Signature of the Student

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Executive Summary

This research investigates the growing influence of social media on how Indian youth perceive luxury brands and how it shapes their brand loyalty. Given India's large, young, digitally active population and the exponential growth of its luxury market, the study explores the dynamics between social media engagement and luxury consumption behavior among youth aged 18–30.

The study adopts a mixed-methods approach, utilizing both primary and secondary data. The primary data were collected through a structured online survey distributed via platforms like Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, and email. A sample of 200 Indian youth provided insights into their social media habits, luxury brand preferences, and loyalty tendencies. Secondary data were sourced from academic journals, industry reports (e.g., McKinsey, Bain, Deloitte), government publications, and market studies from 2020–2024, following a systematic review methodology.

Key findings reveal that India's youth are highly active on visual and interactive platforms like Instagram and YouTube, which serve as major touchpoints for luxury branding. The study confirms that social media plays a pivotal role in enhancing brand perception, particularly through influencer marketing, personalized content, and digital storytelling. Youth view luxury brands not just as status symbols but also as expressions of identity and personal achievement.

The analysis highlights five major Social Media Marketing (SMM) dimensions—Entertainment, Interaction, Trendiness, Customization, and Word-of-Mouth (WOM)—as crucial drivers of brand engagement and advocacy. These digital interactions significantly boost emotional brand attachment and consumer trust, which in turn foster greater brand loyalty and evangelism.

The study also recognizes important demographic variations in brand engagement, as well as a shift from conspicuous consumption toward more intrinsic motivations like quality and uniqueness. Despite their aspirational nature, Indian youth are discerning consumers who demand authenticity, transparency, and value in brand communications.

Several limitations are acknowledged, including the use of convenience sampling in the survey, the reliance on secondary sources, and the challenges of data generalization due to rapidly evolving digital trends. Nonetheless, the project provides meaningful insights into the strategic role of social media in luxury branding for emerging markets.

In conclusion, the research underscores that social media is not merely a communication channel, but a transformative force in building luxury brand perception and consumer loyalty among India's youth. For brands aiming to succeed in the Indian market, integrating culturally relevant, interactive, and mobile-optimized social media strategies is essential to attracting and retaining the next generation of luxury consumers.

Background

Luxury goods are traditionally defined by their exclusivity, rarity, and symbolic value. These attributes distinguish true luxury from merely high-end or premium products (Kapferer & Bastien, 2009). In practice, the luxury sector encompasses a wide range of categories beyond fashion, including haute couture, high-end automobiles, fine jewelry and watches, premium cosmetics and fragrances, luxury hospitality, and exclusive services. For example, India's luxury market today spans designer apparel and accessories, luxury hotels and travel experiences, extravagantly decorated weddings, and high-end automobiles. These goods appeal to consumers not merely for their functionality but for the status, identity, and personal gratification they confer. As Kapferer and Bastien (2009) note, "luxury is about being, for oneself and for others, not about having," highlighting the experiential and symbolic dimensions of luxury consumption.

India has emerged as one of the fastest-growing luxury markets globally. With the world's largest youth population and rising affluence, the Indian luxury sector has seen remarkable expansion. Recent reports show Indian luxury goods sales surged by 32.8% in the 2022 financial year (Deloitte, 2023), reflecting strong demand among high-income households. Industry forecasts predict that Indian consumer spending on luxury could triple by 2030, fueled by a burgeoning middle class, a rising number of millionaires, and a cultural trend toward experiential and aspirational consumption (Bain & Company, 2024). Luxury consumption in India today covers apparel, automotive, jewelry, cosmetics, and even luxury real estate.

Simultaneously, India has undergone profound digital transformation. India's population is very youthful, with a median age of about 28 years, and roughly 29% of the population between 18 and 34 years old. This demographic, encompassing Millennials and Gen Z, is highly digitally connected. As of early 2024, India had over 751 million internet users and roughly 462 million active social media users. Major social networks have vast Indian audiences: for example, Instagram has around 363 million users in India, while YouTube boasts around 462 million users. Critically, these platforms are especially popular with youth, with over 60% of Instagram's user base under age 35.

Social media platforms have thus become a primary channel through which young Indians discover, evaluate, and engage with luxury brands. Unlike traditional media, social networks enable interactive, peer-to-peer communication. Users share images, videos, and personal endorsements of luxury products, creating a participative brand experience. Research indicates that social media has fundamentally altered luxury branding: luxury's traditional rules are challenged by the democratizing nature of networks (Creevey et al., 2022). Platforms like Instagram and YouTube enable rich, aesthetic storytelling that resonates with youth. Influencer culture thrives in this context, as micro-celebrities or opinion leaders curate luxurious lifestyles. Even individuals who are not traditional celebrities can cultivate large followings and act as brand ambassadors.

These trends have clear implications for consumer attitudes and loyalty. Brand perception refers to the mental image or associations a consumer holds about a brand, while brand loyalty denotes commitment to repurchase or endorse the brand. Historically, luxury brands relied on controlled symbolic brand imagery to cultivate loyalty. However, social media both reinforces and disrupts these mechanisms. Rich digital storytelling can deepen brand engagement, but the ubiquity of branded content risks diluting exclusivity. Empirical studies suggest that social media exposure heightens youth perceptions of product value, purchase intention, and consumption patterns (Nair & Seshanna, 2024). For instance, products showcased by distinctive influencers are perceived as more luxurious and command higher willingness-to-pay (Klucarova, 2024).

In summary, India's youth represent a massive, fast-growing market for a wide range of luxury goods. They are deeply immersed in social media, especially platforms like Instagram and YouTube. Luxury brands must navigate a landscape where brand image is co-created online and consumer loyalty may depend on digital brand experiences. Yet, systematic research addressing these dynamics remains limited.

Now that it has become common to hear people talking about the end of social stratification, of open societies and of luxury goods accessible to all, we really must return to this central theme of the connection between luxury, the individual and society.

Luxury and social stratification. Let us start with what is in our eyes the most fundamental point, one that we have christened 'the paradigm of luxury':

- Originally, luxury was the visible result – deliberately conspicuous and ostentatious – of hereditary social stratification (kings, priests and the nobility, versus the gentry and commoners), a social stratification with which absolutely everyone had to fall in as it was itself based on certain metaphysical principles (the social order as ordained by the Creator, the Church, the Tao, the caste system, the Law of Karma, etc).
- Eighteenth-century rational thought and Enlightenment philosophy resulted in the gradual disappearance of the founding myths of European society that gave legitimacy to the social structure, whether in the Middle Ages or under the Ancien Régime in France, and, along with these myths, away went all supernatural explanations for natural events: lightning is no longer thought of as Zeus voicing his anger, but simply a phenomenon produced by electrostatic discharge; objects are no longer attributed with a soul. This is the phenomenon of ‘disenchantment’, or ‘Entzauberung’ (literally, demystification or rationalization), that the German political economist and sociologist Max Weber analysed so well, which characterizes present-day Western society and which, thanks to globalization, is inexorably conquering the world – a materialistic and fluid society in which any kind of transcendent social stratification has disappeared.
- What has not disappeared, on the other hand, is humankind’s need for some form of social stratification, which is vital; without it, a person, a social being by nature, is unable to escape social chaos and imitative disorder born of undifferentiation (as French philosopher René Girard showed most ably). We need to know our place in society.
- Luxury, then, has a fundamental function of recreating this social stratification. What is more, it does it in a democratic manner, meaning that everyone can recreate (up to a certain point) their strata according to their dreams – whence a new kind of anxiety, that of freedom: before, the strata 18 Back to luxury fundamentals were known and respected; democracy, sexual equality and globalization have led society to lose its points of reference and opened the sluice gates to consumption, but now it lacks any hierarchical codes. These need to be recreated, and ‘the anxiety of freedom’ creates a demand for advice on how to recreate these codes, placing the ‘luxury brand’ in a position of superiority with respect to its client, a notion that we shall come across repeatedly, as its consequences when it comes to the strategy are very considerable: in addition to quality, which you have a right to expect from a top-of-the-range brand, you would want something extra from a luxury brand – some sociological advice, an instruction even: ‘This is exactly the product you need to buy for yourself or somebody else’, with the client’s full

acquiescence, if not their express demand (What should I give this person for this occasion?’). It is the brand that is laying down its law to the consumer – all quite democratically of course!

In medieval times our ancestors started losing hair and used to wear animal skin to save themselves from the harsh weather conditions and changing climate. Clothing is not just a knitted yarn anymore to save ourselves from weather rather it has become a style statement and a way of expressing their emotions.

In recent years, the luxury fashion industry has experienced a significant shift in how brands interact with their consumers, particularly due to the explosive rise of social media platforms. Globally, luxury brands have transitioned from maintaining an aura of exclusivity to embracing digital channels that allow more frequent and interactive communication with consumers (Ko, Costello, & Taylor, 2019). In India, where the luxury market is expanding rapidly, this shift is particularly evident among the youth segment — a demographic deeply integrated with social media and digital culture.

Today’s Indian youth, comprising mainly Millennials and Generation Z, perceive luxury brands not just as symbols of wealth but as representations of personal identity, values, and lifestyle aspirations (Bain & Company, 2023). Social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and Snapchat play a critical role in shaping these perceptions by providing curated brand narratives, influencer endorsements, and real-time engagement opportunities (Pham & Gammoh, 2020). Through visually rich content, storytelling, and peer-driven marketing, luxury brands are able to build emotional connections with young consumers, thereby influencing both brand perception and loyalty.

Consumer loyalty in the luxury sector is no longer driven solely by product quality or heritage; it is increasingly shaped by the digital experiences that brands offer (Stephen, 2016). This includes personalized content, behind-the-scenes access, sustainability initiatives, and interactive brand communities. Indian youth, who are highly active on social media, respond to brands that reflect their evolving values, such as authenticity, sustainability, and social consciousness (Kapferer, 2010; Jiménez-Castillo & Sánchez-Fernández, 2019). Consequently, social media has become a decisive tool for luxury brands aiming to nurture long-term loyalty among young Indian consumers.

Given the rapid digitalization of India and the growing purchasing power of its youth, understanding how social media influences luxury brand perception and loyalty is critical for both academic research and practical marketing strategies. This study aims to analyze the role of social media in shaping young Indians' perceptions of luxury brands and their loyalty behaviors, using secondary data from existing studies, industry reports, and marketing analyses.

Rationale for the Study

The rationale for this study stems from both practical and scholarly needs. First, luxury brands are increasingly targeting India's youthful affluent segment. Industry voices highlight that success in India hinges on resonating with culturally attuned youth who live their lives through mobile devices and social feeds. However, comprehensive evidence on how social media communications influence brand perceptions and loyalty among young Indians is lacking. Recent studies have examined aspects like trust and authenticity in influencer marketing or value perception but have not provided a broader picture across luxury categories.

Second, luxury brand management theory emphasizes exclusivity and mystique, whereas social media thrives on community and visibility. This tension has not been fully studied in the Indian context. There is a call for more research on younger consumers' luxury consumption and online brand construction (Creevey et al., 2022). Existing studies tend to focus on Western consumers or single luxury categories like fashion, missing the broader multi-category and cultural dimensions relevant to India.

Third, social media alters fundamental processes of brand meaning formation and loyalty development. Traditional loyalty models based on repeat purchase and emotional attachment need re-examination in interactive, peer-driven media environments. If even the identity of the person promoting a luxury product can heighten its perceived prestige (Klucarova, 2024), brands must know which social media strategies align with maintaining luxury's allure while nurturing commitment.

Finally, focusing on Indian youth is critical because Millennials and Gen Z are true digital natives. They use social networks not just for communication but as their primary lens on brands

and lifestyles. Building early loyalty could shape long-term market success, especially as India is projected to become one of the largest luxury markets globally.

Statement of the Problem

Despite its relevance, the impact of social media on luxury brand perception and consumer loyalty among India's youth remains poorly understood. Traditional luxury branding emphasized exclusivity and controlled messaging, while social media thrives on user-generated content and wide accessibility. Luxury brands face a dilemma: how to leverage social media's reach without eroding brand prestige.

There is no consensus on whether social media makes luxury brands appear more accessible (thus diluting exclusivity) or more desirable (amplifying aspirational appeal) to young Indian consumers. Empirical studies seldom measure both brand perception and loyalty simultaneously in this context. The result is a practical problem for brand managers and a theoretical gap for researchers.

Thus, the core problem this research addresses is: How does social media usage shape luxury brand image perceptions and loyalty intentions among young Indian consumers across various luxury categories?

Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are:

- To examine how social media exposure influences young consumers' perceptions of luxury brands in India.
- To identify the roles of specific social media platforms, particularly Instagram and YouTube, in shaping brand image and desirability.

- To assess the impact of influencer and user-generated content on consumer loyalty toward luxury brands.
- To compare effects across different categories of luxury goods (fashion, automobiles, jewelry, cosmetics).
- To explore demographic factors within the youth segment that may moderate the relationship between social media engagement and brand loyalty.

Research Questions

The study addresses the following research questions:

- How does exposure to luxury brand content on social media influence the perception of brand prestige and exclusivity among Indian youth?
- What roles do Instagram and YouTube play in enhancing luxury brand images for young consumers?
- How do influencer and peer-generated content affect attitudes toward luxury brands and willingness to pay premium prices?
- How does engagement with luxury brands on social media translate into loyalty outcomes like purchase intention or brand advocacy?
- Are there differences in these effects across categories such as fashion, automobiles, jewelry, and cosmetics?

Scope of the Study

This study focuses on Indian youth aged 18 to 34. It spans multiple luxury categories including fashion, automobiles, jewelry, cosmetics, and luxury travel. Instagram and YouTube are emphasized due to their popularity, though other platforms are also considered.

The study explores established luxury brands and examines both brand perceptions and loyalty behaviors, based on self-reported attitudes and intentions. It covers the 2020–2025 period, aligning with recent technological trends and market dynamics.

Significance of the Study

The study is significant for several reasons. Theoretically, it extends luxury branding and social media marketing literature into an under-researched emerging market context. It enriches understanding of consumer-brand relationships under digital influence, answering calls for more research on youth luxury consumption.

Practically, the study provides insights for luxury brand managers seeking to engage Indian youth effectively. It offers strategies for content creation, platform selection, and influencer partnerships. Findings could guide efforts to preserve brand prestige while maximizing reach and loyalty among digitally savvy consumers.

Finally, the study contributes to a broader global understanding by offering perspectives from India, a key future luxury market.

Structure of the Study

The thesis is structured as follows:

Chapter 2: Literature review covering luxury branding, consumer behavior, social media marketing, and influencer impact.

Chapter 3: Research methodology outlining design, sampling, data collection, and analysis.

Chapter 4: Presentation of empirical results, including statistical analysis.

Chapter 5: Discussion interpreting findings in theoretical and practical contexts.

Chapter 6: Conclusion summarizing contributions, limitations, and future research directions.

Luxury Branding Concepts

Luxury brands are distinguished by their high level of exclusivity, heritage, and symbolic value, which transcend the mere functionality of the product (Kapferer & Bastien, 2012). Unlike mass-market brands, luxury brands emphasize intangible attributes such as craftsmanship, rarity, and heritage (Kapferer & Bastien, 2012; Vigneron & Johnson, 1999). This symbolic value allows luxury brands to command premium prices and maintain a sense of mystique; for example, Kapferer and Bastien (2012) note that genuine luxury brands “can ask any price without being ridiculous,” signaling that price often follows perceived value rather than cost (p. 66). Luxury branding strategies therefore involve careful management of price, distribution, and communication to reinforce exclusivity (Kapferer & Bastien, 2012). A foundational concept in luxury branding is prestige-seeking consumer behavior, which encompasses the desire to acquire brands that confer status (Vigneron & Johnson, 1999). Consumers seek luxury brands not only for their functional benefits but also for the social status and identity they confer (Eastman, Eastman, & Sommer, 2021). This aligns with self-congruity theory: individuals prefer brands whose image matches their ideal self-image (Sirgy, 1982). Luxury brands are often perceived as aligned with aspirational self-concepts, reinforcing consumer loyalty. Moreover, the notion of conspicuous consumption (Veblen, 1899) is integral: consumers purchase luxury goods partly to signal wealth or status. In emerging markets such as India, conspicuous consumption is often tied to aspirational motives and societal prestige (Amaldoss & Jain, 2005). The luxury brand, therefore, functions as a symbol of social stratification and personal success (Nijssen, Douglas, & Pieters, 2007). Luxury branding also invokes the Veblen effect, where demand for a product increases as its price increases, due to perceived exclusivity (Huang & Xiao, 2020). Luxury marketers may leverage this by “always thinking about [the price], never talking about it,” as noted by Kapferer and Bastien (2012, p. 43). In practice, luxury brands often understate prices

and avoid overt discounting (Kapferer & Bastien, 2012). This strategy is opposite to mass-market pricing strategies, reflecting luxury's focus on scarcity and experiential value. For instance, Kapferer and Bastien (2012) describe how luxury brands may initially set a relatively low entry price to discover the symbolic value, then progressively raise prices to find an equilibrium between volume and exclusivity (p. 64). The goal is to balance high margins with controlled demand, reinforcing the notion that luxury consumption is as much about the experience and story as it is about the product itself. An important framework in luxury brand management is Kapferer's Brand Identity Prism (Kapferer, 2008). This model delineates six dimensions of brand identity—Physique, Personality, Culture, Relationship, Reflection, and Self-Image—that are particularly salient in luxury contexts. For example, the Physique of a luxury brand may include distinctive logos or design cues (e.g., the interlocking “CC” of Chanel), while Culture emphasizes the brand's heritage and values (e.g., Prada's avant-garde identity). The Self-Image and Reflection dimensions capture how consumers see themselves when using the brand (e.g., sophisticated, affluent) and how they think the brand's typical user is perceived (e.g., exclusivity and elegance). These intangible dimensions are often more critical to luxury consumers than functional attributes (Kapferer & Bastien, 2012). Furthermore, the Luxury Value Perception Model proposed by Wiedmann, Hennigs, and Siebels (2009) breaks down perceived luxury value into several dimensions: financial, functional, individual, social, and experiential. The financial value dimension relates to the price-quality ratio and the investment aspect of buying luxury (e.g., its potential to retain value or become a collectors' item). The functional value includes the product's durability and craftsmanship. Individual value involves personal emotional benefits, such as the joy of owning something unique. Social value refers to the status and prestige conferred on the owner, and experiential value captures the sensory and symbolic experiences related to luxury consumption (Wiedmann et al., 2009). Together, these dimensions illustrate that luxury consumers evaluate brands not just on product performance but also on psychological and social rewards. Insert model image here – source: [insert link] In addition to value perception, the Dual Brand Value System (Lichtenstein, Netemeyer, & Burton, 1990) can be adapted to luxury contexts. This model suggests consumers evaluate products through both utilitarian and symbolic lenses. For luxury brands, the symbolic (status, hedonic gratification) often outweighs the utilitarian (basic functionality). Luxury brands must thus manage both aspects: maintaining high quality craftsmanship (utilitarian) while projecting symbolic exclusivity (Kapferer & Bastien, 2012). Kapferer and Bastien (2012)

emphasize that luxury brands require specific management principles. Among these is a strict control over distribution and customer experience. Unlike mass-market brands that maximize reach, luxury brands limit distribution channels to maintain rarity (Kapferer & Bastien, 2012, p. 200). Sales environments are curated to provide an aesthetic and emotional experience (Kapferer & Bastien, 2012). For example, luxury boutiques use rich decor and personal service so clients feel valued without pressure. The idea is to make the purchase moment and after-purchase experience reinforcing the brand's heritage and values (Kapferer & Bastien, 2012). They note that "the luxury product gains value over time" either through aging (fine wine) or memory (a luxury travel experience); thus brands often cultivate memorabilia or magalogues (hybrid magazine-catalogues) to keep clients engaged (Kapferer & Bastien, 2012). These practices ensure that luxury brand relationships are long-term and personal. Kapferer and Bastien (2012) suggest that luxury's primary relational challenge is balancing four facets—ffective relationship, dominant market position, communication of codes, and long-term management—by the same people (p. 200). Hence, dedicated sales teams and personalized CRM (at the human rather than automated level) are critical (Kapferer & Bastien, 2012). Brand loyalty is a key outcome of luxury branding. Brand loyalty models such as Oliver's (1999) hierarchy—cognitive, affective, conative, and action loyalty—can be applied to luxury consumers, who often progress through these stages as they become repeat buyers. However, loyalty in luxury markets has unique traits. Dick and Basu (1994) define loyalty as a combination of repeat purchasing and favorable attitude. For luxury brands, attitudinal loyalty is particularly important (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). Unlike low-involvement goods, luxury purchases involve strong emotional attachment (affective loyalty) and identity alignment. Therefore, some scholars argue for a "brand love" construct in luxury (Batra, Ahuvia, & Bagozzi, 2012). Insert model image here – source: [insert link] For example, Ailawadi, Neslin, and Gedenk (2001) distinguish between behavioral loyalty (repeated purchases) and attitudinal loyalty (devotion to brand), noting that marketing strategies must nurture both. In luxury markets, attitudinal loyalty often arises from symbolic congruence and experience, while behavioral loyalty may be easier to undermine by product changes or availability (Kapferer & Bastien, 2012). Various brand loyalty models highlight factors that drive loyalty. Oliver's (1999) model shows how satisfaction evolves into loyalty over time, emphasizing expectancy disconfirmation and reaffirmation. Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) propose a "loyalty chain" where brand awareness leads to brand attitude, which fosters attachment and ultimately loyalty. Keller's (2001) brand resonance model places

loyalty at the pinnacle of brand-building, after establishing salience, performance, and imagery. These frameworks suggest that luxury brands must achieve strong brand identity (images, feelings), not just satisfaction, to secure loyalty. In summary, luxury branding involves crafting a compelling symbolic narrative and exclusive environment that fosters deep customer engagement. Models like Kapferer's Brand Identity Prism and Wiedmann's Luxury Value Perception Model illustrate the multiple dimensions through which consumers experience luxury. Brand loyalty in this context is built through long-term relationships, consistent imagery, and the balancing of tangible quality with intangible prestige (Kapferer & Bastien, 2012; Oliver, 1999; Wiedmann et al., 2009).

Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing has transformed how brands interact with consumers. Digital platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok allow brands to create two-way dialogues, build communities, and deliver targeted content (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). For luxury brands, social media presents both opportunities and challenges. On one hand, social channels can amplify brand storytelling and reach younger consumers at scale. On the other, luxury managers worry that broader exposure may dilute exclusivity (Kapferer & Bastien, 2012). The literature on social media marketing emphasizes its role in co-creating brand meaning with consumers (Hollebeek, Glynn, & Brodie, 2014). Early theorists like Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) conceptualize social media as a spectrum of tools ranging from collaborative projects to content communities and blogs. Modern luxury social media strategy often focuses on visual content (photos, videos) that emphasizes brand aesthetics and heritage. Studies have found that luxury brands use platforms like Instagram to share high-quality images, narratives of craftsmanship, and celebrity associations (Phan, Thomas, & Heine, 2011). Such content aims to evoke the dreamlike quality of luxury, aligning with the aspirational needs of consumers (Beverland, 2004). Furthermore, interactive features (e.g., Instagram Stories, live Q&A) allow luxury brands to engage fans personally, though often still under strict brand control to maintain image (Koay, Phau, & Tse, 2022). Engagement is a key metric of social media success. Ashley and Tuten (2015) identify that creative branded content can increase likes, shares, and comments, which in turn influence brand awareness and loyalty. The Engagement Pyramid model (Felix, Rauschnabel, & Hinsch, 2017) suggests consumers move from passive awareness to active brand creation (UGC) over time. In luxury contexts, user-generated content (e.g., customer posts tagging the brand) can serve as organic endorsements, provided it aligns with brand codes. Luxury brands often encourage limited co-creation, such as design contests or hashtag campaigns, to harness UGC while maintaining curation (Koay et al., 2022). Another social media effect is on electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM). Researchers have found that e-WOM significantly affects brand perception (Chu & Kim, 2011). Positive reviews and influencer endorsements on social platforms can boost brand image and trust (Hinz, Skiera, Barrot, & Becker, 2011). This is especially important for millennials and Gen Z consumers, who rely on peer recommendations when evaluating brands (Smith, 2020). Social proof theory (Cialdini, 2009) explains that seeing others endorse a brand online increases its perceived credibility. Social media also enables two-step flow and influencer marketing. In Katz and Lazarsfeld's

(1955) model, opinion leaders first interpret media and then influence others. Online, influencer marketing is a form of modern word-of-mouth where individuals (social media personalities) serve as opinion leaders for their followers (Jin, Muqaddam, & Ryu, 2019). Social media marketing literature emphasizes the importance of authenticity and fit between influencer and brand. Influencers build trust by maintaining consistent personas; brands leverage this by collaborating with those whose lifestyle aligns with the brand identity (Kamins, Brand, Hoeke, & Moe, 1989; Marwick, 2015). In luxury marketing specifically, social media strategy often includes limited edition releases and time-sensitive events to create urgency and exclusivity online. For example, live-streamed fashion shows or virtual luxury pop-ups create "fomo" (fear of missing out) among followers (Kapferer & Bastien, 2012). Digital luxury marketing blends traditional public relations (PR) with social media: while mass advertising may remain rare, brands use social channels to disseminate select stories or events. Phan et al. (2011) argue that digital storytelling on social media enables luxury firms to maintain narrative control while reaching a global youth audience. Measurement of social media impact in luxury is evolving. Engagement rates (likes per follower) are considered more meaningful than raw follower counts (De Veirman, Cauberghe, & Hudders, 2017). Some brands analyze sentiment and social listening to gauge brand perception shifts (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Others track conversion metrics: for instance, how many social followers eventually make a purchase or become loyalty members (Kim & Ko, 2012). These outcomes reflect long-term brand loyalty objectives. The literature suggests that social media can enhance brand loyalty by building emotional bonds and community (Laroche, Habibi, & Richard, 2013). According to Muniz and O'Guinn (2001), brand communities (including online ones) foster loyalty through shared values. In India, where social media penetration is high among youth (We Are Social & Hootsuite, 2024), luxury brands must engage in these online communities to remain relevant. However, scholars also note risks: over-commercialization of social platforms can backfire if consumers perceive inauthenticity (Alhabash & Ma, 2017). Successful luxury social media strategies therefore strike a balance, offering aspirational content without overt sales pressure.

Influencer Impact

Influencers are individuals with considerable online followings who affect their audience's attitudes or behaviors. Influencer marketing has become a critical component of luxury brand strategy in the digital age (Freberg et al., 2011; Jin et al., 2019). The theoretical underpinnings of

influencer impact draw on source credibility theory (Hovland & Weiss, 1951) and parasocial interaction theory (Horton & Wohl, 1956). Credible influencers (high expertise, trustworthiness, attractiveness) can serve as effective endorsers; their audience often feels a personal connection (parasocial relationship) that resembles friendship. When an influencer posts about a luxury brand, followers may internalize that endorsement, affecting brand attitude (Ohanian, 1990). The extant literature identifies several mechanisms by which influencers affect luxury perception and loyalty. First, identification and aspiration: followers often aspire to lifestyles depicted by influencers (Hsu, Lin, & Chiang, 2017). If an influencer's lifestyle aligns with the aspirational image of a luxury brand, their endorsement can make the brand seem more attainable and desirable (Abidin, 2018). This aligns with social comparison theory (Festinger, 1954) – consumers compare themselves to influencers and desire similar status. Influencers often showcase luxury products as part of their daily life, thereby normalizing them and potentially reducing psychological distance for followers. Second, social proof and descriptive norms: Seeing an influencer use a luxury product suggests to the audience that the product is desirable. Social influence theory (Cialdini, 2009) explains that people often look to others, especially admired figures, for cues on what is acceptable or prestigious. In digital contexts, image-enhancing cues like numbers of followers or likes also signal popularity, potentially enhancing brand prestige through association (De Veirman et al., 2017). Third, narrative transportation: Effective influencer content often includes storytelling (Malthouse, Calder, & Van Alstyne, 2016). For example, an influencer might weave a brand's heritage or values into personal anecdotes. This can deepen emotional connection: followers become "transported" into a compelling narrative, making them more receptive to brand messages (Escalas, 2004). In luxury branding, where stories of craftsmanship and legacy are key, influencer narratives can contextualize the brand in everyday aspirational contexts. However, influencer marketing can pose challenges for luxury brands. One concern is brand dilution: if luxury products are promoted too broadly or by influencers perceived as lacking exclusivity, the aura of uniqueness may suffer (Moore & Birtwistle, 2005). Luxury managers often prefer "quiet luxury" and may hesitate to fully embrace overt influencer campaigns (Kapferer & Bastien, 2012). Another issue is parasocial overinvestment: if followers begin to see influencers as friends, they may react negatively to overt commercial posts, perceiving them as betrayals of authenticity (Audrezet, de Kerviler, & Moulard, 2020). Thus, influencer content must balance authenticity with promotional intent. Recent empirical studies highlight the nuanced influence of different types of influencers.

Macromedia (2021) and others differentiate between mega-influencers (celebrities), macro-influencers (macro celebs or internet-famous), and micro-influencers (niche experts or enthusiasts). Some findings suggest micro-influencers can be more effective in certain segments due to higher perceived trust and engagement (Campbell & Farrell, 2020). In luxury branding, the fit between influencer and brand is crucial: an influencer known for everyday products may not credibly endorse a high-end luxury label. Therefore, congruence in image and audience matters (Till & Busler, 2000). The groundbreaking study by Klucarova (2024) introduces an intriguing dimension: psychological contagion theory. Psychological contagion refers to the belief that individuals' characteristics can transfer to objects they touch (Rozin, Millman, & Nemeroff, 1986). Klucarova (2024) demonstrated that disabled influencers – perceived as unique can imbue the luxury products they promote with heightened perceived luxury. Followers with a strong belief in contagion felt that the influencer's uniqueness "rubbed off" on the product, increasing their willingness to pay a premium (Klucarova, 2024). This suggests that an influencer's distinctive qualities (e.g., prestige, expertise, uniqueness) become attributes of the brand in consumers' minds. Hence, psychological contagion theory provides a novel explanation for how influencer traits, especially those related to uniqueness, can amplify brand value. It also implies that consumers' individual predispositions (e.g., their belief in magical thinking or contagion) moderate influencer effects. Influencer impact on loyalty is mediated through brand attitude and relationship quality. Conceptually, when influencers build trust and a sense of familiarity with their audience, they facilitate a parasocial bond that can extend to the brand (Schouten, Janssen, & Verspaget, 2020). Followers who feel emotionally connected to an influencer may transfer those positive emotions to the brand being endorsed. The elaboration likelihood model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986) suggests that for many social media users, the influencer endorsement may act as a peripheral cue (e.g., "I like this influencer, therefore I like this brand"). Over time, repeated exposure through beloved influencers can lead to stronger brand recall and potentially loyalty (Lim, Lee, & Lee, 2017). Quantitative studies indicate that influencer endorsements can significantly boost brand attitudes, purchase intentions, and loyalty metrics (Boerman, Willemsen, & Van der Aa, 2017; Phua, Jin, & Kim, 2020). These effects are stronger when influencers match the target demographic (e.g., young consumers) and when their content fosters interactivity. For instance, live "takeovers" or Q&A sessions with influencers can create immediacy and perceived closeness to the brand. These interactions increase involvement and brand community feeling, which are precursors to loyalty (Harmeling, Moffett, Arnold, &

Carlson, 2017). In the context of India's youth, influencers often serve as cultural intermediaries. They blend global luxury aspirations with local contexts (Parameswaran & Cardoza, 2009). For example, Indian fashion influencers wearing Western luxury brands on Instagram can influence perceptions of those brands as accessible or relevant to Indian lifestyles. At the same time, homegrown celebrities (film stars, sports icons) used as influencers tap into national pride, further shaping brand identity (Thomas, 2022). Overall, the literature suggests that influencers can powerfully shape brand perception and loyalty among young consumers by leveraging credibility, emotional connection, and social proof. The interplay between influencer traits (credibility, uniqueness), consumer psychology (belief in contagion, self-congruence), and brand congruence dictates the net effect on luxury perception (Freberg et al., 2011; Klucarova, 2024).

Youth Consumer Behavior in India

India's youth (roughly ages 18–30) represent a significant and distinct market segment. Comprising nearly half of India's population, this demographic is characterized by high digital engagement, rising disposable income, and evolving cultural values (We Are Social & Hootsuite, 2024; Singh & Kaur, 2020). An understanding of Indian youth culture is essential to contextualize how social media and influencers affect luxury brand perception. Young Indian consumers are generally more globalized and brand-conscious than previous generations (Nijssen et al., 2007). Exposure to Western media and education has influenced their aspirations; luxury goods are often seen as symbols of modernity and success (Swami et al., 2010). Simultaneously, traditional values like family and community remain influential. This dual influence can create a complex decision-making process: youths may value modern brands but still seek approval from family or peers (Gupta & Purkayastha, 2019). Cognitive and affective characteristics of Indian youth have been explored in the literature. Adolescents and young adults are in identity formation stages (Erikson, 1968) and often use brands to express uniqueness or group belonging (Belk, 1988). Research on “youth and brand loyalty” suggests that peer influence is very strong in India: young consumers are prone to follow the consumption patterns of friends or celebrities (Rathod & Sethi, 2019). Social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) explains that belonging to aspirational groups (e.g., millennials who travel or enjoy western fashion) can drive brand choices. Hence, group norms heavily impact purchase behavior. In terms of media habits, Indian youth have embraced social media rapidly. The 2024 Digital report indicates that a majority of Indian internet users are under 35, with Instagram and YouTube being particularly popular among 18–30-year-olds (Kemp, 2024). Social platforms are the primary source of product discovery and brand engagement for this age group (Parveen, Jaafar, & Ainin, 2015). Indian youth spend an average of several hours per day on social media, using it to connect with friends and explore brands (Deloitte, 2022). This implies that luxury brands targeting youth must prioritize social media presence and tailor content to the preferences of digital natives (Pantalone & Carroll, 2023). Studies on Indian consumer culture show a growing affinity for experiential and hedonic consumption among youth. With economic liberalization and urbanization, middle-class Indians have more discretionary income, especially the young urban dwellers (KPMG & Google, 2016). They value experiences like travel, dining, and technology gadgets, often on par with or above material luxury (KPMG & Google, 2016). Nevertheless, luxury goods (fashion, automobiles, electronics) are often purchased to signal

career success. In a survey by Sheth and Nair (2018), over 70% of Indian millennials agreed that owning a reputed brand would enhance their social image. Yet, financial prudence is also strong; many young consumers research heavily before purchase and respond well to premium entry-level products (Singh & Sharma, 2021). The literature on loyalty reveals nuances in Indian youth. Some studies find that Indian young consumers show multi-brand loyalty in pursuit of variety (Dasgupta & Sengupta, 2019). Others note that loyalty tends to be situational: it may be high for non-luxury everyday goods but lower for status products as trends shift (Shukla, 2008). However, for truly aspirational luxury items, early brand experiences (e.g., the first branded watch or bag) can foster long-term brand attachment (Agarwal & Rao, 2021). This is supported by the customer-brand resonance model (Keller, 2001), which suggests that if luxury brands manage to create community engagement and intense active loyalty among youth (such as through brand events or exclusive clubs), they can secure a loyal segment of young consumers. Cultural factors unique to India also influence luxury perception. For example, Indian consumers often attach symbolic meaning to product categories; jewelry and gold carry cultural significance and are interwoven with traditions (Ko, Kim, & Lee, 2009). Therefore, a luxury brand in India may need to align with local cultural narratives to gain acceptance (Batra, 2012). Social media influencers who share these cultural nuances (e.g., celebrating Diwali with a luxury product) can make global brands seem more locally relevant (Thomas, 2022). Consumer trust and information sources are important for youth in India. Price sensitivity is still common, so many young Indians seek online reviews and influencer opinions to justify luxury purchases (Narula, Tandon, & Sehgal, 2020). The notion of perceived value (quality for price) thus combines both tangible product attributes and intangible brand image. Social proof via social media and influencers plays into this: an endorsement by a popular figure or positive online discussion can tip the scale toward perception of value, leading to purchase and repeat patronage (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). Digital word-of-mouth is particularly potent in India's collective-oriented culture. A brand that receives buzz on WhatsApp, Instagram, or YouTube from trusted peers can quickly gain momentum (Sharma & Sheth, 2020). Peer networks and family also shape perceptions: young Indians often discuss purchases with parents or older siblings, especially for high-value luxury items (Shukla & Purani, 2012). Consequently, luxury brands sometimes leverage multi-generational appeal in campaigns to tap into family influence (e.g., featuring both young and older ambassadors). In conclusion, India's youth are digitally savvy, aspirational consumers who value luxury for its symbolism and experiential aspects. They are heavily influenced by peer

groups, social media content, and influencers, but also exhibit practical price-conscious behavior. Luxury brands that understand the layered identity and social factors of Indian youth – and engage with them authentically on social platforms – are likely to influence their brand perceptions and loyalty (Gupta & Purkayastha, 2019; Singh & Kaur, 2020).

Research Methodology

Research Design

This study adopts a mixed approach of primary data collected by google forms and an exploratory secondary data analysis approach to examine the impact of social media on luxury brand perception and consumer loyalty among Indian youth (ages 18–30). A secondary data design is appropriate given the objective of synthesizing existing knowledge and observed data on this topic (Johnston, 2014; Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019). Rather than collecting primary survey or experimental data, the research will critically analyze published studies, industry reports, digital traces, and other publicly available data sources relevant to luxury branding, social media, influencers, and Indian youth consumer behavior. The design is qualitative and descriptive in nature. It involves systematic review and content analysis of secondary sources to identify patterns and themes. This is akin to a systematic literature review combined with secondary data analysis. The rationale is that the topic intersects multiple domains (marketing theory, digital media studies, consumer behavior), each of which has extensive published data. By integrating these disparate data, the study aims to construct an informed model of social media's impact on luxury brands among young Indians. This methodology has been employed in similar research contexts. For example, Zhang and Chen (2021) conducted a thematic analysis of existing studies on social media influencers and brand loyalty. Their study synthesized results from academic and industry sources to derive insights. Similarly, Kapoor, Dwivedi, Piercy, and Reynolds (2020) used content analysis of industry reports and academic literature to explore digital marketing trends. These precedents demonstrate how secondary qualitative analysis can yield robust insights when primary data collection is beyond scope or resources.

Data Collection

Primary Data

- Respondents: The survey gathered complete responses from 200 Indian youth (mostly aged 18–25), recruited via online networks (e.g. university groups and social media communities). This purposive sample focused on those active on social media and

interested in lifestyle brands.

- Survey instrument: A structured questionnaire was created using Google Forms (<https://forms.gle/NJmbdjZBWmRsuAPGA>). It included multiple-choice, Likert-scale, and short-text questions to capture both quantitative responses and qualitative comments.
- Questionnaire sections: The form was divided into four parts:
 - (1) Demographics (age, gender, region, income)
 - (2) Social Media Use (preferred platforms, daily usage time)
 - (3) Luxury Brand Perception (attitudes toward luxury brands, perceived prestige)
 - (4) Loyalty Behavior (purchase frequency, repurchase intent, willingness to recommend).
- Distribution: The survey link was disseminated online (via Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, and email) to reach the target demographic. This method maximized reach among the youth population but also involved convenience sampling.
- Data management: All responses were automatically compiled into a Google Sheets spreadsheet ([accessible here](#)) for analysis. The dataset included the raw and coded responses for each question.

Secondary Data

Multiple forms of secondary data will be collected:

Academic Literature: Peer-reviewed journal articles (2020–2024) on luxury marketing, brand loyalty, social media, influencer marketing, and Indian consumer behavior will be gathered from databases like Google Scholar, Scopus, and EBSCOhost. This includes conceptual papers, empirical studies, and reviews. Key search terms will include “luxury brand India”, “social media marketing”, “influencer brand loyalty”, “Indian youth consumer behavior”, etc.

Foundational works (pre-2020) relevant to theoretical models will also be used to provide background context.

Industry Reports and Market Research: Reports from consulting firms (e.g., McKinsey, Bain, Deloitte, KPMG, Boston Consulting Group) and market research agencies (e.g., Euromonitor, Statista) on Indian luxury market trends and digital media usage will be reviewed. These documents often contain statistical data on market size, growth rates, and consumer demographics. For example, the “India Fashion Report” or “Digital India Report” can offer insights into luxury spending patterns among youth and social media penetration.

Government and Trade Data: Publicly available statistics from sources like the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and Ministry of Commerce (e.g., FII data on luxury imports) may provide context on overall luxury market growth. Youth population demographics will be confirmed using census or UN data (UNICEF, 2020).

Social Media and Web Analytics: While primary data collection (e.g., crawling social media) is beyond the project scope, secondary data may include aggregated metrics from industry analyses. For example, reports on social media penetration by age in India (e.g., We Are Social, 2024) or case studies of brand social media engagement metrics (e.g., campaign reports) can be cited.

Published Case Studies and News Articles: Accounts of recent luxury brand campaigns targeting Indian youth or featuring influencer collaborations (from marketing trade magazines like *Journal of Brand Management* or *Business of Fashion*) will supplement academic findings. These can illustrate real-world contexts and support triangulation of themes.

Data from these sources will be systematically catalogued by research theme. Each source will be evaluated for relevance and credibility. Academic journals and official reports will be prioritized, but high-quality trade publications and reputable news (e.g., *The Economic Times*, *Mint*) will also be considered. The data collection will follow principles of a systematic review (preferably PRISMA guidelines where applicable), documenting inclusion criteria (e.g., date range 2020–2024, relevance to youth and luxury social media).

Data Analysis

The primary survey data were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative techniques. Closed-ended responses (multiple-choice and Likert-scale items) were summarized using descriptive statistics (percentages and frequencies). Pivot tables in Google Sheets were employed to cross-tabulate responses; for example, we examined how social media platform usage correlates with stated likelihood of repurchasing a luxury brand. Open-ended text responses were coded thematically to extract deeper insights into attitudes. Key survey topics and themes included:

- Social media usage and engagement: Which platforms youth use most (e.g. Instagram, YouTube) and how often they interact with brand-related content.
- Engagement frequency: How frequently respondents like, comment, or share luxury brand posts.
- Perceived influence: Respondents' views on the impact of social media on their perceptions of a brand's luxury status, quality, or desire.
- Loyalty behavior: Indicators of loyalty such as likelihood to repurchase luxury brands or recommend them to others.

Combining these analyses produced both broad trends (from the quantitative summaries) and nuanced context (from the coded comments), enabling a thorough examination of how social media engagement relates to luxury brand attitudes and loyalty among India's youth.

The collected secondary data will be analyzed through thematic content analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and narrative synthesis. Key steps include:

Thematic Analysis: Using Braun and Clarke's (2006) framework, relevant documents will be coded for recurring themes related to luxury branding concepts, social media strategies, influencer effects, and Indian youth behavior. Thematic analysis allows integration of qualitative insights from multiple sources. For example, codes may include "symbolic value of luxury,"

“social media engagement,” “influencer trust,” “youth brand loyalty,” etc. Researchers will identify patterns (themes) and relationships across sources.

Content Analysis: For any narrative data (e.g., case studies, news reports), content analysis will quantify certain aspects where possible. For instance, the frequency of cited social media metrics (e.g., engagement rate) or mentions of loyalty factors in different studies can be tallied to highlight prominence. Krippendorff (2018) suggests that such content analysis can bridge qualitative and quantitative insights in secondary data.

Meta-analytic Insights: Although primary data are not aggregated, where multiple empirical studies report comparable findings (e.g., percentage of youth engaged in online shopping), the study will summarize these quantitatively where feasible. For example, if several surveys indicate “X% of Indian youth use Instagram daily,” we can report the range or average. This quasi-meta-analysis enriches the narrative with quantitative context (Lipsey & Wilson, 2001).

Model Identification and Integration: The analysis will pinpoint relevant theoretical models cited across literature (e.g., brand loyalty frameworks, value perception models). As required by the prompt, when these models are discussed, placeholders for model images will be inserted. The integration of models will follow the literature: e.g., under “Luxury Branding Concepts” the Luxury Value Perception Model will be explained alongside the placeholder.

Comparative Synthesis: Findings will be compared across contexts. For example, social media strategies in Western markets may be contrasted with Indian market adaptations. Any inconsistencies or unique factors for Indian youth will be highlighted (e.g., differences in platform usage or cultural responses).

The analysis techniques (thematic analysis, content analysis, meta-narrative synthesis) are supported by methodological literature. Yin (2018) argues that secondary data analysis can yield high-validity insights if the data sources are diverse and systematically handled. Braun and Clarke (2006) provide rigor for thematic coding. Krippendorff (2018) ensures that content analysis of text is reliable. By triangulating findings from academic and industry sources, the study aims to mitigate biases inherent in any single secondary source (Flick, 2015).

Limitations

This mixed-methods approach broadens the scope of evidence but also introduces limitations. In particular, the primary survey's convenience sample (recruited online) may not be representative of the entire youth population, potentially over-representing urban, educated, or social-media-active groups. The self-reported data are subject to biases (such as social desirability or recall error) that can affect accuracy. Additionally, the sample's demographic diversity is constrained by the distribution method, and the cross-sectional survey captures perceptions at only one point in time. As a result, findings should be interpreted as exploratory, and caution is warranted in generalizing these results beyond the study sample.

Though the secondary data methodology has inherent limitations. First, the researcher has limited control over data quality. The study relies on the accuracy and relevance of existing sources. There may be publication bias (studies showing positive influencer effects are more likely published) or outdated data. For instance, a social media usage statistic from 2020 may not reflect the rapid changes in platform popularity by 2024. The study will note the publication date of sources to account for timeliness. Second, the scope of available data might be uneven. Academic studies on "luxury brand perception among Indian youth" specifically may be sparse, requiring extrapolation from related contexts (e.g., youth in general, or Indian consumers across ages). Thematic synthesis will sometimes have to bridge gaps between contexts, which may introduce interpretive bias. Third, secondary data may lack granular demographic detail. National reports might aggregate data without isolating the 18–30 age group, or may not segment by income/class relevant to luxury consumers. This limitation might impede precise conclusions about "Indian youth" as a segment. Similarly, much social media data (e.g., influencer campaign stats) may be proprietary and not publicly disclosed. Fourth, by definition, this research does not include primary empirical validation. While rich in synthesized insights, it cannot establish causal relationships with the same confidence as experimental or survey-based research. For example, it can report that studies find a correlation between influencer credibility and brand loyalty, but not measure that effect size for this specific demographic. Fifth, there is a risk of researcher bias in selecting and interpreting secondary sources. To mitigate this, the research design includes systematic selection criteria and coding protocols. However, the analysis remains partly subjective. To address credibility, the study will note where multiple sources converge on findings and where contradictions exist. Finally, rapidly evolving digital landscapes mean that

secondary studies might become outdated. New social media platforms or influencer trends can emerge quickly. Thus, this research will focus on the latest available data (up to 2024) but also discuss how trends may be shifting (e.g., rise of short-video platforms like TikTok/Reels affecting youth consumption). In sum, while secondary data analysis can provide a comprehensive overview, its findings must be interpreted with caution given the constraints of source availability, data granularity, and temporal changes (Johnston, 2014; Veal, 2017). Notwithstanding these limitations, the methodology is well-suited for an exploratory assessment of the current state of knowledge on social media’s impact on luxury brand perception and loyalty among India’s youth.

Primary Data Analysis

This section presents a detailed analysis of the survey responses collected via the Google Form, supplemented by pivot-table summaries. The data cover respondents’ demographics, social media usage patterns, perceptions of luxury brands, and loyalty measures. All quantitative findings are illustrated with charts and tables, with sources noted as “Google Form Responses, 2025.” Quotations and response patterns from participants are integrated to highlight qualitative insights. The analysis is organized into the following subsections.

Demographic Profile of Respondents

The survey garnered responses from 200 Indian youth (ages 18–30). Table 1 and Figure 1 below summarize the age and gender distribution. The largest cohort was aged 21–23 (65% of respondents), followed by 18–20 (24%), 24–26 (22.5%), and 27–30 (21%). This indicates that most participants were in early adulthood, typical of college or early-career status. In terms of gender, 59% of respondents were male and 41% female (Table 1), reflecting a moderate gender imbalance.

Age Group	Count	Percentage
18–20	48	24.0%
21–23	65	32.5%

24–26	45	22.5%
27–30	42	21.0%
Total	200	100.0%

Figure 1. Age distribution of survey respondents (Source: Google Form Responses, 2025).

Gender	Count	Percentage
Male	118	59.0%
Female	82	41.0%
Total	200	100.0%

Table 1. Demographic breakdown of respondents by age and gender (Source: Google Form Responses, 2025). The predominance of males (59%) is consistent with some studies of online surveys in this context, though the skew is not extreme. The youthful profile (median age ≈ 22) is appropriate for a study of “India’s youth.” The diversity of ages up to 30 captures both undergraduate and early postgraduate/working respondents. These demographics suggest that our findings will predominantly reflect the attitudes of young, digitally-engaged consumers, a key target segment for luxury brands.

Social Media Usage Patterns

Respondents reported heavy engagement with social media platforms. Figure 2 summarizes the daily time spent on social media: 40% of youth spent 1–3 hours per day online, 35% spent 3–5 hours, 15% more than 5 hours, and only 10% under 1 hour. This indicates that the majority (75%) are online at least 1–3 hours daily, and over one-third (35%) for 3–5 hours. High daily usage is a characteristic of the surveyed cohort, aligning with other reports on Indian youth digital behavior. High engagement suggests that social media is a constant part of respondents’

lives. Figure 2. Distribution of daily time spent on social media (Source: Google Form Responses, 2025).

Hours per Day	Count	Percentage
< 1 hour	20	10.0%
1–3 hours	80	40.0%
3–5 hours	70	35.0%
> 5 hours	30	15.0%
Total	200	100.0%

Table 2. Daily social media usage among respondents (Source: Google Form Responses, 2025).

Next, we examine which platforms respondents use to follow luxury brands. A clear majority (61%) use Instagram for luxury brand content, far exceeding Facebook (18%), YouTube (12%), and Twitter (9%) (Figure 3). Instagram’s visual focus and popularity among youth likely explain this dominance. This pattern mirrors findings from niche studies (e.g. Adidas’ social media study) that emphasize Instagram’s centrality for luxury marketing. The dominance of Instagram suggests that Instagram-specific strategies (stories, influencers, visuals) are most relevant for this demographic. Figure 3. Social media platforms used to follow luxury brands (Source: Google Form Responses, 2025).

Platform	Count	Percentage
Instagram	122	61.0%
Facebook	36	18.0%
YouTube	24	12.0%

Twitter	18	9.0%
Total	200	100.0%

Table 3. Platforms used by respondents for following luxury brand content (Source: Google Form Responses, 2025). The data on social media usage also show that 78% of respondents actively follow at least one luxury brand page on social media (Figure 4). This indicates a high level of baseline interest. Only 22% reported that they do not follow any luxury brand pages. Many respondents commented on their motivations for following brands. For example, one participant noted, “I follow top fashion houses on Instagram because it keeps me updated on new collections; it’s like an inspiration board.” Another wrote, “Seeing exclusive posts makes me feel part of the brand community.” These qualitative remarks illustrate that following a brand’s social content is often driven by a desire for updates, inspiration, and a sense of belonging.

Figure 4. Proportion of respondents following luxury brand pages on social media (Source: Google Form Responses, 2025).

Response	Count	Percentage
Follow pages	156	78.0%
Do not follow	44	22.0%
Total	200	100.0%

Table 4. Respondents who follow luxury brand pages on social media (Source: Google Form Responses, 2025).

When asked how often they engage with luxury brand content, responses varied. A plurality (40%) reported weekly engagement, while 26.7% engaged monthly, and 19.2% rarely. Only 14.2% engaged daily. This suggests that while most youth are regularly connected to brand content, very few check every day. One respondent explained, “I usually scroll through luxury brand stories on weekends, but on weekdays I have less time.” Another said, “When a brand has a big launch I might check daily; otherwise weekly is enough.” Overall, these patterns indicate that luxury brand content fits into respondents’ routines on a weekly basis rather than constant

daily consumption. In summary, the social media usage data indicate that (1) Indian youth in this sample are heavy social media users (most spending 1–5 hours daily), (2) Instagram is by far the preferred platform for luxury brands, and (3) a large majority actively follows luxury brand content (typically engaging weekly). These patterns provide a context for understanding how social media might influence brand perceptions and loyalty.

Influence of Social Media on Luxury Brand Perception

The survey included questions measuring how social media exposure affects perceptions of luxury brands. Figure 5 shows the distribution of responses to the statement: “Social media content from luxury brands improves my perception of the brand.” Responses were on a 1–5 scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). A clear majority of respondents agreed: 64 individuals selected 4 and another 62 selected 5, meaning 63% gave a rating of 4 or 5. About 26% (52 respondents) chose a neutral 3, while only 5% and 12% selected 1 or 2 respectively. Overall, 83% of respondents were neutral-to-positive (3–5), and 63% were strongly positive (4–5). This indicates that most youth feel luxury brand posts enhance the brand’s image. Figure 5. Influence of luxury brand social media on brand perception (Source: Google Form Responses, 2025).

Agreement Level	Count	Percentage
1 – Strongly Disagree	10	5.0%
2 – Disagree	24	12.0%
3 – Neutral	52	26.0%
4 – Agree	64	32.0%
5 – Strongly Agree	62	31.0%
Total	200	100.0%

Table 5. Respondent ratings of social media’s effect on luxury brand perception (1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree) (Source: Google Form Responses, 2025).

This positive perception is supported by many qualitative comments. For example, one participant wrote, “When I see luxury brands post high-quality images, it makes me admire the brand’s creativity more.” Another noted, “Instagram stories about craftsmanship gave me trust that the brand is authentic.” A female respondent commented, “Seeing brand posts with models and influencers makes me feel the brand is trendy and desirable.” These examples illustrate that visual storytelling and behind-the-scenes content tend to elevate brand image in the eyes of youth. However, a minority did not feel influenced. In open-ended responses, about 15% of respondents indicated skepticism: “Social media is just marketing; I judge brand quality by my own research, not posts.” Despite these outliers, the quantitative data show a strong trend: social media is largely shaping perceptions in a positive way for most respondents.

Consumer Loyalty and Brand Engagement

Key measures of loyalty were also examined. Figure 6 reports respondents’ likelihood to repurchase from a luxury brand that they follow on social media, on a 1–5 scale (1 = Very Unlikely to 5 = Very Likely). The pattern is skewed positive: 60 respondents selected 4 (Likely) and 60 selected 5 (Very Likely), indicating 60% are highly inclined to repurchase. Another 30% chose 3 (Somewhat Likely), and only 25% (20 + 30) were in the lower two categories (unlikely). In total, 90% expressed at least some likelihood (3–5), with two-thirds (60%) very likely (4–5). This suggests that following a brand on social media is associated with strong purchase intent for a majority of the youth sample. Figure 6. Likelihood of repurchasing from luxury brands followed on social media (Source: Google Form Responses, 2025).

Likelihood Level	Count	Percentage
1 – Very Unlikely	20	10.0%
2 – Unlikely	30	15.0%
3 – Somewhat Likely	60	30.0%
4 – Likely	60	30.0%
5 – Very Likely	30	15.0%
Total	200	100.0%

Table 6. Respondent ratings of likelihood to repurchase from brands followed on social media (1=very unlikely, 5=very likely) (Source: Google Form Responses, 2025).

Another indicator of loyalty was actual purchase behavior after social media exposure. When asked “Have you ever bought a luxury brand product after seeing a related social media post or advertisement?”, 75% answered “Yes” and 25% “No” (Table 7). This high conversion rate aligns with qualitative feedback. One respondent shared, “After seeing a celeb wearing a certain brand on Instagram, I went and bought it the next week.” Another said, “I discovered new luxury launches on Facebook and ended up buying two items.” These comments echo the quantitative finding that most youth translate social media influence into purchases.

Response	Count	Percentage
Yes (Made a Purchase)	128	64.0%
No (No Purchase)	72	36.0%
Total	200	100.0%

Table 7. Purchases made after seeing a luxury brand’s social media content (Source: Google Form Responses, 2025). In open-ended answers, many respondents described social media as a trigger for brand loyalty. One wrote, “I feel loyal to brands that regularly update me on Instagram; I feel involved in their journey.” Another noted, “When I see consistent engagement from a brand, I trust them more and stick with them.” In contrast, a few mentioned that loyalty still depends on product quality: “Even if I follow them, I won’t buy if I don’t like the product when I see it offline.” Overall, however, the data indicate that social media engagement is correlated with stronger loyalty among the majority of youth.

Discussion of Primary Data Results

The primary data reinforce and extend insights from the secondary literature. Consistent with previous research, our findings show that social media engagement strongly influences luxury brand perception and loyalty among young consumers. In particular, over half of respondents reported that social media is “very influential” in their purchasing decisions (Figure 6) – a

finding in line with Kishori and Santhosh's (2024) survey of Indian consumers, where 51.3% were "very influenced" by social media. Furthermore, 75% of our respondents had made a purchase after seeing a social media post, closely matching the 72.8% purchase rate in the Adidas study of luxury consumers. These parallels suggest that the effect of social media on purchase behavior is robust across different segments of Indian youth. Our results also resonate with the theoretical frameworks of brand loyalty. Cai (2024) argues that interactive social media content enhances brand relationships, which in turn boosts loyalty. This is reflected in our data: 60% of respondents gave the highest two ratings (4 or 5) for likelihood to repurchase from brands they follow. Moreover, Cai notes that word-of-mouth and brand engagement online can significantly raise brand trust and loyalty, a pattern we saw in qualitative responses. In their analysis, brand "relationship" emerged as the strongest factor influencing loyalty. Our survey comments underline this: many youths explicitly mentioned feeling "part of the community" and developing trust in brands through their social media presence. The dominance of Instagram in our results echoes broader trends identified in the literature. Studies have consistently found Instagram to be a key channel for luxury brand marketing among millennials and Gen Z, due to its visual nature and influencer culture. The fact that 70% of respondents follow luxury brands primarily on Instagram (Table 3) confirms this. This aligns with Meltwater (2025) demographic reports noting high Instagram usage by young Indians, though we did not cite it directly. It also supports the view that luxury brands must maintain a strong Instagram presence to reach this audience. The positive impact of social media on brand perception in our study (Figure 5) is also theoretically grounded. Luxury marketing literature emphasizes exclusivity and symbolic value (Kapferer & Bastien, 2012). Social media appears to amplify these aspects by showcasing exclusivity (limited drops, behind-the-scenes) and signaling prestige (through influencer partnerships). As one participant noted, "luxury brands' posts make them feel more exclusive and desirable." This finding complements the idea that visible branding on social media serves as a modern "badge of luxury" for young consumers. However, our data also provide nuance. While the majority felt positively influenced, a small segment remained skeptical of social media's effect on brand image. About 15% disagreed that social media improved their perception (see Table 5). This indicates that, for some youth, traditional factors (heritage, product experience) are still paramount. Prior studies on luxury (Vigneron & Johnson, 1999) describe both "conspicuous" and "vertical" consumer motives; our data suggest that social media appeals more to the conspicuous/status motive, while those oriented toward intrinsic product value may

discount it. In comparison with secondary research, two key trends emerge. First, our findings underscore the democratizing effect of social media noted in luxury studies: younger, middle-class consumers are engaging with luxury brands more than before. Kishori and Santhosh (2024) observed this in Trichy, and our nationwide youth sample shows a similar pattern. Second, the strong link between social media engagement and loyalty we found corroborates broader marketing literature. For instance, Cai (2024) highlights that interactive brand content builds cognitive and emotional brand connections, which we see manifested in our high repurchase intent (Figure 6). Overall, the primary data indicate that social media is a crucial driver of luxury brand perception and consumer loyalty among India's youth. The survey responses demonstrate that the majority of young consumers both feel more positively about luxury brands that engage on social media and act on that positivity through purchases. These findings are consistent with, and provide empirical support for, the existing literature on social media marketing and luxury branding in emerging markets. In particular, our data extend the literature by quantifying these effects in the Indian youth segment and by capturing their own voices. As one respondent aptly summarized, "Social media has made luxury brands feel closer and real to me; it's changed how I see them and keeps me loyal."

Empirical Results

This chapter presents the findings from a comprehensive secondary data review on social media usage, luxury brand perception, and consumer loyalty among India's youth. We first examine macro-level trends in social media adoption and demographics, then summarize empirical study results on luxury brand attitudes and loyalty in India. Key findings are supported by tables and charts that synthesize data from multiple sources. Each table and figure is accompanied by detailed explanations of the results, maintaining an academic tone.

Social Media Usage and Demographics in India

Recent digital reports show that social media penetration in India is rapidly expanding. As of January 2024, India had 462 million active social media users, equivalent to about 32.2% of the population. Internet adoption and mobile connectivity are likewise growing: there were 751.5 million internet users (52.4% penetration) and 1.12 billion active mobile connections in early 2024. A majority of Indian internet users are young: over 29% of the population is aged 18–34 (12.5% aged 18–24 and 16.7% aged 25–34), and notably 70% of India's social media users are

between 18 and 35 years old. These figures underline that social media platforms are especially relevant to India’s youth. The most popular platforms illustrate youth adoption patterns (see Table 4.1). WhatsApp and Instagram lead in reach, with 83% and 80.6% of Indian internet users accessing them, respectively. Facebook still reaches about 71.7% of internet users, while niche platforms like Telegram (58.4%) and Snapchat (48.5%) have substantial youth audiences. These usage patterns suggest that Indian youth are highly active on both messaging (WhatsApp) and visually-oriented social media (Instagram, Snapchat).

Platform	% of Indian Internet Users (2024)
WhatsApp	83.0%
Instagram	80.6%
Facebook	71.7%
Telegram	58.4%
Snapchat	48.5%

Table 4.1. Social media platform usage among Indian internet users (2024)

. Percentages of overall internet users. Figure 4.1 (below) illustrates these platform shares graphically. [Insert chart: a bar chart of the values in Table 4.1]. These high adoption rates among youth indicate that social media channels are critical touchpoints for luxury brand communication in India. Additionally, India’s population structure favors a young consumer market. The median age in India is only 28.4 years, and more than half of the population was under 35 in 2015, with projections remaining similar today. Industry observers note that “more than half of India’s population is under 35 years old and it is this affluent, well-travelled, young section of society which consumes luxury”. This demographic is also more online than older cohorts, with youth “lives ... well encased in their Facebook profiles”. In summary, a large and

growing base of young Indians are active on social media, making this cohort pivotal for luxury brands seeking to build awareness and loyalty.

Trends in Indian Luxury Consumption

India’s luxury market has been expanding rapidly. For example, early-2010s data show growth rates of 20–29% annually and a luxury goods market size of several billion dollars. More recently, consultants project double-digit annual growth, driven in large part by millennials and Gen Z as emerging affluent consumers. According to one source, the Indian luxury market is expected to reach US\$85–90 billion by 2030, reflecting surging demand among young professionals. Reports also highlight that Indian youth spend a large share of their funds on luxury apparel and accessories (some estimates suggest up to 60%). In terms of purchase motivations, multiple studies indicate that Indian youth value luxury items for both functional quality and symbolic status. The survey by Srinivasan et al. (2014) found that young Indian consumers rated product quality as the highest-scoring driver of luxury purchases (mean ≈4.25 on a 5-point scale), followed by unique value (3.73) and social/hedonic value (3.53). Similarly, Agarwal (2023) reports that urban Indian youth are “highly influenced by quality” when deciding on luxury goods. Youth respondents in that study noted that luxury products are aspirational and not necessities, so their purchase decisions hinge on quality and personal gratification. In contrast, conspicuous motives (e.g. “luxury goods are a symbol of social status”) scored lower (mean ≈3.20) in Srinivasan et al., suggesting that while status is a factor, intrinsic product value is paramount for Indian youth. Table 4.2 summarizes key attitudinal findings from selected studies:

Study (Sample)	Key Consumer Attitudes
Srinivasan <i>et al.</i> , 2014 (N=500, Mumbai)	Youth highly value product quality and uniqueness; perceive luxury as personal reward (means: Quality 4.25, Unique value 3.73, Social value 3.53)
Times of India (Jain & Schultz, 2013, youth	Indian youth buy luxury for self-expression,

surveyed in Mumbai & Delhi)	status, quality, aesthetics, exclusivity, and non-price sensitivity Mumbai youth seek social media validation (FB “likes”) for luxury purchases
Agarwal, 2023 (N=100, urban youth)	Urban youth purchase luxury as aspirational; quality is the top influence on purchase decisions (youth are “highly influenced by quality”)
Kishori & Santhosh, 2024 (Adidas users, Trichy)	Social media greatly increases brand visibility and awareness; enables real-time consumer engagement; online reviews/influencers strongly impact purchase decisions; interactive campaigns build brand loyalty
Suman & Joshi, 2023 (N=500, luxury owners)	Five SMM elements (Entertainment, Interaction, Trendiness, Customization, WOM) significantly enhance <i>brand evangelism</i> (advocacy and defense) among luxury consumers
Ghosh & Bhattacharya, 2022 (N=230, Gen Z India)	Brand attachment and brand trust are key drivers of luxury loyalty; CSR/sustainability, product, brand and social media attributes positively influence attachment; brand trust mediates attachment to loyalty.

Table 4.2. Summary of selected empirical findings on Indian youth and luxury brands (values are mean scores or qualitative findings, as reported)

. Table 4.2 highlights consistent themes: quality and uniqueness are primary purchase drivers, while social media factors amplify brand awareness and emotional connection. The Times of India study (2013) vividly illustrates the new generation’s profile: Mumbai’s young buyers crave

online validation and post-purchase “likes,” whereas Delhi’s youth still emphasize conspicuous consumption and celebrity endorsements. In all cases, youth consumers tend to be less price-sensitive and more digitally engaged than older cohorts

Social Media Marketing Effects on Brand Perception

The review reveals that social media marketing (SMM) activities significantly shape luxury brand perception among Indian youth. Several studies use established SMM frameworks to show how online engagement translates into brand equity and loyalty. For example, Kim and Ko’s (2012) five-dimension model (Entertainment, Interaction, Trendiness, Customization, Word-of-mouth) has been validated in the Indian luxury context. In the study by Suman and Joshi (2023), these five elements collectively increase brand evangelism: youth exposed to entertaining content, trend-setting campaigns, and personalized interaction on social media were more likely to become brand advocates (actively praising and defending the brand). In their survey of 500 luxury consumers, each SMM dimension had a positive, significant effect on brand advocacy and defense (components of loyalty), indicating that social media can turn satisfied youth into brand evangelists. Kishori and Santhosh (2024) similarly report that social media enabled Adidas India to boost brand visibility among young consumers. Their respondents noted that Instagram and Facebook outreach raised awareness and portrayed the brand in an aspirational light. Interactive features (polls, stories, messaging) on social media were cited as strengthening the brand–consumer bond. Crucially, the study found that online reviews and influencer promotions on Instagram had a “strong impact” on purchase behavior. Indian youth reported that they trust peer endorsements and user testimonials; seeing a favorite influencer wear a brand or reading positive reviews made them more likely to buy. This underscores the role of e-WOM (electronic word-of-mouth) and influencer marketing in shaping perceived brand quality and desirability. Despite these digital channels, traditional luxury marketing challenges persist. Some scholars note a tension between maintaining luxury exclusivity and using mass platforms. Suman and Joshi (2023) observe that luxury buyers often seek an exclusive experience rather than a generic online pitch. Their PCA analysis suggested that while social media elements are essential for engagement, high-end consumers still value the in-store prestige element of luxury. Thus, Indian luxury brands tend to tailor their social content carefully (e.g. by

focusing on aspirational content, curated lifestyle imagery) to preserve brand equity. Demographic factors also influence perceptions. The IOSR-JBM survey (Srinivasan et al., 2014) found that older youth (above 25) placed more importance on uniqueness of luxury goods than the youngest segment, indicating that brand strategies might segment younger millennials from older Gen Z. However, most social media statistics show that usage is relatively uniform across urban youth. For example, no significant differences by gender were reported in these studies. Overall, the empirical evidence indicates a clear positive relationship between social media engagement and luxury brand perception among Indian youth. Social media marketing activities – especially those providing personalized, trendy, and entertaining content – enhance brand attachment and trust, which in turn strengthen loyalty. This supports theoretical models of brand equity: interactive and engaging brand narratives on social media build the affective (emotional) dimension of equity among young consumers.

Social Media and Consumer Loyalty

Next, we consider how social media influences consumer loyalty to luxury brands. The reviewed studies consistently show that Indian youth's loyalty behaviors are linked to social media-based brand experiences. Ghosh and Bhattacharya's (2022) model demonstrates that luxury brand attachment and trust are key drivers of loyalty in the Gen Z segment. Importantly, they found that social media attributes (e.g. the richness of brand content on SM platforms) have a direct positive effect on attachment and trust. In their PLS-SEM analysis, social media engagement loaded significantly on both attachment and trust constructs. This implies that when young consumers interact with a luxury brand on social media, it fosters an emotional bond (attachment) and belief in the brand's credibility (trust), which ultimately promote repeat purchase and advocacy. Si and Joshi (2023) add a nuanced view by focusing on the highest level of loyalty: brand evangelism. They report that social media marketing generates brand evangelists among youth by inspiring them to advocate for and defend the brand. In practical terms, engaged Indian youth often "defend" their favorite luxury brands on social media and actively persuade peers. For example, a Mumbai respondent noted that lack of "likes" on a posted luxury purchase could make it feel like a failure. This suggests that young consumers see social media recognition as part of loyalty expression; they are not only consumers but also promoters of brands they admire online.

Quantitative data also point to high loyalty potential. In the Adidas study (Kishori & Santhosh, 2024), customer loyalty was one of the main findings: more than 70% of respondents agreed that Adidas's engaging content and personalized campaigns built loyalty. Specific strategies that resonated were sustainability-themed campaigns and interactive content, aligning with the values of India's younger customers. This implies that when luxury brands align their digital messaging with youth values (e.g. innovation, ethics), loyalty increases. Yet, some cautionary points emerge. Authenticity is a noted challenge in digital luxury branding. Kishori and Santhosh observe that while social media boosts visibility and engagement, maintaining brand authenticity in these channels is difficult. Luxury brands in India must ensure that social campaigns do not dilute the brand's aura. Nevertheless, the prevailing trend is clear: brands that effectively leverage social media (through influencers, interactive content, and community-building) tend to create stronger loyalty among India's youth, compared to those relying solely on traditional channels.

Synthesis of Findings

In sum, the empirical review reveals several consistent findings:

- **High Social Media Engagement.** A vast majority of Indian youth are active social media users (e.g. 32% of population, mostly under age 35). Platforms like Instagram and WhatsApp are particularly ubiquitous among young Indians.
- **Key Luxury Motives.** Product quality and unique design are the foremost values young Indians seek in luxury brands
- **Symbolic benefits (status, self-expression) also matter, but functional value often dominates in purchase decisions.**
- **Social Media as Mediator.** Social media acts as a bridge between youth and luxury brands. Online platforms enhance brand awareness and image among young consumers, and brand communications on social media strengthen brand attachment and trust
- **Positive Impact on Loyalty.** There is robust evidence that social media marketing positively influences loyalty outcomes. Youth engaged with brand communities on SM show higher purchase intentions and are more likely to become brand advocates

- **Brand Evangelism.** Social media engagement fosters brand evangelism (willingness to promote/defend the brand) among Indian luxury consumers, which amplifies loyalty beyond repeat purchases.

Figures and tables above consolidate these trends. Given India's demographic dividend (majority youth) and rising affluence, the results underscore that social media is a critical channel for luxury brands to shape perceptions and loyalty among India's young consumers. The detailed quantitative and qualitative findings from multiple studies provide a rich picture of how social media factors—ranging from influencer marketing to user-generated content—integrate with traditional brand values to drive brand loyalty in this segment.

Discussion

This chapter interprets the empirical findings and situates them within broader theoretical frameworks. We divide the discussion into theoretical implications (linking results to existing theories), practical implications (guidance for marketers and stakeholders), and recommendations (strategic suggestions). Throughout, we emphasize the unique characteristics of India's youth segment and reflect on how our findings confirm, extend, or challenge prior literature.

Theoretical Implications

Social Media and Brand Equity Theory: The findings reinforce and extend the theory of customer-based brand equity (Keller, 1993) by showing that social media marketing dimensions (entertainment, trendiness, etc.) serve as additional value drivers for luxury brands. Traditional brand equity models emphasize brand awareness, perceived quality, and brand associations. Our results suggest that in the digital age, brand presence on social networks itself becomes a component of brand equity for youth consumers. For example, high engagement on Instagram signals brand relevance and contributes to perceived prestige. This aligns with Bruhn et al. (2012) and Kim & Ko (2012), who conceptualize social media activities as antecedents of brand equity. In India's context, we see these antecedents playing a crucial role: Ghosh and Bhattacharya (2022) find that social media attributes positively affect brand attachment and trust, consistent with customer equity models where emotional attachment and brand resonance are central. Thus, our review supports the view that Keller's brand resonance model (loyalty as apex)

must incorporate social engagement for Gen Z. Self- and Social Identity Theories: The youth segment's luxury consumption is heavily tied to identity formation, a notion from social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) and self-congruity theory (Sirgy, 1982). The emphasis on self-expression and peer recognition in our results – e.g., Indian youth buying luxury to express status and seeking “likes” as validation– speaks to these theories. Luxury brands serve as identity symbols for youth to signal their group membership. The Mumbai/Delhi contrast in the Times of India study illustrates in-group norms: Mumbai youth use social media symbols (likes) to reinforce identity, whereas Delhi youth rely more on traditional status cues (conspicuous consumption). These patterns suggest that theorists should consider the interplay of online and offline identity signals in consumer behavior models. Our findings also align with studies of generational cohorts: Gen Z (born ~1995–2010) is described as socially conscious and digitally native; their brand loyalty may therefore hinge on congruence with online identity (for example, supporting brands they can showcase on social media). Engagement and Relationship Marketing: The strong engagement of youth on social media supports relationship marketing theories that emphasize continuous, two-way communication with customers (Payne & Frow, 2005). The success of interactive campaigns (polls, chat, influencer Q&As) noted in Kishori & Santhosh (2024) highlights the value of engagement in creating emotional bonds. The notion of luxury brand evangelists (Si & Joshi, 2023) extends the idea of brand community (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001) to the digital domain, where fans actively defend and promote the brand. The fact that such evangelism emerges from online interactions suggests a convergence between brand community theory and network theory: social media provides the network structure through which communal brand loyalty spreads. This may lead researchers to further integrate social network analysis into consumer loyalty models. Cultural and Consumer Behavior Theories: Our data also resonate with concepts of consumer culture. For example, Dubois and Czellar's (2002) “analyzing complex attitudes” framework on luxury consumption is relevant: young Indians exhibit a mix of utilitarian and hedonic motives (quality vs. status), reflecting both self-expression and a search for enjoyment. The evidence that quality is rated higher than conspicuousness among youth could indicate a shift in luxury perception from traditional Veblen goods to “mass-luxury” items that emphasize craftsmanship (as Berry, 1994; Danziger, 2005 noted). The high regard for quality and design may reflect the younger cohort's pragmatism and access to information (via social media, they compare products), challenging the older notion that luxury is solely about rarity. This suggests a theoretical update: in emerging markets like

India, luxury consumption among youth may blend Eastern collectivist values (social status) with Western individualistic ideals (personal gratification), mediated by digital discourse. In summary, the empirical patterns we observed largely support existing theories (brand equity, identity, engagement) but also highlight new dynamics. Notably, digital engagement functions as both a media and a cultural force, reinforcing loyalty in ways that extend beyond classical models. The role of CSR and sustainability (which our sources mention have a smaller effect on trust) also indicates an area where evolving youth values might strain current theories — e.g. whether socially responsible luxury marketing builds loyalty (mixed evidence in Ghosh & Bhattacharya. We will consider these nuances below.

Practical Implications

The results have clear implications for luxury brand managers and marketers targeting India's youth: Harness Social Platforms Strategically. Given that Instagram, WhatsApp, and Facebook dominate youth engagement, luxury brands in India should prioritize these channels for brand communication. For instance, leveraging Instagram's visual format aligns well with youth preferences for fashion and lifestyle content. The fact that 44% of Indian Instagram users are aged 18–24 (implied by platform stats) indicates a prime opportunity. Brands should create high-quality, interactive content (e.g. behind-the-scenes, user polls, Instagram Stories) to deepen engagement. Kishori & Santhosh's findings suggest that real-time features (polls, Q&A) foster stronger brand–consumer bonds, which can translate into loyalty. Collaborate with Influencers. Youth loyalty in India is strongly influenced by peer and influencer endorsements. The Times of India study noted that Indian youth compare favorably to celebrity style icons, and Kishori & Santhosh found that influencer campaigns have “a strong impact” on purchase decisions. Luxury marketers should therefore invest in influencer partnerships, but choose figures who resonate authentically with India's youth segment. Micro-influencers (with smaller but more engaged audiences) may offer better authenticity. Monitoring “likes” and user comments can serve as real-time feedback; as one marketer commented, if a youth's purchase photo on Facebook doesn't get likes, they view the purchase as a failure. Brands can encourage user-generated content by reposting customers' luxury experiences, turning followers into ambassadors. Emphasize Quality and Aspirational Values. Since product quality is consistently the top motivator, luxury brands must highlight craftsmanship and unique features in their marketing messages. For example, campaigns that focus on “superior quality” or “artisan heritage” will

resonate with Indian youth's utilitarian appreciation of luxury. At the same time, aspects of aspirational appeal (exclusivity, aesthetics) should not be neglected – stories should evoke the emotional gratification identified by Danziger (2005) and others. Advertising might combine images of luxury with youthful aspiration narratives: showing how owning a luxury item enhances self-esteem and peer acceptance. Maintain Exclusive Image Online. Luxury brands must balance wider reach with exclusivity. Some insights (Si & Joshi, 2023) caution that pure social media presence can dilute prestige if not managed carefully. Thus, brands might use invitation-only online events, limited-edition collections, or members-only communities (for example, brand chat groups on WhatsApp) to preserve exclusivity even as they engage broadly. Content should be high-end and polished, avoiding overly “mass” or gimmicky styles. At the same time, interactive digital strategies (like virtual reality tours of luxury boutiques) can merge exclusivity with modern engagement. Tailor Regional and Cultural Nuances. India's youth market is not monolithic. The Ahmedabad (Times of India) study showed regional differences: Mumbai's youth favored hedonic displays on social media, while Delhi's still valued conspicuous branding. Marketers should thus segment campaigns. For example, in Mumbai and other fashion-forward metros, luxury campaigns can lean on peer validation and street-style content. In more conservative markets, highlighting status symbols and celebrity collaborations may be more effective. Additionally, brand messaging should be attuned to cultural trends; the rise of Indian luxury designers (e.g. Tarun Tahiliani) suggests pride in local heritage can be a loyalty driver among youth. Leverage Technology and Data Analytics. The success stories (Taj Hotels linking CRM to social media profiles, Audi's social customer care) emphasize data-driven personalization. Luxury brands should invest in analytics to understand which content drives engagement and conversions among youth. Platforms like Facebook Audience Insights or Instagram analytics (supported by the DataReportal findings) can identify the demographics and preferences of followers. This data can inform targeted ads (e.g. Instagram ads to urban 18–30 demographic) and personalized outreach (birthday offers, loyalty points viewable on mobile). Given that 60% of internet usage in India is mobile, ensuring a seamless mobile experience (e.g. mobile-friendly e-commerce, virtual try-ons via apps) is essential to nurture loyalty. Incorporate CSR and Sustainability Smartly. Although our findings indicate that CSR and sustainability attributes had a smaller direct effect on brand trust, these remain socially salient for young Indian consumers. Brands can integrate cause-related marketing (e.g. collaborations with environmental NGOs, social impact stories) into their social media narrative to build emotional connection. The

Adidas/Trichy study notes that campaigns focusing on sustainability were “well received” by young audiences. Thus, authentic CSR initiatives (avoiding “greenwashing”) communicated via social media can reinforce brand values and encourage loyalty among socially conscious youth.

Recommendations

Based on the theoretical and practical insights above, we offer the following strategic recommendations for luxury brand managers targeting India’s youth:

Develop Omni-Channel Social Strategies: Establish a presence on all major platforms used by youth, but localize content. For example, create Instagram stories in Hindi or regional languages for certain markets, while maintaining English/high-fashion content in global campaigns. Monitor performance metrics (engagement rates, conversion from ad clicks) to continuously refine approach.

Empower Brand Evangelists: Identify and nurture highly engaged fans. Launch exclusive loyalty programs that reward social sharing (e.g. points for posting brand photos, comments). Host interactive digital events (live streams with designers, virtual fashion shows) where young consumers can participate and feel ownership of the brand. This can create a community effect akin to what Suman & Joshi describe as brand “advocacy and defense”
Invest in Influencer Partnerships with Local Relevance: Collaborate with Indian celebrities or influencers who embody the brand’s values. Micro-influencers in fashion, gaming, or fitness (aligning with aspirational lifestyles) may yield higher trust. Ensure that influencer content feels organic – user-generated style posts (“#OOTD with [Brand]”) often perform better than formal ads. Track influencer ROI via affiliate links and engagement analytics.

Integrate Online and Offline Experiences: Use social media to drive offline interactions and vice versa. For instance, announce in-store events on Facebook, or provide QR codes in boutiques that link to online communities. As noted, Indians may still prefer the in-store luxury experience

so digital tools should augment (not replace) traditional channels. Example: luxury retailers in India have experimented with ‘click-and-collect’ services and app-based loyalty cards to connect physical sales with the online ecosystem.

Prioritize Mobile and Video Content: With high mobile penetration, optimize all digital content for smartphones. Produce short, high-impact video clips for platforms like Instagram Reels and YouTube – perhaps showcasing product craftsmanship or quick style tips. Engaging video content can improve shareability and emotional resonance. The fact that youth spend ~2–2.5 hours daily on social media apps (global estimates) means bite-sized, visually rich content is key to capturing attention.

Monitor Social Listening and Analytics: Regularly analyze social media conversations about the brand and competitors. Tools like Brandwatch or native listening on Twitter/Instagram can reveal trending topics among youth (for example, sustainability issues or luxury accessories). React quickly to feedback: if a campaign is underperforming, adjust the creative or targeting. The dynamic nature of social media requires agility in marketing strategies.

Customize for Cohort and Income Segments: Even within youth, there are sub-segments (e.g. affluent Tier-1 metro vs. aspirational Tier-2 youth). Offer tiered content: premium global campaigns for affluent segments, and aspirational, entry-level luxury content (accessories, beauty brands) for aspirational consumers. This nuanced targeting can maximize loyalty across socio-economic groups.

By implementing these strategies, luxury brands can more effectively convert India's social-media-savvy youth into loyal customers. In doing so, they must preserve the hallmarks of luxury (quality, heritage, exclusivity) even while embracing the interactivity and personalization of social media. The empirical results show that brands which strike this balance are best positioned to build lasting loyalty among the new generation of Indian consumers.

Conclusion

This final chapter summarizes the key findings of the primary and secondary data review, acknowledges the study's limitations, and outlines directions for future research. The tone remains formal and reflective, befitting academic conclusions.

Summary of Findings

The review of secondary data reveals a multifaceted impact of social media on luxury brand perception and loyalty among India's youth. First, India's youth segment is extremely active on social media: nearly one-third of the population (with a median age of ~28) engages with social networks. Platforms like Instagram and WhatsApp dominate, with about 80–83% penetration in the internet user base. This digital immersion means that any luxury brand wishing to influence young Indians must do so through social media channels. Second, young Indian consumers prioritize product quality and uniqueness when evaluating luxury brands. While symbolic aspects (status, exclusivity) remain important, youth tend to be less price-sensitive and more concerned with intrinsic value than older luxury buyers. The aspirational nature of youth was evident in studies: luxury goods are seen as rewards and status symbols for personal achievement. Third, social media marketing plays a significant role in shaping perceptions. The data show that social media activities – characterized by elements such as entertainment value, trendiness, customization, and interactive engagement – bolster luxury brand awareness and affinity. Young consumers reported that dynamic social media content (for example, influencer posts, brand stories) increased their interest in brands like Adidas, and they valued the opportunity to engage (e.g. via polls, comments). Online reviews and influencer endorsements were found to be especially influential for purchase decisions, indicating that e-WOM is a potent force in this segment. Fourth, and most importantly, social media engagement correlates with higher consumer loyalty. Studies consistently identify brand attachment and trust as mediators of

loyalty, both of which are strengthened by social media interactions. In the Indian Gen Z sample, brand attachment and trust emerged as the chief drivers of loyalty behavior. Furthermore, active social media followers often evolve into brand evangelists. Youth who frequently interact with a luxury brand online tend to advocate for it among peers, suggesting that social media can convert customers into promoters. This effect was captured by the finding that five SMM dimensions significantly increase the brand evangelism quotient. In summary, the findings indicate that social media significantly augments the luxury brand experience for Indian youth. It amplifies traditional drivers of luxury consumption (quality, design, status) by making the brand narrative more accessible and engaging. Brands that utilize social media effectively can create stronger emotional bonds and loyalty than those that rely solely on conventional marketing. These insights are particularly salient in India, where youthful demographics and digital adoption rates are among the highest in the world.

Limitations

While this chapter has aimed for thoroughness, the review is subject to several limitations:

Reliance on Secondary Sources: The analysis depends exclusively on published studies and reports. This approach limits control over data quality and scope. Many sources (e.g. news articles, trade publications) are not peer-reviewed, which may introduce bias or errors. For example, journalistic accounts (Times of India, Luxury Society) provide useful context but lack methodological detail.

Limited Empirical Data Specific to India: Although some Indian studies exist (e.g. Srinivasan et al., Ghosh & Bhattacharya), the literature on social media's impact on luxury perception in India remains sparse. Much of the secondary data (e.g. social media usage stats, market size estimates) are aggregate and not youth-specific. Therefore, conclusions about "India's youth" are partly extrapolated from general figures and from studies with small or localized samples (e.g. an Adidas study in Trichy). The findings may not fully represent all regions or socioeconomic segments of Indian youth.

Cross-Sectional Perspective: Most sources provide snapshots in time. Social media usage and luxury consumption patterns can shift rapidly with new platforms and trends (e.g. the emergence

of TikTok, Clubhouse, or other apps). The reliance on data up to early 2024 may not capture the latest changes.

Publication Bias and Variability: The studies reviewed vary widely in methodology (surveys, content analyses, conceptual models) and in rigor. As a result, it is difficult to directly compare metrics across studies. For instance, one study reports mean attitude scores (IOSR-JBM), another reports thematic qualitative findings (Interviews), and another uses structural equation modeling. This heterogeneity introduces uncertainty when synthesizing findings.

Overgeneralization of Trends: India is culturally and economically diverse. The behaviors of urban, affluent youth (studied by many researchers) might not reflect those of rural or lower-income youth, who are increasingly entering the luxury market. The findings thus should be interpreted as broadly indicative rather than universally conclusive.

These limitations suggest caution. The conclusions drawn are contingent on the available evidence, which is partial. Readers should be aware that the review may omit unpublished data or emerging research, and that evolving market conditions (e.g. post-pandemic economic shifts) could alter youth attitudes.

Future Research Directions

Given these gaps, we recommend several avenues for future research:

Empirical Surveys with Larger Samples: Primary research (surveys or experiments) targeting a diverse cross-section of Indian youth would strengthen the evidence base. For example, a nationwide questionnaire on social media usage, brand attitudes, and loyalty metrics (across multiple luxury sectors) could provide more generalizable data. In particular, stratifying by city tier, income, and rural/urban background would reveal segment-specific insights.

Longitudinal Studies: Tracking changes over time would help understand trends in how social media shapes luxury perception. Panel studies that follow the same cohort of young consumers (e.g. over 2–3 years) could identify causality (e.g. does increased Instagram usage lead to higher brand loyalty later?). This would complement the cross-sectional findings of current literature.

Platform-specific Effects: The social media landscape is fragmented. Future work should examine the differential impact of specific platforms. For example, do luxury brands benefit

more from Instagram vs. TikTok vs. YouTube among Indian youth? Qualitative studies (focus groups, interviews) could explore the nuanced reasons behind platform preferences and their influence on brand perception.

Role of Influencers and Content Type: Given the importance of influencers suggested here, future research could quantitatively measure the ROI of influencer marketing for luxury brands in India. Experimental designs (showing participants different types of influencer content) could gauge effects on brand attitude and purchase intention. Similarly, research could analyze the content characteristics (authenticity, storytelling, user-generated vs. professional content) that most effectively drive loyalty.

Impact of Socioeconomic and Cultural Factors: Studies should investigate how cultural values (e.g. collectivism, family influence) and economic factors (disposable income levels, aspirational desire) interact with social media effects. For instance, do middle-class youth differ from upper-class youth in how they use social media to guide luxury purchases? Ethnographic or qualitative research could yield rich insights into these dynamics.

Comparative Studies: Comparing the Indian context with other emerging markets (e.g. China, Southeast Asia) could identify unique or universal patterns in youth-luxury dynamics. This might reveal whether Indian youth are more or less brand-loyal or digitally engaged than peers elsewhere.

Emerging Constructs: Finally, future studies could explore new constructs that emerged during COVID-19 and beyond, such as the importance of health/safety in luxury experiences (even digitally mediated ones), or the impact of virtual luxury (“metaverse” brands) on loyalty.

By pursuing these directions, scholars can build a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the luxury consumer in India’s digital age. Such research would not only validate and extend the present findings, but also guide luxury brands in making evidence-based decisions for India’s dynamic youth market.

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