User-Generated Content Sources: The Use Of Social Media In Motivating Sustainable Luxury Fashion Consumptions

Nornajihah Nadia Hasbullah, Zuraidah Sulaiman, Adaviah Mas’od

Abstract—At present, user-generated content (UGC) in social media plays a pivotal role as the most effective platform in spreading brand messages. Upon recognizing the power of this platform, there is a growing body of studies investigating social media advertising. Nevertheless, there is limited understanding on how UGC sources work, particularly in light of sustainable luxury fashion product. That being mentioned, this study probed into the function of UGC shared via social media in fostering sustainable luxury fashion consumption. Building upon Self-Determination Theory (SDT) as the theoretical framework, this study found that UGC sources could influence the motives behind the acquisition of sustainable luxury products that can be segregated into two categories; intrinsic and extrinsic aspirations. The study outcomes are significantly useful to marketers and organizations to formulate viable strategies, as well as to provide the idea to develop luxury brand digital strategies based on customers’ environmental values and spectrum. To address the limitations of this study, future researchers may expand this research by emphasizing on other digital platform types, so as to influence this present sustainable trend.

Index Terms—User-generated content; Self-Determination Theory; Aspiration Index; Sustainable Luxury Fashion; Motivational Drivers; Social Media; Consumers’ Behaviour

1 INTRODUCTION
The rising prevalent use of social networking tools has significantly changed the business landscape. Concurrently, many companies have begun incorporating digital marketing activities [1]. With the emergence of digital technologies, social media have offered new ways of promoting the product by interacting with consumers. One of the most effective consumer interactions that take place via social media is through user-generated content (UGC) [2]. The UGC reflects the media content created by members of the general public, including online content creation, initiation, circulation, and consumption by users [3]. The major drivers that have led consumers to create brand related content are personal identity, integration, and social interaction [4]. Consumers have begun getting familiar and increasing their positive perceptions of the brand [5]. Upon recognizing the power of this platform, a substantial number of studies have begun assessing the social media advertising domain. Nonetheless, only a handful of studies have looked into UGC, particularly regarding sustainable luxury fashion product [6]. This fundamental shift has penetrated the luxury industry, as consumers are getting more concerned about the environmental and social issues that reflect one’s values and beliefs [7, 8, 9]. Sustainable concerns are, therefore, relevant in the luxury industry due to its high and broad scope that covers the composition of its products, services, and experiences [10]. The major contribution of this study is extended to the existing research literature by examining the intervention of UGC sources in social media as an exceptional communication platform influencing motivational drivers of consumers to consumes sustainable luxury fashion.

2 PROBLEM STATEMENT
As the success of a sustainable plan relies on consumers’ acceptance, support from consumers is significant. Unfortunately, most consumers who perceive as being sustainable do not practice it in the real world. Notwithstanding the luxury sustainability phenomenon [11], studies on a specific advertisement platform that can effectively spread the message of sustainable fashion and transform it into consumption are somewhat limited. The phenomenon of luxury sustainability has been gaining attention [12, 13, 11, 14], despite many unanswered questions, such as if consumers are ready to absorb the intertwined context between luxury and sustainability, as well as the reason behind the inclusion of sustainable aspects as a motivation to purchase luxury products. In the attempt of addressing the question above, this study determined the effect of User-generated content as independent variables in directly and indirectly influence sustainable luxury consumption. Second, this study assessed the impact of two components of motivational drivers as mediating variables which consists of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. In a broader explanation, intrinsic motivation including self-acceptance and community feeling while extrinsic motivation which consists of fame, endorser credibility are represented in the theoretical framework of Self-Determination Theory (SDT) [15]. This study contributes to the digital strategy formulation and the justification of the relationship built based on the theoretical stance. The study outcomes can benefit marketers and organisations to understand the aspirations of purchasers prior to devising effective digital marketing strategies that protect the environment and attain sustainable development. The remainder of this paper proceeds as follows: It starts with a brief literature on sustainable luxury consumption, and then, the present gaps are highlighted and discussed. Next, the proposed framework is presented based on the theoretical foundation, and hypotheses are developed. Moving on, the conclusion summaries the study, and highlights the important findings. The final section addresses the shortcomings and presents some recommendations for future studies, including insights into future research in the area of sustainable luxury fashion.

3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES
Self-determination theory (SDT) is a macro-theory of human motivation that is directly involved with the growth and function of personality in social contexts [15]. This theory perceives that individuals are active organisms with high propensity towards psychological development and growth [16]. This theory has been reckoned as the most effective theory of motivation [17] and has been extensively used to identify the contingencies that affect both motivation and behavior. This theory is more
convinced to account for the different motives in discovering behavior through the construction of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Meanwhile, the luxury value perception model can be classified into two; personal and social value [18, 19, 20]. In precise, personal orientation is highly correlated with intrinsic aspiration, whereas social value is correlated with extrinsic aspiration. Aligning with this, the SDT has been used extensively in studies to explore consumers' motivation and it is indeed well-known as a theoretical framework to study consumer behavior [21, 22, 23, 24]. However, most prior studies have displayed the inconsistent outcomes between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Reacting to that, this study looked into the positive impacts of intrinsic motivation (self-acceptance and community feeling) and extrinsic motivation (fame and endorser credibility) on sustainable luxury fashion consumption.

4 LITERATURE REVIEW

4.1 Sustainable Luxury Fashion Consumption
At first glance, luxury and sustainability seem utterly paradoxical [25, 26]. Luxury is synonymous to inessential and desirable items that are expensive or difficult to obtain. Luxury fashion contradicts sustainability as it addresses more desires than necessities, and in this sense, it is somewhat hypocritical for the industry to engage in sustainability [27] [28]. However, [29, 9] argued that sustainability is a DNA of luxury. The alignment stems from the luxury value of quality, uniqueness, craftsmanship, and durability. Some luxury powerhouses include LVMH and Kering, which have been widely promoting sustainable development and sustainability-oriented innovation as a key strategic priority [30, 31]. Luxury companies have already taken this issue seriously and have made a huge investment to transform into sustainable luxury. In view of that, the presence of digital platform is certainly essential to ensure that this positive information is reachable and accessible by consumers, apart from encouraging consumers to purchase sustainable luxury fashion.

4.2 User-Generated Content in Social Media
The presence of social media advertising that engages in brand messages and disseminates information about luxury brands has the tendency to promote purchase of luxury brand [32]. One of the most effective ways for consumer interaction to take place via social media is through UGC. The UGC shared via social media may have more influence than other sources, mainly because it is spread by a reliable information source accumulated from a consumer's personal network [33, 34]. Some had examined the role of users as the source of advertisements upon testing advertisement disclosures [35, 36, 37]. The shared information was generated with the desire to share knowledge or experiences with other people [38], which may derive from friends and family, organizations and enterprises, or even complete strangers. Individuals contribute to UGC platforms for several reasons. Such contributions may be a result of spontaneous self-expression; merely to mention something about it. Such contributions can be purposeful as well to establish commitment, signal identity, and help others [39, 40, 41, 42]. In essence, UGC may provide more detailed insights into consumers' actual and real-time perceptions [2]. In the context of luxury brands, businesses should design and implement innovative social strategies, besides employing a platform-specific approach, in order to stay relevant with their customers [43]. Following the emerging trend of sustainability within the luxury fashion domain, it is integral for luxury companies to update their social media advertising contents, in order to support the UGC approach and to capture the real response from consumers. In the same vein, the social media need to be informational in nature, updated, and reinforce prosocial values, in an effort to elicit positive behaviors from consumers. The following mediating variables (intrinsic and extrinsic motivation) depict the effect of UGC sources in motivating consumers to purchase sustainable luxury fashion.

5 THE INCLUSION OF MEDIATING EFFECT OF MOTIVATION

5.1 Intrinsic Motivation
Intrinsic motivation is pursued when individuals have high satisfaction, enjoyment, or personal meaning stemming from their attainment. It is interlinked with high level of self-interest and driven by “autonomous reasons” [44]. In this scope of study, intrinsic motivation can be explained in detail with two intrinsic values; self-acceptance and community feeling. In doing so, this paper discusses the impact of USG sources on consumer motivation, which leads to sustainable fashion consumption.

Self-acceptance
Self-acceptance in luxury reflects consumers' preferences influenced by their identity. This type of consumer places more focus on utilitarian and self-expression values, instead of showing off [45]. Most of them seek high quality and lasting products for future investment [46]. The implementation of UGC sources for luxury brands facilitates the interaction with consumers by emphasizing on the specific attributes of luxury, including high quality, rarity, and personality [47]. Several luxury companies, including Louis Vuitton and Gucci, have implemented this approach by creating seasonal and limited-edition collections. The scarcity and limited supply of collections display the exclusiveness and high level of craftsmanship. A recent study revealed the strong relationships between style, value, and environment, which are significant components of brand perception, but not limited to this category of fashion [48]. Similarly, the personal orientation direction is also concerned about the quality of luxury product. Perceived quality affects the willingness of consumers to pay, as well as to create purchase intentions and brand choices [49]. It well suits the need of perfectionist consumers as they avoid counterfeit luxury goods due to the high concern on inferior quality [50]. Knowledgeable consumers will reduce their intention to acquire counterfeit product [51]. Positive attitude is form with the consistency of information provided in social media advertising [32]. Hence, businesses must always update their content of social media advertising to ensure consumer accessibility to new information [48].

Community feeling and affiliation
The intrinsic motivation of sustainable luxury consumption are directed by community feeling and affiliation which are driven by both environmental and social consciousness [23]. Consumers who were conscious of the negative impacts on their purchase tend to avoid purchasing luxury products made in sweatshops [52]. They want their consumption to reflect concerns and aspiration that offer good feeling, but not guilt [29, 53]. Such consumers actively seek information and
contribute to UGC approach in order to identify with the widespread of current issues or facts. More importantly, prior studies indicated that the appearance of a disclosure can capture users’ attention to the fact, thus triggering the consumers’ persuasion knowledge [54, 55]. Those with high inclination and the ability to respect others are bound to adopt this sustainable behavior [56]. The growing conscientious consumption also stemmed from the commitment given by many luxury consumers, whereby most of them are from the well-educated global elite class [29]. Higher social class are now aware of the uprising social and environmental issues. This good news is not limited to the Western luxury markets, but is also noted in Asia, Latin America, and Eastern Europe [57]. This emerging “ethic era” encourages people to be concerned on the ethical implication of the products that they purchase. Overall, consumers have begun addressing sustainability that not only involves the functional of luxury products, but also those deriving from social concern, raw material, and production process. This is in line with a quote by Mahatma Gandhi, “there is no beauty in the finest cloth if it makes hunger and unhappiness”.

5.2 Extrinsic Motivation
Individuals who pursue extrinsic goals are more sensitive to other people’s perceptions, desires, praises, and rewards [58]. Typically, people purchase a product to signal wealth, status, and social power to others. Extrinsic motivation can be explained in detail with three extrinsic values; fame, image, and financial success [59, 60]. These materialism drivers always contradict sustainability [61]. Prior studies also revealed the contradiction between self-enhancement and self-transcendence [62, 21, 63]. Paradox can be noted between pro-self (luxury) and pro-social (sustainable). The growing conscious materialism has bridged the gap of disciplinary perspectives of the past, apart from providing better understanding on the present social world of consumers and business realities [64]. The reconstructed flow of materials, according to [65], focuses on the processes, the possibilities, the co-flourishing, and the limitations of nature. In response to these, this study discusses past studies related to UGC sources on social drivers that may lead to sustainable luxury consumption.

Fame
The customers’ social circle plays an important role in influencing sustainable luxury consumption. Concurrently, sustainable luxury fashion consumers can be easily influenced by “multiple end goals, including self-expression, aesthetic satisfaction, and group conformity” [66]. The “green” concept, which encourages consumers to focus on sustainability, seems to be a higher form of luxury consumption [67]. This study found that status can be applied to promote pro-environmental behavior. In associating brand with consumers, the citing metrics include hashtags and retweets, while latter publications underscoring the power of user-generated brand images and identities [68]. Consumers who purchase luxury fashion have demonstrated their interest in keeping up-to-date with the rapidly changing fashion [69]. Nevertheless, more consumers tend to look at fame by choosing to refine their product choices through consumption of “pre-loved” luxury items and recycling, instead of disposing off a product not in need, [70, 71]. Sustainability is not only based on the product, but also based on the ways of consumption. Up-cycled products appear to be more unique or innovative than those recycled [72]. When green products are not perceived as usual; the likelihood to look more stylish is increased, thus adhering to sustainable trend. Another new trend in sustainable consumption refers to collaborative consumption that emphasizes on sharing culture [73], which is far more complex than traditional consumption [74]. Collaborative consumption alters the relationship of consumers with the product, the others with whom they share the goods, and with the business that facilitates the acquisition of shared goods. Comprehensively, these forms of fashion reflect timeless style and craftsmanship of product attribute. Some have asserted that fashion is built to last over generations [57, 75].

Endorser Credibility
In this present digital era, the credibility of social influencers, including bloggers, designers, models, and well-known photographers, has a vital role in synergizing sustainable fashion with the prospect of consumers. Sustainable clothing style, nonetheless, is far from stylish [76]. Hence, influencers have a great responsibility to turn sustainable fashion into one that is tempting by effectively communicating green fashion across varying cultures. The association between social capital and purchase intention for sustainable fashion brands has been assessed by [77]. The referent power, such as vloggers, makes viewers feel more valued, approved, and more personally acceptance. Involvement of vloggers creates a para social interaction that focuses more on developing interactions with media personalities [78]. This makes consumers to feel more comfortable and have a closer relationship [79, 78]. Figure 1 illustrates the theoretical framework of this study. It posits that UGC serves as an independent variable that influences intrinsic motivation (self-acceptance, community feeling) and extrinsic motivation (fame, and endorser credibility) as the mediating variables, while sustainable luxury fashion consumption as the dependent variable.
6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In summary, this present study has contributed by extending prior work of UGC sources that specifically focused on sustainable luxury fashion consumption. The underpinning theory (SDT) [15] significantly elaborated the motivational drivers of the depicted positive purchase. With the growing shift in perception from conspicuous to conscious consumption, the present consumers are more alert about the uprising sustainability issues. This, in return, has led to positive impacts on profitability, people, and most importantly, the planet. Reacting to that, luxury companies need to be transparent in promoting their products via social media platform. Simultaneously, the practices of UGC can build a long-term relationship between consumers and organizations. It is advisable for luxury companies to introduce more creative contents and activities, in order to capture the heart of consumers. Accordingly, this study enhances the understanding on sustainable luxury fashion consumption, apart from elaborating purchasing criteria and behavioral choices of sustainable luxury fashion consumers. This information is precious to marketers and organizations, especially in the process of designing viable digital marketing strategies. Better insight ascertains higher sales and simultaneously protects the environment, as well as achieving sustainable development.

7. LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

Several constraints noted in this review may serve as potentially interesting avenues for future researches. First, it would be interesting to explore other types of digital platform in influencing this present sustainable trend. In addition, further research is deemed to benefit from replicating and extending the proposed framework in this study to other countries or region, so as to increase the generalization of the study outcomes.

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1. AUTHORS PROFILE

2. Nornajihah Nadia Hasbullah, Ph.D. Candidate, Faculty of Azman Hashim International Business School (AHIBS), Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM), 81310 Skudai, Johor, Malaysia, najihahnadya@yahoo.com.my

3. Zuraidah Sulaiman, Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Azman Hashim International Business School (AHIBS), Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM), 81310 Johor Skudai, Johor, Malaysia.

4. Adaviah Mas’od, Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Azman Hashim International Business School (AHIBS), Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM), 81310 Johor Skudai, Johor, Malaysia.