

Impact of User-Generated Content (UGC) on Luxury Fashion Product Sales through Social Media Influence and International Trade Dynamics in China



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This study seeks to examine the relationships among user-generated content (UGC), social media impact, international trade dynamics, and luxury fashion product sales in the Chinese market. This research examines the mediating role of user-generated content and social media influence in the relationship between consumer preferences and luxury fashion product sales, aiming to elucidate the intricate mechanisms that govern consumer behaviour and market dynamics within the luxury fashion sector. A qualitative research methodology was utilised, incorporating semi-structured interviews with 18 people from the Chinese market. Thematic analysis was employed to interpret the interview data, enabling a comprehensive examination of themes and patterns concerning UGC, social media influence, international trade dynamics, and luxury fashion product sales. The study's results highlight the substantial impact of user-generated content and social media on consumer perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours regarding luxury fashion products in China. The research underscores the influence of international trade dynamics on the correlation between UGC and luxury fashion product sales, elucidating the intricacies of global marketplaces and their consequences on consumer behaviour. This study enhances the current literature by analysing the convergence of user-generated content, social media impact, international trade dynamics, and luxury fashion product sales in China. The study utilises a qualitative research approach to provide essential academic and practical insights for luxury fashion enterprises seeking to enhance their marketing strategies and effectively operate inside the dynamic and competitive Chinese market.

Keywords: International Trade Dynamics, User-Generated Content, Social Media Influence, Luxury Fashion.

Introduction

The luxury garment sector in China has experienced significant growth and transformation over recent decades, driven by rapid economic development, urbanisation,

and shifting consumer preferences. As China has evolved into a major and rapidly expanding luxury market, luxury fashion firms have been compelled to adapt their marketing strategies to align with the unique tastes and expectations of Chinese consumers. (Zhang et al., 2022) assert that UGC has gained significant influence in the fashion business. Rini et al. (2024) characterise UGC as content produced by consumers on social media platforms, which significantly influences customer preferences, brand engagement, and purchasing decisions. In China, where social media platforms have the largest active user base, user-generated content significantly affects consumer behaviour, therefore shaping market dynamics. Platforms like WeChat, Weibo, and Douyin (TikTok) have profoundly transformed the fashion industry. These platforms offer companies exceptional chances to interact with consumers, advertise their products, and enable interactive dialogues (M. Zhang et al., 2022).

Through the visual and interactive features of social media, luxury fashion brands are able to showcase their products, influence consumer attitudes, and stimulate purchasing intentions (Liang & Xu, 2018). Furthermore, social media enables users to discover, share, and engage with fashion-related content, including that generated by peers and influencers. McMullan (2023) suggest that UGC, social media, and luxury fashion in China form a distinctive and dynamic ecosystem that significantly impacts both consumer behaviour and market dynamics. This ecosystem provides luxury fashion brands in China with intriguing opportunities to engage with customers and drive sales. However, several challenges and research gaps remain. Existing studies have primarily focused on customer engagement, brand image, or influencer marketing, often overlooking the holistic relationship between UGC, social media, and commercial success. Consequently, there is a need for a comprehensive investigation into these factors and their influence on luxury fashion sales in China. The effect of social media marketing on sales growth remains unclear, as luxury fashion firms face difficulties in assessing the return on investment (ROI) of their social media campaigns and understanding how these platforms affect business outcomes such as sales and profitability.

Andonopoulos et al. (2023) assessed the interplay between UGC, social media, international trade, and luxury fashion sales, highlighting how these factors influence consumer behaviour and market dynamics. Prom Tep et al. (2022) found that user-generated content significantly affects fashion consumers' perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours. demonstrated that consumers tend to trust UGC more than branded content, thereby increasing engagement and the likelihood of purchase. A study by Yeo et al. (2022) further revealed that social media has a profound effect on fashion purchasing decisions. Cheung et al. (2022) also showed that influencers play a crucial role in shaping brand engagement and customer preferences. In the context of international trade, McMullan (2023) highlighted the influence of globalisation, market competition, and trade restrictions on consumer behaviour and market outcomes. Research has indicated that changes in trade policies can affect the availability, cost, and accessibility of fashion products across borders.

While prior studies have explored these components individually, the relationship between UGC, social media, international trade, and luxury fashion sales has largely been overlooked (Bai & Yan, 2020). Few investigations have focused on how these factors collectively influence luxury fashion sales in China, despite their interactive effects on consumer behaviour and market dynamics, which warrant further exploration (Roelen-

Blasberg et al., 2023). Most studies have relied on large datasets analysed quantitatively, often overlooking the nuanced, context-specific elements of consumer behaviours and market dynamics. As a result, the existing literature remains insufficiently clear. To address this gap, semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis can provide a deeper understanding of consumer behaviour and market outcomes. In this regard, qualitative research can complement quantitative studies, offering valuable insights into the complex relationships underpinning these dynamics. Despite extensive research on the individual components, the impact of UGC, social media, and international trade dynamics on luxury fashion sales in China remains underexplored (Zhang et al., 2023).

This study explores the relationship between UGC, social media influence, international trade dynamics, and luxury fashion sales in China. It examines how UGC and social media shape consumer preferences and luxury fashion product sales, considering global trade factors. The research aims to clarify the complex dynamics that influence consumer behaviour and market outcomes, contributing to the fields of consumer psychology, marketing, and international business. Using qualitative methods, the study reveals the factors driving luxury fashion purchases and helps brands develop targeted strategies for the competitive Chinese market. Additionally, policymakers may use the findings to refine trade policies, fostering innovation and consumer welfare. This research advances both academic understanding and practical applications in luxury fashion marketing and global business.

Literature Review

User-Generated Content

User-generated content (UGC) is a multifaceted phenomenon that combines user engagement with the distribution of digital information. According to Prom Tep et al. (2022), UGC exemplifies a dynamic interaction between online platforms and consumers, promoting engagement and dialogue among individuals with common interests and preferences. Various forms of content, including product reviews, testimonials, visual media, audio recordings, and discussions, are shared across multiple platforms such as discussion boards, social media, forums, review sites, and blogs. Through interactions such as likes, comments, and shares, UGC spreads within digital spaces (Zhao et al., 2023). This interactive process cultivates virtual communities and facilitates the evaluation of content quality. Users of UGC share information, ideas, and recommendations, influencing one another in the process (Rueger et al., 2023). UGC serves as a form of digital social interaction, allowing individuals to connect and feel part of a community. It enables users to share experiences, hobbies, and opinions across cultural and geographical boundaries, thereby creating virtual communities of like-minded individuals (Rameezunnisa & Maheen, 2021). Forms of UGC such as lifestyle vlogs, product reviews, and hashtags provide avenues for self-expression, interaction, and the formation of communities centered around shared interests. As UGC represents authentic consumer experiences and opinions, it is often perceived as more genuine than traditional marketing (Roelen-Blasberg et al., 2023).

Luxury Fashion Product Sales

Numerous factors influence luxury fashion sales, including consumer perceptions, brand image, and market dynamics. In an era where internet-based UGC plays a significant role in shaping consumer behaviour, luxury fashion brands face unique opportunities and challenges. Unlike traditional retail environments, where brands exert greater control over visual and linguistic elements, UGC introduces variables that luxury firms must navigate carefully (Abedsoltan et al., 2022). It is imperative for luxury brands to comprehend how UGC impacts consumer perceptions and purchase decisions, as customers increasingly rely on such content for information and recommendations. Consumer perceptions shape attitudes towards brands, products, and shopping experiences, directly influencing luxury fashion sales. UGC reflects consumer preferences, attitudes, and experiences, thereby shaping market perceptions of luxury fashion (Q. Zhang et al., 2022). Positive UGC can enhance a brand's reputation and attractiveness by reinforcing the exclusivity and premium nature of its offerings. Conversely, negative UGC can damage a brand's image, deter potential customers, and adversely affect both brand equity and revenue (Zhou et al., 2021). Consequently, luxury brands must actively manage UGC to preserve their reputation and drive sales.

Social validation, reassurance, and substantiation derived from UGC also significantly influence consumer purchasing decisions (Rueger et al., 2023). Consumers seeking product reviews, unboxing videos, and influencer endorsements often rely on the comfort and affirmation provided by peers with first-hand product experience (Zhao et al., 2022). Positive UGC can strengthen purchase intentions and encourage transactions, whereas negative or neutral content may discourage potential buyers, prompting them to explore alternatives or delay purchases. Strategic utilisation of UGC is therefore essential for luxury brands to influence consumer behaviour and increase revenue. Additionally, UGC contributes to storytelling and brand promotion, fostering stronger connections between luxury fashion brands and their customers (Pourhejazy et al., 2022). By embracing UGC campaigns, brand collaborations, and user-generated hashtags, luxury fashion brands can expand their brand narratives and deliver compelling customer experiences. Engagement and co-creation through UGC cultivate a sense of ownership and belonging among consumers, thereby enhancing brand loyalty (Abedsoltan et al., 2022). UGC not only enables consumers to advocate for a brand but also influences their broader social networks. To optimise sales and loyalty, luxury fashion brands must cultivate a UGC ecosystem aligned with their values and tailored to resonate with their target audiences.

Social Media Influence

Social media significantly influences consumer opinions, preferences, and purchasing decisions in the digital era. It facilitates the creation, dissemination, and amplification of UGC, shaping consumer behavior (Zhuang et al., 2023). Platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube enable users to share opinions, experiences, and recommendations, thereby affecting perceptions of brands and products (Poturak and Softić 2019). The interactive nature of social media fosters user engagement and discourse among consumers, brands, influencers, and peers, encouraging the sharing and appreciation of UGC within online communities (Chen et al., 2022). Social proof, or the tendency to follow others' actions and opinions, plays a key role in consumer behaviour on social media (Rueger et al., 2023). Positive UGC, such as product reviews, celebrity

endorsements, and influencer collaborations, enhances brand reputation and may inspire consumers to emulate the purchasing behaviours of their peers (Lago et al., 2022).

Social approval and signals further shape purchasing intentions and decisions, with interactive brand-consumer engagement fostering loyalty (Ceyhan, 2019). Brands utilise social media to share content, address customer inquiries, and receive real-time feedback, strengthening connections with their audiences. This engagement encourages consumers to recommend products to their networks. Influencer marketing, where brands collaborate with prominent individuals to create and share content, also plays a pivotal role (Lim et al., 2023). Influencers, as trusted sources, significantly impact consumer behaviour and purchasing decisions. Collectively, influencer partnerships, UGC, and brand-consumer interactions enhance loyalty and participation in the digital marketplace.

International Trade Dynamics

International trade dynamics significantly influence luxury fashion brand positioning, market competitiveness, and consumer behaviour. In China's luxury fashion sector, global trade impacts consumer behaviour and UGC. Trade restrictions, such as tariffs, quotas, and agreements, affect import costs, distribution, and pricing, influencing demand and competitiveness (Yang et al., 2020). Strategic planning and market analysis are essential for managing trade policies, such as luxury taxation, which can disrupt supply chains and product availability (Zhao et al., 2021). E-commerce and globalisation have increased access to international luxury brands, intensifying competition in China (Boardman & McCormick, 2023). This competitive environment highlights the importance of unique branding, innovative strategies, and effective marketing to capture market share (Lim et al., 2023). Globalisation has heightened competition, requiring luxury brands to navigate cultural differences and market trends in China (Zhou et al., 2021). Aligning UGC strategies with global brand identity and local market conditions is vital for success (Adamkiewicz et al., 2022). By leveraging UGC, luxury fashion brands can communicate values, engage customers, and build loyalty while navigating global trade dynamics to enhance sales in China.

Methodology

The study employed purposive sampling to recruit eighteen participants, ensuring demographic diversity in age, gender, and engagement with luxury fashion products (Table 1). Eligible participants were Chinese residents aged 25–45 who had purchased premium clothing, regularly engaged with social media, and interacted with luxury fashion UGC. Inclusion and exclusion criteria were strictly applied, excluding individuals outside the age range, residing outside China, or lacking experience with luxury fashion or social media. Recruitment combined purposive and snowball sampling. Potential participants were identified through professional networks, social media groups, and online forums focused on Chinese luxury fashion enthusiasts. Study invitations and participant information sheets were distributed through various channels. Participants were also encouraged to refer to others meeting the inclusion criteria, facilitating additional recruitment through snowball sampling.

Table 1: Profile of Respondents

Participant ID	Gender	Age	Frequency of Luxury Fashion Purchases	Level of Engagement with UGC
P001	Female	32	Monthly	High
P002	Male	28	Weekly	Moderate
P003	Female	35	Bi-monthly	High
P004	Male	38	Monthly	Low
P005	Female	30	Monthly	High
P006	Male	33	Weekly	High
P007	Female	40	Bi-monthly	Moderate
P008	Male	27	Weekly	Low
P009	Female	31	Monthly	High
P010	Male	34	Bi-weekly	Moderate
011	Female	37	High	High
012	Male	26	Moderate	Moderate
013	Female	34	Low	High
014	Male	36	High	Low
015	Female	29	Moderate	High
016	Male	39	High	Moderate
017	Female	31	High	Low
018	Male	28	Moderate	High

Data collection involved semi-structured interviews to explore the impact of UGC on luxury fashion sales in China. Depending on participant preferences and logistics, interviews were performed face-to-face or by videoconferencing (Table 2). Each session lasted 45–60 minutes, enabling detailed discussions on participants' luxury fashion consumption, social media engagement with UGC, and perceptions of UGC's influence on consumer behaviours and brand dynamics. Data saturation was monitored throughout the process to determine when additional interviews ceased to provide new insights. Saturation was achieved when successive interviews produced redundant information. The research team conducted regular reviews of interview transcripts and interim analyses to identify emerging themes and evaluate the need for further interviews. Once data saturation was confirmed, data collection concluded, and no further interviews were conducted.

Table 2: Interview Guidelines

Variable	Interview Questions
UGC	1. Can you describe your experience with UGC related to luxury fashion products?
	2. How do you perceive the authenticity and reliability of UGC in influencing your purchasing decisions?
	3. What types of UGC do you find most influential in shaping your perceptions of luxury fashion brands?
	4. Can you discuss the role of social media platforms in facilitating the creation and dissemination of UGC?

Table 2: *Interview Guidelines(cont...)*

Variable	Interview Questions
Luxury Fashion Product Sales	1. How do you perceive luxury fashion products in terms of quality, exclusivity, and prestige?
	2. How does UGC influence your attitudes and intentions towards purchasing luxury fashion products?
	3. What factors do you consider when making purchasing decisions for luxury fashion products?
	4. Can you describe any instances where UGC has influenced your actual purchase of luxury fashion products?
Social Media Influence	1. Which social media platforms do you primarily use for engaging with luxury fashion-related content?
	2. How do you perceive the influence of social media on your attitudes and behaviours towards luxury fashion?
	3. What role do influencers play in shaping your perceptions and preferences for luxury fashion brands?
	4. Can you discuss any instances where social media content has directly influenced your purchasing decisions?
International Trade Dynamics	1. How do you perceive the role of international trade dynamics in shaping the availability and pricing of luxury fashion products in China?
	2. How do trade policies and regulations impact your purchasing decisions for luxury fashion products?
	3. In what ways does globalization influence your perceptions and preferences for luxury fashion brands?
	4. Can you discuss any challenges or opportunities related to international trade dynamics and luxury fashion consumption in China?

Rini et al. (2024) three-step thematic analysis approach was employed. First, interviews were transcribed verbatim to ensure data accuracy (Figure 1). Transcripts were organised and examined to identify relevant insights. Initial readings informed a categorisation framework, which was refined as additional themes emerged. An iterative process of abstraction and classification grouped coded content into themes and subthemes, identifying trends, patterns, and divergences within the data. Thematic maps were created to illustrate the relationships between subthemes and main themes, providing a comprehensive overview to guide analysis and discussion. Measures were taken to enhance reliability and validity. Participant verification ensured the accuracy of data and representation of perspectives. Monthly peer debriefing sessions fostered critical reflection, minimising bias during data processing. Data triangulation, involving multiple interviewers and analysts, further enhanced consistency and reliability of findings.

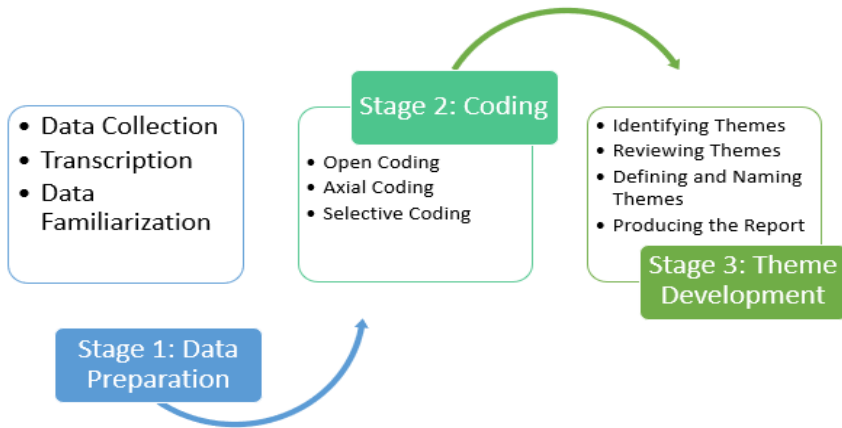


Figure 1: *Stages of Thematic Analysis*

Results

This study explores UGC, social media influence, international trade dynamics, and luxury fashion sales in China. Using qualitative interviews, it analyses factors shaping brand perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours. Findings reveal UGC and social media influence preferences and purchases, while trade dynamics impact product distribution and consumption. The insights guide luxury brands in leveraging UGC and social media to boost sales and brand equity.

User-Generated Content Influences Luxury Fashion Product Sales

The study underscores the significant role of UGC in influencing luxury fashion sales in China, revealing its multifaceted impact on consumer perceptions, attitudes, and purchasing behaviour. Insights were derived from in-depth participant interviews, highlighting the intricate interplay between UGC and luxury fashion consumption (see [Table 3](#)). A prominent theme identified was the authenticity of UGC. Participants consistently emphasised its importance in purchase decisions, favouring UGC over traditional marketing due to its representation of genuine customer experiences and perspectives. Participant P003 stated, “I place confidence in the viewpoints of fellow consumers who disclose their encounters with high-end fashion products.” This supports previous findings that highlight authenticity as critical for consumer trust and engagement ([Adamkiewicz et al., 2022](#)). Consumers trust peer recommendations more than polished advertisements, perceiving UGC as a more reliable source of information.

Social validation also emerged as a key factor in shaping consumer behaviour. Ratings and reviews shared through UGC influenced participants’ perceptions of luxury fashion products. For example, participant P007 acknowledged being swayed by peer approval and positive feedback when considering a purchase, aligning with social identity theory, which posits that individuals seek social validation to enhance self-esteem and foster a sense of belonging ([Chaudhry, 2022](#)). By offering social cues and validation, UGC fosters confidence in purchase decisions and strengthens the consumer’s connection to the

fashion community. The diversity of UGC further plays a pivotal role in consumer decision-making. Participants highlighted the value of content such as unboxing videos, product reviews, and styling tips in informing their choices. Participant P010 noted that UGC provides insights not only into product quality but also its usability and styling potential. This aligns with [Dong et al. \(2023\)](#), who demonstrated that diverse UGC enhances customer engagement and facilitates informed decision-making by presenting a holistic view of a product's attributes and value.

Table 3: UGC Influences Luxury Fashion Product Sales

Aspect	Weightage
Impact of UGC Authenticity	0.35
Influence of Social Validation in UGC	0.25
Importance of UGC Diversity	0.20
Role of Influencers in Shaping UGC	0.20

Influencers were also identified as critical to amplifying UGC's impact on luxury fashion sales. Participants noted that endorsements from trusted fashion influencers increased the credibility and appeal of UGC, particularly among younger consumers. Participant P005 remarked on the influence of Instagram fashion influencers in shaping their purchasing decisions, citing their endorsements as persuasive and inspirational. This supports findings by [Poturak and Softić \(2019\)](#), which highlight influencers as key drivers of brand perception and consumer behaviour. By leveraging their status as trusted authorities, influencers enhance the reach and effectiveness of UGC, boosting consumer engagement and conversion rates. In conclusion, the study illustrates the vital role of UGC in shaping consumer trust, fostering social validation, and providing diverse, actionable insights. Additionally, influencer partnerships enhance UGC's reach and impact, underscoring the importance of fostering a dynamic UGC ecosystem to drive luxury fashion sales in China.

Social Media Influence Influences the Relationship between User-Generated Content and Luxury Fashion Product Sales

The study explored the intricate relationship between social media, UGC, and luxury fashion sales in China, highlighting how social media influences consumer perceptions, behaviours, and purchase decisions (see [Table 4](#)). Extensive interviews revealed that social media enhances UGC's impact by facilitating its creation, distribution, and promotion. Platforms like Instagram and WeChat enable users to share luxury fashion experiences with wide audiences, amplifying UGC beyond traditional marketing channels ([Colicev et al., 2019](#)). Social media also fosters consumer engagement by encouraging interaction and community building. Participant P008 noted that social media UGC enables real-time discussions between customers and content creators about luxury fashion. Similarly, [Yang et al. \(2020\)](#) emphasised that social media serves as a crucial platform for UGC creation and sharing, shaping user perceptions and behaviour through community interaction. The role of influencers in integrating UGC with luxury fashion purchases was another key finding. Influencers use their expertise, reputation, and following to curate and promote luxury fashion UGC. Participant P006 highlighted their

significant influence on purchase decisions, as their endorsements enhance UGC's credibility and persuasive power.

Table 4: *Effect of Social Media Influence on the Relationship Between UGC and Luxury Fashion Product Sales*

Aspect	Weightage
Amplification Effect of Social Media on UGC	0.30
Facilitation of Consumer Engagement with UGC	0.25
Role of Influencers in Mediating UGC Relationship	0.20
Importance of Social Media Analytics	0.25

An earlier study by [Rini et al. \(2024\)](#) found that influencers influence brand attitudes and consumer behaviour. Influencers act as trusted intermediaries between brands and consumers, amplifying UGC's impact on luxury fashion purchases. Participants also noted the potential of social media analytics to enhance brands' UGC strategies and social media presence. Participant P010 highlighted the importance of data-driven insights into customer moods, preferences, and UGC engagement. Social media analytics allows marketers to tailor UGC to their target audience, and when combined with data-driven decision-making, it can significantly boost luxury fashion sales ([Chen et al., 2022](#)). Analytics help brands understand customer preferences, identify emerging trends, and refine their UGC strategies to maximise impact and engagement.

International Trade Dynamics Influence the Relationship between User-Generated Content and Luxury Fashion Product Sales

This study explored the complex relationship between international trade dynamics, luxury fashion sales in China, and UGC. In-depth interviews with participants highlighted the multifaceted effects of trade regulations, market competition, globalization, and brand positioning on consumer perceptions, behaviours, and purchasing decisions (see Table 5). A central focus was the impact of trade restrictions and practices on the cost and availability of luxury fashion in China. Participants observed that tariffs, import restrictions, and trade agreements influence the price and availability of luxury goods. Participant P004 noted that trade policies affect the cost and availability of luxury clothing in China, with tariffs and import limitations potentially reducing brand availability or increasing prices, thereby affecting consumer choices. This supports the findings of [Yang et al. \(2020\)](#), which suggest that trade policies shape consumer behaviour by altering product pricing and availability.

Participants also discussed how market competition affects brands' UGC strategies. In a highly competitive market such as China, it is crucial for brands to maintain relevance and visibility, as highlighted by P009. UGC helps brands build stronger consumer connections and differentiate themselves in the market, a strategy supported by [Zhao et al. \(2021\)](#), who assert that UGC enhances brand awareness, consumer loyalty, and differentiation. Additionally, the influence of globalization on luxury fashion perceptions and purchasing decisions was acknowledged. Globalisation has spread fashion trends and cultural ideas, which have altered consumer views on luxury clothing. Participant P007 stated that globalisation has made luxury goods more affordable for Chinese consumers,

with UGC and social media playing key roles in illuminating global trends and influencing purchasing choices. This study aligns with the notion that global market connectivity and UGC significantly influence fashion trends and consumer preferences.

The panellists highlighted the importance of brand positioning, reputation, and leveraging UGC to boost luxury fashion sales. Authenticity, heritage, and craftsmanship are key to building consumer trust and maintaining global competitiveness. As participant P005 noted, premium fashion brands with a strong heritage are better positioned to navigate international trade dynamics and utilise UGC effectively (Zhou et al., 2021). Brand reputation and equity play a significant role in shaping consumer emotions and behaviours. Participants also discussed how cross-border e-commerce platforms and digital marketplaces promote UGC and facilitate the international transfer of luxury fashion products. Digital platforms break geographical barriers, expanding businesses' global reach. Participant P008 explained that these platforms have transformed the luxury fashion market by providing consumers with easy access to a wide range of products and UGC.

Table 5: *Influence of International Trade Dynamics on the Relationship Between UGC and Luxury Fashion Product Sales*

Aspect	Weightage
Impact of Trade Policies and Regulations	0.30
Influence of Market Competition on UGC Adoption	0.25
Role of Globalization in Shaping Consumer Preferences	0.20
Importance of Brand Positioning and Reputation	0.20

Discussion

The discussion section of this study explores the impact of UGC on luxury fashion sales in China, drawing from relevant academic sources and considering the broader context of global commerce and social media. The findings highlight the significant role UGC plays in shaping consumer behaviour and marketing strategies. UGC is found to strongly influence luxury fashion shoppers' perceptions, attitudes, and purchase decisions, with authenticity, variety, and social validation being key drivers of consumer engagement. These results align with previous research demonstrating that UGC impacts customer trust, brand attitudes, and purchase intentions (Bigné et al., 2023; Dong et al., 2023).

UGC must be authentic to influence consumer behaviour. Participants preferred UGC over traditional marketing due to its perceived authenticity and trustworthiness. Reviews and personal experiences enhance product credibility, while social validation encourages consumers to follow peers' opinions. The diversity of UGC boosts engagement and decision-making (Lim et al., 2023). Social media amplifies UGC by enabling users to interact, share, and promote content related to luxury brands, with influencers, particularly younger ones, expanding its reach and impact. This study confirms previous research on the role of social media and influencers in shaping brand perceptions and consumer behavior (Wei et al., 2024). Effective marketing strategies are essential to boost luxury fashion sales due to the connection between UGC and social media. In the competitive Chinese market, luxury brands must leverage UGC and social media to enhance brand awareness, customer engagement, and sales. Collaborations with

influencers and authentic UGC can foster brand loyalty and increase sales (Zhuang et al., 2023). Marketers should focus on genuine storytelling and engaging content to connect with their audience. By harnessing social media and UGC, companies can create compelling brand experiences that drive both online and offline sales.

Trade restrictions and regulations significantly influence the availability, pricing, and accessibility of luxury fashion in China. Trade agreements, taxes, and import limitations affect international product and service flows, as well as consumer preferences. Changes in trade policies can impact luxury fashion pricing, supply, and competitiveness, as highlighted by several studies (Yang et al., 2020). Market competition also shapes the strategic marketing use of UGC by companies. In China’s competitive luxury fashion market, businesses must leverage UGC to enhance customer engagement and stand out. Authentic customer testimonials can improve a brand’s reputation and influence purchasing decisions, making smart marketing essential for maintaining market leadership. Globalisation has made luxury fashion more accessible and desirable to Chinese consumers (Zhou et al., 2021), with UGC and social media driving global trends. Strong brand positioning and reputation are crucial for navigating market fluctuations and leveraging UGC to boost sales. A consistent brand image and high-quality products foster loyalty and trust, leading to better sales and market success (Figure 2).

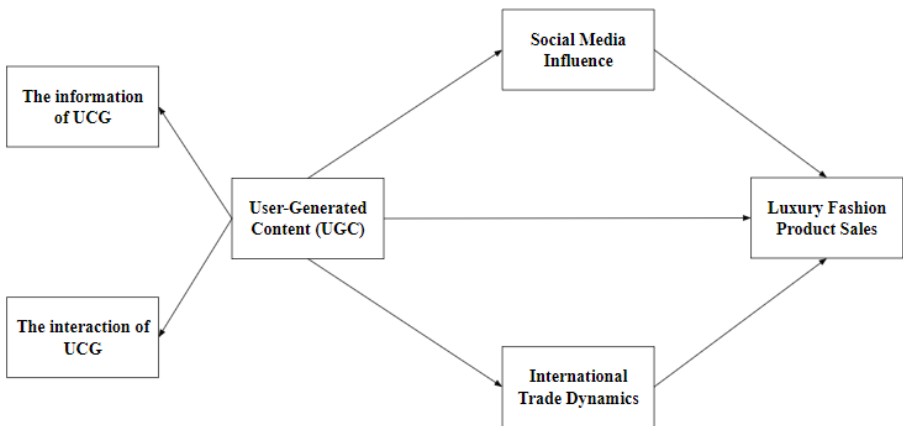


Figure 2: Proposed Framework

Conclusion

This study examines the relationship between UGC, social media, international trade, and luxury fashion sales in China. UGC significantly influences buyers' perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours, with variety, authenticity, and social validation driving customer engagement and purchase decisions. Social media amplifies UGC, with influencers shaping consumer behaviour and boosting sales. The research also highlights how global trade dynamics, such as trade rules, globalization, and market competitiveness, impact luxury fashion demand. The study proposes a model integrating UGC, social media, and international trade to influence consumer behaviour and drive sales.

Implications of the study

Practical Implications

The study's findings offer significant implications for policymakers, marketers, and luxury fashion brands. Emphasising authenticity and variety in UGC, high-end fashion companies can design campaigns that build trust and loyalty with their target audience. The study also highlights the role of influencers and social media networks in driving luxury fashion sales, suggesting that brands collaborate with celebrities to promote UGC and enhance customer engagement. Social media analytics can assist brands in refining their marketing strategies and decisions. Additionally, the research underscores the importance of adapting to international trade dynamics, particularly for Chinese luxury fashion brands. By monitoring trade regulations, industry trends, and consumer preferences, brands can tailor their strategies to the local market. These findings can also guide policymakers in crafting trade policies that support luxury fashion companies globally.

Theoretical Implications

This study offers important theoretical insights for marketing and consumer behaviour research, particularly in the luxury fashion sector. It underscores the role of UGC in shaping consumer behaviour, highlighting the importance of authenticity, social validation, and variety in influencing purchase decisions. Moreover, it extends digital marketing and consumer engagement literature by demonstrating how social media platforms amplify UGC, impacting consumer attitudes and behaviours. The study also explores the impact of global trade dynamics on luxury fashion purchasing, emphasising the importance of brand positioning, trade policies, market competition, and globalisation. According to international marketing research, organisations must adjust their tactics to account for economic, cultural, and legal differences among markets.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

This study explores the relationship between UGC, social media influence, international trade dynamics, and luxury fashion product sales in China, but it has several limitations. The qualitative design limits generalisability, as the findings may not apply to other demographics or regions. Experimental designs, surveys, and observational methods could address this issue by providing more objective data. The study focused on UGC, social media, and international trade in luxury fashion sales, but did not consider other factors like technological advancements, economic conditions, or cultural trends that might also influence market dynamics. Future research should adopt a more comprehensive approach to better understand decision-making in luxury fashion consumption. Furthermore, the impact of changes in social media platforms, such as algorithm updates and shifts in user preferences, was not explored. Longitudinal studies could help assess how these changes affect brand promotion and sales over time. Additionally, variations in market dynamics and consumer behaviour across different luxury fashion segments were not considered, suggesting the need for more research into how demographic and psychographic factors influence responses to UGC and social media strategies. Future studies could also explore the international dimensions of luxury

fashion consumer behaviour through cross-cultural and longitudinal research, as well as experimental studies to better understand the cause-and-effect relationships between trade policies, UGC, and social media engagement. Finally, further qualitative research could involve industry professionals and luxury fashion companies to gain insights into their perspectives on UGC, social media, and international trade.

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