

Beyond sustainability: How luxury resale platform trust signals shape luxury brand perceptions among UK generation Z consumers

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Abstract

The rapid expansion of luxury resale platforms is transforming contemporary luxury consumption by integrating digitalisation, circular economy principles, and evolving consumer values into traditionally exclusivity-driven markets. This study examines how sustainability motivation, platform features, resale participation, and perceived authenticity influence luxury brand perception among UK Generation Z consumers.

Grounded in Signalling Theory, the research differentiates four categories of trust signals – authentication systems, seller ratings, customer reviews, and transparency mechanisms – and explores how each operates uniquely to reduce uncertainty and shape brand evaluations. A quantitative survey of 120 UK Generation Z consumers with prior experience on resale platforms (Vestiaire Collective, Depop, The RealReal, eBay Luxury, Vinted) was conducted. While the sample provides valuable insights, limitations in generalising findings to broader populations, other age groups, or international luxury markets are discussed. Results indicate that platform trust features exert the strongest influence on luxury brand perception, whereas sustainability motivation and resale participation do not have significant direct effects. Perceived authenticity does not mediate the relationship between platform features and brand perception, suggesting that consumers rely predominantly on platform-level trust signals in forming brand evaluations. The study extends Signalling Theory by demonstrating that trust mechanisms function as direct determinants of luxury brand perception and reconceptualises luxury value formation as increasingly platform centric.

Practical implications recommend that luxury brands strategically collaborate with resale platforms, maintain brand equity across primary and secondary markets, and leverage trust-building mechanisms – such as authentication, reviews, ratings, and transparency – without compromising exclusivity or prestige.

Introduction

The luxury fashion industry is undergoing profound structural transformation as convergence of digitalisation, circular consumption models and evolving consumer values that are reshaping the traditional notions of luxury. Historically, luxury brands have depended on mechanism of exclusivity, scarcity and symbolic prestige to construct brand desirability and sustain perceived value (Hennigs et al., 2015; Chevalier, 2020). However, researcher like Fu et al. (2025) determined that the rapid growth of luxury resale platforms is challenging these traditional foundations by making luxury products more accessible while simultaneously promoting sustainability and value retention.

Luxury resale platforms, including Vestiaire Collective, The RealReal, Depop, eBay Luxury and Vinted have become increasingly influential intermediaries within the global fashion ecosystem. According to ThredUp (2025), the global second-hand apparel market is projected to accelerate approximately US\$367 billion by 2029, significantly outpacing growth in the broader apparel industry.

Concurrently, Generation Z has emerged as a pivotal consumer cohort driving this expansion. Bain & Company (2025) reported that Gen Z currently accounts for approximately 20% of global luxury consumption, with projections suggesting that this share is expected to contribute nearly one-third of luxury expenditure by 2030. As digitally native consumers, Generation Z exhibits a strong propensity to engage with luxury through digital and platform-mediated channels, and is increasingly characterised by value orientations emphasising sustainability, transparency, and authenticity (Ewe and Tjiptono, 2023). Collectively, these dynamics highlight a structural shift in luxury consumption patterns, wherein digital platforms and younger consumer cohorts are jointly redefining the mechanisms through which luxury value is accessed, interpreted, and sustained.

Despite the increasing significance of luxury resale within contemporary fashion system, important gaps remain regarding its implication on luxury brand perception. Existing scholarship has predominantly concentrated on sustainability motivations, resale participation and broader circular consumption behaviour (Duffy, 2021; Henninger and Athwal, 2022; Saleem et al., 2025), thereby providing valuable insight into the drivers of consumer engagement within secondary luxury brands. However, comparatively less attention has been directed towards the role of resale platforms as active intermediaries in shaping evaluations of luxury brands. Limited empirical research has examined whether platform mechanism such as authentication services, customer reviews, seller ratings and transparency mechanisms influence luxury brand perception among Generation Z consumers.

This gap is particularly significant as luxury resale environments differ fundamentally from traditional luxury retail settings in terms of information asymmetry, product verification processes and consumer risk exposure. Consumers purchasing pre-owned luxury goods typically encounter heightened uncertainty regarding product authenticity, quality assurance and seller credibility (Reiners, 2022). In response to these structural uncertainties, platform-based trust mechanisms are increasingly understood to play a pivotal role in shaping consumer evaluations of luxury brands operating within secondary markets (Lazaroiu et al., 2020). Grounded in Signalling Theory (Connelly et al., 2025), this study conceptualised authentication systems, customer reviews, seller ratings, and related platform trust signals as informational cues that reduce perceived risk and function as credibility indicators. These signals, in turn, are argued to influence how consumers construct and interpret luxury brand perceptions within digital resale ecosystems. Furthermore, this study examines the extent to which sustainability motivation, platform features, resale participation, and perceived authenticity influence luxury brand perception among UK Generation Z consumers.

Literature Review

Sustainability and Luxury Perception

The rapid expansion of luxury resale platforms has intensified scholarly discourse on sustainability and circular consumption. According to Henninger and Athwal (2022), luxury resale extends product lifecycles, reduces environmental waste, and supports circular economy principles, thereby aligning with sustainability imperatives in contemporary consumption systems. It has been suggested that this development has increased engagement among younger consumers with heightened environmental and social responsibility. In line with the view of Ewe and Tjiptono (2023), Generation Z is conceptualised as a sustainability-oriented cohort whose consumption behaviour is shaped by ethical values and environmental awareness, reflecting a structural shift in luxury consumption.

However, it has been suggested that the relationship between sustainability and luxury consumption remains contested. In one hand, sustainability enhances brand legitimacy and align luxury brands with contemporary consumer values stated by Sofia, (2023). On the other hand, few research (Jain and Rathi, 2023; White, Habib and Hardisty, 2019) argued that consumers continue to prioritise product quality, trust, and economic value over environmental considerations in purchasing decisions. Furthermore, luxury consumption is traditionally associated with exclusivity and prestige, which conflicts with sustainability-oriented consumption ideals. Thereby generating an inherent tension within luxury value systems. Despite increasing interest in sustainable luxury, limited empirical evidence exists regarding whether sustainability motivation directly influences luxury brand perception in resale contexts,

particularly among UK Generation Z consumers. From this discussion, it can be proposed that sustainability motivation positively influences luxury brand perception.

H1: Sustainability motivation positively influences luxury brand perception.

Platform Features and Brand Perception

Luxury resale markets are characterised by elevated uncertainty arising from concerns regarding authenticity, product quality, and seller credibility which has been highlighted by (Youn, Hwang and Ju, 2025). Signalling Theory posits that, under conditions of information asymmetry, consumers rely on observable cues to reduce uncertainty (Connelly et al., 2025). They also tried to surmise product quality in the absence of complete information (Connelly et al., 2025). Within luxury resale platforms, authentication services, seller ratings, customer reviews, secure payment systems, and transparency mechanisms function work as salient trust signals. These signals facilitate credibility assessment and mitigate perceived risk (Connelly et al., 2025).

Recent studies (Liu et al., 2023; Swazan and Youn, 2024) demonstrated that such mechanisms significantly enhance consumer trust and confidence in luxury resale transactions. Liu et al. (2023) demonstrated that authentication procedures and platform transparency positively influence customer experiences, while Swazan and Youn (2024) argued that verification technologies strengthen consumer confidence in secondary luxury markets. Collectively, these findings suggest that platform features may influence not only transactional outcomes but also extend to broader consumer perceptions of luxury brands.

Nevertheless, existing research has predominantly focused on trust, purchase intentions and customer satisfaction, with comparatively limited attention given to luxury brand perception as an outcome variable (Atkinson and Kang, 2021; (Suttharattagul, et al., 2025). As luxury consumers increasingly engage with brands through resale platforms, understanding how platform trust mechanisms shape brand evaluations become increasingly significant. Therefore, stronger platform features are expected to positively influence luxury brand perception.

H2: Platform features positively influence luxury brand perception.

Resale Participation

The expansion of luxury resale platforms has created novel pathways through which consumers engage with luxury products. Participation in resale activities may increase exposure to luxury brands, improve product accessibility and foster alternative interpretations of luxury ownership (Duffy, 2021). Furthermore, Murtas and Pedeliento (2024) argued that resale platforms have transformed traditional customer journeys by introducing new touchpoints between luxury consumption experiences within digital and circular marketplaces.

Murtas and Pedeliento (2024) argued that the influence of resale participation on luxury brand perception remains inconclusive. While increased engagement in resale platforms may enhance consumer familiarity and product awareness, broader accessibility may simultaneously dilute perceptions of exclusivity, a core attribute traditionally associated with luxury value (Chevalier, 2020). Consequently, resale participation may exert either a positive or negative influence on luxury brand evaluations, depending on how consumers interpret the tension between accessibility and exclusivity. Given the limited empirical evidence within this domain, particularly in the UK luxury resale context, resale participation is hypothesised to positively influence luxury brand perception.

H3: Resale participation positively influences luxury brand perception.

Authenticity and Trust Signals

Authenticity constitutes a fundamental dimension of luxury value, as it reinforces perceptions of quality, heritage, and legitimacy (Hennigs et al., 2015). Within resale markets, concerns surrounding counterfeit products and information asymmetry amplify the importance of authenticity evaluation. Consequently, consumers increasingly depend on authentication services, seller verification mechanisms, and customer reviews as key indicators when assessing the genuineness of luxury products.

Drawing on Signalling Theory, platform features can be viewed as trust signals that help consumers evaluate authenticity under conditions of uncertainty (Connelly et al., 2025). Existing research consistently demonstrates that authentication systems and verification mechanisms reduce perceived risk and enhance confidence in luxury resale transactions (Liu et al., 2023; Swazan and Youn, 2024). Therefore, stronger platform features are expected to enhance perceived authenticity.

H4: Platform features positively influence perceived authenticity.

Although authenticity is widely recognised as a key dimension of luxury value, its role within digital resale environments remains underexplored (Gregory, 2019; B, S and Phatak, 2026). Previous studies have largely examined authenticity as an outcome of trust-building mechanisms rather than as an explanatory mechanism linking platform features and luxury brand perception (Christophe Gösken, 2025). Given the theoretical importance of authenticity within luxury consumption, it is plausible that consumers use authenticity assessments when translating platform trust signals into broader evaluations of luxury brands. Consequently, perceived authenticity may mediate the relationship between platform features and luxury brand perception.

H5: Perceived authenticity mediates the relationship between platform features and luxury brand perception.

Methodology

This study adopted a positivist research philosophy and a deductive research approach to examine the factors influencing luxury brand perception among UK Generation Z consumers within luxury resale environments. A quantitative cross-sectional survey design was selected because it enables the systematic testing of theoretically derived relationships between sustainability motivation, platform features, resale participation, perceived authenticity and luxury brand perception. The study focused on UK Generation Z consumers aged between 18 and 27 years who had prior experience using luxury resale platforms such as Vestiaire Collective, Depop, The RealReal, eBay Luxury and Vinted. A purposive sampling technique was employed to ensure that respondents possessed relevant experience and knowledge of luxury resale platforms. Data were collected through an online self-administered questionnaire, generating 124 responses. Following data screening and cleaning, four responses were excluded due to incomplete information or failure to meet the selection criteria, resulting in a final sample of 120 valid respondents. The questionnaire comprised demographic questions and multiple-item constructs measuring sustainability motivation, platform features, resale participation, perceived authenticity and luxury brand perception using five-point Likert scales adapted from established studies in luxury consumption, sustainability and consumer behaviour literature. Although this sample provides valuable insights into UK Generation Z consumers, the relatively modest size and geographically constrained nature of the sample limit the generalisability of the findings. The results may not fully extrapolate to broader consumer populations, other age cohorts, or international luxury markets, where cultural, economic, and platform adoption differences may influence both resale participation and brand perception. Future research should aim to include larger, more diverse samples and explore cross-cultural contexts to enhance external validity and robustness of the conclusions. Data analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS. Descriptive statistics were initially employed to examine respondent characteristics and summarise the distribution of key variables. Pearson correlation analysis was then performed to assess the strength and direction of relationships among the constructs. Multiple regression analysis was used to evaluate the influence of sustainability motivation, platform features and resale participation on luxury brand perception, while an additional regression model assessed the impact of platform features on perceived authenticity. The mediating role of perceived authenticity was examined using the Baron and Kenny (1986) mediation procedure, enabling the assessment of both direct and indirect effects within the proposed conceptual framework. Reliability testing was undertaken using Cronbach's Alpha, with all constructs exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating satisfactory internal consistency and measurement reliability. Ethical considerations were carefully observed throughout the research process, including informed consent, voluntary participation,

respondent anonymity and compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). These procedures helped ensure the validity, reliability and ethical integrity of the study findings.

Findings

Relationships Among Variables

Table 1 presents the Pearson correlation coefficients among the study variables. All variables exhibited positive and statistically significant relationships, suggesting that sustainability motivation, platform features, resale participation and perceived authenticity are associated with luxury brand perception.

Among the variables, platform features demonstrated the strongest relationship with perceived authenticity ($r = .641$, $p < .01$), followed by the relationship between platform features and luxury brand perception ($r = .581$, $p < .01$). These findings indicate that consumers who perceive stronger authentication systems, seller ratings, customer reviews and platform transparency also tend to report higher levels of authenticity and more favourable perceptions of luxury brands.

Although sustainability motivation ($r = .461$, $p < .01$) and resale participation ($r = .429$, $p < .01$) were positively associated with luxury brand perception, their relationships were comparatively weaker. This preliminary evidence suggests that trust-related platform mechanisms may be more influential than sustainability values or participation behaviours in shaping luxury brand evaluations.

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
1. Resale Participation	1				
2. Platform Features	.608**	1			
3. Perceived Authenticity	.518**	.641**	1		
4. Sustainability Motivation	.497**	.624**	.522**	1	
5. Luxury Brand Perception	.429**	.581**	.470**	.461**	1

Note: ** $p < .01$

Table 1. Correlation Matrix

Predictors of Luxury Brand Perception

To determine which variables significantly influence luxury brand perception, multiple regression analysis was conducted. The model was statistically significant ($F = 21.58$, $p < .001$) and explained 35.8% of the variance in luxury brand perception ($R^2 = .358$), indicating moderate explanatory power.

As shown in Table 2, platform features emerged as the only significant predictor of luxury brand perception ($\beta = .434$, $p < .001$). This finding indicates that trust-building mechanisms embedded within resale platforms exert a stronger influence on luxury brand evaluations than sustainability motivations or participation behaviours. Consumers appear to place considerable importance on authentication services, seller credibility, customer reviews and platform transparency when evaluating luxury brands in resale environments.

In contrast, sustainability motivation ($\beta = .143$, $p = .143$) did not significantly influence luxury brand perception. Although respondents generally expressed favourable attitudes towards sustainability, these attitudes did not translate into stronger brand evaluations once platform-related factors were considered. Similarly, resale participation was not a significant predictor ($\beta = .094$, $p = .326$), suggesting that engagement with resale platforms alone does not necessarily alter consumers' perceptions of luxury brands.

Predictor	β	t-value	p-value	Model Statistics	Value
Sustainability Motivation	.143	1.47	.143	R^2	.358
Platform Features	.434	4.35	< .001***	Adjusted R^2	.342
Resale Participation	.094	0.99	.326	F-value	21.58***

Note: *** $p < .001$

Table 2. Regression Results: Luxury Brand Perception

Testing the Mediating Role of Perceived Authenticity

A mediation analysis was performed to examine whether perceived authenticity explains the relationship between platform features and luxury brand perception. The first stage of the analysis revealed that platform features significantly predicted perceived authenticity ($\beta = .432$, $p < .001$), supporting the argument that authentication systems and trust signals enhance consumers' confidence in the legitimacy of luxury products.

However, when perceived authenticity was introduced into the final regression model, it did not significantly predict luxury brand perception ($\beta = .125$, $p = .217$). Furthermore, platform features remained significant ($\beta = .434$, $p = .001$). These results indicate that perceived authenticity does not mediate the relationship between platform features and luxury brand perception.

This finding suggests that platform trust mechanisms influence luxury brand perception directly rather than indirectly through authenticity perceptions. In other words, consumers may regard authentication services, reviews and verification systems as sufficient indicators of credibility, reducing the need for authenticity to function as a separate evaluative process.

Relationship	β	p-value	Result
Platform Features $\rightarrow$ Perceived Authenticity	.432	< .001***	Supported
Perceived Authenticity $\rightarrow$ Luxury Brand Perception	.125	.217	Not Supported
Platform Features $\rightarrow$ Luxury Brand Perception	.434	.001**	Supported

Note: ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Table 3. Mediation Analysis Results

Hypothesis Testing Summary

The hypothesis testing results are presented in Table 4. Of the five hypotheses proposed, two were supported and three were rejected. Platform features were found to significantly influence both luxury brand perception and perceived authenticity, whereas sustainability motivation, resale participation and the mediating role of authenticity were not supported.

Hypothesis	Path Tested	β	P-value	Result
H1	Sustainability Motivation $\rightarrow$ Luxury Brand Perception	.143	.143	Not Supported
H2	Platform Features $\rightarrow$ Luxury Brand Perception	.434	< .001	Supported
H3	Resale Participation $\rightarrow$ Luxury Brand Perception	.094	.326	Not Supported
H4	Platform Features $\rightarrow$ Perceived Authenticity	.432	< .001	Supported
H5	Perceived Authenticity Mediates the Relationship Between Platform Features and Luxury Brand Perception	.125	.217	Not Supported

Table 4. Hypothesis Testing Summary

Overall, the findings demonstrate that platform features represent the most influential factor shaping luxury brand perception among UK Generation Z consumers. Authentication systems, customer reviews, seller ratings and platform transparency significantly influence both perceived authenticity and luxury brand evaluations. By contrast, sustainability motivations and resale participation do not exert significant direct effects on luxury brand perception. These results indicate that trust-building mechanisms embedded within resale platforms play a more important role than sustainability considerations in shaping how consumers evaluate luxury brands within digital resale environments.

Discussion

This study examined how sustainability motivation, platform features, resale participation and perceived authenticity influence luxury brand perception among UK Generation Z consumers. The findings reveal that platform features are the most influential determinant of luxury brand perception, while sustainability motivation and resale participation do not exert significant direct effects. Furthermore, although platform features significantly enhance perceived authenticity, authenticity does not mediate the relationship between platform features and luxury brand perception. Collectively, these

findings suggest that trust-based platform mechanisms play a more important role than sustainability considerations in shaping luxury brand evaluations within digital resale environments.

The strongest finding relates to platform features, which emerged as the only significant predictor of luxury brand perception ($\beta = .434$, $p < .001$). The correlation analysis further demonstrated a strong positive relationship between platform features and luxury brand perception ($r = .581$, $p < .01$), indicating that consumers who perceive stronger authentication systems, seller ratings and review mechanisms are more likely to hold favourable perceptions of luxury brands. This finding supports Signalling Theory (Connelly et al., 2025), which proposed that consumers rely on observable signals to reduce uncertainty when evaluating products under conditions of information asymmetry. Within luxury resale markets, where concerns regarding counterfeit products and product quality remain prominent, authentication services and verification systems appear to function as critical trust signals.

The findings are consistent with Liu et al. (2023), who found that authentication procedures, service quality and transparency significantly influence consumer trust in luxury resale platforms. Similarly, Swazan and Youn (2024) demonstrated that verification technologies strengthen confidence in secondary luxury markets by reducing uncertainty surrounding product authenticity. However, the present study extends this literature by demonstrating that platform features influence not only transaction-related trust but also broader luxury brand perception. This suggests that consumers increasingly evaluate luxury brands through platform experiences rather than solely through brand-controlled communications. Given that resale platforms are becoming major touchpoints in the luxury customer journey, platform credibility may now represent an important component of luxury brand equity.

In contrast, sustainability motivation did not significantly influence luxury brand perception ($\beta = .143$, $p = .143$), despite exhibiting a moderate positive correlation with the dependent variable ($r = .461$, $p < .01$). This finding challenges the widespread assumption that sustainability is a primary driver of luxury consumption among Generation Z consumers (Henninger and Athwal, 2022; Ewe and Tjiptono, 2023). Although Gen Z consumers frequently express support for sustainable consumption practices, the results suggest that sustainability alone does not directly shape evaluations of luxury brands. Instead, the findings align more closely with Jain and Rath (2023), who argued that second-hand luxury consumption is influenced by multiple value dimensions, including trust, convenience and perceived value. The non-significant effect of sustainability may therefore reflect an attitude-behaviour gap, whereby consumers endorse sustainability in principle but prioritise more immediate concerns when evaluating luxury products. This interpretation is particularly relevant given the rapid growth of the resale market, which ThredUp (2025) projected will reach US\$367 billion by 2029. While sustainability may encourage participation in resale markets, the present findings suggest that it does not necessarily translate into stronger luxury brand perceptions.

Similarly, resale participation did not significantly predict luxury brand perception ($\beta = .094$, $p = .326$), despite maintaining a positive correlation with the dependent variable ($r = .429$, $p < .01$). This finding suggests that simply engaging with resale platforms is insufficient to alter how consumers evaluate luxury brands. The result partially contrasts with Duffy (2021) and Murtas and Pedeliento (2024), who argued that resale participation transforms luxury consumption experiences by increasing accessibility and reshaping consumer journeys. However, the present findings indicate that participation alone does not generate more favourable brand evaluations. Instead, consumers appear to differentiate between platform usage and brand perception. In practical terms, consumers may participate in resale markets for reasons such as affordability, convenience or product availability without fundamentally changing how they perceive luxury brands. This finding reinforces the importance of platform quality over platform usage frequency.

The mediation analysis provides further theoretical insight. Although platform features significantly influenced perceived authenticity ($\beta = .432$, $p < .001$), authenticity did not significantly predict luxury brand perception ($\beta = .125$, $p = .217$), resulting in the rejection of the mediation hypothesis. This finding is particularly interesting because authenticity has traditionally been viewed as a central component of luxury value (Hennigs et al., 2015). One explanation is that contemporary consumers increasingly regard authentication systems, reviews and verification mechanisms as sufficient indicators of credibility. As a

result, authenticity may no longer operate as a separate psychological evaluation but instead be embedded within broader perceptions of platform trustworthiness. This interpretation extends recent debates regarding the evolution of luxury consumption in digital environments, where platform-based trust mechanisms increasingly complement or even substitute traditional luxury signals such as heritage and exclusivity.

Taken together, the findings suggest that luxury value within resale environments is increasingly shaped by trust rather than sustainability. While sustainability remains an important contextual value for Generation Z consumers, trust-building mechanisms embedded within resale platforms exert a more direct influence on luxury brand perception.

The study therefore contributes to Signalling Theory by demonstrating that distinct platform trust signals—authentication systems, seller ratings, customer reviews, and transparency mechanisms—exert direct, differential influences on luxury brand perception rather than acting indirectly through perceived authenticity. For example, authentication systems provide objective verification of product legitimacy, reviews and ratings offer peer-based credibility cues, and transparency mechanisms communicate procedural reliability and platform integrity. This richer theoretical framing highlights that these trust signals operate through different cognitive and evaluative pathways, thereby enhancing the conceptual contribution of Signalling Theory to digital luxury resale contexts. More broadly, the findings indicate that the future of luxury resale will rely less on sustainability narratives and more on platforms' capacity to deliver credible, transparent, and differentiated trust mechanisms that shape consumer perceptions of luxury value.

Implications and Conclusion

Theoretical and Practical Implications

This study contributes to the growing literature on luxury resale, Generation Z consumption and digital trust by demonstrating that platform features are more influential than sustainability motivations in shaping luxury brand perception within resale environments. While previous studies have often positioned sustainability as a key driver of luxury consumption among younger consumers (Henninger and Athwal, 2022; Ewe and Tjiptono, 2023), the findings suggest that trust-building mechanisms such as authentication services, customer reviews, seller ratings and platform transparency play a more decisive role in influencing perceptions of luxury brands. This finding extends existing research by highlighting the importance of platform-mediated experiences in shaping luxury value.

The study also contributes to Signalling Theory by demonstrating that platform trust signals directly influence luxury brand perception. Although platform features significantly enhanced perceived authenticity, authenticity did not mediate the relationship between platform features and luxury brand perception. This suggests that consumers increasingly rely on platform credibility and trust infrastructure rather than authenticity evaluations alone when forming perceptions of luxury brands. Consequently, the findings indicate that Signalling Theory may require refinement within digital resale contexts, where trust signals appear to operate more directly than previously assumed. From a practical perspective, the findings suggest that luxury brands can no longer view resale platforms as peripheral marketplaces. Instead, resale platforms have become influential touchpoints that shape consumer perceptions of luxury brands. As Generation Z continues to increase its influence within the luxury market, luxury brands must recognise that consumer trust is increasingly formed through platform experiences rather than traditional brand communications alone.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, several strategic recommendations are proposed to guide luxury brands and resale platforms in effectively managing consumer perceptions and preserving brand equity. Enhance Platform Trust Mechanisms: Luxury resale platforms should continue investing in robust authentication systems, verification services, and transparent review mechanisms, as these features directly influence consumer confidence. Incorporating AI-enabled verification, blockchain tracking, and real-time seller monitoring can further strengthen platform credibility. These mechanisms not only reduce

information asymmetry but also preserve luxury exclusivity by preventing counterfeit circulation and maintaining product authenticity

Structured Brand-Platform Collaborations: Luxury brands should establish formalised partnerships with reputable resale platforms (e.g., Vestiaire Collective, The RealReal, eBay Luxury) to ensure consistent product authentication, presentation, and brand positioning. Implementing joint governance frameworks, brand guidelines, and quality monitoring protocols can safeguard brand equity across secondary markets while supporting circular economy objectives. Such collaborations allow brands to retain control over how their products are evaluated without diluting prestige or exclusivity.

Integrate Sustainability within Trust Strategies: While sustainability remains an important consumer value, findings indicate that trust, transparency, and transaction security exert a more direct influence on luxury brand perception. Luxury brands should embed sustainability initiatives into broader trust-building strategies, such that communication around environmental responsibility reinforces platform credibility and authenticity, rather than acting as standalone messaging that may risk superficiality.

Community Engagement and Monitoring: Resale platforms should improve interactive features, peer reviews, and user-generated content, while brands actively participating in these features can monitor and guide interactions to build consumer trust, maintain luxury appeal, and adjust strategies based on feedback and engagement data.

Conclusion

This study investigated how luxury resale platforms influence luxury brand perception among UK Generation Z consumers. Drawing on Signalling Theory, the research examined the effects of sustainability motivation, platform features, resale participation and perceived authenticity on luxury brand perception. Using survey data from 120 UK Generation Z consumers and applying correlation, regression and mediation analyses, the study identified platform features as the most significant determinant of luxury brand perception.

The findings demonstrate that authentication services, customer reviews, seller ratings and platform transparency significantly influence both perceived authenticity and luxury brand perception. In contrast, sustainability motivation and resale participation did not significantly predict luxury brand perception, while perceived authenticity did not mediate the relationship between platform features and luxury brand perception. These results suggest that trust-building mechanisms embedded within digital resale platforms are more influential than sustainability motivations in shaping how Generation Z consumers evaluate luxury brands.

Overall, the study argues that luxury value within resale markets is increasingly constructed through platform credibility, transparency and trust rather than through sustainability considerations alone. As luxury consumption continues to evolve within digital and circular marketplaces, understanding the role of platform-based trust mechanisms will be essential for luxury brands seeking to maintain relevance, credibility and long-term consumer engagement among future generations.

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