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YOUNG PEOPLE'S INTEREST IN LUXURY FASHION BRANDS IN AZERBAIJAN: MODERN REALITY AND SOCIAL INFLUENCES

Abstract

This study seeks to identify the factors influencing luxury fashion brand purchasing behavior among young consumers in Azerbaijan. The research examines status consumption, self-concept clarity, need for uniqueness, social consumption motivations. Positive or negative attitudes toward luxury fashion brands play a significant role in shaping young consumers' intention to purchase such brands. Furthermore, the study investigates the moderating effect of peer pressure within the socio-cultural context of Azerbaijani youth.

Keywords: *luxury brands, youth, consumer behavior, social media influence, status consumption, need for distinction, self-expression, fashion and beauty.*

INTRODUCTION

Among young consumers in Azerbaijan, consumption is not limited to the functional purchase of goods for practical use. Instead, it also involves acquiring products that carry symbolic value and help individuals express their identity, social position, and desired self-image. This tendency is particularly evident in luxury consumption, where young consumers are often attracted to brands associated with prestige, status, and strong brand image rather than purely functional benefits. However, the understanding of what constitutes a luxury product varies significantly among individuals, highlighting the subjective nature of luxury perception within the Azerbaijani youth market.

THE MEANING OF LUXURY BRANDS IN THE EYES OF YOUNG PEOPLE

Among young people in Azerbaijan, luxury brands are commonly perceived not merely as expensive fashion items but as meaningful symbols that communicate social status, personal success, and lifestyle aspirations. For this consumer group, luxury brands often function as tools for self-expression, allowing individuals to project a desired image and position themselves within their social environment. The symbolic value attached to luxury brands therefore plays a central role in shaping young consumers' perceptions and attitudes.

Existing research on luxury consumption suggests that younger consumers tend to associate luxury brands with prestige, exclusivity, and strong brand image rather than with purely functional benefits. In the Azerbaijani context, this perception is influenced by increasing exposure to global fashion trends, social media, and international luxury retailers, particularly in urban areas such as Baku. As a result, luxury brands are frequently viewed by young consumers as representations of modernity, cosmopolitan identity, and upward social mobility.

However, the meaning attributed to luxury brands is not uniform among Azerbaijani youth. Individual differences in income level, personal values, peer influence, and social environment shape how luxury is interpreted and experienced. While some young consumers associate luxury brands with quality and long-term value, others emphasize their role in gaining social recognition and acceptance. This diversity of perceptions highlights the subjective nature of

luxury and supports the view that luxury branding holds different meanings for different segments of young consumers.

THE TRANSFORMATIVE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media has become a major influence on how young people in Azerbaijan discover and interact with fashion and beauty trends. It allows users to see real-life examples of clothing, accessories, and cosmetics, making it easier for youth to follow trends and develop their personal style. Unlike traditional media, social media provides interactive and immediate experiences, enabling young consumers to engage directly with content creators, comment, share, and observe peer behavior.

Local influencers such as Sabi Orujova, Nadjiba, Hamayil and etc. frequently showcase branded clothing, luxury accessories, and high-end cosmetics. By presenting outfits, makeup looks, and lifestyle content, they create relatable role models whose style many young followers aim to emulate. This influence extends to luxury fashion brands like Gucci, Louis Vuitton, Celine, and beauty products from Chanel, Dior, MAC Cosmetics, and Fenty Beauty. Influencer content such as tutorials, product reviews, and styling videos encourages youth to associate these brands with prestige, self-expression, and modern lifestyle.

In addition to social media influencers, celebrities also play a significant role in shaping youth preferences. Figures such as Gigi Hadid, Bella Hadid, Kendall Jenner, and regional stars who appear in media wearing luxury brands provide examples of aspirational fashion. Young consumers often observe these celebrities in various media, and their choices influence what is perceived as desirable. The combination of influencer promotion and celebrity endorsement increases brand appeal, motivating young Azerbaijanis to adopt similar fashion styles, beauty routines, and lifestyle habits.

Overall, social media functions as a powerful channel for trend dissemination, social learning, and aspirational modeling among young people in Azerbaijan. It strengthens brand perception, shapes consumer preferences, and increases the likelihood of purchasing luxury fashion and beauty products, demonstrating the transformative role of social media in youth consumption behavior.

MAIN REASONS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE'S INCLINATION TOWARD LUXURY BRANDS

Young consumers in Azerbaijan are increasingly drawn to luxury brands due to a combination of social, psychological, and cultural motivations. Below are the key reasons:

1) Aspiration for distinction

Many young Azerbaijanis are motivated by the desire to differentiate themselves from peers. Owning luxury brands provides a sense of exclusivity and uniqueness. For example, brands like Celine, Balenciaga, and Prada are often seen as items that signal refinement and personal style. Influencers like Leyla Huseynova showcases rare pieces in their content, inspiring followers to seek similar exclusivity.

2) Desire for social visibility

Luxury brands help youth gain recognition and admiration in social circles. Wearing or using visible luxury products such as Louis Vuitton handbags, Gucci sneakers, or Dior accessories enhances social visibility.

3) Motivation for experiential enjoyment

Luxury consumption is often tied to the experience of ownership. Young people in Azerbaijan enjoy the aesthetic pleasure of luxury items, shopping in premium boutiques, or unboxing designer products. Brands such as Chanel, Hermès, and Fenty Beauty offer both high-quality products and a memorable experience that attracts youth. Bloggers often film “unboxing” or “haul” videos to share this excitement with their audience.

4) Influence of aspirational role models

Role models, both local and international, strongly affect brand choices. Celebrities like Gigi Hadid, Kendall Jenner, and regional stars who feature in social media content wearing brands like Balmain, Dior, and Valentino encourage young Azerbaijanis to replicate their style.

This influence is amplified by influencers like Nadjiba and Aynishan Guliyeva Khalid, who mix international luxury brands with local trends, making them relatable and aspirational.

5) Perception of authentic quality

Youth also value tangible product attributes such as craftsmanship, materials, and design innovation. Products from Chanel, Celine, and Louis Vuitton are perceived as superior in quality, providing long-term satisfaction. Bloggers and influencers often emphasize these qualities in product reviews, highlighting durability, finish, and design details that appeal to youth.

6) Cultural alignment and global trends

Engagement with luxury brands allows Azerbaijani youth to connect with global fashion trends and cosmopolitan culture. Fashion weeks, influencer content, and social media posts from luxury brands like Gucci, Dior, and Versace expose youth to international lifestyles.

CONCLUSION

Young people in Azerbaijan are drawn to luxury brands not just for their style or price, but for what they represent - identity, status, and lifestyle. These products allow youth to express themselves, stand out among peers, and feel part of a modern, globalized world. Social media and influencers play a huge role in shaping these desires, showing how luxury brands fit into everyday life, beauty routines, and aspirational fashion.

Motives such as the need for uniqueness, social recognition, quality, and experience drive young consumers to seek out luxury brands. Whether it's following trends set by local influencers or emulating international celebrities, Azerbaijani youth connect emotionally with the brands they admire. In this way, luxury consumption becomes more than buying a product — it's about experiencing a lifestyle, expressing identity, and participating in a social and cultural community.

Understanding these motivations provides valuable insights for brands and marketers looking to engage with a young, socially connected, and fashion-conscious audience in Azerbaijan.

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Azərbaycanda gənclərin lüks moda brendlərinə maraq: müasir reallıq və sosial təsirlər

Xülasə

Bu tədqiqatın məqsədi Azərbaycan gəncləri arasında lüks moda brendlərinin satın alınmasına təsir edən amilləri müəyyən etməkdir. Araşdırmada status istehlakı, özünüqavrama dəqiqliyi, fərqlilik ehtiyacı və sosial istehlak motivləri nəzərdən keçirilir. Lüks moda brendlərinə münasibət - müsbət və ya mənfi - gənc istehlakçıların bu brendləri almaq niyyətinə əhəmiyyətli

təsir göstərir. Bundan əlavə, tədqiqat Azərbaycan gənclərinin sosial-mədəni kontekstində yaş qrupuna görə həmyaşdların təzyiqinin moderator rolunu araşdırır.

***Açar sözlər:** lüks brendlər, gənclər, istehlak davranışı, sosial media təsiri, status istehlakı, fərqlilik ehtiyacı, özünü ifadə, moda və gözəllik.*