

Antecedents of Status Consumption of Fashion Brands – The Impact of Sustainability in the Post-COVID Era

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Abstract

Purpose : The present study developed a conceptual model for the antecedents of status consumption for fashion brands in India. It also decoded how increased consumer focus toward sustainability has impacted the consumption of fashion brands.

Methodology : Six consumption values and traits (i.e., the need for materialism, uniqueness, self-esteem, public self-consciousness, social norms, and social media influence) were identified as critical factors based on a narrative literature review (NLR) of the status and sustainable consumption habits.

Findings : We discovered unmistakable indicators that the luxury market is shifting toward a more sustainable paradigm. By choosing sustainable and organic options, consumers are showing fashion manufacturers more consideration. A shift in consumer values and characteristics (i.e., demand for materialism, uniqueness, self-esteem, public self-consciousness, social norms, and social media influence) is linked to a growing preference for sustainable fashion labels.

Practical Implications : It was recommended that marketers address this paradigm shift in consumer values and traits by using sustainability as a key differentiator for luxury brands. Mindfulness may erode materialistic values so that brands may focus on “conscientious value” instead of “conspicuous value.” Our study is not free from limitations and allows scope for future researchers to test the conceptual model empirically.

Originality : This study is an early attempt to evaluate the effects of sustainability concerns on post-COVID fashion brand consumption and the potential contributing elements.

Keywords : consumer research, consumer marketing, fashion, marketing strategy, brand preference, differentiation

Paper Submission Date : October 5, 2022 ; **Paper sent back for Revision :** June 6, 2023 ; **Paper Acceptance Date :** August 20, 2023 ; **Paper Published Online :** March 15, 2024

India is becoming more and more significant to the fashion industry because of its burgeoning middle class and strong manufacturing sector. India is too important for international corporations to ignore, especially when combined with its strong economic fundamentals and growing population of tech-savvy consumers. The clothing market in India is estimated to be worth US \$96.47 billion in 2023. It is projected to develop at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 3.34%, according to a report published by Statista.com (2022). Excessive consumerism, materialism, conspicuous consumption, and status consumption inclinations are all linked to luxury fashion (Goldsmith et al., 2013; Yeniaras & Akkemik, 2017). People, particularly fashion-conscious customers, use conspicuous consumption as a means of enhancing their social position.

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DOI : <https://doi.org/10.17010/ijom/2024/v54/i3/171933>

The fashion industry is a thriving, billion-dollar sector with operations all over the world. Still, it also comes at a high cost to cater to the materialistic and status-driven consumption of customers who care about fashion. The fashion business contributes more than 10% of yearly worldwide carbon emissions, leaving a large carbon footprint. It has also been charged for being blatantly wasteful and water-intensive. Average clothing consumption has increased almost 400% over the past two decades, with an average consumer consuming around 80 billion pieces of clothing in a month. The majority of this clothing contains toxic color dyes, pesticides, and other toxins, which are potentially harmful when disposed of.

This is further exacerbated by the rapidly growing quick fashion trend, which involves producing affordable, stylish collections. Fast fashion clothing focuses on a speedy production of products and a high-volume collection of clothing lines, which is so 'trending' that it needs to be changed every season or even every month. This creates a burning desire amongst consumers to regularly flood their wardrobes with the latest items that they "must" have, as everything else is now "out of fashion." However, "the pandemic amplified public awareness of social injustice in the supply chain (Amed et al., 2020). According to a report by Accenture.com (2020), a total of 61% of consumers made more environmentally friendly, sustainable, or ethical purchases and 89% of them are likely to continue making these purchases, even after the pandemic. People have been forced to reflect on the effects of humanity on the world as a result of the ongoing pandemic and the ensuing crises.

According to Biondi (2020) of voguebusiness.com, the pandemic significantly reduced worldwide luxury sales by between 30 and 40 billion euros. Berg et al. (2019) determined that sustainability was a major area of attention for the fashion business even prior to the pandemic. Water conservation, recycling raw materials, and swapping out hazardous materials and chemicals for more practical alternatives were found to be the actions that might reduce environmental footprints and support the development of a sustainable business model.

Early evidence came in from Zalando, an online European fashion platform, which reported in March 2020 that nearly one-third of its customers were opting for sustainable fashion (Zalando.com, 2020 a, b). Fifita et al. (2020) investigated how South Korean customers consumed sustainable organic food, and the following three findings were made: (a) the necessity of making investments in long-term well-being, (b) the requirement for items that convey social status, and (c) the requirement for products that embody sustainability principles. Okur et al. (2023) assessed the impact of COVID-19 on sustainable fashion consumption behavior and observed that environmental concerns raised the need for knowledge about the environment. In India and the UK, outcomes revealed that nearly all of the respondents continued buying sustainably following the global epidemic and the primary motivations for doing so were the social media effect and a desire for the usage of sustainable fashion.

Knowles et al. (2020) concluded that post-COVID-19, consumers changed their focus from brand stickiness to functional benefits. Consumers were also seen displaying a growing interest in brands that boast of functional performance along with being socially acclaimed. Along the same lines, it was observed that status-driven purchases, which boast of conspicuous consumption, did not seem to lure consumers much. Rather, they exhibited a higher interest in knowing how these companies treat their employees.

The following research gaps were identified:

- ↳ While these insights do indicate the beginning of a shift in consumption practices of fashion brands, the drivers that may be connected with this phenomenon need to be further examined.
- ↳ It is crucial to make assumptions about how sustainable and high-end consumption align and diverge, given the relationship between luxury or status consumption and sustainable consumption and the fact that this research area is still untapped.

The current paper is unique as it is one of the initial initiatives to include the antecedents of status consumption of fashion brands that sustainability concerns will impact, especially in the post-COVID era. The objective is to

throw light on the transition from status, aka luxury or conspicuous consumption, to sustainable consumption of fashion brands and further explore any factors that may be linked with this occurrence.

With the COVID-19 pandemic crisis causing unprecedented changes in consumer needs, perceptions, and consumption patterns, the expected findings of this study could help marketers and brand strategists investigate opportunities for repositioning luxury fashion brands as sustainable fashion. The results of this research are contemporary and contextual as they cater to the most recent branding and positioning issues and challenges being faced by marketers of luxury brands.

In the context of the previously discussed assertions, the ensuing research questions were proposed:

- ↳ What factors drive the status consumption for fashion brands?
- ↳ What effects have the pandemic's growing emphasis on sustainability had on consumers' purchasing decisions regarding fashion brands?

Objectives of the Study

The present research attempts:

- (1) To identify the factors associated with the status consumption of fashion brands in India.
- (2) To explore how sustainability concerns affect the status consumption behavior of fashion brands in India.

Literature Review

Status Consumption and Conspicuous Consumption in Luxury Brands

One of the most crucial attributes of premium brands has been status and conspicuousness (Vigneron & Johnson, 2004). Consumption of prestige goods has typically been used to show off one's social standing to others. It describes how consumers, regardless of their financial situation or social level, search for products and services based on the prestige they confer. Typically, the acquisition of such expensive and exclusive consumption goods has led to social status and prestige (Hammad et al., 2019). Therefore, status consumption refers to the consumers' self-interest in raising their social status through the purchase and use of these conspicuous items that represent status symbols to them. A never-ending cycle of overconsumption that ends with an excess of material objects bought to improve one's social position has often been attracted by this ostentatious spending, also known as status consumption (Podoshen & Andrzejewski, 2012). These overconsumption practices have been largely impacted by the positional treadmill, which has trapped consumers in an endless cycle of overly rampant consumerism in an effort to improve their relative societal standing (Hudders & Pandelaere, 2012; Shrum et al., 2014). Conspicuous consumption is the more accurate term for this extreme over-purchasing of goods or services for one-upmanship (Chaudhuri et al., 2011).

Fashion Consumption and Sustainability Concerns

The pandemic has made people think about the effects of the brands they choose on their well-being and the environment, raising the sustainability concern to the fore. Due to a mushrooming wave of social consciousness and environmental awareness, an ever-increasing number of consumers have searched for products with lower environmental impact with the aim of modifying their consumption choices (Hammad et al., 2019). According to a

survey by Accenture, as cited by Accenture.com (2020), 50% of consumers have grown more cautious about the health-related decisions they make and are expected to do so in the future. Furthermore, 45% of shoppers made more ecologically responsible choices, and they are probably going to keep doing so. This new consumer behavior is going to be a long-term shift, stretching far beyond these two years and possibly for much of the current decade (Oliver Wright, MD, Accenture's global consumer goods practice). This heightened concern is leading consumers to a willingness to pay a premium for products that are not only safe but also environmentally responsible.

Sustainable Consumption and its Relevance in Recent Times

Some major companies, such as the Kering Group, have publicly launched sustainability campaigns for virtually all their premium brands, such as Gucci, Puma, Saint Laurent, and Bottega Veneta. The characteristics of eco-friendly products appear to be closely related to those of high-end products: superb craftsmanship, great originality and style, production utilizing extraordinary raw materials, and bragging of quality and reliability.

Broadly, sustainable fashion (Bhansali, 2020) includes clothing and items that:

- ↳ employ organic (chemical-free, pesticide-free) supplies and paints;
- ↳ follow ethical trade principles;
- ↳ don't use forced labor, child labor, or sweatshop labor (reasonable working hours and fair compensation);
- ↳ abstain from using supplies derived from animals and;
- ↳ refrain completely from animal testing of products.

The core luxury consumers are the millennials, a demographic that is intensely associated with sustainability. Luxury brands are ensuring that they accelerate their efforts to offer sustainable products. Good ethics, no sweatshops, organic raw materials, responsible extraction, and animal welfare are just a few examples of the strategies that luxury firms use to market their sustainable products.

A number of eco-friendly fashion labels that have received great praise in India include Mio Borsa, based in Delhi and selling vegan leather goods; Maati, based in Udaipur and offering PETA-approved natural dyes, upcycled fabric, and packaging free of plastic; Liva, an Aditya Birla Group brand that invented 100% natural and biodegradable viscose staple fiber (VSF); No Nasties, which employs 100% organic vegan cotton in a fair-trade factory; Anokhi and Fab India, etc. Recently, fast fashion retailer Zara announced its plans to go ecological by employing organic, recycled, or sustainable cotton, linen, and polyester. Other brands that specialize in providing vegan, cruelty-free, and ethical cosmetics in India are Forest Essentials, Gem Palace, Khadi Essentials, Lotus Herbals, Vicco, Himalaya, Bombay Perfumery, and The Body Shop. Eco-friendly fabrics, including econyl, recycled polyester, and recycled cashmere, are used in the products under H&M's *Conscious* subbrand. These brands have established the groundwork for sustainable consumerism. The reasons that encourage consumers to purchase fashion brands with sustainability features must be found and examined by different businesses.

Giri et al. (2022) presented a conceptual framework that indicated various psychological factors (atypicality, social desirability, life changes, need for uniqueness, self-benefits, sense of accomplishment, pro-environmental nature, personal experience of others, and consideration of legacy) that influence the consumer's sustainable luxury consumption (Kutsenkova, 2017). Fu and Liang (2019) concluded that the personality traits of a consumer play a crucial role in the adoption of sustainable fashion brands. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused people to become more aware of their surroundings, society, and personal health. As a result, personality qualities, including materialism, self-worth, individuality, and materialism, may alter and have a greater influence on the uptake of eco-friendly, stylish products. Some other variables, such as social media influence (Loureiro et al., 2018) and

consumer's susceptibility to normative social influence (Khare et al., 2012), may also have an impact on the status consumption of fashion brands. Understanding how the sustainability features of fashion brands impact status consumption may require an understanding of social media influence and consumer susceptibility to normative social influence, as consumers' consumption of fashion brands carries a signaling value (Berger, 2017).

Research Methodology

A critical and comprehensive synthesis of the accumulated learning related to status and sustainable consumption habits was conducted. A narrative literature review (NLR) was used to achieve this broad objective. The propositions were formed based on an analysis of the body of literature and secondary sources. The following requirements had to be met by the studies in order for them to be considered for the overview:

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The publications that were chosen included research with an interpretive or exploratory design, publications in the English language, peer-reviewed articles, and other studies that addressed the connection between sustainability issues and conspicuous consumption after COVID-19. The study's search period encompassed publications released between October 1, 2021, and March 1, 2022. Publications that were out of print or that were published before 2012 were not included in the list.

Search Strategy

A list of keywords was identified based on a prior exploratory search by searching databases for research papers on status consumption and sustainable consumption. Key terms were linked using the following Boolean operators: “Sustainable consumption” AND “post-COVID-19,” “Status consumption practices,” AND “Post-COVID-19.”

Wiley, Scopus, Elsevier, Springer, Emerald, Taylor & Francis, and Sage were the main academic databases employed in this study. In Wiley, we found 70 journal articles in English, 40 in Elsevier, 40 in Emerald, 30 in Taylor & Francis, 30 in Springer, 50 in Scopus, and 40 in Sage. After a second review of the joint pool of 300 studies, we excluded 200 studies from the pool. For the next level of screening, we reviewed the titles and abstracts of the investigated research from papers published before and after COVID-19. Among the search terms utilized were fashion labels, sustainability, and consumption of status. Each investigation's empirical results were categorized once the data was examined and axiomatic initial notes were made. Using MS Excel, a literature matrix was created in order to carry out this thorough NLR procedure.

Discussion Section : Reflections on the Antecedents of Fashion Brands – A Shift from Status Consumption to Sustainable Consumption

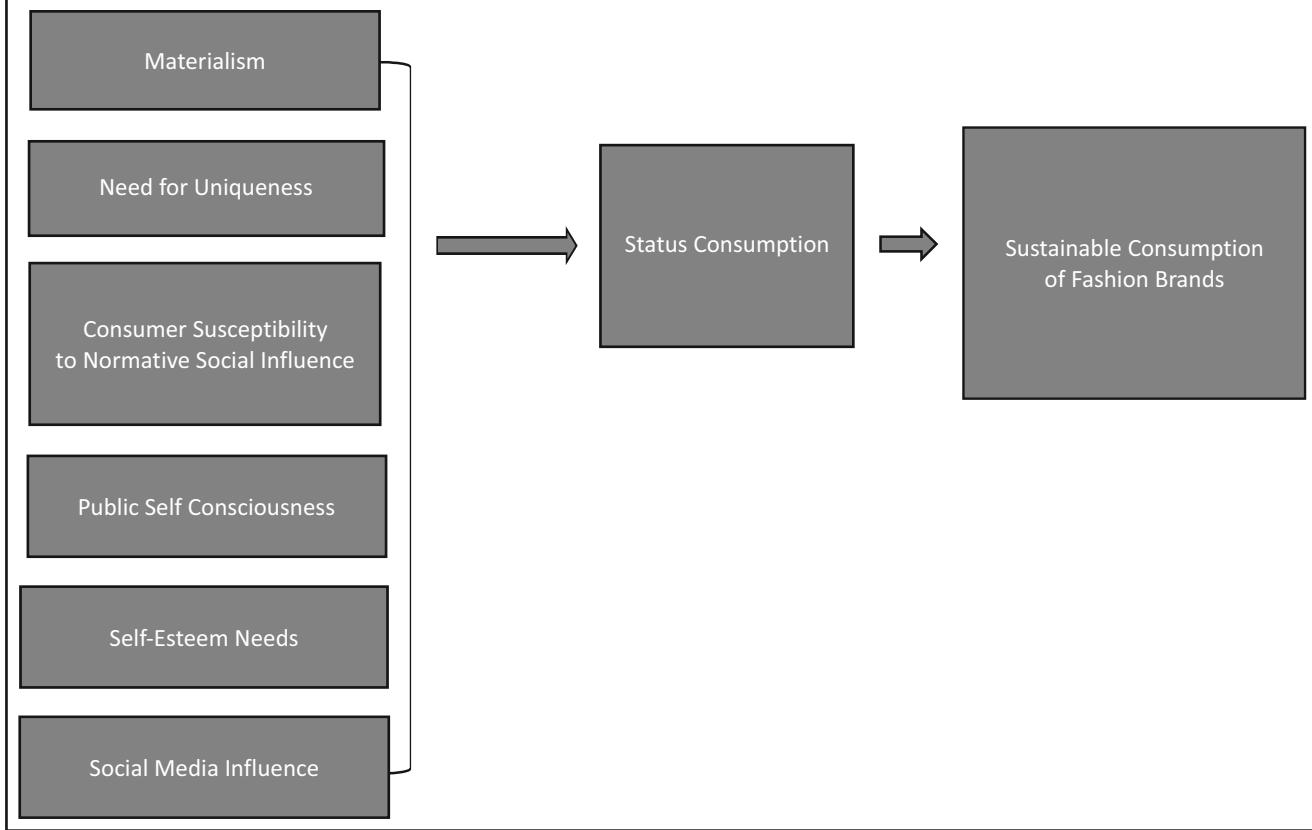
After thoroughly investigating pertinent accessible studies before and during COVID-19, the current paper has examined the foremost components or drivers in the consumer's status consumption of fashion brands as follows:

The section below presents a discussion of the drivers mentioned in Figure 1 and their likely impact on the consumers' status consumption of fashion brands.

Need for Uniqueness

The uniqueness theory stated by Snyder and Fromkin (1977) elaborates on how uniqueness gets manifested in the

Figure 1. Proposed Conceptual Model : Drivers of Consumers' Sustainable Consumption of Fashion Brands



individual's purchase of material goods in pursuit of differentiating themselves from others and augmenting their self-image (Knight & Young Kim, 2007). The need for uniqueness is also defined as a situation in which a person pursues brands and products with a motive to express uniqueness and heighten his/her image and social identity (Tian & McKenzie, 2001).

Individualistic self-identity and image are adopted by consumers who exhibit a demand for uniqueness, as they “practice dissimilarity through buying and usage habits” (Tian & McKenzie, 2001). According to Kokkoris and Kühnen (2013), these consumers consistently and habitually use brands and products to highlight their uniqueness. The two main factors that seem interconnected with conspicuousness are exclusivity and visibility. Exclusivity is best captured by the number of people who can access the product and possess it, while visibility implies the extent to which the product usage and consumption are evident and apparent to others (Piron, 2000). Desai (2020) predicted that the relevance of the need for distinctiveness will increase. Instead of aiming for a shared ideal, consumers will be ready to share what makes them especially different. Purchasing clothing from sustainable fashion labels will probably satisfy consumers' desire for individuality. Hence, the proposition here is:

↳ **Proposition 1** : Consumers' need for uniqueness involving sustainability concerns will result in the status consumption of sustainable fashion brands.

Materialism

Uniqueness displays a close linkage to materialism. More often than not, uniqueness gets manifested in one's

aspiration for social transformation by obtaining material possessions. An attitude with a deep connection to material belongings as a measure of one's social value is referred to as consumption-oriented materialism (Han et al., 2010). The idea that goods become essential components of consciousness and that we are what we own governs this consumption-oriented materialism (Belk, 1988). Materialism is a personality trait that combines possessiveness, non-generosity, and envy. Belk (1988) defined materialism as the prominence a consumer ascribes to worldly belongings. Materialism suggests that property is used as a status and achievement symbol (Richins & Dawson, 1990). Clingy or acquisitive, materialistic consumers are driven to attract attention for their social position. Belk (1988) and Richins (1994a,b) also displayed impulse buying under the influence of materialism (Saptono et al., 2019; Sen & Nayak, 2019). The underlying assumption is that acquiring material possessions leads to happiness and enjoyment, and possessions are seen as a source of fulfillment. Thus, materialism denotes societal standing, individual achievement, and self-satisfaction (Richins & Dawson, 1992).

Materialism and sustainable consumption exhibit tension because of the opposing values that drive them. Materialism is often associated with self-centeredness that serves one's own interests and a concern with accumulating material goods in the name of happiness. However, sustainable consumption has been linked to rationalizing and restricting the purchase of material goods as well as encouraging "collective-oriented" ideals like altruism and concern for the welfare of society (Hammad et al., 2019). Prominent designers anticipate that even materialistic consumers who aspire for social status will become more emotional and perceptive to a variety of issues after COVID-19, such as quick fashion, environmental change, etc. Consumers will favor apparel that has a longer lifespan, is more creative, and has emotional value because they care about the environment, their health, and the welfare of society. Customers will recognize the value of slow-fashion, ethical products created by humans rather than machines utilizing traditional craft techniques. Hence, the proposition here is:

↳ **Proposition 2** : Consumers' materialistic traits are changing due to heightened consciousness of social, environmental, and health concerns during COVID-19 that impacted the status consumption of sustainable fashion brands.

Consumer Susceptibility to Normative Social Influence

The consumer's susceptibility to normative influence states the desire to define or improve one's reputation with significant others by the procurement and usage of goods and brands, as well as a readiness to satisfy social expectations surrounding buying choices (Bearden et al., 1989). For symbolic luxury products, normative influences are absolutely critical (Bearden & Etzel, 1982). Luxury products that leave a favorable first impression are more likely to be used by customers who are more susceptible to social norms and social influence. Kim et al. (2012) concluded that sustainable consumer behavior in the apparel market is impacted by varied social customs and by the consumers' environmental concerns. Post-COVID-19, the fashion industry is expected to see sustainability take center stage. Adopting sustainable fashion will be the new social norm. The following proposition is consequently suggested in light of the above arguments :

↳ **Proposition 3** : Social norms changing due to COVID-19 influence the status consumption of fashion brands.

Public Self-Consciousness

Self-consciousness, a vital human attribute that influences a person's intuitive perspective of existence, has two dimensions: Private self-consciousness, defined as the inclination to think about and attend to one's privately held views, aspirations, ideals and feelings, and public consciousness, defined as the propensity to worry about those self-aspects that are topics of public exhibition (Scheier & Carver, 1985). Publicly self-conscious individuals are

cognisant of the insights, decisions, and responses of others, such that they tend to modify their behaviors with the objective of coping with and controlling others' perceptions, judgments, and opinions about themselves (Nezlek & Leary, 2002).

Publicly self-conscious individuals place importance on status goods as an effective way for image augmentation due to their elevated position, social conspicuousness, and extensive symbolic significance (Richins, 1999). For the purpose of forming desired identities, lowering social anxiety, and boosting confidence, status objects are crucial. These individuals also exhibit a high degree of social status sensitivity, which satisfies their want to consume in order to raise their status. For instance, public self-consciousness has been considered to have a favorable relationship with materialism (Wong, 1997). Extremely self-conscious consumers are sensitive about how they come across on public occasions; thus, they should be wary of the status symbolism in the clothing they wear. They show high degrees of care about how they appear in social settings, how others see them, and how they present themselves because they see themselves as social objects (Fenigstein et al., 1975). Intentions to buy authentic, as opposed to counterfeit goods, have been observed (Kaufmann et al., 2016). According to Netemeyer et al. (1995), there is a positive correlation between public self-consciousness and self-appearance anxiety, fashion involvement, and fashion leadership (Workman & Seung-Hee, 2017). In a study on luxury items, Roux et al. (2017) discovered that the social benefit of luxury goods is the communication that the owner is wealthy, a part of the upper echelon, and someone of style and sophistication. Since COVID-19, individuals are more likely to buy fashion labels that address environmental issues. Therefore, the proposition here is:

↳ **Proposition 4** : Due to the outbreak of COVID-19, the change in consumers' public self-consciousness impacts the status consumption of sustainable fashion brands.

Self-Esteem Needs

Self-esteem is the respect, worth, and acceptance of oneself (Brown, 1993) or, more simply, a comprehensive assessment of one's self-concept (Leonard et al., 1995). Previous studies hypothesized that people naturally attempt to increase their self-esteem and that it is a vital component of the human ego (Crocker & Nuer, 2003; DuBois & Flay, 2004). The symbolic self-completion theory by Wicklund and Gollwitzer (1982) has propagated that incomplete individuals try to attain recognition by indulging in compensatory maneuvers, for instance, quicker modes of consuming status goods. Conversely, Baumeister et al. (1989) suggested that those with high self-esteem have a stronger motivation to pursue status goods than those with lower self-esteem. Post-COVID-19, esteem needs have been compromised severely as this pandemic has left people with battered egos and low self-esteem. Therefore, it can be inferred that to increase their self-esteem, people are going to get materialistic and self-conscious and purchase sustainable fashion brands. The following proposition is, therefore, proposed:

↳ **Proposition 5** : Consumers' self-esteem needs that are changing due to the outbreak of COVID-19 are likely to impact their status consumption of fashion brands.

Social Media Influence

According to Can (2017), social media use frequently directly affects consumer behavior. According to Ünal et al. (2019), symbolic connotations frequently influence consumer purchasing. People often flaunt their glossy lives on social media, especially (GlobalWebIndex.com, 2019; Pasricha et al., 2020) making their extravagant spending habits obvious to their followers and social media circle. Heydari and Laroche (2020) discovered that the inclination for status consumption was heightened by the use of social media for self-presentation and social value that came from there. Sharing social media content that reflects ostentatious lifestyles has become popular

(Thoumrungroje, 2014). Virtual identities created by people on social media legitimize conspicuous consumption. The proposition, in this regard, is:

↳ **Proposition 6** : The outbreak of COVID-19, which has led to an increase in social media usage by consumers, is likely to impact their status consumption of fashion brands.

Implications

Theoretical Implications

This paper explores the impact that consumer values and traits (such as the need for uniqueness, materialism, consumer susceptibility to normative social influence, public self-consciousness, self-esteem needs, and social media influence) make toward sustainable fashion in the post-COVID-19 era (Figure 1). Hammad et al. (2019) and Policarpo and Aguiar (2019) asserted that conspicuous consumption motives are an important driver of green consumption. This paper corroborates past research with similar findings. Through the consumption of sustainable clothing, consumers project a pro-environmental social image, which is signaled by their spending. According to the social identity theory, individuals drive to enhance their self-concept through conformity with group norms (Turner & Oakes, 1986), which rewards individuals with social approval (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004). According to the paper's conclusion, which supports Legere's (2017) findings, customers with higher self-esteem are more inclined to showcase their environmentally conscious lifestyle through slow fashion or sustainable fashion.

Purchasing or possessing a socially approved item increases commonality with other social group members, hence increasing the sense of belongingness and identification (Loureiro et al., 2018; McNeill & Venter, 2019). This paper corroborates past research (Ciasullo et al., 2017) and concludes that interpersonal influence has the power to evoke changes regarding sustainable apparel consumption, especially so in the post-COVID-19 era. The pandemic has resulted in a positive impact on environmental awareness, sustainable consumption, and social responsibility (Ali et al., 2021; Severo et al., 2021). According to the current research, which validates the findings of Vanauken (2015) and Reiter and Kozar (2016), social factors—particularly the influence of social media—are the primary drivers of sustainable shopping practices, even in the wake of the epidemic. Fashion firms can use social media to enhance their brand image, draw in younger customers, and advertise their goods (Vanauken, 2015).

Managerial Implications

The COVID-19 pandemic may bring a considerable shift in the consumers' mindset and values underpinning their luxury purchase decisions. The brands that would be the forerunners to fathom this and adapt accordingly will surely turn out to be the “game changers.” According to Karl-Hendrik Magnus, Senior Partner at McKinsey & Co., consumers have seen how vulnerable the entire world is, and the whole crisis has raised awareness for social and environmental sustainability, even among those that were not previously onto the topic (Roberts-Islam, 2020). The goal of the theoretical framework seen in Figure 1 is to offer recommendations for enhancing the aspects of fashion consumption in relation to sustainability. The fashion industry will require a well-thought-out plan in the post-pandemic age that integrates ethical and environmental issues into its fundamental business operations.

According to a recent survey conducted by Capgemini Research Institute (2020), sustainability has moved up the consumer's priority list, with 67% of customers stating that they will now be more cautious towards conserving natural resources and 65% of customers stating that they will be more “mindful” in their overall usage in the “new

normal." Geiger et al. (2019) claimed that mindfulness can encourage sustainable consumption practices by reducing the so-called attitude-behavior gap, undermining materialistic values, and improving people's psychological well-being.

This is likely to bring three noteworthy transformations in the values and behavior of affluent customers:

(1) Consumers could be prompted to indulge in premium choices for conscientious value instead of conspicuous value, such as benevolence, less cruelty, fair trade, and equality. The focus may move to luxury goods with legal manufacturing techniques, high standards, and traceable origins among conscientious buyers.

Demand for more sustainable operations and a movement toward ecological practices are the two ideologies that are anticipated to become more pronounced post-pandemic (Amed et al., 2020). Post this catastrophe, which had a high emotional cost, consumer preferences may change, at least temporarily, toward silent luxury with an emphasis on traditional qualities such as craftsmanship and lineage rather than the socially visible qualities such as conspicuousness and bling. This is a perfect time for luxury businesses to rethink their marketing strategies, develop products that are sincere and ethical, and make sustainability and social responsibility a key priority.

(2) Another key upcoming trend could be toward buyers engaging in revenge spending – a pleasurable spending pattern that helps individuals feel good during challenging times. Consumers prefer luxury brands for ego-centered values like hedonism, higher quality safety, and well-being. To help customers deal with these unreasonable anxieties, marketers of luxury brands can aim to offer calming experiences to them. Instead of a showy display of only position and wealth, they must offer offerings that reflect sentiments.

(3) The third significant trend may be long-term changes in consumer purchasing habits, with online shopping possibly becoming the new norm, even for luxury brands. According to a report by Muret (2020), nearly 70% of respondents from China, 51% from the USA, and 35% from Europe reported buying luxury goods online during the lockdown period. While the luxury brands industry is quite optimistic that post-pandemic, in-store purchases will return to their pre-pandemic levels, they still need to arm themselves with modern, customized, distinctive, and interactive customer interfaces in order to digitize processes and modernize their systems and technology.

Conclusion

Conspicuous consumption, characterized by materialism, has often been believed to be in complete contrast with sustainable consumption, characterized by altruistic and social welfare orientation (Podoshen & Andrzejewski, 2012; Sukhdev & Shallu, 2013). Counter-intuitively, researchers have studied the connections between conspicuous behavior and sustainable consumption, hence concluding that in certain circumstances, conspicuous motives may actually encourage sustainable behavior (Hammad et al., 2019). The two notions, which have existed in parallel in the past, are seen to be potentially influencing each other post the pandemic. Consumers in newly industrialized countries have also shown concern over environmental or social issues. They are increasingly willing to pay a premium for sustainable brands, countering the previously made and often-used argument that environmental concern is a consumer value evident only in Western societies (Guarín & Knorringa, 2013; Shaban & El-Bassiouny, 2017).

The current research gathers insights concerning the likely effects of conspicuous motives on the sustainable consumption of fashion brands. It further illustrates the crucial factors connected with fashion consumption, which marketers need to be wary of (Figure 1). The research proposes that in the post-COVID era, a shift or change in the consumers' need for uniqueness and self-esteem, involving sustainability concerns, may result in increased consumption of sustainable fashion brands. Likewise, a paradigm change or shift in the post-COVID era in the

consumers' social norms, public self-consciousness, materialistic traits, and social media usage may also result in increased consumption of sustainable fashion brands. Status has been utilized as a driver of sustainable consumption for products like food, hybrid vehicles, and so on. According to Griskevicius et al. (2010), consumers who choose sustainable brands may be motivated to pay a premium for them as a way of indicating their social status. This is because morality and wealth ownership are perceived as positively correlated with status.

In newly developed nations like India, sustainable consumption is still in its infancy. There are clear indications that the luxury market is making a significant shift to a more environmentally friendly model. The adoption of sustainability as a primary brand differentiation in luxury fashion requires sustainable brands to adapt their marketing strategies to this paradigm shift in consumer values and behaviors. The pandemic has led both the fashion industry and the general public to treat fashion items with more mindfulness by acquiring sustainable and organic options. Societies have been nudged to recognize the interconnections between business, economy, environment, and human health. Social responsibility and conscious production & consumption are at the forefront of a new paradigm for this industry. We consider this paper to be a conceptual note intended as an eye-opener, portraying the resemblance in values that are innate in both states as well as sustainable luxury fashion brands.

Limitations of the Study and Directions for Future Research

The strength of this paper lies in the thorough and structured approach in which the literature review was conducted. However, several limitations demand careful thought. First, despite genuine efforts to include all relevant publications with carefully chosen search criteria, it is still possible that some pertinent research may have been mistakenly left out or overlooked due to the selection of keywords. Second, the deliberate and thorough decision to exclusively review full-text papers presents yet another limitation. Third, the study's breadth is constrained by the small number of scientific databases that were accessible at our home universities. The information in a vast number of eligible papers that were not taken into account in this research could have been important for the research. Finally, as the review is limited to English-language articles and possibly pertinent publications in other languages were not taken into consideration, there is a possibility for a language bias.

The study makes certain propositions to circumvent the impact of COVID-19 on the relationship of antecedent factors impacting the status consumption of fashion brands. More specific investigations are, therefore, required to clearly understand the way these relationships have been impacted due to COVID-19. Furthermore, demographic factors like gender, age, and income, as well as other personality qualities like ethnocentrism and consumer innovativeness, may strengthen the case for sustainable consumption practices. The study looked at how social media affects fashion firms' status consumption. Future research might compare different social media platforms to gain a deeper understanding of their mechanisms and relative effects on status consumption, as a significant portion of social media influence comes from online reviews and brand communities. The present conceptual model proposed in Figure 1 may also be tested empirically.

Authors' Contribution

The concept for the conceptual study was created by Dr. Chhavi Taneja, who also created the qualitative design. High-profile research papers were extracted by Dr. Shveta Kalra, who then used keywords to filter the papers and create concepts and codes pertinent to the study design. Drs. Chhavi Taneja and Shveta Kalra examined the study papers and articles and determined the main antecedents. Both authors jointly wrote the manuscript.

Conflict of Interest

The authors certify that they have no affiliations with or involvement in any organization or entity with any financial interest or non-financial interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

Funding Acknowledgment

The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or for the publication of this article.

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INDIAN JOURNAL OF MARKETING

Statement about ownership and other particulars about the newspaper "INDIAN JOURNAL OF MARKETING" to be published in the 3rd issue every year after the last day of February.

FORM 1V
(see Rule 18)

1. Place of Publication	:	NEW DELHI
2. Periodicity of Publication	:	MONTHLY
3. 4,5 Printer, Publisher and Editor's Name	:	S. GILANI
4. Nationality	:	INDIAN
5. Address	:	Y-21, HAUZ KHAS, NEW DELHI-16
6. Newspaper and Address of individual who owns the newspaper and partner of shareholder holding more than one percent.	:	ASSOCIATED MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS PRIVATE LIMITED Y-21, HAUZ KHAS, NEW DELHI-16

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Dated : March 1, 2024

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