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**The influence of national cultures on consumer
engagement with advertising appeals in luxury
brands' social media content**

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TIIVISTELMÄ:

Tämä tutkielma tarkastelee sitä, miten kansalliset kulttuurit vaikuttavat luksusbrändien vaikutuskeinoihin luksusbrändien sosiaalisen median sisällöissä. Aihe on ajankohtainen, sillä teknologian myötä sosiaalisen median merkitys markkinoinnissa on kasvanut. Luksusbrändeihin kohdistuvat asenteelliset muutokset ovat myös yleistymässä. Aikaisemmat tutkimukset ovat pääsääntöisesti käsitelleet kulttuurin, sosiaalisen median markkinoinnin, vaikutuskeinojen ja luksuksen aihepiirejä erikseen tai yhdistäen vain osan aihepiireistä. Tutkielmani yhdistää nämä nykyaikaiset, eli sosiaalisen median markkinoinnin ja perinteiset, eli luksuksen ja markkinoinnin vaikutuskeinojen aiheet keskenään yhtenäiseksi kokonaisuudeksi sekä tarkastelee niiden välisiä yhteyksiä. Tutkielmassani tavoitteena on selvittää, miten tietyt kulttuuriset ulottuvuudet vaikuttavat kuluttajien suhtautumiseen luksusbrändien markkinoinnin vaikutuskeinoja kohtaan.

Tutkielmassani käytetyt teoreettiset viitekehykset ovat Hofsteden kulttuuriset ulottuvuudet, COBRA:t (Consumers' Online Brand-Related Activities), asiakasvuorovaikutuksen ulottuvuudet sekä erilaisia luksusbrändejä ja luksusta käsittelevät teoriat. Näiden viitekehysten avulla tutkielmani pyrkii luomaan yhteyden kulttuuristen tekijöiden, kuluttajien verkkokäyttämisen sekä luksukseen liittyvien arvojen välille. Tutkielma toteutettiin kirjallisuuskatsauksena, ja tutkimusmenetelmänä hyödynnettiin useita kansainvälisiä tieteellisiä lähteitä. Näiden tutkimusten avulla tarkasteltiin aiempia havaintoja tutkielmani tulosten ja tavoitteiden saavuttamiseksi.

Keskeiset tulokset näyttävät, että kansalliset kulttuurit vaikuttavat ihmisten arvojen kokemiseen sekä markkinoinnin vaikutuskeinojen tehokkuuteen. Täten myös luksusbrändien vaikutuskeinoja pitää hyödyntää kulttuurikohtaisesti, jotta ne tehoavat kohderyhmään. Kulttuurin vaikutukset kuluttajien suhtautumiseen vaikutuskeinoja kohtaan ei kuitenkaan ole aina suoraviivaista, vaan siihen voi liittyä muitakin tekijöitä. Luksusbrändit voivat arvioida käyttämiensä vaikutuskeinojen tehokkuutta sosiaalisessa mediassa ja niiden sisällöissä asiakasvuorovaikutuksen viitekehyksillä, kuten COBRA:lla. Ne osoittavat eri tasoja kuluttajien käyttäytymisestä sosiaalisen median sisältöjä kohtaan ja kertovat sisällön onnistumisesta sosiaalisessa mediassa.

AVAINSANAT: Luxury brand, advertising appeals, social media content, consumer engagement, national culture

Contents

1	Introduction	4
1.1	Background of the study	4
1.2	Research questions and delimitations	6
1.3	Definition of key terms	8
1.4	Structure of thesis	9
2	Social media marketing and consumer engagement	10
2.1	Social media content	10
2.2	Consumer engagement	12
2.3	COBRAs as indicators of engagement on social media	13
3	Luxury appeals and the influence of national culture	15
3.1	Characteristics of luxury brands	15
3.2	Luxury appeals	16
3.3	National culture	18
3.4	The influence of national cultures on luxury appeals	19
3.5	Hofstede's dimensions and luxury appeals	20
4	Conclusions	22
4.1	Summary of key findings	22
4.2	Theoretical contribution and managerial implications	24
4.3	Limitations and suggestions for further studies	25
	References	26
	Appendices	33
	Appendix 1. The use of Artificial intelligence	33

1 Introduction

This introduction -chapter consists of four subchapters. The first one, Background of the study, provides an overview of the current situation and relevance of the main themes of the thesis while justifying the need for this thesis. The second one, Research questions and delimitations, present the objective of the thesis and the scope of the research. The third one, Definition of keywords, briefly explains of the central terminology used in this thesis. Finally, the Structure of this thesis explains the order in which the main topics are discussed.

1.1 Background of the study

For the first time since the Great Recession (2007-2009), during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 the luxury market declined (Lawry, 2022, p. 1). However, the luxury market is a growing market with a revenue of US\$489,37 billion in 2026 worldwide, and with an expected annual growth of 2.69% in 2026-2030 (Statista, 2025). The largest segment being Luxury Watches and Jewellery with a market volume of US\$165,48 billion in 2026 (Statista, 2025). Because of the pandemic, many luxury brands had to intensify their marketing through different technologies, such as mobile marketing and live streaming (Lawry, 2022, p. 1).

Nowadays the role of social media is prominent in the lives of consumers. Social media marketing has become an essential part of online marketing strategy because of the development of technology (Kumar & Nanda, 2023, p. 271). Luxury brands have also recognized the importance of social media marketing and are using social media to communicate with consumers to form consumer assets (Kim & Ko, 2011, p. 1480). This step has been important as the use of social media in marketing communications has been regarded as a business take-off tool among luxury brands (Kim & Ko, 2011, p. 1480).

Traditionally, luxury has been associated with exclusivity, heritage, and social distinction (Shukla et al., 2025, p. 2532). However, with significant changes happening to the luxury market driven by factors, such as digitalization, sustainability, and changing consumer values, the understanding of consumer motivations and preferences has become crucial (Al-Issa et al. 2025, p. 1). These transformations have made it important for luxury brand managers to adapt to the changing consumer identities and cultural perspectives (Shukla et al., 2025, p. 2532).

There are factors moderating the value perception and preferences of luxury, such as culture and gender (Akarsu, Shaikh & Maity, 2024, p. 193). For instance, cultural differences affect the weight of the characteristics of luxury, such as quality and prestige (Shukla et al., 2025, p. 2528). One example of cultural differences is that the Chinese consumers prefer trendy luxury brands, and the Japanese consumers appreciate the respect and the history of the brand, giving it the status of luxury (Shukla et al., 2025, p. 2528). In the context of marketing, effectiveness means adapting to cultural values, highlighting crucial impact of value perceptions (de Mooij & Hofstede, 2002, p. 63).

Previous research on luxury examines its many dimensions and consumer perceptions of luxury value, such as hedonism, status and exclusivity (Roux et al. 2017). Research on social media have examined its role for brands and their marketing strategies in a digitalized world, and individual facets of social media marketing behaviours (Bartoloni & Ancillai, 2024, p. 435). Additionally, research of social media content has included examinations of the characteristics of content and the role of user-generated and brand-generated content. National cultures and their differences have been studied by using various frameworks, such as Hofstede's cultural dimensions or through comparisons between specific countries to examine the effect of cultural differences on specific research topics, such as consumers' willingness to share personal information (Shumacher et al. 2023). With the growing importance of social media in everyday life and the changes in consumer attitudes, connecting these topics provide an opportunity

to gain a deeper understanding culture's influence on consumer responses towards luxury brands' social media communications.

1.2 Research questions and delimitations

The objective of this thesis is to identify the influence of national cultures on the consumer engagement with the luxury appeals used in luxury brands' social media content. Marketers use certain appeals to evoke to their target audience and to make their contents and marketing efforts successful. However, luxury has its own characteristics, which is why it is important to recognise the right appeals to use in luxury brands' marketing contents. Additionally, culture plays a big part in whether the used appeals in marketing are functional in the brand's target countries, as cultures emphasize different values. Therefore, the main problem of this thesis is: How does culture influence consumer engagement with the advertising appeals used in luxury brand's social media contents?

The objective of this thesis is supported by two research questions:

1. Which are the elements of social media content and types of consumer engagement?
2. Which are the values and appeals related to luxury brands and the role of culture?

This thesis's delimitation is the examination of luxury brands and values. It will introduce the symbolic, functional and experiential values of luxury. The values indicate to the specific appeals relevant for luxury brands and their marketing efforts, which is an important area of this thesis. In addition, the approach to luxury is through consumer perceptions and not through firm-level strategies. This way this thesis can focus on understanding how luxury appeals are interpreted and what aspects influence the value perceptions of consumers.

This thesis is limited to the analysis of social media content, with a specific focus on brand-generated content published on social media platforms. Because of this, other traditional advertising channels are excluded from this thesis. The primary focus is on how brands utilize social media content in their marketing communication. This delimitation allows for the examination of the effectiveness of luxury appeals through consumer engagement.

This thesis uses Hofstede's cultural dimensions to identify cultural values. Cultural differences in cross-cultural research have been used extensively across multiple disciplines, while Hofstede's dimensions dominating cross-cultural psychology and international management (Beugelsdijk & Welzel, 2018, p. 1469). It provides a clear framework in cultural values through six dimensions and scores (de Mooij & Hofstede, 2002, p. 63), which makes it easier to compare the cultural differences and utilize previous studies. This is why this framework is being used in this thesis. In this thesis, the dimensions of individualism, masculinity and indulgence are chosen to compare and examine cultural value perceptions.

Individualism is a classic dimension, and it includes important cultural values, such as individual accomplishments, which is why it is included in this thesis (Coi, 2025, p.2). Masculinity reflects elements of success and achievement and success, which gives a different point of view when analysing luxury values (Beugelsdijk & Welzel, 2018, p. 1473). Indulgence is a newer dimension of the three, and it is less included in research papers compared to the other two. For this reason, this study uses it as an example to bring a new view of the dimensions and its connection to luxury. Additionally, as indulgence reflects enjoyment of life, it aligns with some of the luxury appeals, making it a relevant dimension to examine in this thesis (Hofstede & Minkow, 2010, in the study of Chudnovskaya & O'Hara, 2022, p. 43). The focus in this thesis is on the cultural dimensions, and not on specific countries, however, some countries will be mentioned as examples.

1.3 Definition of key terms

There are multiple definitions to what a **luxury brand** is, as its meaning is not fully standardized across the world. However, Ko et al (2017) proposed a formal definition to luxury brand:

A luxury brand is a branded product or service that consumers perceive: to be high quality; offer authentic value via desired benefits; whether functional or emotional; have a prestigious image within the market built on qualities such as artisanship, craftsmanship, or service quality; be worthy of commanding a premium price; and be capable of inspiring a deep connections, or resonance, with the consumer. (p. 406)

According to Zhu et al. (2023), **advertising appeals** are the central content of products highlighted in advertising while being the fundamental element of advertising information, and they have an important role on persuading target audience (Feng et al. 2025p.3). Appeals can be rational and emotional, rational appeals referring to factual information and emotional referring feelings (Ježovit & Lučić, 2025, p. 209).

Social media content is part of social media marketing activities (Bartoloni & Ancillai, 2024, p. 442). Content can include images, videos, texts, audio or different social media posts. It includes message strategy and message features, where message strategy relates to the objective of the message and message features includes what companies post for each strategy (Bartoloni & Ancillai, 2024, p. 442-443).

Consumer engagement builds on the interactive experiences customer have with brands or other engagement objects (Brodie et al., 2011, p. 257). It can be used to study specifically consumers' emotions and behaviours when interacting or engaging with brands or services (Liu et al. 2024, p. 704).

Culture has many definitions, which contain elements, such as values, beliefs, and attitudes (Țîmbalari, 2019, p. 220). Akaliyski et al. (2021, p. 774) presents culture as a defining characteristic of an identifiable group of people or a population. Therefore, in the context of **national culture** the identifiable group is a country. There are different frameworks about national cultures, such as Hofstede's dimensions, that identify cultural differences.

1.4 Structure of thesis

This thesis consists of four main chapters. The first chapter is the introduction, which contains background and the objectives of the thesis, research questions, and definitions of the key terms. The second chapter focuses on defining social media marketing content and consumer engagement. These are introduced to measure effectiveness of marketing appeals.

The third main chapter discusses the definitions of luxury brands, and it introduces luxury appeals by identifying common luxury values. This chapter also contains information about national cultures, specifically through Hofstede's dimensions and their influence on luxury value perceptions. The fourth main chapter has the conclusion, and it consists of key findings, theoretical contribution and managerial implications, and limitations and suggestions for further studies.

2 Social media marketing and consumer engagement

Firstly, this chapter talks about social media content, its role in social media marketing, and its characteristics. Secondly, this chapter focuses on consumer engagement, its dimensions, and how the characteristics of brand posts influence the engagement on the posts. Thirdly, as a part of consumer engagement, COBRAs are also included in this chapter and its three levels to show the direct behaviours of consumers on social media.

2.1 Social media content

Brands use social media to attract an audience by providing value, or gratification through its content (Dolan et al. 2019, p. 2216). In fact, they are encouraged to be present on social media networks, as it creates interaction, visibility and trust (Sánchez-Cobarro et al., 2021, p. 520). For example, by using Instagram stories to share engaging and suggestive content, brands can access the consumers effectively and capture the attention of potential consumers (Chen, 2024, p. 193; Sánchez-Cobarro et al., 2021, p. 520). Social media marketing differs from the more traditional marketing communications in a sense that the communication between brands and customers has become interactive and a two-way communication, instead of the one-way direction (Kim & Ko, 2011, p. 1480). For example, platforms, such as Facebook and LinkedIn, give their users a possibility to share their content with others (Kumar & Nanda, 2023, p.271). For brands and marketers, social media content is an important aspect of social media marketing.

Figure 1 shows characteristics of brand posts, which are part of social media content, such as vividness, interactivity, informational content, entertaining content, position, and valence of comments (de Vries et al. 2012, p. 84). Vividness reflects the stimulation of different senses (Steuer, 1992, in the article of de Vries et al. 2012, p. 84). These can be bright colours, size or attention-getting animations (Cho, 1999, p. 38). Interactivity is defined as the extent to which communication participants can influence each other, the

communication medium, and the message, as well as how synchronized these interactions are (Liu & Shrum, 2013, p. 54). There are levels of interactivensess, which are low, medium, and high, which are based on the features of the post, such as just text, links or questions (de Vries et al. 2012, p. 85). Informative content contains information about the brand, product or other important themes, and entertaining content contains entertainment, such as humour (de Vries et al. 2012, p. 85). Position in social media can refer to the position of the content or social media posts in the brand's page (de Vries et al. 2012, p. 85). Valence of comments refers to the different types of comments, such as positive, neutral and negative (de Vries et al. 2012, p. 85).



Figure 1. Brand post characteristics (de Vries et al. 2012).

There can be challenges in social media marketing in creating meaningful content that resonates with audience (Drossos et al. 2023, p. 1175). This is a reason why brands need to be aware of the trends and practices of social media to gain the full benefit of content marketing in social media. For example, nowadays a big part of social media content is

short videos and utilising them gives brands the opportunity to create videos that highlight key themes in an effective timesaving way (Chen, 2024, p. 193). This highlights the need for creating content of interest to users, which can lead to interactions with the content (Sánchez-Cobarro et al., 2021, p. 520).

2.2 Consumer engagement

Consumer engagement is an important metric when analysing a brand's success on social media (Bazi et al. 2023, p. 1). Consumer engagement can be considered multidimensional with three dimensions (cognitive, emotional and behavioural), and the expression of the dimension depends on the context or stakeholders (Brodie et al., 2011, p. 257). Cognitive processing defines as "a consumer's level of brand-related thought processing and elaboration in a particular consumer/brand interactions (Hollebeek et al. 2014, p. 154). Cognitive activity refers to the individual's level of concentration and attention for the brand (Dessart et al. 2016, p. 413; Hollebeek, 2011, p. 790).

Behaviour from the consumer engagement perspective goes beyond transactions and is the manifestation of consumer's behaviour resulting from motivational drivers with a firm/brand focus (van Doorn, et al. 2010, p. 254). Behavioural activity includes customer's level of energy used in interacting with a specific brand or content, such as sharing, learning, endorsing and/or commenting (Hollebeek, 2011, p. 790; Dessart et al. 2016, p. 413). These behaviours are essential for in the context of social media and are important indicators of success. (Gummerus et al. 2012, p. 870). Social media content, such as posts, can engage consumers emotionally (Bazi et al. 2024, p. 8). Emotional activity refers to customer's level of brand related inspiration, pride, enthusiasm and/or enjoyment (Dessart et al. 2016, p. 413; Hollebeek, 2011, p. 790).

The characteristics in Figure 1 can determine the content's popularity (e.g. comments or likes) on social media. Vivid content leads to more positive attitudes towards the content than less vivid ones in the form of likes (de Vries et al. 2012, p. 85). Specifically high level

of interactivity (e.g. question) will create more likes and comments (de Vries et al. 2012, p. 85). Informational content helps the consumers' or audiences' motivation to consume the content and awakens a positive attitude towards the brand's content (de Vries et al. 2012, p. 85). Entertaining content has a similar effect on consumers as informational content, and it brings gratifications, such as emotional release or relief for the audience (Muntinga et al. 2011, p. 19).

On many social media platforms, the most recent posts are on the top and the older ones are at the bottom. The position of a post influences its popularity, as the post on the top gain more popularity (de Vries et al. 2012, p. 85). Different online discussions can create empathy among readers and affect consumer behaviour (Bickart & Schindler, 2001, p. 33). Therefore, positive comments from consumers can enhance the value of the content, making it higher in popularity (de Vries et al. 2012, p. 86). The combination of these characteristics can affect the level of engagement, as well. A combination of text, pictures and entertaining content can stimulate engagement in a form of comments, and links and informative content can lead to an engagement in a form of sharing (Liu et al. 2024, p. 706).

2.3 COBRAs as indicators of engagement on social media

A way to analyse consumers' activities after they are engaged with the marketing content can be through the framework of consumers' online brand-related activities (COBRAs). This framework helps to understand consumer engagement with brand-related content on social media platforms as they show directly the behaviours of consumers towards the content (Buzeta et al. 2020, p. 1; Muntinga et al., 2011, p. 13).

The COBRAs have three levels of activities, which are consuming, contributing and creating brand-related content (Muntinga et al., 2011, p. 16). These dimensions represent the passive and active participation in consumer engagement (Gummerus et al. 2012, p. 869). Consuming represents the minimum level of online brand-related

activeness, which includes watching brand generated videos, viewing product ratings from other users, and dialogues in online brand forums (Muntinga et al., 2011, p. 16). Contributing is online brand-related activeness' middle level, which includes user-to-content and user-to-user interactions, such as conversations in the brand's fan page, contributions to brand forums, and comments on pictures, videos or other brand-related content created by others (Muntinga et al., 2011, p. 17). Creating is the ultimate level of online brand-related activeness, and it includes active production and publishing of brand-related content consumed by others, such as blogs, product reviews, videos, pictures, and music (Muntinga et al., 2011, p. 17). These levels go according to the goals of marketers when developing social media advertising campaigns (Buzeta et al. 2020, p. 1). For example, reach is often the first goal in such campaigns, and it corresponds to the consumption dimension as it reflects passive consumer engagement (Buzeta et al. 2020, p. 1).

There are different factors that affect the COBRA behaviour. The main antecedents of COBRAs are motivational drivers of consumers (Buzeta et al. 2024, p. 406). Empowerment and remuneration motives are the most crucial drivers for COBRAs across (Buzeta et al. 2024, p. 91). Empowerment motives affect contribution and creation dimensions, and remuneration affects consumption dimension (Buzeta et al. 2020, p. 91). On social media, profile-based (vs. content-based) interactions help the development of all COBRA levels and customized messages generate only low-level interactions (Buzeta et al. 2024p. 414). The nature of connectedness on social media and the type of social media platform affects the level of COBRAs, as well (Buzeta et al. 2024, p. 406-416). High levels of consumer's absorption and satisfaction affect positively their COBRA behaviour (Moghddam et al. 2026, p. 1365).

3 Luxury appeals and the influence of national culture

This chapter includes the different dimensions and characteristics of luxury brands. It addresses and explains the different luxury appeals used in marketing. In addition, national cultures are being discussed through Hofstede's cultural dimensions, specifically individualism, masculinity, and indulgence. Through national culture it is analysed how it influences the effectiveness of luxury appeals.

3.1 Characteristics of luxury brands

The word "luxury" comes from the old French word *luxurie*, which means lasciviousness or sinful self-indulgence (Berthon et al, 2009, p. 46). Keller (2009, p. 291) introduced ten characteristics to help identify luxury branding, including maintaining a premium image, creation of intangible brand associations and an aspirational image, aligned marketing program to ensure positive experiences, brand elements (e.g. logos, name), secondary associations from linked entities, controlled distribution, premium pricing strategy, careful brand architecture, broadly defined competition, and legal protection of trademarks. In addition, dimensions, such as rarity, and the level of aesthetics can be key elements in defining a luxury brand (Ko et al, 2017, p. 406).

Berthon et al (2009, p.47) proposes that luxury brands have three components: the functional, the experiential, and the symbolic. The symbolic component is part of the realm of social collective, as symbols allow individuals to signal meanings to others, which is a key aspect of luxury brands. The symbolic nature of luxury brands has two dimensions: "the value a luxury brand signals to others, and the value of that signalling to the signaller" (Berthon et al 2009, p. 48). For example, brands like Ferrari or Gucci signal wealth and prestige to others while reinforcing the owner's self-image (Berthon et al, 2009, p.48). Because luxury products have socialized characteristics, symbolism plays a big role in conveying brand value to customers (Wang et al. 2022, p. 189). However, the symbolism around luxury brands and their interpretations are subjective,

and the brands' association with luxury depends on consumer evaluations (Ko et al, 2017, p. 406).

According to Sheth et al. (1991), the value in functionality represents the value from the utilitarian or physical performance of a product. Consumers emphasize functionality because it defines what an object does, and it is a key determinant in consumer choice (Berthon et al. 2009, p. 48; Wells & Tan, 2024, p. 595). This is why big brands, such as Luis Vuitton and Christian Dior initially made products with a focus on functionality (Berthon et al. 2009, p. 48). The experiential dimension represents the individual's subjective value and taste (Berthon et al., 2009, p. 48). It is based on different experiences from the encounters with the brand, service or product (Mathwick et al., 2001, p. 41; Yuan & Wu, 2008, p. 388).

3.2 Luxury appeals

Appeals in marketing can include values and motives that define the central message (De Mooij, 2021). They are important when it comes to forming consumers initial perceptions and attitude toward products (Zhen et al, 2024, p. 2). De Barnier et al. (2012) compared different scales of a brand's luxury introduced by three different studies. Dimensions identified by Dubois et al. (2001) were distinction, elitism, and hedonism, whereas Vigneron and Johnson (1999) identified elitism, uniqueness, quality, refinement, and power (De Barnier et al, 2012). Kapferer (1998) identified creativity, renown, and elitism (De Barnier et al, 2012). Additionally, status is an important dimension of luxury.

Roux et al (2017, p. 105) have defined these dimensions, and elitism is defined as perceived expensiveness and limited availability of luxury brands. Uniqueness, distinction, and creativity refer to differentiation from mainstream brands, thus falling within the realm of exclusivity. Hedonism and refinement include two aspects of luxury: elegance and emotions. Quality and renown cover the idea of excellence, referring to a brand's intrinsic value. Power refers to brand performance in the marketplace. It focuses

on consumer-based brand equity instead of values associated with luxury consumption. Status relates to social rankings by signalling desired attributes (Balabanis & Stathopoupou, 2020, p. 464).

Figure 2 is based on Roux et al. (2017) research about luxury values. However, this thesis will refer to them as luxury appeals, as the values are strongly connected to the marketing appeals and can be utilized as them advertising content. Figure 2 shows three different motives for luxury consumption, which are need for status, need for uniqueness, and public self-consciousness. Each motive leads to different dimensions of luxury (elitism, exclusivity, and refinement) and luxury appeals. The appeals in Figure 2 are similar to the dimensions identified by the three studies De Barnier et al. (2012) compared in their article. The appeals in Figure 2 are prestige, status, expensiveness, uniqueness, rarity, creativity, beauty, elegance, and pleasure. These luxury appeals can be used in the marketing of luxury brands and products. However, as it is show in Figure 2, there are different motives for luxury consumption that need to be considered. Stokburger-Sauer et al. (2013, p. 895) emphasize that marketers need to plan their strategies according to the values different consumer segments seek when consuming luxury brands, increasing purchase value.

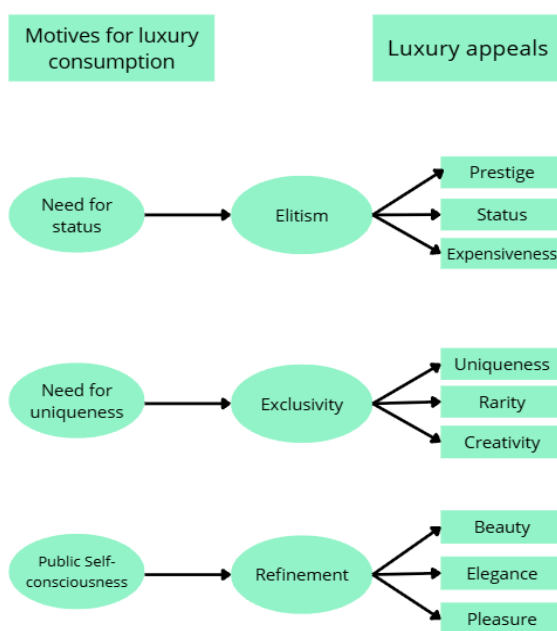


Figure 2. Motives for luxury consumption and luxury appeals (Roux et al., 2017).

In addition, these identified appeals and dimensions go in line with Ko et al. (2019) definition of a luxury brand, which emphasized quality, authenticity, prestige, connections with consumers, and the worthiness of premium pricing. Ko et al. (2019) definition highlights that luxury brands are defined by consumers' perceptions of the brand's attributes, prestige, and overall image. Consumer perceptions are also reflected in the dimensions compared by De Barnier et al. (2012), as many of them (e.g. elitism, quality, uniqueness, and hedonism) are closely linked to consumers' perceptions and symbolic associations.

3.3 National culture

According to Hofstede (1987), culture is a collective programming of the mind and based on that he has identified different mental programs as dimensions of culture. The dimensions are power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism, and masculinity. Later, there was introduced newer dimensions: indulgence and long-term orientation (Hofstede, 2010, referred in a work by Wallace et al., 2024, p. 507). These dimensions are measured by scores from 0 to 100 (De Mooij & Hofstede, 2002, p. 63). Individualism includes the relationship between the individual and collectivity, which predominates in each society (Hofstede, 1987, p. 148). This reflects whether individuals view themselves primarily as autonomous personalities (individualism), or as members of a community (collectivism) (Beugelsdijk & Welzel, 2018, p. 1473). Individual accomplishments and the promotion of thoughts, feelings and behaviours to separate individuals from the group are important for individualistic societies (Choi, 2025, p. 2).

According to Hofstede (1987, p. 176), the dimension of masculinity reflects the duality of sexes, and different societies cope with it in different ways. Men are likely to be more assertive and women more nurturing (masculinity vs. femininity). In a cultural level this can be seen as masculine cultures valuing more achievement, success, and competition,

whereas feminine cultures emphasize caring for others, solidarity, and cooperation (Beugelsdijk & Welzel, 2018, p. 1473). Hofstede and Minkow (2010) introduce indulgence as a tendency to allow enjoyment of basic and natural human desires related to enjoying life and having fun, with an opposite pole being restraint (Chudnovskaya & O'Hara, 2022, p. 43).

Prior research has approached advertising through cultural value appeals (Czarnecka et al. 2018, p. 5). The goal of advertising is to persuade consumers by appealing to the target segment's values, and therefore it is the reflection the dominant cultural values in a society (Czarnecka et al. 2018, p. 5). Therefore, culture has a direct connection to advertising appeals. Frameworks, such as Hofstede's dimensions, help to understand the different usage of advertising appeals in diverse cultures (Cheong et al. 2010, p. 11-12). Additionally, previous research has used the combination on Pollay (1983) classification scheme of appeals and Hofstede (2001) cultural dimensions to compare the popularity of certain appeal in different countries, with results indicating to the connection between national culture and appeals (Mortimer & Grierson, 2010, p. 158).

3.4 The influence of national cultures on luxury appeals

In determining the effective luxury appeals it is important to know the target customers and their different appreciation to luxury. For instance, Women tend to have a more positive attitude towards luxury brands than men and are more responsive to their uniqueness, hedonic, and status value (Stokburger-Sauer et al., 2013, p. 895). Therefore, when targeting women, highlighting these values and appeals can be effective in marketing and in getting a desired outcome, such as generating sales or building attraction to the brand. However, in advertising content, it is important to consider national culture. There are cross-cultural differences in the evaluation and meanings of luxury (Godey, 2013, p. 234). It is not beneficial for marketers to focus on luxury appeals that hold no huge importance in a culture (Stokburger-Sauer et al., 2013, p. 895). Instead, they need to highlight the appeals that are important for the target consumers, making

culture a factor which can affect luxury value perception and therefore the effectiveness of luxury appeals.

3.5 Hofstede's dimensions and luxury appeals

The dimensions of individualism versus collectivism affects consumers perceptions through cultural values. Wong and Ahuvia (1998) propose that collectivist cultures are more likely to emphasize public visibility of possessions than individualistic cultures and have a higher tendency of conformist motivations for luxury consumption (Teimourpour & Hanzaee, 2011, p. 321). However, according to Smith (2011) individualistic cultures tend to embrace personal uniqueness (Shan et al. 2023, p.3). Collectivist cultures also have stronger perceptions of conspicuousness, whereas conspicuousness has a negative impact on individualists' purchase intentions (Aliyev & Wagner, 2018, p. 167). High quality is more emphasized in luxury consumption intentions among collectivists (Aliyev & Wagner, 2018, p. 166). Another difference in individualistic and collective cultures is that hedonism is more valued in individualistic cultures because they are more likely to consume products for their own personal pleasure (Teimourpour & Hanzaee, 2011, p. 319).

Masculine cultures can be connected to status, elitism and conspicuousness. Status is important when showing success (De Mooij & Hofstede, 2002, p. 64). Tafani et al (2024) conducted a study comparing four countries (the US, France, UAE and China) and their rankings on luxury values. Elitism was valued most in the US and China, and both countries have a high score on masculinity compared to other countries, US having a score of 62 and China 66 while France had 43 and UAE 50 (Tafani et al. 2024 p. 67). The showing of expensive possessions, such as watches and gold, are deeply related to the dimension of masculinity and the showing of status and conspicuous consumption (De Mooij & Hofstede, 2002, p. 65).

A study conducted by Rehman (2021, p. 6) shows the differences in Saudi Arabian and Indian consumers' value perceptions of luxury goods through Hofstede's cultural dimensions. Saudi Arabia has a high score on indulgence, whereas India's score is lower. The results of Rehman's (2021, p. 7) show that Saudi Arabia has a higher score on hedonism and snob effect than India, which is the aftermath of a high indulgence score. Snob effect is a recurring phenomenon in luxury, and it refers to the desire for exclusivity and uniqueness, while displaying their status (Sogo & Mitsubayashi, 2021, p. 3330).

The impact of the cultural dimensions is not always straightforward. According to Tafani et al. (2024, p. 69) elitism is emphasized highly in the United States and China, which does not go according to the individualistic versus collectivistic orientation of culture, United States having a score of 91 and China 20 on individualism. Additionally, the emphasis of hedonism in India does not go directly with the country's high individualism score, possibly because of India's low indulgence level (Rehman, 2021, p. 8). These examples show that the combined impact of more than one cultural dimension can change the results, and the influence of Hofstede's dimensions on consumers' value perceptions can vary depending on the countries (Rehman, 2021, p. 8).

Hofstede's cultural dimensions can act as general guidance, but they don't necessarily fully explain how luxury appeals are perceived (Ho, 2022, p. 265). However, they have an undeniable impact on consumers luxury value perceptions. Therefore, luxury brands should tailor their marketing approaches to be appropriate to the cultural differences (Shukla et al., 2025, p. 2528).

4 Conclusions

This chapter first focuses on the summary of key findings on this thesis and the topics. Secondly there are theoretical contributions and managerial implications. Lastly this chapter includes limitations and suggestions for further studies.

4.1 Summary of key findings

The objective of this thesis was to study the influence of culture on the effectiveness of luxury appeals in social media marketing of luxury brands. Luxury can be subjective, but the different dimensions of luxury help to identify what makes a brand or a product luxury. Additionally, they highlight the different motives for luxury consumption, therefore bringing up the appeals of luxury. Appeals are important in marketing as they help to attract attention towards the marketing communications. However, because of the subjectiveness of luxury, the effectiveness of luxury appeals can vary depending on the target consumers. This is where the importance of culture comes in. Culture affects the values of individuals, which is why it needs to be considered if brands want their marketing efforts to be successful.

Culture does, in fact, affect luxury value perceptions. Individualist cultures do not emphasise public visibility, high quality, or conspicuousness as the collectivist cultures do. Collectivist cultures value public visibility of possessions. This is why appeals, such as status can be experienced and valued differently in these cultures. Status for collectivist cultures can connect to social recognition and for individualist cultures it can be more of a personal achievement. Hedonism was valued more in individualist cultures with a connection to personal pleasures. Additionally, uniqueness is embraced in individualistic cultures. Masculinity is related to elitism, status, and conspicuousness based on their similar emphasis on success and showing off. Indulgence influences hedonism and it is connected to the snob effect, where the desire for uniqueness and exclusivity is highlighted. The snob effect can occur with the desire to display status.

Despite the influence of individual cultural dimensions on luxury value perceptions, the impact is not always straightforward, and it can vary depending on the country. Some other factors can affect the value perceptions of consumers. Additionally, the impact of more than one Hofstede's dimension can change the results of consumer's value perceptions, and the emphasis of luxury appeals in these cultures.

Social media marketing and content is important for brands. The characteristics of content determine the popularity of the content. Effectiveness on social media can be measured with consumer engagement by analysing the impact of the content on consumers cognitive, behavioural and emotional sides. The influence of culture on the effectiveness of luxury appeals in social media content can be measured with frameworks from consumer engagement, such as the COBRAs, which is a good tool for measuring the behaviour and direct engagement of consumers towards social media content.

When cultures are considered and the right appeals highlighted in the social media content of luxury brands, the success of the content can be seen through consumer engagement and COBRAs. In Figure 3 it is shown how these key findings relate to each other. It shows the characteristics of brand posts from Figure 1 and appeals from Figure 2 as part of social media content. National culture is there as a moderating factor, connecting the cultural dimensions with the appeals to show which appeals are the most effective within each dimension. Social media content and national culture connect to consumer engagement and its levels and dimensions as the outcome of these factors.

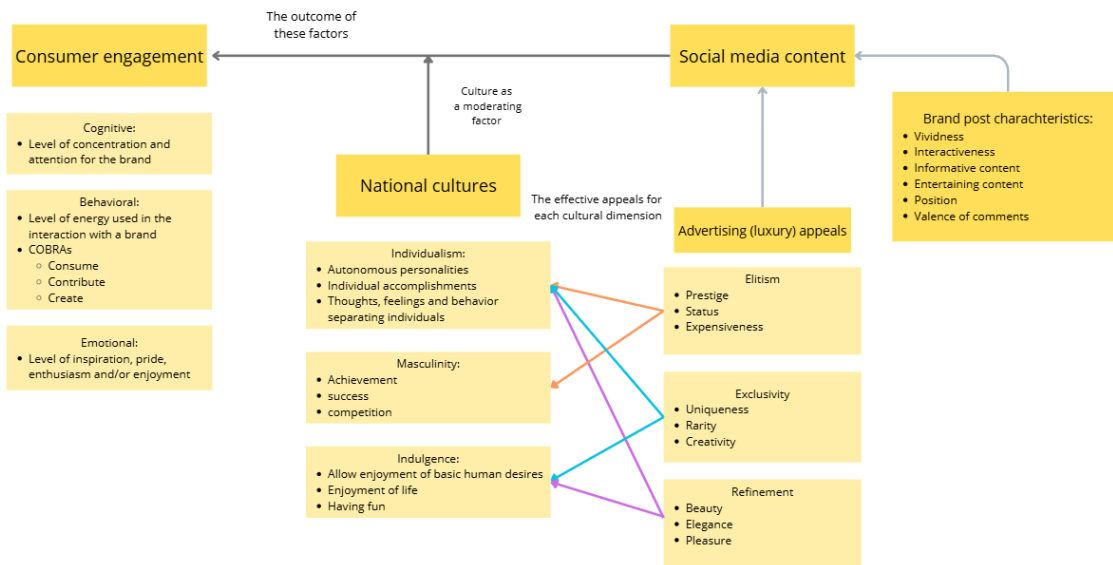


Figure 3. The connection between social media content, national culture, and consumer engagement.

4.2 Theoretical contribution and managerial implications

This thesis combines topics, such as luxury appeals, national culture, social media content, and consumer engagement. It integrates multiple existing theories from different studies and clarifies the connections between them in this specific context. Additionally, with the delimitation of the selected Hofstede's dimensions this thesis provides a more focused understanding of the influence of these dimensions.

The findings of this thesis can provide an understanding of the relationships between cultural dimensions and the effectiveness of luxury appeals. This can help brands to consider cultural values and design social media content that is appropriate for the different cultures by adapting the luxury appeals in the advertising content. These insights can help luxury brands improve consumer engagement on social media and increase purchasing of luxury products and services.

4.3 Limitations and suggestions for further studies

The limitations of this thesis are connected to the selected theoretical frameworks. This thesis only focuses on selected Hofstede's cultural dimensions, and is based on the perspectives of these dimensions, excluding the other three and their possible effect on the findings. This thesis brings up only certain luxury dimensions from the several other theories and dimensions. As this thesis is a literature review, it relies on existing literature, which limits the findings through the scope and availability of previous research. The limited research on indulgence affects the emphasis of this dimension on this thesis. Additionally, research on the context of the theme of this thesis was limited. All these limitations need to be considered when interpreting the findings.

For future research, the examination of other cultural frameworks and their effect on luxury appeals could be examined to provide a different perspective. Additionally further studies can examine specific social media platforms to compare the consumer engagement across platforms. Further studies could investigate other marketing communication in this context or compare if the effectiveness of appeals is related to the different marketing communications. Empirical research on the topic of this thesis could provide a deeper understanding of how cultural values influence the effectiveness of luxury appeals in luxury brands' social media content.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. The use of Artificial intelligence

In the making of this thesis artificial intelligence (AI) was used as a supportive tool. AI was primarily utilized for brainstorming ideas, suggesting alternative wording, clarifying text, translating individual words or phrases, and verifying the grammar of the English language. The used AI language model was OpenAI Chat GPT. All AI-generated suggestions were reviewed and edited by the author before including them in the thesis. The text, figures, interpretation of the literature, conclusions, and findings were made by the author.