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The nature and determinants of user-generated content for dissatisfied customers: evidence from second-hand luxury fashion brands

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#### Abstract

### **Purpose**

We examined the links between user-generated content (UGC), dissatisfied customers and second-hand luxury fashion brands. A central premise of luxury fashion brands is the perceived status and privilege of those who own such items. Despite their marketing logic emphasising exclusivity and rarity, they have broadened their reach by integrating new digital marketing practices that increase access to luxury brand-related information and create opportunities for consumers to purchase products through secondhand sellers.

# Design/methodology/approach

Building on an inductive qualitative study of 59 millennials from three European countries (France, Italy and the UK) and by examining the mediating role of UGC and dissatisfied customers, this paper develops a conceptual framework of three clusters of secondhand luxury fashion goods customers: spiritual consumers, entrepreneurial recoverer consumers and carpe diem consumers.

#### **Findings**

The proposed SEC framework illustrates how the emerging themes interconnect with the identified consumers, revealing significant consumer actions and attitudes found in the second-hand luxury goods sector that influence the usage of UGC and its integration into service failure and recovery efforts.

# **Originality**

This study suggested that the perceptions of consumers seeking secondhand luxury fashion products differ from those who purchase new or never previously owned luxury fashion products Overall, this research sets the stage for scholars to forge a path forward to enhance the understanding of this phenomenon and its implications for luxury fashion companies.

Keywords: user-generated content, millennials, dissatisfied customers, self-categorisation theory, constructivist paradigm, second-hand product, luxury fashion brands

#### 1. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic precipitated a worldwide economic deceleration, resulting in diminished consumer expenditure and a deceleration in the consumption of luxury fashion brands (Barletta et al., 2021; Ozuem et al 2021). Customers who are concerned about the cost of their purchases have turned to more affordable luxury products that provide them with the opportunity to save money (Amatulli et al., 2018). In 2019, the global resale apparel market was valued at USD 7 billion and is expected to grow to USD 36 billion by 2024 (Shahbandeh, 2021). Young consumers, millennials or Generation Z individuals constitute the majority of individuals willing to purchase secondhand items (Mintel, 2020). As of 2020, 62% of luxury consumers were interested in purchasing secondhand luxury products; this led to the success

of the luxury resale market (Kessous & Valette-Florence, 2019), which in 2018 was estimated to have a worldwide value of 28 billion euros (Sabanoglu, 2021).

In addition to integrating into the second-hand industry, the luxury industry has experienced major changes as a result of its embrace of social media (Mintel, 2019), particularly in terms of customer purchasing and recovery from service failure. Parasuraman and Grewal (2000) emphasised the importance of technology in customer service quality evaluation and its perceived value for customer acquisition and transactions. Technology has enabled individuals outside luxury brands' target groups to access luxury products (Liu et al., 2019) by engaging with user-generated content (UGC). UGC encompasses brand-related content, comprising perspectives and experiences about brands or products voluntarily created and shared among consumers (Ozuem et al., 2023a). Technology also cuts out the physical salesperson, as customers rely on UGC to inform their purchasing decisions.

The luxury fashion brand literature has not paid attention to the implications of UGC created by dissatisfied customers after a negative service experience, particularly for secondhand luxury fashion brands. This is a salient theoretical and empirical line of inquiry because consumers' involvement with and purchase of secondhand luxury brands influence their perceptions of luxury brands (Jain and Rathi., 2023). There is a significant gap in the extant studies concerning the effect of the luxury status of branded products and the impact of UGC on consumers' responses to service failure and recovery. To comprehend the antecedents and consequences of dissatisfied customers' involvement in UGC in the context of secondhand luxury fashion branded products, this study aims to address the following two questions: (1) What can we learn from the involvement of dissatisfied customers in UGC, particularly in the purchase of secondhand luxury fashion brands? (2) How do dissatisfied customers' involvement in UGC impact the consumption of secondhand luxury fashion brands? Our work

acknowledges the calls (e.g., Kessous and Valette-Florence, 2019) for enriched, contextualised understanding and theory development by examining dissatisfied customers, UGC and secondhand luxury fashion consumption. Our goal is to elaborate on the interaction between UGC and dissatisfied customers and its effect on secondhand luxury fashion brands.

This study begins with a literature review on dissatisfied customers and UGC and identifies how self-categorisation theory may provide new theoretical insights. Based on our theoretical framework, we explain how the empirical data were generated and analysed through a constructivist inductive approach using theoretical sampling. Consistent with the well-established findings on dissatisfied customers in the literature, we propose a conceptual framework that identifies three categories of customers who are involved in UGC (spiritual consumers, entrepreneurial recoverer consumers and *carpe diem* consumers).

#### 2. Theoretical context

This section is divided into three subsections that discuss the following: first, dissatisfied customers and the main streams of thought; second, customer dissatisfaction and UGC; and third, self-categorisation theory.

#### 2.1 Dissatisfied customers

The literature on dissatisfied customers revolves around two streams of research. In the first stream, customer dissatisfaction is considered an outcome of ineffective service delivery and quality and failure to meet customer expectations; this type of dissatisfaction refers to the resources, procedures and service types used by companies (Bougie et al., 2003; Chen et al., 2021; Li & Fumagalli, 2021; Kelley et al., 1993; Sánchez-García & Currás-Pérez., 2011; Volkers, 2021; Vollero et al., 2021). The second stream examines customers' responses following a dissatisfying experience; it considers their negative reactions and the actions they

take, notably brand avoidance and negative communication (Bougie et al., 2003; Grégoire & Fisher, 2008; Thomas et al., 2022). A dissatisfied customer may choose to express their dissatisfaction directly with the service provider or with others in the form of UGC, which represents a crucial issue for a firm's long-term survival.

The prior marketing literature defines secondhand products as any goods that have been previously owned and used, regardless of age (Cervellon et al., 2012; Amatulli et al., 2020; Hasbullah et al., 2020; Shen et al. 2022). Despite this, the products retain the symbolic value of the brand that they were produced under, alongside attributes associated with personal and nostalgic meaning (Amatulli et al., 2018; Lin et al., 2009; Pantano & Stylos 2020). Luxury purchases commonly indicate a desire for status and power (Estreder et al., 2023; Turunen et al., 2020; Silva et al., 2022); however, UGC has changed the image of luxury brands by enabling amateurs, celebrities and even customers to take an active role in marketing. As part of their social media content strategies, brands such as Dior and Calvin Klein have partnered with icons from younger generations to reach broader audiences and new customer segments (Koivisto & Mattila, 2018). Despite the gradually growing inclusivity of luxury brands, Turunen and Leipämaa-Leskinen (2015) argued that customers still desire the social recognition associated with the brand and that young consumers, such as millennials, are concerned not only about financial risks but also about authenticity risks in acquiring secondhand luxury fashion products. For this reason, customers may rely on collaboratively created UGC to ensure that they reduce the risks associated with secondhand purchasing.

Information that customers may use to make decisions about purchases or intended brand loyalty is embedded in UGC (Purnawirawan et al., 2015), which comes in unstructured forms, including text, images and videos where observers can extract knowledge from the content contributor (Mazzoli et al., 2019; Singh & Chakrabarti, 2020; Roma & Aloini, 2019). This information can initiate collaborative intentions between customers, with UGC acting as the

moderating link between joint activities (Mohammad et al., 2021; Boardman et al., 2022; Namkoong, Ro, & Henderson 2019). Collaboration between customers occurs through a range of activities, including facilitating secondhand sales between customers and sharing and exchanging intangible things such as information, skills and advice between like-minded individuals (Botsman & Rogers, 2010; Amatulli et al. 2020).

These actions are quite common in the secondhand fashion industry. A study by Gopalakrishnan and Matthews (2018) stated that the industry involves experimental consumption combined with people sharing resources and ideas for others to adopt in both a cost-effective and emotionally stimulating manner.

Millennials are characterised as highly experimental in their brand consumption; they desire access to the luxury sector to appease social appearances for prices they can afford (Yan et al., 2015). Millennials also use technology as a way of showcasing or observing lifestyles, which supports their need for community connectiveness (Gapper, 2018). Millennials heavily engage in platforms that facilitate UGC, including YouTube, Facebook and Instagram, and are thus most likely to search for and engage with information through social media (Statista, 2021a, 2021b).

The role of the source of UGC is significant in encouraging millennial customers to engage in UGC; millennials are prone to engage with messages that are part of discussions related to beliefs and values and are wary of the commercial intentions of influencers (Loeb, 2020; Statista, 2020). The credibility of UGC is derived from the perceived expertise and trustworthiness of the communicator (Liu et al. 2017; Singh & Chakrabarti, 2020; Naeem & Ozuem, 2022). Customers arguably have more trust in UGC shared by other customers than in that shared by a brand (Ballantine & Yeung, 2015) because customers can share certain characteristics, such as personal tastes and lifestyles (Ballantine & Yeung, 2015; Mangleburg

et al., 1998), and are perceived as more relatable and authentic in their messaging (Eigenraam et al., 2021; Ozuem et al., 2021a). Millennials may direct significant attention toward the creators of UGC, assigning trust to content created and shared by peers and customers. This can lead customers to build trust in brands if the UGC encourages them to adopt or remain with the brand or defect if the content indicates negative brand sentiment (Landsman & Nitzan, 2020). We provide an illustrative overview of the empirical studies on UGC in Table I.

Table I: Research streams on user-generated content (UGC)

Research stream	Context	Supporting studies	Salient findings
Knowledge content	Knowledge content in UGC is arguably a	Koivisto & Mattila (2018)	UGC has been employed by consumers and
	subcategory of content. The UGC	Liu et al. (2017)	marketers to signal brand perceptions. Individuals
	produced on social media can have higher	Roma & Aloini (2019)	generate detailed reviews and ratings, a form of
	credibility status than other online sources,	Singh & Chakrabarti (2020)	UGC, providing other individuals with knowledge
	because the information is accumulated		of products and services, and brand-related
	from personal and extended social		perspectives
	networks that are perceived as reliable	Eigenraam et al. (2021)	UGC is a user-owned resource. The user-owned
	sources	Mazzoli et al. (2019)	status can reinforce the perceived value,
		Ozuem et al. (2021a)	usefulness and credibility of knowledge content
		Ozuem et al. (2023b)	published through social media
Information	UGC has a significant role in the	Consiglio et al. (2018)	The continued production and diffusion of UGC
production and	production and diffusion of online	De Angelis et al. (2012)	relies on the volume of individuals' sharing
diffusion	information. Individuals can produce UGC	Weathers et al. (2007)	intentions. Studies have found that confidence is a
	with few restrictions. UGC increases the		key mediator in sharing intentions. Individuals'
	volume of content tailored by subject, real-		are likely to feel confident in information they

	I.e		1 1 1 1 1 1 0 1
	time events, activities and other attributes		have searched themselves, and feel a sense of
	of online communities		control over their knowledge processing
		Namkoong, Ro, & Henderson	UGC can be used to verify information distributed
		(2019)	through other online and offline sources. UGC can
		Singh et al. (2022)	be useful to individuals if lack knowledge or feel
		Zhang et al. (2022)	uncertain about topics or situations
<b>Customer experience</b>	The various formats of UGC can	Ballantine & Yeung (2015)	Individuals can signal their real-time emotions
management	contribute to customer experiences within	Hajli (2020)	through UGC, which enables sellers to collect
	online marketspaces. From a managerial	Purnawirawan et al. (2015)	analytical insights into their customers' sentiment
	perspective, UGC provides analytical	Roelen-Blasberg et al. (2022)	and valence towards products, services and other
	insights to develop innovations that	Chang & Lee (2022)	brand-related information. Similarly, other
	support customer experience management	Mishra et al. (2021)	individuals can be influenced by the valence
			displayed through UGC and by the media richness
			displayed through the UGC

### 2.2 Customer dissatisfaction and UGC

Several researchers have proposed that service failure is the main contributing factor to dissatisfied customers' engagement in negative UGC (Azemi et al., 2019; Song et al. 2022; Whiting, Williams, & Hair, 2019); Roelen-Blasberg et al. 2022; Meyer-Waarden & Sabadie 2023). UGC can indicate the emotions (especially negative emotions) that customers may harbor toward a product, service or brand (Mehra, 2023; Obeidat et al., 2018; Ozuem et al., 2021b). UGC, which indicates customers' negative emotions, is commonly referred to as negative electronic word of mouth (eWOM) and has been shown to influence other customers' decision-making processes when purchasing (Hajli, 2020) and to be used as an indicator of product quality (Kordrostami et al., 2020). Customers' intentions to share UGC with negative messaging often occur following a service failure that arouses negative emotions, including frustration and anger (Bougie et al., 2003; Li & Fumagalli, 2021; Mishra et al. 2021), which may vent through UGC to cope with the experience (Presi et al., 2014; Singh et al. 2022; Hansen et al., 2018; Ozuem et al., 2021b). Engaging in negative eWOM can empower customers following an experience that may have been beyond their control. Self-compassion can also be described as a method for restoring a sense of self-esteem (De Angelis et al., 2012) or redeeming a lost sense of personal control (Consiglio et al., 2018; Weathers et al., 2007). This, combined with the ease of sharing information online, attracts consumers to actively participate in the spread of social media firestorms (Hansen et al., 2018; Ozuem et al., 2021b., Presi et al., 2014), which results in increased awareness of service failures and customer dissatisfaction.

A customer might share negative information to achieve compensation for the losses they experienced or to prevent others from encountering a similar negative outcome. Amatulli et al. (2020) investigated how guilt-driven emotions drive customers to engage in negative word of mouth (WOM). They focused on negative results that followed customers' patronage of luxury

brands that were perceived to not deliver sustainability. In this scenario, customers may be motivated to warn others through WOM so that they avoid buying from an unsustainable company (Amatulli et al., 2020; Boardman et al., 2022) and absolve themselves from any negative consequences of the purchase (Agrawal & Duhachek, 2010). Luxury fashion brands are expected to have long-lasting qualities and are strongly associated with excessive and sometimes unnecessary spending (which is a risk in itself in terms of projecting an image of sustainability) (Ferraro et al., 2016; Hong Lan & Watkins, 2022; Yan et al., 2015; Keim & Wagner 2018), which can arouse a sense of guilt in customers who purchase a luxury product (Ki et al., 2017). Thus, it can be argued that customer dissatisfaction would be greater in the luxury fashion sector following service failures (including for second-hand products) than in the more economical mass market fashion sector, and this would prompt a greater desire to engage in negative eWOM. The following provides an illustrative overview of the empirical research on UGC and dissatisfied customers (Table II).

Table II: Overview of customer dissatisfaction in a user-generated content (UGC) context

Research	Customer dissatisfaction context	Supporting references	UGC context	Supporting references
stream				
Service failure	Service failures are major contributors	Chen et al. (2021)	When customers are aware that a	Azemi et al. (2019)
encounters	to customer dissatisfaction. Customers	Kelley et al. (1993)	service failure has occurred, they may	Hansen et al. (2018)
	may encounter various service failures	Smith & Bolton (1998)	be motivated to produce and diffuse	Ozuem et al. (2021b)
	including a defective product, incorrect	Song et al. (2022)	UGC through social media to promote	Presi et al. (2014)
	or delayed service, and a lack of support	Volkers (2021)	the consequences of the failure. The	
	from the provider		nature of the failure may influence	
			different levels of UGC production and	
			diffusion	
Customer	Customers' dissatisfaction can escalate	Bougie et al. (2003)	Failure to meet customer expectations	Azemi et al. (2019)
expectations	if a provider does not meet their	Whiting et al. (2019)	can result in a reporting of these	Bougie et al. (2003)
	expectations. When a provider	Li & Fumagalli (2021)	outcomes using UGC. A customer's	Kurtoğlu et al. (2022)
	promotes products and services,	Sánchez-García &	length of patronage of a provider, their	Li & Fumagalli (2021)
	customers may develop a set of	Currás-Pérez (2011)	novice or experienced customer status	Ozuem et al. (2021a)
	standards to measure the product,	Vollero et al. (2021)	and the level of blame attribution can	

	service and provider's performance.		influence their UGC production. Some	
	Failure to meet these standards can		customers may generate less UGC due	
	result in customer disappointment.		to their lack of knowledge of the	
	Customers with low expectations, or		standard of service delivery the	
	little experience with the provider, may		provider should conduct or because of	
	not hold significant standards as		their inexperience in using UGC to	
	opposed to experienced customers		obtain solutions	
Variations in	Customers may share similar	Grégoire & Fisher	UGC can reflect customers' sentiments	Azemi et al. (2019)
emotional	dissatisfying experiences, but their	(2008)	and valence that are often produced	Mehra (2023)
responses to a	emotional responses may vary	Mehra (2023)	spontaneously during real-time	Obeidat et al. (2018)
dissatisfactory	according to their individual	Meyer-Waarden &	situations, and are influenced by the	Ozuem et al. (2021b)
experience	psychological processing. Customers	Sabadie (2023)	customers' affective stance and their	Yang et al. (2022)
	may evaluate experiences under	Yang et al. (2022)	intended actions towards the provider.	
	different criteria, including the nature		For example, angry customers may	
	and severity of the negative experience,		produce UGC that reflects a negative	
	and their expectations		sentiment or valence, and seek justice	

	for tl	the	consequences	of	a	
	dissatisf	factor	ry experience			

Table III: Main studies on second-hand products and UGC

Research	Context	Supporting references	User-generated content (UGC)	Supporting references
stream			context	
Collaborative	The second-hand luxury industry	Gopalakrishnan &	UGC has contributed to the value	Amatulli et al. (2020)
consumption	consists of several resale	Matthews (2018)	of the second-hand luxury market	Hasbullah et al. (2020)
	business models, including peer-	Lin et al. (2009)	in several ways that are mutually	Mohammad et al. (2021)
	to-peer, owned or external resale	Pantano & Stylos (2020)	associated with, and combine, the	Boardman et al. (2022)
	platforms, buy-back, and product	Shen et al. (2022)	three identified research streams.	
	consignment arrangements. Each		UGC can be integrated into	
	of these have some degree of		online platforms owned by	
	collaborative consumption,		second-hand luxury sellers and	
	where multiple individuals		other online environments that	
	contribute to the promotion and		facilitate collaborative	
	consumption of a preexisting		consumption.	
	luxury product, and individuals			

	can be either, or both, the			
	promoter and consumer			
Preowned	Second-hand luxury goods have	Amatulli et al. (2018)	UGC has also directly	Amatulli et al. (2020)
value	attributes that differ from those	Cervellon et al. (2012)	contributed to enhancing the	Hasbullah et al. (2020)
	of new luxury goods. Their	Turunen et al. (2020)	social value and acceptance of	Mohammad et al. (2021)
	preowned status is linked with	Silva et al. (2022)	the second-hand luxury market.	Boardman et al. (2022)
	practical attributes, such as		Likewise, UGC has promoted the	
	timeliness, durability and		positive attributes of selling and	
	sustainability. They also create a		purchasing second-hand luxury	
	sense of nostalgic value, while		goods.	
	maintaining their original			
	attributes of exclusivity,			
	uniqueness and scarcity.			
	Individuals who previously			
	owned and sell luxury products			
	develop a social role, which			

	gives them an empowering status			
	within the second-hand luxury			
	community			
Psychological	Consumers have multiple needs	Ferraro et al. (2016)	UGC also allows sellers or	Amatulli et al. (2020)
and fulfilment	that justify their decision to	Hong Lan & Watkins	consumers to deliver a visual	Hasbullah et al. (2020)
needs	consume second-hand luxury	(2022)	narrative of the promoted	Mohammad et al. (2021)
	products. One group of	Kessous & Valette-	products.	Boardman et al. (2022)
	customers is driven by frugality	Florence (2019)		
	motivations, a second by	Keim & Wagner (2018)		
	ecological and environmental	Yan et al. (2015)		
	sustainability, a third by the			
	desire to enhance their social			
	status and unique identity, and a			
	fourth who seek to obtain a			
	pleasant consumption experience			
	from exclusive luxury products			

### 2.3 Self-categorisation theory

This paper considers self-categorisation theory. Individuals are motivated to promote a positive and distinctive image of characteristics linked to their identity (Turner et al., 1994; Van Nguyen et al., 2016) and join social groups that share characteristics similar to their own identity (Rouzi & Wang, 2021). Self-categorisation can help individuals identify diverse categories of identities; this can include aligning an individual's identity with a brand's personality traits and values (Chen et al., 2020; Van Nguyen et al., 2016) and can result in differentiation and contrasts between individuals' self-categorisation (Turner et al., 1994).

Self-categorisation in certain contexts can be predicted by an interaction between perceiver readiness and category-stimulus fit, which comprises comparative fit and normative fit (Turner et al., 1994; Voci, 2006). Perceiver readiness "reflects a person's past experiences, present expectations, and current motives, values, goals and needs" (Turner et al., 1994 p.78). Individuals who harbour categorisations in one condition are likely to formulate a similar self-categorisation under new conditions, such as the expectation that luxury fashion products will be of high quality, despite being second-hand. Comparative fit addresses the perceived potential differences that exist between an individual and his or her members within one particular social category and between an individual and his or her members within another social category (Voci, 2006); this can mediate the relationship between customers and secondhand luxury sellers or cause a customer to diverge from a seller if comparative fit is absent. Normative fit aligns with the expected behaviours of people in a given social category (Voci, 2006); millennials, for instance, may be expected to seek affordable luxury or share UGC to express emotions following a service failure, prompting categorisation of these individuals into group communities.

Perceiver readiness, comparative fit and normative fit are context dependent; although a self-category may have been frequently applied in the past, specific contexts and momentary situations can cause the usual categorisation to shift or change (Hobman, Bordia, & Gallois, 2003). For instance, an individual may evaluate a secondhand provider differently following an online service failure and may change his or her perspective on individuals who express criticism of the secondhand luxury industry, which could prompt a possible shift in self-categorisation. UGC includes information individuals share to influence others, such as information about products and services (Chen & Lurie, 2013), negative experiences (De Angelis et al., 2012) and brand sentiments (Kupor & Tormala, 2018); this can prompt engaging responses from observing individuals (Sender & Korzynski, 2019; Septianto et al., 2020) and possible shifts in self-categorisation.

### 3. Paradigm of inquiry and methods

"Constructivism considers that 'humanity ... is responsible for knowledge development and understanding is a matter of interpretive construction on the part of the active subject" (Howell, 2013, p. 90). Guba and Lincoln (1989) argued that the core assumption of the constructivist paradigm was that realities are not objectively 'out there' but constructed by people under the influence of a variety of social and cultural factors that lead to a shared construction (p. 12). Burr (2010) argued that "developments in technology, in media and mass communications means that we are now living in a condition where there are available to us many different kinds of knowledge" (p 12). Constructivism provides the basis for the study's sampling techniques and enables the development of empirical research through an evolutionary constructivist process.

### 3.1 Theoretical sampling and sample

Theoretical sampling provides an evolutionary nonstatic position, as it involves the 'process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes and analyses data and decides what data to collect next' and develops and reinforces a theoretical dimension as it emerges from the data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 45). Strauss and Corbin (1998) described theoretical sampling as the opportunity "to discover variations among concepts and to densify categories in terms of their properties and dimensions" (p. 201). Analytical abstraction and theoretical development guide the research in terms of who to include in the data collection scheme.

Given the demographic data related to online users, the authors invited millennials aged between 18 and 39 years from three European countries to participate: France (19), Italy (21) and the UK (19) (Table IV). The definition of millennials is open to interpretation; some authors determine it to mean those born between 1982 and 1996 (Luo et al., 2018; Hershatter & Epstein, 2010), while others expand the years to include 1980 to 2000 (Dimock, 2019). However, through theoretical sampling, the decision to recruit millennials initially stemmed from their association with technology-specific factors, particularly regarding their natural usage of digital platforms to buy products (Rudolph et al., 2021), their ability to adapt to situations using technology (Gharzai et al., 2020) when selling and buying secondhand luxury goods, and the self-recovery procedures they conduct through social media.

Table IV: Participants' sociodemographic information

Country	Gender	Occupation	Age
France	F	Second-hand luxury fashion seller	25
	F	MBA Global Fashion student	35
	F	Fashion product manager	30
	F	Fashion blogger	24
	M	Photographer	24
	F	Luxury event specialist	24
	M	Luxury fashion customer experience specialist	23
	M	MSc Fashion Management student	26
	M	University Economics student	19
	F	University Marketing student	18
	F	MBA Global Luxury Management student	23
	F	Fashion website manager	34
	M	MBA Global Luxury Management student	32
		Administrator	27
	M		
	M	Arts College student	18
	F	University Sports Management student	23
	F	MSc Global Client Service Management student	25
	F	MBA Global Luxury Management student	24
	M	MBA Global Luxury Fashion Management student	39
Country	Gender	Occupation	Age
	F	Creative arts student	18
itary	F	Data analyst	28
	F	University Business and Administration student	19
			34
	M F	Programme manager	34
	F	University lecturer	27
		MSc Economics student	
	F	MBA student	39
	F	MSc Global Business student	30
	F	Market research analyst	33
	M	E-commerce manager	39
	F	University Business and Administration student	25
	M	Travel blogger	30
	F	Fitness trainer	34
	F	University Business student	20
	F	University Marketing student	23
	M	University Language student	24
	M	University Fashion Marketing and Business student	19
	F	College student	18
	F	Blogger	28
	M	University Sports Management student	20
	F	University Fashion Marketing student	23
	_		
Country	Gender	Occupation	Age
	Gender F	Sales assistant	32
	Gender	Sales assistant Amazon associate	32 30
	Gender F	Sales assistant Amazon associate University Marketing student	32 30 19
	Gender F F	Sales assistant Amazon associate University Marketing student Digital content designer	32 30 19 29
	Gender F F M	Sales assistant Amazon associate University Marketing student	32 30 19
	Gender F F M M	Sales assistant Amazon associate University Marketing student Digital content designer	32 30 19 29
	Gender F F M M M	Sales assistant Amazon associate University Marketing student Digital content designer MSc Business student University Economics student	32 30 19 29 24 20
	Gender F F M M F F F	Sales assistant Amazon associate University Marketing student Digital content designer MSc Business student University Economics student University Law student	32 30 19 29 24 20 23
	Gender F F M M F F F M	Sales assistant Amazon associate University Marketing student Digital content designer MSc Business student University Economics student University Law student University Psychology student	32 30 19 29 24 20 23 21
	Gender F F M M F F M M M M	Sales assistant Amazon associate University Marketing student Digital content designer MSc Business student University Economics student University Law student University Psychology student E-commerce business owner	32 30 19 29 24 20 23 21 27
	Gender F F M M F F M M M M F F M M M	Sales assistant Amazon associate University Marketing student Digital content designer MSc Business student University Economics student University Law student University Psychology student E-commerce business owner Administrator	32 30 19 29 24 20 23 21 27 30
	F F M M M F F F M M F F F M M F F F M M F M F	Sales assistant Amazon associate University Marketing student Digital content designer MSc Business student University Economics student University Law student University Psychology student E-commerce business owner Administrator MSc Economics student	32 30 19 29 24 20 23 21 27 30 25
	F F M M F F M M F F F M M F F F F F F F	Sales assistant Amazon associate University Marketing student Digital content designer MSc Business student University Economics student University Law student University Psychology student E-commerce business owner Administrator MSc Economics student Digital auction manager	32 30 19 29 24 20 23 21 27 30 25 33
Country United Kingdom	F F M M M F F F M M F F F M M F F F M M F M F	Sales assistant Amazon associate University Marketing student Digital content designer MSc Business student University Economics student University Law student University Psychology student E-commerce business owner Administrator MSc Economics student	32 30 19 29 24 20 23 21 27 30 25

F	University Finance student	21
M	Website coordinator	29
F	Shop assistant	18
M	Estate agent	39

# 3.2 Data collection and analysis

A total of 103 individuals were invited to participate in the current study, and 59 consented to participate in the in-depth interviews, each lasting between 35 and 55 minutes. Each researcher interviewed participants from their country using virtual platforms (Teams and Zoom). All the recorded data were translated into English for the analysis. The researchers prepared 15 openended questions concerning perceptions and experiences of secondhand luxury fashion products, UGC and experiences related to service failure and recovery in the industry. Due to the diverse nature of the research topic, open-ended questions were necessary to allow participants to respond without predetermined answers; thus, they could provide rich and complex accounts (Braun & Clarke, 2013). In-depth interviews provided opportunities for the researchers to ask participants to clarify insights that the researchers had not previously considered. This approach allowed the questions to evolve during the interviews, which resulted in the emergence of data derived from the participants' perspectives and experiences (Ozuem et al., 2021b). This approach would give the researchers a range of perspectives to be thematically organised.

Data analysis was conducted through the thematic analysis approach proposed by Gioia et al. (2013), whereby three stages (orders) of analysis were conducted to generate major themes and subthemes (Ozuem, Willis, & Howell, 2022).

The first stage involved the examination of qualitative responses to identify primary codes; the second stage involved the generation of subthemes based on the primary codes and coding of the researchers' theoretical understanding to generate implicit ideas from the explicitly transcribed data. The data were initially examined by two researchers, and two additional

researchers examined the whole dataset to verify that the subthemes reflected the whole dataset. There were no major differences between the participants' responses from the three countries; thus, the subthemes represented the whole sample. In the final stage of analysis, three main themes were created to interconnect and represent quotations from the interviews and subthemes: authenticity redemption, self-recovery autonomy and failure-recovery status holder. The main themes are explained in the Results section (see Table V).

Table V: Key research findings

Sample quotations	Subthemes	Themes
You don't often get a chance to own a luxury brand  I run an online business on Instagram buying and reselling luxury products	Opportunity to obtain luxury product	Authenticity redemption: the heritage, uniqueness and sustainability of a product can reduce perceived product-level service failure severity
Vivid UGC is important so I can visualise the condition of the product	UGC to confirm authenticity	
I worry the product may not be so faithful to the photo or if it's fake. I don't mind the fact that there may be small defects on luxury brands	Product imperfections are tolerated	
Even if there [are] some imperfectionsI keep them anyway because it's a beautiful and special brand		
Knowing that the products are second-hand, I take that into account	Failure severity perceived as low	Self-recovery autonomy: sellers' ability to control or manage service recovery
You know the ropes and know the potential outcomes		
I wrote on an online forum where [there were] other sellers who had the same problem and found advice	Initiative to recover using online resources	

I reached out to fellow customers through Messenger and checked out the company's returns policies		
A seller has an Instagram account; she has a strong community around her, and gives good advice through her account	Community atmosphere of seller's account	Failure-recovery status holder: buyers' perceptions of sellers of second-hand luxury fashion
One seller was very kind, it gives me the feeling that support was present in the online community		
I try my best to maintain communication so my rating doesn't reduce on social media	Seller–customer interaction through UGC by seller	
As someone who manages online second-hand shops, I have to manage customers and other sellers		
The usage of my channels relies on customers' confidence and positive word of mouth	Maintaining positive sentiment through UGC	
I have seen customers comment negatively about a seller That doesn't look good for online sellers		

UGC, user-generated content

#### 4. Results

This section discusses each of the main themes and provides participants' comments related to each theme. It provides a summary of the key themes and associated studies.

# 4.1 Authenticity redemption

Authenticity redemption refers to the heritage, uniqueness and sustainability of a product that can reduce the severity of potential product-level service failure. Research has generally centred on the authenticity of a brand itself, excluding judgments of products or services (Morhart et al., 2015). At the product level of customer perception, authenticity in branding increases perceived product quality, including negatively regarded products (Cinelli & LeBoeuf, 2020). Product authenticity can be described by two terms: indexical authenticity, which is believed to be original, and iconic authenticity, which is faithful to something (Grayson & Martinec, 2004). Luxury products signal a 'one of a kind' symbolic status; the authenticity of luxury products requires clarification, especially in the reselling of second-hand products. Customers conducting online searches for secondhand luxury fashion require rich media that explicitly presents the quality of the product and service delivery, as indicated by this 18-year-old Italian creative arts student:

You don't often get a chance to own a luxury brand. When I look on Instagram I see [images of] products that show them to be in highly good condition despite being second-hand, and the online reviews give me further assurance of the service quality.

This also applies to a 25-year-old French secondhand luxury fashion seller, who emphasised the need to provide clarity about a product's condition to deliver accurate information to customers through UGC:

I run an online business on Instagram buying and reselling luxury products. Being only virtually present[,] forvivid UGC is important, so I can visualise the condition of the product. I can then resend that information to my own customers.

Some customers resist making purchases online and judge the authenticity of promoted products (Audrezet et al., 2018); a 32-year-old British sales assistant emphasised the issue of trust in UGC if there is uncertainty regarding the authenticity of the source and information:

When I buy second-hand online, I worry the product may not be so faithful to the photo or if it is fake. The seller chooses the photo, and if [the] product is destroyed, you won't know.

Arguably, authenticity improves message receptivity, perceived product quality and purchase intentions (Audrezet et al., 2018). Interestingly, however, the data for this study identified the power that the status of luxury brands has on service recovery. The following statement, provided by a 30-year-old Italian MSc Global Business student, highlighted this point:

I don't mind the fact that there may be small defects in luxury brands; in contrast, they give an air of lived-in-ness that I don't mind, so I keep them anyway.

Another participant, an 18-year-old British Marketing University student, similarly stated:

Even if there [are] some imperfections in how the second-hand products were advertised on social media, I keep them anyway because it's a beautiful and special brand.

As mentioned earlier, authenticity can reflect a unique and 'one of a kind' status, even for slightly damaged products (Cinelli & LeBoeuf, 2020). Service failures in the second-hand industry may arise if customers are disappointed about the product they found online; however, the status of a luxury brand and the perceived timeless sustainability of a luxury product can help customers tolerate any unexpected defects in the product or service delivery. Few customers have the opportunity to own luxury brands, and they appreciate the image and quality of the product, despite it not being in its original condition and having had several owners prior to the customer's purchase.

### 4.2 Self-recovery autonomy

Self-recovery autonomy refers to secondhand luxury fashion customers' and sellers' ability to take control of or manage service recovery themselves. Technological advancements have given customers a choice: they can conduct the recovery themselves through self-service technologies or leave the service failure recovery to the seller (Zhu et al., 2013). A 27-year-old French administrator emphasised that while they identified issues with their purchase, they quickly recovered from the service failure through emotional self-recovery:

This disservice was not serious because, knowing that the products are second-hand, I take that into account and don't feel as much distress as others may.

Their expectations of second-hand products undermined the negative response that a customer might have generated and reinforced the impact of brand authenticity on product judgments (Cinelli & LeBoeuf, 2020). However, not all customers will have quick emotional recovery, and some may perceive the severity of the failure to be greater than that of other customers. In addition, customers such as this 20-year-old Italian business student may have a limited capability for self-recovery:

If you cannot fix the issue yourself, you have to try to understand how other sellers know perfectly how to solve the problem.

The decision on whether service recovery strategies are conducted by the firm (Bitner, 1990; Grewal et al., 2008), the customer (Zhu et al., 2013) or jointly (Roggeveen et al., 2012) is likely to depend on the service failure incident and the resources and knowledge the individual has to perform self-recovery. According to a 27-year-old British e-commerce business owner, experience and trust are essential when conducting self-recovery following service failures:

When you are accustomed to searching for and buying secondhand luxury goods, you know the ropes and the potential outcomes. However, for those who don't and do not trust the seller in [the] beginning, they will reach out to anyone to vent out their frustration.

However, self-recovery does not mean that customers rely solely on their own resources. UGC is arguably a resource through which individuals can access information that can help observers make informative decisions (Purnawirawan et al., 2015). The use of UGC to initiate service recovery was suggested by a 23-year-old Italian marketing university student:

I reached out to fellow customers through Messenger and checked out the company's return policies, and I think I improvised well because I managed to solve the failure.

A 26-year-old French MSc Fashion Management student similarly conducted this online activity when acting as a seller:

I had to sell some garments, and there was a problem with the shipping labels ... so I tried to write to Vinted support, but they didn't answer me immediately, so I wrote on an online forum where other sellers ... had the same problem and found advice.

UGC is thus an essential tool for customers and sellers in the secondhand luxury fashion industry because they can extract knowledge from UGC contributors not to simply express dissatisfaction with a service failure but to assist in their service recovery.

# 4.3 Failure-recovery status holder

Failure-recovery status holders align with the understanding of how individuals who are sellers of secondhand luxury fashion are perceived by buying customers, particularly of how they engage in service failure-recovery situations through UGC. According to the service recovery paradox, a customer will hold a company in higher regard after it has corrected a service failure than if there had not been a service failure (Smith & Bolton, 1998). The same principle applies to customers' perceptions of second-hand product sellers. These sellers can build a social media reputation that signals the influence they have in a community and how their community perceives them (Audrezet et al., 2018), including the status of their products and industry expertise, as indicated by a 28-year-old Italian blogger:

A seller, 'Sillabe', has an Instagram account; she has a strong community around her and gives good advice through her account on how to maintain and preserve secondhand garments[,] and even how to adjust them.

The informational support that customers perceive they receive from sellers through online channels can influence their reflections regarding service quality (Tan & Yan, 2020), which can motivate them to continue using the seller's online channels to purchase secondhand luxury goods. This approach can be beneficial if sellers maintain these actions toward their customers during service failure-recovery situations, as it demonstrates commitment to followers in contrast to diverging away from service failures (Thomas & Fowler, 2016) and leaving customers to deal with the consequences, as a 30-year-old British administrator experienced:

One seller was very kind; it gave me the feeling that support was present in the online community. However, another was unresponsive, so I shared on social media for others to know and [to] warn them of this seller.

A lack of perceived support and engagement from sellers is likely to cause customers to respond negatively to any of the sellers' future activities (Audrezet et al., 2018; Rezaei & Valaei, 2017) and reduce their ratings and credibility. If sellers build a reputation for delivering poor service, they can reflect negatively on social media where communication is usually conducted between sellers and customers. A 33-year-old British digital auction manager emphasised such circumstances:

The usage of my channels relies on customers' confidence and positive word of mouth.

If [a] customer comes complaining I try my best to maintain communication so my rating doesn't decrease on social media.

A 34-year-old French fashion website manager faced similar situations when managing second-hand buying-selling collaborations:

As someone who manages online second-hand shops, I have to manage customers and other sellers. Sometimes sellers I mediate with don't respond to customers through their channels, but it reflects bad[ly] on me as the mediator.

UGC enables customers to share information without restrictions; dissatisfied customers are more likely to engage in negative eWOM than in positive eWOM, thus increasing negative sentiments within social media and harming sellers' reputations (Liu et al., 2017). An 18-year-old French marketing student expressed the following experience:

I have seen customers comment negatively about a seller. Someone said, 'If I wanted to try to buy more than one item, you're making it impossible because I don't know how much money I have to put on the card'. This does not look good for online sellers.

The UGC that customers contribute provides sentiment that can indicate how they felt about their experience and provide indirect signals regarding how the seller engaged in service failures and supported their recovery. A lack of emotional and informational support from sellers can ultimately impact their ratings, leading customers to avoid their service channels.

#### 5. Discussion: main consumer clusters

The aim of our study is to enrich the UGC literature in the context of customers dissatisfied with service in the secondhand luxury fashion sector. We introduce three novel consumer clusters (spiritual consumers, *carpe diem* consumers and entrepreneurial recoverer consumers) with an updated construct (see Figure 1) on the basis of (1) our exploration of the relationships between UGC, dissatisfied customers and secondhand luxury fashion; (2) our emergent themes (authenticity redemption, self-recovery autonomy and failure-recovery status holder); and (3) an examination of the participants' expressed comments and the antecedents and consequences of their experiences implied from their statements. The labelling of these consumer groups emerged from their perceived emotional and UGC-related behaviours in online environments, which enabled the researchers to categorise them by core characteristics. In general, the findings demonstrate that UGC plays a critical role in consumers' purchasing and service failure-recovery efforts; some consumers have the dual identity of being a buyer or seller of second-hand products. Consumers of second-hand products share a desire for UGC that exhibits characteristics such as content vividness, supplier and purchasing details, and, above all, product authenticity clarification.

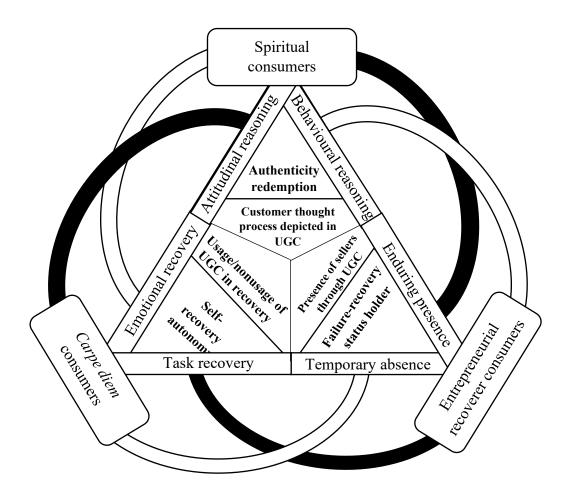


Figure 1: The conceptual framework for spiritual consumers, entrepreneurial recoverer consumers and *carpe diem* consumers. UGC, user-generated content

As the framework for spiritual consumers, entrepreneurial recoverer consumers and *carpe diem* consumers (SEC) in Figure 1 shows, the difference between consumer groups emerges when they exhibit attitudinal or behavioural reasoning, through which their buyer—seller status can be identified. When consumers are dissatisfied, attitudinal or behavioural reasoning causes them to respond differently through UGC; for example, some choose not to react through UGC and recover emotionally, while others apply UGC to facilitate task recovery, such as product returns and compensation, and even their digital self-recovery, through the collective efforts of other customers or sellers. If the consumer seeks recovery through actual tasks, such as

information searching or product returns, they are likely to notice if the seller is absent or present through UGC recovery procedures. In contrast, consumers who have high self-recovery autonomy, indicating emotional readiness and willingness to recover individually, may subsequently seek additional recovery support or offer support to others. The following subsections describe the relationships between the themes and consumer groups and the categorisation of the consumers.

### 5.1. Spiritual consumers

Spiritual consumers hold special regard for luxury fashion products, even if they are second-hand or physically defective or imperfect products. Research is paying increasing attention to consumer spirituality and how it interacts with consumption practices and objects (Higgins & Hamilton, 2019). Luxury fashion products are arguably market offerings that are designed to satisfy customers' desires for meaningful encounters with one's self or high powers, giving customers spiritual fulfilment (Husemann & Eckhardt, 2019). Spiritual fulfilment refers to an individual's need to be part of a greater whole, which in turn influences their actions (Erikson, 1982). Luxury brands are categorised for their heritage and uniqueness; this makes them exceptionally different from more mass market brands, which in turn can cause consumers to authenticate their identity with the characteristics of luxury fashion shown through UGC. Spiritual consumers' purchasing of secondhand luxury fashion is influenced by attitudinal reasoning, which generally refers to the emotional attachment between customers and brands (Böttger et al., 2017) that influences customers' desire for ownership of products that carry the luxury brand. This attitudinal reasoning extends beyond the desire to purchase a secondhand luxury fashion product.

Product defects are among the key categorised service failures (Kelley et al., 1993) and can further intensify if UGC does not accurately depict the product's condition; however, these

consequences can be minor when considering that product defects and imperfections are expected in second-hand retail. Spiritual consumers' emotional states mean that service failure has not occurred unless the severity of the failure exceeds expectations. Spiritual consumers' actions are influenced by the spiritual experience they receive from the product they possess, causing them to act in a way that benefits the brand. Studies support the view that loyal customers' attitudinal reasoning prompts them to overlook failures or defects (Hess Jr et al., 2003; MacInnis & Folkes, 2017). This aligns with the findings of spiritual consumers, who self-recover emotionally without the influence of the seller's or other customers' UGC, as their desire for a luxury fashion product exceeds the perception that service recovery procedures are necessary. Thus, the presence of sellers through UGC is unnecessary other than keeping spiritual consumers informed of product offers and delivery procedures. However, if spiritual consumers are acting as sellers of secondhand luxury fashion, then they are likely to be committed to signaling the quality and authenticity of the products; they will ensure that the customer views the luxury products the way they do, thus emphasising advocating the brand rather than their status as a seller during service failure and recovery situations.

### 5.2 Carpe diem consumers

Carpe diem consumers to enter online platforms and engage in UGC seeking opportunities to conduct activities themselves throughout online encounters. First, they examine UGC to obtain the opportunity to find an authentic secondhand luxury product for attitudinal reasons, similar to those of spiritual consumers. However, if service failures occur, carpe diem consumers will also take the opportunity to pursue recovery procedures, even if UGC is used to recover. If, however, the resulting purchase was not satisfying, carpe diem consumers may be prompted to solve the disservice within a short time frame or in the moments following soon after they encounter service failures, further continuing their 'living in the present' actions.

In terms of self-recovery autonomy, this group exercised their control by using UGC to avoid or recover from service failures. Service failures considered serious enough to act upon may include product defects not previously mentioned and delivery delays or losses. These sorts of issues can be revealed by other customers' UGC, which warns potential customers about suppliers (Schlosser, 2011), ensuring that opportunistic purchases they make have a value that exceeds any potential losses. UGC can also assure carpe diem consumers of the successful outcomes of a purchase, thus enabling them to recover emotionally themselves; however, if they are dissatisfied with the end result, task recovery in reference to informational support, including factors such as product return procedures and compensation embedded in UGC (Sharma & Khadka, 2019), as well as emotional support, is likely needed for emotional recovery to occur. The need for such information means that carpe diem consumers are likely to notice the absence of sellers during failure recovery procedures and may judge the sellers' failure-recovery status based on their length of absence following a reported failure. Carpe diem consumers consider additional characteristics such as type and speed of recovery and the seller's willingness to assist customers. As *carpe diem* consumers are willing to find solutions, they may temporarily leave UGC activity to conduct necessary offline service recovery procedures and may return to find any updates that could assist them.

# 5.3 Entrepreneurial Recoverer consumers

Customers who purchase secondhand luxury products are not always the end-customer but rather one of several owners until the product has an affirmative owner (Turunen et al., 2020). The admiration and respect sought by many luxury consumers provide an entrepreneurial opportunity for individuals to create and manage status consumption that is no longer limited to first-hand markets (Dion & Borraz, 2017). Entrepreneurial recoverers are consumers driven by entrepreneurial motivations acting as sellers or buyers and resellers of secondhand luxury fashion goods; they strive to overcome any service failures that may disrupt their transactions.

Like previous consumer groups, entrepreneurial recoverers may have an attitudinal preference toward brands from the luxury sector. When selling items, they utilise UGC as an advertising method to make use of rich media features in an effort to appeal to customers. If they are conducting a fully online business, they can extend the usage of UGC to search for products that nonentrepreneurial customers are selling and practice behavioural purchasing reasoning—a type of purchasing where individuals do not buy with a specific brand preference in mind (Gorlier & Michel, 2020). They conduct behavioural purchases due to the variation of brands in the secondhand luxury sector and because they must achieve initial investment returns. Thus, they are more critical about the indicated product authenticity information embedded in the UGC they observe and post in online environments.

Since entrepreneurial recoverers deal with brands renowned for their symbolic status, they must maintain a perceived high-quality and trustworthy status in their management of products and issues that customers encounter. Part of this status includes social presence in online activity (Rodríguez-Ardura & Meseguer-Artola, 2018), including UGC at all purchasing and service failure and recovery stages. An absence of such a presence, as well as insufficient service delivery, can result in a negative online status generated by customers who may judge the authenticity of the promoter's online messages (Estreder et al., 2023). Thus, their failure-recovery status is just as important to buyers as their authentic luxury entrepreneurial activities are. In addition, entrepreneurial recoverers face pressure to have high self-recovery autonomy. Problem-solving skills are essential to entrepreneurial activities (Sarasvathy & Venkataraman, 2011), especially if customer complaints arise through social media that could damage the seller's online reputation. Entrepreneurial recoverers' usage of UGC can become a recovery-related activity to provide information to support customers' emotional recovery and the task recovery of failures while offline recovery activities are conducted. It is important to note that the level of responsibility that entrepreneurial recoverers are assigned is subjective, as some

customers may perceive some service failures to be beyond the seller's control (Klein & Dawar, 2004) and may share a level of responsibility if the seller's terms and conditions justify it.

## 6. Conclusion

This study contributes to the understanding of purchasing and service failure-recovery behaviour in the secondhand luxury fashion goods industry by examining the role of branded products' luxury status and the crucial impact of UGC as an important antecedent in consumers' responses to service failure and recovery. Three consumer groups were identified in this study: spiritual consumers, *carpe diem* consumers and entrepreneurial recoverer consumers. Each consumer group engages in the usage of UGC, particularly in product searching and community connectedness. However, consumers differ in their level of integration of UGC into service failure and recovery circumstances; consumers' perceptions of secondhand luxury fashion products and their roles in the industry's collaborative business model influence the level of UGC integration they practice, as presented in this study.

This study suggested that the perceptions of consumers seeking secondhand luxury fashion products differ from those who purchase new or never previously owned luxury fashion products. Secondhand luxury products are likely to have had several temporary owners before settling with a permanent owner (Turunen et al., 2020), which creates a perception of timeless sustainability, thus ensuring that the brand's image and value are retained. These attributes attract spiritual and *carpe diem* consumers, who represent profitability potential to entrepreneurial recoverer consumers who engage in business opportunities around the unique selling points of secondhand luxury products. Interestingly, these attributes play an important role in reducing perceived service failures in this industry. The second-hand status of products and the visual constraints caused by UGC may influence consumers to anticipate possible product defects. However, the exclusivity and uniqueness of secondhand luxury products can

prompt consumers to overlook these issues, which can contribute to perceived service failures, particularly product defects (Kelley et al., 1993), in the firsthand mass market fashion and luxury fashion industries. An opportunity to obtain a luxury product within a desired economic budget is rare for many consumers. Luxury fashion products are designed to give consumers meaning and fulfilment (Husemann & Eckhardt, 2019) and enhance individuals' self-categorisation. Thus, when consumers desire to acquire a luxury branded product, which is made more accessible through second-hand distribution and UGC activity, they are more willing to accept or tolerate any defects in the product or service delivery through UGC, which is mediated by their attitude toward the brand (MacInnis & Folkes, 2017). This reduces the likelihood of consumers pursuing service recovery procedures, such as product returns, compensation and sharing of service failure through UGC, instead of pursuing mental self-recovery.

The profile of some secondhand luxury fashion consumers that has emerged from the data of this study identifies a dual identity in which individual consumers can take on the role of being buyers and sellers through UGC. Our findings show that consumer attitudes toward UGC as a service failure and recovery tool increase the perceived critical need for UGC when consumers adopt a buyer–seller role, which is made possible by the collaborative business model emphasised within the online secondhand luxury goods industry. The act of showcasing luxury products through UGC and ensuring successful marketing and distribution arguably causes consumers to exercise more caution over the transaction to reduce service and quality delivery failures and recovery time and costs. However, there is no universal approach to how UGC activity and service failure and recovery are managed by buyer–seller consumers. Buyer–sellers do not engage in the same collaborative or collective community behaviour as each other, which may be altered if they desire to conduct business as buyer–sellers in the long term or temporarily.

The proposed SEC framework illustrates how the emerging themes interconnect with the identified consumers, revealing significant consumer actions and attitudes found in the secondhand luxury goods sector that influence the usage of UGC and its integration into service failure and recovery efforts. It is important to note that the framework does not take into account specific service failures and recovery procedures but rather provides key characteristics that may influence consumers' attitudes toward UGC under service failure and recovery situations and what actions they may conduct. In addition, although the framework was developed based on data from secondhand luxury goods customers, from an academic perspective, it opens up an opportunity for empirical testing of the framework in other industries. As mentioned earlier, there is a strong distinction between secondhand luxury fashion goods and mass market secondhand fashion goods; thus, future research could compare or contrast the impact of UGC on service failure and recovery efforts in secondhand industries that harbor potentially different consumer behaviors and brand product attributes. Furthermore, the study does not distinguish between consumer sellers and buyers who are independent private sellers, company-recruited sellers, or sellers who rely on a mediating supplier. Sellers who are self-employed or company recruited may be subject to different selling regulations and have access to resources that may be self-obtained or provided by networked suppliers. This may influence their individual online behaviour, altering their responses and ability to perform recovery procedures through UGC. Thus, future research could assess the different behaviours of second-hand sellers from different redistribution channel pathways, incorporating the effects of brand authenticity on customer dissatisfaction.

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