


The *Cinderella* moment: Exploring consumers' motivations to engage with renting as collaborative luxury consumption mode

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Abstract

Past literature argued that the purchase of luxury goods is driven by people's motivation to conform or fit into our economic and social system. In this study, the authors focus on a new aspect of consumption, that is, renting instead of purchasing luxury goods, backed by the emerging opportunities of sharing economy platforms. Drawing upon the analysis of spontaneous consumers' online communications (in the form of tweets), this study aims to investigate the motivations to engage with luxury garment renting within a collaborative consumption context. To this end, a series of automatic content analyses, via two studies, were conducted using the tweets posted with respect to the *Run the Runway* collaborative consumption platform. Results demonstrate consumers' increased willingness to show their social status through renting rather than owning luxurious apparel based on five main motivators (need to wear new clothes for a special event, inspirations created by the products/brands, possibility to explore a new way of consuming luxury goods, need to make more sustainable choices, and to increase the life cycle of each luxury product). The implications of these findings are discussed, while they pave the way for future research in collaborative consumption of luxury retailing.

KEYWORDS

collaborative consumption, consumer behavior, luxury retailing, sharing economy, status consumption, textual data, Twitter

1 | INTRODUCTION

1.1 | We can't always afford our clothes, but are always expected to look the part

This is a tweet dated November 15, 2018, indicating the importance of sharing and collaborative consumption (SCC) services for an American woman who cannot afford to cover her needs in professional clothing via purchasing. This kind of service offers an alternative to traditional apparel purchasing and ownership—acquisition and consumption of clothing in services marketing terminology—for delivering the core proposition. This is an increasing worldwide trend. For instance, Reuters (2018) predicted a global online clothing rental

marketing increase of 10% by the end of 2023, while North America dominates the overall market and is expected to achieve a yearly growth rate of 3.7%, followed by Asia Pacific and then the other regional markets. Thus, instead of spending money to own things—in this case apparel—consumers may access goods for a limited time and pay for the experience of temporarily accessing their favorite goods through sharing platforms. As a result, the same garment would be worn or “shared” many times during its lifetime by many different consumers, producing important social and environmental implications for the human and wider ecosystems. This sharing process may positively contribute to counterbalancing the huge consequences emerging from fast fashion and related mass marketing activities.