Tạp chí Khoa học và Công nghệ Trường Đại học Công nghệ Đông Á

Luxury secondhand fashion in Vietnam: Market development, consumer motivations and barriers

Hoàng Thị Hương Giang
Khoa Quản trị kinh doanh, Trường Đại học Công nghệ Đông Á
Email: gianghth@eaut.edu.vn

Abstract

The global luxury secondhand market is expanding rapidly, yet most research has focused on Western markets with formal resale platforms and institutional trust. Limited attention has been given to emerging economies where luxury resale often occurs through social commerce. This study examines Vietnam's luxury secondhand fashion market and explores consumer motivations, perceived risks, trust, and social commerce. Using a desk review methodology, the study synthesizes academic literature and industry reports and analyses them through thematic content analysis. The review indicates that affordability, status signalling, and aspirations for upward mobility are the main motivations for luxury secondhand consumption in Vietnam. Uniqueness and rarity also influence purchase decisions, while sustainability appears less important. Key barriers include authenticity concerns, financial risk, and weak institutional protection. The study further finds that the Vietnamese market relies more on relational trust than institutional trust. Social media, online communities, seller reputation, and peer recommendations help reduce uncertainty and facilitate transactions. These findings extend luxury resale research beyond Western contexts and highlight the importance of social commerce and trust in emerging markets.

Keywords: luxury secondhand fashion; luxury resale; social commerce; emerging markets; Vietnam.

1. Introduction

The Resale Report published by Boston Consulting Group (2025) indicates that the secondhand market is expanding approximately three times faster than the primary market with a 10% annual growth rate [1]. Currently representing approximately 8% of the global fashion and luxury market (USD 220 billion), the secondhand sector is projected to reach 10% by 2030, equivalent to approximately USD 360 billion. Despite the growing importance of luxury resale, three important gaps remain in the literature. First, existing studies have largely examined luxury resale within Western markets characterized by professional platforms and

institutional trust mechanisms, providing limited understanding of emerging markets where transactions are increasingly mediated through informal and socially embedded channels. Second, although previous studies have identified various motivations for luxury secondhand consumption, the relative importance of economic, social, emotional, and sustainability values remains unclear in emerging economies with different cultural and institutional conditions [2; 3]. Third, limited research has investigated how trust is constructed within social commerce environments where formal authentication systems are weak and interpersonal relationships become central to market exchanges.

Vietnam provides a particularly relevant setting for addressing these gaps. Rapid economic growth, an expanding middle class, increasing aspirations toward luxury consumption, and widespread adoption of social media have facilitated the emergence of a dynamic luxury resale market. Unlike Western markets, luxury resale transactions in Vietnam frequently occur through Facebook groups, livestream commerce, and peer-to-peer interactions, where trust is often established through reputation, community recommendations, and repeated social exchanges.

Accordingly, this study synthesises existing literature and market evidence to examine the development of Vietnam's luxury secondhand market and to explore the roles of consumption values, perceived risks, and trust mechanisms in shaping luxury resale behaviour. The study contributes to the literature in three ways. First, it extends luxury resale research beyond Western platform-based contexts by examining an emerging market setting. Second, it highlights the importance of relational trust as an alternative mechanism to institutional trust in facilitating luxury resale transactions. Third, it integrates consumption value, perceived risk, and social commerce perspectives to provide a more comprehensive understanding of luxury secondhand consumption.

2. Research Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study adopts a desk review approach to synthesise existing academic literature and market evidence relating to luxury secondhand fashion consumption. A literature review methodology is appropriate because research on luxury resale in emerging markets remains fragmented across multiple disciplines, including consumer behaviour, luxury marketing,

sustainability, trust, and social commerce. The objective of the study is not to test causal relationships empirically but to integrate existing knowledge and examine its applicability within the Vietnamese context.

The study integrates academic literature with industry reports to provide both theoretical and contextual insights. While academic studies contribute to understanding consumer motivations, perceived risks, and trust mechanisms, industry reports provide recent evidence regarding market development and consumption trends in Vietnam.

2.2 Literature Search Strategy

Relevant studies were retrieved through Google Scholar, Scopus, ScienceDirect, etc. The search was conducted by using combinations of the following keywords: "luxury secondhand fashion", "luxury resale", "pre-owned luxury", "consumer motivations", "perceived value", "perceived risk", "trust", "authenticity", "social commerce", and "Vietnam". Industry reports and selected market intelligence providers were also reviewed to capture recent market developments.

Studies were included if they examined luxury secondhand or luxury resale consumption; investigated consumer motivations, perceived risks, trust, or social commerce; focused on luxury fashion markets or emerging economies. Studies examining general secondhand products without relevance to luxury consumption were excluded.

2.3 Data Analysis and Synthesis

The selected literature was analysed using thematic content analysis. Following repeated reading of the identified studies, findings were coded into four major themes:

(1) market development;

(2) consumer motivations;

(3) perceived risks and barriers;

(4) trust and social commerce.

The reviewed literature was subsequently interpreted within the Vietnamese context.

3. Literature Review

3.1 Luxury Secondhand Fashion

Luxury secondhand fashion refers to previously owned luxury products resold outside official brand channels [2]. Unlike conventional secondhand goods, luxury resale combines functional value with symbolic meanings such as prestige, exclusivity, and brand heritage.

The growth of digital resale platforms has expanded access to pre-owned luxury products through authentication services and standardized transaction processes, reducing uncertainty and increasing consumer confidence [2]. Consumers purchase secondhand luxury not only for economic benefits but also for social recognition, identity expression, and access to aspirational brands [4].

Luxury secondhand products differ from vintage fashion, which is primarily associated with rarity and nostalgia. In contrast, luxury resale emphasises accessibility to prestigious brands and symbolic consumption [3]. Existing studies, however, have mainly focused on Western markets with established resale platforms, leaving limited understanding of emerging market contexts.

3.2 Consumption Value Theory and Consumer Motivations

Consumption Value Theory suggests that consumer decisions are influenced by functional, social, emotional, epistemic, and conditional values [5]. This framework is particularly relevant to luxury resale because it captures both utilitarian and symbolic motivations. Luxury products often retain their quality and durability over time, allowing consumers to access prestigious brands at lower prices while maintaining product performance. These characteristics generate both economic and functional benefits [4; 6; 7].

Social value reflects the ability of luxury products to communicate status and identity. Conspicuous consumption, defined as the use of products to communicate status aspirations to others, often leads status-oriented consumers to purchase luxury items with visible brand cues to demonstrate wealth and purchasing power. Consumers frequently use luxury brands to express prestige and social belonging, making secondhand luxury an affordable means of obtaining symbolic benefits [7].

Emotional and epistemic values arise from enjoyment, curiosity, and the search for unique or discontinued products. The experience of discovering rare items can generate excitement and personal satisfaction [6]. When consumers encounter limited or iconic items that are no longer available in the primary market, they often experience positive emotions, which supports their desire for uniqueness and differentiation. This process strengthens emotional attachment and deepens the perceived value of such possessions [6; 7].

Conditional value is associated with situational factors such as sustainability concerns and circular consumption. Conditional value in secondhand consumption reflects the intention to avoid mainstream purchasing channels while supporting ethical and environmental objectives, such as resource recycling, waste reduction, and the rejection of excessive display. However, environmental motivations often coexist with economic and social motives rather than acting as primary drivers [7].

3.3 Perceived Risk in Luxury Resale

Despite its benefits, luxury resale involves considerable uncertainty. Perceived risk theory suggests that consumers evaluate potential losses before making purchasing decisions [8].

Financial risk is a major concern for consumers in the luxury resale market. This includes the fear of overpaying for a product that may not retain its value or may be difficult to resell in the future [9]. Performance risk involves concerns regarding product condition, quality, and durability. This risk is particularly pertinent in the luxury market, where the assurance of quality and authenticity is paramount [9]. These concerns become more significant in online transactions where physical inspection is limited. Social risk refers to concerns about negative social evaluation, particularly when secondhand ownership may affect status perceptions [10]. Authenticity risk refers to concerns about counterfeit products and product legitimacy [9]. These risks highlight the importance of mechanisms that reduce uncertainty and support consumer confidence.

3.4 Trust and Authenticity in Luxury Resale

Trust plays a critical role in luxury resale because consumers often lack complete information about product authenticity, quality, and seller credibility. Previous studies show

that trust in sellers, platforms, and authentication systems positively influences purchase intention [6].

Professional resale platforms build institutional trust through authentication services, quality inspections, and consumer protection policies [11]. Authenticity is particularly important because counterfeit products diminish the symbolic and economic value of luxury brands.

Trust can be institutional, based on formal systems and regulations, or relational, based on interpersonal relationships and reputation. While existing studies mainly emphasise institutional trust, relational trust may be more relevant in markets where formal authentication systems are limited.

3.5 Social Commerce and Relational Trust

In the past, pre-owned items were mainly purchased in physical stores which were locally limited. The international establishment of peer-to-peer offers has changed resale market significantly and opened opportunity for more third-party providers in the luxury resale sector [12]. Professional platforms, such as Vestiaire Collective and The RealReal, have institutionalised authentication procedures, thereby formalising trust mechanisms within resale transactions. These platforms reduce uncertainty by embedding expert verification and standardised return policies into their business models. However, the dominance of such institutionalised structures in existing research risks overgeneralising Western platform-based trust models and underestimating alternative market configurations, particularly in emerging economies where informal social commerce may play a more central role.

Social commerce integrates social media technologies with commercial activities, enabling consumers to interact with sellers and other users during the purchasing process [13]. User-generated content, online reviews, recommendations, and virtual communities can reduce uncertainty and influence consumer decision-making by facilitating information exchange and social support [14].

Livestream commerce further strengthens these interactions by allowing real-time communication, product demonstrations, and immediate responses to consumer inquiries.

Such interactive environments enhance transparency and foster trust between buyers and sellers [15].

Compared with professional resale platforms, social commerce relies more heavily on relational trust, including reputation, peer recommendations, and community engagement, rather than formal verification mechanisms [13]. Social interactions and electronic word-of-mouth therefore become important sources of trust in online transactions [14]. Understanding these trust dynamics is particularly important for explaining luxury resale behaviour in emerging markets, where informal transactions and social media-based exchanges often coexist with limited institutional authentication systems.

Overall, the literature indicates that luxury secondhand consumption is shaped by consumption values, perceived risks, and trust mechanisms. However, existing research remains largely focused on Western platform-based markets, highlighting the need to examine these factors in emerging market contexts.

4. Discussion

4.1 Market Development and Luxury Consumption in Vietnam

The growth of Vietnam's luxury secondhand market reflects broader socioeconomic transformations that have intensified status consumption and aspirational purchasing behaviour. The expansion of the middle class and increasing exposure to global luxury culture have strengthened the symbolic value associated with luxury ownership, thereby increasing demand for accessible forms of prestige consumption. Unlike Western markets, where resale is supported by established platforms and formal authentication systems, the Vietnamese market remains fragmented and strongly influenced by social commerce.

Luxury secondhand consumption in Vietnam is increasingly associated with aspirational consumption rather than financial necessity. Existing evidence suggests that younger consumers increasingly use resale channels to access prestigious brands, express social status, and achieve upward mobility. This observation suggests that symbolic and status-related motivations may be particularly important in emerging markets.

4.2 Relational Trust in Social Commerce

Existing studies emphasise institutional trust created through authentication services, return policies, and platform guarantees. In Vietnam, however, trust appears to be predominantly relational. Luxury resale transactions commonly occur through Facebook groups, livestream selling, and peer-to-peer networks. Consumers rely on seller reputation, customer reviews, recommendations, and repeated interactions to reduce uncertainty. Trust may therefore develop through social relationships rather than formal institutions. The literature synthesis extends previous research by showing that relational trust can substitute for institutional trust in emerging markets. It also highlights the importance of social commerce in shaping luxury resale behaviour.

4.3 Consumer Motivations and Cultural Influences

The reviewed literature is broadly consistent with Consumption Value Theory, as consumers seek functional, social, and emotional benefits from luxury resale. Affordable access to luxury brands provides functional value, while the reviewed evidence suggests that social value may be particularly important in Vietnam.

Vietnamese consumers generally place considerable importance on social relationships, public image, and social recognition. Consistent with collectivist cultural orientations, individuals in many Asian societies tend to place greater emphasis on social harmony, group affiliation, and the maintenance of social status [16]. In addition, the concept of face consciousness suggests that consumers are motivated to maintain a favourable social image and gain recognition from others through visible consumption practices [17]. Consequently, luxury products frequently function as symbols of success, social mobility, and personal achievement, allowing consumers to communicate status and identity within their social networks [18; 19]. In this context, secondhand luxury products provide consumers with access to these symbolic and social benefits at a lower financial cost while enabling them to maintain desirable social identities.

This cultural orientation may explain why social value and status-related motivations appear stronger than sustainability concerns in the Vietnamese context. Previous studies have shown that status consumption and conspicuous consumption are particularly influential in emerging Asian markets, where luxury goods often serve as indicators of social achievement

and upward mobility [17; 20]. The reviewed evidence therefore suggests that luxury resale in emerging markets may be better understood as aspirational and status-oriented consumption rather than primarily as environmentally motivated behaviour.

Consumers also value uniqueness and rarity. Limited editions and discontinued products allow individuals to differentiate themselves and strengthen their social identity.

4.4 Barriers and Managerial Implications

Authenticity concerns remain the main barrier to luxury resale in Vietnam. Counterfeit products increase perceived risk and reduce consumer confidence. In addition, some consumers, particularly older generations, continue to associate secondhand products with lower social status or financial constraints. Some consumers may perceive pre-owned products as carrying undesirable symbolic meanings associated with previous owners, creating psychological barriers to secondhand consumption.

The lack of standardized authentication services and consumer protection mechanisms further limits market development. These conditions increase dependence on interpersonal trust but also constrain market legitimacy.

Several managerial implications emerge from these findings. First, resale businesses should invest in authentication services, product verification, and transparent quality information to reduce perceived risk. Second, firms should leverage social commerce channels, including Facebook, livestreaming, and online communities, to build trust and customer engagement. Third, marketing strategies should emphasise status, exclusivity, and product uniqueness, which appear more influential than sustainability messages in the Vietnamese context. Finally, collaboration between resale businesses, luxury brands, and digital platforms could improve market credibility and support the long-term development of Vietnam’s luxury secondhand market.

4.5 Theoretical Contributions

This study contributes to luxury resale literature in three ways.

First, it extends existing luxury resale research beyond Western platform-based contexts by examining an emerging market characterised by informal transactions and social commerce.

Second, the study demonstrates that relational trust may substitute for institutional trust in facilitating luxury resale transactions. While previous studies have emphasised authentication systems and platform guarantees, the Vietnamese context illustrates the importance of seller reputation, peer recommendations, and community engagement.

Third, the study integrates Consumption Value Theory, perceived risk theory, and social commerce literature to provide a more comprehensive explanation of luxury secondhand consumption in emerging markets. The reviewed evidence suggests that consumer behaviour in luxury resale is shaped by the interaction of motivations, risks, and trust mechanisms rather than by individual factors in isolation.

5. Conclusion

Overall, this study achieved its objectives by examining the development of Vietnam's luxury secondhand market, identifying major consumer motivations and barriers, and demonstrating the importance of relational trust and social commerce in shaping luxury resale behaviour. Several limitations should be acknowledged. The study relies primarily on secondary data and existing literature rather than primary empirical evidence. Consequently, the conclusions should be interpreted as conceptual and contextual insights rather than direct empirical findings. Future research should empirically examine the relationships among consumption values, perceived risks, relational trust, and purchase intentions using quantitative or mixed-method approaches. Comparative studies across Asian markets may further refine theoretical understanding of luxury resale in emerging economies.

Reference:

1. Boston Consulting Group, 2025. Resale's Next Chapter: How Fashion and Luxury Brands Can Win in the Secondhand Market. Available at: https://www.bcg.com/publications/2025/how-fashion-luxury-brands-can-win-secondhand-market.
2. Turunen et al., 2020. Selling second-hand luxury: Empowerment and enactment of social roles. *Journal of Business Research*. Volume 116. Pages 474-481.

3. Cervellon, M. C., Carey, L. and Harms, T., 2012. Something old, something used: Determinants of women's purchase of vintage fashion vs second-hand fashion. *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management.* 40 (12). Pages 956–974.
4. Rathi et al., 2023. Exploring young consumer's adoption of secondhand luxury: insights from a qualitative study. *Emerald Publishing*. Volume 28 Issue 1 Pages 117 – 138.
5. Sheth, J. N., Newman, B. I., & Gross, B. L., 1991. Why we buy what we buy: A theory of consumption values. *Journal of Business Research. 22*(2). 159–170.
6. Lou et al., 2022. How Do Perceived Value and Risk Affect Purchase Intention toward Second-Hand Luxury Goods? An Empirical Study of U.S. Consumers. *MDPI.* 14 (18). 11730.
7. Aycock et al., 2023. "I like to buy pre-owned luxury fashion products": Understanding online second-hand luxury fashion shopping motivations and perceived value of young adult consumers. *Routledge*. Volume 14. Issue 3. Page 327 – 349.
8. Bauer, R. A., 1960. Consumer behavior as risk taking. In R. S. Hancock (Ed.), *Dynamic marketing for a changing world* (pp. 389–398). American Marketing Association.
9. Xu & Sutunyarak, 2024. Factors that influence consumers' inclination to acquire counterfeit luxury goods. *EnPress Publisher, LLC*. Volume 8. Issue 7. Article number 6144.
10. Prabhakar et al., 2025. Investigating the Impact of Perceived Risk on Consumers' Luxury Fashion Counterfeit Purchase Behaviour: Insights from an Emerging Economy. SCMS Group of Educational Institutions. Volume 22. Issue 2. 140 -151.
11. Pidada et al., 2025. Delve Into Bandwagon Effect on Second-Hand Luxury Products: Unveiling the Purchase Intention's Motivation. *IGI Global*. Volume 16 Issue 1. 1-18.
12. Schuck et al., 2025. Second-Hand Luxury Fashion. A book chapter of Costin & Barnes 2025 Fashion Marketing: The Contemporary Marketing Mix. *Springer Science+Business Media*.
13. Hajli, N., 2015. Social commerce constructs and consumer's intention to buy. *International Journal of Information Management*. 35(2). 183–191.
14. Kim, S., & Park, H., 2013. Effects of various characteristics of social commerce on consumers' trust and trust performance. *International Journal of Information Management.* 33(2). 318–332.
15. Wongkitrungrueng, A., & Assarut, N., 2020. The role of live streaming in building consumer trust and engagement with social commerce sellers. *Journal of Business Research.* 117. 543–556.
16. Hofstede, G., 2001. Culture's consequences: Comparing values, behaviors, institutions and organizations across nations (2nd ed.). Sage.
17. Wong, N. Y., & Ahuvia, A. C., 1998. Personal taste and family face: Luxury consumption in Confucian and Western societies. *Psychology & Marketing*. 15(5). 423–441.
18. Eastman, J. K., Goldsmith, R. E., & Flynn, L. R., 1999. Status consumption in consumer behavior: Scale development and validation. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice.* 7(3). 41–52.

19. Vigneron, F., & Johnson, L. W., 2004. Measuring perceptions of brand luxury. *Journal of Brand Management.* 11(6). 484–506.
20. Wiedmann, K. P., Hennigs, N., & Siebels, A., 2009. Value-based segmentation of luxury consumption behavior. Psychology & Marketing. 26(7). 625–651.