

Understanding Chinese Buying Behavior in Purchase Intention towards Luxury Goods in China under the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to understand Chinese purchase intention towards luxury products under COVID-19. This research explores the factors that Chinese purchase intention by using secondary data analysis, and an archival study approach. This study has been using five frameworks from previous studies to create a new conceptual framework. The results provided factors that impact Chinese purchase intention towards luxury products under COVID-19. The research found that social influence, physical vanity, and luxury brand perceptions are the factors that affect purchase intention. This study has limitations because behavioral intentions may change after the COVID-19 pandemic is over. This survey is conducted in China, and whether the consumers lived in different cities had a large significant effect on their buying behavior. This study is about the important influencing variables that affect the Chinese's purchase intention towards luxury products during under pandemic.

Keywords - COVID-19, social influence, physical vanity, brand perception, risk perception, purchase intention

JEL Classification code: D30, D40, D41, D42, D43, M30, M37

1. Introduction

Coronavirus disease (the COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. It is first introduced from the city of China, Wuhan in December 2019. The World Health Organization announced that COVID-19 to be a pandemic on March 11, 2020 (World Health Organization, 2020). According to WHO (World Health Organization), the COVID-19 pandemic has caused unprecedented human health and economic consequences. As the pandemic spreads, more countries are closing their borders to effectively control the transmission of the virus. China is the first country that acted to lock down the whole country, closing restaurants, and almost all the business. Many communities in China have applied what is known as "closed management." In most areas where this was applied, villages, communities, and units would only maintain one entrance and exit open, and each household is only given permission a certain number of entrances and exits (Chinanews, 2020). The pandemic had a significant impact on a large number of economies, causing significant delays in business recovery and damage to the production network (Song et al., 2021b). All business has been shut down especially in discretionary business and luxury business is one of the biggest discretionary businesses. In research from Statista (2021), as shown in a recent global study, the watches and jewelry demand experienced the greatest decline in 2020, shrinking by a quarter particularly in comparison to its size in 2019. The pandemic constantly disrupted globally and hindered companies' plans, Gucci additionally called off its display in May that was going to be hosted in California in 2021 (Kanwal, 2021).

The Chinese market is considered one of the biggest markets for luxury products. Luxury products are non-essential items that are highly desired and associated with wealthy or affluent individuals. They are purchased for reasons such as bolstering self-esteem and status, or for the quality and craftsmanship of the

product. A luxury product (or upmarket goods) is products/items/goods for which demand increases more than proportionally as income rises, resulting in a greater proportion of total spending on the good. In contrast to necessities, the demand for luxury items grows at a slower rate than income. In Chinese economics, luxury goods are frequently used synonymously with superior products/goods. Luxury products and brands, while walking through China's shopping malls and airports, Chinese individuals can find a variety of luxury brand stores. There are several varieties that people absolutely adore. There are some of the most prominent luxury brands and products identified by this study. *Burberry* is a British luxury fashion brand that sells clothing and accessories, most notably its iconic trench coat. *Cartier*; this luxury brand sells primarily timepieces and jewelry. *Chanel*; this high-end fashion house sells apparel, handbags, perfume, and cosmetics. *Fendi*; this company was founded in Italy and started out selling leather and fur products, now its line also includes watches, eyeglasses, and fragrances. *Gucci*; sells Italian clothing and leather goods. *Hennessy*; is a French distillery that started in the 18th century. It is the world's largest producer of Cognac. *Hermès*; this brand sells clothing, jewelry, and leather goods, particularly handbags and luggage. *Moët & Chandon*; this French winery produces more champagne than any winery in the world and is famous for *Domaine Chandon* and *Dom Perignon*. *Rolex*; this company sells high-quality watches. It is the biggest seller of luxury watches in the world. *Louis Vuitton*; sells clothing, handbags, jewelry, shoes, and watches. The luxury sectors are contained luxury products and luxury experiences. Therefore, the dimensions of luxury products are divided into soft luxury products and hard luxury products, which are the main class of the individual luxury products sector. Timepieces and jewelry are examples of hard luxury products. Soft luxury products, on the other hand, such as fashion and apparel (Ing Phang et al., 2021). In the next 5 - 7 years, China is predicted to overtake the United States as the world's largest luxury market, as the country's sustained economic expansion continues to offer people both the desire and the resources to indulge. For example, China had 670,000 millionaire families in 2009, with only the United States and Japan having more (THE BOSTON CONSULTING GROUP, 2020). Due to the lockdown, it is predicted that sales in luxury declined. Consumers from abroad are not able to make purchases in China. However, on the other hand, the Chinese spending more money within China, pouring back funding to the Chinese market. The money Chinese people cannot spend overseas; they spent on Luxury products in China. According to the report from TMALL LUXURY (2020), the luxury goods market in mainland China began to rise in April 2020 and is expected to grow by 48 percent in 2020, totaling nearly RMB 346 billion. Nearly all of the world's first-class luxury brands have developed their business in China since it is considered one of the world's most promising and growing luxury markets. The Chinese market is recognized as the most attractive market for global luxury goods businesses, with the highest growth rate (Liang et al., 2017). In 2020, the COVID-19 showed a huge impact on the luxury industry. The global luxury market including both luxury goods and experiences, decreased significantly by 20% to 22%, down to around €1 trillion level in 2015. However, according to Cheng (2022), Chinese consumers are spending more on luxury products at home, even if they cannot readily travel overseas owing to pandemic-related restrictions (D'Arpizio et al., 2021). One of the main reasons is offshore duty-free shops in HAINAN. New government regulations have reduced taxes and adopted other measures that are friendly to business by transforming the region into a duty-free port and a global trading spot. This study determined the pandemic's impact on Chinese people by analyzing the factors that could determine Chinese people's buying intention.

The outbreak of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has been declared a global emergency. The coronavirus infection is especially associated with a high mortality rate in individuals with heart diseases, diabetes, and cancers and the elderly. The whole event is challenging how societies and individuals deal with risk. Today under the COVID-19 pandemic, luxury brand buyers are feeling a great deal of risk and insecurity because of a significant hit to their financial security and health concern. Risk perception is people's subjective assessment of the possibility of a negative event occurring, such as fraud, accident, disease, illness, infection, natural disaster, and death (KANWAL, 2021). KANWAL (2021) also added that luxury companies or business marketers cannot ignore the psychology or mindset changing of luxury. The research is to understand Chinese buying behavior towards luxury goods under pandemic of the COVID-19 by analyzing the data collected. It aims:

(1) to find out the impact of the COVID-19 on risk perception towards luxury goods in China in the COVID-19.

(2) to explain the impact of risk perception on attitude toward luxury goods in China in the COVID-19.

(3) to describe the impact of physical vanity on luxury brand perception towards luxury goods in China in the COVID-19.

(4) to research the impact of attitude on purchase intention towards luxury goods in China in the COVID-19.

(5) to enlighten the impact of social influence and purchase intention towards luxury goods in China in the COVID-19.

(6) to explicate the impact of luxury brand perception on purchase intention towards luxury goods in China in the COVID-19.

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

2.1 COVID-19, Risk Perception and Purchase Intention

The outbreak of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has been declared a global emergency. The coronavirus infection is especially associated with a high mortality rate in individuals with heart diseases, diabetes, and cancers and the elderly. The whole event is challenging how societies and individuals deal with risk. Today under the COVID-19 pandemic, luxury brand buyers are feeling a great deal of risk and insecurity as a result of a significant hit to their financial security and health concern. Risk perception is people's subjective assessment of the possibility of a negative event occurring, such as scam, accident, disease, illness, infection, natural disaster, and death (KANWAL, 2021). KANWAL (2021) also added that luxury companies or business marketers cannot ignore the psychology or mindset changing of luxury

***Hypothesis 1:** There has been no statistically significant impact of the COVID-19 on risk perception toward luxury goods in China in the COVID-19.*

2.2 Attitude, Risk Perception, Physical Vanity, Social Influence, Luxury Brand Perception and Purchase Intention

In the field of luxury industry, Ing Phang et al. (2021) found out that previous studies conceptualized customers' luxury thinking during the COVID-19 period, while some others investigated marketing management difficulties in the luxury industry, such as logistics and supply chain management. However, During the recent COVID-19 pandemic, there were not many empirical research that looked into the important relationships influencing consumer luxury purchase intention. The purchase of luxury brands is entirely dependent on consumer emotional responses, whether positive or negative, and when consumers are in crisis, it is difficult to think of luxury products because they are focused on daily inelastic demand such as food, water, medical protection for example. Risk fear is a negative emotion or an overestimation of risk that prevents consumers from putting themselves in danger by engaging in avoidance behavior and withdrawing or fleeing quickly from the upcoming situation.

In research from Ing Phang et al. (2021) given the fact that COVID-19 forces consumers to be pragmatic when purchasing, it is expected that people will remain dependent on luxury products to form their value perceptions during the pandemic, particularly if possessing luxury brands can help them find positive emotions and feelings to support them get through the difficult time. However, in research from Akter (2021), consumers are subjected to systematic stress during a crisis, and this stress regulates them either to save money in order to accumulate resources that could provide security, or to demonstrate impulsive behavior in purchasing various products that they consider necessary. Ku and Lin (2018) suggested Chinese culture is group oriented, and the Chinese have a strong belief in collectivism. Furthermore, vanity is a big motivator for purchasing luxury products and the role of luxury is even stronger among Chinese customers; as a result, the formation of brand attachment is heavily influenced by others' ideas and opinions.

According to the study from Akter (2021), attitude is the outcome of an individual's underlying beliefs about the results that could be obtained by performing the behavior, or it expresses an individual's attitude toward participating in a specific behavior. Attitude towards behavior is also defined as an individual's positive or negative feeling regarding performing the target behavior (Jain et al., 2017). Jhamb et al. (2020) stated

luxury is a blurred genre. It most likely began with champagne, designer clothing, and sports vehicles, but luxury is now linked with a wide range of products and services. Luxury consumption is now being experienced by a growing number of social classes, in addition to the privileged. The characteristics of luxury products provide buyers with not only the pleasure of owning expensive items, but also psychological benefits such as esteem, prestige, and a sense of great respect, which reminds them and others that they are part of an exclusive group of only a few who can afford these pricey items. In research from Jiang et al. (2019), it is frequently found to be quite suitable for intentions towards counterfeit luxury goods is attitude.

According to the study from Ing Phang et al. (2021), under the relatively high-perceived risks towards luxury brands, family and friends play important roles in influencing luxury purchase intention because they are regarded as highly trustworthy and reliable. A consumer's family is one of the most significant factors because a family helps shape an individual's attitudes and behaviors. The impact of social influence on consumers' luxury brand purchase intention was discussed and empirically supported in the research of Ing Phang et al. (2021) research from Hung et al. (2011). Moreover, Hung et al. (2011) also asserted that socially oriented consumers are motivated to own luxury brands in order to demonstrate their social status and success to their targeted social groups. In the research from Hung et al. (2011), Luxury brand perception has five indicators, they are quality, hedonic, extended self, conspicuousness and uniqueness. Hung et al. (2011) also found that these five factors have been tested on students in Australia and non-students in Asia towards perceptions of luxury brands. The test results showed that quality, extended self and uniqueness are very much related to brand perception while hedonic and conspicuousness just pass the edge. Since COVID-19 is hitting hard on economies, and it does not only change people's lives, it has also changed the way of they behave and shop. Consumers are expected to be influenced deeply by the pandemic, empirical studies on their perceptions and cognitive responses are critical to better understand how they will react and behave. The purchase intention is the consumer's evaluation of products and services that results in the possibility of a transaction (Ku & Lin, 2018). Therefore, to evaluate the attitude, hypothesis of social influence, luxury brand perception affecting on purchase intention as proposed as follows:

Hypothesis 2: *There has been no statistically significant impact of risk perception on attitude toward luxury goods in China in the COVID-19.*

Hypothesis 3: *There has been no statistically significant impact of physical vanity on luxury brand perception toward luxury goods in China in the COVID-19.*

Hypothesis 4: *There has been no statistically significant impact of attitude on purchase intention toward luxury goods in China in the COVID-19.*

Hypothesis 5: *There has been no statistically significant impact of social influence on purchase intention toward luxury goods in China in the COVID-19.*

Hypothesis 6: *There has been no statistically significant impact of luxury brand perception on purchase intention toward luxury goods in China in the COVID-19.*

2.3 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework is assembled based on literature review in the previous researches, existing literature, and theoretical concepts representing the influence of variables including COVID-19, risk perception, physical vanity, social influence, luxury brand perception, and purchase intention, assembled to be the conceptual framework in this study. Hence, the conceptual framework of understanding Chinese buying behaviors towards luxury products under COVID-19 has been presented in Figure 1.

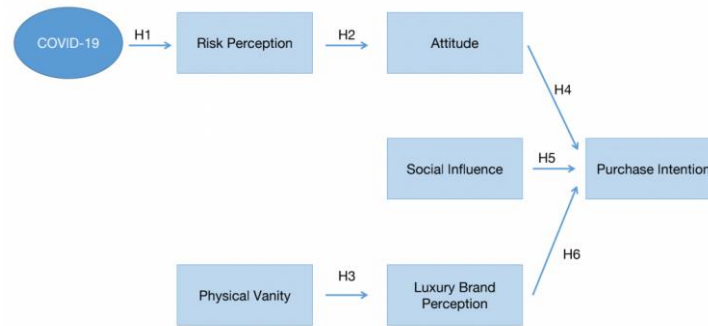


Figure 1. The Conceptual Framework; constructed by the author

3. Methods and Materials

The goal of this study is to figure out how Chinese consumers acquire luxury goods under Covid-19. A pilot test was done on a small set of 42 samples. Second, descriptive data study was utilized to examine respondents' demographic data. Thirdly, multiple linear regression (MLR) was used to analyze the factors affecting purchase intention, composing of COVID-19 knowledge, risk reception, attitude, luxury brand perception, social influence. What's more, the simple linear regression (SLR) was used to analyze the effect of COVID-19 knowledge on risk perception, risk perception on attitude, and physical vanity on social influence.

There are three parts to the questionnaire. Firstly, a screening question is essential to use to verify consumers who are Chinese and experienced buying luxury goods in in China under COVID-19. The second part includes the demographic factors of the respondent which are gender, age, and educational level. The third part is the measuring variables of independent variables or baseline variables. Symmetric and asymmetric were used with the Likert scale which is the analytical interpretation that depends upon the diversities. Symmetric describes neutrality's status (neutral) that presents in between two extremes of strongly disagree (SD) to strongly agree (SA). The variable passes the reliability test, and items of the variable are considered acceptable, good, and excellent for the questionnaire; details can be viewed in table 1.

Table 1. Pre-test results by Reliability Test (Cronbach's Alpha)

Variables	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha (α)	Reliability
COVID-19	3	0.85	Good
Risk Perception	3	0.845	Good
Attitude	5	0.893	Good
Physical Vanity	3	0.724	Acceptable
Luxury Brand Perception	5	0.820	Good
Social Influence	5	0.886	Good
Purchase Intention	5	0.938	Excellent

Note: $n=42$

4. Results

4.1 Descriptive for demographic factors

The authors employed descriptive analysis in a statistical program to study demographic data on Chinese respondents who live in China and bought luxury during COVID-19. Demographic data such as gender, age, education was analyzed to gain a better understanding of respondents' personal characteristics through descriptive analysis. Table 2 shows the frequency distribution for a total of 417 respondents.

Table 2. The analysis of demographic factors using the frequency distribution and percentage

Demographic Information	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	198	47.5
Female	219	52.5
Total	417	100
Age		
18-30	95	22.8
31-40	142	34.1
41-50	112	26.9
Over 51	68	16.2
Total	417	100
Education		
Lower than Bachelor's Degree	57	13.7
Bachelor's Degree	267	64.0
Master's Degree	59	14.1
Ph. D. Degree	34	8.2
Total	417	100

Gender: among all 417 respondents, their distribution showed the higher percentage of female with 52.5% which is higher than male respondents that have 47.5%. The results of respondents, for female and male are 219 and 198 respectively. **Age:** the most respondent in this research is age between 31-40 years old with 142 respondents with 64%, follow by respondents age between 41 – 50 years old with 112 respondents with 26.9%, 95 respondents who age between 18 – 30 years old with the percentage of 22.8%, 68 respondents who age over 51 years old with the percentage of 16.2%. **Education level:** from 417 respondents, 267 respondents have completed bachelor degree (38.4%), following by 59 respondents with 14.1% have completed master degree or, 57 respondents have completed lower than bachelor's degree with the percentage of 13.7, 34 respondents have completed Ph.D. Degree or higher with the percentage of 8.2.

4.2 Descriptive Analysis with Mean and Standard Deviation

This part will include the Mean and Standard Deviation of each group variable, consisting of COVID-19, risk perception, attitude, physical vanity, luxury brand perception, social influence, purchase attention. The criteria for interpreting the mean scores have been set up by adaption from Moidunny (2009) as shown in detail below:

The criteria of the interpretation of mean scores

Mean score Interpretation

4.21 – 5.00 Very high

3.21 – 4.20 High

2.61 – 3.20 Medium

1.81 – 2.60 Low

1.00 – 1.80 Very low

Table 3. Results of Mean and Standard Deviation

COVID-19	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
I understand what is COIVD-19	3.830	1.205	High
I am stressed about COIVD-19	3.830	1.165	High
I feel my life has been changed because of COVID 19	3.840	1.206	High
Risk Perception	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation

I feel I will infect COVID-19 in 2022	3.680	1.282	High
I feel I need to save money under pandemic	3.790	1.192	High
I am afraid I would lose job under pandemic	3.770	1.201	High
Attitude	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
I feel good when I purchase luxury product in COVID-19	3.730	1.123	High
I feel Luxury brand is trustworthy	3.760	1.174	High
I like to buy luxury brand because it always come with good quality	3.770	1.194	High
I had good experience with luxury brand	3.790	1.112	High
I feel positive about luxury brand image	3.770	1.156	High
Physical Vanity	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
Carrying luxury products make me look more attractive.	3.740	1.173	High
It is important that I always look good	3.890	1.133	High
People notice how attractive I am	3.820	1.129	High
Luxury Brand Perception	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
I trust famous brands unconditionally	3.640	1.195	High
I think the brand has personality	3.830	1.131	High
I think the price of luxury product is reasonable	3.720	1.215	High
I believe luxury brand can bring me special shopping experience	3.710	1.159	High
I love packaging of Luxury brand	3.730	1.180	High
Social Influence	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
I will buy luxury products recommended by friends.	3.700	1.200	High
I use social networking platform to collect the information of luxury product.	3.760	1.182	High
I will buy luxury products recommended by family.	3.730	1.112	High
I will want a luxury product if it is popular	3.690	1.179	High
I will buy luxury products recommended by friends.	3.660	1.188	High
Purchase Intention	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
I will buy the luxury product even it is expensive	3.670	1.174	High
I will buy luxury product even it is in COVID-19	3.730	1.143	High
I tend to buy the luxury products next year	3.680	1.163	High
I tend to buy the luxury products this year.	3.740	1.110	High

Table 3 depicts the mean and standard deviation of variables in Chinese purchasing intention towards luxury goods under COVID-19 from the survey instruments. The highest mean of among variables in was COVID-19 (C) with equal 3.834, meanwhile; the lowest mean was Purchase Intention (PI) with equal 3.706. When focusing on the standard deviation, the highest was Risk Perception (RP) with equal 1.061, and the lowest was Luxury Brand Perception (LBP) with equal 1.008.

4.3 Hypothesis Testing Results

4.3.1 Result of Simple Linear Regression for H1, H2, and H3

Statistical Hypotheses 1:

H1n: There has been no statistically significant impact of the COVID-19 on risk perception toward luxury goods in China in the COVID-19.

H1a: There has been a statistically significant impact of the COVID-19 on risk perception toward luxury goods in China in the COVID-19.

In table 4, the COVID-19 (H1) on risk perception under pandemic. The null hypothesis is rejected. The result of the regression indicated that the model explained 65.6% of the variance and that the model was significant. It was found that significantly predicted COVID-19 (H1) on risk perception ($B = 0.806$, $p < 0.001$). The result from H1 showed that the independent variables were used to determine the impact on risk perception.

Statistical Hypotheses 2:

H2n: There has been no statistically significant impact of risk perception on attitude toward luxury goods in China in the COVID-19.

H2a: There has been a statistically significant impact of risk perception on attitude toward luxury goods in China in the COVID-19.

Table 4, a simple linear regression was carried out to test significantly predicted risk perception (H2) on attitude under pandemic. The null hypothesis is rejected. The result of the regression indicated that the model explained 82.9% of the variance and that the model was significant. It was found that significantly predicted risk perception (H2) on attitude ($B = 0.784$, $p < 0.001$). The result from H2 showed that the independent variables were used to determine the impact on attitude.

Statistical Hypotheses 3:

H3n: There has been no statistically significant impact of physical vanity on luxury brand perception toward luxury goods in China in the COVID-19.

H3a: There has been a statistically significant impact of physical vanity on luxury brand perception toward luxury goods in China in the COVID-19.

A simple linear regression was carried out to test significantly predicted physical vanity (H3) on luxury brand perception under pandemic in table 4. The null hypothesis is rejected. The result of the regression indicated that the model explained 46.8% of the variance and that the model was significant. It was found that significantly predicted (H3) on luxury brand perception ($B = 0.784$, $p < 0.001$). The result from H3 showed that the independent variables were used to determine the impact on luxury brand perception.

Table 4. Simple Linear Regression for H1, H2 and H3

Variables	Std. Error	Beta	t-value	Sig.
H1: COVID-19 → Risk Perception	0.029	0.806	27.692	< 0.001*
H2: Risk Perception → Attitude	0.026	0.830	30.265	< 0.001*
H3: Physical vanity → Luxury brand perception	0.025	0.855	33.577	< 0.001*

Note. * $p < .05$

4.3.2 Result of Multiple Linear Regression for H4, H5, and H6

Statistical Hypotheses 4, 5 and 6:

Null Hypothesis: There has been no statistically significant impact of attitude (H4n), social influence (H5n), and luxury brand perception (H6n) on purchase intention toward luxury goods in China in the COVID-19.

Alternative Hypothesis: There has been a statistically significant impact of attitude (H4a), social influence (H5a), and luxury brand perception (H6a) on purchase intention toward luxury goods in China in the COVID-19.

Table 5 shows a multiple linear regression was carried out to determine if attitude, social influence, luxury brand perception significantly affected Chinese purchase intention. R-square was 0.810 at a 95% of confidence level. It means that the independent variables (attitude, social influence and luxury brand

It was found that attitude (H4) significantly predicted purchase intention under COVID-19 ($B = 0.271$, $P < 0.001$). In addition, social influence (H5) significantly predicted purchase intention under COVID-19 ($B = 0.425$, $P < 0.001$), and luxury brand perception (H6) significantly predicted purchase intention under COVID-19 ($B = 0.241$, $P < 0.001$). Therefore, attitude (H4) and social influence (H5), luxury brand perception have significant predicted purchase intention of luxury products under COVID-19. The result from hypotheses 4, 5, and 6 showed that all variables have got variance inflation factors (VIF) higher than 5, and lower than 10, which means they have indicated multicollinearity is acceptable according to Hair et al. (1995). Hair et al. (1995), a $VIF < 10$ is acceptable.

Table 5. Multiple Linear Regression for H4, H5, and H6,

Variables	B	SE B	Beta	t-value	Sig.	VIF
H4: Attitude → purchase intention	0.271	0.052	0.267	5.171	< 0.001*	5.797
H5: Social influence → purchase intention	0.425	0.050	0.429	8.549	< 0.001*	5.464
H6: Luxury brand perception → purchase intention	0.241	0.057	0.240	4.227	< 0.001*	6.974
R square	0.810					
Adjusted R square	0.808					

Note. Dependent variable = purchase intention, * $p < .05$

4.4 The Results of Structural Model

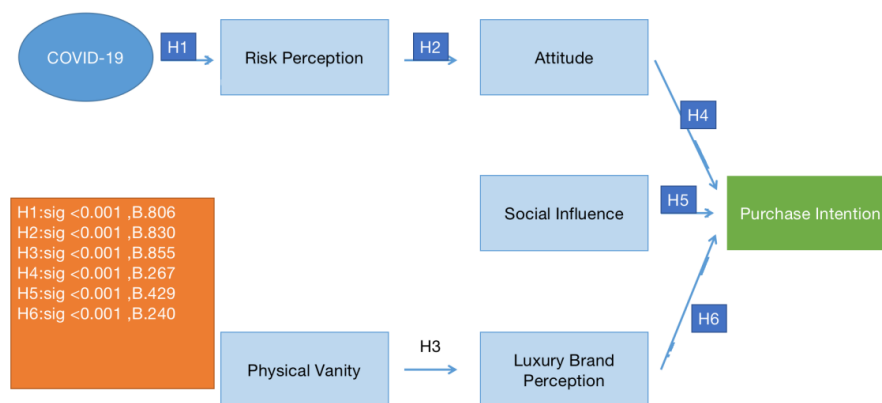


Figure 2. Results of the structural model

5. Discussion

This study uses stratified probability sampling and simple random sampling. To draw a proportional sample of 410 respondents, stratified random sampling divides the entire population into smaller groups or strata. However, of the 410 targets, 445 responded to the questionnaires, with 28 deemed unsuitable for data analysis. Overall 417 respondents, found that the majority of respondents in this study was female (219, 52.5%), age between 31 to 40 years old (142, 64%), majority has bachelor degree for education (267, 38.4%). Figure 3, below indicate that the maximum value is COVID-19, followed by physical vanity, attitude, luxury risk perception, luxury brand perception, social influence, and purchase intention as shown in Figure 3.

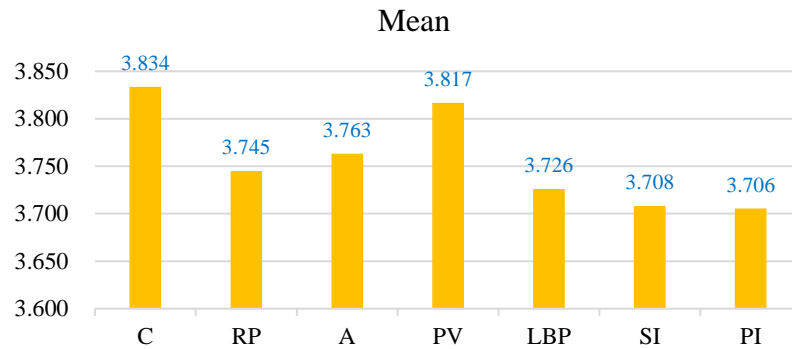


Figure 3. Mean values of each variable

The results of hypotheses testing show that all six independent variables were supported with statistically significant value. The hypotheses testing results are shown table 6 below.

Table 6. Summary of the statistical hypotheses testing results

Statement of Hypothesis	p-value	Decision results
H1n: There has been no statistically significant impact of the COVID-19 on risk perception toward luxury goods in China in the COVID-19.	< 0.001*	Supported
H2n: There has been no statistically significant impact of risk perception on attitude toward luxury goods in China in the COVID-19.	< 0.001*	Supported
H3n: There has been no statistically significant impact of physical vanity on luxury brand perception toward luxury goods in China in the COVID-19.	< 0.001*	Supported
H4n: There has been no statistically significant impact of attitude on purchase intention toward luxury goods in China in the COVID-19.	< 0.001*	Supported
H5n: There has been no statistically significant impact of social influence on purchase intention toward luxury goods in China in the COVID-19.	< 0.001*	Supported
H6n: There has been no statistically significant impact of luxury brand perception on purchase intention toward luxury goods in China in the COVID-19.	< 0.001*	Supported

Note. * $p < .05$

The hypothesis testing shows that there are three variables, which are social influence, attitude, and luxury brand perception with influence on purchase intention of Chinese buying behavior towards luxury products during COVID-19. What's more, it also shows that the COVID-19 has a significant influence on risk perception and risk perception has an influence on attitude. Lastly, it shows physical vanity also plays important role in influencing luxury brand perception.

Social Influence and Purchase Intention

This study showed that social influence had a positive and highly significant impact on purchase intention. The significant value of social influence and purchase intention is less than 0.001. This implies that social influence thru luxury brands can connect the individual and the external world in line with previous studies on possession. According to Hung et al. (2011), social influence is more culturally rooted, especially for a society of collectivism such as Asia country; social influence perhaps carries a more important role than

others do. However, there is also other researcher found out result of the relationship between social influence and purchase intention was inconsistent. In research from [Ing Phang et al. \(2021\)](#), social influence has no direct impact on soft luxury purchase intentions. Friends, family, and peers are valued highly decision-makers, but not in the case of luxury purchases during a pandemic. Researchers have also suggested that interactions may occur less frequently online than when people can see, feel, and touch luxury products in physical stores. A part of the social influence finding can be more explained with the reason that led to different results is probably that China reacted the fastest to the COVID-19, and recovered early compared to other countries. Moreover, China is a society of collectivism, these reasons cause people to value the opinions of family or friends.

The result of descriptive analysis of social attitude, which came from five questions in the questionnaire we collected, the statistical data, shows that the means of social influence is 3.708. The lowest mean among all questions is “I will buy luxury products recommended by friends.” which is equal to 3.660, which is lower than average means. Moreover, this question has the highest standard deviation of 1.188. The result shows that the luxury brand company should focus on more friends’ referral.

Attitude and Purchase Intention

This study showed that attitude had a positive and highly significant impact on purchase intention. The significant value of social influence and purchase intention is less than 0.001. The findings were consistent with the theoretical assumptions that underpinned the study and were similar to the findings obtained by [Jain et al. \(2017\)](#), who explored their respondents’ attitudes toward consumer behavior regarding luxury fashion goods in India. What’s more, [Ajzen \(1991\)](#) stated that purchase intention is guided by purchase behavior, which is influenced by attitude. In addition, in research by [Akte \(2021\)](#), the findings showed that the attitude concerning consumers’ intention to involve in any particular activity has an active influence on their behavioral perception. Jin and Kang (2011) also revealed that the most important factor that impacts Chinese’ purchase intentions toward foreign brands of clothing is attitude. Studies conducted by [Son and Jin \(2013\)](#), [Sritanakorn and Nuangjamnong \(2021\)](#), and [Wongsawan and Nuangjamnong \(2022\)](#) found that the relationship between attitude and purchase intentions of Indian towards international products is significant. By looking in deep detail at a descriptive analysis of social influence, which came from five questions in the questionnaire we collected, the statistical data shows that the means of social influence is 3.763. The lowest mean among all questions is “I feel the luxury brand is trustworthy.” which is equal to 3.760, which is lower than the average means. The result shows that the luxury brand company should focus on how to make consumers feeling of attitude in trustworthy towards brands then consumers will intend to buy more luxury products.

Luxury Brand Perception and Purchase Intention

This study showed that Luxury Brand Perception had a positive and highly significant impact on purchase intention. The significant value of social influence and purchase intention less than 0.001. The result of this study is in line with the previous literature findings. In research from [Ku and Lin \(2018\)](#), purchase intention is strongly influenced by luxury brand perceptions. According to [Ing Phang et al. \(2021\)](#), [Sritanakorn and Nuangjamnong \(2021\)](#), and [Wongsawan and Nuangjamnong \(2022\)](#), who conducted a study on luxury purchase intention in pandemic, brand perception has significantly related to the intention to purchase soft luxury products. It is critical to understand that luxury brands, which typically sell at a premium, are also recognized as having greater quality, unique design, and a greater resell price. Consumers may be more inclined to purchase luxury brands if they are persuaded of the experience and values that they will be able to obtain from the luxury products.

By looking in deep detail of a descriptive analysis of luxury brand perception, which came from five questions in the questionnaire we collected, the statistical data shows that the means of luxury brand perception is 3.726. The lowest mean among all questions is “I trust famous brands unconditionally.” which is equal to 3.540, which is lower than average means. Moreover, this question has the highest standard deviation of 1.195. The result shows that the luxury brand company should focus on more friends’ referral. This means that the respondents have very different opinions about this question. So, the company should be more concerned about increasing their brand image or quality to comprehensively increase how customer’s trust towards their brands.

COVID-19 and Risk Perception

This study showed that COVID-19 had a positive and highly significant impact on risk perception. The significant value of social influence and purchase intention less than 0.001. The result of this study is in line with the previous literature findings. The result of this study agreed with [KANWAL \(2021\)](#), who studied impact of perceived risk on consumer purchase intention towards luxury brands in case of pandemic. It tested that perceived risk has a positive significant relationship with fear of COVID-19. The study also revealed that the impact of customer perceived risk on fear in the case of pandemic of COVID-19. What's more, according to the study from [Asefa et al. \(2020\)](#) and [Nuangjamnong \(2022\)](#), virus was found to cause more mortality than other respiratory infections, according to many study participants.

The result of descriptive analysis of COVID-19, which came from three questions in the questionnaire we collected, the statistical data shows that the means of social influence is 3.834. The lowest mean among all questions is "I understand what is COVID-19" and "I am stressed about COVID-19", which both equal to 3.830, which is lower than average means. Moreover, has the highest standard deviation of 1.206 belongs to the question "I feel my life has been changed because of COVID 19." The result shows that it is important for luxury brands to understand that people perceive a significant risk because of the virus's constant detrimental influence on the economy in the case of an outbreak, and they put a halt to their purchases, particularly of luxury items.

Risk Perception and Attitude

This study showed that risk perception had a positive and highly significant impact on attitude. The significant value of social influence and purchase intention less than 0.001. The result of this study is in line with the previous literature findings. According to the study from [Akter \(2021\)](#), who conducted research in Bangladesh, shows that one's attitude toward perceived behavior control is inextricably linked to one's perception of the COVID-19 risk? It also highlighted that the COVID-19 pandemic's risk perception has a beneficial impact on attitudes regarding perceived behavioral control, which has influenced customers' buying intentions. According to [Hamdani et al. \(2020\)](#), strong beliefs determine an individual's attitude toward an activity, and that strong belief drives an individual to make any decision or choose any product. The result of descriptive analysis of risk perception, which came from three questions in the questionnaire we collected, the statistical data shows that the means of social influence is 3.745. The lowest mean among all questions is "I feel I will infect the COVID-19 in 2022", which both equal to 3.680, which is lower than average means. Moreover, it has the highest standard deviation of 1.282. It means the answer of the question is spread out.

Physical Vanity and Luxury Brand Perception

This study showed that physical vanity had a positive and highly significant impact on luxury brand perception. The significant value of social influence and purchase intention less than 0.001. The result of this study is in line with the previous literature findings. In research from [Ing Phang et al. \(2021\)](#), it reveals that physical vanity has significant influences on luxury brand perceptions. It is also consistent with [Netemeyer et al. \(1995\)](#), people's concerns about their physical attractiveness and outer appearance were discovered to have a substantial impact on their judgments of luxury brands.

The result of descriptive analysis of physical vanity, which came from three questions in the questionnaire we collected, the statistical data shows that the means of social influence is 3.817. The lowest mean among all questions is "Carrying luxury products make me look more attractive", which both equal to 3.740, which is lower than average means. Moreover, it has the highest standard deviation of 1.173. It means the answer of the question is spread out.

6. Conclusion and Suggestions

The result of this research demonstrates that there are relations between variables that finally influence purchase intention. The related factors in the research, attitude, social influence, luxury brand perception have strongly significant influences on purchase intention. Whereas COVID-19 has strongly significant influences

on risk perception and risk perception has significant influences on attitude. Moreover, physical vanity has significant influence on luxury brand perception.

According to the result of survey, social influence is the most significant factor that influence on purchase intention, which implied the value of social groups, family members, peers, relatives, and friends in influencing a person's attitude and behaviors. Therefore, luxury brand companies need to be aware of the significant relationship between those and adjust the marketing plan and strategies based on the survey. To be specific, it is suggested to develop social media strategy, which can allow the consumers share with the social groups, moreover social influencers could also play important role in attracting consumers.

Physical vanity has significant influence on luxury brand perception, which is third influential factor on purchase intention. From this study, the most respondent in this research is age between 31-40 years old, followed by 40-50 years old. It revealed that older consumers are more likely to make a purchase. Consumers who are financially independence may have a higher purchase intention than those who are not. However, younger individuals who do not have enough money can still have a desire for a luxury brand. Moreover, older consumers may care greater physical appearance and social status. Luxury business should pay more attention on age 31-40 years old consumers, in terms of product design, advertising approach, brand image, etc.

This research also investigated the risk perception towards COVID-19, which has significant influence on attitude. The findings of this study will provide important insights into consumer behavior during future outbreaks of contagious diseases such as COVID-19. The luxury industry marketers need to understand the effect of pandemic on Chinese buying behaviors to come up better solution to deal with the crisis.

7. Further Study

First, this study is conducted by online channel during COVID-19 time; there is no way to interview respondents face to face due to the social distance. In the future, the researcher can conduct the interviews in person with respondents to understand how their purchasing behaviors towards luxury products under pandemic in details. What's more, behavioral intentions may change after the COVID-19 pandemic is over. The research work may require additional data collection for post pandemic or after recovering from pandemic. Because the study was only conducted with a small sample size of purchasing behavior and was conducted at a limited period during the pandemic, a study after the pandemic could have developed different results and help to explain more about the purchasing behavior.

Secondly, this study only focus on social influence, attitude and luxury brand perception as variables to purchase intention. In further study, researchers can explore more variables such as customer satisfaction, quality, brand image and conduct more in-deep studies.

Thirdly, this survey is conducted in China, whether the consumers lived in different countries had a huge significant impact on the buying behavior, and the reasons for this result could be further investigated to describe the variances in shifted buying behaviors during the pandemic in different cities.

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