

# Analysis of Sociological Performance of Luxury Choice with Binary Copycat Consumption Model

Benxi Zhang

Jinan University, Shenzhen, Guangzhou, China.

18661716873@163.com

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**Abstract:** The aim of this research is to analyze the different consumption patterns of luxury goods and counterfeit goods and understand the rationality of consumption choices. In this research, from the perspective of sociological manifestation of consumption, through literature research, in-depth interviews, and other methods, luxury consumption of post-80s and post-90s white-collar workers is explored. The influence factors on the consumption choice of counterfeit goods and authentic goods is compared, and the sociological manifestation of consumers' luxury goods choice from different perspectives is analyzed. The results show that from the perspective of consumers, copycat is a non-deceptive and independent choice, with relatively low price attraction and customized luxury brand pursuit. There are two modes of consumption dominance, one is producer-based dominance. The other is based on the dominant mode of consumers, to re-understand the essence and motivation of consumption in the binary copycat consumption mode, expand the connotation and extension of copycat concept, and understand the sociological performance of consumption. Therefore, the sociological expression of luxury choice based on the binary copycat consumption model enriches the understanding of the concept of consumption and helps people form a correct consumption choice.

## 1. Introduction

With the development of the economy and the improvement of living standards, the demand for luxury goods is increasing. Consumers prove their status and values by consuming and owning luxuries, and obtain the pleasure brought by consuming luxuries. Consumption has changed from use value to symbolic cultural value. The essence of luxury consumption is to reflect a social identity with symbols [1]. With the diversification of consumption forms, people's demand is also manifested as more independent choices, and the binary copycat consumption pattern should be carried out. The co-existence of brand-based consumption and the consumption higher than brand customization shows the transformation from producer-based to consumer-based dominant mode.

The study on the sociological performance of luxury selection based on the binary copycat consumption model is to analyze the social performance of different consumption representations of copycat and luxury from the perspective of sociological performance of consumption. There are different degrees of copying of luxury brands. Social development has promoted different consumption patterns of copycat, that is, complete brand copying or incomplete selective and customized copying [2]. The high imitation copycat is of better quality and looks more like a branded product. It is a product that low-income white-collar workers are willing to accept. This kind of copycat consumption shows that the new copycat is an independent and non-deceptive consumption choice. On the one hand, it enables consumers to quickly communicate with fashion and get better psychological enjoyment. On the other hand, it is also a voluntary consumption choice in the form of copycat.

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1 Sociology of luxury consumption behavior

Luxury goods represent a comfortable lifestyle, a rare commodity that is not essential, showing the consumer's social status and lifestyle. The scope of luxury goods not only includes the product itself, but also includes the value of the social background and economic background given by the product [3]. From the perspective of sociological performance, the essence of luxury consumption is to reflect a social identity with symbols [4]. Buying luxury goods is not to consume its use value, but to consume its symbol culture. The sociological study of luxury consumption behavior introduces semiotics, which makes consumption behavior easier to be understood with symbolic value. Symbolic culture seems to be nothing, but it enriches the connotation and extension of goods, making luxury products have vitality [5].

Although people have a variety of understanding of luxury, the characteristics of luxury are also very prominent. First, exquisite and expensive. Luxury goods are exquisite in appearance and quality [6]. Luxury goods pay more attention to details and exquisite quality of other products. The price of luxury goods is also the highest compared to similar products that offer the same function. The high price is also based on the exquisite manufacturing process, bringing customers an unusual feeling. Second, scarcity and uniqueness [7]. The scarcity of raw materials and unique production techniques enable luxury goods to satisfy people's great pursuit of rare and unique products. Maintaining scarcity and uniqueness helps enhance the positioning of luxury brands. Third, the long history of legend. Luxury brands usually contain a long brand story, which makes them legend [8]. The long history of the legendary luxury industry has become a barrier to market access. Fourth, hedonic and non-functional. The connection between luxury and hedonic concept makes owning a luxury a kind of enjoyment, which brings psychological satisfaction and superiority [9]. The consumption of non-functional luxury goods is mainly the consumption of its symbolic value. Fifth, multi-level emotions and temporary. Luxury goods design includes rich creative emotion endowed by designers. The temporality of luxury goods means that they are not fixed, but inspire new products of The Times based on the change of desire and fashion concept. Figure 1 shows the characteristics of luxury goods

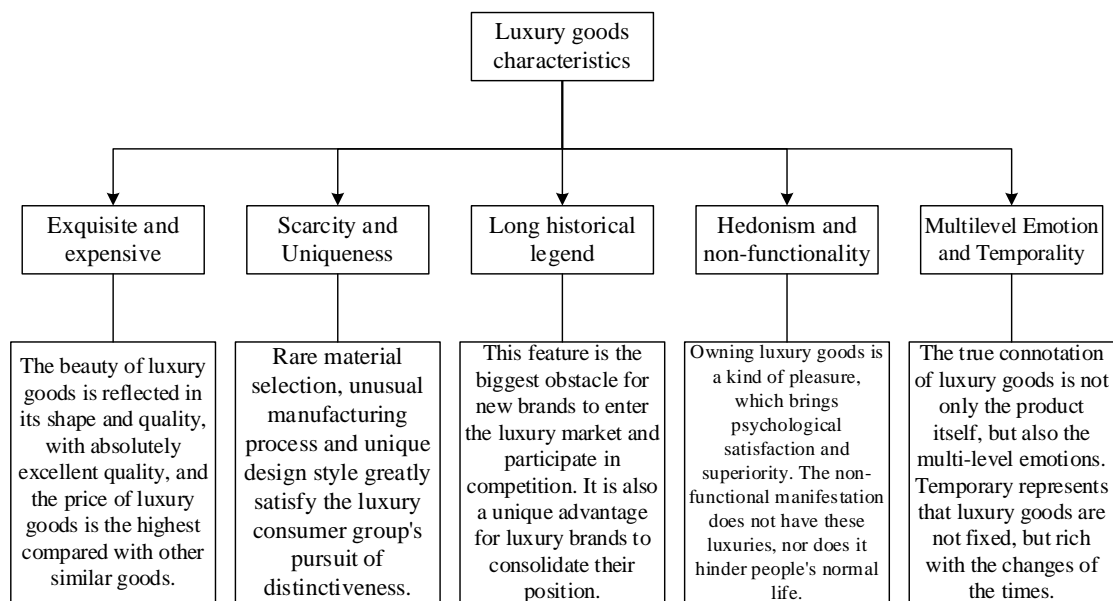


Figure. 1. Characteristics of luxury goods

Luxury consumption has symbolic function. In a word, when people consume luxury goods, they focus on the symbolic meaning and value behind luxury goods rather than the use value of luxury goods themselves. What consumers buy is the symbolic function of luxury goods, which represents the noble status of consumers, social status and the enjoyment of the spiritual world. It highlights the

symbolic function of luxury goods rather than the function of material use.

## **2.2 Binary copycat consumption model**

Copycat products are introduced to the market in large quantities with a high cost performance through copying, imitation, innovation, and improvement. They follow the guidance of the mainstream with their own set of organizational rules, or copy, or rebel. Complete brand copy or incomplete selective and customized copy is conducted. The form of the cottage is divided into two types from the depth of imitation. First, complete brand replication. In other words, copycat products are imitated on the appearance. Copycat producers do not carry out product research and development, and almost have no other investment in the early stage of development. They only use simple copying to push the products to the market at a low price [10]. This level of copycat imitation does not have the conditions for innovation and trial-and-error cost. It is targeted and purposeful to carry out the complete cloning of luxury brands. The target group is the part of people who do not want to pay high price but want to obtain the best-selling brands. The appearance and quality of the products vary according to the degree of copycat and the way of imitation. Complete replication is a one-to-one reduction of the visible part, but there should be a big gap in the core of technical content above details. This kind of similar restoration in the brand, appearance, and function of the product often confuses some consumers, because it is difficult to distinguish the appearance difference between the genuine product and the fake product, and there is often the claim of plagiarism [11]. In addition, a small part of the difference is retained to copy the brand, so as to keep the similarity with the target brand as far as possible, and avoid plagiarism by seeking common ground while reserving differences. For example, in terms of function, it pursues similar but not identical functions with luxury brands, update some new functions, surpass the original imitated brand functions, create new purchase points, form a low price and high cost performance, which can quickly and effectively occupy their own market share.

Second, diversified copycat. The replication at this stage is not only to reduce costs, to seek economic benefits, to occupy the market, but to be more popular. Not only the product itself, but other mainstream authorities have become the object of social copycat. In this research, the study on copycat phenomenon is the imitation of luxury brands [12]. The existence of the price gap between fake and authentic brands forms the advantage of low price and attracts the target customer group with low price. Different from the traditional low-quality copycat, the high-imitation copycat is of better quality and looks more like the brand products, forming a product that low-income white-collar workers are willing to accept, and it is also a kind of voluntary consumer choice. On the one hand, it is in line with the fashion communication to get a better psychological enjoyment, on the other hand, it is also a voluntary form of copycat consumer choice. The consumer party is not the victim, not the helpless deception of the incomplete information, but the sociological manifestation of the consumer's own initiative.

Traditional copycat consumption has long been manifested as low-level imitation production, which exists in low-income consumer groups and thus forms a bad stereotype. However, with the increasing diversification of consumption patterns, people's needs also show more autonomy and selectivity, and the binary copycat consumption mode is formed. Traditional copycat and new copycat are respectively aimed at different income consumer groups to obtain their own competitive advantages. Consumption based on brand and consumption higher than brand customization coexist, one is dominated by producers, the other is dominated by consumers. The traditional producer-led approach is that the copycat manufacturers copy a large number of products at a low price and put them into the market by themselves, while the new consumer-led approach is that consumers select the best products in the market according to their own wishes and carry out customized copycat consumption. The new type of copycat is a continuation and development of copycat in the traditional sense. It meets the essential attributes of copycat imitation, but increases the meaning of customization, which is favored by white-collar workers. Such a subtle form of market demand is perceived and produced by copycat producers. It is not provided by the copycat producers, but is more liberalized and personalized. It selectively carries out brand imitation and rejects the

unrecognized section. This part of the consumer does not think that this is a complete copycat and plagiarism, which is equivalent to completing a new type of incomplete copycat consumption. The co-existence of the new type and the traditional form of copycat consumption pattern constitutes the binary copycat consumption pattern.

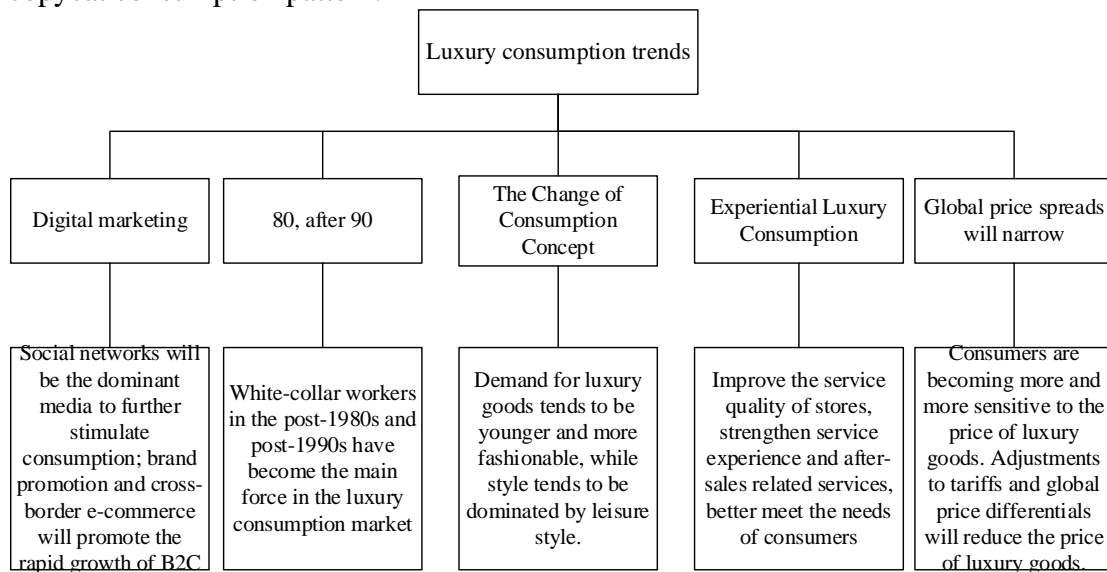


Figure. 2. Future trend of luxury consumption growth

### 3. Results and discussion

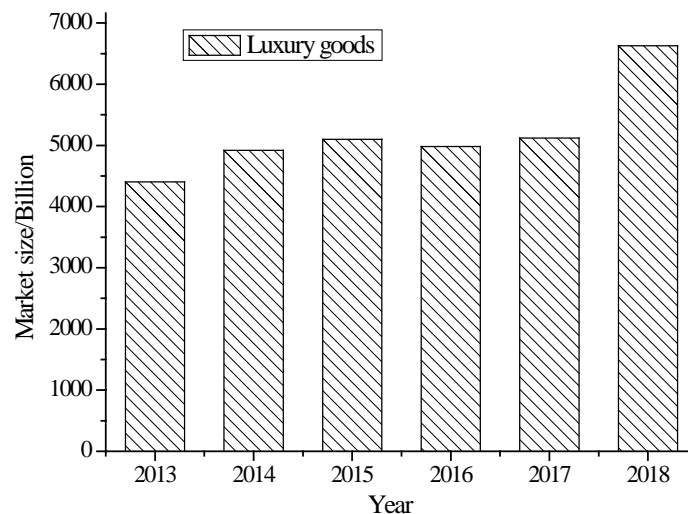


Figure. 3. Market size of China's luxury industry in recent years

Figure 3 shows the market size of China's luxury goods industry in recent years, and the market share of luxury goods is increasing. Luxury consumption continues to grow. In 2018, the market size of China's luxury industry was about 663 billion yuan. With the improvement of economic living standard, consumers have a growing demand for luxuries, and they pay more attention to the spirit of enjoyment when purchasing luxuries. The development potential of luxury consumption market is huge.

Figure 4 shows the proportion of young white-collar workers' savings balance in 2018. Among them, only 30 % of white-collar workers have more than 30,000 yuan in savings, and about 21.9 % have no savings and are in debt. White-collar workers with 10,000 to 30,000 yuan in savings account for only 20%. Young white-collar workers born in the 1980s and 1990s are the main consumers of

luxury goods, which reflects the changes in young people's consumption concept and life attitude.

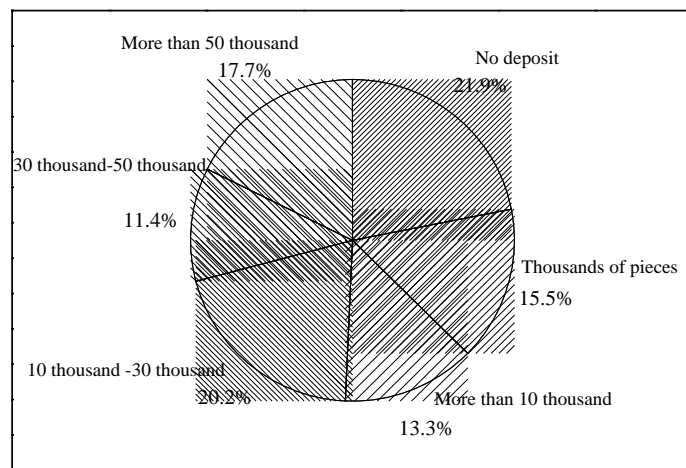


Figure. 4. Savings balance of young white-collar workers

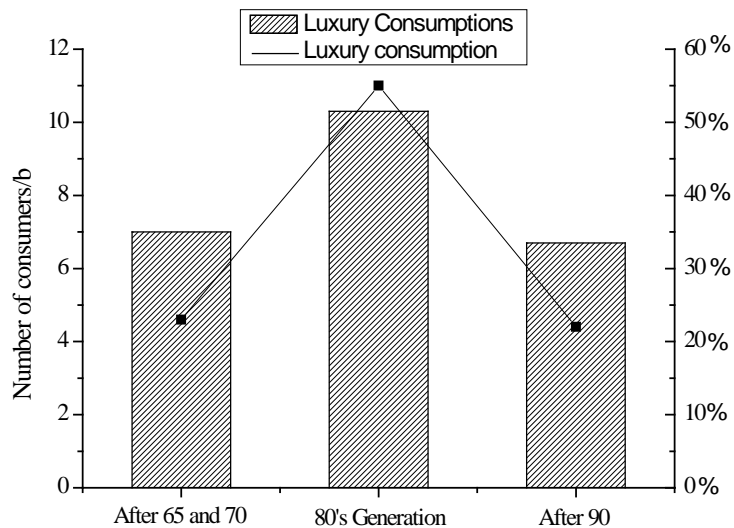


Figure. 5. Proportion of luxury consumers and consumption amount of each age group

Figure 5 shows the proportion of luxury consumers and expenditure in all age groups. The young generation born in the 1980s and 1990s form the main consumption force, with 10 million and 7 million respectively, accounting for 56% and 23% of the total consumption of luxury goods.

#### 4. Conclusion

In this research, different characteristics of luxury consumption and copycat consumption are studied. Based on the binary copycat consumption model, sociological manifestations of consumption choices are analyzed to compare the luxury consumption of white-collar workers born in the 1980s and 1990s, including the factors influencing the choice of copycat consumption and authentic consumption of white-collar workers, psychological performance and so on. On the basis of understanding the characteristics of luxury goods, the sociological performance of luxury consumption behavior is analyzed, and the binary copycat consumption pattern is formed from the imitation depth of the copycat form. From the perspective of consumers, copycat is an independent and non-deceptive choice with relatively low price attraction and customized luxury brand pursuit. All in all, analyzing the sociological behavior of consumption can improve the bad copycat consumption, surpass the low level of traditional copycat consumption, and help people form a correct consumption choice.

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