University of Sussex

Candidate No.: 117887

School of Business, Management and Economics

BUSINESS, MANAGEMENT & ECONOMICS DISSERTATIONS

TWO COPIES OF WORK TO BE SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OFFICE IN THE JUBILEE BUILDING

CANDIDATE NUMBER	MODULE CODE
117887	N1052
DATE DUE	**DATE SUBMITTED**
12 MAY 2016	12 MAY 2016
TITLE OF DISSERTATION	
SIGNAL VISIBILITY IN LUXURIES AND ELECTRONIC WORD-OF-MOUTH COMMUNICATIONS	
NAME OF DISSERTATION SUPERVISOR	
MS. RUXANDRA LUCA	
NAME OF MODULE CONVENOR	**N^{O} OF WORDS (approx.)**
DR. SHOVA THAPA KARKI	7500

DECLARATION: "In making this submission I declare that my work contains no examples of misconduct, such as plagiarism, collusion, or fabrication of results."

INCOMPLETE COVERSHEETS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED BY THE SCHOOL OFFICE

TUTORS WILL PROVIDE MARKS AND FEEDBACK ON SUSSEX DIRECT WITHIN 15 WORKING TERM DAYS FOLLOWING THE DEADLINE

SCRIPTS CAN BE COLLECTED EACH TERM AT A SPECIFIED DATE
(YOU WILL BE INFORMED BY THE SCHOOL OFFICE OF THE TERMLY COLLECTION DAY)

SIGNAL VISIBILITY IN LUXURIES

AND ELECTRONIC WORD-OF-MOUTH COMMUNICATIONS

Candidate Number: 117887

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

BSc in Business and Management Studies

School of Business, Management and Economics

University of Sussex

Date: May 2016

TABLE OF CONTENT

TABLE OF CONTENT

Page

Lists of Figures

Page

List of Table

Page

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express the deepest appreciation to my supervisor Ms. Ruxandra Luca for her guidance and support throughout my research project. Without her patient direction this research project would not have been possible.

In addition, I would like to thank the members from Facebook Group: Louis Vuitton Agenda Love who participated in my research, and Ms. Vahni Levitt who gave me the permission to post in the group. I would also like to give thanks to my friends, Anthea and Ruby, who helped me survive all the stress from this year.

I would like to express my gratitude to my sister Phyllis for her encouragement and support. I would like to offer my utmost gratitude to my beloved parents for their unceasing love and support throughout my research journey. Thank you.

ABSTRACT

In the modern era the way individuals share opinions and experience has shifted from traditional face-to-face word-of-mouth (WOM) communication to electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) on social media platforms, where they can bolster their self-esteem. On the other hand, people purchase luxury products to signal others of their identity and social status, and to boost self-esteem. This research is to examine whether different signal visibility in luxuries would influence one's behaviour in sharing eWOM. We conducted an online survey and received 108 responses. The results revealed that there is a positive relationship between the levels of signal visibility in luxuries and the tendency for one to be an opinion leader in sharing eWOM in general. Conspicuous users are more likely to share eWOM on social networking sites than through instant messaging, and are more likely to be opinion seekers. We also observed that opinion leaders are more likely to engage in luxury consumptions and to diverge from the mainstream. Practical implications for industry and recommendations for future research are discussed.

Keywords: Word-of-mouth (WOM); Electronic Word-of-mouth (eWOM); Social media; Opinion leadership; Opinion seekers, Luxuries; Signal visibility; Conspicuous

RESEARCH PROJECT

Signal Visibility in Luxuries and

Electronic Word-Of-Mouth (eWOM) Communications

INTRODUCTION

Word-of-Mouth (WOM) communications has traditionally been a one-on-one, face-to-face conversation in which individuals shares their consumption experiences with one another (Carl, 2006; Godes et al., 2005). However, in the modern era the way people share their opinions has changed. The use of nontraditional WOM - a one-to-many, written communication via electronic media (Godes et al., 2005), has grown exponentially (Das and Chen, 2007) and become a reliable information source for consumers (Bickart and Schindler, 2001; Brown et al., 2007; Hung and Li, 2007). Prior researches found that an individual shares WOM due to self-enhancement (Dichter, 1966; Packard and Wooten, 2013; Wojnicki and Godes, 2010). Williams (1990) suggested that opinion leaders are more sociable, gregarious and self-confident than non-leaders. On the other hand, individuals signal their identity by their possessions and behaviours (Berger and Heath, 2007, 2008; Douglas and Isherwood 1978; Goffman, 1959; Holt, 1998; Veblen, 1899; Weber 1968/1978; Wernerfelt, 1990). People purchase luxuries to boost self-esteem, facilitate the expression of their identity and signal their superiority or gain social status (Belk, 1985; Han et al., 2010; Richins, 1987; Veblen, 1899). Even though the world is having an economic recession, the worldwide luxury market is still growing, reaching over $210 billion (Bain, 2010); this shows that people are willing to purchase luxuries even in times of recession.

However, not much is known with respect to what kind of eWOM (e.g., social networking sites and instant messaging) consumers with different levels of signal visibility in accessible luxury fashion accessories engage in**.** Prior studies have identified three levels of luxury products (Allérès, 1990); and the three dimensions of luxury consumption (Berthon et al., 2009). Consequently, some individuals prefer more explicit signals, i.e. conspicuous-luxury consumption, while some prefer subtle signals, i.e., inconspicuous-luxury consumption. A scenario case will be used in our research to identify the two groups with different signal visibility. Moreover, not much is known in respect of opinion leadership in engaging luxury consumptions; and the relationships between levels of signal explicitness and opinion seekers.

The research investigates whether consumers with different levels of signal visibility, i.e., conspicuous or non-conspicuous, in accessible luxury fashion accessories consumption would have different tendencies towards being opinion leaders to share eWOM on different social media platforms, i.e. social networking sites and instant messaging; and to be opinion seekers. It is predicted that people who prefer high levels of signal visibility, i.e., more explicit signals such as larger and recognisable logos or patterns, are more likely to engage in sharing eWOM on social media platforms. Independent samples t test and Pearson's Chi-square test for independence will be used for the analysis. Our findings can be used as a reference for companies by making use of the levels of signal explicitness in luxuries to identify potential opinion leaders, who will be able to communicate, share and disseminate information via the effective use of eWOM on social media in reaching their followers.

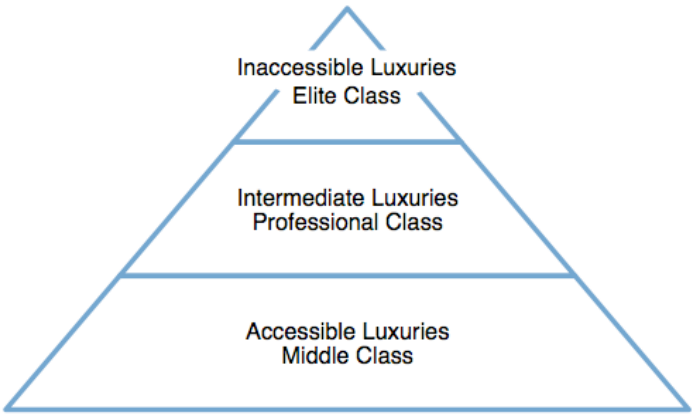
LITERATURE REVIEW

Luxury Products

What is Luxury Products?

'Luxury' is a term that means 'lasciviousness, sinful, self-indulgence' in old French, and means 'excess, extravagance' in Latin (Berthon et al, 2009). It is a challenge to define between the consumption of luxury goods and premium brands (Hieke, 2010; Jiang and Cova, 2012). Luxury can be divided into three levels in terms of the degree of consumer accessibility in the context of socio-economic class as shown in Figure 1, which includes inaccessible luxury, intermediate luxury level and accessible luxury (Allérès, 1990). Inaccessible luxuries refer to products that are with distinctive features and of high price for elite socio-economic class. Intermediate luxuries refer to products that are for the professional class. Accessible luxuries refer to products that can be accessed by middle class who try to promote to a higher social class by making luxury purchases.

FIGURE 1
HIERARCHY OF LUXURY BRANDS
(Allérès, 1990)



Berthon et al. (2009) concludes that the consumption of luxury products is comprised of three dimensions, which include the function value, symbolic value and experiential value. Individuals like to purchase luxury products as they provide extra pleasure and flatter all senses at once; not only going for functional benefits, the psychological benefits are the most important elements that set luxury products apart from non-luxury products (Grossman and Shapiro, 1988; Kapferer, 1997). The product itself and the brand is a meaningful social signal to reveal the type of a person that uses the brand (Wernerfelt, 1990). Some individuals are more likely to use luxuries that are conspicuous, while some prefer inconspicuous.

Signal Visibility: Conspicuous and Non-Conspicuous Consumption

Conspicuous consumption is the tendency of an individual in purchasing and exhibiting expensive products (Veblen, 1899). The signaling process is through the brand visible logos and explicit patterns that make it easily be observed and recognised by others (Berger and Ward, 2010), the larger the logo, the greater the desirability for one to engage in conspicuous consumption (Lee and Shrum, 2012; Nunes et al., 2011); and is driven by function and symbolic value (Levy, 1959). Prior studies found that individuals purchase luxuries not only for their functional value but also for signaling their superiority and success relative to others (Chadha and Husband, 2006; Veblen, 1899). Self-enhancement can motivate one to engage in conspicuous consumption (Belk, 1988; Browne and Kaldenberg, 1997). Households with higher income level are more likely to spend more of their income on visible products, such as fashion (e.g., Dior), automobiles (e.g., Bentley), and jewelry (e.g., Tiffany & Co.) than on underwear and laundry (Heffetz, 2007). Some prefer to spend more on visible products that can favourably differentiate themselves from the mainstream (Charles, et al., 2009).

However in some cases people prefer luxuries that are with subtle logos - inconspicuous consumption. Individuals have to equip with requisite knowledge to decode from the subtle signals that are only observable to them (Berger and Ward, 2010). Past researches have identified that consumers prefer products with implicit brand identifies due to the rejection of ostentatious status symbols (Brooks, 2001; Davis, 1992; Weber 1904/2001) or feeling guilty as being a conspicuous consumer (Seabrook, 2001). Figure 2 illustrates the examples of luxury products with high and low level of signal visibility. The levels of signal explicitness are used to differentiate one self to other parties (Tian et al., 2001), where self-image motivates WOM communications (Chung and Darke, 2006).

FIGURE 2
EXAMPLES OF LUXURY PRODUCTS WITH
DIFFERENT LEVELS OF SIGNAL VISIBILITY

High Level of Signal Visibility

More Explicit Signal

(1)

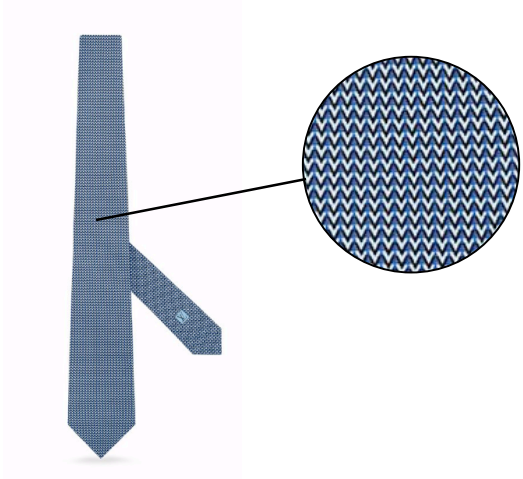
(3)

Low Level of Signal Visibility

Subtle Signal

(2)

(4)

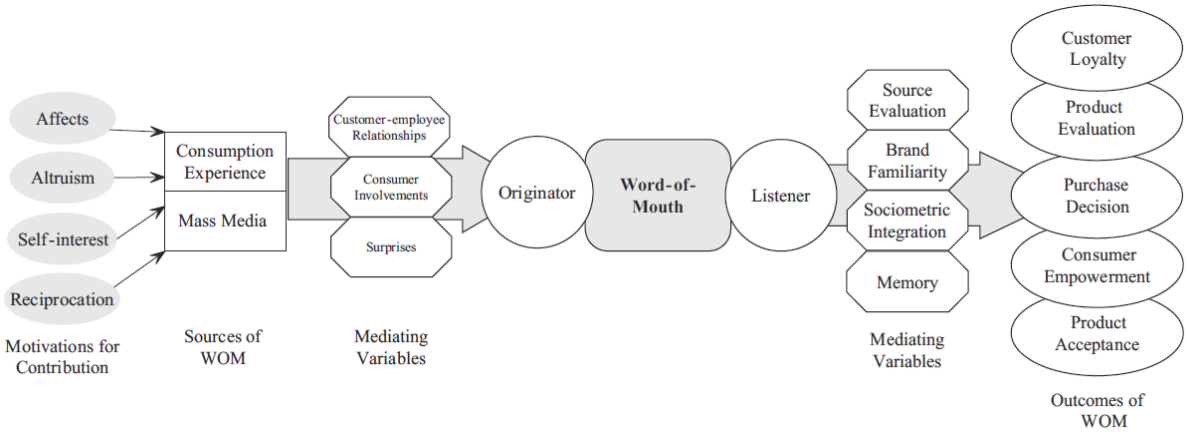


(1) Gucci Shoulder Bag (Gucci, 2016), (2) Hermes "Birkin Bag" (Portero, 2016),
(3) Burberry Tie (Burberry, 2016), (4) Louis Vuitton Tie, patterned with VVV (LV, 2016)

Word-Of-Mouth (WOM) Communications

Word-of-mouth (WOM) communications enable individuals to share their consumption experiences and information with one another towards or away from particular products, brands or services, which requires the physical presence of the senders and receivers (Arndt, 1967; Carl, 2006; Godes et al., 2005; Hawkins et al., 2004). It is an informal communication that focuses on the ownership, usage, or characteristics of certain products and services, or the sellers (Westbrook, 1987). The willingness of an individual sharing experiences with others could be motivated by their affective elements i.e., satisfaction, pleasure and sadness (Dichter, 1966; Neelamegham and Jain, 1999; Nyer, 1997). Figure 3 illustrates the conceptual model of WOM. Consumers perceive WOM as a more reliable, credible and trustworthy source than firm-initiated communications (Grewal et al., 2003). In the digital era individuals not only use traditional WOM to share information, but also eWOM to create new dynamics in the market by building virtual relationships and communities.

FIGURE 3
CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF WORD-OF-MOUTH
(Litvin et al., 2008)



Traditional WOM

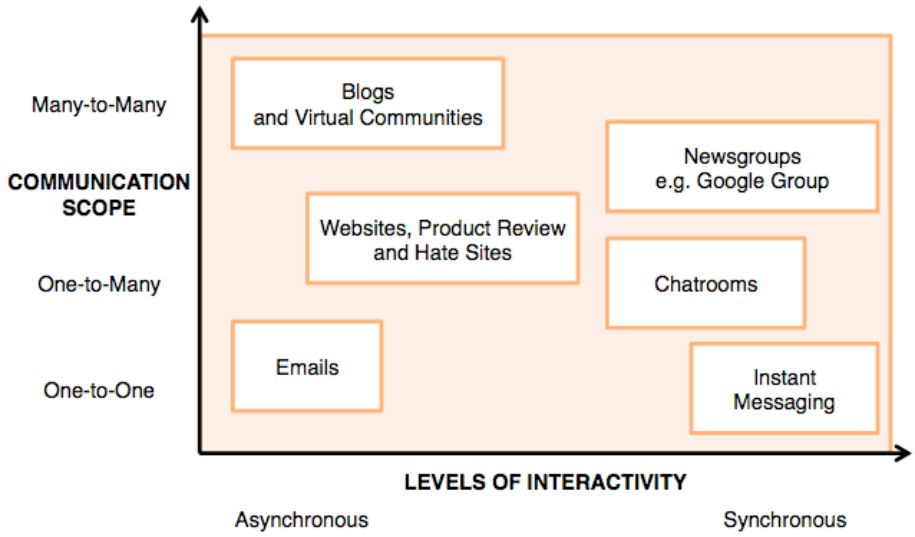
Traditional WOM is a process that an individual shares information and opinions that may influence the other parties' decision in purchasing or using particular products, brands, or services (Hawkins et al., 2004). Dichter (1966) has identified four motives for traditional positive WOM: product-involvement, self-involvement, other-involvement, and message-involvement. One of the reasons people sharing WOM is due to self-enhancement (Dichter, 1966; Packard and Wooten, 2013; Wojnicki and Godes, 2010). It is a tendency to look for experiences that enhance or bolster one's self-concept (Baumeister, 1998; Sirgy, 1982), which makes a person looks better when talking about interesting things than talking about mundane ones (Berger and Schwartz, 2011). With the advancement of Internet technologies, it is common for individuals to share information and opinions online using Electronic Word-of-mouth (eWOM).

Electronic Word-of-mouth (eWOM) and Social Media

Electronic Word-of-mouth (eWOM) is a powerful marketing tool that can easily influence other's purchasing decisions (Bickart and Schindler, 2001; Kumar and Benbasat, 2006; Zhang et al., 2010). Social media have become a medium that organisations use the new hybrid component of integrated marketing communications to engage with their target audiences (Mangold and Faulds, 2009). Past studies have found that social media websites are appropriate platforms to spread eWOM (Canhoto and Clark, 2013; Erkan and Evans, 2014; Kim, Sung and Kang, 2014). There are several formats to share information online, which include social networking sites (e.g., Facebook), creativity works-sharing sites (e.g., YouTube and Instagram) and micro-blogging sites (e.g., Twitter) (Mangold and Faulds, 2009). Users can use these platforms to create and exchange information and their opinions with one another.

Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM) has similar characteristics with WOM and the major difference is that eWOM can be shared by individuals at their convenience, not limited by time and place (Sun et al., 2006). There are various types of eWOM media online channels, including emails, blogs, webpages, newsgroups, chatrooms, and instant messaging as shown in Figure 4 (Hoffman and Novak, 1996; Phelps et al., 2004; Thorson and Rodgers, 2006; Dwyer, 2007; Hung and Li, 2007). EWOM is commonly spread through instant messaging and online social networking sites.

FIGURE 4
A TYPOLOGY OF EWOM CHANNELS
(Litvin et al., 2008)



Instant Messaging. Instant Messaging is a synchronous, one-to-one channel for people to communicate and exchange texts, images, videos and voice transmission in real-time (Cole-Lewis and Kershaw, 2010; Hawn, 2009; Ramirez and Broneck, 2009; Ogara et al., 2014). WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, Instagram Direct and Snapchat are examples of the instant messaging mobile services that are commonly used in 2016 and these applications have overtaken the traditional Short Message Service (SMS) operated by cellular network carriers (BBC, 2013). If individuals prefer to share their eWOM with more people, even with strangers (Dellarocas, 2003), they would use social networking sites instead.

Social Networking Sites. Social networking sites are web-based services that enable users to build a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system and to connect a list of other users such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. The information of eWOM on social networking sites becomes more reliable and trustworthy due to reduced anonymity (Chu and Choi, 2011; Wallace et al., 2009). These websites allow opinion leaders to create, promote and spread eWOM of the brands' profiles of the products and services they have engaged in.

Opinion Leadership

One form of WOM communication is opinion leadership. Opinion leaders are individuals that are in the same social class as non-leaders, but may enjoy a higher social status within the group (Rogers, 1962). They are product category specific (Childers, 1986) and are loyal to particular products (Godes and Mayzlin, 2009).

Opinion Leaders

Compared with non-leaders, opinion leaders stick to one product category (Childers, 1986) and are loyal and familiar with particular products (Godes and Mayzlin, 2009; Chan and Misra, 1990). They are more social gregarious and self-confident (Reynolds and Darden, 1971; Williams, 1990) and have more user experiences and expertise (Venkatraman, 1989) in providing information for others. Their roles contribute to the innovation diffusions (Roger, 1976; Schreier et al., 2007) and their opinions can be spread using instant messaging and/or on social networking sites, which are influential to others' consumption decision (Iyenger et al., 2011). These receivers who are at the end of the two-step influence flow that influenced by opinion leadership are the opinion seekers (Flynn et al., 1996).

Opinion Seekers

Opinion seeking is a process of information seeking. The motivations behind are to let the opinion followers make suitable purchase decisions that help satisfy their needs (Punj and Staelin, 1983), to facilitate purchasing tasks and to reduce risk (Assael, 1987). Prior studies found that opinion seeking is one of the elements of external information search (Beatty and Smith, 1987; Bennett and Mandell, 1969; Newman, 1977; Punj and Staelin, 1983). It is used to satisfy a need or in trying satisfy a need (Katz and Lazarsfeld, 1955).

Building on the definition from Rogers and Cartano (1962), Flynn et al. (1996) suggested that the occurrence of opinion leadership is from the process where an individual try to be influential on the purchasing bahaviour of another party in a specific product field. On the other hand, the occurrence of opinion seeking is from the process where an individual search for advices from other parties before they make a purchase. Prior studies also found that self-esteem can be raised when an individual browses on social media (Gonzales and Hancock, 2011; Wilcox and Stephen, 2013).

Relationships between Signal Visibility In Luxuries and eWOM Communications

Conspicuous luxury possessions can signal information to others, which describes extravagant spending on products intended chiefly to display wealth and signal status (Veblen, 1899). To ensure desired recognition, having more visible consumptions are easier for others to make desired inferences. Some people prefer subtle signals of inconspicuous consumption in luxuries in order to avoid ostentation (Berger and Ward, 2010) or people just dislike logos (Klein, 1999). Therefore, we proposed that an individual having a high level of signal visibility is more likely to be an opinion leader that shares eWOM in on online social media platforms. We will explore further by conducting an online survey.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND OBJECTIVES

The research aim is to determine whether people with different levels of signal visibility, i.e., conspicuous or inconspicuous in accessible luxury fashion accessories consumption may influence one's behaviour to be an opinion leader that shares eWOM in general. Figure 5 shows the conceptual flow the current research. First, the research reveals how people define a luxury purchase and identify the channels people acquire information on luxury products. The first hypothesis is related to the level of signal explicitness in luxuries and the use of eWOM on social platforms. We proposed that the more an individual tends to choose a conspicuous luxury product that is with more explicit signals, the more willing they are to share their opinions or experiences with others as they may feel it is a way to be self-enhance. The following behaviours of the opinion leaders will be measured: (a) expressing opinions, (b) sharing photos, (c) sharing videos, (d) writing reviews, (e) rate products, and (f) commenting on products.

H1: People who prefer more explicit signals are more likely to be an opinion leader in sharing eWOM in general than individuals who prefer subtle signals.

It is believed that individuals who prefer more explicit signals are more likely to go on social networking sites, where the communication scope is one-to-many and the level of interactivity is asynchronous. The second hypothesis is to investigate the relationship between levels of signal explicitness and the likelihood in sharing eWOM on social networking sites.

H2: People who prefer conspicuous luxuries are more likely to use social networking sites than individuals who prefer inconspicuous luxuries.

In addition, individuals may choose a subtle or quiet logo when they choose a luxury product so as to avoid signaling their social-status to the outsiders (Brooks, 2001; Davis, 1992; Weber 1904/2001), but to be recognisable to those who are familiar to the brand (Berger and Ward, 2010). The third hypothesis would investigate the relationships between levels of signal explicitness in luxuries and the tendency in sharing eWOM through instant messaging, which is a one-to-one communication scope and synchronous interactivity.

H3: Individuals who prefer inconspicuous luxuries are more likely to use instant messaging than those who choose conspicuous luxuries.

Furthermore, as opinion leaders are experts on certain products and they are considered to be more social gregarious and self-confident (Reynolds and Darden, 1971; Williams, 1990). The forth hypothesis is to test whether there is any relationship between the tendency in sharing eWOM and the likelihood to engage in luxury consumptions.

H4: People who prefer sharing eWOM are more engaged in luxury consumptions.

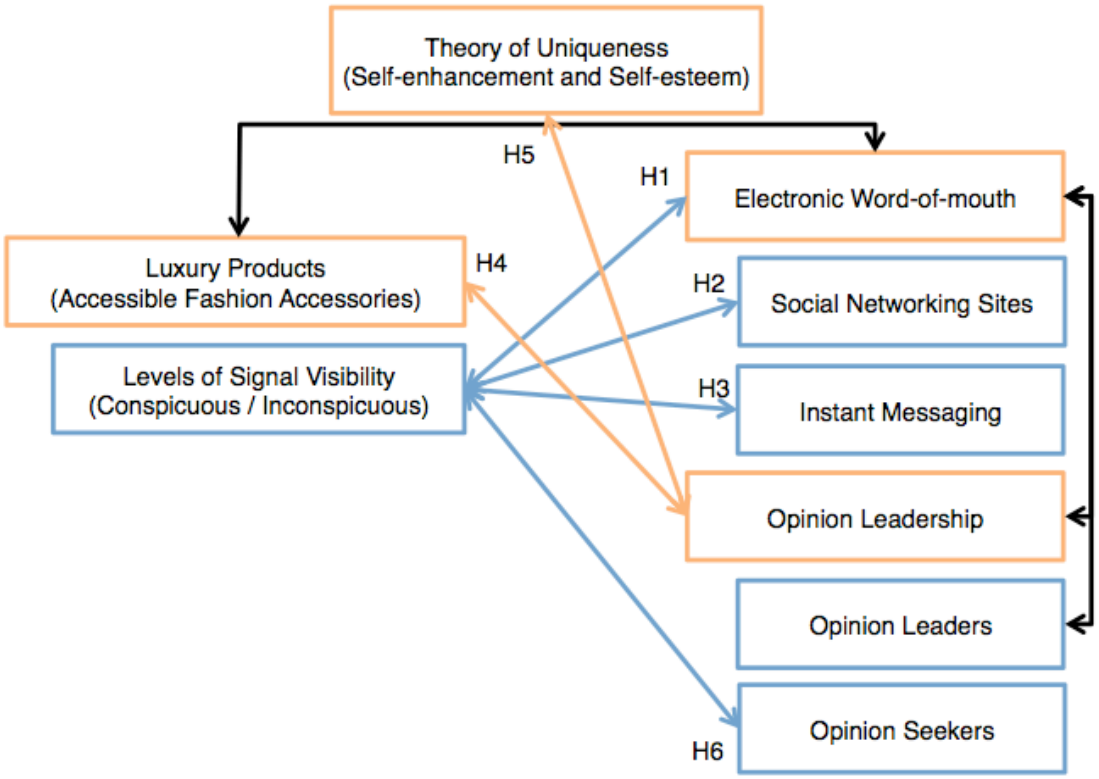
The fifth hypothesis is to assess the relationships between opinion leadership and the tendency of divergence from mainstream. Prior studies have found that individuals share WOM due to self-enhancement (Dichter, 1966; Packard and Wooten, 2013; Wojnicki and Godes, 2010), but not much is known in respect of the relationships between opinion leadership and the tendency for one to diverge from the mainstream. We proposed that the more willing an individual to share eWOM, the more likely they would acquire luxuries to diverge from the mainstream.

H5: People who share eWOM are more likely to acquire luxury brands to diverge from the mainstream.

The last hypothesis is to investigate the relationships between levels of signal visibility and the tendency of being an opinion seeker. As prior studies has shown that self-esteem can be raised when an individual browses on social media (Gonzales and Hancock, 2011; Wilcox and Stephen, 2013). We proposed that individuals who prefer more signal visibility in luxuries are more likely to be an opinion seeker in order to follow the latest trend.

H6: People who prefer more signal explicitness are more likely to be an opinion seeker.

FIGURE 5
CONCEPTUAL FLOW OF THE RESEARCH



METHODOLOGY

Participants, Sampling and Procedures

Participants. In order to measure the signal explicitness and their preferences in spreading eWOM online, 108 participants who are Internet users aged 16 or above (21 male, 87 female, mean age = 30.48, *SD* = 11.24) were invited and deemed appropriate for the study to complete an online self-completion questionnaire using Google Form, of which 25 were members from a group on Facebook: Louis Vuitton Agenda Love (Facebook, 2016). A hyperlink to Google Form was posted on three leading social networks platforms, i.e., Facebook, WhatsApp and Twitter, which are commonly used in 2016.

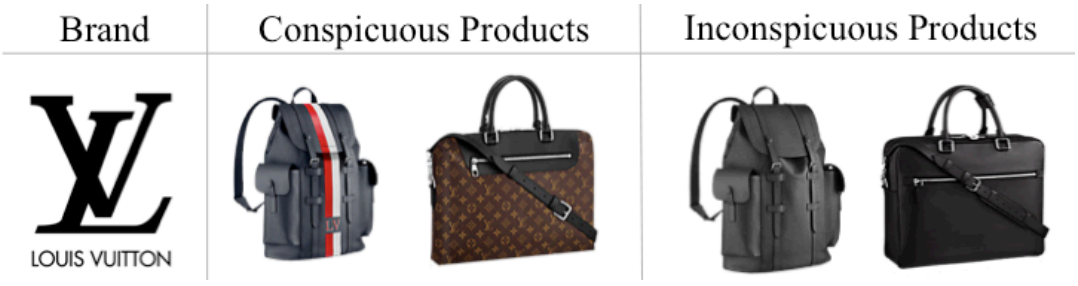
Sampling. Snowball sampling strategy (Goodman, 1961) was used throughout the research process. It is a simple and cost-efficient way in reaching participants who shared similar characteristics, i.e., using the online social networks. Nevertheless, snowball sampling strategy has its limitation that the researcher has little control over the sampling method.

Procedures. The survey was constructed using the Google Form and took approximately 15 minutes for the participants to complete. They were required to read carefully the brief instruction on the purpose of the study (Appendix 1). They were informed the data they provided would be kept strictly confidential and ensured anonymous. Participants were asked to check the box on the first page to confirm they understood and accept the instructions before they started the survey. The survey conducted of three parts (Appendix 2).

The first session was related to their consumption behaviours of luxury products. Questions regarding how participants define luxury products were adapted from Mintel, 2015. The second session was used to assess their usage of social media. The last session was related to their demographic data. General socio-demographic data was collected on such as gender, ethnicity, level of study, level of income per month, and age. The study has granted the ethical approval from University of Sussex Ethical Review Board (Appendix 3).

They were shown pairs of high-end products from the same manufacturer, i.e., four handbags from Louis Vuitton that two had explicit logo (e.g., visible LV logo or Burberry pattern), and the other two did not (e.g., plain colours) (Bergen and Ward, 2010). They were asked to indicate and rate the option they prefer in a scenario case that supposed the participants won and rewarded a prize in a lucky draw and they were given a choice to choose from the one with either high or low level of signal explicitness as shown in Figure 6. To control the differences between the options, all pairs will be from the same brand, made of same material, and photographed from the same angle.

FIGURE 6
DIFFERENTIATION OF USERS WITH
DIFFERENT LEVELS OF SIGNAL EXPLICITNESS



The experiments were used to test the relationships between levels of signal explicitness in luxuries and one's behaviour in sharing eWOM. First, we provided an overview of our exploratory survey. Followed by was Study 1, which used to examine whether people who prefer more signal explicitness in luxuries are more likely to be an opinion leaders in sharing eWOM in general, which includes expressing opinions, sharing photos and videos, writing reviews, rating and commenting on products. The second and third hypothesis tested the relationships between levels of signal explicitness and the likelihood in sharing eWOM on social networking sites and instant messaging respectively. Study 4 and 5 investigated the tendency in engaging luxury consumptions and in diverging from the mainstream of opinion leaders. The last study assessed the relationships between level of signal explicitness in luxuries and the tendency of being opinion seekers.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Overview Results. We had collected 108 responses, of which 21 male and 87 female, through Google Form. Table 1 indicated the distribution of the demographic data of our observed participants in terms of race, educational level, and income level.

TABLE 1
DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

RACE / ETHNICITY	FREQUENCY	%
Asian	64	59.3
White	27	25.0
Hispanic	9	8.3
Black	4	3.7
Others	4	3.7
Total	108	100

EDUCATION	FREQUENCY	%
Colleges	25	23.1
Undergraduates	52	48.1
Postgraduates	23	21.3
PhD	4	3.7
Others	4	3.7
Total	108	100

INCOME GROUP	FREQUENCY	%
Below £1,500	44	40.7
£1,500 - £3,000	27	25.0
Above £3,000	0	0
Prefer not to answer	37	34.3
Total	108	100

How people define luxury products? Table 2 showed the perceptions of participants on luxury products.

TABLE 2
DEFINITIONS OF LUXURY PRODUCTS

DEFINITIONS	%
Brands with a long-standing history of exclusivity	74.1
Use of higher-quality materials and craftsmanship	65.7
Designer labels or visible designer trademark patterns / initials	41.7
A non-necessary items	34.3
Paying a higher price	30.6
One-of-a-kind or limited-availability collectors' items	29.6
Choice to customise	17.6

Where do people acquire information about luxury products? Table 3 revealed that the major channels the observed participants used to acquire information about luxury products are associated with a high level of interactivity. They are less likely to obtain information through channels with a low level of interactivity, except for Magazines (58.3%).

TABLE 3
CHANNELS TO ACQUIRE INFORMATION ABOUT LUXURY PRODUCTS

INTERACTIVITY	CHANNELS	%
High Level	Internet	68.5
	Stores	55.6
	Social Networking Sites	53.7
	Family and Friends	38.9
Low Level	Magazines	58.3
	TV Advertisements	28.7
	Billboards	18.5
	Email	12.0
	Newsletter	5.6

Use of Social Media. Table 4 illustrated the likelihood for the observed participants (n = 108) in using social media platforms.

TABLE 4
USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

TYPES	PLATFORMS	FREQUENCY	%
Social Networking Sites	Facebook	81	75.0
	Instagram	55	50.9
	Twitter	18	16.7
Instant Messaging	WhatsApp	62	57.4
	Snapchat	24	22.2

STUDY 1

LEVELS OF SIGNAL VISIBILITY AND OPINION LEADERSHIP

Study 1 was used to test whether there was a relationship between level of signal visibility in luxuries and the tendency for one to be an opinion leader to share eWOM.

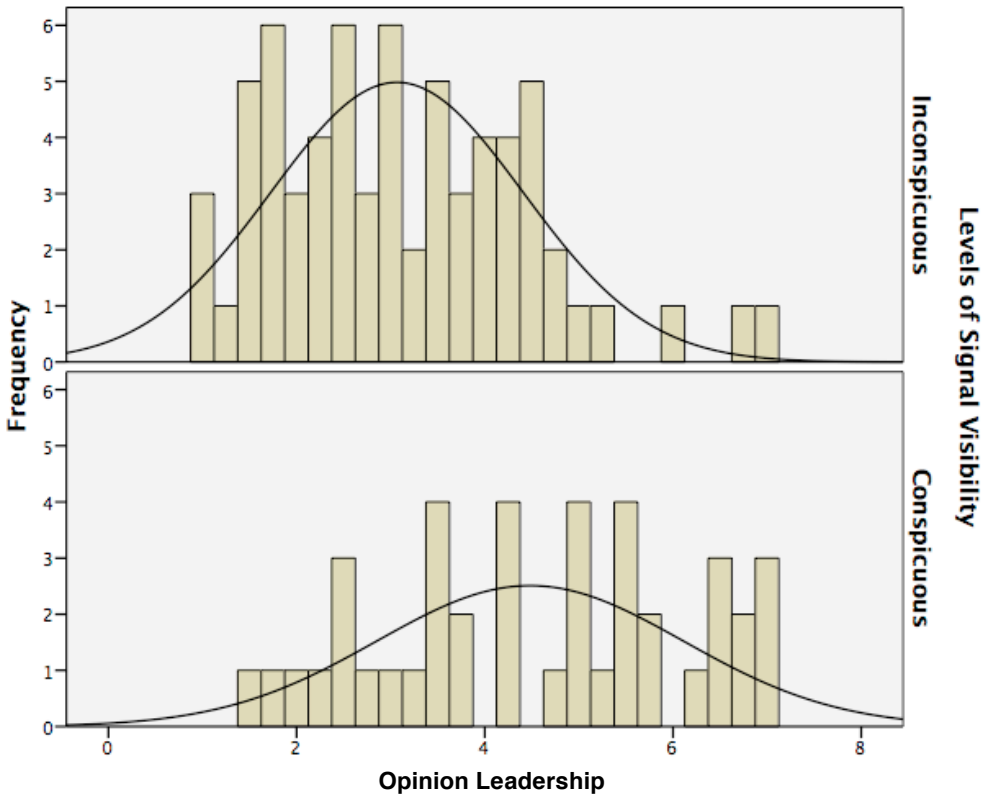
H1: People who prefer more explicit signals are more likely to be an opinion leader in sharing eWOM than those who prefer subtle signals.

Measures. The independent variable was the level of signal visibility of the participants, of which 41 participants prefer conspicuous luxuries and 67 participants prefer inconspicuous luxuries.

The dependent variable was the likelihood of being an opinion leader in sharing eWOM, which includes expressing opinions, giving advice, sharing photos and videos, writing reviews, rating and commenting products on social media. Participants (n = 108) were asked to rank on a 7-point likert scale ranging from 1 = Very Unlikely to 7 = Very Likely to indicate their purposes they go on social media. The means of these variables were averaged.

Results. An independent-samples t test was conducted to compare the tendency in sharing eWOM of individuals with different levels of signal visibility in luxuries (Appendix 4). The significant value for Levene's test was larger than .05 (.053); therefore, the variances were assumed equal. There was a statistically significant difference between the mean scores in the likelihood in sharing eWOM of individuals who prefer subtle explicitness (n = 67, M = 3.07, SD = 1.34) and high level of signal visibility (n = 41, M = 4.48, SD = 1.63), $t(106) = -4.9$, $p < .001$, two-tailed as shown in Figure 7. The magnitude of the differences in the means (mean difference = -1.42, 95% *CI:* -2.35 to -1.11) was large (eta squared = 0.18). It represented 18% of variance in the likelihood of being an opinion leader in sharing eWOM was explained by the levels of signal visibility.

FIGURE 7
LEVELS OF SIGNAL VISIBILITY AND OPINION LEADERSHIP



STUDY 2

LEVELS OF SIGNAL VISIBILITY AND THE USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES

H2: People who prefer conspicuous luxuries are more likely to use social networking sites than individuals who prefer inconspicuous luxuries.

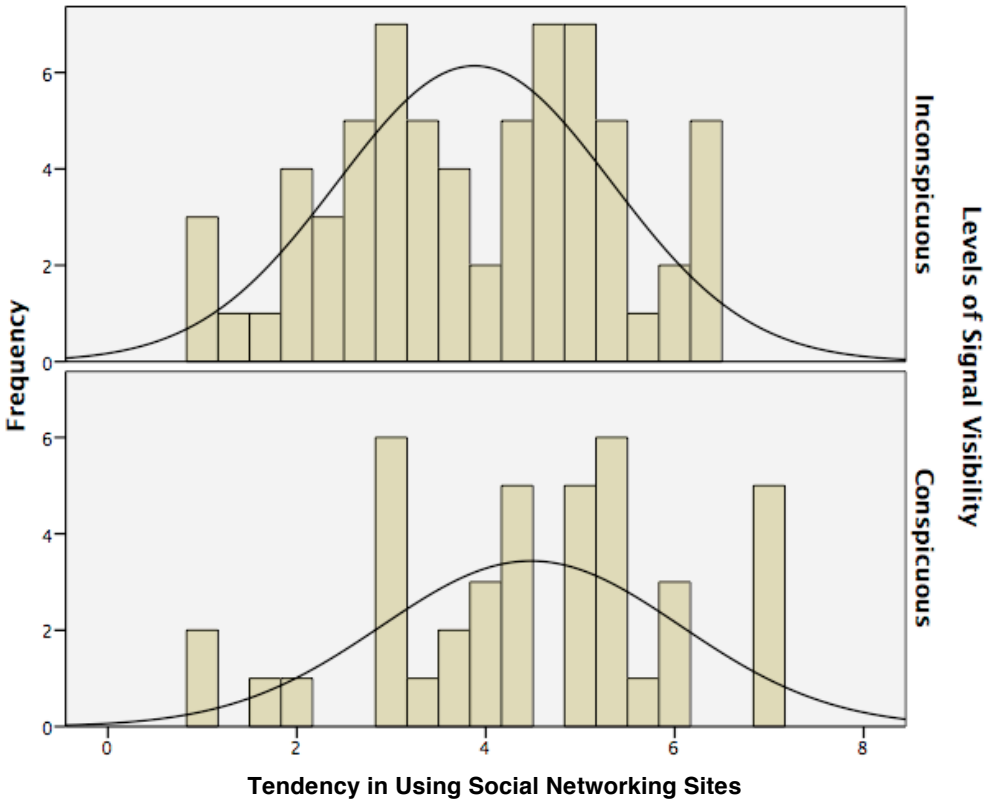
Measures. Similar to Study 1, the independent variable was the levels of signal explicitness of the participants (n = 108), of which 41 participants prefer conspicuous luxuries and 67 participants prefer inconspicuous luxuries.

The dependent variables were the likelihood in using social networking sites. Participants (n = 108) were asked to indicate their usage on Facebook and Instagram on a 7-point likert scale ranging from 1 = Very Unlikely to 7 = Very Likely. The means of these two variables were averaged. These two social networking sites were selected as the observed participants commonly used them. 75% of our observed participants used Facebook and 50.9% of them used Instagram as shown in Table 4.

Results. An independent-samples t test was conducted to compare the likelihood in using social networking sites between individuals who prefer different levels of signal visibility (Appendix 5). The significant value for Levene's test was larger than .05 (.82); therefore, the variances were assumed equal. There was a statistically significant difference between the mean scores in the usage of social networking sites for inconspicuous users (n = 67, M = 3.88, SD = 1.45) and conspicuous users (n = 41, M = 4.48, SD = 1.59), $t(106) = -2.01$, $p = .047$, two-tailed as shown in Figure 8.

The magnitude of the differences in the means (mean difference = -.599, 95% *CI:* -1.19 to -.008) was very small (eta squared = 0.04). It represented only 4% of variance in the likelihood of using social networking sites was explained by the levels of signal visibility.

FIGURE 8
LEVELS OF SIGNAL VISIBILITY AND
THE USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES



STUDY 3

LEVELS OF SIGNAL VISIBILITY AND THE USE OF INSTANT MESSAGING

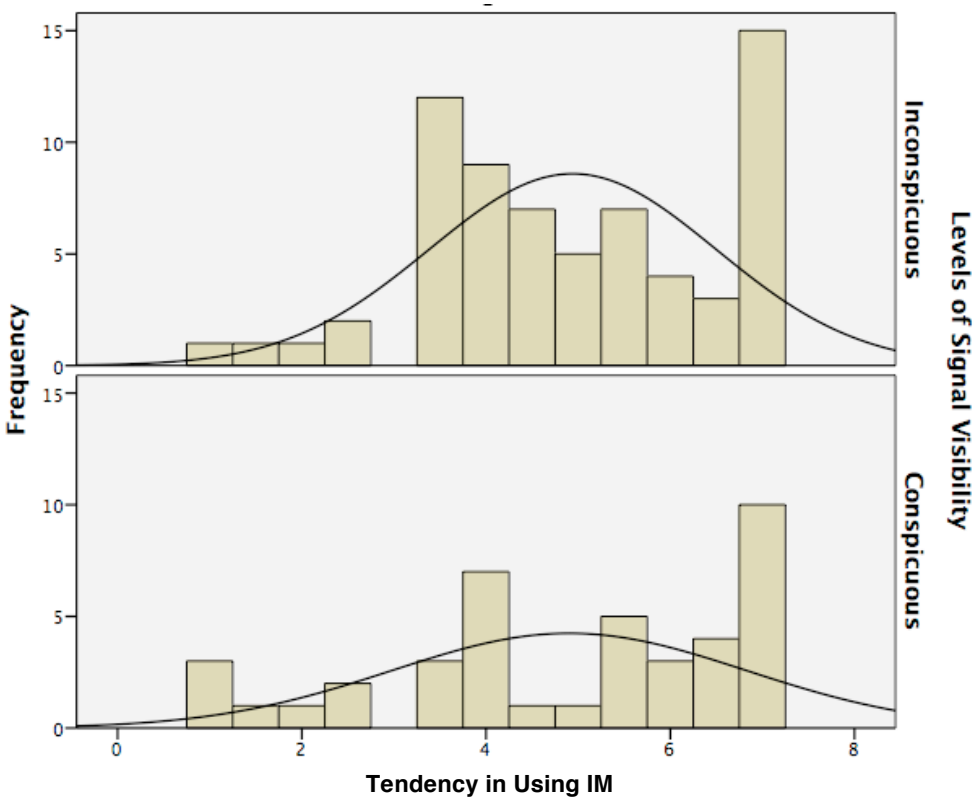
H3: Individuals who prefer inconspicuous luxuries are more likely to use instant messaging than those who choose conspicuous luxuries.

Measures. Similar to Study 1, the independent variable was the levels of signal explicitness of the participants (n = 108), of which 41 participants prefer conspicuous luxuries and 67 participants prefer inconspicuous luxuries.

The dependent variable was the likelihood in using instant messaging. Participants (n = 108) were asked to indicate how likely they use instant messaging and the IM application, i.e., WhatsApp. A 7-point likert scale ranging from 1 = Very Unlikely to 7 = Very Likely was used. The means of these two variables were averaged. 57.4% of our observed participants used WhatsApp.

Results. An independent-samples t test was conducted to compare the likelihood in using instant messaging between individuals who prefer high or low level of signal visibility (Appendix 6). The significant value for Levene's test was larger than .05 (.06); therefore, the variances were assumed equal. There was no statistically significant difference between the mean scores in the usage of instant messaging for inconspicuous users (n = 67, M = 4.94, SD = 1.56) and conspicuous users (n = 41, M = 4.9, SD = 1.93), $t(106) = .11$, $p = .91$, two-tailed as shown in Figure 9. The magnitude of the differences in the means (mean difference = .038, 95% *CI:* -.63 to .71) was very small (eta squared < .01). The null hypothesis was not rejected.

FIGURE 9
LEVELS OF SIGNAL VISIBILITY AND
THE USE OF INSTANT MESSAGING



STUDY 4

OPINION LEADERSHIP AND LEVELS OF DESIRABILITY IN LUXURY PRODUCTS

H4: People who prefer sharing eWOM are more engaged in luxury consumptions.

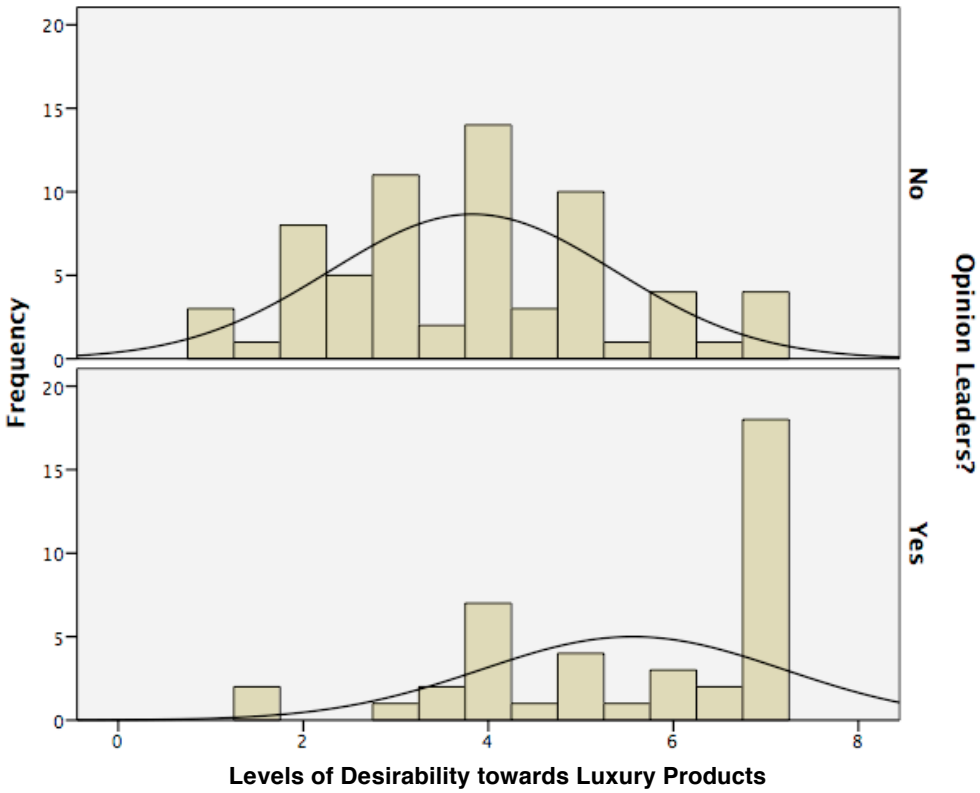
Measures. The independent variable was the tendency in sharing eWOM. Participants (n = 108) were asked to rank their preferences on a 7-point likert scale ranging from 1 = Very Unlikely to 7 = Very Likely. Questions were related to their likelihood in sharing eWOM, which included expressing opinions, giving advice, sharing photos and videos, writing reviews, rating and commenting on products on social media. The means of these variables were averaged. For the means scored from 1 to 4 were classified as not likely to share eWOM, i.e., not opinion leaders, and the means scored above 4 were considered as likely to share eWOM, i.e., opinion leaders.

The dependent variable was the participants' engagement towards luxury products. Participants (n = 108) were asked to indicate their preferences on a 7-point likert scale from 1 = Very Unlikely to 7 = Very Likely about their likelihood in using and purchasing luxury products. The mean of these two variables was averaged.

Results. An independent-samples t test was conducted to compare the scores of engagement towards luxury products for opinion leaders and non-opinion leaders (Appendix 7). The significant value for Levene's test was larger than .05 (.32); therefore, the variances were assumed equal. There was a statistically significant difference between the mean scores in the engagement in luxury consumptions of non-opinion leaders (n = 67, M = 3.83, SD = 1.54) and opinion leaders (n = 41, M = 5.56, SD = 1.64), $t(106) = -5.53$, $p < .001$,

two-tailed as shown in Figure 10. The magnitude of the differences in the means (mean difference = -1.73, 95% *CI:* -2.35 to -1.11) was large (eta squared = 0.22). It represented 22% of variance in the likelihood of an individual engaged towards luxury product was explained by the tendency in sharing eWOM.

FIGURE 10
OPINION LEADERSHIP AND
LEVELS OF DESIRABILITY TOWARDS LUXURY PRODUCTS



STUDY 5

OPINION LEADERSHIP AND
DIVERGENCE FROM MAINSTREAM

H5: People who share eWOM are more likely to acquire luxury brands to diverge from the mainstream.

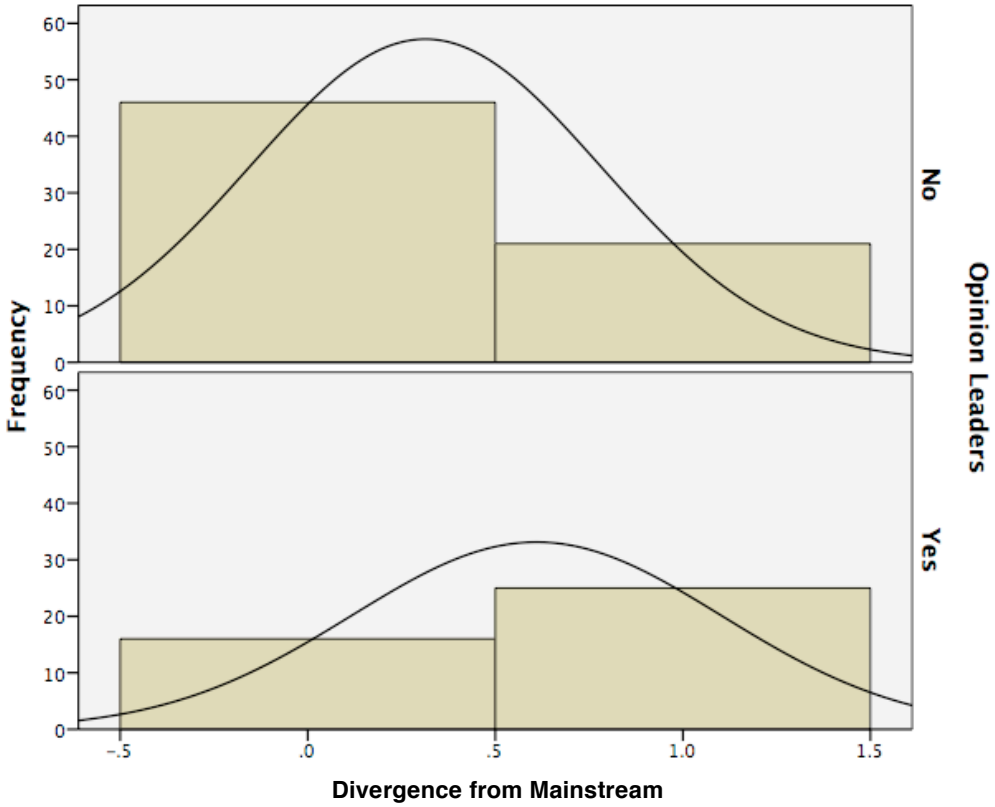
Measures. Similar to Study 4 the independent variable was the tendency in sharing eWOM of the participants (n = 108), of which 41 participants willing to share eWOM were considered as opinion leaders; and 67 participants preferred not to share were considered as non-opinion leaders.

The dependent variable was the tendency of divergence from the mainstream. Questions were related to their tendency in differentiating from mainstream and avoiding things that typical mainstream consumers would buy. The means of these variables were averaged and categorised. Means scored from 1 to 4 were classified as likely to diverge, and means scored above 4 were considered as not likely to diverge.

Results. A Pearson Chi-square test for independence (with Yates Continuity Correction) was used (Appendix 8). All the expected cell sizes were greater than 5 and the minimum expected count was 17.46, which did not violate the assumption. The Chi-square indicated that there was a significant association between the levels of signal explicitness and the likelihood of divergence from the mainstream, χ^2 (1, n = 108) = 7.96, p = .003, phi = .29 as shown in Figure 11.

FIGURE 11

OPINION LEADERSHIP AND DIVERGENCE FROM MAINSTREAM



STUDY 6

LEVELS OF SIGNAL VISIBILITY AND OPINION SEEKERS

H6: People who prefer more signal explicitness are more likely to be an opinion seeker.

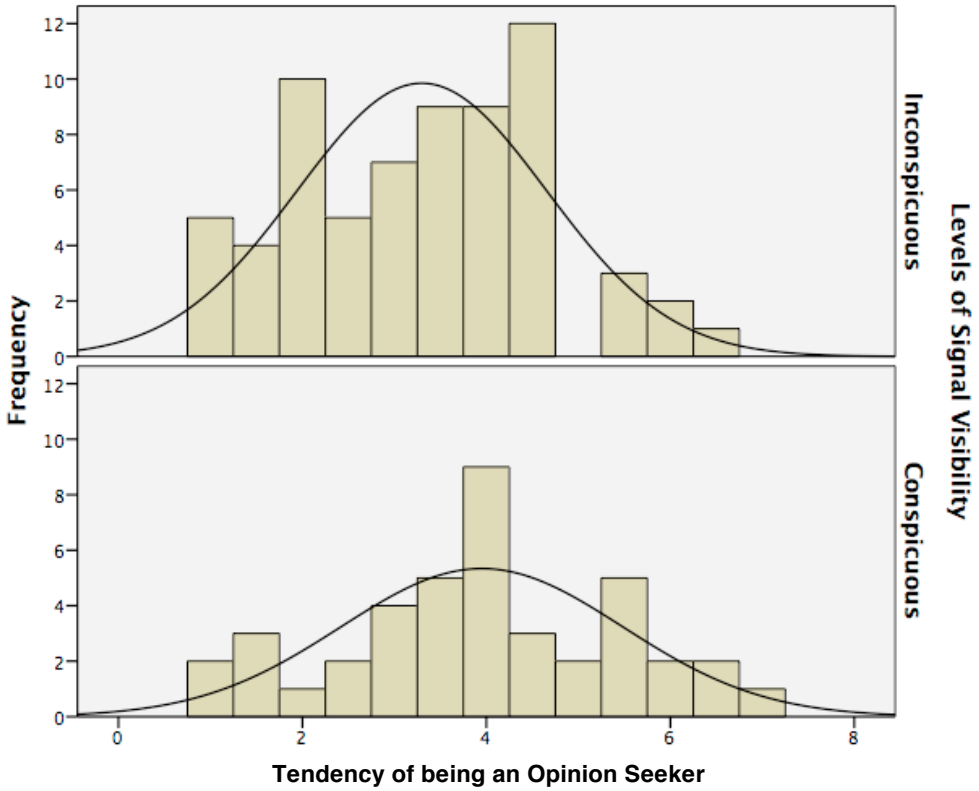
Measures. Similar to Study 1, the independent variable was the levels of signal explicitness of the participants (n = 108), of which 41 participants prefer more explicit signals and 67 participants prefer subtle signals.

The dependent variable was the tendency of being an opinion seeker. Participants (n = 108) were asked to rank their preferences on a 7-point likert scale ranging from 1 = Very Unlikely to 7 = Very Likely about their preference in using social media and making a luxury purchase to keep update with latest trend. The means of these variables were averaged.

Results. An independent-samples t test was conducted to compare the tendency of being an opinion seeker between individuals who prefer high or low level of signal visibility (Appendix 9). The significant value for Levene's test was larger than .05 (.75); therefore, the variances were assumed equal. There was a statistically significant difference between the tendency of being an opinion seeker of inconspicuous users (n = 67, M = 3.30, SD = 1.36) and conspicuous users (n = 41, M = 3.95, SD = 1.53), $t(106) = -2.31$, p = .023, two-tailed. The magnitude of the differences in the means (mean difference = -.653, 95% *CI:* -1.21 to -.09) was small (eta squared = 0.05) as shown in Figure 12. It represented only 5% of variance in the likelihood of being an opinion seekers was explained by the levels of signal visibility.

FIGURE 12

LEVELS OF SIGNAL VISIBILITY AND OPINION SEEKERS



GENERAL DISCUSSION

The current research shows the relationships between levels of signal visibility and one's behaviour in sharing eWOM in general. Not surprisingly, Study 1 indicated there was a significant relationship between levels of signal visibility and tendency of being an opinion leader in sharing eWOM. The higher the tendency an individual chooses conspicuous luxuries, the more likely the individual to be an opinion leader in sharing eWOM in general, which includes expressing opinions, giving advice, sharing photos and videos, writing reviews, rating and commenting on products.

The result was consistent with the signaling through self-enhancement. People who preferred high level of signal explicitness were conspicuous users that would use the explicit signals to enhance their self-identity (Belk, 1988) and to signal others that they were devoted and attached to brands that were similar to them (Fournier, 1998). On the other hand, those who share eWOM were opinion leaders that exerted their own personal influence (Rogers and Cartano, 1962) and signaled their expertise to other parties (Wojnicki and Godes, 2011). Hence, people uses eWOM to share contents that make them look good (Chung and Darke, 2006; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Sundaram et al., 1998), look unique, signal connoisseurship, and gain social status (Dichter, 1966; Engel et al., 1993; Rimé, 2009).

Study 2 and 3 revealed that individuals who preferred high level of signal explicitness were more likely to share eWOM on social networking sites than those prefer subtle signals. However, there was no significant difference between the uses of instant messaging. This can be explained by the gratifications in using social media. Social networking sites such as Facebook and Instagram are platforms that primarily enable users to connect with friends, post and view photos (Raacke and Bonds-Raccke, 2008). The level of interactivity of social networking sites is asynchronous, which has the function of email that enables users to send and receive private messages; and the function of an online forum that the user-generated content can be visible and share within their community (Quan-Haase and Young, 2010). On the other hand, the primarily purposes in using instant messaging are to maintain and support relationships with distant others (Huang and Yen, 2003) and to build relationships and a sense of connection (Hu et al., 2004). Individuals also use instant messaging for entertainment and relaxation, i.e., Snapchat, and for offering help and getting away from pressures and responsibilities, i.e., WhatsApp (Leung, 2001). Individuals who prefer more explicit signals share the characteristics of opinion leaders as identified in study 1.

The reason behind conspicuous users (opinion leaders) more likely to use social networking sites than instant messaging in spreading eWOM is that the former one allows users to reach broader audiences within their social networks, or even strangers outside their social networks (Dellarocas, 2003); while the latter one can only be shared within friends and family that they know.

Study 4 and 5 identified that opinion leaders were more likely to engage in luxury consumptions, and they would be more likely to be divergent from the mainstream. Prior studies have found that self-enhancement was a crucial motivator for consumers to engage in WOM (Sundaram et al., 1998); and in accordance with the Theory of Uniqueness, individuals with high scores in the tendency of general need for uniqueness are more likely to exhibit and signal their uniqueness to others publicly with observable behaviours (Snyder and Fromkin, 1980; Workman and Kidd, 2000). Opinion leaders sharing WOM with other parties not only make them stand out within their community, but also make them different than other members (Chan and Misra, 1990). This helps explain why there is a positive relationship between opinion leadership and the tendency for them to engage in luxury consumptions and to diverge from the mainstream as observed in our research.

The last study illustrated that people who prefer more explicit signals are more likely to be an opinion seeker. In other words, conspicuous users are more likely to use social media to obtain knowledge to keep update with the latest trends. Prior research has shown that individuals can bolster their self-esteem by simply browsing a social network (Gonzales and Hancock, 2011; Wilcox and Stephen, 2013), which implies opinion seekers who go onto social media to look for latest update of the trends are likely to boost their self-esteem. As a result, conspicuous users are intrinsically motivated as being an opinion seeker.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The findings from the survey illustrates that one's behaviour in sharing eWOM is possible to be predicted by the product signal visibility, i.e., conspicuous or inconspicuous. Future research can investigate whether different sizes of product signal visibility, i.e., how big is the logo, may change their behaviours; and explore the motives behind that drive people sharing eWOM, i.e., positive or negative; informational or emotional, and the types of opinion leadership the individuals perform, i.e., communicative opinion leaders, buzz-generating opinion leaders and trustworthy opinion leaders (Bao and Chang, 2014).

The research was conducted under time constraints that only 108 responses were collected, of which 25 were from the Facebook Group: Louis Vuitton Agenda Love. The size of the survey sample was relatively small, which cannot truly reflect the whole population and, therefore, may influence the reliability and validity of the results.

In addition, the majority respondents were female (n = 87), over 50% of the responses was from Asians (n = 64) and 25% contributed to the White (n = 27), and over 40% of the responses (n = 44) was from income group less than £1,500. Gender and culture differences may influence one's tendency in sharing eWOM and the selection of luxuries with different levels of signal visibility; while the difference of the income group may influence their likelihood in making luxury consumptions.

In order to identify the signal visibility of an individual, the focus of the current research is solely on accessible luxuries from the fashion industry, i.e., bags from Louis Vuitton, and did not consider other luxury products from different levels, i.e. intermediate and inaccessible luxuries; and different industries, i.e., automobiles and jewelry, etc. Future studies should continue to explore whether luxuries from different levels and industries may influence one's behaviour to be an opinion leader in sharing eWOM.

Practical Implications for Industry

In the modern era viral marketing becomes more important for companies to promote their brands and increase sales. Opinion leader is the key in spreading eWOM on the online social media platforms that their opinions are influential to the others. Our findings can be used as a reference for the companies in identifying potential opinion leaders using the levels of signal explicitness in luxuries.

CONCLUSION

We conducted an online survey to explore the relationship between levels of signal explicitness in luxuries and the use of eWOM. This research reveals that there is a positive relationship between levels of signal visibility in luxuries and opinion leadership. The more explicit signals in a luxury product, the more likely the one to be an opinion leader in sharing eWOM in general, which can be explained by the self-enhancement in signalling others.

In more specific, conspicuous users are more likely to share eWOM on social networking sites rather than through instant messaging, which is supported by the gratifications in using social media. The use of social networking sites is a many-to-many communication scope with high level of interactivity that enables users to reach audiences in a greater extent compared to instant messaging, which is a one-to-many communication scope with low level of interactivity as identified by Litvin (2008).

Furthermore, opinion leaders have a high level of desirability towards luxury products and they are more likely to acquire luxury brands to diverge from the mainstream. It makes them look unique and stand out from the crowd, which is consistent with the Theory of Uniqueness (Snyder and Fromkin, 1980; Workman and Kidd, 2000). We also found that conspicuous users are intrinsically motivated as being an opinion seeker in order to boost their self-esteem (Gonzales and Hancock, 2011; Wilcox and Stephen, 2013).

The research shed some light on the relationships between signal visibility in luxuries and eWOM communication. As viral marketing becomes more popular nowadays, opinion leaders take an important role that their opinions are influential to others purchasing decision. Companies can use our findings by comparing the levels of signal explicitness in luxuries to recognise potential opinion leaders, who may help promote their brands to their followers, and ultimately drive more sales.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1
PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Section 1 of 6

SURVEY ON LUXURY CONSUMPTION AND USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

INVITATION

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether or not to participate, it is important for you to understand why the research is being conducted and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

PURPOSE OF STUDY

This research aims to investigate how consumers behave towards luxury products and their use of social media. You will be providing data on your opinion of luxury goods consumption and your social media usage. Your answers are very important to the accuracy of our research.

It will take you appropriately 15 minutes to answer the questions. All the answers you provided are strictly confidential and your anonymity is ensured.

Participating in this research is completely voluntary. It is up to you to decide whether or not to participate in the research and you are free to withdraw from the research at any time regardless of the reason.

The study has been approved by the School of Business, Management and Economics, University of Sussex ethical review process.

Should you have any enquiries, please feel free to contact _(Name)_ via email (Email) or at (Phone Number) for more information.
We thank you for your participation.

Please check the box below to indicate you are willing to participate in the research.

☐

Date: 16 March 2016

APPENDIX 2
SURVEY QUESTIONS

Section 2 of 6

SECTION I: CONSUMPTION OF LUXURY PRODUCTS

Which of the following statements define a luxury purchase? (Select multiple if applicable)

- O Brands with a long-standing history of exclusivity (i.e. a high-end brand that is rarely seen in everyday life)
- O Designer labels or visible designer trademark patterns / initials
- O One-of-a-kind or limited-availability collectors' items
- O Use of higher-quality materials and craftsmanship
- O A non-necessity item (anything you want but don't need)
- O Paying a higher price
- O Choice to customize (fabrics, hardware, finish, initials, etc.)

People use luxury products to boost their self-confidence.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly Disagree	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	Strongly Agree

People use luxury products to signal their superiority.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly Disagree	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	Strongly Agree

How do you usually acquire information on luxury products? (Select multiple if applicable)

- O TV advertisements
- O Billboards
- O Magazines
- O Internet
- O Social networking sites
- O Family and friends
- O Stores
- O Email
- O Electronic opt-in newsletter
- O Others (please specify): _____

How likely are you to purchase luxury products?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Very Unlikely	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Very Likely

How likely are you to use luxury products?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Very Unlikely	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Very Likely

In general, I prefer luxury products with:

- O A large logo
- O A small logo
- O No logo

How likely will the following affect your decision in choosing a luxury product? (1 = Very Unlikely; 7 = Very Likely)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Brand	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Colour	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Functionality	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Pattern	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Price	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Style	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

How important is it to you to choose items that differentiate you from mainstream consumers?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Not Important	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Very Important

How important is it for you to avoid things that typical mainstream consumers would buy?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Not Important	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Very Important

What motivates you to make a luxury purchase?
(1 = Very Unlikely; 7 = Very Likely)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
As a treat / indulgence	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
For the quality / craftsmanship	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
As a reward	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
To look good	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
For the extra features	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
As a gift for some -one else	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
To set myself apart from others	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
To keep up with the latest trends	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
To fit in with others	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

Section 3 of 6

Consumption of Luxury Products: Bags

Suppose you won in a lucky draw and the prize was one of the following bags below, which one would you choose? Please select the one you prefer.

- O Option A
- O Option B
- O Option C
- O Option D

Option A

Option B

Option C

Option D

Do you recognise any Louis Vuitton products from above? (Select multiple if applicable)

- O None of the above
- O Option A
- O Option B
- O Option C
- O Option D

How likely are you to choose the above bags? (1 = Very Unlikely; 7 = Very Likely)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Option A	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Option B	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Option C	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Option D	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

Section 4 of 6

Consumption of Luxury Products: Scarves

Suppose you won in a lucky draw and the prize was one of the following scarves below, which one would you choose? Please select the one you prefer.

- O Option A
- O Option B
- O Option C
- O Option D

Option A

Option B

Option C

Option D

Do you recognise any Burberry scarves from above? (Select multiple if applicable)

- O None of the above
- O Option A
- O Option B
- O Option C
- O Option D

How likely are you to choose the above scarves? (1 = Very Unlikely; 7 = Very Likely)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Option A	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Option B	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Option C	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Option D	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

Section 5 of 6

SECTION II: USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

How likely do you use the following social media?
(1 = Very Unlikely; 7 = Very Likely)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	N/A
Facebook	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Instagram	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Twitter	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
WhatsApp	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Snapchat	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

How often do you use social media for these purposes?
(1 = Very Unlikely; 7 = Very Likely)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	N/A
Connect with community	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Keep update with latest trends	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Express opinions	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Give advices	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Share photos	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Share videos	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

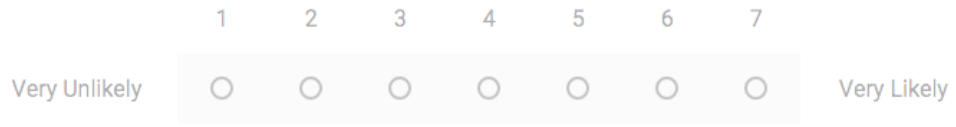
How likely are you to write a review on social media sites about a product that you have used?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Very Unlikely	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Very Likely

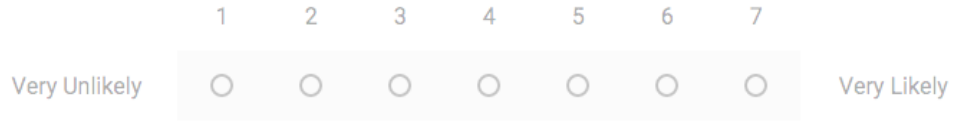
How likely are you to rate on social media sites about a product that you have used?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Very Unlikely	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Very Likely

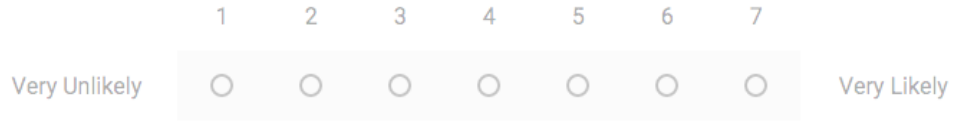
How likely are you to leave a comment on social media sites about any type of product that you have used?



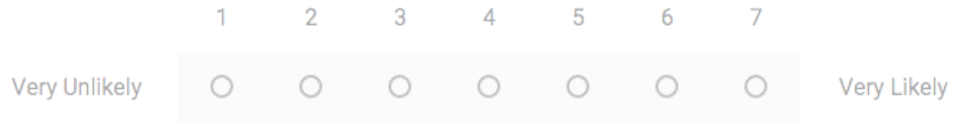
How likely are you to leave a comment on social media sites about a luxury product that you have used?



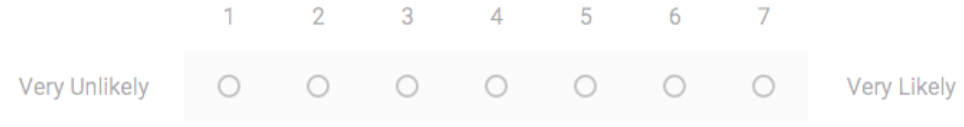
How likely are you to use instant messaging?



How likely are you to share your user experience of a product with your friends?



How likely are you to share your user experience of a product with your family?



Section 6 of 6

SECTION III: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Gender

- O Male
- O Female
- O Prefer not to say

Race / Ethnicity

- O White
- O Black
- O Asian / Pacific Islander
- O Hispanic
- O Prefer not to say
- O Other _____

Level of Study (if any)

- O College
- O Undergraduate
- O Postgraduate
- O PhD
- O Prefer not to say
- O Other _____

Income per Month

- O Below £1,500
- O £1,500 - £3,000
- O Above £3,000
- O Not Applicable
- O Prefer not to say

Age (optional): _____

Please indicate which luxury products you buy, if any.

_____

For further information, please include your email address below:

Email Address (optional): _____

APPENDIX 3
ETHICAL REVIEW APPLICATION

My Ethical Review Applications New Help

Application No	Project Title	Created Date	Submitted To	Submitted Date	Status
ER/	Signal Visibility in Luxuries & Electronic Word-of-mouth Communication	17-Mar-2016	SREO BMEC SCHOOL	17-Mar-2016	Approved

APPENDIX 4
STUDY 1: LEVELS OF SIGNAL VISIBILITY AND OPINION LEADERSHIP

T-Test

Group Statistics

	Levels of Signal Visibility	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Opinion_Leaders	Inconspicuous	67	3.07	1.341	.164
	Conspicuous	41	4.48	1.630	.255

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Opinion_Leaders	Equal variances assumed	3.827	.053	-4.897	106	.000	-1.415	.289	-1.987	-.842
	Equal variances not assumed			-4.673	72.484	.000	-1.415	.303	-2.018	-.811

APPENDIX 5
STUDY 2: LEVELS OF SIGNAL VISIBILITY AND THE USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES

Group Statistics

	Levels of Signal Visibility	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Use of Social Networking Sites	Inconspicuous	67	3.88	1.451	.177
	Conspicuous	41	4.48	1.586	.248

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Use of Social Networking Sites	Equal variances assumed	.050	.824	-2.009	106	.047	-.599	.298	-1.190	-.008
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.966	78.922	.053	-.599	.305	-1.206	.007

APPENDIX 6
STUDY 3: LEVELS OF SIGNAL VISIBILITY AND THE USE OF INSTANT MESSAGING

T-Test

Group Statistics

	Levels of Signal Visibility	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Use of IM	Inconspicuous	67	4.94	1.556	.190
	Conspicuous	41	4.90	1.927	.301

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Use of IM	Equal variances assumed	3.638	.059	.112	106	.911	.038	.338	-.633	.708
	Equal variances not assumed			.106	71.378	.916	.038	.356	-.672	.748

APPENDIX 7
STUDY 4: OPINION LEADERSHIP AND LEVELS OF DESIRABILITY IN LUXURY PRODUCTS

T-Test

Group Statistics

	Opinion Leaders?	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Purchase_Use_Luxuries	No	67	3.83	1.544	.189
	Yes	41	5.56	1.636	.256

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Purchase_Use_Luxuries	Equal variances assumed	1.011	.317	-5.533	106	.000	-1.733	.313	-2.353	-1.112
	Equal variances not assumed			-5.455	80.894	.000	-1.733	.318	-2.365	-1.101

APPENDIX 8
OPINION LEADERSHIP AND
DIVERGENCE FROM MAINSTREAM

Crosstabs

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Diverge from Mainstream * Opinion Leaders	108	100.0%	0	0.0%	108	100.0%

Diverge from Mainstream * Opinion Leaders Crosstabulation

			Opinion Leaders		
			No	Yes	Total
Diverge from Mainstream	No	Count	46	16	62
		Expected Count	38.5	23.5	62.0
		% within Diverge from Mainstream	74.2%	25.8%	100.0%
		% within Opinion Leaders	68.7%	39.0%	57.4%
		% of Total	42.6%	14.8%	57.4%
	Yes	Count	21	25	46
		Expected Count	28.5	17.5	46.0
		% within Diverge from Mainstream	45.7%	54.3%	100.0%
		% within Opinion Leaders	31.3%	61.0%	42.6%
		% of Total	19.4%	23.1%	42.6%
Total		Count	67	41	108
		Expected Count	67.0	41.0	108.0
		% within Diverge from Mainstream	62.0%	38.0%	100.0%
		% within Opinion Leaders	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	62.0%	38.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	9.134[a]	1	.003		
Continuity Correction[b]	7.962	1	.005		
Likelihood Ratio	9.171	1	.002		
Fisher's Exact Test				.005	.002
Linear-by-Linear Association	9.049	1	.003		
N of Valid Cases	108				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 17.46.
b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Symmetric Measures

		Value	Approx. Sig.
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.291	.003
	Cramer's V	.291	.003
N of Valid Cases		108	

APPENDIX 9
LEVELS OF SIGNAL VISIBILITY AND OPINION SEEKERS

T-Test

Group Statistics

	Levels of Signal Visibility	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
OpinionSeekers	Inconspicuous	67	3.30	1.357	.166
	Conspicuous	41	3.95	1.532	.239

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
OpinionSeekers	Equal variances assumed	.100	.753	-2.309	106	.023	-.653	.283	-1.213	-.092
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.242	76.880	.028	-.653	.291	-1.232	-.073

REFERENCES

Allérès, D. (1990). *Luxe - Strategies Marketing*, 1st ed., Paris: Economica.

Arndt, J. (1967), 'Role of Product-Related Conversations in the Diffusion of a New Product', *Journal of Marketing Research*, 4 (August), 291-295.

Assael, H. (1987), *Consumer Behaviour and Marketing Action*, 4th Edition, Boston: PWS-Kent.

Bain (2010), *Luxury Goods Worldwide Market Study*, 7th ed., Boston: Bain.

Bao, T. and Chang, T.L.S. (2014), 'Finding Disseminators via Electronic Word of Mouth Message for Effective Marketing Communications', *Decision Support Systems*, 67, 21-29.

Baumeister, R. F., Bratslavsky, E., Muraven, M. and Tice, D. M. (1998). 'Ego Depletion: Is the Active Self a Limited Resource?', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 74(5), 1252-1265.

BBC. (2013), 'Chat App Messaging Overtakes SMS Texts, Informa Says', *BBC: Business*, [Online]. Available at: www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-22334338 [Accessed: 15 February 2016].

Beatty, S. E. and Smith, S. M. (1987), 'External Search Effort: An Investigation across Several Product Categories', *Journal of Consumer Research*, 14(6), 83-92.

Belk, R. W. (1985), 'Trait Aspects of Living in the Material World', *Journal of Consumer Research*, 12 (December), 265-280.

Belk, R. W. (1988). 'Possessions and the Extended Self', *Journal of Consumer Research*, 15(2), 139-168.

Bennett, P. D. and Mandell, R. M. (1969), 'Pre-purchase Information Seeking Behaviour of New Car Purchasers - The Learning Hypothesis', *Journal of Marketing Research*, 6(11), 430-433.

Berger, J. and Heath, C. (2007), 'Where Consumers Diverge from Others: Identity-Signaling and Product Domains', *Journal of Consumer Research*, 34(8), 121-134.

Berger, J. and Heath, C. (2008), 'Who Drives Divergence? Identity-Signaling, Out-group Dissimilarity, and the Abandonment of Cultural Tastes', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 95(3), 593-607.

Berger, J. and Schwartz, E. M. (2011), 'What Drives Immediate and Ongoing Word of Mouth?', *Journal of Marketing Research*, 48(5), 869-880.

Berger, J. and Ward, M. (2010), 'Subtle Signals of Inconspicuous Consumption', *Journal of Consumer Research*, 37, 555-569.

Berthon, P., Pitt, L., Parent, M., & Berthon, J.-P. (2009). 'Aesthetics and Ephemerality: Observing and Preserving the Luxury Brand', *California Management Review, 52*, 45-66.

Bickart, B. and Schindler, R. M. (2001). 'Internet Forums as Influential Sources of Consumer Information', *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 15(3), 31-40.

Brooks, D. (2001), *Bobs in Paradise: The New Upper Class and How They Got There*, New York: Simon and Schuster.

Brown, J., Broderick, A. and Lee, N. (2007). 'Word-of-mouth Communication within Online Communities: Conceptualising the Online Social Network', *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 21, 2-20.

Browne, B. A. and Kaldenberg, D. O. (1997). 'Conceptualising Self-monitoring: Links to Materialism and Product Involvement', *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 14(1), 31-44.

Burberry. (2016), *Burberry Check Silk Tie*. [Online]. Available at: https://uk.burberry.com/check-silk-tie-p39115551?search=true [Accessed: 22 April 2016].

Canhoto, A. I. and Clark, M. (2013), 'Customer Service 140 Characters at a Time - the Users' Perspective', *Journal of Marketing Management*, 25(5/6), 522-544.

Carl, W. (2006), 'What's All the Buzz About? Everyday Communication and the Relational Basis of Word-of-Mouth and Buzz Marketing Practices', *Management Communication Quarterly*, 19(4), 601-634.

Chadha, R., and Husband, P. (2006), The Cult of the Luxury Brand: Inside Asia's Love Affair with Luxury. London, UK: Nicholas Brealey International.

Chan, K. K. and Misra, S. (1990), 'Characteristics of the Opinion Leader: A New Dimension', *Journal of Advertising*, 19(3), 53–61.

Charles, K. K., Hurst, E. and Roussanov, N. L. (2009), 'Conspicuous Consumption and Race', Quarterly Journal of Economics, 124(2), 425-467.

Childers, T. L. (1986), 'Assessment of the Psychometric Properties of an Opinion Leadership Scale', *Journal of Marketing Research*, 184-188.

Chu, S. C. and Choi, S. M. (2011), 'Electronic Word-of-mouth in Social Networking Sites: A Cross-cultural Study of the United States and China', *Journal of Advertising*, 30(1), 47-75.

Chung, C. and Darke, P. (2006). 'The Consumer as Advocate: Self-relevance, Culture, and Word-of-mouth', *Marketing Letters*, 17(4), 269-279.

Cole-Lewis, H. and Kershaw, T. (2010), 'Text Messaging as a Tool for Behaviour Change in Disease Prevention and Management', *Epidemiologic Reviews*, 32, 56-69.

Das, S. and Chen, M. (2007), 'Yahoo! for Amazon: Sentiment Extraction from Small Talk on the Web', *Management Science*, 53(9), 1375–88.

Davis, F. (1992), *Fashion, Culture and Identity*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Dellarocas, C. (2003). 'The Digitisation of Word-of-mouth: Promise and Challenges of Online Feedback Mechanisms', *Management Science*, 49(10), 1407-1424.

Dichter, E. (1966), 'How Word of Mouth Advertising Works', *Harvard Business Review*, 44(6), 147-166.

Douglas, M. and Isherwood, B. (1978), *The World of Goods: Towards an Anthropology of Consumption*, New York: Norton.

Dwyer, P. (2007), 'Measuring the Value of Electronic Word-of-mouth and Its Impact in Consumer Communities', *Journal of Interactive*, 21(2), 63-79.

Engel, J .E., Blackwell, R. D. and Miniard, P. W. (1993). *Consumer Behaviour*, 7th Edition, Chicago: Dryden Press.

Erkan, I. and Evans, C. (2014), 'The Impacts of Electronic Word-of-mouth in Social Media on Consumers' Purchase Intentions', *Proceedings of the International Conference on Digital Marketing (ICODM 2014)*, 9-14.

Facebook. (2016), *Groups: Louis Vuitton Agenda Love* [Online]. Available at: www.facebook.com/groups/lvagendalove/ [Accessed: 16 March 2016].

Flynn, L. R., Goldsmith, R. E. and Eastman, J. K. (1996), 'Opinion Leaders and Opinion Seekers: Two New Measurement Scales', *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 24(2), 137-147.

Fournier, S. M. (1998). 'Consumers and their Brands: Developing Relationship Theory in Consumer Research', *Journal of Consumer Research*, 24(4), 343-373.

Godes, David, Mayzlin, D., Chen Y., Das, S., Dellarocas, C., Pfeiffer, B., Libai, B., Sen S., Shi, M., and Verlegh, P. (2005), 'The Firm's Management of Social Interactions', *Marketing Letters*, 16(3-4), 415.

Godes, D. and Mayzlin, D. (2009), 'Firm-created Word-of-mouth Communication: Evidence from a Field Test', *Marketing Science*, 28(4), 721-739.

Goffman, E. (1959), *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, New York: Doubleday.

Gonzales, A. L. and Hancock, J. T. (2011). 'Mirror, Mirror on My Facebook Wall: Effects of Facebook Exposure on Self-esteem', *Cyberpsychology, Behaviour, and Social Networking*, 14 (January / February), 79-83.

Goodman, L. A. (1961), 'Snowball Sampling', *Annuals of Mathematical Statistics*, 32(1), 148-170.

Grewal, R., Cline, T. and Davies, A. (2003), 'Early-entrant Advantage, Word-of-mouth Communication, Brand Similarity, and the Consumer Decision-making Process', *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 13(3), 187-197.

Grossman, G. M. and Shapiro, C. (1988), 'Foreign Counterfeiting of Status Goods', *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 103(1), 79-100.

Gucci. (2016), *Gucci Miss GG Original GG Hobo*. [Online]. Available at: www.gucci.com/uk/en_gb/pr/women/handbags/womens-shoulder-bags/miss-gg-original-gg-hobo-p-326514F4G1N9763?position=249&listName=ProductGridComponent&categoryPath=Women/Handbags/Womens-Shoulder-Bags [Accessed: 22 April 2016].

Han, Y. J., Nunes, J. C. and Drèze, X. (2010), 'Signaling Status with Luxury Goods: The Role of Brand Prominence', *Journal of Marketing*, 74 (July), 15-30.

Hawkins, D. I., Best, R. and Coney, K. A. (2004), *Consumer Behaviour: Building Marketing Strategy*, 9th edition. Boston: McGraw-Hill.

Hawn, C. (2009), 'Report from the Field: Take Two Aspirin and Tweet Me in the Morning: How Twitter, Facebook, and Other Social Media are Reshaping Health Care', *Health Affairs*, 28, 361-368.

Heffetz, O. (2007), 'Conspicuous Consumption and Expenditure Visibility: Measurement and application', Working Paper, Johnson School of Business, Cornell University.

Hennig-Thurau, T., Gwinner, K., Walsh, G. and Gremler, D. (2004). 'Electronic Word-of-mouth via Consumer-opinion Platforms: What Motivates Consumers to Articulate Themselves on the Internet?', *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 19(1), 38-52.

Hieke, S. (2010). 'Effects of Counterfeits on the Image of Luxury Brands: An Empirical Study from the Customer Perspective', *Brand Management, 18*(2), 159-173.

Hoffman, D. and Novak, T. (1996), 'Marketing in Hypermedia Computer-mediated Environments: Conceptual Foundations', *Journal of Marketing*, 60, 50-68.

Holt, D. B. (1998), 'Does Cultural Capital Structure American Consumption?', *Journal of Consumer Research*, 25 (1), 1-25.

Hu, Y., Wood, J. F., Smith, V. and Westbrook, N. (2004). 'Friendships through IM: Examining the Relationship between Instant Messaging and Intimacy', *Journal of Computer Mediated Communication*, 10(1). Retrieved 26 April 2016, from http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol10/issue1/hu.html

Huang, A. H. and Yen, D. C. (2003). 'Usefulness of Instant Messaging among Young Users: Social vs. Work Perspective', *Human Systems Management*, 22, 63-72.

Hung K. H. and Li, S. Y. (2007), 'The Influence of eWOM on Virtual Consumer Communities: Social Capital, Consumer Learning and Behavioural Outcome', *Journal of Advertising Research*, 47(4), 485-495.

Iyenger, R., Van den Bulte, C. and Valente, T. W. (2011), 'Opinion Leadership and Social Contagion in New Product Diffusion', *Marketing Science*, 30(2), 195-212.

Jiang, L., & Cova, V. (2012). 'Love for Luxury, Preference for Counterfeits - A Qualitative Study in Counterfeit Luxury Consumption in China', *International Journal of Marketing Studies, 4*(6), 1-9.

Kapferer, J. N. (1997), 'Managing luxury brands', *Journal of Brand Management*, 4, 251-260.

Katz E. and Lazarsfeld P. F. (1955), *Personal Influence*, New York: Free Press.

Kim, E., Sung, Y. and Kang, H. (2014), 'Brand Followers' Retweeting Behaviour on Twitter: How Brand Relationships Influence Brand Electronic Word-of-mouth', *Computers in Human Behaviour*, 37, 18-25.

Klein, N. (1999), *No Logo*. New York: Picador.

Kumar, N. and Benbasat, I. (2006). 'The Influence of Recommendatins and Consumer Reviews on Evaluations of Websites', *Information Systems Research*, 17(4), 425-439.

Lee, J. and Shrum, L. J. (2012), 'Conspicuous Consumption versus Charitable Behavior in Responses to Social Exclusion: A Differential Needs Explanation', *Journal of Consumer Research*, 39 (October), 1-17.

Leung, L. (2001). 'College Student Motives for Chatting on ICQ', *New Media and Society*, 3, 483-500.

Levy, S. J. (1959), 'Symbols for Sale', *Harvard Business Review*, 33 (March-April), 117-124.

Litvin, S. W., Goldsmith, R. E. and Pan, B. (2008), 'Electronic Word-of-mouth in Hospitality and Tourism Management', *Tourism Management*, 29, 458-468.

LV. (2016), *Louis Vuitton VVV Tie*. [Online]. Available at: http://uk.louisvuitton.com/eng-gb/products/vvv-tie-012128 [Accessed: 22 April 2016].

Mangold, W. G. and Faulds, D. J. (2009), 'Social Media: The New Hybrid Element of the Promotion Mix', *Business Horizons*, 52(4), 357-365.

Mintel (2015), 'Luxury Goods Retailing - International', August 2015. [Online]. Available at: http://academic.mintel.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/display/746615/?highlight#hit1 [Accessed: 9 March 2016].

Neelamegham, R. and Jain, D. (1999), 'Consumer Choice Process for Experience Goods: An Econometric Model and Analysis', *Journal of Marketing Research*, 9(1), 69-80.

Newman, J. W. (1977), 'Consumer External Search: Amounts and Determinants', *Consumer and Industrial Buying Behaviour*. New York: North Holland, 79-94.

Nunes, J. C., Drèze, X. and Han, Y. J. (2011), 'Conspicuous Consumption in a Recession: Toning It Down or Turning it Up?', *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 21(2), 199-205.

Nyer, P. U. (1997), 'A Study of the Relationships between Cognitive Appraisals and Consumption Emotions', *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 25(4), 296-304.

Ogara, S. O., Koh, C. E. and Prybutok, V. R. (2014), 'Investigating Factors Affecting Social Presence and User Satisfaction with Mobile Instant Messaging', *Computers in Human Behaviour*, 36, 453-459.

Packard, G. and Wooten, D. (2013), 'Compensatory Knowledge Signaling in Consumer Word of Mouth', *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 23(4), 434-450.

Phelps, J. E., Lewis, R., Mobilio, L., Perry, D. and Raman, N. (2004), 'Viral Marketing or Electronic Word-of-mouth Advertising: Examining Consumer Responses and Motivations to Pass Along Email', *Journal of Advertising Research*, 44(4), 333-348.

Portero. (2016), *Hermes Birkin Bag*. [Online]. Available at: www.portero.com/hermes-craie-togo-birkin-30cm-gold-hardware [Accessed: 22 April 2016].

Punj, G. N. and Staelin, R. (1983), 'A Model of Consumer Information Search for New Automobiles', Journal of Consumer Research, 9(3), 366-380.

Quan-Haase, A. and Young, A. L. (2010). 'Uses and Gratifications of Social Media: A Comparison of Facebook and Instant Messaging', Bulletin of Science, Technology and Society, 30(5), 350-361.

Raacke, J., & Bonds-Raacke, J. (2008). 'MySpace and Facebook: Applying the Uses and Gratifications Theory to Exploring Friendnetworking Sites', *Cyberpsychology & Behavior*, 11, 169-174.

Ramirez, A. and Broneck, K. (2009), 'IM Me: Instant Messaging as Relational Maintenance and Everyday Communication', *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 26, 291-314.

Reynolds, F. D. and Darden, W. R. (1971), 'Mutually Adaptive Effects of Interpersonal Communication', *Journal of Marketing Research*, 8 (November), 449-454.

Richins, M. L. (1987), 'Media, Materialism, and Human Happiness', *Advances in Consumer Research*, 14(1), 352-356.

Rimé, B. (2009). 'Emotion Elicits the Social Sharing of Emotion: Theory and Empirical Review', *Emotion Review*, 1, 60-85.

Rogers, E. M. (1962), *Diffusion of Innovations*, 1st edition, New York: Free Press.

Rogers, E. M. (1976), 'New Product Adoption and Diffusion', *Journal of Consumer* Research, 2(3), 290-301.

Rogers, E. M. and Cartano, D. G. (1962). 'Methods of Measuring Opinion Leadership', Public Opinion Quarterly, 26 (Fall), 435-441.

Schreier, M., Oberhauser, S. and Prügl, R. (2007), 'Lead Users and the Adoption and Diffusion of New Products: Insights from Two Extreme Sport Communities', *Marketing Letters*, 18(1), 15-30.

Sirgy, M. J. (1982). 'Self-concept in Consumer Behaviour: A Critical Review', *Journal of Consumer Research*, 9(3), 287-300.

Seabrook, J. (2001), *Nobrow: The Culture of Marketing, the Marketing of Culture*, New York: Vintage.

Snyder, C. R. and Fromkin, H. L. (1980). *Uniqueness: The Human Pursuit of Difference*, New York: Plenum Press.

Sun, T., Youn, S., Wu, G. and Kuntaraporn, M. (2006), 'Online word-of-mouth (or mouse): An exploration of its antecedents and consequences', *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 11, 1104-1127.

Sundaram, D. S., Mitra, K. and Webster, C. (1998). 'Word-of-mouth Communications: A Motivational Analysis', Advances in Consumer Research, 25, 527-531.

Thorson, K. S. and Rodgers, S. (2006), 'Relationships between Blogs as eWOM and Interactivity, Perceived Interactivity, and Parasocial Interaction', *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, 6(2), 34-44.

Tian, K. T., Bearden, W. O. and Hunter, G. L. (2001). 'Consumers' Need for Uniqueness: Scale Development and Validation', *Journal of Consumer Research*, 28(1), 50-66.

Veblen, T. (1899), *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, New York: Penguin.

Venkatraman, M. P. (1989), 'Opinion Leaders, Adopters, and Communicative Adopters: A Role Analysis', *Psychology and Marketing*, 6(1), 51-68.

Wallace, D., Walker, J., Lopez, T. and Jones, M. (2009), 'Do Word-of-mouth and Advertising Messages on Social Networks Influence the Purchasing Behaviour of College Students?', *Journal of Applied Business Research*, 25(1), 101-110.

Weber, M. (1904/2001), *The Protest and Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, New York: Routledge Classics.

Weber, M. (1968/1978), *Economy and Society*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

Wernerfelt, B. (1990), 'Advertising Content When Brand Choice is a Signal', *Journal of Business*, 63(1), 91-98.

Westbrook, R. A. (1987), Product / Consumption-based Affective Responses and Post-purchase Processes. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 24(3), 258-270.

Wilcox, K. and Stephen, A. T. (2013). 'Are Close Friends the Enemy? Online Social Networks, Self-esteem, and Self-control', *Journal of Consumer Research*, 40, 90-103.

Williams, K. (1990), *Behavioural Aspects of Marketing*, Oxford: Heinemann.

Wojnicki, A. C. and Godes, D. (2010), 'Word of Mouth as Self-Enhancement', *HBS Marketing Research Paper*, No. 06-01, University of Toronto.

Workman, J. E. and Kidd, L. K. (2000). 'Use of the Need for Uniqueness Scale to Characterise Fashion Consumer Groups', *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal*, 18(4), 227-236.

Zhang, J. Q., Craciun, G. and Shin, D. (2010). 'When does Electronic Word-of-mouth Matter? A Study of Consumer Product Reviews', *Journal of Business Research*, 63(12), 1336-1341.