

Using the Q method to detect the mental patterns of fanatic consumers of luxury brands

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Abstract

Luxury brands in various industries are one of the most attractive and profitable segments of the market, which, in addition to economic advantage, helps to develop the quality level of those products in the world by creating competition among luxury brands. Meanwhile, marketers and brand owners are constantly creating loyalty programs for their fanatical consumers. The purpose of this research is to identify the mental pattern of fanatical consumers towards luxury brands. The current research is of mixed exploratory type and was done using the Q method. The statistical population of this research is the customers of luxury watch brands. A sufficient number of statistical samples were asked based on theoretical saturation in a purposeful and accessible manner, six experts familiar with the subject were interviewed, and in a small part, 38 fanatical customers were interviewed to sort sample expressions into They were selected purposefully. The mental model of obsessive consumers included four types: devoted, deceitful, pleasure-seeking, and dysfunctional, which explained about 79% of the variance of the views. Fanatic and dedicated consumers were the dominant model of this research. Finally, implementation suggestions were presented for each of the mental patterns of fanatical consumers for the use of luxury brand owners.

Keywords: mental patterns, fanatical consumers, luxury brands, Q method
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1 Introduction

The growth of the market for luxury products has been of fundamental importance in the past decades, and the reason for this importance is the daily arrival of new customers in this sector. This expansion of the customer base in luxury products is a direct result of widespread urbanization, economic development, and affluent lifestyles [1]. These products are no longer limited to western markets and have the largest number of agents and sales in developing and Asian countries. Having loyal consumers is an important advantage for luxury brands [2]. The increasing popularity of luxury brands in emerging markets indicates that consumers all over the world have the same preferences for buying luxury brands. On the other hand, according to the different cultures of consumers, the consumption styles of luxury goods are also different [3].

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In recent decades, luxury businesses have been described with characteristics such as good thinking, significant growth and the increasing use of information and communication in the luxury market [4]. The growth of the luxury products sector can be attributed to the increase in the provision of luxury products and services. This growth is also due to the increase in the number of consumers of luxury brands. Buying a luxury item is not always related to a specific necessity. Rather, it is related to the fact that symbolic features can create different reactions in the consumer, such as increasing self-esteem and recognition or emotional satisfaction and social status [5]. In the meantime, it seems that the marketing managers of the companies paid more attention to their fanatical fans and in order to honor this support, they organized programs for these loyal customers [6].

The term bigotry often reminds of scenes of religious fanatics, political terrorists or rebels who are engaged in supporting their ideals with boundless passion and intensity. However, this term is also used for those consumers who support and pursue their favorite product and brand with great enthusiasm or the experience of consuming something [7]. Despite the fact that the term bigotry was used in the past and in subjects such as politics and religion, today the phenomenon of bigotry is used in a wide range of disciplines and fields, and for this reason, it is becoming increasingly popular [8].

The reason for the unique and special position of fanatical consumers is that their passion and prejudice are inherent and arise from their internal forces, which can be used in different ways, including through word-of-mouth advertising for their interest and to attract people's opinions and attention [6]. Daily and normal consumption are significantly different from fanaticism because this type of consumption is not only not accompanied by diligent pursuit, but also has a low level of emotional commitment [9].

This research seeks to know more about the phenomenon of customer prejudice and the common experience of different people from different luxury products and brands and different types of fanatical consumers. Fanatic consumers of luxury goods try to use these products to bring their identity closer to the identity of the product and to align their personal and social values with the use of luxury brands. Creating fanatical and loyal customers will reduce the company's costs, especially in the field of marketing; Therefore, company managers should try to identify the types of fanatical customers, because just as valuable fanatical consumers have an emotional and moral commitment to the brand and follow that product and are the most valuable customers of the company, inefficient fanatical consumers also have an effect on the image of the brand and They harm the company.

The results of the research have helped managers and owners of luxury brands to investigate and identify the mindsets of consumers of luxury brands to determine marketing strategies and marketing mix design to increase market share and gain more profit. Also, different mentalities towards fanatical consumers are identified so that by knowing the types of fanatical consumers, suggestions can be made to luxury brand owners on how to deal with each of these types of consumers.

2 Methodology

From a philosophical point of view, this research is based on the positivist interpretive thought model and is in the category of applied research. The research method is mixed and uses a sequential exploratory strategy. In the first stage, the analysis is done based on qualitative data and the research continues with the collection and analysis of quantitative data, then the priority is the qualitative aspect of the research. The findings obtained from the quantitative and qualitative approaches are combined in the stage of interpretation of the findings. The main thinking in the Q method is to recognize the mental patterns, opinions, opinions, and attitudes of people. Data collection was done in the field and in the library; because the theoretical data necessary to discover the subjectivity was obtained from the study, review, and development of existing sources in the field of consumer bias, and to identify the subjectivity, these data were collected from the participants in the field.

In this method, a discourse space was first created by using the analogical method and according to the theories and studies conducted on fanatical consumers, and the discourse space was completed by using the inductive method. The main goal at this stage is to ensure the adequacy of the content of the discourse space or the aggregation theory in order to obtain the maximum thoughts, feelings, opinions, and attitudes of the participants, and it does not necessarily include facts, but includes the personal opinions and perceptions of people. In the current research, theoretical literature and authoritative books and articles were used to create the discourse space, as well as conducting interviews with experts and specialists. For a systematic review of the literature in the field of fanatical consumer, the world's prestigious management journals were widely reviewed in their databases, and all articles that used "fanatic consumer" in their abstracts or keywords were extracted. Also, using internet search engines, books and articles on the subject of fanatical consumers were identified. In order to know the experiences of experts in this matter and

to ensure the comprehensiveness of the identified factors, six marketing specialists were selected and interviewed in a targeted and non-probable manner. All of these studies led to the identification and counting of 56 items, which were formulated as phrases based on the purpose of the research. Finally, according to the standard set in the number of cards, multiple revisions, conducting a pilot test, and also using the advice and opinion of experts and experts, the options that overlapped or were synonymous were combined or eliminated, and the number 39 items were reduced. Then, each of the items was given to the research participants on a card called a Q card.

In this research, watch industries (such as Rolex, Omega, Cartier, and Swatch) were selected. Sampling has been done in a purposeful way, in the Q method, the group of participants is those who value the Q cards in its chart, having the mentality and perspective of the subject. Since the Q method identifies people's mental patterns and does not consider the generalization of the findings to a larger society, the sample of participants is selected in a small and selected form according to the research topic. Based on the studies conducted in the Q method, the number of research participants is different. Usually, choosing between 20 and 80 people seems to be enough to get different points of view on a topic. In this way, after examining the purchase history and introducing the sellers, a list of 38 people was prepared and these people were selected as participants in this research, and Q cards were used as a data collection tool. The data collection tool in the Q method is the Q item cards, which are sorted by the participants in the Q rating table in order of importance from the individual's point of view. In this research, this table follows the forced distribution, it asks the participant to rate the Q-cards in a range of 9-point Likert scale, where the +4 column refers to the options with the most influence and Column 4- is dedicated to the column with the least impact.

Reliability in the Q method is measured through many tools, in this study, Cronbach's alpha was used for the reliability of the research tool.

$$\alpha = \left(\frac{k}{k-1} \right) \left(1 - \frac{\sum_{i=1}^k S_i^2}{S^2} \right)$$

Cronbach's alpha of the research shows the high reliability of the Q statements of the completed chart, which is 0.854%.

3 Findings

The first step in Q factor analysis is to calculate the correlation matrix of Q categories (correlation among respondents). The terms of this matrix are calculated with the following formula:

$$r = 1 - \frac{\sum d_i^2}{\sum (x_i^2 + y_i^2)}$$

$$d_i = y_i - x_i$$

y_i : Respondent y 's score to proposition i , x_i : Respondent x 's score to proposition i

Statistical software is usually used to extract factors in factor analysis. After extracting the factors, it can be seen that each Q category (individual) has one-factor loading per factor. The value of the factor load shows how much each cue category can be an example or representative of a specific factor. If the value of the factor load is multiplied by itself (reaches the power of two), it shows the amount of variance explained by that factor in that Q category. If we perform this calculation in a Q category for all factors and add the obtained numbers together, an index called sharing will be obtained. This index shows how much of the total variance is explained by the extracted factors.

According to the views of the participants, according to Table 1, a total of four mental patterns were identified, which explain and cover 79% of the total variance. In addition, Table 1 shows that each mental model forms a percentage of the total variance.

Table 1: Total explained variance

	cumulative variance %	total variance %	Total
The first mental model	24.492	24.492	9.307
The second mental pattern	44.012	19.520	7.418
The third mental pattern	63.286	19.274	7.324
The fourth mental pattern	79.056	15.770	5.993

The results of sorting the discourse space are analyzed with SPS software, and based on Q factor analysis, a number of unrotated factors are obtained. Then the factors are rotated, and in this research, the Varimax method was used.

Theoretically, the initial matrix of the factor pattern is not the same and it is possible to provide an unlimited number of different situations that, by rotating the axes that determine the factor space, they all create the same correlation matrix. After the factors are rotated and the new table of factors is obtained, the significant cue categories in each factor should be determined. Each category of Q has a series of features that are used to extract this feature from the factor array. To compile the factorial array, the following steps should be followed:

1. Determining meaningful Q categories: Q categories with significant factor load are selected in each factor. The criterion for detecting the significance level of factor load is the following relationship:

$$\frac{1}{\sqrt{n}} \times 1.96$$

n : number of propositions in category Q

2. Calculating the weight of significant Q categories in each factor: It is obtained using the following formula:

$$w = \frac{f}{1 - f^2}$$

f : factor load, w : is the weight of the category Q of a factor

Table 2 shows the Q factor loadings after rotation. According to this matrix, the people who fall into each of these four mental patterns have been identified. The graph of cues that have a significant factor load on one factor has many points in common with each other, the participants in question have done the ranking process in a similar way, and based on this, the mentality and viewpoint of this group of participants are similar. And it can be expressed through the desired factor.

Table 2: Q factor loadings

Factor loadings of first mentality					
Contributors	Factor load	Contributors	Factor load	Contributors	Factor load
1	0.817	16	0.706	27	0.711
4	0.794	18	0.810	32	0.814
8	0.839	22	0.855	34	0.808
11	0.824	24	0.788	35	0.713
Factor loadings of the second mentality					
2	0.812	21	0.793	31	0.758
6	0.590	23	0.836	33	0.765
12	0.738	28	0.767	38	0.752
15	0.855				
Factor loadings of the third mentality					
3	0.832	14	0.824	30	0.725
9	0.775	20	0.816	36	0.764
13	0.806	25	0.821	37	0.723
Factor loadings of the fourth mentality					
5	0.868	17	0.879	26	0.884
7	0.901	19	0.851	29	0.842
10	0.835				

After extracting and rotating the factors and extracting significant factor loadings and important factors, the factors should be interpreted and explained. To express a factor, it is necessary to calculate the score assigned to each Q option from the point of view of the desired factor, and this will lead to the formation of a new Q chart. The factor score of the expressions establishes the connection between the content of the expressions and the factors and is estimated by the weighted average method, and in this way, the factors can be interpreted. The interpretation of the results can be done based on factor scores, but usually, factor arrays are formed before entering the interpretation stage. Factorial arrays are Q-diagram that represents the desired point of view. Therefore, to form factor arrays, we arrange the normalized factor scores and place them in the Q ranking table. Figure 1 shows the factor arrays of the first mental model as an example. For the rating of the first factor scores, Kiwi options No. 19 and 31 with factor scores of 1.7237 and 1.6975 are placed in the highest rank, i.e. 4+. In the same way, other Q options are placed in the graph of factor arrays.

Completely opposed					Completely agree				
-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	
35	10	38	16	9	20	36	14	19	
25	34	22	15	21	4	13	30	31	
	26	28	17	11	2	12	33		
		23	32	1	27	39			
		24	5	18	3	37			
			6	8	29				
				7					

Figure 1: Factor arrays of the first mental model

1. If we multiply the score obtained by each statement in the desired Q category (-4 to +4) by the weight of that Q category (above formula), a weighted score is obtained for each statement. The factor score is obtained from the sum of the weighted scores of the propositions (for meaningful Q categories).
2. Standardization of factor scores or z-score calculation: due to the difference in the number of significant Q categories in each factor, it is not possible to compare factors with weighted scores; therefore, it is necessary to standardize factor scores. This standardized value, called the Z-score of each statement, is calculated from the following equation:

$$z_{score} = \frac{X - \mu}{\sigma}$$

X : Proposition factor score, μ : The average factor score of all propositions, σ : Standard deviation of factor scores of all statements

3. Sorting statements based on Z-score values from large to small
4. Compilation of the factor array: If we return the statements arranged in the previous step to the Q table according to the scores of the Q table and place the statements in the form of a Q category in this table, the factor array related to the desired factor is obtained.

Table 3: Factor arrays and factor scores of the four mental patterns of the research

Object	Factor arrays				Factor scores			
	First	Second	Third	Fourth	First	Second	Third	Fourth
1	20	9	34	19	-0.1006	0.8261	-1.0098	-0.0795
2	13	15	5	24	0.4065	0.0636	1.4233	-0.3660
3	15	17	7	38	0.2994	0.0271	1.3113	-1.5983
4	12	13	2	29	0.6606	0.1157	2.1034	-0.8132
5	28	5	25	10	-0.6313	1.6404	-0.4723	0.8453
6	29	6	28	3	-0.7010	1.4528	-0.5714	1.4139
7	23	1	20	37	-0.2394	2.0308	-0.3460	-1.3615
8	22	4	17	28	-0.2286	1.6835	-0.2450	-0.7435
9	17	11	9	36	0.2131	0.2383	1.1113	-1.2313
10	35	36	22	27	-1.4369	-1.1523	-0.4298	-0.6343
11	19	22	11	9	-0.0988	-0.1848	0.9874	0.9679
12	8	31	35	8	1.0630	-0.7814	-1.0318	1.0567
13	7	23	37	16	1.1164	-0.2834	-1.2085	0.2202
14	3	32	19	4	1.6700	-0.7952	-0.3279	1.3247
15	25	3	12	5	-0.3900	1.7327	0.2558	1.2324
16	24	8	14	6	-0.3117	1.3690	-0.0473	1.1888
17	26	14	6	2	-0.4294	0.0906	1.3460	1.7164
18	21	20	3	1	-0.1755	-0.1746	1.5330	2.1950
19	1	28	31	15	1.7237	-0.6266	-0.6788	0.2731
20	11	12	39	39	0.9002	0.1413	-1.6543	-1.6513
21	18	21	10	35	-0.0573	-0.1756	1.0202	-1.1204
22	31	39	15	13	-0.9311	-1.6788	-0.0651	0.7172
23	33	38	13	7	-1.0060	-1.4099	0.1022	1.1290
24	34	33	23	26	-1.1862	-0.9083	-0.4567	-0.6304
25	39	34	26	23	-1.5931	-1.0587	-0.5083	-0.1611
26	37	30	24	33	-1.4677	-0.7764	-0.4669	-1.0826
27	14	18	4	32	0.3864	-0.0327	1.5065	-1.0350
28	32	37	16	34	-0.9732	-1.1933	-0.1226	-1.0866
29	16	27	8	11	0.2172	-0.4728	1.3025	0.8057
30	4	29	27	12	1.5820	-0.7619	-0.5496	0.7958
31	2	26	21	22	1.6975	-0.4709	-0.3790	-0.1406
32	27	2	30	25	-0.5813	1.9503	-0.6646	-0.4725
33	5	24	36	30	1.1670	-0.4209	-1.1568	-0.9048
34	36	35	29	21	-1.4471	-1.1327	-0.6457	-0.1403
35	38	25	18	20	-1.5690	-0.4424	-0.2713	-0.1004
36	6	16	32	18	1.1579	0.0399	-0.7742	-0.0425
37	10	19	38	17	0.9839	-0.1620	-1.2337	0.0585
38	30	7	33	14	-0.7521	1.4434	-0.7925	0.3729
39	9	10	1	31	1.0624	0.2498	2.1071	-0.9173

The current research focuses on identifying the mental pattern of consumers who are fanatical about luxury brands, which was discovered based on Q factor analysis of four mental patterns, which are shown in Figure 2.

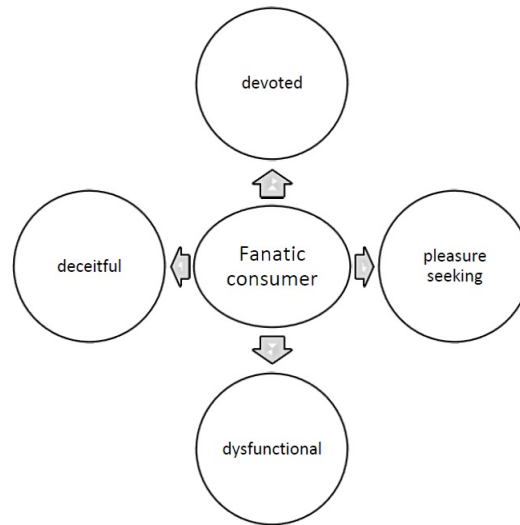


Figure 2: Types of mental patterns towards fanatical consumers

The specific value of the first mental model, which is named fanatical and devoted consumers, is equal to 9.31. This factor represents 24.5% of the common views of the research and twelve participants are significantly correlated with this factor. These people have an emotional commitment to the brand without a profit-seeking view, and they use this brand for pleasure-seeking motives, which indicates their will to pursue and pursue that thing. These people follow up more than usual to use that brand, and their interest in the brand has affected all aspects of their lives, and they do not seek the approval of others in using this brand. This group of people has changed their lifestyle because of this brand and they don't want to change their thoughts and opinions about this brand. They are loyal to the brand despite poor quality or unfavorable performance, and they seek to make any kind of sacrifice for the brand regardless of its consequences, and they do not accept any opposition to ideas and opinions related to the brand.

The specific value of the second mental model, which is named fanatical deceitful consumers, is equal to 7.42. This factor represents 19.5% of the common views of the research and eleven participants are significantly correlated with this factor. By using this brand, their self-confidence increases, and they use this brand to create a balance between the image of the brand and their image so that they are accepted by a certain part of society through this brand. They don't accept the opposing arguments about this brand to the extent that they use verbal violence in the face of opposing arguments, that's why others don't consider them reasonable. This group of people uses this brand as a tool to improve their quality of life. They follow all the events related to the brand and talk about this brand with others in the virtual space.

The specific value of the third mental pattern, which is named fanatical pleasure seeking consumers, is equal to 7.33. This factor represents 19.27% of the common views of the research and nine participants are significantly correlated with this factor. These people use the brand to make others jealous and feel proud when someone asks them for an opinion about this brand. This group of people spends (time, energy, and resources) on this brand, but they do not allocate a significant part of their income to this brand and they are not willing to spend a lot of daily things on this. Buy the brand these people participate in discussions and programs related to the brand and are aware of the latest products offered by this brand, but they do not follow up beyond the usual limit for the brand and their interest in the brand has not affected all aspects of their lives.

The specific value of the fourth mental pattern, which is named dysfunctional fanatical consumers, is equal to 5.99. This factor represents 15.77% of the common views of the research and seven participants are significantly correlated with this factor. This group of people changed their lifestyle because of this brand and are ready to stand in line for several hours to buy their favorite product and use the symbols associated with the brand on their personal devices and other options when shopping. They don't think and if they don't buy the original product, they don't buy the fake product. Their behavior in connection with the brand is criticized by both the people around them and the fans of the brand because they use verbal violence in the face of opposing arguments and they violate social norms because of this brand.

4 Conclusion

The current research seeks to identify the mental pattern of consumers who are fanatical about luxury goods, and by using the Q method, thirty-eight fanatical consumers were interviewed and their mentality was investigated. 30 identified factors were provided to the participants, and after analyzing the obtained information, it was found that these people have four mental patterns, which are devoted fanatical consumers, deceitful fanatics, pleasure seeking fanatics, and dysfunctional fanatics. According to the findings of the present research, it is recommended to the owners of luxury brands personalize their relationships with Fanatic consumers pay with the brand. It is necessary to maintain loyal fanatical consumers and establish continuous relations with them, therefore, fan clubs and regular meetings should be organized and fanatical loyal consumers should be introduced as brand ambassadors instead of verbal advertising. Attract new customers and convert pleasure seeking fanatical consumers into devoted fanatical consumers. He also invited these consumers to periodically visit the production and sales process in the factory and various sales branches for a pleasurable experience. From the lifestyle of those who live with the brand and have collected a collection of objects related to the brand, narrative films were prepared and uploaded on social networks related to the brand. By examining the in-store behavior of devoted fanatical consumers and analyzing it, salespeople can be trained to provide better services to happy and deceptive consumers. He created a database of fanatical consumers and used it to introduce their favorite products and send personal notes, and branch managers communicated with them one-on-one.

Harmful prejudiced consumers give irreparable damage to the brand image, so luxury brand owners are advised to reduce their prejudice towards the brand by using anti-marketing efforts or by inviting Among them, during the brand period, he turned them into fanatical and devoted consumers. If no results were obtained, he prevented them from attending the meetings and took action to revoke their membership in the fan club.

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