



High-end fashion as a social phenomenon: Exploring the perceptions of designers and consumers

Yael Pedro ^a, Enav Friedmann ^b, Sandra Maria Correia Loureiro ^{c,*}

^a Shenkar College of Engineering and Design, The School of Industrial Engineering and Management, Department of Fashion Design, Israel

^b Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Guilford Glazer Faculty of Business and Management, Israel

^c ISCTE-Instituto Universitário de Lisboa and Business Research Unit (BRU-IUL), Av. Das Forças Armadas, 1649-026, Lisbon, Portugal

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

The social constructionist theory
Brand value perception
High-end brands
Designers vs. consumers

ABSTRACT

Grounded on the social constructionist theory, this paper intends to compare the perceptions of the realities of high-end consumers and fashion designers on high-end brands. The main aim is to understand how the perception of luxury brands is socially constructed by designers and consumers and to explore the impact of the social interaction, specifically, the designers' realities impacting consumers' realities.

The research consists of two studies. Study 1 comprised sixteen interviews with worldwide high-end fashion designers, while Study 2 considered three consumer samples (A) consumer interviews (B) consumers' tweets (n = 145,986) specifically on sixteen high-end fashion brands, and (C) consumer online questionnaire (n = 330). We found that high-end fashion designers had more negative (less positive) sentiments compared to the consumers. Designers defined different characteristics that comprise luxury brands. They tend to classify their brand category lower than the consumers. Corroborating the social constructionist theory, we found that the value of high-end brands is constructed by the designers' and consumers' interactions. Consumers gave lower value to a luxury brand if they knew that the designers were unsatisfied and critical of their work, compared to when they were satisfied and confident about it. Therefore, high-end fashion brand managers should consider the different realities of designers and consumers and their interaction in the strategic planning process to ensure designers are satisfied with their work and aligned with the brand's values and image to maintain its luxurious status and appeal to consumers.

1. Introduction

The meaning and value of art are created through the interactions between artists, artworks, and audiences; thus, the value itself is a social construction (Edvardsson et al., 2011). Therefore, high-end brands (luxury and premium brands) design is not an inherent or objective reality but rather something constructed by the social and cultural context in which it is produced and consumed (Huang and Deng, 2008). Individuals' reality regarding high-end brands is constructed of emotional, cognitive, and attitudinal tendencies toward these brands (Wang, 2022; Kang et al., 2022).

The reality of the products' value can be asymmetric for the actors involved (Wang et al., 2022). Even though an object is constructed through the social practices of people, they can still behave as though the world is pre-defined and there is an "objective" reality to an object that makes it a fact (Romaoli and McNamee, 2021).

Literature does not agree on whether the high-end fashion and luxury brand concept is a subjective or objective concept (Michaelidou et al., 2022). Some researchers argue that luxury is defined by subjective experiences (Husain et al., 2022), while others posit that there are objective superior brand characteristics that lead to high-end positioning on a brand continuum (Prentice and Loureiro, 2018). This disagreement highlights the complexity of the concept of luxury and the need for further research to understand the various factors that contribute to its perception. Although Ko et al. (2019, p. 406) claim that "whether or not a brand is considered luxury ultimately depends on consumer evaluations of that brand", examining luxury from the view of designers versus consumers can clarify whether high-end brands are an objective or subjective concept. Although there is a large body of research that examines consumers' perceptions regarding high-end brands, such as Armani, Louis Vuitton, and Prada (Kong et al., 2021), the designers' perspective has mainly been ignored in these studies

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: sandramloureiro@netcabo.pt (S.M.C. Loureiro).

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2024.103877>

Received 16 November 2023; Received in revised form 15 February 2024; Accepted 23 April 2024

Available online 4 May 2024

0969-6989/© 2024 The Authors. Published by Elsevier Ltd. This is an open access article under the CC BY license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

(Sharma et al., 2024). This lack of attention to designers may impact the overall brand value. The consumer's perspective regarding high-end brands focuses on the impact of the brand's features on its value (Sharma et al., 2024), neglecting other significant social influences that are outside of the core brand features, such as the brand's designer's reality (Yodwangjai and Pimapunsi, 2011). Exploring the fashion designer's perspective is, thus, important as they play a crucial role in the fashion industry, and their perspectives can provide insights into marketing strategies (Lang et al., 2019). Therefore, the application of the social constructionist theory that includes the designers' perspectives needs to be integrated, which is the focus of this research.

Analyzing consumers' realities including a deep understanding of perceptions, emotions, and attitudes is essential to high-end brand managers for creating effective marketing strategies that align with consumers' needs, values, and lifestyles (Seo and Buchanan-Oliver, 2019). One of the possibilities for capturing consumers' perceptions and providing insights for high-end brands – beyond the traditional use of surveys and focus groups (Kawaf and Istanbuluoglu, 2019) – is by using social media analytics tools such as tweets (Klaus et al., 2023). This can help identify themes and emotional attitudes of consumers' regarding these brands.

Our purpose was to capture realities not only by using the numerical aspects but also the contextual, nuanced, and personal dimensions, conducting a mixed approach research. This decision was driven by the recognition that the perception of realities is best understood through multiple lenses. Consumers' motivation to buy high-end brands is strongly related to enhancing their positive social standing (Park et al., 2021), while from designers' inner frustration and dissatisfaction with the status quo often derive the creation of high-end products (Särmäkari, 2023). However, they were not yet correctly compared.

Our research has three contributions to the theory. First, the concept of luxury has been widely debated in the literature, with disagreement over whether it is objectively or subjectively determined and what characteristics define luxury brands. This study adds to this discourse by showing that luxury is subjectively determined when comparing two realities (consumers and designers). Second, the reality of consumers regarding luxury brands has been extensively studied, while the designers' reality has received relatively little attention (Sharma et al., 2023). As designers play a crucial role in shaping the brand's identity and maintaining its heritage, it is essential to understand their perspectives. This research addresses this gap by examining designers' perceptions of the brands for which they design. Third, previous literature has focused on various determinants of consumers' brand value without considering the potential impact of designers' perspectives on it (Huang and Deng, 2008). This study fills this gap by demonstrating that interactions shape realities (Berger and Luckmann, 1966) as designers' viewpoints influence consumers' perceptions of brand value.

2. Theoretical background

2.1. Social constructionist theory and high-end brands

High-end brands, which are at the top end of the brand continuum, are considered luxury and premium brands (Wang, 2022). These high-end fashion brands are significantly different from mass fashion brands in terms of price, quality, and exclusivity (Das et al., 2022). Over the years, a significant blur appeared between the concepts of luxury and premium as there was a fusion of mass-market accessibility and prestige, which challenged traditional notions of exclusivity and rarity (Kapferer and Valette-Florence, 2018). Even though there is a perceived overlap between luxury and premium brands (Godey et al., 2016). Luxury brands stand out at the extreme top-end, with their high prices, superior quality, exclusivity, scarcity, storytelling, and global symbol (Sharma et al., 2024). Below luxury, still at the top, are premium brands, which offer higher quality than mass-market brands, with more exclusivity, and higher prices. At the lower-end fashion brands prioritize

affordability and accessibility over exclusivity and craftsmanship, catering to a wide audience. Taking this approach to the brand continuum can help us focus on the high-end brand classification that conveys relatively high social benefits (Kim and Ko, 2012).

The Social Constructionist theory is relevant in understanding the evaluation and perception of high-end brands (Azemi et al., 2022) as these brands can be viewed as the artistic creation of a designer (Barney, 2001). Indeed, high-end brands engage in arts-related activities (Wang, 2022), and they establish themselves as patrons of the arts (Wang, 2022). Social construction theory proposes that art is not an objective reality but a socially constructed phenomenon (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). This means that artistic meanings are not inherent in the artworks themselves but are constructed by society (Berger and Luckmann, 1966), and the interpretation of art is shaped by the cultural and historical context in which it is produced and consumed (Jacobs et al., 2016). Additionally, social interactions influence the meanings attached to high-end brands (Yoo, 2023).

2.2. Subjective and objective nature of high-end brands

When discussing high-end brands, there is often a debate about whether the emphasis should be placed on subjective or objective characteristics, as it is established that such consumption involves both subjective and objective dimensions (Kapferer and Valette-Florence, 2016). However, some argue that the focus should be on objective qualities – such as product quality and consistency – while others believe that subjective factors, such as individual experiences and personal, social, and cultural influences are crucial (Park and Lim, 2023), or social comparisons and marketing communications that shape consumers' subjective experiences of high-end brands (Hogg et al., 2009). For example, Batat (2023) explored the subjective nature of luxury consumption and the importance of a consumer-centric definition of luxury craftsmanship, while others focused on the objective nature of heritage and traditional craftsmanship (Sestino, 2024). One crucial subjective component is perceived satisfaction (with the high-end brand), which relates to the psychological reality of the construct (of the high-end brand) (Wang, 2022). Even though satisfaction is subjective, there might be a consensus between designers' and consumers' perspectives in this regard, supporting more objective realities of high-end brands.

2.3. Emotional response and satisfaction with high-end brand

The positive emotional response following an experience with a new brand is defined as satisfaction (Rodríguez et al., 2020). A range of factors may contribute to individuals' contentment and fulfillment. These factors include the quality of the products, the innovative design and style, the exclusivity and limited availability, the association with prestige and status, the brand's reputation, the level of customer service provided, and the emotional connection individuals feel toward the brand (Park and Lim, 2023). High-end fashion brands – characterized by exceptional craftsmanship and premium materials – play a significant role in satisfying consumers' desire for durability and superior aesthetics (Husain et al., 2022). Moreover, high-end brands' innovative designs and styles allow individuals to express their individuality and stay at the forefront of fashion trends (Kawaf and Istanbuluoglu, 2019). The uncertainty surrounding high-end brands, whether through limited quantities or personalized services, contributes to a sense of privilege and satisfaction among consumers (Agarwal et al., 2022). Owning and wearing high-end fashion items also symbolizes social status and prestige, further enhancing their positive sentiments toward the brand (Bilro et al., 2022). The reputation of high-end fashion brands – built over time through consistent excellence – instills trust and confidence in consumers, reinforcing their positive emotions toward the brand (Agarwal et al., 2022). This emotional connection that individuals establish with these brands often stems from shared values or creative vision (Kawaf and Istanbuluoglu, 2019). Generally, emotional responses and

satisfaction with high-end brands are linked to positive sentiment (Moorlock et al., 2023).

High-end brands can gain insights into their customers' realities by using traditional focus group or questionnaire methods or by analyzing sentiment through the Twitter platform's real-time firm-customer interaction data (Liu et al., 2021). Twitter (now designed as X) is an important tool for high-end brands as it provides valuable information (Moorlock et al., 2023). Thus, following high-end brands on Twitter is seen as a status symbol (Klaus et al., 2023), and users share tweets from these businesses to promote them among their friends, making Twitter one of the powerful tools for analyzing customers' emotional realities concerning high-end brands (Moorlock et al., 2023).

3. Hypotheses development

Designers can be more criticizing than consumers (Bennett et al., 2017). Therefore, we also assume that they will be less positive (or even negative) about the brand they design when compared to consumers' perceptions of the same brand (Ghosh and Roy, 2021). Subjective experiences of the product and level of satisfaction (Park and Lim, 2023) are mainly related to the product's quality offered by the brand (Ghosh and Roy, 2021). The satisfaction and positive responses of consumers are known to be generally high (Amatulli et al., 2020). However, designers' subjective experience with the high-end brands they design for, needs to be explored. Prior research on differences in the subjective emotional experience focused on satisfaction differences between designers and consumers based on the visual aspects of hypothetical furniture (Yodwongjai and Pimapunsi, 2011) and not on the actual product, thereby missing the examination of real experiences by consumers and by the designers.

Designers are not only aware of the backstage aspects of luxury products, which they criticize, but they also experience first-hand the major changes that the luxury market has gone through over the last decade (Sharma et al., 2022). They are cognizant of the actively growing sectors of luxury consumption, which are often described using coined terms such as *masstige* (mass + prestige) (Balabanis and Stathopoulou, 2021) and modern luxury (Kapferer and Valette-Florence, 2016). In the designer's eyes, the proliferation of the mass market has brought the role and position of luxury goods into question, as historically, luxury was associated with rarity and individuality (Sharma et al., 2024). Thus, we predict:

H1a. Consumers' emotional perceptions regarding high-end fashion brands tend to be less negative (more positive) than designers' emotional perceptions regarding the high-end fashion brands they design for.

Social media is another way to explore consumers' realities (Moorlock et al., 2023). Some consumers use social media to post negative complaints (Moorlock et al., 2023), while others enhance their positive show-off benefits (Klaus et al., 2023). Thus, it is unclear what the expected sentiments toward high-end brands are on social media. While consumers often will freely post their opinions on social media, high-end brand designers as employees of the brands, would avoid posting their personal opinions on the brand (Mitchell.), and may do so in personal interviews. The next hypothesis compared sentiments of Twitter(X) posts #hashtag specific to the 16 high-end brands that the designer works for. Specifically, we suggest:

H1b. Consumers' emotions on Twitter(X) regarding high-end fashion brands tend to be less negative (more positive) than designers' emotional perceptions regarding the high-end fashion brands they design for.

Following these hypotheses, we propose an exploratory proposition that will illustrate the different realities, based on consumers' and designers' quotations:

P1: Designers' and consumers' satisfaction with high-end brands will

be different in their nature.

Not only emotions toward high-end brands are expected to differ. Diverse factors characterize what comprises high-end brands, and the key ones include high quality, expensive and appear to be rare and exclusive, prestigious, and authentic, and offer high levels of symbolic and emotional/hedonic values through customer experiences (Christodoulides et al., 2021). To explore the cognitive component of luxury, aligned with prior studies, we focused on the following characteristics: 1) quality (Tynan et al., 2010), 2) brand heritage (Ko et al., 2019) and authentic value, 3) being worthy of commanding a premium price (Tynan et al., 2010) emotional experience (Symbolic, hedonic, and deep connection that provides psychological benefits) (Loureiro et al., 2020), and 5) rarity (Wang et al., 2022).

These characteristics can be aggregated into product attributes (features of the product) and product utilities (consumer's benefit) (Das et al., 2022). Specifically, product attributes refer to what the product gives to consumers (Park and Lim, 2023). However, product utilities refer to what consumers get from the product (Amatulli et al., 2020).

As consumers' and designers' perceptions of realities are expected to be different when conceptualizing 'luxury', we expect designers will prioritize the attributes they "give", such as brand heritage, authentic value, and rarity. While consumers will prioritize the utilities, they "get", like the emotional experience gained from the brand, or the premium price they feel they paid for the worth of the luxurious brand (Ko et al., 2019). This expectation is aligned with self-identity and the need for uniqueness, emotional and psychological elements that are related to consumers' attitudes toward luxury brands (Kim and Ko, 2012). The pricing strategy of luxury brands relies on consumers' sustained acceptance of high prices, which is driven by extrinsic social motivations rather than the pursuit of high quality, thus, the command of high prices is a "get" element of social benefit (Kapferer and Valette-Florence, 2021).

The differing perspectives of designers and consumers in conceptualizing luxury may represent their distinct realities (Tynan et al., 2010). Designers align their creations with the brand's heritage, drawing upon the founder's legacy and the brand's authenticity (Kapferer and Valette-Florence, 2018). They perceive the product's utilities as elements they can give or offer to consumers (Loureiro et al., 2020). Conversely, consumers place greater value on the utilities they receive, particularly the emotional experiences and the premium price they associate with the luxurious brand (Tynan et al., 2010). These differing perceptions highlight the need to understand and measure the basic definition of luxury from both consumer and designer perspectives, enabling a comprehensive assessment of the high-end brand social construction definition (Kapferer and Valette-Florence, 2018). Specifically, we expect consumers' and designers' realities to be different, and they will define luxury differently. We hypothesize the following:

H2. Designers differ from consumers in their social construction definition of a high-end brand with designers focusing on attributes "what you give" (i.e., brand heritage and authentic brand value, a rarity) and the consumers' definitions focusing on benefits "what you get (i.e., emotional experience, perceived worth of a premium price)".

Consumers' and designers' realities might differ as each takes a different role in the high-end brand reality. Behind the high-end brand in the fashion industry is a backstage process that seems to be less glamorous than the frontstage outcome, and is more visible to designers (Karaosman et al., 2020); this includes the materials, production processes, and supply chain (Brun et al., 2017). Designers invest time and effort in the design process by gathering information that helps them to understand design problems and to identify user needs (Ostovan and Khalili Nasr, 2022). They balance different requests and desires to develop the end product, which requires integrating the customer's desires, the firm's guidelines, and their creative view (Das et al., 2022). Designers tend to criticize their work and closely evaluate it (Jacobs et al., 2016). This kind of self-criticism and how to manage it is one of

the designers' training agendas, they strive to create the epitome of artistic excellence. Traditional marketing tools further compound this issue as they need to capture the full value of a brand and its market position more adequately, leaving designers frustrated by the limited recognition of their contributions (Shipilov and Godart, 2015). High-end brands, while capable of enhancing perceptions of status, can paradoxically elicit perceptions of being less warm, introducing conflicting implications for designers and the social impact of their work (Becker et al., 2018). Additionally, the ever-present pressure to continually produce novel and innovative designs to satisfy consumer demands, exemplified in studies on luxury fashion (Jacobs et al., 2016), contributes to designers perceiving their work as hard and demanding. These factors underscore the intricate dynamics prevalent in the fashion industry, which may foster critical perceptions among designers regarding their work and the brands they represent. Thus, we expect:

H3. Designers will perceive their brand category as lower in classification compared to the category classification assigned by consumers (e. g., if the consumers categorize the brand as luxury, designers will categorize the brand as premium, or if the consumers categorize the brand as premium, designers will categorize the brand as non-luxury).

Indeed, consumers' and designers' realities are expected to differ, as the social constructionist theory of art distinguishes between different types of realities when evaluating the value of art or high-end brand design. The theory further suggests that reality perception is something constructed by the social context created through the interactions between designers and audiences. Thus, it is expected that worldwide high-end fashion designers' reality will impact those of the consumers, thus following the theory we propose:

H4. The unsatisfied and critical perspective of the designers on their high-end brands significantly influences the brand value consumers assign to the brand.

4. Overview of the studies

The main aim of this research is to understand how the perception of high-end brands is socially constructed by designers and consumers and to explore the impact of the social interaction between their realities. Thus, two studies explored designers' and consumers' perceptions when evaluating high-end brand design. The first study was comprised of interviews with high-end worldwide designers. The high-end fashion designers, comprised of individuals with specific expertise and qualifications, are small and hard to approach (Döringer, 2021). For in-depth theoretical examination, interviews are a more useful method than surveys (McDermott, 2023). For the interviews, data saturation can be achieved with a minimum sample size as modest as 12 participants (Boddy, 2016). As designers' realities will not be found on social media due to the disclosure agreements (Mitchell, 2002), and regarding that they belong to a small (Lawless and Medvedev, 2016) we will use personal interviews to examine designers' realities in Study 1. Study 2 was comprised of international consumers, including three different samples and methodologies: interviews (Sample A), sentiment analyses of Tweets (social media platform X, Sample B), and an online survey (Sample C). Separate samples can provide a more comprehensive understanding of a complex phenomenon by allowing researchers to independently investigate diverse perspectives of a relatively large population (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004), ensuring a full analysis of the research problem (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). The research gained the university's ethical approval.

As we sought to compare the two samples of designers and consumers and we managed to recruit 16 international designers in Study 1, we used G*Power to calculate the sensitivity of the effect size for each analysis. First, for one one-tailed one-sample *t*-test (H1a, H1b), at an alpha of 0.05 and 80% beta with a sample size of 16 respondents can detect a large effect size of 65%. For a one-tailed non-parametric test of

proportions (H2, H3), we found that with 330 consumers and 16 designers (unequal sample sizes of 20.5 ratios between the groups) at an alpha of 0.05 and 80% beta, we can reasonably detect a medium effect size of 30%. For a one-tailed independent *t*-test (H4), at an alpha of 0.05 and 80% beta with sample sizes of 160 and 170 of the two groups condition, our sample of 330 respondents can detect a medium effect size of 30%. Overall, it seems that a small sample size of the designers may be justifiable if the effect size is large enough to be practically significant and the study is adequately powered to detect the effect (Bartlett, 2019) (see Fig. 1).

5. Study 1- Designers' realities

5.1. Sampling and procedure

The sample was comprised of 16 high-end brand designers who met certain predetermined qualifications (the brands have been on the market for at least 20 years and are considered high-end both on their official website and in the literature (Brandirectory, 2023)). We reached out to 55 high-end designers and interviewed those who agreed to participate. Out of the 16 brands, 12 were luxury, and 4 were premium. We cannot disclose the brands' names due to privacy protection (see Appendix A; out of which 16 were interviewed and their names were followed on Twitter in study 2, sample B).

For the first study, we employed semi-structured interviews with 16 high-end fashion brand designers to explore the designers' reality regarding high-end brands. The high-end brand designers worked for brands in Australia, Belgium, Brazil, France, Germany, India, Italy, Sweden, the U.K., and the U.S.A. Almost half (43.7%) of them were women. Participants' ages ranged from between 25 and 52 years old, with an average age of 35.81 (S.D. = 6.24), and work experience of 8.87 years (S.D. = 3.89). Design processes tend to be similar worldwide (Jacobs et al., 2016). By interviewing designers from different locations and various high-end brands, it was possible to explore a broader knowledge base to yield more generalized theoretical proposition-grounded results. Before starting the interviews, the participants were asked background questions about their design education and experience. Then two questions were asked: 1) Would you say that the product you design is: non-luxury, Premium, or Luxury? 2) What is luxury?

Locating and interviewing the sixteen international designers took five months via Zoom. All participants gave their consent to the recording, transcription, and use of their interview, but without exposing the brand name. Each interview lasted between one and one-and-a-half hours and was conducted in English. The tone of voice and pauses were regarded to clarify meaning, such as conveying a sense of embarrassment or indecisiveness (the interview guide included a question about the designer's perceptions of the high-end brand they design and about how they define luxury).

After verifying the alignment between the audio recording and transcription, the transcripts of all interviews were analyzed using

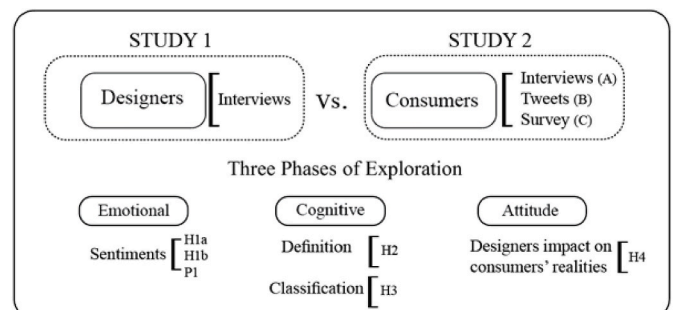


Fig. 1. Studies outline.

thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2021). The analysis was undertaken using the MaxQDA software (Analytics Pro, 2018 version). For analyzing the luxury characteristics, we created codes for the five characteristics: quality, authentic brand heritage, premium price, emotional experience (psychological, symbolic, hedonic), and rarity, which were found in the literature as comprising luxury (Tynan et al., 2010). We examined the frequency of appearance of these characteristics in the designers' interviews. We also analyzed the sentiments in the designers' interviews using the Valence Aware Dictionary and Sentiment Reasoner (VADER) tool (Hutto and Gilbert, 2014). The analysis output is the percentage of positive, negative, and neutral valences that range from zero to one.

Although study 1 gave the view of the designers, study 2 is relevant to dealing with differences between designers and consumers regarding high-end brands. The first exploration phase focused on emotional (H1a, H1b, P1) differences, and the second was cognitive (H2, H3). Given that consumers' realities and designers' realities were expected to be different, the third phase focused on the designers' impact on consumers' attitudes (H4) toward the brand value of a high-end brand.

6. Study 2- Consumers' realities

6.1. Sample A (Consumers interviews)

For the first examination, we recruited 23 luxury and premium consumers from the U.K., U.S.A., Portugal, and Israel (52% women, Mean age = 40.5, S.D. = 2.8) and interviewed them via Zoom. Each interview took about 15 min, in which we asked participants to describe what luxury is. All interviews were again recorded and transcribed. The same sentiment analysis using the VADER tool was conducted as the designers' interviews.

6.2. Sample B (Consumers tweets (X))

For the second examination, we aimed to look specifically at the sentiments of consumers regarding the 16 brands with whom their designers were interviewed. For this, we used the Twitter application program interface with MAXQDA to collect data over one month, from December 9th, 2022 to January 5th, 2023. Specifically, we collected 175,898 tweets containing hashtags referring to sixteen high-end brands where we followed the exact brand names that the designers we interviewed were working for.

Our data collection process included using the full brand name or its abbreviation, limiting the selection to English-only tweets, and excluding retweets. We followed the hashtags on Twitter related to fashion luxury brands, including the brand's full name. Subsequently, we processed the raw data by employing techniques such as removing duplicates, usernames, links, punctuation marks, numeric values, and common stop words. After completing this data-cleaning process, we obtained a sample of 145,986 clean tweets eligible for further text sentiment analysis. We analyzed the sentiments using the same tool we used in the designers' interviews, VADER lexicon for sentiment analysis (Hutto and Gilbert, 2014).

6.3. Sample C (Consumers survey)

For the third examination of consumers, we used an online survey. The sample included 330 English-speaking participants from the U.K., U.S.A., Portugal, and Israel recruited from the Prolific platform. Participants answered the questionnaire for a modest fee of 4\$. Most participants were women (55.8%). The ages of the participants ranged from between 21 and 68 years, with an average age of 28.53 years (S.D. = 6.75). In terms of education, they had an average of 14.68 years (S.D. = 3.44), with 71.1% having an average income level. In the past three years, 45.2% had bought a luxury or premium brand. About 80% were familiar with the sixteen brands.

The online study was presented to the participants to explore their perceptions of luxury and premium brands. First, the brand's category classification was measured for 16 brands (the same brands that we interviewed their designers in study 1), with the participants being asked to classify the brands into non-luxury, premium, or luxury. They also had the option of stating that they were not familiar with the brand. The next item, luxury brand characteristics, was measured by asking respondents to choose which characteristics make a product luxurious. This was conducted by marking up to four of the most relevant aspects from among brand heritage, quality craftsmanship (including quality, design, materials), high price, rarity, and emotional experience (hedonic, symbolic, and image benefits). Next, we randomly exposed participants to two different perspectives of the designers: designers dissatisfied and critical or satisfied and confident about the brand they design. These included two conditions: designers' dissatisfaction with the luxury brand they design: (1) "Assume you recently read an article in which the designer of a known luxury brand was interviewed. The designer expressed his dissatisfaction and criticism about the luxurious brand and had doubts about the level of luxury that the product delivers".

Designers' satisfaction with the luxury brand they design: (2) "Assume you recently read an article in which the designer of a known luxury brand was interviewed. The designer expressed satisfaction with the luxurious brand and had confidence about the level of luxury that the product delivers".

The manipulation check question was "Please rate the level of dissatisfaction and doubt or satisfaction and confidence of the designer regarding the luxury brand they design". The answer options ranged from 1 (dissatisfaction/doubt) to 7 (satisfaction/confidence). Afterward, participants were asked two questions regarding the brand's value (Tynan et al., 2010): "What is the level at which you value the brand?" The answer options ranged from 1 (low value) to 7 (high value). They were then asked, "Do you think that reading such an interview would have changed your perception regarding this luxury brand?" with answers ranging from 1 (changed negatively) to 7 (changed positively); 4 was neutral (did not change). The Cronbach's alpha for both value items was 0.73. The luxury or premium purchase experience was measured with the item: "In the last three years, have you bought any luxury or premium brand products (such as Louis Vuitton, Chanel, Hermes, Armani, Burberry, etc.)?" The answer options were yes or no. For those who answered yes, we examined their satisfaction with luxury brands using two questions. One, an open-ended question that asked them to describe their level of satisfaction with the brand, followed by a second satisfaction question: "Indicate the extent to which that the luxury or premium brand you bought met your expectations," with a choice of answers ranging from 1 (low) to 7 (high).

6.4. Results and discussion

6.4.1. Emotional exploration phase

We compared the emotional perceptions of designers and each sample of the consumers. First, we compared the designers' and consumers' interviews. We computed consumers' negative, positive, and neutral sentiments and used their means to examine the differences between the designers' sentiments to the mean of the consumers' sentiments of high-end brand text, using a one-sample t-test. Designers had 249 sentiments in the interviews. Consumer interviews had 459 sentiments.

Designers had more negative sentiments (2.48%) sentiments of all sentiments were negative), compared with consumers (1% negative sentiments), $t(15) = 9.752, p < 0.001$. Designers were also more neutral (82.38%) than consumers (76.23%), $t(15) = 4.753, p < 0.001$ and less positive (15.16%) than consumers (22.76%), $t(15) = -6.384, p < 0.001$. Indeed, designers use less positive (and more negative and neutral) sentiments than consumers. These support H1a.

Next, we compared the emotional perceptions of the designers'

interviews with the consumers' Tweets. For the consumers' Twitter sample, we had 32,227 sentiment classifications overall in the data. We did the same analysis as in H1a. We computed consumers' negative, positive, and neutral sentiments and used their means to examine the differences between the designers' sentiments to the mean of the consumers' sentiments of high-end related Tweets, using a one-sample *t*-test.

Designers had more negative sentiments (2.48% sentiments of all sentiments were negative), compared with consumers (1.31% negative sentiments), $t(15) = 7.671$, $p < 0.001$. Designers were also more neutral (82.38%) than consumers (78.25%), $t(15) = 3.196$, $p < 0.006$ and less positive (15.16%) than consumers (20.44%), $t(15) = -4.431$, $p < 0.001$.

These support H1b, replicating the results of study 2, sample A. The more positive sentiments of consumers can also be reflected in the consumers' rating of the satisfaction question, it seems, indeed, that consumers were quite satisfied with the luxury brand they bought (Mean = 5.5, S.D. = 1.26, different from the neutral satisfaction value of '4', $t(148) = 14.490$, $p < 0.001$). Lastly, we provide some quotes from consumers and designers that reflect their perceptions of brand satisfaction, reflecting the proposition P1.

Consumers:

"I was surprised by the high quality of the product."

"I enjoy my Chanel bag, got many compliments and the quality was great."

"Luxury brands provide inspiration and a level of standard and quality ... They are those beacons we look up to and thinking 'one day, I will have it.'"

"The product delivered what the brand promised, great quality and high-end materials."

"If I had [lots of] money, I would probably continue to buy many luxury brands."

"I feel that I pampered myself with [a] beautiful design that fits me personally. The reaction that I get from other people makes me feel special. The more it is expensive, the better I feel as I invest in myself."

Designers:

Designer 8: "I have seen many product designs where it started with 'Yes,' which is a great idea. However, when it finished, you would think, oh, it ... actually does not look suitable for the brand."

Designer 15: "So today [it] is not enough to make a down jacket that looks pretty. It could cost 5000 euros, but the moment a drop of water falls on that jacket [it] is ruined".

As the difference between expectation and actual performance relates to satisfaction (Rodríguez et al., 2020), most designers criticized luxury brands today compared to their expectation of "real" traditional luxury brands. In their view, "real" luxury brands convey brand heritage, and quality craftsmanship made from high-end materials, not artificial rarity. Some of the designers remarked as follows:

Designer 5: "Today, luxury is a celebrity definition, a hype definition, an Instagram definition, and not a quality definition. I think it used to be about quality but it's now about [marketing] image."

Designer 7: "Because you can mass-produce endlessly, luxury products are being made in factories in China alongside high street products rather than being made in an atelier, as it would have been before."

Designer 15: "[The] commercial team has more power over the pre-collection and [need] to follow a brief, while on the show collection, [there are] no pricing or creativity limitations, but [a need] to incorporate the spirit and the heritage of the brand."

These quotes demonstrated a discrepancy between the satisfaction levels of consumers who purchase luxury brands and the dissatisfaction levels of designers as P1 asserted. Finally, it seems that designers had

more negative sentiments (less positive), expressing more dissatisfaction compared with the consumers.

6.4.2. Cognitive exploration phase

The cognitive exploration phase used Study 1 and Study 2, sample C data. We examined the definitions of luxury, and then, the classification of specific high-end brands. The most common reference to the luxury attribute that appeared in the designers' interviews (100% of designers interviewed) defined luxurious products as rare and exclusive.

A second reference to luxury characteristics defined luxurious products as having quality craftsmanship (81.3% of the designers), specifically as it related to using high-end materials and manufacturing a brand by experts. The third reference to luxury characteristics was brand heritage (75% of the designers interviewed), specifically as it related to the designers' focus on traditional designing and production in factories as comprising luxurious brands. The fourth reference to luxury was an emotional experience (31.3% of the designers), particularly as it related to the symbolic, hedonic, and image aspects that signal status and approval for the individual. The last reference to luxury was the price of the product (12.5% of the designers), specifically as it related to the high-end prices of the brand (see Appendix B for examples of responses from the designers' interviews).

Considering sample C (online consumers' survey), the most common reference to luxury characteristics (89.7% of the consumers' responses), defined luxurious products as having quality craftsmanship, relating to quality and high-end materials. Another reference to luxury characteristics defined luxurious products as having a defined emotional experience (78.5% of consumers). The third reference to luxury (56.1%) defined the price of the product as high. The fourth reference to luxury highlighted rarity (35.8%). The fifth and last characteristic of luxurious products was brand heritage (33%). To explore the differences in the saliency of the characteristics between designers and consumers, a Mann-Whitney test was conducted.

Brand heritage and rarity were more salient for the designers ("give"), while the high price and emotional experience were more salient for the consumers ("get"). Quality craftsmanship was perceived as equally relevant to luxury in both segments (see Table 1). These results support H1. Indeed, it seems that the definitions provided by the designers mainly emphasized rarity, this is different from the theoretical definitions that are based on consumers where rarity was not a central element in the definition (Ko et al., 2019). Designers defined luxury with elements of quality (when focused on craftsmanship and materials) and authentic brand heritage, while they gave relatively little emphasis on emotional, psychological, and symbolic utilities, as well as the high price that is worth paying. Although the quality was found as an important element (Ko et al., 2019), the emotional, hedonic, and symbolic elements, such as prestige and connection with the brand, that were found to be central in their meta-analysis were less frequently mentioned in the designers' definition of luxury.

Next, to examine the difference in high-end brand classification into luxury, premium, and non-luxury, we examined the frequencies of

Table 1

Differences in the ranking of luxury brand characteristics between consumers and designers.

Characteristics	Designers/Consumers	Mean rank	Z	p-value
Heritage	Consumers	170.14	-3.43	<0.001
	Designers	242.75		
Price	Consumers	176.98	-3.41	<0.001
	Designers	101.63		
Rarity	Consumers	168.36	-5.14	<0.001
	Designers	279.50		
Quality craftsmanship	Consumers	174.18	-1.07	0.286
	Designers	159.56		
Emotional	Consumers	177.28	-4.33	<0.001
	Designers	95.56		

classifications of the designers (using sample study 1 and study 2, sample C) and used the consumers' most common classification (the mode) for each brand when excluding consumers who were not familiar with the brand. Analysis of the designers shows that about half of the designers (56%; 9 out of the 16) paused before answering the classification question. Only 25% classified the brand category correctly, with most (75%) claiming that their brands were lower than mentioned on the site. Years of experience were not correlated with the rating classification (Spearman's $r = 0.35$, $p = 0.19$), meaning there was no difference in years of experience between those who gave lower ranking classifications.

Consumers (collected through classified correctly 87.5% (14 out of 16) of the brands or gave them a higher rank compared to their positioning on the website. We used a Chi-square test to examine the differences between designers' and consumers' classification (see Table 2).

The designers perceived 10 out of the 16 brands (62.5%) to be in a lower classification than consumers (see Table 2). The classifications were significantly different between consumers and designers ($\chi^2(2) = 9.238$, $p < 0.01$), with 78.6% of the luxury classifications ranked by consumers, while designers used the lower classification more (66.7% of the premium classification and 100% of the non-luxury classification).

To conclude the cognitive exploration, we found that designers and consumers prioritized luxury brand characteristics differently when defining luxury according to the backstage reality (product attributes, what designers give) and the frontstage reality (the product's utilities, what consumers get). Brand category classification of luxury and premium brands exploration demonstrated that designers classified the brand they designed for at a lower rank than consumers. As the social constructionist theory suggests, the interaction between the designers

and consumers may impact consumers' realities. The next analysis explored this question, focusing on the attitudinal construct of brand value.

6.4.3. Attitudinal impact exploration

We made sure that the manipulation worked before conducting the analysis. Indeed, the doubt condition received lower ratings than the confident condition (M Dissatisfaction condition = 2.84, S.D. = 1.45; M Satisfaction condition = 4.96 S.D. = 1.55, $t(328) = 12.742$, $p < 0.001$), meaning the manipulation was effective.

We examined the difference in consumers' brand value perception

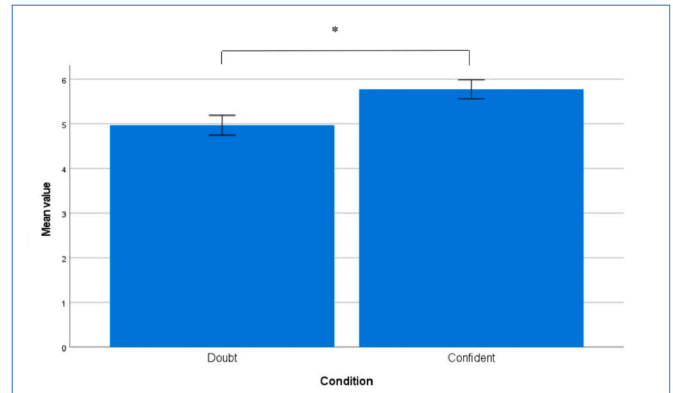


Fig. 2. Difference in consumers' value perceptions between conditions.

Table 2
Designers and consumer classifications.

	Brand positioning on the website	Designers' classification	Presence of pause (x) or no pause (✓)	Consumers' most common classification	Summary of results
Brand 1	Luxury	Luxury	✓	55.2% Luxury	Designer = consumer classification
Brand 2	Luxury	Premium	✓	39.4% Luxury	Designer < Consumer classification
Brand 3	Luxury	Premium	X	62.1% Luxury	Designer < Consumer classification
Brand 4	Luxury	Premium	X	25.5% Premium	Designer = Consumer classification
Brand 5	Luxury	Luxury	✓	56.7% Luxury	Designer = Consumer classification
Brand 6	Premium	Non-Luxury	X	61.2% Premium	Designer < Consumer classification
Brand 7	Premium	Non-Luxury	X	16.6% Premium	Designer < Consumer classification
Brand 8	Premium	Non-Luxury	✓	79.1% Luxury	Designer < Consumer classification
Brand 9	Luxury	Premium	X	24.5% Luxury	Designer < Consumer classification
Brand 10	Luxury	Premium	✓	47.3% Premium	Designer = Consumer classification
Brand 11	Luxury	Premium	X	72.1% Luxury	Designer < Consumer classification
Brand 12	Premium	Premium	✓	49.7% Premium	Designer = Consumer classification
Brand 13	Luxury	Premium	X	67.6% Luxury	Designer < Consumer classification
Brand 14	Luxury	Luxury	✓	59.4% Luxury	Designer = Consumer classification
Brand 15	Luxury	Premium	X	67.6% Luxury	Designer < Consumer classification
Brand 16	Luxury	Premium	X	65.5% Luxury	Designer < Consumer classification

between the two conditions of designer dissatisfaction versus satisfaction with their luxury brand design to analyze H4, (see Fig. 2). The consumers who were assigned to the designer's dissatisfaction condition expressed a lower brand value ($M = 4.97$, $S.D. = 1.42$) than did those who were assigned to the satisfaction condition ($M = 5.78$, $S.D. = 1.34$), $t(312) = 5.125$, $p < 0.001$. This pattern was the same for consumers who bought or did not buy high-end brands, as the interaction term (bought luxury/premium by condition) was not significant ($F(1,308) = 0.495$, $p = 0.482$). This result confirms H4.

In sum, it seems that designers' attitudes regarding their satisfaction with high-end brands influence consumers' perceptions of brand value aligned with the social constructionist theory, as interactions may shape realities (Naeem and Ozuem, 2021).

7. Conclusions and implications

7.1. Theoretical implications

The main purpose of this paper was to investigate the perspectives of both designers and consumers when it comes to high-end brands, with a particular emphasis on emotional and cognitive aspects, and to explore the impact of designers' realities on those of consumers. Exploring differences in emotional and cognitive aspects can help to solve the subjective-objective debate of high-end brands. Emotionally, we found differences between designers and consumers regarding sentiment valence and satisfaction with high-end brands. Cognitively, luxury brand characteristics of high-end brands were prioritized differently by designers and consumers when defining luxury according to the backstage reality (product attributes, what designers give) and the frontstage reality (the product's utilities, what consumers get). Quality craftsmanship was highly prioritized for both designers and consumers. A possible explanation is that quality was found to have both functional attributes and experiential utilities (Friedmann and Brueller, 2018). The brand category classification of high-end brands, wherein we showed that some designers classified the brand they designed for at a lower rank compared to consumers. These findings solve the objective-subjective disagreement in the literature, highlighting the subjective realities regarding high-end brands.

Secondly, the existing body of knowledge on high-end brands by shedding light on a relatively underexplored aspect: the perceptions of designers in the realm of luxury brands. While consumer perspectives have garnered significant attention (Ko et al., 2019), the study of brand-affiliated staff members' viewpoints, such as managers, salespersons, and distributors, has been previously addressed (Christodoulides et al., 2021). However, there remains a notable gap in the literature regarding the broader insights into designers' perceptions of the brands they contribute to. This gap is significant because comprehending their viewpoints is crucial, given their pivotal role in shaping a brand's identity and preserving its heritage.

Finally, previous literature has focused on various determinants of consumers' brand value without considering the potential impact of designers' perspectives on it (Huang and Deng, 2008) as the social constructionist theory would suggest. This paper fills this gap by demonstrating that interactions shape realities (Naeem and Ozuem, 2021) as designers' viewpoints influence consumers' perceptions of brand value.

7.2. Practical implications

Practically, the results of this research can help managers protect their luxury brand value and should be considered in managers' strategic planning of a high-end brand. Managers should consider the impact of the designers' perspective in their drive to sustain the luxury of their brand. This is especially important in an era where transparency of the backstage aspect has become standard (Osburg et al., 2021). Brand management should minimize discord between the consumers

and its designers. One way to align designers' and consumers' realities is to employ a co-creation strategy, where designers and consumers are parties in the creation of luxury design. This can be extended to joint promotion where the brand value can be sustained. Elevating designers' confidence in the luxury brand can be achieved by ensuring quality craftsmanship and strengthening the brand heritage and the rarity of products. This should reassure designers that they are indeed creating luxurious products. By considering the broader social and cultural contexts in which luxury consumption occurs, designers and marketers can ensure that their products align with consumers' values and aspirations, thereby enhancing their appeal and marketability. This understanding of the gaps in realities may create opportunities for managers to safeguard the value of their high-end brand.

8. Conclusions and future research

Although our paper offers several useful insights, it is also subject to several limitations. The field of luxury brands is highly competitive and small; as a result, the designers were reluctant to disclose many concrete examples and ideas regarding their work. Due to the small sample of luxury fashion designers, we also included four premium brand designers' future studies should distinguish between two types of designers, even though both premium and luxury brands are at the higher end of the continuum compared to non-luxury (Tynan et al., 2010). Some comparisons between samples required hypotheses testing using statistical data for data that was gathered quantitatively and qualitatively (e.g., interviews and surveys) which resulted in a unique type of mixed-methods comparison. Nonetheless, using a mixed-methods approach can lead to more generalizable and conclusive results (McDermott, 2023).

Future research should explore how managers can engage designers beyond improving the brand attributes that were tested in this paper. This can be done, for example, by incorporating designers in strategic decision-making and giving them more influence over backstage decisions and processes so that the outcome will be aligned with their expectations.

This paper explored the influence of the designers' perspective on consumers, while future research can examine the influence of the consumers' perspective on the designers to gain a fuller picture of the two realities. It would also be interesting to examine whether consumers' doubt or confidence in the luxury product influences the designer's brand value. This should contribute to enhancing theoretical understanding of how the dynamics of the frontstage reality influence the backstage reality. Such information could be beneficial for the designers and producers of luxury brands. In this paper, we did not differentiate between cross-cultural consumer perspectives on the value of high-end brands; this examination is important to identify unique versus common needs and desires among global market segments (Shammout et al., 2022). Our studies were limited to Western countries, which may limit the generalizability of our findings to other cultural contexts. Future research should aim to explore luxury perceptions and behaviors in a more diverse range of cultural contexts to gain a more comprehensive understanding of luxury. Beyond cultures, it would be interesting to focus on the differences between different age segments and explore whether consumers are homogeneous or not in the designers' impact on their realities, as the young generation tends to be more easily influenced than older consumers.

Additionally, future research should explore consumers' and designers' realities regarding non-luxury fashion brands, as designers may have different realities even in this product class. In this paper, we showed a differential effect for designers and consumers, while the mechanism that may lead to the different realities is suggested only theoretically and not empirically. Lastly, this research focused on fashion luxury designers, while future research can broaden this examination to other categories, such as the designers of luxury automobiles and hotels.

CRediT authorship contribution statement

Yael Pedro: Conceptualization, Investigation, Methodology, Resources, Writing – original draft. **Enav Friedmann:** Conceptualization, Resources, Supervision, Validation. **Sandra Maria Correia Loureiro:** Conceptualization, Supervision, Validation, Visualization, Writing – review & editing.

Declaration of competing interest

None.

Data availability

Data will be made available on request.

Acknowledgement:

We express our gratitude to Mr. Or Peretz of Shenkar College of Engineering and Design for his invaluable assistance in sentiment analysis, which has greatly enriched the content of our academic paper.

Appendix A

1. Alexander McQueen	31. Lanvin
2. Alexander Wang	32. Le Chameau
3. Balenciaga	33. Loewe
4. Barbour	34. Louis Vuitton
5. Body Glove	35. Lua Morena
6. Burberry	36. Lululemon
7. Calvin Klein	37. LVNH
8. Canterbury	38. Moët Hennessy
9. Chanel	39. Nike
10. Comme des Garçons	40. Prada
11. Diesel	41. Puma
12. Dior	42. Quiksilver
13. DKNY	43. Roberto Cavalli
14. DolceandGavvana	44. Saint Laurent
15. Fendi	45. Sandro
16. Giorgio Armani	46. Sealskinz Ltd
17. Givenchy	47. Sperry
18. Gucci	48. Stella McCartney
19. Haglöfs	49. Thom Browne
20. Hermès	50. Thomas pink
21. Hugo Boss	51. Tommy Hilfiger
22. Hunter	52. Trussardi
23. Issey Miakey	53. Valentino
24. Joseph	54. Vivian Westwood
25. JW Anderson	55. Yohji Yamamoto
26. Karen Millen	
27. Karl Lagerfeld	
28. Katharine Hamnett	
29. Kenzo	
30. Lacoste	

Appendix B

The following are examples of responses from the designers' interviews:

Designer 1: "A few craftsmen that are in such high demand; the brands don't like hiring other craftsmen, resulting in a long wait period for the product."

Designer 3: "Rarity of experience."

A second reference to luxury characteristics defined luxurious products as having **quality** craftsmanship, which appeared in 81.3% of the designers' interviews, specifically as it related to using high-end materials and manufacturing a brand by experts. This can be seen in the following comments:

Designer 4: "Luxury products convey not just an image but the craftsmanship behind [them]. Handcrafted, artisanal."

Designer 11: "You are making sure that the product will last for a long time, and you need to make sure that every stitch is perfect, every seam is finished in the right way that you are finishing with the right times and the fabrication feels luxurious and fit for the purpose."

The third reference to luxury characteristics was **brand heritage**, which appeared in 75% of the designer interviews, specifically related to the designers' focus on traditional designing and production in factories comprising luxurious brands. A few examples:

Designer 2: "It is very heritage, so it has a brand identity that you need to adhere to. All the inspiration across seasons comes from the heritage of the brand."

Designer 3: "I think it has more to do with the background of the product than the product itself ... It is the history of the brand. We also have to identify when we have gone too far."

Designer 4: "The true story of the brand and how it started."

The fourth reference to luxury was **an emotional experience**, which appeared in 31.3% of the designer interviews, specifically as it related to the symbolic, hedonic, and image aspects that signal status and approval for the individual. For example:

Designer 11: "They were offering a status."

Designer 16: "Those kinds of symbols that used to be a symbol of status."

The fifth reference to luxury was the **price** of the product, which appeared in 12.5% of the designer interviews, specifically as it related to the high-end prices of the brand. This can be seen in the following sentences:

Designer 1: “Expensive, the pricing needs to be superlative, justifiable”.

Designer 5: “Price (of product production) was never really an issue.”

References

- Agarwal, R., Mehrotra, A., Misra, D., 2022. Customer happiness as a function of perceived loyalty program benefits - a quantile regression approach. *J. Retailing Consum. Serv.* 64, 102770.
- Amatulli, C., De Angelis, M., Pino, G., Guido, G., 2020. An investigation of unsustainable luxury: how guilt drives negative word-of-mouth. *Int. J. Res. Market.* 37 (4), 821–836.
- Azemi, Y., Ozuem, W., Wiid, R., Hobson, A., 2022. Luxury fashion brand customers' perceptions of mobile marketing: Evidence of multiple communications and marketing channels. *J. Retailing Consum. Serv.* 66, 102944.
- Balabanis, G., Stathopoulou, A., 2021. The price of social status desire and public self-consciousness in luxury consumption. *J. Bus. Res.* 123, 463–475.
- Barney, J.B., 2001. Resource-based theories of competitive advantage: a ten-year retrospective on the resource-based view. *J. Manag.* 27 (6), 643–650.
- Bartlett, J., 2019. Introduction to sample size calculation using G*Power. Retrieved from. <https://osf.io/zqphw/download>. (Accessed 15 June 2022).
- Batav, W., 2023. The pursuit of luxury or luxuries? A framework of the past, present, and future of luxury research. *Consum. Mark. Cult.* 26 (2), 103–116.
- Becker, K., Lee, J.W., Nobre, H.M., 2018. The concept of luxury brands and the relationship between consumer and luxury brands. *J. Asian Finance Econ. Bus.* 5 (3), 51–63.
- Bennett, S., Agostinho, S., Lockyer, L., 2017. The process of designing for learning: Understanding university teachers' design work. *Edu. Technol. Res. Dev.* 65 (1), 125–145. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11423-016-9469-y>.
- Berger, P.L., Luckmann, T., 1966. *The Social Construction of Reality*. Anchor Books, Garden City, NY.
- Bilro, R.G., Loureiro, S.M.C., Dos Santos, J.F., 2022. Masstige strategies on social media: the influence on sentiments and attitude toward the brand. *Int. J. Consum. Stud.* 46 (4), 1113–1126.
- Boddy, C.R., 2016. Sample size for qualitative research. *Qual. Mark. Res.* 19 (4), 426–432.
- Brandirectory, 2023. *Luxury and Premium 2023 Ranking*. Retrieved from. <https://brandirectory.com/rankings/luxury-and-premium/table>. (Accessed 15 July 2021).
- Braun, V., Clarke, V., 2021. To saturate or not to saturate? Questioning data saturation as a useful concept for thematic analysis and sample-size rationales. *Qual. Res. Sport Exerc. Health* 13 (2), 201–216.
- Brun, A., Castelli, C., Karaosman, H., 2017. A focused supply chain strategy for luxury fashion management. *JFMM* 21 (4), 544–563.
- Christodoulides, G., Athwal, N., Boukis, A., Semaan, R.W., 2021. New forms of luxury consumption in the sharing economy. *J. Bus. Res.* 137, 89–99.
- Creswell, J.W., Creswell, J.D., 2018. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, fifth ed. Sage, London, UK.
- Das, M., Jebarajakirthy, C., Sivapalan, A., 2022. How consumption values and perceived brand authenticity inspire fashion masstige purchase? An investigation. *J. Retailing Consum. Serv.* 68, 103023.
- Döringer, S., 2021. 'The problem-centered expert interview'. Combining qualitative interviewing approaches for investigating implicit expert knowledge. *Int. J. Soc. Res. Methodol.* 24 (3), 265–278.
- Edvardsson, B., Tronvoll, B., Gruber, T., 2011. Expanding understanding of service exchange and value co-creation: a social construction approach. *J. Acad. Mark. Sci.* 39, 327–339. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-010-0200-y>.
- Friedmann, E., Brueller, D., 2018. Is stereotypical gender targeting effective for increasing service choice? *J. Retailing Consum. Serv.* 44, 35–44.
- Ghosh, S., Roy, K., 2021. Identifying brand equity dimensions and measuring its relationship with product quality dimensions: a study on juice brands in India. *Int. J. Manag. Entrep. Res.* 2 (7), 463–475.
- Godey, B., Manthiou, A., Pedersoli, D., Rokka, J., Aiello, G., Donvito, R., Singh, R., 2016. Social media marketing efforts of luxury brands: influence on brand equity and consumer behavior. *J. Bus. Res.* 69 (12), 5833–5841.
- Hogg, M.K., Banister, E.N., Stephenson, C.A., 2009. Mapping symbolic (anti-) consumption. *J. Bus. Res.* 62 (2), 148–159.
- Huang, K.-H., Deng, Y.-S., 2008. Social interaction design in cultural context. *Int. J. Des.* 2 (2), 81–96.
- Husain, R., Paul, J., Koles, B., 2022. The role of brand experience, brand resonance and brand trust in luxury consumption. *J. Retailing Consum. Serv.* 66, 102895.
- Hutto, C., Gilbert, E., 2014. VADER: A Parsimonious rule-based model for sentiment analysis of social media text. *Proceed. Int. AAAI Conf. Web Soc. Media* 8 (1), 216–225.
- Jacobs, S., Cambré, B., Huysentruyt, M., Schramme, A., 2016. Unraveling Belgian fashion designers' high perceived success: a set-theoretic approach. *J. Bus. Res.* 69 (4), 1407–1411.
- Johnson, R.B., Onwuegbuzie, A.J., 2004. Mixed methods research: a research paradigm whose time has come. *Educ. Res.* 33 (7), 14–26.
- Kang, I., Koo, J., Han, J.H., Yoo, S., 2022. Millennial consumers perceptions on luxury goods: capturing antecedents for brand resonance in the emerging market context. *J. Int. Consum. Market.* 34 (2), 214–230.
- Kapferer, J.-N., Valette-Florence, P., 2016. Beyond rarity: the paths of luxury desire. How luxury brands grow yet remain desirable. *JPBM* 25 (2), 120–133.
- Kapferer, J.-N., Valette-Florence, P., 2018. The impact of brand penetration and awareness on luxury brand desirability. *J. Bus. Res.* 83, 38–50.
- Kapferer, J.-N., Valette-Florence, P., 2021. Which consumers believe luxury must be expensive and why? A cross-cultural comparison of motivations. *J. Bus. Res.* 132, 301–313.
- Karaosman, H., Perry, P., Brun, A., Morales-Alonso, G., 2020. Behind the runway: extending sustainability in luxury fashion supply chains. *J. Bus. Res.* 117, 652–663.
- Kawaf, F., Istanbuluoglu, D., 2019. Online fashion shopping paradox: the role of customer reviews and Facebook marketing. *J. Retailing Consum. Serv.* 48, 144–153.
- Kim, A.J., Ko, E., 2012. Do social media marketing activities enhance customer equity? An empirical study of luxury fashion brand. *J. Bus. Res.* 65 (10), 1480–1486.
- Klaus, P., Manthiou, A., Luong, V.H., 2023. Sustainability in luxury: insights from Twitter activities. *J. Strat. Market.* 1–18.
- Ko, E., Costello, J.P., Taylor, C.R., 2019. What is a luxury brand? A new definition and review of the literature. *J. Bus. Res.* 99, 405–413.
- Kong, H.M., Witmaier, A., Ko, E., 2021. Sustainability and social media communication: how consumers respond to marketing efforts of luxury and non-luxury fashion brands. *J. Bus. Res.* 131, 640–651.
- Lang, C., Seo, S., Liu, C., 2019. Motivations and obstacles for fashion renting: a cross-cultural comparison. *J. Fash. Mark. Manag. An Int. J.* 23 (2), 519–536.
- Lawless, E., Medvedev, K., 2016. Assessment of sustainable design practices in the fashion industry: experiences of eight small sustainable design companies in the Northeastern and Southeastern United States. *Int. J. Fash. Des. Technol. Educ.* 9 (1), 41–50.
- Liu, X., Shin, H., Burns, A.C., 2021. Examining the impact of luxury brand's social media marketing on customer engagement: using big data analytics and natural language processing. *J. Bus. Res.* 125, 815–826.
- Loureiro, S.M.C., Jiménez-Barreto, J., Romero, J., 2020. Enhancing brand coolness through perceived luxury values: insight from luxury fashion brands. *J. Retailing Consum. Serv.* 57, 102211.
- McDermott, R., 2023. On the scientific study of small samples: challenges confronting quantitative and qualitative methodologies. *Leader. Q.* 34 (3), 101675.
- Michaelidou, N., Christodoulides, G., Presi, C., 2022. Ultra-high-net-worth individuals: self-presentation and luxury consumption on Instagram. *EJM* 56 (4), 949–967.
- Mitchell, C., n.d. *Selling the brand inside*. *Harv. Bus. Rev.* 81(1), 99–101.
- Moorlock, E., Dekel-Dachs, O., Stokes, P., Larsen, G., 2023. Constructing consumer-masstige brand relationships in a volatile social reality. *J. Bus. Res.* 155, 113381.
- Naem, M., Ozuem, W., 2021. Understanding the social consumer fashion brand engagement journey: insights about reputed fashion brands. *J. Brand Manag.* 28 (5), 510–525.
- Osburg, V.-S., Davies, I., Yoganathan, V., McLeay, F., 2021. Perspectives, opportunities, and tensions in ethical and sustainable luxury: introduction to the thematic symposium. *J. Bus. Ethics* 169 (2), 201–210.
- Ostovan, N., Khalili Nasr, A., 2022. The manifestation of luxury value dimensions in brand engagement in self-concept. *J. Retailing Consum. Serv.* 66, 102939.
- Park, H., Lim, R.E., 2023. Fashion and the metaverse: clarifying the domain and establishing a research agenda. *J. Retailing Consum. Serv.* 74, 103413.
- Park, J., Hyun, H., Thavisay, T., 2021. A study of antecedents and outcomes of social media WOM towards luxury brand purchase intention. *J. Retailing Consum. Serv.* 58, 102272.
- Prentice, C., Loureiro, S.M.C., 2018. Consumer-based approach to customer engagement – the case of luxury brands. *J. Retailing Consum. Serv.* 43, 325–332.
- Rodríguez, P.G., Villarreal, R., Valiño, P.C., 2020. A PLS-SEM approach to understanding E-SQ, E-Satisfaction, and E-Loyalty for fashion E-Retailers in Spain. *J. Retailing Consum. Serv.* 57, 102201.
- Romaoli, D., McNamee, S., 2021. Mis)constructing social construction: answering the critiques. *Theor. Psychol.* 31 (3), 315–334.
- Särmäkari, N., 2023. Digital 3d fashion designers: cases of Atacac and the fabricant. *Fash. Theory* 27 (1), 85–114.
- Seo, Y., Buchanan-Oliver, M., 2019. Constructing a typology of luxury brand consumption practices. *J. Bus. Res.* 99, 414–421.
- Sestino, A., 2024. The challenge of integrating “intelligent” technologies in luxury shopping contexts: the role of brand personality appeal and consumers' status consumption orientation. *J. Retailing Consum. Serv.* 76, 103488.
- Shammout, E., D'Alessandro, S., Small, F., Nayeem, T., 2022. Lifting the curtain on cultural values, materialism, and luxury consumption: evidence from Jordan. *J. Consum. Behav.* 21 (5), 987–1001.
- Sharma, A., Soni, M., Borah, S.B., Haque, T., 2022. From silos to synergies: a systematic review of luxury in marketing research. *J. Bus. Res.* 139, 893–907.
- Sharma, P., Srivastava, A., Sharma, V., Singh, N., Nijjer, S., 2024. Understanding consumer repurchase intentions towards luxury retail brands: evidence from an emerging market. *J. Retailing Consum. Serv.* 76, 103570.
- Shipilov, A., Godart, F., 2015. Luxury's talent factories. *Harv. Bus. Rev.* 93 (6), 98–104.
- Tynan, C., McKechnie, S., Chhuon, C., 2010. Co-creating value for luxury brands. *J. Bus. Res.* 63 (11), 1156–1163.
- Wang, X., Sung, B., Phau, I., 2022. Examining the influences of perceived exclusivity and perceived rarity on consumers' perception of luxury. *J. Fash. Mark. Manag. An Int. J.* 26 (2), 365–382.

- Wang, Y., 2022. A conceptual framework of contemporary luxury consumption. *Int. J. Res. Market.* 39 (3), 788–803.
- Yodwangjai, S., Pimapunsi, K., 2011. Application of semantic differential technique and statistical approach to evaluate designer's and consumer's perception in furniture design. *Appl. Sci. Eng. Prog.* 4 (1), 23–30.
- Yoo, J.J., 2023. Visual strategies of luxury and fast fashion brands on Instagram and their effects on user engagement. *J. Retailing Consum. Serv.* 75, 103517.

Dr. Pedro, a faculty member at the School of Industrial Engineering and Management and fashion design department, offers a unique blend of academic and practical experience. Her multidisciplinary background in management, design, entrepreneurship, and fashion, coupled with her role as a brand manager and product development expert, positions her as a leading authority in the field.

Dr. Enav Friedmann, as the head of the BGU marketing lab, specializes in consumer behavior, brand preferences, and social marketing. Her research has been published in respected journals such as the *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services* and the *European Journal of Marketing*.

Sandra Maria Correia Loureiro is in the ranking of 2% of the best scientists in the world in both Marketing and Sport, Leisure & Tourism by Stanford University, together with the publishing house Elsevier and SciTech Strategies. Her research interests include relationship marketing, tourism marketing issues, and the implications of VR, AR, and AI. Her papers have been published in a variety of peer-reviewed journals include *Journal of Marketing* (ABS4*), *Journal of Retailing* (ABS 4), *Journal of Travel Research* (ABS 4), *Journal of Business Research* (ABS3), *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* (ABS3), *Tourism Management* (ABS4), *International Journal of Hospitality Management* (ABS3), *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management* (ABS3), *Journal of Cleaner Production* (ABS2) or the *Service Industries Journal* (ABS2). She won several awards, such as: the 2012 Best Paper Premier Award presented by the Global Marketing Conference (comprised of EMAC, ANZMAC, KSMS, and the Japanese Association of Marketing), Highly Commended paper Award 2014 - 7th EuroMed Conference and EuroMed Research Business Institute (EMRBI), Highly Commended paper Award 2016 - 9th EuroMed Conference and EuroMed Research Business Institute (EMRBI), Best Paper Award 2016- ICCMI 2016. In 2017 and 2018 she also won high commended papers award from editor Emerald. Best paper award at the Fashion Management Conference 2019, Excellent Service Award 2021 Global Fashion Management Conference at Seoul-2021 KSMS International Conference for the Uncompromising Service as a Conference Co-Chair and 2021 best reviewer for psychology and marketing.