

## Mapping the Ethical and Digital Transformation of Luxury: A Bibliometric and Thematic Synthesis (2012–2025)

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### ABSTRACT

The global luxury industry stands at a crucial inflection point where heritage and hedonism intersect with responsibility. Previously defined by exclusivity and craftsmanship, luxury now needs to connect itself with the values of sustainability and the transparency of the digital age. This study looks at how research over the past decade has examined this change, where value, virtue, and visibility come together to redefine luxury consumption in the contemporary times. Using 234 Scopus-indexed publications screened between 2012 and 2025, which were narrowed down to a final set of 51 research papers, this study employs bibliometric mapping and thematic analysis to explore the intellectual development of ethics, sustainability, and digitalization within the luxury sector. The analysis shows five related clusters that represent the field's broad ideas: (1) technology-driven digital ecosystems and the rise of virtual luxury; (2) ethical visibility and how the corporates strategically communicate their responsibility; (3) consumer psychology, moral identity, and behavioural intention; (4) authenticity and the growth of the masstige phenomenon; and (5) circularity and sustainable change. The findings indicate that while the discussion around sustainable luxury is growing, it is still conceptually disjointed, reflecting the industry's ongoing balancing act between aspiration and accountability. The digital revolution, from, metaverse retail and influencer-driven storytelling, has not only changed marketing methods but has also transformed the moral landscape of desire. Younger consumers, influenced by awareness and environmental consciousness, look for purpose alongside prestige, viewing status as a representation of ethics instead of excess. By mapping these trends, this study provides an understanding of how ethics, aesthetics, and algorithms interact to shape the future of luxury...

**Keywords:** Sustainable luxury, Ethical consumption, Digitalization in luxury, Luxury Brand Ethics, Circular economy, Bibliometric Analysis.

### 1. INTRODUCTION:

The luxury market today is undergoing a significant change. This Shift is driven by a growing societal focus on ethical consumption, environmental sustainability, and corporate transparency. Luxury Brands, once symbols of opulence and exclusivity, now face more pressure to adjust their strategies to align with responsible practices. As consumer values change, there is a greater demand for accountability in global supply chains (Athwal et al., 2019). Many luxury consumers now view environmental care, fair labour conditions, and authenticity as crucial value drivers, expanding the concept of value within luxury (Pencarelli et al., 2019). At the same time, sustainability is becoming more important in various industries; Companies in the luxury sector, which used to be seen as separate from sustainability issues, are now expected to make credible commitments to social and environmental improvement while maintaining their

aspirational appeal (Kunz et al., 2020). Besides sustainability, digitalization through social media, blockchain, and the metaverse, is reshaping how value, authenticity and prestige are constructed in both material and virtual spaces. This highlights, the conflict between ethics and luxury, creating a notable tension. While traditional views of luxury consumption have been tied to excess rarity, and indulgence, all these qualities often clash with ethical and sustainable standards of moderation, social fairness, and ecological responsibility (Alghanim and Ndubisi, 2022). This situation raises important questions about how conspicuous consumption can coexist with moral accountability in the same marketplace, which is a concern for both researchers and industry professionals (Bronner and De Hoog, 2018). Consumers of luxury products may experience inner conflict as they seek to enhance their image and achieve social distinction while facing increasing demands for responsible behaviour and sustainable choices (Bitane,

2019). The complicated relationship affects both consumer motivation and brand positioning, illustrating the intricate, decision-making processes involved in today's luxury markets (Tavares et al., 2015). This moral tension increasingly plays out in digital spaces where visibility, comparison, and influencer-driven validation fuel both aspiration and anxiety. Our analysis indicates that this digital aspect shifts the ethics-luxury dilemma into a socio-psychological realm, connecting online identity performance with sustainable self-expression.

The rise of media and social networking platforms has deepened the conversation about ethical luxury. Consumers now expect greater transparency, authenticity, and responsible storytelling (Athwal et al., 2019). Social media platforms like Instagram, TikTok, along with influencer-driven marketing, have transformed how luxury brands communicate, making it more democratic while increasing scrutiny around ethical claims and sustainability. Beyond social media, technologies such as blockchain, NFTs, and omnichannel retail systems now play key roles in enhancing transparency, traceability, and circularity. They incorporate ethical communication into technological framework of luxury branding. This increased brand visibility complicates how luxury brands balance aspirational images with socially responsible actions, extending the ethics-luxury paradox into the digital realm. A growing number of studies aim to tackle these complexities. Researchers focus on topics like corporate social responsibility (CSR) in luxury contexts, the rise of sustainable luxury business models, and the emergence of ethical consumer identities (Gazzola et al., 2020). Consequently, recent literature often discusses how luxury brands incorporate CSR strategies and sustainability, responding to changing consumer expectations while seeking a competitive edge (Broccardo et al., 2022). Other research examines digital responsibility, supply chains transparency, and the gap between ethical concerns among luxury consumers and their actual behaviours (Holmqvist et al., 2025). Recent studies have begun to explore new digital trends, such as branding in metaverse, authenticity through NFTs, and online resale markets. However, this research remains fragmented across various unconnected topics and lacks a cohesive theoretical framework, with diverse perspectives and methods leading to unclear concepts integrative structures (Armstrong et al., 2014). Important Knowledge gaps still exist in understanding how ethical values fit into luxury narratives, how to the profit motives with socio-cultural responsibility, and how firms and consumers negotiate the ethics-luxury paradox globally. While past studies have greatly enriched knowledge in this area, existing studies is still divided into separate categories, lacking a thorough overview of its intellectual structure and thematic development. No bibliometric review has yet been done systematically that combines this field, identifies the leading sources, authors, and thematic clusters, and charts research on consumer ethics and luxury consumption over time. Conducting such a review is crucial for illustrating how academic discussions have shifted from earlier debates on conspicuous consumption and moral guilt to modern conversations that focus on sustainability, digital transformation, and conscious luxury.

In light of these gaps, this paper addresses the following research questions:

*Q1: What are the major research trends and intellectual structures that shape the intersection of sustainability, ethics, and digital transformation within the luxury industry?*

*Q2: How have constructs of authenticity, identity, and social influence evolved in digital and sustainable luxury consumption?*

*Q3: What are the emergent thematic clusters and knowledge gaps from this literature, and in what way do they potentially inform future theoretical and empirical research into sustainable luxury ecosystems?*

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. Section 2 presents the theoretical framework that explains the link between consumer ethics, sustainability, and luxury marketing. Section 3 outlines the methodological approach, including data collection, screening criteria, and analytical techniques. Section 4 offers the results and discussion, featuring descriptive statistics, scientific mapping, thematic evolution, and intellectual structure. Section 5 wraps up the paper by highlighting the main theoretical and managerial implications and suggesting future research paths.

### **Conceptual Framework:**

The foundation for this study lies at the intersection of consumer ethics, ethical consumption, and luxury marketing. Consumer ethics, as defined by Muncy and Vitell (1992), refers to moral principles and standards that guide consumer decisions related to boycotting, purchasing from companies that support fair labor, and buying sustainably produced products (Belk et al., 2005). Ethical consumption, according to Harrison et al. (2005), involves choosing not to harm society or the environment when selecting products and services. It reflects an individual's effort to maintain a consistent moral identity in the marketplace. Luxury marketing has typically focused on exclusivity, symbolism, and experiential value. Recently, sustainable luxury has emerged as a new perspective within the industry, promoting social and environmental responsibility in its production, communication, and consumption processes (Grauel et al., 2025). This contrast has been called an "oxymoron" or ethics-luxury paradox. It arises from a conflict between the traditional view of luxury, which is linked to indulgence and rarity, and the demands for moderation, fairness, and sustainability found in ethical consumption (Athwal et al., 2019; Tavares et al., 2015). This paradox raises important questions about challenges for both consumers and businesses. It creates moral uncertainty and complicates decision-making in global markets (Alghanim and Ndubisi, 2022; Cairns et al., 2021).

### **Theoretical Lens:**

This study uses several theoretical perspectives from different fields to examine how consumers reason morally and make decisions in the luxury market. According to Value-Belief-Norm (VBN) Theory, pro-social and environmentally responsible behavior comes from values

that become beliefs. These beliefs then trigger personal norms. This helps explain why consumers include ethical principles in their choices about luxury products (Stern et al., 2000). Moral Identity Theory (Aquino & Reed, 2002) suggests that ethical actions stem from how central moral traits are to one's self-concept. Using these theories, participants may feel moral pride or dissonance when their purchases align or conflict with their personal ethics. Cognitive Dissonance Theory (Festinger, 1957) describes how the discomfort created by the conflict between indulgence and morality leads to rationalization or compensatory behavior. Meanwhile, Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 2004) shows that ethical consumption acts as a social signal of moral prestige and belonging. Together, these theories highlight the psychological balancing act between self-enhancement and self-transcendence motives. They reveal how consumers reconcile their luxury desires with their sense of moral responsibility (Essiz et al., 2022; Geiger-Oneto Minton, 2019).

### Organizational and Brand Perspectives:

At the firm level, CSR Theory (Carroll, 1999) and Brand Authenticity Theory (Beverland, 2005) are two key frameworks that explain how luxury brands establish their ethical stance. CSR theory suggests that, apart from making profits, companies have duties that include ethical, social, and environmental responsibilities (Gazzola et al., 2020). In the luxury sector, these ideas lead to sustainable sourcing, commitments to carbon neutrality, and social advocacy. This aims to balance exclusivity with accountability. Brand Authenticity Theory highlights the importance of transparency, heritage, and integrity in building consumer trust and reducing scepticism about symbolic "greenwashing" (Hoesen, 2025). Additionally, Stakeholder Theory places luxury firms within a network of shareholders, consumers, employees, and communities, whose expectations drive the adoption of ethical practices (Child & Marcoux, 1999). The Triple Bottom Line Framework (Elkington, 1994) supports this by promoting balance among profit, people, and the planet. Together, these frameworks explain how luxury firms align shareholder interests with broader social and environmental needs while gaining legitimacy in ethically aware markets (Yadav et al., 2024; Athwal et al., 2019). The rise of digital media and influencer marketing adds further complexity. Theoretically, Signaling Theory and Authenticity frameworks become more important in the online context. Digital interactions increase the visibility of ethical claims and reveal gaps between brand stories and consumer views. As a result, digital transparency and electronic word of mouth (eWOM) play a crucial role in shaping ethical brand trust in luxury markets (Kapferer & Michaut-Denizeau, 2013).

### Synthesis and Relevance to the Study:

Combining these viewpoints has created a complex but fragmented theoretical landscape around ethical luxury consumption. The connection of consumer ethics theories, moral psychology, and organizational frameworks like CSR and authenticity theory has produced diverse literature in marketing, psychology, and sustainability

studies. However, this research is scattered across various fields, leading to unclear concepts and a lack of theoretical unity (Essiz & Senyuz, 2023; Dhingra, 2024). This highlights the need for a detailed bibliometric and scientific map to bring together the intellectual foundations, track the development of themes, and identify emerging research areas in this field (Athwal et al., 2019). This study aims to create an empirical knowledge map that shows the main intellectual connections and offers a solid evidence base for future research and management strategies relating to ethics, sustainability, and luxury consumption.

### Methods and Materials:

#### Extracting relevant:

To address the research questions guiding this study, we conducted a systematic literature review. We chose Scopus as our main data source because it covers a broad range of disciplines and offers reliable citation indexing in business, management, and social sciences. (Gusenbauer & Gauster, 2024) support this choice. Thus, this database reflects scholarship on consumer ethics, sustainability, and luxury marketing, providing a solid ground for bibliometric analysis.

In October 2025, we used a structured keyword search to find literature that intersects digital media, social media marketing, and ethical luxury consumption. Key search terms included: "ethical consumption," "consumer ethics," "sustainable luxury," "digital luxury," "social media," "influencer marketing," "corporate social responsibility (CSR)," and "authenticity." We specifically included keywords related to digital and social media because they play a significant role in shaping consumer attitudes toward ethics, transparency, and sustainability issues in the luxury sector. We focused on peer-reviewed journal articles and review papers published in English between 2012 and 2025. The results were categorized under the subjects of business, management, economics, psychology, and environmental studies. This initial search returned 234 documents, which we screened and refined using the PRISMA framework.

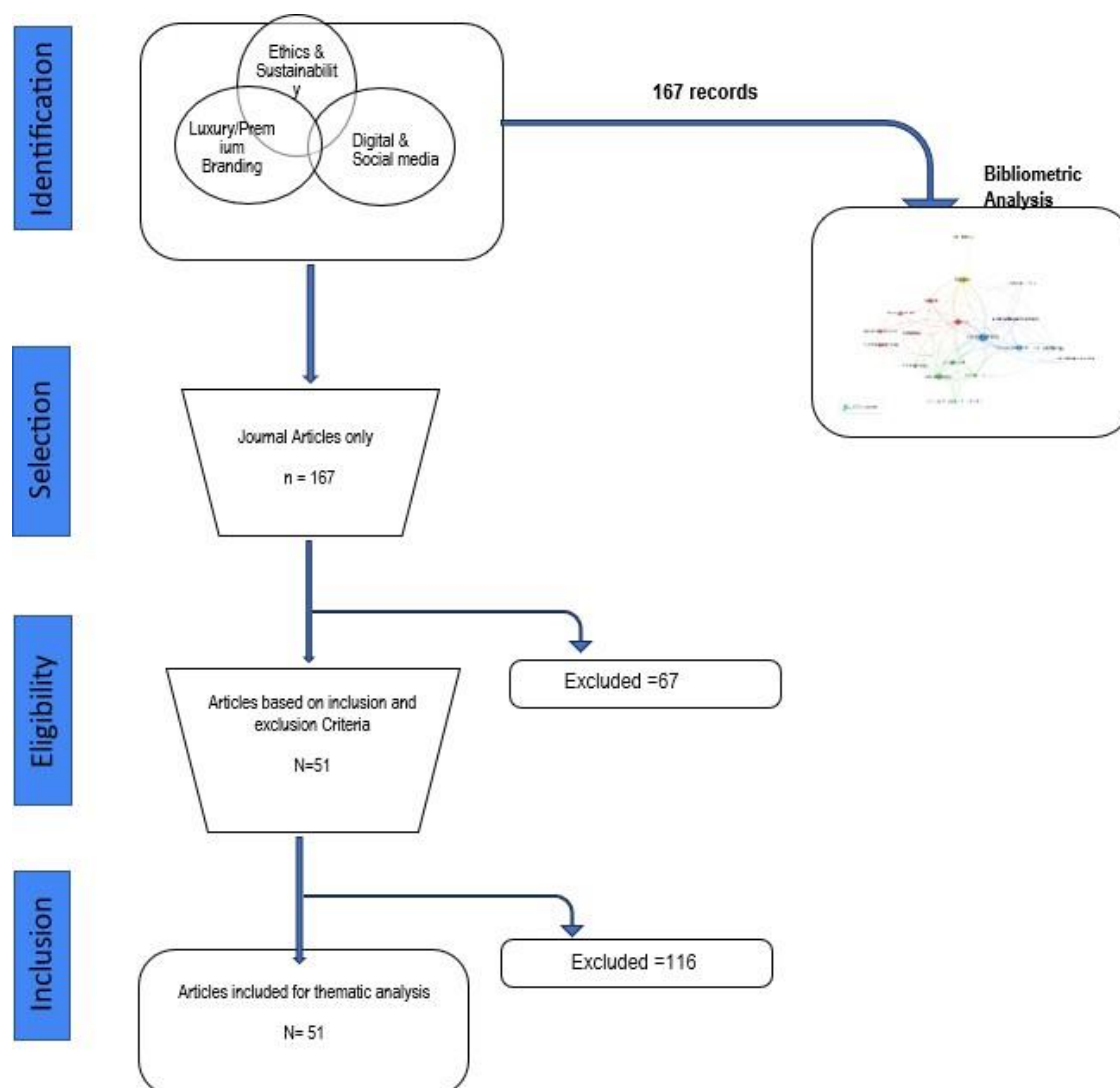
During the screening stage, we removed non-English, duplicate, and irrelevant records, including those from technical fields like engineering or material sciences. A detailed manual review confirmed the relevance to the intersection of ethics, luxury, and digital media. The final dataset included 214 Scopus-indexed research articles and review papers, each addressing at least one of the following areas:

- (i) ethical or sustainable dimensions of luxury consumption,
- (ii) digital or social media engagement in luxury marketing, or
- (iii) CSR and authenticity within luxury brand communication.

Publications found to fall outside the scope of this research study were excluded as some focused only on technical modelling, unrelated consumer categories, or non-marketing contexts. After this process, 167

documents were retained for both bibliometric and thematic analysis. All the steps in the screening process were based on the PRISMA protocol to ensure maximum

transparency and reproducibility. Figure 1 shows the flow of information through the identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion stages.



**Fig 1. Flowchart of the systematic literature review with bibliometric analysis**

### Bibliometric Analysis of Results:

Bibliometric analysis is a valuable research method for mapping global research trends and predicting future research interest (Pham & Le, 2024).

In this paper, bibliometric analysis identifies the features and trends of works combining ethics, sustainability, and luxury consumption in marketing and consumer studies. The data are then analysed by means of summary statistics extracted from Scopus, as shown (n = 167), for the period starting from 2012 up to 2025.

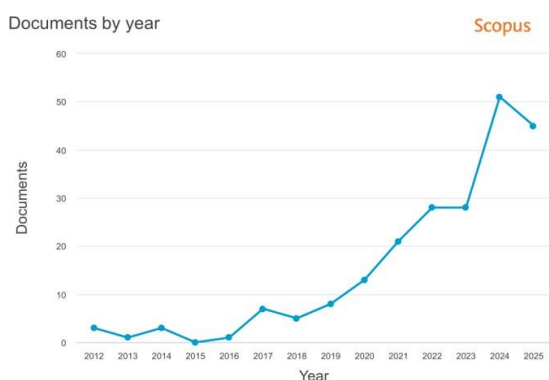
Fig. 2 shows that over the years, the number of publications on ethical consumption in luxury markets has increased steadily. For instance, no indexed publications combining the three core keywords (“ethical

consumption,” “luxury,” and “sustainability”) within Scopus are available before 2012. Secondly, the topic of investigation has received a remarkable raise in scholarly attention in recent years, up to a peak of 52 records in 2024. This rise is in tune with the increase

in research activities on responsible consumer behaviour, digital transformation, and sustainable luxury branding.

Overall, data suggest a consistent upward trajectory in publications between 2017 and 2025, showcasing how the area of ethical luxury consumption has moved from an emerging area of inquiry to an established interdisciplinary area connecting marketing ethics, sustainability, and consumer psychology.

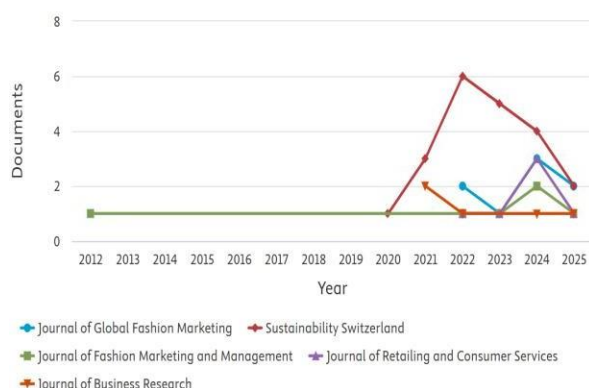




**Fig.2. Annual Scientific Production (Source: Scopus 2025)**

**Figure 3** shows the annual document volume by publication source. The five most preferred outlets for publications on ethical consumption and sustainable luxury are the Journal of Global Fashion Marketing, Sustainability (Switzerland), Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management, Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, and the Journal of Business Research. Among these, Sustainability (Switzerland) has been the most consistent and productive source so far. It experienced a significant increase in

**Fig 3. Documents per year by source (Source: Scopus 2025)**

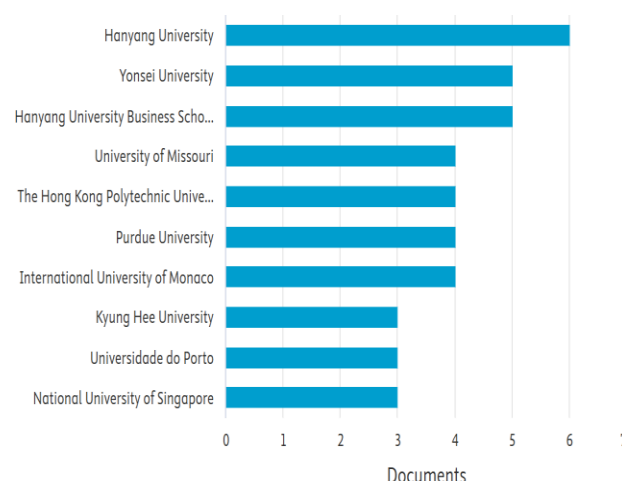


publications from 2022 to 2024, which mirrors the overall rise in sustainability-focused research in luxury branding. The Journal of Global Fashion Marketing and the Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management have also become key contributors in connecting consumer ethics with fashion and luxury consumption. Additionally, the Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services and Journal of Business Research are influential interdisciplinary outlets for research on marketing ethics, sustainability, and consumer psychology. Together, these journals represent a large portion of the total research output in this area and illustrate the growing academic and managerial interest in balancing luxury branding with social and environmental responsibility.

**Figure 4** shows the distribution of documents by institutional affiliation. Hanyang University ranks first with the highest number of publications. It is followed by Yonsei University and Hanyang University Business School, both of which have shown strong academic interest in ethical consumption and sustainable luxury.

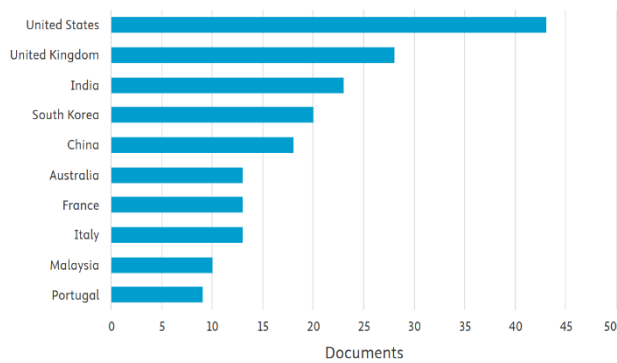
Other top institutions include the University of Missouri, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, and Purdue University. Each has made important contributions to the research on ethical luxury, digital change, and consumer responsibility. Additionally, universities like the International University of Monaco, Kyung Hee University, Universidade do Porto, and the National University of Singapore are also notable. These institutions highlight their growing focus on sustainable and responsible consumption in luxury marketing.

This list showcases a variety of locations. Asia, North America, and Europe are all represented, highlighting the worldwide nature of research on ethical consumption and luxury. This mix of institutions shows a strong international commitment to combining sustainability, consumer ethics, and digital innovation in luxury market.



**Fig.4. Documents by Affiliation (Source: Scopus 2025)**

**Figure 5** compares document counts across 10 countries and territories with the most publications. The countries of origin were determined by the affiliation of the corresponding author. The United States leads with 47 publications, followed by the United Kingdom with 33 and India with 23. Together, these three countries account for over 60% of the total publications. South Korea and China follow with 20 and 18 publications, respectively. Australia, France, and Italy each have 13 publications. Malaysia has 10 and Portugal has 9, rounding out the top ten countries contributing to this field of literature. These results evidence global academic engagement in the research topic of ethical consumption and sustainable luxury.



**Fig 5. Documents by Country (Source: Scopus 2025)**

**Table 1. Documents by Subject Area**

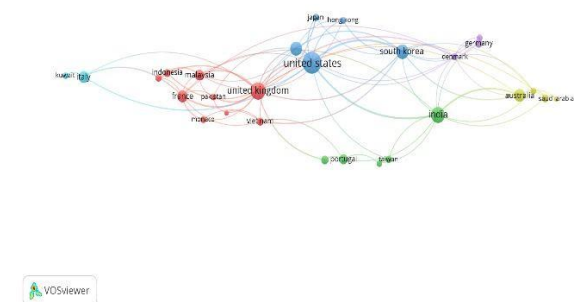
Subject Area	No. Documents	%age
<i>Business, Management and Accounting</i>	143	32.5
<i>Social Sciences</i>	96	21.86
<i>Computer Science</i>	31	7.06
<i>Environmental Science</i>	31	7.06
<i>Economics, Econometrics and Finance</i>	26	5.92
<i>Energy</i>	26	5.92
<i>Psychology</i>	21	4.78
<i>Arts and Humanities</i>	18	4.10
<i>Decision Sciences</i>	15	3.41
<i>Engineering</i>	10	2.27
<i>Materials Science</i>	8	1.82
<i>Medicine</i>	5	1.13
<i>Mathematics</i>	3	0.68
<i>Multidisciplinary</i>	3	0.68
<i>Agricultural and Biological Sciences</i>	1	0.22
<i>Health Professions</i>	1	0.22
<i>Immunology and Microbiology</i>	1	0.22
<b>Total</b>	<b>439</b>	<b>100</b>

Finally, the analysis of published documents by subject area (Table 1) shows that Business, Management, and Accounting is the dominant subject area in the research landscape with 143 documents (33%) of the total publications. Then comes the Social Sciences with 96 documents (22%), while Computer Science and Environmental Science represent 31 documents (7%). The following position is occupied by the subject areas of Economics, Econometrics, and Finance and Energy, each having 26 documents (6%) of the publications. Further contributions come from Psychology (5%), Arts and Humanities (4%), and Decision Sciences (3%), indicating that the domain of ethics–luxury–sustainability is an interdisciplinary one.

The map of co-authorship between countries was built using the VOSviewer software, based on bibliographic data. A threshold of five documents per country was used, and 21 countries reached this threshold (**Fig. 6**).

The most active and collaborative countries in this domain are the United States, the United Kingdom, and India, as captured by the figure, and hence are central in shaping global scholarship on the subject of ethical consumption and luxury. Other major contributors are China, South Korea, Australia, and Germany, with collaborative links ranging from moderate to strong.

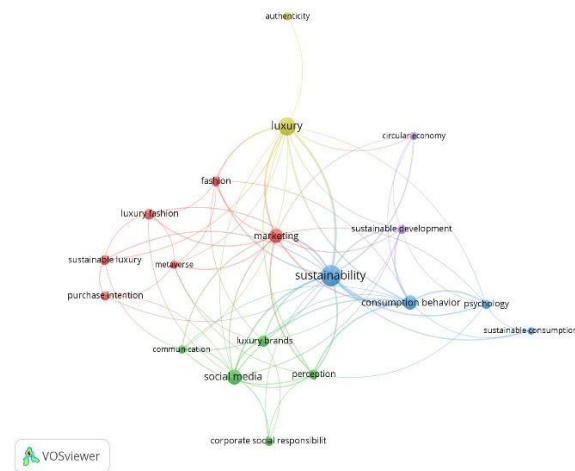
The visualization shows five clusters that indicate regional research collaboration across Europe, Asia, and North America. The size of each node is determined by the volume of the publications, while line thickness illustrates the strength of co-authorship ties.



**Fig 6. Co-authorship network of countries (Source: VOSviewer, 2025)**

Finally, bibliographic data were used to create an author keyword co-occurrence network with the help of VOSviewer software. The software used a minimum threshold of five occurrences for keywords; thus, 19 keywords fell into five color-coded clusters. Figure 7 shows the relationships of the most frequently co-occurring terms to one another, underlining the close conceptual connections between sustainability, consumer

behavior, and digital transformation in the context of Luxury.



**Fig.7. Keyword co-occurrence network (Source: VOSviewer)**

The red cluster covers fashion, luxury fashion, marketing, metaverse, purchase intention, and sustainable luxury. It shows how marketing and technology combine in sustainable luxury research. The green cluster includes communication, corporate social responsibility, luxury brands, perception, and social media. It highlights the growing importance of ethical and digital communication in luxury branding. The blue cluster, which focuses on consumption behavior, psychology, sustainability, and sustainable consumption, reflects consumer attitudes and behaviors related to responsible consumption. The yellow cluster addresses authenticity and luxury, emphasizing emotional value and brand integrity. The purple cluster spans the circular economy and sustainable development. It fits into broader sustainability and policy frameworks that influence luxury practices. After reviewing the research landscape through a keyword co-occurrence analysis of 167 publications, I needed to refine the results to ensure clarity and relevance. I only kept journal articles during this phase to maintain data quality and consistency. I excluded review papers, book chapters, conference proceedings, and AIP. I focused on open-access and full-text research papers to make their content transparent and

accessible. This process resulted in 51 research papers that underwent a thorough manual review. Each paper was examined for its relevance to the main themes of sustainability, ethical consumption, and luxury marketing.

The inclusion criteria for further analysis were:

1. The article must be a peer-reviewed journal publication that is open access and in its final published form.
2. The topics of interest should be at the intersection of sustainability, ethical or responsible consumption, and luxury or premium branding.
3. The paper must include empirical, conceptual, or bibliometric findings relevant to sustainable or ethical practices in luxury.
4. The paper must be published in English, regardless of the publication date.

Articles were excluded if:

1. They were review papers, conference proceedings, book chapters, or articles in press (AIP).
2. The full text could not be accessed or verified publicly.
3. The paper had no focus on integrating issues of sustainability or ethics within the luxury industry.
4. The type of record was other non-research materials - editorials or commentary notes.

After the inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied, the filtered dataset consisted of 51 journal articles to be further analyzed in detail with thematic analysis. Each of these studies contributes to the growing discourse on ethical consumption, sustainability, and luxury marketing. For conceptual coherence, the abstracts, keywords, and findings have been manually screened and categorized into themes associated with the five clusters that emerged from the bibliometric mapping (Figure 7). The analysis further supported the presence of marketing and innovation in luxury fashion, ethical communication and social media, sustainable consumption and consumer psychology, brand authenticity and emotional value, and the circular economy and sustainable development as clusters that best captured the conceptual structure of the field. Table 2 summarises the selected papers, outlining their research focus and thematic alignment.

**Table 2. Critical Taxonomy of Articles**

Authors	Research Aim	Article Type
Abdrabbo et al. (2025)	This study investigates how scarcity and the need for uniqueness (NFU) influence luxury purchase intentions among Millennials and Gen Z, with fear of missing out (FoMO) and social comparison as moderating variables. It addresses how digital-era emotional and identity factors reshape luxury consumption behavior.	Experimental
Youn et al. (2025)	This study investigates how blockchain technology reduces uncertainty and enhances transparency in	Experimental

	second-hand luxury purchases, with price consciousness moderating consumer trust and adoption behavior.	
Cho & Cho (2025)	This study examines how luxury brands leverage NFTs in the metaverse to enhance ethical value perception and consumer engagement. Using VAB theory, it explores how NFT attributes influence brand attitude, resistance to negative information, and luxury purchase intention.	Experimental
Emanuele (2025)	This study analyzes how luxury and identity are constructed through celebrity culture and digital visibility, comparing Fitzgerald’s works with contemporary fame representations. It explores how social visibility and authenticity shape modern luxury consumption and cultural identity.	Conceptual/Qualitative
Perez-Vega et al. (2025)	This study examines how social recognition mechanisms and sustainability communications shape consumer engagement with personal luxury brands on social media. It emphasizes the strategic importance of visibility and symbolic value in advancing ethical luxury communication practices.	Conceptual/ Theoretical
Sederevičiūtė-Pačiauskienė & Kamašauskė (2025)	This study investigates how luxury fashion brands use Instagram Stories to communicate sustainability while maintaining brand prestige. It explores audience interpretations of visual narratives and the role of authenticity and renewal in fostering positive brand engagement.	Empirical Qualitative
Jin et al. (2025)	This research investigates drivers of millennials’ intentions to purchase second-hand luxury, focusing on the mediating role of moral obligation and electronic word-of-mouth. It highlights how ethical consumption motives and social responsibility influence sustainable luxury behavior.	Empirical Quantitative
Erlinda & Fatmawati (2025)	This study explores how fear of missing out (FoMO) shapes consumer decision-making and sustainable consumption in luxury contexts. It conceptualizes FoMO as a psychological driver of impulsive, materialistic, and identity-based luxury consumption within digital environments.	Conceptual
Joenpolvi et al. (2025)	To examine how communicating circular economy principles affects consumer engagement and perception of luxury brands, assessing whether sustainability messaging enhances or diminishes brand appeal.	Empirical quantitative
Becheur et al. (2025)	To explore generational differences influencing ethical and sustainable consumption in the luxury market, focusing on Gen Y’s social and financial motivations for second-hand luxury purchases.	Conceptual and literature-based review.
Hepner (2025)	To analyze U.S. policy shifts on sustainability and diversity in luxury branding, highlighting implications for compliance and cross-market adaptation in global luxury industries.	Conceptual
Garcia-Ortega et al. (2025)	To investigate how fashion brands integrate sufficiency-oriented and anti-consumerist strategies into corporate communication, assessing the prevalence of “greenwashing” and authentic sustainability efforts.	Exploratory qualitative



Sun et al. (2024)	To examine Indonesian millennials' perceptions of luxury fashion brands and how social identity and ethical awareness drive purchase intentions toward sustainable luxury.	Empirical quantitative
Kim et al. (2024)	To assess how NFT-based promotional bundles affect perceived value, authenticity, and consumer response toward luxury fashion brands.	Empirical/Experimental
Wang et al. (2024)	To explore factors shaping second-hand luxury consumption in Shanghai, emphasizing sustainability, product longevity, and consumer values.	Empirical qualitative
Abdelmeguid et al. (2024)	To analyze how slow fashion practices redefine luxury consumption by integrating sustainability, craftsmanship, and innovation to counter fast fashion impacts.	Conceptual and theoretical
Liang (2024)	To investigate how circular economy principles drive innovation in China's hospitality and fashion industries, linking sustainability initiatives with consumer engagement and brand loyalty.	Empirical quantitative
Islam et al. (2024)	To examine how luxury brands utilize social identity theory to build ethical digital engagement, integrating emotional branding with sustainable value creation in virtual environments.	Conceptual
Hong & Ahn (2024)	To examine how brand authenticity and congruence influence luxury service brands' engagement and customer loyalty during the post-pandemic era.	Empirical quantitative
Rudeloff & Michalski (2024)	This study examines how corporate brands, including those in the luxury sector, communicate brand purpose on social media, focusing on the values of solidarity and sustainability and their influence on user engagement. It further compares industry-specific strategies, revealing that luxury brands underutilize brand purpose communication compared to other sectors.	Empirical quantitative
Aldhamiri et al. (2024)	This study explores customer engagement behaviors toward luxury brands on social media, identifying intrinsic and extrinsic motivations that drive active and passive engagement.	Sequential mixed methods
Zhang et al. (2024)	This study examines how psychological contracts and emotional labour influence employee turnover intentions in luxury hotels, highlighting the mediating role of emotional labour in sustaining workforce stability and loyalty.	Empirical quantitative
Zhang et al. (2023)	This study investigates consumers' perceptions and purchase intentions toward luxury brands' digital fashion, analyzing how attitudes, social value, and environmental involvement shape adoption behavior in virtual spaces.	Empirical quantitative
Sung et al. (2023)	This study explores consumer behavior toward blockchain-based luxury NFTs in the metaverse, examining the psychological evaluation of risks and authenticity that influence purchase decisions and extend game and prospect theory applications to digital luxury markets.	Empirical quantitative
Zhao et al. (2023)	This study systematically reviews literature on sustainable luxury and consumer purchase intention,	Conceptual

	identifying key themes such as materials, recycling, social media, and CSR to assess how sustainability influences luxury consumer attitudes and behavior.	
Liu et al. (2023)	This exploratory study investigates how consumers engage with online luxury resale platforms, identifying the key attributes that shape customer value, experience, and sustainability perceptions in buying and selling pre-owned luxury products.	Exploratory qualitative
Wang et al. (2023)	This study analyzes how anti-counterfeiting efforts within luxury supply chains influence pricing, profits, and consumer perceptions. It explores strategic differences between direct selling and reselling structures to identify the most effective anti-counterfeiting approaches for luxury manufacturers and retailers.	Conceptual
Wilska et al. (2023)	This study examines how young consumers construct and express their identities through social media–influenced consumption styles, particularly luxury, trendy second-hand, and sustainable preferences, highlighting the role of influencers and commercial content in shaping youth consumer identity.	Empirical qualitative
Yu et al. (2023)	Examines how influencer attributes and consumer need satisfaction shape self-brand connection and word-of-mouth intention in luxury branding. Highlights moderating roles of identification and product fit within sustainable social media contexts.	Empirical quantitative
Lin & Ku (2023)	Investigates how digital brand experiences on Instagram influence perceptions of authenticity, attachment, and loyalty in luxury fashion. Highlights authenticity as a key mediator linking digital engagement to brand connection.	Empirical quantitative
Todri & Papajorgji (2023)	This study examines consumer attitudes toward recycling luxury items through e-commerce platforms, identifying motivational drivers, preferred platform configurations, and demographic influences to promote ethical and sustainable luxury recycling practices.	Empirical quantitative
Arrigo (2023)	Explores fashion rental as a sustainable alternative to retail within luxury fashion, highlighting opportunities, challenges, and strategic adaptations to evolving consumer consumption patterns.	Empirical Quantitative
Ullström et al. (2023)	Analyzes shifting discourses around air travel in Sweden, highlighting how emerging sustainability narratives and cultural change challenge luxury-driven, high-carbon travel norms.	Qualitative discourse analysis
Ali et al. (2023)	Investigates how Islamic religiosity influences Generation M's ethical attitudes toward luxury counterfeits in social commerce, emphasizing moral determinants of ethical consumption behavior.	Empirical quantitative
Yeşin & Ikram (2023)	Examines how integration quality in omnichannel marketing influences brand equity and consumer perception, proposing a sustainable omnichannel model supporting circular economy transitions. Context luxury sportswear brands	Empirical quantitative
Lou et al. (2023)	Investigates how perceived value dimensions (emotional, social, quality, and green) and perceived	Empirical quantitative

	risk influence U.S. consumers' purchase intentions toward second-hand luxury goods.	
Das et al. (2023)	Examines how consumption values influence masstige fashion purchases and how perceived brand authenticity moderates these effects among middle-income Indian consumers.	Empirical quantitative
da Cunha Brandão & de Miranda (2023)	Examines how sustainability considerations and sustainable consumption behavior directly and indirectly affect consumers' purchase intentions toward luxury services across global markets.	Empirical quantitative
Ruan et al. (2023)	Identifies intrinsic and extrinsic motivations driving luxury fashion rental, integrating luxury and collaborative consumption perspectives through self-determination theory.	Empirical quantitative
Santos & Almeida (2023)	Develops and validates an ethical marketing performance evaluation model for luxury hotel chains, focusing on internal and external marketing dimensions through Delphi analysis.	Qualitative
Castillo-Abdul et al. (2022)	Examines how luxury brands use social media content promoting happiness, health, and CSR to foster stakeholder engagement and enhance brand reputation.	Mixed-Methods (Qualitative + Quantitative)
Rathi et al. (2022)	Maps 34 years of luxury marketing research through bibliometric and content analysis, identifying emerging themes such as sustainability, social media, and counterfeiting.	Conceptual
Chen et al. (2022)	Examines how subjective social class, status anxiety, and social comparison influence conspicuous and sustainable luxury consumption among Chinese consumers.	Empirical quantitative
SanMiguel et al. (2022)	Analyzes how luxury and fast fashion brands communicate sustainability through corporate websites and e-commerce platforms, proposing models for improving online sustainability communication.	Comparative Qualitative Analysis
Jansom & Pongsakornrunsilp (2022)	Examines how Instagram influencers shape Thai millennials' parasocial interactions, value perceptions, and purchase intentions toward luxury fashion brands for sustainable marketing.	Empirical quantitative
Kumagai & Nagasawa (2022)	Examines how launching sustainable apparel from recycled plastics influences brand attitude and purchase intention, highlighting how luxury perception moderates sustainability-driven consumer behavior.	Empirical quantitative
Lu et al. (2022)	Investigates how corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives strengthen brand image and loyalty among luxury online consumers, enhancing competitiveness in the digital market.	Empirical quantitative
Raza et al. (2022)	Explores how factors such as brand congruence, nostalgia, and social media engagement influence brand authenticity, moderated by entrepreneurial marketing in Pakistan's luxury apparel industry.	Empirical quantitative
Ulaş & Vural (2022)	Analyzes how luxury automobile brands utilize corporate social media platforms to communicate identity, promote innovation, and enhance consumer engagement through digital branding strategies.	Qualitative content analysis

Cassidy (2021)	Explores how mass production, fast fashion, and resale culture have devalued quality, proposing a conceptual business model for sustainable high-end fashion in an evolving digital marketplace.	Conceptual
Varenova et al. (2020)	Examines how corporate executives perceive the relationship between CSR and profitability, revealing that firms increasingly view social responsibility as a strategic advantage and integrated business necessity.	Mixed-method

## Interpreting Clusters:

### Cluster 1: Digital and Technological Innovation in Luxury (Blue Node Cluster):

This cluster of blue nodes refers to work that investigates how digitalisation and technological innovation in general, but blockchain-based transparency, NFTs and the metaverse, omnichannel systems, and digital brand experiences in particular, are changing the consumption and marketing of luxury. Put together, these capture well the movement of the sector from a notion of exclusivity based on material ownership to one of authenticity which is verified by data-driven provenance and immersive digital engagement. Empirical findings indicate that blockchain transparency significantly decreases uncertainty and builds up consumers' trust in second-hand purchases of luxury goods or services (Youn et al., 2025), while NFTs and metaverse integrations improve perceived authenticity and resistance to negative information by signalling uniqueness and scarcity (Cho & Cho, 2025; Sung et al., 2023; Kim et al., 2024). Conversely, large-scale linguistic analyses find that framing sustainability messages with locomotion or progress-oriented language increases engagement with circular luxury products by offsetting the otherwise negative impact of overtly "green" appeals (Joenpolvi, Mortimer, & Mathmann, 2024). Parallel research on digital brand experiences shows that genuine, story-driven social media content boosts authenticity, attachment, and loyalty (Lin & Ku, 2023). Meanwhile, the quality of omnichannel integration is a key driver that connects digital consistency to brand value and loyalty results (Yeğin & Ikram, 2022). This cluster combines large-scale quantitative models (PLS-SEM/SEM) with field-level data and behavioral experiments. It focuses on both psychological factors and real-world data. Thematically, these studies present three main points:

Blockchain and NFTs are trust technologies that address information imbalances when creating symbolic exclusivity (Youn et al., 2025; Cho & Cho, 2025; Sung et al., 2023).

The way sustainability messages are framed linguistically and psychologically helps maintain consumer engagement (Joenpolvi et al., 2024).

Digital coordination of omnichannel and social experiences creates engines of authenticity, transforming digital presence into emotional brand value (Lin & Ku, 2023; Yeğin & Ikram, 2022).

The overall insight from Cluster 1 is that technology and sustainability are now connected aspects of value in luxury markets. Digital innovation acts as a means for ethical transparency and creates a new field of luxury meaning. Additionally, it suggests future research should examine how "tokenized authenticity" persists over time and explore cultural differences in digital engagement responses (Youn et al., 2025; Cho & Cho, 2025; Joenpolvi et al., 2024).

### Cluster 2- Communication, CSR, and Digital Authenticity in Luxury Branding (Green Node Cluster):

This green node cluster focuses on research about communication strategies, corporate social responsibility (CSR), and digital authenticity and how they shape consumer engagement, perception, and identity in the luxury sector. The studies look at how luxury brands use social media, corporate communication, and sustainability stories to balance prestige with responsibility. They show that digital platforms serve as key spaces where the meaning of luxury, ethical positioning, and consumer identity are negotiated. Together, these works show that communication acts as both a strategic and symbolic process, helping luxury brands build legitimacy and trust in a market driven by transparency. Several contributions explore how social visibility and media representation affect luxury identity. A cultural-comparative study compares Fitzgerald's view of material ambition with modern fame economies. It shows that luxury and celebrity visibility create an "external mask" of authenticity that defines and destabilizes identity in digital contexts (Emanuele, 2025). Social recognition and symbolic communication appear again in research that highlights how SDG-related communication by luxury brands on social media drives consumer engagement. The research confirms that content about environmental and social sustainability connects with consumers more than economic narratives (Perez-Vega et al., 2025). These findings expand with empirical work evaluating how masstige fashion brands use Instagram Stories to express values like renewal, seduction, and authenticity. Audiences tend to prefer authentic portrayals over stylized imagery, showing a shift toward emotional sincerity in digital branding (Sederevičiūtė-Pačiauskienė & Kamašauskė, 2025). The research on corporate communication supports these results by analysing brand purpose and social value signalling. Studies on top global brands indicate a strong link between purpose-driven messaging and user engagement, yet luxury firms still do not fully utilize "higher purpose" communication on social media compared to other sectors (Rudeloff &



Michalski, 2023). Additional evidence from the luxury automobile sector shows that brands mainly use social media for product and technology displays rather than value-driven narratives. This suggests that corporate digital strategies still Favor aspirational displays over participatory authenticity (Ulas & Vural, 2019). Conversely, research on happiness-oriented communication (Castillo-Abdul, Pérez-Escoda, & Civila, 2021) and CSR initiatives (Lu et al., 2020) shows that emotional and ethical messages—especially those focused on social welfare, health, and happiness—can boost audience interaction and improve brand reputation. This demonstrates a link between well-being communication and brand performance. The cluster also includes studies that connect CSR practices and ethical marketing to brand performance and stakeholder trust. Lu et al. (2020) found that CSR initiatives significantly improve both brand image and loyalty by aligning competitive advantage with social responsibility. Similarly, Santos & Almeida (2022) created and validated a performance evaluation model for ethical marketing in luxury hotel chains. They identified internal factors (integration, training, equality) and external factors (digital campaigns, stakeholder interaction) as key metrics for ethical brand management. These findings reflect broader patterns showing that brands communicating inclusively, transparently, and empathetically build stronger stakeholder confidence and resilience. Methodologically, this cluster combines qualitative content analysis, bibliometric mapping, SEM, Delphi studies, and case-based approaches. It offers multi-level insights that link the small processes of communication—like message framing and narrative tone—to larger results such as brand trust, loyalty, and image. Across studies, three cohesive propositions emerge:

(1) Authenticity in communication is the new currency of luxury credibility, accomplished by emotional resonance, transparency, and social purpose (Emanuele 2025; Sederevičiūtė-Pačiauskienė & Kamašauskė 2025; Castillo-Abdul et al. 2021).

(2) the strategic assets of CSR and ethical marketing rather than philanthropic add-ons establish the synergy between moral legitimacy and financial competitiveness (Lu et al., 2020; Santos & Almeida, 2022 ).

(3) Luxury identity is now mediated through digital media ecosystems: social media and storytelling enable brands to humanise prestige, while engaging consumers in the co-creation of symbolic value, as noted by Rudeloff & Michalski, 2023; Ulas & Vural, 2019 and Perez-Vega et al., 2025.

The Green Node Cluster underlines that luxury communication has moved from a display-based aesthetic towards a values-oriented, emotionally intelligent, and ethical grounding. Further research should investigate in-depth the cross-platform comparative authenticity signals and the impact of culturally specific CSR communication strategies on perception and loyalty across various luxury markets (Emanuele, 2025; Lu et al., 2020; Santos & Almeida, 2022; Perez-Vega et al., 2025).

### **Cluster 3- Consumer Psychology, Digital Behaviour, and Sustainable Luxury Intentions (Yellow Node Cluster):**

This group of yellow nodes examines the psychological and behavioural factors that drive luxury consumption in the digital age. It focuses on emotional, cognitive, and social influences like scarcity, Fear of Missing Out (FoMO), social comparison, moral obligation, and conscientiousness, and how these affect sustainable luxury intentions. The papers in this group come together to explore how consumers' internal motivations and social influences shape purchase intentions, engagement, and ethical choices, making consumer psychology essential to modern research on sustainable luxury. In digital settings, traditional triggers for luxury consumption, such as scarcity and uniqueness, become even stronger. Abdrabbo et al. (2025) show that scarcity and the Need for Uniqueness (NFU) significantly impact luxury purchase intentions. They also find that FoMO and social comparison serve as key moderators, showing that exclusivity driven by digital means creates emotional urgency and perceived social value. Building on this psychological perspective, Erlinda and Fatmawati (2024) map the literature on FoMO, revealing its role in connecting social media use, materialism, and impulsive consumption. They also relate this to sustainable purchasing behaviour through self-determination theory. These insights highlight that in luxury markets, FoMO not only drives consumption but also affects sustainable decision-making, creating tension between self-expression and ethical considerations. Additional research looks at the moral and generational aspects of sustainable consumption. Jin et al. (2025) identify moral obligation as a factor that connects marketing efforts—like electronic word of mouth (eWOM), advertising, and environmental messages—with the intention to buy second-hand luxury items among Chinese millennials. This suggests that ethical messaging can turn aspirational spending into conscious behavior. Similarly, Becheur, Atallah, and Bayarassou (2025) study personal and social motivations in Gen Y consumers. They find that conscientiousness and social influence together predict second-hand luxury purchases, supporting the idea that sustainability in luxury is both a moral and social issue. Together, these studies present a new psychological model where moral obligation, ethical identity, and peer validation shape how consumers embrace sustainable luxury. The relationship between psychological contracts and emotional labour at work further expands this group's exploration. Zhang, Liang, and Wang (2024) show that breaks in psychological contracts within luxury hotels directly affect turnover intentions, which are influenced by emotional labour. Although focused on a specific industry, this study adds to the cluster's psychological framework by demonstrating how emotional conflict and value alignment influence behavior, similar to consumer-brand relationships where perceived inauthenticity can lead to disengagement. Methodologically, this group uses a mix of quantitative SEM-based surveys, bibliometric analyses, and cross-sectional modelling to strengthen the understanding of how emotional, ethical, and social cognition factors predict luxury consumption. Three key insights emerge:

1. These psychological triggers can be double-edged, enhancing desirability while potentially contradicting sustainable decision-making. This point is backed by the findings of Abdrabbo et al. and Erlinda & Fatmawati.

2. Ethical self-concept and moral obligation help transform aspirational motives into sustainable consumption behaviours, particularly among younger consumers.

3. Emotional alignment—whether in employee or consumer settings—supports engagement, loyalty, and retention. Emotion lies at the core of every model of luxury behaviour (Zhang et al., 2024).

Overall, the Yellow Node Cluster highlights that modern luxury consumption is a psychologically complex process closely connected to emotions, social validation, and ethics. The findings shift the view of luxury from being focused only on status to being driven by self-concept and emotional negotiation, showing how digital influences and moral understanding together guide the path toward sustainable luxury. Future research should track the shift from FoMO-driven urgency to value-driven awareness over time and look into how patterns of digital socialization shape lasting ethical consumption identities (Abdrabbo et al., 2025; Jin et al., 2025; Becheur et al., 2025; Erlinda & Fatmawati, 2024).

#### **Cluster 4- Digital Fashion, Masstige, and New Age Brand Authenticity (Red Node Cluster):**

This red node cluster brings together studies that examine how digital fashion environments, brand authenticity, and masstige branding are changing how consumers perceive and engage with luxury. The main focus of this cluster is to understand how technology, aspirational access, and symbolic authenticity redefine what luxury means. Together, these studies show that the democratization of luxury through digital channels, social media, and hybrid value propositions like masstige (mass-prestige) has led to a shift in traditional status hierarchies. Factors like emotional relevance, experiences, and authenticity are now more important than price and exclusivity. Several papers discuss how digital platforms improve perceived authenticity and brand attachment. Lin and Ku (2023) find that digital brand experiences on platforms like Instagram lead to higher perceptions of authenticity, attachment, and brand love. This establishes social media as an emotional space for luxury consumers. Similarly, Zhang, Liu, and Lyu (2023) analyse consumption of digital luxury and find that attitudes toward virtual luxury products, such as metaverse fashion, are influenced by perceived value, social significance, and environmental concerns. This highlights the connection between digital fashion and sustainability. Kim, Lee, and Youn (2024) build on this by testing how NFT fashion bundles affect perceived value and authenticity. They discover that including NFTs boosts perceptions of credibility and exclusivity in digital luxury. In addition, Das et al. (2022) explore the rise of masstige fashion, which offers accessible luxury for aspirational consumers. They show that functional, experiential, and symbolic values drive purchase intent among middle-income women in India. Perceived brand authenticity, through quality and sincerity, strengthens

this effect, emphasizing authenticity's role between consumption values and purchase intent. This aligns with Cassidy (2016), who discusses how luxury brands can regain prestige through craftsmanship, storytelling, and ethical practices in a digitally dominated marketplace. Taken together, these studies suggest that authenticity has become a key factor in the digital luxury space, balancing innovation with emotional and symbolic value. The cluster also includes ideas about brand congruence and entrepreneurial authenticity. Raza, Rani, and Isa (2020) demonstrate that brand nostalgia, congruence, and social media engagement positively affect perceived authenticity in the luxury apparel market of emerging economies. Their findings show that entrepreneurial marketing influences the connection between consumer-brand alignment and perceived authenticity, suggesting that smaller luxury brands can compete against established ones using authentic engagement and storytelling. Methodologically, these studies use PLS-SEM, multi-group analysis, and conceptual modelling to blend quantitative validation with conceptual interpretation. Collectively, they provide three main insights:

Digital fashion ecosystems and NFTs are new channels for signalling authenticity, where symbolic ownership connects with technological transparency (Zhang et al., 2023; Kim et al., 2024).

Masstige branding represents the blending of luxury, where value-driven aspirations and perceived sincerity replace material exclusivity (Das et al., 2022).

Authenticity and brand congruence, greatly strengthened by digital interactions and emotional connections, are essential for brand trust and attachment in today's market (Lin & Ku, 2023; Raza et al., 2020).

The Red Node Cluster illustrates a luxury landscape where digital involvement, emotional connection, and authenticity work together to provide symbolic value. Digital fashion, NFTs, and masstige signal a shift from traditional elitism to accessible exclusivity. Here, identity, innovation, and emotional engagement create new meanings of luxury today. Future research could explore the long-term effects of perceived authenticity across digital touchpoints and how masstige can sustainably coexist with luxury's aspirational identity (Das et al., 2022; Kim et al., 2024; Lin & Ku, 2023; Raza et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2023).

#### **Cluster 5- Circular Economy, Sustainability, and Policy Transformation in Luxury ( Purple Node Cluster):**

The cluster in purple gathers all research that examines the new changes in luxury related to sustainability, circular economy practices, and regulation adaptation. It serves as an intellectual hub for studying how luxury brands are transitioning from exclusivity and conspicuousness to ethical responsibility and circular innovation. The main focus of this cluster is redefining luxury as an ecosystem where longevity, second-hand consumption, and sufficiency drive brand value and consumer awareness. At the structural level, the cluster draws on research that

explores how sustainability becomes part of the luxury value chain. Abdelmeguid et al. (2024) use topic modelling on LinkedIn data to identify changing discussions about sustainability and the circular economy in luxury fashion. They find that digital platforms are increasingly directing management's attention to innovation, waste reduction, and circular design. These findings align with those of Yeğin and Ikram (2022), who propose an omnichannel strategy considering the INQ and BE dimensions within a circular marketing system to understand how brands adapt to sustainability. Both texts show that digitalization acts as a driver and enabler of circular transformation by improving transparency and strengthening sustainable brand identity.

The cluster also develops the intersection of policy, ethics, and consumer adaptation. Hepner (2025) investigates how U.S. deregulation and sustainability agreements have impacted luxury fashion. He shows that brands must align with European standards to remain competitive globally. This broad perspective works well with Garcia-Ortega et al. (2025), who analyze how corporate communication promotes sufficient consumption over excess. They highlight the tension between true circular progress and greenwashing, emphasizing that consistent policies and messaging are essential for credibility in sustainability claims. Many papers in this cluster examine consumer behavior regarding sustainable and circular luxury models. Lou et al. (2022) conduct an empirical study on U.S. consumers' intentions to buy second-hand luxury goods, identifying emotional, social, and green value perceptions as key motivators while recognizing perceived risk as a limiting factor. Similarly, Wang, Liang, and Wang (2024) use grounded theory to study second-hand luxury consumption in Shanghai, emphasizing product longevity, economic pragmatism, and ecological awareness as primary drivers. Ruan, Xu, and Lee (2022) expand the conversation into luxury fashion rentals, identifying intrinsic motivators like hedonic enjoyment, uniqueness, and sustainability, while noting that economic factors, social norms, and ego-defence serve as extrinsic motivators in this dual pathway toward sustainable luxury. Arrigo (2023) supports these findings, demonstrating how fashion rental platforms provide alternative channels that meet ethical and experiential expectations while challenging traditional views on ownership.

These insights appear in studies that frame circularity as both a market opportunity and a moral necessity, examining the economic and ethical aspects of these practices. Brandão and De Miranda (2022) find that sustainable consumption behavior significantly mediates the relationship between perceived luxury service quality and purchase intention, indicating that sustainability now plays a psychological role in luxury value. Cassidy (2016) describes high-quality sustainable production as a remedy for devaluation caused by mass fashion. He urges luxury brands to prioritize craftsmanship and longevity as key differentiators. Similarly, Todri and Papajorgji (2023) identify the underlying mindsets for luxury recycling, noting that motivations like wardrobe renewal, fashion engagement, and ethical profit drive participation in circular fashion e-commerce. Some studies already

connect sustainability to supply chain ethics and anti-counterfeiting strategies. For example, Wang, Liao, and Shen (2023) examine how anti-counterfeiting measures influence price and consumer trust in luxury markets. They suggest that technological and regulatory advancements can strengthen ethical consumption by ensuring product integrity. Likewise, Becheur et al. (2025) and Jin et al. (2025) explore these insights from a psychological perspective, framing second-hand and sustainable luxury consumption as moral choices.

Methodologically, Cluster 5 includes bibliometric mapping, grounded theory, SEM modelling, and conceptual commentary, making it both diverse and in-depth. Three main themes emerge across the studies:

1. Circular and sustainable consumption systems are now central to the strategic direction of luxury goods companies (Abdelmeguid et al., 2024; Yeğin & Ikram, 2022; Arrigo, 2023; Ruan et al., 2022).
2. Brand legitimacy is shaped by regulatory frameworks and ethical marketing, with alignment to international standards and clear sustainability communication being key differentiators.
3. Consumer adaptation to sustainable models—through rental, resale, and recycling—signals a shift from ownership to participation and from exclusivity to ethical identity.

The Purple Node Cluster shows that sustainability has transitioned from a secondary concern to a core principle of modern luxury. The adoption of circular business models, the consumption of second-hand goods, and communication focused on sufficiency have all moved from niche practices to the forefront of how luxury brands can maintain value while embracing responsibility. Future research should concentrate on quantifying the long-term impacts of circular models and analysing cross-market policy integration to bridge the gap between luxury's aspirational identity and ecological accountability.

## Conclusion and Future Research Directions:

Luxury, representing refinement and desire, changes with culture and time. Today, it finds itself at a point where traditional exclusivity meets the growing demand for responsibility and renewal. Digital change and sustainability are now key forces in this area. Together, these two factors are defining the creation and perception of luxury.

This study aims to clarify this transformation by addressing three main questions:

- Q1. What are the main research trends and ideas that shape the overlap of sustainability, ethics, and digital change in the luxury industry?
- Q2. How do ideas about authenticity, identity, and social influence change in the context of digital and sustainable luxury consumption?
- Q3. What themes and knowledge gaps arise from this literature, and how can they guide future research on sustainable luxury ecosystems?



The study answers these questions through a structured bibliometric and thematic analysis of 167 journal articles from the Scopus database, covering the years 2013 to 2025. From this analysis, five interconnected clusters emerged, each representing a unique intellectual area: digital ecosystems and technology-driven luxury, cultural identity and ethical visibility, consumer psychology and behavioral intention, authenticity and the masstige phenomenon, and sustainability and circular transformation. The analysis shows that research in this field is growing quickly but remains quite fragmented. Similar to the early stages of AI and blockchain in supply chains, sustainable luxury is still building a solid empirical foundation. Many studies focus on conceptual discussions or single-market data, indicating that intellectual maturity is at an early but encouraging stage. This expanding body of work highlights a shared awareness among scholars that luxury cannot be separated from ethics, technology, or sustainability.

The results show that the digital shift in luxury is not just about technology; it also involves psychological and cultural aspects. Researchers like Cho and Cho (2025) and Youn et al. (2025) reveal how technologies like NFTs and blockchain are changing transparency and authenticity, drawing consumers closer to the brand's creative and ethical core. Abdelmeguid et al. (2024) and Yeğin and Ikram (2022) suggest that circular economy models and omnichannel systems can integrate sustainability into all levels of the luxury business model. In short, digitalization does not erase luxury heritage; it changes it into new forms of participation, trust, and value. The human elements across the clusters are equally important. Studies on emotional and psychological aspects, such as the fear of missing out, moral obligation, and authenticity, explain how younger consumers are redefining luxury, as noted by Abdrabbo et al. (2025), Jin et al. (2025), and Lin & Ku (2023). For this generation, the appeal of luxury lies not in possession but in purpose and fit. Emotional intelligence, social awareness, and self-expression through sustainability are becoming central to the notion of status. These findings suggest a change that is not only industrial but also deeply personal.

Another intriguing point relates to governance and global standards. According to Hepner (2025), the deregulation of sustainability policies in some areas conflicts with strict environmental frameworks being developed in Europe. This mismatch highlights the need for consistency in policies and cross-border studies examining how regulation impacts sustainable competitiveness in luxury. Without clear frameworks, brands risk losing the credibility that sustainability is meant to support. While varied, there is a common theme: sustainability is not just a trend in luxury but its necessary future. This transition presents its own challenges. Just as the early use of AI and blockchain in industry faced hurdles, the luxury sustainability movement is still learning how to balance innovation with authenticity. Future studies should concentrate on long-term research that tracks consumer behavior over time, compare different cultural markets, and use a mix of methods to connect perception, policy, and performance.

This review gives a thorough overview, but it is limited to the Scopus database. This database was chosen for its consistent coverage of business and social sciences. Including other sources like Web of Science or Google Scholar would enrich the findings even more. Nevertheless, the range of materials analyzed provides a solid picture of how the field has changed and where it is heading. In summary, the path of luxury toward sustainability and digital integration reflects a wider human effort: finding balance between progress and preservation, desire and responsibility. The patterns that emerge from this study highlight how researchers, brands, and consumers are working together to reshape what meaningful and modern means in luxury. The conversation will continue to grow deeper among technology, culture, and ethics. More than craftsmanship or innovation, the future of luxury depends on its ability to create value that is not only exclusive but also lasting, ethical, and emotionally aware.

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