



PALGRAVE ADVANCES IN LUXURY

Aesthetics and Sustainable Luxury Consumption

Evidence from Scientific Literature, Case Studies and Consumer Neuroscience

Alba D'Aniello · Ana Carmela Martinez Levy
Cesare Amatulli · Matteo De Angelis
Rumen Pozharliev

palgrave
macmillan

Palgrave Advances in Luxury

Series Editor

Paurav Shukla
Southampton Business School
University of Southampton
Southampton, UK

Jaywant Singh
Kingston Business School
Kingston University
Kingston Upon Thames, UK

The field of luxury studies increasingly encompasses a variety of perspectives not just limited to marketing and brand management. In recent times, a host of novel and topical issues on luxury such as sustainability, counterfeiting, emulation and consumption trends have gained prominence which draw on the fields of entrepreneurship, sociology, psychology and operations.

Examining international trends from China, Asia, Europe, North America and the MENA region, *Palgrave Advances in Luxury* is the first series dedicated to this complex issue. Including multiple perspectives whilst being very much grounded in business, its aim is to offer an integrated picture of the management environment in which luxury operates. It explores the newer debates relating to luxury consumption such as the signals used in expressing luxury, the socially divisive nature of luxury and the socio-economic segmentation that it brings. Filling a significant gap in our knowledge of this field, the series will help readers comprehend the significant management challenges unique to this construct.

All submissions are single blind peer reviewed. For more information on our peer review process please visit our website: <https://www.palgrave.com/gp/book-authors/your-career/early-career-researcher-hub/peer-review-process>.

This series is indexed in Scopus

Alba D'Aniello •
Ana Carmela Martinez Levy •
Cesare Amatulli • Matteo De Angelis •
Rumen Pozharliev

Aesthetics and Sustainable Luxury Consumption

Evidence from Scientific Literature,
Case Studies and Consumer
Neuroscience

palgrave
macmillan

Alba D'Aniello
University of Bari "Aldo Moro"
Taranto, Italy

Ana Carmela Martinez Levy
Luiss Guido Carli University
Rome, Italy

Cesare Amatulli
University of Bari "Aldo Moro"
Taranto, Italy

Matteo De Angelis
Luiss Guido Carli University
Rome, Italy

Rumen Pozharliev
Luiss Guido Carli University
Rome, Italy

ISSN 2662-1061

ISSN 2662-107X (electronic)

Palgrave Advances in Luxury

ISBN 978-3-031-96832-7

ISBN 978-3-031-96833-4 (eBook)

<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-96833-4>

© The Editor(s) (if applicable) and The Author(s), under exclusive license to Springer Nature Switzerland AG 2025

This work is subject to copyright. All rights are solely and exclusively licensed by the Publisher, whether the whole or part of the material is concerned, specifically the rights of translation, reprinting, reuse of illustrations, recitation, broadcasting, reproduction on microfilms or in any other physical way, and transmission or information storage and retrieval, electronic adaptation, computer software, or by similar or dissimilar methodology now known or hereafter developed.

The use of general descriptive names, registered names, trademarks, service marks, etc. in this publication does not imply, even in the absence of a specific statement, that such names are exempt from the relevant protective laws and regulations and therefore free for general use.

The publisher, the authors and the editors are safe to assume that the advice and information in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication. Neither the publisher nor the authors or the editors give a warranty, expressed or implied, with respect to the material contained herein or for any errors or omissions that may have been made. The publisher remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by the registered company Springer Nature Switzerland AG. The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

If disposing of this product, please recycle the paper.

Foreword

Luxury and sustainability have long been perceived as opposing forces in the world of consumer behavior. On the one hand, luxury is often associated with exclusivity, indulgence, and an aura of excess. On the other, sustainability advocates for resource conservation, ethical production, and a reduction of environmental and social harm. At first glance, the two concepts appear incompatible. However, this new book, “Aesthetics and Sustainable Luxury Consumption: Evidence from Scientific Literature, Consumer Neuroscience, and Case Studies,” challenges this traditional dichotomy. It presents several compelling arguments that luxury and sustainability not only can coexist but also can complement each other, leading to a new conceptual paradigm. Authored by a team of scholars with extensive research experience in sustainable luxury, this book offers a rich and evidence-based exploration of the intersection between luxury goods and sustainability.

One of the central arguments of the book is that the evolving nature of luxury consumption is enabling an overlap between luxury and sustainability. Historically, luxury consumption was primarily driven by the desire for conspicuous consumption—the need to display wealth and status through extravagant purchases. However, this dynamic is progressively shifting. Today, a growing segment of consumers, particularly younger generations, is moving toward what scholars have termed “conscious consumption”, including a deep interest in high-end goods with a

sustainability angle. This gradual shift reflects a deeper concern for the social and environmental impact of one's choices, which is reshaping the luxury market.

Millennials and Generation Z consumers are driving this change. These younger generations demand greater transparency, traceability, and ethical production practices from luxury brands. For them, luxury is no longer defined solely by opulence but by its alignment with sustainability principles. Corporate social responsibility initiatives, once seen as peripheral, now play a central role in shaping brand perception and consumer loyalty. This generational change underscores the growing expectation that luxury products must not only be beautiful and exclusive but also ethically produced and environmentally responsible.

The book also delves into how the very meaning of luxury is being redefined in certain product categories. Innovations like lab-grown diamonds and mushroom leather illustrate how sustainability and luxury can converge. Lab-grown diamonds, for instance, offer the same brilliance and allure as mined diamonds without the environmental and ethical concerns associated with traditional diamond mining. Similarly, mushroom leather represents a sustainable alternative to animal leather, combining high-end aesthetics with eco-conscious production. These examples highlight how the luxury industry can innovate to meet consumer expectations while minimizing its environmental footprint.

One of the most striking aspects of the book is its focus on the role of aesthetics in sustainable luxury consumption. Luxury goods and service environments are inherently linked to the concept of art, and their looks and feel are key drivers of consumer desire. However, the authors argue that aesthetic choices made by luxury brands can either enhance or diminish perceptions of sustainability. Recent advancements in Neuroaesthetics—the study of how the brain perceives and processes art stimuli—offer insights into how consumers unconsciously interpret the sustainability of luxury products. By integrating findings from the literature, the book provides a novel perspective on how aesthetic dimensions can influence sustainable consumption.

I believe one of the book's most significant contributions is its exploration of how luxury brands have embraced various facets of sustainability, such as diversity, product durability, and the preservation of local

traditions. For example, a compelling case study discussed in the book is Rihanna's Fenty Beauty brand, part of the LVMH Group. Fenty Beauty has redefined inclusivity in the luxury cosmetics market by offering products that cater to all skin types and tones. This approach to inclusivity extends to sustainability, as the brand emphasizes ethical production, eco-friendly packaging, and vegan ingredients. The book also examines the philosophy of Brunello Cucinelli, a luxury brand that embodies the principles of humanistic capitalism and human sustainability. Brunello Cucinelli's approach to product design combines the highest quality raw materials, specialized craftsmanship, and timeless elegance. This philosophy of "longevity by design" ensures that the brand's garments transcend fleeting trends and seasons, promoting a more sustainable approach to fashion. By prioritizing durability and timelessness, Brunello Cucinelli demonstrates that luxury can be both aesthetically pleasing and environmentally responsible. Finally, the authors also emphasize the importance of "Made-In" aesthetics in shaping consumer perceptions. Certain aesthetic dimensions, such as the use of local materials and traditional craftsmanship, are more effective in driving sustainable choices. For example, the book showcases the philosophy of Borgo Egnazia, a luxury hospitality brand rooted in the local land and culture of the Apulia region in Italy. Borgo Egnazia's approach to design and hospitality embodies sustainability through its use of local materials, such as tuff stone, which is both authentic and energy efficient. This case study illustrates how aesthetic choices, whether in products or services, can reflect a brand's commitment to sustainability while enhancing its appeal to conscious consumers.

The inclusion of these real-world cases and different interpretations of sustainability enriches the book and makes its arguments highly relevant to both academic and managerial audiences. By showcasing how leading luxury brands have embraced sustainability, the authors provide actionable insights for other brands aiming to navigate the sustainable transition. These examples also serve to inspire consumers, encouraging them to view luxury as a vehicle for positive change rather than as a symbol of excess.

In conclusion, "Aesthetics and Sustainable Luxury Consumption: Evidence from Scientific Literature, Case Studies, and Consumer Neuroscience" is a timely and essential contribution to the field of

consumer behavior. It challenges the traditional notion that luxury and sustainability are incompatible and offers a new framework for understanding how the two can coexist. Through its analysis of the literature, case studies, and consumer neuroscience, the book provides valuable insights into the motivations behind sustainable luxury consumption and the aesthetic dimensions that influence it. At a time when the fast fashion industry continues to thrive, despite growing concerns about sustainability, this book underscores the importance of promoting high-end, sustainable alternatives. By cementing the idea that luxury and sustainability can go hand in hand, the book has the potential to shift consumer behavior toward more responsible and mindful consumption and is an indispensable resource for scholars, practitioners, and anyone interested in the intersection of aesthetics, sustainability, and luxury.

Columbia Business School
New York, NY, USA
January 31, 2025

Silvia Bellezza

Acknowledgements

The authors acknowledge financial support under the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP), Mission 4, Component 2, Investment 1.1, Call for tender No. 104 published on 02.02.2022 by the Italian Ministry of University and Research (MUR), funded by the European Union—NextGenerationEU—Project Title “Made in Italy and sustainable development: A multidisciplinary project for showing the determining role of luxury and aesthetics” (Project No. 2022YJ9SWX)—CUP H53D23002630006—Grant Assignment Decree No. 967 adopted on 30.06.2023 by the Italian Ministry of University and Research (MUR).

Contents

1	Introduction	1
2	Luxury Marketing: State of the Art and Evolving Consumer Behaviors	5
3	Sustainable Luxury and Made in Italy	31
4	Luxury Aesthetics	65
5	Made in Italy Cases from Personal Luxury Goods and Services Industries	103
6	A New Perspective on Sustainable Luxury Consumption: Actionable Insights and Future Research	139
	Index	161

About the Authors

Alba D’Aniello is research fellow at the University of Bari, in Italy currently working on a research project about Made in Italy and sustainable development focused on the role of luxury and aesthetics in shaping sustainable choices. She teaches Marketing and Qualitative and Quantitative Research Methodology for Marketing at Luiss Guido Carli University, where she is also the executive director of the X.ITE (X = Behavioral Insights Technology Enhanced) Research Center, on technologies and market behavior. The latter works as a knowledge-transfer center for professionals, firms, and institutions to manage the transition towards a tech-empowered and sustainable future. She got her PhD in Management in 2023, with a thesis focused on consumers’ evaluation of sustainable food packaging. Indeed, her main research interest is transformative consumer behavior and sustainability in all its nuances, ranging from consumers’ evaluations of green products, how specific product features or production processes may hinder or enhance quality inferences, as well as innovative strategies to boost more responsible choices.

Ana Carmela Martinez Levy is research fellow at LUISS Guido Carli University in Italy, working on a research project about Made in Italy and sustainable development. More particularly, with a focus on the role of luxury and aesthetics in shaping sustainable choices, with an emphasis on neuroscience research. Additionally, she teaches International Marketing

at a center affiliated with the University of Granada and since 2016 she has been collaborating with BrainSigns Company, a highly reputable company specializing in applied neuroscience across multiple fields. Her expertise focuses on the application of neuroscience to consumer behavior in marketing. She attended a Master in Neuromarketing, carrying out her thesis on Neuroaesthetics; Thesis title: “Art and Neuroscience: Neuroaesthetics” in 2015. In 2021 she completed her PhD in Communication, Social Research and Marketing (“Doctor Europeaus”) from the Department of Communication and Social Research, Sapienza, University of Rome, with a thesis entitled: “New frontiers in assessing consumer behavior through neuroscientific approach: a case study on alcoholic vs non-alcoholic beers”. Much of her research has focused on neuroscience consumer behavior on which she has published several articles and chapter books.

Cesare Amatulli is Full Professor of Marketing at the University of Bari in Italy, where he also got his PhD. He also teaches “Brand Management”, “Research Methodology for Marketing”, and “Strategic Marketing in Luxury Industries” at LUISS University in Rome. He has been Visiting Researcher at the Ross School of Business (University of Michigan, USA) and at the University of Hertfordshire (UK). His research focuses on consumer behavior and more specifically on luxury consumption and sustainable luxury. His studies are mainly based on quantitative methods, specifically experiments, to underline cause-effect relationships between communication stimuli and consumers’ behaviors. He has published in various international scientific journals in the fields of marketing, consumer behavior, management and psychology, such as *Journal of Consumer Research*, *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, *Journal of Business Ethics*, *Journal of Business Research*, *Journal of Retailing and Psychology & Marketing*. He is the author of the book titled “Sustainable Luxury Brands” published with Palgrave Macmillan.

Matteo De Angelis is Full Professor of Marketing at Luiss University, in Rome. He got the PhD in Management at the University of Bologna in 2008. At LUISS Guido Carli he is currently Coordinator of the PhD in Management and Director of the Academic Research Unit at the Luiss

X.ITE Research Center, as well as Director of the Master in Marketing Management at Luiss Business School. His work has been published in prestigious international journals in the fields of marketing, consumer behavior, management and psychology, such as *Journal of Marketing*, *Journal of Marketing Research*, *Journal of Consumer Research*, *Strategic Management Journal*, *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *Psychological Science*, and many others. A good part of his research has focused on luxury marketing, particularly on sustainable luxury, on which he has published several articles, and a book titled “Sustainable Luxury Brands” with Palgrave Macmillan.

Rumen Pozharliev is Assistant Professor of Marketing at Luiss University, in Rome. He got the PhD in Marketing at the Erasmus University Rotterdam in 2017. At LUISS Guido Carli he is currently Teaching Area Leader and Senior Researcher at the Luiss X.ITE Research Center, as well as Director of the Master in Retail, E-commerce and Distribution at Luiss Business School. Currently, he is also teaching Marketing Management at Temple University. His work has been published in prestigious international journals in the fields of marketing, neuroscience, and consumer behavior such as *Journal of Marketing*, *Journal of Marketing Research*, *Journal of Consumer Research*, *Journal of Retailing*, *Journal of Advertising*, *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience*, and many others. A good part of his research has focused on the social aspects of luxury marketing and consumer neuroscience on which he has published several articles, and a book titled “La Mente del Consumatore” with Patrizia Cherubino.

List of Figures

Fig. 3.1	How luxury brands are inherently sustainable. (Source: Reproduced from Amatulli et al. (2017))	43
Fig. 4.1	Brain structure. (The frontal (green), temporal (orange), occipital (blue), and parietal lobes (yellow) are distinguished. The brain is seen from the left, being the frontal area on the figure's left. Source: Authors' elaboration)	76
Fig. 4.2	The Triune brain. (Source: Authors' elaboration)	77
Fig. 4.3	Neuroscience tools used in consumer behavior. (Source: Authors' elaboration)	80
Fig. 5.1	Sustainability within the luxury fashion industry. (Source: Authors' elaboration)	107
Fig. 6.1	The dual relationship between consumer behavior and aesthetics. (Source: Authors' elaboration)	143
Fig. 6.2	The aesthetics and sustainable luxury consumption framework. (Source: Authors' elaboration)	149
Fig. 6.3	Brain regions activated through aesthetics. (Source: Authors' elaboration)	150

List of Tables

Table 2.1	Keller's taxonomy of luxury brand features	13
Table 2.2	Luxury consumption: approaches, motives, and desired effects	17
Table 2.3	Well-known segmentation criteria for luxury consumers from academic literature	20
Table 2.4	Clusters of luxury customers	22
Table 3.1	Clusters of ethical luxury buyers	38
Table 4.1	Brain areas and consumer neuroscience	78
Table 4.2	Brain regions and luxury aesthetics	89
Table 5.1	Economic value of major luxury industries	104
Table 5.2	Key principles of sustainability in luxury restaurants	127
Table 5.3	Major aesthetic trends and examples from Made in Italy	129



1

Introduction

The luxury business is increasingly playing a crucial role for sustainable development. Traditionally linked to exclusivity, magnificence, excess, and indulgence, luxury is currently experiencing a paradigm shift that incorporates values of minimalism, inclusivity, and sustainability. At the same time, the evolving values of modern consumers, especially among younger generations, are undermining the conventional foundations of luxury. Consumers are increasingly demanding openness, authenticity, and purpose. Although apparently oxymoronic, a growing number of scholars agree on the idea that luxury is sustainable by definition: luxury products and experiences have historically been distinguished for their craftsmanship, high-quality, sophistication, and beauty, which in turn affect their functional endurance over time (Amatulli et al., 2017).

The present book proposes a novel perspective on sustainable luxury consumption emphasizing the key role of aesthetic dimensions in shaping responsible choices. Indeed, luxury goods and service environments are beautiful, refined, and aesthetically pleasing, which makes them intrinsically linked to the concept of “art” (Kapferer, 2014). However, both luxury and aesthetics are subjective constructs and different aesthetics choices made by luxury brands can either strengthen or decrease