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**Charting research on international luxury marketing:**

**Where are we now, and where should we go next?**

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## **Charting research on international luxury marketing: Where are we now, and where should we go next?**

### **Abstract**

**Purpose:** Despite luxury's increasing globalization and broadening scope via digitalization and new markets, the intellectual structure of the overall research corpus remains tenuous. This work therefore aims to provide an overview of published work on international luxury marketing and to contribute to a better understanding of the research area.

**Design/methodology/approach:** Using a systematic approach, 1151 items (papers) were retrieved and 181 selected from the international luxury marketing field published before 2019. These items were analyzed by using various bibliometric techniques to identify the most productive countries, journals, influential authors, papers, and research clusters.

**Findings:** Although most of the outputs originate from business, management, and marketing journals, other disciplines also research this topic. The analysis reveals an emerging field, with 85% of the published papers appearing between 2010 and 2018, which are primarily the output of U.S.- and U.K.- based authors and none of whom dominates the field. The three identified keyword clusters are: (i) consumers and consumption (ii) tools, and (iii) core themes.

**Practical implications:** This article contributes to our understanding of the evolution, current status, and research trends of published research on international luxury marketing by presenting a mapping analysis and proposing future research directions.

**Originality/value:** This is the first bibliometric mapping analysis of research on the topic from its conception to 2019. It contributes insights from different research disciplines, adds to the categorization of the international luxury marketing literature, and provides promising future research directions in terms of research areas and strategies.

**Keywords** – luxury; luxury marketing; luxury branding; international marketing; bibliometric analysis; network analysis.

**Paper type** - Review paper.

# **Charting research on international luxury marketing: Where are we now, and where should we go next?**

## **Introduction**

Luxury products and brands have an irresistible and lasting worldwide appeal (Goor *et al.* 2020). Associated *inter alia* with very high quality, authenticity, prestige, elitism, creativity, distinctiveness, and hedonism (Ko *et al.* 2019; de Barnier *et al.* 2012), luxury brands generate significant functional, but more importantly symbolic and experiential, consumer benefits (Berthon *et al.*, 2009) making them desirable to consumers across the globe. Based on the latest report by Bain & Co. (2021), the global luxury market is forecasted to grow at an annual compound rate of 10% between 2020 and 2025, or from USD 217 to USD 330-370 billion. Specifically, luxury brands are expected to grow across all continents, led by growth in the U.S., China, and Japan, which accounted for 46% of global luxury sales in 2020 (Statista, 2020).

While provenance is a key pillar of the luxury business model's logic (Kapferer 2012b), this does not mean that its market focus is narrow and local. In fact, luxury organizations' offers are normally based on products and global brands whose place of origin is locally, nationally, and internationally recognized (Hlady-Rispal and Blancheton, 2020). Comité Colbert, a leading association that has promoted the French luxury industry since 1954, includes 'international ambition' as one of its key criteria for inclusion in this important club of top luxury brands (Martin and Mayneris, 2015), which highlights the international element's significance for the luxury concept.

The new millennium witnessed an increase in consumer spending power beyond the traditional, developed markets, such as those in the U.S., France, the U.K., and Japan, on which luxury brands predominantly relied for sales in the past (Okonkwo, 2010). Specifically, consumers in emerging economies, such as the BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India, and China) countries, have gained purchasing power, turning to luxury brands to communicate their

personal success and to be socially elevated (Kapferer and Bastien, 2012). Chinese consumers are expected to be the dominating nationality for luxury purchases by 2025, making more than 45% of global purchases (Bain & Co., 2021). This is remarkable, given that, at the beginning of the millennium, they only accounted for 8% of global luxury consumption (Biondi, 2020). CIVETS (Colombia, Indonesia, Vietnam, Egypt, Turkey, and South Africa) are expected to become luxury brands' next focus, as the relatively late development of consumption societies in these countries presents an opportunity for luxury brands (Patrick and Monga, 2020). The luxury industry's increasing globalization and its relevance to a broader market base require a focus on luxury marketing that goes beyond single and mature contexts.

In recent years, luxury brands' increasing adoption of technological innovations has further contributed to the luxury brands' globalization and their appeal to a broader market base, including Gen Z consumers, a segment that identifies with "global citizenship" (Broadbent *et al.*, 2017). While known to be late adopters of technology due to their focus on values, such as heritage, history, timelessness, a specific knowhow (*savoir faire*) involving hand-made processes, and human capital (Pantano *et al.*, 2021) that seemingly clash with the progressive and obsolete nature of technology, luxury organizations have recently overwhelmingly responded to market and competitive pressures by embracing digital technologies (Lee *et al.*, 2020; Pantano, 2021). Over the last few years, particularly since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the internet has increasingly become a channel for luxury sales (Jain, 2021), for providing access to the luxury customer experience (Klaus, 2021; Holmqvist *et al.*, 2020), and for luxury brand experiential storytelling via social media (Mandler *et al.*, 2020; Xie and Lou, 2020).

Luxury brands' growing online presence has *inter alia* led to different segments perceiving luxury heterogeneously (Chandon *et al.*, 2016) in an internationally growing market (Athwal *et al.*, 2019). Nevertheless, luxury consumers increasingly have similar values and

purchase motivations (Hennigs *et al.*, 2012). Previous research primarily explores why consumers buy luxury goods (Hennigs *et al.*, 2013; Jin *et al.*, 2021), with this research primarily focused on Western luxury markets (Athwal *et al.*, 2019) and only limited research on other contexts, such as emerging markets (Jain, 2020; Jain *et al.*, 2021).

Given (i) the luxury industry's growth and resilience, (ii) the luxury concept's inherent international scope, (iii) luxury markets' evolution and increasing globalization (Kumar *et al.*, 2020) fueled by the higher purchasing power of consumers in new markets and by e-commerce, and (iv) the challenges that emerge from these, international luxury marketing research remains relatively scant. Responding to recent calls for research into this direction (Conejo *et al.*, 2020; Ko *et al.*, 2019), this paper's objective is to systematically identify and objectively analyze the current literature on international luxury marketing in order to provide a roadmap for much needed future research on the topic.

Literature reviews are very dependent on researchers' subjective evaluations, background, and experience, since they are often unable to fully incorporate a large number of research items in their analysis. A more objective examination of a knowledge base is a better basis for a multidisciplinary field with relatively unspecified boundaries (Veloutsou and Ruiz-Mafe, 2019) that are complex in nature (Hollebeek *et al.*, 2021), such as the international luxury marketing field. Bibliometric analyses provide a pathway to overcome many of the more classical approaches to literature reviews' limitations in a scientific field, since they aim to incorporate large amounts of published data and measure the dissemination of knowledge (Archambault and Gagné 2004), by reporting the knowledge structure in the form of publications trends and citation profile of authors, journals and papers, and the knowledge networks, in the form of the top journals, co-authorship networks and bibliographic coupling (Khan *et al.*, 2021). Given the usefulness of bibliometric analyses it is not surprising that they have been used for various broad marketing topics, such as luxury (Gurzki and Woisetschläger,

2017) and international marketing (Samiee and Chabowski, 2012). The latter also applies to narrower sub-disciplines, such as brand relationships (Fetscherin and Heinrich, 2015), online brand relationships (Veloutsou and Ruiz-Mafe, 2019), comparative advertising (del Barrio-García *et al.*, 2020), consumer engagement (Hollebeek *et al.*, 2021), global branding (Chabowski *et al.*, 2013), and exporting (Chabowski *et al.*, 2018). A bibliometric investigation of the international luxury marketing field is timely, not only because luxury has become more international over the last decade (Statista, 2020), but also because it is marketing scholars' need to identify how research serves practitioners with regard to the challenges they increasingly confront. Last but not least, because the number of (international) luxury studies have increased over the years, it is becoming more important to objectively observe the factors that have facilitated to shape the discipline.

The current study responds to the need to better understand research on international luxury marketing by providing a contemporary overview of this research's state, knowledge structure, building blocks, and evolution. This work uses data from the Scopus database, as well as specific comprehensive criteria, to identify 181 published articles that incorporate all three focal areas (international, luxury, and marketing) across the entire multidisciplinary scientific output, and to present a bibliometric analysis of these items and the list is available upon request. The paper's value and uniqueness lie in its following major contributions. First, it contributes to the literature by providing an organized and objective summary of the existing research. It does so by using bibliometric analysis and mappings (Van Eck and Waltman, 2010), which are subsequently enhanced with a qualitative interpretation. Second, by defining the interdisciplinary field, identifying the most salient themes in the field, and shedding light on their structure, this paper is the most exhaustive study on international luxury marketing to date. Finally, the work is a snapshot of international luxury marketing research's thematic evolution



over time, therefore providing academics and practitioners with a better understanding of the trends and emerging areas of interest.

Given this work's multidisciplinary nature and its aim to report and discuss the current state of research on international luxury marketing, the paper is organized as follows: first, the methodology is presented, detailing the data set construction and the data analysis choices. Thereafter, the results are reported. Finally, the results and their theoretical and practical implications are discussed, the study's limitations are acknowledged, and promising areas for future contributions, and appropriate research strategies are proposed.

## **Methodology**

### *Item identification*

Aiming to address limitations of bibliometric analyses, such as limited coverage, self-selection, and mistakes in spelling of authors' names (Archambault and Gagné 2004), this work followed a systematic approach based on a pre-determined research protocol specifying the items to be included (data), the collating methods, and appraising and analyzing the items (Keathley-Herring *et al.*, 2016; Snyder, 2019). This research strategy guides the identification of items to be reviewed by using specific inclusion criteria and by ensuring the included items' quality and validity. To maximize the coverage, ensure that all relevant publications are included, and to generate a broad but relevant sample of items (papers), this study adopted a comprehensive search strategy suitable for multidisciplinary studies and for similar domains, such as luxury (Gurzki and Woisetschläger, 2017) and international marketing (Samiee and Chabowski, 2012). The comprehensive search strategy informed the inclusion criteria and, specifically, the keywords, the database from which the data were retrieved, the included sources, and the chosen studies' time scale.

Developing the final keywords list (table 1) involved five steps and several draft lists. First, three researchers who work in the area identified a list of key themes related to the topic (luxury, international, and marketing) (step 1). Subsequently, the same researchers separately generated a potential keyword list for each of the three themes (step 2). Thereafter, they met again to discuss the keywords in their independently suggested keyword lists, and collectively agreed on a first draft of each theme's keywords list (step 3). The next step (step 4) involved examining papers that identify sources using a systematic approach, particularly papers on luxury (Gurzki and Woisetschläger, 2017) informing the three keyword themes. This resulted in a second draft of the keyword list for each theme. Following previous practice (Samiee and Chabowski, 2012; Veloutsou and Ruiz-Mafe, 2020), the keywords were then discussed with two additional senior academics to ascertain their relevance (step 5).

To identify eligible items, this study used the Scopus database. Scopus is the largest multi-disciplinary database of peer-reviewed literature in social science research, and especially useful for collecting data over an extended time span (Norris and Oppenheim, 2007). Scopus has high quality standards regarding the sources it incorporates (Veloutsou and Ruiz-Mafe, 2020), is widely recognized, frequently accessed for quantitative analyses (Donthu *et al.*, 2020), and usually returns items from more marketing sources than other databases with a more limited coverage, such as the Web of Knowledge (i.e., Samiee and Chabowski, 2012). The research team searched for the keywords in the items' title, abstract, or keywords.

The latter approach helps maximize the relevant publications' coverage, gather the first pool of items, and does not restrict the journals or the areas of research. This approach is not very common, since a great deal the existing research takes the subject areas (i.e., Sinkovics, 2016; Chevtchouk *et al.*, 2021), or the journals' ranking into consideration (i.e., Chevtchouk *et al.*, 2021). Being more inclusive allows for a broader assessment of research, which has specific advantages, as it includes items that are not only published in top-tier journals, overcomes the

researchers' subjective assessments and selection bias, generates a robust, empirically derived representation of the research developments' state in the field under investigation (Veloutsou and Ruiz-Mafe, 2020), and is particularly suitable for multi-disciplinary research.

The choice of the time period during which the items were published supports the objective of ensuring a systematic coverage and the study's replicability. This is important, given that there is a time difference between the dates that items are published and when they appear on Scopus. In fact, some sources and items are reported to Scopus before they are officially assigned to a specific journal issue (pre-published), whereas others are reported after being allocated to an issue date. To control for randomness and given that the data were collected on November 11, 2020, we decided to only download records published from the earliest possible date to the end of 2019, thereby ensuring that a whole publishing year was included.

Using all of the aforementioned inclusion criteria, Scopus returned 1,151 items from 619 sources (table 1). This large number was due to the inclusion of journals from a wide range of disciplinary areas, including those from non-marketing, and even non-management, sources such as anthropology, the visual and performing arts, mathematics, medicine, political science, geography, and engineering.

A number of exclusion criteria were used to ensure the quality of the records/items incorporated into the data set (table 1). The items needed to include all required information, consequently items with mistakes in the key fields or with missing author names were removed. Additionally, the items needed to be full-length and downloadable, which meant that conference papers and book chapters were removed. To further ensure the items quality, lecture notes and items in non-management-related journals ranked as Q3 or Q4 by their Scopus CiteScore 2020 were also removed. Finally, in order to ensure that the results referred to luxury international marketing area, the researchers reviewed all of the surviving sources' abstracts

(i.e., all sources from management-related journals and journals from other disciplines that their Scopus CiteScore 2020 ranked as Q1 or Q2).

As additional exclusion criterion, the research team considered the removal of the 15 items with no citations. However, six of the non-cited sources were published in 2019 and two in 2018. Given that one of this work's key objectives is to examine the field's trends, removing 25% of the 2019 content was deemed inappropriate. Therefore, 15 sources were kept without citations in the data set, and used these items' characteristics to inform the analysis.

--Insert table 1 around here--

### *Data cleaning*

As in previous bibliometric studies (Veloutsou and Ruiz-Mafe, 2020), the data were cleaned in terms of the keywords, authors, and source titles. In an attempt to ensure that the concepts were captured appropriately, a total of 831 keywords were returned and managed by using a reverse approach similar to the one used in previous research to generate items for bibliometric search analyses (Samiee and Chabowski, 2012). The three experts carefully reviewed the list of words. Some keywords were merged, while others were split into more than one when the experts agreed that, by following this approach, the meaning would be better captured. For example, some were spelled in different ways (i.e., behavior and behaviour), while others had the same meaning (i.e., consumer brand relationship and brand relationship; country of origin and country-of-origin; purchase intention, purchase intentions, and buying intention). Given the nature of the search—combining marketing, luxury, and international themes—more generic key words were selected to capture the content of the sources (i.e., advertising was used to capture adverting, international advertising, luxury brand advertising, and cross-cultural advertising), and the concepts rather than the different keywords. For example, the keyword “luxury brand advertising” was split into three: “luxury,” “brand,” and “advertising.” This process produced a final list of 744 keywords.

It was ascertained that the authors and the source title names were corrected, also checking the names of the 427 authors of the chosen papers. Three of the contributors had two different sets of initials in the dataset. Ultimately, the final number of authors came to 422. In terms of the source titles, one of the journals was reported with two different names, with “&” and with “and,” which was also corrected.

### *Data analysis*

Bibliometric analysis uses mathematical and statistical methods to analyze scientific literature (Pritchard, 1969). These methods can comprise either descriptive or network methods, or both (Osareh, 1996), are the most important measure for describing scientific output's evolution and trends based on objective numerical data (Ikpaahindi, 1985). The analysis focused on the authors (countries and names), the source (journals and papers), and the keywords. It is important to note that both the descriptive and network analyses change over time, because new links are added when the data are downloaded at different points in time (Zhao and Strotmann, 2008).

Descriptive analyses report on numbers, present publications' evolution over time, and identify the most influential articles, as well as influential and productive sources and authors, in a particular set of studies (Milian *et al.*, 2019). Measures that capture quantity and relative strength, counts, number of citations, and average of citations per year are typically reported to assess productivity impact and overall contribution to the field. The number of papers (count) indicates the quantity, whereas the citations and the average number of citations per year capture a paper's relative academic impact. Citations are important, since researchers cite sources they consider important for their studies' development. Consequently, highly cited documents attract other researchers' interest and are regarded as more influential than rarely cited ones (Milian *et al.*, 2019). First, the number of citations per year per paper and the average number of citations per year for each entity (paper, author, or publication) were calculated. The

average number of citations per paper was obtained by basing this on the number of papers in each entity.

Network analysis uses algorithms that examine interconnections and aim to identify the subjects most closely related to a specific research field (Milian *et al.*, 2019). When applied to bibliometrics, network analysis uses tools, such as bibliographic couplings, co-citations, and co-occurrences, to develop clusters in which the objects are more similar than in others (Emmons *et al.*, 2016). Bibliographic coupling determines the similarity between documents by identifying items that share the same references. Co-citation analysis is based on the number of times the objects (journals, documents, authors) cite one another. The co-occurrence of keywords identifies the number of times that two keywords are used together in the articles in the sample, therefore indicating their proximity. A network analysis can also provide an overview of the developments over time, indicating how a field develops over time.

For its descriptive analysis, this work used citations to identify the most influential items that shape the international luxury marketing domain. Time may be factored or not when examining citations. An item's total number of citations increases over time, introducing a time bias. A year's average number of citations considers the time factor, but this is not an ideal solution, since papers require the period from their publication date to start attracting citations. Consequently, in order to provide the most complete picture possible, this work reports both the total number of citations and those per year. 2020 was used as the reference year to calculate the number of citations per year in respect of data that included papers published on or before 2019, (i.e., 2020 minus the year in which the item was published).

The data analysis utilized Microsoft Excel for some of the descriptive analyses and VOSviewer ([www.vosviewer.com](http://www.vosviewer.com)) for the bibliographic coupling and co-occurrence of keywords. VOSviewer is a sophisticated, free software tool that uses suitable mapping techniques to cluster outputs into maps that show relevance and strength of large bibliometric

networks' links as visual nodes (van Eck and Waltman, 2010). The produced maps comprise nodes of different sizes, depending on the criteria in the analysis (i.e., the number of papers or citations). The distance between the nodes indicates strongly (weakly) related nodes that appear close (far) from one another (Van Eck and Waltman, 2014).

## **Results**

### *Output production and most productive journals*

Given the luxury industry's growth and increased globalization (Statista 2020), the number of publications on international luxury marketing is surprisingly low, with a total of 181 retrieved publications in the data set. A timeline analysis reveals that, although the first publication on the topic appeared in 1987, there was limited academic engagement with the topic for a long time. The vast majority of publications appeared during the last 10 years, with 159 papers (85%) published after 2010 (Figure 1). Nevertheless, the number of publications per year remains relatively low, reaching just 25 in 2019; despite fluctuations, the last 10 years have shown an upward trend. However, factors such as the luxury industry's characteristics and management and academia's growing interest in research on the topic, might have caused this upward trend.

-Insert figure 1 about here-

Research work on international luxury marketing appears in 88 different sources, whose highest percentile is ranked in 28 different Scopus first-level subject categories (see table 2). Most of the output that survived the exclusion criteria refers to management-related subjects, primarily to business and international management and marketing. Nevertheless, content from other categories, like geography, planning and development, or simply development, and even from more remote categories, such as medicine, political science, and international relations or

even visual arts and performing arts, met the inclusion criteria and were considered for the analysis.

-Insert table 2 here-

With 181 items and 88 sources, the number of outlets is low, with none of them generating regular work in this area. There are 10 (11%) sources with five or more papers and 90 (89%) sources with four or fewer (Table 3). The 10 sources with five or more outputs in the area published a total 73 items, which comprise 40% of the data set's total number of items. The *Journal of Business Research* leads in terms of the number of papers, possibly due to the publication opportunities it offered over the years related to special issues on luxury associated with specialized conferences on the topic. The items from the *Journal of Business Research*, *International Marketing Review*, and *Journal of Brand Management* have the most citations per item.

-Insert table 3 here-

Citations from journals that published more than 5 items on international luxury marketing were used to cluster these sources and to examine their publications' (items') recency. The publication with a very low number of citations (*Emerald Emerging Markets Case Studies*) was removed from the analysis. In the network diagrams produced by VOSviewer (figure 1), the size of the dots representing each source indicates this particular source's number of citations. Two clear source clusters that cross-cite each other and four sources with an increasing number of papers published during the last few years have not been identified.

Cluster 1 has five sources, primarily from the international marketing area, while Cluster 2 has four sources that can be characterized as fashion, branding, and retailing sources (figure 2). The *Journal of Business Research*, a multidisciplinary journal, is classified as belonging to Cluster 1, although the journal receives and publishes more marketing papers than others in any other area. In terms of recency, the *Journal of Business Research* and the *Asia*



*Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics* have made the largest contributions in terms of content, followed by the *Journal of International Consumer Marketing* and the *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management* (figure 2). Given that the *Journal of Business Research* is also the most productive and has the most cited items per year in this data set, the projection is that the work that it publishes will become even more influential in future.

-Insert figure 2 about here-

### *Key contributors*

A total of 427 contributors produced the analyzed papers. Of these contributors, 278 were based in institutions in 50 countries and reported their data. Those based in the 16 countries with more than five contributions to account for 51% of the overall number of publications (Table 4). The authors from the top 2 countries in terms of contributions (the U.S. and the U.K.) provide 22% of the total literature on international luxury marketing.

-Insert table 4 about here-

A very small number of authors (11) contribute 3 or more papers on international luxury marketing, with the most productive author contributing 6 items (table 5), while 385 have contributed just one paper. The total citations per author and the average number of citations per item per year are also reported in table 5. Using VOSviewer, the authors with more than 3 papers into specific research areas were organized based on the degree to which they share the same references and the recency of their work (Table 5). The data indicate that there is a cluster of seven authors (Aiello, Donzé, Godey, Guercini, Hennigs, Oh, and Wiedmann), who have mostly used the same references and have also co-authored papers, whereas the remaining four contributors do not cite each another's work. Most of the authors published their work earlier, with the exception of Donzé and Guercini, who published their work recently; however, this

does not attract a high number of citations per item per year. The work of Shukla has attracted the most citations per item per year, although this researcher's work is not closely related to that of other authors who produce regularly. When undertaking an analysis of authors who have contributed more than 2 items to the field, this showed a similar, fragmented research production, with a very low number of authors linked to the network presented in table 5. A small number of authors are linked to Moore's work, many of whom stand alone or appear in new two- or three-author networks, many of whom are co-authors of the papers.

-Insert table 5 about here-

### *Most influential papers*

To identify the most influential items, the number of citations per year was primarily used, but the total number of citations was also considered. A total of 19 items from the sample have more than, or close to, 10 citations a year, while 14 items have more than 100 citations. Two of the 14 items with more than 100 citations in total, and published more than 10 years ago (Moore and Birtwistle, 2012 and Parkin *et al.*, 2007), do not meet the threshold of 10 citations per year (table 6). Interestingly, those authors who have contributed most to international luxury marketing, contribute only six of the papers with more than 10 citations per year and another paper with more than 100 citations. Items published more than 10 years ago dominate the most influential papers, since these items were published before 2010 and only 3 after 2015.

-Insert table 6 about here-

### *Main keywords*

A total of 587 author-provided keywords were returned, but of those, only 89 (15%) appeared twice or more in the data set. Table 7 presents the keywords that appear in five items or more, as well as words in the title that appear six times or more in the dataset. A very small number of subject-specific and context-specific keywords dominate the data and the author-

provided keywords. The provided keywords are consistent with the words used in the papers' titles, although the word retailing does not appear in these titles, but it is one of the keywords; conversely, the word "hotels" does not appear in the titles, although it is not one of the keywords (table 7). Overall, luxury, brands, and consumer behavior dominate both the keywords and the words used in the title.

-Insert table 7 about here-

International luxury marketing has proven to be a very diverse academic field. Of the 587 author-chosen keywords in the dataset, there were 499 left after they were cleaned up, while only 26 meet the criteria of addressing four occurrences. When including the author-provided and the index keywords, only 30 of the 744 reported keywords appear more than four times in the data, with 633 appearing only once. After using a systematic approach concentrating on theoretical concepts rather than context-specific terms, 19 author-provided keywords of the full set of 20 keywords survived, with the missing one being the additional theoretical concept keyword "consumption behavior," which is a generic word that Scopus added. After comparing the two different sets of keywords (just the author-provided ones vs. the author-provided and the index keywords), it was decided that only using the author-provided keywords option was preferable. Of the 26 author-selected keywords, seven terms were removed from the analysis, five due to being country- or location-specific (China, global, international, India, and the United States), and two because they were sector-specific (fashion and retail).

The data were visualized by means of VOSviewer (Figure 3). All the dataset records were analyzed on the basis of the full counting of the co-occurrence of all their author-provided keywords, with the same weight being allocated to all co-occurrences. The size of the dot of each keyword represents the number of occurrences. 18 of the 19 keywords form three clusters (Table 8), since the keyword sustainability is not linked to the rest of the examined keywords and not presented in the clustering figure. The "consumers and consumption" cluster is the first,

comprising seven keywords, with consumer behavior as the node appearing most often, while most of the other nodes are closely related to consumer behavior and consumption. The second cluster consists of six keywords labeled “tools,” and related to tools that are used to approach a market, such as advertizing, branding, and marketing. The third cluster, comprising five keywords, is labelled “core themes” and attracts the majority of the dataset’s most-cited keywords, including luxury, brand, and country of origin.

-Insert figure 3 about here-

The overlay visualization shows trends in terms of the themes that most recent publications cite (figure 3). The analysis reveals that the latest research focuses on specific terms belonging to different clusters, including materialism, advertising, marketing, luxury consumption, and counterfeiting. When all 26 author-provided keywords are included in the visualization analysis, sustainability is also highlighted as a keyword that has attracted more interest in recent years.

-Insert table 8 about here-

## **Discussion**

In order to organize and decode the international luxury marketing research, a framework based on bibliometric analysis was utilized to assess a field’s maturity (Keathley-Herring, 2016). The framework suggests that the author characteristics, the genesis of the area, the publications’ characteristics, the research design characteristics, the theoretical characteristics, the content characteristics, the impact, the diffusion, and the infrastructure need to be considered when analyzing a research field. Specific dimensions and criteria applicable to specific research fields should be selected when assessing a research field (Keathley-Herring, 2016).

Of the 427 authors identified, most are concentrated in 2 countries (the U.S. and the U.K.) and there are no clear authorities in the area, since only 11 contributed 3 or more papers on international luxury marketing and none more than 6 items. There are very few research networks in the field since the key authors do not collaborate either directly or through other researchers (indirectly). Most of the researchers have published only one paper, come from business, marketing, and management, and choose journals in these fields as outlets for their publications.

The first publication on the topic appeared in 1987, but this was followed by a long period with no output and only a single digit number of publications per year during the period 2001-2011, with 85% of the published records appearing during the period 2010-2018. Although the first paper attracted a large number of citations, the average number of citations per year is only 6.15, while the papers attracting the highest number of citations still have very little impact.

The research output in the broad area of international luxury marketing is rather diverse and somewhat disconnected. Many different journals in very different categories have published work on the field, with journals from the management and, particularly, the international business, and marketing categories being most dominant in respect of their research output. The body of research on international luxury marketing is truly multi-disciplinary, but many high-quality and highly respected marketing and management journals areas publish studies on this area. The *International Marketing Review* was one of the journals to first publish on the topic. Recently, the *Journal of Business Research* has published more papers, probably due to special issues (e.g., Unconventional Luxury and Monaco Symposium on Luxury). Compared to luxury research in general (Gurzki and Woisetschläger, 2017), the number of publications on international luxury marketing is rather small, although the topic is quite central to the luxury concept. Given that the various studies' timeframes differ, it is

impossible to compare them exactly, although Gurzki and Woisetschläger's (2017) much greater output (1315 vs. the 181 in this study) serves as an indicator.

Although China is *en route* to becoming the largest luxury market globally, it is interesting that its research output on international luxury marketing is almost five times smaller than that of the U.S., and three times smaller than the research originating from the U.K. Consequently, there is scope for more such research from China, as well as from emerging and developing countries becoming extremely important for luxury marketing, such as Brazil, Colombia, Indonesia and Egypt.

The literature on luxury marketing has progressed significantly in recent years in terms of themes and topics (content characteristics). It *inter alia* includes: social media and digital technologies (Mandler *et al.*, 2020), AI and smart technologies (Chung *et al.*, 2020; Pantano *et al.* 2018), sustainability and CSR (e.g., Athwal *et al.*, 2019; Muniz and Guzmán, 2021; Osburg *et al.*, 2021), new forms of luxury, such as second hand (Kessous and Valette-Florence, 2019) or shared (Christodoulides *et al.*, 2021), a focus on experiences and hedonism (Holmqvist *et al.*, 2020). On the other hand, the clusters of themes emerging from the analysis of specific international luxury marketing output, shows a far narrower array of topics. In the context of international marketing luxury, the emerging literature on sustainability is currently limited to fashion. Special issues such as the one of *International Marketing Review* on global luxury consumption will help produce additional output and push the boundaries of knowledge with regard to luxury's international marketing.

To summarize, this bibliometric analysis reveals that in the field of international luxury marketing, (i) the authors are not interconnected and no researchers dominate the field, (ii) the first paper appeared more than 30 years ago, but the research stream is not rooted in it and there is no clear and agreed genesis, (iii) the content covered does not engage with important industry trends, and (iv) there are no highly cited authors or papers with high citations, demonstrating

the output's low impact. Although the available data do not allow for the assessment of aspects like the research design characteristics, the theoretical characteristics, the research's diffusion to practice, and the infrastructure, when considering the other indicators against the maturity assessment framework (Keathley-Herring, 2016), it can only be concluded that the field is still emerging.

### **Limitations**

As in all research projects, this work is not free of limitations. Much care was taken to ensure that the relevant published studies that fall within the international luxury marketing domain, was systematically identified. Furthermore, Scopus is the most inclusive journal database and meets well established academic standards, however, certain relevant work might have been omitted. The reasons for the latter could include: (i) they might not have been identified, because they did not include their keywords, (ii) they might have not been included in Scopus, because the time they were published did not fall into the database's coverage, and (iii) because Scopus does not consider work published in other languages that might be relevant for the academic field. Given that this work aimed to maximize the coverage of relevant publications, these possible omissions are a clear shortcoming.

A bibliometric analysis' weakness is that it only captures the developments in the academic field up to the data collection. This study provides a snapshot of the identified research at the data retrieval (November 11, 2020) and highlights how poorly published research on international luxury marketing is recognized. As in all research areas, new outputs are constantly produced and contribute to the development of the academic debate, which add to the pull of the published papers and draw more attention to the existing outputs, in turn attracting more references. The static approach also introduces bias toward older publications, although tactics were employed to reduce this bias by looking at the number of average citations

per year. Furthermore, papers published recently have not as yet attracted citations, while published work has clearly reached a wider audience. Consequently, where citation data is provided, such papers' contribution to the field is more dominant.

### **Directions for future research**

A considerable amount of research on luxury and sustainability, as well as CSR, focuses on the luxury fashion industry. While this may reflect many luxury brands' strategic direction and the personal interests of their designers (Hepner *et al.*, 2020), the innate contradiction between luxury and sustainability's values presents a challenge that luxury brands need to overcome (Muniz and Guzmán, 2021; Park *et al.*, 2019). It is therefore critical for researchers to keep exploring how to overcome the opposing values of luxury and sustainability, especially in a context beyond fashion. The automotive industry could be of particular relevance. In terms of international marketing, the luxury and sustainability topic is of particular relevance, given that different countries find themselves at different levels of sustainability or of their corporate social responsibility life cycle (Guzmán and Becker-Olsen, 2010).

The Covid-19 pandemic's impact should also be carefully explored, given its potential impact on international luxury brands. Although the latter have been proven to be resilient in times of economic contractions (Reyneke *et al.*, 2012), the profound transformation in the values of societies across the globe due to the pandemic, might have led to a change in the luxury concept and in the understanding of what luxury is. The past year has shown that luxury could ultimately be time off (that many may not have), relationships with loved ones, or simple things in life (like enjoying nature). A potentially interesting research area could therefore be exploring what constitutes luxury beyond the narrow confines of brands and products/services (see, e.g., Banister *et al.* 2020). Additionally, the large group of consumers who remained employed during the various pandemic lockdowns, and those who are currently working from



home permanently, spend less on commuting, travel, and eating out. Consequently, these consumers now have more resources and a higher disposable income. On the other hand, people might have engaged in compensatory consumption to alleviate the isolation and loneliness during the pandemic, which means they currently have fewer savings. The pandemic's short- and long-term consequences for the purchase of luxury brands are yet unknown and represent an important future research avenue.

A burgeoning stream of research looks at the democratization of the luxury concept through accessible or more affordable forms, such as masstige brands (Kumar *et al.*, 2020), downward luxury extensions (Boisvert and Ashill, 2018), co-branding strategies between fast fashion and designer luxury brands (Shen *et al.*, 2017), second hand/pre-owned luxury (Kessous and Valette-Florence, 2019), and new forms of luxury consumption in the sharing economy (Christodoulides *et al.* 2021), such as the Airbnb Luxe or Luxury Closet. These developments are important, as they allow luxury brands to enter new markets created by aspirational consumers. However, with very few exceptions (e.g., Boisvert and Ashill, 2018), this research stream adopts a single context, despite the expected differences with regard to accessible luxury's acceptance due to cultural influences on privacy perceptions and on stigmatized behaviors, such as those exemplified by second-hand luxury goods.

In a similar vein, research on international luxury marketing neglects not only *accessible luxury*, but also *inaccessible luxury*, by focusing mainly on *standard luxury* (Wirtz *et al.*, 2020). Luxury sectors, such as private aviation, yachts, and art collection, are examples of the inaccessible luxury that ultra-high net worth individuals (UHNWIs), whose net worth is at least \$30M, usually enjoy. This important segment for the luxury industry is increasingly globalized and highly mobile (Brant, 2020), although just a little is known about their luxury consumption (Klaus, 2021) and how their global lifestyle affects it. Based on recent data from Knight Frank (2021), countries such as China and Saudi Arabia have experienced triple digit growth in their

numbers of UHNWIs since 2015. No research has as yet examined the differences in the luxury consumption preferences, purchasing, and consumption patterns of UHNWIs from different cultural backgrounds.

The majority of research on international luxury marketing focuses on countries positioned at the top of the economic pyramid or at least in the first quartile. While, given that luxury entails a very high price (Kapferer and Bastien, 2012), this is understandable, GDP growth per capita is a better predictor of luxury spending (de Freytas-Tamura, 2012). International researchers are, therefore, encouraged to examine markets positioned lower on the economic pyramid, because their GDP growth is likely to lead consumers in those markets to identify ways of signaling their achievements and status. Another line of research that is specifically relevant to international luxury services, such as the hospitality industry, focuses on the paradox of service providers often originating from the bottom of the pyramid countries with little history of luxury, and which probably never had the opportunity to indulge in it. How do they learn about luxury compared to their counterparts from countries higher up on the economic pyramid with a rich history of luxury? And how well can they empathize with luxury consumers?

Since luxury brands are keen to enter new markets in order to grow their sales and profitability, they face a conundrum. Social hierarchies are more fluid in emerging markets and consumers generally consume luxury products and brands to communicate their status and achieve social elevation (i.e., for inter-personal motives). On the other hand, mature markets are established and, as such, consumers are more likely to consume luxury for personal motives, such as hedonism or for their quality, rather than for inter-personal motives. International marketing research could examine how luxury brands could best address these different consumer motives in ways that would not compromise the luxury brand's global identity for which it is desired.

The Covid-19 pandemic has accelerated luxury organizations' adoption of e-commerce, many of which were late adopters of this technology (Pantano *et al.*, 2021). According to D'Arpizio and Levato (2020) of Bain & Co., the share of purchases made online nearly doubled from 12% in 2019 to 23% in 2020. Furthermore, online channels are expected to become the leading ones for luxury purchases by 2025. Given online channels' growing importance for personal luxury goods, and that many of these are sold internationally via the internet, it is rather surprising that research on international luxury marketing does not have the internet or e-commerce as a key context. Future research should examine how the absence of the physical store experience will affect luxury brands' equity over time, as this absence is expected to influence consumers focusing on inter-personal (social) motives less negatively than those who, for example, value hedonic escapism.

The potential of technologies, such as machine learning and artificial intelligence (AI), to personalize and enhance the luxury customer experience is immense. It is interesting that research guiding luxury brands in terms of which approach to technological innovations they should follow remains scarce (Pantano *et al.*, 2021), and does not consider important international marketing factors, such as the luxury brand's country-of-origin, the target market's traditional versus modern values, and consumer attitudes toward privacy. Furthermore, although initially the adoption of social media and digital technologies by luxury brands was comparatively slow compared to other sectors (Arrigo, 2018), as consumers' motivation to engage with luxury brands on social media has increased for informational and entertainment reasons, luxury brand managers must consider how to deliver creative content that is congruent with their consumers' personalities (Bazi *et al.*, 2020). Social media communication, in fact, increases the level of perceived luxuriousness especially for materialistic consumers given the proximity the consumer feels with the brand (Colella, 2021). Future research should thus explore the impact of augmented reality and technology, mobile apps, and communication

campaigns on newer social media platforms - such as WhatsApp, TikTok, Clubhouse, Twitter Spaces, Caffeine, Instagram Reels, and Houseparty - on international luxury brands, as through this technology and platforms consumers will increase their engagement and willingness to co-create with luxury brands.

Finally, follow-up bibliometric analyses of international luxury marketing can also help keep track of the produced knowledge in the field's developments and directions. Future research could also test the proposed cluster structure's stability, which may be subject to change when new output is published.

The future of international luxury marketing research is promising and exciting. The next few years, as the world adapts to its post-pandemic "new normal," will present luxury brands with challenges and opportunities across the globe. The authors of this paper hope that the presented analysis and the suggested avenues for future research provide a roadmap and motivation for both scholars and managers to advance the field.

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Figure 1. Number of publications on international luxury marketing

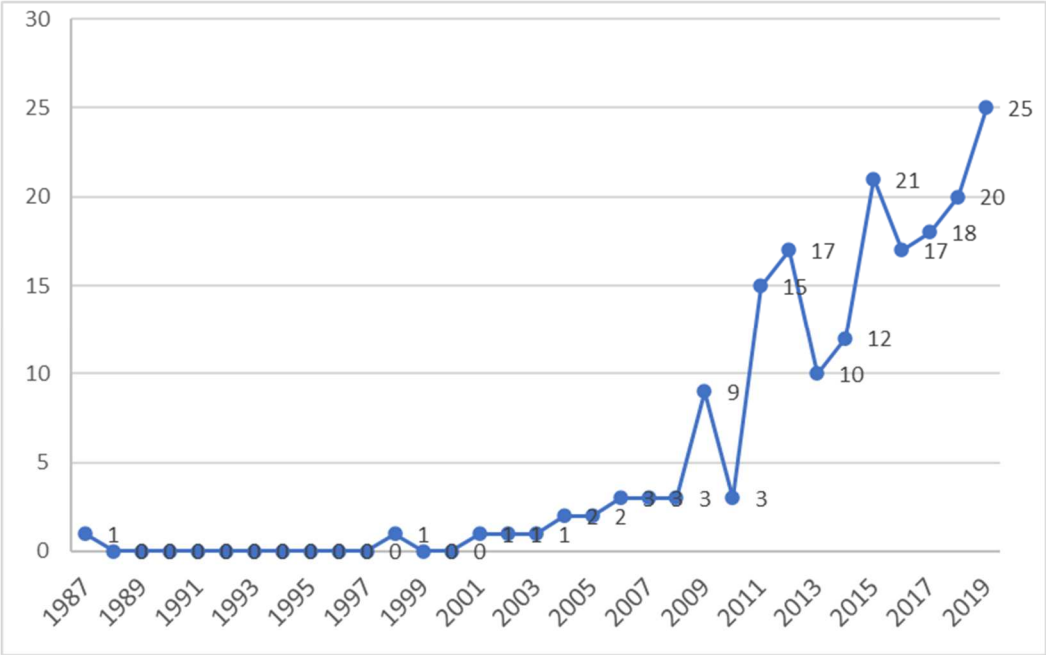


Figure 2: Sources publishing academic work on international luxury marketing (clusters and recency)

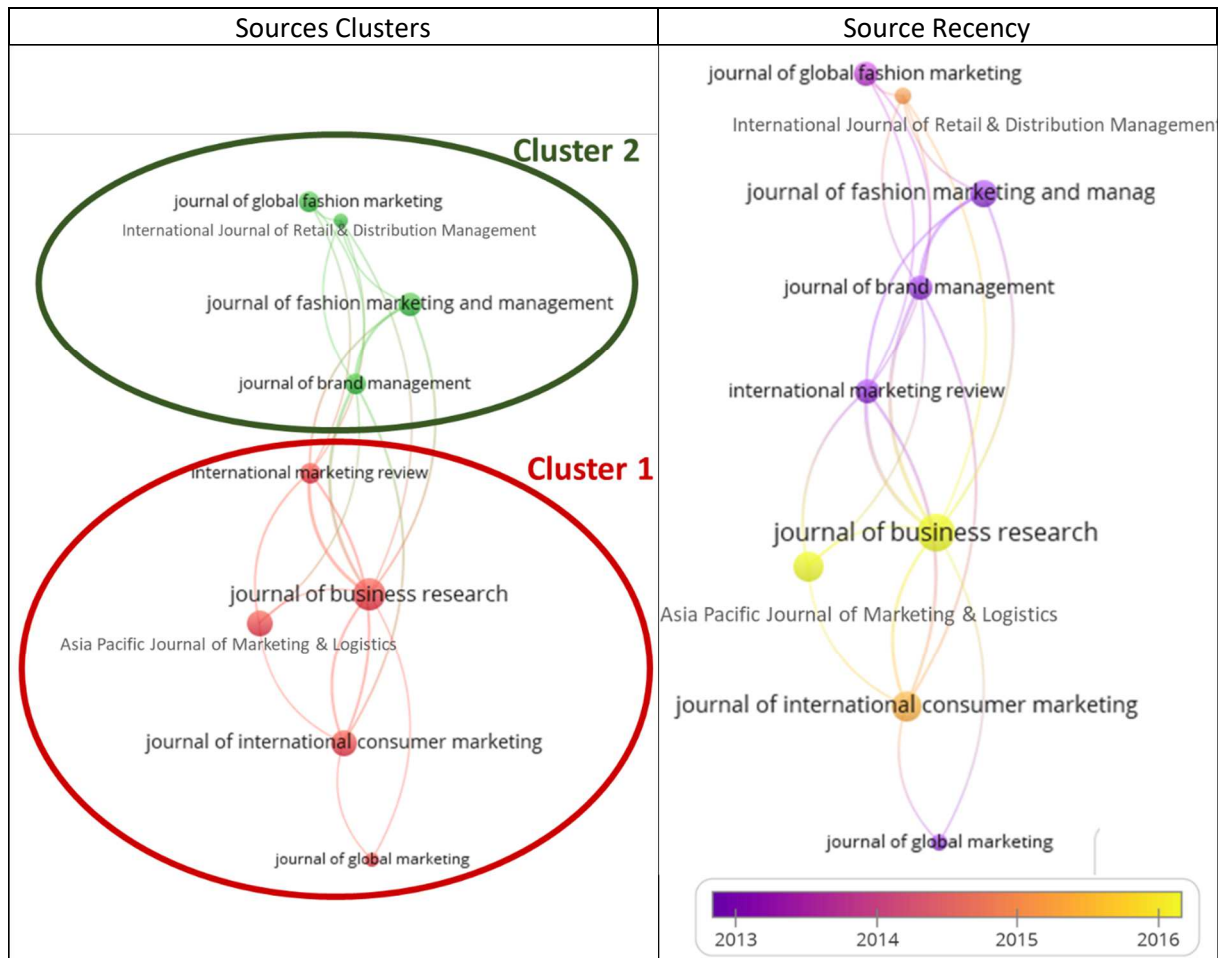


Figure 3: Author-selected keywords referring to international luxury marketing (clusters and recency)

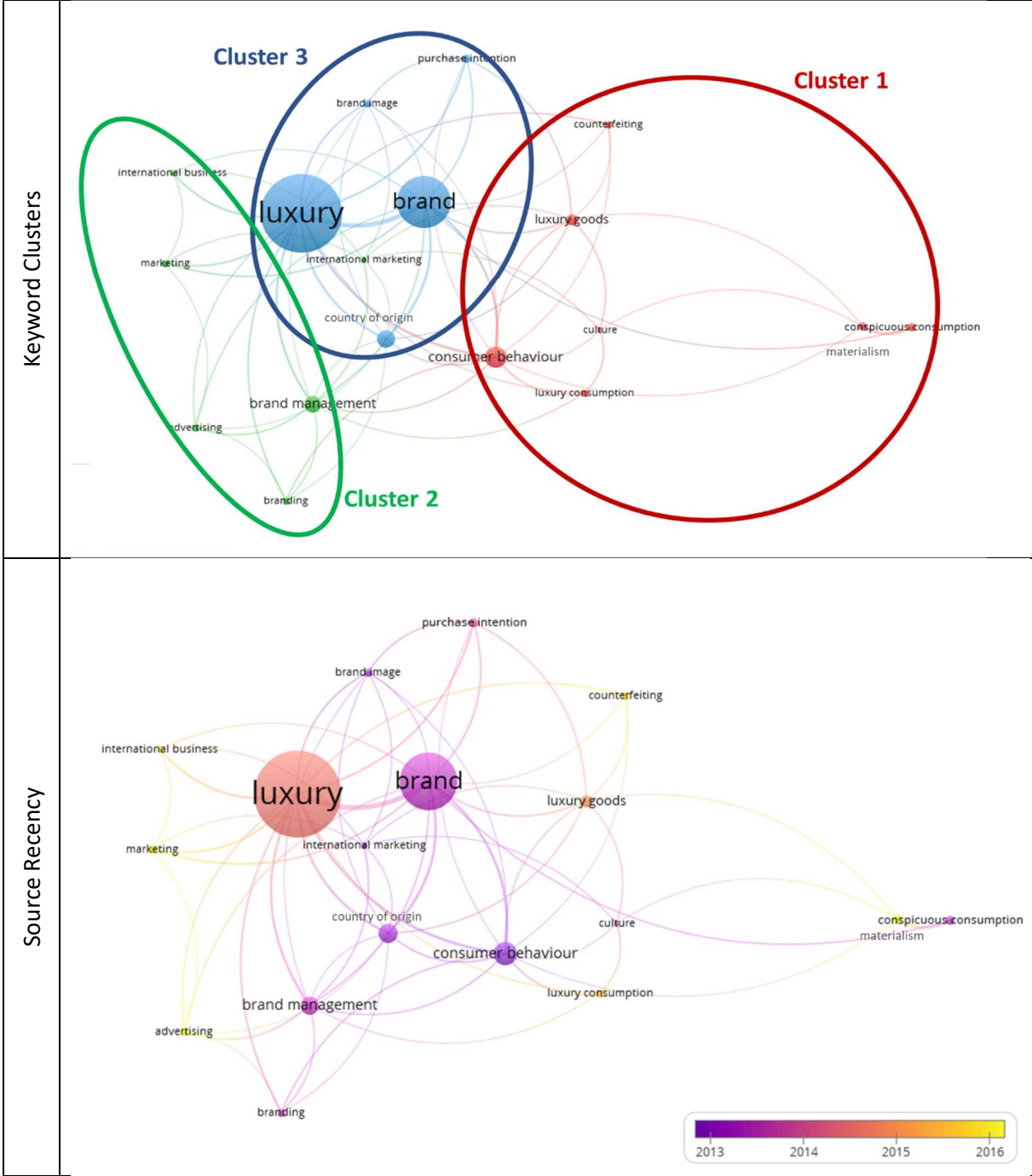


Table 1. Literature review selection criteria and sources survived

<b>Inclusion Criteria #1:</b>	<b>Keywords:</b> (luxury OR "conspicuous consumption" OR "status consumption" OR "prestige brand" OR "status brand") AND (international OR "cross-cultural" OR "cross cultural" OR "cross-national" OR "cross national" OR global) AND (marketing OR brand OR price OR product OR channel* OR distribution OR communication* OR advertising OR consumer*)
<b>Inclusion Criteria #2:</b>	<b>Sources Selection:</b> Scopus Database
<b>Inclusion Criteria #3:</b> <b>Retreated</b>	<b>Time Period:</b> Up to 2019 1,151 items from 619 sources
<b>Exclusion Criteria #1:</b>	<b>No proper source reported:</b> 18 items Mistakes in the reporting of source or incorrect classifications
<b>Surviving Sources</b>	1,133 items
<b>Exclusion Criteria #2:</b>	<b>No author:</b> 18 items
<b>Surviving Sources</b>	1,115 items
<b>Exclusion Criteria #3:</b>	<b>Sources not ranked in Scopus:</b> 121 items Scopus discontinued the content of most of these, or they were reports (121 items)
<b>Surviving Sources</b>	994 items
<b>Exclusion Criteria #4:</b>	<b>Conference papers:</b> 80 items Lack of access to most of the body (full text) of these items, which are often abstracts, and the inability to assess their quality and relevance
<b>Surviving Sources</b>	914
<b>Exclusion Criteria #5:</b>	<b>Books:</b> 179 Lack of access to most of the body (full text) of these items, and the inability to assess their quality and relevance
<b>Surviving Sources</b>	736 items
<b>Exclusion Criteria #6:</b>	<b>Lecture Notes:</b> 15
<b>Surviving Sources</b>	721
<b>Exclusion Criteria #7:</b>	<b>Articles in Q3 or Q4 non-management-related categories:</b> 283
<b>Surviving Sources</b>	437
<b>Exclusion Criteria #8:</b>	<b>Articles not focusing on luxury, international, and marketing issues:</b> 256 items These articles focused on totally irrelevant issues, such as ecology, biology, and medicine; were only marginally related issues, such as production, sustainability, economic development, and various types of products; or they did not include all three components: luxury, international, and marketing
<b>Surviving Sources</b>	181

Table 2. Scopus subject categories of the highest percentile journals in the area of international luxury marketing

<b>No of</b>		
<b>Items</b>	<b>Sources</b>	<b>Scopus thematic category</b>
18	1	Business and International Management
11	1	Marketing
7	1	Economics and Econometrics
5	3	Business, Management and Accounting; General Business, Management and Accounting; Geography, Planning and Development
4	2	Cultural Studies, Finance
3	2	Agricultural and Biological Sciences; Tourism, Leisure and Hospitality Management
2	6	Business, Management and Accounting (miscellaneous); Development; Economics, Econometrics and Finance; History; Management of Technology and Innovation; Social Sciences
1	12	Anthropology; Business Strategy and the Environment; Education; General Economics, Econometrics and Finance; Health Policy; Literature and Literary Theory; Management Information Systems; Management Science and Operations Research; Medicine; Political Science and International Relations; Strategy and Management; Visual Arts and Performing Arts

Table 3. Most productive journals on international luxury marketing

<b>Source Title</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Total citations</b>	<b>Citation per paper per year</b>	<b>CiteScore 2019</b>	<b>Cluster</b>
Journal of Business Research	11	639	10.53	8.9	1
Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics	9	84	2.85	3.5	1
Journal of International Consumer Marketing	9	124	2.56	2.0	1
Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management	8	210	2.98	3.3	2
International Marketing Review	7	265	5.08	6.0	1
Journal of Brand Management	7	327	5.27	4.1	2
Journal of Global Fashion Marketing	7	24	.83	1.9	2
International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management	6	164	2.59	4.5	2
Emerald Emerging Markets Case Studies	5	2	.15	.1	-
Journal of Global Marketing	5	48	1.26	2.2	1

Table 4. Map of origins of authors of international luxury marketing

Country	No
U.S.	57
U.K.	36
Italy	18
France	15
China	12
India	12
South Korea	11
Canada	9
Australia	8
Japan	7
Germany	6
Hong Kong	6
New Zealand	6
Spain	6
Austria	5
Thailand	5

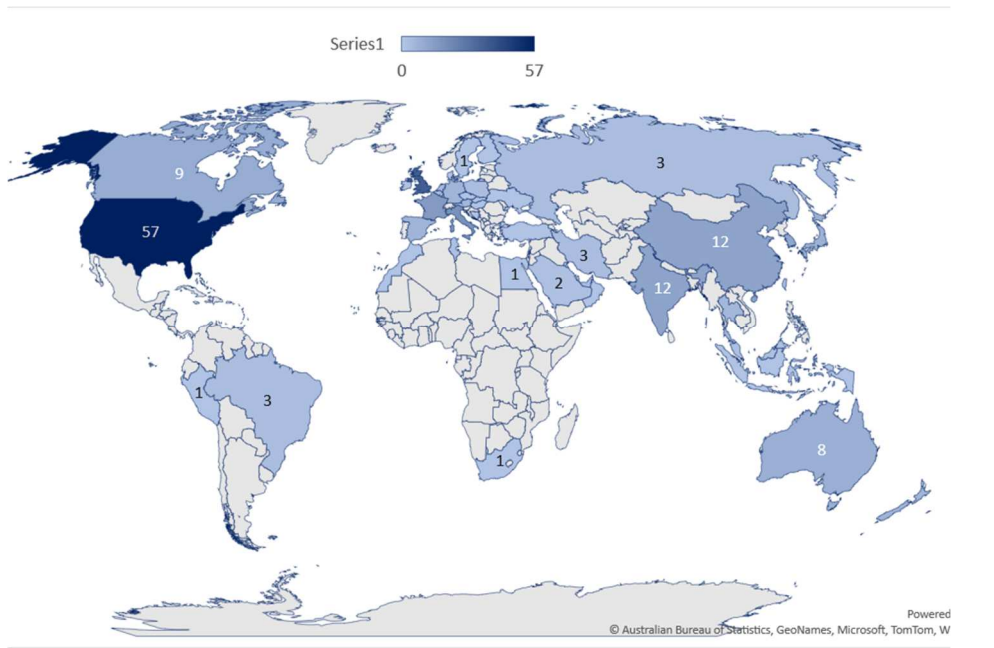




Table 5. Authors of manuscripts on international luxury marketing based on the degree to which they share the same references

Author	No	Citations	
		total citations	Per item per year
Moore, Christopher M.	6	479	7.64
Aiello, Gaetano	5	296	7.37
Donvito, Raffaele	5	296	7.37
Godey, Bruno	4	294	8.97
Hennigs, Nadine	4	208	6.39
Pederzoli, Daniele	4	294	8.97
Shukla, Paurav	4	412	11.96
Wiedmann, Klaus Peter	4	208	6.39
Donzé, Pierre Yves	3	22	2.27
Guercini, Simone	3	27	2.58
Oh, Hyunjoo	3	252	9.95

Authors' output recency

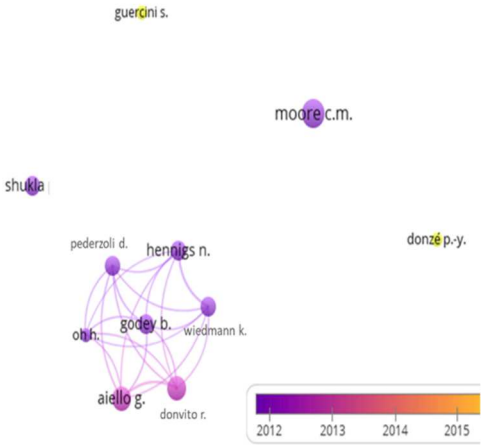


Table 6. Most cited papers on international luxury marketing

<b>Authors, Year</b>	<b>Title &amp; Journal</b>	<b>citations</b>	
		<b>Citations</b>	<b>per year</b>
Bian & Forsythe, 2012	Purchase intention for luxury brands: A cross cultural comparison, Journal of Business Research	244	30.50
Wong & Ahuvia, 1998	Personal taste and family face: Luxury consumption in confucian and western societies, Psychology & Marketing	543	24.68
Fionda & Moore, 2009	The anatomy of the luxury fashion brand, Journal of Brand Management	211	19.18
Üstüner & Holt, 2010	Toward a theory of status consumption in less industrialized countries, Journal of Consumer Research	172	17.20
Athwal et al., 2019	Sustainable Luxury Marketing: A Synthesis and Research Agenda, International Journal of Management Reviews	17	17.00
Shukla & Purani, 2012	Comparing the importance of luxury value perceptions in cross-national contexts, Journal of Business Research	132	16.50
Podoshen et al., 2011	Materialism and conspicuous consumption in China: A cross-cultural examination, International Journal of Consumer Studies	132	14.67
Godey et al., 2012	Brand and country-of-origin effect on consumers' decision to purchase luxury products, Journal of Business Research	111	13.88
Dubois et al., 2005	Consumer segments based on attitudes toward luxury: Empirical evidence from twenty countries, Marketing Letters	184	12.27
Li & Su, 2007	How face influences consumption A comparative study of American and Chinese consumers, International Journal of Market Research	158	12.15
Kim et al., 2016	Narrative-transportation storylines in luxury brand advertising: Motivating consumer engagement, Journal of Business Research	48	12.00
Kapferer, 2012a	Abundant rarity: The key to luxury growth, Business Horizons	95	11.88
Hennigs et al., 2012	What is the Value of Luxury? A Cross-Cultural Consumer Perspective, Psychology & Marketing	93	11.63
Park et al., 2008	Purchasing global luxury brands among young Korean consumers, Journal of Fashion Marketing & Management	134	11.17
Shukla, 2012	The influence of value perceptions on luxury purchase intentions in developed and emerging markets, International Marketing Review	89	11.13
Shukla, 2011	Impact of interpersonal influences, brand origin and brand image on luxury purchase intentions: Measuring interfunctional interactions and a cross-national comparison, Journal of World Business	99	11.00
Kapferer & Valette-Florence, 2018	The impact of brand penetration and awareness on luxury brand desirability: A cross country analysis of the relevance of the rarity principle, Journal of Business Research	22	11.00
Tsai, 2005	Impact of personal orientation on luxury-brand purchase value: An international investigation, International Journal of Market Research	163	10.87
Silverstein & Fiske, 2003	Luxury for the Masses, Harvard Business Review	177	10.41
Nwankwo et al., 2014	Consumer values, motivation and purchase intention for luxury goods, Journal of Retailing & Consumer Services	57	9.50
Moore & Birtwistle, 2004	The Burberry business model: Creating an international luxury fashion brand, International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management	114	7.13
Parkin et al., 1987	Aggregate health care expenditures and national income. Is health care a luxury good?, Journal of Health Economics	203	6.15

Table 7. Author keywords and the words used in the titles of publications on international luxury marketing

Keyword				Title words			
Subject Specific	No	Context Specific	No	Subject Specific	No	Context Specific	No
Luxury	62	Fashion	18	Luxury	118	Fashion	29
Brand	41	China	12	Brand(s)/brands'	79	Global	18
Consumer behavior	17	Global	11	Consumer(s)/consumers'	41	Cross-cultural	18
Country of origin	14	Retail	11	Consumption(s)	24	International	16
Brand management	13	International	7	Purchase	16	China	16
Luxury goods	9			Cultural	10	Hotel(s)	10
Conspicuous consumption	7			Value	10	Chinese	8
Materialism	7			Status	8	Country	8
Purchase intention	7			Perception	8	Korea(n)	7
Advertising	6			Marketing	8	Markets	6
Brand image	6			Attitude(s)	8	Cross-national	6
Branding	6			Social	6	Western	6
Counterfeiting	6			Conspicuous	6		
Luxury consumption	6						
Marketing	6						
International business	5						
International marketing	5						

Table 8. Clusters of author-selected keywords referring to international luxury marketing

<b>Cluster no and name</b>	<b>No of keywords</b>	<b>Keywords</b>
<b>Cluster 1 - Consumers and consumption</b>	7	Conspicuous consumption, Consumer behavior, Counterfeiting, Culture, Luxury consumption, Luxury goods, Materialism
<b>Cluster 2 - Tools</b>	6	Advertising, Brand management, Branding International business, International marketing, Marketing
<b>Cluster 3 - Core Themes</b>	5	Brand, Brand image, Country of origin, Luxury, Purchase intention
<b>Not included in a Cluster</b>	1	Sustainability