



Global Presence vs. Exclusive Identity: Strategic Implications for Luxury Brands

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I. Abstract

In a world where luxury fashion brands expand across continents the balance of global reach and exclusivity presents a unique strategic challenge. This thesis discusses how globalization strategies affect the exclusivity of luxury fashion brands by focusing on geographic expansion, digitalization, and strategic collaborations. Based on a qualitative analysis of four leading luxury fashion brands, namely Louis Vuitton, Chanel, Burberry, and Bottega Veneta, this study examines the mentioned strategies' impact on consumer perceptions of exclusivity. The research draws upon secondary sources including academic journals, industry reports, and brand documents, to explore the subtle ways in which exclusivity is maintained in a rapidly globalizing world. Findings reflect a range of patterns and identify actionable insights, including strategic use of digital tools, selective partnerships, and cultural adaptation without overextension. The thesis contributes to the academic discourse and provides a roadmap for luxury brand managers seeking to balance the goals of global growth and maintaining exclusivity.

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Keywords: Globalization, exclusivity, luxury fashion strategy, democratization, digitalization, collaboration, Louis Vuitton, Chanel, Burberry, Bottega Venetta

Disclaimer: AI algorithms were used for word compression and language correctness under the supervision of the advisor.

Sumário

Num mundo em que as marcas de moda de luxo se expandem por todos os continentes, o equilíbrio entre o alcance global e a exclusividade representa um desafio estratégico único. Esta tese discute a forma como as estratégias de globalização afectam a exclusividade das marcas de moda de luxo, centrando-se na expansão geográfica, na digitalização e nas colaborações estratégicas. Com base numa análise qualitativa de quatro marcas de moda de luxo líderes, nomeadamente Louis Vuitton, Chanel, Burberry e Bottega Veneta, este estudo examina o impacto das estratégias mencionadas nas percepções de exclusividade dos consumidores. A investigação baseia-se em fontes secundárias, incluindo revistas académicas, relatórios da indústria e documentos das marcas, para explorar as formas subtis como a exclusividade é mantida num mundo em rápida globalização. As conclusões reflectem uma série de padrões e identificam ideias acionáveis, incluindo a utilização estratégica de ferramentas digitais, parcerias selectivas e adaptação cultural sem extensão excessiva. A tese contribui para o discurso académico e fornece um roteiro para os gestores de marcas de luxo que procuram equilibrar os objectivos de crescimento global e de manutenção da exclusividade.

Título: Presença global vs. identidade exclusiva: Implicações estratégicas para as marcas de luxo

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Palavras chave: Globalização, exclusividade, estratégia de moda de luxo, democratização, digitalização, colaboração, Louis Vuitton, Chanel, Burberry, Bottega Venetta

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background and Problem Identification

Exclusivity is the heart of Luxury (Baumgarten, 2021). People do not just buy luxury items because they need them – they buy them because not everyone can have them. Exclusivity gives luxury its magic (Dion & Arnould, 2011). The sense that only a select few can own something exceptional keeps the desire for luxury brands alive (Milanesi et al., 2024). As the global luxury fashion industry expects continued growth in the future (CAGR of 4.1% from 2024-2030), challenges arise (Amed et al., 2024; D'Arpizio et al., 2023; Danzinger, 2021; Grand View Research, 2024). Luxury brands grow and spread across the globe, opening new stores and expanding their online presence, their products become easier to access (Bai et al., 2024). The globalization trend raises the question if anyone can buy a luxury item online or walk into a luxury brand store anywhere in the world, is it still exclusive? Does exclusivity fade, the very thing that makes luxury special?

The tension between growing globally and staying exclusive serves as the key focus of this analysis. Luxury brands face a balancing act. They want to grow, reach more markets, and take advantage of the global stage, but they also need to protect what makes them special in the first place (D'Arpizio et al., 2024). The thesis aims to explore how luxury brands expand without losing the very essence of what makes them desirable – an exclusivity that is not just an attribute but the foundation of their identity.

This research is driven by a desire to understand how luxury brands can maintain their exclusivity in a rapidly globalizing market, a question of both academic and practical significance for sustaining brand image. The increased visibility of luxury goods on city streets, worn by people from all backgrounds, led to a deeper interest in how these brands retain their charm and rarity in the face of growing accessibility. With this in mind, it raises the question of whether exclusivity can truly endure in a globalized world and leads to the research question:

How do globalization strategies impact the exclusivity of luxury fashion brands?

To address this question, the research will draw on brand identity to examine how globalization strategies interact with the concept of exclusivity. Brand identity theory provides a framework for understanding how luxury brands maintain a unique and desirable image, even as they pursue global growth.

1.2 Relevance and Stakeholders

The motivation for exploring this issue is rooted in a fascination with how luxury brands occupy a unique space in the consumer landscape. Luxury fashion brands do not merely sell products; they sell a dream, an ideal, and a sense of belonging to something rare and prestigious (Upshaw et al., 2017). Understanding the intricate dynamics allows luxury brands to remain desirable and exclusive while still pursuing growth. This study is an opportunity to dig deeper into these dynamics and uncover insights that are both practically and academically significant.

For business leaders, managers, and brand experts, the tension between global expansion and exclusivity is not just theoretical – it's a real, pressing challenge for their business strategy (Debenedetti et al., 2024). As luxury brands reach new markets, they have to make strategic decisions that could either enhance or weaken their brand identity. Managers must decide where and how to expand without making their products feel too common (Shukla et al., 2022) and face the task of crafting narratives that keep the brand's exclusivity intact (Kapferer & Valette-Florence, 2018). The scholars de Kerviler and Rodriguez (2019) state that protecting exclusivity while pursuing growth is key to ensuring that luxury brands continue to thrive in an increasingly accessible world. The challenge is creating growth strategies that balance increased visibility with preserving a sense of rarity.

According to Kapferer & Valette-Florence (2018), consumers buy luxury not just for the product itself, but for what it represents - status, prestige, and access to something unique. Furthermore, they found that if a brand overextends, it risks diluting its value in the eyes of its customers. When exclusivity fades, so does the appeal, and this can have a significant impact on brand equity (Romaniuk & Huang, 2020). A brand that was once seen as rare and prestigious might begin to feel too accessible, leading to a potential drop in both consumer interest and willingness to pay premium prices.

Understanding this balance is critical not just for the success of individual brands but for the entire luxury industry. This thesis provides insights into how luxury brands navigate this balancing act and protect what makes them unique.

1.3 Research Contribution and Dissertation Outline

Research shows that luxury brands need to appeal to diverse consumer preferences while adapting locally, all without diluting their exclusive image (Debenetti et al. 2024; Feng, 2023; Goor et al., 2020). Digitalization strategies have eased the way to enter new markets for luxury brands, but also run the risk of diminishing their exclusiveness by making the products too accessible online (De Lassus & Anido Freire, 2013; Gao et al., 2023; Kim & Ko, 2012; Ryu et al., 2023; Tynan et al., 2010; Yoo, 2024). Emerging markets, especially in places like China, present both opportunities for growth and challenges in maintaining a luxury brand's exclusivity (Chernov & Gura 2024; Godey et al., 2012; Pino et al., 2019; Shukla et al., 2022; Shukla & Rosendo-Rios, 2021; Yao, 2023). Most of the research articles that have been published on the topic of globalization strategies concern either single-brand studies or discussions of one specific strategy, or even a single market analysis of how individual luxury brands approach their expansion (Chernov & Gura, 2024; Kostov, 2023; Moreau et al., 2020; Pan, 2024; Riley & Lomax, 2004; Xia, 2024). While individual cases provide useful insights, they often do not reflect what is happening in the industry at large or allow for a comparison of different globalization strategies across multiple brands. This thesis aims to address this gap by examining multiple brands to provide a broader understanding of the relationship between globalization and exclusivity.

Literature on exclusivity has underscored its importance in defining consumer perceptions and justifying premium pricing. It argues that exclusivity is the driver of prestige or status in luxury brands (Katyal et al., 2024; Rosendo-Rios & Shukla, 2023; Yao, 2023). Debenetti et al. (2024) and Strebinger et al. (2018) found that one of the main challenges for luxury brands was finding a balance between exclusivity and inclusiveness to maintain their image. Numerous studies also examine sublevels of exclusivity, such as uniqueness and rarity, across various scenarios that provide insights for analyzing the globalization strategies of the chosen luxury companies (Katyal et al., 2022; X. Wang et al., 2022).

This study builds on existing evidence and focuses on the tension between global expansion and exclusivity, examining how globalization strategies such as geographic expansion, cooperation and partnership, and digitalization affect the exclusivity of selected luxury fashion brands. While other studies have examined the impact of globalization and the importance of exclusivity, this work demonstrates how these strategies either preserve or dilute exclusivity. In doing so, it provides an understanding of the balance between globalization and exclusivity.

Strategic challenges that luxury brand managers face are highlighted and practical recommendations on navigating these competing goals are provided.

2. Theoretical Discussion

The literature review aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the theoretical foundations relevant to the main research question: “How do selective globalization strategies affect the exclusivity of luxury brands?”. To address this, a “narrative review” approach is used which has the advantage of flexibility, which makes it more appropriate for this qualitative research design. It is suited for the aim of summarizing previous research, identifying existing debates, knowledge gaps, and the latest interventions, as well as tracking changes in the field (Bell et al., 2022). In line with this, is the literature review that follows a “representative coverage” strategy, using works that are representative of many others in the field (Cooper, 1988). Given the complexity and diversity of globalization strategies and exclusivity tactics in the luxury industry, this methodology allows for an inclusive examination of diverse perspectives and approaches from different studies. It also helps analyze the research question and build an understanding of how luxury brands balance their global expansion with the maintenance of an exclusive image – a multifaceted area that benefits from a broad, comprehensive view across various brands and strategies using a qualitative lens.

2.1 Globalization Strategies

The definition of globalization, while formally named in the late 20th century, has roots extending back centuries through historical processes like colonialism, exploration, trade routes such as the Silk Road, and the spread of religions and cultures. These interactions laid the groundwork for the interconnected world that “globalization” now describes (James & Steger 2014). In the 1980s, the economist and Harvard professor Theodore Levitt popularized globalization within the business context by describing how technological advancements and international trade were bringing markets together across the world (Levitt, 1983). The sociologist Roland Robertson expanded this perspective by defining globalization as the “compression of the world” and the rise of a global consciousness that goes beyond economic integration to include social, cultural, and political dimensions (Robertson, 1992).

Globalization, therefore, is the dynamic process of increasing interconnectedness and integration across markets, societies, and political systems, driven by technological progress and international commerce (James & Steger 2014; Levitt, 1983). It is not just about economic exchange but also the compression of space and the growth of a global consciousness, where local and distant events influence each other (Robertson, 1992).

In luxury fashion, globalization correlates with strategic expansion as brands leverage connectedness to expand their consumer pool and shape cultural trends (Bian & Forsythe, 2012). According to Debendetti et al., (2024) and Strebinger et al. (2018), luxury brands use a holistic approach, integrating global and local elements to build a cohesive, globally appealing identity. Although there are many strategies of globalization across industries, the luxury fashion industry can be seen to mainly focus on the categories; geographic expansion, collaborations and partnerships, and digitalization (Bian & Forsythe, 2012; Hazan et al., 2022; Murati, 2010).

2.1.1 Geographic Expansion

Geographic expansion has been a strategy for numerous luxury fashion brands. By venturing into new markets and opening up new stores, brands can tap into new consumer segments, broaden brand awareness, and boost revenue. Globalization has led to the convergence of consumer preferences, making it possible for luxury brands to offer standardized products across different markets (Levitt, 1983). At the same time, brand equity in the luxury sector relies heavily on perceived exclusivity and loyalty, making it a critical component that should be carefully protected by luxury brands expanding globally, especially when entering new markets (Aaker, 1992; Keller, 2019). Brand equity refers to the value a brand holds in consumers' minds, built through factors such as brand loyalty, quality perception, and exclusivity (Keller, 2019). Other studies show that luxury companies must find the optimal balance between adapting products and marketing strategies to local cultural preferences and standardizing them, especially in diverse markets where consumer expectations for luxury differ (Douglas & Wind, 1987; La Ferle et al., 2008; Liu et al., 2016; Melewar & Saunders, 1999; Nguyen, 2016). However, misinterpretations or cultural faux pas can tarnish the brand reputation and hinder market penetration (Battistini, 2023; Dwivedi et al., 2024; Godey et al., 2013; Kapferer & Valette-Florence, 2019; Klein et al., 2016; Simon-Kucher, 2024; Tsai, 2005). To maintain a local and global competitive edge, they must differentiate themselves through innovative

product offerings, superior customer service, and strong brand positioning (Albrecht et al., 2013; Danzinger, 2021; D'Arpizio, 2023; Ernst & Young, 2019; Godey et al., 2009; Jaggi, 2023; Jost, 2023; Kapferer & Valette-Florence, 2016; Klein et al., 2016; Picot-Coupey, 2014; Willersdorf et al., 2020).

One of the primary benefits of geographic expansion that is highlighted in literature and media is the potential to reach a wider customer base (Albrecht et al., 2013; Alexander et al., 2018; Battistini, 2023; Mazzei, 2021). By entering new markets and opening up more physical stores, luxury brands can tap into a diverse range of consumers with varying preferences and purchasing power. This increased market reach can lead to sales growth and increased brand visibility (Albrecht et al., 2013; Alexander et al., 2018; Bang & Joshi, 2010; Ganesha et al., 2020; Klein et al., 2016; Som & Pape, 2015).

Research about globalization strategies shows that by carefully considering these factors and implementing the mentioned strategies effectively, luxury fashion brands can successfully expand their global footprint and maintain their position as leaders in the industry.

2.1.2 Digitalization

While Levitt's (1983) and Robertson's (1992) definitions of globalization provide a foundation, they may not fully capture the complexities of digital globalization. Today, online platforms and virtual marketplaces create new dimensions of interconnectedness that go beyond traditional geographic expansion, allowing luxury brands to reach global audiences instantly. Bughin et al. (2016) highlight this shift, describing "digital globalization" as driven by data and information flows rather than solely physical goods. This shift raises questions about whether traditional globalization theories can fully explain modern luxury brand strategies, which must balance accessibility with exclusivity in a digital landscape.

A major focus in the literature on digitalization strategies is how luxury brands implement omnichannel strategies to create seamless experiences that connect online and offline touchpoints. Bertrand & Glebova (2024) highlight that digital transformation in luxury is not just about expanding e-commerce; it is essential to ensure a unified brand experience that respects luxury's exclusivity while bridging various channels. One example of this strategy is commonly known as "click and collect" or virtual appointments, which blends digital convenience with personalized service in physical stores (Belvedere et al., 2021; Bertrand & Glebova, 2024; Cabigiosu, 2020; Joy, 2023; Karadag & Erdogmus, 2020; Ozuem & Ranfagni,

2021). While luxury has traditionally thrived in private showrooms or selective boutiques, brands now use limited online releases, VIP experiences, and other tactics to preserve that feeling of exclusivity, even as they reach more people (DeAcetis, 2020). However, much of the existing research on omnichannel strategies relies heavily on case studies of individual brands which raises questions about how applicable these findings are across the broader luxury industry, where brand positioning, customer expectations, and market conditions vary widely (Belvedere et al., 2021; Bertrand & Glebova, 2024; Ozuem & Ranfagni, 2021).

E-commerce platforms have become central to luxury brands' digital strategies, allowing them to reach a broader customer base while managing exclusivity. To manage the brand image, customer experience, and product presentation online, luxury brands build their direct-to-consumer e-commerce sites or curated partnerships with luxury platforms. Such a careful curation of the digital shopping experience maintains exclusivity and assures that the value and allure of luxury items are retained even while they become more accessible (Baker et al., 2018; Bertrand & Glebova, 2024; Chevalier & Gutsatz, 2020; Gielens & Steenkamp, 2019; Girod, 2022; Jaggi et al., 2022; Karadag & Erdogmus, 2020; Klaus, 2022; Liu et al., 2019; Ozuem & Ranfagni, 2021; Sanz-Lopez et al., 2024).

Baker et al. (2018) discuss how brands address the "Internet dilemma," maintaining an aura of exclusivity online while carefully expanding accessibility. Digital platforms such as social media channels offer avenues for high-end brands to engage with customers, striking a balance between reach and prestige (Cabigiosu, 2020; Gibson, 2024; Jaggi et al., 2022; Kemper et al., 2022; Ozuem & Ranfagni, 2021).

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and virtual environments such as the metaverse are increasingly leveraged to elevate consumer engagement, provide personalized recommendations and deliver an exclusive luxury experience through high-tech, hard to come by tools (Girod, 2022; Jaggi et al., 2022; Joy, 2023; Ki et al., 2025; Ornati, & Kalbaska, 2022; Rahman et al., 2023; Sanz-Lopez et al., 2024; Bao et al., 2024; Chen et al., 2025; Ferere, 2021).

2.1.3 Collaboration and Partnership

In the context of globalization, multiple researchers highlight that co-branding with local artists brings craftsmanship into focus, emphasizing luxury's dedication to quality and heritage (De Angilis et al. 2020; Masè & Cedrola, 2017). This helps luxury brands add a touch of cultural relevance to their products in regional markets, catering to local tastes and aesthetic values

(Diaz Ruiz & Cruz, 2023; Hughes, 2023; Masè et al., 2020; Mazzei, 2021; Koronaki et al., 2018). Scheuerle et al. (2023) discuss how collaborations can help luxury brands enhance brand equity and rebuild the emotional value of luxury goods, in coherence with every market's individual cultural preferences. Another important strategy of collaboration is that of artification, which is the integration of art in product design to enhance exclusivity and cultural value. Thus, brands use the artist's name or signature on the products to target young, culturally conscious consumers who appreciate real and innovative products (Baumgarth, 2018; Davino & Cohen-Cheminet, 2020; Diaz Ruiz & Cruz, 2023; Joy & Belk, 2020; Marin et al., 2022). Massi and Turrini (2020) and Perlson (2023) found that especially focusing on long-term collaborations with prominent artists, allows brands to cultivate a legacy and prestige over time. Beyond this, Michel and Willing (2020) and Murtas et al. (2022) found that business collaborations with a non-luxury company, like streetwear brands, are strategic moves to attract new consumers. Such collaborations enable luxury brands to blend exclusivity with accessibility, facilitating market reach without compromising brand positioning. Researchers discuss this alignment as a means to bring unique brand synergy into the luxury space, demonstrating innovation while retaining brand prestige (Lee & Cho, 2022; Murtas et al., 2022). Quamina et al. (2023) explore the issues of co-branding and prove that collaboration with mass-market brands preserves the exclusivity of luxury more successfully than downward extensions.

Furthermore, influencer and celebrity collaborations have transformed luxury branding. Influencers bring an element of relatability and modern appeal, while celebrities reinforce aspirational value, a crucial component in the construction of the luxury brand image (Baudier et al., 2023; Bazi et al., 2020; Pangarkar et al., 2023; Yun et al., 2023). Studies note that influencer marketing in the luxury sector requires carefully curated partnerships that align with brand values and aesthetics to ensure authenticity and maintain exclusivity (Klucarova, 2024; Michel & Willing, 2020; Yu & Hu, 2020). This is relevant in digitally developed markets, where luxury brands collaborate with both macro and micro-influencers to reach niche segments while trying to preserve their exclusivity image (Kay et al., 2020; Pangarkar & Shukla, 2023).

2.2 Concept of Exclusivity

In the luxury industry, exclusivity has long defined the essence of luxury brands, traditionally symbolized by exceptional quality, rarity, and the craftsmanship associated with social privilege

(Loeb, 2022). Phau and Prendergast (2000) point out that while luxury is a subjective concept, luxury brands compete on the ability to evoke exclusivity, a well-known brand identity, brand awareness and perceived quality. Nueno and Quelch (1998) describe, that luxury brands offer a low functional utility-to-price ratio but a high intangible value-to-price ratio, where the appeal lies in the prestige and unique experience associated with owning something out of reach for most. According to Dubois and Paternault (1995) the idea of exclusivity as a “rarity principle”, means that the prestige of the brand gets eroded, if too many people own it. This creates a paradox for brands: they need visibility for profit but must control accessibility to preserve prestige (Berry; 1994; Roux & Floch, 1996).

Today, consumer values have reshaped luxury. For younger generations, luxury is more about self-expression, authenticity, and ethical alignment than status alone (Slaton & Hurst, 2023). Kestenbaum (2021) emphasizes efficiency, purpose, and transparency in modern luxury, while Batat (2023) argues that exclusivity nowadays is a mix of tangible and intangible qualities shaped by creating personal, meaningful experiences. Ko et al. (2019) add that, at its core, a luxury brand should feel unique and special, offering premium quality and creating an emotional connection with people. A product becomes “luxury” if it fits their personal style and helps them connect socially, rather than just signaling wealth (Slaton & Hurst, 2023).

Based on the literature review, the different interpretations of exclusivity are categorized and discussed in greater depth. Together, they provide a roadmap for understanding the strategic balancing act luxury brands face as they strive to remain exclusive in a globalized world.

2.2.1 Scarcity

In the luxury fashion world, the concept of exclusivity is used on the idea of scarcity – whether it’s through limited editions, rare materials, or controlled access (Affuso, 2023; Radón, 2012; X. Wang et al., 2022). Making a product very scarce is one of the most powerful tools to make a product exclusive because it not only raises demand but also stirs a sense of importance among consumers (X. Wang et al., 2022).

Kapferer (2012) introduces the concept of “abundant rarity,” or “virtual rarity” to describe how brands maintain exclusivity while scaling globally. In the digital age, practices like “drop culture,” where products are released in limited quantities in a certain timeframe, create perceptions of rarity and build involvement in the community (Affuso, 2023).

Consumers responses to scarcity can vary by culture. For example, Chinese consumers in contrast to Americans respond strongly to rarity, as it aligns with their cultural values on social status signaling (Chernov & Gura, 2024; Mundel et al, 2021).

Additionally, the differentiation between natural and artificial scarcity is important to understand in luxury markets, as shown by X. Wang et al. (2022). They argue that natural rarity (e.g., diamonds) carries a timeless appeal reinforcing exclusivity more effectively than artificial scarcity techniques, such as limited editions. The difference is subtle but crucial: natural rarity limits access, whereas artificial scarcity can feel mass-market manufactured, which can potentially reduce the brand's luxurious image if not managed carefully (Katyal et al., 2022). Thus, scarcity remains crucial for exclusivity, although its effectiveness varies depending on cultural contexts and strategic implementations (Rosendo-Rios & Shukla, 2023)

2.2.2 Price

High pricing works similarly to scarcity, acting as a natural filter that strengthens the idea that only a privileged group can afford these items. Yeoman and McMahon-Beattie (2013) write that this high price point acts as a social marker, pointing out the brand's prestige and the status of those who own it. The link between price and exclusivity is further supported by Gutsatz and Heine (2018), who argue that luxury must be expensive to be perceived as exclusive. This is supported by the "Veblen effect" which explains how higher prices underline exclusivity, as consumers perceive luxury as superior partly due to its inaccessibility (Bagwell & Bernheim, 1996; Kapferer & Valette-Florence, 2021; Veblen, 1899).

Although high prices serve as a barrier to entry, signaling exclusivity may not resonate equally across cultures. Mundel et al. (2021) and Gutsatz and Heine (2018) explore affordable luxury, noting that while lower prices may dilute exclusivity in Western markets, Chinese millennials see affordable luxury as a pathway to status, suggesting that cultural differences can impact how price influences a brand's image.

Rosendo-Rios and Shukla (2023) examine "masstige" strategies, where brands adopt mid-range pricing to reach broader audiences, balancing between exclusivity and global growth. Romaniuk and Huang (2020) also highlight a related risk that when a luxury brand is widely accessible it can lose its exclusive appeal, suggesting that price can be effective in competitive markets. However as luxury brands increasingly pursue growth, particularly in digitally connected and rapidly developing regions, the assumption that high pricing alone can guarantee

exclusivity may overlook the impact of market saturation and brand ubiquity (Mundel et al., 2021). Therefore, it should be questioned whether a one-size-fits-all pricing strategy can sustain exclusivity in culturally diverse markets and the face of democratization pressures.

2.2.3 Heritage and Craftmanship

Authenticity, rooted in heritage and craftsmanship, is another critical element of exclusivity. This authenticity links the products with the brand's history and values, turning them into something much more than just items but symbols of artistry and tradition. Sharma et al. (2022) warn as luxury brands expand geographically and digitally, authenticity is becoming more and more under pressure. E-commerce can remove elements of heritage, as digital platforms do not offer the physical experience or the story behind that defines a luxury item. Authenticity and craftsmanship act as a safeguard against counterfeiting, raising and maintaining brand value (Sirois, 2021; Bessy & Chateauraynaud, 2019).

Dion and Arnould (2011) highlight “artification” as a strategy where luxury brands employ artists to contextualize the brand as part of cultural heritage (Joy et al., 2014). In addition, maintaining authenticity in pop-up stores has proven effective, as seen in de Lassus and Freire's (2013) study, which shows that these temporary stores provide a sense of exclusivity through their short-lived nature. Thurlow and Jaworski (2017) further analyze how brands sustain exclusivity by using language that reinforces class privilege and elitism, demonstrating that authenticity, particularly linked to heritage, can preserve exclusivity in a global context.

2.2.4 Social Signaling

Exclusivity is closely tied to social signaling, with high-end products acting as signals of status, class distinction and social hierarchy (Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2012; Pino et al., 2019). This aligns with Bourdieu's (1984) “concept of distinction”, where luxury goods serve as indicators of social class, helping individuals position themselves within an elite social hierarchy. Luxury items provide “social capital”, allowing consumers to establish or reinforce social status through ownership (Bourdieu, 1984).

Furthermore, Kastanakis and Balabanis (2014) examine how social dynamics influence luxury consumption. They differentiate between “snobs”, who prefer exclusive items because they're

rare, and “bandwagon” consumers, who are drawn to luxury because it’s widely recognized and coveted.

Consumer behavior theories suggest that luxury products act as identity markers for consumers, a concept known as self-concept theory (Belk, 1988). This theory emphasizes that consumers choose luxury items not only to signal status but also to reflect and reinforce their personal identities (Belk, 1988). Shewani and Chan (2022) demonstrate that also political ideology impacts luxury preferences, with conservatives favoring tangible goods for status signaling over luxury experiences.

Goor et al. (2020) study the phenomenon of “impostor syndrome,” among luxury consumers, where individuals feel inauthentic or undeserving of their status, revealing the psychological factors involved in maintaining a sense of exclusivity. McFerran et al. (2014) discuss the feelings of pride. If luxury comes across as too hubristic, it can backfire and reduce the brand's exclusive image.

Amaral and Loken (2016) highlight how the spread of counterfeit luxury goods complicates these social dynamics by blurring the lines between authentic and fake status symbols. As counterfeits become more common, high-status consumers may turn away from brands associated with knockoffs, which risks diminishing the brand’s exclusivity and perceived value. This phenomenon underscores the critical tension in luxury branding, as efforts to expand reach may inadvertently attract counterfeiting.

2.3 Definition of Thesis Research Question

The existing literature has explored many individual topics and specific cases in the field of exclusivity in the luxury market. When these studies are considered collectively, they provide a clear picture of the current state of research in this area. Only a few studies have systematically given an overview and examined how specific globalization strategies such as geographic expansion, digital engagement, and strategic collaborations impact the exclusivity of luxury brands.

The literature findings on globalization strategies and exclusivity in luxury branding reveal a delicate balancing act for luxury brands. Traditional strategies such as high pricing, limited access, and social signaling are often challenged by market saturation and digital accessibility, making it essential for brands to adopt carefully managed globalization tactics. Current research

often examines exclusivity independently of globalization, overlooking the complexities luxury brands face as they balance global reach with exclusivity.

As a result of the literature review this thesis is linking exclusivity with global growth, which provides a new perspective for understanding and managing exclusivity in an increasingly connected market. This study bridges these gaps by analyzing multiple brands and their globalization strategies to understand how each impacts exclusivity, providing a more comprehensive framework for the luxury industry.

The research question guiding this analysis is:

How do globalization strategies impact the exclusivity of luxury fashion brands?

This question aims to dive deeper into the tension luxury brands face between reaching more people and staying exclusive. It will do so by comparing the findings against existing theories to assess their relevance in today's interconnected luxury market. By looking at how some of the biggest luxury names manage this balance, this thesis will identify the strategic challenges and implications that managers face in balancing global growth with the identity of exclusivity.

3. Methodology

The Methodology section outlines the research approach, beginning with the research method used to explore the tension between globalization strategies and exclusivity. It then details the data collection process, sampling strategy, and data analysis and finishes with a table about the practical approach. Together, these elements provide a clear foundation for understanding the study's methodology and practical application.

3.1 Research Method

For this study, qualitative research methods are used, which are suited for understanding how individuals view the industry and to investigate the tension between global strategies and exclusivity within the luxury fashion industry (Alasuutari, 2009; Islam & Aldaihani, 2022). The lack of a rigid structure is beneficial when exploring complex phenomena such as the definition

of exclusivity, as it avoids imposing preconceived notions on the data and allows the study to reveal the perspectives of the analyzed materials naturally (Bell et al., 2022).

The research process aligns with a flexible yet systematic structure that avoids delimiting areas of enquiry too much, favoring general rather than specific research questions (Bell et al., 2022). This adaptability makes sure that findings are based on emerging patterns and insights, which is particularly valuable when examining the evolving dynamics of globalization. The research question itself necessitates subjective and comprehensive insights that are not quantifiable. Therefore, it tends to be a more open-ended research strategy than is typically the case with quantitative research (Bell et al., 2022).

Not only would a quantitative method rely on numerical data and hypothesis testing, but also often treats the social world as analogous to the natural world, limiting the ability to capture the layered interpretations of exclusivity (Bell et al., 2022; Francisco et al., 2001; Green & Hall, 1984; Schutz (1962)). Similarly, quantitative methodologies rely on instruments and rigid measurements that impose a misleading sense of precision, often forcing complex qualitative phenomena into numerical categories, and thereby obscuring their meanings (Cicourel, 1964). The disconnection of quantitative research from everyday life limits its ability to reflect the real-world context in which exclusivity is perceived and experienced (Cicourel, 1982; LaPiere, 1934).

However, qualitative research is not without its criticisms. It is often deemed too impressionistic and subjective, as interpretations rely heavily on the researcher's judgment (Bell et al., 2022). To address this and ensure a rigorous analysis, the study uses multiple data sources as its basis. Replicability is also a concern, as qualitative studies often depend on the researcher's ingenuity and unique contexts (Bryman, & Burgess, 1994). This limitation is mitigated by transparent documentation of methods and analytical processes. The issue of generalization, arising from small, non-random samples, is counterbalanced by the goal of theoretical rather than statistical generalization.

Overall, this research design has the strengths needed for this thesis, offering depth, flexibility, and rich contextual understanding. At the same time, addressing its limitations through methodological planning and execution of the symbolic and interpretive aspects of luxury branding strategies. This ensures the study can provide meaningful insights into the strategic challenges luxury brands face in balancing global presence with exclusive identity.

3.2 Data Collection Process

As Bell et al. (2022) describe the main research methods, the “collection and analysis of texts and documents” is used for this thesis. Data for this research is gathered from secondary sources, including scientific journals, reference books, and company reports, which provide theoretical angles and results from primary research. To complement these academic sources, and understand current trends and industry benchmarks, industry insights from leading consulting firms (e.g., McKinsey, Bain & Company, Deloitte), trade magazines (e.g. Forbes, Financial Times), and reputable fashion industry publications (e.g., Forbes, Harper’s Bazaar, Vogue) are included. These sources offer valuable, up-to-date perspectives that supplement the viewpoints from academic literature. Combining multiple and diverse sources generates structured, authentic information, giving less subjective and a more in-depth understanding (Bell et al., 2022).

The process of data collection involves searches that are conducted on academic research platforms (e.g. JSTOR, Science Direct, EBSCO) using the keywords “globalization strategies,” “exclusivity,” “luxury brand identity,” and more specific related terms that appear with the research process. This allows for a thorough collection of peer-reviewed articles, industry reports, and foundational texts.

Alternative qualitative methods, mentioned by Bell et al. (2022), while valuable in other contexts, are less suited to the objectives of this study. Ethnography or participant observation, which requires immersion in social settings (Lok & de Rond, 2013), is not a practical choice for this analysis. In this study case, there is a lack of the necessary network and access to enter organizations and observe their strategies in action. Such methods would exceed the scope of this thesis, requiring significant time and resources to achieve meaningful insights. Similarly, accessing qualitative interviews across all the selected companies with C-level executives with comprehensive insights into the chosen strategies to ensure balance and saturation (Hennik & Kaiser, 2022; Strauss & Corbin, 1998) would be highly difficult. Focus groups, which primarily reveal group dynamics (Boddy, 2005), are also less appropriate, as this research focuses on strategies at the organizational level rather than opinions of a certain group or interactions. Language-based approaches, such as discourse analysis, may delve too deeply into textual nuances (Boden, 1994; Mintzberg, 1973), while the analysis of visual materials, like advertisements, focuses only on aesthetic elements rather than strategic considerations (Banks, 2001; Pink, 2007).

Multiple sources can be used for the collection and analysis of texts and documents (Bell et al., 2022). As John Scott (1990) writes, documents are an invaluable resource for qualitative researchers, as they are used for their authenticity, credibility, representativeness, and meaning – criteria that guide this study’s data selection and evaluation process. Therefore, this study focuses on academic journal articles, organizational documents and media outputs.

The primary data for this study consists of a comprehensive collection of scientific research published in academic journals and books, to ensure the validity and reliability of the analysis (Mason 1996). These sources were carefully selected to create a foundation for finding the relevant globalization strategies and exclusivity definitions for the luxury fashion industry. The documents were chosen based on their relevance to fields such as business strategy, marketing, and consumer behavior, ensuring that the data reflects current theoretical and empirical developments. Similarly, books authored by leading scholars and industry experts were included to provide deeper insights into historical trends, conceptual frameworks, and practical applications within the luxury sector.

Organizational documents are valuable for business research because they provide insights into the perspectives of companies. These documents include annual reports, comments by executives, shareholder communications, and press releases. Such materials are accessible to the public through company websites and offer presentations that outline managerial decisions, strategic directions, and the values organizations aim to convey (Bell et al., 2022). For this study, these documents serve as a lens to understand how luxury brands construct their globalization strategies. However, organizational documents are typically crafted to present a favorable image of the company, often to show success while omitting challenges or missteps (Scott, 1990). This raises concerns about credibility, as these documents are not necessarily free from distortion or bias. To address this, the analysis integrates additional sources, such as comments from journalists and experts outside of the companies, and articles from academic journals which provide more critical views and theoretical discussions.

News articles and media outputs include external perspectives and comments on luxury brands and their strategies. Unlike organizational documents, media outputs often highlight controversies, failures, or alternative viewpoints, offering a more nuanced and less sanitized account of a company’s activities (Bell et al., 2022). These sources help in understanding data from organizational documents and identifying discrepancies or gaps in the descriptions presented by companies. However, the authenticity and reliability of the information remain a

concern, especially in online media, where issues like “fake news” or the authorship of articles is unclear (Scott, 1990). To mitigate this, only reputable news articles and media outlets with established credibility are used, and content is cross-verified with other sources.

Furthermore, this study tries to look at documents through a constructionist lens, viewing them not as transparent reflections of reality but as entities that construct their own “documentary reality” that aligns with the producer’s goals (Atkinson & Coffey, 2004). For example, annual reports are intentionally drawn up to show financial stability for investors, while press releases aim to shape public perception and attract media attention (Bell et al., 2022).

Moreover, in this dissertation, the intertextual nature of documents is considered, which do not exist in isolation but are interconnected with other texts. For example, an annual report might reference past reports, industry standards, or regulatory frameworks, collectively shaping the organization’s goals. In the luxury fashion industry, this interconnection reflects how companies position themselves within global trends, consumer behaviors, and market benchmarks. Contextual factors, such as organizational culture, industry norms, and societal trends, further influence the creation and interpretation of these documents (Delanty & Strydom, 2003; Schutz, 1962).

3.3 Sampling

In this thesis, purposive sampling is used to select luxury fashion brands as it allows to strategically select samples based on their relevance to the research questions (Bell et al., 2022). Unlike convenience sampling, which relies on availability, purposive sampling involves a deliberate and systematic process guided by predefined inclusion criteria to ensure that the chosen cases contribute meaningfully to the analysis.

For the analysis of the globalization strategies, the luxury fashion brands – Louis Vuitton, Burberry, Chanel, and Bottega Veneta – are selected and analysed based on specific criteria to ensure consistency and comparability in the analysis. One selection criteria is their market position. The brands chosen are widely recognized as leaders in the luxury fashion industry, representing high brand equity and a global presence (Faccioli et al., 2023; Holmes, 2023; Indvik, 2023). Furthermore, to ensure comparability, the selected brands primarily offer similar product lines (e.g., apparel, accessories) and belong to the same luxury segment. This focus ensures that any differences in strategy are due to globalization and exclusivity practices rather

than varying product or market segments. Despite their shared industry and product lines, the companies employ distinct approaches to globalization and exclusivity, making their analysis and comparison compelling. The selection did not focus for example on the four largest companies in the industry, as the aim was to choose brands that are similar in some ways – such as their luxury positioning and product offerings – but differ in their globalization and exclusivity approaches, providing a broad spectrum and comprehensive overview of the industry. Therefore, another criterion is the company’s adoption of globalization strategies. Brands are selected based on their active, but different levels of engagement with all of the identified globalization strategies (geographic expansion, digitalization, or partnerships).

Also, not only because they share similarities, but also because they originate from different company types and therefore, the way they are navigated makes them interesting to compare. Louis Vuitton is selected for this study as it serves as the flagship brand of the LVMH group. Chanel, in contrast, operates independently of a parent company and is privately owned. Burberry represents a different model, being publicly listed on the stock market. Bottega Veneta, meanwhile, is part of the Kering Group, another major player and conglomerate like LVMH. Despite the leading British company Burberry, all other brands belong to the KHOLC (Kering, Hermès, l’Oréal Luxe, LVMH, and Chanel), a “group” covering the flagships of the luxury industry. These brands have varied organizational structures and strategies, which influence their operations and decision-making.

The sample size for this study was set at four companies to ensure a focused yet comprehensive analysis. The choice strikes a balance between depth and breadth, allowing for a detailed exploration of each brand's globalization strategies while maintaining comparability across cases. This sample size aligns with the purposive sampling approach, where the emphasis is on the strategic selection of units that are most relevant to the research questions rather than on achieving statistical generalizability (Bell et al., 2022).

3.4 Data Analysis

Qualitative research generates large, complex datasets composed of unstructured information. These datasets are both rich and challenging, described by Miles (1979) as an “attractive nuisance”. While the richness of qualitative data is highly valued in this thesis, care is taken to avoid becoming too overly captivated by its complexity ensuring that the interpretation of the data’s broader significance is not lost (Bryman & Burgess, 1994; Bell et al., 2017). Given that

qualitative analysis lacks the codified rules of quantitative methods, this thesis uses broad guidelines and iterative processes to navigate the data and facilitate meaningful interpretation (Okely, 1994).

The integration of inductive and abductive logic further enriches the analysis. Inductive reasoning ensures that the analysis remains grounded in the data while engaging with existing literature (Braun & Clarke, 2006). While the literature on globalization strategies provides a starting point, the analysis remains open to emergent themes such as the role of geographic expansion, digitalization, and collaborations in shaping an exclusivity image.

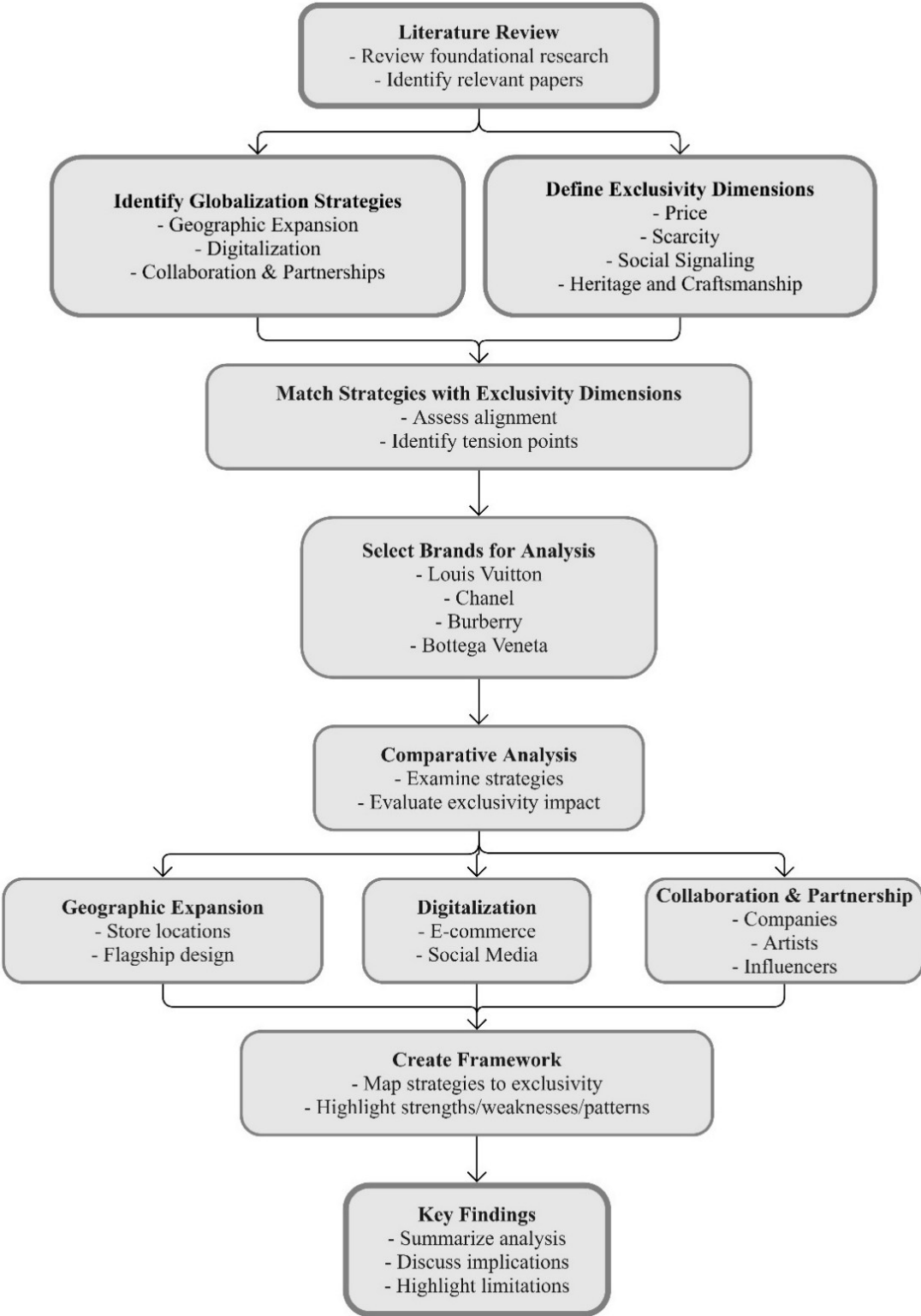
Thematic analysis provides such a flexible and versatile framework generating insights that align with the research objectives and for exploring how existing globalization strategies align with the concepts of exclusivity within the luxury fashion industry. Thematic analysis is more efficient and practical given the constraints of this master's thesis, such as limited time and word count. It facilitates timely progress by focusing on identifying patterns and developing themes that are not static but evolve through the analysis process, making it a more pragmatic choice for comparing luxury brands (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Its use of prevalence, assessed by factors like frequency, coverage, and consistency across the dataset, ensures a systematic and transparent approach. This makes thematic analysis particularly approachable for this thesis, as it provides an adaptable framework for exploring key themes while aligning with the study's focus on clarity and consistency (Ryan & Bernard, 2003).

While grounded theory is a robust approach for generating entirely new theories through iterative data collection and open coding, the focus of this study is not to develop a novel theoretical framework. Grounded theory, focuses on iterative cycles and achieving theoretical saturation, which requires extensive time and resources. Furthermore, grounded theory is based on emergent, context-specific concepts, which can limit the ability to do a focused comparative analysis (Bell et al., 2022).

The better approach for this thesis is thematic analysis because it does not use a distinctive cluster of techniques and can adapt to diverse research contexts without requiring adherence to rigid methodological frameworks (Bell et al., 2022). This type of analysis allows for the integration of existing theoretical insights from the literature with themes that emerge from the data, enabling both theoretical and practical contributions. The straightforward approach to identifying and discussing themes makes sure that the findings are easy to follow and actionable for stakeholders in the luxury fashion industry (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

After outlining the theoretical methodology, an overview of the practical approach is presented in the following figure making the process more accessible and visually comprehensible:

Table 1: Overview of Practical Methodology



4. Analyses and Results

By investigating how geographic expansion, digitalization, and partnerships influence perceptions of exclusivity, this section provides insights into the ways luxury brands strive to maintain their unique status in a globalized world. The goal is to present clear and comprehensible evidence of how each strategy shapes consumer perceptions of luxury brands' exclusivity, highlighting patterns, contradictions, and insights that emerge, thereby offering a grounded understanding of the tension between global growth and exclusivity.

The following table provides an overview of each company to offer background information for the subsequent comparison and analysis:

Table 2: Company background

	Louis Vuitton (LVMH)	Chanel	Burberry	Bottega Veneta (Kering)
Company Type	Subsidiary of LVMH	Privately owned	Public limited company	Subsidiary of Kering
Founded Place, Year, Founder	France, 1854 by Louis Vuitton	France, 1910 by Gabrielle “Coco” Chanel	England, 1856 by Thomas Burberry	Italy 1966, by Michele Taddei and Renzo Zengiaro
Revenue (2023)	N/A	USD 19.744bn	GBP 2.97bn	EUR 1,645bn
Profit Margin (2023)	N/A	24%	9%	19%
Number Stores	580	600	420	350
Regions (by Revenue)	N/A	Europe: 28% Asia Pacific: 52% Americas: 20%	EMEIA: 35% Asia Pacific: 44% Americas: 21%	N/A
Product Mix	Fashion, Bags, Fragrances & Beauty, Watches & Jewelry, Homedécor	Fashion, Bags, Fragrances & Beauty, Watches & Jewelry	Fashion, Bags, Outerwear, Fragrances & Beauty, Jewelry	Fashion, Bags, Jewelry, Homedécor
Famous Products	Tumbler lock trunk, Monogram and Danvier pattern	No°5 Perfume, Little Black Dress, Tweed Jackett, 2.55 Handbag	Gabardine Trench Coat, Check Cashmere Scarf	Intrecciato Bag

Sources: Company Websites

4.1 Geographic Expansion

4.1.1 Louis Vuitton

Louis Vuitton has mastered geographic expansion with directly owned flagship stores, boutiques, and shop-in-shops in major luxury destinations worldwide (Louis Vuitton, 2024; LV Stores, 2024; LVMH, 2024). However, this widespread presence risks normalizing luxury and diluting its unique image (Bourdieu, 1984; Mikheev et al., 2021). The more stores the brand opens, the more accessible it appears to consumers, and, consequently, it is no longer attractive for upper-scale shoppers locally and globally, causing the brand to lose its exclusive image and reputation (Mundel, 2021; Muret, 2023; Rosendo-Rios & Shukla, 2023; Roux & Floch, 1996).

With an affordable entry price for the “new rich” LV is a go-to item for the emerging middle-class seeking social identification through high-visibility luxury (Kapferer & Valette-Florence, 2021; Katyal et al, 2022; Yao, 2023). But it should be kept in mind, that price is considered a key factor in determining the exclusivity, prestige, and unique status of a brand in society (Kapferer & Valette-Florence, 2021; Rovai, 2016).

Flagships in strategic locations in upper-class districts, such as the Maison Louis Vuitton Vendôme in Paris, serve as cultural landmarks and act as a counterbalance, showcasing heritage and craftsmanship while offering exclusivity through limited-edition collections (Arrigo, 2015; Arrigo, 2018; Brenner, 2019; Dion & Arnould, 2011; Guo & Zhang, 2019; Kapferer, 2012; Kozinets et al., 2002; LV 57th Street, 2024; Rosendo-Rios & Shukla, 2023).

While LV successfully integrates localization strategies, especially in emerging markets where the rich middle class is growing, such as incorporating a “Chinese touch” into its biggest Maison “Shanghai Plaza 66”, excessive localization risks undermining its French heritage (Batat, 2023; Chernov & Gura, 2024; Debenedetti et al., 2024; Kapferer, 2012; Mundel et al., 2021; Rovai, 2016; Ryu et al., 2023; Wang, 2021; X. Wang et al., 2022; Yang, 2021).

This balance of regional adaptation and flagship-driven exclusivity positions LV strongly, though its expansive presence may alienate high-value consumers in oversaturated markets (Kapferer, 2012; Kapferer & Valette-Florence, 2021).

4.1.2 Chanel

Chanel takes a more measured approach, emphasizing physical rarity over artificial scarcity (Chanel, 2024; Rovai, 2016; Wang et al., 2024; Yang, 2021). The brand has slowed its

geographic expansion into second- and third-tier cities, focusing instead on flagship stores in prime locations like Tokyo and New York, which highlight French cultural authenticity and craftsmanship (Chanel, 2024; Chanel History, 2024; Dion & Borraz, 2015; Debenedetti et al., 2024; Guilbault, 2024; Montagné Villette, 2010; Rovai, 2016). By designing stores that look like Parisian apartments, Chanel blends heritage with storytelling, creating a consumer experience that reinforces its exclusivity (Liu et al., 2016). Lunardo & Mouangue (2019) found that there are more positive Chanel store evaluations when the luxury brand store is designed using a pop-up format as compared with a more traditional format. These stores are used to “test the water” internationally, maintaining exclusivity through emotional, multi-sensory and unique experiences (Alexander et al., 2018; de Lassus & Freire, 2013; Lu et al., 2023; Lunardo & Mouangue, 2019). However, the overuse of temporary pop-up stores to create an aura of rarity risks appearing gimmicky, potentially diminishing authenticity (Affuso, 2023; de Lassus & Freire, 2013; Kapferer, 2012; Ko et al., 2019; Rosenbaum et al., 2021).

While sizeable flagship stores showcase the brand image and reinforce heritage, especially in first-tier cities, it limits scalability, particularly in emerging markets where bandwagon effects dominate (Assomull, 2024; Chanel Flagship, 2024; Liu et al., 2016; Shukla & Rosendo-Rios, 2021). Furthermore, critics argue that Chanel’s reliance on wealth-based exclusivity and meeting social needs may clash with changing consumer values (Wang, 2022; Y. Wang et al., 2022).

4.1.3 Burberry

Burberry’s rapid expansion has exposed the brand to significant challenges in maintaining exclusivity. The brand, which operates directly managed stores globally, faces store oversaturation in key markets like China, leading to closures and a strategic overhaul to reposition itself as more upmarket (Burberry Annual Report, 2024; Kumar et al., 2020; Sharma et al., 2020; Shukla et al., 2022; Wood, 2019). The closure of stores and the focus on flagship refurbishments, such as the “Avenue Montaigne” store in Paris, unroll a new emphasis on exclusivity, British heritage and drive a consistent brand message across all touchpoints (Burberry Interim Report, 2024; Li & Shen, 2023; Dion & Borraz, 2017; Kapferer & Bastien, 2012; Septianto et al., 2020; Shoaib, 2024). However, Burberry’s outlet stores and entry-level products have democratized the brand, which erodes its distinctiveness and symbolic value, reflecting the tension between accessibility and exclusivity (Gilroy, 2023; Kapferer, 2012; Reid & Spencer, 2024; Shukla & Rosendo-Rios, 2023). Together with over-indexing modern

aesthetics at the exclusion of its heritage in brand expression, Burberry confuses long-time customers (Burberry Strategy, 2022; Faccioli et al., 2023; Shoaib, 2024).

Pop-up stores, such as the “Makers House” in London, provide a solution to balance cultural adoption and keeping its unified exclusive image while expanding its geographic footprint in a controlled manner without long-term risks.

Creating scarcity and desire, by aligning its retail mix more carefully with local market behaviors Burberry is rebuilding its exclusive image (Bian & Forsythe, 2012; de Lassus & Anido Freire, 2013; Debenedetti et al., 2024; Langer, 2024; Li & Shen, 2023; Warnaby & Shi, 2018).

4.1.4 Bottega Veneta

Bottega Veneta is dubbed “quiet luxury” with its explicit “no logo” strategy, appealing to discerning consumers who value subtlety and craftsmanship over ostentation (Fury, 2024; Han et al., 2010; Langer, 2021; Ryu, 2020; Van den Broeke, 2022). The brand is focusing on relocating and refurbishing its existing stores while pursuing its strategy of gradual and targeted openings (Bottega Veneta Stores, 2024; Cabigiosu, 2020; Kering, 2023). This is notable with the establishment of new large-scale flagships, which present heritage and luxury through refined aesthetics and VIP spaces (Chitrakorn, 2024; DeAcetis, 2020; Gorp et al., 2012; Pelegrino, 2024). This approach reinforces BV’s commitment to traditional craftsmanship and preserving heritage, as seen in initiatives like “La Scuola dei Maestri Pellettieri” where handcrafted techniques are shown publicly in its home country Italy (Carmine et al., 2024; Fury, 2024; Rovai, 2026; Rysman, 2024). BV’s preservation of its heritage reinforces its rarity and uniqueness amidst global expansion (Sharma et al., 2022; Dion & Borraz, 2017).

However, BV’s limited visibility in emerging markets like China initially posed challenges, requiring a targeted focus on Tier-1 cities and high-spending consumers (Amaral & Loken, 2016; Bonetti, 2014; Rovai, 2016). While its strategy appeals to niche consumers who orient themselves with low-profile designs, BV risks alienating younger audiences if it fails to maintain contemporary relevance alongside exclusivity (Cabigiosu, 2020; Liu et al., 2017; Rosendo-Rios & Shukla, 2023).

4.1.5 Conclusion Geographic Expansion

Patterns emerge across these brands, with flagship stores serving as the cornerstone for balancing global expansion and exclusivity. Chanel and LV excel in leveraging these stores to reinforce heritage and provide immersive experiences. In contrast, Burberry's challenges with oversaturation and outlet reliance highlight the dangers of overexpansion, while BV's quiet luxury approach demonstrates how a narrower focus on craftsmanship can preserve exclusivity but risks limiting appeal in newer markets. These findings reveal that while all brands grapple with similar tensions, their strategic execution significantly shapes consumer perceptions of luxury and exclusivity.

4.2 Digitalization

4.2.1 Louis Vuitton

As luxury shopping moves online, LV must balance exclusivity with accessibility (Achille et al., 2018; Kim & Kim, 2018; Schuiling & Van Regemorter, 2021). E-commerce expands reach even in areas without physical presence but risks diluting brand exclusivity (Cabigosou, 2023; Gutsatz, 2020; Matic & Pandza Bajcs, 2022; Romo et al., 2017; Rovai, 2016; Xiao, 2023). To address these challenges, LV implements omnichannel strategies, like in-store pickups and virtual try-ons (Choi, 2017; Lamba & Diwan, 2023; Li, 2023).

LV tailors campaigns to cultural preferences, emphasizing luxury as a status symbol in regions like China and Brazil while using regional ads to connect with localized values (Armitage & Roberts, 2016; Choi, 2017; Li & Shen, 2023; Romo et al., 2017; Tarnanidis, 2024).

Storytelling is central to its marketing, as seen in “#Series” campaigns that show the brand's history and craftsmanship, leveraging social media to highlight both heritage and innovation in areas without physical stores (Li, 2023; Romo et al., 2017; Tarnanidis, 2024).

As one of the most discussed luxury brands online, LV combats counterfeits with blockchain tools to ensure authenticity (Dou, 2024; Rovai, 2016; Ryu et al., 2023; Sanz-Lopez et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2022). To counter these and overexposure risks, LV uses invite-only campaigns and apps, VR experiences and monitors social media for reputation management (Dou, 2024; Heine & Berghaus, 2014; Holmqvist et al., 2020; Kim & Ko, 2012; Lamba & Diwan, 2023; Li, 2023; Sanz-Lopez et al., 2024).

Also, maintaining a consistent brand voice and pricing strategy across all platforms is critical for LV's exclusivity image (Xiao, 2023). At the same time, LV adapts to digital-savvy consumers matching the digital experiences with in-store standards through e-commerce, by offering personalized services like monogramming and limited-edition online collections (Armitage & Roberts, 2016; Cabigosou, 2020; Choi, 2017; Joy, 2023; Gutsatz, 2020; Kim & Kim, 2018; Li, 2023; Schuiling & Van Regemorter, 2021).

LV is undergoing a phase labelled “re-branding”, rewriting the brands’ DNA to address Millennial needs (Cabigosou, 2020). Live streaming, such as “See Now, Buy Now,” allows consumers to purchase items immediately after fashion shows, which balances the demand for novelty and instant gratification with exclusivity through limited availability and premium pricing (Cabigosou, 2020; Lamba & Diwan, 2023; Sanz-Lopez et al., 2024).

Caution is needed to avoid non-luxury approaches that undermine the luxury experience (Holmqvist et al., 2020). Highly exclusive luxury needs to remain private, with refined digital and physical interactions creating “moments of luxury” (Holmqvist et al., 2020; Thomsen et al., 2020; von Wallpach et al., 2020).

4.2.2 Chanel

Chanel balances digital innovation with exclusivity rooted in scarcity, status, and heritage (Kapferer & Bastien, 2012; Liu, 2023). Storytelling campaigns like “Inside Chanel” highlight its legacy and artistry and reinforce the uniqueness of the brand (Van Laer et al., 2019; González Romo et al., 2017; Tam & Lung, 2025). They appeal to emotions, such as pride, and can enhance exclusivity campaigns’ effectiveness (Septianto et al., 2020).

To maintain scarcity, Chanel limits online sales to eyewear, fragrances, and skincare, to ensure that the “spirit of the Maison” is experienced through boutique interactions, focusing on personalized service and ambiance (Holmqvist et al., 2020; Debenedetti et al., 2024; Wirtz et al., 2020). While this may alienate younger consumers, it aligns with Chanel’s focus on exclusivity over mass appeal (Affuso, 2023; Baker et al., 2018; Bazi et al., 2020; Kapferer & Valette-Florence, 2018; Quach & Thaichon, 2017; Sanz-Lopez et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2024).

Chanel integrates “phygital” experiences, such as virtual mirrors and augmented reality, into its boutiques to blend tradition with digital innovation (Tam & Lung, 2025; Javornik et al., 2021; Raza et al., 2024). For example, QR codes provide access to product stories, enhancing

customer engagement while preserving heritage (Hajahmadi et al., 2024; Holmqvist et al., 2020). Sharma et al. (2022) emphasize that balancing traditional luxury branding with innovative digital strategies is key to maintaining exclusivity. Chanel's approach avoids mass production and uses high price points to reinforce inaccessibility, addressing the "Internet dilemma" of balancing visibility and rarity (Baker et al., 2018; Fang & Zhang, 2020; Kapferer & Valette-Florence, 2018; Zollo et al., 2020). As Katyal et al. (2022) argue, blending exclusivity with broader accessibility can dilute prestige, but when managed carefully, it offers opportunities for market expansion.

4.2.3 Burberry

Burberry was the first luxury fashion brand to invest wholeheartedly in digitalization strategies especially social media (Kontu & Vecchi, 2014; Phan et al., 2011; Straker & Wrigley, 2016). The brand launches campaigns, blending tradition with innovation by inviting customers to share photos in Burberry coats, creating a sense of community (Burgees, 2024; Kim & Ko, 2012; Kontu & Vecchi, 2014; Phan et al., 2011).

Burberry broadcasts its fashion shows live from London, uses augmented reality try-ons and embraces experiences in the metaverse in retail (Gleim et al., 2025). This ensures global accessibility firsthand and demonstrates leadership in integrating digital tools to enhance exclusivity and prestige through innovation (B. Wang et al., 2022; Gauri, et al., 2021; Javornik et al., 2021; Pangarkar et al., 2022; Phan et al., 2011; Septianto et al., 2020; Roy et al., 2023; Wongkitrungrueng & Assarut, 2020). These applications further personalize the experience and create word of mouth, creating new forms of exclusivity tied to the brand's heritage (Song et al., 2021; Straker & Wrigley, 2016).

However, social media's immediacy can dilute exclusivity by reducing psychological distance (Creevey & Coughlan, 2021). Critics warn that overexposure may tarnish the shine that makes luxury brands special, and constant updates risk reducing the mystery and scarcity that define exclusive luxury (Helal et al., 2018; Kim & Ko, 2012; Kontu & Vecchi, 2014; Pini & Pelleschi, 2017; Wang et al., 2024).

Furthermore, the company offers new products exclusively online, to test the taste of consumers, which reinforces scarcity and engages modern consumers without compromising the luxury image (Godey et al., 2016; Macchion et al., 2017).

4.2.4 Bottega Venetta

Bottega Veneta's unique digitalization strategy highlights its commitment to exclusivity while raising questions about its adaptability in a digital-first marketplace. In 2021, the brand deleted its Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter accounts, replacing them with a magazine, with more progressive and more thoughtful content. Cabigiosu (2020) and Yotka (2021) say that the online presence is harming the exclusive image that the brand wanted to build. In a reality where most luxury brands drown in a "sea of sameness" this move is a statement that enhances the perceived exclusivity and desirability of the brand (Langer, 2021).

By shifting to user-generated content, Bottega Veneta relies on ambassadors to represent the brand. The brand leans on its fans to "speak for the brand" rather than using its voice (Cartner-Morley, 2021; Akhsan & Koronaki, 2022). Yet, researchers highlight that brands relying solely on fan-driven promotion risks losing control over brand storytelling, underlining the importance of controlled messaging (Cabigiosu, 2020; Langer, 2021; Tam and Lung, 2025).

In addition, Park et al. (2020) say that social media is designed for the masses, which goes against the definition of exclusivity. On the other hand, Holmqvist et al. (2020) note for the exclusivity of luxury products, digitalization does not pose a problem. While Bottega Veneta's strategy of absence enhances its exclusive brand image, Zollo et al. (2020) argue that a balance of emotional and rational brand experiences through digitalization is essential to maintaining loyalty and perceived quality.

Langer (2021) argues that the only way to have a future in the luxury market is to inspire customers while staying close to the core value creation model of the brand. Therefore, balancing tradition with innovation remains critical as younger, digital-native consumers demand both heritage and engagement (Akhsan & Koronaki, 2022; Langer, 2021; Meraviglia, 2018; Tam & Lung, 2025).

4.2.5 Conclusion Digitalization

The four luxury brands demonstrate different approaches to balancing digitalization strategies and exclusivity. Louis Vuitton has high use of omnichannel, personalization, and innovative tools to blend accessibility with exclusivity, but its extensive online reach can dilute the brand's exclusive image. Chanel focuses on scarcity by limiting online sales and maintaining the boutique experience, preserving its heritage but potentially pushing away digital-native consumers. Burberry pioneers digital innovation, integrating AR and metaverse experiences,

yet its heavy reliance on social media risks overexposure in the luxury industry. Bottega Veneta's radical strategy of absence from social media underscores its exclusivity, but this risks losing customer engagement and control over the brand narrative. While Louis Vuitton and Burberry excel in digital innovation, Chanel and Bottega Veneta prioritize exclusivity, revealing a trade-off between modern engagement and maintaining luxury exclusiveness. Across all brands, a focus on storytelling, personalization, and controlled scarcity are key patterns in maintaining luxury identity while leveraging digital tools to engage a global audience.

4.3 Collaboration and Partnership

4.3.1 Louis Vuitton

One of Louis Vuitton's globalization strategies is art collaborations, described as artifications, which neutralize the risks linked to the industrialization of luxury since it preserves a distance from the non-luxury world (Kapferer, 2014). Art refocuses the luxury brand on its mission, conveying exclusivity and uniqueness, thus allowing the brand to accentuate its distinguishing characteristics and affirm its timelessness (Chailan, 2018; Kapferer, 2014). Turning stores into gallery-like spaces enhances exclusivity and helps LV mitigate commodification risks during global expansion (Joy et al., 2014; Kapferer, 2014). For example, the contemporary artist Takashi Murakami's successfully reworked LV products into authentic artworks (Joy et al., 2014; Kapferer, 2014; Riot et al., 2013; Khalfe, 2024; Kim et al., 2018; Masè & Cedrola, 2017), while Jeff Koons' collection turned LV handbags into wearable art (Chailan, 2018; Khalfe, 2024). The "Artycapucines Collection" merges LV iconic handbags with the unique visions of five international artists, showing the brand's effort to unite globalization and exclusivity by appealing to diverse cultures worldwide (Artycapucines, 2023; Harper's Bazaar, 2023). However, such collaborations can risk diluting the sophisticated personality of the brand if not handled right (Joy et al., 2014; Kim et al., 2018).

LV bets heavily on a variety of cross-cultural stars ranging from actors to athletes. Celebrities can tell the brand story in advertising campaigns in a different tone than the brand alone (Harper's Bazaar, 2023; Michel & Willing, 2020; Tam & Lung, 2025; Wang, 2024). Yet, campaigns that can generate millions of likes risk overexposure, and the selected influencers, who should represent LV's values, may challenge the exclusivity central to the brand (Tam & Lung, 2025).

Cross-industry or mass-market collaborations, such as limited editions with Supreme or Nike, merge sleek design and allusions to street culture (Michel & Willing, 2020; Khalfe, 2024; Qiao, 2023; Rodrigues et al., 2024;). Other research argues that luxury companies should avoid partnering with brands with weak, or low brand equity, and only consider retailers aptly matched in terms of brand and product fit, to preserve brand exclusivity (Quamina et al., 2023; Suzuki & Kanno, 2022; Oeppen & Jamal, 2014; Rosendo-Rios & Shukla, 2023).

4.3.2 Chanel

The luxury sector has thrived on ideological storytelling based on craftsmanship, rarity, uniqueness, feelings of privilege, and boutiques, with the artisan as the central figure in this storytelling (Kapferer, 2014). Retailers need to choose cobranding partners carefully to achieve the best cobrand image (Mitchell & Balabanis, 2021). The partnership between LVMH and Chanel shows that these days exclusivity includes shared innovation for setting new standards, as even two titans can collaborate to lead the industry (Cernansky, 2024). At the same time, masstige collaborations of Chanel and Nike exemplify a strategy to engage mass markets while maintaining exclusivity (Roggeveen et al., 2021; Suzuki & Kanno; 2022).

Chanel also encourages medium and long-term collaboration with influencers who represent its values and portray aspirational lifestyles, such as Pharrell Williams, who integrated streetwear into Chanel's heritage (Cardini, 2024; Madsen, 2022; Tam & Lung, 2025; The Button, 2024; Vogue Germany, 2019; Zamudio, 2016). While influencer marketing is more effective than traditional marketing when promoting new products (Wue et al., 2021), it also brings inherent risks to brand partnerships (Wilson et al., 2024). By leveraging the power of communities, retailers can better highlight their retail identity and increase the connection that individuals feel to that identity (Roggeveen et al., 2021).

Artistic collaborations also reinforce Chanel's image as a cultural icon, with exhibitions like "N°5 Culture Chanel" held at different museums worldwide, the founder's story is shown to fuel Chanel's content strategy and its heritage (Choi, 2016; Chanel Culture Fund, 2024; Inside Chanel, 2024; Kapferer, 2014; Tam & Lung, 2025). While collaborations enhance Chanel's image, risks such as overexposure or dilution of exclusivity remain. On top, the internet's democratization of luxury has heightened counterfeiting risks. These are addressed through partnerships emphasizing traceability and sustainability, aligning with the court of public opinion and ensuring longevity (Baumgarten, 2021).

4.3.3 Burberry

Burberry has a rich partnership history, creating trenches for the First World War, supplying the British royal family and being worn by a range of celebrities (Burberry Collaborations, 2024; Straker & Wrigley, 2016). Campaigns about its founder like “The Tale of Thomas Burberry”, directed by Asif Kapadia, use cinematic storytelling to highlight Burberry’s heritage, blending aspirational narratives with exclusivity (Rees-Roberts, 2020).

Furthermore, multiple artistic collaborations, reinforce its exclusivity through cultural innovation and heritage (Burberry Collaborations, 2024; Burberry Art Space, 2024). As artists have emerged as brands themselves, they enhance the personalities of the fashion brands they work with (Kim et al., 2018).

Burberry invites university students to design the “Burberry Trench of the Future” (Burberry University, 2019), and has a long-term partnership with the Royal College of Art (Royal College of Art, 2012). Such initiatives build emotional value for connoisseurs (Koronaki et al., 2018; Pedro et al., 2024), though with such collaborations the retailer may be afraid that its core users won’t get an artistic endeavor or that the work might be controversial (Kim et al, 2018). Clear communication of brand direction or distancing techniques can minimize the dilution of exclusivity (Ohkita, 2017).

The partnership with British shoemaker Tricker’s includes numerous parallels with Burberry, with both having a history of outfitting pioneering (Burberry x Trickers, 2023). On the other hand, aiming for a broader, streetwear audience its collaboration with the high-end sports clothes brand Supreme and licensing with electronic manufacturer Sanyo weakened global brand exclusivity by introducing affordable products (Benissan, 2022; Burberry x Supreme, 2024; Gupta et al., 2023).

4.3.4 Bottega Veneta

Bottega Veneta is committed to working with strategic partners who share the same values, namely high quality and craftsmanship (Cabigosou, 2020). The collaborations with the Italian furnish designer “Cassina” and the architectural foundation “Le Corbusier” highlight the brand’s commitment to heritage and craftsmanship, including limited-edition pieces that merge expertise from top-tier companies in their industries. (Bottega Veneta x Cassina, 2024). However, misaligned partnerships can harm a luxury brand’s exclusivity, as negative perceptions of one brand transfer to the other brand, especially in high-end products (Völckner

& Sattler, 2006). Zhang et al. (2022) emphasize that in co-branding, brands must consider the risk attitudes of the two collaborating brands to avoid pitfalls. Chailan (2018) notes that luxury no longer resides simply in having and owning, but rather in the ability of brands to reinvent the luxury paradigm. Partnerships with the “Aspen Art Museum” and the art project “Save Venice” enhance exclusivity by associating the brand with cultural sophistication and rarity (Berlinger, 2023; Save Venice, 2024). Capsules themed around art further suggest rarity, with their unique theme offering an unrepeatable experience (Cabigosou, 2020).

BV avoids gifting products, relying on organic celebrity endorsements, meaning that celebrities wearing BV items, because they adore them and paid for them themselves, reflect stealth wealth (Akhsan & Koronaki, 2022; Spedding, 2023). This approach strengthens exclusivity by creating genuine connections, though it risks brand equity if narratives become fragmented (Ho et al., 2023; Langer, 2021; Mrad et al., 2019).

4.3.5 Conclusion Collaboration and Partnership

Brands are increasingly transforming into collaborative ecosystems, where different stakeholders interact to create brand value jointly (Riedmeier & Kreuzer, 2022). According to the luxury professionals verbatim, traditional luxury becomes a collaborative ecosystem. However, the selection should be careful of who takes part to maintain exclusivity (Park et al., 2020). All the brands use collaborations to enhance cultural relevance, reinforce craftsmanship, and align with exclusivity by selecting partners that reflect their brand values. They strategically leverage art, design, and influencer relationships. Louis Vuitton leans on artistic collaborations and high-profile partnerships, Chanel focuses on heritage-driven storytelling, Burberry combines tradition with modernity, and Bottega Veneta prioritizes understated exclusivity. Each strategy has inherent strengths and weaknesses, with risks of overexposure, misalignment, or brand dilution requiring careful oversight.

5. Conclusion

5.1 General Discussion

This thesis uncovers the complex and often paradoxical interplay between globalization strategies and the preservation of exclusivity within the luxury fashion industry. The findings reveal that exclusivity is not a static concept but a fragile equilibrium, constantly recalibrated as brands seek to expand their global reach (Kapferer & Bastien, 2012). Achieving this balance requires a highly intentional and context-sensitive approach, as missteps can erode the perception of rarity and uniqueness that defines luxury (Dion & Arnould, 2011).

Empirically, the study shows how globalization strategies – geographic expansion, digitalization, and collaborations – each impact the dimensions of exclusivity differently. Geographic expansion often risks overexposure, particularly when new stores or regions are added indiscriminately (Rovai, 2016). While flagship stores in iconic locations can reinforce heritage and prestige, an excessive number of locations or forays into entry-level products dilute exclusivity and signal mass accessibility (Dion & Borraz, 2017; Kapferer, 2012). The balanced execution of localization strategies while deepening relevance in cultural contexts, excessive localization risks compromising the authenticity of a brand's origins (Batat, 2023; X. Wang et al., 2022).

Digitalization emerges as both a disruptor and a savior for exclusivity. The convenience of e-commerce and the expansive reach of digital platforms make luxury products more accessible than ever, creating tension with their exclusiveness (Cabigiosou, 2020). Digital overreach, such as social media campaigns, can inadvertently dilute the mystique that drives demand (Heine & Berghaus, 2014). The challenge lies in creating digital ecosystems that evoke scarcity and rarity, which is no small feat in an environment defined by immediacy and ubiquity (Bao et al., 2024; Gutsatz & Heine, 2018).

Collaborations and partnerships, when executed thoughtfully, provide a pathway to innovation without undermining exclusivity (Diaz Ruiz & Cruz, 2023). However, partnerships with mainstream or streetwear brands – while effective in capturing younger audiences – risk alienating traditional luxury consumers and diluting the brand's prestige. Balancing these collaborations requires a strategic fit that ensures the brand's core identity remains intact while appealing to new and diverse consumer segments (Masè et al., 2020; Koronaki et al., 2018).

The following highlights each company's strengths and weaknesses to provide a deeper understanding of its approaches and strategies:

Table 3: Framework of the companies' globalization strategies

	Geographic Expansion	Digitalization	Collaboration & Partnership
Louis Vuitton (LVMH)	+ Expanding stores in tier 2 & 3 cities, and emerging markets. - High global accessibility risks exclusivity.	+ High availability through digital and social platforms. - Overuse of digitalization strategies risks exclusivity dilution.	+ High leverage on art cultural collaborations to reach global and local audiences. - Overuse and wrong partner selection risks dilution of brand image.
Chanel	+ Focused flagship store expansion and global price hikes reinforce exclusivity. - High global accessibility risks exclusivity	+ Limited e-commerce, and strong social media campaigns maintain exclusivity. - Digital reach can be seen as less innovative, risking loss of tech-savvy audiences.	+ High leverage on iconic collaborations to reinforce luxury status and heritage. - Overuse and wrong partner selection risks dilution of brand image.
Burberry	+ Strong geographic expansion with a balance of flagship and regional stores. - Oversaturation in mature markets and outlet stores risks exclusivity and heritage dilution.	+ Leading digital transformation through early adaption and innovation - Overuse of digitalization strategies risks exclusivity	+ Use of cultural collaborations aligns with brand identity. - Wrong partner selection risks dilution of exclusive brand image and its heritage.
Bottega Veneta	+ Selective store openings focusing on key luxury markets and discrete branding ensure exclusivity. - Limited geographic reach reduces global visibility.	+ Minimal use of digitalization preserves scarcity. - Low digital presence risks reduced engagement with digital-native consumers.	+ Collaborations are based on creating an elite community. - Limited collaborations may reduce global visibility and reach.

5.2 Theoretical Implications

This research contributes to the existing body of knowledge by highlighting the dynamic tension between globalization strategies and exclusivity, expanding on established theories of

luxury brand identity and strategic positioning. While previous studies often treat exclusivity as a static characteristic (Kapferer & Bastien, 2012; Dion & Arnould, 2011), this thesis contributes to brand identity theory, underscoring its fluidity, influenced by geographic expansion, digitalization, and collaborations.

It advances the understanding that exclusivity is not merely a function of rarity or price but a nuanced equilibrium shaped by cultural, technological, and market-specific factors (Rosendo-Rios & Shukla, 2023). Other research often focuses on isolated strategies, single-brand case studies, or testing existing theories, limiting their applicability to broader industry contexts (Debenedetti et al., 2024; Rovai, 2016). This thesis is unique in its comparative approach, analyzing how different luxury brands navigate globalization strategies while maintaining their exclusivity, offering a more comprehensive and interconnected perspective.

The study refines the concept of the “luxury paradox,” particularly in the context of globalization. While scholars such as Kapferer (2012) discuss the tension between visibility and scarcity, this research provides a comparative perspective on how specific strategies either mitigate or exacerbate this paradox.

5.3 Practical Implications

The findings have actionable insights for C-level executives and managers tasked with the tension between growth and exclusivity in the luxury industry.

Managers must avoid overextension in markets, as indiscriminate store openings can dilute brand prestige. Instead, focusing on flagship stores in iconic locations ensures exclusivity while reinforcing heritage. Localization strategies should be applied cautiously. Adapting to cultural contexts is critical but must not compromise the brand’s core identity (Batat, 2023; Wang et al., 2022).

Executives should view digitalization as an opportunity to enhance exclusivity, not just expand reach. Strategies such as limited-edition online drops, blockchain-based authentication, and exclusive virtual experiences can preserve scarcity while engaging tech-savvy consumers (Cabigiosou, 2020; Gutsatz & Heine, 2018). Overly accessible social media campaigns or excessive e-commerce visibility, however, risk eroding the brand’s mystique (Holmqvist et al., 2020).

Strategic collaborations must align with the brand's core identity. Partnerships with artists and high-end designers can enhance cultural relevance and preserve prestige. Conversely, collaborations with mainstream brands, while effective for targeting younger audiences, should be pursued cautiously to avoid alienating traditional consumers (Murtas et al., 2022; Masè et al., 2020).

Managers must prioritize storytelling that emphasizes craftsmanship, history, and cultural roots. Flagship stores, digital content, and immersive experiences should all reinforce the brand's narrative, ensuring that growth aligns with the perception of exclusivity (Dion & Borraz, 2017).

The growth potential in emerging markets such as China and India requires nuanced strategies. Brands must carefully segment their offerings, ensuring entry-level products do not overshadow their high-end lines. Exclusivity must remain central to all market adaptations (Chernov & Gura, 2024; Rovai, 2016).

In an era where luxury faces increasing democratization, managers must adopt a proactive, data-driven approach to monitor consumer perceptions and competitor strategies. These insights underscore the importance of deliberate, context-sensitive decision-making to sustain luxury's most prized asset: exclusivity.

5.4 Limitations

While this thesis provides valuable insights into the tension between globalization strategies and exclusivity in the luxury fashion industry, certain limitations must be acknowledged.

First off, the research adopts a broad perspective, which, while useful for comparative analysis, limits the depth of exploration into each strategy. By focusing on geographic expansion, digitalization, and collaborations, other relevant strategies, such as sustainability initiatives, were left unexplored. Additionally, the study is restricted to four companies: While these brands represent significant players, they cannot capture the full spectrum of strategies and challenges faced by the diverse luxury industry (Debenedetti et al., 2024).

Another limitation stems from the reliance on secondary data. Without direct interviews or firsthand insights from top management, the research lacks the nuanced understanding that could be gained from internal decision-making processes (Bell et al., 2022).

Finally, the analysis is constrained by the luxury fashion context. While the findings are significant, they cannot be fully generalized to other sectors within the luxury industry, which may have different dynamics and strategic priorities (Chernov & Gura, 2024).

5.5 Future Research

Future studies could extend the analysis to other luxury sectors, such as automotive or tourism. For example, the luxury automotive industry is undergoing transformative change due to electrification, sustainability, and technological advancements. Investigating how brands like Rolls-Royce or Tesla maintain exclusivity while adapting to innovation would enrich the discussion on globalization and exclusivity.

Delving into specific companies not included in this study, such as Hermès or Gucci, could provide a deeper understanding of alternative approaches to globalization. Also, case studies focusing on a single company's globalization strategies would allow for a more granular exploration of success factors and challenges.

Future research could investigate the role of globalization strategies in emerging markets like India or Southeast Asia, where luxury consumption patterns differ significantly from established markets like Europe and the U.S. This could provide more context-specific recommendations for global luxury brands.

Expanding the analysis to include other strategies, such as sustainability or digital-first innovations (e.g., NFTs or metaverse activations), could yield valuable insights. These areas are becoming increasingly central to luxury brand positioning and deserve closer attention.

Future research could also examine how globalization strategies impact luxury brands' financial performance, focusing on metrics like profitability and ROI, to reveal the cost-benefit balance of scaling while maintaining exclusivity.

While this research represents an important step in understanding the intersection of globalization and exclusivity, the limitations outlined here underscore the importance of further, more detailed investigations. The evolving nature of the luxury industry ensures that future studies will have ample opportunities to contribute to this dynamic field.

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