



Green Glamour: The Influence of Environmental Concerns on Second-Hand Luxury Consumption

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Buy less, choose well, make it last. – **Vivienne Westwood**

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Abstract

In the recent years, two parallel trends have been emerging: the purchase of second-hand luxury items and an increase in consumers' environmental awareness. This dissertation aims to bridge them by studying the influence of environmental concerns on consumers' preferences for luxury products, with a focus on second-hand items.

Through quantitative research, the research examines the impact of consumers' environmental awareness on purchase intention, perceived quality value, perceived social value, perceived sustainable value, perceived ethical value, and guilt associated with first and second-hand luxury items. It emerged that vintage luxury items are perceived as more sustainable and ethical than the new collection by those consumers who possess high levels of environmental concerns. Similarly, it was discovered that there is a consistent tendency to associate less guilt with second-hand luxury products and that perceptions of sustainability and ethicality further decrease this feeling of guilt. Finally, luxury items were perceived as more socially valuable by those consumers who are less environmentally concerned, going against previous research.

Overall, the current paper contributes to the literature on luxury consumption and sustainability by providing insights into the relationship between environmental concerns and second-hand luxury products. The study also identifies limitations and proposes avenues for future research to enhance understanding in this field and providing marketers and managers with insightful observations in this domain.

Keywords: Luxury, Luxury Consumption, First-hand, Second-hand, Priming, Environmental Awareness, Sustainability, Ethics, Guilt.

Título: Green Glamour: A influência das preocupações ambientais no consumo de luxo em segunda mão

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Resumo

Nos últimos anos, duas tendências paralelas vêm surgindo: a compra de itens de luxo em segunda mão e o aumento da consciência ambiental dos consumidores. Esta dissertação pretende colmatá-los através do estudo da influência das preocupações ambientais nas preferências dos consumidores por produtos de luxo, com foco em itens de segunda mão.

Por meio de pesquisa quantitativa, a pesquisa examina o impacto da consciência ambiental dos consumidores sobre a intenção de compra, o valor de qualidade percebido, o valor social percebido, o valor sustentável percebido, o valor ético percebido e a culpa associada ao primeiro e ao segundo itens de luxo de mão. Emergiu que os itens de luxo vintage são percebidos como mais sustentáveis e éticos do que a nova coleção por aqueles consumidores que possuem altos níveis de preocupações ambientais. Da mesma forma, descobriu-se que há uma tendência consistente de associar menos culpa com produtos de luxo em segunda mão e que as percepções de sustentabilidade e ética diminuem ainda mais esse sentimento de culpa. Por fim, os itens de luxo foram percebidos como mais valiosos socialmente pelos consumidores menos preocupados com o meio ambiente, contrariando pesquisas anteriores.

No geral, o artigo atual contribui para a literatura sobre consumo de luxo e sustentabilidade, fornecendo insights sobre a relação entre preocupações ambientais e produtos de luxo em segunda mão. O estudo também identifica limitações e propõe caminhos para futuras pesquisas que possibilitem o entendimento nesse campo e proporcionem aos marketeers e gestores observações perspicazes nesse domínio.

Palavras-Chave: Luxo, Consumo de Luxo, Primeira Mão, Segunda Mão, Priming, Consciência Ambiental, Sustentabilidade, Ética, Culpa.

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1. Introduction

In 2023, the fashion industry accounted for 10% of the annual carbon footprint, ranking 3rd among the most polluting industries (ClimateTrade, 2023). Specifically, the global luxury fashion market size was \$123.05 billion the previous year (Straits Research, 2023). These figures show the importance of the luxury fashion industry both economically and in terms of sustainability, or better its lack of.

In this scenario, a trend started emerging in the past years: the purchase of second-hand luxury products. The market for these items is growing fast, rising to €45 billion in 2023 (Bain & Company, 2024). This phenomenon was also boosted by an increasing number of available sales channels: from brick-and-mortar stores to global and local online channels and platforms, making second-hand luxury goods widely available (Turunen & Pöyry, 2019). In particular, online platforms are now facilitating both business-to-consumer and even consumer-to-consumer transactions involving vintage luxury items, a few examples are Vestiaire Collective for B2C and Vinted for C2C (Lou, Chi, Janke, & Desch, 2022).

Luxury brands are now facing scrutiny and criticisms coming from the younger consumers who are especially concerned about the industry's environmental impact (Kapferer & Michaut-Denizeau, 2014). In this regard, the industry is considered to be moving slower than others when it comes to sustainability commitments (Cervellon & Shammass, 2013). The younger generations are the largest participants in the second-hand market, with 54% of Gen Z and 48% of Millennial luxury customers purchasing vintage items, reflecting a shift in preferences and behaviors within the luxury retail landscape (Ducasse, Finet, Gardet, Gasc, & Salaire, 2019). They are less interested in permanent ownership and would rather find one-of-a-kind luxury items from aspirational brands whose products are perceived to be unique (Guzzetti, Crespi, & Belvedere, 2021). Such changes in consumer behavior show that consumer perceptions of luxury items are evolving leading to the growth of the second-hand luxury market.

Moreover, we have been witnessing a phenomenon of increasing environmental awareness which has been leading to greener consumption choices. Environmental concern has become a pivotal societal trend as scientific research and media have been shedding a light on how unethical manufacturing practices are damaging the environment (Lou, Chi, Janke, & Desch, 2022). As luxury products are considered to have a timeless nature and superior quality, they are most likely to have a longer life cycle and not being affected at large by fashion trends, therefore they represent the most suitable items for resale markets, presenting opportunities to

foster a more sustainable way of looking at the fashion industry (Lou, Chi, Janke, & Desch, 2022).

Academic research used to be mainly focused on studying first-hand luxury products, but recently the motivations behind second-hand or vintage luxury purchases have becoming increasingly central. Because of the industry's global significance, it is worth studying the impact of purchasing vintage items not only as a way of defining the consumers' personality, but also as a possible first approach to sustainability. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to study how environmental concerns affect consumers' preferences for luxury products, especially in the case of second-hand ones.

The remainder of this dissertation is organized as follows: the subsequent section is dedicated to the theoretical framework and literature review, as well as the proposed hypotheses. Next, the research methodology is outlined, with specific information about research procedures. In the successive section, the data analysis and results are presented and discussed. The research concludes with the main findings and their implications, as well as the limitations of the study.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Definition of Luxury

For the purpose of this study and to better understand the relevant concepts, it is important to start with some definitions. First of all, what is luxury? The word luxury comes from the Latin term "luxus" which, according to the Oxford Latin Dictionary, refers to "soft or extravagant living, (over-) indulgence" and "sumptuousness, luxuriousness, opulence" (Dubois, Czellar, & Laurent, 2005). According to Kapferer (1998), the shared concept of luxury refers to "rare, hedonic, very high-quality objects and services, sold at a price far beyond what their functional value would command, source for self reward and of image lift vis-à-vis some relevant others". From this definition, it is evident that the monetary value is only one of the many factors characterizing luxury and not the defining one. Consumers actually seem to be placing more importance on the perceived quality, uniqueness and social value associated with these items (Bilge, 2015). It is also worth noting that consumers purchase luxury goods to fulfill their feelings of pleasure and satisfaction, making it the perfect example of hedonic consumption (Yeoman, 2011).

2.2 Definition of Vintage

After having defined the concept of luxury, it is now important to state what vintage and second-hand luxury items are. The terms vintage and second-hand are frequently used interchangeably even though they hold two different meanings. More specifically, a vintage fashion item is defined as a “rare and authentic piece that represents the style of a particular era” (Gerval, 2008), the era being between the 1920s and the 1980s (Cervellon, Carey, & Harms, 2012). Moreover, the term refers to items that have been previously owned but not necessarily used (Sihvonen & Turunen, 2016) and which are valued for their past history (Turunen & Leipämaa-Leskinen, 2015). Conversely, second-hand goods are conceptualized as any items that have been previously both owned and used, without any particular restrictions to when they were produced (Cervellon, Carey, & Harms, 2012) (Turunen & Leipämaa-Leskinen, 2015). For the purpose of this study, the aforementioned distinction between vintage and second-hand luxury items is not relevant as the main focus is on previously owned goods, not considering whether they have been used or not. Therefore, the terms “vintage” and “second-hand” will be used implying the same meaning for what follows.

2.3 The Allure of “Pre-Loved” Luxury Items

One concern that might emerge is whether luxury items lose their allure as they move from owner to owner becoming classified as “second-hand”.

A study run by Turunen and Leipämaa-Leskinen (2015) focused on identifying the meanings attributed to second-hand luxury possessions. Through qualitative interviews with 10 Finnish women who owned both new and second-hand luxury accessories, the authors were able to uncover the five meanings associated with these second-hand possessions: “Sustainable Choice” reflecting ecological motivations, “Real Deal” highlighting financial and quality-related considerations, “Pre-Loved Treasure” indicating strong emotional commitments, “Risk Investment” meaning the fear of buying counterfeit goods, and “Unique Find” accentuating individuality. Moreover, this study’s findings show how second-hand luxury items can evoke powerful meanings and emotional connections, sometimes even deeper than those associated with brand new possessions. These “pre-loved” items convey the stories behind them and represent a piece of fashion history, which may favorite the development of closer relationships with them (Turunen & Leipämaa-Leskinen, 2015).

These second-hand items also signal values and authenticity which are crucial for the luxury world. By conducting both qualitative and quantitative analyses Kessousa and Valette-Florence (2019) aimed at determining the relationship that consumers establish with luxury possessions, comparing first-hand and second-hand items. These authors demonstrated the enduring allure of second-hand luxury items and their associated luxury status, despite subtle differences in consumer motivations and consumer-brand relationships between first and second-hand luxury products. While, brand new luxury possessions are motivated by power, social ranking and quality considerations, the purchase of vintage products is driven by social considerations, sustainability concerns and self-affirmation (Kessousa & Valette-Florence, 2019).

Furthermore, in the context of luxury goods, second-hand is perceived as synonymous of quality as the items stood the test of time and what usually happens is that the most iconic ones gain more value overtime instead of being considered outdated as for fast-fashion items (Turunen & Pöyry, 2019). Specifically, the purpose of this 2019 study conducted by Turunen and Pöyry (Shopping with the resale value in mind: A study on secondhand) was to understand how consumers approach the purchase of vintage luxury items and what decision-making style they put in place. Through 22 qualitative semi-structured interviews with women who already had purchased both first and second-hand luxury items, the authors uncovered that second-hand luxury products retain their prestige and appeal and further attract those customers who value quality (“high quality consciousness”), social recognition (“brand consciousness”) and investment future potential (“resale value consciousness”). While it is true that for other categorizations of fashion used products can mean lower quality, vintage luxury products avoid this mental association thanks to their superior quality, durability and timelessness. All the symbolic meanings associated with luxury products are therefore passed on to second-hand items.

In the context of second-hand luxury, the main perceived risk is not related to the item’s allure, but instead to its authenticity (Turunen & Leipämaa-Leskinen, 2015). As the market for vintage products is expanding, so is the one for counterfeit goods. This phenomenon represents a problem especially in the C2C resale market and for online luxury resale platforms (Lou, Chi, Janke, & Desch, 2022). To act on it, authentication procedures and quality checks have been implemented by such platforms and many are also collaborating with the luxury brands themselves. In this way additional unique value is added to the vintage items and the reputation of the second-hand luxury market is further positively influenced.

2.4 Luxury Items and Sustainability

Recently, some luxury brands have started to include more sustainable practices in their production process as a way of improving their image in terms of sustainable impact on the environment. As it is possible to see with the example of the Italian brand Armani, often these eco-friendly product lines are considered and marketed as secondary lines (Athwal, Wells, & Carrigan, 2019). This could be due to the fact that consumers still tend to view products labelled as “sustainable” as not luxurious, they associate them with shapeless recycled clothing and thus appear less desirable (Henninger, Alevizou, & Oates, 2016). In addition, it has been studied that including recycled elements in luxury fashion items negatively affects consumer preferences towards them as they perceive them to be of less quality (Achabou & Dekhili, 2013). For these reasons, this study does not take sustainable luxury fashion items into account. A possible way to start educating luxury consumers towards a sustainable consumption behavior could be the introduction of second-hand items as an alternative to brand-new products, in this way the experience of luxury wouldn't be negatively impacted as previously shown (Athwal, Wells, & Carrigan, 2019).

Before discussing whether consumers consider luxury items to be sustainable or not, it is important to define the concept of sustainability. The United Nations (1987) define sustainability as “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. This concept is closely linked to the behavior of sustainable and ethical consumption put in place by those consumers who think of themselves as eco-conscious and act accordingly (Brandão & Cupertino de Miranda, 2022).

Academic research regarding consumers' perception of luxury products hasn't reached a consensus in terms of sustainability. According to some studies, luxury fashion products are already perceived as more sustainable than other categories like fast fashion, while, on the contrary, some authors suggest that luxury items are not associated with the idea of sustainability. Following is a brief summary of both opinions.

By definition the principles of luxury of craftsmanship, tradition, extremely high quality and rarity are in line with the concept of sustainability (Kapferer J. N., 2010). Because of their high quality, luxury products are associated with longevity and can be perceived as more sustainable given their longer product life. To ensure rarity and to maintain high prices, luxury items are produced in restricted quantities: this can be seen as sustainable because it replaces quantity with quality (Roper, Caruana, Medway, & Murphy, 2013). Luxury is perceived as cleaner than

other categories of fashion (Kapferer & Michaut-Denizeau, 2014) and its consumers are more sensible to the topic as they better understand the impact of their consumption choices on society and the environment (Carrigan, Moraes, & McEachern, 2013).

On the contrary, the same very definition of luxury could be in contrast with the concept of sustainability and this conflict is especially perceived by consumers. The narrative associated with luxury has always been linked to hedonism, rarity, wealth as well as personal pleasure which is completely in contrast with the values of altruism, moderation and ethics associated to sustainability (Naderi & Strutton, 2013) (Carrier & Luetchford, 2012). By promoting the purchase of unnecessary, superfluous goods, the luxury industry fosters the phenomenon of overconsumption which is in direct contrast with sustainability practices (Carrington, Zwick, & Neville, 2016). Moreover, consumers are more prone to associate luxury with a lack of sustainability as they are sceptic about the sustainability claims made by the brands (Kapferer & Michaut-Denizeau, 2014), this is further amplified by the risk of “green-washing” which increases their cynicism and mistrust (Jahdi & Acikdilli, 2009). Many luxury brands have actually moved their operations to low-cost factories in order to sell at higher margins, going against the tradition of craftsmanship and artisanal production. A renowned example is Prada which moved part of its production from Italy to China in 2010.

Having considered the arguments of both sides, it is possible to state that, when purchasing luxury items, consumers give much less importance to sustainability as they are mainly driven by pleasure and social status (Athwal, Wells, & Carrigan, 2019). In addition, a study conducted by Kapferer and Michaut-Denizeau (2014) proved that, for the majority of consumers, sustainability is not included in their decision-making process as only one third of the respondents showed to be taking it into account when it comes to luxury consumption. Even those consumers who think of themselves as ethical, and therefore sustainable, tend not to include the criterion of sustainability when purchasing luxury items (Moraes, Carrigan, Bosangit, Ferreira, & Mc-Grath, 2017).

2.5 Ethical Consumption

Closely linked to the topic of research is the concept of ethical consumption which can be defined as being guided by personal moral values and beliefs when making consumption choices (Crane, Matten, Glozer, & Spence, 2004). This of course reflects an individual’s sense of morality and what they consider to be the “right” or “wrong” way of behaving (Kesebir & Haidt, 2010), thus influencing how individuals act, especially in a group context. It goes without

saying that sustainability practices are considered to be moral since they are aimed at behaving in a way that is “right” for the current and future generations. The same applies for ethical consumers who favor those products and services whose consumption is not harmful to the environment, workers and animals (Huh, 2011). Conversely, as previously stated, luxury consumption typically goes against morality and ethical considerations. Therefore, academic research studied consumers’ perceptions in terms of sustainability when it comes to second-hand or vintage purchases.

According to Guiot and Roux (2010) environmentally conscious consumer behaviors include the purchase of second-hand items as a way of recycling and extending the products’ lifecycles, slowing down the resource waste rate. Second-hand fashion consumption represents a way to be more sustainable and is closely related to the consumers’ choice of pursuing a sustainable lifestyle (Cervellon, Carey, & Harms, 2012). Through second-hand consumption consumers exhibit social consciousness and fulfill a sense of ethical responsibility (Cervellon, Carey, & Harms, 2012). Besides that, the other motivations behind the purchase of vintage items are a criticism towards materialism and consumerism in general (Joung & Park-Poaps, 2013). Consumers’ attitudes towards second-hand consumption vary according to their level of concern for the environment, their prior association with sustainable practices as well as their perception of sustainable fashion (Mandaric, Hunjet, & Kozina, 2021). Consumers with a higher level of awareness in terms of sustainability are more likely to choose green products when making a purchase (Tu, Hsu, & Creativani, 2022). Therefore, it is possible to conclude that consumers perceive second-hand consumption as sustainable and as a way of enacting ethical consumption.

In the context of luxury consumption, even though vintage products are bought mainly to improve consumers’ self-image and achieve a sense of fulfillment (Amatulli, Pino, De Angelis, & Cascio, 2018), environmental sustainability could allow consumers to accomplish those personal goals while also being ethical (Gershoff & Frels, 2015). Second-hand purchases of luxury goods are indeed driven by ethical and ecological concerns, among other factors, (Kessousa & Valette-Florence, 2019) because, by purchasing such products, consumers are helping reducing waste and avoiding the consumption of the materials and natural resources needed to make new items (Amatulli, Pino, De Angelis, & Cascio, 2018). The aforementioned study conducted by Kessousa and Valette-Florence reached this conclusion after having run a qualitative analysis on a sample of 32 luxury customers, it also highlighted how brand heritage

and social climbing have an important role in the decision-making process along with ethical motivations.

To continue, acquiring vintage items extends their longevity promoting a circular economy and thus reducing consumption (Carrigan, Moraes, & McEachern, 2013). Considering the raising interest towards the topic of sustainability, the purchase of vintage items could be a way of reducing the sense of conflict generated by wanting to acquire a luxury product because of its status and the associated social and sustainability concerns. As research suggests, reminders of environmental values or concerns can significantly influence consumer behavior. A study conducted by Loebnitz and Aschemann-Witzel (2016) explored the impact of priming environmental values on product expectations towards organic food among Chinese consumers. After running a 2 (organic label: present, absent) x 2 (priming of environmental values: present, absent) x 2 (value centrality: weak, strong) between-subjects design, the authors found that, when consumers with strong environmental values were primed with environmental cues, they exhibited higher quality expectations in relation to organic-labeled food products. This study highlights how these reminders can influence consumer choices when targeting those with a strong sense of commitment towards ethical consumption. Drawing parallels, consumers' perceived value of vintage luxury items may similarly benefit from such priming by appealing to their moral compass, which is driven by eco-conscious and ethical considerations.

As discussed, consumers' perceptions of these luxury items are not only based on their aesthetic and status appeal, but also on their ethical and environmental attributes. Therefore, activating environmental concerns should accentuate consumers' perceived value of second-hand luxury items, particularly in the case of those already environmentally concerned.

2.6 Social Identity

According to the social identity theory (Ashforth & Mael, 1989), people define themselves based on the groups to which they belong in the society. More specifically, they tend to separate and make a distinction between the group to which they belong, made of people who share similar characteristics, and all the other groups which are different and distant (Stets & Burke, 2000). This social identification stems from the perceived prestige of the group to which one belongs. Generally speaking, consumers are attracted by those products that are used by in-groups and avoid the ones used by out-groups (Stephens, Markus, & Townsend, 2007). This is done to differentiate themselves and to signal their social roles and identities (Berger & Heath, 2008).

In addition, consumers use the symbolic meanings of products (e.g., the brand's logo, specific patterns or any visible feature) to communicate their social identity and to show they belong to a specific group (Berger & Heath, 2007). It has indeed been shown that an individual using products which are associated with a specific social category is more likely to be viewed as belonging to such a group (Berger & Heath, 2008). Therefore, consumers use their purchases as a way to define themselves, especially in the context of luxury where luxury brands convey social class status and serve as symbols of an aspirational lifestyle (Englis & Solomon, 1995).

Luxury goods are more appealing than non-luxury items because of the beneficial values consumers gain by owning and using them (Kauppinen-Räsänen, Koskull, Gummerus, & Cristini, 2019). As previously explained, luxury products are characterized by a series of features which make them exclusive, rare and unique: they are inaccessible to most and, therefore, reflect the status of their owners as only a privileged few can acquire them (Roper, Caruana, Medway, & Murphy, 2013). Another feature which connotes status is price: luxury products are sold at a premium price and consumers are willing to pay it because they believe they will obtain status by displaying their wealth (Kapferer & Laurent, 2016).

Historically luxury brands have developed these prestige associations through exclusive distribution and exorbitant pricing to exclude the lower classes from purchasing their products (Amaral & Loken, 2016). From what has been shown previously, luxury items do not lose their status and allure as they move from owner to owner becoming considered as second-hand. Therefore, it is possible to state that vintage luxury products convey social identity just as much as brand-new luxury items.

Research has shown that consumers tend to buy luxury vintage items not only to stand out from others, but also to capture other people's attention, thus signaling their social identity (Amatulli, Pino, De Angelis, & Cascio, 2018). For these consumers, owning a luxury vintage product serves as a way to achieve social acceptance: by impressing others and showcasing their social status, they will feel a sense of belonging to a specific social group (Amatulli & Guido, 2012). In addition, the purchase of second-hand luxury items satisfies a desire for social recognition: these products are perceived as a means to integrate into those social classes that were previously seen as distant and inaccessible (Kessousa & Valette-Florence, 2019).

In the context of social identity, purchasing luxury vintage products isn't only a way to signal status, but it also represents an opportunity to showcase one's social-related and ethical motivations, like advocating for animal rights and fighting the culture of consumerism (Turunen

& Leipämaa-Leskinen, 2015). These consumers want to be perceived as socially involved and eco-conscious and, therefore, choose to purchase second-hand luxury items to show it. In general, consumers purchase second-hand clothes to build and display their socially conscious identity and to take concrete steps to avoid the unnecessary production and consequently selling of items (Roux & Korchia, 2006). Consumers' growing concern towards ecological and ethical matters is influencing their purchasing decisions also when it comes to their social identity: they opt for vintage luxury items to signal both status and at the same time their commitment to moral behaviors. Therefore, by activating environmental concerns, it should be possible to witness an improvement in the perceived value of vintage luxury products, as second-hand luxury consumption can be both a status symbol and a reflection of ethical values.

2.7 Conspicuous Consumption

Veblen (1899) defined the concept of conspicuous consumption as the display of expensive goods to signal social status aspirations to others. This phenomenon is closely linked to consumers' tendency to buy luxury products to signal status and wealth as well as showing their unique personalities (Amatulli, Pino, De Angelis, & Cascio, 2018).

By definition, luxury products are highly distinctive and unique, helping their owners to be recognized as belonging to a specific social group, therefore, serving as a symbol of social status (Bilge, 2015). Following this line of reasoning, it is possible to state that some green behaviors can signal status too by showing that a person has enough resources, especially money, to invest in these actions without having to make trade-offs (Johnson, Tariq, & Baker, 2018).

While it is true that traditionally status has been linked with self-indulgence, academics have found that it can also be associated with pro-environmental and, more generally, prosocial behaviors (Griskevicius, Tybur, & Van den Bergh, 2010). This is especially true when the green products in question are particularly expensive. From this perspective, it is possible to see a trade-off between wanting to obtain status and behaving in a sustainable way. Therefore, the psychological mechanisms behind conspicuous consumption can be applied outside the scope of luxury goods per se and included into a more holistic perspective adding the social component. As a result, it is possible that consumers use second-hand luxury items to signal both status and pro-environmental belief, highlighting an evolving consumer behavior where luxury and environmental concerns intersect. It follows that reminders of environmental concerns should have a positive impact on consumers' perceived value of vintage luxury items.

2.8 Priming of Environmental Values

Priming occurs when an initial stimulus is shown to influence the response to subsequent information (Janiszewski & Wyer, 2014). The stimulus activates mental representations which will be used to interpret and process following information (Bargh & Chartrand, 2014). Usually those are in the form of attitudes or ideas (Cameron, Brown-Ianuzzi, & Payne, 2012). The way priming works is by making the primed information more accessible, therefore, influencing responses (Janiszewski & Wyer, 2014). This is especially true when the context is deliberately designed to prime the consumer.

Priming can either be content or process-related depending on how it is achieved (Janiszewski & Wyer, 2014). Considering the content subgroup, the focus of cognitive priming is on words and semantic, affective priming aims to activate emotions, and behavioral priming causes respondents to exhibit behaviors (Minton, Cornwell, & Kahle, 2017). On the other hand, procedural priming influences consumer decisions in the sense that the initial stimulus prompts a search strategy which then affects how they process information in making a product choice (Shen & Wyer, 2008).

It is important to note that preexisting attitudes have proved to be moderating the priming effects on behaviors (Cameron, Brown-Ianuzzi, & Payne, 2012). This means that priming environmental values would lead to congruent behavior only for those people to whom environmental values are an imperative for their sense of self (Loebnitz & Aschemann-Witzel, 2016). This does not mean that priming can't activate environmental awareness. Although individuals may differ in their pro-environmental opinions, their attitudes are generally favorable (Dunlap, Van Liere, Mertig, & Emmet Jones, 2000).

In addition, it has been shown that even though consumers may not consider themselves as environmentally aware, they tend to include in their daily lives environmental behaviors almost without noticing (Cornelissen, Pandelaere, Warlop, & Dewitte, 2008). The same research has additionally found that priming environmental attitudes can increase one's self-perception as environmentally conscious and, in turn, lead to greater engagement in positive environmental behaviors (Cornelissen, Pandelaere, Warlop, & Dewitte, 2008).

Furthermore, priming in the form of tasks to measure environmental attitudes actually enhances awareness of the issues irrespective of one's ecological orientation and this consequently has an influence on their behavior (Chen & Tung, 2014). To conclude, consumers may not be

consciously aware of their environmental attitudes, yet, when primed with environmental content and attitudes, they're more encouraged to engage in sustainable behaviors and are more attentive to other environmental cues (Cornelissen, Pandelaere, Warlop, & Dewitte, 2008).

2.9 Hypotheses

Based on the above literature review, the purpose of this research is to study how environmental concerns affect consumers' preferences for luxury products, especially in the case of second-hand ones. It will be investigated whether reminders of environmental concerns, in the form of cognitive priming, increase consumers' perceived value of a vintage luxury item in order to causally test the hypotheses.

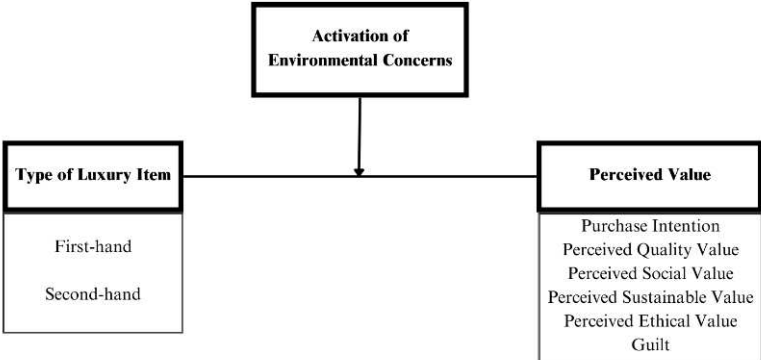
As shown in Figure 1, the activation of environmental concerns acts as a moderator in the relationship between the type of luxury item (first-hand vs second-hand) and the associated perceived value.

The previously discussed research clearly points in one direction:

H1 = The second-hand item will be perceived as more sustainable, more ethical, and will induce less guilt than the first-hand item, no matter the type of priming. This phenomenon will be further accentuated by the priming of environmental values.

H2 = The second-hand item will lead to greater purchase intention and will be associated with greater social and quality value than the first-hand item when participants are primed with environmental values. The main effects will depend on personal preferences of the consumers.

Figure 1– Conceptual Framework



3. Methodology

Having discussed and uncovered the main theories and research in the literature review, this chapter focuses on the methodological techniques implemented in this study. First, the pretest aimed at testing the handbag and the related luxury brand to be presented as independent variable in the main study. Then, the main experiment tested how activating environmental concerns, in the form of priming, influences consumers' perceived value of a vintage luxury handbag.

3.1 Pretest

The purpose of this preliminary research was to evaluate participants' perceptions of luxury and sustainability as well as purchase intention regarding 5 luxury fashion brands and the related handbags. The results were used to determine which handbag was the most suitable for the subsequent experimental research.

The survey included an introduction where it was explained the research purpose highlighting the anonymity of the responses and the voluntariness of participation. Following that, participants were asked to imagine themselves contemplating the purchase of a luxury handbag and to provide their feedback based on the brands and options presented. The survey then was composed of 5 different blocks, each one presenting one luxury brand and its associated handbag, and participants were asked to evaluate them on a Likert scale from 1 (not at all) to 7 (very much) on several aspects.

The brands were chosen on the basis of their prestige and the handbags were selected to be as similar as possible to avoid comparing a big, shopping bag with a small, more suitable for going out one. It is possible to see the handbags presented in this study in the Appendix.

Participants were asked to evaluate each luxury brand and handbag on 6 different aspects: like, luxury, sustainability, ethics, desirability, and second-hand desirability (see Appendix).

Each participant was exposed to all brands and handbags and a total of 20 respondents took part in the survey.

3.2 Main Study

3.2.1 Participants

A total of 204 respondents were recruited through personal connections and social media, in particular Instagram and LinkedIn, all participating voluntarily.

The demographic profile of the sample reveals a larger number of female respondents (80% of the total respondents) which is predictable given that women are more interested in the topic of fashion and luxury than males.

Regarding the participants' age, the average is 35.89 years old ($SD = 15.85$), ranging from 16 to 82. Half of the respondents belong to the Generation Z (born between 1997 and 2012), 17% are Millennials (born between 1981 and 1996) and 25% belong to the Generation X (born between 1965 and 1980). This result is also predictable given that luxury items are timeless and appealing to all generations.

The highest education level completed by the participants is mainly a high school diploma (42%), followed by equally a bachelor's degree and a master's degree (28% each).

In addition, participants are mainly employed full-time (44%) and students (35%).

71% of the respondents are Italian, this data is in line with the choice of language for answering the survey: 64% chose Italian and 36% English. Other nationalities include German (7%), English (5%), and Portuguese (4%).

Regarding their shopping habits, the majority of the respondents (96%), when asked to rate their frequency of luxury fashion purchases on a scale ranging from 1 (never) to 7 (regularly), selected a rating of 4 or lower. In addition, when the same question was asked regarding the past 12 months, almost all of them (99%) chose the answer "1 to 3 times per month" or less. These findings indicate that the participants are not regular customers of luxury fashion brands but do buy these items from time to time.

3.2.2 Materials

The study specified both the independent and dependent variables, along with one control variable and the demographics. It should be underlined that all questions were asked in the same way and order regardless of the condition participants were assigned to.

Independent Variables

The study was designed with one independent variable and one moderator, each with two levels: type of item (first-hand vs. second-hand) and manipulation (priming vs. no priming).

The choice of the handbag to be presented in the study as either first-hand or second-hand was done accordingly to the results of the previously mentioned pretest.

Regarding the priming condition, the manipulation task was taken from a study by Loebnitz and Aschemann-Witzel (2016) and it took the form of cognitive priming. Following the instructions adopted by Schmitt (1994), participants were asked to reflect on either five environmental values or five non-environmental values. Each value was taken from Schwartz's (1992) list. The environmental ones included: preserving nature, caring for future generations, living in a healthy place, unity with nature, and world of beauty. For the no priming condition, the values associated were: perfectionism, respecting other people, enjoying the good things in life, social recognition, and freedom. The instructions read as follows:

“Below are five values listed in alphabetical order. Your task is to arrange them according to their importance to you, as guiding principles in your life. Study the list carefully and pick out the one value which is most important and list it under (1). Then pick out the value which is second most important to you, list it under (2) and so on. Work slowly and think carefully. The end result should truly show how you really feel.” (Schmitt, 1994)

Each participant was randomly assigned to only one of the four possible combinations of conditions, according to how the handbag was presented and the manipulation: first-hand + priming, second-hand + priming, first-hand + no priming, and finally second-hand + no priming.

For a consistent analysis, the independent variable related to the type of item was assigned the following values: 0 = “First-hand” and 1 = “Second-hand”. For the moderator, 0 = “No priming” and 1 = “Priming”.

Dependent Variables

The theoretical framework used as a basis for this study is the consumer perceived value (CPV) which is widely adopted in marketing research to uncover the reasons behind consumers' purchasing decisions (Sheth, Newman, & Gross, 1991). Specifically, Sweeney and Soutar (2001) have identified four dimensions, known as PERVAL scale, which can be applied in a retail purchase situation, namely: quality value, social value, emotional value, and price value.

In addition, a 2022 study (Lou, Chi, Janke, & Desch) has developed a research model for second-hand luxury purchases building on the concept of CPV. The model aimed at studying how six consumption values (perceived economic value, perceived emotional value, perceived social value, perceived quality value, perceived green value, and perceived risk) influence purchase behaviors for second-hand luxury items.

Building on these studies, the dependent variables of this research are: purchase intention, perceived quality value, perceived social value, perceived sustainable value, perceived ethical value, and guilt. The constructs used to measure them were adapted from the study conducted by Lou et Al. (2022) to fit the focus of the research, as shown in the Appendix.

All the constructs were measured on the 7-point Likert scale (1 = not at all, 7 = very much), the same used for the pretest.

To check the reliability of the constructs used to measure the different dependent variables, scale reliability analyses were performed, and, as it will be shown in the following data analysis section, all of them are valid.

3.2.3 Procedure

Before starting the survey, participants were provided with a short introduction where they were told they would be participating in a study about luxury fashion items and sustainability and that their participation would be completely anonymous and voluntary. It was also explained that the questionnaire was available both in Italian and in English to facilitate their participation.

Participants were randomly assigned to either the environmental concerns condition (priming), where they were asked to rank 5 environmental values, or the neutral condition (no priming), where the values to rank were not related to the environment. Then the survey included a control question regarding the respondents' environmental awareness to be used during the subsequent data analysis to check if the manipulation actually worked.

Afterwards participants were presented with the image of the Prada Re-Edition 2005 handbag which was either described as new collection, "first-hand", or as vintage, "second-hand". Again, the assignment of the condition was random. Specifically, to avoid gender differences, the first-hand condition stated: "*Imagine you want to purchase a luxury handbag and are considering this brand new Prada bag.*", and the second-hand condition: "*Imagine you want to purchase a luxury handbag and are considering this vintage, second-hand Prada bag.*".

Under each condition, participants responded to identical questions to complete measures assessing purchase intention, perceived quality value, perceived social value, perceived sustainable value, perceived ethical value, and feelings of guilt associated with the presented luxury fashion item. All the questions belonging to the same dependent variable were asked on the same block, displaying at the top the same image of the handbag.

Following these questions, participants were asked to answer a couple more questions about their shopping habits when it comes to luxury items. Finally, demographics were collected and a short thank you note was presented at the end.

3.2.4 Design

The experimental design was a between-subjects design that explored the effects of the manipulation on the dependent variables according to the type of item presented. Therefore, four conditions were tested in a 2 (first-hand, second-hand) x 2 (priming, no priming) design, where they were randomized.

The choice of this design was made to examine the interactions as well as the main effects of these factors on the dependent variables. Because each participant is exposed to only one experimental condition, the possibility of experiencing demand characteristics is reduced: in this way participants are less likely to change their responses based on what they think the research is about. In addition, randomization enhances the reliability of the study outcomes and their generalizability to broader populations.

4. Data Analysis and Results

4.1 Pretest

The aim of the pretest was to identify which luxury brand, and its associated handbag, to include in the main experiment based on participants' preferences. Below (Table 1) are the descriptive statistics which offer an illustrative picture of the respondents' differences in perception regarding the bags' likability, luxuriousness, sustainability, ethics, desirability, and finally second-hand desirability.

Table 1 – Overall Descriptive Statistics

		Louis Vuitton	Gucci	Prada	Yves Saint Laurent	Chanel
Like	<i>M</i>	4.25	3.50	4.95	4.55	3.30
	<i>SD</i>	1.78	1.24	1.47	1.40	1.46
Luxury	<i>M</i>	5.85	5.00	5.60	5.55	3.85
	<i>SD</i>	1.14	1.26	1.47	1.32	1.69
Sustainability	<i>M</i>	2.75	2.90	2.80	2.70	2.70
	<i>SD</i>	0.91	1.02	1.44	0.98	0.92
Ethics	<i>M</i>	2.50	2.70	2.80	2.65	2.60
	<i>SD</i>	0.89	1.08	1.11	0.88	0.82
Desirability	<i>M</i>	3.30	3.15	3.80	3.85	2.45
	<i>SD</i>	1.92	1.60	1.77	2.03	1.47
Second-hand desirability	<i>M</i>	3.80	3.70	4.75	4.30	2.85
	<i>SD</i>	1.96	1.75	1.86	1.90	1.60

Because all participants evaluated all the brands on all the variables, in a with-in subjects design, it was possible to run one sample t-tests to verify if the differences in perceptions which emerged from simply comparing the means were significant or not. The test value used for this analysis was 3.5, which is the mid-point of the Likert scale on which the respondents evaluated each handbag.

Louis Vuitton scored significant differences on luxury ($t(19) = 9.25, p < .001$), sustainability ($t(19) = -3.68, p = .002$), and ethics ($t(19) = -5.03, p < .001$).

In the same way, Gucci scored significant differences on luxury ($t(19) = 5.34, p < .001$), sustainability ($t(19) = -2.63, p = .017$), and ethics ($t(19) = -3.31, p = .004$).

Prada scored significant differences on likability ($t(19) = 4.42, p < .001$), luxury ($t(19) = 6.41, p < .001$), sustainability ($t(19) = -2.18, p = .042$), ethics ($t(19) = -2.83, p = .011$), and second-hand desirability ($t(19) = 3.01, p = .007$).

Yves Saint Laurent scored significant differences on likability ($t(19) = 3.37, p = .003$), luxury ($t(19) = 6.96, p < .001$), sustainability ($t(19) = -3.66, p = .002$), and ethics ($t(19) = -4.34, p < .001$) – just like Prada but without the second-hand desirability.

Finally, Chanel scored significant differences on sustainability ($t(19) = -3.88, p = .001$), ethics ($t(19) = -4.90, p < .001$), and desirability ($t(19) = -3.20, p = .005$).

From these results, the brand who scored the most significant differences is Prada, closely followed by Yves Saint Laurent. Given that both brands score significantly high in terms of likability and luxury, and significantly low in terms of sustainability and ethics, an additional analysis is needed to choose between them.

A direct comparison between the two brands, using the paired samples t-tests, was performed to establish which brand was more appropriate for the main study. Table 2 below summarizes the descriptive statistics associated with these two brands and highlights the p-values obtained with this analysis.

Table 2 – Descriptive Statistics Prada vs. Yves Saint Laurent

		Like	Luxury	Sustainability	Ethics	Desirability	Second-hand Desirability
Prada	<i>M</i>	4.95	5.60	2.80	2.80	3.80	4.75
	<i>SD</i>	1.47	1.47	1.44	1.11	1.77	1.87
Yves Saint Laurent	<i>M</i>	4.55	5.55	2.70	2.65	3.85	4.30
	<i>SD</i>	1.40	1.32	0.98	0.88	2.03	1.90
	p-value	0.23	0.88	0.75	0.42	0.92	0.35

Looking at the p-values, it is possible to say that there is no significant difference between the brands on any variable. Therefore, both Prada and Yves Saint Laurent would be good candidates for the study. At this point, to choose between them, the only difference, highlighted before, is that Prada’s mean score related to the second-hand desirability is the only significant one: this brand will be the one further investigated in the study.

4.2 Main Study

4.2.1 Reliability of the Measures

The initial step of the main experiment’s data analysis consists of conducting a scale reliability analysis to assess the internal consistency of the dependent variables’ measurement scales used in the study. This analysis evaluates the reliability of the constructs composing each dependent variable, as described in the previous methodology section. It involves calculating the Cronbach’s alpha which indicates the extent to which constructs within a scale consistently measure the same underlying concept. Typically, this value is considered to be high when above 0.70, indicating strong internal consistency and suggesting that the items in the scale are reliable

and can be used as a composite measure of the intended concept. This assessment ensures that the data collected using these scales are robust and valid for further analysis and interpretation in the study. The investigation revealed that all items are consistent and valid, as illustrated in Tables 3 through 8, with Cronbach’s alpha varying from 0.78 to 0.92.

Table 3 – Reliability Analysis on “Purchase Intention”

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach’s Alpha	Number of items
0.91	4

Table 4 – Reliability Analysis on “Perceived Quality Value”

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach’s Alpha	Number of items
0.82	4

Table 5 – Reliability Analysis on “Perceived Social Value”

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach’s Alpha	Number of items
0.92	4

Table 6 – Reliability Analysis on “Perceived Sustainable Value”

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach’s Alpha	Number of items
0.89	4

Table 7 – Reliability Analysis on “Perceived Ethical Value”

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach’s Alpha	Number of items
0.80	4

Table 8 – Reliability Analysis on “Guilt”

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach’s Alpha	Number of items
0.78	3

4.2.2 Manipulation Check

Following the manipulation task previously described, a control was implemented to assess the effectiveness of the activation of the environmental concerns. Participants were asked to rate their level of concern about environmental issues on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = not at all, 7 =

extremely) answering this question: *How concerned are you about environmental issues, such as climate change and pollution?*

The data collected were then used to determine whether participants in the priming condition exhibited higher levels of environmental awareness compared to those in the no priming condition. In order to verify this, an independent samples t-test was conducted comparing the mean scores between the two priming conditions. The results revealed no significant differences between participants who were primed with environmental values ($M = 5.73$, $SD = 1.32$) and those who were not ($M = 5.55$, $SD = 1.48$), meaning that the manipulation didn't effectively activate the environmental concerns as intended ($t(202) = -0.89$, $p\text{-value} = .37$).

One possible explanation for the manipulation's lack of effectiveness could be the already high levels of environmental concern among participants, which might have overshadowed the impact of the priming task. Therefore, the condition to which they were assigned, priming or no priming, didn't impact on their environmental awareness due to their preexisting strong intrinsic environmental concerns.

4.2.3 Environmental Awareness – The New Moderator

Because the activation of environmental concerns has proven to be noneffective, it is not advisable to use the dummy variable associated with the moderator (0 = no priming, 1 = priming) for the data analysis. Therefore, it is necessary to explore alternatives to better understand the impact of environmental awareness on participants' perceptions of luxury products (first-hand vs. second-hand).

For this reason, a good starting point is the question which was used as manipulation check. The responses given to this question were recoded into a dichotomous dummy variable using the median split method, dividing participants into two groups according to their level of environmental concern. Analyzing the descriptive statistics ($M = 5.64$, $SD = 1.40$), the median value (= 6) was used as a cutoff value for distinguishing between high and low environmental awareness. Participants scoring from 1 to 5 were assigned to the low environmental awareness condition (low = 0), while those scoring 6 and 7 were assigned to the high environmental awareness condition (high = 1).

This new measurement can be used as a sort of moderator to examine how variations in environmental awareness influence the perception of luxury products, particularly towards first-hand and second-hand items. Therefore, instead of inducing environmental concerns through

priming, this revised approach focuses on the effects of those already preexisting. For the analysis that follows, this new variable will be used instead of the original moderator and will be correlated with the other study variables, namely the perceived value dimensions (purchase intention, quality, social, sustainability, ethics, and guilt), to explain participants' differences in perceptions and preferences towards luxury products.

4.2.3 Main Results

After having proven the reliability of the scales and having computed a new moderator to avoid the noneffective manipulation, SPSS was adopted to test the study's hypotheses.

In particular, two tests were conducted to explore the possible interactions and to study the main effects: a 2 Item x 2 Environmental Awareness ANOVA and an independent samples t-test. These were repeated for every dependent variable.

Purchase Intention

The ANOVA revealed that there is no significant interaction between the type of item presented and the environmental awareness of the participants on purchase intention ($F(1, 200) = 0.02$, $p\text{-value} = .89$). In addition, the main effects on the independent variable ($F(1, 200) = 0.87$, $p\text{-value} = .35$) and environmental awareness ($F(1, 200) = 0.03$, $p\text{-value} = .86$) are nonsignificant. The descriptives can be seen in Table 9 for the main effects of product type and Table 10 for the main effects of environmental awareness.

Table 9 – Main effects of Purchase Intention on product type

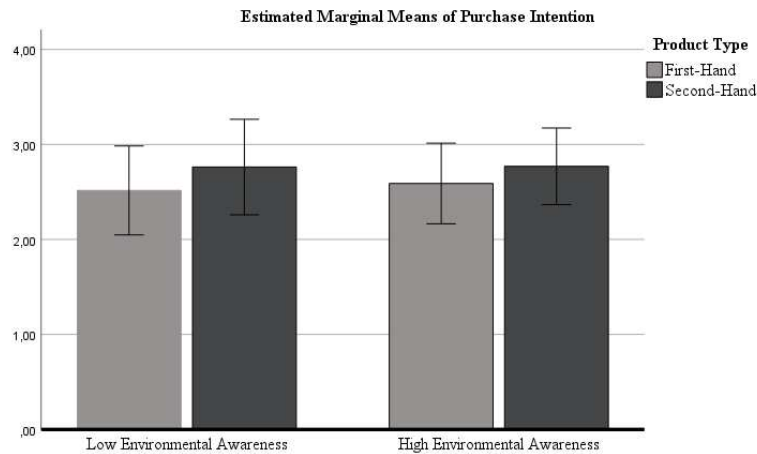
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
First-hand	2.56	1.62
Second-hand	2.77	1.58

Table 10 – Main effects of Purchase Intention on environmental awareness

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Low	2.63	1.49
High	2.68	1.69

Despite these results, as it can be seen in Figure 2, there could be a difference in purchase intention between the first and second-hand item on both the low and high environmental awareness conditions.

Figure 2 – Purchase Intention according to type of item and environmental awareness



For this reason, an independent samples t-test was conducted for each condition. When analyzing only those with low environmental awareness, the difference between the first and second-hand item proved to be nonsignificant ($t(84) = -0.76$, $p\text{-value} = .45$). The same thing for those with high environmental awareness ($t(116) = -0.58$, $p\text{-value} = .56$).

From these analyses, it is apparent that there are no differences in purchase intention, regardless of the type of item presented and the level of environmental awareness of the participants.

Perceived Quality Value

From the ANOVA, it is possible to state that the interaction between the type of item presented and the environmental awareness of the participants on perceived quality value is nonsignificant ($F(1, 200) = 1.53$, $p\text{-value} = .22$), as well as the main effects on the independent variable ($F(1, 200) = 0.89$, $p\text{-value} = .35$) and on environmental awareness ($F(1, 200) = 0.07$, $p\text{-value} = .80$). The descriptives can be seen in Table 11 for the main effects of product type and Table 12 for the main effects of environmental awareness.

Table 11 – Main effects of Perceived Quality Value on product type

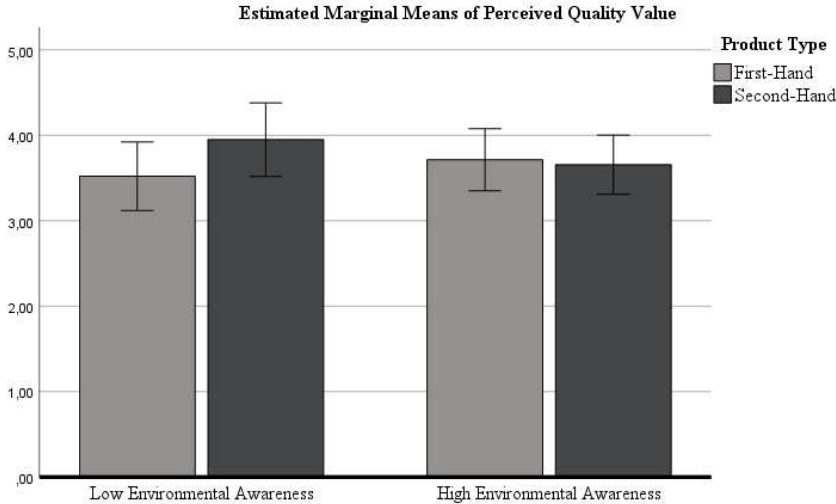
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
First-hand	3.63	1.32
Second-hand	3.77	1.44

Table 12 – Main effects of Perceived Quality Value on environmental awareness

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Low	3.72	1.26
High	3.68	1.46

As shown in Figure 3, it could be possible that those with low environmental awareness associate the second-hand item with greater quality value compared to the first-hand item.

Figure 3 – Perceived Quality Value according to type of item and environmental awareness



To prove this, an independent samples t-test was conducted, unfortunately revealing that the difference is nonsignificant ($t(84) = -1.58$, $p\text{-value} = .12$). The same analysis was conducted for the high environmental awareness condition with the same result ($t(116) = 0.21$, $p\text{-value} = .83$).

Therefore, it is possible to state that there are no significant effects also on perceived quality.

Perceived Social Value

The ANOVA revealed that there is no significant interaction between the type of item presented and the environmental awareness of the participants on perceived social value ($F(1, 200) = 0.21$, $p\text{-value} = .65$), and the same is true for the main effects on the independent variable ($F(1, 200) = 0.50$, $p\text{-value} = .48$). On the other hand, the main effects on environmental awareness are marginally significant ($F(1, 200) = 3.14$, $p\text{-value} = .08$), meaning that those with low environmental awareness associate greater social value to the luxury product than those with high environmental awareness, as it can be seen in Table 14. The descriptives for the main effects of product type can be seen in Table 13.

Table 13 – Main effects of Perceived Social Value on product type

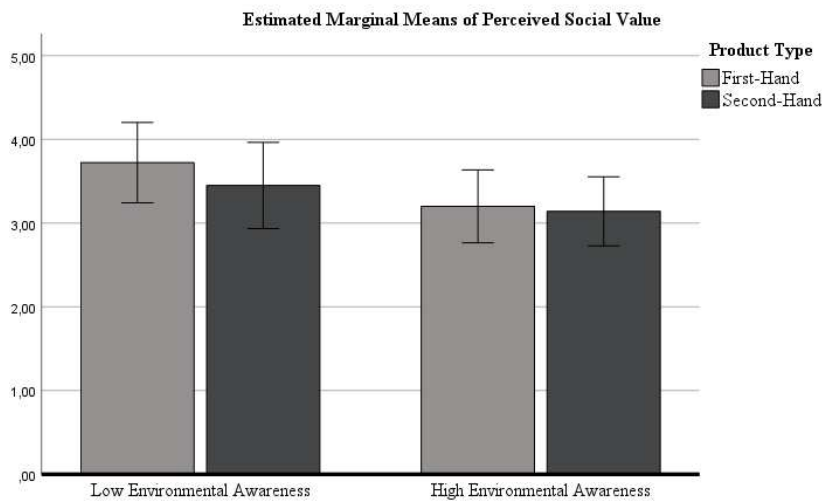
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
First-hand	3.44	1.57
Second-hand	3.26	1.74

Table 14 – Main effects of Perceived Social Value on environmental awareness

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Low	3.60	1.48
High	3.17	1.76

Furthermore, as it can be seen in Figure 4, there could be a difference in perceived social value between the first and second-hand item on the low environmental awareness condition. In particular, it seems that the first-hand item is perceived as with greater social value than the second-hand one.

Figure 4 – Perceived Social Value according to type of item and environmental awareness



For this reason, an independent samples t-test was conducted revealing that this difference is actually nonsignificant ($t(84) = 0.85$, $p\text{-value} = .40$). The same analysis was conducted for the high environmental awareness condition, and the same conclusion was reached ($t(116) = 0.18$, $p\text{-value} = .85$).

Therefore, it is possible to state that consumers with low environmental awareness perceive luxury items as more socially relevant than those with high environmental awareness.

Perceived Sustainable Value

Having run the ANOVA, it is possible to state that the interaction between the type of item presented and the environmental awareness of the participants on perceived sustainable value is nonsignificant ($F(1, 200) = 0.80$, $p\text{-value} = .37$) as well as the main effects on environmental awareness ($F(1, 200) = 0.34$, $p\text{-value} = .56$). On the other hand, the main effects on the product type are significant ($F(1, 200) = 10.45$, $p\text{-value} = .001$), meaning that the second-hand item is

perceived as more sustainable than the first-hand one, as it can be seen in Table 15. The descriptives for the main effects of environmental awareness can be seen in Table 16.

Table 15 – Main effects of Perceived Sustainable Value on product type

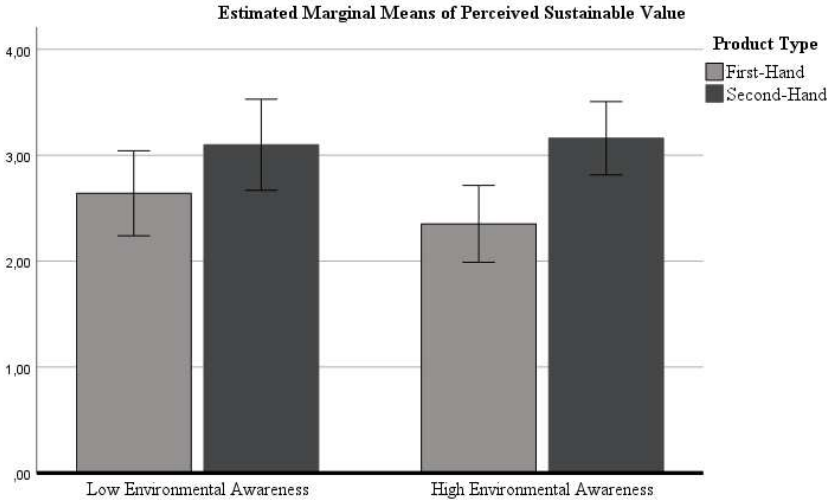
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
First-hand	2.48	1.12
Second-hand	3.14	1.59

Table 16 – Main effects of Perceived Sustainable Value on environmental awareness

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Low	2.85	1.29
High	2.78	1.50

As shown in Figure 5, and accordingly to the main effects on product type, it could be possible that the second-hand item is perceived as more sustainable than the first-hand one under both conditions.

Figure 5 – Perceived Sustainable Value according to type of item and environmental awareness



To prove this, an independent samples t-test was conducted for both conditions. For those with high environmental awareness, this difference is significant ($t(110) = -3.07$, $p\text{-value} = .003$), and Table 17 shows the difference in means for the first and second-hand items.

Table 17 – Independent samples t-test on “Perceived Sustainable Value” under the high environmental awareness condition

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
First-hand item	2.35	1.18
Second-hand item	3.16	1.65

On the other hand, for those with low environmental awareness, this difference is nonsignificant ($t(68) = -1.62$, $p\text{-value} = .11$).

Therefore, it is possible to state that: although people tend to perceive the second-hand product as more sustainable no matter the level of environmental awareness, this only holds when individuals have high levels of environmental awareness, confirming the initial hypothesis: *H1 = The second-hand item will be perceived as more sustainable, more ethical, and will induce less guilt than the first-hand item, no matter the type of priming. This phenomenon will be further accentuated by the priming of environmental values.*

Perceived Ethical Value

The ANOVA revealed that there is no significant interaction between the type of item presented and the environmental awareness of the participants on perceived ethical value ($F(1, 200) = 0.41$, $p\text{-value} = .52$) as well as the main effects on environmental awareness ($F(1, 200) = 2.17$, $p\text{-value} = .14$). Conversely, the main effects on the type of product are marginally significant ($F(1, 200) = 3.26$, $p\text{-value} = .07$), meaning that the second-hand item is perceived as more ethical than the first-hand one, as it can be seen in Table 18. The descriptives for the main effects of environmental awareness can be seen in Table 19.

Table 18 – Main effects of Perceived Ethical Value on product type

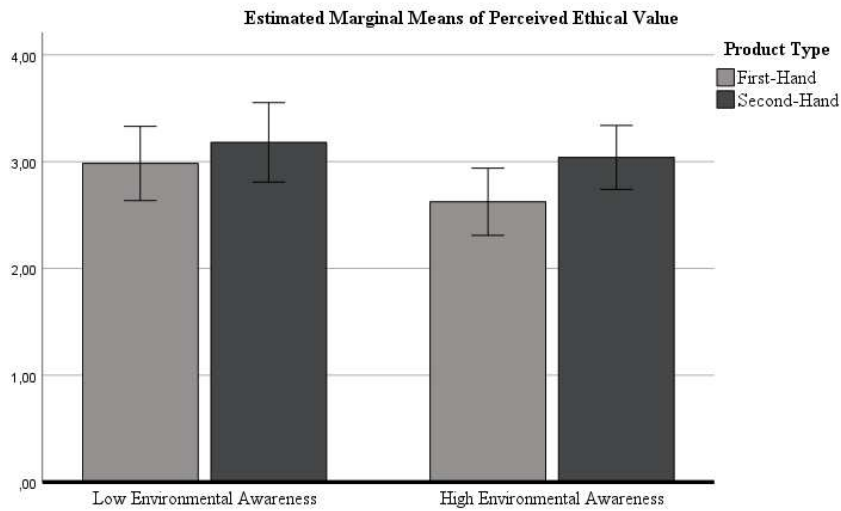
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
First-hand	2.79	1.14
Second-hand	3.10	1.25

Table 19 – Main effects of Perceived Ethical Value on environmental awareness

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Low	3.08	1.09
High	2.84	1.27

Additionally, as it can be seen in Figure 6, those with high environmental awareness could perceive the second-hand item as more ethical than the first-hand one.

Figure 6 – Perceived Ethical Value according to type of item and environmental awareness



To investigate this, an independent samples t-test was conducted, revealing that this difference is actually marginally significant ($t(116) = -1.79$, $p\text{-value} = .08$), and, as reported in Table 20, the prediction can be confirmed: the second-hand item is perceived as more ethical than the first-hand item.

Table 20 – Independent samples t-test on “Perceived Ethical Value” under the high environmental awareness condition

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
First-hand item	2.63	1.23
Second-hand item	3.04	1.29

The same analysis was conducted for the low environmental awareness condition, but the difference was nonsignificant ($t(84) = -0.84$, $p\text{-value} = .41$).

Therefore, it is possible to reach the same conclusion as for the perceived sustainable value: despite the fact that people perceive the second-hand item as more ethical, this is only true for those individuals who possess high levels of environmental awareness. This result confirms the initial hypothesis: *H1 = The second-hand item will be perceived as more sustainable, more ethical, and will induce less guilt than the first-hand item, no matter the type of priming. This phenomenon will be further accentuated by the priming of environmental values.*

Guilt

From the ANOVA, it is possible to state that the interaction between the type of item presented and the environmental awareness of the participants on guilt is nonsignificant ($F(1, 200) = 0.16$,

p-value = .69). Conversely, the main effects of both the type of product ($F(1, 200) = 12.47$, p-value < .001) and the environmental awareness ($F(1, 200) = 10.04$, p-value = .002) are significant. This means that the first-hand product is associated with more guilt than the second-hand one, and those with high environmental awareness perceive more guilt than those with low environmental awareness, as it can be seen from Tables 21 and 22.

Table 21 – Main effects of Guilt on product type

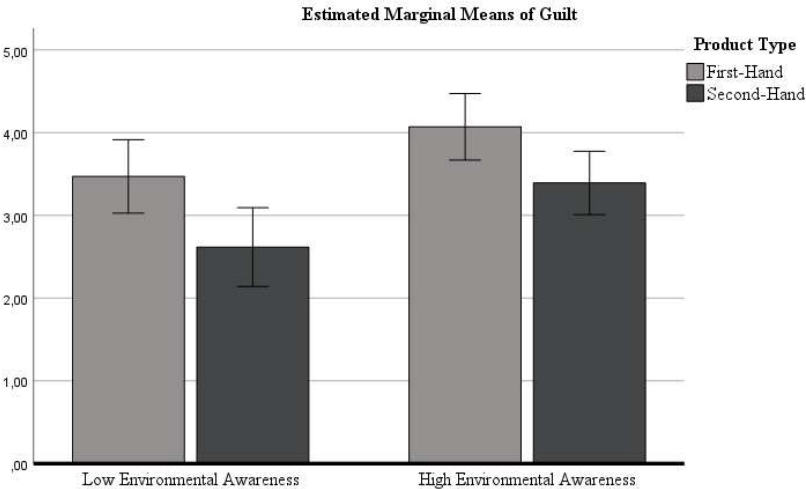
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
First-hand	3.80	1.65
Second-hand	3.09	1.47

Table 22 – Main effects of Guilt on environmental awareness

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Low	3.07	1.51
High	3.71	1.61

Furthermore, as shown in Figure 7, it could be possible that the second-hand item is associated with less guilt than the first-hand one under both conditions.

Figure 7 – Guilt according to type of item and environmental awareness



To prove this, an independent samples t-test was conducted for both conditions, with results confirming this hypothesis. For those with low environmental awareness, this difference is significant ($t(84) = 2.72$, p-value = .008), and Table 23 shows the difference in means for the first and second-hand items.

Table 23 – Independent samples t-test on “Guilt” under the low environmental awareness condition

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
First-hand item	3.47	1.56
Second-hand item	2.62	1.31

Furthermore, the same was obtained regarding the high environmental awareness condition: the difference is significant ($t(116) = 2.3$, p -value = .02), and the means can be read in Table 24.

Table 24 – Independent samples t-test on “Guilt” under the high environmental awareness condition

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
First-hand item	4.07	1.68
Second-hand item	3.39	1.49

Therefore, it is possible to state that, no matter the level of environmental awareness, participants associated less guilt to the second-hand handbag, thus, confirming part of the initial hypothesis: *H1 = The second-hand item will be perceived as more sustainable, more ethical, and will induce less guilt than the first-hand item, no matter the type of priming.*

Drivers of Guilt – Linear Regression

Because this feeling of guilt is perceived under both the high and low environmental awareness conditions, further analyses are needed to explore where it actually comes from. A first step was to run a linear regression to predict guilt using the perceived values that confirm the hypotheses, namely perceived sustainable value and perceived ethical value. Environmental awareness was chosen as the selection variable to study whether the higher guilt experienced by those with low and high environmental awareness is related or not to the perceived sustainable and ethical values.

Selecting only those with low environmental awareness, the regression doesn’t achieve significance (R square = 0.002, Model sig. = 0.91), as it can be seen from Table 25.

Table 25 – Linear Regression on “Guilt” with “Perceived Sustainable Value” and “Perceived Ethical Value” as predictors under the low environmental awareness condition

	Unstandardized B	p-value
Perceived Sustainable Value	0.057	0.72
Perceived Ethical Value	-0.077	0.69

On the other hand, selecting only those with high environmental awareness, the regression doesn’t achieve significance (R square = 0.079, Model sig. = 0.009), but, as it can be seen from

Table 26, the p-value associated with the perceived sustainable value could indicate that, by running the same regression taking out the perceived ethical value, the model could become significant.

Table 26 – Linear Regression on “Guilt” with “Perceived Sustainable Value” and “Perceived Ethical Value” as predictors under the high environmental awareness condition

	Unstandardized B	p-value
Perceived Sustainable Value	-0.20	0.14
Perceived Ethical Value	-0.16	0.32

When a model has more than one predictor, as in this case, the explanatory power of the dependent variable is shared by the different independent variables, even in the case of a very strong predictor. Therefore, four more regressions were run, two using the perceived sustainable value as the only predictor, and two only with the perceived ethical value.

Considering only the perceived sustainable value as predictor, it is possible to show that, for those that have low environmental awareness, the perceived sustainable value doesn’t affect their feelings of guilt, but for those with high environmental awareness it actually predicts their guilt. As a matter of fact, as shown by Table 27, the model for low environmental awareness doesn’t achieve significance (R square = 0, Model sig. = 0.89), while the model for high environmental awareness, Table 28, achieves significance (R square = 0.07, Model sig. = 0.003). These results suggest that the perceived sustainable value of luxury items may exert greater influence on shaping consumer guilt among highly environmentally conscious individuals.

Table 27 – Linear Regression on “Guilt” with “Perceived Sustainable Value” as predictor under the low environmental awareness condition

	Unstandardized B	p-value
Perceived Sustainable Value	0.02	0.89

Table 28 – Linear Regression on “Guilt” with “Perceived Sustainable Value” as predictor under the high environmental awareness condition

	Unstandardized B	p-value
Perceived Sustainable Value	-0.29	0.003

After having run the same regression, but substituting perceived sustainable value with perceived ethical value, the same result was achieved: for those that have low environmental awareness, the perceived ethical value doesn’t affect their feelings of guilt, but for those with high environmental awareness it actually predicts their guilt. Table 29 shows how the model for low environmental awareness doesn’t achieve significance (R square = 0.001, Model sig. =

0.81), while Table 30 shows the significant model for high environmental awareness (R square = 0.06, Model sig. = 0.007). These results imply that the perceived ethical value of luxury products may have a greater impact on consumer guilt among those individuals with high levels of environmental concerns.

Table 29 – Linear Regression on “Guilt” with “Perceived Ethical Value” as predictor under the low environmental awareness condition

	Unstandardized B	p-value
Perceived Ethical Value	-0.04	0.81

Table 30 – Linear Regression on “Guilt” with “Perceived Ethical Value” as predictor under the high environmental awareness condition

	Unstandardized B	p-value
Perceived Ethical Value	-0.31	0.007

To conclude, by looking at Tables 28 and 30 it is possible to affirm that both perceived sustainable and ethical values negatively affect the feelings of guilt of those with high environmental awareness. Therefore, the more a person with already high environmental concerns perceives an item as sustainable and ethical, the less guilt they will feel.

Predictors of Guilt – Mediation

A second analysis that was conducted to study if the perceived sustainable and ethical values predict the effect of product type on guilt (less guilt associated to second-hand items than to first-hand ones) for those with high and low environmental awareness was the mediation.

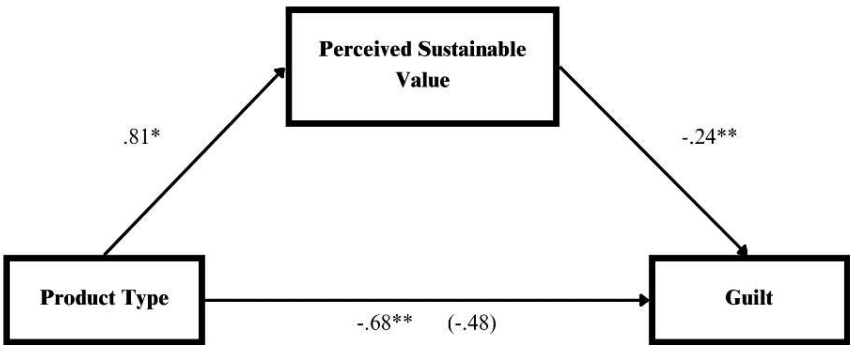
On SPSS, PROCESS by Hayes (2017) was used to run the mediation and the model chosen was number 4, simple mediation. Guilt was used as dependent variable and the product type was used as independent variable, while the mediators chosen were perceived sustainable and ethical values.

By selecting only those with low environmental awareness, a nonsignificant indirect effect was found with a 95% confidence interval [-0.08; 0.27] for the perceived sustainable value and [-0.20; 0.06] for the perceived ethical value, therefore the model doesn't fit the data. The same conclusion can be reached by selecting only those with high environmental awareness: a nonsignificant indirect effect was found with a 95% confidence interval [-0.40; 0.09] for the perceived sustainable value and [-0.25; 0.08] for the perceived ethical value.

By applying the same reasoning as the one used for the regression, four mediations were run: two using only perceived sustainable value as mediator, and the other two with the perceived ethical value.

Starting with the perceived sustainable value as the only mediator and considering only those with low environmental awareness, a nonsignificant indirect effect was found with a 95% confidence interval [-0.09; 0.20], therefore the model doesn't fit the data. Conversely, considering only those with high environmental awareness, a significant indirect effect was found, with a 95% confidence interval [-0.46; -0.02]. The direct effect proved to be nonsignificant (p-value = .11), therefore indicating that there is full mediation. Figure 8 shows this mediation model (R square = 0.09, p-value = .004).

*Figure 8 – Standardized regression coefficients for the relationship between product type and guilt as mediated by perceived sustainable value. Regression coefficient between product type and guilt controlling for perceived sustainable value in parenthesis. * p = .003; ** p = .02*



From this analysis, it is possible to state that the process through which those with high environmental concerns feel guilt includes perceived sustainable value, but this doesn't happen for those with low environmental awareness.

The same analyses were run with the perceived ethical value as the only mediator, but in both cases (low and high environmental awareness), the model didn't fit the data with nonsignificant indirect effects. The confidence interval for the indirect effect in the case of low environmental awareness was [-0.13; 0.07], and the one for high environmental awareness was [-0.33; 0.02].

To conclude, the data showed that, for participants with high environmental awareness, the lower guilt associated with second-hand products when compared to first-hand ones seems to

be explained by the higher perceived sustainable value of vintage products over new collection alternatives.

5. Discussion

In order to explore the different perceptions associated with first and second-hand luxury items, the main study provides relevant and insightful data. In addition, the pretest was successful in indicating the luxury handbag that best suited the research.

Focusing on the main experiment, the data revealed that, regardless of the type of product presented and the participants' level of environmental awareness, their purchase intention and the associated perceived quality remained consistent, exhibiting no differences. This could be due to the allure of luxury products, whether they are brand new or vintage: they're highly desirable and stand out for their high quality.

Moreover, the data showed that luxury items tend to be associated with higher levels of social value by those consumers who experience low levels of environmental awareness than by those more environmentally concerned, regardless of the type of product. This outcome is unexpected since the initial hypothesis was that the second-hand item would've been associated with greater social value than the first-hand one by participants with high levels of environmental awareness. Johnson, Tariq and Baker (2018) found that both status and pro-social identity drive conspicuous consumption, therefore consumers with high environmental concerns should've associated higher social value to the second-hand luxury product as it not only reflects social status but also a pro-social behavior. However, the current findings suggest that for consumers with low environmental concerns, the social value of luxury items is driven by status alone. It is important to clarify that social value in the context of luxury products in general reflects the social status associated with these items, but when it comes to vintage luxury products it encompasses both social status and a pro-social behavior. Therefore, it is reasonable that, for consumers with low environmental awareness, luxury products mainly symbolize social status, as they don't perceive the environmental implications. A question of why highly environmentally aware consumers didn't associate greater social value to the vintage item arises. To explain this, the study conducted by Alghanim and Ndubisi (2022) provides an insightful perspective: heavy consumers of sustainable luxury associate these items with greater values, among which is the social aspect of sustainable luxury, than light consumers. Thus, one possible explanation could be that, because the participants of this study are not regular customers of luxury fashion brands but do buy these items from time to time, therefore, falling

into the category of light consumers, they associated less social value to sustainable luxury options despite their high environmental concerns. Nevertheless, this unexpected finding could be the subject of further exploration into the consumers' perception of vintage luxury items from the social point of view.

Furthermore, the study found that individuals with high levels of environmental concerns perceive the second-hand luxury item as more sustainable and ethical than the first-hand one, aligning with prior expectations and research.

Similarly, it was discovered that there is a consistent tendency to associate less guilt with the vintage luxury product compared to a new one, regardless of one's environmental concerns. The data also suggest the reason why consumers with high and low environmental concerns experience different levels of guilt. Specifically, it was found that the sustainable and ethical attributes of second-hand items influence consumers' guilt perceptions associated with luxury consumption in the case of high environmental concerns, reducing the level of guilt. In addition, the mediation model described above showed that people with high environmental concerns experience less guilt because second-hand luxury products have greater sustainable value, but the perceived sustainable value couldn't explain why individuals with low environmental concerns anticipate greater guilt. Therefore, a limitation emerges here, hinting that another variable could be mediating this relationship: as it will be explained in the limitations and future research section, it could've been better to control for the price of the luxury items presented as first and second-hand.

In general, based on the collected data, the principal conclusion is that the perceived sustainable and ethical values of an item, as well as the sense of guilt caused by luxury products depends on the nature of the product itself and on an individual's environmental awareness. Specifically, these are accentuated by second-hand or vintage items and by one's high levels of environmental concerns, proving to be consistent with the hypotheses.

6. Theoretical and Managerial Implications

This thesis contributes to the consumer behavior literature by clarifying the complex relations between perceptions of luxury products, attitudes towards second-hand items, and environmental awareness.

The theoretical insights provide a starting point for future research. The finding that consumers characterized by low environmental awareness associate luxury items with more perceived

social value challenges existing literature and suggests that social perceptions might be influenced by other factors than environmental concerns, such as social norms and personal values. In addition, environmental education as well as awareness campaigns have proven to be crucial in shaping consumer perceptions towards sustainable products: it was indeed shown how those consumers experiencing high levels of environmental concern perceived the vintage luxury item as more sustainable and ethical. Moreover, second-hand options could serve as a viable option to reduce consumer guilt linked to luxury consumption. This finding could also be further investigated to uncover the underlying psychological mechanisms.

This research also provides managers, retailers and marketers in general with a better understanding of the consumption trend linked to second-hand luxury and the related consumers' perceptions. As demonstrated, consumer education plays a key role in enhancing perceptions of sustainability and ethicality related to second-hand luxury items. Because of this, managers should focus on raising consumers' environmental awareness when promoting these items, for example through educational campaigns. Closely linked to this aspect is the choice of communication messages according to the chosen targets. When it comes to targeting those consumers who do not really identify with environmental concerns, it would be better to emphasize the luxury items' social relevance rather than their sustainability, and vice versa. Another important point for retailers and brands is to leverage on the reduced guilt associated with vintage luxury items, this could resonate well with consumers regardless of their environmental awareness levels.

7. Limitations and Future Research

As for any academic research, this thesis includes some limitations but also uncovers opportunities for future studies.

First, the manipulation at the beginning of the main experiment, implemented in the form of cognitive priming, wasn't successful in activating environmental concerns in the participants, thus it wasn't possible to witness the hypothetical consequences of being primed. Despite the theoretical basis supporting the effectiveness of this manipulation, described in the literature review and methodology sections, the implementation might not have been robust enough to elicit the desired responses from participants. One possible explanation for this could be the chosen stimuli which might not have been strong enough. An alternative could have been the use of images to further amplify the power of the text. An example is a 2020 research (Tanford, Kim, & Kim) which employed affective priming in the form of an Instagram post with

environmental content to influence consumers' decision process, and which demonstrates the efficacy of such priming in generating intended emotions, which in turn influence behaviors and judgements. Alternatively, another explanation could be related to a cultural phenomenon: nowadays we are constantly exposed to news regarding the environment, and thus, it is possible that respondents were already highly environmentally conscious, rendering the manipulation task ineffective. As found in the data, regardless of the participants' age, they were on average highly environmentally aware. Future research could explore alternative strategies for priming environmental concerns, like affective priming, and it would also be interesting to consider cultural differences in environmental attitudes as they could influence respondents' levels of environmental concerns.

Another consequence of a potentially high environmental concern level in the study's sample is that it may also limit the use of the variable "environmental awareness" as a potential moderator for consumers' attitudes towards first and second-hand luxury products. Despite having employed a median split to categorize participants into high and low environmental concern groups, the distribution of environmental awareness scores remained heavily skewed towards the higher end. This suggests that even participants classified as having low levels of environmental concerns still exhibited higher levels compared to the broader population. The prevalence of high environmental concerns within the sample complicates the interpretation of results: given these already high levels of environmental awareness, the efficacy of the manipulation may have been limited, as previously explained. This suggests that future research should consider different approaches to measuring environmental awareness: one question didn't effectively capture the multifaceted nature of environmental concerns.

The third constraint relates to the sample size, which may have limited the precision and generalizability of the findings. While this study recruited a sample considered to be sufficient for the analyses conducted, a larger sample size would enhance its statistical power and allow for more accurate estimations of the relationships investigated. In addition, overrepresentation of female and Italian respondents may have led to social and cultural biases in the responses, potentially limiting the findings' external validity. Future research should recruit a more diversified sample, particularly in terms of gender and nationality, to better capture the heterogeneity of consumer perspectives and facilitate more robust conclusions.

Another important limitation pertains to the potential influence of an uncontrolled variable, particularly, price perception, on the observed guilt. The decision not to mention the price of

the presented item in the survey, whether it was first or second-hand, was done because only one product was presented to the participants, and not to constrain or bias them towards any direction. Additionally, this choice was also influenced by the variability in pricing within the vintage luxury market, where some second-hand items could be even more expensive than new collections. Nevertheless, from the results obtained, it is possible that the lower levels of guilt associated to the second-hand item may be influenced by factors beyond sustainability and ethical concerns, namely the perceived price. Participants may have inferred a price differential, assuming second-hand items to be cheaper. This is particularly likely for those participants who reported lower levels of environmental awareness. The data, in fact, showed full mediation of perceived sustainable value on the relationship between product type and guilt, but only when it comes to highly environmentally aware consumers. On the other hand, in the case of lower levels of environmental concerns, other uncontrolled factors might have mediated this relationship. Therefore, the lower environmentally aware consumers might have been more inclined towards the vintage product as it evoked lower levels of guilt being cheaper, while the first-hand product might have been perceived as more indulgent, thus, inducing more guilt. For this reason, in future research, it is advisable to control for price by explicitly stating that the price would be the same regardless of the type of product type or by assessing participants' perceptions of the price associated with each option and to ensure more accurate and reliable results.

8. Conclusion

Despite a recent approach to the study of the motivations behind vintage luxury purchases, academic research hasn't fully examined the impact of purchasing second-hand luxury items not only as a way of defining the consumers' personality, but also as a sustainable action. This study aims to address how environmental concerns affect consumers' preferences for luxury products, in the case of vintage ones.

The data is consistent with one of the two hypotheses presented, highlighting the influence of one's environmental concerns on perceptions of sustainability and ethicality as well as guilt towards second-hand luxury products. The results showed that consumer perceived sustainable value, perceived ethical value, and guilt depend on the type of product and on personal levels of environmental awareness. Consistently with the hypotheses, these are accentuated by the second-hand item and by high levels of environmental concerns. This underscores the

importance of campaigns of environmental education to raise awareness and shape consumer attitudes towards sustainable luxury products.

To conclude, while the current paper provides valuable insights into the relationship between environmental concerns and second-hand luxury products, there is still much to be further explored in the field. By addressing the limitations mentioned above and building upon the findings of this study, future research can contribute to a better understanding of sustainable luxury consumption and provide marketers and managers with insightful observations in this domain.

9. Appendices

Appendix 1: Pretest – Handbags



Louis Vuitton – Speedy Bandoulière



Gucci – GG Marmont



Chanel – 2.55



Prada – Re-Edition 2005



Yves Saint Laurent – Loulou

Appendix 2: Pretest- Questionnaire

Welcome Page

Dear Participant,

Thank you for your participation in this survey. As a master's student at Católica Lisbon School of Business & Economics, I am conducting a pretest study to evaluate perceptions of luxury fashion brands for my thesis.

The survey will take less than 4 minutes to complete, your participation is completely voluntary and anonymous. Your honest opinions are appreciated, and there are no right or wrong answers.

Feel free to reach out to s-brago@ucp.pt for any comments or concerns.

Thank you for your time and contribution!

Bianca

General Description

Imagine you are considering buying a luxury handbag. Please answer the following questions considering the brands and options presented.

Louis Vuitton



1. How much do you like this brand?

1 – not at all 2 3 4 5 6 7 – very much

2. To what extent do you think this brand is luxurious?

1 – not luxurious at all 2 3 4 5 6 7 – extremely luxurious

3. How sustainable do you think this brand is?

1 – not sustainable at all 2 3 4 5 6 7 – extremely sustainable

4. How ethical do you think this brand is?

1 – not ethical at all 2 3 4 5 6 7 – extremely ethical

5. How much would you like to own this handbag?

1 – not at all 2 3 4 5 6 7 – very much

6. How much would you like to own this handbag if it was second-hand?

1 – not at all 2 3 4 5 6 7 – very much

Gucci



7. How much do you like this brand?

1 – not at all 2 3 4 5 6 7 – very much

8. To what extent do you think this brand is luxurious?

1 – not
luxurious at all 2 3 4 5 6 7 – extremely
luxurious

9. How sustainable do you think this brand is?

1 – not
sustainable at
all 2 3 4 5 6 7 – extremely
sustainable

10. How ethical do you think this brand is?

1 – not ethical
at all 2 3 4 5 6 7 – extremely
ethical

11. How much would you like to own this handbag?

1 – not at all 2 3 4 5 6 7 – very much

12. How much would you like to own this handbag if it was second-hand?

1 – not at all 2 3 4 5 6 7 – very much

Prada



13. How much do you like this brand?

1 – not at all 2 3 4 5 6 7 – very much

14. To what extent do you think this brand is luxurious?

1 – not
luxurious at all 2 3 4 5 6 7 – extremely
luxurious

15. How sustainable do you think this brand is?

- 1 – not sustainable at all 2 3 4 5 6 7 – extremely sustainable
16. How ethical do you think this brand is?
- 1 – not ethical at all 2 3 4 5 6 7 – extremely ethical
17. How much would you like to own this handbag?
- 1 – not at all 2 3 4 5 6 7 – very much
18. How much would you like to own this handbag if it was second-hand?
- 1 – not at all 2 3 4 5 6 7 – very much

Yves Saint Laurent



19. How much do you like this brand?
- 1 – not at all 2 3 4 5 6 7 – very much
20. To what extent do you think this brand is luxurious?
- 1 – not luxurious at all 2 3 4 5 6 7 – extremely luxurious
21. How sustainable do you think this brand is?
- 1 – not sustainable at all 2 3 4 5 6 7 – extremely sustainable
22. How ethical do you think this brand is?
- 1 – not ethical at all 2 3 4 5 6 7 – extremely ethical
23. How much would you like to own this handbag?
- 1 – not at all 2 3 4 5 6 7 – very much
24. How much would you like to own this handbag if it was second-hand?
- 1 – not at all 2 3 4 5 6 7 – very much

Chanel



25. How much do you like this brand?

1 – not at all 2 3 4 5 6 7 – very much

26. To what extent do you think this brand is luxurious?

1 – not luxurious at all 2 3 4 5 6 7 – extremely luxurious

27. How sustainable do you think this brand is?

1 – not sustainable at all 2 3 4 5 6 7 – extremely sustainable

28. How ethical do you think this brand is?

1 – not ethical at all 2 3 4 5 6 7 – extremely ethical

29. How much would you like to own this handbag?

1 – not at all 2 3 4 5 6 7 – very much

30. How much would you like to own this handbag if it was second-hand?

1 – not at all 2 3 4 5 6 7 – very much

Thank you

Thank you for your time spent taking this survey.

Your response has been recorded.

Appendix 3: Main Study

Welcome Page

Dear Participant,

Thank you for your participation in this survey.

As a master's student at Católica Lisbon School of Business & Economics, I am conducting a study on luxury fashion items and sustainability for my thesis.

The survey will take less than 5 minutes to complete, your participation is completely voluntary and anonymous.

Your honest opinions are appreciated, and there are no right or wrong answers.

The survey is available in two languages: English and Italian, you can select the language you are most comfortable with in the top right corner.

Feel free to reach out to s-brago@ucp.pt for any comments or concerns.

Thank you for your time and contribution!

Bianca

Randomization Question

Please click here* to be directed to the study.

** link to one of the four conditions*

RANDOMIZATION

Respondents are directed to one of the four following conditions:

1. Priming, First-hand item
2. No Priming, First-hand item
3. Priming, Second-hand item
4. No Priming, Second-hand item

Priming*

Below are five values listed in alphabetical order. Your task is to arrange them according to their importance to you, as guiding principles in your life. Study the list carefully and pick out the one value which is most important and list it under (1). Then pick out the value which is second most important to you, list it under (2) and so on. Work slowly and think carefully. The end result should truly show how you really feel.

1. Caring for future generations
2. Living in a healthy place
3. Preserving nature
4. Unity with nature
5. World of beauty

** either this block was shown or the No Priming one*

No Priming*

Below are five values listed in alphabetical order. Your task is to arrange them according to their importance to you, as guiding principles in your life. Study the list carefully and pick out the one value which is most important and list it under (1). Then pick out the value which is second most important to you, list it under (2) and so on. Work slowly and think carefully. The end result should truly show how you really feel.

1. Enjoying the good things in life
2. Freedom
3. Perfectionism
4. Respecting other people
5. Social recognition

** either this block was shown or the Priming one*

First-Hand Item*

Imagine you want to purchase a luxury handbag and are considering this brand new Prada bag.



Please answer the following questions.

** either this block was shown or the Second-hand one*

Second-Hand Item*

Imagine you want to purchase a luxury handbag and are considering this brand vintage, second-hand Prada bag.



Please answer the following questions.

** either this block was shown or the First-hand one*

Purchase Intention



1. How much would you like to own the presented item?

1 – Not at all 2 3 4 5 6 7 – Totally

2. How much would you intend to buy the presented item?

1 – Not at all 2 3 4 5 6 7 – Totally

3. To what extent do you see yourself wearing the presented item?

1 – Not at all 2 3 4 5 6 7 – Totally

4. How likely are you to prioritize the presented item over other luxury items?

1 – Unlikely 2 3 4 5 6 7 – Highly likely

Perceived Quality Value



5. How would you rate the overall quality of the presented item?

1 – Very low quality 2 3 4 5 6 7 – Very high quality

6. To what extent does the presented item meet your quality standards?

1 – Not at all 2 3 4 5 6 7 – Totally

7. To what extent do you find the presented item unique?

1 – Not at all unique 2 3 4 5 6 7 – Extremely unique

8. How desirable do you find the presented item?

1 – Not at all desirable 2 3 4 5 6 7 – Extremely desirable

Perceived Social Value



9. To what extent do you believe the presented item can give you social approval?

1 – Strongly disagree 2 3 4 5 6 7 – Strongly agree

10. To what extent do you believe the presented item can improve the way you are perceived by others?

1 – Strongly disagree 2 3 4 5 6 7 – Strongly agree

11. To what extent do you believe the presented item can enhance your status?

1 – Strongly disagree 2 3 4 5 6 7 – Strongly agree

12. To what extent do you believe the presented item would leave a good impression on other people?

1 – Strongly disagree 2 3 4 5 6 7 – Strongly agree

Perceived Sustainable Value



13. How environmentally friendly do you perceive the presented item to be?

1 – Not environmentally friendly at all 2 3 4 5 6 7 – Extremely environmentally friendly

14. How much do you believe buying the presented item helps save resources?

1 – Strongly disagree 2 3 4 5 6 7 – Strongly agree

15. To what extent do you think the presented item has a positive impact on the environment in that it extends the life of used materials?

1 – Strongly disagree 2 3 4 5 6 7 – Strongly agree

16. To what extent do you think you are helping to fight against waste with the presented item?

1 – Strongly disagree 2 3 4 5 6 7 – Strongly agree

Perceived Ethical Value



17. To what extent do you believe purchasing the presented item aligns with ethical values?

1 – Strongly disagree 2 3 4 5 6 7 – Strongly agree

18. To what extent do you believe the production process of the presented item adheres to ethical standards?

1 – Strongly disagree 2 3 4 5 6 7 – Strongly agree

19. To what extent do you believe purchasing the presented item supports ethical practices?

1 – Strongly disagree 2 3 4 5 6 7 – Strongly agree

20. How ethically responsible do you believe the brand is in selling the presented item?

1 – Strongly disagree 2 3 4 5 6 7 – Strongly agree

Guilt



21. How guilty would you feel about owning the presented item?

1 – Not guilty at all 2 3 4 5 6 7 – Extremely guilty

22. How conflicted do you feel about the potential environmental impact of owning the presented item?

1 – Not conflicted at all 2 3 4 5 6 7 – Extremely conflicted

23. How concerned are you by the possibility of the presented item being perceived as excessive or superfluous?

1 – Not concerned at all 2 3 4 5 6 7 – Extremely concerned

Shopping Habits

24. How often do you purchase luxury fashion items?

1 – Never 2 3 4 5 6 7 – Regularly

25. In the last 12 months how often did you purchase a luxury fashion item?

- Never
- Less than once a month
- 1 to 3 times per month
- 4 to 6 times per month
- More than 6 times per month

Demographics

26. How old are you? (please write your age in numbers) *open answer*

27. How would you describe yourself?

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary/Third gender
- Prefer not to say

28. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- High school diploma
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- Doctoral degree

29. What best describes your current employment status?

- Employed full-time
- Employed part-time
- Unemployed
- Student
- Retired

30. What is your nationality?

- Italian

- Portuguese
- German
- English
- French
- Spanish
- Austrian
- Belgian
- Other, please specify

Thank you

Thank you for your time spent taking this survey.

Your response has been recorded.

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