Love at second sight

THE IMPACT OF ADDRESSING THE SECONDHAND MARKET
AS A LUXURY BRAND ON DESIRABILITY AND BRAND ATTITUDES

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ABSTRACT

The fashion industry is facing vast challenges to become more sustainable, as it is known to be one of the most polluting industries in the world. The luxury fashion industry in particular has struggled to integrate sustainability within their business practices. New fashion business models such as addressing secondhand and firsthand luxury markets simultaneously have gained momentum from both practitioners and scholars, as these can provide smart solutions for the sustainability challenges ahead. However, luxury brands remain concerned as to whether this approach may damage their perceived exclusivity. As research on consumer's perception of this approach remains scarce, this study aims to fill this research gap by conducting a 2 (selling both secondhand and firsthand luxury versus selling firsthand luxury only) by 2 (exclusivity claim versus no exclusivity claim) between-subjects experimental study with 142 luxury consumers. The aim of this research is to investigate the effects of this multi-market approach on brand and product attitudes and brand desirability, as well as find ways to counteract possible negative effects of selling secondhand luxury. By doing so, this study revealed that selling both secondhand and firsthand luxury does in fact increase brand attitudes and desirability, via the indirect effect of perceived scarcity. The use of an exclusivity claim however did not significantly increase the perception of perceived scarcity. Furthermore, this empirical study provides both scholars and brand executives with specific insights of how consumers evaluate luxury brands that make efforts to become more sustainable, in addition to how luxury consumers evaluate secondhand luxury products as well.

KEYWORDS
secondhand luxury market, sustainable luxury fashion, exclusivity claim, luxury brand evaluation

ABSTRACT NL

De mode-industrie staat voor grote uitdagingen om te verduurzamen, aangezien die bekend staat als een van de meest vervuilende industrieën ter wereld. Vooral de luxemode-industrie heeft het moeilijk om duurzaamheid in de bedrijfspraktijken te integreren. Nieuwe businessmodellen voor de mode-industrie, zoals het simultaan benaderen van tweedehands- en eerstehands luxemarkten, hebben aan momentum gewonnen, zowel bij vakmensen als wetenschappelijk onderzoekers, omdat ze slimme oplossingen kunnen bieden voor de toekomstige uitdagingen op het gebied van duurzaamheid. Luxemerken blijven echter bezorgd of deze aanpak hun gepercipieerde exclusiviteit zou kunnen schaden. Aangezien onderzoek naar de perceptie van consumenten ten aanzien van deze aanpak schaars is, tracht dit onderzoek deze kloof in te vullen met een 2 (verkoop van zowel tweedehands als eerstehandse luxe versus verkoop van alleen eerstehandse luxe) bij 2 (exclusiviteitsclaim versus geen exclusiviteitsclaim) between-subjects experimentele studie met 142 luxeconsumenten. Het doel van dit onderzoek is om de effecten van deze simultane aanpak op merk- en productattitudes en merkwenselijkheid te onderzoeken, alsmede manieren te vinden om mogelijke negatieve effecten van de verkoop van tweedehands luxe tegen te gaan. Uit dit onderzoek blijkt dat de verkoop van zowel tweedehands als eerstehandse luxe de merkattitudes en merkwenselijkheid zelfs verhoogt, via het indirecte effect van gepercipieerde schaarste. Het gebruik van een exclusiviteitsclaim bleek de perceptie van waargenomen schaarste echter niet significant te verhogen. Verder biedt deze empirische studie zowel wetenschappers als managers van luxemerken specifieke inzichten in hoe consumenten luxemerken beoordelen die inspanningen doen om te verduurzamen, alsook in hoe luxeconsumenten tweedehands luxeproducten op zich evalueren.

KEYWORDS
tweedehandsluxemarkt, duurzame luxemode, exclusiviteitsclaim, luxemerkbeoordeling

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1 INTRODUCTION

According to the United Nation Conference on Trade and Development, the fashion industry is the second most polluting industry in the world (UNFCCC, 2019). The fashion industry as a whole is responsible for about 10% of global greenhouse gas emissions and 20% of wastewater (UNECE, 2018). The fast fashion business model in particular plays a big role in the environmental issue (UNFCCC, 2019) as the concept revolves around frequently purchasing of low-quality items for a low price (Birtwistle & Moore, 2007). After a few wears the items tend to get disposed and replaced by new items (Joy et al., 2012; Tokatli & Kizilgun, 2009). Compared to this, luxury fashion can be considered more sustainable (Joy et al., 2012; Kapferer, 2010), since it focuses on timelessness, high quality and durability (de Angelis et al. 2017; Hudders, 2012; Kapferer, 2010). However, luxury fashion still has a long way to go. Raw material sourcing, animal cruelty and polluting manufacturing methods are just a few examples of unsustainable practices within the luxury industry (Kapferer & Michaut-Denizeau, 2013). Furthermore, it is argued that the concepts of luxury and sustainability are even oxymoronic (Osberg et al., 2020). The associations of luxury with excess, hedonism, overconsumption and consumption beyond necessity contradict sustainability and its focus on responsible consumption, moderation and sobriety (Davies et al., 2012; Harper & Peattie, 2011; Kapferer & Michaut-Denizeau, 2013).

A step towards sustainability would be to address the secondhand luxury market (Franco et al., 2020). This could extend product lifecycles and raise awareness about secondhand consumption (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2017). Certain luxury brands have recently realized the potential of adopting this strategy. For example, in October 2019, luxury retailer Selfridges opened a store selling only pre-owned luxury items from secondhand retailer Vestiaire Collective, right next to their new luxury goods (www.selfridges.com). Also, luxury brand Stella McCartney is working in partnership with secondhand retailer TheRealReal to promote reselling luxury items and boosting the circular economy in luxury fashion (www.TheRealReal.com). Most recently, Zalando, a multibrand online store for both affordable and more premium brands, launched the Zalando Pre-owned platform where consumers can resell their fashion goods for Zalando shopping credit (www.zalando.be).

For luxury brands, a multi-market approach could result in growing sales volume and revenue, while allowing the brand to differentiate from others (Franco et al., 2020; Kim et al., 2012). It also creates an opportunity to control the secondhand market of said brand to maintain quality, authenticity and brand experience. This could guarantee the exclusivity of luxury brands, which is an essential attribute for

luxury consumers to pay the high price tag for luxury goods (Kapferer & Bastien, 2012). Furthermore, this strategy would align with consumer's expectations, since 70% of luxury consumers would like to purchase secondhand products directly from luxury brands (BCG, 2020). Besides, it may also create a trickle-down effect for the whole fashion industry (Amatulli et al., 2017; Atwal et al., 2017), making the industry more circular as a whole. Finally, it is a way for customers to experience the thrill of purchasing new items without depleting scarce resources, and lowering carbon emissions, landfill and water usage (Hur, 2020; Styvén & Mariani, 2020).

Even though this approach to luxury consumption could have many benefits for brands, consumers and the environment, research about addressing both markets remains scarce (Osberg et al., 2020). Luxury brands may have an understanding of purchase decision-making in new luxury, yet this understanding cannot be easily transferred to secondhand luxury purchases. As this is not an easy step for brands to take, extensive research on the opportunities, challenges and tensions of addressing the secondhand market for luxury brands is needed, in order to make the fashion industry more sustainable. Studies about motivations and drivers for new and secondhand luxury exist, but always considers both markets fully separate (for example, Amatulli et al., 2018; Berthon et al., 2009; Hudders, 2012; Turunen & Leipämaa-Leskinen, 2015; Zhang & Zhao; 2019). The exception to this is the study of

Kessous and Valette-Florence (2019), which researches the relations that first-hand vs. secondhand consumers establish with their luxury products. Their study uses the perspective that brands target only one or the other, whereas this study explores the approach of luxury brands addressing both consumers simultaneously by exploring how brand attitudes and brand desirability from luxury consumers change when a luxury brand sells both firsthand and secondhand luxury items on its online store. Furthermore, this study investigates whether the use of an exclusivity cue on the online store will moderate the impact of selling secondhand luxury as a luxury brand on brand attitudes and brand desirability. More formally, the research questions of this paper are:

RQ1: How do consumers' brand and product attitudes and brand desirability change when a luxury brand sells both firsthand and secondhand luxury?

RQ2: What are the effects of using an exclusivity claim on consumers' brand and product attitudes and brand desirability when a luxury brand sells both firsthand and secondhand luxury, compared to when a luxury brand sells firsthand luxury only?

This research will add to existing literature on firsthand and secondhand luxury by examining the altering perceptions of consumers when a luxury brand decides to sell secondhand luxury items. It will furthermore extend current knowledge of the effects of labels (i.e., quality labels, safety labels, sustainability labels) on consumer perception in general, but also in the luxury sector. Additionally, this article provides

deeper understanding of the intangible attributes and values that constitute a luxury brand by manipulating the perception of exclusivity. Methodologically, this research uses a quantitative experimental design, contrary to most studies on secondhand luxury, that use qualitative research designs (for example, Amatulli et al., 2018; Cervellon & Vigreux, 2018; Turunen & Leipämaa- Leskinen, 2015) which can provide new insights in the secondhand luxury research field. Moreover, this study can assist luxury brand executives at developing marketing strategies that protect the exclusivity of a luxury brand and work towards becoming a more innovative and sustainable brand in the luxury industry.

2.1 Compatibility of sustainability and luxury

The importance of sustainability within organizations has increased a lot over the past decades, as governments and consumers pressure brands to become more sustainable (Franco et al., 2020). Existing literature mostly agrees on the definition of sustainability of the Brundtland Report, which states sustainability is "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (Brundtland Report, 1987, p. 8). However, the current literature is divided on whether luxury is compatible with sustainability, and thus an opportunity or a challenge within the global climate issue. Kapferer (2010) argues that the two concepts are indeed compatible because luxury goods are supposed to be high quality and long lasting, and thus being the "enemy of the throw-away society" (Kapferer, 2010, p. 41). The timeless design and outstanding quality of luxury goods makes them ideal for using them over a long period of time (de Angelis et al., 2017), selling them on the secondhand market (Lee et al., 2015) and passing them on to next generations (Arrigo, 2018). This can reduce landfill and the use of scarce resources because one item can serve its purpose for many users year after year and thus reduce the demand for new produced goods (de Angelis et al., 2017; Guercini & Ranfagni, 2013). Also, the rarity and low stock of luxury goods can be

argued a sustainable element, as it implies less overproduction, whilst creating the exclusivity that makes luxury consumers pay large amounts of money for a luxury item (Kapferer, 2012). Other core values of luxury that resonate with sustainability are local production, craftsmanship and controlling the whole supply chain. This not only ensures high quality, but it also avoids poor working conditions and overproduction due to the slow but meticulous manufacturing process of craftsmen (Amatulli et al., 2017; Henninger et al., 2017; Kapferer, 2012; Kapferer & Michaut-Denize, 2013). Recent research also revealed that sustainable luxury practices may positively influence a luxury brand's competitiveness given that sustainable initiatives can enhance consumers' willingness to buy (Amatulli et al., 2018), brand image (Arrigo, 2018), perception of luxury products (Steinhart et al., 2013) and positive word-of-mouth (Cheah et al., 2016). It may also create the opportunity for a luxury brand to differentiate itself from others, both as a supplier on the luxury market and as an employer on the job market (Amatulli et al., 2017; Kim et al., 2012; Osburg et al. 2018; Sourvinou & Filimonau, 2018). Along with these benefits, luxury brands can reach new market segments that consist of sustainability-oriented customers, which can result in growing sales volume and increasing overall revenue. Franco et al. (2020) suggest that luxury brands shift towards eco-friendly, laboratory-made and vegan raw materials, vertically integrate

their supply chain or simply address the secondhand market. The latter can be a low threshold strategy, because it makes use of luxury goods that already exist today instead of investing in developing innovative materials which can be a fruitful yet long term process.

2.2 Unsustainable practices within luxury consumption

Although researchers such as Amatulli et al. (2017) and Kapferer (2010) argue the compatibility of luxury fashion and sustainability, a critical perspective on sustainable luxury is needed (Osberg et al., 2020). Luxury is essentially considered unnecessary, so any luxury purchase contradicts the main attributes of sustainability, such as sobriety and moderation (Streit & Davies, 2013; Harper & Peattie 2011). Next to the oxymoronic character of the concepts itself, the supply chain of luxury is criticized for its unsustainable practices (Kapferer & Michaut-Denizeau, 2013). Animal cruelty, depletion of scarce resources, damaging biodiversity and generating significant waste are just a few examples of which the luxury sector has been criticized for in recent years (Kapferer & Michaut-Denizeau, 2013; BCG & Global Fashion Agenda, 2018). As in many industries, economic growth and technological advancement prevail environmental sustainability (Kilbourne et al., 2002), when in fact this prioritization could threaten the supply of luxury goods and thus sales revenue. That is, luxury brands depend on the access to scarce and rare resources, which are depleting rapidly because of fast rising demand (Tello & Yoon, 2008). By taking up their environmental responsibility, they can ensure this supply of raw materials and securing their long-term competitive success (Franco et al., 2020). But even though some luxury brands like Stella McCartney make noticeable efforts in order to become more sustainable, current literature shows that a majority of luxury consumers do not consider sustainability an important aspect in their decision-making process (Davies et al., 2012). Furthermore, they even perceive sustainable marketed luxury items of lesser quality and thus less desirable (Achabou & Dekhili, 2013; Beckham & Voyer, 2014). Given that secondhand luxury goods hold the high quality and design aesthetic of new luxury, as they are new luxury goods that merely switched owners, they could potentially serve as a sustainable alternative to sustainable produced new luxury.

2.3 Drivers and obstacles for secondhand luxury consumers

The secondhand luxury market has seen a significant growth rate of 10 % every year since 2015, rising to € 26 billion in 2019 (Bain & Co, 2019). Not only luxury market players have looked at this fast-growing segment of the luxury market with great interest, but scholars as well consider this market as a relevant research topic. In 2015, Turunen and Leipämaa-Leskinen used in-depth interviews to shine light on the purchase motives of secondhand luxury consumers. The results were characterized in five themes: Sustainable Choice, Real Deal, Pre-loved Treasure, Risk Investment and Unique Find. They furthermore highlighted

the conflicting meaning of authenticity when shopping for secondhand luxury. On the one hand, previously owned luxury items were sometimes seen as even more authentic than firsthand items, because the past life of these items triggers nostalgic feelings of manufacturing luxury items before the era of mass production. The participants stated that anyone can buy a new, mass produced luxury item, yet only pre-owned items can provoke the spirit of the past when luxury brands focused more on craftsmanship. On the other hand, secondhand luxury consumers often experience concerns and fear of purchasing inauthentic goods, because secondhand luxury nowadays is often sold through online platforms that do not always offer an authentication service. For example, purchasing secondhand via social media platforms entails the risk of receiving a counterfeit item (Turnen & Leipämaa-Leskinen, 2015). Certain luxury brands offer authentication services, yet only after the secondhand item is purchased by a consumer. Buying secondhand luxury goods via luxury brands could vastly diminish this risk because the authenticity can be checked immediately. This authenticity check can ultimately decrease the circulation of counterfeit luxury goods overall.

Amatulli et al. (2018) delved deeper in the purchase determinants of vintage luxury fashion (that is, previously owned, but not necessarily used goods from a specific era (Gerval, 2008). These consequences were categorised in functional and psychological consequences. The former being the consequences Timelessness

and Affordable Luxury, the latter being distinction, impressing others, nostalgia, history, emotional bond with the past and Treasure Hunt. They furthermore linked these consequences to instrumental and terminal values and found that consumers mainly purchased vintage luxury fashion to improve their self-confidence, satisfy their individual identity, and achieve a sense of fulfilment. Next to these intrinsic goals, many participants mentioned that buying secondhand luxury fashion is a way to foster social acceptance and related to showing off one's social status. Kessous and Valette-Florence (2019) similarly found that pre-owned luxury fashion is linked to social climbing and status seeking. Secondhand luxury can be a way to belong to social classes they were unable to reach previously. Besides psychological needs, eco-friendly consumption, brand heritage and windfall are linked to purchasing secondhand luxury fashion (Kessous & Valette-Florence, 2019).

Multiple studies mention the economic advantage of buying secondhand luxury fashion. Consumers of previously owned luxury are driven by purchasing superior quality, luxurious items without breaking the bank (Amatulli et al., 2018; Cervellon & Vigreux, 2018; Kessous & Valette-Florence, 2019; Turunen & Leipämaa-Leskinen, 2015). Interviews from Boston Consulting Group (2020) revealed that the financial uncertainty due to the COVID-19 crisis prompted more luxury consumers to consider secondhand luxury fashion, because of these lower price points. The crisis impacted the first-hand luxury market

greatly with 57% of consumers refraining from purchasing luxury goods (Bianchi et al., 2020). Meanwhile, the secondhand luxury trend is strongly accelerated by the crisis and the secondhand market is rapidly growing (Bianchi et al., 2020; BCG, 2020).

2.4 Drivers and obstacles for firsthand luxury consumers

Research on new luxury consumption categorizes its drivers in three dimensions, specifically the functional, emotional and symbolic value of luxury (for example Berthon et al., 2009; Hudders, 2012; Zhang & Zhao, 2019). The functional value entails what the item does, the experiential value explains the affective responses of luxury consumers and the symbolic value reflects what the item represents (Berthon et al., 2009). First, the experiential value focusses on the brand experience, which Brakus, Schmitt and Zarantonello (2009) conceptualize as 'sensations, feelings, cognitions, and behavioural responses evoked by brand-related stimuli that are part of a brand's design and identity, packaging, communications, and environments' (Brakus et al., 2009, pp. 53). For luxury consumers, this concerns the shopping environment and hedonistic experiences (Hudders, 2012; Zhang & Zhao, 2019). The shopping atmosphere should reflect a luxury brand's values in order to make luxury consumers feel valued, powerful and ultimately willing to pay the price of luxury goods (Fox, 2018; Liu et al., 2013; Manlow & Nobs, 2012). Brands can approach consumers by

integrating high quality standards for the store design, packaging, staff and customer service to create positive associations in the minds of luxury consumers (Berthon et al., 2009). Contrary to this, secondhand luxury can be sold through various selling points, which may have lower standards in terms of purchase experience (Cervellon & Vigreux, 2018). This can possibly damage established brand associations, unless luxury brands find sophisticated ways to incorporate the retail of secondhand items into their brand experience.

Secondly, the symbolic value has two aspects: what the luxury item signals to others and what it signals to the consumer itself (Berthon et al., 2009). The former is considered "external" luxury consumption and is centred on the social visibility of a luxury purchase (Amatulli & Guido 2012; Amatulli et al., 2015). The conspicuousness of goods may have a significant effect on consumer preferences for luxury goods consumed in public, compared to privately consumed luxury goods (Hudders, 2012; Vigneron & Johnson, 2004). Generally speaking, conspicuous consumption is a way for certain luxury consumers to communicate their wealth and social status though a luxury product. Literature suggests that these goals can also be achieved through reselling luxury goods (Turunen et al., 2019). Luxury resale allows consumers to display themselves as firsthand luxury clients, draw a clear distinct line between themselves and secondhand buyers, and achieving higher environmental consumer status. This type of status is understood as being seen as a more

responsible and smarter consumer and setting an example for other consumers. In this view, reselling can be argued a form of conspicuous consumer behaviour (Turunen et al., 2019).

Thirdly, functional drivers for luxury consumption may be high quality, durability, usability and uniqueness (Amatulli & Guido, 2011; Hudders, 2012; Vigneron & Johnson, 2004; Wiedmann et al., 2009; Zhang & Zhao; 2019). Uniqueness is considered a significant driver for luxury consumers to spend excessive amounts of money on luxury items, as it follows the Rarity Principle. This principle states that consumers consider luxury product as rare products and when they are diffused too widely, they lose their luxurious character (Dubois & Paternault, 1995; Veblen, 1899). If luxury brands want to be perceived as unique, rare and exclusive, they ought to tightly control the quantities and retail points of their luxury goods (Dubois & Paternault, 1995). Since luxury fashion has been around since the late 19th century (Veblen, 1899) and the luxury market keeps expanding (BCG, 2019), one can assume that the amount of luxury goods existing today is quite substantial. Many of these goods end up on the secondhand market, often in order to buy new luxury with the profits (Cervellon & Shammas, 2013; Lee et al., 2015).

2.5 The importance of Exclusivity

Exclusivity is known to be an essential element to the identity of luxury brands (Dubois & Paternault, 1995; Ishihara & Zhang, 2017;

Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2012; Wiedmann et al., 2009). Research has shown that consumers have an inherent preference for exclusive goods over widely available items (Verhallen & Robben, 1994; Cialdini, 1993), as the perception of exclusiveness is based on scarcity (Radon, 2012). Today, luxury brands became masters in creating the perception of scarcity through low stock levels, limited availability and excessive price tags (Catry, 2003; Lichtenstein et al., 1993). In doing so, consumers use these premium price tags to determine a product's and brand's exclusivity (Catry, 2003; Lichtenstein et al., 1993). As the price tags of secondhand luxury goods, bar extremely rare vintage items, are noticeably lower than their firsthand counterparts, it may be assumed that the perceived scarcity from a luxury brand selling both firsthand and secondhand luxury will be lower than if a brand were to sell new luxury only. In other words, selling secondhand luxury can make a brand more accessible for wider audiences and reduces the perceived scarcity, and thus exclusivity, of luxury goods. As previously stated, exclusiveness is a key factor for the identity of a luxury brand, which results in a specific attitude towards a luxury brand and defines how appealing the brand and product is to luxury consumers (Kapferer & Bastien, 2012, Radon, 2012; Upshaw et al., 2017). Thus, it may be argued that altering the perceived availability and price tags of certain luxury items by selling secondhand luxury goods can ultimately result in lower brand and product attitudes and desirability. More formally, we hypothesise:

H1: Selling both firsthand luxury and secondhand luxury (compared to selling only firsthand luxury) leads to lower brand attitudes.

H2: Selling both firsthand luxury and secondhand luxury (compared to selling only firsthand luxury) leads to lower attitudes towards the product.

H3: Selling both firsthand luxury and secondhand luxury (compared to selling only firsthand luxury) leads to lower desirability.

Perceived scarcity mediates this effect of selling both firsthand and secondhand on brand and product attitudes and desirability. More formally, we argue:

H4: Selling both firsthand luxury and secondhand luxury (compared to selling only firsthand luxury) will lower perceived scarcity, and thus result in lower brand attitudes.

H5: Selling both firsthand luxury and secondhand luxury (compared to selling only firsthand luxury) will lower perceived scarcity, and thus result in lower product attitudes.

H6: Selling both firsthand luxury and secondhand luxury (compared to selling only firsthand luxury) will lower perceived scarcity, and thus result in lower desirability.

Although luxury brands have successfully evoked an exclusive image in the past century, they are facing vast challenges to maintain this image moving forward. The luxury goods market has seen significant growth over the past decade, rising to 281 billion euros in 2019 (Bain and Company, 2019), which implies that luxury consumption is becoming accessible to wider audiences as opposed to being a leisure activity for the elite (Veblen, 1899; Yeoman & McMahon-Beattie, 2011; Yeoman & McMahon-Beattie, 2013). This shift from "happy few" to "happy many" (Chandon et al., 2016, p. 299) is not only due to increased wealth of the middle classes and the rise of emerging markets such as mainland China (Rein, 2012), but has also seen major acceleration because of e-commerce (Ishihara & Zhang, 2017). This concept is called 'Deluxurification' and is argued to potentially damage luxury brand in the long run, because although it may initially result in increased sales and market share, it will eventually be less desired by the elite (who is the refence group to the masses in this context) and thus less attractive to mass audiences (Amaldoss & Jain; 2005). Luxury brands are therefore forced to seek a clever balance between safeguarding exclusivity on one hand and the growth opportunities posed by e-commerce on the other hand (Balasyan & Casais, 2018; Ishihara & Zhang, 2017). However, online stores offer a high level of customization for brands to create their desired brand experience by using web atmospherics (Manganari et al., 2009) and create space for providing authenticity or exclusivity appeals, and quality labels (Septiano et al., 2020; Yu et al., 2018). Further, Kluge, Köningsveld, Fassnacht and Mitschke (2013) showed the positive influence of a luxury home page design on perceived uniqueness of the brand. Research on the effects of

exclusivity labels on perceived scarcity of luxury goods remains scarce. An exception is the study of Kluge and Fassnacht (2015). Their study examined whether price display and availability claims such as 'Buy online' lowered the perceived scarcity of luxury goods, as this appeal implies that goods are easier accessible. The authors found no significant decrease in perceived scarcity, yet no research was executed to examine what availability claims may result in an increase of perceived scarcity. Furthermore, the study of Aggarwal, Jung and Huh (2011) showed that scarcity messages are most effective when they indicate limited quantities. In the same vein, the study presented made use of a limited edition claim and an exclusivity label to induce perceived scarcity. More specific studies on scarcity appeals or exclusivity labels in secondhand luxury markets are, to our knowledge, non-existing. To fill this research gap, this study proposes the use of an exclusivity claim on the brand website to examine whether this can help luxury brands to safeguard their exclusiveness when (1) selling online, and (2) when selling both secondhand and firsthand luxury fashion.

More formally, we present the following hypotheses and the conceptual model as seen in Figure 2:

H7: Using an exclusivity claim (compared to not using a exclusivity claim) will result in higher perceived scarcity, and thus result in higher brand attitudes, both when selling only firsthand luxury, as well as when selling both firsthand and secondhand luxury.

H8: Using an exclusivity claim (compared to not using a exclusivity claim) will result in higher perceived scarcity, and thus result in higher product attitudes, both when selling only firsthand luxury, as well as when selling both firsthand and secondhand luxury.

H9: Using an exclusivity claim (compared to not using a exclusivity claim) will result in higher perceived scarcity, and thus result in higher desirability, both when selling only firsthand luxury, as well as when selling both firsthand and secondhand luxury.
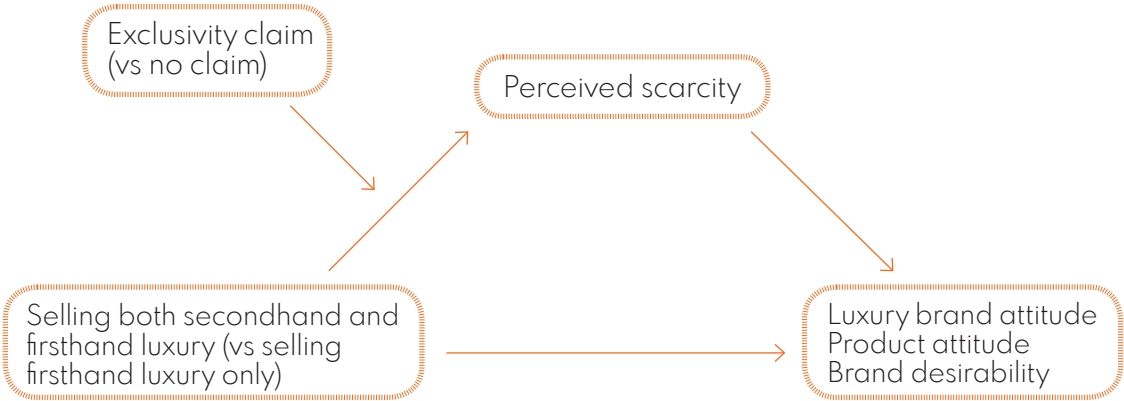

Figure 1: Conceptual model

3.1 Design

This research uses an experimental research design to answer the research question and test the hypotheses. An experiment using a two (selling only new luxury vs. selling new and secondhand luxury) by two (exclusivity claim vs. no exclusivity claim) factorial between-subjects design was conducted to measure the impact of selling secondhand luxury fashion as a luxury fashion brand. Selling secondhand luxury fashion and exclusivity claims were manipulated by making adaptations in the stimuli material. In May 2021, an online survey was used to collect data. After data collection, data cleaning was performed. Six test lines and two responses that only filled in the first two questions were removed from the data set. The research data was analysed using SPSS.

3.2 Stimuli material

To test the hypotheses, a luxury brand website of an existing brand was created. This study opted for an existing brand instead of a fictitious brand, since luxury brands rely heavily on intangible values and brand associations to be perceived as a luxury brand (Wiedmann et al., 2007). When using a fictitious brand, these brand associations would not be activated, and participants may not view the brand as an actual luxury brand such as Hermès or Dior. This may possibly decrease the ecological validity of the experiments. Therefore, this study uses the brand Jil Sander for the manipulations. To counterbalance the impact of pre-existing attitudes towards the brand, the prior attitude towards the brand will be taken into account by measuring change in attitudes towards the brand.

The secondhand luxury condition was manipulated by adding an additional section with secondhand items on the website versus no additional section. To manipulate the exclusivity condition, an exclusivity cue was added on the brand website in the product description versus no exclusivity cue on the brand website. The brand website in the control condition only sold luxury items and had no exclusivity claim. The conditions selling both secondhand and firsthand luxury also showed a short scenario explaining the concept of addressing the secondhand market as a luxury brand (i.e., "Next to selling new luxury pieces, Jil Sander also started selling secondhand (=pre-owned) Jil Sander items"). The secondhand items also had a lower price tag than their firsthand counterparts to resemble the realistic price points of secondhand luxury goods. Apart from the manipulations stated above, the stimuli material was identical in terms of font, image size, product display etc. All manipulations of the website were done using Adobe CC Photoshop. An overview of stimuli material of the main study can be found at Figure 2-5.
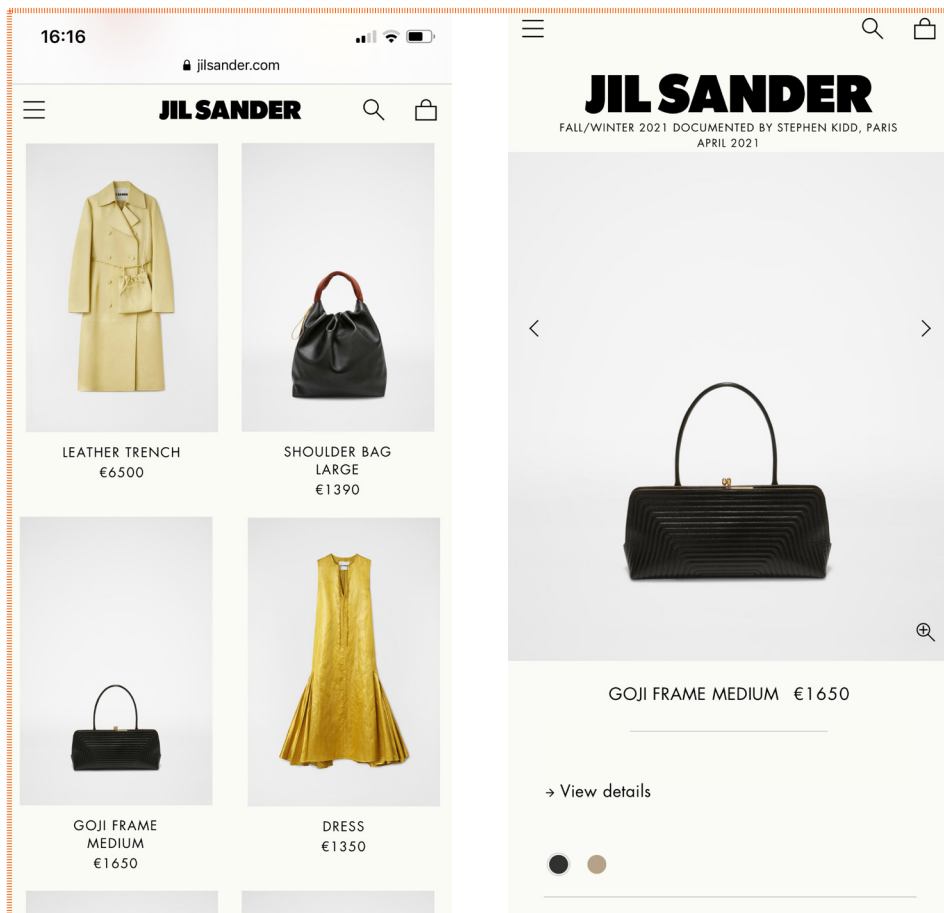
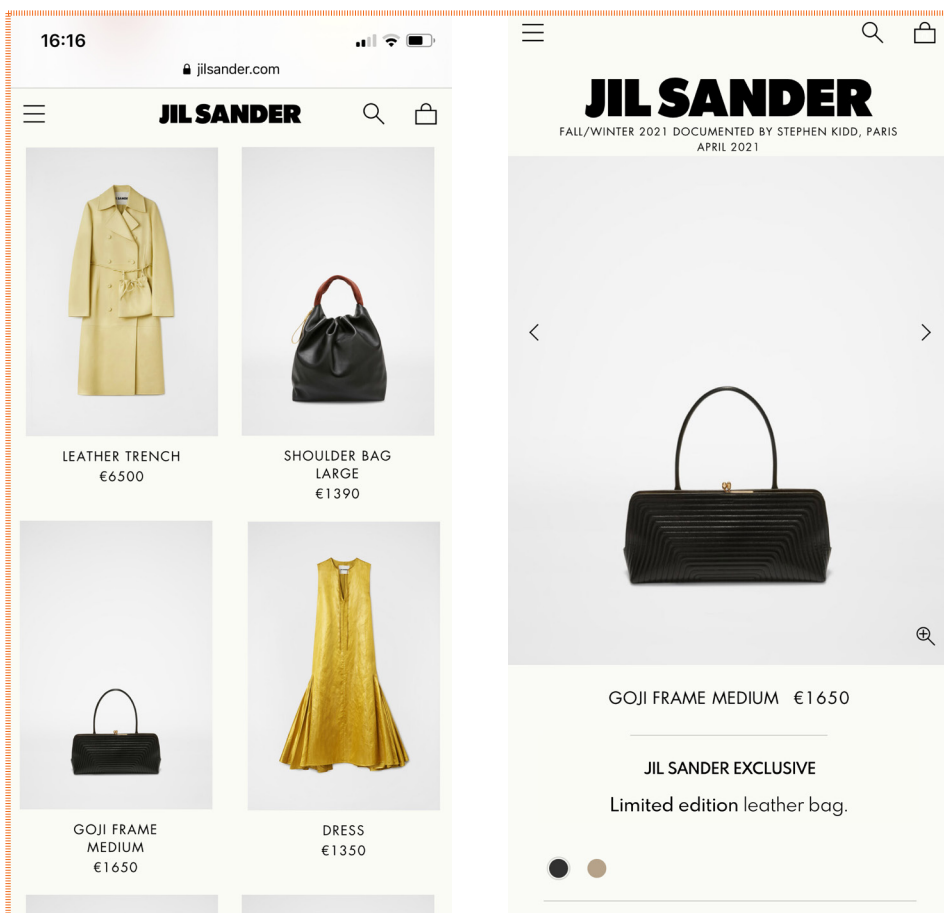Figure 2: Firsthand condition without exclusivity claim

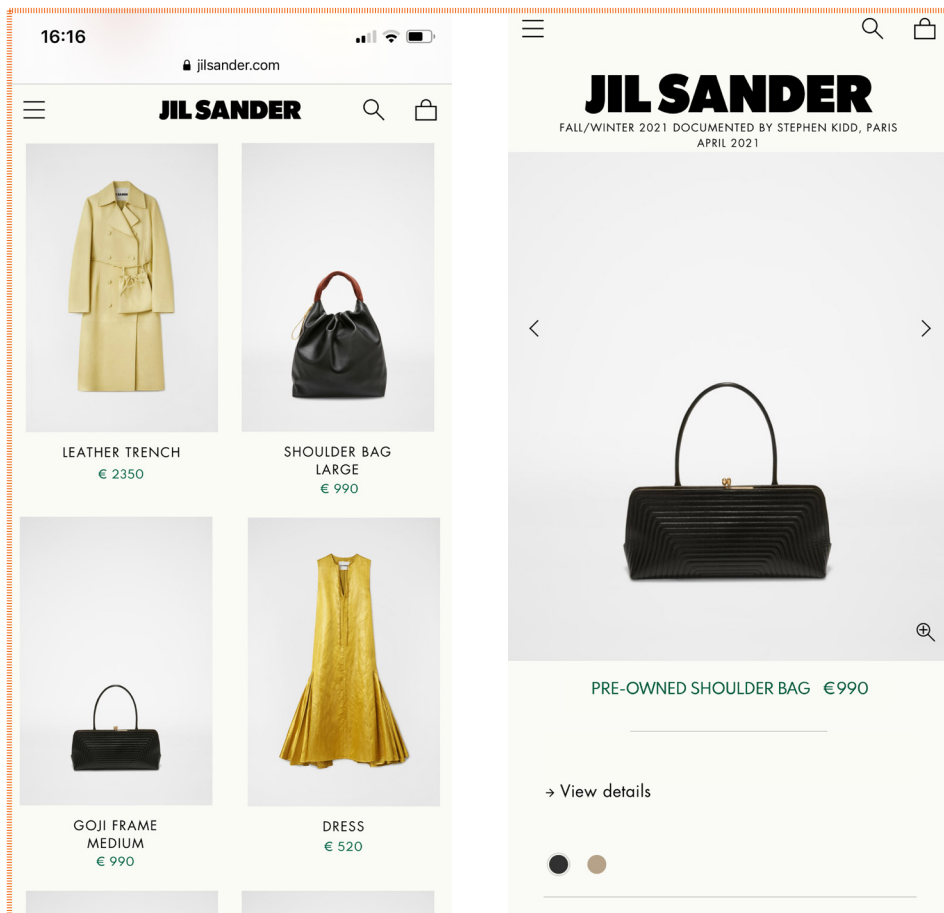Figure 3: Firsthand condition with exclusivity claim

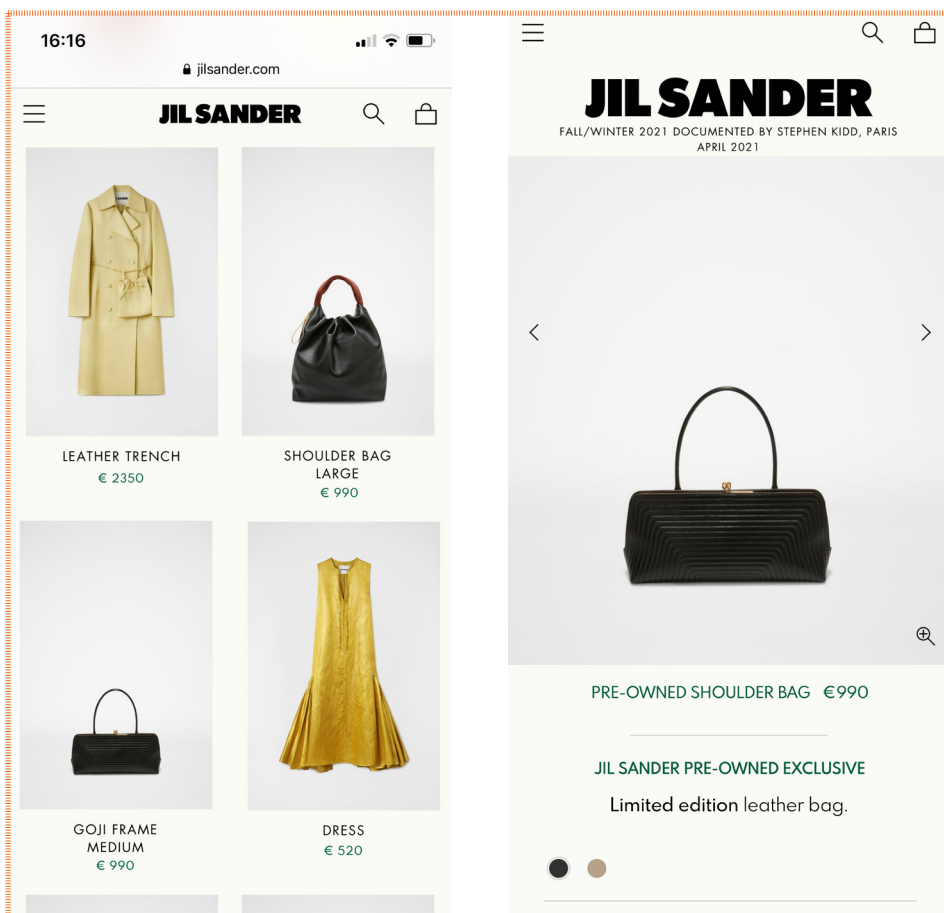Figure 4: Secondhand & firsthand condition without exclusivity claim

Figure 5: Secondhand & firsthand condition with exclusivity claim

3.3 Sample pre-test 1 and 2

80 participants took part in pre-test 1 and were randomly assigned to one of four conditions. For pre-test 2, 82 participants took part and were also randomly allocated to each of the conditions. The pre-tests made use of the convenience sampling method and collected participants via Instagram and Facebook. No selection based on gender, age, household income or luxury consumer behaviour was made for the pre-test sample.

3.4 Sample main study

142 participants (M = 28,45, SD = 9,19) were collected via Prolific, a data collection company in the UK. As the product of the stimuli was relatively feminine (i.e., handbags and women's apparel), only female respondents were selected to participate in the experiment. This can also eliminate the possible influence of gender on the results. Since this study focusses on luxury consumers, a custom pre-screening on luxury fashion (i. e. "Do you own more than two fashion items that cost over £200?") on Prolific was used. The researcher paid approximately UK£5 per hour to each respondent that completed the survey, bringing the total cost for data collection to £79,59. 50% of participants had a monthly household income over €3000. 65% of participants hold a bachelor (or higher) degree. 16% of respondents stated to not spend their own money on luxury. It may be assumed that the luxury goods they own to be selected for the sample were gifted. The 84% that do spend their own money on luxury averagely spent

€ 901,42 per year on luxury items (SD = 859,47). 34% buys secondhand luxury items at least once a year and 27% states to be conscious about the environmental impact of fashion consumption in general. An overview of general statistics of the sample can be found in Table 1.

3.5 Procedure

Participants were randomly allocated to one of four conditions. They received a link to the online survey. When clicking the link, the respondents saw an informed consent message to which they had to agree to take part in the study. Then participants saw campaign images and a short description of the luxury brand: "Jil Sander is a luxury brand founded in Germany in 1967. Jil Sander's journey has always been defined by a distinct focus on refined apparel that was expertly tailored and made in luxurious materials". The participants were asked whether they had purchased items from the brand before. Thereafter, participants could read a scenario: "Imagine you are shopping for a luxury item. During your search, you visit the online store of Jil Sander." Following this message, they were exposed to one of four stimuli, after which they were asked to complete a survey. The survey measured luxury brand attitude, product attitude, brand desirability, change in attitude towards the brand and perceived scarcity. Further, questions were asked on sustainable fashion consumption behaviours and past luxury consumption, as these will be used as covariates in the study. At the end of the survey, participants were asked to fill in

Table 1: General statistics

Variable	Classification	Number	Percentage
Educational background	Less than high school	2	1,4
	High school	48	33,8
	Bachelor (College)	20	14,1
	Bachelor (University)	36	25,4
	Master's degree	35	24,6
Monthly income	Under € 2.000	37	26,1
	€ 2.001 - € 3.000	34	23,9
	€ 3.001 - € 4.000	26	18,3
	€ 4.001 - € 5.000	21	14,8
	€ 5.001 - € 6.000	9	6,3
	€ 6.001 - € 7.000	4	2,8
	€ 7.001 - € 8.000	3	2,1
	€ 8.001 - € 9.000	2	1,4
	Over € 9.000	6	4,2
Past luxury consumption	Less than once a year	89	62,7
	Once every year – once every 6 months	35	24,6
	Once every 6 months – once every 3 months	15	10,6
	Once every 3 months – once every month	3	2,1
Past secondhand luxury consumption	Less than once a year	94	66,2
	Once every year – once every 6 months	21	14,8
	Once every 6 months – once every 3 months	15	10,6
	Once every 3 months – once every month	11	7,7
	Multiple times per month	1	,7

sociodemographic variables such as age, education level and household income.

3.6 Measures

All variables used in the main study were measured with 5-point Likert scales, with 1 being 'strongly disagree', 5 being 'strongly agree'. Luxury brand attitude (α = .81, M = 2.57, SD = 0.82) was measured using 6 items from the Attitudes towards Luxury scale from the study of Dubois et al., (2005). Following the study of Kastanakis and Balabanis (2005), brand desirability (M = 2.91, SD = 1.33) was questioned with an adapted Dream Value by Dubois and Paternault (2005) ("Imagine that you are given the possibility of choosing a beautiful present because you won a contest. How likely would you choose an item from Jil Sander?"). Attitude towards the luxury product (α = .81, M = 3.80, SD = 0.69) was measured using items from the Brand Luxury Index from Vigneron and Johnson (2004). Perceived sustainability of the product (M = 3.13, SD = 0.89) was measured using the item "To what extent do you agree with the following statement: This handbag of Jil Sander is sustainable". The change in attitude (M = 3.20, SD = 0.70) will be measured using the item "Has your attitude towards this luxury brand changed in a positive or a negative way after seeing their website?". As used in the study of Kluge and Fassnacht (2015), perceived scarcity of the product was assessed using 6 items (α = .77, M = 3.42, SD = 0.71), based on items of the Uniqueness scale from the Brand Luxury Index from Vigneron and Johnson (2004). Sustainable fashion consumption (α = .85, M

= 3.39, SD = .85) was questioned with items from Raqqaz et al. (2018). Purchase intention (M = 1.88, SD = 1.07) was measured using the item "How likely are you to purchase an item from Jil Sander in the next year?". An overview of the construct measures can be found in Table 2.

3.7 Results pre-test 1

The stimuli material of the four conditions were checked prior to the data collection. This study initially took Loewe as luxury brand to test the hypothesis. An overview of stimuli material for pre-test 1 is provided in Appendix A. First, the difference between the website with both new and secondhand items, and the website with only new items was tested. In other words, these manipulations were checked to see if participants noticed that the items on the "pre-owned" section are indeed secondhand and not new. 81% of participants in the secondhand and firsthand condition and 69% of participants in the firsthand only condition had correctly noticed this (χ^2(1, N = 80) = 5,91, p = .116). Therefore, this manipulation was successful.

Next to that, the exclusivity manipulation was tested by using an independent samples t-test to examine whether the exclusivity claim led to the perception of a higher perceived scarcity. For this purpose, the Uniqueness scale from the Brand Luxury Index was used (Vigneron & Johnson, 2004) with 1 being 'strongly agree' and 5 being 'strongly disagree'. However, the Chronbach's Alpha of the Uniqueness scale was not satisfactory (α = .458), so items

Table 2: Construct measures

Perceived scarcity α = .77	This handbag of Jil Sander is … Very exclusive Precious Rare Unique Hard to find Widely available
Luxury brand attitude α = .81	All things considered, I rather like this luxury brand. I'm not interested in this luxury brand. This luxury brand makes me dream. Luxury products from this brand make life more beautiful. I could talk about this luxury brand for hours. I would not feel at ease in a luxury shop from this brand.
Product attitude α = .81	This handbag of Jil Sander is … Crafted Luxurious Best quality Sophisticated Superior
Sustainable fashion consumption α = .85	I buy clothing that is made with recycled content. I buy clothing which can be disposed of in an environmentally friendly manner. I buy clothing that is safe for the environment. I limit my use of that clothing which is made of or uses scarce resources. I will not buy new clothing items if I already have previous items in a usable state. I buy clothing which is produced in an environmentally friendly manner.

were tested individually. Unexpectedly, the exclusivity manipulation was not successful. Participants in the conditions with exclusivity claims showed no significant difference for the perceived scarcity items, as shown in Table 3. Plausible explanations for these results are the fact that the desktop version of the Loewe brand website was manipulated, yet it is possible that participants completed the experiment on a mobile device, which made the exclusivity cue less legible and less noticeable. A second possibility is that the sample for the pre-test did not exclusively consist of luxury consumers, and thus were not all familiar with luxury brand websites or price tags. This may have resulted in an overall higher perception of exclusivity, with or without exclusivity cue, as non-luxury consumers are differently affected by major factors such as brand image and luxury product quality (Zhang & Cude, 2018). A third possible explanation is that

Table 3: Outcome independent t-test of exclusivity claim on perceived scarcity items

Item	Condition	M	SD	t(78)	p
Rare	No claim	2.68	0.96	-0,75	.456
	Claim	2.85	0.99		
Unique	No claim	2.56	0.90	-0.02	.987
	Claim	2.56	0.82		
Precious	No claim	3.37	1.07	-0.44	.347
	Claim	3.44	1,07		
Very exclusive	No claim	2.10	0.94	-0.29	.770
	Claim	2.18	0.72		

the participants of the pre-test were Dutch speaking, yet the survey and stimuli material were in English. Dutch speakers may have found difficulties in grasping the difference between the closely related terminology of the BLI such as 'Conspicuous' versus 'Noticeable' (Vigneron & Johnson, 2004). The survey and stimuli material were not translated to avoid differences in meaning between the pre-test and the main study. Following this unsuccessful part of the pre-test, a second pre-test was developed to obtain an effective exclusivity manipulation.

3.8 Results pre-test 2

The second pre-test focused on improving the legibility of the exclusivity cue and simplifying the items in the survey. The second pre-test used the existing brand Bottega Veneta as luxury brand for manipulations to avoid confusion among participants of the pre-tests. The manipulations of the second pre-test were created based on the mobile version of the Bottega Veneta online store. This improved legibility for both desktop users and mobile users. The exclusivity

cue itself was adapted as well. In the first pre-test, the exclusivity cue was a banner on top of the shopping page. Making the banner bolder and more noticeable would lower the ecological validity, as luxury brands prefer very minimal lay outs, avoid overly flashy elements and have substantial reduction of elements compared to non-luxury websites (Kluge et al., 2013; Yu et al., 2018). Instead, this pre-test opted for embedding an exclusivity cue in the product description, right below the product image, in a storytelling manner. Luxury online purchases consist of a higher risk because of the high price and the lack of opportunities to touch or try the items (Kapferer & Bastien, 2012; Wu et al., 2013). To reduce this risk, consumers can consume more product information on the website which has been shown to be positively related to feelings of trust towards the website, and indirectly influences positive attitudes towards the site (Chen & Dibb, 2010). For these reasons the second pre-test used an exclusivity claim in the product description and no longer a banner. An overview of stimuli material of pre-test 2 is presented in Appendix B.

Further, the Uniqueness scale from the BLI (Vigneron & Johnson, 2004) to measure perceived scarcity was adapted to a Likert scale, instead of a bipolar scale. For example, instead of indicating one's opinion between 'Very exclusive' and 'Fairly exclusive', this pre-test used a 7-point Likert scale with 1 'Strongly disagree' to 7 'Strongly agree'. Next to the 4 items of the Uniqueness scale (Very exclusive, precious, rare, unique), 3 items were added to the survey to further test the effect of the exclusivity claim (Hard to find, Widely available and Luxurious). The reliability of the 4 adapted items from the Uniqueness scale (Vigneron & Johnson, 2004) was more satisfactory (α = .724), meaning the understanding of the terminology improved. Independent samples t-tests were used to examine the effects of the exclusivity manipulation on perceived scarcity. The tests revealed that the exclusivity manipulation again did not increase the perceived scarcity of the luxury brand (M = 5.24, SD = 0.90), compared to conditions without exclusivity manipulation (M = 5.27, SD = 0.96, $t(80)$ = 0.15, p = .884). Similarly, participants exposed to the exclusivity cue did not score higher on the item 'Not widely available' (M = 4.15, SD = 1.48) than participants that were not exposed to the cue (M = 4.10, SD = 1.51, $t(80)$ = -1.17, p = .87). Also, participants in the exclusivity cue condition did not score differently on the item 'Hard to find' (M = 4.70, SD = 1.45), than participants in the conditions without exclusivity cue (M = 4.17, SD = 1.41, $t(80)$ = -1.67, p = .096).

Possible explanations for these unsignificant effects are that the exclusivity cue in the description of the items may have been too long for consumers to fully notice the focus on exclusivity, and thus did not lead to higher perceived scarcity. Once more, this pre-test used a sample of luxury and non-luxury consumers, so it may be due to the lack of knowledge or experience concerning luxury consumption that the exclusivity cue did not increase perceived scarcity significantly. Following these findings, stimuli material for the main study was adapted to have a more distinguishable exclusivity cue. The descriptions were shorter, and the titles contained a more obvious exclusivity label (Figure 2-5). Further, the sample of the main study was adapted to consist of luxury consumers only to eliminate possible differences between luxury and non-luxury consumers.

4.1 Manipulation checks

Before testing the hypotheses, a manipulation check between the condition selling both firsthand and secondhand luxury, and the condition with only new firsthand luxury was conducted. In other words, the manipulations were checked to see if participants noticed that the items of the "pre-owned" shopping pages were indeed secondhand and not new (i.e. What does this luxury brand sell?"). 82% of participants in the condition selling both secondhand and firsthand luxury had correctly noticed this, as well as 86% of participants in the firsthand only condition had correctly noticed this (χ^2(1, N = 142) = 0.47, p = .494). Therefore, this manipulation was successful. A second manipulation check was done to test whether the participants in the exclusivity claim condition had noticed the exclusivity claim in the product description (i.e. "Was the handbag on the image limited edition?". 45% correctly indicated that it was limited edition, 41% did not remember and 14% incorrectly indicated that it was not limited edition. Of the condition without exclusivity claim, 29% had correctly indicated that the handbag was not limited edition, 56% did not remember and 15% incorrectly indicated that it was limited edition (χ^2(1, N = 142) = 4.31, p = .116). No significant differences were found between conditions. To test whether the use of an exclusivity claim led to higher perceived scarity, a t-test was conducted. This test showed that conditions with exclusivity cue did not score significantly higher on percieved scarcity (M = 2.76, SD = .82), compared to conditions without exclusivity cue (M = 3.44, SD = 0.71, t(140)= 0.29, p = .772). Further, a two-way ANOVA was conducted to examine whether there is an interaction effect of using an exclusivity cue and selling both secondhand and firsthand luxury fashion on perceived scarcity. There was no significant main effect of the exclusivity cue (F(1, 138) = 0.07, p = .79, η^2 = .00) on perceived scarcity. However, there was a significant main effect of selling both secondhand and firsthand luxury (F(1, 138) = 5,07, p = .03, η^2 = .04) on perceived scarcity. No significant interaction effect of the exclusivity cue and selling both secondhand and firsthand luxury (F(1, 138) = 0.54, p = .46, η^2 = .00) was observed. This part of the manipulation was therefore unsuccessful. Future research is needed to develop a more effective exclusivity claim.

4.2 Hypotheses tests

To test hypothesis 1, 2 and 3, independent samples t-tests using SPSS were performed. Unexpectedly, selling both secondhand and firsthand luxury fashion increased the luxury brand attitude (M = 2.76, SD = 0.82), compared to selling only firsthand luxury as a luxury brand (M = 2.39, SD = 0.78, t(140)= 2.77, p = .006). Similarly, participants in the conditions that sold both firsthand and secondhand luxury scored higher on brand desirability (M = 3.24, SD = 1.29), than

participants in the conditions that sold only firsthand luxury (M = 2.58, SD = 1.28, $t(140)$= 3.06, p = .003). In other words, participants had a more positive brand attitude towards a luxury brand selling both secondhand and firsthand luxury and found it more desirable than a luxury brand selling only firsthand luxury. Furthermore, luxury consumers reported higher purchase intentions when the luxury brand sold both firsthand and secondhand luxury (M = 2.17, SD = 1.16), than when the luxury brand sells firsthand luxury only (M = 1.59, SD = 0.89, $t(132)$= 3.33, p = .001). Regarding the luxury product itself, selling both secondhand and firsthand luxury as a luxury brand did not change the attitude towards the luxury product (M = 3.91, SD = 0.69), compared to selling only firsthand luxury (M = 3.70, SD = 0.68, $t(140)$= 1.85, p = .067). However, the participants did perceive the handbag in the secondhand conditions as more sustainable (M = 3.32, SD = 0.91), than participants in the firsthand only conditions (M = 2.94, SD = 0.83, $t(138.8)$= 2.61, p = .010). The attitude of luxury consumers did not differ when comparing a firsthand product with a secondhand product, yet luxury consumers considered the secondhand option more sustainable than the firsthand option. Based on these results, hypotheses 1 and 3 were partially rejected because selling both secondhand and firsthand luxury did have a significant effect on luxury brand attitudes and brand desirability, yet the effect was positive instead of negative. Hypothesis 2 is rejected because no significant effect of selling both secondhand and firsthand luxury on product attitude was observed.

To examine whether perceived scarcity is the underlying effect that drives the mechanism between selling both secondhand and firsthand luxury and the dependent variables, a mediation analyse using model 4 of PROCESS (Hayes, 2017) with 5000 bootstrap samples and a 95% confidence interval were executed. In addition, sustainable fashion consumption, luxury fashion consumption and secondhand luxury consumption were added as covariates because these may influence the attitude towards the luxury brand selling both secondhand and firsthand luxury. Results showed that selling both secondhand and firsthand luxury indirectly affected luxury brand attitude via perceived scarcity (ab = .39, SE = .13, $t(137)$ = 2.97, 95%-CI = [0.13; 0.65]). Selling both secondhand and firsthand luxury resulted in a higher perceived scarcity (a = .24, SE = .12, $t(137)$ = 2.07 , p = .041), and perceived scarcity was positively related to luxury brand attitude (b = .38, SE = .09, $t(136)$ = 4.11, p < .001). The same mediation analysis was conducted with brand desirability as dependent variable. This second mediation analysis with 5000 bootstrap samples revealed that scarcity was the underlying mechanism on the effect between selling both secondhand and firsthand luxury and brand desirability (ab = .64, SE = .22, $t(137)$ = 2.94, 95%-CI = [0.21; 1.07]). Selling both secondhand and firsthand luxury resulted in a higher perceived scarcity (a = .24, SE = .12, $t(137)$ = 2.07, p = .041), and perceived scarcity was positively related to brand desirability (b = .49, SE = .15, $t(136)$ = 3.17, p = .002). A third

mediation analysis was conducted with product attitude as dependent variable. This analysis with 5000 bootstrap samples revealed no significant mediation effect (ab = .21, SE = .12, t(137) = 2.07 95%-CI = [-0.02; 0.43]). An overview of the significant mediating effects can be found in Figure 6 and 7. Drawing on these finding, hypotheses 4 and 6 are partly rejected because selling both secondhand and firsthand luxury did have a significant effect on luxury brand attitudes and brand desirability via the indirect effect of perceived scarcity, yet the effect between dependent variable and mediator is positive instead of negative. Hypothesis 5 is rejected because no significant mediating effect was found.

Further, we examined whether the indirect effect of perceived scarcity on the relation between selling both secondhand and firsthand luxury, and luxury brand attitude was moderated by the use of an exclusivity cue. For this purpose, model 7 of PROCESS (Hayes, 2017) was used to examine this moderated mediation. The analysis with 5000 bootstrap samples revealed no significant moderated mediation (ab = .05, SE = .08, 95%-CI = [-0.08; 0.23]). Similarly, no significant moderated mediation was found with product attitude (ab = .09, SE = .13, 95%-CI = [-0.13; 0.39]) or brand desirability (ab = .09, SE = .13, 95%-CI = [-0.08; 0.23]) as outcome variables. These results reject hypothesis 7 to 9.
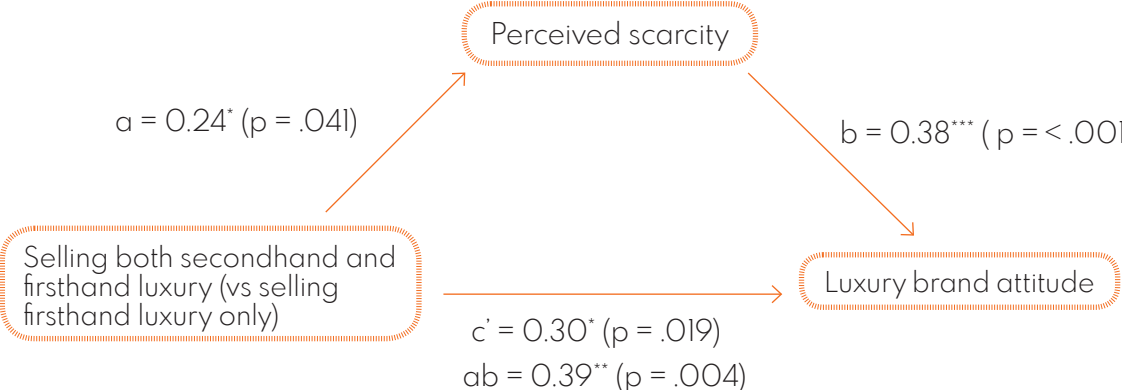
Figure 6: Mediation analysis Luxury brand attitude
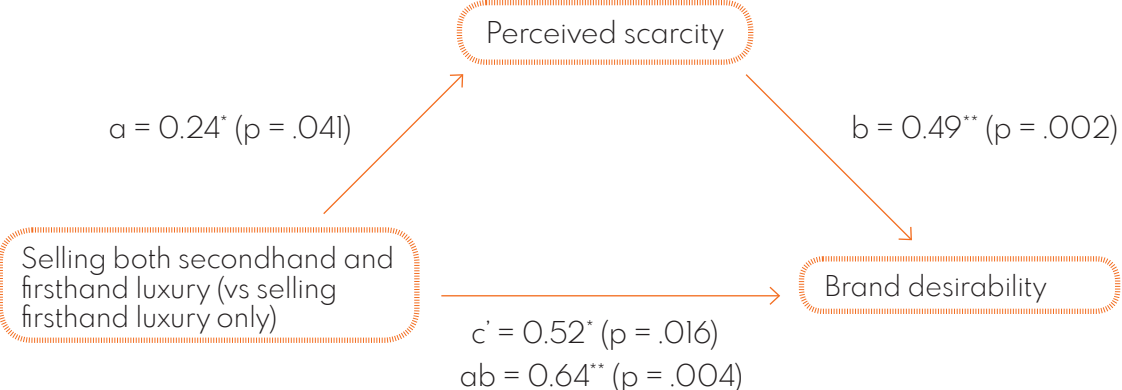
Figure 7: Mediation analysis Brand desirability

Literature on sustainable luxury reveals contradictory findings concerning the role of sustainability in the luxury fashion market (Grazzini, Acuti, & Aiello, 2020). This study reveals that selling secondhand luxury as a luxury brand leads to significant higher brand attitudes and brand desirability. This is in contrast with the study of Davies et al. (2012) which showed that consumers perceive ethics to be significantly less important in luxury purchase decisions. Ethics was the lowest priority for luxury consumers when buying into luxury brands (Davies et al., 2012). In the same vein, Achabou and Dekhili (2013) found that sustainable product attributes, such as recycled materials, affect consumer preferences negatively. A possible explanation for this difference is that this study did not explicitly mention the sustainable nature of secondhand products, whereas the research of Davies et al. (2012) and Achabou and Dekhili (2013) purposely referred to the sustainable or ethical characteristics of luxury products. On the other hand, the findings of the present research align with those of De Angelis et al. (2017), which states that the best strategy to introduce sustainable luxury products is to make them similar in design to existing 'non-sustainable' luxury products of the brand, definitely so when the product is durable, and consumers have a higher luxury brand knowledge. This strategy avoids lowered luxury brand evaluation compared to when the sustainable product is more similar to a product of a sustainable brand (De Angelis et al., 2017). The products used in the present study have very high design similarity to the 'non-sustainable' products as they are essentially the same products and are sustainable because they have multiple lifecycles. Moreover, this study is in line with results of Steinhart et al. (2013) that suggests that an environmental claim may improve evaluations of luxury products, because this claim provides justification to indulge in luxury products. Although the present research did not use a claim to emphasize sustainability characteristics, luxury consumers did regard the secondhand product as more sustainable. In this light, secondhand luxury may act as a justification for indulging in luxury as well.

Next to the effects of selling secondhand luxury as a luxury brand, this study found no significant effects of using an exclusivity label. This is contrary to the study of Yu et al. (2018) that found an increased purchase intention and brand attitude for certain customers when using a quality label alongside luxury fashion products. The label in the study of Yu et al. (2018) however, was more distinct and noticeable, and was indorsed by a multibrand fashion store, whereas the present study made use of an integrated exclusivity label endorsed by the luxury brand itself. It is possible that the difference in label display and the source of the label may have led to varying results. The non-significant results of the present study lay in line with the article of Upshaw,

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Amyx and Hardy (2017), where the authors suggest that mostly implicit exclusivity appeals such as brand prestige or premium pricing create the exclusive perception of luxury goods. The present research used a label that said 'exclusive' and 'limited edition' yet did not provide additional information in what way it was exclusive or limited. As exclusivity in luxury is a complex and multifaceted dimension (Kapferer & Bastien, 2009; McMahon-Beattie, 2013; Radon, 2012; Upshaw et al., 2017; Wiedmann et al., 2007), the label used in the present study may not have adequately induced these facets in the minds of luxury consumers.

5.1 Managerial implications

This study also provides clear managerial implications. As consumers increasingly expect fashion companies to take steps towards sustainability and circular business models (Forbes, 2020), luxury brand executives might struggle to balance sustainable values with established brand associations such as exclusivity and prestige. The findings of the present research indicate that selling secondhand luxury items may be a feasible first step to take, as this approach does not require vast transformative interventions but utilises products that already exist in the market. Brand executives might fear the threat of the secondhand luxury market on sales numbers or brand perceptions, yet this study reveals that addressing the secondhand market can be a fruitful approach. In regard to consumer's perception, this approach does not damage brand attitudes and desirability, in fact

selling secondhand luxury as a luxury brand has shown to have quite favourable effects. Overall, when developing sustainable brand strategies, luxury brands should not shy away from the opportunities of the secondhand luxury market.

5.2 Limitations and future research

This study has several limitations that may be addressed in further research. This study was restricted to one luxury fashion brand, namely Jil Sander. More research across other luxury brands is advised to generalise the findings. Jil Sander does not specifically position itself as a sustainable luxury brand, thus further research with luxury brands with a clear sustainable position, such as Stella McCartney, is needed to examine whether this positioning affects the findings. Next, this study used an existing luxury brand which may have impacted the results due to pre-existing brand attitudes and knowledge. Therefore, research using a fictious brand may be beneficial to thoroughly test the effects of selling secondhand luxury as a luxury brand on brand attitudes and desirability. Additionally, it would be interesting to test different ways of addressing the secondhand market in order to offer more specific managerial advice to executives. This study sold secondhand luxury in the same online store as the firsthand items, yet it is possible for luxury brands to partner with existing secondhand luxury platforms such as Vestiaire Collective or develop a new platform to sell secondhand luxury. Both of these options create the opportunity to sell secondhand goods

fully separately from their firsthand luxury offering. This may lower the possible threat on luxury associations yet would require a multitude of investments compared to adding a secondhand page on the existing online store. Thus, future research on the different approaches to selling secondhand luxury is advised before these methods can be applied to the real-life luxury market.

Methodologically, this study opted for manipulated screenshots of the online store as stimuli material. Even though these manipulations were based on the existing brand website, they did not allow participants to browse the website, compare different options or add items to a shopping basket. This may have decreased the ecological validity of the experiment, as participants did not experience the full luxury shopping experience. Additional research is needed to control for this online shopping behaviours, for example by using measures such as clicks, time spent on site, revisiting pages and completed purchases. Further, the exclusivity claim in the present study was integrated in the product description, which may have led to participants not noticing the claim. Therefore, future research should further test different exclusivity claims to generalise the findings. Moreover, this study used a sample that consisted exclusively of women. Future research could examine whether a male sample holds different findings. Also, this study focused on the online store, yet it can be expected that selling secondhand luxury in brick-and-mortar luxury boutiques brings additional challenges to safeguard the

luxury brand associations, yet also provides multiple opportunities for exclusivity cues (e.g., store interior design, conversations with staff, display of firsthand and secondhand items). This offline setting provides multiple pathways for scholars to further examine the field of secondhand luxury retail. Lastly, this research concentrates on secondhand luxury fashion, which is closely related to vintage luxury fashion. Vintage luxury fashion however is often perceived as extremely rare and prestigious, and oftentimes retails at higher price points than firsthand luxury. Hence, scholars may find different results when testing the findings of this study with vintage luxury instead of secondhand luxury.

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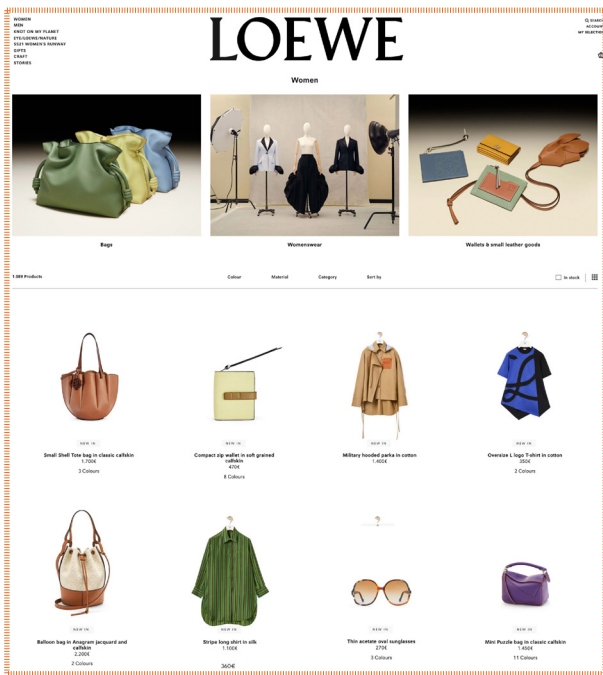
APPENDIX A

Firsthand condition x no claim
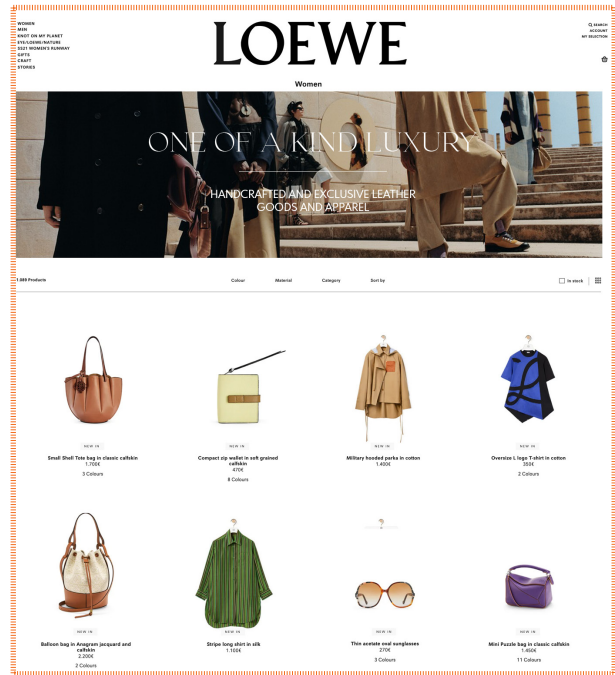
Firsthand condition x exclusivity claim
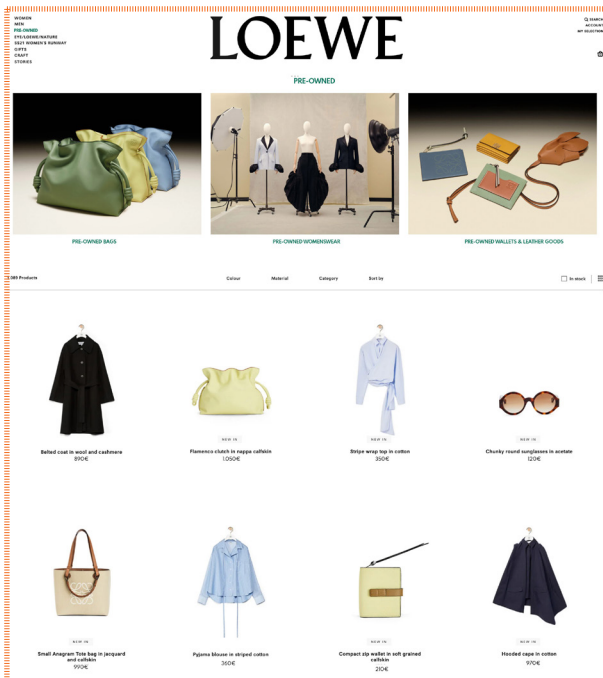
Secondhand condition x no claim
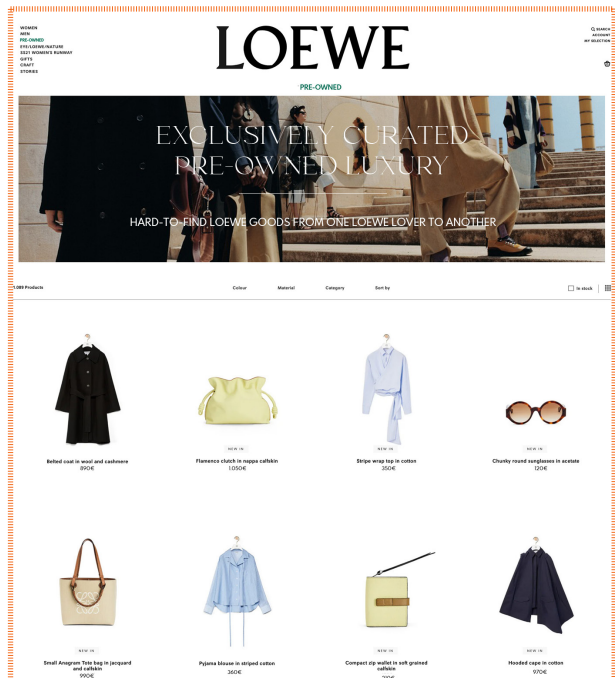
Secondhand condition x exclusivity claim

Appendix A: Stimuli material for pre-test 1
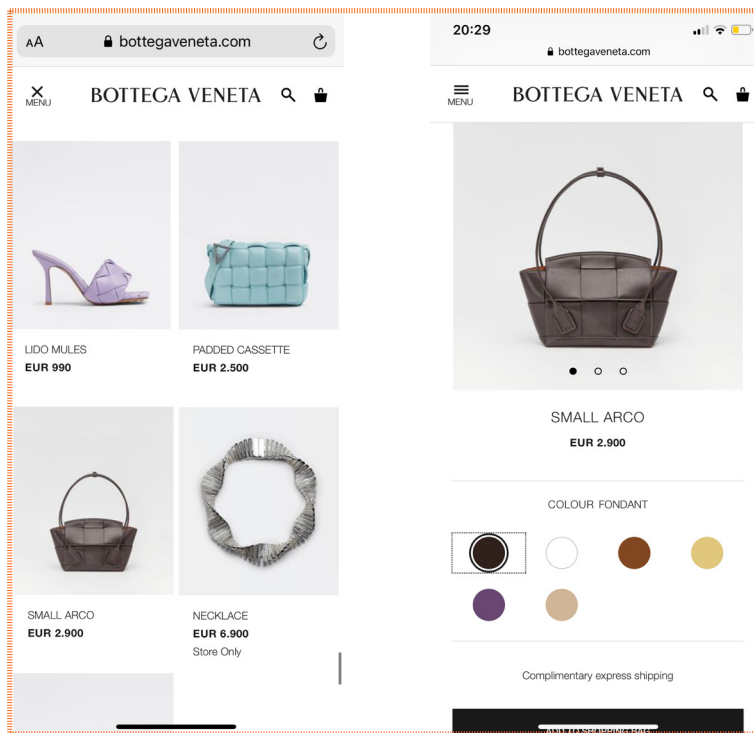
Firsthand condition x no claim
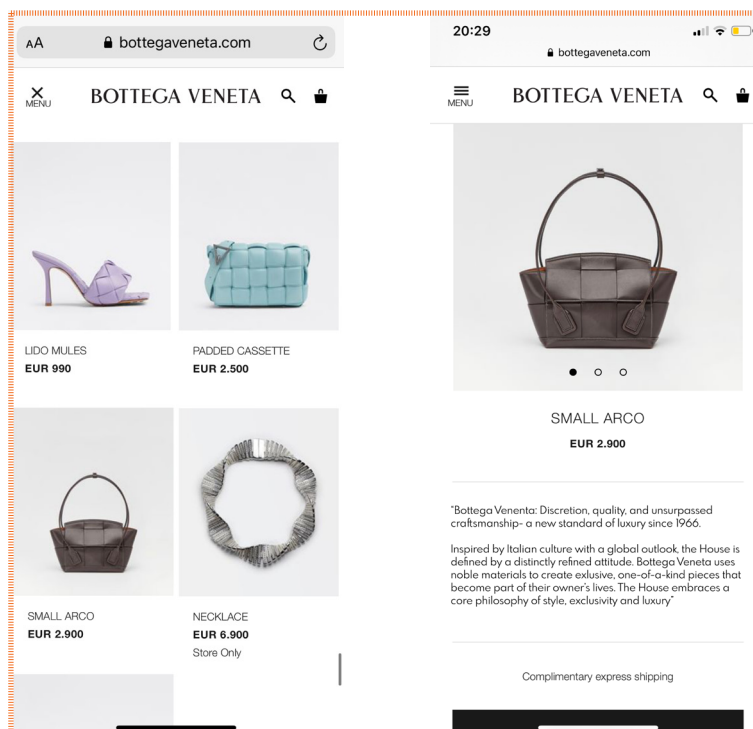
Firsthand condition x exclusivity claim

Appendix B: Stimuli material for pre-test 2
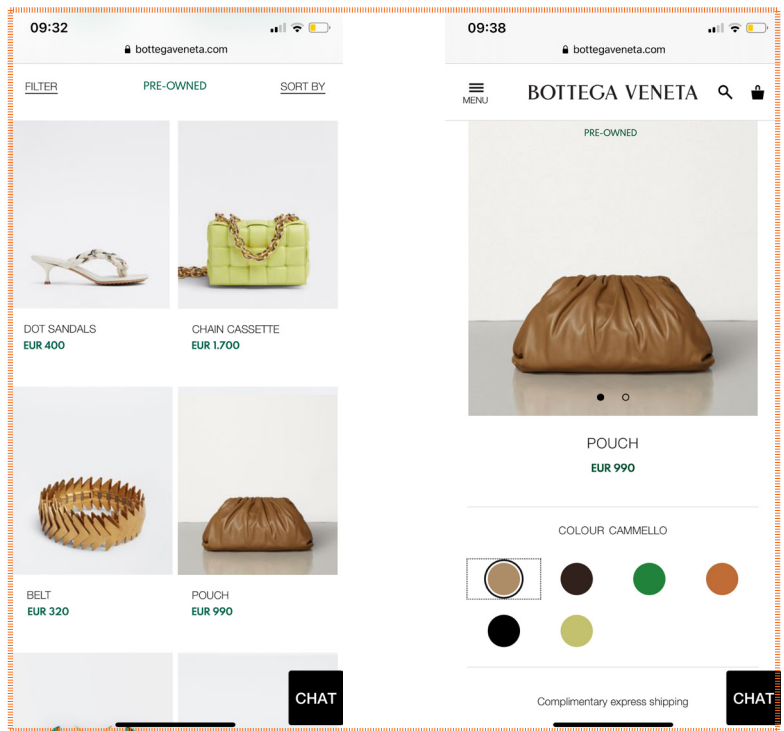
Secondhand condition x no claim
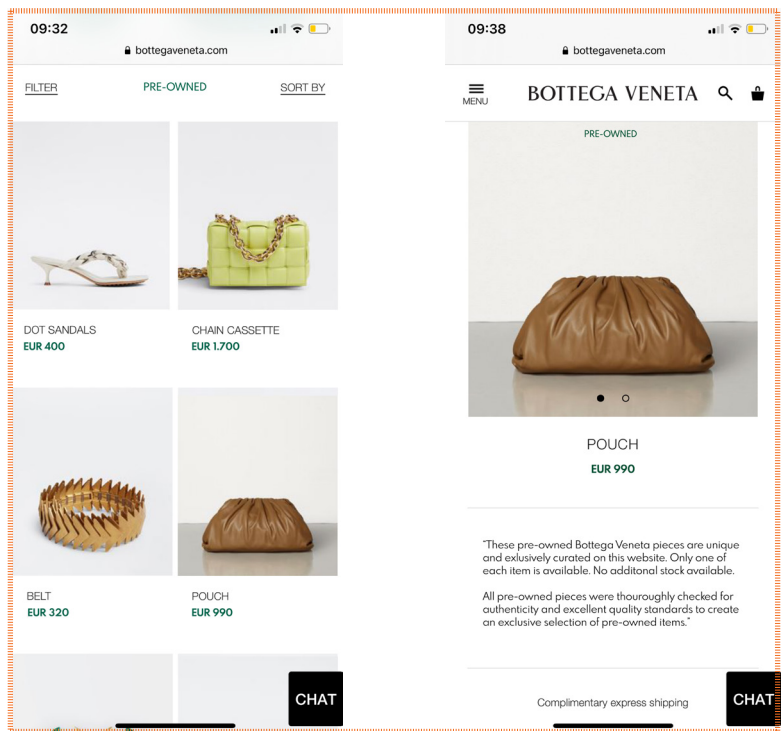
Secondhand condition x exclusivity claim

Dearest participant,

A very warm thank you for participating! These questions will only take 1 minute of your time. Any questions can be sent to evelien.tempelaere@ugent.be

Have a nice day!

Please read the following statement and watch the images attentively.

Loewe is a luxury brand founded in Spain in 1846, they are approaching 175 years as one of the world's major luxury houses. Loewe's journey has always been defined by an obsessive focus on craftsmanship and an unmatched expertise with leather.

Appendix C: Survey pre-test 1

Read the following scenario.
Imagine you are shopping for a luxury item. During your search, you visit the online store of Loewe. Next to selling new luxury pieces, Loewe also started selling secondhand Loewe items. By doing this, Loewe is improving their environmental impact as well as ensure the authenticity of pre-owned Loewe items. Down below you can see the Loewe online store.

OR

Read the following scenario.
Imagine you are shopping for a new luxury item. During your search, you visit the online store of Loewe. Down below you can see the Loewe online store.

Please indicate your opinion of luxury brand Loewe.

Loewe is ...

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	
Fairly exclusive	○	○	○	○	○	Very exclusive
Precious	○	○	○	○	○	Valuable
Rare	○	○	○	○	○	Uncommon
Unique	○	○	○	○	○	Unusual

Loewe is ...

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	
Crafted	○	○	○	○	○	Manufactered
Upmarket	○	○	○	○	○	Luxurious
Best quality	○	○	○	○	○	Good quality
Sophisticated	○	○	○	○	○	Original
Superior	○	○	○	○	○	Better

Loewe is ...

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	
Conspicuous	○	○	○	○	○	Noticable
Popular	○	○	○	○	○	Elitist
Affordable	○	○	○	○	○	Extremely expensive
For wealthy	○	○	○	○	○	For well-off

What does this luxury brand sell on its website?
o   New luxury only (1)
o   Secondhand luxury only (2)
o   New and secondhand luxury (3)
o   New luxury and leftover stock from previous seasons (4)
o   New luxury and a more affordable collection (5)

Q14 Dearest participant,

A very warm thank you for participating! These questions will take less than 1 minute of your time.
Any questions can be sent to evelien.tempelaere@ugent.be

Have a nice day!

This is luxury fashion brand Bottega Veneta. It originated in 1966 in Vincenza, Italy. The house specialises in luxury leather goods, womenswear and menswear.

Appendix D: Survey pre-test 2

Read the following scenario.

"Imagine you are shopping for a luxury item. During your search, you visit the online store of Bottega Veneta. Next to selling new luxury pieces, Bottega Veneta also started selling secondhand (=pre-owned) Bottega Veneta items. By doing this, Bottega Veneta is improving their environmental impact as well as ensure the authenticity of pre-owned Bottega Veneta items."

Down below you can see the Bottega Veneta pre-owned shopping page.

Watch the following images attentively.

OR

Read the following scenario.

"Imagine you are shopping for a luxury item. During your search, you visit the online store of Bottega Veneta."

Down below you can see the Bottega Veneta shopping page.

Watch the following images attentively.

Indicate your opinion of Bottega Veneta.

Bottega Veneta is ...

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
Very exclusive (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Precious (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Rare (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Unique (4)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Hard to find (5)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Widely available (6)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Luxurious (7)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Imagine that you are given the possibility of choosing a beautiful present because you won a contest. How likely would you choose an item from Bottega Veneta?

o   Extremely likely (1)
o   Somewhat likely (2)
o   Neither likely nor unlikely (3)
o   Somewhat unlikely (4)
o   Extremely unlikely (5)

Dear participant,

Thank you for taking part in this research. By continuing to the survey you agree that your participation in this research study is voluntary. All responses will be anonymous.

Please contact evelien.tempelaere@ugent.be for any questions you may have.

o   I agree (1)
o   I do not agree (2)

Jil Sander is a luxury brand founded in Germany in 1967. Jil Sander's journey has always been defined by a distinct focus on refined apparel that was expertly tailored and made in luxurious materials.

Appendix E: Survey main study

Have you purchased a Jil Sander item before?

o   Yes (1)

o   No (2)

Exposure to 1 of 4 conditions

Imagine you are shopping for a luxury item. During your search, you visit the online store of Jil Sander. Please watch the following images attentively. You cannot return to this page to view the images again.

OR

Imagine you are shopping for a luxury item. During your search, you visit the online store of Jil Sander. Next to selling new luxury pieces, Jil Sander also started selling pre-owned (= secondhand) Jil Sander items.

Please watch the following images attentively. You cannot return to this page to view the images again.

Please indicate your opinion. This handbag of Jil Sander is …

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Very exclusive (1)	O	O	O	O	O
Precious (2)	O	O	O	O	O
Rare (3)	O	O	O	O	O
Unique (4)	O	O	O	O	O
Hard to find (5)	O	O	O	O	O
Widely available (6)	O	O	O	O	O

This handbag from Jil Sander is …

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Very exclusive (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Precious (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Rare (3)	○	○	○	○	○
Unique (4)	○	○	○	○	○
Hard to find (5)	○	○	○	○	○
Widely available (6)	○	○	○	○	○

What is your opinion of the price tag of this handbag?
o   Too high (1)
o   Somewhat too high (2)
o   Just right (3)
o   Somewhat too low (4)
o   Too low (5)
o   I don't remember the price tag (6)

Has your attitude towards this luxury brand changed in a positive or a negative way after seeing their website?
o   Extremely positive (1)
o   Somewhat positive (2)
o   Neither positive nor negative (3)
o   Somewhat negative (4)
o   Extremely negative (5)

How likely are you to purchase an item from Jil Sander in the next year?
o   Extremely likely (1)
o   Somewhat likely (2)
o   Neither likely nor unlikely (3)
o   Somewhat unlikely (4)
o   Extremely unlikely (5)

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Crafted (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Luxurious (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Best quality (3)	○	○	○	○	○
Sophisticated (4)	○	○	○	○	○
Superior (5)	○	○	○	○	○
Sustainable (6)	○	○	○	○	○

Imagine that you are given the possibility of choosing a beautiful present because you won a contest. How likely would you choose an item from Jil Sander?
o   Extremely likely (1)
o   Somewhat likely (2)
o   Neither likely nor unlikely (3)
o   Somewhat unlikely (4)
o   Extremely unlikely (5)

How often do you purchase luxury items?
o   Less than once a year (1)
o   Once every year – once every 6 months (2)
o   once every 6 months – once every 3 months (3)
o   once every 3 months – once every month (4)
o   Multiple times per month (5)

How much do you spend on luxury items per year? (in euros)

_____

How often do you buy pre-owned, vintage and/or secondhand luxury items?
o   Less than once a year (1)
o   Once every year – once every 6 months   (2)
o   once every 6 months – once every 3 months   (3)
o   once every 3 months – once every month (4)
o   Multiple times per month (5)

How do these statements relate to your fashion consumption of the past 6 months?

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
I buy clothing that is made with recycled content. (1)	o	o	o	o	o
I buy clothing which can be disposed of in an environmentally friendly manner. (2)	o	o	o	o	o
I buy clothing that is safe for the environment. (3)	o	o	o	o	o
I limit my use of that clothing which is made of or uses scarce resources. (4)	o	o	o	o	o
I will not buy new clothing items if I already have previous items in a usable state. (5)	o	o	o	o	o
I buy clothing which is produced in an environmentally friendly manner. (6)	o	o	o	o	o

Answer the questions based on the images you just saw. What does Jil Sander sell on its online store?

o   New luxury (1)
o   Secondhand luxury (2)
o   New luxury and secondhand luxury (3)
o   New luxury and items from old collections (4)
o   New luxury and an affordable collection (5)

Was the Jil Sander handbag on the image a limited edition?

o   Yes (1)
o   No (2)
o   I don't remember (3)

What is your age? (e.g. 25)

_____

What is your highest obtained degree?

o   Less than high school (1)
o   High school (2)
o   Bachelor (College) (3)
o   Bachelor (University) (4)
o   Master's degree (5)
o   Doctoral degree (6)

What is your monthly household income?

o   Under € 2.000 (1)
o   € 2.001 - € 3.000 (2)
o   € 3.001 - € 4.000 (3)
o   € 4.001 - € 5.000 (4)
o   € 5.001 - € 6.000 (5)
o   € 6.001 - € 7.000 (6)
o   € 7.001 - € 8.000 (7)
o   € 8.001 - € 9.000 (8)
o   Over € 9.000 (9)