

Luxury in Instagram's Eyes Burberry, Louis Vuitton & Gucci



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Abstract

Social scientists are struggling to define and measure luxury in the contemporary marketing practices. It became an even more evolving issue when introducing the luxury marketing practices on social media platforms. In the absence of a clear definition for an intangible phenomenon like luxury and the luxury marketing as performance held on inexpensive sources such as social media, exploring this phenomenon from a new point of view is essential. This study takes three exemplary brands to represent the luxury fashion sector, Burberry, Louis Vuitton and Gucci and investigated the marketing practices held on Instagram. To begin with a qualitative content analysis of the visual posts by the three brands on Instagram was conducted to understand the marketing communication techniques used. Followed by a qualitative content analysis of comments by followers on these visual posts, to comprehend the language of comments and their role in the 'luxury performance'. The findings suggest that the brands on Instagram emphasized on communicating luxury brand associations more regular than traditional marketing practices, those associations were chosen to fit to the visual images and to Instagram as a medium. Followers' responses were mainly positive, and showed emotional attachment towards the brands. The communicated brand associations from the brand corresponded to a great level with the perceived message seen in the form of comments by followers. Some contradictions do exist between communication luxury brand associations on Instagram, but there is no effect on maintaining, sustaining and 'performing luxury' on Instagram.

Keywords: Luxury, luxury as a marketing performance, brands, fashion brands, marketing communication, brand associations, social media, Instagram.

1. Introduction

Luxury marketing has gained maturity and expansion in the last couple of decades. The market value and the rate of growth of luxury goods, in comparison to other goods in the same category, have increased dramatically in the past 10 years (Fionda & Moore, 2009). As the luxury market grew, it also simultaneously shifted away from its origin in the market. Luxury in the past was more exclusive than it is today; the idea of luxury goods was linked to aristocrats, European kings, and Chinese emperors (Thomas, 2007). Only the nobles and aristocrats could afford luxury goods from the best craftsmen (Thomas, 2007). Kings, landlords and emperors of the world attracted the best craftsmen, artists from all over the country and sometimes even the continent (Thomas, 2007). Now luxury has become more available than ever, anyone can buy a luxury item if they simply pay for it.

However, there are brands that are still considered luxurious even though they are widely available. That is seen to be because luxury has become more of a “feel” rather than actual exclusivity. The cornerstone of luxury items is the high quality material and craftsmanship that are used in production and reflected in the price (Kapferer & Bastien, 2012). So if brands communicate luxurious attributes to consumers, with repetition and recognition, brands will be able to attain that luxury feel in consumers’ mind (Keller, 2012).

The development of mass media can be seen to have made customers more aware of luxury brands than ever before. Luxury brands now communicate to their customers using different platforms or tools. The increasing role of social network sites in people’s daily lives has had a tremendous influence on the way luxury brands communicate (Evans, 2012). However, this has shifted the marketing of luxury brands from what they have been doing over the past decades. We often see luxury stores in a specific mall, or a

particular street or district. That is not a coincidence; luxury brands depend on the location and on each other to create that luxurious atmosphere to customers (Kapferer, 2006). Despite the fact that social media platforms are profitable organizations – through selling advertisement space – it is free for the user to join and use these platforms (Hargreaves, 2014). Thus this has created a contradiction that this proposed research seeks to address: while luxury goods are seen as ‘exclusive’ and ‘expensive’, they are increasingly being promoted and appearing on non-exclusive and free social network sites. How then can luxury brands maintain certain notions of luxury given their seeming omnipresence on social network sites? Does the concept of luxury change in a marketing sense given that luxury brands have gained a great number of followers, likes and shares on the different social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and Instagram?

There are some aspects of social medial platforms, specifically the more visual platforms that support communication techniques, which luxury brands highly depend on. According to Kapferer & Bastien (2012) luxury needs to be vague rather than being specific when communicating to the medium so that customers can find their personal share of the luxuries dream. In addition, luxury brands depend more on images than words to maintain the mystery and mystique in their communication (Kapferer & Bastien, 2012). Therefore communication on the more visual platforms seems to be more appropriate for luxury brands to sustain the mystique in there communications.

This study looks at three luxury fashion brands on Instagram and investigates how those brands can be seen to ‘perform’ luxury. Instagram is an online photo sharing and social media platform that was launched in 2010 by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger and was later in 2012 purchase by Facebook (Doran, 2012). Instagram functions as a virtual gallery, online meeting space and pictorial narrative that is accessible from hand-held devices. Since it was launched, it gained a lot of young customers, with now a close to approximately 150 million monthly users and 55 million photos are uploaded on a daily basis (Instagram Press, 2013). Due to Instagram’s visual nature and its 70% female user

base, luxury brands are increasingly gaining attention and success among its users (Buquid, 2013).

However, this study does not take for granted that there is one thing that can be called 'luxury', rather luxury is created and demonstrated in the marketing practices of these brands. These three brands were carefully selected through their reputation in the market in being seen as luxurious and of high price and quality compared to other goods in the category of fashion. The brands that were selected are the following; Burberry, Louis Vuitton and Gucci. The choice for these brands was reinforced by the following statistical observations: first, all three of these have high numbers of Instagram followers; Burberry 1.2 million followers, Louis Vuitton 1.2 million followers and Gucci with 1.1 million followers (Nitrogram50, 2013). Second, there is a significant reliance on a number of hashtags with the name of these brands. For Burberry there are 1,041,310 that indicated the brand's name, for Louis Vuitton there were 1,713,129, and for Gucci 2,042,33 (Nitrogram50, 2013). Third, these brands are seen to compete in similar markets – Fashion market- with products such as bags, sunglasses, watches and apparel. This will allow for a logical flow between differing performances of luxury in similar categories. It is also worth pointing out that those three brands are from three different countries, Burberry is English, Louis Vuitton is French and Gucci is Italian. This may be of interest and may give an insight to the different cultural and communication aspects involved in the performance of luxury.

As suggested above, this study aims to identify how luxury brands are sustaining and maintaining a performance of 'luxury' through their social media communication. This is occurring in a context that is in contradiction with the perceived values of luxury brands – that of being exclusive and expensive, whereas social media, and particularly with Instagram, is open to all and inexpensive. Therefore the following research question has been formulated:

***RQ:** How do luxury fashion brands perform and communicate the conception of luxury within and through social media?*

Sub questions:

- a. *How do Burberry, Louis Vuitton and Gucci 'perform' luxury through visual posts on Instagram?*
- b. *How do comments and hashtags by followers of Burberry, Louis Vuitton and Gucci play a role in luxury performance?*

1.1 Brands Background

The chosen brands that were used in this study as examples to represent luxury fashion brands are Burberry, Louis Vuitton and Gucci. To start this research, an introduction to the brands and social media is appropriate as they are substantial for this study.

Burberry

Thomas Burberry founded Burberry in 1856 in Basingstoke, England when he opened a store selling men's outerwear (Burberry, 2014). The reputation of the company was enhanced through Burberry's development of "gabardine", a fabric that was resistant to tearing; was weatherproof but was also breathable (Burberry, 2014). "This new fabric was especially suited to military needs and led Burberry to design an army officer's raincoat, which became an integral element of the standard service uniform for British officers in the early 1900s" (Moore & Birtwistle, 2004). During the First World War, Burberry continued to develop the officer's raincoat by adding functional dimensions such as epaulettes, straps and D-rings. Named the "Trench coat" as a result of its military associations, the company developed its now distinctive Burberry check as a lining for the product (Adams, 1995; Sherwood, 1998; Burberry, 2014). Fast-forwarding the chronology, in the 1920's Burberry introduced women design with the "ladies green wool gabardine" ski suit. Burberry was introducing more and more clothes that were worn by sport athletes and in the 1930's it was on a catalogue cover of winter sports outfits (Burberry, 2014). In the 1960's Burberry Focused its efforts towards the elegant luxury apparel and continued to carry this successful image in the luxury market until today.

Louis Vuitton

Louis Vuitton (1821-1892) was a French entrepreneur and designer whose name became iconic in the fashion world (Pasols, 2005). In 19th century Europe, box-making and packing was a highly respectable and urbane craft (Louis Vuitton, 2014). A box-maker and packer custom-made all boxes to fit the goods they stored and personally loaded and unloaded the boxes (Pasols, 2005). It took Vuitton only a few years to stake out a reputation amongst Paris's fashionable class. In 1852, When Napoleon III assumed the title of Emperor of the French; his wife hired Louis Vuitton as her personal box-maker and packer (Pasols, 2005). This provided a gateway for Vuitton to a class of elite and royal clientele (Pasols, 2005). In 1854, Vuitton opened his own box making shop specializing in packing fashion (Pasols, 2005). Louis Vuitton then started with luggage and trunks, and his products were ordered from royals from other countries such as Egypt (Pasols, 2005). In 1872, Vuitton introduced a new trunk design featuring beige canvas and red stripes (Pasols, 2005). The simple, yet luxurious, new design appealed to Paris's new elite and marked the beginning of the Louis Vuitton label's modern incarnation as a luxury brand (Pasols, 2005). After Louis died in 1892, his son, Georges, took the company to new heights, developing what is recognized as the first "designer label" on a product with the monogram LV on the products (Louis Vuitton, 2014). In 1984 the company was listed on the Paris Bourse (Louis Vuitton, 2014). It already owned other luxury brands such as Givenchy, Veuve Clicquot and Loewe, and three years later it merged with the drinks giant Moët Hennessy to create what was to become the world's biggest luxury conglomerate, LVMH. In 1996 Louis Vuitton expanded its products beyond luggage (Pasols, 2005). Vuitton's luggage company has since become a world leader in luxury consumer goods, with products that include travel books, perfume, distilled spirits and designer clothing. In 1997, Louis Vuitton entered the world of high fashion with the designs of Marc Jacobs, who became the company's artistic director for 16 years, and left Louis Vuitton in 2013 (Forbes, 2013). Louis Vuitton now is one of the most profitable brands in the world with profit margins approaching 40% (Forbes, 2013).

Gucci

Guccio Gucci founded Gucci in the early 1920s. He was an Italian immigrant in Paris and then London; Guccio made a living working in luxurious hotels and was impressed with the affluent luggage he saw the guests carrying (Giannini et al., 2011). Inspired particularly by the elevated lifestyle he witnessed in the Savoy Hotel in London, on his return to Italy he decided to merge this refined style of living with the exclusive skills of his native craftsmen (Gucci Biography, 2014). Specifically he utilized the skills of local Tuscan artisans (Gucci, 2014). He began by selling leather bags to horsemen in the 1920s and graduated into luxury luggage with the emergence of horseless carriages and non-equine transport (Gucci Biography, 2014). Together with his sons, Guccio expanded his company to include stores in Milan and Rome as well as additional shops in Florence, selling his finely crafted leather accessories as well as silks and knitwear featuring his signature logo (Giannini et al., 2011). Within a few years the label was enjoying growing success, the cosmopolitan international elite holidaying in Florence converged on Guccio's boutique on a quest for his equestrian inspired Guccio shoes, bags, trunks, gloves and belts (Giannini et al., 2011). Most of Guccio's clients were horse-riding aristocrats, and Guccio continued developing products to satisfy that segment (Giannini et al., 2011). With Guccio's death in 1953 his sons Aldo, Vasco, Ugo and Rodolfo took over the family business (Gucci, 2014). The brothers took the successful luggage business to new heights, opening stores round the world and making the Guccio name synonymous with celebrity and chic (Gucci, 2014). Guccio products quickly became internationally renowned for their enduring style and were valued by movie icons and elite figures in the era of the Jet Set (Giannini et al., 2011).

Throughout the 1960s Guccio continued its global expansion opening Guccio shops in London, the USA and the lucrative emerging market of the Far East (Giannini et al., 2011). Following the enlargement of their luggage business, the company developed the first ready to wear Guccio collection, heavily featuring the double G logo (Giannini et al., 2011).

1.2 Social Media Background

Social media, also known as social network sites is defined as “A web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system” (Boyd & Ellison, 2008).

The nature and nomenclature of these connections may vary from site to another. What makes social network sites unique is not that they allow individuals to meet strangers –even though it is possible-, but rather that they enable users to articulate and make visible their social networks (Boyd & Ellison, 2008). This can result in connections between individuals that would not otherwise be made, but that is often not the goal, and these meetings are frequently between “latent ties” (Haythornthwaite, 2005) who share some offline connection. Hence the first recognizable social network site launched in 1997. SixDegrees.com that allowed users to create profiles, list their Friends and, beginning in 1998, surf the Friends lists (Boyd & Ellison, 2008). Those features existed before but they were more in the form of dating sites and networking with strangers (Boyd & Ellison, 2008).

In 2003 several social network sites started to follow and spread worldwide such as Myspace and Friendster (Boyd & Ellison, 2008). Facebook then followed not so long after that, it began in early 2004 as a Harvard-only social network site (Cassidy, 2006). Beginning in September 2005, Facebook expanded to include high school students, professionals inside corporate networks, and, eventually, everyone. Many network sites are tremendously used today such as Twitter, Instagram, Flickr, Google +, LinkedIn and many more.

After the popularity of social network sites among many users worldwide and users daily bases activities on those sites. Brands grabbed the opportunity in taking part and create profiles where followers or fans can interact with them. This is a relatively new marketing practice that brands started with on Facebook there after Twitter and Instagram

were also of attention due to their difference in nature. The focus of this study will be on Instagram as it is of a visual nature, and seen to suit the luxury brands performance that is of focus of this research.

2. Theoretical framework

In the following, central concepts of the thesis will be defined in order to establish a clear understanding of what is meant, when they are applied and mentioned in the thesis. This is essential, as multiple approaches to each concept exist.

2.1 Definition of Branding and the Concepts Brand Identity and Brand Image

A brand can be defined as the following “the totality of what the consumer takes into consideration before making a purchase decision” (Pickton & Broderick, 2005, p.242), which put differently means that the brand is the sum of all experiences received by the consumer through name, logo, symbol, communication and design that differentiates the corporation and its products or services from those of competitors (Okonkwo, 2007). Pickton & Broderick (2005) argue that branding is the means for establishing a brand, what is done in relation to the name, logo, symbol, communication, design and so forth, and can more specifically be defined as a “strategy to differentiate products and companies and to build economic value for both the consumer and the brand owner” (p.242). The economic value for the consumer is, according to Okonkwo (2007), created through the functional and emotional benefits that a successful brand signals to offer the consumer, who consequently feels confident that the brand will deliver a certain experience. Consumers who perceive the brand to be beneficial will then form an emotional and psychological attachment towards the brand, which will then create economic value for the brand owner, who, through loyal consumers, will arguably have a competitive advantage and experience stable, if not increased, sales (Okonkwo, 2007).

In traditional marketing, brand positioning is viewed as the foundation of brand management, but this is according to Kapferer and Bastien (2012) different in luxury branding, where the creation and maintenance of the brand’s unique identity and dream is key. It is thus essential for luxury brands to communicate in an aesthetic manner, which cannot be associated with that of mass-produced or premium brands that communicate to

sell en masse; “In luxury you communicate in order to create the dream and to recharge the brand’s value, not in order to sell” (Kapferer & Bastien, 2012, p.211). The brand identity can, according to Kapferer and Bastien (2012), be defined as the DNA of the brand, more specifically the tangible and intangible facets of the brand that define it and differentiate it from others. This conceptualization is founded on six broad categories of brand manifestations; traditional communication activities, the signature system, points of sale/offices /factories, products, manifestations of company behavior and manifestations of actual consumers (Chevalier & Mazzalovo, 2008), and of these, the focus of this thesis is on social media communication activities. A brand identity has a unique brand personality, which is the outward face of the brand that through ‘core personality traits’ shows the ‘true self’ of the brand; who it is and how it views itself (Okonkwo, 2007). It is seen as important to distinguish between brand identity and brand image, as the brand image is the subjective perception of the objective brand identity, created in the consumer’s mind through their interpretation of all the corporate controlled brand manifestations that together create the brand identity (Pickton & Broderick, 2005). The ultimate goal of marketers is of course that the brand image corresponds with brand identity but this can, as the above indicates, not be taken for granted (Pickton & Broderick, 2005). Many scholars, such as Kapferer and Bastien (2012), Chevalier (2008) and Okonkwo (2007) argue that “the luxury business above all is a business of brands” (Chevalier & Mazzalovo, 2008, p. 81), and that the notion of luxury would not exist if it was not for branding and its ability to create the perception of value: “Branding is the lifeline of the luxury industry, and without branding there would be no luxury goods” (Okonkwo, 2007, p.10). It is thus essential for corporations, who want to be a part of and remain in the luxury market, to focus and concentrate on branding.

Customer brand image can be created through branding; it can also be enhanced through the influence of the Word of Mouth of customers (Keller, 2012). Word of Mouth (WOM) which can be defined as “all informal communications directed at other consumers about the ownership, usage or characteristics of particular goods or their sellers” (Westbrook, 1987). The focus for this research is on ‘e-WOM’ that is known to be any positive or negative statements that are made by potential, actual or former customers about the

brand or its products, which is made available to multitude of people via the internet (Hennig-Thurau & Walsh, 2004). This can take place on Instagram in the form of comments by followers. For this analysis this is taken into account as one of the effects that comments have on other consumers and the brand image.

2.2 Definition of Luxury and Luxury Fashion Brands

Through out this framework, I will shed the light on the luxury environment; starting with luxury definition, luxury market and then the luxury target segment.

Despite the different ideas, definitions or opinions that we may hear about luxury, it is more of a feeling that generates these ideas that we end up understanding and even believing. This feeling is a psychological interpretation of past-related exclusivity and rarity that was associated with luxury decades ago (Tynan, McKechnie & Chhuon, 2010). It is presumed that there are two types main feelings for luxury; this distinction is between feeling accomplishment, or what is termed authentic pride, and that is the feeling for the motive to purchase luxury goods (McFerran, Aquino & Tracy, 2014). The other feeling is the one that is triggered from displaying luxury products which is believed to be snobbery and hubristic pride (McFerran et al., 2014). There is however no guarantee that individuals are likely to feel the same, it depends on other logical characteristics, like for instance how many times this individual has purchased luxury goods. Therefore, this feeling is undefined; in other words, luxury products do not promise certain or specific feelings that will be enhanced just by purchasing these products. As brands, Burberry, Louis Vuitton and Gucci have this undefined feeling of luxury, something which consumers all recognize but nevertheless find difficult to define due to its subjective and value-based nature.

The notion of luxury can be found in many brands, but as the above indicates, for this research Burberry, Louis Vuitton and Gucci are used as exemplary brands because of their exclusivity and recognition in the luxury market. Those brands are in luxury ready-to-wear, fashion sector that offers haute couture, men and women's ready-to-wear and

accessories (Chevalier & Mazzalovo, 2008,). Within this category, luxury is in broad terms characterized by authenticity, exclusivity, uniqueness, innovation, craftsmanship, premium pricing and high quality (Okonkwo, 2007), as well as a creative and emotional intangible worth (Chevalier & Mazzalovo, 2008). Chevalier & Mazzalovo (2008) distinguish between three levels of luxury (p. xi), and the majority of luxury brands within the fashion sector as the model shows, offers all three levels.

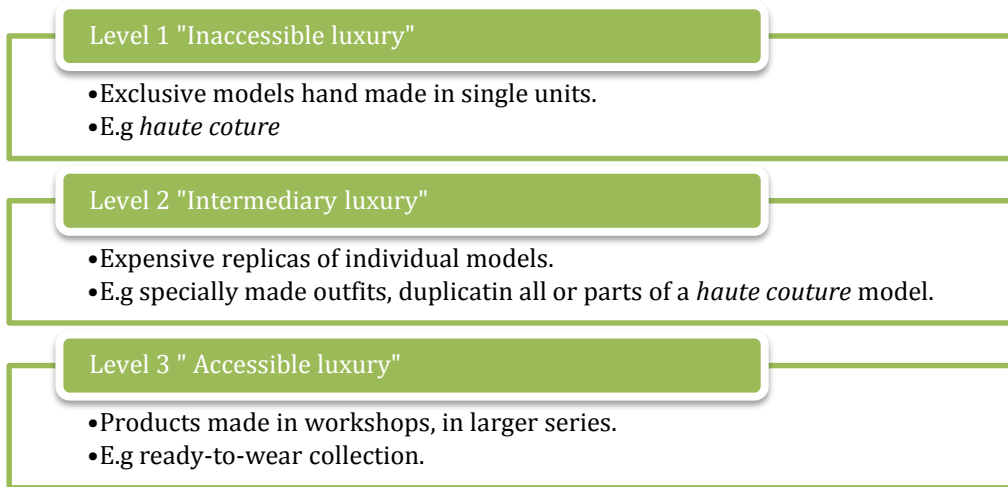


Figure 1: Based on Chevalier & Mazzalovo, 2008,p.xi

According to Kapferer (2006), the three levels indicated in (figure 1) are interdependent and thus all necessary, as the creation of haute couture at the inaccessible luxury level – which functions to sell and recreate the brand universe and reinforce the brand identity – is financed by the profits made from sales at the accessible luxury level. Even though the focus of this research is on the accessible luxury, the economical success of this level will have an influence on the other levels of luxury.

2.3 The Luxury World

The following section provides a general presentation of today's rather complex luxury market and luxury consumer. It is crucial for luxury brands to have a clear understanding of the competition, social trends and consumers, who they are; their needs and expectations, in their sector, as well as the related challenges, seeing that it more or less determines how the brand should construct its brand communication (Okonkwo, 2007).

2.3.1 Luxury Market

The luxury market has attained maturity, together with the steady expansion of the scope of its market and a rapid growth in the number of customers. Berthon, Berthon, Pitt, & Parent (2009) stated that the luxury brand industry is "...one of the most profitable and fastest-growing brand market, yet at the same time poorly understood and under-investigated" (P.45). This is perhaps because luxury can be seen to have various meanings – it is hard to express it in one single way-. The word 'luxury' has a long history, coming from the Latin word 'luxus' meaning "'soft or extravagant living, (over)-indulgence' and 'sumptuousness, luxuriousness, opulence'" (Tynan et al., 2010). "Luxury as we know it today is rooted in old Europe's royal courts – primarily those of France, which set the standards for lavish living." (Thomas, 2007, p.21) In 2013, the luxury goods industry was worth over € 200 billion (D'Arpizion, 2013). This includes almost all the different categories starting with fashion clothing, jewelry, leather and silk goods, perfumes, cosmetics, champagne and spirits which "...convey status and a pampered life – a luxurious life" (Thomas, 2007, 3). Furthermore, D'Arpizion argues, that "...worldwide luxury goods market revenues will grow as much as 50% faster than global GDP, with an expectation of 4% to 5% growth in 2013 and 5% to 6% annual average through 2015, on track to break the € 250 billion sales threshold by mid-decade." (D'Arpizion, 2013). Given these facts, and noting the limited research in this area, it is clear that the luxury brand industry is booming and in need of further investigation, particularly in relation to the use of social networks.

As referenced earlier, the luxury market has developed rapidly in the last fifty years, and that is due to the number of changes that occurred within our society (Okonkwo, 2007). One of the greatest contributors to change is globalization, which has internationalized the luxury sector and led to increased competition (Hines & Bruce, 2007). Brands from all over the world are now in rivalry against each other (Okonkwo, 2007). In addition, due to advancements in business and management practices, along with globalization, market entry barriers are now low, which has led to increased competition (Hines & Bruce, 2007). In other words, new luxury brands are able to enter the market easier and emerge competing for consumers' attention (Okonkwo, 2007). In addition, the rise of fashion brands from 'mass' to 'premium' has increased competition and influences the luxury sector, as consumers view these products as alternatives to luxury products at better price-value (Okonkwo, 2007). Another trait of the current luxury market is democratization, which more specifically implies that consumer markets have expanded to everyone (Chevalier & Mazzalovo, 2008) which makes it appropriate for brands to market themselves on social media platforms that are of reach to everyone, primarily due to a general increase in wealth not just among the best potential clients but also among the middle-class (Kapferer & Bastien, 2012; Okonkwo, 2007).

Oddly, the financial crisis has, according to several studies (Fellowes, 2008), not really had a negative effect on the luxury market, as the globalization of the sector has created various national markets for the luxury brands to rely on. Kapferer (2012) states that, despite the ongoing crisis transition of Western economies, the luxury sector is growing. James Ogilvy, chief executive of Luxury Briefing says:

“We're in the middle of the maelstrom now, which affects confidence, but luxury is a long-term business for the brands involved. The customer base is broader than it was with some brands having more than 200 stores worldwide, and emerging markets may counteract the stagnation of some of the more mature markets” (cited in Fellowes, 2008, p.18-19).

John Guy, retail and luxury goods analyst at MF Global, a brokerage firm, elaborates that luxury commodities have now emerged into international markets, as such; they need to

be measured in the international context. For instance in Britain, the demand for luxury goods decrease because conspicuous consumption does not go down too well in contrast to China and Russia, where portraying ones wealth is a symbol of power (Fellowes, 2008). However, it is not only global presence that saves luxury brands from the recession; Ogilvy argues that people who are used to buy luxury will continue to do so, as they value and appreciate quality: “This flight to quality by consumers, also provides the key to understanding why luxury brands will survive this recession, especially those with heritage and a strong identity” (Fellowes, 2008). The luxury target audience is less price-sensitive and actually expects luxury goods to be premium-priced rather than economically priced (Okonkwo, 2007). Pricing forms a part of the branding process as consumers often judge the position of a brand and the value of a product in terms of price, therefore lowering the price of brands during economic crisis is in fact not an option. All in all, the current market traits indicate that it is crucial for luxury businesses to have a strong and competitive brand identity and history, as well as a global presence, and what is a better way doing that, than being on the most viral platforms, social media.

2.3.2 Target Segment

Because of today’s high supply of luxury brands, consumers are now more empowered than ever; they can easily switch between brands and are less loyal than before (Hujic, 2005). Today’s consumers are well informed and can pick and choose exactly what they want, and consequently have a critical attitude and sky-high expectations and demands (Okonkwo, 2007). There are, according to Okonkwo (2007), broadly speaking two major segments of luxury consumers in Western societies; namely the ‘traditional luxury consumers’ on one hand – who belong to the upper class and revere the traditional and well-established brands - and the ‘new luxury consumers’ on the other. It is quite impossible to clearly segment these new luxury consumers, also named ‘New Premium Consumers’ (Hujic, 2005), seeing that they do not belong to a single social class or culture (Okonkwo, 2007). Most of them can nevertheless be characterized, in general, by certain post modernistic tendencies, such as individualism, reflexivity, a need for self-

expression, as well as a strong focus on personal, hedonistic needs (Okonkwo, 2007), and based on this, Chevalier and Bastien (2008), propose some specific traits: Luxury consumers are first of all eclectic, that indicates that they have high expectations, want to stand out and signal professionalism and modernity through their appearance. Besides this, consumers look for luxury products with hedonistic and aesthetic value rather than functional, which means that they aim for personal pleasure and experience more than anything else (Atwal & Williams, 2009). It is also essential to highlight that although consumers might not be young of age, they are indeed youthful in spirit (Hujic, 2005). Today, luxury is without borders therefore it is hard to identify or limit the target segment. However, what really seems crucial is that the luxury feeling, luxury brand associations and luxury experience are communicated and delivered carefully and closely through the different marketing practices.

2.4 Marketing as a Performance

Traditional marketing is defined by the American Marketing Association (AMA) 1985, as “the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion and distribution of ideas, goods and services to create exchange and satisfy individual and organizational objectives” (Cited in Pickton & Broderick, 2005). Marketing can also be seen to “create” markets, as the starting point for new forms of consumer demand that previously did not exist (Cochoy, 1998). For Callon (1998a, 1998b) and Cochoy (1998), the role of marketing in creating and constructing these markets is based on “performance”. This performance is done through different marketing practices to deliver to the consumer the luxury feeling. A consumer’s demand for a product, a brand or a feeling that is associated with those, did not always exist (Cochoy, 1998).

However, delivering a phenomenon like “luxury” that is hard to define and that has more intangible attributes than functional ones, makes that performance questionable. What also seems to be contradictory to these performances are its association with Instagram, a platform that differs completely from luxury and exclusivity, due to its feature of being free and available to everyone. To start with, let's look at the first complexity in this

performance “delivering an undefined phenomenon”. As stated by Catry (2003) “...Like magicians, luxury incumbents seek to perform an illusion where actual scarcity is replaced by perceived rarity” This illusion can be based on the fact that historically, luxury was stemmed from use of valuable material that is naturally scarce, such as gold and diamonds (Carty, 2003). Nowadays this has shifted towards performing an illusion of being rare, or rather an illusion of luxury itself. Luxury is intangible and it has clearly changed over the years. However, it still exists and the reason for its existence is the way in which luxury brands can be seen as ‘performed’ rather than what they offer (Kapferer, 2012). That explains the reason why luxury brands market themselves in certain districts or specific shopping malls that would enhance this performance.

The second complexity comes when introducing performance on social media platforms. Even though luxury fashion brands’ target segment discussed earlier, would suit the market performance on social media as it reaches ‘everybody’. However, none of Instagram’s specifications brings the context of luxury. Put differently, Instagram is a free platform that is used for various other purposes, and all other brands that are of less value than luxury are being likewise performed as ‘brands’. This study is therefore created, to investigate how the luxury performance is held on a platform that is in contradiction with the normal perception of luxury.

2.4.1 Marketing as a Performance on social media

Brands usually send messages to customers by enhancing desirable brand associations when communicating to customers (Pelsmacker, Geuens & Bergh, 2010). The importance of this is reinforced by Okonkwo (2007); he indicates that fashion luxury brands are not only about clothes and accessories, but also deeply dominate people’s identity and lifestyle. However, before a brand can give its consumers a distinctive identity, it needs to first achieve a distinctive identity itself. Brand identity is the answer to the question “what are you?” (Keller, 2012). One way to understand and interpret the brand identity is to look at the associations related to the brand (Pelsmacker et al., 2010). Brand associations are typically understood as anything in the consumer’s memory linked

to a specific brand, such as associations that form networks ultimately creating an overall brand image (Keller, 2012). For a brand to be successfully recognized and recalled, these associations need to be strong, favorable and unique (Pelsmacker et al., 2010). The associations are strong when they are relevant to the brand, favorable when they are liked from consumers and unique when they differentiate from other competitors (Keller, 2012). Hence, Luxury brands' mission is to deliver associations that would be recognized and recalled as luxury.

Communicating brand associations can be communicated through various ways, such as advertisements messages, logos or slogans etc. The increasing role of social network sites in people's lives has had a tremendous influence on the communication style that brands used to adopt. Today, customers can engage with brands more explicitly and quicker with the two-way communication, rather than the old-fashion and traditional way of retrieving information through the web (Grunig, 2009; Lewis, 2010). Social media platforms are therefore seen as a powerful medium for customer relationship building (Yoon, Choi & Sohn, 2008). This relationship is formed through customers' interactivity with the brand. "Interactivity is the key property of the Web that facilitates consumers' active participation in communications and transactions in the online environment" (Yoon et al., 2008). Consumers' interactivity with the brand is primarily in the form of comments on social media. Comments on social media are today's contemporary language. The importance of this language can be seen to be significant and serious because it is public. Not only the brand can view these comments, other followers are also exposed and might get influenced by those comments.

In addition, social media platforms give the opportunity for consumers to view products in a more relaxing atmosphere and consumers ask questions about the brand openly (Evans, 2012). Through social media, luxury brands can be seen as able to increase their targeted segments (Evans, 2012). This is in part because social media breaks a barrier that a lot of customers have about visiting a luxury brand store. In luxury brands stores, the customer would presumably feel the pressure in acting in certain ways when entering high-class stores, especially if they are new customers. The pressure could consist of the

embarrassment or even trepidation in not being able to meet the standards of luxury or the ability to purchase (Evans, 2012). While on social media the customer have the freedom to view the brand as it suits him/her and the decision making process is done in relaxing terms. In fact social media can be seen as a step to help reduce the stress and pressure before entering a luxury store.

2.5 Luxury Communication on Social Media

Communicating with customers on social media is somewhat a new phenomenon, therefore finding empirical studies was challenging. On the other hand, there are different studies that when put together generated a solid ground for this research.

2.5.1 Visual communications

With the growing popularity of social media for both users and among brands, there has also been an increased presence of luxury brands on the more visual social media platforms. Visual appeal is crucial and it is seen to be the primary way for brands to entice consumers (Pieters & Warlop, 1999). That is owing to the ease of recalling and recognizing visual images than texts (Pelsmacker et al., 2010). Kapferer (2012) also argues that luxury brands highly depend on images rather than texts to leave it up to the consumer to perceive luxury as it suits them. This emphasizes the fact that luxury brands seek to communicate a personalized unique dream for individuals. Customers can have limitless ways of translating images; this can be done in ways that suit each individual customer; unlike verbal communication that would perhaps hinder the customer's freedom. Images can be seen to be a good fit for luxury considering that luxury itself is undefined; hence customers can define luxury as it suits them through their personal analysis of images.

In order for consumers to perceive a brand as luxurious, the brand needs to communicate certain sophisticated associations. These associations vary from a brand to another, but there are some basic associations seen as necessary for luxury brands. Aaker developed a

five-dimension personality model to classify the main personalities that brands can adopt, one of which is particularly important for luxury brands (Aaker, 1997). This brand personality model includes the following dimensions: sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication and ruggedness. According Okonkwo, luxury goods are categorized in the sophistication dimension (Okonkwo, 2007). Aaker underlined some of the associations in her brand personality model, and the associations with sophistication were described as upper class, glamorous, charming, feminine, good looking and smooth (Aaker, 1997). After the basic luxury associations, come different associations that need to be strong and unique to differentiate the brand from other rivals in the market (Pelsmacker et al., 2010). These associations will be discussed after coding and analyzing the visual posts of Burberry, Louis Vuitton and Gucci.

Several authors also noted that a true luxury brand communication is done through communicating the nine characteristics of luxury (See Figure 2). This is generally applied to all forms of communication. Social media or more specifically, Instagram might be limited with few of those characteristics since the communication used on it is mostly visual and delivering deep opulence concepts through visual posts might be affront. Having Aaker's and Ukonkwo's basic guidelines for luxury associations and the luxury brand communication figure, helped guide the examination of the visual posts in the first sub research question.

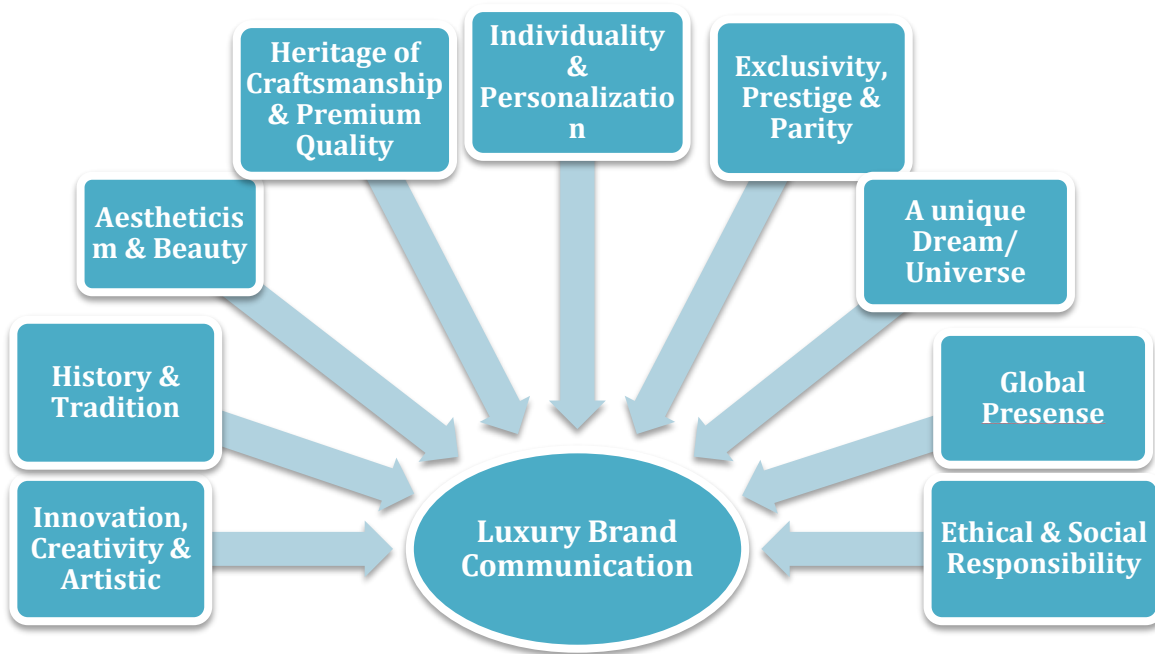


Figure 2: Characteristics of luxury brand communication (Okonkwo, 2007; Chevalier & Mazzalovo, 2008; Brioschi, 2006).

2.5.2 Followers' communication

The key tools of luxury fashion branding are differentiation and emotional appeal (Ukonkwo, 2007). Differentiation can be done in the tangible products that brands offers, however the focus of this research will be communicating the intangible aspect of luxury fashion brands. The intangible aspects of luxury branding include the psychological responses that consumers exhibit towards luxury fashion that leads to an emotional attachment to specific brands and their products and services (Keller, 2012). Emotional appeal connects with the consumer's sub-conscious, sensitivity, intelligence and personality with the brand (Ukonkwo, 2007); this implies that an intimate relationship and a special bond between brands and their consumers are created through the emotional appeal. Instagram is a two-way communication platform, therefore looking at followers' interaction with the brand through comments will illustrate the relationship that consumers have towards the brand. Followers express different emotions and opinions

through the easy comment option given on Instagram. The brand and the public audience can view comments on Instagram and reply to them also in public. The undisguised platform of Instagram makes those comments of value to this research. Those comments function as reviews to the brand or certain product. Hence, it is an important area of research, to interpret the degree to which the luxurious performance has an effect on followers.

Today, social media users have the ability to invite friends to different posts by commenting their name under the post. This entails that for luxury brands, the comments will play the role of e-WOM. It can be seen as an e-WOM because customers will most likely have an influence on their online community (Kim & Ko, 2012). By customers' participation on the online public space of Instagram their personal online community will be able to read the comments on their own news feed. Moreover, a study by DEI Worldwide (2008) provides the following statistics: 70% of consumers have visited social media sites to get information; 49% of these consumers have made a purchase decision based on the information they found through the social media sites; 60% said they were likely to use social media sites to pass along information to others online; and 45% of those who searched for information via social media sites engaged in WOM (Cited in Cuming, 2008). These statistical facts show the significance of followers and their interaction with brands on social media.

3. Methods

This chapter more precisely describes what information was necessary for answering the research question, together with the methods for collecting data. All the instruments that are used for coding and the resulting codes from this are discussed. Data analysis and results are then combined together in the next chapter because they are highly interconnected.

Using social media as a data source is a relatively new phenomenon. The deeply interdisciplinary nature of studies makes it difficult to retrieve a complete up to date empirical study employing data collection on social media (Evans, 2012). At the same time, the popularity and importance that social medial platforms are gaining among many users make them an interesting site for research.

"Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p.3)

In this research I am interpreting the phenomenon of the creation of the luxury market on Instagram; it is a social phenomenon that involves brands “senders” and the followers “receivers” of this luxury performance. This performance is in the representation of visual images and comments. This will be studied in its natural setting on Instagram; images and comments will be translated to understand the meaning behind this social phenomenon of luxury performance.

This research was constructed using the qualitative content analysis. Qualitative content analysis is a technique that derives from the communication science (Flick, Kardoff & Steinke, 2004). This research is mainly focused on the communication of brands with visual posts on one hand, and followers and their comments communicating back with brands. In this research, these two forms of communication are seen to play a role in marketing as a performance. In order to understand this communication, the language used in this communication needs to be explained.

First, there is the language of visual posts that was analyzed using the qualitative content analysis. This analysis was done by translating the visual cues that were seen of relevance to luxury into a text and codes of words. To answer the second sub research question, a similar type research was conducted; comments were collected and I used qualitative content analysis to be able to grasp the various responses within these comments.

The procedure for coding in my qualitative content analysis followed a grounded theory approach. Glaser and Strauss developed grounded theory in the 60's; the purpose was first to tackle problems related to the great amount of data that needs to be handled for qualitative research (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Often in qualitative research analysis, researchers find themselves with a great amount of data, but this generates data in a non-standard format, which, in the nature of the research, can rarely be predicted in advance (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Grounded theory offers a way of attending in detail to qualitative material in order to develop systematically theories about the phenomena, which have been observed. The term was coined by Glaser and Strauss (1967) to refer to an approach which they had developed during the course of research into American health institutions (Glaser & Strauss, 1964, 1965a,b) to enable them to 'discover theory from data' rather than having to proceed by quantitatively testing hypotheses derived from the work of the few specialized theorists.

There were several researchers that took interest in grounded theory; they developed and created different modes for grounded theory research. Charmaz (2000) has presented a constructivist mode of grounded theory, which can be seen as an approach between

positivism and post-modernism. Constructivism assumes that there are multiple social realities simultaneously rather than the only “real reality” (Charmaz, 2000). In constructivist grounded theory, it is stressed that data is constructed through an on-going interaction between the researcher and participant (Charmaz, 2000). It is assumed that action and meaning are dialectical; meaning shapes action and action affects meaning (Charmaz, 2000). The meaning and the action are therefore highly interconnected; and so are the analysis and the results simultaneously. The analysis represent both the researcher’s and the participant’s way of thinking. The result of this analysis – unlike the original grounded theory – is seldom presented as theory and more as a story or a narrative with a focus on understanding the social process (Charmaz, 2000). Charmaz (2000) states that the researcher’s analysis tells a story about people, social processes, and situations. The researcher composes the story; it does not simply unfold before the eyes of an objective viewer Charmaz, 2000). Accordingly, the story reflects the viewer as well as what is viewed. Hence, this analysis provides the answer to the research question in the form of a story telling of the luxury performance that takes on Instagram.

3.1 Visual analysis

For the first stage, this research will start with the first research sub-question:

- a. *How do Burberry, Louis Vuitton and Gucci ‘perform’ luxury through visual posts on Instagram?*

This research analysed the visual posts by Burberry, Louis Vuitton and Gucci on Instagram. The units for the qualitative content analysis were Instagram posts by the three brands Burberry, Louis Vuitton and Gucci on their official page on Instagram. Data was collected via the official page of each brand on Instagram. However, the web version of Instagram <http://iconosquare.com/viewer.php> was used rather than the Instagram’s mobile App. In order to be able to collect data from the pages of Burberry, Louis Vuitton and Gucci, I used my personal account on Instagram. Before sampling started, a couple

of months were spent observing posts by brands on Instagram. During these months I followed Burberry, Louis Vuitton and Gucci on Instagram, posts then started to appear on my own Instagram profile. I also engaged in “liking”, commenting and tagging friends in certain posts. With the “news following” feature that Instagram provides, other followers of my account were able to see what I like or comment on. Therefore, after observing and participating on Instagram, I felt the need to explore this phenomenon of commenting language for the second research sub question, more details regarding comments analysis will be elaborated in (See section 3.2).

3.1.1 Visual Images Sample

The first step in qualitative content analysis is choosing the images, otherwise known as sampling. After observing brands on Instagram, some remarks helped choose my sampling technique. The three brands do not post on a regular basis. Some brands post more often than others, mostly depending on the events held and the products launched. Posts were then sampled to cover a variety of events and target segments.

A sample of 40 posts of each brand (120 posts in total) on Instagram was collected from Instagram’s official page. The sampling method that was used in this stage is purposive sampling, which is also called judgment sampling (Tongco, 2007). Purposive sampling suggests that the sample is collected based on the judgement of the researcher (Tongco, 2007). Sampling is therefore done through finding images that suit the research question, and that are believed to advance the research far better than any randomly chosen sample.

Posts were selected from the beginning of the brands’ active engagement on Instagram in May 2012 until March 2014. “User’s interaction with the brand has transformed today to the ‘liking’; In 2009 liking and the accompanying ‘Like’ button were introduced and presented as a shortcut to commenting in order to replace short affective statements like ‘Awesome’ and ‘Congrats!’ ...” (Pearlman, 2009). “The button provides a one-click shortcut to express a variety of affective responses such as excitement, agreement, compassion, understanding, but also ironic and parodist liking” (Helmond & Gerlitz,

2013, p.1358). Hence, Posts were selected according to the criteria of high number of 'likes' by followers, their various events that the luxury brands engage with and the variety of products and targeted segment. Those were the characteristics of the purposive used for sampling the visual posts.

3.1.2 Coding

The visual posts from Burberry, Gucci and Louis Vuitton that were part of my sample were coded. The data was coded according to the constructivist grounded theory method. "Coding may be described as the deciphering or interpretation of data and includes the naming of concepts and also explaining and discussing them in more detail" (Flick et al., 2004). The explanations are reflected in coding notes. The result of coding is then a list of terms as well as an explanatory text that are discussed in details in the data analysis section.

In coding, researchers use their background knowledge about the context of the textual passage being investigated and, in general terms, their knowledge about the area of investigation (Flick et al., 2004). Consequently, the theoretical framework for coding was used to guide this research as well as the analysis. Three types of coding may be distinguished that may be partially considered as phases in the research process, open, axial and selective coding (Flick et al., 2004).

In order to ensure reliability and validity of the codes and avoid subjectivity, ten students of seven females and three males majoring in business administration at the Norwegian School of Management BI in Oslo were asked to code a section of images. I chose university students because it was an accessible group that was willing to participate. In addition, students were familiar with research and coding and looked into images closely and in depth; that helped save time and advance the outcome of coding. Moreover, students were also given some basic guidelines about open coding, and they were told that the core of the research is about luxury performance. Once this was done, their codes were crosschecked with the initial codes for this study to ensure reliability and

validity of the final codes. Their codes matched my codes to a great level and they were taken into consideration for the first stage in open coding. The process of coding is explained and examples are provided for each step below.

3.1.3 Open Coding

In open coding, data are ‘broken down’ analytically, and in this the principle of constructivist grounded theory is derived from the data, that is from the text developed from translating visual images (Flick et al., 2004). As a first step Flick et al., (2004) advise to analyze units in single short textual passages. In this stage posts were individually analyzed and codes were created for each post individually. Detailed codes were created according to all what is seen in the in the visual post. For open coding it mostly dependent on literally stating what is seen in the visual posts (Rose, 2001).

Flick et al. (2004) suggest that coding is more profitable when *in-vivo codes* are used instead of theoretical codes. In-vivo codes are colloquial interpretations of the phenomena, and they are taken directly from the language of the field of investigation and the research question (Flick et al., 2004). Following those guidelines, codes were based on different variables that were inspired from the theoretical framework and that are also relevant to the research question.

It was also advisable to use traditional categories such as age, gender, level, and so on, but only if they are relevant (Flick et al., 2004). Many of the marketing visual posts depend on basic categories and signs of humans, which symbolize particular qualities to their audience (Dyer, 1982). Dyer (1982) suggested a list of human representations that are indicated in advertisings that are worth investigating; those were listed as such:

- Representation of bodies; Age, gender, race, hair, looks
- Props and settings: light, colors and different settings of the image and objects
- Representation of activity: touch and body movements

- Representation of manners: Expressions, eye contact, pose

As I went a long with coding I kept in mind the basic criteria, and developed further codes according to the theoretical framework and personal observation. The criterion was adjusted according to the fit to the Instagram medium and according to their relevance to the research question.

For coding I used iPhoto, which is a digital photograph manipulation software application developed by Apple Inc (Apple Inc., 2014). I coded the images using the “tagging faces” feature; this allowed me to easily track the codes of the 120 images. After codes were created, clicking on a certain code will show how many times this code was brought up. In addition, it also shows the images that the code appears in. In open coding there were 2,640 codes for the 120 images. After that first step, the codes that were repeated 5 times or above were kept, while the ones that had a smaller quantity were eliminated. Thereafter, I was left with 370 codes in total.

An example of this stage is a post by Louis Vuitton as seen below. This posts indicated many different codes such as, gold, red lipstick, leather, flower imprints etc. Other codes were created in the same manner for other posts. The purpose of this step is to determine what codes emerge in common with the other posts. After this step, codes were narrowed down according to their relevance to the research question.



Screenshot iPhoto: Open Coding Louis Vuitton

3.1.4 Axial coding

Axial coding in constructivist grounded theory is the process of relating codes to each other and creating categories and concepts that fit to them; this can be established via a combination of inductive and deductive thinking (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). With this applied, I narrowed the codes and classified them into different categories. This was organized so that different ideas and codes in images are classified, and the leitmotiv ideas are under the suited category. For example, one of the categories was the camera gaze, which describes how shots are taken. The look of the camera is the gaze, which is done by the photographer or the filmmaker (Mulvey, 1975). While we gaze we tend to build up a certain relationship, this relationship varies according to the shot taken (Mulvey, 1975). In a long shot we hardly focus on one subject since there are more than one to focus upon (Mulvey, 1975). In the mid shot if the viewer sees the person in the picture, but he is not looking at the viewer. This looks as if the person does not know the viewer. But in the close up shot the model is looking at the viewer (Mulvey, 1975). In that case the viewer build up a personal relationship with the model and hence the brand.

The various kinds of shot give a different meaning when gazed upon; therefore I felt it important to analyze this category (Mulvey, 1975).

3.1.5 Selective coding

The previous two stages are guidelines to reach the selective coding stage. Selective coding is the final part for data coding to be completed, after core concepts emerge from the coded data categories and subcategories have been identified through open and axial coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). During selective coding, previously identified discrete concepts and categories are further defined, developed, and refined and then brought together to tell a larger story (Flick et al., 2004). Selected codes were arranged in three codebooks, one codebook for each brand, however the codes that were used for each brand were the same (See Appendix A, B, C).

At the codes that were suggested for from students who double coded a section of the images were also analyzed. Students' codes were seen to match my codes to a great extent. However, students emphasized codes such as hair and smooth skin tremendously. Due to their relevance and importance to luxury brand associations they were taken into consideration.

3.2 Qualitative Content Analysis of Comments and Hashtags

The second sub research question was formulated to understand the actors involved in luxury performance. Since luxury performance is directed towards followers; it is essential to understand their role.

- a. *How do comments by followers of Burberry, Louis Vuitton and Gucci play a role in luxury performance?*

Research using qualitative content analysis focuses on the characteristics of language as communication with attention to the content or contextual meaning of the text (McTavish & Pirro, 1990). Therefore, for the second research sub-question a qualitative content analysis of comments was chosen, because the ultimate goal is to understand followers' reaction to the luxury performance by Burberry, Louis Vuitton and Gucci. The units that were analysed in this section were comments, which is the main form of interaction that followers have with brands on Instagram.

Comments can be seen significant because they are assumed to have an influence on others who view these comments. Social media users are more likely to pay attention to content from a person they are following intentionally because they would be interested. This suggests that individuals following the brand can be seen as 'brand ambassadors'. The brand's ambassador role is usually a part of the employee's job (Freeman & Liedtka, 1997); Employees constitute the interface between a brand's internal and external environments and can have a powerful impact on consumers' perceptions of both the brand and the organization (Schneider & Bowen, 1985; Balmer & Wilkinson, 1991). However, with social media, brands now have free labor from their "followers" that have their own online communities. A follower is more likely to have more influence on his or her own online community than an unknown employee of a brand. This power that followers have over their community is seen as great because it works as a form of word of mouth marketing, in this case e-WOM.

3.2.1 Followers' Comments Sample

Sampling in this stage was based on purposive sampling as well. Again this sampling method suggests that the sample is selected for a purpose that serves to answer the research question. This was the chosen sampling technique because during observation; there was seen to be specific notions in the content of the comments. While other comments seemed to be pointless, random and irrelevant for the research.

I spent time reading comments several times before choosing my sample. During the process of reading different comments there were seen that the content of the comments had a certain notion. This notion was based on expressing emotions; those emotions were merely positive and linked desiring the brand. The purposive analysis suggests different techniques in which the researcher can adopt during sampling. Thus, the technique used for purposive sampling is homogenous (Tongco, 2007); comments were collected according to some traits and characteristics that will be further explained in the data analysis. For this research, 40 comments were collected from each brand (120 in total). The comments were chosen from 60 of the visual posts formerly analysed in the previous sub research question.

4. Data Analysis & Results

4.1 Qualitative Content analysis of Visual Posts

Data analysis starts with the first research sub question that is related to the analysis of coding the visual posts by the brand as explained in the methods section.

b. How do comments by followers of Burberry, Louis Vuitton and Gucci play a role in luxury performance?

Codes in this stage were classified under the seven categories; I will explain why each of the categories were taken into account and included in the codebook. About 70% of the visual posts included a model. Therefore, I started with the list of Dyer (1982) mentioned in the coding section above: the human representation.

The first representation is of bodies; Age, gender, race, hair, looks. The ages of the female and male models in the posts were between 20's to early 30's; this was seen through their bright, shiny smooth looking and healthy skin. However, hair and looks emerged significantly in posts. Females' hair in posts was either nicely and professionally done in a smooth silky appeal, or in a hair up-do. Males' hair was well groomed and styled elegantly. In certain contexts hair can be a very important signifier. Hair often is seen to represent to beauty and freedom, (Martin & Gentry, 1997). Below is an example of a young female model from a post of Burberry's. As seen this post the model's hair is long and the wind coming through it makes it look even more feminine, classy and beautiful. From the soft appeal of the skin of the model it gives a feeling of youth. Approximately half of the visual posts had a clear focus on the appearance of nice hair for both females and males (See Table 1).



Appendix C: Burberry Codebook, pic 14

Style and looks in Burberry, Louis Vuitton and Gucci were mostly of an elegant nature. This was seen through the timeless and classic styles of the models and the products (Schurman, 2014). This is not surprising because of the fact that luxury brands are expensive and durable; a consumer would want to wear an item more often than other medium or lower price items. As stated by Okonkwo (2007) anyone who wanted to be seen as cultivated, well educated and well groomed adopted the French taste and style that is elegant and classy. There was a universal acceptance for decades that only France possessed the secrets of sophistication and charm and elegance (Okonkwo, 2007). This was clearly adopted until today as seen from the posts; half of the posts were of an elegant classic style. Elegance was seen from only clothes in some pictures, but other times like the post below, with the black and white, old car in the back ground and the simple classical dress the model is wearing. The second picture is from Gucci that shows a man with a semi formal suit; from the background the way books were placed in shelves, makes it appear as if the man is well educated. And according to Okonkwo (2007) education is a part of enhancing the feeling of elegance.



Appendix C: Burberry Codebook, 23

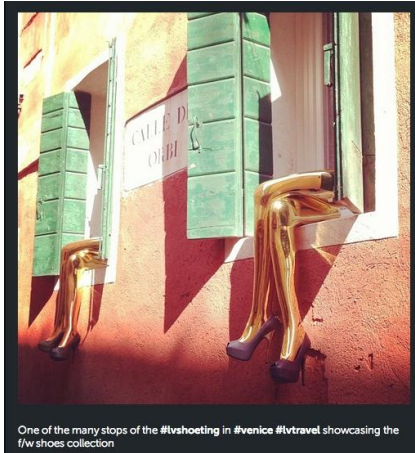


Appendix B: Gucci Codebook, 27

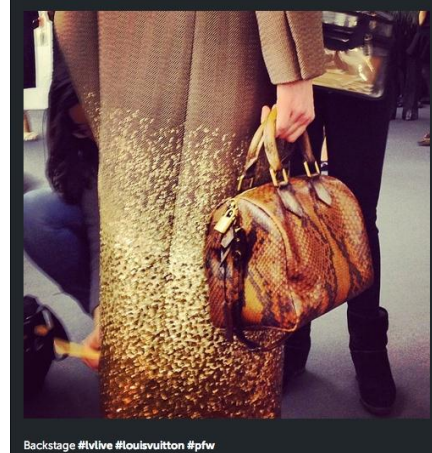
Other codes were also frequently found such as the obvious use of cosmetics such as lipstick, eye shadow, mascara, eyeliner and nail polish. These were frequently found due to the higher number posts with female models, therefore taken into account. Fifty posts had clear use of cosmetics; this simply indicates beauty, because cosmetics are beautifying products. However the cosmetics applied were rather simple and classy to match the elegant style discussed earlier.

The second representation is that of props and settings; this includes light, colors and different settings of the image and objects. What distinguishes Instagram's posts is their filtered aspect; with the filtered feature, colors and light blends and appear pleasant to the viewer. But filtering makes tracking the original color difficult. On the other hand, a color that appeared clearly and frequently in posts was gold. Gold is a definitive mark of opulence; it has been a representative of wealth and power for decades due to its scarcity (Bernstein & Volcker, 2012). The Golden color is also associated with abundance and prosperity, luxury and quality, prestige and sophistication, value and elegance; the color psychology of gold implies affluence, material wealth and extravagance (Gogic, 2013). Thirty-nine visual posts included the color gold, some through jewelry and others were in clothes, purses or in the background. The following two posts from Louis Vuitton are examples of other ways of having gold than jewelry. The first have manikin legs from

gold, shining with the reflection of the sun. The second post the model has gold glitters on her dress shining, they are also the center and the focus of the picture.



Appendix A: Louis Vuitton Codebook, 21



Appendix C: Louis Vuitton Codebook, 18

Leather is also one of the fabrics that appeared often in visual posts by the three brands. About on third of the posts contained the clear use of leather in products. There were different items that used leather such as shoes, skirts, jackets dresses and purses. The posts below shows boots from Louis Vuitton and the other shows a skirt from Gucci, both has leather appear clear, shiny and clean. Due to the procedure of leather making products that is a natural raw material of an animals skin and then it has to go through many processes to turn it into a material that can be used for manufacturing (Sterlaaci, 2010). It takes a lot of time in waiting and in man hours and chemicals have to use and then it has to be transported around different manufacturing facilities to complete a product. Gold and leather are codes for the category of quality as represent the luxurious quality of products (See Appendix A, B, C). Gold and leather are both representatives of good, durable, luxurious quality. Especially when associated with globally known brands, such as Burberry, Louis Vuitton and Gucci.



Appendix A: Louis Vuitton, 28



Appendix B: Gucci Codebook, 3

46 % of posts also clearly had the logo appear in them. By logo I refer to the brand's actual logo, logo colors, brand's name or other symbols that are known to be adopted only by this brand. In the posts below, Burberry shows the logo and the colors of the brands logo that are red, black, beige and white. The second post is by Gucci that shows a purse with the clear logo of Gucci on it. The last post is by Louis Vuitton, which is the brand that has its logo as a part of the design imprinted on purses, bags and shoes. This post and a lot of other post by Louis Vuitton had the logo easily seen either from because it enhances recall and recognition, but also because with well known brands logos are considered a part of the history heritage of the brand (Keller, 2012).



Appendix B: Burberry, 7



Appendix B: Gucci, 19



Appendix A: Louis Vuitton,

One of the elements that are also seen to be important for a luxury brand is a strong Country Of Origin (COO) link, especially a country with a strong reputation as a source of excellence in luxury fashion such as France and Italy (Krupka, Ozretic-Dosen, Previsic, 2014). These attributes are usually carried out in advertising for luxury brands. A strong country of origin plays a significant role in the quality of the products as mentioned in previous sections. France and Italy are the most important luxury brand source countries in the world. Those two countries command more than one-half of the global consumer luxury brands- Italy with 30% and France with 25% of the market (Krupka et al., 2014).

Taking into account the fact that Gucci, Chanel, Dolce & Gabbana, Cavalli, Armani, Yves Saint Laurent, and Lacroix are just some of Italian French luxury brands, the share of luxury brands in fashion industry is expected to be even higher (Krupka et al., 2014). The success around the world items “made in Italy” is mostly due to the Italian brand’s ability to transfer a certain sense of product quality in concert with values and experiences of beauty, elegance, tradition, luxury, and life quality (Krupka et al., 2014). Brand’s association with country of origin tends to have a strong impact on brand’s reputation; especially in a specific industry such as fashion (Okonkwo, 2009). It is seen that a product’s country of origin has a stronger effect when considering luxury products than necessities (Okonkwo, 2007). Thus, for luxury brands, especially for luxury fashion brands, COO presents a make or break of brand’s market success. Country of origin was communicated to followers on Instagram through posts Eiffel Tower representing France for Louis Vuitton, and Burberry had several posts of London skylines. For Gucci however this was not seen in any of the visual posts from the sample.

Luxury brands do not exist by chance, the time effort and professional craftsmanship put into producing these goods is what interests buyers (Okonkwo, 2007). This was interesting to see in five of the visual posts by the brands. Those posts showed the process of drawing different designs for example as seen below. In the first post by Gucci shows the process of a design of sunglasses, it shows papers and tools and the hands as they are doing different measures for the design. The second post is by Louis Vuitton showing different drawing of men collection of boots that appears to be a winter

collection. This shows why those brands are worth the luxurious image of theirs and worth the money spent on them since there is efforts put in designing these items by hand drawings.

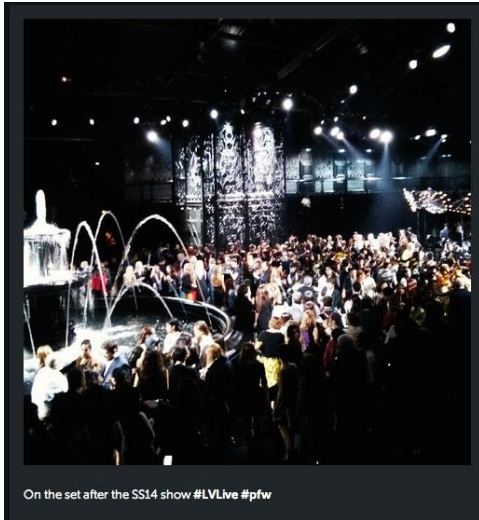


Appendix B: Gucci, 11



Appendix A: Louis Vuitton, 23

There was also seen that the brands engaged in events such as fashion shows and the Oscars/red carpet. There were 21 posts that had either a fashion show or red carpet/Oscars' events. Fashion shows with well-known brands – that are recognized and recalled for luxury fashion – like Burberry, Louis Vuitton and Gucci, are held usually in different countries, which is one way to see this triggering the global presence. Furthermore, these fashion shows create a media buzz in different global fashion magazines such as vogue (Vogue, 2014), news and in the internet world. The first post below is a fashion show from Louis Vuitton showing a great number of people gathering for the fashion show event. The second post is from Burberry, showing the end of the fashion show with models in line and audience clapping as the models walk (See Appendix A, B, C for more examples).



Appendix A: Louis Vuitton Codebook, 31



Appendix C: Burberry Codebook, 10

There was also a clear presence of the Oscars event; The Oscars is an annual American awards ceremony honoring achievements in the film industry (Oscars, 2013). This event is attendant by many well-known celebrities, and having brands present in such event enhances the global presence of the brand. The first post below shows a dress from Burberry and the model is at the red carpet with many photographers in the background. The second post is from Gucci showing a celebrity with a background that says Oscars and the Oscar award. Both images are glamorous, feminine and sophisticated.



Appendix C: Burberry Codebook, 12



Appendix B: Gucci Codebook, 2

The current definition of a brand has evolved from marks, names, logos and shapes to

elaborate marketing development and strategies. The result is the creation of something powerful and consistent, which has the ability to produce emotional and psychological attachment with consumers and financial value for the brand owner (Okonkwo, 2007). Therefore, the camera gaze is also analyzed because close up model shots forms a personal relationship with the viewer. There were 22% close up model shots of models in the visual images, with the model looking directly at the viewer and the focus is on the face and eyes.

At last I looked at the number of times the same product is repeated across the different images. This helped understand if brands differentiated and personalized the communication techniques. Under the category repeated product, results have shown that Burberry had nine posts of the beige trench coat. As seen from the Burberry's background, the trench coat is Burberry's trademark and a part of the start of its great heritage. Burberry seems to emphasize this background and heritage of theirs through repetition of the trench coats items. However, those images were all displayed in different settings, each with a different unique personality. The variety of the settings of those visual posts gives the viewer many options to choose and relate him or herself with. The images below display female and male models wearing beige trench coats. The first image is a close up image with two female models one is young and the other is middle-aged model. The second one is for a male model outdoor dressed semi formal. The last one shows a couple at the beach also semi formally dressed. The viewer can relate to different situations and a different dream according to their wish with those various options.



Appendix C: Burberry Codebook

After analyzing the different codes and categories, they were seen to somewhat follow the characteristics of luxury brand communication (See Figure 2). I placed the codes under the suited category. They were presented as such:

<i>Codes</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage of 120 posts</i>
Gender products		
Female	86	72 %
Male	32	27 %
Beauty		
Cosmetics	51	43 %
Hair	56	46 %
Elegance	60	50 %
Smooth Skin	50	41 %
Quality		
Gold	39	32 %
Leather	35	29 %
Global Presence		
Fashion shows	14	12 %
Red carpet	7	6 %
Craftsmanship/Heritage		
Logo	55	46 %
COO	5	4 %
Design	5	4 %
Camera gaze		
Close up shot	26	22 %
Medium shot	40	33 %
Long shot	10	8 %
Repeated Products		
Burberry trench coat		8%

Table 1: Percentage of the Visual Codes

4.2 Qualitative Content Analysis of Comments

The second research sub question is related to the qualitative content analysis of comments by followers on the visual posts by the brand.

b. *How do comments by followers of Burberry, Louis Vuitton and Gucci play a role in luxury performance?*

When the sample was collected, there was seen that most of the comments made by followers on visual post, had certain traits, characteristics and notions that seemed to appear very often. This research looked at the notions that were repeated; comments henceforth were grouped and arranged according to the notions that emerged.

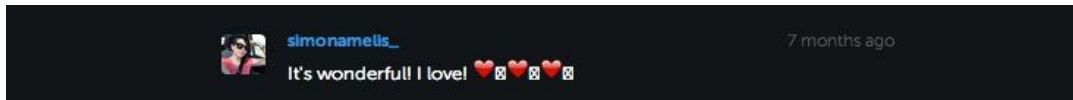
Comments were mainly expressed using emotional words to justify certain feelings towards the brands. Not surprising to start with, the most common word that was repeated was 'love'. I assume it is because the reason to follow a brand to start with, is stemmed from an interest or a desire to see more of the brand. Followers are similar to fans; that is why it is seen as a positive sign to have a brand with many followers. From that fact, I believe that I am dealing with comments from customers that already recognize the brand as luxury. 'Love' in comments was expressed towards different specific items or remarks that followers simply loved, however sometimes it was a general expression of love such as "In love" or "OMG, love love love".

Therefore I divided up the comments of love into *love general*, referring to general expressions of love as in the previous examples. And there is the more specific 'love' that were as follows; *Love brand*, *love product*, *love model* and *love hair*; all these categories had a repetition more than three times, therefore they were acknowledged. A number of comments were from followers who *owned* a product and stated this in comments. Other desires for the brand were in the form of "need" or "want" the brand or products. There

were also requests for gifting, and proposals to *gift* items in the content of comments. Moreover, a small number of comments had an *offensive* or negative content towards the brand. Other comments that caught my attention were from followers that *defended* the brand from negative comments by other users. Unexpectedly, the number of *hashtags* in comments was small, however hashtags are considered to be of importance to marketers therefore were analyzed too. Hashtags are used to define and arrange posts according to categories using the sign # before the required category (Hiscott, 2013); assigning a hashtag with a brand can be seen as a brand association. *Tags* on the other hand were very popular in comments, tags or also known as ‘mentions’ refer to the @ which is a sign used in social media, followed by the name of the person you wish to share the post with (Soo, 2012). In the next section each of these categories will be explained and examples will be provided to illustrate the content and the use of categories.

General Love

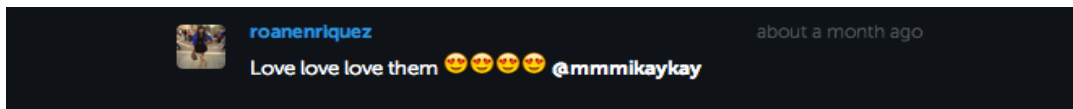
The sample of 120 comments for Burberry, Louis Vuitton and Gucci were arranged and placed under the category in which the comments fit (See Appendix D). For the first category, “love general”, 29 comments expressed general love without any specifications to what they love. For example this comment “It’s wonderful I love” a comment made on Louis Vuitton’s, as seen it literarily states love without any indication towards any specific event or item. Similar comments were also made on the pages of Gucci and Burberry, as shown below in (See also Appendix D). “In love” and “Love love love” were statements that had general love, yet positive because love is a positive feeling. The motive for such comments could be seen to mean that they love everything by the brand that is why they generalize their love expression. Otherwise, it could indicate that they love what they see in the visual post. Which again as analyzed earlier in the visual analysis, brand product, model, practicality and quality of products, beauty and/or the brand designs.



Appendix D: Comment 80, Louis Vuitton



Appendix D: Comment 41, Gucci



Appendix D: Comment 29, Burberry

Some other comments were under the “love general” category, because the content had a meaning referring to strong love, such as comment the comment below from Gucci “Obsessed” or comment five for Burberry (See Appendix D) “ Oh you make my heart smile”. Both used words and phrases referring to love without necessarily using the word “love” necessarily. Therefore these comments were considered to fall under the love general category as well.



Appendix D: Comment 81, Gucci

Love Brand

In the second category, love was expressed to the brand by mentioning the brand name in the comment together with love. “I love anything Burberry” or “Flawless @Gucci” are both examples of love and admiration towards the brand. Nine comments in total had a content of expressing positive emotions towards the brand.



Appendix D: Comment 36, Burberry



Appendix D: Comment 98, Gucci

Love Product

Love was also associated with specific products that were seen in the different visual posts by Burberry, Louis Vuitton and Gucci. “I love the trench coat...” stating love and relating it to the trench coat from Burberry (See Appendix D, comment 28 Burberry). “Love those skirts” is another comment for Gucci showing love towards skirts (See Appendix D, comment 85 Gucci). Twenty-three out of the 120 comments were of explicit love towards appointed products. As pointed out in the visual analysis it was seen that Burberry had a number of posts with trench coats. A number of comments responded positively to the trench coats by Burberry. Communicating on that level of repetition of the brand’s famous products is seen to be desirable by consumers.

Love Design

Similarly for comments on loving the design, it was interesting how followers pay attention to details in the design of the product and show love and admiration to designs by the brand. One follower commented the following “I love how Burberry print is imprinted on the make up as well”, the follower expressed love towards the design of a make up item by the brand that had the Burberry print on it. “Hand sketched! That is some talent right there” another comment on Burberry referring to the talent of the design that is hand sketched. Such comments show a positive relation between the brands’ communicated association discussed earlier about logo, craftsmanship and design; and

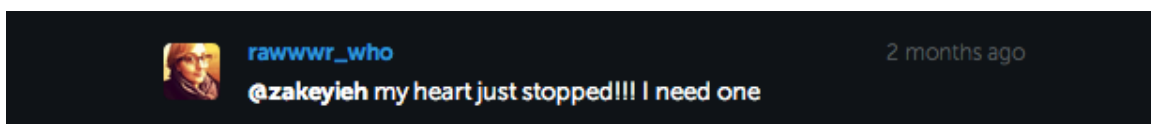
customers experience with this communicated associations. The associations that the brands communicated in the visual posts are triggered in consumers mind. Again brands communicate to deliver a certain experience, and seeing this in the comments shows brands what associations are most desirable by followers and perhaps could help in better ways to emphasize on those desirable associations in the future. The total number of comments with this type of content was five comments (See Appendix D).

Love model & Love hair

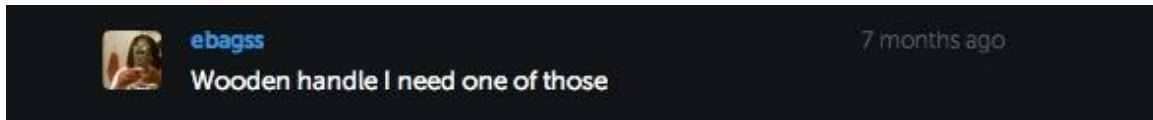
The last two categories for love were towards the models seen in the visual post, such as “@alipickens my dream boyfriend” or “love her”; comments that represented content of love towards the model in the visual post by the brands. Likewise, loving the hair of the model was expressed in four of the comments (See Appendix D), such as “@thecoolgentleman @louisvuitton @ jaguelynx that hair always looks so fresh! I love it!” a comment made for Louis Vuitton from a follower that loved and admired the hair of the model in the visual post. Those remarks from followers were also seen clearly in the analysis of images. Models were youthful, classy and charming with their glowing skin of focus of the image. ‘Hair’ was seen to be nicely done for both female and male models in the analysis of images.

Need

Followers commented on the visual posts of the brand expressing their need to buy this brand or a certain product. Need is a strong word to use, especially for luxury products, because they are not usually necessities but rather a prosperity (Okonkwo, 2007). Comments with this nature were as follows “@zakeyieh my heart just stopped!!! I need one” “Wooden handle I need one of those” five comments in total clearly stated the need for certain products from the brands (See Appendix D).



Appendix D: Comment 13, Burberry



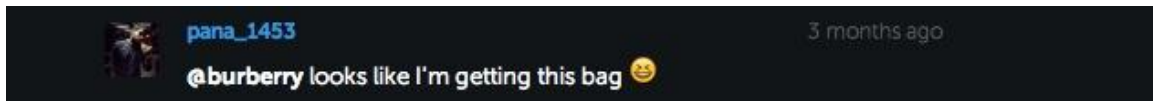
Appendix D: Comment 108, Gucci

Want

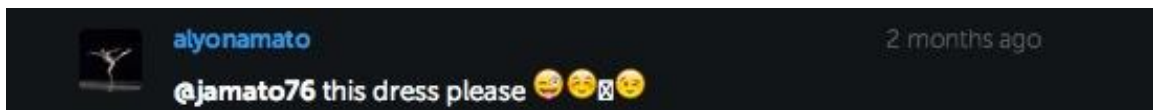
Other followers wanted the product and declared, “want” instead of “need”, not as strong as need yet “want” shows a positive attitude towards the brand. Twenty-two comments out of the sample of 120 included either word “want” with naming certain items that they wanted, or in other expression that referring to just want in general as in the following examples below (See Appendix D). Generalizing could again refer to wanting what is seen in the visual images, for instance the outfit as a whole or certain product.



Appendix D: Comment 115, Gucci



Appendix D: Comment 18, Burberry



Appendix D: Comment 43, Louis Vuitton

Gift

Some of the other notions that were common among followers were gift proposals and gift wishes. Some followers requested gifts through obvious statements such as “@avery__ann buy me this and i'll love you forever” and others were proposals to buy the item such as “Are you hoping these are in your hands in 5 days @marissathergr8” or

a more direct statement like “Ima get u this @cardosokicks” (See Appendix D). Gifting is seen related to joy, because gifting is usually occurring in happy occasions such as birthdays and out of love (Pelsmacker et al., 2010).

Offensive

On the other hand, not all comments were positive; a very small percentage of comments were of a negative content. Offensive or negative contents comments were six in total; they were towards the brand, products and even models. An example of an offensive comment is the following from Burberry “The edges of those petals would be filthy with dirt and grease within a year” (See Appendix D, Comment 9, Burberry). This comment was negative towards the functional and practical performance of the brand; referring to the product being dirty in a year. Other comments were criticizing the brand as a whole. Such as this comment from Gucci (See Appendix D, comment 82, Gucci), “ugly. Spending way too much money on marketing this bag. Anyone that likes this bag is just interested in the name brand not the bag”. In this comment there are two criticisms, one was toward the brand spending a lot of money on marketing; the other criticism was towards customers who liked products just because of the popularity and luxurious appeal of the brand.

Defensive

On the other hand, three comments of the sample had a content that defended the brand from negative comments such as the ones I mentioned (See Appendix D). Defensive comments usually come with a tag to reply the follower who stated an offensive or negative comment to the brand, model or a product. A comment from Louis Vuitton (See Appendix D, Comment 78 Louis Vuitton) “If you don’t like Michelle do not write stupid... @ggoldbar”. In this comment it appears that it is a reply to a negative comment from a follower that did not like the model in the post. “I luuuuv it and close ur mouth

@lagercurrywestham U BIGOT!!!!!!” this is also another example of defending the brand from negative commenters or ‘haters’ of the brand.

Hashtags

Marketers are seen to benefit from the use of hashtags and that is due to several reasons (Doctor, 2013). Hashtags are used to categorize the content of different visual posts or statuses shared (Doctor, 2013). Therefore it makes it easier for marketers to communicate, improving content discovery and it also can be used to announce certain campaigns or events (Doctor, 2013). Hashtags was one of the categories that was oddly not popular among the brand followers, only four comments indicated hashtags. Hashtags included the name of the brand and again expressing love, and admiration towards the brand using phrases with words such as amazing and perfection such as the following comments (See Appendix D) .

1. I love #Burberry#and#trenchcoat
2. Amazing!!! #perfection #lovelondon
3. @linzco i can not with her hair. #amaze
4. #GucciEverything

Tags

“Tags” was the category that had the highest number of repetition, 40% of the comments included tags (See Appendix D). Tags indicate that customer is sharing the post with others from the same online community. This is then treated as an e-WOM and since comments were of positive nature as analyzed in the previous section in love towards the brand, this e-WOM is seen positive. According to Brown, Barry, Dacin & Gunst (2005) a positive WOM is stemmed from customers’ clear identification of the brand and commitment to the brand (See Figure 3). This clear identification can also be seen to be

that there is a correspondent between the brand's identity – what the brand is trying to deliver – and the customer's image.

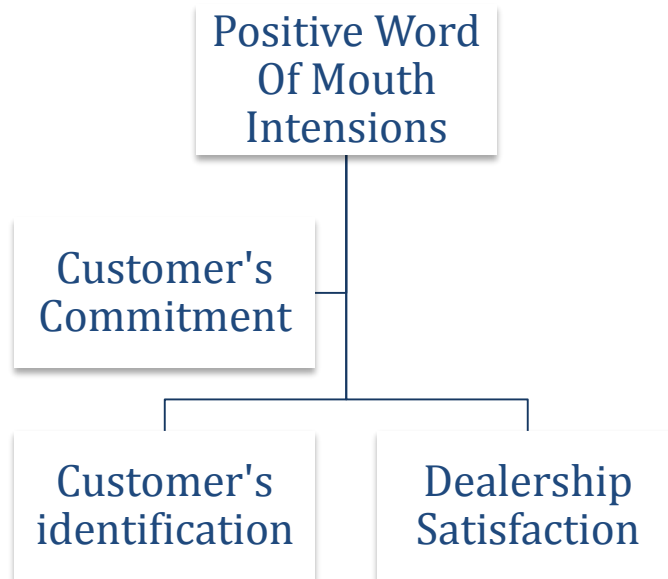


Figure 3: Positive WOM model proposed by Brown, Barry, Dacin & Gunst (2005)

What Do Positive Feelings Mean?

The positive feelings that are expressed towards the brand can be seen as an essential part of the decision making process. According to the hierarchy-of-effects model that is applied for marketing communications purposes, it suggests that the decision making process goes through three phases is the Think/Feel/Do (Pelsmacker et al., 2010). Think, refers to consumers recognition of a problem and the need to find a solution (Pelsmacker et al., 2010). Feel refers to the different types of attitudes or preferences that consumers may have towards a specific brand or product (Pelsmacker et al., 2010). In this case, there is a positive attitude formed at this stage. Lastly, Do is the action the consumer takes. It is the actual purchase, repurchase or seeking information about the product or service. This model relates a customer's level of involvement they have towards the purchase of a product or service in a buying situation (Pelsmacker et al., 2010). High-

involvement products are products that are usually expensive or important therefore customer is highly involved in the decision making process (Pelsmacker et al., 2010). High- involvement products such as fashion, jewelry are seen to fall in the second quadrant (See Figure 4). It implies that the process starts with the Feel, Think then Do, therefore seeing a positive attitude in the feel is more likely to have a positive influence in the second stage and hence a positive action is taken towards the product or brand.

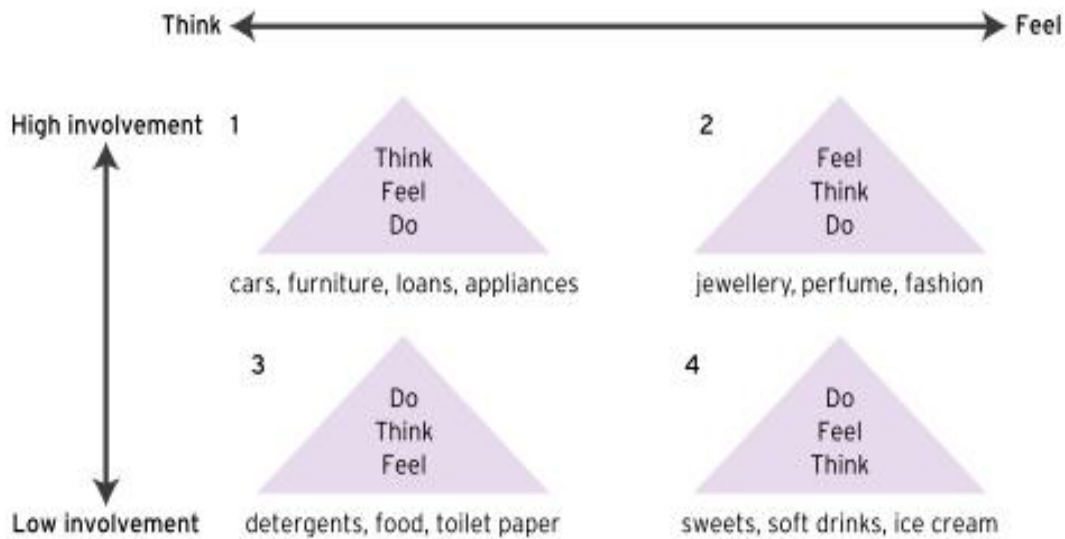


Figure 4: The hierarchy of Effects Model (Pelsmacker P. et al., 2010)

Studies have shown a positive correlation between emotions and high-involvement products (Holbrook & Batra, 1987). In the evaluation of emotions in the consumption experience shows that pride and joy are the most experienced emotions in the consumption of high involvement products (Holbrook & Batra, 1987). Pride and joy was seen from customers that had comments indicating that the owning products and that are happy about. According to another study it shows that love is the third most experienced emotion in the consumption of high-involvement products that have good heritage (Richins, 1997). This can imply that the fact that love was shown in many comments that customers are aware of the luxury heritage of the brand.

Oddly, It is believed that emotional responses are derived from the “tactile” which is touching and feeling different products in store, this is according to Okonkwo (2007) is what forms the emotional attachment or response from consumers. However, it seemed that there was a great deal of emotional responses among followers of the brand on Instagram. This could also possibly mean that the customers have experienced the “in store” feeling before, and had the confidence that the brand would deliver the expected.

5. Discussion

This research aimed to investigate the creation of the ‘performance’ of luxury through marketing work done on the social network site Instagram and the respondents’ role in this performance. This was done through using three exemplary brands – Burberry, Louis Vuitton and Gucci – that represented the luxury fashion sector.

The first research sub question investigated how luxury ‘performance’ was done through the visual posts by the brands –Burberry, Louis Vuitton and Gucci- on Instagram. Results have shown that for Instagram, luxury brands’ associations need to be mainly communicated through visual posts. According to the characteristics of luxury brands communication (See figure 2) it was seen that some of the characteristics were easier to establish through Instagram, while others were not as evident.

Furthermore, it was shown from the results that aestheticism and beauty were emphasized through the youthful models that were in the visual posts, the use of cosmetics and the elegant style and appearance. According to Chevalier & Mazzalovo (2008) there is a strong consumer wish for beauty and hedonistic pleasure in luxury brands, and it is thus vital to communicate in highly aesthetic codes and cues. Quality was also one of the important characteristics of luxury brands (Kapferer & Bastien, 2012). A good quality product is what differentiates premium luxury brands from other brands (Kapferer & Bastien, 2012). However, quality is also something that would be assumed to be seen when interacting with the product, for example by touching and feeling the material and looking into the different fabrics used in the production (Kapferer & Bastien, 2012). Instagram emphasized quality by what is considered rare and expensive such as gold and leather, which were seen in different images. Enhancing sophisticated upper class associations are according to Aaker (1997) a part of the luxury feel and the luxury brand identity.

Another aspect that seemed to trigger the feeling of quality and luxury is the third characteristic analyzed which was the heritage and craftsmanship. Okonkwo (2007)

argues that heritage and craftsmanship has favorable connotations, and hence a positive effect on the perceived quality of the brand. The associations that Kapferer and Bastien suggested for craftsmanship and heritage were mainly the logo and the COO, which were seen across many of the visual images by the brands. Even though brands enhanced different COO aspects because they vary in culture and background, other luxury associations did not differ from a brand to another. Therefore, luxury on Instagram confirms Hines & Bruce (2007) argument that luxury is marketed to suit a very international taste and has become more global oriented. Moreover, there were images of the procedure of the design that were seen to capture both craftsmanship and quality. These were seen through cues such as papers with art design drawings of products. Other images were showing some handcrafting designs, which show the time and effort put into producing different products. This was also seen to assert personalization because a viewer could relate an item that they bought or wish to buy with seeing the procedure of the design. In addition, even with the number of repeated items for Burberry – namely trench coats – there were displayed in different atmospheres. The variety of situations, lighting, models and camera gaze all gave the viewer a unique and distinguished appearance, hence a unique experience.

The global presence of luxury brands is an indispensable aspect of reaching and satisfying consumers that seek luxury (Okonkwo, 2007). Being on Instagram satisfies a side of the global presence for luxury brand, since it is a platform that is used worldwide. In addition, there were attributes that were seen to elaborate on this global presence; in the visual images this was communicated through fashion shows and the global Oscars event. Fashion shows with recognized and well-known luxury brands are usually held in different countries especially in cities that are known for fashion such as Paris, New York and Milan (Krupka et al., 2014). Thus, images with fashion shows emphasized that those brands are globally well-known luxury fashion brands. The Oscars is also one of the events that are known internationally and having celebrities endorse the brands in such event is seen of upper class and sophisticated. Characteristics such as ethical social responsibility and exclusivity did not seem to be enhanced on Instagram. Perhaps this is

due to the limited marketing practices than can be held on Instagram; brands primarily communicate through photo sharing.

These luxury brand associations are fundamental because they play a role in communicating the brand identity to consumers (Pelsmacker et al., 2010). The marketing practice that is held on Instagram is seen to create new ways of communicating luxury; those ways are done to suit the visual communication on Instagram. Furthermore, the associations that were communicated are similar to the traditional luxury associations that can be seen in advertisements (See figure 2). The ones that are easier to establish were emphasized more to make up for the ones that were difficult to communicate through Instagram, for example beauty over corporate social responsibility.

For the brands not to be able to communicate all the aspects of the luxury brand shows that there is a contradiction between luxury and Instagram. What seems to contradict is not the availability of Instagram, because brands can benefit from enlarging the target segment and awareness. The contradiction was seen to be due to Instagram's visual focused nature. Besides, even though Instagram gives the brands the choice to market to everyone, brands still focused on females and this was seen through the female-based products that were shown in the visual images. There were few images with kids' products and these are also targeted to females; according to Pelsmacker et al. (2010) females or mothers are the ones involved in the decision making of purchasing kids products.

These brand associations are also essential because brand communication highly relies on associations to present the brand identity to consumers (Pelsmacker et al., 2010). This marketing practice that is held on Instagram, is seen to create new ways of communicating luxury; those ways are done to suit the visual communication on Instagram. However, the associations that were communicated are similar to the traditional luxury associations that can be seen in advertisements (See figure 2). The ones that are easier to establish were emphasized more to make up for the ones that were

difficult to communicate through Instagram, for example beauty over corporate social responsibility image cues.

Cochoy (1998) suggested that the marketing as a performance could be done in ways to create markets and consumers. The marketing practices of Burberry, Louis Vuitton and Gucci were taken to Instagram. Hence, Instagram created a new place for this luxury performance to occur, rather than a new concept of the luxury market. This was seen through the similar associations that are communicated in any fashion luxury market. This is also a part of sustaining and maintaining a luxury brand, as if associations will change it might confuse consumers and weaken the luxury position of the brands that took years to attain (Pelsmacker et al., 2010).

Followers were a part of the luxury performance because they were the “receivers” of this performance by the brands. Comment responses were expressed in positive feelings towards the brands, mainly with love and desire to the brand. This could indicate that the performance of luxury by brands was successful in communicating luxury. As stated by Kapferer and Bastien (2012) emotional attachment towards a luxury brand is a sign of success; as brands intend to build a relationship with customers through long lasting emotional attachment. Consumers were confident that the brands will deliver a beneficial or even luxurious experience, hence an economic value for consumers is created and thereafter an economical value is created for brands owners. Besides, followers’ strong emotional attachment towards the brands that was expressed in comments is seen to be due to two main motives. First, followers are already familiar with brands and are satisfied consumers; therefore a positive attitude is created and expressed through comments. According to Pelsmacker et al. (2010) positive attitude towards the brands are stemmed from having the brand meet or exceed customer’s expectations. Second, one of the feelings associated with luxury argues McFerran et al. (2014) is the feeling to show off the products with pride and arrogance. This is seen to be a motive because Instagram users’ own friends on Instagram will see those comments in their news feed. For example if person ‘A’ comments that he owns a product of a luxury brand, followers/friends of person ‘A’ will know so from their news feed, which in ways satisfies the consumer’s

luxury feeling. This is also seen to create a positive e-WOM; since results have shown positive attitude and feelings in comments about the brands and products. Put differently, a comment that enhances luxury has not only included the commenter and the brand, but also a third party that is experiencing these luxury associations and hence the luxuries feel. That is seen to have a greater influence since this third party is now experiencing so from people they follow intentionally.

Today, luxury has proved to continue to move away from its origin. It started gradually throughout the years to become more accessible to consumers, as now Burberry, Louis Vuitton and Gucci stores are open for everyone to shop at. With the introduction of luxury brands on Instagram, luxury has become even more available in terms of market reach. In addition, brands still seemed to be able to communicate luxurious aspects of the brands. However the ways to do so have clearly gone in different direction than before. Brands communicated luxury brand associations to customers through depending primarily on visual posts on Instagram. Brands' followers on Instagram responded positively through comments, which created an ideal atmosphere of a market that works in harmony and synergy between brands and their customers. The contradiction between the "luxury" and luxury performance on Instagram is hence seen something that is in favor for luxury brands –as it is easy and an inexpensive marketing practice- rather than a hindrance.

5.1 Limitation of the Study

Considering the little research done on social media platforms, it was difficult to find empirical studies that I could relate to. There was a lack of prior research that used Instagram for research analysis because it is still a relatively new platform. Most of the researches done on other social media platforms were more quantitative and not on investigating marketing practices. Therefore, it was challenging to predict the sample size needed and ways to handle or rely on social media data. Images were handled following analysis of advertising to compensate for the lack of social media visual analysis while

comments were handled as reviews by customers. One of the limitations of this study was also the reliability of the data collected on Instagram. The only technique that helped avoid this issue was double coding the images from outsource to avoid subjectivity.

Moreover, Due to the fact that this research analysis was self-reported it was biased towards particular concerns; events were focused on 'luxury performance' cues specifically. This bias is also believed to occur due to the purposive sampling technique used that depends on the researcher's judgment. Besides, Looking at images for three brands and with the limited time frame, going in depth with the analysis of visual images was not achievable. Furthermore this research was mostly focusing on brand associations that were seen in images. Psychological interpretations of human activities in the images were not focused upon in this study.

Other obstacles were also found while coding the comments; there seemed to be mostly positive emotional responses of the similar nature. Creating a scale of the strength and weakness of these emotions was not possible, neither coding them the way that was done with images. Therefore sampling technique had to change from random sampling to purposive sampling to sample according to the notions and traits that were emerged and of relevance to luxury.

6. Conclusion

The social media platform Instagram became globally popular among young adults on the level of networking and sharing images due to the relatively easy photo-sharing feature (McDermott, 2014). Instagram gave the opportunity for users to personalize images by adding filters and the blurring effects to them; if two photos are taken from the same vantage point, they are still displayed differently due to that personalized option. Instagram's popularity and unique photo sharing technology was seen to create an opportunity for brands to implement marketing practices on. This research looked into how this opportunity was taken by the luxury brands Burberry, Louis Vuitton and Gucci and how they carried out marketing practices on such medium. This was of interest because it was seen challenging to communicate the associations of the luxury brand on a medium that does not reinforce luxury. Hence, a more detailed investigation to how those luxury brands communicated their standards and maintained their popularity using a medium such as Instagram was of interest, especially with the challenge presented by sustaining luxury on such an available customer base.

Luxury brands do not get formed in a day; Burberry, Louis Vuitton and Gucci had a long history of achievements for the luxurious position they are in today. Those brands were once in the luxury market in its original meaning of exclusivity as they were sold to elite clientele and emperors. Burberry, Louis Vuitton and Gucci became less exclusive and more available throughout the years. Yet remained expensive, classy and a part of the luxury market today despite their accessibility. This is seen to be due to brands communicating luxury associations and 'preforming' luxury to create markets and consumers by enhancing the luxury feeling. This luxury performance was also carried out in ways to suit Instagram.

Communication was seen to be significant in sustaining and maintaining the opulence and sophisticated associations of the brand through visual posts. Communications on Instagram was both from the brand to its followers through visual posts, and from follower in the form of comments. Qualitative content analysis was the method used for

analyzing visual posts and comments from follower. Qualitative content analysis of the visual images helped translate the cues into what was considered luxury brand associations. Instagram for brands functioned as network, where brands communicated to followers the brand identity through enhancing brand associations as seen from the analysis of visual images. Results have shown that the luxury brand characteristics that were communicated on Instagram did not differ from the traditional one through advertising. However, there were associations that were enhanced more than others to fit the visual nature of Instagram, while other associations were limited. Moreover, brands posted images on Instagram continuously and more regular than traditional marketing practices. Regardless, brands were able to deliver most of the luxury characteristics and associations of their brands. Hence, the luxury performance did not seem to be affected with Instagram as a non-luxury resource.

Qualitative content analyses of comments by followers on brand's visual posts were also analyzed to comprehend the language used in comments. Results showed positive attitudes from followers towards the brands. This positive attitude was seen from the positive sensual expressions in comments about the brand and its practicality. This indicates and confirms Okonkwo's (2007) findings that consumers perceived the brand to be beneficial and therefore emotional attachment towards the brands were shown. Hence, follower's role on Instagram was seen to boost the luxury performance of these brands. Moreover, results have shown that positive comments can be treated as positive e-WOM and it is in return favorable for the brand's economic value. The positive responses and attitudes that followers expressed through comments enhanced the feel of luxury in Instagram as a whole. Having harmony between the brand's identity and the perceived image created a pleasant atmosphere for both the brand and customer.

Burberry, Louis Vuitton and Gucci clearly managed to align the luxury message they are communicating through the marketing practices on Instagram. Brands also focused on communicating the luxury brand associations that were easier to establish through visual posts and associations that are also seen suitable for Instagram. Those brands saw a need to cope with trend and technology and be on one of the most popular social network sites.

Besides, Burberry, Louis Vuitton and Gucci were confident that their strong luxury position in the market would not be harmed by availability and expanding the market reach to Instagram. By the end of this research the number of followers of the brands were again checked and it was recorded that the number of followers has increased to be from 1.2 million to 1.8 for Louis Vuitton, 1.2 mil to 1.5 mil for Burberry and from 1.1 mil for Gucci to 1.5 mil (Instagram, 2014). Gaining a great number of followers shows that followers are interested and are pleased with brands' posts. Furthermore, studies showed that people's engagement with brands on social media has a strong positive correlation with people's preference for a brand and their likelihood to have purchased from that brand, and their willingness to recommend that brand (Kim & Ko, 2012). Those statistical facts prove that Instagram is still in its booming stage and hence is an attraction for these brands to carry such marketing practices and for researchers to investigate such phenomenon.

6.1 Future Research

This research started with the assumption of luxury being an intangible created feeling instead of it being a definitive firm fact. This was presumed due to fact that luxury has changed in the exclusivity it started with decades ago, and yet was still perceived as such with all the changes that varies from the origin of luxury.

The luxury performance is analyzed on Instagram and results have shown how brands and followers played a role in this performance. Brands communicated luxury associations that resulted in producing comments by followers that showed emotional attachment and some about the practicality of products. Hence, for future research this an area to further investigate; how comments are starting to become essential and be a part of a marketing practice. Interviewing followers who comment on brands and investigate whether this emotional response is created through the visual communication on Instagram alone or with previous experience with brand communications. This will increase the reliability and validity of the results.

To help understand the luxury performance, it would also be advisable to focus on one brand and go in an in-depth analysis of it. For instance, look at magazine advertising, TV commercials, the brand's official website together with the brand's performance on social media. This will help the researcher see whether the brand differentiate with their communications from the more traditional communications to communicate on social media.

Instagram has also showed how important it is for luxury marketing practice due to it being a visual focused platform with no distractions with texts and statuses. However, social media is very critical in the sense that it is a trend that could loose its popularity. For instance Facebook has begun to loose its popularity especially among young users. "It seems like they don't use Facebook anymore," President Obama recently told a group of millennials over coffee, according to The Atlantic (Cited in McDermott, 2014) the "they" in question refers to young adults. Facebook's penetration among U.S. college-aged adults (age 18 to 24) decreased by three percentage points to 88.6 percent in Nov. 2013 from Feb. 2013 (Cited in McDermott, 2014). If this were the case for Instagram, an area of research would be looking to how brands can reach this customer base created on Instagram in other ways?

Instagram has also become a medium for fame and popularity; celebrities are created through only being popular Instagram users with many followers. Accordingly, an area of future research to build upon is if the creation of new luxury performance for a new brand on Instagram alone. This would raise a question of "Can new luxury brands achieve a luxury position by using Instagram?" It would be interesting to see if Instagram would help make new brands become luxurious and popular just as it helped many of its users become celebrities. As in this research it was looking at a very strong luxurious brands that gained awareness and luxury from traditional marketing practices and over a period of time.

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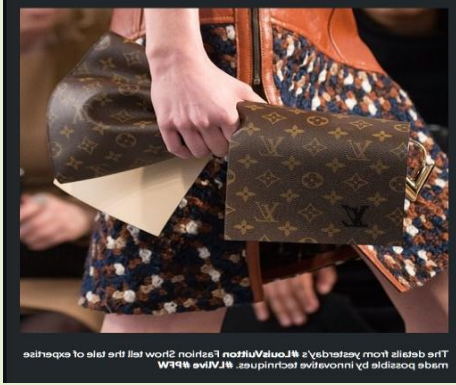
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Appendices

Appendix A: Louis Vuitton Codebook

Picture/ Code name	Image	Gender products	Beauty	Quality	Heritage/ craftsmanship	Global presence	Camera Gaze	Repeated product
Burberry 1	 <p>The newest #LouisVuitton campaign features Michelle Williams, shot by Peter Lindbergh. 6:01 pm 4/17/2014</p>	Female	Cosm, hair, smooth skin, elegant	Leather	Logo	-	Close up Shot	-
Burberry 2	 <p>Adèle Exarchopoulos accepted the Romy Schneider Award in Paris last night wearing #LouisVuitton</p>	Female	Cosm, hair, smooth skin	Leather	-	-	Med Shot	-
Burberry 3	 <p>LIYA is wearing a cut-out printed dress; gold and silver metal earrings; with black patent leather boots. The #LouisVuitton F/W 2014-2015 Women's Collection created by Nicolas Ghesquière shot by #JuergenTeller</p>	Female	smooth skin	Gold, Leather	-	-	Close up Shot	-

Burberry 4



Female

-

Leather

Logo

Fashion show

-

-

Burberry 5



Female

Cosm, hair, smooth skin, elegant

Gold, Leather

Logo

-

Close up Shot

-

Burberry 6



Female

Cosm, hair, smooth skin

Leather

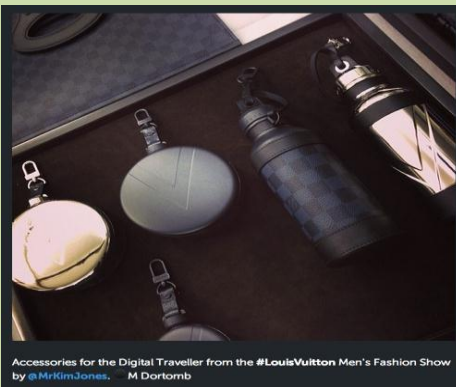
Logo

-

Med Shot

-

Burberry 7



Male

-

Gold

Logo

-

-

-

Burberry 8



Female

Cosm, hair, smooth skin

Leather

-

-

Close up Shot

-

Burberry 9



Female

Cosm, hair, smooth skin, elegant

-

-

-

Med Shot

-

Burberry 10



Female & Male

Cosm, hair, smooth skin, elegant

Gold, Leather

Logo

Fashion show

Long Shot

-

Burberry 11



Female

Cosm, smooth skin

-

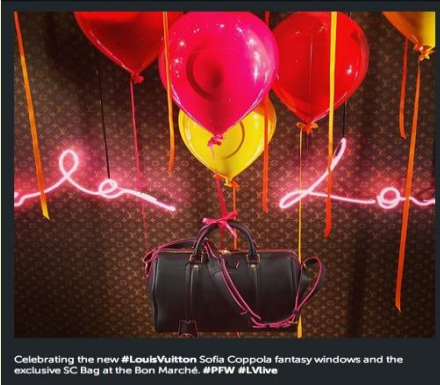
-

Fashion show

Med Shot

-

Burberry 12



Female

-

Leather

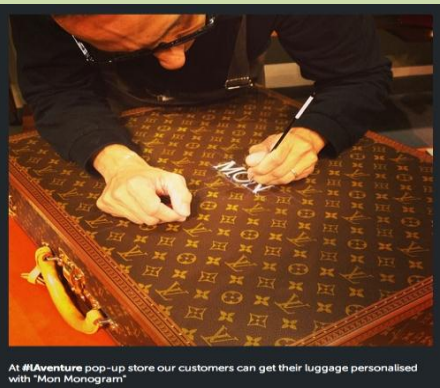
Logo

-

-

-

Burberry 13



Male

-

Leather

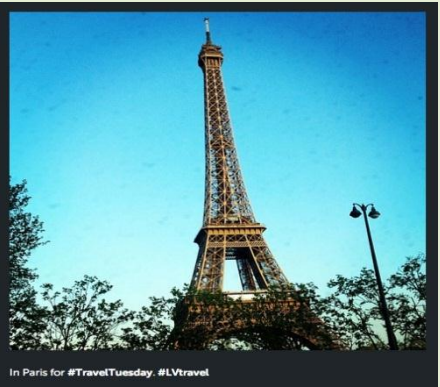
Logo

-

Med Shot

-

Burberry 14



-

-

-

COO

-

-

-

Burberry 15



Female

Cosm, hair, smooth skin, elegant

-

-

Oscars

Close up Shot

-

Burberry 16



Female

-

Leather

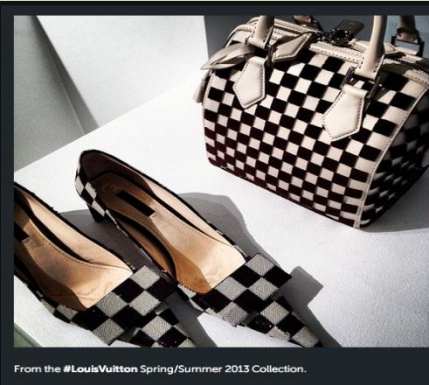
Logo

-

-

-

Burberry 17



Female

Elegant

Leather

-

-

-

-

Burberry 18



Female

-

Gold,
Leather

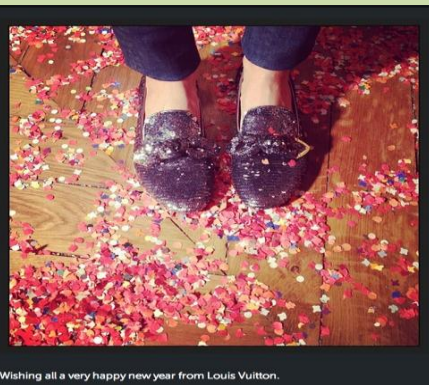
-

Fashion
show

-

-

Burberry 19



Female

-

-

-

-

-

-

Burberry 20



-	-	-	Logo	-	Long Shot	-
---	---	---	------	---	-----------	---

Burberry 21



Female	-	Gold	-	-	-	-
--------	---	------	---	---	---	---

Burberry 22



Female	-	-	Logo	-	-	-
--------	---	---	------	---	---	---

Burberry 23



Male	-	-	-	-	-	-
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Burberry 24



Female

-

Gold, Leather

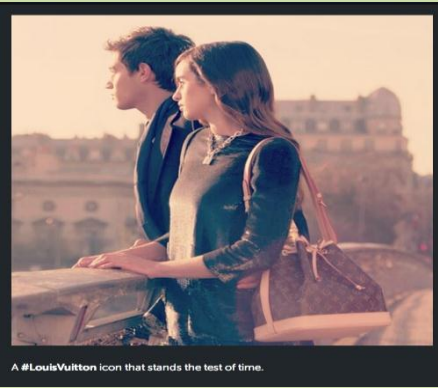
Logo

-

-

-

Burberry 25



Female & Male

Cosm, hair, smooth skin

Leather

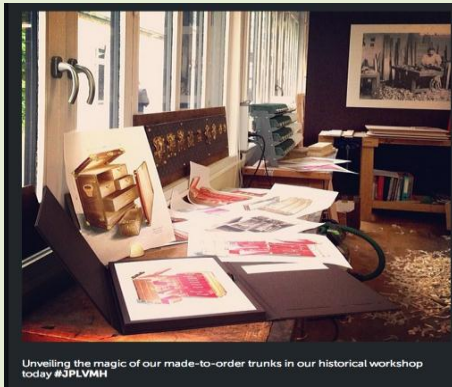
Logo

-

Med Shot

-

Burberry 26



Female & Male

-

-

-

-

-

-

Burberry 27



Female

Elegant

Gold, Leather

Logo

-

-

-

Burberry 28



-	-	Leather	Logo	-	-	-
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Burberry 29



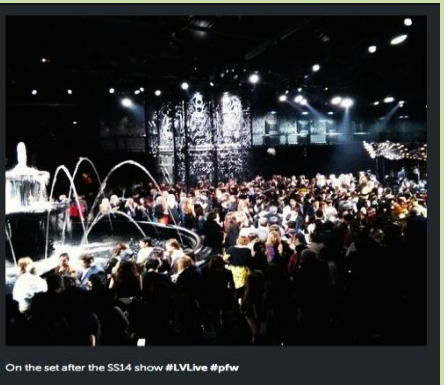
Male	-	Leather	-	Fashion show	-	-
------	---	---------	---	--------------	---	---

Burberry 30



Female	Cosm, hair, smooth skin	-	-	-	Close Up Shot	-
--------	-------------------------	---	---	---	---------------	---

Burberry 31



-	-	-	-	Fashion show	Long Shot	-
---	---	---	---	--------------	-----------	---

Burberry 32



Female

Elegant

Leather

Logo

-

-

-

Burberry 33



Male

Hair, elegant

-

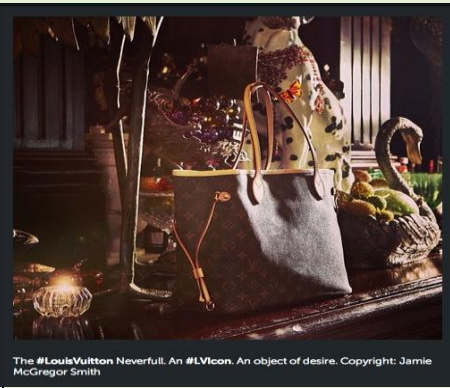
-

-

Med Shot

-

Burberry 34



Female

-

Leather

Logo

-

-

-

Burberry 35



Female

Elegant

Leather

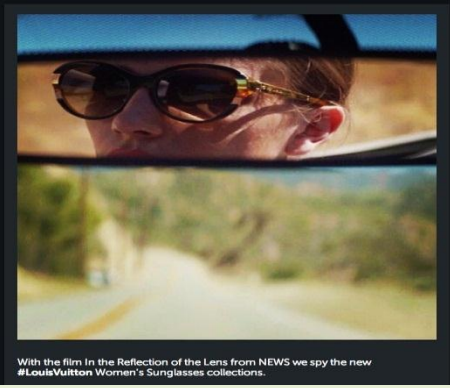
Logo

-

-

-

Burberry 36



Female

Cosm, smooth skin, elegant

Gold

-

-

Med Shot

-

Burberry 37



Female

Cosm, hair, smooth skin

-

-

-

Close up Shot

-

Burberry 38



-

Cosm, hair

-

COO

Fashion show

Med Shot

-

Burberry 39



Female

-

Gold

-

-

-

-

Burberry 40






The lovely @kristina_bazan at the #louisvuitton fashion show. #pfw


Total

		Female	Cosm, hair, smooth skin, elegant	Leather	Logo	-	Med Shot	-
40	30 Female 8 male	15 Cosm 14 hair 12 elegant 15 smooth skin	10 Gold 22 Leather	19 Logo 2 COO	7 Fashion show 2 Oscars	7 close 10 Med long	Non	

Appendix B: Gucci Codebook





Picture/ Category	Image	Gender products	Beauty	Quality	Heritage/ craftsmanship	Global presence	Camera Gaze	Repeated product
Gucci 1		Male	Elegant	-	Logo	-	-	-
Gucci 2		Female	Cosm, hair, smooth skin, elegant	Gold	-	Red carpet	Close Up Shot	-
Gucci 3		Female	Cosm, Hair, smooth skin, Elegant	Leather	-	-	Med Shot	-

Gucci 4	 <p>Turn it up. @gucciguilty guilty photographed in Paris. You can't look out, but we know @gucciguilty didn't let anything get in our way. #GucciGuilty</p>	Female	Cosm, hair, smooth skin	-	-	-	Close Up Shot	-
Gucci 5	 <p>Nothing is really so simple. Models across Paris. Occasions with an edge. #GucciBlackandWhite Gucci Paris</p>	Female	Cosm, hair, smooth skin, elegant	-	-	-	Med Shot	-
Gucci 6	 <p>Light of hand. Fantasy. Try to watch our new short film. #GucciBlackandWhite Gucci Paris</p>	Female & Male	Cosm, Hair, smooth skin, Elegant	Gold	-	-	Med Shot	-
Gucci 7	 <p>Covered up and out of sight. See how well a leopard makes a perfect model for our new short film. Check out the film in our film to watch. #GucciBlackandWhite Gucci Paris</p>	Female	Cosm, Hair, smooth skin, Elegant	Gold	Logo	-	Med Shot	-





Gucci 8		Female	Smooth skin, Elegant	Leather	Logo	-	-	-
Gucci 9		Male	Elegant	Leather	-	-	Med Shot	-
Gucci 10		Female	Cosm, hair, smooth skin	-	-	-	Med Shot	-
Gucci 11		-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Gucci 12		Kid	-	-	-	-	Close Up Shot	-
Gucci 13		Female	Cosm, Hair, smooth skin, Elegant	-	Logo	-	Med Shot	-
Gucci 14		Male	Elegant	-	-	-	-	-
Gucci 15		Female	Cosm, Hair, smooth skin	-	-	-	Med Shot	-

Gucci 16		Female	Cosm, Hair, smooth skin, Elegant	Gold, Leather	Logo	-	Close Up Shot	-
Gucci 17		Female	-	Gold	-	-	-	-
Gucci 18		Female	Cosm, Hair, smooth skin, Elegant	-	-	-	Close Up Shot	-
Gucci 19		Female	-	Leather	Logo	-	-	-


Gucci 20		Female & Male	Cosm, Hair, smooth skin, Elegant	Gold	-	-	Med Shot	-
Gucci 21		Male	-	-	-	-	Close Up Shot	-
Gucci 22		Female	Cosm, Hair, smooth skin, Elegant	-	-	-	Close Up Shot	-
Gucci 23		Male	Hair, smooth skin	-	-	Fashio show	Long Shot	-

Gucci 24		Female	Cosm, hair, smooth skin	Gold	-	Red carpet	Close Up Shot	-
Gucci 25		Female	Cosm, hair, smooth skin	-	Logo	-	Close Up Shot	-
Gucci 26		Kid	-	-	-	-	Med Shot	-
Gucci 27		Male	hair, smooth skin, Elegant	-	-	-	Close Up Shot	-



Gucci 28		Female	Cosm, Hair, smooth skin, Elegant	Gold	-	-	Med Shot	-
Gucci 29		Male	-	Leather	Logo	-	-	-
Gucci 30		Male	elegant	-	Logo	-	Med Shot	-
Gucci 31		Female	Cosm, hair, smooth skin	-	Logo	-	Long Shot	-





Gucci 32		Male	Elegant	Leather	Logo	-	-	-
Gucci 33		Female	Elegant	Gold	-	-	-	-
Gucci 34		Female	Cosm, hair, smooth skin, elegant	-	-	-	Med Shot	-
Gucci 35		Female	-	-	Logo	-	-	-





Burberry 36	 <p>Our soft accessories collection gets a fresh update for spring #BurberryAccessories #Burberry</p>	Female	-	-	Logo	-	-	-
Gucci 37	 <p>On the road's best with James Franco and #GucciBlackTaffetas, a #Burberry tote bag for men #Gucci #BlackTaffetas</p>	Male	hair, smooth skin, Elegant	-	-	-	Med Shot	-
Gucci 38	 <p>Put a bow on it #BurberryGucci #Gucci.com #Gucci #BowTie</p>	Male	Elegant	-	Logo	-	-	-
Gucci 39	 <p>Now Fashion is back in a #BurberryGucci #Gucci.com #BurberryGucci #BurberryGucci</p>	Female	Cosm, Hair, smooth skin, Elegant	-	-	Red carpet	Close Up Shot	-

Gucci 40		-	-	-	Design	-	Long Shot	-
Total	40	25 Female 13 Male 2 Kid	17 Cosm 23 Elegant 22 Smooth skin 21 Hair	9 Gold 7 Leather	14 Logo 1 Design	1 Fashion show 3 Red carpet	11 Close 14 Med 3 long	Non



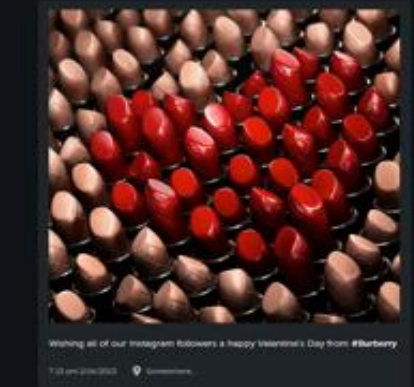

Appendix C: Burberry Codebook

Picture/ Code name	Image	Gender products	Beauty	Quality	Heritage/ craftsmanship	Global presence	Camera Gaze	Repeated product
Burberry 1	 <p><small>Kate Moss and Cara Delevingne shot by @hughesfoster - behind the scenes of a new #Burberry fragrance campaign coming later this year</small></p>	Female	Cosm, hair	Gold	Logo	-	Close up Shot	✓
Burberry 2	 <p><small>Behind the scenes of the latest #BurberryAcoustic shoot featuring British musician Lorde. Lorde on 5/22/2014. London, England</small></p>	Female	Elegant, hair	Leather	-	-	Med Shot	-

Burberry 3	 <p>The Post from #Burberry - in bloom for Spring/Summer 2014 © 2014 Burberry</p>	Female	Elegant	Leather	Logo	-	-	-
Burberry 4	 <p>Highly detailed and graphic prints backstage at the #Burberry A/W14 show #FW © 2014 Burberry</p>	Female	Cosm, hair, smooth skin	Gold	-	Fashion show	Med Shot	-
Burberry 5	 <p>A fresh new British cast in between takes on the set of the #Burberry S/S14 campaign © 2014 Burberry</p>	Female	Cosm, hair, Smooth skin	-	Logo	-	Med Shot	-
Burberry 6	 <p>One of the campaign stars, Susie Watershouse & George Barnett on the set of the new #Burberry campaign #14141414 © 2014 Burberry</p>	Female & Male	Hair, smooth skin	-	-	-	Med Shot	-





Burberry 7	 <p>On the 21st day of December, wrap your #BurberryGifts with love and golden ribbons</p> <p>9:09 am 12/21/2013</p>	Female	Smooth skin, elegant	Gold	Logo	-	-	-
Burberry 8	 <p>On the 6th day of December the anticipation rises at #Burberry 121 Regent Street</p> <p>9:08 am 12/6/2013 Burberry</p>	Kid	Elegant, hair	Gold	Logo	-	Long Shot	✓
Burberry 9	 <p>Fashion executive Fred Burnham shot for #KnooffreFrench in Russia #NOFT</p> <p>9:40 am 08/16/2013</p>	Male	Hair, Elegant	Leather	-	-	Med Shot	-
Burberry 10	 <p>Plans for the finale - The #BurberryProrsum 2/2014 show, shot with #Flashes #LFW</p> <p>9:00 am 8/16/2013</p>	Female	Cosm, hair, smooth skin	Gold, Leather	Logo	Fashion show	Long Shot	-

Burberry 11	 <p>Models Cara Delevingne and Du Juan arrive at the #AnotherFrench event in Shanghai #AD11 1:39 am 01/01/2011</p>	Female	Cosm, hair, smooth skin	Gold	-	Fashion show	Close Up Shot	-
Burberry 12	 <p>Sienna Miller (@SiennaMiller) wearing a nice #Burberry dress to #TheGreenGatsby screening at #Cannes2013 6:55 pm 05/05/2013</p>	Female	Cosm, hair, smooth skin, elegant	Gold	-	Oscars	Close Up Shot	-
Burberry 13	 <p>Sienna Miller and @Caradelevingne wearing #Burberry to celebrate "Punk: Chaos to Culture" at the #MetGala last night. 7:38 am 07/09/2012</p>	Female	Cosm, hair, smooth skin, elegant	Gold	Logo	Oscars	Med Shot	-
Burberry 14	 <p>@Caradelevingne #discovering the new #Burberry Body Tender fragrance 1:38 am 07/02/2011</p>	Female	Cosm, hair, smooth skin, elegant	Gold	Logo	-	Med Shot	✓

Burberry 15	 <p>Rumsey takes - the start #Burberry Spring/Summer 2013 campaign 7:28 am - 6/10/12</p>	Female & Kid	Cosm, elegant	Gold	Logo	-	Med Shot	✓
Burberry 16	 <p>Kate Campbell and Charise France wearing Splash Sunglasses in the Burberry S/13 campaign 1:31 am - 5/8/12</p>	Female & Male	Cosm, hair, smooth skin, elegant	-	-	-	Close Up Shot	-
Burberry 17	 <p>Wishing all of our Instagram followers a happy Valentine's Day from #Burberry 7:23 am - 2/14/12</p>	Female	Cosm	Gold	-	-	-	-
Burberry 18	 <p>Distinctive and exquisitely crafted #burberrygifts - featuring the iconic Orchard bag 7:48 am - 12/18/11</p>	Female	-	Gold	Logo	-	-	-

Burberry 19		Male	Elegant	Gold	-	-	Long Shot	-
Burberry 20		Female	Cosm, hair, smooth skin	Gold	Logo	Fashion show	Close Up shot	-
Burberry 21		Female	Elegant	-	Logo	-	-	-
Burberry 22		Female	Cosm, hair, smooth skin	Gold	Logo	Fashion show	Close Up Shot	-

Burberry 23		Female	Cosm, hair, Elegant	-	-	-	Med Shot	-
Burberry 24		Female	-	Gold	Logo	-	-	-
Burberry 25		non	-	-	COO	-	-	-
Burberry 26		Male	-	-	Design	-	-	-

Burberry 27	 <p>#BurberryTravel Following on the streets of #London © 2014 Burberry</p>	Male	Elegant	-	-	-	Med Shot	-
Burberry 28	 <p>Actor Jeremy Renner shot for #AnotherFrenchinParis #MDFIT © 2014 Burberry</p>	Male	Elegant, hair	-	Logo	-	Close Up Shot	✓
Burberry 29	 <p>The new #Burberry beauty look - inspired by the new #Burberry Fragrance #TheBurberry © 2014 Burberry</p>	Female	Cosm, hair, smooth skin	-	Logo	Fashion show	Med Shot	-
Burberry 30	 <p>The new Burberry #B White collection featuring British models Sebastian Brice and Camille Robinson © 2014 Burberry</p>	Female & Male	Cosm, hair, smooth skin, elegant	Gold	Logo	-	Close Up Shot	✓

Burberry 31		Male	Elegant	-	-	-	Long Shot	-
Burberry 32		Female & Male	Elegant	-	Logo	-	Med Shot	✓
Burberry 33		Female	Cosm, hair, smooth skin, young	-	Logo	-	Med Shot	-
Burberry 34		Female	Elegant	-	Logo	-	-	-

Burberry 35	 <p>Introducing the new Burberry AW12 campaign starring British actors Gemma Ward and Russian film star</p> <p>3:37 pm 12/20/11</p>	Female & Male	Cosm, hair, Elegant	-	-	-	Med Shot	-
Burberry 36	 <p>#Burberry Paris featuring the luminous shades of the TUSA makeup - shot with #Promakeup #FW</p> <p>1:38 pm 12/20/11</p>	Female	Cosm, smooth skin, elegant	-	Logo	-	-	-
Burberry 37	 <p>Styler Catherine Bates shot for #AvalonTheWeek in Paris #ADTF</p> <p>7:36 pm 12/24/11</p>	Female	Elegant	-	-	-	Med Shot	✓
Burberry 38	 <p>Fun and fashion - discover #BurberryGifts for children this festive season</p> <p>7:40 pm 12/20/11</p>	Kid	Elegant	Gold	Logo	-	Med Shot	✓

Burberry 39	 <p>Sketches of London landmarks from the upcoming #Burberry Heritage A/W14 show - see this Wednesday #LCH</p> <p>© 2014 Burberry Ltd. London</p>	Female	Elegant	Gold	COO	-	-	-
Burberry 40	 <p>A hand-drawn sketch of the London skyline from the #Burberry Heritage A/W14 collection - featured on the show at 8pm London time #LCH</p> <p>© 2014 Burberry Ltd. London</p>	Female	Elegant	Gold, Leather	COO	-	-	-
Total	40	31 Female 11 Male 2 kids 1 other	19 Cosm 25 elegant 16 smooth skin 21 Hair	20 Gold 6 leather	22 Logo 3 COO 1 Design	6 Fashion show 2 Oscars	8 Close 16 Med 4 Long	9 ✓

Appendix D: Comments Codebook

Comment number	Comments/ content	Love General	Love Brand	Love Product	Love Design	Love Model	Love hair	Possession	Need	Want	Gift	Defend	Offensive	hashtags	Tag
		Burberry Comments													
1	It's my dream come true @ravery_W														
2	OMG OMG OM there two are amazing <3														
3	OMG this is too much to handle!Look @l3bloni3														
4	Beautiful <3														
5	Oh Burberry you make my heart smile														
6	I love how Burberry print is imprinted on the make up as well														
7	I have a wallet that looks like that @evetteodhiambo														

8	So pretty these pink flowers													
9	the edges of those petals would be filthy with dirt and grease within a year													
10	Thoso bags <3													
11	Woahhhh so damn awesome													
12	That is some talent design!													
13	@zakeyieh my heart just stopped!!! I need one													
14	The "starving imigrants in ugly bathrobes" collection													
15	I luuuuuv it and close ur mouth @lagercurrywestham U BIGOT!!!!!!!													
16	This is hot													
17	I love #Burberry#and#trenchcoat													
18	Sorry no! In the step of abercrombie!! Look where that brand landed													

19	@burberry looks like i'm getting this bag													
20	Hand sketched? That is some talent right there													
21	This print is amazing!!													
22	Amazing!!! #perfection #lovelondon													
23	Best in the industry @burberry													
24	I just got one !!													
25	Already got those													
26	Are you hoping these are in your hands in 5 days @marissathergr8													
27	This is the store where i bouhgt my first Burberry bag!!													
28	Love the trench, hate the trousers													
29	Love love love them @mmmikaykay													

Louis Vuitton Comments															
41	In love														
42	Awwww this dress														
43	@jamato76 this dress please														
44	Oh em gee. Love love loooooooooovveeeeeee @samantmalik														
45	Love it i have my own purse right here														
46	Love lv!!														
47	I want!														
48	My husband got it for me														
49	It amazes me how many people want this but have absolutely no idea what it is!!! Lol.														
50	I want that bag!!														

51	Love this @soniamacdonald													
52	Oh how i adore this bag!! It's perfect stitching and all!!!!!! The greatest of true beauty													
53	She is very beautiful													
54	Her beautiful is all inside and outside of her. No word can describe her fabulous													
55	@jazzykinz i love													
56	love her													
57	love this spirit!													
58	Omg so many thoughts come to my head. But that's you and I @anaisnunez													
59	@asterical this is so us													
60	@natalieort your dream bag!													
61	Charming <3 love bag													

62	Love Lv														
63	I want														
64	Must to have @sandraaclira !! Rs bojo														
65	I'm in love														
66	This shoes are very very very pretty														
67	I bought a beautiful pair today														
68	Omg i need..														
69	@pursebop I think you'll love these														
70	@myriamghandour like this? Perfect thanks. (hope you got me the right size)														
71	Her handbag love														
72	Absolutely love														

116	I could get this outfit for my princess!!														
117	I luv the outfit														
118	#GucciEverything														
119	Love it @mafloreto														
120	@teresucci_arena i want that scarf														
	Total	28	9	23	5	8	4	8	5	21	10	3	6	4	47

Appendix E: Image Codes Guidelines

Categories & Codes	Meaning
Gender Products	
Female	Female product in the photo
Male	Male product in the photo
Kid	Kid product in the photo
Beauty	
Cosm	Cosmetics such as make up, nail polish and beautifying products
Hair	Referring to hair does and up does / well groomed
Elegant	Referring to elegant style of clothes and appearance
Smooth Skin	Clear smooth skin of the model/ referring to young
Quality	
Gold	Gold items or gold colour in the image
Leather	Leather material used in products
Heritage/Craftsmanship	
Logo	Clear logo appearance in the image
COO	Country of origin of the product, Country skylines
Design	Procedure of designing a product
Global Presence	
Fashion show	Fashion shows in the photo, many people, cat walk, models on stage
Oscars	Oscars event, red carpet
Camera Gaze	
Close up	Shots of models facing the viewer of the image/ Direct eye contact with viewer
Med	Shots of models not looking straight to the viewer/ gazing left, right or down
Long	Shots of models from far/ face gazing not clear

Appendix F: Comments Code Guidelines

Categories	Meaning
Love General	General love expressed, no specific dedication
Love Brand	Love dedicated to the brand by mentioning the brand name
Love Product	Love dedicated to specific items and products
Love Design	Love dedicated to the design of the product or the brands
Love Hair	Love expressed towards the model's hair
Owning	Owning a product from the brand
Need	Expressing the need to certain products from the brands
Want	Wanting certain products from the brand
Gift	Gift proposals and gift wishes from the brand
Defend	Defending the brand, model or product
Offensive	Negative offensive towards the brand, model or product
Hashtags	the sigh # before a word / referring to categorizing names