Sustainable Development

WILEY

Sustainable Development

RESEARCH ARTICLE OPEN ACCESS

Consensus-Based Recommendations to Embrace Sustainable Luxury: A Delphi Study

Alexia Del Greco[1] | Selena Russo[2] | Francesca Greselin[3] | Marco Bani[2] | Giulia Rampoldi[2,4] | Federico Zorzi[2,5,6,7] | Stefano Ardenghi[2,5] | Claudio Rozzoni[8] | Maria Grazia Strepparava[2,7,9] | Paolo Galli[1,9] | MUSA-Spoke5 group

[1]Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences, University of Milano-Bicocca, Milano, Italy | [2]School of Medicine and Surgery, University of Milano-Bicocca, Monza, Italy | [3]Department of Statistics and Quantitative Methods (DISMEQ), University of Milano-Bicocca, Milano, Italy | [4]Pediatric Hematology Unit, Fondazione IRCCS San Gerardo Dei Tintori, Monza, Italy | [5]Department of Mental Health, ASST Monza, Monza, Italy | [6]Department of Pedagogy, Psychology and Philosophy, University of Cagliari, Cagliari, Italy | [7]Clinical Unit "Psicologia Clinica", Fondazione IRCCS San Gerardo Dei Tintori, Monza, Italy | [8]Dipartimento di Beni Culturali e Ambientali, Università Degli Studi di Milano, Milano, Italy | [9]MaRHE Center (Marine Research and Higher Education Center), Magoodhoo Island Faafu Atoll, Maldives

Correspondence: Selena Russo (selena.russo@unimib.it)

Received: 1 August 2025 | **Revised:** 9 March 2026 | **Accepted:** 27 March 2026

Keywords: circular economy | consensus study | Delphi methodology | ethical consumption | luxury | stakeholder consensus | sustainability | sustainable luxury

ABSTRACT

Integrating sustainability into luxury practices presents unique challenges. Using a two-phase Delphi method, this study develops consensus-based recommendations for sustainable luxury. Findings identify key priorities including traceability, fair labour, circular design, and sustainable materials as essential for aligning luxury with ethical and environmental imperatives. The importance of authentic communication and consumer education also emerged. These findings provide managers with guidance on sequencing interventions, embedding checkpoints, and aligning operations with stakeholder expectations while informing policymakers on incentives and standards to foster ethical, environmentally responsible, and socially equitable luxury practices. By bridging academic, managerial, and policy perspectives, this study advances an integrative understanding of sustainable luxury as both an ethical commitment and a strategic advantage, contributing to the transition toward responsible innovation.

1 | Introduction

The concept of luxury has long resisted a singular, universal definition. This conceptual plurality has generated a fragmented body of scholarship, particularly regarding how sustainability should be defined, prioritised, and operationalised within the luxury domain. Perspectives on luxury differ significantly depending on the disciplinary lens adopted. From an economic standpoint, luxury goods are often considered highly income-elastic products, characterised by a low price-to-functionality ratio, where perceived value lies more in symbolic and experiential dimensions than practical utility (Kapferer and Michaut-Denizeau 2014; McClung 2023). Sociologically, luxury can signal social stratification, distinguishing elites through conspicuous consumption (Schrage 2012), whereas philosophical interpretations describe it as a transgressive force challenging utilitarian rationality (Wiesing and Roth 2019). These perspectives reflect luxury's multidimensional nature and its embeddedness in cultural, social, and personal values (Dhaliwal et al. 2020; Koch 2012).

MUSA-Spoke5 Group: Andrea Visconti, Beatrice De Santes, Elisa Arrigo, Roberta Bettinetti, Tommaso Buganza, Stefania Carraro, Federica Celeste, Federico Cerri, Licia Cerini, Miriam Colombo, Marco Contardi, Camilla Falivena, Luca Fallati, Silvia Gadola, Marco Giustra, Valerio Isa, Lucio Lamberti, Maddalena Mazzocut-Mis, Lucia Morelli, Lucia Paladino, Stefania Palmieri, Margherita Pero, Federico Pippo, Lorenzo Pizzuti, Daniela Preite, Claudia Riccardi, Elisabetta Rocchetti, Francesco Saliu, Lucia Salvioni, Carlo Salvato, Emanuela Scarpellini, Elena Scoccianti, Davide Seveso, Francesca Spena, Alessandra Spagnoli, Gianluca Tedaldi, Ilaria Tani, Francesco Tissoni, Giovanna Tonelli, Umberto Tolino, Daniel Trabucchi, Tamara Gaia Vasiljev.
[Correction added on 20 May 2026, after first online publication: Elisa Arrigo has been added to the MUSA-Spoke5 Group.]

The motivations behind luxury consumption are similarly diverse, ranging from external drivers—such as social distinction and status—to internal ones related to identity, emotion, and personal gratification. Cross-cultural studies highlight these variations: For instance, luxury purchases as a marker of social belonging dominate in Asian and Arab cultures, while Western consumers may prioritise uniqueness, quality, or heritage (Kapferer and Michaut 2016; Naumova et al. 2019). Generational shifts further complicate the landscape, with younger consumers increasingly favouring personalised and experience-based luxury (Jiang and Shan 2018).

Due to the evolving landscape and luxury complexity, considering sustainability has emerged as an imperative. Traditionally seen as incompatible, luxury and sustainability appear to promote opposing values: opulence and exclusivity versus moderation and responsibility (Beckham and Voyer 2014) with luxury brands being often criticised for unsustainable practices ranging from environmental degradation to exploitative labour conditions (Ahmad and Dubey 2024; Ebert 2018). Emerging definitions and evolving consumer expectations are increasingly challenging this dichotomy. High-quality, durable, and artisan-crafted luxury items inherently possess features aligned with sustainable development, such as reduced waste and long product lifecycles (Kapferer 2010). A philosophical perspective helps dispel the idea that luxury is inherently at odds with sustainability. Aesthetic and phenomenological accounts show that luxury's core does not lie in excess or conspicuous consumption, but in the distinctive experience that enables an interruption of ordinary life and leads to an experience of heightened sensibility and a reflective engagement with beauty (Franceschina 2025). Rozzoni (2025) extends this view ethically: if luxury is understood as an aesthetic experience rather than a material privilege, it becomes, in principle, accessible to anyone capable of appreciating its qualitative dimensions. Consequently, genuine luxury must be ecological and inclusive, shifting its value from scarcity and economic exclusivity to qualitative enrichment and the sustainable flourishing of human life. Under this lens, luxury and sustainability are not only compatible but mutually reinforcing. Whether luxury conflicts with or complements sustainability principles, its inherently fluid, multifaceted, and evolving character makes it crucial to bridge their principles and practices. Recently, driven by consumer shifts toward ethical and sustainable products, luxury firms have begun to incorporate eco-conscious practices into their business strategies (Athwal et al. 2019). Moreover, regulatory frameworks (e.g., the UK's Modern Slavery Act) and societal shifts, particularly among younger consumers, are catalysing change within the industry (Winston 2016; Legislation.gov.uk 2024).

This situation has given rise to the notion of sustainable luxury or eco-luxury—a segment that aims to reconcile exclusivity with ecological and social responsibility (Athwal et al. 2019; Dean 2018). Currently, the decade of sustainability in luxury has begun, and some studies highlight the synergies between luxury and sustainability (e.g., craftsmanship, heritage, durability), whereas others caution that the perception of 'green' luxury may dilute its aspirational value (Dekhili et al. 2019; Cervellon and Shammas 2013).

Empirical evidence confirms that the paradox between luxury and sustainability is underpinned by conceptual ambiguities about what sustainable luxury represents and how it should be evaluated. Although some consumers express positive attitudes toward sustainability, purchase decisions of luxury items are less driven by sustainability reasons (Grauel et al. 2025): other factors such as quality, brand reputation, or past post-purchase satisfaction or own pleasure take precedence when luxury purchasing (Achabou and Dekhili 2013; Joy et al. 2012). On the other hand, luxury buyers could primarily take sustainability into account for some specific products such as pearls or seafood (Nash et al. 2016; Cowburn et al. 2018).

Consumers' perception of fit between sustainability and luxury, as said, varies by product category and context. Some consumers look for sustainable food that appears to be more authentic (Hartmann et al. 2016). Amatulli et al. (2021) showed that sustainability-focused messaging makes a luxury brand appear *atypical*, something unusual within the luxury category, which paradoxically increases consumers' willingness to buy than excellence framing. For some other consumers, however, the attributes of "sustainable" do not change their perception (Rolling and Sadachar 2018). Finally, some products or experiences' "green" attributes such as clothing and apparel are perceived as diminishing exclusivity or aesthetic appeal to consumers (Beckham and Voyer 2014; Dekhili et al. 2019). Research also indicates that consumers often do not actively pursue sustainable luxury products, frequently assuming that luxury goods have minimal negative impacts and are free from labour exploitation given their higher prices (Davies et al. 2012; Janssen et al. 2015; Moraes et al. 2017).

Another central theme in the existing literature concerns identity. Luxury consumption is closely tied to social differentiation and status (Davies et al. 2012). However, sustainability is often perceived as incongruent with these identity goals, representing altruism and restraint rather than indulgence or prestige (Griskevicius et al. 2010). This tension creates an attitudinal barrier for many consumers (Cervellon and Shammas 2013). Still, for a smaller segment, sustainable luxury offers a way to perform ethical distinction and conspicuous virtue (Cervellon and Shammas 2013).

Studies of consumer engagement indicate emerging segments that may value sustainable luxury, however for self-oriented benefits such as health, prestige, or emotional satisfaction, rather than pure altruism (Cervellon and Shammas 2013). Overall, as Carranza et al. (2023) more recently argue, the literature remains fragmented, with few integrative frameworks that link positive drivers (such as identity, authenticity, or craftsmanship) and negative drivers (such as perceived hypocrisy or greenwashing). These ambiguities make it difficult to determine whether sustainability enhances or diminishes luxury's symbolic and experiential value. Moreover, cross-cultural research shows that motivations for sustainable luxury vary across contexts, suggesting that any generalisable conceptualisation must reconcile diverse economic, ethical, and aesthetic logics (Tafani et al. 2024; Osburg et al. 2024). Vanhamme et al. (2023) address these challenges by attempting to identify distinct luxury ethical consumer segments, or "personas," based on motivations, ethical orientation, and socio-psychological drivers. This five-cluster segmentation offers a practical solution to previous gaps by allowing brands to tailor sustainability strategies and communication to the specific needs and values of different consumer groups, rather than assuming a uniform approach.

Another factor influencing consumers is the alignment between brands' sustainability claims and their actual practices. High-profile scandals such as labor exploitation in fashion supply chains and environmental damage associated with material sourcing have intensified public scrutiny (Adegeest 2025; Jacob 2011). Findings by Cheah et al. (2023) show that consumers tend to take distances from the brand when luxury brands engage in sustainability communication while simultaneously exhibiting environmental misconduct. Interestingly, this distance is reduced when brands demonstrate genuine corrective actions or when consumers' desire for exclusivity remains strong. "Greenwashing" risks are, however, widespread, and unsubstantiated ethical claims can erode consumer trust and brand credibility (Persakis et al. 2025). Regarding attempts to categorise defining factors and frameworks of sustainable luxury, research has increasingly sought to clarify its core dimensions, moving beyond early debates about the incompatibility between exclusivity and responsibility. Several frameworks converge on three broad pillars. First, environmental dimensions emphasise resource efficiency, responsible materials, durability, circularity, and low-impact production (Achabou and Dekhili 2013). Second, social and ethical dimensions highlight fair labour conditions, transparent supply chains, craftsmanship, and cultural preservation as key markers of responsible luxury (Joy et al. 2012). Third, symbolic and experiential dimensions focus on authenticity, emotional value, storytelling, and the alignment between luxury identity and sustainability narratives (Sharma et al. 2024). Multidimensional models integrate these perspectives. Hennigs et al. (2012) provide a robust conceptual foundation for understanding how luxury and sustainability intersect by identifying four core value dimensions: financial, functional, individual, and social. The financial dimension emphasises long-term value, such as durability and resale potential, reflecting the economic sustainability of luxury goods. The functional dimension highlights product quality, craftsmanship, and longevity, which naturally align with environmentally sustainable practices. The individual dimension captures the emotional and identity-related benefits that luxury consumers derive, including personal satisfaction and status, illustrating how sustainable luxury can resonate with self-oriented motivations. Finally, the social dimension underscores ethical conduct, societal contribution, and transparency, reflecting the social responsibility component of sustainability. Cowan and Conejo (2022) propose a conceptual framework for sustainable luxury, covering the full product life-cycle from design, sourcing, and production to retail, usage, disposal, packaging, and transportation. This approach emphasises integrating environmental and social responsibility while maintaining luxury's quality, craftsmanship, and exclusivity. Key principles include durable and circular design, ethical supply chains, reduced waste, and optimised logistics, alongside strategies to communicate sustainability in ways that resonate with both self-oriented and ethical consumer motivations.

Despite increasing scholarly attention, the field remains theoretically fragmented and empirically uncoordinated. Most studies focus either on consumer attitudes or firm-level initiatives, with limited efforts to integrate perspectives across academia, industry, and policy. Furthermore, no consensus exists regarding the relative importance or feasibility of proposed sustainability factors. This highlights the need for integrative approaches that connect the symbolic, ethical, and operational dimensions of sustainable luxury while incorporating diverse stakeholder viewpoints. To date, no study has developed a structured, multi-stakeholder consensus hierarchy of sustainable luxury factors. The absence of such an integrative and prioritised framework limits theoretical clarity and practical guidance in the transition toward sustainable luxury. This study addresses these gaps by employing a Delphi approach in the attempt to gather and synthesise expert knowledge, bridging academic, managerial, and policy perspectives. Expert-based consensus techniques, such as the Delphi method, are particularly suited to this task because they synthesise knowledge from multiple stakeholder domains into coherent frameworks. Unlike purely descriptive reviews, Delphi studies iteratively refine expert judgements to identify stable priorities and shared meanings, reducing conceptual noise and clarifying boundaries within emerging fields. In this sense, our study directly responds to Carranza et al. (2023) call for integrative models that connect the psychological, institutional, and contextual dimensions of sustainable luxury. By systematically prioritising factors and operational checkpoints for sustainable luxury, the present study extends existing evidence on luxury consumption, corporate social responsibility, and sustainability, and generates evidence that can guide future research, managerial decision-making, and policy development.

1.1 | Objectives

Building on existing literature, this paper addresses the need for expert-informed guidance by identifying and evaluating the core components of sustainable luxury, ultimately seeking consensus on the key factors and operational checkpoints that define and support sustainability in the luxury sector.

This study aims to co-produce a shared understanding of sustainable luxury, informing both research and practice within—and beyond—the MUSA framework.

In particular, the study aims to: (i) Identify and prioritise the most critical factors that enable or hinder the implementation of sustainability in the luxury sector; (ii) Determine the relevance and feasibility of specific checkpoints or indicators to assess progress toward sustainable luxury; (iii) Contribute to the development of a shared framework for sustainable luxury, grounded in expert consensus and actionable in real-world contexts. By systematically gathering and synthesising expert insights, this study seeks to offer a structured foundation for decision-making and policy development, whereas supporting luxury companies in navigating the complex intersection of environmental integrity, social responsibility, and brand value.

2 | Method

The Delphi methodology was selected because it is particularly suited to exploring emerging, complex, and interdisciplinary topics where empirical evidence is limited and conceptual boundaries remain fluid (Hasson et al. 2025). Sustainable luxury represents such a field, characterised by diverse stakeholder perspectives, evolving standards, and an absence of universally

accepted definitions or metrics. The Delphi approach allows for the structured elicitation and refinement of expert judgements through iterative rounds, promoting convergence toward a reasoned consensus while maintaining participant anonymity to minimise the influence of dominant voices or group pressure (Hsu and Sandford 2007; Okoli and Pawlowski 2004). This process is particularly valuable for integrating academic, managerial, and policy insights into a coherent framework, as it combines qualitative exploration with quantitative validation of priorities. By systematically aggregating expert knowledge, the Delphi method provides both conceptual clarification and practical guidance for areas such as sustainable luxury where traditional empirical or experimental designs may be premature or infeasible.

To this end, we implemented a two-round Delphi study involving experts and stakeholders. The decision to conduct two Delphi rounds was guided by established methodological recommendations indicating that two to three rounds are generally sufficient to achieve stability of responses and meaningful consensus without inducing participant fatigue (Hsu and Sandford 2007).

Experts were drawn from the MUSA (Multilayered Urban Sustainability Action) project established in Milan through collaboration among the University of Milano-Bicocca, Politecnico di Milano, Bocconi University, the University of Milan, and other partners. Its goal is to foster integrated sustainability across environmental, economic, and social dimensions and to position Milan as a leader in sustainable innovation. One of its six key thematic areas, Spoke 5, focuses on advancing sustainability in fashion, luxury, and design by developing innovative materials, promoting circular business models, and strengthening local entrepreneurship. More information about the MUSA project can be found at https://musascarl.it/. Our study forms part of this initiative, seeking to produce a shared and actionable understanding of sustainable luxury through expert consensus.

To assist researchers and stakeholders in selecting relevant aspects for achieving sustainable luxury, we developed recommendations based on expert contributions gathered through an online survey (Phase 1—Generative phase). Spoke 5 members' review via an online two-round Delphi panel was used to reach a formal consensus on the experts' insight.

The Delphi method involves a group-based approach designed to achieve the most accurate and dependable consensus from a panel of skilled and knowledgeable experts through a series of questionnaires administered within a structured feedback process (Dalkey and Helmer 1963; Keeney et al. 2011). The sample size for both the generative and Delphi phases was determined on a purposive, expertise-driven basis rather than by probabilistic power calculations, following standard practice for Delphi studies where the primary criterion is panelist knowledge and relevance rather than statistical representativeness (Okoli and Pawlowski 2004).

The study entailed two phases:

Phase 1—Generative Phase: A survey on aspects to be considered when tackling sustainable luxury was administered to a multidisciplinary advisory panel.

Phase 2—Delphi Phase: in a two-round Delphi study, a survey was administered to Musa Spoke 5 Members.

The study was approved by the Ethics Committee of University of Milano—Bicocca (Protocol 807—Meeting of the Ethics Committee held on December 18, 2023).

2.1 | Phase 1—Generative Phase: International Experts' Contribution

A pool of 62 international experts was invited via email or through social media platforms (such as LinkedIn or Instagram) to provide strategic input on the definitions of aspects to be considered when addressing sustainable luxury. This was done using an online survey that allowed for freely structured comments.

Members of the panel for the advisory group had to be experts in one or more of the following fields:

- Sustainability, including environmental scientists, consultants, social responsibility experts, environmental educators, scientific journalists, and sustainability literacy experts;
- Luxury Industry Professionals, including luxury brand executives, fashion designers, or luxury retailers;
- Consumer Behaviour and Marketing Experts such as market researchers and branding experts;
- Academics and Researchers including sustainability and ethical consumerism scholars;
- NGO Representatives and Activists from organizations focused on environmental conservation and sustainable practices and ethical Fashion Advocates;
- Supply Chain and Manufacturing Experts and Consultants;
- Regulators of areas related to sustainability or luxury.

The inclusion criteria for the advisory panel had been designed to ensure a diverse range of perspectives and expertise, which are essential to generate comprehensive insights and recommendations. No a priori sample size was set, as there are no clear indications of the size of panels in the literature. The major criteria to determine the size for both advisory and Delphi panels are "to include participants who are knowledgeable in the field of study and are willing to commit themselves to multiple rounds of questions or interactions on the same topic" (Grisham 2009).

After providing demographic information, the 22 experts who completed the survey were asked to suggest factors, methods, processes, technological aspects, and checkpoints that need to be included when talking about sustainable luxury and to rate their level of importance with each suggested element on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 'Not at all important' to 'Extremely Important' (See Supplementary A).

Moreover, respondents' perception of the relationship between Sustainability and Luxury was asked through two items. One item asked participants to rate their level of agreement with

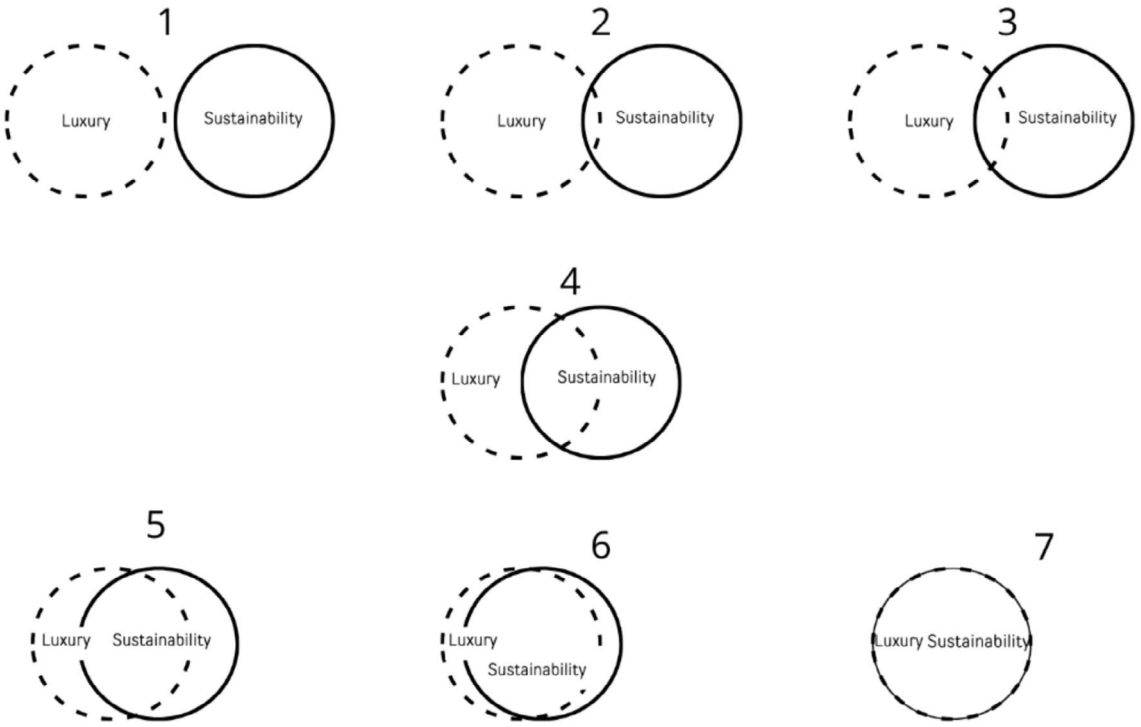

FIGURE 1 | Relationship between sustainability and luxury (adapted from Aron et al. 1992).

the statement "Sustainability and Luxury are in contrast" on a Likert scale from 0 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree).

The second item is an adaptation of the Aron et al. (1992) *Inclusion of other in the self* scale. Respondents had to indicate their perception of the relation between Sustainability and Luxury by choosing a graphic representation among seven (Figure 1).

The qualitative clustering of open-ended responses in Phase 1 followed a framework analysis and was conducted collaboratively by two researchers who independently reviewed the data, discussed emerging themes, and reached consensus through iterative comparison. A third researcher independently reviewed the responses and aspects generated. Agreement was achieved through negotiated consensus, a widely accepted approach in exploratory Delphi studies (Hasson et al. 2000).

2.2 | Phase 2: Two-Round Delphi

As the objective of the Delphi study is to provide a common and shared view of sustainable luxury generated within the MUSA project, participants for this phase were recruited exclusively from members of the SPOKE 5—Sustainable Fashion, Luxury, and Design of the MUSA project. Participants were e-mailed a web link to the consent form, and once informed consent was provided, participants were presented with the study survey.

In Round 1, respondents were asked to provide demographic and professional information and rate their view on the importance of each of the 24 factors and 5 checkpoints drawn from the generative phase using a 5-point Likert scale from '0-not at all important' to '4-Extremely important'. Then, participants were asked to choose 5 out of the 24 factors as top priority in terms of urgency, and 5 as low priority (Table S3). Furthermore, they were asked to add further aspects or factors that they believe are important to consider when achieving Sustainable Luxury, which were not already present in the list. Finally, participants provided their view of the relationship between Sustainability and Luxury through the item adapted from (Aron et al. 1992; Figure 1).

Respondents who completed the questionnaire in Round 1 of the Delphi survey were invited via e-mail to complete Round 2. For each of the 24 factors and 5 checkpoints, participants were presented with the rating they provided during Round 1, along with the overall mean and standard deviation from the panel, and were asked to rate their importance again using the same 5-point Likert scale. Respondents were also asked to rate the importance of the aspects generated in Round 1.

Moreover, participants were asked to order from 1 to 5 in terms of priority, the 5 aspects that scored the highest priority in round 1 and to indicate whether, among those aspects suggested by MUSA SPOKE 5 members in round 1, there were any they would include in the top 5 priorities. Specifically, participants were asked to rank five factors in order of importance, from 1 (most important) to 5 (least important), using a drag-and-drop interface.

As for the rating of factors and checkpoints, criteria for the level of consensus were defined a priori based on agreement responses on the Likert scale ["very important" or "extremely important"], and included the following categories of consensus: "unanimity or consensus", "majority", and "discrepancy" when 100%–80%, ≥70%, and <70% of participants agreed with a high level of importance. Based on these criteria, three classes of recommendations were created:

- Class I: Factors and checkpoints for which there is unanimity or consensus regarding their importance for industry stakeholders and researchers in the field (80%–100%).

- Class II: Factors and checkpoints for which the majority of MUSA experts agreed for their importance for industry stakeholders and researchers in the field (70%–79%).
- Class III: Factors and checkpoints for which there is a discrepancy among MUSA experts regarding their importance or priority for industry stakeholders and researchers in the field (< 70%).

To determine when sufficient agreement had been reached among panel members, a pre-defined consensus threshold of ≥80% agreement was established prior to data collection as this aligns with methodological guidance in Delphi research, where consensus levels between 70% and 80% are commonly adopted to indicate strong convergence of expert opinion (Diamond et al. 2014; Hasson et al. 2000; Hsu and Sandford 2007). Setting the threshold at 80% reflects a conservative standard that prioritizes robustness and clarity of consensus while acknowledging that higher thresholds may reduce the inclusion of minority viewpoints. The chosen level was therefore intended to balance methodological rigor with inclusivity, ensuring that the resulting priorities represent a well-substantiated and credible expert agreement.

3 | Results

3.1 | Phase 1: Generative Survey

Out of the 62 experts invited, 40 accessed the questionnaire and 22 completed the survey (response Rate 35.5%). Demographic information of the advisory panel members is reported below in Table 1.

The advisory panel provided a total of 311 prompts for aspects and 62 prompts for checkpoints to consider when tackling sustainable luxury. Through a qualitative clustering process, 24 relevant aspects and 5 critical checkpoints were drawn (Tables 2 and 3).

3.2 | Phase 2: Two-Round Delphi

In Delphi Round 1, out of the 101 MUSA-SPOKE5 members invited, 77 completed the Delphi survey (76.2% response rate). Following, out of the 77 MUSA-SPOKE5 members invited to participate in Round 2 of the Delphi, 51 completed the survey (66% response rate). In Table 4, respondents' demographic and professional information, along with their views on the relationship between luxury and sustainability, are reported. To explore potential attrition bias, the demographic and professional characteristics of participants who completed only Round 1 are also reported. Descriptive analyses of mean age (and age range), gender distribution, and field of expertise did not reveal substantial differences between groups, suggesting that attrition did not meaningfully alter the overall profile of the expert panel.

Regarding the relationship between sustainability and luxury, the majority of respondents ($n = 50$) selected ratings 3 and 4, indicating a partial overlap between the concepts of sustainability and luxury. Ten participants perceived only a slight connection between the two, while six considered them to be fully overlapping. In contrast, three respondents viewed sustainability and luxury as entirely separate and unrelated concepts.

TABLE 1 | Generative phase demographics and relationship between luxury and sustainability.

Age	**Mean 50.5 (SD = 9.3) range 31–64**
Gender	11 males, 11 females
Expertise field (more answers were allowed)	Sustainability $n = 7$ Luxury industry $n = 2$ Consumer behaviour and marketing $n = 2$ Academia and research $n = 12$ NGO representatives and activists $n = 1$ Supply chain and manufacturing $n = 2$ Regulators $n = 0$
Seniority	Less than 10 years $n = 2$; More than 10 years $n = 20$
Perceived Juxtaposition between Sustainability and Luxury *"Sustainability and Luxury are in contrast."* from 0-strongly disagree to 4-strongly agree.	Mean = 1.9 SD = 1.269 0 (Strongly disagree) $n = 3$ 1 (Somehow disagree) $n = 7$ 2 (Neither agree nor disagree) $n = 3$ 3 (Somehow agree) $n = 7$ 4 (Strongly agree) $n = 2$
Relationship between sustainability and luxury	1 $n = 1$ 2 $n = 2$ 3 $n = 5$ 4 $n = 8$ 5 $n = 2$ 6 $n = 1$ 7 $n = 3$

TABLE 2 | Aspects identified during the generative phase as relevant for fostering sustainable luxury, including expert ratings of importance.

Factors to be taken into account when considering sustainability and luxury	Number of responses	Mean importance 0–4
Extended producer responsibility to ensure the producer's accountability throughout the entire product life cycle, including the post-consumer stage.	1	4
Ensuring that production processes respect human rights and promote safe and fair working conditions.	16	3.7
Promoting local craftsmanship by collaborating with artisans and local communities to preserve traditional techniques.	5	3.6
Adoption of upcycling models and strategies, a reuse process that does not require further material processing (e.g., transforming jeans into a skirt).	7	3.4
Ensuring traceability and transparency across the entire supply chain by leveraging advanced technologies such as blockchain to verify the origin of materials and ensure compliance with ethical practices by suppliers.	10	3.4
Designing high-quality, durable products while optimising resources through techniques that minimise waste, such as modular or custom designs.	7	3.4
Selecting materials and/or extraction or production practices with minimal impact on biodiversity and the environment.	15	3.4
Educational marketing to communicate the product's story, the materials used, and the positive impact of the purchasing choice on communities and the environment.	7	3.4
Educating consumers on recognising labels and certifications.	7	3.4
Employing techniques or machinery that optimise the amount of raw material (e.g., additive manufacturing; 3D printing) to reduce waste and scraps.	15	3.3
Adoption of circular economy models, meaning production and consumption practices involving sharing, lending, reusing, repairing, refurbishing, and recycling materials and products for as long as possible.	12	3.2
Adoption of lean manufacturing practices to reduce water, energy, raw material, and chemical consumption through optimised processes.	14	3.2
Adoption of closed-loop recycling systems, production models where used materials are recycled and reintroduced into the production cycle to create new, similar products without losing quality.	9	3.2
Adoption of life cycle assessment (LCA) to evaluate the environmental impact at each stage: from design to production, distribution, use, and end-of-life.	16	3.2
Employing bio-based materials composed of renewable resources such as mycelium, synthetic silk, or biodegradable plastics.	16	3.2
Employing recycled materials derived from post-consumer or post-industrial waste, such as recycled PET for fabrics and metal recycling.	16	3.2
Employing renewable energy sources and technologies in production processes, such as solar heating and low-energy systems.	10	3.2
Minimising and optimising logistics and transportation to reduce the carbon footprint.	14	3
Creation of digital twins to simulate and optimise production processes before physical realisation (e.g., virtual collections to reduce physical prototypes).	1	3
Adopting internationally recognised sustainability standards (e.g., GOTS, FSC, ISO 14001, etc.).	14	3
Employing packaging made from biodegradable, sustainable materials.	17	2.8
Employing packaging made from recycled or recyclable materials.	17	2.8
Reducing the amount of packaging used through optimised and functional design.	17	2.8
On-demand manufacturing to reduce production and storage costs and environmental impact.	2	2

Note: This table presents 24 factors, methods, technological aspects, and processes generated by international experts in Phase 1, along with their frequency and mean importance rating on a 0–4 Likert scale.

TABLE 3 | Aspects and critical checkpoints identified as relevant for fostering sustainable luxury.

Measures and checkpoints to consider for achieving sustainable luxury.	Number of responses	Mean importance 0–4
Obtaining recognised certifications (e.g., ISO 14001, GOTS, FSC) to demonstrate compliance with environmental and social sustainability standards. Measurable goal: Percentage of certified products relative to the total (e.g., 75% within 5 years). Checkpoint: Compliance audits by certification bodies; number of certifications obtained annually.	6	3.5
Monitoring and continuous improvement of working conditions along the supply chain, ensuring fairness, safety, and respect for human rights. Measurable goal: Percentage of suppliers verified according to ethical criteria (e.g., 100% of critical suppliers within 2 years). Checkpoint: Regular inspections, anonymous employee reports, implementation of corrective actions, and training programs.	2	3.5
Publication of regular reports that communicate progress in sustainability to stakeholders, including successes and areas for improvement. Measurable goal: Production of a periodic (e.g., annual) sustainability report accessible to the public. Checkpoint: Timely release of reports (e.g., by Q2 each year); increased stakeholder engagement (e.g., feedback received).	14	3.3
Implementation of regular internal or external audits to monitor compliance with sustainability practices and corporate standards. Measurable goal: Percentage of business operations subject to annual audits compared to the total. Checkpoint: Frequency of audits (e.g., quarterly or annual); reports with recommendations and corrective actions implemented.	12	3.2
Reduction of CO_2 emissions, energy consumption, or the use of recycled materials. Measurable goal: Reduction of the carbon footprint within a defined period (e.g., by 25% over 3 years). Checkpoint: Periodic measurement (e.g., annual) of emissions using standard tools (e.g., GHG Protocol); verification of milestone achievements (e.g., −10% after the first year).	13	3.1

Note: This table outlines five key checkpoints proposed by experts to ensure the implementation and monitoring of sustainable luxury practices, × by the advisory panel in the generative phase. Frequency and mean importance rating (a 0–4 Likert scale) for each aspect/checkpoint are reported.

Tables 5 and 6 report the percentage of participants rating each factor and checkpoint as "3-Very important" or "4-Extremely important" in Round 1 and Round 2. Means and standard deviations of the ratings in Round 1 for factors and checkpoints are reported in Tables S1 and S2. The frequency of participants who considered each factor among the top five priorities or the five lowest priorities is also reported in Table S1. Means and standard deviations of the ratings in Round 2 for factors and checkpoints are reported in Tables S3 and S4.

Respondents in Round 1 produced 23 new prompts of aspects to consider to achieve sustainable luxury. Two researchers proceeded with a qualitative clustering process of the new aspects suggested, resulting in 13 new aspects. A third researcher reviewed the list for potential overlap between the newly suggested aspects and those in the original Round 1 list, confirming 13 new aspects (Table 7).

The frequency of participants who considered each of the 13 factors suggested in Round 1 among the top five priorities is reported in Table S3.

In Figure 2 the average ranking of the 5 factors that had scored the highest in Round 1 scored in Round 2 in terms of priority to achieve sustainable luxury is reported. The highest score was obtained by Designing high quality and durable products (Average 2.41), followed by guaranteeing human rights and fair working conditions (Average 2.76).

The percentages of agreement in Round 1 ranged between 44.2% and 94.8% with the lowest percentage for the use of Digital Twins and the highest percentage for the importance of ensuring that production processes respect human rights and promote safe and fair working conditions.

The percentage of agreement at Round 2 ranged from 25.5% to 98%, confirming the findings of the previous round.

Based on the results of round two of the Delphi survey, factors and checkpoints were organised in the three classes of consensus-based recommendations on considering them during the transition towards sustainable luxury.

A set of Wilcoxon signed-rank tests was conducted to examine whether scores differed between Round 1 and Round 2 for each factor and checkpoint considered. No statistically significant differences were observed for any item (all $p > 0.174$), suggesting that participants' evaluations remained consistent across rounds. The convergence of expert opinion suggests that consensus had been reached after the second rounds, suggesting that an additional round would unlikely lead to relevant new

TABLE 4 | Phase 2-two-round Delphi: Musa spoke 5 members demographics.

	Round 1	Round 2	Lost at Round 2
Total	77	51	26
Age	Mean 42.9 (SD = 13) range 25–66	Mean 42.5 (SD = 12.4) range 25–67	Mean 44.7 (SD = 14.2) range 26–66
Gender	27 males, 49 females, 1 other	20 males, 30 females, 1 other	8 males, 18 females
Expertise Field (more answers were allowed)	Sustainability $n = 23$ Luxury Industry $n = 8$ Consumer Behaviour and Marketing $n = 6$ Academia and Research $n = 65$ NGO Representatives and Activists $n = 0$ Supply Chain and Manufacturing $n = 2$ Regulators $n = 0$	Sustainability $n = 15$ Luxury Industry $n = 5$ Consumer Behaviour and Marketing $n = 4$ Academia and Research $n = 44$ NGO Representatives and Activists $n = 0$ Supply Chain and Manufacturing $n = 2$ Regulators $n = 0$	Sustainability $n = 7$ Luxury Industry $n = 3$ Consumer Behaviour and Marketing $n = 2$ Academia and Research $n = 22$ NGO Representatives and Activists $n = 0$ Supply Chain and Manufacturing $n = 0$ Regulators $n = 0$
Seniority	Less than 10 years $n = 29$; More than 10 years $n = 48$	Less than 10 years $n = 18$; More than 10 years $n = 33$	Less than 10 years $n = 10$; More than 10 years $n = 16$
Relationship between Sustainability and Luxury	1 $n = 3$ 2 $n = 10$ 3 $n = 21$ 4 $n = 29$ 5 $n = 6$ 6 $n = 2$ 7 $n = 6$	N/A	N/A

insights—thereby validating the two-round design adopted. The percentage shift between Round 1 and Round 2 ranged from less than 1% to approximately 10%, further confirming the stability of panelists' evaluations. This low level of variation across rounds is consistent with the goals of the Delphi process and suggests that consensus had been reached on the relative importance of each factor and checkpoint.

4 | Discussion

This paper aims to provide a structured, consensus-driven framework for redefining and addressing sustainable luxury. Through the collective input of multidisciplinary experts and key stakeholders from the luxury and fashion ecosystem, we gathered insights into which operational principles and strategic priorities should be considered most critical for aligning luxury with sustainability, thus guiding this transition.

Specifically, to develop our recommendations, a survey of international experts and a Delphi methodology were employed, a structured technique designed to achieve consensus among experts on complex topics.

This process enabled the identification of the most critical and widely supported strategies for integrating sustainability into luxury, based on stakeholder consensus. The results were synthesised into three priority classes according to their perceived importance and feasibility, thereby guiding both academic reflection and strategic decision-making in the sector.

When considering the prioritisation of sustainable luxury practices emerging from our Delphi study through the lens of stakeholder theory (Freeman 1984; Mitchell et al. 1997), meaningful interpretations emerged. Stakeholder theory posits that organisations must account for the interests of multiple parties, ranging from consumers and employees to suppliers, regulators, and society at large, whose power, legitimacy, and urgency influence managerial decision-making. Although we need to consider that our Delphi panel was composed of experts and therefore consumers' perspective is not fully included, our Class I–III categorisation may reflect not merely feasibility or technical priority, but the salience of stakeholder expectations across the luxury ecosystem.

Our classification, furthermore, aligns closely with other established conceptual models. For instance, Hennigs et al. (2012) identify four core value dimensions of sustainable luxury, which are financial, functional, individual, and social; our classification into Classes I–III well reflects a similar integrated perspective. Class I (e.g., traceability, fair labour, durable materials) corresponds primarily to functional and social values, Class II (e.g., renewable energy, certifications, storytelling) reinforces functional and individual dimensions, whereas Class III (e.g., emotional engagement, post-material values) maps onto individual and social values. Similarly, Cowan and Conejo (2022) emphasise sustainability across the full product life cycle, integrating operational and symbolic strategies; our Classes mirror this structure, with Class I recommendations corresponding to core operational priorities such as traceability, fair labour, and circular production; Class II reflecting enabling mechanisms like renewable energy, certifications,

TABLE 5 | Consensus-based recommendations at the two rounds of the Delphi method.

Factors that need to be included when talking about sustainable luxury	1st round (% very important and extremely important) Total = 77	2nd round (% very important and extremely important) Total = 51	Percentage shift[a]	Class of recommendation
Ensuring that production processes respect human rights and promote safe and fair working conditions.	94.8%	98.0%	2.28	I
Adoption of lean manufacturing practices to reduce water, energy, raw material, and chemical consumption through optimised processes.	90.9%	96.1%	0.65	I
Promoting local craftsmanship by collaborating with artisans and local communities to preserve traditional techniques.	84.4%	92.2%	1.25	I
Designing high-quality, durable products while optimising resources through techniques that minimise waste, such as modular or custom designs.	88.3%	90.2%	1.06	I
Adoption[a] of Circular Economy models, meaning production and consumption practices involving sharing, lending, reusing, repairing, refurbishing, and recycling materials and products for as long as possible.	83.1%	90.2%	3.45	I
Adoption of Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) to evaluate the environmental impact at each stage: from design to production, distribution, use, and end-of-life.	80.5%	86.3%	0.82	I
Ensuring traceability and transparency across the entire supply chain by leveraging advanced technologies such as blockchain to verify the origin of materials and ensure compliance with ethical practices by suppliers.	81.8%	86.3%	1.26	I
Reducing the amount of packaging used through optimised and functional design.	72.7%	84.3%	2.25	I
Adoption of Closed-Loop Recycling Systems, production models where used materials are recycled and reintroduced into the production cycle to create new, similar products without losing quality.	75.3%	82.4%	0.65	I
Selecting materials and/or extraction or production practices with minimal impact on biodiversity and the environment.	80.5%	82.4%	0.59	I
On-demand manufacturing to reduce production and storage costs and environmental impact.	63.6%	80.4%	6.25	I
Educating consumers on recognising labels and certifications.	81.8%	80.4%	1.15	I
Employing renewable energy sources and technologies in production processes, such as solar heating and low-energy systems.	76.6%	78.4%	1.13	II
Educational marketing to communicate the product's story, the materials used, and the positive impact of the purchasing choice on communities and the environment.	72.7%	76.5%	1.10	II
Employing techniques or machinery that optimise the amount of raw material (e.g., additive manufacturing; 3D printing) to reduce waste and scraps.	72.7%	74.5%	1.11	II

(Continues)

TABLE 5 | (Continued)

Factors that need to be included when talking about sustainable luxury	1st round (% very important and extremely important) Total = 77	2nd round (% very important and extremely important) Total = 51	Percentage shift[a]	Class of recommendation
Employing packaging made from biodegradable sustainable materials.	70.1%	74.5%	0.44	II
Minimising and optimising logistics and transportation to reduce the carbon footprint.	71.4%	72.5%	0.21	II
Adopting internationally recognised sustainability standards (e.g., GOTS, FSC, ISO 14001, etc.).	70.1%	72.5%	3.70	II
Extended Producer Responsibility to ensure the producer's accountability throughout the entire product life cycle, including the post-consumer stage.	75.3%	72.5%	4.58	II
Employing bio-based materials composed of renewable resources such as mycelium, synthetic silk, or biodegradable plastics.	63.6%	66.7%	1.33	III
Employing packaging made from recycled or recyclable materials.	66.2%	66.7%	1.02	III
Employing recycled materials derived from post-consumer or post-industrial waste, such as recycled PET for fabrics and metal recycling.	59.7%	60.8%	1.41	III
Adoption of upcycling models and strategies, a reuse process that does not require further material processing (e.g., transforming jeans into a skirt).	63.3%	51%	6	III
Creation of digital twins to simulate and optimise production processes before physical realisation (e.g., virtual collections to reduce physical prototypes).	44.2%	25.5%	10.53	III

Aspects suggested by MUSA spoke 5 members in 1st Round	2nd Round (% very important and extremely important) Total = 51	Class of recommendation
Ensuring fair business practices by preventing large companies from using their bargaining power to impose unfair conditions on smaller suppliers, manufacturers, or other stakeholders in the supply chain.	80.4%	I
Involvement of the company in practical sustainable actions (i.e., reforestation).	72.5%	II
Equal repartition of profits across the supply chain (suppliers, manufacturers, branders, retailers).	66.7%	III
Salary cap for top managers, less gap with workers' salaries.	64.7%	III
Providing benefits for businesses and companies when adopting sustainable practices, while decreasing the costs of adopting such practices.	64.7%	III
Animal welfare.	62.7%	III
Fostering sustainable consumption through consumer communities and small circles, while also influencing broader society.	58.8%	III
Fair resource allocation and distribution to achieve a positive social impact.	56.9%	III
Improving the aesthetic of sustainable products.	52.9%	III

(Continues)

TABLE 5 | (Continued)

Aspects suggested by MUSA spoke 5 members in 1st Round	2nd Round (% very important and extremely important) Total = 51	Class of recommendation
Evaluating how companies act as responsible corporate citizens while navigating ethical dilemmas in the pursuit of sustainable luxury.	52.9%	III
Fair price with limited mark-ups.	51.0%	III
Rethinking growth and development as distinct concepts within sustainable luxury.	49.0%	III
Harnessing experiential consumption, emotional engagement, subjective feelings, and social pressure to incentivise sustainable purchases.	47.1%	III

[a]Percentage shift for each factor and checkpoint was calculated as the absolute difference between the average scores assigned in Round 1 and Round 2, divided by the Round 1 average and multiplied by 100. This metric provides a descriptive indication of how much the panelists' ratings changed across rounds.

and storytelling; and Class III encompassing emergent dimensions, including consumer engagement and post-material values. These alignments demonstrate that the expert-prioritised factors do not exist in isolation but reflect an integrated model of sustainable luxury value creation.

Interestingly, certain highly technological factors, such as the use of digital twins to simulate and optimise production processes, showed a noticeable decline in agreement between rounds. Although overall convergence was achieved, this shift may suggest that participants reassessed the relative centrality and feasibility of such innovation-driven solutions when compared to more structurally embedded priorities, such as fair labour practices, traceability, and durable product design. Another possible interpretation is that highly technological interventions, although promising, may be perceived as requiring substantial infrastructural investment, specialised competencies, and organisational transformation, thereby reducing their perceived immediacy or scalability within the current luxury ecosystem. In contrast, ethical and supply-chain–oriented practices may be viewed as more foundational to the legitimacy of sustainable luxury.

The panel's evaluation may suggest that effective strategies must balance ethical rigour, environmental stewardship, economic viability, and emotional resonance. The high consensus on traceability and equitable working conditions is consistent with increasing demands for social justice and transparency in global supply chains (Boston Consulting Group, and Altagamma 2019; Gazzola et al. 2017; Connell and Piccirilli 2021). The study also revealed an emerging awareness of the economic implications of sustainability in the luxury context: items related to cost–benefit trade-offs and redistribution of value along the supply chain (e.g., fair pricing, supplier equity, reduced executive pay gaps) reflect the tension between exclusivity and equity. This underscores the need to address not only the environment but also the socio-economic dimensions of sustainability (McCormick and Ram 2022), paving the way for a more holistic paradigm of luxury that transcends traditional boundaries. Meanwhile, the emphasis on emotional and aesthetic aspects confirms the distinctiveness of luxury consumption and the opportunity to channel aspirational and identity-driven motivations into more sustainable behaviours (Bhutto et al. 2022; Cao et al. 2023; Qasim et al. 2019).

Sustainable luxury sits at the intersection of competing paradigms: Exclusivity versus equality, permanence versus novelty, authenticity versus commodification, and ethical legitimacy versus status symbolism. These tensions reflect enduring contradictions in luxury: premium pricing and scarcity, which create exclusivity, often conflict with the democratisation of access and environmental justice ideals. Therefore, "green" luxury must negotiate these trade-offs. In doing so, our study confirms existing literature (Carrigan et al. 2013) arguing that sustainable luxury discourses should attend to institutional legitimacy (standards and certifications), cultural meaning (symbolic authenticity), and performative credibility (actual environmental and social impact)—not just consumer psychology. In other words, sustainable luxury is not simply about adding "green" features to high-end products, but about reconfiguring the luxury regime itself: how status is signalled, how value is judged, and how trust is built.

These insights help sharpen the conceptual ambiguity we face: is sustainable luxury a reform of luxury (keeping status but greening operations), a transformation (rethinking luxury's core meanings), or an alternative domain altogether? Many empirical studies settle for enumerating "green attributes", without engaging the deeper structural tensions. Our Delphi approach was not merely an exercise in ranking sustainable features but a method that surfaces expert judgements about how to navigate and reconcile those tensions. By eliciting consensus among diverse experts, we aimed to stabilise contested boundaries and map which tensions are resolvable and which remain irreducible. In doing so, the consensus is positioned to contribute to the broader academic debates about reconciling sustainability and luxury: it offers empirically grounded insights on how luxury's symbolic, institutional, and operational dimensions can be aligned.

4.1 | Class I Recommendations

Class I recommendations represent practices with high stakeholder salience, meaning they are widely regarded as critical

TABLE 6 | Consensus-based recommendations at the two rounds of the Delphi method (critical checkpoints).

Critical checkpoints that are considered necessary to assure a transition towards sustainable luxury	1st round (% Very important and Extremely important) total = 77	2nd Round (% very important and extremely important) Total = 51	Percentage shift[a]	Class of recommendation
Monitoring and continuous improvement of working conditions along the supply chain, ensuring fairness, safety, and respect for human rights. Measurable goal: Percentage of suppliers verified according to ethical criteria (e.g., 100% of critical suppliers within 2 years). Checkpoint: Regular inspections, anonymous employee reports, implementation of corrective actions, and training programs.	84.4%	92.2%	0.08	I
Reduction of CO_2 emissions, energy consumption, or the use of recycled materials. Measurable goal: Reduction of the carbon footprint within a defined period (e.g., by 25% over 3 years). Checkpoint: Periodic measurement (e.g., annual) of emissions using standard tools (e.g., GHG Protocol); verification of milestone achievements (e.g., −10% after the first year).	72.7%	88.2%	5.43	I
Implementation of regular internal or external audits to monitor compliance with sustainability practices and corporate standards. Measurable goal: Percentage of business operations subject to annual audits compared to the total. Checkpoint: Frequency of audits (e.g., quarterly or annual); reports with recommendations and corrective actions implemented.	57.1%	60.8%	1.71	III
Obtaining recognised certifications (e.g., ISO 14001, GOTS, FSC) to demonstrate compliance with environmental and social sustainability standards. Measurable goal: Percentage of certified products relative to the total (e.g., 75% within 5 years). Checkpoint: Compliance audits by certification bodies; number of certifications obtained annually.	55.8%	60.8%	4.38	III
Publication of regular reports that communicate progress in sustainability to stakeholders, including successes and areas for improvement. Measurable goal: Production of a periodic (e.g., annual) sustainability report accessible to the public. Checkpoint: Timely release of reports (e.g., by Q2 each year); increased stakeholder engagement (e.g., feedback received).	48.1%	47.1%	0.28	III

[a]Percentage shift for each factor and checkpoint was calculated as the absolute difference between the average scores assigned in Round 1 and Round 2, divided by the Round 1 average and multiplied by 100. This metric provides a descriptive indication of how much the panelists' ratings changed across rounds.

by multiple stakeholders. These encompass supply chain transparency and traceability, respect for human rights and working conditions, lean manufacturing, and the use of sustainable materials and processes based on a circular economy model, such as closed-loop recycling, LCA, low-impact sourcing, and packaging reduction. Moreover, ensuring fair business practices by preventing large companies from using their bargaining power to impose unfair conditions along the supply chain is also included in Class I Recommendations.

Initiatives such as supply chain transparency, fair labour practices, and circular economy-based operations address concerns of both regulatory bodies and consumers while mitigating reputational and operational risks for brands. These practices align with stakeholders' demands for ethical, accountable, and environmentally responsible operations. From a stakeholder-theoretical perspective (Freeman 1984; Mitchell et al. 1997), the convergence of expert consensus on Class I priorities signals that firms cannot ignore these factors without risking legitimacy,

TABLE 7 | The 13 aspects important to consider when tackling sustainable luxury suggested by MUSA-SPOKE5 members in Round 1 of the Delphi.

1	Fair resource allocation and distribution to achieve a positive social impact.
2	Fostering sustainable consumption through consumer communities and small circles, while also influencing broader society.
3	Harnessing experiential consumption, emotional engagement, subjective feelings, and social pressure to incentivise sustainable purchases.
4	Improving the aesthetic of sustainable products.
5	Involvement of the company in practical sustainable actions (i.e., reforestation).
6	Equal repartition of profits across the supply chain (suppliers, manufacturers, branders, retailers).
7	Salary cap for top managers, less gap with workers' salaries.
8	Providing benefits for businesses and companies when adopting sustainable practices, while decreasing the costs of adopting such practices.
9	Animal welfare
10	Ensuring fair business practices by preventing large companies from using their bargaining power to impose unfair conditions on smaller suppliers, manufacturers, or other stakeholders in the supply chain.
11	Fair price with limited mark-ups
12	Evaluating how companies act as responsible corporate citizens while navigating ethical dilemmas in the pursuit of sustainable luxury.
13	Rethinking growth and development as distinct concepts within sustainable luxury

trust, and competitive advantage. Moreover, consumer education and labelling initiatives empower end-users as active stakeholders, reinforcing the co-creation of value and transparency in luxury markets.

Improving traceability in the luxury sector requires a systemic and relational approach that extends beyond technological solutions or isolated compliance mechanisms. As Holmqvist and Kowalkowski (2023) argue, enhancing traceability depends on the quality and governance of business-to-business relationships across the supply chain, where trust, information sharing, and value alignment between brands, suppliers, and resellers become central. Luxury firms should embed traceability requirements within supplier and distributor selection criteria, contractual agreements, and ongoing relationship management processes, ensuring that ethical practices are co-created rather than externally imposed. Although digital tools such as blockchain and RFID technologies can facilitate data transparency, their effectiveness relies on strong relational foundations and governance structures that promote openness and accountability. Integrating traceability into the managerial and cultural fabric of the supply chain not only supports ethical integrity but also enables continuous improvement and internal learning, allowing luxury brands to reconcile traditional values of craftsmanship and exclusivity with contemporary expectations of transparency and sustainability (Holmqvist and Kowalkowski 2023).

Elevating supply-chain transparency and traceability is foundational to ethical luxury production, also in terms of human rights. For example, the report by Business & Human Rights Resource found that 77% of companies source from countries with elevated risks of forced labour, and only 8% provide detailed disclosures on these risks beyond the first tier of their supply chains. Engagement of luxury and apparel firms with trade unions and worker representatives is limited with only 22% of companies reporting it. This figure unveiled a broader deficiency in traceability mechanisms that would allow brands to monitor and support fair labour practices throughout their supply networks. Similarly, although nearly half of benchmarked firms have been linked to instances of forced labour, only 22% disclosed tangible remediation outcomes for affected workers, suggesting that information on labour conditions often remains opaque or fragmented (Business and Human Rights Resource Centre 2023). Strengthening traceability systems, through transparent data sharing, supplier mapping, and multi-tier monitoring, becomes essential for ensuring ethical accountability and upholding decent work across the global luxury supply chain.

Furthermore, research shows that power asymmetries in supply chains allow dominant firms to influence decision-making processes in ways that can disadvantage weaker suppliers. Nurhayati et al. (2021) highlight that firms with greater bargaining power often shape pricing, sourcing, investment, and operational decisions, which can force smaller partners to bear disproportionate costs, accept unfavourable terms, or compromise on sustainability practices. In the context of luxury supply chains, such imbalances are particularly relevant because brands frequently rely on specialised suppliers for craftsmanship and high-quality materials, giving dominant brands leverage to impose conditions along the chain. These dynamics underscore the importance of ensuring fair business practices, including transparent contracting, equitable terms, and ethical monitoring, to prevent exploitation and maintain both supply chain integrity and brand legitimacy. Strongly linked to transparency and traceability, educating consumers on recognising labels and certifications also emerged as Class-I recommendations. This aligns with recent research (Wang 2025) showing that luxury consumers are increasingly demanding transparency about "where their luxury goods come from" and brands must implement mechanisms such as certifications, audits, and traceability systems to monitor supplier practices and material origins. Educating consumers by presenting accessible information about sourcing, certifications and supply-chain practices is a strategic way for luxury brands to strengthen their value proposition and build deeper loyalty and trust. Emerging literature suggests that authentic sustainability claims and transparent production chains significantly enhance consumer trust and brand value, informing that transparency and traceability are no longer optional but are

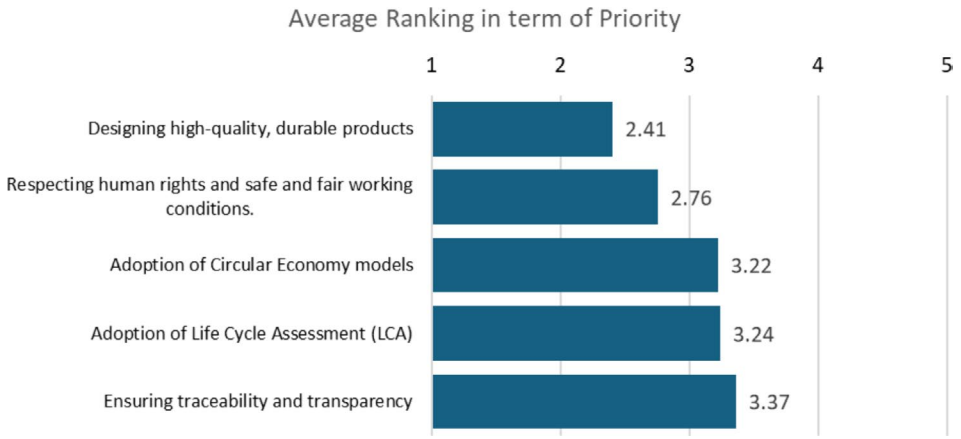

FIGURE 2 | Phase 2-Delphi Round 2—average ranking in terms of Priority of the 5 aspects emerging from Round 1. A lower number means higher priority. ($N = 51$).

central to stakeholder trust and competitive advantage in sustainable luxury markets (Chekima and Wafa 2022; Holmqvist and Kowalkowski 2023; Karaosman et al. 2020). Despite growing awareness around sustainability, luxury consumers in fact often lack the information, access, and motivation needed to make sustainable choices. Research shows that even ethically minded consumers feel that seeking sustainable luxury is too time-consuming and costly and at the same time, widespread scepticism about the authenticity of sustainability claims by luxury brands is reported (Athwal et al. 2019).

On-demand production, high-quality and durable products, along with promoting local craftsmanship, have also been indicated as fundamental factors. A McKinsey & Company report (Amed et al. 2019) shows how start-ups are pioneering on-demand manufacturing, while larger players are experimenting with microfactories, speedfactories, and digital knitting technologies to facilitate customisation and rapid prototyping. Key technological innovations include 3-D knitting, digital and laser printing, semi-automated sewing, automated logistics, and body-scanning tools, which allow for personalised garments at scale. Overall, these innovations are enabling reduced lead times and greater responsiveness to market trends, but also improved sustainability through small-batch production and enhanced opportunities for consumer personalisation.

The convergence of ethical, environmental, and operational criteria in this class aligns with prior findings in the literature on sustainable luxury (Kapferer and Michaut-Denizeau 2014; Cervellon and Shammas 2013), confirming that measurable and externally validated practices are central to stakeholder trust and legitimacy in the luxury sector. Adopting lean manufacturing and circular economy models, along with designing durable products, aligns with long-standing values in luxury, such as exclusivity, craftsmanship, and quality, but reframes them in environmental terms. The convergence of these aspects may suggest that experts see a clear overlap between traditional luxury values and sustainable innovation. The emphasis in Class recommendations on traceability, fairness in business practices, and consumer education on recognising labels may reflect growing expectations from consumers and regulators for transparency and ethical conduct.

4.2 | Class II Recommendations

Class II Recommendations are of medium priority and may reflect moderate stakeholder salience. They represent areas that are important but less immediate or coercive; therefore, firms may invest progressively, balancing feasibility constraints with the need to maintain stakeholder engagement. Although these actions may not carry the same urgency as Class I recommendations, they contribute to relational and moral legitimacy and signal long-term commitment to sustainability.

These include the implementation of recognised sustainability certifications, standards, and audits, and consequently educational marketing to communicate the product's story and the positive impact of the purchasing choice on communities. Operationally speaking, reducing transportation and optimising logistics, employing renewable energy sources and technologies in production processes, such as solar heating and low-energy systems or machinery that optimises the use of raw materials and reduces waste and scraps, has also reached a medium consensus. Symbolic or experiential actions, such as corporate reforestation, extended producer responsibility, and packaging made from recyclable materials, have been highlighted as important aspects. Class II initiatives require organisational adaptation and long-term investment. Businesses may face technological constraints, inconsistent supplier standards, or resistance from creative teams concerned about aesthetic compromise. Managers should approach these as phased innovations, piloting new materials or processes in capsule collections before scaling. Embedding energy and material-efficiency targets into operational KPIs can help institutionalise these practices and ensure continuous improvement. Responsible packaging and logistics play a complementary role in reducing environmental impact throughout the supply chain. Luxury brands should transition to biodegradable or certified sustainable packaging materials and redesign logistics networks to minimise transportation distances and reliance on carbon-intensive modes. Reduction of employee travel through the introduction of digital structure and prioritising low-emission transport solutions further reduces emissions. Policymakers can reinforce these efforts through regulatory frameworks for Extended Producer Responsibility, subsidies and incentives (particularly supporting pilot projects that

test low-waste production systems or implementation of post-consumer programmes such as take-back, recycling, or reforestation initiatives), and advertising standards that promote truthful communication, while NGOs and certification bodies can monitor corporate participation, facilitate partnerships, educate stakeholders about standards, and act as watchdogs against misleading claims.

Collectively, these changes indicate the relevance of visible and tangible commitments, although their implementation might require more time, resources, or structural change. Their classification may reflect the dual nature of luxury sustainability: the need for credibility and action, balanced with consumer expectations of storytelling and emotional value (Joy et al. 2012; Chekima and Wafa 2022).

4.3 | Class III Recommendations

Class III Recommendations may reflect practices with emerging or latent stakeholder salience, such as enhancing emotional engagement, emphasising aesthetic sustainability, and redefining growth in post-material terms. These factors may be important to evolving consumer and societal expectations, but currently exert limited direct pressure on luxury firms. Stakeholder theory (Freeman 1984) can help explain their lower prioritisation: these stakeholders may possess legitimacy in principle but lack sufficient power or urgency to drive immediate implementation. Nevertheless, attention to these emergent concerns prepares firms for future shifts in stakeholder expectations and potential competitive advantage in a cultural landscape increasingly sensitive to sustainability narratives.

Class III recommendations include product aesthetics, emotional engagement, peer influence, and redefining growth and consumption in post-material terms. Although less central from an implementation standpoint, these dimensions provide insight into evolving consumer values and societal discourses. They echo the growing body of research that positions sustainability as a cultural and affective challenge, not merely a technical or regulatory one (Aggarwal et al. 2024). Class III priorities demand cultural transformation and consumer education. These can be advanced through collaborations with artists, museums, or sustainability ambassadors who reinterpret luxury as a vehicle for cultural and environmental stewardship (Joy et al. 2012). It is also of fundamental importance to communicate sustainability without diluting the prestige of products or services. Effective communication should emphasise timeless design, enduring craftsmanship, and social legacy. Storytelling should occur through immersive experiences (e.g., atelier visits, digital traceability storytelling) that enhance symbolic capital while conveying ethical credibility (Kapferer and Michaut-Denizeau 2014). Transparency and discretion must coexist; sustainability becomes an extension of excellence, not its replacement. At the same time, Class III recommendations suggest that luxury brands should promote socio-economic equity by implementing profit-sharing mechanisms across the supply chain, reviewing executive compensation to reduce wage gaps, offering internal incentives for sustainable practices, and embedding social impact metrics into decision-making. In materials and product design, brands are encouraged to adopt bio-based, recycled, and cruelty-free materials, develop upcycling programmes, improve packaging recyclability, and uphold animal welfare standards. Digital innovations, including digital twins and virtual prototyping, can optimise production processes, reduce waste, and enhance product aesthetics while maintaining sustainability. Together, these measures enable luxury firms to align ethical, environmental, and technological practices with consumer expectations and supply-chain realities, fostering legitimacy, innovation, and long-term sustainability.

4.4 | Checkpoints and Priorities

In addition to the prioritisation of factors, the Delphi panel also evaluated the relevance of specific checkpoints—that is, concrete indicators and operational milestones to guide and monitor progress. Checkpoints could serve as tangible measures of progress toward addressing stakeholder concerns and maintaining legitimacy. Under stakeholder theory, they in fact could be interpreted as management tools for monitoring the fulfilment of stakeholder expectations, particularly those with high salience. For instance, among the most relevant checkpoints identified were: Guaranteeing ethical working conditions along the supply chain, ensuring fairness, safety, and respect for human rights; and the achievement of measurable environmental goals (such as carbon footprint reduction) (Class I). These checkpoints suggest that among the crucial milestones to reach are not only tools for accountability but also actual drivers of cultural and organisational change within companies.

The frequency of internal or external audits, the timely release of sustainability reports (e.g., by Q2 annually), and the adoption of recognised certifications (e.g., GOTS, ISO 14001) with defined coverage targets were in Class III recommendations. These relate to emerging or latent-salience practices. These checkpoints could allow firms to anticipate shifts in expectations, aligning strategy with stakeholders' demands and expectations, which may gain influence over time. By tracking these indicators, companies can position themselves proactively for future competitive and reputational advantages.

To further validate the Delphi classification, participants were also asked to identify the top five most critical and the five least critical items to tackle when promoting sustainable luxury. The resulting ranking showed strong alignment with the class-based categorisation. The majority of top-priority items selected by panellists belonged to Class I, reinforcing their centrality and perceived feasibility. These included factors such as traceability, fair working conditions, sustainability certifications, production based on circular economy principles, and life-cycle assessments. On the other hand, the items most frequently ranked as less critical corresponded predominantly to Class III, including abstract concepts like redefining growth, subjective emotional engagement, and aesthetic improvements. Although not dismissed, these were generally seen as less actionable or urgent in the short term, thus confirming the layered structure of sustainable luxury interventions.

The consensus hierarchy offered here provides recommendations for businesses to sequence interventions according

to urgency and feasibility and help to translate sustainability aspirations into actionable priorities. For a more detailed, stakeholder-oriented guide translating the detected priorities into practical actions, we provide a schematic table (Table S5). This guide is presented as a draft: while it offers general recommendations for luxury brands, policymakers, and NGOs, each organisation should tailor these actions to the specificities of their supply chain, stakeholders, operational context, and strategic objectives.

4.5 | Limitations

Although this study provides structured recommendations for integrating sustainability and luxury through expert consensus, several limitations should be acknowledged.

Althoiugh our panel size and retention are consistent with Delphi best practice, the sample is limited and affiliated with the MUSA project; therefore, results represent expert consensus within this network and should be generalised with caution. Although participants represented diverse sectors, including academia, industry, and policy, this composition may have introduced contextual bias reflecting European or project-specific perspectives on sustainability and luxury. Furthermore, the generative phase employed purposive and snowball sampling through professional networks, social media, and email invitations. Athough this approach is consistent with qualitative exploratory research aimed at identifying expert insights, it may introduce self-selection bias (Magnani et al. 2005), as participation was limited to individuals already engaged with sustainability and luxury discourse. Future research should expand the geographic and cultural scope of expert participation, incorporating voices from regions where luxury markets and sustainability priorities may differ significantly.

Furthermore, the majority of Delphi participants were from academia, which may have biased the consensus findings toward academic perspectives. Although academics provide deep conceptual and methodological knowledge, their views may not fully reflect industry realities, consumer concerns, or regulatory priorities. Future studies should seek greater diversity in professional backgrounds, including industry executives, NGOs, regulators, and practitioners, to enhance the validity and generalisability of the recommendations.

Additionally, item classification into three consensus-based categories followed a conceptual logic aligned with agreement thresholds rather than statistical similarity. Although exploratory multivariate techniques (e.g., cluster analysis) were not appropriate in the context of this study due to the limited sample size and underlying statistical assumptions, they can be useful to empirically examine item groupings in future research aiming at tool development or hypothesis generation.

Moreover, as no systematic qualitative feedback was collected between rounds, interpretations about changes in agreement across rounds remain exploratory and should be treated cautiously. Future research may benefit from integrating open-ended reflections within Delphi rounds to better understand the reasoning underlying shifts in expert evaluations.

Although the decision to include only experts in the Delphi panel was intentional and aligned with the aim of the study, to achieve a broader and more empirically grounded understanding, future research is advised to include consumers and acquire their perspective through consumer surveys, experiments, or ethnographic research.

An additional limitation of the present work is that it did not differentiate between luxury categories (e.g., fashion, jewelry, hospitality, or automotive), which may entail distinct sustainability challenges and stakeholder dynamics. Comparative analyses across sectors would allow testing the robustness and transferability of the three-class hierarchy, identifying category-specific drivers or constraints.

Finally, the Delphi method itself has inherent limitations. Potential issues include groupthink, conformity pressures, and anchoring effects, whereby early responses or dominant opinions influence subsequent ratings. The Delphi method emphasises convergence and agreement, which may downplay areas of controversy or theoretical plurality.

Future research could adopt complementary methods (such as Q methodology, cross-case analysis, or mixed-method triangulation) to capture divergent viewpoints and contextual nuances in sustainable luxury practice. Similarly, longitudinal designs could assess how consensus priorities evolve over time as sustainability standards, consumer expectations, and regulatory pressures change.

5 | Conclusions

This study contributes to policy debates on aligning economic competitiveness with social and environmental responsibility, core objectives of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, offering a three-class hierarchy recommendations to prioritise sustainable luxury practices. Class I recommendations include supply-chain transparency, fair labour practices, circular design, traceability, and consumer education and ask for immediate managerial action to secure legitimacy, trust, and operational compliance. Class II initiatives cover renewable energy, eco-certifications, and responsible logistics, and involve phased organisational adoption and long-term investment. Class III priorities, such as emotional engagement and post-material values, demand cultural transformation and consumer education.

Future research may build on these results by empirically testing the identified priorities and checkpoints within specific organisational and cultural contexts, thereby validating and refining the proposed framework. Comparative studies across luxury sub-sectors could reveal how industry-specific structures influence the feasibility and salience of sustainability priorities. Likewise, cross-cultural research could deepen understanding of how socio-cultural values shape the reconciliation of exclusivity and responsibility, considering that meanings of luxury vary significantly across cultural settings. Further inquiry into consumer perceptions and emotional responses to sustainability initiatives could illuminate how authenticity, moral satisfaction, and aesthetic pleasure interact in sustainable luxury consumption.

Author Contributions

Alexia Del Greco: conceptualization, methodology, investigation, writing – original draft. **Selena Russo:** conceptualization, methodology, investigation, writing – original draft. **Francesca Greselin:** methodology. **Marco Bani:** methodology. **Giulia Rampoldi:** writing – review and editing. **Federico Zorzi:** writing – review and editing. **Stefano Ardenghi:** writing – review and editing. **Claudio Rozzoni:** writing – review and editing. **Maria Grazia Strepparava:** supervision. **Paolo Galli:** supervision.

Acknowledgements

Dr. Selena Russo is funded by Piano Operativo Nazionale—PON "Ricerca e Innovazione" 2014–2020 Asse IV, azioni IV.4 "Dottorati e contratti di ricerca sulle tematiche dell'innovazione" e IV.6 "Dottorati e contratti di ricerca su tematiche green" per la contrattualizzazione di ricercatori a tempo determinato di tipologia "A" ex art. 24 comma 3 lett. a della Legge 240/2010. Ms. Alexia Del Greco is supported by the MUSA—Multilayered Urban Sustainability Action—project, funded by the European Union—NextGenerationEU, under the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP) Mission 4 Component 2 Investment Line 1.5: Strengthening of research structures and creation of R&D "innovation ecosystems", set up of "territorial leaders in R&D". Open access publishing facilitated by Universita degli Studi di Milano-Bicocca, as part of the Wiley - CRUI-CARE agreement.

Funding

This work was supported by Piano Operativo Nazionale—PON "Ricerca e Innovazione" 2014–2020 Asse IV, azioni IV.4, MUSA—Multilayered Urban Sustainability Action—project, funded by the European Union—NextGenerationEU, under the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP) Mission 4 Component 2 Investment Line 1.5: Strengthening of research structures and creation of R&D "innovation ecosystems", set up of "territorial leaders in R&D".

Disclosure

Declaration of AI use: The authors declare that artificial intelligence tools were used solely for English language editing and stylistic refinement. The AI did not contribute to the study design, data collection, data analysis, interpretation of results, or the generation of scientific content. The authors take full responsibility for the content of the manuscript.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

References

Achabou, M. A., and S. Dekhili. 2013. "Luxury and Sustainable Development: Is There a Match?" *Journal of Business Research* 66: 1896–1903.

Adegeest, D. A. 2025. "Luxury's Shifting Façade: As Scandals Mount, is Consumer Trust Eroding? FashionUnited." https://fashionunited.com/news/fashion/luxurys-shifting-facade-as-scandals-mount-is-consumer-trust-eroding/2025072167247.

Aggarwal, E., A. B. Singh, and R. Misra. 2024. "Does Consumption Values and Ascribed Responsibility Predict Attitudes Towards Sustainable Luxury Brands?" *Journal of Consumer Marketing* 41, no. 2: 180–195. https://doi.org/10.1108/JCM-05-2023-6058.

Ahmad, G., and S. K. Dubey. 2024. "Sustainable Luxury Fashion in India: A Case of Grassroot by Anita Dongre." *Emerging Economies Cases Journal* 6, no. 1: 48–58. https://doi.org/10.1177/25166042231220196.

Amatulli, C., M. De Angelis, and C. Donato. 2021. "The Atypicality of Sustainable Luxury Products." *Psychology & Marketing* 38, no. 11: 1990–2005.

Amed, I., A. Balchandani, M. Beltrami, A. Berg, S. Hedrich, and F. Rölkens. 2019. "Fashion on Demand. McKinsey & Company." https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/retail/our-insights/fashion-on-demand.

Aron, A., E. N. Aron, and D. Smollan. 1992. "Inclusion of Other in the Self Scale and the Structure of Interpersonal Closeness." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 63, no. 4: 596–612.

Athwal, N. K., V. Wells, M. Carrigan, and C. E. Henninger. 2019. "Sustainable Luxury Marketing: A Synthesis and Research Agenda." *International Journal of Management Reviews* 21, no. 4: 405–426. https://doi.org/10.1111/ijmr.12195.

Beckham, D., and B. G. Voyer. 2014. "Can Sustainability be Luxurious? A Mixed-Method Investigation of Implicit and Explicit Attitudes Towards Sustainable Luxury Consumption." Advances in Consumer Research, Vol. 42, pp. 245–250. http://www.acrwebsite.org/volumes/1017922/volumes/v42/NA-42.

Bhutto, M. Y., M. A. Khan, M. Ertz, and H. Sun. 2022. "Investigating the Role of Ethical Self-Identity and Its Effect on Consumption Values and Intentions to Adopt Green Vehicles Among Generation Z." *Sustainability* 14, no. 5: 3015. https://doi.org/10.3390/su14053015.

Boston Consulting Group, and Altagamma. 2019. *True Luxury Global Consumer Insight 2019*. Boston Consulting Group.

Business & Human Rights Resource Centre. 2023. "2023 Know the Chain: Apparel & Footwear Benchmark. Business & Human Rights Resource Centre." https://www.business-humanrights.org/en/from-us/briefings/2023-knowthechain-apparel-footwear-benchmark/.

Cao, J., H. Qiu, and A. M. Morrison. 2023. "Self-Identity Matters: An Extended Theory of Planned Behavior to Decode Tourists' Waste Sorting Intentions." *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 20, no. 6: 5099. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph20065099.

Carranza, R., L. Zollo, E. Díaz, and M. Faraoni. 2023. "Solving the Luxury Fashion and Sustainable Development "Oxymoron": A Cross-Cultural Analysis of Green Luxury Consumption Enablers and Disablers." *Business Strategy and the Environment* 32, no. 4: 2399–2419. https://doi.org/10.1080/0267257X.2013.798675.

Carrigan, M., C. Moraes, and M. McEachern. 2013. "From Conspicuous to Considered Fashion: A Harm-Chain Approach to the Responsibilities of Luxury-Fashion Businesses." *Journal of Marketing Management* 29, no. 11–12: 1277–1307.

Cervellon, M. C., and L. Shammas. 2013. "The Value of Sustainable Luxury in Mature Markets." *Journal of Corporate Citizenship* 52: 90–101. https://doi.org/10.9774/GLEAF.4700.2013.de.00009.

Cheah, I., A. S. Shimul, and M. Teah. 2023. "Sustainability Claim, Environmental Misconduct and Perceived Hypocrisy in Luxury Branding." *Spanish Journal of Marketing—ESIC* 27, no. 3: 306–323. https://doi.org/10.1108/SJME-02-2022-0012.

Chekima, B., and S. A. Wafa. 2022. "The Paradox of Sustainable Luxury: Exploring Consumers' Willingness to Pay More for Sustainable Luxury Products." In *Sustainable and Ethical Fashion*, edited by S. S. Muthu, 103–123. Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-2454-4_6.

Connell, R., and G. Piccirilli. 2021. "The Knotty Relationship Between Luxury and Social Responsibility: Luxury Brand CSR Perception Analysis: A Consumer Voice Snapshot." https://www.luxurydaily.com/wp-content/uploads/pdf_cache/3/3/0/5/7/9/330579.pdf.

Cowan, S. R., and F. J. Conejo. 2022. "A Conceptual Framework for Sustainable Luxury." *Journal of International Marketing Strategy* 7, no. 1: 1–13.

Cowburn, B., C. Moritz, C. Birrell, G. Grimsditch, and A. Abdulla. 2018. "Can Luxury and Environmental Sustainability Co-Exist? Assessing the Environmental Impact of Resort Tourism on Coral Reefs in the Maldives. Ocean & Coastal Management, 158, pp. 120–127."

Dalkey, N., and O. Helmer. 1963. "An Experimental Application of the Delphi Method to the Use of Experts." *Management Science* 9, no. 3: 458–467.

Davies, I. A., Z. Lee, and I. Ahonkai. 2012. "Do Consumer Care About Ethical Luxury?" *Journal of Business Ethics* 106: 37–51.

Dean, A. 2018. "Everything is Wrong: A Search for Order in the Ethnometaphysical Chaos of Sustainable Luxury Fashion. The Fashion Studies Journal." 1–18.

Dekhili, S., M. A. Achabou, and F. Alharbi. 2019. "Could Sustainability Improve the Promotion of Luxury Products?" *European Business Review* 31, no. 4: 488–511.

Dhaliwal, A., D. P. Singh, and J. Paul. 2020. "The Consumer Behavior of Luxury Goods: A Review and Research Agenda." *Journal of Strategic Marketing* 33: 1–27. https://doi.org/10.1080/0965254X.2020.1758198.

Diamond, I. R., R. C. Grant, B. M. Feldman, et al. 2014. "Defining Consensus: A Systematic Review Recommends Methodologic Criteria for Reporting of Delphi Studies." *Journal of Clinical Epidemiology* 67, no. 4: 401–409. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclinepi.2013.12.002.

Ebert, I. 2018. "Sustainability Strategies in Luxury Fashion: Company Disclosure on Human Rights." In *Sustainable Fashion: Governance and New Management Approaches*, 97–108. Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-74367-7_9.

Franceschina, M. 2025. "Lusso e Merce: A Partire Dalla Nozione di "Industria Culturale"." In *Estetica Del Lusso*, edited by M. Mazzocut-Mis, 95–128. Raffaello Cortina Editore.

Freeman, R. E. 1984. *Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach*. Pitman Publishing.

Gazzola, P., G. Colombo, R. Pezzetti, and L. Nicolescu. 2017. "Consumer Empowerment in the Digital Economy: Availing Sustainable Purchasing Decisions." *Sustainability* 9, no. 5: 693. https://doi.org/10.3390/su9050693.

Grauel, C., C. Burmann, and M. Schade. 2025. "Sustainability Preferences of Luxury Consumers: Is All That Glitters Green?" *Future Business Journal* 11: 145. https://doi.org/10.1186/s43093-025-00561-3.

Grisham, T. 2009. "The Delphi Technique: A Method for Testing Complex and Multifaceted Topics." *International Journal of Managing Projects in Business* 1, no. 1: 112–130. https://doi.org/10.1108/17538370910930545.

Griskevicius, V., J. M. Tybur, and B. Van den Bergh. 2010. "Going Green to Be Seen: Status, Reputation, and Conspicuous Conservation." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 98, no. 3: 392.

Hartmann, L. H., S. Nitzko, and A. Spiller. 2016. "The Significance of Definitional Dimensions of Luxury Food." *British Food Journal* 118: 1976–1998.

Hasson, F., S. Keeney, and H. McKenna. 2000. "Research Guidelines for the Delphi Survey Technique." *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 32, no. 4: 1008–1015. https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1365-2648.2000.t01-1-01567.x.

Hasson, F., S. Keeney, and H. P. McKenna. 2025. "Revisiting the Delphi Technique—Research Thinking and Practice: A Discussion Paper." *International Journal of Nursing Studies* 168: 105119. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijnurstu.2025.105119.

Hennigs, N., K.-P. Wiedmann, C. Klarmann, et al. 2012. "What Is the Value of Luxury? A Cross-Cultural Consumer Perspective." *Psychology & Marketing* 29, no. 12: 1018–1034.

Holmqvist, J., and C. Kowalkowski. 2023. "Traceability in Luxury: Harnessing B2B Relationships to Enhance Ethical Practices in the Luxury Industry." *Industrial Marketing Management* 111: 257–267. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.indmarman.2023.04.008.

Hsu, C. C., and B. A. Sandford. 2007. "The Delphi Technique: Making Sense of Consensus." *Practical Assessment, Research and Evaluation* 12, no. 10: 1–8. https://doi.org/10.7275/pdz9-th90.

Jacob, R. 2011. "Shenzhen Sweatshop Allegations Force Gucci to Act. Financial Times." https://www.ft.com/content/1c903860-f498-11e0-a286-00144feab49a.

Janssen, C., J. Vanhamme, and S. Leblanc. 2015. "Should Luxury Brands Shout or Whisper? The Effects of Brand Prominence on Consumer Perceptions of Responsible Luxury." *NA–Advances in Consumer Research* 43: 574–575.

Jiang, L., and J. Shan. 2018. "Heterogeneity of Luxury Value Perception: A Generational Comparison in China." *International Marketing Review* 35, no. 3: 458–474. https://doi.org/10.1108/IMR-12-2015-0271.

Joy, A., J. F. Sherry, A. Venkatesh, J. Wang, and R. Chan. 2012. "Fast Fashion, Sustainability and the Ethical Appeal of Luxury Brands." *Fashion Theory* 16: 273–296.

Kapferer, J. N. 2010. "All That Glitters Is Not Green: The Challenge of Sustainable Luxury." *European Business Review* 2, no. 4: 40–45.

Kapferer, J. N., and A. Michaut-Denizeau. 2014. "Is Luxury Compatible With Sustainability? Luxury Consumers' Viewpoint." *Journal of Brand Management* 21, no. 1: 19. https://doi.org/10.1057/bm.2013.19.

Kapferer, J.-N., and A. Michaut. 2016. "Pursuing the Concept of Luxury A Cross-Country Comparison and Segmentation of Luxury Buyers' Perception of Luxury." Journal of International Marketing Strategy. 4, No. 1.

Karaosman, H., P. Perry, A. Brun, and G. Morales-Alonso. 2020. "Behind the Runway: Extending Sustainability in Luxury Fashion Supply Chains." *Journal of Business Research* 117: 652–663. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2018.09.017.

Keeney, S., H. McKenna, and F. Hasson. 2011. *The Delphi Technique in Nursing and Health Research*. John Wiley & Sons. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781444392029.

Koch, K.-D. 2012. "Luxury Brands: The Idea of Luxury in Different Countries. Brand Trust Strategy Consultant." https://www.brand-trust.de/en/studies/Luxury-brands-The-idea-of-luxury-in-different-countries.php.

Legislation.gov.uk. 2024. "Modern Slavery Act 2015." https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/30/contents.

Magnani, R., K. Sabin, T. Saidel, and D. Heckathorn. 2005. "Review of Sampling Hard-To-Reach and Hidden Populations for HIV Surveillance." *AIDS and Behavior* 9, no. 2: 137–151. https://doi.org/10.1097/01.aids.0000172879.20628.e1.

McClung, S. 2023. "Normal Goods & Luxury Goods. Inomics." https://inomics.com/terms/normal-goods-luxury-goods-1531734.

McCormick, H., and P. Ram. 2022. "Take a Stand: The Importance of Social Sustainability and Its Effect on Generation Z Consumption of Luxury Fashion Brands." In *Sustainable Luxury: An International Perspective*, edited by C. E. Henninger and N. K. Athwal, 219–239. Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-06928-4_11.

Mitchell, R. K., B. R. Agle, and D. J. Wood. 1997. "Toward a Theory of Stakeholder Identification and Salience: Defining "Who" and "What" Really Counts." *Academy of Management Review* 22, no. 4: 853–886.

Moraes, C., M. Carrigan, C. Bosangit. et al. 2017. "Understanding Ethical Luxury Consumption Through Practice Theories: A Study of Fine Jewellery Purchases." *Journal of Business Ethics* 145: 525–543. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-015-2893-9.

Nash, J., C. Ginger, and L. Cartier. 2016. "The Sustainable Luxury Contradiction: Evidence From a Consumer Study of Marine-Cultured Pearl Jewellery." *Journal of Corporate Citizenship* 63: 73–95.

Naumova, O., S. Bilan, and M. Naumova. 2019. "Luxury Consumers' Behavior: A Cross-Cultural Aspect." *Innovative Marketing* 15, no. 4: 1. https://doi.org/10.21511/im.15(4).2019.01.

Nurhayati, K., J. Rezaei, and L. A. Tavasszy. 2021. "The Interplay Between Power Structure and Decision-Making in Supply Chains: A Systematic Review." *Journal of Supply Chain Management Science* 2, no. 3–4: 1–28.

Okoli, C., and S. D. Pawlowski. 2004. "The Delphi Method as a Research Tool: An Example, Design Considerations and Applications." *Information & Management* 42, no. 1: 15–29. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.im.2003.11.002.

Osburg, V. S., V. Yoganathan, F. Bartsch, et al. 2024. "How Sustainable Luxury Influences Product Value Perceptions and Behavioral Intentions: A Comparative Study of Emerging vs Developed Markets." *Journal of Business Ethics* 191: 713–738. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-024-05661-8.

Persakis, A., T. Nikolopoulos, I. C. Negkakis, et al. 2025. "Greenwashing in Marketing: A Systematic Literature Review and Bibliometric Analysis. International Review on Public and Nonprofit Marketing." https://doi.org/10.1007/s12208-025-00452-x.

Qasim, H., L. Yan, R. Guo, A. Saeed, and B. N. Ashraf. 2019. "The Defining Role of Environmental Self-Identity Among Consumption Values and Behavioral Intention to Consume Organic Food." *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 16, no. 7: 1106. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph16071106.

Rolling, V., and A. Sadachar. 2018. "Are Sustainable Luxury Goods a Paradox for Millennials?" *Social Responsibility Journal* 14, no. 4: 802–815. https://doi.org/10.1108/SRJ-07-2017-0120.

Rozzoni, C. 2025. "Che Cos'è il Lusso? Un Approccio Fenomenologico." In *Estetica Del Lusso*, edited by M. Mazzocut-Mis, 157–180. Raffaello Cortina Editore.

Schrage, D. 2012. "The Domestication of Luxury in Social Theory." *Social Change Review* 10, no. 2: 177–193. https://doi.org/10.2478/scr-2013-0017.

Sharma, S., R. Jain, and M. Maggon. 2024. "Digital Brand Immersion: Unveiling the Impact on Authenticity, Attachment, and Loyalty in Luxury Fashion." *Academy of Marketing Studies Journal* 28, no. 6: 1–12.

Tafani, E., F. Vigneron, A. Azoulay, S. Crener, and A. Zahid. 2024. "The Influence of Culture and Gender in Luxury Brand Consumption: A Comparison Across Western and Eastern Culture Consumers." *Journal of International Marketing* 32, no. 4: 58–80. https://doi.org/10.1177/1069031X241235629.

Vanhamme, J., A. Lindgreen, and G. Sarial-Abi. 2023. "Luxury Ethical Consumers: Who Are They?" *Journal of Business Ethics* 183, no. 3: 805–838. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-021-04981-3.

Wang, R. 2025. "The Role of Ethical Sourcing in Luxury Brand Supply Chains: Elevating Ethical Practices in the Luxury Fashion Industry for Entrepreneurs and Marketers." History of Luxury.

Wiesing, L., and N. A. Roth. 2019. *A Philosophy of Luxury*. Routledge.

Winston, A. 2016. "Luxury Brands Can No Longer Ignore Sustainability. Harvard Business Review." https://hbr.org/2016/02/luxury-brands-can-no-longer-ignore-sustainability.

Supporting Information

Additional supporting information can be found online in the Supporting Information section. **Table S1:** Perceived importance and prioritisation of sustainability factors in the context of luxury in Round 1 Delphi ($N = 77$). **Table S2:** Perceived importance and prioritisation of checkpoints and measures to achieve sustainable luxury in Round 1 Delphi ($N = 77$). **Table S3:** Perceived importance and prioritisation of sustainability factors in the context of luxury in Round 2 Delphi ($N = 51$). **Table S4:** Perceived importance and prioritisation of checkpoints and measures to achieve sustainable luxury in Round 2 Delphi ($N = 51$). **Table S5:** Implications.