



Degree Program in Luxury, Fashion and Made in Italy

Course of Advanced Marketing Management

# **Sport: The new luxury opportunity?**

Prof. Mazzù Marco Francesco

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SUPERVISOR

Prof. Festa Alberto

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CO-SUPERVISOR

Eva-Kumiko Mizutani

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CANDIDATE

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## **ABSTRACT:**

The sports industry is increasingly appealing to luxury fashion brands which started betting on this sector in the last few years. This thesis's objective is to analyze the sports marketing trend and explore the impact of luxury fashion brands entering the sports market through sponsorships, collaborations, and product extensions.

The study examines how these strategies affect the brands' luxury perception, considering consumer attitudes toward brand reputation, product quality, and market relevance firstly through secondary research in the form of a literature review and then through primary research in the form of a quantitative survey.

The findings reveal that while sponsorships and carefully curated collaborations can enhance brand visibility and prestige, product extension into sportswear presents a more nuanced challenge. Although brand reputation often outweighs product relevance, with loyal consumers willing to embrace new offerings based on brand identity alone, there is a significant risk of diluting the luxury brand's exclusivity and prestige.

The research also highlights a strong scepticism among consumers more focused on sports, who question the credibility and authenticity of luxury brands in this new domain. The study concludes with insights into the delicate balance luxury brands must maintain when diversifying into non-traditional markets and offers recommendations for future research on the evolving dynamics between brand identity and product innovation.

**Research Question:** Why are luxury fashion brands increasingly betting on entering the sports industry? What are the impacts and limits of this brand expansion trend on luxury fashion brand perception?

**Keywords:** Luxury Fashion Brands, Sports Brands, Brand Extension Strategy, Marketing Trends, Sponsorship, Collaborations, Product line extensions

## **PREFACE:**

This thesis explores the intricate relationship between luxury fashion brands and the sports industry. This topic idea comes from my deep passion for sports and interest for luxury fashion that I somehow always struggled to connect as I wrongly considered them as 2 distinct, unmatchable sectors. When reflecting on my orientation choices and whether I wanted to work in luxury or sports marketing, finding a world where both sector meet came out as my new obsession. Thus, this thesis topic appeared as a perfect way for me to end my master's degree with, indeed it is combining both of my greatest area of interest while embodying today's trend and matter, it's a subject that is true to me, timely and plenty of untapped subjects to cover.

Throughout this work, I have sought to investigate whether luxury brands can successfully navigate the sports market without compromising their core values and how they can strategically position themselves to enhance their brand equity in a rapidly changing global marketplace.

This thesis is a culmination of my academic pursuit in the field of luxury brand management. It reflects not only a scholarly investigation but also a personal exploration of how luxury, identity, and cultural significance are intertwined in today's world. Thus, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my academic advisors and mentors who have provided invaluable guidance and support throughout this journey. Their insights have been important in shaping the direction of this research. I also wish to thank my professors and other industry professionals who contributed their perspectives, which enriched this study's practical relevance.

I also want to thank all the survey participants who generously took time out of their schedules to contribute to this research; their involvement was essential to the completion of this thesis.

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# INTRODUCTION

In the summer of 2024, Paris hosted the Olympic Games, and for the first time, the world's largest luxury conglomerate LVMH was the premium sponsor of the internationally renowned sports event. Similarly, many luxury brands - from Dior to Tiffany or Fenty - are starting to collaborate with athletes and iconic sports brands, stepping out of their usual market segment. The fusion of luxury and sportswear represents a fascinating intersection of two seemingly disparate worlds—one focused on elite aesthetics and the other on athletic performance and inclusivity. One of the main drivers of this market expansion trend is the increasing competition in the luxury and fashion industry (Murtas G, Pedeliento G, Mangiò F (2022)). From simple partnerships of sports events to collaboration with sports brands or product extensions into the sportswear market, luxury brands are blurring the boundaries between fashion, lifestyle, and sports, thus facing new challenges and opportunities as they venture into the sports market.

Traditionally associated with exclusivity, heritage, and craftsmanship (K.L. Keller, 2009), luxury brands have begun to explore uncharted territories, seeking to extend their influence beyond the confines of haute couture and into the dynamic, performance-driven world of sports (Dubois and Laurent, 1996). This trend raises critical questions about the impact of such market expansions on the core identity of luxury brands, their perceived value, and their ability to maintain an aura of prestige in a more accessible, yet highly competitive industry (Kapferer and Bastien, 2009).

Indeed, brand expansion involves strategically identifying and pursuing new market segments to extend the influence and reach of a product. This strategy enables businesses to access untapped markets, diversify revenue streams, and most of all achieve sustainable business growth (Kim and Lavack, 1996). Therefore, it is interesting to analyze how customers perceive these branding strategies. It is demonstrated that co-branding in the fashion industry supports value creation through different relationship levels such as brand awareness and competencies but that numerous challenges and risks exist in practice (Oeppen J. & Jamal A. (2014)). Indeed, if sports brands appear more prestigious or specifically target sportspersons, then aren't luxury brands threatened by a downgrading perception from their customers? Yet it seems that there has never been as much collaboration between sports icons and luxury fashion brands. At a time when brand image is becoming crucial (Hatch and Schultz, 2008), partnering with athletes or sports companies can be a way to foster

customer's brand association with social engagement, empowerment, and other purposeful causes.

Therefore, this study aims to investigate brand extension marketing strategies, exclusively applied to the case of luxury fashion brands entering the sports industry, following this research question:

RQ: Why are luxury fashion brands increasingly betting on entering the sports industry and what are the impacts and challenges of this brand expansion trend on luxury fashion brand perception?

If numerous research talk about luxury marketing and branding strategies to expand market segments, none of them deal with luxury brands entering the sports industry. Thus, the primary objective of this thesis is to understand why luxury brands are betting on the sports market, how it is observable in practice, and what challenges it faces. The study begins with a thorough literature review that identifies gaps in existing research. Then primary data were collected thanks to a quantitative survey designed to gauge consumer attitudes toward different types of luxury brand extensions into sports. The survey was distributed to a sample of 150 luxury or sports-interested individuals via social media and email, and it was created using the user-friendly software Qualtrics. To ensure accuracy and relevance, the first part of the survey focused on selecting participants through personal, close-ended, or simple multiple-choice questions. The remainder of the questionnaire included Likert scale responses to assess participants' perceptions of luxury brands in relation to the hypotheses. The collected data were then analyzed using the statistical tool SPSS to draw clear, statistical conclusions and address the initial hypotheses.

The findings provide insights into how luxury fashion brands can strategically position themselves to maintain their prestige while embracing the evolving demands of modern consumers. Results reveal that while brand sponsorships and collaborations with established sports brands generally enhance a luxury brand's image, the introduction of autonomous sportswear lines yields mixed reactions. Consumers prioritize quality, know-how, and emotional connection, and these elements are key to maintaining a brand's luxury status in the sports market. Based on these insights, the study recommends that luxury brands carefully select collaborators, emphasize exclusivity through limited-edition collections, and strategically target their audience to preserve their luxury positioning while navigating the sports market. In doing so, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of the complex

relationship between luxury branding and market diversification, offering valuable guidance and actionable strategies for luxury brands seeking to expand into this growing sector without compromising their core identity. This paper can also be valuable for future academic literature as it fills a gap concerning the specific and current presence of luxury in the sports field.

This paper is divided into 5 chapters:

The first one consists in a secondary research in the form of a literature review based on the work of reliable specialists in the luxury industry which have addressed the question of market expansion strategies of luxury brands. That permits to lay the foundations of our study by clearly defining and explaining our subject of interest and its evolution.

Chapter 2 is the second part of a literature review consisting of a more in-depth analysis of luxury brands' marketing strategies to enter the sports industry, giving reasons and examples of these trending brand expansion opportunities. This chapter also unveils the 3 main hypotheses raised to lead our quantitative research.

Chapter 3 describes the method used to collect the data to conduct our survey. The strategy of the research, its design and process, and how data have been collected and analyzed is covered here.

Chapter 4 is dedicated to our quantitative survey results, analysis, and discussion to accept or reject our hypothesis.

Eventually, chapter 5 concludes and summarizes the main findings of our study while addressing its potential limitations and managerial implications.

Overall, this thesis explores the implications of brand expansion marketing strategies, delving into consumer perceptions of luxury, the role of brand reputation over product quality, and the potential risks of diluting the exclusivity that defines luxury.

# CHAPTER 1

## 1.1 The Luxury Fashion Industry

### 1.1.1 Definition and evolution

As explained by Som and Blanckaert in 2015, “The story of the evolution of luxury is really about the evolution of society”. That is one of the reasons why there is a lack of clarity and consensus in defining Luxury (Miller and Mills, 2012). However, Keller in Managing the Growth Tradeoff: Challenges and Opportunities in luxury branding in 2009, carries out 10 characteristics of a luxury brand. Among them are, maintaining a premium image, creating intangible brand associations aligned with quality, heritage, and craftsmanship, controlling distribution, and employing premium pricing strategies for exclusivity. As this definition is broad enough to be applied to various luxury products, it will be used as a reference to conduct our research on the evolution of luxury brands and their perception when entering the sports industry.

The luxury industry has massively evolved since the creation of the very first luxury fashion brands in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, initially with Hermes (1837), then followed by Louis Vuitton (1854). The growth of the luxury fashion industry and its transformations are indicative of historical contexts; indeed, as mentioned by Okonkwo U. “Fashion is a strong force that has always played a significant role in the evolution of mankind’s society”. This quote here underlines how luxury fashion and society are deeply related, fashion influences societies but fashion is even more influenced and dependent on societies (Som & Blanckaert, 2015). Multiple aspects of the luxury fashion market were impacted by external elements such as the spread of the internet, the emergence of harshly competitive new markets, and the shift to sophisticated business concepts in management - particularly impacting luxury fashion brands initially focusing more on product development than modern branding (Okonkwo U., 2016). The urge to deal with environmental protection and sustainability issues is also creating new attitudes to adopt and challenges to overcome for luxury brands (Pavione, E., Pezzetti, R. & Dall’Ava, M. 2016). There's been a change in the luxury market's attention, moving from just focusing on products to putting more emphasis on consumers and branding (K.L. Keller, 2009).

### 1.1.2 Luxury Fashion brands

In this research paper, the spotlight is directed exclusively towards luxury fashion brands, deliberately excluding a broader examination of luxury across various sectors such as watches, jewelry, wine and spirits, cars, and hospitality. Indeed, exploring luxury in a generalized manner would dilute the research's precision and potentially overlook the distinct characteristics inherent to luxury fashion entering the sports industry. For instance, renowned watch brands like Rolex or luxury car manufacturers are historically associated with tennis, golf, or Formula 1 and have blurred the boundaries between luxury and the sports industry since their creation, thus warranting separate analyses. Here focusing on luxury fashion brands, this study aims to observe and explain how luxury fashion brands are investing in their symbolic personality rather than functional ones (K. Heine, 2010). Indeed, design signature, exclusivity, heritage, environment, and clear brand identity are key elements composing a luxury fashion brand. Thus crafting a relevant, distinct, and consistent marketing strategy is essential for luxury brands, aiding in their global recognition and leveraging their esteemed status (Fionda A., Moore C., 2009).

## **1.2 Brand extension**

### 1.2.1 Context and Definition

The different evolutions in society mentioned above coupled with the increasing demand for luxury goods due to the emergence of Middle Eastern and Asian economies, and the increased purchasing power of the middle classes of some countries (Hudders et al., 2012), led to significant growth in the luxury fashion market. As a result, luxury brands have broadened their appeal beyond their initial exclusive clientele (Yeoman and McMahon-Beattie, 2006; Wiedmann et al., 2009), a phenomenon often referred to as the “democratization of the luxury market” (Dubois and Laurent, 1996). According to Kapferer and Bastien (2009), the ubiquity of luxury today explains the complexity of managing this sector’s brands in contemporary times. This shift has necessitated brands to adapt and address these evolving market dynamics. Multiple strategies are available for a luxury fashion brand willing to adapt to the current context, but this research paper will exclusively focus on brand extension. Brand extension is commonly defined as a marketing strategy in which a company uses its existing brand name and reputation to launch new products or enter new product

categories that are related or unrelated to its core business (DeGraba and Sullivan, 1995; Pitta and Katsanis, 1995). This strategy allows the company to leverage the equity and recognition of its established brand to penetrate new markets or appeal to different consumer segments quickly. The extension aims to capitalize on the trust and loyalty consumers have towards the existing brand, thereby reducing the risks associated with introducing entirely new products or brands (Stegemann, 2006).

### 1.2.2 Brand extension type

Brand extensions can be categorized into two main types: horizontal and vertical. A vertical brand extension involves launching a new product within the same category as the original brand, but at a different price point or quality level (Keller and Aaker, 1992; Sullivan, 1992). This can involve upgrading or downgrading the brand (Kim et al., 2001). Conversely, in a horizontal brand extension, a company expands its brand by introducing a new product either in a related category or in a completely different one while retaining the same brand (Sheinin and Schmitt, 1994).

Brand extension strategy can take various forms from co-branding to line extension, category extension, or franchising (Hennigs, N., Wiedmann, K., Behrens, S., Klarmann, C. and Carduck, J., 2013). Line extensions - leveraging existing brand names and products to introduce variations within the same product category – are the most common and perceived as low-risk, given their minimal introduction costs and familiarity with consumers (Kahn, 1998). On the other hand, category extensions involve higher risk as they introduce entirely new products into different categories.

### 1.2.3 Brand Extension Risks and Challenges

From a luxury fashion perspective, brand extension strategies are one of the solutions employed to satisfy a constantly growing demand and competition in the luxury marketplace (Stegemann, 2006). However, this phenomenon reveals an opposition between the expanding and democratizing luxury market (Yeoman and McMahon-Beattie, 2006) and the initial essence of luxury to remain exclusive and scarce (Dubois et al, 2001). This challenges balancing luxury growth with the imperative requirement to maintain its uniqueness (Tynan et al., 2010). Over-extending a luxury brand risks damaging the core image and equity established by the parent brand name (Aaker, 1990) especially when there is a misalignment

between the core brand and the extended one (Reddy et al., 1994). Additionally, the core brand must possess a strong image with a high level of brand recognition, credibility, and strength (Pitta and Katsanis, 1995). Consequently, introducing excessive or inconsistent brand extensions may result in a negative brand perception that could prove challenging for a company to overcome (Lane and Jacobson, 1995). Strategies such as downward pricing may attract new customers but risk diluting the brand's exclusivity and prestige (Magnoni and Roux, 2008, Ahluwalia and Gürhan-Canli, 2000). Similarly, co-branding or line extension can raise doubts about the core brand's quality and credibility in entering this new market (Kim and Lavack, 1996).

## **1.3 Brand perception**

### **1.3.1 Brand Identity/Strength**

To study the impact of brand extension on the brand image (i.e. customer perception of the brand identity), it is essential to define brand identity, a major component of corporate branding (Fionda and Moore, 2009). Brand identity is the essence of a company's personality, a representation of its values, mission, and offerings, fostering recognition, trust, and loyalty (Urde, 2013). It is key to create a cohesive marketing strategy and memorable brand experience across all touchpoints (Kapferer, 2012) thanks to favorable brand personality traits, aspirational corporate associations, and a distinct premium brand image (Chevalier and Mazzalovo, 2008; Keller, 2009). Within the luxury fashion sphere, a well-defined brand identity, not only attracts customers but also shapes their perceptions and emotional connections with the brand thanks to both tangible and intangible aspects (Hatch and Schultz, 2008). With the value added by brand identity, luxury fashion brands command premium prices, reinforcing notions of exclusivity and superiority, consequently creating a perception of unattainability (Kapferer and Bastien, 2009).

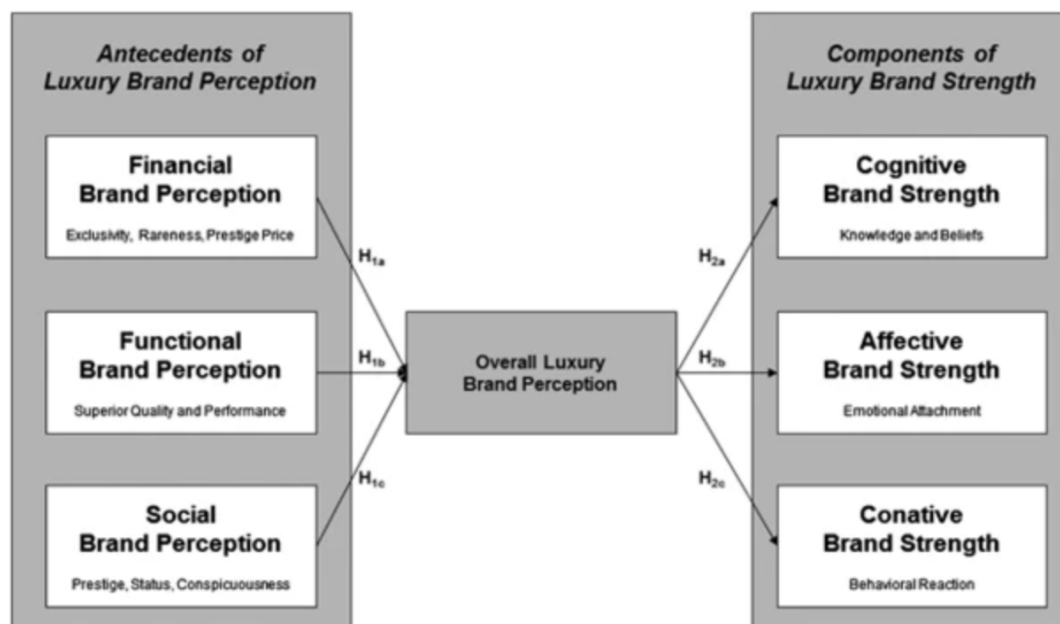
### **1.3.2 Customer Brand Perception**

From a consumer perspective, luxury fashion brands serve as symbols to cultivate a positive social image (Eagly and Chaiken, 1993). However, if conspicuous consumption was initially the primary motivator for luxury brand purchases (Corneo and Jeanne, 1997; Vigneron and Johnson, 2004), other motives such as financial, functional, and emotional factors, also play a

significant role in customer brand perception now (Wiedmann et al., 2007, 2009). Hennigs et al. (2013) found that consumers form their perceptions of luxury fashion brands based on a combination of financial, functional, and social factors which are linked to the cognitive, affective, and conative elements of brand strength (Figure 1).

We will use this conceptualization of luxury brand perception drivers (left part of the conceptual model) to tackle our research on the effect of brand extension on brand perception.

*Figure 1 - Customers' implicit associations conceptualization*



**Source:** Hennigs, N. et al 2013, "Brand extensions: A successful strategy in luxury fashion branding? Assessing consumers' implicit associations", *Journal of fashion marketing and management*, vol. 17, no. 4, pp. 390-402.

Traditionally, consumers interpret high prices as an indicator of superior quality and prestige (Erickson and Johansson, 1985; Tellis and Gaeth, 1990; Groth and McDaniel, 1993), associating expensiveness with exclusivity and desirability (Lynn, 1991; Verhallen and Robben, 1994). Luxury brands are also valued for their social recognition and conspicuousness (O'Cass and McEwen, 2004), serving as symbolic markers of affluence and

social status (Vigneron and Johnson, 2004), making the social perception of a luxury brand determinant in shaping its overall appeal and perception (Belk, 1988; Dittmar, 1994). Additionally, consumers expect luxury brands to offer superior quality and performance, further shaping their brand perception (O’Cass and Frost, 2002).

### 1.3.3 Emotional attachment in brand perception

Brand identity plays a fundamental role in influencing the perception of luxury brands (Dubois et al, 2005). Vigneron and Johnson (1999) identified five key factors consumers consider when evaluating a luxury brand: conspicuousness, uniqueness, quality, hedonism, and self-extension. Indeed, luxury consumers increasingly prioritize personal-oriented aspects like emotional attachment and brand loyalty in their purchasing decisions (Theng So et al., 2013). Consequently, luxury brands are shifting their focus from traditional differentiation strategies based on price and status to fostering emotional connections and attachment with customers (Cailleux et al., 2009). Traditional branding strategies betting on brand recognition and relying solely on the prestige of brand image have become less impactful in engaging today's luxury consumers due to an increased focus on emotions, particularly the sense of closeness and involvement with brands (Bain & Co., 2005; Choo et al., 2012). Thus, luxury companies are shifting towards prioritizing the development of customer-brand relationships to resonate with their aspirations (Kapferer and Bastien, 2009). Brands need to craft narratives that demonstrate genuine understanding of consumers’ lifestyles and convince them that their brand contributes to enriching their lives, to creating deeper connections and sustaining loyalty (Thompson et al., 2006). Ultimately, emotional attachment fosters a significant customer-brand relationship as it commands a higher level of commitment from customers (Orth et al., 2010; Thomson et al., 2006).

## CHAPTER 2

### 2.1 Why luxury fashion brands are extending into the sports industry

#### 2.1.1. Icons and shared values to foster customers' emotional connections

This chapter focuses specifically on luxury fashion brand expansion into the sports industry, to fill a gap and understand what drives luxury fashion brands to extend into sports. The primary reasons for this extension strategy are common to other brand extensions: increase awareness, enhance brand image, expand market reach, and innovate, etc (Aaker, 1990, Murtas G et al., 2022). Then what's more with the sports industry?

As David J.A. describes in *The Olympic Games Effect: How Sports Marketing Builds Strong Brands*, in 2012, there is a historical emotional attachment between sports and consumers making sports marketing a powerful tool for brand building (Shank, M.D., et al., 2014). The world of athletes is characterized by extraordinary challenges and feats offering historical moments and lasting memories to audiences worldwide (David J.A., 2012). Moreover, the sports market initially doesn't belong to luxury which gives it a more human, accessible aspect yet remaining mythical and iconic due to athlete's incredible performances (David J.A., 2012). Thus luxury fashion brands are betting on the sports industry because it aligns with consumers' increasing desire for an emotional connection with brands (Theng So, J. et al., 2013).

By collaborating with sports brands and athletes, luxury fashion brands not only tap into a new market segment but create a stronger bond with their customers. This approach makes luxury fashion brands more relatable thanks to the creation of stories customers can identify to (Thompson et al., 2006). Athletes embody qualities like determination and success which resonate with luxury brand values (David J.A., 2012). In the world of luxury, where exclusivity and exceptional skills reign supreme, the pursuit of victory and extraordinary performance aligns seamlessly with the values prized by luxury brands. This alignment explains why luxury brands are expanding into sports, leveraging associations to enhance their influence, image, and reputation (Hennigs N. et al., 2013). Sports inspire and have the

ability to evoke strong emotions and passion among fans in a unique way, when brands align themselves with sports teams, athletes, or events, they tap into this emotional connection (Campaign Asia, (n.d.)).

### 2.1.2 Emergence of Athleisure Trend

Other luxury brands' motivation to enter the sports industry lies in emerging driving forces such as changes in consumer lifestyle and preferences. The Athleisure market has grown significantly, reaching USD 243.94 billion in 2024, and is projected to reach USD 687.68 billion by 2030 (Global Inc, Research and Markets). The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated this trend as remote work became more common and more interactions were conducted from home blending activewear into everyday attire (Bringé, A., Forbes, 2021). Additionally, rising focus on fitness and health awareness has fueled the demand for comfortable yet stylish clothing options (Grand View Research, 2019). Luxury fashion brands are also responding to the call for more sustainable, inclusive, and high-quality material, innovating in fashion and functional design (Bringé, A., Forbes, 2021). This shift towards athleisure garments has been mostly driven by millennials, attracted by the integration of subculture icons into luxury, particularly through the attraction of the sneakers business. Iconic examples include partnerships like Supreme x Nike, Louis Vuitton x Nike, Adidas x Alexander Wang, etc. (Gosselin, V., 2021).

### 2.1.3 The Streetwear Opportunity

The blending of luxury and sportswear is driven by their shared allure of exclusivity. While luxury fashion relies on exclusivity derived from high prices, sportswear, and more particularly streetwear, derives its exclusivity from a niche, connoisseur mindset. Both cultivate exclusivity for their consumers. Luxury brands do so through storytelling and heritage, while streetwear through limited collections and distinctive communication strategies. Recognizing this appeal, luxury brands are eager to create the same intimate bond with sportswear consumers, leading to collaboration with sports giants (Gosselin, V., 2021).

## **2.2 Different brand expansion strategies and their risk**

Numerous research study the impact of brand extension on luxury brands, from risk and challenges to opportunities and recommendations of good fit in brand collaboration.

However, none of them focus on the precise field of brand extension into sports, which, as seen previously, result from different societal trends and needs, and are characterized by other values and outcomes. Thus, this paper aims to provide insight into brand extensions that apply to the sports industry, to give valuable results to luxury fashion brands willing to conduct successful brand extensions into the sports market.

### **2.2.1 Sponsoring/Partnering**

Luxury brands are increasingly entering the sports industry through sponsorship strategies, aiming to engage with consumers and enhance their brand (Christensen, S.R. 2006).

Examples include Louis Vuitton's collaboration with the NBA, crafting unique accessories like the official steamer trunk for the NBA championship trophy, and tapping into the initially unexpected influential power of iconic athletes in the new global fashion world (Michael Patent, CampaignAsia). This integration extends to other sports, with Louis Vuitton designing trophy cases for events like the Rugby and FIFA World Cups, and even the League of Legends World Championship, further proving its adaptability across diverse domains and its willingness to target a younger audience (Campaign Asia). Similarly, Prada collaborated with China's women's national football team, and LVMH is now the sponsor of the upcoming Olympic Games in Paris, aligning with the ethos of "The Art of Crafting Dreams" and "Artisans of all Victories" where luxury becomes a metaphor of sports victory, and athletes and craftsmen create luxury (FashionNetwork, CNN, Monteros M., 2023). These sponsorships aim to capitalize on the massive visibility and audience reach of sports events, elevating brand associations and fostering stronger connections with a diverse audience (Christensen, S.R. 2006).

However, Dubois and Paternault (1995) suggested that there is a risk associated with advertising for luxury brands, as it may potentially damage the brand's exclusive image. Brand extensions would reduce the attributes associated with luxury brands (uniqueness, scarcity, quality...), which would harm the overall perception of luxury brands (Vigneron and Johnson 2004). Consequently, having widely known brand associations might diminish

consumer attitudes toward luxury brands (Dubois and Paternault, 1995). Following this idea, a hypothesis to study the impact of brand extensions of luxury fashion brands into the sports industry, on their brand equity, could be:

H1: Luxury fashion brands sponsoring widespread sports events or athletes has a negative impact on their luxury perception.

### 2.2.2 Collaboration / Co-branding

Another way for luxury fashion brands to extend into the sports industry is through collaboration with other sports brands. Co-branding represents a strategic alliance where brands unite to form a singular product through collaborative efforts and achieve mutual benefits; with sports brands, luxury fashion brands are showcasing the fusion of high-end style with athletic culture (S. J. Dickinson and T. Heath, 2008; Cao and Zhang, 2011). Collaboration, allows brands to harness existing brand equity for growth and innovation, leveraging each other's reputation and core strengths (Dickinson and Heath, 2008). Examples include Prada's partnership with Adidas to create the Superstar sneaker collection or the Linea Rossa football boots collection, Dior's collaboration with Nike for the Dior x Air Jordan 1 sneakers, or Balmain with Puma creating two exclusive extravagant capsule collections (Monteros M., 2023). These collaborations blur the lines between fashion and athleticism, introducing innovative products and technologies that resonate with diverse audiences (Campaign Asia. (n.d.)).

According to Jemma Oeppen & Ahmad Jamal (2014), collaboration strategies can create value through various types of relationships, including co-branding based on brand awareness, shared values, and complementary expertise. Additionally, Murtas et al. (2022) indicate that luxury brands should first collaborate with well-known brands within their target market before considering partnerships with brands from other sectors. Following this statement a hypothesis for our research could be:

H2: Luxury fashion brands collaborating with sports brands positively impact the luxury image of the brand.

### 2.2.3 Category extension

Moving on to a riskier type of brand extension, luxury fashion brands are embracing category extension strategies to venture into the sports industry, particularly in response to the booming athleisure trend accelerated by the pandemic (Magnoni, F. and Roux, E. 2012).

Category extension involves introducing a new product in a category or market segment that is different from the brand's existing offerings, leveraging brand equity and consumer trust (Quelch and Kenny, 1994). Notable examples include Hugo Boss's Boss Orange, Valentino's VLNT line, and Prada's Linea Rossa, which infuses sportswear elements with high fashion (Campaign Asia. (n.d.)). These initiatives allow luxury brands to cater to evolving consumer preferences while capitalizing on the growing demand for stylish and versatile activewear. However, Roux and Floch (1996), affirm that brand extensions, whether through line or category extensions, can undermine the perception of exclusivity and uniqueness in luxury. Similarly, observation shows that numerous luxury goods companies compromised their unique positioning due to the extensive proliferation of their products (Dubois & Laurent, 1994; Sharp, 1993). For instance, luxury brands like Gucci and Lacoste experienced significant brand damage as a result of introducing line extensions that increased availability, thereby diminishing the prestige associated with the brand (Lane and Jacobson 1997). Moreover, according to Henning N. et al. (2013), consumers' perception of a luxury brand after a downgrading strategy reduces their association of the brand with luxury. Following this statement, a hypothesis for our research could be:

H3: Luxury fashion brand product category extension into the sports industry harms the consumer perception of a luxury brand.

## **Chapter 3 - Methodology:**

### **3.1 Research Strategy**

The two first chapters of this paper were dedicated to conducting secondary research in the form of a literature review, which provided the necessary bases to further developing the topic of luxury fashion brands entering the sports industry. This theoretical background allowed us to acknowledge a gap in the existing literature and raise some hypotheses that need to be assessed to directly explore consumers' perception of luxury fashion brands in the sports market. These hypotheses were tested through primary research in the form of a quantitative cross-sectional survey.

This method clearly represents a group's overall behavior and reasoning, thanks to its reliance on structured numerical data that produces straightforward statistical outcomes rather than a qualitative approach where collected information is considered more subjective and not adapted to this paper's goal. Key metrics will include factors such as brand prestige, quality, exclusivity, and the perceived effect of brand extension into the sports market. The quantitative data collected from the survey will be statistically analyzed to identify trends, correlations, and potential shifts in consumer perception. By conducting a quantitative survey, the findings can be extended to a wider population, providing actionable insights for luxury brands considering betting on the sports opportunity.

### **3.2 Research Design**

As mentioned before, the aim of this primary research is to gain information from potential luxury fashion consumers of different age groups and backgrounds and whom ideally have a close approach to the sports industry, to assess their expectation and image of luxury brands entering the sports market. According to the purpose of the study, the research design has been defined with both descriptive and exploratory questions to allow diversity in answers while obtaining statistical similarities in respondents viewpoint. In fact, exploratory designed research in the form of open-ended questions allows us to gain a deeper understanding of the respondent opinion, get a justification of the person statement and, to some extent, find new variables that may be valuable to our research and that may also be quantified if recurrent. Descriptive design research, on the other hand, are close-ended questions that where thought

throughout during the secondary research made in the two first chapters, it enables us to get clearer statistical result.

For more accuracy in our consumer profile and to obtain answers from a relevant part of the population for this research, the first part of the survey aimed at selecting individuals thanks to close-ended, simple multiple-choice questions regarding the respondent personal features. Then the second part of the questionnaire implies Matrix tables and multiple-choice questions with text entry possibility to measure the participant perception of the different aspects of a luxury fashion brand that are challenged when entering the sports market.

The survey consists of 15 questions spread into 2 main parts, in which the first one is divided into 2 blocks and the second one into 3. The very first block permits to depict a simple demographical portrait of the respondent while the second one focuses on the respondent's general attitude and habits with luxury fashion brands and sports brands, in order to filter results and observe how it impacts brand perception in the future collected data. The second part of the survey is strictly focused on the 3 main hypothesis at stake in this paper. Thus, the first block of this part is assessing respondents' perception of luxury brand sponsoring sport entities, while the second one tackles luxury fashion brand collaborating with sports brand, and the very last block seeks for customers opinion of sports collection launched solely by luxury fashion brands.

### **3.3 Research Process & Data Collection**

The questionnaire was created using Qualtrics which is a powerful online survey software creator allowing various question types and precise results analysis. It was first tested among a close relative group to ensure its optimum performance and logical progress. After reviewing its functionality and understandability thanks to useful feedback, the survey was shared through an anonymous link that was made available on various social media and networks including Instagram, Facebook, direct messages and mailing strategies from the 15<sup>th</sup> of July 2024. Eventually, the survey reached more than 140 answers in 1 month, which enabled us to get a broad sample of participants who have interacted with both luxury fashion and sportswear brands, allowing for a comprehensive analysis of their attitudes and perceptions. In order to reach our targeted audience, the survey was also published on Luxury connoisseurs groups and pages, in addition to professional sports clubs to get the different viewpoints of both fields.

The respondents were informed that all the data collected are anonymous and only used for the purpose of this paper. Moreover, the whole survey was conducted in English which enabled to get answers from people coming from various countries and nationalities and mostly with an international background. Indeed, results are showing people coming from the USA, different countries in Europe with a lot of French and Italians, South Africans, and some people in Asia including, Chinese, Japanese, Indonesian, and eventually Australians. The survey was closed on the 15th of August 2024 after the number of answers was deemed sufficient but also since it started to become difficult to reach respondents with an interesting perspective for the study in the authors network. The date chosen to share the survey was also strategic knowing the date of the Olympic Games in France. Largely sponsored and showcased on social media by LVMH. The final sample size amounted to a total of 145 responses but only 102 of them were validated for the analysis. Unexploitable answers were either uncompleted or disqualified due to the respondents' disinterest in the topics at stake, which would have negatively influenced the accuracy of the data analysis.

### **3.4 Data Analysis**

Eventually, all the answers were analyzed using the statistic software SPSS provided by IMB to make clear statistical statements concerning the results obtained and answer our initial hypotheses. In fact, of all the analysis tools on the market, this one was deemed the most comprehensive. It allows for easy creations of various analyses from all the input variables and provides a solid framework for an accurate analysis of our findings. To make the most of the software and provide precise results, data from Qualtrics were automatically transferred into the software. After making sure that the data collected with the questionnaire was reliable and valid, which means that we made sure that respondents' answers were well interpreted, easily understandable, and consistent, we were able to test some hypotheses to draw conclusions. As mentioned earlier, a few hypotheses have been raised thanks to the knowledge acquired in the literature review and they have been the main focus of our analysis.

- H1: Luxury fashion brands sponsoring widespread sports events or athletes has a negative impact on their luxury perception.
- H2: Luxury fashion brands collaborating with sports brands positively impact the luxury image of the brand

- H3: Luxury fashion brand product category extension into the sports industry harms the consumer perception of a luxury brand.

These hypotheses are linked to subjects that seemed to be timely but unclear or not studied before, making it even more interesting to explore. Besides the Hypotheses tested here, other questions and findings have been revealed through the analysis, especially thanks to the exploratory questions, and will be detailed in the Findings and Discussion section. Key side questions include: whether the success hinges more on the product quality or the power of advertising and brand reputation; and whether it is more strategic for luxury brands to develop their own sportswear lines or to collaborate with established sportswear brands.

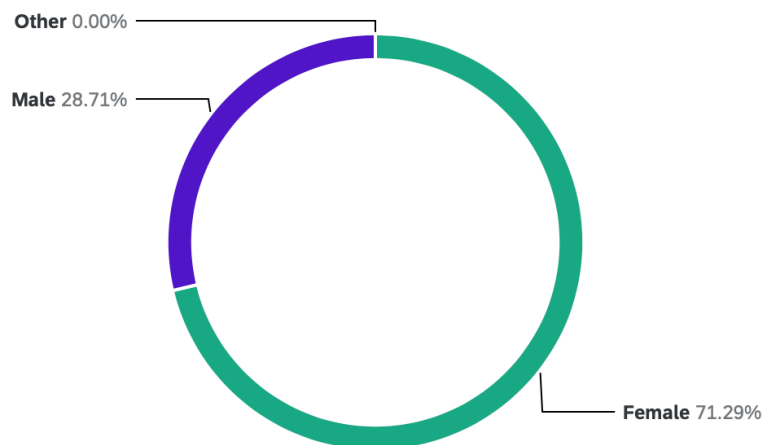
## CHAPTER 4 - RESULTS & DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Respondent's portrait – Demographic data:

To begin the survey, we aimed to create a detailed demographic profile of the respondents. Indeed, establishing a clear socio-demographic landscape enables to better interpret the results of the survey, identify trends, and make more informed conclusions. This foundational data is crucial for ensuring that the analysis accurately reflects the experiences and perspectives of the surveyed population.

#### 4.1.1 Gender

Gender: How do you identify? ⓘ

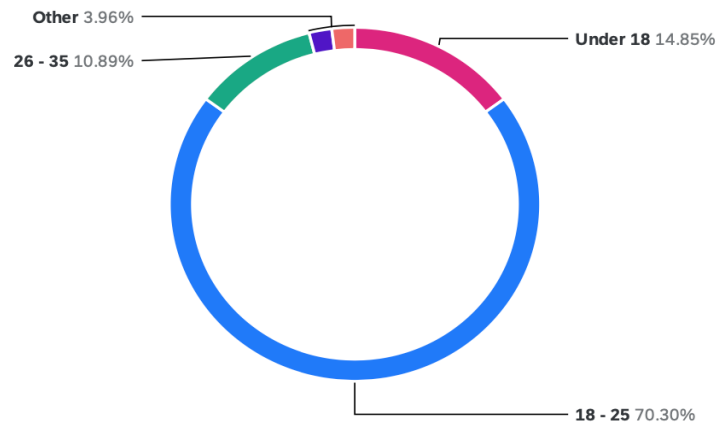


*Figure 2 – Respondents' gender*

Out of the 101 respondents validated for this survey, a significant majority of them are women, accounting for a total of 72 (71,29%), while male respondents are 29 which represents 28,71% of the total of person interviewed.

#### 4.1.2 Age

How old are you? 101 ⓘ

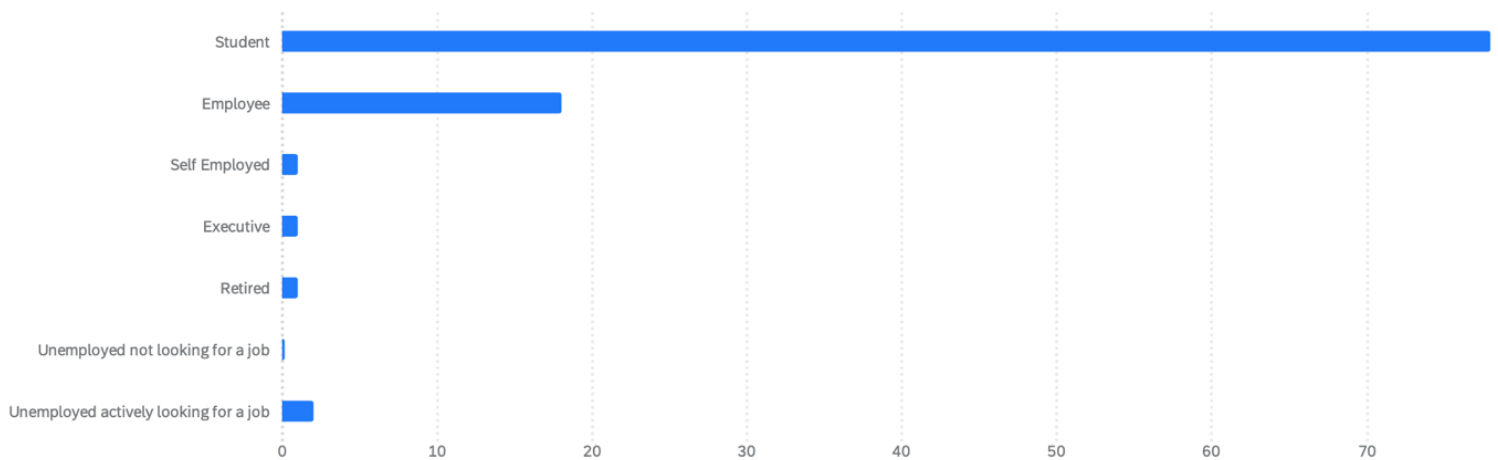


*Figure 3 – Respondents' age*

The age of the respondents has been divided in generational subgroups according to commonly addressed age groups. Among these age selection possibilities a massive majority of respondents comes from Generation Z (people from 18 to 25 years old) with 70,30% of the total responses. Moreover, people under 18 years old also represents an important part of the answers, thus, enlarging the Gen Z weight in this survey. Indeed, under 18 accounts for 14,85% of answers, becoming the second age group of this survey and providing key insights on those who are building their opinion of the future of luxury fashion and sport through social media. The third notable group is the one of millennials (from 26 to 35 years old) representing 10,89% of total reponses. Eventually, we have two smaller samples of older generation with Generation X (from 36 to 54 years old) with 2 respondents, and Baby Boomers (here accounted as 55 years old and more) with 2 respondents as well and together accounting for a total of 4% responses.

### 4.1.3 Professional situation

What's your profession 101 ⓘ

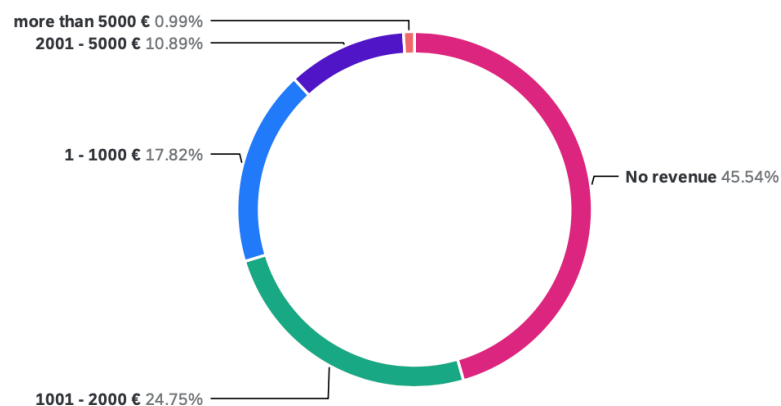


*Figure 4 – Respondents' profession*

Due to the environment where the survey has been shared and the author's acquaintances, a massive majority of respondents (77,23%) are students. A second group is the one of employees representing 17,82% of respondents. Among the 4,95% of other respondents some are self employed/entrepreneurs, executive, unemployed or even retired.

### 4.1.4 Revenue

Revenue: What's your monthly salary? ⓘ



*Figure 5 – Respondents' revenue*

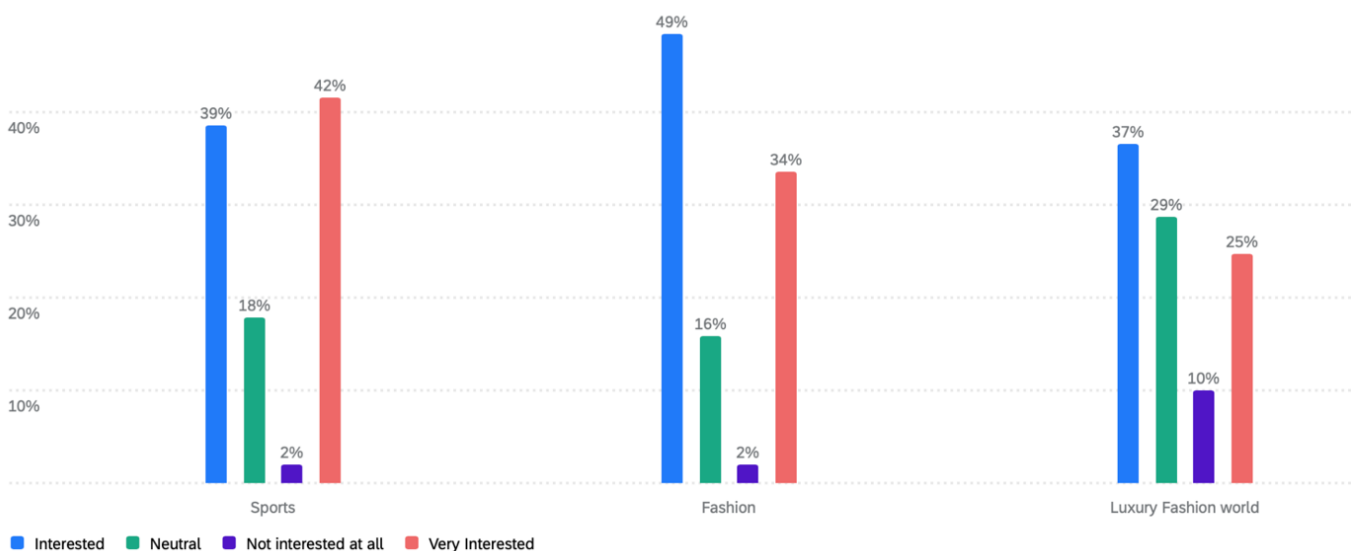
As mentioned above, a significant majority of respondents are students, which makes it logical to obtain “No revenue” as almost half of the respondents financial situation (45,54% of answers). However, the category 1001 to 2000\$ arrives in second position with a percentage of 24,75% answers, right above the 1 to 1000\$ category which represents 17,82% of total answers. These majority of answers are surely related to the age and professional situation of the respondents whom are mostly from Generation Z and thus do not have a stable monthly revenue yet. Eventually 10,89% of respondents were able to select 2001 to 5000\$ as their revenue situation, while only 1 respondent is above 5000\$ a month (0,99%).

## 4.2 Attitude towards Luxury Fashion and Sports brands.

In order to better understand the results of the Hypothesis Testing part (see point 3.2.3), it was necessary to assess the interest of our respondents towards the subjects at stake and try to understand their habits to create filters and subgroups depending on different consumer profile.

### 4.2.1 Interest in the topic at stake

Rate your interest in these topics 101 ⓘ



*Figure 6 – Respondents' interest in the topic at stake*

To obtain a general portrait of the respondents and understand their approach and knowledge of luxury, fashion and sports, we wanted to know their interest in these topics. Generally, our respondents are interested or very interested in the topics studied, however, we can notice that a greater majority of people knows about fashion (83%) compared to the luxury fashion world, which appears less accessible and holds the interest of 66% of respondents. On the other hand, sports interest 81% of respondents, making it valuable for future comparisons. Indeed, we can then compare the perceptions of sports-oriented respondents with those of fashion/luxury-oriented respondents regarding luxury fashion brands entering the sports industry.

#### 4.2.2 Respondents' definition of luxury

What factors are most influential in defining a brand as luxury? Please rank the following factors in order of importance to you. ①

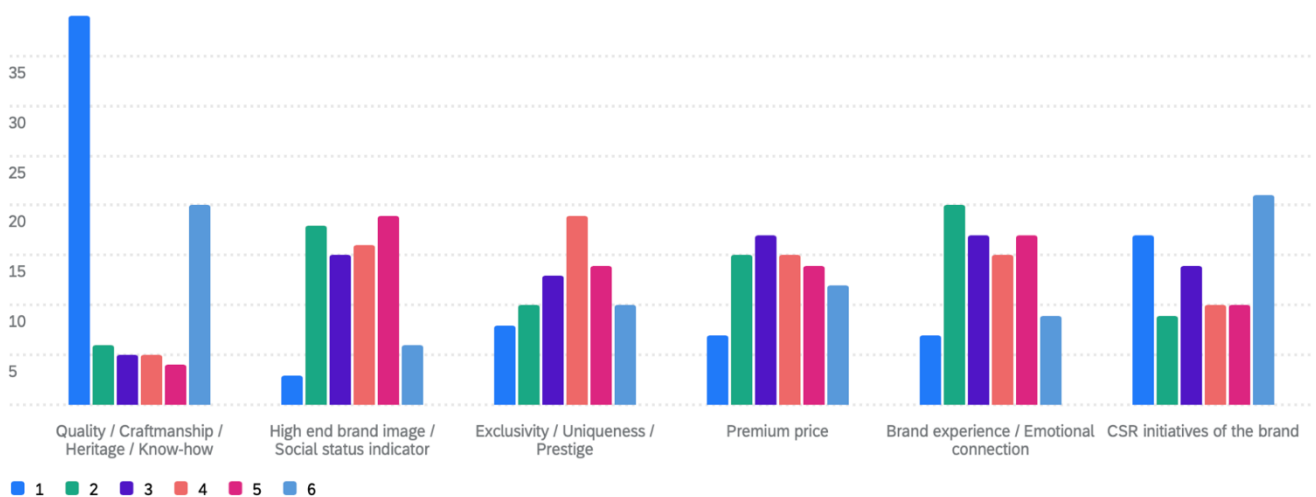


Figure 7 – Respondents' definition of luxury

	Quality / Craftmanship / Heritage / Know-how	High end brand image / Social status indicator	Exclusivity / Uniqueness / Prestige	Premium Price	Brand Experience / Emotional Connection	CSR initiatives of the brand
Mode	2.88	3.63	3.68	3.61	3.51	3.59
Median	2.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.00	3.50
Mode	1	5	4	3	2	6
Std. Deviation	2.156	1.394	1.544	1.556	1.509	1.881

Table 1 – Determinants of luxury ranking

A key question in our survey is to understand respondents' initial perception of luxury. During the secondary research, six main factors were identified as determinant in defining luxury. Thus, respondents were asked to classify them in order of importance to define a brand as being luxury in their opinion. As a result, and thanks to SPSS statistics generator we were able to get a ranking of these factors and know what luxury in consumers' mind is, before any links with sports are made.

As visible on this chart, the number one determinant of luxury according to the respondents is the Quality, Craftsmanship, Heritage and Know-How of the brand (ranked first by 48% of respondents), which were all gathered in one single criterion as they all refer to the story and skills of the brand lying in the product itself.

In second position we obtain Brand experience and Emotional connection as decisive for a brand to be perceived as luxury (19%). Indeed, as observed in the first chapters of this paper, creating an emotional connection with customers has become the new obsession of luxury brands, all trying to interact with customers through more investments in brand experience.

Then, we have Premium Price as an indicator of luxury (17%), followed by the brand Exclusivity, Uniqueness and Prestige (18%) and in fifth position the High-end brand image/ Social status indicator of the brand (19%). On the contrary, the CSR initiatives of the brand were deemed the least important factor to define luxury for 20% of respondent.

Interestingly the CSR aspect of a brand came out as the least important factor, but a lot of respondents also placed it as the most important one. Indeed, according to 17% of respondents, the CSR initiatives of a brand is the number one criterion for it to be defined as luxury, thus showing that the socio-environmental question is still an emerging concern in society, leaving people with diverse opinions.

Thanks to these questions we were able to generate some profiles depending on customers' interest and knowledge in luxury fashion and sports.

By understanding respondents' habits we created filters to divide answers in subgroups depending on their interest in the topics at stake. Thus, when responses are filtered by center of interest, we obtain slightly different results of the luxury perception from luxury connoisseurs and sports persons.

As visible in the tables below, respondents who are passionate by sport perceive the quality and the emotional connection with the brand as more important in the definition of luxury. On the other hand, if luxury connoisseurs rank quality as the first determinant of luxury as well, they consider the social status indicator associated with the brand image as more influential in the perception of a brand as luxury while this criterion is ranked 5<sup>th</sup> by sports-oriented persons.

These findings can be useful for luxury brands when wondering which features to enhance to increase their luxury image to the public, depending on which customer group they want to target. Indeed, if the quality of the product should always come first when a luxury brand is planning to enter the sports market while maintaining its luxury appeal, it should bet on the brand experience and emotional connection with its customers to attract a sport-oriented clientele.

	Quality / Craftmanship / Heritage / Know-how	High end brand image / Social status indicator	Exclusivity / Uniqueness / Prestige	Premium Price	Brand Experience / Emotional Connection	CSR initiatives of the brand
Mode	2.64	3.68	3.67	3.69	3.51	3.69
Median	1.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.00	4.00
Mode	1	5	4	3	2	6

*Table 2 – Sports-oriented person's perception of luxury*

	Quality / Craftmanship / Heritage / Know-how	High end brand image / Social status indicator	Exclusivity / Uniqueness / Prestige	Premium Price	Brand Experience / Emotional Connection	CSR initiatives of the brand
Mode	2.78	3.61	3.60	3.58	3.59	3.72
Median	1.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.50	4.00
Mode	1	2	5	4	3	6

*Table 3 - Luxury Fashion connoisseur's definition of luxury*

### 4.2.3 Respondents' expectation of sports brand

What factors matter most to you when considering a sports brand? Please rank the following factors in order of importance to you. ⓘ

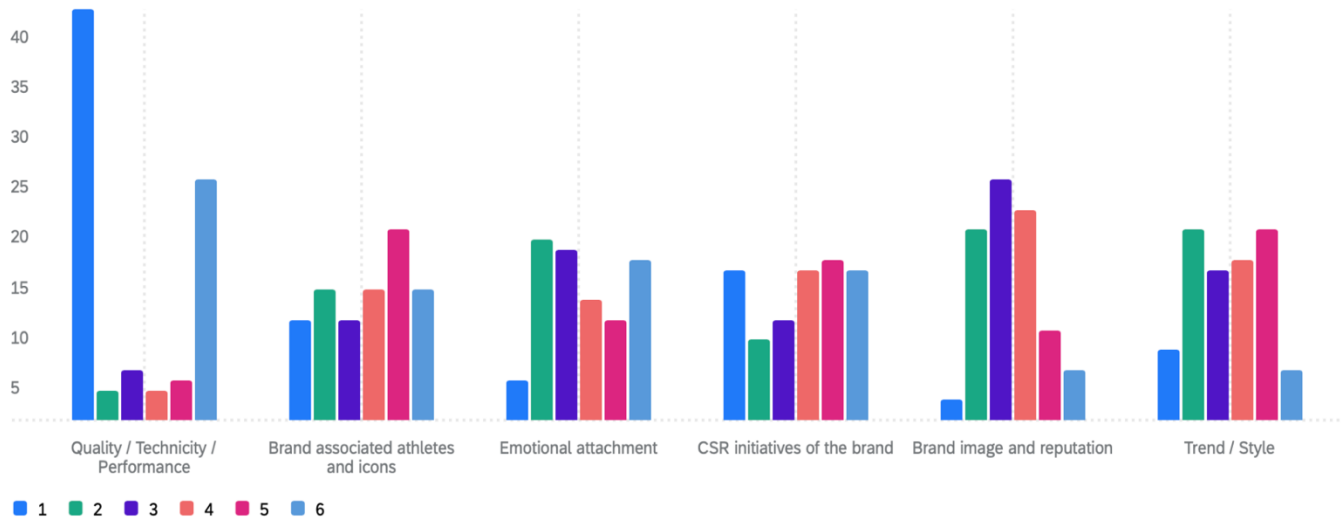


Figure 8 – Respondents' definition of a sports brand

	Quality / Technicity / Performance	Brand associated athletes and icons	CSR initiatives of the brand	Emotional attachment	Brand image and reputation	Trend / Style
Mode	3.00	3.70	3.67	3.70	3.41	3.45
Median	1.00	4.00	4.00	3.00	3.00	3.50
Mode	1	5	6	2	3	2

Table 4 – Sports brand determinants ranking

After understanding what the key component of luxury in respondent's mind were, it was necessary for the scope of this research to get an insight of respondent's expectations when considering a sports brand. Similarly to the previous question, respondents were asked to rank predetermined factors when thinking about a sports brand.

A large majority of people (40%) considers the Quality, Technicity and Performance as being the top criteria in a sports brand. Here again it's the factor combining the quality attributes related to the products (this time adapted to the sports field) which arrives in first position. As for luxury, the second most important factor for respondents when talking about a sports brand is the emotional attachment associated with the brand. 19% of the respondents would choose a sports brand upon an interaction, bond felt with the brand just after considering its

quality and technicity. However, as visible on SPSS statistics results the factor of Trend and Style also has a mode of 2 with 19% of respondent placing it in second position, equally to the fifth position. Since Trend has two modes (2 et 5), we decided to keep the emotional connection in second and rank the Stylish motive in 4<sup>th</sup> position as the Brand image and reputation factor was clearly deemed third by respondents.

In fifth position we obtain the Brand associated athletes' and icons (19% respondents placed it 5) and eventually the CSR initiatives of the brand had multiple modes (1,4,5,6) but, knowing the results and ranking of the other factors, it was here again classified as the least important factor to respondents when considering a sports brand.

What's interesting to notice here is that respondents' answers are ambivalent, as per the question regarding luxury, both Quality-related motives and CSR initiatives motives are either ranked first or last by respondents. This is most likely due to the different profiles of respondents. Indeed, the sports brand perception also varies upon the respondent's interest in sports or fashion. Those who are passionate about sports would genuinely rank the technicity/performance, and emotional connection with a sports brand first compared to a high fashion connoisseur who would rather go for the quality/performance, and style/trend of the sports brand.

Thus, from a marketing point of view, this analysis can be useful for a luxury brand to choose the adequate sports brand to partner with or to become. The factors to focus on will be different upon targeting a sports connoisseur clientele or a luxury fashion one.

	Quality / Technicity / Performance	Brand associated athletes and icons	CSR initiatives of the brand	Emotional attachment	Brand image and reputation	Trend / Style
Mode	2.77	3.71	3.92	3.52	3.48	3.43
Median	1.00	4.00	4.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
Mode	1	4	5	3	4	2

*Table 5 - Luxury fashion connoisseur's perception of a sports brand*

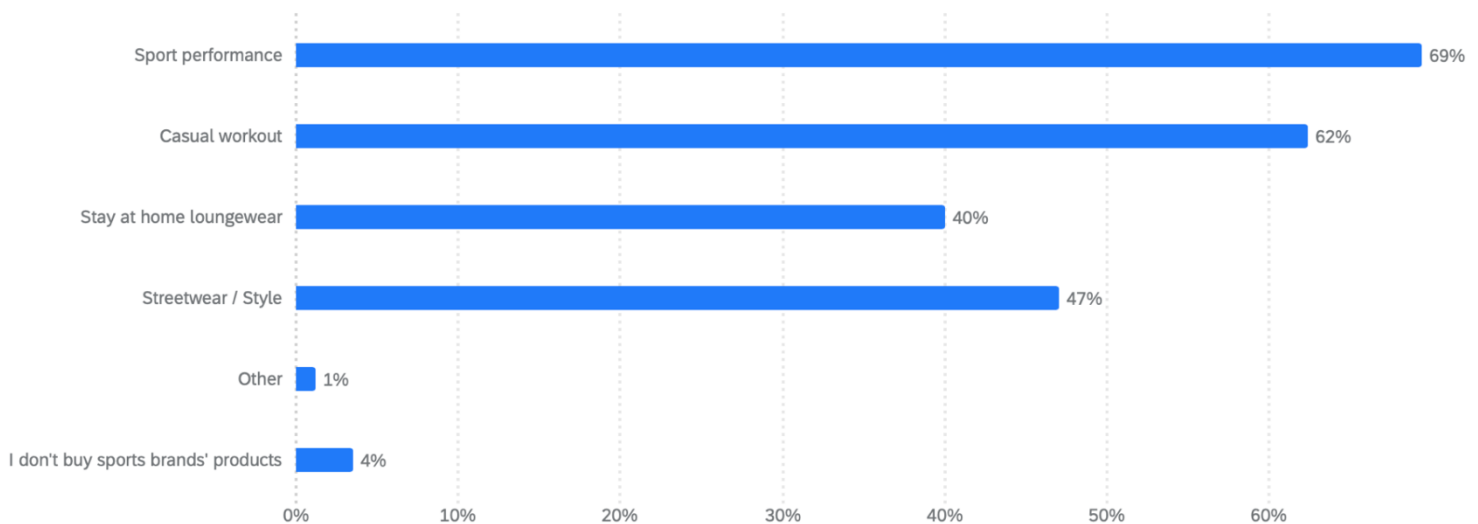
	Quality / Technicity / Performance	Brand associated athletes and icons	CSR initiatives of the brand	Emotional attachment	Brand image and reputation	Trend / Style
Mode	2.72	3.78	3.60	3.80	3.48	3.63
Median	1.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.00	4.00
Mode	1	5	4	2	3	6

*Table 6 - Sports person perception of sports brands*

#### 4.2.4 Sports apparel buying purpose

What are the main use of the products you buy from a sports brand? (multiple answers possible) ⓘ

...



*Figure 9 – Respondents' sports apparel buying habits*

To refine our research, it is necessary to know what are the main uses of the sports products bought by our respondents. In fact, it will have a significant impact on the future analysis of the results since we can imagine that the expectation of a sports product from someone who uses it for competition and performance will be different than from someone who use it just for the style or comfort.

Since we tried to collect answers from as many sports person as possible we obtained the use of Sports Performance as the largest part of our sample (69%), then people usually purchase from a sports brand for their casual workout (62%), and for the style, especially with the growing streetwear trend which concerns 47% of respondents. As multiple answers were possible it is normal to obtain a high percentage for sports performance and casual workouts knowing that people training daily will have different use of their sports equipment.

40% of respondents also buy from sports brands to stay at home in comfortable loungewear, which is not surprising knowing the increasing number of people working from home since Covid pandemic.

Lastly, only a few parts of our sample don't buy sports products at all or have other uses than what had been suggested (without specifying which ones).

This question allows us to have an overview of our respondents' purchasing habits and certify that the great majority of our sample is reliable for this study as they almost all (95%) know and interact with sports brands.

## 4.3 Hypothesis Testing

This part aims to test our three different hypotheses and observe the actual impact of different brand extension strategies on the customers' perception of the luxuriousness of a brand. Here the questions' results are displayed but other rising questions and the validation or rejection of our initial hypothesis will also be discussed.

### 4.3.1 Luxury brands sponsoring sports entities

To what extend do you agree with the following statement: Top luxury fashion brands engaging in sponsorship deals with sports entities (events, athletes) are positively impacting their:

To what extend do you agree with the following statements: Top luxury fash...	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
Brand awareness and image	39%	43%	12%	4%	1%
Prestige and exclusivity	21%	33%	29%	14%	3%
Emotional connection with customers	36%	43%	13%	8%	0%
Brand credibility in the sports market	30%	33%	18%	14%	4%
Story, value and heritage consistency	14%	43%	18%	18%	4%
CSR engagement perception	9%	37%	30%	14%	9%

*Table 7 – Respondents' impression of sponsoring strategies*

In order to test our first hypothesis:

- H1: Luxury fashion brands sponsoring widespread sports events or athletes have a negative impact on their luxury perception.

We asked respondents what was their impression of the impact of sponsoring on different aspects of luxury.

The first aspect studied in this tab is the brand awareness and image of the luxury fashion brand. Thus, we can see that most respondents (82%) think sponsorship deals between luxury brands and sports entities have a positive impact on the luxury brand awareness. Concerning the prestige and exclusivity of the luxury brand 54% of respondents somewhat or strongly believe that sponsoring has a positive impact on it while 29% think it has no particular impact, and 17% disagree with the fact that it would have a positive impact on the prestige of the luxury brand.

As seen previously, creating a connection with customers seems the key to loyalty nowadays for luxury brands, the results here shows that 79% of respondents agree that luxury fashion brands sponsoring sports event or athletes are positively impacting their emotional connection with customers. Then concerning the luxury brand credibility in the sports market and the consistency with its story, heritage, and value, the results are mitigated with more people disagreeing with the fact that sponsoring would have a positive impact on these aspects (18% and 22%) and 18% being neutral to this statement. However, there is still a majority of respondents answering positively to this statement ( 63% for the credibility aspect and 57% for the consistency).

Eventually the CSR engagement perception of luxury fashion brand when sponsoring sports entities is not seen as positively impacted. Indeed, 30% of respondents neither agree or disagree to this statement, implying that there's no potential link or effect between sponsorship and CSR initiatives. However, 46% of respondents believe there's a positive correlation between the 2 with 9% of respondents strongly agree, which is, on the other hand, the same amount of person who strongly disagrees with the statement and thus believe in a negative link between sponsorship and CSR with other 14% of people who somewhat disagree.

- 1- B. What best describe your impression of a luxury fashion brand sponsoring a widespread sport event or athlete? (multiple answers possible)

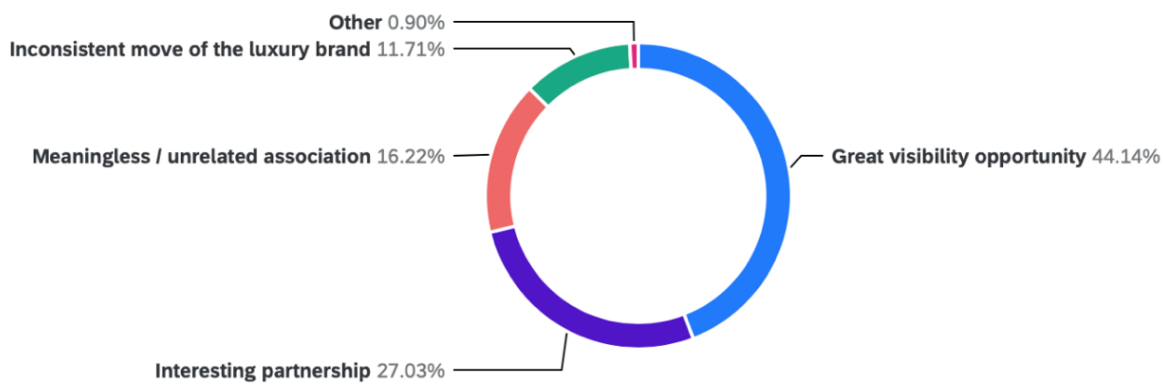


Figure 10 - Pie chart with shared percentage

What best describe your impression of a luxury fashion brand sponsoring a widespread sport event or athlete... ⓘ

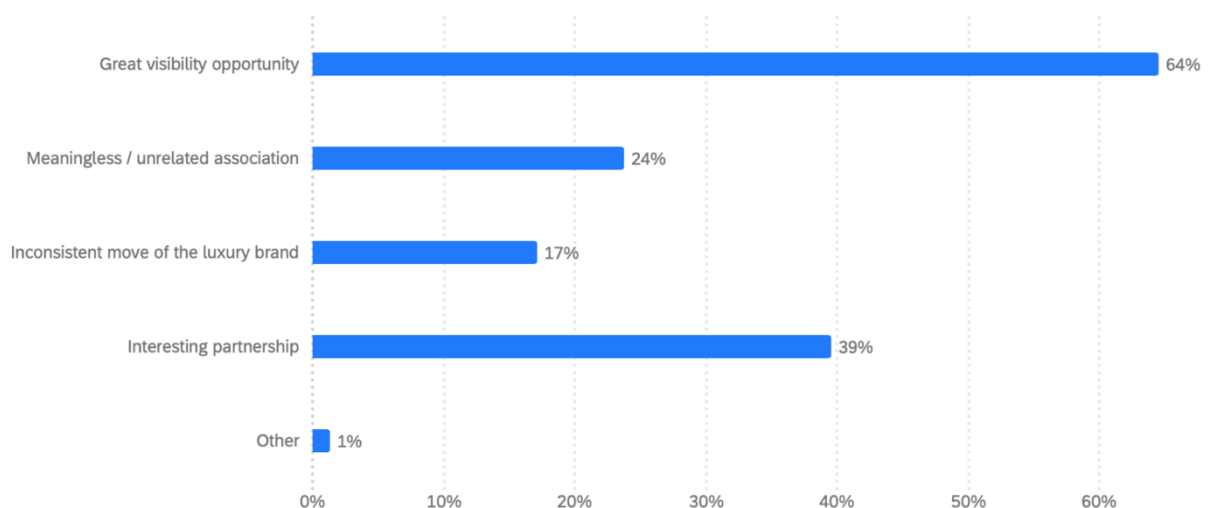


Figure 11 - Bar chart with the number of responses in percentage of total

This question serves as a complementary question to summarize more simply respondents' opinions on luxury fashion brands sponsoring widespread events or athletes and thus answer to our first hypothesis. Generally, people have a positive image of luxury brand entering the sports market through sponsorship strategies, with 64% of respondent thinking it is a great visibility opportunity and almost 40% judging it as an interesting partnership although they initially don't belong in the same category. However, there are still 24% of people thinking that these strategies are meaningless as they are unrelated associations and 17% say it is an inconsistent move from the luxury fashion brand as it is in opposition with its initial field.

- H0: Luxury fashion brands sponsoring widespread sports events or athletes harms their luxury perception.
- H1: Luxury fashion brands sponsoring widespread sports events or athletes has a positive impact on their luxury perception.

Thus, we can reject our null hypothesis and accept H1, implying that top luxury fashion brands sponsoring sports events have a positive impact on their luxury image.

Indeed, if the CSR initiatives aspect and the consistency with the brand's story, heritage, and value are not necessarily perceived as positively impacted by sponsorship. Brand awareness, prestige, and emotional connection with customers (which were deemed the most important criteria for a brand to be perceived as luxury) are positively touched by sponsoring strategies.

Consequently, the statement made in the literature review concerning sponsoring strategies in luxury must be nuanced when applied to the sports market. Indeed, numerous authors including Dubois, Vigneron and Johnson stated that advertising by sponsoring may damage the brand's exclusive image since it would reduce the attributes associated with luxury brands and harm the overall perception of luxury. In our study on the contrary, it is visible that a luxury fashion brand sponsoring widespread sports events or athletes is increasing the brand's perceived prestige as being a renowned athlete or attending a major sports event is not accessible to everyone, it reinforces the exclusive, inaccessible and scarce aspect of the luxury brand.

#### 4.3.2 Luxury fashion brands collaborating with sports brands

To what extent do you agree with the following statements: Luxury Fashion Brands' collaboration collections with sports brands are positively impacting their:

To what extent do you agree with the following statements: Luxury Fashion...	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
Brand awareness and image	42%	31%	19%	7%	1%
Prestige and exclusivity	19%	30%	19%	28%	4%
Emotional connection with customers	22%	49%	23%	5%	1%
Credibility and legitimacy in the sports market (high product performance and technicity)	20%	43%	19%	14%	4%
Story, value and heritage consistency	15%	28%	32%	20%	4%
CSR engagement perception	9%	32%	34%	22%	3%

*Table 9 - Respondents' impression of collaboration strategies*

In order to test our second hypothesis:

- H2: Luxury fashion brands collaborating with sports brands positively impact the luxury image of the brand

We asked respondents if Luxury fashion brands launching a co-branded collection with a sports brand has an impact on their impression of different aspects of luxury.

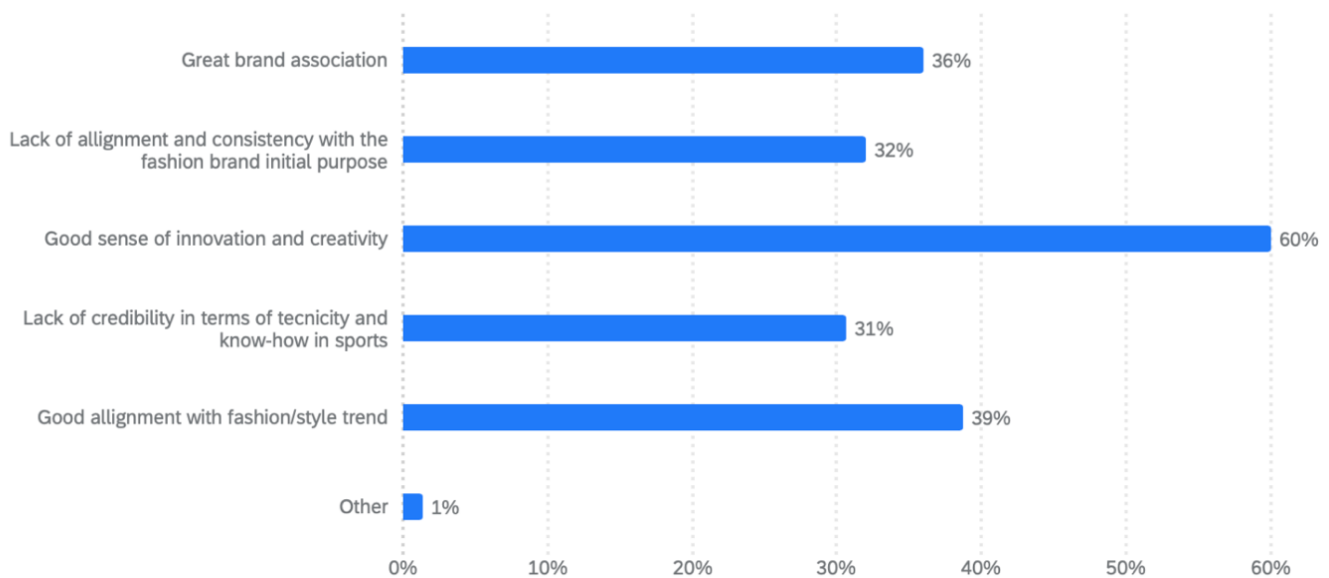
The first aspect at stake here again is the brand awareness and image of the luxury fashion brand. Thus, we can see that a majority of respondents (73%) think that collaborations between luxury brands and sports brands have a positive impact on the luxury brand image, among them 42% of people strongly agree with this statement. However, concerning the prestige and exclusivity of the luxury brand only 49% of respondents somewhat or strongly believe that collaborations have a positive impact on it while 32% disagree on the fact that it would have a positive impact on the prestige of the luxury brand.

Then for what concerns the important creation of an emotional connection with the customers, the results here show that 71% of respondents agree that luxury fashion brands collaborating with sports brands or athletes are positively impacting their emotional bond with customers. The luxury brand credibility and legitimacy in the sports market which implies offering products of high quality and technicity is said to be positively impacted by the brand extension strategy at stake by a majority of 63% of respondents.

On the other hand, the consistency of the luxury fashion brand with its story, heritage, and value, is overall rather negatively impacted by collaboration strategies with 24% of respondents disagreeing with the statement and 32% being neutral.

Eventually, the CSR engagement perception of luxury fashion brands when collaborating with sports entities is not seen as positively impacted. Indeed, 34% of respondents neither agree or disagree with this statement, implying that there's no potential link or effect between co-branding and CSR initiatives. However, 41% of respondents believe there's a positive correlation between the 2 with 9% of respondents who strongly agree, which is, on the other hand, higher than the amount of people who strongly disagree to the statement (3%) and thus believe in a negative link between collabs and CSR with 22% of people who somewhat disagree.

- 1- B. What best describe your impression of a luxury fashion brand when launching a sportswear collection in collaboration with a sports brand? (multiple answers possible)



*Figure 12 – Luxury fashion brand collaboration with sport brand impression*

As per the first hypothesis testing question, this question aims at having an overview of respondents' opinions on luxury fashion brands collaborating with sports brands or athletes. Generally, people have a positive image of luxury brands entering the sports market through

collaboration strategies, with 60% of respondents thinking it is a good sense of innovation and creativity. Moreover, almost 40% also think it's in total alignment with current fashion and style trends, and 36% of respondents judge this move as a great brand association although they initially don't belong in the same category. However, there are still 32% of people thinking that this strategy lacks alignment and consistency with the luxury fashion brand's initial purpose and 31% say the luxury fashion brand has no credibility in terms of technicity and know-how for performance when entering the sports market even if it's through a recognized sports brand.

We can notice that compared to the sponsorship impression section, the negative impression of the effect of collaboration are slightly higher here. This can be explained by the fact that collaboration strategies are even more positioning luxury brands as entering the sports market compared to sponsorship strategies that can be perceived just as a visibility strategy.

H0: Luxury fashion brands collaborating with sports brands positively impact the luxury image of the brand

H1: Luxury fashion brands collaborating with sports brands negatively impact the luxury image of the brand

In this situation, we can thus accept the null hypothesis since collaboration strategies are positively perceived by customers regarding their impact on the luxuriousness of the brand. As visible through the survey results, a majority of respondents believe collaboration strategies between luxury fashion brands and renowned sports brands are in alignment with today's marketing trend and demonstrate a good sense of innovation and creativity which improve their luxury appeal.

Overall, a luxury brand collaborating with a settled sports brand will attract the curiosity of customers while maintaining credibility thanks to the sports brand's technicity combined with the luxury brand's fashion prestige. This confirms Jemma Oeppen and Ahmad Jamal (2014) observation of collaboration strategies, stating that it can create value based on the right relationship between the 2 brands, just like complementary expertise.

These results match our initial findings detailed in the first part of this paper where collaborations and sponsoring are described as the safest way to expand into a new market while surfing on current trends. However, as mentioned by Murtas et al. (2022) luxury brands

should collaborate with well-known brands within their target market before considering partnerships with brands from other sectors and when doing so the 2 brands' values and visions must align in some ways. It is therefore important to consider that the findings of this survey obviously vary according to the perceived match in the collaboration, and thus, these results depend on the collaboration at stake.

### 4.3.3 Luxury fashion brands launching their own sports collection

To what extent do you agree with the following statements: Luxury Fashion Brands extending their product line to sportswear are positively impacting their:

To what extent do you agree with the following statements: Luxury Fashion...	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
Premium brand image	22%	27%	18%	28%	5%
Prestige and exclusivity	15%	19%	28%	30%	8%
Story, value and heritage consistency	14%	24%	26%	24%	12%
Credibility and legitimacy in the sports market (high product performance and technicity)	19%	31%	15%	27%	8%
Emotional connection with customers	20%	31%	30%	15%	3%
CSR engagement perception	16%	20%	38%	18%	7%

*Table 10 - Respondents' impression of line extension strategies*

To test our third hypothesis:

- H3: Luxury fashion brand product category extension into the sports industry harms the consumer perception of a luxury brand.

We asked respondents what are their impression when a luxury fashion brand decides to launch its own sportswear line as a brand extension strategy. Here is a general overview of

the response obtained since the factors studied are numerous, but the detailed results for each aspects of luxury are available into charts in the annex part.

The first aspect of luxury studied in this tab is the premium brand image of the luxury fashion brand. Thus, it seems that the results are more mitigated here compared to the other hypothesis tested, indeed, only 47% of respondents think that the product line extension strategy has a positive impact on the luxury brand premium image. On the other hand, 33% of respondents believe that it harms the luxury fashion premium brand image, a key aspect of the luxury perception. These results somewhat confirm the previous findings of our secondary research where, according to Henning N. et al. (2013), consumers' perception of a luxury brand after a product category extension (implying a downgrading strategy) reduces their association of the brand with luxury.

Concerning the prestige and exclusivity of the luxury brand only 34% of respondents somewhat or strongly believe that launching its own sportswear line as a luxury fashion brand has a positive impact on it while 28% think it has no particular impact, and 38% disagree on the fact that it would have a positive impact on the prestige of the luxury brand. These numbers are aligned with Roux and Floch (1996) affirmation that brand extensions can undermine the perception of exclusivity and uniqueness in luxury. As mentioned previously some luxury brands experience brand damage as a result of overintroducing line extensions that increase availability and diminish the prestige associated with the brand (Lane and Jacobson 1997).

Then concerning the luxury brand consistency with its story, heritage and value, the results are not positive with more people disagreeing with the fact that product extension would have a positive impact on consistency (36%) and 26% being neutral to this statement. However, there is still 38% of respondents thinking the strategy at stake has a positive impact here.

An important aspect to consider in this case is the luxury brand's credibility and legitimacy to enter the sports market, which is negatively perceived here by 35% people disagreeing with the fact that a luxury fashion brand has enough know-how in high product performance and technicity. Nonetheless, 50% of respondents estimate that a luxury brand has enough credibility and legitimacy to enter the sports market anyway, while 15% of respondents are neutral to the question.

For what concerns, the emotional connection created with the customer through a product line extension, the results here show that 51% of respondents agree that luxury fashion brands are positively impacting their emotional connection with customers with this strategy. However, 30% of respondents neither agree nor disagree suggesting that there's no particular link between launching a sports collection and fostering more emotional interaction with the customer, while 18% believe it has on the contrary a negative impact on the customer attachment to the luxury brand.

CSR engagement perception of luxury fashion brand when launching its own sports products is, here again, seen as negatively impacted. Indeed, 38% of respondents neither agree or disagree with this statement and, 25% somewhat or strongly disagree. However, 36% of respondents believe there's a positive correlation between the two.

### 3-B. What best describes your impression of a luxury fashion brand when launching its own sportswear collection? (multiple answers possible)

What best describes your impression of a luxury fashion brand when launching its own sportswear collectio... ⓘ

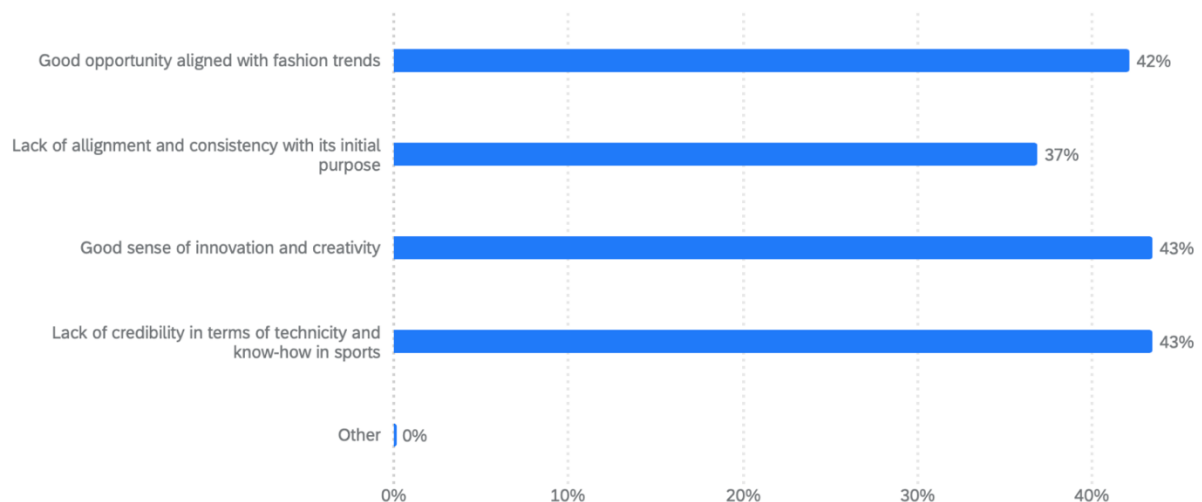


Figure 13 – Luxury fashion brand line extension into sport impression

According to this simplified opinion overview question, we can notice that, as opposed to the two previous brand expansion strategy tested (sponsorship and collaborations), respondents have a more mitigated opinion of luxury brand launching their own sportswear collection.

Generally, 43% of respondents think it is a good sense of innovation and creativity from the luxury fashion brand but the same amount of people believe there's a lack of credibility in terms of technicity and know-how to enter the sports market. Eventually, 42% of respondents think it's a good opportunity in alignment with current fashion trends, which makes it overall more positive than negative as the last negative opinion possible choice gathers 37% of respondents thinking that the luxury brand lacks alignment and consistency with its initial purpose when entering the sports market.

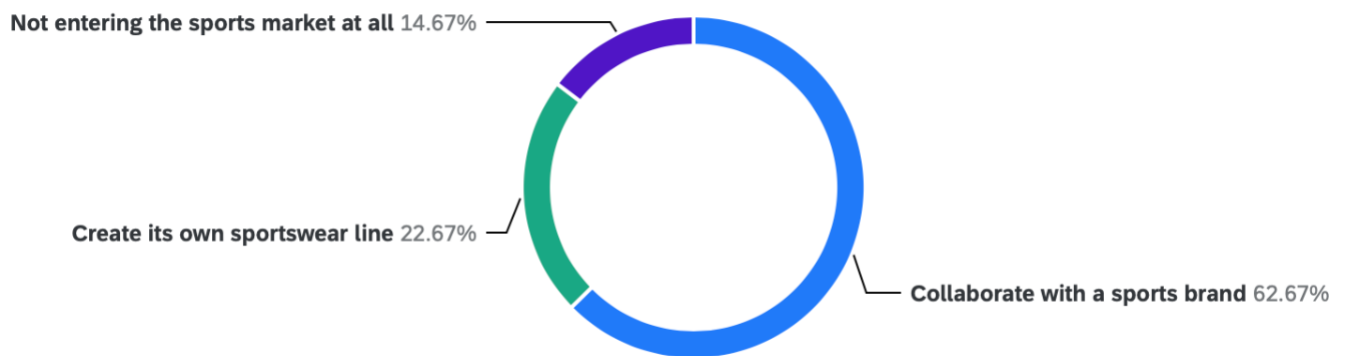
We can notice that compared to the sponsorship impression section, the negative impression of the effect of product extension is higher here.

H0: Luxury fashion brand product category extension into the sports industry improves the consumer perception of a luxury brand.

H1: Luxury fashion brand product category extension into the sports industry harms the consumer perception of a luxury brand.

Our data results show that despite what was observed in previous research, when a luxury fashion brand extends its product offer into sports apparel it is overall positively perceived by customers. We can thus accept the null hypothesis and reject our initial hypothesis stating that product category extension into the sports industry harms the consumer perception of the luxuriousness of a brand. However, it is important to note that even though there is majority of respondents answered positively to the survey, the amount of people disagreeing with the fact that product category extension has a positive impact on the luxury image of a brand is way larger than for sponsorship or collaboration strategies. We can thus consider that luxury fashion brands extending their product line into the sports market may encounter more difficulties in reaching a general success, as it will convince only a bit more than half of its usual target market.

3-C. In your opinion, is it more relevant for a luxury brand to create its own sportswear line or to collaborate with a sports brand already qualified in the sports industry and why?



*Figure 14 – Collaborate, create, or not enter at all?*

As a final question respondents were asked to give their opinion on the strategic move a luxury brand is worth doing to enter the sports market and if possible, they were invited to justify their choice so we could better understand and analyze their perception and possibly reveal new parameters possibilities to complement the research.

On the graph here, a significant majority appears from the answers with almost 63% of respondents thinking that it is more relevant for a luxury fashion brand to enter the sports market through a collaboration strategy with an already qualified sports brand. On the other hand, the option of creating its own sportswear line as a luxury fashion brand is chosen by 22.67% of respondents, implying that this option is less attractive for customers who rather see luxury fashion brands in the sports market through co-branded products that through their own name.

Lastly, a minority of respondents believe that luxury fashion brands rather not enter the sports market at all, probably because this brand extension is meaningless and unrelated to them, but we will see what are the most recurrent justification for these choices.

Eventually, this last graph well reflects what has previously been found through our survey and can give an insight into luxury fashion brands willing to enter the sports market to know which move is safer to do according to their perception by potential customers.

This last question, although it was guided with some predetermined answers, was also an exploratory one as respondents were asked to explain why they chose one strategy over another. As many different justifications were provided, only the relevant ones were kept and

those conveying similar ideas were gathered and reformulated into one concept to ensure the clarity of the answers. Here is a selection of the most relevant justification obtained:

- **From respondents who chose “Collaborate with a sports brand” as the best brand extension strategy:**

“To benefit from the innovation and legitimacy of the sports brand.”

“It’s a tough question because collaborations between sport and luxury became a must now but it also depends on the brands at stake. I think that overall entering the sports market is really timely and surely profitable for luxury fashion houses, but collaborations have to be carefully thought to align with both brands’ values and missions, otherwise, it’s a flop. On the other hand, creating its own sportswear line is the riskiest option but here again, if it guarantees a high-quality product and proves that it is not just for communication buzz the luxury brand can gain credibility and be valuable in the sport market”

“For the know-how of the sport brand”

“There are lower risks and low innovative cost”

“Collaborating with a sports brand is a good strategy if it doesn’t change the original purpose of the luxury brand while expanding to new customers and new trends. Moreover, sport is often seen as a positive activity, with important benefits on your health, body, lifestyle etc. which makes it a good added value for the brand”

“To have the credibility and know how to produce effective sports products”

“To make yourself known more easily, and attract more people”

“Actively introducing a respectable sports brand's quality (in materials and design) into their collection, giving priority to practicality and comfort rather than innovative / creative design.”

“It would bring them more technicity and know how to compete in the sports industry”

“For the credibility”

“The best thing a luxury brand can do is to take the biggest athletes of each sport to promote their collaboration in the sports market (ex: football Ronaldo or Messi will promote the brand collaboration)”

- **From respondents who chose “Create its own sportswear line” as the most relevant brand extension strategy:**

“I think it might depend on what type of sportswear but if they create their own line, they can make sure it’s better aligned with the brand perhaps.”

“Provides exclusivity and loyalty for those who support that luxury brand”

“Sports can now be considered as an activity reserved to a certain elite (horseback riding golf...) and create its own sportswear line perfectly match with the premium brand image.

However, a normal customer who doesn’t often buy those types of brands can perceive it as a mockery because of the ridiculous price of a jumper for example.”

“If a luxury brand creates in own sports line, it is very much likely that its initial customers that do physical activities will then turn to the luxury brand at stake to buy products instead of buying from a random sports brand because their favorite luxury fashion brand wasn’t initially making athleisure clothing.”

“Even if a luxury fashion brand’s initial purpose is not to make sports apparel, real connoisseur and fans of a luxury brand would buy anything from the luxury brand no matter its relevance in the market. Thus, a luxury fashion brand would get all benefits from launching its own sportswear line”

“According to me if a luxury fashion brand creates its own sportswear line it won’t damage its image to the public neither would it be judged as not qualified or not credible to enter the sports market. Indeed, luxury brands are known for providing the best quality possible and excellence in their product so in the same way it would be perceived at launching top notch sports products and won’t need to prove anything to be performant in the sports industry as their brand reputation is already settled.”

**- From respondents who chose “Not entering the sports market at all” as the most relevant brand extension strategy:**

“Entering the sports market is trendy but, in my opinion, it is just for fashion purposes and not really for sports performance and credibility in the sports market. Luxury fashion brands can enter the sports market just for the cool image but I won't trust them for real sports matters.”

“I don’t think we should have a collaboration between both sides. If you do so, you lose the opportunity of selling a « high quality » and « premium » product by making it less difficult to buy on the market.”

“Extending into the sport market would just remove the prestige and scarcity associated with a luxury brand”

“As a sport person I believe luxury fashion brand should not enter the sports market at all as they would just distort the proper function and mean of sport apparel and sport in general. Luxury brands are just betting on the current trend of sport, but sport should remain a physical activity about performance and passion, it should remain open to everyone and not belong to a luxury elite.”

“If a luxury fashion brand is planning to enter the sports market for marketing and fashion goals it will probably work but if the luxury brand is really planning to reach sports persons with an actual sportswear collection it will fail as no athlete would pay more to buy sports apparel from a brand which is not specialized in the discipline and know nothing about real performance.”

“I am more interested in sports than fashion so for me a luxury fashion brand entering the sports market would just be a mockery to attract wealthy elite without any real concern about the sports aspect behind the collection.”

## **CHAPTER 5 - Conclusion:**

This part here aims at further discussing and summarizing the main findings detailed above in the context of the research question and potentially raise some limitations in the study.

### **5.1 Additional hypothesis raised after the exploratory question results**

Thanks to the justifications gathered above, some side hypotheses emerged, especially concerning the importance of the brand compared to the product.

The importance of brand reputation over the inherent quality of the product itself is particularly emphasized in the context of luxury fashion brands entering the sports market. As one testimony highlights, even if a luxury brand's initial focus is not on sports apparel, dedicated connoisseurs and loyal fans of the brand are likely to purchase products regardless of their specific relevance to the market. This suggests that the mere association with a luxury brand can be enough to drive sales and secure a foothold in a new market. Another perspective reinforces this, arguing that the creation of a sportswear line by a luxury brand would neither damage its public image nor undermine its credibility. The association with quality and excellence that luxury brands command would naturally extend to their sportswear offerings, meaning these brands would not need to prove their capability within the sports industry. Their established reputation would suffice to assure consumers of the high standards and performance expected from luxury products. This underscores the idea that in the luxury sector, brand identity and reputation often outweigh the specific qualities of the product itself, allowing luxury brands to successfully diversify into new markets without risking their established prestige. This leads the way to potential future research to question whether it is actually the product or the brand that matters most.

Consequently, one may also wonder if a luxury brand extension strategy in the sports market isn't just about creating buzz and improving its marketing results. Indeed, as observed in the last exploratory question, answers justifying the option of not entering the sports market at all for a luxury fashion brand were in the majority chosen by respondents who were more interested in sports than fashion. The opinions gathered reflect a strong skepticism toward luxury fashion brands entering the sports market, primarily due to concerns about legitimacy, performance, and the preservation of brand prestige. Many respondents view such moves as

driven more by fashion trends than by genuine engagement with sports performance, arguing that the credibility of luxury brands in sportswear is questionable. This perceived lack of expertise and focus on true athletic needs is seen as undermining both the function of sports apparel and the exclusivity that defines luxury brands. The fear is that this fusion would dilute the prestige of luxury brands, making their products seem less exclusive and more accessible, thereby losing their premium status. Moreover, there is a concern that such ventures could distort the essence of sports, turning it into a domain for the elite rather than a universal activity rooted in passion and performance.

## **5.2 Results of hypothesis testing**

The main purpose of this paper was to understand why luxury fashion brands are increasingly entering the sports market and have a deeper knowledge of the customer's luxury perception after such practice to see if luxury fashion is compatible with sports. Through secondary research in the form of a literature review, it was first observed that luxury brand extensions are marketing strategies made to fulfill the evolution of the luxury demand and the democratization of luxury. Applied to the sports market, they are the result of the increasing need to connect with customers on an emotional level, and an answer to the athleisure and streetwear trend.

However, most articles dealt with luxury brand extension strategy in general and this study focuses on brand extension to the sports field in particular. Thanks to our quantitative study it was first found that for both fashion luxury and sport-interested persons combined, the quality, know-how, and heritage of a brand is the first determinant of luxury followed by emotional attachment and connection with the brand. This finding aligns with the empirical studies presented in the first chapters where luxury brands were said to initially focus more on their product development and functional values, and that now the emphasis of modern branding is more customer-oriented through the symbolic value of the brand. The findings of our research prove that these 2 main determinants are generally not harmed by any brand extension strategies in the sports market, thus showing a greater openness from customers and rejecting some of the hypotheses raised after the studies of brand extension in general, as mentioned in our literature review.

All in all, notable differences between the different brand extension strategies lie in the degrees of sports knowledge they require.

- H1: Luxury fashion brands sponsoring widespread sports events or athletes have a positive impact on their luxury perception. Not only it is a great way for the luxury brand to get more visibility and enhance its brand awareness but it also contributes to fostering an emotional connection with customers while reinforcing its prestigious image and exclusive aspect due to the difficulty of accessing some events.
- H2: Luxury fashion brands collaborating with sports brands positively impact the luxury image of the brand. Collaborations are perceived as timely and innovative; they contribute to the luxury brand visibility and exclusivity aspect expressed through unique limited-edition collections with sports brands. However, collaborations need to be carefully thought out based on the brands' shared values and icons to be relevant and align with the luxury image in the public's eye.
- H3: Even though it is perceived as more relevant for a luxury fashion brand to collaborate with an established sports brand rather than launching a sportswear line on its own, product category extensions into the sports industry don't always harm the consumer perception of a luxury brand. Results show very mitigated opinion towards this strategy that risks damaging the luxury image of a fashion brand, especially through its prestige and exclusivity. Nevertheless, the luxury image of a fashion brand extending its offer to sportswear is overall more positively than negatively perceived thanks to the emotional connection built with customers, and the credibility and premium brand image of the luxury brand.

### **5.3 Limitations, Managerial Implications, and suggestion for Future Research**

This paper has been written in the context of a master's thesis and presents several limitations due to this format. Some limitations mostly lie in the sample size and diversity. Indeed, the sample primarily consisted of 102 people which is quite limited to apply to a larger scope. Moreover, most of them were student respondents with a rather small budget and mostly coming from France or Italy, thus the findings may not be generalizable across different markets or consumer segments since luxury perception might also be influenced by culture and purchasing power. Although the survey was conducted through a quantitative study, the

results rely heavily on subjective consumer perceptions, which can vary widely based on personal experiences, cultural influences, and individual preferences. This subjectivity may introduce bias and limit the applicability of the findings to broader contexts. As mentioned in the methodology the research was conducted in a specific timeframe, during Paris 2024 Olympic Games, when trends and consumer attitudes towards luxury brands in the sports market were particularly prominent. These trends might shift over time, making the findings less relevant in the future.

Eventually, the focus on luxury fashion brands entering the sports market may overlook other important factors, such as the role of digital marketing, the influence of social media, or the impact of global economic conditions on luxury brand perception. All these factors, obviously have an impact on the luxury perception. Due to the time and length restriction of this thesis, we decided to focus our research on certain key factors in luxury perception, however, it is necessary to keep in mind numerous other factors contributing to the success or failure of a luxury fashion brand extension strategy.

Indeed, luxury fashion brands should carefully consider their choice of sports brand collaborators, ensuring that the partnership aligns with their brand values and enhances their luxury image. Limited-edition collections that emphasize exclusivity and innovation can be particularly effective. Sponsoring high-profile sports events or athletes can be a powerful tool for enhancing brand prestige and visibility. However, brands should be selective, focusing on events and individuals that resonate with their target audience and reinforce their luxury positioning. For what concerns autonomous sports product line creation, any sportswear line must emphasize premium quality, exclusivity, and alignment with the brand's core identity to avoid negative consumer perceptions. Last but not least, the important is to clearly define whom to target when entering the sports market (as shown earlier, consumers' perception depends on their interest in sports or luxury fashion). Brands should then prioritize understanding their consumers' emotional connections and perceptions to strengthen brand loyalty and maintain a luxury image even when entering new market segments like sports.

Based on the emerging side hypothesis and limitations, future research could explore the balance between brand reputation/prestige and the product quality itself in driving consumer decisions. Studies could also further examine the importance of the quality of marketing (with social media, influencers, etc) in shaping these perceptions.

Additionally, examining how such brand extensions impact overall luxury perception with consumer segmentation between sports and fashion enthusiasts could inform more tailored marketing strategies and product offerings. It could also be valuable to conduct cross-cultural studies to explore how perceptions of luxury fashion brands entering the sports market vary globally according to different target markets.

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# APPENDIX:

## THE SURVEY

Respondents portrait:

1- How do you identify?

- Female
- Male
- Other
- Do not wish to answer

2 - How old are you?

- Under 18
- 18 – 25
- 26 – 35
- 36 – 55
- 56 and above

3 – What's your profession?

- Student
- Employee
- Self-Employed
- Executive
- Retired
- Unemployed not looking for a job
- Unemployed actively looking for a job

4 – What's your monthly salary?

- No revenue
- 1\$ - 1000\$
- 1001\$ - 2000\$
- 2001\$ - 5000\$
- More than 5000\$

5 – Rate your interest in these topics

	Not interested at all	Neutral	Interested	Very Interested
Sports	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fashion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Luxury Fashion world	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6 - What factors are most influential in defining a brand as luxury? Please rank the following factors in order of importance to you (1 being the most influential and 6 being the least influential).

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Quality / Craftmanship / Heritage / Know-how	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
High end brand image / Social status indicator	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Exclusivity / Uniqueness / Prestige	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Premium price	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Brand experience / Emotional connection	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
CSR initiatives of the brand	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7 - What factors **matter most to you** when considering a **sports brand**? Please rank the following factors in order of importance to you (1 being the most important and 6 being the least important).

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Quality / Technicity / Performance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Brand associated athletes and icons	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Emotional attachment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
CSR initiatives of the brand	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Brand image and reputation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Trend / Style	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8 - What are the main use of the products you buy from a **sports brand**? (multiple answers possible)

- Casual workout
- Sport performance
- Stay at home loungewear
- Streetwear / Style
- Other
- I don't buy sports brands' products

Hypothesis testing

9 - To what extend do you agree with the following statements:

**Top luxury fashion brands** engaging in **sponsorship** deals with **sports entities** (events,

athletes) are **positively impacting** their:

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
Brand awareness and image	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Emotional connection with customers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Prestige and exclusivity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Brand credibility in the sports market	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
CSR engagement perception	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Story, value and heritage consistency	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10 - What best describe your impression of a luxury fashion brand sponsoring a widespread sport event or athlete? (multiple answers possible)

- Great visibility opportunity
- Meaningless/unrelated brand association
- Inconsistent move of the luxury brand
- Interesting partnership
- Other

11 - To what extent do you agree with the following statements:

Luxury brands collaborations with sport brand are positively impacting their:

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
Brand awareness and image	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Emotional connection with customers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Prestige and exclusivity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Credibility and legitimacy in the sports market (high product performance and technicity)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
CSR engagement perception	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Story, value and heritage consistency	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

12 - What best describes your impression of a luxury fashion brand when launching a sportswear collection in collaboration with a sports brand? (multiple answers possible)

- Great brand association
- Lack of alignment and consistency with the brand initial purpose
- Good sense of innovation and creativity
- Lack of credibility in terms of technicity and know-how in sports
- Good alignment with fashion style / trend
- Other

13 - To what extent do you agree with the following statements:

Luxury Fashion Brands extending their product line to sportswear are positively impacting their ...

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
Premium brand image	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Emotional connection with customers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Prestige and exclusivity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Credibility and legitimacy in the sports market (high product performance and technicity)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
CSR engagement perception	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Story, value and heritage consistency	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

14 - What best describes your impression of a luxury fashion brand when launching its own sportswear collection? (multiple answers possible)

- Good opportunity aligned with fashion trends
- Lack of alignment and consistency with its initial purpose
- Good sense of innovation and creativity
- Lack of credibility in terms of technicity and know-how in sports
- Other

15 - In your opinion, which strategy would be more effective for a luxury fashion brand willing to enter the sports market and why?

- Create its own sportswear line
- Collaborate with a sports brand
- Not entering the sports market at all