

## From shame to pride: consuming second-hand luxury as a sustainable practice

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**Purpose:** What is the value-in-use of sustainable choices? Through interviews and observations, we document the value processes of consumers buying second-hand luxury. While luxury is sometimes seen as the opposite of sustainability, we show not only how these concepts can be made compatible, but also describe how this can be done a way that favours sustainable and ethical choices while simultaneously driving customers' value-in-use.

**Design/Methodology/approach:** Through second-hand luxury boutiques, we got access to twelve customers who allowed us to observe them and interview them about their value processes in buying and using second hand luxury.

**Findings:** Our findings document a consumer journey in which customers increasingly take pride in their second-hand consumption. Many respondents tell us that at first they turned to second-hand luxury for financial reasons, but now increasingly take pride in their sustainable choices. Some respondents tell us how, at first, they were a bit ashamed of buying second-hand and tried to hide the fact that their luxury consumption was second-hand, then came a stage where they accepted it, and now many of them are proudly proclaiming it and take pride in buying second-hand. Our data describe how increased acceptance of their own choices also lead customers to perceive stronger value-in-use.

**Research limitations:** Reflecting consumption patterns, our sample of twelve customers is limited to female customers aged 24-65 years.

**Social implications:** Developing how a more sustainable form of luxury actually can increase customers' value-in-use has potentially far-reaching implications for society as the world struggles to combine ever-increasing consumption with the need for recycling. We show how ethical choices in luxury is not a contradiction, as sometime claimed, but instead a viable path towards more sustainable practices.

**Originality:** The value-in-use of luxury usually relies on conspicuous consumption, in stark contrast to buying second-hand. Our findings describe the complete opposite of the extant literature, as we follow the customer journeys of customers coming to take pride in buying second-hand.

**Key words** sustainable development; second-hand; luxury; value; stakeholders

**Paper type** –Research paper