

American and Italian Fashion Luxury Resale Market. A Cross-cultural Study

Carlotta Berlin and Tiziano Vescovi*

1. Introduction

Over 80% of the Top 100 companies in the luxury industry declared lower sales of luxury goods in 2020. The fall in demand for this type of products was mainly caused by the Covid-19 pandemic spread and the changes in consumer behavior (due to retail store closures and travel bans) it took with itself. Anyway, it is evident that Covid-19 has boosted a deep transformation, that the world of luxury was already going through.

Nowadays, luxury is no more related to an elite of people. There exists a deep cultural trend, which relies on a shift towards personal fulfilment and ambition through experience, and so the approach to luxury itself is totally changing (Yeoman, 2010).

Over the past decade, there have been two main phenomena which have boosted new ways to access luxury.

The first one is the increased relevance acquired by the experiential type of consumption, where customers are actively engaged and participate in a *moment of luxury*, a hedonic and escapist experience that is necessarily brief, spatial, liminal, ephemeral and collective, where people set aside their daily issues just for specific periods of time (Holmqvist, 2020). This phenomenon gives a new consumer-driven characterization of luxury, providing new interesting insights to analyze the topic (Holmqvist, 2020).

The second relevant occurrence for luxury's access relates to the power acquired by some multi-million platforms that offer new forms of digitalized buying experiences in luxury and which are forcing traditional retailers and brands to rethink their strategies (Christodoulides et al, 2021). Their powerful role will be better explained next in the chapter.

In addition to the relevance of the digital transformation, another important term to take into consideration for the revolution in the luxury world is sustainability.

The word *sustainable* appears now in many luxury products' labels, and the industry is filled by notions like ethical fashion (including responsible production methods, working conditions, and fair trade); circular fashion (related to recycling, upcycling, and thrifting); slow fashion (in the forms of sharing, renting) and conscious fashion (eco-friendly and green fashion).

In this sense, it is important to mention that the greatest effect on luxury consumption's change has been driven by the rise of the *sharing economy*. The sharing economy has also been referred to as *collaborative consumption* or *collaborative economy*, that is an economic system or model made of decentralized networks and marketplaces that release the value of underutilized assets by matching needs and haves (Botsman, 2015).

Christodoulides et al. (2021) have portrayed the main new forms of luxury consumptions embedded in the sharing economy scenario. Specifically, *on-demand economy*, *product-service economy*, *second-hand consumption* and *co-ownership* have been discussed.

The *on-demand economy* has been defined as “*the economic activity created by technology companies that fulfill consumer demand via the immediate provisioning of goods and services*” (Jaconi, 2014). Concerning the luxury sector, the term *on-demand economy* mostly refers to some

* Ca' Foscari University of Venice, Italy

apps which enable people renting a variety of items, from private jets, helicopters to Chanel's gala dresses just for one night.

Co-ownership is another exemplification of sharing economy. It is based on the activity of more consumers who permanently share a particular good/product/service, so taking advantage of the benefits deriving from ownership while avoiding the financial issues related to it (Christodoulides et al., 2021).

The *product-service* economy has to do with the presence of a company which provides a temporary access to a service or a good to a consumer; so, while the firm maintain the ownership of the product it offers, a variety of different consumers become temporary users along time (Christodoulides et al., 2021). Once the product has been used and returned, it becomes available again for another person to be rented (Frenker and Shor, 2017) .

On the contrary, different time perception is related to another version of the sharing economy, which is named *second-hand consumption*. In fact, it involves long-term ownership. It is about business selling consumers or users selling each other goods, often mediated by relative digital platforms.

This form of sharing economy has to do with the concept of permanent access to the products derived from the exchange (Christodoulides et al., 2021).

From this overview, what it is really outstanding is that the change of purchasing patterns triggered by the development of the sharing economy has democratized luxury, enabling the great majority of the population to access specific types of premium goods (Kachan, 2019).

It is nowadays evident that the secondary market for premium or luxury goods, where people can buy their pre-owned items (whether they are vintage or not) is booming, since it has become one of the fastest-growing luxury trends (Beauloye, 2021).

Despite cultural and geographical differences, attention and passion for resold clothing increased dramatically since the early 1990s due to celebrity endorsement and the relative media attention reserve to it (Cavallo 2020), involving always more luxury brands.

As it has been previously stated, in the last decade second-hand and vintage luxury market has grown a lot, reaching the acumen of success in the last two years. Among individual secondhand luxury segments, leather goods such as handbags are extremely popular. Also, the watches and more generally the jewelry segment is going well in the resale luxury market (Bianchi et al., 2020).

The reasons for the expansion of the luxury secondary market consumption are many, among them an increase in online sales, changing consumer preferences, and rising relevance given to the sustainability topic in the luxury world, supported in particular by the youngest generations (Bianchi et al., 2020). These trends were already well established before the Covid-19 outbreak hit, but the pandemic and the consequent economic crisis have boosted them. Online distribution platforms (have boosted luxury secondary market sales, offering well-crafted taxonomy, vast variety of goods, price transparency, home deliveries and repair services. The commercial power of these platforms has been so disruptive, that traditional luxury brands have recently started to collaborate with them.

At face value, if not properly handled, the secondary market can be a serious threat for luxury brands.

As it has already been stated, there is the obvious risk of first-hand luxury products' sales being cannibalized by more consumers buying second-hand items.

But maybe even more relevant than this, brand image can be profoundly menaced: "in the wild" of the secondary market, luxury companies risk to lose the control over the entire scenario their brands' are associated with. Moreover, many times, there is even no guarantee of the authenticity of the item traded; so, the fast-growing resale marketplaces can be a source for brand dilution if they do not certify for the authenticity or condition of resold products (Bianchi et al., 2020).

Anyway, even if with some skepticism due to the unsure reaction of luxury consumers, many luxury brands are nowadays involved inside secondary markets, in different ways. There are brands

who have a real positive approach towards this resale topic, since they find in the secondary luxury market an optimistic and exciting opportunity for them.

It is the current value of concepts like sustainability and waste reduction and the growing interest in fashion thrifting that demonstrate that the resale market in luxury is not just a trend of today, but it will be part of the fashion luxury business of tomorrow (Hawsley, 2021).

By incorporating buy-back and resale schemes directly into their business model, luxury brands have financial advantages derived from the items circled back through the business, while at the same time they protect their image and increase their sustainable improvement (Hawksley, 2021).

Operating internally or in certified collaborations with digital platforms, brands can demonstrate their commitment towards sustainability through resale initiatives, encouraging customers to use the same brand for both first-hand and second-hand sales and enhancing brand loyalty. Brands can furthermore leverage a wider customer base, acquiring new target segments who cannot usually buy the goods fully priced. Moreover, direct channels allow the brand to exclusively manage customer relationships and own relative data (Phillips, 2021).

In conclusion, even if some luxury brands have still some doubts about the impact of the pre-loved fashion in the new luxury market, data confirm a positive correlation between the two distinct markets.

2. Change in luxury consumers' behavior, from possession to experience

The substantial growth of the luxury resale market has demonstrated a shift in consumer behavior: it is evident that consumers are more focused on how they may experience rather than acquiring luxury (Thomsen, Holmqvist, von Wallpach, Hemetsberger, & Belk, 2020), with a shift towards an unconventional type of luxury consumption where it is relevant “having-to-being” and “owning-to-experiencing” (Cristini et al., 2017). The idea of recycling luxury has now become chic. The experience of luxury is still totally embedded in the resale scenario since it can be transferred from one owner to another in the secondary markets.

The store, in fact, is perceived as a place of discovery, not necessarily to purchase an item; consumers visit retailers as they were exhibitions. In Cervellon and Vigreux study (2018), the purchasing practice in a resale luxury store has been compared to a pilgrimage since people regularly come back inside the shop in order to be always informed about new items' introduction.

The level of luxury experience is created depending on the shops' atmosphere and environment, and the type of interactions created with the client advisors. If luxury boutiques can be perceived as stern places, resale luxury stores are much more easygoing.

On the contrary, online resale luxury platforms are a place of purchase, where the objective is much more functional, that is making a good deal. Resale luxury consumption has evolved from being a source of shame to being a source of pride, and so these items deserve the proper legitimacy and dream-value of brand-new luxury goods.

Many people are attracted by the thrill of the hunt (Guzzetti et al., 2021), excited by the idea of tracking down pre-loved luxury, stuck on a continuum between a lifelong pursuit that is never complete and a form of escape. Differently from the traditional form of luxury consumption, characterized by long-term relationship between the consumer and the brand, collaborative forms of luxury consumption, as in the resale market case, imply shorter, more recreational, and experiential types of purchasing motivations in addition to utilitarian consumption's reasons (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2017).

Starting from the assumption that luxury consumption is characterized by three diverse dimensions (Vickers and Renand, 2003), precisely the functional dimension (related to the good's

practical features and their ability to satisfy the consumers' expectations), the experiential dimension (easily attached to the hedonic atmosphere of luxury brands) and the symbolic dimension (including the value, dream and desirability of luxury in its whole), the authors have guided the research with a precise purpose. That is, the objective has been the one to understand in which way the luxury's goods previous life can influence the meanings attached to them, as well as how second-hand consumption can be characterized by the features of a real luxury experience.

The results of the research have attached to second-hand luxury possessions five meaning themes: sustainable choice, real deal, pre-loved treasure, risk investment and unique find (Turunen and Liepamaa-Leskinen, 2015), which end in becoming the major consumption's drivers for second-hand luxury items.

It can be said that, from a broad overview of previous studies consulted in order to prepare the paper, some topics concerning resale luxury consumption (either vintage or second-hand) seem to recur many times: price attractiveness, nostalgia, emotional bond, sustainable concerns and consumers' need for uniqueness (Kessous and Valette-Florence, 2019) are some of them.

The term frugality is a possible consumption driver for second-hand fashion goods, mainly related to the concept of value and price consciousness. A consumer is considered frugal if his/her activity of purchasing is based on smart and reasoned choices: resourcefully using economic assets and services and carefully using any other type of resources (Lastovicka, Bettencourt, Shaw Hugner, & Kuntze, 1999).

In their analysis, which is not focus on the luxury sector, but it embraces the fashion system in general, Cervellon et al. (2012), hypothesize and then confirm that "the main driver to the purchase of second-hand clothes is frugality, both directly and indirectly through the mediation of bargain hunting".

Bargaining hunting is purchasing behavior concentrated in finding items at the lowest price or, anyway, the best deals. Bargaining hunting means buying pre-owned luxury piece with the highest value-for-money, which is the most convenient relationship between the good itself and the price at which it is sold.

If this practice is experience in presence, in a physical retailer, the joyful atmosphere created by the social contact with friendly and passionate salespeople can positively influence the purchase (Guzzetti et al., 2021). This sentiment of socialization generates also a sense of community and closeness between buyers and sellers (Belk, 1988). Anyway, communities of luxury consumers in the resale market have been created also virtually, via social media, websites, blogs, e-WOM and customer forums, which are also digital places where they can share relevant information.

Bargain hunting, moreover, works as a mediator between the economic drivers and the purchase intention of second-hand clothes. A consumer's pride and "bragging rights" (or talking with pride about something you have done), but also his/her self-importance are merely incited by an astute purchase of an affordable item, bought with relatively little money (Fox, 2018).

But frugality is not the only influencing factor for bargain hunting; often, this type of purchaser is also guided by need-for status, which is a concept also related to a cultural factor. Consumers with a high need-for-status but who cannot afford to purchase at full price are often tempted by the purchase of pre-worn items (Cervellon et Vigreux, 2018).

With the term *Nouveau riche* is considered the group of luxury consumers who have recently joined a wealthier social class; they are considered as social climbers who have a strong need to show their purchasing power. *Nouveau riche* seek to possess pre-owned luxury brands in order to compensate for not being previously able to access this market. Their purchase is motivated by aspirational reasons, in order to show of affording a "pseudo-luxury" lifestyle, that very few can enjoy of (Fox, 2018). This is why authenticity assumes a fundamental role in the luxury resale market.

The search for uniqueness is particularly important for fashion-conscious consumers who have the will to stand out from the mass by wearing items which are difficult to be found either because they were produced in limited stock or because they date back many years.

To be precise, purchasers of vintage items are hunting for treasures, unique items which are signed by specific designers, and they belong to certain eras. In this way, consumers feel unique and diverse from anybody else (Cervellon and Vigreux, 2018).

The correspondence to the uniqueness' concept in the second-hand luxury consumption is unique find. This meaning relates to purchasing an item which becomes a personal representation. In some cases, pre-loved possessions are perceived as even more authentic than traditional luxury items, and consequently, the second-hand luxury items provided the purchasers with means to differentiate themselves from the masses (Turunen and Liepamaa-Leskinen 2015).

It is interesting to underline how culture is a relevant factor in defining the weight that the need for uniqueness and distinction have in luxury resale market consumers' purchasing behavior. Specifically, the need for uniqueness is a proper characteristic of Western cultures that are more individualistic (Hofstede, 2001). Asian countries, contrary, are more collectivistic are surely more sensitive towards the theme of social status and acceptance.

Authenticity acquires relevance in the second-hand consumption (Fox, 2018). In the second-hand luxury consumption's research, in fact, the term authenticity is strictly related to one of the five meanings found in Turunen and Liepamaa-Leskinen (2015) study: risk investment. Consumers consider acquiring a previously owned luxury item as taking a risk. The results of the abovementioned analysis provide great emphasis on this matter: the fear of inauthenticity might even oppress consumers, since it can bring them to suffer both financial and reputational risks. This fact can become a fundamental point to consider for service retailers offering different kinds of authenticity services (Turunen and Liepamaa-Leskinen 2015).

So, actually, the process of reassurance about the products' authenticity becomes a matter of trust (Cervellon and Vigreux, 2018). For this reason, trust is a determinant criterion in the choice of the secondhand retailer. Since in a second-hand luxury shop, consumers do not have the same guarantee they can have in a first-hand consumption boutique, they expect to have proper explanations on what makes their product genuine, just as if they get detailed information when they go to the store.

In addition to being important concepts for product' authenticity, genuineness and quality are also at the basis of other important functional consumption's drivers, such as timeliness and duration of the goods themselves. For this reason, people easily understand the luxury resale market as the idea of investing in quality and timeliness goods, avoiding fast-fashion but remaining within a reasonable budget. Timeliness and duration, associated with relative inexpensiveness, that is the usual financial convenience in purchase, are sources of another important functional consequence leveraged from vintage consumption: affordable luxury. It is the consumers' benefit of getting excellent quality saving money (Amatulli et al., 2018).

Durability and timeliness are surely two terms easily related with the ecological and ethical concern of purchasing in the resale luxury fashion market. In the study conducted by Keim and Wagner (2018), it has been found that culture influences also the sensitivity towards the sustainable aspect of the purchase. For example, it emerges that Italian and French people are more inclined to environmental issues if compared to Vietnamese cultural consumers. The ecological one is a major driver also in North Europe and UK (Carey and Cervellon 2014).

Surprisingly, Cervellon et al. (2012) research demonstrates that there is not a direct relation between the ecological consciousness and the purchase of vintage or second-hand items, but just through the mediating effect of bargain hunting, the great majority of studies in the topic reveal that environmental sustainability is another important attribute associated to vintage luxury consumption.

As a functional consequence risen the attribute of environmental sustainability and leveraged by purchasers, avoiding waste becomes an important luxury secondhand consumption's driver

(Amatulli et al., 2018). So, it is the social-related dimensions, representing the altruistic meanings of second-hand luxury possessions (Turunen and Liepamaa-Leskinen 2015).

Moreover, the secondhand luxury market contribution to a responsible consumption is realized thanks to the seller behavior. The reselling activity has also a direct positive effect on the sales of new items: the higher the possibility to resell a good, the higher the probability to enter in new high-end transactions (Chu and Liao 2010).

3. A cross-cultural study on resale luxury' s consumer behavior: Italy and United States

In this paper, the cross-cultural analysis on resale luxury market consumption's drivers has been concentrated in the Italian and American market. Following the global trend, both US and European luxury market are increasing. The study realized by McKinsey Company in 2020 has revealed that the biggest markets for luxury and premium resale goods are: Europe (50% to 55% of market share), the United States (25% to 30%) and China, which occupies another 10% of the entire market. Anyway, even if currently much of resale market is still offline (from 65% to 75%), it is affirmed that almost the total annual growth will be online.

In 2021, United States stand out for being the biggest national luxury market in the entire world (D'Arpizio et al., 2021) and it considered a key market for second-hand fashion items (Casadei, 2022). "Resale appeals to the overwhelming majority of luxury customers in the US" declares the research conducted in 2021 by eBay and Vogue Business, resulted from 1,021 American surveyed.

Unfortunately, given the novelty of the topic and the much lower market share occupied by Italian resale luxury consumers in the global scenario, there is no such deep and quantitative analysis also for the Italian market.

Anyway, Italy has been included in diverse studies concerning the European market; here, it is a lot increasing, in 2021 more than 15-20%, a type of local luxury consumption (D'Arpizio et al., 2021).

The same report analyses also how the European market is composed in terms of products' categories: 20% is composed by handbags, 20% by jewelry and watches, 20% by clothing, 10% by accessories, 10% by small leather and 10% by footwear. From these studies, it emerges that both American and European resale luxury market, in the personal good sector, have a preference for handbags.

3.1. Hostede's cross-cultural framework

Given the resale luxury's consumption drivers discussed in this study' s previous section, the already stated objective of the paper is to analyze how cultural differences can affect second-hand luxury consumption behavior. The research urges from a gap which has been also underlined in many academic studies conducted on the topic.

The experiential analysis takes into consideration two relevant theoretical aspects. The first one is the academic theory concerning the general drivers of second hand and luxury consumption, which has been deeply described in the previous part of this paper. The second factor to consider is a theoretical model, which becomes the reference for this paper as much as cultural differences are concerned.

For this specific case, the model chosen is the well-known one realized by Geer Hofstede (1991).

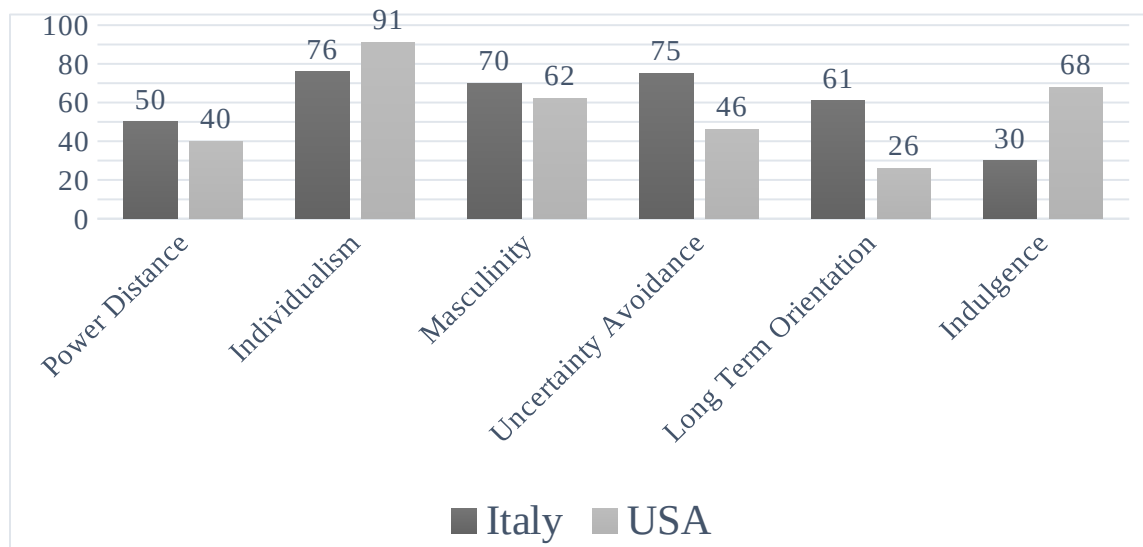
At the end, linking demographic, geographic, economic and political aspects, Hofstede's model has attached to the concept of culture six dimensions: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism versus collectivism, masculinity versus femininity, short term versus long term orientation and indulgence.

For the purpose of this paper, only four out of six dimensions have been deepened: uncertainty avoidance, individualism versus collectivism, short term versus long term orientation and indulgence versus restrain. This selection has been chosen for supporting a greater reliability of the research: the dimensions considered are the ones in which Italy and United States have a major distance in the Hofstede’s Index. In this way, evident findings should emerge in pre-loved and vintage luxury consumer’s behavior.

This is the heart of the research: to each Hofstede’s dimension is finally associated one of the resale luxury’s consumption drivers. The purpose is of finding hypothetical similarities or differences among Italian and American’s consumers, and so to individuate cultural influences in resale luxury’s consumption. In case of the American culture, power distance is strictly correlated to individualism.

Country-level scores for Italy and the United States place both of them at the more individualistic end of the spectrum, with the United States being higher than Italy (Burton et al., 2019).

Exhibit 1. USA and Italy in Hofstede’s Cultural Dimensions Model’s country comparison



In “Individualism-Collectivism Index”, Italy scores 76, anyway with some differences between North and South of Italy. Hofstede’s dimension of individualism and collectivism can be easily connected to the drivers of pre-loved luxury consumption as need for uniqueness for vintage and unique find for second-hand fashion items.

It is interesting to underline how culture impacts in defining the weight that the need for uniqueness and distinction have in luxury resale market consumers’ purchasing behavior. From previous studies, in fact, the concept of uniqueness seeking has been widely defined as a feature of individualism (Cai et al., 2018).

The need for uniqueness is a proper characteristic of Western cultures that are more individualistic (Hofstede, 2001). Uniqueness is more valued in individualistic cultures and can offend people in collectivistic cultures (Jawaid and Siddiqui 2020). Asian countries are more collectivistic and surely more sensitive towards the theme of social status and acceptance. As far as consumer’s behavior is concerned, a large amount of research has revealed that people with a high level of need of uniqueness “desire scarce, novel, customized or unpopular products” (Cai et al., 2018).

The desire to feel different is one of the main reasons which tempt people to choose purchasing second hand vintage goods instead of brand-new ones. Amatulli et al. (2018) individuate in theme called distinction, consumers' need to buy something which is just influenced by their own personal taste and not by the market. Unique find values the purchasing of a good which "represents me" (Turunen and Leipamaa-Leskinen, 2015).

Therefore, it is possible to hypnotize that:

H1: *"Culture affects fashion resale luxury consumer behavior. Cultures which are classified high in the Individualism Index should be highly impacted by their need for uniqueness and distinction when they choose to purchase second-hand or vintage luxury."*

"American people's need for uniqueness as a driver for purchasing resale luxury should be at a higher degree, if compared with the Italians' one"

So, consumers characterized by a collectivist nature have a remarkable need to express and show their image with significant others (Dubois et al., 2005); luxury brands and products, thanks to their symbolic value, enhance consumers' success, wealth, power, and social achievement to others (Hudders and Pandelaere, 2012). Precisely focusing topic of this paper, collectivism can be easily associated to the resale luxury consumption, for second-hand items.

In order to satisfy their aspirational and competitive reasons, consumers who are not financially able to achieve brand-new luxury items, compensate purchasing pre-loved ones.

So, given this discussion about a possible influence between Hofstede cultural dimension of collectivism and need of status considered as one of the main drivers in resale luxury consumption, it is possible to hypnotize that:

H2: *"Culture affects fashion resale luxury consumer behavior. Cultures which are classified high in the Collectivism Index should highly impacted by their need for status when they choose to purchase second-hand luxury."*

"Italian people's need for status as a driver for purchasing resale luxury should be at a higher degree, if compared with the Americans' one."

Uncertainty Avoidance is Hofstede's dimension which expresses the tolerance for ambiguity in each culture. Cultures which are classified with a high score in uncertainty avoidance dimension have a tendency to reduce as much as possible the probability to face the unstructured situations. As a consequence, the level of risk taking is low in order to downsize ambiguity and stressful situations (Nagy and Konyha, 2018; Karahanna et al., 2013).

Uncertainty accepting cultures, on the opposite side, are more open to ambiguous situations, to opinions which are different from what they are used to deal with (Hofstede, 2011); uncertainty is considered as "a natural inherent of life" (Nagy and Konyha, 2018).

Italy has a high position in the Uncertainty Avoidance Index, since it scores 75.

Opposite to Italy, US is positioned below average as far as Uncertainty Avoidance dimension is concerned, with 46 as a score. This means more openness to ambiguity, change, innovation, novelty in all the fields of life. What emerges, it is that uncertainty avoidance countries would necessarily trust on stricter authentication systems for luxury goods in resale markets than uncertainty accepting ones.

In conclusion, given all the discussion about uncertainty avoidance as Hofstede' cultural dimension and the concepts of "authenticity, quality, risk investment and trust" in second-hand luxury consumption, and considering the geographical focus of the paper, two sentences have been hypothesized:

H3: “Culture affects fashion resale luxury consumer behavior. Cultures which are classified high in the Uncertainty Avoidance Index should have a higher level of risk perception and stress in purchasing second-hand luxury, and so they more positively support luxury brands’ direct intervention in the resale market. At the same time, they should have a higher level of trust, authenticity and quality perception in vintage luxury goods if compared with brand-new ones.”

“Italian consumers should have a higher level of risk perception and stress in purchasing second-hand luxury, and so they more positively support luxury brands’ direct intervention in the resale market, than American ones. At the same time, Italian people, respect to American ones should have a higher level of trust, authenticity and quality perception in vintage luxury goods if compared with brand-new ones.

Hofstede’s fifth dimension corresponds to the difference between Long and Short term orientation in national cultures. Countries with a long-term orientation are more pragmatic, providing great relevance to efficiency and modern education. At the short-term orientation pole cultures, societal norms are really important and change is a great obstacle to overcome (Hofstede, 2011, Kooyers, 2015).

In Hofstede’s fifth dimension, countries objects of the paper’s study, that is Italy and USA score really differently. Italy scores 61 in cultural orientation, United States score 26 in the relative index.

Italian culture is pragmatic and Italian people are quite dependent on situation, context and time.

American people are actually short-term oriented, more concentrated on the present rather than on the past or on the future they are more motivated by immediate gratification and by very quick results (Roberts, 2014).

Consumers’ perception of time could also affect consumers’ luxury buying behavior, according to different points of view. Firstly, long-term oriented consumers are more likely to control current consumption desires to purchase luxury ahead in time. They have higher sustainability preferences (Minton et al. 2018), and it is in search for brands with high-quality images and timeliness durability (Bearden et al. 2006). Luxury products do not represent only high prestige and rarity, but they are perceived so for their quality, life spans and durability (Kapferer 2010). Thus, durability is a central point in the definition

Therefore, the following hypotheses can be formulated:

H4: “Culture affects fashion resale luxury consumer behavior. Cultures which are classified as Long-Term oriented value more timeliness and durability than short-term oriented ones.”

“Italy gives greater relevance to timeliness, relative inexpensiveness, affordable luxury and real deal as a consumption drivers for resale luxury products than United States.”

H5: “Culture affects fashion resale luxury consumer behavior. Cultures which are classified as Long-Term oriented value more environmental sustainability than short-term oriented ones.”

“Italy gives greater relevance to environmental sustainability as a consumption drivers for resale luxury products than United States.”

Sixth dimension in Hofstede’s framework is labeled as Indulgence versus Restrain, and it investigates how much and in which way social norms provide citizens’ either control or freedom in fulfilling their human aspirations (Hofstede et al., 2010). High indulgence societies are characterized by the acceptance of free gratification from appreciating and enjoying life and fun (Hofstede et al., 2010).

On the contrary, national cultures which are dominated by Restraint, they are characterized by strict social norms in charge of regulating and controlling personal gratitude for enjoyable and leisure personal needs (Hofstede et al., 2010).

According to Hofstede et al. (2010), people from restraint countries tend to have fewer desires, they do not provide great relevance to leisure and pleasure in life. This reflects also in a lower interest for spending and purchasing. Italy scores 30 in the Indulgence-Restrain Index. This means that there is a general tendency to cynicism and pessimism, with the idea of strictly controlling gratification of leisure time and desires. Differently, the United States scores 68 on the sixth dimension, and so it is labeled as an Indulgent society. According to Silva et al. (2022), pleasure relates to people's enthusiasm in engaging in pre-loved luxury items shopping with friends as an exciting adventure, driven by the thrill of the hunt, more dynamic than in first-hand stores.

Starting from this point, and considering treasure hunting as a driver, it can be hypothesized that:

H6: "Culture affects fashion resale luxury consumer behavior. Cultures which are classified as Indulgent should have a higher level of treasure hunting and nostalgia motivation in purchasing vintage luxury."

"American consumers should have a higher level of treasure hunting and nostalgia motivation in purchasing vintage luxury than Italian ones"

It has been stated that second-hand purchasers are more prompt to buy pre-owned fashion items guided by mere frugality. Frugal are consumers who try to reuse their resources and to spend their money carefully (Todd & Lawson, 2003).

Starting from this point, and considering frugality and bargain hunting as a driver and its correlation with Hofstede's sixth dimension, it can be hypothesized that:

H7: "Cultures which are classified as Restrained should have a higher level of bargain hunting and frugality motivation in purchasing second-hand luxury."

"Italian consumers should have a higher level of bargain hunting and frugality motivation in purchasing second-hand luxury than American ones"

It is also relevant to briefly mention if the role played by COVID-19 in pre-loved luxury consumption has been mediated by different cultural aspects: is pre-loved luxury consumption increased, decreased or unchanged? Has it really shifted totally online?

Recent studies have proved a positive correlation between the rise of the Covid-19 pandemic and a boom in interest for pre-loved world, especially in the luxury sector.

In the research conducted by Vogue Business in collaboration with eBay, it has emerged that 40% of survey's participants, who were American, have confirmed that Covid-19 drove them to spend more on pre-owned luxury online.

Historically fragmented and dominated by small local boutiques with little consumer reach, due to the impact of COVID-19, the pre-loved luxury market has completely changed, witnessing the growing online luxury resale sites and the market move towards consolidation.

The eBay and Vogue Business research has affirmed that the demand for pre-owned luxury seems to remain high even after the definitive end of Covid-19 restrictions.

Khan (2021) refers to "*Revenge Luxury Consumption*" in order to define a post Covid-19 indulgence-oriented luxury consumption phenomenon, characterized by consumers' will to engage in self-gratifying form of consumption, counterbalancing a period of restrained purchasing behavior.

Conversely, Khan (2021) mentions another type of consumption behavior incentivized by the rise of Covid-19, named as "*Silent Consumption*", a balanced and inconspicuous purchase choice focused more on ethicality, sustainability of humanity and the wellbeing of our planet. Moreover, Covid-19 has caused a deep global acceleration in people's comfort level with shopping online,

with an increase trust in photographs, videos, and scrupulous product descriptions as substitutes of traditional physical stores' inspections (Conway, 2022). The research conducted by

Given the overall brief discussion on the role of Covid-19 in this paper the following hypothesis can be formulate:

H8: "Independently from cultural aspects, with the spread of Covid-19, there has been a global increase in pre-loved and vintage luxury consumption."

H9: "The rise of Covid-19 has pushed the shift towards an online type of pre-loved and vintage luxury consumption."

4. The Empirical Research

In order to verify the suppositions emerged, empirical research has been managed. The primary objective of this analysis concerns finding if, and in which way, culture can influence consumption's drivers in second-hand luxury market. Precisely, the research will compare Italian and American consumers and it is based on the Hofstede's cultural framework. It has been chosen a survey research method.

About sampling, American and Italian people have been selected. Precisely, Americans and Italians have been included both if they were living in their respective countries or abroad; moreover, also foreign people who have been living in Italy or US for at least one year were considered valid survey's participants. Anyway, the research has been conducted utilizing a written medium to share questions: the surveys have been realized using Google Forms.

The second step followed for a survey's research is designing questions (Chrysochou, 2017). This activity is about taking decisions on the type of questions and the best words to use in them (Chrysochou, 2017) with the purpose to assure the clarity and the comprehensiveness of the questionnaire. Therefore, two questionnaires have been realized, each of which in the official language of the two countries.

Exhibit 2. List of research's tools for hypotheses' verification

| | 1-5 SCALES | OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS | CLOSED-ENDED QUESTIONS |
|--|--|---|--|
| Need for Uniqueness and Need for Status in Individualistic and Collectivistic countries | <p>"I purchase rare and unique pre-loved luxury fashion items, which make me distinguish from other people. Less people own an item, the most it is worth for me"</p> <p>"The higher the number of people who own a luxury product, the more my desire to buy it increases. For this reason, I am willing to buy it, even pre-loved."</p> <p>"Often, I buy pre-owned luxury just to feel part of a group which I couldn't afford to be part of, buying brand-new items. In this way, I can positively impress people who surround me."</p> | | |
| Authenticity, quality, risk investment and trust in Uncertainty Avoiding and Uncertainty accepting cultures | <p>"I believe that luxury items belonging to past eras are more authentic and they have a superior quality, because they are the result of productive techniques which are less industrialized than today's ones."</p> <p>"When I purchase a pre-loved luxury item, I am afraid to risk purchasing a counterfeit."</p> | What makes you feel surer about the authenticity of the product you are purchasing? | What do you think about luxury brands' active participation in the resale market? (Gucci collaboration with TheRealReal) |
| Nostalgia and Treasure hunting and Frugality and Bargain hunting in Indulgent and Restrained cultures | <p>"The higher the price, the more the pre-loved luxury good worths for me."</p> <p>"Value-for-money is my main reason to buy pre-loved fashion luxury goods."</p> <p>"The lower the price, the better the deal I have made buying a pre-loved luxury item."</p> <p>"Searching rare and unique pre-loved fashion luxury goods is one of my favorite hobbies."</p> <p>"It's very important to me to know the pre-loved luxury item's story/bound</p> | | |

| | | | |
|---|---|--|---|
| | with the past before purchasing it." | | |
| Timeliness, relative inexpensiveness, affordable luxury and real deal and Environmental sustainability in Short-term oriented and Long-oriented cultures | "I strongly believe that purchasing pre-loved fashion luxury items makes me actively participate in a circular economy and it is a sustainable buying behavior." "I prefer purchasing one pre-loved luxury good than many fast-fashion items." "I prefer buying luxury items from past eras because I believe they have a greater durability." "Durability (in terms of style and raw materials) is one of the major reasons for buying pre-owned luxury, above all if compared with the relative price" | | What do you think about luxury brands' active participation in the resale market? (Gucci collaboration with TheRealReal) |
| The Covid-19 spread and cultural effects on resale luxury market | | | How has you pre-loved fashion luxury purchasing behavior changed after Covid-19 spread? From Covid-19 spread, have your pre-loved luxury fashion purchases shifted online? |

At the end, the last part of the survey asks participants to either agree or disagree on different statements concerning resale luxury consumptions' drivers. The scale used goes from 1 to 5 (1=totally disagree, 2= partially agree, 3=neutral, 4=substantially agree, 5=totally agree). There were 357 respondents in total.

To summarize, exhibit 2 illustrates all the items used in order to measure cultural impact in consumption's drivers and the role played by the spread of Covid-19.

As it can be seen from the Italian market, 42.1% (106 individuals) out of 252 respondents have never participated in the resale luxury market. Among others, 24.6% (62 individuals) have participated as either seller or buyers and 33.3% (84 people) have been at least once in lifetime resale luxury consumers. In the American scenario, 27.6% (29 people) has never participated in the resale luxury market, 40% (42 individuals) has been protagonist either has consumer or seller, and 32.4% (34 respondents) has been part of the resale luxury market just as consumers.

It is relevant to notice that the sample is mainly composed by female individuals (87.8% in total). The majority of American (46.1%) and Italian respondents (42.5%) belong to the 27-41 age span. Even 14-26 is well represented as a range, especially among the Italians (38.4%); 25% of people from US belongs to this age-group.

For both countries the "trusted" dimension of the store is a fundamental feature to be considered; Italians, however, still enjoy the physical shopping experience more than the online one.

Just before starting the heart of the analysis concerning consumption's drivers, a general question has been asked in order to individuate which is the very first resale luxury consumption's reason for Italian and American consumers (exhibit 2).

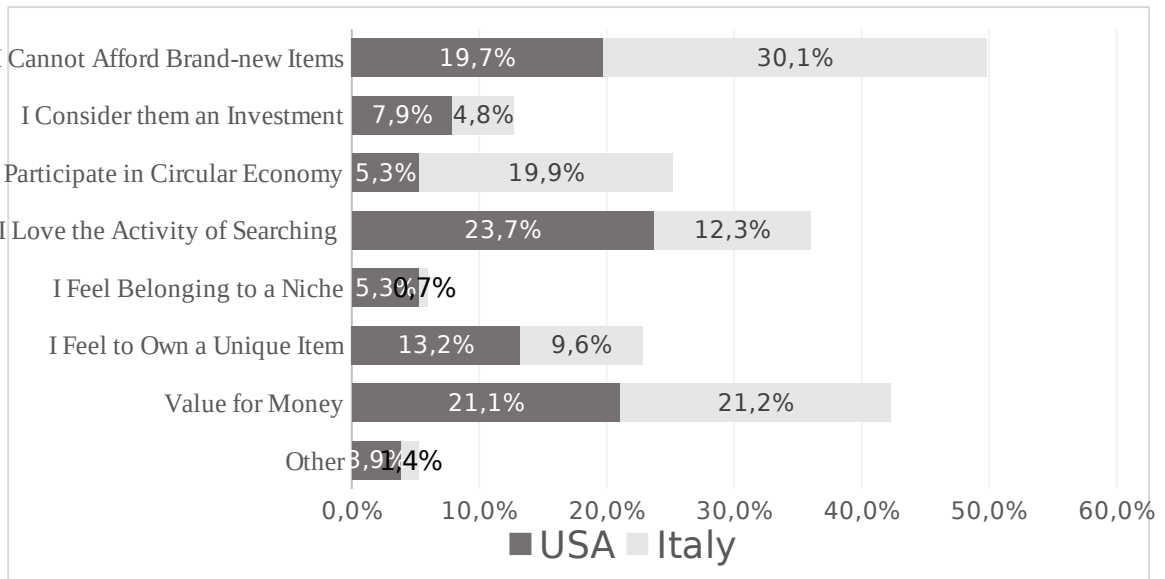
In the Italian case, the first and second positions in the podium are occupied by economic motives.

Americans' podium peak is taken by the passion for fashion and the hunting activity.

As Other, Americans have included resale fashion market's advantages as lack of seasonability and possibility to buy what is not available anymore in stores; differently, Italians have mentioned that no reason prevails on the others, but they all have the same value.

It will be really interesting to verify the coherence between the results of this very last inquiry and the findings on Americans and Italians' similarities and differences in resale luxury consumption' drivers, emerging in the following paragraph.

Exhibit 2. Which one among these statements do you believe is your first reason to buy pre-loved luxury fashion items?



Need for uniqueness and need for status have been respectively associated with individualism and collectivism as Hofstede’s dimensions, in the hypothesis named as H1 and H2.

It will be really interesting to verify the coherence between the results of this very last inquiry and the findings on Americans and Italians’ similarities and differences in resale luxury consumption’ drivers, emerging in the following paragraph.

Need for uniqueness and need for status have been respectively associated with individualism and collectivism as Hofstede’s dimensions, in the hypothesis named as H1 and H2.

Concerning the statement “I purchase rare and unique pre-loved luxury fashion items, which make me distinguish from other people. Less people own an item, the most it is worth for me”.

It emerges that the highest majority of American respondents totally agree with this sentence (32.9%). The American votes’ distribution is characterized by a mode equal to 5 (totally agree), the mean equal to 3.54. The Italian market results very similar to the American one. Both markets have an almost equal preference for buying resale luxury fashion goods with the aim to differentiate from others.

Exhibit 3. Mode, mean and Standard Deviation of the answers (1-5) to the statements.

| Statement | USA | | | Italy | | |
|--|------|------|------|-------|------|------|
| | Mode | Mean | SD | Mode | Mean | SD |
| I purchase rare and unique pre-loved luxury fashion items, which make me distinguish from other people. Less people own an item, the most it is worth for me | 5 | 3.54 | 1.34 | 5 | 3.60 | 1.33 |
| The higher the number of people who own a luxury product, the more my desire to buy it increases. For this reason, I am willing to buy it, even pre-loved | 1 | 2.43 | 1.23 | 2 | 1.86 | 1.12 |
| Often, I buy pre-owned luxury just to feel part of a group which I couldn't afford to be part of, buying brand-new items. In this way, I can positively impress people who surround me | 1 | 1.86 | 1.19 | 1 | 2.04 | 1.24 |
| I believe that luxury items belonging to past eras are more authentic and they have a superior quality, because they are the result of productive techniques which are less industrialized than today's ones | 5 | 4.18 | 1.07 | 5 | 4.14 | 1.04 |
| When I purchase a pre-loved luxury item, I am afraid to risk purchasing a counterfeit | 4 | 3.38 | 1.22 | 3 | 3.09 | 1.18 |
| Durability (in terms of style and raw materials) is one of the major reasons for buying pre-owned luxury, above all if compared with the relative price | 5 | 4.09 | 1.07 | 4 | 3.82 | 0.98 |
| I prefer buying luxury items from past eras because I believe they have a | 5 | 4.09 | 1.07 | 4 | 3.61 | 1.10 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|------|------|---|------|------|
| greater durability | | | | | | |
| I prefer purchasing one pre-loved luxury good than many fast-fashion items | 5 | 4.54 | 0.87 | 5 | 4.22 | 1.09 |
| I strongly believe that purchasing pre-loved fashion luxury items makes me actively participate in a circular economy and it is a sustainable buying behavior | 5 | 4.01 | 1.08 | 5 | 4.13 | 1.09 |
| Searching rare and unique pre-loved fashion luxury goods is one of my favorite hobbies | 4 | 3.63 | 1.16 | 3 | 3.21 | 1.35 |
| It's very important to me to know the pre-loved luxury item's story/bound with the past before purchasing it | 2 | 3.04 | 1.26 | 3 | 2.90 | 1.31 |
| The higher the price, the more the pre-loved luxury good is worth for me. | 2 | 2.11 | 1.09 | 1 | 2.16 | 1.11 |
| Value-for-money is my main reason to buy pre-loved fashion luxury goods | 5 | 3.72 | 1.20 | 4 | 3.59 | 1.08 |
| The lower the price, the better the deal I have made buying a pre-loved luxury item | 5 | 3.78 | 1.19 | 3 | 3.16 | 1.40 |

This statement, “The higher the number of people who own a luxury product, the more my desire to buy it increases. For this reason, I am willing to buy it, even pre-loved” has been used in order to measure respondents level of need for status as resale luxury consumption’s driver. There seem to be some differences among American and Italian people.

As far as the third assertion is concerned, "Often, I buy pre-owned luxury just to feel part of a group which I couldn't afford to be part of, buying brand-new items. In this way, I can positively impress people who surround me.", the interpretation is similar to the one elaborated for the previous sentence.

It is remarkable to notice that, in both cases, the percentage of people who have expressed a degree of neutrality is actually equal to the ones of who agreed with the content of the sentence.

Broadly speaking, the data resulted from this study partially support hypothesis H1 and H2.

So, the findings of the study are in line with the supposition that culture influences resale luxury consumption’s drivers: both countries have much more interest in buying for a need for uniqueness, than for a need for status.

However, even if US are even “more individualistic” than Italy (15 points over), they do not express a much higher need of distinguishing from others in their resale luxury consumption behavior. On the contrary, American consumers even express a more moderate position as far as need for status is considered. Italians’ point of view, in fact, is even more distant from both sentences describing a typical approach of some consumers guided by their need of feeling accepted and outstanding from others. As a conclusion, it can be said that maybe US and Italy position is too close in the collectivism/individualism Hofstede’s dimension in order to provide an effective analysis on this parameter’s influence on resale luxury purchasing intentions.

The third hypothesis elaborated in this paper relates Hofstede’s dimension of Uncertainty Avoidance and *Authenticity, quality, risk investment and trust* as resale luxury purchasing’s driver. Precisely, it states that cultures which are highly positioned in Hofstede’s Uncertainty Avoidance index should feel a higher level of risk in purchasing second-hand luxury, as they should positively support brands’ direct intervention in the resale market. Meanwhile, they should also have a higher level of trust in goods’ authenticity while buying vintage luxury.

To verify the concept in H3, two statements have been included in the survey: “I believe that luxury items belonging to past eras are more authentic and they have a superior quality, because they are the result of productive techniques which are less industrialized than today’s ones”, and “When I purchase a pre-loved luxury item, I am afraid to risk purchasing a counterfeit”.

As it is clearly visible from the Exhibit 3, again markets behave similarly. However, data’s distribution seems to be more homogenous than for the previous case.

Actually, resale luxury consumers have confidence with authenticity and certificates systems, reliability of the seller (either a trusted online platform or a small vintage store) and their own experience in order not to run into counterfeits and to feel safer about goods' authenticity.

As a conclusion, it can be broadly affirmed that data emerged does not support H3.

Analyzing a possible association between a higher cultural level of Uncertainty Avoidance and a higher degree of trust and feeling of reassurance in vintage luxury purchasing behavior, Italian consumers should have demonstrated an approach in this direction, different from the Americans' one. Italians, in fact, are properly classified as an Uncertainty Avoidance country (they score 75 in Hofstede' index), while Americans tend to Uncertainty Acceptance (since they score 46).

Anyway, empirical data do not demonstrate any contrast between the two countries, on the contrary, findings on respondents' consideration about the quality and authenticity of vintage luxury goods are very similar.

Some light differences can be found in the risk perception while buying pre-loved luxury. Both cultural frameworks have not a defined position on the topic: data show a wide distribution in the level of agreement with the sentence. In both cases, the percentage of the individuals neglecting even a minimum level of risk is very low. This is the contrary of what expected: Americans appear to have a slightly higher level of risk consideration while buying second-hand: the percentage of American consumers who positively supports brands intervention for authenticity reasons is higher than Italian ones.

With H4 and H5, in this paper is proposed that long-term oriented cultures value durability, timeliness and environmental sustainability as resale luxury consumption's drivers more than short term oriented one.

Four statements have been included in the questionnaire. The first one is: "Durability (in terms of style and raw materials) is one of the major reasons for buying pre-owned luxury, above all if compared with the relative price".

With Mann Whitney test, it has been analyzed as alternative hypothesis if Italian votes' median is higher than American one: p-value is 0.8067, so it cannot be statistically affirmed.

Since previous analysis signals absence of differences from the two samples' behavior, it has been tried to use as null hypothesis the equality between the two medians. The p-value of the Mann Whitney test is 0.3878, so the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. In the case of this statement, the test confirms that the two samples behave in the same way.

"I prefer buying luxury items from past eras because I believe they have a greater durability." Has been the other sentence used in order prove the content expressed by H4.

Again, for the objective proof of data's behavior has been applied the Mann Whitney test. The p-value resulted, checking as alternative hypothesis whether Italians preference in buying past eras' items for durability's reasons is higher than American one is 0.9998. This idea is absolutely rejected.

So, testing as alternative hypothesis whether, on the contrary, Americans' behavior is more in favor of durability, it has resulted a p-value 0.00018. Being lower than the level of significance, the null hypothesis is rejected, confirming the opposite of what supposed by H4: even if short-term oriented, Americans' interest for durability as purchasing driver is higher than Italians' one.

Results obtained from the study of these sentences do not support what is supposed in H4. It is well-defined, in fact, that most Americans consider durability as one of the most important purchasing drivers in the resale market. That is, they even take more side in this topic rather Italians. As far as this research is concerned, long-term orientation seems not be a synonym of durability's support as major resale luxury purchasing's driver.

"I prefer purchasing one pre-loved luxury good than many fast-fashion items."

As far as this sentence is concerned, some light differences can be read between the two markets.

Both Italians and Americans, following an ethical point of view, prefer adopting a behavior which makes them purchase less pieces in the resale market rather than more items in the fast

fashion world. For both, in fact, the results' mode is 5; what changes, however, is the votes distribution.

Regarding this sentence, and providing as alternative hypothesis that Italians, being long-term oriented, have a higher tendency to substituting fast-fashion items with luxury pre-loved ones (Italians' median is higher than American's one), the p-value is 0.9912. Switching the alternative hypothesis with the null one, a 0.00891 p-value results. Actually, the Mann-Whitney test proves that Americans have a greater tendency to favor the substitution of a higher number of fast-fashion with luxury pre-owned ones.

"I strongly believe that purchasing pre-loved fashion luxury items makes me actively participate in a circular economy and it is a sustainable buying behavior." This phrase has been adopted in order to verify the positive relation between Long-Term oriented countries and a greater attention given to the environmentally sustainable aspect of participating in the resale luxury market.

Participants of both cultures broadly assent with the content of this statement.

Mann-Whitney test has been used to verify if for Italians being part of the resale luxury market is a sign of circular economy participation more than for Americans. The p-value of the test is 0.1453, so the alternative hypothesis is denied. It has been tested, as alternative hypothesis, if American votes' median is higher: p-value is 0.8552: even in this case it is denied. This means that there is no significant difference between the two samples' behavior as much as this sentence is concerned.

From just analyzed data, it emerges that sustainability is evidently a relevant factor for purchasing resale luxury items, in both countries.

Hofstede's dimension of Indulgence and Restrain has been taken into consideration in H6 and H7, to individuate cultural influence in Nostalgia and Treasure hunting and Frugality and Bargain hunting as consumption drivers for vintage and second-hand fashion luxury items, respectively.

Hypothesis 6 states that the more a culture is indulgent, the more it values hedonic reasons in consumption, and consequently the more it considers the pleasure derived from Treasure hunting as an important purchasing driver. The study supports that American consumers should give more relevance to Treasure hunting and nostalgia motive than the Italian ones.

This supposition has been proved submitting two questions to survey's participants. "Searching rare and unique pre-loved fashion luxury goods is one of my favorite hobbies." has been the first one.

What emerges is that American votes' distribution is more concentrated on the right side, with a prevalence of people which thinks that searching for rare luxury pieces is one of their favorite hobbies. Italians' findings are much more homogeneously distributed, with a higher support for a neutral position on the topic. This is proved also by the results of the Mann-Whitney test: considering that Americans have a higher median than Italians as alternative hypothesis is confirmed by obtaining a p-value equal to 0.01367.

The second written item used to study at a cross-cultural level the role of nostalgia as a purchasing driver is this sentence: "It's very important to me to know the pre-loved luxury item's story/bound with the past before purchasing it."

Data from Italian consumers illustrate a general tendency towards disagreement in considering nostalgia in resale fashion luxury market as important in driving purchases. Neutrality prevails.

Statistical figures are not much different in the American framework.

As it is observable from Graph ??, American data's almost homogeneous distribution show the lack of a very precise tendency towards a total disagreement or total agreement with the sentence. Mann-Whitney test has confirmed what has emerged from data: supposing as alternative hypothesis that Americans' median is higher than Italians' one produces a p-value equal to 0.2177; it values 0.783 if the alternative hypothesis opposite is supposed. Actually, there is not enough evidence to properly distinguish a precise difference in consumers' behavior regarding this sentence.

As a conclusion, data confirm H6: findings have proved that most indulgent cultures are the ones which values more hedonic motives in consumption, since Americans demonstrate a greater interest for treasure hunting while purchasing vintage than Italians.

Anyway, regarding nostalgia, neither Italians' nor Americans' votes have shown a clear position in considering it an important consumption driver in vintage luxury fashion goods.

However, even if not with big numbers, research's results are again in line with H6: the percentage of Americans who appreciate to be aware of goods' bound with the past is higher than the Italian ones. Similarly, the proportion of restrained Italians, who do not agree with the sentence is higher than the Americans' one.

With the previous statements, the analysis has concentrated on one of the two sides of Hofstede seventh dimension, which is Indulgence. At the opposite, there is Restrain. In this dissertation, H7 has associated Restrain cultural frameworks with Bargain hunting as resale luxury purchasing driver.

In order to investigate it, three related questions have been asked in the survey "The higher the price, the more the pre-loved luxury good is worth for me." has been the first one. Broadly speaking, findings reveal that neither Italians nor Americans agree in perceiving higher price as synonym of object's higher value. American votes' mean is 2.11, while the Italian one is 2.16.

P-value of the Mann-Whitney analysis, supposing as alternative hypothesis that the probability to get higher value from Italians is higher than the probability to get higher value from Americans, is equal to 0.381. 0.6199 is the p-value supposing that the American votes' median is higher than the Italian's one. It is confirmed that there is no evidence for affirming a significant distance in the two samples' consumer behavior.

The second sentence used to study the relationship between Restrain and Frugality/Bargain hunting is "Value-for-money is my main reason to buy pre-loved fashion luxury goods." It is remarkable to remember that value-for-money has been ranked in the second position (with almost the same percentages) when it has been asked Which one among these statements do you believe is your first reason to buy pre-loved luxury fashion items? both in the American and Italian markets. In fact, from what can be also read in Graph 25, there is a general agreement with the analyzed phrase.

Choosing as alternative hypothesis of the Mann-Whitney that the two samples' medians are different produces 0.2551 as p-value: there is no evidence to reject the null hypothesis confirming an absence of difference in behavior between the two samples.

Regarding this topic, the last question included in the survey has been "The lower the price, the better the deal I have made buying a pre-loved luxury item." As far as this sentence is concerned, Graph 26 reports great differences among the two markets. Contrarily to what has been supposed by H7, the perception that "the lower the price, the better the deal" seems much higher in the American market.

Even for this specific case, the Mann-Whitney test has been applied. Testing the probability of finding a higher value from the Italian sample than the American one has resulted in a p-value equal to 0.999. This alternative hypothesis is absolutely denied. The opposite supposition, testing as alternative hypothesis if Americans' median is higher than Italians' one has resulted in a p-value equal to 0.00008287. Differently to what expected, Americans associate a lower price to a better deal.

From the observations of the analysis, H7 is not confirmed: data do not support the hypothesis of a correlation between Restrain cultural framework and a higher level of bargain hunting and frugality in purchasing second-hand luxury. Even if differently classified by Hofstede, both countries do not support the idea of a positive correlation between an item's higher price and its higher value. On the contrary, in the resale market, even if it is luxury, it seems really much important to find a good deal.

Even for non-restrained Americans, value-for-money in fact is the main reason to purchase pre-loved fashion luxury; Italians' position, instead, appears a bit less decisive on the topic. It could be

that “value-for money” is not the very first purchasing driver for them, but among the most important.

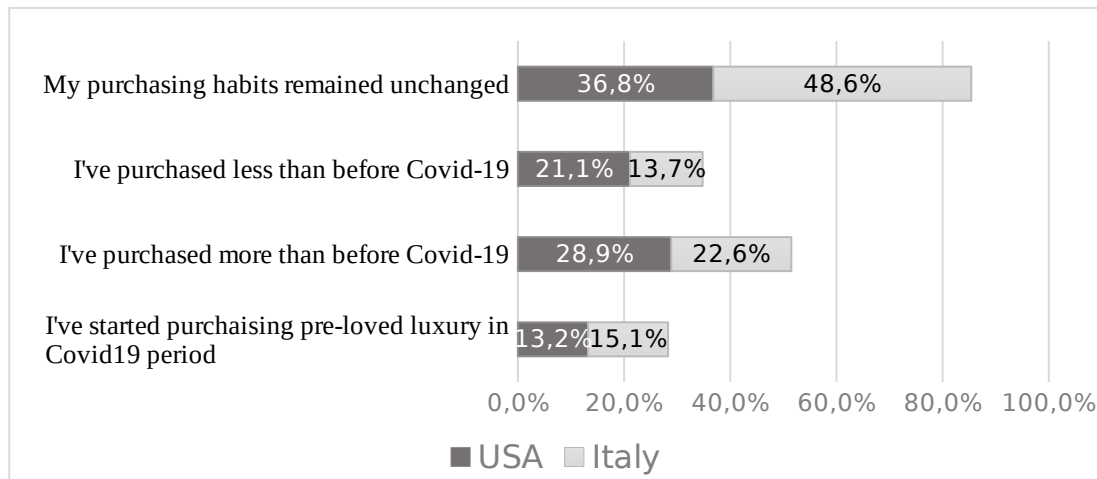
Moreover, contrarily to what has been supposed, Americans see a correspondence between a lower price and a better deal. Italians have a higher level of neutrality on the topic.

With H8 and H9, this study tries to verify if Covid-19 spread has influenced pre-loved luxury consumption in the same way at a global level, without being intercepted by cultural influences. The two worldwide trends of a general increase in secondary luxury market’s purchases as well as a tremendous growth in the online sector have been verified.

The first is this one is “Independently from cultural aspects, with the spread of Covid-19, there has been a global increase in pre-loved and vintage luxury consumption.”

Findings do not exactly tend towards this direction: data do not support a sure rise in consumption, neither for Americans nor for Italians. Most of both Americans and Italians behaves the same way it was used to do before the pandemic spread.

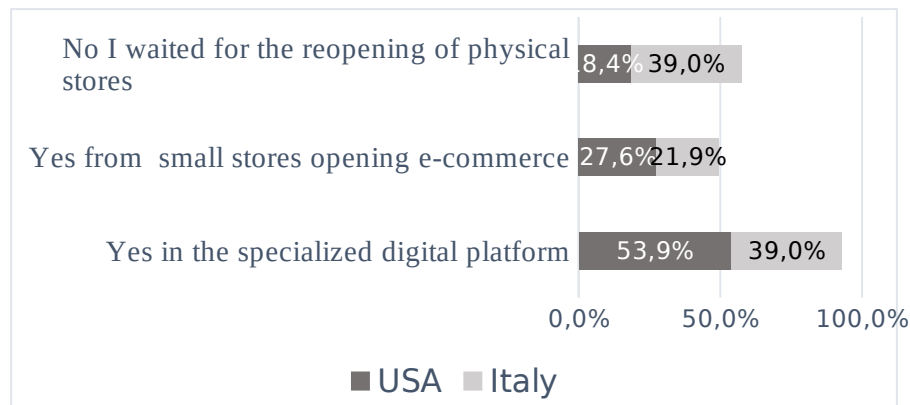
Exhibit 4. How has you pre-loved fashion luxury purchasing behavior changed after Covid-19 spread?



Last hypothesis elaborated is “The rise of Covid-19 has pushed the shift towards an online type of pre-loved and vintage luxury consumption at a global level.” Graph 28 illustrated the results obtained from the presence of the close-ended question From Covid-19 spread, has your pre-loved fashion luxury purchases shift online?

Contrarily to what has been supposed, great differences emerge from the two samples. Italians’ votes are completely divided while most Americans has stated that they have shifted towards online consumption, to specialized digital platforms. As a general conclusion, H8 and H9 are denied.

Exhibit 5. From Covid-19 spread, has your pre-loved fashion luxury purchases shift online?



Opposite to expectations, the greatest part of consumers has remained loyal to their purchasing's routine after Covid-19 spread, independently from cultural framework. However, differences appear in the case of the ones who have diminished their purchases in the luxury market.

Diversities in the purchasing locations have also appeared: while Italians are equally divided among the ones who purchase from online platforms and physicals stores, Americans are much more into an online type of consumption. Covid-19 spread has had a diverse impact depending on the cultural framework.

4.1 Empirical research's limitations

Despite the interesting results just emerged from the empirical analysis, it is important to underline that this study brings with itself some limitations. The first constraints come out from the sample: there are sampling bias (Qualtrics, 2022). The sample in fact, it is very limited in size. This means that the data could be not perfectly representative of an entire and homogeneous population of interest (Qualtrics, 2022). In addition to it, the sample is a self-selected one: people have intentionally and voluntary chosen to fill the survey. This type of bias is called voluntary response bias (Qualtrics, 2022), and it results from the presence of strong opinions on the related topic.

Another relevant element to remember is that survey's distribution happened through social media. It could have been another possible source of sampling biases. In this way, in fact, just people belonging to the online community and social media users have been included in the study. All the other categories of resale luxury market consumers have been automatically excluded from the analysis.

More than sampling biases, this survey could have been characterized by some difficulties of comprehension for the respondents, related to two major issues. The first one is attached to the novelty of the type of research in this topic. The second obstacle could be related to the language: the survey in English has not been prepared by a mother tongue person, so maybe some little linguistic imperfections could have emerged.

However, despite these limitations, this study might be a starting point for future research in this field. This research's results could also be an interesting point of reference for fashion luxury companies which are about to actively enter the resale market.

5. Conclusions

Resale fashion luxury market is currently booming at a global level. It has been seen that, with first approaches to the vintage world, the phenomenon's origins date back to last century.

Nowadays the sector is transforming itself, following a very fast-growing path. This has happened also thanks to a constantly increasing attention provided to the sustainability topic, but also thanks to the role played by the big online reselling platforms.

Inside the resale fashion luxury segment, a big audience of consumers is included. The market, in fact, is composed by a variety of purchasers: from the niche of collectors in search of the rarest fashion pieces, to individuals willing to own a luxurious item, without paying it full-price.

However, the resale trend has exploded in the last years: for this reason, very few data are available about consumers' behavior. Precisely, findings are lacking at a cross-cultural level. This paper was actually born with the aim to start covering this gap, and with the expectations to find evidence of a strong cultural influence guiding consumption's decisions, taking the American and the Italian samples as point of reference.

Moreover, despite cultural differences, it was supposed also a big global effect caused by the spread of Covid-19, with an increase in market's purchases as well as an almost complete shift in the online consumption. Findings from this paper have almost entirely disappointed expectations.

What emerges, in fact, is a similar behavior in both American and Italian consumers, in vintage and second-hand sections of the market. Except for one, no significant difference has been found in support of the hypotheses elaborated. Moreover, the dissimilarities emerged are not of great entity: data's differences are reduced at a minimum level, almost in any case studied.

Only the association of an indulgent culture with a hedonistic type of consumption has been proved by the study. That is, Americans are more interested in the activity of searching for rare pieces, that is treasure hunting, than Italians ones; the latter, in fact, seem more focused on functional motivation driving their purchasing decisions.

Other variations between the samples appear as much as frugality, durability, sustainability and need for status are concerned: however, results report the opposite than what was hypothesized. Americans are slightly more in favor of substituting a higher number of fast fashion items with a lower one of vintage or second-hand luxury garments; at the same time, they are more prone to consider greater durability in vintage goods as an important purchasing driver. This type of behavior should have been more evident among the Italian sample, since they are classified as a long-term oriented culture.

Moreover, Americans show a slightly higher tendency to a "bandwagon-effect" type of consumption, even if they are categorized as a severe individualistic culture by Hofstede. Last but not least, Americans seem a little bit interested to make a good deal (in terms of price) in second-hand luxury consumption, than what Italians are. Data should have proved the contrary, since Italians are much more restrained than Americans, to what Hofstede declares. These surprisingly results could be associated to various motives.

Despite its limits, the study has provided important insights for future research: there are no significant proofs in supporting that the Hofstede cultural framework is the proper tool to delineate differences in consumers' behavior in the resale luxury market. Given the novelty of the topic analyzed, it is having been chosen to adopt Hofstede's model to conduct this research mainly for the linearity of its structure, easy to apply, and for its international reliability.

As it has been stated, in some circumstances, resale luxury market distances itself from the parameters and features that characterize the traditional luxury sector; in fact, it rises from different consumers' interests and wills. The market is dynamic, and it is surely guided by continuously changing trends.

With its simplicity and stillness, on the contrary, Hofstede's model could have been too restrictive in order to properly study the resale luxury phenomenon. The usage of this bilateral model could have not effectively evidenced the influences and interactions between cultural variables (Mead and Andrews, 2009) and, in this precise case, purchasing drivers.

Hofstede model, in fact, assumes cultural homogeneity. This is totally anachronistic as well as a purely ideal supposition, which cannot find actual confirmation. A national culture is composed by continuously changing political, economic, ethical factors. From the very brief analysis of the

survey's respondents who have never participated in the resale luxury market, it has emerged that for both Americans and Italians the main reason behind their choice is lack of financial affordability.

This, for example, is the proof that consumption is not only a strictly national culture-dependent variable, but it is also influenced by someone's subjective economic condition. Numerous are the factors related to the resale luxury market which should be mentioned to provide an appropriate picture of the phenomenon.

Moreover, cultural classification provided by Hofstede is still historically related to the period in which the model has been elaborated, while there has been a drastic change in the rate of geographical and cultural development. So, the framework is not able to adapt to changes and to provide an upgraded picture of the current consumption's scenario, evidencing peculiarities and specificities of the controversial markets studied.

As it has been seen from the paper, the resale luxury market scenario, precisely, is always more developed online, where national barriers constantly crumble. Hofstede's model, on the contrary, confines the concept of culture inside national borders; differently, there are many other variable levels for assessing culture other than the nation-state one.

For further research's scope, it would be interesting to compare the countries also including the two aspects that were excluded, power distance and masculinity; if significant diversities come out, it would be definitely proved that Hofstede model is not the proper one to study evidence from resale fashion luxury consumption. USA and Italy, in fact, score very close to each other in the Hofstede's index as much as these two dimensions are concerned. Given the already mentioned limits of this analysis, it is suggested for further research to use more dynamic and present-time oriented models, able to properly categorize cross-cultural differences regarding the resale luxury market.

Despite the analysis strictly focuses on the use of Hofstede's cultural framework, also data coming from the very small research on Covid-19 have proved a surprising result, demonstrating more cultural differences than what expected.

Findings also report the presence of some slight dissimilarities regarding the online or offline type of consumption after the hit of Covid-19 pandemic. This could be considered a signal that culture has effectively a role in the resale luxury market consumption. It is just needed the proper tool to measure its effect.

To conclude, as it has already been affirmed many times, purchasing behavior related to both second hand and vintage consumption is a real new topic to be investigated, and unfortunately there is no benchmark to compare evidence emerged from this study. Anyway, it could happen that resale luxury trend, being mainly guided by young generations, is globally approached without many diversities in terms of cultural aspects; other factors, such as age range could be the real determinant in consumption behaviors.

What is sincerely undeniable is that the topic needs further research: resale luxury market would be a pillar in the future of fashion and brands should have the right tools to understand differences and similarities among consumers they globally serve.

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