

ORIGINAL PAPER

Leveraging Digital Communication Technologies for Brand Equity Enhancement in the Luxury Jewelry Sector

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Received: 19 May 2026 / Revised: 17 August 2026 / Accepted: 20 August 2026

Abstract. This qualitative single-case study examined how a selected Thai luxury jewelry brand uses digital communication technologies to communicate luxury identity, cultivate customer relationships, and support Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) without undermining exclusivity. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with five purposively selected key informants representing the focal brand, digital marketing expertise, and general luxury consumption. Participants were selected for their information-rich knowledge relevant to the research objectives; given the limited sample, the study does not claim full thematic saturation. Data were analyzed using a hybrid deductive–inductive thematic approach. Deductive coding was informed by CBBE and the anti-laws of luxury marketing, while inductive coding captured practices emerging from the interviews. Trustworthiness was strengthened through member checking, peer debriefing, independent coding by multiple coders, and an audit trail. Three themes emerged: curated storytelling of craftsmanship and heritage; controlled digital visibility that preserved luxury exclusivity; and the movement from public digital touchpoints to private consultation and personalized offline experiences. The findings suggest that sales-oriented mass communication may weaken luxury distinctiveness, whereas carefully governed storytelling supports brand awareness, perceived quality, and distinctive brand associations. Selective disclosure reinforces prestige, while personalized online-to-offline interaction contributes to trust, brand resonance, and long-term loyalty. Digital communication is therefore most valuable when integrated with consistent brand governance, customer relationship practices, offline service, and suitable partnerships. As the study examined one brand and included general luxury consumers rather than customers of the focal brand, the findings are context-specific and should not be generalized to the wider luxury jewelry industry.

Keywords: Brand Equity, Digital Marketing Communication, Luxury Jewelry

1. Introduction

The contemporary global business landscape is increasingly driven by volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity (VUCA). Tackling VUCA environments is not easy, but it is essential to thrive in a chaotic world. The VUCA model is a powerful tool for helping leaders diagnose and think about the nature of the challenges they are faced. (Mohd Aris, Omar & Hashim, 2021) In an era marked by macroeconomic fluctuations and an intensifying societal focus on frugality, sustainability, and the circular economy, consumer purchasing behavior has undergone a fundamental transformation. Nevertheless, amidst these pervasive economic pressures, the luxury jewelry industry has demonstrated remarkable resilience and sustained growth. High-end jewelry pieces are no longer perceived merely as ornamental accessories; instead, they have been elevated to the status of "passion assets." Collectors and investors recognize that these creations offer structural resilience, wealth risk diversification, and long-term value retention during periods of global instability (Lombard Odier, 2026). The global luxury jewelry market continues to expand, propelled by a growing affluent demographic and a rising demand for premium lifestyle products that signify both emotional value and social status (Dataintelo, 2026).

The enduring appeal of this sector lies within the precise definition of "luxury," which fundamentally diverges from standard premium

goods. Luxury is not dictated solely by a premium price point; rather, it emerges from the intricate interplay of six core dimensions: price, quality, aesthetics, rarity, extraordinariness, and symbolism. Luxury jewelry brands rely heavily on historical heritage, superlative craftsmanship, and compelling narrative storytelling to cultivate an aura of mystique and intense desire. (Chevalier & Mazzalovo, 2008) To safeguard this prestige, the industry operates under strict "anti-laws of marketing." These counter-intuitive principles dictate that brands must maintain a deliberate distance from the masses, resist immediate gratification of consumer demands, strictly abstain from promotional discounts, and intentionally introduce friction into the customer journey to demand patience or exclusive access. The primary objective of these anti-laws is to protect the absolute value of the brand and prevent the dilution of its high-end image.

Rigid adherence to these luxury principles forms the bedrock for constructing and sustaining robust Brand Equity. Within the luxury jewelry context, brand equity serves as a critical bridge connecting the physical product with the consumer's psychological perception. It encompasses interconnected dimensions, including brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality, brand identity, and brand loyalty. To ascend to the pinnacle of brand equity—brand resonance—luxury jewelry brands must articulately communicate their identity, project meaning through exceptional performance and imagery, elicit powerful emotional responses, and foster seamless, enduring relationships with their clientele. (Chongwitookit, 2019)

Historically, luxury brands meticulously controlled these narratives and preserved their brand equity through highly restricted and carefully filtered traditional communication channels. However, the rapid contemporary transition toward a digital economy has brought about a profound paradigm shift.

Digital communication technologies—ranging from social media platforms and influencer networks to advanced innovations like Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR)—have become indispensable for reaching a global, tech-savvy audience. Yet, the adoption of these technologies introduces a critical paradox for luxury brands. The inherent nature of digital media, characterized by mass accessibility, immediacy, and ubiquity, directly conflicts with the traditional anti-laws of luxury. If mismanaged, the highly accessible nature of digital platforms threatens to erode the exclusivity, mystique, and distance essential to the survival of a luxury brand.

Consequently, this article aims to address a critical gap in contemporary luxury marketing: navigating the paradox of digital integration within the luxury jewelry sector. This study examines the intersection of digital innovation and traditional luxury principles, investigating how brands can strategically leverage digital communication technologies for brand equity enhancement. The core challenge lies in utilizing digital platforms to drive engagement, awareness, and perceived quality without compromising the exclusivity and heritage that define the very essence of luxury jewelry.

1.1 Research Objectives

To explore how a selected Thai luxury jewelry brand uses digital communication technologies to communicate luxury brand identity and cultivate personalized customer relationships.

To examine how these digital communication practices are perceived to support brand equity, particularly brand awareness, perceived quality, brand resonance, and long-term customer loyalty.

1.2 Research Hypothesis

The utilization of digital marketing communications, including social media

platforms, search engines, and emerging digital technologies, positively influences brand equity, brand awareness, and brand image in the luxury jewelry industry.

1.3 Theoretical Concepts

The theoretical framework used in this study includes the following concepts:

- (1) Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) Model
- (2) Brand Identity Prism
- (3) Anti-laws of Luxury Marketing

1.3.1 Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) Model

This theory explains brand equity from the consumer's perspective, focusing on the feelings, attitudes, and psychological perceptions held toward a brand. It structures brand building into a pyramid consisting of four steps and six core building blocks aimed at developing the highest level of customer relationship (Keller, 2013)

Step 1 Identity (Salience): "Who are you?" This represents the brand's foundational identity and the level of consumer awareness and familiarity.

Step 2 Meaning: "What are you?" This consists of the physical and functional attributes of the product (Performance) and the psychological or social image the brand attempts to portray (Imagery).

Step 3 Response: "What about you?" This involves how consumers respond to the brand, encompassing their personal evaluations (Judgments) and emotional reactions (Feelings).

Step 4: Relationships (Resonance): "What about you and me?" The pinnacle of brand equity, representing a deep psychological bond and an enduring, active relationship between the customer and the brand.

1.3.2 Brand Identity Prism

A comprehensive prism model used to analyze and understand the identity or "DNA" of an organization. This helps brands differentiate themselves, establish a strong positioning, and strategize effectively for global market entry. The prism is divided into six main facets under two dimensions: Externalization (socially visible aspects) and Internalization (internal core elements) (Kapferer, 2004)

Physical facet (External) The tangible appearance, logo, product design, and primary color scheme that make the brand recognizable.

Relationship (External) The nature of the connection, service, and mode of interaction between the brand and its customers.

Reflected consumer (External) The ideal image or characteristics of the user as perceived by society when wearing or using the brand.

Personality (Internal) The brand's character, communicating its traits as if it were a human being to connect with the target audience.

Culture (Internal) The heritage, values, roots, and original culture that the brand upholds and respects.

Self-image (Internal) The consumer's internal feeling, individual idea, or self-reflection when possessing the luxury brand.

1.3.3 Anti-laws of Luxury Marketing

A set of counter-intuitive marketing principles required for managing luxury brands, which operate in direct opposition to traditional mass-marketing strategies. The primary objective is to protect the brand's absolute value, preserve its high-end image, and maintain a deliberate distance to cultivate desire. Key anti-laws include (Kapferer, 2004)

Do not offer discounts: Utilizing sales promotions or discounts fundamentally destroys the luxury status and brand image.

Do not respond to customer demands immediately: Brands must deliberately maintain a distance and avoid mass-market convenience to preserve their mystique and exclusive value.

Make products difficult to buy: Luxury goods are rooted in exceptional craftsmanship and take time to produce. Creating artificial or natural limitations ensures customers feel they possess something incredibly rare and exclusive.

Communicate to create dreams, not to sell: Advertising must focus on storytelling.

1.4 Research Framework

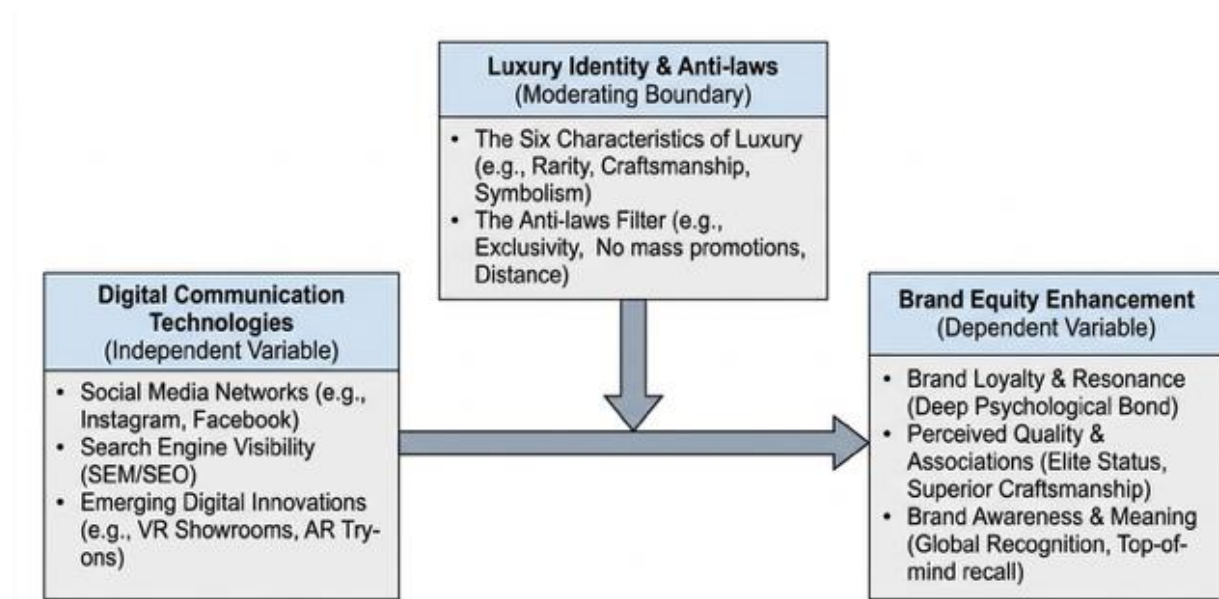


Figure 1 Research Framework

1.5 Scope and Data Used in the Study

This research utilizes primary qualitative data collected through in-depth, semi-structured interviews. The data sources are as follow:

Digital Marketing Communication data is collected from industry professionals (Technical Officer and CEO/Founder) based in Paris, France.

Jewelry Business Company perspective data is sourced from Jewelandco, a luxury jewelry brand located in Bangkok, Thailand.

Customer and Consumer perspective data is collected directly from luxury jewelry buyers based in Bangkok, Thailand.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design to explore the intersection of digital marketing communications and brand equity within the luxury jewelry sector. To gain comprehensive, in-depth insights into both industry strategies and consumer behaviors, a semi-structured interview method was utilized. This approach provided the flexibility to explore dynamic personal experiences, organizational concepts, and emotional responses while maintaining a core thematic focus.

2.2 Participants and Sampling

A purposive sampling technique was used to select participants from three distinct but interconnected sectors, ensuring a holistic view of the market ecosystem. The sample included:

Digital Marketing Professionals: Two industry experts (a Technical Officer and a CEO/Founder) based in Paris, France, selected to provide insights into platform algorithms, global targeting capabilities, and campaign management.

Jewelry Business Representative: A corporate partnership executive and founder from Jewelandco, a luxury jewelry brand based in Bangkok, Thailand. This participant provided the internal perspective on maintaining brand identity, craftsmanship, and luxury positioning in the digital space.

Luxury Consumers: Two consumers based in Bangkok, Thailand, selected to represent different generational perspectives and behaviors regarding digital advertising and luxury purchasing decisions. (Chongwitookit, 2019)

Participants were purposively selected based on their direct involvement in the focal brand's digital communication, brand management, sales, or customer relationship activities. This criterion ensured that the participants possessed information-rich experience relevant to the research objectives.

2.3 Data Collection

Primary data was gathered through in-depth, Face-to-Face, and telephone interviews. The semi-structured interview guide was systematically divided into four distinct sections to cover all variables of the conceptual framework

Demographics: General background information of the interviewees.

Platform Perspective: Questions targeting marketing experts regarding digital strategies, platform selection e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Search Engine, budget allocation, and the positive/negative impacts of digital advertising.

Jewelry Business Perspective: Questions focusing on brand identity, customer relationship management, and the specific application of the Brand Equity Model within the luxury jewelry context.

Consumer Perspective: Questions exploring the psychological and behavioral responses to digital advertising, brand awareness, and satisfaction levels.

To ensure accuracy and capture the nuances of the open-ended responses, all interviews were voice-recorded with participant consent and supplemented with field notes.

2.4 Data Analysis

The qualitative data collected from the recordings and notes were transcribed and analyzed. A thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was conducted to identify recurring patterns, cross-reference the viewpoints of the three different sectors, and evaluate how the findings aligned with established theories, specifically Kapferer's Brand Identity Prism and Keller's Customer-Based Brand Equity Model. The synthesized data was then used to determine the overall effectiveness and challenges of integrating digital communication technologies into the luxury jewelry market.

3. Results

The qualitative data gathered from the semi-structured interviews provided comprehensive insights into how digital marketing communication technologies impact luxury jewelry brands. The findings are categorized into three main themes: the effectiveness of digital platforms, the maintenance of brand identity, and the enhancement of brand equity.

3.1 The Impact of Digital Communication Platforms on Luxury Jewelry

Interviews with digital marketing professionals revealed that visual-centric platforms, particularly Instagram and Facebook, are highly effective tools for increasing global brand awareness when utilizing precise audience targeting. Short-form videos and high-quality image showcases were identified as the most engaging formats, as modern consumers prefer visual storytelling over text-heavy advertisements. However, experts cautioned that untargeted, mass-market digital campaigns not only fail to generate a return on investment but also pose a significant risk of diluting the luxury brand's image.

From the consumer perspective, digital advertisements that maintained a sophisticated, non-promotional tone successfully cultivated a sense of luxury, mystery, and desire. Consumers reported that digital platforms made the brand feel more accessible for gathering product knowledge; however, the final purchasing decision still heavily relied on the physical boutique experience, personalized service, and the perception of exclusivity.

3.2 Maintaining Luxury Brand Identity in the Digital Space

The case study of Jewelandco, evaluated through Kapferer's Brand Identity Prism, demonstrated how a luxury jewelry business successfully translates its traditional identity into the digital realm without violating the anti-laws of luxury

Physical & Personality The brand maintains strict visual consistency across its digital touchpoints e.g., Instagram by utilizing an elegant "JL" logo and a controlled color palette of gold, black, and white, which projects a sophisticated, mysterious, and luxurious personality.

Culture & Relationship Digitally, the brand communicates the "power of the diamond" and high-jewelry craftsmanship inspired by nature. It emphasizes highly personalized

customer relationship management, presenting itself as a "private jeweler" that offers exclusive offline experiences e.g., private wine dinners to complement online interactions.

Reflection & Self-Image The brand's digital narrative is carefully crafted to make consumers feel they belong to an elite, affluent community, reinforcing their self-image as successful and sophisticated individuals.

3.3 Enhancing Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE)

Applying Keller's Brand Equity Model, the results indicate that the strategic integration of digital marketing significantly enhances specific equity dimensions for Jewelandco

Brand Awareness: Effectively generated through digital Word of Mouth (WOM), online recommendations, and a curated social media presence.

Brand Meaning (Imagery & Performance): The brand utilizes digital channels to showcase its exceptional performance, highlighting the use of finest-quality raw materials and globally recognized certificates e.g., GIA, HRD, GRS to ensure consumer trust. Imagery is enhanced by promoting the luxurious and cozy environment of its physical boutique.

Brand Resonance: The goal of establishing a deep psychological bond is achieved by using digital communication not merely as a sales tool, but as a gateway to invite consumers into the "Jewelandco family." This approach fosters long-term brand loyalty through stellar, customized, and highly personal service.

4. Discussion and conclusions

The findings of this study illuminate the complex relationship between digital communication technologies and luxury brand management. Traditional luxury marketing has historically relied on exclusivity, controlled accessibility, symbolic distance, and prestige.

Digital platforms, however, are designed to maximize visibility, accessibility, and interaction. Their use therefore creates a “luxury paradox”: luxury brands must benefit from the extensive reach of digital communication without allowing such visibility to weaken the rarity, distinction, and mystique on which luxury identity depends. The challenge is not whether luxury brands should use digital communication, but how they can control its content, intensity, and purpose. In this respect, digital platforms should be used to create meaningful and inspiring brand experiences rather than function solely as direct-selling channels, consistent with the experiential orientation of luxury marketing described by Atwal and Williams (2009).

The findings suggest that digital communication can support brand equity when it prioritizes “showcasing” over “selling.” Rather than emphasizing price promotions or immediate transactions, luxury jewelry communication should foreground craftsmanship, product meaning, distinctive design, heritage, rarity, and the symbolic value associated with ownership. In the focal case, Jewelandco’s use of visually oriented platforms such as Instagram enables the brand to increase visibility while presenting carefully selected stories and images. Potential customers are subsequently encouraged to continue the interaction through private communication or a physical boutique visit, where the brand can offer personalized consultation and a high-touch luxury experience. The brand’s decision not to foreground prices in its digital presentation can therefore be interpreted as a case-specific mechanism for shifting customers’ attention from price comparison toward craftsmanship, symbolic meaning, and personalized service. It should not, however, be treated as a universal requirement for all luxury brands.

This interpretation is supported by Goi et al. (2026), who examined 300 luxury consumers in Malaysia and found that social media positively influenced luxury brand equity, while luxury brand equity subsequently had a positive effect on purchase intention.

Importantly, their study also found a negative direct relationship between social media and purchase intention. This mixed result indicates that greater digital exposure does not automatically generate luxury purchases. Instead, social media appears to contribute indirectly by developing brand awareness, brand associations, perceived uniqueness, brand loyalty, and perceived quality. Consequently, luxury jewelry brands should not evaluate digital communication exclusively through reach, impressions, or immediate online sales. Its strategic value lies in strengthening the meanings and perceptions that distinguish the brand before customers proceed toward private consultation, boutique engagement, or purchase.

Storytelling is particularly important in this process because it translates the intangible qualities of luxury into accessible brand meanings. The findings of the present study indicate that visual narratives concerning craftsmanship, design inspiration, product symbolism, and personalized service enable Jewelandco to communicate luxury identity without relying on conventional promotional messages. This finding is consistent with Feng et al. (2026), who found that stories generated by luxury brands produced stronger positive engagement and brand equity than consumers’ brand storytelling. Their study further demonstrated that archetype consistency mediated the relationship between luxury brand story type and brand equity, while the degree of brand control moderated this relationship. These findings suggest that storytelling does not enhance brand equity merely because it attracts attention. Its effectiveness depends on whether the stories consistently reflect the brand’s core identity and remain under appropriate brand direction.

For Jewelandco, this means that digital content should consistently reinforce the same luxury associations across photographs, captions, videos, direct messages, private consultations, and boutique experiences. Stories about craftsmanship and product meaning should not be isolated communication activities; they should be supported by clear brand guidelines

and coordination among those responsible for digital content, design, customer service, sales, and boutique interaction. Such consistency helps transform digital visibility into coherent brand associations, perceived quality, authenticity, and uniqueness. Conversely, inconsistent content, excessive promotional communication, or partnerships that do not correspond with the brand's identity may attract short-term attention while weakening the distinctiveness that supports luxury brand equity.

The relational dimension of digital communication is equally important. Evidence from the Thai luxury market provides further support for this interpretation. Napalai and Saewanee (2024), in a study of 300 consumers of luxury bag brands in Bangkok and the surrounding metropolitan area, found that brand coolness positively influenced both brand love and brand engagement in self-concept. In turn, brand love and engagement in self-concept directly influenced brand equity, with the structural model explaining 94.20% of the variance in brand equity. Although their study focused on luxury bags rather than luxury jewelry and did not directly examine digital communication, its findings help explain how personalized digital interactions may contribute to brand equity. When customers perceive that a brand reflects their identity, aspirations, or desired lifestyle, communication can develop beyond awareness into emotional attachment and personal identification.

Accordingly, personalized communication through direct messages, private consultations, individualized product recommendations, and follow-up interactions may support brand resonance by allowing customers to feel recognized rather than treated as members of a mass audience. Digital communication thus contributes to luxury brand equity not simply by making the brand more visible, but by facilitating a progression from visibility to recognition, emotional engagement, and relationship continuity. The movement from online storytelling to personalized offline interaction is therefore central to the focal brand's strategy. Digital platforms introduce

the brand and communicate its identity, while private and physical interactions deepen trust, emotional meaning, and customer commitment.

Taken together, the findings and recent literature indicate that the contribution of digital communication to luxury brand equity operates through several interconnected mechanisms. Controlled digital visibility strengthens brand awareness without necessarily eliminating exclusivity. Consistent brand-generated storytelling develops favorable and distinctive brand associations. Personalized interactions encourage brand love and engagement in self-concept. These psychological and relational outcomes can subsequently contribute to stronger brand resonance, loyalty, and long-term brand equity. Digital communication should therefore not be managed as a separate promotional function. It should be integrated with brand identity, customer relationship practices, boutique service, internal content governance, and the continuing maintenance of customer relationships.

Within the focal case, Jewelandco appears to manage the luxury paradox by combining curated digital visibility with controlled, personalized relationship-building. Nevertheless, because the study examines a single luxury jewelry brand, these findings should be interpreted as context-specific insights rather than generalized principles applicable to the entire luxury jewelry industry. Further research involving multiple brands and customer perspectives is required to determine whether the same relationships among digital communication, storytelling, luxury identity, customer engagement, and brand equity occur across different luxury jewelry contexts.

This study concludes that, within the focal Thai luxury jewelry brand, digital communication technologies can support brand equity when they are used not merely to maximize visibility or generate immediate online sales, but to communicate a coherent luxury identity, present carefully curated stories of craftsmanship and symbolic value, and extend personalized customer relationships across digital and physical touchpoints. Digital visibility alone is

insufficient. Its contribution to brand equity depends on whether online communication strengthens brand awareness, perceived quality, distinctive brand associations, emotional attachment, and customer identification with the brand. This interpretation is consistent with recent evidence showing that social media can strengthen luxury brand equity without necessarily producing an immediate increase in purchase intention, that brand-generated stories are more effective when they remain consistent with the brand's identity and under appropriate brand control, and that brand love and engagement in self-concept contribute directly to brand equity in the Thai luxury market (Feng et al., 2026; Goi et al., 2026; Napalai & Saewanee, 2024).

For Jewelandco, the strategic value of digital communication therefore lies in guiding potential customers from curated online inspiration toward private consultation, personalized boutique experiences, and continuing relationship-building. The findings suggest that brand equity is supported not only by digital storytelling or online visibility, but also by the brand's ability to recognize individual customer needs, maintain interaction after the initial contact, and connect digital communication with personalized offline service. In this way, digital platforms function as relationship-building touchpoints rather than independent mass-selling channels, allowing the brand to increase awareness while retaining the selectivity, symbolic distance, and exclusivity associated with luxury consumption.

However, sustaining this contribution requires more than selecting appropriate technologies or communication channels. The brand must establish consistent organizational practices, including clear brand guidelines, coordination among digital communication, design, sales, customer service, and boutique personnel, systematic customer follow-up, and after-sales relationship management. Appropriate partnerships with designers, craftspeople, digital platforms, event organizers, or other collaborators should also be selected according to their compatibility with the brand's identity. Digital communication

should therefore be managed as part of an integrated and adaptable brand-governance and customer-relationship system rather than as an isolated promotional activity.

Because this study is based on a single luxury jewelry brand and a limited qualitative sample, the findings should be interpreted as context-specific insights rather than generalized conclusions about the broader luxury jewelry industry. Future research should examine multiple brands and include customer perspectives to determine how digital communication, luxury identity, customer relationship management, organizational capabilities, and strategic partnerships jointly contribute to brand equity and sustainable business development over time.

5. Limitations

This study acknowledges certain limitations. The research was primarily qualitative, utilizing a purposive sample and focusing heavily on a specific case study (Jewelandco) within the Thai luxury jewelry market. While this approach provided deep, contextual insights, the findings may reflect specific cultural behaviors and may not be universally generalizable across all luxury segments.

6. Recommendations for Managerial Practice

For luxury jewelry practitioners, it is highly recommended to explore advanced technological innovations that bridge the digital and physical worlds without compromising quality. Implementing Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) can provide immersive "try-on" experiences, transforming a 2D online catalog into a highly interactive and personalized digital boutique. Furthermore, brands aiming for global expansion should diversify their social media portfolios beyond Facebook and Instagram; penetrating the Asian luxury market, for example, requires establishing a strong presence on localized platforms such as WeChat, Weibo, and Baidu.

7. Recommendations for Future Research

Future research should consider employing quantitative methodologies with larger, cross-cultural sample sizes to statistically measure the impact of specific digital campaigns on brand equity metrics. Additionally, investigating the psychological impact of AR/VR technologies on the perceived value of high-end jewelry could provide further actionable insights for the luxury sector.

Acknowledgement

This article is developed from my master's research conducted at ESC Rennes School of Business, France. I sincerely thank the institution, particularly Professor Dr. Hussain Dildar, former Dean of the MSc ILBM program, for the invaluable opportunity to pursue this academic path. I am deeply indebted to my research supervisor, Professor Dr. Yann Truong, whose patience, motivation, and immense knowledge provided crucial guidance throughout this project. I also extend my special appreciation to all the key informants who generously shared their time and insights, which were vital to the completion of this study. Finally, I express my profound gratitude to my parents, Mr. Wisit Chongwitookit and Mrs. Wantana Techavorabot, for their unwavering support of my educational journey in Europe, which laid the foundation for my ongoing academic and professional endeavors.

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