

The Ethics of Identity

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Abstract

A large body of research in the luxury field has investigated how customers use luxury goods to signal their status and what role luxury consumption plays in the identity creation. Whereas the relationship between luxury consumption and identity creation has been widely explored, the research in the luxury field omitted an employee perspective in identity creation. Yet, luxury struggles with ethicality, and the concepts are often perceived as contradictory, especially in the social context. This paper addresses the incompatibility of luxury and ethicality, especially in the social context by undertaking an employee perspective and study the role of luxury in identity creation for female managers working in the field of luxury. The results of ten interviews reveal how employees in the luxury industry construct their identities through their job, and how the prestige and exclusivity of the luxury industry shape these identity creations. Our findings explored how the identity motives can be enacted through a professional career in the luxury industry and provides knowledge luxury brands managers can use to design their CSR strategies around business ethics in the context of equality in the workplace.

Keywords: luxury, job identity, identity motives

Track: Social Responsibility & Ethics