

QUITE LUXURY: SILENT LUXURY MARKETING APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

Quiet luxury is one of the latest trends emerging in the luxury industry. It has been gaining momentum in recent years as a response to the economic uncertainty which followed the pandemic. The current global scenario brought back a preference for understated pieces, which hold great value thanks to their craftsmanship, quality and subtlety, but do not overtly display it through prominent branding. As consumers increasingly seek uniqueness and exclusivity in today's world where even conspicuous luxury is no longer a marker of social status, their needs are met by a trend which is all about inconspicuousness, elegance and subtlety. Consequently, many fashion houses have begun to embrace and integrate this aesthetic and lifestyle in their collections. The aim of this paper is to investigate the phenomenon of quiet luxury by analyzing the values it embodies and the motivations behind its growing appeal. Moreover, an investigation on the silent marketing and communication strategies adopted is performed to better understand how they influence product perception and brand desirability, and how they can restore the perception of exclusivity which conspicuous luxury brands might have lost. To answer these questions, the research covers two quiet luxury brands case studies in different cultural contexts, providing a qualitative analysis on the strategies adopted to craft the brand's identity.

Quiet Luxury Concept

The essence of quiet luxury is the prioritization of quality over quantity, individual taste over conforming to the masses. Quiet luxury represents a lifestyle, and a philosophy which preaches the renunciation of the superfluous, favoring more conscious choices, and attributing value to the individual and social wellbeing (Tomasello, 2023). The expression is commonly associated to a specific lifestyle and taste for understated luxury pieces, that convey elegance, emphasize exclusivity and wealth, yet can be recognized and appreciated only by those who possess the cultural capital to understand the value of what they are looking at. Silent luxury is deeply intertwined with its brand heritage, conveyed through its storytelling. Quiet luxury consumers appreciate the art and craftsmanship of the luxury items they purchase. They are interested to know the story behind it.

Exclusivity and rarity are drivers of whether something is perceived luxurious or not. Both are important drivers of luxury consumption, and while rarity fulfills the need for distinctiveness, exclusivity serves the purpose of elevating the consumer to a specific signal social status. However, with the evolution of luxury, in recent years the focus has slowly shifted towards hedonic, experiential, and self-identity needs (Wang, Sung, & Phau, 2024),

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expanding luxury beyond just conventional material goods.

While conspicuous luxury caters to the need for recognition, inconspicuous luxury avoids overt status displays. However, this does not mean that inconspicuous consumers might not be still looking for the approval of the elites to some extent. For instance, overt narcissists, who are bold and confident, prefer quiet luxury, as their scope is to convey their uniqueness and sophistication, while impressing those who are part of the same elitist group. Covert narcissist, instead, who are insecure, and look for approval, opt for loud luxury designs to obtain social validation, even if there might be some limit to this rule, as cover narcissist may not want something that is widely available to the public (Taylor, Borenstein, & Pangarkar, 2025). Therefore, despite the differences, some psychological motives for consuming quiet luxury are shared with those of loud luxury. Conspicuous and inconspicuous consumption differ because quiet luxury appeals to individuals who prefer to express themselves through unique, value-driven pieces rather than extravagant designs, their attitude is indeed value-expressive (Taylor, Borenstein, & Pangarkar, 2025).

The study conducted on the influence of emotions on luxury purchases by Makkar and Yap (2018) introduced the role of hubristic pride and guilt in inconspicuous luxury consumption. If authentic pride, intended as pride linked to confidence and personal achievement, is the result of a self-earned success, hubristic pride has a more negative connotation, and it is linked to a feeling of superiority in respect to others. In the context of inconspicuous luxury, consumers are also influenced by pride, as they seek exclusivity, but they express it differently by choosing luxury goods that are refined and subtle rather than overtly branded.

Additionally, guilt can influence luxury consumption. Unlike those who pursue uniqueness through luxury consumption, some inconspicuous consumers are driven by negative emotions such as fear, shame, or guilt. Such guilt might originate from the “excess” nature of luxury which can be perceived as wasteful especially in times of economic troubles (Eckhardt, Belk, & Wilson, 2015) and environmental struggles. In this context, to avoid attracting envy and protect themselves, inconspicuous luxury consumers are driven towards subtler designs. In this way, they avoid overtly displaying their wealth, while still being able to enjoy the pleasure of their purchases. For example, in times of conflict crises, quiet luxury preference tends to increase by at least 15% (Antioco & Koshevaya, 2025). However, such negative emotions are not the sole reason for their preference towards quiet luxury, as positive emotions like hedonic pleasure, self-fulfillment and cultural enrichment can also reinforce discreet luxury choices (Makkar & Yap, 2018). The combination of wealth and low need for status of “patricians” results in a preference for silent luxury, as the aim of such consumers is to be recognized only by their peers and therefore use “horizontal signals” (Taylor, Borenstein, & Pangarkar, 2025), confirming what has been stated by other scholars in the field.

Luxury is consumed to associate to a specific lifestyle which is symbolized by the brand and the luxury items. In recent years, with the rise in concerns for the environment, and an increasing rejection towards ostentatious consumption and anti-consumerism, more and more people have been embracing minimalism and ethical consumerism as a lifestyle. These beliefs have redirected the attention towards quiet luxury, which emphasizes the

sustainability of its production methods, authenticity, and transparency of its processes, while offering understated designs and rejecting loud luxury business model and its extravagance. Inconspicuous consumption seems to be the sustainable choice, as it avoids mass production, and it promises to offer few staple pieces which are meant to last and possess timeless value. Therefore, personal values, concerns, and beliefs can also influence luxury consumption.

The Rise of Quite Luxury

There are several reasons behind the rise of quiet luxury at this specific moment in time. First, within the global economic scenario, after Covid-19 crisis and the following economic recession, luxury still registered a steady growth in the following years. The phenomenon, known as “leaping luxuries” (Eckhardt, Belk, & Wilson, 2015), reflects the tendency to invest on small luxury goods over basic needs due to their social visibility and status-signaling value. This is also referred to as the “lipstick effect” which is particularly common in recession periods.

Second, there is an ongoing social and cultural shift leading to non-material consumption, with a preference for access rather than ownership (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012). As a result, experiential consumption is becoming increasingly significant, and luxury consumption seems to be shifting towards a post-materialist perspective, which perfectly resonates with the new quiet luxury movement as it focuses on the quality and intrinsic value of luxury rather than the volume of consumption (Płodowska & Sękowski, 2018).

Third, with the dilution of the signaling ability of traditional luxury goods, caused by the mass consumption of luxury, affluent consumers are looking for a new way to convey their status and differentiate themselves from the masses and the new rich. Nowadays, status and conspicuousness can and should be decoupled: status is related to the consumption of “high quality, luxury, class”, whereas conspicuousness is tied to recognizability, image, and appearance (Eckhardt, Belk, & Wilson, 2015, p. 811).

Fourth, the rise of quiet luxury is a phenomenon that is not solely tied to developed countries, but it is starting to become evident also in emerging markets. Postrel predicted that as these countries would become wealthier and start moving from the development phase, they would shift from conspicuous to inconspicuous luxury (Postrel, 2008).

Fifth, the increasing concerns about the sustainability of the fashion industry have also affected the luxury sector. To promote a more sustainable business model, the return to minimalism with the aspiration of reducing over-consumption has translated into the quiet luxury movement promoting quality over quantity, and timelessness over fads that are forgotten within a couple of months.

This shift in luxury consumption raises the question: what drives customers to prefer inconspicuous luxury over conspicuous luxury? While conspicuous luxury caters to the need for recognition, inconspicuous luxury avoids overt status displays. However, this does not mean that inconspicuous consumers might not be still looking for the approval of the elites to some extent. For instance, overt narcissists, who are bold and confident, prefer

quiet luxury, as their scope is to convey their uniqueness and sophistication, while impressing those who are part of the same elitist group.

Conspicuous and inconspicuous consumption differ because quiet luxury appeals to individuals who prefer to express themselves through unique, value-driven pieces rather than extravagant designs, their attitude is indeed value-expressive (Taylor, Borenstein, & Pangarkar, 2025). Additionally, guilt can influence luxury consumption. Unlike those who pursue uniqueness through luxury consumption, some inconspicuous consumers are driven by negative emotions such as fear, shame, or guilt. Such guilt might originate from the “excess” nature of luxury which can be perceived as wasteful especially in times of economic troubles (Eckhardt, Belk, & Wilson, 2015) and environmental struggles. In this context, to avoid attracting envy and protect themselves, inconspicuous luxury consumers are driven towards subtler designs. In this way, they avoid overtly displaying their wealth, while still being able to enjoy the pleasure of their purchases. Further research into the psychology of luxury consumption introduced four types of consumers who are identified as the “patrician”, the “parvenu”, the “poseur”, and the “proletarian”. These customers approach luxury consumption in different ways (Taylor, Borenstein, & Pangarkar, 2025).

The framework proposed by the authors indicates that the need for status showcased by “parvenu” and “poseurs” results in a preference for conspicuous luxury, as loud luxury’s intrinsic qualities respond to such need. In particular, parvenus and poseurs aim to convey to those with lower affluence that they do not belong to their social group. On the other hand, the combination of wealth and low need for status of “patricians” results in a preference for silent luxury, as the aim of such consumers is to be recognized only by their peers and therefore use “horizontal signals”. Proletarians do not access to luxury consumption.

Consumers of Quiet Luxury

The quiet luxury consumer is typically an individual who showcases a tendency towards inconspicuous consumption. These consumers present specific desires and purposes. They already possess the status and embody the “quiet luxury” lifestyle; therefore, they do not need to signal their standing to others, which in turn increases silent luxury consumption appeal (Han, Nunes, & Drèze, 2010). They seek discreetness, because they don’t want to be recognized by those who are socially below them, but at the same time they want to feel connected to the “knowledgeable elites” (Taylor, Borenstein, & Pangarkar, 2025) who are part of their same social group and can understand the real value of what they are wearing. But who exactly constitutes this segment of quiet luxury consumers? Silent luxury customers are typically affluent upper-class individuals who possess great knowledge about the luxury industry and belong to the “highest social-economic group” (Han, Nunes, & Dr.ze, 2010).

Their education on luxury brands is partially explained by their social upbringing which has exposed them to this sector. This provides a cultural capital that allows them to really value and assess the intrinsic qualities of silent luxury’s products: their quality, reliability, longevity, and superior craftsmanship (Taylor, Borenstein, & Pangarkar, 2025, p. 146). In this case, cultural capital is intended as the ensemble of social qualities and attributes an

individual possess, which confer the individual with the education and refined tastes that signify the individual's status within a society (Makkar & Yap, 2018). The cultural capital allows individuals from this customer group to recognize quiet luxury products without needing any logos to differentiate inconspicuous items. Moreover, quiet luxury consumers might have an environmental and ethical consciousness which brings them to choose clothing options which are more sustainable, and quiet luxury's model and storytelling perfectly fits that (Berger & Ward, 2010). Demographically, luxury consumers are becoming younger. This is particularly relevant for quiet luxury, since it could probably benefit from this growing younger customer base, especially because younger consumers are increasingly concerned with sustainability and ethical issues, which would bring them closer to quiet luxury values (Jiang, Cui, & Shan, 2021).

Quiet Luxury Marketing Strategies

To analyze how brands are bringing quiet luxury items into the market and their stores, it is necessary to dive into the "silent strategies" they employ using the 7Ps Marketing Mix model, product, price, promotion, place, people, process, and physical evidence (Booms and Bitner 1982). Silent luxury products present both similarities and distinctive features with respect to the overall luxury segment, both in terms of their specific characteristics and the values associated with them. In particular, the design of luxury products is a crucial element for their desirability, more than their functional value (Greenberg, et al., 2019). Quiet luxury design is associated to a specific aesthetic. Garments aim at fitting into the "old money style", the timeless and sophisticated fashion style associated with individuals or families who have held wealth for generations. This style requires minimal and elegant designs, which are often restoring models that have been out in the stores for decades. The intrinsic characteristics of quiet luxury items provide it with its unique visual appeal. Each piece is thoughtfully designed with a focus on subtle elegance rather than ostentation and great attention for details, namely for stitching precision and hand-finishing of products.

An additional noteworthy aspect of quiet luxury's product strategy lies in its lack of logos or silent branding. The heritage component further enhances quiet luxury products' value. Consumers of quiet luxury appreciate the luxury items for their story, the artisanal know-how passed down over decades, and the cultural legacy each piece carries through generations. In term of actual pricing, quiet luxury positions itself in the highest spectrum. The premium pricing strategy aims at reducing the accessibility of products, hence making the items exclusive, and consequently increasing their attractiveness. Vice versa, the product rarity can justify the premium price customers have to pay to gain access to the elite group which consumes quiet luxury.

Quiet luxury promotion is aligned with the trend's values; hence it is characterized by subtlety, and ostentation avoidance. Silent luxury communication whispers to a discerning audience, without needing any flashy campaign to attract the masses, in contrast with loud luxury which is evidently extravagant. Quiet luxury's promotion strategy aims at cultivating a loyal, discerning customer base that appreciates and embodies the brand's philosophy rather than focusing on attracting everyone. For silent luxury, authenticity is key, and the communication revolves around the trend's values of understated elegance, traditions, and craftsmanship, which are emphasized through subtle cues. Usually, quiet

luxury brands adopt a promotional strategy which uses storytelling to narrate the brand and the product's value. This approach confers to quiet luxury items a unique value by adding a story to each item that transcends the product's physical attributes. While quiet luxury brands might use social media as a platform to present themselves, one should note that they mainly rely on word-of-mouth (WOM) within their niche community segment to spread awareness.

Place: quiet luxury brands are distributed only in selected, exclusive retail spaces, aligning with the trend's principle of inaccessibility, and strengthening consistency across all touchpoints. Distribution channels include boutiques, as primary points of sale, and flagship stores. Locations are carefully chosen, as they should be reflective of the brand values and aesthetic (Koullias & Roberts, 2023). Therefore, silent luxury brands stores are in cities with a higher concentration of affluent individuals or in exclusive holiday destinations. The limited number of locations enhances the brand's desirability. By adopting minimalistic approach also to the display of the collections, clothing items value is emphasized, as the space lets the uniqueness and rarity of each piece to stand out, while also allowing customers to truly appreciate what they are looking at. Silent luxury brands tend to often organize appointment-only shopping experiences and private fittings, or exclusive viewings of the latest collections to ensure that each one of their customers feels special.

The silent luxury strategy focuses great attention on the people who are part of such business model, and who embody its philosophy of providing superior quality and attention to details. Starting from a crucial element for quiet luxury strategy, this trend strongly relies on highly skilled artisans and craftsmen. These people are fundamental to the quiet luxury strategy because they are the ones who provide value to the brand. They showcase passion, dedication to their work and attention to details, keeping customers always in mind to provide something unique and of value. In quiet luxury stores, the staff is often trained to act more personal consultants rather than traditional sales associates. Therefore, their role requires providing highly personalized experiences, showcasing great care for the customer. Processes are also characterized by a customer-centric focus. First, quiet luxury process strategy focuses on a slow, craft-like production model. Silent luxury production adopts ethical and sustainable practices rather than the fast pace and mass production models which instead characterize most fashion houses (Oudinot, 2024).

Lastly, quiet luxury strategy also affects physical evidence by the packaging and retail store design. This trend's essence is minimalistic, and this reflects, as already discussed, on the store appearance, but also on something that is less evident, but of great importance: the product's packaging. Brands from this segment tend adopt a "less is more" approach also to packaging, stripping down the wrapping, and product designs, of all the elements which are unnecessary (Ruchon, 2024), and which might overwhelm the object perception of elegance and sophistication.

In conclusion, discreetness and minimalism are essential elements of quiet luxury, and traditional loud advertising does not reflect the approach of these brands. Therefore, rather than relying on overt promotional tactics, quiet luxury prefers silent strategies, seeking to

establish deeper, and more meaningful connections with their audience. This requires a nuanced and culturally resonant communication strategy, namely, storytelling which is one of the most adopted approaches. Indeed, storytelling as it is a powerful tool to convey the brand's identity and values in a subtle, yet compelling, way. Through storytelling the brand narrates the origins of materials, the dedication to crafting unique products, the sustainable and ethical approach to production, and the timeless and durable qualities of the designs. Customers who, nowadays require more and more information, are educated by the brand through storytelling which helps them appreciate and recognize such values. Storytelling allows brands to find a balance between the real value of their products and the perceived one, enhancing overall value through the synergetic combination of the brand's products, principles, and philosophy.

Case Studies

This section explores “born into” quiet luxury brands, with a selection of an Italian and an international case study, to better understand the phenomenon, identify some possible cultural variations affecting the strategies applied, and how these brands have built their silent identity.

Brunello Cucinelli: The Italian Interpretation of Quiet Luxury

Brunello Cucinelli stands out as one of the most influential contemporary brands within the Italian luxury landscape. The brand has contributed to the definition of the quiet luxury paradigm, and it sets itself apart from historic fashion houses, through its unique approach. The core identity of the brand resides in the founder's notion of “gentle luxury”, an expression that identifies a more conscious and refined interpretation of luxury. Gentle luxury places simple beauty, excellent craftsmanship, ethics, and sustainability at the heart of the luxury experience (Brunello Cucinelli, 2025).

Brunello Cucinelli was designing for the “absolute luxury” segment, which for him meant to create garments that were reflective of the Italian knowhow, craftsmanship and manual skills, but most importantly would hold value not because of their label, but thanks to their intrinsic, qualities and wearability. From the company's initial steps in 1978, when Brunello Cucinelli was personally visiting potential customers, the company has grown a lot. In the 90s, it started gaining recognition on an international level, reaching solid financial results. The brand's ethic and elegant clothing had become attractive for international consumers, and this enabled the brand expansion in Europe, America, and Asia through its mono-brand boutiques (Brunello Cucinelli, The Origins of the Company). The brand's international growth ultimately led to 2024 results, when the company reached revenues for €1.28 billion while also registering solid growth. Production is still exclusively located in Italy, with more than 400 artisan laboratories that handcraft around 60% of production.

Brunello Cucinelli embodies the quiet luxury movement. The founder himself describes it as a form of “kind and conscious” luxury (Crivelli, 2024). This aligns the brand with the sustainable and ethical intents of quiet luxury. By adopting this approach, and through the combination of fashion and art with elegance, Brunello Cucinelli's quiet luxury goes beyond the traditional luxury paradigm (Sehgal, 2025).

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The brand's exclusivity is built on several elements. First, Brunello Cucinelli relies on the prestige, crafted over the decades, over quality, craftsmanship, innovation and creativity. This exclusivity is further enhanced by the price point, with \$3,000 sweaters inaccessible to most individuals, this pricing policy enables Brunello Cucinelli to elevate to the higher end of luxury. The fashion house privileges leading cities and resorts worldwide, exclusive sales spaces in multi-brand and luxury department stores and mono-brand boutiques which are directly operated by the firm. The absence of evident logos on the garments, contributes to this allure of exclusivity surrounding the brand's positioning.

A predominant feature of the brand is its strong connections with the traditions and heritage of the Italian territory, which confers it a strong identity. the Italian style, which focuses on quality and craftsmanship over flashy trends, and chooses muted-earthy tones, perfectly fits with the quiet luxury idea of creating timeless garments which are not loud, they provide durability and comfort, as they are meant to be worn in "everyday life". The Italian timeless style combined with the idea of a type of luxury that is authentic, sustainable, and holds great value has attracted people from all over the world. the Italian style, aligning with the minimalistic aesthetic which has been trending recently, is well appreciated by sophisticated customers from different markets (Sehgal, 2025), even far from Europe. In particular, the Asian market registered impressive growth (+12.6%) between 2023 and 2024 for the company.



Exhibit 1. Brunello Cucinelli flagship store

If other luxury brands have diversified production, favoring markets where manufacturing is cheaper, Brunello Cucinelli maintains its production fully Italian, as the brand's primary objective is to create superior quality garments. The territory holds great value, because it is the heart of artisanal traditions and heritage, which have been transmitted across generations. Hence, the regional territory, which has gathered all the knowhow and artisanal skills over the decades, becoming highly specialized, could be assimilated to

manufacturing luxury districts. The brand distinguishes itself also for the superior quality raw materials that it uses for its clothes. These are sourced from the best suppliers in the territory, which are carefully selected according to their quality, trustworthiness, as they need to also respect the company work ethic and sustainability model, as well as innovativeness.

Brunello Cucinelli's philosophy and values communication requires great attention in terms of the strategies to adopt, to avoid overexposure which would damage the brand's image. The brand avoids aggressive advertising, preferring a discreet and understated approach to communication strategies. The communication is centered around storytelling which conveys the brand's philosophy and its values rather than just pushing products to consumers. Themes span from Italian culture, village life, dignity, respect, education, kindness and the value of the custodianship of places.

The brand expresses universal values, referring to some of the most important philosophers in history, like Socrates, Kant, Saint Francis, the objective is to create a firm communication that conveys an ethical and universal philosophical message, which can be appreciated by those who look for something more to justify their luxury purchases. Ethics and sustainability are core values, permeating the entire business. It is also economic sustainability, with a business model that seeks balance, in its development, and constant growth. The company pursues sustainable profit growth while upholding its ethical and environmental principles. In this setting, where growth is approached gently, with the advent of the new technologies, for instance AI, the company seeks also technological sustainability. In Brunello Cucinelli case, the company's DNA is defined by a business model structure which lies over some of the main principles of silent luxury: a) Sustainable Growth and Healthy Profitability; b) "Made in Italy", Craftsmanship, and Product Excellence; c) Exclusive Positioning and Distribution.

To summarize, the case represents a compelling example of a luxury brand which has been able to grow not through overt branding or high visibility, but through a strong identity rooted in ethical and sustainable values, tradition and heritage, quality, and craftsmanship. These elements are subtly manifested by the brand, rather than loudly displayed, aligning Brunello Cucinelli with the quiet luxury phenomenon.

ICICLE: The Chinese Take on Quiet Luxury

The Chinese luxury market has undergone several shifts across the decades. As China started opening to the Western world, and the number of individuals who could afford luxury increased, Chinese consumers started embracing the Western look, becoming one of the top luxury segments. Chinese luxury spending increased over the following decades, and between 2019 and 2023, the Chinese luxury domestic market saw impressive growth, at 18% per year, effectively doubling in size.

The main motives behind Chinese consumers turning preferences towards Western-style luxury brands was to catch up with fashion and showcase the social status and prestige associated with such brands (e.g. Gucci, Louis Vuitton, Prada). Therefore, consumers would opt for the louder and conspicuous designs (Wu, Luo, Schroeder, & Borgerson,

2017). However, since 2024, the market has faced a significant slowdown due to Chinese consumers preferences shift (McKinsey & Company, 2025). Consumption preferences have also seen a change from traditional Western luxury brands towards domestic and inconspicuous luxury brands, signaling a potential transformation of this industry in China.

The reason behind this change in preferences lies on a return to traditional cultural identity and lifestyle, coupled with that a renewed interest towards discreet branding imbued with Chinese cultural values. A new generation of Chinese luxury brands has been emerging and gaining market share within the territory. These brands are also starting to embrace the quiet luxury style, as consumers are avoiding prominent branding and ostentatious designs, in favor of brands which draw on traditional Chinese aesthetic and values (Wu, Luo, Schroeder, & Borgerson, 2017). ICICLE (之禾) is a brand that represents a compelling example of Chinese interpretation of the quiet luxury trend with its high quality, elegant and minimalistic ready-to-wear collections.

ICICLE was founded in 1997, in Shanghai, with the vision of promoting an ethical approach to high-end fashion. Through the brand's "natural way fashion philosophy" ICICLE pursues the mission of harmony between people and nature, which then reflects on the garments production philosophy. ICICLE, which in Chinese is called 之禾 (Zhi H.), literally translates as the "sprouting seed", evoking with the expression the connection between human and nature of the brand, its principles are built on a fusion between Chinese philosophical values, environmental ethics, and the pursuit of a balance between human and nature. In particular, the Chinese philosophy and heritage valuing a humble life, in harmony with oneself, others, and nature, is woven in the brand.

The brand's "Natural way" approach involves first the selection of fabrics, which are ethically sourced from some of the highest quality producers. These fabrics are carefully selected among the finest ones, including Mongolian cashmere, Belgian linen, Italian wool, Chinese silk, and Japanese organic cotton. To guarantee the lowest environmental impact, the brand privileges design's simplicity, minimalism, eliminating superfluous details, to guarantee products through the clothing's quality and style a lifetime durability.

The brand's image has been built over being known, among the true connoisseurs, as a luxury ready-to-wear clothing and accessories brand, committed to sustainable practices, craftsmanship, and quality. The philosophy behind ICICLE is one of harmony between humanity and nature, embodying Taoist and Confucianism heritage values, through the sustainability focus, which becomes one of the core values of the brand, and a key distinguishing feature. The clothing's minimalistic aesthetic, achieved through simple cuts and silhouettes, colors, and fabrics, is completed by the lack of visible logos.

The commitment to sustainability covers all processes, up to the packaging, where reusable bags or recyclable boxes are employed. Even clothing labels are made of ecological paper, which further supports the brand's commitment. This comprehensive dedication to crafting an eco-friendly luxury label enhances product's value and increases its appeal for the more conscious consumers.

The brand's prices are not only connected to the brand's label but mostly reflect the commitment to quality, the selection of the finest materials, the domestic production, and the ethical sourcing.



Exhibit 2. ICICLE flagship store

ICICLE's customer is an affluent, mature and conscious individual (Harshita, 2025), who, possessing the cultural capital and education to recognize the brand, are able to appreciate the understated refinement, authenticity and craftsmanship of the products. From flagship stores to design centers and shopping complexes, the brand has been able to evoke its philosophy through its retail spaces, creating immersive, and exclusive experiences. Flagship boutiques embody the ICICLE's minimalistic, neutral toned, and elegant aesthetic.

The promotion strategy of ICICLE is subtle, avoiding overt branding to focus on craftsmanship. The brand proposes a message of "buy less, buy better, make it last". Storytelling is another tool adopted within the brand's promotional strategy. In particular, ICICLE relies on its brand narrative based on themes that link fashion, culture, craftsmanship, urban life, and nature to appeal to customers. The brand builds its equity via word-of-mouth within its niche community and reinforces its exclusive positioning through partnering with heritage institutions only.

Conclusions

The quiet luxury phenomenon diffusion marks a remarkable shift in the luxury industry. This paper first investigates the reasons behind the surge of the quiet luxury phenomenon, uncovering that it is primarily the result of the current economic scenario, as the recession that followed the pandemic has led the fashion industry to adopt a more conservative direction. This has affected consumers' purchase attitude towards fashion, and it has resulted in their preference for quality over quantity, and minimalism for durability. The crisis has also prompted affluent individuals to avoid ostentatious displays of wealth, and

quiet luxury's no evident logos policy has perfectly aligned with this need.

The quiet luxury promises are to bring back luxury's exclusivity, by making its products inaccessible and unrecognizable to the masses, as they require cultural capital to be understood and appreciated, and by creating absolute luxury products, superior thanks to their quality, craftsmanship, and subtle elegance. The company offers are addressed to inconspicuous consumers, identified by scholars as "patricians", are affluent individuals who exhibit low need to signal status vertically, and prefer horizontal signaling aimed at their peers who possess the cultural capital to appreciate the intrinsic value of their luxury choices.

Within the luxury industry, this phenomenon has led to the decoupling of luxury and conspicuousness which have been traditionally associated. Luxury is no longer consumed only for status signaling purposes, and it does not have to be ostentatiously displaying wealth, therefore quiet luxury abandons logos for recognizability. Inconspicuousness has become part of the luxury vocabulary, marking a type of luxury that is minimalist, through subtle designs, muted colors and timeless elegance.

Brunello Cucinelli and ICICLE case studies provide valuable insights into how the diffusion of quiet luxury, and the theoretical implications of "silent marketing strategies" explored in previous chapters, are concretely applied within real business models. These cases have been selected to show how two very different countries, Italy on one side, being a developed country with a longstanding luxury heritage, and, on the other side China, an emerging country and a market traditionally defined by conspicuous consumption preference, embrace the quiet luxury model and principles given their different cultural contexts.

Brunello Cucinelli exemplifies a quiet luxury model rooted in the "Made in Italy" excellence, a slow production and humanistic capitalism. Indeed, the brand's strength resides in its deep connection to Italian heritage, which elevates the brand's quality perception and confers it authenticity, but also in its exclusivity crafted through silent marketing strategies. Brunello Cucinelli opts for a philosophical communication strategy, emphasizing the brand's care for sustainability and integrity, connecting it to concepts such as the humanistic capitalism and sustainable growth. Brunello Cucinelli's "gentle luxury" storytelling attracts only those consumers who possess the cultural capital and discernment to appreciate such values, and who look for products that can convey quietly such story.

On the other hand, ICICLE, while originating from an emerging market, it also embodies a simple quiet luxury aesthetic and value-driven philosophy. The brand integrates Chinese traditions and values, centered around the respect for nature and a frugal lifestyle with Western tailoring. Within the brand's promotion strategy, storytelling is integrated seamlessly, to convey the brand's mission into crafting elegant clothes with a sustainability-centric approach.

Both cases exemplify brands that prioritize a sustainable and ethical approach into crafting garments, and a dedication to minimalism and timeless elegance. However, their cultural

expression differs, as Brunello Cucinelli communicates through a poetic and philosophical storytelling that appeals to European sense of refinement and cultural capital, whereas ICICLE promotes a more intimate relationship with nature and ethical production inspired by Chinese culture and philosophy. Despite some cultural differences, both cases confirm that the quiet luxury phenomenon is referring to some common principles applied within brands across diverse cultural contexts. From a managerial perspective, the research provides a roadmap for quiet luxury brands on how to develop their marketing strategies and shape their identity to align with the quiet luxury phenomenon and appeal to the affluent consumers seeking value in their purchases beyond a label.

To conclude, in a world dominated by fast-paced consumption, fueled by fast fashion, trends, and aggressive communication, where quality has been compromised in favor of quantity, and promoting unsustainable fashion business models, quiet luxury speaks to a growing desire for substance, longevity, and authenticity. This phenomenon could reveal a new cultural shift, which has broadened the definition of luxury and detached it from ostentation.

Keywords: Quite luxury, Inconspicuous consumption, Craftsmanship, Sustainability, Storytelling

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