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Setting the Sustainability Agenda: The Impact of Luxury Brands' SDG-Related Tweets on Consumer Engagement

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ABSTRACT

This study examines luxury market brands' communications related to the sustainable development goals (SDGs) on the social media platform "X," and their impact on online consumer engagement. Our longitudinal study analyses 57,000 social media posts by 19 luxury brands (7-year period), revealing that social and environmental sustainability communications are the most popular to elicit consumer engagement, while economic sustainability messaging lacks a similar effect. The personal luxury industry (which includes apparel, footwear, watches, jewelry, and accessories) was chosen for this study as this industry faces unique challenges and more scrutiny over its practices. The study highlights the importance of sustainability communication in branded owned media, while emphasizing the role of the brand in shaping the public agenda through the content consumers like and share. Conceptually, agenda-setting theory is extended in this paper to cover luxury brand communications on social media. In this context, the theory is proven for some of the 17 SDGs; however, for economic agendas, extra strategic marketing practices beyond online social media communications may be required. Recommendations include prioritizing the reframing of economic sustainability communications and the continuation of the social and environmental sustainability messaging for consumer resonance.

1 | Introduction

The luxury market continues to expand, with estimates of a 6% revenue growth from 2022 to 2026 (Boston Consulting Group 2022) and leading luxury brands seeing double-digit sales growth in recent years (Deloitte 2023; Kenton 2024). Bain & Company's annual luxury study identifies the personal luxury goods market (the focus of this paper) as the "core of the core" of luxury segments, encompassing categories such as apparel (fashion, ready-to-wear, and haute couture), accessories (leather goods, shoes, and eyewear), watches, and jewelry (Bain and Company 2024). The industry's impressive performance is sometimes eclipsed by instances of malpractice that result in negative social and environmental impacts (Anzolin et al. 2024).

Despite this, and contrary to mainstream brands, luxury brands are viewed as taking a more proactive role in driving sustainability (Park and Kim 2016). For instance, Arrigo (2018) highlights that luxury brands utilize their flagship stores to engage stakeholders by showcasing their sustainability efforts. These stores not only emphasize the use of ethically sourced materials in their products, but also feature elements like solar-powered or energy-autonomous lighting, flooring made from certified sustainable forests, and LEED or geothermal energy certifications.

While many argue of a natural incompatibility between luxury (associated with status, ostentation) and sustainability (related to altruism, ethics) (Karaosman et al. 2020; Kong et al. 2021); some scholars link luxury and sustainability by considering the

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TABLE 1 | Richemont's sustainability strategy.

| SDG | Focus area | Examples from Richemont and its brands |
|---|--|---|
| SDG 5 (Gender Equality) | Women's empowerment, fair wages, and ethical labor practices. | Chloé became the first luxury brand to achieve B Corp certification, reflecting its commitment to social and environmental performance. |
| SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) | Preservation of artisanal craftsmanship. | Richemont supports traditional watchmaking and jewelry-making skills, ensuring economic growth and job sustainability. |
| SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) | Ethical sourcing, circular fashion, and responsible manufacturing. | Chloé emphasizes the use of sustainable materials and circular fashion, reinforcing its commitment to ethical luxury. |
| SDG 13 (Climate Action) | Carbon neutrality, renewable energy. | Richemont operates with 97% renewable electricity worldwide (as of March 2023) and aims to reduce its carbon footprint. |

Source: Richemont (2021, 2023).

durability of luxury products, which supports slow production processes and prevents overproduction (Vanacker et al. 2022). A sector “wake,” new government regulations, stakeholder pressure, awareness of potential competitive advantage (Rolling et al. 2021; Akrouf and Guercini 2022; Gasulla Tortajada et al. 2024) and, in some cases, strong sustainability values (Park et al. 2019) are prompting luxury brands to increase their sustainability efforts. For instance, the LVMH Group (including fashion houses such as Loewe and Louis Vuitton) aims to accelerate progress toward environmental excellence through their LIFE initiatives, focused on protecting biodiversity, fighting climate change, following circular economy practices, and operating with transparency (LVMH, n.d.). Richemont (our selected luxury brand) is best known for its luxury watch and jewelry brands like Cartier, Van Cleef & Arpels, Piaget, and Vacheron Constantin (see Table 1), but also owns fashion houses such as Chloé, Alaïa, and Dunhill. Though smaller in fashion, the group remains active in leather goods, accessories, and apparel.

A standout example is Chloé, a Parisian brand celebrated for its feminine, bohemian aesthetic. As part of Richemont, it upholds the group's luxury vision while prioritizing sustainability. For example, Chloé has recently introduced Chloé Vertical, including digital IDs in their clothes to make their products more circular while facilitating access to information about the product, and repair and resale opportunities (Vogue 2023).

Richemont's sustainable strategy includes adopting environmentally and socially responsible initiatives that align with the United Nations' sustainable development goals (SDGs). The focus varies, however, between brands. Table 1 provides specific examples illustrating this alignment.

The luxury industry's trend toward sustainability is accelerated by changing consumer demands, particularly amongst younger generations, who are increasingly prioritizing ethical

consumption (Athwal et al. 2019). This is further enforced by growing regulatory pressures and industry-wide standards (e.g., GRI 2025), driving brands to communicate supply chain transparency and ethical behaviors. However, little is known about the effects of communicating these sustainability efforts through social media on consumer online engagement. The limited research exploring sustainability-related communications by luxury brands on social media (Kong et al. 2021) highlights growing consumer expectations for all brands to adopt sustainable practices, but also suggests that sustainability-related communications may be effective for non-luxury brands, but not necessarily for luxury ones. The authors suggest that such communications could negatively affect luxury brands, as consumers might perceive sustainability as conflicting with quality. Conversely, sustainability communications by non-luxury brands may lead to increased purchase intentions, particularly in cultures with high sustainability awareness.

While acknowledging the valuable discussion this study initiates, the reality is that sustainability is becoming a key differentiator for luxury brands, enhancing brand reputation and creating a competitive advantage in the luxury market; thus, more research on the effects of communicating these sustainability efforts is needed. Consequently, our study focuses on the personal luxury goods sector rather than non-luxury, due to its more tangible commitments to sustainability and the rich opportunities it offers for further research. Despite growing scholarly interest in the luxury industry (Taylor and Carlson 2021; Reyes-Menendez et al. 2022), studies looking at the intersection between luxury and sustainability are still limited (Perez et al. 2020; Mok et al. 2022). A better understanding of luxury brands' sustainability efforts and how consumers react to them is needed, as even though previous research suggests that consumers tend to care less about sustainability when buying luxury goods (Davies et al. 2012; Podoshen and Andrzejewski 2012), trends are changing (De Angelis et al. 2017), with more than 60% of consumers

taking sustainability into account when purchasing luxury goods nowadays (Boston Consulting Group 2022). Moreover, as shown in the illustrative examples in Table 1, even if in an unstandardized manner (Jestratijevic et al. 2024), luxury brands commit to the SDGs as part of their sustainability strategies, linking specific initiatives to one or more of the 17 SDGs. But how do these brands influence the public agenda on SDG-related sustainability efforts? And how do those communications translate into consumer online engagement with the brand?

Thus, our study addresses the abovementioned gaps in research by examining luxury brands' agenda-setting communication efforts in social media, with the aims of (1) understanding which SDG-related dimensions brands are prioritizing in their sustainability narratives as part of their marketing and agenda-setting strategies, and (2) examining how these communication efforts influence consumer engagement with the brand. To achieve these aims, the following research questions guide our study:

RQ1. *Which SDG-related agenda are luxury brands communicating on social media?*

RQ2. *Which group of SDG-related communications (categorized under the three dimensions of the triple bottom line—social, economic, and environmental) leads to higher levels of online consumer engagement?*

Our study responds to recent calls in the literature for more research looking at how luxury brands could benefit from aiming to address the SDGs (Hepner et al. 2021), and more research on sustainable communications posted by luxury brands in social media, in particular in less visual platforms such as X (Eastman et al. 2024). This study makes several contributions. First, a conceptual contribution in this article is to broaden agenda-setting theory to account for the effects of brand-controlled media. Second, we are able to identify which SDGs the luxury brands selected in the study are focusing their agenda-setting efforts on. Third, this study presents empirical evidence on the relationship between SDGs-related communications (categorized under the three dimensions of the Triple Bottom Line) and online consumer behavior.

2 | Literature Review

2.1 | Marketing and Sustainability—The Role of the SDGs

Sustainable development is defined as development that “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (WCED 1987, 8). Despite growing evidence of companies using marketing to “greenwash,” pledging more than what they actually do (Kärnä et al. 2001), the field of marketing has contributed to sustainable development (Danciu 2013; Lawrence and Mekoth 2023) by “marketing” sustainability—increasing awareness, knowledge and trust among consumers and citizens (Gordon et al. 2011; Dangelico and Vocellelli 2017; Chandy et al. 2021), even through social media (Kapoor et al. 2021)—, and by developing strategies aimed at addressing different aspects of the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) (Economic, Environmental, and Social) (Elkington 1998).

Recently, marketing efforts aimed at addressing social and environmental issues have started relying on the SDGs as a tool to design, report, and influence sustainability activities (Amoako et al. 2022; Voola et al. 2022). The 17 SDGs and 169 associated targets, emerging from the three dimensions of the TBL, were proposed by all members of the United Nations in 2015 as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as a global call for action to improve human life and protect the environment (UN, n.d.). They serve as a worldwide appeal for collaboration among governments, civil society, private organizations, and diverse stakeholders across the Global North and South. They are often seen as the successors of the Millennium Development Goals, a set of 8 goals that were to be achieved by 2015 (UN 2025), which were more focused on the problems faced by the Global South and that achieved some significant, albeit uneven, results related to poverty eradication and the reduction of mortality levels among mothers and children under 5 (UN 2015). The SDGs, however, offer a more comprehensive and ambitious approach (Biermann et al. 2017), aiming to foster partnerships in tackling complex sustainable development challenges, including those related to the improvement of human life and the protection of the environment.

As mentioned earlier in this section, the SDGs are gradually being adopted as part of marketing strategies, as they provide a framework that allows organizations to operationalize sustainability (Voola et al. 2022). In fact, soon after the SDGs were launched, the “Big Six” advertising and marketing companies (Dentsu, Havas, Interpublic, Omnicom, Publicis Groupe, and WPP) signed an agreement with the UN as part of the “Common Ground” initiative, showing their support to the SDGs, while initiating a transition toward a more sustainable future in the sector (Jones et al. 2018) and moving beyond “business as usual” (Scheyvens et al. 2016). However, while SDG-related marketing communications is a flourishing area of both practice and research—with authors, for instance, developing SDG-related marketing communications commitment indexes (Wagner et al. 2024)—, more research is needed to explore what this type of communication means in terms of customer engagement.

In the luxury industry in particular, companies rely on the guidelines shared by the SDGs to design their sustainability strategies, for example, aiming to achieve a circular economy model by addressing SDGs 8 (“Decent work and economic growth”) and 12 (“Responsible consumption and production”) (López et al. 2023). While research has shown that consumers see luxury and sustainability as unable to coexist—particularly for those who define luxury as expensive or rare (Kapferer and Michaut-Denizeau 2014)—, the limited amount of literature exploring the adoption of SDGs in the personal luxury industry suggest that consumers value luxury brands efforts to achieve the SDGs, particularly those related to SDGs 8, 12, and 3 (“Good health and well-being”) (Hepner et al. 2021). According to López et al. (2023), however, luxury brands' SDG-related efforts are focused on efficiency, and therefore linked mainly to SDGs in the economic and environmental dimensions. Brands are able to reach “economies of scale” on their environmental efforts, reaching a point where more production does not translate into more pollution. Companies need to be careful, nevertheless, not to engage in “SDG washing” behaviors (Anwar and El-Bassiouny 2020). For instance, a luxury brand might use

sustainable raw materials and thus contribute to SDG12, while relying on sweatshops with adverse working conditions to produce their apparel. In that case, the company would be having a positive effect on one goal while jeopardizing another one (e.g., SDG8—by not offering decent working conditions), and would be therefore “washing” at the expense of the SDGs. When communicating about the SDGs, organizations should also seek consistency, as research has shown that luxury brands often display inconsistencies between the SDG-related information they include in their sustainability report, and what they communicate on their social media platforms (Rangel-Perez and López 2022). This inconsistency could affect consumers’ levels of trust and may again be perceived as “washing.”

For the purpose of this study and to facilitate analysis, the data in relation to the 17 SDGs were grouped under the three dimensions of the TBL, following the ideas proposed by Kostoska and Kocarev (2019). By examining what group of SDGs leads to higher levels of engagement, this study uncovers the most effective sustainability dimension(s) luxury brands could use when designing their sustainability strategies to increase consumer engagement on social media. Understanding this is important, as traditional research on corporate social responsibility (CSR) has shown that consumers’ perception of a company’s sustainability efforts, as well as their engagement with environmental messaging, might influence consumers’ behavior toward that company (Sen and Bhattacharya 2001; Kim 2017; Narayanan and Singh 2023) and their engagement with environmental sustainability initiatives (Salnikova et al. 2022). For example, in the case of some consumers, if they perceive sustainability efforts positively, they would be more likely to make a purchase (Pandey et al. 2023), keep their loyalty (Ogunmokun et al. 2021), or recommend the brand through positive word-of-mouth (Markovic et al. 2022). But do personal luxury consumers give equal importance to all dimensions of the TBL? Or is one dimension and a specific group of SDGs leading to more engagement than others? The limited existing research on the link between luxury brands’ communications about sustainability on social media and engagement offers mixed results. The authors like Eastman et al. (2024) encourage luxury brands to communicate their sustainability efforts through social media platforms, as these kinds of posts—whether focused on environmental and social issues—could lead to higher levels of online engagement. Other authors, such as Kong et al. (2021), however, argue that sustainable communication by luxury brands could pose a risk to the brand, as some consumers might not associate sustainability with quality and prestige, resulting in brand dissonance. Thus, further research is required on the impact of sustainability communications on social media engagement, especially within the personal luxury industry.

2.2 | Sustainable Messaging in Luxury: Driving Engagement on Social Media

In the past, luxury brands avoided social media as they were apprehensive that it was incongruent with their image of authenticity, exclusivity, and uniqueness (Rodrigues and Borges 2020). Brand image and exclusivity are paramount concerns for luxury brands, and to protect their image, brand managers strive for narrative control and mitigating the risks of open discussion on

social media (Rodrigues and Borges 2020). A luxury brand has a carefully curated image, and the open nature of social media risks diluting its prestige. Fear of negative feedback and loss of control further drives a cautious approach.

Conversely, mainstream brands actively court frequent open engagement on social media, whereas luxury companies prioritize attempts to limit engagement to high-quality, visually appealing content to preserve exclusivity. This practice is evolving, as brands increasingly use platforms like Instagram to engage younger audiences while maintaining their core values (Rodrigues and Borges 2020).

However, social media has quickly become an essential communication channel for luxury brands. It offers powerful marketing opportunities, influencing both general consumers and luxury high-end customers. Social media’s effectiveness for luxury consumers stems from brand-to-consumer and consumer-to-consumer interactions fueled by likes, shares, and information sharing (Lee et al. 2018).

Luxury consumers are progressively using social media for several reasons, including the desire to cultivate relationships with the brands they appreciate, to engage in co-creation in luxury brand experiences, and to satisfy both functional and hedonistic needs in relation to luxury goods (Jahn et al. 2012; Colella et al. 2019). Online consumer engagement with brands and peer interaction plays an essential role in acquiring information and encouraging purchasing behaviors (Kong et al. 2021), and has increasingly become a desired marketing outcome for brands in this space. Social media also has a significant role to play in social identity linked to online visibility and self-presentation. Therefore, it is essential for luxury brands to continuously scrutinize their performance on social media, examining consumer and brand follower engagements, as this could have a positive or negative impact on brand image (Lee et al. 2018).

Furthermore, consumers and wider stakeholders are starting to hold organizations accountable in their sustainability commitments, which include transparent, frequent communications where they can judge activities and impact (Michelon and Rodrigue 2015). This is pressuring luxury brands to engage in sustainable behaviors and use communications focusing on mindful consumption and social responsibility more often to shape public opinions on their environmentally friendly activities, despite these contradicting and clashing with the traditional portrayal and promotion of luxury (Kong et al. 2021; Kyrousi et al. 2023).

As a result, luxury brands and parent companies are using social media channels to disseminate their environmental and social sustainability efforts. The digital communications platforms provide a reputable space to enable brands to share their sustainability commitments and information with their consumers (Crapa et al. 2024). This is key for luxury brands, as consumers are becoming more aware of sustainability issues in the luxury industry (Kunz et al. 2020; Holmqvist and Kowalkowski 2023) and are demanding more visibility and transparency in the supply chain (Holmqvist and Kowalkowski 2023). However, more research on the influence of these types of communications on online consumer engagement is needed.

2.3 | Online Consumer Engagement

Consumers are spending a growing amount of time on social media channels interacting with other consumers and brands (Lamberton and Stephen 2016; Sheth 2021). Part of these interactions has been conceptualized as forms of online consumer engagement, and the interest in this phenomenon has led to a prolific body of literature as it poses several benefits to both brands and consumers (Saikia and Bhattacharjee 2024). Online consumer engagement can be defined as the frequency with which customers connect with brands in a digital setting such as visiting a brand's website or through responses such as clicks, likes, comments, and shares on social media platforms (Gavilanes et al. 2018). While consumer engagement has been conceptualized as a multidimensional construct that includes behavioral, cognitive, and affective dimensions, social media managers have mainly focused on behavioral manifestations of engagement (Van Doorn et al. 2010; Lim et al. 2022), such as users liking the content being published in these channels or sharing it with their friends.

Online consumer engagement is an important outcome for brands due to the several benefits that it creates for both consumers and the brand. From a brand perspective, engaging with consumers in online brand communities can enhance brand equity and brand engagement (Dessart et al. 2015; Pradhan et al. 2023). This engagement is vital as it can lead to the co-creation of brand value and promote positive relationships between consumers and brands (Kamboj et al. 2018). The concept of co-creation, central to Service-Dominant (S-D) logic, emphasizes the importance of value-in-use (Vargo and Lusch 2014). This perspective posits that value is not solely embedded within a product, but rather is realized through its utilization by the customer. Firms can actively enhance this value-in-use by providing resources and facilitating their integration with other private and public resources available to the customer, including social media presence and content being disseminated on these platforms (Kamboj et al. 2018). Furthermore, online consumer engagement is linked to preventing brand avoidance, highlighting the importance of brands being actively engaged with consumers online (Schee et al., Schee et al. 2020). There is also evidence that consumer engagement with online brand communities drives satisfaction, brand gratitude, and subsequent consumer engagement with the brand (Yuan et al. 2020). This cycle of engagement is further reinforced by consumer-generated media stimuli, which evoke emotions and enable consumer brand engagement (Loureiro et al. 2019).

Online consumer engagement plays a significant role in promoting a brand's message and driving sales (Pansari and Kumar 2017; Pentina et al. 2018). In the context of luxury products, research has focused on defining measurement approaches (Xiao and Chen 2025), or on understanding how consumer-brand engagement can produce desirable outcomes such as improved brand connection and increased brand usage intent (Brandão et al. 2019). Furthermore, for brands using social media to communicate their engagement with sustainability, this can not only enhance their brand image, as brand-driven promotions of social and environmental commitments seem to be less impactful (Zhao et al. 2019). But engagement with

such content on social media platforms can enhance consumers' appeal toward the brand, particularly among consumers who are increasingly conscious of sustainability issues (Voola et al. 2022). A recent study focusing on social media, CSR, and engagement found that some dimensions communicated by brands, including social inclusivity, are instigators of heightened consumer engagement. Although findings suggested that some attract less consumer engagement than others, including environmental responsibility (Macca et al. 2024).

2.4 | Public Opinion: An Agenda-Setting Theory Perspective

McCombs and Shaw established the agenda-setting theory in 1972, which posits that media communications go beyond general reporting, focusing on important news, which then shapes what the public perceives to be critical (McCombs and Shaw 1972). Therefore, agenda-setting theory suggests that the prominence of elements in the media based on saliency influences the prominence of those elements among the public (McCombs et al. 2018). In other words, the media not only informs the public "what is relevant" but also "what to think about" (Kim et al. 2015). This makes the public feel involved in the issues, increasing message comprehension and message acceptance (Eisend and Küster 2011).

Historically, traditional media outlets have served as influential communication channels for CSR and sustainability issues. Reputable media are trusted information sources where consumers gain knowledge and understanding of organizational activity, significantly influencing public opinions and perceptions (Lundahl 2021; Zhang and Dong 2021; Kwon et al. 2024). For example, if the media agenda prioritizes specific CSR concerns like labor conditions or environmental practices, the public agenda is influenced to focus more on these issues, impacting public perception and reputation.

Social media is a powerful tool to disseminate CSR and sustainability information, allowing for more interactivity and two-way communications, further influencing the public agenda. Conversations about SDGs and wider sustainability have increased significantly on Twitter, supporting the gap to examine the effectiveness of corporate agendas on social media (Kouloukoui et al. 2023). Thus, agenda-setting theory is crucial in understanding how social media is used by brands as it helps in comprehending the process of transferring salience from the brand agenda to the public (consumer) agenda (Chong 2019). In the context of social media, agenda-setting theory has been used to explain how online media shared in blogs shape consumer concerns toward 'greenwashed' environmental claims (Fernando et al. 2014). Chong (2019) further extended existing work using agenda-setting theory by suggesting that brands strategically shape the public's awareness and prioritization of social events through their online presence, particularly their social media posts.

We employ agenda-setting theory, specifically focusing on the first level of agenda-setting, supported by Feezell's (2018) work on digital media, to understand how luxury brands strategically highlight specific SDGs on social media. We contend that luxury

brands actively attempt to set an agenda by strategically highlighting specific CSR dimensions aligned with broader societal values and the SDGs. This represents their proactive effort to frame issues and increase the prominence of certain sustainability topics, aiming to influence what consumers consider important. We acknowledge that consumers are not passive recipients of this agenda. Their engagement behavior (likes and retweets) serves as a key indicator of the success of the brand's agenda-setting effort in the digital space. This engagement signifies the extent to which the brand's proactively set agenda resonates with consumers' own pre-existing values and priorities, effectively demonstrating the transfer of salience to the public or consumer agenda. High levels of audience engagement can lead to consumers amplifying the brand's prioritized topics within their networks. This aligns with contemporary applications of agenda-setting theory in digital environments (Feezell 2018), where brands initiate the agenda, and consumer engagement validates and reinforces its reach and impact. While we do not explore a direct, iterative feedback loop where consumer engagement immediately reconfigures brand discourse within the scope of this particular study, our analysis provides a snapshot of the efficacy of the brand's initial agenda-setting attempts.

The growing awareness and demand for CSR among consumers and stakeholders (Yamane and Kaneko 2021) prompt us to explore the potential impact of social media content on luxury brand engagement. Our research investigates whether luxury brands' social media posts that integrate the SDGs and the TBL framework lead to increased online engagement. Specifically, we explore if content focusing on specific areas of economic sustainability (e.g., fair trade practices and employee well-being), environmental sustainability (e.g., carbon footprint reduction and sustainable sourcing), and social sustainability (e.g., community engagement, diversity and inclusion) elicits a stronger response (e.g., more likes and retweets) from consumers.

3 | Methodology

A purposive sampling methodology was employed, focusing on an organization with a favorable Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) ranking (Ferrell and Ferrell 2022) and a multi-brand presence across diverse product categories. Compagnie Financière Richemont, comprising 19 distinct luxury brands, was selected for this study. Our selection of Compagnie Financière Richemont as the unit of analysis is driven by the understanding that SDG-related decisions, strategies, and overarching communication frameworks are typically formulated and cascaded from the corporate level, as reflected by the company's ESG management structure (Richemont 2025). Areas of activity are displayed in Table 2.

Data extraction, preprocessing, and analysis were conducted using Python, leveraging X's official API v2 connection and the Tweepy library (Roesslein 2022). Social media platform X enables users to access messages and posts from commercial entities without the necessity of following them. Unlike other social media platforms, nearly all posts are publicly available and extractable, which is required to extract large amounts of reliable data (Sistilli 2024). The platform's retweeting feature facilitates the sharing of posts, generating electronic word-of-mouth

TABLE 2 | Richemont's luxury brands and their areas of activity.

| Brand | Area of activity |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Watchmaking | |
| A. Lange & Söhne | Watchmaking |
| Baume & Mercier | Watchmaking |
| IWC Schaffhausen | Watchmaking |
| Jaeger-LeCoultre | Watchmaking |
| Panerai | Watchmaking |
| Piaget | Watchmaking and jewelry |
| Roger Dubuis | Watchmaking |
| Vacheron Constantin | Watchmaking |
| Jewelry and watchmaking | |
| Cartier | Jewelry and watchmaking |
| Van Cleef & Arpels | Jewelry and watchmaking |
| Buccellati | Jewelry and silverware |
| Fashion and accessories | |
| Chloé | Clothing, leather goods, and accessories |
| Alaïa | Fashion |
| Peter Millar | Fashion |
| Leather goods and accessories | |
| Delvaux | Leather goods |
| Dunhill | Fashion, leather goods, and accessories |
| Montblanc | Writing instruments, leather goods, and watches |
| Serapien | Leather goods |
| Specialty luxury goods | |
| Purdey | Firearms and luxury goods |

(eWOM) (Zhang et al. 2011; Williams et al. 2015). Given X's character limitations and the tendency for retweets to maintain the original sentiment (Kim et al. 2015), the frequency of retweets can serve as an indicator of eWOM success (Walker et al. 2017). This study specifically investigates the efficacy of sustainability messaging in driving eWOM for brands. The data corpus consisted of the latest 3000 posts (original and reposts) from each of the 19 X accounts, encompassing attributes such as original text, likes, and total reposts. The resulting dataset spanned 57,000 posts over a 7-year period. This number of posts allowed us to collect all the posts the brands have posted during that period for further analysis, and it is in alignment with those used in previous similar studies (e.g., De Luca et al. 2022). We

selected posts from 2016 to 2022, as the SDGs were adopted by all UN Member States in late 2015, but only launched on January 1, 2016 (UN, [n.d.](#)).

Agenda-setting theory posits that both media and public agenda manifest in real-world indicators that assert the prominence of the topics in the agenda. Building upon previous work (Fernando et al. 2014), we operationalized these indicators by examining the frequency with which specific keywords appeared, which revealed the brand's media agenda. Additionally, we analyzed online engagement to determine the level of public interest in these same topics. As part of the pipeline, the posts were then compared with an SDG keyword catalogue that was developed, building on existing taxonomies (i.e., Monash University 2017; Elsevier 2023) and flagging those posts that contained any of the words shown ($N=1580$). The adapted SDG keyword catalogue includes keywords related to each of the 17 SDGs. Once X posts with mentions related to each of the SDGs were identified, we operationalized three dimensions grouped into three categories in line with Kostoska and Kocarev (2019) dimensions: economic (SDGs 1, 2, 3, 8, and 9), environmental (SDGs 6, 7, 12, 13, 14, and 15), and social (SDGs 4, 5, 10, 11, 16, and 17).

4 | Analysis

To answer [RQ1](#). We began by calculating the proportion of posts containing SDG-related keywords relative to the total number of tweets published by each brand per year.

Tables 3 and 4 illustrate the number of posts compared with the number of posts containing SDG mentions per brand and over the years.

This step was essential to contextualize trends and distinguish between the organic increase in posting activity and a potential strategic shift in SDG communication. We then analyzed how often keywords related to each SDG and TBL category were mentioned. Table 3 shows that in total, SDG-related keywords were mentioned 2460 times in our sample. From those mentions, SDG10, SDG9, SDG7, and SDG12 were the most mentioned.

We then grouped the SDGs into three dimensions that align with the TBL following Kostoska and Kocarev's (2019) approach. Figure 1 illustrates how the number of tweets mentioning SDG-related content has changed over the period 2016 to 2022. Overall, we can observe a growing trend in the number of posts mentioning SDG-related words.

In addition, Figure 2 shows that, overall, the focus during this period has been mainly on the social dimension, followed by the economic and environmental dimensions. We have also included some exemplars of posts in Appendix 1.

To answer [RQ2](#). We performed a negative binomial regression. We chose to conduct this type of test as the dependent variables were count data (i.e., number of posts favorited and number of RTs) with overdispersion, meaning that a few posts were the ones that had the greatest number of Likes (Figure 3) and retweets (Figure 4), whereas most posts had only a few likes and posts. Negative binomial regression is considered appropriate when

TABLE 3 | Number of total tweets and tweets with SDG mentions by brand.

| Brands | SUM of tweets | SUM of SDG tweets | Percentage of SDG tweets over the total |
|---------------------|---------------|-------------------|---|
| AZ Factory | 733 | 37 | 5.05% |
| Baume & Mercier | 2168 | 120 | 5.54% |
| Buccellati | 32 | 0 | 0.00% |
| Cartier | 1125 | 55 | 4.89% |
| Chloé | 475 | 112 | 23.58% |
| dunhill | 564 | 13 | 2.30% |
| IWC Watches | 3000 | 297 | 9.90% |
| Jaeger-LeCoultre | 1453 | 28 | 1.93% |
| Montblanc | 728 | 50 | 6.87% |
| NET-A-PORTER | 2359 | 159 | 6.74% |
| Panerai | 542 | 78 | 14.39% |
| Peter Millar | 1541 | 70 | 4.54% |
| Piaget | 2298 | 112 | 4.87% |
| Roger Dubuis | 680 | 99 | 14.56% |
| Serapian Milano | 118 | 2 | 1.69% |
| THE OUTNET | 2357 | 43 | 1.82% |
| Vacheron Constantin | 1307 | 54 | 4.13% |
| Van Cleef & Arpels | 1801 | 105 | 5.83% |
| Watchfinder & Co. | 2628 | 103 | 3.92% |
| YOOX | 1334 | 40 | 3.00% |
| Grand Total | 27,243 | 1577 | 5.79% |

the data exhibit overdispersion, as it provides a more flexible and accurate fit for this type of data (Ver Hoef and Boveng 2007; Kuijken et al. 2016).

We first conducted the analysis on the number of liked posts. The results in Table 5 show that posts mentioning SDG-related terms related to the economic dimension category ($\text{Exp}(\beta)=0.86$, $p<0.05$) had a negative effect on the post being liked. On the other hand, posts related to the social dimension had a positive and significant effect on the number of times those posts were liked ($\text{Exp}(\beta)=1.12$, $p<0.01$). There was no effect of the environmental dimension on the number of times posts were liked ($\text{Exp}(\beta)=0.97$, $p=0.59$). The control variable Year, treated as a categorical predictor with 2016 as the reference category, demonstrates varying effects on the expected number of

TABLE 4 | Number of total tweets and tweets with SDG mentions by brand per year.

| Brands | 2016 | | 2017 | | 2018 | | 2019 | | 2020 | | 2021 | | 2022 | |
|---------------------|--------|------------|--------|------------|--------|------------|--------|------------|--------|------------|--------|------------|--------|------------|
| | Tweets | SDG Tweets |
| AZ Factory | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 45 | 3 | 512 | 26 | 176 | 8 |
| Baume & Mercier | 744 | 25 | 538 | 17 | 288 | 32 | 113 | 15 | 160 | 5 | 177 | 12 | 148 | 14 |
| Buccellati | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 31 | 0 |
| Cartier | 203 | 6 | 308 | 4 | 135 | 8 | 123 | 7 | 96 | 6 | 152 | 10 | 108 | 14 |
| Chloé | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 156 | 31 | 319 | 81 |
| dunhill | 218 | 6 | 158 | 4 | 94 | 1 | 17 | 1 | 34 | 0 | 23 | 1 | 20 | 0 |
| IWC Watches | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 847 | 76 | 782 | 61 | 621 | 50 | 518 | 58 | 232 | 52 |
| Jaeger-LeCoultre | 495 | 1 | 106 | 2 | 223 | 3 | 184 | 12 | 101 | 1 | 209 | 4 | 135 | 5 |
| Montblanc | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 308 | 30 | 224 | 13 | 107 | 5 | 89 | 2 |
| NET-A-PORTER | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1539 | 113 | 820 | 46 |
| Panerai | 242 | 23 | 86 | 14 | 78 | 12 | 62 | 12 | 11 | 0 | 35 | 8 | 28 | 9 |
| Peter Millar | 182 | 7 | 75 | 4 | 163 | 4 | 251 | 4 | 202 | 10 | 365 | 28 | 303 | 13 |
| Piaget | 301 | 6 | 131 | 0 | 205 | 2 | 467 | 25 | 557 | 39 | 432 | 26 | 205 | 14 |
| Roger Dubuis | 62 | 3 | 27 | 6 | 125 | 26 | 114 | 21 | 116 | 13 | 172 | 25 | 64 | 5 |
| Serapian Milano | 38 | 0 | 23 | 0 | 57 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| THE OUTNET | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1528 | 24 | 517 | 9 | 312 | 10 |
| Vacheron Constantin | 232 | 4 | 253 | 4 | 157 | 4 | 179 | 16 | 177 | 8 | 179 | 11 | 130 | 7 |
| Van Cleef & Arpels | 276 | 10 | 214 | 5 | 306 | 18 | 263 | 10 | 237 | 21 | 279 | 23 | 226 | 18 |
| Watchfinder & Co. | 830 | 23 | 250 | 13 | 178 | 17 | 235 | 16 | 365 | 12 | 441 | 14 | 329 | 8 |
| YOOX | 294 | 10 | 388 | 6 | 376 | 2 | 84 | 4 | 70 | 6 | 83 | 8 | 39 | 4 |
| Grand total | 4117 | 124 | 2557 | 79 | 3232 | 207 | 3182 | 234 | 4544 | 211 | 5897 | 412 | 3714 | 310 |

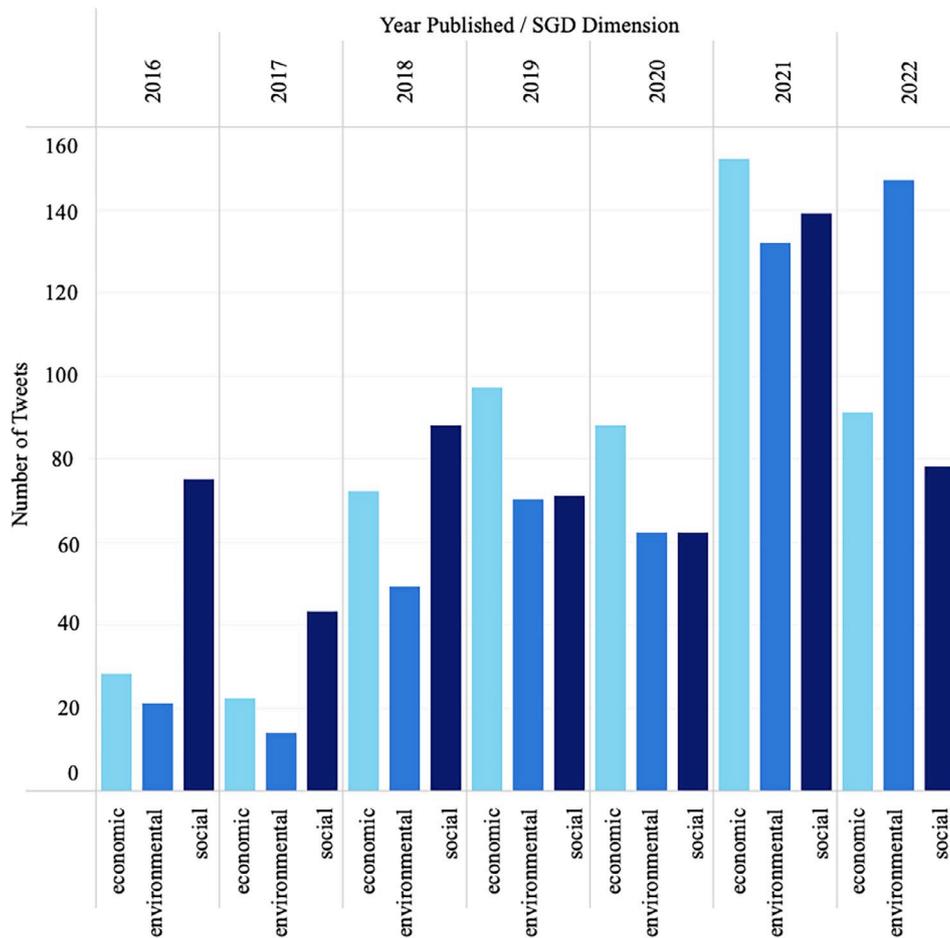


FIGURE 1 | Number of posts mentioning SGD-related terms per year.



| | | | |
|-------------------|-----|-----|-----|
| Frequency | 843 | 733 | 884 |
| Percentage | 34% | 30% | 36% |

FIGURE 2 | Frequency of SDG dimensions in relation to the TBL.

likes. Compared to 2016, the $\text{Exp}(\beta)$ reveals statistically significant increases in expected likes for all subsequent years: 2017 ($\text{Exp}(\beta)=1.81, p < 0.01$), 2018 ($\text{Exp}(\beta)=3.27, p < 0.01$), 2019 ($\text{Exp}(\beta)=4.75, p < 0.01$), 2020 ($\text{Exp}(\beta)=3.33, p < 0.01$), 2021 ($\text{Exp}(\beta)=2.77, p < 0.01$), and 2022 ($\text{Exp}(\beta)=3.25, p < 0.01$). The

results indicate that, holding the economic, environmental, and social pillars constant, the rate of likes was substantially higher in each of these years compared to 2016. This could reflect the increased awareness and consequently engagement with the topics contained in the pillars.

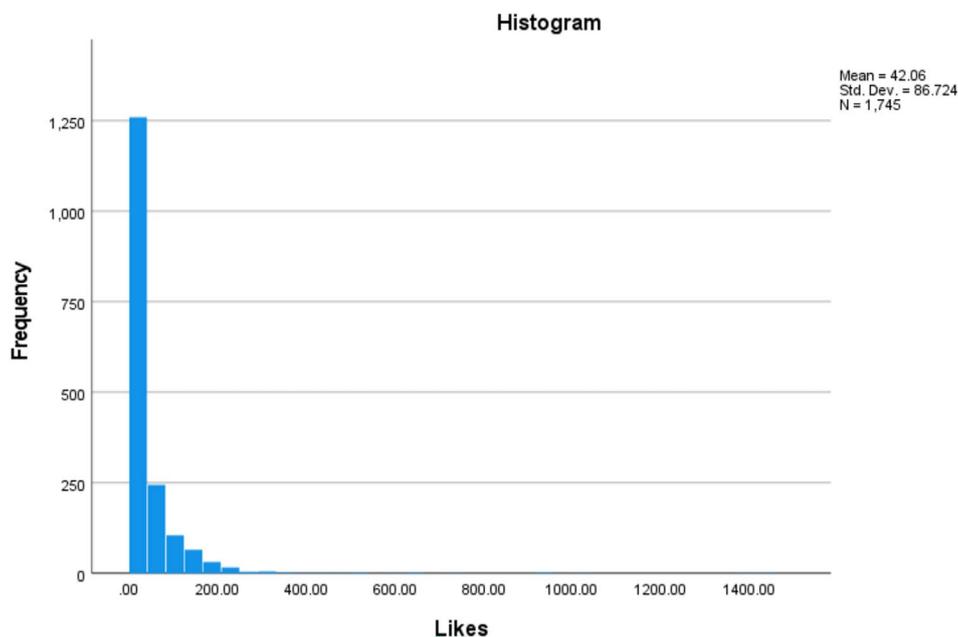


FIGURE 3 | Number of likes per posts.

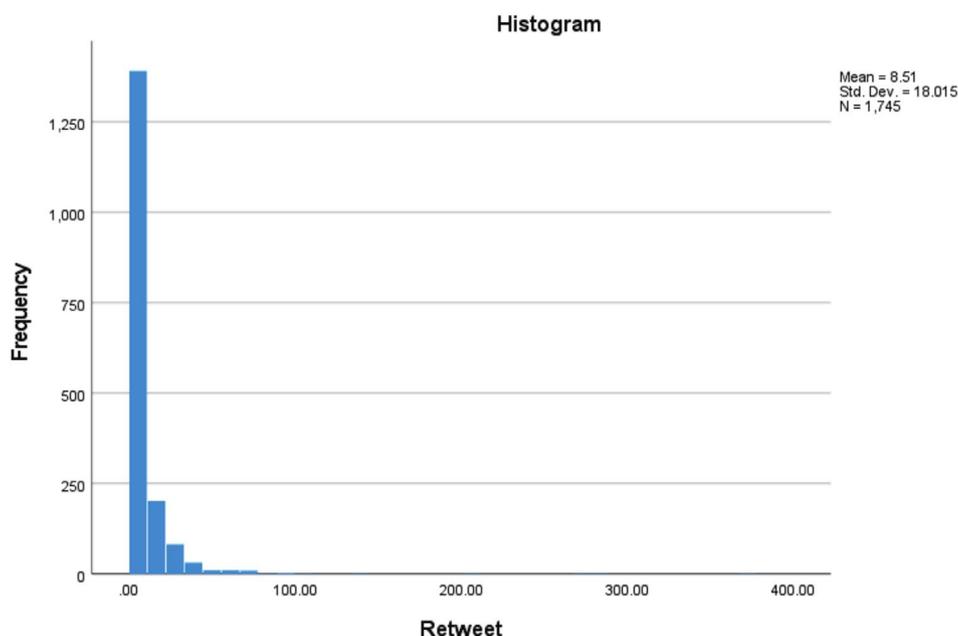


FIGURE 4 | Number of retweets per post.

We then examined the number of retweets per post to determine whether different TBL categories led to more retweets. Our findings show that Environmental ($\text{Exp}(\beta)=1.23, p<0.01$) and Social related categories ($\text{Exp}(\beta)=1.30, p<0.01$) elicited more retweets/shares (Table 6). Of the two, the social-related categories had a slightly greater impact. No changes were explained from economic-related categories ($\text{Exp}(\beta)=1.05, p=0.41$). We also controlled for the variable Year. The results show that while 2019 saw a statistically significant increase in the expected number of retweets/shares compared to 2016 ($\text{Exp}(\beta)=1.26, p<0.05$), 2021 experienced a significant decrease ($\text{Exp}(\beta)=0.64, p<0.01$). The remaining years, 2017 ($\text{Exp}(\beta)=1.13, p=0.41$), 2018 ($\text{Exp}(\beta)=1.23, p=0.08$), 2020 ($\text{Exp}(\beta)=1.09, p=0.47$), and 2022 ($\text{Exp}(\beta)=0.80, p=0.06$), did not exhibit statistically

significant differences in the expected number of retweets/shares when compared to the baseline year of 2016. Table 7 provides a summary of the results.

5 | Discussion

Overall, we agree with Hepner et al. (2021) in that luxury brands should commit to the SDGs and use them as part of their brand communications as, contrary to the ideas of previous research (Kong et al. 2021), sustainable communications by luxury brands could lead to consumers' online supportive behavior. We found that there is a balance in terms of the topics brands use to communicate on social media, with similar

TABLE 5 | TBL dimensions as predictors of post being liked.

| Predictor | β | SE | Wald χ^2 | df | Sig. | Exp(β) | 95% CI for Exp(β) | |
|----------------------|----------------|------|---------------|----|---------|----------------|---------------------------|-------|
| | | | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| (Intercept) | 2.7 | 0.12 | 496.38 | 1 | < 0.001 | 14.8229 | 11.69 | 18.79 |
| Economic pillar | -0.16 | 0.06 | 7.9 | 1 | 0.005 | 0.86 | 0.77 | 0.95 |
| Environmental pillar | -0.03 | 0.06 | 0.29 | 1 | 0.593 | 0.97 | 0.86 | 1.09 |
| Social pillar | 0.11 | 0.06 | 4.34 | 1 | 0.037 | 1.12 | 1.01 | 1.25 |
| [Year = 2022] | 1.18 | 0.11 | 114.15 | 1 | < 0.001 | 3.25 | 2.62 | 4.03 |
| [Year = 2021] | 1.02 | 0.11 | 92.89 | 1 | < 0.001 | 2.77 | 2.25 | 3.41 |
| [Year = 2020] | 1.2 | 0.12 | 106.98 | 1 | < 0.001 | 3.33 | 2.65 | 4.18 |
| [Year = 2019] | 1.56 | 0.11 | 186.62 | 1 | < 0.001 | 4.75 | 3.8 | 5.94 |
| [Year = 2018] | 1.18 | 0.12 | 102.43 | 1 | < 0.001 | 3.27 | 2.6 | 4.11 |
| [Year = 2017] | 0.59 | 0.15 | 15.98 | 1 | < 0.001 | 1.81 | 1.35 | 2.41 |
| [Year = 2016] | 0 ^a | | | | | | | |

Note: Dependent variable: Likes.

^aSet to 0 because this parameter is redundant.

TABLE 6 | Mentions of SDG-related keywords.

| SDG | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------|-----------|------------|
| SDG1 | 31 | 1.30% |
| SDG2 | 160 | 6.50% |
| SDG3 | 168 | 6.80% |
| SDG4 | 139 | 5.70% |
| SDG5 | 56 | 2.30% |
| SDG6 | 93 | 3.80% |
| SDG7 | 225 | 9.10% |
| SDG8 | 30 | 1.20% |
| SDG9 | 454 | 18.50% |
| SDG10 | 503 | 20.40% |
| SDG11 | 45 | 1.80% |
| SDG12 | 196 | 8.00% |
| SDG13 | 79 | 3.20% |
| SDG14 | 37 | 1.50% |
| SDG15 | 103 | 4.20% |
| SDG16 | 136 | 5.50% |
| SDG17 | 5 | 0.20% |
| Total | 2460 | 100% |

frequencies across SDG groups, but being communications related to the “social SDGs” the most frequent. Consistent with the ideas of Eastman et al. (2024), our results suggest that posts related to both the social and the environmental dimensions of the TBL lead to some type of online engagement. However, communications related to the social dimension of the TBL

(SDGs 4, 5, 10, 11, 16, and 17) lead to more engagement, both in terms of likes and retweets. This is consistent with a recent study on social media, brands, and CSR that found social inclusivity correlates with higher levels of customer engagement (Macca et al. 2024). These results also align with research in other contexts suggesting that sustainability efforts focused on social issues lead to better consumer responses (e.g., Rahman and Norman 2016; Cheng et al. 2023), in particular when communicated via social media (Barbeito-Caamaño and Chalmeta 2020). It could be argued that our results highlight consumers' growing awareness of social issues in the industry, and their willingness to support brands investing in their social responsibility. Luxury brands have the potential to promote the social dimension of the TBL and move from “glamour to responsibility” (Carrigan et al. 2013, 1299). Apparently, those who have already started the transition manage to get consumers engaged.

In terms of the environmental dimension (SDGs 6, 7, 12, 13, 14, and 15), communications focused on topics such as climate action and responsible consumption affect engagement in terms of retweets but have no effect on likes. These results partly support the ideas of previous research in other contexts suggesting that environmental sustainability positively affects consumers' intentions to support organizations (e.g., Adrita and Mohiuddin 2020). However, in a brand communication context, Macca et al. (2024) found that communicating environmental responsibility attracted less engagement, which may partially explain the non-significant effect on likes. Interestingly, communications focused on the economic dimension of the TBL (SDGs 1, 2, 3, 8, and 9) have no effects on the number of retweets, but they have a negative effect on the number of likes. These results might be explained by consumers not perceiving these sustainability efforts positively, which, contrary to what happens if they do (Kim 2017), translates into negative/nonexistent engagement behavior. It might be that those economic pledges are not properly substantiated, which could drive consumers

TABLE 7 | TBL Dimensions as predictors of post being retweeted/shared.

| Predictor | β | SE | Wald χ^2 | df | Sig. | Exp(β) | 95% CI for Exp(β) | |
|----------------------|----------------|------|---------------|----|---------|----------------|---------------------------|-------|
| | | | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| (Intercept) | 1.87 | 0.12 | 232.93 | 1 | 0.00 | 6.50412 | 5.11 | 8.27 |
| Economic pillar | 0.05 | 0.06 | 0.67 | 1 | 0.414 | 1.05 | 0.93 | 1.18 |
| Environmental pillar | 0.21 | 0.06 | 10.7 | 1 | 0.001 | 1.23 | 1.09 | 1.4 |
| Social pillar | 0.26 | 0.06 | 21.03 | 1 | < 0.001 | 1.3 | 1.16 | 1.46 |
| [Year = 2022] | -0.22 | 0.11 | 3.59 | 1 | 0.058 | 0.8 | 0.64 | 1.01 |
| [Year = 2021] | -0.44 | 0.11 | 16.13 | 1 | < 0.001 | 0.64 | 0.52 | 0.8 |
| [Year = 2020] | 0.09 | 0.12 | 0.52 | 1 | 0.471 | 1.09 | 0.86 | 1.38 |
| [Year = 2019] | 0.23 | 0.12 | 3.74 | 1 | 0.053 | 1.26 | 1 | 1.58 |
| [Year = 2018] | 0.21 | 0.12 | 3 | 1 | 0.083 | 1.23 | 0.97 | 1.56 |
| [Year = 2017] | 0.12 | 0.15 | 0.67 | 1 | 0.414 | 1.13 | 0.84 | 1.53 |
| [Year = 2016] | 0 ^a | | | | | | | |

Note: Dependent variable: Retweets/shares.

^aSet to 0 because this parameter is redundant.

to see those communications as SDG-washing (Anwar and El-Bassiouny 2020). The lack of online supportive behavior might also be due to existing negative perceptions, mainly influenced by well-known wrongdoings in the luxury industry (i.e., poor working conditions) (Holmqvist and Kowalkowski 2023), consumers growing awareness of these issues, and their willingness to avoid buying from luxury brands following these practices (Phau et al. 2015).

It could be argued that while the personal luxury industry mostly engages in instrumental CSR practices, focused on traditional corporate objectives (Donaldson and Preston 1995), consumers show more appreciation for normative ones and SDG-related actions such as those aimed at reducing inequalities and promoting sustainable communities. At the same time, the lack of support for the hypotheses proposed in this study could imply that luxury brands may not be doing enough to address the TBL, or they might not be effectively communicating their efforts in this regard. Or perhaps, as Rangel-Perez and López (2022) suggested, there may be an inconsistency between what companies do and include in their sustainability reports and what they communicate on social media. In any case, if they are indeed not balancing sustainability efforts across the three dimensions of the TBL and the 17 SDGs, they would be contradicting current debates and understandings of sustainability in luxury (Akrouf and Guercini 2022).

Furthermore, the findings support that luxury brands' communication strategies on social media platforms can shape public discourse and engagement surrounding sustainability, in line with agenda-setting theory (Russell Neuman et al. 2014). To answer the question of how brands influence the public agenda on SDG-related sustainability efforts, the results suggest that luxury brands are using their owned media to develop brand communities in the digital space, to drive a purposeful sustainability agenda that is positive for both society and the environment. In relation to how these communications translate into consumer

online engagement with the brand, the results suggest that although the sustainability agenda from the brand's owned media includes economic posts, it is not gaining the same traction as social and environmental posts. Kong et al. (2021) found that economic communications for luxury brands increased eWOM, and thus, reframing these posts may be required to support and amplify effective luxury sustainability agendas.

The findings extend existing theorization on the role of media in shaping public agenda, and indeed brands, especially those with great levels of exposure through social media. Specifically, we found that while posts emphasizing economic sustainability did not resonate with audiences in terms of likes, those highlighting social and environmental issues elicited significantly more engagement, particularly in the form of retweets, which is a form of eWOM communication.

6 | Conclusion

By examining luxury brands' communications in relation to the SDGs, this study answered two main research questions. First, the study aimed to understand the agenda-setting efforts related to the 17 SDGs that luxury brands are communicating on social media. The results found that the selected luxury brands are using messages related to all SDGs, but the communications agenda slightly prioritized messages related to "social SDGs," followed by economic and environmental, as per Kostoska and Kocarev's (2019). Second, the study aimed to examine which group of SDG-related communications leads to higher levels of online consumer engagement. The results found that social posts had more likes and were also more likely to be retweeted by the luxury brand followers, which aligns with previous research by Barbeito-Caamaño and Chalmeta (2020). Results in relation to the SDG-related communications linked to the other two dimensions showed that the environmental dimension posts were more likely to be

retweeted, but less likely to be liked. For the economic dimension, no significant results were found in relation to retweets, while an interesting negative relationship was found when analyzing engagement in terms of likes. Suggesting that economic tweets related to SDGs may need to be reframed for positive audience engagement.

These important findings provide evidence on how luxury brands can use their communication strategies to better market sustainability, an approach suggested by authors such as Gordon et al. (2011), Dangelico and Vocalelli (2017), or Chandy et al. (2021), among others. However, while our results suggest that luxury brands show efforts to put forward an agenda related to the 17 SDGs and the three dimensions of the TBL, the positive feedback that they receive from consumers, in the form of engagement behaviors, is underperforming for their economic-related content. Therefore, more effective communication strategies could be used to engage consumers when discussing these aspects.

6.1 | Theoretical Contributions

The study contributes to the debate around agenda-setting theory (McCombs et al. 2018) in several ways. First, our results support the conceptualization that brands can also act as agenda-setting entities in the media that they control, and that their messaging efforts drive some of the indicators of (consumer) public opinion on social media, namely the number of likes and retweets. Second, our study also revealed that there are elements of the TBL that resonate more strongly among consumers. The insights provided contribute to the limited research on the effectiveness of SDG-related communications in driving online consumer engagement (Hepner et al. 2021), and to current discussions on how luxury brands could benefit from using social media to communicate their sustainability efforts (Eastman et al. 2024).

Feezell (2018) previously proved agenda-setting theory on social media through the analysis of political information tracked via social media channels, suggesting it is still a valid theory in the digital age. In this study, audience engagement behaviors such as likes and shares on social media suggest that for certain SDG dimensions, consumers are amplifying the sustainability public agenda as they are being influenced by brands on what to think about. Brands often use these channels to disseminate information, with the knowledge that traction will occur through likes, sharing, and algorithms, reinforcing the communications. As topics are repeatedly discussed and shared, relevance and significance increase. In essence, the findings of customer engagement of certain SDG posts prove that exposure to SDG-related communications provides tangible evidence that there is an increased amount of public engagement, and therefore higher public awareness.

6.2 | Managerial Implications

In line with the recommendations made by Paul (2024), we have identified a number of managerial implications. While

there may be inconsistencies between what companies actually do and what they post on social media (Rangel-Perez and López 2022), the brands studied in this project appear to be striking a balance between the dimensions of the TBL when communicating their sustainability efforts. While this is positive, our findings suggest that the more luxury brands talk about topics related to the economic dimension, such as innovation (one of the most frequently mentioned topics, under SDG9, see Table 6), or decent work and economic growth (SDG8), the less engagement they receive. On the other hand, when these brands communicate about social issues, more engagement is generated, suggesting consumers care more about the brands' social sustainability efforts.

Therefore, we suggest that luxury brands to review their sustainability strategies and, consequently, how they communicate about it, so posts in relation to all dimensions of the TBL not only generate engagement, but are also able to shape the public opinion of their followers. In particular, the findings endorse prioritizing social and environmental sustainability messaging to enhance consumer engagement and resonance, as SDG-related communications across those two dimensions lead to higher levels of engagement. But to achieve the above-mentioned balance, more effective communication strategies are required to address the lack of engagement with the economic dimension and, to some degree, the environmental one. Emphasizing the social benefits of responsible economic practices could provide a solution to the lower levels of online engagement that this pillar experienced. Being more transparent in terms of what they do and communicate on social media might also help with engagement, as transparent sustainability-related communications on social media increase consumers' attitudes toward companies (Lee and Chung 2023). Transparency could be achieved by providing substantial information about their sustainability efforts, including specific targets and progress toward meeting them (especially those related to the economic dimension, which led to none/negative engagement). While this might be challenging due to word-count limitations in posts, brands could include hyperlinks or QR codes to provide additional information, demonstrating their openness and accountability. Overall, the findings imply that luxury brands have the power to shape the public agenda among their followers by prioritizing these topics, potentially influencing public perception and discourse toward these crucial aspects of sustainability.

6.3 | Limitations and Directions for Future Research

In our study, we associated the number of "likes" and "retweets" with positive consumer online engagement, in line with previous studies (e.g., Walker et al. 2017). However, the profiles of those engaging with the brands' posts were not analyzed; thus, our measure of engagement can only be interpreted as generalized online consumer behavior. Future research could explore engagement further by analyzing the profiles of consumers engaging with the brands. The study could also be extended by extracting data from other comparable social media platforms (i.e., TikTok and Instagram).

Another limitation of our study is the potential for alternative classifications of the 17 SDGs. Some might argue that SDG12, for example, could be under the economic dimension, instead of the environmental one. Or that SDG3 (Good health and well-being) should be placed under the social dimension, instead of the economic dimension. While we acknowledge the validity of these potential arguments, we believe Kostoska and Kocarev's (2019) approach provides a comprehensive, systematic, and peer-reviewed approach to mapping SDGs under the TBL dimensions. This peer-reviewed status lends it a degree of credibility and rigor that strengthens the foundation of our research. There are also limitations in the design that we chose for this study, where we aggregated the results at a house of brand level as opposed to individually per brand. We acknowledge that both consumer engagement and Richemont's SDG involvement vary significantly depending on the brand within the group. Not all brands communicate equally on these aspects, nor do they generate the same level of engagement. A brand-specific or sector-based study could yield more granular results and help to better understand how and why stakeholders—both brands and consumers—engage with the SDGs at a brand level.

Future research could continue our longitudinal study to identify the extent of developments in brand communications at significant points of economic, social, or political change. Extending the debate to investigate the impact of income inequality and how this influences conversations about luxury brands on social media platforms (following the ideas shared by Walasek et al. (2017)) could provide valuable context for analyzing changes in brand communications, especially during significant societal shifts. Future research could also explore engagement across specific brands and products; for example, engagement levels for different items (jewelry, watches, fashion, and luggage). Similarly, engagement measures could be explored across different consumer demographics, as different age groups hold varied perspectives on luxury brands (Henninger et al. 2017). Studies could also test our conceptual model in other countries within the Western world, as well as outside of it. The consumption of luxury brands is increasing in countries such as China, where awareness about environmental issues is lower than in more developed countries (Ali et al. 2019), which presents an interesting area for future research.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

Data Availability Statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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Appendix 1

Exemplars of Posts Shared by Luxury Brands Connected to SDGs

| Brand | SDG | Post description |
|------------------|-------|---|
| Chloe Fashion | SDG1 | Made from recycled fabrics, this puffer jacket is a collaboration with @Sheltersuit, a social justice organization that provides direct protection against cold and rain for homeless people through multifunctional clothing. Discover on https://t.co/cTgokJ1xY #CHLOE https://t.co/170tGYRIN5 |
| NETAPORTER | SDG11 | We're all searching for ways to make a positive impact on our planet, and building a greener beauty regime is one to consider. Discover the industry game-changers making a solid case for sustainable beauty. https://t.co/8vRr9i7bht https://t.co/L6fCuI3m4S |
| Baume et Mercier | SDG11 | Ocean protection: It is about working together. The NGO Waste Free Oceans does not just remove plastic from the ocean: it has developed a complete economic system based on the reclaim and reuse of rubbish and its conversion into new-generation materials. https://t.co/x4hykNZszF |
| The AZ Factory | SDG11 | Inside the Factory: take a sneak peek into the production process for #FreeTo, a unique collaboration with sustainable textile company Pyratex—tremendous work went into creating the perfect, vibrant hues used throughout. #AZFACTORY #Pyratex https://t.co/CnhSsZKyXu |
| Baume et Mercier | SDG12 | As a member of the Responsible #Jewellery Council, we're committed to the #ethical sourcing of #diamonds and other #precious materials. https://t.co/dIimRmthjy |
| The AZ Factory | SDG13 | With temperatures on the rise and social calendars filling up, #FreeTo has got you covered. Plus, discover the newly introduced Hug bag, made with wearability and durability in mind. Shop now on https://t.co/ldgvf7gkgI #AZFACTORY https://t.co/QDSuWMwlfP |

| Brand | SDG | Post description |
|---------------|-------|--|
| NET-A-PORTER | SDG13 | NET-A-PORTER is a leading online luxury fashion retailer for women, established in 2000. It offers a curated selection of high-end fashion, fine watches, jewelry, and home décor from the world's most coveted brands, and is recognized for its personalized shopping experiences. Want to know where your diamonds come from? Discover how NET-A-PORTER jewelry houses are enhancing the ethical and environmental credentials of their diamonds to deliver responsible jewels with crystal-clear provenance. https://t.co/GsUKpInY6n https://t.co/ddHIKqnjg8 |
| Chloe Fashion | SDG16 | The Sheltersuit & Chloé backpack, made from repurposed and upcycled leather and canvas. Social justice organization @ Sheltersuit protects the homeless by providing full-length coats that double as sleeping bags. https://t.co/k1k5fwfhTO |
| Mont Blanc | SDG3 | Write all your good deeds and exciting plans in classic #Montblanc #stationery, now dressed in attention-grabbing scarlet. Proceeds from the #MontblancM (RED) will benefit @RED foundation in the fight against HIV/AIDS. https://t.co/naRfKHggiC |