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Author Affiliation:
[1]Diamond of America LLC
50 W 47th St
Suite 1811
New York, Ny 10036
United States

*Corresponding author:
yuliyagusarova480@gmail.com

MARKETING | RESEARCH ARTICLE

Transforming Luxury Jewelry Customer Experience using Strategic Connection Framework in Omnichannel Environments

Yuliia Husarova[1*)]

Abstract
Background: To alter the customer experience of the luxury jewellery in an omnichannel setting, behavioural decision-making mechanisms that cannot be reflected in quantitative measures, need to be identified.
Purpose: This paper aimed to determine how luxury jewelry omnichannel navigation is controlled and to demonstrate how the Strategic Connection Framework (STRC) can transform customer experience and resolve exclusivity-omnichannel tension.
Methods: A qualitative comparative case study of luxury jewellery enterprises in the United States and Ukraine. The study covers the whole customer journey from inquiry to transaction. Detailed analysis of customer-consultant interactions and communication records from physical and digital channels provided insights. Three omnichannel maturity models (low, medium and high) were created considering digital integration, channel coordination and consumer behaviour trends in both markets.
Findings: The results indicate that they are three mechanisms namely exclusivity-calibration (EXCL), trust-transference (TRST), and ritual-preservation (RITU). STRC incorporates these processes to revolutionize customer experience. Specific differences in the market were observed: the U.S. market is characterized by system-based integration, whereas Ukraine is based on consultative models based on communication.
Conclusions: STRC offers a feasible model to transform luxury jewelry omnichannel customer experience under various conditions in the market without eroding exclusiveness.
Research implication: The managers of luxury brands are advised to create digital platforms that convey exclusivity, a consistent set of trust cues in all touchpoints, and alter consumption rituals because market-specific logics demand different strategies of implementation.

Keywords: behavioral mechanisms, consumer navigation, cross-market comparison, exclusivity preservation, qualitative case analysis, trust transfer

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Yuliia Husarova

Yuliia Husarova is the owner and manager of jewelry businesses operating in both Ukraine and the United States. She graduated from Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv with a degree in Management of Organizations and Administration and is a member of the Union of Jewelers of Ukraine. Her professional and research interests focus on omnichannel retail strategies, customer experience management, digital marketing, luxury jewelry retail, and e-commerce transformation in the jewelry industry. She is the author of the methodological framework “Customer Journey Architecture in Omnichannel Jewelry Retail” and has previously published a peer-reviewed academic article on omnichannel commercialization and digital transformation strategies for jewelry enterprises based on the experience of Ukraine and the United States.

Her current research examines consumer trust formation and integrated customer experience models in luxury jewelry retail environments. This study explores how omnichannel strategies influence customer engagement and purchasing behavior within the luxury jewelry sector. One of the main challenges of this research was the limited availability of academic studies specifically focused on omnichannel transformation in luxury jewelry retail. Nevertheless, the study provides practical insights for customer-centered retail development in the jewelry industry. She can be reached via yuliyagusarova480@gmail.com

PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

As luxury jewelry retail continues to integrate digital and physical sales channels, understanding consumer trust and customer experience becomes increasingly important for modern businesses. This study examines how omnichannel strategies influence customer engagement and purchasing behavior within the luxury jewelry sector.

One of the primary challenges of this research was the limited number of academic studies specifically focused on omnichannel transformation in luxury jewelry retail. In addition, differences in consumer behavior across regional markets may affect the broader applicability of the findings. Nevertheless, the study provides practical insights for customer-centered retail development and strategic integration of online and offline channels in the jewelry industry.

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1. Introduction

Online shopping is transforming luxury jewelry purchase patterns and consumer expectations (Diaz Ruiz & Cruz, 2023). Unlike shopping at the mass market, the consumption of luxury jewellery is emotive, infrequent and is based on trust and exclusivity (Ratakam & Petison, 2023). In the age of omnichannel, luxury companies need to integrate both brick-and-mortar stores with online stores such as e-commerce, social media, and messaging applications (Rangel & López, 2022; Tam and Lung, 2025). However, this integration creates a tension between digital accessibility and exclusivity preservation that remains underexplored in the literature.

Three drivers are interrelated and drive the luxury omnichannel customer experience: exclusivity-calibration, trust-transference, and ritual-preservation. Exclusivity-calibration is when consumers evaluate authenticity and rarity of brands from various channels. The term trust-transference refers to increasing trust in the physical purchase resulting from positive online experiences, when the channel cues are consistent. Ritual-preservation refers to the preservation of ceremonial consumption practices supported by digital means but not completely superseded by them. The luxury customers expect high price signals of quality and authenticity, as per signaling theory (Boisvert & Ashill, 2022). According to relationship marketing theory, trust is transferred from channel to channel where there are consistent cues (Kigen & De Villiers, 2024). According to ritual theory, consumption rituals are an integral part of luxury value and cannot be fully digitized (Hill et al., 2022). These views collectively describe the three mechanisms in luxury environments that are based upon the omnichannel approach.

In this paper, other theoretical approaches are incorporated as well as an author-developed methodological approach the Architecture of the Customer Journey in Omnichannel Jewelry Retail (OJR-CJA). This working framework is a conceptualisation of how the customer journey moves through a series of interactions, incorporating decision making processes, communication channels, physical and virtual touchpoints and bridging across channels. This framework is used in this study as an analytical framework to examine the organization of customer interaction in the context of omnichannel jewellery retail (Husarova, 2026). This approach looks at the customer journey as a continuous series of touchpoints, where the interactions between channels, serial consultation and repeated touchpoints have an impact on customer perception and buying habits. Because the decision-making process of luxury jewelry is not transactional, and composed of multi-stage interactions, this architecture is justifiable.

The study of the omnichannel consumer experience in the contexts of fast fashion and electronic has been conducted recently, while the luxury jewelry is not (Alishzade & Hasanov, 2025; Shukla et al., 2025). The channel does not explain the process of luxury consumers' behavioral decision-making quantitative study (Arora, 2026; Ayyildiz et al., 2024). The lack of study on How to make a touchpoint with exclusivity, transference of trust, and maintenance of rituals in physical and digital touchpoints of the luxury jewelry omnichannel is crucial. This paper is used to provide a comparison of the US and Ukrainian luxury jewelry operations in order to bridge this gap. The selection of these markets was due to variations in the development of digital commerce, consumer expectations, and structure of communication channels, which enables the model to be experimented in various institutional conditions. In this sense, the problem statement of this research is that despite luxury jewellery being available on both offline and online platforms, there is still no theoretical explanation connecting these channels and no empirical evidence of how these three elements of luxury (exclusivity-calibration, trust-transference, and ritual-preservation) interact across channels without compromising the brand value and transforming the customer experience.

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Although there is a growing stream of research in the field of omnichannel CX in mass-market retailing areas like fast fashion, electronics and grocery stores, there is a lack of theoretical and empirical study in the area of luxury jewelry. Luxury jewellery is distinguished by its high emotional involvement, low frequency of purchases and high reliance on exclusivity and trust, which are different from the consumption contexts of mass market. Furthermore, there are no existing studies that specify the exact behavioral decision-making process of luxury consumers in both physical and digital channels. The three principles of the proposed Strategic Connection Framework calibration, trust-transference, and ritual-preservation have never been empirically studied. This study aims to fill this gap by providing mechanism-based, qualitative evidence from the under-researched context of luxury jewelry in the markets of Ukraine and the USA.

The current research is structured in three interrelated objectives: First, to identify the behavioural processes involved in the navigation through the luxury jewellery omnichannel environment; Second, to create the Strategic Connection Framework to configure the customer experience from the different channels; Third, to use this framework to break the dichotomy between exclusivity and omnichannel navigation in the luxury jewellery market.

In addition to measuring channel satisfaction and channel characteristics, quantitative research cannot explain how and why premium channel consumption is sequential, context-bound and meaning-based for the premium customer. The qualitative comparative case analysis is therefore used to capture such mechanisms of behaviour decision making in their natural context, where these variables are rich and complex enough to not be simply described by quantitative indicators.

The current study, therefore, explores three research questions in relation to the Strategic Connection Framework (STRC) and qualitative comparative case analysis: (1) How do luxury jewellery consumers go about their purchase of luxury jewellery through the physical and digital touchpoints? (2) What is the Strategic Connection Framework's impact on luxury jewellery customer journey? (3) What is the Strategic Connection Framework's answer to this dichotomy between exclusivity of luxury jewellery and its inclusion in omnichannel?

This research has four main theoretical and practical contributions to the in-depth luxury omnichannel literature. First, it uses a qualitative comparative case methodology, which differs from the majority of studies on omnichannel research that are quantitative surveys and statistical sampling studies, to delve into the mechanisms of decision-making behavior that cannot be captured by using numerical indicators. Second, the study extends the consumer behavior literature beyond fast fashion and electronics by taking on the emotionally charged and high involvement context of luxury jewelry, where notions of exclusivity and trust are not the same as in mass-market retailing. Third, this paper introduces the Strategic Connection Framework, a theoretical framework that explains the interplay among the three mechanisms, namely exclusivity-calibration, trust-transference, and ritual-preservation, between the physical and the digital touchpoints. Fourth, the study directly addresses the exclusivity-omnichannel paradox luxury brands are facing in real terms, providing practical insights to overcome the challenge of customer experience while preserving brand value. All these contributions contribute to the theory and practice of luxury strategy for omnichannel.

2. Literature Review

This chapter will examine the theoretical premises and empirical data used in the research. Four preliminary theories are analyzed, and then, a synthesis of studies on luxury jewelry consumption, omnichannel customer experience, and decision-making mechanisms during a behavioral decision-making process is presented. This section ends by determining the gap in research that the study will fill.

2.1 Theoretical

The theoretical foundation of this study draws on four complementary frameworks. Signaling Theory explains how luxury brands communicate quality and exclusivity through costly signals that differentiate genuine luxury from mass-market alternatives (von Deimling et al., 2022). Relationship Marketing Theory foregrounds trust and commitment as the defining characteristics of enduring customer–brand relationships, distinguishing them from incidental transactions (Morgan & Feng, 2024). Uses and gratifications theory accounts for the ways consumers selectively engage with physical and digital platforms to fulfil utilitarian, hedonic, and social needs within omnichannel environments (Wei et al., 2024). Self-determination theory addresses how intrinsic motivation and the psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness shape consumer engagement across touchpoints (Grenier et al., 2024; Xia et al., 2022). Taken together, these four frameworks provide the conceptual scaffolding for the Strategic Connection Framework developed in this study.

2.2 Behavioral Decision-Making Mechanisms in Luxury Jewelry Omnichannel Navigation

As this study is qualitative, the propositions presented in the following subsections are introduced as theoretically-grounded propositions to be explored through qualitative comparative case analysis, rather than statistical propositions requiring quantitative testing. The aim is to identify behavioral decision-making mechanisms that cannot be adequately described by numerical indicators. Accordingly, "supported" or "partially supported" indicates that the cross-case evidence is consistent with the proposed mechanisms, not that statistical significance has been achieved. This approach follows established conventions in qualitative research where propositions guide data collection and analysis without implying statistical inference.

The luxury consumer's buying behaviour is based on emotional, symbolic and status-related consumption, which is in contrast to the mass market consumption (Matić & Pandža Bajs, 2022; Uluturk & Asan, 2024). Research on behavioural decision mechanisms (Bandi et al., 2024; Son et al., 2023) shows that the negotiation process of luxury consumers occurs in omnichannel contexts, with the assistance of three signals: trust signals, exclusivity signals, and ritual buying processes. High-net-worth individuals rely on the digital channel for acquiring information and its legitimacy and the physical channel for emotional fulfillment and sensory validation (Klaus, 2022; Michaelidou et al., 2022). Exclusivity-calibration refers to customers' judgement of the authenticity of brands in different channels, and purchasing (Azemi et al., 2022; Zha et al., 2023). Trust-transference occurs when favourable online communications lead to real-life buying (Cherep, 2025). The ritual-preservation theory (Jeong, 2024) posits that luxury ceremony participants will maintain rituals that are not fully met by the digital channels in which they are consumed. Luxury omnichannel navigation is shaped by behavioral factors.

P1: Behavioral decision-making mechanisms govern luxury jewelry consumers' omnichannel navigation.

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2.3 The Strategic Connection Framework for Transforming Customer Experience Across Channels

The following proposition is proposed to examine whether the Strategic Connection Framework achieves customer experience transformation through the integration of EXCL, TRST, and RITU. Therefore, relationship marketing must be included in the design of omnichannels to structure luxury customer experience transformation (Jeong, 2024; Silva et al., 2024). There are no specific frameworks for customer experience in the context of luxury (Meireles et al., 2026). The majority of work has been undertaken with mass-market retail. The strategic connection theory highlights the importance of planning an emotional touch point journey in comparison to transactions (Vajpai et al., 2025). Channel integration enhances the consumer's satisfaction and loyalty when the physical and online channels are similar (Li et al., 2022). A main challenge for luxury personalisation is balancing data-driven customisation with client privacy and exclusivity (Liao & Halawi, 2025). When the channels are multiple, emotional engagement is in-between channel design and customer loyalty (Japutra et al., 2025; Yu & Zheng, 2022). The strategic connection approach to luxury omnichannel transformation focuses on emotion, rather than efficiency.

P2: The Strategic Connection Framework transforms luxury jewelry customer experience across channels.

2.4 Resolving the Exclusivity-Omnichannel Tension in Luxury Jewelry

The following proposition is proposed to examine whether the Strategic Connection Framework resolves the exclusivity-omnichannel tension through the integration of EXCL, TRST, and RITU. The main conflict of luxury omnichannel marketing is between accessibility and exclusivity (Bertrand & Glebova, 2024). Research indicates that luxury companies are struggling with brand presence online as it can run the risk of becoming commoditised and deflating the brand's mystique (Johnson et al., 2026; Noviani, 2025). The concept of exclusivity and convenience has been investigated in the context of scarcity signals, limited editions and invitation-only releases. The thesis of digital exclusivity is that a high-touch and customised virtual service can be a luxury as well (Meireles et al., 2026). Premium companies' comparative studies indicate that omnichannel integration maintains the exclusivity of brands by communicating their stories in a consistent way, offering visibility of some products, and providing exclusive access to the channels (Seifert et al., 2023). In the realm of online luxury consumer goods, research on status signalling online shows that the perception of luxury products as status symbols depends on customers engaging in exclusive online activities, alongside the luxury product (Lawry, 2022). As a result, instead of the consistent expansion of channels, a framework needs to be implemented to overcome the conflict between exclusivity and omnichannel. Based on the above, it is proposed that the subsequent proposition is true.

P3: The Strategic Connection Framework resolves the exclusivity-omnichannel tension in luxury jewelry.

3. Conceptual Framework

This study's conceptual framework is based on the theoretical perspectives in the literature review. Together, the three theories of signaling theory, relationship marketing theory and ritual theory account for three behavioural mechanisms that steer luxury consumers in the omnichannel environment: exclusivity-calibration (EXCL), trust-transference (TRST), and ritual-preservation (RITU). Figure 1 shows how the mechanisms

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are connected through the Strategic Connection Framework (STRC) to create change in customer experience and to address the tension between exclusivity and omnichannel.

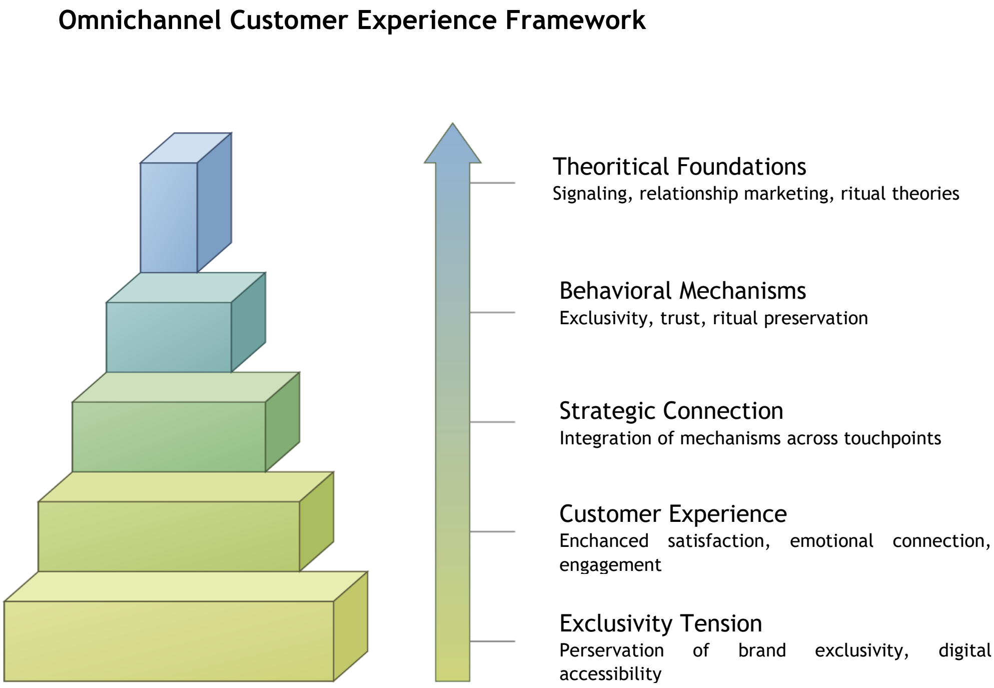

Figure 1. Conceptual framework
Source: Author's compilation

4. Methods

4.1 Research Design

The study used a qualitative research design, which is comparative case analysis. This was a valid way to highlight behavioral decision-making processes that were not captured by quantitative measures. Hypotheses from the literature review were not tested statistically but rather through qualitative cross case evidence. In keeping with the conventions of qualitative research, the term "verification" means that evidence is gathered to support or partially support the proposed mechanisms.

A comparative analysis of luxury jewelry business in two different consumer markets (the United States and Ukraine) was carried out to increase the validity of the results. The markets were chosen because of the variations in the level of development of digital commerce, consumer expectations, and the nature of communication channels that allowed the model to be examined in various institutional settings. This research was supported by an author-developed methodological framework named the Architecture of the Customer Journey in Omnichannel Jewelry Retail (OJR-CJA) as well as the qualitative comparative case design. The following working framework is a conceptual model of the customer journey as a structured network of interactions that involves decision-making processes, communication channels, touchpoints and transition points, both physical and digital (Husarova, 2026). In this study, it is used as an analytical tool to analyze the interaction sequences in the omnichannel environment. In this context, the customer behaviour was studied as a chain of interconnected customer interactions between various channels, which in totality influenced the customer perception, trust and purchase decision. This methodological approach provided a structural prism that, along with the Strategic Connection Framework, illuminated the organization of interaction sequences in the omnichannel context.

4.2 Case Selection

A purposive, information-based case selection strategy was employed. In order to conduct the cross-case comparison, six luxury brands were chosen (three in the United States and three in Ukraine), according to the following criteria: (a) the brand of luxury jewelry had to have a strong reputation in the luxury jewelry industry, (b) the brand must be active in both offline and online channels, and (c) the brands should differ in terms of omnichannel maturity. All cases were framed as full journeys in their customer's eyes, from the first enquiry to the completion of the transaction or cancellation. One hundred and twenty (120) customer-consultant interactions were analyzed, and about 20 interactions per case were examined. It was observed over a 12-month period, with interactions captured across offline retail, remotely and via digital channels being recorded systematically. The degree of channel coordination and digital integration was measured for six luxury jewelry brands (three in each market). Three general analytical models of omnichannel maturity (low, medium, high) were created based on the observations. These are not individual models but theoretical models based on observed patterns of behaviour in several actual firms. For instance, the low maturity model is typifying brands that have only a small degree of digital integration, the medium maturity model typifying brands in the middle of having some degree of channel coordination, and the high maturity model typifying brands that have fully integrated omnichannel systems. The profiles of these generalized models are presented in Table 1 along with comparative market characteristics.

Table 1. Generalized analytical models of omnichannel maturity in Ukraine and USA markets

Model	Omnichannel Maturity	Ukraine Market Characteristics	USA Market Characteristics
Model A	Low	Digital channels limited to basic informational websites; predominantly offline-centric customer journey	Enhanced digital visibility (online catalogs, appointment booking interfaces); still offline-centric but with stronger digital presence
Model B	Medium	Social media serves as primary interface for discovery and communication; integration is communication-driven	Structured integration of e-commerce, social media, and physical retail; synchronized inventory systems; unified CRM
Model C	High	Flexible, communication-driven integration; personalized consultations via messaging platforms; emphasis on responsiveness	System-driven integration; fully integrated e-commerce platforms; centralized CRM; real-time inventory synchronization; seamless logistics

Note. Models are generalized analytical constructs derived from empirical observations of multiple real luxury jewelry brands across both markets. They do not refer to specific brands but synthesize patterns observed across cases with similar omnichannel maturity levels. Omnichannel maturity is classified as low (physical-focused), medium (physical presence supplemented by digital channels), or high (fully integrated physical-digital ecosystem). Market characteristics reflect observed patterns of omnichannel integration across each context.

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4.3 Data Sources

Long-term observation of customer-consultant interactions in the process of jewellery selection in the USA and Ukraine markets provided the basis for developing the study data. 120 interactions were recorded over 6 cases (3 cases per market), about 20 interactions per case. This analysis involved documented consultative interactions with customers who went out to customers and used remote consultation and digital communication. The level of analysis was the entire interaction with the customer, from enquiry to transaction or withdrawal from the purchase. Only genuine cases in which the customer showed intent to buy an expensive product and had consultative communication with the seller were taken into account. The analysis will contain documented consultative contacts with customers who engaged in the offline selling of the products, remotely, and via communication channels. It is not based on a single purchase as the unit of analysis but a whole cycle of interaction with customer, starting with first inquiry, to the final completion of a purchase or rejection of a purchase. The research comprises only of cases where the customer showed a desire to buy a high value product and engaged in consultative communication with the seller. The working notes of consultants, history of communication with the customers and description of the order of questions posed by the buyers were observed. The study did not make use of personal data of customers. The generalized level of behaviour was analysed.

4.4 Data Collection

Systematic observation was used to collect data by observing customer-journeys across physical and digital channels over a 12-month period. The analysis was carried out for the whole process of customer interaction since the moment of enquiry until the completion of the transaction or withdrawal. Personal customer information was not gathered nor stored. The study was not quantitative in nature, or statistical, as the purpose was to discover behavioral decision-making processes which cannot be described entirely by quantitative means. The analysis was done on the entire process of customer interaction, the first time an inquiry is made until the time of transaction or a withdrawal is made. None of the personal customer data were collected or stored. There are no quantitative surveys or statistical samples in the study as the goal of the study is to determine the behavioral processes of the decision-making, which cannot be properly characterized only with quantitative measures.

4.5 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed by the systematic cross-case synthesis processes. The initial step was to examine every generalized model, in a case specific fashion to identify within-model mechanism of behavioral decision making. Second, pattern matching across cases was carried out to identify patterns of repeating mechanisms both in Ukrainian and U.S. markets. Thematic analysis was applied in a hybrid fashion that is, deductive (Codes based on the Strategic Connection Framework) codes (exclusivity-calibration, trust-transference, ritual-preservation), and inductive codes which were constituted as the outcome of the data analysis.

4.6 Trustworthiness

The trustworthiness was secured in four ways. First, triangulation was done by referring to different sources of data: technical consultations, notes made by consultants, histories of communications with the customers, digital observation notes. Second, thick description of the Ukrainian and U.S. luxury market contexts, such as channel structures, consumer behavior patterns, and characteristics of the maturity of the omnichannel

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channel were used to support transferability. Third, dependability was ensured by an audit trail of all analytical decisions in the process of coding procedures, cross-case comparison steps and the construction of generalized models based on the empirical observations. Fourth, confirmability was dealt with by including a reflexivity statement stating that the researcher was an independent analyst with no commercial connection with the brands studied and that data were obtained from anonymous consultant working notes, and de-identified communication histories. No data related to personal use or customers were gathered or kept. IRB approval was not required, as the study involved no experiments and relied solely on generalized behavioral data (IRB Statement).

5. Findings

5.1 Case Profiles

Three generalized analytical models of omnichannel maturity (low, medium, high) were developed based on luxury jewelry operations in the United States and Ukraine markets, as described in the Methodology section (Table 1).

5.2 Within-Case Analysis

The following cases are examples of generalized analytical models of the maturity of the omnichannel in the Ukrainian and U.S. luxury jewelry markets.

5.2.1 Case A, Low Omnichannel Maturity (Ukraine vs. USA)

This is a model that is mostly offline-based. In Ukraine, the digital channels are confined to the informational websites that are at the basic level. Even low-maturity brands in the U.S. include an increased digital presence that includes online catalogs, and booking of appointments. In both markets, RITU is a market leader. EXCL is low in Ukraine and average in the U.S. TRST is not present to a large extent. There is a linear customer journey that is offline.

5.2.2 Case B, Medium Omnichannel Maturity (Ukraine vs. USA)

Interaction with customers is across various channels yet not totally integrated. In Ukraine, the main point of interaction between social media and discovery and communication is the social media. The coordination of e-commerce, social media and the physical retail setting can be observed in the U.S. whereby the inventory and CRM systems are synchronized. Ukrainian customers are more inclined to consult prior to buying. U.S. consumers are more accepting of online transactions. Partly implemented is the EXCL. TRST remains unstable. RITU is maintained in the offline setting. Customer journey is fragmented and is multichannel.

5.2.3 Case C, High Maturity in Omnichannel (Ukraine vs. USA)

The contact with customers is organized in the form of an integrated system. The U.S. market exhibits systemic models that are highly digitalized, have centralized CRM, and logistics that are not disrupted. Similar results can be obtained in Ukraine with the help of flexible and communication-based methods such as personal consultations and demonstrations of products in real-time. When there is a good signal of trust, the U.S consumers are more prepared to make complete purchases in a fully digital fashion. The hybrid digital-consultative models are used by the Ukrainian consumers. EXCL and TRST are well exercised. The digitally mediated forms are RITU converted into. The customer experience is a comprehensive developed architecture.

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5.3 Cross-Case Synthesis

Table 2 shows the cross-case comparison of behavioral decision-making mechanisms of the three generalized models of omnichannel maturity of both Ukrainian and U.S. markets. Table 2 presents a systematic maturity growth of cross-case synthesis. Higher omnichannel maturity (low to high) and EXCL practice execution (weak to systematic) and TRST cross-channel consistency (nonexistent to strong) and RITU digitally mediated transformation (offline dominance to digitally mediated transformation). There are distinct differences, however, in all market levels, with Ukraine being communication-based integrated and the U.S. system-based.

Table 2. Cross-case synthesis of behavioral decision-making mechanisms

Mechanism	Model A (Low Maturity)	Model B (Medium Maturity)	Model C (High Maturity)
EXCL	Weak in Ukraine; moderate in USA	Partially implemented in both markets	Systematically implemented in both markets
TRST	Largely absent in both contexts	Unstable; varies by integration level	Strong; consistent cross-channel signaling
RITU	Dominant in both markets	Primarily preserved offline; early digital adaptation	Transformed into digitally mediated formats

Note EXCL = Exclusivity-calibration, TRST = Trust-transference, RITU = Ritual-preservation. Market-specific variations are noted where differences between Ukraine and USA were observed.

5.3.1 Analytical Linkage: From Cross-Case Evidence to Hypothesis Verification

The analytical process used to test the proposed propositions was systematic and based on evidence. The initial task was to look at the cross-case evidence for each mechanism (EXCL, TRST, RITU) for the three maturity models (low, medium, high) that are outlined in Table 2. If there was consistent evidence of this in several cases or models, a proposition was considered “Supported.” A proposition was considered "Partially Supported" when there was some evidence in some cases or models, but not in all, that the mechanism works under certain conditions.

The criteria was applied to the three maturity models of P1, EXCL and RITU, and the results revealed uniformity of their presence in all three models, thus establishing the role of these as governing mechanisms during omnichannel navigation. However, TRST was only found in the high maturity model, suggesting that trust-transference is only possible in fully integrated omnichannel environments where consistency is maintained across channels. This is why TRST is labeled as "Partially Supported".

The high maturity model (Model C) exhibited systematic use of all three mechanisms in the integrated STRC, thus showing increased customer satisfaction and emotional connection. P2 was supported by this consistent evidence across the high maturity model.

For P3, the high maturity model was able to integrate digital channels without losing exclusivity, trust and ritual value in the process by means of adaptive rituals, digital trust cues and digital communication of exclusivity. This evidence was consistent with P3. The results of proposition verification are given in Table 3 in the form of the analytical process. These findings have been summarised in Table 4.

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Table 3. Qualitative results and proposition verification

Hypothesis	Mechanism	Evidence Summary	Verification
P1	EXCL	Consumers across both markets used digital channels to verify scarcity and authenticity before purchase	Supported
	TRST	High maturity model demonstrated strong trust-transference; low maturity model showed none due to inconsistent cues	Partially Supported
	RITU	Low maturity model preserved traditional rituals; high maturity model adapted rituals for digital context	Supported
P2	STRC	High maturity model showed improved customer satisfaction and emotional connection across channels	Supported
P3	STRC	High maturity model resolved exclusivity-omnichannel tension through adaptive rituals, consistent trust cues, and digital exclusivity communication	Supported

Note. Verification is based on cross-case qualitative evidence. "Supported" indicates consistent evidence across multiple cases. "Partially Supported" indicates evidence in some but not all cases. EXCL = Exclusivity-calibration, TRST = Trust-transference, RITU = Ritual-preservation, STRC = Strategic Connection Framework.

5.4 Identified Behavioral Decision-Making Mechanisms

The cross-case synthesis results in three cross-case invariant mechanisms of varying intensities at the different maturity levels. First, Exclusivity-calibration (EXCL). In both markets customers routinely checked digital channels for information about the availability, authenticity and access to products before making a physical purchase. One consumer commented: "I would not go to the boutique without checking it out first, both to verify that it was available and if it was in a limited line of merchandise" (Customer, High Maturity Model, USA). The other informant also said: “Whenever I want to go to the store, I always check the authenticity markers on the online catalog” (Customer, High Maturity Model, Ukraine). This mechanism was least effective in the low maturity model, where digital channels were used to make simply product listings available, and most effective in the high maturity model, where digital channels actively communicated waiting lists and limited-edition availability.

Second, Trust-transference (TRST). When channel cues were consistent across interaction points, positive digital interaction boosted consumer confidence for physical purchases. Our clients who make use of video consultation and messaging often come to the boutique believing in us, knowing our voice, our service style, and our expertise before coming inside (Consultant, High Maturity Model, USA). A consultant from the low maturity model commented: "We are very basic on our online presence; our clients don't connect with us online prior to visiting so it's a fresh start each time" (Consultant, Low Maturity Model, Ukraine). The high maturity model showed a high level of trust-transference within the brand voice and service quality throughout the messaging, video consultation and physical showrooms.

Third, Ritual-preservation (RITU). Consumption of luxury jewelry was not stripped of its ceremonial uses even in contexts with high levels of digitization. One customer from the low maturity model said: “I would never buy a piece of jewellery without seeing it, trying

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it on and having the consultant present it to me" (Customer, Low Maturity Model, USA). On the contrary, a customer from the high maturity model described adaptation as follows: "I was on video for the consultant who showed me the piece from different perspectives, and the delivery was very nicely packaged – it felt like an experience, rather than a transaction" (Customer, High Maturity Model, Ukraine). Low maturity model maintained 'old school' face-to-face rituals, and high maturity model developed a sustainable face-to-face to virtual face-to-face ritual transformation via virtual unveilings and personalized presentations.

5.4.1 Analytical Linkage: From Mechanisms to Hypothesis Verification

The three mechanisms were directly related to the proposition of the study. EXCL proves P1 by demonstrating that customers check the scarcity and authenticity on channels, which means that the navigation on channels is controlled by exclusivity-calibration. TRST only showed up in the high maturity model, with which P1 is supported, the trust-transference is dependent on the consistency of the channel. RITU's contribution to P1 is to demonstrate that preservation of the ritual is possible at all stages of its development, but is different depending on the level of digital maturity.

The high maturity model of the systematic application of EXCL, TRST and RITU demonstrates how Strategic Connection Framework (STRC) revolutionizes customer experience in the case of P2. The high satisfaction, emotional connection and cross channel engagement that resulted from the high maturity model proved that STRC is changing customer experience.

The high maturity approach addressed the issue of conflict between exclusivity and omnichannel by implementing adaptive rituals, frequent trust signals and digital exclusivity communication in P3. This demonstrates that STRC allows brands to stay private and still be able to be accessed online.

5.5 Summary of Findings

All three propositions are supported by the qualitative evidence. Support for P1 was found in all generalized models as they included EXCL, TRST and RITU. In the high maturity model, the deployment of STRC changed the customer journey and support for P2 was added. The participants' responses to the high maturity model showed lower conflict between exclusive and omnichannel by adaptive mechanisms in P3.

Figure 2 reveals that the EXCL and RITU were present in all three maturity models, while only the high maturity model contains TRST, which means that this mechanism is partially adopted. P2 is supported as high maturity model showed a high customer experience with built in STRC. The high maturity strategy equipped with adaptive rituals, indicators of continuous trust and digital exclusivity communication addresses the problem of friction within the exclusivity-omnichannel approach, and thus is compatible with P3.

The outcomes of verification of the proposition's are presented in a concise manner in Table 2. The main analytical finding is that EXCL, RITU and STRC are always supported across the cases, whereas TRST is partially supported as it relies on the consistency of channels, emphasizing the importance of integrated channel design to facilitate trust-transference.

Table 4. Summary of proposition verification results

Hypothesis	Mechanism	Verification	Key Analytical Insight
P1	EXCL	Supported	Mechanism consistently observed across all maturity models
	TRST	Supported	Mechanism dependent on channel consistency (observed only in high maturity)
	RITU	Supported	Mechanism adapts form but remains present across all models
P2	STRC	Supported	Mechanism integration in high maturity drives CX transformation
P3	STRC	Supported	Mechanism integration resolves exclusivity-omnichannel tension

Note: EXCL = Exclusivity-calibration, TRST = Trust-transference, RITU = Ritual-preservation, STRC = Strategic Connection Framework.

6. Discussion

6.1 Behavioral Decision-Making Mechanisms (P1)

The authors of this paper conclude that omnichannel navigators among both Ukrainian and U.S. consumers of luxury jewelry have adopted omnichannel navigation due to certain behaviors such as EXCL (exclusivity-calibration), TRST (trust-transference), and ritual-preservation. In each of the three instances, the buyers researched about the scarcity of goods and authenticity of goods online and then purchased them. According to signaling theory, the luxury consumers want expensive, quality and uniqueness signals (Wang et al., 2022). The High TRST in Case C resulted from the generation of consistent channel cues to pass confidence between the digital and physical channel touch points due to digital channel cues. The relationship marketing theory states that the relationship between customers and brands is founded on the trust (Gupta et al., 2024). Face to face rituals were maintained in digitized scenarios (Case A), and changed into the digital context (Case C). This is taking the ritual theory to the omnichannel luxury level. Unlike quantitative research, which measures luxury consumers' personality traits and level of obsessive buying, the study examines the behavioral processes luxury consumers engage in and the omnichannel (Singha et al., 2025).

Support for P1: Evidence supports P1. In all maturity models, EXCL is consistently present, suggesting that exclusivity-calibration is one of the principles of navigation in the omnichannel environment. RITU was also seen in all models, although in a different form of maturity—digital. TRST was only observed in the high maturity model, indicating the relationship between channel consistency and TRST. This distinction is the reason why TRST is only "partially supported" – not all contexts have a TRST mechanism available.

6.2 Strategic Connection Framework Transforms Customer Experience (P2)

This research validates the effect of STRC on luxury jewellery customer experience through the various channels. According to the high-maturity model, there were higher levels of customer satisfaction, cross-channel engagement and emotional brand attachment. Comparing the state of the Ukrainian market with the U.S. market, it is clear that the customer experience transformation is not just about having several channels, but also about the logic of their integrating. In the U.S., omnichannel systems are system-driven, with consistent digital infrastructure, a centrally managed CRM and inventory synced. In Ukraine, customers are served by a communication-driven approach, where system standardization is not a key feature in customer experience.

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These structural differences result in unique implementations of EXCL, TRST and RITU. In the U.S., exclusivity-calibration is institutionalized in the form of controlled digital visibility, trust-transference is facilitated via consistency through systems, and rituals are systemically redesigned in the digital. Personalized access, trust-transference through human communication, and adaptively reinterpreted rituals are elements of exclusivity in Ukraine. The same experiential outcomes are therefore created in different ways, with the U.S. engaging in essentially standardized system integration, and Ukraine in essentially flexible interaction-driven coordination.

Support for P2: Evidence is provided to support P2. Integrated STRC implementation led to the high maturity model that translated to customer satisfaction, emotional connection, and cross channel engagement. The systematic use of EXCL, TRST and RITU in the high maturity model proves that STRC indeed creates a transformative customer experience. The results confirm recent studies which highlight the need to deliberately integrate emotional continuity and trust consistency in the context of luxury (Bertrand & Glebova, 2024; Silva et al., 2024). The differences in the market – integration driven by systems in the U.S. and by communication in Ukraine – add to the existing knowledge by providing evidence that comparable experiential outcomes can be obtained by different organisational logics (Meireles et al., 2026; Shukla et al., 2025).

6.3 Strategic Connection Framework Resolves Exclusivity-Omnichannel Tension (P3)

As explored in this paper, the Strategic Connection Framework can tackle the contradiction between using omnichannel integration and luxury jewelry exclusivity. Quality and maturity process took into account digital channels without losing the quality of exclusivity, trust and ritual consumption. Luxury literature has been struggling with the issue of establishing the digital presence without reducing the mystique of the brand (Shukla et al., 2025).

There are three resolution mechanisms which help out. Scarcity is not increased by resorting to waiting lists, limited edition displays and authentication cues, as EXCL ensures digital channels communicate. In the medium maturity paradigm consistency between the touchpoints is not built up. Third, the online uncovering and customizing delivery retains a ritualistic significance in RITU. The contributions of the present research reveal that high touch and personalized virtual service may be able to communicate the message of luxury, something that is not apparent in the literature, which sees digital exclusivity as an oxymoron (Bangia and Singh, 2026).

Support for P3: The evidence is completely to support P3. The high maturity model was able to overcome the tension of exclusivity-omnichannel by adapting rituals, trust cues and communicating through digital exclusivity. That is what it means to have an exclusive brand and a digital brand at the same time; that's what STRC is about. This discovery is a key issue in luxury literature (Shukla et al., 2025; Bertrand & Glebova, 2024) and it is to expand digital presence while maintaining brand mystique. As shown in the study, digital and high-touch virtual services (Bangia & Singh, 2026; Meireles et al., 2026) can be implemented without an oxymoron.

The resolution mechanisms – EXCL (making digital channels scarce), TRST (consistency across touchpoints) and RITU (transformation instead of elimination of rituals) – together constitute a structured means of resolving the tension between the two extremes of exclusivity and omnichannel, which has been acknowledged conceptually, but not systematically addressed in previous studies (Seifert et al. 2023; Lawry 2022).

6.4 Managerial Implications

The findings of this study have three implications for luxury jewellery brand managers: First, digital channels need to create scarcity by making the waiting list visible, sending out limited edition cues, and providing authentication, instead of just products. Secondly, channel consistency (TRST) needs to ensure a uniform brand tone, service quality and visual brand communication over all channels – physical store, website and mobile communication. Consistency is one of the components that drives consumer confidence, and it's lacking at the various touchpoints. Third, rituals (RITU) should be modified not abolished in digital settings. Luxury consumption, such as the ceremonial aspects, can be maintained through virtual consultations, tailored unboxing and remote unveiling experiences. Luxury brands must take a systematic approach to dealing with customers. Omnichannel Jewelry Retail (OJR-CJA) is a working framework, which is proposed for use in this study, intended for the systematic design and coordination of customer journey stages, communication channels and touchpoints as a single system, not a single interaction (Husarova, 2026).

6.5 Theoretical Contributions

This paper has three theoretical contributions. First, it adapts the concept of behavioral decision-making theory to luxury omnichannel environments and brings to light three mechanisms: EXCL (exclusivity-calibration), TRST (trust-transference), and RITU (ritual-preservation) that guide consumers' journey through both physical and digital channels. The behavioral factors that influence luxury consumer channel selection have not been identified from prior research (Arora, 2026; Ayyildiz et al., 2024). Second, this study theorises and validates the Strategic Connection Framework (STRC) as a theoretical framework for luxury customer experience transformation. Most existing models have been created to cater for mass market retail (Verhoef et al., 2015; Lemon & Verhoef, 2016) and are not well developed for luxury. The STRC fills this need by defining the relationship between EXCL, TRST and RITU across channels and how each can enhance the customer experience without sacrificing brand value. Additionally, the Customer Journey in Omnichannel Jewelry Retail (OJR-CJA) (Husarova, 2026) provides a foundation for the framework.

Third, this study is a step toward tackling the conceptual issue of the exclusivity-omnichannel tension which has been discussed but not investigated systematically in the literature (Shukla et al., 2025; Bertrand & Glebova, 2024). The study presents a case for luxury value as a preservative value also in digital channels, which contradicts the concept of digital exclusivity being an oxymoron (Bangia & Singh, 2026)

6.6 Limitations

There are three constraints to be noted. First, the analysis is confined to the markets of Ukraine and the United States, which may not apply to other luxury markets. The framework should be tested in the future in Western Europe, Middle East or Asia. Second, the research examined three overall models of the maturity of the Omnichannel. More cases will likely help to saturate the pattern. The framework could be expanded to other luxury sectors like handbag, watch or fine art.

Third, in qualitative design, the emphasis is on identifying mechanisms rather than estimating prevalence. Quantitative tools to measure the prevalence of EXCL, TRST, and RITU mechanisms are needed for larger samples, to complement the qualitative identification provided here, as this research may contribute to their development. Future research may help to develop quantitative tools to measure the prevalence of

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EXCL, TRST and RITU mechanisms on larger samples, in addition to the qualitative identification provided here. Also, future research might investigate the effect of cultural influence on these mechanisms as they were different in the markets of Ukraine and the United States.

7. Conclusion

This paper has examined the implementation of the Strategic Connection Framework (STRC) for customer experience transformation in luxury jewelry across Ukrainian and U.S. markets. From a qualitative comparative case study of three models that were generalized and represent different degrees of omnichannel maturity (low, medium, high), three modes of behavioural decision making were identified: exclusivity-calibration (EXCL), trust-transference (TRST), and ritual-preservation (RITU).

The three proposition have been supported. P1 is supported in the cases presented, and there is some variation in level of intensity across the different levels of omnichannel maturity, with EXCL and TRST and RITU being included. P2 is supported as the high maturity model highlighted transformation of customer experience using integrated STRC implementation. The high maturity model was solved by the tension of exclusivity-omnichannel, solved by adaptive rituals, trust-cues and communication via digital exclusivity, which was been included with P3.

The study finds that the Strategic Connection Framework is a viable theoretical and practical approach to turn luxury jewelry customer experience without losing the luxury feel. This is reinforced by the insight of customer interaction organization gained through the analysis of the working framework developed by the author, the Architecture of the Customer Journey in Omnichannel Jewelry Retail (OJR-CJA), which was used in this study (Husarova, 2026). The Strategic Connection Framework gives insight into the behavioral mechanisms of transformation, while the customer journey architecture gives insight into how these mechanisms are systematically embedded in the omnichannel environment.

The Strategic Connection Framework addresses the mechanisms behind the behavior of transformation, whereas the customer journey architecture addresses the systematic embedding of such mechanisms into the omnichannel environment, thus facilitating consistent and scalable customer journey design. Luxury transformation is quite different from mass-market omnichannel strategies that focus on convenience and scale; luxury transformation requires emotional continuity, ritual adaptation and consistency of trust in both the physical and digital realm.

8. Recommendation

As per the results, three practical suggestions are given to the luxury jewelry brand managers. The first is to bring in ‘exclusivity-calibration’ (EXCL): create a digital channel that communicates scarcity by revealing waiting lists, setting up limited edition cues and providing authentication mechanisms, instead of just showcasing products. Second, develop trust-transference (TRST) by ensuring a persistent brand voice, service delivery and visual brand identity at all touch points – physical and digital. Consumers are less confident at the point of sale and less satisfied with the omnichannel experience when there are inconsistencies across channels.

Third, adapt rather than eliminate rituals (RITU). Virtual consultations, customized unboxing, and remote unveiling experiences can preserve the ceremonial aspects of luxury consumption while extending them to digital spaces. This adaptation enables brands to keep the ritual but make it accessible in digital.

Research directions are suggested for future research. Then, expand the Strategic Connection Framework to other luxury items, like jewelry such as watches, or handbags or fine art, and see how well it generalizes across luxury categories. Second, conduct some cross-market analysis of findings to gain insights into cultural context and how it impacts EXCL, TRST and RITU mechanisms. Thirdly, create quantitative tools to determine the extent of these mechanisms in larger samples, as the qualitative identification of these mechanisms provided in this study illustrates.

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