



The Great 2020 Reset,
What's Next for 2021?

The Changing Luxury Landscape in Southeast Asia

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Executive Summary

Southeast Asia's large population and growing purchasing powers present exciting and fertile ground for the growth of luxury brands in the region. The diversity and complexity of peoples, tastes and engagement methods with luxury brands in the region, however, demand a greater degree of understanding.

Isentia has thus set out to uncover on-the-ground discussions of the top luxury brands in Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam, the Philippines, Indonesia and Thailand. We identify key trends, markets and brands that have led mainstream media coverage and social conversations in Southeast Asia.





Methodology

Drawing from its extensive media monitoring analytics databases, Isentia compiled this report by harnessing all mainstream media coverage and social media data around luxury brands across six markets in Southeast Asia between October 1, 2020, and November 15, 2020. Analysed in this report are:

- 1) Digital journalism comprising online news and magazines as well as blogs, and
- 2) Social media data with chatter on Twitter, Facebook and forums.

Luxury vs. Income Disparity and Religious Tensions

Luxury brands are clearly objects of desire in Southeast Asia, reflecting tastes and status. The prominence of luxury brands as symbols of status and material wealth also place them in positions of scandal and outrage as they are starkly juxtaposed against income disparity and religious tensions inherent to the region. Netizens in Malaysia, for instance, noted that it was better to be rich with Chanel cotton pads and unhappy than to be poor and happy [MY: [1](#)]. A monk spotted with Hermès bags in Thailand garnered the ire of netizens who found such displays of wealth unbecoming of a monk [TH: [1](#)].



Particularly, religion can be used in a backlash against luxury brands. In Indonesia and Malaysia, mainstream coverage was dominated by exaltations to boycott French luxury brands like Louis Vuitton, Dior, Yves Saint Laurent and Chanel [ID: [1](#), [2](#)][MY: [1](#), [2](#)]. The majority of Muslim populace of the two countries was to show their dissatisfaction with French President Emmanuel Macron's speech on fighting "Islamist separatism".

"Consumer confidence has slowed down as we endure economic recession and declining outlook of job prospects. The demand for luxury brands in Malaysia has been dampened as countries continue to close their borders for tourism. Due to the drastic decline in foreign tourists, luxury retailers are moving to online shopping and this mode of shopping will become another major distribution channel for luxury goods in the country."



Ho Paik San, Associate
Insights Director, Malaysia

Interestingly, Indonesian netizens highlighted income disparity in the country as celebrities threw their luxury bags away, with several asking for the celebrities' bags instead [ID: [1](#)]. Many netizens shared that there could be no real boycott of French luxury brands, as many could not afford nor spell the names of these brands [ID: [1](#), [2](#), [3](#)].

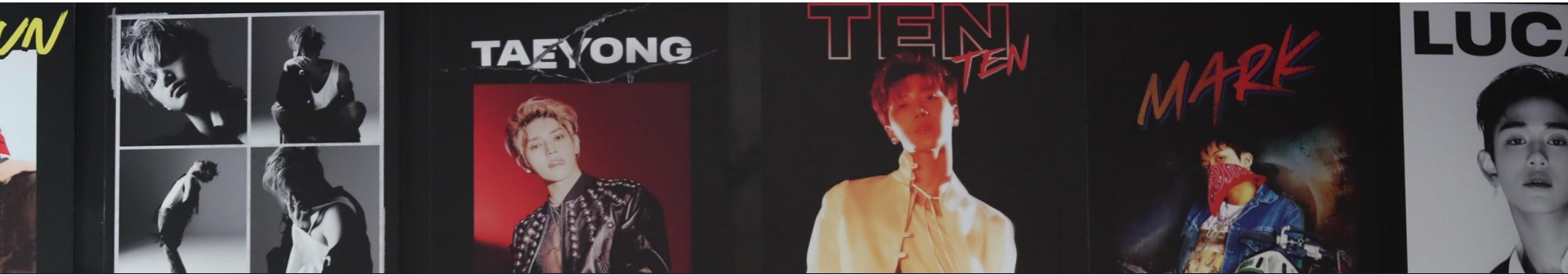


Celebrity and Korean Pop Influence

Celebrity influence around brands was the most prominent in the Philippines. Mainstream media reported heavily on local celebrities Heart Evangelista, Sharon Cuneta and Kris Lawrence with their luxury items [PH: [1](#), [2](#), [3](#)]. Social buzz for the top 4 luxury brands in the Philippines was largely driven by discussions on local and K-pop celebrity brand ambassadors too [PH: [1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [4](#)].



In fact, K-pop celebrities who were named brand ambassadors were the most consistent drivers of social buzz in the region. K-pop artistes Sehun drove buzz for Dior in Malaysia [MY: [1](#)], Kai for Gucci in Indonesia [ID: [1](#)], Jisoo for Cartier [TH: [1](#)] and Taeyong for Gucci among others in Thailand [TH: [1](#), [2](#)].





Notable Trends

Singapore

Mentions of luxury brands both in digital journalism and social media stood out in Singapore when compared to other Southeast Asian countries. The business-centric coverage and banal discussions of luxury brands by netizens reflect the relative material wealth of Singaporeans and Singapore's status as a global business hub.

Coverage from digital journalism on luxury brands in Singapore tended to adopt a business and profit-centred focus. Coverage was driven by articles that delved into LVMH and Tiffany's price agreements in a \$16 billion takeover deal [SG: [1](#), [2](#)], innovative business strategies including the use of augmented reality at Dior [SG: [1](#), [2](#)] and messaging apps at Louis Vuitton [SG: [1](#)], and profit earnings [SG: [1](#), [2](#)].



On the other hand, a range of luxury brands was mentioned by Singaporean netizens as part of discussions on life decisions and rituals – what, when and where should luxury brands like Tiffany & Co., Gucci and Louis Vuitton be bought or gifted for dating, marriage proposals and work purposes [SG: [1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [4](#)].

“A strong reflection of Singapore’s material wealth has been the continued interest in luxury products among Singaporean netizens despite the COVID-19 climate.”



Jenna Wang, Senior
Insights Manager,
Singapore



Vietnam

Both coverages from digital journalism and social buzz in Vietnam are a testament to the rising purchasing powers of the Vietnamese, and their growing demand for well-made and meaningful luxury items. News reported about the local partnerships made by Chanel [VN: [1](#), [2](#)], films of meticulously handcrafted Dior handbags [VN: [1](#), [2](#)], and the moving story of Louis Vuitton Chairman and CEO's success [VN: [1](#), [2](#)] to inspire Vietnamese shoppers with an image of success and status as they begin to reject fast fashion.



Such sentiments are mirrored in Vietnam's social buzz, as numerous netizens shared about the must-have Yves Saint Laurent, Dior, Louis Vuitton and Gucci skincare, make-up and fashion items for every Vietnamese individual [VN: [1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [4](#)].

“Vietnam is at its entry stage of the luxury industry, which has been fuelled by economic growth, the rise of e-commerce, celebrities, and international travels, along with increasingly connected consumers. Middle-class Vietnamese are spending on second-hand or hand-carried goods, makeup and accessory lines. The growing need of owning genuine products posed opportunities in the Vietnam market; however, luxury brands would need a strategic move to win over counterfeits and second-hand supplies.”



Nhi Tran, Senior Insights
Manager, Vietnam

Brand Analysis

Digital Journalism Coverage

Chanel was the top luxury brand mentioned in digital journalism in three of six Southeast Asian markets – Malaysia, Vietnam and the Philippines. These were attributed to articles on a boycott of French brands in response to French President Emmanuel Macron’s speech on fighting “Islamist separatism” that angered Muslims worldwide [MY: [1](#)]; coverage on Chanel’s partnerships and placements with both global and local Vietnamese celebrities to inspire shoppers [VN: [1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [4](#)]; and news on Filipino celebrities like Heart Evangelista and Sharon Cuneta who showcased the Chanel items they owned [PH: [1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [4](#)].



Digital Journalism Coverage

Louis Vuitton and Christian Dior were ranked top 5 among luxury brands in terms of article volume across all markets except Thailand.



	Singapore		Malaysia		Vietnam		Philippines		Indonesia		Thailand	
	Brand	Vol	Brand	Vol	Brand	Vol	Brand	Vol	Brand	Vol	Brand	Vol
1	Louis Vuitton	385	Chanel	47	Chanel	746	Chanel	50	Yves Saint Laurent	532	Paul Smith	5
2	Christian Dior	385	Christian Dior	36	Gucci	483	Louis Vuitton	43	Louis Vuitton	225	Cartier	3
3	Chanel	369	Louis Vuitton	29	Christian Dior	479	Gucci	35	Christian Dior	174	Givenchy	3
4	Tiffany & Co.	357	Kenzo	20	Louis Vuitton	476	Christian Dior	33	Hermès	144	Armani	2
5	Gucci	333	Pandora	20	Hermès	398	Hermès	26	Gucci	115	Gucci	2

Table 1: Digital Journalism Coverage Brand Analysis

Brand Analysis

Social Media Buzz

Chanel was also the top luxury brand mentioned on social media in two markets. Buzz for Chanel in the Philippines was driven by compliments for Chanel Chance perfume (PH: [1](#), [2](#)) and excitement over the global Chanel brand ambassadors, Jennie Kim, a K-pop artiste [PH: [1](#), [2](#)]. In Thailand, tweets translating an ad featuring Chinese actor Wang Yibo recommending Chanel's N5 perfume [TH: [1](#)] and about a local brand that had copied Chanel's style [TH: [1](#)] were widely retweeted and liked.





Gucci was ranked top 5 among luxury brands in terms of social buzz across all markets except Malaysia, owing largely to the fact that Kai, from K-pop group EXO, had been named a brand ambassador for Gucci [PH: [1](#), [2](#)][ID: [1](#)][TH: [1](#)].

	Singapore		Malaysia		Vietnam		Philippines		Indonesia		Thailand	
	Brand	Vol	Brand	Vol	Brand	Vol	Brand	Vol	Brand	Vol	Brand	Vol
1	Rolex	1,340	Shu Uemura	13,724	Lancome	5,880	Chanel	5,884	Christian Dior	15,772	Chanel	25,371
2	Tiffany & Co.	1,069	Pandora	2,345	Yves Saint Laurent	3,814	Louis Vuitton	5,449	Louis Vuitton	3,106	Armani	5,004
3	Gucci	970	Chanel	2,334	Christian Dior	2,876	Gucci	1,803	Yves Saint Laurent	2,349	Hermès	4,636
4	Louis Vuitton	802	Christian Dior	1,183	Louis Vuitton	2,730	Prada	1,357	Balenciaga	1,938	Gucci	2,703
5	Cartier	697	Kenzo	1,049	Gucci	1,787	Christian Dior	978	Gucci	1,357	Cartier	2,655

Table 2: Social Media Buzz Brand Analysis

“The Emerging Markets may offer the most potential even with the transition of 2020 to 2021 shaping up to be another challenging year for the global economy, consumer spending for luxury items remains resilient in this side of Asia. This is not to say that consumption for luxury spending is poised to see skyrocketing growth rates as we enter a post-pandemic period. To reach these conclusions for Indonesia, Thailand, and the Philippines, there is a strong need to deep dive and analyse not only what, when, and where emerging consumers are buying, but also why they make their choices. All the more worthy to highlight is that through actionable insights we will discover and bust significant myths about the mind-set and behaviour of emerging consumers.”



Lady Ochel Espinosa,
Regional Insights
Manager for Emerging
Markets, SEA

Brand Ranking & Coverage

Social Media

1.	CHANEL	34.9K
2.	DIOR	20.8K
3.	LOUIS VUITTON	15.1K
4.	SHU UEMERA	13.7K
5.	GUCCI	9.3K
6.	HERMES	7K
7.	LANCOME	6.2K
8.	YVES SAINT LAURENT	6.2K
9.	ARMANI	5.5K
10.	CARTIER	3.7K

Online News

1.	CHANEL	1.2K
2.	LOUIS VUITTON	1.2K
3.	DIOR	1.1K
4.	GUCCI	979
5.	HERMES	747
6.	YVES SAINT LAURENT	685
7.	PRADA	406
8.	TIFFANY & CO	374
9.	CELINE	217
10.	BURBERRY	179


Try clicking the brand name, country flag and insight content to filter out more data and see its interactivity.

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