

Journal of Fashion Business
Vol.27, No.6

ISSN 1229-3350(Print)
ISSN 2288-1867(Online)

J. fash. bus. Vol. 27,
No. 6:66-84, December. 2023
[https://doi.org/
10.12940/jfb.2023.27.6.66](https://doi.org/10.12940/jfb.2023.27.6.66)

A Study on the Characteristics of the Manufacturing Method of Handbags by Brand

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Keywords

Handbag, Sewing Method,
Expression Techniques,
Subsidiary Material

Abstract

Handbags are a part of fashion and while their significance and value are increasing, research on this topic is lacking. This study defines handbags and categorizes the materials used for making handbags, sewing methods, expression techniques, and terminologies related to accessories. A total of 1,743 handbags that were released from the Spring 2020 to Fall 2023, Ready-to-Wear collections by 8 selected brands (Hermes, Dior, Fendi, Chanel, Louis Vuitton, Prada, Gucci, and Alexander McQueen), were analyzed. Out of these, 732 unique designs, excluding those with only color variations, were studied. The most common sewing methods were 'Cut, sewing, and edge painting', 'Cylinder arm sewing', 'Cut, edge painting, and sewing', and 'Inverted seam', in that order. Slim strap designs primarily used the 'Cut, sewing, and edge painting' method, whereas the body, especially with narrow and hard leather, was best suited for the 'Cylinder arm sewing machine'. For expression techniques, the most frequently used methods were 'Quilting', 'Metal Eyelet', 'Embossing', 'Printing', 'Punching', and 'Weaving', respectively. The characteristics of each brand's production methods, expression techniques, and accessories were as follows: First, the exposure of logos and monograms is prominent. Unlike clothing, handbags often prominently feature the brand's logo or monogram. Second, signature quilting is a prominent feature. Quilting effectively conveys the brand's signature style, providing cushioning, volume, and pattern effects. Third, sustainable development is a growing trend. Brands are increasingly applying eco-friendly and socially responsible designs.

This research was supported in
2023 by Seoil University

I. Introduction

1. Background and Purpose of the Study

Leather, like its long history, has a wide range of uses including clothing, interior design, car seats, and more. Handbags, in particular, are one of the products that maximize the value of leather. Handbags are not only the pinnacle of fashion along with shoes but are also used as a part of financial investment, expecting a price increase without use and serving as an investment product.

After COVID-19, as overseas travel has revitalized, domestic duty-free shops' sales growth rate for domestic consumers in the first quarter of this year increased up to nine times (Hong, 2023). Especially, luxury brands like Louis Vuitton, Chanel, Hermès, and Gucci have seen a surge in growth rates. In the fashion category, which accounts for 22% of Lotte Duty Free's sales, handbags were the highest-selling products. The sales proportion of handbags increased from 25% before the pandemic to 35% currently. The luxury consumption fervor is hot with the addition of revenge spending and the ME + ECONOMY trend of spending generously for oneself (Hong, 2023). According to data submitted by the National Tax Service and the Customs Service requested by Congressman Seo Byung-soo, the individual consumption tax imposed on imported luxury bags last year increased by 38.1% to 25.6 billion won, compared to before COVID-19, showing the largest increase in sales among high-priced products (Jegal, 2021). According to the 'Major Distribution Sales Trends' published by the Ministry of Trade, Industry, and Energy, the proportion of famous foreign brands including luxury goods in the sales of three major department stores, Lotte, Hyundai, and Shinsegae, increased from 15.8% in 2017 to 30% last year and 33% in the first half of this year. Abroad, the British Guardian also reported that sales of luxury clothing, bags, watches, and supercars have surged due to revenge spending. This is reported to be influenced by the increase in the wealthy class and the luxury consumption phenomenon of young people (Lee, 2021).

The symbolic meaning of handbags and their importance in the fashion market are rising, but the research and reporting are insufficient. Looking at the previous studies related to handbags, there are Kim and Kim(2018), Kim(2014), Shin(2013), Jin and Shin(2011), and Koo(2008), who researched handbag designs, and Wang(2020), who researched handbag patterns, but most are studies related to handbag design, and research related to handbag production is lacking. At a time when the nurturing of young talents related to production in the fashion industry is urgent, researching handbag sewing methods and types of details, and analyzing the characteristics of production methods and expression techniques, and subsidiary materials, expressing design as work instructions, and developing practical skills to communicate with sample producers can be the basis for systematic educational materials and manpower training.

2. Scope and Method of Research

The scope of the research included understanding the definition of a handbag, organizing terms for handbag sewing equipment, sewing methods, expression techniques, and subsidiary materials. In addition, based on the '2021 Luxury Hierarchy' of the luxury shopping platform Trenbe, a total of 8 brands were selected including Hermès, Dior, Fendi, Chanel, Louis Vuitton, Prada, Gucci, and Alexander McQueen (Lee, 2021). The research focused on the characteristics of production methods for a total of 1,743 handbags from the Spring 2020 to Fall 2023 Ready-to-Wear collections of the selected brands, excluding duplicate designs with only different colors, and investigated sewing methods, expression techniques, and the use of subsidiary materials. Table 1 shows the number of handbags per season for each brand, excluding duplicate designs.

II. Theoretical Background

1. Definition of a Handbag

According to Fashion Specialized Materials Compilation

Table 1. *Analyses of the Number of Seasonal Handbag Analyses for Brands*

Brand	2023		2022		2021		2020		Total
	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall	
Louis-vuitton	13(28)	16(23)	11(20)	13(23)	17(23)	14(26)	21(28)	15(26)	120(197)
Gucci	8(36)	5(42)	12(61)	7(17)	14(27)	11(32)	12(25)	5(34)	74(274)
Chanel	11(33)	18(26)	13(45)	20(50)	14(24)	10(16)	15(28)	14(19)	115(241)
Hermes	5(23)	8(29)	6(13)	5(13)	2(12)	3(8)	5(24)	7(19)	41(141)
Alexander-mcqueen	7(10)	6(21)	5(7)	5(10)	3(4)	6(10)	10(20)	18(27)	60(109)
Prada	9(30)	3(18)	4(9)	3(27)	4(12)	8(16)	21(22)	15(54)	67(188)
Fendi	14(75)	11(36)	11(38)	14(54)	30(51)	20(36)	24(41)	22(56)	146(387)
Christian Dior	11(32)	19(16)	14(27)	11(17)	20(26)	10(16)	8(39)	16(33)	109(206)

Number excluding duplicate designs(Total number of handbags per season for brands)

Committee(1997), a handbag is a general term for bags ranging from medium to small sizes that can hold cosmetics, wallets, and personal belongings and can be carried around. It has two straps like a tote bag, no shoulder strap or handle like a clutch bag, or can be worn over the shoulder like a shoulder bag. In a narrower sense, it is also referred to as a handbag. The Handbag Dictionary defines it as a small bag that women carry in their hands or on their shoulders. National Institute of the Korean Language(1999) also defines it as a small bag that women carry in their hands or on their shoulders. Fashion Dictionary Compilation Committee(1999) defines a handbag as a women's accessory for carrying money, cosmetics, etc., and comes in various forms such as barrel, basket, envelope, pouch, etc., with or without handles, and is mainly made of leather, canvas, plastic, straw, fabric or tapestry, beads, metal mesh, etc. In summary, a handbag can be defined as 'a women's bag that is carried in the hand or arm and contains money, cosmetics, etc.'

2. Handbag Sewing Equipment

The initial work required for handbag production includes skinning, cutting, and bonding. Skinning, to adjust the thickness of the leather, can be done entirely

or partially. The whole skinning machine(Figure 1) is equipment that thins the cut leather to a uniform thickness according to its purpose and desired style, and its product name is KAMEGE 520L. The partial skinning machine is also equipment that thins the cut leather to a uniform thickness according to its purpose and desired style(Figure 2). Its product name is NIPPY NP-201. The flatbed sewing machine(Figure 3) is the most commonly used, being a flatbed sewing machine. It allows for stable work, but three-dimensional stitching on hard leather is impossible. JUKI 8700-7, Durkopp Adler M-Type 867 Eco, KM-640UBL, etc. are examples. Figure 4 shows a flatbed sewing machine with a long body that makes it easy to sew special areas. Also known as a tarp sewing machine, it can sew areas that cannot be sewn with a flatbed machine. Durkopp Adler M-Type 669 Eco, Sunstar 380 are examples of this.

The high-post sewing machine (Figure 5), also known as a post sewing machine, has a raised bed for sewing the bottom of bags or for very precise work. Durkopp Adler M-Type 867 Eco High Post is an example.

3. Handbag Sewing Method

The handbag sewing methods were studied with reference to bag-making manuals and the Simone Accessories



Figure 1.
*Shaving
Machine*
(sfsc-gangdong.or.kr)



Figure 2.
*Partial Shaving
Machine*
(sfsc-gangdong.or.kr)



Figure 3.
*Sewing Machine
with a Single Needle*
(taken by author)



Figure 4.
*Tarp Sewing
Machine*
(taken by author)



Figure 5.
*High Post Sewing
Machine*
(taken by author)

Collection, Yonsei University Institute of Language, and Information Studies(2017).

Firstly, Fold Stitching, also known in practice as "haeri," involves skiving the leather thinly and then sewing it with a sewing machine after folding. As the leather is folded and sewn, a disadvantage is that it becomes thicker(Figure 6). Secondly, Cut & Sewing, also known as "tsunagi" or "ssakdduk," takes advantage of leather's property of not fraying, by cutting and directly sewing without fraying(Figure 7). Thirdly, Cut, Sewing, and Edge Painting involves cutting and sewing leather, then finishing the cut edges neatly by applying edge coat. Over time, the coated edges might crack and look untidy. Most of the time, the color of the edge coat is matched with that of the leather, but sometimes a contrasting color is used for a lively look. The leather is sometimes painted and dried before sewing(Figure 8). In the case of the bag body, 'Cut, Edge Painting, and Sewing' is often used(Figure 9). Fourthly, Inverted Seam, also known as "uramising" in the industry, is a sewing method often used when making reversible bags. It involves sewing from the inside so that the seam is hidden when the bag is turned inside out. The internal seamallowance is usually tidied up with glue. This method is often used on soft leather. The hallmark of this method is that the sewing lines are not visible on the outside, giving a neat finish(Figure 10). Fifthly, Piping Sewing, also referred to as "tongtongi bakgi" or "PP insert sewing" in the industry, is a common method used

along the edges. It involves sewing a thin plastic pipe or cloth rope wrapped in leather or fabric at the juncture of two surfaces. It is used to add volume in certain areas or to define the shape of the edges(Figure 11). Sixth, Bias Binding, also known as "nappabakgi," involves wrapping specific parts with leather, fabric, or bias tape. It is used either as a point on the surface of the product or to neatly finish the edges and maintain the shape of the bag by wrapping the inside seam allowance(Figure 12). Seventh, Double Stitching involves sewing two lines of stitches at once or sewing two lines one after the other. It is both decorative and robust(Figure 13). Eighth, Cylinder Arm Sewing, also known as "maldungbakgi," is used when flat, straight sewing is impossible, i.e., when sewing the bottom of the bag in one go. This method uses a cylinder arm sewing machine(Figure 14). Ninth, Hand Stitch is a method where each stitch is hand-sewn, giving a crafted feel. It's challenging to stitch the entire product by hand, so it's usually used in areas that need to stand out (Figure 15).

4. Handbag Expression Techniques

The meanings of terms compiled from National Institute of the Korean Language(1999), Fashion Association Design(2012), and Simone Accessories Collection et al.(2017) are as follows:

First, Pleats involve creating regular or irregular folds in leather to achieve a feminine atmosphere with various



Figure 6.
Fold Stitching

(taken by author)



Figure 7.
Cut & Sewing

(Fashion Association Design, 2012, p.58)



Figure 8.
Cut, Sewing, and Edge Painting

(taken by author)



Figure 9.
Cut, Edge Painting, and Sewing

(taken by author)



Figure 10.
Inverted Seam

(taken by author)



Figure 11.
Piping Sewing

(taken by author)



Figure 12.
Bias Binding

(taken by author)



Figure 13.
Double Stitching

(www.purseblog..com)



Figure 14.
Cylinder Arm Sewing

(<https://www.youtube.com>)



Figure 15.
Hand Stitching

(taken by author)

intervals or widths, such as pleats, ruffles, flounces, etc. (Figure 16). Second, Stitch refers to the act of sewing fabric with a needle or sewing machine or the number of stitches made, as described in the fashion terminology dictionary. It also signifies embroidery techniques (Figure 17). Third, Embossing is defined in National Institute of the Korean Language (1999) as the process of creating a raised pattern by placing paper, fabric, leather, metal, etc., between the raised and recessed parts of a die and then applying strong pressure from behind. This method is also used for leather (Figure 18). Fourth, Punching involves using a punching tool to create patterns in leather by making holes, allowing various atmospheres to be created even without different colors or patterns of the material (Figure 19). There are also eyelets where metal orthread is wrapped around the punched holes for decoration (Figure 20). Fifth, Cutting maximizes the

advantage of leather that does not fray, using techniques like knife, scissors, or laser cutting (Figure 21).

Sixth, Fringe involves cutting leather uniformly to create a kinetic effect as a decoration on the edges of handbags (Figure 22). Seventh, Weaving is the technique of intertwining or crisscrossing several strands of leather, creating pattern effects and enhancing the luxurious feel of the leather (Figure 23). Eighth, Printing allows for a wide range of patterns, from simple geometric designs to flowers, lettering, animations, etc., making handbags much more unique (Figure 24). Ninth, Molding Technique, also known in French as 'cuir bouilli' is a traditional Western technique where vegetable-tanned leather is soaked in hot water, oil, or wax and then hardened into a certain shape (Figure 25). Tenth, Quilting is a technique where padding or sponge is inserted inside the leather and stitched to make the pattern more

prominent(Figure 26). Eleventh, Patchwork is a technique of piecing together large and small pieces of fabric. It can be connected in regular polygon shapes or irregular shapes for specific designs. This is different from

applique, which involves cutting various shapes of other fabrics, lace, leather, etc., and stitching them around the edges on a base fabric(Figure 27).



Figure 16.
Gathers
(taken by author)



Figure 17.
Stitch
(taken by author)



Figure 18.
Embossing
(www.purseblog.com)



Figure 19.
Punching
(www.purseblog.com)



Figure 20.
Metal Eyelet
(www.purseblog.com)



Figure 21.
Cutting
(www.vogue.com)



Figure 22.
Fringing
(www.vogue.com)



Figure 23.
Weaving
(taken by author)



Figure 24.
Printing
(www.vogue.com)



Figure 25.
Molding Technique
(www.vogue.com)



Figure 26.
Quilting
(taken by author)



Figure 27.
Patchwork
(www.purseblog.com)

5. Handbag Subsidiary Materials

In addition to leather or lining, metallic subsidiary materials are necessary for handbags. They play a significant role in both function (like fastening or hooks) and design.

First, Bottom Feet, also known in the industry as "sokobal," are metal decorations fixed to protect the bottom of the bag from dirt or wear (Figure 28). They can also be made from plastic or leather. Second, Rings are used to connect the bag's handle or clasp or as decorative elements. Types of rings include D-rings, O-rings, square rings, elliptical rings, etc. (Figure 29). Third, Dog Clips, commonly known as 'bag hooks', are ring-shaped decorations that allow attachments to be detached from the bag. They are used for connecting handles or shoulder straps or attaching decorations to the bag (Figure 30). Fourth, Chains are made by linking

several metal rings and can have leather straps threaded through or have leather straps placed in the center with metal chains connected on both sides (Figure 31). Fifth, Rivets, also known as 'kashime', are used for decorative effects or to fix several layers of leather or fabric. They come in various types like double-sided, single-sided, convex, semi-spherical, and can also be custom-made (Figure 32). Sixth, 'Slide Adjusters' or 'Sun' shaped rings are used as buckle decorations to adjust the length of the bag strap (Figure 33). Seventh, Buckles are metal pieces used to fasten belts or shoes (Figure 34). Eighth, Frames refer to skeletons or frameworks in handbags, usually metal frames in this context (Figure 35). Ninth, Button Studs, also called 'standing decorations', are metal decorations fixed with screws and used for fastening or adjusting the length of shoulder straps, among other things (Figure 36). Tenth, Eyelets, also known as 'hadome', are used to create holes in



Figure 28.
Bottom Feet
(taken by author)



Figure 29.
Ring
(taken by author)



Figure 30.
Dog Clip
(taken by author)



Figure 31.
Chain
(taken by author)



Figure 32.
Rivet
(taken by author)



Figure 33.
Slide Adjuster
(taken by author)



Figure 34.
Buckle
(taken by author)



Figure 35.
Frame
(<https://search.shopping.naver.com>)



Figure 36.
Button Stud
(taken by author)



Figure 37.
Eyelet
(taken by author)

fabric and fix them with metal decorations (Figure 37). Other materials include leather strap end decorations, lock decorations, handles, snap springs, etc.

III. Research Content

The production method characteristics of the 8 brands are as shown in Table 2. From 2020 to 2023, in the Spring and Fall Ready-to-Wear collections of these 8 luxury handbag brands, the most frequently used sewing method was "Cut, Sewing, and Edge Painting," used 362 times. Despite the disadvantage of cracking and peeling over time, this method was the most utilized due to its sleeker finish compared to other methods like Bias Binding. "Cut, Sewing, and Edge Painting" was the most used technique in almost all brands and seasons, excluding Chanel. It is a method consistently used for handles and straps, unaffected by trends. The second most common method was "Cylinder Arm Sewing," used 238 times, mainly for sewing the bottom part of handbags, which is difficult to do with standard or tarp sewing machines. The third was 'Inverted Seam,' used 119 times, especially by brands like Chanel, Prada, and Dior that often use comparatively soft materials. The fourth was 'Cut, Edge Painting, and Stitching,' used 121 times. This technique, which involves attaching painted leather pieces to the body of the handbag, was the third or fourth most commonly used method across most brands. The fifth most common method was 'Piping Sewing,' used 73 times, particularly by Louis Vuitton, Chanel, and Dior. In terms of expression techniques, "Quilting" was used the most, 109 times. Chanel, for instance, used this technique the most every season. Dior frequently used the Cannage quilt throughout all seasons. Other brands like Alexander McQueen and Gucci also occasionally employed this technique, which is effective for cushioning, volume, leather position fixing, and pattern effects in handbags. The second most used technique was "Metal Eyelet," at 54 times, almost every season by Chanel and Dior. Chanel mainly used it for strap connections, while Dior used it for handle connections and also as a design element. Third were

"Printing" and "Embossing," each used 32 and 31 times respectively. Louis Vuitton used these for logos and signature patterns, and Dior primarily used them for logos.

For subsidiary materials, "D-Rings" were used 265 times, primarily for connecting straps and charms to bags. Second was "Dog Clips," used 153 times, mainly for attaching straps. The third was "Frames," used 127 times, especially by Fendi in their Peekaboo handbags, where frames are integral or form a structural design. Chanel designed handbags using various shaped metal frames like Camellia or check patterns. "Leather+Chain" was used 81 times, predominantly by Chanel, and "Metal Chain" 73 times across various brands like Alexander McQueen, Fendi, Louis Vuitton, Gucci, and Chanel. "Rivets" were used 74 times, frequently by Louis Vuitton and Dior. Louis Vuitton mainly used them on the edges of box-shaped bags, and Dior used them on the Dior Book Tote and straps. Other commonly used materials were "Bottom Feet" 65 times, "Buckles" 59 times, and "Button Studs" 49 times.

1. Characteristics of Manufacturing Methods by Brand

1) Louis Vuitton

For Louis Vuitton, the most frequently used sewing method was 'Cut, Sewing, and Edge Painting' used primarily on handles and straps, applied 55 times (Figure 38). This method was followed by 'Cut, Edge Painting, and Sewing,' mainly used for decorative strap details on the bag body, and 'Cylinder Arm Sewing'(Figure 39), used 39 times, which is particularly suitable for sewing the bottom part of handbags that are difficult to do with standard or tarp sewing machines. The box-shaped designs consistently released by Louis Vuitton often utilized 'Cylinder Arm Sewing.' In Fall 2022, they introduced a new box shape, the Petite Malle with an extended bottom and gusseted side. Additionally, 'Inverted Seam'(Figure 40) and 'Piping Sewing' were frequently used. As for the expression techniques of handbags, 'Embossing' was used 15 times. A notable example from the Fall 2023 Alexander McQueen collection involved

diamond-shaped embossed leather, where thin leather straps were stitched into each indentation to create a variety of colors(Figure 41). Additionally, Louis Vuitton's self-developed Epi Leather, characterized by its subtle ripple pattern, is natural tanned calfskin leather dyed with special paint technology, adding uniqueness with its diagonal pattern. In terms of handbag hardware, similar to other brands, 'D-Rings' and 'Dog Clips' were most used for strap and handle connections, appearing 47 and 39 times, respectively. The Spring 2023 Pouch(Figure 42) featured oversized 'Dog Clips' and chains as a distinctive feature. The large metal chains bore the Louis Vuitton logo, while the body leather was either printed or embossed with the logo. Additionally, box-shaped designs and frames, consistently introduced by Louis Vuitton, prominently utilized 'Rivets', used 30 times. Louis Vuitton, known for its box-shaped designs, frequently employs branding techniques on its handbags. They often print the monogram on the leather or emboss it using a monogram mold on the body of the leather(Figure 39). Additionally, they use embossing techniques on leather(Figure 40) and incorporate the monogram into the straps using jacquard weaving. These methods of integrating branding directly into the design and materials of the handbags have been a regular practice for Louis Vuitton each year.

2) Gucci

Gucci's sewing method most frequently used 'Cut, Sewing, and Edge Painting', appearing 36 times, followed by 'Cut, Edge Painting, and Sewing' with 31 occurrences, and 'Cylinder Arm Sewing' with 28. Other notable methods were 'Piping Sewing' and 'Bias Binding'. Figure 43 shows a 1970s-inspired mini shoulder bag featuring leather trimming, G metal ornamentation, quilting, and piping techniques. The most prominent expression technique for Gucci was 'Printing', used 16 times, especially up until the 2022 Fall season, which saw a variety of prints. Particularly in Fall 2021, Gucci collaborated with Adidas, incorporating geometric elements(Figure 44). 'Metal Eyelets' were used four times in the Fall 2022 season, where they were combined with Rivets for decorative purposes. For handbag hardware, 'D-Rings' were most frequently used for strap and handle connections, appearing 32 times, while 'Rivets' with brand imprints and 'Metal Chains' were used 13 and 10 times, respectively. Additionally, since 1947, Gucci has consistently introduced the distinctive bamboo handle, crafted by heating and shaping the bamboo, then cooling it.

3) Chanel

Chanel, distinguished by its use of monochrome and



Figure 38.
Cut, Sewing, and Edge Painting
(www.purseblog.com)



Figure 39.
Cylinder Arm Sewing of Louis-Vuitton
(www.vogue.com)



Figure 40.
Inverted Seam
(www.purseblog.com)



Figure 41.
Embossing of Louis-Vuitton
(www.purseblog.com)



Figure 42.
Large Dog Clip & Chain
(www.purseblog.com)



Figure 43.
Cutting, Painting & Sewing
(www.vogue.com)



Figure 44.
Printing of Gucci
(www.purseblog.com)



Figure 45.
Mini Bag
(www.purseblog.com)



Figure 46.
Inverted Seam of Chanel
(www.vogue.com)



Figure 47.
Quilting of Chanel
(www.purseblog.com)



Figure 48.
Chanel 22 Bag
(www.vogue.com)



Figure 49.
Frame of Chanel
(www.vogue.com)

pastel pop colors, stood out among the brands with its youthful vibe, particularly with pink shades, mini bags, and heart-shaped bags. From 2020 to 2023, romantic mini bags were consistently introduced. In the Spring 2021 season, micro bags with handles just big enough for two fingers and bracelet-connected micro bags were featured (Figure 45). These micro bags came in various forms, including small top handle bags, micro belt bags with a metallic flap, etc. The most common sewing method was 'Cylinder Arm Sewing', used 33 times, due to the angular shapes of the mini bags and designs using frames. 'Inverted Seam' was the second most common, used 24 times (Figure 46), especially with Chanel's signature tweed material, which was prominently featured in Fall 2022 handbags.

In terms of expression techniques, 'Quilting' (Figure 47) was overwhelmingly prevalent, used 78 times. Particularly

in Fall 2023, lightweight and flexible leather quilting was applied to the practical Chanel 22 Bag (Figure 48), offering a more youthful and playful design. 'Metal Eyelets' were also frequently used, primarily for body and strap connections or threading strings, appearing 19 times. The hardware features of Chanel handbags included 'Leather-inserted Chains' as a signature embellishment (64 times), followed by metal frames (Figure 49) and designs combining leather straps with metal chains, used 19 and 12 times, respectively. The Spring 2023 collection saw diverse uses of metal frames, combined with leather and pearls. Other notable features included the use of 'Pearls' and 'Camellias' in various forms, such as flat or three-dimensional shapes, sequins, beads, etc. Chanel's house codes like quilt, pearls, camellias, and tweed were consistently reflected in its handbags.

4) Hermès

Hermès' sewing methods heavily featured 'Cut, Sewing, and Edge Painting', especially prevalent in their range. The Birkin bag, for example, used details like harnesses (Figure 50) and fringes, thus employing 'Cut, Sewing, and Edge Painting' more frequently than just for handles and straps. Also, with the introduction of box-shaped designs and small cases like AirPods, lipstick, credit card cases, 'Cylinder Arm Sewing' (used 28 times) was extensively utilized.

The most used expression technique for Hermès was 'Punching', appearing 8 times. In the Fall 2021 season, punching was heavily used on Birkin bags, adding an edgy and asymmetrical feel (Figure 51). Other techniques were scarcely used. In terms of hardware, similar to other brands, 'D-Rings' and 'Bottom Feet' (Figure 50) were most frequently used, appearing 13 and 10 times, respectively, with buckles also being commonly used (9 times).

Hermès predominantly produced bags in colors like tan, navy, burgundy, and black for the Fall, and brighter shades of orange and brown for SS. The brand consistently introduced new yet repetitive designs for its beloved Birkin and Kelly bags. The Birkin bag's design often incorporated punching, while the Kelly bag's harder design made extensive use of 'Cylinder Arm Sewing'. The year 2023 saw the introduction of materials like fringes and feathers to counterbalance the hard designs.

5) Alexander McQueen

The predominant sewing method for Alexander McQueen was 'Cut, Sewing, and Edge Painting', used 33 times, followed by 'Cylinder Arm Sewing' with 23 occurrences, and 'Cut, Edge Painting, and Sewing' with 20. Additionally, 'Double Stitching' and 'Hand Stitch' were each used 4 times.

The expression techniques featured 'Quilting' (Figure 52) and 'Patchwork' (Figure 53) each used 4 times, and 'Embossing' and 'Punching' each appearing 3 times. McQueen's quilting stood out for its unique design sensibility, contrasting the typical square or diamond patterns seen in other brands. The brand's hardware choices included 'Metal Chain' straps used 27 times, 'D-Rings' 13 times, and 'Frames' (Figure 54) 9 times. The metal chains were used not only over the shoulder but also looped through the side rings down to the bottom, adding a decorative effect (Figure 55). Other decorative elements like punching, metal eyelets, knuckles, and Rivets were evident, indicating a focus on ornamental features. The brand also presented new ways of holding handbags, such as through knuckles (Figure 55) or metal handles, and offered bracelet-like decorative effects. Alexander McQueen's distinctive traits include monochrome, knuckles, sharp Rivets, unique quilting, and chain straps.



Figure 50.
Harness

(www.vogue.com)



Figure 51.
Punching of Hermes

(www.pursebop.com)



Figure 52.
Quilting of Alexander McQueen

(www.purseblog.com)



Figure 53.
Patchwork of Alexander McQueen

(www.vogue.com)

6) Prada

Prada's most frequently used sewing method was 'Cut, Sewing, and Edge Painting', appearing 40 times, particularly emphasized in the Prada Cleo design during the Spring 2023 season. The design accentuated the sleek lines with black edge painting on colored leather (Figure 56). Due to the angular designs and narrow width, 'Cylinder Arm Sewing' was used 23 times as the second most common method. For example, the triangular pendant logo of the bag or the trapezoidal shape used in bag designs necessitated this method. In Fall 2021, it was also applied to soft napa leather gloves with small pouches in shapes like triangles and squares.

The expression technique most frequently used was 'Weaving', appearing 6 times, all in Spring 2020, with both the body and straps utilizing this technique (Figure 57). Rope or Nappa leather was handcrafted into tube ropes for the Mesh Bag (Figure 58), and the Prada Matinee was introduced with new woven handles made from alligator leather.

Prada's expression techniques were minimal due to the simplicity of its designs. Weaving was the only extensively used technique, as seen in the Mesh Bag and Prada Matinee with woven handles. Prada's focus was on modern design, highlighting the triangular logo pendant on each item. Fendi, Gucci, Dior, and Louis Vuitton maximized branding by weaving their monograms into the designs. Conversely, Chanel expressed its logo three-dimensionally using chains.



Figure 54.
Frame of
Alexander McQueen
(www.vogue.com)



Figure 55.
Chain of
Alexander McQueen
(www.vogue.com)



Figure 56.
Triangle Bag
(www.vogue.com)



Figure 57.
Matinee
Woven Handles
(www.vogue.com)



Figure 58.
Mesh Bag
(www.vogue.com)

7) Fendi

In terms of sewing methods, Fendi extensively used the 'Cut, Sewing, and Edge Painting' technique in 80 out of 146 designs during the study period, and 'Cylinder Arm Sewing' was employed in 42 instances, marking the highest usage rate among the 8 brands studied. 'Inverted Seam' was used 23 times, and 'Cut, Edge Painting, and Sewing' appeared 20 times. 'Hand Stitch' and 'Bias Binding' were notably differentiating techniques for Fendi, used 17 and 11 times respectively. 'Hand Stitch' was applied to 'Cut, Edge Painting, and Sewing' to add dimension (Figure 59), and many designs from the Spring 2020 season featured side finishing with 'Bias Binding' (Figure 60).

In terms of expression techniques, 'Weaving' (Figure 61) was used 17 times, the highest frequency along with Prada. In Spring 2020, various and innovative materials such as leather, raffia, and beads were utilized for the weaving technique. 'Patchwork' appeared 7 times, and 'Punching', 'Printing', and 'Embroidery' each were used 6 times. Particularly, the 'Printing' on the Peekaboo in Spring 2022, featuring graphic artwork, gained attention. Fendi revived some works of the fashion illustrator Antonio Lopez and reflected them in its latest collection (Figure 62). In terms of hardware, 'D-Rings' were used 79 times, the most frequently. Figure 63 shows a design where D-rings weren't used for connecting the body and strap of a micro mini bag, instead aiming for a more decorative function with

D-rings and dog clips. 'Frames' were used 58 times. The clutch with a tilted F monogram frame(Figure 61) was presented in various materials such as fur and patchwork leather. The Peekaboo, featuring a frame structure, has been constantly reimagined each season to strengthen its presence. In Spring 2023, for the first time, the Peekaboo was fitted with a chain strap(Figure 64). Another point of interest is Fendi's Tombolo aquilano lace from the 2021 S/S collection. This technique, improved by the Benedictine nuns since the 15th century, was applied to bags allowing the wearer to reveal or conceal as desired (Figure 65). Additionally, the market baskets (constructed of recycled PVC) from Spring 2021, made of 100% recycled PVC, represented Fendi's commitment to environmental concerns.

8) Dior

In sewing methods, Dior predominantly used 'Cut, Sewing, and Edge Painting' in 69 instances, 'Bias Binding' 24 times, and both 'Inverted Seam' and 'Cylinder Arm Sewing' were each used 22 times.

For expression techniques, 'Quilting' was used 24 times, 'Metal Eyelet' 20 times, and 'Embossing' 8 times. 'Quilting' included the Cannage quilt (Figure 66) which was featured in every season during the study period, especially prominent in Fall 2023. 'Quilting' and 'Embossing' were frequently used on handbag handles where 'Metal Eyelet' was typically applied. 'Embossing' involved engraving the CD signature (Figure 67) or floral patterns on the bags. In terms of hardware, 'D-Rings' were used 56 times, 'Dog Clips' 33 times, 'Bottom Feet'



Figure 59.
Hand Stitch
(www.purseblog.com)



Figure 60.
Bias Binding
(www.vogue.com)



Figure 61.
Weaving Clutch
(www.vogue.com)



Figure 62.
Printing of Fendi
(www.purseblog.com)



Figure 63.
D-ring & Dog Clip
(www.vogue.com)



Figure 64.
Chain Straps
(www.vogue.com)



Figure 65.
Tombolo Aquilano Lace
(www.purseblog.com)



Figure 66.
Cannage Quilting
(www.purseblog.com)



Figure 67.
Embossing of Dior
(www.purseblog.com)

27 times, 'Square Rings' 23 times, and 'Rivets' 21 times, with 'O-Rings' at 15 instances. These decorative elements were all notably present in the Dior Vibe bowling bag from the 2022 Spring season. A distinctive feature in the hardware usage by Dior is the frequent application of 'Bottom Feet' for protection against wear and tear.

V. Conclusion

This study was aimed at providing systematic educational materials and a foundation for workforce training by researching the definition of handbags, sewing equipment, production methods, expression techniques, and hardware, and analyzing their characteristics. Based on the luxury hierarchy, brands such as Hermès, Dior, Fendi, Chanel, Louis Vuitton, Prada, Gucci, and Alexander McQueen were selected for this study. The research analyzed 732 unique handbag designs out of a total of 1,743 products presented in the Spring 2020 to Fall 2023 Ready-to-Wear collections.

Handbags are defined as women's bags that are carried in the hand or on the arm, containing items like money and cosmetics. In handbag production, the first step involves using machines like flat skiving machines and partial skiving machines to prepare leather according to the desired style and thickness. For sewing, machines like single-needle lockstitch sewing machines, tarp sewing machines, and high-post sewing machines are essential.

The most commonly used sewing methods across all brands were 'Cut, Sewing, and Edge Painting' for handles and straps, and 'Cylinder Arm Sewing' for areas of the handbag that are difficult to sew with regular machines, such as the bottom. Following these were 'Cut, Edge Painting, and Sewing', 'Inverted Seam', 'Piping Sewing', and 'Bias Binding'. In terms of hardware, 'D-Rings' and 'Dog Clips' were most frequently used for connecting straps and bag bodies. This was followed by 'Frames', 'Chains with Leather Inlay', 'Rivets', 'Bottom Feet', 'Buckles', and 'Button Studs'. The most frequently used expression techniques were 'Quilting', 'Metal Eyelet', 'Embossing', 'Printing', 'Punching', and 'Weaving'. However, while the sewing methods and hardware

showed similar trends across brands, the expression techniques varied significantly depending on each brand's characteristics. Louis Vuitton, following Fendi, released the most designs(120) and frequently used embossing techniques, especially with its proprietary Epi Leather. Gucci often collaborated with companies like Adidas to incorporate large fonts and geometric elements in its printing. Chanel's handbags reflected its house code with tweed material, grid-pattern quilting, and 'Chains with Leather Inlay'. Hermès consistently introduced new yet repetitive designs for its beloved Birkin and Kelly bags. Birkin bags frequently used 'Punching' due to their design features, and Kelly bags, due to their rigid design, often employed 'Cylinder Arm Sewing'. Other techniques were scarcely used. Alexander McQueen's characteristics include monochrome colors, knuckles, sharp Rivets, unique Quilting, and chain straps. In particular, its Quilting is unique, showcasing design sensibility different from the typical square or diamond shapes of other brands. Prada's expression techniques were minimal due to its simple design, mostly using weaving. Fendi's expression technique 'Weaving' was used as frequently as Prada's. In Spring 2020, Fendi utilized various new materials like leather, raffia, and beads for this technique. Dior's expression technique predominantly featured the Cannage Quilt throughout the study period, especially in Fall 2023. The characteristics of each brand's production methods, expression techniques, and accessories are as follows:

First, the exposure of logos and monograms is prominent. Unlike clothing, handbags often prominently feature the brand's logo or monogram. Most brands emphasize their branding using moldings, embossing, printing, embroidery, etc. Louis Vuitton, for instance, showcases its monogram through printing or embossing on leather. Gucci and Chanel often use metal 'GG' logos or print 'Gucci' on canvas or leather. Dior highlights its CD metal lock on the 30 Montaigne and uses CD metal for strap connectors on the SaddleBag, effectively merging functionality with branding. Fendi's tilted F monogram frame on clutches and 'Fendi' lettering molded into the bag's base are examples of sophisticated visual

branding. Other methods like mother-of-pearl inlay, embossing, and printing are also used for branding. Prada attaches its triangular logo pendant to all items, and brands like Fendi, Gucci, Dior, and Louis Vuitton weave monograms into the fabric to maximize branding. Chanel, for example, uses chains to create a three-dimensional logo effect.

Second, signature quilting is a prominent feature. Quilting effectively conveys the brand's signature style, providing cushioning, volume, and pattern effects. Chanel consistently features its signature grid quilting in each season. Dior's Cannage quilt, present throughout the study period, is instantly recognizable as a brand symbol. Unlike other brands that use typical square or diamond-shaped quilting, Alexander McQueen stands out with its unique quilting designs, making a strong brand statement. Third, sustainable development is a growing trend. Brands are increasingly applying eco-friendly and socially responsible designs. Fendi's Basket bag made from 100% recycled PVC and Dior's use of materials other than leather like Denim Canvas and Embroidered Velvet are examples of this trend. Alexander McQueen has created modern designs using scraps of colored leather for patchwork, and Prada has used faux fur, jacquard, and nylon in bags to promote sustainability.

Handbags remain a delicate and sensory fashion item that requires the skill of a master artisan, even in an era where 3D printing can construct houses. Handbags, having a stronger brand identity than clothing, are less influenced by seasonal fashion trends. Therefore, unless revolutionary production methods emerge, the existing sewing techniques and hardware are unlikely to change significantly. However, in terms of expression techniques, innovative products can be developed depending on the designer's concept, brand identity, and material development. This study aims to provide young fashion enthusiasts with knowledge and high-value design inspiration in the field of handbags. However, caution is advised in interpreting the findings, as the analysis was based solely on the external appearance of collections presented.

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Received (November 22, 202)

Revised (December 18, 2023)

Accepted ((December 19, 2023)