

THE INFLUENCE OF BRAND KNOWLEDGE ON THE INTENTION TO PURCHASE PERSONAL LUXURY PRODUCTS

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ABSTRACT

This conceptual paper discusses the influence level of brand knowledge through various components on personal luxury products. The modern luxury market is an irresistible sector, experiencing growth worldwide. A shift in luxury consumers' behaviours is primarily one of the main contributing factors to this growth. Despite generating an increase in the profits and sales for most luxury houses, it is necessary for luxury marketers and academic researchers to accommodate all luxury consumers, not just the new, growing segment. It appears that the characteristics of the traditional luxury consumers from many decades ago need to be reinserted. With the inclusion of brand knowledge, the conceptual model presented in this paper has the ability to capture the purchase intentions of all luxury consumers. Brand knowledge is integral to the framework because it captures the significance of the inherent key characteristics of luxury brands as well as the perceived value from luxury consumption, both of which influence the intention to purchase personal luxury products. This study incorporates the influence of luxury brand knowledge into the model to better explain the intentions to purchase personal luxury products across all types of luxury consumers. By properly reflecting the changes of luxury consumption behaviours and its relationships through an enhanced model, marketers can plan and execute efficient branding, marketing and communication strategies.

KEYWORDS: luxury; luxury consumption; luxury brand knowledge; luxury purchase intention; personal luxury

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, there has been a rapid increase in global luxury consumption with the rise in number of luxury consumers from 140 million to 350 million globally (Bain & Company, 2015). Such a phenomenal growth in the luxury market leads to a widely increased interests among researchers across all disciplines (Truong, et al., 2008; 2009, Tynan et al., 2010; Kapferer and Valette-Florence, 2016). In particular, personal luxury goods market is forecast to continue to grow between 2-3 percent through 2020 (Bain & Company, 2016). Despite the fact that personal luxury goods is a major driver of the entire market, there is a limited research in this product category.

Two factors of this fast-growing trend stimulate the need for additional research into consumers' behaviours. First, there has been a shift in luxury consumers' profile (Hanna, 2004; Fionda and Moore, 2009) and purchasing patterns (Bain & Company, 2015; 2016) where social influences (Dubois et al., 2001; Berthon et al., 2009; Cheah et al., 2015; Yang and Mattila, 2014; Kapferer and Valette-Florence, 2016) and people's needs for materialism, appearances to enhance their ego and self-concept (Phau and Prendergast, 2000; Kapferer, 2006) are having greater impact on how consumers make their luxury purchase decisions. Second, it appears that the characteristics of the traditional luxury consumers as well as old marketing models from many decades ago need to be redefined (Bain & Company, 2015). Danziger (2005) indicates that the changes in luxury consumers' purchase decision has created a dramatic shift in the purchase behaviour as a whole, making it difficult for luxury marketers to recognise the trend.

To date, existing literature on luxury purchase intention focuses mainly from the cultural, economic, psychological perspectives (Leibenstein, 1950; Veblen, 1899; Bian and Forsythe, 2012; Liu et al., 2012; Wong and Ahuvia, 1998; Vigneron and Johnson, 2004; Shukla, 2012; Cheah et al., 2015) but remains limited on investigating luxury consumers' behaviours through the integration of brand knowledge aspect. Major works from marketing scholars on luxury value perceptions (Wiedmann et al., 2007 and 2009; Vigneron and Johnson, 2004; Shukla, 2012; Shukla and Purani, 2013; De Barnier et al., 2006; Hennigs et al., 2012 and 2013) suggest that they are important in explaining the whole picture of luxury consumption but insufficient in explaining purchase intentions (Shukla, 2012).

Kapferer (2006) discusses that it is typical for consumers to identify which brand belongs to the luxury category, however, it could be more complex for the precise definition of luxury to be identified and understood. Therefore, this study seeks to incorporate the branding aspects into the investigation on the significance of brand knowledge towards the intention to purchase personal luxury products.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The research objectives for this study are:

- To develop a conceptual model explaining the relationship between luxury brand knowledge and personal luxury products purchase intention
- To identify the segments of modern luxury consumers based on their brand knowledge and its influence on purchase intention
- To explore the importance of luxury brand characteristics and luxury brand perception (the components of luxury brand knowledge) on personal luxury products purchase intention

LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of luxury is first explained by Veblen (1899) that the consumption of luxury goods is primarily considered by the affluent consumers with the desire to display their wealth to the relevant significant others. Even though the concept of luxury remains obscure, the clearer definition of luxury is given by Nueno and Quelch (1998) as the "ratio of functional utility to price is low while the ratio of intangible and situational utility to price is high" and that luxury products are beyond an ordinary expensive goods but "an ephemeral status

symbol". Shukla (2010) also defines luxury as the consumption that is not for just oneself but a socially-oriented type of consumption that fulfils the consumers' own indulgence as well as to serve the "socially directed motives".

The aforementioned definitions of luxury show it is an "elusive concept" (Kapferer, 1998) with "fuzzy frontiers" (Kapferer, 2006). The luxury concept is describes as "incredibly fluid, and changes dramatically" over time and varied among different cultures (Yeoman and McMahan-Beattie 2006). As consumers become richer (Fionda and Moore, 2009) and are able to afford more luxury brands (Nueno and Quelch, 1998), luxury is no longer reserved for the rich but also includes the rising number of aspiring middle-class consumers (Shukla, 2012) who enjoy material comfort (Yeoman and McMahan-Beattie, 2006; Yeoman, 2011; Granot, et al., 2013). This change makes the term luxury even more difficult to define (Shukla, 2010) and will continue as an ongoing debate among research scholars (Kapferer and Valette-Florence, 2016).

Dubois and Paternault (1995) mention that "luxury items are bought for what they mean, beyond what they are", this statement defines the nature of luxury brands where consumers often purchase luxury products not merely because of their outstanding quality but because of the name and the symbolic identity the brand provides. Kapferer (1998) recognises the importance in exploring the perception of luxury brands from the end-users themselves because they know best. This also adds to the ongoing complexity and difficulties in giving luxury a discreet definition (Kapferer, 1997 and 1998). The work of Grotts and Johnson (2013) investigates the status consumption of millennial consumers and indicates that it is highly possible that the consumers may not express any interest on the quality of the products but are placing greater emphasis on the ability of the handbags to be recognised and generate attention from their reference groups.

With regard to marketing strategy, luxury marketers react to the rapid increase in demand to maintain their position of exclusivity by increasing the price every year in order to secure their clientele (Kapferer, 2015b). Louis Vuitton, Rolex, and Christian Dior increase the price of their products every year to sustain the dream value of the consumers (Kapferer, 2015a; 2015b). It is apparent that most luxury companies are managing the dilemma of maintaining the exclusivity of its products while increasing brand awareness as well as focusing on securing more market share and revenue (Kastanakis and Balabanis, 2012; Berthon et al., 2009). Despite the recognisable shifts in luxury consumption pattern, the sector will continue to grow with the majority of affluent consumers as discussed by Steve Kraus of Ipsos (King, 2015).

The most recognisable shift in luxury marketing strategy is on the increasing number of luxury companies offering lower-price products in response to the rising level of demand for luxury consumption by the enthusiastic middle class consumers (Truong, et al., 2008; Kastanakis and Balabanis, 2012). Luxury was once reserved for the "happy few" (Veblen, 1899) but this notion is no longer practical for today's luxury environment where luxury products are "consumed by a larger aspirational segment" (Granot et al., 2013).

Democratisation of luxury refers to when luxury brands create a lower-priced accessory items in order to appeal to the broader market, making luxury accessible to those "who could never afford to purchase the principal items in the line" (Nueno and Quelch, 1998) or the new luxury consumers who seeks recognition from luxury purchase. Han et al. (2010) discusses that different classes of consumers can now be distinguished by the brands of purses, watches, or shoes that they own. They let the brands speak for them, whether they prefer the loud Gucci

logo or displaying the consumption of a “no logo” strategy” by carrying a Bottega Veneta bag (Han et al., 2010).

As Husic and Cicic (2009) state, an important question on today’s luxury consumption that if it is possible for everyone to obtain luxury items, are the brands still considered luxury? This is one of the important agendas concerning luxury consumption that prompts researchers to investigate this changing behaviours and perceptions of luxury consumers. It is also significance to note that the increase in global demand in luxury market is not necessarily positive but could be negative if the demand is not being managed efficiently (Hennigs et al., 2015). Despite frequent changes in luxury consumption patterns, Kapferer and Valette-Florence (2016) argues that it is vital to understand how consumers behave in order for the brands to create and maintain trust and reputation among its consumers.

To understand the rise in the democratisation of luxury, academic researchers attempt to investigate the premium pricing characteristics and strategies (Yeoman and McMahon-Beattie, 2006) and the impact of personal orientation on luxury purchase value (Tsai, 2005). With the presence of the democratisation of luxury, the pressure on the perception of luxury brand is intense where luxury companies are dealing with the dilemma in increasing the brand exposure and profit while maintaining a “fragile perception” on the exclusivity of the brands (Vigneron and Johnson, 2004). Therefore, it is fundamental for luxury marketers to understand the foundation of the luxury concepts and values in order to maintain and enhance the brands’ uniqueness and exclusivity (Hennigs et al., 2015). Once luxury is accessible to more people, the aura of the brand is definitely needs good protection (Kapferer, 1998).

Danziger (2005) argues that the notion of ‘past behaviour predicts future behaviour’ may not be applicable to the luxury market. However, the foundation remains where the marketers need to understand the basics about the past and present behaviours in order to offer the products and services at the price that luxury consumers are willing to pay. It is partly due to the minimisation of the possible risks that might occur in purchasing luxury products as stated by Kapferer and Valette-Florence (2016) that “in luxury, no one wants to buy the wrong brand”.

In light of these changes in the demand and strategies, a new framework of luxury purchase intention will be presented. This framework integrates brand knowledge in order to accommodate the traditional consumer, who appreciates the brand and its exclusivity, as well as the new buyer who wants recognition. This attempt in merging the two groups of luxury consumers together will highlights how traditional and new luxury consumers make their purchase decisions based on different components of luxury product characteristics as well as different value perception, or that is to say, based on a different levels of brand knowledge.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Over several decades scholars attempted to agree on a single comprehensive definition for the term ‘luxury’ but have not yet reached that goal because the concept of luxury is highly individual and the market itself is heterogeneous (Hennigs et al., 2013). The definition of luxury, therefore, is very complex to define (Vigneron and Johnson, 1999; Dubois and Duquesne, 1993) due to its “subjective character” (De Barnier et al., 2012) with many diverse facets (Phau and Prendergast, 2000).

This study provides a new perspective by looking at the factors that influence luxury purchase intention. Based on the original work of Keller (1993), it is important to understand the structure and content of brand knowledge because these dictate what comes into the consumer's mind when they think about a brand and what they know about the brand (Keller, 2003). Consumer brand knowledge is defined as the "personal meaning about a brand stored in consumer memory, that is, all descriptive and evaluative brand-related information" (Keller, 2003). Strong, unique, and favorable brand associations must be created with consumers (Kotler and Keller, 2016).

In luxury consumption, different consumers seek different emotional and functional benefits from luxury brands (Kapferer, 1998), which makes it relevant and significant to investigate the level of influences of brand knowledge and value perceptions on the intention to purchase luxury products.

The proposed conceptual framework for this study is presented in Figure 1.

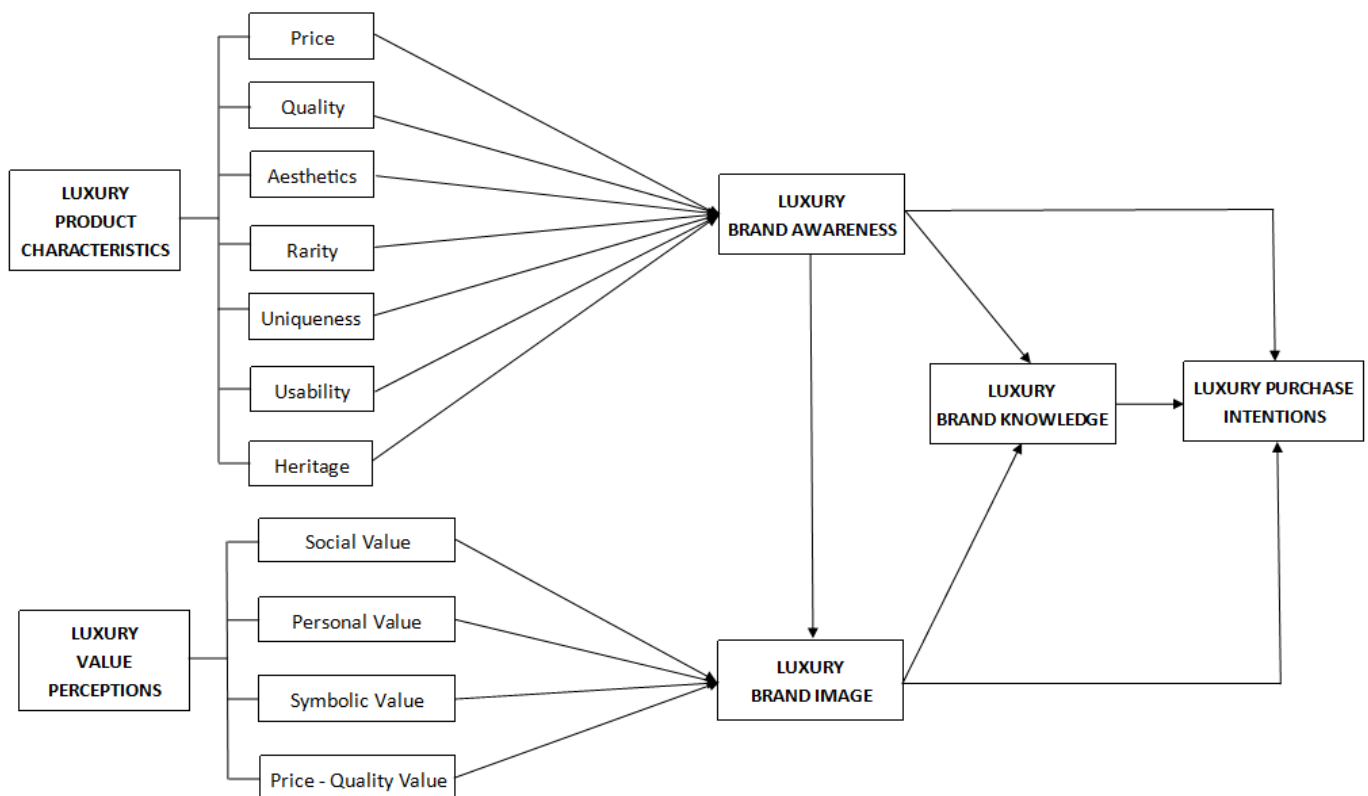


Figure 1: Proposed Conceptual Framework

Luxury Product Characteristics

Today's luxury is described as a "commonplace" (De Barnier et al., 2012) and anyone can own a purse or a pair of shoes but classes of consumers are distinguished by specific brands (Han et al., 2010). Consumers often immediately associate luxury products as expensive (Kapferer and Bastien, 2013) and thus, they are charged a premium price for purchasing luxury items. Price serves as one of the entrance barriers for luxury brands consumption together with other characteristics such as exclusive distribution and aesthetic dimensions of the products (Kapferer, 1997).

Unlike basic brands, luxury brands use only the finest materials (Kapferer, 1997) and the most delicate production process with human hand production as a significant role (Kapferer and Bastien, 2012). Exceptionally high quality is then regarded as one of the core characteristics that differentiate luxury brands from basic brands. It is anticipated that the quality of luxury products will be one of the factors which enhance positive brand awareness which leads to the intention to purchase personal luxury products.

Modern luxury brands are regarded as “global brands with universal cachets” (Berthon et al., 2009). Therefore, maintaining exclusivity while generating revenues is very challenging for luxury brands. Dubois et al. (2001) discuss that rarity concept in luxury brands add to pleasure in consumption and can be signified by high price which enhanced the desire of the products (Hennigs et al., 2013). However, recent work from Kapferer and Valette-Florence (2016) points out that there is no more rarity in luxury but the ‘abundant strategies’ which refers to the artificial rarity tactics by creating the feelings of exclusivity than the actual exclusivity through limited edition ranges instead (Kapferer, 2012). The same work also reports the rumor about Rolex watch that sells 1 million pieces per year which leads to the question about the exclusiveness and rareness of luxury products in this modern luxury world. The fact that more people having access to luxury brands and its products will eventually be damaging the exclusivity of the brand (Quelch, 1987). The proposed conceptual model includes the rarity characteristic of luxury products in order to examine the level of influence on the decision to purchase personal luxury products.

As stated by Okonkwo (2007), luxury products can be replicated by competitors and counterfeiters but a brand is what makes the product unique and timeless and impossible to be imitated. “Saint Laurent is not Chanel” and “Balmain is Balmain – there is no Balmain for the Asian continent and another for the United States” (Kapferer, 1997). Each luxury brand possesses different sophisticated tangible characteristics that convey the roots of the brand’s culture and way of life (Kapferer, 1997). In the same manner of the branding context, Tian et al. (2001) propose that in luxury product consumption, the role of the need for uniqueness is significant among individuals because uniqueness is likely to contribute to the rise and recognisable social standing of the consumers. If the product is perceived as unique, the value of the consumption will be enhanced.

Aesthetics is one of the luxury products’ features that cannot be compromised (Okonkwo, 2007). Luxury brand represents art on functional items, it “defines beauty” (Kapferer, 1997). When it comes to the aesthetics characteristic comprises with overall characteristics of luxury brands, none of the luxury brands are the same (Berthon et al., 2009). Kapferer (2015) argues that luxury brands do not run after consumers because luxury is all about the originality with the touch of the brands’ exceptional craftsmanship (Nueno and Quelch, 1998).

Hermès Kelly bag and Gucci’s bone bag handle is an example of the pivotal products that is often contributes to the established brand’s image in luxury consumers’ mind and these classics are still available in a high demand today. The aesthetic characteristic of a luxury brand is the combination of the “creative act” where the finished product must be perceived as having an excellent quality and is a “symbol of beauty” as suggested by the findings from Kapferer (1998). The design of luxury products must be visible to both oneself and the significant others. Kapferer (1997) discusses that the brand signature must be recognisable, either with a loud or quiet signature (Han et al., 2010) because what is recognisable on the person who is wearing the product represents the halo which enhance one’s power (Kapferer, 1997). The relationship between the aesthetic characteristic of the product towards the intention to purchase is likely to be positive since modern luxury consumers use luxury products for social recognition and to be in the crowd.

As any other types of products, the usability of the product must satisfy consumers' needs by the ease of use which depends on the individual evaluation and the specific occasion regarding the use of the item (Wiedmann et al., 2009). The expectation of the usability of luxury products is anticipated to influence the brand awareness and towards the decision to purchase personal luxury products.

The originality and the "heritage of craftsmanship" is one of the distinct characteristics of luxury product offerings (Nueno and Quelch, 1998; Okonkwo, 2007). Luxury brands are a "living memory" and this feature of luxury brands cannot be compromised because "the brand's truth lies within itself" (Kapferer, 1997). Most traditional luxury brands are hundreds of years old and it this characteristic is considered a hallmark of luxury brands (Hanna, 2004) as product integrity is developed through great dedication over a period of time by luxury firms (Beverland, 2005). It is compulsory and highly significance for the design team of the brand to "respect the brand heritage yet continuously reinvent it" (Nueno and Quelch, 1998). Kapferer and Bastien (2012) states that in order for luxury products to stay true, all the details starting from the location of the manufacturing process needs to be consistent with the roots of the brand. For instance, Chanel and Hermès manufactured their products in France, the origin for both labels, thus keeping the true luxury heritage of the brands. There is a limited research with heritage as one of the factors that influences the intention to purchase luxury products and this study will investigate the relevance of heritage in luxury branding.

Luxury Value Perceptions

The proposed conceptual framework also concentrates on exploring different value perceptions towards luxury brands because consumers' perceptions of luxury brands' attributes and characteristics considered more important than the actual extrinsic attributes of the products (Heine and Phan, 2001; Dubois and Paternault, 1995). Kapferer (2015b) states that one of the luxury strategies' goal is to increase the perceived value among the desired consumers while making the brands non-comparable to any other brands. Wiedmann et al. (2007; 2009) suggests that the behavioural outcomes of luxury consumption are mainly driven by the luxury value elements.

Tynan, et al. (2010) addresses the importance of understanding the luxury consumers' perception of luxury brands' image and value in order to compensate for the high price tags. The perception of luxury ownership differs from culture to culture where the findings from Phau and Prendergast (2000) suggests that Asian consumers hold different perceptions of luxury brands when compared to the Western counterparts. Asian individuals' highest concern is to secure and improve their social status using luxury goods while the Americans' luxury consumption pattern is based on the self-expression aspect.

Social value is one of the most highly relevant value in luxury consumption (Chevalier and Mazzalovo, 2012) according to the nature of luxury consumers who wants to be different and special and at the same time at the "forefront of the social trends". Recent work from Cheah et al. (2015) also suggests that social influence is positively influences the willingness to purchase luxury shoes. According to Tsai (2005) on his work on the personal motivation on luxury brand purchase value, he argues that socially-oriented motivations are only part of the entire luxury consumption value. Hennigs et al., (2015) research findings supports that luxury consumers considered social value as a part of their purchase intention and willingness to pay a premium price. Personal motives are considered to be significance in luxury consumption and that marketing efforts are highly required in order to sustain the relationship between luxury brands and consumers as well as encouraging brand loyalty (Tsai, 2005).

Personal value can be explained by the idea of “self-concept” which discusses the established relationship between consumers and their possessions (Hines and Bruce, 2007). A study from (Tsai, 2005) indicates that luxury consumption that occurs from personal orientation is an international phenomenon where luxury marketers need to recognise this type of motivation. Kapferer and Bastien (2012) states that “when it comes to luxury, hedonism takes precedence over functionality” and without hedonistic component, the product is longer a luxury but a result of snobbery consumption that it very likely to lead to the action of provocation. The purchase of luxury products “provide extra pleasure and flatter all senses at once” (Kapferer, 1997). The findings from a cross-cultural study by De Barnier et al. (2006) depicts the new phenomenon among UK luxury consumers who purchase luxury for ‘self-pleasure’.

There is no other product category with such a high symbolic benefit as luxury products (Heine and Phan, 2011). Belk (1988) discusses that luxury products are very much used for social communication and this has been widely evidenced by existing literature (Nueno and Quelch; 1998; Yang and Mattila, 2013; Husic and Cacic, 2009; O’Cass and Frost, 2004; Dubois et al., 2001; Han et al., 2010; De Barnier et al., 2012; Cheah et al., 2015; Tynan et al., 2010) and is anticipated to positively influence the purchase intention among modern luxury consumers.

This research study follows a suggestion of Shukla (2012) that by measuring the perception of price and quality as a single dimension may yield interesting insights. In economic terminology, luxury product refers to “those whose price/quality relationship is the highest of the market” (Kapferer, 1997). Dubois and Duquesne (1993) states it is compulsory for luxury brands to deliver the level of quality that justifies the high price tags in both from the consumers’ perspective and economic perspective (Kapferer, 1997). Individual consumers behave in accordance to their subjective expectations and value perceptions (Zhang and Bloemer, 2008), they would expect the brands to deliver the products according to the price paid within the perceived criteria.

Kapferer and Valette-Florence (2016) discuss that high prices of luxury products are only a portion of what constitutes luxury products as price may be only an indicator of prestige (Shukla, 2012). Beverland (2005) discusses that price and quality of luxury goods complement each other as both characteristics of excellent quality and high price are inherited in luxury goods. Shukla (2012) indicates that there is a relationship between price and quality as the work from Rao and Monroe (1989) have provided a positive relationship of the construct. This price and quality value of luxury goods is worth investigating because in comparison to regular brands, luxury products charge higher for the product that offers the similar functional benefit (Shukla, 2012). As Leavitt (1954) proposes that consumers often associate price as an indicator of quality but limited research on luxury consumption investigates this association, therefore, the proposed conceptual framework will examine this relationship.

Luxury Brand Knowledge

Consumer brand knowledge, according to Keller (1993) is defined in terms of two components; brand awareness and brand image. Many different meanings have been assigned to the term ‘brand image’ according to the marketing discipline (Bian and Moutinho, 2011). This study adopts Aaker’s (2010) definition of brand image as how the brand is perceived by the consumers. It is further discussed that the knowledge of brand image provides useful background information for developing brand identity (Aaker, 2010).

Brand awareness consists of brand recognition and brand recall (Keller, 1993) and plays an important role in consumer decision making (Keller et al., 2012). Kapferer (1997) argues that for luxury brands to be desired by consumers, the signs must be known by everyone. According to Kotler and Keller (2016), building brand awareness is to enhance the consumer's ability to sufficiently recognize or recall the details about the brand to make a purchase. This study follows this suggestion from Kotler and Keller (2016) and adapts to the luxury consumption context by using luxury product characteristics as the main influential factors. While measuring the influence of luxury brand knowledge on luxury purchase intention as a whole, a positive relationship between brand awareness and brand image is anticipated according to Keller et al. (2012).

Dubois et al. (2001) asserts that in order for consumers to appreciate luxury brands, knowledge about these brands is required. This study investigates the content of luxury brand knowledge by considering the influence of various inherent characteristics of luxury products. Even though the definition and concept of luxury still remains obscure (Kapferer, 1998), luxury brands and its products by nature serve different tangible and intangible qualities compared to ordinary brands (Kapferer, 1997).

Kapferer (1997) emphasises on increasing the number of consumers who know and understand the brand rather than focusing on those who actually purchase the products because having a knowledge about the brand is considered a long-term advantage for the brand. As stated by Shukla (2012) that it can be useful to explore the level and effect of consumer knowledge and expertise of luxury products towards the luxury purchase intention. This research study also follows a suggestion by Hennigs et al. (2013) that in order for the luxury marketers to understand the elements that constitute a luxury brand, it is important to investigate the "multifaceted desires an individual seeks through luxury consumption".

The proposed conceptual model will advance academic research in an area that is understudied. Empirical validation of the model will aid marketers in efforts to approach various consumer segments without compromising brand image and profitability.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

This study provides both theoretical and managerial implications. On theoretical grounds, this study provides an enhanced model in investigating the influence of luxury brand knowledge towards luxury purchase intention considering luxury brand characteristics and luxury value perceptions.

On a managerial perspective, this study provides an update in the modern luxury consumers' consumption pattern in terms of what specific characteristics of luxury products they would consider when they intend to purchase. At the same time, this study analyses the types of luxury value perceptions acknowledged by modern luxury consumers towards their purchase decision. In addition, the proposed conceptual framework will take into account the behaviours of traditional luxury consumers, who seem to have been lost due to the increased demand among the new luxury consumers. According to Keller et al. (2012), the marketers of the brand need to acknowledge the insights to how brand knowledge exists in consumer memory. From the model, marketers can plan and execute efficient marketing and communication strategies for modern luxury consumers given their fast-changing preference in luxury consumption. Following the suggestion from Kapferer and Valette-Florence (2016) which indicates that "luxury is made by brands" and apart from selling luxurious products, the dream is what is attached to the brand logo and name. Therefore, by investigating the

relationship between luxury products characteristics along with luxury value perceptions, this study aims to provide a refreshing analysis of today's luxury consumers and what stimulates them to buy personal luxury products.

FURTHER RESEARCH

A questionnaire will be developed by the integration of the established measurements and scales from the existing luxury consumption and branding literature. A draft of the questionnaire will be reviewed against the literature and the practical insights obtained from the sales associates and experts in the luxury industry for the suitability and clarity of the questions. The final draft of the questionnaire will be pre-test on a small number of respondents from the target audience. The target population for the study is among general luxury consumers. The data collected from the survey will be analysed using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) approach to model decision process and validate the proposed conceptual framework. Cluster analysis will be used to identify segments of consumers as recommended by Aaker et al. (2013). The anticipated research findings will expand on the degree of influences of the brand knowledge towards the willingness to purchase of personal luxury goods. It is also expected that the research findings will be useful in redefining the existing types of luxury consumers to represent today's luxury consumers.

LIMITATIONS

There are a possible limitations to this research due to the differences in the nature of the respondents as luxury brand consumption motives differ by culture to culture (Bian and Forsythe, 2012). There is a potential possibility that the research result obtained from this study may not be generalizable as each consumption is unique (Bourgeon and Filser, 1995 cited in De Barnier et al, 2006). At the same time, self-reported attitudes can be inconsistent where self-contradiction can occur among individuals which leads to a degree of ambiguity to a certain extent (Dubois et al, 2001). This research acknowledges a strong concern stated by Heine and Phan (2011) that one of the main weaknesses in the existing luxury consumer-oriented research is that most studies employs student sample or convenient sample groups which tend to lack the sufficient amount of both luxury brand information as well as the purchase experience (Fionda and Moore, 2009; Beverland, 2005). Therefore, this research study will avoid using student samples in order to yield the most valuable results.

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