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History as a Factor Creating the Value of a Luxury Brand

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Abstract

Theoretical background: The attributes of a luxury brand include both the physical characteristics of the product and the symbolic values that the brand provides to the consumers. Symbolism is interpreted as prestige, beauty, charisma, the creation of which requires larger and more time-consuming efforts than just producing a unique, expensive, high-quality product. An important aspect of a reliable, trustworthy image is the history of the brand and its creators. In the opinion of many authors, it is an important element of the brand's value, not only shaping its luxurious image, but also providing psychological values. Although history is not always indicated directly among the attributes of luxury brands, it is the basis of other values ascribed to them. The luxurious nature of the brand is often defined in the literature through the prism of its symbolism, an important element of which is history, along with heritage and country of origin. A prestigious heritage is built and maintained in time and culture by brands that are embedded in historical notions of luxury. As a result of associations with the heritage, brand is perceived as the highest quality, unique and authentic one. Symbolism, heritage and the history of a luxury brand are related to emotional qualities of personal indulgence and self-expression.

Purpose of the article: The aim of the article is to verify the importance of the history of the brand in the process of shaping the value of a luxury brand in the perception of consumers.

Research methods: A total of 203 valid responses were collected from wealthy respondents declaring monthly income over PLN 20,000 gross. An analysis of the results of the study was carried out, as well as an analysis of the literature.

Main findings: In the era of dynamic development of new technologies, unpredictable changes in consumer expectations towards companies and their offers, it turns out that history, heritage and attachment to tradition are highly valued by consumers of luxury goods. They shape a higher level of trust, both in the company's brand and its products, and increase the consumers purchase willingness. Companies that can boast of long history should undoubtedly communicate it intensively and care about providing consumers not only with basic values related to the product itself, but also symbolic values, which are particularly important for consumer of luxury goods. History and the heritage of a luxury brand constitute one of the essential elements of the brand's value and should also be treated as such by companies.

Introduction

The luxury brand managers face the challenge of improving their understanding of the complexity and dynamics of their consumers' subjective perceptions of luxury that ultimately influence their behavior. In a market where there is a lack of unanimity in understanding the true essence of a luxury brand, constantly confronted with an insatiable global appetite for counterfeits, knowledge of the perception of the core values of a luxury brand and the reasons why consumers desire and/or buy genuine luxury brands are critical factors of success (Wilcox et al., 2009).

Luxury exists in the world as long as people live in it. However, a luxury brand as a specific area of branding is a relatively new concept. Significant changes took place in this field in the 1990s, when small companies so far managed by the families that created them and had sole control over the quality, design of products and the methods of their production, were taken over by huge international corporations (Seo & Buchanan-Oliver, 2015). At that moment, the importance of the brand has increased, and emphasizing family, historical roots, communicating that the spirit of the family that created the brand is still alive has become one of its important image-building activities. The enormous capital contributed by the new business owners was invaluable to the further development of the brands. However, it was impossible and unjustified to completely cut off the family roots, many years of tradition, culture, often even a legend that was created over decades of existence of some brands.

The attributes of a luxury brand include both the physical characteristics of the product and the symbolic values that the brand provides to consumers. Symbolism is interpreted as prestige, beauty, charisma, the creation of which requires larger and more time-consuming efforts than just producing a unique, expensive, high-quality product (Zhang et al., 2023; Romaniuk & Huang, 2019; Hennigs et al., 2015). An important aspect of a reliable, trustworthy image is the history of the brand and its creators. The fact that the company has been existing on the market for many years evokes a sense of security in consumers, the belief that its products have reliably satisfied the needs of consumers for many years (Rode et al., 2016; Erdem & Swait, 2004). In the case of luxury products, these feelings become less pragmatic. The history of a luxury brand is often related to the history of people or even families who created the brand. It becomes a legend, a story which, although seems unbelievable,

creates an aura of uniqueness and magic around the brand, provide consumers with values that go beyond the basic attributes of the product. In the opinion of many authors, it is an important element of the brand's value, not only shaping its luxurious image, but also providing psychological values (Dion & Borraz, 2015). Although history is not always indicated directly among the attributes of luxury brands, it is the basis of other values ascribed to them.

In the literature, the values of a luxury brand are most often categorized taking into account their social (Klaus, 2022), symbolic (Klaus & Tarquini-Poli, 2022), and emotional values (Gupta et al., 2022). Research in this area focuses on endogenous factors shaping the perception of brand value. Brand attributes are most often used to define the concept of a luxury product, but there is a lack of research evaluating their significance in the perception of the value of a luxury brand. Although history is an important and increasingly popular area of research and theoretical considerations, most research is limited to selected markets, specific methods of communicating brands heritage for brand promotion purposes. There is still little research on the perception of brand value through the prism of its history, as well as the influence of heritage on product purchase intentions. This aspect is a significant research gap.

The aim of this article is to analyze and evaluate the importance of a brand's history in the perception of its value by consumers. The author carried out an analysis of the literature and previous research on the perception of a luxury brand value, and the own study on the importance of history in the assessment of the value of a luxury brand.

Literature review

History of luxury

In order to get the answer to the question "What is luxury?", it would be necessary to ask it in the appropriate way, namely "What is luxury to you?". Luxury is a relative concept – this conclusion arises with almost every attempt to define this term. It has evolved over the course of hundreds of years. This phenomenon has as long history as the history of mankind, dating back to the times of ancient Greece, Rome and the powers of the South and East.

Products that have such deep historical roots come from previous eras, due to their history they acquire a luxurious character, an aura of inaccessibility resulting from the inability to return to the times in which these goods were created, the inability to produce these goods again. It is natural that the works of Renaissance artists, antique furniture, or other valuables from past eras, cost a fortune compared to the modern versions of objects fulfilling the same functions. Their luxurious character results not only from the extraordinary craftsmanship and design, but also, and perhaps above all, from the inability to recreate them, very limited availability, resulting from the rarity and uniqueness of single copies of products.

Attachment to luxury, the desire to leave a permanent trace of the achievements of culture and art was very strong already in ancient times. Wealthy Egyptians, representatives of royal families, surrounded themselves with tombs, known as “palaces of eternity”, with valuables and objects which, in their opinion, were essential for life in the new and better world to which they were to end up after death. Luxurious objects which the deceased were surrounded with, were a ticket to a better world. Their presence in this world was to provide the deceased with access to everything that was a source of pleasure during life (McNeil & Riello, 2016).

Archaeological discoveries made in the Nile Valley unequivocally prove that the evolution of the “luxury industry” of those times was like the changes that luxury undergoes today. It strove for democratization. Mummies and tombs, as well as their contents, indicate that the privilege of being in touch with luxury became more and more available to ordinary people, for almost all Egyptians. Democratization is a process present in almost all societies that are characterized by an adoration of luxury, and which have achieved a sufficient level of prosperity (Kapferer & Bastien, 2009).

Ancient Greek, Egyptian and Roman cultures, until the fall of the Roman Empire, marked the main path, way and perspective for the perception of luxury. At the same time, antiquity shows a very unconventional view of luxury, which undermines the way this phenomenon is perceived by modern generations. For the ancient Greeks, luxury was the “final temptation”, resisting it was equated with steadfastness of character, while giving in to temptation was a sign of weakness, even degeneration (Franchetti, 2013).

The Romans also noticed negative connotations of the phenomenon of luxury in many of its dimensions. The definition existing in Rome at that time was derived from the word *luxus*, which meant “glamor”, “lavishness”, but also “sensuality”, and *luxuria*, that is, “hooliganism”, “excess”, “extravagance”. The desire for luxury items was seen as greed, which, in turn, was the source of other negative phenomena such as audacity, and even crimes and vices (McNeil & Riello, 2016).

Ancient cultures’ perceptions of luxury had overwhelmingly negative connotations. Despite social ostracism, luxury goods were produced, imported from distant corners of the world, and a large part of them has survived to this day, thanks to the indulgence for luxury of subsequent generations. The wealthy elite of Europe in the 14th and 15th centuries, collecting an impressive collection of the literary and artistic legacy of Greece and Rome, created new forms of luxury. In the 14th century, Italy became the largest antiques market in the world. The rulers of cities such as Florence, Mantua and Milan passionately collected extremely expensive ancient artifacts. Over time, the collector’s practice also spread to noble families. The possession of valuable artifacts was a sign of high social status. In the 17th century, this trend also spread to Great Britain, where less wealthy aristocrats began collecting antiques (Kovesi, 2015).

The period of World War I and II radically changed the face of luxury and what was considered luxury. On the ashes of warfare, mainly the production of essential goods was rebuilt. The consumption of luxury was returning, but in a much less osten-

tatious form than before the war. The strongest brands that were created long before the outbreak of World War I and II not only survived this difficult time but are still operating successfully to this day. Among them are famous brands such as Hermes (1837), Tiffany & Co. (1837), Cartier (1847), Louis Vuitton (1854), Burberry (1856), Rolex (1905), Chanel (1910), Gucci (1921) and many others. The Gucci brand is an excellent example of using the brand's long history in the process of creating its value. The family roots of the company, unfortunately, do not always have a positive effect on its image. Numerous family conflicts, which also spilled over into the business field, are the subject of many publications, or even film productions unfavorable to the brand. The brand, however, draws on its many years of history also in a very professional and deliberately prepared way. An example of this type of activity is the Gucci Museum in Florence named Gucci Garden, visited not only by Gucci customers, but also history enthusiasts or just tourists. There is also a small brand store on the premises of the Museum. Gucci Garden is an excellent example of a combination of commercial activities that provide consumers with utility values resulting from their purchases, and cultural activities, offering symbolic values related to the possibility of being in touch with art, history and heritage created by the brand for over a century.

The essence and characteristics of luxury products

The perception of luxury has changed over the years of the functioning of this phenomenon, along with cultural, social and market changes. The contemporary way of defining luxury goods still remains ambiguous and leaves a huge field for discussion. However, as part of theoretical research and practical experience in this area, a set of specific features and attributes that characterize luxury goods, as well as activities shaping the brand image that give it a luxurious character, has been developed. Activities resulting from the companies' marketing strategies are most often emphasized, as well as social, cultural and psychological aspects related to the consumption of luxury goods. On this basis, luxury goods are considered to be products which production costs are high, as well as their prices, which provide spiritual experiences and are not necessary in everyday life (Xu, 2020). These are goods characterized by scarcity and preciousness, and their value is largely tied to the brand. Moreover, the quality of luxury products is much higher than their mass counterparts. They satisfy, first, psychological needs, not physical ones (Becker & Lee, 2018). Therefore, their functional value is definitely lower than psychological values such as pleasure. Luxury goods are often related to history, culture and heritage. These are the elements that shape an important attribute of the product, which is the brand (Butcher & Pecot, 2022).

The concept of luxury is often equated with the concept of a luxury product. This is confirmed by the conclusions from the literature analysis carried out by Wirtz et al. (2020). On this basis, the authors have defined luxury goods as high-quality, expensive products and services that are not essential to life, that are rare, exclusive,

prestigious and authentic, the consumption of which provides a high level of symbolic and emotional/hedonistic values (Wirtz et al., 2020).

By using or possessing luxury products, consumers satisfy a psychological need to increase their self-esteem. In other words, luxury products are purchased and used to create and manifest their high social status, while arousing respect in the eyes of other members of society (Shukla, 2010; Vigneron & Johnson, 2004). According to Nia, and Zaichkowsky, the mental satisfaction achieved by possessing and using certain brands of products is the primary factor that distinguishes luxury goods from other products (Nia & Zaichkowsky, 2000). The definitions of a luxury product presented in the literature focus primarily on such features of this concept as exclusivity and rarity. They also emphasize the very high value of the price-quality ratio (McKinsey, 1990), and the extremely low ratio between functionality and price. In turn, the ratio of price to situational utility and intangible assets offered by luxury products is usually perceived as high (Nueno & Quelch, 1998). From the consumer's perspective, luxury brands are defined by exclusivity and very high quality, as well as integration of these factors into the image and awareness of these brands (Phau & Prendergast, 2000).

The perception of the luxurious nature of the product is highly subjective, relative and contextual (Ostovan & Nasr, 2022). According to Stępień, even if one can list common aspects that characterize luxury, "the vagueness of categorization does not build unambiguous demarcation lines between what is a luxury and what is not" (Stępień, 2019).

In the management literature, the way of defining luxury products is based on identifying the differences between a mass product and a luxury product on the basis of such features as: price, quality, aesthetics, rarity, uniqueness/originality, functionality to price ratio (Heine, 2011). Although these differences are easy to grasp, drawing a clear line between a mass/common product and a luxury product is a big challenge. This is because luxury and mass products are the end points of the product continuum. Indicating the point at which a mass good becomes a luxury is not unambiguous and acceptable to all consumers (Tynan et al., 2010). This is due to the relativity of the concept of luxury and, consequently, of a luxury product. Moreover, dynamic changes on the luxury goods market constitute a significant obstacle to the conceptualization of the essence of a luxury product.

As shown above, many different paths have been taken in countless attempts to define the concept of luxury and define its semantic territory. Therefore, one can go so far as to say that luxury should not be treated with rigid definitions, since there are as many definitions as many authors. It should be remembered that luxury, regardless of circumstances, has never been and will not be a socially neutral concept – it was and still is the main sociological problem in many societies, because it is the cause of stratification into classes or social groups. In a sense, it is society that defines what luxury is by deciding on the usefulness of items or services (Wang, 2022).

Based on the analyzes of the literature and research in this area carried out so far, for the purposes of this discussion, a definition of luxury goods was created,

according to which luxury products should be defined as high-quality, expensive goods that are rare, exclusive, original and prestigious (Tynan et al., 2010), for which the demand grows with the increase in their prices and the degree of desire by other consumers (Leibenstein, 1950), purchased in order to achieve high social status (Bagwell & Bernheim, 1996) not under the influence of needs, but desires (Berry, 1994), not by it is to eliminate discomfort but to provide pleasure (Kemp, 1998). This definition will be treated as binding in the further part of the discussion in the article (Dryl & Gil, 2016).

The place of history in the luxury brand value concept

Brand is one of the most imaginative elements of a product's structure. Being interpreted as a concept, sign, symbol or design or their combination, identifying the products of a specific seller and distinguishing them from those offered by the competition, it can be perceived as an added value of the product. Luxury brands are unique compared to other products (Ko et al., 2019). To be successful, they must constantly work on ways to provide exceptional, unique value to their consumers that will compensate for the high price of the products (Chapman & Dilmeri, 2022). Influential brands can evoke positive associations in the minds of consumers, trigger emotions and feelings that can be causative and affirmative (Posner, 2019). At the same time, the brand is a tool for building prestige and determining the luxurious nature of the product. These are not utilitarian values that define the consumer's behavior in the market, but the image of the product, shaped by the symbolism of the brand (Dryl, 2012).

The difficulty in defining a luxury brand was perfectly captured by Heine (2012), stating: "from about 20 years ago until today, there is above all a consensus in business literature that there is actually no consensus about the definition of luxury products and brands". Defining a brand as a luxury one depends on many factors. These are mainly consumers who decide whether a brand is luxurious in their opinion. Enterprises must shape their activities in such a way as to build a luxurious image in the perception of consumers. Brand personality is a particularly accentuated attribute by both theoreticians and practitioners in the area of luxury brand management. It includes both the physical characteristics of the product and the intangible assets provided by the brand. The personality of the consumer as well as the sociological and psychological conditions in which the consumer exists are also important in this context. According to Sung and Choi (2015), the brand does not have objective personality traits independent of the consumer's perception. This means that buyers draw conclusions based on direct and indirect contact with the brand and on this basis make an assessment (Aaker et al., 2004). Therefore, it is recognized that the personality of a luxury brand is a hypothetical creation created by the consumer. It is an integral element of the image and brand capital and is also strongly related to the brand value in the consumer's mind (Keller, 1993).

Keller (2009) identifies the following attributes of the brand that create its luxurious character: premium image; intangible brand associations; high quality; logos, symbols, packaging; secondary associations from linked personalities, events, countries, and other entities; controlled distribution; premium pricing strategy; carefully managed brand architecture; broadly defined competition, and legal protection of trademarks. History was not indicated among the mentioned activities as an important factor shaping the luxury character of the brand. It should be noted, however, that symbols and brand architecture can be built based on the history of the brand, which is often the case in the world of luxury.

On the other hand, Heine (2012) emphasizes that all these activities are subject to final verification in the perception of consumers who make the assessment of the luxurious nature of the brand. Among the features of the brand that could determine its luxurious character, Heine mentions high price, quality, aesthetics, rarity, extraordinariness and high degree of non-functional associations. Like Keller, the author does not refer directly to the history of the brand. Non-functional associations, however, include a number of intangible artifacts among which history is an important factor. Table 1 presents an approach to the history as an attribute of a luxury brand from the perspective of selected authors.

Table 1. History as an attribute of luxury brand

| Author | Luxury brand attributes |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Bethon et al. (2009) | High price, excellent quality, authenticity, history , tradition and uniqueness |
| Kapferer and Bastien (2009) | Excellent quality, high price, sensuality, beauty, exclusivity, history , uniqueness |
| Phau and Prendergast (2000) | Exclusivity, high brand awareness and its image, excellent quality, high degree of customer loyalty |
| Dubois et al. (2001) | High quality, high price, aesthetics and polysensuality, superfluousness, ancestral heritage and personal history |
| Tynan et al. (2010) | High quality, high price, redundancy, rarity, exclusivity, originality, prestige, symbolic and emotional/hedonistic values |
| Heine (2011) | High price, high quality, aesthetics, rarity, uniqueness, symbolism (charisma, pride, the best of the best products for the best) |
| Onknowo (2009) | Premium quality, high price, controlled distribution, high recognition, distinctive image, global reputation, emotional values (symbolism), innovation, creativity, uniqueness |
| Keller (2009) | Premium image; intangible brand associations; high quality; logos, symbols, packaging; secondary associations from linked personalities , events, countries, and other entities; controlled distribution; premium pricing strategy; carefully managed brand architecture; broadly defined competition, and legal protection of trademarks |
| Groth and McDaniel (1993, pp. 10–16) | Perceived exclusivity and rarity, achieved by high price; brand symbolism strongly associated with marketing policy |
| Nueno and Quelch (1998) | Premium quality, heritage of craftsmanship, recognizable style or design, limited production to ensure exclusivity, emotional appeal with product excellence, global reputation, association with a country of origin, personality and values of the brand's creator |
| Dubois et al. (2001) | Excellent quality, very high price, scarcity and uniqueness, aesthetics and polysensuality, ancestral heritage and personal history , superfluousness |

Source: Author's own study based on (Dryl & Dryl, 2018).

The history of the brand is given special importance by Dubois et al., defining luxury products through the prism of their features. Among the attributes of a luxury brand, they mention ancestral heritage and personal history. According to the authors, the luxury brands must have a long history and their elaboration as well as consumption process should respect tradition (Dubois et al., 2001).

Not all authors refer to the history of the brand in their considerations on the main attributes of luxury brand. It should be noted, however, that the luxurious nature of the brand is often defined in the literature through the prism of its symbolism. Symbolism refers to the psychological characteristics of the consumer, related to the perception of the extent to which the brand personality coincides with his own image. It refers to the values, lifestyle, can be considered as the spiritualization of a product, giving it human characteristics, by presenting the image, history, heritage and achievements of the brand's creators. History is an important element of symbolism, along with heritage and country of origin (Kapferer, 2012; Alexander, 2009). A prestigious heritage is built and maintained in time and culture by brands that are embedded in historical notions of luxury (Alexander, 2009). As a result of associations with the heritage of the brand, it is perceived as the highest quality, unique and authentic (Dion & Arnould, 2011). Symbolism manifested through the history of the brand and its creators is the reason why consumers identify with the brand and the values shared by successive generations of its creators. Symbolism, heritage and the history of a luxury brand are related to emotional qualities of personal indulgence and self-expression (Eastman & Eastman, 2011).

According to Halwani (2021), the heritage of the brand is shaped by its history and the scarcity of its products. These values provide consumers with a sense of certainty, stability and trust. It is indicated that they reduce the perceived risk associated with the purchase of a luxury product (Kim et al., 2008). Many authors emphasize the need to deepen research on the importance of heritage in shaping consumer's connections to brands (Frizzo et al., 2018). The studies conducted so far indicate:

- heritage reinforces trust in brand, its authenticity and commitment (Rose et al., 2016), latent sentiments of credibility and trustworthiness (Erdem & Swait, 2004),
- brand heritage creates a positive consumer affect (Mandler et al., 2020),
- brand heritage provides consumers with a sense of certainty, stability and trust (Halwani, 2021),
- history is a lens of authenticity (Safeer et al., 2021; De Barnier et al., 2012),
- history is being associated by consumers with brand's longevity and stability (Sadaba & Mir, 2018),
- heritage holds value not only for consumers but also for other stakeholders, distinguishes the brand, builds brands equity (Keller & Richey, 2006).

Representatives of the luxury goods market see the possibility of combining brand history with modern media (Butcher & Pecot, 2022). Communicating brands heritage is becoming an important aspect of building brand strength, not only through modern communication channels (Butcher & Pecot, 2022), but also by creating an

attractive space for stores offering luxury goods, known as heritage stores (Dion & Borraz, 2015). Previous studies indicate a strong connection between history and luxury branding (Ardeler et al., 2015), the positive impact of the retention of heritage on the trust and credibility of a brand (Dion & Mazzalovo, 2016).

Although heritage is an important and increasingly popular area of research and theoretical considerations, most research is limited to selected markets, specific methods of communicating brands heritage for brand promotion purposes. There is still little research on the perception of brand value through the prism of its history, as well as the influence of heritage on product purchase intentions.

Research methods

The results of the study presented in this article are part of a wider study conducted by the author from January to the end of June 2022, on the perception of the luxurious nature of a product among wealthy consumers, whose monthly income, according to the KPMG categorization, exceeds PLN 20,000 gross (KPMG, 2022). The study was conducted using the survey method in one of the premium car dealerships in Olsztyn, offering various premium and luxury brands. The dealership is one of the few of its kind in Poland, which is why its customers are mostly people from outside Olsztyn. The questionnaire was distributed among the dealership's customers and people from their circle of friends. The questionnaire contained a filtering question regarding the respondents' income. Only people whose gross monthly income exceeds PLN 20,000 participated in the study.

The aim of the part of the study presented in this article was to assess the importance of brand history in the perception of the value of a luxury brand from the consumer's perspective. The following hypotheses were formulated in the study:

H1: History of the brand is not the main factor determining the value of the luxury brand in consumers perception.

H2: In consumers opinion, the long history of the brand inspires their trust in brand.

H3: The long history of the brand is a guarantee of good quality of the product in consumers opinion.

H4: The luxury brands with long lasting tradition and family origins are favored by consumers.

203 respondents, including 69 women and 134 men, were the subject to the study. The characteristics of the sample are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Demographic characteristics of the respondents

| Age | | | | | | |
|--------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------------|-------|
| Less than 20 | 20–29 | 30–39 | 40–49 | 50–59 | More than 60 | Total |
| 0 | 1 | 25 | 51 | 81 | 45 | 203 |
| 0 | 0.5% | 12.3% | 25.1% | 39.9% | 22.2% | 100% |
| Education | | | | | | |
| Secondary | | High | | Total | | |
| 27 | | 176 | | 203 | | |
| 13.3% | | 86.7% | | 100% | | |

Source: Author's own study.

Primary and vocational education were also listed in the questionnaire. However, none of the respondents indicated these answers. The strength of the study is the selection of a sample of wealthy people who use the services of a premium car dealership, which suggests that they are buyers of luxury goods, what was confirmed in the study. Therefore, they have the knowledge and experience to provide reliable answers to the questionnaire. In order to avoid ambiguities in the interpretation of the concept of luxury, the questionnaire contains a definition that will be valid for the purposes of this study and was presented in the article. The weakness, however, is the lack of representativeness of the sample, therefore, the results of the study cannot be generalized to the entire population. However, they are an introduction to further in-depth research in this area. In order to deepen this research, it is necessary to extend it to a nationwide sample, which is more diverse, e.g. by gender and age. The author is aware of the limitations resulting from the unrepresentativeness of the sample.

Results

In order to assess the popularity of luxury products among the respondents, they were asked what percentage of all their purchases are luxury goods (Figure 1). The question did not indicate a time frame, as it concerned the general share of luxury goods in the respondents' shopping basket, both goods of frequent, periodic and episodic purchase. The question did not concern brands, but products assessed by respondents as luxury. It should be noted that there are products that, although they do not have a well-known brand, are perceived as luxury, for example, due to their inaccessibility. Examples of this type of products in Poland are high-quality shrimps or some services.

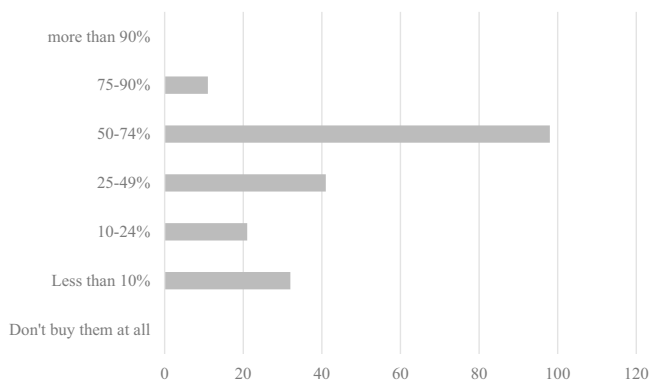


Figure 1. Share of luxury products in respondents' purchases

Source: Author's own study.

Almost half of the respondents (48.3%) declared that more than half of the products they purchase are luxury products. None of the respondents indicated the answer: above 90%, which seems justified, taking into account the fact that some of the everyday purchases, by their very nature, cannot include products belonging to the luxury category. When analyzing the results obtained in this question, it can be noticed that among the surveyed group, luxury products are very popular and constitute a significant part of their shopping basket. None of the respondents indicated that they do not buy luxury goods at all.

The next question was to identify the significance of the brand's history against other factors shaping the value of luxury product in the opinion of the respondents. The scale from 1 to 5, where 1 – *completely irrelevant*, 5 – *essential* (Figure 2), was used.

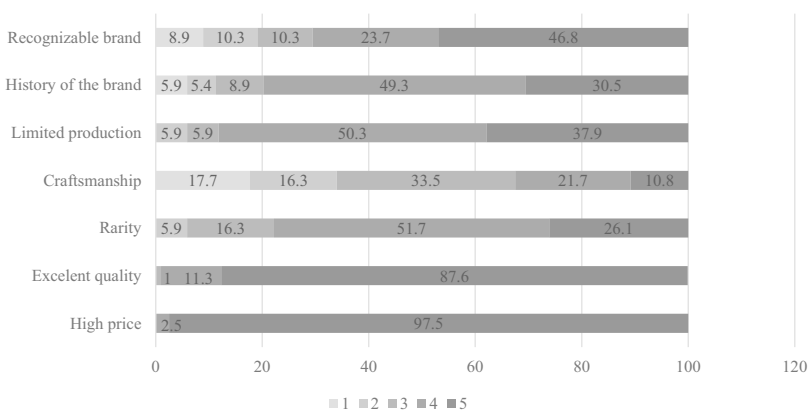


Figure 2. Factors determining the value of the luxury brand

Source: Author's own study.

According to the respondents, the factors that most significantly shape the value of a luxury brand are high price and excellent quality. Almost all respondents found this attribute essential in creating brand value. Craftsmanship turned out to be the least important feature. In this case, the respondents’ opinions were fairly evenly divided and every third respondent considered this attribute to be irrelevant, every third as significant or very important, while the remaining respondents had no opinion. As it turns out, the history of the brand is important for the respondents in the context of shaping the brand value. Almost half of the respondents (46.8%) considered this attribute very important, while 23.7% as significant. In the opinion of every fifth respondent, the history of the brand does not matter in assessing its value. The results obtained in this part of the study clearly indicate the importance of history as an attribute shaping the value of a luxury brand.

In the next question, the respondents were asked to respond to the proposed statements. The assessment was made on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 – *I disagree completely*, 5 – *I agree completely*.

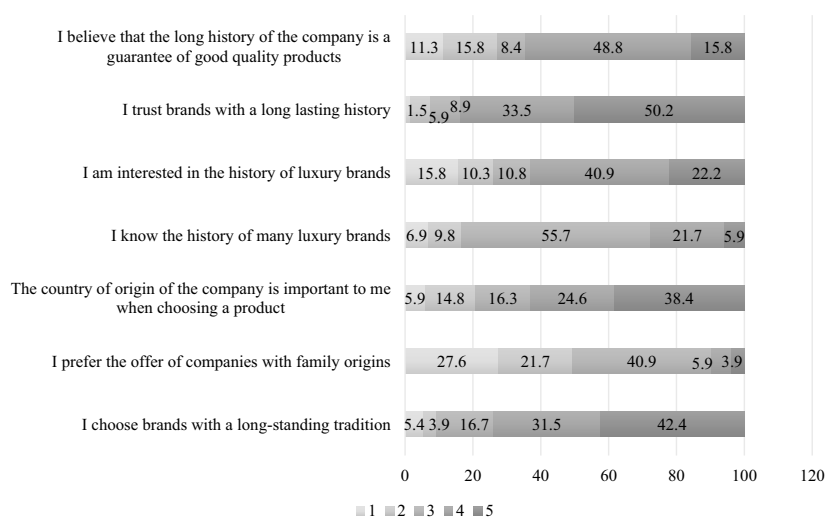


Figure 3. Attitude to proposed statements

Source: Author’s own study.

The results of this part of the study clearly show that the long-term history of the company increases consumers trust in the brand, as well as their willingness to purchase the product. 83.7% of respondents agree with the statement “I trust in brands with a long lasting history”, and 73.9% choose brands with a long tradition. Moreover, the vast majority of respondents (64.6%) equate the company’s long-term existence on the market with high-quality products. The history of luxury brands turns out to be an interesting topic for the interviewees. 2/3 of them are interested in this subject.

However, as it turns out, this interest does not correspond to the actual knowledge of the respondents in this regard. Only every fourth of them declares knowledge of the history of luxury brands. More than half of the respondents (55.7%) did not have an opinion on this subject.

Many luxury brands are associated with their place of origin, which is consistent with the concept of the country of origin effect, that is particularly strong in the case of luxury goods. However, as already emphasized in this article, many of the luxury brands with family roots have been taken over by global concerns, often shifting a large part of their business beyond the brand's birthplace. In addition, even the finest luxury brands move some of their production to Asian countries. This is done with an appropriate level of care to ensure the highest standards of product quality, but at the same time it is a clear move away from the traditions created by the brand. Country of origin is an important attribute of a luxury brand for 63% of respondents. However, the family roots of the brand are not so important to them. Only one in ten respondents prefer brands with a family tradition.

Discussions

The rules of luxury goods marketing differ fundamentally from the principles functioning on the market of mass goods. In order to justify a very high price of products, luxury brands must make every effort to ensure that the value provided to customers goes beyond the scope of functionality and usability of products. The consumer of luxury goods expects strong impressions, psychological values arising from contact with beauty and uniqueness. The undeniable, often unattainable for many mass brands, advantages of companies operating on the luxury goods market is their tradition, heritage, history and a strong unique image of their creators. These are the values that are not possible to create overnight, and therefore they constitute the unique value of the brand.

The analysis of the literature, as well as the results of the research conducted for the purposes of this study, clearly indicate that history is an important factor creating the value of a luxury brand. Based on the results of the study, the following hypotheses were verified:

H1: History of the brand is not the main factor determining the value of the luxury brand in consumers perception.

The hypothesis was positively verified. The history of the brand is important for the respondents in the context of shaping the brand value. Almost all respondents found this attribute essential but the factors that most significantly shape the value of a luxury brand are high price and excellent quality.

H2: In consumers opinion, the long history of the brand inspires their trust in brand.

The hypothesis was positively verified. The long-term history of the company increases consumers trust in the brand. 83.7% of respondents agree with the state-

ment “I trust in brands with a long lasting history”, and 73.9% choose brands with a long tradition.

H3: The long history of the brand is a guarantee of good quality of the product in respondents opinion.

The hypothesis was positively verified. The vast majority of respondents (64.6%) equate the company’s long-term existence on the market with high-quality products.

H4: The luxury brands with long lasting tradition and family origins are favored by the respondents.

The hypothesis has been partially positively verified. The results of the study show that the long-term tradition of the company increases respondents’ willingness to purchase the product, 73.9% of them choose brands with a long tradition. The family roots of the brand are not so important to them. Only one in ten respondents prefers brands with a family origins.

Conclusions

The concept of luxury is a very subjective concept that evolves over time. Manufacturers of luxury goods remain under strong pressure, on the one hand, to maintain the historical character of the brand, often built by successive generations of its creators, and on the other hand, to keep up with the dynamic, often unpredictable changes taking place in the environment. In scientific research, much attention is paid to the analysis of the value of a luxury brand, most often recognized in such categories as social, symbolic and emotional values. However, without focusing on specific brand attributes that shape its value and the possibilities of using these attributes in the strategy of building the perception of brand value. Brand history is one of such attributes. One can find in the literature the results of many studies indicating the importance of heritage in building trust, confidence and reducing the perceived risk. However, there is little research on the luxury goods market. There are also no guidelines on how to use heritage to increase brand awareness, its value, and consumers purchase motivation. This topic requires research, extended to respondents from different countries and cultures. The results of this type of research can be an important proposal for marketing solutions, thanks to which the effort put in by successive generations of luxury brand creators will be effectively used through the implementation of appropriate marketing strategies.

Many luxury brands use their heritage in everyday activities, both in terms of image and in the process of shaping their offer. There are books, films and even museums presenting their history and company’s artistic achievements. Certainly, it is a huge challenge for companies to maintain and continue this heritage. From the point of view of shaping the brand value, it is also important to properly communicate the historical values of the brand, its roots, origin, and the achievements of subsequent generations of owners. The history of the brand is a huge value in itself. The fact

that it is also appreciated by consumers is an important guideline for business. Appropriate tools should be developed that will significantly communicate and provide consumers with this symbolic value. Undoubtedly, the example of brands such as Gucci, presenting their history in a museum specially created for this need, is a great example of activities in this direction. History is an important attribute of the brand, impossible to counterfeit, providing intangible, yet important values to consumers.

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