

INFLUENCE OF UNIQUENESS ON LUXURY FASHION BRANDS PURCHASE INTENTION OF THE THAI PEOPLE.

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ABSTRACT

As stated by Euromonitor International (2016), the demand of luxury brand consumption among the Thai people is increasing. They do not only mention luxury products like clothing or accessories, but also other types such as services (i.e. luxury hotel, spa and salon including exclusive cinema). The aim of this research is to explain the relationship between Thai consumer behaviour and uniqueness effect on luxury fashion brand purchase intention. This research will compare and contrast the relative theories and support the result by data collection from the sampling.

Keywords: Uniqueness, Luxury Fashion brand, Consumption

INTRODUCTION

According to Berry(1994), Vickers and Renand(2003), luxury brand is anything and nothing. Fionda and Moore (2008)define the characteristics of luxury through the consumption perspective. The image of the brand can symbolize what the consumer needs from the brand item's consumption. It means luxury fashion brand can identify their character through consumption either by purchasing, using and eating.

Referring to the previous paragraph, there is a contrast between 'luxury' and 'fashion'. Luxury brands consist of high-quality and high-priced goods (Tynan, McKechnie, & Chhuon, 2009). However, it can also have various meanings (Berry, 1994., Vickers and Renand, 2003) depending on the consumer's perspective. In the same way, Tynan, McKechnie, and Chhuon (2009) identify that uniqueness, rarity, exclusionary, distinguished, and authenticity present high levels of symbolism and emotional value, which are also elements of luxury brands.

However, fashion brand needs to establish and present seasonal goods by using theme and concept all year-round to magnetise consumers' interest. Additionally, if the product is popular and becomes symbolic or represents uniqueness, it can be promoted from fashion to a luxury product (Chevalier and Gutsatz, 2012).

Luxury brands is the leader of fashion brand (Kim and Ko, 2010). It can be inferred that luxury fashion brands is the symbol that consist of exclusivity, dividend prices, image and status (Jackson, 2004). In addition, the consumer's aim to own the products is one of the elements too.

In response to the need to be different and distinctive from others, consumers want to show their uniqueness through their purchases (Ryan, 2008; Tian, Bearden, and Hunter, 2001). In the same way, social acceptance is also a factor for the individual to display their uniqueness (Knight and Kim 2007; Tian, Bearden, and Hunter 2001). Therefore, it can be said that the consumption of luxury fashion brand by the consumer represents their uniqueness and individuality.. Consumers have a desire to own the new product launched by the luxury fashion brand in order to display their distinctiveness. The limited number of products that are available in the market will support their intentions and show that their individuality is hard to imitate.

In the same way, purchase intention is the consumption process that has been affected by the attitude (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). It means that the willingness to identify the reason behind the consumers' intention to purchase goods, furthermore, it can also be a tool to forecast future consumer behaviour.

Thailand, one of the countries in Asia, is known for her uniqueness in culture, tradition, arts, food, and people's lifestyles as well as their attitudes. Luxury fashion brand consumption is one of the approaches for Thai consumers to display their individuality. Thai people are aware about their purchase behaviour (Euromonitor, 2015), as their decision to spend money relies on the local and global economy.

However, many research launched to Thai population usually focuses on luxury fashion brand as an image of wealth and the upper class. This objective of this research is to find more reason as to why Thai people have purchase intention of luxury fashion brands.

OBJECTIVE

1. To explore the relationship between uniqueness and Thai consumer behaviour on luxury fashion brands.
2. To suggest the luxury fashion market on how to design the product to respond to the needs of Thai consumer.
- 3.

METHODOLOGY

From the data collection, the researcher assembled many public research articles to compare and contrast the contents. To find the result and achieve the objectives of this research, the researcher needs to do following the research method by using research strategy to guide the research's process. Qualitative and quantitative data mix is required to identify the answer of this research.

Firstly, the researcher needs to launch the questionnaire to filter the sampling. This research focuses on Thai population that has consumption on luxury fashion brands in Thailand. The snowball sampling can help the researcher to get the large number of sampling. Additionally, social networks like Facebook and Twitter can help the researcher gain an easier access to the target group nowadays. In the same way, statistics is the first step of data analysis. This can help researchers forecast the target group's behaviour.

The researcher will contact the sampling after they have answered the questionnaire. However, the researcher needs to have ethical considerations. Firstly, the researcher cannot force respondents to answer the questionnaire, as it relies on the voluntary response. Secondly, the researcher needs to keep the confidentiality of the sampling, for instance, the password to access the data is required. Furthermore, the questionnaire is designed to avoid any word choice that may be offensive to the samplings. For example, the word such as snob is considered to be rude. The researcher needs to avoid it to use on the questionnaire.

RESULTS

Results of this research from the questionnaire and interview respondents will be presented as data analysis . The researcher explores the Thai people's interest in luxury fashion brand due to the characteristics of brand. This means they seek for the uniqueness from the luxury fashion brand consumption. In the same way, luxury fashion brand can reflect their identity by using or the consumption of the product.

Table 1 Gender

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	46	30.7	31.3	31.3
Female	101	67.3	68.7	100
Missing	3	2		

The females are the majority of the respondents. 68.7% from 150 respondents are female while 31.3% are males. The snowball sampling is the reason why results appear to be this way. The questionnaire was sent to many females that researcher chosen by purposive sampling before these selected respondents sent it to the other respondents who consume luxury brands or share the same interest. From Table 1

Table 2 Age

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
19 - 25	11	7.3	7.5	7.5
25 - 30	36	24	24.5	32
31 - 45	33	22	22.4	54.4
More than 45 years old	67	44.7	45.6	100
Missing	3	2		
Total	150	100	100	

The age group that is the minority of this research is between 19 - 25 at 7.3%, followed by the second age group, 31-45 years, at 22%. The 25 -30 years age group has the rate at 24.0%; being very close to the second age group of this research. On the other hand, respondents ages more than 45 years old is the majority of this research at 44.7%. From Table 2.

As seen from Table 3, an example of questionnaires is used to compile primary data before analysis, and shows the statistics together with the result.

Table 3 Descriptive of Unique value

Questions	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Luxury fashion brands that I prefer need to show my individual characteristics.	145	1	6	4.4828	1.31816
I buy luxury fashion products because they have uniqueness and an attractive style.	145	1	6	4.6414	1.07158
I think luxury fashion products have an identity that general products do not have it.	144	1	6	4.5278	1.13399
I think luxury fashion products have an identity that general products do not have it.	145	1	6	4.3655	1.37847

I collect unusual products as a way of telling people I'm different.	145	1	6	4.0483	1.47352
I'm often on the lookout for new luxury fashion products or brands that will add to my personal uniqueness.	145	1	6	3.8276	1.45461
When a luxury fashion product I own becomes popular among the general population, I begin using it less	145	1	6	3.9448	1.39333
I like to own new luxury fashion products before others do.	145	1	6	3.7103	1.54073
I avoid luxury fashion products or brands that have already been purchased by everyone.	144	1	6	3.7986	1.45121
Valid N (listwise)	143				

As it can be seen from the table, the reason Thai people purchase luxury fashion brands is because of the brand's image and product style. However, they do not mind if others own the luxury fashion product before them, Thai consumers also do not avoid the luxury fashion brands that have been purchased by others too. More people have responded to this category, thus supporting the results of this research. 4 of 5 from the respondents have confirmed that using luxury fashion brands is a way to present their uniqueness. It can be analysed that Thai consumers prefer to seek luxury fashion brands as a way to display their uniqueness or they will buy luxury fashion brands when they have unique motivation from the impulsive buying.

Additionally, as mentioned as the element of luxury fashion brands by Tynan, McKechnie, and Chhuon (2009), the price of the product can be linked to consumer behaviour. High prices will be appealing to consumers who have purchasing power. In the same way, the rareness of items, such as limited edition series, is a pull factor for a minimal number of people who can own it and be able to reflect their uniqueness. Moreover, service given to consumers by the luxury fashion brand is also important to make consumers feel exclusive and comfortable, and would likely bring them back to use their service again. To conclude, high-price, high-quality, exclusive service, and the rarity of the item influence the uniqueness of purchase intention.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

The aim of this research is to explore the relationship between uniqueness and Thai consumer behaviour on luxury fashion brands purchase intention. The result of the research is positive. It can be explained that Thai consumers who spend money for high-priced goods has an intention to display their uniqueness. Additionally, this research may suggest luxury fashion market to design the products, including providing exclusive service, as a way to fulfil the needs of Thai consumers. Product is not the only selling point as service is equally as significant for luxury fashion brands nowadays.

The purpose of this research is to explore the relationship between the uniqueness effect and Thai people's luxury fashion brands consumption purchase intention. There are 150 respondents in Thailand for this research. This is a minimal size to conclude the result but if the future research can collect more data, the result of the findings can be changed. There are

many motivations that has affected luxury fashion brand consumption of Thai people, as well as many theories related to this research area such as hotel, spa and salon. This research does not provide further in depth research of consumer behaviour such as the popular area where Thai consumers usually purchase the luxury fashion goods. Future researchers can expand this area of future research to find out more results.

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