

They are Not All Same: Variations in Asian Consumers' Value Perceptions of Luxury Brands

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Abstract

Asian markets are steadily becoming key growth regions for the consumption of luxury brands. However, despite the growth, many luxury brand firms are unable to obtain the desired economic returns through their marketing strategies in Asia. One of the major shortcomings of the marketing strategies of luxury brands in Asia relates to the way consumers across Asian markets are treated homogenously by many firms. This study examines the constituent value perceptions among the three prominent Asian markets for luxury goods, namely, China, India and Indonesia. The results of a quantitative survey conducted with 626 real luxury consumers across the three countries identifies how consumers' luxury value perceptions related to functional value, symbolic value and experiential value vary across these three Asian markets. Knowledge emerging from this study is important as it demonstrates how luxury brands can improve their marketing strategies for Asian consumers by recognizing the differences in luxury value perceptions across markets. With novel insights on the Asian consumer, the luxury brand firms can align their marketing strategies to respective markets by leveraging the similarities and differences in consumer value perceptions. Such a structured approach informed by empirical evidence will enhance their competitiveness and profit opportunities in the high growth Asian markets. The study also identifies a number of future research directions.

Keywords: *Value perceptions, luxury brands, Asian consumers, China, India, Indonesia, emerging markets*

1. Introduction

The market for luxury goods and services is booming globally and the growth is especially striking within the Asian economies. While some leading luxury brands such as LVMH,

Gucci and Hermes have been highly successful in penetrating Asian markets, brands such as Prada and Mulberry have struggled to establish themselves in Asia (Butt and Roberts 2014; Osborn 2012). Analysts have mainly ascribed the underperformance of luxury brands to factors from the organization side such as over expectations, and treating many Asian markets as homogenous (Financial Times 2014). As Asian economies become more competitive, how a luxury brand can profit from these rapidly growing markets represents an important question (Shukla 2012; Hennigs et al. 2013). Researchers have established that the attempts to explain the social behavior of consumers in one culture based on another culture would be inadequate due to differences in the psychology of consumption and value associations (Belk 1999; Sheth et al. 1991; Sharma 2010). With regards to Asian consumers and status consumption, the evidence on the underlying value perception that drive luxury consumption is largely anecdotal (Chadha and Husband 2005). As a consequence, the insights on the changing effects of value perceptions on consumers in different Asian markets are inconclusive, and have been highlighted as a substantial research gap by several authors (e.g., Berthon et al. 2009; Shukla 2012; Hennigs et al. 2012; Wiedmann et al. 2009).

This study, therefore, examines the constituent value perceptions that drive luxury purchase intentions among the largest and prominently growing Asian markets, namely, China, India and Indonesia. The research reported in this paper makes the following contributions. Theoretically, the findings enrich the discipline's knowledge on how value perceptions influence Asian consumers' decision making. A further theoretical contribution of the study is the extension of the three dimensional value perceptions framework developed by Berthon et al. (2009), by separating the symbolic dimension into two distinct aspects of self-directed symbolism and other-directed symbolism. The benefit of this distinction of the symbolic value perception is proven important as other-directed symbolism is a significant influencer for Indian consumers, while self-directed symbolism is highly influential for Indonesian consumers. This finding, in turn, offers insights into how a luxury firm can profit

from customizing the constituent value perceptions as a differentiator in their marketing strategy. Moreover, the results also offer an opportunity to standardize the marketing campaigns, as functional value is observed to be significant across all markets. Overall, the theoretical and practical contributions make this study important to both researchers and managers.

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

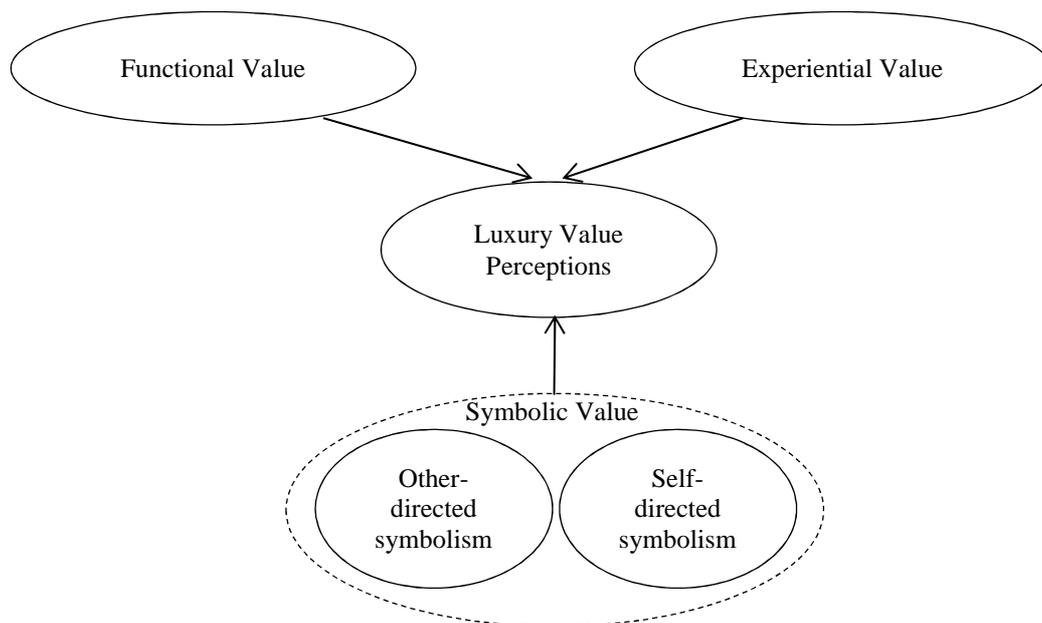
2.1 Constituent luxury value perceptions

Value creation has been widely discussed in the literature on consumer research from both theoretical and practical perspectives. There is a consensus among researchers and practitioners that creating value can be a key to long-term success (Sweeny and Soutar 2001). Zeithaml (1988, p 14) defines perceived value as “a consumer’s overall assessment of the utility of a product (or service) based on perceptions of what is received and what is given”. The centrality of the ‘give’ and ‘get’ components highlighted in Zeithaml’s (1988) definition become even more pronounced in the field of luxuries. This is because luxury goods by definition are expensive and hard to obtain and enable consumers to satisfy their material and socio-psychological needs to a far greater degree than regularly consumed goods (Shukla and Purani 2012; Wiedmann et al. 2009).

Researchers have attempted to conceptualize constituent luxury value perceptions through various lenses, including, brand luxury index (Vigneron & Johnson 2004), consumption values (Hennigs et al. 2012; Wiedmann et al. 2009), co-creation (Shukla & Purani 2012; Tynan et al. 2010) and impression management (Shukla 2012). Berthon et al. (2009) suggest that in order to understand luxury values, it is essential to capture the full dimensionality of the relationships among people, products, and brands. Following Karl Popper’s “three worlds” hypothesis, Berthon et al. (2009) conceptualize luxury brands with three distinct value-based dimensions: functional, experiential and symbolic. The functional

dimension relates to the material embodiment which reflects in physical manifestations such as quality of material and craftsmanship. The experiential dimension is associated with subjectivity and is idiosyncratic as it differs from person to person. It gets reflected through sensations, feelings, cognitions and behavioral intentions aroused by brand-related stimuli such as logo, packaging, advertisements and environment. The symbolic dimension gets reflected in the social signals which are constructed through the narrative associated with the brand's meaning, myth, stories and consumer's own wealth, prestige and social status. In this study, we extend the three-component model proposed by Berthon et al. (2009) by including two specific sub-dimensions for symbolic value. Based on the work by Tynan et al. (2010) and Shukla and Purani (2012), we posit that symbolic value is driven by self-directed and other-directed symbolisms.

Figure 1: Conceptual framework



2.1.1 Functional Value

Functional value represents the perceived utility of a product resulting from its inherent attributes or characteristic-based ability to perform its functional, utilitarian or physical purposes (Sheth et al. 1991; Smith and Colgate 2007). In other words, the meaning is derived from the perceived functionality of the product (Berthon et al. 2009) wherein price-quality

perceptions are a dominant aspect (Shukla and Purani 2012). Marketing managers have long understood that a common way to increase the appeal of an otherwise ordinary product is to attach a high price to it (Han et al. 2010). Consumers will pay a higher price for a functionally equivalent good because they crave the status brought about by such material displays of wealth (Bagwell and Bernheim 1996). In some ways, higher prices themselves offer a strong signal of quality to consumers and they can feel superior as one of the few who can afford to buy the product. Often, consumers associate prestige with a product through the price and quality perceptions of the product itself (Brucks et al. 2000). For luxury brands high price and excellent quality go hand in hand as inherent traits (Shukla 2012). Based on the extant literature, we measure functional value through the dominant effect of price-quality perceptions. Therefore,

H1: Asian consumers' luxury value perceptions will be significantly influenced by the functional value perceptions.

2.1.2 Symbolic Value

Although, price quality perceptions can help gain status, the perceptions themselves do not determine the desirability of a luxury brand. The symbolic association driving a brand choice can send significantly meaningful signals to other consumers about the type of person using that brand (Han et al. 2010). It is widely accepted that people make inferences about others based on their choices of consumption objects. Moreover, it is also recognized that people see their possessions as a part, or an extension, of themselves (Belk 1988). Symbolic value refers to the extent to which people attach or associate psychological meaning to a product (Smith and Colgate 2007). Extant literature shows that symbolic value has two specific aspects, namely, self-directed symbolism and other-directed symbolism (Shukla and Purani 2012; Tynan et al. 2010). Most people use luxury brands for their symbolic meanings and it is well established in Western consumer based literature that luxury goods make people feel good

about themselves (Shukla and Purani 2012; Wiedmann et al. 2009). Additionally, it has been observed that consumers in Western developed markets use their symbolic possessions such as luxury brands to extend, expand and strengthen their sense of self (Ahuvia 2005; Belk 1988). However, while the consumption of luxury brands is growing rapidly among Asian consumers, research has not examined the influence of self-directed symbolism among Asian consumers (Sharma 2010; Shukla and Purani 2012). Based on the above logic and prior research, we posit that:

H2a: Asian consumers' luxury value perceptions will be significantly influenced by self-directed symbolism.

Luxury brands offer many avenues for self-directed symbolism and it is also noted that these brands possess a desirability that provides the owner with a perceived status through its signals (Hennigs et al. 2012). Luxury goods are often acquired according to what they mean to the individual and to the members of their social reference group (Shukla 2010; Tynan et al. 2010). Moreover, researchers observe that luxury brands are not only used for fitting in with reference groups (Escalas and Bettman 2005) but also used for standing out (Han et al. 2010). Furthermore, comparing the effect of interpersonal influences among British and Indian consumers, Shukla (2011) observes that due to the collectivist nature of the society, Indian consumers demonstrate high orientation towards conforming to the expectations of others. Thus, other directed symbolism may be a strong predictor of luxury purchase intentions among Asian consumers. Therefore,

H2b: Asian consumers' luxury value perceptions will be significantly influenced by other directed symbolism.

2.3 Experiential value

Experiential/hedonic value is concerned with the extent to which a product creates appropriate experiences, feelings, and emotions for the customer (Smith and Colgate 2007). Experiential value is highly subjective and gets reflected through the hedonic dimensions of a brand (Berthon et al. 2009). McCracken (1986) opines that there is a significant relationship between individual income rise and prosperity and the desire for product with symbolic aspects. Understanding the differing patterns of consumption among Asian consumers is not only important because of the market size and growth of Asian economies, but also because the growth is fuelling the aspirations of an emergent global class with discretionary purchasing power that is approaching Western levels. Shukla (2011) opines that these *nouveau riche* Asian consumers are one of the most important target markets for luxury firms across the world. With the evidence of rising income levels and a growing appetite for luxury brands among Asian consumers, this study posits that experiential value will play a significant role in influencing luxury value perceptions. It has been noted that each luxury brand attempts to create a unique store-level experience and firms spend a significant amount of their revenue on building and maintaining the unique shopping experience for their consumers (Kozinets et al. 2002). In addition, from a customer's perspective, historically, buying luxury brands involved dressing up and going into a high-end boutique to consult with a salesperson about what to buy (Adams 2013). Thus, the shopping pleasure in itself offers a significant avenue in generating precious experiential value. Based on the above debate, it is proposed that:

H3: Asian consumers' luxury value perceptions will be significantly influenced by the experiential value.

3 Methods

3.1 Sample and data collection

With increasing disposable income, Asia is becoming the frontier market region for luxury goods (Euromonitor 2014). According to Lassignardie and Lewis (2013), the Asia-Pacific

region is predicted to overtake North America as home to the highest number of millionaires by 2015. As luxury businesses are increasingly expanding in this region, it is critical to understand and evaluate the constituent value perceptions that drive Asian consumers' luxury purchase decisions. China is already identified as the fifth largest luxury goods market in the world and is expected to be a key region of growth for luxury goods by 2020 (Deloitte 2013). Additionally, India has been the fastest growing market for luxury goods in the world since 2011, and it is noted that the sale of luxury goods in Indonesia has doubled since 2008 (Euromonitor 2014). This study therefore focuses on the three rapidly growing Asian luxury markets, namely China, India and Indonesia.

A survey of actual luxury consumers was used to test the hypotheses. First, we developed a questionnaire based on previously developed scales. The conceptual and functional equivalence for all constructs was assessed subjectively by the multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, multi-national and multi-institutional research team members. These scales were evaluated by a panel of expert judges for content and face validity. The expert panel included 2 executives working in the field of luxury marketing in China and India. Thereafter, the questionnaire was submitted to two academics, who assessed each scale item for representativeness, specificity and clarity. A pilot test was carried out (n = 20 for each market) to identify any impolite, unclear or difficult to understand questions. The questionnaire was distributed in Shanghai and Beijing in China; Mumbai and Bangalore in India and Jakarta in Indonesia, as each of these cities are major hubs of luxury stores in the respective countries.

Respondents were contacted on major shopping streets and/or malls, as appropriate in each city where numerous luxury brand stores are located. Respondents who were not nationals of the particular countries were not included in the study. To avoid respondent and

response bias, data was collected over a five-week period with the survey team rotating the location of interviews, the times of the day and the days of the week to make the final sample representative of the population of shoppers. In order to capture the views of real luxury consumers, the procedure for filtering the consumers was followed as suggested in extant literature by Han et al. (2010) and Shukla (2012). The respondents were asked if they had purchased any luxury accessories or luxury products in the past 6 months. They were asked to recall the brands they had purchased, thus creating an appropriate environment for the study. In total, 626 fully completed questionnaires were used for the analysis. The composition of respondents for each nationality is: China (n=231; response rate: 41.03%; $M_{age} = 27.3$ years; female = 51.5%), India (n=190; response rate: 41.44%; $M_{age} = 24.37$ years; female = 62.1%) and Indonesia (n=205; response rate: 43.94%; $M_{age} = 32.8$ years; female = 65.1%).

In order to avoid response bias, the questionnaire was translated in Mandarin and Bahasa Indonesia by native speakers of the language. The questionnaire was then back translated by another native speaker to observe equivalence of meaning. A comparison of two translations indicated no substantial differences in the meanings of the scales. To avoid interviewer bias, each interviewer was trained with a similar brief and debriefing sessions were held at the end of each day to standardize the process as much as possible. To minimize and estimate the effect of common method variance, several recommended procedural and statistical remedies were used as suggested by Podsakoff et al. (2003). Order bias was controlled by counterbalancing the order of the measurement of the variables. The scale items order as well as the position of the predictor and criterion variable were changed. To avoid response format bias, the participants in between completed a series of filler tasks unrelated to the study. To reduce method bias, the respondents were guaranteed anonymity and were also assured that there are no wrong or right answers, and that they should answer questions as honestly as possible.

3.2 Measures

The initial sets of items were derived from established existing measurement scales. Questions relating to functional value were derived from Shukla (2012). Other-directed symbolic value measures were used from O’Cass and McEwan (2004). Self-directed symbolism was captured using the scale items developed by Tsai (2005). Experiential value was measured with the items from Babin et al. (1994). All measures used a five-point Likert-type response format, with “strongly disagree” and “strongly agree” as anchors. Table 1 provides details of standardized loadings, average variance extracted (AVE), composite reliability (CR) and Cronbach’s alpha for each country. Following Shukla (2012), the luxury purchase intentions construct was measured using self-reported items by asking respondents “how likely is it that you will buy a luxury accessory within three months from now?”, and “the probability that I would consider buying luxury accessory within three months from now” (measured on “very high” to “very low”).

As seen in Table 1, the AVE for the measures was 0.50 and above for all constructs, which is greater than the level recommended by Dillon and Goldstein (1984). Cronbach alpha value was also above the threshold. Discriminant validity was assessed using the test suggested by Fornell and Larcker (1981). According to this test, a scale possesses discriminant validity if the average variance extracted by the underlying latent variable is greater than the shared variance (i.e., the squared correlation) of a latent variable with other latent variable. As Table 2 shows, this criterion was met by all the variables in the study as no correlation exceeds the square root of the average variance extracted. In a further stringent test of discriminant validity, a procedure suggested by Bagozzi, Yi, and Phillips (1991) was followed. In this procedure, each pair of constructs is analysed through a pair of measurement models with and without the correlation between the constructs fixed to unity. Changes in

chi-square were far greater than the critical value in each case, supporting discriminant validity in each model.

Table 1: measurement model

	China	India	Indonesia
	Std. Est.	Std. Est.	Std. Est.
Symbolic value			
<i>Other directed symbolism</i>			
Owning this accessory indicates social status	0.67	0.74	0.55
Owning this luxury accessory indicates a symbol of achievement	0.88	0.66	0.56
Owning this luxury accessory indicates a symbol of wealth	0.80	0.65	0.73
Owning this luxury accessory indicates a symbol of prestige	0.80	0.84	0.66
<i>Composite Reliability (CR)</i>	<i>0.87</i>	<i>0.82</i>	<i>0.72</i>
<i>Average Variance Extracted (AVE)</i>	<i>0.81</i>	<i>0.70</i>	<i>0.51</i>
<i>Cronbach's Alpha</i>	<i>0.87</i>	<i>0.84</i>	<i>0.75</i>
<i>Self-directed symbolism</i>			
I am very attracted to unique luxury accessories	0.87	0.72	0.75
I like to own new luxury accessories before others do	0.71	0.80	0.82
I am more likely to buy luxury accessories that are unique	0.50	0.66	0.77
<i>Composite Reliability (CR)</i>	<i>0.74</i>	<i>0.77</i>	<i>0.82</i>
<i>Average Variance Extracted (AVE)</i>	<i>0.61</i>	<i>0.64</i>	<i>0.74</i>
<i>Cronbach's Alpha</i>	<i>0.71</i>	<i>0.70</i>	<i>0.81</i>
Experiential value			
While purchasing luxury accessories, I felt the excitement of the hunt	0.65	0.66	0.83
When purchasing luxury accessories, I am able to forget my problems	0.63	0.72	0.82
I enjoy a shopping trip no matter what I purchase	0.74	0.60	0.67
<i>Composite Reliability (CR)</i>	<i>0.71</i>	<i>0.70</i>	<i>0.82</i>
<i>Average Variance Extracted (AVE)</i>	<i>0.53</i>	<i>0.51</i>	<i>0.73</i>
<i>Cronbach's Alpha</i>	<i>0.73</i>	<i>0.77</i>	<i>0.82</i>
Functional value			
In my mind higher price equals higher quality	0.65	0.73	0.64
An item being higher in price makes it more desirable to me	0.66	0.86	0.79
Higher priced luxury brand accessories mean more to me	0.69	0.90	0.57
<i>Composite Reliability (CR)</i>	<i>0.71</i>	<i>0.87</i>	<i>0.71</i>
<i>Average Variance Extracted (AVE)</i>	<i>0.52</i>	<i>0.83</i>	<i>0.53</i>
<i>Cronbach's Alpha</i>	<i>0.71</i>	<i>0.87</i>	<i>0.70</i>

4. Findings

Since this study uses data collected across three countries, it is important to assess cross-cultural measurement invariance for all the scales. Steenkamp and Baumgartner (1998)

suggest using a structural equation modelling approach for this, with a multi-step process putting increasingly restrictive constraints on a multiple-group measurement model and testing the significance of changes in model fit. A maximum likelihood estimation procedure with LISREL 8.8 was used for this purpose.

Table 2: Correlations matrix

	ODS	SDS	EXV	FNV	PI
China					
Other directed symbolism (ODS)	<i>0.90</i>				
Self-directed symbolism (SDS)	0.46	<i>0.78</i>			
Experiential value (EXV)	0.52	0.61	<i>0.73</i>		
Functional value (FNV)	0.45	0.48	0.45	<i>0.72</i>	
Purchase intentions (PI)	0.24	0.26	0.25	0.37	<i>0.73</i>
India					
Other directed symbolism (ODS)	<i>0.84</i>				
Self-directed symbolism (SDS)	0.42	<i>0.80</i>			
Experiential value (EXV)	0.38	0.60	<i>0.71</i>		
Functional value (FNV)	0.36	0.46	0.41	<i>0.91</i>	
Purchase intentions (PI)	0.59	0.42	0.35	0.53	<i>0.70</i>
Indonesia					
Other directed symbolism (ODS)	<i>0.71</i>				
Self-directed symbolism (SDS)	-0.16	<i>0.86</i>			
Experiential value (EXV)	0.22	0.08	<i>0.86</i>		
Functional value (FNV)	0.37	-0.10	0.50	<i>0.73</i>	
Purchase intentions (PI)	0.25	0.28	0.60	0.58	<i>0.75</i>

* Values in diagonal italics represent square root of AVE.

Table 3 provides the results of the stepwise process used for testing the difference in measurement for the invariance levels. After achieving configural invariance (M1 - χ^2 (238) = 414.94; RMSEA = 0.059; NNFI = 0.96; CFI = 0.97), the next step involved testing the data for full metric invariance (M2). The procedure was carried out by constraining the factor loadings to be equal across the three national groups and comparing the fit statistics with the unconstrained model. The difference between M2 and M1 was non-significant ($\Delta\chi^2$ (14) = 28.46; $p < 0.01$). Furthermore, the other fit indices are better than the recommended cut-off points (RMSEA = 0.061, χ^2 /df = 1.76, NNFI = 0.96 and CFI = 0.97). Thus, support for full metric invariance is observed. The full scalar invariance was not achieved. As noted by Steenkamp and Baumgartner (1998) however, full scalar invariance is extremely rare in

cross-national studies. Next, a partial scalar invariance model was tested by freeing the invariance constraints on intercepts. Two chi-square difference tests were conducted to assess the fit of the partial scalar invariance model (M4). The first test compared M4 to M2 and the second compared M4 to M1 which suggested that the partial scalar invariance model was not significantly worse than the full metric or configural invariance model. Moreover, the other fit indices showed significant improvement from the full scalar invariance model (RMSEA = 0.062, $\chi^2/df = 1.75$, NNFI = 0.95, CFI = 0.96). Therefore, it can be concluded that partial scalar variance was achieved across the samples.

Table 3: Invariance measurement

Model comparison	χ^2	df	χ^2/df	$\Delta\chi^2$	Δdf	RMSEA	NNFI	CFI
Full configural invariance (M1)	414.94	238	1.74			0.059	0.96	0.97
Full metric invariance (M2)	443.40	252	1.76	28.46	14	0.061	0.96	0.97
Full scalar invariance (M3)	507.91	264	1.92	92.97	26	0.067	0.95	0.96
Partial scalar invariance (M4)	456.42	261	1.75	41.48	23	0.062	0.95	0.96

Table 4 provides the structural model with respective path coefficients and t-values for each country. Hypothesis 1 is fully supported as functional value was found to be significant across China ($\beta = 0.31$, $p < 0.05$), India ($\beta = 0.51$, $p < 0.001$) and Indonesia ($\beta = 0.28$, $p < 0.01$). Other-directed symbolism was highly significant for Indian consumers ($\beta = 0.64$, $p < 0.001$) hence H2a is partially supported. Self-directed symbolism was significant among Indonesian consumers ($\beta = 0.24$, $p < 0.01$). However, it was non-significant among Chinese and Indian consumers, thus offering partial support for H2b. Similarly, experiential value was also significant among Indonesian consumers ($\beta = 0.84$, $p < 0.001$) but not among Indian and Chinese consumers, thus providing partial support for hypothesis H3.

Table 4: Structural model

	China		India		Indonesia	
	Std. Est.	T-value	Std. Est.	T-value	Std. Est.	T-value
Functional Value	0.31	1.82*	0.51	4.20***	0.28	2.04**
Symbolic value						
Other directed symbolism	0.04	0.34	0.64	5.11***	-0.01	-0.06
Self-directed symbolism	0.05	0.23	0.14	0.82	0.24	2.34**
Experiential value	0.05	0.25	0.08	0.50	0.84	5.81***

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

5 Discussion and conclusion

This study aimed to understand consumer value perceptions towards luxury products across three major countries in Asia. These markets are characterized by high growth and a increasing number of aspirational consumers who frequently buy luxury brands. The results show that the constituent value perceptions driving these consumers to purchase luxury goods differ significantly across the three countries studied in our research. In India, the construct of other directed symbolism is significantly related to luxury value perceptions, indicating a demonstration effect on luxury brand consumption. Indian luxury brand consumers might be influenced by what their significant others think of them, and therefore act accordingly to achieve social conformity, consistent with the findings of Shukla (2011). In addition, there is a large segment of nouveau riche customers with the need to buy luxury brands for ostentatious consumption.

Luxury value perception of the Indonesian customers, on the other hand, is influenced by the self-directed symbolism of luxury brands. Self-directed symbolism is more about the individual, and therefore this result is counter-intuitive to the general perception of Indonesia as a collectivistic society. The finding can be attributed to the relatively long period of economic development in Indonesia, enabling the consumers to use their symbolic possessions such as luxury brands to strengthen their sense of self, similar to the reported behaviour of their western counterparts (Ahuvia 2005; Belk 1988). The Indonesian customers also show significant impact of experiential value on their luxury value perceptions, which is consistent with the result showing significant impact of self-directed symbolism on luxury value perceptions. Experiential value perceptions represent store-level and personal pleasure derived from the consumption of luxury brands.

Functional value perception has a significant impact on luxury value perceptions across all three countries in the study. The significant result across the three countries show that consumers evaluate the functional value of a luxury brand in terms of the status it brings to them, and therefore are willing to pay a premium price. The three countries have witnessed rapid economic growth over the last two decades, and a consequential increase in the number of aspirational consumers. These consumers associate prestige through the price and product quality perceptions, and therefore buy luxury brands which are perceived to accord higher status in the eyes of the society (Berthon et al. 2009).

5.1 Theoretical contributions

This study makes two important contributions. First, this study extends Berthon et al. (2009)'s three component model of luxury value perceptions and thereby enhances our understanding of the constituent luxury value perceptions. Prior literature treats symbolic value perceptions as a singular construct. By contrast, this study proposes a novel conceptualization of symbolic luxury value perception as a bi-dimensional concept consisting of other directed and self-directed value perceptions. The two sub dimensions of symbolic value enables an in-depth understanding of how luxury value perceptions are formed and what are their constituents.

Second, the study examined the constituent luxury value perceptions in the Asian consumer context. Previous studies have largely treated Asian consumers as a homogenous entity, and this misconception has often spilled over to marketing practice resulting in costly mistakes by several luxury brands. Therefore, whether there are any variations in Asian consumers' perceptions of luxury dimensions is an important question. To answer this question, it is imperative to identify whether there are differences across Asian countries in terms of luxury value perceptions. The findings of this research study demonstrate that Asian

consumers vary in their value perceptions of luxury goods. Asia is a vast continent, consisting of several cultures and subcultures, and consequently poses significant challenges to the marketers of luxury products. Thus, the study provides insights into the constituent luxury value perceptions of Asian consumers, and by doing so, enriches knowledge in the domains of value perceptions and behavior of Asian consumers.

5.2 Managerial implications

This study offers rich insights into the differences in consumer value perceptions of luxury goods across Asian consumers. The three countries included in this study are at different levels of maturity in terms of economic development, which is reflected in how the consumers perceive the value of luxury products. Marketers can benefit from knowledge about the differences (and similarities) in constituent luxury value perceptions and differentiate their marketing strategy accordingly. For instance, a luxury brand strategy in Indonesia should emphasize how the brand could enhance a consumer's self-image and could make them feel good about themselves, as well as focus on the experiential aspects of buying and using the brand. On the other hand, a luxury brand in India should focus more on how the brand could add to the buyers' social status. Thus, the luxury brand marketer should customize their positioning and communication strategies for symbolic and experiential value perceptions across the three countries. Given that the functional value has a significant impact on luxury value perceptions in all three countries, marketers could standardize their strategy for this dimension of luxury value perception.

5.3 Limitations and future research

The findings of this study are contingent on the following limitations which are identified as avenues for further research. The study included three large and rapidly developing Asian countries. Further studies can include samples from smaller countries where luxury

consumption is picking up at a slower rate, and conduct a cross-country comparison. In addition, a further study could examine the impact of the tenure of customer-brand relationship on luxury value perceptions, and examine whether long-term customers differ in their perceptions to the recent customers. Furthermore, future studies could investigate the role of rarity of brands, new vs established luxury brands, brand attachment and commitment in shaping luxury value perceptions in the Asian countries. In conclusion, this study sheds light on the constituent value perceptions of consumers in three major Asian economies. The study provides suggestions for how researchers may develop this research further, and how managers might respond in the light of enhanced understanding of value perceptions towards luxury brands.

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