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The Effect of Brand Image on Consumer Behaviour: Case Study of Louiss Vuitton-Moet Hennessy

Gökhan TEKİN¹

Sercan YILTAY²

Esra AYZAZ³

¹Hasan Kalyoncu University, Graduate School of Social Sciences, Business Doctoral Program, gokhan.tekin@teb.com.tr

²Kahramanmaraş Sutcu Imam University, Graduate School of Social Sciences, Graduate Business Program, sercan.yiltay@gmail.com

³Kahramanmaraş Sutcu Imam University, Graduate School of Social Sciences, Graduate Business Program, esraayaz92@hotmail.com

Abstract

Consumers are influenced by many psychological, social and personal factors that influence their perception of a brand. Brand is a powerful tool to attract more consumers to buy particular products and, has become important in the luxury market. A very important factor that influences consumer's perceptions of a brand is strong brand image.

The main purpose of this article is to study and analyze the role of brand image on consumer behaviour. This study examines how brand image affects consumer behaviour from a consumer's perspective. In order to more practical approach, the study concerned case study of LVMH.

All data and result based on literature is collected from mainly books, journal, articles, and online material. The methodology for this study was quantitative. A questionnaire was designed to provide answer to research question. In this study, one hundred four random participants were collected online.

Keywords: Brand Image, Consumer Behaviour, Luxury Goods

JEL Classification: M30, M31, M39.

1. INTRODUCTION

The purchasing process is a combination of mental and physical activities that ends with an actual purchase almost daily (Sheth & Mittal 2004) Therefore it is interesting to study the connection within "what we buy" and "why we buy it". In this circumstance, brands play a leading role in customer decision making. There are many factors or attributes of consumers effecting their view and decisions. In today's increasing competitive marketplace, Consumers differ in their perceptions; they would necessarily hold different images for any specific brand and often have to make a choice among a range of products or brands in the market that differ very little in its price or unction. In such circumstances, their final decision depends on the image they associate with different brands.

For example, Louis Vuitton handbags which earn high reputation are so attractive to most people, when it is mentioned, most of people would think of Louis Vuitton. Differently when young woman thinks of buying cosmetic, she will firstly think of buying it from Christian Dior.

Brand image has been an important concept in consumer behaviour research and is a crucial factor influencing the purchasing of luxury product decision. Keller (1997) demonstrates that the brand image is essential in apparel purchase behaviour because it impacts consumers' preferences and purchase intentions as well as their willingness to pay a premium price and recommend the brand to others. Thus, when consumers hold a strong and constructive brand image, they will be more likely to evaluate the apparel product positively, regardless of price.

Furthermore the luxury goods sector is particularly chosen in this research. To be successful in a luxury business, it requires different rules from non-luxury sector. Often, luxury customers are not shopping based on price; in fact they rather value the distinctive experience, design and quality. A specific brand is the subject of this research study. LVMH is a world-renowned brand and generally considered as a brand that signifies high quality.

The connection within brand and consumer behaviour has been focus of much research in the past years. The main purpose of this research is to explore the relationship between a luxury brand, its brand image and the consumer's attitude and alliance with it presenting a study of luxury brand demand.

The relationship between brand image and consumer behaviour will be investigated while identifying the major aspects of brand image that influences the consumers' purchasing decision using a case study on how brand image affects the consumer behaviour. The study will also investigate and analyse the changes in the relationship between brand image and consumer' purchasing decision, while focusing on the value of the brand and establish the impact of brand image on consumer' observation about quality, value and benefits of the product, overall attitude toward the product, and decision to purchase the product.

2. LITERATURE REVIEWS

2.1. Brand Equity

The author Aaker, in his study demonstrates that the power of brand is often expressed by brand equity and how do consumers respond to different brands? Another question would be asked that is, how do brands distinguish themselves from each other? According to Aaker the answer to the question is brand equity where he stated;

"Brand equity is a set of brand assets and liabilities linked with a brand, including its name and symbol that could impose beneficial or detrimental effects on the values arising from the product or services".(Aaker 1996,7).

There is an example which can describe how people recognise and respond to a brand. In De Chernatony's book, the author consider and indicates that a test between Diet Pepsi and Diet Coke and in addition, when the two brands are concealed, the test shows that 51% of the consumers prefer Pepsi while 44% of them prefer Coke and 5% of them cannot tell the difference. For contrast, another test is conducted without concealing the brands. They also find significant differences in without covering the brands, it shows that only 23% of the consumer prefers Pepsi and the proportion of the consumer who prefers Coke increases to 65% and 12% of them thinks that two brands of cola are equal. As a consequence of the result, De Chernatony concludes with a question, *"How can this be explained if not in terms of the added values that are aroused in the minds of consumers when they see the familiar Coke logo and pack?"* For that reason, it is easy to see that how important brand equity is to the brand

2.2. Brand Awareness

According to Aaker, brand awareness is one of major determinants of brand equity and he stated that it can be referred to as the degree of consumer' familiarity with a brand. According to Keller conceptualized Brand awareness as comprising of brand recall and brand awareness. Keller also stated that the Brand awareness relates to consumers' capacity to verify previous exposure to the brand when given the brand as a cure. In addition he indicates that the Brand

recall relates to consumers' capability to recover brand when given the product category and the needs fulfilled by the category, or some other type of search as a indication (Aaker, 2000 and Keller, 2008).

On the other hand Aaker claims that the brand awareness is the ability of a possible buyer to classify and to bring to mind that a brand is an associate of a certain goods category. He stated that there are three level of brand awareness which are brand recognition, brand recall and top of mind. In following the two authors Rossiter and Percy demonstrated in their research that it is related to the strength of brand clew in memory which allows to consumers to ascertain the brand under dissimilar situations. Finally both authors claim that it is the strength of a brand's existence in the mind of the consumer (Rossiter et al 2000).

2.3. Brand Image

According to Kahle and Kim in the present day 's growing competitive market place, consumers have to make their choice between a variety of product or brands in the market that differ very small in its price or function. They argue that in such situations, their final decision depends on the image they relate with dissimilar brands. Additionally the authors express that the brand image has increased reputation as the feelings and images associated with brand and a well-known and accepted brand image is one of the most important assets a firm possesses (Kahle and Kim, 2006).

Dobni and Zinkhan(1990) sum up Brand image in following factors which are;

- The concept of a brand that is held by the consumer.
- Largely a subjective and perceptual phenomenon that is formed through consumer interpretation, whether reasoned or emotional.
- Not inherent in the technical, functional or physical concerns of the product. Rather, it is affected and moulded by marketing activities, by context variables, and by the characteristics of the perceiver.
- Where brand is concerned, the perception of reality is more important than the reality itself (Dobni and Zinkhan, 1990).

2.4. Brand Associations

In his article Aaker examines the Brand image and he indicates that associations are the key world when analysing literature on brand image. He claims that the building of a brand association is critical to develop the image of a brand and which different brands have different associations to their prospective customers. For example he claims that such kind of relations can provide bases for them to make purchase decisions and even become loyal to the brand. Moreover he indicates that associations towards a brand can create value for the firm and alongside its customers in a number of ways.

In following, similar to Keller, Pitta and Katsanis (1995) also stated that unique, favourable and strong brand image allows the brand to be easily differentiated and positioned in the consumers mind, thereby adding to the possibility of increased brand equity.

According to Keller (1993), Brand associations can be classified into three categories which are attributes, benefits, and attitudes as can be seen from the consumer-based brand equity framework.

On the other hand Aaker (1991) also stated that the furnishes have different types of brand associations, which including product attributes, intangibles, costumer benefits, relative price, use-application, user-customer, celebrity-person, lifestyle-personality, product class, competitors and country-geographic area. The similarity between these types of brand associations and Keller's categories of brand associations is quite clear. These are Brand

image and the role that associations which play in the information of brand image and portrayed graphically.

The finding on outcome Keller implies that attributes refer to the specific characteristics a product has and attributes also can be further categorized into product-related attributes as well as non-product related attributes. This means for product-related attributes, the overall features of the product or service are concerned.

Furthermore another argument about the brands demonstrated by Keller, which he indicates that brands, can be positioned in terms of their unique usage symbolism or representative of consumers who use them. Non-product related attributes *"the aspects of a product that relate to its purchase or consumption are price information, packaging or product appearance information, user imagery, and usage imagery"*.

Lastly Keller argues that the price is a very important factor, for the reason that consumers hold expectations and perceptions about the quality and value of a brand, based on its price and may organize their knowledge of brands according to the price factors. He also points that User- Usage imagery, it could be formed directly from customers' own experiences with brand users or indirectly by means of advertising or by some other source of information such as word of mouth.

An overview of Brand Benefits and in Keller (1993, 1998) study He stated that benefits are another category in brand association and which refers to personal value that consumers attach to brand or product -service based on what they believe the brand could do for them. Benefits can also be classified into three categories according to underlying motivations to which they related: functional, experimental and symbolic benefits. For example function benefits indicate the physical or basic advantages a brand may have.

According to Gabbott and Hogg(1998) brand attitudes are defined as *"consumers' overall evaluations of a brand"* also they incorporate summary evaluations of information which represent how consumers feel in a long run, lying in a continuum from positive to negative. Keller (1993) also indicates that brand images are closely related to how favorably the brand is evaluated. According to Keller the higher the brand approach, the higher the brand image is and he points out that a positive overall brand attitude can be arranged if consumers believe that the brand has attributes that can satisfy their wants and as well as their needs.

2.5. Consumer Behaviour

According to Solomon consumer behaviour is about human responses in a commercial world. He stated that people consume things and also consume and buy these products according to their needs, preferences and buying power and these can be consumable goods, durable goods, speciality goods or, industrial goods. For example he demonstrate this, what we buy, how we buy, where and when we buy, in how much quantity we buy depends on our perception, self concept, social and cultural background and our age and family cycle, our attitudes, beliefs values, motivation, personality, social class and many other factors that are both internal and external to us. While buying, we also regard as whether to buy or not to buy and, from which source or seller to buy (Solomon, 2011).

Furthermore, Solomon indicates that consumer behaviour involves the psychological methods that consumers go through in identifying needs and finding ways to resolve these requirements, through making purchase decisions. For example, he also implies that whether or not to purchase a product and, if so, which brand and where. Other example is that interpret information, make plans, and implement these plans and by engaging in comparison shopping or actually purchasing a product. In addition Solomon defines consumer as the decision-making process and physical activity concerned in acquiring, evaluating, using and disposing of goods and services.

2.5.1. Consumer Buying Decision Process

According to Kotler (2003) in the buying decision process, people play different roles in decision-making process. He claims that it can be divided into five functions which are initiator, influencer, decider, buyer and user as follows.

- Initiator: The person who first suggests the idea of buying the product or service; information may be gathered by this person to help the decision.
- Influencer: The person who attempts to persuade others in the group concerning the outcome of the decision and typically gather information and attempt to impose their choice criteria on the decision.
- Decider: The individual with the power and/or financial authority to make the ultimate choice regarding whether to buy, what to buy, how to buy, or where to buy.
- Buyer: The person who conducts the transaction and makes the actual purchase.
- User: The person who consumes or uses the product or service

Moreover through marketing textbooks and consumer researchers sometimes employ slightly different terms some of the stages, as a result the study of consumer behaviour focuses mainly on these seven stages and how a range of factors influence each stage of consumers' decision.

- Need recognition, problem awareness
- Search for information
- Pre-purchase evaluation of alternatives
- Purchase
- Consumption
- Post-Consumption Evaluation
- Divestment

2.5.2. Characteristics Affecting Consumer Behaviour

Lake indicates that there are various factors influencing the purchases of consumer these are, internal influences and external influences. Lake also claims that the costumer behaviour is influenced by the interaction of interpersonal influences such as cultures, subcultures, household structures, and groups that have an effect on the individual. In addition he states that internal influences come from inside the consumer and they are the personal thoughts and feelings, including perception, self-concept, lifestyle, motivation, emotion, attitudes and intentions. (Lake, 2009).

2.5.2.1. Environmental Influences

- Cultural Factors

In his study Fill indicate that culture factors are essential and he also point out that the culture is part of the *external* influences that impact the consumer and consumer behaviour is deeply influenced by cultural factors such as: buyer culture, subculture, and social class. Fill defines that culture is the most basic cause of a person's wants and behaviour, for him every group or society has a cultural influence on buying behaviour may differ greatly from country to country, or even neighbourhood to neighbourhood. (Fill, 2009). Furthermore he points out that each culture has different subcultures such as religions, nationalities, geographic regions, racial groups.

- Social Factors

Other essential aspect for behaviour of customers is social factors and there is a big impact on this issue of buying behaviour of consumers. One of the important social factors is: reference groups, family, role and status (Kotler and Armstrong, 2008). The affect of reference group which contains potential in forming a person attitude or behaviour varies across products and brands. For example if the product is visible such as dress, shoes, car etc then the influence of

reference groups will be high. Reference groups also include opinion leader (a person who influences other because of his special skill, knowledge or other characteristics).

As to the roles and status, in the society each person possesses different roles and status depending upon the groups, family, clubs, organization etc. to which he/she belongs. The good example specified by the authors that when a woman is working in an organization as finance manager and now she is playing two roles, one of finance manager and other of mother. Therefore her buying decisions will be influenced by her role and status.

- Personal factors

Research has shown that consumer's purchase decisions are also affected by his personal characteristics such as age, sex, and stage in family life-cycle, education, occupation, income, life-style, his overall personality and overall self-concept. (Pickton and Broderick, 2001).

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2.5.2.2. Individual Differences

- Motivation

According to Hoyer, et all., (2009), motivation is defined as "*an inner state of arousal that provides energy needed to achieve goal*". They claim that the motivated consumer is energized, ready and willing to engage in a goal-relevant activity, For example, Hoyer, et all.,(2009)developed a idea that if u learn that a much-anticipated video-game will go on sale next Tuesday, you may be motivated to be at the store early that morning. He argues that consumer can be motivated to engage in behaviours, make decision, or process information, and this motivation can be seen in the context of acquiring, using, or disposing of an offering.

- Perception

According to Kavita Singh (2009) the perception is one of the major psychological factors that influence consumer buying process and is the course of selection and organization of environmental stimuli and interpreting them to provide meaningful experiences for the

perceiver. Additionally, he demonstrates that Perception engages reaching for, obtaining, and processing in order. It is also represents the psychological process whereby people take information from the environment and make sense of their world.

- Attitude and Beliefs

One of his book Ramesh state that attitude can be defined as a mental predisposition-favourable or unfavourable, positive or negative- towards a person, concept, product, brand, service or an idea. Beliefs are mental statements which may be concerned with any facet of life- religion, nation, product or brand. He also claims that it's important to note that attitude and behaviour are separate things. Because an individual has a particular attitude about sometimes does not mean that the individual will act on the attitude (Ramesh, 2008).

In contrast, according to Lamb, et al., (2009), attitudes and beliefs related with values and consumer attitudes are a composite of a consumer's. Lamb defines this factors into 3 concept; first beliefs about, secondly feelings about, and finally behavioural intentions toward some "object"—within the context of marketing, usually a brand, product category, or retail store. These mechanisms are viewed together as they are well interdependent and together represent forces that influence how the consumer will react to the object

2.6. Luxury Goods

LVMH is considered as a luxury brand based on its characteristics. Luxury goods are characterised by exclusivity, premium prices, image and status, which combine to make them desirable for reasons other than function and are usually those which are in the top sector across a variety of products including clothing, jewellery, watches, leather goods, cosmetic, fragrances and other personal goods (Bruce, Moore and Birtwistle, 2004).

Dubois and Duquesne(1993) also demonstrate that people who have privileged economic status are willing to pay exceptionally high prices in order to show off how wealthy they are. He declares that this group of people is reliable with conspicuous consumption model. Through the product quality, aesthetic design, excellence of service of luxury goods, they express their ability to pay premium price. In addition to them, luxury goods companies' brands stand for a standard of excellence.

Finally Bentley and Malefy indicate that people who purchase luxury goods can be grouped into two categories. One is using luxury goods to reveal their wealth and social status. The other group is buying luxury goods to identify themselves. Hence, in the next section, the symbols and meanings of luxury goods will be examined from those two perspectives.

2.6.1. Symbols of Luxury Goods

Show off Wealthy/ Express Social Status

Dubois and Duquesne (1993) express that the rich classes of a society express their economic superiority over the rest by the purchase, and especially the possession of luxury goods which serve as status symbols. Consequently, the authors argue that wealthy people purchase luxury goods not only to show off how wealthy they are, but also to express their social status. Dubois and Duquesne state that there are two consumption patterns therefore can be known as: snobbism and bandwagon.

According to Dubois and Duquesne (1993) people with snobbish behaviour incline to purchase less of the product if others buy it as well. That is to say, people distinguish themselves from others by purchasing certain products. As a consequence, people from wealthy background tend to purchase luxury goods resulting from the snobbish attitude. The authors also affirm that as for people with bandwagon behaviour, they lean to purchase the product because others buy it as well and the majority of this group is from the middle class.

Self-Identity

In their study Bouxirrit and Shin(2005) state that through the possession of luxury goods we can express our social values, sexuality, age, hobbies, and a myriad of other aspects of identify. According to this outcome it is very easy to know that some people purchase luxury products resulting from either satisfying their emotional needs or stating their own values through the symbol carried by luxury brands.

2.6.2. The Concept of Luxury

We can approach a certain idea of modern luxury by looking at the characteristics that are usually attached to recognized luxury brands. According to Kapferer (2005) some of these traits are shared with mass market brands while none of them alone is enough to make a product a luxury good. However, Kapferer claims that a combination of several characteristics is always found in major luxury brands. These are scarcity, quality and price, dream and imagery, long history and creation and novelty.

- Scarcity

In the present day's fast-changing society, the concept of "*abundance*" is more and more passing and the luxury products consumed by the elite soon stop to being considered such. According to Kapferer this has happened with cell phones, a luxury that only a few privileged people could afford before it became popular and turned into a need for almost all. For this reason, the concepts that best define luxury these days are scarcity, uniqueness and exclusivity. Kapferer also state that exclusivity is conveyed, among other things, by selective distribution channels.

- Quality and Price

A high price automatically blocks access to luxury products, generating exclusivity. Kapferer (2005) express that in the consumer's mind, the price is justified and reflects the product's superior quality and high quality of the materials used, technical excellence and the time spent by skilled workers on its fabrication, investment in communication and flawless service. Therefore all of these elements contribute to the feeling of exclusivity, uniqueness and distinction that the consumer gets from purchasing a luxury object.

- Dream and Imagery

Being elite, expensive and perfect will never push a product into the luxury category if it doesn't have an attractive imagery. According Kapferer this trait is what structures the imagination and makes it possible for a brand to have character with the communal unconscious. Moreover the luxury product is inspirational, it is an object of dreams and desired through the values and symbols it conveys. In addition some of this aspiration is created by the inherent product qualities and some of it is copied from the fame and collective aspiration for it. This is why visibility is important and the luxury good must provide some kind of prestige to its owner.

- Long History

The most successful and renowned luxury brands have a long history behind them this point of view express by Kapferer and he assert that major luxury brands all date back to before 1950. According to Kapferer ones linked with high craftsmanship skills (jewellery and watches) all appeared in the 19th century and the fashion brands in the early 20th century. For example, even if some younger brands have managed to make their way into the luxury universe such as, Armani, Versace, and Lacroix. Commonly, there is a link between a brands' prestige and its history. Thus this long history according to Kapferer is transports the customer back to a mysterious, attractive period in the past.

- Creation and Innovation

Some professionals feel that luxury is about constantly creating and innovating. This is particularly true in fashion where innovation is vital. He admits that one of the outcomes is

that luxury brands often create new trends, defining what is fashionable and setting the codes of the moment.

Furthermore, luxury brand's competitive advantage is based on the continuity of the resources and skills it has built up over time. Kapferer demonstrate that to face with imitators, an established luxury brand benefits from four major assets and these are; firstly to its brand capital, built up over time; secondly a critical mass resulting from the scope of its activities such as range of products, stores, worldwide implantation. Thirdly to strong consistency between its products, stores, brand image and history; and finally to tacit knowledge resulting from a long, collective learning process. In a nutshell, it is the company's historically sole culture, one that is rare and unique, which is valued by luxury clients.

2.6.3. Positioning of a Luxury Brand

In his study Okonkwo (2009) state that brand positioning is the brands and all its associations' placement and appreciation in the mind of the consumer. According to Okonkwo the practicalities of brand positioning begin in the consumers mind when they are hit by an expression of the brand. He also declare that luxury brands, and aspiring premium brands, are determined to occupy a position of high-end, expensive, prestigious and well-crafted in the customers mind and this is common for all luxury brands and is easily reached and upheld. Therefore according to him this concept is called the broad level of positioning. For example the brands individual differences such as designs; origin or other unique factors are expressed through the narrow level of positioning. Finally he argue that aim of all this is to have the consumer place the brand in the right place in their mind and consequently facilitate decision making, for example when looking to buy.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN & METHODOLOGY

Once all primary data is gathered from the online questionnaire, they will then be analyzed by using a statistical method with the help of Microsoft Excel. As a result, the data that has been analyzed will be presented in the form of cross tables and figures. In following the previous research that has been gathered from the secondary data will be compared with the statistical analysis in order to find out, if the study has gained any relevance, or if there has been any changes in the field of luxury products that has occurred. Respondents were randomly selected using the random sampling in a population which had an access to the internet. The sample size is split over age, gender, occupation, ethnic origin, average and house hold income. There will be 104 people who will be completing the questionnaire.

A questionnaire was designed based on a case study of LVMH. The questionnaire begins with a brief introduction of survey, and the definition of LVMH. The design of the questionnaire is composed of 3 parts . Part one consists of quantitative questions and contains personal details of respondents including: age, gender, status, occupation and income levels and ethnic origin. Personal details are required for general background of respondents who purchase luxury brand products. The question of how often do respondents purchase luxury items will indicate the personal frequency of purchasing luxury items. Part two consists of quantitative questions for instance, such as 'What influences you into purchasing luxury brand products?', the respondent's perception, attitude and purchase decision of LVMH products. This types of questionnaire are also related to ordinal data; in a form of Likert scale, whereby questions are categorised and ranked on scales, whereby respondents are required to rate their decisions (Waters, 1994) from 1 to 5 (1= strongly agree, 2=agree, 3= neutral, 4= disagree, and 5= strongly disagree). The last part of the questionnaire intended to probe deeply into kind of feeling and emotions that the consumers associated with the LVMH brand. The survey in the form of online questionnaire composed of 16 questions.

4. FINDING AND ANALYSIS

As far as the analysis is concerned, it will be based on the most pertinent quotes, which reveal the viewpoints from respondents respectively. The chapter consists of three sections in which the respondents' backgrounds, the effect of brand image on them and also their opinions of brand are presented and compared. The sample consisted of 102 random voluntary participants collected online. A total of 18 questions were asked to all of these respondents which were specially designed to estimate the behaviour and awareness of these participant to a brand image, especially that of Louis Vuitton- Moet Hennessy.

Individuals are influenced by personal factors such as demographics, which include details of an individual's age, gender, income and education. The surrounding environment and situation also influences the decision making process of the consumers. (Pickton and Broderick, 2001).In order to make the interpretation of data easier and provide insights into the results obtained from data, it is important that the demographic and biographic information of the target population be discussed.

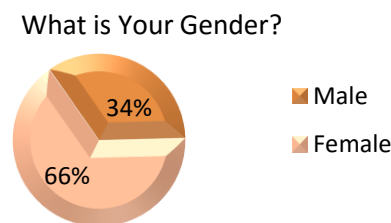
As it mentioned in previous part, the environmental influences on consumer behaviour include culture, social class, personal influences, family and situation. Thus, the question is helpful to learn participants' backgrounds. (Blackwell R.D., Miniard P.W., and Engel J.F. (2001).

Firstly, the personal information of respondents is represented as demographic characteristics. A total of 104 participants participated in this study. Demographic characteristics (i.e., gender, age, personal income, annual household income) of participants were listed by one by.

Dubois and Laurent (1993) investigated the relationship of socio demographic characteristics and luxury brand awareness and purchase in five European countries. Income, education and occupation were most strongly and consistently associated with luxury brand purchase across the five countries. Age, gender, marital status, and location of residence (urban, rural etc.) showed no or only a weak relationship.

At first, the survey indicated the gender of the respondents to predict and estimate the variance in degree of brand awareness between men and women.

Figure 1: Gender Of The Participants



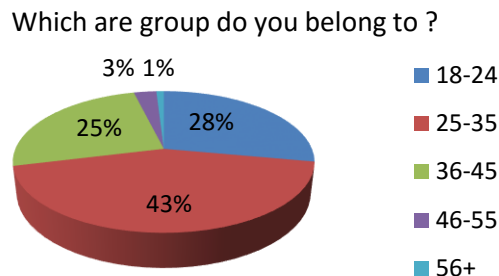
Source: Created by the Researcher (2011)

Figure 1 shows that 104 respondents answered and most of the them are female (66%), which there is an 32% difference in comparison to the male respondents (34%). There was no missing data for these variables.

People in different age groups have different opinions, perception and motives towards luxury products that is why they behave differently. Respondents were asked about the age group they belonged. This helped to understand how people of a certain age group react and perceived a brand image. The various age groups considered are listed below: 18-24; 25-35; 36-45; 46-55 and 56+

The respondents come from a wide range of age groups. Participants' ages ranged from 18 to over 56 and the major part of them were 25 to 35 years old, 50% and 35% of respondents represented the age group of between 18 and 24. A considerably low percentage of 15% of respondents belonged to age group of over 45 years old.

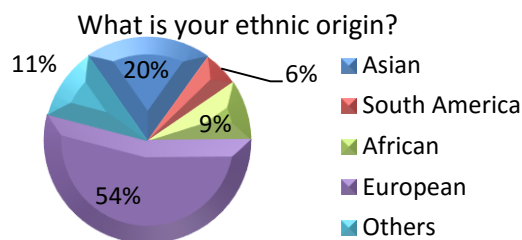
Figure 2: Which Of The Following Age Categories Do You Currently Fall Under ?



Source: Created by the Researcher (2011)

The ethnic origin of consumer can play efficient role as a deciding factor when it comes to product evaluate and brand awareness. The respondents from different ethnic origin have been applied to this study. Thus, the findings reflected a broader view of consumer behaviour towards the perception of brand image and culture differences. The respondents were thus asked their ethnic origin with a purpose to study their perception of brand image.

Figure 3: Shows The Answer Of The Respondents To The Question Of Ethnic Origin.

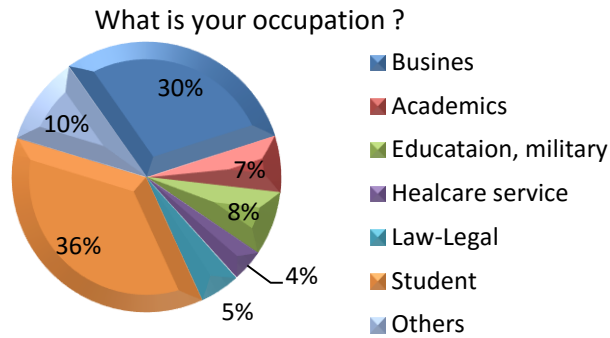


Source: Created by the researcher (2011)

The amount of respondents who answered the questionnaire was not equally balanced in terms of ethnic origin. The largest percentage of ethnic origin was Europe (54%) and 11% from Asia. However, 25.5 % of the respondents were from others countries and 6% of them were from South America. *Luxury* goods were defined high-end *products* and services that are expensive.

Therefore the importance of occupation in decision buying process cannot be underestimated. Occupational needs also create a demand for certain quality of product and brand. Luxury brand awareness and purchase is more likely to be connected with income and occupation. In this part, respondents were asked to select the occupation status from the following list of occupations.

Figure 4: Occupational Split Of The Respondents

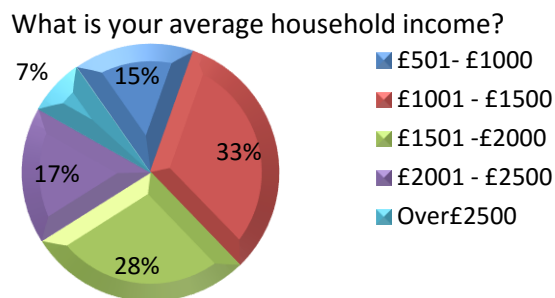


Source: Created by the researcher (2011)

Figure 4 shows the various occupations that represented in terms of the occupation, the majority of respondents (36%) were students and participants were working in the field of business which is 30%, followed by education and military service 8%. 6% of the respondents were working in other professions while 7% were academics. 4% of the respondents were working in healthcare service and 5% were from law and legal services.

As it has been mentioned in literature review, Luxury goods are premium goods with high quality products. Dubois and Duquesne (1993). Consumer's position in a society with income level is the indicators of person's social class and income is seen as a factor that constraints individuals in pleasing their consumption needs. Therefore, income can be significant determinant to consumer's consumption attitude, purchasing behaviour and decision process. In other words, most of the people consuming luxury goods are from high income groups and consumers purchasing decision can be influenced from their average household income. From this perspective it makes sense to apply income level as the criteria. Accordingly, the respondents were asked to select their average household income from the following range. (£500 to £1000-£1001 to £1500-£1501 to £2000-£2001 to £2500-Over £2500).

Figure 5: Split Of Household Income

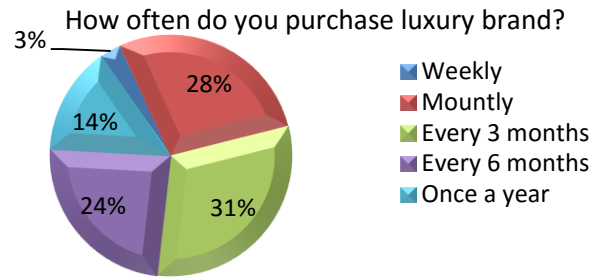


Source: Created by the researcher (2011)

Figure 5 shows the percentage split of the respondents as per their household income. Most participants' annual household income was £1001 – £1500 (33%). 28% of the respondents belonged to the income range of £1501- £2000 while 17% of the respondents represented the income group of £2001- £2500. The percentage of respondents belonging to the income group of £500- £1000 was 15% and over £2500 was 7%. Out of the 104 employees, 2 respondents did not indicate their income.

The next question investigated the frequency of luxury purchase. The question of how often do respondents purchase luxury items indicates the personal frequency of purchasing luxury items.

Figure 6: Frequency Of Luxury Consumption



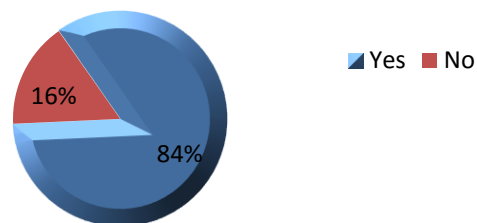
Source: Created by the researcher (2011)

Figure 6 displays the frequency of luxury consumption. This can be described as need recognition. Regarding to frequency of purchasing, the majority of respondents purchasing luxury brand products are monthly and every 3 months. The 31% of respondents purchase a luxury product every 3 months (40%) followed by every months (28%), every 6 months (24%) and once a year (14%) and weekly (5%).

As it has been in literature review part, brand familiarity is one of the variables closely related to brand image and would also influence consumer' perception of the brand image. In this question, respondents were asked to indicate whether or not they had heard of LVMH brand. If consumers are more sensitive to or familiar with a certain apparel brand, they are more likely to purchase the products of the brand..

Figure 7: Split Of Respondents Familiar And Unfamiliar With LVMH Brand

Are you familiar with the brand LVMH (Louis Vuitton- Moet Hennessy) ?



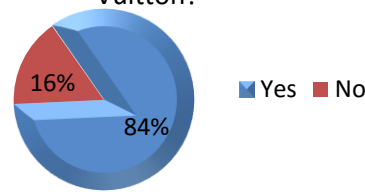
Source: Created by the researcher (2011)

Figure 7 shows that from the responses, it has been found out that LVMH achieved higher brand awareness. It can be said that LVMH conveniently located in the mind of people. The majority of respondents in the survey, very familiar with LVMH brand. Although LVMH has split over into everyday commerce, there are still 4 respondents that have no ideas about LVMH. Out of the total 100 respondents, 4 were not familiar with LVMH brand. Therefore the remaining 94 respondents that familiar with the brand answered the rest of questions. They answered questions regarding their awareness of LVMH and their general attitude towards luxury.

The respondents were asked if they used any of the products under LVMH brand name. 100 respondents have been participated. 16 % of those respondents have not used LVMH products yet while 84% of respondents used a LVMH product. It indicates that a large a large number of respondents participated not only were familiar with various brands under LVMH name, they also were using the range of product of LVMH.

Figure 8: The Percentage Of Using Of LVMH

Do you buy luxury branded product, such as Louis Vuitton?

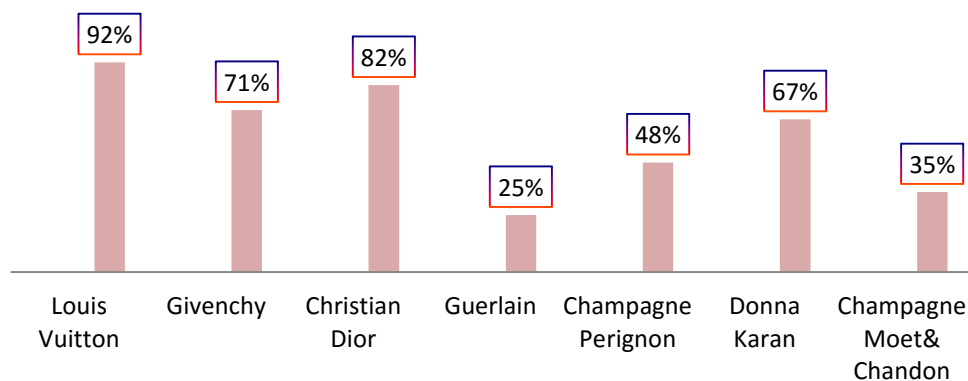


Source: Created by the researcher (2011)

As seen above the most of the customer was aware of LVMH and purchase its products. In the literature review, Keller claimed that brand awareness is created by increasing the brand familiarity .LVMH possesses a unique portfolio of some 60 prestigious brands in five different sectors. The respondents were asked whether or not they were aware of the others brands that marketed under LVMH brand. This information enables an understanding of the degree of familiarity with the various brands under LVMH’s brand name. They were also asked to specify the others which were not identified in the following list: Louis Vuitton ; Givenchy; Christian Dior; Guerlain; Champagne Don Perignon; Donna Karan, Champagne Moet&Chandon.

Figure 9. Summaries The Respondents’ Answers To Whether They Were Aware Of These Brands Under The Name Of LVMH

Which of the following brands do you know under the LVMH's brand range?



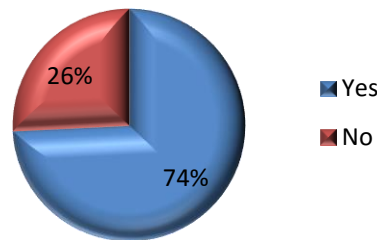
Source: Created by the researcher (2011)

Figure 9 summaries the respondents answer to whether they were aware of these brands under the brand name of LVMH. According to respondents, 92% of them were familiar with the Louis Vuitton brand name while 82% were familiar with Christioan Dior. 71% of the respondents were familiar with Givenchy and while 67% were familiar Donna Karan. The other brands of Champagne Dorn Perignon, Guerlian and Champagne Moet&Chandon were the brands with least familiarity of 48%, 25% and 35% respectively with the respondents. To sum up, the respondents have a varying degree of familiarity with the brands under the LVMH’s brand name.

In the coming question, in order to investigate the influence of the brand image on consumer behaviour, respondents were asked whether brand image would affect in their decision to purchase a LVMH product. As mentioned previously in chapter two, brand image is defined as the set of beliefs held about a particular brand in consumers’ mind (Kotler, 2000) and hence it could have a beneficial or detrimental effect on customers’ buying decisions.

Figure 10: Affect of Brand Image On The Decision To Buy LVMH Product

Does the brand image affect your decision to buy any Louis Vuitton- Moet Hennessy product?



Source: Created by the researcher (2011)

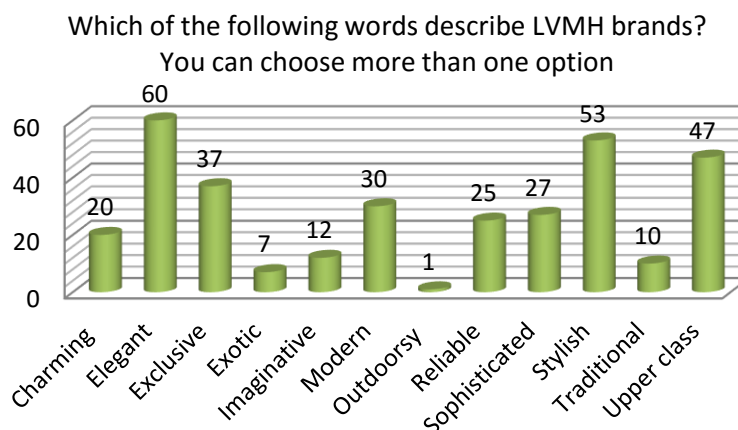
Figure 10 shows that 74 per cent stated that brand image plays critical role in their decision process to buy a product whereas 26 per cent indicated that brand image does not affect their decision to buy a product. 3 of respondents did not answer this question. The respondents who thought that brand image has positive affects their final decision were asked about the reasons why brand image affected their final decision to buy LVMH product.

Respondents described their views as follows: Status Symbol; High quality; Style; Well-known; Prestige; Fashionable; Higher societal image; Respectability; Premium Price; Standing behind of the product in case of any problem; Brand trust.

The personal, social and psychological were important factors that played a role in consumers' perception. In this question, respondents were given a choice of 12 image descriptor related to luxury brand. Each of the respondents was asked to describe views, concerning their feelings towards LVMH in one or a few words. The various options associated with luxury brand have been arranged such as charming, elegant, exclusive, exotic, imaginative, modern, outdoorsy, reliable, sophisticated, stylish, and traditional and upper class. They were asked to mark multiple answers from these options in order to match of their personal image of LVMH.

The answers that were received by respondents for LVMH were given below.

Figure 11: Description of LVMH Brands



Source: Created by the researcher (2011)

Figure 11 shown above, most of them mentioned these criteria at once. 60% of the respondents stated that LVMH products were elegant. The majority (47%) of the respondents termed LVHMH brand as upper class whereas 37% thought that LVMH was exclusive. For 53% of respondents stylish means LVMH. 20 % of the respondents believed that LVMH brands were charming. Whereas 10 per cent of the participants referred to LVMH as traditional, only

30 per cent indicated it is modern. 25% of respondents defined LVMH brand were reliable. 27% of them believed that LVMH was sophisticated.

This stage covers in-depth questions about their views to luxury brand image. Main issues covered in the literature, including brand and brand equity. This questions attempts to find out the criteria of choosing LVMH product. As it has been mentioned in previous part, Keller stated that brand image as perceptions about a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in consumer memory. This image may appeal to consumers at a functional or symbolic level. Brand feelings are customers' emotional responses and reaction with respect to brand and are the most important factor in making purchase intention. They want to buy products that can provide them with the most possible benefits that will satisfy their physical and emotional desires (Nueno and Quelch, 1998).For instance, needs for self-expression and social identification are based on subjective criteria feelings. Respondents were asked to determine how well each of these feelings fitted to the brand they been associated with. They ranked their feelings from least important to very important.

Figure 12: Feelings Associated With LVMH



Source: Created by the researcher (2011)

Figure 12 summarises their responses. The majority of respondents (4.62) associated a feeling of safety and comfort with the LVMH brands. The feeling of self respect was (4.11) while excitement associated with the brand (4.05). Social approval was (3.90), followed by fun (3.70). It can be said that Louis Vuitton-Moet Hennessy generates a variety of feeling within the respondents which relate to a strong sense of association with the brand.

The respondents were asked to rate the level of importance factors when buying LVMH brands as opposed to other luxury brands.

Past experience with the brand; Whether is known, well-advertised; Quality; Satisfaction; Its name or logo; Country image; Premium price; Recommendation; and Style, colour, durability

Figure 13: important factors affecting the decision to buy LVMH product against other luxury brands. Thinking of the brand, which of things on this list are / would be most important to you in deciding to buy compared to other luxury brands? (Rate from least important to very important? You may choose more than one).

Table 1. Factors Of Buying LVMH Products

	Least important	Less important	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very Important	Rating Average
Past experience with the brand	6.5%	2.2%	7.5%	16.1%	35.5%	32.35%	4.69
Whether is well known, well- advertised	5.6%	11.1%	10.4%	16.7%	24.4%	31.8%	4.87
Quality	3.2%	1.1%	3.2%	6.3%	24.2%	62.1%	5.34
Satisfaction	2.2%	3.2%	3.2%	7.5%	33.3%	50.5%	5.18
Its name or logo	5.6%	3.4%	22.5%	22.5%	29.2%	16.9%	4.17
Country image	7.6%	8.7%	21.7%	28.3%	22.8%	10.9%	3.83
Premium Price	3.3%	3.3%	13.3%	33.3%	28.9%	17.8%	4.34
Recommendation	5.6%	5.6%	11.2%	29.2%	36.0%	12.4%	4.21
Style, Colour, Durability	4.3%	1.1%	0.0%	8.7%	33.7%	52.2%	5.23

Source: Created by the researcher (2011)

The respondents were asked about the main factors of buying LVMH luxury products. The first question was brand positioning related question .A brand is positioned depending on a consumer's previous experience. The previous experience could be the knowledge of product, earlier promotion of the brand and also other events that occur in an individual's life. The behaviour of individuals seem to vary depending on their past experience as everyone has different set of events that take place in their life. Thus an individual's perception of a symbol or sign will vary depending on some previously related experience. The majority of respondents highlighted the importance of past experience (4.69).

The other factor related brand equity, a well-known brand name and logo associated with a brand image creates competitive advantages. LVMH represent certain symbol for its customers. According to respondents, the name and logo (4.11) was the important factor in deciding to buy a LVMH product against other luxury brands.

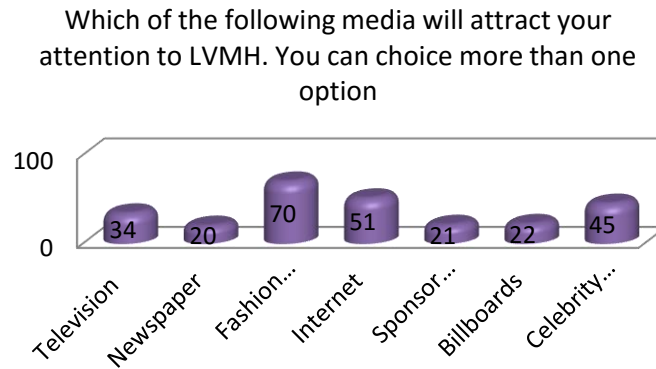
Brand associations are extremely important as they were defined in literature review. With regard to this, most of respondents found that Satisfaction (5.18) is one of the key factors for them to consider when buying luxury goods.

As discussed before, luxury goods have been defined as premium goods with high product quality, artistic design, and excellence service. The quality of LVMH products and its design were the main factors affecting the decision to buy a LVMH product. This shows that quality and design of LVMH product greatly influence consumer to buy LVMH products.

Perception of respondents towards country-of-origin was not efficient factor affecting in deciding whether or not to buy an LVMH product (3.83) while most of respondents regard the product is well known and well advertised.

The following question was asked to respondents about media that would be attracting their attention to the LVMH and its products. In order to increase the publicity, the brands need to become more aware among the consumers. As mentioned in the literature review, Advertising is a power full tool for raising brand awareness and could be some useful tools for raising brand awareness. It is found that advertisement attitude is attributable to the influence on brand attitudes, affecting consumer's intention to purchase. This issue was examined through asking the question, which of the following media will attract your attention to LVMH. There are mainly some ways for the respondents to learn about the brands, including television, newspaper, fashion magazines, internet, sponsor activities, billboards, celebrity advertising.

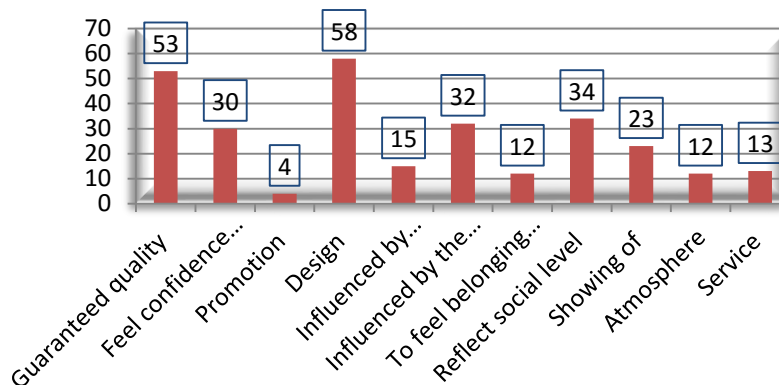
Figure 13: Preferred Media To Attract Attention Of Consumers



Source: Created by the researcher (2011)

Among these respondents, 70% of respondents have stated that the advertisement in fashion magazine influences them into purchasing luxury products. . 51% expressed that they had been affected by internet advertising. Also, the use of celebrities on advertisement encourages them into purchase luxury brand products. 40%of them mentioned that they became more aware of the brands through the celebrities in the advertisements in which they could associate the brand image with the celebrities The respondents agreed to the role of advertising using television (34%) and billboards (22%) as the next mediums which would attract the attention of the participants. Advertising in newspaper were the second to last medium identified by the participants that would attract their attention whereas advertising using sponsorship events had the least likelihood of 21% to attraction of respondents. As a result, the most preferred medium to attract the participants' attention was through fashion magazines and the least preferred one was sponsorship events. In order to get a deeper understanding the characteristics affecting consumer behaviour towards luxury product, respondents were asked to identify their purchasing purpose of luxury goods. According to CDP model mentioned previously in literature review, consumer decision process is affected mostly by two reasons which are individual differences and environmental influences.

Figure 14: Purchasing purpose of LVMH luxury goods



Source: Created by the researcher (2011)

Luxury brands are made of good quality materials and have unique accessories with unique design, One hundred respondents were asked to describe why they buy LVMH product with regard to luxury purchase motivation. For the majority of the consumers "design" is the first buying motive with 58 percentages. Reflect social level is the other important motivations when to decide for buying luxury goods with 34 percentage. In addition service and promotion of the luxury product are not very effective motivations for consumers with 7 and

4 percentage. 60% of the buyers strongly agree that they buy LVMH for its guaranteed quality.

Moreover, luxuries attracted a large segment due to their unique designs and limited amount of pieces. Consumers are looking for "something that is going to make them feel unique by making a distinction from other people. %34 of respondents stated that using and owning luxury products helps to build on an individuals' social image. Their purpose in buying LVMH products was associated luxuries with wealth and social image, where these meanings are promoted through luxury symbols.%32 of respondents believed that LVMH get their attention by using celebrities in advertisement. Media and celebrity affected them into purchasing LVMH products.

Another interesting feature lies in the purchasing purpose was the effect of friends. As it mentioned previously, consumers are generally influenced by a variety of outside elements. 12 of them have the same motivational factors in buying LVMH luxury goods. They believed that opinions of friends and relatives had a significant impact on the respondents' purpose in buying LVMH products.

As it mentioned previously, with regard to bandwagon effect, consumers buy goods because it conforms to a social group. It was also seen that consumers did want to fit into a certain part of the society with the usage of certain brands, as LVMH had formed strong positions in the mind of people. %12 of respondents agree that feeling to a group had impact in their buying LVMH goods while 30% them indicated when using LVMH they felt confidence.

The second part of the questionnaire asked the respondents the rank the degree with which they agree with a given statement about LVMH. These statements attempts to determine respondents' perception of brand, their attitudes towards brands and how they perceive the price-quality relationship of LVMH. The statements and the responses to these specific are discussed in greater detail below. Out of 100 respondents, 9 respondents choose not to answer these questions.

Table 2. Opinions on the brand of LVMH

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
LVMH comes to my mind at first when luxury is mentioned	2	7	13	42	36
Symbol of the brand can built recognition to me	2	4	9	41	43
LVMH is different from other luxury brands	1	9	19	40	31
Use of LVMH brands can express my personality	13	20	31	21	15
LVMH is for people who want to stand out in a crowd	8	16	27	35	14
The people I admire and respect use this brand	17	26	32	16	9
I have a clear impression of the type of people who consume this brand	9	16	28	34	13
The value of this brand give me confidence to its Product	2	3	5	56	34
LVMH provides good value for money	7	12	20	45	16
LVMH is symbol of innovative design	4	7	33	41	15
I can purchase when LVMH launches new product	9	16	40	25	10
LVMH gets my attention by using celebrities in their advertisement	7	8	28	35	22
The opinion that the outside world (customers, media, public) has about LVMH is important for me	9	10	32	29	20
I prefer to buy products available in a limited edition	11	16	26	30	17

Source: Created by the researcher (2011)

Question 1 was brand equity- related questions. As mentioned in the literature, Brand awareness is one the major determinants of brand equity. It can be referred to as the degree of consumer's familiarity with a brand. These questions were to find out whether brand

equity is an important when buying LVMH products. A majority of the respondents (%78) agree that LVMH come to their mind at first when luxury is mentioned.

This question focused on logos, an important element of brand and design. 84% of the respondents agree that Symbol of LVMH brand can built recognition to them. This question has attempted to identify the influence of consumer values on luxury goods focusing on brand logos. Brand names and brand logos of luxury goods significantly influence to consumer buying behaviour. 71 of the participants indicated LVMH was different from others luxury brands, while 19% of them had neutral response to the question.

The question regarding to factors that motivate and influence consumers' luxury purchases was the Use of LVMH brands can express my personality. As stated in the literature, personal values can be argued as the fundamental determinants in affecting consumer's attitudes and behaviours and some people buy luxury products resulting from either fulfilling their emotional needs or stating their own values through the symbol carried by luxury brands.

The questionnaire findings revealed that all 36% of the respondents agreed that one of the motivators that led them purchase luxury product, was need to express their personality and style. The reason that consumers choose luxury product lies mainly on the unique design that luxuries provide, which matches to their personalities and styles. 31% of the respondents were not able to make up their mind. Attitudes towards LVMH goods,49% of the respondents were of the view that LVMH goods help them to stand out in the crowd whereas 24% of them disagreed. They buy luxury goods for conspicuousness.

As it mentioned before, reference group has an impact on consumer purchasing decision. Respondents were asked them if the people they admired and respected used LVMH products, 25% of respondents agreed this, whereas a majority of respondents (45%) were disagree. 27% of them did not mention their views about this.47% of the respondents were of the people who had a clear impression of the people who used LVMH brand, while 25% disagreed and 32% had neutral views towards it.

In this question it has been intended to investigate whether brand image is an important criterion for consumers to choose its product to purchase.90% of respondents did show an inclination towards the value of LVMH brand image gives them confidence to buy its products while 5% disagreed with this. When the respondents were asked if LVMH brand provided value for money, 61% of respondents agreed whereas 19% of respondents were disagreed. Consumers may have a positive effect in viewing celebrities associated to luxury brand products. As in the case of LVMH adverts, most of the respondents recognized the model used in the advert as Uma Thurman, Jennifer Lopez and Scarlet Johansen. 57% of respondents agreed that celebrities in LVMH advertisement were an efficient way to affect consumer to buy luxury goods.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

This study basically focused on understanding the relationship between brand image and the luxury goods of LVMH. Briefly, this study can be summarized as follows: the first chapter brought out the research idea and the objectives of study that enveloped the basic rationale behind the study. Secondly, theories behind the luxury industry and complex multi factor consumer behaviour have been described. The determining factors for luxury purchasing have been examined and it revealed some insight in the effect of brand image on consumer behaviour. In following part described the methods and methodology adopted to investigate the research objectives of this study. The survey question was designed and personal and psychological influence was analysed by survey result. With the responses that obtained from 104 participants, the main research problem of this study has been answered.

Consumer behaviour is the study of when, why, how and where people do or do not buy products. It studies characteristics of individual consumer such as demographics and behavioural variables in an attempt to understand people's wants. It also tries to assess influence on the consumer from groups such as family, friends, reference group, and society in general. As mentioned in literature review, the relationship between consumer behaviour and luxury industry is both simplistic and complicated. The study's aim was to reveal which are the motivators and influence that affect the consumer's purchasing behaviour. We found a number of factors such as social, cultural, personal and psychological. While the consumer attitude towards these high priced upmarket LVMH goods is influenced by demographics like age and sex of the consumer. Social, cultural and psychological influence strongly affects consumer behaviour which can be summarized as income and wealth, the role of family.

According to our study, respondents that were asked participate in the survey were very familiar with LVMH. It can be seen that a majority (96%) of the respondents in the survey were aware of the brand. One advantage of this was to get trustworthy answers from our respondents. LVMH appears to be more popular in the mind of respondents. Our findings suggest that all respondents regard product quality, style, price, satisfaction and past experience with the brand as their most important criteria for deciding to buy luxury brand. From this study, it can be said that LVMH is an excellent example of having brand image on consumer behaviour. Respondents have a certain brand image for LVMH, based on their attitudes, the associations they have with the brand and perception regarding certain of LVMH.

The brand image that respondents have of LVMH could be related brand association and their brand descriptions. The associations between and memory of respondents was investigated. All respondents could recall some positive aspect of their favourite brands at once.

The literature showed that luxury goods provide private for consumers and symbolize social codes. Consumers behaviour regarding luxury goods is thus the result of social and self expression motivations. Some of the respondents in the survey indicated that they possess luxury goods to show their status. Therefore it could be seen that the image of using luxury goods is perceived as show-off wealth and social status for some consumer. To summarise, luxury brands play an important role in consumer purchasing decision. According to primary and secondary data, main findings of the result suggest that the brand image has a significant power of creating a product or wiping it from consumers market.

The recommendation of this article briefly can be concluded as follows;

In the recent years, the luxury goods industry has grown competitively with a high level of innovation improving non-price completion factors such as services and quality, for this reason there should be careful attention to the various target audience of these luxury brands. Luxury brands are often imitated on a large scale and sold as counterfeits and thus counterfeit products might create a pricing upheaval in the market where the same brands is available at the cheaper price. LVMH and others luxury brands such as Prada, Gucci and etc., should take strong stands against such counterfeiting by running an anti-piracy campaign. The consumer would have a dominating tendency of buying the lesser priced associated with the same level of prestige status and pride. Understanding the consumer's motivations factors towards luxury products would help marketer to develop marketing strategies.

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