Conceptualizing country-of-ingredient authenticity of luxury brands

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A B S T R A C T

The research investigates the influence of country-of-ingredient authenticity towards product judgement and ultimately how the construct influences the willingness to buy and recommend luxury branded products. This research is divided into 2 studies where the methodology takes on a $2 \times 2 \times 2$ experimental research design looking at the raw materials acquired to craft Alpaca wool sweaters from brand and country of origin (COO) such as Prada (Made in Peru), Prada (Made in Italy) and Touchè (Made in Peru) and artisan skills used for Chikan-embroidered dresses from Prada (Made in India), Prada (Made in Italy) and Touchè (Made in India). Some findings indicate that Alpaca wool sweater 'made in Peru' does improve consumers' judgment of the branded product however country image and brand image played a part in authenticating the Chikan-embroidery that is 'made in India'. Sustainable and ethical practices also positively improve product judgement of the products.

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1. Introduction

Some consumers are now moving towards an authentic country perspective of ingredient branding. The concept of ingredient branding is arguably a powerful marketing strategy used by high quality branded exports and more recently luxury branded products in order to justify low country image perceptions as trade-offs for high quality raw materials or expert artisan techniques (Anholt, 2003; Kim, Shin, Cheng, Lennon, & Liu, 2015). Therefore, conducting research can be important for understanding how the effects of authenticity in ingredient branding, craftsmanship and ethical sustainability can become a more epigrammatic style of decision making involving COO cues.

The present study investigates the consumer's need for ingredient authenticity and its influence on product judgment as well as consumer's willingness to buy and recommend luxury branded products that are of multi-country affiliations. The study answers these issues using the following three key research objectives: (1) examining the concept of authenticity in ingredient branding; (2) modelling the antecedents and moderator of ingredient authenticity and relating that construct to product judgment and brand attachment; and (3) measuring the influence of ingredient authenticity on consumer's willingness to buy and recommend luxury branded products.

This research adds to the literature on country of origin (COO) effects in several ways. First, by drawing upon congruency theories, attachment theory and the brand strength hypothesis, the research develops a theoretical framework with the relevant sociological and psychological theories to rationalise consumer's behaviours, specifically showing how and why individual needs for authenticity in ingredient branding enhances product judgment, brand attachment as well as their impacts on willingness to buy and to recommend on luxury branded products (Perrouty, d'Hauteville, & Lockshin, 2006). Second, the research adds further understanding of how marketers can enhance brand attachment to a specific brand by manipulating the COO cues in relation to ingredient branding (Newman & Dhar, 2014). Third, past studies do not explicitly examine closely the relationship between ingredient branding and its corresponding COO image perceptions (Anholt, 2003; Kim et al., 2015). While past research on authenticity and COO has focused on certain antecedents relating to consumer personality traits and in other specific contexts, the model developed for this research examines consumer's need for ingredient authenticity as three congruent factors in order to explain consumer's product judgment, brand attachment and their buying intentions.

2. Conceptual background and hypotheses development

The adoption of schema congruity theory is useful particularly in understanding how a country's information affects the evaluation of its products (Fiske & Linville, 1980). COO is as a form of stereotype that simplifies information processing and subsequently reducing risk-aversion to assist in the purchase decision (Anholt, 2003; Kim et al., 2015). As consumers evaluate branded products originating from a particular country with ingredients branded or sourced from another country, they will draw on existing knowledge or pre-existing beliefs of that country which in turn affects their perception that results in the evaluation of the overall "product category" of that particular country. Therefore, a positive level of congruency is usually achieved when a

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comparable fit is found between the country perceptions of the ingredient authenticity and the country of brand (Newman & Dhar, 2014).

However, a comparable fit is not always found or easily recognized especially when material, craftsmanship or ingredient are sourced from a developing or less developed country, for example, 'a made in France' Louis Vuitton Pashmina Coat with the key material Pashmina wool originating from Tibet. While the quality and aesthetic dimensions do not suffer from the economic development of the country and in most cases are proven to be superior, it creates a less optimistic view of the branded product when pre-existing schemas and knowledge are to be challenged and built. Therefore, this is an opportunity for companies and brands to choose and identify with the strength of the countries whose raw materials, artisan skills and sustainable and ethical practices are deemed to be synonymous in terms of superiority and authenticity in relation to the country it is known for, regardless of the country's image.

Individuals can form emotional attachments to brands (Thomson, MacInnis, & Park, 2005), and that an emotional attachment to a brand will predict their level of commitment. Thus, a relevant indicator of commitment is the extent to which the individual remains loyal to the brand that encompasses the strength of emotional attachment or investment towards the branded product. To this extent, a valid measure of brand attachment should predict consumer's investment in a brand, such as their willingness to buy or willingness to pay a price premium to obtain it (Thomson et al., 2005). According to the brand strength hypothesis, significant brand-by-country-of-origin interaction effects exist. In this regard, brand strength hypothesis supports the notion that COO effect will tend to work in the favour of and be stronger for branded products with a brand that is less known compared to a brand that is better known (Perrouty et al., 2006). Fig. 1 presents the conceptual framework.

2.1. Country image and ingredient branding

Country macro and micro images affect perceived product quality differently, depending on the product category (Pappu, Quester, & Cooksey, 2007). While the economy has waned in recent times, France associates with prestige luxury and has a high country image in terms of luxury branded goods, agriculture and tourism hospitality. In comparison, Sri Lanka has a low country image in terms of economic development is however still highly regarded and sought after for its "world class" tea (Shimp, Samiee, & Madden, 1993). Consequently, the distinction between low country image and high country image is blurred when each country is well known for different products and

specialties (e.g. France for luxury, Sri Lanka for tea) regardless of its economic stability (Pappu et al., 2007). With the increase of hybrid/bi-national products (Andersen & Chao, 2003), the recognition of a product's origins beyond the "made-in" cue has procured new avenues emphasizing ingredient branding as an important consideration and cue in consumer product evaluation.

2.2. Consumer's need for ingredient authenticity

Consumer's need for authenticity in acquiring luxury brands is a topic within luxury branding literature that is garnering attention over the last decade (Liapati, Assiouras, & Decaudin, 2015; Napoli, Dickinson, & Beverland, 2012). Luxury branded products are perceived by consumers to be handmade or manufactured by artisans (Beverland, 2005, 2006) using time honoured traditions (Postrel, 2003), and/or natural ingredients (Han & Stoel, 2016; Miller-Spillman, Lee, Graham, & Cho, 2016). Luxury brands with a long standing culmination of history, traditional cultures, regions and beliefs can exude a distinct uniqueness and nostalgic impression that adds to its authenticity (Han & Stoel, 2016; Napoli et al., 2012; Postrel, 2003). Therefore, this research conceptualises consumer's need for ingredient authenticity and defined it as a set of generic consumer characteristics or traits (that is to seek, peruse or consume) products and or services that is deemed to be superior, authentic, and synonymous to a specific location in the pursuit of one's self-image and social standing (Napoli et al., 2012). More importantly, a strong ingredient brand from a favourable image country can elevate the perceptions of a brand from an unfavourable image country.

The findings in the prior studies support development of the following hypotheses.

H1. Authenticity of raw materials has a positive effect on product judgment of luxury branded products.

H2. Authenticity of artisan skills has a positive effect on product judgment of luxury branded products.

H3. Authenticity of sustainable/ethical practices has a positive effect on product judgment of luxury branded products.

H4. Product judgement of luxury branded products has a positive effect on consumer willingness to buy luxury branded products.

H5. Product judgment of luxury branded products has a positive effect on consumer willingness to recommend luxury branded products.

H6. Consumer willingness to recommend luxury branded products has a positive effect on consumer willingness to buy luxury branded products. [All these hypotheses are shallow. The study needs consider (model) contrarian cases that occur in your set of data. For example, authenticity has a negative effect on judgments for some consumers. You need to go beyond the NHST—go beyond testing against the null hypothesis.]

2.3. Brand attachment

"Brand attachment" is the strength of the relationship between the brand and the consumer self (Thomson et al., 2005). Some consumers who have high attachments or emotionally bonds to a brand are more motivated to expend resources (Thomson et al., 2005) and are more likely to make a favourable purchase decision. Therefore, this research expects an individual's attachment to a brand will moderate their product judgment and willingness to buy and recommend a branded product. More specifically, the effect of favourable product judgement towards willingness to buy and recommend a branded product should be relatively stronger for a well-known brand, regardless of country and image perceptions (Pappu et al., 2007).
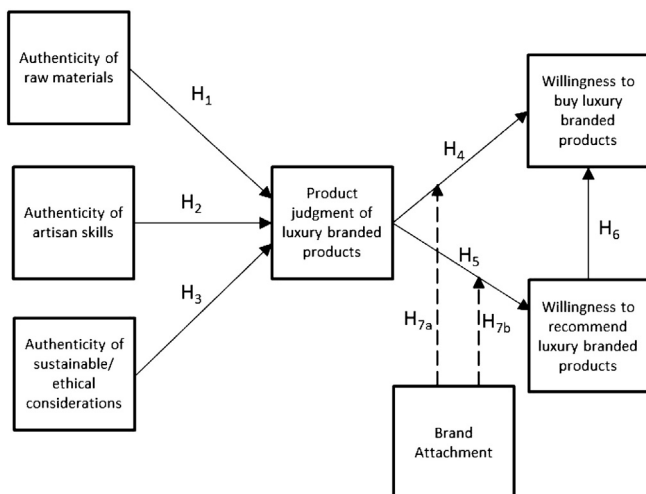

Fig. 1. Conceptual Model.

The decision informs the H7a and H7b.

H7a. Brand attachment moderate the relationship between product judgment of luxury branded products and consumer willingness to buy luxury branded products.

H7b. Brand attachment moderate the relationship between product judgment of luxury branded products and consumer willingness to recommend luxury branded products.

3. Method and analysis

An experimental fixed-factor $2 \times 2 \times 2$ between subjects factorial research design was developed. The three research components were two brand images (Prada and Touché), two types of ingredient authenticity (raw materials and artisan skills) and two levels of COO images (Italy and India/Peru). The decision to use luxury branded apparel is based on three precepts. Firstly, the branded products involved portray the very important components of artisan skills and raw material craftsmanship. For instance, India produces the unique and rare skill of Chikan embroidery (dress), while in Peru Alpaca wool is harvested to make high quality sweaters. Secondly, the branded products allow for an in-depth comparison between high and low COO images as part of the ingredient branding concept. In this case, India and Peru are position as low COO image, while Italy is position as a high COO image. Thirdly, the brand "Prada" is a real luxury brand and is of relative interest to the subject pool used, thus contributing to the ecological validity within the research framework. Furthermore, the fictitious brand "Touché" acts as a control for brand effects in determining whether consumer's need for ingredient authenticity is triggered due to a well-known brand name or the specific ingredient branding, regardless of the brand image or effects.

3.1. Data collection

Data were collected using a mall intercept method in downtown Perth, Western Australia. Trained interviewers were given instructions to approach every 5th shopper to cross a designated spot to participate in a self-administered questionnaire. The survey instrument was developed using established scales such as consumer's need for ingredient authenticity (10-item scale by Napoli et al., 2012), consumer judgment towards branded products (a 6-item scale by Wood & Darling, 1993), consumer willingness to buy (a 6-item scale by Bower & Landreth, 2001), consumer willingness to recommend (a 3-item scale by Maxham & Netemeyer, 2003) and brand attachment (a 4-item scale by Park, MacInnis, Priester, Eisingerich, & Lacobucci, 2010). All items are measured on a seven-point Likert scale with 1 representing "strongly disagree" and 7 representing "strongly agree".

4. Results and analysis

4.1. Model testing

The analysis of the research utilized both structural equation modelling (SEM) techniques and statistical methods. Cronbach α was used to establish the reliability of the constructs and discriminant validity of the measurement model was also tested. The model specification to assess the fit of the multi-item scales was conducted through latent variable SEM analysis. The structural models' assessment of goodness-of-fit used the maximum likelihood estimation as an estimation procedure with the SEM sequence beginning from model specification, model identification, parameter estimation, model testing and, lastly, model modification/re-specification. Congeneric model of each constructs was tested using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and their goodness-of-fit determined before a full measurement model was

tested using AMOS 22.0 program. Finally, the research's hypothesized pathways from the structural models are interpreted for results.

4.2. Measurement model evaluation

The reliability and discriminant validity of each of the constructs would be established based on Cronbach's α and the fit of the scale items in the measurement model is subjected to SEM analysis. CFA was conducted and re-specified, if theoretically sound, on the six constructs before a full measurement model was analyzed. High reliability α and SEM demonstrated unidimensionality was established from the CFA for the six single-construct measurement models, namely: authenticity of raw materials, authenticity of artisan skills, authenticity of sustainable/ethical practices, product judgment, willingness to buy and willingness to recommend luxury branded products.

Consequently, the study tests a full measurement model to ensure discriminant validity among the constructs. Each item only loads on one construct and constructs are allowed to covary. Item removal was considered however, the process may cause a change in interpretation of the construct or not encapsulate the complete purview of the construct. Discriminant validity is demonstrated in the full measurement model as the model was significant ($p < 0.001$) to the corresponding constructs with adequate factor loadings. Hence, the full structural model can be established to study the proposed hypotheses. Table 1 provides a summary of the single-construct and measurement models used for this research.

4.3. Evaluation of the hypothesized structural model

After establishing the measurement model, the full structural model is assessable. The structural models were assessed by examining indices to determine the model fit, structural parameter estimates and the proportion of variance accounted by the endogenous variables. In specifying the structural model, partial aggregation approach is adopted. This approach to model assessment was used for two reasons: (1) maintained all the dimensions of the constructs and (2) provided a specification of the model that is less affected by accumulated error caused by a large number of items loaded on the constructs. In this way, the full domain of the constructs and hypothesized pathways can be assessed. The model fit indices and the pathways between the constructs allow for the research's hypotheses to be evaluated.

4.3.1. Study One

Study One compares the effect ingredient authenticity has on brands for the raw materials used in making the Alpaca wool sweaters. The structural model for Prada Alpaca wool sweaters (Made in Peru) indicated an adequate level of fit, $\chi^2 (45) = 87.503$, p < 0.000, RMSEA = 0.069, SRMR = 0.0512, GFI = 0.935, AGFI = 0.888, CFI = 955, TLI = 0.935. The model for Prada Alpaca wool sweaters (Made in Italy) indicated an adequate level of fit, $\chi^2 (45) = 80.716$, p < 0.001, RMSEA = 0.078, SRMR = 0.0827, GFI = 0.908, AGFI = 0.840, CFI = 963, TLI = 0.945. The model for Prada Alpaca wool sweaters (Made in Peru) indicated an adequate level of fit, $\chi^2 (110) = 175.122$, p < 0.000, RMSEA = 0.059, SRMR = 0.0696, GFI = 0.893, AGFI = 0.851, CFI = 945, TLI = 0.931.

4.3.2. Study Two

Study Two focuses on the effect ingredient authenticity has on brands for artisan skills adopted to create the Chikan-embroidered dress. The structural model for Prada Chikan-embroidered dress (Made in India) indicated an adequate level of fit, $\chi^2 (81) = 136.686$, p < 0.000, RMSEA = 0.066, SRMR = 0.0799, GFI = 0.898, AGFI = 0.849, CFI = 927, TLI = 0.906. The model for Prada Chikan-embroidered dress (Made in Italy) indicated an adequate level of fit, $\chi^2 (68) = 116.287$, p < 0.000, RMSEA = 0.067, SRMR = 0.0591, GFI = 0.904, AGFI = 0.851, CFI = 977, TLI = 0.969. The model for

Table 1
Single-construct and full measurement models results.

Constructs	No. of items	α	Mean	χ^2	df	p-Value	RMSEA	SRMR	GFI	AGFI	TLI	CFI
Authenticity of raw materials	3	0.94	4.80	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Authenticity of artisan skills	3	0.90	5.51	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Authenticity of sustainable/ethical practices	4	0.95	4.48	1.24	1	0.27	0.004	0.0045	0.996	0.961	0.998	0.999
Product judgment	6	0.82	5.10	8.09	8	0.43	0.008	0.030	0.985	0.962	0.999	0.999
Willingness to buy	6	0.94	4.55	16.88	8	0.38	0.079	0.024	0.970	0.922	0.975	0.987
Willingness to recommend	3	0.95	5.06	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Full measurement model	–	–	–	490.17	262	0.000	0.074	0.087	0.802	0.800	0.940	0.932

Touchè Chikan-embroidered dress (Made in India) indicated an adequate level of fit, χ^2 (110) = 195.377, p < 0.000, RMSEA = 0.070, SRMR = 0.0789, GFI = 0.880, AGFI = 0.833, CFI = 919, TLI = 0.900. The standardized parameter estimates for both studies are presented in Tables 2 and 3, respectively.

4.4. Hierarchical moderated regression analysis

Hierarchical moderated regression analysis (see Baron & Kenny's, 1986 moderation approach) was used to test the effects of moderation (brand attachment) on both exogenous variable, product judgment of luxury branded products and endogenous variables, willingness to buy luxury branded products and willingness to recommend luxury branded products. Separate regression analyses were conducted for all four constructs in the hierarchical moderated regressions: brand attachment, product knowledge of luxury branded products, willingness to buy luxury branded products and willingness to recommend luxury branded products and the interaction term between these variables. Moderation exists when the model with the interaction term and product judgment of luxury branded products is statistically significant (p < 0.005). The results and interactions of the regression analysis are compiled in Tables 4 and 5 for Study One and in Tables 6 and 7 for Study Two.

5. Discussion

5.1. Discussions: Study One

The first type of ingredient branding, which is authenticity in raw materials is discussed in this first study. The stimulus for the study

shows 'Peruvian alpaca wool' as the ingredient used to manufacture the Alpaca wool sweaters and emphasises the superiority of the 'Peruvian' alpaca wool as a raw material in this case. Furthermore, the discussions from Study One and Two will compare the results and provide support for the proposed hypotheses under three conditions namely the type of ingredient branding, the levels of COO images and the brand image or effects in order to determine the impact these cues will have on consumer product judgment of luxury branded products and their buying behaviour.

5.1.1. Influence of authenticity of raw materials to consumer product judgment of luxury branded products

The structural model pathway indicates that the path from authenticity of raw materials to product judgment of luxury branded products is significant with factor loadings of 0.293 and 0.178 for Alpaca wool sweater from Prada (Made in Peru) and Touchè (Made in Peru) but not from Prada (Made in Italy). These results indicate that authenticity of raw materials does have a positive effect on product judgment of the Alpaca wool sweater made by Prada and Touchè (Made in Peru). This shows the recognition of Peru as the authentic and superior location to acquire wool. The cue 'Made in Peru' in this sense has elevated consumers' product judgment of the sweater in comparison to the 'Made in Italy' claim. There are no reported brand effects or preference as consumers perceive the quality of the Alpaca wool sweater from Touchè to be favourable as well. This supports the notion from Pappu et al. (2007) about the existing effect of a country micro image in comparison to certain product categories commanding more prominence if it were to originate from specific countries. Hence, H1 is only supported for the Alpaca wool sweaters from Prada (Made in Peru) and Touchè (Made in Peru).

Table 2
Structural model pathways of Study One (Alpaca wool sweater).

Pathways	Factor loadings	Sig.
Prada (Made in Peru)		
AuRawMaterials → product judgment	0.293	***
AuArtisanSkills → product judgment	0.168	0.100
AuSustainable → product judgment	0.108	0.022*
Product judgment → willingness to buy	0.556	0.100
Product judgment → willingness to recommend	1.250	***
Willingness to recommend → willingness to buy	0.606	***
Prada (Made in Italy)		
AuRawMaterials → product judgment	0.055	0.210
AuArtisanSkills → product judgment	0.479	***
AuSustainable → product judgment	0.089	0.070
Product judgment → willingness to buy	0.008	0.980
Product judgment → willingness to recommend	1.362	***
Willingness to recommend → willingness to buy	0.740	***
Touchè (Made in Peru)		
AuRawMaterials → product judgment	0.178	0.036*
AuArtisanSkills → product judgment	0.291	***
AuSustainable → product judgment	0.231	0.004*
Product judgment → willingness to buy	0.172	0.110
Product judgment → willingness to recommend	0.786	***
Willingness to recommend → willingness to buy	0.768	***

*** p < 0.000.
 * p < 0.05.

Table 3
Structural model pathways of Study Two (Chikan-embroidered dress).

Pathways	Factor loadings	Sig.
Prada (Made in India)		
AuRawMaterials → product judgment	0.249	0.002*
AuArtisanSkills → product judgment	0.077	0.442
AuSustainable → product judgment	0.424	***
Product judgment → willingness to buy	1.278	***
Product judgment → willingness to recommend	0.831	***
Willingness to recommend → willingness to buy	0.011	0.913
Prada (Made in Italy)		
AuRawMaterials → product judgment	0.146	0.004*
AuArtisanSkills → product judgment	0.302	***
AuSustainable → product judgment	0.225	***
Product judgment → willingness to buy	0.349	0.017*
Product judgment → willingness to recommend	1.116	***
Willingness to recommend → willingness to buy	0.701	***
Touchè (Made in India)		
AuRawMaterials → product judgment	0.119	0.025*
AuArtisanSkills → product judgment	0.134	0.105
AuSustainable → product judgment	0.147	0.010*
Product judgment → willingness to buy	0.442	0.113
Product judgment → willingness to recommend	0.821	0.012*
Willingness to recommend → willingness to buy	0.242	***

*** p < 0.000.
 * p < 0.05.

Table 4

Study One: results for hierarchical moderated regression for willingness to buy (Alpaca wool sweater).

Independent variables[a]	Sig.[**]	R^2	F	df	ΔR^2	F change	df	β
Prada (Made in Peru)								
Product judgement	0.000	0.138	31.614	1	0.138	31.614	198	0.371
Product judgement + brand attachment	0.000	0.353	53.638	1	0.215	65.383	197	0.472
Product judgement + brand Attachment + (product judgement × brand attachment)	0.247	0.357	36.271	1	0.004	1.346	196	−0.068
Prada (Made in Italy)								
Product judgement	0.000	0.237	40.100	1	0.237	40.100	129	0.487
Product judgement + brand attachment	0.000	0.528	71.510	1	0.291	78.750	128	0.583
Product judgement + brand attachment + (product judgement × brand attachment)	0.854	0.528	47.325	1	0.000	0.034	127	0.011
Touchè (Made in Peru)								
Product judgement	0.000	0.172	35.201	1	0.172	35.201	169	0.415
Product judgement + (brand attachment)	0.000	0.466	73.349	1	0.294	92.449	168	0.571
Product judgement + brand attachment + (product judgement × brand attachment)	0.631	0.467	48.753	1	0.001	0.231	167	−0.027

[a] Dependent variable: willingness to buy.

[**] Sig. < 0.05.

5.1.2. Presence of brand effects towards authenticity of artisan skills

The structural model pathways indicated that the path from authenticity of artisan skills to product judgement of luxury branded products is significant for the Prada sweater 'Made in Italy' and Touchè sweater 'Made in Peru' with a factor loading of 0.479 and 0.291 and not the Prada sweater that is 'Made in Peru'. The results reveal that while consumers' perceive the authenticity of Peruvian artisan craftsmanship positively, there is a need to justify the luxury purchase with a connection to the well-known country-of-brand, Italy. This finding justifies that consumers' associate the authenticity of artisan craftsmanship of luxury branded good to originate from the established country-of-brand. This effect, however, was not seen in the fictitious brand as consumers regard the authenticity of the artisan skills from Touchè sweater to improve the product judgment of the product. Hence, H2 is supported for the Alpaca wool sweaters from Prada (Made in Italy) and Touchè (Made in Peru).

5.1.3. Presence of brand image and country image effects towards authenticity of sustainable/ethical practices

The pathway from authenticity of sustainable/ethical practices to product judgement of luxury branded products is significant for Prada and Touchè sweaters 'Made in Peru' with factor loadings of 0.108 and 0.231. These findings show that authenticity of sustainable/ethical practices is positively influencing consumers' product judgment of the sweater. Acknowledging the ingredient authenticity of the sustainable practices does improve the product judgment of luxury branded products and elevate both the luxury and fictitious brands' perceptions. In this age, it is expected of luxury brands to uphold a strict compliance

to sustainability efforts (Han & Stoel, 2016; Miller-Spillman et al., 2016). Hence when consumers are familiar with the country, Italy, the COO effect becomes less substantial and they begin to treat it as an industry norm. Hence, the 'made in Peru' sustainable/ethical practices can provide a more authentic and significant cultural ownership towards the luxury brands by employing and acknowledging Peruvian labour in the co-creation of the Peruvian Alpaca wool sweater. Subsequently, H3 receives support for the Alpaca wool sweaters from Prada and Touchè (Made in Peru).

5.1.4. Indirect influence of product judgment to willingness to buy luxury branded products

No significance occurs in the pathways from product judgement of luxury branded products to willingness to buy luxury branded products in all three stimuli. Consumers' product judgment of luxury branded products did not positively influence willingness to buy luxury branded products. As a result, H4 is rejected. However, an indirect effect exists where product judgment of luxury branded products does have a positive influence on willingness to recommend luxury branded products and subsequently a positive influence to willingness to buy luxury branded products. This can be a confirmation bias (Nickerson, 1998) trait where consumers' will defend and believe their initial conclusions rather than adapting to the current one. Alpaca wool is characterized to be warmer and softer than sheep's wool. Consumers who believe in this opinion may place an importance on the characteristics and in turn will share this knowledge to their peers leading to the positive influence on willingness to buy regardless of brand name. Hence H5 and H6 are supported for all three stimuli in Study One.

Table 5

Study One: results for hierarchical moderated regression for willingness to recommend (Alpaca wool sweater).

Independent variables[a]	Sig.[**]	R^2	F	df	ΔR^2	F change	df	β
Prada (Made in Peru)								
Product judgement	0.000	0.140	32.233	1	0.064	32.233	198	0.374
Product judgement + brand attachment	0.000	0.298	41.835	1	0.200	44.375	197	0.405
Product judgement + brand attachment + (product judgement × brand attachment)	0.810	0.298	27.776	1	0.006	0.058	196	0.015
Prada (Made in Italy)								
Product judgement	0.000	0.406	88.099	1	0.406	88.099	129	0.637
Product judgement + brand attachment	0.000	0.507	65.911	1	0.102	26.386	128	0.345
Product judgement + brand attachment + (product judgement × brand attachment)	0.308	0.511	44.306	1	0.004	1.048	127	−0.065
Touchè (Made in Peru)								
Product judgement	0.000	0.186	38.710	1	0.186	38.710	169	0.432
Product judgement + brand attachment	0.000	0.349	45.013	1	0.163	41.938	168	0.425
Product judgement + brand attachment + (product judgement × brand attachment)	0.417	0.351	30.169	1	0.003	0.663	167	−0.051

[a] Dependent variable: willingness to recommend.

[**] Sig. < 0.05.

Table 6
Study Two: results for hierarchical moderated regression for willingness to buy (Chikan-embroidered dress).

Independent variables[a]	Sig.[**]	R^2	F	df	ΔR^2	F change	df	β
Prada (Made in India)								
Product judgement	0.000	0.154	28.780	1	0.154	28.780	158	0.393
Product judgement + brand attachment	0.000	0.305	34.463	1	0.151	34.463	157	0.403
Product judgement + brand attachment + (product judgement × brand attachment)	0.061	0.321	24.536	1	0.015	3.558	156	0.126
Prada (Made in Italy)								
Product judgement	0.000	0.248	51.503	1	0.248	51.503	156	0.498
Product judgement + brand attachment	0.000	0.579	106.510	1	0.331	121.675	155	0.662
Product judgement + brand attachment + (product judgement × brand attachment)	0.901	0.579	70.561	1	0.000	0.016	154	−0.007
Touchè (Made in India)								
Product judgement	0.063	0.022	3.494	1	0.022	3.494	158	0.147
Product judgement + brand attachment	0.000	0.296	33.078	1	0.275	61.327	157	0.529
Product judgement + brand attachment + (product judgement × brand attachment)	0.132	0.307	22.995	1	0.010	2.288	156	0.101

  [a] Dependent variable: willingness to buy.

  [**] Sig. <0.05.

5.2. Discussions: Study Two

The second type of ingredient branding, which is authenticity in artisan skills is discussed in this second study. The stimulus for the study shows 'Chikan-embroidery' as the ingredient used to manufacture the cotton dress and emphasises the superiority of the Indian Chikan craftsmanship.

5.2.1. Influence of authenticity of raw materials to product judgment of luxury branded products

The pathway from authenticity of raw materials to product judgment of luxury branded products is significant for all three stimuli with a factor loading of 0.249, 0.146 and 0.119. Authenticity of raw materials of the Chikan-embroidery dress is seen to positively impact on product judgment of the luxury branded product. Consumers may draw on multiple cues to evaluate brand origin. In this case, the inclusion of both country cues of Italy and India have influenced consumers' evaluation of the raw ingredient used to make the dress. Hence, H1 receives support for all three stimuli.

5.2.2. Influence of authenticity of artisan skills to product judgment of luxury branded products

The pathway from authenticity of artisan skills to product judgment of luxury branded products is significant only for the Chikan-embroidered dress from Prada (Made in Italy) with a factor loading of 0.479. This result indicates that authenticity of artisan skills is positively influencing product judgment of luxury branded products only when the origin of artisan craftsmanship is from Italy. This supports the theory of hierarchy of biases (Schooler, 1971) as a positive relationship was

seen between authenticity of artisan skills and consumer product judgment when the craftsmanship is associated with Italy which is known for its technical expertise and design (Pappu et al., 2007). Hence, H2 is only supported by the Chikan-embroidered dress by Prada (Made in Italy).

5.2.3. Influence of authenticity of sustainable/ethical practices to product judgment of luxury branded products

The pathway from authenticity of sustainable/ethical practices to product judgment of luxury branded products is significant for all three stimuli in Study Two with a factor loading of 0.424, 0.225 and 0.147. These results indicate that authenticity of sustainable/ethical practices positively influenced product judgment of the luxury branded products. Unlike Study one, brand image and country image effects do not display itself within this experiment which indicates that consumers have a positive perception of the labour conditions established to manufacture the dress from both Indian and Italian sources. Hence, H3 is supported fully by all three stimuli.

5.2.4. Presence of brand effects towards product judgment and willingness to buy luxury branded products

The pathway from product judgment of luxury branded products to willingness to buy luxury branded products is significant for both dresses by Prada (Made in India) and Prada (Made in Italy) with factor loadings of 1.278 and 0.349. These results indicate that consumers' product judgment of luxury branded products is positively influencing willingness to buy from Prada. Han and Stoel (2016) posit that consumers are hesitant to purchase products when a lack of product information exists. Hence, consumers are less willing to buy the dress from Touchè because they do not have enough information about the brand

Table 7
Study Two: results for hierarchical moderated regression for willingness to recommend (Chikan-embroidered dress).

Independent Variables[a]	Sig.[**]	R^2	F	df	ΔR^2	F Change	df	β
Prada (Made in India)								
Product judgement	0.001	0.064	10.717	1	0.064	10.717	158	0.252
Product judgement + brand attachment	0.000	0.263	28.038	1	0.200	42.542	157	0.463
Product judgement + brand attachment + (product judgement × brand attachment)	0.248	0.269	19.182	1	0.006	1.346	156	0.080
Prada (Made in Italy)								
Product judgement	0.000	0.280	60.655	1	0.280	60.655	156	0.529
Product judgement + brand attachment	0.000	0.580	106.968	1	0.300	110.649	155	0.630
Product judgement + brand attachment + (product judgement × brand attachment)	0.814	0.580	70.896	1	0.000	0.055	154	−0.018
Touchè (Made in India)								
Product judgement	0.013	0.038	6.302	1	0.038	6.302	158	0.196
Product judgement + brand attachment	0.000	0.153	14.211	1	0.115	21.310	157	0.342
Product judgement + brand attachment + (product judgement × brand attachment)	0.549	0.155	9.555	1	0.002	0.360	156	0.044

  [a] Dependent variable: willingness to recommend.

  [**] Sig. < 0.05.

and its origin. Hence, H4 receives support by Chikan-embroidered dresses by Prada (Made in India) and Prada (Made in Italy).

5.2.5. Influence of consumer product judgment of luxury branded products to willingness to recommend luxury branded products

The pathway from product judgement of luxury branded products to willingness to recommend luxury branded products is significant for all three stimuli with factor loadings of 0.831, 1.116 and 0.821. These results indicate that product judgment of luxury branded products has a positive influence on willingness to recommend luxury branded products. Maheswaran (1994) denotes that customers will judge product quality through aspects such as product performance and product-specific attributes. With a positive product evaluation and quality perception of the Chikan-embroidered dress, the incidence of word-of-mouth between peers would be higher.

5.2.6. Influence of willingness to recommend luxury branded products to willingness to buy luxury branded products

The pathway from willingness to recommend luxury branded products to willingness to buy luxury branded products is significant for Chikan-embroidered dress by Prada (Made in Italy) and Touchè (Made in India). These results indicate that willingness to recommend luxury branded products positively influences willingness to buy luxury branded products for dresses by Prada (Made in Italy) and Touchè (Made in India). These findings support studies from Biyalogorsky, Gerstner, and Libai (2001) and Chen, Huang, and Chou (2008) that consumers rely more on customer recommendations when making purchase decision. However when it comes to Chikan-embroidery, consumers are more willing to recommend a Prada 'Made in Italy' dress than a 'Made in India' dress. This tendency can be attributed to "consumer status consciousness" preferring to associate the luxury brand to its country of brand as opposed to country of ingredient authenticity. Subsequently, based on the schema congruity effect (Fiske & Linville, 1980) consumers having prior knowledge of ingredient authentic products from India will be more willing to recommend and purchase the embroidered dress from the fictitious brand, Touchè based on their previous experiences.

5.3. Moderation effect of brand attachment between product judgments of luxury branded products and willingness to buy and recommend luxury branded products

Study One and Two showed no moderation as the standard coefficients from the model with the interaction terms of product judgment of luxury branded products and brand attachment were not significant. Consequently, H7a and H7b are rejected for both studies. McQueen, Foley, and Deighton (1993) describes brand attachment as 'an affect-laden evaluation by consumers and a strong feeling of affiliation' which indicates that attachment is predominantly an expressive and emotive function. The lack of attachment affect shows that consumers may rely on cognitive aspects of the purchase such as perceived risk or switching costs to make a decision to buy or recommend the luxury branded products.

6. Implications

First and foremost, this research highlights the importance of COO image as a trigger for positive product judgment, buying behaviour and word of mouth intentions. This means that fashion labels and luxury brands do not need to shy away from a low COO image or one that is not synonymous with the brand's COO, rather marketers should emphasise on the country's expertise in terms of high quality raw materials or rare and genuine artisan craftsmanship when trying to signal for high quality, status and image. Furthermore, the retention of historical or social themes in the making of these authentic designer products for instance, could be emphasized in communication strategy.

Secondly, this research provides important insights for government and policy makers in terms of new labelling practices and communication initiatives. Policy makers have to be aware that there are no stringent 'country of origin' rules for luxury goods under the European Union and other international laws when production is outsourced to other countries (Sarasin, 2012). For example, in Italy, only 10% of the product needs to be assembled in Italy for it to bear the 'Made in Italy' label. It is important that international companies operating within the European Union are able to take advantage of this policy to source from countries with low country image but still be branded as a high end label with a high country image. However, this market entry strategy also means that there is a need for international companies that are operating outside of the European Union to be aware of the guidelines and policies that defines the "country of origin" of their labels and products in particularly for marketing and promotional purposes.

Thirdly, this research also highlights the consumer's positive leanings and preference towards a more sustainable environment and ethical practices when dealing with luxury fashion goods. This shows that consumers are now becoming more interested in whether the material contents of their luxury apparels or products are being sourced from transparent and ethical supply chains (Han & Stoel, 2016; Kong, Ko, Chae, & Mattila, 2016; Miller-Spillman et al., 2016). Fashion houses and companies have to be aware that the sourcing of materials and ingredients from third world countries could lead to negative publicity (i.e. the '*sweatshop*' third world syndrome) which could potentially soil a brand's image. Therefore, such situations should be met with an increased focus in maintaining a good sense of corporate social responsibilities through the use of business sponsorship of third world partners and awareness programmes advocating for better working conditions and fair-compensation. This is also an opportunity for companies to strategically enlist a brand advocate or endorser to act as a market maven to the public to advocate for their cause.

7. Limitations and future research directions

This research has several limitations which can be addressed with future research. Firstly, the research is based on a cross-sectional perspective, rather than on a longitudinal approach. This trend can be tested towards the country perspective of ingredient branding to determine whether the product judgments of the authentic raw materials or artisan skills have changed throughout the years. The second limitation of the research is that the data was collected in Australia; therefore use caution in generalising current results to other countries.

Consider the possibility of examining the conceptual model developed in this research to other research settings where authenticity and craftsmanship are prevalent in consumer's purchase decisions such as wines and spirits. Provisions should also be made to look into the differences in ingredient-authenticity perception between different-tiered luxury brands (i.e. Prada vs Michael Kors) and sub-brand or nested brands (i.e. Miu Miu by Prada vs Shang Xia by Hermès). Lastly, considering the ongoing discussion in the literature on the validity of the consumer need for ingredient authenticity scale and other possible sources of country authenticity and ingredient branding influencing consumer's purchase decisions, future research into this area is vital.

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