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Cross Country Assessment of Personal Luxury Brands Consumption

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Abstract
This research aims to investigate the factors affecting the purchasing of personal luxury products by Malaysian and French consumers. In Malaysia and France, a total of 284 functional samples were completed. The data was analyzed using SPSS which also known as (Statistical Package for Social Science). The results of this study are limited to individuals residing in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and Paris, France. However, the data collected from these two countries does not represent its entire population. Hence, careful consideration should be used in this research as the results does not represent all of the consumers that centers around Malaysia and Paris. This study indicated that marketers and luxury brand managers should establish effective promotional strategies and programmes in Malaysia and Paris in order to encourage customers to generously invest on personal luxury brand. On the other hand, the imperceptible consumption pattern can also be extended by retailers towards other luxury product groups and service industries.
Keywords: Personal Luxury Brands, Cross Country, Consumers, Marketing Strategy, Service Industry

Introduction
According to Euromonitor International (2016), while Malaysia's ringgit fell to its lowest value and the increasing cost of living in 2016, the purchasing output of different categories of luxury goods still displayed growth in revenue. Chandran (2014) studied that Malaysia 's luxury market is projected to rise steadily in value between the year 2013 and 2018, with inflation of 62 percent over that period. Malaysia 's luxury industry is projected to be worth 1.2 billion US dollars in 2013 (Young, 2013), consequently it shows that the luxury market in Malaysia is expected to rise to 1.94 billion US dollars by 2018. Bian and Company (2013) subsequently updated the luxury market of Malaysia as one of the six Southeast Asian countries along with Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam and the Philippines, that 'drive Asian growth' for the luxury market in Asia. According to So, Parsons, and Yap (2013), the level of rivalry between luxury fashion brands is incredibly competitive in Malaysia. The

overwhelming number of high-end luxury fashion houses have opened their branches in Malaysia, such as Chanel, Louis Vuitton, and Burberry. In various states of the Malaysian shopping mall, such as Starhill Gallery, The Gardens Midvalley, The Pavillion, Suria KLCC, Johor Premium Outlet, Mitsui Premium Outlet, and Genting Premium Outlet, these brands can indeed be easily accessed. On the whole, it is essential for Malaysian consumers to develop better understanding of the consumption of luxury goods, especially their initial intention of purchasing latent high end fashion items.

Similarly in Europe between 2016 and 2017, growth in luxury goods consumption stood at 6 percent, maintaining a large market share in terms of revenue and accounting for over a third of global consumption (EUR 87 billion). Additionally, France showed well throughout Deloitte 's 2017 global ranking, with three of the ten largest classes specialising in luxury goods and with LVMH in the top spot. Throughout the first nine months of the year, LVMH maintained its position as the world leader and reported a 12 percent rise in revenue, led by sales of luxury and leather products in the third quarter (Louis Vuitton, Christian Dior Couture). For other French companies, each of which reported substantial increases over the first part of the year, the year 2017 should prove to be fruitful. In the first half of 2017, the Kering Group, ranked fifth worldwide, reported practically 30 percent growth, led by the luxury market and the Gucci brand in particular, which registered impressive results in the third quarter. Evidently, through the end of September, L'Oréal Luxe also reported double-digit growth (+10.8 percent) and Hermès international (+10 percent) was ranked 12th in terms of global revenue.

Literature Review

There are many meanings of the term luxury since every individual has different expectations and several variables, including demographics, lifestyle, habit, social climate, and, obviously, luxury surveyors and marketers, can influence the definition of luxury. According to Dubois and Laurent (1994), rapid contemplation can seemingly affect the perception of luxury. While Kapferer and Bastien (2012) believe that the definition of luxury is rather dated since it is based on humanity. Luxury is a term which means light and "lux" in Latin. Luxury implies sparkles that are somehow like a ray of sun, luxury is fascinating and beauty distinguishes. Similarly, there are couple of aspects that contribute to luxury. Firstly is the monetary capacity to pay the price of quality and the ability to enjoy the artistic, next, imaginative and alluring qualities of the product, something beyond basic expediency (Sari and Kusuma, 2014). As revealed by Vigneron and Johnson (2004), luxury products are characterised as both pleasurable and pleasant but somehow hard to acquire.

Vigneron and Johnson (1999) have thoroughly study the motive for social standards escalation influencing the consumption behavior. The five dimensions of the reasons for buying luxury goods, namely, the influence of Veblen, Snob, Bandwagon, Hedonic and Perfectionism, were also initiated by (Vigneron and Johnson, 1999). First, the Veblen effect refers to the quest for social prestige through the purchasing of high-priced goods, created by the potential to seek visible value. Accordingly, Scwartz (2004) emphasized the concept of when consumers are entitled to impress others and boost their wealth, the high price of luxury goods is given a great deal of focus and he accentuated it as the individual’s hierarchical value. The hierarchical personality describes people who appear to show social superiority over others via owning luxury fashion items as they viewed to offer greater social status, (Schwartz, 2004; Wiedmann, Hennigs and Siebels, 2009).

Furthermore, the second component of the Snob effect, illustrates the psychology of authenticity based on the notion of individuality. Schwartz (2004) explained that snob shoppers give greater attention to the luxury brands' distinctive status and tend to fulfil their personal desire to be different from the rest. According to Vickers and Renand (2003), the exclusivity gradually increases given the growing of price, alternatively, the higher the cost, the less accessible the brand is. On the contrary, the Bandwagon consumers depend very little on price relative to Snob customers, but assign greater priority to the social impact of prestige goods (Vickers and Renand, 2003; Wiedmann, Hennigs and Siebels, 2009). Vigneron and Johnson (1999) illustrated that for these specific consumers, the social importance of luxury brands is expressed by customer criteria for social identity. The reason for bandwagons to buy is to adhere to their desired groups and separate from their undesirable groups.

Wiedmann, Hennigs and Siebels (2009) believes that though Snobs and Bandwagons predominantly concern consumers' self-identity, their manifestations are seemingly opposite. The distinction between these two dimensions has been studied by Leibenstein (1950). He suggested that if these luxury items are bought by a mass of customers, the demand for Snobs to buy luxury goods would decrease. In contrary, if mass individuals buy the same goods, the demand for Bandwagons will grow. The social role of luxury consumption was suggested by Veblen (1899). He claimed that luxury goods are viewed as representations of social status towards others. Furthermore, the ideology of collectivism also consists of this component, suggesting the willingness to show the ability to communicate with people in social contexts by making luxury purchasing choices (Xiao & Kim, 2009). In the same way as people prefer to equate luxury goods with prosperity and greater socioeconomic class, it is common for people sporting luxury brands to be viewed rather pompously than those wearing the ordinary brands (Nelissen and Meijers, 2011).

Alternatively. the Hedonic influence, reflecting the emotional values of consumers, is called the fourth dimension. Hedonic consumers pay little attention to the cost or the prestige metric, equivalent to the Bandwagons which stress their thoughts and emotions about luxury goods. Therefore, according to Cavender and H. Kincade, (2014) the purpose of the acquisition is to satisfy the enjoyment and excitement of customers through the tangible benefits obtained from the goods, including texture, taste, visual impression, etc. Vigneron and Johnson (1999) have clarified that hedonic impetus is more affected by customers' inner desires rather than interpersonal needs. Comparably, the dimension that ventures into the materialist explanations for the consumption of luxury goods in the study was conducted by Thomson, MacInnis and Park (2005). The acquisition of luxury goods is considered by materialism to be the measure of well-being, satisfaction and life's progress particularly extracted from the individual understanding of luxury products.

Lastly, the final dimension that centers around the quality value of high-end brands known as the Perfectionism effect. The emphasis in this dimension is on the product itself, primarily on consistency. This dimension was described by Wong and Ahuvia (1998) as the integrative motivation associated with quality of endogenous luxury. According to Husic and Cicic (2009), perfectionist customers are more in compliance with their understanding of the practicality and durability of the commodity and prefer to focus on price as a guide for decision. Generally, three scopes can be divided into the above five dimensions. In terms of the quality value of luxury brands, the first scope includes the luxury product itself, such as the Perfectionism effect. Secondly, the scope concerns the psychology and personal desire for luxury goods, which consists of the Hedonic effect in terms of consumer subjective standards and the Snob effect of distinction psychology. Lastly, the final scope deals with the sociocultural roles of luxury consumption, known as the Bandwagon effects, which are the social implications of prestige goods, and the impact of the Veblen, which focused on the quest for social prestige.

Methodology

Furthermore, due to the focus of the research on the variables affecting the consumption of personal luxury brands in Malaysia, the population for this study centers around those consumers who bought personal luxury brands in Malaysia. Evidently, 142 customers will be the experimental sample. According to Guadgnoli and Velicer (1988) the recommendation for a minimum size of 100 to 200 sample size for observations is possibly based on the claim that when sample sizes exceed this amount, the correlation coefficient has become an accurate estimator of the population correlation coefficient. The research was conducted primarily in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia also known as Malaysia's capital city. Moreover, majority of the brands are accessible in Kuala Lumpur. Besides, the author distributed self-administered questionnaires to be completed by the respondents in order to retrieve the data. This kind of questionnaire is distributed to respondents by hand. Specifically, It is easier to administer such questionnaires, comparatively cheaper than face-to-face surveys, and it also allows a large number of people to be part of the process (Saunders and Bezzina, 2015). Accordingly, the questionnaire has been adapted and is separated into eight main parts for this analysis. To prove each hypothesis, the rest of the seven parts were geared at gathering the data. Subsequently, the 5-point Likert scale was used in this study.

Findings

Using SPSS, the data was analysed and the final statistical analysis report was presented in the following section. Throughout this study, forms of analysis have been used starting with the frequency analysis and followed descriptive analysis.

Frequency Analysis

For this research, frequency analysis was the fundamental approach where it was precisely analyzed. The profile of the respondents are listed in more detail in this section. Data was gathered in the questionnaire from Section F, which comprised of multiple kinds of demographic inquiries such as gender, age, ethnicity, qualification, income, purchase frequency and consumption of favorable personal luxury brands. On the whole, the study presented the demographic findings of respondents into table forms.

Table 1: Number of Respondent by Gender in Kuala Lumpur

Demographic		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sex:	Male	36	25.4
	Female	106	74.6
	Total	**142**	**100**

Table 2: Number of Respondent by Gender in Paris

Demographic		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sex:	Male	51	35.9
	Female	91	64.1
	Total	**142**	**100**

"Respondent by Gender" in Kuala Lumpur and Paris are seen on the basis of Table 1 and Table 2. The majority of respondents in Kuala Lumpur and Paris were women extending to 74.6 percent, and 64.1 percent, based on the number of questionnaires distributed in both countries, comprising 284 respondents.

Table 3: Number of Respondent by Age in Kuala Lumpur

Demographic		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age:	18 to 24	24	16.9
	25 to 34	44	31.0
	35 to 44	43	50.3
	45 to 54	23	16.2
	55 or older	8	5.6
	Total	**142**	**100.0**

Table 4: Number of Respondent by Age in Paris

Demographic		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age:	18 to 24	70	49.3
	25 to 34	32	22.5
	35 to 44	24	16.9
	45 to 54	15	10.6
	55 or older	1	0.7
	Total	**142**	**100.0**

Next, the number of respondents by age in Kuala Lumpur and Paris is presented in Table 3 and Table 4. In Kuala Lumpur, the majority of respondents are 35 to 44 years old, with a percentage of 50.3

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percent, followed by 25 to 34 years old, then 18 to 24 years old, followed by 45 to 54 years old. Subsequently, 5.6 percent of respondents aged between 55 and over are in the remaining balance. While in Paris, the majority of respondents were 18 to 24 years old with a percentage of 49.3%, followed by 25 to 34 years old, then 35 to 44 years old and followed by the estimates of 45 to 54 years old. The remaining balance is 0.7% of respondents aged between 55 and over.

Table 5: Number of Respondent by Ethnicity in Kuala Lumpur

Demographic		**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
Race:	Asian/Pacific Islander	4	2.8
	Arab	5	3.5
	Malay	109	76.8
	Chinese	13	9.2
	Indian	10	7.0
	Others	1	0.7
	Total	**142**	**100.0**

Table 6: Number of Respondent by Ethnicity in Paris

Demographic		**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
Race:	Black/African American	8	5.6
	White/Caucasian	114	80.3
	Arab	17	12.0
	Malay	1	0.7
	Others	2	1.4
	Total	**142**	**100.0**

Moreover, Table 5 and Table 6 show the number of respondents by ethnicity in Kuala Lumpur and Paris. Majority of the respondents in Kuala Lumpur were Malays at 76.8%, followed by Chinese at 9.2%, and India at 7.0%. Furthermore, followed by Arabic at 3.5%, Asian/Pacific Islander 2.8% The remaining balance was 0.7%. Meanwhile in Paris, the majority of respondents were White/Caucasian at 80.3%, followed by Arabs by 12.0%, and Black/African at 5.6%. The remaining 1.4% of the remaining balances were Malays at 0.7%.

Table 7: Number of Respondent by Qualification in Kuala Lumpur

Demographic		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Qualification:	Less than a high school diploma	6	4.2
	High school degree/equivalent	8	5.6
	Some college, no degree	9	6.3
	Associate degree	8	5.6
	Bachelor's degree	70	49.3
	Master's degree	27	19.0
	Professional degree	5	3.5
	Doctorate	5	3.5
	Others	4	2.8
	Total	**142**	**100.0**

Table 8: Number of Respondent by Qualification in Paris

Demographic		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Qualification:	High school degree/equivalent	33	23.2
	Some college, no degree	5	3.5
	Associate degree	2	1.4
	Bachelor's degree	45	31.7
	Master's degree	44	31.0
	Professional degree	12	8.5
	Others	1	0.7
	Total	**142**	**100.0**

Furthermore, Table 7 and Table 8 shows the number of respondents by level of education in Kuala Lumpur and Paris. Majority of the respondents in Kuala Lumpur had a bachelor’s degree of 49.3%, followed by Master's degree of 19.0%. Respondents with professional degrees and Doctorate had the same percentage of 3.5%. Meanwhile in Paris, the majority of respondents had at least a bachelor’s degree representing a percentage of 31.7%, followed by Master's degree of 31.0% and high school degree equivalent of 23.2%. For Kuala Lumpur and Paris, the respondents who chose others represented the lowest percentage in both countries at 2.8% in Kuala Lumpur and only 0.7% in Paris.

Table 9: Number of Respondent by Employment in Kuala Lumpur

Demographic		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Employment:	Full-time employment	100	70.4
	Part-time employment	5	3.5
	Unemployed	4	2.8
	Self-employed	12	8.5
	Student	16	11.3
	Retired	4	2.8
	Others	1	0.7
	Total	**142**	**100.00**

Table 10: Number of Respondent by Employment in Paris

Demographic		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Employment:	Full-time employment	61	43.0
	Unemployed	2	1.4
	Self-employed	8	5.6
	Student	68	47.9
	Retired	3	2.1
	Total	**142**	**100.0**

Table 9 and Table 10 show the number of employment status in Kuala Lumpur and Paris. Majority of the respondents in Kuala Lumpur at 70.4% were full-time employment followed by students at 11.3%, and 8.5% of respondents were self-employed. Next, 3.5% of the respondents were part-time employment, and the unemployed and retired respondents had the same percentage of 2.8%. Meanwhile, 0.7% of respondents chose others. Respondents in Paris showed that 47.9% of respondents were students, while 43.0% of respondents in Paris were full-time employment, followed by 5.6% of respondents were self-employed. Next, 2.1% of the respondents in Paris were retired and the remaining 1.4% were unemployed.

Table 11: Number of Respondent by income in Kuala Lumpur

Demographic		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Income:	RM 0 - RM 20,000	82	57.7
	RM 20,001 - RM 40,000	28	19.7
	RM 40,001 - RM 60,000	11	7.7
	RM 60,001 - RM 80,000	12	8.5
	RM 80,001 - RM 100,000	7	4.9
	RM 100,001 - above	2	1.4
	Total	**142**	**100.0**

Table 12: Number of Respondent by income in Paris

Demographic		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Income:	Euro 0 - Euro 20,000	75	52.8
	Euro 20,001 - Euro 40,000	7	4.9
	Euro 40,001 - Euro 60,000	35	24.6
	Euro 60,001 - Euro 80,000	24	16.9
	Euro 80,001 - Euro 100,000	1	0.7
	Total	**142**	**100.0**

Furthermore, Table 11 and Table 12 show the Number of Respondent by income in Kuala Lumpur and Paris. Majority of the population in Kuala Lumpur achieve an income between RM 0 - RM 20,000 which was 57.7%. The findings were similar to those in Paris at 52.8% of respondents with income between Euro 0 - Euro 20,000. In Kuala Lumpur, only 1.4% of respondents had income between RM 100,001 and above. While in Paris, only 0.7% of respondents had income of Euro 80,001 to Euro 100,000. There are no respondents in Paris who own earnings of between Euro 100,001 and above.

Table 13: Number of Respondent by Purchase frequency in Kuala Lumpur

Demographic		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Purchase frequency:	Monthly	11	7.7
	Once a year	58	40.8
	Twice a year	39	27.5
	Others	34	23.9
	Total	**142**	**100.0**

Table 14: Number of Respondent by Purchase frequency in Paris

Demographic		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Purchase frequency:	Weekly	3	2.1
	Monthly	13	9.2
	Once a year	31	21.8
	Twice a year	19	13.4
	Other	76	53.5
	Total	**142**	**100**

Table 13 and Table 14 show Number of Respondent by Purchase frequency in Kuala Lumpur and Paris. In Kuala Lumpur, a majority of 40.8% of the total respondents chose to purchase luxury goods at least once a year followed by once in two years at 27.5%. While in Paris, most of the respondents chose another 53.5% which is that the respondents made a weekly purchase, followed by only once a year at 13.4%. In Paris. branded goods are more frequently purchased as they are relatively cheaper than in Kuala Lumpur.

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Table 15: Number of Respondent by Preferred luxury brands in Kuala Lumpur

Demographic Frequency Percentage (%)

Preferred luxury brands:	Montblanc	15	10.6
	Tissot	19	13.4
	Tod's	5	3.5
	Prada	23	16.2
	Gucci	15	10.6
	Luois Vuitton	12	8.5
	Tiffany & Co	9	6.3
	Berluti	1	0.7
	Tag Huer	1	0.7
	Rolex	2	1.4
	Omega	3	2.1
	Cartier	3	2.1
	Chopard	3	2.1
	Bulgari	7	4.9
	Hermes	4	2.8
	IWC	1	0.7
	Bottega Veneta	1	0.7
	Patek Philippe	3	2.1
	Harry Winston	1	0.7
	Others	14	9.9
	Total	**142**	**100.0**

Table 16: Number of Respondent by Preferred luxury brands in Paris

Demographic		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Preferred luxury brands:	Montblanc	8	5.6
	Tissot	7	4.9
	Prada	5	3.5
	Gucci	10	7.0
	Louis Vuitton	12	8.5
	Tiffany & Co	3	2.1
	Tag Huer	2	1.4
	Rolex	6	4.2
	Omega	1	0.7
	Cartier	2	1.4
	Hermes	5	3.5
	Patek Philippe	2	1.4
	Breguet	1	0.7
	Harry Winston	2	1.4
	Others	76	53.5
	Total	**142**	**100.0**

Lastly, Table 15 and 16 show Number of Respondent by Preferred luxury brands in Kuala Lumpur and Paris. Top 3 brands which were the choice of respondents in Kuala Lumpur were Prada at 16.2%, followed by Tissot at 13.4%. While the Montblanc and Gucci brands share the same position, as 10.6% of respondents share the same interest for both brands. Different findings come when looking at the top 3 brand tendencies of choice of respondents in Paris. Majority of respondents in Paris chose Others at 53.5%. Most respondents have listed other brands such as Givenchy, Balenciaga and Miu Miu as preferred brands. Followed by Louis Vuitton at 8.5% and Montblanc at 5.6%. The Montblanc brand is the top 3 brands that seem to be the choice of respondents for both countries.

Conclusion and Recommendation

This research stimulate two crucial points concerning the field of luxury merchandising literature by dedicating to two important points. First, by comparing Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, and Paris, France, the analysis describes the disparities between Western and Asian cultures. This is the first study documented by this researcher that contrasted luxury brand intentions with those two particular cultures. In several previous research studies by Bian & Forsythe (2012); Hennigs et al (2012) Park, Ko, & Kim(2010); Shukla (2011); Shukla and Purani (2012), have initiated the contrasting elements of luxury brands consumptions between the western society and the eastern Asian cultures. Eventually, this research centres only on the participants from Kuala Lumpur and Paris as the intended sample. Thus, the total population in Malaysia and France were not adequately represented. In order to achieve comprehensive results, more studies should take into account the inclusion of more towns.

Nonetheless, some strategic implications for luxury brand retailers in both the Kuala Lumpur and Paris markets were generated by the results of this research. Fashion brands like Prada, Tissot. Montblanc and Gucci were the top personal luxury brands favoured by Kuala Lumpur buyers, whereas, Others (Givenchy, Balenciaga, Miu Miu), Louis Vuitton and Montblanc were the top personal luxury brands favoured by Paris customers. Subsequently, marketers of these top personal luxury brands should therefore continue the great promotional advertising of their brand hence retain their success. Accordingly, other luxury brands will hopefully learn and able to determine the explanations behind higher aspirations for these brands from the leading brands recognized by customers in this research.

This paper establishes the significant differences on the consumer buying behaviours, decision processes and brand preferences between Kuala Lumpur and Paris. In the light of this research, the researcher hopes that it may benefit the body of knowledge in the area of personal luxury brand consumption and consumers purchasing behaviours. Furthermore, in investing on personal luxury brand, the consumers and marketers should develop a great understanding on the purchasing factors that influence purchasing decisions, the variables that impact consumer purchases and the evolving dynamics surrounding the culture. The research has illustrate numerous variables that have been analysed suggesting that gender, age, ethnicity, education level of respondents, occupation, level of income of individuals purchase frequency and preferred luxury brand may affect the consumption of personal luxury brands. Hence, the research conducted may contributes to the establishment of knowledge that is indispensable to the diligence of luxury brand consumption and also served as a platform for exploring the immense potential exhibit through in-depth analysis, especially cross-country comparisons.

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