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Consumer Perception of the Value of Brand Heritage

BACHELOR THESIS WITHIN *Business Administration*

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The authors have during the last semester of their three-year bachelor's degree program in business administration taken the opportunity to conduct a study about a topic of particular interest to them. Accordingly they chose to explore how consumers perceive the value of brand heritage of luxury fashion brands.

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ABSTRACT

Brand heritage and consumer perceived value are two concepts which separately have received a growing interest among academics for quite some time. However both of them combined, hence consumers' perception of the value of brand heritage is a relatively unexplored field of research. This study therefore intends to explore how consumers perceive the value of brand heritage of luxury fashion brands. To achieve this purpose, the study will investigate consumers' perception of the value of brand heritage of four European luxury fashion brands – Burberry, Chanel, Gucci, and Louis Vuitton – which serve as illustrative/reference brands in this study. These four European luxury fashion brands are chosen as illustrative brands in this study based on the determination that heritage is a central part of their brands.

Secondary data was collected through Internet based document analysis of the illustrative brands to determine whether these qualify as heritage brands. Furthermore, semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect primary data for the purpose to explore how consumers perceive the value of brand heritage of the illustrative brands.

The findings of the study reveal that consumers perceive the value of the brand heritage of the illustrative brands because it serves as a source of credibility and trust between the consumers and the brands. There is a perception that the brands have managed to maintain a certain standard regarding quality and craftsmanship, and likewise delivered according to consumers' expectations over time. Furthermore consumers perceive the value of the brand heritage of the illustrative brands since it contributes to a sense of belongingness and social acceptance. They value the identity and meaning of the illustrative brand, hence the perception that the brands have managed to persistently deliver according to their core values and promises over time. It provides the consumers with the opportunity to connect with the brands on a personal level and to create their own individual identities and lifestyles through the brands. All this, in combination with the perception of the brands as timeless and durable, that they inhabit a sense of credibility and trust, which in the long run may generate loyalty - they value that the brands are loyal to them - conclude how consumers perceive the value of the brand heritage of the illustrative brands.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	7
1.1. BACKGROUND	7
1.2. PROBLEM	9
1.3. PURPOSE	9
1.4. RESEARCH QUESTION	10
1.5. METHOD	10
1.6. CONTRIBUTIONS	10
1.7. DELIMITATIONS	11
1.8. DEFINITIONS	11
1.8.1. BRAND	11
1.8.2. BRAND EQUITY	11
1.8.3. LUXURY & META - LUXURY	12
1.8.4. BRAND HERITAGE	12
1.8.5. ILLUSTRATIVE BRANDS	12
2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	13
2.1. HERITAGE BRANDS	13
2.1.1. HERITAGE QUOTIENT, HQ FRAMEWORK: ELEMENTS OF HERITAGE	13
2.2. CONSUMER PERCEIVED VALUE	17
2.3. CONSUMER PERCEIVED VALUE OF BRAND HERITAGE	17
2.4. CONSUMER-BASED BRAND EQUITY	18
2.4.1. BRAND AWARENESS	19
2.4.2. BRAND ASSOCIATIONS	20
2.4.3. PERCEIVED QUALITY	20
2.4.4. BRAND LOYALTY	20
2.5. CHOICE OF THEORIES	21
3. METHODOLOGY	22

3.1. QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHOD	22
3.2. RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY: INTERPRETIVISM AND SUBJECTIVISM	22
3.3. ABDUCTIVE RESEARCH APPROACH	23
3.4. QUALITATIVE DATA AND DATA COLLECTION METHOD	24
3.4.1. PRIMARY AND SECONDARY DATA	24
3.4.2. DATA COLLECTION THROUGH INTERVIEWS	25
3.4.3. SELECTION OF RESPONDENTS	27
3.4.4. SELECTING AND ANALYSING THE ILLUSTRATIVE BRANDS	29
3.5. ILLUSTRATIVE BRAND:	30
3.5.1. BURBERRY	30
3.5.2. CHANEL	30
3.5.3. GUCCI	31
3.5.4. LOUIS VUITTON	32
3.6. DATA ANALYSIS	32
3.7. TRUSTWORTHINESS	33
3.8. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS	35
4. EMPIRICAL DATA ANALYSIS	36
4.1. TRACK RECORD	36
4.2. LONGEVITY	39
4.3. CORE VALUES	43
4.4. USE OF SYMBOLS	46
4.5. HISTORY	48
4.6. SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS	51
5. DISCUSSION	54
6. CONCLUSION	58
7. IMPLICATIONS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY	60
7.1. IMPLICATIONS FOR THEORY	60

7.2. IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH	60
7.3. IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE	60
7.4. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY	61
8. REFERENCES	62
<hr/>	
9. APPENDIX	67
9.1. INTERVIEW GUIDE	67
9.1.1. ENGLISH	67
9.1.2. SWEDISH	73
9.1.3. STATISTICAL DIAGRAM	80

1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to provide the reader with essential background information about the research topic and state the literature gap through a problem discussion in order to formulate the purpose of the paper. A short list of definitions considered relevant for the paper will also be presented.

1.1. BACKGROUND

“Make a better future by developing elements of the past”

(Goethe - German poet and writer; Menkes, 2010)

Research about "heritage brands" or "brands with heritage" have received considerable attention over the years (Balmer & Burghausen, 2015; Urde et al. 2007; Wuestefeld et al., 2012). Literature suggests that heritage is a main driver of brand value and equity (Wiedmann et al., 2011). This might be explained partly due to the fact that heritage invokes a sense of credibility and authenticity about the brand as perceived by consumers. The past highlights essential qualities of the brand such as core values, conduct, and quality, contributing to perceived credibility and reliability which in turn might enhance the value of the brand and contribute to present and future performances (Urde et al., 2007).

The literature suggests that the perception consumers have about a brand is a main driver for its value or equity. Brand equity has thus been referred to as consumer-based brand equity, which stresses the importance of consumers' attitudes, and behaviour for enhanced brand value based on their brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality and brand loyalty (Aaker, 1991). Accordingly the past, hence a brand's historical background and track record, has thus been assumed to influence how consumers perceive the brand and what they associate with it today (Wiedmann et al., 2011).

Primarily formulated by the German poet Goethe and currently quoted by Karl Lagerfeld, CEO and head designer of the luxury fashion house Chanel, the phrase *“Make a better future by developing elements of the past”* is referred to as one of Chanel's inspiring principles and leitmotifs (Menkes, 2010). Similarly the former CEO of the fashion house Hermès, Jean-Louis Dumas, emphasise the impact heritage can have on a brand's current performance by saying that *“time is our greatest weapon”* arguably referring to the importance of accepting, preserving and using the history and legacy of such a luxury fashion house to enrich the value of its brand (Ricca

& Robins, 2012).

The consumption of luxury fashion brands has expanded enormously on a global level over the last twenty years (The Economist, 2014; Hennings et al., 2015). Even though the industry of luxury fashion, just like other markets, occasionally experience ups and downs, it has been argued that luxury brands are among the ones who suffered the least from the economic crisis in 2008. They were quick to recover arguably based on the general assumption that luxury brands have evolved over time into well-founded establishments, where knowledge, purpose and timelessness of their businesses provide them with valuable leverage, the possibility to resist external pressure, and preserve their legacy (Ricca & Robins, 2012).

The consumption of luxury brands is no longer only available for an exclusive segment of the society and therefore the number of consumers belonging to the luxury fashion industry's consumer base has increased (Menkes, 2002). As a result luxury fashion brands have witnessed a steady growth in their collective brand value (Robins, 2016). Within the luxury fashion industry European brands are those who are contributing to the increase in collective brand value the most (Brujo, 2017; Statista, 2017). This might be due to the fact that Europe, with its remarkable inherited and preserved heritage, is serving as the home for many of the most superior luxury fashion houses (King, 2016).

Meta-luxury is a new term use to describe and assess the essence of true luxury. Meta-luxury acknowledges the importance of knowledge, purpose, and timelessness as principal components of a brand in order to achieve something extraordinary and unique, namely luxury (Ricca & Robins, 2012). Moreover, it has been proclaimed that a majority of those luxury brands, which are considered meta-luxury brands, are based in Europe. Even though the new definition of luxury has acknowledged that the history of such brands is highly essential for their existence, endurance and sustainability, the relationship between heritage and luxury brands has been emphasised long before. There is a general assumption that the majority of the most luxury brands of today, those arguably qualifying as meta-luxury brands, are marked by their notable past and historical roots. The belief is that a strong heritage establishes the soul and heart of a luxury brand, its core values, skills, excellence and quality (Wuestefeld et al., 2012; Jacksson & Haid, 2002). In turn heritage might thus be considered a contributor to the creation of brand value and influence how consumers perceive the value of such luxury brands.

1.2. PROBLEM

Previous research argues that brand heritage influences consumers' perception about a brand, their attitude towards it and how they behave accordingly (Wiedmann et al., 2011). Additionally, there is an assumption that consumer perception, attitude and behaviour towards a brand contribute to its enhanced value (American Marketing Association, 2017, Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993).

A majority of the most influential luxury fashion brands are located in Europe today. It has been argued that they are characterised by their past and marked by their historical roots which highlight the importance to acknowledge heritage as part of their being (Brujo, 2017). Some brands qualify as heritage brands, meaning that they inhabit certain characteristics measured and determined according to a model proposed by Urde et al., (2008).

However, how consumers perceive the value of brand heritage of luxury fashion brands, qualifying as heritage brands, is a topic that has not previously been researched and therefore constitutes a literature gap. Consequently the intention with this study is to contribute to existing literature by filling the identified gap where there is a lack in previous research about how consumers perceive the value of brand heritage of luxury fashion brands. This study argues that it is important to address this gap in the literature because it will add new understandings and knowledge to be used theoretically to enable further research and practically for instance by brand managers.

1.3. PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to explore how consumers perceive the value of brand heritage.

To achieve this purpose, the study will investigate consumers' perception of the value of brand heritage of four European luxury fashion brands – Burberry, Chanel, Gucci, and Louis Vuitton – which serve as illustrative/reference brands in this study. These four European luxury fashion brands are chosen as illustrative brands in this study based on the determination that heritage is a central part of their brands.

1.4. RESEARCH QUESTION

How do consumers perceive the value of brand heritage as a component of luxury fashion brands, illustrated by Burberry, Chanel, Gucci, and Louis Vuitton?

1.5. METHOD

This paper will be conducted by use of two data collection methods of a qualitative nature. The two methods correspond to a collection of both secondary data and primary data. Through Internet based document analysis of the illustrative brands, secondary data will be collected to determine whether these qualify as heritage brands with reference to the Heritage Quotient (HQ) framework (Urde et al., 2007). Additionally primary data from semi-structured interviews will be collected in order to explore how consumers perceive the value of the brand heritage of the illustrative brands. The interviewer will conduct the interviews based on an interview guide with predetermined questions related to the research purpose and the theoretical framework of the study.

1.6. CONTRIBUTIONS

The main contribution of this paper is to add new understandings and knowledge about the value of brand heritage to existing literature. Secondly, previous research about brand heritage has usually taken an organisational approach by focusing on the identity of the brand and the organisation in question; who they are, what they represent, and how they portray themselves to the outside world. Therefore, this study intends to make a theoretical contribution to literature by focusing on consumers and how they perceive the brand heritage of a brand or organization. Finally, the authors want to fill the identified literature gap and therefore make a practical contribution as it might help brand managers of luxury fashion brands, which qualify as heritage brands, in their overall assessment and understanding about how consumers perceive and value the heritage of their brands.

1.7. DELIMITATIONS

The study is limited with regard to the scope of the exploration and the means by which data has been collected seeing that the study has been conducted in Sweden. This means that the concluding assumptions about how consumers' perceive the value of brand heritage of the illustrative brands are with regard to consumers in the Swedish market.

1.8. DEFINITIONS

1.8.1. BRAND

A brand is *“the promise of the bundles of attributes that someone buys and provide satisfaction...The attributes that make up the brand may be real or illusory, rational or emotional, tangible or invisible.”* (Ambler, 1992). The focus is on the perceptions consumers hold or associate with the brand. Those characteristics, attributes or features that constitute the essence of a brand and differentiates products and companies from each other is crucial to comprehend in order to understand how value can be added to the brand (Wood, 2000).

1.8.2. BRAND EQUITY

Brand equity is *“a set of assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name and symbol, that add to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or to that firm's customers”* (Aaker, 1991).

Assets (or liabilities) linked to a brand are separated into distinct categories referred to as name awareness, brand associations, perceived quality, brand loyalty, and other proprietary brand assets (Aaker, 1991). However, it has been argued that *“other proprietary brand assets”* is not suitable to measure brand equity from a consumer perspective (Yoo & Donthun, 2001; Washburn & Plank, 2002). Therefore the four remaining dimensions of Aaker's consumer-based brand equity model is considered and will aid the evaluation and discussion of consumers perception of the value of brand heritage. (Aaker, 1991).

Additionally, Keller (1993) argues that consumers' differential behaviour and response towards a

brand as a direct effect of their brand knowledge is a construct of two components, brand awareness and brand image. Strong, unique and favourable brand associations generate a positive brand image, which as a dimension of brand knowledge affects brand equity positively (Keller, 1993).

Therefore, Keller's discussion about brand awareness and brand associations will be used to complement Aaker's (1991) dimensions as they might provide valuable perspectives and add more substance to the matter about consumers perception of value, which in turn is considered beneficial for this research paper.

1.8.3. LUXURY & META - LUXURY

The conceptualization of meta-luxury serves as the general definition for the term luxury in this study. Meta-Luxury consist of three main elements; *knowledge*, *purpose* and *timelessness* which are linked together, seeing as "*Knowledge, in its widest possible sense, is essential to purpose. Purpose is, in turn, the path towards timelessness.*" (Ricca & Robins, 2012).

1.8.4. BRAND HERITAGE

Brand heritage is "*a dimension of a brand's identity found in its track record, longevity, core values, use of symbols and particularly in an organizational belief that its history is important*". (Urde et al., 2007).

1.8.5. ILLUSTRATIVE BRANDS

The term illustrative brands refers in this study to the four European luxury fashion brands - Burberry, Chanel, Gucci, and Louis Vuitton. These have been selected and serve as illustrative/reference brands based on the determination that they qualify as heritage brands.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The aim of this chapter is to present an explain theories and concepts considered relevant for the purpose of this study. These concepts and theories form the basis for the empirical data analysis conducted in the fourth chapter.

2.1. HERITAGE BRANDS

Brand heritage may be considered a somewhat relevant concept for many different brand types and structures (Urde & Greyser, 2015). Urde, Greyser and Balmer (2007) define brand heritage as *"a dimension of a brand's identity found in its track record, longevity, core values, use of symbols and particularly in an organizational belief that its history is important"*. Further, researchers emphasise the fact that a brand's longevity and sustainability are used to prove that its core values and performance are reliable (Wiedmann, et al., 2011). However, it has been argued that heritage is not the same as history, seeing as history explores and explains the past – what it is - whereas heritage emphasise the past by means of acknowledging its importance for present as well as future purposes and performances. It is therefore argued that all brands have a history, but only a few have a heritage. A heritage brand emphasise history as an essential component of its true identity and clearly bases its value proposition on its heritage (Urde et al, 2007). Consequently, literature suggests that there is a distinguishable difference between brands with a heritage and heritage brands (Balmer & Burghausen, 2015). Whereas heritage brands highlight the fact that heritage is part of their identity and value proposition, brands with a heritage do not, rather they simply acknowledge its existence but they do not use it strategically to embrace the past with the present and the future in unity. Seeing the importance of stating a difference between brands with a heritage and heritage brands, the authors of this paper have chosen to focus on the latter due to the purpose of this study as the past and historical roots, part of a brand's identity and positioning, will be explored from a consumer perspective (Urde et al, 2007).

2.1.1. HERITAGE QUOTIENT, HQ FRAMEWORK: ELEMENTS OF HERITAGE

In order to define heritage brands, and decide if a brand can qualify as such, certain

characteristics are analysed. These characteristics indicate whether and how much heritage that might be present or potentially found in a brand. Such characteristics are track record, longevity, core values, use of symbols, and history (Urde et al., 2007). The original intent with the framework is to analyse the heritage of a brand from an organisational perspective, hence the organisation itself is to analyse the extent to which heritage is an essential component of its identity based on the five dimensions mentioned above. Even so this paper assesses the framework with an intent to explore whether heritage is an essential component of a brand's portrayed existence and being from a consumer perspective.

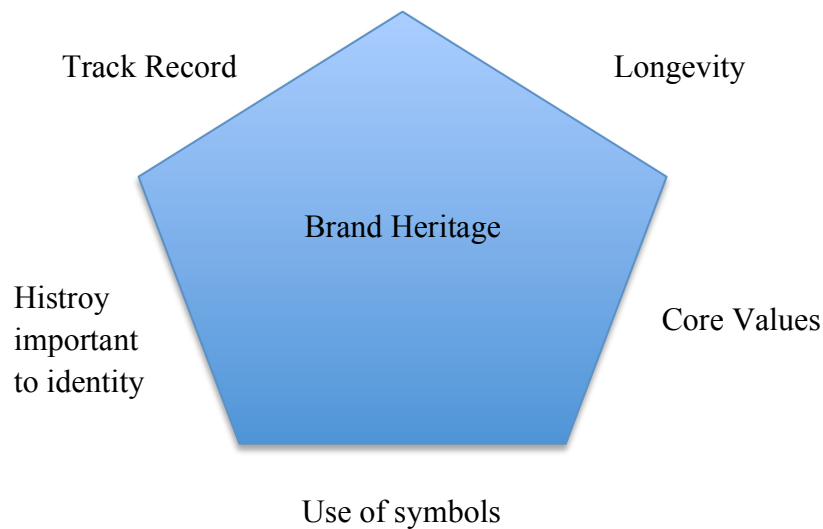


Figure 1: Heritage Quotient Framework – Elements of heritage (Adapted from Urde et al.,2007)

Track Record is an indication that a brand, over time, has been able to successfully communicate and deliver its internally incorporated values and promises to consumers, hence a proof that it has lived up to these in the eyes of the consumers (Urde et al., 2007). Furthermore, it implies that a brand has been able to demonstrably perform on a high level, and when keeping its promises over time it might have been able to arouse a sense of credibility and trust to create a strong relationship with its consumers (Urde et al., 2007). In order to track the demonstrated performance literature suggests that elements such as awareness, associations, perceived quality and loyalty - all being related to a brand's equity - might aid and provide proof of continuity and high quality performance throughout its life-span (Urde et al., 2009). It has further been argued

that a track record might be described as an unwritten contract between the brand and consumers. The perception consumers have about a brand and what they expect it to deliver is arguably based on the brand's behaviour and demonstrated performance, whether or not they have actually lived up to their promises over time. It might thus be argued that a track record as an unwritten contract constitutes the relationship between what the brand promises and the overall perception and expectations consumers have about its performance over time (Urde et al., 2009).

It has been argued that *longevity* over time mirrors the consistency and sustainability of other dimensions of the HQ framework, especially track record and the use of symbols (Urde et al. (2007). Standing alone, longevity is not considered enough to decide whether a brand can qualify as a heritage brand. Nevertheless it is still an essential component in unison with the other dimensions of the brand heritage construct, especially for family-owned organization, those with persistent operationalisation over multiple generations (Urde et al., 2007). Furthermore it has been argued that longevity is about continuous evolvement, meaning that a brand has to honour its core values and identity persistently over time in order for it to remain relevant and trustworthy in the eyes of consumers (Ricca & Robins, 2012).

Academics argue that *core values* constitute those values that permeate a brand, they may lay the foundation for and shape the internal strategies and objectives that drives the performance of a brand. Therefore it might be argued that consumer perceived brand value might stem in the core values of a brand, those values that are carefully managed and nurtured as well as communicated externally to consumers (Urde et al., 2007; Urde, 2009). Core values are considered vital for a brand by means of justifying its essence and identity. A brand will be considered trustworthy and reliable if it consistently attempts to preserve and nurture the values by means of effectively being able to communicate their significance to the surroundings (Urde, 2007; Wuestefeld et al, 2012). If a brand successfully manages to embrace and preserve the core values, achieve consistency in the nurturing and communication of the values essential meaning, as well as effectively incorporate them in the brand's strategies so as to remain true to its identity, the core values might over time become a natural part of the brand and its heritage (Urde, 2007). It is considered critical for a brand that its core values are being communicated both externally and internally on equal terms. There is an assumption saying that the brand has to communicate their core values externally in a credible and trustworthy manner, consistently over time, in order for

consumers to perceive the value of the brand. Literature suggests that as consumers' confidence and trust for the brand is strengthened, their perception of the value of the brand increases (Urde, 2009).

Continuing the discussion about the different HQ dimensions, it has been considered relevant to acknowledge the *use of symbols* by means of reflecting and expressing what a brand really is, what it stands for, and its heritage (Urde et al., 2007). The use of symbols, relate to logos or designs and are assumed to illustrate the brand's core meaning (Urde et al., 2007).

Furthermore, *history* is an element considered important for a brand's identity and is therefore supposed to influence how it operates today (Urde et al., 2007). Literature suggests that corporate brands are understood as being in history as well as having a history, meaning that these brands are shaped by the past as much as they shape it. They contribute to the making of future history in their contemporary setting (Urde et al., 2007; Balmer & Burghausen, 2015).

As stated above, this paper will focus on consumer perceived value of brand heritage. Hence, the aforementioned HQ framework will be adapted appropriately to conform to the purpose of this study. The modification of the model will involve minor alteration of the dimensions conceptualization, meaning that they will be defined and viewed from a consumer perspective rather than from an organisational perspective as in the original version. Therefore, when referring to the different dimensions of the model during the analysis, the authors of this paper have chosen to adjust them accordingly.

Track Record: How do consumers perceive the value of the track record of the illustrative brands?

Longevity: How do consumers perceive the value of the longevity of the illustrative brands?

Core Values: How do consumers perceive the value of the core values of the illustrative brands?

Use of Symbols: How do consumers perceive the value of the various symbols, logos, or designs used by and related to the illustrative brands?

History: How do consumers perceive the value of the history of the illustrative brands and how do they relate it to the brands' identity?

2.2. CONSUMER PERCEIVED VALUE

There is extensive controversy about the conceptualization of perceived value in literature today (Aulia et al., 2016; Sánchez-Fernández & Iniesta-Bonillo, 2007). Despite different opinions about the complexity of the concept and its construct there is a general agreement that it considers the relationship between a consumer and a product (or brand) (Aulia et al., 2016). Furthermore it has been argued that the value of a brand as perceived by consumers should be considered with respect to its nature regarding situational, personal and comparative aspects. Additionally literature suggests that consumers perceive the value of a brand in a certain manner based on individual preferences about brand characteristics and interpretations of brand performance, together with a combination of intellectual and emotional associations about the authenticity of a brand (Aulia et al., 2016; Sánchez-Fernández & Iniesta-Bonillo, 2007). It is assumed that one can relate consumers' perception about the value of a brand to their general attitude and interpretation about it based on their brand awareness and the characteristic they associate with it (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993). With this being said consumers evaluate the value of a product (or brand) based on their general perception about it with regard to their awareness about the brand and what they associate with it. Consequently, the extent to which the associations can be regarded as strong, unique and favourable further emphasise consumers perception of the value of a brand (Keller, 1993).

2.3. CONSUMER PERCEIVED VALUE OF BRAND HERITAGE

Even though the separate concepts of perceived value and brand heritage have received a growing interest among academics for quite some time, both of them combined, hence consumers perception of the value of brand heritage, is a relatively unexplored field of research (Aulia et al., 2016; Wuestefeld et al., 2012). Nevertheless, scholars investigating this argue that heritage might create value as perceived by consumers based on what they associate with the brand in terms of added depth, authenticity and credibility. This statement is supported by Urde et al., (2007) as they in their deliberation of brand heritage argue that consumers' perception of the value of a brand might be influenced by their overall perception of the heritage and authenticity of it. They

further argue that if consumers perceive the heritage of a brand as an essential and positive component of its being their loyalty towards the brand increases (Urde et al., 2007). Additionally, literature suggests that the extent to which consumers are aware of, and favourably associate the heritage aspect with a brand can impose a sense of trust and reliability. Consequently the heritage of a brand might also impact the perception consumers have about the quality of the brand, or else the products offered by the brands, which arguably is regarded as a main driver of consumer-based brand equity, hence consumer perceived value of the brand. Increased loyalty and high-perceived quality as a reflection of the heritage consumers relate to a brand might influence their willingness to pay a higher price for the products offered by the brand (Wuestefeld et al., 2012; Aaker, 1991). It might thus be assumed that consumers' perception of the value of a heritage brand is an effect of their perception about its trustworthiness, credibility, and high quality, as well as their overall loyalty towards the brand (Wuestefeld et al., 2012).

With regard to the purpose of this study it has been decided that Aaker's (1991) consumers-based brand equity model – with support from Keller (1993) - will aid the evaluation and discussion of consumers' perception of the value of brand heritage

2.4. CONSUMER-BASED BRAND EQUITY

The dimensions of Aaker's (1991) consumer-based brand equity model, together justifying the value and strength of a brand, is henceforth presented and thoroughly evaluated.

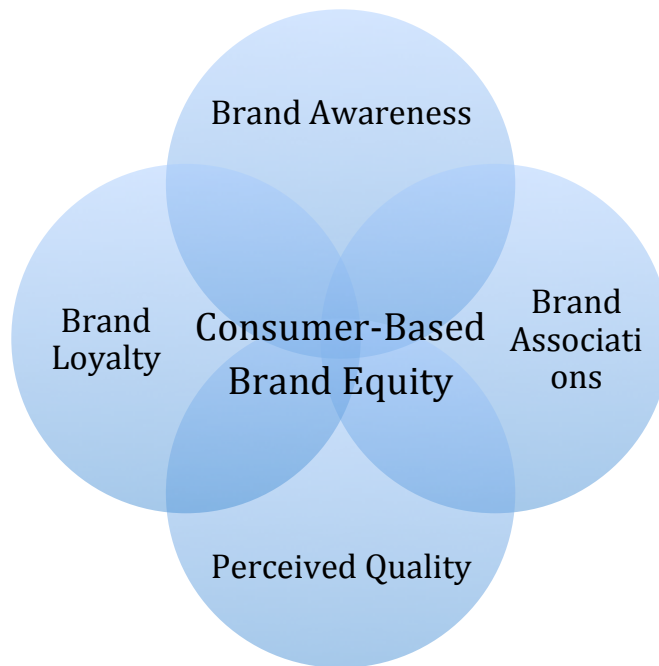


Figure 2: Consumer-Based Brand Equity model (Modified version adapted form Aaker’s 1991 model)

2.4.1. BRAND AWARENESS

Brand awareness refers to the position a brand has taken in the minds of the consumers, how familiar they are with a brand and their ability to recognize and recall the brand relative to others (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993). Keller (1993) argues that brand awareness consists of brand recognition and brand recall. Brand recognition refers to consumers’ ability to remember an exposure to a brand in the past. It has been argued that consumers might develop positive associations about a brand only by recognising it (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 1993). Brand recall however, relates to consumers’ ability to recall or retrieve a brand from their minds given a specific product category. This requires a much stronger brand position in their memory than the ability to simply recognise a brand (Aaker, 1991). A brand is considered to be dominant when it is the only one to be recalled by a majority of the consumers within a specific product category (Aaker, 1991). Even though this is highly favourable the importance of brand awareness is still to make sure that consumers actually recognise and recall the brand, which in turn affect their perception about the brand and how they act accordingly (Keller, 1993).

2.4.2. BRAND ASSOCIATIONS

Brand associations consist of all perceptions, beliefs, feelings, images, experiences, and attitudes persistent in consumers' minds of a specific brand (Kotler & Keller, 2006). It is considered the most important dimension of brand equity with a belief that it is the prime factor linking the consumer to a brand (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993). Keller (1993) suggests that strong, unique, and favourable brand associations result in a positive brand image, which thus contributes to increased brand equity. Accordingly, Aaker (1991) state that brand image is the composition of associations linked to a brand in consumer minds. He also argues that brand associations can create value and thus increase brand equity by influencing brand recall and consumers purchasing decisions, generate positive attitudes or feelings towards a brand, differentiate the brand, and lay the foundation of brand loyalty (Aaker, 1991). This is further highlighted by the argument that the meaning of a brand for consumers relates to the perceptions they have about it based on brand associations in their memory (Keller, 1993).

2.4.3. PERCEIVED QUALITY

Perceived quality relate to consumers' perception about the quality of a product or service with regard to its intended purpose and supposed performance (Aaker, 1991). Perceived quality is basically consumers overall perception about the quality and superiority of a brand (Aaker, 1996). It is supposed to increase the perceived value of the brand, hence brand equity, by means of influencing consumers brand choice, their intention to purchase the brand, and their willingness to pay premium prices (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 1993). In order for a brand to generate high quality products and services, and thus be able to strengthen the perception of value of the brand, it is important to acquire knowledge about, and understand what consumers actually associate with quality and what it means to them (Aaker, 1996).

2.4.4. BRAND LOYALTY

There is a belief that the awareness, associations and perceived quality of a brand influence brand loyalty positively – and that it in turn influence them back - which means that loyalty could arise

from consumers' perception about the brand's quality or as an effect from the favourable, strong, and unique associations they have about it (Aaker, 1991). Brand loyalty considers consumers' attitude towards a brand and the effect it has on their decision-making and purchasing behaviour as it measures the extent to which consumers are attached to a brand (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993). This is based on the fact that consumers consider what the brand can do for them, whether the brand can keep and has kept its promises, and if it can provide them with superior value (Aaker, 1991) Due to perceptions based on favourable, strong, and unique associations generating a positive brand image, brands with a high level of loyalty benefit from a strong and committed customer base (Keller, 1993). Literature further suggests that a combination of consumer perceived value and a general attitude of trust associated with a brand generate a high level of loyalty (Taylor et al., 2004).

2.5. CHOICE OF THEORIES

The authors decision to explore consumer perception of the value of brand heritage of the illustrative brands stem in the fact that they believe - supported by literature and a general assumption - that a majority of most luxury fashion brands today are ostensibly marked by their past and historical roots (Wuestefeld et al., 2012).

The HQ framework arguably intends to analyse brand heritage from an organizational perspective (Urde et al., 2007). However, literature suggests that a brand's identity, what they are and how they want to be portrayed, should correspond to a brand's image and how consumers really perceive the brand, as a generator of brand value (Larsson, 2007). Consequently, the same dimensions used to measure brand heritage from an organizational perspective will thus in this exploratory study be used to look into the heritage of brands as perceived by consumers.

Moreover, in order to aid the evaluation of consumer perception of the value of brand heritage, four out of five dimensions of Aaker's (1991) consumer-based brand equity model is considered. In other words consumers' awareness and associations about the heritage of the illustrative brands are deliberated in addition to how their perception of brand heritage might affect perceived quality as well as brand loyalty.

3. METHODOLOGY

The chapter serves to explain and defend the methods used within this study. This includes the deliberation of the research approach, the data collection methods, and justification for the selection of relevant and valuable sources. Furthermore it will present the illustrative cases, describe the data analysis method and conclude with a discussion about the trustworthiness of the study.

3.1. QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHOD

This exploratory study is based on a qualitative approach. Research of a qualitative nature emphasise words and symbols in a specific context with an attempt to understand the social reality of people and how they interpret their surroundings. Quantitative research however generally gathers statistical data with an intention to investigate and examine specific variables and their relationship, focusing particularly on the variables quantity, extent, capacity, and frequency (Christensen et al., 2016). Qualitative research intends to understand how people in a certain social setting experience and perceives things (Creswell, 2014). Such is generally considered appropriate by means of creating clarity within a specific field, concept, phenomenon or research topic marked by confusion or ambiguity. (Jacobsen, 2002).

Therefore, when it comes to research topics intended to explore perceptions, attitudes, associations and meanings of individuals in a social setting and how they behave accordingly - such as in this study intending to explore consumers perception of the value of brand heritage of the illustrative brands - a qualitative approach is considered preferable (Creswell, 2014; Christensen et al., 2016).

3.2. RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY: INTERPRETIVISM AND SUBJECTIVISM

A research philosophy should reflect a particular study's approach to knowledge - how new knowledge is developed - based on assumptions about how the world is viewed (Saunders et al., 2009). Epistemology is one way to think about research philosophy and considers how knowledge is formed and the meaning of it. Ontology, however, considers how the reality, hence the social setting being investigated or explored, is viewed (Saunders et al., 2009). There are two major contrasting epistemological approaches applicable to different studies; interpretivism and

positivism (Bryman & Bell, 2011). *Interpretivism* intends to interpret and understand the subjective meaning of a social context considering perceptions of individuals in a social setting as a whole, whereas *positivism* base conclusions on facts with the assumption that "*the researcher is independent of and neither affects nor is affected by the subject of the research*" (Remenyi et al., 1998). Furthermore, a main characteristic of positivism is that it intends to make generalisations about a social setting while in contrast interpretivist tend to emphasise the complexities and uniqueness of an ever-changing situation (Saunders et al., 2009).

Subjectivism and objectivism account for two opposing aspects of ontology. They are based on varied assumption of the essence of reality and how it is viewed. *Subjectivism* assumes that the perceptions of actors in a social setting creates and constitutes the reality. *Objectivism* however argue that the reality constitutes a social setting which is viewed external to and separated from the actors operating in it (Saunders et al., 2009).

The intention to explore consumers' perception of the value of brand heritage of the illustrative brands therefore suggests that this study is marked by an interpretivist epistemology supported by a subjective ontology (Saunders et al., 2009).

3.3. ABDUCTIVE RESEARCH APPROACH

Literature talks about three different approaches to address a research purpose defined either by deductive, inductive, or abductive reasoning (Bryman, 2016; Jacobsen, 2002)

Deductive reasoning refers to a theory testing approach. Theories or expectations about a specific research topic, social setting, or phenomena are developed and tested against a collection of data, which either confirm or contradict the proposed hypothesis (Jacobsen, 2002; Creswell, 2014; Saunders et al., 2009). The *inductive approach* is on the other hand referred to as theory building. It generally involves the interpretation and analysis of data collected through the observation of a specific topic, social setting or phenomena by means of generating new understandings about a matter through the development of theories (Jacobsen, 2002; Saunders et al., 2009). Deductive and inductive reasoning might seem rather conclusive in their conceptualisations. However, the *abductive approach* as another more open approach, combines inductive and deductive elements – those that might be considered most appropriate for the purpose of a specific research paper -

and therefore support the reasoning behind this study (Bryman, 2016; Jacobsen, 2002).

The authors originally selected the theories after critical evaluation of the research purpose. Data was thereafter collected, interpreted and explored in order to conclude whether it would match the proposed expectations and selected theories. Since theories thus lay the foundation for collecting data, the study incorporates some deductive elements of reasoning (Saunders et al., 2009). Furthermore the authors used qualitative data collection methods to explore and understand consumers' perception of the research topic, which indicate that some inductive elements complement the deductive ones. Consequently, these statements support the fact that this study is based on an abductive approach (Bryman, 2016; Jacobsen, 2002).

3.4. QUALITATIVE DATA AND DATA COLLECTION METHOD

3.4.1. PRIMARY AND SECONDARY DATA

Embraced by a qualitative research approach this research paper exhibits two different sources of data collected through qualitative means. The process of collecting data started with the exploration and analysis of online documents and material about the illustrative brands. Data from such sources is considered secondary since others previously have gathered it with an original intent to serve a different purpose. Even so the authors collected and analysed such data to provide evidence that the illustrative brands qualify as heritage brands in order to further explore how consumers perceive the heritage of these brands based on the collected primary data (Jacobsen, 2002). Nevertheless in order to estimate the reliability and trustworthiness of secondary sources they have to be heavily scrutinized and evaluated to decide whether they qualify as credible sources appropriate for a study to fulfil its intended purpose (Jacobsen, 2002; Christensen et al., 2016). Subsequently, the authors selected semi-structured interviews as the qualitative method to obtain primary data about consumers' perceptions of the value of brand heritage. Information is thus collected directly from a first-hand source, hence the respondents being interviewed (Jacobsen, 2002). The decision to use a combination of both primary and secondary data stem in the assumption that it is considered highly favourable for a study to gather information from two different kinds of sources (Jacobsen, 2002). As this study collects data by use of both semi-structured interviews and online document analysis, instead of being dependent

on a single source, the different types of data will be able to complement, support and control each other. With support from the two sources the findings and final conclusion in this study might be considered more reliable and trustworthy, enabling the fulfilment of the purpose in a highly refined manner (Jacobsen, 2002).

3.4.2. DATA COLLECTION THROUGH INTERVIEWS

The examination of Internet based documents related to the illustrative brands of the study provide a relevant collection of data used to prove that the illustrative brands - Burberry, Chanel, Gucci, and Louis Vuitton - qualify as heritage brands. Consequently, even though such documents and material are regarded as secondary sources they are still considered qualitative in their nature and will thus complement the interviews, the primary source of collecting qualitative data (Christensen et al., 2016).

By means of exploring consumer perceptions of the value of heritage, the authors seek to observe, explore, and obtain words, experiences, knowledge, associations, and the general perception of the respondents participating in the interviews since these are among other elements considered highly significant in the attempt to comprehend contextual meaning in a qualitative research (Christensen et al. 2016).

There are different types of interviews used to collect data in research, both qualitative and quantitative (Bryman & Bell, 2011). However, since this study is of a qualitative nature, qualitative interviews will be the only ones deliberated here. Consequently there are certain characteristics of such interviews that are worth emphasising to not confuse them with quantitative ones (Bryman, 2016). Quantitative interviews are structured in a well-defined and validated manner by means of measuring essential variables or concepts, while qualitative interviews are substantially less structured and tend to focus more on the person being interviewed with an emphasis on observing respondents' perception and attitude about an issue. Furthermore, they tend to be more flexible and adaptive based on responses from the interviewees and their perception about relevant and essential elements of the topic. Detailed and comprehensive replies are likewise desirable and highly valued instead of short and general answers to single questions (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Therefore, based on the defining

characteristics advocated above the authors decided to use qualitative interviews as the principal method to collect data. Consequently, the authors considered the method to be highly preferable due to the assumption that it will give the respondents a chance to associate freely around the specific topic and further digging deeper into the elements they consider are the most essential ones. This will contribute to valuable and comprehensive information and knowledge about their perceptions, highly beneficial for the deliberation of the research purpose (Christensen et al., 2016).

Qualitative interviews might be referred to as an umbrella term for various types of interviews conducted in different situations and settings. The number of people being questioned as well as the number of interviewers might vary depending on the situation, whether it is a personal interview, a focus group, or a panel interview (Christensen et al. 2014). However two forms referred to as unstructured and semi-structured interviews are considered the most essential ones, where the later has been selected as the most appropriate method for this research purpose (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Semi-structured interviews allows the interviewer to partially control the interview and guide the respondents towards the relevant issues and concepts of the study, in contrast to unstructured interviews often compared to ordinary conversations between the two parties. They do also allow the respondent to freely associate around those specific topics discussed by means of digging deeper into the concepts (Bryman & Bell, 2011). A list of predetermined questions, hence an interview guide, was assembled by the authors before conducting the interviews as it is advised to do so (Christensen et al., 2014). Further, the questions were not always asked in the same specific order and follow-up questions or questions associated with respondents replies were sometimes added to the final set of questions actually asked, as semi-structured interviews generally allows this (Bryman, 2016).

A decision was taken by the authors to record the interviews, as it is highly advisable to do so in qualitative research (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Recordings allow the authors, acting both as researchers and interviewers, to focus attentively on the respondents and the conversations in full, ask questions, listen to the answers, and be flexible by adapting to shifting nuances and turns of the discussion (Christensen et al., 2014). They also enable the authors to repeatedly listen to the interviews after they have been conducted in order to thoroughly analyse the content and extract all relevant information and valuable material for the purpose of the research (Bryman & Bell,

2011). In addition to recordings, notes were taken during the interviews. Since both of the authors writing this research paper were present during the interviews, one acted interviewer while the other took notes and observed. The notes are thus able to complement the recordings, highlight statements made by the respondent, and enable the authors to remember the interviews as accurately as possible (Christensen et al. 2014).

3.4.3. SELECTION OF RESPONDENTS

The respondents participating in the interviews were selected based on purposive sampling, which is generally associated with the selection of a specific sample for the purpose of a qualitative research (Bryman, 2016). The opposite is probability sampling often used within quantitative research, where each and every possible respondent or unit within a population has an equal chance of being selected, hence the approach is based more on statistical representation of a population as a whole (Christensen et al., 2014). Purposive, or non-probability, sampling however is focusing on the importance to obtain valuable data from respondents based on their knowledge and understanding about a specific topic, phenomenon, or social setting (Christensen et al. 2014). Consequently, the use of purposive sampling within this qualitative study suggest that that the research purpose is supposed to give an indication about what units to sample which means that the respondents participating in the semi-structured interviews were not selected randomly but rather based on a set of criteria evaluating their relevance and validity for the study (Bryman, 2016).

The criterion states that the selection of respondents should be consumers or potential consumers of any of the illustrative brands. Thus they are supposed to have bought something from Burberry, Chanel, Gucci, or Louis Vuitton, or else had the intention to do so. Accordingly, the respondents are therefore expected to have at least some knowledge or experience about these brand in order to be able to contribute with their perceptions about the research topic.

In order to find appropriate respondents based on the criterion set above, the authors searched fan pages of the illustrative brands on online social networks such as Facebook and Instagram. The objective was to connect with those who had “liked” any of the fan pages, with the assumption that they would be somewhat familiar with the brand and have knowledge or perhaps some

experience about it. This specific approach to sampling is purposive since respondents are selected based on their expected relevance for the research purpose (Christensen et al., 2014).

Additionally the authors searched for qualifying respondents among those they believe inhabit valuable knowledge about the research topic. For instance store managers of more exclusive brand stores were asked due to their presumed knowledge as promoters of brands. Further, people who had or are working in the industry of fashion, thereby considered experienced and knowledgeable, were also asked (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

Furthermore, since the authors could not find a proper amount of suitable, relevant, and available respondents from those who had liked the fan pages or among those being asked based on their presumed knowledge about the research topic, snowball sampling was used as a complement to sample additional respondents. Snowball sampling means that based on recommendations or other similar guidance from the purposive sample originally selected, the authors got in contact with other appropriate respondents relevant as samples for the purpose of the study (Bryman, 2016).

Nine people are the total number of respondents selected to participate in the semi-structured interviews by use of different sampling approaches. Three respondents were sampled through the search of fan pages. One respondent is working as a store manager, and two others have previous experience of working within the fashion industry. Finally the three remaining respondents were selected based on snowball sampling

Except the qualifying criterion respondents have to meet in order to be selected, other personal information based on demographic variables is not considered purposeful for this explorative paper (Bryman & Bell, 2011). A decision was therefore made not to publish any such information related to the respondents participating in the interviews. Nevertheless, some collective information about the respondents reveal that all are women between the ages 20 to 80 years which gives the study a more comprehensive and wide-ranging sample selection of the entire population of the illustrative brands' consumer base. The fact that most respondents are of similar gender is not regarded as a lack of credibility since literature suggests that women actually account for a majority of the consumers within the fashion retail industry (Evens et al., 2008). So rather it might be assumed that the sample selection thus represents the reality of the social

setting being explored as a relevant and trustworthy sample of the population.

3.4.4. SELECTING AND ANALYSING THE ILLUSTRATIVE BRANDS

The research design of this paper requires the authors to collect data from both primary and secondary sources, which is highly beneficial for a study rather than to rely on a single one (Jacobsen, 2002). Secondary data collected from Internet based sources related to the illustrative brands is used to prove they qualify as heritage brands. To narrow the study segment to a specified targeted sample, this study is focusing exclusively on the European market. The authors believe that Europe itself inhabits certain characteristics that add to the heritage reflected upon those luxury brands who are calling this particular market their home. It is assumed that the brands Burberry, Chanel, Gucci, and Louis Vuitton - eventually selected as study illustrations - clearly belong to the top section of luxury fashion brands based in Europe and they are considered to inhabit clearly visible - and for this study - valuable characteristics of being marked by their past and historical roots according to the HQ framework (Statista, 2017; Wuestefeld et al., 2012; Urde et al., 2007). Furthermore, given that different European countries serve as their historical home, and that they all operate in Sweden where the study is conducted, makes them more relevant as illustrative brands (Lundgren, 2016; Arnell, 2011; Gucci, 2017; Louis Vuitton, 2017b).

When documents of all sorts are analysed to collect relevant and effective data for the purpose of a research paper, four criteria are considered essential to acknowledge (Bryman & Bell, 2011). These four criteria; authenticity, credibility, representativeness, and meaning of content being analysed, should be assessed in order to evaluate the quality and validity of considered material (Bryman, 2016). Due to the vast amount of information, material, documents and all sorts of content circulating the Internet today, it is considered even more essential to cautiously evaluate acquired material based on the four criteria stated above (Bryman, 2016). The exploration and analysis of Burberry's, Chanel's, Gucci's, and Louis Vuitton's official websites and other related virtual documents will be based on the HQ framework and evaluated according to its five dimensions (Urde et al. 2007) by means of providing evidence that the illustrative brands qualify as heritage brands.

3.5. ILLUSTRATIVE BRAND:

3.5.1. BURBERRY

Burberry is a British luxury fashion brand founded in 1854 by Thomas Burberry (Burberry, 2017d), which arguably qualify as a heritage brand. The logo, as a visual representation of the brand, emphasise that symbols are used as means to convey their identity. Another example include the Burberry check introduced during the 1920s, thereafter registered as a trademark, and still incorporated within their product lines today. Also the trench coat, patented in 1912, is an iconic symbol regularly given in updated versions (Burberry, 2017d). Burberry emphasise its history and tradition as an established outdoor clothing producer of exclusive quality products, incorporated in the legacy of the brand's founder. Furthermore the brand clearly state that their heritage of innovation and craftsmanship are deeply embedded in their business operations (Burberry, 2017c). The dimension of track record is among others represented by the brand's invention of the gabardine fabric, in 1879, and the trench coat during the beginning of the 1900s. Moreover, the brand highlights iconic products and fashion inventions as part of its heritage (Burberry, 2017b) as means to acknowledge the authenticity of the brand's entire product portfolio (Urde & Greyser, 2015). The dimension of longevity is reflected by the fact that the brand was founded in 1857, and has ever since gradually built up its reputation as a well-established luxury brand. Hence, the brand started as an outdoor clothing manufacturer and has ever since been associated with great quality (Burberry, 2017d). The brand's core values, protect, explore, and inspire, are used to foster a culture that includes a global mindset and entrepreneurial spirit, with an emphasis of understanding the importance of responsibility (Burberry, 2017a).

3.5.2. CHANEL

Chanel is a French luxury fashion brand created by Gabrielle Chanel, who opened her first store in 1910 (Chanel, 2017a), which is argued to qualify as a heritage brand. The brand's use of symbols is among others presented in its iconic products, for instance the Little Black Dress - still introduced in updated versions today - the perfume Chanel No.5, the 2.55 quilted bag, and the

tweed suit. Also, the brand uses its logo and specific signature colours such as black, white, and beige which have been persistent over time, ensuring the consistency and nurturing in their use of symbols portraying who they are (Krick, 2004; Chanel, 2017a). Furthermore, the brand is focusing a lot on its décor in stores to communicate their identity and core meaning, hence their flagship stores presents vintage furniture, and combinations of the brand's signature colours (Yurtbay, 2014). This also acknowledges the importance history has for the brand. The brand's knowledge about the female body, which has been in focus ever since the start is an evident example of the brands track record. Hence, the brand dresses women comfortable, but still elegantly (Krick, 2004). Longevity is represented by the age of the brand. Further it was established in a time where women were expected to dress in a particular way, Gabrielle Chanel therefore revolutionised women's way of dressing (Chanel, 2017c). The brand's core values, perfectionism, heritage, "less is more", quality, and elegancy are all rooted in the legacy of the founder, which the brand incorporates still today (Yurtbay, 2014).

3.5.3. GUCCI

Gucci is an Italian luxury fashion brand founded in 1921 by Guccio Gucci (WWD, 2017), which arguably qualify as a heritage brand. This is represented by the brand's use of symbols as means to portray their core meaning and identity. The brand has attached its logo, the GG logo, to its leather products and clothing (WWD, 2017). Further it is famous for its green-red-green web, which clearly identifies the brand. The brand has been a favourite brand for different celebrities, which emphasises the brand's status as a luxury brand (Gucci PPR, 2017). Moreover, the brand's history is represented by the Gucci family which have managed the brand for generations, always with the aim to convey the legacy of the founder, thus making the brand's history important to its identity (Menkes, 2010). Their track record is arguably represented by their continuous attempt to consistently deliver according to consumers' expectations with regard to their values, traditions and promises, especially emphasising their high quality product, craftsmanship, and innovation (Gucci PPR, 2017) Furthermore, the founder invented the woven canapa in 1935 which was a new material introduced to the market at that time. The brand was established in 1921, meaning that they have been around for long as a given brand of the luxury fashion industry (WWD, 2017). Moreover, the brand values craftsmanship, innovation and quality with an emphasis on

leather products, and has therefore developed a status as a lifestyle brand for the rich and famous (Gucci PPR, 2017). However, the brand has recently changed direction under new creative directors by focusing on being contemporary, romantic and eclectic in order to contribute with something novel and trendy to the luxury fashion market (Kering, 2017).

3.5.4. LOUIS VUITTON

Louis Vuitton is a French luxury fashion brand founded in 1854 (LVMH, 2017) argued to qualify as a heritage brand. The brand's use of symbols is visual apparent, seeing as they incorporate its identifying logo, patterns and colours on their products. The brand is particularly known for its monogram print and bags such as the Steamer (LVMH, 2017). The history of the brand emphasise the legacy of its founder, Louis Vuitton, as a known craftsman and maker of trunks. Also, the brand evolved through the development of transportation meaning that it adapted its products to suit the characteristics of travellers (LVMH, 2017). The brand has persistently focused on keeping its core consumer, the jet setter, meaning that they have acknowledge its heritage as a travel brand and accordingly demonstrably performed and honoured its core vales and promises, hence a clearly defined track record (Fashionista, 2017). The longevity of the brand might be considered with regard to its age as it was founded in 1854 and has remained respected within the luxury fashion industry ever since. Furthermore, the brand was established in a time when travellers needed to protect their belongings with the use of trunks, which still today identifies the brands (Louis Vuitton, 2017a). As of today, the brand values its heritage of being a known maker of trunks, and its adventurous spirit, evident in the brand's innovation and daring designs (LVMH, 2017).

3.6. DATA ANALYSIS

Researchers argue that the distinction between the data collection and the analysis of it is an ongoing process and should therefore be implemented parallel to each other. Therefore, the authors decided to work with the data right after it was collected in order to enable a thorough and comprehensive analysis. The researchers, hence the authors of this paper, are the analytical instrument (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

The interview guide used during the interviews contains questions based on the HQ framework so as to provide relevant data in order to conduct the analysis. The empirical findings of this paper are analysed according to the theoretical framework, meaning that the chapter has been structured according to the different dimensions of the HQ framework where the data is analysed accordingly. The findings based on the conducted analysis are thereafter discussed in depth in order to come to a conclusion about how consumers perceive the value of the brand heritage of the illustrative brands.

3.7. TRUSTWORTHINESS

In order for this study to be considered credible, replicable and neutral it is important to emphasise its trustworthiness. To analyse a study's trustworthiness, Lincoln and Guba (1985) present some criteria; credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability. The authors chose to analyse this paper from these criteria due to their relevancy and appropriateness for qualitative studies (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

Credibility should present the reason for a study to be true (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The authors chose to interview respondents with a particular interest and knowledge about the research topic in order to comprehend valuable insights and thus be able to evaluate consumers' perception about the value of brand heritage. The interviews were conducted face-to-face or performed over the phone. The authors considered the first more preferable since it increases the likelihood of interpreting the respondents replies more accurately. The interviews were recorded and performed in rooms with no disturbances to disrupt. Furthermore, Shenton (2004) argues that triangulation is a method used to determine if a study is considered trustworthy. Hence, triangulation includes the use of different methods, such as the combination of semi-structured interviews and Internet based document analysis of the illustrative brands, in order to increase the credibility of the paper.

The study should be useful in other and similar situations as well, therefore the dimension of transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In order to manage this, the authors have provided a comprehensive description of the methodology. Hence, it is well formulated and relevant so that other researchers will gain a deeper understanding of the approach. Furthermore, the authors have

presented a clear problem discussion, theoretical framework, a proper analysis of the data collected, and a discussion of the findings. By examining these sections, other researchers have the possibility to determine whether the research design can be useful in other situations as well. Furthermore, by separating the purpose from the context it is possible to research the same purpose in other contexts simultaneously.

The third criterion is confirmability should give proof of the neutrality of the study, hence it should be looked upon from the perspective of the respondents and not from the researchers (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The authors made sure to have a natural mind-set during the interviews and further when analysing the data. Shenton (2004) suggests some methods in order to confirm the confirmability of the paper. Also, the respondents received the guarantee of remaining anonymous and the only personal questions asked were about their age and occupation. Since the respondents were reassured that no personal information related to them would be published, they were more confident and therefore more willing to discuss openly with the authors during the interview. One shortcoming however was the use of phone as a means of interviewing some respondents. The authors would rather have conducted all interviews face-to-face seeing as they believe that it would have given them a better understanding of the respondent in question. However, limitations concerning resources and time occurred, and therefore, some interviews were made over the phone instead. Furthermore, since the interviews were conducted in Swedish and translated to English credibility issues might arise. However, the authors of this paper ensured that the translation was made very thoroughly. This was possible with the aid of different formal encyclopaedias.

The fourth criterion is dependability, which should ensure the consistency of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This paper is therefore constructed with clear and well-defined sections, so that it follows a clear path, making it easy to understand and follow the authors' line of reasoning. Furthermore, the same interviewer conducted all the interviews in order to assure consistency in the manner they were performed. Also, the interview questions were designed so as to relate to the different dimensions of the HQ framework to ensure their relevancy for this particular study. Though, some flexibility and modifications of the questions were offered, since the authors thus are able to understand the perceptions of each separate respondent more accurately. The interview guide is found in appendix 7.1.

3.8. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

All respondents were asked for permission to be recorded as it is considered extremely important to do so for the sake of integrity matters (Christensen et al., 2014). If respondents were to disapprove, notes would be taken as the only means to record the interview.

Further highlighting the importance of integrity matters no personal information about the people participating in the interviews are published in this study. All respondents are therefore anonymised in order to protect their integrity since their identity is not considered relevant for the purpose of this paper, only their perception about the topic being explored

4. EMPIRICAL DATA ANALYSIS

This section presents the analysis of the data collected, constructed with regard to the HQ framework due to its relevancy for the purpose of analysing consumers' perceptions of the value of brand heritage of the illustrative brands according to the theoretical framework presented in chapter two.

4.1. TRACK RECORD

Track record is an indication that a brand successfully has been able to perform on a high level by delivering its promises and values to consumers over time (Urde et al., 2007). In order to look closer into how consumers perceive the value of track record the respondents were asked questions about what aspects of the illustrative brands appeals to them the most and why.

Overall the respondents associate aspects such as luxury, exclusivity, quality, and high premium prices with these brands. Furthermore they regard the brands as established luxury fashion brands due to the fact that they have a long lived history, which indicatively appeals to them. Respondents do also claim that these illustrative brands are selling an identity that they represent a certain kind of lifestyle and personality, reflected upon consumers who buy products from these brands. In turn this might generate a sense of belonging as respondents talk about social acceptance, saying they want to make a statement about who they are, what they want to be perceived as, and what they want to be associated with. Contrariwise, there is a claim that consumers rather want to prove something to the surroundings by buying these products, hence a matter of status and power. The illustrative brands are perceived as symbols of status mainly due to their exclusivity according to respondents. They perceive them as such partly because the supply is extremely limited compared to the demand which accordingly makes the products even more interesting and positively influence their perception of the brands value. This argument is further emphasized as the respondents claim that they are attracted by these brands due to the *"pleasure of having something that not everybody has"*. Furthermore they do also assert that the exclusivity is a trigger for premium prices, which in turn makes the even more exclusive.

Even though all respondents claim that quality is an essential criterion for the existence of the illustrative brands - they expect them to perform on a high level with high quality products - their perception about quality is quite ambiguous. Some argue that quality itself exclusively

characterizes the illustrative brands and also is a generator for high premium prices. However on the contrary there is an argument saying that the quality of the materials and the textiles used to produce the products can only be *"good enough"*. Accordingly, respondents who clearly demonstrate a great interest and knowledge about the illustrative brands and the fashion industry as a whole due to for instance previous working experiences, collectively argue that the quality between the illustrative brands and less luxury fashion brands do not differ that much. Rather they claim the craftsmanship and the design have a greater impact on how consumers perceive the value of the illustrative brands.

Indicatively respondents have high expectations about the brands in general especially concerning the durability of the products since the brands are well-established with a history traced far back in time. One respondent mentions that she associates the meticulous craftsmanship and design of the illustrative brands with their history and heritage, that she assumes they have emerged into what they are today due to their persistent focus on these important aspects over time. This is supported by other respondents who claim the brands have been able to demonstrably perform on a very high level over time according to aspects such as high quality, extremely well-crafted products and refined design, which thus contribute to their perception about them as exclusive and luxury brands.

Timelessness in connection to the durability aspect of products is also something the respondents relate to the brands heritage and history. Indicatively they perceive the heritage of the illustrative brands as proof that these persistently have been able to perform and deliver on certain accounts with regard to consumers' expectations, which is the reason why they perceive them as timeless and durable. They argue that if you buy something from any of the illustrative brands today it will last for many years ahead and be passed to next generations in the same manner as products have been passed down through generations over time. Some perceive the purchase of a product from the illustrative brands as an investment, that there is a resale value sometimes even higher than the original retail price, since they associate the products with high quality and expect them to be well-crafted and durable, hence that will last for a very long time ahead. Accordingly, products sold years ago are still attractive today as indicated by one respondent proclaiming her desire to buy a vintage bag from the illustrative brands. The resale value in combination with the timelessness and durability of the illustrative brands' products contribute to respondents'

perception of them as credible and trustworthy. Moreover, the argument that the brands have been able to persistently perform on a high level with regard to aspects such as quality and craftsmanship, and constantly deliver according to consumers expectations are other qualities the respondents perceive as highly essential when it comes to how they evaluate their perception of the value of the brands, whether they can trust and rely on them or not. Consequently, the history of a brand can either have a positive or a negative impact on how consumers perceive the value of the brand. One respondent states that the actions and behaviour of brands greatly influence her perception and further her willingness to buy from them. If a brand has done something in the past that she does not agree with, that she believes departs from who they claim they are and what they stand for, her purchase intention vanishes. This indicates that she does not want to be associated with it, hence she has lost faith in the brand and does not perceive it as trustworthy and credible. Therefore if a brand does not live up to its values and promises, that it just for once perhaps behave inappropriately or make a misjudgement, there may be extensive consequences for a long time ahead. Consequently, the brand's track record may be affected negatively and the reputation and overall perception of the brand may be harmed, hence consumers perception of the value of the brand diminishes and so their support and willingness to purchase from the brand.

Furthermore, respondents' reveal that a certification of authenticity or similar proofs of quality generates credibility. Additionally the exclusivity aspect associated with the brands augments respondents' perception about how they are considered trustworthy and credible. Since there is a limited supply, respondents expect the brands to perform on a high level, provide high quality and well-crafted products. They want to be assured that they know what to expect during a purchase. This is related to timelessness, as they claim the brands have delivered according to their expectations over time, that they are still pertinent in their design and style portraying who they are and what they stand for today as in the past and for the future. The fact that the brands are regarded as durable, respondents - consumers - argue they can trust them to be credible. The aforementioned aspects contributing to how the respondents perceive the brands as trustworthy may further be an indication of loyalty. This is implied, as respondents declare that if their expectations are fulfilled persistently they will continue to purchase since they know what they will get. As consumers' expectations are satisfied their perception of the value of the illustrative brands will, according to respondents, be affected positively, which is reflected by them being loyal to the brands.

4.2. LONGEVITY

Longevity often considers the lifespan of a brand, however the age alone does not contribute to whether a brand is a heritage brand or not. Rather it is about consistency and sustainability of the other dimensions of the HQ framework, as the brand should honour its core values and identity persistently over time in order for consumers to perceive it as trustworthy and relevant (Urde et al., 2007; Ricca & Robins, 2012). To explore how consumers perceive the value of longevity respondents were asked various questions about the illustrative brand's history and origin. The intention was to investigate how and why consumers perception of a brand may be affected by its age or origin and if it has an impact on their purchase decision. Furthermore respondents were asked what might influence their relationship towards any of the illustrative brands in the long-run and also what aspects they believe influence their perception of the credibility and trustworthiness of them. Nevertheless, the answers to and discussions around all questions asked during the interviews are taken under deliberation since it is considered important to acknowledge the perception the respondent have about the value of all HQ dimensions when analysing how they perceive the value of longevity.

Loyalty was a subject that most respondents automatically started to discuss when they were asked about their long-term relationship towards the illustrative brands. Respondents assert that it is highly important with a brand's internal loyalty. If a brand remains true to itself, that it persistently manage to uphold its identity, core values and keep its promises, one respondent argues that she perceives it as trustworthy and credible, which eventually might generate brand loyalty. Furthermore respondents declare they have certain expectations of the illustrative brands. These are based on how the brands persistently have and are portraying themselves, especially considering their history and origin, that they have managed to deliver on certain accounts over time by staying true to their core values and keep promises. Respondents argue that consumers may become loyal to a brand if it fulfils their expectations and requirements. They expect the illustrative brands demonstrated performance and delivery of their entirety to be faultless, and further argue that if the brands manage to preserve this standard and quality it might generate loyalty. Accordingly, what connects this to how consumers perceive the value of longevity is the importance of the time aspect that the illustrative brands persistently have to uphold and maintain

their core values and promises in order to live up to consumers' expectations. Furthermore, the respondents perceive these brands as more trustworthy and credible due to their history, considerable age, and argue that their heritage evidently has an impact on what they are and operate today and how consumers perceive the value of them.

One respondent claims that it is a lot easier to recognize a brand closely linked and associated to its history and origin. She perceives such a brand as credible due to their track record with the argument that she thereby knows what to expect from it and that it will be good. Accordingly this statement is supported by other respondents claiming that a credible brand may call for loyal customers only if the brand has managed to persistently preserve and honour its core values and promises over time. Furthermore highlighted, one respondent specifically argues that she considers herself loyal to a brand if it manages to fulfil her expectations based on its persistent high quality performances in the past. Moreover another respondent argues that her thoughts and associations about the heritage and history of a brand affects her relationship towards it in the long run since, *"you will still always have the same expectation that they will keep their quality, they should not compromise with anything but they should have...they should preserve their core values, it is very important, really!"* This indicates that loyalty towards a brand is a positive effect of how consumers have perceived the value of longevity. Accordingly it suggests that respondents highly value the age and origin of the brand with regard to how and why they perceive brands as credible, a justification for what they base their expectations on. These need to be fulfilled in order to positively influence consumers perception of the value of brand heritage, with the possible effect that they remain loyal in the long run.

With reference to respondents' reports, loyalty, longevity and heritage are closely linked to and support each other. They argue that if a brand remains timeless and preserves a classical recall, if they stay true to what they are and what they have been, hence permanence over time, loyal consumers may be the result. It is further suggested that the illustrative brands have something in common - they have managed to identify their brand with a very specific logo, which makes it easy to instantly recognize it. This may be an example of permanence over time since these brands, according to the respondents, have been able to maintain and preserve the originality of their logos and use of symbols, which they instantly associate with the specific brand. However some state that they understand if some brands feel an urge to change, that they consider it

important to adapt to the contemporary fashion environment and remain stylish according to current standards in order to be perceived as relevant and also fight competing brands in the market. Nevertheless, there are different perceptions about the extent to which a brand should adapt and change. For instance one respondent asserts that the history is important but it means nothing if the brands cannot be modern simultaneously. Indicatively she means that the heritage and history defines what the brand is and stands for which is necessary for them to constantly maintain and nurture, but that they still have to adapt to the present in order to remain relevant to modern standards.

Respondents also argue that the illustrative brands have to be very careful not to lose their true identity based on their timelessness, perseverance of core values, and consistent use of symbols, as illustrated by their track record. If the brands change too much, making it hard for consumers to recognize and recall the brand, they may lose consumers, rather than attract them. Similarly, respondents further claim that stylish updates of products that drift away too much from the brands identifying hallmarks may not remain as timeless as such products from brands who constantly and carefully preserve their identity with only minor changes in their product offers.

Collectively respondents argue that they perceive the illustrative brands as timeless due to their history, heritage, and the fact that they are of considerable age. Even though they occasionally produce new collection in an attempt to remain stylish and updated, and sometimes experience ups and downs, the brands history and heritage, their perseverance of their core value and identity over time give them a stable foundation to rely on. This means that it guides them into the future and helps them endure in the long run which is highly valued by respondents. This statement is further emphasized with a claim that the illustrative brands use symbolic tools to portray themselves and their heritage as means to communicate and be associated with a certain type of lifestyle to attract consumers. The respondent focuses specifically on Burberry as an exemplifying illustration of this statement, that Burberry uses different marketing tools to associate themselves with the British countryside, outdoor life, and nature, together perceived as a British lifestyle, the same lifestyle she claims they have tried and managed to communicate in the past as well as in the present. Even though she knows that all brands have to change after a fashion she argues that the illustrative brands still deliver their distinguishing quality and craftsmanship and that they have tried to always portray themselves in the same manner since the

start.

As already mentioned there are different opinions and perceptions about how and why the history and heritage of the illustrative brands is important. Respondents claim that some illustrative brands have managed to preserve, strategically use, and communicate their heritage better than others. For instance one respondent reports that there are notable distinctions between Chanel and the three other illustrative brands. She talks vividly about Chanel - recall stories about the brand, their history and being - which clearly influence her perception of the brand, how she appreciates it and value it today. Due to her knowledge about Chanel she feels a connection to the brand, and highly values everything she associates with it. Further she repeatedly feels the urge to purchase items from the brand since she wants their image to reflect upon herself, feel a sense of belonging and connectedness towards it and what it represent, thus visually apparent if she wears anything from the brand. Contrariwise she argues that Burberry, Gucci, and Louis Vuitton do not strategically use the heritage aspect to communicate their identity to consumers. Therefore she perceives these brands as less trustworthy and credible and is less keen to appreciate the value of their longevity since it is not evident to her. However arguably she perceives Burberry, Gucci, and Louis Vuitton in this manner since she herself does not have a great interest in these specific brands, and therefore she is not as susceptible for any possible communication of their heritage. Accordingly she states that she clearly perceives the value of Chanel's longevity, since she values their long-lived history and their consistency over time. She perceives it as credible and trustworthy and repeatedly feels the desire to purchase from the brand, which indicates loyalty.

Most respondents claim they feel a connection to Chanel and therefore want to be associated with it by purchasing products from the brand. This is how they perceive the value of Chanel's longevity arguable due to that they demonstrably have a greater interest in Chanel and are thus more knowledgeable about its history and origin relative to the other illustrative brands.

Furthermore, another example of how respondents differentiate the illustrative brands from each other with regard to how they perceive the value of their longevity is given by one respondent who does not perceive Gucci in the same manner as she did during the 1980s. During the 1980s she knew exactly what the brand represented, claiming they communicated their identifying features with easily recognizable characteristics. However today she has no idea who they really are, and therefore she does not value Gucci as she did back in time, she feels no connection

towards it, and therefore she has no intention or urge to purchase from that brand today. Nevertheless she claims she still have the same expectations she had before regarding the brands craftsmanship and high quality, faultless products. Indicatively she believes that Gucci has not honoured its heritage and core values consistently since she does not perceive them as equally timeless and classical anymore. It can therefore be argued that her perception of the value of Gucci's longevity has been affected negatively since she has no intention to purchase form the brand today.

Finally the importance and value of memories linked to a brand, which may be created for instance through the usage of a product or from a service experience in a shop during a purchase occasion, is discussed by respondents. Accordingly they claim that it is vital for a brand to try to connect with consumers on a personal level, communicate a message, a lifestyle, or an identity consumers can relate to and want to be associated with. If a brand manages to attract them and make a purchase experience or the usage of a product more personal, positive memories may be the result which in turn create positive association towards a brand and thus make it easier and more natural for consumers to recall the brand (Aaker, 1991). It is further argued that memories may be created if expectations are fulfilled, if a consumer experiences that a brand is able to constantly honour, preserve, and communicate its core values and promises. The associations' consumers have about a brand based on their memories linked to it may affect the perception they have of the brand either negatively or positively (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993). Thus, if consumers find that the brand manages to persistently preserve its essential being based on their long live history and origin, stay true to itself and honour its core values and promises, their perception of the value of longevity may be positively affected and in turn influence and enhance their perception of the overall value of the heritage brand.

4.3. CORE VALUES

Core values are those values used to shape the internal strategies and objectives that drive the performance of a brand. The values are considered vital for a brands existence and should be communicated both internally as well as externally to consumers as means to justify the brands credibility and trustworthiness (Urde et al., 2007). In order to explore how consumers perceive the value of core values the respondents were asked what core values they associate with and

believe characterize the illustrative brands. Some respondents had a hard time to evaluate the illustrative brands on separate accounts and therefore proclaimed some core values they associate with and believe characterize all of the brands. The most essential and valuable ones are quality and craftsmanship as they assume that these together create the backbone for the brands existence and that they have to deliver these in order to fulfil consumer's expectations. One respondent argues that the ambition for all of the illustrative brands is to maintain and preserve their quality and craftsmanship regardless what they are producing. She states that luxury brands such as Burberry, Chanel, Gucci, and Louis Vuitton should represent high-quality, first-class and faultless products, hence the best there is in the market. Consequently, if these brands are not able to deliver the quality consumers expect, that they have not honoured their core values, she claims they may not be perceived as trustworthy and credible.

Other suggestions of core values mentioned repeatedly are exclusivity and luxury. One respondent claim that the exclusivity is used to profile and strengthen the brands. She exemplifies this by saying that the illustrative brands use the same furnishing and design their stores in similar fashion in order for consumers to recognize the brand and its essential characteristics regardless what country they are in.

The respondents where further asked why they believe the brands have core values and how they themselves as consumers are affected by them. One respondent argues that the illustrative brands are based entirely on them selling an identity to their consumers. She claims that consumers purchase products from such brands since they want the brand's core values to reflect upon them, they want to identify themselves with the brands. This is further emphasized by another respondent who suggests that consumers choose to purchase products from brands with core values they personally can relate to. She explains it as an identity consumers feel a connection to and want to be associated with, if the core values are something they agree with and support, something they want to be. Furthermore respondents state that the brands represent some sense of belongingness that consumers want to identify themselves with the brands and their core values since, *"when you purchase them [product from the brands] you believe you are as successful as the product"*. Another quote saying *"they purchase Chanel's audacity and ambition"* highlight this statement and emphasise the importance to externally communicate the brand's core values both for consumers themselves since respondents claim they want to feel a connection to the

brand they are purchasing, and for the brand itself since it may help them to attract consumers.

Consumers may feel that they are sharing the same identity with both the brands and other consumers if they value the same associated core values. Respondents suggest consumers consider it highly important to feel a sense of belonging and connectedness towards a brand based on its core values. However, conversely some argue that consumers do not believe that the core values are important at all. Instead, they claim that consumers believe that the products represent luxury and status, that they only purchase the products due to this as means to show-off.

Moreover, respondents claim that some consumers purchase products from brands such as Burberry, Chanel, Gucci, and Louis Vuitton due to the satisfaction they obtain when they purchase the brand based on their associations, sense of belongingness and identification with it. They argue that products from less luxury brands cannot generate the same pleasure, rather they do only deliver the functional aspects of the products. Accordingly, one respondent suggests that this is why some consumers may develop an "*addiction*" – hence they claim they are in need of the satisfaction of purchasing something from any of the illustrative brands, indicating their loyalty towards them.

Cohesively respondents assert that the core values associated with the illustrative brands have been affected by their history and heritage, they perceive them as persistent today but suggest they have evolved over time. It is further argued that the core values just exist as a natural but still essential component of the brands being and identity. The respondents consider it essential for the illustrative brands to carefully nurture and preserve their core values which is emphasized by one respondent arguing that it is of the uttermost importance for brands to justify and honour their core values as part of their branding. Otherwise, if brands lose track of who they are or drift away too much from their identifying features, it may harm them. She has great expectations about brands such as Burberry, Chanel, Gucci, and Louis Vuitton considering their demonstrated performance, which indicates the importance for brands to preserve and honour their core values in order to keep consumers satisfied and preferably loyal.

The core values respondents are able to describe and suggest characterise the illustrative brands clearly affect their overall perception - hence expectations, trust and loyalty - of them either positively or negatively. Furthermore, according to respondents the illustrative brands have

honoured and managed to communicate their core values, that they highly value them as part of the brands identity. This indicates that the respondents positively perceive the value of the core values of the illustrative brand with regard to their sense of identification and belongingness, associated trusts and credibility, and sometimes even loyalty towards the brands.

4.4. USE OF SYMBOLS

The use of symbols are reflecting and expressing what a brand really is, what they stand for, and their heritage. These relate to logos or designs and are assumed to illustrate the brand's core meaning (Urde et al., 2007). In order to look closer into how consumers perceive the value of the use of symbols the respondents were asked questions about what they associate with the illustrative brands in terms of symbols and similar identifying features, the impact these may have on their perception of the brands, and whether the use of symbols may be related to - and their impact on - other aspects of the brands.

The illustrative brand's logos have taken a dominant position in their minds as they are the first thing the respondents recall with regard to associations about either Burberry, Chanel, Gucci, or Louis Vuitton or when they hear any of these brands names being mentioned. Accordingly they consider these logos to be extremely important by means of communicating the brands' identity. Furthermore, respondents argue that they perceive the logo as a symbol used to identify and differentiate the brands and the products the brands' logo is attached to from other competing brands and their products. However due to the availability of fake products some respondents suggest that monograms and logos have lost their relevancy and value.

Respondents claim that consumers sometimes purchase and wear products from specific brands as a symbol of power, they want to identify themselves with the success, exclusivity and high status of the brands, which is signalled through the brands use of symbols. Hence, consumers want to prove they are successful and that they can afford the products. This argument that the brands use symbols to communicate who they are in order to attract consumers is highlighted by one respondent saying that *"[...] it is enough to just see these things to get an impression [...]"* and she further claims that this is exactly what they have worked so hard with over the years, to develop an image that consumers instantly can recognize, recall, and identify themselves with.

Even though respondents emphasize the importance of logos in order to relate to and identify the illustrative brands they also argue that Chanel, Gucci and Louis Vuitton's logos are visually more appealing since they are displayed by use of abbreviations of their brand names, hence initials - Chanel's CC, Gucci's GG and Louis Vuitton's LV - in comparison to Burberry which either uses its full brand name or else a symbol of a knight. Respondents therefore assert that it is easy to instantly recognize Chanel, Gucci, and Louis Vuitton since they always use and are associated with the same type of logo, their initials. However since respondents claim that Burberry do not really have a specific logo, but rather use different tools to portray themselves and their brand for instance through various symbols, hence the knight, or identifying features such as their design the Burberry check, they do not regard the brand as consistent in their communication as Chanel, Gucci, and Louis Vuitton. Further one respondent states that this contributes to her perceiving Burberry as less exclusive compared to the other brands. She argues that since Burberry do not use a specific and consistent logo one may associate the various symbols they rather use, with symbols related to other less luxury and exclusive brands. For instance when she sees Burberry's symbol, the knight, she may not instantly recognize it as Burberry's but instead associate it with other brands such as Ralph Laurent who use a symbol of a polo player. Therefore she does not perceive Burberry as exclusive or value it as the other brands, saying *"I feel that if I would purchase a brand, and my intention was to show people that I own an exclusive product, I would not choose Burberry since I believe that less [people] recognize Burberry's logo compared to Chanel, Gucci, and Louis Vuitton."*

However, another respondent has a different opinion with regard to the logos. She argues that the identifying features is really what constitutes a brand and that these features all-together are much more important than simply a logo alone. She also refers to Burberry as an exemplifying illustration of her argument and claims that Burberry's logo itself is nothing compared to their identifying symbolic features such as the Burberry check. Consequently all the associations the respondents have in terms of symbolic and identifying features are equally important to acknowledge as the logos in how they perceive the value of the illustrative brands' use of symbols.

It can be argued that the brands have managed to communicate who they are in a consistent manner over time since most respondents have the same associations and relate similar symbols

or identifying features to the illustrative brands. One respondent claims that these brands use symbols to portray who they are and their heritage since they want to communicate a picture of themselves which consumers thus will be able to associate with the brands identity and a certain type of lifestyle they value. She argues that it is highly essential that the brands constantly over time have managed to communicate the same picture of them so they today can be associated with the same lifestyle they were associated with in the past. Further she claims that it may be dangerous to change or modernize logos or identifying symbols since they are often deeply embedded in the minds of consumers. However if a brand has honoured its core values, and consistently used its symbols to communicate its meaning and identity this generates a sense of trust which she highly values and regard as a qualifying criterion for consumers to remain loyal,

Respondents argue that the symbols and identifying features of Burberry, Chanel, Gucci, and Louis Vuitton over time have had the same visual appearance since they attempt to preserve their heritage, the timelessness and classical outlook of their being in order to be considered more trustworthy and credible. They suggest the brands want to communicate that they are durable brands, that they consistently will continue to operate in the same manner, with the same quality and well-crafted products as they have done in the past, are doing in the present, and will do in the further accordingly. Indicatively this generates a sense of trust, which positively influences how respondents perceive the value of the brands use of symbols and further affect their overall perception of the value of the brand heritage of these brands.

4.5. HISTORY

History is an element considered important for a brand's identity and may therefore influence how it operates today (Urde et al., 2007). A brand's identity is generally considered from an organizational perspective since it constitutes the perception the brand has about itself, what it really is and stand for, and how it wants to be portrayed to the outside world (Larsson, 2014). However since this study aims to explore the value of brand heritage from a consumer perspective it was considered relevant to ask the respondents about their perception of the history of the illustrative brands, and how and why it may influence their perception of the value of these heritage brands in general.

Respondents' knowledge about the history of the illustrative brands varies quite a bit. Most of them demonstrably know at least something about Burberry, Chanel, Gucci, and Louis Vuitton's history or background, for instance about the brands' country of origin. They argue that the relationship between a brand and its country of origin is a valuable part of their history and heritage influencing what the brand is today and how it portrays itself. Additionally they claim that the country of origin characterizes the brands and their products making it possible to differentiate them from each other. One respondent, however, reveals that she really has no specific knowledge about any of the illustrative brands. Rather she perceives them as well established brands, which she values since this inhibits a sense of credibility and trust - proof that they produce high quality products - but she cannot really say anything specific about their history. On the contrary, respondents with considerable more knowledge about the history of the illustrative brands can recall stories about historical occasions or settings related to the brands or report on very specific information about them. Nevertheless, it is clear that all respondents are more knowledgeable about the history of the brand or brands they are interested in. Indicatively Chanel is the brand that appeals to many respondents since some respondents have very little to say about the other illustrative brands but can recall a great amount of information or tell stories about Chanel's background and history.

Even though the historical knowledge about the brands differ among the respondent they agree that the history of the brands influence and affect their perception about the value of brand heritage which is clearly stated by one respondent saying that *"Regardless if you know anything about them or not, you know that have been around for a long time and that is even more important somehow"*. Another respondent further says *"I know that they have been around for long in the market, and I have a great deal of respect for that, since there are so many [brands] who come and go."* She also argues that these brands have been around for so long since they have control over their operations and production processes they have developed over time. She further claims that they therefore have managed to maintain a certain valuable standard when it comes to the quality and craftsmanship of the products. This is why they have survived for so long, that they still are as successful and respected today as they were in the past, and if they carefully nurture and preserve the essentially of their being, which is based on their demonstrated past performances, she argues they will be so in the future as well. Also she suggests that due to this control and maintenance today as in the past, products produced by the illustrative brands are

sometimes worth much more today than they were when they were purchased back in time. This is clearly valued by respondents, emphasised by the saying *"If I purchase something then it is something I feel I can keep for a long time and that it can be inherited by my daughters. You do not get rid of such a bag once you have purchased it. That is what you are attracted by. The emergence of a new brand in that price range or so, it does not feel nearly as attractive, just the fact that it is new and that you cannot be as confident about its future"*.

This quote highlights a shared opinion among respondents, that the timelessness of the illustrative brands is closely related to their heritage. Furthermore the history and timelessness of a brand contribute to it being perceived as well-established. Respondents argue that the more knowledge you have about the history of a brand the more it affects and influence your overall perception of the brand. The respondents report that they rather choose to purchase from a well-established brand since it has been around for generations. This indicates that the history and heritage of a brand influence consumers' selection of a brand, that it positively contributes to how they perceive the value of the brands hence a brand marked by its heritage is thus assumed to attract more consumers. Accordingly, respondents claim the heritage of the illustrative brands give a sense of security and credibility which they value since they see them as well-established and timeless, due to an argument the brands' have honoured who they are and what they stand for - their core values - over time which their history and past can confirm.

Moreover, the respondents state that the heritage aspect affects how they perceive the quality of the products produced by the illustrative brands. One respondent claim that *"Well, it is about the generations of craftsmanship in combination with the quality, that is how you think about it somehow. You think that they have been around for long and you probably think that they will be around for a long time ahead as well."* Indicatively they perceive the history of the brands as a symbol of guaranteed quality since they argue that the craftsmanship has been an integral part of the brands being for generations. This emphasises the statement that the illustrative brands have been able to survive for so long due to the control they have. Respondents claim this generates a sense of security and credibility, they acknowledge and highly value the craftsmanship of the products which indicatively is part of how they positively perceive the value of the quality of the products. Consequently this may indicate why they appreciate the resale value of these brands products, that the purchase of a product is regarded as an investment. The history of the

illustrative brands is therefore valued due to the durability aspect since respondents perceive the heritage as a warranty, as proof that the brands' product will last for long. However, on the contrary there is still an argument that some consumers disregard and does not appreciate the history of the illustrative brands. Instead respondents claim that these consumers care more about having the products as a symbol of status and power.

Lastly all these statements described and discussed above with regard to the respondents' perception about the history of the illustrative brands influence their perception about the brands' credibility and trustworthiness, they want to be assured they can feel a sense of security, that they know what to expect. This indicates how they perceive the value of the brand heritage of these brands, as it in turn may generate loyalty.

4.6. SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS

Elements of Brand Heritage	HOW consumer perceive the value of...	WHY consumers perceive the value of...
Track Record	Believe the brands represent a lifestyle or personality. That they are selling an identity which might generate a sense of belonging and social acceptance	Because they believe that these brands have honoured their values and promises and further managed to communicate and deliver them over time. This in turn increases their perception of them as trustworthy and credible, which eventually might generate loyalty.
	Believe the brands produce high quality and well-crafted products. They also consider them to be timeless and durable.	Due to their track record, since they have been able to perform and deliver on these accounts persistently over time with regard to consumers' expectations.
	Due to their exclusivity.	Because they have been able to demonstrably perform on a very high level over time according to aspects such as high quality, well-crafted products and refined design. Also due to the limited supply which makes the products even more interesting to

		purchase, it generates pleasure, to have something that not everybody has.
Longevity	Through their memoires	Due to the connection with the brands on a personal level, a lifestyle or identity consumers can relate to and want to be associated with. Based on previous experiences and fulfilment of their expectations.
	Believe they are trustworthy and credible	First because consumers value the age and origin of the brands Also since there is a belief that the brands persistently have preserved their identities, core values and kept its promises and further been able to communicate and deliver these. Finally, because consumers know what to expect from the brands
	A sense of loyalty towards the brands	As they are considered trustworthy and credible. Also since there is a belief that the brands are able to fulfil consumers expectations and requirements.
	Through the timeless, traditional and classical recall and recognition	Because of the brands history, heritage and their considerable age and since they believe that the brands have delivered according to their expectations over time, that they are still pertinent in their design and style portraying who they are and what they stand for today as in the past and for the future.
Core Values	Their high quality and craftsmanship	Since they associate these qualities or values with the brand and believe they permeate every dimension of the brand, the core for their existence. Also that the brands are expected to be faultless.

	Through their communication and portrayal of their identity, as a personality or lifestyle they sell to consumers.	Since the consumers want the brands core values to reflect upon them, they want to identify themselves with the brands. Feel a sense of belonging. They trust them and believe they are credible.
Use of Symbols	Through their logos and other identifying symbolic features such as designs.	<p>Since they have had the same visual appearance over time.</p> <p>Further they signal the consistency in the brands communication about who they are, their identity.</p> <p>Also the durability of the brands that they have managed to preserve their heritage, timelessness and classical outlook of their being.</p> <p>All this might in turn generate trust and credibility.</p>
History	Through the brands' country of origin	Since it is an essential part of the bands history and heritage, which in turn influence what the brand is today and how it portrays itself. The timelessness and durability of the brand.
	That the brands are well-established, timeless and durable brands	Due to the resale value of the products. The purchase of a product as an investment.
	The control they have over their operation and production processes	Since they have managed to maintain a certain standard when it comes to quality and craftsmanship, that they have survived for so long and that they are still as successful and respected today as they were in the past.

Table 2: Summary of respondents' perception of the value of brand heritage

5. DISCUSSION

A discussion is henceforth presented with regard to the analysis conducted above in order to conclude how consumers perceive the value of brand heritage of the illustrative brands.

The respondents' awareness of the illustrative brands is considered according to how well they recognize and recall them in relation to their brand heritage (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993). The analysis conducted above according to the HQ framework indicates that the respondents overall are well aware of the existence of the illustrative brands. Brand recognition refers to the ability to remember an exposure to a brand in the past (Keller, 1993). Therefore, by just being able to talk about the brands and discuss them during the interviews indicates that all respondents are able to recognize them even though they do not feel an equally strong connection to all of them. More specifically however some argue they find it easier to recognize a brand closely linked to and associated with its history, which they value since it contributes to them seeing it as credible due to the brands demonstrated performance over time.

Brand awareness does also involve how well consumers recall the brand in their minds given a specific product category (Aaker, 1993). Positive memories and hence positive associations of a brand may be the result of favourable purchase experiences or usage of products, which arguably will make it easier and more natural for consumers to recall the brand. Given the support of the illustrative brands' track records, respondents claim that the brands have worked really hard over time to develop an image consumers instantly can recognize, recall and identify themselves with. This indicates that the respondents are well aware of the illustrative brands in general, since they can recognise and recall the brands but also feel a sense of belonging towards them, an identity they can relate, which they value. What has to be mentioned however is that some respondents clearly think it is easier to recall some brands since they have more knowledge about their history. Some can even recall stories about the brands historical background or report on very specific information about their past. Moreover respondents are demonstrably more knowledgeable about the history of the brand or brands they are interested in which in turn affect how well they recall and value the brands in their minds. In conclusion however it might be assumed that the respondents in general have a strong brand awareness of the illustrative brands since all of them are able to recognize the brands and further most of them do also recall the brands to a high extent.

A quote from one respondents saying, *"They have a heritage, they have a quality, they have a standard"* efficiently summarize what the respondents similarly associate with the illustrative brands. Indicatively, they perceive heritage as something naturally associable with the illustrative brands, further emphasized with their claim that the history of the brands act as a symbol of guaranteed quality and that it represents craftsmanship. Moreover, another respondent argues that these brands use symbols to portray who they are and their heritage. Brand associations are commonly evaluated based on their strength, uniqueness, and favourability (Keller, 1993). Logos are considered the most important symbol respondents associate with the brands. Their associations about the logos and their statement that they are easily recognizable further indicate that they perceive them as strong representations of the brands, that the logos make it possible to efficiently differentiate the brands from each other. They argue that this is especially true for Chanel, Gucci and Louis Vuitton's logos as they are constructs of the brands initials, which further also indicate the uniqueness of them. This together with the consistency of the visual presentation of the logos, since respondents claim that the logos have remained the same over time – which communicates a message of their timelessness - also makes them favourable.

Respondents further indicate that other symbols the illustrative brands use to portray themselves and their heritage generate strong, unique and favourable associations towards the brands. Such are the design Burberry check, which is clearly something the respondent associate with the consistency and durability of Burberry, and Coco Chanel as an important and influential person – an ambassador - they claim represents and constitutes the essence of Chanel. Moreover, the country of origin of the separate brands strongly, uniquely and favourably highlight the heritage of the illustrative brands, their history, how they came to be, and what they are today. For instance Italy is something respondents instantly mention and associate with Gucci. They clearly state that the perceived association between Gucci and Italy communicates some valued features of Gucci and its identity, that the brand constitutes high quality, well-crafted products and that they persistently over time for generations have been able to deliver on these accounts. Altogether this emphasise the fact that the association of the country of origin in relation to Gucci is strong, unique and favourable and therefore positively influence respondents perception of the value of the brand.

Respondents suggest that the logos and identifying symbols related to the illustrative brands have

had the same visual appearance over time since they claim the brands attempt to preserve their heritage, the timelessness, and the classical outlook of their being. Therefore it might be argued that the respondent perceive the value of the brand heritage of the illustrative brands as being enhanced due to the strong, unique and favourable associations they have about the brands and their heritage.

Respondents' perceptions about the quality of the illustrative brands is considered with reference to their awareness and associations about the brands being and thus explore how they perceive the heritage of them. The aforementioned analysis conducted according to the HQ framework concludes that respondents associate the illustrative brands with great quality and craftsmanship. However, there are some diversified arguments about the quality of the illustrative brands in comparison to less luxury brands. Some respondents argue that high-quality constitutes the essence of the well-established illustrative brands and that it therefore justifies their premium prices. However, others claim that the quality of the illustrative brands do not differ much from less luxury fashion brands, that the quality can only be *"good enough"*. Instead they argue that craftsmanship and design rather influence how consumers perceive the value of the illustrative brands.

Moreover, respondents claim that the history of the brands act as a symbol of guaranteed quality and that it represents craftsmanship, hence that the heritage of the illustrative brands affects how they perceive the quality of the products. This is acknowledged by one respondent who proclaim, *"Well, it is about the generations of craftsmanship in combinations with the quality that is how you think about it somehow. You think that they have been around for long and you probably think that they will be around for a long time ahead as well"*. Indicatively respondents highly value the quality and craftsmanship of the illustrative brands products, they see a purchase as an investment since they argue that they inhibit a resale value.

Also respondents' intention and willingness to pay premium prices are somewhat diversified. Some are willing to pay higher premium prices since they value the quality of the products and for the reason that they regard them as an investment. Other do not have the intention to pay such premium prices since they claim that consumers only pay for the brand itself, hence not for the quality of the products alone. In general however, respondents value the history and heritage of the illustrative brands since they argue it justifies their high-quality and well-crafted products,

which in turn defend their premium prices.

In order to appreciate how heritage might contribute to brand loyalty, respondents' awareness about the heritage of the brands, whether their associations related to heritage of the brands are favourable, strong and unique, and how they perceive the quality of the brands is considered. Respondents claim that the illustrative brands' internal loyalty might contribute to consumer loyalty. Hence, if the illustrative brands honour their core values and promises, if they preserve a classical recall and remains timeless, consumers might perceive them as trustworthy and credible and therefore become loyal towards the brands. Respondents' also acknowledge the importance to have their expectations fulfilled persistently for recurrent purchases, since they therefore know what to receive, for example high quality products. As indicated another generator of brand loyalty are respondents - consumers - personal feelings towards a particular brand. They value the sense of belonging they feel, that they can connect with the brands on a personal level and the opportunity to create their own individual identities and lifestyles through the brands. Consequently, they argue that whereas products from less luxury brands only deliver functional aspects, products from the illustrative brands generate pleasure and satisfaction, which in turn may lead to addiction felt for the brand, thus indicating that some sort of loyalty has been developed.

Consequently, it can be argued that respondents' overall perception about the heritage of the illustrative brands in combination with their perception regarding quality generates loyalty. However, even though several different factors separately may lead to brand loyalty it is indicatively the combination of them that is valued and successfully makes the respondents loyal towards the illustrative brands.

6. CONCLUSION

Respondents' perception of the value of brand heritage of the illustrative brands was initially analysed according to each separate dimension of Urde et al.'s. (2007) HQ framework. Thereafter, a discussion was initiated where the concluding arguments from the initial analysis were further deliberated in order to eventually conclude how consumers perceive the value of the brand heritage of the illustrative brands.

In conclusion it can be argued that respondents knowledge and interest about the history of the illustrative brands positively influence how they perceive the value of their brand heritage. As indicated by the analysis, those respondents who are more interested in the brands are also more knowledgeable about them and their history. Even so, all respondents value the fact that they see them as well-established brands since they have been around for so long. This give support to how and why they value the brand heritage, because it serves as a source of credibility and trust between the respondents – the consumers – and the illustrative brands, they claim the brands have managed to maintain a certain standard when it comes to quality and craftsmanship and that they have delivered according to consumers' expectations over time. Also, respondents perceive the value of the brand heritage of the illustrative brands due to their resale value - they see a purchase as an investment - because they claim that the brands are still pertinent in their design and style portraying who they are and what they stand for, today, as in the past, and for the future.

Furthermore, respondents perceive the brand heritage of the illustrative brands as valuable since it contributes to a sense of belongingness and social acceptance. They urge for a personality - which they suggest is a reflection of the brands identity – obtained by living their communicated lifestyle, something they feel they can relate to and want to be part of. They claim that some of the illustrative brands have managed to better preserve, nurture and manage their identity and core meaning, as they in a satisfied manner demonstrably have performed on a high level by honouring and delivering their core values and promises over time. Respondents therefore perceive the value of the brand heritage of the illustrative brands due to the opportunity to connect with the illustrative brands on a personal level – to feel a sense of belonging - and the ability to create their own individual identities and lifestyles through the brands.

So all the above, in combination with respondents perception of the brands as timeless and durable, that they inhibit a sense of credibility and trust, which in the long run may generate loyalty - since respondents value that the brands are loyal to them - together conclude how consumers perceive the value of the brand heritage of the illustrative brands.

7. IMPLICATIONS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

7.1. IMPLICATIONS FOR THEORY

The study has expanded the original versions of the theories used by focusing on exploring brand heritage from a consumer perspective rather than from an organisational perspective. Therefore, for future research the approach taken in this study to explore brand heritage might be applicable in other similar studies as well.

7.2. IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH

Possible contributions to future research on the topic of brand heritage may be to allow this particular purpose to be analysed from other contexts, such as American luxury fashion brands. Another suggestion for research is to compare how consumers perceive the value of brand heritage within European luxury fashion brands against American luxury fashion brands in order to analyse possible differences. A third suggestion is to research how consumers from other countries than Sweden perceive the value of brand heritage, and suggestively analyse possible differences.

7.3. IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

The study will help brand owners of luxury fashion brands, those qualifying as heritage brands, to understand how consumers perceive the value their brand heritage. Consequently it may aid them in their strategic decisions about what aspects of their branding - those focusing on their heritage - they should emphasize the most in order to add value both for consumers and for the brand itself.

7.4. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Further considering the limitations of time and resources, some of the semi-structured interviews intending to collect primary data about consumers' perceptions of brand heritage was conducted via telecommunicational means even though it may have been preferable, due to consistency matters, if all of them had been conducted face-to-face. However with regard to the limited time frame and the fact that resources, hence possibility to travel, was restricted, the authors considered it more important to collect valuable data from qualifying respondents to add to a more validated analysis of the research purpose, rather than assuring that all interviews were conducted face-to-face.

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9. APPENDIX

9.1. INTERVIEW GUIDE

9.1.1. ENGLISH

Personal Questions

1. Age?
2. Occupation?

General Questions

3. What does luxury represent or mean to you?
4. Relationship to luxury fashion brands?
 - a. Do you buy luxury fashion clothes?
 - b. Which brands have you bought in the past?
 - c. Which brands would you like buy?
 - d. Why do you buy luxury fashion products?

Illustrative Brands (Cases)

5. Have you ever bought (or intend to buy) products from any or all of the following brands: Burberry, Chanel, Gucci or Louis Vuitton?

Track Record - Knowledge, Timelessness

7. Considering any of these brands - Burberry, Chanel, Gucci & Louis Vuitton - those you have bought or would like to buy, those you find attractive.
 - a. What do these brands mean to you?
 - b. Why did you buy or would like to buy these specific brands?
8. When you buy or if you would buy anything from Burberry, Chanel, Gucci or Louis Vuitton:
 - a. What aspect of their products appeals to you the most?

b. Why?

c. Do any of these aspects increase the trustworthiness and credibility you associate with any of these luxury fashion brands? Why?

9. What do you believe are important criteria in general for consumers when it comes to these luxury fashion brands? What aspect(s) of such brands' products do you believe appeal to consumers in general the most?

History - Timelessness

10. With regards to the brands we have talked about (Burberry, Chanel, Gucci, and Louis Vuitton), what is your perception about their heritage and history?

a. Are you familiar with or aware of their heritage, legacy, history, and if so, in what sense?

11. How does the heritage (history, legacy) of these brands influence your view or appreciation of them in general?

a. Do you connect heritage and history with some other characteristics/ criteria of luxury fashion brands? Ex: quality, price, exclusivity, timelessness, loyalty?

12. What do you think is the general perception consumers have about heritage and history of these luxury fashion brands?

Core Values - Purpose

13. If you think of Burberry, Chanel, Gucci or Louis Vuitton, what core values (or core message), if any, do you associate with them and believe characterise the brands?

a. Why do you think they have these core values?

b. What does it mean for the brand?

c. How do these core values affect you?

d. How do you think they affect consumers of the brands in general?

Longevity - Knowledge, Timelessness

14. The thoughts and associations that you have about the heritage and history of any of the brands we have discussed, how does these affect your relationship with the brand in the long term? - Loyalty?

Use of Symbols - Purpose

15. When you think about any of these luxury fashion brands (Burberry, Chanel, Gucci, and Louis Vuitton) or hear their brand name, what do you associate with them?

- For example, persons, symbols, places, and events?

16. Associate freely around Burberry, Chanel, Gucci or Louis Vuitton, what is the first thing that comes to mind when you think about any of these brands?

17. Considering their logos and what you associate with these brand, how does your associations contribute to how you perceive the brand, what do the brands really mean to you?

18. With regard to what you associate with any of these particular brands, what parallels can you draw between your associations and history, quality, and exclusivity?

19. In what way would you say that these brands use symbols to portrait themselves and their heritage? History? Quality? Exclusivity?

20. If the respondent brings up price, how do this affect their thoughts about the brand, might they relate it to or se a connection between price and heritage? Quality? Exclusivity? Loyalty?

Spider Chart questions

The respondents will be asked to rate the extent to which they believe the different elements of the HQ framework are important as part of the brands (illustrative cases) on a 1 to 5 scale.

21. Track Record: To what extent are the internally incorporated values and promises, those that are and have been delivered to you over time, of the following brands important (valuable) to you?

- Burberry

5. Extremely important 4. Very important 3. Moderately important 2. Slightly important 1. Not important

- Chanel

5. Extremely important 4. Very important 3. Moderately important 2. Slightly important 1. Not important

- Gucci

5. Extremely important 4. Very important 3. Moderately important 2. Slightly important 1. Not important

- Louis Vuitton

5. Extremely important 4. Very important 3. Moderately important 2. Slightly important 1. Not important

22. Longevity: To what extent are these brands values, promises, and their communication about their true identity - what they are and what they stand for - which has been delivered over time, important to you?

- Burberry

5. Extremely important 4. Very important 3. Moderately important 2. Slightly important 1. Not important

- Chanel

5. Extremely important 4. Very important 3. Moderately important 2. Slightly important 1. Not important

- Gucci

5. Extremely important 4. Very important 3. Moderately important 2. Slightly important 1. Not important

- Louis Vuitton

5. Extremely important 4. Very important 3. Moderately important 2. Slightly important 1. Not important

23. Core Values: To what extent are the core values of these brands which is communicated to the consumers, important to you?

- Burberry

5. Extremely important 4. Very important 3. Moderately important 2. Slightly important 1. Not important

- Chanel

5. Extremely important 4. Very important 3. Moderately important 2. Slightly important 1. Not important

- Gucci

5. Extremely important 4. Very important 3. Moderately important 2. Slightly important 1. Not important

- Louis Vuitton

5. Extremely important 4. Very important 3. Moderately important 2. Slightly important 1. Not important

24. Use of symbols: To what extent are the various symbols, logos, designs, etc., used to portray these brands, who they are and their heritage, important to you?

- Burberry

5. Extremely important 4. Very important 3. Moderately important 2. Slightly important 1. Not important

- Chanel

5. Extremely important 4. Very important 3. Moderately important 2. Slightly important 1. Not important

- Gucci

5. Extremely important 4. Very important 3. Moderately important 2. Slightly important 1. Not important

- Louis Vuitton

5. Extremely important 4. Very important 3. Moderately important 2. Slightly important 1. Not important

25. History: To what extent do you believe that history is important to the identity of these brands, who they are, how they operate today and that it might affect how they operate in the future?

- Burberry

5. Extremely important 4. Very important 3. Moderately important 2. Slightly important 1. Not important

- Chanel

5. Extremely important 4. Very important 3. Moderately important 2. Slightly important 1. Not important

- Gucci

5. Extremely important 4. Very important 3. Moderately important 2. Slightly important 1. Not important

- Louis Vuitton

5. Extremely important 4. Very important 3. Moderately important 2. Slightly important 1. Not important

Final Questions

26. Do you have something you would like to add about the heritage or history of any of the brands we have discussed (Burberry, Chanel, Gucci, Louis Vuitton)?

27. Do you have any other thoughts or some questions that you might want to ask us about what we have recently discussed?

Valuable Words

- Heritage
- History
- Quality
- Exclusivity
- Loyalty

In relation to chosen brands

- Trench coat
- The Burberry Check
- The Little Black Dress
- Perfume No.5
- Bag 2.55
- Coco Chanel
- Loafers
- GG logga
- Green – Red – Green
- Väskor – The speedy, The Keepall, The Noé

Personliga frågor

1. Ålder?
2. Sysselsättning?

Generella frågor

3. Vad representerar/ betyder lyx för dig?
4. Relation till lyxvarumärken?
 - a. Köper du lyxiga fashion/mode varumärken?
 - b. Vilka märken har du tidigare köpt?
 - c. Vilka märken skulle du vilja, har tänkt köpa?
 - d. Varför köper du lyxiga mode varumärken?

Illustrative Brands (cases)

5. Har du tidigare köpt (eller tänkt köpa) produkter från något av följande varumärken:
Burberry, Chanel, Gucci or Louis Vuitton?

Track Record (knowledge, timelessness)

6. Med tanke på dessa märken - Burberry, Chanel, Gucci, Louis Vuitton - det/ de som tilltalar dig, som du kanske köpt eller skulle vilja köpa?

- a. Vad betyder de för dig?
- b. Varför köpte eller skulle du vilja köpa just dessa?

8. När du köper/konsumerar eller om du skulle köpa/konsumera lyxiga varumärken som Burberry, Chanel, Gucci eller Louis Vuitton:

- a. Vilka aspekter av dessa varumärkens produkter tilltalar dig mest?
- b. Varför?
- c. Finns det några av dessa aspekter som eventuellt skulle kunna ge dig förtroende för – och öka trovärdigheten av märkena? Varför just dessa

9. Vilka kriterier tror du generellt är viktiga för konsumenter i allmänhet vad gäller dessa lyxiga varumärken? Vilka aspekter av dessa varumärkens produkter tror du tilltalar konsumenter mest?

History (timelessness)

10. Med tanke på de varumärken vi pratat om (Burberry, Chanel, Gucci, och Louis Vuitton) hur ser du på/ upplever/ uppfattar deras arv/historia?

- a. Känner du till något om deras arv, ursprung, historia och isf vad?

11. Har arvet (historia, ursprung) av dessa varumärken någon inverkan på hur du ser eller betraktar dem generellt?

- a. Förknippar du arv, ursprung och historia med något annan karaktäristiskt drag av lyxiga varumärken? Tex: Kvalité, pris, exklusivitet, tidlöshet, lojalitet?

12. Hur tror du generellt att den allmänna synen på arv och historia i samband med dessa lyxvarumärken är?

Core Values (purpose)

13. Om du tänker på Burberry, Chanel, Gucci eller Louis Vuitton, vilka kärnvärderingar, om några, associerar du med dem och tycker/tror karakteriserar varumärket?

- a. Varför tror du dom har dessa kärnvärderingar?
- b. Vad betyder det i så fall för varumärket?
- c. Hur påverkar dessa kärnvärderingar dig?
- d. Hur tror du dessa kärnvärderingar generellt påverkar konsumenter av varumärket?

Longevity (knowledge, timelessness)

14. De tankar och associationer du har om arv och historia gällande något av de lyxmärken vi diskuterat, hur påverkar detta din relation till dessa varumärket i det långa loppet/ med tiden?
- Lojalitet?

Use of symbols (purpose)

15. När du tänker på någon av dessa lyxiga modevarumärken (Burberry, Chanel, Gucci, Louis Vuitton) eller hör deras namn nämnas, vad associerar du med dem?

Ex: Symboler, personer, platser, händelser?

16. Vad är det första du tänker på i samband med något av dessa märken? Associera fritt kring Burberry, Chanel, Gucci eller Louis Vuitton.

17. Med tanke på deras loggor, eller det du associerar med dessa varumärken, hur bidrar detta till hur du uppfattar dem? Vad de verkligen betyder för dig?

18. Utifrån det du associerar med något av de specifika varumärken vi pratat om, vilka paralleller kan du dra mellan dina associationer om dessa och kvalité? Historia? Exklusivitet?

19. På vilket sätt skulle du säga att dessa varumärken använder symboliska medel för att porträttera sig själva och deras arv? Historia? Kvalité? Exklusivitet?

20. Om respondent tar upp pris, hur påverkar detta deras syn/tankar/uppfattning om varumärket:

a. Finns det likheter/paralleller eller ett samband mellan pris och arv? Kvalité? Exklusivitet? Lojalitet?

Spider Chart questions

Respondenterna kommer uppmanas att betygsätta i vilken utsträckning dom tror/upplever att de olika elementen av HQ modellen är viktiga som/och en del av de utvalda varumärkena (illustrative cases) på en skala från 1 till 5.

21. Track Record: I vilken utsträckning är följande varumärkens interna värderingar och löften – de som förmedlats och har förmedlats till dig med tiden – viktiga för dig?

22.

• Burberry
5. Extremt viktigt 4. Väldigt viktigt 3. Måttligt viktigt 2. Lite viktigt 1. Inte viktigt

- Chanel
5. Extremt viktigt 4. Väldigt viktigt 3. Måttligt viktigt 2. Lite viktigt 1. Inte viktigt
- Gucci
5. Extremt viktigt 4. Väldigt viktigt 3. Måttligt viktigt 2. Lite viktigt 1. Inte viktigt
- Louis Vuitton
5. Extremt viktigt 4. Väldigt viktigt 3. Måttligt viktigt 2. Lite viktigt 1. Inte viktigt

23. Longevity: I vilken utsträckning är dessa varumärkens värderingar, löften och hur dom kommunicerar sin sanna identitet (vad dom är och står för) som de med tiden har förmedlat, viktiga för dig?

- Burberry
5. Extremt viktigt 4. Väldigt viktigt 3. Måttligt viktigt 2. Lite viktigt 1. Inte viktigt
- Chanel
5. Extremt viktigt 4. Väldigt viktigt 3. Måttligt viktigt 2. Lite viktigt 1. Inte viktigt
- Gucci
5. Extremt viktigt 4. Väldigt viktigt 3. Måttligt viktigt 2. Lite viktigt 1. Inte viktigt
- Louis Vuitton
5. Extremt viktigt 4. Väldigt viktigt 3. Måttligt viktigt 2. Lite viktigt 1. Inte viktigt

24. Core Values: I vilken utsträckning är dessa varumärkens kärnvärderingar, de som externt kommunicerats till konsumenter, viktiga för dig?

- Burberry
5. Extremt viktigt 4. Väldigt viktigt 3. Måttligt viktigt 2. Lite viktigt 1. Inte viktigt
- Chanel
5. Extremt viktigt 4. Väldigt viktigt 3. Måttligt viktigt 2. Lite viktigt 1. Inte viktigt
- Gucci
5. Extremt viktigt 4. Väldigt viktigt 3. Måttligt viktigt 2. Lite viktigt 1. Inte viktigt
- Louis Vuitton
5. Extremt viktigt 4. Väldigt viktigt 3. Måttligt viktigt 2. Lite viktigt 1. Inte viktigt

25. Use of Symbols: I vilken utsträckning är de olika symbolerna, loggorna, designen, etc., det som porträtterar dessa varumärken – vad de är och deras arv – viktiga för dig?

- Burberry
5. Extremt viktigt 4. Väldigt viktigt 3. Måttligt viktigt 2. Lite viktigt 1. Inte viktigt
- Chanel
5. Extremt viktigt 4. Väldigt viktigt 3. Måttligt viktigt 2. Lite viktigt 1. Inte viktigt
- Gucci
5. Extremt viktigt 4. Väldigt viktigt 3. Måttligt viktigt 2. Lite viktigt 1. Inte viktigt
- Louis Vuitton
5. Extremt viktigt 4. Väldigt viktigt 3. Måttligt viktigt 2. Lite viktigt 1. Inte viktigt

26. History: I vilken utsträckning tycker du historia är en viktig del av dessa varumärkens identitet; vad/vilka de är, hur de drivs/arbetar idag, och hur det möjligtvis kan påverka hur de kommer drivas/ arbeta i framtiden?

- Burberry
5. Extremt viktigt 4. Väldigt viktigt 3. Måttligt viktigt 2. Lite viktigt 1. Inte viktigt
- Chanel
5. Extremt viktigt 4. Väldigt viktigt 3. Måttligt viktigt 2. Lite viktigt 1. Inte viktigt
- Gucci
5. Extremt viktigt 4. Väldigt viktigt 3. Måttligt viktigt 2. Lite viktigt 1. Inte viktigt
- Louis Vuitton
5. Extremt viktigt 4. Väldigt viktigt 3. Måttligt viktigt 2. Lite viktigt 1. Inte viktigt

Avslutning:

26. Har du något ytterligare du vill tillägga om arv eller historia i relation med lyxiga fashion varumärken?

27. Något du funderat över eller några frågor till oss om det vi nu diskuterat?

Värdeord:

- Arv
- Kvalité
- Historia
- Exklusivitet
- Lojalitet

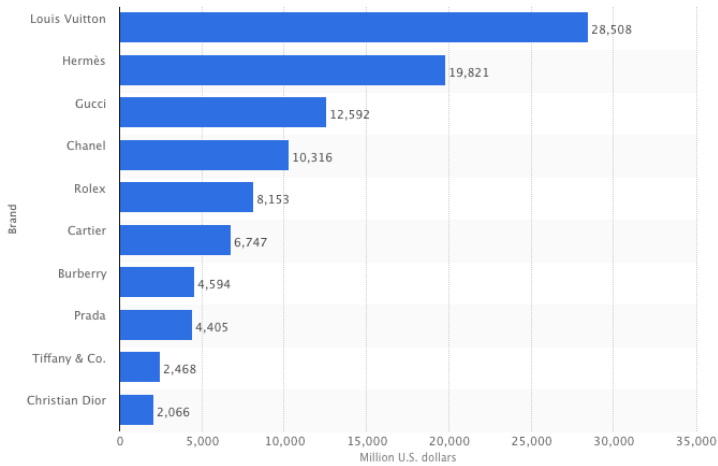
I relation till utvalda märken:

- Trenchcoat
- Burberry check
- Little black dress
- No5
- 2.55 bag
- Coco Chanel
- Loafers
- GG logga
- Green – Red – Green
- Väskor – The speedy, The Keepall, The Noé

9.1.3. STATISTICAL DIAGRAM

Industries > Retail & Trade > International Trade > Worlds top luxury brands by brand value in 2016

Brand value of the leading 10 most valuable luxury brands worldwide in 2016 PREMIUM + (in million U.S. dollars)



ABOUT THIS STATISTIC

This statistic depicts the brand value of the leading 10 most valuable luxury brands worldwide in 2016. In that year, Burberry was the seventh ranked most valuable luxury brand worldwide with a brand value of about 4.59 billion U.S. dollars.

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