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THE INFLUENCE OF CULTURE AND GENDER IN LUXURY BRAND CONSUMPTION: A COMPARISON ACROSS WESTERN AND EASTERN CULTURE CONSUMERS

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Abstract

Culture and gender differences in values associated with luxury consumption are investigated. Two Western individualistic-oriented countries with mature luxury markets (France and the United States) and two Eastern collectivistic-oriented countries with developing luxury markets (the United Arab Emirates and China) are compared using Roux, Tafani and Vigneron's (2017) model of luxury values. Main results indicate that refinement, heritage, and to a lesser extent, exclusivity receive greater emphasis in Western rather than Eastern countries. Chinese and US consumers place particular emphasis on elitism. Additionally, gender shapes the importance placed on luxury values: men emphasize elitism (and exclusivity in Western countries only), whereas women emphasize refinement. Furthermore, the adherence to own-gender beliefs (i.e., traits attributed to one's gender) fully mediates gender influence within all four countries. Theoretical implications are discussed based on major frameworks of national culture and the social structural theory (Eagly and Wood, 1999). Managerial implications in terms of cultural and gendered adaptation of marketing strategies are considered.

Key words:

Luxury brand values, Luxury consumption, Cultural values, Western and Eastern cultures, Gender, Gender Beliefs.

Bain & Company (2022), a reputed consulting firm in the luxury industry, reported that the value of the worldwide personal luxury goods market (i.e., accessories, leather goods, beauty, fashion, watches, and jewelry) reached €353 billion in 2022 (up 26% from its 2019 historic level) and forecasted a rise to €540–580 billion in 2030. The substantial growth of the luxury market across all the continents witnesses an increasing globalization that raises two main issues with high managerial implications. First, as market globalization may lead to cultural homogenization (Steenkamp 2019), it questions the persistence of national culture influence on values associated with luxury consumption. Second, as globalization opens new opportunities, especially the entry or expansion in developing markets to anticipate a possible saturation of mature markets (Veloutsou, Christodoulides, and Guzmán 2022), it questions the influence of the development level of domestic markets on luxury values. So, what are the most impactful luxury values and does this hierarchy vary as a function of national culture and/or market development? Is the classical opposition between Western individualistic vs. Eastern collectivistic cultures (Triandis 1995) sufficient to explain cross-country differences? These are key issues for managers when deciding whether and how to implement a global strategy or to address each market with some cultural adjustments. However, these questions remain unanswered as past findings from international luxury research are little consistent and inconclusive (for a review, see Stathopoulou and Balabanis 2019), because of critical discrepancies in the selection and the measurement of luxury values. Therefore, it calls for the use of an integrative and valid framework embracing the key luxury values to capture the influence of culture. For this reason, the present study relies on Roux, Tafani, and Vigneron's (2017) framework that is purported to be comprehensive with four dimensions grouping twelve values regarded as the most predominant ones in luxury consumption: (i) Elitism (prestige, status, and expensiveness), (ii) Exclusivity (uniqueness, rarity, and creativity), (iii) Refinement (beauty, elegance, and pleasure), and (iv) Heritage (history, quality, and trust).

Additionally, gender influence on luxury values has received greater attention since the 2010s. For instance, Stokburger-Sauer and Teichmann (2013) stated that luxury was 'just a female thing', because women had more favorable attitude toward luxury brands compared to men. However, the Shullman Research Center (2017), a consulting agency specialized in luxury, reported that men spent more on luxury than women (58% vs. 42% of the total value of the 2016 US personal luxury goods market). Statista (2020), the leading statistics portal for market data, also revealed a consistent fact: men (women) represented 56% (44%) of the total value of the 2018 US luxury apparel market. Therefore, the female orientation of luxury was not confirmed when considering actual sales instead of self-reported attitudes. Accordingly, sampling frequent luxury brand buyers to better reflect market realities, Roux et al. (2017) found that each gender favors specific values: men emphasize both elitism and exclusivity, while women emphasize refinement. These findings question the origin of gender differences in luxury consumption. Do such differences rely on some biological dispositions or on the incorporation of gender beliefs (i.e., social traits and roles) into the self-concept as postulated by the Social Structural Theory (SST, Eagly and Wood 1999)? Furthermore, culture shapes the adherence to gender beliefs with a stronger adherence within Eastern rather than Western cultures (Swim et al. 2010), thus questioning the interplay of gender and culture in luxury consumption: Is gender influence on luxury values consistent across cultures or not? To the best of our knowledge, these two issues have not been addressed yet.

First, we propose an extension of the framework of luxury values and drivers developed by Roux et al. (2017), with the integration of the need for authenticity as a driver of the heritage value. Second, we review major dimensional models of national culture to present main differences across Western and Eastern cultures and to discuss mixed findings regarding cross-cultural differences in luxury values. Third, building on this conceptual and empirical background, we develop hypotheses about the influence of culture on luxury

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values. Fourth, based on the SST, we argue that adherence to own-gender beliefs mediates the influence of gender on luxury values. Fifth, we used four samples of luxury buyers from France, the United States, China, and the UAE to test our hypotheses. Main results reveal that despite the increased globalization of the luxury market, the influence of national culture on luxury values is persisting, going beyond the contrast across individualistic and collectivistic cultures. Indeed, additional cultural dimensions along with the development level of domestic luxury markets must be considered to clarify such differences. Additionally, the adherence to own-gender beliefs is found to explain well gender differences in luxury values, which partly vary as a function of culture. Lastly, empirical, theoretical, and managerial implications are discussed before addressing limitations and research perspectives.

Conceptual Background and Hypotheses Development

We address four conceptual issues about: *(i)* the driver of the heritage value, the effect of culture on both *(ii)* luxury values and *(iii)* gender beliefs, and (iv) the mediating role of the adherence to own-gender beliefs in the effect of gender on luxury values.

Insert Figure 1 round here

Luxury Brand Values and Drivers

Based on an extensive literature review, Ko, Costello, and Taylor (2019) concluded that five elements are necessary to capture the essence of luxury brands: quality, authenticity, prestige, premium price, and resonance that reflects a deep connection with consumers. This is consistent with a common understanding among academics who have regarded luxury brand perceptions as a subjective and multidimensional construct that embraces a large variety of ideas and feelings, including both inner-directed (intrapersonal) and outer-directed (interpersonal) values (see e.g., Dubois, Czellar, and Laurent 2005; Kapferer 1998; Vigneron and Johnson 2004; Wiedmann, Hennigs and Siebel 2007). Roux et al. (2017) have proposed an integrative model of luxury perceptions (Figure 1) that encompasses values associated with and motives for luxury consumption. According to Vigneron and Johnson (1999), luxury values relate to sought-after attributes and standards guiding behavior (Woodruff 1997), while drivers are incentives that lead individuals toward desirable goals and values (McClelland 1988). Hence, luxury values and drivers are two related but separate facets of consumer-brand relationships: values are brand-oriented attributes that indicate what luxury brands are expected to be, and drivers are consumer-orientated motives, shaping the respective importance placed on luxury values.

Using French samples of luxury buyers, Roux et al. (2017) have identified 12 luxury values grouped into four dimensions (Figure 1). Elitism consists of three status- and price-related values that favor self-enhancement through wealth-displaying (Vigneron and Johnson 2004): status, prestige, and expensiveness. Exclusivity groups values related to differentiation from the mainstream (Kapferer and Valette-Florence 2021): uniqueness and rarity, along with the preference for originality (Kapferer 1998): creativity. Refinement includes values dealing with the concern for aesthetics and physical appearance: beauty and elegance, and the hedonic gratification stemming from the consumption experiences: pleasure (Vigneron and Johnson 2004). Beyond its historical background referring to brand stability, longevity, and adaptability (Pécot et al. 2019), brand heritage is defined in a broader sense that embraces history and two resulting values: quality and trustworthiness (Pécot, Valette-Florence and De Barnier 2018). Roux et al. stated that this model offers an extensive typology of luxury values as it integrates all the values previously identified and adds a new one, trustworthiness, which was of particular importance for French consumers.

Their model also specifies the drivers of luxury values, except for brand heritage, which is viewed as an inner-directed value that is less involved in the display of the self (Vigneron and Johnson 1999). Conspicuous Consumption (CC), defined as the display of possessions to signal wealth (Veblen 1899) and Need for Status (NFS), the tendency to purchase goods to gain status (Eastman, Goldsmith, and Flynn 1999), drive elitism. Indeed, O'Cass and McEwen (2004) found that Conspicuous and Status Consumption are two related but distinct constructs since Conspicuousness favors Status Consumption, which in turn increases perceived brand status (O'Cass and Shiahtiri 2013). Need for Uniqueness (NFU) that refers to the pursuit of differentness through the display of possessions (Tian, Bearden, and Hunter 2001) positively influence exclusivity. Lastly, Public Self-Consciousness (PSC), the tendency to direct attention onto others' reactions to the self (Fenigstein, Scheier, and Buss 1975), drives refinement. Hence, specific drivers are associated with the three outerdirected luxury values.

However, Roux et al. (2007) noted that a main limitation of their framework was that it does not include any antecedent of brand heritage. Here, we propose to consider Need For Authenticity (NFA) as a driver of brand heritage. Brand authenticity is defined as a subjective perception related to the genuineness that consumers ascribe to a brand (Napoli et al. 2014). Brand authenticity includes four aspects: (i) continuity: the persistence of brand standards, (ii) credibility: the brand's willingness to honor its promise, (iii) integrity: benevolence and sincerity toward consumers, and (iv) symbolism: the ability to embody key values to the eyes of consumers (Morhart et al. 2015). Given the globalization and increased virtuality of contemporary markets, brand authenticity helps consumers to give meaning to consumption behavior and to achieve self-authentication goals, such as controlling personal environment or being connected to others (Beverland and Farrelly 2010). Perceived brand authenticity that relies on brand history (Fritz, Schoenmueller, and Bruhn 2017; Mohrart et al. 2015; Napoli et al. 2014; Södergren 2021) positively influences both brand trustworthiness and expected brand quality (Eggers et al. 2012; Moulard, Raggio, and Folse 2016; Portal, Abratt, and Bendixen 2019; Schallehn, Burmann, and Riley 2014). We define need for authenticity as the extent to which consumers care about genuineness with regards to their own consumption

behaviors. In that sense, we move from a perspective that originally revolves around brand perception to a perspective focused on consumer motives. As brand authenticity positively relates to the three aspects of heritage (history, quality, and trustworthiness), we posit that:

H1: Need for authenticity has a positive influence on brand heritage.

The Influence of Culture on Luxury Brand Values

Academics agree that culture refers to shared systems of values, beliefs and customs transmitted over generations that shape behavior and differentiate groups, especially countries (Hanson 2004). Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkow (2010) regarded culture as a 'collective programming of the mind' including six dimensions: (i) power distance is the acceptance of inequalities, (ii) collectivism (vs. individualism) refers to connectiveness with the community, (iii) long-term (vs. short-term) orientation, (iv) masculinity (vs. femininity), (v) uncertainty avoidance, and (vi) indulgence toward free gratification of desires. House et al. (2004) have proposed a nine-dimension GLOBE model by decomposing both masculinity and collectivism into two sub-dimensions, and adding two dimensions: humane orientation and performance. Lastly, Schwartz (1994) viewed value priorities as key aspects of culture. His model includes three bipolar dimensions: (i) embeddedness (social order and tradition) vs. autonomy (independence and hedonism), (ii) mastery (self-enhancement) vs. harmony (self-transcendence), and (iii) hierarchy (authority and power) vs. egalitarianism (equity and justice). Overall, these three most popular models overlap in a large extent, although a similar label occasionally refers to different contents (de Mooij 2015; Minkov and Blagoev 2012). All these models explain differences across countries well (de Mooij 2017), but Hofstede's one better clusters cultural distance across markets (Magnusson et al. 2008).

Comparisons across Western vs. Eastern countries have been a major topic in crosscultural business studies for a long time (Usunier, van Herk, and Lee 2017). Triandis (1995) found that the individualistic vs. collectivistic orientation of culture was the key dimension contrasting Western cultures (North America, Europe, Oceania) with Eastern cultures (Asia, Middle East, Africa, Latin America). In Western cultures, individualism (i.e., independence, autonomy) prevails, favoring openness to change and egalitarianism, while collectivism (i.e., the sense of duty toward the community, the concern for relationships with significant others) prevails in Eastern cultures, favoring respect for traditions and hierarchy. Culture also shapes the sampling of the private (vs. collective) self, which relates to the reference point from which the self is assessed: oneself (vs. significant others). Westerners favor the sampling of the private self, whereas Easterners favor the collective self (Triandis 1989). Accordingly, Markus and Kitayama (1991) argued that the definition of the self is primarily independent (separate from others) in Western cultures but interdependent (related to others) in Eastern cultures because Westerners are less prone to consider the opinion of and connectiveness with others. In summary, Western (Eastern) cultures emphasize individualism (collectivism), openness to change (traditions), and egalitarianism (hierarchy), in line with the prevalence of independent (interdependent) self-concept at the individual level. Based on key differences in cultural values and self-definition, next section reviews previous findings (Table 1) and introduces hypotheses about the influence of culture on luxury values.

Insert Table 1 round here

Culture and the elitist value of luxury

Veblen (1895) stated that luxury consumption mainly proceeds from two outerdirected drivers: wealth displaying (namely conspicuousness) and status signaling in the direction of others. First, the influence of these two drivers relies on the emphasis placed on hierarchical values, such as power distance (Gao, Winterich, and Zhang 2016) that is higher in Eastern (vs. Western) cultures. Second, Wong and Ahuvia (1998) argued that Easterners are more concerned than Westerners with wealth displaying and status signaling because the prevalence of interdependent self over independent self leads individuals to pay particular attention to the gaze of others. This suggests that Easterners may value elitism more because it relates to price and status-related items, which are congruent with both hierarchical values and interdependent self-concept. Accordingly, Shukla (2011) reported that the impact of interpersonal normative influence (i.e., the explicit and implicit pressures exerted on group members to comply with norms) on luxury purchase intents is higher among Easterners (Indian consumers) rather than Westerners (British consumers), illustrating the predominance of outer-directed motives in Eastern cultures. Shukla and Purani (2012) also showed that outer-directed motives (e.g., gaining approval) are more important than inner-directed ones (e.g., affirming the private self) for Indian consumers, while both motives have a similar importance among British consumers. Accordingly, Shukla et al. (2022) found that the positive influence of conspicuous signaling (i.e., the display of material possessions) on purchase intents is higher in Eastern (India and China) than Western cultures (the USA and Spain). Conspicuousness also limits purchase intents within Western cultures (the USA and Germany) but not within Eastern cultures (Azerbaijan, see Aliyev and Wagner 2018, and South Korea, see Lee et al. 2018). However, Shukla (2012) reported that status consumption exerts a similar positive influence on purchase intents of Westerners (British and US consumers) and Easterners (Indian and Malaysian) when motives are not outer directed (e.g., signaling status to others) but inner-directed (e.g., gaining personal status). Given that Roux et al.'s model views elitism as relying on outer-directed drivers, we hypothesize that:

H2: Eastern culture consumers attach more importance to elitism in luxury consumption than do Western culture consumers.

Culture and the exclusive value of luxury

The prevalence of both individualistic values over collectivistic values (e.g., autonomy over embeddedness, Schwartz 1999) and independent self over interdependent self (Markus and Kitayama 1991) within Western (vs. Eastern) cultures mutually sustains the consumers' need to stand out and feel unique. Therefore, exclusivity, which explicitly relates to differentiation from the mainstream, may be more valued by Westerners than Easterners. Accordingly, the former (e.g., West European and US consumers) place more importance on exclusivity and perceived uniqueness than the latter do (mainly, Asian consumers, Godey et al. 2013; Shukla 2012). In addition, Aliyev and Wagner (2018) reported that the impact of brand exclusivity on purchase intents is positive in Western cultures but negative in Eastern cultures, pointing out opposite responses (attractiveness vs. rejection) that exclusivity elicits depending on culture. Consistently, Kapferer and Valette-Florence (2018) found that mass-marketed luxury brands that erode perceived exclusivity exert a stronger negative influence on purchase intents of Western rather than Eastern consumers. Therefore, we assume that:

H3: Western culture consumers attach more importance to exclusivity in luxury consumption than do Eastern culture consumers.

Culture and the refinement value of luxury

Roux and colleagues (2017) argued that refinement embraces the pleasure that luxury consumption provides as well as the concern for physical appearance, especially for aesthetic features (beauty and elegance). First, cultural values congruent with the two aspects of refinement, such as hedonism, stimulation, and harmony, receive more emphasis in Western rather than Eastern cultures (Schwartz 2008). Second, Markus and Kitayama (1991) stated that the prevalence of independent (interdependent) self favors (limits) the expression and experience of ego-focused emotions, such as pleasure. For instance, Falk, Dunn, and Norenzayan (2010) reported that Westerners, as well as individuals primed with independent self, place more importance on expected enjoyment when making decision. Altogether, these considerations suggest that refinement may be more valued in Western cultures. Accordingly, on the one hand, Western consumers place more emphasis on the hedonic experience stemmed from luxury consumption (Godey et al. 2013; Shukla 2012), and such hedonic

experience exerts a stronger positive influence on luxury purchase intents of Westerners (Aliyev and Wagner 2018; Shukla and Purani 2012). However, Stepien et al. (2016) noted that Westerners may be less prone to emphasize hedonism when national culture exhibits a low level of indulgence that restrains the expression and experience of pleasure (e.g., in German culture). On the other hand, the concern for physical appearance (Netemeyer, Burton, and Lichtenstein 1995) is higher in Western cultures (e.g., the USA. and New Zealand) rather than Eastern cultures (e.g., China and India; see Durvasula and Lysonski 2008; Wang and Waller 2006) because the prevalence of individualistic values and independent self-concept leads Westerners to focus on self-perception. Therefore, given that Westerners are more concerned with the two main aspects of refinement, we assume that:

H4: Western culture consumers attach more importance to refinement in luxury consumption than do Eastern culture consumers.

Culture and the heritage value of luxury

In contrast with the three previous luxury values, heritage that embraces quality, trustworthiness, and history is viewed as inner-directed. Indeed, Holbrook (1999) classification of consumer values considers quality as a self-directed value because it concerns the personal utility placed on goods for their own sake without regard to opinions from others. In the same vein, Vigneron and Johnson (1999) have defined the 'perfectionist effect' in luxury consumption as a personal and private motive leading consumers to rely on their own perception of quality to achieve reassurance, outlining a close connection between quality and trustworthiness. In addition, brand history, which relates to subjective perceptions rooted in personal experience with the brand, bolsters both perceived quality and trustworthiness (Guo and Zhong 2020). Donzé and Fujioka (2015) pointed out that luxury consumption has developed much earlier in Western (mature) markets compared to Eastern (developing) markets. Therefore, brand history as a symbol of timeless quality and a sign of trust (Urde, Greyser, and Balmer 2007) may be more meaningful for, and thus more valued by Westerners than Easterners. In a nutshell, the three aspects of heritage rely on self-directed rather than others-directed motives. Hence, heritage may receive greater emphasis in individualistic Western cultures that favor independent self. Accordingly, US and UK consumers place more emphasis on quality than Asians do (Shukla, 2012), and quality also exerts a stronger positive influence on purchase intents of Westerners rather than Asians (Lee et al. 2018). However, the opposite was found in some studies that associated quality with price perception (e.g., by explicitly referring to the quality-price ratio, see Aliyev and Wagner 2018; Stepien et al. 2016), thus grouping together inner- and outer-directed values. Most importantly, these studies have not considered brand history nor trustworthiness, and as a result do not allow to capture the effect of culture on brand heritage in its broadest sense. Given that brand heritage primarily relies on self-directed motives, we hypothesize that:

H5: Western culture consumers attach more importance to brand heritage in luxury consumption than do Eastern culture consumers.

Culture and Adherence to Own-Gender Beliefs (AOGB)

Academics do agree that sex refers to intrinsic biological dispositions of males vs. females, while gender relates to social patterns of traits and behaviors associated with men vs. women (Pryzgoda and Chrisler 2000). West and Zimmerman (1987) stated that individuals '*do*' gender by enacting gender beliefs to display their own personal identity. The Social Structural Theory (SST, Eagly and Wood 1999) views gender stereotypes as widespread beliefs contrasting traits and roles attributed to men and women: men are associated with instrumental and agentic attributes (e.g., dominant, ambitious, independent), and women with communal and emotional ones (e.g., gentle, caring, tender, see Holt and Ellis 1998). The SST posits that individuals incorporate gender beliefs through a socialization process that legitimates gender inequality to the benefit of men, as professional achievement is still viewed as relying on masculine rather than feminine attributes (Ridgeway, 2011).

Williams, Satterwhite, and Best (1999) found that gender stereotypes are consistent across cultures, although little variations in their content, consisting in a closer alignment of male rather than female stereotypes with dominant cultural values occur (Cuddy et al. 2015). According to the SST, the persistence of traditional gender roles in Eastern cultures makes adherence to gender stereotypes stronger compared to Western cultures (Swim et al. 2010; Gibbons, Stiles and Shkodriani 1991; Williams and Best 1990). Stereotypes endorsement is also higher when the between-gender rather than within-gender comparison is salient as the former leads individuals to rely on in-group attributes to define the self (Turner and Onorato, 1999). Additionally, Glick (2006) showed that between-genders comparison is perceived as more accurate (and thus more salient) in Western rather than Eastern cultures because of less inequalities and lower power distance across genders (Kinias and Kim 2012). So, resulting AOGB is higher in Western cultures when the gender comparison relates to self-description rather than description of others (Guimond et al. 2006). As the setting of the present study (see the Measures section below) relates to the description of others and makes betweengenders comparison salient, we assume that:

H6: AOGB is higher in Eastern rather than Western cultures.

Gender Influence and the Mediating Role of Adherence to Own-Gender Beliefs

Meyers-Levy and Loken (2015) has documented the pervasive influence of gender on a wide range of consumer behaviors (e.g., offline and online shopping, customer loyalty, ad responses, etc.). For instance, Meyers-Levy (1988) showed that both genders do prefer the products providing some benefits congruent with their own role: other-directed benefits for women (communal role) vs. self-directed benefits for men. (agentic role). Additionally, women who are also associated with emotional traits, place more emphasis on the affective facets of shopping (hedonic consumption), which favor impulse buying (Tifferet and Herstein 2012). In contrast, men who are regarded as dominant and independent, are more concerned with status consumption (Tifferet, Shani, and Cohen 2013), along with customization appeal (Seo and Lang 2019). In a nutshell, gender differences in consumer behaviors appear to be highly consistent with gender beliefs. This is also true regarding luxury consumption, as elitism and exclusivity are more appealing for men, just as refinement is for women. Additionally, gender moderates the relationships among luxury drivers and values: the positive influence of Need for Status on elitism and of Need for Uniqueness on exclusivity are both higher for men compared to women, while the positive influence of Public Self Consciousness on refinement is higher for women (Roux et al., 2017). In other words, each gender is more sensitive to specific drivers and more prone to emphasize values that are consistent with gender beliefs. Lastly, gender has no effect on heritage because heritage is an inner-directed value that is less involved in the display of gender. To complete these findings and provide further support to the SST, we posit (Figure 2) that gender influence on luxury values is not resulting from biological differences but from the Adherence to Own-Gender Beliefs (AOGB), that is the incorporation of gendered attributes into the self-concept. AOGB relates to the personal and subjective sense of being male or female (i.e., gender identity in contrast with biological dispositions), and leads individuals to adopt gender-consistent behaviors (Wood and Eagly 2015). Therefore, we assume that AOGB leads consumers to favor gender-consistent luxury values, taking precedence over sex-typed differences because subjective social meanings play a larger role than biological counterparts in the display of gender (Wood and Eagly 2012). In that sense, AOGB should fully mediate gender influence on luxury values, except heritage that is an inner-directed value not influenced by gender.

H7: The adherence to own-gender beliefs fully mediates the influence of gender on elitism (H7a), exclusivity (H7b), and refinement (H7c).

Insert Figure 2 round here

Sample and Design

Insert Table 2 round here

We selected four countries to investigate cross-cultural differences in luxury values: two Western countries with mature luxury markets, France, and the United States of America (USA), along with two Eastern countries, with developing markets, China and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). We varied locations among Western countries (Europe vs. America) and Eastern countries (Asia vs. the Middle East) because of some unique aspects of national culture (Steenkamp 2001). Country selection relied on the prevalence of individualism (vs. collectivism) and egalitarian (vs. hierarchical) values in national culture. According to main frameworks of culture (Table 2), individualism (collectivism) and autonomy (embeddedness) are higher in the two Western (Eastern) countries, whereas the opposite is observed regarding values related to the acceptance of social inequalities, such as power distance and hierarchy. Nonetheless, some discrepancies occur across the two Western countries, as individualism is more valued in the USA, while egalitarianism receives more emphasis in France. Although the rapid modernization of the Chinese society since the late 20th century has favored the rise of individualism among the younger generations, some traditional Confucianist values do persist (Sun and Ryder 2016). For instance, Zhang and Wang (2019) reported that the desire for 'face' (i.e., the respectability resulting from compliance to social norms), which relates to collectivistic and hierarchical values, is still driving young Chinese's luxury consumption. The UAE have also experienced some major societal changes during the last 30 years with new wealth and rapid urbanization leading Emirati to place more emphasis on individualism (Grey et al. 2014). Yet, the adherence to collectivistic and hierarchical values inherited from the Islamic ethics (e.g., a sense of duty toward the community or obedience) is pervasive in the UAE (Jayashree et al. 2014). For instance, a collectivistic orientation is preponderant and

more influential than an individualistic orientation among Emirati students (Zeffane 2014). In summary, despite a rising individualism in the two Eastern countries, which suggests a step toward some form of cultural homogenization, the UAE and China still differ from the USA and France regarding both individualistic and hierarchical values.

Two thousand and forty-eight respondents (512 from each country) participated in a face-to-face survey that took place in summer 2022, during a five-day session (from Tuesday to Saturday, from 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.). Respondents were approached in malls located in Paris, Los Angeles, Dubai, and Shanghai. We referred to the Global Residence Index (2022), a city ranking based on the total number of local stores and dealerships from leading luxury brands. We selected the best ranked city in each country, except in the USA. In the USA, we looked for a representative pool of luxury malls, and based on a cross reference set of criteria (i.e., media impact, luxury shopping destination, etc.), we selected South Coast Plaza and the Beverly Center in Los Angeles, which are some of the most luxurious malls in the USA (Statista, 2022). This peculiarity of the US sampling is discussed in the limitation section.

Participants completed this paper /pencil survey in hallway booths away from people. Interviewers were doctoral students in marketing who were trained to respondent selection and survey administration. We surveyed only people who purchased at least one luxury brand in each of the three following product categories during the last 12 months: leather goods, fragrances, and clothes. In doing so, we aimed to select the most meaningful sample (i.e., actual luxury brand buyers). For each product category, respondents first listed the brands they had purchased. Then, we cross-referenced with the classifications of luxury brands that major consulting firms, such as Deloitte (2022), a company from the Big Four) have proposed. Only the buyers cross-referencing luxury brands in each product categories were considered. The most purchased brands were French (or Italian) in all four samples, with Chanel, Louis Vuitton, Dior, Hermès (and Gucci) always being part of the top-10 (Appendix A). The prevalence of French and Italian brands was especially pronounced in developing markets due to the absence of popular domestic luxury brands. In contrast, US and French consumers listed more domestic brands, reflecting the omnipresence of globally known brands, and also suggesting an inclination to national favoritism.

Each country's sample was balanced on eight age classes (from 16-22 years to 65 and over) and gender. It included 75% of upper-class (e.g., independent professionals, managers, and executives,) and 25% of lower middle-class participants (e.g., technicians, workers, and employees), Although luxury consumption is still higher in upper rather than middle classes, thus justifying the over-representation of the former, it is worth considering the latter because of the democratization of luxury consumption (see e.g., Shukla et al. 2022). Indeed, targeting middle classes may be a relevant strategy, especially regarding the most accessible luxury goods such as fashion accessories or fragrances. Each cell resulting from this factorial design, 4 (country) x 8 (age class) x 2 (gender), included 32 respondents, with 24 upper-class and 8 lower middle-class respondents, to ensure the equivalence of samples across countries.

Measures

All measures were administrated in the native language of participants (i.e., French, American English, Mandarin, or Arabic). The initial version of Roux et al.'s scale was drawn in French, whereas all other measures were initially drawn in English language. The translations were done by professionals using first semantic, then back-translation method.

Drivers of Luxury Brand Values.

We used the items proposed by Roux et al. (2017) to measure Conspicuous and Status Consumption, Need for Uniqueness, and Public Self Consciousness (Appendix B). Four items from O'Cass and McEwen (2004) measured conspicuous (two items) and status (two items) consumption. Three items (one item per dimension) from Tian et al. (2001) assessed Need for Uniqueness, and three items from Fenigstein et al. (1975) assessed Public Self Consciousness. We used an *ad-hoc* measure of Need for Authenticity (Appendix B) by adapting four items from Morhart et al.'s (2015) brand authenticity scale. Here, rather than evaluating brands on the four dimensions of authenticity (continuity, integrity, credibility, and symbolism), participants rated their personal expectations about each dimension, thus moving from a perspective centered on brand perception to a perspective explicitly focusing on consumer needs. All the items were rated on 11-point scales ranging from -5 = strongly disagree to +5 = strongly agree.

Importance of Luxury Brand Values

The respective importance of the 12 luxury values issued from Roux et al.'s model was assessed on a 11-point scale, ranging from 0 = not important to me to 10 = extremely important to me. In line with Rokeach's (1973) procedure, a short description of each value was used to limit possible polysemy (Appendix C).

Adherence to Own-Gender Beliefs (AOGB)

We used traits from the Bem's (1974) Sex Role Inventory to assess AOGB. Building on Holt and Ellis' (1998) findings, we selected six masculine traits (i.e., traits regarded as more desirable for men than women: ambitious, assertive, competitive, dominant, having leadership abilities, and independent), and six feminine traits (i.e., regarded as more desirable for women than men: compassionate, eager to soothe hurt feelings, flatterable, gentle, tender, and sensitive to the needs of others). Each trait was rated on 11-point scales ranging from -5 = this trait better applies to women to +5 = this trait better applies to men. Here, negative and positive numeric values were used to better contrast responses on this bipolar scale (Schaefer and Presser 2003). The adherence to gender beliefs relies on a stereotyping process that consists in applying gender-consistent traits to both genders: applying masculine traits to men, and feminine traits to women. In contrast, AOGB is just a part of this process, which focuses on gender-consistent traits that respondents apply to their own-gender group. Thus, the measurement of AOGB varied as a function of the respondents' gender and concerned for men and women respectively, the extent to which: *(i)* male respondents estimated that masculine traits better applied to men than to women, and *(ii)* female respondents estimated that feminine traits better applied to women than to men. For women, scores were reverse coded so that higher scores indicated higher AOGB. As such, this setting relied explicitly on between-genders comparison and related to the description of others (men and women in general) rather than to self-description, thus favoring AOGB that is a major antecedent of self-perception (Schmader, Johns, and Barquissau 2004).

Analysis and Results

Insert Table 3 round here

Cross Cultural Invariance of the Luxury Values Scale

First, we tested measurement invariance to ensure the validity of cross-country comparisons (Steenkamp and Baumgartner 1998). We performed a Multigroup Confirmatory Factor Analysis (MCFA) on ratings of luxury values and drivers with the four countries as groups, using maximum likelihood method (Jöreskog 1969). Model 1 (Configural invariance) that fixed the same factor structure across countries, fitted the data well (Table 3) according to Hu and Bentler's (1999) cutoff values: Comparative Fit Index (CFI) > .95; Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) < .05; and Standardized Root Mean Residual (SRMR) < .05. All loadings were significant (ranging from .56 to .90), supporting configural invariance. Conforming to Steenkamp and Maydeu-Olivares (2021), Model 2 constrained the variance of the method factor to 1 and its covariance with all factors to 0, to check Common Method Variance (CMV). This random-intercept model fitted the data better than Model 1, $\Delta \chi^2(104) = 213.87$; p < .001, but the improvement of fit was not substantial, $\Delta RMSEA \leq .015$, $\Delta SRMR \leq .030$, and $\Delta CFI \leq .010$. Thus, CMV bias was not an issue. Model 3 that constrained all loadings to be equivalent across countries reached a good fit and did not fit

the data worse than Model 1, $\Delta \chi^2(51) = 64.59$; p = .10, supporting full metric invariance. Model 4 constrained intercepts to be equivalent across countries. Despite satisfactory fit indices, Model 4 fitted the data worse than Model 1, $\Delta \chi^2(102) = 373.89$; p < .001, thus full scalar invariance was not satisfied. Then, according to Byrne, Shavelson, and Muthén (1989), we tested partial scalar invariance by relaxing some intercepts based on the most significant modification indices. Model 5 that relaxed the intercept constraint on seven items (quality, beauty, rarity, prestige, Nfu1, Nfa1, and Psc2) reached a good fit and did not fit the data worse than Model 1, $\Delta \chi^2(81) = 93.36$; p = .16. Thus, partial scalar invariance was achieved.

Convergent and Discriminant Validities of the Luxury Values Scale

Two findings evidenced convergent validity (Appendix D). First, composite reliabilities (CR) \geq .70 in all four countries (Jöreskog 1971) Second, Average Variances Extracted (AVE, Fornell and Larcker 1981) \geq .50 in all four countries (except for exclusivity in the UAE, which was .49). Two findings supported discriminant validity. First, Average Variance Extracted was higher than Maximum Shared Variance (MSV) for each latent construct in all four samples (Fornell and Larcker 1981). Second, correlations among latent constructs (i.e., Hetero-Trait-Mono-Trait ratios) < .85 in all four samples (Henseler, Ringle, and Sarstedt 2015). Thus, convergent and discriminant validities were both achieved.

Insert Table 4 round here

Cross-Cultural and Gender Differences in Luxury Brand Values

We performed General Linear Models (GLM) on latent scores of the four luxury values issued from Model 5. We used Country as a between-subjects variable, controlling for social class (contrast coded: -1 for middle, +1 for upper-class), gender (contrast coded: -1 for men, +1 for women), and age (eight ordinal classes). The effect of country was significant for all four luxury values (elitism, F(3, 2041) = 86.24, p < .001; exclusivity, F(3, 2041) = 53.57, p < .001; refinement, F(3, 2041) = 30.74, p < .001; and heritage, F(3, 2041) = 35.22, p < 001; refinement, F(3, 2041) = 30.74, p < .001; and heritage, F(3, 2041) = 35.22, p < 001; refinement, F(3, 2041) = 30.74, p < .001; and heritage, F(3, 2041) = 35.22, p < 001; refinement, F(3, 2041) = 30.74, p < .001; and heritage, F(3, 2041) = 35.22, p < 001; refinement, F(3, 2041) = 30.74, p < .001; and heritage, F(3, 2041) = 35.22, p < 001; refinement, F(3, 2041) = 30.74, p < .001; and heritage, F(3, 2041) = 35.22, p < 001; refinement, F(3, 2041) = 30.74, p < .001; refinement, P(3, 2041) = .000; refinement, P(3,

.001). Decompositions (Table 4) revealed that elitism was more valued in the USA and China compared to the UAE and France, thus H2 was not supported. The highest importance of exclusivity was observed in the USA, and the lowest in China. French and Emirati consumers placed a similar importance on exclusivity, falling in between the US and Chinese consumers. H3 was not supported. Both Western countries (France and USA) placed more importance on refinement compared to the two Eastern countries (the UAE and China), supporting H4. Lastly, heritage had greater importance in Western than in Eastern countries, confirming H5, and was also more important for French than US consumers.

The ranking of luxury values varied as a function of country (Table 4). In the French sample, a clear hierarchy occurred: brand heritage was the most important value, followed by refinement, exclusivity, and elitism (all paired *t*-tests were significant). In the US sample, only elitism was less important than the other three values (ps < .01). Differences within the Emirati sample were also somewhat tenuous: heritage was more important than exclusivity (t(511) = 2.10; p < .04) and elitism (t(511) = 2.24; p < .03). In contrast, a clear hierarchy took place within the Chinese sample, with elitism as the most important value and exclusivity as the less important one, heritage and refinement both falling in between (ps < .05).

The influence of gender confirmed Roux et al.'s (2017) findings. Indeed, men placed more importance than women on both elitism ($\beta = -.20, p < .001$) and exclusivity ($\beta = -.14, p$ < .001), while women placed more importance on refinement ($\beta = .20, p < .001$). However, the interaction of gender and country on exclusivity reached significance, F(3, 2041) = 9.37, p < .001, as gender effect was significant in both Western countries (USA: $\beta = -.36, p < .001$; France: $\beta = -.27, p < .001$), but not significant in Eastern countries (UAE: $\beta = .00$; China: $\beta = .01$). No other interaction effect reached significance. Additionally, exclusivity ($\beta = .22, p < .001$), elitism ($\beta = .20, p < .001$), and refinement ($\beta = .20, p < .001$) were more important for upper rather than lower middle-class participants. Lastly, age was found to favor heritage (β = .22, *p* < .001) but to limit exclusivity (β = -.21, *p* < .001).

Insert Table 5 round here

Cross Cultural Invariance of Gender Beliefs

A MCFA was run on ratings of masculine and feminine traits. Model 6 (Configural invariance) provided close fit to the data (Table 5). All loadings were significant, ranging from .45 to .80. Thus, configural invariance was satisfied. Model 7 (Random intercept) fitted the data better than Model 6, $\Delta \chi^2$ (44) = 87.73; p < .001. However, the improvement of fit was negligible, $\Delta RMSEA \leq .015$, $\Delta SRMR \leq .030$, and $\Delta CFI \leq .010$. Therefore, CMV bias was not an issue. Model 8 (equivalent loadings across countries) reached a good fit and did not fit the data worse than Model 6, $\Delta \chi^2$ (30) = 14.87; p = .99, supporting full metric invariance. Model 9 (equivalent intercepts across countries) fitted the data well but worse than Model 6, $\Delta \chi^2$ (60) = 125.04; p < .001. Thus, full scalar invariance was not achieved. Based on the most significant modification indices, Model 10 that relaxed the intercept constraint on five items (eager to soothe hurt feelings, compassionate, tender, independent, and ambitious) did not fit the data worse than Model 6, $\Delta \chi^2$ (45) = 25.74; p = .99, supporting partial scalar invariance.

Insert Table 6 round here

Cross Cultural Differences in Adherence to Own-Gender Beliefs

A GLM with country and gender as between-subject variables was run on AOGB scores (Table 6). The main effect of country was significant, F(1, 2038) = 15.08, p < .001: AOGB was stronger in both Eastern compared to both Western countries, supporting H6. The main effect of gender was also significant, F(1, 2038) = 13.65, p < .001: AOGB was stronger for men (M = 1.84) compared to women (M = 1.66), probably due to a higher desirability of masculine traits (Cuddy et al. 2015). Lastly, the gender and country interaction did not reach significance, F(1, 2038) = 1.78, p = .15, thus indicating consistent patterns across countries.

Insert Figure 3 round here

The Mediating Role of AOGB in Gender Effect on Luxury Values

We run a MCFA on luxury values and drivers to test a structural model (Model 11) that considered both (i) the mediating role of AOGB in the influence of gender on luxury values, and (ii) the moderating effect of gender on the relationships across drivers and luxury values, controlling for the effects of social and age classes (Figure 3). We used the two-step residual centering approach (Little, Bovaird, and Widaman 2006) to test moderating effects. As moderation relates to gender and drivers' interactions, product terms of gender by each driver were calculated then regressed onto gender and the driver of interest. We used regression residuals as estimates of moderating effects because residuals are unrelated to gender nor drivers, thus representing the unique variance of moderating effects.

Insert Table 7 round here

Model 11 achieved a good fit (CFI = .96, RMSEA = .02, and SRMR = .05), thus suggesting that the hypothesized model described well the relationships among constructs in all four countries, Then, conforming to Hayes (2009), we ran 5,000 bias-corrected bootstraps to test the mediating role of AOGB. Bootstrapping consisted in resampling the original data set to approximate a 95% confidence interval (CI) around estimates of the total, direct, and indirect effects of gender on luxury values. Hayes argued that a given effect is significant when its 95% CI does not include the 0 value. This allows to differentiate three mediation patterns: (i) no mediation when the indirect effect is not significant, (ii) a partial mediation when both indirect and direct effect are significant, (iii) a full mediation when the indirect effect is not. Main findings (Table 7) revealed that AOGB fully mediated the effect of gender on elitism in all four countries, as the indirect effect (via AOGB) reached significance, but the direct effect did not. This was also true regarding the effect of gender on refinement. Thus, H7a and H7c were both verified. In the two Western

countries, the indirect effect of gender (via AOGB) on exclusivity was significant, but the direct effect was not, indicating full mediation. In contrast, in the two Eastern countries, no effect of gender on exclusivity was significant, so that no mediation occurred in any Eastern countries. Therefore, H7b was evidenced in Western countries only. Lastly, as suggested, gender did not impact brand heritage in any countries.

The Moderating Role of Gender

The structural model (Model 11) validated the positive influence of *(i)* Conspicuous Consumption on Need for Status *(ii)* Need for Status on elitism, *(iii)* Need for Uniqueness on exclusivity, and *(iv)* Public Self Consciousness on refinement, in all four countries (Figure 3). Need for Authenticity positively influenced brand heritage within all four samples, confirming H1. Additionally, gender moderated the influence of Need for Status and Public Self Consciousness on luxury values. The positive influence of Need for Status on elitism was stronger for men compared to women, while the opposite was observed regarding the positive influence of Public Self Consciousness on refinement. These two moderation effects were consistent across all four countries (Figure 3). In contrast, gender moderated the positive influence of Need for Uniqueness on exclusivity in Western countries only: a stronger influence of Need for Uniqueness was found among male rather than female Westerners. No moderation effect of gender occurred regarding the influence of Need for Authenticity on brand heritage.

Insert Table 8 round here

Discussion

Need for Authenticity as a Driver of Brand Heritage

Table 8 reports the status of the hypotheses we tested. The need for authenticity exerts a positive influence on brand heritage in all four countries, supporting H1, thus substantially completing Roux et al.'s framework. This finding suggests that the need for authenticity leads consumers to use self-relevant cues to give meaning to what they buy (Arnould and Thompson 2005), especially cues that relate to brand heritage, such as quality standards (Beverland 2006), history (Brown, Kozinets, and Sherry 2003), and trustworthiness (Thompson, Rindfleisch, and Arsel 2006). Moreover, the measurement model of luxury brand drivers and values we propose achieves partial scalar invariance, providing a valid framework for cross-cultural comparisons. This is a major empirical contribution since many cross-cultural studies of luxury values did not ensure the equivalence of measures across countries, thus impairing the validity of findings and favoring some possible discrepancies (Steenkamp and Baumgartner 1998).

Cultural differences in Luxury Values

Despite the increased globalization of the luxury market, some substantial differences across national cultures are persisting in values associated with luxury consumption. First, as predicted, the importance placed on elitism is lower in France compared to the two Eastern countries. However, elitism receives the highest emphasis in the USA and China, which is not consistent with the individualistic vs. collectivistic orientation of culture. Therefore, H2 is not supported, suggesting that some additional dimensions of national culture should be considered. More specifically, differences in terms of elitism may result from the egalitarian orientation of culture, which is higher in France compared to the USA or China (Schwartz 2008). Second, US consumers place greater emphasis on exclusivity than Chinese consumers do, whereas French and Emirati fall in between. Once again, this pattern does not match the individualistic vs. collectivistic orientation of national culture. Thus, H3 is not supported. The greater emphasis placed on exclusivity in the USA compared to France is not likely to result from the prevalence of independent- over interdependent-self as both countries have similar scores on self-construals (Fernández, Páez, and González 2005). Exclusivity may be crucial for US consumers because they place a particular importance on the mastery dimension of culture, which refers to self-enhancement through the affirmation of personal independence

(Schwartz 2008). In that sense, US consumers seem to couple between-groups differentiation (i.e., being part of an elite) with within-group differentiation (i.e., seeking for exclusivity to achieve self-uniqueness, Gentina, Shrum, and Lowrey 2006). Emirati consumers also place more emphasis on exclusivity than Chinese consumers do. This finding may result from more extensive contacts among Emirati and Westerners (in 2021, Western expatriates stood at 8.5% of the Emirati population¹) and higher exposure to Western social media in the UAE compared to China². Indeed, both factors bolster the familiarity with the Western lifestyle and global culture (Belk, 1999; Cleveland and Laroche 2007), favoring commonalities among Emirati and Westerners. Therefore, such dynamics may lead Emirati to be more sensitive to self-differentiation motives that are critical within Western cultures (Tian et al. 2001). For instance, Semaan et al. (2019) found that Emirati women view their need for uniqueness as the key driver of their own luxury consumption.

Results observed regarding refinement and brand heritage fully support H4 and H5. On the one hand, Westerners place more emphasis on refinement compared to Easterners, with no significant difference across the two Western nor across the two Eastern countries. Therefore, the emphasis placed on refinement matches the individualistic orientation of culture. Indeed, this suggests that the greater importance of refinement within Western countries is resulting from the prevalence of individualism over collectivism. Indeed, the individualistic orientation of culture favors hedonism (Schwartz 1994) and self-appearance concern (Wang and Waller 2006) that are the two main features of the refinement value. On the other hand, Westerners place more emphasis on heritage than Easterners. This confirms Shukla's (2012) and Lee et al.'s (2008) findings, but it contradicts those from Aliyev and Wagner (2018) and Stepien et al. (2016) who focused on a specific trait of brand heritage, the quality-price ratio. In contrast, our study shows that brand heritage in its broader sense (including not only quality but also trustworthiness and history) is more important in mature than in developing markets. This is especially true with respect to France that is the historic birthplace of luxury trade (Lipovetsky and Roux 2003), thus suggesting that the more mature the domestic market, the larger the weight of brand history in shaping perceived quality and trustworthiness. Therefore, the importance placed on heritage depends on both cultural values and market development as brand heritage is more central in individualistic than collectivistic cultures, and even more central in the earliest market, France, compared to the USA.

Gender Influence on Luxury Values

This study is the first to highlight the interplay of culture and gender influence in luxury consumption, and to show that gender influence is ensuing from the adherence to gender beliefs. First, it illustrates the influence of culture on gender beliefs. As predicted (H6), AOGB is higher in both Eastern compared to both Western countries. This confirms that the persistence of traditional gender roles within Eastern countries leads to a stronger adherence to gender stereotypes (Swim et al. 2009). This finding is observed in an empirical setting that favors AOGB. Indeed, participants were to compare men and women on gendered attributes and thus were focused on a single category: gender. Otherwise, a stereotype dilution may occur when intersectional categories are available (Hall et al. 2019). Therefore, further research is needed to determine our findings' generalizability. Second, in all four countries, men place more importance on elitism, while women. emphasize refinement, confirming previous findings that focused on French samples (Roux et al. 2017). Accordingly, gender also moderates the positive influence of (i) NFS on elitism and (ii) PSC on refinement in all four countries: the former is higher for men, while the latter is higher for women. This pattern is consistent with the SST as each gender places more emphasis on the values and drivers that are congruent with own-gender traits and roles. In contrast, gender influence on exclusivity varies across cultures. In both Western countries, men place greater emphasis on exclusivity than women do, and Need for Uniqueness has a higher influence on

men compared to women, whereas neither direct effect nor moderation effect of gender occurs in the two Eastern countries. Therefore, SST's predictions are supported in Western cultures only. Interestingly, Cuddy et al. (2015) reported that both genders are more prone to associate men rather than women with the most culturally valued attributes. Indeed, men are viewed as more independent than women in individualistic Western cultures, but they are viewed as more interdependent than women in collectivistic Eastern cultures. Consequently, the exclusive value of luxury that relates to differentiation from the mainstream may provide independent-oriented Westerners, notably men, with a more relevant and valued dimension to contrast genders. Conversely, the prevalence of interdependence in Eastern cultures may limit the relevance of exclusivity in the display of gender, leading both genders to place little importance on this value. Additionally, the hypothesized mediating role of AOGB receives full (H7a, H7c) or partial (H7b) support. AOGB fully mediates gender influence on elitism and refinement in all four countries. AOGB also fully mediates the influence of gender on exclusivity in both Western countries, but no mediation occurs in the two Eastern countries wherein exclusivity seems to be less involved in the display of gender as discussed above.

Theoretical Implications

First, the increasing prevalence of counterfeiting (OECD³ reported that the share of fakes in global trade increased by 25% from 2013 to 2019) is a major threat for luxury brands. Indeed, Armaral and Loken (2016) found that the exposition to counterfeits damages genuine luxury brands, especially among upper-class consumers (i.e., their core target). Thus, the need for authenticity as an antecedent of brand heritage, may prevent the acquisition of counterfeits because it favors the concern for quality, risk avoidance, and integrity that limits fakes purchasing (Eisend, Hartman, and Apaolaza 2017). In that sense, the model we propose contributes to bridge the gap between genuine luxury brands vs. counterfeit purchasing, that is a main avenue for future research on luxury consumption (Khan, Fazili, and Bashir 2021).

Second, this study suggests that brand heritage, refinement and exclusivity are three individualistic-oriented luxury values that are critical for Westerners. In contrast, elitism can be considered as a collectivistic-oriented luxury value that is critical for Easterners, especially Chinese consumers. Accordingly, in the USA and France, individualistic-oriented values receive greater emphasis than collectivistic-oriented values, while the opposite is observed in China. However, a theoretical background contrasting only individualistic vs. collectivistic cultures is not sufficient to account for cross-cultural differences in luxury values. Indeed, additional factors, such as national culture specificities or the state of development of the domestic luxury market must be considered to better understand these differences. For instance, a clear hierarchy of luxury values occurs in France, with heritage as the most important value and elitism as the least important one due to the egalitarian orientation of French culture. In contrast, the hierarchy observed in developing markets, especially in the UAE, is far less pronounced, and exclusivity receives in the UAE an emphasis that is not consistent with the collectivistic orientation of the country. Thus, decoupling the effects of national culture and luxury market development is decisive for future research. Interestingly, Steenkamp (2019) has examined relationships among national culture and attitudes toward global (local) consumer culture, defined as preferences for worldwide popular commodities (vs. for commodities traditionally popular in their own country). Attitudes toward local culture are negatively related to individualism and independence but positively related to hierarchical and traditional values. In contrast, attitudes toward global culture are positively related to openness to societal change and harmony. This indicates the key role of Western (Eastern) values in global (local) consumer culture, thus suggesting that acculturation to westernized global culture may be regarded as favoring the quest of individualistic values.

Third, according to the SST, this study shows that gender influence is resulting from the incorporation of own-gender beliefs into the self-concept rather than from sex differences

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since no significant direct effect of gender is observed on any luxury values when controlling for the effect of AOGB. So, the residual effect of biological dispositions, if any, is marginal. Thus, identifying AOGB as the mediator of gender influence goes far beyond the observation of gender differences to shed light on the reasons why men and women emphasize distinct luxury values that are consistent with own-gender traits and roles. As a result, luxury is not *'just a female thing'* whatever the culture.

Managerial Implications

Going global for luxury brands is almost systematic and the tendency is to carry out a common strategic plan across markets (Kapferer and Bastien 2012) with similar positioning, offering, targeting, and communication campaigns, to maintain brand consistency and to limit expenses. However, cross-cultural and gender differences in the hierarchy of luxury values suggests that global strategies need further adaptation and fragmentation to fit the specificity of domestic markets. Our findings offer practical implications to design local and culturally relevant strategies to strengthen the brand's position in highly competitive mature markets, or to expand in less competitive developing markets (Kapferer 2015; Shukla et al. 2022).

First, when a clear hierarchy is observed among luxury values, local strategies may rely on the culturally predominant values, such as heritage in France or elitism in China. France is home to some of the most renowned and oldest luxury brands, such as Chaumet (1780), Guerlain (1828), or Louis Vuitton (1854), which preserve and perpetuate centuriesold traditions and craftsmanship. Hence, it comes as no surprise that heritage is the most important value for French consumers, and accordingly many French luxury brands are placing heritage at the core of their brand identity (Dion and Borraz 2015). For instance, in 2012, Louis Vuitton's campaign *L'invitation au voyage*⁴ emphasized heritage by depicting products in Le Louvre, a museum stepped in history. Its 2020 campaign *Spirit of travel*⁵ sustained such positioning through a timeless journey in Vietnam. The same is true about Lacoste whose 2017 *Timeless⁶* campaign testified its iconic polo over time. In recent years, luxury conglomerates have realized that brands with heritage are valuable assets, sparking a growing interest in reviving old labels such as Jean Patou, Paul Poiret, or Moynat (Dion and Mazzalovo 2016). In practice, to succeed on the competitive French market, managers should leverage heritage by featuring founding dates on packaging or in advertisements, celebrating corporate anniversaries and key characters from brand history, or referring to some historical events to consolidate brand loyalty and to appeal to new users.

Our study suggests that elitism is the key value to target in China as consumers are more prone to conspicuous consumption. The slow growth of Shang Xia shows the difficulty of launching inconspicuous luxury brands even on less competitive markets such as China. Indeed, Shang Xia that emphasizes excellence, craftsmanship, and traditions (namely, brand heritage values) has not reached profitability yet⁷. Additionally, in 2018, Dior sparked a social media backlash⁸ due to the poor quality of the video posted on Weibo to relaunch the Saddle bag in China, which damaged the brand's status. In contrast, Burberry has addressed the Chinese market in a way that was consistent with elitism. In 2020, Burberry performed strongly in China⁹ with sales boosted by a locally produced campaign¹⁰ that harmonized status-signaling (with items exhibiting prominent brand logos and monogram motifs) and Chinese traditions (with a celebration of red color). Campaigns celebrating social standing, financial wealth, and prestige are likely to be more effective in China, as exemplified by the Chinese perfume brand DOCUMENTS that is amongst the most expensive fragrances, yet fast becoming a commercial success after only two years in business¹¹. Thus, managers may implement elitism through (i) high-end positioning since price sensitivity is less influential in less competitive markets, and (ii) status appealing (e.g., associating the brand with wealthy groups, selecting socially prominent ambassadors, or using symbols of success and social recognition) to perpetuate the consumers' feeling to be part of the happy few.

When no clear hierarchy among luxury brand values occurs, as observed in the USA and the UAE, adapting marketing strategies to gender differences is an option. In that case, strategies may rely on the values that each gender emphasizes. Interestingly, Rolex¹² has a differentiated strategy for men and women in the US market. On Instagram, Rolex features Roger Federer as its male brand ambassador. His sporting and financial success highlight the elitist status of Rolex. By contrast, most of female ambassadors listed on the brand social channels are artists who provide the brand with a greater sense of aesthetics. Similarly, in the Middle East market, Tom Ford has adapted offering and communication to gender. In 2013, the brand launched Sahara Noir¹³, a new female fragrance inspired by Middle East traditions, which emphasized the beauty and mystery of the Middle East. By contrast, the campaign for its male fragrance Noir¹⁴ used an oversized bottle to reinforce the status and expensiveness of the product. Therefore, when targeting men, elitism should be implemented as previously discussed. For female consumers, strategies should rely on refinement by stressing on the hedonic aspects of consumption (e.g., focusing communications on the positive emotions experienced, offering experiential products eliciting pleasure, and providing consistent shopping experience) and self-appearance enhancement (e.g., infusing a sense of aesthetics in products, packaging, and advertisements, and portraying boost in self-perception).

These considerations point out the contribution of culture and gender in implementing marketing campaigns adapted to market specificity. In absolute terms, luxury brands should benefit from local and/or gender-oriented strategies, but in practice, it raises issues about brand dilution risks: fitting expectations of specific targets must not impair brand identity. So, what luxury brands do to adapt to a global growth strategy might not be the same for all the brands within a spectrum of brand luxuriousness (i.e., lower vs. higher). New and smaller emerging brands with lower heritage and prestige might consider adapting more to local specificities and be more micro-segmented to break into markets (e.g., employing wedge

marketing, focusing on a small section of the niche to hone the trade). Larger and more established brands with higher prestige should be less dependent on market specificities and might favor consistency with core values to assure long-term success. Thus, bringing brand identity and culturally predominant values together is a major challenge for practitioners.

Limitations and Future Research

Our findings are contingent on several limitations. First, we considered two Western and two Eastern countries only, thus further cross-cultural studies involving a larger body of countries are needed to generalize our findings. Second, we sampled from one city only per country. Particularly, in the USA, where the notions of fashion and luxury might be different on the West vs. the East Coast, thus calling for the use of more diverse US samplings in future research. Third, in this study, the development level of domestic luxury markets and the separation of Western vs. Eastern cultures may be regarded as two confounding variables because Western markets are generally more mature than Eastern ones. Hence, the respective influence of each variable should be investigated by contrasting the development level of markets within each culture. Fourth, we measured differences in national culture at the country level only, thus measuring differences at the individual level may provide some additional insights. Indeed, it would be fruitful to assess personal self-construals that are supposed to influence the importance placed on exclusivity. Linking country and individual levels may shed light on the way that culture is likely to shape individual dispositions and impact luxury values. Fifth, it may be worth exploring the effect of wealth distribution on luxury values since the two countries (United States and China) placing the greatest emphasis on elitism are the ones that have experienced the most significant growth in the proportion of wealthy individuals in recent years¹⁵. Sixth, we found that AOGB is higher in Eastern than Western cultures as our setting led participants to focus on between-gender comparison. Therefore, further research may determine whether this finding holds in a more natural

setting. Seventh, we regarded the alignment of Emirati's values onto Westerners' ones as the consequence of acculturation to westernized global culture. Here, Steenkamp's (2019) typology of consumer responses to global and local culture may shed light on involved acculturation processes by contrasting hybridization (integration of global culture into local culture) with globalization (assimilation of global culture).

Conclusion

This research contributes to the study of luxury consumption empirically,

conceptually, and managerially. First, it provides academics with an extensive and crosscultural invariant framework of luxury values, adapted to country comparison. Conceptually, it shows that cultural differences in luxury values are still persisting and are not limited to the contrast across individualistic vs. collectivistic cultures: additional dimensions of national culture as well as the state of luxury markets must be considered. Moreover, this study illustrates the interplay of gender and culture: gender influence on luxury values is resulting from AOGB and partly varies as a function of culture. Managerially, it offers practitioners a framework to adapt strategies to specifically target genders, cultures, and distinct markets.

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Luxury Values	Previous findings
Elitism (prestige, status, expensiveness)	Easterners (vs. Westerners) place more emphasis on elitism when status is outer- directed (e.g., Aliyev and Wagner 2018; Lee et al. 2018; Shukla 2011; Shukla and Purani 2012), but no difference occurs when status is inner-directed (Shukla 2012).
Exclusivity (uniqueness, rarity, creativity)	Westerners (vs. Easterners) place more emphasis on exclusivity (e.g., Aliyev and Wagner 2018; Godey et al. 2013; Kapferer and Valette-Florence 2018; Shukla 2012).
Refinement (pleasure, elegance, beauty)	Westerners (vs. Easterners) place more emphasis on hedonism (e.g., Aliyev and Wagner 2018; Godey et al. 2013; Shukla 2012; Shukla and Purani 2012). Westerners (vs. Easterners) are more concerned with physical appearence (e.g., Durvasula and Lysonski 2008; Wang and Waller 2006).
Heritage (quality, history, trustworthiness)	Opposite findings were found, showing that Westerners (vs. Easterners) place more emphasis on quality (e.g., Lee et al. 2018; Shukla 2012), and the reverse (e.g., Aliyev and Wagner 2018; Stepien et al. 2016). History and trustworthiness were not considered.

Table 1. The influence of culture on luxury values.

Table 2. Scores on dimensions of national culture as a function of country.

		France	USA	UAE	China
	Individualism (vs. Collectivism)	71	91	25	20
	Power distance	68	40	90	80
Hofstede's	Masculinity (vs. Feminity)	43	62	50	66
Values ^a (0-100 continuum)	Uncertainty avoidance	86	46	80	30
(0 100 0011110011)	Indulgence (vs. Restraint)	48	68	n/a	24
	Long-term (vs. Short-term) orientation	63	26	n/a	87
	Ingroup collectivism	4.37	4.25	4.71	5.80
	Institutionall collectivism	3.93	4.02	4.50	4.77
	Power distance	2.76	2.85	3.23	3.10
Globe	Gender egalitarianism	4.40	5.06	3.38	3.68
Values ^b	Assertiveness	3.38	4.32	3.80	5.44
(1 to 7 scale)	Uncertainty avoidance	4.26	4.00	4.82	5.28
	Future orientation	4.96	5.31	5.92	4.73
	Humane orientation	5.67	5.53	5.30	5.32
	Performance orientation	5.65	6.14	5.96	5.67
	Embeddedness	3.20	3.67	n/a	3.74
	Affective autonomy	4.30	3.87	n/a	3.30
Schwartz's	Intellectual autonomy	5.13	4.19	n/a	4.18
Values ^c	Mastery	3.72	4.09	n/a	4.41
(-1 to 7 scale)	Harmony	4.21	3.46	n/a	3.78
	Hierarchy	2.21	2.37	n/a	3.49
	Egalitarianism	5.05	4.68	n/a	4.23

Notes: ^a retrieved from https://www.hofstede-insights.com/product/compare-countries/ on January 28, 2023. ^b retrieved from https://globeproject.com/results#country, ^c retrieved from

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/304715744_The_7_Schwartz_cultural_value_orientation_sc ores_for_80_countries on January 28, 2023.

	χ^2	Degree of freedom	CFI	RMSEA	SRMR
Model 1: Configural Invariance	1261.89	1052	.990	.010	.031
Model 2: Random-intercept	1048.02	948	.995	.007	.030
Model 3: Full Metric Invariance	1326.48	1103	.989	.010	.031
Model 4: Full Scalar Invariance	1635.78	1154	.976	.014	.032
Model 5: Partial Scalar Invariance (7 intercepts relaxed)	1355.25	1133	.988	.010	.031

Table 3. Fit indices of measurement models of luxury brand values and drivers.

Table 4. Means (Standard-Deviation) of luxury brand values as a function of country.

	France	USA	UAE	China	Overall
Heritage	7.79 a	7.37 b	6.76 c	6.89 c	7.20
	(1.62)	(1.94)	(2.02)	(1.88)	(1.91)
Refinement	7.35 a	7.59 a	6.64 b	6.77 b	7.09
	(1.75)	(1.98)	(2.03)	(2.00)	(1.98)
Exclusivity	6.62 b	7.51 a	6.52 b	6.04 c	6.67
	(1.95)	(2.00)	(1.90)	(2.20)	(2.09)
Elitism	5.48 c	7.05 a	6.50 b	7.20 a	6.55
	(2.16)	(2.27)	(1.95)	(2.03)	(2.21)

Notes: For each line, means with different subscripts differ significantly (Scheffé test, p < .05).

	χ^2	Degree of freedom	CFI	RMSEA	SRMR
Model 6: Configural Invariance	512.62	332	.954	.016	.038
Model 7: Random-intercept	424,89	288	.963	.014	.035
Model 8: Full Metric Invariance	527.49	362	.958	.015	.039
Model 9: Full Scalar Invariance	637.66	392	.938	.018	.039
Model 10: Partial Scalar Invariance (5 intercepts relaxed)	538.36	377	.959	.014	.039

 Table 5. Fit indices of measurement models of masculine and feminine traits.

Table 6. Means (Standard-Deviation) of adhrence to own-gender beliefs (AOGB) as a function of country and gender.

	France		USA		UAE		China	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
AOGB	1.77 (1.05)			1.43 (1.13)				

 Table 7. Standardized effects of gender [95% Confidence Interval] on luxury brand values across countries.

		France		Unite	d States of A	merica	Un	nited Arab St	ates		China	
	Total	Direct	Indirect	Total	Direct	Indirect	Total	Direct	Indirect	Total	Direct	Indirect
	Effect	Effect	Effect	Effect	Effect	Effect	Effect	Effect	Effect	Effect	Effect	Effect
Heritage	.04	.12	08	04	13	.09	.01	.05	04	05	.06	11
	[05 ; .13]	[05 ; .31]	[24 ; .07]	[13 ; .05]	[28 ; .04]	[05 ; .21]	[08 ; .10]	[15 ; .25]	[21 ; 13]	[14 ; .04]	[10 ; .22]	[24 ; .03]
Refinement	.26***	06	.32***	.25***	.09	.16*	.31***	.07	.24**	.22***	.01	.21**
	[.17 ; .34]	[24 ; .12]	[.16 ; .47]	[.17; .34]	[08 ; .26]	[.02 ; .31]	[.23 ; .39]	[14 ; .26]	[.07 ; .44]	[.14 ; .31]	[15 ; .17]	[.08 ; .37]
Exclusivity	26*** [34 ; - .17]	06 [25 ; .14]	20* [37 ; - .03]	29*** [38 ; - .21]	09 [24 ; .07]	20** [35 ; - .07]	00 [09 ; .09]	.13 [07 ; .32]	13 [30 ; .05]	.02 [07 ; .11]	.05 [12 ; .21]	03 [18 ; .13]
Elitism	39** [46 ; - .30]	09 [26 ; .09]	30*** [44 ; - .16]	38*** [46 ; - .30]	07 [22 ; .07]	31*** [43 ; - .18]	44*** [51 ; - .37]	13 [31 ; .06]	31*** [46 ; - .16]	40*** [47 ; - .33]	10 [24 ; .04]	30*** [42 ; - .18]

Note: The sign of gender effects relied on the contrast-coding we used; (-1 for men; +1 for women). As such, a positive sign indicates that women place more emphasis on the value, a negative sign indicates the opposite. * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001.

 Table 8. Overview of hypotheses' status.

	H select	0
	Hypotheses	Status
Drivers of luxury values	H1: Need for authenticity has a positive influence on brand heritage.	Supported
	H2: Eastern consumers attach more importance to elitism than do western consumers.	Not supported
Culture	H3: Western consumers attach more importance to exclusivity than do eastern consumers.	Not supported
and luxury values	H4: Western consumers attach more importance to refinement than do eastern consumers.	Supported
	H5: Western consumers attach more importance to brand heritage ithan do eastern consumers.	Supported
Culture and gender beliefs	H6: The adherence to own-gender beliefs is higher in eastern rather than western culture.	Supported
	H7a: The adherence to own-gender beliefs fully mediates the influence of gender on elitism.	Supported
Gender beliefs and luxury values	H7b: The adherence to own-gender beliefs fully mediates the influence of gender on exclusivity.	Partially supported
	H7c: The adherence to own-gender beliefs fully mediates the influence of gender on refinement.	Supported

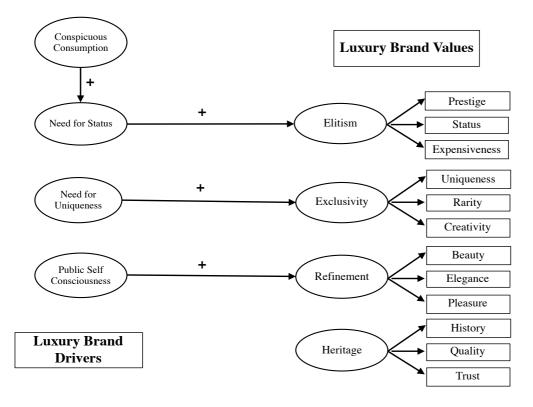


Figure 1. Roux, Tafani and Vigneron's model of luxury brand values and drivers (2017)

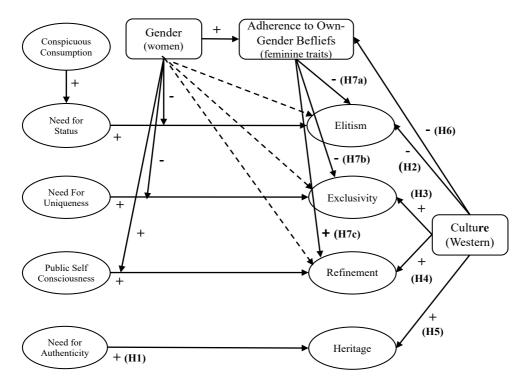


Figure 2. Conceptual model.

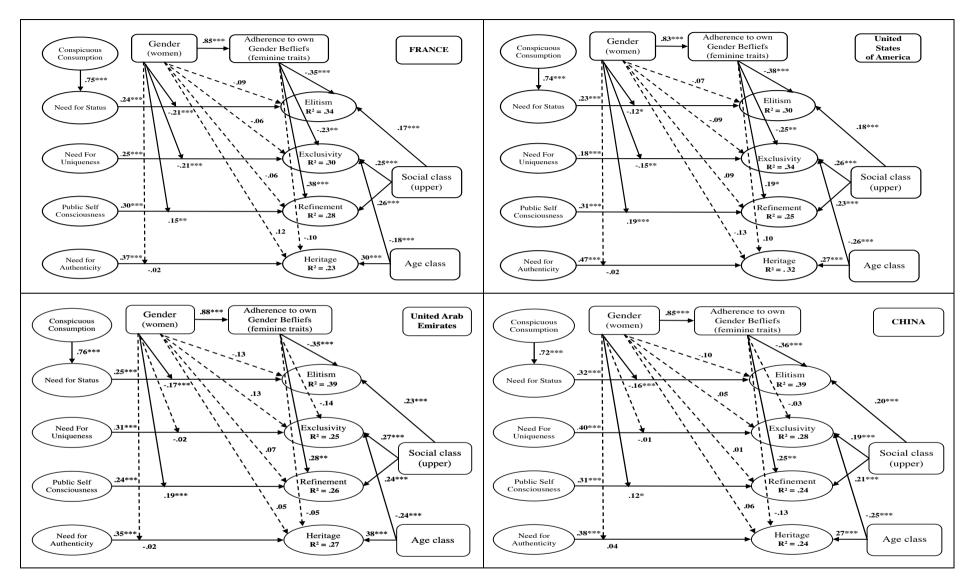


Figure 3. Structural model of luxury values and drivers as a function of country (* p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001).

France		USA		UAE		China	l
Chanel	26%	Gucci	25%	Chanel	29%	Chanel	21%
Dior	24%	Chanel	24%	Gucci	25%	Dior	19%
Louis Vuitton	17%	Ralph Lauren	18%	Louis Vuitton	22%	Gucci	18%
Guerlain	15%	Louis Vuitton	17%	Dior	18%	Louis Vuitton	18%
Saint-Laurent	13%	Dior	14%	Hermès	15%	Burberry	16%
Hermès	13%	Armani	12%	Ralf Lauren	12%	Prada	14%
Armani	12%	Burberry	12%	Prada	10%	Hermès	12%
Boss	11%	Vera Wang	9%	Dolce & Gabbana	10%	Armani	12%
Lacoste	10%	Michael Kors	8%	Fendi	7%	Versace	8%
Gucci	8%	Hermès	6%	Balenciaga	6%	Michael Kors	7%

Appendix A: Most purchased luxury brands as a function of country.

Note: For each brand, percentages are ratio of the total number of citations (without cumulation across categories) and sample size.

Appendix B:	Scales and	phrasings	of luxury	value drivers
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Scale	Measured concept (items)
	- Conspicuous consumption (CC):
	I love to be noticed by others. (CC 1)
Conspicuous and status consumption	I like to show who I am. (CC 2)
(CSC): O'Cass and McEwen (2004)	- Status consumption (SC):
	I prefer brands that are success symbols. (SC 1)
	I like brands that indicate achievement. (SC 2)
	- Creative choice counter-conformity:
	Often, when buying merchandise, an important goal is to find something that communicates my uniqueness. (NFU 1)
Need for uniqueness (NEU):	- Unpopular choice counter-conformity:
Need for uniqueness (NFU): Tian et al. (2001)	I often violate the understood rules of my social group regarding what to buy or own. (NFU 2)
	- Avoidance of similarity:
	When products or brands I like become very popular, I lose interest in them. (NFU 3)
	I usually worry about making a good impression. (PSC 1)
Public self-consciousness (PSC): Fenigstein, Scheier, and Buss (1975)	I am concerned about what other people think of me. (PSC 2)
	I am usually aware of my appearance. (PSC 3)
	- Continuity:
	It is essential that a brand survives times and trends. (NFA 1)
	- Integrety:
Need for authenticity (NFA):	It is crucial that a brand acccomplishes its value promise. (NFA 2)
Adapted from Morhart et al. (2016)	- Credibility : It is important that a brand cares about its consumers. (NFA 3)
	- Symbolism:
	A brand must reflects values that I care about. (NFA 4)

Appendix C: Labels and phrasing of luxury brand values

Label	Phrasing
Beauty	A luxury brand should embody beauty, aestheticism, and charm
Creativity	A luxury brand should be creative, innovative, and avant-garde
Elegance	A luxury brand should embody elegance, refinement, and sophistication
Expensiveness	A luxury brand should be expensive, elitist, and unaffordable to most people
History	A luxury brand should have a rich history, tradition, and savoir-faire
Pleasure	A luxury brand should elicit pleasure, desire, and fantasy
Prestige	A luxury brand should be prestigious, famous, and highly esteemed
Quality	A luxury brand should be of exemplary quality, perfect, and fault-free
Rarity	A luxury brand should be rare, uncommon, and owned by few people
Status	A luxury brand should express a certain status, standing, standard of living
Trust	A luxury brand should be trustworthy, reliable, credible
Uniqueness	A luxury brand should be unique, exclusive, and distinctive

	France												United States of America										
Constructs	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	CR	AVE	MSV	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	CR	AVE	MSV	
1 Elitism	.55***	.23***	.26***	.33***	.31***	.07	.04	.05	.80	.57	.30	.55***	.19***	.21***	.29***	.33***	.08	.01	.03	.80	.58	.30	
2 Exclusivity	_	.34***	.30***	.17***	.19***	35***	.16***	.18***	.75	.50	.30	_	.34***	.26***	.15***	.13**	33***	.07	.07	.75	.50	.30	
3 Refinement	_	_	.38***	.14**	.12**	.05	.32***	.14**	.76	.51	.14	_	_	.33***	.10*	.15**	.09	.35***	.10*	.78	.55	.12	
4 Heritage	_	_	_	.06	.13**	.09*	.03	.44***	.77	.53	.19	_	_	_	.01	.10*	.08	.11*	.57***	.77	.53	.32	
5 CC	_	_	_	_	.83***	.21***	.09*	02	.86	.76	.69	_	_	_	_	.82***	.20***	.11*	06	.86	.76	.67	
6 NFS	_	_	_	_	_	.23***	.03	.03	.87	.77	.69	_	_	_	_	_	.19***	.06	03	.86	.75	.67	
7 NFU	_	_	_	_	_	_	.08	.11*	.84	.64	.12	_	_	_	_	_	_	.07	.03	.85	.66	.11	
8 PSC	_	_	_	_	_	_	_	.08	.84	.63	.10	_	_	_	_	_	_	_	.03	.90	.74	.12	
9 NFA	_	_	_	_	_	_	_	_	.80	.50	.19	-	_	_	_	_	_	_	_	.80	.50	.32	
	Uniited Arab Emirates												China										
Constructs	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	CR	AVE	MSV	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	CR	AVE	MSV	
1 Elitism	.51***	19***	.25***	.29***	.38***	.14**	.11*	.09*	.80	.58	.26	.47***	16***	.21***	.37***	.41***	.20**	.07	.06	.81	.59	.22	
2 Exclusivity	_	.32***	.25***	.13**	.21***	40***	.04	.15**	.75	.50	.26	_	.19***	.17***	.12**	.08	49***	.13**	.08	.76	.51	.24	
3 Refinement	_	_	.38***	.19***	.23***	.09*	.26***	.22***	.77	.53	.14	_	_	.20***	.03	.09*	.05	.40***	.04	.76	.51	.16	
4 Heritage	_	_	_	.05	.07	.08	.09	.42***	.78	.54	.18	_	_	_	.11*	.09*	.02	.05	.48***	.78	.54	.23	
5 CC	_	_	_	_	.84***	.19***	.08	.10*	.85	.73	.70	_	_	_	_	.80***	.13**	.17	.07	.85	.73	.64	
6 NFS	_	_	_	_	_	.18***	.06	05	.83	.71	.70	_	_	_	_	_	.16***	.05	.04	.85	.74	.64	
7 NFU	_	_	_	_	_	_	.14**	.13**	.82	.60	.16	_	_	_	_	_	_	.06	00	.85	.66	.24	
8 PSC	_	_	_	_	_	_	_	.12**	.87	.68	.07	_	_	_	_	_	_	_	.02	.82	.61	.16	
9 NFA	_	_	_	_	_	_	_	_	.80	.51	.18	_	_	_	_	_	_	_	_	.80	.51	.23	

Appendix D: Correlations among latent contructs (HTMT Ratios), Composite Reliability (CR), Average Variance Extracted (AVE), and Maximum Shared Variance (MSV) across countries.

Notes: * *p* < .05, ** *p* < .01, *** *p* < .001.

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