

Consumer Perceptions of Brand Heritage and Luxury: A Quantitative Study of Burberry

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Abstract—This paper examines the relationship between perceived brand heritage and perceived luxury, focusing on how consumers evaluate Burberry following its 2023 strategic repositioning toward craftsmanship and British identity. A positivist, quantitative, and correlational research design is adopted. Data were collected through a cross-sectional online survey using convenience sampling (n = 68 valid responses). Perceived brand heritage and luxury were measured using the Brand Heritage Scale (BHS) and Brand Luxury Index (BLI). Spearman's rank correlation was used to test the hypothesised relationship. The results indicate a statistically significant positive relationship between perceived brand heritage and perceived luxury ($\rho = 0.483, p < 0.001$). This suggests that stronger perceptions of heritage are associated with higher luxury evaluations, confirming heritage as a key driver of perceived brand value. The study is limited by a small, convenience-based sample predominantly aged 25–30, restricting generalisability. Future research should examine broader demographics and compare heritage effects across cultural and branding contexts. The findings suggest that luxury brand managers should integrate heritage cues such as craftsmanship, historical narratives, and symbolic elements across communication and design to enhance perceived luxury and consumer trust. This study provides empirical evidence of brand heritage as a measurable determinant of luxury perception within a contemporary rebranding context, contributing to the understanding of heritage as both a signalling mechanism and a symbolic resource in modern luxury branding.

Index Terms—Brand equity, Brand heritage, Burberry, Consumer perception, Luxury branding, Luxury perception, Signalling theory.

I. INTRODUCTION

In an increasingly uncertain and dynamic global economy, consumers tend to gravitate toward heritage brands because they are perceived as more credible, trustworthy, and reliable [19]. This highlights a key research problem: understanding how a brand's history, longevity, and consistency shape contemporary consumer evaluations [19], [5]. Accordingly, this study examines the relationship between brand heritage and perceived luxury, focusing on how consumers' perception of Burberry's heritage influences their evaluation of the brand following its 2023 strategic shift toward craftsmanship and British identity [1], [19].

Brand heritage is defined as a dimension of brand identity that includes a track record, longevity, core values, symbolic elements, and an organisational belief in the importance of history [3]. It functions as an omni-temporal construct linking the past, present, and future through perceptions of stability, longevity, and adaptability [2], [12]. This connects with luxury consumption, a multidimensional construct fulfilling both functional and psychological needs through conspicuousness, uniqueness, quality, hedonism, and extended-self [16], [10]. Signalling Theory explains how heritage reduces information asymmetry by communicating authenticity, expertise, and consistency [11], while symbolic consumption perspectives highlight its role in identity expression [10], [16]. Despite strong evidence supporting the value of brand heritage, gaps remain in understanding its effectiveness in contemporary rebranding contexts, particularly for brands like Burberry that have shifted between trend-driven and tradition-led strategies [1]. It is unclear whether urban consumers aged 25–40

perceive a renewed emphasis on heritage strongly enough to influence luxury perception [1]. Additionally, limited research compares traditional European heritage models with constructed, narrative-driven approaches in modern branding contexts [9], [13], especially where brand meanings may be fluid or contradictory [19], [18].

This study addresses these gaps by examining the extent to which perceived brand heritage correlates with perceived luxury in the context of Burberry [1]. It evaluates whether renewed emphasis on heritage reinforces the brand's luxury status and tests the hypothesis that perceived brand heritage significantly and positively correlates with perceived brand luxury [1]. The scope is limited to measuring perceived brand heritage using the Brand Heritage Scale (BHS) and perceived luxury using the Brand Luxury Index (BLI) [15], [16]. The study adopts a positivist philosophy and a quantitative, correlational design based on cross-sectional survey data, collected through non-probability convenience sampling with a sample primarily aged 25–30 [1]. Understanding this relationship is important for contemporary brand management, as luxury brands increasingly rely on heritage narratives to sustain exclusivity [19], [1]. Heritage acts as a signal of authenticity and quality while reducing perceived risk [11], [19], and enhances the symbolic and experiential dimensions of luxury consumption [16], [11].

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Introduction

This research examines the impact of brand heritage on the perception of luxury, focusing on how a brand's history, longevity, and consistency shape contemporary consumer evaluations [19], [5]. In an increasingly uncertain environment, consumers tend to gravitate toward heritage brands due to their perceived credibility, trustworthiness, and reliability [19]. This review synthesises theoretical and empirical insights to understand how a brand's past contributes to its current luxury positioning, particularly in cases such as Burberry's renewed focus on craftsmanship and identity [1]. The review focuses on brand heritage measured through the Brand Heritage Scale (BHS) and perceived luxury through the Brand Luxury Index (BLI) [15], [16]. It examines contemporary fashion and luxury brands such as Chanel, Louis Vuitton, and

Ralph Lauren, while excluding historical discussions that do not contribute to consumer-perceived value [1], [17].

B. Theoretical Background

Brand heritage is a dimension of brand identity defined by a track record, longevity, core values, symbolic elements, and an organisational belief in the importance of history [3]. It operates across time, linking past, present, and future, and is perceived through stability, longevity, and adaptability [2], [11]. Heritage therefore functions as an active component of brand meaning rather than a static historical element. Luxury consumption is a multidimensional construct that satisfies both functional and psychological needs [10], [16]. The Brand Luxury Index captures this through conspicuousness, uniqueness, quality, hedonism, and extended-self, highlighting that luxury extends beyond product quality to include emotional and symbolic value [16]. Signalling Theory explains how heritage reduces information asymmetry by communicating authenticity, expertise, and consistency, thereby lowering perceived risk and strengthening trust [11]. At the same time, symbolic consumption and self-congruity perspectives suggest that luxury brands enable identity expression, with heritage-rich brands offering deeper cultural and emotional meaning [10], [18].

C. Empirical Insights

Empirical research shows that brand heritage enhances multiple dimensions of perceived value, including economic, functional, affective, and social aspects [19]. For example, studies on Chanel demonstrate strong emotional and affective impacts, while research on Louis Vuitton and Ralph Lauren indicates that heritage strengthens all key luxury dimensions [1], [19]. Heritage also plays a key role in signalling credibility and supporting premium pricing. By improving perceived quality and trustworthiness, it increases consumers' willingness to pay higher prices and reduces uncertainty in purchase decisions [6], [11]. Cultural differences influence how heritage is constructed. European brands rely on authentic historical continuity, whereas American brands often create heritage through storytelling [9]. Despite these differences, both approaches shape perceived value effectively [1].

Consumer responses further vary across age groups. Younger consumers are attracted to resale potential and “future vintage” value, while older consumers emphasise emotional and nostalgic connections [7], [8]. Most studies use quantitative methods such as PLS-SEM, but are limited by narrow samples and geographic concentration, reducing generalisability [1], [11], [16].

D. Research Gap and Conceptual Direction

Despite strong evidence on the value of heritage, gaps remain in understanding its effectiveness in contemporary rebranding contexts. In Burberry's case, it is unclear whether consumers aged 25–40 perceive its renewed heritage positioning strongly enough to influence luxury perception after earlier trend-driven strategies. There is also limited research comparing traditional European heritage with constructed, narrative-driven approaches in modern markets, particularly in the context of digital storytelling [1], [13]. Addressing these gaps is essential to understanding how heritage functions in evolving luxury contexts. Building on this, the study proposes that perceived brand heritage positively influences perceived luxury and enhances credibility through signalling [11]. This relationship may vary depending on whether heritage is historically rooted or narratively constructed [1].

E. Conclusion

In summary, brand heritage is a key driver of perceived luxury value, acting as a signal of credibility, authenticity, and quality while reducing consumer risk [1], [11], [12], [17], [19]. It enhances multiple value dimensions across luxury contexts [1], [19]. However, gaps remain in understanding heritage-led repositioning in contemporary branding, particularly across consumer groups and differing heritage models [7], [9], [18]. This study addresses these gaps by examining the relationship between perceived brand heritage and perceived luxury using validated scales [11], [16]. The following chapter outlines the methodology used to test these relationships.

[Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Study]
 Brand Heritage (Stability, Adaptability, Longevity) → [Signalling] → Perceived Luxury (Conspicuousness, Uniqueness, Quality, Hedonism, Extended-self)
 Fig. 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study.

III. METHODOLOGY

The primary aim of this study is to examine the relationship between brand heritage and perceived luxury, specifically investigating how consumers' perception of Burberry's heritage influences their evaluation of the brand following its 2023 strategic shift. As luxury brands increasingly rely on historical narratives to sustain exclusivity and prestige, understanding this association is critical for contemporary brand management.

This study is grounded in a positivist research philosophy, which assumes that reality is objective and can be measured through empirical observation. Positivism is appropriate for this research as it focuses on testing relationships between measurable constructs using structured methods. The study examines two clearly defined variables perceived brand heritage and perceived luxury using validated scales, namely the Brand Heritage Scale (BHS) and the Brand Luxury Index (BLI) [15], [16]. This enables the generation of objective, quantifiable insights and supports hypothesis testing. In line with this philosophy, a quantitative research approach is adopted. Quantitative methods allow for the collection of numerical data and the use of statistical analysis to identify patterns and relationships between variables. This approach is particularly suitable as the study aims to test the relationship between brand heritage and perceived luxury using structured measurement scales. It also ensures alignment with the positivist emphasis on objectivity and generalisability.

The research employs a correlational design, which examines the relationship between variables without manipulation. This design is appropriate as the study seeks to understand how perceptions of brand heritage relate to perceptions of luxury in a real-world context. Since the focus is on naturally occurring consumer perceptions, no experimental intervention is required. A non-probability convenience sampling strategy was used to collect data. The questionnaire was distributed to 100 individuals, of which 84 responses were received. After data cleaning, 68 valid responses were retained for analysis. This approach was chosen due to practical constraints, particularly the limited timeframe of four weeks. While convenience sampling enables efficient data collection, it limits the generalisability of findings, as the sample may not fully represent the broader population.

Data was collected using a self-administered online questionnaire, which is efficient, structured, and suitable for quantitative research. The study follows a cross-sectional design, capturing consumer perceptions at a single point in time. The questionnaire was developed using two established scales. The Brand Heritage Scale (BHS) [15] was used to measure perceived brand heritage across the dimensions of stability, longevity, and adaptability. From the original 10 items, five items were selected based on face validity and clarity: (1) Burberry is a timeless brand; (2) Burberry communicates a sense of tradition; (3) Burberry has a strong link to the past; (4) Burberry reinforces long-held traditions; (5) Burberry knows how to reinvent itself while staying true to its roots. Perceived luxury was measured using the Brand Luxury Index (BLI) [16], which captures five dimensions: conspicuousness, uniqueness, quality, hedonism, and extended-self. From the original 20 items, one item per dimension was selected based on clarity and representativeness: Affordable Extremely Expensive; Fairly Exclusive Very Exclusive; Good Quality Best Quality; Attractive Glamorous; Fairly Powerful Very Powerful.

For data analysis, the study employs inferential statistics, specifically Spearman correlation, to examine the strength and direction of the relationship between brand heritage and perceived luxury. This method is appropriate for analysing relationships between variables measured using scale-based responses and aligns with the study’s objective of testing associations. In summary, this research adopts a positivist, quantitative, and correlational approach, supported by convenience sampling and survey-based data collection using validated scales. These methodological choices form a coherent framework for examining the relationship between brand heritage and perceived luxury. The following chapter presents the results derived from this analysis.

IV. RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of the quantitative, correlational, survey-based study investigating the relationship between brand heritage and perceived luxury in the context of the Burberry brand. The research aim was to determine whether perceptions of a brand’s heritage significantly influence its luxury standing among consumers. The following sections

outline the sample demographics, provide descriptive statistics for the variables measured, and detail the results of the Spearman rank correlation analysis.

A. Sample Demographics

The study utilised a sample of 68 respondents (N = 68). The demographic profile of the participants, focused on age and brand familiarity, is summarised in Table I below.

Table I: Sample Demographics (N = 68)

Demographic Category	Characteristics	Frequency (f)	% of Total
Age	25–30	52	75.00%
	31–35	6	8.82%
	36–40	6	8.82%
	Over 40	3	4.41%
Brand Familiarity	Yes, very familiar	37	54.41%
	Somewhat familiar	14	20.59%
	Slightly familiar	15	22.06%

The sample is heavily concentrated in the 25–30 age group, which constitutes the vast majority at 75.00%. The remaining participants are evenly split between the 31–35 and 36–40 categories (8.82% each), while those over 40 represent the smallest portion at 4.41%. Regarding brand engagement, more than half of the participants (54.41%) identified as being very familiar with Burberry. The remaining respondents reported being somewhat familiar (20.59%) or slightly familiar (22.06%).

B. Descriptive Statistics

The variables were measured using two primary scales: the Brand Heritage Scale (BHS), comprising questions Q3 through Q7, and the Brand Luxury Index (BLI), comprising questions Q8 through Q12. Responses were recorded on a scale of 1 to 7.

Table II: Descriptive Statistics for BHS and BLI Items

Variable / Item	Mean	Median	Mode	Std. Dev.
Brand Heritage Scale (BHS)				
Q3. Timeless brand	4.90	5.0	6.0	1.53
Q4. Sense of tradition	4.82	5.0	5.0	1.50
Q5. Link to the past	4.81	5.0	4.0	1.60

Q6. Long-held traditions	4.81	5.0	4.0	1.56
Q7. Reinvention / Roots	5.01	5.0	6.0	1.48
Brand Luxury Index (BLI)				
Q8. Adjective Pair 1 (Expensive)	5.00	5.0	5.0	1.53
Q9. Adjective Pair 2 (Exclusive)	4.73	5.0	5.0	1.60
Q10. Adjective Pair 3 (Quality)	5.21	5.0	5.0	1.32
Q11. Adjective Pair 4 (Glamorous)	4.85	5.0	5.0	1.50
Q12. Adjective Pair 5 (Powerful)	4.95	5.0	4.0	1.42

Note: Data derived from sample N = 68.

The descriptive data reveals distinct patterns between the two scales. Within the Brand Heritage Scale, the means are relatively consistent, ranging from 4.81 to 5.01, with all items sharing a median of 5.0. Q7 (“Reinvents while staying true to roots”) achieved the highest mean (5.01) and a mode of 6.0, indicating a trend toward higher agreement. Conversely, Q5 and Q6 both had the lowest modes (4.0), with responses spread across the scale.

The Brand Luxury Index scores are notably higher, with means for Q8 through Q11 ranging from 4.73 to 5.21. These four items all show a median of 5.0, indicating moderately high but not ceiling-concentrated luxury ratings. Q12 serves as an outlier within this index, with a mean (4.95) and mode (4.0) that are the lowest in the BLI and align more closely with the BHS items. Reliability analysis further supports this variance, noting that while BHS items show very high coherence ($r = 0.875-0.907$), Q12 in the BLI showed a weak item-total correlation, consistent with its notably lower mean and modal response compared to the other BLI items.

C. Correlation Analysis

To determine the relationship between the composite scores of Brand Heritage (Q3–Q7) and Brand Luxury (Q8–Q12), a Spearman rank correlation ρ (rho) was conducted. This non-parametric test was selected because the data is derived from ordinal Likert-type items.

Table III: Spearman Correlation Results

Statistic	Value	Significance (p)	95% CI
Spearman's ρ (rho)	0.483	< 0.001	[0.285, 0.636]
Sample Size (n)	68		

The analysis results in a Spearman correlation coefficient of ρ (rho) = 0.483, indicating a positive relationship between the two variables. The significance level is statistically significant ($p < 0.001$), with an exact p-value of 0.000003, which is well below the standard 0.05 threshold. This statistical evidence confirms that as perceptions of Burberry’s brand heritage increase, consumers’ perceptions of its luxury status consistently increase as well.

The results indicate a clear demographic leaning toward a younger, brand-familiar audience. Descriptive statistics highlight that while Burberry is rated moderately high for heritage, it receives even stronger ratings for luxury dimensions, albeit with some internal variance in the luxury index. Most critically, the correlation analysis confirms a statistically significant, moderate-to-large positive relationship ($\rho = 0.483, p < 0.001$) between perceived brand heritage and luxury perception. These findings provide a data-driven foundation for understanding how tradition and history function as luxury signals for the brand.

V. DISCUSSION

This research investigated the impact of perceived brand heritage on the perception of luxury, specifically examining whether historical continuity and craftsmanship-led narratives act as significant drivers of luxury value for contemporary consumers. The primary aim was to determine whether a significant relationship exists between the Brand Heritage Scale (BHS) and the Brand Luxury Index (BLI) in the context of Burberry’s 2023 strategic shift toward its British identity. The study tested the alternative hypothesis that perceived brand heritage significantly and positively correlates with perceived brand luxury. The analysis revealed a significant positive association between perceived brand heritage and luxury perception among the sampled consumers. The Spearman correlation coefficient ($\rho = 0.483$) indicates a strong relationship, suggesting that higher

perceptions of Burberry's legacy, continuity, and traditions are associated with higher evaluations of its prestige, exclusivity, and quality. As a result, the null hypothesis is rejected, providing empirical support for the argument that brand heritage is a measurable driver of luxury perception.

This finding suggests that for urban luxury consumers, a brand's historical narrative is not merely contextual but central to its perceived luxury status. It aligns with prior research demonstrating that brand heritage enhances affective, functional, and social dimensions of customer-perceived value. In particular, the findings support the work of Aydın and Dimitrova [1], who argue that brand heritage strengthens multiple dimensions of luxury perception and increases consumer confidence in the brand. Burberry's emphasis on its founding heritage and iconic symbols such as the trench coat reinforces what is described as an "omni-temporal" identity, linking past, present, and future to strengthen its premium positioning.

The effectiveness of these heritage signals can be understood in relation to the demographic and contextual characteristics of the sample. The respondents were predominantly emerging adults aged 25–30, a group that tends to associate heritage luxury with long-term value and investment potential. As noted by Halwani [8], this demographic often perceives heritage products as "future vintage," where longevity contributes to both symbolic and economic value. Additionally, in a digital and fast-changing market environment, heritage signals authenticity and stability, reducing perceived risk and reinforcing trust. From a theoretical perspective, the findings are strongly supported by Signalling Theory, which explains how brands communicate credibility and quality under conditions of information asymmetry. Heritage functions as a signal of consistency, expertise, and authenticity, enabling consumers to infer quality and reliability without direct evaluation. This is closely aligned with Brand Heritage Theory [2], [3], which emphasises the importance of stability, longevity, and core values in building trust and reinforcing brand meaning over time.

The results also align with Symbolic Consumption and Self-Congruity Theory, which suggest that consumers use brands as tools for identity expression. In this context, Burberry's heritage provides a symbolic narrative that consumers can associate with, allowing them to align their self-image with ideas of

timelessness, tradition, and cultural sophistication. This highlights how heritage operates not only as a functional signal but also as a symbolic resource that enhances the experiential and identity-driven aspects of luxury consumption.

At the same time, a more nuanced interpretation emerges when considering the reliability analysis of the Brand Luxury Index. The relatively weak item-total correlation for the conspicuousness dimension suggests that heritage may not uniformly influence all aspects of luxury perception. While heritage strongly reinforces perceptions of quality and uniqueness, its influence on overt status display or "showy" consumption may be less consistent. This observation aligns with prior research indicating that different dimensions of luxury respond differently to brand cues depending on context and consumer motivations (Christodoulides et al., 2008). Additionally, the high level of brand familiarity among respondents likely strengthened the impact of heritage, as familiarity increases sensitivity to consistency in brand narratives and enhances the effectiveness of heritage as a signal.

VI. CONCLUSION

This study examined the relationship between perceived brand heritage and perceived luxury among consumers evaluating Burberry following its 2023 strategic repositioning. The results provide clear empirical support for the hypothesis that perceived brand heritage significantly and positively correlates with perceived brand luxury ($\rho = 0.483$, $p < 0.001$). This confirms brand heritage as a key driver of luxury perception, particularly for younger consumers who value authenticity and long-term brand consistency.

The findings contribute to the literature by extending theoretical frameworks Signalling Theory, Brand Heritage Theory, and Symbolic Consumption into a contemporary rebranding context. They demonstrate that heritage operates as both a functional signal and a symbolic resource, reinforcing exclusivity, quality perceptions, and identity-driven consumption.

Practically, the study suggests that luxury brand managers should strategically integrate heritage cues including craftsmanship narratives, historical symbols, and cultural identity markers across communications and product design. This is especially relevant in a digital marketplace where authenticity and consistency are increasingly valued.

Limitations include the small, convenience-based sample predominantly aged 25–30 and the cross-sectional design, which restricts causal inference and generalisability. Future research should employ larger, more diverse samples, longitudinal designs, and comparative analyses across different cultural contexts and heritage brand typologies. Additionally, further investigation into the differential impact of heritage on specific luxury dimensions particularly conspicuousness would enrich understanding of how heritage signals function across varied consumer motivations.

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