

Artist Name Infusion and Luxury Perceptions: Expanding the Use of Art in Branding

ABSTRACT

Luxury democratization has led to profound changes in the way luxury is understood, affecting companies' management and consumers' decision-making. This phenomenon has also expanded the sources of luxury perception and its antecedents. This article presents a novel way to influence luxury perceptions, using art pieces in the design of a product and including artists' names as collaborators (artist name infusion). This research also considers the potential differences in processing to explain the effects between generations, acknowledging the differences from those raised both before and after luxury democratization took place. As a result, a significant effect of artist name infusion was found, and it is possible to state that the perception of aesthetics and exclusivity mediated this effect. Additionally, younger generations emphasize the importance of aesthetics, while older generations emphasize the effects of exclusivity. These results are relevant from theoretical and practical perspectives.

Keywords: Art Infusion, Artist Name, Luxury Democratization, Aesthetics, Exclusivity

1. Introduction

For the past few decades, we have witnessed nonstop growth in the luxury goods market worldwide, and its prosperity attracts new providers and new ways to signal the luxurious characteristics of products and services every day, each time reaching a larger clientele (Kapferer & Valette-Florence, 2018). According to recent estimations, the global luxury market grew by 4% in 2019, which is almost 75% greater than the world's growth rate for the same period, reaching an amazing 1.5 trillion USD (D'Arpizio *et al.*, 2020). Amazingly, these steady growth rates have shown resilience in the face of adversity, overcoming economic contractions, setbacks and profound changes in consumption decision-making. As consumers change, markets change with them, and the luxury market is not an exception. An important source of growth in this sector over the last 30 years is attributed to the profound transformation in the perception of how luxury works and how it is conceived, a phenomenon commonly called "democratization" (Dubois & Laurent, 1995).

Starting in the late 90s, democratization of luxury began when the middle class expanded and people attained higher levels of wealth, allowing them a greater chance to acquire luxury products, which was often related to having a higher social status (Hauck & Stanforth, 2007). This boost in demand encouraged a continuous expansion of luxury product portfolios and the opening of new luxury concepts that contributed to making these markets more diverse and accessible (Silverstein & Fiske, 1995). Therefore, luxurious products or services moved away from being just exclusive, as they were no longer owned only by the elites (Yeoman & McMahon-Beattie, 2018; Wiedmann *et al.*, 2009). The meaning of luxury started to expand, making other attributes gain importance. People started evaluating luxury characteristics not only by expressive dimensions but also by impressive dimensions, such as quality and

aesthetics, pushing brands to create value through the differentiation of these aspects. These new product characteristics are now fundamental for many consumers (Hudders *et al.*, 2013). Currently, democratization as a concept has settled for everybody: practitioners from related industries, consumers and researchers. For instance, studies have performed in-depth explorations of changes in the meaning of luxury and the differences in how different groups of people understand the concept and, accordingly, behave (Frank, 1999; Hauck & Stanforth, 2007; Hudders *et al.*, 2013). For example, studies have explored how consumers from different generations react, evaluate and make decisions related to the concept of luxury (Jiang & Shan, 2018; Kapferer & Michaut, 2019).

Intuitively, older generations' conceptions regarding the idea of luxury come from the pre-democratization era, which might not necessarily be the case for younger generations. Regarding this topic, Kapferer & Michaut (2019) conclude that the main perceptions attached to luxuries, such as prestige, heightened quality, and expense, remain essential for all generations. Nevertheless, they also discovered that there is a difference in the peripheral traits involving luxury. Millennials, for example, pay more attention to the fashion and beauty dimensions of luxury, and seniors place more emphasis on rarity and the fact that luxury is for the minority (Kapferer & Michaut, 2019).

These market and consumer transformations brought on by democratization have shaped the context of the luxury industry for the past three decades. Future events may also do the same. In the past, companies faced the challenges of democratization by developing strategies to differentiate themselves from their competition or to reinforce the core dimensions of their product's luxury perceptions. As a result, we have seen, for example, initiatives aiming to increase brand-pricing

power by including singular and intangible elements, such as country of origin, craftsmanship, or heritage (Wiedmann & Hennigs, 2012). Moreover, there have been attempts to connect luxury products with sustainability and social responsibility to appeal to current trends (Janssen *et al.*, 2014; Han *et al.*, 2017; Kapferer & Michaut, 2019). Also, to strengthen the perception of the scarcity of a product, the creation of limited editions has been a trend as well (Jelinek, 2018).

Furthermore, one democratization driven strategy that has been an exciting research topic is the collaboration between luxury brands and art to enhance the luxuriousness and exclusiveness of products (Hagtvedt & Patrick, 2008). Many luxury brands have leaned towards art because they consider it a natural extension of their nature (Dubois & Duquesne, 1993) and have identified the proximity that exists between the two concepts (Joy *et al.*, 2012). Regarding their products, brands seek to transform limited editions into authentic artwork that can bring inspiration and transcendence to consumers (Kapferer, 2014). According to Kim *et al.* (2012), luxury brands collaborate with famous artists as a way to integrate art into their activities. Chailan (2018) identified four main types of collaboration between art and the luxury industry: business collaboration, patronage, foundations, and artistic mentoring. The first is the most common, and it represents a relationship in which the brand pays an artist to work on a particular project for a (usually) predetermined amount of time.

Examples of collaborations with brands are the iconic projects between Dior and the famous contemporary artists who are invited to portray their vision of the “Lady Dior” handbag, transforming this product into a “work of art” (Antonaglia & Ducros, 2020). Takashi Murakami, a talented artist from Japan, collaborated with a luxury brand when he created multiple designs for Louis Vuitton (Baumgarth & Wieker, 2020). However, not all of the collaborations have been established between highly-

renowned artists, nor by the most luxurious brands, especially in a democratized luxury market. An example is the German beer brand Warsteiner, which launched two series of special beer bottles in collaboration with twelve graffiti artists (Baumgarth & Wieker, 2020). Other examples can be found through a simple search on Amazon or similar websites. By searching “art and sneakers” on these platforms, one can get a glimpse of just how common these kinds of collaborations are. Furthermore, in addition to being an illustration of art and brand collaborations, these cases are examples of product art infusion.

Hagtvedt & Patrick (2008), who tried to determine whether art would influence attitudes toward products, first explored the art infusion effect. They concluded that the infusion of a work of art into a product design or its packaging enhanced the perception of luxury from a spillover effect due to the perceptions of exclusivity and prestige associated with art. Since then, different variations of art infusion in products have been researched in various contexts (Kim *et al.*, 2012; Lee *et al.*, 2015; Estes *et al.*, 2018). The effect has been shown to work at the product and brand level independent of the content, popularity, or style of the artwork. Despite the increasing academic interest in exploring this topic, the role of including an artist's name in the work of art added to a product has not been studied in the branding literature regarding luxury.

Since art might not exist without the artist (Vidokle, 2010), it becomes reasonable and interesting to analyze the impact that the inclusion of an artist's name might have on the art infusion effect. The addition of an author's name can create a crucial difference in perception, signaling that a design is actually art. Additionally, the names of different artists will create different connotations, which might affect the perceptions of the artwork and, consequently, the perception of the product. These

effects, however, may not work in the same way for individuals of different ages or generations since each might understand luxury in different ways.

This article experimentally examines the effect on luxury perceptions of including an artist's name on art infused products ("artist name infusion"). Moreover, this paper seeks to understand whether that effect is explained by the improvement of specific perceptions associated with luxury. Furthermore, the influence of consumer age on the intensity and pathways of the effect is analyzed.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Art infusion effect

The first challenge that arises when discussing possible art effects on product perceptions is a clear definition of what art represents and the values associated with the concept of art itself. Like much of the art infusion research, this article considers art as being represented by what consumers understand as art (Hagtvedt & Patrick, 2008; Lee *et al.*, 2015). This consumer approach fundamentally describes exclusivity, luxury, and sophistication as concepts strongly associated with art (Hoffman, 2002; Margolin, 1992; Martorella, 1996; Shrum Jr, 1996; Tansey & Kleiner, 1996; Venkatesh & Meamber, 2006).

Hagtvedt & Patrick (2008) took this consumer perspective approach when researching the effect art could have on the products associated with it. As noted before, they were the first to explore this effect and discovered that art evokes perceptions of exclusivity and luxury regardless of the content. They also tested this infusion effect on product design and packaging, and the outcome remained the same.

Lee (2015) noted that Hagtvedt & Patrick (2008) used classic or famous artwork in their experiments, which could be important when considering its influence on

consumers. Therefore, they tested the effect on luxury brands, but with contemporary and nonfamous art. The art infusion effect remained significant, transferring to the brands' connotation of prestige. The recognizability of the artwork is also an interesting issue since it could improve the art infusion effect because the artwork is more likely to be associated with its creator (Peluso *et al.*, 2017).

What these past works have in common is that they use images, visuals, or designs perceived as art by consumers. Indeed, the art infusion effect depends on whether the artwork is perceived as art (Hagtvedt & Patrick, 2008). Moreover, as part of an experiment, Hagtvedt and Patrick (2011) primed consumers to think of a piece of artwork as just an illustration, discovering that the art infusion effect was reduced.

Other research in the field explored the effect with different explanatory variables (Baumgarth, 2018), such as product categories (Moon & Kwak, 2010; Huetll & Gierl, 2012; Estes *et al.*, 2018; Hüttl-Maack, 2018), consumer characteristics (Moon & Kwak, 2010; Mantonvani & Tazima, 2016; Peluso *et al.*, 2017; Pino *et al.*, 2017; Naletelich & Paswan, 2018) and type of art (Moon & Kwak, 2010; Peluso *et al.*, 2017; Naletelich & Paswan, 2018). Nevertheless, none of them explored the effect of including the artist's name on the artwork and its effects on product perceptions. Moreover, the values associated with an artist, and how these could change with the familiarity of the artist, have not been analyzed.

2.2. Role of the artist's name

One of the attributes generally associated with the value of art is the authenticity of the artwork. In this regard, the inclusion of the artist's name or signature reinforces the authenticity aspect of a specific art piece, enhancing its art perception and even raising its value (Hernando, 2014). The first influence that the artist's name might have

on the art infusion effect lies in reinforcing the perception of the artwork and therefore the exclusivity, prestige, and luxury perceptions that come with it. The other effect of including the artist's name will depend on the characteristics of the artist or the value of the artist's body of work. The level of admiration, for example, is a characteristic that has an impact on the artist's value. Art pieces created by a respected artist have more value, just like an artist whose work is admired is more valued (Becker, 1982).

Hernando & Campo (2017a) developed a scale to measure an artist's perceived value and identified two main attributes that determine the value of an artist: aesthetic-cognitive and social-legacy. First, the aesthetics-cognitive dimension depends on the public perception of the artist's creativity and innovation. A more creative and innovative artist could have a higher aesthetic-cognitive value. Second, the social-legacy dimension depends on the impact that the artist has had in society over generations. If an artist is more famous or familiar, the artist's social-legacy value might be higher.

The level of familiarity or "recognizability" (Peluso *et al.*, 2017) is a characteristic that will logically differ between artists and could have an impact on their evaluation. It has been shown experimentally that including the name of a very familiar or moderately familiar artist on a piece of art has effects on the aesthetic perceptions of the artwork due to the artist's known creativity and impact (Hernando & Campo, 2017b). This experiment was only centered on the field of art and logically did not consider either branding or art infusion effects.

Therefore, considering the overall effect that an artist could have on the artwork and, eventually, on the art infusion effect, a first hypothesis is proposed:

H₁: *The inclusion of the artist's name has a significant positive effect on a product's luxury perceptions.*

2.3. Luxury dimensions affected by the artist

Luxury has always been associated with perceptions of prestige, sophistication, and high-class (Hagtvedt & Patrick, 2008). Historically, luxury was a privilege for the elites due to its high price and scarcity. High-class, exclusive, and limited were predominant attributes used to describe luxury products before the democratization process highlighted earlier (Hudders *et al.*, 2013). However, with profound industrial advances, the masses became wealthier, and thus, luxury became much more attainable (Hauck & Stanforth, 2007). Furthermore, the production of luxury goods started increasing in different categories (Silverstein & Fiske, 2003), and other characteristics, such as quality and aesthetics, started to play bigger roles in differentiating luxury products from non-luxury products.

When democratization just started to become pervasive, luxury products were characterized as those with attributes of extreme quality, a high price, scarcity, aesthetics, personal history, superfluity, and conspicuousness (Dubois *et al.*, 2001). Heine (2012) described that luxury products should include high levels of price, quality, aesthetics, rarity, extraordinariness, and symbolic meaning. Moreover, from the brand perspective, Hudders *et al.* (2013) determined that three primary attributes define the meaning of luxury and classified them as premium quality, aesthetics, and exclusivity.

As stated before, artist name infusion reinforces the “art” connotation of the piece first and therefore spills over to the product the perceptions of its exclusivity and luxury. Furthermore, the inclusion of an artist's name might enhance the aesthetics and prestige perceptions of the artwork and the product. Therefore, these possible connections give origin to the second hypothesis of this article:

H₂: *The effect of including the artist's name on luxury perceptions is mediated by exclusivity and aesthetical perceptions.*

2.4. Perception of luxury through generations

The transformation brought by democratization changed the meaning of luxury for the new generation. Children born in the 90s were not raised in a world where luxury was only known as being exclusively for a minority. They grew up in a context in which luxury was intrinsically related to high-quality materials and beautiful aesthetics.

Research on luxury perception differences through generations has mainly been qualitative and has focused on a single generation group. However, Kapferer and Michaut's (2019) quantitative work made a valuable contribution to this body of knowledge. The authors tried to show that the main cognitive perceptions of luxury remained the same in different generational cohorts. They concluded that the main attributes of luxury (high quality, expensiveness, prestige, and pleasure) remained identical across generations. However, they did find significant differences between millennials and seniors in the peripheral traits associated with luxury. To understand luxury, millennials put more emphasis on aesthetic aspects such as fashion and beauty, while seniors thought of luxury more in terms of its scarcity and exclusivity for a minority.

In a different cultural context, Jiang & Shan (2018) also found similar results when they identified that the hedonic values of luxury are more relevant for young Chinese consumers. Hedonic values in luxury research are usually associated with emotional responses, such as sensory pleasure, aesthetic beauty, and excitement (Vigneron & Johnson, 2004). These results are important when taken together because they show that generational effects on luxury perceptions and values might be similar regardless of potential differences among cultures (Dubois *et al.*, 2001; Podoshen *et al.*, 2011; Chandon *et al.*, 2017).

The findings of both of these studies show that younger consumers (those post-democratization) might put more emphasis on aesthetics attributes (fashion, beauty, sensory pleasure, etc.) to define their perception of luxury. On the other hand, older consumers (those pre-democratization) might associate their luxury perception with more exclusive attributes (scarcity, for a minority, etc.).

With this in mind, the previously theorized artist name infusion effect on the different dimensions of luxury should be analyzed considering the possible effects of age. Therefore, the last hypotheses are:

H_{3a}: For post-democratization consumers, the effect of artist name infusion on luxury perceptions is mainly mediated by aesthetical perceptions.

H_{3b}: For pre-democratization consumers, the effect of artist name infusion on luxury perceptions is mainly mediated by exclusivity perceptions.

3. Method

Two studies were conducted to test the previous hypotheses. These studies were conducted on two different samples from Chile. Study 1 (N = 121) was intended to test H₁ and H₂ in a student sample. The main objective of Study 2 (N = 231) was to test H₃ in a heterogeneous age sample so the effects of age could be precisely analyzed and to provide additional support for H₁ and H₂. Finally, Study 2 also included an additional scenario to test the further effects of the inclusion of an artist's name and to add robustness to the results.

3.1. Study 1

3.1.1. Design

To test the previous hypotheses, two different stimuli needed to be created to act as scenarios. Both stimuli had to showcase an already art-infused product, but in one of them, an artist was acknowledged as the creator of the work. These stimuli considered multiple elements that needed to be addressed with like-type products, including brands, artworks, artists, and so on. Before making this decision regarding these elements, design objectives were defined to establish a framework that took into consideration previous work performed in the art infusion literature.

Regarding the product type, research shows that the art infusion effect on product evaluation might be higher for utilitarian products (Estes *et al.*, 2018). Additionally, in the Chilean context, art infusion examples have been seen on home appliance products. Therefore, for Study 1, the product showcased was a kettle.

The brand of the product was also an issue that had to be discussed. A real brand was intended to be used to improve the realism of the scenarios, but the aim was to select a brand that adequately fitted with the hypothetical art infused product. To identify the brand, a pretest was carried out on a convenience sample (N = 33) that compared brands in relation to the fit of a possible art-brand collaboration. The brands considered were Oster, Thomas, Nex, Somela and Qualex. First, participants were asked, through a yes or no question, if they could imagine an art collaboration with the previous brands. Oster ranked first, with 73% of the sample answering that they could imagine the collaboration. Respondents were then asked if they had previously seen home appliances from these brands with art designs. Once again, Oster had the highest score, with 18% of participants stating that they had seen art on the design of Oster products. Oster has launched products with artistic designs in the past, so these

results made sense. Thus, the kettle presented in Study 1 was identified as an Oster product.

Concerning the familiarity and the art perception of the artwork, the objective was to select artwork with a moderate level of familiarity and a moderate perception of art because high or low levels of familiarity might have additional effects, and high levels of art perception might not leave room for artist name infusion effect to happen. In the same previous pretest ($N = 33$), the familiarity of the artwork (FAM) and art perception (ARTPER) were measured (Lee *et al.*, 2015). Eventually, a contemporary piece of artwork that met the explained criteria was selected ($M_{FAM} = 3.80$, $SD_{FAM} = 2.23$; $M_{ARTPER} = 4.36$, $SD_{ARTPER} = 1.77$).

Regarding the selection of the artist as the creator of the work, a medium level of familiarity was needed to avoid any extra connotations that a highly familiar or famous artist could have. The same pretest discussed previously showed that the Chilean artist Nemesio Antúnez had a moderate level of familiarity compared to other Chilean artists, such as Roberto Matta and Renate Neumann ($M_{MATTATA} = 5.45$, $M_{ANTUNEZ} = 3.79$, and $M_{NEUMANN} = 1.73$).

When constructing the stimuli, the possibility that some participants considered the product to be a limited edition raised issues. This was considered a risk because if the product was considered a limited edition, this might also impact the product exclusivity perception, which could interfere with detecting the real artist name infusion effect. Therefore, the kettle was presented as a "limited edition" to isolate the effect of the artist's name for both stimuli.

After these considerations, the resultant stimuli were constructed (Figure 1). The first one, called "No-Artist" (NO-ART), presented a limited edition Oster kettle with a contemporary artwork infusion and a description stating that the product "will

beautifully decorate your kitchen." The only difference between the first and second scenarios, called "Artist" (ART), was the inclusion of Nemesio Antunez as the creator of the design.

Insert Figure 1 Here

Respondents were first randomly presented with one of the scenarios. They then evaluated the luxury, aesthetics, and exclusivity perceptions of the product. Later, to control relevant variables, respondents reported their brand evaluation, brand trustworthiness, and familiarity with art. The instrument finished with different questions related to demographics, such as gender, age, education, and family income.

3.1.2. Sample

The test sample consisted of 121 ($N_{\text{NO-ART}} = 63$, $N_{\text{ART}} = 58$) undergraduate business majors from a Chilean university participating for course credit. As noted before, the idea was first to test the effects on a mainly young sample ($\text{Mean}_{\text{age}} = 20.66$, $\text{SD}_{\text{age}} = 1.87$). The gender distribution was relatively balanced, with 55.4% of the participants identifying themselves as male and 44.6% as female. General art familiarity was measured, revealing that the sample was neither highly familiarized nor lowly familiarized with art ($M_{\text{FAM}} = 3.83$, $\text{SD}_{\text{FAM}} = 1.24$).

3.1.3. Measures

To measure luxury, scales from Hagtvedt & Patrick (2008) and Vigneron & Johnson (2004) were adapted to the particular context of considering luxury and prestige items. On the other hand, scales from Dubois *et al.* (2001), Heine (2012), and

Hudders *et al.* (2013) were selected and adapted to form the aesthetics and exclusivity construct. For the aesthetic perception, the selected attributes were *beauty*, *attractive*, *perfect for a kitchen*, and *modern* (alpha = 0.79). For exclusivity, *unique design*, *exclusivity*, and *scarce style* were selected as attributes (alpha = 0.77). Finally, to determine the product luxury perception, the selected attributes were *luxury*, *prestige*, and *sophistication* (alpha = 0.86). All of the attributes for each construct were measured on a 7-point scale.

Control variables were also included in the study. Art familiarity was assessed using six 7-point Likert statements adapted from Hagtvedt & Patrick's (2008) scale (example item: "I am familiar with art"). The reliability of this scale was assessed, and it successfully had an alpha value of 0.86. Other control variables, such as brand evaluation and brand trustworthiness, were measured.

3.1.4. Results

First, a linear regression analysis was conducted between the No-Artist and Artist conditions with luxury perception as the dependent variable. The results revealed a significant effect of including the artist's name on product luxury perception ($\beta = 0.22$, $p < 0.05$), giving support to H₁.

A parallel mediation model was then run to see if the first main effect was explained by mediators, such as aesthetics and exclusivity. To test mediation and moderation, the PROCESS Macro for SPSS was utilized (Hayes, 2013). The total indirect effect of the parallel mediation result was significant (Effect = 0.68; LLCI = 0.32, ULCI = 1.09; 95% confidence). The direct effect of the artist's name was found to be non-significant (Effect = -0.04; $p > 0.1$), which shows that a complete parallel mediation takes place (Hayes, 2013). This result supports H₂.

The exclusivity (EXC) indirect effect was found to only be marginally significant ($\text{Effect}_{\text{EXC}} = 0.10$; LLCI = 0.01, ULCI = 0.26; 90% confidence), and the aesthetics (AES) indirect effect result was significant ($\text{Effect}_{\text{AES}} = 0.59$; LLCI = 0.28, ULCI = 1.00; 95% confidence).

Finally, neither art familiarity, brand trustworthiness, nor brand evaluation moderated any of the relations before mentioned. The results held when these variables were included in the model as controls.

3.1.5. Discussion

The findings of Study 1 show that including the artist's name in the description of the product as the creator of the design improves the product's perceived luxury. This effect is further explained by an increase in the evaluation of the perceptions of aesthetics and exclusivity of the product, consequently influencing luxury evaluations.

These results are consistent with previous findings related to the effects of using art pieces to improve luxury evaluations. The artist's name infusion might be interpreted as a signal to understand the design of the product as an art piece, enhancing the consumer's luxury perception. Concretely, Study 1 also shows a proposed path of how these effects might work. The artist's name could, on the one hand, increase perceptions of scarcity and uniqueness, reinforcing a product's exclusivity and, on the other hand, still allow consumers to evaluate its design and attractiveness in a better way, raising their aesthetical evaluation of the product. As noted before, exclusivity and aesthetics are key antecedents in the formation of luxury perception. Given the younger nature of the sample, these results are also consistent with the theory, as the mediation effect through aesthetics is stronger than the mediation effect through exclusivity (the indirect effect contrast is significant comparing

both paths). Students represent a subject selection from the post-democratization period, and their focus is expected to be centered on impressive dimensions, such as aesthetics, rather than an expressive dimension, such as exclusivity.

To confirm these results and provide additional support to H₁ and H₂ in a less specific context, Study 2 uses a general population sample allowing a comparison of pre-democratization subjects to post-democratization subjects, which also aims to test H₃.

3.2. Study 2

3.2.1. Design

The design of Study 2 follows a similar design as that of Study 1. To expand the generalizability of the study, a different product category was chosen (a toaster), and an additional scenario considering a less familiar artist was included. Three scenarios are now discussed: “No-Artist” (NO-ART), “Artist” (ART), and “Unknown Artist” (UNK). Respondents were once again randomly presented with one of the scenarios ($N_{\text{NO-ART}} = 76$, $N_{\text{ART}} = 78$, $N_{\text{UNK}} = 77$) in a between-subjects design. The new scenario and artist were selected based on the same pretest discussed in Study 1. The artist Renate Neumann was selected as the unknown artist since she had the lowest familiarity of the three Chilean artists. This new scenario aims to test whether the results hold, improving the attributions of the found effects to the name inclusion itself and not to the familiarity or previous knowledge of the artist and her work. This third scenario is presented in the ancillary results section.

3.2.2. Sample

The study was conducted on 231 Chilean participants gathered through a convenience sample. As noted before, the idea was to test the effects on an age-

diverse sample ($M_{\text{age}} = 34.50$; $SD_{\text{age}} = 15.30$). Once again, art familiarity was measured and revealed that the sample was neither highly familiarized nor lowly familiarized with art ($M_{\text{FAM}} = 4.30$, $SD_{\text{FAM}} = 1.42$).

Two subsamples were created from combinations of the scenarios to compare the effect of the inclusion of the different artists' names separately. The first one considered the "No-Artist" and "Artist" condition ($N = 154$), and the second one considered the "No-Artist" and "Unknown Artist" condition ($N = 153$). The second subsample is analyzed in additional results.

3.2.3. Measures

The same variables and measures used in Study 1 were also used in the second study. The reliability of each of the scales of luxury ($\alpha = 0.88$), aesthetics ($\alpha = 0.88$), and exclusivity ($\alpha = 0.86$) was assessed and successfully scored.

3.2.4. Results

Linear regression analysis was conducted between the No-Artist and Artist conditions with luxury perceptions as a dependent variable. The results revealed a significant effect of including the artist's name on product luxury perception ($\beta = 0.24$, $p < 0.05$), giving additional support to H_1 .

As for study 1, a parallel mediation model was tested with aesthetics and exclusivity. Once again, the total indirect effect of the parallel mediation result was significant (Effect = 0.73; LLCI = 0.37, ULCI = 1.09; 95% confidence). The direct effect of the artist's name was found to be non-significant (Effect = -0.09; $p > 0.1$), which shows again that a complete parallel mediation takes place.

The exclusivity indirect effect was significant (Effect_{Exc} = 0.39; LLCI = 0.18, ULCI = 0.70; 95% confidence), and the aesthetics indirect effect also had a significant

result ($\text{Effect}_{\text{AES}} = 0.34$; $\text{LLCI} = 0.12$, $\text{ULCI} = 0.64$; 95% confidence). This result once again supports H₂.

To explore the role of age in the mediation process and give support to H₃, a moderated parallel mediation was run (Figure 2). The index of moderated mediation for both mediators had a significant result ($\text{Index}_{\text{EXC}} = 0.01$; $\text{LLCI}_{\text{EXC}} = 0.00$, $\text{ULCI}_{\text{EXC}} = 0.02$; $\text{Index}_{\text{AES}} = -0.01$; $\text{LLCI}_{\text{AES}} = -0.03$, $\text{ULCI}_{\text{AES}} = -0.002$; 95% confidence). The interactions of both mediators with age also had a significant result ($\beta_{\text{EXC} \times \text{AGE}} = 0.01$; $p_{\text{EXC} \times \text{AGE}} < 0.01$; $\beta_{\text{AES} \times \text{AGE}} = -0.02$; $p_{\text{AES} \times \text{AGE}} < 0.01$). Table 1 shows the conditional indirect effect of both mediators at different values of age. These results support H_{3a} since, at a younger age, mediation only occurs through aesthetics, and at an older age, the mediation effect only occurs through exclusivity, giving support to H_{3b}.

Finally, again, neither art familiarity, brand trustworthiness, nor brand evaluation moderated any of the relations before mentioned or changed the result when added as a control variable.

Insert Figure 2 Here

Insert Table 1 Here

3.2.5. Ancillary result

Using the second subsample ($N = 153$), which included the “No-Artist” and “Unknown Artist” condition, the same analysis performed in Study 2 was run. The linear regression analysis results revealed a significant effect of including the artist’s name on product luxury perception ($\beta = 0.24$, $p < 0.05$), adding robustness to the

results shown in previous studies. The total indirect effect of the parallel mediation result was significant (Effect = 0.53; LLCI = 0.19, ULCI = 0.91; 95% confidence) and the direct effect showed a non-significant result (Effect = 0.03; $p > 0.1$), meaning that complete mediation occurs. The exclusivity indirect effect was significant (Effect_{EXC} = 0.23; LLCI = 0.07, ULCI = 0.48; 95% confidence), and the aesthetics indirect effect was also significant (Effect_{AES} = 0.30; LLCI = 0.09, ULCI = 0.60; 95% confidence). The moderated mediation analysis results showed significant indexes for both mediators (Index_{EXC} = 0.01; LLCI_{EXC} = 0.00, ULCI_{EXC} = 0.02; Index_{AES} = -0.01; LLCI_{AES} = -0.02, ULCI_{AES} = -0.00; 95% confidence).

3.2.6. Discussion

Study 2 shows that artist name infusion has an impact on the perception of product luxuriousness. Both studies supported H₂, which states that aesthetics and exclusivity mediate the relationship between the artist's name and luxury perceptions. Indeed in both studies, when including the artist's name, the luxury perception of the product improved through these two mediators.

Following the findings of Study 1 on students, this study shows that an interaction of both mediators with age might exist. Specifically, when considering younger people, the inclusion of the artist's name mainly affected luxury perceptions through aesthetics (mimicking the results of Study 1). In the case of older people, the effect also was found, but the main mediation path shows its effect through exclusivity. This finding is completely aligned with the theoretical foundations of the democratization of the luxury market.

Both younger and older people, representing pre- and post-democratization eras, perceive the inclusion of the artist's name as an aesthetic and exclusivity

improvement of the product. The difference relies on the relations made between these variables and luxury. Younger people perceive the product as more exclusive, but the impact of exclusivity on luxury perceptions fades out, enhancing the effects of aesthetics, possibly because they understand luxury more from an aesthetics perception rather than one of exclusivity. The opposite effect happens with older people; aesthetics are less relevant, enhancing the mediation path of exclusivity.

This study additionally contributes in such a way that suggests the effect is not only produced by the familiarity of the artist's name. The results show that luxury perceptions improve even when a not-widely-known artist is infused. Even more importantly, the effects are replicated for all the relevant results, including differences in age and the strength of the mediation paths.

4. Conclusions and implications

4.1. Research contribution and theoretical implications

This paper aims to fill a gap in the art infusion and luxury branding literature by bringing attention to the artist rather than the art itself in these types of collaborations. Previously, quantitative research has mainly focused on the artwork and the different variations of it. When using a well-known or a classic art piece, the name of the artist is less relevant or could be implicit in the mental processing of the consumer; however, by using lesser-known artwork or designs exclusively created for a product, the art effect can be blurred and not explicit. This article represents the first study that investigates the effect of the artist in an isolated manner. Since the artist has an impact on luxury perceptions, he or she should be considered an important variable to take into account in the future when studying art infusion effects on products and branding decisions.

Moreover, this article breaks down the artist infusion effect into two mediators that help to explore the process and describe it more precisely. Aesthetics and exclusivity are two key perceptions that are heavily associated with luxury products (Dubois *et al.*, 2001; Heine, 2012; Hudders *et al.*, 2013) but have not been covered individually in the art infusion literature. Usually, when regarding art infusion effects on luxury, articles only explore the direct effect without analyzing possible mediators. This article goes a step further by not only showing the main effect but also exploring the mechanisms by which the effect works.

The definitive contribution of this article is twofold. First, the article introduces the concept of artist name infusion into the branding literature and demonstrates a positive effect on luxury evaluation. The article also performs an in-depth exploration of a possible explanation of the process of how this effect arises. Second, the article actively contributes to expanding the knowledge of the effects of luxury democratization on the evaluation of products, showing variations of the effect for groups of different ages that represent the periods of pre- and post-democratization. Interestingly, the inclusion of an artist's name has a positive and significant effect in both cases. Still, it is possible to observe that the process paths for both generations differ substantially in terms of the relevance of aesthetics and exclusivity as mediators.

4.2. Managerial implications

As seen in the literature, art infusion as a luxury branding strategy has gained popularity over the years. Nevertheless, only infusing artwork might not always improve product perceptions significantly. This article's findings are novel in showing the relevance of displaying the artist's name as the creator of the design. When considering a venture into this type of art-infusion strategy, managers should take into

consideration the added value that an artist could bring to the table. For example, artwork from a world-recognized famous artist or a classic piece of art would create effects by themselves (Hagtvedt & Patrick, 2008), but an exclusive design that is not recognizable, or a piece of art from a moderate to lesser-known artist, would benefit from the inclusion of the artist's name.

Age, in this article, is considered a key variable to describe the nature of the artist infusion effect on luxury perceptions. Since age is a commonly used and important market segmentation variable, brands should be careful when deciding the target at which the strategy will be aimed. Special consideration, for example, should be taken on communicating an artist-brand collaboration. If a brand aims to make its products perceived as more luxurious and mainly has a young audience, presenting an artist-brand collaboration might be more effective when reinforcing aesthetical attributes. The same could be said about emphasizing exclusivity aspects when communicating with an older formation.

Finally, as the results hold for a low-familiarity artist, the brand could take more risks and collaborate with new or undiscovered artists to benefit both product luxury evaluations and new artists' careers.

4.3. Limitations and future research directions

Regarding artist familiarity, this paper's first limitation is that it only uses an artist with a moderate and low level of familiarity to test its effects. A contrast could be explored utilizing a very familiar artist versus an unfamiliar artist. Not only is familiarity relevant, but the reasons behind familiarity are also intriguing. An artist could be widely known due to negative or positive connotations, which might have an impact on product perceptions.

Concerning luxury dimensions, the artist infusion effect could be analyzed on quality and price perception. These are two variables associated with luxury that were not considered in this article on purpose but could be relevant due to economic values related to art and artists (Hernando, 2014). Brand quality, for example, could be a moderator variable interacting with the artist infusion effect. The same could be said about price display and different levels of expensiveness. Using a mid-quality, mid-price brand (for the specific context of use) allowed the effects of the luxury perceptions to be observed more clearly; this effect could be lessened by a ceiling effect if extreme luxury brands are used.

One last limitation of this paper is the use of a completely Chilean sample. Cultural differences between countries might influence the effects explored. Moreover, cultural differences could explain variations in art and artist appreciation among regions.

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Figure 1. Stimuli for Study 1: Without Artist (NO-ART) vs With Artist's Name (ART).



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Hervidor de Agua Oster® Edición Limitada. Colección de Artista Nemesio Antúnez.

Hervidor Oster edición limitada, pintado por Nemesio Antúnez, decorará maravillosamente tu cocina.

Figure 2. Moderated parallel mediation model for Study 2.

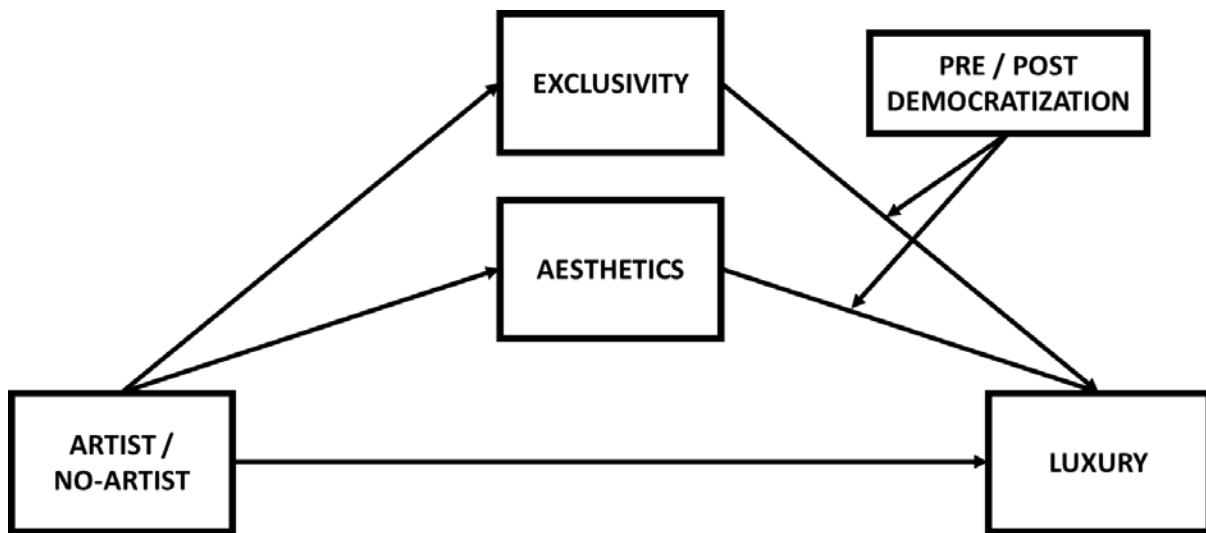


Table 1. Moderated parallel mediation results for Study 2.

	Age (+/- 1 SD)	Effect	LLCI	ULCI
Exclusivity	Low (21,06)	0,0869	-0,1180	0,3026
	Mid (36,05)	0,2753	0,1212	0,5132
	Hi (51,04)	0,4636	0,2067	0,7970
Aesthetics	Low (21,06)	0,5530	0,1772	1,0350
	Mid (36,05)	0,3622	0,1219	0,6936
	Hi (51,04)	0,1715	-0,0090	0,4646