

The Effect of Experiential and Material Purchases on Preference for Product-Country Image Labels

Abstract

This research examines how purchase type (experiential vs. material) influences the tradeoffs between favorable vs. less favorable product-country image (PCI) labels. More specifically, these studies explore how retailers' framing of a product as either material or experiential affects tradeoffs between different PCIs. Four studies reveal that consumers exhibit a greater relative preference for favorable PCI when making material purchases compared to when making experiential purchases. Furthermore, purchase type effect is moderated by the need for authenticity and the degree of importance consumers place on PCI. We further discuss theoretical and practical implications of our findings.

Keywords

Product-country image, Experiential Purchases, Material Purchases, Authenticity, Extrinsic Motivation

Introduction

Consumers often rely on preconceived notions and stereotypes associated with a product-country image (PCI) to form initial impressions and make purchasing decisions. Thus, PCI serves as a cue for consumers, signaling product quality prior to purchase. Consumers often associate specific countries or regions with superior product quality and craftsmanship due to reputation, manufacturing processes, and adherence to quality standards, thus influencing consumers' liking for products hailing from different countries (Godey et al. 2012; Huang et al. 2022). For instance, products from countries with established reputations for excellence, such as Germany or Japan in the automotive industry, are often perceived as higher in quality and in reliability.

PCI is playing an increasingly important role in consumer behaviors and preferences, exerting a significant influence on consumers' decision-making processes, making it a crucial factor for marketers and retailers to consider. For example, the influence of PCI is greatest for luxury products, as well as products that are publicly consumed (Piron 2000). Moreover, consumers consider PCI in their decision-making criteria when making luxury goods purchasing decisions, preferring to purchase luxury products from PCI which have mature luxury markets (Godey et al. 2010). Furthermore, PCI plays an especially significant role in purchasing decisions for those with low expertise in a product category. Specifically, in the absence of extensive knowledge, consumers' overall positive images of PCI create a halo, thus allowing novice consumers to form summary constructs about products in question (D'Alessandro and Pecotich 2013).

These important studies highlight the advantages realized by a PCI with favorable reputation, especially in regard to the product categories in question. However, prior research

has failed to examine when consumers may prefer a product which hails from a country with a less favorable reputation relative to other countries. In the present investigation, we aim to shed light on how consumers take PCI into account when decision making. In doing so, we draw on prior purchase type research to examine experiential and material purchases as a potential boundary to the positive effect of a favorable PCI.

Recent work has taken a closer look at decisions related to experiential and material purchases. For example, purchase type influences tradeoffs between mystery and non-mystery deals (Urumutta Hewage and He 2022), willingness to borrow (Tully and Sharma 2018), consumption timing (Kumar and Gilovich 2016), and acceptance of price increases (Bastos 2019). In the current research, we examine another decision context — PCI tradeoffs — which is relevant to consumer purchase and consumption decisions. Given consumers have to make tradeoffs on a day to day basis (Tversky et al.1988; Tully et al. 2015; Urumutta Hewage and He 2022), we put forth that it is important to study tradeoffs between PCIs. Across four studies, we suggest that, when considering material purchases, consumers tend to give more importance to the strength of the PCI compared to when they are making experiential purchases. We suggest that this effect is moderated by consumers' need for authenticity, as well as the importance placed on PCI.

Together, the findings presented here make two key theoretical contributions. First, our research extends recent work on experiential and material purchases by identifying another way in which these two purchase types differ in nature. While prior research has identified differences in purchase types, suggesting that experiential purchases increase consumer borrowing (Tully and Sharma 2018) and preference for mystery options (Urumutta

Hewage and He 2022) when compared to material purchases, the current work demonstrates that purchase type also affects tradeoffs between differing PCI.

Second, we broaden the literature on PCI to suggest a key boundary to the positive effect of PCI. While prior literature contends that a favorable PCI is preferable (Bandyopadhyay and Banerjee 2003), we present a purchase type in which PCI is relatively less important, and thus consumers are more accepting of the less favorable PCI label. The current research adds to the existing work on PCI by identifying a critical boundary condition that challenges the prevailing notion of a universally favorable PCI effect. By introducing a distinct purchase context, we reveal that the significance of PCI diminishes, allowing consumers to show greater acceptance towards products with less favorable PCI associations. This finding extends prior PCI literature and highlights the need for a nuanced examination of the PCI effect across different purchase types.

There is anecdotal evidence suggesting that PCI plays an important role in international marketing strategies. This could not be timelier considering the abundance of companies who need to market their products across the globe. To be successful, those companies should examine the favorability of their PCI. Based on the favorability, they should select marketing communication strategies. More specifically, if a retailer markets a product with a favorable PCI, using a material frame in communication campaigns will be beneficial. However, if the PCI is not favorable it will be more beneficial to use an experiential frame. In particular, experiential frames are more appropriate for developing nations as they typically suffer from a negative PCI effect (Bandyopadhyay and Banerjee 2003). For these reasons, companies should consider PCI as a strategic tool when marketing products or services.

Literature Review

Product Country-Of-Origin Image (PCI)

The PCI is a key concept in international marketing which has connected both the image of the country and image of the product that originates from a certain country (Roth and Diamantopoulos 2009). It is defined as the “stereotype image countries and/or their outputs ... that ... impact on behavior” (Hooley et al. 1988 p. 67). Furthermore, Nebenzhal et al. (2003) refers to PCI as a set of consumer perceptions related to a product’s the attributes of a product originating from a specific country and the resulting social desirability of owning a product that is made in that country. Such cues alter consumer behaviors and preferences (Godey et al. 2010; Huang et al. 2022). PCI serves as an extrinsic cue for assessing a product (Agrawal and Kamakura 1999) and purchase decisions (Hoang et al. 2022). Furthermore, PCI influences the degree to which consumers trust brands, which thus affects consumer engagement on social media (Huang et al. 2022).

Though PCI has a crucial role in shaping consumer behavior, only certain countries are perceived to possess a favorable image (Roth and Diamantopoulos 2009). For instance, Germany is perceived favorably for their cars, Italy has a favorable image for shoes and other leather products (Wang and Yang 2008), Switzerland for their chocolates (Herz and Diamantopoulos 2017), Japan is synonymous for quality electronics (Magnusson et al. 2011), while the United States is perceived as favorable for most consumer products (Pereira et al. 2005). Given the significance of PCI, Statista developed the “Made-In-Country-Index” to evaluate 49 countries. Their work encompassed a total of 43,034 consumers worldwide who represented 90 percent of the global population. Results indicated that regions that are seen as more favorable are Germany, Switzerland, and the European Union. In contrast, according to

the “Made-In-Country-Index”, countries with less favorable PCI include Argentina, India, and China (Biagi 2017).

Prior work shows that countries with favorable PCI tend to have edge over those who have less favorable PCI (Ittersum et al. 2003). Consumers perceive higher benefits, and display a willingness to pay a premium for a product that comes from a favorable PCI compared to a product hailing from a less favorable PCI (Koschate-Fischer et al. 2012). Additional research suggests that brands that possess favorable PCI are more readily received by the consumers than brands that come from less favorable PCI (Mohd Yasin et al. 2007). A bias for favorability in PCI can lead to increased brand popularity and can foster greater brand loyalty (Kim and Chung 1996). The notion of more or less favorable PCI is of pivotal importance in Country-of-Origin (COO) research. Furthermore, PCI favorability is readily recognized by consumers and academics alike.

A favorable PCI can help signal status or manage impressions compared to a less favorable PCI (Heslop and Papadopoulos 1993; Nebenzhal et al. 2003). This extrinsic motivation can drive consumer preferences to acquire products with favorable PCI rather than less favorable ones. However, less is known about what might influence such motivation and consequently may lead to tradeoffs between favorable and less favorable PCIs. We propose that purchase type (experiential vs. material) can influence such tradeoffs.

Purchase Type

Prior work on purchase types has classified purchases based on different characteristics. One recent purchase categorization has gained attention both among academia and practitioners alike: classifying purchases based on the intention or motivation behind the purchase. For example, Van Boven and Gilovich (2003) defined purchases based on their

respective acquisition motives. Specifically, experiential purchases are those in which non-tangible events or series of events are attained. In contrast, material purchases are tangible objects that can be acquired. Both consumers and marketers alike recognize the differences in these purchase types.

Material purchases compared to experiential purchases are driven by extrinsic motivations (Ho and Wyer 2021; Van Boven et al. 2010), such that consumers tend to emphasize the tangible outcomes gained from consumption (i.e., prestige, status, or popularity; Richins 1994; Vigneron and Johnson 2004). Given the intangible nature of experiential purchases, fulfilling tangible outcomes is more difficult. The difference between the underlying motivations for these two types of purchases can change how choice options are evaluated. It is reasonable to assume that extrinsic motivation generated by material purchases increases the emphasis on tangible outcomes compared to experiential purchases.

Despite the acknowledgement of the relevance of PCI on purchasing decisions, the connection between PCI and type of purchase has received limited attention in marketing research. In an effort to address this gap in the existing literature, the current research explores whether purchase type (experiential vs. material) influences relative preference for PCI (favorable vs. less favorable). We propose that purchase type and PCI are connected by motivation. Prior work has shown that material purchases are driven by extrinsic motivation compared to experiential purchases (Ho and Wyer 2021; Van Boven et al. 2010). When making material purchases, consumers are motivated by external rewards such as status or impression management rather than for pure enjoyment. To fulfill extrinsic motivations, consumers choose products that can signal status (Richins 1994; Vigneron and Johnson 2004). In fact, favorable PCI labels act as a status signaling or impression management

mechanism and fulfill extrinsic motivational needs (Heslop and Papadopoulos 1993).

Therefore, we hypothesize that for material purchases consumers will display higher behavior intention towards favorable PCI label than for experiential purchases. Stated formally:

H1: Consumers will display higher relative behavior intentions towards more favorable PCI label for material purchases than for experiential purchases.

Consumers often rely on external product cues such as PCI in decision making (Hsu et al. 2017; Lim et al. 1994; Orłowski et al. 2022). However, some consumers place greater emphasis on extrinsic cues such as PCI more heavily than others when making choices (Urumutta Hewage et al. 2021). It is plausible that those who value PCI more have a higher relative preference for more favorable PCI for material purchases than those who place lower importance on PCI. For experiential purchases, extrinsic PCI cues do not matter because motivation for these types of purchases is less extrinsic. Therefore, even though consumers may have different levels of value of importance placed on PCI, it will not increase the preference for more favorable PCI. Stated formally:

H2: The effect of purchase type on relative preference for favorable PCI label is moderated by personal importance of PCI.

Psychology and marketing research alike recognize that consumers are heterogeneous in their intrinsic motivations when decision making (Chan et al. 2015; Urumutta Hewage et al. 2021). For example, some consumers have a greater desire to obtain material goods which will make them feel unique, such as luxury goods (Chan et al. 2015), to fulfill status-seeking motivations (Clark et al. 2007).

Authenticity, too, serves as a motivating factor in decision making (Ferraro et al. 2016). For example, authenticity can increase consumer engagement, loyalty, satisfaction, and

product choice (Jones et al. 2022; Matthews et al. 2020). Importantly, PCI signifies authenticity of a product (Newman and Dhar 2014) and provides assurance of product legitimacy and originality (Nunes et al. 2021).

However, not all consumers have the same authenticity needs. Consumers who strongly desire authenticity deliberately seek out authentic goods, remain loyal to authentic brands, and forego consumption of inauthentic goods (Napoli et al. 2016). Thus, those who value authenticity will have a higher preference for more favorable PCI. As such, we predict that the purchase type effect on relative preference for favorable PCI depends on the need for authenticity. When the need for authenticity is high, consumers will have a greater preference for the favorable PCI. Stated formally:

H3: The effect of purchase type on relative preference for favorable PCI label is moderated by need for authenticity.

Four studies test our hypotheses. In Studies 1A and 1B, we examine consumers' relative preference for favorable PCI labels for material purchases compared to experiential purchases. Next, in Study 2, we test a theoretically relevant moderator: importance of PCI. Finally, Study 3 examines the boundary effect of the need for authenticity. In all four studies, we applied the purchase framing technique frequently used in experiential and material literature (Carter and Gilovich 2010; 2012; Urumutta Hewage and He 2022). Further, for our dependent variable, we utilized comparable countries to complete a conservative test of our hypothesis. We also incorporated two different types of products to increase generalizability.

Study 1A

Method

Study 1A examined the impact of material and experiential purchases on the trade-offs between PCI purchase decisions (favorable vs. less favorable PCI label). We applied purchase framing, a technique used in prior literature in which a bottle of wine was framed as being either an experiential or material purchase (Carter and Gilovich 2010, 2012; Urumutta Hewage and He 2022). One hundred and one participants (MTurk; $M_{\text{age}} = 41.37$, female 37.6%) completed the study for a nominal fee. Participants were randomly assigned to one of two purchase types: experiential or material. In the experiential condition, participants were asked to think about drinking and sniffing a wine, while participants in the material were asked to think about how a wine would fit into their wine collection and the prominent place it would assume in the wine collection.

Next, participants completed the dependent variable. Consumer choice has been captured in numerous ways in the consumer decision making literature (Kamakura et al. 1996). For example, binary choice is one way of measuring where participants are asked to choose from two options (Carson 1994). Another way to capture choice is asking participants to make tradeoffs. For example, participants may be asked to make tradeoffs and indicate their relative preference between two options (Tversky et al. 1988). In the present work, we examined tradeoffs which led to relative preference for more favorable PCI.

Respondents were presented with two options which were told to be equal in monetary value: South African wine (less favorable COO label) and French wine (more favorable PCI label). South Africa and France were chosen as the countries for this study because France is often associated with its large wine industry (Wine Producing Countries 2022). While South Africa also has a thriving wine industry, the general consumer is not aware of this; thus, the

two options were comparable in terms of size of wine industry. Next, participants were asked which wine they would choose on a 7-point scale (1 = Most likely to choose South African wine/7 = Most likely to choose French wine). Participants completed the manipulation check for purchase framing followed by the purchase type definition (“To what extent do you think the wine bottle that you imagined at the beginning of the survey is: 1 = Completely experiential/5 = Completely material”; adapted from Van Boven and Gilovich 2003). Then, we administered the manipulation check for COO favorability adapted from Hooley et al. (1988) and Nebenzhal et al. (2003). Participants were asked to rate their agreement with two statements: “South Africa is known for wines” and “France is known for wines” (1 = Strongly disagree/5 = Strongly agree). Lastly, they indicated their age and gender.

Results and Discussion

First, we analyzed the manipulation check for purchase type. Participants in the material purchase condition perceived the wine to be more material compared to those in the experiential condition ($M_{\text{material}} = 3.12$; $M_{\text{experiential}} = 2.40$, $F(1,99) = 7.88$, $p < .01$). Next, we conducted a manipulation check for PCI favorability using one sample t-test, in which the mid-point was 3 in the scale. We found that France was perceived as a favorable PCI for wine ($M = 4.69$, $t(101) = 28.56$, $p < .001$) while South Africa ($M = 2.14$, $t(101) = -7.97$, $p < .001$) was perceived to possess a less favorable PCI for wine.

To test whether purchase type affected relative preference towards the option with favorable PCI, an independent samples t-test was conducted in which we compared the means of the experiential and material groups. We used purchase type as the independent variable and relative preference for favorable PCI as the dependent variable. Participants in the

material condition had a higher likelihood to choose the French wine ($M_{\text{material}} = 5.67$) compared to participants in the experiential condition ($M_{\text{experiential}} = 4.98$, $F(1,99) = 4.12$, $p < .05$).

The findings of this study provide support for Hypothesis 1. Consumers exhibited a higher relative preference for more favorable PCI when making material purchases compared to experiential purchases. In this study, purchase type was manipulated using a framing technique in which the same product, a bottle of wine, was framed as either an experiential or material purchase. To enhance robustness of the observed effect across a wide range of stimuli, we conducted Study 1B.

Study 1B

Method

To confirm that this effect would be seen with a different product category, we conducted a second study. One hundred and two MTurk workers ($M_{\text{age}} = 39.65$, female 52.9%) participated in this experiment, wherein a unisex watch was framed as either experiential or material purchase type. Participants assigned to the experiential condition imagined how they would feel wearing the watch, how they would use it, and how it would go with their daily activities. Participants in the material condition imagined the watch aesthetics, the watch's reliability and durability and durability, and how it would fit with their other accessories.

Next, participants were presented with two European PCI options which were equal in monetary value: English watch (less favorable PCI label) and Swiss watch (more favorable PCI label). England was chosen as the less favorable PCI option because the country is

comparable to Switzerland in terms of watch production and general country economics (NationMaster, 2022). From these options, participants were asked to indicate which product they would prefer on a 7-point scale (1 = Most likely to choose English watch/7 = Most likely to choose Swiss watch). Next, we administered manipulation checks for both purchase type and PCI. For purchase type, they were prompted to answer: “To what extent do you think the watch that you imagined at the beginning of the survey is: 1 = Completely experiential/5 = Completely material”. For PCI, respondents indicated their agreement with the following: “England is known for watch products” and “Switzerland is known for watch products” (1 = Strongly disagree/5 = Strongly agree). Finally, they answered age and gender questions.

Results and Discussion

We first analyzed the manipulation check for purchase type. Participants in the material condition perceived the watch to be more material ($M_{\text{material}} = 4.54$) compared to those in the experiential condition ($M_{\text{experiential}} = 3.39$, $F(1,100) = 24.46$, $p < .001$), indicating that the manipulation check work as intended. Next, we examined the manipulation check for PCI favorability. Switzerland was perceived as more favorable PCI for watches ($M = 4.54$, $t(101) = 24.87$, $p < .001$) opposed to England ($M = 3.39$, $t(101) = -3.57$; $p = .001$) which was the less favorable PCI option.

Replicating Study 1A results, participants primed with the material frame showed a higher relative preference for more favorable PCI ($M_{\text{material}} = 6.24$) than those in the experiential condition ($M_{\text{experiential}} = 4.98$, $F(1,100) = 10.91$, $p < .001$). Once again, we found support for purchase type effect on the tradeoffs between the PCI labels. The next study provides further evidence by testing a boundary condition to this effect.

Study 2

Method

The aim of Study 2 was to examine the moderating role of importance of PCI on purchase type and preference for favorable PCI label relationship. We used a convenience sampling method by posting the study link in the social media. One hundred and seven participants ($M_{\text{age}} = 26.48$, female 70.1%) completed the study. We used the same manipulation of bottle of wine as in Study 1A. First, participants read either experiential or material framing of the bottle of wine. Next, they indicated for which bottle of wine they are likely to search more information on a 5-point scale (1=More for German wine/5=More for French wine). Note that we included German wine as the less favorable PCI option, which is comparable country to France but lesser-known country for wine. Afterwards, participants were given a description of what PCI meant (adapted from Hooley et al. 1988; Nebenzhal et al. 2003) and requested to rate the degree to which they considered PCI to be important for the decision that they made on a 5-point scale (1=None at all/5=A great deal). Next, they completed the same manipulation checks for PCI favorability and purchase type as in Study 1A. Finally, participants answered the demographics questions and concluded the survey.

Results and Discussion

First, we examined the manipulation checks. Participants in the material purchase condition perceived the wine bottle to be more material in nature ($M_{\text{material}} = 3.04$) than the participants in the experiential purchase condition ($M_{\text{experiential}} = 2.54$, $F(1, 105) = 4.15$, $p < .05$). PCI manipulation checks indicated that German wine was perceived as less favorable

PCI ($M = 1.91$, $t(106) = -12.62$, $p < .001$), while French wine ($M = 4.46$, $t(106) = 19.32$, $p < .001$) was perceived as more favorable PCI compared to the mid-point (3 in a 5-point scale).

We conducted a regression using purchase type (categorical) and importance of PCI (continuous) and their interaction as independent variables and likelihood to search information for the more favorable PCI. Experiential purchase condition was coded as 1 and material purchase condition coded as -1. We observed a significant interaction between purchase type and importance of COO ($\beta = -.30$, $t(103) = -2.34$, $p < .05$), suggesting that our effect is contingent upon the importance of PCI. However, purchase type ($\beta = .88$, $t(103) = 1.77$, $p = .08$) and PCI effects ($\beta = .00$, $t(103) = .03$, $p = .97$) on relative information search for superior PCI were not significant. Next, to understand the type of interaction and identify regions of significance, a spotlight analysis was conducted using PROCESS Model 1 (Preacher and Hayes 2008). We observed a Johnson-Neyman point (Spiller et al. 2013) 3.92+ in importance of PCI (see Figure 1). When the importance of PCI was 3.92 or above participants were more likely to seek information for the favorable PCI option in the materially framed wine than in the experientially framed wine. Study 2 provides evidence that our effect depends on the importance one places on PCI. Next, we examine another boundary condition for our effect.

[Insert Figure 1 here]

Study 3

Method

The goal of Study 3 was to explore the moderating role for need for authenticity. Ninety-nine participants were recruited from MTurk ($M_{\text{age}} = 19.34$, female 46.5%). We used the same stimuli used in Study 1B. The study procedure was similar to Study 1B except, we included a question about authenticity consideration in their purchase decision on a 5-point scale (1=None at all/5=A great deal). Participants concluded the survey by completing the manipulation checks for PCI and purchase type and recording the demographics information.

Results and Discussion

Manipulation of purchase type was satisfactory, whereby material condition participants perceiving watch to be more material ($M_{\text{material}} = 4.22$) than those in the experiential condition ($M_{\text{experiential}} = 3.15$, $F(1,97) = 17.76$). Analysis revealed that English watch was known for less favorable PCI ($M = 2.61$, $t(98) = -3.49$, $p < .001$) than the Swiss watch ($M = 4.59$, $t(98) = 22.09$, $p < .001$) compared to the mid-point (one samples t-test).

We conducted a regression using purchase type and need for authenticity and their interaction term as the independent variables and relative preference for favorable PCI as the dependent variables. Experiential condition was coded as 1 and material condition coded as -1. The interaction between purchase type and need for authenticity was significant ($\beta = -.19$, $t(95) = -2.05$, $p < .05$), suggesting that the effect authenticity consideration is an important boundary condition. Purchase type was not significant ($\beta = .60$, $t(95) = 1.60$, $p = .11$) in the model while need for authenticity was significant ($\beta = .21$, $t(95) = 2.25$, $p = .03$). Next, to explicate the interaction we conducted a spotlight analysis (Preacher and Hayes 2008) as in Study 2. We observed a Johnson Neyman (Spiller et al. 2013) region above 4.31 of need for authenticity (see Figure 2). This suggests that when the need for authenticity was more than

4.31, participants had a higher relative preference for favorable PCI label in material condition than in the experiential condition. This study supports H3, that the need for authenticity acts as a boundary condition for the effect of purchase type on relative preference for favorable PCI.

[Insert Figure 2 here]

General Discussion

In the current research, we demonstrated in four studies that consumers have a higher relative preference for more favorable PCI options when acquiring material purchases compared to acquiring experiential purchases (Studies 1A-1B). This effect is moderated by the personal importance of PCI (Study 2) and need for authenticity (Study 3). To show greater generalizability, our effect was tested on two different product categories and with five different PCI labels. The outcome was consistent across the samples regardless of the product category or countries used. Additionally, we used purchase framing to operationalize purchase type rather than different type of product, which is a conservative test of our effect.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

Our work makes important contributions for both theory and practice. We add to the experiential and material literature by understanding PCI tradeoffs as an important downstream consequence to purchase type (Tully et al. 2015; Urumutta Hewage and He 2022). We show that purchase type influences relative preference for more favorable PCI. More specifically, material purchases may benefit from having favorable PCI than experiential purchases. We also contribute to consumer decision making, specifically,

consumer tradeoffs literature (Chitturi et al. 2007; Tversky et al. 1988). Given consumers have limited financial resources, they have to make tradeoffs all the time. We show that one such tradeoff is between PCI labels.

In addition to expanding the PCI literature (Hooley et al. 1988; Nebenzhal et al. 2003; Roth and Diamantopoulos 2009), our research uncovers a crucial limitation to the positive influence of a favorable PCI. Contrary to previous studies emphasizing the preference for a favorable PCI (Bandyopadhyay and Banerjee 2003), we introduce a specific purchase scenario where the significance of PCI diminishes, thus offering a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of PCI. When shopping for an experiential purchase, consumers exhibit greater openness towards purchases from a less favorable PCI. Our work sheds lights on the nuanced nature of the PCI effect and its contextual variability, thus challenging the prevailing notion of a universally favorable PCI effect that is emphasized in prior work and contributing towards deeper insights into consumer behavior and PCI implications. Furthermore, the findings presented here suggest that the impact of purchase type on PCI tradeoffs is contingent upon consumers' prioritization of authenticity and the significance they attribute to PCI cues. This too highlights the complex interplay between consumer values, product attributes, and the PCI effect and further emphasizes the need for marketing strategies which align with consumers' preferences and priorities.

Lastly, these findings have notable implications for marketing practitioners and retailers seeking to leverage PCI in their persuasive efforts. The findings suggest that for products with favorable PCI cues, using material frames in communication campaigns would be advantageous. Conversely, in cases where favorable PCI cues are absent, employing an experiential frame is more beneficial. Furthermore, when targeting a specific segment of

consumers which highly values authenticity or places greater importance on PCI, incorporating material framing into communication frames can be crucial. By adhering to these guidelines, marketers can optimize the effectiveness of their communication campaigns and foster greater consumer engagement of purchases. Thus, the current research provides insights that empower marketers to make informed decisions about campaign framing, ultimately maximizing the PCI effects to persuade consumer attitudes and behaviors.

Limitations and Future Directions

While the research presented here shows a relationship between purchase type and relative preference for favorable PCI label, it does have limitations. We used a convenience sample method by recruiting participants from MTurk and via social media. It is encouraged to test this effect using larger samples that have a better representation of the general population. Only participants located in the United States were used in the current work. The United States is considered an individualist culture (Patel, Trivedi, and Yagnik 2020). Therefore, we encourage researchers to test the effect in more collectivist countries to see whether our findings hold. In addition, we encourage researchers to test other potential boundary conditions such as consumers' political ideologies, as this can affect motivations for status products (Urumutta et al. 2021), as well as consumers' perceptions of the ideologies of brands themselves (Boman, Urumutta Hewage, and Hasford 2023).

In our current work, we only tested two product categories (i.e., wine and watch) and we encourage future research to investigate new product categories in which consumers emphasize PCI more. In addition, we used comparable countries for PCI. More extreme examples (e.g., China vs. France for wine) would produce an even more pronounced effect.

Therefore, it is ideal to test more countries that range different levels of PCI. Such work can increase the generalizability of the outcome.

In conclusion, the current research demonstrates how purchase type (i.e., experiential vs material) can influence consumer preference for different PCI. Given the increase in globalization for consumer goods, we hope that research will further investigate consequences of purchase type and PCI on consumer behavior.

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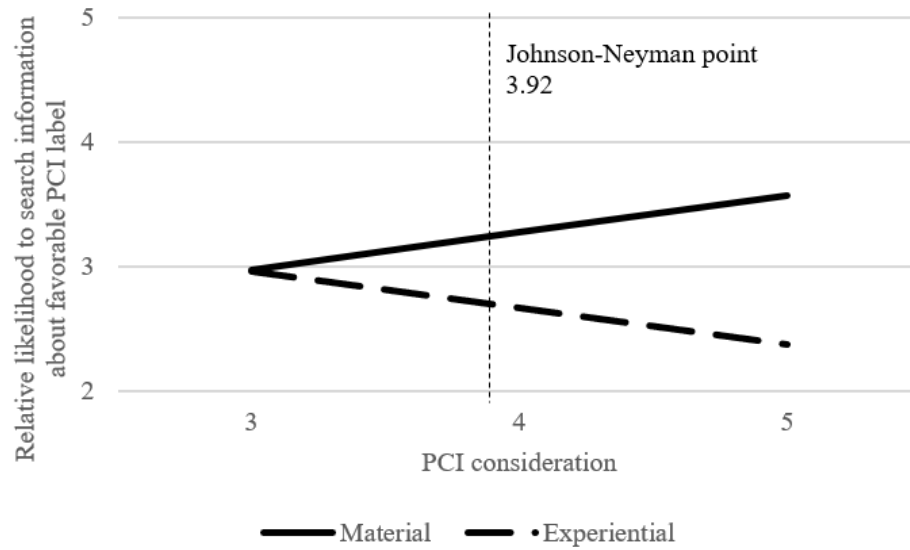


Figure 1. Interactive effect of purchase type and PCI consideration on relative likelihood to search information about favorable PCI label.

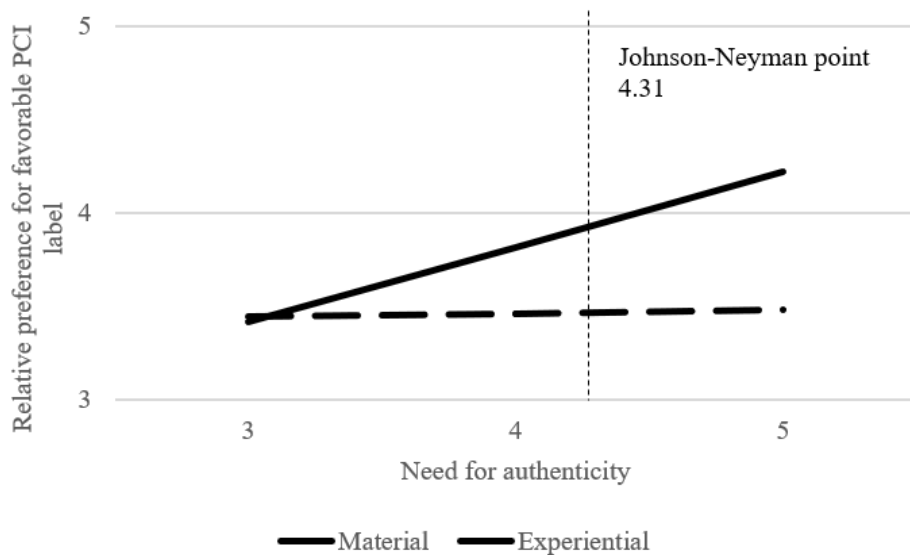


Figure 2. Interactive effect of purchase type and need for authenticity on relative preference for favorable PCI label.