

Toward a better understanding of the phenomenon of ambivalence in the endorsement of sustainable luxury

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Abstract

• Objectives / Research Questions

This research proposes to better understand the antecedents and amplifying factors of the ambivalence phenomenon in the endorsement of sustainable luxury (social vs. environmental).

• Methodology

A first exploratory qualitative study based on the album online technique studied consumers' mental representations of sustainable luxury endorsed by a celebrity. A second quantitative study, conducted in the form of an experiment (N = 192), manipulated celebrity endorsement (presence vs. absence) and the type of cause (social vs. environmental).

• Results

The qualitative study identifies two antecedents of ambivalence (satisfaction with commitment vs. suspicion of commercial motives) and two distinct types of sustainable orientations (social vs. environmental). The quantitative study complements these results by demonstrating that celebrity endorsement fosters ambivalence but generates a stronger impact on positive consumer reactions, particularly in the case of social causes.

• Managerial implications

The endorsement of a sustainable cause generates, despite the ambivalence, stronger effects on the perception of luxury associated with the brand and on the intention to recommend it. By collaborating with celebrities, brands are thus invited to commit themselves at a social level, by seeking to raise awareness of inequalities, or at an environmental level, by limiting their ecological impact.

• Originality

The complementarity of the two studies – qualitative and quantitative – specifies the conditions for the emergence of the ambivalence phenomenon and thus clarifies the theoretical field relating to endorsement strategies. Distinguishing between two sustainable commitment types this research also allows to propose concrete managerial recommendations to brands.

• **Keywords:** luxury, sustainability, celebrity endorsement, ambivalence.

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