



Book Review:

Luxury Brands in China and India

by Glyn Atwal and Douglas Bryson

Palgrave Macmillan, London, UK

2017, 1st Edition

256 pages

ISBN-13: 978-1-137-54713-2

ISBN-e: 978-1-137-54715-6

<http://www.palgrave.com/us/book/9781137547132#aboutBook>

Keywords: Marketing, brand, luxury, China, India, culture.

Over the last 20 years the luxury sector experienced an interesting shift: Traditionally associated to developed economies, luxury consumption now mostly takes place in developing countries across Latin America, the Middle East, and Asia. This phenomenon follows a dramatic increase of upper/middle-class consumers in emerging markets. With higher discretionary incomes than prior generations, increasing sophistication, and a strong desire to fulfill material/social aspirations, consumers in developing countries now currently drive the luxury sector. With luxury consumption more diverse and complex than ever, it becomes critically important to understand its local nuances.

Numerous books, articles and reports address luxury marketing in developing countries. However, these treatments are to different degrees limited: They approach countries as single, homogenous markets, the subtleties of each lost; they derive insights from conventional wisdom, tainted by preconceptions and stereotypes; and they are based on dated information, no longer applicable to these highly-dynamic environments. All the above results in less than ideal insights for luxury marketers.

Building on their significant academic and industry experience, luxury experts Professors Glyn Atwal and Douglas Bryson offer their *Luxury Brands in China and India*. Triangulating multiple data sources, including primary consumer research, and addressing the different consumer segments in each country, the book updates and refines knowledge in regards to two of the largest, fastest-growing, and thus most-important luxury markets in the world. As the authors indicate, p. 8-9:

“Our overall objective is to examine the Chinese and Indian markets, not with a one country-one market approach, but to take the perspective that we face a plethora of markets. We therefore set out to decode the diversity that is an inherent feature of these countries. Similarly, we share the view that the Chinese or Indian luxury consumer is not homogeneous and there is a need to identify insights and outcomes that are specific to the consumer typology... China and India are at

crossroads and are both entering a new era of development with significant implications for both tactical and strategic marketing planning. We have therefore provided analysis and evaluation that updates existing findings to prepare both existing and future executives and senior managers to devise luxury marketing strategies that are coherent with China's and India's 'New Reality'."

Luxury Brands in China and India comprises ten chapters covering a range of issues. Ch. 1, *A New Reality*, serves as an introduction, and presents how luxury consumption generally evolved in both countries. Subsequent chapters address more-specific aspects: Ch. 2, *Luxury Dilemmas*, discusses key dynamics, often contradictory, that continue to transform these luxury markets. Ch. 3, *The Aspirational Rich*, covers how buoyant middle classes now dominate luxury consumption. Ch. 4, *The Super-Rich*, portrays the different wealthy elites and their respective idiosyncrasies. Ch. 5, *Faking Luxury*, addresses the role of forgeries, and the different counterfeit segments of luxury consumption. Ch. 6, *Giving Luxury*, discusses high-end gift-giving, an important albeit neglected facet within collective cultures. Ch. 7, *Digitally Rich*, reconciles consumers' strong online presence with luxury's different aspects. Ch. 8, *Responsible Luxury*, covers how luxury brands are increasingly expected to be socio-environmentally ethical. Ch. 9, *Learning from Mistakes*, recounts a series of business blunders, and how high-end firms may learn from these. Ch. 10, *A Luxury Footprint*, serves as a conclusion, and presents a broad strategic framework to help luxury brands strengthen their presence in these (and other) markets.

While chapters relate to one another, they are mostly self-contained. This allows to read them sequentially, or if so inclined, to skip around the book and focus on what is of interest. Chapters also have their own reference sections. This makes it easier to access original sources, and extend one's understanding of specific issues. The book ends with an *Index*, which allows to look up particular brands and concepts. Chapters are preceded by ample endorsements, *Acknowledgements*, a *Table of Contents*, and *Lists of Figures/Tables*.

Luxury Brands in China and India targets a well-defined audience. While the insights provided might interest/update academics as to what's happening in these two key markets, the book clearly targets marketing practitioners through a wealth of actionable advice. Sprinkled with relevant statistics, expert opinions, and case studies, as well as photos, the book results fluid and highly-readable.

In sum, *Luxury Brands in China and India* is practical and engaging. Not only is it bound to stimulate thought and discussion, but its valuable insights are also likely applicable to other country-markets, even luxury marketing as a whole. Worth reading, highly recommended.

Dr. Francisco J. Conejo

University of Colorado - Denver