

**Curtin Business School**

**School of Marketing**

**Brand Mimicry of Luxury Brands**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this research is to extend the theory of mimicry from the discipline of biological and natural sciences into the luxury branding context. This is achieved through a rigorous theory building exercise that resulted in the development and validation of three brand mimicry scales. To measure the differences between the three types of mimicry, three presence of mimicry scales were developed through scale generation, purification, confirmation and validation. These procedures were achieved through twelve studies. The three scales are namely Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimicry, Vavilovian mimicry and Pouyannian mimicry. The three type of mimicry scales were identified by drawing parallels between mimicry examples in nature and in marketing. This research attempted to bridge the gap in the literature by highlighting a possible overarching theory that encapsulates the different types of copying and imitation practices in the marketplace.

A research model was then developed to empirically test the differences between the three types of mimicry across four different product categories (cars, clothing, shoes and jewellery). Each of the presence of mimicry scale was tested for their influence on variables such as perception of luxury, product evaluation, brand familiarity, consumers' need for uniqueness and status consumption. This research is first of its kind to examine the presence of mimicry based on the theory of mimicry in the luxury brand context.

The main methodology entailed a 3 (type of mimicry) x 4 (product category) factorial experimental design (12 studies) to examine the effects of the three types of mimicry on consumer perception and product evaluation. A total of 2036 useable responses were collected throughout the study. Exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis (using SEM) were utilized in the scale development process. Other statistical techniques used to test for the hypotheses included multiple linear regression, stepwise regression, hierarchical moderated regression and mediation analysis.

The findings of the study revealed that there are significant differences between the three types of mimicry and their influence on the various variables. It was revealed that Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimicry was found to have a negative influence towards perception of luxury and product evaluation towards mimic brand. In contrast, Vavilovian mimicry and Pouyannian mimicry was found to have positive influence on perception of luxury and product evaluation. In addition, brand familiarity and consumers' need for uniqueness were found to have significant relationships towards the three types of mimicry. There were also a number of significant mediating and moderating relationships.

This study provides significant theoretical, methodological and managerial contributions. In addition to developing three brand mimicry scales, the cross disciplinary extension of theory from the discipline of biological and natural sciences to a marketing context provides strong theoretical foundation. In addition, the use of real life examples and brands as the stimuli establishes ecological validity for the studies. The implications and findings derived from the study can provide insights into the strategic brand planning for mimic brand managers, model brand managers and policy makers. In contrast to previous studies, this research examined the mimicry phenomenon from the perspective of a mimic brand manager.

**Keywords:** Mimicry, Wicklerian-Eisnerian, Vavilovian, Pouyannian, Perception, Luxury Brands, Copying, Similarity, Scale Development

## STATEMENT OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP

### Declaration

To the best of my knowledge and belief this thesis contains no material previously published by any other person except where due acknowledgment has been made.

This thesis contains no material that has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university.



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Hui Min, Teah

28 March 2013

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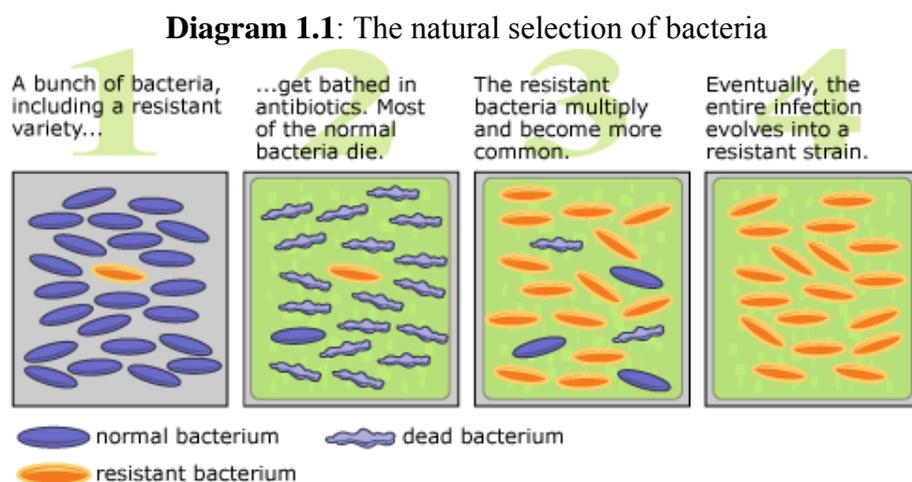
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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### BACKGROUND OF MIMICRY

It was only fifty years ago that the invention of antibiotics saw the eradication of major infectious agents that were seen as health threats to mankind. In the past two decades, the spike in the number of infectious diseases and the emergence of new ones has raised panic in the healthcare sector<sup>1</sup>. The nasty ability of bacteria to become resistant to the most powerful antibiotics available in the market has caused a worldwide epidemic. For example, MRSA, a drug-resistant strain of the bacterium *Staphylococcus aureus*, now thrives in hospitals where the use of antibiotics has bred a super-bug better known as the “flesh-eating” bacteria. The only remaining antibiotic that can affect the antibiotic resistant bacteria is vancomycin. But recently, new strains of MRSA are showing resistance even to vancomycin<sup>2</sup>.



Adapted from Source: University of California Museum of Paleontology's Understanding Evolution (<http://evolution.berkeley.edu>)

When one takes an antibiotic, a few of the bacterial cells in the body would already happen to have genes that enable them to be resistant to it just based on random chance. This is the process of natural selection. And they multiply incredibly quickly, thus leaving behind their equally resistant progeny in greater numbers. The resistant bacteria will then start spreading and will soon outnumber the weak and vulnerable ones in the population. Then, when the

<sup>1</sup> Evolution of Antibiotic Resistance. Available at: [http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/evolution/library/10/4/1\\_104\\_03.html](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/evolution/library/10/4/1_104_03.html)

<sup>2</sup> Fields, 2012. Available at: [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/dr-douglas-fields/antibiotic-resistant-bact\\_b\\_1176687.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/dr-douglas-fields/antibiotic-resistant-bact_b_1176687.html)

same antibiotic is used again, it loses its effectiveness because a greater population of new bacteria have become resistant<sup>3</sup>. The bacteria have evolved (see Diagram 1.1).

The real problem starts when bacteria are exposed to environmental stresses that do not kill them all. The then remaining bacteria then mutates to survive. While science is finding better ways to kill bacteria, the microbes then counterattack by mutating into super-bugs<sup>4</sup>. These days bacteria evolve at such fast rates that antibiotic only has a small window of opportunity to work. So now where is the incentive to invest in a decade of research for a new drug?<sup>5</sup>

*Doesn't this scenario seem all too familiar?*

No different to antibiotics and bacteria, our marketplace is similarly strewn with bacteria-like super fakes. In recent years, fakes have just multiplied at rapid rates. This sudden surge in brand mimicry has sent a ripple of panic across the luxury brand industry. The ability of these super fakes to evade prosecution has made it a worldwide epidemic. Through the untrained eye, it used to be easy to differentiate the counterfeit as shoddy and a low quality fake. However, these counterfeiters have evolved, improved and upgraded their manufacturing abilities to be virtually indiscernible to an untrained eye.

*They have now created super fakes.*

When the industry fights the super fakes with the toughest and best strategies, the mimics fight back harder. They find a better way to upgrade their products and eliminate its weaker traits.

*They have evolved.*

In recent times, the trademark war engaged between brands has made headlines and caused controversy around the world. Take for example, for 18 months, the red soles of Christian Louboutin were in the spotlight as Yves Saint Laurent (YSL) was sued for using the signature red soles of Louboutin on the bottom of their red pumps<sup>6</sup>. The court finally ruled for Yves Saint Laurent to be allowed to use the red soles as part of monochromatic red shoes and still

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<sup>3</sup> Parker-Pope, 2008. Available at: <http://well.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/03/27/drug-resistance-explained/>

<sup>4</sup> See Fields 2012

<sup>5</sup> Sample, 2013. Available at: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2013/jan/24/antibiotics-mrsa>

<sup>6</sup> Krupnick, 2012. Available at: [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/10/16/christian-louboutin-vs-ysl-lawsuit-over\\_n\\_1970511.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/10/16/christian-louboutin-vs-ysl-lawsuit-over_n_1970511.html)

retained Louboutin's trademark protection over the red sole of his shoes<sup>7</sup> (see Diagram 1.2). Another example involves the mini Apple of China, Xiaomi, a smartphone company that has taken a chunk of Apple's pie. Slightly less than three years after its introduction, Xiaomi is valued at \$4 billion and has attracted a legion of fans that mimics the adoration of fanatics of the Apple iPhone. The founder, Lei Jun clothed like Steve Jobs, has created a fan base for his line of moderately priced high-end smartphones by mimicking Apple's antics and marketing tactics of attaching exclusivity around Xiaomi's products<sup>8</sup> (see Diagram 1.3).

**Diagram 1.2:** Louboutin versus YSL



**Diagram 1.3:** Xiaomi Phone 2 Launch



<sup>7</sup> See Krupnick, 2012

<sup>8</sup> Lee, 2012. Available at: <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/12/07/us-china-xiaomi-apple-idUSBRE8B60A420121207>

<sup>9</sup> Bergin, 2012. Available at: <http://fashion.telegraph.co.uk/news-features/TMG9768890/Christian-Louboutin-versus-YSL-red-soles-case-is-dismissed.html>

<sup>10</sup> Chang, 2012: Available at: <http://micgadget.com/29102/xiaomi-phone-2-launch-event-looks-like-apple-keynote-with-steve-jobs-video/>

More on the battle of the brands includes Samsung and Apple, the two world's largest smartphone makers engaged in patent disputes in over 10 countries<sup>11</sup>. Samsung was ordered to pay Apple \$1.05 billion in one of the lawsuits, after the South Korean conglomerate was found to infringe several of Apple's patents in creating 26 of its products<sup>12</sup>. While Apple has sought for a ban of Samsung phones being sold on the U.S. shelves, court refrained from doing so considering that while the phones contain some infringing features, they also possessed a far greater number of non-infringing features. By pulling the so called "copycat" off the shelves, it would cause harm to the public<sup>13</sup>. In hopes of dominating the world's mobile market, the legal battle continues when Apple recently filed another lawsuit alleging Samsung's newer products are unfairly using Apple's technology, and the saga continues<sup>14</sup>. Looking back in time, Apple has had its fair share of copyright disputes. In 2004, the company was made to pay \$100 million to Creative Labs for infringing on their Zen MP3 player, which was deemed a pioneer in the market<sup>15</sup>. However, Apple as "a user focused fast follower and a relentless improver" made the iPod into a revolutionary device that changed the digital music landscape forever<sup>16</sup>. Another example of imitation spanned across four decades. The legal battle between Lacoste and Crocodile involving the trademarked and famous crocodile logo ended eventually in mutual agreement<sup>17</sup>. The settlement between the two brands stipulates that Crocodile agrees to stop using the crocodile in its logo and will adopt a new version. In exchange, Lacoste will make a concession to accept the new version of the logo. All these real life marketing examples showcased an underlining concept, and that is mimicry.

Drawing its roots from Darwin's theory of evolution, Bates (1862, 502) described mimicry as a visible "resemblance in external appearance, shapes and colours between members of widely distinct families". Further development of the theory led it to the concept of natural selection and the survival of the fittest. In order to survive, many organisms in nature employ mimicry (Vane-Wright, 1976). This strategy is similarly reflected in marketing (Kapfarrer, 1995; Shenkar, 2010; 2012). Based on the accounts of the rampant copying in the industry, there is evidence that there are observed parallels between the types of mimicry identified in

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<sup>11</sup> Gayle, 2012. Available at: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-2251176/Key-Apple-iPhone-patent-used-1bn-lawsuit-Samsung-REJECTED.html#axzz2Kpucq2Xb>

<sup>12</sup> Elias, 2012. Available at: - [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/12/17/samsung-ban-apple\\_n\\_2319751.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/12/17/samsung-ban-apple_n_2319751.html)

<sup>13</sup> See Elias, 2012

<sup>14</sup> See Elias, 2012

<sup>15</sup> Krazi, 2006. Available at: [http://news.cnet.com/2100-1047\\_3-6108901.html](http://news.cnet.com/2100-1047_3-6108901.html)

<sup>16</sup> Barwise and Meehan, 2012. Available at: <http://www.europeanbusinessreview.com/?p=6409>

<sup>17</sup> Huo, 2013. Available at: - [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/en/doc/2003-11/11/content\\_281699.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/en/doc/2003-11/11/content_281699.htm)

the discipline of biological and natural sciences and mimicry in marketing. However, there is still very little that is known within this area at present.

Based on the review of the key classification studies within the discipline of biological and natural sciences (Vane-wright, 1976; 1980; Pasteur, 1982), three types of mimicry are identified which are Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimicry, Vavilovian mimicry and Pouyannian mimicry. They are found to convey a close resemblance to three types of mimicry in marketing. Therefore, this serves as a foundation to conceptualize the theory of mimicry further into the luxury branding context within marketing.

## **RESEARCH ISSUE/JUSTIFICATION AND OBJECTIVES**

The study of copying and imitation in marketing has begun more than half a century ago (e.g. Callman, 1940; Loken et al., 1986; Foxman et al., 1990; Lefkoff-Hagius and Mason, 1993; Balabanis and Craven, 1997; Nia and Zaichkowsky, 2000; d'Astous and Gargouri, 2001; Warlop and Alba, 2004; Walsh and Mitchell, 2005; Penz and Stottinger, 2005; Gentry et al., 2006; de Matos et al., 2007; Penz et al., 2008; Wilcox et al., 2009; Kim and Karpova, 2010; Poddar et al., 2011; Ahuvia et al., 2013). The interest within this area is showing exponential growth, with numerous researchers documenting the copying and imitation phenomenon in marketing using increasingly sophisticated studies. However, a basic literature review would reveal that there are many types of copying and imitation observed in the marketplace. As such, there lies the important question of a unified concept or theory that encapsulates all the various types of copying and imitation. In addition, the theory of mimicry has been extensively used in other disciplines (such as biomimetics, management, economics, and so on) (e.g. Lee and Pennings, 2002; Coupland, 2005; Bar-Cohen, 2006; Bassens et al., 2012), yet it has limited application within marketing.

There is little research within current literature that extends the theory of mimicry into marketing, more specifically into branding within the luxury brand context. Even if there are current studies of mimicry in marketing, they are mainly from the behavioural psychology point of view (e.g. van Baaren et al., 2003; Tanner et al., 2008; Ruvio et al., 2013). In addition, there is an abundance of studies that documented the effects of many types of copying in the convenience goods sector (e.g. Loken et al, 1986; Foxman et al., 1992; Harvey et al., 1998; Warlop and Alba, 2004; Walsh and Mitchell, 2005; Miceli and Pieters, 2010). In

addition, even when there are studies on the copying of luxury brands, they are predominantly on the counterfeiting of luxury brands (e.g. Cordell et al., 1996; Nia and Zaichkowsky, 2000; Hilton et al., 2004; Penz and Stottinger, 2005; Gentry et al., 2006; Wilcox et al., 2009; Yoo and Lee, 2011; Poddar et al., 2011; Sharma and Chan, 2011; Hamelin et al., 2012) Therefore, this presents a gap within literature to extend the theory of mimicry into examining mimicry within the luxury brand context.

In addition, along with the lack of application of the theory of mimicry in marketing, is also the absence of a conceptual model that measures the different types of mimicry (Sherratt, 2008). Past studies have designed research models to study mainly counterfeiting (e.g. Ang et al. 2001; Bian and Moutinho, 2011), which is only an aspect of mimicry. Therefore, generalizability of existing models to other forms of mimicry is yet to be determined. This presents a need for a conceptual model that is designed to measure the presence of mimicry.

Most of the previous studies in copying and imitation are often investigations on counterfeiting. This is one of the more developed areas of mimicry that has received more attention than many other types of copying (e.g. Wee et al., 1995; Cordell et al., 1996; Prendergast et al., 2002; Gentry et al., 2001; Gentry et al., 2006; Eisend and Schuchert-Guler, 2006; Juggessur and Cohen, 2009; Commuri, 2009; Chaudhry and Stumpf, 2011; Poddar et al., 2011; Yoo and Lee, 2011; Gabrielli et al., 2012). However, some studies have used the “counterfeiting” word interchangeably to discuss “inspired copies” and piracy (Wee et al., 1995; Kwong et al., 2003), which is not an overarching concept but only a subset of mimicry. One of the key reasons is because of the lack of unity in many definitions within the copying and imitation literature (e.g. McDonald and Roberts, 1994; Lai and Zaichkowsky, 1999; Wilcox et al., 2009). Therefore a unified concept using an established theory such as the theory of mimicry to coin the other variations of copying within the marketplace (e.g. counterfeiting, imitation, fakes, piracy, and so on) can reduce the amount of confusion with each of the terms. In addition, by adopting a unified concept that can be applied across all types of copying can allow the study of the comparisons between the various types of mimicry. This can highlight the nuances and differences between each type of mimicry. Therefore, a construction of a basic classification system similar to the classification in the discipline of biological and natural sciences is much warranted (e.g. Vane-Wright, 1976; 1980; Pasteur, 1982).

In addition to mimicry in the convenience goods sector, mimicry is widespread in the luxury brand industry. However, lesser studies have examined mimicry within the luxury brand industry beyond counterfeiting. There are notable differences between the nature of convenience goods and luxury brands in influencing consumer evaluation and involvement (d'Astous and Gargouri, 2001) which would contribute to better understanding of the mimicry phenomenon. In addition, there is a lack of real life luxury brands being used when examining the mimicry of luxury brands (d'Astous and Gargouri, 2001).

One of the perspectives that is under-researched is the implications of mimicry from a mimic brand owner's perspective. Most studies have taken a stance on the negative implications of mimicry on the model (original) brands' perspective (e.g. Jacoby and Roth, 2008; Penz and Stottinger, 2008; Hieke, 2010; Poddar et al., 2011; Grappi et al., 2013). Therefore there is limited understanding on the extent and the nature of the impact of mimicry on the industry as a whole (Wilcox et al., 2009; Staake et al., 2009; Romani et al., 2012). In addition, there is increasing support for imitation as a strategic edge (Huang et al., 2010; Shenkar, 2010; 2012) which has defied conventional wisdom of the negative implications of mimicry.

There are currently existing scales in the literature that measures perceived product similarity (Loken et al., 1986; Walsh and Mitchell, 2005) or single item scales to measure similarity between products (e.g. Miceli and Pieters, 2010). In addition, the scales are either based on a product category or it does not explain the possible differences between products. This limits the understanding on the specific attributes and characteristics that defines each type of mimicry. Therefore, the lack of understanding of what makes two products or brands similar (Till and Priluck, 2000) is still a continuous quest for researchers to explore.

The 21<sup>st</sup> century saw a rise in mass production and information overload, which resulted in the need for uniqueness and differentiation by consumers (Tian et al., 2001; Berger and Ward, 2010). Previous studies have found the importance of consumers' need for uniqueness on the consumption of luxury brands (e.g. Kastanakis and Balabanis, 2012) and fashion goods (e.g. Workman and Kidd, 2000; Knight and Kim, 2007). Based on the premise that mimic brands are often scarcer than model brands (Bates, 1962; Poulton, 1890; Ruxton et al., 2005), and are non-mainstream (Romani et al., 2012) there would be interesting implications for consumers' need for uniqueness.

In summary, further research and exploration of brand mimicry is warranted. In order to achieve this, the study will (1) undertake a rigorous theory building exercise to extend the theory of mimicry into marketing, (2) undertake the development of three specific mimicry scales to measure the three classifications of mimicry, (3) measure and compare the effectiveness of each type of mimicry in the luxury brand context, (4) evaluate and compare the effectiveness of the three types of mimicry across four product categories using real life marketing brands, (5) develop a conceptual model that incorporates the direct and indirect relationships of all the key variables. In light of these conceptualizations, the key research question for this question is **“How do the specific types of mimicry (Wicklerian-Eisnerian, Vavilovian and Pouyannian mimicry) differ in their effect on consumers’ behaviour in the luxury brand context?”** More specifically, the research questions and objectives of this study are:

**Research Question 1:** How does the theory of mimicry explain mimicry in luxury brands?

**Objective 1:** To conceptualize the theory of mimicry into marketing and to draw parallels between the world of the “wild” and the world of “marketing” using real life marketing examples.

**Objective 2:** To develop a model conceptualizing the three different types of mimicry and influences on consumers’ responses towards the mimic and the model brand within the luxury brand industry.

**Research Question 2:** How does the presence of mimicry influence the perception of luxury and consumer evaluations towards the mimic brand?

**Objective 3:** To develop and validate the three different presence of mimicry scales to measure the perceived product similarity between the model and the mimic brand.

**Objective 4:** To investigate the influence of mimicry on perception of luxury and product evaluations.

**Research Question 3:** How do personality traits influence the evaluation of mimic brands?

**Objective 5:** To investigate the influence of brand familiarity of the mimic brand and model brand on perception of luxury and product evaluation.

**Objective 6:** To examine the influence of personality traits (i.e. consumers' need for uniqueness and status consumption) on product evaluations towards mimicry.

**Objective 7:** To investigate the mediating and moderating relationships that exists between perception of luxury, consumer personality traits and product evaluations.

## **DELIMITATIONS AND SCOPE**

This research is one of the first in exploring and extending the theory of mimicry from the discipline of biological and natural sciences into the luxury branding context at the point of this study. Therefore, it primarily serves as a rigorous theory building exercise rather than as a theory testing investigation. Therefore, this study is mainly to conceptualize and develop three different types of mimicry scales to be used to measure consumers' responses towards each type of mimicry. Due to the exhaustive and on-going classifications of mimicry in the disciplines of biological and natural sciences (Pasteur, 1982), only three are selected on the basis of the close parallels to mimicry in marketing. In addition, the dearth of research on mimicry (excluding counterfeiting) in the luxury brand context has prompted the research to be undertaken within this sector (d'Astous and Gargouri, 2001). In addition, four product categories (cars, clothing, shoes and jewellery) are selected for use in this study based on their growth within the luxury brand industry (Heine, 2011; Bain and Company, 2012). Furthermore, these are the most highly imitated products within the marketplace (Juggessur and Cohen, 2009), which makes them suitable for the purpose of this study.

In order to achieve a desired comparison between the studies, a homogenous student sample is recommended for experimental studies (Calder et al., 1981). By limiting the respondents to the same "life stages", the researcher can control for and reduce the number of external factors that may influence their perception and evaluation of brand mimicry. Hence, the subjects are limited between ages 18 to 35. This age group is apt for the study on luxury brands as they are considered the target market for luxury brands (Knight and Kim, 2007; Park et al., 2008; Latter et al., 2010; Liu et al., 2012).

## KEY DEFINITIONS

### DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this study, the following definitions are adopted.

**Mimicry** is the visible “resemblance in external appearance, shapes and colours between members of widely distinct families” (Bates, 1865, p. 502). A mimicry system involves three protagonists that highlight the interaction between the organisms. The three protagonists are namely the model, the mimic and the signal receiver (dupe/operator) (Pasteur, 1982; Vane-Wright, 1976; Wickler, 1965). Based on Wickler’s definition of the mimicry system (1965), he constructed a triadic structure that involves **the mimic**, as the imitating organism that can be any species of organism or virus that can produce a mimetic signal; **the model**, as the entity being imitated (either animate or inanimate); and **the signal receiver** or operator (Vane-Wright, 1976), or sometimes termed as the dupe (Pasteur, 1982) that fails to discriminate between the mimic and the model.

- **Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimicry:**

A form of aggressive mimicry, the mimic resembles a harmless model, which allows it to approach and prey on the model itself and or on unsuspecting third parties/ signal receiver (Eisner et al., 1978). The mimic is predaceous but shares similar colouration and shape to the model. When the unsuspecting signal receiver is unaware, the mimic will hurt the model (i.e. take a bite off the signal receiver) (Srgyley, 1999). As a result of the deception, the signal receiver distrusts both the mimic and the model.

**Brand mimicry definition:** *is defined as a form of aggressive mimicry which allows the mimic to imitate the model and to deceive or confuse unsuspecting signal receivers through high physical similarities. They are often harmful to both the signal receiver and the model brand. They are sometimes seen as direct copies of the model brand.*

- **Vavilovian mimicry:**

Vavilovian mimicry is classified as a form of crop mimicry (Pasteur, 1982). It is the case of ‘useful weeds’ that resemble cultivated crop (e.g. wheat) at specific stages during its life history. They then developed seeds

and seed-dispersal mechanisms that resulted in mistaken identity and evades eradication (Barrett, 1983). As a result, the “useful weed” became crops themselves (Williamson, 1982).

**Brand mimicry definition:** *is when the mimic deceives or possibly confuses the signal receiver through symbolic and functional similarities, but as a result evades prosecution. Subsequently, it evolves, innovates and establishes itself away from the model brand over time and becomes an independent brand. They are often moderately similar mimics or so called imitative innovations.*

**Pouyannian mimicry:** is a form of mimicry that flowers uses which involves the use of false cues to attract pollinators or dispersers through the production of female sex pheromones. It is a process of coevolution between plants and insects that is mutualistic in nature (Wiens, 1978).

**Brand mimicry definition:** *is defined a form of mimicry where the mimic brand imitates the model brand to diffuse an innovation in a market through moderately similar concepts or styling. The use of this form of mimicry often results in trend creation. They are often inspired copies of the model brand rather than direct copies.*

**Perception of luxury:** Perception represents a subjective reality. Perception describes how consumers become aware of and interpret the environment (Phau and Prendergast, 2000; Monkhouse, 2012). The definition of luxury used in this study refers to exclusivity and products that are not for mass consumption (Wiedmann, Hennigs and Siebels, 2009).

**Product evaluation:** Brand associations that consumers hold such as perceived quality, prestige, brand awareness and other proprietary assets (e.g. patents) can directly or indirectly influence brand evaluations and brand preferences (Aaker, 1991). It is suggested by Hoyer and MacInnis (2008) that overall evaluations and attitudes (likes and dislikes) are more easily remembered than the specific attributes of a product or a brand. When a product lacks information or when the consumer lacks knowledge about a product, they look to certain product signals, such as price, warranty, packaging in order to form product evaluations.

Therefore, strong product attributes and signals can influence consumer evaluations (Blackwell et al., 2006).

**Brand familiarity:** The brand perceptions that consumers form of brands may be driven by their needs and brand knowledge derived from past personal experiences (Keller, 2001). Often, brand familiarity is described as an exposure effect, suggesting that repetitive exposure to a stimuli or a brand will generate positive evaluations towards the brand (Laroche et al., 1996). Brand familiarity is beyond only the concept of exposure to a brand but includes consumers' level of knowledge about a brand (Kim and Chung, 2012).

**Consumers' need for uniqueness:** The concept of consumers' need for uniqueness lies in being different from others or to become distinctive among a group (Snyder and Fromkin, 1980). This is often signalled through material objects one acquires which is to serve the purpose of enhancing one's self-image (e.g. Belk, 1988; McCracken, 1986; Richins, 1994; Tian and McKenzie, 2001) and social image (e.g. Fisher and Price, 1992; McAlister and Pessemier, 1982; Tian et al., 2001).

There are three forms of consumers' need for uniqueness identified.

**Creative choice counter-conformity** postulates that based on the Western culture, expressing one's distinctiveness from others require one to create their own style through goods that convey self-image (Kron, 1983).

**Unpopular choice counter-conformity** on the other hand is "the selection or use of products and brands that deviate from group norms and thus risk social disapproval that consumers withstand in order to establish their differences from others" (Tian et al., 2001, pg. 52).

**Avoidance of similarity** is the disinterest and discontinued use of products that have become less scarce and have become a mass consumed product (i.e. products that are mainstream) (Tian et al., 2001). Consumers who pursue this form of uniqueness would prefer products that are of a "minority choice" and are acceptable and good products. However, the choices are not seen as a typical product for the group (Tian and McKenzie, 2001).

### **Status consumption:**

Status consumption has long been defined as the purchase, use, display and consumption of goods and services as a means of gaining status (Veblen, 1899; Packard, 1959; Mason, 1981; Scitovsky, 1992; Eastman et al., 1997). Furthermore, it involves a social ranking or recognition that a group would award to an individual (Packard, 1959; Dawson and Cavell, 1986; Scitovsky, 1992; Eastman et al., 1997), that is irrespective of social and income level. It is inaccurate to assume that only the wealthy are prone to status consumption (Freedman, 1991; Miller 1991; Eastman et al., 1997; Shipman, 2004). Status consumption is for consumers who are seeking self-satisfaction as well as to display their prestige and status to surrounding others usually through visible evidence (Eastman et al., 1997).

## **KEY THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS**

### **Theory of mimicry**

Mimicry is the superficial resemblance of one organism to another in order to gain fitness or advantage (Vane-Wright, 1980). In addition, the mistaken identity through deception is suggested to be an innate response (Smith, 1975; 1977; 1978), or otherwise a learned response through prior experience and constant reinforcement (Tinbergen, 1960; Clarke, 1962).

### **Other Theoretical Underpinnings**

The major theoretical underpinning for this study is based on the theory of mimicry. However, the other underpinnings that support the theory of mimicry are:

**Classical conditioning:** is the functional link between an unconditioned stimulus and response (e.g., feeding and salivation) becomes associated with a second, independent stimulus (e.g., Pavlov's bell) if the independent stimulus repeatedly accompanies the unconditioned stimulus (Pavlov, 1927).

**Stimulus generalization:** refers to the degree to which a response conditioned to a particular stimulus is also evoked by similar stimuli (Till and Priluck, 2000; Zaichkowsky and Simpson, 1996). The theory also explains the transferability and

generalization of negative reactions or past experiences that share similar physical attributes (Miaoulis and D'Amato, 1978; Rozin et al., 1986).

**Cue utilization theory:** suggests that through the use of extrinsic and intrinsic cues, products can communicate different views to consumers (Cox, 1967). The theory postulates that it is not necessary to copy the established product's presentation, merely to ensure that the cue pattern the consumer perceives when glancing along the aisle is similar enough to evoke the imagery created by the mimic (Davies, 1998).

**Categorization theory:** product categories are organized in the minds of consumers as structures in which products range from prototypical (typical) members within a category to unclear cases to clear non-members (Mervis and Rosch, 1981; Barsalou, 1982).

**Anchoring theory:** is the process of updating evaluations of a stimulus that is influenced by a memory or stimulus based perceptual construct called the reference point (Meyer and Johnson, 1995). The reference point acts as an anchor against which the target stimulus is judged that influences the update of information.

**Spillover effects:** key properties of a product will spill over to the product in which it is perceived to be associated (Hagtvedt and Patrick, 2008). More commonly, the spillover effects concerns specific content (physical attributes, designs, concepts, brand) of the product or general connotations (what it represents and the symbolic value).

**Signalling theory:** suggests that brands can utilize these signals (through manipulation of attributes or activities) to convey information about their characteristics (Spence, 1974).

These theories help by illustrating the effects of the presence of mimicry on the perception of luxury and product evaluation. In addition to the main model, other theories such as rarity principle, theory of social representations and theory of conspicuous consumption also explain the relationship and effects of luxury branding on mimicry.

**Rarity principle:** is when the "scarcer" the brand, the more valuable it is (Dubois and Paternault, 1995; Mason 1981; Phau and Prendergast, 2000).

**Theory of social representations:** is defined as the influence of a social group on the opinions and values of its members through the collective elaborations of a social object (i.e. subject of common interest) (Moscovici, 1963; 1984).

**Theory of conspicuous consumption:** is when those who put wealth in evidence are rewarded with preferential treatment by social contacts. This effect is based upon the comparison of the desirability of signalling through price, quantity or quality (Bagwell and Bernheim, 1996; O’Cass and McEwen, 2004).

The underpinnings of the study are explained in greater detail in the subsequent chapters on hypothesis development and theoretical framework.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Based on other studies, the methodology is adapted from Hagtvedt and Patrick (2008), Walsh and Mitchell (2005) and van Horen and Pieters (2012a; 2012b). The data is captured using self-administered surveys that consisted of questions on brand familiarity and product evaluation of the two brands (one mimic and one model brand), a scale on the presence of mimicry, scales on measuring consumers’ need for uniqueness, scales on status consumption and simple demographic questions. The research will be undertaken in two phases. Phase One develops and validates the three presence of mimicry scales to measure the existence of Wicklerian-Eisnerian, Vavilovian and Pouyannian mimicry independently (Chapter 5). These scales will be used to measure the presence of mimicry in Phase Two of the study (main study - Chapter 6). Phase Two consists of 12 studies that empirically test three of the presence of mimicry scales across four product categories. An experimental approach of a 3 (types of mimicry) x 4 (product categories) is employed to generalize the scale across different product contexts. The product categories are cars, clothing, shoes and jewellery within the luxury brand industry. The developed survey instrument will capture their perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic and the model brand, the presence of mimicry scale (Wicklerian-Eisnerian, Vavilovian or Pouyannian), brand familiarity towards model brand and mimic brand, consumers’ need for uniqueness and status consumption questions. Each subject is only exposed to one form of mimicry and one pair of brands. With the exception of the presence of mimicry scales which are developed in Phase One of the research, survey items will be derived from past studies (e.g. Hagtvedt and Patrick,

2008; Kent and Allen, 1994; Tian et al., 2001 and Eastman et al., 1999). Exploratory factor analysis in SPSS and confirmatory factor analysis using structural equation modelling (SEM) will be used in Phase One of the study to develop and validate the presence of mimicry scale. Exploratory factor analysis and regressions are being used as the key statistical techniques to test the hypotheses for Phase Two (main studies). The method and support for the chosen instruments are discussed at length in Chapter 4.

### **Scale development and Validation**

The key literature and theories explored in the development and validation of the three mimicry scales are based on the work by Churchill (1979), DeVellis (1991, 2003), Hagtvedt and Patrick (2008), Walsh and Mitchell (2005), Nunnally (1978), Oh (2005), Spector (1992), and Wells et al. (1971). These studies guide the scale development process and are discussed in more detail in Chapter 5 on scale development.

## **EXPECTED RESULTS**

As discussed previously, there is a vacuum in the literature pertaining to the extension of mimicry from the discipline of biological and natural sciences to mimicry in the marketing and branding context. In addition, the classification and identification of three types of mimicry parallels between nature and marketing does not exist (at the time of this study). Therefore, to test the hypotheses, and answer the research questions and objectives (see Chapter 3), a sound research methodology (see Chapter 4), a number of relevant scales/measures and appropriate research techniques have been adopted and developed. The first study will develop and validate the Wicklerian-Eisnerian, Vavilovian and Pouyannian mimicry scales using twelve studies (see Chapter 5). It is predicted that these scales will measure and highlight the differences in respondent's reaction towards the three types of mimicry across four product categories (cars, clothing, shoes, and jewellery). For the main study, a new set of data will be collected using a 3 x 4 (type of mimicry x product category) factorial experimental design to validate and generalize the three mimicry scales developed in this research. The results of the twelve studies are presented and discussed in Chapter 6. Findings that provide theoretical, methodological and managerial significance are expected to be uncovered (see Chapter 7).

## **SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY**

The key research questions of the work are to conceptualize the theory of mimicry into marketing within the luxury brand industry. The aims of the study are to develop, test and validate the three different types of mimicry that are found to show parallels between nature and marketing. As an overview, success in showing the significant differences between the mimicry scales will indicate the need for future research and the adaptation of the theory of mimicry in imitation and copycat research. The research will have theoretical, methodological, and managerial significance in the following ways.

### **THEORETICAL SIGNIFICANCE**

The conceptualization of the theory of mimicry in marketing is an extension of mimicry from the discipline of biological and natural sciences and serves as a rigorous and robust theory building exercise. The identification of the three types of mimicry also provides foundation and a basis for future researchers to develop future studies within the imitation and copying literature. The conceptual development provides a possible theoretical framework and model which can possibly be applied to other contexts and further developed with other variables. In addition, this study is one of the first to compare the three different types of mimicry and their effects on four product categories (cars, clothing, shoes and jewellery). In addition, this study serves to be one of the first to provide a start to a classification scheme to brand mimicry in marketing. This is to provide a unified concept to discuss the copying phenomenon, which is similar to Vane-Wright (1980) and Pasteur's (1982) classification of mimicry in nature. Furthermore, the theory of mimicry draw on likes of classical conditioning, cue utilization, categorization theory, and spillover effects to explain the theory of mimicry and the mimicry phenomenon in marketing and branding.

### **METHODOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE**

The most significant methodological contribution of this study is the development, validation and generalization of three mimicry scales to measure three different types of mimicry observed in the marketplace. The scale development procedures are discussed in Chapter 5. In addition, the existing scales within marketing that studies perceived similarity are usually global scales (e.g. Walsh and Mitchell, 2005) or single item scales (e.g. Miceli and Pieters, 2010). Therefore, this does not take into account the varying differences between consumers' perception of mimicry, but takes it as an overall appearance (Loken et al., 1986). Hence this study is developed based on specific attributes and similarity judgments between a model and

a mimic brand. In addition, this research used real life marketing examples to examine the effects of three different types of mimicry which is much warranted in the study of mimicry of luxury brands (d'Astous and Gargouri, 2001). In addition, this also improves the generalizability of the scales, hence highlighting the significance of this study for future researchers to extend brand mimicry further into other product categories/sectors (i.e. convenience goods). Furthermore, by adapting and extending existing methodology (e.g. Bijmolt et al., 1998; Walsh and Mitchell, 2005; Hagtveldt and Patrick 2008) into another context further enhances the rigour and robustness of this study.

### **MANAGERIAL SIGNIFICANCE**

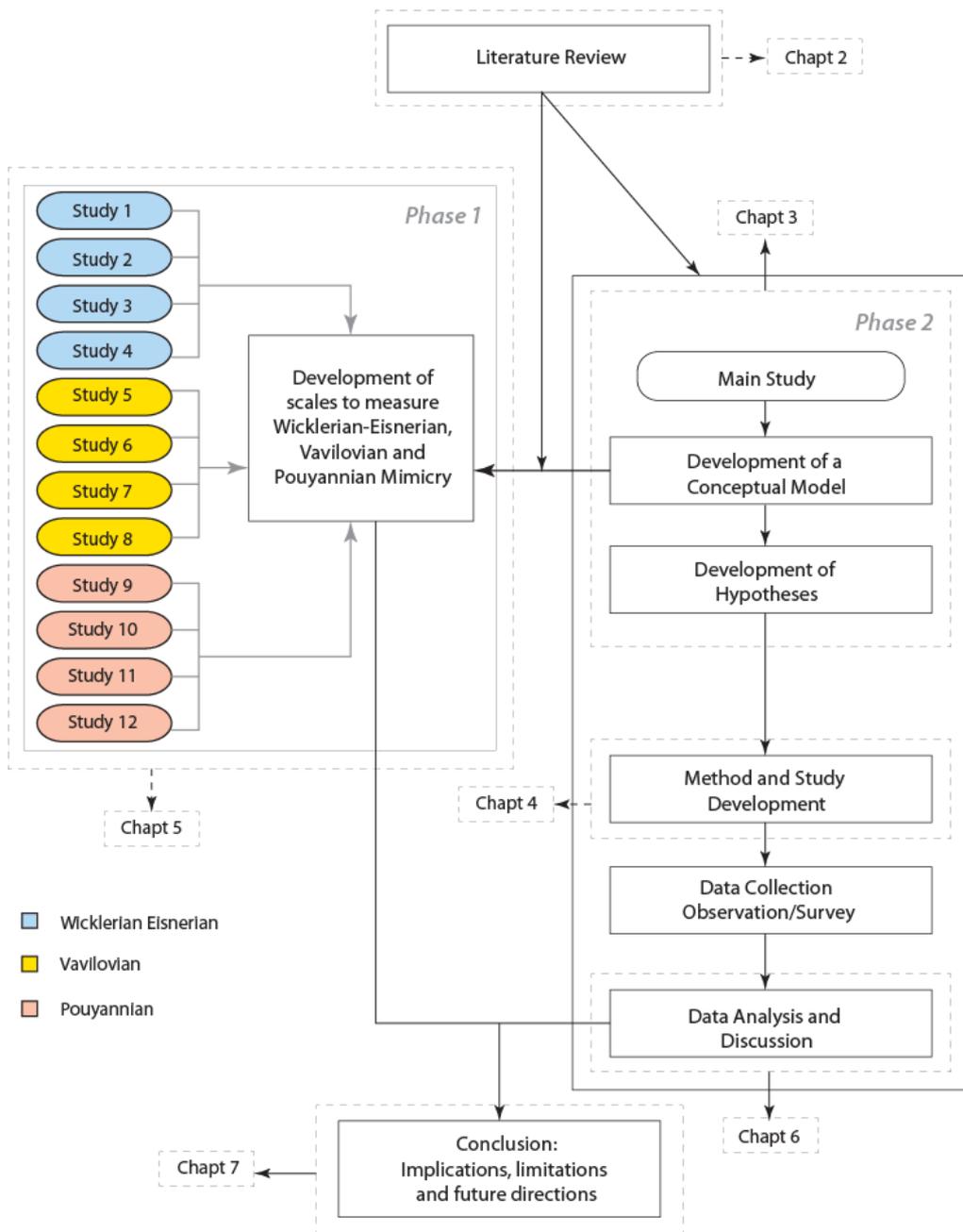
The study will highlight important findings for mimic brand managers, model brand managers and policy makers by understanding the three different types of mimicry and how it applies and affects consumers. The implications for the different type of mimicry are being empirically tested and discussion of the findings will show interesting trends that allow better formulation of strategies. Furthermore, based on the findings on consumers' perception and evaluation of mimic brands, it provides insights into managing and understanding mimicry as a strategy. The findings can for example, assist entrepreneurs in identifying the mode of entry into the marketplace (Huang et al., 2010). It is therefore important for brand managers to understand the nature of the different mimicry strategies to optimize their resources (Shenkar, 2010; 2012). The findings will discuss the potential of other strategies such as collaboration between mimic brands and model brands (Simonin and Ruth, 1998).

For policy makers, the constant debate regarding the legitimacy of mimic brands can be reviewed. In contrast to conventional beliefs, copying may not always be negative and harmful (Raustiala and Sprigman, 2006; Suk and Hemphill, 2009; Shenkar 2010; 2012). In fact, authors have postulated mimicry to be beneficial to the marketplace. Therefore, this study strives to ease the stigma surrounding the concept of copying by providing definitions of the types of mimicry and their applications. The characteristics between the three types of mimicry can provide directions for the formulation of successful strategies for both the mimic brand and the model brand managers. In addition, the findings can provide policy makers with a blueprint to formulate strategies to safeguard and protect consumers and corporations from malicious imitators. The scale developed for this study can provide a measurement for policy and law makers to define what constitutes copying and the degrees of copying.

Lastly, the examination of personality traits and its effect on the perception and evaluation towards mimicry allows the segmentation of markets and the identification of previously ignored markets (Knight and Kim, 2007; Ruvio et al., 2008).

The research process undertaken to achieve the objectives and significant contributions is shown in Figure 1.4. The diagram shows the process and related chapters for the research undertaken.

**Figure 1.4:** A schematic overview of the research process



## **CONCLUDING COMMENTS FOR CHAPTER ONE**

This work will present an alternative perspective to the concept of mimicry by building the theory of mimicry into marketing. As seen in Figure 1.4, the dissertation is structured as follows; Chapter 2 will discuss the relevant literature exploring mimicry in the luxury brand industry. Chapter 3 will present the theoretical framework and development of the hypotheses for this study. Next, Chapter 4 will explain the methodology used in this study. Chapter 5 will explore the scale development process undertaken in the study to develop the three types of mimicry scale. Chapter 6 will include subchapters of Part 2, Part 3, Part 4 and Part 5 to independently present the in-depth results from the data analysis and discussion on the findings. Finally, Chapter 7 will conclude with the implications of this research, limitations and suggestions for future research.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **RELEVANT LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter provides a review of all relevant literature pertaining to this study. It can be largely structured into five different sections to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the mimicry concept. The scope of the review will be focused on brand mimicry in the luxury branding context and its effects on consumer behaviour. The five main sections include (a) definition of mimicry (b) brand mimicry defined (c) mimicry and innovation (d) academic literature on variables affecting mimicry, and (e) gaps in the literature.

In the first section, a definition of mimicry in the context of the discipline of biological and natural sciences is provided. This is followed by an explanation on why organisms mimic and the evolution of deception and mimicry. Next, the classification of mimicry systems and mimicry in other disciplines is discussed. Subsequently, the identification of the three types of mimicry parallel to marketing and the three key roles of mimicry are discussed.

In the second section, a working definition of brand mimicry is explained. An overview of the various types of mimicry in the marketplace is provided. This is followed by the identification of brand mimicry within marketing and its application in the luxury brand and fashion industry is highlighted. Lastly, other areas of law such as copyright, trade-dress and trademark are discussed.

In the third section, literature linking mimicry and innovation is presented. More specifically, the section addresses the relation between innovation and mimicry. This is followed by an overview of the negative implications and the risks of mimicry.

In the fourth section, the academic literature on the variables affecting mimicry is reviewed. These included a discussion on the implications of consumer perceptions, attitudes and evaluations on mimicry effects of product similarity in the literature; consumer confusion and deception associated with mimicry; consumer familiarity, knowledge and experience towards brands and its effect on perception of mimicry; and, the various product types examined in the literature in relation to mimicry. Lastly, some of the personality factors that influence brand mimicry are also discussed.

The first four sections provide an underlying framework and understanding for the chapter. Gaps in the literature are identified throughout the literature review process. The chapter will conclude with a summary of the key gaps that are directly related to this study.

## **DEFINITION OF MIMICRY**

Drawing its roots from Darwin's theory of evolution, Bates' (1862, 502) definition of mimicry is the visible "resemblance in external appearance, shapes and colours between members of widely distinct families". A concept of biological mimicry in Bates' definition would encompass "deceptive resemblances", "deceptive analogies", "mimetic resemblances", "mimetic analogies" and "imitative resemblances" but that all forms of mimetic resemblance are phenomena of the same nature (Bates, 1861, p. 608; Pasteur, 1982). Along the same vein, Wickler (1968, 8) has associated terms such as "pattern", "warning pattern", "protective pattern" when describing mimicry. There are a number of definitions formulated by past scientists which is presented in Table 2.1 that provides an overview into the various perspectives on mimicry.

It is paramount to appreciate that it is a challenge to provide a unified concept of mimicry (Pasteur, 1982; Vane-Wright, 1976, 1980). In searching for the most appropriate definition, each previous definition was evaluated for their possible weaknesses (Vane-Wright, 1980) before arriving at a suitable definition for use in this study. Based on the extant review on the literature pertaining to the definitions of mimicry, the adoption of Vane-Wright's (1980) definition is deemed most appropriate. The definition provides a strong overview of the mimicry phenomena, yet without being hair-splitting and overly inclusive of the possible mimicry concepts documented by previous scientists (Vane-Wright, 1980). By definition, "mimicry involves an organism (the mimic) which simulates signal property of a second living organism (the model) which are perceived as signals of interest by a third living organism (the operator), such that the mimic gains in fitness as a result of the operator identifying it as an example of the model" (Vane-Wright, 1980, p.4). According to Vane-Wright (1980), the inclusion of the word "fitness" in the definition embraces precision and simpler wording, thus it closely mirrors with Wiens' (1978, p. 367) definition (see Table 2.1). In addition, it also showcases the fact that mimicry is a process of natural selection and the "survival of the fittest" based on Darwin's theory of evolution (Vane-Wright, 1979).

**Table 2.1:** Definitions of mimicry by various scientists

Source	Definition	Keywords
Cott, 1940, p.397	Poulton (1898) and Cott (1940): "In the former [protective resemblance or crypsis], an animal resembles some object which is of no interest to its enemy, and in so doing is concealed; in the latter [protective mimicry] an animal resembles an object which is well known and avoided by its enemy, and in so doing becomes conspicuous."	Concealed, protective, resembles, conspicuous
Wickler, 1968, p. 238, 241	Wickler (1968): "If a signal of interest to the signal-receiver is imitated, then this is a case of mimicry, whereas if the generally uninteresting background or substrate is imitated, then camouflage (or mimesis) is involved". "Common to all examples of mimicry, is the deception of the signal-receiver by a counterfeit signal that carries a quite specific meaning for the receiver."	Imitated, deception, counterfeit
Wiens, 1978	Wiens (1978): "The process whereby the sensory systems of one animal (operator) are unable to discriminate consistently a second organism or parts thereof (mimic) from either another organism or the physical environment (the models), thereby increasing the fitness of the mimic."	Sensory systems, discriminate, fitness
Vane-Wright, 1980, p. 4	Vane-Wright(1980): "Mimicry involves an organism (the mimic) which simulates signal properties of a second living organism (the model) which are perceived as signals of interest by a third living organism (the operator), such that the mimic gains in fitness as a result of the operator identifying it as an example of the model."	Simulates signal properties, perceived, fitness
Robinson, 1981, p. 19	Robinson (1981): "Mimicry involves an organism (the mimic) which simulates signal properties of another organism (the model) so that the two are confused by a third living organism and the mimic gains protection, food, a mating advantage (or whatever else we can think of that is testable)as a consequence of the confusion."	Protection, food, mating advantage, confusion

Adapted from Endler (1981), p. 26

To further explain and distinguish mimicry from other forms of similarities, Wallace provided five criteria to define mimicry (Maran, 2001, p.328). These are: (1) the imitative species live in the same area and shares the same environment as the imitated; (2) the imitators are always more vulnerable to its environment than the imitated; (3) the imitators are often less abundant; (4) the imitators differ from the bulk of their allies; (5) the imitation, however minute is always external and only visual and never extending to the internal characteristics or to the features that do not affect the external appearance of the imitator (Poulton, 1890).

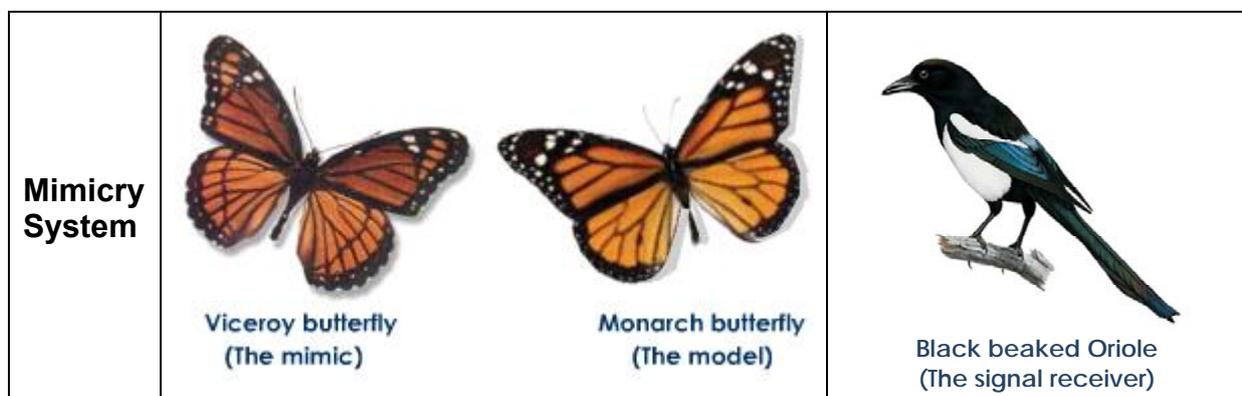
However, like other fields within the discipline of biological and natural sciences, the mimicry phenomenon is often hard to conceptualize as a “unified” concept (Pasteur, 1982; Dettner and Liepert, 1994; Starrett, 1993). There are many types of mimicry that are extensively researched upon and described (Wickler, 1968), yet there are still many other types of mimicry that warrant further investigation (Pasteur, 1982). However, since Bates’ (1861) work in 1860s, more detailed developments and investigations into the various types of mimicry have been undertaken by various scientists (see Wickler, 1965; Wiens, 1978; Cott, 1940; Müller, 1879). In addition, Starrett (1993) has simplified the concept by providing a two-word definition for the word mimicry which he simply termed as “adaptive resemblance”.

While Pasteur (1982) has commented that most of the studies on mimicry focused mainly on the visual systems that are observable to the human eye, emerging studies on mimicry have delved beyond the visual characteristics. Rather they have moved into chemical, tactile and reproductive mimicry which may be invisible to the human eye but not to the signal receivers (Nilsson, 1983; Jackson and Wilcox, 1993; Lenoir et al., 1997). In addition, Cott (1954) has also noted that under certain circumstances, animals including birds, lizards, fishes amongst others recognize objects in different ways to how humans observe. After a review by Cott in 1940, there is evidence to suggest that the status of some specific cases of mimicry may yet to be validated (Vane-Wright, 1980; Pasteur, 1982). However the existence and adaptive value of mimicry and other forms of protective coloration can no longer be questioned based on the substantial evidence of many other established types of mimicry (i.e. Batesian and Müllerian mimicry). As such, mimicry has become an established phenomenon (Schmidt, 1958).

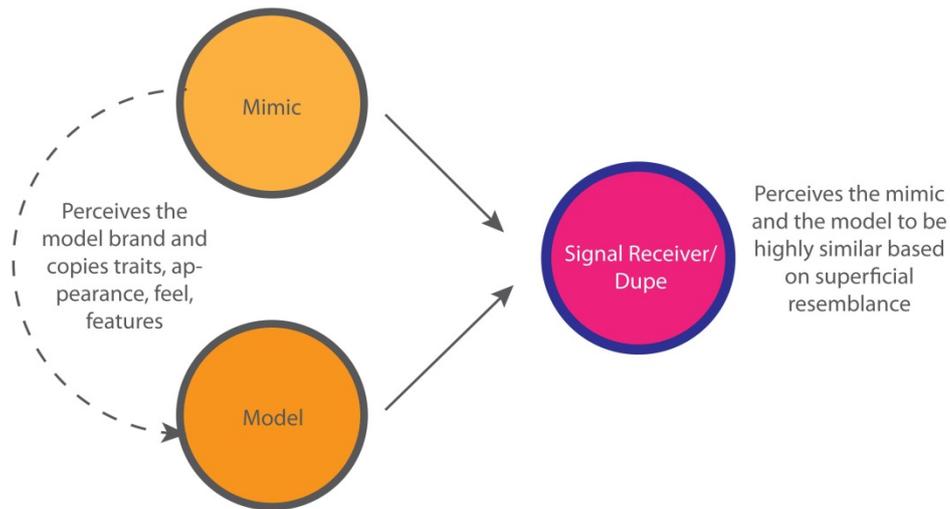
## **THE THREE ROLES IN MIMICRY**

Fundamentally, mimicry is classified as a system (see Diagram 2.2 and 2.3) that involves three protagonists that highlights the interaction between the organisms. The three protagonists are namely the model, the mimic and the signal receiver (Pasteur, 1982; Vane-Wright, 1976; Wickler, 1965). Based on Wickler's theory of mimicry system (1965), he constructed a triadic structure that involves the mimic, as the imitating organism that can be any species of organism or virus that can produce a mimetic signal; the model, as the entity being imitated (either animate or inanimate); and the signal receiver or operator (Vane-Wright, 1976), or sometimes termed as the dupe (Pasteur, 1982) that fails to discriminate between mimic and model. There may be more than one signal receiver in some cases, however, the mimic and model must share at least one receiver to qualify as mimicry (Bates, 1862; Muller, 1879). In addition, mimicry is suggested to be an adaptation evolved by the pressure of natural selection from signal receivers (Vane-Wright, 1980). In most cases, the mimic acquires the traits of another organism (the model) or produces a "counterfeit" signal (Wickler, 1965) in order to deceive or confuse the dupe (signal receiver) (Premaratne et al. 2010; Starrett, 1993; Vane-Wright, 1976; 1980). Not to be confused with camouflage, which is the simulation of the background of uninteresting objects or forms (Vane-Wright, 1980), mimicry is a concept different to camouflaging or crypsis (e.g. whereby the organism tries to avoid producing signals that might be detected by the signal receiver). Often the dupe is fooled because of the close similarities between the model and the mimic, whereby the difference is indiscernible to the dupe (Pasteur, 1972; 1982; Vane-Wright, 1980). Therefore, it was suggested that it is no longer considered mimicry when deception, confusion or mistaken identity is not generated from the process of imitation (Wickler, 1968; Wiens, 1978; Pasteur, 1982).

**Diagram 2.2:** Mimicry system – the model, the mimic, the signal receiver



**Figure 2.3:** Mimicry system in a triadic structure/relationship



Adapted from Vane-Wright (1976), p. 29

One common feature among all models and other forms of warning coloration is their conspicuousness (Cott, 1940). When the model is conspicuous, the greater the likelihood that it will be learnt and recognized by its predators and also it will be easily distinguished from its surroundings and other organisms, therefore providing greater protection to the mimic. In addition, the added complexity in shape, colour and other pattern may also increase conspicuousness (Schmidt, 1958). However, being a mimic can be extremely dangerous. In order to emulate an effective mimetic resemblance to a model, the mimic will need to become conspicuous as a result. Becoming conspicuous will incur increased exposure and bring attention to its predators. Therefore, the effects of the mimetic appearance on providing benefits to the mimic must therefore be greater than any harm the exposure of being a mimic will bring (Schmidt, 1958).

Overall, the model and the mimic will usually have a biological role in relation to each other, regardless of whether it can be a positive or negative relationship. In any mimetic situation, a model must be present and can provide advantage to the mimic, since the mimic can only exist by copying a model. In addition, because of the selective process employed by the signal receiver, the mimetic resemblance can then be maintained or improved. However, the presence of the mimic may be either a balance to the ecosystem, or be an advantage or disadvantage to both the mimic and the model (Vane-Wright, 1976).

## **Why do organisms mimic?**

In order to understand the mimicry phenomenon, the underlying reasons that propel organisms to employ this strategy needs to be understood. There have been a number of identified reasons for why organisms mimic. Some of the reasons that are highly stipulated and observed by past scientists are the following three. The first reason for mimicry is for predatory reasons (i.e. to attract their prey predominantly for food) (Vane-Wright, 1976; 1980). The second is for protection (i.e. to survive and sustain within the environment) (Joron and Mallet, 1998). Lastly, organisms mimic for reproductive reasons (i.e. for mating advantage) and for plant mimics, they employ mimicry to disperse their seedlings (Robinson, 1981; Pasteur, 1972; 1982; Wiens, 1978). Organisms employ mimicry as a strategy was suggested to stem from the fact that it offers protection and other additional advantages. Mimicry allows an individual to better utilize their habitat more efficiently whereby full visibility is not compromised. The individual can continue its routine of foraging or basking without having to bear the energetic cost of alertness and escape, nor having to remain hidden or camouflaged (Ruxton et al., 2004; Dill and Fraser, 1997). As such, mimicry opens opportunities and provides physiological benefits to the mimic, especially during the early stages of mimicry evolution. It is also interesting to note that the evolutionary rate of the mimic should be higher than that of the model, as it is believed that the mimic potentially gains more from mimicry than the model (Joron and Mallet, 1998). In addition, a model is unable to escape by only gradually evolving, drastic changes need to be in place in order to break away from the mimic (Nur, 1970; Turner, 1984). Otherwise, by gradually evolving new patterns or slight changes, the mimic can easily catch up (Nur, 1970; Joron and Mallet, 1998).

## **The evolution of deception and mimicry**

Resemblance between organisms and species originates from the shared history or adaptation to a similar environment (Schaefer and Ruxton, 2009). Among all the adaptations between plants and other organisms, the deception of other organisms is largely unexplainable and provides intriguing insights into nature. Primarily, mimicry is suggested to be the foundation of deception because the interaction between the model, mimic and signal receiver results in mistaken identity of the model and mimic (Schaefer and Ruxton, 2009; Pasteur, 1982; Endler, 1981; Roy and Widmer, 1999). The nature of mimicry is deemed to be a deceptive process due to the exploitation of perceptual biases. This means that sensory or cognitive biases for particular traits exist and selection favours any sender that exudes a trait matching these biases (Schaefer and Ruxton, 2009).

In deceptive mimicry, the mimic usually must be less abundant than the model (Bates, 1862; Ruxton et al., 2005). With visual mimicry, the mimic must be similar to the model in size and behaviour (Randall and Randall, 1960; Moyer, 1977; Baylis, 1982; Snyder, 1999; Eagle and Jones, 2004). Mimics that acquire the deceptive signal(s) from the model might be able to exploit a greater variety of different model/operator species than mimics that biosynthesize the substance(s) (Dettner and Liepert, 1994). Mimicry arises from a signal receiver's permanent cognitive confusion between the mimic and the model, especially during situations where perceptual distinctions must be made (Dettner and Liepert, 1994). Vane-Wright (1976, 1980) further defines the deceptive mimetic relationship between the organisms to be *synergic* when the mimic is advantageous to the model. In contrast, the relationship is *antergic* when the deception of the mimic is disadvantageous to the model.

### **CLASSIFICATION OF THE MIMICRY SYSTEM**

The concept of mimicry was first defined by Henry Walter Bates in 1862. Since then many biologists have been in search of new examples of the mimicry phenomenon in order to better explain the concept (Dettner and Liepert, 1994). A large majority of the studies surround visual mimicry, as the signals communicated by organisms are more readily and easily perceivable by humans (Pasteur, 1982; Vane-Wright, 1976; Wiens, 1978). Since Bates, pioneers in the study of mimicry include Wallace (1870), Muller (1878), Peckham (1889), Poulton (1890) and Brower (1960). In later years, the study of mimicry moved from perceptual resemblance to examining communicative structures of mimicry (Wickler, 1965; 1968; Vane-Wright, 1976; 1980; Pasteur, 1982; Howse and Allen, 1994). In addition, many natural scientists have attempted to classify mimicry into a classification scheme to foster a better understanding of the phenomenon (Vane-Wright, 1976; Endler, 1981; Pasteur, 1982; Zabka and Tembrock, 1986; Starrett, 1993). However, due to the lack of overall consensus, this study will base the classifications and definitions of the types of mimicry primarily on Pasteur's (1982) work. While the researchers have acknowledged that a uniform terminology based on mimetic resemblances is important, the comprehensive study of the behavioural ecology involved in mimicry is still elementary (Dettner and Liepart, 1994; Vane-Wright, 1976, 1980; Schmidt; 1958; Pasteur, 1982).

## **IDENTIFICATION OF THE THREE TYPES OF MIMICRY**

Through closer investigation of the types of mimicry identified by natural scientists to date, a number of parallels have been drawn between mimicry and marketing. An extant literature review of mimicry in the discipline of biological and natural sciences has revealed a constant use of key words that have been similarly employed in copying and imitation literature in marketing. Some of the common keywords within literature can be seen in Table 2.1. The highlighted words that pertain to copying in marketing includes “counterfeit”, “imitation”, “signals”, “confusion”, “deception” and “conspicuous”.

Therefore, upon this premise and the evaluation of the literature, three key types of mimicry are identified for use in this study. These three types of mimicry are found to draw closest parallels between what is observed in nature and what is present in the marketplace. The marketplace parallels are also found to be a more common occurrence and therefore can allow for the potential adaptation of the mimicry concept to other products or contexts. A summary of the three types of mimicry and the marketing parallel is presented in Table 2.4. A detailed justification of the theoretical reasoning between the biological and marketing example is provided in Chapter 3.

**Table 2.4:** Summary of the three types of mimicry (biological vs. marketing parallel)

Type of mimicry	Characteristics	Marketing Example
<b>Wicklerian-Eisnerian</b>	<p>High similarity between the mimic and the model brand. Often very similar in physical characteristics. The similarities can sometimes cause confusion. The quality of the products is often substandard as compared to the model brand. As a result, harm may arise to the consumer from the use of this form of mimic.</p>	<p><b>Crocs and Kmart “Crocs”</b></p> <p>Crocs were known by their unique design of their Crocs shoe. The Croc shoe is manufactured with the Crosslite material that has antibacterial capabilities amongst others. Kmart just mimics the look of the Crocs without the specifications and materials. Numerous consumers were hurt as a result when they were deceived to believe that Kmart Crocs/ lookalike Crocs and Crocs are essentially the same product. (See Diagram 3.3)</p>
<b>Vavilovian</b>	<p>Moderate similarity between the mimic and the model brand. The designs are similar in symbolic and beneficial characteristics. They are less well known and may sometimes confuse consumer in terms of the brand origin. The mimic often evolves and draws inspiration from the model brand through key features. They try to diversify over time but derive ideas from the model. Mimic establishes itself as an independent brand through time and builds own brand personality.</p>	<p><b>Innocent Juice and Nudie Juice</b></p> <p>Innocent Juice was a pioneer in the UK market as an innovator in the premium juice category. Innocent Juice was different to any other juice; the brand had a quirky personality. While not within the same market, Nudie Juice copied the symbolic and beneficial function of Innocent Juice by bringing premium juice to the Australian market. With both brands sharing a similar brand image, packaging and brand personality, consumers are sometimes confused as to who is the pioneer and the follower. Subsequently Nudie Juice evolved and established itself away from Innocent Juice using its own creative campaigns and brand building. It was acknowledged that inspiration was drawn from Innocent Juice to create Nudie Juice. (see Diagram 3.6)</p>
<b>Pouyannian</b>	<p>Moderate similarity between the mimic and the model brand. This form of copying often emulates the model brand’s style and concepts. Most mimics are well-known brands that intend to jump on the bandwagon of the current trends and the “new” ideas of the moment. They help spread and disperse the trend further when the trendy fashion becomes available to the masses.</p>	<p><b>Chanel tweed jacket and Zara tweed jacket</b></p> <p>Chanel was the first to create and launch the Chanel tweed jacket that was unique to its time. Revered as a classic, the mimic brand Zara emulates the symbolic, stylistic and the conceptual aspects of the Chanel tweed. Modifications are made to give a different “twist” to the Zara tweed. Zara serves to help disperse the trend in the marketplace. More brands will hop onto the bandwagon and Chanel tweed then becomes a “must have” as a result. (see Diagram 3.8)</p>

## **MIMICRY IN OTHER DISCIPLINES**

The development of the theory of mimicry and the advancement in this field has brought the concept to become a firmly rooted phenomenon (Schmidt, 1958). Over the past few decades, there is a constant stream of research that has led to a better understanding of mimicry (e.g. Clark and Sheppard, 1960; Turner, 1988; Maran, 2001) and the application of the theory of mimicry in other disciplines (e.g. Lee and Pennings, 2002; Jones, 2007; Ruvio et al., 2013).

The theory of mimicry has been extended into many other areas of science such as computer sciences (Sun et al., 2011), engineering and biomimetics (Bar-Cohen, 2006; Sarikaya et al., 2003; Parker and Townley, 2007). Other areas which have employed the theory of mimicry include management (Lee and Pennings, 2002), economics (Blume and Easley, 2000), law (Colker, 2006; Suk and Hemphill, 2009), finance (Bassens et al., 2012), behavioural psychology (Chartrand and Bargh, 1999; van Baaren et al., 2003; Coupland, 2005; Tanner et al., 2008; White and Argo, 2011; Ruvio et al., 2013), research methodology (Guéguen et al., 2011), amongst many others. However, the theory of mimicry has rarely been applied to marketing, more specifically in the field of branding and marketing. This therefore suggests potential in the extension and development of this theory within branding and marketing (Saad, 2006; 2011).

Based on the review of relevant literature, there are some parallels drawn by various authors on the mimicry phenomenon in the marketplace (e.g. Milgrom and Roberts, 1986; Kapfarrer, 1995; Bagwell and Riordan, 1991; Saad, 2011; Lee and Pennings, 2002; Coupland, 2005). In order to better understand the copying phenomena in marketing, a number of authors have attempted to classify the various types of copying into a structure that can provide clearer examples of the copying (e.g. Kaikati and LaGarce, 1980; Harvey et al., 1998; Phau et al., 2001; Hilton et al., 2004; Kim et al., 2009). For example, based on the study by Harvey et al. (1998), the authors compared case histories of three different retailers and three private label branding strategies. The authors have provided a descriptive classification and found that depending on the type of private label strategy, there would be different levels of effectiveness in achieving market penetration. The authors described the first strategy as the extensive copycat; second strategy as the moderate strategy with overt similarities to private label branding without an identical trade dress; third strategy as the minimal direct comparison to nationally branded products. In addition, Hilton et al. (2004) have also attempted to classify various forms of counterfeits. While definitions for the various forms of counterfeits are delineated in the study, the term “counterfeit” was used rather loosely and

was compounded with other forms of copying such as “condoned copies made by other designers or fashion houses” (Hilton et al., 2004, p. 349), which is not counterfeiting but rather a subset of mimicry. Although Harvey et al. (1998) and Hilton et al. (2004) amongst a number of other authors such as Phau et al. (2001) have outlined a number of classifications of copying in marketing, a call for research to develop the concept mimicry in application to branding and marketing is still much warranted.

In addition, studies on copying have gained momentum over the past three decades (e.g. Hansen, 1979; Kaikati and LaGarce, 1980; Crossman and Shapiro, 1988; Cordell et al., 1996; Chaudhry and Walsh, 1996; Tom et al., 1998; Phau et al., 2001; Hoe et al., 2003; Penz and Stottinger, 2005; Commuri, 2009; van Horen and Pieters, 2012), with more sophisticated studies in the area emerging over the last few years addressing the supply (Glass and Wood, 1996; Green and Smith, 2002; Liu et al., 2005) and demand side of counterfeiting (Grossman and Shapiro, 1988; Tom et al., 1998; Gentry et al., 2001; de Matos, 2007; Penz and Stottinger, 2009), price determinants of imitation products (Cordell et al., 1996; Penz and Stottinger, 2005; Lau, 2006), personality traits of consumers (Furnham and Valgeirsson, 2007; Phau and Teah, 2009; Phau et al., 2009; Swami et al., 2009), product similarities (Loken et al., 1986; Lefkoff-Hagius and Mason, 1993; Walsh and Mitchell, 2005), trade-dress (Harvey et al., 1998; Warlop and Alba, 2004), cross national comparisons (Richardson et al., 1994; Husted, 2000; Harvey and Walls, 2003; Bian and Veloutsou, 2008; Gistri et al., 2009) and retailer effects on copying (Cordell et al., 1996; d’Astous and Gargouri, 2001; d’Astous and Saint-Louis, 2002). In evaluating the literature on copying, there are a number of theories that are heavily used such as the theory of reasoned action (e.g. Peace et al., 2003; Marcketti and Shelley, 2009) and the theory of planned behaviour (e.g. Phau and Teah, 2009; Kim and Karpova, 2010). Most studies have often used socio-psychology theories such as theory of social control (Lee and Workman, 2011), bandwagon effects (Nia and Zaichkowsky, 2000; Balkin et al., 2004; Barnett, 2005; Juggessur and Cohen, 2009), signalling theory (Commuri, 2009), stimulus generalization (Foxman et al., 1990; Collins-Dodd and Zaichkowsky, 1999; Till and Priluck, 2000), moral competence theory (Cordell et al., 1996), utility theory (Walsh and Mitchell, 2005; Sharma and Chan, 2011), or economic theories such as game theory (Amrouche and Zaccour, 2006; Jørgensen and Liddo, 2007; Wong, 2012). Therefore, a review of existing studies highlights that while there are currently theories from other disciplines that have been applied to examine mimicry in marketing; an overarching theory that encapsulates the various forms of copying is warranted. Through the examination of the theory of mimicry

in the discipline of biological and natural sciences, the theory closely mirrors the mimicry of brands in marketing. Hence, it is important to coin a unified concept or term to discuss the phenomenon as a whole.

### **Applications of mimicry**

Schmitt (1969) termed the studies and imitation of nature and its methods, mechanisms and processes as Biomimetics. According to Bar-Cohen (2006), nature continuously serves as an inspiration for innovation and mankind to derive ideas and concepts to help improve our lifestyles (Hsu et al., 2002). Through the inspiration from nature, some of human's achievements include the development of effective materials, structures, tools, algorithms, and many other such benefits (Bar-Cohen, 2005). Furthermore, the similarities between the organisms in nature have spurred human interest for decades (Maran, 2001). Upon an observation of our marketplace, it is known that the ability to fly was derived from the flight of birds with the input of human developed capabilities and technologies that led to the development and improvement of aerotechnology (Bar-Cohen, 2009). In addition, the design and function of fins that divers use is inspired from the legs of water creatures (e.g. seals). In fact, nature serves as a model that has developed and perfected a pool of invention that has withstood the practical and durable test of time and its environment. For example, Velcro was inspired from the Cockleburs that stick to an animal's coat; the honeycomb structure made by bees is the inspiration for optimal packing; or the biological inspirations that include the use of whiskers to avoid collision, or the development of controlled camouflage and materials with self-healing capabilities (Bar-Cohen, 2006; Bhushan, 2009). All these inspirations are derived by mimicking nature (Vincent et al., 2006). Therefore, it further enhances the value of extending the theory of mimicry from the discipline of biological and natural sciences into the marketing and branding context.

## **BRAND MIMICRY DEFINED**

Through the extension of the definition of mimicry from the discipline of biological and natural sciences to marketing, the definition of brand mimicry can be described as the process that:

*“involves a brand (the mimic) which simulates the signal property of a second brand (the model) through for example, the trade dress, image, concept, which are perceived signals of interest by a third party (the signal receiver/dupe/operator), such that the mimic brand gains fitness as a result of the signal receiver identifying it as an example of the model brand”.*

This is usually with the intention to survive in the market, enter the market or to compete within the industry (Levitt, 1966; Shenkar, 2012).

There are three roles that exist in a brand mimicry relationship similar to the mimicry relationship found in nature. In order to better explain the concept of brand mimicry these three key roles will need to be established. Their definitions are also extended from the theory of mimicry from the discipline of biological and natural sciences. These key roles are namely:

**The model brand** or also can be known as the original brand, it is usually a well-known brand with high brand value or a brand with successful designs that is seen to be profitable or attractive to imitate.

**The mimic brand** can be an unknown, moderately well-known or well-known brand or a brand in a different category. It stimulates signals that imitate certain characteristics of the model brand.

**The signal receiver/ operator / dupe** is either the model brand that can be hurt or deceived or benefited from the brand mimicry relationship, or consumers who can be deceived or willing purchasers of the mimic brand.

## **THE MULTIPLE FACES OF BRAND MIMICRY**

There are a number of issues that exist within current literature that resides in the definition of the terms, such as copying, imitation, fakes, me-too, counterfeits and so on. This presents a gap within the literature that calls for an overarching theory to be developed that encapsulates the various types of copying. Firstly, even with the increase in the number of copying or imitation studies in recent years (see Hilton et al., 2004), the concept of copying or imitation is still a challenge to unify. Various authors have applied the word “counterfeit” in different ways to many other types of copying, such as to describe imitation or lookalikes (Phau and Teah, 2009), or to other wares such as film and media goods (Ruvio and Bryce, 2008). Penz and Stottinger (2008, p. 353) see counterfeits as the “production and sale of a fake product that is seemingly identical to an original brand name product”. In contrast, Wiedmann et al. (2012) states an OECD definition of counterfeit to be “...any manufacturing of a product which so closely imitates the appearance of the product of another to mislead a consumer that it is the product of another or deliberately offer a fake substitute to seek potential purchase from non-deceptive consumers”. These two definitions had overlaps in their definition, but it is still rather vague as to what are the characteristics of counterfeits. However, the concept of deception as a result of the similarity between the products may be a fine line to draw and still remain unclear. With the growing popularity of “design piracy”, the concept of only copying a designer’s overall concept that can cause confusion may not fall completely within the scope of “counterfeiting”. However, it has sometimes been consolidated together as one form of “copying” (Hilton et al., 2004). The disunity in the definitions is exemplified in a review of a number of other articles. For example, McDonald and Roberts (1994) defined counterfeits and piracy as different types of copying based on the premise of one being non-deceptive and the latter as deceptive. However, this definition is in contrast to Lai and Zaichkowsky’s (1999) definition of counterfeits which defined counterfeits as “illegally made products that resemble the genuine goods but are typically of lower quality in terms of performance, reliability, or durability” (Wilcox et al., 2009, p. 248). In addition, McDonald and Robert’s (1994) definition of pirated goods was in contrast to Wilcox et al.’s (2009), as the latter definition was “exact copies of the original but are typically limited to technology categories, such as software”. This is also only the tip of the iceberg. The review of literature revealed many such discrepancies.

This is not to suggest that prior studies have not been successful in their attempt to unify the terms in the copying, counterfeiting and imitation literature. Numerous studies in the past have attempted to discuss and outline the various forms of counterfeits or brand piracy

(Kaikati and LaGarce, 1980; Harvey et al., 1998; Ha and Lennon, 2006; Phau et al., 2001; Hilton et al., 2004). Their attempt to provide a classification scheme similar to Pasteur (1982) and Vane-Wright (1980) in mimicry in nature has not been futile. Based on some of the definitions, it is observed that while some of the terms overlap, there are still distinct characteristics of each form of copying that is worthwhile of further examination. For example, d’Astous and Gargouri (2001) stated that brand imitations are distinct from counterfeit products, which are considered strict copies of genuine products (Kay, 1990). This is exemplified by the fact that brand imitations intend to “look like” the original so that it makes consumers “think of” the original brand. On the other hand, a counterfeit’s sole purpose is to “be like” the original and provide a cheaper copy of the authentic product (d’Astous and Gargouri, 2001). In addition, Phau et al. (2001) also highlighted the difference between a counterfeit, pirated brand and imitations through their degree of similarity to the original brand as well as the intention to deceive consumers. However, Staake et al. (2009) have also highlighted that there are numerous studies which have consolidated piracy and counterfeit together with other forms of illicit trade which inhibits the possibility of understanding the unique characteristics of each form of mimicry. This therefore calls for a need for renewed understanding within the area of brand copying and imitation and an overarching theory that can classify the various types of copying. In response to this, this study proposes that brand mimicry can serve as an umbrella concept that encapsulates the various forms of copying.

Therefore, in order to better understand the concept of brand mimicry and its applications in marketing, the various forms and terms that have been used to describe brand copying have been summarized Table 2.5. Diagram 2.6 depicts the product similarities between the mimic and the model for a few selective types of mimicry. The various definitions have been contrasted to delineate what each of the terms truly means. It can also be observed that there are sometimes grey areas, which make defining the brand mimicry phenomenon a challenge. Yet, without an overarching theory to guide the definitions it would be a tougher challenge to understand the concept of copying and to extend the current literature within the field. As such the following table serves to provide an overview or some clarification on the terminologies found within the brand copying literature.

**Table 2.5:** Definitions and characteristics of types of brand mimicry terms

Type	Definition	Characteristic	Reference/Source
Copycat branding	In legal terms, is the infringement of a product's "trade dress"		Harvey et al. (1998)
	Imitates the visual appearance of a leading brand with the aim of exploiting positive associations related to the leading brand	The term copycat appearance and trade-dress imitation are marketing and legal terms used for the same form of phenomenon.	Warlop and Alba (2004)
		May imitate low level concrete perceptual attributes (colours, shape, sizes, lettering) as well as high level abstract themes (benefits, goals, or usage context) communicated by the trade dress of a leading brand	Miceli and Pieters (2010)
	Copycat brands imitate the trade-dress of a leading brand, such as its brand name or its package design, to take advantage of the latter's reputation and marketing efforts.	Most copycats imitate distinctive perceptual features of the leader brand, such as the colour, depicted objects, and/or shape of the package or the letters and sounds of the brand name	Van Horen and Pieters (2012a)
		Mostly direct copies that infringe on trademarks.	Raustiala and Sprigman (2006, p.6)
Counterfeits	Products bearing a trademark that is identical to a trademark registered to another party		Bian and Moutinho (2009)
		Existence thrive on high brand value products, product attributes are copied from original product	Eisend and Schuchert-Guler (2006)
		Seen as criminal act. Purchasers are seen as indirect conspirators with counterfeiters' criminal and illegal economic activities	Turunen and Laaksonen (2011); Ha and Lennon (2006)
	Reproduction that appear identical to the legitimate products in appearance (i.e. packaging, trademarks, and labeling)	Copies made to deceive consumers to believe products are authentic	Ha and Lennon (2006) see also Ang et al. (2001)

<b>Design copying</b>	Can go by other names: inspiration, adaptation, homage, referencing, remixing.	Should be distinguished from other forms of relation between two designs	Suk and Hemphill (2009)
	Design copying is distinguished from counterfeits or “knock offs”		Raustiala and Sprigman, 2006, p.6
<b>Design piracy</b>	The copying of other manufacturers’ designs (also known as style piracy)	Design refers to the application to a dress that would include all the details involved in its makeup. Design is an interpretation of the style.	Callman (1940)
<b>Imitations</b>	Also known as knockoffs, are copies that are similar but not identical to the authentic item		Ha and Lennon (2006)
	Utilizes similar package, design, brand name, advertising, and so on to facilitate the acceptance of a brand by consumers		d’Astous and Gargouri (2001)
<b>Knock-offs</b>	Copies that replicates popular aesthetic features of competitor	Unlike counterfeits are not sold in an attempt to pass as the original (see Ferrill and Tanhehco)	Bartow (2011/2012)
	Knocking off can be defined as copying the designs of another designer and making small changes to which is later sold at a cheaper price than the original designers’ price.		Arlen (1993)
		Involve the copying of protected trademarks	Raustiala and Sprigman, 2006, p.6
<b>Lookalikes</b>	New generation of own brand products that have similar packaging and labelling characteristics to leading branded products		Balabanis and Craven (1997)

<b>Me too brands</b>	As a new stock keeping item that the reseller buyer perceives to be about the same as a previously introduced item.	It may have minor differences in price, features, or performance, but these differences are not sufficient to attract new customers who would not have bought the pioneer brand	Alpert et al. (1992), p. 26
		Possess similarity in the positioning of the brand rather than physical appearance of the product.	Warlop and Alba (2004)
<b>Piracy</b>		Piracy is often a term used on digital goods (such as software, film and music)	Husted (2000)
		A pirated product is one that is without the intention to deceive the customer	McDonald and Roberts (1994)
	The customer is aware that the object is a fake and the product is usually sold at a fraction of the price of the original (can also be known as a non-deceptive fake)		Phau et al. (2001)
<b>Private labelled brands</b>	Brands that nearly duplicate a national brand's trade dress	It is not be considered trademark infringement if retailer includes on label "as compared to national brand"	Harvey et al. (1998)

**Diagram 2.6:** Examples of types of brand mimicry

Type of Brand Mimicry	Mimic vs. Model brand
Counterfeit	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>CHANEL</b></p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;">   </div> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Real</i>                      <i>False</i></p>
Design Copying	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;">   </div>
Lookalikes	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;">   </div>
Private Label Brands	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: center; align-items: center;">  <span style="margin: 0 20px; font-size: 2em;">VS</span>  </div>

## **MIMICRY IN MARKETING**

Copying in marketing has thrived over the past few decades. This mimicry trend is evident from the discussions in the media (e.g. Mourdoukoutas, 2011 ; Quinn, 2011; Melik, 2012; Nakata, 2012 ) and also from the surge of research in this area (e.g. Penz and Stottinger, 2008a; Wilcox et al., 2009; Staake et al., 2009; Bao et al., 2011; Yoo and Lee, 2011; Ulhøi, 2012; Posen et al., 2013). However, counterfeiting is often the more commonly discussed form of brand mimicry. Other forms of brand mimicry that has receiving some attention include private label brands, follower brands, brand imitations, brand piracy, and copycats (see Loken et al., 1986; Lefkoff-Hagius and Mason, 1993; van Horen et al., 2009; Bao et al., 2011; Dahlén, 2012; van Horen et al., 2012a; 2012b). In fact, statistics have shown that counterfeiting constitutes 5 to 7% of world trade (Economist, 2010), with a growth rate of 1700% over the past decade. In addition, Levitt (1966) observed more than four decades ago that the influx of “innovations” in the marketplace is not innovations, but rather imitations. The prominence of brand mimicry in marketing is widespread. While there are many forms of mimicry, there are also a range of industries which mimicry is heavily practiced. For example, in the convenience goods sector, private label brands are an example of brand mimicry at its best (Balabanis and Craven, 1997; Collins-Dodd and Zaichkowsky, 1999). Brand mimicry is also practiced in the fashion market by emulating the latest fashion fresh from the runway into cheaper alternatives for consumers (Bharathi, 1996; Law et al., 2004; Suk and Hemphill, 2009; Tan, 2009).

Some authors have explained that imitation serves as a better business growth and profit making strategy therefore making it an attractive strategy to pursue (Levitt, 1966; Huang et al., 2010; Shenkar, 2010; 2012). However, there are contrasting arguments in this area on the benefits and the detrimental effects of brand mimicry on the brand, business and society as a whole. There are suggestions that copying helps stimulate the demand for the product (Givon et al., 1995; Yoo and Lee, 2011), and there others who suggest that it can harm the brands and may hinder innovation, employment, and trade (Poddar et al., 2011). Furthermore, there are researchers who believed that imitation can be beneficial to consumers by providing various benefits, such as providing symbolic benefits to a consumer who is unable to afford the authentic luxury brand (Nia and Zaichkowsky, 2000). Therefore, the following discussion will highlight brand mimicry (1) as a lucrative business strategy (e.g. Levesque and Shepherd, 2004; Huang et al., 2010; Shenkar, 2010; 2012); (2) as a provision of alternative choices to consumers (e.g. Raustiala and Sprigman, 2006; Suk and Hemphill, 2009); or, (3) as a catalyst

for the creation of better products and spur innovation (Raustiala and Sprigman, 2006; Posen et al., 2013). These perspectives on the benefits of mimicry are discussed below.

**(a) Mimicry as a business strategy**

Shenkar (2010, p. 3) stated “humans, as well as other species have always relied on imitation to survive in a hostile environment, make tools, and outdo rivals and protagonists”. Along with globalization and fast paced technological advancement, it has become more feasible, more cost effective and much faster to imitate. One of the key strengths of most imitators is that they avoid dead ends. They are able to tweak the original innovation to suit changing consumer preferences. In some cases, if they have observed the failure of innovators, they can then leap frog onto the next stage of technology generation (Shenkar, 2010). In addition, brand mimicry has been found to have its share of success as a market entry strategy.

However, the level of brand mimicry that a new venture exhibits will have significant impact on its performance. Levesque and Shepard (2004) stated that to enter a high-technology industry, a brand or firm can mimic the leaders products by reverse engineering the market leader’s product or to imitate the leader’s marketing strategies (i.e. target market, distribution channels, price, etc.). These two examples are considered to be high level mimicry cases. In addition, dependent on the country, whether it is a developed or developing economy would have a varied degree of success from using a mimicry strategy. Naranjo-Valencia (2011) also highlighted that innovation and imitation strategies are both viable strategies for product introduction. Based on the logic that there can only be one pioneer in the market, any subsequent entry into a market would be an imitator to some degree. Hence, imitation seems to be a more common strategy than innovation (Zhou, 2006). Therefore, it is important for brand managers and business leaders to believe that imitation has its value if implemented appropriately. As such, it is important for brands to understand that imitation is not hindering innovation, but can be a driver of innovation (Shenkar, 2010).

**(b) Mimic brands as an alternative to model brands**

Walsh and Mitchell (2005) explained from a utilitarian perspective that mimicry is favoured by consumers on the basis that it maximizes benefits and brings happiness to a greater number of members within a community (Shirwaikar, 2009). Mimic brands are often perceived as an alternative choice to model brands because of the high prices that most model brands command (Juggessur and Cohen, 2009). Consumers may be enticed by cheaper alternatives such as mimic brands that provide similar styles (Kristensen et al., 2012). With

competitions that offer numerous consumers with a similar product option, there are greater points of comparison available for consumers (Harvey et al., 1998). Lesser-known mimic brands with high quality and well-crafted designs also provide desirable information to consumers that help form positive evaluations about the brand (Gabrielsen et al., 2010). In the UK, a case of copying in 1994 saw the court rule in favour of a mimic brand because it was believed that consumers benefited from the retailers' abilities to imitate established brands at lower prices (Davies, 1998).

### **(c) Mimic brands can create better products and spur innovation**

The power of an innovator lies in the potential to create markets, shape consumer preferences and even change consumers' basic behaviour when it enters a new market (Zhou, 2006). However, mimics will have the opportunity to identify a superior position and introduce superior products that can better meet consumer needs (Shankar et al., 1998; 1999). There are occasions when the mimic may sometimes harbour unique and useful attributes not possessed by the market leader. In the event that the mimic brand is an exact copy of the model brand in terms of attributes and characteristics, it will soon create a copy that competes directly with the market leader (Posen et al., 2013). However, mimic brands can seek emulate only the successful or key characteristics of the model brand and include minor modifications to the product. This may sometimes bring about an improved version of the original product that can supersede the model brand (Posen et al., 2013). Through this process of "natural selection", the mimic brand is also able to omit the weaker traits of the innovator and focus on the stronger capabilities. Therefore, mimicry can be a tactic to surpass or differentiate itself from competitors (Huang et al., 2010; Shenkar, 2012).

## **MIMICRY IN THE LUXURY BRAND INDUSTRY**

It has been well documented and explored by past researchers that brand mimicry is a common occurrence in the convenience goods sector (e.g. Loken et al., 1986; Foxman et al., 1990; Balabanis and Craven, 1997; Steenkamp et al., 2010). Although, brand mimicry has been present since Veblen's time, mimicry in the luxury brand industry has just recently received increased attention (e.g. Nia and Zaichkowsky, 2000; d'Astous and Gargouri, 2001; Penz and Stottinger, 2008; Wilcox et al., 2009; Hieke, 2010; Bekir et al., 2012). In fact, some argue that the luxury brand industry thrives on mimicry as it allows new entrants into the market place, therefore spurring a healthy competition (Raustiala and Sprigman, 2006). Due

to the perception that there is a monopoly amongst the major corporations, mimic brands could well be the catalyst of growth and innovation (Hilton et al., 2004). Raustiala and Sprigman (2006) commented that even though copying is rampant, the competition, innovation and investment in the industry are still un-ending. Therefore, to combat brand mimicry some industry response to copying from the major designers is to change designs from season to season so that it is harder for the mimic brands to keep up, and to limit distribution and production (i.e. special editions, limited distribution).

Based on McKinsey's (2010) report on the global luxury market, the past few years have seen a growth of the luxury market. Comparatively to 1980s, there is a ten percent annual growth for this sector. It is estimated that the traditional luxury categories (fashion, jewellery and table ware) constitutes a €150 billion to €200 billion market. The global luxury market is worth €1 trillion when including other product categories such as cars and other luxury services such as hotels and travels. This makes the luxury market a very lucrative industry (Heine, 2011). The luxury industry is still growing in both volume and value with expectations of €200 billion sales for 2012 (Valette-Florence, 2012). Hence, due to the profitable nature of the luxury brand industry, many new market entrants and brand mimics have set their sights on entering this sector. While it is seen as a relatively saturated market, recent trends have observed the emergence and popularity of mass-tige brands (Truong et al., 2009; Kastanakis and Balabanis, 2011) and fast fashion (Bruce and Daly, 2006; Barnes and Lea-Greenwood, 2010). These new forms of "luxury" have taken a lead in driving consumer tastes and preferences (Bhardwaj and Fairhurst, 2010). In order to enter the market, many brands have opted for a mimicry strategy that allows companies to build on the successful trends in the marketplace (such as Forever 21, Zara, H&M, and so on). At such economic and fashion-hungry times, brand mimicry has taken a stronghold in consumers' daily consumption and choice. While imitation in the luxury brand industry may be a norm, one of the challenges is to know the line between imitation and outright copying (Berg, 2002).

It is depicted in the literature, when an individual is unable to afford the expensive luxury brands, they will resort to a more financially attractive twin (Juggessur and Cohen, 2009). This may either be a counterfeit or a mimic brand. The psychology of purchasing a counterfeit or a mimic brand often revolves around the individual's aspiration of being linked to a "higher social background" or to exude prestige and status (Wilcox et al., 2009; Yoo and Lee, 2011). It was found that one of the key motivators behind purchasing counterfeit luxury

brands is the financial benefits. Consumers are happy to trade the high quality of luxury brands with a low price. This becomes a bigger looming problem with the quality of counterfeits and other mimic brands have advanced tremendously (Gentry et al., 2001; Gentry et al., 2006; Phau and Teah, 2009), that they can be deceptively similar to the genuine article. Other issues surrounding copying of luxury brands include the argument that luxury brands themselves create the desire for counterfeit luxury brands. This can be as a result of the successful creation of a luxury brand's meaning through advertising and marketing strategies that have crafted around the brand which enhanced the "desire" for the luxury brand (Wilcox et al., 2009). This is so much so that in order to assuage their desire, they opt for the alternative mimics if they are unable to afford the genuine article (Romani et al., 2012). Mirroring past literature, it is postulated that only the successful and desirable brands are copied (Nia and Zaichkowsky, 2000; Penz and Sottinger, 2008; Bian and Moutinho, 2009; Hieke, 2010; Romani et al., 2012).

Interestingly, a number of studies have highlighted the benefits of brand mimicry to the genuine luxury brands. For example, Romani et al. (2012) suggested that the presence of counterfeits can create a flattery effect. This can be created by generating the demand for faster and newer creations by the genuine brand. In addition, Barnett (2005) suggested that counterfeits can enable the original brands to charge a higher premium for their genuine luxury products because those who can afford and seek status will be eager to distinguish themselves from the masses. This way, the genuine luxury brands will also be identifying with their valuable and intended group of consumers. Other perspectives on the benefits include perspectives that with the presence of mimic brands and counterfeits in the marketplace can motivate luxury brands to be even more creative and innovative in order to outdo its last design (El Harbi and Grolleau, 2008). In addition, one popular stream of thought is that counterfeits and mimic brands actually promote genuine luxury brands through generating high familiarity and awareness for the genuine luxury brand (Nia and Zaichkowsky, 2000; Bekir et al., 2012; Romani et al., 2012).

## **MIMICRY IN THE FASHION INDUSTRY**

One of the industries which brand mimicry is rampant and has been deliberated in detail within marketing and legal journals is the mimicry of fashion goods (e.g. Hoe et al., 2004; Hilton et al., 2004; Raustiala and Sprigman, 2006; Jacoby and Roth, 2008; Adler, 2009; Juggessur and Cohen, 2009; Suk and Hemphill, 2009; Tan, 2009-2010; Burack, 2010; Ferrero-Regis, 2010; Kim and Karpova, 2010; Dahlén, 2012). It is not without reason that mimic manufacturers set their sights on the lucrative fashion market. Based on industry statistics, just luxury fashion goods alone was forecasted to generate a €212 billion in revenue in 2012, which is a 10% increase from 2011 (Bain & Company, 2012). The fashion business is considered as an innovative business (Fassin, 2000) and has faced numerous IPR issues (Hilton et al., 2004). According to the U.S. Customs and Border Protection reports, fashion products (i.e. clothing, shoes, watches, leather goods) are deemed to be one of the most popularly copied and counterfeited products (Juggessur and Cohen, 2009). Because of the lack of unified and regulation in terms of IPR and a consensus towards what constitutes originality and copying, the debate in this area persists (Suk and Hemphill, 2009). The proliferating brand mimicry within the fashion industry is further fuelled by the modest protection that is available for “design” of clothing (Jacoby and Roth, 2008).

According to Raustiala and Sprigman (2006) in their “Piracy Paradox” article, the authors stated that design copying is not a taboo in the fashion industry. Although the IPR struggle is a constant tug-of-war for fashion firms (Hilton et al., 2004), fashion designers have accepted design copying as a fact of life. In some cases, design copying is treated as a form of homage rather than piracy. For example, companies such as H&M thrived on copying of fashions that are “fresh” off the catwalk, yet to this day they have opened 1000 stores globally and ever expanding, marking a definite sign of success (Raustiala and Sprigman, 2006). According to the authors, while fashion firms have taken significant steps to protect their trademarked brands, they have acknowledged that appropriation is only a part of life and what the industry entails. However, Scruggs (2007) argued that the lack of protection towards fashion designs could be an implicit statement that fashion is of little importance or value to the society. Considering that the fashion industry is worth \$500 billion, consumers have chosen to spend a large amount of their disposable income on fashion (Scruggs, 2007). This makes the fashion industry a very tempting sector for mimic brands. However, numerous authors have emphasized the drawbacks of copying in the fashion industry. Jacoby and Roth (2008) stated that with rampant copying it does not allow the creative energy of companies to be dedicated

to designing new and innovation products. Rather it would be focused on promoting trademarks and logos. This would in turn lead to the abandonment of producing creative work; instead time would be dedicated to branding. As Thomas (2007) suggested, this would lead to erosion of quality materials, superior craftsmanship and artistic qualities of a fashion design.

Interestingly, Simmel (1957) proposed more than half a century ago that if individuals do not imitate others, fashion would not exist, and the society would only be unconnected individualistic appearances. Primarily, it is important to understand the nature of clothing as a product that can express status (Raustiala and Sprigman, 2006). As such economists term this as “positional goods” whose value is closely linked to the value that consumers and others perceive. Hence, the positioning of a fashion item can be double sided. It is suggested that its desirability rises when only some or a minority group of consumers possess it. However the desirability lowers when more consumers possess it, or when it becomes a mass product (Raustiala and Sprigman, 2006). The reason behind it would be that while the fashion product remains the same, the product is unable to place the owner among the elite or the fashion savvy; instead it blends in with the masses. While not all fashion products are positional, many of them fall within this category. Certain clothing brands and styles convey prestige. In the same vein, fashion is unlike other industries, whereby it serves other functions that create meaning for the individual and also the society (Suk and Hemphill, 2009).

Many producers or brands make cheap copies or simplified versions of “haute couture” that appear in fashion magazines. There are certain designs that make easy targets for copyists. These can be a result of simple designs that are without complicated tailoring, exotic fabrics, delicate ornaments and obvious trademarks (Suk and Hemphill, 2009). On the one hand designers spend a lot of time and effort to develop designs only to have it “ripped” off immediately by other manufacturers. The severity extends to having the “copy” launched prior to the original in the marketplace. The operation of the fashion industry requires a large amount of capital investment and the constant innovation and production within short periods of time with or without IPR protection showcases the industry to be competitive and a fast paced industry (Bharathi, 1994; Scruggs, 2007).

It is said that copyists do not only copy everything in the marketplace, but are selective. Their selection is based on what is favoured and successful (Suk and Hemphill, 2009). While

copyright law has strived to protect designers whose works can be identified separately to the utilitarian aspect of the clothing, there are still gaps to protect the overall concept of the design (Bharathi, 1994; Scruggs, 2007). Past debates have requested that fashion works should have trade dress protection in the look and feel of the clothing (Bharathi, 1994). Trade dress provides protection for the entire fashion work rather than only identifiable or mere elements of a fashion work (Bharathi, 1994). Suk and Hemphill (2009) proposed a right that allows similarities and trend features to be adopted but not close copies. The allowance of designers to join a trend and adopting design elements but inputting other forms of differentiation to the work would benefit the industry. Not to be confused with counterfeits, which are just direct copies that infringe trademarks; design copying is a different category of goods. For example, retail copycats such as H&M or copycat designers that work in major fashion houses do not counterfeit the designs by copying trademarks. The goods are sold under a different trademark but the design elements have been “inspired” or borrowed from the fashion originator (Raustiala and Sprigman, 2006).

The key concepts that discuss the adoption of innovation or trends by consumers in the fashion industry would be the process of “differentiation” and “flocking”. According to Suk and Hemphill (2009), differentiation occurs when consumers strive for expression of their identity through fashion and this process of individual differentiation becomes an identifiable desired feature (of fashion). But the nature of fashion involves a collective characteristic, is that even when consumers strive to be different through their fashion choices, fashion itself is a participation in a group or collective movement. This collective movement is termed flocking. Consumers who “flock” to buy new clothes are not because of a lack of cloths, but rather the existing clothes seem outdated. In the hopes to be “in fashion” consumers will seek to purchase similar clothing that converge to a particular theme that is popular or ideas that reflect the times they are in. While the authors do not argue in favour of direct copies, the process of differentiation does require an amount of imitation or adoption of a certain feature to create a trend. When there are sufficient number of shops and vendors that adopt the same trend feature or element in their products, yet with sufficient amount of differentiation in the items, a successful trend might emerge (Suk and Hemphill 2009).

## LEGAL ISSUES OF MIMICRY

When discussing about the concept of mimicry, one of the key aspects that is always discussed are the legal implications and the controversy that surrounds the practice.

Two areas that are often discussed within the imitation literature often involve trade dress and trademark infringement. Infringement is a legal term that is used to describe a situation when a product offering of a brand is seen to have close similarities to another brand's product offering (Foxman et al., 1990). From a legal perspective, whether consumers are confused during the decision making process is a key determinant of infringement (see Boal, 1983). While confusion is an important aspect of possible infringement, it is neither a necessary nor sufficient condition to prove infringement (Foxman et al., 1990; Kapfarrer, 1995). There are situations whereby brand confusion may not be present, but the court may rule that infringement has occurred based on the judgment of the imitator's intention to emulate the distinctive characteristics of an original brand or product (see Fletcher and Wald, 1986; 1987).

**Trade dress** encompasses the total image of product, size, shape, colour, colour combinations, texture, graphics, or even sales techniques (Raustiala and Sprigman, 2006). In another words, it is the overall appearance of a product (Loken et al., 1986; Warlop and Alba, 2004). Good branding and marketing dictates that in order for a brand to be successful, they need to stand out through unique attributes and distinction from its competitors (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993; Carpenter and Nakamoto, 1989; Henard and Szymanski, 2001). However, brands have been observed to jump onto the imitation bandwagon to free ride off strong brands through the imitation of their trade dress (Rutherford et al., 2000; Warlop and Alba, 2004). As such, the prevalence of trade dress copying has seen researchers examine the brand confusion associated with this form of marketing strategy (e.g. Foxman et al., 1990; Loken et al., 1986; Miaoulis and d'Amato, 1978; Simonson, 1994; Wilke and Zaichkowsky, 1999; Warlop and Alba, 2004).

The more commonly observed trade dress infringement cases is often found in the convenience goods sector and between national and private label brands (Balabanis and Craven, 1997). According to Harvey et al. (1998), it is noted that the war between national and private brands has been on-going for close to a century. However, this unending dispute is a result of establishing and generating awareness of ones' brand in consumers' minds so that differentiation is clear between the two brands. This is in the hope to "ward off" the

potential competitors that are in the marketplace or that wish to enter the market. The emergence of private labeled brands is more pronounced in groceries (e.g. Loken et al., 1986; Balabanis and Craven, 1993; Harvey et al., 1998; van Horen and Pieters, 2012a) and pharmaceuticals (e.g. Shtilerman, 2005; Wade and Bloechl-Daum, 2010; Giordanetto et al., 2011), but has become visibly prevalent into other industries such as clothing (Suk and Hemphill, 2009). Furthermore, what initially started out as an alternative product for value conscious consumers soon became an eminent threat for national brands because of the close similarities and rampant copying (Balabanis and Craven, 1997; Warlop and Alba, 2004). Because of the changes in the marketplace over the last few years, a variety of reasons have seen the rise in the popularity of private label brands. Such reasons include the evolution of channel of distribution, the intensified competition between brands, and the various strategic options taken up by brands (Harvey et al., 1998). Therefore, because of a combination of factors, consumers have taken to private label branded or mimic products because of the similarities in perceived quality between the mimic and the model brand. Legally, there have been challenges in prosecuting mimic brands that infringe on the trade dress of model brands. Laws have been in place to limit the ability of new entrants to imitate (trade-dress) appearance of an existing brand in terms of the product packaging and design (Warlop and Alba, 2004). However, in order for trade dress protection to be in place, the original creator will need to demonstrate consumer knowledge and awareness of the brand meaning (secondary meaning) and associations. Without which, it would be hard to establish the presence of knocking off and consumer confusion (Warlop and Alba, 2004; van Horen and Pieters, 2012a).

**Trademarks** such as brand names and brand symbols may be considered as the most important assets of many brands (Simonson, 1994). They serve a number of functions, which are mainly to (1) identify the seller's products and distinguishing them from competing products, (2) signal the quality of the product, (2) serve as advertising and promotional instruments (Simonson, 1994). With the growing cost and difficulty of establishing new trademarks in the marketplace, it has led many companies to use their trademarks on new offerings through line extensions rather than introducing new brand names. As such, companies go to great lengths to protect their trademark from being infringed upon (see Cohen, 1986; 1991).

Trademark infringement occurs “when there is the likelihood of confusion or when the copycat brand takes unfair advantage of or is detrimental to the distinctive character or

reputation of the trademark” (van Horen and Pieters, 2012b, p. 83). Not to be confused with the copyright law, trademark law seeks to protect the goodwill associated with a mark and its purpose as a source identifier (Scruggs, 2007). Trademark law is a relatively established area of the law that allows a company to seek protection for an indefinite period of time. Fashion designers largely pursue trademark protection, especially when logos are common design elements on their designs and clothing (e.g. Louis Vuitton, Chanel, Ralph Lauren) (Scruggs, 2007). In the fashion industry, even when protection is granted to a company, there are still aspects of the design that is not protected under the Trademark law (Scruggs, 2007). Such aspects would be the design of the garment itself, while the logo and source-identifying elements can be protected; it still allows mimics to copy the design without the logo.

Prominent fashion designers and luxury fashion houses have continuously been pushing for stronger legislation that protects them against counterfeiting and other illegal copying (Callman, 1950; Jacoby and Roth, 2008; Suk and Hemphill, 2009; Dahlén, 2012). However, to date, the stance towards better copyright protection has been slow and has not come to fruition (e.g. Elman, 2008/2009; Adler, 2009; Burack, 2010). For example, in the U.S., there is no copyright protection for designs of dresses, shoes, belts and other apparel goods. This has caused independent luxury brands to take matters into their own hands to curb copying and counterfeiting. Such establishments include the Comite Colbert (see Diagram 2.7) and other independent organizations to patrol and report counterfeiting and copying to the authorities. It is without a doubt that fashion designers invest both time and effort into creating new designs and innovation. However, most times their rewards often dissipate into the hands of fast paced copiers (Jacoby and Roth, 2008; Suk and Hemphill, 2009). Often the argument behind having extensive legal protection for fashion designs lies in the perceived worth of fashion designs as art for the selected few or craft for the masses (Scruggs, 2007). Wanasika and Conner (2011) emphasized that the outcome of a weak legal environment and intellectual property rights regime can lead to environmental instability and the inability to estimate the cost and benefits of innovation.

**Diagram 2.7:** Comite Colbert anti-counterfeiting campaigns

<p><b>PAS DE FAUX POUR UNE VRAIE LADY</b></p>  <p><b>N'ACHETEZ PAS DE CONTREFAÇON ! EN FRANCE LA LOI PRÉVOIT JUSQU'À 300 000 € D'AMENDE ET 3 ANS D'EMPRISONNEMENT</b></p>  <p><small>UNE CAMPAGNE MENÉE PAR LA DOUANE ET LE COMITÉ COLBERT SOUS L'ÉGIDE DU COMITÉ NATIONAL ANTI-COUPÉRAÇON</small></p>	<p><b>A FAKE CROCODILE CAN MAKE YOU CRY REAL TEARS.</b></p>  <p><b>IN FRANCE, BUYING OR CARRYING A COUNTERFEIT PRODUCT IS A CRIMINAL OFFENCE PUNISHABLE BY UP TO 3 YEARS IMPRISONMENT AND A € 300 000 FINE. COUNTERFEITING IS A REAL MENACE TO SOCIETY.</b></p>  <p><small>CAMPAGNE LEE BY TRENCH CUSTOMS AND COMITÉ COLBERT UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE FRENCH NATIONAL ANTI-COUNTERFEITING COMMITTEE</small></p>
<p><b>MISER SUR LE MAUVAIS CHEVAL PEUT VOUS CÔTER CHER</b></p>  <p><b>N'ACHETEZ PAS DE CONTREFAÇON ! EN FRANCE LA LOI PRÉVOIT JUSQU'À 300 000 € D'AMENDE ET 3 ANS D'EMPRISONNEMENT</b></p>  <p><small>UNE CAMPAGNE MENÉE PAR LA DOUANE ET LE COMITÉ COLBERT SOUS L'ÉGIDE DU COMITÉ NATIONAL ANTI-COUPÉRAÇON</small></p>	<p><b>IL NE VOUS PORTERA PAS CHANCE À LA DOUANE</b></p>  <p><b>N'ACHETEZ PAS DE CONTREFAÇON ! EN FRANCE LA LOI PRÉVOIT JUSQU'À 300 000 € D'AMENDE ET 3 ANS D'EMPRISONNEMENT</b></p>  <p><small>UNE CAMPAGNE MENÉE PAR LA DOUANE ET LE COMITÉ COLBERT SOUS L'ÉGIDE DU COMITÉ NATIONAL ANTI-COUPÉRAÇON</small></p>
<p><b>PROCHAIN DÉFILÉ... AU PALAIS DE JUSTICE</b></p>  <p><b>N'ACHETEZ PAS DE CONTREFAÇON ! EN FRANCE LA LOI PRÉVOIT JUSQU'À 300 000 € D'AMENDE ET 3 ANS D'EMPRISONNEMENT</b></p>  <p><small>UNE CAMPAGNE MENÉE PAR LA DOUANE ET LE COMITÉ COLBERT SOUS L'ÉGIDE DU COMITÉ NATIONAL ANTI-COUPÉRAÇON</small></p>	<p><b>UN FAUX PAS QUI VOUS CÔTERA CHER</b></p>  <p><b>EN FRANCE LA LOI PRÉVOIT JUSQU'À 300 000 € D'AMENDE ET 3 ANS D'EMPRISONNEMENT. LA CONTREFAÇON EST UN VRAI FLÉAU.</b></p>  <p><small>UNE CAMPAGNE MENÉE PAR LA DOUANE ET LE COMITÉ COLBERT SOUS L'ÉGIDE DU COMITÉ NATIONAL ANTI-COUPÉRAÇON</small></p>

## **MIMICRY AND INNOVATION**

In 1985, Drucker made a renowned observation that businesses have two basic functions and they are to market and innovate. Innovation was defined by Tushman and Nadler (1986) as “the creative process through which new products, services, or production processes are developed for a business unit”. Levitt (1966) and Schumpeter (1950) suggest that innovation is generally defined “as the commercial introduction of ideas which is new or original for the industry” (Gemser and Wijnberg, 2001, p. 564). This is on the premise that there are no identical or similar ideas within the industry. Imitation occurs when competitors in the same industry copy the innovator even when it is a “new” thing for the copier (Gemser and Wijnberg, 2001). Innovators are suggested to be a propellant of change within the marketplace and consumer behaviour (Zhou, 2006).

Landes (1969) has once argued that good imitators make good innovators. Looking into history, the most technically successful societies such as medieval Europe and modern Japan started as imitators and eventually evolved into innovators (Landes, 1969; Von Tunzelmann, 1994). In fact, numerous new domestic and luxury goods were invented through the process of “imitation”. Through the evolution of the product, imitation rode on the advancement of technology to bring about improved aesthetics that built the material culture (Berg, 2002). It can now be seen that research in the area of mimicry is growing. There are recent studies that are exploring the potential of imitation as a strategy (Posen et al., 2013; Ethiraj and Zhu, 2008; Csaszar and Siggelkow, 2010; Shenkar, 2012), which is a big step away from the conventional belief that imitation is detrimental to the industry. As Berg (2002) has noted, the key principle behind product development during the 18<sup>th</sup> century was anchored on “imitation” of successful products. In recent years, the application of an imitation strategy has found renewed belief in a number of researches (Huang et al., 2010; Shenkar, 2012; van Horen and Pieters, 2012a). As Berg (2002, p. 9) aptly puts it, “the part played by imitation and product innovation is a more dynamic aspect of technological innovation if seen in the light of evolutionary theory”.

In contrast to the halo of innovation, many companies seek to mimic for strategic reasons (Shenkar, 2010; 2012). Many have often viewed mimicry as a strategy used by inferior firms to catch up with the market leaders. However, connotations with innovation these days lie in the high amount of uncertainty and risk that a company will need to be prepared for. Therefore, mimicry becomes an alluring strategy as it reduces risk and unexpected outcomes

(Huang et al., 2010). With this in mind, an imitative innovation would be employed that only applies an already successful innovations produced by another company and adopt it as ones' own through slight modifications (Levitt, 1966). On a similar note, Shenkar (2012) postulated that imitation is a given or important for companies to "stay in the game". Previously shunned as undesirable, now being a copycat has become acceptable. While there may still be some forms of copying that is still negatively received (e.g. counterfeiting), presently, not all forms of copying are seen as unacceptable (Suk and Hemphill, 2009). Although not a commonly held view, a few studies have speculated that rather than bringing harm to the original brand companies, original brand companies benefit from counterfeits because it increases their brand visibility, and in turn the demand for their original products (Arellano, 1994; Barnett, 2005; Lee et al., 2003). For example, fashion luxury counterfeits such as handbags, shoes and watches bring visibility to the original fashion brands because they can aid the identification of the brands through the designs and logos (Barnett, 2005).

Furthermore, Wanasika and Conner (2011) stated that imitation could be an effective strategy under certain conditions. These conditions make pioneering a disadvantage and imitation an advantage. In addition, Mansfield et al. (1981) found that imitation costs are 35% lower than innovation costs. The imitator does not need to spend as much resources on research as the innovator or existing products have provided knowledge and information for product development (Schnaars, 1994). In addition, imitators have the opportunity to identify successful products and to identify a superior position. This can help introduce improved products to better serve consumers (Shankar et al., 1999). For example, laggards or follower brands can identify areas of weaknesses within current products and can aid potential development (Posen et al., 2013). Furthermore, imitation can breed the spread of knowledge, which can help develop the industry. Loken et al. (1986) have also stated that imitation is not only prevalent in the marketplace, but is a necessity in order to help increase consumer learning. Imitation can also help facilitate the categorization process of products and brands within product categories. Furthermore, if the consumer judgment on similarity between the mimic and the model brand is based on the features that are diagnostic of product quality and serves the consumers' goal, then the similarity-based inferences are accurate and adaptive. This may speed and assist in consumer learning of the brands or products (Meyer, 1987). Problem only arises when consumers inferred similarities based on non-diagnostic cues such as superficial packaging which may then lead to confusion or mistaken beliefs (Gilovich, 1981; Warlop and Alba, 2004).

### **Menacing mimics: Negative implications of mimicry on original brands**

There have been constant discussion and statements about the negative implications of mimicry or copying (e.g. Callman, 1940; Jacoby and Roth, 2008; Poddar et al., 2011; Grappi et al., 2013). From the designer's perspective, it hurts their reputation, hinders their incentive to be innovation. Since a design or creation can be immediately copied, the loss of revenue will result in less money and time to be creative (Jacoby and Roth, 2008). From a consumer's perspective, there seems to be many positives associated with design piracy. However, it can be said that it is only for the short term. Because of the lack of protection for designers, the lack of innovation will then leave fewer choices for consumers. While in the short run, the cheaper copycat designs can be purchased at a cheaper price, but start-up businesses may decline. But more importantly, consumers may not be able to identify and differentiate between the original and the mimic that causes confusion and may mislead consumers (Kapfarer, 1995).

In recent years, the emergence of fast fashion has caused ripples in the fashion industry (Tan, 2009-2010). While some have seen the benefits of fast fashion in offering consumers cheaper alternatives, others have deemed it as parasitic to the fashion industry (Suk and Hemphill, 2009; Tan, 2009-2010). For example, Scruggs (2007) believed that knock-off fashion designs are typically of lesser quality than the originals. When copiers make red carpet and high fashion looks available to the average consumer who is unable to afford the expensive original, it is unjust that they reap the monetary benefits from copying. Arguably, many fashion houses have extensions and alternate lines that are catered to a lower income group without possibly lower quality products.

However, the beneficial aspects of fast fashion would be consumer trend adoption, because of the entry into a lower consumer market and segment who otherwise may not afford high end and high priced fashion items. It has to be acknowledged that the menacing effects of mimics are being spurred by the advancement of electronic communications and express shipping that has brought prototypes of products into the market quicker. In some cases, the copies can even reach the market before the original (Stewart, 2005). However, what causes the industry great distress would be the low cost and fast paced copying that just "wait and see" which of the fashion introductions are successes and then copy only the successful ones. The copyists enter the market and capitalize on the trend and reap profits off the original designs without

the investment and expense on design. The inferior quality and the highly discounted prices were said to exploit the original designers (Suk and Hemphill, 2009).

Wilke and Zaichkowsky (1999) have also stated that low cost counterfeits can diminish the exclusivity of luxury goods in the eyes of consumers. Conversely, arguments in support of mimicry would state that counterfeits satisfy the demand of consumers who strive to possess status goods or brands without having to pay for the “full price” (Wilcox et al., 2009; Yoo and Lee, 2011). Again, this would therefore dent the luxury brand market and profits may go to the counterfeiters instead of the original brands (Penz and Stottinger, 2008; Hieke, 2010). In addition, other disadvantages of counterfeiting is said to affect consumers indirectly via higher prices on original goods, which includes the cost of higher copyright protection on product designs (Bamosy and Scammon, 1985). Furthermore, modern technology inadvertently aids the speed and accuracy of copying and lowers the costs of such endeavors. The lack of cost associated with time, monetary and research investments also spares the copier from being burdened with setup costs if the designs are unpopular. Therefore, making copying successful designs a lucrative free ride (Scruggs, 2007).

From an original brand’s perspective, the reduction of profitability due to copying can therefore reduce the incentive to innovate and create new designs (Suk and Hemphill, 2009). Therefore, because of such a vicious cycle, there will be a reduction of innovation within the industry (Jacoby and Roth, 2008). One of the more common arguments of mimicry would be that the cheaper alternatives reduce the demand for the original brand because the copy can diminish the “snob appeal” of the original product (Commuri, 2009). In addition, one of the problems with mimicry is that it leads to price competitions and the erosion of profits for the model brands (Posen et al., 2013).

### **Risks of a being a mimic**

For a brand, utilizing a copycat strategy can be risky. While mimicry seems to be a relatively profitable strategy, there may be times when the reaction from consumers may be negative rather than positive (Miceli and Pieters, 2010), depending on the mimic brand's motivations (Friestad and Wright, 1994). Blatant imitation of another successful brand can elicit positive feedback if the imitation of visual similarity is seen as an attempt to bridge and communicate competitive parity between the model and the mimic (van Horen and Pieters, 2012a; 2012b). However, it can backfire when package similarity between the model and the mimic is seen as an intentional ploy to mislead and deceive consumers about the product quality or to "leech" off the model brand (Warlop and Alba, 2004).

While imitation seems profitable by copying successful innovators, it can still run the risk from investing in dead-end projects and also failing to recreate a working product. In some cases, the imitator may fall behind when the market becomes saturated with other mimics. In addition, as with such strategic moves, investing in imitation also run the risks of limiting the company's future options if they are unable to breakthrough from strictly copying (Shenkar, 2012). From a legal perspective, copying original brands can result in heavy penalties and expensive court trials, in some cases the renegotiation of merchandising policies (Collins-Dodd and Zaichkowsky, 1999). Many of the repercussions of copying can be costly as well as detrimental to the brand (e.g. Louboutin vs. Yves Saint Laurent).

## **ACADEMIC LITERATURE ON VARIABLES AFFECTING BRAND MIMICRY**

The review of the literature magnified a number of key variables which can directly and indirect affect brand mimicry. Based on prior studies within imitation, counterfeiting, copying, product similarity, a number of variables that provides implications to brand mimicry are discussed.

### **PERCEIVED PRODUCT SIMILARITY**

The influence of perceived product similarity between brands and its influences on consumers have received empirical support over the past few decades (Lefkoff-Hagius and Mason, 1993; Loken et al., 1986; Balabanis and Craven, 1997; Walsh and Mitchell, 2005; Walsh et al., 2010; Penz and Stottinger, 2008; Miceli and Pieters, 2010; van Horen and Pieters, 2012). This field of research is observed to continue its growth and development as it seems that there is still much that is yet unknown within the literature. While the main purpose of branding and product differentiation is to lead to product positioning in the minds of consumers, the increase in the number of similar products make it hard for consumers to choose and distinguish between brands (Walsh and Mitchell, 2005). Through such confusion, there is the risk of the loss of utility (Walsh and Mitchell, 2005) and the mistakes of making misinformed or wrong purchases (Balabanis and Craven, 1997). For example, Loken et al. (1986) found that with higher perceived similarity between two brands, consumers tend to generalize the same meanings and associations across both brands (Finch, 1996). This in turn leads consumers to translate the quality and performance of the original brand to the imitator (Ward et al., 1986).

A growth in research in understanding how variation in designs and priming of information increases consumer preference is observed (Chitturi et al., 2008; Hagtvedt and Patrick, 2008; Orth and Malkewitz, 2008; Kristensen et al., 2012). More common than before, consumers are presented with many product choices with very similar designs and are required to make a choice based on attributes such as brand name, price or other information attached to the object (Kristensen et al., 2012). It is observed in magazines and other media that showcases and compares branded design objects, which is usually high priced with cheaper substitutions available in the marketplace (e.g. Cosmopolitan has a section named Splurge and Steal, or ASOS mimics red carpet or runway designs for the masses (see Diagram 2.8 on mimicry in

fashion). This provides an alternative to consumers who may not be able to afford the high priced item, but can choose to purchase the cheaper variation (Raustiala and Sprigman, 2006).

**Diagram 2.8: Mimicry in fashion**



The extant literature within mimicry and imitation has shown that consumers perceive similarity based on their judgments of the attributes of the products and brands (Boush, 1997; Loken et al., 1986; Lefkoff-Hagius and Mason, 1993; Walsh and Mitchell, 2005). The study on corporate image and product similarity by Penz and Stottinger (2008) divided product attributes into three different aspects. Similarly, Lefkoff-Hagius and Mason (1993) discussed that marketing researchers have used a wide variety of descriptors to measure similarity preference. Within the myriad of terminologies, there are three basic types of characteristics that present a common strain in the literature. These characteristics are physical characteristics (appearance and design); beneficial (the purpose or use of the product); and image (how the use of the product associate the user to a desired group, role, or image) (Lefkoff-Hagius and Mason, 1993; d'Astous and Gargouri, 2001). Prior to that, Wee et al. (1995) and Tom et al. (1998) have identified and used similar attributes when studying the important attributes of counterfeit products. In addition, van Horen and Pieters (2012a) have identified two overarching forms of imitation based on the attributes that the brands copy. For example, they have termed the copying of distinctive perceptual attributes or distinctive features of a brand in terms of colour, shape, packaging, or letters as feature imitation. Visual similarities are often used as cues to help elaborate on ambiguous stimuli (i.e. a brand that consumers are not familiar with). This is seen as a more popular copycat strategy that has received great amount of attention within the infringement literature (Miaoulis and d'Amato, 1978; Loken et al., 1986; Kapferer, 1995; Collins-Dodd and Zaichkowsky, 1999; Howard et al., 2000; Warlop and Alba, 2004; Zaichkowsky, 2006), and is often thought to free-ride on the brand equity of the model brands. The other form of imitation strategy they have identified is known as thematic imitation whereby the focus is on the copying of the semantic meaning or inferred attributes of the model brand. These distinctions contribute a new level of meaning to the literature by providing greater depth into the varied forms of imitation that can take place in the marketplace. As such, copying may not be on the superficial features, but even on a conceptual level. In addition, some authors have postulated other characteristics that influence consumer evaluation of imitation, such as price (Cordell et al., 1996; Turunen and Laaksonen, 2011) and retailer of the mimic brands (Cordell et al., 1996; d'Astous and Gargouri, 2001).

One of the key impacts of high-perceived product similarity between the mimic brand and the model brand would be the generalizations that occur between the mimic brand and the model brand (d'Astous and Gargouri, 2001). Products that are similar generate inferences which

consumers will connote similar meaning. Consumers tend to infer that the attributes between products that share similar packaging and other visual similarities to be the same in terms of quality, benefits and performance (Loken et al., 1986; Balabanis and Craven, 1997). However, this inference may in fact be misleading to consumers (Walsh and Mitchell, 2005). In some situations, consumers may also be mistaken into believing that they are buying the original rather than an imitation (Balabanis and Craven, 1997; d'Astous and Gargouri, 2001). In addition, Walsh and Mitchell (2005) stated that when consumers start to believe that all products within a category are similar, it can also lead to product misuse, product misunderstanding, the misattribution of product attributes and also consumer vulnerability.

One of the main reasons for consumers perceiving brands to be similar is founded on their willingness to generalize among brands, which in turn leads to the evaluation of the brands (Walsh and Mitchell, 2005). Studies have also postulated that there is a relationship between consumers' evaluation and the level of product similarity between the mimic and the model brand (Richardson et al., 1994; d'Astous and Gargouri, 2001; van Horen and Pieters, 2012a, 2012b). According to Warlop and Alba (2004), copycats with high degree of physical similarity (visual) is less positively evaluated than mimic brands which are mimicking based on attributes (perceptual). Further elaborated by Miceli and Pieters (2010), the authors found in their study using two experiments that when the optimum level of similarity between the model and mimic brand is reached, consumers may begin to have negative evaluations towards the mimic. However, this result varies depending on the type of copycat (thematic or attribute based). In addition, van Horen and Pieters (2012b) believed that subtle copycats are often more effective than blatant or direct copycats. Because of the unabashed imitation strategy, blatant copycats may be perceived to take unfair advantage of the model brand, which makes the copycats less liked by consumers. The authors also found that consumers' appraisal of copycats depends largely on the evaluation mode. They found that under a situation that is non-comparative (the mimic is not directly comparable with the model brand), high degrees of similarity can be positive. In contrast, when consumers are in a situation where they are able to make comparisons between the mimic and the model brand, high similarity copycats are less positively evaluated than moderately similarity copycats. Interestingly, it was found that moderately similar copycats may be more harmful to a model brand, than a highly similar copycat that is easily detected (van Horen and Pieters, 2012b). This is based on the premise that moderately similar copycats may be "under the radar", hence they can go undetected by both consumers and the law. Furthermore, it was also found

that brands that imitate highly distinctive features or physical attributes of the model brand are negatively evaluated by consumers (van Horen and Pieters, 2012a). Therefore, high perceived product similarity may not necessarily bring about positive evaluation, much against common belief (Loken et al., 1986; Warlop and Alba, 2004).

To date, the definition of the degree of imitation and product similarity in the marketplace is still constantly evolving (e.g. Loken et al., 1986; Balabanis and Craven, 1993; Warlop and Alba, 2004; Miceli and Pieters, 2010; van Horen and Pieters, 2012b). For complex industries like the fashion industry, the argument for copyright for fashion designs was on the basis of physical and conceptual separability of the design (Scruggs, 2007). It is often easier for policy makers and companies to discern a product when the physical element can be distinct from the utilitarian or useful element of the product. However, conceptual similarities between products are harder to distinguish and can be confusing under various circumstances. Conceptually, if the product design is not designed primarily for utilitarian reasons it can be suggested to be conceptually distinct. However, such arguments are mostly subjective (Scruggs, 2007). The measurement for product similarity in the legal system is mostly based on past cases and formed by persons trained in law (Mitchell and Kearney, 2002; Walsh and Mitchell, 2005; Scruggs, 2007). Thus far, while the knowledge in the area of copying is fast increasing (e.g. Miceli and Pieters, 2010; van Horen and Pieters, 2012a, 2012b), the conditions under which consumers perceive an model brand and a mimic to be similar are yet unclear (Miceli and Pieters, 2010). Hence, this is yet an unresolved gap within theory and practice that serves as a call for further research (d'Astous and Gargouri, 2001; Walsh and Mitchell, 2005; Miceli and Pieters, 2010; van Horen and Pieters, 2012a, 2012b).

### **PERCEPTION, ATTITUDES AND PRODUCT EVALUATION**

Past studies in the area of counterfeiting, imitation and knock off have placed strong emphasis on understanding consumer purchase through attitudes (de Matos et al., 2007; Penz and Stottinger, 2008; Phau and Teah, 2009). Some studies have also addressed the influence of various characteristics on consumer's perceptions of brand imitations (e.g. Foxman et al., 1990). However, d'Astous and Gargouri (2001) pointed out there is a lack of studies that addressed consumer evaluations of brand imitations. It was postulated that consumers who are generally brand sensitive would place greater importance on brand names (Kapfarer and Bastien, 2009), which may then form more negative perceptions of brand imitations. Most

common assumptions by marketers would be that when products are similar, they will be similarly liked by consumers (Lefkoff-Hagius and Mason, 1993). It was also discovered that what is important to consumers when they judge the similarity of products may not directly lead to positive evaluations during the decision to purchase. Carson et al. (2007) examined the prototypicality of pioneer brands and follower brands in their study. It was found that regardless of the close attribute similarities between the pioneer and the differentiated follower, prior exposure and experience with the pioneer will lead to more favourable evaluations. Additionally, there are differences in consumers' evaluation and response towards the type of imitation used by the mimic brand. When the mimic brand is highly similar in terms of visual stimuli, they will be negatively evaluated. This is as a result of the possible association with high visual or physical similarities with unfair practice and may be seen as inappropriate by consumers (van Horen and Pieters, 2012a). In contrast, by imitating the thematic or perceptual attributes of a model brand, consumers' evaluative judgments will be based on their affective experiences. These can be indirect associations to the model brand's attributes. The associations are likely to be pleasant and positive because they remind consumers about something which they are familiar with and can feel pleasant (Jacoby et al, 1989; Moreland and Zajonc, 1982). Therefore, the positive associations with the model brand are likely to be transferred to the mimic brand (Forgas, 1995; Schwarz and Clore, 1983).

Brand knowledge can affect consumer preferences and product choice either positively or negatively (Hsieh, Pan, and Setiono, 2004). Wee et al. (1995) also pointed out that the more unfavourable one's attitudes towards counterfeiting or counterfeiters, the less likely the purchase intention towards a counterfeit. Nia and Zaichkowsky (2000) found that consumers own both the "original" and the "fake" products across various product categories. The same consumer may opt for the original sometimes and other times opt for the fake. More commonly, the authors found that for accessories, consumers are more likely to purchase both the original and the fake at the same time. In addition it is also suggested that attitudes play a huge role when assessing counterfeits and brand imitations (e.g. Cordell et al., 1996; Ang et al., 2001; Bian and Veloutsou, 2008; de Matos et al., 2007; Phau and Teah, 2009; Phau et al., 2009).

Research has consistently supported that consumers perceive functionality and aesthetics of counterfeits to be of great importance (Turunen and Laaksonen, 2011). Interestingly, it was also found that counterfeits are also evaluated on a continuum and based on various attributes

depending on the level and quality of counterfeits. Comparatively to a non-branded product, counterfeits are evaluated better as it portrays symbolic meanings. Consumers are able to express their ambitions and dreams through the use of a luxury counterfeit. Gentry et al. (2003) further stated in their paper that consumers do compare and evaluate between the originals and fakes by their varying quality levels. In recent times, it has also been found that fakes are now available at many quality levels (Gentry et al., 2003; Gentry et al., 2006; Phau and Teah, 2009; Phau et al., 2009) and are no longer only “shoddy” and cheap looking fakes. It was also reported that consumers’ intensive product evaluations can differentiate between the levels and during the decision making process. Interestingly, a consistent observation noted by many researchers within the counterfeiting and imitation literature, have identified that consumers often perceive the quality and functionality of the copies to be similar to that of the original (e.g. Penz and Stottinger, 2008a; Phau and Teah, 2009; Turunen and Laaksonen, 2011). As such, perceived similarity between the original and the copies are important to consumers (Penz and Stottinger, 2008a). Based on past studies, there have been consistent views that show mimic brands and the model brands to share similar quality, durability and functionality (e.g. Penz and Stottinger, 2008a; Phau and Teah, 2009; Yoo and Lee, 2011).

### **CONSUMER CONFUSION AND DECEPTION**

A definition formulated by Foxman et al. (1992) encapsulated the concept of consumer brand confusion as “one or more errors in inferential processing that lead a consumer to unknowingly form inaccurate beliefs about the attributes or performance of a less-known brand based on a more familiar brand’s attributes or performance” (p. 125). Based on the copyright and trade dress protection laws, four types of consumer confusion have been identified (Bharathi, 1996). They are namely, simple product confusion, confusion about the source of sponsorship, subliminal trademark association and reverse association. Simple product confusion occurs when consumers purchase a fashion item of one designer thinking that it is the creation of an entirely different designer. Confusion about the sources of sponsorship is when consumer believes that the imitator has received endorsement or approval from the original creators or sponsors of the original brand (Loken et al., 1986). Subliminal trademark association occurs when the copier free-rides on an existing designer’s work through subtle or conscious association with an existing and protected trade dress (Foxman et al., 1992). Lastly, reverse association is when the consumer believes that the

copycat is the original creator of the fashion work (Bharathi, 1996). These forms of confusion commonly occur when consumers evaluate between the mimic and the model brand (Balabanis and Craven, 1997).

The counterfeiting literature suggests that there are two types of consumers (Grossman and Shapiro, 1988). There are those who are deceived and the ones who are active seekers of counterfeits (Turunen and Laaksonen, 2011; Phau and Teah, 2009; ; Hopkins et al., 2003; Wilcox et al., 2008; Hamelin et al., 2012). Consumers who are deceived by counterfeits are not aware and unable to identify a fake because of the close similarities between the counterfeit and the original (Eisend and Schuchert-Güler, 2006). Whereas, the latter are consumers who knowingly purchase counterfeits and are conscious of their decision to do so. Recent studies within the literature have examined the behaviour and motivations active seekers of counterfeits, who purposefully purchase counterfeits due to the benefits they can receive from such expeditions (Juggessur and Cohen, 2009; Wilcox et al., 2009). It is highlighted by d'Astous and Gargouri (2001) that many consumers are not mistaken but consider the purchase of a brand imitation willingly. However, most studies that examined deceived consumers discuss about the presence of consumer confusion that leads to wrong decisions and purchases (Balabanis and Craven, 1997). On this note, it was found that brand confusion is likely to occur with similarity between brands when consumer attention and product involvement is low (Kapfarer and Theonig, 1992). In addition, low consumer familiarity and product experience adds to the likelihood of confusion (Foxman et al., 1990). The negative effects of product similarity are not a minor issue, especially since it causes confusion. The legal implications are severe as confusion is seen as an important element in court decisions regarding trademark infringement (Foxman et al., 1992; Howard et al., 2000; Warlop and Alba, 2004).

Similarly, consumers who are deceived by mimic brands in general are due to the fact that mimic brands are often closely similar in physical characteristics or the differences are indiscernible to the untrained consumer (Balabanis and Craven, 1997; Poddar et al., 2012). According to a number of studies (Rafiq and Collins, 1996; Walsh and Mitchell, 2005; Balabanis and Craven, 1997), 20 percent of the consumers often feel that retailer labels and manufacturer brands look so similar that there is a high degree of confusion between the two. Studies have reinforced that similarity between products cause confusion, which in turn influences consumers to mistakenly select the wrong product (i.e. lookalikes) (Loken et al., 1986; Foxman et al., 1990; Balabanis and Craven, 1997; Lai and Zaichkowsky, 1999). However, Dawar et al. (1992) suggested that purchases for different occasions may decrease confusion, such as when purchasing a gift for a special occasion. Arguably, most confusion cases occur for convenience goods because of the various situational factors that might influence a purchase (Foxman et al., 1992; Balabanis and Craven, 1997). In the case of luxury purchases, consumers may pay more attention to their purchases because of the amount of involvement that is required when making an important or a notably more expensive purchase (Balabanis and Craven, 1997).

Past studies that focused on discussing brand confusion have often focused on stimulus similarity (Loken et al., 1986; Miaoulis and d'Amato, 1978). It is postulated that the more similar the characteristics between two stimuli, the higher the likelihood of confusion (Foxman et al., 1992). Hence, an important part of understanding brand confusion in this case is the ability to identify the key elements that affect perceived similarity between the stimuli. For most consumer goods, brand confusion is anchored on the similarity of packaging, name of the product (that infers similar brand origin), and physical properties (Loken et al., 1986; Foxman et al., 1992). However, various product categories may have other factors that may cause brand confusion, which requires further attention.

From the buyers' perspective, confusion between trademark simply implies that the consumer do not get the brand they intend to buy (Balabanis and Craven, 1997). Hence, the key test for trademark infringement is the likelihood of confusion (LOC) between trademarks (Allen, 1991). Furthermore, source confusion occurs when a reasonable number of consumers incorrectly believes that two brands share a common source (same brand origin), even when they do not (Howard et al., 2000). Examples of such occurrences stem from having closely similar brand names that infer similar brand origins (Kirkpatrick, 1998). In addition,

similarity in design, or the “trade dress” of a brand is found to have a significant impact on brand source confusion (Kapfarrer, 1995). Deception then occurs when a brand knowingly and purposefully takes advantage of the circumstances, or (potentially) causes a consumer to act in a manner that he or she would not have done otherwise (Aditya, 2001). In addition, while deception may lead to brand confusion, they are not conceptually the same. Confusion can also occur based on individual characteristics, situational effects, and/or marketing actions (Foxman et al., 1992).

### **CONSUMER FAMILIARITY, EXPERIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE**

The ability to distinguish among brands can improve over time after consumers acquire new product class knowledge and brand familiarity (Foxman et al., 1990). It has been found that the lack of consumer familiarity or less experience with a product or brand can result in greater brand confusion (Foxman et al., 1990). Furthermore, the deceptiveness and non-deceptiveness of a mimic brand or product is based on consumer’s knowledge and awareness. If the consumer has a greater awareness of the brands, they would be less likely to choose a mimic because of the negative influences (Penz and Stottinger, 2005). In facilitating the understanding of information in the marketplace, brand experience is an important factor to deter brand confusion (Foxman et al., 1992). It is found that when product involvement and product familiarity are high, consumers will be more concerned about the consequences of their purchases (Foxman et al., 1990), and will therefore evaluate the brand imitation more negatively (d’Astous and Gargouri, 2001).

Consumer product knowledge has been an important characteristic that influences all phases within the consumer decision making process (Bettman and Park, 1980). Therefore, depending on ones’ product knowledge, the perception towards a product would also be different (Laroche et al., 1993). With higher levels of product knowledge, that would mean that a consumer would have better developed and more complex schemata that has better formulated decision criteria (Marks and Olson, 1981). When processing information, it would require lesser cognitive effort and the relevant knowledge structures can be activated immediately, and more information can be processed as a result (Alba and Hutchinson, 1987). Kempf and Smith (1998) postulated that when consumers have higher levels of product knowledge, they become more diagnostic and informed than consumers with lower levels of product knowledge. It was found by Bian and Moutinho (2011) that the more knowledgeable

consumers tend to have less favourable perceptions towards counterfeit products. In addition, Lai and Zaichkowsky (1999) discovered that individuals who are more knowledgeable about brand leaders in the marketplace are less accepting towards imitation products than individuals who are less knowledgeable about brand leaders.

Based on Marcketti and Shelley (2009), consumer knowledge is important in influencing behavioural intention when it comes to the willingness to purchase non-counterfeit goods. It was found in their study that with increased knowledge of the apparel industry, consumers formed important perceptions towards counterfeiting. It is suggested that with increased knowledge, the importance towards not purchasing counterfeit goods lowered, this could be attributed to the improvements and quality of counterfeits in recent years. However, when consumer are concerned about the industry, especially with the harm that counterfeiting could bring, consumers were deterred towards purchasing counterfeits and have greater willingness to pay more for non-counterfeits.

## **PRODUCT TYPE**

Current literature has a concentration of brand imitation studies on low involvement convenience goods (d'Astous and Gargouri, 2001). A large number of studies have focused on the supermarket brands such as private label brands copying the national brands (Loken et al., 1986; Balabanis and Craven, 1997; Harvey et al., 1998; Collins-Dodd and Zaichkowsky, 1999; Burt and Davis, 1999; Till and Priluck, 2000; Choi and Coughlan, 2006). Although Loken et al. (1986) examined four different product categories (shampoo, cold remedies, deodorants and mouthwash) using various brands, their results were still limited within convenience goods. Ward (1986) studied a single product category (shampoo) and Foxman et al. (1990) studied two types of convenience goods (noodle soup and deodorant). Warlop and Alba (2004) also looked at five different product categories, which are hot sauce, ground coffee, laundry detergent, spaghetti and potato chips. Even more recent studies (such as Miceli and Pieters, 2010; van Horen and Pieters, 2012a; 2012b) also looked at the convenience goods sector. For example, van Horen and Pieters (2012a) looked at yogurt, bottled water, sport shoes and laundry detergent. However, one of the reasons for the abundance of studies within the sector could be that the discussion of trade dress and similarity between products can be better discerned within the convenience goods industry. The trade dress and physical attributes can be evaluated more objectively, whereas within the

fashion industry, similarity between products can be subjective (van Horen and Pieters, 2012a; 2012b). Hence, this highlights the importance of developing a measure to determine the presence of mimicry or the perceived product similarity in the fashion or luxury brand industry (d'Astous and Gargouri, 2001).

Interestingly, a large majority of counterfeit studies in recent years have focused on the luxury brand industry (Penz and Stottinger, 2005; Commuri, 2009; Gistri et al., 2009; Juggessur and Cohen, 2009; Phau and Teah, 2009; Wilcox et al., 2009; Hieke, 2010; Yoo and Lee, 2011). Although imitation is predominantly studied within the convenience goods sector (e.g. d'Astous and Gargouri, 2001), the imitation of luxury brands has had a long history (Berg, 2002). In fact, d'Astous and Gargouri (2001) were one of the first few to start examining imitation in the luxury brand industry by examining product categories and specific brands. The authors investigated two convenience goods (bread and shampoo) and two luxury fashion goods (polo T-shirt and sunglasses) whereas Nia and Zaichkowsky (2000) examined if counterfeits devalue luxury brands. Cordell et al. (1996) were also one of the few researchers who used real brands and real products. While the study did not specifically address the luxury brand industry, the use of a Ralph Lauren Polo t-shirt as the stimulus was a start to looking at other product categories other than convenience goods. Wilcox et al. (2009) have also attempted to address the counterfeit luxury brands sector as a whole. In studying brand prominence, Han et al. (2010) used real life luxury brands such as Louis Vuitton in their stimulus to measure the effects of brand prominence. In addition, Based on the above discussion, it can be observed that there are number of studies have been found to study copying in the luxury brand sector, but the use of specific product categories or luxury brands is relatively rare (e.g. d'Astous and Gargouri, 2001; Han et al., 2010), especially in comparison to the abundance of studies using real life brands in the convenience goods sector.

The dearth of research on imitation or product similarity within the luxury brand industry highlights the potential for research in this area (e.g. Phau and Teah, 2009). Furthermore, the copying or imitation of luxury brands and convenience goods may not be perceived in the same way by consumers (d'Astous and Gargouri, 2001). This could be that luxury brands are often more expensive and a mimic of the model can serve as an interesting alternative to consumers. In addition, there are fundamental differences between luxury and convenience goods. Dubois and Duquesne (1993) has highlighted that they are different in dimensions like image, perceived risk, familiarity affective involvement and so on. Therefore, it is important

for studies to focus on how consumers relate to specific products rather than as studying consumers' holistic evaluation of an industry (d'Astous and Gargouri, 2001).

### **PERSONALITY FACTORS**

Personality traits have been found to be an important factor that influences consumer decisions in a purchase decision (Ang et al., 2001; Eisend and Schuchert-Guler, 2006; Swami et al., 2009; Wilcox et al., 2009; Kim and Karpova, 2010). Past studies have identified a number of personality factors mainly in the fields of counterfeiting, piracy and to some degree imitation. Some of the more commonly examined factors within the imitation and copying literature are integrity (Ang et al., 2001; de Matos et al., 2007; Phau et al., 2009b), status consumption (Penz and Stottinger, 2005; Wiedmann et al., 2012), value consciousness (Wee et al., 1995; Nia and Zaichkowsky, 2000; Wang et al., 2005), and materialism (Yoo and Lee, 2004; Swami et al., 2009; Kim and Karpova, 2010) and so on. These factors have placed an important role for practitioners to understand consumers and their purchase of counterfeits. Furthermore, it has been emphasized that personal characteristics play a significant role in influencing consumers' perceptions towards brand imitations (d'Astous and Gargouri, 2001).

Previous research have identified that individuals tend to express their uniqueness or individuality through the choice of specific types of clothing in order to distinguish themselves from their peers (Snyder and Fromkin, 1980). Furthermore, the influence of self-image on product evaluations is important to influencing consumer evaluations (Wilcox et al., 2009; Yoo and Lee, 2011). The symbolism of the brand and product and how it relates to the consumer can influence ones' perception towards the brand (Wilcox et al., 2009). Mimic brands are often seen as a rarer product than the model in the marketplace, and some mimic brands can be very creative and innovative.

More commonly examined personality trait in the counterfeit literature that is closely related to the consumption of luxury brands is status consumption. For status-oriented consumers, the consumption of luxury brands is a signal of status and prestige (Barnett, 2005; Veblen, 1899). The two types of status that are associated with luxury brands is firstly the ownership of a scarce product whereby the production is limited and is highly priced (Eastman et al., 1999). The second type of status is derived from the ownership of a product conforming to group norms (Barnett, 2005). The counterfeit literature often dictates that part of the reason

why consumers purchase counterfeits it that counterfeits provide consumers with the associated brand image and providing the status symbol without paying the price for it (Juggessur and Cohen, 2009). One of the reasons why luxury brand fashion goods such as clothing, handbags, and accessories are high targets for counterfeit manufacturers is that they project positive brand image, a desirable and prestigious logo (Wilcox et al., 2009; Yoo and Lee, 2004). Penz and Stottinger (2008) also found that based on various characteristics of Australian consumers they seek pleasure, variety and excitement in life, which makes them more likely to purchase counterfeits. But they would only do so if the image, quality and physical appearance of the mimic were similar to the model brand. However, the authors also found that consumers may not necessarily only be drawn to the perceived similarities between the products, in fact U.S. consumers are looking for the products to look “different” to each other. Hence, the current literature is still unearthing more influences of personality traits on consumers’ inclination to purchase mimic brands. However, it has been highlighted by previous studies that personality traits are key influences of attitudes and behaviour towards purchasing counterfeit and imitation products.

## **GAPS IN THE LITERATURE**

Through extant literature review, this chapter has provided a review of the overall concept of mimicry in both the discipline of biological and natural sciences and marketing. An identification of the types of mimicry has been delineated and an overview of the parallels between the discipline of biological and natural sciences and marketing is drawn. The chapter has also highlighted some deficiencies stated in the literature that is relevant to the content and context of study. The current gaps may have significant consequences for building both theory and practice. Based on the relevant literature review conducted, the following research gaps are identified for this study.

### **GAP 1 –Need for Theory of Mimicry in Marketing**

One of the more obvious gaps in the literature is a unifying theory that supports the various types of copying in the marketplace. Theories that have often been used include the theory of planned behaviour (e.g. Phau and Teah, 2009; Kim and Karpova, 2010), theory of reasoned action (e.g. Peace et al., 2003; Marcketti and Shelly, 2009), bandwagon effects (e.g. Nia and Zaichkowsky, 2000; Balkin et al., 2004; Barnett, 2005; Juggessur and Cohen, 2009), stimulus generalization (Foxman et al., 1990; Collins-Dodd and Zaichkowsky, 1999; Till and Priluck, 2000) amongst others to explain copying, imitation and counterfeits within the marketplace. However, upon investigating the theory of mimicry, it is found that the theory has been used prominently in other disciplines (e.g. biomedical sciences, management, psychology, behavioural sciences, etc.), but is rarely used in marketing. Furthermore, the theory of mimicry is the overarching theory within the discipline of biological and natural sciences that serves as a cornerstone definition for any form of copying or imitation behaviour (Vane-Wright, 1976; 1980; Pasteur, 1982). Therefore, there is the potential to extend the theory of mimicry to be used in marketing. In addition, while drawing parallels between nature and the marketplace, close similarities are observed which are yet to be studied (Bar-Cohen, 2006; Blume and Easley, 2000; Sheratt, 2008). The word and concept of mimicry is acknowledged in similarity (product and behavioural) and copycat studies as a loose term to describe copying (e.g. Kapfarrer, 1995; Coupland, 2005; Romani et al., 2012), yet the actual concept of mimicry has yet to be extensively applied to product similarity studies in marketing (Sheratt, 2008).

## **GAP 2 – Need for Conceptual Model of Predictors and Outcomes of Mimicry**

In addition to the lack of theoretical application of the concept of mimicry in marketing, at the point of this study there is also a lack of a conceptual model that can be applied to study the mimicry phenomenon in marketing (Sheratt, 2008). While numerous studies have built conceptual models (Ang et al., 2001; Phau and Teah, 2009; Bian and Moutinho, 2011; Yoo and Lee, 2011), the models are often only applied to one form of mimicry and attempts to generalize to all types of mimicry is yet to be determined. It can also be observed that the majority of studies within the field of copying are in examining counterfeiting (e.g. Cordell et al., 1996; Cordell, 1997; Collins-Dodd and Zaichkowsky, 1999; Phau et al., 2001; Penz and Stottinger, 2005; Wilcox et al., 2009; Sharma and Chan, 2011; Hamelin et al., 2012; Romani et al., 2012; Poddar et al., 2011; Ahuvia et al., 2013; Grappi et al., 2013) and in comparison, there are much lesser studies in other types of mimicry (e.g. Loken et al., 1986; Collins-Dodd and Zaichkowsky, 1999; Lai and Zaichkowsky, 1999; d’Astous and Gargouri, 2001; Warlop and Alba, 2004; d’Astous and Saint-Louis, 2005). Many authors like Ang et al. (2001), Marcketti and Shelley (2009) and Bian and Moutinho (2011), have developed conceptual models to explain the counterfeiting phenomenon that has been applied across different cultures. However, most of the models are still restricted within the study of counterfeits, which is a small part of brand mimicry.

## **GAP 3 - Need to differentiate between Counterfeiting and Mimicry**

One of the harder areas to determine and is still currently debated by numerous researchers is the concept of counterfeiting (e.g. McDonald and Roberts, 1994; Eisend and Schuchert-Guler, 2006; Hilton et al., 2004). The word has been used interchangeably in many studies to discuss “inspired copies”, to imitation, to private label brands which do not constitute counterfeiting but rather a subset of mimicry. As such, a unified concept that can apply across various forms of copying is warranted. Studies have often studied the various forms of mimicry (inclusive of imitation, counterfeiting, lookalikes and fakes) independent of each other. The concepts may each have slight differences which some researchers have sometimes chosen to ignore (Staake et al., 2009) by collapsing various types of copying together therefore ignoring the possible differences between each type of copying. This therefore calls for a classification system similar to the classification developed in the discipline of biological and natural sciences (Vane-Wright, 1980; Pasteur, 1982). In addition, at the point of this study, there has yet to be a model developed that can be used to study the forms of copying together and in comparison with one another (Kapferer and Thoenig, 1992;

d'Astous and Gargouri, 2001). As Miceli and Pieters (2010) has postulated and discovered, the various types of mimicry (high similarity or low similarity) would have varying effects on consumer evaluation and responses.

#### **GAP 4 - Need for study of Mimicry in the Luxury Brand Industry**

The extant literature shows that there is a large number of studies that has investigated copying in the convenience goods sector such as supermarket brands (see Foxman et al., 1990; Balabanis and Craven, 1997; Miceli and Pieters, 2010; van Horen and Pieters, 2012a; 2012b). This could be due to the prevalence of mimicry within the convenience goods sector. However, there are observations of the rapid emergence of mimic brands within the luxury brand industry (d'Astous and Gargouri, 2001; Raustiala and Sprigman, 2006; Juggessur and Cohen, 2009). More importantly, it has been noted that the nature of the luxury brand sector is different to that of the convenience goods sector (d'Astous and Gargouri, 2001). Therefore, further investigation in this area would provide further insights into consumer behavior and brand management of luxury brands. In addition, past studies on imitation or counterfeiting of luxury brands have often examined the concept holistically. For example, studies investigate by measuring attitudes or consumer evaluations towards the counterfeit luxury brands or a particular product category as a whole (e.g. Penz and Stottinger, 2008; Marcketti and Shelley, 2009; Wilcox et al., 2009). d'Astous and Gargouri (2001) has highlighted the lack of real life luxury brands within specific product categories being used within the studies on brand mimicry. This presents a gap within the literature that requires further research.

#### **GAP 5 - Need to understand Mimic Brand Owners**

One of the perspectives that is rarely examined is the investigation of mimicry from the perspective of mimic brand owners. Numerous studies have condemned counterfeiting and copying to be devastating to original brands (e.g. Callman, 1940; Jacoby and Ruth, 2008; Poddar et al., 2011; Bartow, 2011-2012; Grappi et al., 2013), however there are emerging studies that have suggested otherwise (Nia and Zaichkowsky, 1999; Raustiala and Sprigman, 2006; Shenkar, 2010; 2012; Levitt, 1966). While there are growing interest in imitation strategies, research from the perspective of mimic brand owners is still lacking. The implications of how consumers perceive mimic brands can provide insights for mimic brand managers, model brand managers and policy makers.

## **GAP 6 – Need for Specific Brand Mimicry Scales**

While there are currently scales to measure perceived product similarity (e.g. Walsh and Mitchell, 2005), however most of the items are either one item scales (e.g. Loken et al., 1986; Miceli and Pieters, 2010) or global scales (Walsh and Mitchell, 2005) that do not highlight the specific similarities between the model and the mimic brand (e.g. Howard et al., 2000; Walsh and Mitchell, 2005). Furthermore, due to the subjective nature of the perception of similarity between products or brands, the influence of specific attributes or similarity of specific attributes are usually ignored in the case of one-item scales. Furthermore, global or one-item scales are neither unable to measure nor predict the type of mimicry that is in question or that is being presented. Therefore, specific scales that are tailored to each form of mimicry are required in order to measure specific types of mimicry. According to Tversky (1977), there is a continuous potential to explore the similarity between products and brands. There is still a lot to be explored as to what makes two brands or objects similar (Till and Priluck, 2000; d’Astous and Gargouri, 2001; Walsh and Mitchell, 2005; van Horen and Pieters, 2012b). There is support that similarity between products has many dimensions (Tversky, 1977) and will require further research. In addition, van Horen and Pieters (2012b) have highlighted the need for strong theories and methodologies to be developed to measure the degrees of similarity between products, other than focusing on only visual similarities. In addition, they have postulated this would be contributing to the advancement of marketing science and trademark law.

## **GAP 7 - Need to differentiate Consumer Needs for Uniqueness and Mimicry**

Personality factors have been evident in influencing consumer decisions (Brody and Cunningham, 1968; Kassarijan, 1971; Horton, 1979; Simonson and Nowlis, 2000). In line with this, status consumption has been found to be successful in predicting behavioural outcomes (see Phau and Teah, 2009). However, consumers’ need for uniqueness on the other hand has been used predominantly in predicting fashion behaviour (e.g. Workman and Kidd, 2000; Knight and Kim, 2007) and luxury consumption (e.g. Kastanakis and Balabanis, 2011). Based on the premise that mimic brands are scarcer and in some cases are uniquely different to mainstream model brands, mimic brands may be alluring to consumers who are inclined towards expressing uniqueness in their consumption. In the literature of counterfeiting, imitation, and copycats, studies to date have not addressed the influence of consumers’ need for uniqueness on brand mimicry of luxury brands (Tian et al., 2001; Wilcox et al., 2009). Therefore, further studies in this direction are warranted.

## **CONCLUDING COMMENTS FOR CHAPTER TWO**

The hypotheses and research objectives mirror a number of the key gaps and concerns highlighted in this chapter. Chapter 3 will explore the research questions, research objectives, theoretical underpinnings, the conceptual framework and the development of hypotheses that will address the deficiencies highlighted in this chapter.

# **CHAPTER 3**

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter will examine the hypotheses for the study and the key underpinning theories. The first section of this chapter reviews the research questions and objectives of this study. This is followed by an introduction into the theory of mimicry. Next, a definition of each type of mimicry from the context of the discipline of biological and natural sciences is discussed followed by the marketing example. Subsequently, the theories that support the theory of mimicry and this study are deliberated. This is followed by a discussion on each of the hypotheses and the justification behind each relationship postulated for this study.

As discussed previously, there is a dearth of research to date that applies the theory of mimicry to marketing. Furthermore, there has been very little theoretical application and empirical research that classify the different types of mimicry and elaborate on specific parallels between nature and marketing. As such, the understanding of consumer responses towards the various types of mimicry has been minute and practitioners will need to be aware of the differences in order to formulate effective branding strategies. While most studies have examined a number of forms of copying in marketing, a conceptual framework has yet to be developed to classify brand mimicry. The purpose of this research is to develop knowledge and findings that address the above gaps in the literature. The objectives of this study, which will apply, develop and compare the three types of mimicry from the discipline of biological and natural sciences in marketing, centres around acquiring knowledge on the key issues (as discussed in Chapter 2) which are based on the identified gaps in the literature. The research questions of this study are:

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

Based on the gaps identified in the literature and the objectives of the study, the following research questions have been proposed:

1. How does the theory of mimicry explain mimicry of luxury brands?

**[GAP 1, 2, 3, 4, 6]**

2. How does the presence of mimicry influence the perception of luxury and consumer evaluations towards the mimic brand?

**[GAP 5]**

3. How do personality traits influence the evaluation of mimic brands?

**[GAP 7]**

## **RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

Based on the above research gaps, the proposed research objectives are proposed:

1. To conceptualize the theory of mimicry into marketing and to draw parallels between the world of the “wild” and the world of “marketing” using real life marketing examples.

**[GAP 1, 2]**

2. To develop a model conceptualizing the three different types of mimicry and influences on consumers’ responses towards the mimic and the model brand within the luxury brand industry. **[GAP 3, GAP 4]**

3. To develop and validate the three different presence of mimicry scales to measure the perceived product similarity between the model and the mimic brand. **[GAP 5, 6]**

4. To investigate the influence of mimicry on perception of luxury and product evaluations. **[GAP 3, 4, 5]**

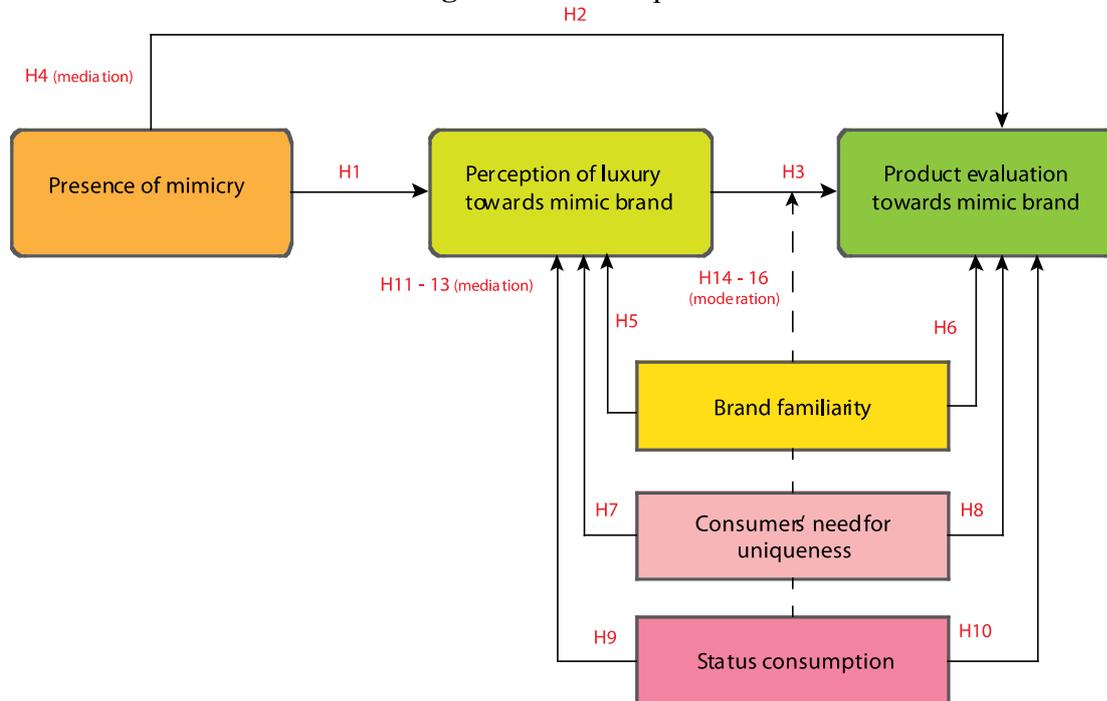
5. To investigate the influence of brand familiarity of the mimic brand and model brand on perception of luxury and product evaluation. **[GAP 3, 4, 5]**

6. To examine the influence of personality traits (i.e. consumers’ need for uniqueness and status consumption) on product evaluations towards mimicry. **[GAP 7]**

7. To investigate the mediating and moderating relationships that exists between perception of luxury, consumer personality traits and product evaluations. **[GAP 3, 4, 5, 7]**

Based on the literature review and the theoretical underpinnings, the following conceptual model has been developed. The model will be applied and tested across all three types of mimicry.

**Figure 3.1: Conceptual model**



# **AN INTRODUCTION INTO THE THEORY OF MIMICRY**

## **THE THEORY OF MIMICRY**

Since the *Origin of Species* by Darwin, it can be said that the theory of mimicry is one of the most illustrative applications of natural selection that has been formulated after Darwin's theory of evolution (Fisher, 1930; Vereecken and Schiestl, 2008). Mimicry can occur in many forms and scientists have discovered its effects in the world of plants, animals, insects, birds, and many other living organisms (Vane-Wright, 1980; Williamson, 1982; Pasteur, 1982; Bates, 1862; Wickler, 1965; Wiens, 1978). Although mimicry has been studied extensively over the past century, there are still numerous types of mimicry that have yet to be unearthed (Wickler, 1968; Vane-Wright, 1976). It has been observed that mimetic systems are particularly widespread among animals and insects. However, there is somewhat lesser attention or consolidated reports on plants within the literature (Williamson, 1982).

As the overarching theory underpinning this study, it is therefore important to understand the concept of mimicry. The fundamental concept within mimicry lies in the definition that mimicry is the superficial resemblance of one organism to another in order to gain fitness or advantage (Vane-Wright, 1980). In addition, the mistaken identity of deception is suggested to be an innate response (Smith, 1975; 1977; 1978), or otherwise a learned response through prior experience and constant reinforcement (Tinbergen, 1960; Clarke, 1962). This familiarity is built through the frequency of the signal receiver/dupe's contact with the model and the mimic that can influence the effectiveness of mimicry (Williamson and Nelson, 1972; Matthews, 1977; Williamson, 1982).

Furthermore, it is important to highlight some of the key conditions for mimicry to occur. Firstly, mimicry is classified as a triadic system that involves three protagonists/organisms (1) the model, (2) the mimic, (3) the signal receiver/dupe/operator (Vane-Wright, 1980; Pasteur, 1982). These key roles will serve as the basis of the mimicry relationships in order to understand the effects of the interaction between the three roles of the mimicry system. Secondly, there is often the degree of deception that is inherent in mimicry (Vane-Wright, 1976; 1980; Schaefer and Ruxton, 2009) which often leads to mistaken identity and confusion (Endler, 1981; Roy and Widmar, 1999).

### **Darwinian's theory of evolution by natural selection**

Darwin's theory of evolution through the process of natural selection was one of the groundbreaking theories in the world that provided implications for the organization of nature (humans, animals and plants) (Muller, 1949). Based on this theory, Herbert Spencer in 1864 coined the evolutionary process as "the survival of the fittest", which means possessing the characteristics to better survive (Ellis, 2010). Following on from this, it started with heritable variation in different directions, which is followed by differential survival and multiplication of the variants through either natural or artificial selection. It is then highlighted that some organisms survive better than others within the ecosystem. This is because they are often better adapted to survive in their environment (Ellis, 2010).

Based on a simple idea, the concept of natural selection stemmed from the fact that organisms compete for resources (Ellis, 2010). Therefore, those who are better at adapting to their environment or circumstances will leave more offspring. The gradual adaptation improves over time which describes the foundation of evolution by natural selection (Ellis, 2010). It is explained that natural selection acts on individuals, but the population evolves, and not the individuals. While it is not random, the environmental pressures will lead to natural selection.

### **PARALLELS OF MIMICRY AND MARKETING**

In reviewing the literature on copying and imitation, there were obvious parallels that suggest connection to mimicry in the discipline of biological and natural sciences. As such, from the review of Vane-Wright (1976) and Pasteur's (1982) classification system and other specific mimicry occurrence, there are three types of mimicry that have showed closer parallels to marketing. The three types of mimicry are namely (1) Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimicry, (2) Vavilovian mimicry, and (3) Pouyannian mimicry. The next section will start with a discussion of the mimicry in the discipline of biological and natural sciences, followed by the marketing parallel using actual brands and examples observed in marketing. The comparison attempts to highlight the conceptual and practical relevance of mimicry between the discipline of biological and natural sciences and marketing.

## WICKLERIAN EISNERIAN MIMICRY

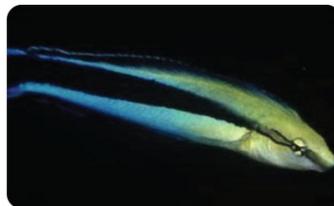
### **Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimicry in nature**

A form of aggressive mimicry, the mimic resembles a harmless model, which allows it to approach and prey on the model itself and or on unsuspecting third parties (Eisner et al., 1978). Wickler (1963, 1968) studied the motion of the cleaner wrasse *Labroides dimidiatus* and its mimic the sabre-toothed blenny *Aspidontus taeniatus*. The cleaner wrasse is a *mutualist* for which the host fish (yellow tang) will open its gill covers to permit the wrasse to enter and clean its gills of parasites (Srygley, 1999). The sabre-toothed blenny is predaceous but with its similar colouration, shape, and motion, it deceives the yellow tang into opening its gills, but instead of cleaning the gills it takes a bite from the gills. The sabre-toothed blenny takes advantage of its extremely close resemblance with the cleaner wrasse to approach the yellow tang and deceives it as a result (Pasteur, 1982; Wickler, 1968). Once bitten, the yellow tang shies away from both the sabre-tooth blenny and the cleaner wrasse as it is unable to differentiate between both fishes. It will move away onto a new population of fishes to avoid being confused and bitten by the sabre-tooth blenny again (Wickler, 1963) (see Diagram 3.2).

**Diagram 3.2:** Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimicry of cleaner wrasse, sabre-toothed blenny and yellow tang



Model: Cleaner Wrasse



Mimic: Sabre-toothed Blenny



Dupe: Yellow Tang

### **Wicklerian Eisnerian mimicry in marketing**

Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimicry in marketing is exemplified by the mimicry of Kmart “Crocs” and Crocs. This form of mimicry “dupes” consumers (see Diagram 3.3) into believing the mimic brand and the model brand share the same benefits. Crocs as the model are designed with special benefits whereby the patented material used for its shoes Crosslite is odourless, slip resistance, and anti-bacterial (Kam 2009). Furthermore, the design of the shoe moulds the feet, therefore fulfilling its brand promise of comfort. However, mimic brands of Crocs such as the Kmart “Crocs” only copy the superficial look of the model Crocs without the same design specifications and only uses poor quality plastic (Kam, 2009). Therefore the

mimic is without the ergonomic benefits attached to the model Croc shoes. Consumers mistake the mimic to perform the same function and to share the same properties as the model because of the similar physical attributes. When the product fails to meet initial expectations or when harmed (i.e. when consumers are physically hurt see example in Figure 3.4) consumers are then the victims of deception. As a result of this deception, consumers will end up avoiding and not trusting both the mimic and the model brand in fear of further exploitation.

**Diagram 3.3:** Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimicry in marketing of Crocs and “Kmart” Crocs



Figure 3.4: Cases of reports of Crocs injuries

**Another child seriously injured wearing "Crocs" at Atlanta airport**



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## Crocs urges escalator safety as child loses toe

SINGAPORE, Nov 9 (Reuters) - Crocs Inc. ([CROX.O](#)), maker of the hugely popular crayon-coloured rubber clogs, has called for better escalator safety after a Singapore child lost a toe when its imitation clog was caught in a moving stairway.

On Saturday, 2-year-old Chong Shiyr's right big toe was ripped off in a Singapore mall after her rubber clog -- an imitation of a Croc shoe -- got stuck between the escalator gap and the side wall, the toddler's mother told Reuters.

Her toe was found nearly three hours later but could not be reattached as it was too badly damaged.

## VAVILOVIAN MIMICRY

### **Vavilovian mimicry in nature**

Vavilovian mimicry is classified as a form of crop mimicry (Pasteur, 1982; Barrett, 1983). According to Wickler (1968), Vavilovian mimicry involves weeds, such as rye (*Secale*) that mimicked the first crops of man (dupe) through their evolution in the wheat (model) fields (Williamson, 1982) (see Diagram 3.5). Subjected to the methods of man to gather and separate weed from wheat, rye have developed seeds and seed dispersal mechanisms that mimicked those of wheat (Williamson, 1982). Through such means, rye has forcefully made its way into being accepted by man and to compete with wheat in the fields. Based on Vavilov's (1951) explanation, he calls the cereals (e.g. rye, domestic oats, rye, etc.) that originated from mimetic weeds as secondary crops. This form of mimicry is the result of unintentional selection by human beings due to the close similarities between the mimic and the model (Barrett, 1983). These secondary crops are now dependent on humans for their survival. Through the process of mimicry mimetic weeds transforms from aggressive (parasitic) to being a productive and mutualistic form of mimicry (Pasteur, 1982). In addition, the closer the resemblance of the mimic in habit and ecological requirements to the model, the harder it is for the farmer to control the growth of the mimic without damaging the primary crop (Bunting, 1960; Hammerton, 1968; McNeill, 1976; Parker, 1977; Harlan, 1982). Therefore the mimic can evade eradication as a result (Vane-Wright, 1976).

**Diagram 3.5:** Vavilovian mimicry of wheat and rye



### Vavilovian in marketing

There are a number of parallels found within marketing that can serve to explain Vavilovian mimicry. One of the brands that employed the Vavilovian mimicry strategy lies within the beverage sector and is none other than Nudie Juice. Nudie Juice (mimic) started in 2002 by employing similar strategies to that of Innocent Juice (model) from the UK (see Diagram 3.6). Nudie Juice has drawn many similarities from Innocent Juice such as the brand character (a small child like character), the packaging, and the concept of offering “premium fruit juice”. While many critics and consumers have suggested high level of similarities between the two brands (Ho, 2005), the founder Tim Pethick suggested they are not the same. It was suggested that he initially drew inspiration from Innocent Juice but has evolved the brand from being similar to “something different” (Ho, 2005). After more than a decade in the Australian market, the Nudie brand has evolved from juice to the beyond just a juice brand to differentiate from Innocent Juice. Within the ever-expanding premium fruit juice market, Nudie has moved to a unique brand position in the Australian market (Lee, 2004).

**Diagram 3.6:** Vavilovian mimicry in marketing of Innocent Juice and Nudie Juice



## **POUYANNIAN MIMICRY**

### **Pouyannian mimicry in nature**

Pouyannian mimicry is a form of chemical mimicry (Pasteur, 1982; Dettner and Liepert, 1994). This process of mimicry involves the use of false cues to attract pollinators or dispersers through the production of female sex pheromones. It is a process of coevolution between plants and insects that is mutualistic in nature and the antagonistic interrelationship is an important and a requisite condition for mimicry systems (Wiens, 1978). Furthermore, it is said that up to 50% to 60% of the Orchidaceae species attract pollinators through the use of some or other forms of mimetic resemblance (Wiens, 1978; Pasteur, 1982; Williamson, 1982), making it a prime example of deceptive mimicry in plants (Schaefer and Ruxton, 2009). Tactile and visual cues are employed to encourage and induce copulation attempts in order to assist in the dispersal of pollen (Dettner and Liepert, 1994).

Pouyannian mimicry occurs when nectarless female flowers (i.e. Bee Orchid) mimics the mating characteristics and signals of female bees in order to attract the male counterparts to copulate on the flowers (Pouyanne 1917; Coleman, 1927). In turn, the male bee mistakenly acts as the pollinator and assists the Bee Orchid in reproduction (Dafni 1984). However, the male bee is “swindled” or deceived into believing that the Bee Orchid is the female bee through very close similarities in texture, scent and feel (Dettner and Liepert, 1994; Faegri and van de Pijl 1979) (see Diagram 3.7). The intention of the Bee Orchid was not to harm the male bee, rather than to seek pollination through the male bee (Vereecken and Schiestl, 2008). In imitating the female bee, the Bee Orchid then would be able to scatter its pollen to other parts of the ecosystem that can then sustain the population of Bee Orchids. During the bee’s involuntary flower visits, the male bee transfers the orchid gametes (pollinaria) to its head or abdomen, which assures cross-pollination when the pollinium inseminates the next visited flower (van der Pijl and Dodson, 1966; Dettner and Liepert, 1994). It is also observed that the mimic achieves higher pollination success in the presence of the model than in its absence (Schaefer and Ruxton, 2009).

**Diagram 3.7:** Pouyannian mimicry of female bee and bee Orchid



Model: Female Bee



Mimic: Bee Orchid



Dupe: Male Bee

### Pouyannian in marketing

When Coco Chanel first conceptualized the tweed jacket in 1954, little did she know that the design would become a staple of women’s fashion for many generations to come (LaGrave, 2012). The first Chanel tweed jacket (model) was revered by fashionistas around the world. However, it was only reserved for many exclusive luxury lovers. Brands such as Zara (mimic), in order to jump onto the trendsetting bandwagon, also created their variation of the Chanel tweed. The mild differences between the brands and willing consumers therefore emulate the design, style or concept of the Chanel tweed jacket and further disperse the trend (see Diagram 3.8).

**Diagram 3.8:** Pouyannian mimicry of Chanel tweed and Zara “tweed”



Model: Chanel Tweed Jacket



Mimic: Zara Tweed Jacket



Dupe: Consumer

### **Concluding Comments for the Introduction into the Theory of Mimicry**

The introduction into the theory of mimicry provides an extension from the discussion of mimicry in Chapter 2. The theory of mimicry will serve as the underpinning theory for this study. The three types of mimicry highlighted and discussed in Chapter 2 are described in detail by using the biological and marketing parallels as examples to explain mimicry in marketing. The definitions of the three types of mimicry will be the basis of the scale development in Chapter 5. The following section will discuss in detail the underpinning theories and the development of the hypotheses for this study.

## **HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT**

### **THEORIES SUPPORTING THE THEORY OF MIMICRY**

The next section will discuss these following theories:

- (a) Classical conditioning: stimulus generalisation
- (b) Cue utilization theory
- (c) Categorization theory
- (d) Anchoring theory
- (e) Spillover effects
- (f) Signalling theory

#### **Classical Conditioning**

Based on the social learning theory of classical conditioning, the theory is used to explain and support the theory of mimicry (Zinn et al., 2008). The use of this theory in marketing has been supported by a growing number of studies (e.g. Allen and Janiszewski, 1989; Bierley et al., 1985; Shimp et al., 1991; Till and Priluck, 2000; Walsh and Mitchell, 2005) when examining conditioned attitudes and responses between brands. Founded by Pavlov (1927), the essence of the classical conditioning theory lies in the association of two stimuli, a unconditioned stimulus (US) and a conditioned stimulus (CS). Through the use of association, one of the stimuli will come to evoke a similar response as the other stimulus. This theory has been applied to marketing context and as an explanatory framework in conditioning behaviour (e.g. Allen and Madden, 1985). Emerging studies have also utilized this theory in explaining the generalization of attitudes in a branding context (e.g. Till and Priluck, 2000). For example, studies have used the theory in understanding the extent a conditioned stimulus will transfer a similar effect to another similar stimuli.

#### ***Stimulus generalization***

Anchored in Pavlov's (1927) theory of classical conditioning, the process of stimulus generalization facilitates the transfer of knowledge, affect, intentions, and associations between similar brands (Martin and Stewart, 2001). The theory refers to the degree to which a response conditioned to a particular stimulus is also evoked by similar stimuli (Till and Priluck, 2000; Zaichkowsky and Simpson, 1996). The theory also explains the transferability and generalization of negative reactions or past experiences that share similar physical attributes (Miaoulis and D'Amato, 1978; Rozin et al., 1986). The process of generalization

postulates that when consumers have learnt to react to a stimulus in a consistent way (Corman 1967; Shimp 1991), in the presence of the mimic or any look-alike to the original brand, it will evoke the same reaction and response because of the associative similarity between the original and the “copy” (Walsh and Mitchell, 2005). However, because of the subjective perception of similarity, similarity judgments would be dependent on individual experience, knowledge, motives, and personalities (Walsh and Mitchell, 2005). This therefore suggests that a stimulus can be perceived very differently by different consumers.

Past studies have looked at generalization in human conditioning (Razran, 1949; Till and Priluck, 2000). It was found that the strength of the conditioned reaction can vary depending on the stimulus. For example some subjects generalized stronger responses to words that sounded similar but had different meanings, while other subjects generalized stronger responses to words that had similar meanings but that sounded different. Furthermore, Rozin et al. (1986) found that if one has negative feelings towards an object, that negative feeling can be transferred to a similar object, which was defined as the “law of similarity”.

There are marketing examples which utilizes stimulus generalization to its benefit. For example, private label brands use the concept of stimulus generalization to its advantage by “looking like” a national brand in order to compete against them (Hoch and Banerji, 1993). They mimic the packaging through colour, fonts and other superficial characteristics (Kanner, 1995) and can confuse consumers under circumstances of brief viewing times (Kapfarer, 1995). Mostly, this is seen as a form of exploitation whereby private label brands piggy back off the good will of successful national brands. Commonly mimic brands imitate through style and design using colours and shapes, thereby affecting the evaluation of attributes of products (Zaichkowsky and Simpson, 1996). In addition, the use of similar brands can generalize similar brand origin (Kerby, 1967). Some of the examples within the luxury brand and fashion industry are shown in Diagram 3.9.

**Diagram 3.9:** Examples of cases of brand mimics



### Cue Utilization Theory

This theory suggests that through the use of extrinsic and intrinsic cues, products can communicate different views to consumers (Cox, 1967). The theory postulates that it is not necessary to copy the established product's presentation, merely to ensure that the cue pattern the consumer perceives when glancing along the aisle is similar enough to evoke the imagery created by the mimic (Davies, 1998). Mimic brands often imitate through evaluative (descriptive elements i.e. themes) or descriptive (i.e. colours) attributes. It is more commonly seen that mimic brands copy visual appearances that relates to favourable consumer associations and positive evaluations as a form of association to the original brand (Collins-Dodd and Zaichkowsky, 1999).

Literature dictates that consumers rely on cues such as price, brand name, packaging, colour to help make quality judgments (Richardson et al., 1994; Leavitt, 1954; Allison and Uhl, 1964). According to Olson (1976) brand names are important to help convey composite information about the attributes of a brand. Brand impressions can also be formed based on associations through price, size, shape and performance (McDaniel and Baker, 1977; Wheatley et al., 1981; Peterson, 1977).

More commonly discussed in the literature is the distinction between extrinsic and intrinsic cues. Extrinsic cues are described as product related attributes such as price, brand name and packaging which are not a part of the physical product. In contrast, intrinsic cues (i.e. ingredient quality) cannot be manipulated without altering the physical properties of the product. These cues are almost impossible to be determined by the average consumer. Assessments need to be made by manufacturers, government agencies, and other experts with necessary equipment and skills (Olson, 1972).

In addition there are surrogate or indirect indicators which consumers use to base their judgments upon. Surrogate measures such as brand name, can be used to infer either product quality or ingredient quality). These product related cues can be interpreted, evaluated and assessed easily when considering various brand alternatives (Dick et al., 1997). According to Underwood and Klein (2002), extrinsic cues serve as surrogate indicators of product quality.

### **Categorization Theory**

Based on this theory, product categories are organized in the minds of consumers as structures in which products range from prototypical (typical) members within a category to unclear cases to clear non-members (Mervis and Rosch, 1981; Barsalou, 1982). Consumers regularly use category information in forming judgments about a new product category or category member (Loken, 2006). For example, consumers infer similarities based on brand or by attributes (Loken et al., 2002; Meyvis and Janiszewski, 2004). Furthermore, when there is accessible information about the brand category or a similar brand (such as brand extensions), it increases the perception of similarity the two brands. Therefore, category inferences will be more likely to occur as a result of the information (Loken, 2006). This in turn supports the notion that with greater perceived familiarity between the brands, can increase the acceptance

of the similar brand because of product category similarity or brand specific associations (Barone et al., 2000; Bottomley and Hoden, 2001; Klink and Smith, 2001).

There are advantages that model brands hold that are superior over mimic brands. Consumers tend to prefer the attributes of model brands to those of the mimics brands (which are seen as differentiated followers). Through exposure and experience, consumers learn to like the attributes of the model brands. Model brands are often stronger and better perceived in their product positions than mimics, and tend to be more preferred even though there are close similarities between the model and the mimic brand (Carpenter and Nakamoto, 1989). This holds even if the mimic is at a lower price. In addition, the theory posits that beliefs about an object or attitudes can vary based on how the object is categorized (Sujan and Bettman, 1989; Rajagopal and Burnkrant, 2009). For example, a mimic brand with a similar brand name as the original brand name will be categorized to be from the same family of brands (Boush, 1997). Therefore, the perception and evaluation of the mimic brand would be highly different.

### **Anchoring Theory**

The process of updating evaluations of a stimulus is influenced by a memory or stimulus based perceptual construct called the reference point (Meyer and Johnson, 1995). The reference point acts as an anchor against which the target stimulus is judged which in turn influences the update of information. Supported by Tversky and Kahneman (1974), they described the process of anchoring and adjustment as people making estimates by starting from the initial point, which is adjusting subsequently to arrive at the final answer. However, anchoring has been found to lead to judgments of stimuli that are biased in the direction of the anchor. The adjustment biases have been consistent. These include predictions as to how consumers make purchase quantity decisions, evaluate product bundles, and evaluate the preference of others (Wansink et al., 1998). In addition, Esch et al. (2009) suggested that every time an individual forms an image based on a stimulus while being exposed to another stimulus, this image may be subjected to anchoring effects.

Furthermore, the creation of value perceptions is a psychological movement towards a leader or an exemplar brand (van Auken and Adams 2005). In addition, this is based on the idea that stimuli are judged based on differences between a referent and stimuli (Helson, 1964). The initial design will serve as an anchor for the consumer when making evaluations of products

in subsequent periods once the category definition has changed. It is also found that the most prototypical products in a product category will be ingrained in consumers' mental representation and more likely to subject to anchoring than less typical brands (Carson et al., 2007).

Furthermore, it serves as a process by which new knowledge, ideas, and opinions are proven by a social group if they fit into a pre-existing categorization scheme (Penz and Stottinger, 2008). In the case of mimic brands, consumers may anchor the mimic brand with pirated brands or counterfeits as the initial perception, or it may be anchored with an original or parent brand, which they will associate the product design with. The consumer will use the ingrained perceptions as a referent point when making judgments and evaluation of the mimic brand (Carson et al., 2007).

### **Spillover Effects**

The theory suggests that key properties or information of a product will spill over to the product in which it is perceived to be associated (Simonin and Ruth, 1998; Baumgarth, 2004; Hagtvedt and Patrick, 2008). More commonly, the spillover effects concerns specific content (physical attributes, designs, concepts, brand) of the product or general connotations (what it represents and the symbolic value). The theory has been used to explain various investigations in other domain such as studies on cobranding/brand alliances (e.g. Simonin and Ruth, 1998; Votolato and Unnava, 2006; Helmig et al., 2008), art (e.g. Hagtvedt and Patrick, 2008) and music (e.g. Gorn, 1982). For instance, music was found to have an effect on consumers' assessment of unrelated products through the transfer of affect (Hagtvedt and Patrick, 2008). In addition, Gorn (1982) also found that product preference can be affected when listening to liked or disliked music. Other studies include the influence of odour on consumer perceptions (Spangenberg et al., 1996).

Hagtvedt and Patrick (2008) also analysed two aspects of spillover effects. In attempting to understand the spillover effects of art onto consumer products, they examined the content-dependent influence of art, and the generalized content-dependent influence of art. The content-dependent influence dictates that the specific content of artwork and what it depicts will spillover, whereas the generalized content-dependent influence addresses the general connotations (thematic) aspects of what art represents. This suggests that if the specific

attributes of a product is to spillover to the similar product, this would not be a generalizable effect. However, the generalized connotations would involve the overall perception and attribute of the brand.

### **Signalling Theory**

The signalling theory have been used many numerous past researchers as theories to explain consumer-based brand evaluations and consumer brand choice (Erdem and Swait 1998, 2004; Aaker, 1991). The theory is founded in information economics that suggests that imperfect and asymmetric information characterizes a market. Brands can utilize these signals (through manipulation of attributes or activities) to convey information about their brand characteristics (Spence, 1974). Based on Erdem and Swait (1998), when consumers are uncertain about product attributes, brands tend to use its brand image or attributes to inform consumers about the product and its position. It is therefore important to understand that if a brand positions itself as a high quality and prestigious brand, it is important that these perceptions signal the brand position.

Due to the informational aspects of a marketplace, companies are encouraged to use brands as signals. A brand becomes a signal when it encapsulates and symbolizes a company's past and current marketing activities and strategies (Erdem and Swait, 1998). When this happens, a brand can convey information about a product attribute from physical (ingredients), to functional (useful properties) to perceptual, symbolic (popularity, prestige) attributes. Therefore, the information conveyed by the brand's associated marketing activities and strategies depends on the design of the brand's marketing mix and brand elements (e.g. high quality information associated with high price) (Akerlof, 1970; Darby and Karni, 1973; Ross, 1988; Rao and Monroe, 1989).

A signal has two characteristics, which are namely clarity and consistency. Clarity of a brand refers to the absence of ambiguity in the information by the brand's past and present marketing strategies and activities (Shannon and Weaver, 1949; Jervis, 1970). In addition, consistency is another factor that influences clarity. Consistency refers to the degree to which each mix component or decision reflects the whole brand (Heil and Robertson, 1991). Consistency may contain more than one element of the marketing mix (e.g. expensive retailer

and exquisite packaging for high end brands) or to the components of each marketing element (e.g. copy and style of advertising, such as Absolut Vodka).

However, the most important aspect of a brand signal is its credibility. Tirole (1990) suggested that signal credibility determines if a market signal conveys information effectively. Hence, the information about a brand's position that is communicated to the consumer should be seen as truthful and dependable. A clear and credible brand signal creates value to consumers by decreasing the information cost and risks perceived by consumers, thus increasing consumer-expected utility (Erdem and Swait, 1998). Because of the credibility and clarity of the brand signal, it may increase perceived quality by creating favourable attribute perceptions. According to Park and Srivivasan (1994), the favourable attribute perceptions may be a result of the symbolic attributes that are perceived. With similar products, consumers often have preconceived perceptions of the model brands. Therefore, with products that look similar, the preconceived judgments towards the original will be activated when the copy share similar attributes or appearance to the original. In this case, the signals that the copy exudes will connect and communicate the identity of the original brand.

## **HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT FOR H1 – H4**

### **Presence of mimicry**

For this study, brand mimicry occurs when there is a presence of mimicry (Wicklerian-Eisnerian, Vavilovian, or Pouyannian mimicry) which is when there are resemblances observed between two brands. Therefore, the presence of mimicry would be the perceived resemblance of product characteristics between the model and the mimic brand. This judgment of the presence of mimicry will serve as the outcome of the comparison process between the model and the mimic brand (Gregson, 1975). As such, the measure of the presence of mimicry plays a pivotal role in establishing if brand mimicry is in effect.

It has been well documented in past studies on the influence of perceived product similarities on influencing the way consumers perceives and evaluates products (e.g. Loken et al., 1986; Foxman et al., 1990; Kapfarer, 1995; Warlop and Alba, 2004; Warlop et al., 2005; Walsh and Mitchell, 2005; Miceli and Pieters, 2010; van Horen and Pieters, 2012a; 2012b). A number of scholars have addressed and identified a few of the characteristics and attributes between brands that formed the judgments of similarity between brands (e.g. Wee et al., 1995; Tom et al., 1996; Penz and Stottinger, 2008). Lefkoff-Hagius and Mason (1993) suggested physical (or tangible) attributes, image (or utility), and beneficial (or utility) aspects (Wee et al., 1995) between products to examine their perceived similarity. It is asserted by Lefkoff-Hagius and Mason (1993) that attributes are not evaluated independently, they may be “activated” at the same time when consumers compare particular products. When evaluating fashion items, they proposed the importance of utility and benefits such as visibility, functionality and looks. Lastly, with luxury brands, the symbolic aspects such as the image and prestige that is associated with the brand are found to be important in forming similarity judgments. With luxury brands, the mimic would be expected to communicate something about the consumers’ self-concept and image in order to be perceived as similar to the model brand (e.g. Dornoff and Tatham, 1972; Onkvisit and Shaw, 1987). The symbolic benefits are considered to be important evaluations since that is what consumers pay the price for in luxury brands (Dubois and Paternault, 1995; Nia and Zaichkowsky, 2000). Interestingly, Vranešević and Stančec (2003) found that consumers do not base their judgements exclusively on physical characteristics. They will often process the brand as a signal of quality, before they evaluate other characteristics. This therefore suggests that consumers often process decisions based primarily on what the brand image conveys.

A further comparison by van Horen and Pieters (2012b) showed that there are copycats that carry varying degrees of similarity. According to the authors, subtle usually have their own brand name, logo and packaging style, but still show similarity to the model brands. They are often easily differentiated as they only share subtle similarities and are known as moderately similar copies (Wilke and Zaichkowsky, 1999). It is suggested and found by the authors that blatant copying and high similarity between brands may be less liked than subtle and moderately similar copycats (i.e. Vavilovian or Pouyannian mimics). Therefore, high similarity copycats may bring less harm to the model brand than subtle and moderately similar copycats. Therefore, their findings suggest that different types of mimicry will have a varied effect on consumer evaluation (van Horen and Pieters, 2012a; 2012b). However, it is found that depending on whether consumers are able to compare between the high similarity mimic and the model brand, it would have varied effects on consumers' evaluation of the mimic brand. The authors found that when consumers are able to make a comparison between the mimic and the model brand, high similarity mimics were evaluated less positively. This is further highlighted by d'Astous and Gargouri (2001) that if there is high perceived similarity, the likelihood that consumer think that the brand is trying to "manipulate" or "fool" them would be rather high. In the case of the moderately similar mimic, they seem to be better liked and even go undetected as a form of mimicry even when comparisons are made to the model brand (van Horen and Pieters, 2012b)..

### **Perception of luxury**

Hansen and Wanke (2011) suggested that the concept of luxury is represented in a more abstract way than most other ordinary items. Heine (2011) stated that while the notion of luxury has been extensively studied, a consensus to the term "luxury" has yet to be clearly defined. While he has attempted to bridge the gap by consolidating the various definitions within the literature, the concept of luxury is still lacking in consensus (Heine, 2011). In addition, this projects an interesting limitation when understanding a consumers' perception of luxury.

In order to understand a consumer's perception of luxury, it is fundamental to understand that perception is subjective and is based on the awareness of and the interpretation of their environment (Phau and Prendergast, 2000; Wiedmann et al., 2009). Therefore, luxury can project different meanings to different people. In turn, consumers are motivated to purchase luxury goods for various different reasons. In addition, one's cultural values can also guide

what is important to them, which in turn shapes their perception of luxury (Wiedmann et al., 2009). A definition proposed by Wiedmann et al. (2009), suggests that luxury refers to exclusivity and are products that are not for mass consumption. Other connotation to the word luxury includes ‘premium quality’, ‘first class’ (Langmack, 2006). In addition, Dubois and Paternault (1995) defined luxury products to have included “excellent quality”, “very high price”, “scarcity and uniqueness, and “aesthetics and polysensuality”. According to Heine (2011, p. 46), potential luxury brands should be evaluated by the following characteristics: price, quality, aesthetics, rarity, extraordinariness, and symbolism. The myriad of perceptions towards the concept of luxury reveals the literature’s lack of agreement on the concept of luxury (Heine, 2011). However, for the intention of this study, the key concepts of luxury such as exclusivity, high class, prestigious, and luxurious will be used as the basis of perception of luxury for this study.

As suggested by Monkhouse et al. (2012), the presence of mimics of a product can lead to the diminished perception of luxury of the product is yet to be confirmed. This is also reflected by other researchers (Penz and Stottinger, 2008a; Hieke, 2010), that it is currently still unfounded whether mimics will diminish the value of an original brand (Wilke and Zaichkowsky, 1999). However, it can be assumed that when consumers have positive perception of luxury towards the mimic brand, it will also lead to positive product evaluations because of the generalization of the positive characteristics of the model brand (van Horen and Pieters, 2012a; 2012b). In addition, mimic brands copy in the hopes of generalizing the positive associations that consumers have towards the model brand in order to receive the same evaluations. Furthermore, Hagtvedt and Patrick (2008) found that perception of luxury leads to product evaluation of consumer products in the presence of visual art. Similarly, it can be argued that in the presence of mimicry, when there is the transfer of positive associations of the model to the mimic, consumers’ perception of luxury will lead to positive product evaluation. Therefore, based on this theory if the model brand is perceived as luxurious, the connotations of exclusivity, luxury and sophistication will also be transferred to the mimic brand (Margolin, 1992; Hoffman, 2002; Hagtvedt and Patrick, 2008).

## **Product evaluation**

Brand associations that consumers hold such as perceived quality, prestige, brand awareness and other proprietary assets (e.g. patents) can directly influence brand evaluations and brand preferences indirectly (Aaker, 1991). It is suggested by Hoyer and MacInnes (2008) that overall evaluations and attitudes (likes and dislikes) are more easily remembered than the specific attributes of a product or a brand. During the process, if consumers can form evaluations about a product's attributes, their perceptions towards the attributes will determine their attitude. In addition, when a product lacks information or when the consumer lacks knowledge about a product, they look to certain product signals, such as price, warranty, packaging in order to form product evaluations. Therefore, strong product attributes and signals can influence consumer evaluations (Blackwell et al., 2006).

The consumer judgments on the products are based on the cues and other sources of information about the product characteristics. Past research has also identified some of the key ways which consumers form product evaluations. Some of the measures include perceived economy (Deering and Jacoby, 1972), perceived worth (Shapiro, 1972), purchase intention (LaBarbera, 1982) perceived quality (Valenzi and Eldridge, 1973); or attitude towards the product (Erickson et al., 1984). In addition, adding familiar attributes to a product helps to improve product evaluation (Meyers-Levy and Tybout, 1989; Mukherjee and Hoyer, 2001). When consumers are able to compare and because of the familiar attributes between brands, it can influence consumers' evaluation of the brand or product (Broniarczyk and Gershoff, 1997).

### **Justification for Hypotheses H1 – H4**

Building on the above discussion with the overarching concept of the Theory of Mimicry and supported by Classical Conditioning Theory, Cue Utilization Theory, Categorization Theory, Spillover Effects and Signalling Theory, the differences between the three types of mimicry are postulated to show different relationships. As such, the reasoning for each of the variation in the relationships is explained.

### **Wicklerian-Eisnerian Mimicry:**

As defined in this study Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimics are often highly similar in physical characteristics to the model brands. Past studies have found that high similarity between the mimic brand and the model brand will generalize negative connotations (van Horen and

Pieters, 2012a; 2012b) when consumers believe that they are being “deceived” or fooled by the tactics of the mimic brand (d’Astous and Gargouri, 2001). In addition, consumers might tend to anchor a close and blatant copy or mimic as a “counterfeit”, or a lower quality “copycat” (Carson et al., 2007). Therefore, this negative connotation to mimic brands will lead to negative perceptions and evaluation on the mimic brand. However, when perception of luxury towards the mimic brand is positive, it will in turn lead to positive evaluations towards the mimic brand. As such, the following hypotheses are postulated:

**H1:** Presence of mimicry will lead to a negative perception of luxury towards the mimic brand.

**H2:** Presence of mimicry will lead to a negative product evaluation of the mimic brand.

**H3:** Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand will lead to a positive product evaluation of the mimic brand.

In addition, based on the relationship between presence of mimicry, perception of luxury towards the mimic brand, and product evaluation towards the mimic brand, it is postulated that:

**H4:** Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand will mediate the relationship between the presence of mimicry and product evaluation of the mimic brand.

### **Vavilovian Mimicry:**

As defined in this study Vavilovian mimics are often moderately similar to the model brand. While copying the products, the Vavilovian mimics often modifying certain characteristics of the product. They may emulate certain characteristics of the model brand but are often of a different brand name. By copying the symbolic and functional similarities of the model brand they are subtler forms of mimics. Therefore, consumers will be more likely to transfer symbolic associations from the model brand to the mimic (Walsh and Mitchell, 2005). In turn, this would generalize the positive associations from the model brand to the mimic brand. In addition, because of the functional and symbolic characteristics, it would signal a similar image as the model brand (Erdem and Swait, 1998). Hence, the presence of Vavilovian mimicry will lead to positive perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand. As such, the following hypotheses are postulated:

**H1:** Presence of mimicry will lead to a positive of luxury towards the mimic brand.

**H2:** Presence of mimicry will lead to a positive product evaluation of the mimic brand.

**H3:** Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand will lead to a positive product evaluation of the mimic brand.

In addition, based on the relationship between presence of mimicry, perception of luxury towards the mimic brand, and product evaluation towards the mimic brand, it is postulated that:

**H4:** Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand will mediate the relationship between the presence of mimicry and product evaluation of the mimic brand.

### **Pouyannian Mimicry:**

As defined in this study Pouyannian mimics are often moderately similar to the model brand. This type of mimic emulates the stylistic and conceptual aspects of the model brand. In addition, Pouyannian mimics are relatively well-known brands. Therefore copying of trendy items within the marketplace signals the mimic brand to share similar image as the model brand. This will in turn lead to the transfer the positive associations of the model brand to the mimic brand (Pavlov, 1927; Martin and Stewart, 2001). As such, the presence of Pouyannian mimicry will lead to positive perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand. As such, the following hypotheses are postulated:

**H1:** Presence of mimicry will lead to a positive of luxury towards the mimic brand.

**H2:** Presence of mimicry will lead to a positive product evaluation of the mimic brand.

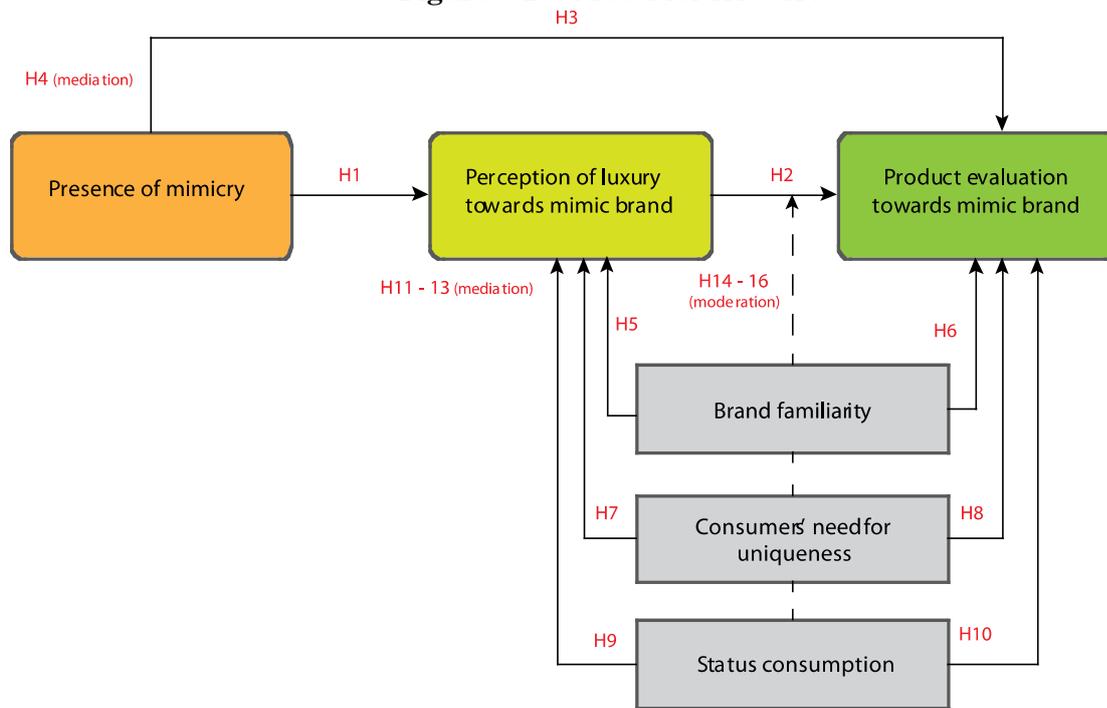
**H3:** Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand will lead to a positive product evaluation of the mimic brand.

In addition, based on the relationship between presence of mimicry, perception of luxury towards the mimic brand, and product evaluation towards the mimic brand, it is postulated that:

**H4:** Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand will mediate the relationship between the presence of mimicry and product evaluation of the mimic brand.

Based on the above discussion, the summary of the following hypotheses (H1-H4) for the three types of mimicry are postulated as presented in **Table 3.11**.

**Figure 3.10: Model for H1 – H4**



**Theories supporting Hypotheses H1 – H4:**

**Theory of Mimicry** (supported by Classical Conditioning Theory, Cue Utilization Theory, Categorization Theory, Spillover Effects and Signalling Theory)

**Table 3.11: Hypotheses H1 – H4**

Hypotheses		Wicklerian-Eisnerian	Vavilovian	Pouyannian
<b>H1</b>	Presence of mimicry will lead to a positive/negative perception of luxury	-	+	+
<b>H2</b>	Presence of mimicry will lead to a positive/negative product evaluation	-	+	+
<b>H3</b>	Perception of luxury will lead to a positive/negative product evaluation	+	+	+
<b>H4</b>	Perception of luxury will mediate the relationship between presence of mimicry and product evaluation of the mimic brand			

## **MEDIATORS AND MODERATORS**

### **HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT FOR H5 (A, B), H6 (A, B), H11 (A, B) AND H14 (A, B)**

#### **Brand Familiarity**

Brand familiarity has long been postulated to have an effect on the influence of brand evaluations (Kim and Chung, 2012). The brand perceptions that consumers form of brands may be driven by their needs and brand knowledge derived from past personal experiences (Keller, 2001). Often, brand familiarity is described as an exposure effect, suggesting that repetitive exposure to a stimuli or a brand will generate positive evaluations towards the brand (Laroche et al., 1996). Studies have indicated that brand familiarity affects trust, brand preference, brand attitudes, satisfaction and purchasing behaviour. However, brand familiarity is beyond only the concept of exposure to a brand but includes consumers' level of knowledge about a brand (Kim and Chung, 2012). Ghosh et al. (1995) have also observed that brand familiarity increases consumers' perceived risk whereby a consumer who is unfamiliar with a brand might negatively evaluate the brand.

Prior experience can have influences on product preferences and choice due to knowledge and maturation of consumer experiences (Kristensen et al., 2012). Therefore, consumers with more experience with purchasing from a product category they would have had personal choices and tastes that relate to their experience (Johnson and Lehmann, 1997). Consumers with prior experience would have the knowledge that certain attributes may combine to signal a certain level of quality or image, which may not apply to consumers with no prior purchase or experience of the product category (Kristensen et al., 2012). It was also shown that with similar looking products, a familiar brand name or a well-known brand would increase preference for the product.

Borrowing from the literature of brand extension, Klink and Smith (2001) discovered that brand familiarity towards the parent brand can lead to positive affect towards the brand extension and consumer evaluations. In the case of a mimic brand, familiarity towards the model brand would thereby create a halo effect (Dawar and Lei, 2009; Kim and Chung, 2012) which can spillover to the mimic brand.

According to Penz and Stottinger (2005), the higher the brand familiarity towards the original brand the more unlikely consumers will purchase mimic brands. This can be attributed to the fact that model brands are often salient in consumers' memory because they are seen to be the leaders or pioneers in the category or have a high market share (Carpenter and Nakamoto, 1989). Therefore this brand knowledge or familiarity will be brought to mind when comparisons are being made between the model and the mimic brand (van Horen and Pieters, 2012b). Therefore, the stored brand knowledge and brand perceptions can affect the information processing of consumers which can affect the outcome of consumers' perception towards the product or brand (Balabanis and Craven, 1992; Tikkanen and Vääriskoski, 2010). In actual fact, mimic brands utilize their similarity in trade dress to try to access information that consumers have stored in their memory about the model brand in order to transfer them (van Horen and Pieters, 2012b). In addition, research has shown that the effect of accessing the information can help the evaluation of the mimic brand.

### **Underpinning theories for H5 (a, b), H6 (a, b), H11 (a, b) and H14 (a, b)**

#### **Anchoring Theory**

Building onto the previous discussion on Anchoring Theory, Bijmolt et al. (1998) suggested that the absence of brand familiarity would affect consumers' evaluation of the model and the mimic brand. When consumers lack brand knowledge, the consumer will evaluate the model and the mimic brand to be the "same" or the replications of the same product within the category. However, when there is brand familiarity i.e. towards the model brand only, that will be the anchor which the consumer will base their reference upon (Helson, 1964). Subsequent exposure to the mimic brand will therefore be judged based according to the initial reference point (i.e. stored brand knowledge about the model brand). In this case, dependent on their experience and knowledge with the model brand, it will affect their evaluation of the model brand (Carson et al., 2007). This is because consumers learn about the model brand prior to any other brand. This will result in the model brand being retrieved, considered and with the likelihood of being chosen over the mimic brand (Alpert and Kamins, 1994; Kamins et al., 2007). Similarly, when consumers are familiar with both brands, the evaluation may either be neutralized or they may be better able to form similarity judgments as well as evaluations (Murphy and wright, 1984). When they are highly familiar with a brand, most often they will be able to differentiate between high similarity and low similarity between products (Bijmolt et al., 1998).

### **Justification for Hypotheses H5 (a, b) and H6 (a, b)**

Based on the preceding discussion of the supporting theories namely Anchoring Theory, the differences between the three types of mimicry are postulated to show different relationships. As such, the reasoning for each of the variation in the relationships is explained.

#### **Wicklerian-Eisnerian Mimicry:**

Based on the discussion above, if consumers are familiar with the Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimic brand, the stored knowledge about the Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimic brand will generate a negative perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. This is due to the fact that consumers would be aware of the nature of the mimic brand as a close or blatant copy. As such, they would base their evaluation on this information or knowledge.

Alternatively, if consumers are highly familiar with the model brand, they will have negative perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. This is as a result of the stored knowledge of the model brand as the “original”. Therefore this will still enhance the perception of the mimic brand as a “copy”. As such, the following hypotheses are postulated:

**H5A:** Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand will lead to a negative perception of luxury towards the mimic brand

**H5B:** Brand familiarity towards the model brand will lead to a negative perception of luxury towards the mimic brand

**H6A:** Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand will lead to a negative product evaluation of the mimic brand

**H6B:** Brand familiarity towards the model brand will lead to a negative product evaluation of the mimic brand

### **Vavilovian Mimicry:**

Based on the discussion above, if consumers are familiar with the Vavilovian mimic brand, the stored knowledge about the Vavilovian mimic brand will generate positive perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. This is due to the fact that consumers would be aware that Vavilovian mimics are subtle and moderate mimics that mimic the symbolic and functional aspects of the model brand. Therefore, the transfer of the positive associations from the model brand will be activated when forming evaluations.

Similarly, if consumers are highly familiar with the model brand, they will have positive perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. This is as a result of the stored knowledge of the model brand as the “original”. As such, the following hypotheses are postulated:

**H5A:** Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand will lead to a positive perception of luxury towards the mimic brand

**H5B:** Brand familiarity towards the model brand will lead to a positive perception of luxury towards the mimic brand

**H6A:** Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand will lead to a positive product evaluation of the mimic brand

**H6B:** Brand familiarity towards the model brand will lead to a positive product evaluation of the mimic brand

### **Pouyannian Mimicry:**

Based on the discussion above, if consumers are familiar with the Vavilovian mimic brand, the stored knowledge about the Pouyannian mimic brand will generate positive perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. This is due to the fact that consumers would be aware of Pouyannian mimic brands as they are relatively well known brands in the marketplace. In addition, they are subtle and moderate mimics that mimic the stylistic and conceptual aspects of the model brand. Therefore, the transfer of the positive associations from the model brand will be activated when forming evaluations.

Similarly, if consumers are highly familiar with the model brand, they will have positive perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. This is as a result of the stored knowledge of the model brand as the “original”. As such, the following hypotheses are postulated:

**H5A:** Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand will lead to a positive perception of luxury towards the mimic brand

**H5B:** Brand familiarity towards the model brand will lead to a positive perception of luxury towards the mimic brand

**H6A:** Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand will lead to a positive product evaluation of the mimic brand

**H6B:** Brand familiarity towards the model brand will lead to a positive product evaluation of the mimic brand

Based on the above discussion on the hypotheses for the three types of mimicry, and the relationship between brand familiarity towards the mimic brand/model brand, perception of luxury towards the mimic brand, and product evaluation of the mimic brand, it is postulated that:

**H11A:** Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand will mediate the relationship between the perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand.

**H11B:** Brand familiarity towards the model brand will mediate the relationship between the perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand.

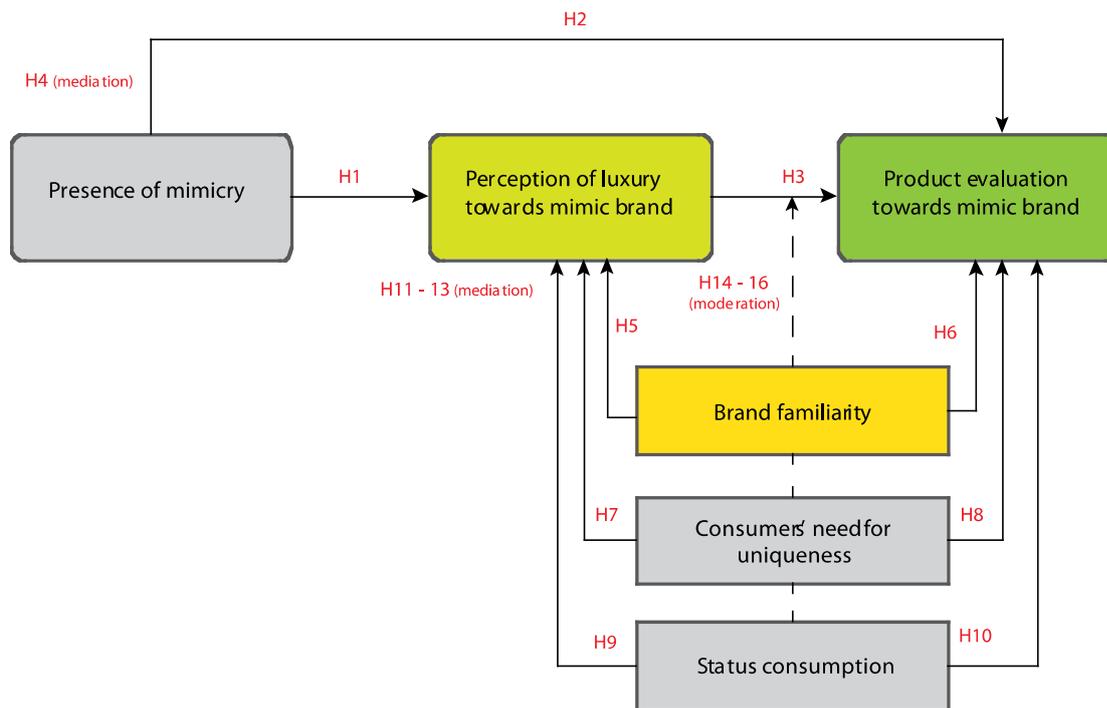
In addition, it is postulated that:

**H14A:** Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand will moderate the relationship between the perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand.

**H14B:** Brand familiarity towards the model brand will moderate the relationship between the perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand.

Based on the above discussion, the summary of the following hypotheses (H5, H6, H11 and H14) for the three types of mimicry are postulated as presented in **Table 3.13**.

**Figure 3.12:** Model for H5 (a, b), H6 (a, b), H11 (a, b) and H14 (a, b)



**Theories supporting Hypotheses H5 (a, b), H6 (a, b), H11 (a, b) and H14 (a, b):**  
Anchoring Theory

**Table 3.13:** Hypotheses for H5 (a, b), H6 (a, b), H11 (a, b) and H14 (a, b)

Hypotheses		Wicklerian-Eisnerian	Vavilovian	Pouyannian
<b>H5a</b>	Brand familiarity towards a mimic brand will lead to a positive/negative perception of luxury	-	+	+
<b>H5b</b>	Brand familiarity towards a mimic brand will lead to a positive/negative product evaluation	-	+	+
<b>H6a</b>	Brand familiarity towards a model brand will lead to a positive/negative perception of luxury	-	+	+
<b>H6b</b>	Brand familiarity towards a model brand will lead to a positive/negative product evaluation	-	+	+
<b>H11a</b>	Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand will mediate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand			
<b>H11b</b>	Brand familiarity towards the model brand will mediate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand			
<b>H14a</b>	Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand will moderate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand			
<b>H14b</b>	Brand familiarity towards the model brand will moderate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand			

## **HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT FOR H7, H8, H12 AND H15**

### **Consumers' Need for Uniqueness**

Snyder and Fromkin's (1980) uniqueness theory suggests that consumers' need for uniqueness is the concept of being different from others or to become distinctive among a group. According to Esposito (2011), in modern society every consumer is seeking his/her own originality and trying to be seen or recognized by significant others as a unique and authentic subject. This is often signalled through material objects one acquires which are to serve the purpose of enhancing one's self-image (e.g. Belk, 1988; McCracken, 1986; Richins, 1994; Tian and McKenzie, 2001) and social image (e.g. Fisher and Price, 1992; McAlister and Pessemier, 1982; Tian et al., 2001). Uniqueness motivation is a propelling force that guides and motivates people to act (Markus and Kitayama, 1992). Furthermore, it is argued that the search for uniqueness is a continual process (Snyder 1992) that requires an individual to continually seek means to move away from the norm so as to maintain their differences over time (Tian and McKenzie, 2001). In addition, Romani et al. (2012) stated that consumers enjoy being distinguished away from the mainstream. Therefore, consumer goods that helps to distinguish a consumer away from the mainstream will be seen as unique or distinctive (Romani et al., 2012).

The act of setting one apart from the norm is known as counter-conformity (Nail, 1986). According to Tepper (1997), there are three types of consumers' need for uniqueness; they are namely creative choice counter-conformity, unpopular choice counter-conformity and avoidance of similarity.

**Creative choice counter-conformity** is that when expressing one's distinctiveness from others require one to create their own style through goods that convey self-image (Kron 1983). This form of counter-conformity involves purchasing "acceptable" products that reflect one's personal style and taste through acquisition of material possessions that are novel, original or unique to what other consumers purchase (Kron, 1983). More commonly, market mavens are suggested to belong to this group of consumers (Solomon and Rabolt, 2004). Brands and products that offer distinguishable attributes such as prestige, exclusivity and unique features are appealing to this group of consumers (Knight and Kim, 2007).

**Unpopular choice counter-conformity** on the other hand is "the selection or use of products and brands that deviate from group norms and thus risk social disapproval that consumers

withstand in order to establish their differences from others” (Tian et al., 2001, pg. 52). The product selections can be seen as “unacceptable” by social standards and are often not chosen by other consumers (Tian and McKenzie, 2001). Furthermore, their choices may be considered bizarre (Simonson and Nowlis, 2000), yet they do not heed criticisms from others (Knight and Kim, 2007).

Lastly, **avoidance of similarity** is the disinterest and discontinued use of products that have become less scarce and have become a mass consumed product (i.e. products that are mainstream). Consumers who pursue this form of uniqueness would prefer products that are of a “minority choice” and are acceptable and good products. However, the choices are not seen as a typical product for the group (Tian and McKenzie, 2001). It is to steer away from over popular or mainstream that has become the norm to establish one’s uniqueness. For example, these type of consumers are likely to purchase from vintage stores and will sought out discontinued styles or even combine their clothes in unusual ways (Knight and Kim, 2007).

While these are the three common forms of counter-conformity identified, the options that consumers pursue can vary depending on situation and personal preference. Consumers who have higher need for uniqueness would apply these three forms of counter-conformity responses on a daily basis (Tian and McKenzie, 2001).

Due to the effects of globalization, it steers many consumers towards non-conformity and individualism. Non-conformity can be a result of consumers who are unaware of social norms or that they are not responsive towards the reactions of others (Tepper and Hoyle, 1996). Based on this, the scarcity of luxury brands can enhance value for consumers to differentiate themselves from others (Burns and Brandy, 2001). Therefore, consumers with greater need for uniqueness would likely place greater value on possessions that convey relative rarity and exude the perception of scarcity (Tian and McKenzie, 2001). Although it can be suggested that consumers may choose to purchase high priced items that seen as scarce products, they can also make creative choices or unpopular choices that portray their acquisitions as rare or scarce. This may not have anything to do with price. As such, consumers’ need for uniqueness is independent of an individual’s income (Tian and McKenzie, 2001).

For a luxury product, the perceived uniqueness and conspicuousness are dimensions that serve a social function. A consumer who strives to be unique will try to enhance their social image and self-image. Through the consumption of a scarcer and rarer product, such as a luxury brand it creates a perceived uniqueness that is both desirable for the consumer and creates desirability for the brand (Turunen and Laaksonen, 2011). Furthermore, the expressive nature of a luxury brand generates expressive motives behind the purchase of luxury brands. Other than the need for conformity and need for communicating one's own identity, the last would be consumers' need for uniqueness (Hudders, 2012). In addition, it was found that preference for scarcer products is higher for consumers with a high need for uniqueness (Lynn, 1991).

### **Underpinning theories H7, H8, H12 and H15**

#### **Rarity Principle**

Theorizes that the “scarcer” the brand, the more valuable it is based on rarity principle (Dubois and Paternault, 1995; Mason 1981; Phau and Prendergast, 2000). In the luxury brand industry, rarity expresses exclusivity and self-image. Furthermore, Giacalone (2006) noted that the volume of production and rarity of the products are in conflict. As Atsmon et al. (2010) stated, luxury brands are considered as products whose price and quality ratios are the highest in the market. Lynn (1991) asserted that scarcity of a product enhances the perceived value of a product. Through the use of words like ‘limited edition’, it enhances that value of the product. Furthermore, it helps consumers differentiate themselves from others (Burns and Brandy, 2001). Therefore, luxury brands strive to preserve their value by preventing over-diffusion so as to be perceived as ‘rarer’.

In addition, consumers may value scarcer products because of the contribution to individual need or sense of uniqueness (Brock, 1968; Fromkin, 1970). As such, Lynn (1991) postulated that in order to increase the perceived value of a product or service, the perceived scarcity for the product can be manipulated to reflect exclusivity. Some of the marketing practices that utilize this tactic are distributing through exclusive outlets, using premium and prestige pricing on products, or restricting the number of order sizes of the products. It has been highlighted that mimic brands are often scarcer than model brands (Bates, 1862; Poulton, 1890; Ruxton et al., 2005) and is non-mainstream (Romani et al., 2012). This would therefore enhance the appeal of mimic brands to consumers who have a sense of uniqueness.

## **Theory of Social Representations**

It is defined as the influence of a social group on the opinions and values of its members through the collective elaborations of a social object (i.e. subject of common interest) (Moscovici, 1963; 1984). Brands (original/counterfeit) are sought for what they represent in a social environment (Cordell et al., 1996; Cova, 1997; Elliott and Wattanasuwan, 1998) and these beliefs and values which are developed within the social environment and are expressed by shared common-sense representations (Stewart and Lacassagne, 2005). In addition, social representations are seen as a collective elaboration of social objects, such as a subject matter of common interest by a social group. These can include ideas, thoughts, images and also knowledge about a social object (Moscovici, 1963; p. 1984).

Dissimilar to perceptions and attitudes, which can focus on individual opinion, social representations involves the social knowledge, which suggests that the content of the knowledge and its significance for social groups are relevant (Penz and Stottinger, 2008b). Once social representations are formulated, they can influence attitudes and behaviour. This in turn impacts on a consumer's behaviour through the guide of selection and evaluation of presented information. According to Jodelet (1993), social representations are the interpretations of reality and represent the guidelines for individuals in their surroundings.

Once social representations are formed, they are made up of structurally organized elements (Abric 1996). There are two different elements within a social representation. Firstly, there are central elements that form the core of a social groups' social representation. This core (or nucleus) aims to organize the social groups' ideas, and operates as a normative constrain for the social group. This core is stated to change less quickly and is stable over time. Secondly, there are peripheral elements that may change based on consumer's individual experience and that protect the core (Abric, 1993).

### **Justification for Hypotheses H7 and H8**

Based on the preceding discussion with support of Rarity Principle and Theory of Social Representations, the differences between the three types of mimicry are postulated to show different relationships as follows:

#### **Wicklerian-Eisnerian Mimicry:**

Based on the above discussion, Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimic brands are scarcer than model brands in the marketplace. Therefore it is postulated that:

**H7A:** Consumers' need for uniqueness will lead to a positive perception of luxury towards the mimic brand

**H7B:** Consumers' need for uniqueness will lead to a positive product evaluation of the mimic brand

#### **Vavilovian Mimicry:**

Based on the above discussion, Vavilovian mimic brands are scarcer than model brands in the marketplace. Therefore it is postulated that:

**H7A:** Consumers' need for uniqueness will lead to a positive perception of luxury towards the mimic brand

**H7B:** Consumers' need for uniqueness will lead to a positive product evaluation of the mimic brand

### **Pouyannian Mimicry:**

Based on the above discussion, Pouyannian mimic brands are scarcer than model brands in the marketplace. Therefore it is postulated that:

**H7A:** Consumers' need for uniqueness will lead to a positive perception of luxury towards the mimic brand

**H7B:** Consumers' need for uniqueness will lead to a positive product evaluation of the mimic brand

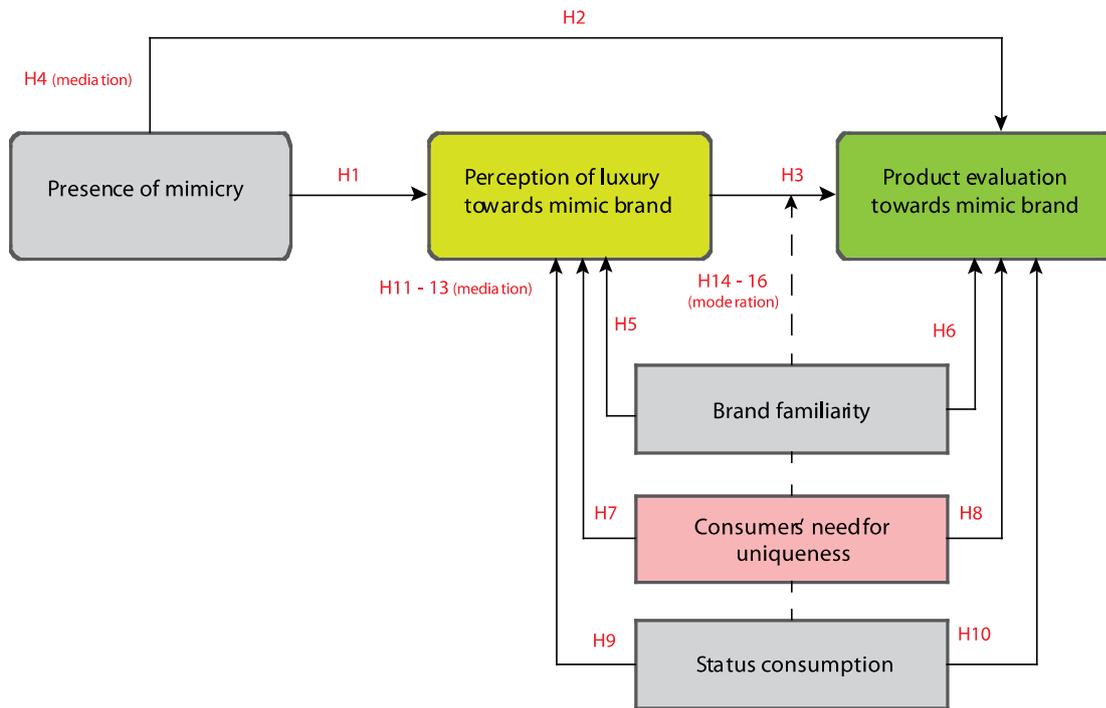
Based on the above discussion on the hypotheses for the three types of mimicry, and the relationship between consumers' need for uniqueness, perception of luxury towards the mimic brand, and product evaluation of the mimic brand, it is postulated that:

**H12:** Consumers' need for uniqueness will mediate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand

**H15:** Consumers' need for uniqueness will moderate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand

Based on the above discussion, the summary of the following hypotheses (H7, H8, H12 and H15) for the three types of mimicry are postulated as presented in **Table 3.15**.

**Figure 3.14:** Model for H7, H8, H12 and H15



**Theories supporting Hypotheses H7, H8, H12 and H15:**  
Rarity Principle and Theory of Social Representations

**Table 3.15:** Hypotheses for H7, H8, H12 and H15

Hypotheses		Wicklerian-Eisnerian	Vavilovian	Pouyannian
<b>H7</b>	Consumers' need for uniqueness will lead to a positive/negative perception of luxury	+	+	+
<b>H8</b>	Consumers' need for uniqueness will lead to a positive/negative product evaluation	+	+	+
<b>H12</b>	Consumers' need for uniqueness will mediate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation towards the mimic brand			
<b>H15</b>	Consumers' need for uniqueness will moderate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand			

## **HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT FOR H9, H10, H13 AND H16**

### **Status Consumption**

Status consumption has long been defined as the purchase, use, display and consumption of goods and services as a means of gaining status (Veblen, 1899; Packard, 1959; Mason, 1981; Scitovsky, 1992; Eastman et al., 1997). Furthermore, it involves a social ranking or recognition that a group would award to an individual (Packard, 1959; Dawson and Cavell, 1986; Scitovsky, 1992; Eastman et al., 1997), that is irrespective of social and income level. It is inaccurate to assume that only the wealthy are prone to status consumption (Freedman, 1991; Miller 1991; Eastman et al., 1997; Shipman, 2004). Status consumption is for consumers who are seeking self-satisfaction as well as to display their prestige and status to surrounding others usually through visible evidence (Eastman et al., 1997).

For fashion conscious consumers, they would seek not to wear the same outfit as what others are wearing but would seek goods that contain a certain trend feature but is differentiated (Suk and Hemphill, 2009). The status function of goods is signalled through the brand image and trademark of a product. Therefore, a status conscious consumer will be more likely attracted by a status brand's image and symbolic characteristics (O'Cass and Frost, 2002). In addition, status consumers seek to possess brands that exude brand symbols that reflect their self-identity. Hence, it is believed that mimic brands are perceived to be less prestigious as they are often seen as "copies" or imitations (d'Astous and Gargouri, 2001). Arguably, it can be suggested that mimic brands are harmful to the model brand and are therefore seen to be lower in status and prestige.

## **Underpinning theories for H9, H10, H13 and H16**

### **Theory of Conspicuous Consumption**

Veblen (1899) first accounted that human apparel is worn for physical comfort and reputable appearance. It was indicated then that the function of dress is to indicate wealth, social rank, respect or success (Edgell, 1992). It is therefore said that conspicuous consumption is pursued to enhance one's prestige and status in the society (O'Cass and McEwen, 2004). This can be done through the public demonstration of signalling wealth and communicating affluence to others through the consumption of status goods (Eastman et al., 1999). It was asserted that Veblen's theory of conspicuous consumption is anchored on the fact that consumers who display their wealth are rewarded with preferential treatment and such an

effect is dependent upon the comparison of the desirability of signalling through price, quantity and quality (Bagwell and Bernheim, 1996). The intention of such consumption is in the interest of seeking ‘esteem’ and ‘envy’ from the eyes of significant others around the individual (Phau and Prendergast, 2000). There are two key motivations in relation to conspicuous consumption (Veblen, 1899). The first is the need for pecuniary emulation which is defined as consumer’s attempt to project the image that they are a class above than the rest. The second looks as invidious comparison, which is when consumers distinguish themselves from those they perceive to be from classes below them (Phau and Prendergast, 2000).

### **Signalling Theory**

Based on the signalling theory, people often diverge or converge to ensure that others form desired identity inferences about them (Berger and Heath, 2007). Products, attitudes, brands, and preferences (tastes) act as signals of identity (Wernerfelt, 1990). The signalling theory postulates that brands connects and communicates identity to groups who share similar tastes or use similar products. Furthermore, it is common that people make inferences about each other based on their possessions (Belk et al., 1982; Burroughs et al., 1991). Most of the inferences are based on the possessions that someone owns. The objects that symbolize status and success are often high priced and are relatively expensive in comparison to a similar product within the product category (Han et al., 2010). Although price is suggested to connote status, price is not the only signal that determines the desirability or exclusivity of a status brand (Han et al., 2010). The brand choice of a consumer can send meaningful social signal to other consumers about the personality, image and the type of person using the brand (Wernerfelt, 1990). Therefore, the symbolism lies in the association between the brand and the user of “types” of consumers who purchases and uses the brand (Muniz and O’Guinn, 2001). Therefore, consumers are influenced by their own social or reference group (Bearden and Etzel, 1982; Whittler and Spira, 2002), those who they aspire to be like (Escalas and Bettman, 2003; 2005), those they will like to be disassociated with (White and Dahl, 2006). Therefore the signalling theory serves as a foundation in explaining the importance of the meanings of brands in attracting and repelling consumers (Sirgy, 1982).

### **Justification for Hypotheses H9 and H10**

Based on the preceding discussion of the Theory of Conspicuous Consumption and Signalling Theory, the differences between the three types of mimicry are postulated to show different relationships. As such, the reasoning for each of the variation in the relationships is explained.

#### **Wicklerian-Eisnerian Mimicry:**

Based on the discussion above, Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimics are seen as close or blatant copies of the model brand. They are therefore seen as lower in quality and status. Therefore, it is postulated that:

**H9:** Status consumption will lead to a negative perception of luxury towards the mimic brand

**H10:** Status consumption will lead to a negative product evaluation of the mimic brand

#### **Vavilovian Mimicry:**

Based on the discussion above, while Vavilovian mimics are moderately similar to model brands, they however unknown or lesser known brands. Therefore, it is postulated that:

**H9:** Status consumption will lead to a negative perception of luxury towards the mimic brand

**H10:** Status consumption will lead to a negative product evaluation of the mimic brand

#### **Pouyannian Mimicry:**

Based on the discussion above, Pouyannian mimic brands emulate the styling and conceptual aspects of a model brand that reflects the trends of the marketplace. In addition, they are relatively well-known brands. Therefore, it is postulated that:

**H9:** Status consumption will lead to a positive perception of luxury towards the mimic brand

**H10:** Status consumption will lead to a positive product evaluation of the mimic brand

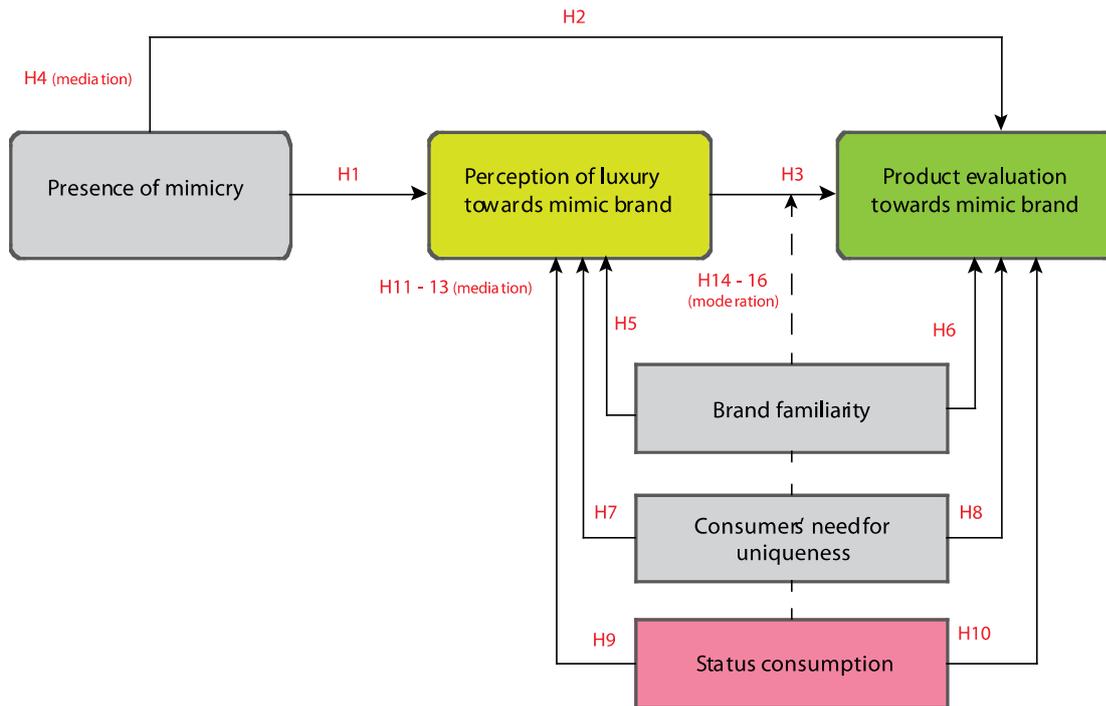
Based on the above discussion on the hypotheses for the three types of mimicry, and the relationship between status consumption, perception of luxury towards the mimic brand, and product evaluation of the mimic brand, it is postulated that:

**H12:** Status consumption will mediate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand

**H15:** Status consumption will moderate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand

Based on the above discussion, the summary of the following hypotheses (H9, H10, H13 and H16) for the three types of mimicry are postulated as presented in **Table 3.17**.

**Figure 3.16:** Model for H9, H10, H13 and H16



**Theories supporting Hypotheses H9, H10, H13 and H16:**

Theory of Conspicuous Consumption

**Table 3.17:** Hypotheses for H9, H10, H13 and H16

Hypotheses		Wicklerian-Eisnerian	Vavilovian	Pouyannian
<b>H9</b>	Status consumption will lead to a positive/negative perception of luxury	-	-	+
<b>H10</b>	Status consumption will lead to a positive/negative product evaluation	-	-	+
<b>H13</b>	Status consumption will mediate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand			
<b>H16</b>	Status consumption will moderate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand			

### **CONCLUDING COMMENTS FOR CHAPTER THREE**

As evidenced by the preceding chapters, there is a dearth of research in the area of brand mimicry. As a result, a number of gaps are postulated and needs to be bridged. This research attempts to bridge the current gaps in research by providing knowledge and insights into some of the more important questions surrounding brand mimicry. However, as discussed in Chapter 2, there is a need for the development of scales pertaining to the three types of brand mimicry prior to the accurate and rigorous study on the three types of brand mimicry. As such, the research will consist of scale development of the three types of brand mimicry and subsequently a series of studies (main study – Chapter 6) will be conducted to validate and generalize the scale across a number of product categories. The methodology for the main study will be discussed in Chapter 4. Subsequent Chapters 5 and 6 will discuss the scale development procedure and the data analysis and findings respectively.

# **CHAPTER 4**

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter outlines the methodology used for the main study (Chapter 6). This chapter begins with the research design. These include the discussion of the experimental design adopted, the preparation of the stimulus, and the pretesting for this study. The next section presents the selection of the intended research participants and an explanation of the instruments used for the study. Next, a description of the data collection procedure and method and the intended analyses techniques is presented. Lastly, an overview of the ethical issues involved in the study is outlined. One point to emphasize on the onset is that different parts of the methodology of this study including stimulus generalization, data collection techniques and other related issues are largely adapted and developed by replicating the research method of Hagtvedt and Patrick (2008). Three scales are also developed in this study and the process is documented in Chapter 5.

### **RESEARCH DESIGN**

The research design for this study is based on an experimental approach with a factorial design of a 3 (types of mimicry) x 4 (product categories) matrix. The concept of experimental relates to techniques that include a manipulation of stimuli or tasks that are randomly assigned to groups of respondents to different conditions (Simonson, 1994). This approach has been used in past studies examining confusion (Loken et al., 1986; Kent and Allen, 1993; Olsen et al., 2003) and product similarity (Lefkoff-Hagius and Mason, 1993; Bijmolt et al., 1998; d'Astous and Gargouri, 2001; Warlop and Alba, 2004; Miceli and Pieters, 2010; van Horen and Pieters, 2012a; 2012b). It has been suggested that experimental studies allow respondents to perform purchase or purchase like tasks. However, this approach is not without flaws. One of the disadvantages of an experimental approach would be the complexity of the experiment (Simonson, 1994). In order to minimize the influence of alternative factors, the experiments are carefully designed and controlled for. In addition, the experiments are designed to allow respondents to focus on the choices and evaluation of the brands, rather than on the specific trademarks of the brands. This is in order to reduce the demand characteristics of possible biasness of how the questions should be answered and to

avoid possible leading questions (Simonson, 1994). The outline of the types of mimicry and the product categories with the brands (stimulus) are outlined in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1:** Stimulus for experimental study

Type of Mimicry	Cars	Clothes	Shoes	Jewelry
Wicklerian – Eisnerian Mimicry	Study 1	Study 2	Study 3	Study 4
	Shuanghuan Noble vs. Smart ForTwo	H&M vs. Stella McCartney	Kmart “Birkenstocks” vs. Birkenstocks	Reebok vs. Tiffany & Co.
Vavilovian Mimicry	Study 5	Study 6	Study 7	Study 8
	Geely vs. Rolls Royce	Crocodile vs. Lacoste	Forever 21 vs. Valentino	Lovelinks vs. Pandora
Pouyannian Mimicry	Study 9	Study 10	Study 11	Study 12
	Lexus vs. Mercedes Benz	Gap vs. Burberry	Guess vs. Gucci	Thomas Sabo vs. Tiffany & Co.

In order to capture the essence of brand mimicry, extensive research into existing brands that display mimicry is conducted. An extensive search using various sources, such as popular press publications, magazines, internet, reviews, forums, blogs and other sources of information are used to identify brands that are potentially known by respondents to display one of the three types of brand mimicry. Brands are also evaluated based on presence in the country. Further, mainly global brands are selected to avoid possible alienation of certain respondents. The final set of brands selected went through a panel of judges in a pretest to discuss the relevance and knowledge of each set of brands before using it for the final questionnaire. The brands are then selected and applied to each type of mimicry. The brands are also pre-tested to ensure that they fall within the scope of luxury brands. The four product categories allow the scale to be applied across a broader spectrum of products to better represent the luxury brand industry.

### **PRODUCT CATEGORY SELECTION**

Fashion products are representative of the luxury industry. While not everyone follows fashion closely, somehow consumers are in touch with fashion (Suk and Hemphill, 2009).

Based on a study commissioned by Davenport Lyons in 2005/2006 (Ledbury Research), the top four typical form of luxury goods purchased by consumers are clothing, shoes, watches and jewelry (Wall and Large, 2010). Cars are considered another form of luxury that is often overlooked. In addition, Wilcox et al. (2009) suggested that there is the lack of evidence on counterfeit cars. However, the recent industry statistics from an industry report from Bain & Company (2012) projected the luxury car industry to be worth €290 billion in revenue. This suggests that the luxury cars market is a very lucrative market. There may not be counterfeit cars, but there are observations of mimicry in terms of styling between cars. Based on this premise, these four product categories are selected to rigorously test for the presence and different types of mimicry. The reason for the choice of four product categories is to allow greater generalizability. These categories have been pretested on respondents to ensure they are seen to be luxurious for consumers.

### **STIMULUS DESIGN AND PREPARATION**

The stimulus is produced by a professional graphic designer who retrieved and sourced the brand and product images from the official company sites of the brands. Slight modifications of the images were conducted to ensure that they look professional and authentic. However, there is no manipulation of the content of the images. The images are of the products from various angles to ensure a better evaluation from respondents and to emulate a purchase-like perspective. This also allows respondents to evaluate the brands from a number of perspectives and a variety of images rather than only one image or product. This also attempts to provide a closer examination as in line with the procedure set out by Hagtvedt and Patrick (2008), where respondents have time to view the stimulus. In line with past research, similarity studies have often used pair-wise brands to assess product similarity comparisons (e.g. Loken et al., 1986; Bijmolt et al., 1998). Therefore, this study used a pair of brands (a model brand and a mimic brand) to test for the presence of mimicry. In addition, real life brands are chosen and used for the study to improve ecological validity (Ellis and Hornik, 1988; Cowan, 1989; Thøgersen, 2004).

### **PRETEST OF STIMULUS**

#### **Focus Group**

A focus group with the panel of eight judges comprising of a mix of experts from the luxury brand industry, academics and other industry professionals was conducted to ensure that the three types of mimicry are distinct and that the stimulus falls clearly into each type of

mimicry. A definition and explanation of each type of mimicry is provided to the panel of judges as a guide to the exercise.

### **Respondent Pretest**

Students in a large Western Australia university were used as the sample to pretest the stimulus and the scale items for testing the concepts of mimicry. This is conducted across three different classroom settings each consisting of 20 students. Brands assessed with the highest familiarity were chosen to create the stimulus for each product category and corresponding type of mimicry. A number of considerations such as whether it falls into the nominated form of mimicry, whether the brand has an international presence and also whether it is considered a luxury brand are filtered prior to using the brands for the pre-test.

In the exercise, the students are given a section to note their open-ended thoughts and responses to the stimulus shown and what other brands that they can relate to. An open discussion on the pretest was undertaken to encourage feedback on the layout, design, stimulus, procedure and instructions of the experimental study. The student subjects are then given a chance to provide other alternative examples they have encountered in the past and other keywords that can be used to describe the similarities between the model and the mimic brand.

## **RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS (SAMPLE FOR FINAL STUDY)**

Undergraduate and postgraduate university students studying at a large Western Australian university are used as the subjects for the study. Student samples has been often used and supported to be a representation of general consumers (DelVecchio 2000; Yavas 1994). Student samples have been used extensively in past studies on counterfeits, piracy and imitations (e.g. Loken et al., 1986; Lefkoff-Hagius and Mason, 1993; Wee et al., 1995; Cordell et al., 1997; Kim et al., 2009; Miceli and Pieters, 2010; van Horen and Pieters, 2012). It was stated by Loken et al. (1986) that students are more highly sensitized to brand or product origin, therefore they are good sample to use for this study. Further, the use of a student sample is beneficial for this study as they represent a homogenous group of consumers that is suitable for an experimental design (Calder et al., 1981). It can be suggested that there is lesser chances of the data being influenced by consumers' life stations, personal circumstances, and age differences. Furthermore, students would have a moderate level of brand familiarity towards products in the marketplace. However the brands selected have been pretested to test for brand familiarity and exposure within the Australian context prior to use in the actual study.

Furthermore, there is an emergence of a large number of brands that are targeted at young consumers that employ mimicry. The age of the sample would range from 18 to 30. The true intention of the study is not revealed to the sample. However, an overview of the context of the study is explained to the students during the debriefing. Each group is only exposed to one set of stimulus to reduce the likelihood of confusion between the various stimuli.

## **SURVEY INSTRUMENT**

The survey instrument consists of established scales and the only scale to be developed in this study would be the "presence of mimicry" scale. The scales for the various constructs within the study are all reliable with Cronbach's alpha of above .8, which is deemed acceptable (Nunnally, 1970). The reliabilities of the scale items are available in Table 4.2.

**Table 4.2:** Scale reliabilities and sources

Scale	Source	No. of observed items	$\alpha$
1. Presence of Mimicry	<i>To be developed for this study</i>	N/A	N/A
2. Perception of Luxury	Adapted from Hagtvedt and Patrick (2008)	4 items	.94
3. Product Evaluation	Adapted from Hagtvedt and Patrick (2008)	4 items	.92
4. Brand Familiarity	Kent and Allen (1994)	3 items	.85
5. Consumer's Need for Uniqueness	Tian et al. (2001)	31 items	.85
6. Status Consumption	Eastman et al. (1999)	5 items	.86

The survey is structured with care by allowing the participants to have a chance to evaluate the brands through comparison of the stimuli provided. This intends to emulate a real life purchase decision where by comparisons between the model and the mimic brand can be made (Simonson, 1994; d'Astous and Gargouri, 2001). The sections within the survey will be discussed in the following sections. Please refer to Appendix F for the full survey. All the measures are described as follows:

### **Scale Measure 1: Presence of mimicry**

To assess the presence of mimicry, part of this research is to develop a scale to measure each form of mimicry. Based on the literature review (Chapter 2) and existing theoretical justification (Chapter 3), three brand mimicry scales are explicitly developed for this study. A thorough description of the scale development process established by Churchill (1979) and DeVellis (2003) is described in Chapter 5.

The measures compare key product features between the model and the mimic brand. Therefore, based on past studies on product similarity and perception of similarity between products or brands (Lefkoff-Hagius and Mason, 1993; Wee et al. 1995; Tom et al. 1998; Walsh and Mitchell, 2005; Penz and Stottinger, 2008a) and each form of mimicry would have specific scale items that pertain to measuring that specific form of mimicry. Previous

studies within the copying or product similarity literature have often used Likert scales (Loken et al., 1986; Bijmolt et al., 1998; Penz and Stottinger, 2008a).

*Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimicry Scale:* the scale has identified three attributes and consists of 11 items. These attributes are namely image characteristics, beneficial characteristics and physical characteristics. Respondents were asked to indicate on a 7 point Likert scale whether they perceive similarity between the model and the mimic brand.

*Vavilovian mimicry Scale:* the scale has identified three attributes. These attributes are namely physical characteristics, symbolic characteristics and beneficial characteristics consisting of 15 items. Respondents were asked to indicate on a 7 point Likert scale whether they perceive similarity between the model and the mimic brand.

*Pouyannian mimicry Scale:* the scale has identified three attributes. These attributes are namely image characteristics, intellectual characteristics and physical characteristics consisting of 13 items. Respondents were asked to indicate on a 7 point Likert scale whether they perceive similarity between the model and the mimic brand.

### **Scale Measure 2: Perception of luxury**

The measure to examine perception of luxury is adapted from Hagtvedt and Patrick (2008). While the original 5-item scale used was a semantic scale, for this study we have adapted to a 7-point Likert scale. A negative worded item was also included in the scale. The respondents were posed with questions like “I perceive X brand to be luxurious”. These items are presented at **Appendix F**.

### **Scale Measure 3: Product evaluation**

The measure of product evaluation was based from the study by Hagtvedt and Patrick (2008). The 5 item scale was adapted from a 7-point semantic scale to a 7-point Likert scale. To measure product evaluation, questions like “I like X very much”, “I have favourable evaluations towards X” are posed to the respondents. The items can be seen at **Appendix F**.

#### **Scale Measure 4: Brand familiarity**

There are numerous brand familiarity scales. Most of the scales used in imitation studies are one item scales (Miceli and Pieters, 2010; van Horen and Pieters, 2012a, 2012b). However, for this study Kent and Allen's (1994) scale is used as it measures experience, knowledge and familiarity. An example of the question is "I am familiar with the X brand". The items can be seen in **Appendix F**.

#### **Scale Measure 5: Consumers' need for uniqueness**

Based on Tian et al.'s (2001) 31 scale items, the consumers' need for uniqueness is used in this study. Although there was a refined version of 9 items by Knight and Kim (2009), the original scale comprising of three dimensions, namely avoidance of similarity, unpopular choice counter-conformity and creative choice counter-conformity was used. The items are measured on a 7-point Likert scale. The respondents are posed with questions such as "I collect unusual products as a way of telling people I am different", "I often look for one-of-a-kind product or brands so that I create a style that is all my own", and "I often dress unconventionally even when it is likely to offend others. The items can be seen in **Appendix F**.

#### **Scale Measure 6: Status consumption**

Status consumption is consistently measured in studies involving counterfeits or copying of luxury brands (Phau and Teah, 2009; Sharma and Chan, 2011). Numerous studies have validated the scale across numerous cultural backgrounds and contexts. The established scale is from Eastman et al.'s (1999) scale. The instrument consisted of five items in the form of a 7-point Likert scale. The items consist of "I would buy a product just because it has status", "I am interested in new products with status", "The status of a product is irrelevant to me" to name a few. The items can be seen in **Appendix F**.

#### **Demographics**

The respondent's gender, age, income, education and country of residence were collected to provide a clear profile of the respondents. Results of the analysis are shown in Chapter 6.

## **DATA COLLECTION AND PROCEDURE**

Data collection was administered through a convenience student sample in the large Western Australian University. The researcher is responsible for managing the data collection process in a classroom setting with a face to face interview with the respondents. The student samples are also informed of the incentive in terms of credit which they will only receive upon full completion of the exercise. After providing the background into the study, the instructions on the process of the exercise is delivered. They are reassured of anonymity issues and confidentiality. Furthermore, they are informed that this is an unpaid study that is not linked to any industry or brand. They are made known of any ethical issues or concerns and they have the option to opt out of the study at any point in time.

The students are told to complete the exercise whereby there is no discussion between participants. The questionnaires are then distributed face down. The cover page consists of details such as the objectives of the study, the ethics clearance number, and contact details to assure compliance to the ethical standards set by the Ethics committee. They are then told to complete Section A, which comprises of scale items of brand familiarity towards the mimic brand. This is based upon their own knowledge without the effect of the stimuli (as outlined in Section A). They are then shown a collage of images of the mimic brand which lasted 20 seconds, whereby they are reminded to pay attention to the images. Once they have watched the stimuli, they are told to proceed to the next section which they completed their responses to scale items for product evaluation and perception of luxury (as outlined in Section B). This procedure is repeated for the model brand (Section C and D). Following this, the respondents are told to complete questions that relate to their impression of the perceived similarity between the mimic and the model brand (as outlined in Section E). This was completed at the respondent's own pace. Finally, they were instructed to complete the rest of the exercise which included scales for consumers' need for uniqueness and status consumption (Section F). Finally basic demographic information is collected (Section G). Once the respondents have completed the surveys, they were collected. A short debriefing completed the exercise and respondents were thanked for their time and participation.

One issue that has to be reiterated is that in line with the method by Hagtvedt and Patrick (2008), respondents were given time to look at the stimulus in order to answer the questions based on their impression. The order of the stimuli had no influence on the results (Hagtvedt

and Patrick, 2008), as such that was not taken into account and was consistent throughout the studies to have questions relating to the mimic brand first and model brand after.

## **ANALYSIS METHODS AND STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES**

The first part of the research was to develop three scales that measures three different types of brand mimicry. Based on this premise, the scale development procedure was employed based on Churchill (1979) and DeVellis' (2003) procedure. Structural Equation Modelling using AMOS was utilized to perform CFA in order to derive the final set of scales. The detailed explanation of the scale development process is discussed in Chapter 5.

The purpose of this research is to examine the hypothesized relationships between the presence of mimicry towards perception of luxury and product evaluation of mimic brands. This can be achieved through the use of regressions to test for the relationships. While multiple regressions is acceptable and appropriate, the use of stepwise regression to the relationships of the dimensions within the presence of mimicry scale can reveal important findings that determine the more important factors that influence perception of luxury and product evaluation of mimic brands. Regression analysis is deemed a suitable analytical technique to test for the relationships (Loken et al., 1986), based on past studies that have also employed this statistical technique in order to examine the influence of perceived product similarity.

In addition, there are a number of mediation and moderation effects were tested using mediation analysis following the guidelines of Baron and Kenny (1986). Hierarchical moderated regression is used to test for the moderators within the studies.

## **ETHICAL ISSUES**

The ethical issues are considered in detail prior to the study and the collection of data. Each questionnaire is ethically approved by HREC prior to conducting the data collection to ensure that no ethical concerns will be felt by the respondents. Any sensitive question or confidential information will be filtered before the start of data collection. The ethics numbers are SOM2011004, SOM2011006 and SOM2011035. The approved ethics forms can be seen in **Appendix G**.

The information sheet also provides the consent of the respondents whereby consent is assumed in the return of the completed questionnaire. Assurance to the respondents of the anonymity and confidentiality of their information is provided. As real brands are used in the studies, the respondents are informed that the study is not linked to any particular brand or industry and the data serves only for the fulfilment of a Doctoral degree. Their responses will also be kept at a safe place for five years as in line with the regulations set by the University.

## **CONCLUDING COMMENTS FOR CHAPTER FOUR**

This chapter has set out the measures and method that was used in the analysis of the proposed hypotheses. Discussion on the justification of the choice of measures and methods are presented to ensure that the study is conducted through a rigorous research process in order to achieve the goal of the study. The analysis and results of the hypotheses and research questions presented in Chapter 3 are shown in the chapter 6. The next chapter describes the process and procedures of scale development of the study.

# CHAPTER 5

## SCALE DEVELOPMENT

### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the process undertaken to develop three scales to be used in the research model in this thesis. Each scale will be designed to measure specific types of mimicry (e.g. Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimicry, Vavilovian mimicry and Pouyannian mimicry). A more in-depth review of previous scales and the need for scales has been discussed in Chapter 2 (literature review).

The chapter is structured into 5 parts. The first part of the chapter reviews the definition of each type of mimicry. It also proceeds to describe the steps taken in the initial stages of scale development. While the scales were developed independently of each other; the purpose and process in the development of each scale is the same. To reduce the amount of repetition in the chapter, these steps will be described in this part of the chapter. Part 2 will describe four studies namely for the EFA (study 1), CFA (study 2), validation tests (study 3) and generalizability tests (study 4) for Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimicry scale. The process of generating, purifying, validating and generalizing is described in detail. Part 3 and Part 4 replicates the same process for Vavilovian mimicry (study 5-8) and Pouyannian mimicry (study 9-12) scale respectively. A total of 12 studies were used to generate, purify and validate the scale as depicted in **Table 5.1**. Part 5 provides an overall conclusion to this chapter.

**Table 5.1:** Structure of Scale Development Chapter

STAGE	Wicklerian-Eisnerian Scale	Vavilovian Scale	Pouyannian Scale
<b>1</b>	Study 1	Study 5	Study 9
<b>2</b>	Study 2	Study 6	Study 10
<b>3</b>	Study 3	Study 7	Study 11
<b>4</b>	Study 4	Study 8	Study 12

## **PART 1 – OVERVIEW OF THE SCALE DEVELOPMENT PROCEDURE**

### **DIMENSIONALIZING MIMICRY**

This section will first recap the definition of each type of mimicry and explain the procedure for the scale development. The conceptual definition of each type of mimicry will be used as a foundation to dimensionalize each of the mimicry scale.

**Wicklerian-Eisnerian Mimicry:** *is defined as a form of aggressive mimicry which allows the mimic to imitate the model and to deceive or confuse unsuspecting signal receivers through high physical similarities. They are often harmful to both the signal receiver and the model brand. They are sometimes seen as direct copies of the model brand.*

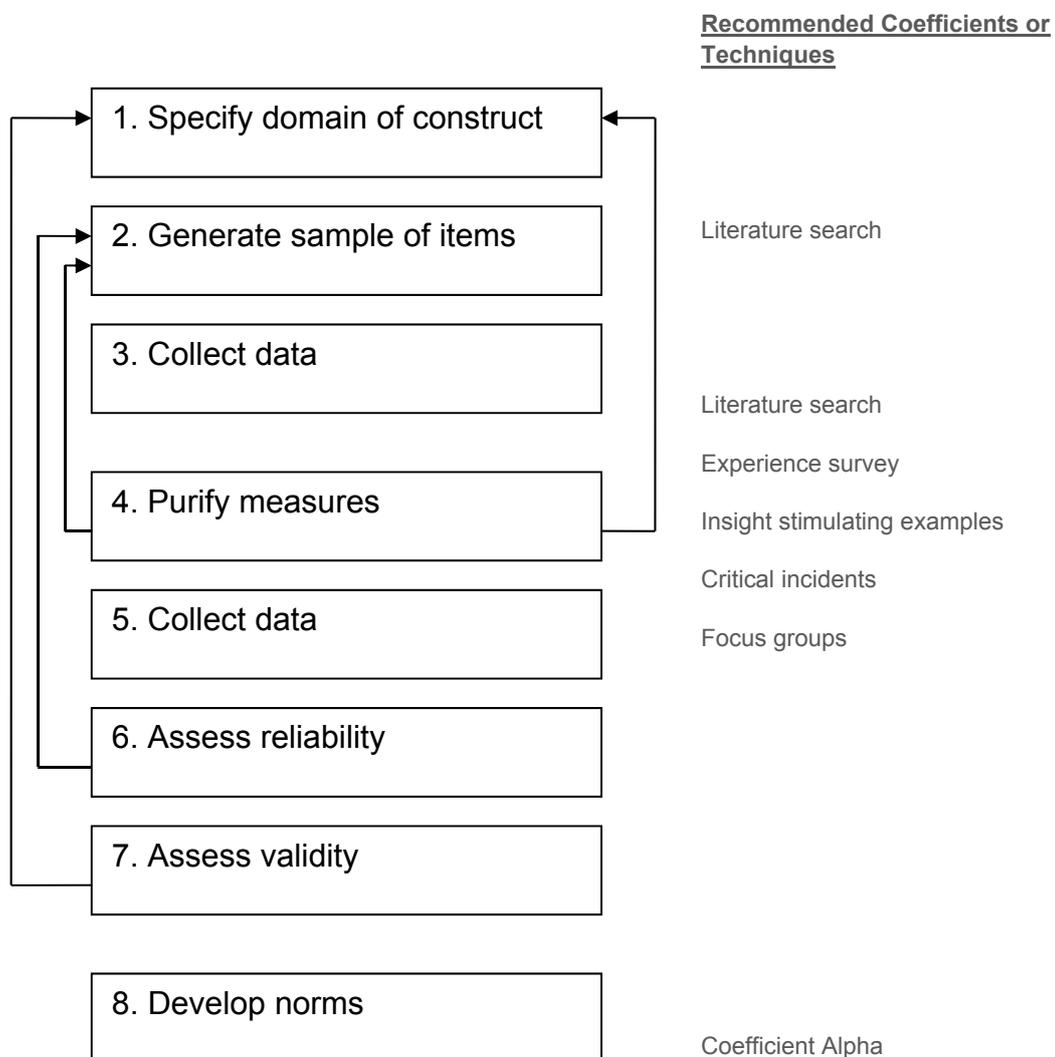
**Vavilovian Mimicry:** *is when the mimic deceives or possibly confuses the signal receiver through symbolic and functional similarities, but as a result evades prosecution. Subsequently, it evolves, innovates and establishes itself away from the model brand over time and becomes an independent brand. They are often moderately similar mimics or so called imitative innovations.*

**Pouyannian Mimicry:** *is defined a form of mimicry where the mimic brand imitates the model brand to diffuse an innovation in a market through moderately similar concepts or styling. The use of this form of mimicry often results in trend creation. They are often inspired copies of the model brand rather than direct copies.*

## SCALE DEVELOPMENT

Research on the processes of scale development was undertaken through the review of a number of key studies, books and journals. Based on the review, Churchill (1979), DeVellis (1991; 2003), Li et al., (2002), Marchegiani and Phau (2010), Nunnally (1978), Oh (2005), Spector (1992), and Wells et al.'s (1971) studies were identified to be of key importance to the scale development process. Churchill's (1979) procedure was found to be most suitable and was therefore adapted and adopted for the purpose of this study. In order to better understand the techniques and procedures outlined by Churchill (1979), Figure 5.2 helps to illustrate the processes involved.

**Figure 5.2:** Suggested procedure for developing better measures



(Adapted from Churchill 1979)

## **EXPLORATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS (EFA): DEVELOPING THE SCALE ITEMS**

### **Overview of EFA**

This section describes the procedures that were used to generate and purify the scale items for the Wicklerian-Eisnerian, Vavilovian and Pouyannian mimicry scales. The process for generating and purifying the scale items is replicated across the three scales. Therefore, this section will provide a holistic view of the EFA process.

#### **What are we trying to achieve?**

Previous studies have used a number of methods to generate a set of potential scale items. According to Li et al. (2002), they followed three methods to arrive at the pool. These three steps are: literature reviews (Churchill, 2979), thesaurus searches (Wells et al., 1971), and experience surveys (Chen and Wells, 1999; Churchill, 1979; Walsh and Mitchell, 2005). The study follows the steps of scale development set out by DeVellis (2003).

#### **What is it we want to measure?**

DeVellis (2003) suggested that in order to provide clarification on the purpose of scale development, it is important to begin by understanding the theories that surround the concept of study. For this study, the key contribution and theory is the theory of mimicry. The extension of this theory to marketing required the review of natural science journals, legal, marketing and branding journals on imitation, copying, counterfeiting, brand confusion and so on to better understand of current literature and existing scales. The extensive review of literature was conducted also to uncover the parallels between biology and marketing. While the literature that was reviewed span across a number of disciplines, specific attention was given to papers by Vane-Wright (1980), Pasteur (1982), Hagtvedt and Patrick (2008), Warlop and Alba (2004), Walsh and Mitchell (2005), Penz and Stottinger (2008a; 2008b), Miceli and Pieters (2010), van Horen and Pieters (2012a; 2012b) to extend the theory and develop the scale.

DeVellis (2003) stressed the importance of the distinctiveness of constructs to others that are already present. Based on the review of the literature on copying and product similarity, the presence of mimicry scale may share certain similarities to the perceived product similarity scale (PPSS) (Walsh and Mitchell, 2005) and the items measuring perceived product similarity in Penz and Stottinger's (2008a) study. However, Walsh and Mitchell's (2005)

PPSS scale addressed product similarity from a product category level and Penz and Stottinger's (2008a) scale while it was reliable, it was not validated and consisted of only five general product attributes. An example of Walsh and Mitchell's (2005) scale showed items such as "Most brands are very familiar, making it difficult to distinguish them", and "Some brands look so similar that I don't know if they are made by the same manufacturer". The intended presence of mimicry scale is intended to measure attempts to find an objective measure of similarity that is not too hairsplitting and can be generalized across most products (Walsh and Mitchell, 2005). For example, while there may be ornamental similarities between a mimic and a model brand, but ornaments may not be a common element or characteristic across all products. In addition, one of the observations of most measurements of product similarity is that they are often direct or global measures that are either single-item scales that measure overall similarity without taking into account the distinctive characteristics that form perceived product similarity (e.g. Loken et al., 1986; Lefkoff-Hagius and Mason, 1993; Miceli and Pieters, 2010; van Horen and Pieters, 2012a; 2012b). Hence, the presence of mimicry scale intends to generate items from an objective perspective that looks at common but specific characteristics that can allow comparison between a model and a mimic brand. Based on the above discussion, the presence of mimicry scale possesses distinctions to other scales (known at the point of study) and in turn provides justification for the scale to be developed.

Based on the literature, it was highlighted by a number of authors that there could be at least three key characteristics (e.g. physical, image, and so on) that highlights the product similarities between the mimic brand and the model brand (e.g. Lefkoff-Hagius and Mason, 1993; Penz and Stottinger, 2008a). At this stage, the definitions of the three types of mimicry have shown differences which will result in some of the items and factors to be distinct from each other. The selection of words is carefully generated in order to encompass terms that can describe the characteristics of each type of mimicry. However, while the expectation is that there will be different dimensions within each type of mimicry, there will still be similar terms or possibly characteristics between each type of mimicry. An appropriate way to develop the scale is to examine the three types of mimicry independently through the use of focus groups to clearly define and to maintain some level of distinction between the three types of mimicry.

## **GENERATE AN ITEM POOL**

The first part of the scale development process is to generate a large set of pool items. This draws on the first two scale development techniques (literature reviews and thesaurus searches), that has been used by other researchers (e.g. Li et al., 2002; Phau and Marchegiani, 2010).

### **Literature Reviews**

To begin with, a review of the literature revealed that there are very few scales that measure product similarity, and for those that do, they are often measured in a one-item scale (e.g. Loken et al., 1986; Bijmolt et al., 1998; Miceli and Pieters, 2010; van Horen and Pieters, 2012a). For example, one of the common forms of questions on similarity is “How similar are the products?” (1=completely dissimilar, 7= completely similar) (e.g. Miceli and Pieters, 2010). Therefore, the review on the existing literature to derive a list of key items extended to the examination of studies on trademark, trade-dress, counterfeits, imitation, private label brands, piracy, brand confusion, and product similarity. Through the initial review of the items, most of the discussion around product similarity surrounds physical, image and beneficial attributes which forms a crucial part of the literature (Miceli and Pieters, 2010; Lefkoff-Hagius and Mason, 1993; Warlop and Alba, 2004; Penz and Stottinger, 2008). In addition, some keywords identified included appearance, features, concept, theme, style, design, looks, and so on. Other symbolic characteristics such as prestige, exclusivity, luxury, sophistication, success, were also drawn from counterfeit literature on luxury brands and other luxury brand studies to measure mimicry in the luxury brand context (Heine, 2012). Other legal journals on imitation and copying were referred to for terms that are commonly used within the industry (Suk and Hemphill, 2009) to ensure consistency. A content analysis of the words was conducted and words that appeared most frequently were retained and included into the pool of items. A number of key studies were referred to as a basis deriving possible dimensions from the scale development process (Penz and Stottinger, 2008).

### **Thesaurus Searches**

The items expected to relate to mimicry can also be constructed with thesaurus terms such as “imitation, mockery, pretence, camouflage, deceit, deceptive marking, false appearance, and protective colouring, and disguise, trick”. The broader search using these terms revealed other items such as “counterfeit, clone, copy, counterfeiting, dupe, duplicate, fake, forgery, image, impression, likeness, match, mimesis, mirroring, replica, resemblance”. Based on the thesaurus search, it can also be deduced that imitation, counterfeits, fakes and duplicates

relates to mimicry. The use of the thesaurus in addition to the literature review provides a solid starting point for the scale. The terms that were found most appropriate among the synonyms were utilized in developing the initial pool of items.

### **Experience Surveys**

A panel consisting of 15 academic and industry professionals was consulted regarding the words derived from the thesaurus search and the list of adjectives used for the initial pool of items. Considerations for the items were based on clarity, conciseness, ease of understanding, and other perspectives that were overlooked that can be used to explain the mimicry phenomenon were discussed. For example, some of the words that were derived from literature such as “fashionableness” and “luxuriousness” were questioned for their possible misinterpretation and conciseness. In addition, other industry specific terms that would not be understood by a reasonable consumer such as “graphic elements”, “mark”, “symbol” were also questioned for their appropriateness and limitation on consumer responses. Other terms that were used to compare the similarity between the products such as “share”, “express”, “show”, “communicate”, in sentences like “The products share similar physical attributes” were discussed for their meaning and expressive component. The panel suggested that the sentences need to be kept simple and concise so that the subjects are able to relate and accurately answer the questions. The commonly used words were retained and some technical terms were added into the initial pool of item. The panel of judges was constantly reminded that this study is addressing mimicry and not counterfeiting, therefore the specific definitions of each type of mimicry were discussed with the panel prior to starting the experience surveys. Each type of mimicry repeats the same procedure in order to ensure that the scales are distinct and that key words are specifically related to the type of mimicry that was they intend to measure.

### **DETERMINE THE FORMAT OF MEASUREMENT**

Previous copying and product similarity studies have often used a 7-point Likert scale (e.g. Bijmolt et al., 1998; Miceli and Pieters, 2010). Therefore, the development of the scales will follow the guidelines of prior studies.

### **INITIAL ITEM POOL REVIEWED BY EXPERTS**

The initial pool of items were then reviewed by the group of 10 experts from the industry and marketing academics to help generate the most appropriate pool and to assist in maximizing the content validity of the scale. The panel was first supplied with the working definitions of the specific construct (e.g. Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimicry), and real life examples of the type of mimicry were also provided to better relate to the concept. The panel was then asked to indicate which items correspond closely to the construct and which were moderately corresponding and lastly which were irrelevant. Comments on individual items were invited. When discussing the items, the panel was asked to indicate any clarity or conciseness issues, as well as to point out any other ways to improve in the terminologies in tapping into the constructs. Feedback and recommendations on how to better conceptualize the constructs were invited.

### **CONSIDERATION OF INCLUSION OF VALIDATION ITEMS**

There were a number of items that were purposefully included in the questionnaires to detect flaws or problems (DeVellis, 2003). Some of the suggestions for including such items are to discover if there are motivations that could influence responses such as social desirability issues. The nature of the study was thought not to incur such issues. The second reason to include items that may cause flaws is to assist in measuring construct validity. There were a number of validation items that were included into the questionnaire in attempt to test for construct validity. However, there was a limit to the number of additional items that can be included as the initial pool of items was already of around 40 to 50 items.

### **EVALUATE THE ITEMS**

Based on the literature review and through focus group discussions, it is anticipated that there will be at least three dimensions from the pool of items. In examination of Lefkoff-Hagius and Mason's (1993) study, the main dimensions identified for product similarity are Physical, Image and Beneficial similarities. Other studies have also reflected that these are the common dimensions when discussing the attributes in copying (Cordell et al., 1996; Penz and Stottinger, 2008a) and inclusive of characteristics to measure luxury brands. An exploratory factor analysis is employed to examine the dimensions within the scale. This procedure is also used to reduce the number of items. As suggested by Churchill (1979) the initial coefficient alpha is calculated first. It is initially sufficient to conduct an exploratory factor analysis for the early stages of research on a construct.

## **PART 2 - WICKLERIAN-EISNERIAN MIMICRY**

This section discusses the EFA, CFA, validation and generalizability of the Wicklerian Eisnerian mimicry scale. The results of the scale development for Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimicry is reported in this section.

### **STUDY ONE: EFA WICKLERIAN-EISNERIAN SCALE**

#### **Stimulus and Sample for EFA**

The pool of items that was initially generated for Wicklerian Eisnerian mimicry scale was tested using a series of stimuli. While the context of the study was within luxury brands, some other products taken as examples from the convenience goods sector that was befitting to Wicklerian Eisnerian mimicry were also added. Each type of mimicry was tested independently and the stimulus was specially prepared to ensure that the actual type of mimicry was being measured. In order to ensure little confusion between, the product stimuli was also pre-tested on a group of judges to ensure consistency across the constructs. In addition, tests to ensure a degree of similarity between the pair of products is undertaken in order to ensure the presence of mimicry. Care was being taken to ensure that there is no deviation of the responses to the stimulus from what the questionnaire is intended to measure. The stimulus were kept constant in the number of pairs of brands, and the duration the subjects are exposed to the stimulus are all controlled for across the three types of mimicry. Each group of subjects is only exposed to one type of mimicry.

The first set of scales developed for Wicklerian Eisnerian mimicry was administered to a sample size of 218 respondents. The demographics and characteristics of the respondents were relatively representative of the respondents that will be used in future studies. Students were used as it has been indicated in past studies that students are appropriate subjects for scale development as they serve as surrogate consumers (Yavas, 1994). The data is checked for missing values and responses that are either incomplete or inappropriately completed are removed. Hence, only 190 useable responses were retained. The exercise was undertaken in a classroom setting at a large Australian university. The students were allowed to provide feedback with an open-ended discussion with the administrator and other students at the end of the exercise about the products.

## **Results of EFA**

As the study intended to develop scales to measure Wicklerian Eisnerian mimicry, the initial pool of items were cleaned to reveal five factors that seem to qualify as potential items for use. Items with double or triple loadings and that show factor loadings below .3 were eliminated. The items in the other unexpected factors were examined and items that were found to have little relevance to the study were removed. From the 42 items that were factor analyzed, 24 items remained within that is used to measure Wicklerian Eisnerian mimicry (shown in 5.1A). From the factor analysis, the inconsistent items were also removed based on the co-efficient alphas (Nunnally, 1978; Peterson, 1994). The initial Cronbach's alphas for the factors were above .7, suggesting that the initial scales are still considerably long. As such, the next stage will be to optimize the scale length and to purify the data.

Firstly, based on the alpha co-efficients, the items were deemed to be reliable for the study. However, looking at the list of scale items, they are suggested to be fitting for Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimicry. While the scale items are considerably long, they did not overlap and are seen to be relevant. As such, no other additional items were removed for Stage One.

**Table 5.1A – Exploratory Factor Analysis for Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimicry**

Items	Factor Loadings				
	F1: W-Image	F2: W-Physical	F3: W-Beneficial	F4: W-Conceptual	F5: W-Brand
The products express a similar image of sophistication	.885				
The products express a similar image of elegance	.861				
The products express a similar image of success	.824				
The products express a similar degree of luxury	.786				
The products express similar appeal	.740				
The products express similar fashion	.717				
The products express a similar image	.665				
The products share similar product designs		.755			
The products share similar styles		.722			
The products share similar looks		.720			
The products share similar appearances		.641			
The products share similar physical traits		.639			
The products share similar aesthetics		.608			
The products share similar practicality			.795		
The products share similar product utility			.772		
The products share similar reliability			.759		
The products share similar durability			.753		
The products share similar functionality			.742		
The products express similar concepts				.787	
The products express similar ideas				.745	
The products express similar trends				.718	
The products share similar brand names					.832
The products share similar sounding brand names					.757
The products share similar logos					.708
<b>% of Variance</b>	22.317	17.109	11.593	7.377	5.263
<b>Cumulative % of Variance</b>	63.650				

<b>Eigenvalue</b>	5.356	4.106	2.782	1.770	1.261
<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	.903	.805	.838	.756	.705
<b>Overall Cronbach's Alpha</b>	.831				
<b>KMO</b>	.801				
<b>Barlett's Test of Sphericity</b>	.000				

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.

Factor loadings 0.3 suppressed.

## **STUDY TWO: CFA WICKLERIAN-EISNERIAN SCALE**

This stage was performed to examine the dimensions of the scales in Study One, and to further purify the items. Churchill (1979) suggested that the scale purification step is to examine the dimensionality of the items. Churchill (1979, p. 69) further noted that a measure is said to have “face” or content validity when the sample is adequate and the items “look right” (Heeler and Ray, 1972). Hence, the content validity of the scales would also be examined by comparing the remaining items with the working definition of the Wicklerian Eisnerian mimicry.

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) will be used to test for the dimensions, which is considered to be a superior technique over EFA for this task (O’Leary-Kelly and Vokurka, 1998). Additionally, CFA has been used to reduce scales by identifying the items that need to be trimmed from the scale, which assists by confirming the scale in its final form (Floyd and Widaman, 1995; Netemeyer et al., 2003). Confirmatory Factor Analysis would be undertaken using the AMOS 19 programme.

A new survey is produced consisting of the 24 item Wicklerian Eisnerian mimicry items, as well as the demographics collected in Study One. A pretest was conducted to ensure no errors or difficulties in the understanding and the application of the survey. In reality, this survey in this stage is basically smaller than the versions of the surveys used in Study One.

### **Sample**

New data was collected for this study. Respondents were exposed to only stimulus (pair of brands) that is tested to show Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimicry. Similar to the conditions in Study One, the respondents are students who fall between 18 to 35 years of age and they are briefed on the confidentiality issues and that they are able to withdraw from the exercise at any point in time. This was conducted in a classroom style setting with respondents similar to that used previously. Useable responses for this study was  $n = 175$ .

## Results

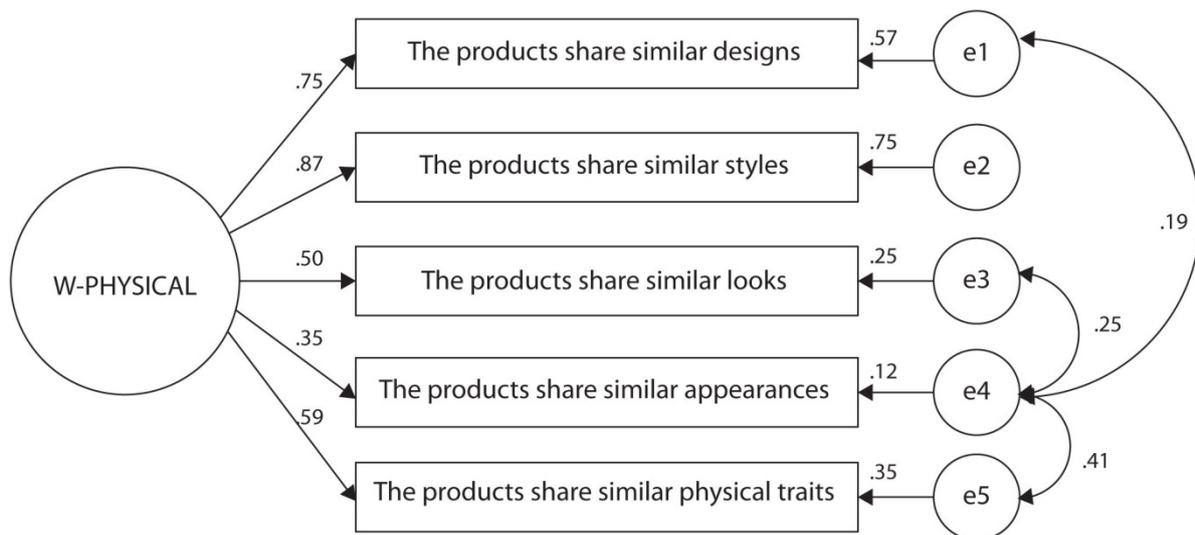
CFA is deemed useful to further refine the scales. Prior to completing the measurement model, the congeneric model for each of the factors within the Wicklerian Eisnerian mimicry scale is tested to ensure model fit before testing it as a measurement model.

CFA further refined the scales resulting in three dimensions which are namely physical characteristics, image characteristics and beneficial characteristics. Physical and image characteristics dimensions resulted in five items each and beneficial characteristics resulted in six items. According Raubenheimer (2004), multi-dimensional scales should have a minimum of three items to load significantly on each factor in order to be successfully identified.

## Congeneric Models

### W-Physical Characteristics

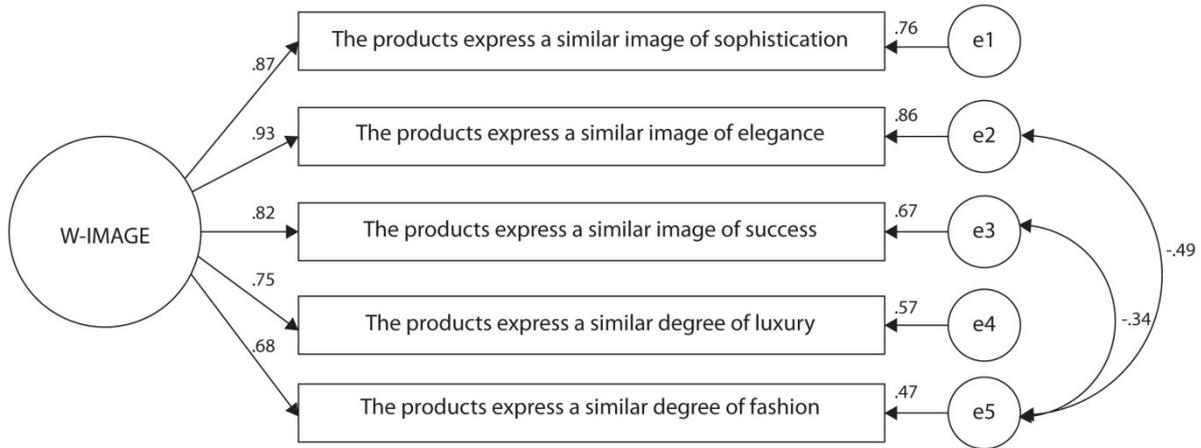
Figure 5.2A: Congeneric model for w-physical characteristics



The congeneric model for physical characteristics recorded Chi-Square = 2.457, Degrees of Freedom = 2, Probability level = .293, RMSEA = .036, RMR = .019, AGFI = .958, CFI = .998.

### W-Image Characteristics

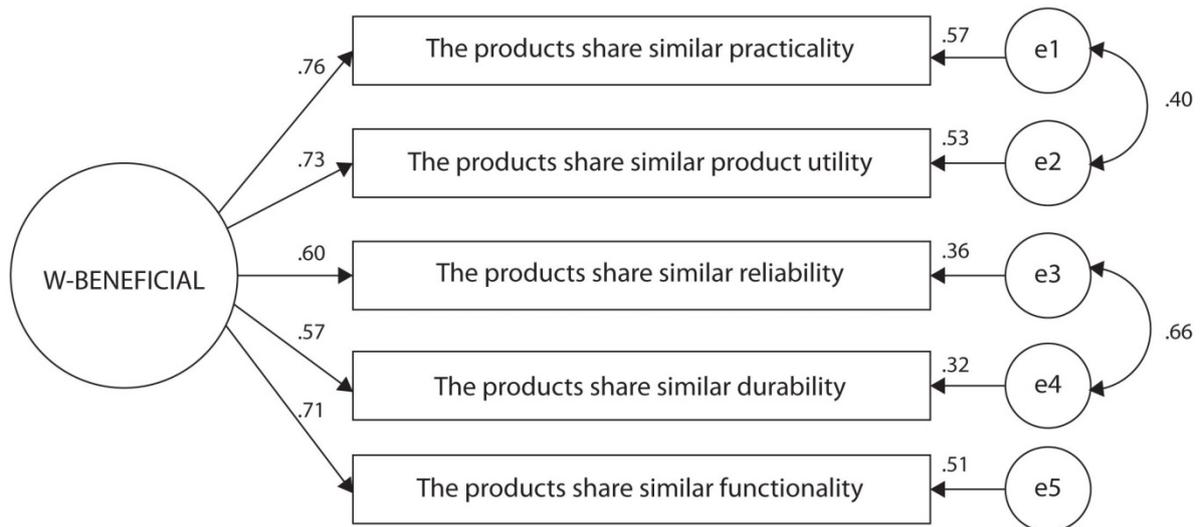
**Figure 5.3A:** Congeneric model for w-image characteristics



The congeneric model for image characteristics recorded Chi-Square = 3.851, Degrees of Freedom = 3, Probability level = .278, RMSEA = .040, RMR = .037, AGFI = .955, CFI = .998). The items in this factor will be retained for the final Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimicry scale.

### W-Beneficial Characteristics

**Figure 5.4A:** Congeneric model for w-beneficial characteristics

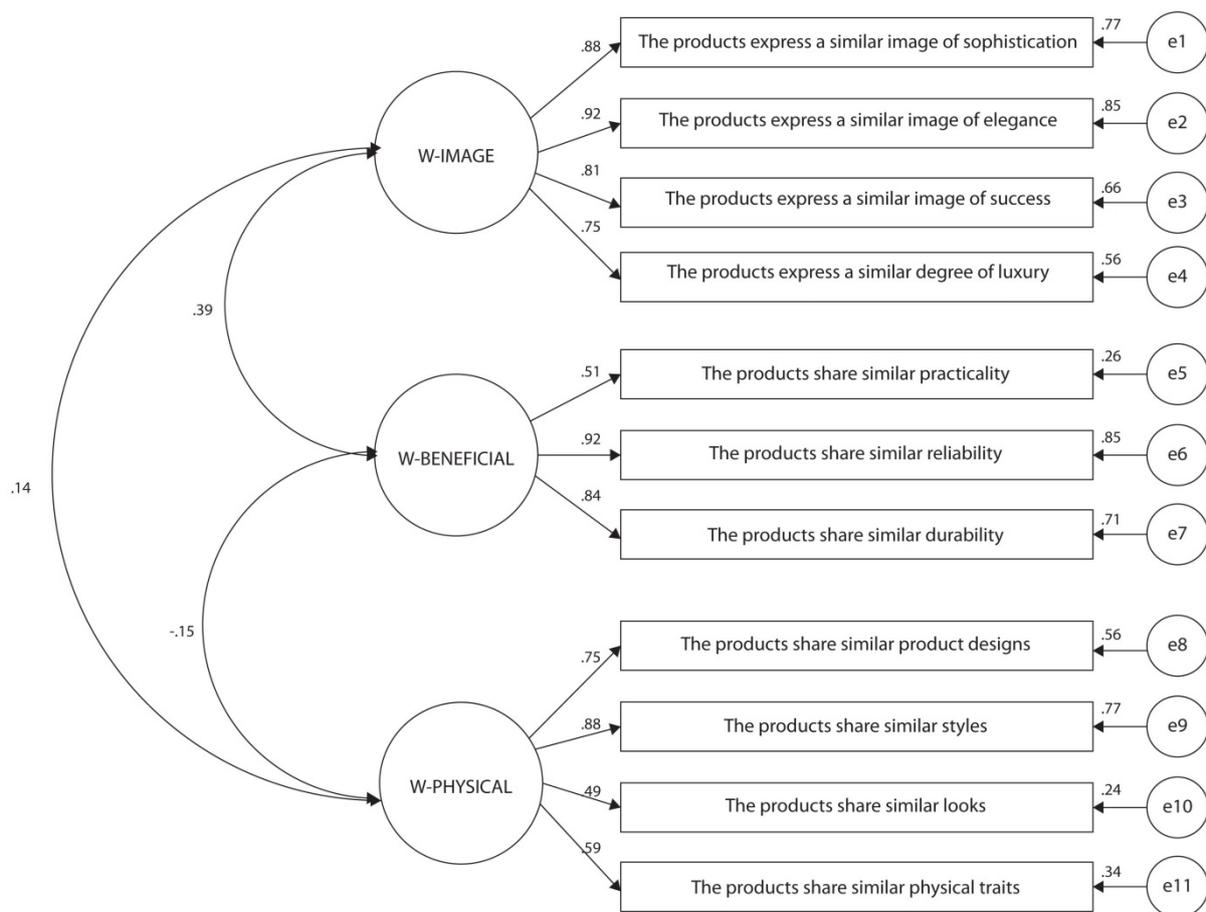


The congeneric model for beneficial characteristics recorded Chi-Square = 3.879, Degrees of Freedom = 3, Probability level = .275, RMSEA = .041, RMR = .026, AGFI = .956, CFI = .998.

## Measurement Model

Based on the congeneric models for the three dimensions of Wicklerian-Eisnerian, it is shown by the results (Figure 5.2A – 5.4A) to achieve acceptable measures (Hu and Bentler, 1999; Holmes-Smith and Rowe, 1994). These three factors are then being used in the measurement model to ensure that the three dimensions of the scale are of acceptable measures.

**Figure 5.5A:** Measurement model for Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimicry



In the next step of the measurement procedure, the three-factor structure was testing using CFA (Kelloway, 1998; Walsh and Mitchell, 2007). Based on the measurement model (Figure 5.4A), model identification was achieved with the 11 items and the model fit statistics are found to be of acceptable range and can be used for further analysis (Hu and Bentler, 1999) (Chi-Square = 52.758, Degrees of Freedom = 39, Probability level = .070, RMSEA = .045, RMR = .078, AGFI = .914, CFI = .985). The remaining items continue to fall under the definition of the Wicklerian-Eisnerian construct which is intended to measure (content/face validity).

Using CFA, the 15 items (as shown in the congeneric models in Figure 5.2A – 5.4A) from post EFA has been refined to 11 remaining items. The other four items were removed due to low regression weights that were below the acceptable standards (Hu and Bentler, 1999). These 11 items have indicated a good model fit within three dimensions.

### **Concluding comments for Study Two**

Through CFA, the initial 24-items in the Wicklerian-Eisnerian scale have been refined to 11 remaining items. These items are shown to have acceptable loadings. From this point on, further tests on reliability and validity can be conducted.

### **STUDY THREE: VALIDATION OF WICKLERIAN EISNERIAN MIMICRY SCALE**

This step is conducted to establish the scale's criterion validity (predictive) and construct/trait validity (nomological, discriminant and convergent). Studies by Campbell and Fiske (1959), Churchill (1979), and Walsh and Mitchell (2005) were followed as guides for this stage. For this to be achieved, new survey forms and collection of new data was required. This is discussed in the following section.

#### **Sample**

A new survey was designed by including the 11-item Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimicry scale items and the measures to be used to test for predictive, nomological, discriminant and convergent validity. The survey was pre-tested on respondents that are similar to the intended sample used for the main data collection. A focus group like exercise was conducted to collect feedback regarding the possible issues with the readability, grammatical, comprehension of instructions, and so on. The pre-test showed that the new survey is fit to be used.

The data collection is conducted using a new group of respondents who do not have prior exposure to any of the mimicry scale development procedures. After removing any incomplete or inappropriately completed data, 141 useable responses remained.

#### **Criterion (predictive) and Construct (nomological) Validity**

Trait and nomological validity are both useful distinctions for the exploration of construct validity (Campbell, 1960). Eastman et al. (1999, p. 44) stated that "criterion validity is the extent to which a measure is related to actual behaviours of other real life outcomes (Anastasi, 1986; Nunnally, 1978)". This form of validity relates to the ability of a scale "to predict something that should theoretically be related or ability to predict" (Oh, 2005, p. 301). In addition, Churchill (1979) proposes that as a final step to scale development, it is important to show that the measure behaves as expected to other constructs. Hence, criterion validity attempts to correctly predict the criterion measure. Perception of luxury and product evaluation of mimic brand is included to test for the criterion validity of the presence of Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimicry. Previous studies have demonstrated product similarities are expected to have a significant effect on product evaluation (Lefkoff-Hagius and Mason, 1993; van Horen and Pieters, 2012). However, according to DeVellis (2003, p. 52) even if the

correlation between a predictor measure and a criterion is high, the score obtained on the predictor may not serve as the most accurate estimate of the criterion.

For Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimicry, the perception of luxury and product evaluation both recorded positive Cronbach's alpha scores ( $\alpha = .874$  and  $\alpha = .864$  respectively). The criterion (predictive) validity of the Wicklerian-Eisnerian scale was supported. Those who perceive a high presence of Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimicry (measured by the scale developed for this study) had a significantly lower mean score of perception of luxury towards mimic brand ( $M = 1.6800$ ,  $SD = .7964$ ) than those who perceive a lower presence of Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimicry ( $M = 2.2171$ ,  $SD = 1.0520$ ) ( $t = -3.203$ ,  $p = .002$ ). In addition, those who perceived a high presence of Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimicry had a significantly lower mean score of product evaluation of mimic brand ( $M = 2.2436$ ,  $SD = 1.038$ ) than those who perceive a lower presence of Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimicry ( $M = 3.0229$ ,  $SD = 1.1679$ ) ( $t = -3.528$ ,  $p = .001$ ). This is explained by the fact that Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimics are of highly similar to the model brands (i.e. blatant copies) (van Horen and Pieters, 2012b). Therefore it results in a negative product evaluation from consumers. This finding is in line with the definition of Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimicry.

In conjunction with establishing criterion validity, the use of the consumers' evaluation scale should also be used to establish "nomological validity". Initially proposed by Cronbach and Meehl (1955), nomological validity serves as a form of construct validity that is lawlike and the examination of the constructs and measures is conducted using formal hypotheses based on theory (Peter, 1981; Cadogan et al., 1999). When an instrument is believed to have nomological validity, it will demonstrate relationship to another construct to which it is theoretically related (Churchill, 1995). The link between nomological validity and criterion (predictive) validity lies in the explanation that "the degree which the construct as measured by a set of indicators predicts other constructs that past theoretical or empirical work says it should predict" (Droge, 1997). As proposed by previous studies (e.g. van Horen and Pieters, 2012b) the presence of mimicry (similarity between products) should lead to attitude and evaluation formation. Therefore, to test for the nomological validity of the presence of mimicry scale, it is anticipated that there should be a relationship between presence of mimicry, perception of luxury and product evaluation as dictated in the literature (Hagtvedt and Patrick, 2008). This would provide evidence that the scale and the related constructs in the study should behave as what theory dictates (Cadogan et al., 1999).

Past studies have used correlations to test for the relationship between constructs in validation of scales (Heeler and Ray, 1972). In addition, when examining the nomological validity of a measure, it is paramount for the researcher to also concentrate on a pattern of the results between the criterion and predictors rather than just the significance of the results (Cronbach and Meehl, 1955; Netemeyer et al., 1991). Therefore, while nomological validity is achieved in this study, further research that identify the patterns would need to be conducted in order to robustly justify the scales as having nomological validity. At this stage, with the support of previous results, the scales continue in their line of positive results towards validation.

Based on the results in Table 5.6A, it is shown that there are significant correlations between the presence of mimicry scale and other constructs which are theoretically related. Therefore it can be suggested that the presence of mimicry scale predicts the relationships as what past studies have documented. Although there are no direct studies that examine the presence of Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimicry, it can be postulated that the scale has the “ability to predict” what past studies in imitation and product similarity has postulated.

**Table 5.6A:** Results for criterion and construct validity (Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimicry)

<b>Pearson Correlations</b>	<b>Presence of Mimicry</b>	<b>Perception of Luxury</b>	<b>Product Evaluation</b>
Presence of Mimicry	1		
Perception of Luxury	.377**	1	
Product Evaluation	.405**	.709**	1

\*\* $p \leq 0.01$

### **Trait Validity (discriminant and convergent)**

Based on the fundamental principles in science, a particular construct or trait should be measurable by more than one method (Churchill, 1979). Furthermore, Peter (1981) has stated that in addition to construct validity, trait validity provides necessary information for accepting construct validity. Distinctive to construct validity, trait validity relates to the empirical relationship between measures of different constructs (Peter, 1981). Trait validity can be conducted using discriminant and convergent validity tests (Campbell and Fiske, 1959). The intention to conduct discriminant and convergent validity tests is to primarily examine “the amount of systematic variance in a measure’s scores and determine whether the systematic variance results in high correlations with other measures of the construct and low

correlations with constructs of other phenomena with which the construct should not be associated” (Peter, 1981, p. 135). Convergent validity relates to the degree of agreement in measures of the same or similar construct, whereas discriminant relates to the degree which measures of conceptually different constructs differ (Campbell and Fiske, 1959; Churchill, 1979; Oh, 2005).

According to Ping (2004), discriminant validity has been typically established in past studies as using correlations. It is determined by demonstrating that a measure does not highly correlate with another measure from which it is different (Campbell, 1960). It is suggested that correlations with other measures below 0.7 is deemed as acceptable and can serve as evidence of measuring distinctness and discriminant validity (Ping, 2004). On the other hand, convergent validity is “based on the correlation between responses obtained by maximally different methods of measuring the same construct” (Peter, 1981). Following Ping (2004) and Walsh and Mitchell’s (2005) as guidelines for the validity tests, for discriminant validity the *Brand Familiarity scale* is used. The *Brand Familiarity* scale is chosen because it is believed that theoretically, the presence of mimicry scale should not be related to *Brand Familiarity* (Walsh and Mitchell, 2005) as the items that the scale consists of are “I am familiar...”, “I am knowledgeable about...”. The three-item scale was reliable ( $\alpha = .939$ ). The Brand Familiarity scale is from Kent and Allen (1994).

For convergent validity, the use of Sproles and Kendall’s (1986) Overload-Confusion scale was used and the scale is found to be reliable ( $\alpha = .845$ ). The Overload-Confusion scale is selected based on the justification that when consumers are faced with brands that are closely similar and with a great number of brands to choose from, they become overloaded with information (Walsh and Mitchell, 2005). As a consumer, one will begin to simplify the information they can process about the brands (Sproles and Kendall, 1986). According to Walsh and Mitchell (2005), when there are a great number of brands in a product category to choose from, it is often a sign of brand copying and in this case testing for the presence of mimicry scale further emphasizes the presence of brands with similar features. Therefore, based on this premise, it is postulated that information overload and presence of mimicry likely to be positively correlated.

In order to show discriminant validity, a correlations test is conducted between the Brand Familiarity scale and the presence of mimicry scale. As previously discussed, it is postulated

that Brand Familiarity should not theoretically relate to the presence of mimicry scale since brand familiarity discusses the level of knowledge a consumer has (Kim and Chung, 2012), as opposed to whether there are similar attributes between two products (presence of mimicry scale). The results in Table 5.7A shows that the presence of mimicry and the Brand Familiarity scale has a low but significant correlation, which shows some discriminant validity.

In order to demonstrate convergent validity, a correlations test is conducted between the Confusion-Overload and the presence of mimicry scale. The bivariate correlation (Pearson) between the two scales was .48 and is statistically significant at .05, this suggests a degree of convergent validity.

**Table 5.7A:** Results for discriminant and convergent validity (Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimicry)

<b>Pearson Correlations</b>	<b>Presence of Mimicry</b>	<b>Confusion Overload</b>	<b>Brand Familiarity</b>
Presence of Mimicry	1		
Confusion Overload	.480**	1	
Brand Familiarity	-.234*	-.057	1

\*\* $p \leq 0.01$ , \* $p \leq 0.05$

### **Concluding comments for Study Three**

From this study, we can observe that the proposed Wicklerian Eisnerian mimicry scale performed successfully in the predictive, nomological, convergent and discriminant validity tests.

## **STUDY FOUR: GENERALIZABILITY OF WICKLERIAN EISNERIAN SCALE**

The purpose of this study was to increase the generalizability of the scales by performing a CFA on the previously validated items in each of the scales using a variation in the stimulus, through the use of a different product category and brand.

### **Generalizability**

It is important for a scale to be able to function under varying conditions and scenarios in order for it to be successfully adopted and applied both academically and managerially. In order to test for the generalizability of the scale, the stimulus consisting of the collage of two brands (one model and one mimic) within the same product category is produced. The stimulus included new images pertaining to Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimicry. A new survey was produced. This generalizability test is adopted from one of the main studies (see Chapter 6).

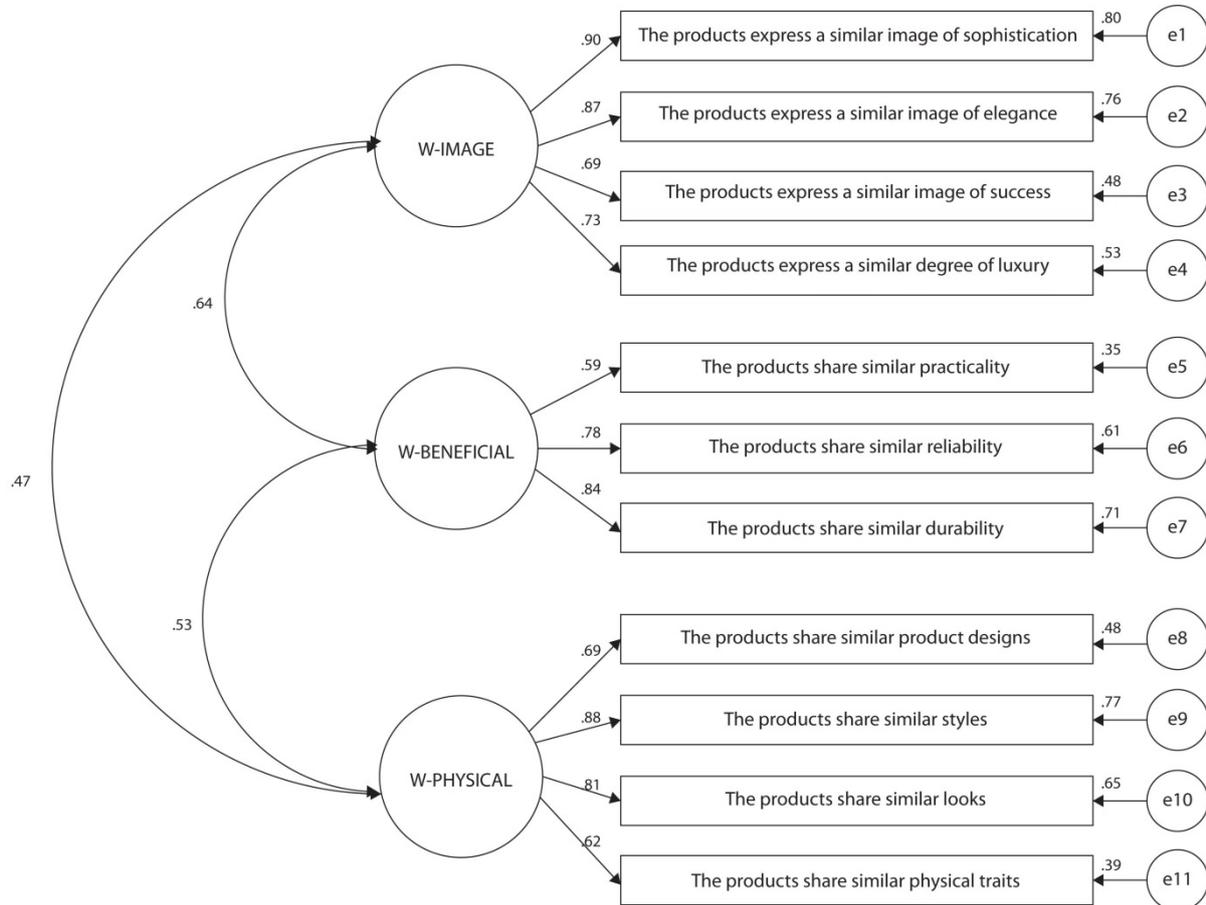
### **Sample**

The stimuli are newly created collage using real life brands falling under one of the four product categories chosen for the main study. A focus group for each of the stimuli was undertaken with the respondents similar to that used in the intended group for analysis. The stimuli were discussed with the group to ensure that they were accurately measuring the form of mimicry the scale was designed to measure. A new sample was collected under conditions stated in previous studies resulting in 165 useable responses.

## Results

AMOS 19 was utilized to complete the CFA. The results for the CFA in this study are revealed in Figure 5.8A.

**Figure 5.8A:** CFA for the Wicklerian Eisnerian mimicry scale under new conditions



Selected important statistics for the CFA (Figure 5.8A) include: Chi-square = 41.069, Degrees of freedom = 38, Probability level = .338, RMSEA = .025, RMR = .096, AGFI = .908, CFI = .996.

### **Concluding comments for Study Four**

The CFA showed that the Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimicry scale under a different condition revealed acceptable results (Hu and Bentler, 1999). The finding suggests the generalizability of the scale. The final items for this scale can be seen in Figure 5.9A.

**Figure 5.9A:** Final Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimicry scale

Items appear as a 7-point Likert scale anchored at 1 by ‘strongly disagree’ and at 7 “strongly agree”.

**Factor 1: W - Image Characteristics**

1. The products express a similar image of sophistication
2. The products express a similar image of elegance
3. The products express a similar image of success
4. The products express similar degree of luxury

**Factor 2: W- Beneficial Characteristics**

5. The products express similar practicality
6. The products express similar reliability
7. The products express similar durability

**Factor 3: W - Physical Characteristics**

8. The products share similar product designs
9. The products share similar styles
10. The products share similar looks
11. The products share similar physical traits

## **PART 3: VAVILOVIAN MIMICRY**

This section discusses the EFA, CFA, validation and generalizability of the Vavilovian mimicry scale. The results of the scale development for Vavilovian mimicry is reported in this section.

### **STUDY FIVE: EFA FOR VAVILOVIAN MIMICRY**

#### **Stimulus and Sample for EFA**

The pool of items that was initially generated for Vavilovian mimicry scale was tested using a series of stimuli. While the context of the study was within luxury brands, some other products taken as examples from the convenience goods sector that was befitting to Vavilovian mimicry were also added. Each type of mimicry was tested independently and the stimulus was specially prepared to ensure that the actual type of mimicry was being measured. In order to ensure little confusion between, the product stimuli was also pre-tested on a group of judges to ensure consistency across the constructs. In addition, tests to ensure a degree of similarity between the pair of products is undertaken in order to ensure the presence of mimicry. Care was being taken to ensure that there is no deviation of the responses to the stimulus from what the questionnaire is intended to measure. The stimulus were kept constant in the number of pairs of brands, and the duration the subjects are exposed to the stimulus are all controlled for across the three types of mimicry. Each group of subjects is only exposed to one type of mimicry.

The first set of scales developed for Vavilovian mimicry was administered to a sample size of 195 respondents. The demographics and characteristics of the respondents were relatively representative of the respondents that will be used in future studies. Students were used as it has been indicated in past studies that students are appropriate subjects for scale development as they serve as surrogate consumers (Yavas, 1994). The data is checked for missing values and responses that are either incomplete or inappropriately completed are removed. Hence, only 177 useable responses were retained. The exercise was undertaken in a classroom setting at a large Australian university. The students were allowed to provide feedback with an open-ended discussion with the administrator and other students at the end of the exercise about the products.

## **Results of EFA**

As the study intended to develop scales to measure Vavilovian mimicry, the items were cleaned to reveal four factors that seem to qualify as potential items for use. Items with double or triple loadings and that show factor loadings below .3 were eliminated. The items in the other unexpected factors were examined and items that were found to have little relevance to the study were removed. From the 55 items that were factor analysed, 23 items remained within that is used to measure Vavilovian mimicry (shown in 5.1B). From the factor analysis, the inconsistent items were also removed based on the co-efficient alphas (Nunnally, 1978; Peterson, 1994). The initial Cronbach's alphas for the factors were above .7, suggesting that the initial scales are still considerably long. As such, the next stage will be to optimize the scale length and to purify the data.

Firstly, based on the alpha co-efficients, the items were deemed to be reliable for the study. However, looking at the list of scale items, they are suggested to be fitting for Vavilovian mimicry. While the scale items are considerably long, they did not overlap and are seen to be relevant. As such, no other additional items were removed for Stage One.

**Table 5.1B** – Exploratory Factor Analysis for Vavilovian Mimicry

Items	Factor Loadings			
	F1 – V-Physical	F2 – V-Symbolic	F3 – V-Beneficial	F4 – V-Brand
The products share similar looks	.810			
The products share similar designs	.802			
The products share similar product features	.801			
The products share similar physical appearances	.784			
The products share similar styles	.751			
The products share similar colour(s)	.723			
The products share similar themes	.720			
The products share similar aesthetics	.713			
The products express similar degree originality		.812		
The products express similar degree of creativity		.809		
The products express similar degree of innovation		.757		
The products express similar image of sophistication		.746		
The products express similar degree of uniqueness		.729		
The products express similar image of prestige		.703		
The products express similar degree of novelty		.697		
The products express similar image of success		.650		
The products share similar practicality			.797	
The products share similar functionality			.762	
The products share similar product utility			.746	
The products share similar reliability			.699	
The products share similar durability			.642	
The products share similar brand name				.914
The products share similar sounding brand name				.913
<b>% of Variance</b>	40.173	12.963	8.119	6.515
<b>Cumulative % of Variance</b>	67.770			
<b>Eigenvalue</b>	9.240	2.982	1.867	1.498
<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	.924	.923	.881	.909
<b>Overall Cronbach's Alpha</b>	.947			
<b>KMO</b>	.904			
<b>Barlett's Test of Sphericity</b>	.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.  
 Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.  
 a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.  
 Factor loadings 0.3 suppressed.

## STUDY SIX: CFA FOR VAVILOVIAN MIMICRY

This stage was performed to examine the dimensions of the scales in Study Five, and to further purify the items. Churchill (1979) suggested that the scale purification step is to examine the dimensionality of the items. Churchill (1979, p. 69) further noted that a measure is said to have “face” or content validity when the sample is adequate and the items “look right” (Heeler and Ray, 1972). Hence, the content validity of the scales would also be examined by comparing the remaining items with the working definition of the Vavilovian mimicry.

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) will be used to test for the dimensions, which is considered to be a superior technique over EFA for this task (O’Leary-Kelly and Vokurka, 1998). Additionally, CFA has been used to reduce scales by identifying the items that need to be trimmed from the scale, which assists by confirming the scale in its final form (Floyd and Widaman, 1995; Netemeyer et al., 2003). Confirmatory Factor Analysis would be undertaken using the AMOS 19 programme.

A new survey is produced consisting of the 23 item Vavilovian mimicry items, as well as the demographics collected in Study One. A pretest was conducted to ensure no errors or difficulties in the understanding and the application of the survey. In reality, this survey in this stage is basically smaller than the versions of the surveys used in Study One.

### **Sample**

New data was collected for this study. Respondents were exposed to only stimulus (pair of brands) that is tested to show Vavilovian mimicry. Similar to the conditions in Study One, the respondents are students who fall between 18 to 35 years of age and they are briefed on the confidentiality issues and that they are able to withdraw from the exercise at any point in time. This was conducted in a classroom style setting with respondents similar to that used previously. Useable responses for this study was  $n = 206$ .

## Results

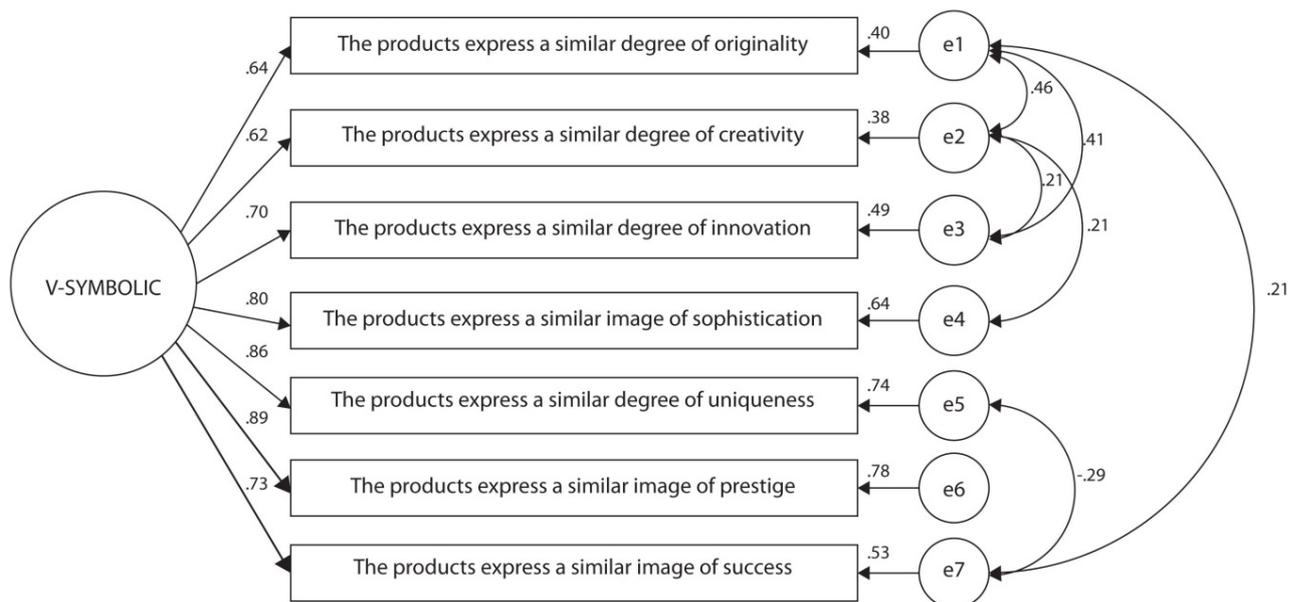
CFA is deemed useful to further refine the scales. Prior to completing the measurement model, the congeneric model for each of the factors within the Vavilovian mimicry scale is tested to ensure model fit before testing it as a measurement model.

CFA further refined the scales resulting in three dimensions which are namely physical characteristics, symbolic characteristics and beneficial characteristics. Physical and symbolic characteristics dimensions resulted in seven items each and beneficial characteristics resulted in five items. According Raubenheimer (2004), multi-dimensional scales should have a minimum of three items to load significantly on each factor in order to be successfully identified.

## Congeneric Models

### V-Symbolic Characteristics

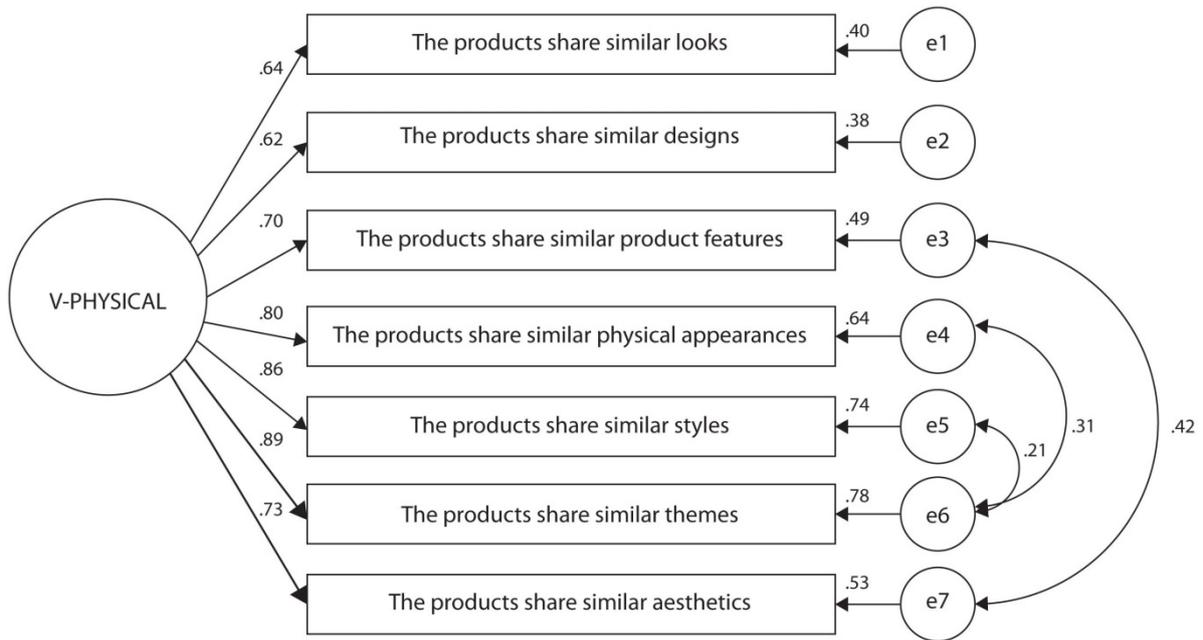
**Figure 5.2B:** Congeneric model for v-symbolic characteristics



The congeneric model for symbolic characteristics recorded Chi-Square = 9.390, Degrees of Freedom = 8, Probability level = .310, RMSEA = .029, RMR = .033, AGFI = .956, CFI = .998.

### V-Physical Characteristics

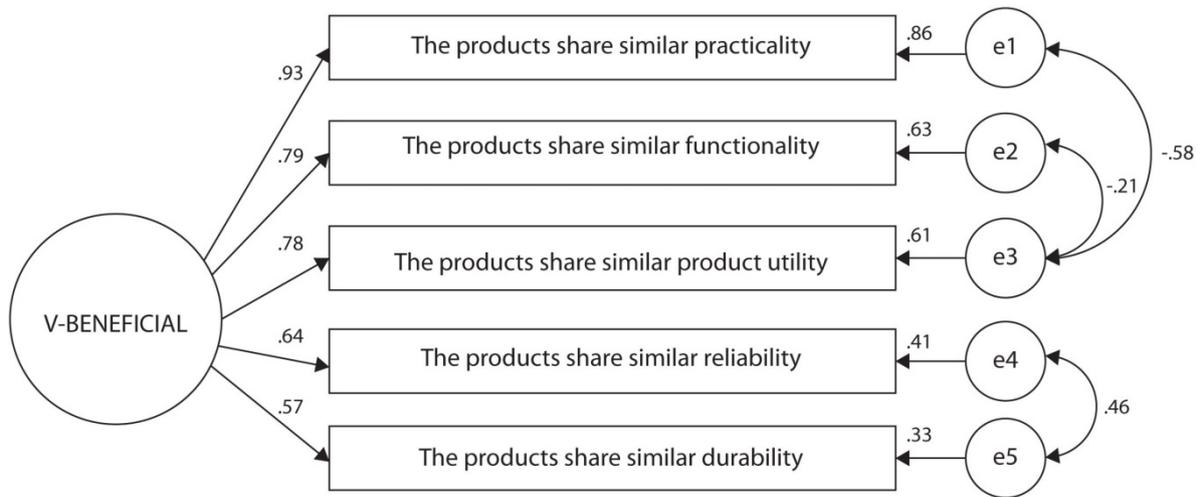
**Figure 5.3B:** Congeneric model for v-physical characteristics



The congeneric model for physical characteristics recorded Chi-Square =12.571, Degrees of Freedom =11, Probability level = .322, RMSEA = .026, RMR = .029, AGFI = .954, CFI = .998).

### V- Beneficial Characteristics

Figure 5.4B: Congeneric model for v-beneficial characteristics

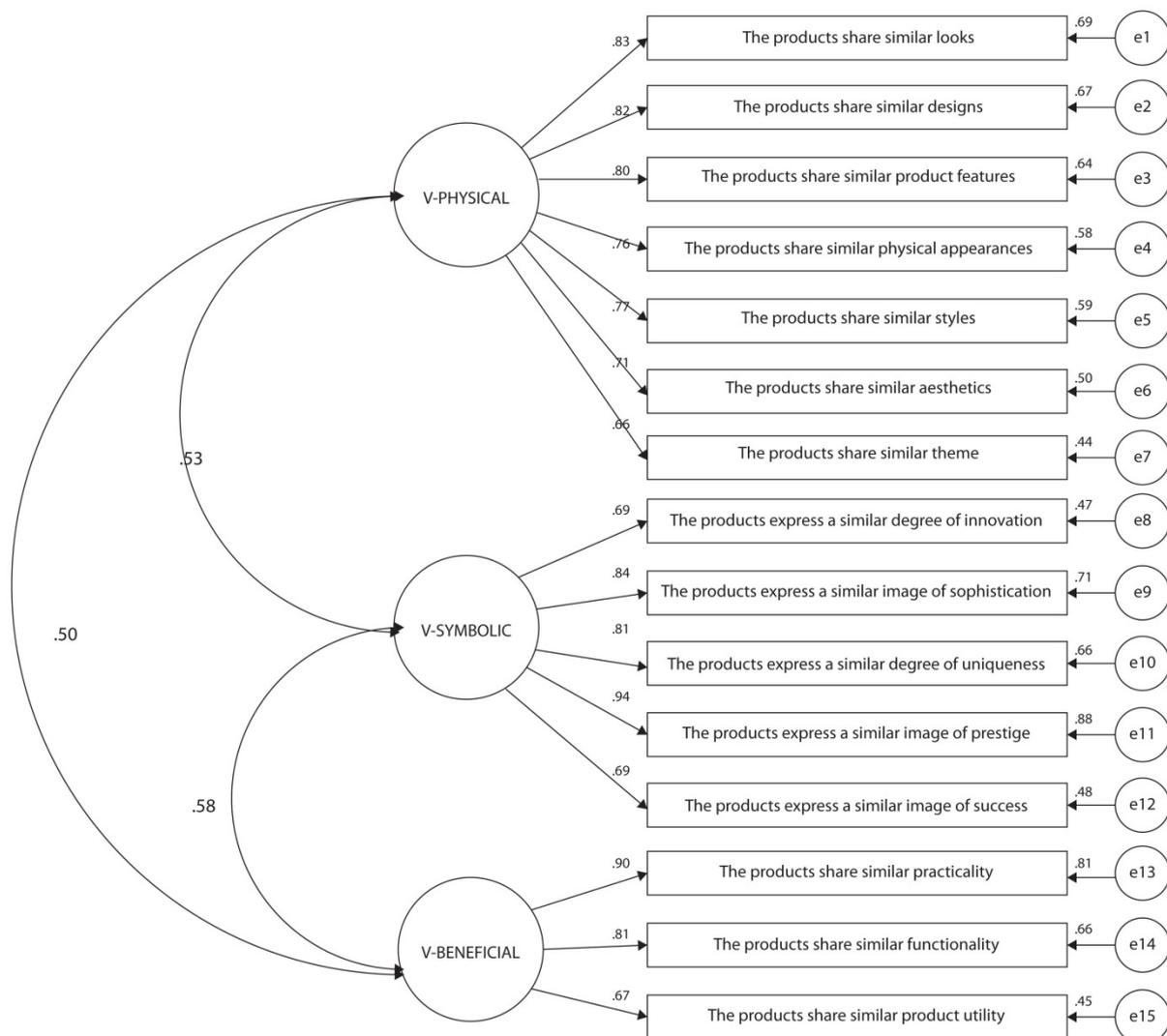


The congeneric model for beneficial characteristics recorded Chi-Square = 3.203, Degrees of Freedom = 2, Probability level = .202, RMSEA = .054, RMR = .018, AGFI = .954, CFI = .997.

## Measurement Model

Based on the congeneric models for the three dimensions of the Vavilovian mimicry, it is shown by the results (Figure 5.2B – 5.4B) to achieve acceptable measures (Hu and Bentler, 1999; Holmes-Smith and Rowe, 1994). These three factors are then being used in the measurement model to ensure that the three dimensions of the scale are of acceptable measures.

**Figure 5.5B:** Measurement model for Vavilovian mimicry



In the next step of the measurement procedure, the three-factor structure was testing using CFA (Kelloway, 1998; Walsh and Mitchell, 2007). Based on the measurement model (Figure 5.5B), model identification was achieved with the 15 items and the model fit statistics are found to be of acceptable range and can be used for further analysis (Hu and Bentler, 1999) (Chi-Square =104.183, Degrees of Freedom = 83, Probability level = .058, RMSEA = .035,

RMR = .063, AGFI = .914, CFI = .989). The remaining items continue to fall under the definition of the Vavilovian mimicry construct which is intended to measure (content/face validity).

Using CFA, the 19 items (as shown in the congeneric models in Figure 5.2B – 5.4B) from post EFA has been refined to 15 remaining items. The other four items were removed due to low regression weights that were below the acceptable standards (Hu and Bentler, 1999). These 15 items have indicated a good model fit within three dimensions.

### **Concluding comments for Study Six**

Through CFA, the initial 23-items in the Vavilovian scale have been refined to 15 remaining items. These items are shown to have acceptable loadings. From this point on, further tests on reliability and validity can be conducted.

## **STUDY SEVEN: VALIDATION OF VAVILOVIAN MIMICRY SCALE**

This step is conducted to establish the scale's criterion validity (predictive) and construct/trait validity (nomological, discriminant and convergent). Studies by Campbell and Fiske (1959), Churchill (1979), and Walsh and Mitchell (2005) were followed as guides for this stage. For this to be achieved, new survey forms and collection of new data was required. This is discussed in the following section.

### **Sample**

A new survey was designed by including the 15-item Vavilovian mimicry scale items and the measures to be used to test for predictive, nomological, discriminant and convergent validity. The survey was pre-tested on respondents that are similar to the intended sample used for the main data collection. A focus group like exercise was conducted to collect feedback regarding the possible issues with the readability, grammatical, comprehension of instructions, and so on. The pre-test showed that the new survey is fit to be used.

The data collection is conducted using a new group of respondents who do not have prior exposure to any of the mimicry scale development procedures. After removing any incomplete or inappropriately completed data, 104 useable responses remained.

### **Criterion (predictive) and Construct (nomological) Validity**

Trait and nomological validity are both useful distinctions for the exploration of construct validity (Campbell, 1960). Eastman et al. (1999, p. 44) stated that "criterion validity is the extent to which a measure is related to actual behaviours of other real life outcomes (Anastasi, 1986; Nunnally, 1978)". This form of validity relates to the ability of a scale "to predict something that should theoretically be related or ability to predict" (Oh, 2005, p. 301). In addition, Churchill (1979) proposes that as a final step to scale development, it is important to show that the measure behaves as expected to other constructs. Hence, criterion validity attempts to correctly predict the criterion measure. Perception of luxury and product evaluation of mimic brand is included to test for the criterion validity of the presence of Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimicry. Previous studies have demonstrated product similarities are expected to have a significant effect on product evaluation (Lefkoff-Hagius and Mason, 1993; van Horen and Pieters, 2012). However, according to DeVellis (2003, p. 52) even if the correlation between a predictor measure and a criterion is high, the score obtained on the predictor may not serve as the most accurate estimate of the criterion.

For Vavilovian mimicry, the perception of luxury and product evaluation both recorded positive Cronbach's alpha scores ( $\alpha = .897$  and  $\alpha = .820$  respectively). The criterion (predictive) validity of the Vavilovian scale was supported. Those who perceive a high presence of Vavilovian mimicry (measured by the scale developed for this study) had a significantly higher mean score of perception of luxury towards mimic brand ( $M = 4.9856$ ,  $SD = .98561$ ) than those who perceived a lower presence of Vavilovian mimicry ( $M = 3.7688$ ,  $SD = 1.40332$ ) ( $t = -5.557$ ,  $p = .000$ ). In addition, those who perceived a high presence of Vavilovian mimicry had a significantly higher mean score of product evaluation of mimic brand ( $M = 4.8243$ ,  $SD = 1.16609$ ) than those who perceived a lower presence of Vavilovian mimicry ( $M = 4.2266$ ,  $SD = 1.2790$ ) ( $t = -2.378$ ,  $p = .022$ ). This result is in line with van Horen and Pieters' (2012a) results that suggested that mimics that are similar to the model brand in image and other non-physical attributes can lead to better evaluation of the mimic. Therefore, this finding is in accordance to the definition of Vavilovian mimicry.

In conjunction with establishing criterion validity, the use of the consumers' evaluation scale should also be used to establish "nomological validity". Initially proposed by Cronbach and Meehl (1955), nomological validity serves as a form of construct validity that is lawlike and the examination of the constructs and measures is conducted using formal hypotheses based on theory (Peter, 1981; Cadogan et al., 1999). When an instrument is believed to have nomological validity, it will demonstrate relationship to another construct to which it is theoretically related (Churchill, 1995). The link between nomological validity and criterion (predictive) validity lies in the explanation that "the degree which the construct as measured by a set of indicators predicts other constructs that past theoretical or empirical work says it should predict" (Droge, 1997). As proposed by previous studies (e.g. van Horen and Pieters, 2012b) the presence of mimicry (similarity between products) should lead to attitude and evaluation formation. Therefore, to test for the nomological validity of the presence of mimicry scale, it is anticipated that there should be a relationship between presence of mimicry, perception of luxury and product evaluation as dictated in the literature (Hagtvedt and Patrick, 2008). This would provide evidence that the scale and the related constructs in the study should behave as what theory dictates (Cadogan et al., 1999).

Past studies have used correlations to test for the relationship between constructs in validation of scales (Heeler and Ray, 1972). In addition, when examining the nomological validity of a measure, it is paramount for the researcher to also concentrate on a pattern of the results

between the criterion and predictors rather than just the significance of the results (Cronbach and Meehl, 1955; Netemeyer et al., 1991). Therefore, while nomological validity is achieved in this study, further research that identify the patterns would need to be conducted in order to robustly justify the scales as having nomological validity. At this stage, with the support of previous results, the scales continue in their line of positive results towards validation.

Based on the results in Table 5.6B, it is shown that there are significant correlations between the presence of mimicry scale and other constructs which are theoretically related. Therefore it can be suggested that the presence of mimicry scale predicts the relationships as what past studies have documented. Although there are no direct studies that examine the presence of Vavilovian mimicry, it can be postulated that the scale has the “ability to predict” what past studies in imitation and product similarity has postulated.

**Table 5.6B:** Results for criterion and construct validity (Vavilovian mimicry)

<b>Pearson Correlations</b>	<b>Presence of Mimicry</b>	<b>Perception of Luxury</b>	<b>Product Evaluation</b>
Presence of Mimicry	1		
Perception of Luxury	.555**	1	
Product Evaluation	.330**	.508**	1

\*\* $p \leq 0.01$

### **Trait Validity (discriminant and convergent)**

Based on the fundamental principles in science, a particular construct or trait should be measurable by more than one method (Churchill, 1979). Furthermore, Peter (1981) has stated that in addition to construct validity, trait validity provides necessary information for accepting construct validity. Distinctive to construct validity, trait validity relates to the empirical relationship between measures of different constructs (Peter, 1981). Trait validity can be conducted using discriminant and convergent validity tests (Campbell and Fiske, 1959). The intention to conduct discriminant and convergent validity tests is to primarily examine “the amount of systematic variance in a measure’s scores and determine whether the systematic variance results in high correlations with other measures of the construct and low correlations with constructs of other phenomena with which the construct should not be associated” (Peter, 1981, p. 135). Convergent validity relates to the degree of agreement in measures of the same or similar construct, whereas discriminant relates to the degree which

measures of conceptually different constructs differ (Campbell and Fiske, 1959; Churchill, 1979; Oh, 2005).

According to Ping (2004), discriminant validity has been typically established in past studies as using correlations. It is determined by demonstrating that a measure does not highly correlate with another measure from which it is different (Campbell, 1960). It is suggested that correlations with other measures below 0.7 is deemed as acceptable and can serve as evidence of measuring distinctness and discriminant validity (Ping, 2004). On the other hand, convergent validity is “based on the correlation between responses obtained by maximally different methods of measuring the same construct” (Peter, 1981). Following Ping (2004) and Walsh and Mitchell’s (2005) as guidelines for the validity tests, for discriminant validity the *Brand Familiarity scale* is used. The *Brand Familiarity scale* is chosen because it is believed that theoretically, the presence of mimicry scale should not be related to *Brand Familiarity* (Walsh and Mitchell, 2005) as the items that the scale consists of are “I am familiar...”, “I am knowledgeable about...”. The three-item scale was reliable ( $\alpha = .938$ ). The Brand Familiarity scale is from Kent and Allen (1994).

For convergent validity, the use of Sproles and Kendall’s (1986) Overload-Confusion scale was used and the scale is found to be reliable ( $\alpha = .861$ ). The Overload-Confusion scale is selected based on the justification that when consumers are faced with brands that are closely similar and with a great number of brands to choose from, they become overloaded with information (Walsh and Mitchell, 2005). As a consumer, one will begin to simplify the information they can process about the brands (Sproles and Kendall, 1986). According to Walsh and Mitchell (2005), when there are a great number of brands in a product category to choose from, it is often a sign of brand copying and in this case testing for the presence of mimicry scale further emphasizes the presence of brands with similar features. Therefore, based on this premise, it is postulated that information overload and presence of mimicry likely to be positively correlated.

In order to show discriminant validity, a correlations test is conducted between the Brand Familiarity scale and the presence of mimicry scale. As previously discussed, it is postulated that Brand Familiarity should not theoretically relate to the presence of mimicry scale since brand familiarity discusses the level of knowledge a consumer has (Kim and Chung, 2012), as opposed to whether there are similar attributes between two products (presence of mimicry

scale). The results in Table 5.7B shows that the presence of mimicry and the Brand Familiarity scale has a low but significant correlation, which shows some discriminant validity.

In order to demonstrate convergent validity, a correlations test is conducted between the Confusion-Overload and the presence of mimicry scale. The bivariate correlation (Pearson) between the two scales was .519 and is statistically significant at .00, this suggests a degree of convergent validity.

**Table 5.7B:** Results for convergent and discriminant validity (Vavilovain mimicry)

<b>Pearson Correlations</b>	<b>Presence of Mimicry</b>	<b>Confusion Overload</b>	<b>Brand Familiarity</b>
Presence of Mimicry	1		
Confusion Overload	.519**	1	
Brand Familiarity	.177*	.063	1

\*\* $p \leq 0.01$ , \* $p \leq 0.05$

**Concluding comments for Study Seven**

From this study, we can observe that the proposed Vavilovian mimicry scale performed successfully in the predictive, nomological, convergent and discriminant validity tests.

## **STUDY EIGHT: GENERALIABILITY OF VAVILOVIAN MIMICRY SCALE**

The purpose of this study was to increase the generalizability of the scales by performing a CFA on the previously validated items in each of the scales using a variation in the stimulus, through the use of a different product category and brand.

### **Generalizability**

It is important for a scale to be able to function under varying conditions and scenarios in order for it to be successfully adopted and applied both academically and managerially. In order to test for the generalizability of the scale, the stimulus consisting of the collage of two brands (one model and one mimic) within the same product category is produced. The stimulus included new images pertaining to Vavilovian mimicry. A new survey was produced. This generalizability test is adopted from one of the main studies (see Chapter 6).

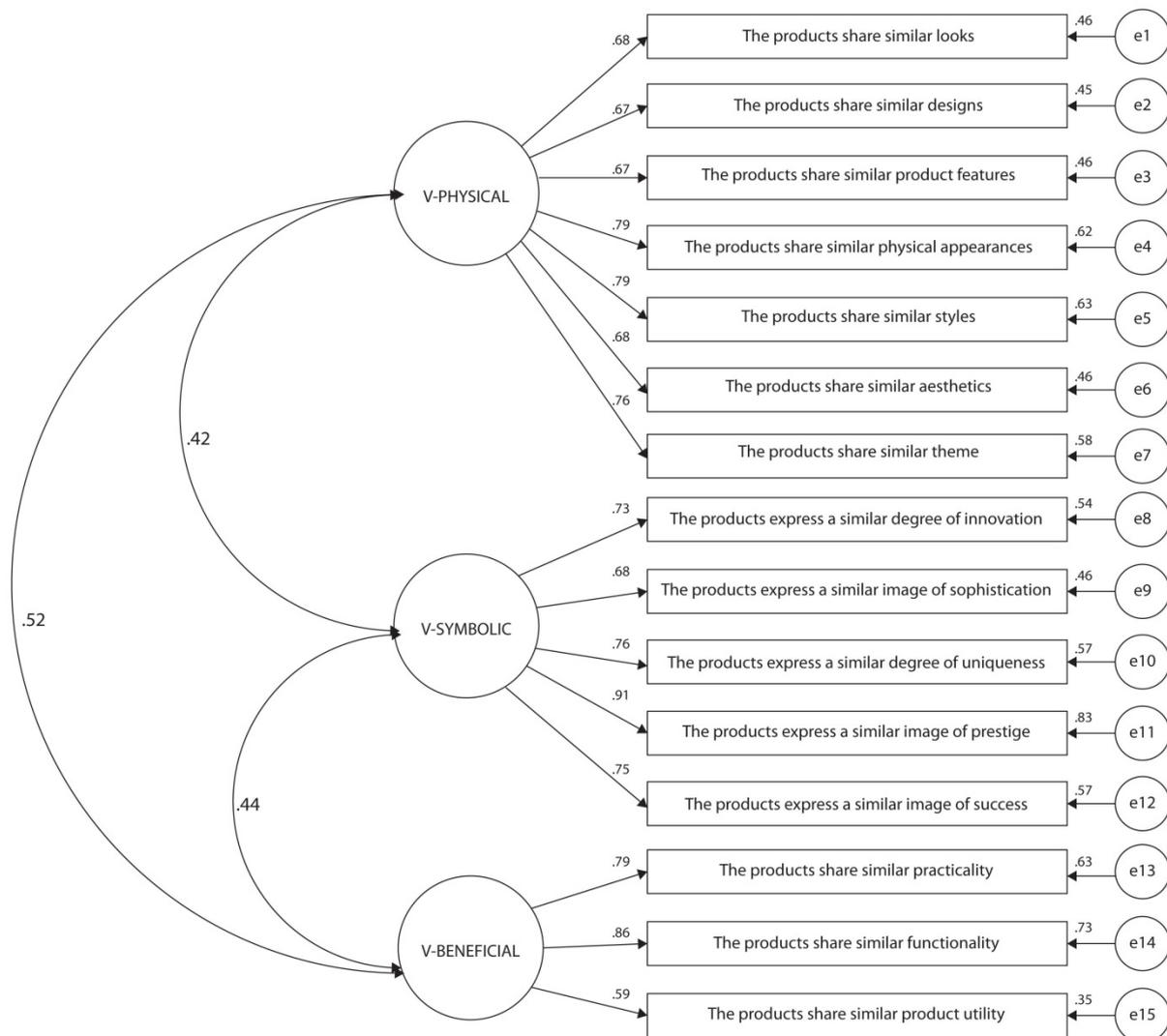
### **Sample**

The stimuli are newly created collage using real life brands falling under one of the four product categories chosen for the main study. A focus group for each of the stimuli was undertaken with the respondents similar to that used in the intended group for analysis. The stimuli were discussed with the group to ensure that they were accurately measuring the form of mimicry the scale was designed to measure. A new sample was collected under conditions stated in previous studies resulting in 107 useable responses.

## Results

AMOS 19 was utilized to complete the CFA. The results for the CFA in this study are revealed in Figure 5.8B.

**Figure 5.8B:** CFA for the Vavilovian mimicry scale under new conditions



Selected important statistics for the CFA (Figure 5.7A) include: Chi-square = 102.038, Degrees of freedom = 84, Probability level = .088, RMSEA = .045, RMR = .087, AGFI = .851, CFI = .977.

### **Concluding comments for Study Eight**

The CFA showed that the Vavilovian mimicry scale under a different condition revealed acceptable results (Hu and Bentler, 1999). The finding suggests the generalizability of the scale. The final items for this scale can be seen in Figure 5.9B.

**Figure 5.9B:** Final Vavilovian mimicry scale

Items appear as a 7-point Likert scale anchored at 1 by ‘strongly disagree’ and at 7 “strongly agree”.

**Factor 1: V-Physical Characteristics**

1. The products share similar looks
2. The products share similar designs
3. The products share similar product features
4. The products share similar physical appearance
5. The products share similar styles
6. The products share similar aesthetics
7. The products share similar themes

**Factor 2: V-Symbolic characteristics**

8. The products express a similar degree of innovation
9. The products express a similar image of sophistication
10. The products express a similar degree of uniqueness
11. The products express a similar image of prestige
12. The products express a similar image of success

**Factor 3: V-Beneficial characteristics**

13. The products express similar practicality
14. The products express similar functionality
15. The products express similar product utility

## **PART 4: POUYANNIAN MIMICRY**

This section discusses the EFA, CFA, validation and generalizability of the Pouyannian mimicry scale. The results of the scale development for Pouyannian mimicry is reported in this section.

### **STUDY NINE: EFA OF POUYANNIAN MIMICRY SCALE**

#### **Stimulus and Sample for EFA**

The pool of items that was initially generated for Pouyannian mimicry scale was tested using a series of stimuli. While the context of the study was within luxury brands, some other products taken as examples from the convenience goods sector that was befitting to Pouyannian mimicry were also added. Each type of mimicry was tested independently and the stimulus was specially prepared to ensure that the actual type of mimicry was being measured. In order to ensure little confusion between, the product stimuli was also pre-tested on a group of judges to ensure consistency across the constructs. In addition, tests to ensure a degree of similarity between the pair of products is undertaken in order to ensure the presence of mimicry. Care was being taken to ensure that there is no deviation of the responses to the stimulus from what the questionnaire is intended to measure. The stimulus were kept constant in the number of pairs of brands, and the duration the subjects are exposed to the stimulus are all controlled for across the three types of mimicry. Each group of subjects is only exposed to one type of mimicry.

#### **Results of EFA**

The Pouyannian mimicry scale was administered to a sample size of 326 respondents. The demographics and characteristics of the respondents were relatively representative of the respondents that will be used in future studies. Students were used as it has been indicated in past studies that students are appropriate subjects for scale development as they serve as surrogate consumers (Yavas, 1994). The data is checked for missing values and responses that are either incomplete or inappropriately completed are removed. Hence, only 269 useable responses were retained. The exercise was undertaken in a classroom setting at a large Australian university. The students were allowed to provide feedback with an open-ended discussion with the administrator and other students at the end of the exercise about the products.

As the study intended to develop scales to measure Pouyannian mimicry, the items were cleaned to reveal seven factors that seem to qualify as potential items for use. Items with double or triple loadings and that show factor loadings below .3 were eliminated. The items in the other unexpected factors were examined and items that were found to have little relevance to the study were removed. From the 47 items that were factor analyzed, 30 items remained within that is used to measure Pouyannian mimicry (shown in 5.1C). From the factor analysis, the inconsistent items were also removed based on the co-efficient alphas (Nunnally, 1978; Peterson, 1994). The initial Cronbach's alphas for the factors were above .7, suggesting that the initial scales are still considerably long. As such, the next stage will be to optimize the scale length and to purify the data.

Firstly, based on the alpha co-efficients, the items were deemed to be reliable for the study. However, looking at the list of scale items, they are suggested to be fitting for Pouyannian mimicry. While the scale items are considerably long, they did not overlap and are seen to be relevant. As such, no other additional items were removed for Stage One.

**Table 5.1C:** Exploratory Factor Analysis for Pouyannian mimicry

Items	Factor Loadings						
	F1 – P-Image	F2 – P-Physical	F3 – P-Intellectual	F4 – P-Beneficial	F5 – P-Conceptual	F6 –P-Brand	F7 – P-Features
The products express a similar image of elegance	.859						
The products express a similar image of sophistication	.852						
The products express a similar image of success	.837						
The products express a similar image	.759						
The products express a similar image of prestige	.730						
The products express similar appeal	.680						
The products express a similar degree of luxury	.665						
The products share similar looks		.815					
The products share similar appearances		.790					
The products share similar physical traits		.723					
The products share similar shapes		.688					
The products share similar designs		.686					
The products share similar aesthetics		.675					
The products express similar degree of creativity			.849				
The products express similar degree of originality			.841				
The products express similar degree of novelty			.782				
The products express similar degree of uniqueness			.739				
The products express similar degree of innovation			.738				
The products share similar reliability				.797			
The products share similar practicality				.792			
The products share similar functionality				.746			
The products share similar durability				.741			

The products share similar concepts					.857		
The products share similar ideas					.824		
The products share similar themes					.769		
The products share similar sounding brand names						.864	
The products share similar brand names						.845	
The products share similar logos						.696	
The products share similar features							.858
The products share similar product features							.843
<b>% of Variance</b>	26.946	15.369	7.475	6.429	5.612	4.435	4.154
<b>Cumulative % of Variance</b>	70.419						
<b>Eigenvalue</b>	26.946	15.369	7.475	6.429	5.612	4.435	4.154
<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	.909	.853	.882	.848	.891	.765	.836
<b>Overall Cronbach's Alpha</b>	.898						
<b>KMO</b>	.966						
<b>Barlett's Test of Sphericity</b>	.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.  
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.  
a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.  
Factor loadings 0.3 suppressed.

## **STUDY TEN: CFA OF POUYANNIAN MIMICRY SCALE**

This stage was performed to examine the dimensions of the scales in Study One, and to further purify the items. Churchill (1979) suggested that the scale purification step is to examine the dimensionality of the items. Churchill (1979, p. 69) further noted that a measure is said to have “face” or content validity when the sample is adequate and the items “look right” (Heeler and Ray, 1972). Hence, the content validity of the scales would also be examined by comparing the remaining items with the working definition of the Pouyannian mimicry.

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) will be used to test for the dimensions, which is considered to be a superior technique over EFA for this task (O’Leary-Kelly and Vokurka, 1998). Additionally, CFA has been used to reduce scales by identifying the items that need to be trimmed from the scale, which assists by confirming the scale in its final form (Floyd and Widaman, 1995; Netemeyer et al., 2003). Confirmatory Factor Analysis would be undertaken using the AMOS 19 programme.

A new survey is produced consisting of the 30 item Pouyannian mimicry items, as well as the demographics collected in Study One. A pretest was conducted to ensure no errors or difficulties in the understanding and the application of the survey. In reality, this survey in this stage is basically smaller than the versions of the surveys used in Study One.

### **Sample**

New data was collected for this study. Respondents were exposed to only stimulus (pair of brands) that is tested to show Pouyannian mimicry. Similar to the conditions in Study One, the respondents are students who fall between 18 to 35 years of age and they are briefed on the confidentiality issues and that they are able to withdraw from the exercise at any point in time. This was conducted in a classroom style setting with respondents similar to that used previously. Useable responses for this study was  $n = 255$ .

### **Results**

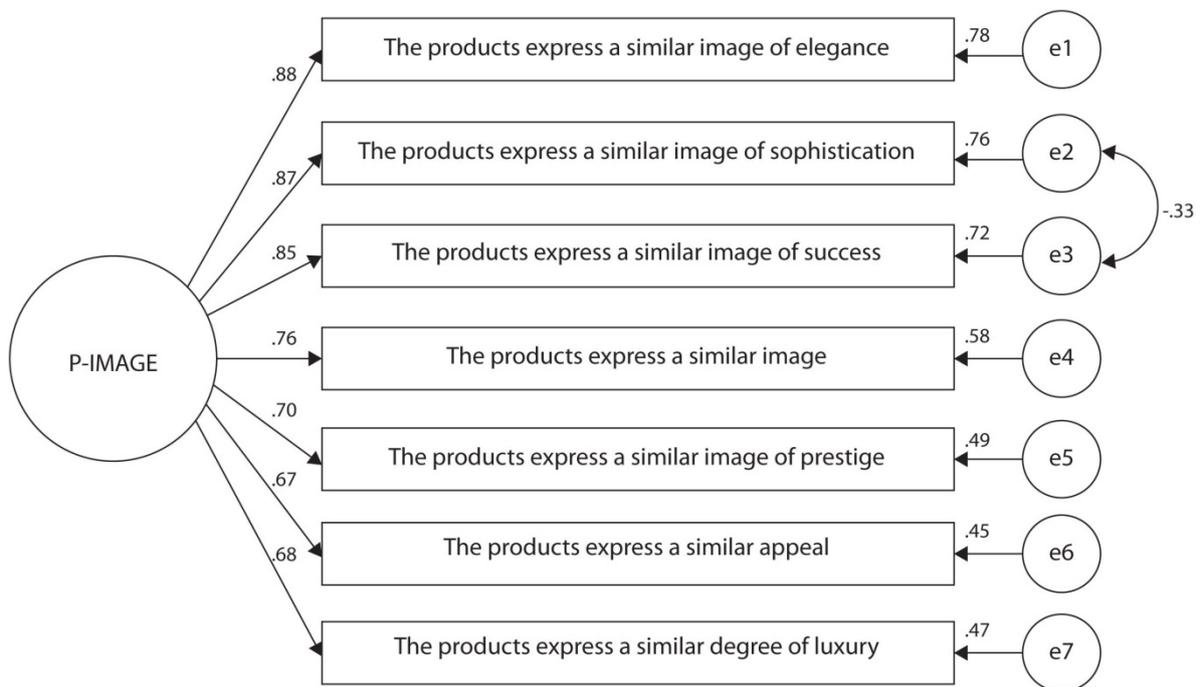
CFA is deemed useful to further refine the scales. Prior to completing the measurement model, the congeneric model for each of the factors within the Pouyannian mimicry scale is tested to ensure model fit before testing it as a measurement model.

CFA further refined the scales resulting in three dimensions which are namely physical characteristics, image characteristics and beneficial characteristics. Physical and image characteristics dimensions resulted in five items each and beneficial characteristics resulted in six items. According Raubenheimer (2004), multi-dimensional scales should have a minimum of three items to load significantly on each factor in order to be successfully identified.

### Congeneric Models

#### P-Image Characteristics

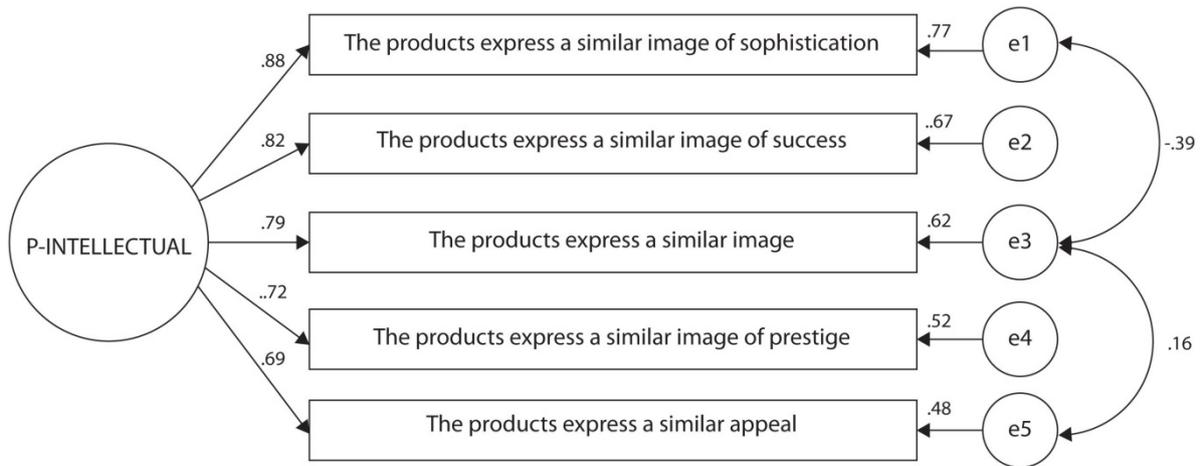
**Figure 5.2C:** Congeneric model for p-image characteristics



The congeneric model for image characteristics recorded Chi-Square = 15.356, Degrees of Freedom = 12, Probability level = .286, RMSEA = .027, RMR = .046, AGFI = .962, CFI = .998.

### P-Intellectual Characteristics

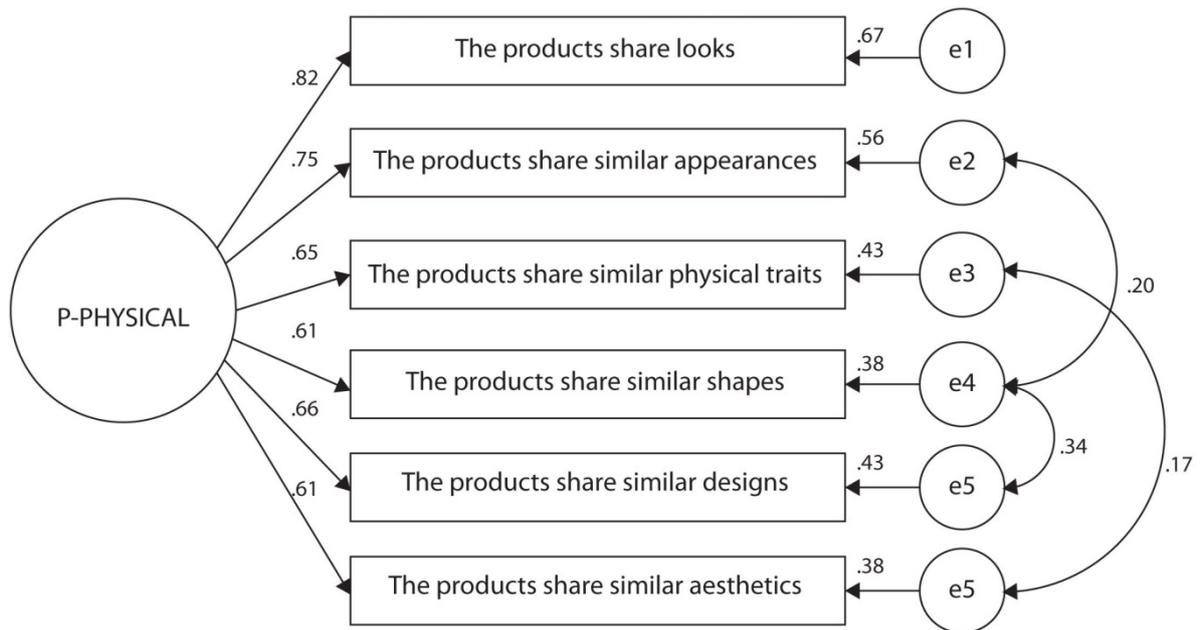
Figure 5.3C: Congeneric model for p-intellectual characteristics



The congeneric model for intellectual characteristics recorded Chi-Square = 4.820, Degrees of Freedom = 3, Probability level = .185, RMSEA = .049, RMR = .032, AGFI = .963, CFI = .997.

## P-Physical Characteristics

**Figure 5.4C:** Congeneric model for p-physical characteristics

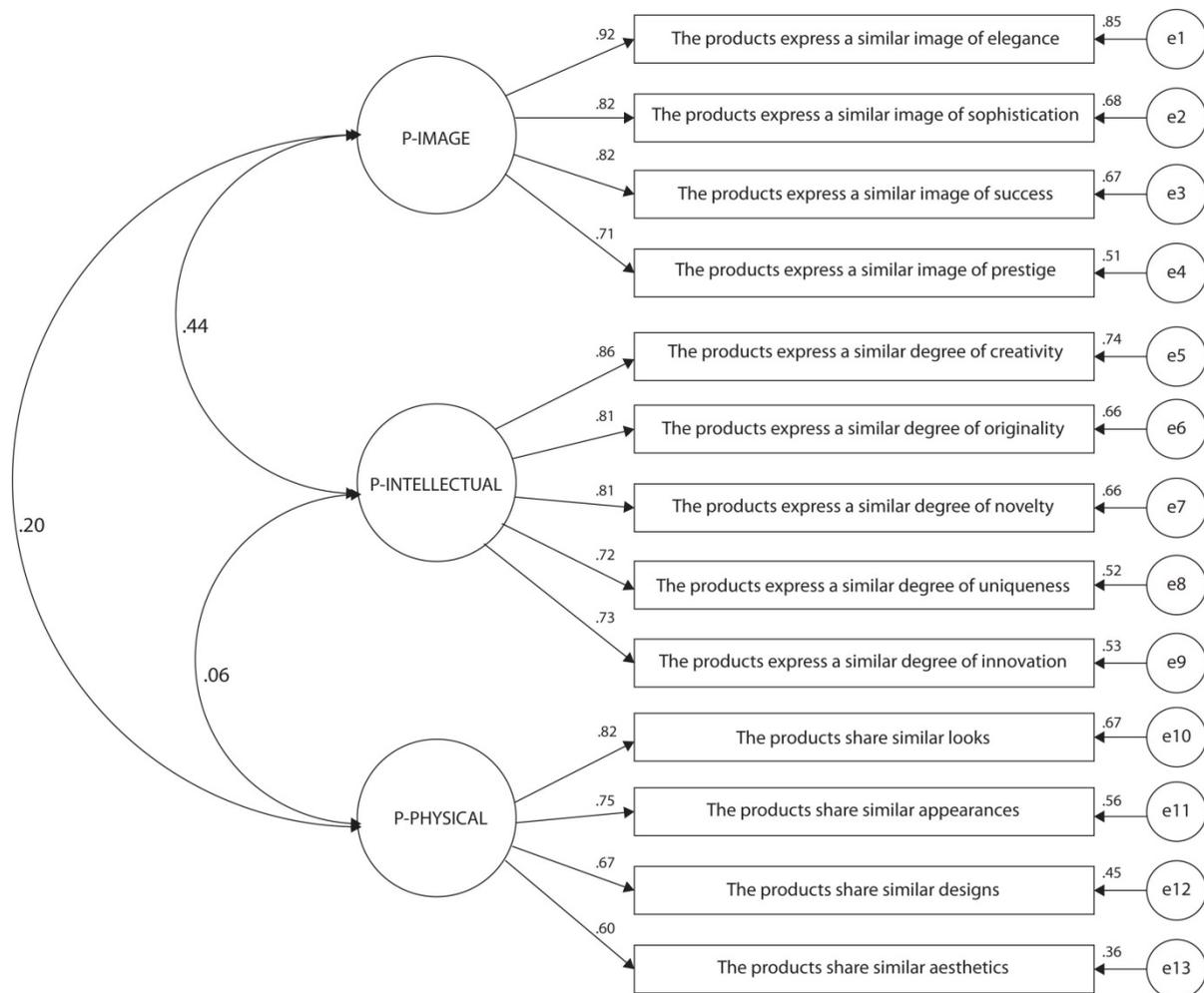


The congeneric model for physical characteristics recorded Chi-Square = 6.241, Degrees of Freedom = 6, Probability level = .397, RMSEA = .013, RMR = .020, AGFI = .972, CFI = .999).

Based on the congeneric models for the three dimensions of Vavilovian mimicry, it is shown by the results (Figure 5.2C – 5.4C) to achieve acceptable measures (Hu and Bentler, 1999; Holmes-Smith and Rowe, 1994).

## Measurement Model

**Figure 5.5C:** Measurement model for Pouyannian mimicry



In the next step of the measurement procedure, the three-factor structure was testing using CFA (Kelloway, 1998; Walsh and Mitchell, 2007). Based on the measurement model (Figure 5.4A), model identification was achieved with the 13 items and the model fit statistics are found to be of acceptable range and can be used for further analysis (Hu and Bentler, 1999) (Chi-Square =75.577, Degrees of Freedom = 60, Probability level = .085, RMSEA = .032, RMR = .092, AGFI = .936, CFI = .990). The remaining items continue to fall under the definition of the Pouyannian construct which is intended to measure (content/face validity).

Using CFA, the 18 items (as shown in the congeneric models in Figure 5.2C – 5.4C) from post EFA has been refined to 13 remaining items. The other four items were removed due to

low regression weights that were below the acceptable standards (Hu and Bentler, 1999). These 13 items have indicated a good model fit within three dimensions.

**Concluding comments for Study Ten**

Through CFA, the initial 30-items in the Pouyannian mimicry scale have been refined to 13 remaining items. These items are shown to have acceptable loadings. From this point on, further tests on reliability and validity can be conducted.

## **STUDY ELEVEN: VALIDATION OF POUYANNIAN MIMICRY SCALE**

This step is conducted to establish the scale's criterion validity (predictive) and construct/trait validity (nomological, discriminant and convergent). Studies by Campbell and Fiske (1959), Churchill (1979), and Walsh and Mitchell (2005) were followed as guides for this stage. For this to be achieved, new survey forms and collection of new data was required. This is discussed in the following section.

### **Sample**

A new survey was designed by including the 13-item Pouyannian mimicry scale items and the measures to be used to test for predictive, nomological, discriminant and convergent validity. The survey was pre-tested on respondents that are similar to the intended sample used for the main data collection. A focus group like exercise was conducted to collect feedback regarding the possible issues with the readability, grammatical, comprehension of instructions, and so on. The pre-test showed that the new survey is fit to be used.

The data collection is conducted using a new group of respondents who do not have prior exposure to any of the mimicry scale development procedures. After removing any incomplete or inappropriately completed data, 145 useable responses remained.

### **Criterion (predictive) and Construct (nomological) Validity**

Trait and nomological validity are both useful distinctions for the exploration of construct validity (Campbell, 1960). Eastman et al. (1999, p. 44) stated that "criterion validity is the extent to which a measure is related to actual behaviours of other real life outcomes (Anastasi, 1986; Nunnally, 1978)". This form of validity relates to the ability of a scale "to predict something that should theoretically be related or ability to predict" (Oh, 2005, p. 301). In addition, Churchill (1979) proposes that as a final step to scale development, it is important to show that the measure behaves as expected to other constructs. Hence, criterion validity attempts to correctly predict the criterion measure. Perception of luxury and product evaluation of mimic brand is included to test for the criterion validity of the presence of Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimicry. Previous studies have demonstrated product similarities are expected to have a significant effect on product evaluation (Lefkoff-Hagius and Mason, 1993; van Horen and Pieters, 2012). However, according to DeVellis (2003, p. 52) even if the correlation between a predictor measure and a criterion is high, the score obtained on the predictor may not serve as the most accurate estimate of the criterion.

For Pouyannian mimicry, the perception of luxury and product evaluation both recorded positive Cronbach's alpha scores ( $\alpha = .884$  and  $\alpha = .787$  respectively). The criterion (predictive) validity of the Pouyannian mimicry scale was supported. Those who perceived a high presence of Pouyannian mimicry (measured by the scale developed for this study) had a significantly higher mean score of perception of luxury towards mimic brand ( $M = 4.6169$ ,  $SD = 1.1328$ ) than those who perceived a lower presence of Pouyannian mimicry ( $M = 2.8917$ ,  $SD = .9380$ ) ( $t = -6.717$ ,  $p = .000$ ). In addition, those who perceived a high presence of Pouyannian mimicry had a significantly higher mean score of product evaluation of mimic brand ( $M = 4.6761$ ,  $SD = .9996$ ) than those who perceived a lower presence of Pouyannian mimicry ( $M = 3.6417$ ,  $SD = .9673$ ) ( $t = -4.491$ ,  $p = .000$ ). This result is in line with van Horen and Pieters' (2012a) results that suggested that mimics that are similar to the model brand in image and other non-physical attributes can lead to better evaluation of the mimic. Therefore, this finding is in accordance to the definition of Pouyannian mimicry.

In conjunction with establishing criterion validity, the use of the consumers' evaluation scale should also be used to establish "nomological validity". Initially proposed by Cronbach and Meehl (1955), nomological validity serves as a form of construct validity that is lawlike and the examination of the constructs and measures is conducted using formal hypotheses based on theory (Peter, 1981; Cadogan et al., 1999). When an instrument is believed to have nomological validity, it will demonstrate relationship to another construct to which it is theoretically related (Churchill, 1995). The link between nomological validity and criterion (predictive) validity lies in the explanation that "the degree which the construct as measured by a set of indicators predicts other constructs that past theoretical or empirical work says it should predict" (Droge, 1997). As proposed by previous studies (e.g. van Horen and Pieters, 2012b) the presence of mimicry (similarity between products) should lead to attitude and evaluation formation. Therefore, to test for the nomological validity of the presence of mimicry scale, it is anticipated that there should be a relationship between presence of mimicry, perception of luxury and product evaluation as dictated in the literature (Hagtvedt and Patrick, 2008). This would provide evidence that the scale and the related constructs in the study should behave as what theory dictates (Cadogan et al., 1999).

Past studies have used correlations to test for the relationship between constructs in validation of scales (Heeler and Ray, 1972). In addition, when examining the nomological validity of a

measure, it is paramount for the researcher to also concentrate on a pattern of the results between the criterion and predictors rather than just the significance of the results (Cronbach and Meehl, 1955; Netemeyer et al., 1991). Therefore, while nomological validity is achieved in this study, further research that identify the patterns would need to be conducted in order to robustly justify the scales as having nomological validity. At this stage, with the support of previous results, the scales continue in their line of positive results towards validation.

Based on the results in Table 5.6C, it is shown that there are significant correlations between the presence of mimicry scale and other constructs which are theoretically related. Therefore it can be suggested that the presence of mimicry scale predicts the relationships as what past studies have documented. Although there are no direct studies that examine the presence of Pouyannian mimicry, it can be postulated that the scale has the “ability to predict” what past studies in imitation and product similarity has postulated.

**Table 5.6C:** Results for criterion and construct validity (Pouyannian mimicry)

<b>Pearson Correlations</b>	<b>Presence of Mimicry</b>	<b>Perception of Luxury</b>	<b>Product Evaluation</b>
Presence of Mimicry	1		
Perception of Luxury	.656**	1	
Product Evaluation	.446**	.664**	1

\*\* $p \leq 0.01$

**Trait Validity (discriminant and convergent)**

Based on the fundamental principles in science, a particular construct or trait should be measurable by more than one method (Churchill, 1979). Furthermore, Peter (1981) has stated that in addition to construct validity, trait validity provides necessary information for accepting construct validity. Distinctive to construct validity, trait validity relates to the empirical relationship between measures of different constructs (Peter, 1981). Trait validity can be conducted using discriminant and convergent validity tests (Campbell and Fiske, 1959). The intention to conduct discriminant and convergent validity tests is to primarily examine “the amount of systematic variance in a measure’s scores and determine whether the systematic variance results in high correlations with other measures of the construct and low correlations with constructs of other phenomena with which the construct should not be associated” (Peter, 1981, p. 135). Convergent validity relates to the degree of agreement in

measures of the same or similar construct, whereas discriminant relates to the degree which measures of conceptually different constructs differ (Campbell and Fiske, 1959; Churchill, 1979; Oh, 2005).

According to Ping (2004), discriminant validity has been typically established in past studies as using correlations. It is determined by demonstrating that a measure does not highly correlate with another measure from which it is different (Campbell, 1960). It is suggested that correlations with other measures below 0.7 is deemed as acceptable and can serve as evidence of measuring distinctness and discriminant validity (Ping, 2004). On the other hand, convergent validity is “based on the correlation between responses obtained by maximally different methods of measuring the same construct” (Peter, 1981). Following Ping (2004) and Walsh and Mitchell’s (2005) as guidelines for the validity tests, for discriminant validity the *Brand Familiarity scale* is used. The *Brand Familiarity* scale is chosen because it is believed that theoretically, the presence of mimicry scale should not be related to *Brand Familiarity* (Walsh and Mitchell, 2005) as the items that the scale consists of are “I am familiar...”, “I am knowledgeable about...” The three-item scale was reliable ( $\alpha = .911$ ). The Brand Familiarity scale is from Kent and Allen (1994).

For convergent validity, the use of Sproles and Kendall’s (1986) Overload-Confusion scale was used and the scale is found to be reliable ( $\alpha = .870$ ). The Overload-Confusion scale is selected based on the justification that when consumers are faced with brands that are closely similar and with a great number of brands to choose from, they become overloaded with information (Walsh and Mitchell, 2005). As a consumer, one will begin to simplify the information they can process about the brands (Sproles and Kendall, 1986). According to Walsh and Mitchell (2005), when there are a great number of brands in a product category to choose from, it is often a sign of brand copying and in this case testing for the presence of mimicry scale further emphasizes the presence of brands with similar features. Therefore, based on this premise, it is postulated that information overload and presence of mimicry likely to be positively correlated.

In order to show discriminant validity, a correlations test is conducted between the Brand Familiarity scale and the presence of mimicry scale. As previously discussed, it is postulated that Brand Familiarity should not theoretically relate to the presence of mimicry scale since brand familiarity discusses the level of knowledge a consumer has (Kim and Chung, 2012),

as opposed to whether there are similar attributes between two products (presence of mimicry scale). The results in Table 5.7C shows that the presence of mimicry and the Brand Familiarity scale has a low but significant correlation, which shows some discriminant validity.

In order to demonstrate convergent validity, a correlations test is conducted between the Confusion-Overload and the presence of mimicry scale. The bivariate correlation (Pearson) between the two scales was .455 and is statistically significant at .00, this suggests a degree of convergent validity.

**Table 5.7C:** Results for convergent and discriminant validity (Pouyannian mimicry)

<b>Pearson Correlations</b>	<b>Presence of Mimicry</b>	<b>Confusion Overload</b>	<b>Brand Familiarity</b>
Presence of Mimicry	1		
Confusion Overload	.455**	1	
Brand Familiarity	.227*	.163	1

\*\* $p \leq 0.01$ , \* $p \leq 0.05$

### **Concluding comments for Study Eleven**

From this study, we can observe that the proposed Pouyannian mimicry scale performed successfully in the predictive, nomological, convergent and discriminant validity tests.

## **STUDY TWELVE: GENERALIZABILITY OF POUYANNIAN MIMICRY SCALE**

The purpose of this study was to increase the generalizability of the scales by performing a CFA on the previously validated items in each of the scales using a variation in the stimulus, through the use of a different product category and brand.

### **Generalizability**

It is important for a scale to be able to function under varying conditions and scenarios in order for it to be successfully adopted and applied both academically and managerially. In order to test for the generalizability of the scale, the stimulus consisting of the collage of two brands (one model and one mimic) within the same product category is produced. The stimulus included new images pertaining to Pouyannian mimicry. A new survey was produced. This generalizability test is adopted from one of the main studies (see Chapter 6).

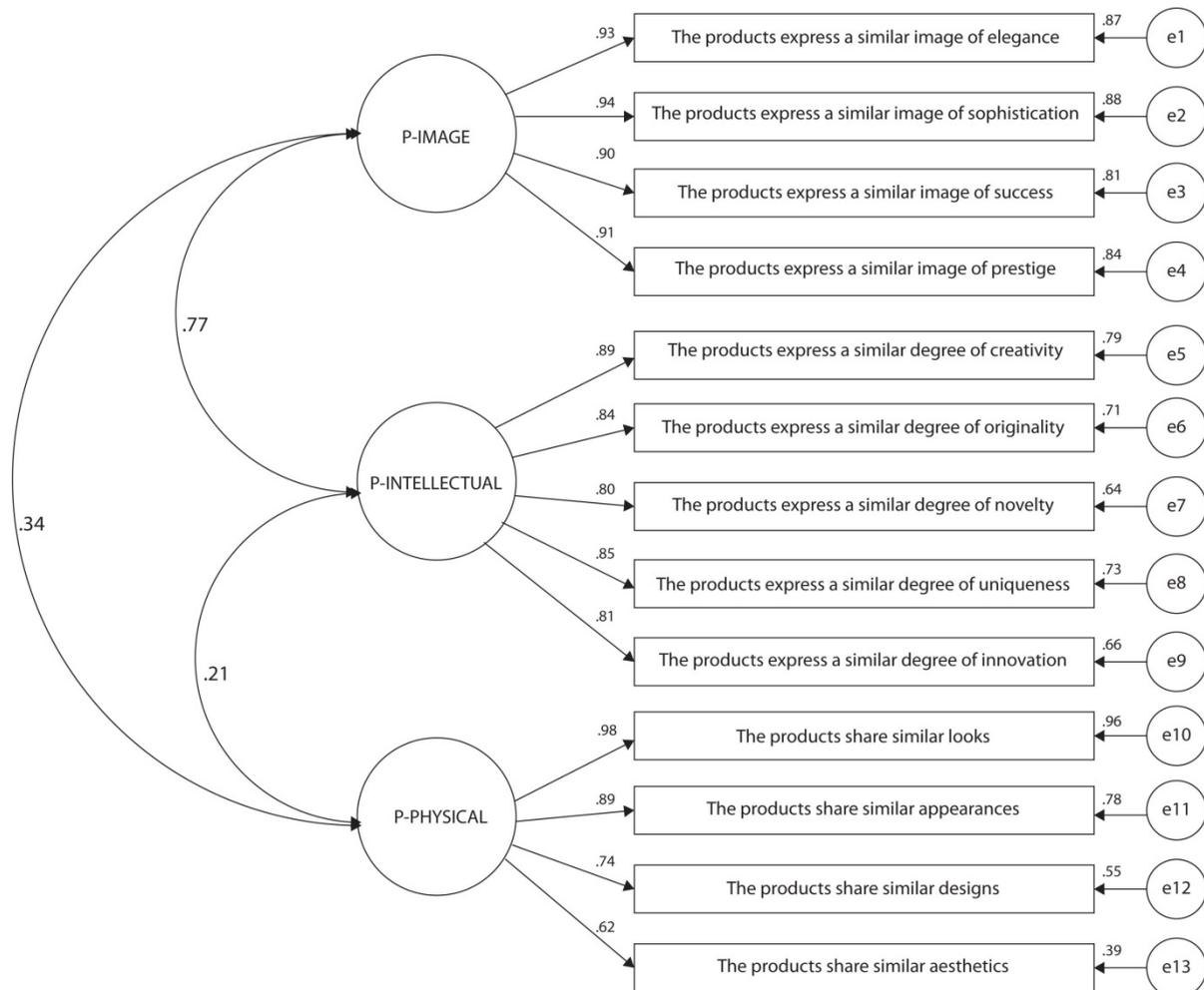
### **Sample**

The stimuli are newly created collage using real life brands falling under one of the four product categories chosen for the main study. A focus group for each of the stimuli was undertaken with the respondents similar to that used in the intended group for analysis. The stimuli were discussed with the group to ensure that they were accurately measuring the form of mimicry the scale was designed to measure. A new sample was collected under conditions stated in previous studies resulting in 98 useable responses.

## Results

AMOS 19 was utilized to complete the CFA. The results for the CFA in this study are revealed in Figure 5.8C.

**Figure 5.8C: CFA for the Pouyannian mimicry scale under new conditions**



Selected important statistics for the CFA (Figure 5.7A) include: Chi-square = 68.016, Degrees of freedom = 57, Probability level = .151, RMSEA = .038, RMR = .096, AGFI = .888, CFI = .993.

### Concluding comments for Study Twelve

The CFA showed that the Pouyannian mimicry scale under a different condition revealed acceptable results (Hu and Bentler, 1999). The finding suggests the generalizability of the scale. The final items for this scale can be seen in Figure 5.9C.

**Figure 5.9C:** Final Pouyannian mimicry scale

Items appear as a 7-point Likert scale anchored at 1 by ‘strongly disagree’ and at 7 “strongly agree”.

**Factor 1: P- Image Characteristics**

1. The products express a similar image of elegance
2. The products express a similar image of sophistication
3. The products express a similar image of success
4. The products express a similar image of prestige

**Factor 2: P-Intellectual Characteristics**

5. The products express similar degree of creativity
6. The products express similar degree of originality
7. The products express similar degree of novelty
8. The products express similar degree of uniqueness
9. The products express similar degree of innovation

**Factor 3: P-Physical Characteristics**

10. The products share similar looks
11. The products share similar physical appearance
12. The products share similar designs
13. The products share similar aesthetics

## **PART 5 CONCLUDING COMMENTS FOR CHAPTER FIVE**

This chapter has explained the process undertaken in developing the three brand mimicry scales, each of the scales is designed to measure the presence of Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimicry, Vavilovian mimicry and Pouyannian mimicry respectively. As previously discussed in the body of this chapter, the research has followed the scale development process that has been tested and updated by previous academics. Through the 12 studies, this research has generated and purified the items through EFA and CFA (1, 5, 9), shown multi-dimensionality using CFA (2, 6, 10), confirmed the scales' convergent, discriminant, and predictive (criterion) validity (3, 7, 11), and investigated the generalizability validity (4, 8, 12), and ensured the scales' ability to measure its intended purpose (3, 7, 11). As mentioned in the introduction of the chapter, a summary of the steps undertaken for each scale developed is displayed in Table 5.2. The final items in their complete form appear in Figure 5.9A – 5.9C.

**TABLE 5.3: SUMMARY OF WICKLERIAN EISNERIAN MIMICRY SCALE DEVELOPMENT**

<b>Study 1</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	Generate items that relate to Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimicry scale
	<b>Items</b>	42
	<b>Respondents</b>	190
	<b>Stimuli</b>	A series of brand pairs (of mimic and model brands) that befit the definition of Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimicry
	<b>Methods</b>	Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), reliability analysis (Cronbach's alpha)
	<b>Results</b>	EFA revealed 5 factors, 3 of which were clearly related to Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimicry. Further EFA and reliability test resulted in 24 items relating to Wicklerian Eisnerian mimicry ( $\alpha = .831$ )
<b>Study 2</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	Test the dimensionality of the items developed in Study 1
	<b>Items</b>	24
	<b>Respondents</b>	175
	<b>Stimuli</b>	A series of brand pairs (consisting of a mimic and a model brand each) that befit the definition of Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimicry
	<b>Methods</b>	Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) (congeneric and measurement models) with AMOS 19
	<b>Results</b>	CFA further refined the scale resulting in 11 items for Wicklerian Eisnerian mimicry ( $\alpha = .774$ ). Chi-square = 52.758 , Degrees of Freedom = 39, Probability level = .070 , AGFI = .914, SRMR = .078 , RMSEA = .045
<b>Study 3</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	Perform validity tests including: criterion, nomological, discriminant and convergent
	<b>Items</b>	11
	<b>Respondents</b>	141
	<b>Stimuli</b>	One brand pair (consisting of a mimic and model brand)
	<b>Other scales used</b>	Confusion Overload scale, Brand Familiarity scale, Perception of Luxury scale, Product Evaluation scale
	<b>Methods</b>	Pearson correlations, median split, T-tests, reliability test (Cronbach's alpha)
<b>Results</b>	The validity tests were considered successful, showing convergent and discriminant validity. The T-tests also showed that each scale was (as theoretically expected) linked to perception of luxury and product evaluation. Reliability (Cronbach's alpha) continued to show high reliability of the Wicklerian Eisnerian scale ( $\alpha = .869$ )	
<b>Study 4</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	Increase the generalizability of the scale by performing a CFA on the Study 3 results using a variation in product category and brand choice
	<b>Items</b>	11
	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>165</b>
	<b>Stimuli</b>	One brand pair (of a mimic and a model brand) in the shoe category
	<b>Methods</b>	Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) with AMOS 19
	<b>Results</b>	CFA continued to show three dimensions and the generalizability of the Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimicry scale ( $\alpha = .755$ ) under new conditions of a different product category and brand. Chi-square = 41.069, Degrees of Freedom = 38 , Probability level = .338 , AGFI = .908, SRMR = .096 , RMSEA = .025

**TABLE 5.4: SUMMARY OF VAVILOVIAN MIMICRY SCALE DEVELOPMENT**

<b>Study 5</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	Generate items that relate to Vavilovian mimicry scale
	<b>Items</b>	55
	<b>Respondents</b>	177
	<b>Stimuli</b>	A series of brand pairs (of mimic and model brands) that befit the definition of Vavilovian mimicry
	<b>Methods</b>	Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), reliability analysis (Cronbach's alpha)
	<b>Results</b>	EFA revealed 5 factors, 3 of which were clearly related to Vavilovian mimicry. Further EFA and reliability test resulted in 23 items relating to Vavilovian mimicry ( $\alpha = .947$ )
<b>Study 6</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	Test the dimensionality of the items developed in Study 5
	<b>Items</b>	23
	<b>Respondents</b>	206
	<b>Stimuli</b>	A series of brand pairs (consisting of a mimic and a model brand each) that befit the definition of Vavilovian mimicry
	<b>Methods</b>	Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) (congeneric and measurement models) with AMOS 19
	<b>Results</b>	CFA further refined the scale resulting in 15 items for Vavilovian mimicry ( $\alpha = .915$ ). Chi-square = 104.183, Degrees of Freedom = 83, Probability level = .058 , AGFI = .914, SRMR = .063, RMSEA = .035
<b>Study 7</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	Perform validity tests including: criterion, nomological, discriminant and convergent
	<b>Items</b>	15
	<b>Respondents</b>	104
	<b>Stimuli</b>	One brand pair (consisting of a mimic and model brand)
	<b>Other scales used</b>	Confusion Overload scale, Brand Familiarity scale, Perception of Luxury scale, Product Evaluation scale
	<b>Methods</b>	Pearson correlations, median split, T-tests, reliability test (Cronbach's alpha)
	<b>Results</b>	The validity tests were considered successful, showing convergent and discriminant validity. The T-tests also showed that each scale was (as theoretically expected) linked to perception of luxury and product evaluation. Reliability (Cronbach's alpha) continued to show high reliability of the Vavilovian scale ( $\alpha = .891$ )
<b>Study 8</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	Increase the generalizability of the scale by performing a CFA on the Study 3 results using a variation in product category and brand choice
	<b>Items</b>	15
	<b>Respondents</b>	107
	<b>Stimuli</b>	One brand pair (of a mimic and a model brand) in the shoe category
	<b>Methods</b>	Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) with AMOS 19
	<b>Results</b>	CFA continued to show three dimensions and the generalizability of the Vavilovian mimicry scale ( $\alpha = .885$ ) under new conditions of a different product category and brand. Chi-square = 102.038, Degrees of Freedom = 84 , Probability level = .088, AGFI = .851, SRMR = .087 , RMSEA = .045

**TABLE 5.5 SUMMARY OF POUYANNIAN MIMICRY SCALE DEVELOPMENT**

<b>Study 9</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	Generate items that relate to Pouyannian mimicry scale
	<b>Items</b>	47
	<b>Respondents</b>	269
	<b>Stimuli</b>	A series of brand pairs (of mimic and model brands) that befit the definition of Pouyannian mimicry
	<b>Methods</b>	Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), reliability analysis (Cronbach's alpha)
	<b>Results</b>	EFA revealed 5 factors, 3 of which were clearly related to Pouyannian mimicry. Further EFA and reliability test resulted in 30 items relating to Pouyannian mimicry ( $\alpha = .898$ )
<b>Study 10</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	Test the dimensionality of the items developed in Study 9
	<b>Items</b>	30
	<b>Respondents</b>	255
	<b>Stimuli</b>	A series of brand pairs (consisting of a mimic and a model brand each) that befit the definition of Pouyannian mimicry
	<b>Methods</b>	Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) (congeneric and measurement models) with AMOS 19
	<b>Results</b>	CFA further refined the scale resulting in 11 items for Pouyannian mimicry ( $\alpha = .842$ ). Chi-square = 75.577, Degrees of Freedom = 60, Probability level = .085, AGFI = .936, SRMR = .092, RMSEA = .032
<b>Study 11</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	Perform validity tests including: criterion, nomological, discriminant and convergent
	<b>Items</b>	13
	<b>Respondents</b>	145
	<b>Stimuli</b>	One brand pair (consisting of a mimic and model brand)
	<b>Other scales used</b>	Confusion Overload scale, Brand Familiarity scale, Perception of Luxury scale, Product Evaluation scale
	<b>Methods</b>	Pearson correlations, median split, T-tests, reliability test (Cronbach's alpha)
	<b>Results</b>	The validity tests were considered successful, showing convergent and discriminant validity. The T-tests also showed that each scale was (as theoretically expected) linked to perception of luxury and product evaluation. Reliability (Cronbach's alpha) continued to show high reliability of the Pouyannian scale ( $\alpha = .921$ )
<b>Study 12</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	Increase the generalizability of the scale by performing a CFA on the Study 3 results using a variation in product category and brand choice
	<b>Items</b>	13
	<b>Respondents</b>	98
	<b>Stimuli</b>	One brand pair (of a mimic and a model brand) in the shoe category
	<b>Methods</b>	Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) with AMOS 19
	<b>Results</b>	CFA continued to show three dimensions and the generalizability of the Pouyannian mimicry scale ( $\alpha = .920$ ) under new conditions of a different product category and brand. Chi-square = 68.016, Degrees of Freedom = 57, Probability level = .151, AGFI = .888, SRMR = .096, RMSEA = .038

## **CHAPTER 6 – PART 1: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter describes the analysis and discussion of the research. In light of the rigour of the methodology adopted, it is best to capture the concept of each individual type of mimicry and relate it to the findings by structuring this chapter to comprise of 5 parts. Part 1 will provide a quick overview of the chapter and present the flow of the subsequent parts. This will be followed by a report of the analysis and findings of the respective type of mimicry clearly structured into Part 2, Part 3 and Part 4. The concluding comments which summarise all the findings will be presented in Part 5.

## OVERVIEW OF ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter reports the findings of the 12 studies which employs a 3 x 4 (3 types of mimicry x 4 product categories) factorial experimental design. These studies will be reported in three parts and coloured coded to enable better reference to each type of mimicry. They are as follows:

**Part 2** refers to **Wicklerian-Eisnerian Mimicry (Studies 1-4)**

**Part 3** refers to **Vavilovian Mimicry (Studies 5-8)**

**Part 4** refers to **Pouyannian Mimicry (Studies 9-12)**

Table 6.1 provides a matrix presenting the stimulus details of the 12 studies.

**Table 6.1:** Stimulus for experimental study

Type of Mimicry	Cars	Clothes	Shoes	Jewelry
Wicklerian – Eisnerian Mimicry	<b>Study 1</b>	<b>Study 2</b>	<b>Study 3</b>	<b>Study 4</b>
	Shuanghuan Noble vs. Smart ForTwo	H&M vs. Stella McCartney	Kmart “Birkenstocks” vs. Birkenstocks	Reebok vs. Tiffany & Co.
Vavilovian Mimicry	<b>Study 5</b>	<b>Study 6</b>	<b>Study 7</b>	<b>Study 8</b>
	Geely vs. Rolls Royce	Crocodile vs. Lacoste	Forever 21 vs. Valentino	Lovelinks vs. Pandora
Pouyannian Mimicry	<b>Study 9</b>	<b>Study 10</b>	<b>Study 11</b>	<b>Study 12</b>
	Lexus vs. Mercedes Benz	Gap vs. Burberry	Guess vs. Gucci	Thomas Sabo vs. Tiffany & Co.

Each of these parts will open with a recap of the definition of the individual type of mimicry and accompanying hypotheses. It then presents the findings of all the respective studies and end with the conclusion which summarizes the key findings within each type of mimicry.

## OVERVIEW OF STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES

A number of statistical techniques were used to test the hypotheses H1 to H16. They are applied across the twelve main studies.

First, a reliability test using Cronbach alpha's test for internal consistency is used to ensure that all the constructs within the study is reliable. The reliabilities are above 0.7 in accordance to the indicator by Nunnally (1970). The scales used for the 12 studies for cars, clothes, shoes and jewellery to test for the influence of three types of mimicry are showcased below in Table 6.2. The Cronbach's alphas are all within the acceptable range suggested by Nunnally (1970).

**Table 6.2:** Summary of scale reliabilities for all 12 studies

Scale	Source	No. of observed items	Reliability ( $\alpha$ )
Presence of Mimicry (Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimicry)	<i>Developed for this study</i>	11 items	.747 - .884
Presence of Mimicry (Vavilovian mimicry)	<i>Developed for this study</i>	15 items	.806 - .930
Presence of Mimicry (Pouyannian mimicry)	<i>Developed for this study</i>	13 items	.905 - .947
Perception of Luxury	Adapted from Hagtvedt and Patrick (2008)	5 items	.835 - .945
Product Evaluation	Adapted from Hagtvedt and Patrick (2008)	5 items	.816 - .929
Brand Familiarity	Kent and Allen (1994)	3 items	.705 - .945
Consumer's Need for Uniqueness	Tian et al. (2001)	31 items	.883 - .938
Status Consumption	Eastman et al. (1999)	5 items	.742 - .896

Second, a descriptive statistical analysis was conducted in SPSS to identify the profile of the respondents. Based on the percentages of each group, the respondents are likely to be aged between 19 to 35 years of age, with a majority of females and to reside in Australia. This provides an indication that the sample is highly homogenous (DeVecchio, 2000; Yavas, 1994), which is contingent in providing a better understanding on the effects of the presence of mimicry on the variables proposed to be tested in Chapter 2 and 3.

Third, a series of factor analysis were conducted using Principal Component extraction and Varimax rotation method on the presence of mimicry scale and the consumers' need for uniqueness scale. The analysis is conducted in order to ensure that the presence of mimicry scale and the consumers' need for uniqueness scale for each study falls into three dimensions. Further, a factor loading co-efficient of 0.3 was suppressed. The individual dimension within each scale was tested for reliability using Cronbach's alpha, and an overall reliability for the scale was retrieved to ensure internal consistency throughout. An item loading of 0.6 was used to determine internal scale consistency (Schaufeli et al., 2002).

Fourth, hypotheses H1 to H3 were examined using stepwise regression analysis and H5 to H10 were examined using a series of multiple linear regressions. Stepwise regression is a common method used for exploratory data analysis (Wheatley et al., 1981; McIntyre et al., 1983). The use of this exploratory technique is to identify by statistical means a subset of the independent variables that is relevant to the model. In this case, the "best" statistical predictors are chosen. Multiple regressions on the other hand is a form of complex associational statistical method, which is based on a correlation matrix of all the variables (Leech et al., 2008 p. 94). This technique is deemed appropriate for use to predict one outcome measure from several independent variables.

Fifth, Hypotheses H4, H11 – H13 were examined using mediation analysis in accordance to the steps set out by Baron and Kenny (1986). According to MacKinnon et al. (2002) and Baron and Kenny (1986), these four steps are required in order to show the evidence of mediation.

Step 1: Regression analysis is conducted between (X) as the predictor and (Y) as the criterion variable.

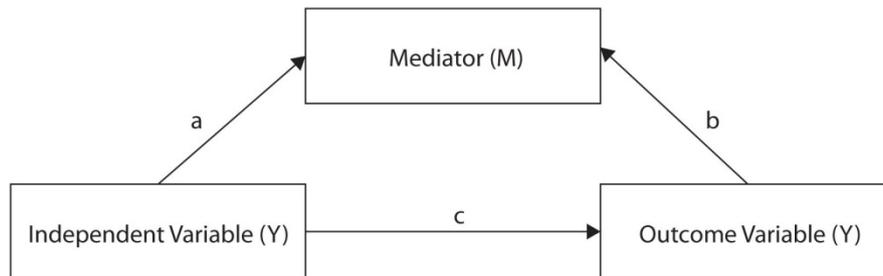
Step 2: Regression analysis is conducted between (X) as the predictor and (M) as the mediator. The mediator is treated like an outcome variable in this step.

Step 3: Regression analysis is conducted between (M) as the predictor and (Y) as the dependent variable.

Step 4: Regression analysis is conducted between (X) and (M) as the predictors and (Y) as the criterion variable. This step tests if the mediator affects the outcome variable.

It is stated by Baron and Kenny (1986) that if all the four steps are met, then (M) is a full mediator of the X – Y relationship. If (X) and (M) both predicts (Y), then the findings only support partial mediation. A Sobel test is suggested in order to confirm if the relationship is a partial or a full mediation (Sobel, 1982).

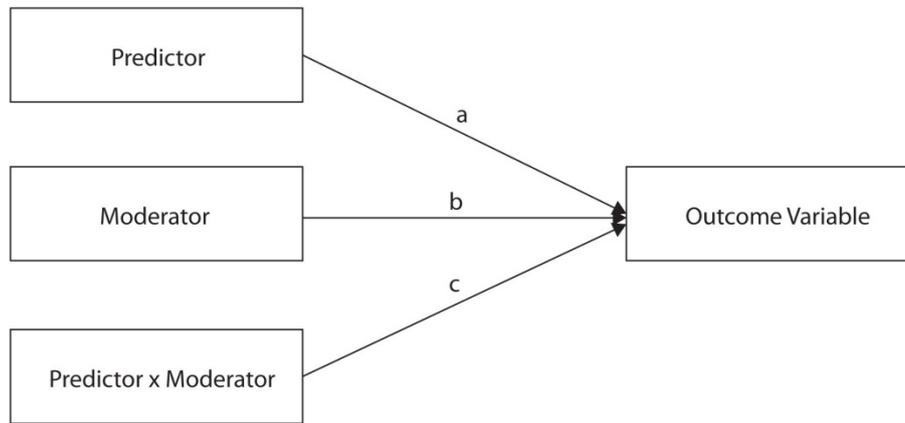
**Figure 6.3:** Mediator model



(Adapted from Baron and Kenny, 1986)

Sixth, Hypotheses H14 – H16 were examined using hierarchical moderated regression following the steps outlined by Anderson (1986) and Caruana et al. (2000). The main objective of using hierarchical moderated regression is to minimize the number of independent and moderator variables and to “maximize the predictive ability of a theoretically based regression model” (Anderson, 1986, p. 187). The moderating effects of the variables to be tested are determined through a series of model comparisons. An F test is performed to determine if there is significant change in the model  $R^2$  once a moderator-independent variable interaction term is added to the regression equation. The technique consists of fitting a regression equation like the following:

**Figure 6.4:** Moderator model



(Adapted from Baron and Kenny, 1986)

The intention of performing a hierarchical moderated regression was to minimize the number of independent and moderator variables. This is with the purpose of maximizing the predictive ability of a theoretically based regression model. To run a hierarchical moderated regression, an F test is performed in order to determine whether the addition of a moderator-independent interaction term to the regression equation makes a significant change in the model  $R^2$  (Pedhazur, 1982; Roscoe, 1975; Saunders, 1955, 1956). Peter et al. (1984) stated that hierarchical moderated regression is an adequate method to test for significant interaction effects between predictors, criteria and the moderating variable.

## **CHAPTER 6 -PART 2:**

### **WICKLERIAN-EISNERIAN MIMICRY**

#### **OVERVIEW**

This chapter will discuss and compare the influence of the presence of Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimicry on four different product categories, namely cars, clothing, shoes and jewellery within the luxury brand industry (see Table 6.1A).

As a recap of the definition, **Wicklerian Eisnerian mimicry** *is defined as a form of aggressive mimicry which allows the mimic to imitate the model and to deceive or confuse unsuspecting signal receivers through high physical similarities. They are sometimes seen as direct copies of the model brand.*

Each study will begin with factor analysis of the Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimicry scale and the consumers' need for uniqueness scale. It is then followed by a discussion of the demographic profile of the respondents. Next, the results of the hypotheses will be discussed in three sections: (a) direct relationships (H1-H3, H5-10) (b) mediating relationships (H4, H11-H13) and (c) moderating relationships (H14-H15). A summary and discussion of findings will be provided at the end of each study. An overall conclusion and summary of the chapter will serve to conclude the chapter. The following table (Table 6.2.1) outlines the sequence of the studies and the stimulus (brands) used in each study within this chapter.

**Table 6.1A:** Summary of stimulus for Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimicry

Wicklerian-Eisnerian Mimicry	Product category	Model Brand	Mimic Brand	Signal Receiver/Dupe
<b>STUDY ONE</b>	Cars	 <p>Smart ForTwo</p>	 <p>Shuanghuan Noble</p>	Consumers
<b>STUDY TWO</b>	Clothing	 <p>Stella McCartney</p>	 <p>H&amp;M</p>	Consumers
<b>STUDY THREE</b>	Shoes	 <p>Birkenstock Cork Sandals</p>	 <p>Kmart Cork Sandals</p>	Consumers
<b>STUDY FOUR</b>	Jewellery	 <p>Tiffany</p>	 <p>Reebok</p>	Consumers

	<b>HYPOTHESES</b>
<b>H1</b>	Presence of mimicry will lead to a negative perception of luxury
<b>H2</b>	Presence of mimicry will lead to a negative product evaluation of the mimic brand
<b>H3</b>	Perception of luxury will lead to a positive product evaluation of the mimic brand
<b>H4</b>	Perception of luxury will mediate the relationship between the presence of mimicry and product evaluation of the mimic brand
<b>H5a</b>	Brand familiarity towards the model brand will lead to a negative perception of luxury towards the mimic brand
<b>H5b</b>	There is a negative relationship between brand familiarity towards the model brand and perception of luxury towards the mimic brand
<b>H6a</b>	Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand will lead to a positive product evaluation of the mimic brand
<b>H6b</b>	Brand familiarity towards the model brand will lead to a negative product evaluation of the mimic brand
<b>H7</b>	Consumers' need for uniqueness will lead to a negative perception of luxury towards the mimic brand
<b>H8</b>	Consumers' need for uniqueness will lead to a negative product evaluation of the mimic brand
<b>H9</b>	Status consumption will lead to a negative perception of luxury towards the mimic brand
<b>H10</b>	Status consumption will lead to a negative product evaluation of the mimic brand
<b>Mediation effects:</b>	
<b>H11a</b>	brand familiarity towards the mimic brand will mediate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation towards a mimic brand
<b>H11b</b>	brand familiarity towards the model brand will mediate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation towards a mimic brand
<b>H12</b>	consumers' need for uniqueness will mediate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation towards a mimic brand
<b>H13</b>	status consumption will mediate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation towards a mimic brand
<b>Moderation effects:</b>	
<b>H14a</b>	brand familiarity towards the mimic brand will moderate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand
<b>H14b</b>	brand familiarity towards the model brand will moderate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand
<b>H15</b>	consumers' need for uniqueness will moderate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand
<b>H16</b>	status consumption will moderate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand

## **STUDY ONE: Shuanghuan Noble and Smart ForTwo**

Based on Table 6.1A, Study One will be testing the hypothesized relationship for the car product category using two real life brands to test for the effects of the presence of Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimicry on consumers. The model brand is Smart ForTwo and the mimic brand is Shuanghuan Noble. The signal receiver(s) are consumers. Respondent characteristics are first discussed, followed by the hypotheses postulated in Chapter 3.

### **Profile of Respondents**

The total usable number of responses for Study One is 171 respondents. The responses that were incomplete or had missing values were removed and not used for analysis. The respondents were mainly between 19 to 25 years of age (73.1%), with more females (62.9%) than males. The majority of the respondents are Australians (52%). Furthermore, it is found that most of the respondents are more familiar with Smart ForTwo (model brand) ( $M = 3.41$ ,  $SD = 2.147$ ) than the Smart Noble (mimic brand) ( $M = 1.87$ ,  $SD = 1.268$ ).

### Factor Analysis – Presence of mimicry scale

Prior to conducting analysis, factor analysis was conducted on the presence of mimicry scale (Wicklerian-Eisnerian) that was developed for this study (see detailed scale development procedure in Chapter 5). Results from Table 6.1.1A shows that there are three factors and consists of 11 items that accounts for 73.748% of cumulative variance. The Cronbach’s alpha coefficients were all above 0.8 which is deemed suitable for further analysis (Nunnally, 1970). The three factors are namely “image characteristics”, “physical characteristics”, and “beneficial characteristics” which are used for subsequent analysis.

**Table 6.1.1A:** Factor analysis of the Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimicry scale

Items	Factor Loadings		
	F1 – W-Image Characteristics	F2 – W-Physical Characteristics	F3 – W-Beneficial Characteristics
The products express a similar image of elegance	.919		
The products express a similar image of sophistication	.888		
The products express a similar image of success	.765		
The products express a similar degree of luxury	.741		
The products share similar physical traits		.834	
The products share similar product designs		.825	
The products share similar looks		.824	
The products share similar styles		.786	
The products share similar reliability			.913
The products share similar durability			.896
The products share similar practicality			.829
<b>% of Variance</b>	37.016	21.992	14.740
<b>Total % of Variance</b>	73.748		
<b>Eigenvalue</b>	4.072	2.419	1.621
<b>Cronbach’s Alpha</b>	.871	.839	.884
<b>Total Cronbach’s Alpha</b>	.828		
<b>KMO</b>	.789		
<b>Barlett’s Test of Sphericity</b>	.000		

### Factor Analysis – Consumers’ need for uniqueness scale

An exploratory factor analysis was conducted on the original 31-item consumers’ need for uniqueness scale (see Table 6.1.2A). Through Varimax rotation, the items were reduced to 18 items with an acceptable range of reliabilities. The three dimensions of consumers’ need for uniqueness which is namely avoidance of similarity, creative choice counter-conformity and unpopular choice counter-conformity will be used for subsequent analysis.

**Table 6.1.2A:** Factor analysis of the consumers’ need for uniqueness scale

Items	Factor Loadings		
	F1 – Avoidance of Similarity	F2 – Creative Choice Counter-conformity	F3 – Unpopular Choice Counter-conformity
When a product I own becomes popular among the general population, I begin using it less.	.854		
When a style of clothing I own becomes too commonplace, I usually quit wearing it.	.755		
I often try to avoid products or brands that I know are bought by the general population.	.744		
When products or brands I like become extremely popular, I lose interest in them.	.731		
I give up wearing fashions I’ve purchased once they become popular among the general public.	.710		
Products don’t seem to hold much value for me when they are purchased regularly by everyone.	.703		
As a rule, I dislike products or brands that are customarily purchased by everyone.	.699		
I avoid products or brands that have already been accepted and purchased by the average consumer.	.681		
Having an eye for products that are interesting and unusual assists me in establishing a distinctive image.		.782	
The products and brands that I like best are the ones that express my individuality.		.758	
I often combine possessions in such a way that I create a personal image for myself that can’t be duplicated.		.723	
I often look for one-of-a-kind products or brands so that I create a style that is all my own.		.722	
I have sometimes purchased unusual products or brands as a way to create a more distinctive personal image.		.684	

I often try to find a more interesting version of run-of-the-mill products because I enjoy being original.		.635	
When I dress differently, I'm often aware that others think I'm peculiar but I don't care.			.793
If someone hinted that I had been dressing inappropriately for a social situation, I would continue dressing in the same manner.			.773
Concern for being out of place doesn't prevent me from wearing what I want to wear.			.626
I often dress unconventionally even when it's likely to offend others.			.618
<b>% of Variance</b>	41.401	11.120	7.903
<b>Total % of Variance</b>	60.424		
<b>Eigenvalue</b>	7.452	2.002	1.422
<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	.901	.872	.700
<b>Overall Cronbach's Alpha</b>	.907		
<b>KMO</b>	.904		
<b>Barlett's Test of Sphericity</b>	.000		

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The following sections will discuss the results of the hypotheses with the discussion on the findings. Results of the analysis are discussed in the following sections. A summary of the results for each study can be found at the end of each study.

### **Results for Hypotheses H1 – H3**

The set of hypotheses H1, H2 and H3 examines the influence of presence of mimicry towards perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at Table 6.1.3A and Table 6.1.4A

**Table 6.1.3A:** Stepwise regression of presence of mimicry towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand

	<b>B-Values</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>Adjusted R2</b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Shuanghuan Noble)</b>						
<b>Image Characteristics</b>	.242	.066	.276	.075	3.639	.000*
<b>Physical Characteristics</b>	-.221	.095	-.177		-2.333	.021*
<b>Product evaluation of the mimic brand (Shuanghuan Noble)</b>						
<b>Beneficial Characteristics</b>	.188	.057	.248	.056	3.312	.001*

\*Sig. <.05

**Independent variable:** Presence of mimicry

Stepwise regression was conducted between the three dimensions of the presence of mimicry scale towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Shuanghuan Noble). The results show that “Image characteristics” have a significant positive relationship towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand ( $\beta=.276$ , Sig. =.000). On the other hand, “Physical characteristics” showed a significant negative relationship towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand ( $\beta=-.177$ , Sig. =.021). Hence, H1 is partially supported.

Stepwise regression was conducted between the three dimensions of the presence of mimicry scale towards product evaluation of the mimic brand (Shuanghuan Noble). The results showed that only “Beneficial characteristics” has a significant positive relationship towards product evaluation of the mimic brand ( $\beta=-.248$ , Sig. =.001). Hence, H2 is rejected.

This result indicates that “Image characteristics” are important in influencing how consumers perceive the luxury of the mimic brand. It is found that the greater the similarity between the

mimic and the model brand in terms of the image characteristics, the more likely consumers will tend to perceive the mimic brand to be luxury. In contrast, the greater the similarity between the mimic and the model brand in terms of physical characteristics, the lower the perception of luxury towards the mimic brand.

The results also indicate that the greater the similarity between the mimic and the model brand in terms of the beneficial characteristics, the more positive the product evaluations of the mimic brand.

**Table 6.1.4A:** Regression between perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand

	<b>B- Values</b>	<b>Standard Error</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Shuanghuan Noble)</b>	.534	.057	.584	.337	9.320	.000*

\*Sig. <.05

**Dependent variable:** Product evaluation of the mimic brand

Linear regression was conducted between perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand. It is found that perception of luxury towards the mimic brand has a significant positive relationship towards product evaluation of the mimic brand ( $\beta=.584$ , Sig. =.000). Hence, H3 is supported.

The result indicates that the higher the consumers' perception of luxury towards the mimic brand, the more positive the product evaluation of the mimic brand. This is in support of past research (Hagtvedt and Patrick, 2008).

### Results for Hypotheses H5A, H5B, H6A and H6B

The set of hypotheses H5A, H5B, H6A and H6B examines the influence of brand familiarity towards the mimic brand and brand familiarity towards the model brand on perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at Table 6.1.5A.

**Table 6.1.5A:** Regression of brand familiarity towards mimic/model brand towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand

	B-Values	Std. Error	Beta	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	t-value	Sig.
<b>Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Shuanghuan Noble)</b>						
<b>Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand (Shuanghuan Noble)</b>	.435	.090	.349	.117	4.848	.000*
<b>Brand familiarity towards the model brand (Smart ForTwo)</b>	-.026	.052	-.039	-.004	-.507	.613
<b>Product evaluation of the mimic brand (Shuanghuan Noble)</b>						
<b>Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand (Shuanghuan Noble)</b>	.484	.080	.423	.174	6.059	.000*
<b>Brand familiarity towards the model brand (Smart ForTwo)</b>	.035	.047	.057	-.003	.740	.461

\*Sig. <.05

Linear regression was conducted between brand familiarity towards the mimic brand (Shuanghuan Noble) and perception of luxury towards the mimic brand. The results show a significant positive relationship between brand familiarity towards the mimic brand and perception of luxury towards the mimic brand ( $\beta=.349$ , Sig. =.000). Similarly, linear regression was conducted between brand familiarity towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand. The findings showed a significant positive relationship between the two variables ( $\beta=.423$ , Sig. =.000).

Linear regression was conducted between brand familiarity towards the model brand (Smart ForTwo) and perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Shuanghuan Noble). The relationship was found to be insignificant. Similarly, linear regression of brand familiarity towards the model brand (Smart ForTwo) and product evaluation of the mimic brand (Shuanghuan Noble) and the relationship was also found insignificant. Hence, H6a and 6b are both rejected.

The findings showed that brand familiarity towards the mimic brand (Shuanghuan Noble) is important. It can influence how consumers perceive and evaluate the mimic brand. In this case, the higher the brand familiarity towards the mimic brand, the higher the perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand.

### Results for Hypotheses H7 and H8

The set of hypotheses H7 and H8 examines the influence of the three dimensions of consumers' need for uniqueness on perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at Table 6.1.6A.

**Table 6.1.6A:** Multiple regression of consumers' need for uniqueness towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand

	<b>B-Values</b>	<b>Std Error</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>Adj. R2</b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Shuanghuan Noble)</b>						
<b>Avoidance of Similarity</b>	.176	.091	.192		1.930	.055
<b>Creative Choice Counter-conformity</b>	-.090	.096	-.096	.007	-.930	.354
<b>Unpopular Choice Counter-conformity</b>	.038	.090	.035		.418	.676
<b>Product evaluation of the mimic brand (Shuanghuan Noble)</b>						
<b>Avoidance of Similarity</b>	.148	.083	.177		1.779	.077
<b>Creative Choice Counter-conformity</b>	-.033	.088	-.039	.012	-.376	.707
<b>Unpopular Choice Counter-conformity</b>	.045	.083	.046		.549	.584
<b>*Sig &lt;.05</b>						

Regression analysis was conducted between consumers' need for uniqueness and perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Shuanghuan Noble). No significant relationship emerged. Similarly, Regression analysis was conducted between consumers' need for uniqueness and product evaluation of the mimic brand (Shuanghuan Noble). No significant relationship was found. Hence, H7 and H8 are both rejected.

### Results for Hypotheses H9 and H10

The set of hypotheses H9 and H10 deals with the influence the three dimensions of consumers' need for uniqueness on perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at Table 6.1.7A.

**Table 6.1.7A:** Linear regression of status consumption towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand

	<b>B-Values</b>	<b>Standard Error</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>Adjusted R2</b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Shuanghuan Noble)</b>						
<b>Status Consumption</b>	-.085	.070	-.093	.003	-1.212	.227
<b>Product evaluation of the mimic brand (Shuanghuan Noble)</b>						
<b>Status Consumption</b>	-.024	.064	-.028	-.005	-.367	.714

\*Sig <.05

Linear regression was conducted between status consumption and perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Shuanghuan Noble). No significant relationship was found. Similarly, linear regression was conducted between status consumption and product evaluation of the mimic brand (Shuanghuan Noble). No significant relationship was found. Hence, H9 and H10 are both rejected.

## MEDIATION ANALYSIS

### Results for Hypotheses H4, H11A, H11B, H12 and H13

The set of hypotheses H4, H11A, H11B, H12 and H13 examines mediating effects within the conceptual model. Hypothesis H4 examines the mediating effects of perception of luxury towards the mimic brand on presence of mimicry and product evaluation of the mimic brand. Hypotheses H11A, H11B, H12 and H13 examines the mediating effects of brand familiarity towards the mimic brand , brand familiarity towards the model brand , consumers' need for uniqueness, and status consumption on perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at Table 6.1.8A.

**Table 6.1.8A:** Mediation analysis

Predictor	Criterion	B	Std Error	Beta	t-value	Adj. R2	Sig.
Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand	Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand (Shuanghuan Noble)	.280	.058	.349	4.848	.117	.000*
Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand	Product evaluation of the mimic brand	.534	.057	.584	9.320	.337	.000*
Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand (Shuanghuan Noble)	Product evaluation of the mimic brand	.484	.080	.423	6.059	.174	.000*
Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand	Product evaluation of the mimic brand	.455	.058	.497	7.776		.000*
Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand (Shuanghuan Noble)		.289	.073	.253	3.964	.390	.000*

**Sobel Test:**  $z = 3.773$ ,  $p < .05$ ; **Goodman Test:**  $z = 3.805$ ,  $p < .05$ ;  
\* Sig. < 0.05

Mediation effects of brand familiarity towards the mimic brand on the relationship between perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Shuanghuan Noble) and product evaluation of the mimic brand was conducted. Based on the results, it can be observed that brand familiarity towards the mimic brand partially mediates the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation. Hence, H1 1a is supported.

However, H4, H1 1b, H12 and H13 did not meet the first two conditions required for testing mediation effects. Therefore there is no need to conduct further mediation analysis. Thus, the hypotheses are rejected.

Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand can influence the product evaluation of the mimic brand through consumers' brand familiarity towards the mimic brand. This suggests that consumers' brand familiarity can also enhance consumers' evaluation of the mimic product.

## MODERATION ANALYSIS

### Results for Hypotheses H14A, H14B, H15 and H16

The set of hypotheses H14A, H14B, H15 AND H16 examines the moderating effects of brand familiarity towards the mimic brand, brand familiarity towards the model brand, consumers' need for uniqueness, and status consumption on perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at Table 6.1.9A.

**Table 6.1.9A:** Hierarchical moderated regression

Independent Variables	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	F	df	Δ R <sup>2</sup>	F Change	df	β	Sig.
Perception of Luxury	.337	86.857	1	.341	86.857	168	.301	.021
Perception of Luxury + Brand Familiarity (mimic)	.390	55.088	1	.057	15.713	167	.030	.832
Perception of Luxury + Brand Familiarity (mimic) + (Perception of Luxury x Brand Familiarity (mimic))	.398	38.210	1	.011	3.081	166	.360	.081
Perception of Luxury	.341	86.857	1	.341	86.857	168	.518	.000
Perception of Luxury + Brand Familiarity (model)	.347	44.347	1	.006	1.552	167	.005	.971
Perception of Luxury + Brand Familiarity (model) + (Perception of Luxury x Brand Familiarity (model))	.349	29.632	1	.002	.479	166	.108	.490
Perception of Luxury	.336	85.695	1	.340	85.695	166	.813	.000
Perception of Luxury + Status Consumption	.333	42.678	1	.000	.117	165	.150	.248
Perception of Luxury + Status Consumption + (Perception of Luxury x Status Consumption)	.334	28.934	1	.005	1.294	164	-.262	.257
Perception of Luxury	.339	86.743	1	.343	86.743	166	.565	.001
Perception of Luxury + Avoidance of Similarity	.342	44.332	1	.006	1.605	165	.074	.558
Perception of Luxury + Avoidance of Similarity + (Perception of Luxury x Avoidance of Similarity)	.338	29.377	1	.000	.004	164	.012	.952
Perception of Luxury	.337	86.481	1	.341	86.481	167	.254	.217
Perception of Luxury + Creative Choice Counter-conformity	.338	43.857	1	.005	1.154	166	-.113	.364
Perception of Luxury + Creative Choice Counter-	.345	30.500	1	.011	2.823	165	.395	.095

<b>conformity + (Perception of Luxury x Creative Choice Counter-conformity)</b>								
<b>Perception of Luxury</b>	.337	86.857	1	.341	86.857	168	.327	.079
<b>Perception of Luxury + Unpopular Choice Counter-conformity</b>	.336	43.822	1	.003	.860	167	-.111	.400
<b>Perception of Luxury + Unpopular Choice Counter-conformity + (Perception of Luxury x Unpopular Choice Counter-conformity)</b>	.341	30.123	1	.008	2.132	166	.325	.146
<b>* Dependent variable : Product evaluation of the mimic brand (Shuanghuan Noble)</b>								

Based on the results of the hierarchical moderation analysis (see Table 6.1.9A), the moderators are found to be insignificant.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FOR STUDY ONE

The findings of the hypotheses are summarized below in Table 6.1.10A.

**Table 6.1.10A:** Summary of findings for Study One

<b>Hypotheses</b>		<b>Accepted/Rejected</b>
<b>H1</b>	Presence of mimicry will lead to a negative perception of luxury	Partially accepted
<b>H2</b>	Presence of mimicry will lead to a negative product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H3</b>	Perception of luxury will lead to a positive product evaluation of the mimic brand	Accepted
<b>H4</b>	Perception of luxury will mediate the relationship between the presence of mimicry and product evaluation of the mimic brand	Accepted (partial mediation)
<b>Brand familiarity</b>		
<b>H5a</b>	Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand will lead to a negative perception of luxury towards the mimic brand	Supported
<b>H5b</b>	Brand familiarity towards the model brand will lead to a negative perception of luxury towards the mimic brand	Supported
<b>H6a</b>	Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand will lead to a negative product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H6b</b>	Brand familiarity towards the model brand will lead to a negative product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>Consumers' need for uniqueness</b>		
<b>H7</b>	Consumers' need for uniqueness will lead to a positive perception of luxury towards the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H8</b>	Consumers' need for uniqueness will lead to a positive product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>Status consumption</b>		
<b>H9</b>	Status consumption will lead to a negative perception of luxury towards the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H10</b>	Status consumption will lead to a negative product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>Mediation effects:</b>		
<b>H11a</b>	Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand will mediate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation towards a mimic brand	Supported
<b>H11b</b>	Brand familiarity towards the model brand will mediate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation towards a mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H12</b>	Consumers' need for uniqueness will mediate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation towards a mimic brand	Rejected

<b>H13</b>	Status consumption will mediate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation towards a mimic brand	Rejected
<b>Moderation effects:</b>		
<b>H14a</b>	Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand will moderate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H14b</b>	Brand familiarity towards the model brand will moderate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H15</b>	Consumers' need for uniqueness will moderate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H16</b>	Status consumption will moderate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected

The results from Study One using Shuanghuan Noble car as the mimic brand and Smart ForTwo car as the model brand have shown some interesting results. Based on the results, it is found that “Image” and “Beneficial” characteristics of the presence of mimicry have shown significant relationships towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand. While “Image” characteristics hold a positive relationship towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand, “Physical” characteristics hold a negative relationship towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand. This suggests that similarity in the image of the brands can enhance the perception of luxury. This finding is echoed in previous studies that suggest that image plays a key role in influencing perception (Penz and Stottinger, 2008). This can be explained that for luxury brands, that image or symbolic characteristics are key ingredients to enhance the “luxury” of the product. Therefore, it highlights that when the presence of image similarities between the mimic and the model brand is high, the transference of exclusivity, luxury and prestige will also be high.

Interestingly, the close physical similarities in terms of the look and design of the mimic brand diminish the perception of luxury towards the mimic brand. Similar to van Horen and Pieter’s (2012b), they found that close or blatant copying in terms of similarity on physical attributes, consumers tend to perceive or evaluate the brand less favourably. This is especially so when consumers are able to compare between the mimic and the model brand. Therefore, it is important for mimic brand managers to “imitatively” innovate in order to steer away from exact copies as it often connotes counterfeiting or piracy which are often seen to “fool”, deceive or manipulate consumers. This in turn can lead to negative evaluations and more importantly, project an image of harm.

In addition, “Beneficial” characteristic similarities between the mimic and the model brand can result in positive product evaluations towards the mimic brand. Aspects such as perceived practicality and the durability of the mimic brand can result in consumers liking and having favourable evaluations towards the mimic brand. This is in alignment with the finding of Myers and Shocker (1981) who suggested that the beneficial attributes of a product will be most important in shaping consumer judgments of preference and choice. This reflects the fact that for Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimicry, the practicality of the car to be used from point A to point B will form their liking or preference. Therefore, it is important for mimic brand managers to highlight the importance of the benefits that the product can provide.

It is important to note that brand familiarity towards the mimic brand show a positive relationship towards both the perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and the product evaluation of the mimic brand. Therefore, it can be suggested that when consumers are familiar with a mimic brand, they will be more likely to perceive it in a positive light and to possibly like and form favourable evaluations towards it. Along the same vein, previous studies have reinforced that brand awareness or familiarity is highly related to brand choice and preference (Axelrod, 1968; Haley and Case, 1979). In this when consumers are highly familiar with the mimic brand (Shuanghuan Noble) they will have positive perception of luxury towards the car. Considering that the car emulates the Smart ForTwo, which is a subsidiary of the Mercedes Benz, the spill over effects from the Mercedes Benz Smart ForTwo may transfer over to Shuanghuan Noble (Hagtvedt and Patrick, 2008). Furthermore, if consumers are knowledgeable about the car and the category, it therefore shows that they will be aware that the car is designed for an upper market target. Hence, based on this premise, it is important for mimic brand managers to improve on brand awareness. This may therefore also lead to positive evaluation of the Shuanghuan Noble car. This finding is surprising, considering that Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimics are often harmful to consumers. This may suggest that the transfer of positive associations from Smart ForTwo may alleviate the negative image of the Shuanghuan Noble, especially if consumers have prior knowledge about the brand. In addition brand familiarity towards the mimic brand is found to partially mediate the relationship between perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand. The finding shows that brand familiarity is important in shaping product evaluation in the absence of perception of luxury towards the mimic brand.

Therefore, mimic brand managers will need to continually enhance on the positive image of the mimic brand.

Consumers' need for uniqueness and status consumption did not find significant results when tested towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand. In addition, brand familiarity towards the model brand is not found to mediate the relationship between perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand.

## **STUDY TWO: H&M and Stella McCartney**

Based on Table 6.1A, Study Two will be testing the hypothesized relationship for the clothing product category using two real life brands to test for the effects of the presence of Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimicry on consumers. The model brand is Stella McCartney and the mimic brand is H&M. The signal receiver(s) are consumers. Respondent characteristics are first discussed, followed by the hypotheses postulated in Chapter 3.

### **Profile of Respondents**

The total usable number of responses for Study Two is 129 respondents. The responses that were incomplete or had missing values were removed and not used for analysis. The respondents were mainly 19 to 25 years of age (71.3%), with more females (68.2%) than males. The majority of the respondents are Australians (57.5%). Furthermore, it is found that most of the respondents are more familiar with H&M (mimic brand) ( $M = 4.99$ ,  $SD = 1.947$ ) than Stella McCartney (model brand) ( $M = 3.60$ ,  $SD = 2.086$ ).

### Factor Analysis – Presence of mimicry scale

Prior to conducting analysis, factor analysis was conducted on the presence of mimicry scale (Wicklerian-Eisnerian) that was developed for this study (see detailed scale development procedure in Chapter 5). Results from Table 6.2.1A shows that there are three factors and consists of 11 items that accounts for 70.912% of cumulative variance. The Cronbach’s alpha coefficients were all above 0.8 which is deemed suitable for further analysis (Nunnally, 1970). The three factors are namely “image characteristics”, “physical characteristics”, and “beneficial characteristics” which are used for subsequent analysis.

**Table 6.2.1A:** Factor analysis of the Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimicry scale

Items	Factor Loadings		
	F1 – Image Characteristics	F2 – Physical Characteristics	F3 – Beneficial Characteristics
The products express a similar image of elegance	.846		
The products express a similar image of sophistication	.845		
The products express a similar image of success	.786		
The products express a similar degree of luxury	.765		
The products share similar looks		.825	
The products share similar styles		.803	
The products share similar physical traits		.776	
The products share similar product designs		.775	
The products share similar durability			.842
The products share similar reliability			.787
The products share similar practicality			.676
<b>% of Variance</b>	45.284	15.647	9.981
<b>Total % of Variance</b>	70.912		
<b>Eigenvalue</b>	4.981	1.721	1.098
<b>Cronbach’s Alpha</b>	.872	.846	.773
<b>Overall Cronbach’s Alpha</b>	.878		
<b>KMO</b>	.829		
<b>Barlett’s Test of Sphericity</b>	.000		

### Factor Analysis – Consumers’ need for uniqueness scale

An exploratory factor analysis was conducted on the original 31-item consumers’ need for uniqueness scale (see Table 6.2.2A). Through Varimax rotation, the items were reduced to 15 items with an acceptable range of reliabilities. The three dimensions of consumers’ need for uniqueness which is namely avoidance of similarity, creative choice counter-conformity and unpopular choice counter-conformity will be used for subsequent analysis.

**Table 6.2.2A:** Factor analysis of the consumers’ need for uniqueness scale

Items	Factor Loadings		
	F1 – Avoidance of Similarity	F2 – Creative Choice Counter-conformity	F3 – Unpopular Choice Counter-conformity
I avoid products or brands that have already been accepted and purchased by the average consumer.	.786		
The more commonplace a product or brand is among the general population, the less interested I am in buying it.	.781		
Products don’t seem to hold much value for me when they are purchased regularly by everyone.	.780		
When a product I own becomes popular among the general population, I begin using it less.	.765		
As a rule, I dislike products or brands that are customarily purchased by everyone.	.749		
When products or brands I like become extremely popular, I lose interest in them.	.747		
When a style of clothing I own becomes too commonplace, I usually quit wearing it.	.741		
I give up wearing fashions I’ve purchased once they become popular among the general public.	.736		
The products and brands that I like best are the ones that express my individuality.		.855	
Often when buying merchandise, an important goal is to find something that communicates my uniqueness.		.809	
I’m often on the lookout for new products or brands that will add to my personal uniqueness.		.807	
Having an eye for products that are interesting and unusual assists me		.801	

in establishing a distinctive image.			
Concern for being out of place doesn't prevent me from wearing what I want to wear.			.787
When I dress differently, I'm often aware that others think I'm peculiar but I don't care.			.775
If someone hinted that I had been dressing inappropriately for a social situation, I would continue dressing in the same manner.			.762
<b>% of Variance</b>	44.749	13.176	9.372
<b>Total % of Variance</b>	67.298		
<b>Eigenvalue</b>	6.712	1.976	1.406
<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	.918	.870	.745
<b>Overall Cronbach's Alpha</b>	.909		
<b>KMO</b>	.896		
<b>Barlett's Test of Sphericity</b>	.000		

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The following sections will discuss the results of the hypotheses. A summary of the results for each study can be found at the end of each study.

### **Results for Hypotheses H1 – H3**

The set of hypotheses H1, H2 and H3 examines the influence of presence of mimicry towards perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at Table 6.2.3A and 6.2.4A.

**Table 6.2.3A:** Stepwise regression of presence of mimicry towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand

	<b>B- Values</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (H&amp;M)</b>						
<b>Image Characteristics</b>	.242	.079	.292	.197	3.077	.003*
<b>Physical Characteristics</b>	-.179	.081	-.202		-2.200	.030*

\*Sig. <.05

**Independent variable:** Presence of mimicry

Stepwise regression was conducted between the three dimensions of the presence of mimicry scale towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (H&M). The results show that “Image characteristics” have a significant positive relationship towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand ( $\beta=.292$ , Sig. =.003). On the other hand, “Physical characteristics” has showed a significant negative relationship towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand ( $\beta=-.202$ , Sig. =.030). Hence, H1 is partially accepted.

Stepwise regression was conducted between the three dimensions of the presence of mimicry scale towards product evaluation of the mimic brand (H&M). It was found that none of the presence of mimicry (Wicklerian-Eisnerian) has a significant relationship towards product evaluation of the mimic brand. Hence, H2 is rejected.

The results indicate that “Image characteristics” are important in influencing how consumers perceive the luxury of the mimic brand. It is found that the greater the similarity between the mimic and the model brand in terms of the image characteristics, the more likely the

consumers will tend to perceive the mimic brand to be “luxury”. In contrast, the greater the similarity between the mimic and the model brand in terms of physical characteristics, the lower the perception of luxury towards the mimic brand.

However, it was found that for the mimic brand H&M, the presence of mimicry did not reveal any significant relationships towards product evaluation of the mimic brand.

**Table 6.2.4A:** Regression between perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand

	<b>B-Values</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (H&amp;M)</b>	.365	.086	.352	.117	4.238	.000

\*Sig. <.05

**Dependent variable:** Product evaluation of the mimic brand

Linear regression was conducted between perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand. It is found that perception of luxury towards the mimic brand has a significant positive relationship towards product evaluation of the mimic brand ( $\beta=.117$ , Sig. =.000). Hence, H3 accepted. The result indicates that the higher consumers’ perception of luxury towards the mimic brand will lead to positive product evaluation of the mimic brand.

### Results for Hypotheses H5A, H5B, H6A and H6B

The set of hypotheses H5A, H5B, H6A and H6B examines the influence of brand familiarity towards the mimic brand and brand familiarity towards the model brand on perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at Table 6.2.5A.

**Table 6.2.5A:** Regression of brand familiarity towards mimic/model brand towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand

	B-Values	Std. Error	Beta	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	t-value	Sig.
<b>Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (H&amp;M)</b>						
<b>Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand</b>	.120	.049	.213	.038	2.455	.015*
<b>Brand familiarity towards the model brand (Stella McCartney)</b>	.089	.052	.150	.015	1.706	.090
<b>Product evaluation of the mimic brand (H&amp;M)</b>						
<b>Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand (H&amp;M)</b>	.425	.036	.727	.525	11.931	.000*
<b>Brand familiarity towards the model brand (Stella McCartney)</b>	.148	.053	.241	.051	2.798	.006*

\*Sig. <.05

Linear regression was conducted between brand familiarity towards the mimic brand (H&M) and perception of luxury towards the mimic brand. The results show a significant positive relationship between brand familiarity towards the mimic brand and perception of luxury towards the mimic brand ( $\beta=.213$ , Sig. =.015). Similarly, linear regression was conducted between brand familiarity towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand. The findings showed a significant positive relationship between the two variables ( $\beta=.727$ , Sig. =.000). Hence, H5a and H5b are accepted.

Linear regression was conducted between brand familiarity towards the model brand (Stella McCartney) and perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (H&M). The relationship was found to be insignificant. Hence, H6a is rejected.

Linear regression of brand familiarity towards the model brand (Stella McCartney) and product evaluation of the mimic brand (H&M). The findings showed a significant positive relationship between the two variables ( $\beta=.241$ , Sig. =.006). Hence, H6b is accepted.

The findings showed that brand familiarity towards the mimic brand (H&M) is important. It can influence how consumers perceive and evaluate the mimic brand. In this case, the higher the brand familiarity towards the mimic brands the higher the perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. Furthermore, it is found that brand familiarity towards the model brand (Stella McCartney) can positively influence the product evaluation of the mimic brand (H&M). As such, if consumers are knowledgeable or familiar with the model brand, it will transfer positive associations to the mimic brand that can result in positive evaluations towards the mimic brand.

### Results for Hypotheses H7 and H8

The set of hypotheses H7 and H8 examines the influence of the three dimensions of consumers' need for uniqueness on perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at Table 6.2.6A.

**Table 6.2.6A:** Multiple regression of consumers' need for uniqueness towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand

	<b>B- Values</b>	<b>Std Error</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>Adj. R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (H&amp;M)</b>						
<b>Avoidance of Similarity</b>	.000	.093	.001		.005	.996
<b>Creative Choice Counter-conformity</b>	.063	.099	.064	-.004	.631	.529
<b>Unpopular Choice Counter-conformity</b>	.093	.090	.105		1.041	.300
<b>Product evaluation of the mimic brand (H&amp;M)</b>						
<b>Avoidance of Similarity</b>	-.191	.094	-.215		-2.038	.044*
<b>Creative Choice Counter-conformity</b>	.233	.100	.228	.043	2.317	.022*
<b>Unpopular Choice Counter-conformity</b>	.128	.091	.140		1.412	.160
<b>*Sig &lt;.05</b>						

Regression analysis was conducted between consumers' need for uniqueness and perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (H&M). No significant relationship emerged. Hence, H7 is not supported.

Regression analysis was conducted between consumers' need for uniqueness and product evaluation of the mimic brand (H&M). Avoidance of similarity and creative choice counter-conformity emerged to show a significant relationship towards product evaluation of the mimic brand (H&M). Avoidance of similarity is found to show a weak significant negative relationship ( $\beta = -.215$ , Sig. = .044) towards product evaluation of the mimic brand (H&M). On the other hand, creative choice counter-conformity is found to show a significant positive relationship ( $\beta = .228$ , Sig. = 0.022) towards product evaluation of the mimic brand (H&M). Hence, H8 is partially supported.

The results show that consumers' need for uniqueness does not influence perception of luxury towards the mimic brand. However, two dimensions of consumers' need for uniqueness are found to influence product evaluation of the mimic brand. In this case, the negative relationship between avoidance of similarity and product evaluation of the mimic brand suggests that the mimic brand may not be perceived as a scarce product and that many consumers may own an H&M product. In fact, with the increase of prominence of H&M stores worldwide, it is becoming a brand that is relatively common to consumers.

On another hand, creative choice counter-conformity showed a significant positive relationship towards product evaluation of the mimic brand. This suggests that while consumers who tend to look to mix and match to express their own individual style will have positive evaluations towards mimic brand. In this case, H&M is considered to be a brand that follows the trends and has many new products that are being produced and changed at a relatively fast pace. For consumers who tend to want to express their individual style, the variety available at H&M can provide many types of mimics that allow consumers to "create" an image or style of their own.

### Results for Hypotheses H9 and H10

The set of hypotheses H9 and H10 deals with the influence the three dimensions of consumers' need for uniqueness on perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at Table 6.2.7A.

**Table 6.2.7A:** Linear regression of status consumption towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand

	<b>B-Values</b>	<b>Standard Error</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (H&amp;M)</b>						
<b>Status Consumption</b>	.129	.082	.137	.011	1.562	.121
<b>Product evaluation of the mimic brand (H&amp;M)</b>						
<b>Status Consumption</b>	.137	.085	.141	.012	1.604	.111

\*Sig <.05

Linear regression was conducted between status consumption and perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (H&M). No significant relationship was found. Similarly, linear regression was conducted between status consumption and product evaluation of the mimic brand (H&M). No significant relationship was found. Hence, H9 and H10 are both not supported.

## MEDIATION ANALYSIS

### Results for Hypotheses H4, H11A, H11B, H12 and H13

The set of hypotheses H4, H11A, H11B, H12 and H13 examines mediating effects within the conceptual model. Hypothesis H4 examines the mediating effects of perception of luxury towards the mimic brand on presence of mimicry and product evaluation of the mimic brand. Hypotheses H11A, H11B, H12 and H13 examines the mediating effects of brand familiarity towards the mimic brand, brand familiarity towards the model brand, consumers' need for uniqueness, and status consumption on perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at Table 6.2.8A.

**Table 6.2.8A:** Mediation analysis

Predictor	Criterion	B	Std Error	Beta	t-value	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	Sig.
Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand	Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand (H&M)	.377	.154	.213	2.455	.038	.015*
Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand	Product evaluation of the mimic brand	.365	.086	.352	4.238	.117	.000*
Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand (H&M)	Product evaluation of the mimic brand	.425	.036	.727	11.931	.525	.000*
Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand	Product evaluation of the mimic brand	.214	.062	.207	3.453		.001*
Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand (H&M)		.399	.035	.683	11.414	.562	.000*

**Sobel Test:**  $z = 2.397$  \*  $p < .05$ ; **Goodman Test:**  $z = 2.405$  \*  $p < .05$ ;  
 \*\* Sig. < 0.05

Mediation effects of brand familiarity towards the mimic brand on the relationship between perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (H&M) and product evaluation of the mimic brand was conducted.

Based on the results, it can be observed that brand familiarity towards the mimic brand partially mediates the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation. Hence, H11a is partially accepted.

However, H4, H11b, H12 and H13 did not meet the first two conditions required for testing mediation effects. The independent is not found to show a significant relationship to the dependent variable; and the independent variable did not show a significant relationship towards the mediator. Therefore there is no need to conduct further mediation analysis. Thus, the hypotheses are rejected.

Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand can influence the product evaluation of the mimic brand through consumers' brand familiarity towards the mimic brand. This suggests that consumers' brand familiarity can also enhance consumers' evaluation of the mimic product.

## MODERATION ANALYSIS

### Results for Hypotheses H14A, H14B, H15 and H16

The set of hypotheses H14A, H14B, H15 AND H16 examines the moderating effects of brand familiarity towards the mimic brand, brand familiarity towards the model brand, consumers' need for uniqueness, and status consumption on perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at Table 6.2.9A.

**Table 6.2.9A:** Hierarchical moderated regression

Independent Variables	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	F	df	Δ R <sup>2</sup>	F Change	df	β	Sig.
Perception of Luxury	.117	17.959	1	.124	17.959	127	.061	.731
Perception of Luxury + Brand Familiarity (mimic)	.562	83.256	1	.445	130.272	126	.492	.031
Perception of Luxury + Brand Familiarity (mimic) + (Perception of Luxury x Brand Familiarity (mimic))	.562	55.656	1	.003	.766	125	.268	.383
Perception of Luxury	.117	17.959	1	.124	17.959	127	.432	.009
Perception of Luxury + Brand Familiarity (model)	.147	12.014	1	.036	5.440	126	.391	.150
Perception of Luxury + Brand Familiarity (model) + (Perception of Luxury x Brand Familiarity (model))	.144	8.183	1	.004	.598	125	-.249	.441
Perception of Luxury	.117	17.959	1	.124	17.959	127	-.093	.785
Perception of Luxury + Status Consumption	.119	9.633	1	.009	1.269	126	-.245	.371
Perception of Luxury + Status Consumption + (Perception of Luxury x Status Consumption)	.124	7.026	1	.012	1.704	125	.595	.194
Perception of Luxury	.117	17.959	1	.124	17.959	127	.558	.027
Perception of Luxury + Avoidance of Similarity	.115	9.335	1	.005	.747	126	.139	.597
Perception of Luxury + Avoidance of Similarity + (Perception of Luxury x Avoidance of Similarity)	.113	6.452	1	.005	.724	125	-.310	.396

<b>Perception of Luxury</b>	.117	17.959	1	.124	17.959	127	.263	.517
<b>Perception of Luxury + Creative Choice Counter-conformity</b>	.130	10.565	1	.020	2.901	126	.093	.729
<b>Perception of Luxury + Creative Choice Counter-conformity + (Perception of Luxury x Creative Choice Counter-conformity)</b>	.123	7.001	1	.000	.036	125	.095	.849
<b>Perception of Luxury</b>	.117	17.959	1	.124	17.959	127	.263	.517
<b>Perception of Luxury + Unpopular Choice Counter-conformity</b>	.115	9.306	1	.005	.696	126	.093	.729
<b>Perception of Luxury + Unpopular Choice Counter-conformity + (Perception of Luxury x Unpopular Choice Counter-conformity)</b>	.108	6.167	1	.000	.033	125	.095	.849
<b>* Dependent variable : Product evaluation of the mimic brand (H&amp;M)</b>								

Hierarchical moderated regression analysis was conducted on brand familiarity towards the mimic brand, status consumption, consumers' need for uniqueness between perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand to test for the interaction effects between the moderator, independent variable and the dependent variable. Based on the results of the hierarchical moderation analysis, the moderators are found to be insignificant. Hence, H14a, H14 b, H15 and H16 are rejected.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FOR STUDY TWO

The findings of the hypotheses are summarized below in Table 6.2.10A.

**Table 6.2.10A:** Summary of findings for Study Two

<b>Hypotheses</b>		<b>Accepted/Rejected</b>
<b>H1</b>	Presence of mimicry will lead to a negative perception of luxury	Partially accepted
<b>H2</b>	Presence of mimicry will lead to a negative product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H3</b>	Perception of luxury will lead to a positive product evaluation of the mimic brand	Accepted
<b>H4</b>	Perception of luxury will mediate the relationship between the presence of mimicry and product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>Brand familiarity</b>		
<b>H5a</b>	Brand familiarity towards the model brand will lead to a negative perception of luxury towards the mimic brand	Accepted
<b>H5b</b>	There is a negative relationship between brand familiarity towards the model brand and perception of luxury towards the mimic brand	Accepted
<b>H6a</b>	Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand will lead to a positive product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H6b</b>	Brand familiarity towards the model brand will lead to a negative product evaluation of the mimic brand	Accepted
<b>Consumers' need for uniqueness</b>		
<b>H7</b>	Consumers' need for uniqueness will lead to a positive perception of luxury towards the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H8</b>	Consumers' need for uniqueness will lead to a positive product evaluation of the mimic brand	Partially accepted
<b>Status consumption</b>		
<b>H9</b>	Status consumption will lead to a negative perception of luxury towards the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H10</b>	Status consumption will lead to a negative product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>Mediation effects:</b>		
<b>H11a</b>	Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand will mediate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation towards a mimic brand	Partially accepted
<b>H11b</b>	Brand familiarity towards the model brand will mediate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation towards a mimic brand	Rejected

<b>H12</b>	Consumers' need for uniqueness will mediate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation towards a mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H13</b>	Status consumption will mediate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation towards a mimic brand	Rejected
<b>Moderation effects:</b>		
<b>H14a</b>	Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand will moderate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H14b</b>	Brand familiarity towards the model brand will moderate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H15</b>	Consumers' need for uniqueness will moderate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H16</b>	Status consumption will moderate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected

The results from Study Two investigated the hypotheses based on using H&M organic cotton clothes as the mimic brand and Stella McCartney organic cotton clothes as the model brand has shown some interesting results. Based on the results, it is found that “Image” and “Physical” characteristics of presence of mimicry has significant relationship towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand. “Image” characteristics are found to have a positive relationship towards perception of luxury of mimic brand. This supports that similarities in terms of the image between the mimic and the model brand can enhance the perception of luxury of the mimic brand. In addition, while past studies have documented the importance of image attributes to influencing consumer assessments of luxury brands, the understanding of its importance in the mimicry literature is in its infancy.

However, similarities in the “Physical” characteristics observed the opposite relationship. This finding aligns with van Horen and Pieter’s (2012a) study that suggested that highly similar physical or feature imitation is evaluated less positively than even no imitation at all. This may be due to the fact that with Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimicry, high physical similarities may connote the intention to “deceive” and “fool” (Balabanis and Craven, 1997; Warlop and Alba, 2004) as this form of mimicry does harm consumers through its deception (Vane-Wright, 1876; 1980). This would therefore lead to diminished perceptions of luxury.

Whereby, close similarities in terms of the design and physical traits of the mimic brand can lower the perception of luxury of the mimic brand. In support of past studies (Hagtvedt and Patrick, 2008), perception of luxury towards the mimic brand has a positive relationship towards product evaluation of the mimic brand. Therefore, the study highlights the importance of “luxury” and prestigious perceptions between the mimic and the model brand. When there are similarities in image attributes, the mimic is better perceived as a result. Therefore, mimic brand managers should explore this avenue in emulating the intangible aspects of a model brand rather than the physical aspects. In addition, in highlight the elements of luxury, it can also lead to positive evaluations of the mimic brand (d’Astous and Gargouri, 2001; Hagtvedt and Patrick, 2008).

Furthermore, brand familiarity towards the mimic brand has shown significant relationships towards both the perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand. Consumers who are familiar and knowledgeable about the mimic brand will have perceived the mimic brand in a more “luxury” or exclusive way and also likelier to like and form favourable evaluations towards the mimic brand.

Interestingly, it is also found that brand familiarity towards the model brand will also result in positive product evaluations towards the mimic brand. This can possibly be explained by the transference and spillover of the positive brand associations from the model brand to the mimic brand (Hagtvedt and Patrick, 2008).

In addition, avoidance of similarity and creative choice counter-conformity dimensions of consumers’ need for uniqueness are shown to have significant relationships towards product evaluation of the mimic brand. Avoidance of similarity showed a negative relationship while creative choice counter-conformity showed a positive relationship. This can be explained by the different types of consumer who sought different aspects of uniqueness in their purchase decisions. Consumers who would like to avoid products that are common and have become mainstream would have less favourable evaluations towards the mimic brand (Kastanakis and Balabanis, 2011). On the other hand, consumers who mix and match products emphasize their personal taste to reflect their own style, would have favourable evaluations towards the mimic brand.

Lastly, brand familiarity towards the mimic brand is found to mediate the relationship between perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand. Therefore, it is important to enhance brand familiarity of the mimic brand in order to achieve better product evaluations of the mimic brand.

### **STUDY THREE: Kmart “Birkenstocks” and Birkenstock**

Based on Table 6.1A, Study Three will be testing the hypothesized relationship for the shoes product category using two real life brands to test for the effects of the presence of Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimicry on consumers. The model brand is Birkenstock and the mimic brand is Kmart “Birkenstock”. The signal receiver(s) are consumers. Respondent characteristics are first discussed, followed by the hypotheses postulated in Chapter 3.

#### **Profile of Respondents**

The total usable number of responses for Study One is 145 respondents. The responses that were incomplete or had missing values were removed and not used for analysis. The respondents were mainly between 19 to 25 years of age (86.2%), with more males (54.2%) than females. The majority of the respondents are Australians (58.6%). Furthermore, it is found that most of the respondents are more familiar with Kmart (mimic brand) ( $M = 5.42$ ,  $SD = 1.706$ ) than the Birkenstock (model brand) ( $M = 2.48$ ,  $SD = 1.944$ ).

#### **Factor Analysis – Presence of mimicry scale**

Prior to conducting analysis, factor analysis was conducted on the presence of mimicry scale (Wicklerian-Eisnerian) that was developed for this study (see detailed scale development procedure in Chapter 5). Results from Table 6.3.1A shows that there are three factors and consists of 11 items that accounts for 66.972% of cumulative variance. The Cronbach’s alpha coefficients were all above 0.8 which is deemed suitable for further analysis (Nunnally, 1970). The three factors are namely “image characteristics”, “physical characteristics”, and “beneficial characteristics” which are used for subsequent analysis.

**Table 6.3.1A:** Factor analysis of the Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimicry scale

Items	Factor Loadings		
	F1 – Image Characteristics	F2 – Physical Characteristics	F3 – Beneficial Characteristics
The products express a similar image of elegance	.847		
The products express a similar image of sophistication	.787		
The products express a similar image of success	.785		
The products express a similar degree of luxury	.718		
The products share similar styles		.829	
The products share similar looks		.819	
The products share similar physical traits		.721	
The products share similar product designs		.670	
The products share similar durability			.886
The products share similar reliability			.849
The products share similar practicality			.825
<b>% of Variance</b>	31.121	22.727	13.094
<b>Total % of Variance</b>	66.972		
<b>Eigenvalue</b>	3.427	2.500	1.440
<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	.813	.759	.836
<b>Overall Cronbach's Alpha</b>	.747		
<b>KMO</b>	.742		
<b>Barlett's Test of Sphericity</b>	.000		

### Factor Analysis – Consumers’ need for uniqueness scale

An exploratory factor analysis was conducted on the original 31-item consumers’ need for uniqueness scale (see Table 6.3.2A). Through Varimax rotation, the items were reduced to 17 items with an acceptable range of reliabilities. The three dimensions of consumers’ need for uniqueness which is namely avoidance of similarity, creative choice counter-conformity and unpopular choice counter-conformity will be used for subsequent analysis.

**Table 6.3.2A:** Factor analysis of the consumers’ need for uniqueness scale

Items	Factor Loadings		
	F1 – Avoidance of Similarity	F2 – Creative Choice Counter-conformity	F3 – Unpopular Choice Counter-conformity
I often try to avoid products or brands that I know are bought by the general population.	.848		
When a product I own becomes popular among the general population, I begin using it less.	.837		
The more commonplace a product or brand is among the general population, the less interested I am in buying it.	.830		
As a rule, I dislike products or brands that are customarily purchased by everyone.	.788		
When products or brands I like become extremely popular, I lose interest in them.	.775		
When a style of clothing I own becomes too commonplace, I usually quit wearing it.	.762		
I give up wearing fashions I’ve purchased once they become popular among the general public.	.677		
I often combine possessions in such a way that I create a personal image for myself that can’t be duplicated.		.848	
Often when buying merchandise, an important goal is to find something that communicates my uniqueness.		.840	
I often look for one-of-a-kind products or brands so that I create a style that is all my own.		.760	
The products and brands that I like best are the ones that express my individuality.		.728	
I have sometimes purchased unusual products or brands as a way to create a more distinctive personal image.		.659	
I enjoy challenging the prevailing taste of people I know by buying something they wouldn’t seem to accept.			.776
When I dress differently, I’m often aware that others think I’m peculiar but I don’t care.			.766

If someone hinted that I had been dressing inappropriately for a social situation, I would continue dressing in the same manner.			.736
I rarely act in agreement with what others think are the right things to buy.			.700
I have often violated the understood rules of my social group regarding what to buy or own.			.657
<b>% of Variance</b>	43.367	12.820	10.222
<b>Total % of Variance</b>	66.409		
<b>Eigenvalue</b>	7.372	2.179	1.738
<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	.923	.868	.832
<b>Overall Cronbach's Alpha</b>	.915		
<b>KMO</b>	.891		
<b>Barlett's Test of Sphericity</b>	.000		

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The following sections will discuss the results of the hypotheses. A summary of the results for each study can be found at the end of each study.

### **Results for Hypotheses H1 – H3**

The set of hypotheses H1, H2 and H3 examines the influence of presence of mimicry towards perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at Table 6.3.3A and Table 6.3.4A.

**Table 6.3.3A:** Stepwise regression of presence of mimicry towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand

	<b>B-Values</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Kmart)</b>						
<b>Beneficial Characteristics</b>	.293	.051	.428		5.779	.000*
<b>Image Characteristics</b>	.174	.054	.237	.331	3.193	.002*
<b>Physical Characteristics</b>	-.147	.059	-.172		-2.504	.013*
<b>Product evaluation of the mimic brand (Kmart)</b>						
<b>Beneficial Characteristics</b>	.429	.062	.499		6.971	.000*
<b>Image Characteristics</b>	.183	.066	.199	.374	2.769	.006*
<b>Physical Characteristics</b>	-.160	.071	-.149		-2.248	.026*

\*Sig. <.05

**Independent variable:** Presence of mimicry

Stepwise regression was conducted between the three dimensions of the presence of mimicry scale towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Kmart). The results show that “Beneficial” ( $\beta=.428$ , Sig. =.000) and “Image” characteristics ( $\beta=.237$ , Sig. =.002) have a significant positive relationship towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand. On the other hand, “Physical” characteristics showed a significant negative relationship towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand ( $\beta=-.172$ , Sig. =.013). Hence, H1 is partially accepted.

Stepwise regression was conducted between the three dimensions of the presence of mimicry scale towards product evaluation of the mimic brand (Kmart). It was found that “Beneficial”

and “Image” characteristics have a significant positive relationship towards product evaluation of the mimic brand. On the other hand, “Physical” characteristics showed a significant negative relationship towards product evaluation of the mimic brand ( $\beta = -.149$ , Sig. = .026). Hence, H2 is partially accepted.

The results indicate that the three dimensions of presence of mimicry are important factors that influence how consumers perceive the luxury of the mimic brand. It is found that the greater the similarity between the mimic and the model brand in terms of the beneficial and image characteristics, the higher the consumers’ perception of luxury towards the mimic brand. In contrast, the closer the similarity between the mimic and the model brand in terms of physical characteristics, the lower the perception of luxury towards the mimic brand.

In addition, the three dimensions of presence of mimicry are found to be significant predictors of product evaluation of the mimic brand. It is found that the greater the similarity between the mimic and the model brand in terms of the beneficial and image characteristics the higher the perception of luxury towards the mimic brand. On the other hand, the greater the similarity between the mimic and the model brand in terms of physical characteristics the lower the product evaluations of the mimic brand.

**Table 6.3.4A:** Regression between perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand

	<b>B-Values</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand</b>	.889	.074	.709	.499	12.020	.000*

\*Sig. <.05

**Dependent variable:** Product evaluation of the mimic brand

Linear regression was conducted between perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand. It is found that perception of luxury towards the mimic brand has a significant positive relationship towards product evaluation of the mimic brand ( $\beta = .709$ , Sig. = .000). Hence, H3 accepted.

The result indicates that the higher consumers’ perception of luxury towards the mimic brand will lead to positive product evaluation of the mimic brand.

### Results for Hypotheses H5A, H5B, H6A and H6B

The set of hypotheses H5A, H5B, H6A and H6B examines the influence of brand familiarity towards the mimic brand and brand familiarity towards the model brand on perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at Table 6.3.5A.

**Table 6.3.5A:** Regression of brand familiarity towards mimic/model brand towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand

	B-Values	Std. Error	Beta	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	t-value	Sig.
<b>Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Kmart)</b>						
<b>Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand (Kmart)</b>	-.026	.053	-.041	-.005	-.496	.621
<b>Brand familiarity towards the model brand (Birkenstock)</b>	.055	.048	.096	.002	1.153	.251
<b>Product evaluation of the mimic brand (Kmart)</b>						
<b>Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand (Kmart)</b>	-.001	.066	-.001	-.007	-.013	.990
<b>Brand familiarity towards the model brand (Birkenstock)</b>	-.003	.060	-.004	-.007	-.049	.961

\*Sig. <.05

Linear regression was conducted between brand familiarity towards the mimic brand (Kmart) and perception of luxury towards the mimic brand. The results show no significant relationship between the variables. Linear regression was conducted between brand familiarity towards the mimic brand (Kmart) and product evaluation of the mimic brand. The results show no significant relationship between the variables. Hence, H5a and H5b are rejected.

Linear regression was conducted between brand familiarity towards the model brand (Birkenstock) and perception of luxury towards the mimic brand. The results show no significant relationship between the variables. Linear regression was conducted between brand familiarity towards the model brand (Birkenstock) and product evaluation of the mimic brand. The results show no significant relationship between the variables. Hence, H6a and H6b are rejected.

### Results for Hypotheses H7 and H8

The set of hypotheses H7 and H8 examines the influence of the three dimensions of consumers' need for uniqueness on perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at Table 6.3.6A.

**Table 6.3.6A:** Multiple regression of consumers' need for uniqueness towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand

	B-Values	Std Error	Beta	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	t-value	Sig.
<b>Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Kmart)</b>						
Avoidance of Similarity	-.002	.067	-.003		-.032	.974
Creative Choice Counter-conformity	.035	.068	.052	.066	.523	.602
Unpopular Choice Counter-conformity	.200	.071	.267		2.808	.006*
<b>Product evaluation of the mimic brand (Kmart)</b>						
Avoidance of Similarity	-.086	.084	-.099		-1.022	.309
Creative Choice Counter-conformity	.039	.086	.045	.075	.451	.652
Unpopular Choice Counter-conformity	.303	.090	.318		3.358	.001*
<b>*Sig &lt;.05</b>						

Regression analysis was conducted between consumers' need for uniqueness and perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Kmart). It is found that unpopular choice counter-conformity has a significant positive relationship towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand ( $\beta=.267$ , Sig. =.006).

Regression analysis was conducted between consumers' need for uniqueness and product evaluation of the mimic brand (Kmart). Unpopular choice counter-conformity emerged to show a significant relationship towards product evaluation of the mimic brand (Kmart) ( $\beta=.318$ , Sig. =.001). Hence, H7 and H8 are partially accepted.

The results show that unpopular choice counter-conformity has a positive relationship towards both perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand. Consumers who tend to deviate from group norms in their purchase behaviour would have positive perception of luxury towards the Kmart mimic. Similarly, consumers prone to unpopular choice counter-conformity would also have better product evaluations of mimic brand. It can be suggested that consumers who “do not care” if they receive social disapproval will more likely be more receptive towards the mimic brand.

### Results for Hypotheses H9 and H10

The set of hypotheses H9 and H10 deals with the influence the three dimensions of consumers' need for uniqueness on perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at Table 6.3.7A.

**Table 6.3.7A:** Linear regression of status consumption towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand

	<b>B-Values</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Kmart)</b>						
<b>Status Consumption</b>	-0.045	.063	-0.059	-0.003	-.709	.479
<b>Product evaluation of the mimic brand (Kmart)</b>						
<b>Status Consumption</b>	-.044	.079	-.046	-.005	-.554	.580

\*Sig <.05

Linear regression was conducted between status consumption and perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Kmart). No significant relationship was found. Similarly, linear regression was conducted between status consumption and product evaluation of the mimic brand (Kmart). No significant relationship was found. Hence, H9 and H10 are both rejected.

## MEDIATION ANALYSIS

### Results for Hypotheses H4, H11A, H11B, H12 and H13

The set of hypotheses H4, H11A, H11B, H12 and H13 examines mediating effects within the conceptual model. Hypothesis H4 examines the mediating effects of perception of luxury towards the mimic brand on presence of mimicry and product evaluation of the mimic brand. Hypotheses H11A, H11B, H12 and H13 examines the mediating effects of brand familiarity towards the mimic brand, brand familiarity towards the model brand, consumers' need for uniqueness, and status consumption on perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at Table 6.3.8A and Table 6.3.9A.

**Table 6.3.8A:** Mediation analysis

Predictor	Criterion	B	Std Error	Beta	t-value	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	Sig.
Beneficial Characteristics	Perception of Luxury	.360	.049	.525	7.377	.271	.000*
Beneficial Characteristics	Product Evaluation	.499	.059	.581	8.530	.333	.000*
Perception of Luxury	Product Evaluation	.889	.074	.709	12.020	.499	.000*
Perception of Luxury	Product Evaluation	.700	.082	.558	8.553	.556	.000*
Beneficial Characteristics		.248	.056	.288	4.415		.000*

**Sobel Test:**  $z = 6.268$  \*  $p < .05$ ; **Goodman Test:**  $z = 6.284$  \*  $p < .05$ ;  
\* **Sig.** < 0.05

Mediation effects of perception of luxury towards the mimic brand on the relationship between presence of mimicry and product evaluation of the mimic brand was conducted. The different dimensions of presence of mimicry are tested independently to test for the mediation effects of each characteristic.

Mediation analysis was conducted on “Beneficial” characteristics, perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand to test the mediation effects between the variables. According to the results in Table X, perception of luxury towards the mimic brand is found to partially mediate “Beneficial” characteristics and product evaluation of the mimic brand.

**Table 6.3.9A:** Mediation analysis

Predictor	Criterion	B	Std Error	Beta	t-value	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	Sig.
Image Characteristics	Perception of Luxury	.282	.057	.385	4.992	.142	.000*
Image Characteristics	Product Evaluation	.346	.071	.376	4.856	.136	.000*
Perception of Luxury	Product Evaluation	.889	.074	.709	12.020	.499	.000*
Perception of Luxury	Product Evaluation	.831	.079	.662	10.458	.508	.000*
Image Characteristics		.111	.058	.121	1.912		.058

**Sobel Test:**  $z = 4.575$  \*  $p < .05$ ; **Goodman Test:**  $z = 4.588$  \*  $p < .05$ ;  
\* **Sig.** < 0.05

Mediation analysis was conducted on “Image” characteristics, perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand to test the mediation effects between the variables. According to the results in Table X, perception of luxury towards the mimic brand is found to fully mediate “Image” characteristics and product evaluation of the mimic brand.

However, H11a, b, H12 and H13 did not meet the first two conditions required for testing mediation effects. The independent is not found to show a significant relationship to the dependent variable; and the independent variable did not show a significant relationship towards the mediator. Therefore there is no need to conduct further mediation analysis. Thus, the hypotheses are rejected.

Based on the mediation analysis results, it can be observed that perception of luxury towards the mimic brand partially mediates the relationship between presence of mimicry and product evaluation. The findings suggest that a “Beneficial” characteristic has a direct relationship towards product evaluation which can also have indirect effects with perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand. It is therefore important to understand that beneficial characteristics are important to influence perception of luxury and evaluation towards a mimic brand. Similarly, perception of luxury fully mediates the relationship between “Image” characteristics and product evaluation of the mimic brand.

## MODERATION ANALYSIS

### Results for Hypotheses H14A, H14B, H15 and H16

The set of hypotheses H14A, H14B, H15 and H16 examines the moderating effects of brand familiarity towards the mimic brand, brand familiarity towards the model brand, consumers' need for uniqueness, and status consumption on perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at Table 6.3.10A.

**Table 6.3.10A:** Hierarchical moderated regression

Independent Variables	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	F	df	Δ R <sup>2</sup>	F Change	df	β	Sig.
Perception of Luxury	.499	144.471	1	.503	144.471	143	.254	.318
Perception of Luxury + Brand Familiarity (mimic)	.496	71.961	1	.001	.229	142	-.217	.137
Perception of Luxury + Brand Familiarity (mimic) + (Perception of Luxury x Brand Familiarity (mimic))	.505	49.935	1	.012	3.426	141	.520	.066
Perception of Luxury	.499	144.47	1	.503	144.471	143	.886	.000
Perception of Luxury + Brand Familiarity (model)	.501	73.254	1	.005	1.515	142	.122	.333
Perception of Luxury + Brand Familiarity (model) + (Perception of Luxury x Brand Familiarity (model))	.508	50.575	1	.011	3.075	141	-.290	.082
Perception of Luxury	.499	144.471	1	.503	144.471	143	.803	.002
Perception of Luxury + Status Consumption	.496	71.736	1	.000	.005	142	.045	.749
Perception of Luxury + Status Consumption + (Perception of Luxury x Status Consumption)	.493	47.588	1	.001	.150	141	-.106	.699
Perception of Luxury	.505	146.072	1	.509	146.072	141	.817	.000
Perception of Luxury + Avoidance of Similarity	.503	72.945	1	.001	.420	140	.031	.812
Perception of Luxury + Avoidance of Similarity + (Perception of Luxury x Avoidance of Similarity)	.501	48.527	1	.001	.358	139	-.134	.550

Perception of Luxury	.499	144.471	1	.503	144.471	143	.972	.000
Perception of Luxury + Creative Choice Counter- conformity	.496	71.763	1	.000	.032	142	.145	.321
Perception of Luxury + Creative Choice Counter- conformity + (Perception of Luxury x Creative Choice Counter-conformity)	.496	48.192	1	.004	1.026	141	-.323	.313
Perception of Luxury	.499	143.178	1	.502	143.178	142	1.068	.000
Perception of Luxury + Unpopular Choice Counter- conformity	.501	72.791	1	.006	1.699	141	.321	.028
Perception of Luxury + Unpopular Choice Counter- conformity + (Perception of Luxury x Unpopular Choice Counter-conformity)	.509	50.472	1	.012	3.379	140	-.526	.068
* Dependent variable : Product evaluation of the mimic brand (Kmart)								

Hierarchical moderated regression analysis was conducted on brand familiarity towards the mimic brand, status consumption, consumers' need for uniqueness between perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand to test for the interaction effects between the moderator, independent variable and the dependent variable. Based on the results of the hierarchical moderation analysis, the moderators are found to be insignificant. Hence, H14a, H14 b, H15 and H16 are rejected.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FOR STUDY THREE

The findings of the hypotheses are summarized below in Table 6.3.11A.

**Table 6.3.11A:** Summary of findings for Study Three

	<b>Hypotheses</b>	<b>Accepted/Rejected</b>
<b>H1</b>	Presence of mimicry will lead to a negative perception of luxury	Partially accepted
<b>H2</b>	Presence of mimicry will lead to a negative product evaluation of the mimic brand	Partially accepted
<b>H3</b>	Perception of luxury will lead to a positive product evaluation of the mimic brand	Accepted
<b>H4</b>	Perception of luxury will mediate the relationship between the presence of mimicry and product evaluation of the mimic brand	Partially accepted
<b>Brand familiarity</b>		
<b>H5a</b>	Brand familiarity towards the model brand will lead to a negative perception of luxury towards the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H5b</b>	There is a negative relationship between brand familiarity towards the model brand and perception of luxury towards the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H6a</b>	Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand will lead to a positive product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H6b</b>	Brand familiarity towards the model brand will lead to a negative product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>Consumers' need for uniqueness</b>		
<b>H7</b>	Consumers' need for uniqueness will lead to a negative perception of luxury towards the mimic brand	Partially accepted
<b>H8</b>	Consumers' need for uniqueness will lead to a negative product evaluation of the mimic brand	Partially accepted
<b>Status consumption</b>		
<b>H9</b>	Status consumption will lead to a negative perception of luxury towards the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H10</b>	Status consumption will lead to a negative product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>Mediation effects:</b>		
<b>H11a</b>	Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand will mediate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation towards a mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H11b</b>	Brand familiarity towards the model brand will mediate the relationship between perception of	Rejected

	luxury and product evaluation towards a mimic brand	
<b>H12</b>	Consumers' need for uniqueness will mediate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation towards a mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H13</b>	Status consumption will mediate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation towards a mimic brand	Rejected
<b>Moderation effects:</b>		
<b>H14a</b>	Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand will moderate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H14b</b>	Brand familiarity towards the model brand will moderate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H15</b>	Consumers' need for uniqueness will moderate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H16</b>	Status consumption will moderate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected

The results for Study Three examined the hypotheses using Kmart sandals as the mimic brand and Birkenstock sandals as the model brand has shown some interesting results. It was revealed that the three dimensions of the presence of mimicry scale have a significant relationship towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand. Both “Image” and “Beneficial” characteristics are found to have positive relationship towards perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand.

On the other hand, “Physical” characteristics are found to have a significant negative relationship towards perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. Similar to the findings from Study One and Two, close physical similarities between the mimic and the model brand is reinforced to lead towards negative perception of luxury and product evaluation towards the Kmart “Birkenstocks” because of the high similarity that are negatively associated with blatant copies (van Horen and Pieters, 2012b). In addition, consumers will tend to believe that manufacturer intends to “fool” them. Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand has also shown a significant positive relationship towards product evaluation of the mimic brand.

Interestingly in this study, brand familiarity towards neither mimic brand nor the model brand showed any significant relationships. However, unpopular choice counter-conformity is found to have a positive impact on perception of luxury towards Kmart and product

evaluation of Kmart. Status consumption was found to have no significant relationship towards perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. This could be explained by the fact that Kmart's variation of the Birkenstock is not a mainstream and is considered to be a close copy. Furthermore, the product is projected to bring "harm" to consumers and is therefore an unpopular choice. However, consumers who strive towards unpopular choice counter-conformity would choose to go against the grain in their decisions (Tian et al., 2001; Knight and Kim, 2007), therefore serves as an explanation that they would still consider the similarity between the Kmart "Birkenstocks" to transfer similar "luxury" elements from the model Birkenstock.

Based on the mediation analysis, perception of luxury towards the mimic brand is found to partially mediate the relationship between "Beneficial" characteristics and product evaluation of the mimic brand. Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand was found to fully mediate the relationship between "Image" characteristics and product evaluation of the mimic brand. Hence, it can be suggested that "Beneficial" characteristics can indirectly influence consumers' product evaluation of the mimic brand, while "Image" characteristics can directly influence product evaluations of mimic brand.

Lastly, hierarchical moderated regression revealed no moderators.

## **STUDY FOUR: Reebok and Tiffany and Co.**

Based on Table 6.1A, Study Four will be testing the hypothesized relationship for the car product category using two real life brands to test for the effects of the presence of Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimicry on consumers. The model brand is Tiffany and Co. and the mimic brand is Reebok. The signal receiver(s) are consumers. Respondent characteristics are first discussed, followed by the hypotheses postulated in Chapter 3.

### **Profile of Respondents**

The total usable number of responses for Study One is 108 respondents. The responses that were incomplete or had missing values were removed and not used for analysis. The respondents were mainly between 19 to 25 years of age (74.1%), with more females (63.9%) than males. The majority of the respondents are Australians (60.1%). Furthermore, it is found that most of the respondents are more familiar with Reebok (mimic brand) ( $M = 5.15$ ,  $SD = 1.707$ ) than Tiffany and Co. (mimic brand) ( $M = 4.56$ ,  $SD = 2.025$ ).

### Factor Analysis – Presence of mimicry scale

Prior to conducting analysis, factor analysis was conducted on the presence of mimicry scale (Wicklerian-Eisnerian) that was developed for this study (see detailed scale development procedure in Chapter 5). Results from Table 6.4.1A shows that there are three factors and consists of 11 items that accounts for 75.870% of cumulative variance. The Cronbach’s alpha coefficients were all above 0.8 which is deemed suitable for further analysis (Nunnally, 1970). The three factors are namely “image characteristics”, “physical characteristics”, and “beneficial characteristics” which are used for subsequent analysis.

**Table 6.4.1A:** Factor analysis of the Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimicry scale

Items	Factor Loadings		
	F1 – W-Image Characteristics	F2 – W-Physical Characteristics	F3 – W-Beneficial Characteristics
The products express a similar image of success	.889		
The products express a similar image of elegance	.888		
The products express a similar image of sophistication	.884		
The products express a similar degree of luxury	.855		
The products share similar product designs		.863	
The products share similar looks		.854	
The products share similar physical traits		.735	
The products share similar styles		.697	
The products share express similar practicality			.809
The products share express similar reliability			.729
The products share express similar durability			.698
<b>% of Variance</b>	46.909	18.001	10.961
<b>Overall % of Variance</b>		75.870	
<b>Eigenvalue</b>	5.160	1.980	1.206
<b>Cronbach’s Alpha</b>	.939	.834	.745
<b>Overall Cronbach’s Alpha</b>		.884	
<b>KMO</b>		.865	
<b>Barlett’s Test of Sphericity</b>		.000	

### Factor Analysis – Consumers’ need for uniqueness scale

An exploratory factor analysis was conducted on the original 31-item consumers’ need for uniqueness scale (see Table 6.4.2A). Through Varimax rotation, the items were reduced to 12 items with an acceptable range of reliabilities. The three dimensions of consumers’ need for uniqueness which is namely avoidance of similarity, creative choice counter-conformity and unpopular choice counter-conformity will be used for subsequent analysis.

**Table 6.4.2A:** Factor analysis of the consumers’ need for uniqueness scale

Items	Factor Loadings		
	F1 – Avoidance of Similarity	F2 – Creative Choice Counter-conformity	F3 – Unpopular Choice Counter-conformity
I often try to avoid products or brands that I know are bought by the general population.	.886		
When a product I own becomes popular among the general population, I begin using it less.	.833		
As a rule, I dislike products or brands that are customarily purchased by everyone.	.792		
The more commonplace a product or brand is among the general population, the less interested I am in buying it.	.784		
When a style of clothing I own becomes too commonplace, I usually quit wearing it.	.778		
I avoid products or brands that have already been accepted and purchased by the average consumer.	.686		
The products and brands that I like best are the ones that express my individuality.		.867	
Having an eye for products that are interesting and unusual assists me in establishing a distinctive image.		.857	
I’m often on the lookout for new products or brands that will add to my personal uniqueness.		.749	
As far as I’m concerned, when it comes to the products I buy and the situations in which I use them, customs and rules are made to be broken.			.809
I often dress unconventionally even when it’s likely to offend others.			.765
If someone hinted that I had been dressing inappropriately for a social situation, I would continue dressing in the same manner.			.603
<b>% of Variance</b>	48.148	13.821	8.762
<b>Cumulative % of Variance</b>		70.731	
<b>Eigenvalue</b>	5.778	1.658	1.051
<b>Cronbach’s Alpha</b>	.918	.810	.718
<b>Overall Cronbach’s Alpha</b>		.900	
<b>KMO</b>		.860	
<b>Barlett’s Test of Sphericity</b>		.000	

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The following sections will discuss the results of the hypotheses. A summary of the results for each study can be found at the end of each study.

### **Results for Hypotheses H1 – H3**

The set of hypotheses H1, H2 and H3 examines the influence of presence of mimicry towards perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at Table 6.4.3A and Table 6.4.4A.

**Table 6.4.3A:** Stepwise regression of presence of mimicry towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand

	<b>B-Values</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Reebok)</b>						
<b>Image Characteristics</b>	.489	.063	.602	.357	7.768	.000*
<b>Product evaluation of the mimic brand (Reebok)</b>						
<b>Beneficial Characteristics</b>	.237	.073	.302	.083	3.265	.001*

\*Sig. <.05

**Independent variable:** Presence of mimicry

Stepwise regression was conducted between the three dimensions of the presence of mimicry scale towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Reebok). The results show that “Image” characteristics has a significant positive relationship towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand ( $\beta=.602$ , Sig. =.000). Hence, H1 is partially accepted.

Stepwise regression was conducted between the three dimensions of the presence of mimicry scale towards product evaluation of the mimic brand (Reebok). It was found that “Beneficial” has a significant positive relationship towards product evaluation of the mimic brand ( $\beta=.302$ , Sig. =.001). Hence, H2 is rejected.

The results indicate that “Image characteristics” are important in influencing how consumers perceive the luxury of the mimic brand. It is found that the greater the similarity between the mimic and the model brand in terms of the image characteristics, the more likely consumers will tend to perceive the mimic brand to be “luxury”. In addition, the greater the similarity between the mimic and the model brand in terms of beneficial characteristics, the more likely it would improve the product evaluation of the mimic brand.

**Table 6.4.4A:** Regression between perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand

	<b>B-Values</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand</b>	.435	.058	.590	.342	7.521	.000*

\*Sig. <.05

**Dependent variable:** Product evaluation of the mimic brand

Linear regression was conducted between perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand. It is found that perception of luxury towards the mimic brand has a significant positive relationship towards product evaluation of the mimic brand ( $\beta=.590$ , Sig. =.000). Hence, H3 accepted.

The result indicates that the higher consumers’ perception of luxury towards the mimic brand will lead to positive product evaluation of the mimic brand.

### Results for Hypotheses H5A, H5B, H6A and H6B

The set of hypotheses H5A, H5B, H6A and H6B examines the influence of brand familiarity towards the mimic brand and brand familiarity towards the model brand on perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at Table 6.4.5A.

**Table 6.4.5A:** Regression of brand familiarity towards mimic/model brand towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand

	B-Values	Std. Error	Beta	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	t-value	Sig.
<b>Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Reebok)</b>						
<b>Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand (Reebok)</b>	.412	.085	.427	.174	4.856	.000*
<b>Brand familiarity towards the model brand (Tiffany)</b>	-.005	.076	-.006	-.009	-.066	.947
<b>Product evaluation of the mimic brand (Reebok)</b>						
<b>Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand (Reebok)</b>	.304	.063	.427	.175	4.864	.000*
<b>Brand familiarity towards the model brand (Tiffany)</b>	.078	.055	.136	.009	1.413	.161

\*Sig. <.05

Linear regression was conducted between brand familiarity towards the mimic brand (Reebok) and perception of luxury towards the mimic brand. The results show a significant positive relationship between brand familiarity towards the mimic brand and perception of luxury towards the mimic brand ( $\beta=.427$ , Sig. =.000). Similarly, linear regression was conducted between brand familiarity towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand. The findings showed a significant positive relationship between the two variables ( $\beta=.136$ , Sig. =.000). Hence, H5a and H5b are accepted.

Linear regression was conducted between brand familiarity towards the model brand (Tiffany) and perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Reebok) and product evaluation of the mimic brand (Reebok). The relationships were found to be insignificant. Hence, H6a and H6b are rejected.

The findings showed that brand familiarity towards the mimic brand (Reebok) is important. It can influence how consumers perceive and evaluate the mimic brand. In this case, the higher the brand familiarity towards the mimic brands the higher the perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand.

### Results for Hypotheses H7 and H8

The set of hypotheses H7 and H8 examines the influence of the three dimensions of consumers' need for uniqueness on perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at Table 6.4.6A.

**Table 6.4.6A:** Multiple regression of consumers' need for uniqueness towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand

	<b>B-Values</b>	<b>Std Error</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>Adj. R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Reebok)</b>						
<b>Avoidance of Similarity</b>	.051	.133	.047		.381	.704
<b>Creative Choice Counter-conformity</b>	-.218	.139	-.164	.063	-1.574	.119
<b>Unpopular Choice Counter-conformity</b>	.344	.144	.280		2.389	.019*
<b>Product evaluation of the mimic brand (Reebok)</b>						
<b>Avoidance of Similarity</b>	-.145	.100	-.183		-1.456	.148
<b>Creative Choice Counter-conformity</b>	.120	.103	.123	.041	1.163	.247
<b>Unpopular Choice Counter-conformity</b>	.257	.107	.284		2.392	.019*

\*Sig. <.05

Regression analysis was conducted between consumers' need for uniqueness and perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Reebok). It is found that unpopular choice counter-conformity has a significant positive relationship towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand ( $\beta=.280$ , Sig. =.019).

Regression analysis was conducted between consumers' need for uniqueness and product evaluation of the mimic brand (Reebok). Unpopular choice counter-conformity emerged to show a significant relationship towards product evaluation of the mimic brand (Reebok) ( $\beta=.284$ , Sig. =.019). Hence, H7 and H8 are partially accepted.

The results show that unpopular choice counter-conformity has a positive relationship towards both perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand. Consumers who tend to deviate from group norms in their purchase behaviour would have positive perception of luxury towards the Reebok mimic. Similarly, consumers prone to unpopular choice counter-conformity would also have better product evaluations of mimic brand. It can be suggested that consumers who “do not care” if they receive social disapproval will more likely be more receptive towards the mimic brand. In the case of Reebok, they are considered to be a brand that has suffered in recent years and has lower popularity. With consumers who tend to sought out unpopular brands that are generally not accepted by mainstream consumers may also find Reebok appealing. Even when they cause harm, consumers might not take that into consideration even though it is “unacceptable” by general consumers.

### Results for Hypotheses H9 and H10

The set of hypotheses H9 and H10 deals with the influence the three dimensions of consumers' need for uniqueness on perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at Table 6.4.7A.

**Table 6.4.7A:** Linear regression of status consumption towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand

	<b>B-Values</b>	<b>Standard Error</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Reebok)</b>						
<b>Status Consumption</b>	.133	.119	.108	.002	1.117	.267
<b>Product evaluation of the mimic brand (Reebok)</b>						
<b>Status Consumption</b>	.245	.085	.270	.064	2.882	.005*

\*Sig <.05

Linear regression was conducted between status consumption and perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Reebok). No significant relationship was found. Linear regression was conducted between status consumption and product evaluation of the mimic brand (Reebok). It was found that status consumption has a significant positive relationship towards product evaluation of the mimic brand ( $\beta=.270$ , Sig. =.005). This can suggest that consumers who are more status prone would have positive evaluations towards a mimic brand. Hence, H9 and H10 are both rejected.

## MEDIATION ANALYSIS

### Results for Hypotheses H4, H11A, H11B, H12 and H13

The set of hypotheses H4, H11A, H11B, H12 and H13 examines mediating effects within the conceptual model. Hypothesis H4 examines the mediating effects of perception of luxury towards the mimic brand on presence of mimicry and product evaluation of the mimic brand. Hypotheses H11A, H11B, H12 and H13 examines the mediating effects of brand familiarity towards the mimic brand, brand familiarity towards the model brand, consumers' need for uniqueness, and status consumption on perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at Table 6.4.8A.

**Table 6.4.8A:** Mediation analysis

Predictor	Criterion	B	Std Error	Beta	t-value	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	Sig.
Perception of Luxury	Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand (Reebok)	.442	.091	.427	4.856	.174	.000*
Perception of Luxury	Product Evaluation	.435	.058	.590	7.521	.342	.000*
Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand (Reebok)	Product Evaluation	.304	.063	.427	4.864	.175	.000*
Perception of Luxury	Product Evaluation	.368	.062	.498	5.893		.000*
Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand (Reebok)		.153	.060	.215	2.538	.374	.000*

**Sobel Test:**  $z = 3.423$  \*  $p < .05$ ; **Goodman Test:**  $z = 3.460$  \*  $p < .05$ ;  
**\*\* Sig. < 0.05**

Mediation effects of brand familiarity towards the mimic brand on the relationship between perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Reebok) and product evaluation of the mimic brand was conducted.

Based on the results, it can be observed that brand familiarity towards the mimic brand partially mediates the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation. Hence, H11a is partially accepted.

However, H4, H11b, H12 and H13 did not meet the first two conditions required for testing mediation effects. The independent variable is not found to show a significant relationship to the dependent variable; and the independent variable did not show a significant relationship towards the mediator. Therefore there is no need to conduct further mediation analysis. Thus, the hypotheses are rejected.

Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand can influence the product evaluation of the mimic brand through consumers' brand familiarity towards the mimic brand. This suggests that consumers' brand familiarity can also enhance consumers' evaluation of the mimic product.

## MODERATION ANALYSIS

### Results for Hypotheses H14A, H14B, H15 and H16

The set of hypotheses H14A, H14B, H15 AND H16 examines the moderating effects of brand familiarity towards the mimic brand, brand familiarity towards the model brand, consumers' need for uniqueness, and status consumption on perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at Table 6.4.9A.

**Table 6.4.9A:** Hierarchical moderated regression

Independent Variables	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	F	df	Δ R <sup>2</sup>	F Change	df	β	Sig.
<b>Perception of Luxury</b>	.342	56.568	1	.348	56.568	106	.444	.141
<b>Perception of Luxury + Brand Familiarity (mimic)</b>	.374	32.955	1	.038	6.439	105	.181	.362
<b>Perception of Luxury + Brand Familiarity (mimic) + (Perception of Luxury x Brand Familiarity (mimic))</b>	.368	21.780	1	.000	.035	104	.076	.851
<b>Perception of Luxury</b>	.342	56.568	1	.348	56.568	106	.707	.000
<b>Perception of Luxury + Brand Familiarity (model)</b>	.355	30.503	1	.020	3.241	105	.275	.191
<b>Perception of Luxury + Brand Familiarity (model) + (Perception of Luxury x Brand Familiarity (model))</b>	.352	20.397	1	.003	.486	104	-.186	.487
<b>Perception of Luxury</b>	.342	56.568	1	.348	56.568	106	.623	.042
<b>Perception of Luxury + Status Consumption</b>	.379	33.689	1	.043	7.397	105	.242	.211
<b>Perception of Luxury + Status Consumption + (Perception of Luxury x Status Consumption)</b>	.374	22.266	1	.000	.037	104	-.070	.849
<b>Perception of Luxury</b>	.342	56.568	1	.348	56.568	106	.597	.030
<b>Perception of Luxury + Avoidance of Similarity</b>	.338	28.266	1	.002	.324	105	-.045	.834
<b>Perception of Luxury + Avoidance of Similarity + (Perception of Luxury x Avoidance of Similarity)</b>	.331	18.664	1	.000	.000	104	-.001	.999

<b>Perception of Luxury</b>	.342	56.568	1	.348	56.568	106	.580	.155
<b>Perception of Luxury + Creative Choice Counter-conformity</b>	.363	31.435	1	.027	4.457	105	.154	.462
<b>Perception of Luxury + Creative Choice Counter-conformity + (Perception of Luxury x Creative Choice Counter-conformity)</b>	.356	20.758	1	.000	.002	104	.021	.962
<b>Perception of Luxury</b>	.342	56.568	1	.348	56.568	106	.639	.026
<b>Perception of Luxury + Unpopular Choice Counter-conformity</b>	.339	28.452	1	.003	.567	105	.118	.639
<b>Perception of Luxury + Unpopular Choice Counter-conformity + (Perception of Luxury x Unpopular Choice Counter-conformity)</b>	.333	18.817	1	.000	.058	104	-.099	.810
<b>* Dependent variable : Product evaluation of the mimic brand (Reebok)</b>								

Hierarchical moderated regression analysis was conducted on brand familiarity towards the mimic brand, status consumption, consumers' need for uniqueness between perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand to test for the interaction effects between the moderator, independent variable and the dependent variable. Based on the results of the hierarchical moderation analysis, the moderators are found to be insignificant. Hence, H14a, H14 b, H15 and H16 are rejected.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FOR STUDY FOUR

The findings of the hypotheses are summarized below in Table 6.4.10A.

**Table 6.4.10A:** Summary of findings for Study Four

<b>Hypotheses</b>		<b>Accepted/Rejected</b>
<b>H1</b>	Presence of mimicry will lead to a negative perception of luxury	Partially accepted
<b>H2</b>	Presence of mimicry will lead to a negative product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H3</b>	Perception of luxury will lead to a positive product evaluation of the mimic brand	Accepted
<b>H4</b>	Perception of luxury will mediate the relationship between the presence of mimicry and product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>Brand familiarity</b>		
<b>H5a</b>	Brand familiarity towards the model brand will lead to a negative perception of luxury towards the mimic brand	Accepted
<b>H5b</b>	There is a negative relationship between brand familiarity towards the model brand and perception of luxury towards the mimic brand	Accepted
<b>H6a</b>	Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand will lead to a positive product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H6b</b>	Brand familiarity towards the model brand will lead to a negative product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>Consumers' need for uniqueness</b>		
<b>H7</b>	Consumers' need for uniqueness will lead to a positive perception of luxury towards the mimic brand	Partially accepted
<b>H8</b>	Consumers' need for uniqueness will lead to a positive product evaluation of the mimic brand	Partially accepted
<b>Status consumption</b>		
<b>H9</b>	Status consumption will lead to a negative perception of luxury towards the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H10</b>	Status consumption will lead to a negative product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>Mediation effects:</b>		
<b>H11a</b>	Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand will mediate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation towards a mimic brand	Partially accepted
<b>H11b</b>	Brand familiarity towards the model brand will mediate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation towards a mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H12</b>	Consumers' need for uniqueness will mediate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation towards a mimic brand	Rejected

<b>H13</b>	Status consumption will mediate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation towards a mimic brand	Rejected
<b>Moderation effects:</b>		
<b>H14a</b>	Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand will moderate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H14b</b>	Brand familiarity towards the model brand will moderate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H15</b>	Consumers' need for uniqueness will moderate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H16</b>	Status consumption will moderate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected

The results for Study Four examined the hypotheses using Reebok jewellery as the mimic brand and Tiffany jewellery as the model brand has shown interesting results. It was revealed that “Image” characteristics has a positive influence towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand, while “Beneficial” characteristics is found to have a significant positive relationship towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand. The findings emphasize that similarity between the mimic and the model in terms of image will result in better perception of luxury. Similar to the findings by Turunen and Laaksonen (2011), mimic brands that convey similar image attributes will be likely to be viewed in a positive light. This is because of the consumers generalizing the brands to share similar qualities as well. For better product evaluations, it is important to have similar beneficial characteristics such as perceived similarity in reliability and durability of the mimic brand. Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand was found to have a significant positive relationship towards product evaluation of the mimic brand.

Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand is found to have a significant positive relationship towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand. This suggests the importance of brand familiarity of the mimic brand. When consumers are familiar or knowledgeable about a mimic brand, they tend to have better perception and evaluation of the brand. Interestingly, the mimic brand Reebok who is not a brand that sells jewellery, but rather sports equipment would still generalize positive perception of luxury and product evaluation. Furthermore, when one considers Reebok, one would not think of the brand in a positive light (especially as a “harmful” mimic brand). However, the brand has recently revitalized their brand to reflect a better image. As such, it

could have been caused by consumers' familiarity or knowledge of Reebok that eliminated the negative connotations of mimicry.

Unpopular choice counter-conformity was found to have a significant positive relationship towards both perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. Consumers who tend to not purchase products that conform to the norm tend to have better perception and product evaluation. These consumers may not tend to pay attention to the harmful side effects of mimic brands, which is the case for this form of mimicry; instead, they can sometimes challenge risks and what the norm dictates (Tian et al., 2001; Knight and Kim, 2007).

Status consumption is found to have a significant positive relationship towards product evaluation of the mimic brand. This can suggest that status consumers would have a better product evaluation of Reebok.

Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand is found to partially mediate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand.

## CONCLUSION FOR PART 2 (WICKLERIAN-EISNERIAN MIMICRY)

In summary, the results of the four studies of Part 2 (**Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimicry**) show that there are significant relationships between presence of mimicry, perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand. Furthermore, brand familiarity and consumers' need for uniqueness have emerged to play important roles in influencing perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand. There are also a number of mediation effects evidenced. However, no moderation has been observed.

**Presence of mimicry** - it is found that in general the three dimensions of the presence of mimicry scale have significant relationships towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (H1) and product evaluation of the mimic brand (H2). "Image" characteristics have consistently emerged as showing significant positive relationship towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand. However, "Physical" characteristics have shown significant negative relationship towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand. It is also found that "Beneficial" characteristics have a significant positive relationship towards product evaluation of the mimic brand. It is also found that perception of luxury has a significant positive relationship towards product evaluation of the mimic brand (H3). These results indicate a number of points. They are namely:

- The presence of mimicry scale is evidenced to be able to generalize across the four product categories.
- The three dimensions of the presence of mimicry scale affects perception of luxury and product evaluation at varying degrees and showed different relationship towards the dependent variables.
  - It is also interesting to note that "Image" characteristics have emerged to generate positive perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluations of mimic brand. This suggests that the image of a brand is an area to enhance for luxury products. This reinforces the fact that consumers purchase mimics or counterfeits as a cheaper alternative but would still like the image attributes, which therefore leads to positive perceptions and evaluations (Juggessur and Cohen, 2009; Wilcox et al., 2009). Furthermore, past studies have reiterated the fact that consumption of luxury goods is to enhance or display ones' self-image (Eastman et al., 1999; O'Cass and Frost, 2002; Han et al., 2010). The similarity in

image attributes will allow consumers to fulfil the impression of prestige through the consumption of mimic brands (Juggessur and Cohen, 2009; Wilcox et al., 2009). Therefore, it is important for mimic brands to enhance and emulate the image characteristics of the model brand in order to generate positive perception and evaluations.

- In addition, “Physical” characteristics emerged to generate negative perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand. Therefore, this suggests that close physical similarities between the model and the mimic brand may actually be detrimental to the mimic brand. The fact that Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimicry is harmful to consumers also accentuate the close physical similarities can be another deterrent towards the mimic brand (Balabanis and Craven, 1997; Warlop and Alba, 2004; van Horen and Pieters, 2012a). Past studies by van Horen and Pieters (2012b) have documented the negative effects of blatant physical copies. They are less favourable in the eyes of consumers. Therefore, highlighting the fact that mimic brands should emulate the intangible aspects of a successful model brand.
- “Beneficial” characteristics affect the product evaluation of the mimic brand. The perception that there are practical similarities between the mimic and the model brand generates positive influences towards product evaluation of the mimic brand. As past counterfeit studies have documented, one of the key areas that entices consumers to purchase counterfeits are the beneficial characteristics of the copy (Ang et al., 2001; d’Astous and Gargouri, 2001; Penz and Stottinger, 2008; Phau and Teah, 2009). This emphasizes the fact that consumers are interested in the functional aspects of a mimic luxury brand and not only the image or physical characteristics. If the product does not serve the function, this does not provide value as to how the mimic serves as an alternative to full priced model brands but at a fraction of the price (Balabanis and Craven, 1997).

**Brand familiarity** –towards the mimic brand has also shown significant positive relationship towards both perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (H5a) and product evaluation of the mimic brand (H5b). In this case, if consumers know about the mimic brand or has knowledge about it, this helps the consumer generate better perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and positive evaluations of the brand. This highlights the importance of creating

awareness and familiarity for mimic brands. Interestingly, this finding contrasts Penz and Stottinger's (2008) finding that with past knowledge and awareness of the mimic brand, it would generate less positive evaluations. Instead the negative influences would come into play (Marcketti and Shelley, 2009) considering that it is a mimic brand. However, this finding could present potential areas of development for mimic brands. One of the key benefits of mimic brands is that they are often independent brands that are not a 100% copy like a counterfeit. Therefore, consumers may have potential experience with other aspects of the brands which may transfer to the brand and therefore the mimic product. This in turn can enhance product evaluation (Balabanis and Craven, 1997; Johnson and Lehmann, 1997; Kim and Chung, 2012; van Horen and Pieters, 2012b). This emphasizes the importance of mimic brand managers to ensure that they develop a positive brand image rather than focusing on mimicking successful products. As Shenkar (2012) has stated, it is the investment in long term resources that make mimicry a lucrative strategy.

Brand familiarity towards the model brand did not show significant relationship towards influencing the perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (H6a). However, it is found that while there is evidence in Study Two that brand familiarity towards the model brand can generate positive product evaluations of the mimic brand (H6b), this finding was not generalized across all the four product categories.

**Consumers' need for uniqueness** - is found to have significant relationship between perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (H7) and product evaluation of the mimic brand (H8). Study two on clothing showed that avoidance of similarity and creative choice counter-conformity dimensions of the consumers' need for uniqueness scale showed significant relationship towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand. Avoidance of similarity was found to have a negative relationship towards both perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. This could be explained by the fact that the mimic brand (H&M) has become very popular and has become mainstream in many parts of the world and is well-known and common. Consumers who exhibit characteristics of avoidance of similarity would therefore perceive this as a brand they would avoid as it is too similar to what the masses possess. Similar to Kastanakis and Balabanis' (2011) finding, the luxury value of the mimic brand will disappear when too many people starts to own the product. Therefore, mimic brands will also need to develop itself as a niche so as to potentially be exclusively owned. On the other hand,

creative choice counter-conformity showed a positive relationship towards perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. This can be possibly explained by consumers prone to creative choice counter-conformity tend to express their uniqueness through gathering goods and mixing and matching to create their own style. In addition, consumers prone to creative choice counter-conformity often seek social differentiations, but still want the approval for their choices. In the case of H&M, they provide variety and fast turnaround of mimic goods bode well with this group of consumers. Furthermore, they are relatively well known as not to alienate consumers who are looking for creative expression (Kastanakis and Balabanis, 2011).

Interestingly, it is found that unpopular choice counter-conformity has significant positive relationship towards perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand for Study Three and Study Four. The two mimic brands used in these two studies (Kmart and Reebok) are often seen as less desirable brands to consumers. However, to consumers prone to unpopular choice counter-conformity they may not care or heed what other consumers perceive as acceptable. In fact, they may go against the grain to appease themselves and their risk taking behaviour. Considering the mimic brands are seen to be harmful, it does not deter these consumers who want to express their deviation from group norms.

**Status consumption** - on the other hand did not show significant relationship towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (H9). However, only Study Four results showed status consumption to have a significant positive relationship towards product evaluation of the mimic brand (H10). This could explain that status consumption does not play a role in Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimicry. While most of these mimic brands often mimic luxury brands, mimic brands themselves are often not considered as luxury brands other than Reebok, which is seen to be revitalizing itself and to possess a higher price tag than the other mimic brands. This finding is interesting as status consumption has been found to be a key determinant for luxury goods consumption (e.g. Eastman et al., 1999; O’Cass and McEwen, 2004) or the consumption of counterfeit luxury goods (e.g. Phau and Teah, 2009; Wilcox et al., 2009).

**Mediation effects** - There are a number of significant mediation effects in this study. Predominantly, brand familiarity is found to partially mediate the relationship between perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand (H11a). This suggests that brand familiarity plays an important role in consumer perception of luxury and their product evaluation of the mimic brand. Other proposed mediators such as brand familiarity towards the model brand, consumers' need for uniqueness and status consumption has not observed consistent mediation effects on perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. The mediation effects of brand familiarity on mimic brands, at the point of the study were yet to be uncovered. Hence, this study attempts to bridge the gap in the literature by providing insights into the mediating effects of brand familiarity on the perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brands.

**Moderators** - It is consistent throughout that brand familiarity, consumers' need for uniqueness and status consumption are not moderators of perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand.

## CHAPTER 6 - PART 3: VAVILOVIAN MIMICRY

### OVERVIEW

This chapter will discuss and compare the influence of the presence of Vavilovian mimicry on four different product categories, namely cars, clothing, shoes and jewellery within the luxury brand industry (see Table 6.1B). as presented, there will be 4 studies designed to test Vavilovian mimicry.

As a recap of the definition, **Vavilovian mimicry** *is when the mimic deceives or possibly confuses the signal receiver through symbolic and functional similarities, but as a result evades prosecution. Subsequently, it evolves, innovates and establishes itself away from the model brand over time and becomes an independent brand. They are often moderately similar mimics or so called imitative innovations.*

Study Five to Eight will be discussed independently. Each study will begin with factor analysis of the Vavilovian mimicry scale and the consumers' need for uniqueness scale. It is then followed by a discussion of the demographic profile of the respondents. Next, the results of the hypotheses will be discussed in three sections: (a) direct relationships (H1-H3, H5-10) (b) mediating relationships (H4, H11-H13) and (c) moderating relationships (H14-H15). A summary and discussion of findings will be provided at the end of each study. An overall conclusion and summary of the chapter will serve to conclude the chapter. The following table outlines the sequence of the studies and the stimulus (brands) used in each study within this chapter.

**Table 6.1B:** Summary of stimulus for Vavilovian mimicry

Vavilovian Mimicry	Product category	Model Brand	Mimic Brand	Signal Receiver/Dupe
<b>STUDY FIVE</b>	<b>Cars</b>	 <p><b>Rolls Royce</b></p>	 <p><b>Geely</b></p>	<b>Consumers</b>
<b>STUDY SIX</b>	<b>Clothes</b>	 <p><b>Lacoste</b></p>	 <p><b>Crocodile</b></p>	<b>Consumers</b>
<b>STUDY SEVEN</b>	<b>Shoes</b>	 <p><b>Valentino</b></p>	 <p><b>Forever 21</b></p>	<b>Consumers</b>
<b>STUDY EIGHT</b>	<b>Jewellery</b>	 <p><b>Pandora</b></p>	 <p><b>Lovelinks</b></p>	<b>Consumers</b>

## **STUDY FIVE: Geely and Rolls Royce**

Based on Table 6.1B, Study Five will be testing the hypothesized relationship for the car product category using two real life brands to test for the effects of the presence of Vavilovian mimicry on consumers. The model brand is Rolls Royce and the mimic brand is Geely. The signal receiver(s) are consumers. Respondent characteristics are first discussed, followed by the hypotheses postulated in Chapter 3.

### **Profile of Respondents**

The total usable number of responses for Study Five is 100 respondents. The responses that were incomplete or had missing values were removed and not used for analysis. The respondents were mainly between 19 to 25 years of age (52%), with more females (60.6%) than males. The majority of the respondents are Australians (58%). Furthermore, it is found that most of the respondents are more familiar with Rolls Royce (model brand) ( $M = 4.65$ ,  $SD = 2.367$ ) than the Geely (mimic brand) ( $M = 2.59$ ,  $SD = 2.113$ ).

### **Factor Analysis – Presence of mimicry scale**

Prior to analysis, factor analysis was conducted on the presence of mimicry scale (Vavilovian) that was developed for this study (see detailed scale development procedure in Chapter 5). Results from Table 6.2B shows that there are three factors and consists of 15 items that accounts for 70.6% of cumulative variance. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients were all above 0.8 which is deemed suitable for further analysis (Nunnally, 1970). The three factors are namely "physical characteristics", "symbolic characteristics", and "beneficial characteristics" which are used for subsequent analysis.

**Table 6.1.1B:** Factor analysis of the Vavilovian mimicry scale

Items	Factor Loadings		
	F1 – V-Physical Characteristics	F2 – V-Symbolic Characteristics	F3 – V-Beneficial Characteristics
The products share similar physical appearances	.863		
The products share similar looks	.819		
The products share similar aesthetics	.800		
The products share similar designs	.745		
The products share similar themes	.710		
The products share similar styles	.668		
The products share similar features	.645		
The products express a similar image of sophistication		.836	
The products express a similar image of success		.828	
The products express a similar image of prestige		.806	
The products express a similar degree of innovation		.757	
The products express a similar degree of uniqueness		.733	
The products share similar practicality			.909
The products share similar product utility			.897
The products share similar functionality			.751
<b>% of Variance</b>	45.923	14.342	10.327
<b>Total % of Variance</b>		70.592	
<b>Eigenvalue</b>	6.888	2.151	1.549
<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	.893	.896	.841
<b>Overall Cronbach's Alpha</b>		.903	
<b>KMO</b>		.863	
<b>Barlett's Test of Sphericity</b>		.000	

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.  
 Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.<sup>a</sup>

a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.

### Factor Analysis – Consumers’ need for uniqueness scale

An exploratory factor analysis was conducted on the original 31-item consumers’ need for uniqueness scale (see Table 6.1.2B). Through Varimax rotation, the items were reduced to 14 items with an acceptable range of reliabilities. The three dimensions of consumers’ need for uniqueness which is namely avoidance of similarity, creative choice counter-conformity and unpopular choice counter-conformity will be used for subsequent analysis.

**Table 6.1.2B:** Factor analysis of the consumers’ need for uniqueness scale

Items	Factor Loadings		
	F1 – Avoidance of Similarity	F2 – Creative Choice Counter-conformity	F3 – Unpopular Choice Counter-conformity
I often try to avoid products or brands that I know are bought by the general population.	.925		
As a rule, I dislike products or brands that are customarily purchased by everyone.	.913		
When a product I own becomes popular among the general population, I begin using it less.	.812		
I avoid products or brands that have already been accepted and purchased by the average consumer.	.740		
The more commonplace a product or brand is among the general population, the less interested I am in buying it.	.714		
Often when buying merchandise, an important goal is to find something that communicates my uniqueness.		.838	
I often combine possessions in such a way that I create a personal image for myself that can’t be duplicated.		.822	
Having an eye for products that are interesting and unusual assists me in establishing a distinctive image.		.774	
I have sometimes purchased unusual products or brands as a way to create a more distinctive personal image.		.758	
The products and brands that I like best are the ones that express my individuality.		.757	
If someone hinted that I had been dressing inappropriately for a social situation, I would continue dressing in the same manner.			.876
I enjoy challenging the prevailing taste of people I know by buying something they wouldn’t seem to accept.			.701
When I dress differently, I’m often aware that others think I’m peculiar but I don’t care.			.674
As far as I’m concerned, when it comes to the products I buy and the situations in which I use them, customs and rules are made to be broken.			.581
<b>% of Variance</b>	53.407	11.961	8.952
<b>Cumulative % of Variance</b>		74.320	
<b>Eigenvalue</b>	7.477	1.675	1.253
<b>Cronbach’s Alpha</b>	.930	.919	.798
<b>Overall Cronbach’s Alpha</b>		.931	
<b>KMO</b>		.879	
<b>Barlett’s Test of Sphericity</b>		.000	

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following sections will discuss the results of the hypotheses. A summary of the results for each study can be found at the end of each study.

### Results for Hypotheses H1 – H3

The set of hypotheses H1, H2 and H3 examines the influence of presence of mimicry towards perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at Table 6.1.3B and Table 6.1.4B.

**Table 6.1.3B:** Stepwise regression of presence of mimicry towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand

	<b>B-Values</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Geely)</b>						
<b>Symbolic Characteristics</b>	.410	.106	.365	.125	3.885	.000*

\*Sig. <.05Product evaluation of the mimic brand

**Independent variable:** Presence of mimicry

Stepwise regression was conducted between the three dimensions of the presence of mimicry scale towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Geely). The results show that only “Symbolic” characteristics has a significant positive relationship towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand ( $\beta=.365$ , Sig. =.000). Hence, H1 is partially accepted.

Stepwise regression was conducted between the three dimensions of the presence of mimicry scale towards product evaluation of the mimic brand (Geely). The regression showed that presence of mimicry does not have a significant relationship towards product evaluation of the mimic brand. Hence, H2 is rejected.

This result indicates that “Image characteristics” are important in influencing how consumers perceive the luxury of the mimic brand. It is found that the greater the similarity between the mimic and the model brand in terms of the image characteristics, consumers will tend to perceive the mimic brand to be “luxury”.

**Table 6.1.4B:** Regression between perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand

	<b>B-Values</b>	<b>Standard Error</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>Perception of Luxury towards the mimic brand (Geely)</b>	.583	.073	.625	.385	7.933	.000*

\*Sig. <.05

**Dependent variable:** Product evaluation of the mimic brand

Linear regression was conducted between perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand. It is found that perception of luxury towards the mimic brand has a significant positive relationship towards product evaluation of the mimic brand ( $\beta=.625$ , Sig. =.000). Hence, H3 is supported. The result indicates that the higher consumers' perception of luxury towards the mimic brand will lead to higher product evaluation of the mimic brand.

### Results for Hypotheses H5A, H5B, H6A and H6B

The set of hypotheses H5A, H5B, H6A and H6B examines the influence of brand familiarity towards the mimic brand and brand familiarity towards the model brand on perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at Table 6.1.4B.

**Table 6.1.5B:** Regression of brand familiarity towards the mimic/model brand towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand

	B-Values	Standard Error	Beta	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	t-value	Sig.
<b>Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Geely)</b>						
<b>Brand familiarity towards the Mimic Brand</b>	.124	.095	.131	.007	1.313	.192
<b>Brand familiarity towards the Model Brand</b>	-.267	.079	-.324	.096	-3.395	.001*
<b>Product evaluation of the mimic brand (Geely)</b>						
<b>Brand familiarity towards the Mimic Brand</b>	.377	.080	.429	.176	4.698	.000*
<b>Brand familiarity towards the Model Brand</b>	-.266	.073	-.346	.111	-3.657	.000*

\*Sig. <.05

Linear regression was conducted between brand familiarity towards the mimic brand (Geely) and perception of luxury towards the mimic brand. The results did not show a significant relationship. Hence, H5a is rejected.

Similarly, linear regression was conducted between brand familiarity towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand. The findings showed a significant positive relationship between the two variables ( $\beta=.429$ , Sig. =.000). Hence, H5b is accepted.

Linear regression was conducted between brand familiarity towards the model brand (Rolls Royce) and perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Geely). The results showed a significant negative relationship ( $\beta=-.324$ , Sig. =.001). Hence H6a is rejected.

Linear regression of brand familiarity towards the model brand (Rolls Royce) and product evaluation of the mimic brand (Geely) and the relationship was also found to be significantly negative ( $\beta = -.324$ , Sig. = .001). Hence, H6b is accepted.

The findings showed that brand familiarity towards the mimic brand (Geely) is important towards influencing the product evaluation of the mimic brand. If consumers are knowledgeable or familiar with the Geely brand, that would lead to positive product evaluations of Geely. On the other hand, the findings showed that brand familiarity towards the model brand (Rolls Royce) would lead to negative perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. This suggests that if consumers are knowledgeable about the model brand, they would evaluate the mimic in less favourable light.

## Results for Hypotheses H7 and H8

The set of hypotheses H7 and H8 examines the influence of the three dimensions of consumers' need for uniqueness on perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at Table 6.1.6B.

**Table 6.1.6B:** Multiple regression of consumers' need for uniqueness towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand

	<b>B- Values</b>	<b>Std Error</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>Adj. R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Geely)</b>						
<b>Avoidance of Similarity</b>	.091	.124	.097		.738	.462
<b>Creative Choice Counter-conformity</b>	.099	.139	.102	-.010	.717	.475
<b>Unpopular Choice Counter-conformity</b>	-.178	.149	-.158		-1.195	.235
<b>Product evaluation of the mimic brand (Geely)</b>						
<b>Avoidance of Similarity</b>	.033	.115	.038		.288	.774
<b>Creative Choice Counter-conformity</b>	.057	.129	.063	-.005	.441	.660
<b>Unpopular Choice Counter-conformity</b>	.089	.139	.085		.645	.521
<b>*Sig &lt;.05</b>						

Regression analysis was conducted between consumers' need for uniqueness and perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Geely). No significant relationship emerged. Similarly, regression analysis was conducted between consumers' need for uniqueness and product evaluation of the mimic brand (Geely). No significant relationship was found. Hence, H7 and H8 are both rejected.

### Results for Hypotheses H9 and H10

The set of hypotheses H9 and H10 deals with the influence the three dimensions of consumers' need for uniqueness on perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at Table 6.1.7B.

**Table 6.1.7B:** Linear regression of status consumption towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand

	B-Values	Standard Error	Beta	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	t-value	Sig.
<b>Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Geely)</b>						
<b>Status Consumption</b>	.194	.093	.205	.032	2.078	.040*
<b>Product evaluation of the mimic brand (Geely)</b>						
<b>Status Consumption</b>	.287	.084	.326	.097	3.417	.001*

\*Sig <.05

Linear regression was conducted between status consumption and perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Geely). It is found that status consumption has a significant positive relationship towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand ( $\beta=.205$ , Sig. =.040).

Linear regression was conducted between status consumption and product evaluation of the mimic brand (Geely). It is found that status consumption has a significant positive relationship towards product evaluation of the mimic brand ( $\beta=.326$ , Sig. =.001)

The results show that consumers who are status conscious would be more likely to have higher perception of luxury towards the mimic brand. Similarly, the more status conscious a consumer is, the more likely they will have positive product evaluations of the mimic brand (Geely).

## MEDIATION ANALYSIS

### Results for Hypotheses H4, H11A, H11B, H12 and H13

The set of hypotheses H4, H11A, H11B, H12 and H13 examines mediating effects within the conceptual model. Hypothesis H4 examines the mediating effects of perception of luxury towards the mimic brand on presence of mimicry and product evaluation of the mimic brand. Hypotheses H11A, H11B, H12 and H13 examines the mediating effects of brand familiarity towards the mimic brand, brand familiarity towards the model brand, consumers' need for uniqueness, and status consumption on perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at Table 6.1.8B.

**Table 6.1.8B:** Mediation analysis

Predictor	Criterion	Std Error	B	Beta	t-value	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	Sig.
Perception of Luxury	Brand familiarity towards the Model Brand	.116	-.394	-.324	-3.395	.096	.001*
Perception of Luxury	Product Evaluation	.073	.583	.625	7.933	.385	.000*
Brand familiarity towards the Model Brand	Product Evaluation	.073	-.266	-.346	-3.657	.111	.000*
Perception of Luxury	Product Evaluation	.077	.534	.573	6.977		.000*
Brand familiarity towards the Model Brand		.063	-.123	-.161	-1.953	.402	.054

**Sobel Test:**  $z = 2.488$  \*  $p < .05$ ; **Goodman Test:**  $z = 2.536$  \*  $p < .05$ ;  
**\*\* Sig. < 0.05**

Mediation effects of brand familiarity towards the model brand on the relationship between perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Geely) and product evaluation of the mimic brand was conducted. Based on the results, it can be observed that brand familiarity towards the model brand fully mediates the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation. Hence, H11b is supported.

Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand can influence the product evaluation of the mimic brand through consumers' brand familiarity towards the model brand. This suggests that consumers' brand familiarity towards the model can also directly consumers' evaluation of the mimic brand. Hence, in this case, if consumers have greater brand familiar towards

Rolls Royce, they are likelier to have negative product evaluation towards Geely especially if they also hold negative perception of luxury toward the Geely. In this case, perception of luxury towards the mimic brand only indirectly influences product evaluation of the mimic brand.

**Table 6.1.9B:** Mediation analysis

Predictor	Criterion	Std Error	B	Beta	t-value	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	Sig.
Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Geely)	Status Consumption	.105	.218	.205	2.078	.032	.040**
Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Geely)	Product evaluation of the mimic brand	.073	.583	.625	7.933	.385	.000**
Status Consumption	Product evaluation of the mimic brand	.084	.287	.326	3.417	.097	.001**
Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Geely)	Product evaluation of the mimic brand	.069	.543	.583	7.454	.420	.000**
Status Consumption	Product evaluation of the mimic brand	.073	.181	.207	2.641		.010**

**Sobel Test:**  $z = 7.744$  \*  $p < .05$  (.081); **Goodman Test:**  $z = 1.792$  \*  $p < .05$  (.073);  
**\*\* Sig.** < 0.05

Mediation effects of status consumption on the relationship between perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Geely) and product evaluation of the mimic brand, was conducted.

It is found that status consumption partially mediates perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand, suggesting that status consumption has a rather large impact on the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. Hence, H13 is accepted.

However, H4, H11a and H12 did not meet the first two conditions required for testing mediation effects. Therefore there is no need to conduct further mediation analysis. Thus, the hypotheses are rejected.

## MODERATION ANALYSIS

### Results for Hypotheses H14A, H14B, H15 and H16

The set of hypotheses H14A, H14B, H15 AND H16 examines the moderating effects of brand familiarity towards the mimic brand, brand familiarity towards the model brand, consumers' need for uniqueness, and status consumption on perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at Table 6.1.10B.

**Table 6.1.10B:** Hierarchical moderated regression

Independent Variables	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	F	df	Δ R <sup>2</sup>	F Change	df	β	Sig.
Perception of Luxury	.385	62.935	1	.391	62.935	98	.616	.000
Perception of Luxury + Brand Familiarity (mimic)	.503	51.143	1	.122	24.354	97	.416	.030
Perception of Luxury + Brand Familiarity (mimic) + (Perception of Luxury x Brand Familiarity (mimic))	.499	33.834	1	.001	.131	96	-.082	.718
Perception of Luxury	.385	62.935	1	.391	62.935	98	.663	.002
Perception of Luxury + Brand Familiarity (model)	.402	34.280	1	.023	3.816	97	-.018	.955
Perception of Luxury + Brand Familiarity (model) + (Perception of Luxury x Brand Familiarity (model))	.397	22.745	1	.001	.224	96	-.147	.637
Perception of Luxury	.385	62.935	1	.391	62.935	98	.294	.140
Perception of Luxury + Status Consumption	.420	36.874	1	.041	6.976	97	-.168	.501
Perception of Luxury + Status Consumption + (Perception of Luxury x Status Consumption)	.429	25.807	1	.015	2.518	96	.531	.116
Perception of Luxury	.385	62.935	1	.391	62.935	98	.392	.029
Perception of Luxury + Avoidance of Similarity	.383	31.748	1	.005	.733	97	-.293	.268
Perception of Luxury + Avoidance of Similarity + (Perception of Luxury x Avoidance of Similarity)	.390	22.090	1	.013	2.071	96	.455	.153

<b>Perception of Luxury</b>	.385	62.318	1	.391	62.318	97	.350	.096
<b>Perception of Luxury + Creative Choice Counter-conformity</b>	.388	32.095	1	.010	1.531	96	-.225	.359
<b>Perception of Luxury + Creative Choice Counter-conformity + (Perception of Luxury x Creative Choice Counter-conformity)</b>	.394	22.260	1	.012	1.953	95	.447	.166
<b>Perception of Luxury</b>	.385	62.935	1	.391	62.935	98	.641	.004
<b>Perception of Luxury + Unpopular Choice Counter-conformity</b>	.409	35.262	1	.030	5.013	97	.183	.467
<b>Perception of Luxury + Unpopular Choice Counter-conformity + (Perception of Luxury x Unpopular Choice Counter-conformity)</b>	.403	23.267	1	.000	.002	96	-.013	.967
<b>* Dependent variable : Product evaluation of the mimic brand (Geely)</b>								

Hierarchical moderated regression analysis was conducted on brand familiarity towards the mimic brand, status consumption, consumers' need for uniqueness between perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand to test for the interaction effects between the moderator, independent variable and the dependent variable. Based on the results of the hierarchical moderation analysis, the moderators are found to be insignificant. Hence, H14a, H14 b, H15 and H16 are rejected.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FOR STUDY FIVE

The findings of the hypotheses are summarized below in Table 6.1.11B.

**Table 6.1.11B:** Summary of findings for Study Five

<b>Hypotheses</b>		<b>Accepted/Rejected</b>
<b>H1</b>	Presence of mimicry will lead to a positive perception of luxury	Partially accepted
<b>H2</b>	Presence of mimicry will lead to a positive product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H3</b>	Perception of luxury will lead to a positive product evaluation of the mimic brand	Accepted
<b>H4</b>	Perception of luxury will mediate the relationship between the presence of mimicry and product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>Brand familiarity</b>		
<b>H5a</b>	Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand will lead to a positive perception of luxury towards the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H5b</b>	Brand familiarity towards the model brand will lead to a positive perception of luxury towards the mimic brand	Accepted
<b>H6a</b>	Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand will lead to a positive product evaluation of the mimic brand	Accepted
<b>H6b</b>	Brand familiarity towards the model brand will lead to a negative product evaluation of the mimic brand	Accepted
<b>Consumers' need for uniqueness</b>		
<b>H7</b>	Consumers' need for uniqueness will lead to a positive perception of luxury towards the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H8</b>	Consumers' need for uniqueness will lead to a positive product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>Status consumption</b>		
<b>H9</b>	Status consumption will lead to a negative perception of luxury towards the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H10</b>	Status consumption will lead to a negative product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>Mediation effects:</b>		
<b>H11a</b>	Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand will mediate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation towards a mimic brand	Rejected

<b>H11b</b>	Brand familiarity towards the model brand will mediate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation towards a mimic brand	Accepted
<b>H12</b>	Consumers' need for uniqueness will mediate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation towards a mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H13</b>	Status consumption will mediate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation towards a mimic brand	Accepted
<b>Moderation effects:</b>		
<b>H14a</b>	Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand will moderate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H14b</b>	Brand familiarity towards the model brand will moderate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H15</b>	Consumers' need for uniqueness will moderate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H16</b>	Status consumption will moderate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected

Study Five examined the hypotheses using Geely as the mimic brand and Rolls Royce as the model brand has shown some interesting results. It was revealed that only “Symbolic” characteristic of the presence of mimicry scale has a significant relationship towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand. The presence of mimicry was observed not to have a significant relationship toward product evaluation of the mimic brand (Geely). Therefore, similarities in the symbolic aspects of the brands can lead to better product evaluation for the mimic brand. Turunen and Laaksonen (2011) stated that mimics are considered better than brands without brands (un-branded) because by copying the model brand, the mimic emulates the symbolic meanings of the model brand. In this case, a new car brand such as Geely strives to achieve acceptance through the use of important styling cues and designs that exude similar symbolic characteristics of the Rolls Royce.

Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand was shown to have a significant relationship towards product evaluation of the mimic brand (Geely). In accordance to previous findings, consumers tend to form judgments and evaluation based on existing knowledge (Marcketti and Shelley, 2009). More importantly, mere exposure effect also postulated that consumers tend to prefer products which they are somewhat familiar with or have been exposed to in the past (Walsh and Mitchell, 2005). Therefore, the findings present important recommendations

for Geely to enhance brand familiarity and awareness in order to build the brand further. However, brand familiarity towards the mimic brand did not observe a significant relationship towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand.

Interestingly, the results of the study found that brand familiarity towards the model brand (Rolls Royce) has a significant negative relationship towards perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand (Geely). It is found that when consumers are familiar or knowledgeable about Rolls Royce, their perception of luxury and product evaluation towards Geely would be less favourable. Therefore, it is important to note the effects of brand familiarity of both the mimic and model brand on consumer perception and evaluations. This can be attributed to the fact that the similarity in design and concept to the Rolls Royce can be a deterrent for consumers who may believe that it is a close copy (van Horen and Pieters, 2012a). In addition, Vavilovian mimics often enter the market by adopting a strategy to copy the physical or features of the model brands. This therefore conforms to a blatant copy and is evaluated less positively in general (van Horen and Pieters, 2012a; 2012b).

Status consumption was found to have a significant positive relationship towards both perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand. Hence, it can be suggested that status consumers would have a better perception of luxury and product evaluation with the close similarities between the model and the mimic brand. This is in line with literature that have highlighted that status consumption to have an influence towards consumer behaviour towards mimic luxury products (Phau and Teah, 2009; Kastanakis and Balabanis, 2011). Kastanakis and Balabanis (2011) proposed that status consumers are driven towards bandwagon luxury (i.e. luxury for the masses). This presents a potential for Geely to further emulate the successful “luxury” trends set by the industry and to pursue products that can symbolize a successful luxury car.

It is also found that brand familiarity towards the model brand (Rolls Royce) is a mediator between the perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand. Brand familiarity towards the model brand (Rolls Royce) serves as a full mediator, therefore suggesting that brand familiarity towards the model brand (Rolls Royce) has a high impact on influencing whether consumers form favourable evaluations towards the mimic brand (Geely).

On a similar note, status consumption was found to partially mediate the relationship between perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand. It is important to note that status consumers will better enhance product evaluations of the mimic brand.

## **STUDY SIX: Crocodile and Lacoste**

Based on Table 6.1B, Study Six will be testing the hypothesized relationship for the car product category using two real life brands to test for the effects of the presence of Vavilovian mimicry on consumers. The model brand is Lacoste and the mimic brand is Crocodile. The signal receiver(s) are consumers. Respondent characteristics are first discussed, followed by the hypotheses postulated in Chapter 3.

### **Profile of Respondents**

The total usable number of responses for Study One is 107 respondents. The responses that were incomplete or had missing values were removed and not used for analysis. The respondents were mainly between 19 to 25 years of age (79.4%), with more females (52.3%) than males. The majority of the respondents are Australians (62.7%). Furthermore, it is found that most of the respondents are more familiar with Lacoste (model brand) ( $M = 5.14$ ,  $SD = 1.662$ ) than the Crocodile (mimic brand) ( $M = 4.73$ ,  $SD = 1.936$ ).

### **Factor Analysis – Presence of mimicry scale**

Prior to conducting analysis, factor analysis was conducted on the presence of mimicry scale (Vavilovian) that was developed for this study (see detailed scale development procedure in Chapter 5). Results from Table 6.2.1B shows that there are three factors and consists of 15 items that accounts for 65.648% of cumulative variance. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients were all above 0.8 which is deemed suitable for further analysis (Nunnally, 1970). The three factors are namely "physical characteristics", "symbolic characteristics", and "beneficial characteristics" which are used for subsequent analysis.

**Table 6.2.1B:** Factor analysis of the Vavilovian mimicry scale

Items	Factor Loadings		
	F1 – V-Physical Characteristics	F2 – V-Symbolic Characteristics	F3 – V-Beneficial Characteristics
The products share similar styles	.804		
The products share similar looks	.798		
The products share similar designs	.773		
The products share similar features	.769		
The products share similar themes	.743		
The products share similar aesthetics	.731		
The products share similar physical appearances	.675		
The products express similar image of prestige		.866	
The products express similar degree of innovation		.800	
The products express similar degree of uniqueness		.772	
The products express similar image of sophistication		.766	
The products express similar image of success		.712	
The products share similar functionality			.825
The products share similar practicality			.813
The products share similar product utility			.724
<b>% of Variance</b>	39.860	15.965	9.822
<b>Total % of Variance</b>		65.648	
<b>Eigenvalue</b>	5.979	2.395	1.473
<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	.895	.867	.784
<b>Overall Cronbach's Alpha</b>		.887	
<b>KMO</b>		.849	
<b>Barlett's Test of Sphericity</b>		.000	

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.  
 Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.<sup>a</sup>  
 a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.

### **Factor Analysis – Consumers’ need for uniqueness scale**

An exploratory factor analysis was conducted on the original 31-item consumers’ need for uniqueness scale (see Table 6.2.2B). Through Varimax rotation, the items were reduced to 15 items with an acceptable range of reliabilities. The three dimensions of consumers’ need for uniqueness which is namely avoidance of similarity, creative choice counter-conformity and unpopular choice counter-conformity will be used for subsequent analysis.

**Table 6.2.2B:** Consumers' Need for Uniqueness

Items	Factor Loadings		
	F1 – Avoidance of Similarity	F2 – Creative Choice Counter-conformity	F3 – Unpopular Choice Counter-conformity
I often try to avoid products or brands that I know are bought by the general population.	.862		
When a product I own becomes popular among the general population, I begin using it less.	.837		
I give up wearing fashions I've purchased once they become popular among the general public.	.805		
The more commonplace a product or brand is among the general population, the less interested I am in buying it.	.798		
As a rule, I dislike products or brands that are customarily purchased by everyone.	.788		
Products don't seem to hold much value for me when they are purchased regularly by everyone.	.718		
The products and brands that I like best are the ones that express my individuality.		.782	
Often when buying merchandise, an important goal is to find something that communicates my uniqueness.		.769	
I'm often on the lookout for new products or brands that will add to my personal uniqueness.		.753	
I often combine possessions in such a way that I create a personal image for myself that can't be duplicated.		.734	
Having an eye for products that are interesting and unusual assists me in establishing a distinctive image.		.715	
If someone hinted that I had been dressing inappropriately for a social situation, I would continue dressing in the same manner.			.822
I have often gone against the understood rules of my social group regarding when and how certain products are properly used.			.748
I have often violated the understood rules of my social group regarding what to buy or own.			.742
I often dress unconventionally even when it's likely to offend others.			.719
<b>% of Variance</b>	44.069	13.418	10.189
<b>Cumulative % of Variance</b>		67.676	
<b>Eigenvalue</b>	60610	2.013	1.528
<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	.915	.858	.817
<b>Overall Cronbach's Alpha</b>		.907	
<b>KMO</b>		.876	
<b>Barlett's Test of Sphericity</b>		.000	

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following sections will discuss the results of the hypotheses. A summary of the results for each study can be found at the end of each study.

### **Results for Hypotheses H1 – H3**

The set of hypotheses H1, H2 and H3 examines the influence of presence of mimicry towards perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at Table 6.2.3B and 6.2.4B.

**Table 6.2.3B:** Stepwise regression of presence of mimicry towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand

	<b>B-Values</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>Perception of Luxury towards the mimic brand (Crocodile)</b>						
<b>Symbolic Characteristics</b>	.602	.090	.548	.293	6.709	.000*
<b>Product evaluation of the mimic brand (Crocodile)</b>						
<b>Symbolic Characteristics</b>	.297	.074	.367	.126	4.038	.000*

\*Sig. <.05

**Independent variable:** Presence of mimicry

Stepwise regression was conducted between the three dimensions of the presence of mimicry scale towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Crocodile). The results show that “Symbolic” characteristics have a significant positive relationship towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand ( $\beta=.548$ , Sig. =.000). Hence, H1 is partially accepted.

Stepwise regression was conducted between the three dimensions of the presence of mimicry scale towards product evaluation of the mimic brand (Crocodile). It was found that “Symbolic” characteristics has a significant relationship towards product evaluation of the mimic brand ( $\beta=.367$ , Sig. =.000). Hence, H2 is partially accepted.

The results indicate that “Symbolic” characteristics are important in influencing how consumers perceive the luxury of the mimic brand. It is found that the greater the similarity between the mimic and the model brand in terms of the image and symbolic aspects of the products, consumers will tend to perceive the mimic brand to be “luxury”. Furthermore, the

similarity in symbolic aspects between the model and the mimic brands also positively influences product evaluations of the mimic brand.

**Table 6.2.4B:** Regression between perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand

	<b>B-Values</b>	<b>Standard Error</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>Perception of Luxury towards the mimic brand</b>	.486	.054	.660	.430	8.990	.000*

\*Sig. <.05

**Independent variable:** Presence of mimicry

Linear regression was conducted between perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand. It is found that perception of luxury towards the mimic brand has a significant positive relationship towards product evaluation of the mimic brand ( $\beta=.660$ , Sig. =.000). Hence, H3 accepted.

The result indicates that the higher consumers' perception of luxury towards the mimic brand will lead to positive product evaluation of the mimic brand.

### Results for Hypotheses H5A, H5B, H6A and H6B

The set of hypotheses H5A, H5B, H6A and H6B examines the influence of brand familiarity towards the mimic brand and brand familiarity towards the model brand on perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at Table 6.2.5B.

**Table 6.2.5B:** Regression of brand familiarity towards the mimic/model brand towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand

	B-Values	Standard Error	Beta	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	t-value	Sig.
<b>Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Crocodile)</b>						
<b>Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand (Crocodile)</b>	.085	.081	.102	.001	1.048	.297
<b>Brand familiarity towards the Model Brand</b>	.062	.083	.072	-.004	.742	.460
<b>Product evaluation of the mimic brand (Crocodile)</b>						
<b>Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand (Crocodile)</b>	.154	.058	.250	.054	2.651	.009*
<b>Brand familiarity towards the Model Brand</b>	.191	.058	.304	.084	3.273	.001*

\*Sig. <.05

Linear regression was conducted between brand familiarity towards the mimic brand (Crocodile) and perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Crocodile). The results did not show a significant relationship. Similarly, linear regression was conducted between brand familiarity towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand. The findings showed a significant positive relationship between the two variables ( $\beta=.250$ , Sig. =.009). Hence, H5a is rejected and H5b is accepted.

Linear regression was conducted between brand familiarity towards the model brand (Lacoste) and perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Crocodile). The relationship was found to be insignificant. Hence, H6a is rejected.

Linear regression was conducted between brand familiarity towards the model brand (Lacoste) and product evaluation of the mimic brand (Crocodile). The findings showed a

significant positive relationship between the two variables ( $\beta=.304$ , Sig. =.001). Hence, H6b is rejected.

The findings showed that brand familiarity towards the mimic brand (Crocodile) and brand familiarity towards the model brand (Lacoste) are both important influences of product evaluation of the mimic brand (Crocodile). In fact, based on the results, it can be suggested that Crocodile can benefit from overall brand familiarity. Therefore, if consumers are knowledgeable or familiar with the model brand and mimic brand, it will help transfer positive associations that can result in positive evaluations towards the mimic brand.

### Results for Hypotheses H7 and H8

The set of hypotheses H7 and H8 examines the influence of the three dimensions of consumers' need for uniqueness on perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at Table 6.2.6B.

**Table 6.2.6B:** Multiple regression of consumers' need for uniqueness towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand

	B-Values	Std Error	Beta	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	t-value	Sig.
<b>Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Crocodile)</b>						
<b>Avoidance of Similarity</b>	.018	.119	.017		.149	.882
<b>Creative Choice Counter-conformity</b>	.252	.149	.199	.015	1.689	.094
<b>Unpopular Choice Counter-conformity</b>	-.242	.133	-.208		-1.825	.071
<b>Product evaluation of the mimic brand (Crocodile)</b>						
<b>Avoidance of Similarity</b>	.016	.087	.021		.183	.855
<b>Creative Choice Counter-conformity</b>	.271	.108	.291	.041	2.500	.014*
<b>Unpopular Choice Counter-conformity</b>	-.143	.097	-.167		-1.479	.142
*Sig <.05						

Regression analysis was conducted between consumers' need for uniqueness and perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Crocodile). No significant relationship emerged. Hence, H7 is not supported.

Regression analysis was conducted between consumers' need for uniqueness and product evaluation of the mimic brand (Crocodile). Creative choice counter-conformity is found to show a significant positive relationship ( $\beta=.291$ , Sig. =.014) towards product evaluation of the mimic brand (Crocodile). Hence, H8 is partially supported.

The results show that consumers' need for uniqueness does not influence perception of luxury towards the mimic brand. However, creative choice counter-conformity is found to influence product evaluation of the mimic brand (Crocodile). This can suggest that consumers who seek products that are unique and seen scarce to create their individual style and unique personal image will favour the Crocodile brand and have positive evaluations towards their products. This can be the case whereby Crocodile also mimics the stylistic aspects of the Lacoste products. Hence, while it shares similarities, it can express an individual's unique taste by not selecting a product that is commonly known by the marketplace.

### Results for Hypotheses H9 and H10

The set of hypotheses H9 and H10 deals with the influence the three dimensions of consumers' need for uniqueness on perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at Table 6.2.7B.

**Table 6.2.7B:** Linear regression of status consumption towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand

	B-Values	Standard Error	Beta	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	t-value	Sig.
<b>Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Crocodile)</b>						
Status Consumption	.173	.113	.148	.013	1.531	.129
<b>Product evaluation of the mimic brand (Crocodile)</b>						
Status Consumption	.144	.083	.166	.018	1.729	.087

\*Sig <.05

Linear regression was conducted between status consumption and perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Crocodile). No significant relationship was found. Similarly, linear regression was conducted between status consumption and product evaluation of the mimic brand (Crocodile). No significant relationship was found. Hence, H9 and H10 are both rejected.

## MEDIATION ANALYSIS

### Results for Hypotheses H4, H11A, H11B, H12 and H13

The set of hypotheses H4, H11A, H11B, H12 and H13 examines mediating effects within the conceptual model. Hypothesis H4 examines the mediating effects of perception of luxury towards the mimic brand on presence of mimicry and product evaluation of the mimic brand. Hypotheses H11A, H11B, H12 and H13 examines the mediating effects of brand familiarity towards the mimic brand, brand familiarity towards the model brand, consumers' need for uniqueness, and status consumption on perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at Table 6.2.8B.

**Table 6.2.8B:** Mediation analysis

Predictor	Criterion	Std Error	B	Beta	t-value	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	Sig.
Symbolic Characteristics	Perception of Luxury	.090	.602	.548	6.709	.293	.000
Symbolic Characteristics	Product Evaluation	.074	.297	.367	4.038	.126	.000
Perception of Luxury	Product Evaluation	.054	.486	.660	8.990	.430	.000
Perception of Luxury	Product Evaluation	0.65	.483	.655	7.438	.424	.000
Symbolic Characteristics		.071	.006	.008	.087		.931

**Sobel Test:** z = 5.369 \* p> .05; **Goodman Test:** z = 5.390 \* p> .05;  
**\*\* Sig.** < 0.05

Mediation effects of perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Crocodile) on the relationship between “Symbolic” characteristics and product evaluation of the mimic brand was conducted.

Based on the results, it can be observed that “Symbolic” characteristics fully mediate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation. Hence, H4 is partially accepted.

The findings suggest that “Symbolic” characteristic has a direct effect towards product evaluation. However, in the presence of perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Crocodile), the perception of luxury can influence the product evaluation of the mimic brand (Crocodile).

However, H11a, H11b, H12 and H13 did not meet the first two conditions required for testing mediation effects. The independent variable is not found to show a significant relationship to the dependent variable; and the independent variable did not show a significant relationship towards the mediator. Therefore there is no need to conduct further mediation analysis. Thus, the hypotheses are rejected.

## MODERATION ANALYSIS

### Results for Hypotheses H14A, H14B, H15 and H16

The set of hypotheses H14A, H14B, H15 and H16 examines the moderating effects of brand familiarity towards the mimic brand, brand familiarity towards the model brand, consumers' need for uniqueness, and status consumption on perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at Table 6.2.9B.

**Table 6.2.9B:** Hierarchical moderated regression

Independent Variables	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	F	df	Δ R <sup>2</sup>	F Change	df	β	Sig.
Perception of Luxury	.430	80.826	1	.435	80.826	105	.847	.000
Perception of Luxury + Brand Familiarity (mimic)	.459	45.915	1	.034	6.653	104	.440	.046
Perception of Luxury + Brand Familiarity (mimic) + (Perception of Luxury x Brand Familiarity (mimic))	.462	31.283	1	.008	1.541	103	-.355	.217
Perception of Luxury	.430	80.826	1	.435	80.826	105	1.008	.000**
Perception of Luxury + Brand Familiarity (model)	.492	52.243	1	.066	13.804	104	.644	.001**
Perception of Luxury + Brand Familiarity (model) + (Perception of Luxury x Brand Familiarity (model))	.507	37.402	1	.020	4.352	103	-.570	.039**
Perception of Luxury	.430	80.826	1	.435	80.826	105	.683	.010
Perception of Luxury + Status Consumption	.429	40.827	1	.005	.903	104	.096	.636
Perception of Luxury + Status Consumption + (Perception of Luxury x Status Consumption)	.424	26.967	1	.000	.019	103	-.047	.892
Perception of Luxury	.430	80.826	1	.435	80.826	105	.898	.000
Perception of Luxury + Avoidance of Similarity	.430	40.948	1	.006	1.039	104	.346	.131
Perception of Luxury + Avoidance of Similarity + (Perception of Luxury x Avoidance of Similarity)	.433	27.980	1	.008	1.585	103	-.378	.211

<b>Perception of Luxury</b>	.430	80.826	1	.435	80.826	105	.975	.003
<b>Perception of Luxury + Creative Choice Counter-conformity</b>	.447	43.883	1	.023	4.356	104	.384	.094
<b>Perception of Luxury + Creative Choice Counter-conformity + (Perception of Luxury x Creative Choice Counter-conformity)</b>	.448	29.693	1	.006	1.170	103	-.432	.282
<b>Perception of Luxury</b>	.430	80.826	1	.435	80.826	105	.620	.004
<b>Perception of Luxury + Unpopular Choice Counter-conformity</b>	.427	40.483	1	.003	.514	104	.004	.987
<b>Perception of Luxury + Unpopular Choice Counter-conformity + (Perception of Luxury x Unpopular Choice Counter-conformity)</b>	.422	26.761	1	.000	.053	103	.066	.818
<b>* Dependent variable : Product evaluation of the mimic brand (Crocodile)</b>								

Hierarchical moderated regression analysis was conducted on brand familiarity towards the mimic brand, status consumption, consumers' need for uniqueness between perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand to test for the interaction effects between the moderator, independent variable and the dependent variable. Based on the results of the hierarchical moderation analysis, it is found that brand familiarity towards the model brand moderates the relationship between perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand. Therefore, H14b is accepted. The other proposed moderators were found to be insignificant. Hence, H14a, H15 and H16 are rejected.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FOR STUDY SIX

The findings of the hypotheses are summarized below in Table 6.2.10B.

**Table 6.2.10B:** Summary of findings for Study Six

<b>Hypotheses</b>		<b>Accepted/Rejected</b>
<b>H1</b>	Presence of mimicry will lead to a positive perception of luxury	Partially accepted
<b>H2</b>	Presence of mimicry will lead to a positive product evaluation of the mimic brand	Partially accepted
<b>H3</b>	Perception of luxury will lead to a positive product evaluation of the mimic brand	Accepted
<b>H4</b>	Perception of luxury will mediate the relationship between the presence of mimicry and product evaluation of the mimic brand	Partially accepted
<b>Brand familiarity</b>		
<b>H5a</b>	Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand will lead to a positive perception of luxury towards the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H5b</b>	Brand familiarity towards the model brand will lead to a positive perception of luxury towards the mimic brand	Accepted
<b>H6a</b>	Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand will lead to a positive product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H6b</b>	Brand familiarity towards the model brand will lead to a negative product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>Consumers' need for uniqueness</b>		
<b>H7</b>	Consumers' need for uniqueness will lead to a positive perception of luxury towards the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H8</b>	Consumers' need for uniqueness will lead to a positive product evaluation of the mimic brand	Partially accepted
<b>Status consumption</b>		
<b>H9</b>	Status consumption will lead to a negative perception of luxury towards the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H10</b>	Status consumption will lead to a negative product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>Mediation effects:</b>		
<b>H11a</b>	Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand will mediate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation towards a mimic brand	Rejected

<b>H11b</b>	Brand familiarity towards the model brand will mediate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation towards a mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H12</b>	Consumers' need for uniqueness will mediate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation towards a mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H13</b>	Status consumption will mediate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation towards a mimic brand	Rejected
<b>Moderation effects:</b>		
<b>H14a</b>	Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand will moderate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H14b</b>	Brand familiarity towards the model brand will moderate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand	Accepted
<b>H15</b>	Consumers' need for uniqueness will moderate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H16</b>	Status consumption will moderate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected

The results for Study Six which examined the hypotheses by using Crocodile as the mimic brand and Lacoste as the model brand have shown some interesting results. It was revealed that “Symbolic” characteristics of the presence of mimicry scale has a significant positive relationship towards both perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Crocodile) and product evaluation of the mimic brand. The findings emphasize the importance of highlighting symbolic similarities between the mimic and the model brand and that it has strong influences on both perception of luxury and product evaluation of the Crocodile. As reflected in previous findings, intangible attributes that connote the prestige and “luxury” of the model brand is being perceived as “luxury” by consumers. By emulating the symbolic aspects of the model brand, it follows a thematic form of imitation which is considered as subtle (van Horen and Pieters, 2012b). In addition, as consumers sought luxury brands for the image and symbolic attributes, the presence of close symbolic characteristics may entice consumers further to consider the mimic as an alternative to the model (e.g. Balabanis and Craven, 1997). Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand has also shown a significant positive relationship towards product evaluation of the mimic brand.

It was found that brand familiarity towards the mimic and model brand did not have a significant relationship towards the perception of luxury towards the mimic brand. However,

both brand familiarity towards the mimic (Crocodile) and the model (Lacoste) brand showed a significant positive relationship towards product evaluation of the mimic brand. This can be a suggestion that brand familiarity of the mimic and the model brand works to the benefit of the mimic brand. This is in the hope that the positive associations with Lacoste can be transferred to the product evaluations of Crocodile.

Based on the findings, creative choice counter-conformity is found to influence product evaluation of the mimic brand. This is suggesting that Crocodile being a mimic share similarities to Lacoste, but as a novel brand that is acceptable to reflect one's style. This can be emphasized by the fact that Crocodile has grown and evolved from a copycat. However, the scarcity of the brand makes it alluring to consumers who seek novel brands (Tian et al., 2001; Turunen and Laaksonen, 2011).

It was also found that the relationship between "Symbolic" characteristics and product evaluation of the mimic brand is mediated by perception of luxury towards the mimic brand. Therefore emphasizing the importance of perception of luxury and how the symbolic characteristics can enhance consumers' perception of luxury towards the mimic brand which can lead to eventual positive product evaluation.

Lastly, brand familiarity towards the model brand was found to be a moderator between perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand. This suggests that consumers' familiarity with Lacoste will enhance consumers' perception of luxury towards Crocodile and the product evaluation of Crocodile.

## **STUDY SEVEN: Forever 21 and Valentino**

Based on Table 6.1B, Study Seven will be testing the hypothesized relationship for the car product category using two real life brands to test for the effects of the presence of Vavilovian mimicry on consumers. The model brand is Valentino and the mimic brand is Forever 21. The signal receiver(s) are consumers. Respondent characteristics are first discussed, followed by the hypotheses postulated in Chapter 3.

### **Profile of Respondents**

The total usable number of responses for Study Seven is 143 respondents. The responses that were incomplete or had missing values were removed and not used for analysis. The respondents were mainly between 19 to 25 years of age (93%), with more males (56.6%) than females. The majority of the respondents are Australians (54.6%). Furthermore, it is found that most of the respondents are more familiar with Valentino (model brand) ( $M = 4.13$ ,  $SD = 1.892$ ) than Forever 21 (mimic brand) ( $M = 3.94$ ,  $SD = 1.999$ ).

### **Factor Analysis – Presence of mimicry scale**

Prior to conducting analysis, factor analysis was conducted on the presence of mimicry scale (Vavilovian) that was developed for this study (see detailed scale development procedure in Chapter 5). Results from Table 6.3.1B shows that there are three factors and consists of 15 items that accounts for 72.261% of cumulative variance. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients were all above 0.8 which is deemed suitable for further analysis (Nunnally, 1970). The three factors are namely "physical characteristics", "image characteristics", and "beneficial characteristics" which are used for subsequent analysis.

**Table 6.3.1B:** Factor analysis of the Vavilovian mimicry scale

Items	Factor Loadings		
	F1 – V-Physical Characteristics	F2 – V-Image Characteristics	F3 – V- Beneficial Characteristics
The products share similar physical appearances	.815		
The products share similar features	.801		
The products share similar designs	.798		
The products share similar looks	.781		
The products share similar styles	.774		
The products share similar aesthetics	.654		
The products share similar themes	.641		
The products express similar degree of uniqueness		.819	
The products express similar image of prestige		.819	
The products express similar image of sophistication		.765	
The products express similar degree of innovation		.720	
The products express similar image of success		.706	
The products share similar functionality			.859
The products share similar practicality			.839
The products share similar product utility			.760
<b>% of Variance</b>	53.656	9.899	8.706
<b>Total % of Variance</b>		72.261	
<b>Eigenvalue</b>	8.048	1.485	1.306
<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	.919	.900	.864
<b>Overall Cronbach's Alpha</b>		.930	
<b>KMO</b>		.906	
<b>Barlett's Test of Sphericity</b>		.000	

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.  
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.<sup>a</sup>  
a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.

### **Factor Analysis – Consumers’ need for uniqueness scale**

An exploratory factor analysis was conducted on the original 31-item consumers’ need for uniqueness scale (see Table 6.3.2B). Through Varimax rotation, the items were reduced to 15 items with an acceptable range of reliabilities. The three dimensions of consumers’ need for uniqueness which is namely avoidance of similarity, creative choice counter-conformity and unpopular choice counter-conformity will be used for subsequent analysis.

**Table 6.3.2B:** Factor analysis of the consumers' need for uniqueness scale

Items	Factor Loadings		
	F1 – Avoidance of Similarity	F2 – Creative Choice Counter-conformity	F3 – Unpopular Choice Counter-conformity
When a product I own becomes popular among the general population, I begin using it less.	.881		
As a rule, I dislike products or brands that are customarily purchased by everyone.	.824		
I often try to avoid products or brands that I know are bought by the general population.	.818		
The more commonplace a product or brand is among the general population, the less interested I am in buying it.	.798		
I give up wearing fashions I've purchased once they become popular among the general public.	.784		
Products don't seem to hold much value for me when they are purchased regularly by everyone.	.745		
When products or brands I like become extremely popular, I lose interest in them.	.733		
Having an eye for products that are interesting and unusual assists me in establishing a distinctive image.		.805	
I'm often on the lookout for new products or brands that will add to my personal uniqueness.		.796	
The products and brands that I like best are the ones that express my individuality.		.773	
Often when buying merchandise, an important goal is to find something that communicates my uniqueness.		.748	
I often think of the things I buy and do in terms of how I can use them to shape a more unusual personal image.		.708	
When I dress differently, I'm often aware that others think I'm peculiar but I don't care.			.846
If someone hinted that I had been dressing inappropriately for a social situation, I would continue dressing in the same manner.			.830
I enjoy challenging the prevailing taste of people I know by buying something they wouldn't seem to accept.			.734
<b>% of Variance</b>	54.082	10.984	8.633
<b>Cumulative % of Variance</b>		73.699	
<b>Eigenvalue</b>	8.112	1.648	1.295
<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	.944	.883	.844
<b>Overall Cronbach's Alpha</b>		.938	
<b>KMO</b>		.932	
<b>Barlett's Test of Sphericity</b>		.000	

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following sections will discuss the results of the hypotheses. A summary of the results for each study can be found at the end of each study.

### Results for Hypotheses H1 – H3

The set of hypotheses H1, H2 and H3 examines the influence of presence of mimicry towards perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at Table 6.3.3B and 6.3.4B.

**Table 6.3.3B:** Stepwise regression of presence of mimicry towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand

	<b>B- Values</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>Adj. R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>Perception of Luxury towards the mimic brand (Forever 21)</b>						
<b>Symbolic Characteristics</b>	.458	.080	.462	.352	5.692	.000*
<b>Beneficial Characteristics</b>	.220	.087	.206		2.537	.012*
<b>Product evaluation of the mimic brand (Forever 21)</b>						
<b>Beneficial Characteristics</b>	.238	.102	.220	.125	2.333	.021*
<b>Symbolic Characteristics</b>	.199	.094	.199		2.111	.037*

\*Sig. <.05

**Independent variable:** Presence of mimicry

Stepwise regression was conducted between the three dimensions of the presence of mimicry scale towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Forever 21). The results show that “Symbolic” ( $\beta=.462$ , Sig. =.000) and “Beneficial” characteristics ( $\beta=.206$ , Sig. =.012) have a significant positive relationship towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand. Hence, H1 is partially accepted.

Stepwise regression was conducted between the three dimensions of the presence of mimicry scale towards product evaluation of the mimic brand (Forever 21). It was found that “Beneficial” ( $\beta=.220$ , Sig. =.021) and “Symbolic” ( $\beta=.199$ , Sig. =.037) characteristics have a significant positive relationship towards product evaluation of the mimic brand. Hence, H2 is partially accepted.

The results indicate that “Symbolic” and “Beneficial” characteristics are important factors that influence how consumers perceive the luxury of the mimic brand. It is found that the greater the similarity between the mimic and the model brand in terms of the beneficial and symbolic characteristics, the better perception of luxury towards the mimic brand. Similarly, “Symbolic” and “Beneficial” characteristics are important in influencing product evaluations of mimic brand.

**Table 6.3.4B:** Regression between perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand

	<b>B-Values</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>Perception of Luxury towards the mimic brand (Forever 21)</b>	.514	.073	.508	.253	7.007	.000*

\*Sig. <.05

**Dependent variable:** Product evaluation of the mimic brand

Linear regression was conducted between perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand. It is found that perception of luxury towards the mimic brand has a significant positive relationship towards product evaluation of the mimic brand ( $\beta=.508$ , Sig. =.000). Hence, H3 is accepted.

The result indicates that the higher the consumers’ perception of luxury towards the mimic brand, the more favourable is the product evaluation of the mimic brand.

### Results for Hypotheses H5A, H5B, H6A and H6B

The set of hypotheses H5A, H5B, H6A and H6B examines the influence of brand familiarity towards the mimic brand and brand familiarity towards the model brand on perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at Table 6.3.5B.

**Table 6.3.5B:** Regression of brand familiarity towards the mimic/model brand towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand

	B-Values	Std Error	Beta	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	t-value	Sig.
<b>Perception of Luxury towards the mimic brand (Forever 21)</b>						
<b>Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand (Forever 21)</b>	-.071	.054	-.110	.005	-1.311	.192
<b>Brand familiarity towards the model brand (Valentino)</b>	-.089	.056	-.131	.010	-1.570	.119
<b>Product evaluation of the mimic brand (Forever 21)</b>						
<b>Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand (Forever 21)</b>	.298	.049	.457	.203	6.093	.000*
<b>Brand familiarity towards the model brand (Valentino)</b>	.046	.057	.067	-.003	.795	.428

\*Sig. <.05

Linear regression was conducted between brand familiarity towards the mimic brand (Forever 21) and perception of luxury towards the mimic brand. The results show no significant relationship. Similarly, linear regression was conducted between brand familiarity towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand. The findings showed a significant positive relationship between the two variables ( $\beta=.457$ , Sig. =.000). Hence, H5a is rejected and H5b is accepted.

Linear regression was conducted between brand familiarity towards the model brand (Valentino) and perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Forever 21) and product evaluation of the mimic brand (Forever 21). The relationships were found to be insignificant. Hence, H6a and H6b are rejected.

The findings showed that brand familiarity towards the mimic brand (Forever 21) is important. It can influence how consumers perceive and evaluate the mimic brand. In this case, the higher the brand familiarity towards the mimic brands the higher the perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand.

### Results for Hypotheses H7 and H8

The set of hypotheses H7 and H8 examines the influence of the three dimensions of consumers' need for uniqueness on perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at Table 6.3.6B.

**Table 6.3.6B:** Multiple regression of consumers' need for uniqueness towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand

	B-Values	Std Error	Beta	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	t-value	Sig.
<b>Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Forever 21)</b>						
Avoidance of Similarity	-.078	.101	-.083		-.769	.443
Creative Choice Counter-conformity	.329	.125	.265	.131	2.629	.010*
Unpopular Choice Counter-conformity	.223	.090	.244		2.483	.014*
<b>Product evaluation of the mimic brand (Forever 21)</b>						
Avoidance of Similarity	.008	.106	.009		.077	.939
Creative Choice Counter-conformity	.371	.132	.297	.054	2.817	.006*
Unpopular Choice Counter-conformity	-.073	.095	-.080		-.775	.440

\*Sig. <.05

Regression analysis was conducted between consumers' need for uniqueness and perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Forever 21). It is found that creative choice counter-conformity ( $\beta=.265$ , Sig. =.010) and unpopular choice counter-conformity have a significant positive relationship towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand ( $\beta=.244$ , Sig. =.014).

Regression analysis was conducted between consumers' need for uniqueness and product evaluation of the mimic brand (Forever 21). Creative choice counter-conformity emerged to show a significant relationship towards product evaluation of the mimic brand (Forever 21) ( $\beta=.297$ , Sig. =.006). Hence, H7 and H8 are partially accepted.

The results show that creative choice counter-conformity and unpopular choice counter-conformity have a positive relationship towards perception of luxury of mimic brand

(Forever 21). This suggests that consumers who like to purchase brands that are unique and novel will perceive Forever 21 to be “luxury”. Similarly consumers who deviate from group norms in their purchase behaviour will also perceive mimic brands to be “luxury”. This could be the products that Forever 21 mimics are closely similar to those of the model brand which can exude a “luxury” perception.

In addition, creative choice counter-conformity is found to have a significant positive relationship towards product evaluation of the mimic brand. This suggests that Forever 21 is favoured by consumers who tend to seek novel and acceptable brands to create their own individual style.

### Results for Hypotheses H9 and H10

The set of hypotheses H9 and H10 deals with the influence the three dimensions of consumers' need for uniqueness on perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at Table 6.3.7B.

**Table 6.3.7B:** Linear regression of status consumption towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand

	B-Values	Standard Error	Beta	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	t-value	Sig.
<b>Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Forever 21)</b>						
Status Consumption	.161	.086	.157	.018	1.888	.061
<b>Product evaluation of the mimic brand (Forever 21)</b>						
Status Consumption	.177	.086	.170	.022	2.052	.042*

\*Sig <.05

Linear regression was conducted between status consumption and perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Forever 21). No significant relationship was found. Linear regression was conducted between status consumption and product evaluation of the mimic brand (Forever 21). It was found that status consumption has a significant positive relationship towards product evaluation of the mimic brand ( $\beta=.170$ , Sig. =.042). This can suggest that consumers who are more status prone would have positive evaluations towards a mimic brand. Hence, H9 and H10 are both rejected.

## MEDIATION ANALYSIS

### Results for Hypotheses H4, H11A, H11B, H12 and H13

The set of hypotheses H4, H11A, H11B, H12 and H13 examines mediating effects within the conceptual model. Hypothesis H4 examines the mediating effects of perception of luxury towards the mimic brand on presence of mimicry and product evaluation of the mimic brand. Hypotheses H11A, H11B, H12 and H13 examines the mediating effects of brand familiarity towards mimic brand, brand familiarity towards model brand, consumers' need for uniqueness, and status consumption on perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at Table 6.3.8B, Table 6.3.9B and Table 6.3.10B.

**Table 6.3.8B:** Mediation analysis

Predictor	Criterion	Std Error	B	Beta	t-value	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	Sig.
Symbolic Characteristics	Perception of Luxury	.068	.571	.576	8.375	.327	.000
Symbolic Characteristics	Product Evaluation	.080	.322	.322	4.032	.097	.000
Perception of Luxury	Product Evaluation	.073	.514	.508	7.007	.253	.000
Perception of Luxury	Product Evaluation	.090	.489	.484	5.433	.249	.000
Symbolic Characteristics		.089	.043	.043	.481		.631

**Sobel Test:**  $z = 5.395^*$   $p < .05$ ; **Goodman Test:**  $z = 5.418^*$   $p < .05$ ;  
**\*\* Sig.** < 0.05

Mediation effects of perception of luxury towards the mimic brand on the relationship between “Symbolic” characteristics and product evaluation of the mimic brand was conducted.

Based on the results, it can be observed that perception of luxury towards the mimic brand fully mediates the relationship between “Symbolic” characteristics and product evaluation of the mimic brand.

**Table 6.3.9B:** Mediation analysis

Predictor	Criterion	Std Error	B	Beta	t-value	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	Sig.
Beneficial Characteristics	Perception of Luxury	.080	.494	.462	6.193	.208	.000
Beneficial Characteristics	Product Evaluation	.086	.357	.331	4.163	.103	.000
Perception of Luxury	Product Evaluation	.073	.514	.508	7.007	.253	.000
Perception of Luxury	Product Evaluation	.082	.457	.452	5.548	.260	.000
Beneficial Characteristics		.088	.131	.122	1.497		.137

**Sobel Test:**  $z = 4.643$  \*  $p < .05$ ; **Goodman Test:**  $z = 4.669$  \*  $p < .05$ ;  
**\*\* Sig.** < 0.05

Mediation effects of perception of luxury towards the mimic brand on the relationship between “Beneficial” characteristics and product evaluation of the mimic brand was conducted.

Based on the results, it can be observed that perception of luxury towards the mimic brand fully mediates the relationship between “Beneficial” characteristics and product evaluation of the mimic brand. Hence, H4 is partially accepted.

**Table 6.3.10B:** Mediation analysis

Predictor	Criterion	Std Error	B	Beta	t-value	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	Sig.
Perception of Luxury	Creative Choice Counter-conformity	.064	.270	.334	4.207	.105	.000
Perception of Luxury	Product Evaluation	.073	.514	.508	7.007	.253	.000
Creative Choice Counter-conformity	Product Evaluation	.102	.329	.263	3.237	.063	.002
Perception of Luxury	Product Evaluation	.078	.478	.473	6.168		.000
Creative Choice Counter-conformity		.096	.131	.105	1.369	.258	.173

**Sobel Test:**  $z = 2.562$  \*  $p < .05$ ; **Goodman Test:**  $z = 2.609$  \*  $p < .05$ ;  
**\*\* Sig. < 0.05**

Mediation effects of creative choice counter-conformity on the relationship between perceptions of luxury towards the mimic brand (Forever 21) and product evaluation of the mimic brand was conducted.

Based on the results, it can be observed that creative choice counter-conformity fully mediates the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation. Hence, H12 is partially accepted.

However, H11a, H11b and H13 did not meet the first two conditions required for testing mediation effects. The independent variable is not found to show a significant relationship to the dependent variable; and the independent variable did not show a significant relationship towards the mediator. Therefore there is no need to conduct further mediation analysis. Thus, the hypotheses are rejected.

## MODERATION ANALYSIS

### Results for Hypotheses H14A, H14B, H15 and H16

The set of hypotheses H14A, H14B, H15 and H16 examines the moderating effects of brand familiarity towards mimic brand, brand familiarity towards model brand, consumers' need for uniqueness, and status consumption on perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at Table 6.3.11B.

**Table 6.3.11B:** Hierarchical moderated regression

Independent Variables	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	F	df	Δ R <sup>2</sup>	F Change	df	β	Sig.
Perception of Luxury	.253	49.099	1	.258	49.099	141	.897	.000*
Perception of Luxury + Brand Familiarity (mimic)	.517	77.048	1	.266	78.136	140	1.111	.000*
Perception of Luxury + Brand Familiarity (mimic) + (Perception of Luxury x Brand Familiarity (mimic))	.537	55.934	1	.023	7.049	139	-.663	.009*
Perception of Luxury	.253	49.099	1	.258	49.099	141	.397	.020
Perception of Luxury + Brand Familiarity (model)	.266	26.737	1	.018	3.503	140	-.091	.744
Perception of Luxury + Brand Familiarity (model) + (Perception of Luxury x Brand Familiarity (model))	.265	18.024	1	.004	.710	139	.253	.401
Perception of Luxury	.253	49.099	1	.258	49.099	141	.321	.287
Perception of Luxury + Status Consumption	.256	25.455	1	.008	1.602	140	-.076	.797
Perception of Luxury + Status Consumption + (Perception of Luxury x Status Consumption)	.253	17.009	1	.002	.352	139	.263	.554
Perception of Luxury	.253	49.099	1	.258	49.099	141	-.024	.930
Perception of Luxury + Avoidance of Similarity	.249	24.505	1	.001	.193	140	-.576	.072
Perception of Luxury + Avoidance of Similarity + (Perception of Luxury x Avoidance of Similarity)	.264	17.960	1	.020	3.867	139	.899	.051

<b>Perception of Luxury</b>	.253	49.099	1	.258	49.099	141	.089	.828
<b>Perception of Luxury + Creative Choice Counter-conformity</b>	.258	25.639	1	.010	1.874	140	-.191	.552
<b>Perception of Luxury + Creative Choice Counter-conformity + (Perception of Luxury x Creative Choice Counter-conformity)</b>	.257	17.383	1	.005	.905	139	.562	.343
<b>Perception of Luxury</b>	.253	49.099	1	.258	49.099	141	-.174	.472
<b>Perception of Luxury + Unpopular Choice Counter-conformity</b>	.258	25.670	1	.010	1.921	140	-1.058	.001
<b>Perception of Luxury + Unpopular Choice Counter-conformity + (Perception of Luxury x Unpopular Choice Counter-conformity)</b>	.301	21.424	1	.048	9.731	139	1.383	.002
<b>* Dependent variable : Product evaluation of the mimic brand (Forever 21)</b>								

Hierarchical moderated regression analysis was conducted on brand familiarity towards the mimic brand, status consumption, consumers' need for uniqueness between perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand to test for the interaction effects between the moderator, independent variable and the dependent variable.

Based on the results of the hierarchical moderation analysis, brand familiarity towards the mimic brand is found to be a significant moderator of perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand. The results suggest that brand familiarity towards the mimic brand can enhance product evaluation of the mimic brand in the presence of positive perception of luxury towards the mimic brand. Hence, H14a is accepted.

The other proposed moderators are found to be insignificant. Hence, H14 b, H15 and H16 are rejected.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FOR STUDY SEVEN

The findings of the hypotheses are summarized below in Table 6.3.12B.

**Table 6.3.12B:** Summary of findings for Study Seven

<b>Hypotheses</b>		<b>Accepted/Rejected</b>
<b>H1</b>	Presence of mimicry will lead to a positive perception of luxury	Partially accepted
<b>H2</b>	Presence of mimicry will lead to a positive product evaluation of the mimic brand	Partially accepted
<b>H3</b>	Perception of luxury will lead to a positive product evaluation of the mimic brand	Accepted
<b>H4</b>	Perception of luxury will mediate the relationship between the presence of mimicry and product evaluation of the mimic brand	Partially accepted
<b>Brand familiarity</b>		
<b>H5a</b>	Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand will lead to a positive perception of luxury towards the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H5b</b>	Brand familiarity towards the model brand will lead to a positive perception of luxury towards the mimic brand	Accepted
<b>H6a</b>	Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand will lead to a positive product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H6b</b>	Brand familiarity towards the model brand will lead to a negative product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>Consumers' need for uniqueness</b>		
<b>H7</b>	Consumers' need for uniqueness will lead to a positive perception of luxury towards the mimic brand	Partially accepted
<b>H8</b>	Consumers' need for uniqueness will lead to a positive product evaluation of the mimic brand	Partially accepted
<b>Status consumption</b>		
<b>H9</b>	Status consumption will lead to a negative perception of luxury towards the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H10</b>	Status consumption will lead to a negative product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>Mediation effects:</b>		
<b>H11a</b>	Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand will mediate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation towards a mimic brand	Rejected

<b>H11b</b>	Brand familiarity towards the model brand will mediate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation towards a mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H12</b>	Consumers' need for uniqueness will mediate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation towards a mimic brand	Partially accepted
<b>H13</b>	Status consumption will mediate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation towards a mimic brand	Rejected
<b>Moderation effects:</b>		
<b>H14a</b>	Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand will moderate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand	Accepted
<b>H14b</b>	Brand familiarity towards the model brand will moderate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H15</b>	Consumers' need for uniqueness will moderate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H16</b>	Status consumption will moderate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected

The results for Study Seven examined the hypotheses using Forever 21 shoes as the mimic brand and Valentino shoes as the model brand has shown interesting results. It was revealed that “Symbolic” and “Beneficial” characteristics of the presence of mimicry scale have a significant positive relationship towards perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. Thus emphasizing the importance of symbolic and beneficial characteristic similarities between the mimic and the model brand can result in better perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. This reinforces the importance of symbolic characteristics for luxury brands (Juggessur and Cohen, 2009; Wilcox et al., 2009) even for mimic brands. In order to be in the luxury brand market, consumers will need to perceive the mimic brand to have similar symbolic values that will then lead to positive perception of luxury and product evaluation. In addition, while luxury brands are often suggested to be about the status rather than the functionality of the product (Veblen, 1899), the perceived similarity for mimic brands in terms of functionality and durability has long been documented to be important for consumers (Penz and Stottinger, 2008). Therefore this provides important insights for mimic brand managers to highlight the similar benefits between mimic and the model brand and emulate the symbolic success of the model brand. Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand has also shown a significant positive

relationship towards product evaluation of the mimic brand. The result is reinforced by the findings of Hagtvedt and Patrick (2008).

Interestingly, brand familiarity towards the mimic brand did not observe any significant relationships towards both perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. However, brand familiarity towards the model brand (Valentino) has a significant positive relationship towards product evaluation of the mimic brand. Therefore the findings suggests that if consumers are familiar with Valentino, the positive associations with Valentino and its shoes can transfer to influence the product evaluation of the Forever 21 shoes which are often close mimics of Valentino.

It is also found that creative choice counter-conformity has a significant positive relationship towards perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. Unpopular choice counter-conformity is also found to have a significant positive relationship towards product evaluation of the mimic brand. The findings can suggest that consumers' who seek products to enhance their individual style will have higher perception of luxury and better product evaluation of Forever 21 shoes. This may be due to the fact that Forever 21 mimics many luxury brands which provide a great variety of choices those appeals to consumers seeking creative choices (Kastanakis and Balabanis, 2012). Similarly, consumers whose purchase tends to be "different" and deviate from group norms will also have better product evaluation of the Forever 21 shoes. This is indirectly suggesting that Forever 21 can be appealing to consumers who strive towards these two forms of uniqueness.

Status consumption was also found to have a significant positive relationship towards product evaluation of the mimic brand. It can suggest that the status conscious consumers will have higher and better product evaluation of the Forever 21. This could be a result of the products being closer mimics of Valentino and the products can exude a similar level of status or symbolic values. Furthermore, most consumers tend to find that since Forever 21 offers fast fashion with the same "look", this becomes a favourable aspect that allows status consumers to "look" prestigious.

It is also found that perception of luxury towards the mimic brand mediates the relationship between "Symbolic" characteristic and product evaluation of the mimic brand. Similarly, perception of luxury towards the mimic brand also mediates the relationship between

“Beneficial” characteristics and product evaluation of the mimic brand. Therefore, this is suggesting that perception of luxury is important in influencing product evaluation of the mimic brand.

Lastly, it is found that brand familiarity towards the mimic brand serves as a moderator between perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand. This suggests that brand familiarity towards the mimic brand can enhance the product evaluation of the mimic brand.

## **STUDY EIGHT: Lovelinks and Pandora**

Based on Table 6.1B, Study Eight will be testing the hypothesized relationship for the car product category using two real life brands to test for the effects of the presence of Vavilovian mimicry on consumers. The model brand is Pandora and the mimic brand is Lovelinks. The signal receiver(s) are consumers. Respondent characteristics are first discussed, followed by the hypotheses postulated in Chapter 3.

### **Profile of Respondents**

The total usable number of responses for Study Eight is 103 respondents. The responses that were incomplete or had missing values were removed and not used for analysis. The respondents were mainly between 19 to 25 years of age (73.8%), with more females (61.2%) than males. The majority of the respondents are Australians (58.3%). Furthermore, it is found that most of the respondents are more familiar with Pandora (model brand) ( $M = 5016$ ,  $SD = 2.136$ ) than Lovelinks (mimic brand) ( $M = 2.59$ ,  $SD = 1.729$ ).

### **Factor Analysis – Presence of mimicry scale**

Prior to conducting analysis, factor analysis was conducted on the presence of mimicry scale (Vavilovian) that was developed for this study (see detailed scale development procedure in Chapter 5). Results from Table 6.4.1B shows that there are three factors and consists of 11 items that accounts for 64.645% of cumulative variance. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients were all above 0.8 which is deemed suitable for further analysis (Nunnally, 1970). The three factors are namely "physical characteristics", "symbolic characteristics", and "beneficial characteristics" which are used for subsequent analysis.

**Table 6.4.1B:** Factor analysis of the Vavilovian mimicry scale

Items	Factor Loadings		
	F1 – V-Physical Characteristics	F2 – V-Symbolic Characteristics	F3 – V-Beneficial Characteristics
The products share similar designs	.869		
The products share similar looks	.824		
The products share similar themes	.823		
The products share similar styles	.805		
The products share similar features	.787		
The products share similar physical appearances	.761		
The products share similar aesthetics	.727		
The products express similar image of prestige		.845	
The products express similar degree of innovation		.800	
The products express similar image of sophistication		.752	
The products express similar degree of uniqueness		.734	
The products express similar image of success		.657	
The products share similar practicality			.894
The products share similar functionality			.874
The products share similar product utility			.707
<b>% of Variance</b>	32.396	19.563	12.686
<b>Total % of Variance</b>		64.645	
<b>Eigenvalue</b>	4.859	2.394	1.903
<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	.907	.820	.780
<b>Overall Cronbach's Alpha</b>		.806	
<b>KMO</b>		.801	
<b>Barlett's Test of Sphericity</b>		.000	

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.  
 Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.<sup>a</sup>  
 a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.

### Factor Analysis – Consumers’ need for uniqueness scale

An exploratory factor analysis was conducted on the original 31-item consumers’ need for uniqueness scale (see Table 6.4.2B). Through Varimax rotation, the items were reduced to 18 items with an acceptable range of reliabilities. The three dimensions of consumers’ need for uniqueness which is namely avoidance of similarity, creative choice counter-conformity and unpopular choice counter-conformity will be used for subsequent analysis.

**Table 6.4.2B:** Factor analysis of the consumers’ need for uniqueness scale

Items	Factor Loadings		
	F1 – Avoidance of Similarity	F2 – Creative Choice Counter-conformity	F3 – Unpopular Choice Counter-conformity
I often try to avoid products or brands that I know are bought by the general population.	.857		
Products don’t seem to hold much value for me when they are purchased regularly by everyone.	.790		
When a product I own becomes popular among the general population, I begin using it less.	.789		
The more commonplace a product or brand is among the general population, the less interested I am in buying it.	.785		
As a rule, I dislike products or brands that are customarily purchased by everyone.	.784		
When products or brands I like become extremely popular, I lose interest in them.	.772		
I avoid products or brands that have already been accepted and purchased by the average consumer.	.769		
When a style of clothing I own becomes too commonplace, I usually quit wearing it.	.620		
If someone hinted that I had been dressing inappropriately for a social situation, I would continue dressing in the same manner.		.747	
I often dress unconventionally even when it’s likely to offend others.		.678	
When I dress differently, I’m often aware that others think I’m peculiar but I don’t care.		.664	
When dressing, I have sometimes dared to be different in ways that others are likely to disapprove.		.633	
I collect unusual products as a way of telling people I’m different.		.623	
The products and brands that I like best are the ones that express my individuality.			.804
I’m often on the lookout for new products or brands that will add to my personal uniqueness.			.770
I often look for one-of-a-kind products or brands so that I create a style that is all my own.			.749
<b>% of Variance</b>	39.002	11.950	10.430
<b>Cumulative % of Variance</b>		61.381	
<b>Eigenvalue</b>	6.240	1.912	1.669
<b>Cronbach’s Alpha</b>	.918	.721	.760
<b>Overall Cronbach’s Alpha</b>		.883	
<b>KMO</b>		.863	
<b>Barlett’s Test of Sphericity</b>		.000	

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following sections will discuss the results of the hypotheses. A summary of the results for each study can be found at the end of each study.

### Results for Hypotheses H1 – H3

The set of hypotheses H1, H2 and H3 examines the influence of presence of mimicry towards perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at Table 6.4.3B and Table 6.4.4B.

**Table 6.4.3B:** Stepwise regression of presence of mimicry towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand

	B-Values	Std. Error	Beta	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	t-value	Sig.
<b>Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Lovelinks)</b>						
<b>Symbolic Characteristics</b>	.494	.100	.437	.210	4.933	.000*
<b>Physical Characteristics</b>	-.369	.135	-.241		-2.724	.008*
<b>Product evaluation of the mimic brand (Lovelinks)</b>						
<b>Symbolic Characteristics</b>	.242	.092	.253	.054	2.623	.010*

\*Sig. <.05

**Dependent variable:** Product evaluation of the mimic brand

Stepwise regression was conducted between the three dimensions of the presence of mimicry scale towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Lovelinks). The results show that “Symbolic” ( $\beta=.437$ , Sig. =.000) has a significant positive relationship towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand. On the other hand, “Physical” characteristics showed a significant negative relationship towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand ( $\beta=-.241$ , Sig. =.008). Hence, H1 is partially accepted.

Stepwise regression was conducted between the three dimensions of the presence of mimicry scale towards product evaluation of the mimic brand (Lovelinks). It was found that “Symbolic” characteristics has a significant positive relationship towards product evaluation of the mimic brand ( $\beta=.253$ , Sig. =.010). Hence, H2 is partially accepted.

The results indicate that when consumers perceive similarities in symbolic characteristics between the model and the mimic brand, they would have a high perception of luxury towards the mimic brand. In contrast, the closer the similarity between the mimic and the

model brand in terms of physical characteristics, the lower the perception of luxury towards the mimic brand.

It is found that the greater the similarity between the mimic and the model brand in terms of the beneficial characteristics, the better product evaluation is of the mimic brand.

**Table 6.4.4B:** Regression between perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand

	<b>B-Values</b>	<b>Standard Error</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>Perception of Luxury towards the mimic brand (Lovelinks)</b>	.582	.061	.686	.465	9.467	.000*

\*Sig. <.05

**Dependent variable:** Product evaluation of the mimic brand

Linear regression was conducted between perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand. It is found that perception of luxury towards the mimic brand has a significant positive relationship towards product evaluation of the mimic brand ( $\beta=.686$ , Sig. =.000). Hence, H3 accepted.

The result indicates that higher consumers' perception of luxury towards the mimic brand will lead to more positive product evaluation of the mimic brand.

### Results for Hypotheses H5A, H5B, H6A and H6B

The set of hypotheses H5A, H5B, H6A and H6B examines the influence of brand familiarity towards the mimic brand and brand familiarity towards the model brand on perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at Table 6.4.5B.

**Table 6.4.5B:** Regression of brand familiarity towards the mimic/model brand towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand

	B-Values	Standard Error	Beta	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	t-value	Sig.
<b>Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Lovelinks)</b>						
<b>Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand (Lovelinks)</b>	.060	.096	.062	-.006	.621	.536
<b>Brand familiarity towards the model brand (Pandora)</b>	-.169	.067	-.242	.049	-2.505	.014*
<b>Product evaluation of the mimic brand (Lovelinks)</b>						
<b>Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand (Lovelinks)</b>	.159	.080	.193	.028	1.977	.050*
<b>Brand familiarity towards the model brand (Pandora)</b>	-.056	.059	-.094	-.001	-.948	.345

\*Sig. <.05

Linear regression was conducted between brand familiarity towards the mimic brand (Lovelinks) and perception of luxury towards the mimic brand. The results show no significant relationship between the variables. Linear regression was conducted between brand familiarity towards the mimic brand (Lovelinks) and product evaluation of the mimic brand. The results show a weak significant positive relationship ( $\beta=.193$ , Sig. =.050). Hence, H5a is rejected and H5b is accepted.

Linear regression was conducted between brand familiarity towards the model brand (Pandora) and perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Lovelinks). It is found that there is a significant negative relationship ( $\beta = -.242$ , Sig. = .014) between brand familiarity towards the model brand (Pandora) and perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Lovelinks). Therefore the results suggest that if consumers are familiar with Pandora, they will have negative perception of luxury towards Lovelinks. Linear regression was conducted between brand familiarity towards the model brand (Pandora) and product evaluation of the mimic brand. The results show no significant relationship between the variables. Hence, H6a is accepted and H6b is rejected.

## Results for Hypotheses H7 and H8

The set of hypotheses H7 and H8 examines the influence of the three dimensions of consumers' need for uniqueness on perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at Table 6.4.6B.

**Table 6.4.6B:** Multiple regression of consumers' need for uniqueness towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand

	B-Values	Std Error	Beta	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	t-value	Sig.
<b>Perception of Luxury towards the mimic brand (Lovelinks)</b>						
<b>Avoidance of Similarity</b>	-.188	.115	-.183		-1.641	.104
<b>Creative Choice Counter-conformity</b>	.339	.127	.275	.072	2.657	.009*
<b>Unpopular Choice Counter-conformity</b>	.204	.112	.191		1.812	.073
<b>Product evaluation of the mimic brand (Lovelinks)</b>						
<b>Avoidance of Similarity</b>	-.130	.100	-.149		-1.296	.198
<b>Creative Choice Counter-conformity</b>	.085	.112	.081	.010	.760	.449
<b>Unpopular Choice Counter-conformity</b>	.174	.099	.192		1.766	.080

\*Sig. <.05

Regression analysis was conducted between consumers' need for uniqueness and perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Lovelinks). It is found that creative choice counter-conformity has a significant positive relationship towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand ( $\beta=.275$ , Sig. =.009).

Regression analysis was conducted between consumers' need for uniqueness and product evaluation of the mimic brand (Lovelinks). The findings did not reveal significant relationship towards product evaluation of the mimic brand. Hence, H7 is partially accepted and H8 is rejected.

Consumers prone to creative choice counter-conformity would probably consider Lovelinks to be an alternative that is slightly different to the Pandora but retaining similar characteristics. Creative choice counter-conformity dictates that consumers will seek alternative products that can enhance individual style. In this case, Lovelinks can be seen as a close alternative to the Pandora.

### Results for Hypotheses H9 and H10

The set of hypotheses H9 and H10 deals with the influence the three dimensions of consumers' need for uniqueness on perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at Table 6.4.7B.

**Table 6.4.7B:** Linear regression of status consumption towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand

	<b>B- Values</b>	<b>Standard Error</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Lovelinks)</b>						
<b>Status Consumption</b>	.028	.097	.028	-.009	.284	.777
<b>Product evaluation of the mimic brand (Lovelinks)</b>						
<b>Status Consumption</b>	.087	.082	.105	.001	1.064	.290

\*Sig. <.05

Linear regression was conducted between status consumption and perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Lovelinks). No significant relationship was found. Similarly, linear regression was conducted between status consumption and product evaluation of the mimic brand (Lovelinks). No significant relationship was found. Hence, H9 and H10 are both rejected.

## MEDIATION ANALYSIS

### Results for Hypotheses H4, H11A, H11B, H12 and H13

The set of hypotheses H4, H11A, H11B, H12 and H13 examines mediating effects within the conceptual model. Hypothesis H4 examines the mediating effects of perception of luxury towards the mimic brand on presence of mimicry and product evaluation of the mimic brand. Hypotheses H11A, H11B, H12 and H13 examines the mediating effects of brand familiarity towards mimic brand, brand familiarity towards model brand, consumers' need for uniqueness, and status consumption on perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at Table 6.4.8B.

**Table 6.4.8B:** Mediation analysis

Predictor	Criterion	Std Error	B	Beta	t-value	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	Sig.
Symbolic Characteristics	Perception of Luxury	.103	.464	.410	4.521	.160	.000
Symbolic Characteristics	Product Evaluation	.092	.242	.253	2.623	.054	.010
Perception of Luxury	Product Evaluation	.061	.582	.686	9.467	.465	.000
Perception of Luxury	Product Evaluation	.068	.594	.700	8.777	.461	.000
Symbolic Characteristics		.076	-.033	-.035	-4.34		.665

**Sobel Test:**  $z = 2.977$  \*  $p < .05$ ; **Goodman Test:**  $z = 3.019$  \*  $p < .05$ ;  
**\*\* Sig.** < 0.05

Mediation effects of perception of luxury towards the mimic brand on the relationship between “Symbolic” characteristics and product evaluation of the mimic brand was conducted.

Based on the results, it can be observed that perception of luxury towards the mimic brand fully mediates the relationship between “Symbolic” characteristics and product evaluation of the mimic brand.

## MODERATION ANALYSIS

### Results for Hypotheses H14A, H14B, H15 and H16

The set of hypotheses H14A, H14B, H15 and H16 examines the moderating effects of brand familiarity towards mimic brand, brand familiarity towards model brand, consumers' need for uniqueness, and status consumption on perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at Table 6.4.9B.

**Table 6.4.9B:** Hierarchical moderated regression

Independent Variables	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	F	df	Δ R <sup>2</sup>	F Change	df	β	Sig.
Perception of Luxury	.465	89.629	1	.470	89.629	101	.475	.001
Perception of Luxury + Brand Familiarity (mimic)	.483	48.617	1	.023	4.499	100	-.158	.434
Perception of Luxury + Brand Familiarity (mimic) + (Perception of Luxury x Brand Familiarity (mimic))	.491	33.860	1	.013	2.697	99	.397	.104
Perception of Luxury	.465	89.629	1	.470	89.629	101	.515	.014
Perception of Luxury + Brand Familiarity (model)	.465	45.360	1	.005	1.048	100	-.134	.555
Perception of Luxury + Brand Familiarity (model) + (Perception of Luxury x Brand Familiarity (model))	.465	30.555	1	.005	.971	99	.257	.327
Perception of Luxury	.465	89.629	1	.470	89.629	101	.738	.001
Perception of Luxury + Status Consumption	.467	45.704	1	.007	1.412	100	.127	.435
Perception of Luxury + Status Consumption + (Perception of Luxury x Status Consumption)	.462	30.216	1	.000	.081	99	-.072	.777
Perception of Luxury	.465	89.629	1	.470	89.629	101	1.036	.000
Perception of Luxury + Avoidance of Similarity	.461	44.653	1	.002	.299	100	.263	.125
Perception of Luxury + Avoidance of Similarity + (Perception of Luxury x Avoidance of Similarity)	.476	31.910	1	.020	3.865	99	-.484	.052

<b>Perception of Luxury</b>	.465	89.629	1	.470	89.629	101	.698	.008
<b>Perception of Luxury + Creative Choice Counter-conformity</b>	.460	44.520	1	.001	.158	100	.040	.811
<b>Perception of Luxury + Creative Choice Counter-conformity + (Perception of Luxury x Creative Choice Counter-conformity)</b>	.455	29.387	1	.000	.005	99	-.023	.944
<b>Perception of Luxury</b>	.465	89.629	1	.470	89.629	101	.866	.000
<b>Perception of Luxury + Unpopular Choice Counter-conformity</b>	.471	46.450	1	.011	2.203	100	.008	.965
<b>Perception of Luxury + Unpopular Choice Counter-conformity + (Perception of Luxury x Unpopular Choice Counter-conformity)</b>	.469	30.997	1	.003	.529	99	-.221	.469

Hierarchical moderated regression analysis was conducted on brand familiarity towards the mimic brand, status consumption, consumers' need for uniqueness between perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand to test for the interaction effects between the moderator, independent variable and the dependent variable. Based on the results of the hierarchical moderation analysis, the moderators are found to be insignificant. Hence, H14a, H14 b, H15 and H16 are rejected.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FOR STUDY EIGHT

The findings of the hypotheses are summarized below in Table 6.4.10B.

**Table 6.4.10B:** Summary of findings for Study Eight

<b>Hypotheses</b>		<b>Accepted/Rejected</b>
<b>H1</b>	Presence of mimicry will lead to a positive perception of luxury	Partially accepted
<b>H2</b>	Presence of mimicry will lead to a positive product evaluation of the mimic brand	Partially accepted
<b>H3</b>	Perception of luxury will lead to a positive product evaluation of the mimic brand	Accepted
<b>H4</b>	Perception of luxury will mediate the relationship between the presence of mimicry and product evaluation of the mimic brand	Partially accepted
<b>Brand familiarity</b>		
<b>H5a</b>	Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand will lead to a positive perception of luxury towards the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H5b</b>	Brand familiarity towards the model brand will lead to a positive perception of luxury towards the mimic brand	Accepted
<b>H6a</b>	Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand will lead to a positive product evaluation of the mimic brand	Accepted
<b>H6b</b>	Brand familiarity towards the model brand will lead to a negative product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>Consumers' need for uniqueness</b>		
<b>H7</b>	Consumers' need for uniqueness will lead to a positive perception of luxury towards the mimic brand	Partially accepted
<b>H8</b>	Consumers' need for uniqueness will lead to a positive product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>Status consumption</b>		
<b>H9</b>	Status consumption will lead to a negative perception of luxury towards the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H10</b>	Status consumption will lead to a negative product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>Mediation effects:</b>		
<b>H11a</b>	Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand will mediate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation towards a mimic brand	Rejected

<b>H11b</b>	Brand familiarity towards the model brand will mediate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation towards a mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H12</b>	Consumers' need for uniqueness will mediate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation towards a mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H13</b>	Status consumption will mediate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation towards a mimic brand	Rejected
<b>Moderation effects:</b>		
<b>H14a</b>	Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand will moderate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H14b</b>	Brand familiarity towards the model brand will moderate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H15</b>	Consumers' need for uniqueness will moderate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H16</b>	Status consumption will moderate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected

The results for Study Eight examined the hypotheses using Lovelinks jewellery as the mimic brand and Pandora jewellery as the model brand has shown interesting results. Based on the results, it is found that “Symbolic” characteristics has emerged to have significant positive relationship towards perception of luxury of mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand. Therefore, similarity in symbolic characteristics will result in better perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. On the other hand, close similarities in “Physical” characteristics between the mimic brand and the model brand will result in negative perception of luxury towards the mimic brand. Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand is found to have a positive relationship towards product evaluation of the mimic brand.

Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand is found to have a positive relationship towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand. Brand familiarity towards the model brand is found to have a negative relationship towards perception of luxury. Hence, in the case of Lovelinks and Pandora, consumers will tend to have positive perception of luxury when they are familiar with Lovelinks. When consumers are familiar with Pandora, they will tend to perceive Lovelinks to be less “luxury”, which can be attributed to the comparison with Pandora that Lovelinks is a mimic or copy. This enhances the results by van Horen and Pieters (2012b) that when consumers have a point of reference or comparison between the model and the mimic brand, often closely similar mimics are less favourably evaluated. Furthermore, Lovelinks is marketed as a cheaper alternative that is available in less expensive outlets.

It is also found that perception of luxury towards the mimic brand fully mediates the relationship between symbolic characteristics and product evaluation of the mimic brand. Lastly, no moderators were found to be significant in this study.

## CONCLUSION FOR PART 3 (VAVILOVIAN MIMICRY)

In summary, the results of the four studies of Vavilovian mimicry show that there are significant relationships between presence of mimicry, perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand. Furthermore, brand familiarity, consumers' need for uniqueness and status consumption have emerged to play important roles in influencing the perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand. Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand is also found to be a mediator of presence of mimicry and product evaluation of the mimic brand. While it has not found consistent results throughout the four studies, there is evidence that brand familiarity towards the mimic brand moderates the relationship between perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand.

**Presence of mimicry** – It is found that generally, for Vavilovian mimicry, the three dimensions of the presence of mimicry scale have significant relationship towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (H1) and product evaluation of the mimic brand (H2). Consistently throughout the four studies, “Symbolic” characteristics has emerged as the key factor influencing consumer perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. While “Beneficial” and “Physical” characteristics have weaker evidence to support their relationship towards perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand, it is found that “Beneficial” characteristics can lead to positive perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. However, “Physical” characteristics is found to have a negative relationship towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand. It is found that perception of luxury has a significant relationship towards product evaluation of the mimic brand (H3). These results indicate a number of interesting points. They are namely:

- The presence of mimicry (Vavilovian) scale is evidenced to be generalizable across the four different product categories.
- The three dimensions of the presence of mimicry scale affects perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand at varying degrees. There are also different relationships observed between various characteristics.
  - It is interesting to note that “Symbolic” characteristic has emerged to consistently generate positive perception of luxury and product evaluation

of the mimic brand. Therefore, it suggests that close symbolic similarities between the mimic and the model brand can result in higher perceived luxury towards the mimic brand. Similarly, close symbolic similarities between the mimic and the model brand can generate positive evaluations of mimic brand. The results suggest that it is important to enhance symbolic similarities for the mimic brand in order to lead to favourable consumer responses. In reflection of previous results, consumers sought luxury mimic brands as alternatives to the model counterparts to exude the same image or reflect similar self-image (Kastanakis and Balabanis, 2012). Therefore, when mimic brands portray similar symbolic benefits; consumers would perceive it as equally “luxury”. In fact, mimic brand managers should take special care to understand what constitutes the image of luxury and to mimic that characteristic.

- “Beneficial” characteristic was found to have a positive influence on both perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. Therefore, when consumers perceive practical similarities in terms of durability and utility between the mimic and the model brand, they tend to form more favourable evaluations towards the mimic brand. The finding is enhanced by Penz and Stottinger’s (2008) study that consumers tend to perceive mimic brands to share close functionality and durability characteristics with the model brands. In addition, this characteristic is positively evaluated as the benefits are one of the fundamental reasons for the purchase of the product. While Veblen (1899) postulated that status often would supersede that of the functionality of the product sometimes, it is found that consumers seek mimic brands as an alternative to expensive model brands (Balabanis and Craven, 1997). Therefore, it will need to still function to a similar degree as the model brand.
- “Physical” characteristic was found to have a negative relationship towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand. This suggests that close physical similarities in terms of appearance between the mimic and the model brand can result in negative perception of luxury towards the mimic brand. However, “Physical” characteristics did not emerge to be a key influence on the perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand across the four studies. It is however still important to

visually distinct the mimic and the model while retaining similarities in “Symbolic” characteristics.

**Brand familiarity** – towards the mimic brand has shown significant positive relationship towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (H5a) and product evaluation of the mimic brand (H5b). While there seems to have lesser evidence throughout the four studies to show the relationship between brand familiarity towards the mimic brand and perception of luxury towards the mimic brand, it is found that consumers who know about the mimic brand helps them generate better perception of luxury towards the mimic brand. There is consistent evidence throughout the studies suggesting that familiar or knowledgeable consumers of the mimic brand tend to form better product evaluations of the brand. However, this could also be attributed to the fact that Vavilovian mimics tend to be scarcer and lesser known in the marketplace. This in turn may also be a pronounced opportunity for targeting consumers who seek scarce and rare products. There is potential to develop the mimic brand into a niche brand which offers unique variations of the model (e.g. Crocodile now offers varied and unique tailoring that boasts quirky fun – see Diagram 6.2).

Brand familiarity towards the model brand showed significant relationship towards perception of luxury (H6a) and product evaluation of the mimic brand (H6b). There is weaker evidence suggesting that brand familiarity towards the model brand results in positive perception of luxury towards the mimic brand. But the findings have shown that brand familiarity towards the model brand has a negative relationship towards perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. The results from Study Five on cars and Study Eight on jewellery support that when a consumer is familiar with the model brand, they will tend to respond less favourably to the product and also to perceive the mimic brand as less “luxury”.

**Diagram 6.2:** Images of Crocodile brand



**Consumers' need for uniqueness** – is found to have a significant relationship between perception of luxury (H7) and product evaluation of the mimic brand (H8). While the results are not generalized across the four studies, Study Six (clothes) and Seven (shoes) found that creative choice counter-conformity to have a positive relationship towards perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. Unpopular choice counter-conformity was found to have a significant relationship towards product evaluation of the mimic brand. The findings suggest that for these two product categories, consumers who purchase brands that are unique and novel products from “acceptable” brands to create their own personal style would find that mimic brands provide an alternative to be a little different to what may be deemed more mainstream. Since mimic brands are often seen scarcer, this adds to the value of it being novel and unique (Kastanakis and Balabanis, 2012).

Unpopular choice counter-conformity was found to influence product evaluation in Study Seven (shoes). In this case the mimic from Forever 21 is often very similar to the model brands, and considered as an outlet for variety rather than quality. The similarity of the shoes

to the model brand can exude luxury in the eyes of the consumer. Furthermore, many of the shoes are highly similar to that of the model brand.

**Status consumption** – did not show consistent significant relationships towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (H9) and product evaluation of the mimic brand (H10). It was found in only one study that status consumption leads to positive perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Study Five on cars). Status consumption can also lead to favourable product evaluations of mimic brand; however this finding was not generalized across four studies (only found in Study Seven on shoes). Therefore, this suggests that the product category may have an influence on the relationships and consumer perception and evaluation of mimic brands.

**Mediation effects** – There are a number of mediation effects found significant across the four studies. Predominantly perception of luxury towards the mimic brand is found to be a mediator of the relationship between presence of mimicry and product evaluation of the mimic brand (H4). However, it was also found that brand familiarity towards the mimic brand (H11a) and brand familiarity towards the model brand (H11b) are found to also mediate perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand on two separate studies. No mediation effects were found for consumers' need for uniqueness (H12) and status consumption (H13).

**Moderators** – While three of the studies did not reveal any moderators, Study Seven (shoes) revealed that brand familiarity towards the mimic brand (H14a) moderates the relationship between perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand. Therefore, the findings suggest that brand familiarity towards the mimic brand is important and can enhance the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand.

## CHAPTER 6 - PART 4: POUYANNIAN MIMICRY

### OVERVIEW

This chapter will discuss and compare the influence of the presence of Pouyannian mimicry on four different product categories, namely cars, clothing, shoes and jewellery within the luxury brand industry (see Table 6.1C). As presented, there will be 4 studies designed to test Pouyannian mimicry.

As a recap of the definition, **Pouyannian mimicry** is defined a form of productive mimicry where the mimic brand imitates the model brand to diffuse an innovation in a market through moderately similar characteristics or styling. They are often inspired copies of the model brand rather than direct copies.

Study Nine to Twelve will be discussed independently. Each study will begin with factor analysis of the **Pouyannian mimicry** scale and the consumers' need for uniqueness scale. It is then followed by a discussion of the demographic profile of the respondents. Next, the results of the hypotheses will be discussed in three sections: (a) direct relationships (H1-H3, H5-10) (b) mediating relationships (H4, H11-H13) and (c) moderating relationships (H14-H15). A summary and discussion of findings will be provided at the end of each study. An overall conclusion and summary of the chapter will serve to conclude the chapter. The following table outlines the sequence of the studies and the stimulus (brands) used in each study within this chapter.

**Table 6.1C:** Summary of stimulus for Pouyannian mimicry

Pouyannian Mimicry	Product category	Model Brand	Mimic Brand	Signal Receiver/Dupe
<b>STUDY NINE</b>	Cars	 <b>Mercedes Benz</b>	 <b>Lexus</b>	<b>Consumers</b>
<b>STUDY TEN</b>	Clothes	 <b>Burberry</b>	 <b>Gap</b>	<b>Consumers</b>
<b>STUDY ELEVEN</b>	Shoes	 <b>Gucci</b>	 <b>Guess</b>	<b>Consumers</b>
<b>STUDY TWELVE</b>	Jewellery	 <b>Tiffany &amp; Co.</b>	 <b>Thomas Sabo</b>	<b>Consumers</b>

## **STUDY NINE: Lexus and Mercedes Benz**

Based on Table 6.1C, Study Nine will be testing the hypothesized relationship for the car product category using two real life brands to test for the effects of the presence of Pouyannian mimicry on consumers. The model brand is Mercedes Benz and the mimic brand is Lexus. The signal receiver(s) are consumers. Respondent characteristics are first discussed, followed by the hypotheses postulated in Chapter 3.

### **Profile of Respondents**

The total usable number of responses for Study Nine is 101 respondents. The responses that were incomplete or had missing values were removed and not used for analysis. The respondents were mainly between 19 to 25 years of age (56.4%), with more males (57%) than females. The majority of the respondents are Australians (80.2%). Furthermore, it is found that most of the respondents are more familiar with Mercedes Benz (model brand) ( $M = 6.08$ ,  $SD = 1.317$ ) than Lexus (mimic brand) ( $M = 5.70$ ,  $SD = 1.671$ ).

### **Factor Analysis – Presence of mimicry scale**

Prior to conducting analysis, factor analysis was conducted on the presence of mimicry scale (Pouyannian) that was developed for this study (see detailed scale development procedure in Chapter 5). Results from Table 6.1.1C shows that there are three factors and consists of 13 items that accounts for 84.594% of cumulative variance. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients were all above 0.8 which is deemed suitable for further analysis (Nunnally, 1970). The three factors are namely "intellectual characteristics", "image characteristics", and "physical characteristics" which are used for subsequent analysis.

**Table 6.1.1C:** Factor analysis of the Pouyannian mimicry scale

Items	Factor Loadings		
	F1 – P- Intellectual Characteristics	F2 – P- Image Characteristics	F3 – P-Physical Characteristics
The products express a similar degree of originality	.891		
The products express a similar degree of creativity	.879		
The products express a similar degree of novelty	.845		
The products express a similar degree of uniqueness	.785		
The products express a similar degree of innovation	.741		
The products express a similar image of success		.851	
The products express a similar image of prestige		.850	
The products express a similar image of sophistication		.839	
The products express a similar image of elegance		.811	
The products share similar physical appearances			.828
The products share similar aesthetics			.827
The products share similar looks			.826
The products share similar designs			.798
<b>% of Variance</b>	61.912	14.647	8.036
<b>Cumulative % of Variance</b>		84.594	
<b>Eigenvalue</b>	8.049	1.904	1.045
<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	.955	.969	.885
<b>Overall Cronbach's Alpha</b>		.947	
<b>KMO</b>		.896	
<b>Barlett's Test of Sphericity</b>		.000	

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.  
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.  
a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.

### **Factor Analysis – Consumers’ need for uniqueness scale**

An exploratory factor analysis was conducted on the original 31-item consumers’ need for uniqueness scale (see Table 6.1.2C). Through Varimax rotation, the items were reduced to 16 items with an acceptable range of reliabilities. The three dimensions of consumers’ need for uniqueness which is namely avoidance of similarity, creative choice counter-conformity and unpopular choice counter-conformity will be used for subsequent analysis.

**Table 6.1.2C:** Factor analysis of the consumers' need for uniqueness scale

Items	Factor Loadings		
	F1 – Avoidance of Similarity	F2 – Creative Choice Counter-conformity	F3 – Unpopular Choice Counter-conformity
I often try to avoid products or brands that I know are bought by the general population.	.883		
As a rule, I dislike products or brands that are customarily purchased by everyone.	.875		
The more commonplace a product or brand is among the general population, the less interested I am in buying it.	.843		
When a style of clothing I own becomes too commonplace, I usually quit wearing it.	.828		
Products don't seem to hold much value for me when they are purchased regularly by everyone.	.783		
When a product I own becomes popular among the general population, I begin using it less.	.778		
I give up wearing fashions I've purchased once they become popular among the general public.	.774		
I avoid products or brands that have already been accepted and purchased by the average consumer.	.734		
Having an eye for products that are interesting and unusual assists me in establishing a distinctive image.		.891	
The products and brands that I like best are the ones that express my individuality.		.862	
I often try to find a more interesting version of run-of-the-mill products because I enjoy being original.		.836	
I often look for one-of-a-kind products or brands so that I create a style that is all my own.		.784	
I'm often on the lookout for new products or brands that will add to my personal uniqueness.		.743	
If someone hinted that I had been dressing inappropriately for a social situation, I would continue dressing in the same manner.			.895
When I dress differently, I'm often aware that others think I'm peculiar but I don't care.			.834
As far as I'm concerned, when it comes to the products I buy and the situations in which I use them, customs and rules are made to be broken.			.623
<b>% of Variance</b>	49.066	13.311	10.721
<b>Cumulative % of Variance</b>	73.098		
<b>Eigenvalue</b>	7.851	2.130	1.715
<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	.941	.922	.806
<b>Overall Cronbach's Alpha</b>	.921		
<b>KMO</b>	.885		
<b>Barlett's Test of Sphericity</b>	.000		

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following sections will discuss the results of the hypotheses. A summary of the results for each study can be found at the end of each study.

### **Results for Hypotheses H1 – H3**

The set of hypotheses H1, H2 and H3 examines the influence of presence of mimicry towards perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at Table 6.1.3C and Table 6.1.4C.

**Table 6.1.3C:** Stepwise regression of presence of mimicry towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand

	<b>B-Values</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Lexus)</b>						
<b>Image Characteristics</b>	.394	.060	.552	.298	6.588	.000*
<b>Product evaluation of the mimic brand (Lexus)</b>						
<b>Image Characteristics</b>	.250	.074	.322	.095	3.384	.001*

\*Sig. <.05

**Independent variable:** Presence of mimicry

Stepwise regression was conducted between the three factors of the “presence of mimicry” towards “perception of luxury towards the mimic brand”. It is found that only “Image characteristics” emerge as significant ( $p=.000$ ) and having a positive relationship towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand ( $\beta=.552$ , Adj.  $R^2=.298$ ). Hence, H1 is partially accepted.

Stepwise regression was conducted between the “presence of mimicry” towards “product evaluation of the mimic brand”. Based on the results, “Image characteristics” is found to have a significant positive relationship towards product evaluation of the mimic brand ( $\beta=.322$ , Sig.  $=.001$ ). Hence, H2 is partially accepted.

**Table 6.1.4C:** Regression between perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand

	<b>B-Values</b>	<b>Standard Error</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Lexus)</b>	.721	.082	.663	.434	8.818	.000*

\*Sig. <.05

**Independent variable:** Presence of mimicry

Linear regression was conducted between “perception of luxury towards the mimic brand” and “Product evaluation of the mimic brand”. The results showed a positive significant relationship ( $\beta=.663$ ,  $p=.000$ ).

The emergence of Image characteristics and most significant in influencing consumers’ perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand suggests that the symbolic aspects of a mimic brands can lead to favourable perceptions and evaluations. This result is in support of past studies that suggest the transfer of non-physical attributes of a product and the influence on consumer evaluations (e.g. Miceli and Pieters, 2010). Consumers draw similarities between Lexus and Mercedes Benz by how they perceive they exude similar prestige, elegance and sophistication. Furthermore, consistent with past literature, consumers’ perception of luxury towards the mimic brand would in turn influence consumers’ product evaluations towards the mimic brand. Hence, H3 is accepted.

### Results for Hypotheses H5A, H5B, H6A and H6B

The set of hypotheses H5A, H5B, H6A and H6B examines the influence of brand familiarity towards the mimic brand and brand familiarity towards the model brand on perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at Table 6.1.5C.

**Table 6.1.5C:** Regression of brand familiarity towards the mimic /model brand towards perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand

	B-Values	Standard Error	Beta	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	t-value	Sig.
<b>Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Lexus)</b>						
<b>Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand (Lexus)</b>	.287	.073	.368	.127	3.940	.000*
<b>Brand familiarity towards the model Brand</b>	.088	.069	.126	.006	1.263	.209
<b>Product evaluation of the mimic brand (Lexus)</b>						
<b>Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand (Lexus)</b>	.390	.076	.459	.203	5.145	.000*
<b>Brand familiarity towards the model Brand</b>	.156	.074	.206	.033	2.098	.038*

\*Sig. <.05

Based on the results it is found that brand familiarity towards the mimic brand has significant relationship towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand ( $\beta=.368$ , Adj. R2 = .127) and product evaluation of the mimic brand ( $\beta=.459$ , Adj. R2 = .203). On the other hand, brand familiarity towards the model brand did not show a significant relationship towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand but has a weaker positive significant relationship towards product evaluation of the mimic brand ( $\beta=.074$ , Adj. R2 = .033). Hence, H5a, H5b and H6b are accepted and H6a is rejected.

### Results for Hypotheses H7 and H8

The set of hypotheses H7 and H8 examines the influence of the three dimensions of consumers' need for uniqueness on perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at Table 6.1.6C.

**Table 6.1.6C:** Multiple regression of consumers' need for uniqueness towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand

	B-Values	Std. Error	Beta	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	t-value	Sig.
<b>Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Lexus)</b>						
<b>Avoidance of Similarity</b>	-.214	.106	-.243		-2.016	.047*
<b>Creative Choice Counter-conformity</b>	.188	.094	.242	.023	2.006	.048*
<b>Unpopular Choice Counter-conformity</b>	.001	.079	.001		.014	.989
<b>Product evaluation of the mimic brand (Lexus)</b>						
<b>Avoidance of Similarity</b>	-.214	.116	-.223		-1.849	.068
<b>Creative Choice Counter-conformity</b>	.127	.102	.150	.018	1.243	.217
<b>Unpopular Choice Counter-conformity</b>	-.081	.086	-.098		-.948	.345
<b>*Sig &lt;.05</b>						

Regression analysis was conducted between consumers' need for uniqueness and perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Lexus). Avoidance of similarity was found to have a significant negative relationship towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand ( $\beta = -.243$ , Sig. = .047). Creative choice counter-conformity ( $\beta = .242$ , Sig. = .048) was found to have a significant positive relationship towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand. Hence, H7 is rejected.

Regression analysis was conducted between consumers' need for uniqueness and product evaluation of the mimic brand (Lexus). No significant relationship emerged. Hence, H8 is rejected.

### Results for Hypotheses H9 and H10

The set of hypotheses H9 and H10 deals with the influence the three dimensions of consumers' need for uniqueness on perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at Table 6.1.7C

**Table 6.1.7C:** Linear regression of status consumption towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand

	B-Values	Standard Error	Beta	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	t-value	Sig.
<b>Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Lexus)</b>						
<b>Status Consumption</b>	.112	.078	.144	.011	1.443	.152
<b>Product evaluation of the mimic brand (Lexus)</b>						
<b>Status Consumption</b>	.187	.083	.220	.039	2.242	.027*

\*Sig <.05

Linear regression was conducted between status consumption and perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Lexus). It is found that status consumption does not have a significant relationship towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand. Hence H9 is rejected.

Linear regression was conducted between status consumption and product evaluation of the mimic brand (Lexus). It is found that status consumption has a significant positive relationship towards product evaluation of the mimic brand ( $\beta=.220$ , Sig. =.027). Hence, H10 is accepted.

## MEDIATION ANALYSIS

### Results for Hypotheses H4, H11A, H11B, H12 and H13

The set of hypotheses H4, H11A, H11B, H12 and H13 examines mediating effects within the conceptual model. Hypothesis H4 examines the mediating effects of perception of luxury towards the mimic brand on presence of mimicry and product evaluation of the mimic brand. Hypotheses H11A, H11B, H12 and H13 examines the mediating effects of brand familiarity towards the mimic brand, brand familiarity towards the model brand, consumers' need for uniqueness, and status consumption on perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at Table 6.1.8C and Table 6.1.9C.

**Table 6.1.8C:** Mediating effects of perception of luxury on presence of mimicry (image) and product evaluation of the mimic brand

Predictor	Criterion	Std Error	B	Beta	t-value	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	Sig.
Image Characteristics	Perception of Luxury	.060	.394	.552	6.588	.298	.000
Image Characteristics	Product Evaluation	.074	.250	.322	3.384	.095	.001
Perception of Luxury	Product Evaluation	.082	.721	.663	8.818	.434	.000
Perception of Luxury	Product Evaluation	.098	.759	.698	7.722	.431	.000
Image Characteristics		.070	-.049	-.064	-.703		.484

**Sobel Test:**  $z = 5.261^*$   $p < .05$ ; **Goodman Test:**  $z = 5.283^*$   $p < .05$ ;  
**\*\* Sig. < 0.05**

Mediation effects of perception of luxury towards the mimic brand on the relationship between “Image” characteristics and product evaluation of the mimic brand was conducted.

Based on the results, it can be observed that perception of luxury towards the mimic brand fully mediates the relationship between “Image” characteristics and product evaluation of the mimic brand.

**Table 6.1.9C:** Mediating effects of brand familiarity on perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand

Predictor	Criterion	Std Error	B	Beta	t-value	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	Sig.
Perception of Luxury	Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand	.120	.472	.368	3.940	.127	.000
Perception of Luxury	Product Evaluation	.082	.721	.663	8.818**	.434	.000
Brand Familiarity	Product Evaluation	.076	.390	.459	5.145	.203	.000
Perception of Luxury	Product Evaluation	.084	.621	.572	7.393	.483	.000
Brand Familiarity		.066	.211	.249	3.218		.002

**Sobel Test:** z = 3.128 \* p< .05; **Goodman Test:** z = 3.166 \* p< .05;  
**\*\* Sig. < 0.05**

Mediation effects of brand familiarity towards the model brand on the relationship between perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Lexus) and product evaluation of the mimic brand was conducted.

Based on the results, it can be observed that brand familiarity towards the model brand fully mediates the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation. Hence, H11a is partially accepted.

## MODERATION ANALYSIS

### Results for Hypotheses H14A, H14B, H15 and H16

The set of hypotheses H14A, H14B, H15 AND H16 examines the moderating effects of brand familiarity towards the mimic brand, brand familiarity towards the model brand, consumers' need for uniqueness, and status consumption on perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at Table 6.1.10C.

**Table 6.1.10C:** Hierarchical moderated regression

Independent Variables	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	F	df	Δ R <sup>2</sup>	F Change	df	β	Sig.
Perception of Luxury	.434	77.765	1	.440	78.822	99	-.502	.000
Perception of Luxury + Brand Familiarity (mimic)	.483	47.735	1	.054	10.356	98	.000	.999
Perception of Luxury + Brand Familiarity (mimic) + (Perception of Luxury x Brand Familiarity (mimic))	.480	31.748	1	.002	.378	97	.286	.540
Perception of Luxury	.434	77.765	1	.440	77.765	99	.256	.097**
Perception of Luxury + Brand Familiarity (model)	.444	40.950	1	.015	2.756	98	-.679	.020**
Perception of Luxury + Brand Familiarity (model) + (Perception of Luxury x Brand Familiarity (model))	.483	32.152	1	.043	8.385	97	.960	.005**
Perception of Luxury	.434	77.765	1	.440	77.765	99	.598	.000
Perception of Luxury + Status Consumption	.445	41.039	1	.016	2.855	98	.001	.999
Perception of Luxury + Status Consumption + (Perception of Luxury x Status Consumption)	.440	27.145	1	.001	.105	97	.143	.746
Perception of Luxury	.434	77.765	1	.440	77.765	99	.629	.000
Perception of Luxury + Avoidance of Similarity	.437	39.797	1	.008	1.464	98	-.148	.632
Perception of Luxury + Avoidance of Similarity + (Perception of Luxury x Avoidance of Similarity)	.431	26.282	1	.000	.036	97	.061	.850

<b>Perception of Luxury</b>	.434	76.766	1	.439	76.666	98	.722	.000
<b>Perception of Luxury + Creative Choice Counter-conformity</b>	.432	38.715	1	.005	.812	97	.032	.918
<b>Perception of Luxury + Creative Choice Counter-conformity + (Perception of Luxury x Creative Choice Counter-conformity)</b>	.427	26.611	1	.001	.112	96	-.121	.738
<b>Perception of Luxury</b>	.434	77.765	1	.440	77.765	99	.700	.000
<b>Perception of Luxury + Unpopular Choice Counter-conformity</b>	.441	40.505	1	.013	2.257	98	-.038	.901
<b>Perception of Luxury + Unpopular Choice Counter-conformity + (Perception of Luxury x Unpopular Choice Counter-conformity)</b>	.436	26.766	1	.000	.062	97	-.085	.803
<b>*Dependent variable:</b> Product evaluation of the mimic brand (Lexus)								

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FOR STUDY NINE

The findings of the hypotheses are summarized below in Table 6.1.11C.

**Table 6.1.11C:** Summary of findings for Study Nine

<b>Hypotheses</b>		<b>Accepted/Rejected</b>
<b>H1</b>	Presence of mimicry will lead to a positive perception of luxury	Partially accepted
<b>H2</b>	Presence of mimicry will lead to a positive product evaluation of the mimic brand	Partially accepted
<b>H3</b>	Perception of luxury will lead to a positive product evaluation of the mimic brand	Accepted
<b>H4</b>	Perception of luxury will mediate the relationship between the presence of mimicry and product evaluation of the mimic brand	Partially accepted
<b>Brand familiarity</b>		
<b>H5a</b>	Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand will lead to a positive perception of luxury towards the mimic brand	Accepted
<b>H5b</b>	Brand familiarity towards the model brand will lead to a positive perception of luxury towards the mimic brand	Accepted
<b>H6a</b>	Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand will lead to a positive product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H6b</b>	Brand familiarity towards the model brand will lead to a positive product evaluation of the mimic brand	Accepted
<b>Consumers' need for uniqueness</b>		
<b>H7</b>	Consumers' need for uniqueness will lead to a positive perception of luxury towards the mimic brand	Partially accepted
<b>H8</b>	Consumers' need for uniqueness will lead to a positive product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>Status consumption</b>		
<b>H9</b>	Status consumption will lead to a positive perception of luxury towards the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H10</b>	Status consumption will lead to a positive product evaluation of the mimic brand	Accepted
<b>Mediation effects:</b>		
<b>H11a</b>	Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand will mediate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation towards a mimic brand	Accepted
<b>H11b</b>	Brand familiarity towards the model brand will mediate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation towards a mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H12</b>	Consumers' need for uniqueness will mediate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation towards a mimic brand	Rejected

<b>H13</b>	Status consumption will mediate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation towards a mimic brand	Rejected
<b>Moderation effects:</b>		
<b>H14a</b>	Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand will moderate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H14b</b>	Brand familiarity towards the model brand will moderate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H15</b>	Consumers' need for uniqueness will moderate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H16</b>	Status consumption will moderate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected

The results of Study Nine by using Lexus as the mimic brand and Mercedes Benz as the model brand has shown some interesting results. It was revealed that “Image” characteristics of the presence of mimicry scale has a significant positive relationship towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand. The findings emphasize the importance of “Image” characteristics and it is found to be important to highlight image similarities such as sophistication and prestige of the mimic car to enhance both perception of luxury and product evaluation. This highlights the importance of mimic brands to emulate the image characteristics of the model brand in order to achieve positive perceptions of luxury and product evaluation (Juggessur and Cohen, 2009). In addition, perception of luxury towards the mimic brand has also shown a significant positive relationship towards product evaluation of the mimic brand (Hagtvedt and Patrick, 2008).

It was found that brand familiarity towards the mimic brand will positively influence the perception of luxury and product evaluation of Lexus as the mimic brand. In fact, consumers will tend to perceive Lexus in a favourable light if they are knowledgeable or experienced with the car. Interestingly, brand familiarity towards the model brand (Mercedes Benz) will also lead to positive influence on product evaluation of the mimic brand (Lexus). The transfer of image associations (Balabanis and Craven, 1997; Warlop and Alba, 2004; Miceli and Pieters, 2010) from Mercedes Benz to Lexus can be a probable explanation especially when Lexus mimics Mercedes Benz based on the styling of their products (i.e. European styling).

Avoidance of similarity was found to have a significant negative relationship towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Lexus). This can possibly be explained by the commonness of the design within the market place (Kastanakis and Balabanis, 2012). When

the product becomes too common and being mainstream and used by the masses, consumers who are prone to avoidance of similarity will tend to have less positive perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Tian et al., 2001). On the other hand, creative choice conformity showed a significant positive relationship towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand. This can be possibly explained by how the mimic brand (Lexus) retains the styling of Mercedes Benz but would have incorporated designs, which are their own to create the car. Therefore, while it is similar, the mimic may still be presented as a unique and novel brand and product.

Status consumption was found to have a significant positive relationship towards product evaluation of the mimic brand. This can be explained by how the design of the product and the brand image of luxury could have led to this positive influence.

Perception of luxury was found to fully mediate the relationship between “Image” characteristics and product evaluation of the mimic brand. This suggests the importance of how consumers’ perceive the brand. If the brand is established as a “luxury” brand, it would influence the product evaluation of Lexus. Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand was found to be a partial mediator of perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. This suggests that it is important for the mimic brand to enhance their brand image in the minds of consumer. If they are aware of the brand, it will indirectly influence product evaluation of the mimic brand.

## **STUDY TEN: Gap and Burberry**

Based on Table 6.1C, Study Ten will be testing the hypothesized relationship for the clothing product category using two real life brands to test for the effects of the presence of Pouyannian mimicry on consumers. The model brand is Burberry and the mimic brand is Gap. The signal receiver(s) are consumers. Respondent characteristics are first discussed, followed by the hypotheses postulated in Chapter 3.

### **Profile of Respondents**

The total usable number of responses for Study Ten is 116 respondents. The responses that were incomplete or had missing values were removed and not used for analysis. The respondents were mainly 19 to 25 years of age (85.3%), with slightly more males (50.9%) than females. The majority of the respondents are Australians (62%). Furthermore, it is found that most of the respondents are more familiar with Burberry (model brand) ( $M = 5.09$ ,  $SD = 1.650$ ) than Gap (mimic brand) ( $M = 4.58$ ,  $SD = 1.770$ ).

### **Factor Analysis – Presence of mimicry scale**

Prior to conducting analysis, factor analysis was conducted on the presence of mimicry scale (Pouyannian) that was developed for this study (see detailed scale development procedure in Chapter 5). Results from Table 6.2.1C shows that there are three factors and consists of 13 items that accounts for 74.878% of cumulative variance. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients were all above 0.8 which is deemed suitable for further analysis (Nunnally, 1970). The three factors are namely "intellectual characteristics", "physical characteristics", and "image characteristics" which are used for subsequent analysis.

**Table 6.2.1C:** Factor analysis of the Presence of Mimicry (Pouyannian) scale

Items	Factor Loadings		
	F1 – P- Intellectual Characteristics	F2 – P- Physical Characteristics	F3 – P- Image Characteristics
The products express a similar degree of creativity	.853		
The products express a similar degree of uniqueness	.748		
The products express a similar degree of originality	.735		
The products express a similar degree of innovation	.712		
The products express a similar degree of novelty	.710		
The products express a similar image of sophistication		.888	
The products express a similar image of elegance		.849	
The products express a similar image of success		.842	
The products express a similar image of prestige		.835	
The products share similar looks			.873
The products share similar designs			.845
The products share similar physical appearances			.835
The products share similar aesthetics			.830
<b>% of Variance</b>	47.434	48.197	9.247
<b>Cumulative % of Variance</b>	74.878		
<b>Eigenvalue</b>	6.166	2.366	1.202
<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	.865	.945	.884
<b>Overall Cronbach's Alpha</b>	.905		
<b>KMO</b>	.872		
<b>Barlett's Test of Sphericity</b>	.000		

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.  
 Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.  
 a. Rotation converged in 4 iterations.

### Factor Analysis – Consumers’ need for uniqueness scale

An exploratory factor analysis was conducted on the original 31-item consumers’ need for uniqueness scale (see Table 6.2.2C). Through Varimax rotation, the items were reduced to 9 items with an acceptable range of reliabilities. The three dimensions of consumers’ need for uniqueness which is namely avoidance of similarity, creative choice counter-conformity and unpopular choice counter-conformity will be used for subsequent analysis.

**Table 6.2.2C:** Factor analysis of Consumers’ Need for Uniqueness

Items	Factor Loadings		
	F1 – Avoidance of Similarity	F2 – Creative Choice Counter-conformity	F3 – Unpopular Choice Counter-conformity
Often when buying merchandise, an important goal is to find something that communicates my uniqueness.	.846		
I often combine possessions in such a way that I create a personal image for myself that can’t be duplicated.	.810		
I often look for one-of-a-kind products or brands so that I create a style that is all my own.	.741		
I often try to find a more interesting version of run-of-the-mill products because I enjoy being original.	.729		
When a product I own becomes popular among the general population, I begin using it less.		.766	
Products don’t seem to hold much value for me when they are purchased regularly by everyone.		.748	
As a rule, I dislike products or brands that are customarily purchased by everyone.		.748	
I often dress unconventionally even when it’s likely to offend others.			.869
If someone hinted that I had been dressing inappropriately for a social situation, I would continue dressing in the same manner.			.850
<b>% of Variance</b>	44.489	15.924	11.207
<b>Total % of Variance</b>		71.621	
<b>Eigenvalue</b>	4.004	1.433	1.009
<b>Cronbach’s Alpha</b>	.831	.738	.777
<b>Overall Cronbach’s Alpha</b>		.837	
<b>KMO</b>		.810	
<b>Barlett’s Test of Sphericity</b>		.000	

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The following sections will discuss the results of the hypotheses. A summary of the results for each study can be found at the end of each study.

### **Results for Hypotheses H1 – H3**

The set of hypotheses H1, H2 and H3 examines the influence of presence of mimicry towards perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at **Table 6.2.3C** and **Table 6.2.4C**.

**Table 6.2.3C:** Stepwise regression of presence of mimicry towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand

	<b>B- Values</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Gap)</b>						
<b>Image Characteristics</b>	.317	.071	.387	.225	4.460	.000*
<b>Physical Characteristics</b>	.200	.087	.199		2.294	.024*
<b>Product evaluation of the mimic brand (Gap)</b>						
<b>Physical Characteristics</b>	.185	.071	.238	.049	2.620	.010*

\*Sig. <.05

**Independent variable:** Presence of mimicry

Stepwise regression was conducted between the three dimensions of the presence of mimicry scale towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Gap). The results show that “Image” ( $\beta = .387$ , Sig. = .000) and “Physical” ( $\beta = .199$ , Sig. = .024) characteristics have a significant positive relationship towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand. Hence, H1 is partially accepted.

Stepwise regression was conducted between the three dimensions of the presence of mimicry scale towards product evaluation of the mimic brand (Gap). It is found that only “Physical” characteristics showed a significant positive relationship towards product evaluation of the mimic brand. Hence, H2 is partially accepted.

**Table 6.2.4C:** Regression between perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand

	<b>B-Values</b>	<b>Standard Error</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand</b>	.303	.066	.393	.147	4.560	.000*

\*Sig. <.05

**Dependent variable:** Product evaluation of the mimic brand

Linear regression was conducted between perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand. It is found that perception of luxury towards the mimic brand has a significant positive relationship towards product evaluation of the mimic brand ( $\beta=.393$ , Sig.=.000). Hence, H3 is supported. The result indicates that the higher consumers' perception of luxury towards the mimic brand will lead to positive product evaluation of the mimic brand.

### Results for Hypotheses H5A, H5B, H6A and H6B

The set of hypotheses H5A, H5B, H6A and H6B examines the influence of brand familiarity towards the mimic brand and brand familiarity towards the model brand on perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at Table 6.2.5C.

**Table 6.2.5C:** Regression of brand familiarity towards the mimic /model brand towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand

	<b>B-Values</b>	<b>Standard Error</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Gap)</b>						
<b>Brand familiarity towards the mimic Brand</b>	-.165	.063	-.239	.049	-2.626	.010
<b>Brand familiarity towards the model Brand</b>	-.052	.066	-.073	-.003	-.780	.437
<b>Product evaluation of the mimic brand (Gap)</b>						
<b>Brand familiarity towards the mimic Brand</b>	.164	.047	.308	.087	3.462	.001
<b>Brand familiarity towards the model Brand</b>	.076	.051	.139	.011	1.499	.137

\*Sig. <.05

Linear regression was conducted between brand familiarity towards the mimic brand (Gap) and perception of luxury towards the mimic brand. The results showed a significant negative relationship towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand ( $\beta=-.239$ , Sig.=.010). Hence, H5a is rejected.

Similarly, linear regression was conducted between brand familiarity towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand. The findings showed a significant positive relationship between the two variables ( $\beta=.308$ , Sig.=.001). Hence, H5b is accepted.

Linear regression was conducted between brand familiarity towards the model brand (Burberry) and perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Gap). The results did not show a significant relationship. Hence H6a is rejected.

Linear regression was conducted between brand familiarity towards the model brand (Burberry) and product evaluation of the mimic brand (Gap). The results did not show a significant relationship. Hence, H6b is rejected.

### Results for Hypotheses H7 and H8

The set of hypotheses H7 and H8 examines the influence of the three dimensions of consumers' need for uniqueness on perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at Table 6.2.6C.

**Table 6.2.6C:** Multiple regression of consumers' need for uniqueness towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand

	<b>B- Values</b>	<b>Standard Error</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Gap)</b>						
<b>Creative Choice Counter- conformity</b>	.051	.113	.049		.448	.655
<b>Unpopular Choice Counter- conformity</b>	-.094	.083	-.118	.009	-1.126	.263
<b>Avoidance of Similarity</b>	-.115	.105	-.126		-1.098	.274
<b>Product evaluation of the mimic brand (Gap)</b>						
<b>Creative Choice Counter- conformity</b>	.055	.087	.068		.630	.530
<b>Unpopular Choice Counter- conformity</b>	-.107	.064	-.174	.023	-1.678	.096
<b>Avoidance of Similarity</b>	-.077	.080	-.109		-.958	.340
<b>*Sig &lt;.05</b>						

Regression analysis was conducted between consumers' need for uniqueness and perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Gap). No significant relationship emerged. Similarly, regression analysis was conducted between consumers' need for uniqueness and product evaluation of the mimic brand (Gap). No significant relationship was found. Hence, H7 and H8 are both rejected.

### Results for Hypotheses H9 and H10

The set of hypotheses H9 and H10 deals with the influence the three dimensions of consumers' need for uniqueness on perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at Table 6.2.7C.

**Table 6.2.7C:** Linear regression of status consumption towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand

	B-Values	Standard Error	Beta	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	t-value	Sig.
<b>Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Gap)</b>						
Status Consumption	-.221	.101	-.202	.032	-2.199	.030*
<b>Product evaluation of the mimic brand (Gap)</b>						
Status Consumption	-.135	.078	-.159	.017	-1.720	.088

\*Sig <.05

Linear regression was conducted between status consumption and perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Gap). It is found that status consumption has a significant negative relationship towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand ( $\beta = -.202$ , Sig. = .030). Hence, H9 is rejected.

Linear regression was conducted between status consumption and product evaluation of the mimic brand (Gap). It is found that there is no significant relationship between status consumption and product evaluation of the mimic brand. Hence, H10 is rejected.

## MEDIATION ANALYSIS

### Results for Hypotheses H4, H11A, H11B, H12 and H13

The set of hypotheses H4, H11A, H11B, H12 and H13 examines mediating effects within the conceptual model. Hypothesis H4 examines the mediating effects of perception of luxury towards the mimic brand on presence of mimicry and product evaluation of the mimic brand. Hypotheses H11A, H11B, H12 and H13 examines the mediating effects of brand familiarity towards the mimic brand, brand familiarity towards the model brand, consumers' need for uniqueness, and status consumption on perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at Table 6.2.8C and Table 6.2.9C.

**Table 6.2.8C:** Mediation analysis

Predictor	Criterion	Std Error	B	Beta	t-value	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	Sig.
Physical Characteristics	Perception of Luxury	.089	.328	.324	3.656	.097	.000
Physical Characteristics	Product Evaluation	.071	.185	.238	2.620	.049	.010
Perception of Luxury	Product Evaluation	.066	.303	.393	4.560	.147	.000
Perception of Luxury	Product Evaluation	.070	.272	.353	3.888	.153	.000
Physical Characteristics		.070	.096	.124	1.368		.174

**Sobel Test:**  $z = 2.874$  \*  $p < .05$ ; **Goodman Test:**  $z = 2.916$ \*  $p < .05$ ;  
**\*\* Sig.** < 0.05

Mediation effects of perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Gap) on the relationship between “Physical” characteristics and product evaluation of the mimic brand was conducted.

Based on the results, it can be observed that “Physical” characteristics fully mediates the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation. Hence, H4 is partially accepted.

**Table 6.2.9C:** Mediation analysis

Predictor	Criterion	Std Error	B	Beta	t-value	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	Sig.
Perception of Luxury	Brand Familiarity	.132	-.346	-.239	-2.626	.049	.010
Perception of Luxury	Product Evaluation	.066	.303	.393	4.560	.147	.000
Brand Familiarity	Product Evaluation	.047	.164	.306	3.462	.087	.001
Perception of Luxury	Product Evaluation	.061	.381	.495	6.219	.314	.000
Brand Familiarity		.042	.227	.427	5.363		.000

**Sobel Test:**  $z = 2.096$  \*  $p < .05$ ; **Goodman Test:**  $z = 2.153$  \*  $p < .05$ ;  
**\*\* Sig. > 0.05**

Mediation effects of brand familiarity towards the mimic brand on the relationship between perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Gap) and product evaluation of the mimic brand was conducted.

Based on the results, it can be observed that brand familiarity towards the mimic brand fully mediates the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation. Hence, H11a is supported.

## MODERATION ANALYSIS

### Results for Hypotheses H14A, H14B, H15 and H16

The set of hypotheses H14A, H14B, H15 AND H16 examines the moderating effects of brand familiarity towards the mimic brand, brand familiarity towards the model brand, consumers' need for uniqueness, and status consumption on perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at Table 6.2.10C.

**Table 6.2.10C:** Hierarchical moderated regression

Independent Variables	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	F	df	Δ R <sup>2</sup>	F Change	df	β	Sig.
<b>Perception of Luxury</b>	.147	20.796	1	.154	20.796	114	.948	.000*
<b>Perception of Luxury + Brand Familiarity (mimic)</b>	.314	27.312	1	.172	28.763	113	1.101	.002*
<b>Perception of Luxury + Brand Familiarity (mimic) + (Perception of Luxury x Brand Familiarity (mimic))</b>	.332	20.088	1	.024	4.128	112	-.733	.045*
<b>Perception of Luxury</b>	.147	20.796	1	.154	20.796	114	.490	.073
<b>Perception of Luxury + Brand Familiarity (model)</b>	.168	12.617	1	.028	3.908	113	.281	.423
<b>Perception of Luxury + Brand Familiarity (model) + (Perception of Luxury x Brand Familiarity (model))</b>	.161	8.392	1	.001	.110	112	-.139	.740
<b>Perception of Luxury</b>	.147	20.796	1	.154	20.796	114	-.062	.882
<b>Perception of Luxury + Status Consumption</b>	.146	10.836	1	.007	.894	113	-.472	.206
<b>Perception of Luxury + Status Consumption + (Perception of Luxury x Status Consumption)</b>	.147	7.622	1	.009	1.162	112	.532	.283
<b>Perception of Luxury</b>	.147	20.796	1	.154	20.796	114	-.129	.691
<b>Perception of Luxury + Avoidance of Similarity</b>	.148	10.995	1	.009	1.164	113	-.634	.068
<b>Perception of Luxury + Avoidance of Similarity + (Perception of Luxury x Avoidance of Similarity)</b>	.160	8.311	1	.019	2.627	112	.696	.108

<b>Perception of Luxury</b>	.147	20.796	1	.154	20.796	114	.024	.954
<b>Perception of Luxury + Creative Choice Counter-conformity</b>	.140	10.348	1	.001	.070	113	-.314	.334
<b>Perception of Luxury + Creative Choice Counter-conformity + (Perception of Luxury x Creative Choice Counter-conformity)</b>	.139	7.182	1	.007	.872	112	.464	.352
<b>Perception of Luxury</b>	.147	20.796	1	.154	20.796	114	-.077	.695
<b>Perception of Luxury + Unpopular Choice Counter-conformity</b>	.159	11.898	1	.020	2.692	113	-.858	.004
<b>Perception of Luxury + Unpopular Choice Counter-conformity + (Perception of Luxury x Unpopular Choice Counter-conformity)</b>	.198	10.487	1	.045	6.506	112	.810	.012
<b>* Dependent variable : Product evaluation of the mimic brand (Gap)</b>								

Hierarchical moderated regression analysis was conducted on brand familiarity towards the mimic brand, status consumption, consumers' need for uniqueness between perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand to test for the interaction effects between the moderator, independent variable and the dependent variable.

Based on the results of the hierarchical moderation analysis, brand familiarity towards the mimic brand is found to be a significant moderator of perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand. The results suggest that brand familiarity towards the mimic brand can enhance product evaluation of the mimic brand in the presence of positive perception of luxury towards the mimic brand. Therefore, H14a is supported.

The other proposed moderators are found to be insignificant. Hence, H14b, H15 and H16 are rejected.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FOR STUDY TEN

The findings of the hypotheses are summarized below in Table 6.2.11C.

**Table 6.2.11C:** Summary of findings for Study Ten

<b>Hypotheses</b>		<b>Accepted/Rejected</b>
<b>H1</b>	Presence of mimicry will lead to a positive perception of luxury	Partially accepted
<b>H2</b>	Presence of mimicry will lead to a positive product evaluation of the mimic brand	Partially accepted
<b>H3</b>	Perception of luxury will lead to a positive product evaluation of the mimic brand	Accepted
<b>H4</b>	Perception of luxury will mediate the relationship between the presence of mimicry and product evaluation of the mimic brand	Partially accepted
<b>Brand familiarity</b>		
<b>H5a</b>	Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand will lead to a positive perception of luxury towards the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H5b</b>	Brand familiarity towards the model brand will lead to a positive perception of luxury towards the mimic brand	Accepted
<b>H6a</b>	Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand will lead to a positive product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H6b</b>	Brand familiarity towards the model brand will lead to a positive product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>Consumers' need for uniqueness</b>		
<b>H7</b>	Consumers' need for uniqueness will lead to a positive perception of luxury towards the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H8</b>	Consumers' need for uniqueness will lead to a positive product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>Status consumption</b>		
<b>H9</b>	Status consumption will lead to a positive perception of luxury towards the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H10</b>	Status consumption will lead to a positive product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>Mediation effects:</b>		
<b>H11a</b>	Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand will mediate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation towards a mimic brand	Accepted
<b>H11b</b>	Brand familiarity towards the model brand will mediate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation towards a mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H12</b>	Consumers' need for uniqueness will mediate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation towards a mimic brand	Rejected

<b>H13</b>	Status consumption will mediate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation towards a mimic brand	Rejected
<b>Moderation effects:</b>		
<b>H14a</b>	Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand will moderate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand	Accepted
<b>H14b</b>	Brand familiarity towards the model brand will moderate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H15</b>	Consumers' need for uniqueness will moderate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H16</b>	Status consumption will moderate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected

The results for Study Ten by using Gap as the mimic brand and Burberry as the model brand has shown some interesting results. It was revealed that an “Image” characteristic of the presence of mimicry scale has significant positive relationship towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand. This finding is reflected in previous studies that suggest the importance of image similarities between the mimic and the model brand in order to generalize “luxury”, which is what a luxury brand mimic hopes to connote (Penz and Stottinger, 2008; Wilcox et al., 2009). In addition, a “Physical” characteristic was found to have significant positive relationship towards perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. This finding is in contrast to past studies that suggest that close similarities infer blatant copying and may therefore result in negative references (e.g. Warlop and Alba, 2004; van Horen and Pieters, 2012b). However this finding can possibly be explained by the fact that Gap itself is a well-known brand that although mimicked the much coveted Burberry trench coat, the Gap mimic actually provides a lower priced alternative that still provides similar “style” as that of Burberry. In fact, with Pouyannian mimics, they do want to “look like” the model brands in styling as that is what consumers look for – a cheaper alternative that looks like the model. In contrast to being a counterfeit, Pouyannian mimics often are known brands and may provide slight alterations to the brand that result in positive perception of luxury (because of the styling and aesthetics) and product evaluation (Burberry trench is a trendsetting status icon). Therefore, it is important to emphasize the similarity of image characteristics in terms of the image of prestige, sophistication and success in order to enhance the perception of luxury towards Gap. In addition, the close physical similarity in the case of Gap mimicking Burberry resulted in positive product evaluations towards Gap. It was also found that perception of luxury towards the mimic brand has a significant positive

relationship towards product evaluation of the mimic brand. This finding is consistent with results for Hagtvedt and Patrick (2008).

Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand was found to have a significant negative relationship towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand. This finding was interesting and could be explained by the existing perception of Gap may not be seen as highly “luxury” which could have resulted in being perceived negatively. This may be due to the current existing brand image of Gap as a provider of mid-priced clothing. This provides an area for the mimic brand to enhance. However, brand familiarity towards the mimic brand has a significant positive relationship towards product evaluation of the mimic brand. Therefore, while perception of luxury towards Gap may be lower, the product evaluation of the quality of the mimic itself is still positive. Interestingly, the finding is against common understanding that the brand images of the mimic brand will spillover to its products (Simonin and Ruth, 1994). This finding provides insights that while the brand image of the mimic brand may not be seen as “luxury”, if the product that they have mimicked is a successful or a lucrative status symbol, consumers may still form positive product evaluations towards the mimic brand.

It was also found that status consumption has a significant negative relationship towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand. This suggests that the more status conscious the consumer, the less likely they will perceive Gap to be “luxury”. Even by copying Burberry’s products/trench coat, consumers may still not generalize Gap to be “luxury”. This could also be because of existing brand image of Gap that resulted in this negative perception. Hence, it is important for mimic brands to ensure that their brands are perceived to be “luxury” if they want to be seen as a “luxury” mimic. In fact, even by emulating the Burberry trench did not transfer the aura of Burberry to Gap (Kastanakis and Balabanis, 2012). Therefore, the entrenched image of Gap needs to be looked at in order to be seen as a “luxury” mimic than as a “cheap” mimic.

There are a number of mediators in this study. Firstly, perception of luxury was found to fully mediate the relationship between “Physical” characteristics and product evaluation of the mimic brand. Therefore, this suggests the importance of perception of luxury to play a significant role in influencing product evaluation of the mimic brand. The other mediator found was the brand familiarity towards the mimic brand. It was found to mediate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. Therefore, it is important for Gap to increase brand familiarity. Furthermore it is important to

enhance the existing image of the mimic brand in order to be better perceived and evaluated by consumers.

Lastly, the study found brand familiarity towards the mimic brand to be a significant moderator of perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. This again stresses the importance of brand familiarity of Gap in order enhance consumer's product evaluation of the mimic brand.

## **STUDY ELEVEN: Guess and Gucci**

Based on Table 6.1C, Study Eleven will be testing the hypothesized relationship for the shoes product category using two real life brands to test for the effects of the presence of Pouyannian mimicry on consumers. The model brand is Gucci and the mimic brand is Guess. The signal receiver(s) are consumers. Respondent characteristics are first discussed, followed by the hypotheses postulated in Chapter 3.

### **Profile of Respondents**

The total usable number of responses for Study Eleven is 95 respondents. The responses that were incomplete or had missing values were removed and not used for analysis. The respondents were mainly between 19 to 25 years of age (89.5%), with more males (55.8%) than females. The majority of the respondents are Australians (55.7%). Furthermore, it is found that most of the respondents are more familiar with Gucci (model brand) ( $M = 5.64$ ,  $SD = .978$ ) than Guess (mimic brand) ( $M = 5.38$ ,  $SD = 1.213$ ).

### **Factor Analysis – Presence of mimicry scale**

Prior to conducting analysis, factor analysis was conducted on the presence of mimicry scale (Pouyannian) that was developed for this study (see detailed scale development procedure in Chapter 5). Results from Table 6.3.1C shows that there are three factors and consists of 13 items that accounts for 79.710% of cumulative variance. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients were all above 0.8 which is deemed suitable for further analysis (Nunnally, 1970). The three factors are namely "intellectual characteristics", "image characteristics", and "physical characteristics" which are used for subsequent analysis.

**Table 6.3.1C:** Factor analysis for Pouyannian mimicry

Items	Factor Loadings		
	F1 – P- Intellectual Characteristics	F2 – P- Image Characteristics	F3 – P- Physical Characteristics
The products express a similar degree of creativity	.866		
The products express a similar degree of originality	.812		
The products express a similar degree of novelty	.805		
The products express a similar degree of innovation	.770		
The products express a similar degree of uniqueness	.734		
The products express a similar image of success		.897	
The products express a similar image of prestige		.870	
The products express a similar image of elegance		.793	
The products express a similar image of sophistication		.752	
The products share similar physical appearances			.872
The products share similar looks			.868
The products share similar designs			.861
The products share similar aesthetics			.799
<b>% of Variance</b>	53.646	17.914	8.150
<b>Cumulative % of Variance</b>		79.710	
<b>Eigenvalue</b>	6.974	2.329	1.060
<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	.923	.936	.892
<b>Overall Cronbach's Alpha</b>		.925	
<b>KMO</b>		.891	
<b>Barlett's Test of Sphericity</b>		.000	

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser

Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.

### **Factor Analysis – Consumers’ need for uniqueness scale**

An exploratory factor analysis was conducted on the original 31-item consumers’ need for uniqueness scale (see Table 6.3.2C). Through Varimax rotation, the items were reduced to 14 items with an acceptable range of reliabilities. The three dimensions of consumers’ need for uniqueness which is namely avoidance of similarity, creative choice counter-conformity and unpopular choice counter-conformity will be used for subsequent analysis.

**Table 6.3.2C:** Factor analysis of the consumers' need for uniqueness scale

Items	Factor Loadings		
	F1 – Avoidance of Similarity	F2 – Creative Choice Counter-conformity	F3 – Unpopular Choice Counter-conformity
I actively seek to develop my personal uniqueness by buying special products or brands.	.818		
Having an eye for products that are interesting and unusual assists me in establishing a distinctive image.	.816		
I have sometimes purchased unusual products or brands as a way to create a more distinctive personal image.	.781		
I'm often on the lookout for new products or brands that will add to my personal uniqueness.	.756		
The products and brands that I like best are the ones that express my individuality.	.750		
Often when buying merchandise, an important goal is to find something that communicates my uniqueness.	.733		
I often combine possessions in such a way that I create a personal image for myself that can't be duplicated.	.674		
I often try to avoid products or brands that I know are bought by the general population.		.879	
As a rule, I dislike products or brands that are customarily purchased by everyone.		.875	
The more commonplace a product or brand is among the general population, the less interested I am in buying it.		.866	
When a product I own becomes popular among the general population, I begin using it less.		.801	
When a style of clothing I own becomes too commonplace, I usually quit wearing it.		.707	
If someone hinted that I had been dressing inappropriately for a social situation, I would continue dressing in the same manner.			.863
I often dress unconventionally even when it's likely to offend others.			.799
<b>% of Variance</b>	47.780	15.612	7.856
<b>Total % of Variance</b>		71.248	
<b>Eigenvalue</b>	6.689	2.186	1.100
<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	.902	.920	.764
<b>Overall Cronbach's Alpha</b>		.913	
<b>KMO</b>		.865	
<b>Barlett's Test of Sphericity</b>		.000	

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following sections will discuss the results of the hypotheses. A summary of the results for each study can be found at the end of each study.

### Results for Hypotheses H1 – H3

The set of hypotheses H1, H2 and H3 examines the influence of presence of mimicry towards perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at Table 6.3.3C and Table 6.3.4C.

**Table 6.3.3C:** Stepwise regression of presence of mimicry towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand

	B-Values	Std. Error	Beta	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	t-value	Sig.
<b>Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Guess)</b>						
<b>Image Characteristics</b>	.386	.096	.449	.435	4.034	.000*
<b>Intellectual Characteristics</b>	.280	.116	.269		2.421	.017
<b>Product evaluation of the mimic brand (Guess)</b>						
<b>Intellectual Characteristics</b>	.416	.078	.485	.227	5.352	.000

\*Sig. <.05

**Independent variable:** Presence of mimicry

Stepwise regression was conducted between the three dimensions of the presence of mimicry scale towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Guess). The results show that “Image” ( $\beta=.449$ , Sig. =.000) and “Intellectual” ( $\beta=.269$ , Sig. =.017) characteristics have a significant positive relationship towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand. Hence, H1 is partially accepted.

Stepwise regression was conducted between the three dimensions of the presence of mimicry scale towards product evaluation of the mimic brand (Guess). It was found that “Intellectual” characteristics has a significant positive relationship towards product evaluation of the mimic brand ( $\beta=.485$ , Sig. =.000). Hence, H2 is partially accepted.

**Table 6.3.4C:** Regression between perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand

	<b>B-Values</b>	<b>Standard Error</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Guess)</b>	.546	.064	.664	.435	8.565	.000

\*Sig. <.05

**Dependent variable:** Product evaluation of the mimic brand

Linear regression was conducted between perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand. It is found that perception of luxury towards the mimic brand has a significant positive relationship towards product evaluation of the mimic brand ( $\beta=.664$ , Sig. =.000). Hence, H3 accepted.

The result indicates that the higher consumers' perception of luxury towards the mimic brand will lead to positive product evaluation of the mimic brand.

### Results for Hypotheses H5A, H5B, H6A and H6B

The set of hypotheses H5A, H5B, H6A and H6B examines the influence of brand familiarity towards the mimic brand and brand familiarity towards the model brand on perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at Table 6.3.5C.

**Table 6.3.5C:** Regression of brand familiarity towards the mimic /model brand towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand

	B-Values	Standard Error	Beta	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	t-value	Sig.
<b>Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Guess)</b>						
<b>Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand (Guess)</b>	-.030	.118	-.026	-.010	-.252	.802
<b>Brand familiarity towards the model Brand</b>	-.217	.117	-.189	.026	-1.861	.066
<b>Product evaluation of the mimic brand (Guess)</b>						
<b>Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand (Guess)</b>	.241	.093	.259	.057	2.582	.011*
<b>Brand familiarity towards the model Brand</b>	-.002	.098	-.002	-.011	-.017	.986

\*Sig. <.05

Linear regression was conducted between brand familiarity towards the mimic brand (Guess) and perception of luxury towards the mimic brand. The results show no significant relationship between the variables. Linear regression was conducted between brand familiarity towards the mimic brand (Guess) and product evaluation of the mimic brand. The results show a significant positive relationship ( $\beta=.256$ , Sig. =.011). Hence, H5a is rejected and H5b is accepted.

Linear regression was conducted between brand familiarity towards the model brand (Gucci) and perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Guess). It is found that there is no significant relationship between brand familiarity towards the model brand (Gucci) and perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Guess). Linear regression was conducted between brand familiarity towards the model brand (Gucci) and product evaluation of the mimic brand. The results show no significant relationship between the variables. Hence, H6a and H6b are rejected.

### Results for Hypotheses H7 and H8

The set of hypotheses H7 and H8 examines the influence of the three dimensions of consumers' need for uniqueness on perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at Table 6.3.6C.

**Table 6.3.6C:** Multiple regression of consumers' need for uniqueness towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand

	B-Values	Standard Error	Beta	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	t-value	Sig.
<b>Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Guess)</b>						
<b>Creative Choice Counter-conformity</b>	.186	.145	.145	.132	1.284	.202
<b>Avoidance of Similarity</b>	-.361	.113	-.382		-3.204	.002*
<b>Unpopular Choice Counter-conformity</b>	.354	.104	.387		3.410	.001*
<b>Product evaluation of the mimic brand (Guess)</b>						
<b>Creative Choice Counter-conformity</b>	.189	.123	.178	.073	1.529	.130
<b>Avoidance of Similarity</b>	-.282	.096	-.362		-2.942	.004*
<b>Unpopular Choice Counter-conformity</b>	.175	.088	.232		1.982	.050*

\*Sig <.05

Regression analysis was conducted between consumers' need for uniqueness and perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Guess). It was found that avoidance of similarity has a significant negative relationship towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand ( $\beta = -.382$ , Sig. = .002). Unpopular choice counter-conformity is found to have significant positive relationship towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand ( $\beta = .387$ , Sig. = .001).

Regression analysis was conducted between consumers' need for uniqueness and product evaluation of the mimic brand (Guess). It was found that avoidance of similarity has a significant negative relationship towards product evaluation of the mimic brand ( $\beta = -.362$ , Sig. = .004). Unpopular choice counter-conformity was found to have a weak significant positive relationship towards product evaluation of the mimic brand ( $\beta = .232$ , Sig. = .050). Hence, H7 and H8 are partially accepted.

### Results for Hypotheses H9 and H10

The set of hypotheses H9 and H10 deals with the influence the three dimensions of consumers' need for uniqueness on perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at Table 6.3.7C.

**Table 6.3.7C:** Linear regression of status consumption towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand

	<b>B-Values</b>	<b>Standard Error</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Guess)</b>						
<b>Status Consumption</b>	-.008	.125	-.007	-.011	-.064	.949
<b>Product evaluation of the mimic brand (Guess)</b>						
<b>Status Consumption</b>	-.038	.103	-.039	-.009	-.373	.710

\*Sig <.05

Linear regression was conducted between status consumption and perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Guess). No significant relationship was found. Similarly, linear regression was conducted between status consumption and product evaluation of the mimic brand (Guess). No significant relationship was found. Hence, H9 and H10 are both rejected.

## MEDIATION ANALYSIS

### Results for Hypotheses H4, H11A, H11B, H12 and H13

The set of hypotheses H4, H11A, H11B, H12 and H13 examines mediating effects within the conceptual model. Hypothesis H4 examines the mediating effects of perception of luxury towards the mimic brand on presence of mimicry and product evaluation of the mimic brand. Hypotheses H11A, H11B, H12 and H13 examines the mediating effects of brand familiarity towards the mimic brand, brand familiarity towards the model brand, consumers' need for uniqueness, and status consumption on perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at Table 6.3.8C.

**Table 6.3.8C:** Mediation analysis

Predictor	Criterion	Std Error	B	Beta	t-value	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	Sig.
Intellectual Characteristics	Perception of Luxury	.087	.615	.591	7.070	.343	.000
Intellectual Characteristics	Product Evaluation	.078	.416	.485	5.352	.227	.000
Perception of Luxury	Product Evaluation	.064	.546	.664	8.565	.435	.000
Perception of Luxury	Product Evaluation	.079	.477	.580	6.071	.443	.000
Intellectual Characteristics		.082	.122	.142	1.491		.139

**Sobel Test:**  $z = 5.443$  \*  $p > .05$ ; **Goodman Test:**  $z = 5.465$  \*  $p > .05$ ;

\*\* Sig. < 0.05

Mediation effects of perception of luxury towards the mimic brand on the relationship between “Intellectual” characteristics and product evaluation of the mimic brand was conducted.

Based on the results, it can be observed that perception of luxury towards the mimic brand fully mediates the relationship between “Intellectual” characteristics and product evaluation of the mimic brand.

## MODERATION ANALYSIS

### Results for Hypotheses H14A, H14B, H15 and H16

The set of hypotheses H14A, H14B, H15 and H16 examines the moderating effects of brand familiarity towards the mimic brand, brand familiarity towards the model brand, consumers' need for uniqueness, and status consumption on perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at Table 6.3.9C.

**Table 6.3.9C:** Hierarchical moderated regression

Independent Variables	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	F	df	Δ R <sup>2</sup>	F Change	df	β	Sig.
Perception of Luxury	.435	73.358	1	.441	73.358	93	.768	.040
Perception of Luxury + Brand Familiarity (mimic)	.507	49.276	1	.076	14.525	92	.349	.219
Perception of Luxury + Brand Familiarity (mimic) + (Perception of Luxury x Brand Familiarity (mimic))	.502	35.542	1	.000	.071	91	-.121	.790
Perception of Luxury	.435	73.358	1	.441	73.358	93	.363	.380
Perception of Luxury + Brand Familiarity (model)	.445	38.701	1	.016	2.701	92	-.074	.779
Perception of Luxury + Brand Familiarity (model) + (Perception of Luxury x Brand Familiarity (model))	.443	25.918	1	.004	.649	91	.355	.423
Perception of Luxury	.435	73.358	1	.441	73.358	93	.706	.074
Perception of Luxury + Status Consumption	.430	36.457	1	.001	.193	92	-.006	.981
Perception of Luxury + Status Consumption + (Perception of Luxury x Status Consumption)	.424	24.048	1	.000	.012	91	-.051	.913
Perception of Luxury	.435	73.358	1	.441	73.358	93	.865	.000
Perception of Luxury + Avoidance of Similarity	.436	36.337	1	.007	1.094	92	.156	.496
Perception of Luxury + Avoidance of Similarity + (Perception of Luxury x Avoidance of Similarity)	.437	24.014	1	.007	1.227	91	-.311	.271

<b>Perception of Luxury</b>	.435	73.358	1	.441	73.358	93	.773	.048
<b>Perception of Luxury + Creative Choice Counter-conformity</b>	.429	37.263	1	.000	.059	92	.082	.719
<b>Perception of Luxury + Creative Choice Counter-conformity + (Perception of Luxury x Creative Choice Counter-conformity)</b>	.423	25.312	1	.001	.087	91	-.136	.768
<b>Perception of Luxury</b>	.435	73.358	1	.441	73.358	93	.773	.048
<b>Perception of Luxury + Unpopular Choice Counter-conformity</b>	.431	36.611	1	.002	.365	92	.082	.719
<b>Perception of Luxury + Unpopular Choice Counter-conformity + (Perception of Luxury x Unpopular Choice Counter-conformity)</b>	.432	24.869	1	.007	1.214	91	-.136	.768
<b>* Dependent variable : Product evaluation of the mimic brand (Guess)</b>								

Hierarchical moderated regression analysis was conducted on brand familiarity towards the mimic brand, status consumption, consumers' need for uniqueness between perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand to test for the interaction effects between the moderator, independent variable and the dependent variable. Based on the results of the hierarchical moderation analysis, the moderators are found to be insignificant. Hence, H14a, H14 b, H15 and H16 are rejected.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FOR STUDY ELEVEN

The findings of the hypotheses are summarized below in Table 6.3.10C.

**Table 6.3.10C:** Summary of findings for Study Eleven

<b>Hypotheses</b>		<b>Accepted/Rejected</b>
<b>H1</b>	Presence of mimicry will lead to a positive perception of luxury	Partially accepted
<b>H2</b>	Presence of mimicry will lead to a positive product evaluation of the mimic brand	Partially accepted
<b>H3</b>	Perception of luxury will lead to a positive product evaluation of the mimic brand	Accepted
<b>H4</b>	Perception of luxury will mediate the relationship between the presence of mimicry and product evaluation of the mimic brand	Accepted
<b>Brand familiarity</b>		
<b>H5a</b>	Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand will lead to a positive perception of luxury towards the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H5b</b>	Brand familiarity towards the model brand will lead to a positive perception of luxury towards the mimic brand	Accepted
<b>H6a</b>	Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand will lead to a positive product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H6b</b>	Brand familiarity towards the model brand will lead to a positive product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>Consumers' need for uniqueness</b>		
<b>H7</b>	Consumers' need for uniqueness will lead to a positive perception of luxury towards the mimic brand	Partially accepted
<b>H8</b>	Consumers' need for uniqueness will lead to a positive product evaluation of the mimic brand	Partially accepted
<b>Status consumption</b>		
<b>H9</b>	Status consumption will lead to a positive perception of luxury towards the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H10</b>	Status consumption will lead to a positive product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>Mediation effects:</b>		
<b>H11a</b>	Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand will mediate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation towards a mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H11b</b>	Brand familiarity towards the model brand will mediate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation towards a mimic brand	Rejected

<b>H12</b>	Consumers' need for uniqueness will mediate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation towards a mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H13</b>	Status consumption will mediate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation towards a mimic brand	Rejected
<b>Moderation effects:</b>		
<b>H14a</b>	Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand will moderate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H14b</b>	Brand familiarity towards the model brand will moderate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H15</b>	Consumers' need for uniqueness will moderate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H16</b>	Status consumption will moderate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected

The results of Study Eleven by using Guess as the mimic brand and Gucci as the model brand has shown some interesting results. It was revealed that an “Image” characteristic of the presence of mimicry scale has a significant positive relationship towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand. This echoes previous results that image is a key characteristic determining how “luxury” consumers perceive the mimic brand to be. Based on generalization theory, the similarity in image provided associations that is transferred to the mimic brand (Till and Priluck, 2000).

However, “Intellectual” characteristic was found to be a significant positive predictor of both perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. This suggests that similarity between the mimic and the model brand in terms of the image (such as image of prestige) is important to form positive perception of luxury towards Guess. However, intellectual characteristics such as whether they are similar in degree of innovation, creativity and novelty will result in positive perception of luxury and favourable product evaluation of Guess. This can be suggesting that the thematic attributes of copying (i.e. concept of using the monogram on its shoe design) could have transferred to positive perception of luxury and product evaluation. It is also found in the study that perception of luxury towards the mimic brand has a significant positive relationship towards product evaluation of the mimic brand. This finding is consistent with Hagtvedt and Patrick’s (2008) findings.

Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand is found to have a significant positive relationship towards product evaluation of the mimic brand. This suggests that with consumers who are familiar with Guess, they will tend to like the mimic brand better. Based on the categorization theory, consumers may not have anchored Guess as a cheap or a copycat (Loken et al., 1986; Loken, 2006). Furthermore, the existing knowledge in consumers' minds may have still associated Guess with a semi-"luxury" brand with quality. However, this could be also due to the country of study. Australians may be less well versed with brands, and therefore may still perceive the brand to have positive brand image.

Interestingly, avoidance of similarity and unpopular choice counter-conformity are found to have significant relationship towards both perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. Avoidance of similarity was found to have a negative relationship towards perception of luxury and product evaluation of Guess. This could be attributed to the fact that the close mimic and the appearance of Guess products do tend to be mainstream. Furthermore, the brand is also seen as a "common" brand that is very much present in many countries. However, it also is seen as a "cheap" copy of Gucci. The designs are also seen to be quite mainstream. Hence, these factors could also influence consumers who strive to avoid similarities in their products to perceive Guess to be less "luxury" and less favourable (Kastanakis and Balabanis, 2012). However, unpopular choice counter-conformity was found to have a positive relationship towards perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. This finding could be explained by the fact that while consumers may all strive for the Gucci and other luxuries within the marketplace, products such as Guess would not fall under mainstream luxury. In fact, it may be seen as a much cheaper alternative of a "cheap" luxury. Therefore, for consumers who tend to seek excitement and differentiation through unpopular choices, Guess can be seen as an unpopular luxury (Tian et al., 2001). In fact, recent impression of Guess has been that it is a copycat brand within the mass luxury market.

Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand was found to be fully mediating the relationship between "Intellectual" characteristics and product evaluation of the mimic brand. This suggests that it is important to enhance the perception of luxury towards Guess in order to form positive evaluations towards Guess. Lastly, there were no moderators found in this study.

## **STUDY TWELVE: Thomas Sabo and Tiffany**

Based on Table 6.1C, Study Twelve will be testing the hypothesized relationship for the car product category using two real life brands to test for the effects of the presence of Pouyannian mimicry on consumers. The model brand is Tiffany and Co. and the mimic brand is Thomas Sabo. The signal receiver(s) are consumers. Respondent characteristics are first discussed, followed by the hypotheses postulated in Chapter 3.

### **Profile of Respondents**

The total usable number of responses for Study Twelve is 134 respondents. The responses that were incomplete or had missing values were removed and not used for analysis. The respondents were mainly between 19 to 25 years of age (72.4%), with more females (70.9%) than males. The majority of the respondents are Australians (58.2%). Furthermore, it is found that most of the respondents are more familiar with Tiffany and Co. (model brand) ( $M = 6.02$ ,  $SD = 1.401$ ) than Thomas Sabo (mimic brand) ( $M = 3.41$ ,  $SD = 2.375$ ).

### **Factor Analysis – Presence of mimicry scale**

Prior to conducting analysis, factor analysis was conducted on the presence of mimicry scale (Pouyannian) that was developed for this study (see detailed scale development procedure in Chapter 5). Results from Table 6.4.1C shows that there are three factors and consists of 13 items that accounts for 80.764% of cumulative variance. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients were all above 0.8 which is deemed suitable for further analysis (Nunnally, 1970). The three factors are namely "intellectual characteristics", "image characteristics", and "physical characteristics" which are used for subsequent analysis.

**Table 6.4.1C:** Factor analysis of the Pouyannian mimicry scale

Items	Factor Loadings		
	F1 – P- Intellectual Characteristics	F1 – P- Image Characteristics	F2 – P- Physical Characteristics
The products express a similar degree of originality	.884		
The products express a similar degree of creativity	.852		
The products express a similar degree of novelty	.779		
The products express a similar degree of innovation	.778		
The products express a similar degree of uniqueness	.737		
The products express a similar image of success		.889	
The products express a similar image of prestige		.887	
The products express a similar image of sophistication		.824	
The products express a similar image of elegance		.819	
The products share similar looks			.907
The products share similar designs			.879
The products share similar physical appearances			.868
The products share similar aesthetics			.796
<b>% of Variance</b>	51.761	20.724	8.279
<b>Cumulative % of Variance</b>		80.764	
<b>Eigenvalue</b>	6.729	2.694	1.076
<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	.918	.963	.897
<b>Overall Cronbach's Alpha</b>		.920	
<b>KMO</b>		.881	
<b>Barlett's Test of Sphericity</b>		.000	

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.  
 Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.  
 a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.

### **Factor Analysis – Consumers' need for uniqueness scale**

An exploratory factor analysis was conducted on the original 31-item consumers' need for uniqueness scale (see Table 6.4.2C). Through Varimax rotation, the items were reduced to 17 items with an acceptable range of reliabilities. The three dimensions of consumers' need for uniqueness which is namely avoidance of similarity, creative choice counter-conformity and unpopular choice counter-conformity will be used for subsequent analysis.

**Table 6.4.2C:** Factor analysis of the consumers' need for uniqueness scale

Items	Factor Loadings		
	F1 – Avoidance of Similarity	F2 – Creative Choice Counter-conformity	F3 – Unpopular Choice Counter-conformity
As a rule, I dislike products or brands that are customarily purchased by everyone.	.858		
When a product I own becomes popular among the general population, I begin using it less.	.851		
I often try to avoid products or brands that I know are bought by the general population.	.828		
Products don't seem to hold much value for me when they are purchased regularly by everyone.	.795		
When products or brands I like become extremely popular, I lose interest in them.	.763		
When a style of clothing I own becomes too commonplace, I usually quit wearing it.	.745		
I give up wearing fashions I've purchased once they become popular among the general public.	.721		
I avoid products or brands that have already been accepted and purchased by the average consumer.	.700		
Having an eye for products that are interesting and unusual assists me in establishing a distinctive image.		.821	
The products and brands that I like best are the ones that express my individuality.		.777	
I'm often on the lookout for new products or brands that will add to my personal uniqueness.		.775	
I often try to find a more interesting version of run-of-the-mill products because I enjoy being original.		.713	
I collect unusual products as a way of telling people I'm different.		.691	
I have sometimes purchased unusual products or brands as a way to create a more distinctive personal image.		.669	
If someone hinted that I had been dressing inappropriately for a social situation, I would continue dressing in the same manner.			.824
I often dress unconventionally even when it's likely to offend others.			.816
I enjoy challenging the prevailing taste of people I know by buying something they wouldn't seem to accept.			.740
<b>% of Variance</b>	49.390	10.476	9.122
<b>Total % of Variance</b>	69.988		
<b>Eigenvalue</b>	8.396	1.781	1.551
<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	.940	.887	.778
<b>Overall Cronbach's Alpha</b>	.933		
<b>KMO</b>	.902		
<b>Barlett's Test of Sphericity</b>	.000		

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following sections will discuss the results of the hypotheses. A summary of the results for each study can be found at the end of each study.

### Results for Hypotheses H1 – H3

The set of hypotheses H1, H2 and H3 examines the influence of presence of mimicry towards perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at Table 6.4.3C and Table 6.4.4C.

**Table 6.4.3C:** Stepwise regression of presence of mimicry towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand

	B-Values	Std Error	Beta	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	t-value	Sig.
<b>Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Thomas Sabo)</b>						
<b>Image Characteristics</b>	.184	.051	.305	.145	3.591	.000*
<b>Physical Characteristics</b>	.160	.078	.173		2.038	.044*
<b>Product evaluation of the mimic brand (Thomas Sabo)</b>						
<b>Intellectual Characteristics</b>	.218	.066	.277	.070	3.313	.001*

\*Sig. <.05

**Independent variable:** Presence of mimicry

Stepwise regression was conducted between the three dimensions of the presence of mimicry scale towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Thomas Sabo). The results show that “Symbolic” ( $\beta=.437$ , Sig. =.000) has a significant positive relationship towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand. On the other hand, “Physical” characteristics showed a significant negative relationship towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand ( $\beta=-.241$ , Sig. =.008). Hence, H1 is partially accepted.

Stepwise regression was conducted between the three dimensions of the presence of mimicry scale towards product evaluation of the mimic brand (Lovelinks). It was found that “Symbolic” characteristics has a significant positive relationship towards product evaluation of the mimic brand ( $\beta=-.253$ , Sig. =.010). Hence, H2 is partially accepted.

**Table 6.4.4C:** Regression between perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand

	<b>B-Values</b>	<b>Standard Error</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Thomas Sabo)</b>	.427	.075	.445	.192	5.704	.000

\*Sig. <.05

**Dependent variable:** Product evaluation of the mimic brand

Linear regression was conducted between perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand. It is found that perception of luxury towards the mimic brand has a significant positive relationship towards product evaluation of the mimic brand ( $\beta=.445$ , Sig. =.000). Hence, H3 accepted.

The result indicates that the higher consumers' perception of luxury towards the mimic brand will lead to positive product evaluation of the mimic brand.

### Results for Hypotheses H5A, H5B, H6A and H6B

The set of hypotheses H5A, H5B, H6A and H6B examines the influence of brand familiarity towards the mimic brand and brand familiarity towards the model brand on perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at Table 6.4.5C.

**Table 6.4.5C:** Regression of brand familiarity towards the mimic /model brand towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand

	B-Values	Std. Error	Beta	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	t-value	Sig.
<b>Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Thomas Sabo)</b>						
<b>Brand familiarity towards the mimic Brand (Thomas Sabo)</b>	.100	.045	.190	.029	2.217	.028
<b>Brand familiarity towards the model Brand (Tiffany)</b>	.005	.063	.008	-.008	.086	.931
<b>Product evaluation of the mimic brand (Thomas Sabo)</b>						
<b>Brand familiarity towards the mimic Brand (Thomas Sabo)</b>	.294	.036	.577	.327	8.076	.000
<b>Brand familiarity towards the model Brand (Tiffany)</b>	.201	.058	.288	.076	3.454	.001*

\*Sig. <.05

Linear regression was conducted between brand familiarity towards the mimic brand (Thomas Sabo) and perception of luxury towards the mimic brand. The results showed a significant positive relationship between brand familiarity towards the mimic brand and perception of luxury towards the mimic brand ( $\beta=.190$ , Sig. =.028). Linear regression was conducted between brand familiarity towards the mimic brand (Thomas Sabo) and product evaluation of the mimic brand. The results show a significant positive relationship ( $\beta=.577$ , Sig. =.000). Hence, H5a and H5b are accepted.

Linear regression was conducted between brand familiarity towards the model brand (Tiffany) and perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Thomas Sabo). The results show no significant relationship between the variables. It is found that there is a significant negative relationship ( $\beta = -.242$ , Sig. = .014) between brand familiarity towards the model brand (Tiffany) and product evaluation of the mimic brand (Thomas Sabo). Hence, H6a is rejected and H6b is accepted.

### Results for Hypotheses H7 and H8

The set of hypotheses H7 and H8 examines the influence of the three dimensions of consumers' need for uniqueness on perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at **Table 6.4.6C**.

**Table 6.4.6C:** Multiple regression of consumers' need for uniqueness towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand

	B-Values	Std. Error	Beta	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	t-value	Sig.
<b>Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Thomas Sabo)</b>						
Avoidance of Similarity	-.077	.092	-.096		-.842	.401
Creative Choice Counter-conformity	.171	.103	.192	.002	1.666	.098
Unpopular Choice Counter-conformity	.014	.085	.016		.164	.870
<b>Product evaluation of the mimic brand (Thomas Sabo)</b>						
Avoidance of Similarity	-.066	.085	-.086		-.775	.440
Creative Choice Counter-conformity	.262	.096	.307	.061	2.741	.007*
Unpopular Choice Counter-conformity	-.204	.079	-.243		-2.589	.011*

\*Sig. <.05

Regression analysis was conducted between consumers' need for uniqueness and perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Lovelinks). The findings did not reveal significant relationship towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand.

Regression analysis was conducted between consumers' need for uniqueness and product evaluation of the mimic brand (Lovelinks). The findings show that creative choice counter-conformity has a significant positive relationship towards product evaluation of the mimic brand ( $\beta=.307$ , Sig. =.007). Unpopular choice counter-conformity is shown to have a significant negative relationship towards product evaluation of the mimic brand ( $\beta=-.243$ , Sig. =.011). Hence, H7 is rejected and H8 is partially accepted.

### Results for Hypotheses H9 and H10

The set of hypotheses H9 and H10 deals with the influence the three dimensions of consumers' need for uniqueness on perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at Table 6.4.7C.

**Table 6.4.7C:** Linear regression of status consumption towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand

	<b>B-Values</b>	<b>Standard Error</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Thomas Sabo)</b>						
<b>Status Consumption</b>	-.007	.070	-.008	-.008	-.096	.924
<b>Product evaluation of the mimic brand (Thomas Sabo)</b>						
<b>Status Consumption</b>	.090	.067	.116	.006	1.346	.181

\*Sig <.05

Linear regression was conducted between status consumption and perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Thomas Sabo). No significant relationship was found. Similarly, linear regression was conducted between status consumption and product evaluation of the mimic brand (Thomas Sabo). No significant relationship was found. Hence, H9 and H10 are both rejected.

## MEDIATION ANALYSIS

### Results for Hypotheses H4, H11A, H11B, H12 and H13

The set of hypotheses H4, H11A, H11B, H12 and H13 examines mediating effects within the conceptual model. Hypothesis H4 examines the mediating effects of perception of luxury towards the mimic brand on presence of mimicry and product evaluation of the mimic brand. Hypotheses H11A, H11B, H12 and H13 examines the mediating effects of brand familiarity towards the mimic brand, brand familiarity towards the model brand, consumers' need for uniqueness, and status consumption on perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at Table 6.4.8C.

**Table 6.4.8C:** Mediation analysis

Predictor	Criterion	Std Error	B	Beta	t-value	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	Sig.
Perception of Luxury	Brand Familiarity	.163	.360	.190	2.217	.029	.028
Perception of Luxury	Product Evaluation	.075	.427	.445	5.704	.192	.000
Brand Familiarity	Product Evaluation	.036	.294	.577	8.076	.327	.000
Perception of Luxury	Product Evaluation	.064	.349	.360	5.475	.449	.000
Brand Familiarity		.034	.259	.508	7.721		.000

**Sobel Test:**  $z = 2.132$  \*  $p < .05$ ; **Goodman Test:**  $z = 2.147$  \*  $p < .05$ ;  
**\*\* Sig. < .05**

Mediation effects of brand familiarity towards the model brand on the relationship between perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Thomas Sabo) and product evaluation of the mimic brand was conducted.

Based on the results, it can be observed that brand familiarity towards the model brand partially mediates the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation. Hence, H11a is supported.

## MODERATION ANALYSIS

### Results for Hypotheses H14A, H14B, H15 and H16

The set of hypotheses H14A, H14B, H15 and H16 examines the moderating effects of brand familiarity towards the mimic brand, brand familiarity towards the model brand, consumers' need for uniqueness, and status consumption on perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. A summary of these results can be seen at Table 6.4.9C.

**Table 6.4.9C:** Hierarchical moderated regression

Independent Variables	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	F	df	Δ R <sup>2</sup>	F Change	df	β	Sig.
Perception of Luxury	.203	34.559	1	.209	34.559	131	.300	.011
Perception of Luxury + Brand Familiarity (mimic)	.449	54.817	1	.249	59.613	130	.298	.384
Perception of Luxury + Brand Familiarity (mimic) + (Perception of Luxury x Brand Familiarity (mimic))	.459	36.504	1	.002	.392	129	.232	.532
Perception of Luxury	.192	32.541	1	.198	32.541	132	.178	.616
Perception of Luxury + Brand Familiarity (model)	.268	25.313	1	.081	14.707	131	-.045	.919
Perception of Luxury + Brand Familiarity (model) + (Perception of Luxury x Brand Familiarity (model))	.265	17.017	1	.003	.584	130	.428	.446
Perception of Luxury	.192	32.541	1	.198	32.541	132	-.086	.000
Perception of Luxury + Status Consumption	.200	17.640	1	.014	2.396	131	-.597	.990
Perception of Luxury + Status Consumption + (Perception of Luxury x Status Consumption)	.223	13.702	1	.028	4.901	130	.905	.948
Perception of Luxury	.192	32.541	1	.198	32.541	132	.434	.020
Perception of Luxury + Avoidance of Similarity	.196	16.147	1	.000	.000	131	-.023	.947
Perception of Luxury + Avoidance of Similarity + (Perception of Luxury x Avoidance of Similarity)	.179	10.684	1	.000	.000	130	.025	.948

<b>Perception of Luxury</b>	.192	32.541	1	.198	32.541	132	.541	.023
<b>Perception of Luxury + Creative Choice Counter-conformity</b>	.194	17.011	1	.008	1.386	131	.241	.440
<b>Perception of Luxury + Creative Choice Counter-conformity + (Perception of Luxury x Creative Choice Counter-conformity)</b>	.208	11.356	1	.001	.243	130	-.199	-.493
<b>Perception of Luxury</b>	.192	32.541	1	.198	32.541	132	.621	.000
<b>Perception of Luxury + Unpopular Choice Counter-conformity</b>	.217	19.441	1	.031	5.205	131	.216	.558
<b>Perception of Luxury + Unpopular Choice Counter-conformity + (Perception of Luxury x Unpopular Choice Counter-conformity)</b>	.218	13.377	1	.007	1.192	130	-.443	.277
<b>* Dependent variable : Product evaluation of the mimic brand (Thomas Sabo)</b>								

Hierarchical moderated regression analysis was conducted on brand familiarity towards the mimic brand, status consumption, consumers' need for uniqueness between perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand to test for the interaction effects between the moderator, independent variable and the dependent variable. Based on the results of the hierarchical moderation analysis, the moderators are found to be insignificant. Hence, H14a, H14 b, H15 and H16 are rejected.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FOR STUDY TWELVE

The findings of the hypotheses are summarized below in Table 6.4.10C.

**Table 6.4.10C:** Summary of findings for Study Twelve

<b>Hypotheses</b>		<b>Accepted/Rejected</b>
<b>H1</b>	Presence of mimicry will lead to a positive perception of luxury	Partially accepted
<b>H2</b>	Presence of mimicry will lead to a positive product evaluation of the mimic brand	Partially accepted
<b>H3</b>	Perception of luxury will lead to a positive product evaluation of the mimic brand	Accepted
<b>H4</b>	Perception of luxury will mediate the relationship between the presence of mimicry and product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>Brand familiarity</b>		
<b>H5a</b>	Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand will lead to a positive perception of luxury towards the mimic brand	Accepted
<b>H5b</b>	Brand familiarity towards the model brand will lead to a positive perception of luxury towards the mimic brand	Accepted
<b>H6a</b>	Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand will lead to a positive product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H6b</b>	Brand familiarity towards the model brand will lead to a positive product evaluation of the mimic brand	Accepted
<b>Consumers' need for uniqueness</b>		
<b>H7</b>	Consumers' need for uniqueness will lead to a positive perception of luxury towards the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H8</b>	Consumers' need for uniqueness will lead to a positive product evaluation of the mimic brand	Partially accepted
<b>Status consumption</b>		
<b>H9</b>	Status consumption will lead to a positive perception of luxury towards the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H10</b>	Status consumption will lead to a positive product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>Mediation effects:</b>		
<b>H11a</b>	Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand will mediate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation towards a mimic brand	Partially accepted
<b>H11b</b>	Brand familiarity towards the model brand will mediate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation towards a mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H12</b>	Consumers' need for uniqueness will mediate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation towards a mimic brand	Rejected

<b>H13</b>	Status consumption will mediate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation towards a mimic brand	Rejected
<b>Moderation effects:</b>		
<b>H14a</b>	Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand will moderate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H14b</b>	Brand familiarity towards the model brand will moderate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H15</b>	Consumers' need for uniqueness will moderate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected
<b>H16</b>	Status consumption will moderate the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand	Rejected

The results of Study Twelve by using Thomas Sabo as the mimic brand and Tiffany as the model brand has shown some interesting results. It was revealed that the three dimensions of the presence of mimicry scale revealed significant positive relationship towards perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. “Image” and “Physical” characteristics of Thomas Sabo was found to lead to a positive perception of luxury towards the brand, On the other hand “Intellectual” characteristics was found to lead to positive product evaluation of Thomas Sabo. It is interesting to note that similarities between the mimic and the model in terms of image of sophistication or prestige and physical and aesthetic similarities will lead to consumers perceiving Thomas Sabo to be “luxury”. This finding is in alignment with previous studies that suggests the transfer of associations between the mimic and the model brand (e.g. Balabanis and Craven, 1997; Warlop and Alba, 2004; Penz and Stottinger, 2008). The similarity in terms of similar degrees of innovation, creativity and novelty between Thomas Sabo and Tiffany resulted in better product evaluations towards Thomas Sabo. This could possibly be explained by the fact that while Tiffany and Co. started the trend with the charms that has taken the world by storm. Thomas Sabo entered the market with a cheaper alternative that was anchored on the concept of charm bracelets (Till and Priluck, 2000). As such, the similarities between two brands were not only based on superficial physical similarities, but the conceptual similarities. In addition, Thomas Sabo had taken the mimicry further by evolving through its' relatively unique packaging that still conveyed “luxury” and with co-branding strategies with Disney amongst others to appeal to a different market (Simonin and Ruth, 1998).

It is also found that perception of luxury towards the mimic brand has a significant positive relationship towards product evaluation of the mimic brand.

Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand has a significant positive relationship towards both perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. This is important for Thomas Sabo that when consumers are aware or familiar of the brand, they will tend to better perceive the brand as “luxury” and form positive evaluations. This could be due to the success that Thomas Sabo while mimicking the similar physical characteristics of Tiffany products has built their own brand image to be of a mass “luxury” brand (Kastanakis and Balabanis, 2012). Furthermore, brand familiarity towards the model brand (Tiffany) also leads to positive product evaluation of Thomas Sabo. This could be seen that Tiffany as the market leader in expensive jewellery will transfer positive evaluations of their products to mimic products from Thomas Sabo. They are well known for their charm bracelets and similar to Tiffany, those charms are a much-coveted trend or fashion.

Two dimensions of consumers’ need for uniqueness were found to have significant relationship towards product evaluation of the mimic brand. It was found that creative choice counter-conformity has a significant positive relationship towards product evaluation of Thomas Sabo. This could possibly be explained by the fact that Thomas Sabo although has mimicked or has similar products to Tiffany is an acceptable brand that also creates their own lines and variations to Tiffany products. As such, consumers who are prone to creative choice conformity will seek Thomas Sabo as an alternative that provide unique and novel items slightly different to that of Tiffany’s that allow them to create their own personal style and choice (Tian et al., 2001; Knight and Kim, 2007). On the other hand, unpopular choice counter-conformity was found to have a negative relationship towards product evaluation of Thomas Sabo. As the products of Thomas Sabo follows those of a mainstream trend created by Tiffany, consumers who strive to seek un-mainstream and unpopular choices that do not fit the social norm would find that the mimic brand anchors its success on what dictates mainstream trends (Tian et al., 2001; Kastanakis and Balabanis, 2012). As such, they would evaluate Thomas Sabo in a less favourable light.

It was found that brand familiarity towards the mimic brand partially mediates the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. This suggests the importance of enhancing and sculpting a brand image and to make consumers aware and familiar of the brand albeit Thomas Sabo may be seen as a mimic.

## CONCLUSION FOR PART 4 (POUYANNIAN MIMICRY)

In summary, the results of the four studies of Part 4 show that there are significant relationships between presence of mimicry, perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand. Furthermore, brand familiarity, consumers' need for uniqueness and status consumption have emerged to play important roles in influencing perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand. Perception of luxury towards the mimic brand is also found to be a mediator of presence of mimicry and product evaluation of the mimic brand. While it has not found consistent results throughout the four studies, there is evidence that brand familiarity towards the mimic brand moderates the relationship between perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand.

**Presence of mimicry** – It is found that in general for Pouyannian mimicry, the three dimensions of the presence of mimicry scale have significant relationship towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (H1) and product evaluation of the mimic brand (H2). Consistently throughout the four studies, “Image” characteristics has emerged as a key factor influencing consumer perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand. While, “Physical” and “Intellectual” characteristics also had an influence on perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand, the findings were only applicable to some studies and not generalized across the four studies. “Physical” characteristics was found to have a significant positive relationship towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand. This finding provides interesting results to suggest that for Pouyannian mimics, physical similarities are a key to generalizing luxury between the mimic and the model, much against some past findings that suggest otherwise (e.g. Miceli and Pieters, 2010; van Horen and Pieters, 2012a). This could be due to the fact that luxury brands function in a dissimilar way to convenience goods. In fact, similarity between the brands provides the “image” associated with the model brand but offered at an alternative price. In addition, Pouyannian mimics are often relatively well-known brands who offer to provide a different twist to a popular product (Levitt, 1966; Shenkar, 2012). “Intellectual” characteristics on the other hand, was found to show significant positive relationship towards product evaluation of the mimic brand. This finding adds contribution to existing literature as previous studies have often examined similarities in terms of physical, image and beneficial attributes (Lefkoff-Hagius and Mason, 1993; Penz and Stottinger, 2008a). However, the conceptual and stylistic aspects of copying between mimic and model brands have yet to be

understood. This finding attempts to provide a first in understanding the implications of emulating the conceptual and “creative” elements of a model brand. In fact, when mimic brands transfer a similar context to another market (i.e. Thomas Sabo providing a cheaper alternative to charm bracelets), it was successfully seen as an alternative. In addition, the product evaluation was favourable as Thomas Sabo did not deviate from building a “luxury” image (see image) through its marketing and promotional mix. It is consistently found across the four studies that perception of luxury towards the mimic brand has a significant positive relationship towards product evaluation of the mimic brand (H3). This result echoes the findings of Hagtvedt and Patrick (2008). These results indicate a number of points. They are namely:

- The presence of mimicry (Pouyannian) scale is evidenced to be generalizable across the four different product categories.
- The three dimensions of the presence of mimicry scale affect the perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand at varying degrees and for different product categories. There are also different relationships observed between various characteristics.
  - It is interesting to note that “Image” characteristics has emerged to consistently generate positive perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. The findings suggest that close image similarities in terms of prestige, sophistication can result in higher perception of luxury towards the mimic brand. Close image similarities can also result in positive evaluations towards mimic brand. It can be deduced that for mimic brands to succeed and lead to high perception of luxury and positive product evaluation, the mimicry of “image” attributes that are intangible are most important.
  - “Physical” characteristics was found to lead to positive perception of luxury and product evaluation. This finding is in contrast to previous findings in Chapter 6A and 6B whereby close similarities between the mimic and the model brand can result in lower perception of luxury and negative product evaluations of mimic brand. Therefore, it can be said that while copying design, look and aesthetics of the model brand in this case can lead to positive evaluations. This can also be attributed to generally better and higher brand familiarity for Pouyannian mimics.
  - “Intellectual” characteristics was found to lead to positive perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. This suggests that the degree of

similarity in terms of creativity, innovation and these conceptual characteristics can result in the mimic brand being better perceived and evaluated. Therefore, stressing the fact that while copying physical characteristics, the mimic brand will need to take into consideration the innovative aspects of the model brand and to incorporate that into the mimic brand. The emulation of intellectual characteristics is unique to Pouyannian mimics who do not strive to be blatant copycats. They are also brands which have built their own brand image and are often seen as relatively well known brands. Therefore, the success of this form of mimicry lies in the evolution of their brand image, but also the adaptation of “strong” traits within the industry. In fact, the success of the mimics lie in the fact that they copy successful innovations such as the iconic trench coat from Burberry, the monogram shoes of Gucci, the charm bracelet craze amongst others. This can suggest that the timeless classics of the model brands can never go wrong.

- It can also be observed from the four studies that the presence of Pouyannian mimicry leads to an overall a positive perception of luxury and favourable evaluations of the mimic brand.

**Brand familiarity** - towards the mimic brand has shown significant positive relationship towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (H5a) and product evaluation of the mimic brand (H5b). There seems to be consistent evidence across the four studies that high brand familiarity towards the mimic brand will lead to more favourable product evaluation of the mimic brand. However, while brand familiarity was found to largely influence product evaluation of the mimic brand, its influence on perception of luxury was either insignificant for some studies or for Study Nine (clothes) it was found to lead to negative perception of luxury towards the mimic brand. However, it has to be taken into account that the possibility of Gap being perceived primarily as a luxury brand could also affect consumers’ perception of luxury towards the mimic brand. Therefore, it is important for brands to establish positive image and perception in consumers’ minds (Juggessur and Cohen, 2009).

Brand familiarity towards the model brand was found to only have significant positive relationship towards product evaluation of the mimic brand. However, this finding was not generalized across all four studies, but was only found in Study Nine (cars) and Study

Twelve (jewellery). This could be explained by that these two product categories are generally more expensive than clothes and shoes, therefore the familiarity of the model brand can transfer better product associations and evaluations especially when these product types would either go through more involved purchase decisions. Hence, the brand familiarity towards the model brand can in fact assist the mimic brand in forming better product evaluations towards mimic brand (Walsh and Mitchell, 2005). Furthermore, the trends and fashion created by the model brand would have already been present in the marketplace whereby consumers may already be aware and have prior evaluations about the product.

**Consumers' need for uniqueness** – is found to have varying degrees of significant relationship towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (H7) and product evaluation of the mimic brand (H8). While not all three dimensions of consumers' need for uniqueness was applicable for each study, it can be found that creative choice counter-conformity and unpopular choice counter-conformity showed better generalizability (across two studies). Creative choice counter-conformity was found to show significant positive relationship toward perception of luxury in Study Nine (cars) and product evaluation of the mimic brand in Study Twelve (jewellery). Unpopular choice counter-conformity was found to show significant positive relationship towards product evaluation of the mimic brand in Study Eleven (shoes) and a significant negative relationship towards product evaluation of the mimic brand in Study Twelve (jewellery). The findings suggest that depending on the form of product and category, it might activate consumers' different sense of uniqueness (Kastanakis and Balabanis, 2012).

**Status consumption** – did not show consistent significant relationship towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (H9) and product evaluation of the mimic brand (H10). It was found in only one study that status consumption had a significant negative relationship towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand (Study Ten, clothes). However, this could be attributed to the fact that consumers would not perceive Gap to be a “luxury” or prestigious brand. Therefore, status consumers would tend to have a lower perception of luxury towards the mimic brand. Furthermore, status consumers are often better aware of the brand knowledge in the marketplace.

**Mediation effects** – There are a number of mediation effects found significant across the four studies. Predominantly across the four studies, perception of luxury towards the mimic brand is found to be a mediator of the relationship between presence of mimicry and product evaluation of the mimic brand (H4). However, it was also found that brand familiarity towards the mimic brand mediates the relationship between perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand (H11a). No mediation effects were found for brand familiarity towards the model brand (H11b), consumers’ need for uniqueness (H12) and status consumption (H13).

**Moderators** – While the three of the studies did not reveal any moderators, Study Ten (clothes) revealed that brand familiarity towards the mimic brand (H14a) moderates the relationship between perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand. Therefore, the findings suggest that brand familiarity towards the mimic brand is important and can serve to enhance the relationship between perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand.

## **CHAPTER 6 - PART 5: CONCLUDING COMMENTS**

### **CONCLUDING COMMENTS FOR CHAPTER 6**

This chapter presents the results of three types of mimicry using four different product types resulting in twelve different studies. Each type of mimicry presents 4 respective studies including the demographic profiles, factor analyses of all the relevant measures, regression analysis and mediation and moderation analysis to test the hypotheses. Along with the findings, a short discussion and implication of the findings is generalized.

Overall, it is found that the three presence of mimicry scales are tailored to measure each specific form of mimicry. Across the three chapters, the presence of mimicry scale is also found to have significant relationships towards perception of luxury towards mimic brand and product evaluation of mimic brand. Furthermore, brand familiarity towards the mimic and model brand is shown to have significant relationship towards perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand. Brand familiarity is also found to be involved both as a mediating and a moderating variable. Consumers' need for uniqueness has generated interesting findings that have seen varying relationships when applied to each of the types of mimicry. While status consumption has overall shown very little significant relationships, there is evidence that it can influence consumer perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand.

The next chapter presents the conclusion of the thesis. Chapter 7 will provide a review of the research questions and research objectives and detail how the objectives have been achieved through this study. It is followed by a summary of the findings for each type of mimicry and a summary of findings based on each product category. This is followed by a discussion on the theoretical, methodological and managerial contributions. The limitations and the future directions for this study is addressed at the end of the chapter.

# **CHAPTER 7**

## **CONCLUSION**

### **OVERVIEW OF THE CHAPTER AND OUTCOMES OF THE STUDY**

This chapter starts by providing a review of the research objectives and a short summary of how each of the objectives has been achieved. Next, an overview and summary of the research findings based on each type of mimicry and also the findings from the results based on the various product categories are discussed. This is followed by a presentation of the theoretical, methodological and managerial implications of the study. Finally, the results the limitations of the study and suggestions for future directions are discussed.

### **REVIEW OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

To help review the purpose of the study, the following are the three research questions.

4. How does the theory of mimicry explain mimicry of luxury brands?
5. How does mimicry influence the perception of luxury and consumer evaluations?
6. How do personality traits influence the evaluation of mimic brands?

Based on the following research questions, a series of hypotheses was developed (in Chapter 3) and integrated into the conceptual model and tested in Chapter 6. Through the results and analysis of the study, a summary of the results for each objective is presented in Table 7.1.

## **REVIEW OF RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

**Table 7.1:** A summary of the key results for each of the objectives is presented in the following table.

<b>Original Objective from Chapter One</b>	<b>Results in Brief</b>
To conceptualize the theory of mimicry into marketing and to draw parallels between the world of the “wild” and the world of “marketing” using real life marketing examples.	The conceptual definitions of the three types of mimicry were developed in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3. The conceptualization is based upon the literature from the discipline of biological and natural sciences and marketing. The three types of mimicry identified are Wicklerian Eisnerian, Vavilovian and Pouyannian mimicry.
To develop a model conceptualizing the three different types of mimicry and influences on consumers’ responses towards the mimic and the model brand within the luxury brand industry.	A conceptual model testing the three different types of presence of mimicry was developed in Chapter 3 and tested in Chapter 6. The three different mimicry scales were tested using real life brands across four product categories.
To develop and validate the three different presence of mimicry scales to measure the perceived product similarity between the model and the mimic brand.	The three presence of mimicry scales were developed and validated in Chapter 5. The three mimicry scales were then used to test direct and indirect relationships within the conceptual model formulated in Chapter 3. The results are discussed in Chapter 6.
To investigate the influence of mimicry on perception of luxury and product evaluations.	Each type of mimicry has shown statistically significant results. The three different mimicry scales were found to influence perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brands in Chapter 6.
To investigate the influence of brand familiarity of the mimic brand and model brand on perception of luxury and product evaluation.	Chapter 6 showed significant results for brand familiarity of the model/mimic brand and its effects on presence of mimicry, perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand.
To examine the influence of personality traits (i.e. consumers’ need for uniqueness and status consumption) on product evaluations towards mimicry.	Chapter 6 tested and examined the effects of personality variables such as consumers’ need for uniqueness and status consumption on the perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. The relationships were found to be statistically significant in Chapter 6.
To investigate the mediating and moderating relationships that exists between perception of luxury, consumer personality traits and product evaluations	Chapter 6 examined the mediation and moderation effects between perceptions of luxury, product evaluation of mimic brand, brand familiarity, consumers’ need for uniqueness. The results were found to be statistically significant and are presented in Chapter 6.

## **OVERVIEW OF KEY FINDINGS FOR EACH TYPE OF MIMICRY**

Through a series of 12 studies, there are specific summaries of findings that are unique to each type of mimicry. It is consistent throughout the 12 studies that image and symbolic aspects of similarity between the mimic and the model brand generates better perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. Similarly, it is found throughout the 12 studies that perception of luxury towards the mimic brand positively influences product evaluation of the mimic brand. Brand familiarity towards mimic or model brand is found to be an important influence on perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand. Brand familiarity is found to be a mediator in numerous studies. The following section provides a general summation of trends and findings.

### **WICKLERIAN EISNERIAN MIMICRY**

The findings for Wicklerian-Eisnerian Mimicry has shown that the presence of Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimicry scale has three dimensions and are namely “Image”, “Physical” and “Beneficial” characteristics. These three characteristics are found to have significant relationship with perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brands. In fact, it is found that while “Image” characteristics generate higher perception of luxury and better product evaluation towards mimic brand, “Physical” characteristics generate lower perception of luxury and less positive product evaluation of the mimic brand. Therefore the findings suggest that mimic brands should enhance image similarities, but avoid close physical similarities. This is because close physical similarities could result in unfavourable perception and evaluations, which supports previous findings by van Horen and Pieters (2012b). The findings show that similarities in “Beneficial” characteristics have a strong influence on product evaluation of mimic brands. The results therefore suggest that Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimics should enhance their perceived similarity in practicality, durability and reliability in relation to the model brand. In addition, based on the understanding of Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimic brands in the marketplace, most of the mimics are often cheaper in quality and different in the materials used. However, most consumers only purchase the mimic brand for functional use and discard once it is broken without high perceived loss. They are also much cheaper in price and are marketed in lower priced outlets to provide a functional option to consumers.

Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand can help consumers form higher perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and positive product evaluations of the mimic brand.

However, brand familiarity towards the model has seen no effect on perception of luxury or product evaluation of the mimic brand. The results stressed that Wicklerian-Eisnerian Mimicry is less favourably evaluated because of their close physical similarities to the model brand (Friestad and Wright, 1994; Warlop and Alba, 2004; van Horen and Pieters, 2012a). However, when consumers are familiar with the mimic brand, it reduces the possibility of it being viewed as “counterfeits”, which may be a fine line to draw with some Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimic brands. In addition, findings also provided supporting evidence to Hagtvedt and Patrick’s (2008) study that perception of luxury was found to positively influence product evaluation of the mimic brand. Thus, the finding provides strong support for mimic brands to enhance the perception of luxury of the mimic brand.

Interestingly, the different dimensions of consumers’ need for uniqueness affect consumers in different ways in terms of their perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation towards the mimic brand. However, unpopular choice counter-conformity seems to positively influence perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. This may be a result of this form of mimic being an overall less popular option by the mainstream consumers. Consumers susceptible to unpopular choice counter-conformity might not “care” what others think about such shoddy cheap mimics, they would possibly buy for the practical and utility benefits associated with the mimic brand.

### **VAVILOVIAN MIMICRY**

The findings for Vavilovian Mimicry have shown that the presence of Vavilovian Mimicry scale has three dimensions and are namely “Symbolic”, “Physical” and “Beneficial” characteristics. These three characteristics are found to have a significant relationship with perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brands. However, the results prominently show that “Symbolic” characteristics has a consistent positive influence on perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand. This result emphasizes the findings of past studies that consumers are often highly attracted to the symbolic connotations that a luxury mimic brand exudes (Cordell et al., 1996; Juggesur and Cohen, 2008; Wilcox et al., 2009; Yoo and Lee, 2011), such as obtaining the prestige associated with mimic brands but not having to pay exorbitant prices for it (Penz and Stottinger, 2008a).

The findings also show that “Physical” and “Beneficial” characteristics are found to have a lesser influence on perception of luxury towards the mimic brand and product evaluation of the mimic brand. Therefore, it is important to downplay “Physical” characteristic similarities as it can attract negative perception of luxury and product evaluation towards the mimic brand (Friestad and Wright, 1994; Warlop and Alba, 2004; Miceli and Pieters, 2010; van Horen and Pieters, 2012b). Interestingly, this finding highlights that consumers may be more interested in the symbolic similarities for Vavilovian mimicry than the “Beneficial” characteristics. In line with Gentry et al.’s (2001) finding, this suggests that consumers tend to find gratification from the symbolic rather than functional aspects of a mimic. Therefore, one can deduce that the functionality or durability similarities may be of less importance when assessing this form of mimicry. In addition, the findings also provided supporting evidence to Hagtvedt and Patrick’s (2008) study that perception of luxury was found to positively influence product evaluation of the mimic brand. Thus, the finding provides strong support for mimic brands to enhance the perception of luxury of the mimic brand.

Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand is found to have positive influence on product evaluation of the mimic brand. Therefore suggesting when consumers know or is familiar with the mimic brand, they are likely to have more favourable evaluations towards the mimic brand (Kim and Chung, 2012; van Horen and Pieters, 2012a). In contrast, brand familiarity towards the model brand resulted in negative product evaluation towards the mimic brand (in the car and jewellery category). Wilcox et al. (2009) postulated that when consumers evaluate the social and functional risks involved in obtaining the mimic brand it would result in lower interest in the mimic brand. Considering that cars and jewellery are product categories that possess higher social and financial risks than clothing and shoes, this seems to be a valid justification.

Lastly, creative choice counter-conformity is found to influence perception of luxury towards the mimic brand. While it is not consistent across all four studies, consumers who tend to seek unique, novel and “acceptable” brands will have better perception of luxury towards Vavilovian mimic brands. This could be attributed to the fact that Vavilovian mimics often still possess slightly distinctive features to the model brand and are still considered socially acceptable as they are not direct or blatant copies of the model brand (Kastanakis and Balabanis, 2012).

## POUYANNIAN MIMICRY

The findings for Pouyannian Mimicry has shown that the presence of Pouyannian mimicry scale has three dimensions and are namely “Image”, “Physical” and “Intellectual” characteristics. These three characteristics are found to have significant relationship with perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brands. However, more prominently, is that “Image” characteristics consistently positively influence perception of luxury towards the mimic brand. Consistent with the luxury brand literature, consumers who sought luxury mimic brands seek the brand and status image that is associated with model brands (Bloch et al., 1993; Kozar and Marcketti, 2011; Wilcox et al., 2009; Yoo and Lee, 2011). It is also found that “Physical” characteristics has a positive influence on perception of luxury towards the mimic brand, while “Intellectual” characteristics is found to have a positive influence on product evaluation of the mimic brands. In contrast to past findings that suggest the negative influence of “Physical” characteristics similarities between the model and the mimic brand (Friestad and Wright, 1994; Miceli and Pieters, 2010; van Horen and Pieters, 2012a), this study found that physical similarities lead to positive perception of luxury and product evaluation towards the mimic brand. A possible explanation could be attributed to the fact that Pouyannian mimic brands are often relatively well known brands. Therefore, consumers would be unlikely to perceive them as a direct or blatant copycat like the Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimics. In addition, most of the products that Pouyannian mimics imitate are often the “iconic” pieces (e.g. Chanel tweed jacket, Burberry trench coat) or what is considered fashionable at the time (e.g. the ombre design of the Prada shoe see Diagram 7.2) therefore, consumers do want the mimic brands to share similar physical characteristics to the model brand in order to emulate the style or the status that the model brand exudes. The findings also revealed that similarity of “Intellectual” characteristics leads to favourable product evaluations of the mimic brand. This can be explained by the fact that Pouyannian mimic brands often only imitate the successful innovations in the marketplace. Consumers want the mimic to be physically similar to the model brand because it is not all consumers who want to deviate too far away from popular trends and the norm (Kastanakis and Balabanis, 2012). In addition, Pouyannian mimics contribute by diffusing the trendy features within the marketplace and creating a trend as a result (Suk and Hemphill, 2009). Furthermore, Pouyannian mimics are often relatively well-known brands and through the emulation of a successful luxury brand or a fashion classic, they provide longer lasting products that do not necessary become obsolete like fast fashion. In addition, the findings also support evidence to Hagtvedt and Patrick’s (2008) study that perception of luxury was

found to positively influence product evaluation of the mimic brand. Thus, the finding provides strong support for mimic brands to enhance the perception of luxury of the mimic brand.

**Diagram 7.2:** Example of the ombre trend created by Prada



Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand is shown to have positively influence product evaluation of the mimic brand. Therefore, this suggests that the higher the brand familiarity towards the mimic brand, the more favourable the product evaluation of Pouyannian mimic brands. Furthermore, the brand familiarity towards the model brand also is a bonus to Pouyanninan mimic brands as it results in positive product evaluation of the mimic brand. This finding highlights the importance of brand familiarity of both the model and the mimic brand in order to form overall positive perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. This finding provides support to van Horen and Pieters (2012a) results that suggest the influence of brand familiarity on the evaluation of thematic-based mimic brands like Pouyannian mimic brands.

## Summary of key findings for EACH type of mimicry

Table 7.3 is a summary of the key findings throughout the 12 main studies across the three different types of mimicry.

**Table 7.3:** Summary of findings for each type of mimicry

Type of Mimicry/ Hypotheses	Wicklerian-Eisnerian	Vavilovian	Pouyannian
Presence of mimicry (H1 & H2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Image characteristics lead to positive perception of luxury</li> <li>Beneficial characteristics lead to positive product evaluation</li> <li>Physical characteristics lead to negative perception of luxury</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Symbolic characteristics lead to positive perception of luxury and product evaluation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Image characteristics lead to positive perception of luxury</li> <li>Physical characteristics lead to positive perception of luxury (clothing and jewellery)</li> <li>Intellectual characteristics leads to positive product evaluation (shoes and jewellery)</li> </ul>
Perception of luxury (H3)	Perception of luxury influences product evaluation	Perception of luxury influences product evaluation	Perception of luxury influences product evaluation
Brand familiarity (mimic brand) (H5a & H5b)	Leads to positive perception of luxury and product evaluation	Leads to positive product evaluation (except for jewellery)	Leads to positive perception of luxury (only for cars and jewellery) Leads to positive product evaluation
Brand familiarity (model brand) (H6a & H6b)	Insignificant	Leads to negative product evaluation (only for cars and jewellery)	Leads to positive product evaluation (only for cars and jewellery)
Consumers' Need for Uniqueness (H7 & H8)	Unpopular choice counter-conformity leads to positive perception of luxury and product evaluation (only for shoes and jewellery)	Creative choice counter-conformity leads to positive perception of luxury and product evaluation	Avoidance of similarity leads to negative perception of luxury (only for cars and shoes)
Status consumption (H9 & H10)	Leads to positive product evaluation (only for jewellery)	Leads to positive product evaluation (only for cars and shoes)	Leads to negative perception of luxury (cloth) leads to positive product evaluation (cars)
Mediation (H4, H11 – H13)	Partial mediations	Full and partial mediations	Partial
Moderation (H14 – H16)	Insignificant	Clothing (brand familiarity towards model brand) Shoes (Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand)	Insignificant

## **OVERVIEW OF KEY FINDINGS FOR EACH PRODUCT CATEGORY**

In order to gain generalizability of the three types of mimicry, empirical studies are tested across four product categories. In each of the product categories, interesting findings are observed. As such, the following section provides a review of the key findings pertaining to each of the product categories.

### **CARS**

The findings across the three types of mimicry have revealed some interesting trends within the luxury car industry. It is found that the “Image” and “Symbolic” characteristics positively influence perception of luxury towards the mimic brand. This therefore emphasizes the importance if consumers perceive the mimic as projecting similar “luxury” as the model brand. Furthermore, it is found that the Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand has a positive influence on product evaluation of the mimic brand. Whereas, there are mixed results when assessing the effects of Brand familiarity towards the model brand on perception of luxury and product evaluation towards the mimic brand. This highlights the fact that brand familiarity effects are mimicry type-specific (van Horen and Pieters, 2012a). In addition, status consumption is found to have a positive influence on perception of luxury towards the mimic brand for both Vavilovian and Pouyannian mimicry. This therefore suggests that status consumers have better evaluations of these two forms of mimics rather than Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimics. This finding can be explained by the possibility of Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimicry as highly physical replicas of the model brands can cause negative perceptions when this would involve greater risk and possibly with high level of deception and exploitation associated with blatant copies (Friestad and Wright, 1994; Warlop and Alba, 2004; Miceli and Pieters, 2010; van Horen and Pieters, 2012a; 2012b).

### **CLOTHING**

The findings across the three types of mimicry have seen some interesting trends pertaining to the luxury clothing industry. It is found that the “Image” and “Symbolic” characteristics will influence the perception of luxury towards the mimic brand. This reflects previous findings that “Image” similarities for luxury brand mimics is important to a consumer to express status and image (Penz and Stottinger, 2008; Wilcox et al., 2009) Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand is found to show positive product evaluation towards the mimic brand. In addition, brand familiarity towards the model brand will also result in positive product evaluation towards Wicklerian-Eisnerian and Vavilovian mimic brands. This finding

reiterates the importance of prior knowledge about the model brand can transfer the brand associations to the mimic brand. This could in turn result in positive product evaluations (Balabanis and Craven, 1997; van Horen and Pieters, 2012b). Similarly, prior knowledge about the mimic brand may provide a consumer with information that may bias the consumers towards a favourable reaction towards the mimic brand (Warlop and Alba, 2004). Consumers can therefore retrieve information about the brand and base their perceptions and evaluations on their impression of the mimic brand. Considering the product category and also the brands chosen for this study, most of the brands are well-known and relatively positive brands that do not at present hold strong negative images.

It was also found that creative choice counter-conformity positively influences product evaluation towards mimic brand for the luxury clothing market. This suggests that mimicry of clothing brands can provide an alternative to consumers as they might see it as a form of novel, or unique product that allows creative choice counter-conformity prone consumers to express self-image and identity (Kastanakis and Balabanis, 2012) and will therefore result in positive product evaluation.

## **SHOES**

The findings across the three types of mimicry have seen some interesting trends pertaining to the luxury shoe industry. It is found throughout the three types of mimicry that “Image” and “Symbolic” characteristics will positively influence perception of luxury towards the mimic brand. This finding is consistent with previous findings that suggest the importance of these intangible image and symbolic aspects of a luxury mimic brand in influencing consumers’ perception. Consumers when purchasing a luxury mimic brand would still want to enjoy the benefits they can derive to express their status and image (Wilcox et al., 2009), albeit at a lower price. Furthermore, “Beneficial” characteristics can positively influence perception of luxury towards the mimic brand. This finding suggests that consumers who look towards shoe mimic brands place important emphasis on the functionality of the mimic brand when forming their perceptions towards the mimic brand.

Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand has also highlighted positive product evaluation of the mimic brand. This finding may therefore suggest that when consumers are aware of the mimic brand or if they have prior experience with the mimic brand, it would influence the product evaluation of the mimic brand (Warlop and Alba, 2004). Therefore it is important for

mimic brands to build brand awareness. This in turn will help in consumers' product evaluation. In addition, it also suggests that based on consumers' prior experience, that mimic brands have a certain level of quality (d'Astous and Saint-Louis, 2005). They may not only be only "cheap" copies and are improving in quality. Interestingly, it is found that unpopular choice counter-conformity has a positive influence on perception of luxury and product evaluation towards the mimic brand. This can suggest that consumers tend to believe that within the shoe category, consumers are more likely to risk social disapproval and purchase products that deviate from what is seen as "acceptable" and away from group norms. This is to express ones' personality trait and values in their consumption (Tian et al., 2001; Knight and Kim, 2007). Therefore, the abundance of different designs and variation within the shoe industry using a mimicry strategy can be a beneficial tactic for consumers' who seek a sense of uniqueness (Kastanakis and Balabanis, 2012).

### **JEWELLERY**

The findings across the three types of mimicry have seen some interesting trends pertaining to mimicry in the jewellery industry. It is found throughout the three types of mimicry that "Image" and "Symbolic" characteristics have a positive influence on perception of luxury towards the mimic brand. This finding highlights previous findings to the importance of accentuating the image similarities between the mimic and the model brand to form positive perceptions of luxury (Juggessur and Cohen, 2009; Wilcox et al., 2009; Sharma and Chan, 2011). In addition, brand familiarity towards the mimic brand will lead to positive product evaluation towards the mimic brand. This finding reiterates the importance of consumer awareness and knowledge towards the mimic brand on the whether they will have favourable evaluations towards the mimic brand.

## Summary of findings for product category

Table 7.4 is a summary of the key findings throughout the 12 main studies across the four different product categories.

**Table 7.4:** Summary of findings for product category

Product category/ Hypotheses	Cars	Clothing	Shoes	Jewellery
<b>Presence of mimicry (H1 &amp; H2)</b>	Image/symbolic characteristics is a key influencer of perception of luxury	Image/symbolic characteristic has positive influence towards perception of luxury	Image/symbolic characteristics positively influence perception of luxury and product evaluation. Beneficial/intellectual characteristics positively influence perception of luxury and product evaluation	Image/symbolic characteristics leads to positive perception of luxury
<b>Perception of luxury (H3)</b>	Perception of luxury influences product evaluation	Perception of luxury influences product evaluation	Perception of luxury influences product evaluation	Perception of luxury influences product evaluation
<b>Brand familiarity (mimic brand) (H5a &amp; H5b)</b>	Leads to positive product evaluation	Leads to positive product evaluation	Leads to positive product evaluation (for Vavilovian and Pouyannian mimicry)	Leads to positive perception of luxury. Leads to positive product evaluation (for Wicklerian-Eisnerian and Pouyannian mimicry)
<b>Brand familiarity (model brand) (H6a &amp; H6b)</b>	Leads to negative perception of luxury and product evaluation (only for Vavilovian mimicry). Leads to positive product evaluation (only for Pouyannian mimicry)	Leads to positive product evaluation for Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimicry and Vavilovian mimicry	Insignificant	Insignificant

<b>Consumers' Need for Uniqueness (H7 &amp; H8)</b>	Avoidance of similarity and creative choice counter-conformity for Pouyannian mimicry only	Creative choice counter-conformity leads to positive product evaluation (Wicklerian-Eisnerian and Vavilovian mimicry)	Unpopular choice counter-conformity leads to positive perception of luxury.	Insignificant
<b>Status consumption (H9 &amp; H10)</b>	Positive relationship towards product evaluation (for Vavilovian and Pouyannian mimicry)	Leads to negative perception of luxury for Pouyannian mimicry	Leads to positive product evaluation (only for Vavilovian mimicry)	Insignificant
<b>Mediation (H4, H11 – H13)</b>	Partial and full mediations	Partial and full mediations	Partial and full mediations	Partial mediations
<b>Moderation (H14 – H16)</b>	Insignificant	Moderation (only for Vavilovian mimicry)	Moderation (only for Vavilovian mimicry)	Insignificant

## **CONTRIBUTIONS/IMPLICATIONS**

A number of conceptual, methodological and managerial contributions are achieved. These include support, and in some cases contradictions, of previous works, as well as providing new information previously unknown or empirically underexplored. These specific contributions are delineated in the following sections. Chapter 6 can be referred to for further discussion on specific results.

### **THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTION**

The major contribution of this study was to extend the theory of mimicry from the discipline of biological and natural sciences into a marketing context. The purpose of this is multifold. Firstly, it has vast applicability across many other disciplines and is one of the core theories which modern sciences is founded upon (Bates, 1862; Schmidt, 1958). The successful applicability as shown in this study opens the field for future researchers and marketers to provide conceptual underpinnings of other relevant marketing issues when considering mimicry as the key construct for research. However, more importantly, it is a fact that within the “copying” literature, there are no dominant theories that can encapsulate the essence of imitation. The theory of mimicry was a phenomenon much observed in nature by natural scientists could also be observed in the “concrete jungle”. There were a number of parallels drawn from this study and real life examples were examined and identified from marketing to have similarities both conceptually and theoretically. The following is an evidence of the theoretical contribution of this study:

- (a) The extension of the theory of mimicry from discipline of biological and natural sciences into marketing has also resulted in a rigorous and robust theory building exercise that has borrowed numerous other theories from other fields of social sciences such as classical conditioning, cue utilization, categorization theory, spillover effects amongst others. These supporting theories further provided support to the theory of mimicry within marketing and the copying phenomenon. Furthermore, in response to the lack of specific studies in branding that uses the theory of mimicry; this study has delved into findings from other disciplines and extended the implications from law, innovation and more important the disciplines of biological and natural sciences into a marketing context.

- (b) Based on the review from literature, there were specific types of mimicry identified instead of coining “mimicry” as a unified term and concept. Natural scientists have found it a challenge to unify mimicry and there are many types of mimicry present in nature (Pasteur, 1982). Based on the classification system by Pasteur (1982) and Vane-Wright (1980) a similar classification scheme for brand mimicry is presented. While at present only three types of mimicry are identified, this study serves as a foundation for other future studies. As such, following their lead, three types of mimicry were identified and applied into the study. By employing the theory of mimicry, the copying phenomenon has a unified concept to coin the other variations of copying within the marketplace such as counterfeiting, imitation, fakes, which are often all confused to be one of the other (see McDonald and Roberts, 1994; Phau and Prendergast, 2001; Wilcox et al., 2009).
- (c) While there are attempts to examine the various types of copying, not unified in concept (Harvey et al., 1998; Hilton et al., 2004), or they are often consolidated together as one form of copy (e.g. Staake et al., 2009; Staake et al., 2012). However, as established in nature there are many types of mimicry similar to what is observed in the marketplace. They are often variations of mimicry, yet without a definition, it is hard to conceptualize the form of mimicry. As such, the study has identified three types of mimicry from discipline of biological and natural sciences and mirrored it with parallels of real life marketing examples to provide definitions for each form of mimicry and to coin a term in order to allow future researchers to better identify the form of mimicry in question. The three types of mimicry identified from the discipline of biological and natural sciences and applied to marketing are Wicklerian-Eisnerian Mimicry, Vavilovian Mimicry and Pouyannian Mimicry. Their names are retained and derived from the discipline of biological and natural sciences and are found to be apt for application to marketing.
- (d) In addition, a theoretical framework based on the theory of mimicry is developed that applies to the luxury brand industry to allow future researchers to utilize a model that is developed on the premise and definition of mimicry.

## **METHODOLOGICAL CONTRIBUTION**

There are a number of methodological contributions that have emerged from this study, as follows:

- (a) The presence of mimicry scale was developed for the three different types of mimicry. Most scales in the past have often measured similarity as a global and overall measure (see Walsh and Mitchell, 2005; Miceli and Pieters, 2010), the distinctions between the various types of mimicry may be lost as a result. As such, this study employed a rigorous scale development process that developed the three different types of mimicry as individual constructs that share similar ideologies, yet based on their varying definitions were best applied to their form of mimicry. The scales were also validated across four product categories to ensure generalizability and robustness. The development of these three scales can be used as foundation for future studies.
  
- (b) The design of the scale was based on a reference to a number of previous studies (e.g. Walsh and Mitchell, 2005; Miceli and Pieters, 2010). It was found in the literature that most scales are either global measures, or one item scales. This projects an important flaw in the literature as the scales are unable to measure the differences between consumers' perceived similarity. While Walsh and Mitchell (2005) and other studies have asserted that perceived similarity is subjective, that may be due to the fact that most of the items are overly specified (i.e. ornaments, colour, and so on) and only applicable to certain products or category. They can also be overly general do not measure an overall "appearance" or "design". A research gap for an encompassing scale was highlighted in order to study the differences in the degrees of similarity between the mimic brand and the model brand, while not being hair-splitting. On the other end of the continuum, Walsh and Mitchell's (2005) perceived product similarity scale only looked at the perceived product similarity from an overall product category perspective. In addition, Loken et al. (1986) examined product similarity by judging the overall appearance. It has to be acknowledged that by examining product similarities from an overall or product category perspective may provide more holistic observations. However, these observations may be limited by not being able to identify the differences between what are the specific areas of similarities between the model and the mimic brand. Based on this study, there are clearly differences between types of mimicry and product category. Hence, this study has developed a scale based

on key descriptors of product attributes (tangible and intangible) that can be adapted and applied to other categories and context.

- (c) The use of real life marketing examples that consumers may be aware of has provided generalizability into the industry. Furthermore, the use of real life marketing brands also improved the ecological validity of the study (Ellis and Hornik, 1988; d'Astous and Gargouri, 2001). In addition, the design of the survey instrument allowed comparison between the stimuli that was intended to emulate an actual purchase scenario where consumers are able to compare between products (Balabanis and Craven, 1997; van Horen and Pieters, 2012b). This was found to be an effective mode of survey (Morgan, 1990; Kapfarer, 1995) as evaluation modes were found to influence consumer decision when evaluating product similarities (van Horen and Pieters, 2012a; 2012b)
- (d) The product categories that were selected for this study were based on important industry statistics. According to a study by Bain & Company (2012), a revenue estimation of the luxury market is at a 10% growth from 2011. The estimated revenue for the shoe market is at €12 billion, Men's and Women's Apparel at € 53 billion, Jewellery at € 11 billion and the car sector at € 290 billion. These industries contribute a diverse range of product category that contribution to a large fraction in the growth of the world's luxury market. Therefore, the implications from a study on the mimic brands within the luxury market a much overdue and warranted (d'Astous and Gargouri, 2001). In addition, the inclusion of the cars product category is a contribution to current literature. Past studies on copying had rarely looked at cars as an industry to examine (Wilcox et al., 2009). This is due to the fact that counterfeiting is not a frequent occurrence within the car industry. However, different to the study on counterfeiting of cars, this study looked at the mimicry strategies employed within the industry. It is a highly debatable issue about the copying of styling and even designs within the automobile sector. Therefore, this study presents a new dimension to mimicry within the luxury brand context. In addition, the study will also be able to delineate category specific implications from across four dominant luxury sectors which will add value to the current body of knowledge.

## **MANAGERIAL CONTRIBUTION**

There are a number of managerial implications that have emerged from this study. They are as follows:

- a) Copying has been coined an art of many centuries (Baudrillard, 1981). It has also been seen as a strategic move and a profitable mode of business (e.g. Levitt, 1966; Huang et al., 2010; Wanasika and Conner, 2011; Shenkar, 2010; 2012; Posen et al., 2013). Yet, the understanding towards this form of strategy and its implications are often little known or understood. The many controversial arguments towards how copying can damage the original brand or that it can benefit the original brand have never met general consensus (e.g. Penz and Stottinger, 2008b; Hieke, 2010). Similarly, while many brands employ a mimicry strategy, little is known about the success and implications on consumers, the marketplace and the brand itself. Hence, this study serves to be one of the earlier studies to examine the success of three types of mimicry (rather than only one form of copying) through the use of one research model. In addition, the application of the theory of mimicry into real life scenarios enables marketing practitioners to formulate effective strategies for their brand. For the policy maker, the often-controversial determination of what constitutes copying is often subjective (Walsh and Mitchell, 2005; Scruggs, 2007; Penz and Stottinger, 2008a).
- b) This study strives to provide better guidelines that can help determine which form of mimicry is being addressed. Based on the results of this study, it supports previous arguments by Raustiala and Sprigman (2006) and Suk and Hemphill (2009) that not all forms of copying are bad. In fact, the findings from the study have shown that consumers do form better evaluations towards certain types of mimicry (Vavilovian and Pouyannian mimicry) which is in line with previous results (van Horen and Pieters, 2012a; 2012b). This therefore highlights to brand managers the dire need of understanding the various types of mimicry in order to make informed decisions about the repercussions or effects of the various types of mimicry strategies on consumers. For example, mimic brands can provide greater value to consumers based on their ability to improve on what model brands have innovated (Levesque and Shepherd, 2004; Posen et al., 2013). As previous studies have highlighted, entering the market as a mimic brand can sometimes be inevitable as there can only be one

pioneer or innovator at any one time (Huang et al., 2010). However, the importance lies in whether a mimic brand can enter the market and be better than the model brand. It is shown through Vavilovian mimicry that mimicry works but only if they have evolved over time. In certain cases, the mimic brand may even supersede the model brand (i.e. Apple and Creative). Therefore it is the mimic brand managers' duty to evaluate and analyse the market opportunities.

- c) Based on the classification scheme of this study, practitioners and researchers will be able to clearly define the type of mimicry they would like to undertake and to apply the characteristics accordingly. This also allows a better understanding of one's brand positioning. More importantly, this study aims to remove the stigma that surrounds brand mimicry (e.g. Penz and Stottinger, 2005; Poddar et al., 2012; Grappi et al., 2013). Due to the uncertainty and the unknown implications of copying, past researchers have often perceived imitation to lead to negative consequences (Poddar et al., 2012). This study provided a renewed perspective that allows a better informed branding and marketing decision.

The above discussion provided a holistic overview of the managerial implications that are derived from this study. The following discussion will provide specific implications for mimic brand managers, model brand managers and legal policy makers.

### **Mimic brand managers**

As highlighted and supported by Raustiala and Sprigman (2006) and Shenkar (2012), mimicry can be a lucrative strategy if employed correctly. Based on this premise, it has encouraged a stream of research that explored various forms of imitation (e.g. Lefkoff-Hagius and Mason, 1993; Harvey et al., 1998; Rutherford et al., 2000; Warlop and Alba, 2004; Miceli and Pieters, 2010; van Horen and Pieters, 2012a; 2012b). Some of the findings in this study are in line with previous findings and there are also other new insights are derived from this study. Therefore, based on the findings a number of strategic implications are highlighted and proposed for mimic brand managers below.

- (a) It is found that the physical similarities of Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimicry lead to negative perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. This is against popular belief that close physical similarities to the model brand will lead to

transfer of positive associations from the model brand to the mimic brand. In fact, it leads to the tendency of consumers to think that the brand is of lower quality and a cheap “fake”. Therefore, mimic brand managers should try to avoid blatant copying especially if you are a Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimic. Based on the examples provided, Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimics are often discount stores or outlets that sell cheaper products (e.g. Target, Kmart) or that are often less reputable and with a lower brand image. In addition, by having high physical similarities to the model brand may result in easier detection and prosecution by law as it may brim on trademark or trade dress infringement (van Horen and Pieters, 2012a). However, other factors such as brand familiarity with the brand may inadvertently transfer to the perception of luxury of the mimic brand as a consumer would know that the mimic is not a luxury brand (Warlop and Alba, 2004). In contrast, the perceived physical similarities of the Pouyannian mimic to the model brand resulted in positive perception of luxury and product evaluation of the mimic brand. It is therefore important for Pouyannian mimics to accentuate the physical similarities to the model brand. Considering that Pouyannian mimicry involves copying of “classic” and “iconic” pieces of model brands, a consumer would most likely prefer a closely similar copy that can “look like” the model brand but it is a cheaper quality variation. Many brand within the industry employ this tactic to compete successfully within the industry (for example, Splurge and Steal). Overall, the image and symbolic characteristics of the mimic brands are key aspects that consumers look for in a luxury mimic brand. This emphasizes the importance of the image of luxury, prestige and exclusivity that the mimic brand should still exude regardless of type of mimicry.

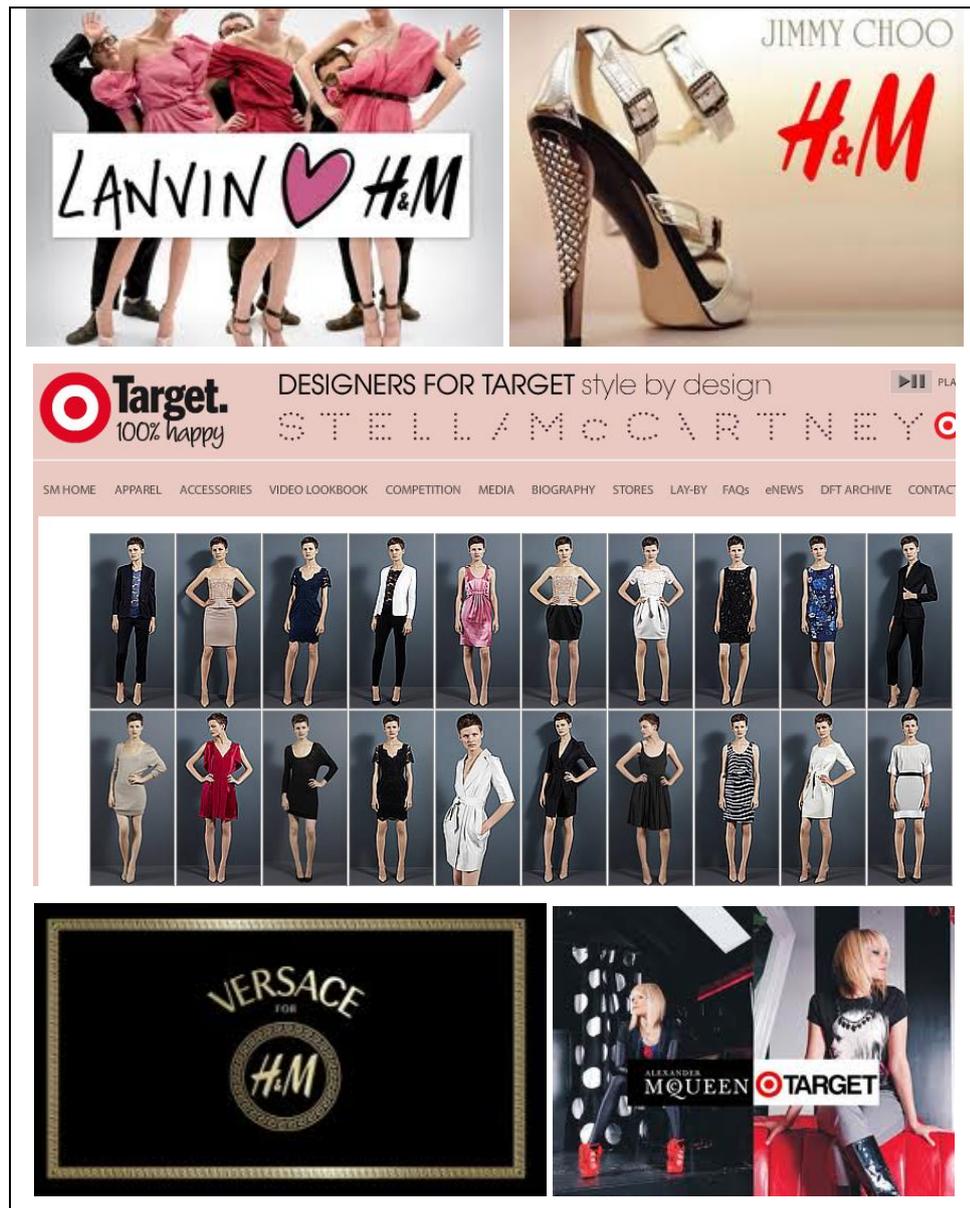
- (b) Brand familiarity towards the mimic brand was found to be important for all types of mimicry. This emphasizes the importance of mimic brands in investing in promotion and generating a positive brand image in consumers’ minds. In fact, as a mimic brand it is important to identify the specific brand positioning – either as a lower priced brand (Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimicry), a new market entrant (Vavilovian mimicry), or an existing well-known brand (Pouyannian mimicry). Dependent on these characteristics, it will then lead to the strengthening of certain characteristics. In addition, having negative brand image, will more likely lead to negative perception and product evaluation regardless of the mimicry of a successful product. The transfer of a negative brand image from the mimic brand may be stronger than any transfer of

positive product association from a model brand to the mimic product. Furthermore, it is found that brand familiarity towards the model brand has implications on consumers' perception of luxury and product evaluation towards the mimic brand. The results revealed that for Vavilovian mimics, brand familiarity towards the model brand leads to negative product evaluation for the car and the jewellery category. It can be assumed that the products are high involvement products with higher associated risk. Therefore, Vavilovian mimics which are often relatively new brands in the marketplace may not incite confidence in consumers when compared to the model brand. On the other hand, brand familiarity towards the model brand in Pouyannian mimicry revealed the opposite finding. It resulted in positive product evaluation of the mimic brand in both cars and jewellery category. Firstly, Pouyannian mimics are often relatively well known brands. Therefore, consumers would usually have confidence in the mimic brand. Furthermore, consumer experience and familiarity of the trends and innovation of the model brand would therefore motivate them to seek for alternatives if, for example they are unable to buy a Chanel tweed, an alternative would be a Zara tweed. This in turn results in the positive product evaluation of the mimic brand (Zara tweed). Hence, Pouyannian mimic brand managers should relate the product as closely to the model brand as possible.

- (c) Based on this study, the implications from understanding consumers' need for uniqueness provides insights for segmentation strategies to be formulated to address the varied groups of consumers who may be enticed by mimic brands. This study has primarily highlighted that dependent on the type of mimicry. Brand mimicry can appeal to consumers who seek a different sense of uniqueness. It was found that consumers prone to unpopular choice counter-conformity are more likely to form positive perception of luxury and product evaluation towards the mimic brand. Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimicry is often seen as a form of blatant or close copying, which may be unacceptable to the norm. For example, the case of H&M and many fast fashion brands these days are a strategic case of mimicry. While model brand managers tend to condemn these brands as "pirates" and unoriginal, the strategy they have pursued has provided benefits for specific types of consumers. Looking at the H&M and Stella McCartney example (see Diagram 7.5), H&M provides alternative solutions to an organic t-shirt, which can retail at a much lower price. However, the

biggest issue with Wicklerian Eisnerian mimics would be that they are harmful to consumers because of their substandard mimicry. They may mimic the physical appearance, yet they do not exactly work the same way which can become a drawback to them. Based on the research findings, consumers tend to overlook such information of harm.

**Diagram 7.5:** Examples of co-branding



Interestingly, for unpopular choice counter-conformity consumers, this appeals to their sense of deviation from what is seen as “acceptable” (Tian et al., 2001). Consumers who are prone to creative choice counter-conformity were found to have positive perception of luxury and product evaluation towards the Vavilovian mimic

brand. This suggests that consumers who would like to “mix and match” brands to create their own style would see Vavilovian mimic brands as a good option. While Vavilovian mimics are not considered as overly popular and mainstream, they offer distinctions and uniqueness to what is within the marketplace that can help the consumer shape their personal style and image (Tian et al., 2001; Kastanakis and Balabanis, 2012). Consumers who are prone to avoidance of similarity on the other hand have shown to have negative perception of luxury towards the Pouyannian mimic brand in mainly the car and shoes category. This finding implicates that Pouyannian mimicry is prevalent especially within the car and shoes industry. A Pouyannian mimic would therefore lead to a lower perception of luxury because it is seen as “common” and may suggest that all the brands “look” the same and without much variation. Hence, it is important for mimic brand managers to evaluate the segment they wish to pursue. Dependent on which form of mimicry strategy is pursued, the messages or the product designs will need to be modified to accentuate appeal to the group of unique consumer. It is important for mimic brand managers to understand that consumers who strive for a sense of uniqueness would seek products that can accentuate their personality and values. In addition, mimic brand managers may consider the positioning of the mimic brand as a niche brand rather than a mass consumer mimic. Literature has also stated that mimic brands are often less abundant than model brands, which is also an area of opportunity. Based on the findings, the type of mimic brand has a strong influence on consumers’ need for uniqueness. For some consumers, when the mimic becomes available to the masses, it loses the scarcity of the brand. Therefore, the less “common” a mimic brand is, it will appeal to consumers looking for exclusivity and scarce products. In addition, Bain and Company (2012) have recently reported their shift in luxury consumption in the younger market to emphasize uniqueness over heritage. This therefore presents an ample opportunity for mimic brand managers.

- (d) In line with Darwinian’s theory of evolution and the process of natural selection, it is important to strengthen competitive advantages and eliminate weaknesses over time. This is important to mimic brand managers when considering the type of mimicry to utilize but more importantly the evolution of the mimic brand. Firstly, it is important to understand that the cycle of innovation and imitation in the marketplace can be pre-empted based on the theory of mimicry. Therefore, for a mimic brand manager would

be to understand when to either enter a new market (i.e. to a developing country) or to launch a new product (i.e. into an existing or new market). This provides implications for the mimic brand manager. There are many successful examples around the world that has seen an innovation from a country being translated and extended to another country as an “innovation”. For example, Jamba Juice from the US and Boost Juice in Australia, or Innocent Juice in from the UK, and Nudie Juice in Australia (see Diagram 3.6). This therefore highlights the potential of mimic brands to emulate successful innovations from a saturated market into a new market. In addition, as Posen et al. (2013) and Shenkar (2010; 2012) have postulated, entering the market as a “follower” or “mimic” can be beneficial to the mimic brand if they observe the flaws or potential areas for improvement upon the launch of the innovation. The mimic brand then improves on the gaps and launches an imitative innovation. In most cases, the follower can either supersede the model brand or better suit consumers’ needs (Shenkar, 2012) as they would better know what works and what does not based on the model brand. Therefore, the process of natural selection happens weaker traits are eliminated and the stronger traits (successful traits) are retained until the next mimic or next imitative innovation occurs.

- (e) Building onto the discussion on Darwinian’s theory of evolution and natural selection, mimic brands can evolve over time and become a successful independent brand. Looking at the three types of mimicry, most Pouyannian mimic brands in the marketplace are often an evolved version of the Vavilovian mimic. For example, Zara entered the market based on a Vavilovian mimicry strategy. They were an unknown name that provided image benefits to consumers through their “lookalike” clothes to the fresh fashion selections off the runway, but at a fraction of the price. They were not perceived favourably by the model brands. However, they have established themselves through branding exercises and the strategic design of their supply chain, which catapulted them into one of the most popular fast fashion chains in the world. In addition, they are now a form of Pouyannian mimic rather than a Vavilovian mimic. In some cases, they are seen to be better preferred than their luxury and expensive counterparts as they provide the benefits of fast changing fashion and “luxury” pieces at a reasonable price. Other examples are ASOS.com who branded themselves on the premise of a mimicry strategy. Similarly, Crocodile adopted a Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimicry strategy that started out with close to outright copies of Lacoste’s designs.

However, over the years Crocodile has innovated through rebranding the logo, the image of the stores, the product lines, and has refined the brand through deriving inspiration from other luxury brand sources other than Lacoste. Interestingly, the products that Crocodile showcase are uniquely quirky and are novel to what is available in the marketplace. Therefore, mimicry is a gradual process of evolution. It may take time, but more importantly is the long term strategic direction that mimic brand managers take that can lead the mimic brand to more than just any mimic brand. Therefore, this strategy has great potential for development and execution.

(f) One of the implications for mimic brand managers is to seek collaboration with model brand managers in a co-branding exercise. The mimic brand and the model brand can mutually benefit each other's brand image through the transfer of positive associations to one another. Rather than be seen as polar opposites, many luxury brands have combined their strengths through bringing luxury to the masses without creating a brand extension that may result in diluting the brand's equity. This can be executed through brand collaborations. Recently a number of such examples have emerged in the fashion industry. For example, Jimmy Choo created a special edition for H&M, Lanvin for H&M, Stella McCartney for Target, amongst many upcoming others. This has opened doors for luxury brands to embrace a different target market that has received great success. Consumers who are unable to afford the high end Jimmy Choo shoes can opt for the cheaper special edition for H&M but still retains a "luxury connotation". This provides greater "desire" for consumers to look forward to the special editions which increases the brand awareness and enhances the image of Jimmy Choo and also reduces the negative perception of H&M as a mimic brand. Mimic brands can often reach a larger target market, one which the expensive Jimmy Choo could not or would not explore. Therefore, the model brand can enter the mass consumer market without diluting the luxury brand status of the model brand. For the mimic brand, the collaboration with a model brand can enhance its brand image and improve brand familiarity and perception of luxury in the eyes of the consumers. Furthermore, this can enhance the positioning of the mimic brand. It may also be more expensive to launch a brand extension than to seek collaboration. Interestingly, H&M who was being condemned by many designers for "ripping" off their designs have now also launched their own line of more premium designer

inspired line named COS (Portas, 2011 ). Entering the market as a Pouyannian mimic, they offer the brand promise of offering timeless and distinctive trendy pieces to consumers. This strategy looks at marketing to a new segment (different to the H&M more youthful concept), this looks at offering “classic” pieces that are often inspired by luxury superbrands like Prada, Chanel, and so on, which then distinctively differentiates the COS brand from its cheaper mimic twin. This providing greater range of alternatives for consumers through a mass-tige brand. In addition, it is beneficial for the mimic brand to primarily understand that mimic brand consumers are not seeking high-end luxury but for affordable, fun and novel product alternatives.

### **Model brand managers**

One of the key discussions regarding brand imitations and any form of brand mimicry is the detrimental effects that it can bring to the model brand. Nia and Zaichkowsky (2000) investigated if counterfeits can devalue luxury brands, and more recently Hieke (2010) examined if counterfeits can affect the image of original luxury brands. However, the studies have been inconclusive as their findings were left statistically insignificant. Therefore, this study strives to be one of the first to provide some insights into the potential effects of mimicry on mimic brands which can also translate to potential strategic avenues for model brands. The following are some of the key managerial contributions for model brand managers.

- (a) The saying of “if you can’t beat them, join them” can be applicable in this scenario. It is important for model brand managers to first understand that mimic brands may not be counterfeits or fakes. Therefore, rather than eliminating mimic brands from the marketplace, model brand managers should look at the strategic potential of a mimic brand. There are many mimic brands that have the expertise and the resources to manufacture better quality products than the model brand themselves. Mimic brands thrive in the marketplace by emulating the model brands, and there are cases when the mimic brand can do better (such as Apple and Samsung). Therefore, model brands can acquire mimic brands as a manufacturing arm, or to even purchase mimic brands as a brand extension. Considering the investment of launching a brand extension may be high, the acquisition of a ready and relatively well-known brand that closely aligns with one’s brand image, it is can enhance the brand portfolio further. In the case of

LVMH, they acquired the mimic brand Charles & Keith, whose primary business is to derive inspiration from latest shoe and accessories trends from the latest luxury brand and to churn out modified mimics. In addition, Charles & Keith has been a growing, if not a brand with a large loyalty fan base due to their branding strategies and improved brand image. In addition, when it is owned by LVMH, the question of mimicry dissolves as then it would only be mimicking its own parent brand, which largely helps solidify the model brand.

- (b) One of the key considerations that model brands will need to evaluate is the level of innovation of their products. While mimicry is inevitable when you are a successful brand, there is literature to suggest that many model brands have often become less inspiring brands that charges exorbitant prices without truly innovating and creating new products that consumers see as worthwhile of the high price. In addition, over time, model brands will either have to revitalize or reinforce the brand to keep consumers reminded about the brand values and image that is the core of the brand. Therefore, as the survival of the fittest goes, when model brands start to become complacent or do not innovate, they are soon overtaken by mimic brands. Therefore, it is crucial for model brands to either innovate or imitate. The new term coined by Shenkar (2012), would be to “imovate”, which is to create imitative innovations that would be desired by consumers. Furthermore, in order for model brands to fend off mimic brands would be to have drastic changes to the brand. For example, to only change the colour or slight features of the brand would not constitute a big enough change that can leave mimic brands further behind in the competition (Schmidt, 1958).
- (c) It is also crucial for model brands to remember that not all mimic brands are harmful. As documented by prior studies (e.g. Raustiala and Sprigman, 2006; Suk and Hemphill, 2009), mimicry can help the model brand diffuse the innovation. When Louis Vuitton first introduced the monogram, it was different and unique to what the market is used to. Subsequently, many variations of the monogram emerged, and other luxury brands such as Gucci also emulated the concept. However, this created a massive trend within the marketplace that currently still exists today. This then forms a trend and through the test of time, this first creative innovation would be termed as the “classic”. This then solidifies the model brand image rather than dilutes it. Hence, mimic brands are important players in the marketplace to provide an alternative to

consumers, but more importantly to diffuse innovations. Otherwise, only a selective few will be able to afford the expensive model. The presence of mimic brands in the marketplace also stands a testament to the success and popularity of the model brand.

- (d) In addition, model brands would need to return to the first principles of assessing the evolution of a brand. In examining the current climate and issues surrounding counterfeiting, it can be seen that an exhaustive number of strategies have been put in place, such as tough IPR regulations, penalties, holograms and other counterfeit detection devices, and so on. However, the numbers and statistics on reflect a stronger than ever demand and growth in this illicit market. Therefore, this example can be likened to a biology parallel of the superbugs. With the greater amount of resistance and “antibiotics” put in place to stamp out the spread and growth of virus, the viruses mutate faster and become stronger as a result. As such, the viruses then become superbugs over time as their need to survive is as great as or even greater than humans’ need to eradicate them. Hence, a similarity can be observed in the luxury brand industry. The tougher regulations and penalties imposed have only seen many counterfeiters create better quality counterfeits that can even escape the detection of the original luxury brands. This is only one of the numerous means which counterfeiters have eluded the prosecution of original luxury brands and the law. Furthermore, studies have also shown that counterfeits increase the appeal of the original luxury brands (Wilcox et al., 2009; Romani et al., 2012). Therefore, brands will need to rethink their strategy and look to brand mimicry as an alternative.

### **Legal and policy makers**

- (a) There is a gap in the legal framework and literature that suggests a lack of copyrighting and protection for similarities or copying between products (Suk and Hemphill, 2009; van Horen and Pieters, 2012b). The measurements presented in this study allow a clearer distinction between the types of mimicry and the degree which can be accepted. Harvey et al. (1998) have established a table to compare the different forms of copying in the marketplace similar to each type of mimicry. However, there was no scale that was developed that can allow policy makers and brand managers to objectively assess the degree of similarity. In many cases, the definitions of the copycat cases are often isolated and are fragmented. In response to the call for research, the scale and conceptual framework attempts to provide policy makers a guideline to identify the type of mimicry in question and serve as a tool to determine

the degree of similarity between the model and the mimic brand (van Horen and Pieters, 2012b). However, this study is exploratory at this stage and while it has conducted a rigorous theory building exercise, it has not been refined through rigorous theory testing. This study provides a foundation and a guideline to consider when policy makers are assessing the legal implications of a mimic brand.

- (b) In addition, this study strives to legitimize the concept of mimicry in the eyes of policy makers. The key to mimicry is that it may not all be necessarily harmful. In the case of counterfeits and pirated products, or even when examining some of the Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimic brands, they can often bring harm to consumers. While there are cases of Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimics that have brought harm to consumers (e.g. Crocs and Kmart “Crocs”), there are some other form of mimicry that have provided certain benefits to consumers. For example, Vavilovian mimicry can provide novel and unique products that are modified from the mainstream and popular brands that are often at a cheaper price. The introduction of mimic products can often provide a better product or brand alternative to consumers which may otherwise result in the monopoly of larger market players.
- (c) By facilitating a competitive environment within reasonable means, such as allowing Pouyannian mimics to exist can assist the development of trends and fashion. While copyright and trademark laws can safeguard large companies, the smaller companies may be unable to sustain and may be stifled by such competition. In that case, it builds a monopoly within the industry. As such, smaller companies that are within legal means of not blatantly infringing on trademark of the model brands and do not harm consumers should be given an opportunity to thrive. Furthermore, there is an abundance of examples of mimic brands that have evolved through branding efforts and marketing to become successful and beneficial brands (e.g. Apple and Xiaomi). Therefore, it can be suggested that mimicry can build a sustainable and healthy competitive brand ecosystem.

In concluding the implications derived from this study, it is fundamental for practitioners, researchers and policy makers to understand the essence of the theory of mimicry and Darwin’s theory of evolution. The process of imitation and innovation is a cyclical one. An innovator may never always remain an innovator; and a mimic may never always remain a

mimic. The key in surviving in a tough and competitive marketplace is to be able to understand the consumer needs, trends and competition within the ecosystem. As literature has dictated, being a mimic may not be the worst strategy in markets of high uncertainty and during turbulent times (Shenkar, 2010; 2012; Posen et al., 2013). It may be better to observe and learn what an innovator succeeds or fails in before entering the market. In fact, being an innovator may not be the best strategic option when resources are lacking (Huang et al., 2012). Therefore a strong brand analysis and strategic direction needs to be in place in order to pre-empt, strategize, and evolve. *Like biologists agree that imitation is essential to evolution; brand strategists in turn need to value that imitation is essential to brand and market evolution.*

## **LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS**

This study on brand mimicry in the luxury brand context has extended the theory of mimicry from discipline of biological and natural sciences into a marketing and branding context. The objectives of the study have been achieved through theory building, scale development and the analysis of the effects of three types of mimicry on consumer perception and product evaluation towards the mimic brand. However, similar to other studies there are limitations of this study that are highlighted.

While this study has extended the theory of mimicry from discipline of biological and natural sciences to a marketing context by drawing parallels between nature and marketing, there is still an abundance of knowledge that is unknown. Firstly, the study is limited by the identification of only three types of mimicry, therefore only three main types of marketing parallel drawn. These three types of mimicry do not encompass all the types of mimicry present in the marketplace. Therefore, it is important to note that these are still initial stages of theory building. This study serves to be one of the first (at the point of this study) to explore the various similarities between mimicry in nature and mimicry in marketing. In addition, a large part of the theory surrounds Darwinian's theory of evolution, which has omitted the development of recent scientists that have postulated Neo-Darwinian theory of evolution. The Neo-Darwinian theory is a synthesis of natural selection and variation/mutation which has valuable implications for marketing and branding.

Second, this study only used a student sample. Theory and literature has asserted that a student sample is homogenous, which makes it suitable for experimental studies and for theory validation research (Calder et al., 1981). However, it is therefore limited in external validity and is therefore a poorer representation of the general population (Yoo and Lee, 2011).

Third, the study is conducted in Australia only. This limits the generalizability of the study to other countries. In addition, only luxury brands are examined in this study. Therefore, other sectors such as convenience goods have not been addressed in this study. As d'Astous and Gargouri (2001) have stated, there are differences between the luxury brand industry and the convenience goods sector that could provide differing results.

Fourth, there may be possible brand familiarity issues associated with this study as Australian may not be exposed or familiar with a number of these international brands. Although there are a number of brands that are Australian specific, the other brands may have a lesser presence in Australia. There are also a number of strong implications presented in the findings of this study that surround brand familiarity towards the brands used in this study. However, it was not taken into account the effects of the level brand familiarity consumer possess towards a brand and how it influences perception of luxury and product evaluation. That is projected to have influences as it can be assumed that prior brand knowledge would affect the evaluation of the mimic brand directly and subsequently the product.

Fifth, the study only tested the effects of presence of three types of mimicry on the mimic brand and not on the model brand. As previous studies have suggested (Kapfarer, 1995; Nia and Zaichkowsky, 2000; Romani et al., 2012), the existence of mimic brand will have implications and influence on model brands. However, this study had not tested for those differences. Furthermore, there are other variables such as novelty seeking, materialism and social factors that are not taken account in this study. More importantly, the conditions of deception and brand confusion were not examined in this study.

Sixth, the study is limited in the use of mainly regressions to test the independent relationships between variables within the model. This may not take into account the interaction of the variables within a full model. Hence, the use of other statistical techniques such as SEM would be able to provide a better test of the applicability of the research model.

Lastly, the stimulus of this study was visual based through the use of a collage of brand images compiled by a professional graphic designer. There are limitations in using this form of stimulus design as respondents are unable to touch, feel and assess the product in a more interactive mode. Therefore, their assessment of perception of luxury and product evaluation is predominantly based on either their prior knowledge or the visual stimulus provided. This therefore reduces the consumer experience in a real life purchase situation. In addition, while the use of the 31-item consumers' need for uniqueness scale was inevitable, the scale might potentially cause respondent fatigue. Therefore a shorter scale or refined scale may be warranted in order to avoid possible fatigue. In addition, brand name has been acknowledged as an important attribute in judging brand similarities by past studies (e.g. Dawar and Parker, 1994; Howard et al., 2000). However, this research has excluded brand name effects as they

are subjective to personal conditions. For example, some consumers tend to perceive similarity of a name based similar sounding brand names and others perceive similarity based the meanings of the brand names (Howard et al., 2000; Miceli and Pieters, 2010; van Horen and Pieters, 2012a). A separate study will only be able to evaluate the differences between the brand name similarities between similar products.

There are also a number of future directions worthy of further research. First, more studies into the theory of mimicry are warranted. In addition, the inclusion of Neo-Darwinian perspectives into further theory building and validation would present a more robust extension of the theory of mimicry. In addition, other common types of mimicry in nature should also be assessed for their parallels to marketing (e.g. Batesian mimicry and Mullerian mimicry). There is a large number of mimicry still undefined within nature. This is similar to the vast types of mimicry observed in marketing. Therefore, this study serves as an initial classification system which would require further research to build into a similar mimicry classification system consolidated by Pasteur (1982).

Second, further validation of the scale is required through the application of the three types of mimicry scale to other product categories. While imitation in the convenience goods sector has been studied extensively, the application of the theory of mimicry with the three types of mimicry is yet to be conducted. In addition, to improve the generalizability of the three mimicry scales, it would be beneficial to investigate the influence of mimicry in other countries. This would also further validate the scales.

Third, this study used regressions to test the relationships within the research model. Further studies are warranted by using structural equation modeling to examine the model fit of the research model.

Fourth, other variables such as consumer involvement or product involvement can be examined. In addition, while product evaluation of the mimic brand was used as the outcome variable, this may not represent eventual purchase intention or behaviour. Future studies can examine purchase intention towards the mimic or the model brand and test for the influence of presence of mimicry on behaviour (Miceli and Pieters, 2010). Additionally, the theory of mimicry postulated that there are usually a degree of deception and brand confusion, however, this were not examined and investigated in detail. There are possible eminent relationships

between deception, confusion and presence of mimicry that can present further implications. Therefore further investigation into the conditions of deception and confusion in relation to brand mimicry is needed.

Fifth, the use of general consumers to examine the presence of mimicry would improve the ecological validity of the study. In addition, respondents should be surveyed at a location where purchase behaviour of luxury brands takes place (e.g. malls). This can further enhance the ecological validity of the study. In addition, the use of the physical products as stimulus rather than the visual collage used in this study will provide a better representation of the actual behaviour and scenario in evaluating a product (e.g. Hagtvedt and Patrick, 2008). For example, respondents may be presented with two products that they can touch and feel which will be able to allow them to form better evaluations of the product and brand. In addition, while this study has provided a start to a classification scheme for brand mimicry and three different types of mimicry scales, there is still a potential for more to be explored (Tversky, 1977). Further study on what are some of the other attributes or conditions that make consumers perceive two products or brands to be similar is much needed (Till and Priluck, 2000; d'Astous and Gargouri, 2001; van Horen and Pieters, 2012a; 2012b).

Sixth, this study investigated the influences of presence of mimicry on the mimic brands. There have been gaps in the literature that have suggested the need for researchers to look at how product similarity can influence the model brand (e.g. van Horen and Pieters, 2012b). Future studies can extend the model by examining the influence of presence of mimicry on perception of luxury and product evaluation towards the model brand. In addition, studies have uncovered the value of mimicry on luxury brand owners (e.g. Romani et al., 2012). Therefore findings from understanding the implications of mimicry on luxury brand owners will provide deeper insights and understanding of the mimicry phenomenon.

Lastly, the brands used in this study are mostly international brands. There may therefore be issues with the familiarity of some of the brands. Therefore future studies can examine local brands, or more specifically brands that are available in the country of study. However, it would also be interesting to test the effects of presence of mimicry of global brands and compare that with domestic brands to test for the differences in consumer perception and evaluation. In addition, while respondents were asked about their level of brand familiarity, the possible differences between high and low brand familiarity towards the brands were not

taken into account when testing for the relationship across variables. At present, brand familiarity has shown significant influence on the presence of mimicry, perception of luxury and product evaluation. However, when taking into account the levels of brand familiarity can highlight whether low brand familiarity consumers will have higher perception of luxury and product evaluation towards the mimic brand or otherwise.

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# Appendix A: Stimulus Wickerian Eisnerian

## Stimulus used for Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimicry main study

The product images were not manipulated in any way.  
 (Example of brand pairs used for the study to measure the presence of mimicry)

 <p><b>Study 1: Mimic- Shuanghuan Noble</b></p>	 <p><b>Study 1: Model – Smart ForTwo</b></p>
 <p><b>Study 2: Mimic - Kmart "Birkenstocks"</b></p>	 <p><b>Study 2: Model – Birkenstock</b></p>
 <p><b>Study 3: Mimic – H&amp;M</b></p>	 <p><b>Study 3: Model – Stella McCartney</b></p>
 <p><b>Study 4: Mimic – Reebok</b></p>	 <p><b>Study 3: Model – Tiffany &amp; Co.</b></p>

## Appendix B: Stimulus Vavilovian

### Stimulus used for Vavilovian mimicry main study

The product images were not manipulated in any way.

(Example of brand pairs used for the study to measure the presence of mimicry)

 <p><b>Study 5: Mimic- Geely</b></p>	 <p><b>Study 5: Model – Rolls Royce</b></p>
 <p><b>Study 6: Mimic - Crocodile</b></p>	 <p><b>Study 6: Model – Lacoste</b></p>
 <p><b>Study 7: Mimic – Forever 21</b></p>	 <p><b>Study 7: Model – Valentino</b></p>
 <p><b>Study 8: Mimic – Lovelinks</b></p>	 <p><b>Study 8: Model – Pandora</b></p>

## Appendix C: Stimulus Pouyannian

### Stimulus used for Pouyannian mimicry main study

The product images were not manipulated in any way.

(Example of brand pairs used for the study to measure the presence of mimicry)

 <p>Study 9: Mimic- Lexus</p>	 <p>Study 9: Model – Mercedes Benz</p>
 <p>Study 10: Mimic - Gap</p>	 <p>Study 10: Model – Burberry</p>
 <p>Study 11: Mimic – Guess</p>	 <p>Study 11: Model – Gucci</p>
 <p>Study 12: Mimic – Thomas Sabo</p>	 <p>Study 12: Model – Tiffany &amp; Co.</p>

## Appendix D: Survey Instrument for EFA

### Survey Instrument: EFA Survey form

#### Wicklerian Eisnerian mimicry

Note: This survey has been reformatted to fit the margins of the thesis. This has resulted in smaller font size than the original. The readability of the original survey was superior to this.

The survey instruments for the EFA are the same in formatting and layout. For the purpose of clarity, the survey instrument for Wicklerian Eisnerian mimicry is presented. The same format is applied across to the other two types of mimicry.

This study is addressing the concept of mimicry in the marketplace. There are no right or wrong answers for the questions. Your answers will also be kept confidential and will not be linked to you in any way.

#### Brands

<b>A</b>	<b>Please rate your level of agreement to the following statements:</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>					<b>Strongly Agree</b>	
<b>1</b>	I am knowledgeable about the brand – K-Swiss	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>2</b>	I am knowledgeable about the brand – Payless Shoesource	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>3</b>	I am knowledgeable about the brand - Escada	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>4</b>	I am knowledgeable about the brand – Dorall Collection	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>5</b>	I am knowledgeable about the brand – Forever 21	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>6</b>	I am knowledgeable about the brand – Ray Ban	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>7</b>	I am knowledgeable about the brand – Ralph Lauren	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>8</b>	I am knowledgeable about the brand – Rahel Chatier	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>9</b>	I am knowledgeable about the brand – Crocs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>10</b>	I am knowledgeable about the brand – Walmart	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>11</b>	I am knowledgeable about the brand – Target	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>12</b>	I am knowledgeable about the brand – Roberto Cavalli	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>13</b>	I am knowledgeable about the brand – Smart Fortwo	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>14</b>	I am knowledgeable about the brand – Smart Noble	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>15</b>	I am knowledgeable about the brand – Corona	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>16</b>	I am knowledgeable about the brand – Cerona	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

\* Watch the stimulus before proceeding\*

**Physical Characteristics**

<b>B</b>	<b>Please rate your level of agreement to the following statements:</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>						<b>Strongly Agree</b>
	<b>The products share similar:</b>							
<b>1</b>	The products share similar product features	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>2</b>	The products share similar designs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>3</b>	The products share similar shapes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>4</b>	The products share similar logos	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>5</b>	The products share similar colour(s)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>6</b>	The products share similar appearances	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>7</b>	The products share similar ornaments	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>8</b>	The products share similar aesthetics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>9</b>	The products share similar looks	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>10</b>	The products share similar a sounding brand name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>11</b>	The products share similar brand names	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>12</b>	The products share similar appeal	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>13</b>	The products share similar physical traits	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>14</b>	The products share similar product designs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

\* Watch the stimulus before proceeding\*

**Symbolic/Intangible Characteristics**

<b>C</b>	<b>Please rate your level of agreement to the following statements:</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>				<b>Strongly Agree</b>		
<b>1</b>	The products express similar ideas	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>2</b>	The products express similar concepts	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>3</b>	The products express similar themes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>4</b>	The products express similar appeal	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>5</b>	The products express similar trends	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>6</b>	The products express similar status	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>7</b>	The products express similar styles	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>8</b>	The products express a similar degree of trendiness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>9</b>	The products express a similar degree of exclusivity	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>10</b>	The products express a similar image of prestige	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>11</b>	The products express a similar degree of uniqueness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>12</b>	The products express a similar degree of creativity	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>13</b>	The products express a similar degree of originality	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>14</b>	The products express a similar degree of novelty	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>15</b>	The products express a similar degree of innovation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>16</b>	The products express a similar degree of luxury	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>17</b>	The products express a similar image	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>18</b>	The products express a similar image of sophistication	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>19</b>	The products express a similar image of elegance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>20</b>	The products express a similar image of success	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>21</b>	The products express a similar image of glamour	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>22</b>	The products express similar fashion	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

\* Watch the stimulus before proceeding\*

**Utility/Beneficial Characteristics**

<b>D</b>	<b>Please rate your level of agreement to the following statements:</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>					<b>Strongly Agree</b>	
<b>1</b>	The products share similar product quality.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>2</b>	The products share similar functionality	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>3</b>	The products share similar reliability	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>4</b>	The products share similar durability	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>5</b>	The products share similar practicality	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>6</b>	The products share similar product utility	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

<b>E Demographics</b>				
<b>1</b>	<b>Gender</b>		Male <input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	Female <input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>
<b>2</b>	<b>Age group</b>			
	18 and below <input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	19 - 25 <input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	26 - 35 <input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	36 - 45 <input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
	46 - 55 <input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	56 - 65 <input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>	65 and above <input type="checkbox"/> <sub>7</sub>	
<b>3</b>	<b>Annual Household Income (per annum in Australian Dollars)</b>			
	\$20,000 and below <input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	\$20,001 – 45,000 <input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	\$45,001 – 60,000 <input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	
	\$ 60,001 – 75,000 <input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	\$75,001 – 90,000 <input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<b>Others</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>4</b>	<b>Country of origin</b>			
	Australia <input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	Malaysia <input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	Hong Kong <input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	China <input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
	Indonesia <input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>	<b>Others</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <sub>7</sub>	please specify:	
<b>5</b>	<b>Highest Level of Education</b>			
	Secondary School <input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	College/TAFE <input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	Bachelor degree <input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	
	Postgraduate level <input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<b>Others</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	please specify:	

<b>F</b>	<b>Did you observe any other similarities between the products?</b>

## Appendix E: CFA Survey Instrument for CFA

### Survey Instrument: CFA Survey form

#### Wicklerian Eisnerian mimicry

The survey instruments for the CFA are the same in formatting and layout. For the purpose of clarity, the survey instrument for Wicklerian Eisnerian mimicry is presented. The same format is applied across to the other two types of mimicry.

Note: This survey has been reformatted to fit the margins of the thesis. This has resulted in smaller font size than the original. The readability of the original survey was superior to this

This study is addressing the concept of mimicry in the marketplace. There are no right or wrong answers for the questions. Your answers will also be kept confidential and will not be linked to you in any way.

\* Watch the stimulus before proceeding\*

#### Physical Characteristics

<b>A</b>	<b>Please rate your level of agreement to the following statements:</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>				<b>Strongly Agree</b>		
<b>1</b>	The products share similar product features	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>2</b>	The products share similar logos	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>3</b>	The products share similar appearances	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>4</b>	The products share similar aesthetics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>5</b>	The products share similar looks	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>6</b>	The products share similar a sounding brand name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>7</b>	The products share similar brand names	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>8</b>	The products share similar styles	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>9</b>	The products share similar physical traits	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>10</b>	The products share similar product designs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

\* Watch the stimulus before proceeding\*

### Symbolic/Intangible Characteristics

<b>B</b>	<b>Please rate your level of agreement to the following statements:</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>			<b>Strongly Agree</b>			
<b>1</b>	The products express similar ideas	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>2</b>	The products express similar concepts	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>3</b>	The products express similar trends	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>4</b>	The products express a similar degree of luxury	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>5</b>	The products express a similar image	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>6</b>	The products express a similar image of sophistication	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>7</b>	The products express a similar image of elegance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>8</b>	The products express a similar image of success	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>9</b>	The products express similar fashion	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

\* Watch the stimulus before proceeding\*

**Utility/Beneficial Characteristics**

<b>C</b>	<b>Please rate your level of agreement to the following statements:</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>					<b>Strongly Agree</b>	
<b>1</b>	The products share similar functionality	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>2</b>	The products share similar reliability	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>3</b>	The products share similar durability	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>4</b>	The products share similar practicality	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>5</b>	The products share similar product utility	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

<b>D</b>	<b>Demographics</b>						
<b>1</b>	<b>Gender</b>			Male <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>2</b>	<b>Age group</b>						
	18 and below <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	19 - 25 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	26 - 35 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	36 - 45 <input type="checkbox"/>
	46 - 55 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	56 - 65 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	65 and above <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>3</b>	<b>Annual Household Income (per annum in Australian Dollars)</b>						
	\$20,000 and below <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$20,001 – 45,000 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$45,001 – 60,000 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	\$ 60,001 – 75,000 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ 75,001 – 90,000 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Others</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>4</b>	<b>Country of origin</b>						
	Australia <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Malaysia <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hong Kong <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	China <input type="checkbox"/>
	Indonesia <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Others</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>please specify:</b>		
<b>5</b>	<b>Highest Level of Education</b>						
	Secondary School <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	College/TAFE <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bachelor degree <input type="checkbox"/>		
	Postgraduate level <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Others</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>please specify:</b>		

## **Appendix F: Survey Instrument for Main study**

### **Survey Instrument: Main Study Survey forms**

The survey instruments for the main studies are the same in formatting and layout.

For the purpose of clarity, the survey instrument for each type of mimicry is presented using different product categories.

Note: This survey has been reformatted to fit the margins of the thesis. This has resulted in smaller font size than the original. The readability of the original survey was superior to this.

# Wicklerian-Eisnerian mimicry: Shuanghuan Noble and Smart ForTwo (cars category)

This study is addressing the concept of mimicry in the marketplace. There are no right or wrong answers for the questions. Your answers will also be kept confidential and will not be linked to you in any way.

## Part 1

Look at the articles carefully.

My scariest in-car experience actually happened earlier in the Summer, when I found myself on the freeway in a Chinese-spec Shuanghuan Noble... on which at least one wheel was seriously out of round. The second I hit about 72 MPH, the thing took on a life of its own, oscillating wildly back and forth and trying to throw itself into one adjacent lane after the other. Realizing I had only ever seen this vehicle crash-tested at less than half the speed at which I was then traveling, contemplating its top-heavy dimensions and not even knowing if this dealer-plated example had a functioning airbag, I grappled with the wheel and eased down the speed. Eventually it stopped pogo-ing, all though it took my heart another 20 minutes or so to follow suit. Even compared to my select irresponsible experiences with insanely overpowered-powered vehicles, it was by far the most terrifying, mortality-facing, PTSD-inspiring experience I've ever had in a car... probably because I only *half*-expected to be literally taking my life into my hands on that drive.



*Some industry analysts also said there could be a move by overseas car makers to bar Chinese models out of their markets as they fear the low-pricing strategy would harm their market domination.*

*Media reports said the Noble is expected to cost about 7,000 euros – the lowest price for a small car on the German market.*

*Shuanghuan exports the CEO to eastern European markets as well as African countries.*

*It also signed contracts with dealers in Italy to export 2,000 CEOs in addition to 1,000 Nobles in the near future if the controversial models could pass relevant tests.*

*But the dispute with global counterparts is casting a shadow on the car maker's sales strategy and may even prompt Shuanghuan to promise to sell the CEO only in Asia and Africa while the Noble will be sold only in China.*

*"They (the CEO and Noble) really share similarities in body design with its overseas counterparts. The weakness (in design) is used by overseas parties to block Chinese cars while Chinese producers have been long criticized for lacking intellectual property rights protection," said an industry analyst.*

*"To build up an up-scale car brand on the international markets rather than just make a copycat, Chinese car makers need more efforts to improve research and development capability," he said.*



### Noble crashes out of key car safety tests

Adjust font size:

The Noble subcompact car, which the Shuanghuan Auto-mobile Co is scrambling to export to Europe, has been awarded the lowest rating ever given out in a Chinese crash test.

The China Automotive Technology and Research Center, the nation's official vehicle laboratory, gave two stars to Shuanghuan's Noble. This compared to the five-star rating achieved by Lavida, made by Shanghai Volkswagen, and the Yaris compact, made by Guangzhou Toyota. All three cars were reviewed in the same batch of tests.

Analysts said the results will make it more difficult for Shuang-huan to tap European markets, which usually require a higher safety standard.

"Whether Noble will pass the crash test in Europe is more questionable and depends on further improvement," said Jia Xinguan, the former chief analyst with the China National Automotive Industry Consulting and Development Corp.

Shuanghuan earlier said the Noble would enter European markets such as Italy and Greece next spring. It already sells the Noble in Southeast Asia and Africa. Monthly sales in Thailand are approaching 1,000 units.

Zhang Rui, communications officer of Shuanghuan, yesterday said the Noble has yet to be granted import approval by Europe and the car maker is improving product safety before taking the European crash test.

"Our determination to export our small cars to Europe and the US market remains unchanged," Zhang said.

The Noble is also likely to face a court battle in Europe because it has been accused of copying the design of Mercedes-Benz's Smart Fortwo.

(Shanghai Daily October 10, 2008)



<b>A</b>	<b>Please rate your level of agreement to the following statements:</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>						<b>Strongly Agree</b>
<b>1</b>	I am familiar with the <u>Shuanghuan Noble</u> brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>2</b>	I am knowledgeable about the <u>Shuanghuan Noble</u> brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>3</b>	I am experienced with the <u>Shuanghuan Noble</u> brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

\* Insert image of Shuanghuan Noble here \*

Based on the images, please answer the following questions:

<b>B</b>	<b>Please rate your level of agreement to the following statements about the <u>Smart Noble</u> brand:</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>						<b>Strongly Agree</b>
<b>1</b>	I like the <u>Shuanghuan Noble</u> brand very much.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>2</b>	I have favourable evaluations towards the <u>Shuanghuan Noble</u> brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>3</b>	I have positive evaluations towards the <u>Shuanghuan Noble</u> brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>4</b>	I think that the <u>Shuanghuan Noble</u> brand is good.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>5*</b>	I think that the <u>Shuanghuan Noble</u> brand is unpleasant.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>6</b>	I perceive the <u>Shuanghuan Noble</u> brand to be luxurious.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>7</b>	I perceive the <u>Shuanghuan Noble</u> brand to be prestigious.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>8</b>	I perceive the <u>Shuanghuan Noble</u> brand to be attractive.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>9</b>	I perceive the <u>Shuanghuan Noble</u> brand to be high-class.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>10</b>	I perceive the <u>Shuanghuan Noble</u> brand to be exclusive.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

<b>C</b>	<b>Please rate your level of agreement to the following statements:</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>						<b>Strongly Agree</b>
<b>1</b>	I am familiar with the <u>Smart ForTwo</u> brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>2</b>	I am knowledgeable about the <u>Smart ForTwo</u> brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>3</b>	I am experienced with the <u>Smart ForTwo</u> brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Based on the images, please answer the following questions:

<b>D</b>	<b>Please rate your level of agreement to the following statements about the <u>Smart ForTwo</u> brand:</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>						<b>Strongly Agree</b>
<b>1</b>	I like the <u>Smart ForTwo</u> car very much.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>2</b>	I have favourable evaluations towards the <u>Smart ForTwo</u> brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>3</b>	I have positive evaluations towards the <u>Smart ForTwo</u>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	brand.						
<b>4</b>	I think that the <b>Smart ForTwo</b> brand is good.	1	2	3	4	5	6 7
<b>5*</b>	I think that the <b>Smart ForTwo</b> brand is unpleasant.	1	2	3	4	5	6 7
<b>6</b>	I perceive the <b>Smart ForTwo</b> brand to be luxurious.	1	2	3	4	5	6 7
<b>7</b>	I perceive the <b>Smart ForTwo</b> brand to be prestigious.	1	2	3	4	5	6 7
<b>8</b>	I perceive the <b>Smart ForTwo</b> brand to be attractive.	1	2	3	4	5	6 7
<b>9</b>	I perceive the <b>Smart ForTwo</b> brand to be high-class.	1	2	3	4	5	6 7
<b>10</b>	I perceive the <b>Smart ForTwo</b> brand to be exclusive.	1	2	3	4	5	6 7

<b>E</b>	<b>Please rate your level of agreement to the following statements:</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>						<b>Strongly Agree</b>
	<b>The products share similar:</b>							
<b>1</b>	The products share similar looks.	1	2	3	4	5	6 7	
<b>2</b>	The products share similar styles.	1	2	3	4	5	6 7	
<b>3</b>	The products share similar physical traits.	1	2	3	4	5	6 7	
<b>4</b>	The products share similar product designs.	1	2	3	4	5	6 7	
<b>5</b>	The products express a similar image of sophistication.	1	2	3	4	5	6 7	
<b>6</b>	The products express a similar image of elegance.	1	2	3	4	5	6 7	
<b>7</b>	The products express a similar image of success.	1	2	3	4	5	6 7	
<b>8</b>	The products express a similar degree of luxury.	1	2	3	4	5	6 7	
<b>9</b>	The products share similar reliability.	1	2	3	4	5	6 7	
<b>10</b>	The products share similar durability.	1	2	3	4	5	6 7	
<b>11</b>	The products share similar practicality.	1	2	3	4	5	6 7	

<b>I</b>	<b>Please rate your level of agreement to the following statements:</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>						<b>Strongly Agree</b>
<b>1</b>	I collect unusual products as a way of telling people I am different.	1	2	3	4	5	6 7	
<b>2</b>	When dressing, I have sometimes dared to be different in ways that others are likely to disapprove.	1	2	3	4	5	6 7	
<b>3</b>	When products or brands I like become extremely popular, I lose interest in them.	1	2	3	4	5	6 7	
<b>4</b>	As far as I am concerned, when it comes to the products I buy and the situations in which I use them, customs and rules are made to be broken.	1	2	3	4	5	6 7	
<b>5</b>	I have sometimes purchased unusual products or brands as a way to create a more distinctive personal image.	1	2	3	4	5	6 7	
<b>6</b>	I often look for one-of-a-kind products or brands so that I create a style that is all my own.	1	2	3	4	5	6 7	

<b>7</b>	I avoid products or brands that have already been accepted and purchased by the average consumer.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>8</b>	Often when buying merchandise, an important goal is to find something that communicates my uniqueness.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>9</b>	I often combine possessions in such a way that I create a personal image for myself that cannot be duplicated.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>10</b>	I often dress unconventionally even when it is likely to offend others.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>11</b>	I often try to find a more interesting version of run-of-the-mill products because I enjoy being original.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>12</b>	I rarely act in agreement with what others think are the right things to buy.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>13</b>	When a product I own becomes popular among the general population, I begin using it less.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>14</b>	I often try to avoid products or brands that I know are bought by the general population.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>15</b>	As a rule, I dislike products or brands that are customarily purchased by everyone.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>16</b>	I actively seek to develop my personal uniqueness by buying special products or brands.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>17</b>	Concern for being out of place does not prevent me from wearing what I want to wear.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>18</b>	Having an eye for products that are interesting and unusual assists me in establishing a distinctive image.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>19</b>	The products and brands that I like best are the ones that express my individuality.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>20</b>	I give up wearing fashions I have purchased once they become popular among the general public.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>21</b>	When it comes to the products I buy and the situations in which I use them, I have often broken customs and rules.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>22</b>	The more commonplace a product or brand is among the general population, the less interested I am in buying it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>23</b>	I often think of the things I buy and do in terms of how I can use them to shape a more unusual personal image.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>24</b>	I'm often on the lookout for new products or brands that will add to my personal uniqueness.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>25</b>	I have often violated the understood rules of my social group regarding what to buy or own.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>26</b>	Products do not seem to hold much value for me when they are purchased regularly by everyone.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>27</b>	I have often gone against the understood rules of my social group regarding when and how certain products are properly used.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>28</b>	When a style of clothing I own becomes too commonplace, I usually quit wearing it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>29</b>	I enjoy challenging the prevailing taste of people I know by buying something they would not seem to accept.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>30</b>	If someone hinted that I had been dressing inappropriately for a social situation, I would continue dressing in the same manner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

31	When I dress differently, I am often aware that others think I'm peculiar but I don't care.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
32	I would buy a product just because it has status.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
33	I am interested in new products with status.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
34	I would pay more for a product if it had status.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
35	The status of a product is irrelevant to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
36	A product is more valuable to me if it has some snob appeal.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

<b>J</b>	<b>Demographics</b>				
<b>1</b>	<b>Gender</b>		Male <input type="checkbox"/>	Female <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>2</b>	<b>Age group</b>				
	18 and below <input type="checkbox"/>	19 - 25 <input type="checkbox"/>	26 - 35 <input type="checkbox"/>	36 - 45 <input type="checkbox"/>	
	46 - 55 <input type="checkbox"/>	56 - 65 <input type="checkbox"/>	65 and above <input type="checkbox"/>		
<b>3</b>	<b>Annual Household Income (per annum in Australian Dollars)</b>				
	\$20,000 and below <input type="checkbox"/>	\$20,001 – 45,000 <input type="checkbox"/>	\$45,001 – 60,000 <input type="checkbox"/>		
	\$ 60,001 – 75,000 <input type="checkbox"/>	\$75,001 – 90,000 <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Others</b> <input type="checkbox"/>		
<b>4</b>	<b>Country of origin</b>				
	Australia <input type="checkbox"/>	Malaysia <input type="checkbox"/>	Hong Kong <input type="checkbox"/>	China <input type="checkbox"/>	Mauritius <input type="checkbox"/>
	Indonesia <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Others</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>please specify:</b>		
<b>5</b>	<b>Highest Level of Education</b>				
	Secondary School <input type="checkbox"/>	College/TAFE <input type="checkbox"/>		Bachelor degree <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Postgraduate level <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Others</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>please specify:</b>		

**Thank you for your time and participation!**

## Vavilovian mimicry: Crocodile and Lacoste (clothing category)

This study is addressing the concept of mimicry in the marketplace. There are no right or wrong answers for the questions. Your answers will also be kept confidential and will not be linked to you in any way.

<b>A</b>	<b>Please rate your level of agreement to the following statements:</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>						<b>Strongly Agree</b>
<b>1</b>	I am familiar with the <u>Crocodile</u> brand	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>2</b>	I am knowledgeable about the <u>Crocodile</u> brand	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>3</b>	I am experienced with the <u>Crocodile</u> brand	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

\* Insert the images of Crocodile brand here\*

Based on the image above, please answer the following questions:

<b>B</b>	<b>Please rate your level of agreement to the following statements about the <u>Crocodile</u> brand:</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>						<b>Strongly Agree</b>
<b>1</b>	I like <u>Crocodile</u> brand very much.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>2</b>	I have favourable evaluations towards <u>Crocodile</u> brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>3</b>	I have positive evaluations towards <u>Crocodile</u> brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>4</b>	I think that <u>Crocodile</u> brand is good.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>5*</b>	I think that <u>Crocodile</u> brand is unpleasant.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>6</b>	I perceive <u>Crocodile brand</u> to be luxurious.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>7</b>	I perceive <u>Crocodile</u> brand to be prestigious.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>8</b>	I perceive <u>Crocodile</u> brand to be attractive.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>9</b>	I perceive <u>Crocodile</u> brand to be high-class.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>10</b>	I perceive <u>Crocodile</u> brand to be exclusive.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

<b>C</b>	<b>Please rate your level of agreement to the following statements:</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>						<b>Strongly Agree</b>
<b>1</b>	I am familiar with the <u>Lacoste</u> brand	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>2</b>	I am knowledgeable about the <u>Lacoste</u> brand	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>3</b>	I am experienced with the <u>Lacoste</u> brand	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

\* Insert images of Lacoste brand here \*

Based on the image above, please answer the following questions:

<b>D</b>	<b>Please rate your level of agreement to the following statements about the <u>Lacoste</u> brand:</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>				<b>Strongly Agree</b>		
1	I like <u>Lacoste</u> brand very much.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	I have favourable evaluations towards the <u>Lacoste</u> brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	I have positive evaluations towards <u>Lacoste</u> brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	I think that <u>Lacoste</u> brand is good.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5*	I think that <u>Lacoste</u> brand is unpleasant.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6	I perceive <u>Lacoste</u> brand to be luxurious.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7	I perceive <u>Lacoste</u> brand to be prestigious.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	I perceive <u>Lacoste</u> brand to be attractive.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9	I perceive <u>Lacoste</u> brand to be high-class.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10	I perceive <u>Lacoste</u> brand to be exclusive.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

<b>E</b>	<b>Please rate your level of agreement to the following statements when comparing Crocodile and Lacoste brands:</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>				<b>Strongly Agree</b>		
1	The products share similar product features.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	The products share similar designs.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	The products share similar physical appearances.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	The products share similar aesthetics.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5	The products share similar looks.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6	The products share similar styles.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7	The products share similar themes.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	The products express a similar image of sophistication.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9	The products express a similar image of success.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10	The products express a similar image of prestige.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11	The products express a similar degree of uniqueness.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12	The products express a similar degree of innovation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13	The products share similar functionality.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14	The products share similar practicality.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15	The products share similar product utility.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

<b>F</b>	<b>Please rate your level of agreement to the following statements:</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>					<b>Strongly Agree</b>	
<b>1</b>	I collect unusual products as a way of telling people I am different.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>2</b>	When dressing, I have sometimes dared to be different in ways that others are likely to disapprove.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>3</b>	When products or brands I like become extremely popular, I lose interest in them.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>4</b>	As far as I'm concerned, when it comes to the products I buy and the situations in which I use them, customs and rules are made to be broken.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>5</b>	I have sometimes purchased unusual products or brands as a way to create a more distinctive personal image.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>6</b>	I often look for one-of-a-kind products or brands so that I create a style that is all my own.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>7</b>	I avoid products or brands that have already been accepted and purchased by the average consumer.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>8</b>	Often when buying merchandise, an important goal is to find something that communicates my uniqueness.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>9</b>	I often combine possessions in such a way that I create a personal image for myself that cannot be duplicated.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>10</b>	I often dress unconventionally even when it is likely to offend others.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>11</b>	I often try to find a more interesting version of run-of-the-mill products because I enjoy being original.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>12</b>	I rarely act in agreement with what others think are the right things to buy.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>13</b>	When a product I own becomes popular among the general population, I begin using it less.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>14</b>	I often try to avoid products or brands that I know are bought by the general population.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>15</b>	As a rule, I dislike products or brands that are customarily purchased by everyone.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>16</b>	I actively seek to develop my personal uniqueness by buying special products or brands.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>17</b>	Concern for being out of place does not prevent me from wearing what I want to wear.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>18</b>	Having an eye for products that are interesting and unusual assists me in establishing a distinctive image.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>19</b>	The products and brands that I like best are the ones that express my individuality.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>20</b>	I give up wearing fashions I have purchased once they become popular among the general public.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>21</b>	When it comes to the products I buy and the situations in which I use them, I have often broken customs and rules.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>22</b>	The more commonplace a product or brand is among the general population, the less interested I am in buying it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>23</b>	I often think of the things I buy and do in terms of how I can use them to shape a more unusual personal image.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

24	I am often on the lookout for new products or brands that will add to my personal uniqueness.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25	I have often violated the understood rules of my social group regarding what to buy or own.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26	Products do not seem to hold much value for me when they are purchased regularly by everyone.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
27	I have often gone against the understood rules of my social group regarding when and how certain products are properly used.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
28	When a style of clothing I own becomes too commonplace, I usually stop wearing it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
29	I enjoy challenging the prevailing taste of people I know by buying something they would not seem to accept.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
30	If someone hinted that I had been dressing inappropriately for a social situation, I would continue dressing in the same manner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
31	When I dress differently, I'm often aware that others think I am peculiar but I do not care.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
32	I would buy a product just because it has status.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
33	I am interested in new products with status.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
34	I would pay more for a product if it had status.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
35	The status of a product is irrelevant to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
36	A product is more valuable to me if it has some snob appeal.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

<b>G</b>	<b>Demographics</b>				
1	<b>Gender</b>		Male <input type="checkbox"/>	Female <input type="checkbox"/>	
2	<b>Age group</b>				
	18 and below <input type="checkbox"/>	19 - 25 <input type="checkbox"/>	26 - 35 <input type="checkbox"/>	36 - 45 <input type="checkbox"/>	
	46 - 55 <input type="checkbox"/>	56 - 65 <input type="checkbox"/>	65 and above <input type="checkbox"/>		
3	<b>Annual Household Income (per annum in Australian Dollars)</b>				
	\$20,000 and below <input type="checkbox"/>	\$20,001 – 45,000 <input type="checkbox"/>	\$45,001 – 60,000 <input type="checkbox"/>		
	\$ 60,001 – 75,000 <input type="checkbox"/>	\$\$ 75,001 – 90,000 <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Others</b>		
4	<b>Country of origin</b>				
	Australia <input type="checkbox"/>	Malaysia <input type="checkbox"/>	Hong Kong <input type="checkbox"/>	China <input type="checkbox"/>	Mauritius <input type="checkbox"/>
	Indonesia <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Others</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	please specify:		
5	<b>Highest Level of Education</b>				
	Secondary School <input type="checkbox"/>	College/TAFE <input type="checkbox"/>	Bachelor degree <input type="checkbox"/>		
	Postgraduate level <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Others</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	please specify:		

Thank you for your time and participation!

## Pouyannian mimicry: Guess and Gucci (shoes category)

This study is addressing the concept of mimicry in the marketplace. There are no right or wrong answers for the questions. Your answers will also be kept confidential and will not be linked to you in any way.

<b>A</b>	<b>Please rate your level of agreement to the following statements:</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>				<b>Strongly Agree</b>		
<b>1</b>	I am familiar with the <u>Guess</u> brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>2</b>	I am knowledgeable about the <u>Guess</u> brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>3</b>	I am experienced with the <u>Guess</u> brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**\* Insert image of Guess here \***

**Based on the image above, please answer the following questions:**

<b>B</b>	<b>Please rate your level of agreement to the following statements about the <u>Guess</u> brand:</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>				<b>Strongly Agree</b>		
<b>1</b>	I like the <u>Guess</u> brand very much.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>2</b>	I have favourable evaluations towards the <u>Guess</u> brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>3</b>	I have positive evaluations towards the <u>Guess</u> brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>4</b>	I think that the <u>Guess</u> brand is good.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>5*</b>	I think that the <u>Guess</u> brand is unpleasant.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>6</b>	I perceive the <u>Guess</u> brand to be luxurious.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>7</b>	I perceive the <u>Guess</u> brand to be prestigious.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>8</b>	I perceive the <u>Guess</u> brand to be attractive.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>9</b>	I perceive the <u>Guess</u> brand to be high-class.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>10</b>	I perceive the <u>Guess</u> brand to be exclusive.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

<b>C</b>	<b>Please rate your level of agreement to the following statements:</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>				<b>Strongly Agree</b>		
<b>1</b>	I am familiar with the <u>Gucci</u> brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>2</b>	I am knowledgeable about the <u>Gucci</u> brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>3</b>	I am experienced with the <u>Gucci</u> brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**\*Insert image of Gucci here \***

Based on the image above, please answer the following questions:

<b>D</b>	<b>Please rate your level of agreement to the following statements about the <u>Gucci</u> brand:</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>				<b>Strongly Agree</b>		
1	I like the <u>Gucci</u> brand very much.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	I have favourable evaluations towards the <u>Gucci</u> brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	I have positive evaluations towards the <u>Gucci</u> brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	I think that the <u>Gucci</u> brand is good.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5*	I think that the <u>Gucci</u> brand is unpleasant.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6	I perceive the <u>Gucci</u> brand to be luxurious.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7	I perceive the <u>Gucci</u> brand to be prestigious.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	I perceive the <u>Gucci</u> brand to be attractive.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9	I perceive the <u>Gucci</u> brand to be high-class.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10	I perceive the <u>Gucci</u> brand to be exclusive.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

<b>E</b>	<b>Please rate your level of agreement to the following statements when comparing Guess and Gucci brands:</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>				<b>Strongly Agree</b>		
1	The products share similar designs.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	The products share similar physical appearances.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	The products shares similar aesthetics.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	The products share similar looks.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5	The products express a similar image of sophistication.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6	The products express a similar image of elegance.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7	The products express a similar image of success.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	The products express a similar image of prestige.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9	The products express a similar degree of uniqueness.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10	The products express a similar degree of creativity.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11	The products express a similar degree of originality.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12	The products express a similar degree of novelty.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13	The products express a similar degree of innovation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

<b>F</b>	<b>Please rate your level of agreement to the following statements:</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>				<b>Strongly Agree</b>		
1	I collect unusual products as a way of telling people I'm different.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	When dressing, I have sometimes dared to be different in ways that others are likely to disapprove.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

<b>3</b>	When products or brands I like become extremely popular, I lose interest in them.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>4</b>	As far as I'm concerned, when it comes to the products I buy and the situations in which I use them, customs and rules are made to be broken.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>5</b>	I have sometimes purchased unusual products or brands as a way to create a more distinctive personal image.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>6</b>	I often look for one-of-a-kind products or brands so that I create a style that is all my own.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>7</b>	I avoid products or brands that have already been accepted and purchased by the average consumer.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>8</b>	Often when buying merchandise, an important goal is to find something that communicates my uniqueness.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>9</b>	I often combine possessions in such a way that I create a personal image for myself that cannot be duplicated.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>10</b>	I often dress unconventionally even when it is likely to offend others.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>11</b>	I often try to find a more interesting version of run-of-the-mill products because I enjoy being original.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>12</b>	I rarely act in agreement with what others think are the right things to buy.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>13</b>	When a product I own becomes popular among the general population, I begin using it less.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>14</b>	I often try to avoid products or brands that I know are bought by the general population.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>15</b>	As a rule, I dislike products or brands that are customarily purchased by everyone.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>16</b>	I actively seek to develop my personal uniqueness by buying special products or brands.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>17</b>	Concern for being out of place does not prevent me from wearing what I want to wear.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>18</b>	Having an eye for products that are interesting and unusual assists me in establishing a distinctive image.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>19</b>	The products and brands that I like best are the ones that express my individuality.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>20</b>	I give up wearing fashions I have purchased once they become popular among the general public.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>21</b>	When it comes to the products I buy and the situations in which I use them, I have often broken customs and rules.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>22</b>	The more commonplace a product or brand is among the general population, the less interested I am in buying it.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>23</b>	I often think of the things I buy and do in terms of how I can use them to shape a more unusual personal image.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>24</b>	I am often on the lookout for new products or brands that will add to my personal uniqueness.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>25</b>	I have often violated the understood rules of my social group regarding what to buy or own.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>26</b>	Products do not seem to hold much value for me when they are purchased regularly by everyone.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>

27	I have often gone against the understood rules of my social group regarding when and how certain products are properly used.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
28	When a style of clothing I own becomes too commonplace, I usually stop wearing it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
29	I enjoy challenging the prevailing taste of people I know by buying something they would not seem to accept.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
30	If someone hinted that I had been dressing inappropriately for a social situation, I would continue dressing in the same manner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
31	When I dress differently, I'm often aware that others think I am peculiar but I do not care.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
32	I would buy a product just because it has status.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
33	I am interested in new products with status.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
34	I would pay more for a product if it had status.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
35	The status of a product is irrelevant to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
36	A product is more valuable to me if it has some snob appeal.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

<b>G</b>	<b>Demographics</b>				
1	<b>Gender</b>		Male <input type="checkbox"/> _1	Female <input type="checkbox"/> _2	
2	<b>Age group</b>				
	18 and below <input type="checkbox"/> _1	19 - 25 <input type="checkbox"/> _2	26 - 35 <input type="checkbox"/> _3	36 - 45 <input type="checkbox"/> _4	
	46 - 55 <input type="checkbox"/> _5	56 - 65 <input type="checkbox"/> _6	65 and above <input type="checkbox"/> _7		
3	<b>Annual Household Income (per annum in Australian Dollars)</b>				
	\$20,000 and below <input type="checkbox"/> _1	\$20,001 – 45,000 <input type="checkbox"/> _2	\$45,001 – 60,000 <input type="checkbox"/> _3		
	\$ 60,001 – 75,000 <input type="checkbox"/> _4	\$\$ 75,001 – 90,000 <input type="checkbox"/> _5	<b>Others</b>		
4	<b>Country of origin</b>				
	Australia <input type="checkbox"/> _1	Malaysia <input type="checkbox"/> _2	Hong Kong <input type="checkbox"/> _3	China <input type="checkbox"/> _4	Mauritius <input type="checkbox"/> _5
	Indonesia <input type="checkbox"/> _6	<b>Others</b> <input type="checkbox"/> _7	<b>please specify:</b>		
5	<b>Highest Level of Education</b>				
	Secondary School <input type="checkbox"/> _1	College/TAFE <input type="checkbox"/> _2		Bachelor degree <input type="checkbox"/> _3	
	Postgraduate level <input type="checkbox"/> _4	<b>Others</b> <input type="checkbox"/> _5	<b>please specify:</b>		

**Thank you for your time and participation!**

# Appendix G: Ethics Forms

## Ethics Approvals/ Clearance from HREC Curtin University (SOM2011004)



### Form C Application for Approval of Research with Low Risk (Ethical Requirements)

SOM 2011

Office Use Only: Date Added to Database: \_\_\_\_\_ Application No: 004

This form should be completed by students/staff undertaking research involving humans with low risk, defined as research where participants have the potential to suffer no harm, but where there is potential to suffer only inconvenience or discomfort". Research may not commence without written notification of approval. This form must be submitted along with the checklist in the Application Guidelines. Please complete this document electronically save it, print it, and have it signed, then submit it.

Please note that if your application involving humans is not classed as low risk you will need to complete a Form A "Application for Ethical Approval of Human Research" <http://research.curtin.edu.au/ethics/human.cfm#application>

#### SECTION 1 TO BE COMPLETED BY APPLICANT

1. Investigator Name(s) MIN TEAH ID Number 12794515  
Supervisor Name (if applicable) IAN PHAY ID Number 2155981  
Telephone 09 X4348 Email min.teah@cbs.curtin.edu.au  
Mailing Address School of Marketing  
School/Department School of Marketing

2. Project Title Investigating Vanilorian Mimicry in the Luxury Brand Industry  
3. Plain English summary of Project (maximum 100 words)

The purpose of the study is to understand consumer perception towards Vanilorian mimicry and how it affects evaluation of products.

4. Aims of Project (maximum 100 words)

- To understand the presence of mimicry and how it affects consumer evaluations
- To investigate the impact of brand familiarity and status consumption when Vanilorian Mimicry is present.

# Ethics Approvals/ Clearance from HREC Curtin University (SOM2011006)



## Form C Application for Approval of Research with Low Risk (Ethical Requirements)

Office Use Only: Date Added to Database: \_\_\_\_\_ Application No: SOM 2011 006

This form should be completed by students/staff undertaking research involving humans with low risk, defined as research where participants have the potential to suffer no harm, but where there is potential to suffer only inconvenience or discomfort. Research may not commence without written notification of approval. This form must be submitted along with the checklist in the [Application Guidelines](#). Please complete this document electronically save it, print it, and have it signed, then submit it.

Please note that if your application involving humans is not classed as low risk you will need to complete a Form A "Application for Ethical Approval of Human Research" <http://research.curtin.edu.au/ethics/human.cfm#application>

### SECTION 1 TO BE COMPLETED BY APPLICANT

- Investigator Name(s)** Min Teah ID Number 12794515  
**Supervisor Name** (if applicable) Ian Phau ID Number 2155981  
**Telephone** 4348 **Email** min.teah@cbs.curtin.edu.au  
**Mailing Address** School of Marketing  
**School/Department** School of Marketing
- Project Title** Investigating Bakerian Mimicry

3. **Plain English summary of Project** (maximum 100 words)

To develop a scale to measure Bakerian mimicry of luxury brands.

4. **Aims of Project** (maximum 100 words)

To develop a scale to measure Bakerian mimicry.

# Ethics Approvals/ Clearance from HREC Curtin University (SOM2011035)



Curtin University

Form C

## Application for Approval of Research with Low Risk (Ethical Requirements)

Office Use Only: Date Added to Database: \_\_\_\_\_ Application No: SOM 2011 035

This form should be completed by students/staff undertaking research involving humans with low risk, defined as research where participants have the potential to suffer no harm, but where there is potential to suffer only inconvenience or discomfort". Research may not commence without written notification of approval. This form must be submitted along with the checklist in the [Application Guidelines](#). Please complete this document electronically save it, print it, and have it signed, then submit it.

Please note that if your application involving humans is not classed as low risk you will need to complete a Form A "Application for Ethical Approval of Human Research" <http://research.curtin.edu.au/ethics/human.cfm#application>

### SECTION 1 TO BE COMPLETED BY APPLICANT

1. Investigator Name(s) Min Teah ID Number 12794565  
 Supervisor Name (if applicable) Prof. IAN PHAU ID Number 2155981  
 Telephone x 4014 Email ~~ian~~ minteah@dx.curtin.edu.au  
 Mailing Address School of marketing  
 School/Department Marketing

2. Project Title Investigating Wickeliam-Eisnevan mimicry in the luxury brand industry  
 3. Plain English summary of Project (maximum 100 words)

To examine the phenomenon of Wickeliam-Eisnevan mimicry in the luxury brand industry. A scale will be developed to measure mimicry. <sup>form of</sup> eg. brand copying

4. Aims of Project (maximum 100 words)

To develop ~~and~~ a scale to measure W.E mimicry using a stimulus & questionnaire