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Abstract
This study aims to provide an in-depth understanding of the impact of “Italianate” on UK consumers’ brand perceptions and brand preferences amongst fashion and food and beverage products. This study explores the relationship between the concept of country of origin and brand origin and their impact on consumers’ perceptions and preferences of “Italian” luxury brands, and attempts to identify the factors that influence their perceptions of these brands. The findings reveal that brand image, brand trust and brand experience are highly important in influencing the relationship between consumers and “Italian” luxury brands. Moreover, the perceptions of brand images and consumers’ attitudes are strongly influenced by the “Italianate” nature which is represented by a mixture of “Made in Italy” and “Made by Italian Creativity.”

INTRODUCTION
The concept of brand origin is different from the well-established subject of country of origin. Country of origin has more influence on fictitious brands than known brands. For fictitious brands, country of origin represents one of the most accessible information for judging the qualitative of a product (Hui and Zhou 2003). The brand origin is linked and integrated into brand image (Thakor and Kohli 1996). Consequently, it has been shown that Italy is connected with well known and high quality brands such as Armani and Gucci being ones of the most desired brands in the world thanks to their strong and unique brand images (ACNielsen 2006). Thus, country and perceived brand origin are important product attributes taken into account by consumers in making purchase decisions (Keller 1993). It is important for brand managers to understand the distinction between the two concepts that is connected with consumer perceptions. The association of brand origin has a direct impact on perceptions of the brand and ultimately, the image of the brand. (Jin et al. 2006, p. 285). Brand origin should be a distinct association that does not change with the change in manufacturing location. Brand origin stresses consumer’s perceptions of a brand relating to its origin, rather than where the product is actually produced. (Thakor and Kohli 1996). Therefore, it is interesting to conduct an empirical study on the association of Italianate and its impact on brand perceptions. This paper aims to investigate the impact of Italianate on UK consumers’ brand perceptions in relation to luxury brands.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Country of Origin
Country of origin or country of manufacture (“Made in”) has been considered as an extrinsic cue of a product, having a significant impact on attitudes and beliefs towards a product (Gurhan-Canli and Maheswaran 2000). Country of origin can influence a consumer’s choice of a product, providing a halo effect to consumers regarding the quality, dependability, perceived risk and value for money, when more specific information is not readily available and consumers are unable to detect the true quality of the product before trial (Bilkey and Nes 1982; Han and Terpstra 1988; Janda and Rao 1997; Maheswaran 1994).

Consumers hold and use stereotyped images about countries in order to help themselves judge products from different countries (Lotz and Hu 2001). Those images are composed by variables such as typical products, national characteristics, economic and political background, history and traditions (Nagashima 1970). Furthermore, the image of a country is represented by a series of dimensions that positively qualify a nation in terms of its production profile. The dimensions include: innovative approach (superiority, cutting-edge technology), design (style, elegance, and balance), prestige (exclusiveness, status of the national brands), workmanship (reliability, durability, quality) (Roth and Romeo 1992).

Some studies found that country of origin biases can arise for both developed and developing countries. Generally, products manufactured in high industrialized countries are perceived to be of higher quality and more prestigious than the ones made in less developed countries (Janda and Rao 1997). In addition, other studies have introduced the concept of consumer ethnocentrism that can be defined as beliefs concerning the appropriateness of purchasing products made in foreign countries (Lantz and Loeb 1996; Sharma et al. 1995). Highly ethnocentric consumers prefer products from countries considered as similar in terms of culture compared to products manufactured in countries with dissimilar culture (Watson and Wright 1999).

Although the country of origin concept has been widely studied and been seen as one of the most important external variables in influencing consumers’ attitudes and perceptions in the purchasing decision in an age of intensive international competition and globalisation, it has been argued that it is becoming increasingly misleading and confusing and should be replaced by a more appropriate brand origin concept (Thakor and Kohli 1996; Koubaa 2008).

Made in Italy
“Made in Italy” is internationally well-known for and strongly connected with design, fashion and food (Busacca, Bertoli, and Molteni 2005; Spinelli 2004). That is the reason why consumers and international operators trust buying and investing in “Italian” products. This is particularly true for European Union and other Western countries that share a similar culture, values and levels of industrialization as that of Italy. On the other hand, although some countries, such as Asian countries, culturally very different from Italy, in the past have shown some resistance in recognising the validity and high quality of “Italian” products, these and newly developed countries are starting to show a particular interest towards “Italian” products and brands. For example, Chinese consumers consider foreign products and brands from more developed countries, such as “Italian,” as indicating high social status and modernity (Assocamerestero 2006; Chadha and Husband 2006).

“Made in Italy” is not simply a label to put on products coming from Italy, but also represents other values. It reveals a consumer’s profile, characterized by sense of the material and immaterial values of the “product-system;” self-actualization and aspiration, utility, social position, emotional and identity investment (Spinelli 2004). “Made in Italy” represents the “Italian” reputation of being a world leader for producing products recognised for quality, design, excellence and durability (Confindustria 2008b; Istituto Piepoli 2004). Thus, the most powerful strength of the “Italian” production system has seen in the capability of creating a unique balance among polarities apparently difficult to conciliate: tradition and modernity, aesthetic and functionality, hand-crafted and technology (Confindustria 2008a).
Brand Origin

With the globalization, a multitude of products, so called hybrid products, which are designed, branded in a country and yet manufactured in another country, has arisen in the marketplace. Thakor and Kohli (1996, p.27) define brand origin as “the place, region or country to which the brand is perceived to belong by its target consumers.” The perception of the country of origin of a hybrid product which cannot be defined purely by the “made-in” theory becomes critically important in evaluating brand image and quality of a product (Phau and Prendergast 2000). A brand possesses a certain value, known as brand equity, which is determined by the popularity, reputation, and associated beliefs of the brand (Aaker 1991; Kim and Chung 1997). One key brand association is the country from which the brand is originated, known as the brand origin (Thakor and Kohli 1996). In the case of luxury brands which promote the brand origin instead of country of origin, maximising their brand equity, consumers perceive and evaluate the brand through its brand personality, origin cues, country ethnicity, brand name and consumer’s self-concepts such as status symbol (Aaker 1997; Phau and Prendergast 2000). According to Aaker (1997) if consumers trust the brand quality, the brand image is restored and will be strongly evaluated; the latter will not be influenced by the country of manufacture as brand characteristics will not change with a change in manufacturing location (Phau and Prendergast 2000). Relocating manufacturing processes can reduce production cost but at same time brings up the issue concerning consumers’ perceptions of product and brand value (Hamzaoui and Merunka 2006).

“Made by Italian Creativity”

In light of the trend toward offshore manufacturing by some Italian multinationals (Chadha and Husband 2006), the “Made in Italy” concept is gradually replaced by “Made by Italian Creativity” concept. Thus consumers’ satisfaction arises from owning a branded product which represents status, resonance, luxury and style thanks to high “Italian” creativity and brands image and is indifferent to the country of manufacture (Confindustria 2008b). The critical value to Italy comes from being a country where products and brands are designed instead of where products are manufactured (Assocamerestero 2006; Phau and Prendergast 2000).

In the fashion sector, it is widely agreed that creativity is the most important characteristic owned by “Italian” brands and products. For instance, as Prada makes pieces for some of its handbags in Turkey, Prada Group NV Chief Executive Patrizio Bertelli says he would like to insert a “Made by Prada” label on its products, in order to highlight peculiar Prada creativity and originality instead of the place of manufacture.

Moreover, handbag maker Francesco Biasia that started to shift production to China and Eastern Europe in the late 1990s, justifies that choice with a change in consumers’ tastes that cares more about creativity and not where a particular product is actually manufactured (Galloni 2005).

A survey conducted by Assocamerestero and 53 Italian Chambers of Commerce in 34 countries, shows that 93.5% of people interviewed (such as customers, international operators, media) consider “Italian” product quality the most important point of differentiation. Moreover, 87.3% of interviewees judge “Italian” products unique for their luxury connotation. 89% consider design and packaging as crucial, while 98%, especially in Europe and Japan, perceive Italy as the country where design and creativity were born. Moreover, 18% of those interviewed do not consider it fundamental that products are manufactured in Italy, but that they necessarily need to keep the proverbial quality, taste, design, promotion and communication, evoking the famous style (Assocamerestero 2006).

According to Kim and Chung (1997), if a country is recognised for particular intangible assets that are shared by brands originating from the same country, in the design, fashion, food and beverage industries, brands originating from Italy tend to have similar brand images in terms of the perceived quality of product features. Thus, “Italian” brands base their names, personalities and values on prerogatives and origin cues that differentiate Italy in the world. As examples, Valentino means “sophistication and elegance” (Valentino 2008). Tod’s represents “understated luxury and impeccable taste” (Tod’s 2008). De Cecco and Illy signify “the geniuses of pasta between tradition and innovation” and “authentic Italian coffee” respectively (De Cecco 2008; Illy 2008).

Additionally, an international online survey conducted by ACNielsen on 21,000 consumers in 42 countries (including the UK) in 2005, reveals that Armani and Gucci are the most desired brands in the world thanks to their strong and unique brand images.

According to Frank Martell, CEO ACNielsen Europe, those brands sell more than products, in fact they sell their image for which consumers are willing to pay. Consumers know to receive quality, sophistication and style, values without time with a global appeal (ACNielsen 2006).

Relationship between Consumers and “Italian” Luxury Brands

Brand researchers have developed several conceptualisations of brands and how brands affect consumer behaviour. Earlier models have focused heavily on how consumer perceive and evaluate brands by investigating certain knowledge structures such as brand awareness and brand image (Aaker 1991; Aaker 1997; Keller 1993). Existing literature studied cognitive and brand relationship perspectives and their constructs separately and through different research paradigms (Esch et al. 2006). Recently, it has been shown the importance to have a comprehensive model that includes cognitive and relationship variables at the same time showing how these variables are interrelated and contribute to influence present and future purchases (Esch et al. 2006). The relationship process can generate cognitive benefits as well as positive affects and emotions that result in a bond between the brand and the consumer (Fournier 1998).

It is very important to establish a strong relation among the three different relationship constructs—brand satisfaction, brand trust and brand attachment—and how they are related to brand awareness and brand image. It is expected brand awareness and brand image to be antecedents to brand satisfaction and brand trust. That is, both brand satisfaction and brand trust require brand knowledge (Esch et al. 2006). Symbolic brands and brands associated with a high level of perceived risk need to provide trust which is achieved through developing perceptions of consumer-brand intimacy and emotional investment (Hess and Story 2005). A strong connection between trust and satisfaction then develops brand attachment (Esch et al. 2006). In addition, consumer-brand relationship can be reinforced by emotional experiences (Mai and Conti 2008; Fournier 1998).

“Italianate” and Product Categories

In order to understand whether “Made in Italy” is more important than “Made by Italian Creativity” or vice-versa or whether both concepts have the same importance in defining “Italianate” connotations and consumers’ perceptions, it is fundamental to analyse the impact that the two concepts have on the specific product category in which “Italian” luxury brands operate (Irwin 2003; Bertoli et al. 2005). According to a survey conducted by Assocamerestero and 53 Italian Chambers of Commerce in 34 countries, interviewees perceive fashion (99%), design (94%) and food and beverage (90%) as the key excellence of the Italian economic sectors and luxury symbols of Italy in the world (Assocamerestero 2006).
Notably, brand origin/product fit represents the perceived competence of a country to design a specific product type within a particular product category. Thus, a country will be characterized by a strong brand origin/product fit when it is perceived as highly capable to design the product; the fit will be weak in the opposite case (Roth and Romeo 1992). Instead, the country of origin/product fit represents the perceived capability of a country to produce a specific product type. As, generally there is correspondence among country of origin and brand origin, there are countries that may have a weak brand origin/image/product fit but a strong country of origin/image/product fit (Roth and Romeo 1992).

Additionally, the impact of the country of origin depends on the perceived level of complexity of the product (Batra et al. 2000). Thus, it has been argued that country of origin and brand origin influence on consumers’ purchasing intention can be very high in connection to luxury products. In that case, country of origin would have a greater impact than price in product quality assessment (Piron 2000).

Moreover, according to Dubois and Paternault (1995), luxury products are chosen for their intrinsic meaning compared to what they are. In this sense, luxury brands can be considered as “less about the items being sold, and more about what the brand name stands for” (Ziccardi 2001, p.18).

It can be said that luxury products purchased or possessed by consumers have symbolic meanings and communicate social distinctions or values (Douglas and Isherwood 1979; Ger et al. 1993). Thus, it is possible to show “the difference of luxury consumptions between Confucian and Western countries: Western consumers tend to conspicuously consume luxuries because the products reflect their private preferences whereas East Asian consumers tend to consume luxuries rather because the products conform to their social norms” (Park et al. 2008, p.248). This is also true if a consumer’s age is considered. In fact, teenagers “are more likely to rely on luxury brands and products in order to symbolize status” (Phau and Leng 2008, p.69). Thus, such products are perceived as public goods assisting them in performing their desired role (Hamaouzi and Merunka 2006; Piacentini and Mailer 2004). The assumptions are inverted in the case of adult consumers (Phau and Leng 2008).

The consequence is that brand origin has a stronger influence for the public goods, which indicates that for products with fashion or status symbolic meanings, consumers are more sensitive to it than they are for more private goods that can be more connected with country of origin (Hamaouzi and Merunka 2006).

**METHODOLOGY**

In order to develop an understanding of the subject involved, qualitative and quantitative methods of primary research have been used. Two focus groups were conducted, one for each product category: (1) fashion, and (2) food and beverage. There were ten participants in each of the groups. The participants were recruited from London high streets and shops where luxuries goods are sold. The pre-screening criteria were to select people preferring/purchasing fashion products/brands such as Armani and Gucci and food and beverage products/brands such as De Cecco and Illy. The focus groups lasted two hours on average. The focus groups aimed to explore the meaning of “Italianate” in decision making process for each luxury product category. The discussions have unveiled the impact of cognitive and relationship variables such as brand image, trust, satisfaction and brand experience on purchases and preferences of “Italian” luxury brands. Moreover, the moderator also explored if attitudes and preferences are influenced by the country of origin and/or brand origin and how those concepts influence “Italianate” connotation for each product category.

Following the focus groups, two sets of questionnaires for each product category have been designed. The variables were derived from issues that emerged in the literature review and the analysis of information gathered in focus groups. From the literature review, it revealed that age is an important variable in determining consumers’ attitudes and perceptions. Particularly in fashion category where there is a distinct difference between teenagers and adults. Therefore, age is used as an important profiling variable in the questionnaire. Purposive sampling technique was used to select samples: 50 respondents prefer “Italian” fashion products, and 50 prefer “Italian” food and beverage products. The data were analysed using SPSS software.

**THE RESULTS OF ANALYSIS**

**Focus Groups Results**

The analysis of the focus groups highlights some important points about consumers’ attitudes towards and perceptions of “Italian” luxury brands.

**Fashion.** During the discussion it has emerged that in the luxury fashion sector, Italian brands benefit from a great awareness, being well-recognized and loved. In fact, the respondents have mentioned different “Italian” brands and mainly Armani, Gucci, Dolce & Gabbana, Prada, Valentino and Versace along with some British and French brands among their favourite ones. The former are perceived as “Italian” because of their names and representing an elegant, classical, and at the same time, sexy, unique style and status symbol.

Brand names are considered very important in terms of trust because of their reputation, history, guaranteeing quality and symbolizing luxury. Furthermore, for fashion products’ nationality has largely been judged as fundamental in terms of trust and Italy has been evaluated as the most trustworthy country because of the promise of excellent quality and beauty of clothes. Thus, respondents have shown the unanimous perception that luxury branded clothes made in developing counties such as India and China could loose prestige, appeal and not be worth an expensive price. Thus, they have quietly agreed that both country of manufacture and country where the product is branded/designed are important and should be the same.

Moreover, during the focus group the counterfeit issue has been examined, being nowadays particularly important and dangerous for the fashion industry. Counterfeit products represent huge earnings for criminal organisations that damage brand images and make consumers of original products feel disappointed and underestimated. Moreover, asking which brands’ products they have noticed counterfeit the most, particularly French and Italian brands have been mentioned, such as Louis Vuitton, Gucci and Prada.

Giving opinion on the importance of “Made in Italy,” all respondents have agreed that it is a fundamental assurance of long tradition of high and luxury craftsmanship. Moreover, “Made in Italy” should go along with “Made by Italian Creativity” in order to guarantee lasting appeal and success of “Italian” luxury brands. In fact, Italy is considered as a country that has made an identity in terms of design that cannot be compared with other countries. At the same time, “Italian” brands have been evaluated as highly dependent on the “Italianate” connotation. “Italianate” would guarantee an exclusive style and high quality craftsmanship.

Analysing point of sale’s impact on forming a valuable consumers’ experience, the respondents perceive “Italian” luxury brand’ shops like pieces of art with an excellent design and product display and a very professional and helpful staff. The whole is considered a crucial contributor of a highly stimulating and enjoyable shopping experience.
**Food and Beverage.** Through the discussion it has been possible to determine that “Italian” food and beverages such as pasta, pizza and coffee, are very much appreciated by respondents. Moreover, “Italian” food has also emerged to be one of the most preferred types food along with French, Japanese and Spanish. “Italian” food has been considered luxurious as particularly expensive and healthy, trusted and satisfying because of the use of very simple, fresh and natural ingredients, such as pure tomatoes and olive oil, that guarantee a high quality and great taste. 

Moreover, Pizza, Mozzarella di Bufala, Parmigiano Reggiano and Coffee are well-recognised and known as traditional, tasty and unique Italian products. The respondents have shown to know a vast range of traditional “Italian” products, drinks and brands: firstly, different kind of pasta, such as Tagliatelle, Vermicelli and Gnocchi, secondly, breads, such as Ciabatta and Bruschetta, thirdly, desserts, such as Tiramisù. Among drinks, they have mentioned Espresso and Cappuccino. Chocolate products and brands have been the most recognised and well-known. Moreover, after pasta and pizza, chocolate has been shown as the most preferred product with Nutella and Ferrero Roches under Ferrero’s brand name. Ferrero has also been one of the most recognised “Italian” brand names along with Barilla and De Cecco for pasta, Bertolli for olive oil, and Lavazza, Martini and San Pellegrino for coffee, alcohol and water respectively.

Then, the issue of “Italian Sounding” names was considered. Such names are perceived negatively and damaging purely “Italian” brands in order to take advantage of their resonance and image. Moreover, respondents consider those brands cheaper and do not believe that they could assure the high quality of “Italian” brands and most of them state to have never bought an “Italian Sounding” brand.

At the same time, Italian brands have been evaluated as highly dependent on the “Italianate” connotation. “Italianate” would guarantee positive feelings and expectation about quality and great Mediterranean taste and trust.

Analysing point of sales’ impact on forming a valuable consumers’ experience, respondents have shown that the most expensive “Italian” brands have been seen in “high level” supermarkets only, such as Waitrose. Moreover, they have perceived “Italian” food and beverage brands’ restaurants and bars as being very warm, traditional with many options on the menu and a very friendly staff.

**Survey Results**

Quantitative research has given the opportunity to provide a broad understanding on the issues that emerged in the literature review and qualitative research.

**Fashion.** The survey results show that the key target market for luxury fashion brands and in particular “Italian” brands is at teenagers (aged 15-18). In influencing consumers’ decision making process, brand name and country of origin are the most significant factors for teenagers and adults respectively. Considering “Italian” brands, brand origin represented by “Italian” creativity and unique design, has been evaluated as the most important factor followed by status symbol for teenagers (aged 15-18). In contrast, elegance and classicism and care for details represent the most important factors for adults (aged 19 and above). Those characteristics have been defining “Italianate” connotation and affecting consumers’ attitudes towards and perceptions of “Italian” brands. Furthermore, teenagers have demonstrated not to be concerned about “Made in Italy.” In fact, they do not consider it an issue if a product is “Made in China” or other developing country, as they buy the brand and the representing status symbol. However, “Made in Italy” is highly important to adults. In fact, they would not buy an “Italian” product made in China for example.

The fact that teenagers mainly purchase for status symbol motivations can be seen in connection with the counterfeit issue. In fact, that issue has consumer underestimation as major consequence for teenagers and damage of brand image for adults. Additionally, both teenagers and adults prefer “Italian” brands compared with British and French ones. “Italian” brands are considered the most trustworthy in terms of quality and attractive in terms of design. In both groups, Armani has been defined the most popular and preferred brand.

Considering the importance that consumers give to point of sales in order to have a memorable shopping experience, shop’s design in particular has been evaluated the most positive element.

**Food and Beverage.** The analysis has showed that there is a certain age group balance between people that buy/prefer food and beverage products/brands.

Moreover, in evaluating various elements that consumers could consider in their decision making process, brand reputation and history and brand nationality have been equally perceived as fundamental in all population groups. Instead, country of origin has been defined the least important.

However, when respondents have given their opinion about “Italian” products/brands, the majority of them have evaluated “Made in Italy,” and so passion, tradition, high quality and uniqueness, as the most important factor that defines “Italian” food and “Italianate” meaning. In fact, those people would never buy an “Italian” brands’ product made in other countries as they think cannot be assured high quality of ingredients and competency in the making process.

Considering “Italian” food brands, Ferrero and Barilla have been the most recognised. Ferrero has been evaluated as the most popular brand by people between 18 and 35 years old. Barilla has been the most well-known brand by people between 36 and 60+ years old. Moreover, 60+ age group has also shown to recognise the De Cecco brand. Among beverage brands, Illy and Martini have been evaluated as the most recognised totally. However, San Pellegrino has appeared the most well-known brand by people between 26-45 age group, with Lavazza representing the most mentioned brand by 18-25 age group.

Considering “Italian Sounding” brands issue, the majority of respondents of all age groups have agreed that they would not buy those brands because they would not assure the same quality of authentic “Italian” products. Moreover, “Italian” food and beverage have been considered as the healthiest, tastiest and most satisfying compared to French, Spanish and Japanese. However, French food and beverage has been evaluated as the most luxurious.

To conclude, evaluating point of sales of “Italian” products/brands, all respondents have shown to be particularly satisfied by restaurants and bars’ menu variety. However, 26-35 age group has been mainly sensitive to the point of sale’s atmosphere.

**CONCLUSIONS**

Literature review and primary research has given the opportunity to have a better understanding of how consumers perceive “Made in Italy” and “Made by Italian Creativity” cues. Their relative importance has been shown to depend on the specific product category (fashion or food and beverage) in which “Italian” luxury brands operate. This evaluation has been very important in establishing “Italianate” role in consumers’ attitudes and perceptions. Moreover, it has been possible to identify influential factors and variables that contribute to the relationship between consumers and “Italian” luxury brands.

The findings of this research are largely consistent with the literature. It has been shown that country of origin influence on
consumers’ purchasing intention can be very high in connection to luxury products. Moreover, it has been demonstrated that brand origin has a stronger influence for public goods with status symbolic meanings. Consumers are more sensitive to it rather than for more private goods that can be more connected with country of origin (Hamzaoui and Merunka 2006). “Made by Italian Creativity” has been considered the most important factor that characterize Italian products/brands and “Italianate” core. However, “Made in Italy” has shown to have a different value when different product categories and age groups are concerned.

Considering the fashion sector and the public nature of the products, “Made by Italian Creativity” has been considered the most important aspect in the decision making process, especially for teenagers as they buy the brand and the representing status symbol. However, “Made in Italy” as well as “Made by Italian Creativity” is highly important to adults. In the food and beverage sector, “Made in Italy” and “Made by Italian Creativity” have been evaluated almost equally important in defining “Italian” food and beverage.

It is essential to establish a strong connection among relationship constructs represented by brand satisfaction, brand trust and brand attachment and how they are related to brand awareness and brand image. “Italian” brands have been characterized by a large brand name awareness and special image and reputation, capable to positively impact on trust, satisfaction, and attachment towards those brands by consumers. Moreover, emotional experiences, through “Italian” brands’ retail points, has emerged as crucial in determining lasting and interactive relationships with consumers. In fact, it has appeared a positive overall perception of “Italian” brands’ point of sales representing and offering the traditional, stylish and elegant “Italian life style.”

“Italian” brands have similar brand images in the luxury product category in terms of the perceived quality of product features. Thus, “Italianate” is made by brands’ names, personalities and values on prerogatives and origin cues that differentiate Italy in the world. Thus, “Italian” brands such as Armani, De Cecco and Illy are chosen as symbolizing the “Italianate” nature. This appears to be represented by the “Made by Italian Creativity” and “Made in Italy” mixture: “Italian” creativity, top design, originality and style, status symbol, luxury craftsmanship, elegance and classicism, care for details, passion, tradition, high quality and uniqueness.

Based on the finding of this study, marketers must not forget the importance of the perceptions of brand origin and its national identity because they represent a powerful source of brand appeal and image, determining and influencing purchase decisions. Thus, establishing the importance that “Made in Italy” and “Made by Italian Creativity” have in defining “Italianate” connotations, it appears that “Italian” luxury brands need to face with some issues and choices in order to keep and increase their success, also considering the specific product category in which they operate (Irwin 2003; Busacca, Bertoli, and Molteni 2006).

In terms of the limitation of this study, the focus groups participants and questionnaire respondents were from central London area where it is hugely cosmopolitan. Future research needs to select samples randomly in the whole UK. Moreover, it could be significant to take into account other London and UK areas where “Italianate” perceptions of population could significantly vary. Also, it could be valuable to compare consumers’ attitudes towards and perceptions of the two realities of “Italian” fashion: the already mentioned multinational companies renowned for their brands image that have mainly moved to delocalization, and small brands and companies specialized in quality and handcrafted production in Italy.

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