

Vintage in average consumers' eyes: authenticity, and symbolism

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Abstract

Given the non-negligible popularity of vintage and its substantial market results, it is important to understand how average consumers perceive and react to vintage goods. In the present paper, we study consumers' preferences for vintage goods over new ones and the dimensions that contribute to consumers' enthusiasm for vintage consumption. Across six experiments, we show that preferences for goods increase when consumers believe that they are vintage versus new products. Higher perceived authenticity and symbolism of the vintage goods among consumers are the underlying mechanism: vintage goods, compared to new products, are perceived as more original and unconventional, which enables consumers to convey an authentic self-image. Therefore, consumers attach more symbolic value to vintage products than their modern counterparts and consequently hold more positive product attitudes towards vintage goods. The paper also discusses the significance of vintage consumption and the implications of our findings.

Keywords: *Vintage; Authenticity; Symbolism*

Track: Consumer Behaviour