





# In the Eye of the Beholder;

The Effects of Authenticity Cues on Purchase Intention and Overall Brand Rating, depending on Desire for Control

Han Gie Sie, BSc. (0015830)

Master Communication Studies, Marketing Communication Track  
Department of Behavioral Sciences, University of Twente, Enschede, the Netherlands

## THESIS INFO

Date:  
13 November 2011  
Place:  
Utrecht, the Netherlands  
Corresponding email address:  
guy@guysie.nl

Advisor:  
Dr. Ir. Peter W. de Vries  
University of Twente  
Co-Advisor:  
Dr. Thomas J.L. van Rompay  
University of Twente

## ABSTRACT

Many studies assume positive effects of brand authenticity on brand outcomes, yet empirical evidence is lacking. This thesis addresses this lack by testing the effect of cues signaling authenticity on purchase intention and overall brand rating, mediated by the participants' perception of authenticity. Furthermore, based on recent theory that assumes processing of authenticity cues is contingent on consumer goals, it is predicted that this mediation is conditional. Mediation by perceived authenticity occurs more strongly when authenticity cues match participants' desire for control, versus when it does not. An experimental study was conducted using an online 2 × 2 between-participants design with 236 participants. Results confirmed that authentic cues led to higher perceived authenticity, which in turn caused higher purchase intention and overall brand rating. Moreover this effect was stronger for consumers with a high desire for control when cues were consistent with this desire.

## 1. Introduction

The concept of using a brand's authenticity as a positioning device has been gaining traction in the marketing community. In fact, a recent yearly survey asking Dutch marketing professionals what they consider the most important trend of the year puts authenticity in first place, ahead of social media – the reigning champion of the previous 3 years (Laar & Ponfoort, 2011). Due to the continuing standardization and homogenization of the marketplace (Thompson, Rindfleisch, & Arsel, 2006) and the decline of traditional sources of meaning, consumers increasingly seek out authentic products and experiences (Arnould & Price, 2000). This search for authenticity, and a brand's ability to render authentic products and experiences in response to this demand, has been called the new business imperative of the 21st century (Gilmore & Pine, 2007) and one of the cornerstones of contemporary marketing (Brown, Kozinets, & Sherry Jr, 2003).

Research on brand authenticity, however, has not caught up with its newfound popularity. A recent literature review by Wessel (2010) found only 10 empirical studies concerning brand authenticity, 8 of which were qualitative in nature. There are many theories, but as of yet little experimental data supporting them. Many articles presume favorable outcomes as a result of brand authenticity, but to our knowledge this has not yet been tested quantitatively. This study aims

to help fill this gap by examining the effects of brand authenticity on purchase intention and overall brand rating. Furthermore, based on a recent framework theorizing the dependence of authenticity perception upon consumer goals (Beverland & Farrelly, 2009), the moderation of these effects by desire for control will be tested.

### 1.1 Authenticity

Authenticity has proven to be a difficult concept to define. When used as part of everyday language it comprises multiple meanings, such as being sincere, original, real and trustworthy. Because of this rich combination authenticity has been used to examine many subjects ranging from films and journalistic practices of tabloids, to political discourse and virtual reality (Molleda, 2009). But the definition used has varied from one study to another and in some cases 'authentic' was merely a synonym for 'true'. This simplification foregoes the multiplicity of meaning that makes authenticity an interesting concept (Grayson & Martinec, 2004) and devalues its use as a separate entity. For authenticity to have scientific value it must signify more than mere truth. For example, in their marketing book on the subject Gilmore and Pine (2007) attempted to explain the complex nature of authenticity by positing that there are two standards of authenticity that exist concurrently: "is the offering what it says it is?" and "is the offering true to itself?" (p. 97). The first standard touches upon feelings of trustworthiness and honesty, whilst the second standard has more notions of genuineness and consistency. Though most authentic brands would do well on both standards, a brand could still be authentic to the consumer even if it did not pass both. This explains why Disneyland, for example, is seen as authentic by some consumers: even though it is a commercial theme park filled with fiberglass castles and actors in character suits – not what they say they are and thus fake, in Gilmore and Pine's words – there are few brands so true to itself as Disney is. Every element of Disneyland, no matter how scripted or contrived, is created to invoke the genuine Disney feeling their audience grew up with.

*The author would like to express his gratitude to the following people for their help and guidance during the process of writing this thesis:*

*Peter de Vries, the advisor from the University of Twente, for his invaluable advice and support from the very beginning.*

*Thomas van Rompay, the co-advisor from the University of Twente, along with Jorik Chen, Desirée van Dun, Sabine Hoogstad, Aisha Sie and Ross Tuck, for their insightful comments while reviewing the rough drafts.*

*Thomas van Ardenne and Koen Buisman for dragging the author, kicking and screaming, across the academic finish line. This thesis would not exist without their constructive help, motivational support, and the occasional necessary scolding.*

*And last but not least the author's parents, for allowing him to enjoy college life to its fullest and being patient enough to let him get here in the end.*

In consumer research the scientific construct of authenticity has gained much attention in the tourism sector since MacCannell (1973) introduced it (for an overview and recent insights see Knudsen & Waade, 2010). In this sector authenticity is mostly defined as a product feature of a destination or experience, for example the authenticity of an ancient temple, or a museum that makes you feel authentically immersed in the past (Chronis & Hampton, 2008).

More recently this construct has shifted into the brand management and marketing field of consumer research. While the underlying theories are often similar, most of the tourism-focused findings are geared specifically towards tourists and tourist destinations. This makes it difficult to generalize the results to a more brand- and product-oriented field. Instead it is presumed that when a consumer considers a brand or product authentic this will lead to favorable outcomes such as brand identification, loyalty and sales (Chalmers & Price, 2009). In this context authenticity has been studied in advertising (Beverland, Lindgreen, & Vink, 2008; Botterill, 2007; Chalmers, 2007), coffee (Molleda & Roberts, 2008), farmers' markets (Smithers & Joseph, 2010), fictional locations (Grayson & Martinec, 2004), the food and beverage industry (Alexander, 2009; Boutrolle, Delarue, Köster, Aranz, & Danzart, 2009; Groves, 2001; Muñoz, Wood, & Solomon, 2006; Thompson, et al., 2006), luxury wines (Beverland, 2005, 2006; Beverland & Luxton, 2005), performing arts (Derbaix & Decrop, 2007), shoes (Beverland & Ewing, 2005), subcultures of consumption (Beverland, Farrelly, & Quester, 2010; Leigh, Peters, & Shelton, 2006) and traditional merchandise (Chhabra, 2005). The presumption of favorable outcomes is made implicitly in all these articles, based on the assertion that consumers will prefer authentic offerings. However, no effort is made to test for the supposed positive effects.

Despite the growing body of work on the subject there has been no single, generally accepted definition of authenticity. Many studies in consumer research use their own definitions and corresponding models (e.g. Belk & Costa, 1998; Beverland, 2006; Beverland, et al., 2008; Cohen, 1988; Culler, 1981; Grayson & Martinec, 2004; Kates, 2004; Leigh, et al., 2006; MacCannell, 1973; Rose & Wood, 2005; Wang, 1999) which often leads to conflicting results. For the purpose of this study the simple, yet effective, definition by Beverland and Farrelly (2009) is used, where authenticity is that which feels genuine, real and/or true to the consumer.

### 1.2 Consumer Motivation

The view that consumers increasingly seek out authentic offerings is based on Arnould and Price's (2000) assertion that the major social institutions that used to shape their identities are in decline. Macroeconomic, social and demographic changes have undermined the way people see class, family, race, nationality and place. Institutions that used to define people, such as the church they went to or the company they worked at, are losing their social influence (Gilmore & Pine, 2007). Arnould and Price (2000) see three main factors that are responsible for this shift:

1. *Globalization*; as the world becomes more unified, through cross-border trade and immigration for example, previously individual cultures become assimilated into one single monoculture.
2. *Deterritorialization*; because people are no longer constrained to normal territorial boundaries, we are exposed to diverse cultural experiences. As a result these experiences lose their connection to place and time that previously helped shape identity.
3. *Hyperreality*; due to the stylization of everyday life it is becoming increasingly difficult to distinguish reality from fantasy. What is 'real' is no longer an absolute characteristic, but an attribution made after our consciousness has filtered the multitude of available media.

Consumers attempt to compensate for this loss of identity by

seeking out rituals that can help them build and affirm new identities of their own choosing. Brands are increasingly important in these rituals, as they allow consumers to reconnect to that sense of time, place/space and shared culture they had previously lost (Beverland, 2009). But the standardization and homogenization of the marketplace means that not every brand can offer the necessary distinctive experience. As a result consumers purposefully seek out those brands that they feel are authentic (Thompson, et al., 2006).

### 1.3 Authenticity Cues

Beverland (2005) criticized the then existing definitions of authenticity, arguing that they were asserted arbitrarily or ideologically driven while ignoring how authenticity was actually viewed by consumers and marketers. Hence, Beverland took a bottom-up approach to identify what consumers and experts considered signs of authenticity in real-world settings. In the luxury wine sector he discovered that wineries projected an image of authenticity by crafting a sincere story. This story publicly avowed attributes such as their history and culture, hand made craft production and commitment to quality, while simultaneously rejecting commercial motives, rational production methods and modern marketing techniques. However, in follow-up research Beverland and Luxton (2005) found that in reality it was necessary for the continued existence of the wineries to use modern production facilities and marketing expertise. Their real intent to remain true to the brand's values (seen as authentic) had to be balanced against the similarly real commercial considerations (seen as inauthentic). To do so the wineries decoupled the reality of their internal operations from the projected image in their external communication, downplaying the inauthentic elements and instead emphasizing their authentic attributes.

This strategy of letting consumers interpret authentic signals whilst hiding inauthentic ones reveals the socially constructed nature of authenticity. Authenticity is not simply an attribute inherent to a brand, but should be seen as an assessment by an individual consumer of the information available (Grayson & Martinec, 2004). In this sense a brand does not 'have' authenticity, but sends the consumer intentional and unintentional authenticity cues that signal it. The consumer can then perceive the brand as (in)authentic after evaluating these cues. This allows for the co-creation of authenticity, as brands and consumers are engaged in ongoing reciprocal dialogues (Visconti, 2010). By using feedback from consumers to manipulate existing cues and create new ones brand managers and marketers can manage their brand authenticity.

Starting with Beverland's (2005) work in the luxury wine sector, more authenticity cues have been uncovered in real-world settings. In his marketing book on authenticity Beverland (2009) summarized the discovered cues in ten consistent themes that had emerged from research on the narratives of authentic brands: Founding, Family, Conflict and Struggle, Triumph and Tragedy, Creation, History, Community, Place, Consumers, and Product/Service. Founding tells stories about the start of the brand, the motivation behind it and the early challenges. Family stories are centered on the family members involved with the brand and their stewardship of it as the generations change. Stories involving Conflict and Struggle humanize a brand, making it relatable by being as less-than-perfect as its consumers are. Tales of Triumph and Tragedy tell of the brand's successes as well as its failures, both of the brand and the people behind it. Seeking acceptance or recognition, problems launching new products or services, disasters and break-ups are often elements featured in these stories. Creation revolves around the people behind the brand, how they solved problems and challenged conventions to create the products, their love of the production and craft involved. History stories explain the role the brand has played in historical events, both in its use by historical figures and by shaping history as it unfolded. It also depicts the history of the brand and how it has evolved throughout the years. Community tales describe the communities

that have grown around the brand and the way a mutual relationship between the two has developed. Place gives the brand a substantive link to a birthplace or other surrounding that helped shape the product and gave it a context to perform in. Stories from Consumers about how they relate to the brand can also be retold by the brand, personalizing the other themes and strengthening the bond between consumer and brand. Finally, the Product/Service stories center on the brand's actual products or services. Here the subject is their quality and performance, how loved they are and how essential they were for the brand's success.

#### 1.4 Perceived Authenticity

Because authenticity is not an attribute of a brand but an assessment made by an individual consumer (Grayson & Martinec, 2004), it would be necessary for research purposes to measure this authenticity perceived by the consumer, as opposed to the image of authenticity the brand managers believe they are projecting. Wessel (2010) has developed a brand authenticity instrument for this purpose. This instrument was based solely on dimensions found in empirical studies on authenticity (Alexander, 2009; Beverland, 2005, 2006; Beverland & Farrelly, 2009; Beverland, et al., 2008; Beverland & Luxton, 2005; Boutrolle, et al., 2009; Grayson & Martinec, 2004; Leigh, et al., 2006; Muñoz, et al., 2006) and was further refined by Wessel using input from professional marketing experts. To measure the perception of a brand's authenticity the instrument includes such items as *"Despite the commercial interests, this brand seems sincere to me"* and *"I have the feeling this brand has been around for years"*.

#### 1.5 Authenticity Framework

Research on authenticity cues has resulted in some surprising findings. Consumers have identified authenticity in the patently fake (Brown, 2001), obvious reproductions (Bruner, 1994), mass-market objects (Miller, 2008), the fictional (Grayson & Martinec, 2004) and the unreal (Rose & Wood, 2005), while many would consider these the direct opposite of what should be considered authentic. According to Beverland and Farrelly (2009) however, these are not cases where authenticity is wrongly attributed. Instead, they are examples of consumers finding elements in these objects that are genuine, real or true to them personally – even though others might disagree. To resolve this Beverland and Farrelly proposed an overarching framework in which the process of authenticating an object, brand or experience is contingent on a consumer's personal goals. This framework was also based on Arnould and Price's (2000) notion that consumers are motivated to seek authenticity – again defined as that which feels genuine, real and/or true to the consumer – to find meaning in their lives and thus prefer objects, brands and experiences that reinforce a desired identity. In other words, authentication happens because consumers have an underlying goal, a positive identity benefit that they wish to obtain by consuming the object, brand or experience. Within the context of this goal the available information is actively processed, with precedence given to cues that are consistent with the goal while downplaying or ignoring others. In their study Beverland and Farrelly (2009) described three consumer goals: connection, virtue and control. The first goal, connection, stood for the desire for *"...a feeling of being connected to important others, to community, place, culture, or to society in general"* (p. 843). For example, a participant in Beverland and Farrelly's study considered the Campagnolo cycling brand authentic because it had a legitimacy amongst the cycling subculture, being run by people passionate about cycling, and thus made him feel connected to other cyclists.

The second goal, virtue, represented the desire to make *"... judgments based on purity of motive. Conferring authenticity in these accounts was akin to expressing one's morals"* (p. 846). A participant in their study felt the Nike shoe brand, for example, was inauthentic and stopped using their products, even though they were the market

leader, because she perceived a lack of ethics in their use of child labor.

The last consumer goal, control, was seen as *"...the desire of informants to achieve mastery over their environment... In this sense, control is an end state (whereby consumers seek to be 'in control') rather than a process"* (p. 841). As an example, a participant in the study felt that Rip Curl was an authentic surfing brand not because it had the 'cool factor', but because they concentrated on making the best products. Using their products made him better in the water and helped him achieve personal mastery.

According to this framework an object can be perceived as authentic by one consumer, yet inauthentic by another, depending on each consumer's salient goals. A consumer with a control goal might find Land Rover authentic because it instills feelings of being in control when driving across rough terrain. But a consumer with a virtue goal might find the same brand morally inauthentic, as the high emissions and poor fuel economy contributes to further damage to the environment. Both consumers process the same information, but give precedence to cues that are consistent with their salient goal.

#### 1.6 Desire for Control

Though the state of a consumer's salient goals might vary from moment to moment, the desire to achieve mastery over their environment and be 'in control' is also a known personality trait. This trait, called the desire for control, was first described by Burger and Cooper (1979) and represents an individual's motive to control events in one's life and environment. Desire for control is a proven and reliable constant that can be used to measure the control goal, as it seems likely that an individual with a high desire for control would feel this same need during the authentication process.

#### 1.7 Control Authenticity Cues

In Beverland and Farrelly's (2009) study of the control goal they found four underpinning standards that were used by their participants to authenticate objects in the context of that goal: first-hand experience, independent judgment, verifiability and instrumentality. For first-hand experience the participants wanted the opportunity to personally test an object. A participant in Beverland and Farrelly's study felt a certain brand of shampoo, that promised to give her control over frizzy hair, was authentic because the claim turned out to be true after she tried the shampoo. Independent judgment allowed participants not to be concerned with what they were supposed to do according to others. A participant selected surf brands he thought were authentic on the basis of his own judgment, rejecting fashion and peer pressure. The standard of verifiability desired objects that claimed verifiable benefits as opposed to making emotive marketing claims. One participant felt the ING bank was authentic because they avoided making advertising claims, but instead rationally informed him that they offered a 5.25% interest rate. Finally, instrumentality was concerned with an object being an effective means to an end. A participant in their study mentioned he considered Apple authentic, because it was the first brand to empower him with an easy-to-use computer to engage in tasks he could not otherwise manage.

Given the cues summarized in the 10 themes by Beverland (2009) and these 4 underpinning standards of the control goal, it is possible to create a brand story that would contain cues that signal authenticity as well as match the control consumer goal. Conversely, it would also be possible to signal inauthenticity while still matching the control consumer goal. For the purpose of this study this mixed bag operationalization, combining both types of cues in one manipulation, will be referred to as 'control authenticity cues'.

#### 1.8 Hypotheses

To recap; it is assumed that consumers, based on available

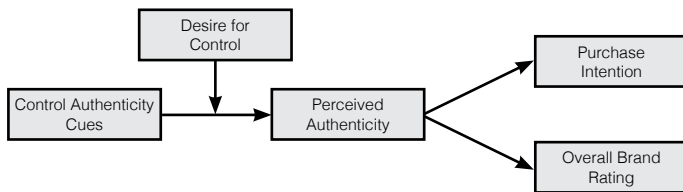


Figure 1. Conceptual Research Model

authenticity cues, evaluate the authenticity of a brand. Because consumers seek out authentic brands, an increase in perceived authenticity in turn leads to favorable brand outcomes. The consumer's purchase intention and overall rating of a brand are two such outcomes that could be positively influenced by perceived authenticity. Therefore it is predicted that:

**H1:** Control authenticity cues positively affect purchase intention and overall brand rating. This effect is mediated by perceived authenticity.

Furthermore it is predicted that the mediation by perceived authenticity described in hypothesis 1 occurs more strongly when the control authenticity cues match participants' desire for control, versus when it does not:

**H2:** The hypothesized effect of control authenticity cues on purchase intention and overall brand rating, mediated by perceived authenticity, is moderated by desire for control. Because precedence will be given to cues consistent with desire for control the effect will be stronger when desire for control is high.

Both hypotheses are visualized in the conceptual research model depicted in figure 1. To test the two hypotheses an experimental study was conducted using an online questionnaire. Inspired by quotes from a participant in Beverland and Farrelly's (2009) study, regarding his car in relationship to the control consumer goal, the fictional car manufacturer Cavalier was fabricated as the subject of this questionnaire. To manipulate the control authenticity cues two versions of a text about this manufacturer were created. One version contained authentic control authenticity cues, while the other contained inauthentic control authenticity cues. Participants' desire for control and their views regarding the manufacturer's perceived authenticity, overall brand rating and their purchase intention were all measured. The collected data was then analyzed using a multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) and two moderated mediation analyses.

## 2. Method

### 2.1 Participants and Design

A total of 236 questionnaires was completed. Of the participants 89 (37.7%) were female and 147 (62.3%) were male. Age varied between 14 and 60 years old ( $M = 26.90$ ,  $SD = 7.45$ ). Education ranged from elementary school to post-grad university level, though the majority of participants were highly educated (19.1% higher vocational and 70.3% university level).

The experiment was set up as a 2 (Control Authenticity Cues: authentic versus inauthentic)  $\times$  2 (Desire for Control: high versus low) between-participants design. Control Authenticity Cues were manipulated using two different versions of a text. Desire for Control was measured and split into a high and low group based on the median value ( $Mdn = 3.55$ ) for the MANCOVA analysis. The original continuous Desire for Control variable was used for the moderated mediation analyses. Dependent variables were Perceived Authenticity, Purchase Intention and Overall Brand Rating.

The chosen subject matter for the stimuli might not appeal

Table 1  
Summary of manipulated cues in the stimuli texts

Cue	Authentic	Inauthentic
Founding <sup>a</sup>	Founded to build off-road vehicle to rival the Jeep	Founded to take advantage of low cost production in China
Family <sup>a</sup>	Family business	Publicly owned company
Triumph and Tragedy <sup>a</sup>	Lost army contract bid to Land Rover due to high cost, but found niche market with high performance needs	Bad reviews due to poor performance of vehicles, but rebounded by using massive advertising campaign
Creation <sup>a</sup>	Traditional handcrafted	Modern mass manufacturing
History <sup>a</sup>	Exists since 1948	Exists since 2005
Place <sup>a</sup>	Rural England	Industrial China
Community <sup>a</sup>	Pioneers, adventurers	Image conscious youth
Product/Service <sup>a</sup>	High quality, high performance off-road vehicle	Low quality SUV with the looks of an off-road vehicle
Firsthand experience <sup>b</sup>	Free 1 month test period	Test-drive unavailable
Independent judgment <sup>b</sup>	Word of mouth marketing	Massive advertising and marketing campaigns
Verifiability <sup>b</sup>	Specification oriented marketing	Lifestyle oriented marketing
Instrumentality <sup>b</sup>	Overcomes rough terrain	Meant for normal asphalt use

<sup>a</sup> Themes from Beverland (2009). <sup>b</sup> Underpinning standards from Beverland and Farrelly (2009).

equally to all participants. To control for this two control variables were added that measured existing Attitude Towards Cars in general and Attitude Towards Off-road Vehicles/SUV's specifically.

### 2.2 Procedure

A questionnaire was created that was available online for 2 weeks, from July 8 to July 22, 2011. Participants were recruited for this study by sending email invitations, posting on Dutch online message boards and using online social networks. As an added incentive every participant who completed the survey and left a valid email address would be eligible to win one of four gift cards. Participants were randomly assigned to either the authentic or inauthentic Control Authenticity Cues condition.

### 2.3 Stimuli

For the Control Authenticity Cues conditions two texts were written in the style of a newspaper or magazine general interest article. While both texts followed the same general structure to describe the fictional car manufacturer Cavalier, each text varied the authenticity cues to create either an authentic or inauthentic version of the story. The 12 manipulated cues were based on two sources: 8 from the 10 themes found by Beverland (2009) in the narratives of authentic brands and 4 from the underpinning standards used in the control consumer goal (Beverland & Farrelly, 2009). See table 1 for a summary of manipulated cues and appendix A for the full stimuli texts.

### 2.4 Measures

Overall Brand Rating was measured as a single item rated on a 10-point scale. All other items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*totally disagree*) to 5 (*totally agree*). All items are included in appendix B.

To measure Desire for Control the Desirability of Control Scale by Burger and Cooper (1979) was used. This scale consists of 20 items such as "I enjoy having control over my own destiny" and "I wish I could push many of life's daily decisions off on someone else". A validated Dutch translation of this scale was used (Gebhardt & Brosschot, 2002) and

reliability was acceptable ( $\alpha = .77$ ).

Perceived Authenticity was measured using Wessel's (2010) perceived brand authenticity instrument, containing items such as "This brand is one-of-a-kind" and "I think the quality of this brand is clearly recognizable". In this originally 17-item scale 1 item was double-barreled ("I think this brand is honest and sincere") and split into 2 separate items to reduce confusion. All 18 resulting items were modified to refer to Cavalier instead of an unspecified brand and 7 items were rewritten into negative wording to reduce acquiescent bias. As this scale was originally in Dutch it did not need translation. It was very reliable ( $\alpha = .93$ ).

A Purchase Intention scale was created consisting of five items, one of which was worded negatively. The items measured the participant's intent to consider or buy a car from the Cavalier brand if they were hypothetically looking for an off-road vehicle/SUV (e.g. "If I was looking for this type of car, there is a good chance I would buy a Cavalier") or buying a car now (e.g. "If I had to buy a car now, I would not consider Cavalier"). The final item simply measured direct intent: "I want to buy a Cavalier". Reliability of the scale was acceptable ( $\alpha = .77$ ).

An Attitude Towards Cars two-item scale was created that measured the participant's pre-existing opinion on cars in general (e.g. "I think cars are an interesting subject"). This scale was reliable ( $\alpha = .88, r = .79, p < .001$ ). Additionally, an Attitude Towards Off-road vehicles/SUV's scale was created with two items, one worded negatively, measuring the participant's pre-existing opinion on Off-road Vehicles/SUV's specifically (e.g. "I would never drive an off-road vehicle or SUV"). This scale was also reliable ( $\alpha = .81, r = .68, p < .001$ ).

### 3. Results

#### 3.1 Multivariate Analysis of Covariance

To reduce the risk of an inflated Type I error a two-way between-groups MANCOVA was performed. Three dependent variables were used: Perceived Authenticity, Purchase Intention and Overall Brand Rating. The two independent variables were Control Authenticity Cues and a dichotomized (by median split) Desire for Control. Attitude Towards Cars in general and Attitude Towards Off-road vehicles/SUV's specifically were used as covariates to control for existing personal opinions towards the subject matter. Tables 2, 3 and 4 show mean scores and standard deviations for Perceived Authenticity, Purchase Intention and Overall Brand Rating.

After adjusting for the existing Attitude Towards Cars,  $F(3, 228) = 3.11, p = .03$ , and Attitude Towards Off-road Vehicles/SUV's,  $F(3, 228) = 7.01, p < .001$ , there was a significant main effect for the Control Authenticity Cues manipulation on the combined dependent variables  $F(3, 228) = 156.22, p < .001$ , Wilks' Lambda = .33, partial  $\eta^2 = .67$ . When the results for the dependent variables were considered separately all three showed significant effects: Perceived Authenticity  $F(1, 230) = 413.93, p < .001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .64$ ; Purchase Intention  $F(1, 230) = 47.27, p < .001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .17$ ; and Overall Brand Rating  $F(1, 230) = 269.54, p < .001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .54$ . All dependent variables were significantly higher in the authentic Control Authenticity Cues condition as compared to the inauthentic condition: Perceived Authenticity ( $M_{auth} = 3.93, SD = 0.43$ , vs.  $M_{inauth} = 2.84, SD = 0.40$ ); Purchase Intention ( $M_{auth} = 2.66, SD = 0.71$ , vs.  $M_{inauth} = 2.08, SD = 0.66$ ); and Overall Brand Rating ( $M_{auth} = 7.57, SD = 0.71$ , vs.  $M_{inauth} = 5.86, SD = 0.92$ ). No significant main effect was found for Desire for Control,  $F(3, 228) = 0.13, ns$ .

A significant interaction effect was found for the combined dependent variables,  $F(3, 228) = 3.91, p = .01$ , Wilks' Lambda = .95, partial  $\eta^2 = .05$ . All three dependent variables showed significant effects when considered separately: Perceived Authenticity  $F(1, 230) = 10.86, p = .001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .05$ ; Purchase Intention  $F(1, 230) = 3.99, p = .05$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .02$ ; and Overall Brand Rating  $F(1, 230) = 4.65, p = .03$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .02$ . Figures 2, 3 and 4 illustrate this interaction effect.

**Table 2**

Mean scores of Perceived Authenticity, taken on a 5-point scale, as a function of Control Authenticity Cues and Desire for Control, higher scores indicating higher levels of perceived authenticity

Desire for Control	Control Authenticity Cues								
	Authentic			Inauthentic			Total		
	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	N
Low	3.85	0.44	72	2.94	0.37	47	3.50	0.61	119
High	4.02	0.40	54	2.77	0.40	63	3.35	0.75	117
Total	3.93	0.43	126	2.84	0.40	110	3.42	0.68	236

**Table 3**

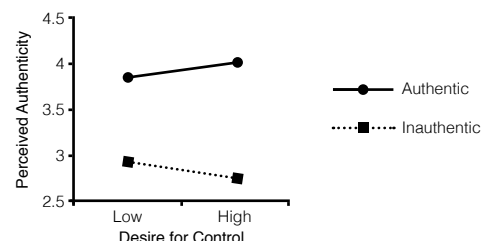
Mean scores of Purchase Intention, taken on a 5-point scale, as a function of Control Authenticity Cues and Desire for Control, higher scores indicating higher levels of purchase intention

Desire for Control	Control Authenticity Cues								
	Authentic			Inauthentic			Total		
	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	N
Low	2.60	0.66	72	2.17	0.58	47	2.43	0.66	119
High	2.74	0.76	54	2.01	0.70	63	2.35	0.81	117
Total	2.66	0.71	126	2.08	0.66	110	2.39	0.74	236

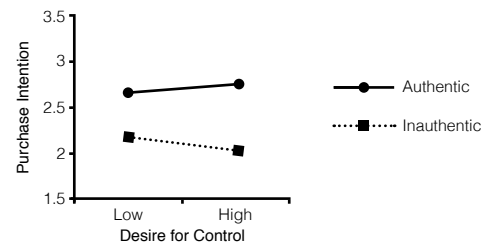
**Table 4**

Mean scores of Overall Brand Rating, taken on a 10-point scale, as a function of Control Authenticity Cues and Desire for Control, higher scores indicating higher ratings

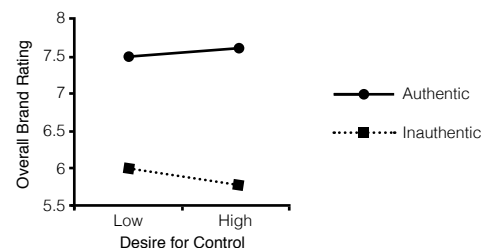
Desire for Control	Control Authenticity Cues								
	Authentic			Inauthentic			Total		
	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	N
Low	7.50	0.73	72	6.00	0.91	47	6.91	1.09	119
High	7.67	0.67	54	5.76	0.93	63	6.64	1.26	117
Total	7.57	0.71	126	5.86	0.92	110	6.78	1.18	236



**Figure 2.** Estimated marginal means for Perceived Authenticity



**Figure 3.** Estimated marginal means for Purchase Intention



**Figure 4.** Estimated marginal means for Overall Brand Rating

**Table 5**  
Summary of multiple regression analyses for variables predicting the proposed mediator Perceived Authenticity (N = 236)

Predictors	Effects on Perceived Authenticity	
	$\beta$	t
Control Authenticity Cues	-.79***	-20.36
Desire for Control	.51***	4.36
Control Authenticity Cues $\times$ Desire for Control	-.49***	-4.21

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$

**Table 6**  
Summary of hierarchical multiple regression analyses for variables predicting the dependent variable Purchase Intention (N = 236)

Predictors	Effects on Purchase Intention			
	Model 1		Model 2	
	$\beta$	t	$\beta$	t
Control Authenticity Cues	-.38***	-6.40	.03 <sup>ns</sup>	0.28
Desire for Control	.58**	3.22	.32 <sup>ns</sup>	1.78
Control Authenticity Cues $\times$ Desire for Control	-.59**	-3.28	-.34 <sup>ns</sup>	-1.91
Perceived Authenticity			.52***	5.43

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$

**Table 7**  
Summary of hierarchical multiple regression analyses for variables predicting the dependent variable Overall Brand Rating (N = 236)

Predictors	Effects on Overall Brand Rating			
	Model 1		Model 2	
	$\beta$	t	$\beta$	t
Control Authenticity Cues	-.71***	-15.96	-.26**	-3.97
Desire for Control	.46**	3.43	.17 <sup>ns</sup>	1.37
Control Authenticity Cues $\times$ Desire for Control	-.52***	-3.91	-.24*	-2.00
Perceived Authenticity			.57***	8.82

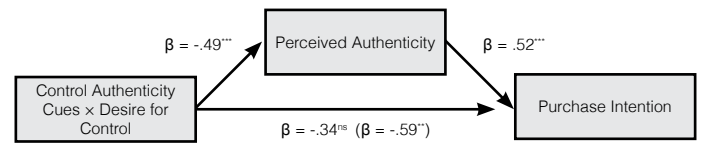
\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$

Subsequent contrast analyses revealed that Perceived Authenticity showed significant differences between the low and high Desire for Control conditions in both authentic,  $F(1, 230) = 4.95, p = .03$ , and inauthentic,  $F(1,230) = 5.89, p = .02$ , Control Authenticity Cues conditions. The contrast analyses showed no significant difference for the authentic and inauthentic Control Authenticity Cues condition in Purchase Intent,  $F(1, 230) = 1.28, ns$  and  $F(1, 230) = 2.81, ns$  respectively or Overall Brand Rating,  $F(1, 230) = 1.30, ns$  and  $F(1, 230) = 3.56, ns$  respectively.

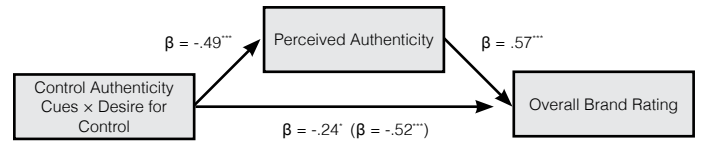
3.2 Moderated Mediation

To test if the mediation of the relationships between Control Authenticity Cues and Purchase Intention / Overall Brand Rating by Perceived Authenticity is conditional two moderated mediation analyses were conducted. The procedure for these analyses suggested by Muller, Judd and Yzerbyt (2005; see also Preacher, Rucker, & Hayes, 2007) was followed and all relevant continuous variables – Desire for Control, Perceived Authenticity, Purchase Intention and Overall Brand Rating – were centered at their mean.

For full conditional mediation to apply, a number of regression analyses should show that both (a) the interaction of the independent variable (Control Authenticity Cues) and the moderator (Desire for Control) on the proposed mediator (Perceived Authenticity), and (b) the effect of the mediator on the dependent variables (Purchase



**Figure 5.** Results of moderated mediation analysis for variables predicting Purchase Intention \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$



**Figure 6.** Results of moderated mediation analysis for variables predicting Overall Brand Rating \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$

Intention and Overall Brand Rating) are significant. Furthermore (c) the mediator should show a unique effect on the dependent variable and (d) the effect of the interaction term on the dependent variable should reduce if the mediator is inserted into the regression analysis. Finally, a Sobel test is performed to determine whether the path from the interaction term to the dependent variable via the mediator is significant.

As shown in tables 5, 6 and 7 and figures 5 and 6 the results of the regression analyses are in conformance with requirements (a) and (b); they show significant paths from the interaction term (Control Authenticity Cues  $\times$  Desire for Control) to the proposed mediator (Perceived Authenticity) and from the mediator to both dependent variables. The analyses for both dependent variables also pass requirement (d) as the effect from the interaction term reduces going from model 1 to model 2 (from  $\beta = -.59$  to  $\beta = -.34$  for Purchase Intention and from  $\beta = -.52$  to  $\beta = -.24$  for Overall Brand Rating). However, in the case of Overall Brand Rating the path from the interaction term to the dependent variable remains significant when the mediator is added, which does not pass requirement (c). This leads to the conclusion that for Overall Brand Rating a partial moderated mediation effect is found, whilst Purchase Intention is fully mediated. The Sobel tests performed for both dependent variables confirm that this mediation is significant ( $z_{PI} = -3.33, p < .001$  and  $z_{OBR} = -3.80, p < .001$ ).

Both hypotheses are confirmed by the findings of the MANCOVA and moderated mediation analyses. It should be noted that the final contrast analyses of the interaction effect in the MANCOVA did not show significant differences for the dependent variables Purchase Intention or Overall Brand Rating. But the moderated mediation analysis, which retains more of the available Desire for Control information by not dichotomizing the variable, shows that moderated mediation does take place for these dependent variables. The mediation by perceived authenticity found in the moderated mediation analyses was significant, but only partial in the case of Overall Brand Rating. As full mediation was not strictly predicted this does not invalidate the hypotheses.

4. Discussion

Though existing research has presumed favorable brand outcomes as a result of brand authenticity, to our knowledge no quantitative studies of these supposed effects have been reported so far. The results of this study confirm that brand authenticity does indeed lead to favorable outcomes: cues that signaled authenticity led to higher perceived authenticity, which in turn caused higher purchase intention and overall brand rating. This confirms hypothesis 1.

Furthermore, the effect of these cues was conditional. When desire for control was high, precedence was given to authenticity cues that were consistent with this desire. Authentic control cues were perceived as more authentic while inauthentic control cues

were perceived as less authentic, when compared to the low desire for control condition. This in turn confirms hypothesis 2.

This means that a brand's authenticity can be used as an effective brand management or marketing tool: an increase in perceived authenticity has a positive effect on favorable brand outcomes. A brand manager or marketer can influence how their consumers perceive a brand's authenticity by managing the relevant authenticity cues. However, the processing of said cues is dependent on states (e.g. a salient control consumer goal) or personality traits (e.g. desire for control) of the consumer. As a result the specific effect of manipulating a cue cannot be guaranteed, as the interpretation can differ from one consumer to the next.

#### 4.1 Limitations and Implications for Research

This study certainly adds evidence in favor of Beverland and Farrelly's framework (2009), but only one of the three consumer goals was tested in this experiment. Replication of the results for the connection and virtue goals would provide a more solid basis for this framework. For such research it would be necessary to either find personality traits similar to desire for control for each goal, or develop methods to measure the state of the consumer goals themselves.

The choice to use a personality trait could also explain why the moderating effect of desire for control is weak, though significant, when compared to the main effect of the authenticity cues. A personality trait is more stable and less pronounced than a measurement of the actual state of a goal, which could become apparent only during the authentication process and might carry a more powerful moderating effect. It is also possible that the moderating effect of the control goal is weaker in general when compared to the connection and virtue goals. This would be relevant for further study.

Purchase intention and overall brand rating were chosen as brand outcomes due to the short-term nature of the experiment and the use of a fictional brand. This precluded the use of brand outcomes such as brand equity or brand loyalty that would necessitate time to build up a relationship with the consumer or have previous experience with a brand. Further research should explore authenticity's relationship to these other desirable outcomes, especially in the context of existing brands.

It should be noted here that low desire for control does not necessarily preclude the consumer from having a control consumer goal during authentication. Furthermore, the experiment design does not control for the participants having a salient connection or virtue consumer goal while authenticating the Cavalier brand. However, as the experiment concerned a fictional brand that would not confer any real-world identity benefits upon consumption, it was considered unlikely that these goals would be salient during the experiment.

The mediation of the effect on overall brand rating by perceived authenticity was significant, but only partial. Control authenticity cues, moderated by desire for control, remained of significant influence. It would appear that some of the cues could be interpreted in a way that influenced this dependent variable through a different path than perceived authenticity. For example, the cue describing Cavalier as a high-performance off-road vehicle could be interpreted as a sign that Cavalier was authentic, but might also directly influence overall brand rating positively because it signaled a better product.

Furthermore, because of the mixed bag operationalization of the control authenticity cues, no conclusions can be drawn regarding the effects of specific cues used in the stimuli. It is possible that some interpretations are not controlled for in the research design. For example, in this study the inauthentic text places the Cavalier manufacturing facilities in China to signal inauthenticity because of cheap mass manufacturing. On the other hand, this could possibly be interpreted as an inauthentic virtue cue, because it brings to mind images of sweatshops. As it was considered unlikely that these goals were salient this was not considered a danger to the experiment design, but it would be important to account for these alternate

interpretations in future experiments where more than one goal is tested concurrently.

Wessel (2010) had remarked that some items in the brand authenticity instrument might require additional weighting, as their influence had not been proven equal during the creation of the scale. Whilst taking note of this consideration the instrument was used as-is, as further development was not considered within the scope of this study.

#### 4.2 Practical Implications

Notwithstanding these limitations, the results of this study can contribute significantly to marketing practice. To begin with, this is the first study to empirically test brand authenticity in relation to favorable outcomes. The consumer's perception of authenticity was shown to have positive effects on their purchase intention and the overall rating they gave the brand. Improving a brand's perceived authenticity would therefore lead to tangible benefits, such as increased sales. This conclusion is strengthened by the strong effect of the manipulated cues on perceived authenticity. It is further proof that while the socially constructed nature of authenticity puts it outside of a marketer's direct control, it can still be influenced indirectly by manipulating the brand's story.

Second, the moderation of this effect by desire for control shows that consumers with differing goals can have varying perceptions of authenticity. This allows marketers to influence their brand's perceived authenticity by targeting consumers with a specific goal, influencing the goals their consumers have or tailoring the offered cues to better fit a specific goal. For example, an inauthentic brand might deliberately target consumers that have a low desire for control so as to minimize the damage to their perceived authenticity. An authentic brand, on the other hand, that scores well with high desire for control consumers might instead use advertising designed to temporarily prime a consumer into a high desire for control state. Lastly, a brand that wanted to target consumers with a high desire for control could tailor its marketing message to more effectively signal authenticity. According to Beverland and Farrelly's (2009) underpinning standards for the control goal, authenticity is conferred when the possibility for firsthand experience, independent judgment, verifiability and instrumentality are conveyed. Therefore a marketer should stress the functional performance benefits, give the consumer opportunities for rational decision-making and keep emotive marketing claims to a minimum, to further improve the perceived brand authenticity.

Finally, the irony of marketing research on brand authenticity is not lost on the author. Considering the notions of sincerity and trustworthiness that are associated with the concept of authenticity, it feels especially disingenuous to actively manipulate consumers into believing a brand is authentic. Yet, one can also take the findings and see them in a more positive light. By showing that authenticity can lead to tangible benefits, the study stresses the importance for brands to actually *be* authentic. As Gilmore and Pine (2007) point out, when you advertise what you are not – i.e. when you lie to the consumer by sending false authenticity cues – your brand is easily exposed as phony. It is not good enough to merely tell the people you are authentic; you must make an actual effort. Otherwise your customers will find out and punish you for it, because ultimately they decide how authentic you are. In this sense authenticity is much the same as beauty: in the eye of the beholder.

#### References

- Alexander, N. (2009). Brand authentication: creating and maintaining brand auras. *European Journal of Marketing*, 43(3-4), 551-562.
- Arnould, E. J., & Price, L. L. (2000). Authenticating Acts and Authoritative Performances: Questing for Self and Community. In S. Rathneshwar, D. G. Mick & C. Huffman (Eds.), *The Why of Consumption: Contemporary Perspectives on Consumer Motives, Goals, and Desires* (pp. 140-163). London: Routledge.

- Belk, R. W., & Costa, J. A. (1998). The Mountain Man Myth: A Contemporary Consuming Fantasy. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 25(3), 218-240.
- Beverland, M. B. (2005). Crafting Brand Authenticity: The Case of Luxury Wines. *Journal of Management Studies*, 42(5), 1003-1029.
- Beverland, M. B. (2006). The 'real thing': Branding authenticity in the luxury wine trade. *Journal of Business Research*, 59(2), 251-258.
- Beverland, M. B. (2009). *Building Brand Authenticity: 7 Habits of Iconic Brands*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Beverland, M. B., & Ewing, M. (2005). Slowing the adoption and diffusion process to enhance brand repositioning: The consumer driven repositioning of Dunlop Volley. *Business Horizons*, 48(5), 385-391.
- Beverland, M. B., & Farrelly, F. J. (2009). The Quest for Authenticity in Consumption: Consumers' Purposive Choice of Authentic Cues to Shape Experienced Outcomes. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 36(5), 838-856.
- Beverland, M. B., Farrelly, F. J., & Quester, P. G. (2010). Authentic subcultural membership: Antecedents and consequences of authenticating acts and authoritative performances. *Psychology and Marketing*, 27(7), 698-716.
- Beverland, M. B., Lindgreen, A., & Vink, M. W. (2008). Projecting Authenticity Through Advertising: Consumer Judgments of Advertisers' Claims. *Journal of Advertising*, 37(1), 5-15.
- Beverland, M. B., & Luxton, S. (2005). Managing integrated marketing communication (IMC) through strategic decoupling: how luxury wine firms retain brand leadership while appearing to be wedded to the past. *Journal of Advertising*, 34(4), 103-116.
- Botterill, J. (2007). Cowboys, Outlaws and Artists: The rhetoric of authenticity and contemporary jeans and sneaker advertisements. *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 7(1), 105-125.
- Boutrolle, L., Delarue, J., Köster, E., Aranz, D., & Danzart, M. (2009). Use of a test of perceived authenticity to trigger affective responses when testing food. *Food Quality and Preference*, 20(6), 418-426.
- Brown, S. (2001). *Marketing: The Retro Revolution*. London: Sage.
- Brown, S., Kozinets, R. V., & Sherry Jr, J. F. (2003). Teaching old brands new tricks: Retro branding and the revival of brand meaning. *Journal of Marketing*, 67(3), 19-33.
- Bruner, E. M. (1994). Abraham Lincoln as Authentic Reproduction: A Critique of Postmodernism. *American Anthropologist*, 96(2), 397-415.
- Burger, J. M., & Cooper, H. M. (1979). The desirability of control. *Motivation and Emotion*, 3(4), 381-393.
- Chalmers, T. D. (2007). Advertising Authenticity: Resonating Replications of Real Life. *European Advances in Consumer Research*, 8, 442-443.
- Chalmers, T. D., & Price, L. L. (2009). Perceptions of Authenticity in Advertisements: Negotiating the Inauthentic. *Advances in Consumer Research*, 36, 72-75.
- Chhabra, D. (2005). Defining authenticity and its determinants: Toward an authenticity flow model. *Journal of Travel Research*, 44(1), 64-73.
- Chronis, A., & Hampton, R. D. (2008). Consuming the authentic Gettysburg: How a tourist landscape becomes an authentic experience. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 7(2), 111-126.
- Cohen, E. (1988). Authenticity and Commoditization in Tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 15(3), 371-386.
- Culler, J. (1981). Semiotics of Tourism. *American Journal of Semiotics*, 1(1/2), 127-141.
- Derbaix, M., & Decrop, A. (2007). Authenticity in the Performing Arts: A Foolish Quest? *Advances in Consumer Research*, 34, 75-80.
- Gebhardt, W. A., & Brosschot, J. F. (2002). Desirability of Control: Psychometric properties and relationships with locus of control, personality, coping, and mental and somatic complaints in three dutch samples. *European Journal of Personality*, 16, 423-438.
- Gilmore, J. H., & Pine, B. J. (2007). *Authenticity: what consumers really want*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Business School Press.
- Grayson, K., & Martinec, R. (2004). Consumer perceptions of iconicity and indexicality and their influence on assessments of authentic market offerings. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 31(2), 296-312.
- Groves, A. (2001). Authentic British food products: a review of consumer perceptions. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 25(3), 246-254.
- Kates, S. (2004). The Dynamics of Brand Legitimacy: An interpretive Study in the Gay Men's Community. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 31(2), 455-464.
- Knudsen, B. T., & Waade, A. M. (2010). *Re-investing authenticity: tourism, place and emotions*. Bristol: Channel View Publications.
- Laar, M., & Ponfoort, O. (2011, July). Marketingtrendsonderzoek 2011. *MarketingTribune*, 28, 18-19.
- Leigh, T. W., Peters, C., & Shelton, J. (2006). The consumer quest for authenticity: the multiplicity of meanings within the MG subculture of consumption. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 34(4), 481-493.
- MacCannell, D. (1973). Staged Authenticity: Arrangements of Social Space in Tourist Settings. *American Journal of Sociology*, 79(3), 589-603.
- Miller, D. (2008). *The Comfort of Things*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Molleda, J. C. (2009). Construct and Dimensions of Authenticity in Strategic Communication Research. *Anagramas*, 8(15), 85-97.
- Molleda, J. C., & Roberts, M. (2008). The value of "authenticity" in "glocal" strategic communication: The new Juan Valdez campaign. *International Journal of Strategic Communication*, 2(3), 154-174.
- Muller, D., Judd, C. M., & Yzerbyt, V. Y. (2005). When moderation is mediated and mediation is moderated. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 89(6), 852-863.
- Muñoz, C., Wood, N., & Solomon, M. (2006). Real or blarney? A cross-cultural investigation of the perceived authenticity of Irish pubs. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 5(3), 222-234.
- Preacher, K. J., Rucker, D. D., & Hayes, A. F. (2007). Addressing moderated mediation hypotheses: Theory, methods, and prescriptions. *Multivariate Behavioral Research*, 42(1), 185-227.
- Rose, R. L., & Wood, S. L. (2005). Paradox and the consumption of authenticity through reality television. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 32(2), 284-296.
- Smithers, J., & Joseph, A. E. (2010). The trouble with authenticity: separating ideology from practice at the farmers' market. *Agriculture and Human Values*, 27(2), 239-247.
- Thompson, C. J., Rindfleisch, A., & Arsel, Z. (2006). Emotional branding and the strategic value of the Doppelgänger brand image. *Journal of Marketing*, 70(1), 50-64.
- Visconti, L. M. (2010). Authentic Brand Narratives: Co-Constructed Mediterraneanness for l'Occitane Brand. *Research in Consumer Behavior*, 12, 231-260.
- Wang, N. (1999). Rethinking authenticity in tourism experience. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 26(2), 349-370.
- Wessel, K. (2010). *Hoe authentiek is authenticiteit? Onderzoek naar de indicatoren die bepalen of een consument een merk als authentiek waarneemt*. Unpublished master's thesis, University of Twente, Enschede, The Netherlands.

## Appendix A

*Stimuli used in experiment: Authentic condition, English translation*

### Cavalier, the British all-rounder

Hidden in the green hills of the British countryside lays an old hangar. There are many of these hangars in England, old rusty hulks from the Second World War left abandoned since. But this hangar is strikingly different. Not a spot of rust covers this building, nor can it be called abandoned. Every day people still work hard in this hangar to build the Cavalier off-road vehicles.

The two brothers James and Ian Coventry founded Cavalier in 1948. During the Second World War the brothers fought side-by-side with American soldiers in France. The military vehicles with which the Americans stormed across the battlefield were the iconic Jeeps, for which no terrain was a problem.

The brothers were so impressed by the Jeeps that after the war they decided to build a British version of this army vehicle. Bretonshire, their birthplace, lay in an uncultivated region far from the civilized world. This unmarred environment was the perfect place to develop an off-road vehicle that would outperform the American Jeep.

James and Ian hoped to win the British army contract with their Cavalier, but in the end lost it to the competing Land Rover. During testing the Cavalier performed better than the Land Rover on all fronts, but was also simply too expensive for the army.

The story behind Cavalier could have met an inglorious end here. But while the army was not interested, the properties of the Cavalier turned out to be perfect for others. Explorers, researchers and other adventurers bought Cavaliers to challenge the jungles, ice fields and deserts. The cars overcame any terrain with ease. The reputation of the off-road vehicles spread like wildfire, without the Coventry's having to spend a single dime on advertising. These days word of mouth is still the way the order book is filled each year; there is no marketing budget to speak of. Cavalier owners praise the company for not using exaggerated advertising campaigns but letting the achievements of the car speak for it instead. If so desired a potential buyer can receive a simple brochure detailing the specifications of the vehicle. It is a brand that does not participate in the fads of the modern society.

Despite this popularity Cavalier never grew into a world-class multinational. The brothers believed that rushed expansion would be detrimental to the quality of the cars. The family business has kept this vision in mind and is still based in the picturesque town of Bretonshire. The same hangar has been used as a factory since 1960, where 150 employees still build every off-road vehicle by hand. Innovations for safety and better performance are implemented, but other than that the model and production methods have not changed much in the past 50 years. Most parts for the car are still built in-house, seeing a Cavalier built shows how much traditional craftsmanship goes into it. Cavalier trusts its products so much that potential buyers can borrow a Cavalier for a month, free of charge, to see in practice if the vehicle meets their demands. This almost always results in the sale of a Cavalier.

Considering the prospects it seems the future for Cavalier will stay bright for many years. We suspect we'll see more from this brand.

*Stimuli used in experiment: Inauthentic condition, English translation*

### Cavalier, the Chinese low-cost alternative

Hidden in the harbor district of Shanghai lays a factory. There are many of such factories in Shanghai, new prefab constructions that can suddenly appear from one day to the next. It does not stand out between the other 10 identical factories on the same terrain. But there is one difference: in this factory people work day and night to build the Cavalier SUV.

Two British businessmen, James Bretonshire and Ian Coventry, founded Cavalier in 2005. During the economic boom of the '90s they worked at several car manufacturers as managers, responsible for the *Sports Utility Vehicle* (SUV) models. These popular cars, only really fit for city use though their sturdy exteriors suggested otherwise, were often partly built in Asia to maximize profits.

The partners were so impressed by the low costs associated with Asian production that they decided to build a complete SUV in China. Shanghai had been declared a '*Special Economic Zone*' by the government, where foreign companies were allowed to settle cheaply. This zone was the perfect place to develop an SUV that could compete with the expensive American and European models.

Bretonshire and Coventry hoped that their Cavalier would give Western consumers a reasonable alternative, but could not get a foothold here. In their reviews critics panned the Cavalier because of the disappointing quality and performance, despite the low price.

The story behind Cavalier could have met an inglorious end here. But while the Western world was not interested, the Asian market most definitely was. A massive marketing campaign was successfully launched to sell the SUV in countries like Korea and Singapore. Cavalier was able to get actor Brad Pitt as their ambassador for TV commercials and started to sponsor the yearly Korean Music Awards. The Cavalier became a popular lifestyle product, a fashion accessory just as important as having the right bag or the perfect shoes. This trend is now moving to the West, as hip youth choose to drive Cavalier for this image.

Thanks to this popularity Cavalier grew in just a few years to become a major car manufacturer in China. The businessmen profited from the economies of scale by going public and moving to an even larger factory. To optimally utilize this space Cavalier lets teams of designers and marketers redesign the models each year. Thousands of employees and hundreds of automatic robots keep the factory running day and night. And despite the high production the cars keep selling like hotcakes. They're so popular that it's no longer possible to get a test drive at a Cavalier dealer – a test drive is an unnecessary waste of time and money if every car gets sold anyway.

Considering the prospects it seems the future for Cavalier will stay bright for many years. We suspect we'll see more from this brand.

*Stimuli used in experiment: Authentic condition, Dutch version used*

### **Cavalier, de Britse alleskunner**

Verborgen in de groene heuvels van het Britse platteland ligt een oude hangar. Er zijn veel van dit soort hangars in Engeland, oude wegroestende stellages uit de tweede wereldoorlog die sindsdien verlaten zijn. Maar deze hangar is opvallend anders. Geen plekje roest ontsiert dit gebouw, van verlaten kan men ook niet spreken. In deze hangar wordt nog elke dag hard gewerkt om de Cavalier terreinwagens te bouwen.

Cavalier werd in 1948 opgericht door de twee broers James en Ian Coventry. Tijdens de tweede wereldoorlog vochten de broers in Frankrijk zij aan zij met Amerikaanse soldaten. De legerwagens waarmee de Amerikanen over het slagveld raasden waren natuurlijk de iconische Jeeps, waarvoor geen enkel terrein een probleem was.

De broers waren zo onder de indruk van deze Jeeps dat zij na de oorlog besloten om een Britse versie van het legervoertuig te bouwen. Bretonshire, hun geboortedorp, lag in een onbebouwde streek ver van de bewoonde wereld. Deze onaangestaste omgeving was de perfecte plek om een terreinwagen te ontwikkelen die nog beter zou presteren dan de Amerikaanse Jeep.

James en Ian hoopten met hun Cavalier het Britse legercontract binnen te halen, maar verloren deze uiteindelijk aan het concurrerende Land Rover. In de tests bleken de Cavaliers op alle punten beter te presteren dan de Land Rover, maar daardoor ook simpelweg te duur voor het leger te zijn.

Het verhaal achter Cavalier had hier roemloos kunnen eindigen. Maar waar het leger niet geïnteresseerd was, bleken deze eigenschappen van de Cavalier voor anderen juist perfect. Ontdekkingsreizigers, onderzoekers en andere avonturiers kochten Cavaliers om jungles, ijsvlaktes en woestijnen te trotseren. De wagens overwonnen met gemak elk terrein. De reputatie van de terreinwagens verspreide zich hierdoor razend snel, zonder dat de Coventry's ook maar één cent aan reclame hoefden te besteden. Mond-tot-mond reclame is tegenwoordig nog steeds de manier waarop elk jaar het orderboek gevuld wordt, een marketingbudget heeft het bedrijf nauwelijks. Cavalier klanten prijzen het bedrijf erom dat ze geen overdreven reclamecampagnes gebruiken, maar de prestaties van hun auto's voor zich laten spreken. Desgewenst kan een potentiële koper een simpele folder ontvangen waarin de specificaties van de auto beschreven staan. Het is een merk dat niet meedoet aan de modegrillen van de moderne maatschappij.

Ondanks de populariteit groeide Cavalier nooit uit tot een bedrijf van wereldformaat. De broers geloofden dat overhaast uitbreiden ten koste zou gaan van de kwaliteit van de auto's. Het familiebedrijf heeft deze visie altijd in het achterhoofd gehouden en het is daarom nog steeds in het pittoreske Bretonshire gehuisvest. Sinds 1960 doet dezelfde hangar dienst als fabriekshal voor het merk, waar door 150 werknemers elke terreinwagen nog steeds met de hand in elkaar wordt gezet. Vernieuwingen voor veiligheid en betere prestaties worden doorgevoerd, maar verder is het model en de productiemethode in de afgelopen 50 jaar nauwelijks veranderd. Nog steeds worden zoveel mogelijk onderdelen voor elke wagen in eigen beheer gemaakt, het is een waar ambachtswerk als je ziet hoe een Cavalier in elkaar gezet wordt. Het vertrouwen van Cavalier in hun product is zo groot dat potentiële kopers gratis een maand lang een Cavalier mogen lenen, om zo in de praktijk te kunnen testen of de auto aan de wensen voldoet. Dit lenen resulteert bijna altijd in een verkochte Cavalier.

Met zulke vooruitzichten lijkt de toekomst voor Cavalier ook de komende jaren nog zonnig te zijn. We zullen vast nog meer horen van dit merk.

*Stimuli used in experiment: Inauthentic condition, Dutch version used*

### **Cavalier, de Chinese prijsvechter**

Verborgen in het havengebied van Shanghai ligt een fabriekshal. Er zijn veel van dit soort fabrieken in Shanghai, splinternieuwe prefab constructies die van de ene op de andere dag kunnen verschijnen. Hij valt eigenlijk niet op tussen de 10 andere identieke fabriekshallen die op hetzelfde terrein staan. Maar er is één verschil: in deze hal wordt dag en nacht gewerkt om de Cavalier SUV te bouwen.

Cavalier werd in 2005 opgericht door twee Britse zakenmannen, James Bretonshire en Ian Coventry. Tijdens de economische boom van de jaren '90 werkten zij bij verschillende automerken als bedrijfskundigen, verantwoordelijk voor de *Sports Utility Vehicles* (SUV) modellen. Deze populaire auto's, die ondanks het stoere uiterlijk van een terreinwagen alleen geschikt zijn voor gebruik in de stad, werden om de winst te maximaliseren vaak gedeeltelijk geproduceerd in Aziatische landen.

De compagnons waren zo onder de indruk van de lage kosten die dit met zich meebracht dat zij besloten om zelf een SUV volledig in China te laten bouwen. Shanghai was door de regering tot een *'Speciale Economische Zone'* verheven waar buitenlandse bedrijven zich goedkoop mochten vestigen. Deze zone was de perfecte plek om een auto te ontwikkelen die kon concurreren met de dure Amerikaanse en Europese modellen.

Bretonshire en Coventry hoopten met hun Cavalier de westerse consument een redelijk alternatief aan te bieden, maar kregen daar geen voet aan wal. In de recensies lieten critici de Cavalier links liggen vanwege de tegenvallende kwaliteit en prestaties, ondanks de lage prijs.

Het verhaal achter Cavalier had hier roemloos kunnen eindigen. Maar waar de westerse wereld niet geïnteresseerd was, bleek de Aziatische markt juist klaar te zijn voor deze auto. Een massale marketingcampagne werd succesvol ingezet om de SUV's in landen als Korea en Singapore aan de man te krijgen. Cavalier wist acteur Brad Pitt te strikken als ambassadeur voor de reclamespotjes en begon jaarlijks de Korean Music Awards te sponsoren. Onder de doelgroep werd de Cavalier daardoor al snel een populair lifestyle product, een net zo belangrijke mode accessoire als de juiste tas of de perfecte schoenen. Deze trend begint nu over te waaien naar de Westerse landen, waar hippe jongeren vanwege het imago ook voor Cavalier kiezen.

Met dank aan deze populariteit groeide Cavalier in enkele jaren uit tot een grote autoproducent in China. De zakenmannen behaalden nog meer schaalvoordeel door na het uitbrengen van aandelen te verhuizen naar een grotere fabriekshal. Om die ruimte optimaal te benutten laat Cavalier teams van ontwerpers en marketeers elk jaar alle modellen vernieuwen. Duizenden werknemers en honderden automatische robots blijven dag en nacht de fabriek draaiende houden. En ondanks de hoge productie blijven de auto's als warme broodjes over de toonbank gaan. Ze zijn zelfs zo populair dat het niet mogelijk is om een testrit te maken bij Cavalier dealers – een testrit is een onnodige verspilling van tijd en geld als elke auto toch wel verkocht wordt.

Met zulke vooruitzichten lijkt de toekomst voor Cavalier ook de komende jaren nog zonnig te zijn. We zullen vast nog meer horen van dit merk.

**Appendix B***Items used in experiment, English translation*

Desire for Control		Perceived Authenticity	
01	I prefer a job where I have a lot of control over what I do and when I do it	01	I have the feeling Cavalier has been around for years
02	I enjoy political participation because I want to have as much of a say in running government as possible	02	In essence Cavalier still does the same thing it did when it was founded
03	I try to avoid situations where someone else tells me what to do	03	Cavalier upholds its own traditions
04	I would prefer to be a leader rather than a follower	04 neg	It is unclear what Cavalier stands for
05	I enjoy being able to influence the actions of others	05	Cavalier's communication matches who they are
06	I am careful to check everything on an automobile before I leave for a long trip	06 neg	I think Cavalier is dishonest
07 neg	Others usually know what is best for me	07 neg	I think Cavalier is insincere
08	I enjoy making my own decisions	08	Cavalier is one-of-a-kind
09	I enjoy having control over my own destiny	09	I feel Cavalier is sincerely trying to be of service to its customers
10 neg	I would rather someone else took over the leadership role when I'm involved in a group project	10 neg	I think the style of Cavalier is not clearly recognizable
11	I consider myself to be generally more capable of handling situations than others are	11	I think the quality of Cavalier is clearly recognizable
12	I'd rather run my own business and make my own mistakes than listen to someone else's orders	12	In Cavalier the passion for its craft is visible
13	I like to get a good idea of what a job is all about before I begin	13 neg	Cavalier is not interested in me, only in my money
14	When I see a problem I prefer to do something about it rather than sit by and let it continue	14	Despite the commercial interests, Cavalier appears sincere to me
15	When it comes to orders, I would rather give them than receive them	15	Cavalier meets my expectations
16 neg	I wish I could push many of life's daily decisions off on someone else	16 neg	Cavalier makes false promises
17	When driving, I try to avoid putting myself in a situation where I could be hurt by someone else's mistake	17 neg	I do not have a good feeling about Cavalier
18	I prefer to avoid situations where someone else has to tell me what it is I should be doing	18	Cavalier is close to the people
19 neg	There are many situations in which I would prefer only once choice rather than having to make a decision	<b>Overall Brand Rating</b>	
20 neg	I like to wait and see if someone else is going to solve a problem so that I don't have to be bothered by it	01	If you had to give this brand an overall rating, what kind of score (on a scale of 1 to 10) would you give it?
Purchase Intention			
01	If I was looking for this type of car, there's a good chance I would consider a Cavalier		
02	If I was looking for this type of car, there's a good chance I would buy a Cavalier		
03 neg	If I had to buy a car now, I would not consider a Cavalier		
04	If I had to buy a car now, I would buy a Cavalier		
05	I want to buy a Cavalier		
Attitude Towards Cars			
01	I think cars are an interesting subject		
02	I know a lot about cars		
Attitude Towards Off-road vehicles/SUVs			
01	I think off-road vehicles and SUV's are beautiful cars		
02 neg	I would never drive an off-road vehicle or SUV		

## Items used in experiment, Dutch version used

Desire for Control		Perceived Authenticity	
01	Ik heb het liefst een baan waarbij ik zelf kan bepalen wat ik doe en wanneer ik dat doe	01	Ik heb het gevoel dat Cavalier al jaren lang bestaat
02	Ik houd ervan om deel te nemen aan politiek omdat ik zoveel mogelijk te zeggen wil hebben in het beleid van de regering	02	Cavalier doet in de basis nog altijd hetzelfde als toen het werd opgericht
03	Ik probeer de situaties te vermijden waarin iemand anders mij vertelt wat ik moet doen	03	Cavalier houdt de eigen tradities in stand
04	Ik heb liever de leiding dan dat ik geleid word	04 neg	Het is onduidelijk waar Cavalier voor staat
05	Ik beïnvloed graag het doen en laten van anderen	05	De communicatie van Cavalier past bij wie ze volgens mij zijn
06	Ik zorg ervoor dat ik alles aan de auto gecontroleerd heb voordat ik op reis ga	06 neg	Ik vind Cavalier oneerlijk
07 neg	Anderen weten meestal wat het beste voor me is	07 neg	Ik vind Cavalier niet oprecht
08	Ik houd ervan mijn eigen beslissingen te nemen	08	Cavalier is uniek in zijn soort
09	Ik beschik graag over mijn eigen lot	09	Ik heb het gevoel dat Cavalier oprecht probeert de klant van dienst te zijn
10 neg	Bij een groepstaak heb ik liever dat een ander het leiderschap op zich neemt	10 neg	Ik vind de stijl van Cavalier niet duidelijk herkenbaar
11	Ik denk dat ik beter ben in het omgaan met moeilijke situaties dan anderen	11	Ik vind de kwaliteit van Cavalier duidelijk herkenbaar
12	Ik zou liever mijn eigen bedrijf hebben en mijn eigen fouten maken dan andermans bevelen te moeten opvolgen	12	In Cavalier is de passie voor het vak zichtbaar
13	Ik wil graag een goed beeld hebben van wat een baan precies inhoudt voordat ik er aan begin	13 neg	Cavalier is niet geïnteresseerd in mij maar alleen in mijn geld
14	Als ik een probleem zie, doe ik er liever iets aan, in plaats van dat ik passief toekijk en het op zijn beloop laat	14	Ondanks de commerciële belangen komt Cavalier wel oprecht op mij over
15	Als het op bevelen aankomt, geef ik die liever dan dat ik ze krijg	15	Cavalier voldoet aan mijn verwachtingen
16 neg	Ik zou willen dat ik veel van mijn dagelijkse beslissingen op anderen zou kunnen afschuiven	16 neg	Cavalier doet aan valse beloften
17	Als ik autorijd, probeer ik situaties te voorkomen waarin ik door andermans fout een ongeluk zou kunnen krijgen	17 neg	Ik heb geen goed gevoel bij Cavalier
18	Ik vermijd liever situaties waarin iemand anders mij moet vertellen wat ik moet doen	18	Cavalier staat dichtbij de mensen
19 neg	Er zijn veel situaties waarin ik liever geen keus zou hebben dan dat ik een beslissing moet nemen	Overall Brand Rating	
20 neg	Ik wacht liever af tot iemand anders het probleem oplost dan dat ik me er zelf druk over maak	01	Als u dit merk een algemene beoordeling zou moeten geven, wat voor een rapportcijfer zou u dan geven?
Purchase Intention			
01	Als ik op zoek zou zijn naar zo'n soort auto, is de kans groot dat ik een Cavalier zou overwegen		
02	Als ik op zoek zou zijn naar zo'n soort auto, is de kans groot dat ik een Cavalier zou kopen		
03 neg	Als ik nu een auto zou moeten kopen, zou ik Cavalier niet in overweging nemen		
04	Als ik nu een auto zou moeten kopen, zou ik een Cavalier kopen		
05	Ik wil graag een Cavalier kopen		
Attitude Towards Cars			
01	Ik vind auto's een interessant onderwerp		
02	Ik weet veel van auto's af		
Attitude Towards Off-road vehicles/SUVs			
01	Ik vind terreinwagens en SUVs mooie auto's		
02 neg	Ik zou nooit in een terreinwagen of SUV willen rijden		