

Luxury tourism – a review of the literature

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Abstract

This study aims to provide a holistic and comprehensive picture of the current state of luxury tourism research. In order to do so, 119 articles published between 2004-2019 were analysed by content analysis and a systematic literature review. Based on the analysis of the systematic literature review, the study synthesised the theoretical research streams on luxury tourism research. The studies approached the context via ten different key features. The findings suggest that current luxury tourism research concentrates on quantitative studies, conducted mainly in contexts that present traditional luxury tourism products. The synthesis of the theoretical streams identifies that research is based on marketing literature, and this is discussed with four different approaches (1) consumer consumption, (2) brand management, (3) service marketing, and (4) consumer behaviour-oriented perspective. Luxury tourism is a multidimensional and broad concept that requires attention in academic research. The study also gives suggestions for future research opportunities.

Key words: luxury tourism, new luxury, experiential luxury, luxury service, unconventional luxury

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Introduction

In the past 20 years, the consumer market has been affected by the transition to an experience-based economy (Atwal & Williams, 2009; Carù & Cova, 2007; 2003; Pine & Gilmore, 1999), meaning that rather than just buying products or services, consumers are searching for experiences to fulfil their needs and desires. The same phenomenon is visible with luxury consumption as a significant trend in the luxury market is the consumers' shift from product consumption towards experiential luxury consumption (Cristini, Kauppinen-Räsänen, Barthod-Prothade, & Woodside, 2017). Furthermore, the concept of luxury has evolved and become multifold and besides the traditional understanding of the concept is a new form of luxury, that is, unconventional luxury (Thomsen, Holmqvist, von Wallpach, Hemetsberger, & Belk, 2020). The traditional understanding of luxury highlights the conspicuous consumption of luxury, which means that luxury is seen as elitist, exclusive, symbolic, prestigious, expensive, and attached firmly to the products and their attributes (Godey *et al.*, 2013). In this perspective, consumers gain value as a form of status via public symbolism (Thomsen *et al.*, 2020). The new understanding of luxury approaches luxury as epistemologically scarce, experiential, and agentic (Thomsen *et al.*, 2020), which means luxury is seen as a consumer-defined approach, where the meaning of luxury is more self-driven, emotional, and emphasising the experiences, quality, and enrichment of life (Bauer, von Wallpach, & Hemetsberger, 2011; Yeoman & McMahon-Beattie, 2011).

Even though research on luxury is constantly broadening within academia (Chandon, Laurent, & Valette-Florence, 2016, 2017; Gurzki & Woisetschläger, 2016) and luxury spending in the service industry has boomed (Chang, Ko, & Leite, 2016), it has been argued that little attention has been given to research on luxury services (Yang & Mattila, 2014, 2016, 2017). In fact, in their recent study Wirtz *et al.* (2020 p. 665) argue that “services are largely missing from the luxury literature, just as the field of luxury is mostly missing from the service literature”. Pure luxury services are a rapidly growing sector where the nature of luxury has shifted towards experiences and intangible things (Kapferer & Bastien, 2012). Furthermore, as the luxury market is an essential segment in the travel and tourism industry (Park, Reisinger, & Noh, 2010) and there is neither a clear or general definition of luxury tourism nor a luxury traveller (Bakker, 2005) luxury tourism requires further research (Park & Reisinger, 2009; Swarbrooke, 2018). In terms of the discussion on luxury hospitality and tourism within academia, it is essential to understand and define the nature of luxury tourism more profoundly in order to gain an overview of luxury tourism research. Furthermore, Thomsen *et al.* (2020) have called for a more comprehensive understanding of luxury. Therefore, this study aims to fill this research gap by reflecting the current understanding of the concept of luxury tourism in academic literature.

The objective of the study is two-fold. Firstly, the objective is to describe and contextualise luxury tourism research. That is, how researchers approach the context of luxury tourism. Secondly, the objective of the study is to give an overview of current academic research on luxury tourism. By reflecting on luxury tourism research, the study contributes to the discussion of experiential luxury and tourism as well the discussion on luxury services. Thus, this study (see Figure 1) uses the approach of Ritchie (1997) in the analysis, with the aim of explaining the phenomenon more comprehensively by balancing between a detailed understanding of past research and by providing an overview of the current insight into the state of luxury tourism research; this is done by combining different research streams. Systematically analysing the state of development in an academic discussion is essential to the growth and maturity of any discipline (Williams & Plouffe, 2007). This study analysed a sample of 119 articles using content analysis and a systematic literature review, and then synthesised the theoretical research streams of luxury tourism into a framework. Bringing together diverse conceptions, the study offers a perspective on the research which contributes to our understanding of the phenomenon. Taking the time to consider a discipline's state of knowledge can make an investment in future research more

productive for both academics and managers by providing potential areas for the future direction of the research (Williams & Plouffe, 2007). Furthermore, this kind of perspective gives a more holistic view of the phenomenon, which is needed in business research (Holmqvist & Diaz Ruiz, 2017). In so doing, it brings new value to the academic discussion on experiential luxury, luxury services and luxury tourism and argues that luxury tourism research is currently lacking studies on the new luxury experiences with different cultural and geographical origins.

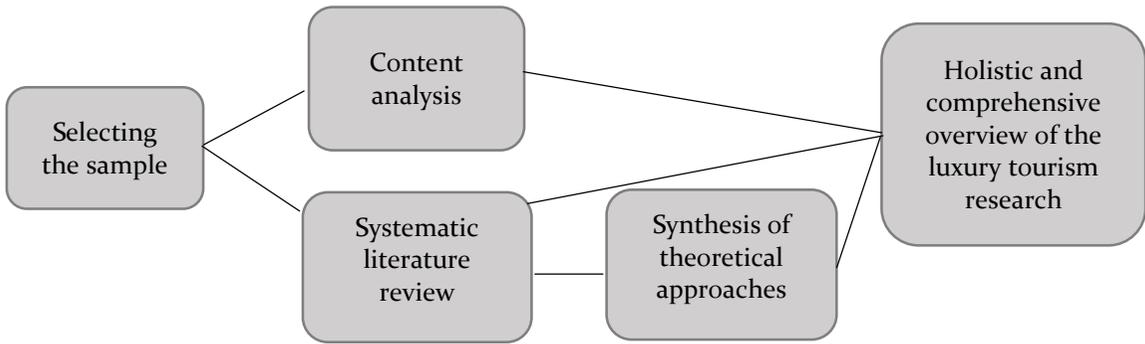


Figure 1. *Research design*

The article first explains the sample and selection criteria used for the study. Then it proceeds to present the findings of the content analysis and discusses the challenges of defining luxury tourism via these key factors. Following the findings of the content analysis, the findings from the systematic literature review are presented. The third section addresses the synthesis of the theoretical research streams that have emerged on luxury tourism and discusses the respective paradigms. Finally, the article concludes with an overview by discussing these emergent issues and offering suggestions for further research.

From the roots of luxury consumption to the contemporary discussion with luxury

The theoretical roots of luxury consumption have been recognised by Thorstein Veblen in his book “Theory of leisure class” as being based on conspicuous consumption, although some of the aspects of conspicuous consumption had already been previously noted by Rae (Leibenstein, 1950). In his seminal work, Veblen argues that as wealth increases and spreads through society, satisfying subsistence needs ceases to drive consumption and instead it becomes driven by attempts to attain the esteem and envy of fellow humans (Veblen, 1899). As a result, lower social classes try to emulate the consumption of higher social classes, which often motivates individuals to consume conspicuously (Veblen, 1899). Somewhat later, luxury consumption began being discussed using demand theories, which in addition to emphasising the Veblen effect, that is conspicuous consumption, also included the bandwagon effect. The bandwagon effect is when the demand for a commodity is increased because others are also consuming the same commodity; this is accompanied by the snob effect, which is the extent to which the demand for goods is decreased as others are also seen to be consuming the same commodity (Leibenstein, 1950). Combined these perspectives, the Veblen, bandwagon, and snob effects offer a picture of how conspicuous consumption has moved from the extremes of being exclusive to an activity enjoyed by mass consumers (bandwagon), at the same time fighting to keep it exclusive (snob) (Page, 1992). Between these extremes, various scholars have tried to identify and define luxury and the motivations for consumption (Page, 1992), and, as societies have developed to be more affluent, there has been a change in the consumption of luxury (Mason, 1981). Furthermore, the change has been influenced by various personal and social aspects, which differ based on society’s inner or other-

directness (Mason, 1981). Subsequently, Laurent and Dubois (1994) then argued that the word luxury encapsulates symbolic and cultural values, and luxury has an ambivalent and dual nature and is attached to abstract concepts such as space, time, or freedom. Furthermore, they contended, people's predisposition toward luxury is affected by their perception of the luxury world in general and their personal fit within that world (Laurent & Dubois, 1994).

As societies have developed and purchasing power has increased, conspicuous consumption is argued to have become a predominantly middle-class phenomenon in affluent societies, and it has changed considerably from Veblen's depiction of ostentatious display (Page, 1992). Prior research (e.g., Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2012, 2014) shows that luxury is not only for the rich and sophisticated and it is no longer about exclusivity alone (Kumar, Paul, & Unnithan, 2020). The background of luxury consumers and the variation in their expectations have expanded (Heyes & Aluri, 2018; Thomsen *et al.*, 2020; Uriely, 2005). Rather, luxury consumption has been democratized and become available to the masses as luxury brands have extended their brands downward with masstige brands (Kumar *et al.*, 2020). This phenomenon of masstige stands for mass prestige and results from a luxury brand reducing its price to become affordable to the masses without compromising the product's quality too much (Kumar *et al.*, 2020). Luxury has traditionally been based on rarity (Kapferer, 2015); with the development of masstige, what is luxury, has become more challenging to define. Non-luxury and luxury are seen as two extremes in a continuum, and where the ordinary ends and luxury starts is in the eyes of the beholder (Tynan, McKechnie, & Chhuon, 2010). Besides the term masstige, there has been a discussion in academic literature on accessible luxury (Chang *et al.*, 2016; De Barnier, Falcy, & Valette-Florence, 2012), affordable luxury (Mundel, Huddleston, & Vodermeier, 2017) and everyday luxury (Banister, Roper, & Potavanich, 2020) in contrast to inaccessible luxury (Chang *et al.*, 2016), which refers to the traditional understanding of luxury.

Even though there are no commonly approved theories and definitions about luxury among researchers, scholars have agreed that luxury is a multidimensional concept that is relative, subjective, and contextual (Kauppinen-Räsänen, Gummerus, von Koskull, & Cristini, 2019). Furthermore, in the contemporary world, luxury is also argued to be based more on inner-directed values than outer-directed (Bauer *et al.*, 2011) and has gained more inconspicuous forms (Eckhardt, Belk, & Wilson, 2015; Makkar & Yap, 2018). As products are losing the rarity and exclusivity aspects usually attached to luxury there has been a rise in experiential consumption (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Pine & Gilmore, 1998); this means that consumers are turning to luxury experiences as they are a more inconspicuous form of consumption and more difficult to imitate (Eckhardt *et al.*, 2015) creating prerequisites for experiential services such as luxury tourism. Luxury experiences are regarded as more valuable than material things as they are unique (Tynan *et al.*, 2010). This supports consumers' desire to use luxury as a tool for self-expression (Chandon *et al.*, 2016), where luxury is no longer only about quantities and ownership, but instead, includes quality and experiences, where consumers consume luxury, for example, as a demonstration of their culture, lifestyle, and taste (Kapferer, 2014). According to Wirtz *et al.* (2020), two perspectives on luxury and luxury consumption have been recognized in current academic discussion, and these need to be integrated together in luxury services research. The dominating discussion revolves around focusing on the object characteristics that can be considered a luxury, and the second perspective focuses on what luxury means to the individual (Wirtz *et al.*, 2020).

Methodology

Ritchie (1997) argues that the method of a study is a balance between a detailed understanding of previous research and a synthesis of the research streams; this then leads to an assessment that offers an insight into future possibilities. Furthermore, Li and Petrick (2008) describe the objective of

this kind of approach as a means of recognising whether there is a gap in the research between academic research and real-world practices and to discover if there is a need to re-evaluate the current state of research.

This research focused on studies published in a recent 15-year period (2004–2019) since there was a significant shift in luxury consumption at the beginning of the 2000s. First, this period was marked by a change in consumption to more experiential forms of luxury, and luxury also became democratised (Silverstein & Fiske, 2008). Secondly, during this period, it was recognised that luxury can be based on other things than status and exclusivity such as emotional desires and hedonic values (e.g., Godey *et al.*, 2013). Moreover, in this change luxury was allowed to become more personal (Bauer *et al.*, 2011) and inconspicuous (Eckhardt, Belk, & Wilson, 2015).

The constant shifting of the concept of luxury makes it challenging to determine the precise boundaries of what should or should not be included in the sample. Experiential luxuries can include matters such as fine dining, luxury travel, and pampering services (Kim, 2018), all of which are universal tourism experiences. Consequently, the layered nature of tourism products and the various synonyms for the concepts of luxury or alternative labels impacted the sampling of this work, and it is therefore based on a broad view of what can be defined under the term luxury tourism.

The search terms included “luxury tourism”, “luxury travel”, “luxury holiday”, “luxury restaurant”, and “luxury hotel”. Six databases ScienceDirect, Ebsco, Sage Online Journals, Proquest, and Emerald Insight, as well as Google Scholar, were investigated using these search terms. Between September 2019 – December 2019, the resulting sample of collected studies was then screened using a three-step inclusion criteria. First, only those studies and books published between the chosen period were retained. Second, only academic journal articles and books were included in the sample, thus eliminating articles published in newspapers, magazines and books that did not have a scientific background. Third, articles that appeared multiple times in different databases were eliminated so that they were only included once in the sample. This resulted in 135 studies. However, it was noted that the number of books and theses in the sample was only five. Therefore, to obtain more eligible data, books, and thesis were removed from the sample. In addition, eleven studies were excluded as they were written in a language other than English or did not describe the context or the attributes of the luxury tourism in question. Consequently, the final study sample, based on the search terms, resulted in 119 articles in 57 journals. The sample is listed in Appendix 1.

The first phases of analysing the sample utilised content analysis, which requires the examining and interpreting of the particular body of material in order to identify and group patterns and themes (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). Williams and Plouffe (2007) argue that using a content analysis of published research gives the possibility to see the whole instead of the details that one item of research work has contributed. In other words, it allows all the knowledge generated within a discipline to be assessed, rather than focusing on individual studies (Williams & Plouffe, 2007). This study utilised summative content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). By examining the introduction, the literature review, and the methodology section of the 119 studies carefully, the attributes or features of luxury tourism that the studies refer to, were identified. That is, how the contexts in these studies were described, as it was considered that this would reveal what is believed to be essential in luxury tourism in the current academic discussion. The content analysis resulted in ten different categories of how luxury tourism as a context is approached.

The second phase of the analysis was a systematic literature review, which is a useful method when focusing on exploring what is known about a specific phenomenon. The goal was to identify, evaluate, and summarise the relevant studies made about the topic in the form of a replicable and transparent process (Tranfield, Denyer, & Smart, 2003). The systematic literature review categorised the data based on the year, geographical origin of the study, study context, the objective of the study, the subject of the research, theoretical and methodological approach, and the findings of the study. This analysis method resulted in an overview of the current state of the research, which also served as a basis for the synthesis of the theoretical approaches of the different research streams in luxury tourism research.

By combining these two analysis methods and synthesising the theoretical research streams, the study offers a comprehensive and holistic picture of the state of luxury tourism research. This paper presents the results of the content analysis and systematic literature review of 15 years of research in the domain of luxury tourism. The overview, which evaluated 119 articles published in peer-reviewed journals, provides a descriptive snapshot of how luxury tourism in contemporary academic discussion is being approached. It also includes the patterns of theoretical approaches that have characterised the development of luxury tourism over a recent 15-year period. As luxury has considerably evolved in this period, this kind of conceptual research is necessary, and experiential luxury such as luxury tourism literature is undeniably ready for this kind of overview.

Findings of the content analysis – how luxury is described and contextualised in tourism research

The content analysis revealed ten different categories that indicated how researchers approached the context of luxury tourism; that is, how they describe and contextualise luxury tourism in their studies. The categories are listed in Figure 2, and Appendix 2 shows the typical expressions that were used in forming a certain category. The category of the brand did not describe the features of the luxury brand as such; rather, it collected those luxury tourism and hospitality companies that researchers gave as an example of a luxury brand. Besides describing the study context with key factors in the 40 studies, there was a clear definition of what is meant by a certain concept. For example, Hwang and Han (2018, 484), who based their definition on De La Vina and Ford (2001), gave the following explanation of the study context: “A luxury cruise is defined as a cruise trip that starts at a rate of \$350 per day and serves upper-class consumers”.

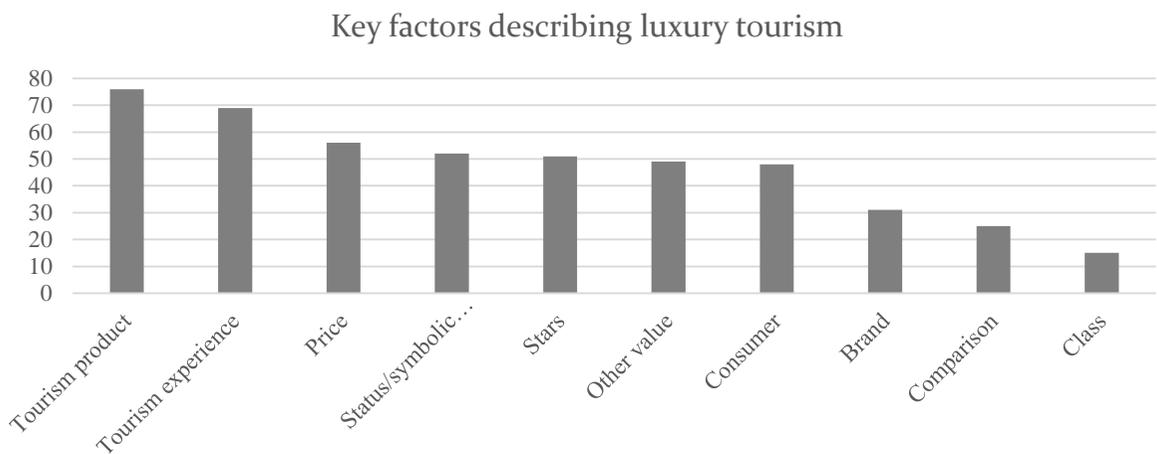


Figure 2. Key factors describing luxury tourism

Luxury tourism as a tourism product or tourism experience

The most significant categories for describing the luxury tourism context, approached luxury tourism from the perspective of the product (n=76) or the experience (n=69). In these studies, luxury was defined from both perspectives in 48 cases. Luxury tourism from the perspective of a luxury product was seen as a hotel or restaurant with certain material features, physical surroundings, where the aesthetics, atmosphere and the décor of the facilities were the main criteria describing the context. In these cases, luxury tourism referred to a product which offered excellent quality, exclusivity, and full or customised high-quality service and food. Additionally, features such as security, amenities, and location were mentioned. When the context of luxury tourism was defined as an experience, the approach was to view consumers as obtaining different benefits and memorable experiences when using the product (Ariffin, Maghzi, Soon, & Alam, 2018).

As an experience, luxury tourism was mostly described as experiential, emotional, and hedonic, with high quality present in the overall performance. Furthermore, the experience was described as unique, personalised, exclusive, memorable, and holistic; with pampering, comfort and convenience being central for the customer. The luxury experience was also seen in some cases as a prestigious and conspicuous consumption experience. Feelings of privacy, novelty, escape, authenticity, as well as aesthetic appreciation and safety were all part of the experience. In those cases, where both the product and experience were used to describe the context, the view was first product-based and then further described with experiential factors. The basis of these categories describing luxury tourism as a context arises from the intersection of traditional and new luxury. When luxury tourism is seen as a product it is linked to materialism, where luxury is exclusive, expensive, high-quality, conspicuous, and tangible (Yeoman & McMahon-Beattie, 2011), it is deemed traditional luxury. Whereas with new luxury, luxury tourism is defined more from the perspective of an experience (Tynan *et al.*, 2010). Furthermore, defining tourism products based on material factors may relate to the argument of Wirtz *et al.* (2020) that luxury service literature is heavily based on luxury goods, even though, it is also noted that services and goods differ in fundamental ways and that a goods logic is only partly applicable to services.

Price as an indicator of luxury tourism

From the findings, price, expensiveness, or high cost was attached to the description of luxury tourism in 58 studies (e.g. Han, Hwang, & Lee, 2018; Kim, Jeon, & Hyun, 2011). The studies on luxury research agreed that expensiveness is attached to luxury, especially to traditional luxury (Godey *et al.*, 2013), and most often the price is an indicator and key dimension of luxury (Kapferer & Bastien, 2012; Kapferer, Klippert, & Leproux, 2014). The challenge of describing luxury tourism from the perspective of price arises from the remarkable growth of the luxury sector, because in the contemporary world, luxury is based on its extension to the middle class with sometimes more affordable prices. According to Kapferer, Klippert, and Leproux (2014), therein lies the paradox of the luxury market as it needs to be expensive, yet it has to grow and be accessible at the same time. Moreover, in luxury, the price does not have to be explained rationally: it is the price of the intangibles such as the prestige of the brand (Kapferer & Laurent, 2016).

Furthermore, there are variations in people's beliefs as to whether something should be categorised as luxury based on price (Kapferer & Laurent, 2016), and price alone qualifies luxury when the brand is not known (Kapferer *et al.*, 2014). In addition, in the context of luxury tourism, price is not necessarily relevant for consumers in luxury hotels (Feng, Wang, & Ryan, 2018) and luxury tourists do not necessarily decide on purchasing based on price; instead, they seek the best quality and most suitable services (Yang & Mattila, 2014, 2017). Lee and Hwang (2011) noted that luxury restaurants could not be defined only by price. Furthermore, in the context of tourism and hospitality, the most expensive is not

necessarily the most luxurious. In a study of hotel suites by Heyes and Lashley (2017), a negative correlation was found between price and luxury and a positive relationship between price and exclusivity.

Additionally, it has been noted in the study by Harkison *et al.* (2018) that an expensive experience may even be the opposite of a true luxury experience. The price is a continuous variable, and there is no definite view on what the price should be in order for something to be luxurious and included in a luxury domain; furthermore, what is expensive for one person, might not be expensive for another (Kapferer & Laurent, 2016). Moreover, with the phenomenon of *masstige* and unconventional luxury considering price as an indicator of luxury tourism has its challenges.

Luxury tourism as a form of status or other value

Luxury tourism was defined in 55 studies from the perspective of its symbolic meaning. In these studies, luxury was described as prestige, which enhances the social status of consumers, and social recognition, by which luxury tourism aims to impress others and increase the social status of the tourist. Status has been attached to luxury ever since Veblen's 1899 theory of the leisure class, in which luxury is used to produce meanings and signal social distinction from others (Hemetsberger, von Wallpach, & Bauer, 2012). However, the concept in the contemporary world is more abstract than that described by traditional literature on consumer behaviour (Hansen & Wänke, 2011).

Beside the symbolic value of luxury, the studies also referred (e.g., Correia, Kozak, & Reis, 2014; Hwang & Hyun, 2016; Yang & Mattila, 2016) to hedonic value (n=18), emotional value (n=11), functional value (n=9), need for uniqueness (n= 9), experiential value (n=7), self-actualisation (n=7), relational value (n=3), financial value (n=3), self-satisfaction (n=2), individual value, need for escapism, novelty and safety. This fragmentation of value perceptions may be based on the difficulty of defining value in terms of luxury. Consumer behaviour scholars agree that the concept of luxury value consists of several underlying dimensions; however, there is no specific agreement on the number, and types of dimensions (Monkhouse, Barnes, & Stephan, 2012) and consumer's luxury value perceptions are inadequately understood (Shukla & Purani, 2012). Furthermore, with the challenge of describing luxury tourism from the perspective of value, it needs to be noted that value perceptions are affected by situational variables and individual characteristics (Hennigs *et al.*, 2012). This perspective also refers to the rationale of whether we are defining luxury tourism based on outer-directed or inner-directed values. The roots of luxury consumption have tended to refer to outer-directed motivations, however with development of luxury consumption in society it has moved towards inner-directed motivations. Therefore, it has been suggested that both outer-directed (i.e., utilitarian and symbolic/expressive) and self-directed values that are experiential/hedonic, relational, and cost/sacrificing are now determining luxury consumption (Tynan *et al.*, 2010). However, even though luxury is a very subjective experience, the current academic contextualisation of luxury tourism is still heavily dominated by the outer-directed perspective.

Star qualification as an attribute of luxury tourism

The studies defined luxury via star qualification, such as diamond ratings or Michelin stars in 56 cases. Typically, the studies referred to Michelin star restaurants (n=10) or luxury hotels with 5 (n= 43) or 4 stars (n=18) or five-star deluxe (n=6) (e.g., Lu, Berchoux, Marek, & Chen, 2015; Yang & Lau, 2015). In many cases, the studies referred to both 5 and 4-star ratings, describing these hotels as full-service hotels. Three of the studies gave an example of *über* luxury using a 7-star level qualification as an image of a luxury product.

The international star qualification may define luxury from the perspective of technical and material features of a luxury tourism product, where the star rating influences guest expectations and presents an image of the level of hospitality they expect to receive (Ariffin & Maghzi, 2012). The challenge with this attribute is that international star qualification is not globally used, and even though a five-star classification corresponds to luxury, there are variations between the quality inside the category (Tomasevic, 2018). Consequently, in a study of Cetin and Walls (2016), for example, in a luxury hotel context, the price was an indicator of luxury rather than the star rating as it would have excluded boutique luxury hotels from the study. Furthermore, some studies also referred to the understanding that accommodation in luxury tourism might not necessarily have to be five-star standard anymore (Bakker, 2005) as according to Kiessling, Balekjian, and Oehmichen (2009, 5) “luxury is no longer defined by the number of stars a hotel has, but by its tailor-made services to the individual needs of the guest.” Using a star qualification objectifies luxury tourism giving a marketer’s perspective. However, it needs to be noted that contemporary consumers are heterogenic and for example, the ultra-rich consumer, who has all the material wealth, may not perceive the standard five-star hotel as a luxury (Wirtz *et al.*, 2020). Therefore, using a star qualification as an expression of luxury tourism has challenges as a key factor.

Describing the luxury tourist in order to understand luxury tourism as a context

A description of the luxury tourist featured in 53 of the studies; that is, who the consumer is and what kind of attributes these tourists have. A luxury tourist was described as experienced and experience-oriented, with high cultural capital (n=22). Furthermore, luxury tourists were described as seeking value in the form of high quality, exceptional services, and excellent physical surroundings (n=22). Such a consumer has high expectations since they know what they want (n=21). In 15 studies, the consumer was described as wealthy, affluent, and as having extensive purchasing power and material resources; only one study defined the consumer as having a middle- or high level of income. Nine of the studies described consumers as those seeking meaning from luxury tourism as a form of status or hedonic value. The challenge with descriptions of luxury tourists arises from the heterogeneity of the contemporary luxury consumer. With masstige, contemporary luxury consumers may have very different economic backgrounds (Kumar *et al.* 2020), which is also influenced by their cultural background (Godey *et al.*, 2013) and previous experiences of luxury. The heterogeneity of the consumer is invisible when contextualising luxury tourism, which may impact the overall ways in which luxury is discussed in academic literature. This is because what is considered wealthy is a relative concept in the current luxury market and the contemporary luxury consumer with masstige is not necessarily ultra-rich, thus the same services may be used by both ultra-rich and masstige consumers. Therefore, from this perspective, when contextualising luxury tourism it is necessary to note that luxury perceptions are subject-related, as this is not visible in the current contextualisation of luxury tourists by researchers.

Describing the context as a perspective of brand

Describing the luxury tourism context based on international well-known hospitality brands was an approach in 34 studies (e.g., Wiedmann, Labenz, Haase, & Hennigs, 2018; Yang & Mattila, 2014). Regarding hotels, the studies referred to Western brands such as the Four Seasons (n=9), the Ritz-Carlton (n=7), and the Sheraton, Hilton, Hyatt, and Starwood. In some studies, researchers referred to the hotel Burj-al-Arab (n=3) as an ultimate example of luxury tourism as a brand. In the cruise context, the examples of luxury brands were the Carnival Corporation, the Royal Caribbean International, and Star Cruise. Furthermore, in the context of restaurants, examples given of luxury brands were Morton’s, Ruth’s Chris, and Shula’s Steakhouses. For air travel, the Emirates airline (n=3) was the most frequently mentioned brand.

Luxury brands can be seen as a common denominator to understand consumption across different cultures (Dubois & Paternault, 1997). The challenge with this approach is that there is a difference between luxury brands as even though two brands can be luxurious at the same time, they are not seen as equally luxurious (Vigneron & Johnson, 2004). Furthermore, in luxury tourism studies, it is noted that large branded companies may not produce ultimate luxury at the same level as small companies; small size firms engage with customers on a more personal level, which may lead to more a meaningful experience (Iloranta, 2019). Therefore, a brand does not necessarily guarantee luxuriousness in the context of unconventional luxury. Furthermore, with *masstige*, the meaning of traditional luxury brands has been diluted, creating further challenges to contextualising luxury tourism based on brand.

Comparison as an approach to the description of luxury

Luxury has always been seen as being separate from the standard with its exclusivity and rarity, and social comparison has been acknowledged to be a part of luxury consumption. Therefore, the approach to defining or describing luxury tourism by comparing it to something seen as normal is natural. For example, Liu, Wu and Li (2019, 357) compared luxury travel experience from multiple perspectives as “compared to non-luxury travel, a luxury travel experience appears to be more exclusive, less affordable, and indicative of higher status, higher quality, and greater hedonic value; hence, it signals a stronger sense of superiority and uniqueness among luxury consumers’ peers.” From the findings, most of the time (n=13), luxury tourism was defined by comparing the level of service (e.g., Hwang and Hyun, 2013) and a personalised service was used as an indicator of comparison. Nine of the studies defined luxury tourism by comparing it to the price, such as referring to the average price as being higher than in standard cases (e.g., Bakker, 2005; Chen and Peng, 2014). The studies also made comparisons from the perspective of superior quality (n=6), extraordinary superiority (n=5), and the aesthetics of the physical surroundings (n=7).

In addition, describing the consumers (n=5) and consumer behaviour as a form of hedonic value (n=4) was also a basis of comparison (e.g., Lee and Hwang, 2011; Jin, Line and Merkebu, 2016). It has been argued that the psychological benefits would be the main factor that distinguishes luxury from non-luxury (Nia & Zaichkowsky, 2000). However, in the context of tourism consumption, both luxury and non-luxury can provide psychological benefits and the only difference exists in the attributes that define the luxury (Liu *et al.*, 2019). Moreover, the difficulty with comparisons is that it has been recognised that aside from the multidimensionality of luxury concepts, there can be different levels of luxury tourism; ordinary luxury and ultimate luxury (Iloranta, 2019). A further complication is that consumers’ expectations are continuously on the rise, which affects the general understanding of the concept of luxury (Danziger, 2005). Ultimately, understanding what is seen as a luxury is purely subjective, and therefore the aspect of comparison alone produces certain difficulties. This means that luxury services should not be categorized but rather seen as a continuum ranging from ordinary services to everyday luxury, then to standard luxury and elite luxury; the characteristics of luxury services can then be seen as relative degrees, and subjective perceptions (Wirtz *et al.*, 2020).

Class as a descriptive attribute

In 15 studies, luxury tourism was described from the perspective of upper-class consumers (e.g., Han & Hyun, 2018; Hyun & Han, 2015). References to class were typically made in the studies conducted in a luxury cruise context (n=9). The remainder of the studies described class as a form of symbolic production of an elite status, a distinction, and privilege of the super-elite, and a wealthy class belonging to the same social class and sense of nobility. Historically, luxury has been something for the elite and the lifestyle of the upper-class (Veblen, 1899). However, in the contemporary world with the phenomenon of democratisation of luxury and *masstige*, luxury has become partly available to the

masses (Kumar *et al.*, 2020), and luxury is no longer only for elite (Chandon *et al.*, 2016), but rather as Hemetsberger *et al.* (2012) argue that the significant distinction in today's world is that luxury has become disconnected from social class.

Discussion of the content analysis findings

The study findings gave an insightful snapshot of how the domain's knowledge generation when describing and contextualising the luxury tourism context is conducted in the researchers' approach to luxury tourism in their studies. The findings illustrate that in the current contextualisation of luxury tourism scholars still heavily base their concepts of luxury tourism on stars or material factors; this means that assumptions of what is considered a luxury is based on objectifying luxury with rather technical features or physical elements and hardware. This view remains robust, even though human elements are frequently regarded as more valuable in the luxury experience than material features (Ariffin *et al.*, 2018). Furthermore, the content analysis supports the view of Wirtz *et al.* (2020), which argues that luxury service research is heavily based on luxury goods literature, where something is defined as a luxury based on the characteristics of a product. However, for services, because of their intangibility and experiential characteristics, this kind of pure objectification of luxury is not possible; consequently, services should also be analyzed from the perspective of the subjective perceptions of the consumer (Wirtz *et al.*, 2020).

The study findings from the content analysis are in line with Gil-Lafuente, Merigó, and Viziente (2014), showing that it is difficult to define the concept merely based on a few factors or indicators. The findings also support the view of Lee and Hwang (2011) that luxury services are not easily defined based on one factor. Therefore, on average, the studies referred to four different key factors describing luxury tourism as a research context. The challenge with these approaches in luxury tourism arises from subjective, contextual, and relative factors attached to luxury as a concept (Kauppinen-Räsänen *et al.*, 2019). However, it needs to be noted that based on the findings of the content analysis, academic research needs to take the evolving concept of luxury into account and re-evaluate periodically the level of key factors or attributes describing the context. It is evident that what has been assumed to be luxury may no longer necessarily contribute to this evolving understanding, especially as different generations may see luxury tourism from a different perspective than previous generations (e.g., Heyes & Aluri, 2018). Therefore, in the future more research will be needed on the subjective perceptions of luxury tourism consumers. Furthermore, the findings indicate that more research is also needed on luxury tourism products and experiences based on other factors than conspicuous consumption; that is key factors derived from elements other than status, brand, or class. These factors are market-led, however, in the contemporary world consumers define what is luxury. Conspicuous consumption has heavily influenced luxury consumption theories, which is visible in the content analysis, however, as the concept of luxury and consuming of luxury has changed, academic research may also need to re-evaluate the starting point for contextualising luxury tourism.

Findings of the systematic literature review - an overview of the current luxury tourism research

The number of articles published within the study context, luxury tourism, had increased over the chosen fifteen-year period (see Figure 3.). In luxury tourism, significant growth in the research popularity can be seen after 2010. Before 2010, there were nine studies conducted, but between 2010-2014, the number increased to 27. Following this, the popularity of research expanded steadily so that 83 of the total 119 journal studies were conducted from 2015 to 2019.

Most of the studies (n=95) were published in 39 different tourism, hospitality and service journals: the International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management (n=14) and the International Journal of Hospitality Management (n=14), being the most frequent, followed by the Journal of Hospitality Marketing and Management (n=5) and Tourism Management (n=5).

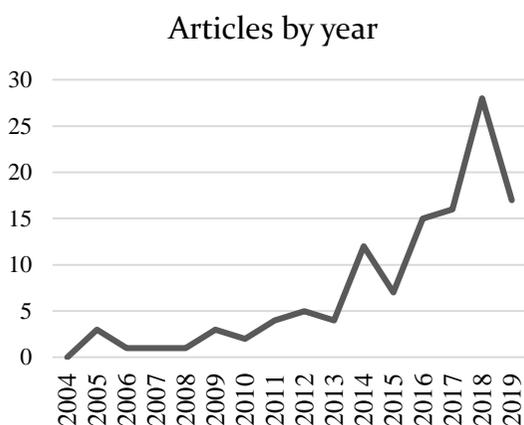


Figure 3. Articles by year

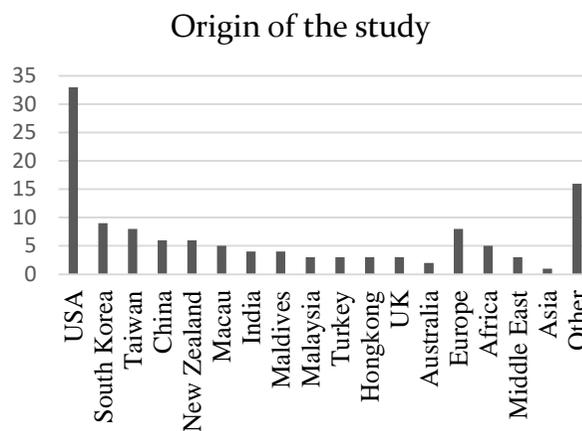


Figure 4. Origin of the study

Additionally, 15 of the studies were published in journals relating to business, marketing, and revenue and pricing, such as the Journal of Revenue and Pricing Management (n=5). A further nine of the studies were classified into other journals, such as journals of geographical or social studies. The studies were conducted (see Figure 4) in the United States (n=33), South Korea (n=9), Taiwan (n=8), China (n=6), New Zealand (n=6), and Macau (n=5). All the studies where there were less than two countries of origin mentioned were combined under the classification of the continent in which the studies were conducted (e.g. Europe). Furthermore, the classification of the term 'other' comprised of conceptual papers and studies conducted in an online environment.

The context of the studies (see Figure 5) varied broadly as 41 of the studies were conducted in luxury hotels, 20 in luxury restaurants, 11 on luxury cruises, and 9 in luxury tourism. The contexts of luxury accommodation and luxury resorts were mentioned both as a study context in six studies. In addition, the contexts were also described as luxury shopping behaviour in tourism (n=4), luxury hotel restaurant (n=4), luxury travel (n=4), airline (n=3), luxury hospitality services (n=2), luxury resort hotel (n=2) and category other (n=6), which included glamping, luxury wildlife tourism, space tourism, luxury chain hotel, luxury second home, and luxury service.

In terms of perspectives, most of the studies (n= 79) were from the consumers' or customers' perspectives. Six of the studies were from the service providers' perspective, eight of the studies combined the service providers, customers or employees' perspective and 15 were conducted from other perspectives, e.g., employee (n=4), company (n=3), industry (n=4) while other perspectives included were from sources such as sharing economy or a destination or were conceptual papers (n=14). The majority of the studies utilised quantitative (n=71) rather than qualitative (n=28), mixed-method (n=10), and conceptual (n=10) approaches.

Contexts of the studies

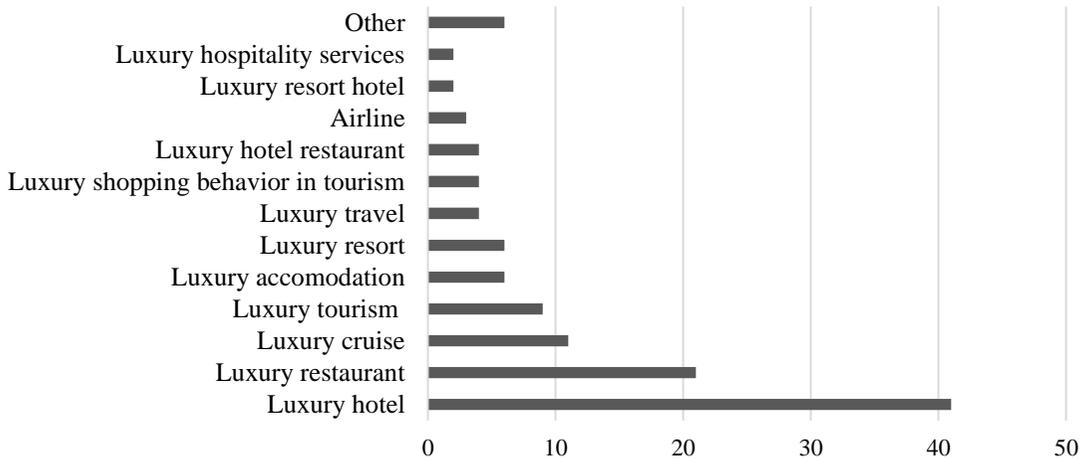


Figure 5. Contexts of the studies

The key approaches for the theoretical frameworks of the studies were frequently from multiple perspectives, meaning, for example, that the study approached the luxury tourism phenomenon from, for instance, the value and repurchase intention. Therefore, in many cases categorising key theoretical approaches for the studies was based a number of categories not just one. The most common key approach for the theoretical frameworks of the studies (see Figure 6.) was researching the phenomenon from the perspective of customer expectation, satisfaction, trust, and loyalty (n=26). Consumer consumption related approaches, such as purchasing patterns, consumption habits, and repurchase intentions (n=23), was the second-largest category. In addition, several studies concentrated on brand and image related perspectives (n= 21) such as brand prestige, brand community, brand differentiation, brand attachment, brand loyalty, brand equity, and brand attitude, and brand love. Service quality and encounter (n=16) were among the most studied themes. Consumer behavioural perspectives included studies with travel motivations and customer or consumer experiences (n=15). Relationship marketing and quality studies were also among the most common approaches (n=10). Additionally, those studies that concentrated on luxury tourism and sustainability themes (n=9) were published mainly in geographical journals.

Different approaches to the value of luxury tourism (n=8) were among the interests of the leading research themes. However, the perceived value discussion was fragmented. Employee related studies (n= 7) concentrated on humanic factors, and the perspective was mainly concerned with communication with customers. The category classified as other consisted of a variety of studies, for example, sharing economy, gastronomy and conceptual papers, etc. Considering the different theoretical approaches, the findings of the sample studies were fragmented and are not, therefore, presented here.

Key approaches in the theoretical frameworks of the studies

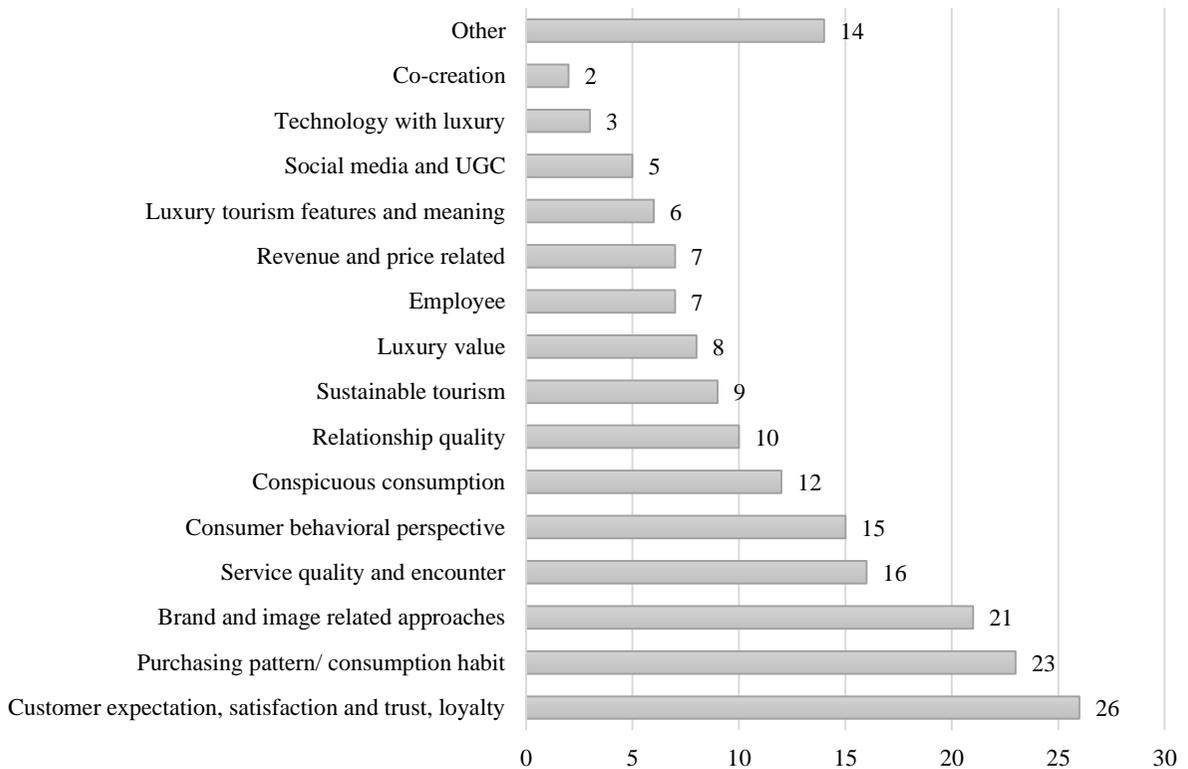


Figure 6. Key approaches in the theoretical frameworks of the studies

The findings of the systematic literature review can be summarised as follows. The current state of luxury research concentrates on countries and contexts that represent quite traditional luxury tourism products. However, the variety of what is considered luxury tourism is wide, and research in luxury tourism is broadening in academia. Furthermore, the amount of quantitative research is tending to dominate the research field, which indicates that assumptions about what is considered a luxury is market-led. However, in the contemporary discussion the consumers' perspective of luxury is essential, as luxury is a subjective and multidimensional concept.

The findings are in line with Wirtz *et al.* (2020), who argue that a considerable amount of luxury service research is conducted in luxury contexts, but the luxury service itself is not studied, as the focus is rather placed on other factors. Therefore, more research on luxury services and experiences itself is needed. In addition, more research on the service provider's perspective would be beneficial as it could also provide perceptions about the heterogeneity of the luxury tourism consumer which is not currently very visible in the research. The findings support the view of Conejo *et al.* (2020) that more studies are needed about service provision and value formation to properly understand luxury service consumption. Furthermore, the systematic literature review findings indicate that luxury consumption theories, such as consumption habits and purchasing patterns and conspicuous consumption, are still in the main emphasis of the literature. Consequently, more research is needed about other factors as Wirtz *et al.* (2020, p. 675) argue "for luxury services conspicuous consumption may be of lower relevance compared

to luxury goods and are less often chosen for conspicuous consumption due to their lack of a tangible good that is owned and can be easily shown". The next section, with a synthesis of theoretical research streams, concentrates on describing, in more depth, different approaches and paradigms of the current state of luxury tourism research.

Streams in literature in luxury tourism discussion

Based on the theoretical approaches identified in the systematic literature review, this synthesis of the theoretical research streams combines the theoretical approaches of luxury tourism in order to make a comprehensive understanding of the luxury tourism research and its future possibilities. The aim is not to review the theoretical approaches, but instead, discuss the image of these different approaches in luxury tourism and, therefore, provide an overview (e.g., Li & Petrick, 2008; Ritchie, 1997; Saraniemi & Kylänen, 2011).

Luxury tourism research lies within the marketing discipline. Therefore, this synthesis approaches the different streams found within marketing literature in order to analyse the discussion on luxury tourism and omits those studies that were conducted in other disciplines. The number of articles which could be integrated into a marketing discussion was 102. Furthermore, it needs to be noted that these streams are not separate. Instead, in many cases, the approaches overlap each other as can be seen in Figure 7. The different streams are presented in the figure by the size of the circle which is related to the number of studies in the streams.

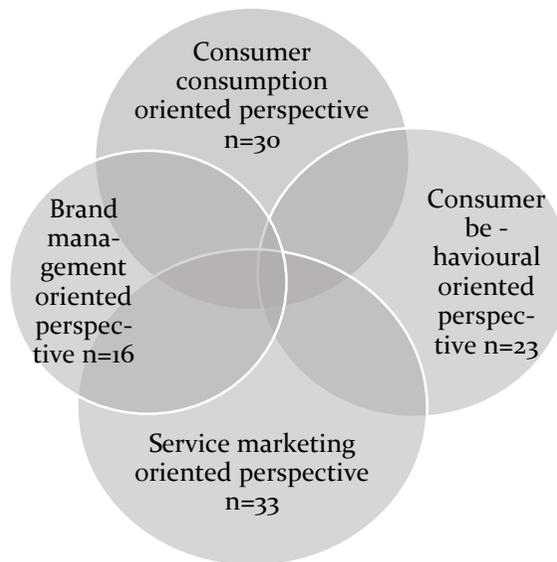


Figure 7. *The research streams found within luxury tourism research*

Consumer consumption-oriented perspective

The consumer consumption-oriented approach considers a luxury tourist as a passive consumer when he or she is the object of the actions taken by the service provider and the providers' goods and services. This approach is concerned with how a consumer reacts to a service with his/her consumption habits and patterns of behaviour. Consumer consumption-oriented research in luxury tourism considers repurchase intentions, patterns, and revisit intentions (e.g., Han, Hwang, & Lee, 2018; Han, Yu, Koo, & Kim, 2019; Hwang & Hyun, 2013).

The challenge with this perspective is that on the one hand the luxury tourist is seen as behaviourally consistent, whose actions are predictable and explainable and therefore, the perspective of the production process is mainly managerial. On the other hand, this approach recognises that luxury consumers are heterogeneous. However, in this case, the perspective is more from conspicuousness, meaning that the consumer's consumption is assumed to be based on the symbolic meanings of objects and their demonstrative status rather than interpersonal motivations and values. Namely, consumers, base their consumption behaviour on luxury tourism products mainly as an expression of wealth and to stand out from others (e.g., Popescu & Olteanu, 2014; Yang & Mattila, 2017). Furthermore, the consumer consumption-oriented perspective includes pricing and revenue management components, such as how consumers react to prices in luxury tourism. This paradigm, therefore, focuses on buying and purchasing luxury tourism, where the perspective of understanding consumer consumption is based on traditional luxury consumption theories such as those of Veblen, the bandwagon and snob effects. This perspective is the second largest approach in the current research on luxury tourism.

Brand management-oriented perspective

The perspective of brand management comes from the assumption that brands drive luxury tourism consumption. Defining luxury tourism via brand is understandable, as research on luxury incorporates branding literature, and luxury brands are perfect examples of branding (Keller, 2009). A brand is seen as an indicator of a certain quality and image that represents meaning for consumers' expectations. The research employing the brand management-oriented approach takes account of different sides of brand management such as brand prestige, brand attachment, brand attraction, brand storytelling, brand loyalty, brand equity, image congruence, etc. (e.g., Heo & Hyun, 2015; Hwang & Han, 2018; Jin *et al.*, 2016). This approach considers luxury tourism more as a product than an experience, where the consumer reacts to the brand as it is managed in a certain way. Thus, the perspective is based on traditional luxury tourism products, such as luxury hotels with specific tangible and intangible attributes, with the brand promising a certain level of quality to be expected by the consumer. Consumers are seen as emotional, and luxury service providers can generate positive customer responses by improving a brand with different initiatives and symbolic elements of the brand products. Therefore, this approach sees the brand as an attribute affecting consumer decision making and buying behaviour.

Service marketing-oriented perspective

The service marketing-oriented view approaches research on luxury tourism from the perspective of service quality, service encounter, and servicescape (e.g., Gupta, Dasgupta, & Chaudhuri, 2012; Lai & Hitchcock, 2017). Furthermore, the research stream includes customer retention and relationship marketing, or a focus on customer loyalty, trust, and satisfaction (e.g., Harkison, 2017; Meng & Elliott, 2008). In this orientation, the language used in studies changes from the consumer to the customer. In addition, this perspective takes into account the service recovery and role of the employees and employee communication and performance in interactions with customers (e.g., Hyun & Kim, 2014; Jeong & Hyun, 2019).

Service is always a part of luxury, whether the discussion concerns luxury products or luxury services (Kapferer & Bastien, 2012). It is seen as a standard element; however, there is a variety of studies and respective approaches to describe it. On the one hand, it strictly refers to service quality with a rather technical perspective on how the service is delivered as a performance with high quality for the customers. On the other hand, even though the quality is recognised as a part of service, the service is seen more from the perspective of the experience and functionality of the service. This means that this view describes service more from the perspective of interaction such as having a personalised manner

and service from the heart, where the needs of the customer are met or even satisfied beyond a customer's expectations.

Nevertheless, the perspective as regards the service is that the role of the frontline employee in luxury tourism is considered essential. The service marketing-oriented view reflects the evolution of discussion inside service marketing with the approaches of service quality, customer relationship management, and service experience. As the discussion on luxury tourism is about services, it is understandable that the service marketing perspective is the most common approach in luxury tourism research.

Consumer behavioural-oriented view

This perspective approaches consumers' consumption as behavioural practices, where the travel motivation, value creation, experiential consumption, and its attributes, are the central themes. Luxury is increasingly defined through ideal values and experiences (Kiessling *et al.*, 2009) as the different needs of consumers are met (Hemetsberger *et al.*, 2012).

This stream does not see luxury tourism only as a means of status. Instead, it acknowledges that luxury tourism may be based on intrinsic value elements that respond to different kinds of needs of the consumer and may even support self-actualisation in the experience. However, as has already been expressed throughout this study and in the content analysis section, even though the consumption perspective here is value-driven, understanding the value dimensions regarding luxury is complex. Besides symbolic values, luxury value may include elements, for example, of hedonic value, functional value, relational value, experiential value, emotional value, and individual value.

From all these recognised different theoretical research streams, the consumer behavioural-oriented view is the one that most sees luxury tourism as an experience. However, as luxury experiences are abstract, grasping their attributes creates difficulties (Hemetsberger *et al.*, 2012). Consequently, because of the subjectivity and contextual aspects of luxury, its meaning to the consumer does not necessarily require there to be an offering or luxurious context; instead, the luxury experience can emerge from a lived experience or activity (Kauppinen-Räsänen, Gummerus, von Koskull, & Cristini, 2019). Therefore, this view on luxury tourism may require the greatest amount of research in the future.

Discussion and conclusions

This study contributes to luxury service, experiential luxury and luxury tourism literature by describing the current state of luxury tourism research and offering suggestions for future research. This is the first time to best knowledge of the authors that research on luxury tourism from this perspective has been conducted and it answers several calls for research on a more comprehensive understanding of luxury (e.g., Thomsen *et al.*, 2020), luxury services (e.g., Conejo *et al.*, 2020; Wirtz *et al.*, 2020), and luxury tourism. The findings of the study revolve around the questions of aspects of unconventional luxury, fragmented value perceptions, utilising qualitative research and different cultural contexts, which all may have an impact on a future understanding of luxury tourism in academic discussions.

The findings indicate that luxury tourism is a multidimensional concept, which should not be described via one key factor or attribute as used alone they may have several limitations. The attributes attached to describing luxury tourism in context are very similar to those traditionally attached to luxury goods, where quality and price create certain expectations about luxury; that is, an objectifying of luxury. As noted earlier, in current discussions, these attributes are more abstract, and luxury services should also be researched from the consumer's subjective perceptions (Wirtz *et al.*, 2020). Furthermore, luxury consists of more than product features, quality, functionality, and price (Thomsen *et al.*, 2020) and

certainly experiences with unconventional luxury go beyond traditional luxury attributes (von Wallpach, Hemetsberger, Thomsen, & Belk, 2020). As the context for luxury is in the service and hospitality business, and for the consumer tourism is about experiences, further research could therefore focus especially on those attributes that are attached to unconventional luxury tourism experiences. These attributes include the meaningfulness and preciousness of luxury moments in experiences (e.g., Iloranta, 2019; von Wallpach *et al.*, 2019). Research on this area could also widen the understanding of the different value elements attached to luxury tourism as an experience as these were fragmented in the current discussion. With experiences, the value may be more inner-directed, and therefore features attached to the unconventional luxury experiences such as authenticity, novelty, and uniqueness under current discussion in luxury tourism research are still often imperceptible. Furthermore, the findings of this study support the view of Kapferer and Laurent (2016) that with traditional forms of luxury tourism, rather than identifying different dimensions of attributes that should be considered to define luxury, luxury research should focus on identifying where luxury begins in each dimension because this level varies across consumers and countries.

This view is also related to the findings of the systematic literature review. The findings indicate, that the current state of luxury tourism discussion is heavily based on research utilising quantitative methods. Additionally, most of the studies are conducted in the USA and Asia with a representation of luxury hotels and restaurants as a form of the luxury tourism product. Therefore, the findings that are considered as luxury tourism in the current literature are related to these contexts and sometimes to the more traditional perception of luxury; thus, research on new luxury experiences, such as unconventional luxury, have only a minimal role in the current discussion. However, as Kauppinen-Räsänen *et al.* (2019) note, traditional meanings may no longer correspond to the consumers' understanding. This leads to the question of whether luxury, in the contemporary world, is something that researchers can quantify or is luxury, especially luxury services, very personal and qualitative by nature, and should therefore be researched more using qualitative methods.

Moreover, as luxury is a cultural notion and luxury is valued and defined differently around the world (Wiedmann, Hennigs, & Siebles, 2007), the current discussion is lacking studies from other countries and continents, for example, Europe, Africa, and Southern America. The studies in these contexts or with a qualitative perspective may be relevant in the future as it could raise factors such as sustainability, safety, and privacy as a part of the value formation for the consumer, making it a more meaningful experience (Iloranta, 2019). Furthermore, in the domain of luxury tourism research, understanding aspects such as how consumers enrich their existence or actualise themselves via luxury tourism, are marginal at the moment. This may be related to the cultural and quantitative method based finding of this study and therefore needs further research in different cultural contexts with different methods.

Status as a value dominates the studies, but the other values attached to the concept are versatile, which may indicate that further research is needed on the value elements. Luxury nowadays serves self-interest more than status (Bauer *et al.*, 2011; Cristini *et al.*, 2017; Hemetsberger *et al.*, 2012; Silverstein & Fiske, 2008) and prestige may even produce negative connotations (Goor, Ordabayeva, Keinan, & Crener, 2020). Furthermore, the findings of the studies concerning perceived value with luxury tourism may have been different if the focus had been on the wealthy or those who are trading up by consuming luxury; this is because the higher the status a person has, the less likely that status as a value will affect their holiday choices (Correia *et al.*, 2014). In addition, the generational aspect of the concept may be different for millennials than it has been with previous generations (e.g., Heyes & Aluri, 2018; von Wallpach *et al.*, 2019). Therefore, the study suggests that the heterogeneity of the market should be noted more precisely in future research, and defining the consumer's background and the context of

the study may be essential in future research. As the findings of the studies in the systematic literature review were fragmented, the findings support the view of Kastanakis and Balabanis (2014, 2147), who argue that “luxury markets are more heterogeneous than the status-driven literature suggest.” The proper question is whether researchers using quantitative methods are assuming the attributes related to the fragmented consumers’ values, or would qualitative methods widen the field and actually present the real values and benefits behind experiential consumption in luxury tourism. The academic discussion on luxury tourism should focus in the future on consumers’ meaning-making as regards luxury. As Kauppinen-Räsänen *et al.* (2019) express it, instead of focusing on meanings attached to the offering, the focus should be on meanings generated by consumers.

The basis of the research is from a marketing discipline perspective, and thus provides a consumer consumption-oriented view, a brand management-oriented view, a service marketing-oriented view, and a consumer behavioural- oriented view. However, the luxury market and consumption patterns are in the process of transformation. The state of the current luxury tourism research, even though it is from the consumer’s perspective, is predominantly based on brands and conspicuous consumption, gives much consideration to consumers’ social identity, and takes a managerial perspective. The findings of this study therefore also support the conclusions of Hemetsberger *et al.* (2012) that the individual identity needs associated with luxury consumption are being neglected. Therefore, future research may need to concentrate on a consumer behavioural oriented view and the value formation of luxury tourism experiences, as, ultimately, in the context of tourism, value formation is essential for the consumer (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004) and the means by which a service provider can be differentiated in the market (Tussyadiah, 2014). The findings indicate that researching luxury service and experiences in luxury tourism itself will be needed in the future, as currently the focus has been more on other things and luxury service and experiences have offered only a context for research. Furthermore, as Wirtz *et al.* (2020) note, luxury service research is based on luxury goods literature as it is evident that the product perspective in literature dominates luxury service research.

Although the study has significant contributions, it has a limitation as several databases and search engines were used to find the literature describing the concept, and the number of articles and books excluded from each stage of the data collection were not tracked. Furthermore, with the content analysis, it was not recorded how intensely researchers referred to a specific key factor.

Nevertheless, the authors hope that the study will have an impact on encouraging new research and practices within luxury tourism. As Yeoman and McMahon-Beattie (2018) suggest, the future of luxury may have many different scenarios. Traditional luxury is not disappearing, but there is an additional new form of luxury, with concepts such as *masstige* that require new approaches to luxury research. Luxury tourism research has the opportunity to be a forerunner in the field of tourism and hospitality research and serve as a role model, leading the research into the means by which customer experiences can be incorporated into other service industries (Bakker, 2005). To summarise, as a contribution to this field of research, the study argues that research on luxury tourism is currently heavily based on status-driven assumptions of luxury consumption; this means that luxury tourism is seen to be facilitated and experienced in an environment where the material features of luxury and brand or stars set the level of luxury. Furthermore, the studies are conducted in a cultural context that supports the image of traditional luxury, which further supports the image of status-based consumption as the basis of luxury tourism. However, as was already noted, status is no longer necessary for all the consumers. The findings of the study suggest that both academics and practitioners must accept that consumers’ expectations regarding luxury change as they experience luxury and current consumer may have very different perceptions about luxury. Therefore, luxury tourism research and the industry must

continually redefine and re-evaluate luxury tourism products and experiences and the biases in the research.

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Appendix 1. Sample of the study

Article	Journal	Year	Origin of the study	Context
Bakker, M.	Travel & Tourism Analyst	2005	NM (not mentioned)	Luxury travel
Presbury, R., Fitzgerald, A., & Chapman, R.	Managing Service Quality	2005	Australia	Luxury hotel
Surlemont, B., Chantrain, D., Nlemvo, F., & Johnson, C.	International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	2005	France, Belgium, UK, and Switzerland	Luxury restaurant
Billings, L.	Space Policy	2006	USA	Space tourism
Klidas, A., Van Den Berg, P. T., & Wilderom, C. P. M.	International Journal of Service Industry Management	2007	Europe	Luxury hotel
Meng, J. (Gloria), & Elliott, K. M.	Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services	2008	South Korea/USA	Luxury restaurant
Kiessling, G., Balekjian, C., & Oehmichen, A.	Journal of Retail and Leisure Property	2009	UK, France, Italy, Germany, Spain	Luxury hotel
Ryan, C., & Stewart, M.	Journal of Sustainable Tourism	2009	UAE	Luxury resort
Wu, C. H. J., & Liang, R. D.	International Journal of Hospitality Management	2009	Taiwan	Luxury hotel restaurant
Mohsin, A., & Lockyer, T.	International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	2010	India	Luxury hotel
Park, K. S., Reisinger, Y., & Noh, E. H.	International Journal of Tourism Research	2010	USA	Luxury shopping behaviour in tourism
Kim, I., Jeon, S. M., & Hyun, S. S.	Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing	2011	online	Luxury restaurant
Lee, J. H., & Hwang, J.	International Journal of Hospitality Management,	2011	USA	Luxury restaurant
Miguel Molina, M., Miguel Molina, M., & Rumiche Sosa, M.	Electronic Journal of Business Ethics and Organization Studies	2011	Maldives	Luxury resort
Walls, A., Okumus, F., Wang, Y., & Kwun, D. J. W.	Journal of Hospitality Marketing and Management	2011	NM	Luxury hotel
Agrusa, J., Hussain, Z., & Lema, J.	Journal of Tourism Challenges and Trends	2012	Maldives	Luxury resort/ Luxury tourism destination
Ekiz, E., Khoo-Lattimore, C., & Memarzadeh, F.	Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Technology	2012	Malaysia	Luxury hotel
Kang, J., & Hyun, S. S.	International Journal of Hospitality Management	2012	USA	Luxury restaurant
Thurlow, C., & Jaworski, A.	Social Semiotics	2012	USA	Luxury travel

Article	Journal	Year	Origin of the study	Context
Wernick, D. A., & Von Glinow, M. A.	Thunderbird International Business Review	2012	NM	Luxury hotel
Hwang, J., & Hyun, S. S.	International Journal of Hospitality Management	2013	USA	Luxury restaurant
Narteh, B., Agbemabiese, G. C., Kodua, P., & Braimah, M.	Journal of Hospitality Marketing and Management	2013	Ghana	Luxury hotel
Tekken, V., Costa, L., & Kropp, J. P.	Journal of Coastal Conservation	2013	Morocco	Luxury resort
Verissimo, M. Loureiro S.	Tourism Management Studies	2013	NM	Luxury hotel
Ahmad, R.	Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research	2014	India	Luxury tourism
Chen, A., & Peng, N.	International Journal of Hospitality Management	2014	China	Luxury hotel
Correia, A., Kozak, M. Reis, H.	Advances in Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research	2014	Portugal	Luxury tourism
Gil-Lafuente, A. M., Merigó, J. M., & Vizuete, E.	Economic Research-Ekonomiska Istrazivanja	2014	Taiwan and Macao	Luxury resort hotel
Hwang, J., & Han, H.	Tourism Management	2014	USA	Luxury cruise
Hyun, S. S., & Kang, J.	International Journal of Hospitality Management	2014	USA	Luxury restaurant
Hyun, S. S., & Kim, I.	Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research	2014	South Korea	Luxury restaurant
Khoo-Lattimore, C., & Ekiz, E. H.	Tourism and Hospitality Research	2014	Malaysia	Luxury hotel
Kozub, K. R., O'Neill, M. A., & Palmer, A. A.	Journal of Services Marketing	2014	USA	Luxury hotel
Kucukusta, D., Heung, V. C. S., & Hui, S.	Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing	2014	Hong Kong	Luxury hotel
Popescu, O.	SEA: Practical Application of Science	2014	NM	Luxury tourism
Yang, W., & Mattila, A. S.	International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	2014	USA	Luxury hospitality
Cervellon, M. C., & Galipienzo, D.	Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing	2015	Australia	Luxury hotel
Chen, A., Peng, N., & Hung, K. P.	International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	2015	Taiwan	Luxury restaurant
Hyun, S. S., & Han, H.	Journal of Travel Research	2015	USA	Luxury cruise
Lu, C., Berchoux, C., Marek, M. W., & Chen, B.	International Journal of Culture, Tourism, and Hospitality Research	2015	Taiwan	Luxury hotel

Article	Journal	Year	Origin of the study	Context
Peng, N., & Chen, A. H.	Marketing Intelligence and Planning	2015	Hong Kong	Luxury restaurant
Walters, T., & Carr, N.	Tourism and Hospitality Research	2015	New Zealand	Luxury second home
Yang, F. X., & Lau, M. C. (Virginia) M. C.	International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	2015	Macau	Luxury hotel
Allan, M. M.	Journal of Marketing Management	2016	Ghana	Luxury hotel
Bahri-Ammari, N., Van Niekerk, M., Ben Khelil, H., & Chtioui, J.	International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	2016	Tunisia	Luxury restaurant
Buckley, R., & Mossaz, A. C.	Tourism Management	2016	Switzerland	Luxury wildlife tourism
Cetin, G., & Walls, A.	Journal of Hospitality Marketing and Management	2016	Turkey	Luxury hotel
Chen, A., Peng, N., & Hung, K. Peng.	International Journal of Hospitality Management	2016	Taiwan	Luxury restaurant
Chu, Y., Tang, L. (Rebecca), & Luo, Y.	Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality and Tourism	2016	NM	Luxury hotel
Correia, A., Kozak, M., & Reis, H.	Journal of Travel Research	2016	Portugal	Luxury tourism
Hwang, J., & Hyun, S. S.	Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research	2016	USA	Luxury cruises
Jin, N. (Paul), Line, N. D., & Merkebu, J.	International Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Administration	2016	USA	Luxury restaurant
Jin, N. (Paul), Line, N. D., & Merkebu, J.	Journal of Hospitality Marketing and Management	2016	USA	Luxury restaurant
Lai, I. K. W., & Hitchcock, M.	Tourism Management	2016	Macau	Luxury hotel
Xie, L., Li, Y., Chen, S. H., & Huan, T. C.	International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	2016	China	Luxury hotel
Yang, W., & Mattila, A. S.	International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	2016	USA	Luxury restaurant as an example of luxury hospitality services
Yang, W., Zhang, L., & Mattila, A. S.	Cornell Hospitality Quarterly	2016	USA	Luxury hotel
Zaidan, E. A.	Journal of Vacation Marketing	2016	UAE	Luxury shopping in tourism
Akgün, A. E., Keskin, H., & Koçak Alan, A.	Service Industries Journal	2017	Turkey	Luxury restaurant
Chang, Y., & Ko, Y. J.	International Journal of Hospitality Management	2017	NM	Luxury service (Golf club)

Article	Journal	Year	Origin of the study	Context
Han, H., & Hyun, S. S.	International Journal of Hospitality Management	2017	South Korea	Luxury hotel restaurant
Harkison, T.	Research in Hospitality Management	2017	New Zealand	Luxury accommodation
Heyes, A., & Lashley, C.	Research in Hospitality Management	2017	UK	Luxury hotel
Kothari, U., & Arnall, A.	Environment and Planning	2017	Maldives	Luxury resort
Lai, I. K. W., & Hitchcock, M.	Tourism Management	2017	Macau	Luxury hotel
Lee, Y. K., Kim, S. H., Kim, M. S., & Kim, H. S.	International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	2017	South Korea	Luxury hotel restaurant
Liu, M. T., Wong, I. K. A., Tseng, T. H., Chang, A. W. Y., & Phau, I.	Journal of Business Research	2017	Macau	Luxury hotel
Manthiou, A., Kang, J., & Hyun, S. S.	Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing	2017	NM	Luxury cruise
Sarmah, B., Kamboj, S., & Rahman, Z.	International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	2017	India	Luxury hotel
Shim, C., Kang, S., Kim, I., & Hyun, S. S.	Current Issues in Tourism	2017	USA	Luxury cruise
Spenceley, A., & Snyman, S.	Tourism and Hospitality Research	2017	Botswana	Luxury lodge
Thurlow, C., & Jaworski, A.	Discourse and Society	2017	NM	Luxury tourism
tom Dieck, M. C., Jung, T. H., Kim, W. G., & Moon, Y.	International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	2017	UK	Luxury hotel
Yang, W., & Mattila, A. S.	Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research	2017	USA	Luxury hospitality services
Ariffin, A. A. M., Maghzi, A., Soon, J. L. M., & Alam, S. S.	E-Review of Tourism Research	2018	Malaysia	Luxury hotel
Armoni, N. Ernawati, N, Jendara I.	International Journal of Applied Sciences in Tourism and Events	2018	Asia	Luxury tourism
Chen, A., & Peng, N.	International Journal of Hospitality Management	2018	Taiwan	Luxury restaurant
Correia, A., Kozak, M., & Kim, S. (Sam).	Tourism Economics	2018	Hong Kong	Luxury shopping in tourism
Cowburn, B., Moritz, C., Birrell, C., Grimsditch, G., & Abdulla, A	Ocean and Coastal Management	2018	Maldives	Luxury resort
Han, H., & Hyun, S. S.	International Journal of Hospitality Management	2018	USA	Luxury cruise
Han, H., Hwang, J., & Lee, M. J.	Current Issues in Tourism	2018	USA	Luxury cruise
Han, H., Kim, W., Lee, S., & Kim, H. R.	Social Behavior and Personality	2018	South Korea	Luxury restaurant

Article	Journal	Year	Origin of the study	Context
Harkison, T.	International Journal of Hospitality Management	2018	New Zealand	Luxury accommodation
Harkison, T., Hemmington, N., & Hyde, K. F.	International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	2018	New Zealand	Luxury accommodation
Harkison, T., Hemmington, N., & Hyde, K. F.	Journal of Revenue and Pricing Management	2018	New Zealand	Luxury accommodation
Heyes, A., & Aluri, A.	Research in Hospitality Management	2018	USA	Luxury accommodation
Hung, K.	Tourism Review International	2018	China	Luxury hotel
Hwang, J., & Han, H.	Tourism and Hospitality Research	2018	USA	Luxury cruise
Hwang, J., & Lyu, S. O.	Tourism Management Perspectives	2018	USA	Airline
Jin, N. (Paul), Line, N. D., & Yoon, D.	Journal of Hospitality Marketing and Management	2018	USA	Luxury restaurant
Kang, J.	International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	2018	USA	Luxury hotel
Kimes, S. E., & Ho, J.	Journal of Revenue and Pricing Management	2018	NM	Luxury hotel
Oancea, O.	Journal of Revenue and Pricing Management	2018	NM	Airline
Parameswaran, K.	Studia Humana	2018	NM	Airline
Pohland, L., & Kesgin, M.	Journal of Revenue and Pricing Management	2018	USA and Internationally	Luxury hotel
Richard, B., Murphy, J., & Altin, L.	Journal of Revenue and Pricing Management	2018	NM	Luxury tourism
Ryu, K., Lehto, X. Y., Gordon, S. E., & Fu, X.	International Journal of Hospitality Management	2018	USA	Luxury hotel
Sharma, S., & Mishra, P.	Review of Professional Management- A Journal of New Delhi Institute of Management	2018	India	Luxury chain hotel
Sourvinou, A., & Filimonau, V.	Journal of Sustainable Tourism	2018	UK	Luxury hotel
Wiedmann, K. P., Labenz, F., Haase, J., & Hennigs, N.	Journal of Brand Management	2018	online	Luxury hotel
Wu, B., & Yang, W.	International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	2018	China	Luxury hotel
Zhang, E. Y., & Tse, T. S. M.	Journal of China Tourism Research	2018	China	Luxury travel
Correia, A., Kozak, M., & Kim, S. (Sam).	Journal of Travel Research	2019	Hong Kong	Luxury shopping in tourism

Article	Journal	Year	Origin of the study	Context
Gutberlet, M.	Tourist Studies	2019	Oman	Luxury cruise
Han, H., Moon, H., & Hyun, S. S	International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	2019	South Korea	Luxury resort hotel
Han, H., Yu, J., Koo, B., & Kim, W.	Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality and Tourism	2019	South Korea	Luxury hotel restaurant
Harkison, T., Hemmington, N. and Hyde, K	Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes	2019	New Zealand	Luxury accommodation
Iloranta, R.	Tourism Management Perspectives	2019	Finland	Luxury tourism
Jang, S., & Moutinho, L.	International Journal of Hospitality Management	2019	Turkey	Luxury hotel
Jeong, J. Y., & Hyun, S. S.	Tourism Management Perspectives	2019	USA	Luxury cruise
Kiatkawsin, K., & Han, H.	International Journal of Hospitality Management	2019	South Korea	Luxury restaurant
Kim, B., Kim, S. (Sam), King, B., & Heo, C. Y.	Journal of Vacation Marketing	2019	USA	Luxury hotel
Lee, W. S., Lee, J. K., & Moon, J.	Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management	2019	South Korea	Glamping
Lee, Y., & Kim, I.	Service Business	2019	USA	Luxury cruises
Liu, H., Wu, L., & Li, X. (Robert).	Journal of Travel Research	2019	USA	Luxury travel
Novotná, M., & Kunc, J.	Tourism	2019	Czech Republic	Luxury tourism
Peng, N., & Chen, A.	International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	2019	Taiwan	Luxury hotel
Peng, N., & Chen, A.	Journal of Sustainable Tourism	2019	Taiwan	Luxury hotel
Ryu, K., Lehto, X. Y., Gordon, S. E., & Fu, X.	Tourism Management	2019	USA	Luxury hotel

Appendix 2. Description of unified key evaluation factors

Key factor	Description
Class	Upper-class consumers, symbolic production of elite status, distinction and privilege of the elite, super-elite, wealthy class, and belonging to the same social class, sense of nobility
Price	Premium price, high price, expensive, numerical cost or rate
Brand	One hundred one different brands. Western brands such as Four Seasons, Ritz-Carlton, Sheraton, Hilton, Hyatt, and Starwood. Burj-al-Arab, Carnival Corporation, Royal Caribbean International and Star Cruise, Morton's, Ruth's Chris, and Shula's Steakhouse, Aberkrombie & Kent, Emirates, Air France Etc.
Stars	Star qualification, such as Forbes Five Star award AAA Five Diamond ratings or Michelin stars. Seven stars, five- or four-stars hotels or five-star deluxe.
Tourism product	A hotel, restaurant, resort, etc. with certain material features, physical surroundings, where aesthetics and atmosphere and décor of the facilities are the main qualities describing luxury tourism. Referred to offer excellent quality, exclusivity, and full or customized high-quality service and food with features such as privacy and security, amenities, and location.
Tourism experience	The consumer gets different emotional and experiential benefits, such as safety, novelty, escaping daily life, feeling of privacy by being pampered and comfort, and convenience as getting high-quality performance experience (dining, staying) using or consuming the product. A memorable experience, unique experience, holistic experience, exclusive experience, custom-designed experience, personalized experience, luxurious experience, legendary experience, conspicuous consumption experience, prestigious experience, hedonic experience, emotional experience, aesthetic experience.
Value as a form of status	Prestige to enhance the social status, prestigious status, need for status, high status, a symbol of prestige, status-seeking, signal prestige, idealized self-image, self-extension, expressive value, distinguish from others, signalling of the self, enhance social self-concept, impress others, social recognition, snobbism, social approval, symbolic production, symbolic value, symbolic benefit, symbolic meaning, distinction, superiority, conspicuousness, conspicuous consumption, symbolic consumption
Other value	Self-actualization, escapism, novelty, financial value, functional value, need for uniqueness, individual value, hedonic value, emotional value, experiential value, relational value.
Comparison to “normal”, how luxury tourism differs from something, which is considered as normal	Extraordinary, level of personalised/special service, physical surroundings, more expensive, superior value with quality, hedonic value, consumer
Consumer	Seek high-quality and services, exclusivity. Wealthy and have material resources, are affluent, high purchasing power, middle or high level of income. Experience oriented, high with cultural capital, high expectations, know what they want, seek meaning, status or hedonic value.

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