Goldsmiths Research Online

Goldsmiths Research Online (GRO)
is the institutional research repository for
Goldsmiths, University of London

Citation

Parnwell, Michael and Meng, Kelly. 2024. Methodological fitness-for-purpose in the phygital age: the case of luxury. Qualitative Market Research, 27(3), pp. 433-448. ISSN 1352-2752 [Article]

Persistent URL

https://research.gold.ac.uk/id/eprint/34271/

Versions

The version presented here may differ from the published, performed or presented work. Please go to the persistent GRO record above for more information.

If you believe that any material held in the repository infringes copyright law, please contact the Repository Team at Goldsmiths, University of London via the following email address: gro@gold.ac.uk.

The item will be removed from the repository while any claim is being investigated. For more information, please contact the GRO team: gro@gold.ac.uk

Goldsmiths
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

Qualitative Market Re

Methodological Fitness-for-Purpose in the Phygital Age: The Case of Luxury

Journal:	*Qualitative Market Research*
Manuscript ID	QMR-07-2023-0096.R1
Manuscript Type:	Research Paper
Keywords:	Luxury, phygital, methodology, reductionism, contextualisation, interpretivism

SCHOLARONE™
Manuscripts

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

Methodological Fitness-for-Purpose in the Phygital Age: The Case of Luxury

~~Michael J G Parnwell and Kelly Ying Meng~~

Abstract

Purpose

The paper aims to contribute to this special issue on interpretivist research methodologies and the phygital consumerist landscape by exploring some underlying issues within the specific context of luxury consumption. The paper starts with a critique of current research, drawing particular attention to problems of reductionism, poor representativeness and weak contextualisation in research that adopts a positivist epistemology. The paper then highlights some of the contributions that interpretivist scholarship is making, and can potentially make, to our understanding of the experiential and humanistic aspects of luxury consumption, presented in a nuanced, discursive and deeply contextualised manner.

Methodology

This commentary is informed by an in-depth examination of the methodology and approach adopted in the 327 most-recently published academic articles on luxury (from late-2021).

Findings

This opinion piece suggests the need for a sea-change in the way that scholars approach luxury research in online, offline and hybrid phygital settings in order to capture and convey its true complexity, diversity, contingency and contextuality, its emotional and symbolic character, and to help ensure that it delivers findings that are of relevance and value to luxury industry practitioners.

Originality

This is the first paper to look comprehensively and critically at the methodological approaches adopted by academics writing in the field of luxury consumption.

Keywords

Luxury; phygital; methodology; positivism; interpretivism; reductionism; contextualisation; experiential.

Qualitative Market Research

Introduction

In 1965, the philosopher Karl Popper wrote of clocks and clouds: the former regular, orderly and predictable; the latter seemingly random, disorderly and unpredictable (Popper, 1965). These metaphorical representations of scientific positivism and interpretivist idealism were

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

placed by Popper at opposite ends of a continuum wherein different epistemological practices and traditions held sway at different moments in history, at the whim of the "fashions of science" (Popper, 1972, 215). In the field of consumer research, and social studies more generally, the current 'fashion' has begun to question the utility of the reductionist and decontextualised tendencies of scientific reasoning, which has dominated consumer research hitherto, and is beginning to explore the scope for more subjective, nuanced and experiential methodological approaches to deliver deeper insight and a clearer understanding of consumer behaviour, not least in the hybrid online-offline settings that have come to the forefront since the global pandemic (Batat, 2023). This commentary will explore the extent to which research in the field of luxury is adequately positioned to contribute to this interpretivist turn given its majority focus on the hypothetico-deductive approach. The interpretivist paradigm is centred on the belief that there are multiple 'realities' that are socially constructed and subjectively interpreted, which can not be described by universal laws, and where an understanding of context and an individuals' experiences are vital for both knowledge and knowing (Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017, 34; Sanchez *et al*., 2023, 2-3).

Qualitative Market Research

Background

Why the specific focus on the luxury industry? First, exploring a specific segment of the consumer market is consistent with the interpretivist call for case-specific and contextualised research which challenges the virtue of universalised narratives, even in newly-emerging fields such as the phygital. Second, the luxury industry's relationship with the phygital landscape is a quite specific, evolving and in some ways rather uneasy one. Some 'quiet' luxury brands, such as Bottega Veneta, Hermès, Loro Piana and Brunello Cucinelli, have eschewed an online presence as a way of protecting their aura of exclusivity and seeking to maintain a one-to-one

relationship with customers (Quach and Thaichon 2017), relying predominantly on offline modalities such as flagship stores and boutiques. 'Louder' luxury brands, such as Dior, Louis Vuitton, Gucci and Balenciaga, have enthusiastically embraced online marketing to enhance brand awareness and increase sales around the world (Beauloye, 2023), in the process contributing in no small measure to the so-called 'democratisation of luxury' which simultaneously underpins its financial vitality and threatens its singularity.

Third, luxury as an industry is deeply human-centric, placing a heavy emphasis on understanding and catering to human emotions, desires and yearnings in their multifarious and contingent manifestations (Cristini, Kauppinen-Räisänen and Woodside, 2022; Xu and Mehta, 2022). Luxury transcends the transactional, functional and managerial by emphasising the experiential ~~(Wallpach *et al.*, 2020)~~, seeking to choreograph exceptional and exclusive encounters that resonate with consumers' emotions, identities and aspirations. Experiential luxury transcends object- and ownership-oriented consumerism and its association with conspicuity, instead emphasising interactions with luxury that involve life experiences and 'moments' (Wallpach *et al.*, 2020, 492). Luxury research in this experiential moment thus requires a human-centric approach which can delve deeply into the industry's diverse, intangible, subjective, contextual and socially-constructed character in order to capture the essence of luxury consumption. As such, the luxury industry provides a perfect palette from which to construct an image of interpretivist research within hybrid settings.

This paper is structured in two main parts. The first presents a short critique of the current state of luxury research, drawing particular attention to limitations such as its tendency towards reductionism, questionable representativeness and shallow contextualisation, all of which are anathema to an industry that places such a strong emphasis on experience, essence, emotion

Qualitative Market Research

and symbolism in online, offline and hybrid settings. The second outlines the case for, and challenges facing, more interpretivist research in the field of luxury which focuses on deep immersion, narrative exposition, subjective judgement and uniqueness rather than sameness, and where the researcher reflects critically on their positionality, perspective and potential to bring about change.

By both critically evaluating existing luxury research and through incorporating the unique context of luxury, we hope we can contribute to this special issue by identifying gaps in our current knowledge and possible methodological pathways towards more relevant research. In the process, we hope to shed light on some of the implications of phygital marketing and its intersection with consumer research methodologies. Whilst research in hybrid phygital settings is still in its nascent stage within the luxury sector, it holds immense potential for advancing our understanding of consumer behaviours and preferences in this digitally-driven era. At the same time, by adopting some of the core arguments behind Batat's viewpoint article, we hope we can also address the current shortcomings of luxury research, which are~~is~~ something we drew attention to in our recent book (Parnwell and Meng, 2023). Finally, by addressing some of the limitations and challenges of interpretivist methodologies in this paper, we hope we will also contribute to this research agenda going forward by cautioning against a pendulum shift towards the subjective and the fluid that downplays the value of systematic analysis.

The Current State of Luxury Research

Research on luxury has experienced a veritable explosion of interest over the last ten years or so, increasing more than ten-fold from the late noughties to the early twenties (Figure 1).

<Insert Figure 1 around here>

Qualitative Market Research

Several factors help to explain this proliferation of interest. The luxury industry has undergone significant transformation during this period, characterised most particularly by its so-called ‘democratisation’: the dilution of exclusivity and the expansion of attainability, the massification and globalisation of production and consumption, the corporatisation of luxury brands, and the proliferation of digital platforms which has dramatically increased accessibility and awareness, particularly among the younger generations (Shukla, Rosendo-Rios and Khalifa, 2022; Kapferer and Valette-Florence, 2018; but see also Thomas, 2007). Put simply, there is more luxury taking more forms, attracting more interest from more people in more places. In conjunction with this dramatic growth of research interest in luxury, the centre of gravity in luxury scholarship has shifted quite dramatically from the West towards the global East and South: between 2000 and 2011, 86.2% of all research was accounted for by scholars who were based in Western institutions, whilst between 2012 and 2023, 34.3% of luxury scholarship came from the emerging nations in the global south, particularly Asia. In theory, local scholars are often best-placed to obtain research data on the processes, manifestations and impacts of the luxury industry’s expansion in their countries, and the socio-cultural contexts within which luxury consumerism operates, but this does not always manifest itself in reality, as we shall see shortly.

To facilitate our critical evaluation of luxury research we closely examined the methodological approaches adopted by scholars of luxury. We focused on the 327 most recent exemplars of luxury research. Of these articles, 182 (56%) adopted a purely quantitative approach, 81 (25%) were qualitative studies, and 20 (6%) used mixed methods but were essentially quantitative in nature (qualitative methods were used inductively to establish the parameters for a subsequent quantitative investigation). Thus 71.4% of luxury studies which used investigative research methods were quantitative in approach. The remaining articles were either conceptual or

Qualitative Market Research

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60

literature-based 'think pieces' or focused on developing mathematical models. Of the research articles that used quantitative methods, 94 (51.7%) used Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), 52 (28.6%) conducted experiments or simulations, and the remainder (18.7%) used various forms of statistical analysis, including regression and analysis of variance, but not within the framework of SEM or experimentation. Almost all qualitative studies (98.8%) used content or thematic analysis. A total of 144 empirical studies (50.1%) centred on hypothesis testing, seven of which were qualitative studies and the remainder quantitative.

From this brief summary we can clearly see that luxury research predominantly adopts a hypothetico-deductive approach. This, in itself, is not an issue: there is some very good scholarship being undertaken using quantitative methods which helps to advance our understanding of luxury consumerism and the dynamics of the industry (e.g., Bazi, Filieri and Gorton, 2023; Ehrensperger *et al.*, 2022). But as a whole there are, in our view, a number of significant shortcomings associated with the current approach to luxury research, and on which we will focus our discussion in the remainder of this section. Most of these are the antithesis of the research approach that has been advocated by Batat (2023) in her viewpoint article. The key shortcomings on which we shall focus concern: reductionism, representativeness, contextualisation, limited specialisation, and questionable practical value.

Reductionism

Whilst not wishing to decry modelling and experimentation *per se* as legitimate methodological tools, we believe the tendency to (over)simplify the complexities and diversities of luxury consumers and consumerism is something that should be more keenly problematised by critically reflexive luxury scholarship. Structural Equation Modelling typically commences

Qualitative Market Research

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60

with the formulation of a literature-informed conceptual model that suggests the nature and direction of relationships between component elements, posited by a series of hypotheses, with variables usually divided into 'factors that explain' (independent or explanatory variables) and a phenomenon or process 'to be explained' (dependent, response or outcome variable), such as luxury purchase intention. Each of these variables then needs to be converted into observed or measurement variables, where feasible, or left as latent variables or 'factors' which can be inferred by other variables in the model. The process of conversion can be problematic: what we would argue to be the great complexity of factors that influence consumer behaviour, most particularly in the field of luxury - which may be circumstantial, contextual, psychological, contingent, varied, multidimensional and often deeply personal – can only with care, consideration, creativity and criticality be converted to a handful of variables and boxes without reducing a situation to only a skeletal and quite superficial approximation to 'reality'. There is no doubt that the conceptual models that luxury scholars are testing are eminently interesting and worthwhile as academic exercises, but representing processes such as democratisation, hedonism (Rosendo-Rios and Shukla, 2023), authenticity (Kwon, Amendah and Ahn, 2022), brand self-congruence and social capital (Bizarrias *et al.*, 2023) as numbers requires considerable ingenuity. Most researchers use previous studies to guide the construction of measurement variables: out of 92 studies using SEM that we examined, only three developed their own measures, either in whole or in part (Bazi, Filieri and Gorton, 2023; Rosendo-Rios and Shukla, 2023; Lim, Aggarwal and Dandotiya, 2022). One consequence of this is that most measurements of conceptual variables deliver a sameness that is not an adequate reflection of complex, contextual and constantly changing realities. The questions used to obtain data are also often very basic (e.g.: purchase intention: "I am likely to purchase luxury brands" [Ostovan and Nasr, 2022, 10]; hedonism: "I believe that owning luxury goods is a symbol of prestige"

Qualitative Market Research

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60

[Rosendo-Rios and Shukla, 2023, 6]), and through a critical lens it is difficult to see how they can yield deep and nuanced insights into complex social and psychological phenomena.

Representativeness

There are around 400 million luxury consumers world-wide, and this figure is projected to increase to 500 million by the year 2030 (D'Arpizo *et al.*, 2022). But the phrase 'luxury consumer' is a misleadingly simple label which masks a phenomenally complex and diverse array of purchasing (and non-purchasing) behaviour, motivations, mechanisms, signals and associations, across a myriad of social, cultural and demographic contexts, and a diverse array of luxury sectors. It is incumbent on the luxury researcher to ensure that the data upon which they base their analysis and conclusions is sufficiently representative of the heterogeneity of luxury consumerism. We contend in this section that luxury research could do much better in this regard.

We start by looking at how researchers select participants for their studies. Quite a large number of studies did not even use luxury consumers as the basis of their investigations into luxury consumption: at least 29 of our sample studies used (predominantly undergraduate) students, mainly for experiment-based research into perceptions of luxury goods. While these research subjects are not technically luxury consumers, they are a convenient and accessible source of data for academic researchers, and can foster an understanding of how young people react when placed momentarily in the presence of luxury items.

The majority of studies we examined used 'have purchased a luxury item within the last x months' or 'have stayed at a luxury hotel in the last year' as the key factor in determining

Qualitative Market Research

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

whether participants should be included in or excluded from a study. Whilst some researchers were very clear about what constituted a luxury item (usually listing relevant brands), the majority left the definition to the participants' own judgement. As we emphasise throughout this discussion, 'luxury' is a complex phenomenon, and there is no simple yes/no threshold, not least since the processes of democratisation and massification have taken hold over the last few years. We could argue that while the act of purchasing or wanting to purchase a luxury item may make a person a 'luxury consumer' in a technical sense, this categorisation lacks the nuance that reflects the diversity and contextual nature of luxury consumption.

Sampling is a further bone of contention with regard to the representativeness of luxury data sets. Dividing 400 million luxury consumers across the principal global markets suggests relevant country populations that number in the tens of millions in parts of North America, Europe and Asia. To this we must add the immense diversity of luxury consumers in each and every one of these locations: not all luxury consumers are the same, and no market constitutes a homogeneous entity. Set against this back-drop, our research revealed that the average sample size across 266 surveys was 339.8 for quantitative studies (Standard Deviation 275.7), and 29.3 for qualitative studies (SD 22.8). These samples would generally be considered sufficient to satisfy statistical requirements, and we do not wish to challenge this. But several factors suggest to us that researchers are more preoccupied with obtaining data for their studies than ensuring that these data adequately match the populations they are researching. We did not pick up a single study which mapped out a sampling frame which adequately accommodated the entire population or sub-group from which their sample was to be drawn. Given that the majority of studies focused on particular countries, as we shall discuss shortly, the sampling frames should technically encompass all luxury consumers, all millennials, all Gen Z, all luxury tourists and so on within a particular spatial, social or cultural setting. Taking a sample of 328 Chinese

Qualitative Market Research

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

consumers and presenting it as an example of luxury consumption in a collectivist setting (Carranza *et al.*, 2022), or around 300 consumers each from the USA and Thailand as the basis for exploring the influence of religious commitment and global identity on luxury purchase intention (Ma *et al.*, 2021), in our judgement is an inadequate basis for exploring the complex and diverse psychological, behavioural and socially-contextualised drivers and outcomes of luxury consumerism.

On top of this, a large majority of researchers who reported their sampling procedures (n=106) used non-probabilistic sampling (86.8%). Admittedly, non-probabilistic sampling may sometimes be better than random sampling at targeting cohorts of people that researchers are particularly interested in, but questions can be asked about the ability of snowball, convenience and opportunistic sampling, for instance, to deliver participants who are sufficiently representative of the wider populations researchers are interested in and which their studies claim to represent. A pattern we noticed was that the majority of researchers obtained data samples, made some reference to sampling procedures and in some cases reflected on inherent shortcomings, but these limitations were then often overlooked in the discussion of findings and presentation of conclusions and recommendations.

Another trend that we noticed, which is also likely to have some bearing on representativeness, was the growing use of crowdsourcing platforms to obtain data for luxury research. Out of 182 quantitative studies, at least 109 used some form of commercial service as an avenue to obtaining data, 79 of which involved using crowdsourcing platforms such as Amazon MTurk, Academic Prolific and Qualtrics. There is no doubt that the availability of such channels has greatly improved the convenience and speed of conducting survey-based research, but this is traded off against a greater distance and anonymity in the relationship between researcher and

Qualitative Market Research

research, which means the researcher has less direct control over the data-extraction process. Researchers must also rely on a third party to oversee sampling and selection procedures, and remain mindful of the fact that although they may commission a probabilistic or stratified sample from the hordes of workers who populate crowdsourcing platforms, these in themselves are not necessarily representative of the wider world. Platforms such as MTurk and Prolific have fewer than one million 'workers' spread around the world, the selection of whom may incorporate several forms of bias, together with problems with satisficers, bad faith work, language proficiency (Marshall *et al.*, 2023), and now issues with bot- and AI-generated responses (Veselovsky, Ribiero and West, 2023). If the proportion of luxury consumers in these pools reflects their ~~share~~ distribution in~~of~~ the population as a whole, then using crowdsourcing platforms to generate data for luxury research is highly unlikely to deliver truly representative samples.

Contextualisation

Luxury consumption is complex and, we argue strongly, is profoundly influenced by the context within which it occurs. Luxury consumers may have the purchase of a luxury item, or attachment to a brand, or followership of a brand's social media platform or KOL in common, but each luxury consumer is placed in a social, locational, cultural and demographic context, the collectivity of which creates the heterogeneous mosaic of luxury consumers that makes the industry so fascinating to study, but at the same time so challenging to research. Because of limitations of space, we will focus on country here as a proxy for context. From our sample of 327 pieces of academic research on luxury, 197 studies drew data from 47 specified countries (see Figure 3), giving a total country count of 267: this constitutes 68% of all studies that used empirical data (twenty-eight studies focused on two or more countries).

Qualitative Market Research

<Insert Figure 2 around here>

However, we use the term ‘country contexts’ loosely here, because the large majority of studies drew data from specific countries but did not produce what we might call ‘context rich’ pieces of analysis. A context-rich study might include some of the following: a section outlining the country context of the study and the socio-cultural characteristics of the target group; a discussion which highlights the heterogeneity of the country context and of the research subjects; an indication of how sampling procedures were designed to capture such heterogeneity (not simply basic demographic features); a reflection on how a sample taken from a specific location may not have captured this heterogeneity, and thus the interpretation of results should be cautious, and generalised conclusions avoided; and discussion of findings should be nuanced according to the context of the research. What we tended to find, in contrast, was that a limited sample of participants from a single nation tended, in the final discussion, to be extrapolated to the country as a whole without reference either to representativeness or the diversity of said population; some limited country studies were later presented as typical of, for example, Asia, ‘collectivist’ or ‘individualist’ cultures, emerging economies, and so on; or the country context was never mentioned, even when it was clear that samples had been country-specific. The overriding impression was that a significant number of studies were more focused on extracting data that positioning these data in context.

We only have space for a couple of examples. Some studies contained quite sweeping generalisations: “given the cultural similarities among Asian countries, an investigation on luxury brand consumption in the Chinese market can not only provide a better understanding of luxury markets in Asia but also shed light on global luxury brand consumption trends” (Wang and Chen, 2021, 660), which demonstrates poorly nuanced contextual understanding. Bizzarias *et al.* (2023) looked at the luxury consumption potential of underprivileged

Qualitative Market Research

individuals from a developing country [Brazil], focusing on "…the dual mechanisms of social capital and social approval [which] combine to explain how customers distant from power can engage in the consumption of luxury brands" (ibid., 15). The sophisticated analysis was based on a convenience sample of 196 (mostly undergraduate) students from two universities in Brazil, but neither their specific locational context nor relevant sociological aspects of Brazil as the setting for the research were discussed at any point. The authors do reflect on the possibility that "there might be context-dependent variables that could change the effects we found" (ibid., 16), and suggest that qualitative research on the same topic could deliver a more 'open' perspective (ibid., 16). In contrast, Jiang, Gao and Shi (2021) did at least reflect on the way that contextual specificity makes it difficult to extrapolate findings to wider contexts: "…we cannot generalise the findings from the individual to the national level, because we conceptualise PDB [power-distance beliefs] as an individual cultural value rather than a country-level one in our study. We argue that generalising the United States as a low-PDB country and China as a high-PDB country might oversimplify the complex cultural phenomenon, because each country might have both high- and low-PDB value individuals." This shows good cultural-contextual understanding and reflexive caution.

Taking the above criteria into consideration, we examined all the empirical studies contained within our sample to determine the extent to which research with a country focus was adequately contextualised. This is obviously a subjective judgement, but we believe the following data are sufficiently robust to convey a sense of the extent to which luxury research is contextually immersed and nuanced. We found that only 24.1% (56) of 231 empirical studies paid attention to contextualisation, although in a further 5 studies context was implicit in the way findings were presented. 171 studies (73.7%) did not satisfy any of the criteria mentioned above. Only 10.7% of quantitative studies (N=159) and 7.1% of mixed methods studies

Qualitative Market Research

(~~n~~N=14) were contextualised, compared with 72.1% of qualitative studies (~~n~~N=61). In Table 1 we have cross-tabulated contextualisation against the country or regional focus of luxury research. Whilst a lack of contextualisation was seen across the board, this aspect of research was particularly weak in the Indian sub-continent and the USA. Paradoxically, it was pleasing to see that almost half of all research involving Middle Eastern countries (and, in almost all cases, Middle Eastern researchers) paid consistent attention to contextual settings. This was in part explained by the slightly higher preponderance of qualitative research emanating from this region. Studies which focused on brands rather than countries tended to present a higher degree of contextualisation (to the brand(s) rather than location), but this was also in part explained by brand-focused research adopting a predominantly qualitative approach. The same was largely the case for research focusing on countries in Europe.

<Insert Table 1 around here>

Limited Luxury Specialisation

There is no doubt that luxury as a research arena has grown in popularity in recent years, but in the majority of instances research in this field it is not being undertaken by scholars who may be thought of as luxury specialists and who are versed in the behavioural nuances and contextual intricacies of the luxury industry. More typically, academic specialists in marketing, business, psychology and so on are being drawn into the *tableau vivant* of luxury as an alluring test-bed for ideas and propositions which are approached with a disciplinary eye rather than an immersive feel, and which reproduce mainstream tropes rather than adopting a critical perspective on luxury (Armitage and Roberts, 2016, 12-19). We base this statement on some research we undertook into luxury research authorship. From the 327 articles we used for our investigation we selected 196 that involved empirical research and which had been (co)written

Qualitative Market Research

by up to three authors, giving a total of 387 authors whose disciplinary profiles we then examined. We did this by perusing their affiliated university profiles and their profiles on public platforms such as LinkedIn, Research Gate and Academia. These authors were then grouped ~~them~~ into twelve disciplinary categories.

The exercise revealed that the authors are drawn from a wide range of (sub-)disciplinary backgrounds, which showcases the multidisciplinary spread of luxury research. The majority of authors (21.2%) lie within the discipline of marketing, highlighting its dominant role in luxury research. Consumer behaviour and psychology (17.8%) emerged as another significant disciplinary category, emphasising the importance of understanding consumers' motivations, perceptions, and decision-making processes in luxury consumption. For the purposes of this study, luxury itself is recognised as a distinct (sub-)disciplinary field (see also, Armitage and Roberts, 2016, 14), where researchers specialise specifically in the arena of luxury, and typically reside in institutions dedicated to the understanding of luxury, broadly defined, and offer specialist teaching programmes in areas such as luxury brand management, luxury market dynamics, and the cultural significance of luxury consumption. Only 17.8% of all authors were considered to be luxury specialists, based on the informed judgement of one such. Additionally, the fields of culture and society (6.5%), business and management (6.2%), and hospitality and tourism (8.8%) collectively make up around a quarter of all luxury research. Sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) (3.6%) have emerged as a growing area of interest within the luxury industry.

While researchers on luxury were thus drawn from a diverse array of mainstream disciplines, true interdisciplinary research was very limited in our sample of publications and authors, despite our view that the segmentation of luxury research inadequately synchronises with its

Qualitative Market Research

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

multidisciplinary nature and the importance of a holistic understanding to grasp its fluid character and interconnected nuances. This compartmentalised intellectual approach may be one factor in helping to explain why there is currently a paucity of theoretical formulations which apply to and are derived specifically from a luxury industry perspective, whereas examples from luxury have been used extensively to advance theory, concepts and empirical understanding in other disciplinary fields.

Relevance and Value

When we wrote our book on research methodology for luxury management (Parnwell and Meng, 2023), we drew attention to the apparent mismatch between the research outputs of academics writing on luxury and the information needs of the luxury industry. Whilst the former have grown exponentially, only a very small proportion of the practitioners we surveyed or interviewed indicated that they regularly used academic articles to inform their decision-making, preferring the more accessible and digestible industry reports produced by such companies as Bain & Co, Statista, Boston Consulting Group, Euromonitor, and so on. In order to validate our findings from this somewhat limited piece of empirical research (a survey of 81 industry insiders and in-depth interviews with 10 respected industry practitioners), we undertook a follow-up survey for the present article. One of the co-authors conducted a quick Poll via LinkedIn (open for two weeks) to find out how frequently luxury managers rely on academic research outputs for their business operations.

According to the poll results, it appears that luxury managers have varying degrees of reliance on academic research outputs for their business operations. Out of the 271 votes received from both posts, 20% of respondents indicated that academic research outputs play a significant role

Qualitative Market Research

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

in informing and shaping their decision-making processes. On the other hand, 36% of stated that they occasionally and selectively consult academic research outputs: this group recognises the potential value of academic research but may not incorporate it into their day-to-day operations consistently. A further 44% of respondents voted that academic research outputs are rarely (34%) or never (10%) utilised in their day-to-day operations, suggesting that they may prioritise other sources of information or rely more heavily on industry publications, consultancies, as well as in-house knowledge and experience.

An argument can be made that producing practical outputs that are of use to luxury industry practitioners is not the principal purpose of academic research, but this view could be countered by the observation that more than half the empirical papers we examined as background to this article included a section towards the end of the discussion which assessed the management implications of their research findings for the luxury industry specifically and for marketing *et cetera* in general. We also observed that not a single paper discussed how the research outputs could be delivered to industry practitioners in a way that was useful to them. There seemed to be an assumption that simply undertaking the research, presenting the findings and suggesting its value would make a difference to how luxury practitioners approached their business. The discussion above suggests that this in insufficient in a majority of instances. This observation is also consistent with the view presented in the previous section, and from our own research, that very few academics writing on luxury have a first-hand association with the industry.

An Interpretivist Future for Luxury Research

The discussion thus far has focused on some of the shortcomings that are manifest in contemporary luxury research, when seen against the need for scholarship that is better tuned

Qualitative Market Research

in to the diverse, experiential and qualitative character of consumers' engagement with brands and markets in physical, digital and hybrid pgygital settings. In drawing attention to widespread tendencies towards reductionism, questionable representativeness and scant regard for contextualisation, we have also started to highlight some of the challenges that lie in the path of interpretivist scholarship on phygital landscapes and processes. In the remainder of this paper we will look at some of the changes that need to be made – and indeed are already taking place – if we are to get close to the heart and soul of luxury consumption, and phygital consumption more generally.

We should first make clear where we stand on the meaning of 'luxury'. Our focus is not on utilitarian aspects such as price, branding, strategy, showiness and ownership, but rather on emblematic elements such as place, people, stories, history, excellence and essence. Luxury has, by definition, to be exclusive (Thomas, 2007). The luxury consumer is someone who understands and appreciates the symbolic character of luxury. Who and where these people are, how and why they engage with luxury, and with others through luxury, is something that is deeply personal and individual, the psychological and behavioural underpinnings of which can not be simply explained by fitting people into broad and generalised conceptual boxes - such as Gen Z, Indian, materialist, hedonist, post-consumerist - populated by data obtained from reductive instruments and remote, extractive processes. Each luxury consumer has their own personality, story, history, trajectory, motivation, social position, cultural context and behavioural disposition. For this reason, we do not believe that the shortcomings we have highlighted can simply be ameliorated through 'better' positivist research. We need a much more human-centred and experience-focused approach if we are to capture the 'true' essence of luxury consumption in hybrid settings.

Qualitative Market Research

We will use two brief examples to illustrate our thinking in this regard. The first concerns the so-called 're-moralisation of luxury' (Berry, 2016; Csaba, 2008). Christopher Berry (2016) approached this from three perspectives: ethical, social and green. Several words come to mind in the latter context – sustainable, responsible, inconspicuous, post-consumerist, altruistic, experiential, self-actualisational – which all have a resonance in trends which are growing in prominence within luxury consumption. The point here is not to detail the character and underpinnings of such trends, but to consider what methodological techniques we can deploy to capture their fundamental essence. Shifts in consumer attitudes and behaviour are not occurring simultaneously and universally – far from it: in different parts of the world, indeed even in different neighbourhoods, we can find individuals and social groups who display the full gamut of luxury consumerist traits, from acquisitive and showy, through discerning, to experiential and emotional, responsible, and, finally, transcendental (B and T Magazine, 2023, citing Christopher Sanderson, The Future Laboratory). Who they are, what is influencing their (shift in) behaviour, how profound it is in reality, and what this all means for future luxury consumption are intellectual and practical questions for which we need insightful, nuanced and context-sensitive answers. It is hard to see how a five-element structural equation model, or an experiment involving undergraduate students, can deliver such outcomes. Rather, we need research that is fine-grained, ground-truthed, immersed, ethnographic, comparative, meaning-focused and discursively-presented, perhaps by multiple teams of researchers, in order to make sense of the simultaneous multiplicities of contemporary reality.

A second example concerns the growing prevalence and importance of online modalities and communities in the definition and operationalisation of luxury today. Digital channels and social media - together with their associated KOLs, influencers, bloggers, marketers and the like – provide an essential lubricant for luxury (with some exceptions), and getting to grips

Qualitative Market Research

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60

with the intricacies of the relationship between brands and consumers through pure digital or hybrid phygital channels is essential not only to brand strategy but also to understanding the rapidly evolving socio-cultural contexts of luxury consumption, or brand engagement more broadly. Writing code to scrape masses of information from digital artefacts and archives, and using automated tools for data processing (such as Latent Semantic Analysis) may indeed deliver and digest huge sets of data, but the inputs and outputs also lack personality, individuality, nuance and context. The focus in this kind of research tends to be on what people write (or the images they create) rather than the who, how and why of communication, the context from which it originates, and the symbolism in conveys. Interpretivist Natural Language Processing (Artificial Intelligence) may possibly arrive one day, but in the meantime there remains tremendous scope for the various techniques of qualitative investigation and analysis to help curate a deep and thick understanding of the diversity, dynamics and meaning of the luxury brand-consumer interface on-line, in-store and in multiple permutations of both.

Research by Mrad, Farah and Mehdi (2023) conveys a sense of what can be achieved through qualitative research in phygital settings. Their investigation centred on the use of the WhatsApp communication service by luxury brands, and was based on in-depth interviews with 27 luxury consumers in the UK. Their findings revealed a level of insight into luxury consumers' feelings and perceptions that simply could not be achieved through web-scraped data or Likert scale surveys. Their research highlighted the double-edged sword of social media communication by luxury brands. On the one hand, they found that receiving customised or personalised messages from luxury brands enhanced consumers' privileged sense of being valued by these brands in a way that would not be realised through mass marketing or mass communication via WhatsApp that would be more typical of high street brands (ibid., p.346). Some customers used WhatsApp to seek information about luxury brands and product ranges rather than going to

Qualitative Market Research

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

physical stores, where they would feel under pressure to buy (ibid., p.345). Paradoxically, other luxury consumers were reluctant to engage fully with WhatsApp because the multisensory experience of visiting a physical store was such an important part of consumers' relationship with their preferred luxury brands, and could not be replicated or replaced by social media communication, however imaginatively designed it is (ibid., p.347). Consumers were also very quick to react when luxury brands overstretched their use of social media, becoming too 'pushy' or when they started using WhatsApp as a marketing tool, as opposed to a personalised means of communication (ibid., p.349-350).

As this study and many others show, the pendulum has already started to swing in the direction of more interpretivist research (Christodoulides and Wiedmann, 2022), as evidenced by the fact that almost one-third of all empirical studies in the field of luxury now adopt qualitative methodologies, in full or in part, as evidenced by our own survey of the literature. Some positive examples from our perusal of recent luxury research might include, for example, the constructivist qualitative research on luxury lodges by Manfreda *et al.* (2023) which is strong on reflexivity, insider positionality and contextualisation; Bellezza (2022), which is a good example of the use of Grounded Theory in luxury research; the study by Zha *et al*. (2022) of the importance of sensory experiences in brand engagement (including, but not exclusive to luxury); Wu's (2022) marketing-oriented ethnographic study using field observation; Philippe, Debenedetti and Chaney (2022), which is a fine example of qualitative content analysis using imagery; and Hlady-Rispal and Blancheton's (2022) study of two French luxury clusters, which exemplifies contextualised research. One pleasing observation we have made is that some of this qualitative research has involved luxury industry-connected individuals mobilising their personal networks to access key actors and provide deep insight through interviews and case studies (e.g., Loranger and Roerass, 2023; Javornik *et al.*, 2021; Bai *et al.*, 2022). One

Qualitative Market Research

consequence of this is that we gain more insight into brands' and managers' perspectives on luxury, when the vast majority of research studies tend to focus on consumers, not least because of easier data access.

Conclusions and Considerations

In advocating a shift along the continuum of research from positivism to interpretivism, we should be mindful of a number of challenges that must first be met. Immersion, engagement, deep contextual and experiential understanding, and closeness to research participants (both online and offline) may take more time to nurture than most research and publication schedules allow. Holistic, multidisciplinary, discursive and empathetic styles will take time and dexterity to develop, and to become more widely accepted as authoritative and valid. Conventions, traditions, rigid intellectual boundaries, and the gatekeepers of academic disciplines and publications channels need to evolve and be more open to change if new research directions are to become mainstreamed. There is an urgent need for more theory that is luxury-specific rather than borrowed or adapted from umbrella disciplines; and even more important is for these theoretical formulations to be informed by grassroots realities and bottom-up processes which also provide scope for localised and indigenous perspectives on luxury to thrive (Konadu-Osei, Boroş and Bosch, 2023). Luxury researchers need to engage in more collaborative research (including with the luxury industry itself) rather than operating from disciplinary silos and *assuming* research outputs have some practical value and relevance. Also, whilst the current discussion has inevitably focused on luxury in the field of market research, its core argument can be applied in other branches of luxury studies, including philosophy, sociology, political economy, consumer culture and cultural geography (Armitage and Roberts, 2016, 4-5).

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

Researchers also need to reflect on the speed with which luxury itself is evolving, perhaps more rapidly and profoundly than other areas of consumption (and, indeed, post-consumption), meaning that researchers need to be conceptually and methodologically nimble rather than using old lenses to explore new phenomena, processes and outcomes.:

> "…what is regarded as luxury varies through time and space, and across economic, social and cultural contexts. It is therefore essential that critical luxury studies reflects the need to follow the shifts and turns that the meaning of luxury takes through multiple and constantly evolving contexts" (Armitage and Roberts, 2016, 12).

A particular concern we have about the present enterprise of luxury research, and which is relevant to calls for more reflexive scholarship, concerns its purpose. In our view, research is an extractive industry, drawing, mining or scraping data on human activities and perceptions from various sources, in the belief (or assumption) that it makes a difference to society and industry, beyond enhancing researchers' careers and reputations (Igwe and Madichie, 2022). Crowdsourcing and digital platforms add further distance between the researcher and the people who are the source of their data, creating an increasingly impersonal, anonymous, superficial and mechanical relationship which obfuscates researchers' responsibilities towards their participants. More funding agencies today are concerned about the demonstrable social impact of the research they support, so it is incumbent on researchers of luxury to be more proactive in ensuring their outputs reach those who could most benefit from their findings – in our instance the luxury industry itself - which in turn may necessitate their closer involvement with practitioners in the design and execution of this research.

Having made the case for more interpretivist research in the field of luxury, most particularly in phygital settings, we should not lose sight of two considerations that simultaneously reinforce and weaken our argument. The underlying need is for 'good' research, whatever its

Qualitative Market Research

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

epistemological flavour. We have drawn attention to some of the limitations of current research when seen through the lens of the distinctively human and contextual character of luxury consumption. We do not necessarily need a full pendulum swing from positivism to interpretivism to ameliorate these shortcomings, and indeed there is plenty of scope for quantitative analysis to contribute to our understanding of the phygital in luxury consumption. We should also remain mindful of some of the limitations of interpretivism, such as subjectivity, potential selection bias, non-generalisability, non-replicability, low reliability, conceptual fluidity and so on. There is certainly scope for a qualitative revolution in luxury research, and in explorations into the phygital environment more generally, but we must be careful not to throw the baby of investigative rigour out with the bathwater of superficial or reductionist research.

References

Armitage, J. and Roberts, J. (2016), "Critical luxury studies: defining a field", in: Armitage, J. and Roberts, J. (Ed.s), *Critical Luxury Studies: Art, Design, Media*, Edinburgh University Press, pp.1-21.

B and T Magazine (2023), "'Most of us don't know our customer', the Future Laboratory tells brands", *B and T Magazine*, Surry Hills, NSW, Australia.

Bai, H., He, W., Shi, J., McColl, J. and Moore, C. (2022), "Parenting advantages of emerging market multinationals (EMNCs) in luxury fashion retailing", *International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management*, Vol. 50 No. 1, pp. 1-17.

Batat, W. (2023), "Experiential research as a methodological framework for studying consumer behaviors in phygital settings", *Qualitative Market Research*, Vol. 26 No. 3.

Bazi, S., Filieri, R. and Gorton, M. (2023), "Social media content aesthetic quality and customer engagement: the mediating role of entertainment and impacts on brand love and loyalty", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 160.

Beauloye, F.E. (2023), "The 15 most popular luxury brands online", *Luxe Digital*, 29 May 2023.

Bellezza, S. (2022), "Distance and alternative signals of status: a unifying framework", *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 50 No. 20, pp. 322-342.

Berry, C.J. (2016), "Luxury: a dialectic of desire?", in: J. Armitage, J. and Roberts, J. (Ed.s), *Critical Luxury Studies: Art, Design, Media*, Edinburgh University Press, pp.47-66.

Bizarrias, F.S., Cucato, J.deS.T., Strehlau, V.I and Strehlau, S. (2023), "Can individuals with power distance consume luxury? a model for inclusion through social capital and social approval" *Gobal Business Review*, 7 March 2023.

Carranza, R., Zollo, L., Díaz, E. and Faraoni, M. (2022), "Solving the luxury fashion and sustainable development 'oxymoron': a cross-cultural analysis of green luxury

Qualitative Market Research

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

consumption enablers and disablers", *Business Strategy and the Environment*, Vol. 32 No. 4, pp.2399-2419.

Christodoulides, G. and Wiedmann, K-P. (2022), "Guest editorial: a roadmap and future research agenda for luxury marketing and branding research", *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, Vol. 31 No. 3, pp.341-350.

Cristini, H., Kauppinen-Räisänen, H. and Woodside, A.G. (2022), "Broadening the concept of luxury: transformations and contributions to well-being", *Journal of Macromarketing*, Vol. 42 No. 4, pp.673–685.

Csaba, F.F. (2008), "Redefining luxury: a review essay", Creative Encounters Working Paper #15, Copenhagen Business School.

D'Arpizio, C., Levato, F., Prete, F. and de Montgolfier, J. (2023), "Renaissance in uncertainty: luxury builds on its rebound", Bain & Company Report, 17 January 2023.

Ehrensperger, E., Greenberg, D., Krohmer, H., Nagel, F., Hoyer W. and Zhang, Z.J. (2022), "Succeeding in competitive arenas with arena-relevant marketing capabilities", *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 56 No. 2, pp.321-350.

Hlady-Rispal, M. and Blancheton, B. (2022), "The Diamond Model: a French luxury cluster model embedded in regional heritage", *Journal of Small Business Management*, Vol. 60 No. 2, pp.420-446.

Igwe, P.A., Madichie, N.O. and Rugaga, D.G. (2022), "Decolonising research approaches towards non-extractive research", *Qualitative Market Research*, Vol. 25 No. 4, pp.453-468.

Javornik, A., Duffy, K., Rokka, J., Scholz, J., Nobbs, K., Motala, A. and Goldenberg, A. (2021), "Strategic approaches to augmented reality deployed by luxury brands", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 136, pp.284-292.

Jiang, L., Gao H. and Shi, L.H. (2021), "The effect of power distance beliefs on the inconspicuous versus conspicuous consumption of luxury accessories in China and the USA", *Journal of Marketing Management*, Vol. 37, pp.15-16.

Kapferer, J-N and Valette-Florence, P. (2018), "The impact of brand penetration and awareness on luxury brand desirability: a cross country analysis of the relevance of the rarity principle," *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 83, pp.38-50.

Kivunja, C. and Kuyini, A.B. (2017), "Understanding and applying research paradigms in educational contexts", *International Journal of Higher Education*, Vol. 6, No. 5, pp.26-41.

Konadu-Osei, O.A., Boroş, S. and Bosch, A. (2023), "Methodological decolonisation and local epistemologies in business ethics research", *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 186, pp.1-12.

Kwon, J, Amendah E. and Ahn, J. (2022), "Mediating role of perceived authenticity in the relationship between luxury service experience and life satisfaction", *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, (online) 30 November 2022.

Lim, W.M., Aggarwal A. and Dandotiya, R. (2022), "Marketing luxury services beyond affluence in the new normal: insights from fine dining during the coronavirus pandemic", *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, Vol. 66, Article 102936.

Loranger, D. and Roeraas, E. (2023), "Transforming luxury: global luxury brand executives' perceptions during COVID", *Journal of Global Fashion Marketing*, Vol. 14 No. 1, pp.48-62.

Ma, J., Hong, JH., Yoo, B. and Yang, J. (2021), "The effect of religious commitment and global identity on purchase intention of luxury fashion products: a cross-cultural study", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 137, pp.244-254.

Qualitative Market Research

Manfreda, A., Melissen, F., Presbury, R., Richardson, S. and King, J. (2023), “A model of luxury lodge experience quality”, *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, Vol. 54, pp.486-499.

Marshall, C.C., Goguladinne, P.S.R, Maheshwari, M., Sathe, A. and Shipman, F.M. (2023), “Who broke Amazon Mechanical Turk? an analysis of crowdsourcing data quality over time”, 15th ACM Web Science Conference, April 30 to 01 May 2023, Austin TX, USA.

Mrad, M., Farah, M. and Mehdi, N. (2022), “WhatsApp communication service: a controversial tool for luxury brands”, *Qualitative Market Research*, Vol. 25 No. 3, pp.337-360.

Naeem, M. and Ozuem, W. (2022), “Understanding the different types of UGC participants and social context for fashion brands: insights from social media”, *Qualitative Market Research*, Vol. 25 No. 2, pp.181-204.

Ostovan, N. and Nasr, A.K. (2022), “The manifestation of luxury value dimensions in brand engagement in self-concept”, *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, Vol. 66 No. 3, Article 102939.

Parnwell, M.J.G. and Meng, K. (2023), *Research Methods in Luxury Management*, London: Routledge.

Philippe, D., Debenedetti, A. and Chaney, D. (2022), “How brands mobilize status, reputation, and legitimacy cues to signal their social standing: the case of luxury watchmaking”, *Marketing Theory*, Vol. 22 No. 3, pp.333-358.

Popper, K.R. (1965), “Of clouds and clocks: an approach to the problem of rationality and the freedom of man”, the Second Arthur Holly Compton Memorial Lecture, Washington University, 21 April 1965.

Popper, K.R. (1972), *Objective Knowledge: An Evolutionary Approach*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Quach, S. and Thaichon, P. (2017), “From connoisseur luxury to mass luxury: value co-creation and co-destruction in the online environment”, *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 81, pp.163-172.

Rosendo-Rios, V. and Shukla, P. (2023), “When luxury democratizes: exploring the effects of luxury democratization, hedonic value and instrumental self-presentation on traditional luxury consumers’ behavioral intentions”, *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 155, Article 113448.

Sanchez, J.I., Bonache, J., Paz-Aparicio, C. and Oberty, C.Z. (2023), “Combining interpretivism and positivism in international business research: the example of the expatriate role”, *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 58, pp.1-13.

Shukla, P., Rosendo-Rios, V. and Khalifa, D. (2022), “Is luxury democratization impactful? its moderating effect between value perceptions and consumer purchase intentions,” *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 139, pp.782-793.

Thomas, D. (2007), *Deluxe: How Luxury Lost its Lustre*, London: Penguin.

Veselovsky, V., Ribeiro, M.H. and West, R. (2023), “Artificial artificial artificial intelligence: crowd workers widely use large language models for text production tasks”, *arXiv*, 13 June 2023.

Wallpach, S.von, Hemetsberger, A., Thomsen, T.U. and Belk, R.W. (2020), “Moments of luxury: a qualitative account of the experiential essence of luxury”, *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 116, pp.491-502.

Wang, Y. and Chen, H. (2021), “Self-presentation and interactivity: luxury branding on social media”, *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, Vol. 30 No. 5, pp.656-670.

Wu, Z. (2022), “Crafting inconspicuous luxury brands through brand authenticity in China”, *Frontiers in Psychology*, Vol. 13, Article 826890.

Qualitative Market Research

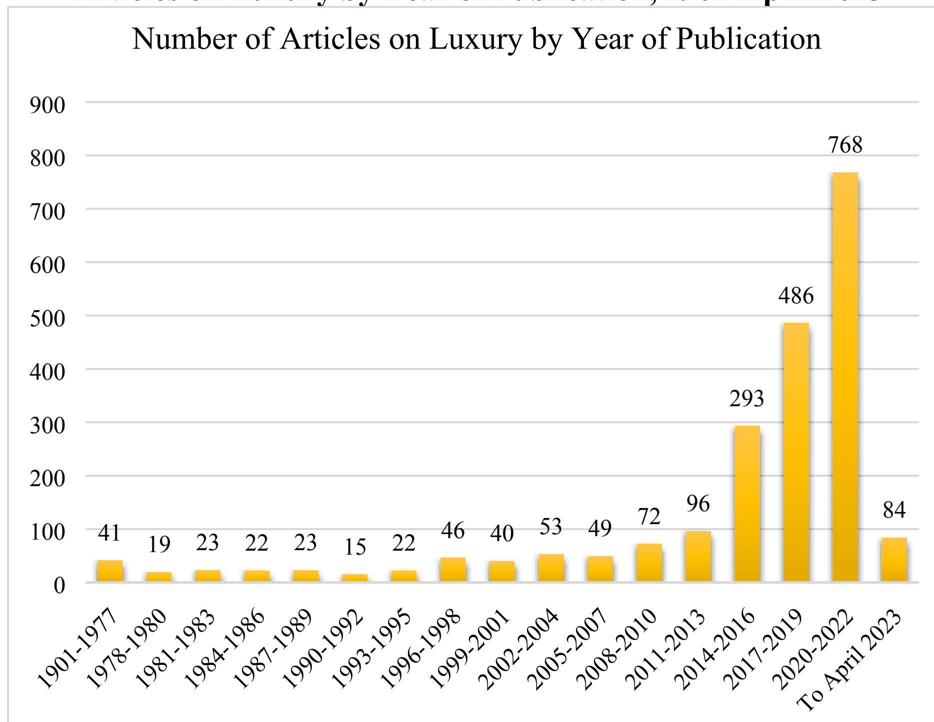
Xu, L. and Mehta, R. (2023), "Technology devalues luxury? exploring consumer responses to AI-designed luxury products", *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, Vol. 50, pp.1135-1152.

Zha, D., Foroudi, P., Melewar, T.C. and Jin, Z. (2022), "Experiencing the sense of the brand: the mining, processing and application of brand data through sensory brand experiences", *Qualitative Market Research*, Vol. 25 No. 2, pp.205-232.

Qualitative Market Research

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

Figure 1:
Articles on Luxury by Year of Publication, 1901-April 2023



Data Source: Calculated from the Web of Science (Clarivate PLC)

Market Research

Figure 2
Country Focus of Academic Research on Luxury from a Sample of 327 Academic Papers, 2021-2023 (n=267)

Source: Co-authors' Research

Qualitative Market Research

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

Table 1
Luxury Research Contextualisation and Methodological Approach, by Country or Region (n=248)

Country/ Region	Contextualisation		Approach		n=
	Contextualised	Not Contextualised	Quantitative or Mixed	Qualitative	
USA	10.5	89.5	87.9	12.1	57
China	22.7	77.3	82.2	17.8	44
India & Pakistan	6.7	93.3	82.7	17.3	30
Europe	35.8	64.2	61.5	38.5	53
Other Asia	25.0	75.0	81.2	18.8	32
Middle East	46.7	53.3	73.3	26.7	15
Brands	64.7	35.3	35.3	64.7	17
Average	25.4	74.6			248

Source: Co-authors' Research

Qualitative Market Research