The desire for luxury jewellery possession: modelling influence factors

Vivian Alexandra Roth

A thesis submitted to

the University of Gloucestershire

in accordance with the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

In the Gloucestershire Business School

June 2022

Word count: 72,000

Table of content

LIST OF TABLES 5
LIST OF FIGURES 7
TABLE OF ABBREVIATIONS 9
ABSTRACT 10
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT 12
DEDICATION 12
DECLARATION 13
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION 14
1.1 INTRODUCTORY REMARKS 14
1.2 TOPIC AND CONTEXT 17
1.2.1 Introduction to the context of this research 17
1.2.1.1 Overview of the current situation. 19
1.2.2 Possession and its relation to consumption, consumer behaviour and conspicuous consumption 20
1.2.2.1 Consumer behaviour and consumption as the origin of possession. 21
1.2.2.2 Definition of possession and its importance for the thesis. 24
1.2.2.3 The distinction between possession and ownership 24
1.2.2.4 Possession of luxury. 26
1.2.3 The phenomenon of luxury 27
1.2.3.1 The luxury market and its development 27
1.2.3.2 Luxury jewellery, its definition and the rationale for this thesis 34
1.2.4 Desire 38
1.3 RELEVANCE, IMPORTANCE AND OBJECTIVES 39
1.3.1 Problem statement 39
1.3.2 Purpose of the study, research objective, research question and introduction to research methods 40
1.3.3 Justification and relevance of proposed research 42
1.3.4 Expected knowledge contribution 43
1.4 THESIS STRUCTURE 44
CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW 47
2.1 INTRODUCTION 47
2.1.1 Methodology of the systematic review process 50
2.1.1.1 Article search and selection. 51
2.2 POSSESSION AS THE KEY CONSTRUCT 56
2.2.1 Possession and its link to the self 56
2.2.2 Possession and the concept of distinction 60
2.2.3 Possessions and their value 60
2.2.4 Nature of acquiring possessions 63
2.2.5 Desire in the context of luxury jewellery possession 64
2.2.5.1 Distinguishing the meaning of desire from needs, wants, wishes or motivations. 64
2.2.5.2 Desiring luxury jewellery. 69
2.3 EXAMINING THE INFLUENCE OF ONE'S EMOTIONAL RELATIONSHIP TO OBJECTS AND THE NOTIONS OF SELF-IMPROVEMENT AND SOCIAL POSITIONING ON THE DESIRE FOR LUXURY JEWELLERY POSSESSION 70
2.3.1 Introduction 70
2.3.2 Emotional relation to objects: Possession attachment and the emotional significance of possessions 72
2.3.2.1 Emotional significance of possessions and its impact on emotional relation to objects. 75
2.3.2.2 Possession attachment and its impact on one's emotional relation to objects. 76

2.3.2.3 Emotional relation to objects and its influence on the desire for luxury jewellery possession. 79
2.3.2.4 Possession attachment positively influences the emotional significance of possessions. 81
2.3.2.5 Possession attachment positively influences self-extension. 82
2.3.3 Self-improvement: Self-extension and consumers' need for uniqueness *84*
2.3.3.1 Self-extension and its impact on self-improvement....85
2.3.3.2 The consumer's need for uniqueness and its impact on self-improvement. 88
2.3.3.3 Self-improvement and its impact on the desire for luxury jewellery possession. 91
2.3.4 Social positioning: Social identity and the symbolic meaning of luxury *92*
2.3.4.1 Social identity and its impact on social positioning....93
2.3.4.2 The symbolic meaning of luxury and its impact on social positioning. 97
2.3.4.3 Social positioning and its impact on the desire for luxury jewellery possession....101
2.4. SYNTHESIS AND CONCLUSION OF KEY FINDINGS 103
CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY 107
3.1 INTRODUCTION.... 107
3.2 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY 107
3.2.1 General perspective: Epistemology of post-positivism *109*
3.2.2 Ontological position of realism: reality is objective and independent of the researcher . *112*
3.3 METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN 113
3.3.1 Research methodology: Survey *113*
3.3.2 Research design.... *114*
3.3.3 Quantitative research approach: The role of theory in research with deductive reasoning *115*
3.4 QUANTITATIVE STUDY DESIGN AND METHOD.... 117
3.4.1 Questionnaire development.... *119*
3.4.2 Measurement scale *121*
3.4.3 Detailed operationalization of measurement scales and questionnaire justification *122*
3.4.3.1 Collection of background data on the level of possession. 123
3.4.3.2 Operationalization of desire for luxury jewellery possession. 123
3.4.3.3 Operationalization of emotional significance of possessions. 127
3.4.3.4 Operationalization of possession attachment. 128
3.4.3.5 Operationalization of self-extension. 130
3.4.3.6 Operationalization of consumer's need for uniqueness. 132
3.4.3.7 Operationalization of social identity. 135
3.4.3.8 Operationalization of the symbolic meaning of luxury. 137
3.4.3.9 Data collection on demographics. 142
3.4.4 Questionnaire language and translation.... *142*
3.5 QUESTIONNAIRE TESTING 143
3.5.1 Pre-testing stage.... *144*
3.5.2 Pilot study stage *145*
3.6 DATA COLLECTION, QUESTIONNAIRE SAMPLING AND DISTRIBUTION 148
3.6.1 Data collection method.... *148*
3.7 SAMPLING DESIGN AND QUESTIONNAIRE DISTRIBUTION 149
3.7.1 Approach for sampling design.... *150*
3.7.2 Sample size *154*
3.7.3 Identification of eligible respondents *154*
3.7.4 Procedure for questionnaire completion.... *157*
3.7.5 Assessing model validity.... *157*
3.8 DATA ANALYSIS METHODS: AN OVERVIEW 159
3.9 LIMITATIONS OF METHODOLOGY 160
3.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND PRIVACY 160
CHAPTER 4. RESULTS 163
4.1 INTRODUCTION.... 163
4.2 APPROACH TO DATA ANALYSIS.... 163
4.2.1 Normal distribution *166*
4.2.2 Outliers *167*
4.2.3 Data analysis technique: Structural equation modelling *168*
4.2.4 Terminology and conditions used with structural equation modelling *170*

4.2.5 Assessment of model fit and fit indices ... *170*
4.3 ISSUES AFFECTING THE MODEL AND ITS PERFORMANCE IN STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODELLING ... 173
4.3.1 Modification of a misfit model and re-specification ... *174*
4.4 DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STUDY SAMPLE AND DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS ... 174
4.4.1 Sample composition by age ... *175*
4.4.2 Sample composition by gender ... *176*
4.4.3 Sample composition by nationality ... *177*
4.4.4 Sample composition by marital status ... *178*
4.4.5 Sample composition by educational level ... *179*
4.4.6 Sample composition by employment status ... *181*
4.4.7 Sample composition by number of luxury jewellery pieces in possession ... *182*
4.4.8 Sample composition according to means of obtaining luxury jewellery ... *183*
4.5 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS ON CONSTRUCT LEVEL AND EXAMINING NORMALITY DISTRIBUTION ... 184
4.5.1 Descriptive statistics at the construct level ... *184*
4.5.2 Bivariate correlation analysis ... *184*
4.5.3 Results of normality distribution ... *185*
4.6 VALIDATION OF INITIAL MEASUREMENT MODEL USING CONFIRMATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS ... 187
4.6.1 Confirmatory factor analysis for the initial model ... *188*
4.7 VALIDATION OF THE FINAL MEASUREMENT MODEL ... 195
4.8 FINAL MEASUREMENT MODEL (CONFIRMATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS) ... 195
4.8.1 Validity of the measurement scale ... *198*
4.8.1.1 Results of convergent validity ... 198
4.8.1.2 Results of discriminant validity ... 200
4.8.2 Reliability of the measurement scale ... *201*
4.8.3 Measurement model summary ... *201*
4.9 STRUCTURAL MODEL (HYPOTHESIS TESTING) ... 202
4.9.1 Parameter estimates ... *204*
4.9.2 Results of hypothesis testing ... *205*
4.10 SUMMARY: FINAL STRUCTURAL MODEL BASED ON RESULTS OF HYPOTHESIS TESTING ... 208

CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION ... 210
5.1 INTRODUCTION ... 210
5.2 RESEARCH CONTEXT ... 210
5.3 DISCUSSION OF KEY FINDINGS ... 212
5.3.1 The role of the emotional significance of possessions and possession attachment through an emotional relation to objects (H1a–1e) ... *212*
5.3.1.1 The influence of emotional significance of possessions on emotional relation to objects and desire for luxury jewellery possession (H1a and H1c). ... 212
5.3.1.2 The influence of possession attachment on emotional relation to objects and the desire for luxury jewellery possession (H1b, H1d and H1e). ... 215
5.3.2 The role of self-extension and consumers' need for uniqueness through self-improvement (H2a–2c) ... *217*
5.3.2.1 The influence of self-extension on self-improvement and the desire for luxury jewellery possession (H2a and H2c). ... 217
5.3.2.2 The influence of CNFU on self-improvement and the desire for luxury jewellery possession (H2b). ... 220
5.3.3 The role of social identity and symbolic meaning through social positioning (H3a–3c) ... *225*
5.3.3.1 The influence of social identity on social positioning and the desire for luxury jewellery possession (H3a and H3c). ... 225
5.3.3.2 The influence of the symbolic meaning of luxury on social positioning and the desire for luxury jewellery possession (H3b). ... 227
5.4 OVERARCHING INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS AND THEIR INTELLECTUAL VALUE ... 230
5.4.1 The value of possession ... *230*
5.4.2 Possessions and the nature of their acquisition ... *233*
5.4.3 One's relationship to objects: Gift-giving vs. gift-receiving ... *236*
5.4.4 Changing relationships over time ... *238*
5.4.5 The unique character of desire ... *239*

5.4.6 The meaning of the excluded constructs *240*
5.5 SUMMARY: DISCUSSION 242

CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSION 245
6.1 INTRODUCTION 245
6.2 OVERVIEW OF THE MAIN RESEARCH FINDINGS 245
6.3 ANSWERING THE RESEARCH QUESTION 246
6.4 ACADEMIC CONTRIBUTIONS 247
6.4.1 Contributions to the research area *247*
6.4.1.1 Holistic approach. 247
6.4.1.2 Novel context. 248
6.4.1.3 Consideration of possession and desire in one coherent construct. 248
6.4.1.4 Possession extending beyond ownership. 249
6.4.1.5 Identification of two influencing factors on the dependent variable. 249
6.4.1.6 Exclusion of the 'brand' factor. 250
6.4.1.7 Advancement of thinking through additional aspects. 250
6.4.2 Novelty of the methodological approach in this domain *251*
6.4.3 Summary of theoretical implications *253*
6.5 MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS 253
6.5.1 Practical implications of the study *253*
6.5.2 Benefits to the industry and to organizations *254*
6.6 RESEARCH LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH 256
6.6.1 Context and model construct limitations *257*
6.6.2 Research design and analysis limitations *261*
6.6.3 Sample and data collection limitations *263*
6.7 FURTHER RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS 265
6.8 SUMMARY 267

REFERENCES 270

APPENDICES 303
Appendix A. Final online questionnaire – English version 303
Appendix B. Final online questionnaire – German version 320
Appendix C. Methodology 337
Appendix D. Results 341
Appendix E. Results of Principal Component Analysis (PCA) 373

List of Tables

Table 1 *Definitions of luxury jewellery* 34
Table 2 *Inclusion and exclusion criteria* 52
Table 3 *Overview of authors' views and perspectives on desire versus neighbouring constructs for (luxury jewellery) possession* 66
Table 4 *Details of independent variables* 71
Table 5 *Consolidated research hypotheses* 105
Table 6 *Overview of main research constructs, sub-constructs, sources and justification for their consideration in the present thesis* 120
Table 7 *Adjustments made to existing scales on status-maintenance goal and the desire for car brands, as used by Kim, Park and Dubois (2018), for use in this research* 126
Table 8 *Adjustments made to Ball and Tasaki's (1992) 'Emotional Significance Scale for the early ownership, mature ownership, and predisposition stages' for use in this research* 128
Table 9 *Adjustments made to Ball and Tasaki's (1992) possession attachment scale for use in this research* 129

Table 10 *Adjustments made to Sivadas and Venkatesh's (1995) 'Incorporation into the extended self-scale' for use in this research* 131
Table 11 *Adjustments made to Ruvio et al.'s (2008) Consumers' Need for Uniqueness Scale for use in this research*....................133
Table 12 *Adjustments made to Cameron's (2004) 'Three-factor model of social identity' for use in this research* 136
Table 13 *Adjustments made to Hayes's (2005) 'Symbolic meaning of money scale' for use in this research*....................139
Table 14 *Overview of adaptations made to the survey based on pre-test and piloting*.........146
Table 15 *Results of the reliability and validity of the piloting (n = 32)* 148
Table 16 *Criteria for acceptable model fit parameters* 172
Table 17 *Age characteristics of sample*....................175
Table 18 *Gender characteristics of the sample* 176
Table 19 *Nationality characteristics of the sample* 177
Table 20 *Marital status characteristics of the sample*....................178
Table 21 *Educational level completed characteristics of the sample*....................180
Table 22 *Employment status characteristics of the sample*....................181
Table 23 *Number of luxury jewellery pieces possessed by the sample (categorized in halves)* 182
Table 24 *Means of obtaining luxury jewellery pieces* 183
Table 25 *Bivariate correlations table*....................185
Table 26 *Descriptive statistics on scale level, based on mean, standard deviation, skewness, kurtosis and the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests*....................186
Table 27 *Model fit indices of measurement model after CFA* 197
Table 28 *Overview of factor loadings per item for final measurement model (indicated as standardized regression weights in AMOS)*....................198
Table 29 *Overview of results for average variance extracted and composite reliability for the initial model* 199
Table 30 *Results of discriminant validity for the final measurement model considering square root of AVE and the construct correlations* 200
Table 31 *Reliability of the final measurement model by assessing Cronbach's alpha* 201
Table 32 *Comparison of structural model fit (with one correlated error term) for Model 1 and Model 2* 203
Table 33 *Critical ratios of the structural model*....................204
Table 34 *Results of hypothesis testing for the latent variable of emotional relation to objects* 206
Table 35 *Results of hypothesis testing for the latent variable of self-improvement* 207
Table 36 *Results of hypothesis testing for the latent variable of social positioning*.............207
Table 37 *Overview of groups for data collection* 339
Table 38 *Descriptive statistics on Item-level*....................341
Table 39 *Overview of factor loadings per item for initial measurement model (indicated as standardized regression weights in AMOS) (<0.5 deleted for further analysis)*..................342
Table 40 *Overview of factor loadings per item for final measurement model (indicated as non-standardized regression weights in AMOS)* 345
Table 41 *Overview of hypotheses and their respective result based on this thesis* 346
Table 42 *Overview of results for Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and Composite Reliability (CR) for the initial model* 347
Table 43 *Overview of discriminant validity for the initial measurement model considering square root of AVE and the construct correlations* 347
Table 44 *Reliability of the initial measurement model by assessing Cronbach's Alpha* 348

Table 45 *Discriminant validity of the initial model without VAR5.2 and with correlated error terms by modification indices* 348
Table 46 *Test of Between-subjects Effects on the variable of Age* 350
Table 47 *Test of Between-subjects Effects on the variable of Gender*..................................354
Table 48 *Test of Between-subjects Effects on the variable of Marital status* 358
Table 49 *Test of Between-subjects Effects on the variable of Educational level*..................363
Table 50 *Test of Between-subjects Effects on the variable of Employment status* 367
Table 51 *Results of Principal Component Analysis (PCA)* 373
Table 52 *Principal Component Analysis (PCA) - Pattern matrix* 374
Table 53 *Results of answer pattern analysis for conspicious answers*.................................378
Table 54 *Cluster analysis. Pairwise comparison of variables between defined clusters* 379
Table 55 *Anova Table* 381

List of Figures

Figure 1 *Structure of the thesis* 46
Figure 2 *Flow chart of systematic literature review (SLR)*...51
Figure 3 *Most influential articles based on the frequency of citations referred to in the literature* 54
Figure 4 *Major contributing authors (two or more articles)* 55
Figure 5 *Desire for luxury jewellery possession model* 104
Figure 6 *Final proposed model based on the literature review and following pre-testing* ...147
Figure 7 *Overview of the process to qualify respondents* 156
Figure 8 *Measurement model resulting from confirmatory factor analysis (CFA)* 196
Figure 9 *Final measurement model after the correlation of one error term resulting from confirmatory factor analysis (CFA)* 197
Figure 10 *Final conceptual structural model (2) based on results*.......................................209
Figure 11 *Initial model as proposed based on literature review (without any items being removed)* 338
Figure 12 *Final structural model 1 (without covariances)* 350
Figure 13 *Profile pilot on Age and desire for luxury jewellery possession* 351
Figure 14 *Profile pilot on Age and emotional significance of possessions* 351
Figure 15 *Profile pilot on Age and possession attachment*...352
Figure 16 *Profile pilot on Age and self-extension* 352
Figure 17 *Profile pilot on Age and CNFU*...353
Figure 18 *Profile pilot on Age and social identity*..353
Figure 19 *Profile pilot on Age and symbolic meaning of luxury* 354
Figure 20 *Profile pilot on Gender and desire for luxury jewellery possession* 355
Figure 21 *Profile pilot on Gender and emotional significance of possessions*.....................355
Figure 22 *Profile pilot on Gender and possession attachment*..356
Figure 23 *Profile pilot on Gender and self-extension*..356
Figure 24 *Profile pilot on Gender and CNFU* 357
Figure 25 *Profile pilot on Gender and social identity* 357
Figure 26 *Profile pilot on Gender and symbolic meaning of luxury* 358
Figure 27 *Profile pilot on Marital status and desire for luxury jewellery possession*...........359
Figure 28 *Profile pilot on Marital status and emotional significance of possessions* 360
Figure 29 *Profile pilot on Marital status and possession attachment* 360
Figure 30 *Profile pilot on Marital status and self-extension* 361
Figure 31 *Profile pilot on Marital status and CNFU* 361

Figure 32 *Profile pilot on Marital status and social identity*..362
Figure 33 *Profile pilot on Marital status and symbolic meaning of luxury*..........................362
Figure 34 *Profile pilot on Educational level and desire for luxury jewellery possession*.....364
Figure 35 *Profile pilot on Educational level and emotional significance of possessions* 364
Figure 36 *Profile pilot on Educational level and possession attachment*.............................365
Figure 37 *Profile pilot on Educational level and self-extension*...365
Figure 38 *Profile pilot on Educational level and CNFU*..366
Figure 39 *Profile pilot on Educational level and social identity*..366
Figure 40 *Profile pilot on Educational level and symbolic meaning of luxury* 367
Figure 41 *Profile pilot on Employment status and desire for luxury jewellery possession*...368
Figure 42 *Profile pilot on Employment status and emotional significance of possessions* ...368
Figure 43 *Profile pilot on Employment status and possession attachment* 369
Figure 44 *Profile pilot on Employment status and self-extension* 369
Figure 45 *Profile pilot on Employment status and CNFU*..370
Figure 46 *Profile pilot on Employment status and social identity*..370
Figure 47 *Profile pilot on Employment status and symbolic meaning of luxury*..................371
Figure 48 *Histogram of amount of luxury jewellery pieces in possession*............................372
Figure 49 *Illustration of the measurement model after conducting Principal Component Analysis (PCA)*..377
Figure 50 *Illustration of the measurement model after conducting Principal Component Analysis (PCA) and after removing VAR5.2*..378
Figure 51 *Cluster analysis. Dendrogram using average linkage (between groups). Combination of scaled distance clusters*..382

Table of Abbreviations

AIC	Akaike information criterion
AVE	Average variance extracted
BCC	Browne-Cudeck criterion
BOS	Bristol online surveys
CFA	Confirmatory factor analysis
CFI	Comparative fit index
CNFU	Consumer need for uniqueness
CR	Composite reliability
C.R.	Critical ratio
EFA	Exploratory factor analysis
MI	Modification indices
RMSEA	Route mean square error of approximation
PCA	Principal component analysis
SD	Standard deviation
SEM	Structural equation modelling
SLR	Systematic literature review
TLI	Tucker Lewis index

Abstract

Research surrounding the desire for luxury jewellery possession is extremely limited, even though possessions play a key role in personal, social, and behavioural structures in western cultures, and despite customers' growing desire for luxury products, as indicated by continued sales growth. The unique features of luxury jewellery - being comparatively small, often unobtrusive and worn close to the body - make it particularly interesting as a product category.

Based on extensive literature in comparable fields, this research uses Structural Equation Modelling to examine six observed variables and three latent variables that may influence desire for luxury jewellery possession. 547 responses from consumers living in Germany who possess luxury jewellery are used to test the predictive model.

Findings reveal that 'self-extension', and 'self-improvement' had the strongest direct significant effect on desire for possession, followed by 'social identity' and 'social positioning', whilst the direct effect of 'emotional significance' and 'emotional relationship to objects' was not significant. 'Possession attachment', 'consumer need for uniqueness' and 'symbolic meaning of luxury' were removed from the model as they failed to meet the necessary markers for discriminant validity. Future research is needed to determine their nature and impact given that these concepts seem likely to play some role.

This research considers aspects that have received limited attention; it also extends current theories that primarily refer to the "point of purchase" and "purchase intention" by examining how people relate to objects that they already possess. It also highlights the distinctive nature of luxury jewellery, clearly not mundane objects. The complex influence of the nature of acquisition is considered, and opportunities for future research to examine the different natures highlighted. The research also acknowledges that the value of possession may vary across time and between individuals and be of considerable importance to desiring

luxury jewellery possession. Finally, the research identifies the potential of established scales within the context of possession and consumers' relationship to luxury objects. Given these insights, this thesis has made a significant and original contribution to existing knowledge.

The findings also offer insights for luxury jewellery retailers, demonstrating that consumers' need for self-extension and social identity should be considered to construct more nuanced marketing activities when approaching customers. This is expected to increase consumers' desire for luxury jewellery possession.

Keywords: possession, desire, luxury jewellery, emotional significance of possessions, self-extension, social identity.

Acknowledgement

I highly appreciate the continuous supervision and guidance of both of my academic supervisors, Dr. Philippa Ward and Dr. Richard Warr. Your feedback of constructive and insightful comments, professional advice and motivating encouragement have greatly assisted in the development and editing of this thesis and supported me in expanding on my full capabilities. Thank you for your patience. No doctoral candidate could have possibly asked for better supervisors than you two.

Writing this dissertation has taken up an incredible amount of time in my private life and I would therefore want to thank my partner and best friend Micki for his calming influence, his incredible patience, a listening ear and constant advice. I owe you. Completing this degree would not have been possible without the support of my mother, Marina. I thank you a lot for always believing in me. I would like to also thank my gorgeous, kind and optimistic grandmother for believing in me and being “proud like Oscar”. It was great to have you by my side.

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my mother Marina Kessler and my partner and life-companion Michael Goretzki. Without your love and support, finishing my doctoral studies would not have been possible.

DOI: 10.46289/GG96W3Y2

Declaration

Herewith, I declare that all work in this thesis has been carried out in accordance with the regulations of the University of Gloucestershire. It is original except where indicated by specific references in the text. No part of the thesis has been submitted in support of any other degree or academic award. The thesis has not been presented to any other educational institution in the United Kingdom or overseas. Any views expressed in the thesis are those of the author and in no way represent those of the University.

Signature [redacted]

Date: 10 December 2022

Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 Introductory remarks

This thesis falls within the field of consumer behaviour, with a specific focus on luxury jewellery as a consumed product. In this context, although luxury is a concept that has been studied since Veblen in 1912, researchers have a continued and increasing interest in the topic (Wiedmann et al., 2009; Kapferer, 2014; Han et al., 2010; Janssen et al., 2014). The meaning of luxury should first be understood before its use in the field of jewellery is elaborated.

The word Luxus means sensuality, splendour or pomp (Yeoman & McMahon-Beattie, 2011) and the term luxury originates from the Latin word *luxuria*, meaning ‘extras of life’ (Danziger, 2004). Included in this term is the word fragment ‘extra’, which on the one hand applies to the description of luxury and on the other hand points to the accompanying emotional, self-, social and functional benefits – which form a basis for differentiation.

Traditionally, luxury has been associated with exclusivity, prestige, and superior quality (Atwal & Williams, 2009) and hence elements that are an addition to the normal standard (however this might be defined in this context). According to Brun et al. (2008), as well as Dubois and Laurent (1994), extraordinary designs and exceptional quality are perceived to be core properties of luxurious products (Dewey, 2009). Here, the authors refer to designs that are different from the norm, have better quality than the norm and are scarce with a low number of pieces made available for distribution and sale. Since luxury possession conveys exclusivity, status and public display, it is sometimes even deemed a symbol of wealth (Atwal & Williams, 2009) and purchasing power (O’Cass & Frost, 2002, as cited in Kim & Jang, 2014). Others emphasize luxury’s rarity, social interaction and recognition by others (Cornell, 2002, as cited in Wiedmann et al., 2007). Because of these many facets, it is difficult to provide a universally accepted definition of luxury. Luxury can represent pleasure, indulgence and sometimes even pride for consumers (McFerran et al., 2014). The present thesis considers the work of Eastman and Eastman (2015), who rely on evaluations from Cornell (2002, as cited in Wiedmann et al., 2007) as well as Phau and Prendergast (2000, as cited in Atwal & Williams, 2009) regarding the properties of luxury. They characterize luxury goods as comprising rarity and exclusivity, premium prices, extravagance, quality, craftsmanship, status and prestige while providing internal values such as self-reward (Truong & McGoll, 2011), hedonism (Hudders & Pandelaere, 2012) and perfectionism (Vigneron & Johnson, 1999) to the owner. However, it must be noted that the classification of luxury is subjective: What is luxurious to one person might be commonplace for another, and vice versa (Phau & Prendergast, 2000, as cited in Atwall & Williams, 2009).

Notable characteristics that differentiate the luxury industry include ‘logofication’, the ‘plastering’ of instantly recognizable symbols in a continuous pattern across the product (Chadha & Husband, 2006, as cited in Husic & Cicic, 2008). Moreover, Kapferer and Bastien (2009) emphasize that exclusive services are a key component of luxury brands, as do Eastman and Eastman (2015). According to Kim et al. (2016), the most essential feature of luxury includes high product quality in terms of materials, sophistication, advanced tools and unique production skills. These features – especially the typically high product quality found in the luxury industry – result in high prices, which seem to be appropriate for valuable luxury goods. Several other product characteristics can be attributed to luxury goods, for example, high-class packaging and popular store locations (usually in highly frequented shopping malls or on streets surrounded by other luxury retailers) and contribute to the possession experience. Thereby, organizations aim to ensure that luxury products are perceived to be of high quality. Further factors that can increase the desire for luxury possession are their appealing advertisements, such as De Beers’s 1999 advertisement stating, ‘Diamonds are forever’, which elevated the luxury jewellery industry, as do other famous brand names such as Louis Vuitton, Ferrari or Cartier (Husic & Cicic, 2008). The aforementioned exceptional features contribute to an increased desire for possession, while a positive purchase experience empowers luxury to be a status symbol in western societies (Bothra, 2013).

According to a study by Husic and Cicic (2008), aspects such as desired image, status and prevailing fashion play a key role in luxury consumption. One illustrative example of this is Louis Vuitton, whose image is consistently associated with luxury, exclusiveness, high value, and high prices, among others. Its handbags, scarves and jewellery are manufactured from high-quality materials. Its stores have waiting lists for certain pieces, representing the scarcity of its products and giving the consumer the feeling of producers creating products for them individually. Specific in-store décor and atmosphere also convey luxuriousness: a golden entrance door; few pieces displayed in the showcase; and only limited entry to prevent overcrowding and to guarantee personal customer service from professionally dressed and well-trained staff, who wear gloves to avoid soiling the products, and door attendants in suits, opening the door for customers. Purchases are packed in several layers: a cloth bag, inside a box, inside a bag, taped up in another plastic bag to protect the branded bag from damage or environmental influences like rain. The result is queueing with long waiting times in front of luxury stores such as Tiffany & Co. or Louis Vuitton around the world (e.g., Paris, Düsseldorf, Frankfurt). It is unclear whether the purpose of this queuing practice is merely to prevent overly filled stores or to attract even more customers and increase the brands' status of exclusivity. Whilst it is important to recognize the occurrence of this phenomenon, elaboration thereof is beyond the scope of this thesis.

Following the introduction to the concept of luxury in this section, the next section describes the category of luxury jewellery.

The present thesis simultaneously illuminates and analyses the phenomenon of possessing luxury jewellery and models influencing factors from both a behavioural and an organizational perspective. An exploration of the extent to which certain factors impact the desire to own luxury jewellery contributes to expanding the current understanding of this topic.

This chapter first introduces the topic and context of the present research, provides an overview of the current situation of the luxury market and its development, and introduces the construct of possession that is central to this thesis. The construct of possession is deduced from consumption and consumer behaviour as the broad origin, followed by an introduction to luxury goods and their market, as well as an introduction to the construct of desire. Thereafter, the chapter explains the relevance and importance of this thesis, including its research objective, justification and expected contribution to knowledge. The chapter ends with an overview of the thesis structure.

1.2 Topic and context

1.2.1 Introduction to the context of this research

In the West, 'possessions' have an impact on the social and behavioural structures of society and have been considered widely in several studies. In people's communication what one *has* is frequently made the subject of interactions. The symbolic meaning attached to products is frequently perceived to be projected on the owner themself, thereby displaying desired self-image (Dittmar, 1992; Elliott, 1997; Wallendorf & Arnold, 1988; Wattanasuwan, 2005). This consumption-oriented behaviour constitutes an essential element of meaning in a person's social life (Stavrakakis, 2006; Wattanasuwan, 2005). While some people enjoy discussing what brave and intelligent children they *have* or what a romantic partner they *have* (Lifton, 1973), others prefer to talk about the new mobile phone or television they *bought*, the house they *own* or the car they *possess.* These may be possessions (tangible or intangible) – although they might not be immediately and consciously perceived as such – that people perceive they have, talk about and sometimes even develop feelings for. Thus, 'being what you own' still holds in contemporary consumer behaviour (e.g., Van Esterick 1986; Feirstein, 1986; Rosenbaum, 1972). This consumption-oriented behaviour is frequently driven by an underlying desire for ownership, be it external or internal (Khaniwale, 2015), which is the essential driver in buying decisions and purchase behaviour. Thus, people's underlying consumption drivers are relevant aspects for marketers to consider when elaborating on consumer buying behaviour (Maden et al., 2015). There are numerous possibilities to consume, and product offerings are omnipresent. The luxury jewellery industry is no different. According to Lesniewski and Kasztalska (2018), 'Luxury jewellery is not just a nice item; it is a huge international business that generates millions of dollars in revenue' (p.76). Marketing is one relevant factor that contributes to the significance and size of the luxury jewellery industry. Through its activities, including promotion, marketing creates demand for luxury goods that ultimately generates a need for those products amongst consumers (Lesniewski & Kasztalska, 2018).

Broadly speaking, the concepts of luxury and luxury products represent a means for social differentiation, with a common international understanding of what the product and the brand represent (Kapferer & Bastien, 2009). The core characteristic of the luxury market is the concepts of rarity and scarcity, which are seen to increase the desire for ownership of 'the exclusive' – creating a feeling of uniqueness and of being luxurious oneself (Gentina et al., 2016; Hines & Bruce, 2007; Kim, 2018, as cited in Shao et al., 2019). In 1986, Grossman and Shapiro provided a definition that still applies, stating that luxury goods are products where demonstration or usage provides the consumer with prestige regardless of the good's functional use. However, the underlying motives for why people have the desire to own luxury jewellery products remain an insufficiently studied research area.

The constitution of desire is of special interest in the present study. Compared with non-luxury products, the desire for luxury (jewellery) products can be higher due to non-functional reasons. In a study regarding luxury goods' desirability, Kapferer and Valette-Florence (2016) identified that selection and seduction are major contributors to luxury desirability and, in turn, may be two relevant drivers that influence the reasons consumers may perceive a luxury product to be overpriced, unnecessary, superfluous or ostentatious. What is desirable and reasonable for some, may not be the case for others. This desire to possess specific goods has a considerable influence on consumers' buying decisions because social, behavioural, cultural, personal and emotional aspects might be involved in this drive for desire (Khaniwale, 2015).

'Western' in the present study refers to places and regions that are, broadly speaking, developed countries – be it North America, Europe, or the developed parts of Asia – in which luxury as a market exists, rather than to specific geographical domains. As an example, Singapore is considered to be western as it is extremely developed and hosts to a large extent a prosperous society, while Myanmar would not be considered as that, although both are part of Asia. As such it is used as a general collective categorization rather than attributing a specific cultural grouping or disposition.

An overview of the current situation with regard to luxury jewellery possession is presented next.

1.2.1.1 Overview of the current situation.

Generation Y consumers, raised by baby boomers, tend to be more consumption-oriented and tend to have high disposable incomes compared to consumers from other generations (Fingerman et al., 2009). This increasing affluence and resulting consumption contribute to the rise of luxury in western societies (Yeoman & McMahon-Beattie, 2011). Given that many people can easily possess goods due to the omnipresent availability of products and peoples' financial possibilities, a high effort is required to gain social recognition through the act of possession. One way to still receive this attention and recognition from others is through differentiation in the product, which may be a *luxury* good instead of an 'ordinary' one. Anyone can own a purse, a watch, or a pair of shoes, but not everyone can own a luxurious one that represents a distinguishing feature for certain classes of consumers (Han et al., 2010) because large financial resources are required to do so. The question that seems unanswered, though, is why people want to possess luxury items. It should be considered that not everyone is equally driven or motivated by material possession. This can differ from person to person. For those who are, various luxury industry sectors exist, such as the automotive, art, jewellery, fashion, real estate, home furnishing and consumer electronics sectors, to name a few, each containing a range of product categories from which to choose. All these categories share the characteristic of being 'luxurious', but they are still different enough from one another that one must consider each category separately. This thesis seeks to determine what constitutes the main drivers for the possession of luxury jewellery amongst those who possess it.

The key construct of the present thesis, namely possession, is introduced next, along with its relation to consumption, consumer behaviour in general and conspicuous consumption.

1.2.2 Possession and its relation to consumption, consumer behaviour and conspicuous consumption

Before presenting the focus, scope, relevance and importance of the present thesis, this section highlights some of the key aspects of consumption, as this provides a basis for the underlying topic of the research and helps introduce the relevance of the construct of possession.

1.2.2.1 Consumer behaviour and consumption as the origin of possession.

The luxury market's growth and development that continues since the 1970s confirms the relevance of luxury consumption for society, and thus might increase its relevance for the individual. Today, consumption plays a relevant role in the social lives of many living in western societies, in that (luxury) consumption is progressively perceived to be 'usual' and no longer special, rare, or exclusive in society (Stavrakakis, 2006). Consumer behaviour comprises the selection, purchase, possession and use of goods or services to fulfil individuals' needs and wants (Austria et al., 2022; Gajjar, 2013; Khaniwale, 2015), while it considers psychological, social and economic factors (Austria et al., 2022). Not only purchasing and using certain goods or services but also convincing others of the value of possessing certain (luxury) products by sharing positive experiences is a relevant activity that shapes consumerism in society (Khaniwale, 2015), indicating the influence of reference groups and social-symbolic meaning.

McCracken (1988), who evaluated the symbolic character of consumer goods, makes a relevant point regarding consumption: From a consumer perspective, products in one's possession contain attributes that not only provide functional value but also surpass this functionality by the communication of meaning for the consumer (McCracken, 1988, as cited in Venkatesh, 2010). Functional values, such as utility, are thus surpassed by the meaning-related value of possessing the product within the consumer's social culture and striving for meaningfulness in life through one's possessions is part of self-identification and self-representation (Wattanasuwan, 2005; Douglas & Isherwood, 1996). The combination of value and meaning indicates the importance of emotions that guide consumers' choices to possess (Gajjar, 2013).

Also, researchers have extensively studied how consumers establish an attitude towards a product, as attitudes are assumed to be linked to behaviour and purchase. For instance, according to Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), two relevant components influence attitudes toward a product: belief structure and evaluative criteria (Lee & Um, 1992, as cited in Jamal & Goode, 2001, p.142). With their belief structure, consumers associate certain features with a product and possibly also with luxury goods, while evaluative criteria can lead them to judge a product based on certain characteristics. Evaluative criteria can also be used in heuristic judgements in decision-making, which is relatively widespread among consumers (Jamal & Goode, 2001).

When considering consumer behaviour from a different and more extreme angle, one can also consider consumer behaviour as part of a person's overall 'life performance', as Tsaknaki et al. (2015) do. They state that both behaviour and social, gender and class roles, as well as selected clothes, jewellery and accessories, determine a person's life performance.

Next, conspicuous consumption, another relevant concept of a person's consumption behaviour, is considered. Much contemporary research around the subject of luxury consumption is related, or based on, the concept of conspicuous consumption (Truong, 2010), which was first addressed by Veblen (1934) in his economic theory of the leisure class and which states that people with adequate financial resources tend to consume highly visible products to display their wealth and gain social status (Shao et al., 2019; Li & Su, 2007; Han et al., 2010). However, according to Veblen's theory, the main intention of consumption is not only the sole display or use of luxury (status-seeking) but may also be intended to maintain or save face (face-saving) (Li & Su, 2007; Han et al., 2010). According to Veblen, the following still holds today: Higher-class consumers try to conspicuously possess certain luxury goods to differentiate themselves from lower-class consumers, while lower-class consumers try to conspicuously possess luxury goods to communicate a sense of belonging to the upper class (Han et al., 2010). According to the definition by Mason (1984, as cited in Kang & Park, 2016), conspicuous consumption is the ability to display one's solvency for high-priced luxuries to engage in impression management. For this thesis, conspicuous consumption is defined as follows: '…The rich [consumers] tend to consume highly conspicuous goods in order to display their wealth and gain social status.' (Truong, 2010, p.656)

In other words, conspicuous consumption entails action or activity, namely a person expressing something (Tsaknaki et al., 2015). Further, individuals driven by materialistic values tend to consume conspicuously (Kumar, 2019). This could be a potential phenomenon in the setting of luxury jewellery possession and hence is further elaborated upon (Tsaknaki et al., 2015).

In summary, social theory grasps the complexity of cultural, social, and economic processes that can influence consumption (Wheeler, 2012, as cited in Moraes et al., 2015). Sociologists and researchers in other disciplines agree that individuals and groups alike use consumption by positioning and communicating their belongings as a notable source of symbolic meaning to affiliate, or not, with specific groups (Dittmar, 1992; Elliott, 1997; Wallendorf & Arnold, 1988, as cited in Wattanasuwan, 2005). As evidenced by the previously mentioned theories, possession can be considered as one specific aspect of consumption, which is the focus of this thesis. Its definition and relevance for the present thesis are introduced briefly in the next section.

1.2.2.2 Definition of possession and its importance for the thesis.

The possession of luxury jewellery – consciously differentiated from the consumption thereof, with the purchase being the most classic form of consumption – is an under-researched phenomenon, and detailed investigation in this area is needed to provide relevant information about why consumers strive to possess certain goods, specifically luxury jewellery. To this end, the construct of possession must first be assessed further and delimited to determine the framework of the present thesis. Findings from research into consumer behaviour in its broadest sense refer to possessions in the context of object accumulation, attachment and 'things we call ours' (Belk, 1988, as cited in Chen, 2009). As Belk is one of the leading academics in the field of consumer behaviour and consumption and has shaped the field regarding possessions, his views are given specific attention and discussed throughout, alongside those of other researchers. For the present thesis, 'possession' refers to much more than functional values or properties (Belk, 1988); it is an intense emotional relationship that exceeds ownership and impacts both the self and social values while having a personal significance to people (Ferraro, 2011).

This research primarily examines the factors influencing the *individual* and demonstrates that these factors stem from different sources influencing luxury jewellery's desirability. The next section first covers the distinction between possession and ownership and then elaborates on the phenomenon of luxury.

1.2.2.3 The distinction between possession and ownership.

Even though dictionary definitions of possession and ownership are remarkably similar and largely indistinguishable, authors have recently distinguished between the two terms. The present thesis distinguishes between the two terms in that ownership is referred to as a material accumulation or the ownership of property (Aikhenvald, 2013), while a possession exceeds this material accumulation in that it provides an experiential and symbolic dimension that creates belongingness and is a long-term notion. Moraes et al. (2015) state that consumers '…associate luxury products more with an experiential and symbolic dimension than with the material ownership of things' (p.4). This indicates not only a relation but also a difference in perception between ownership and the more experiential and symbolic dimensions included in the term possession – as it is used in this thesis. Other authors refining the classical view of ownership refer to a sense of possession involved with ownership that creates a feeling of belonging to the self (Belk 1988; Pierce et al., 2003). This view also suggests a slight difference in meaning. This thesis thus draws a distinction between the two terms as defined above and focuses on possession specifically rather than ownership. Regarding luxury jewellery, the researcher of this thesis assumes that consumers will have feelings for their possessions, which leads the existing thesis to the assumption that emotional components might be relevant in the present thesis (e.g., possession attachment and the emotional significance of possessions). In contrast, with the ownership of certain goods – for instance, a cardigan that is fashionable for a few seasons and then becomes outdated – there is a 'classic' assumption of ownership rather than the potentially more complex and longer-term notion of possession.

In summary, studying the behaviour regarding the possession of luxury jewellery is expected to clarify two key issues concerning luxury jewellery marketers and consumers: First, it is expected to clarify the nature of the underlying desire for luxury jewellery possession. Second, it provides information about one's emotional relationship to objects, self-improvement and social positioning and the interrelationships amongst these with the desire for luxury jewellery possession.

The next sub-section evaluates the possession of luxury, followed by an in-depth exploration of the phenomenon of luxury.

1.2.2.4 Possession of luxury.

'We are what we have', being an expression regarding materialism and the self, reflects the motivations to possess (Belk, 1988). The understanding of consumer (possession) behaviour presupposes familiarity with underlying consumption motivations (Maden et al., 2015).

Criticizing the previous theory, McFerran et al. (2014) suggest that the positive feelings of superiority triggered by purchasing luxuries are frequently accompanied by negative perceptions from others. Some can perceive them as signals of arrogance, excessive pride or conceitedness. According to Tsaknaki et al. (2015), for many (but not all) people, luxury implies anything 'extra', unnecessary and that one can forgo (Tsaknaki et al., 2015). While most would state that clothes are necessary to stay warm and protected from environmental conditions, 'luxury clothes' made from silk or belonging to a specific brand are 'extra' and beyond the norm. This 'extra' provided by the brand, or fabric in this example, is not necessarily needed to protect an individual from environmental conditions, but for some, it is desired for personal fulfilment – beyond the mere 'protection' value that the garment offers.

Such personal fulfilment derived from luxury goods (Shao et al., 2019) could occur because these products convey meaning and act as tools to communicate social class, status, wealth and identity (McFerran et al., 2014). The diverse interactions a luxury product has with its stakeholders (e.g., via advertising or at the point of purchase) create experiences and impressions that can impact the way in which luxury jewellery is perceived (Tynan et al., 2010). Through visible bodily display, especially with luxury jewellery (McFerran et al., 2014; Atwal & Williams, 2009; Venkatesh et al., 2010), such goods may attract the attention of others. Furthermore, advertising campaigns presumably support the publicity of luxury jewellery and increase people's desire for it, as indicated by Noel and Barbor (2018), who found that alcohol advertising increased young adults' desire to drink, and such outcomes may well transfer to other product categories. With increased public awareness of luxury jewellery's preciousness, some people may respect, admire, or be impressed by the possessor, who has the necessary financial resources to possess such luxurious products. By shaping perception, the value proposition of a luxury piece can, hence, be co-created through external influence (Tynan et al., 2010).

As some possessors are aware of their increased social standing through the display of luxury products, they position themselves in relation to a particular group to which they want to belong, thereby enhancing their self-confidence (Husic & Cicic, 2009). This perceived self-fulfilment and/or self-confidence that emanates from possessing luxury products displays one facet of the distinction between luxury and non-luxury products, being elaborated on in Chapter 2. In this study, conceptualizing the co-creation of the luxury jewellery value proposition through its social surroundings emphasizes the importance of social positioning in relation to luxury jewellery possession. Therefore, the phenomenon of luxury is considered in more detail next.

1.2.3 The phenomenon of luxury

1.2.3.1 The luxury market and its development

The luxury industry has been among the fastest-growing sectors since the 1970s when Europe managed to strengthen its competitiveness globally (Atwal & Bryson, 2018). Demand for luxury items and specifically for luxury jewellery is still increasing and expended to grow the market in parallel with globalization (Austria et al., 2022) and with the global overconsumption trend (Kumar, 2019). The desire for luxury jewellery possession is considered in Germany in this thesis because first, it is the home to the researcher, and second, Germany, with its relatively high gross domestic product per capita of USD 43.311 in 2019 and USD 41.219 in 2020 (Trading economists, n.d.), is considered a high-income country**,** which leads to the assumption that it is home to luxury jewellery possessors.

This section considers market data for the luxury industry in general, and for luxury jewellery, on a global level, as well as specifically for Germany. In the general global luxury market, there is increasing demand for a wide variety of luxury products, strengthened through the increasing purchasing power, and increasing disposable incomes (specifically from the middle class), which leads to the overall growth of the market (Expert market research, 2021). The worldwide luxury goods market has expected revenue amounting to USD 312.60 billion in 2022 (Statista, 2022a), and the market is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate of 5.4% until 2027 (Statista, 2022a). In 2022, approximately 20% of total sales are generated through online business, with the largest luxury product segment being the luxury fashion industry (Statista, 2022a). Most of the sales generated in the worldwide luxury sector are made in the United States, with approximately USD 69.530 million in 2022 (Statista, 2022a).

When considering the worldwide luxury *jewellery* market specifically, the expected revenue for 2022 amounts to USD 23.27 billion in 2022 with a compound annual growth rate of 4.15% until 2027 (Statista, 2022b). In this sector, most sales are generated in China, with approximately USD 12.500 million in 2022 (Statista, 2022b).

At the German national level, the luxury market in general, according to Fortune business insights (2021) and for the last full year (2021) for which data is available, had a total revenue of USD 13.7 billion, with a compound annual growth rate of 18.8% between 2017 and 2020 (Statista, 2022c).

When data from Statista 2022 regarding the German luxury market, in general, are considered, similar results are reported. The expected revenue for 2022 amounts to USD 12.14 billion in 2022 with a compound annual growth rate of 8.18% until 2027 (Statista, 2022c). In Germany, the largest segment is luxury fashion with a market volume of USD 4.52 billion in 2022 (Statista, 2022c). Approximately 26% of total sales were generated through online sales in 2022, this is an even higher proportion when compared to global online sales (Statista, 2022c).

In the German luxury *jewellery* market, according to the Euromonitor International Report from April 2022 regarding Luxury jewellery in Germany, retail sales reached EUR 1.7 billion in 2021, growing strongly by 14% in 2021 compared to a significant decline in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Revenue is expected to increase at a compound annual growth rate of 4-6% (Euromonitor, 2022). Data from Statista (2022d) regarding the German luxury jewellery market identifies that revenue for the luxury jewellery segment in Germany is expected to amount to USD 0.29 billion in 2022, with an expected compound annual growth rate of 6.23% until 2027 (Statista, 2022d).

When considering the companies behind this industry, three major conglomerates represent the bulk of the luxury landscape in fashion and accessories (Husic & Cicic, 2008): Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton (LVMH), Compagnie Financière Richemont and Gucci, all being parent companies to a variety of brands (Husic & Cicic, 2008). For example, Louis Vuitton, Christian Dior, Fendi, Kenzo and Marc Jacobs, amongst others, belong to the LVMH group, while Cartier, Mont Blanc, Piaget and Van Cleef & Arpels, amongst others, belong to Richemont, and Yves Saint Laurent, Gucci, and Balenciaga and other brands belong to the Gucci group. The leading luxury jewellery companies LVMH and Compagnie Financière Richemont reported increases in sales even in the post-pandemic period (LVMH, 2021; Koltrowitz, 2022), with LVMH reporting record revenues of EUR 44.2 billion in the first three quarters of 2021, an increase of 46% over the previous year (LVMH, 2021). However, with 2020 marking the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, a comparison between 2021 performance and pre-pandemic performance in 2019 suggests that organic growth in 2021 is appropriate and demonstrates an 11% increase in 2019 (LVMH, 2021). LVMH 's watches and jewellery division alone recorded a 2021 growth in organic revenue of 11% compared with 2019 and 49% compared with 2020, again indicating clear business growth (LVMH, 2021). A similar growth trend can be observed for its competitor, and the second-largest, noteworthy player in the luxury field, Compagnie Financière Richemont. Sales increased to EUR 5.6 billion in 2021, with a 38% performance increase compared with the pre-pandemic period in 2019 (Koltrowitz, 2022). According to Euromonitor (2022), Louis Vuitton Deutschland GmbH was the leading luxury jewellery company in Germany in 2020, with a retail value share of 10% (Euromonitor, 2022).

The workforce behind this industry is also significant. According to Moraes et al. (2015), 'millions of people are employed by the global jewellery industry' (p.1). Childs (2014) more concretely stated that more than 13 million people work directly for the gold industry. Thus, some countries' economic efficiency is heavily affected by the luxury jewellery industry's performance (Childs, 2014; Cavalieri, 2012, as cited in Moraes et al., 2015).

Given the worldwide public health crisis due to Covid-19, the impact of the pandemic went beyond health and significantly impacted the world economy (Nath & Batra, 2020), and lead to an uncertain economic climate, and discretionary spending (Statista, 2022e). National lockdowns, social distancing policies and travel restrictions are all associated with these outcomes (Statista, 2022d). The result was an extreme worldwide economic decline in the global luxury market in 2020 (Statista, 2022e), and this included the luxury jewellery industry, with revenues for jewellery and watch retail declining by approximately 20% in

2020 (Statista, 2022d). Several implications need to be mentioned. The widespread distribution of the virus led to lockdowns with limitations to leave the home and closed stores, and thus, partly, lead many to have no possibility to work. This automatically led to employment restrictions, limited or no income, and a reduction of spending power for many consumers (D'Arpizio et al., 2020). Additionally, according to a McKinsey (2020) report, "20-30% of the revenue of the luxury industry is generated by the consumers buying luxury goods while travelling outside their home country" (Nath & Barta, 2020, p.138). Hence, travel restrictions imposed significant constraints with regard to the profitability of luxury businesses (Nath & Barta, 2020). Further, the supply chain of manufacturing companies was also massively affected by the crisis. Due to a lack of manpower and limited supplies of material, some production sites had to be temporarily closed or there were massive delays in deliveries, limiting product retail (Nath & Barta, 2020). These concerns were equally displayed in the report "The future of luxury: Bouncing back from COVID-19" by Bain & Company (2021), where a worldwide decline in sales by 20–22% in 2020 was also reported (D'Arpizio et al., 2021). Given the widespread of the pandemic, the effects were noticeable around the world and influenced the entire industry.

Before the COVID pandemic and its specific influence, several other societal and economic developments had led to growth in this industry. Consumers' disposable income and female employment have increased, while unemployment has decreased (Husic & Cicic, 2008; Truong, 2010; Yeoman & McMahon-Beattie, 2011) due to economic drivers such as German industrialization in the 1950s, leading to a rise of the middle class (Yeoman & McMahon-Beattie, 2011). As a result, more income can be spent both in general and specifically on luxury goods, which maintains market growth. These societal and economic changes have led to higher disposable income, which in turn has increased the demand for high-quality luxury products (Kang & Bae, 2016). Due to this general increase in income in

Western societies, consumers are willing and able to pay higher prices for products in general and for high-priced luxury goods in particular (Husic & Cicic, 2008). Furthermore, the rise in social media penetration and the resulting globalization through online content have impacted and are influencing product preferences and the desire for luxury goods around the world (Research and Markets, 2021). The societal developments that have led to the prospering of large parts of the global population have also affected emerging markets, leading to the growth of the wealthy class around the world (Maden, 2015; Silverstein & Fiske, 2003, 2005; Fiske & Silverstein, 2004; Yeoman & McMahon-Beattie, 2006, as cited in Truong, 2010). In the emerging economies of China, India, Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America in particular, the desire for luxury products is increasing (Verdict Research, 2007; Chadha & Husband, 2006, as cited in Tynan et al., 2010). The luxury industry has thus been able to increase prices, especially when compared with the non-luxury market (Stokburger-Sauer & Teichmann, 2011). The paradox is that despite luxury and non-luxury products having the same functional value, the former is demanded and fetch higher prices compared to the latter (Amaral & Loken, 2016).

The demand for material products has not only increased but also changed: People with an average income wish to imitate the lifestyle of the prosperous (O'Cass & Frost, 2022; Amaldoss & Jain, 2005), while others strive to possess superior-quality products (Vigneron & Johnson, 2004). Others still experience an internal drive for pleasure (Silverstein & Fiske, 2005, as cited in Truong, 2010). Even though each change in demand considered in isolation is an important aspect, the concurrence of these desires covers a broad group of society, which is important and increases the requirement for research in this area. When considering certain luxury areas such as fashion apparel, accessories, cosmetics, and fragrances, some contemporary researchers even describe the luxury market as a 'mass market', because aside from members of the richest social class being evident in the market, people with moderate incomes can also afford certain luxury products, for example, certain luxury handbags or accessories (Nueno & Quelch, 1998, as cited in Truong, 2010; Yeoman & McMahon-Beattie, 2006, as cited in Truong, 2010). Furthermore, luxury pieces that are of particular interest are those that offer emotional value through customer experiences (Tynan et al., 2009; Austria et al., 2022). Memorable in-store shopping experiences, for example, are expected to impact customer relationships (Austria et al., 2022). According to Pop and Zottu (2016), the experience can take place before, during or after possession, while these luxury items are 'more powerful than any other consumer good' (p.1011).

Since many companies generate their profits through the sale of products or goods, it can be assumed that a likely aim of organizations is to increase sales and thus revenue; however, the drawback is that it becomes challenging for those in the luxury industry to retain their 'luxury' status, especially if their products are not exclusive, 'hard to get' or rare. For organizations, striking a balance between satisfying high demand while protecting the product's exclusivity and scarcity is a complex challenge. However, considered from a consumer perspective, this rarity is one aspect that constitutes the underlying desire for luxury and is important to be maintained if the efforts of the organization are to succeed (Bian & Veloutsou, 2007). Communication strategies are being developed by product management and marketing teams to maintain this feeling of rarity (Tynan et al., 2009).

Although not within the scope of the present thesis, the sharing economy and collaborative consumption have seen recent growth, which has led to the emergence of luxury fashion rentals in the past years (Ruan et al., 2022). Though still emerging, an altered luxury field is expected to lead to changing business models, for example generating rental income for luxury organizations that are expected to amount to 10% of revenue by 2030 (Bain, 2022, as cited in Ruan et al., 2022), while the cost-efficiency of the second-hand market and renting opportunities may also lead to a decrease in demand for new products (Luxury Goods in Germany, 2021).

1.2.3.2 Luxury jewellery, its definition and the rationale for this thesis

Jewellery is considered a strong signifier of personal meaning and culture that can, in turn, offer insights into a person (Wright et al., 2008). Luxury jewellery is cherished widely due to its material value and the provided symbolic meaning it conveys (Austria et al., 2022). The present study focuses on the product category of luxury jewellery and its relation to possession. This product category is researched for several reasons, which are explained in this section.

Although there are different opinions among researchers regarding luxury jewellery – for example, Dewey (2009) considers jewellery to be an unnecessary and overly expensive kind of luxury product – this thesis seeks to offer a nuanced understanding by defining luxury jewellery. Consumers associate luxury products with an experiential, aesthetic and symbolic meaning rather than with their functional benefits and material ownership (Roper et al., 2013, as cited in Moraes et al., 2015; Tsaknaki et al., 2015). Although drawing a clear distinction between non-luxury and luxury products is difficult (Cornell, 2002, as cited in Wiedmann et al., 2007; Kaminakis et al., 2014), this thesis considers the following definitions of luxury jewellery (Table 1):

Table 1

Definitions of luxury jewellery

Definition	Author
Exclusive adornments worn on the body, or clothes	Tsaknaki et al., 2015

Crafted from high-quality and durable precious materials, such as gold, silver or platinum, and sometimes refined with gemstones	Jamal & Goode, 2001; Heine & Phan, 2011; Tsaknaki, Ferneaus & Jonsson, 2015
Relatively expensive	Kang & Park, 2016
Sold in combination with an exclusive service	Kapferer & Bastien, 2009, as cited in Eastman & Eastman, 2015
Scarce with limited availability	Janssen et al., 2014, as cited in Moraes et al., 2015
Support consumers in creating and communicating symbolic meaning	Heine & Phan, 2011; Tynan et al., 2010

According to Jamal and Goode (2001), 'Precious jewellery is likely to be considered by many as a very personal and cherished belonging with high levels of satisfaction attached to its possession' (p.141). Moreover, they state that it is a discretionary and expensive purchase for most consumers. As with general luxury products, the price of luxury jewellery and the resulting perceived high value symbolize wealth and social class (Tsaknaki et al., 2015). The definition of luxury jewellery for an individual is influenced by the subjective symbolic meaning behind the luxury jewellery piece and by, for instance, individual style preferences (eye-catching vs. discrete) or material preferences. Jewellery can encompass watches, cufflinks, earrings, rings, necklaces, bracelets, broaches, tiepins (Tsaknaki et al., 2015) and many other objects for personal adornment. This thesis examines *fine* luxury jewellery, which differs from other types of luxury products: 'Fine jewellery is metal in composition, such as fine gold, platinum, and sterling silver with or without gemstones' (Sanguanpiyapan & Jasper, (2010, p.152*)*, and has a unique composition of metal and stones. In this thesis, fine luxury jewellery is likely to be exclusive in terms of design, manufacturing, material composition, availability, or price.

Luxury jewellery contains differentiating characteristics, particularly its manufacturing: It is primarily handcrafted, and production is time-consuming, and partly customized, thereby supporting the development of personal associations with its uniqueness. The material's durability is another noteworthy aspect of high-grade manufacturing: Luxury jewellery mainly contains gold or platinum as key materials. By contrast, non-luxury jewellery mainly contains silver, nickel, or copper – materials that are susceptible to deformation or discolouration. The superior durability of luxury jewellery may lead to extremely long product life cycles compared with non-luxury jewellery. This is one of the reasons luxury jewellery is frequently used for wedding rings, which represent a product category intended for lifelong use (Tsaknaki et al., 2015).

As noted in self-perception research (e.g., Allport, 1937; Prelinger, 1959), the body plays a central role in relation to the extended self (Belk, 1988), and jewellery is one of the items visibly worn on easily recognizable body parts such as ears, chest or hands. In contrast to many other luxury products, for luxury jewellery, the body is the main platform for display (Venkatesh et al., 2010), while it is worn close to the body, meaning that the body plays a crucial role and acts as a platform for display and perception of aesthetic appearance (Venkatesh et al., 2010). This indicates close personal attachment (Kettley, 2005) and, as such, these pieces can carry strong personal meaning (Wright et al., 2008).

Moreover, most luxury product categories gain their luxurious position and recognition by originating from a certain brand and obviously displaying brand trademarks (Austria et al., 2022). Hence, the brand name, oftentimes clearly recognizable, is considered the main driver for the acquisition of the good (Husic & Cicic, 2008; Pop & Zottu, 2016). This is not always the case with luxury jewellery as is the focus of the present study. The relevance of a certain brand is often not key in the luxury product category, which is why it was excluded. Luxury jewellery does not focus solely on the brand as the chief symbolic device. With luxury jewellery, in many cases the display of a brand name is not as prominent as it is on other goods; instead, the piece is frequently visible and displayed at a site of meaning.

In addition, luxury goods, especially jewellery, are frequently perceived as timeless, particularly when contrasted with fashion trends (Venkatesh et al., 2010). This applies to luxury jewellery in particular because of its enduring nature. Considered from a consumer perspective, this means that luxury can be used as a constant tool to fulfil internal desires of self-fulfilment and self-reward (O'Cass & McEwen, 2004, as cited in Eastman & Eastman, 2015). Considered from an organizational perspective, the timelessness of luxury jewellery results in continuous demand for its possession and hence economic efficiency (Kim et al., 2016; Vigneron & Johnson, 2004; Kim & Ko, 2012). This interest in luxury jewellery stems mostly from women, who make up much of the target market, as can be seen by previous literature on luxury jewellery. Venkatesh et al. (2010), in their paper 'The aesthetics of luxury fashion, body and identity formation', focus only on female consumers, actively excluding men from their study, while Stokburger-Sauer and Teichmann (2013) assessed whether luxury consumption is solely 'a female thing' and found that 'women have a more positive attitude toward and a higher purchase intention of luxury brands versus non-luxury brands then men' (p.889). The higher interest from the female gender group is also demonstrated by Rai and Gopal (2017), who found that women often initiate luxury jewellery purchases. The above indicates an overrepresentation of women as target customers in the luxury jewellery segment; they are also expected to be overrepresented in the sample of the present thesis.

In summary, luxury jewellery is the object of interest in this research for two chief reasons. First, the issue of brand is not as prevalent in the luxury jewellery category as it is in other luxury categories, such as cars or fashion. Luxury jewellery pieces are comparatively small; therefore, an obvious brand display (e.g., a brand name or logo) or other noticeable brand attributes (e.g., a certain style or shape associated with that particular brand) are not always visible. Rather, the unique composition of metal and stones and the design of the object are paramount, which obviates the power of the brand that exists in other industries, including the automotive and fashion industries, and focuses on the intrinsic nature and the expressive quality of the object itself. Second, not only is luxury jewellery intimately associated with the body, which is the platform for its display (Venkatesh et al., 2010), but it also has some sense of longevity, and this potentially enables its display over an extended period.

Following a detailed discussion of possession, luxury and luxury jewellery in this section, the next section introduces the key construct of desire.

1.2.4 Desire

The motivation process for luxury consumption that drives consumers is informed by rationality as well as emotionality (Maden et al., 2015). The present thesis evaluates the desire to possess luxury jewellery. Through an evaluation of desire, a completely different and to date under-researched construct evolves: The desire to possess luxury jewellery is distinct from the sole consideration of luxury jewellery possession and extends previous knowledge by considering this passionate emotion called desire (Belk et al., 2003). In this extension, what is considered is not only the number of luxury jewellery pieces in a person's possession but also the person's desire to possess them, which may not necessarily reflect their existing possessions. A further reason why desire is evaluated in this thesis stems from findings by Chen (2009), who states that desire and consumers' value perceptions of certain objects may differ: Consumers' value perceptions do not always match their desires, while desires, instead of consumers' value of an object, are decisive for consumption (Chen, 2009).

This strengthens the necessity to evaluate desire in the specific context of consumption, as elaborated in this thesis.

Desire frequently, but not always, precedes ownership or possession (Noles & Gelman, 2014). The construct of ‘desire’ itself is unique, although authors and practitioners in the field often use it interchangeably with the terms ‘wants’ and ‘needs’. Maclaran (2013) clearly differentiates between these terms by stating, ‘In contrast to the imperial necessities of needs and the fanciful wishes of consumer wants, consumer desires instead involve a passionate fixation on a particular object. Our desires are both felt at the bodily level as well as envisioned in mental images’ (p.284). In other words, desire is a personal feeling of inner heat or craving (Belk et al., 2003), which this thesis assesses in connection with luxury jewellery possession.

The following section addresses the relevance and importance of this thesis, starting with the underlying problem and justification, followed by the expected contribution to the existing body of knowledge.

1.3 Relevance, importance and objectives

1.3.1 Problem statement

Existing research regarding the desire to possess luxury jewellery is scarce, even though possessions play a key role in personal, social and behavioural structures in western cultures and despite customers’ growing desire for luxury products, as indicated by continued sales growth. The majority of luxury consumption literature is concerned with grasping the role and function of external motivations (e.g., Amaldoss & Jain, 2005; Bagwell & Bernheim, 1996), while few studies have examined the influence of intrinsic motivation (Tsai, 2005, as cited in Truong et al., 2010, Truong & McColl, 2011). References to luxury appear in the works of, inter alia, Atwal and Williams (2009), who investigated luxury brand marketing and its experience; Li, Li and Kambele (2012), who investigated luxury fashion brand consumers; and Brun et al. (2008), who explored logistics and supply chain management in luxury fashion retail. To date, considerable literature has addressed the concept of luxury and luxury consumption, including Moraes et al. (2015), who sought to understand ethical luxury consumption through practice theories; Husic and Cicic (2008), who elaborated on luxury consumption factors; and Stokburger-Sauer and Teichmann (2011), who researched the role of gender in luxury consumption.

Further knowledge generation and research are needed to determine the underlying factors driving this specific phenomenon. Ultimately, through the results of this thesis regarding the luxury jewellery industry, recommendations can be made for dealing with the desire for its possession in a sophisticated way.

The chapter continues by introducing the purpose of the present thesis, the research objective, the proposed research question, and an introduction to methods.

1.3.2 Purpose of the study, research objective, research question and introduction to research methods

No previous research has evaluated the influencing factors concerning the desire to possess luxury jewellery. This research aims to contribute knowledge to explain the desire for possessions in the area of luxury jewellery and to expand the scope of common consumption and ownership. To do so, the present study extends the existing body of knowledge by conducting quantitative surveys with those who possess luxury jewellery pieces.

Based on existing literature, this study explores the following essential concepts that drive possession: the self (e.g., Belk, 1988), emotional and personal associations (e.g., Jamal & Goode, 2001) and the external characteristics of luxury (e.g., Atwal & Williams, 2009). This thesis aims to extend the view of Moraes et al. (2015), who state that luxury possession is frequently associated with a symbolic experience. This thesis emphasizes an integrated approach to considering the desire for possession in relation to luxury jewellery and its underlying motivating factors, while consciously excluding the otherwise dominating factor of brands in the product category of fine luxury jewellery.

Before the literature is reviewed, the study's objective and its specific research question are clarified. Based on the literature review, the hypotheses developed to detail the nature of the expected relationships regarding the desire to possess luxury jewellery. Therefore, the research objective is to test whether the hypotheses can be supported by an evaluation of the initial model using structural equation modelling (SEM) (Shuttleworth, 2008). The structured quantitative data-generation process using surveys should enable both generalizability of the results and predictability (Leung, 2015).

RESEARCH QUESTION: What factors influence the desire to possess luxury jewellery amongst possessors of such jewellery?

The research question is assessed from the perspective of the possessor. An understanding of what factors positively influence luxury jewellery possession should lead to an understanding of their degree of influence and their impact on luxury jewellery possession. Interrelationships among the independent variables can affect the SEM model and the extent to which the independent and the latent variables can explain the dependent variable (Malhotra et al., 2012). They can provide more detail about quantitative relationships in terms of correlational research, which is a relevant aspect to consider in this specific research area.

To collect the necessary data for this thesis, a quantitative method was considered to be most appropriate. Specifically, to test the applicability of the hypothesized influencing factors on the desire for luxury jewellery possession and their degree of influence, after a piloting phase, a survey was considered the appropriate methodology, for which an online questionnaire was distributed to possessors of luxury jewellery using snowball sampling. The questionnaire was distributed digitally in and around the researchers' social network, which was in the western region of Germany. For subsequent data analysis, SEM was applied to test the proposed model of this thesis that developed from the hypothesized relationships among constructs. This was a result of the literature review presented in Chapter 2. The research methodology is then elaborated on in Chapter 3.

The relevance and justification of the present thesis are highlighted next.

1.3.3 Justification and relevance of proposed research

Considering consumers and the luxury industry simultaneously, it is meaningful to better understand consumers by exploring the luxury consumption trend in detail (Kang & Bae, 2016). This thesis provides insights into how the desire to possess luxury jewellery impacts the luxury jewellery industry and enables one to derive specific measures to accelerate business activities accordingly.

Previously introduced concepts indicate the existence of literature considering consumer behaviour (Khaniwale, 2015; Kang & Bae, 2016; Thakur & Kaur, 2015), luxury (Husic & Cicic, 2008; Kapferer & Bastien, 2009) and possession (Belk, 1988; Wattanasuwan, 2005). However, the focus on the specific product category of luxury jewellery, and the exact reasons for desiring luxury jewellery were mostly disregarded. Moreover, a significant quantity of literature discusses the intention to buy (Ajzen, 1991), whereas current research often does not focus on the owner or possessor of a piece of jewellery. Another aspect is that existing literature on luxury consumption mostly deals with external, cultural or social influencing factors (Khaniwale, 2015), while internal factors are frequently not considered in detail (Tsai, 2005, as cited in Truong et al., 2010; Truong & McColl, 2011). This research defines possession as something one owns and a tool to express self-definition and self-identity; it is different from either consumption or ownership as a sole construct.

Considering the aforementioned existing literature, this study assesses the constructs of the emotional significance of possessions, possession attachment, self-extension, the consumer's need for uniqueness (CNFU), social identity, and the symbolic meaning of luxury, as well as their relationship to the desire to possess luxury jewellery.

The next section elaborates on the extent to which the present thesis is expected to contribute to the existing body of knowledge and the extent to which this study fills the research gap.

1.3.4 Expected knowledge contribution

This thesis contributes to the existing body of knowledge by seeking to explain the complexity of the desire to possess luxury jewellery and its influencing factors. Explaining why people desire luxury jewellery is important for the academic field as, to date, this topic has been under-researched, and limited theoretical insight into the concept of desire is available concerning possession, specifically when considering the particular product category of luxury jewellery. Insights into the desire to possess luxury jewellery are relevant because possessions play a germane role in personal, social and behavioural constitutions in western societies, and they consciously extend on current theories that mainly address the 'point of purchase' or 'purchase intention', while this thesis concentrates on how people relate to objects that are already in their possession. A further major contribution lies in the uniqueness of the product category of luxury jewellery, which is particularly interesting and distinct from mundane objects, as elaborated upon at the end of Chapter 1. Furthermore, the value of possessions and the nature of their acquisition are assessed; both are relevant aspects that have received limited attention in the current context of luxury jewellery.

The findings of the present thesis may be particularly interesting for luxury jewellery retailers, as in-depth knowledge of what drives consumers' desires to possess certain luxury jewellery products is expected to impact the demand for these products. Therefore, knowing which factors play a role in the desire to possess luxury jewellery may reveal the focal points of commercial communication and product positioning. When people perceive a desire to possess luxury jewellery, they may feel the need to possess a specific product, and a product purchase may be a likely result, leading to an increase in sales for luxury jewellery retailers. Knowledge of the influencing factors for this desire is thus relevant for retailers.

As a conclusion to Chapter 1, the structure of the thesis is presented next.

1.4 Thesis structure

The present thesis consists of six chapters, including the introduction and a conclusion. Figure 1 provides an overview of the focus areas per chapter.

The thesis proceeds with Chapter 2, which reviews the most relevant literature in the context of luxury jewellery possession. It provides an overview of previous findings on possession as the key construct, followed by a thorough elaboration on the constructs explored in this study, namely possession attachment, the emotional significance of possessions, self-extension, CNFU, social identity and the symbolic meaning of luxury to provide an academic basis for this research and fill the identified gaps in the literature.

Chapter 3 explains the research methodology. The research philosophy is presented, and the data collection design and method are described. The main part of this chapter outlines the operationalization of the measurement scales used to assess the variables presented in the literature review. Questionnaire sampling and testing are subsequently outlined before the approach to data collection is explained. Finally, the approach to data analysis and its statistical treatment using the SEM technique is explained, including the assessment of model fit and the related model fit indices relevant to assessing the measurement model and the structural model respectively.

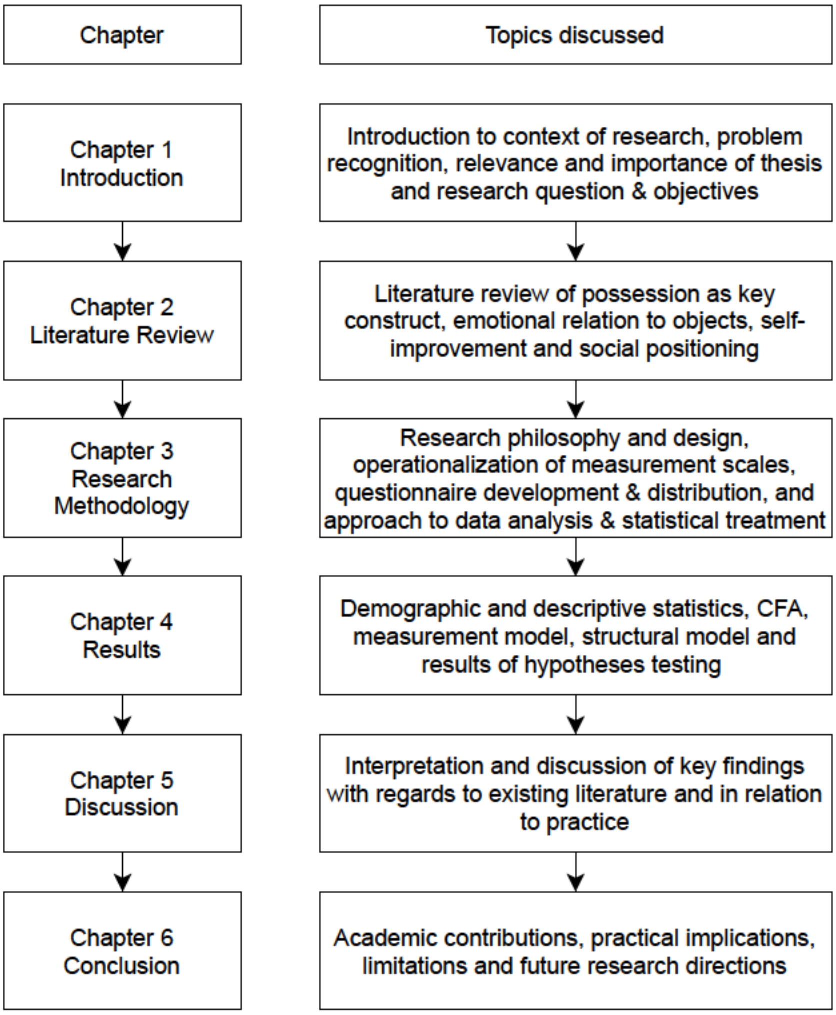
Chapter 4 begins with a respondent overview as well as background information on data preparation before data analysis. The descriptive statistics are summarized before the results of the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) are presented. The main part of this chapter outlines the results of the measurement model and the structural model, including an elaboration on model fit and model re-specifications. The chapter ends by presenting the final model and the respective results of hypothesis testing.

Chapter 5 discusses the revealed findings from the previous chapter with regard to existing literature and the research context and provides potential explanations for certain expected and unexpected outcomes. Furthermore, it discusses the significance of the outcomes with the hypothesized relationships.

In Chapter 6, the thesis concludes with a compilation and evaluation of the main findings regarding the hypotheses. It includes a review of the academic and practical implications and highlights the contributions this thesis makes in comparison with findings from previous literature. Finally, the limitations of the thesis and suggestions for future research are outlined.

Figure 1

Structure of the thesis



Chapter 2. Literature Review

This chapter discusses relevant previous academic findings, concepts, theories and definitions of the desire to possess luxury jewellery. It also identifies the assumed influencing factors of this desire on the emotional significance of possessions, possession attachment, self-extension, CNFU, social identity and the symbolic meaning of luxury. Academic backgrounds and related insights are addressed, and gaps in existing literature are emphasized.

2.1 Introduction

The desire to possess luxury jewellery continues to be underexplored, particularly in a holistic evaluation of humans' emotional relations to objects, self-improvement and social positioning. This is of particular importance because the possession of luxury products has increased in importance for younger consumers, specifically Generation Z and millennials, who are characterized by having different motivators and personalities than other generations with regard to luxury consumption (Wintermeier, 2021; Austria et al., 2022); and who come from Asia as well as western markets (the US and Europe) (Wintermeier, 2021), and its evaluation is therefore appropriate.

Research has, however, revealed that the decision process regarding possession is typically long, and motivations are complex and often even subconscious (Pop & Zottu-Z, 2016). While previous research has investigated issues such as purchase decision behaviour (see e.g., Bettman, 1970; Fishbein, 1963; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Mitchell & Olson, 1981; Rosenberg, 1950) or how an attitude towards a product develops (Jamal & Goode, 2001; Cuomo et al., 2019), no research, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, has yet investigated the desire to possess luxury jewellery, which represents a strong signifier of personal and socio-cultural meaning (Wright et al., 2008; Kauppinen-Räisänen et al., 2019). In their recent work, Kang and Bae (2016) provide a dynamic model of luxury consumption in which they reflect that luxury provides social, rather than functional, meaning, which makes investigating luxury jewellery from a socio-psychological perspective particularly interesting.

Possession is an abstract phenomenon, and it has long been considered alongside the notions of 'property', 'acquisition', 'rights', and 'control' in legal, sociological and psychological studies. In such work, possession has also been connected to the idea of 'sentiments':

> …a sentiment is a complex disposition to experience various emotions in regard to the object upon which these emotions are focused… the relation of the individual to his [sic] property may best be understood psychologically in terms of… the sentiment of possession; that is of the grouping of various emotional tendencies about the property object itself. (Beaglehole, 1932, p.3)

Here, the focus is on the emotional relationship between the person and their possession; in doing so, early and persistent distinctions have been made between different 'forms' of possession. Ginsberg (1937) suggested that value is attached to objects in two ways: either because they fulfil wishes or satisfy needs, or because the value was learned through conditioning. According to him, it was known in 1937 already that objects of the same initial value that may even be indifferent can become interesting at some point through, for example, the attachment of value, the occurrence of events or memorable experiences. In this way, a conditioned attachment and value can arise without any initial value or attractiveness of the object. This suggests that possessed objects have no 'intrinsic value' apart from the value individuals assign to them, and in many ways, it may well be this second variety of objects that come to have the most personal significance or be charged with the highest degree of emotion. Luxury jewellery may constitute such an object: Its components have little 'intrinsic value', but scarcity and/or 'conditioning or assimilation' provide a basis for its possession, and those who possess it often weave many complex emotions around it, including desire, hope, fear, anxiety and disappointment, as well as pleasure in attainment and joy in domination. Given these characteristics, there is a clear understanding that people do not simply seek luxury possessions to satisfy or fulfil any direct (physiological) needs, but rather that such 'possession' is clothed in meaning and emotion. This offers an intriguing focus for the examination of possession.

Given the developed understanding of possession in domains such as sociology and social psychology, it is surprising that this phenomenon has not received much attention within the field of consumer behaviour, where the issue of 'purchase intention' has been the focus. The present research explores luxury jewellery possession from a consumer behaviour perspective. Doing so results in several challenges, for instance defining what constitutes luxury jewellery, compared with other jewellery products, in terms of its visibility and even its material value, and perhaps even more importantly, the aspects that drive, to different degrees, consumers' relationships with their possessions. Given these circumstances, emotional relations to objects, self-improvement and social positioning are examined in this research to provide a basis to better investigate the desire for luxury jewellery possession. To this end, this research elaborates on the population of luxury jewellery possessors.

The literature review begins with a discussion of several theories, starting with an in-depth socio-psychological analysis of the central concept of possession, including the relevant aspects of consumption, as well as luxury and luxury jewellery in particular. The main body of the literature review explores emotional, self, and social aspects and their influence on the desire for luxury jewellery possession. In the respective sections, a discussion of the most influential aspects of the variables is presented, each resulting in the development of hypotheses that are then tested in this research.

First, the methodology of the systematic literature review (SLR) process is introduced.

2.1.1 Methodology of the systematic review process

Identifying apparent and obscure variables in this specific setting requires a thorough review of relevant and reliable existing academic literature. An SLR, aiming to 'synthesise areas of conceptual knowledge that contribute to a better understanding of the issues', was conducted as part of this research project and is used to address the research question at hand (Jesson et al., 2011; Xiao & Watson, 2019). This research expects to identify interrelationships among variables, which should enable the deduction of possible hypotheses regarding the specific research setting in this thesis.

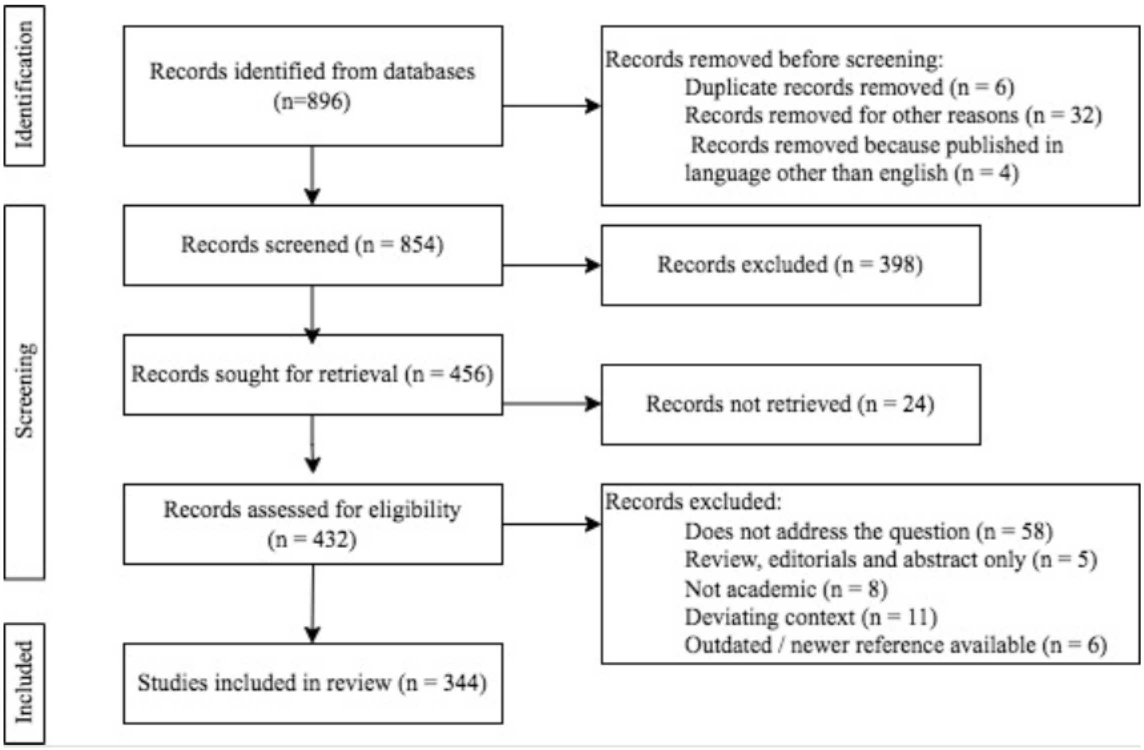
A systematic literature review process was carried out according to the industry standard of Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA). According to Andreini and Bettinelli (2017), 'Literature reviews are key elements in every discipline as they provide a summary of existing evidence that is needed to inform new academic projects, policy, and practice' (p.1).

To conduct an SLR, the present thesis applied the process as suggested by Xiao and Watson (2019), consisting of 1) search the literature, 2) screen for inclusion, 3) assess the quality of the literature, 4) extract the data, 5) analyse and synthesize the data, and finally 6) report the findings.

Figure 2 details the SLR process applied in the present thesis.

Figure 2

Flow chart of systematic literature review (SLR)



The following section outlines the article search and selection as part of the SLR.

2.1.1.1 Article search and selection.

Several key bibliographic and electronic databases were browsed to retrieve conceptually and empirically relevant records and databases regarding the desire to possess luxury jewellery (Sahu et al., 2020; Jesson et al., 2011). The most important database was the in-house library database of the University of Gloucestershire, called the 'University of Gloucestershire Worldcat', which is linked to multiple online and offline libraries worldwide (such as Science Direct and Scopus). The second relevant database was Google Scholar. Together, they made up most of the databases used, although the Emerald database was also referred to.

In adherence to the protocol for the literature search strategy, the key search terms used to browse those databases were selected based on the research topic and research objectives to retrieve appropriate results. For example, keywords were selected from the research objectives and research questions. Similar and related words complemented the search (Jesson et al., 2011; Xiao & Watson, 2019). The most relevant ones were ‘luxury’, ‘possession’, ‘possession of luxury’, ‘luxury jewellery’, ‘consumption’, ‘desire for luxury jewellery possession’, ‘motivation’, ‘emotional relation to objects’, ‘emotional significance of possessions’, ‘possession attachment’, ‘self-improvement’, ‘self-extension’, ‘consumers’ need for uniqueness’, ’social positioning’, ‘symbolic meaning of luxury’, ‘social identity’ and ‘impression management’. Identified keywords were also partly searched for in combination with one another.

As a next step, all initially identified articles were sorted for a detailed review based on the exclusion and inclusion criteria. These criteria for integrated literature selection and the rationale behind them are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

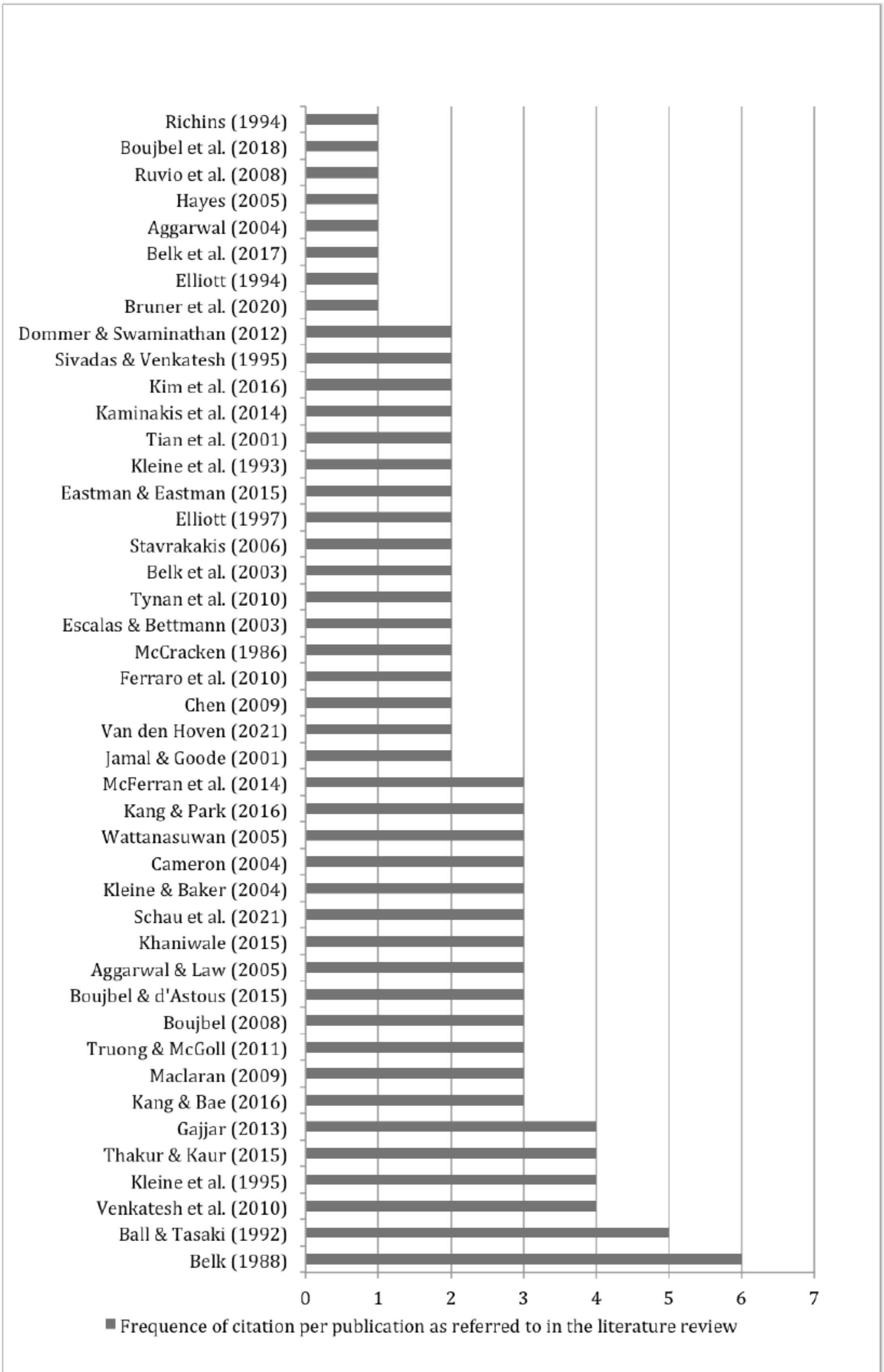
Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Inclusion and exclusion criteria	Rationale
Research published in a language other than English was excluded from this thesis.	Lack of sufficient understanding by the researcher.
Regarding publication type, only original sources (e.g., academic journal articles) were included, while reviews, letters and editorials were excluded.	To ensure scientific standards.
Peer-reviewed journals were included.	Scientific quality is assured through independent researchers in the field.
Sources published between 1890 and 2022 were included.	This extensive period enables relevant insights to be included.

The initially identified studies and articles retrieved from the databases were screened, resulting in the inclusion of $n = 344$ publications in the systematic review. The thesis also included relevant articles through forward and backwards referencing, accounting for 64 of the 118 publications. Figure 3 provides an overview of the 40 most influential articles based on the frequency of citations referred to in the literature review.

Figure 3

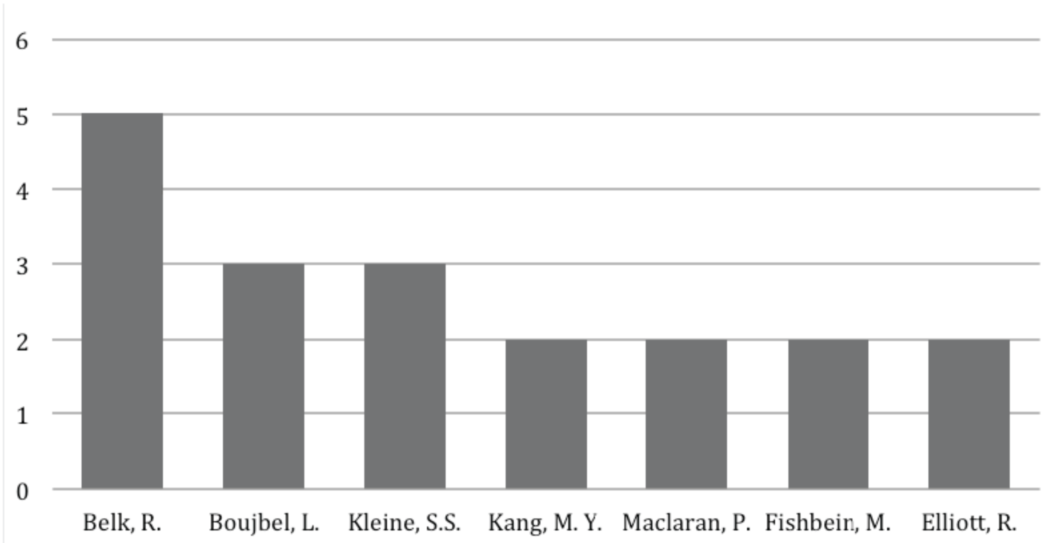
Most influential articles based on the frequency of citations referred to in the literature



Additionally, Figure 4 depicts the major contributing authors based on the number of articles published and cited in the present thesis.

Figure 4

Major contributing authors (two or more articles)



From all literature scanned and analysed, relevant theories and findings were extracted and collected in an Excel data extraction table indicating authors and papers in the top columns, and subject areas in the leftmost row. The main selection criterion for papers to be considered was that they had to contain relevant information related to one of the following: 'background on the topic'; 'market overview'; 'motivating factors for (luxury) consumption', namely 'buying/purchasing', 'possession', 'luxury', 'luxury products/luxury goods', 'luxury jewellery', 'consumption (of luxury goods)', 'self-concept', 'status (consumption)', 'consumer behaviour', 'luxury customers', 'desire', external influences (e.g., 'symbolic meaning', 'emotions', 'social identity' and 'physical appearance') and internal influences (e.g., 'need for uniqueness', 'distinction', 'self-identity', 'symbolic meaning' and 'perceived value').

This variety of selection criteria at the start of the research explains why the content matrix is extensive, but more importantly, it indicates that this research is based on a deep and comprehensive elaboration of scientific literature. The synthesis of the results of the literature analysis ultimately ends in the model presented at the end of this chapter.

The research aim of this thesis is to test the correlation between certain independent variables regarding the dependent variable of luxury jewellery possession. To achieve this goal, it is important to gain a deeper understanding of possession, consumer behaviour and the desire for luxury jewellery possession as well as of the luxury area and the category of luxury jewellery in general. These elements are detailed in the next sections.

2.2 Possession as the key construct

In the field of consumption and consumer behaviour, goods can be consumed in different ways, with consumption through purchase and possession, on the one hand, being central (Chen, 2009). On the other hand, art in a museum can also be consumed by viewing and experiencing it temporarily, indicating the complexity of the construct of consumption. The present thesis considers the construct of possession as the basis of this research.

2.2.1 Possession and its link to the self

Numerous products or objects can be possessed and thus be of value to someone, while the desire to possess certain things varies from person to person. The relationship between objects and persons and characteristics for self-definition, their emotional value and the social influences on possessions play a key role in possession and will be elaborated upon when defining the construct (Maclaran, 2013; Jain, 2017).

A recent publication by Belk et al. (2017) refers to Bagozzi (2013), stating that 'consumption begins and ends with the self' (p.255). Belk adds to this statement that no matter what the goal, whether to develop or strengthen one's independent self or to strengthen one's self-image through groups, consumption and possession play a crucial role in today's consumer society. According to Chen (2009), possession and the related individual extension of the self are assumed to be ‘the most basic and powerful fact of consumer behaviour’ (Belk, 1988, p.139). Very early research by Sartre in 1943 already indicated this relation by stating that possessions are relevant to people, as they tell people who they are and, to some extent, represent a defining characteristic of the self (Sartre, 1943). Thus, for many, possessions aid in determining identities and act as objects to think and communicate with. Ferraro et al. (2011) developed this idea and named it the ‘possession-self-link’, referring to meaningful possessions that serve to gain self-identity and build up self-definition.

First, this thesis considers Belk’s (1988) work on possessions and the extended self. While he states that one regards possessions as parts of oneself, indicating that ‘we are what we have’ (e.g., Van Esterick 1986; Feirstein 1986; Rosenbaum 1972), he also suggests that people’s identities are to some extent formed by a transfer of the possession’s identity onto themselves (Belk, 1988). In an advancement of his initial formulation of the extended self, Belk et al. (2017) have further developed Belk’s own idea and state that people most likely have various selves that may contradict each other, for example, the work versus the family self (Tian & Belk, 2005, as cited in Belk et al., 2017). However, this thesis diverges from his proposition that the emphasis on material possessions decreases over time, as numerous statistical indicators show that consumption has steadily increased over the past 60 years (see, e.g., Weller, 2002), and at least some of this increased consumption is likely to be framed as possession. Yet, Belk’s statement that a consumer’s emphasis on material possessions remains high throughout life is expected to be confirmed by findings from the present thesis:

> Emphasis on material possessions tends to decrease with age but remains high throughout life as we seek to express ourselves through possessions and use material possessions to seek happiness, remind ourselves of experiences, accomplishments,

> and other people in our lives, and even create a sense of immortality after death. (Belk, 1988, p.160)

Although this thesis is in alignment with the aforementioned findings dominated by Belk, other authors have perceived the need for even further specification of the term possession, as indicated by the fact that additional findings in the field have occurred since 1988. Maclaran (2009) makes a relevant point when summarizing,

> As McCracken (1986) theorizes, we do not gain a sense of possession of things simply by purchasing and taking physical control of them. Rather, we often must perform possession rituals that may include cleaning, showing off, photographing, and talking about our new acquisition. […] We also personalize these objects by placing our stuff in them to make them truly our own. We thereby remove traces of former owners and impose our own identity on the possession (Belk, 1988). (p.285)

Moreover, this study's examination of the possession of luxury jewellery does not privilege the aspect of display – it is equally interested in people who possess luxury jewellery and who store it in private safes or safe deposit boxes most of the time, instead of wearing and displaying it in public.

Further considerations around the construct of possession give hints on the connection between possession and the social influence on it, among other things shaped by the symbolic meaning of products for certain social groups, which is elaborated upon next. Already in 1978, Douglas and Isherwood stated that the meaning of goods stems from social contexts and is not based primarily on the fulfilment of basic human needs, as one might expect. Later, Escalas and Bettmann (2003) mentioned the shared understanding of the strength of a certain symbolic meaning of products, whose purpose is to communicate a sense of belonging to or differentiation from certain groups. Tynan et al. (2010) advanced this position by stating that the meanings and value of goods are commonly co-created by both consumers and brands.

Several authors agree, stating that the meaning of possession – involving the creation of a sense of coherence and shared identity and investment in purposeful aspirations important to oneself (Steger, 2011, cited in Dezutter et al., 2013) – is frequently created socially, not only by reference groups of friends, family, and acquaintances but also by subjective experiences or personal achievements (King et al., 2006, as cited in Dezutter et al., 2013). Thus, society plays a role in influencing the meaning of consumption and possessions, which in turn are expected to influence the desire for certain possessions.

When considering possessions and the self in a social context, the presentation of the self to others is key; this self-presentation is desired to gain prestige (Wilcox et al., 2009, as cited in Eastman et al., 2021). In this regard, the phenomenon of the *Veblen effect* is mentioned; it describes a consumer's willingness to pay a premium price for a product that the purchaser perceives to be more prestigious than a less expensive, functionally equivalent option (Bagwell & Bernheim, 1996, as cited in Chenavaz & Eynan, 2021). Here, the perception of 'prestigiousness' must be highlighted, as it is highly subjective and can vary between individuals and over time. However, occasionally, a perception of prestigiousness is expected to be the case, for example when people perceive a luxury wedding ring to be more prestigious than one that costs less, even though it has the same functionality and symbolism of the matrimonial bond between two people. As will be seen in the operationalization of constructs that follow in the methodology chapter, certain item formulations touch on prestigiousness.

Considering the above-mentioned points, the present thesis provides specificity regarding the product category of luxury jewellery because the reasons that drive the desire to possess products in this category are expected to be diverse and impacted by internal as well as external factors that extend beyond simple ownership. Before doing so, possession as a tool for distinction is introduced next.

2.2.2 Possession and the concept of distinction

The 'concept of distinction', which is frequently used in social contexts when people distinguish by the distinctions they make (Bordieu, 1984), is the unifying idea related to the desire to possess luxury jewellery, one's emotional relation to objects, self-improvement and social positioning. In the process of distinguishing oneself from others, the consumer is the decision-maker and thus the exporter of a possession – regardless of whether it is desirable. That said, the increased supply of products, the increase in social media marketing communications and the consequent increase in the desire for possessions, provoked by profit-oriented organizations, highlights the overarching influence organizations have on individual consumers and their attitudes (Gajjar, 2013; Duffett, 2017; Austria et al., 2022). From an organization's perspective, those oriented towards an increase in revenue frequently promote their products to consumers to influence product choices at the point of purchase, while consumers are being exposed to already-saturated markets. This occurrence indicates that the increased demand and consumption is not solely based on an increase in consumers' intrinsically motivated desire, but also stems from their external, increased exposure to the promotion of consumption and in turn the resulting evaluation of ownership and possession. Recognizing this phenomenon is relevant because it indicates that influencing factors affect the desire for luxury jewellery possession.

After this section's evaluation of possession, its link to the self and the concept of distinction, the following section discusses the value of possessions.

2.2.3 Possessions and their value

When examining the concept of possession (i.e., the way in which people relate to objects after their acquisition), the value attached to possessions must be taken into consideration. In

1988, Belk stated that '…we cannot hope to understand consumer behaviour without first gaining some understanding of the meanings that consumers attach to possessions' (Belk, 1988, p.139).

When discussing value and the value of possessions, the perception of that value and the consumer value attached to possessions is of relevance, as they are different from the monetary value attached to objects and possessions, which is an objective cost–benefit trade-off (Chen, 2009). Consumer value refers to a person's subjective assessment and valuation of an object (Holbrook, 1999, as cited in Chen, 2009), and this value can be assessed differently by different people (Hirschman, 1983, as cited in Chen, 2009). The value of purchased products might be different from what was intended by the inventor of the product. From a business perspective, companies produce products and establish their value to make them attractive to consumers (Schau et al., 2021). Companies even co-create value together with customers to ensure a product's success, which is mostly assessed based on sales volume (Schau et al., 2021). Also, the value may change over time, and it can be perceived differently from one person to another.

With regard to the value of possessions, there are two related concepts regarding possession: the snob effect and the bandwagon effect. They are briefly described to provide valuable insights and background knowledge on the construct of possession and its value.

The *snob effect* occurs when demand for a specific product decreases *as the* overall number of buyers increases – essentially, scarcity is sought. This effect occurs among people who want to differentiate themselves from others and desire uniqueness (Leibenstein, 1950). However, this effect also presents the luxury industry with a permanent balancing act: on the one hand, the need to be profitable and therefore successful by making sufficient revenue (in parts through mass dissemination) and, on the other hand, the need to be 'sufficiently' exclusive while facing the risk of being perceived by customers as easily accessible, resulting in a loss of exclusive appeal (Stępień, 2021; Yeoman & McMahon-Beattie, 2014). Kapferer & Bastien (2009) referred to this idea of exclusivity and stated that:

> The aspect of exclusivity is widely understood as a key characteristic of luxury products (Kapferer & Bastien 2009; Okonkwo, 2009). In this context, limited accessibility and rarity are cornerstones of luxury and justify their price premium. A sense of exclusivity should be maintained at all customer contact points, which demands specific locations, excellent product presentation and skilled sales personnel (Kapferer & Bastien 2009, as cited in Hennigs et al., 2012, p.31)

The issues Hennigs et al. (2012) raise address the fact that any such company produces a desire for a certain thing, while at the same time trying to limit product availability so as not to over-saturate the market. With the *bandwagon effect*, one individual wants to be like others in their reference group. This results in the demand to possess the same (or similar) goods; the desire to possess a product thus increases as the number of people who possess it increases (Tynan et al., 2010).

As these phenomena have been identified within consumer research in general, it seems plausible that they will apply to the possession of luxury jewellery. As an example, according to the snob effect, the desire to possess a product may decrease. Each of the effects has a potential relationship to the luxury jewellery market. There is significant overlap when considering that premium prices are being paid for products with less expensive, functionally equivalent alternatives, as described in the Veblen effect, while in the luxury industry, premium prices are being paid for luxury jewellery, which mostly does not have any additional functional value (e.g., bracelets or necklaces). A need for uniqueness is expected amongst people with a desire to possess luxury jewellery, which is fundamentally what is described in the snob effect, where demand correlates negatively with uniqueness. For people who have a desire to possess luxury jewellery but a low need for uniqueness, the bandwagon effect could apply, since there is a high need for in-group identification, which ultimately increases demand.

The following section evaluates the diverse nature of acquisition when it comes to possession and the complexity that correlates with this diverse nature.

2.2.4 Nature of acquiring possessions

With regard to possessing luxury jewellery, that a luxury jewellery piece is in one's possession is self-evident, though the history of acquisition and how a product became a possession can be very different. Possession itself does not deal with this variation when it comes to the nature of possession. Possessions and luxury jewellery pieces can be purchased, gifted, inherited or found, to name a few, showing that the nature of acquiring a certain piece may vary. In the present thesis, the questionnaire will ask study participants about the way in which their luxury jewellery pieces were obtained. However, it must be mentioned that a differentiation based on those acquisition-based characteristics is extremely complex, as one person may, for example, have obtained numerous luxury jewellery pieces but in different ways, while the meaning of the nature of acquisition may also vary from case to case. For example, an engagement ring, being a gift, is perhaps valuable to the recipient, while a chain as a gift from a person one does not like, or with whom one has a conflict, may not be valuable and desirable at all.

A further facet regarding the nature of acquisition stems from access-based and collaborative consumption. Due to younger consumer classes being increasingly interested in luxury and specifically luxury fashion, business models are changing to encounter motivations of those 'luxury newcomers' who are younger, less affluent, less interested in conspicuous consumption and more concerned with sustainable consumption (Ruan et al., 2022). Especially in the luxury fashion industry, the sharing economy saw substantial growth, changing consumption from purchase and ownership to collaborative consumption through renting (Ruan et al., 2022). That way, consumers can temporarily acquire and own a luxury product for a considerably lower price (Gong et al., 2022). Renting luxury jewellery is not yet widely used in contemporary society and, therefore, renting is not considered as part of the nature of acquisition in this research; however, its emergence is acknowledged.

The nature of acquisition in general is assessed in the present thesis, but a detailed evaluation of the desire to possess luxury jewellery based on the nature of acquisition is beyond the scope of the study and requires further research.

Closing this section, the evaluation of desire in the context of luxury jewellery possession and how it differs from other constructs are outlined in the next section.

2.2.5 Desire in the context of luxury jewellery possession

2.2.5.1 Distinguishing the meaning of desire from needs, wants, wishes or motivations.

Desires are an elementary component with regard to human motivators (Boujbel & d'Astous, 2015). Several researchers have evaluated the concept of desire from an emotional and a psychological perspective while also considering social aspects (Belk et al., 2003; Boujbel, 2008). In line with the Handbook of Marketing Theory (Maclaran, 2013), the present thesis is guided by the research of Belk et al. (2003) on defining and differentiating desire from other concepts such as needs, wants, wishes and motivations. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1970), as soon as a need for something (e.g., the physiological need for water or food) is satisfied (e.g., by drinking or eating something), the need disappears relatively quickly (in this case because thirst and hunger are fulfilled). By contrast, wants or wishes are less necessary and are dispensable; they emerge in the mind and commonly differ from person to person, which is not the case for the needs proposed by Maslow (1970), which are physical (Maclaran, 2013). Furthermore, wants and wishes tend to emerge for a category of things, such as objects (e.g., cars) or activities (e.g., going on vacation), whereas the desire for material objects is similar to the emotions that occur in passionate and intimate love relationships (Ahuvia, 2005, as cited in Maclaran, 2013) – they are intense and constitute a 'state of anxious anticipation that is itself pleasurable and desirable (Belk et al., 2003)' (Maclaran, 2013).

When considering desire in the context of possession, though Chen (2009) challenges the presumption that 'possession is the ultimate expression of consumer desire' (Chen, 2009, p.937), the present thesis assumes that this is the case and expects it to hold for the desire to possess luxury jewellery. That said, a distinction must be made between desire and motivation. Chen (2009) gives evidence of the similarity of the two concepts, in which he assumes that motivations are often of a social, functional, or financial nature, as in economics (Moureau 2000a, as cited in Chen, 2009), and that motivations provide a rational explanation for the 'reason why'. However, since he also states that consumption assumes the involvement and participation of consumers, being described as emotional and mental 'pulling' (Belk et al., 2003, as cited in Chen, 2009), Chen rather considers desire as an advancement of motivations and refers to desire as 'the interplay of … bodily passions and mental reflections' (Belk et al., 2003, as cited in Chen, 2009) throughout. Desire can trigger action, but it can also bridge the relationship between person and product, even when the product is already owned, in this context taking on a 'transferral' role. With the desire for luxury jewellery, it is expected that rational aspects such as value, emotional relatedness and feelings of superiority play a significant role. Another differentiating aspect of motivation is that it describes a previous, preliminary state regarding consumption that usually precedes ownership. By contrast, desire can still be perceived even after an object is owned, which is not the case with the preliminary motivation for ownership. The present study is interested in this anticipatory state detached from sole motivation and ownership.

Numerous views and theoretical approaches are described in the existing literature. Table 3 draws together the different views per author.

Table 3

Overview of authors' views and perspectives on desire versus neighbouring constructs for (luxury jewellery) possession

Author	Authors' views and perspectives
Belk (1988)	• Motivation to possess increases, as 'we are what we have'.
Belk et al. (2003)	• Desires may be more satisfying than their realization.
Boujbel (2008)	• Desires indicate what people want to possess. • The degree of desire changes from person to person and from product to product. • Desires may be created by fantasies. • Desires can be uncomfortable.
Kang & Park (2016)	• A correlation exists between the desire for novelty, variety or pleasure on the one hand and positive feelings towards luxury brands on the other.
Maclaran et al. (2009)	• Motivation precedes ownership. • Desire can exceed ownership, can trigger action and can connect persons and objects.
Maden et al. (2015)	• Pleasure, status and the need for uniqueness are the main motivators for the possession of luxury jewellery.
Noles & Gelman (2014)	• Desire can lead to ownership or the motivation to own. • Desire and motivation are not dependent on each other; desire and motivation do not necessarily determine each other.
Stavrakakis (2006)	• Desire can be perceived as just 'something else, something unavailable or impossible', instead of for a specific product.

	• Triggers for desire are aesthetics, quality, status, uniqueness, price, brand, comfort or the lack of something.
Thakur & Kaur (2015)	• Social, cultural and personal motivating factors exist for luxury consumption.

It is important to clarify the relationship between desire and ownership since it could be assumed that the two conditions necessarily go hand in hand. These concepts are related in that desire can lead to ownership or the motivation to own something. However, they are also distinct in that they are not dependent on each other. One frequently desires something that one does not (and is not going to) own (e.g., an expensive apartment), while one can own things one does not desire at all (e.g., an unwelcome or inappropriate gift) (Noles & Gelman, 2014). Consider an everyday piece of underwear, for example. This is something one wants to own because it is comfortable, but it is unlikely to be a possession one 'desires'. On the one hand, a person might possess a luxury heirloom that they never would have desired because they do not perceive it to be beautiful, but they own it because it previously belonged to their grandmother. On the other hand, someone might desire a luxurious ring costing a notional amount of EUR 50,000, but given the circumstances, they will never own it. This illustrates an important condition: Desire does not necessarily determine ownership, and vice versa (Noles & Gelman, 2014).

Desires play a relevant role in life and society, as they indicate what people want to possess (Boujbel, 2008; Boujbel & d'Astous, 2015; Boujbel et al., 2018). The degree and the intensity of the experience of desire differ from person to person (Boujbel, 2008; Boujbel & d'Astous, 2015), since consumers who are more materialistic tend to desire consumer goods more strongly (Boujbel et al., 2018). While some constantly desire certain goods and strive for satisfaction and fulfilment through the possession of those goods, others rarely desire things at all and find personal fulfilment independent of material possessions (Boujbel, 2008;

Shao et al., 2019). The (symbolically created) desire in the first scenario could be influenced by fantasies created in advertising. These fantasies are difficult to realize in the real world (Stavrakakis, 2006), potentially leading to desires that exist but are never fulfilled and consequently indicating the success of advertising. Another illustrative example might be the fashion and beauty industry. Marketing campaigns feature models with 'perfect' appearances (with the help of today's photo- and video-editing options), creating consumers' desire for this perfect appearance that is not that easily attainable through the use of the promoted product alone. Irrespective of the product, it is not always clear whether the feeling of desire is so appealing in itself that acquiring the product is not necessarily more satisfying than the desire to acquire it (Belk et al., 2003; Boujbel, 2008). The perceived desire does not necessarily need to be focused on a specific product, but human desire can be perceived as 'something else', something impossible or something currently unavailable (Stavrakakis, 2006). This can be true for possessing a certain luxury jewellery piece, such as a watch or bracelet for which one has saved money and searched for the best offer for months. This kind of preliminary engagement with a future acquisition, and everything related to it, can be so satisfying in itself that the possession at the end does not surpass this level of satisfaction.

Kang and Park (2016) highlighted the increased desire for 'novelty, variety and sensory gratification or pleasure' and its correlation to positive feelings towards luxury brands. With this 'narcissistic consumption', as they term it, luxury consumption and the desire for luxury expand. Jamal and Goode (2001) elaborated on consumers' evaluative criteria for consumption and related them to price, brand name and country of origin or to rather subjective attributes that are quality, comfort, and design (Grapentine, 1995; Myers & Shocker, 1981). These criteria can also be triggers for possession because a relationship exists between consumption and possession.

Next to positive feelings of enlightenment and pleasure, desires can also be uncomfortable: Consumers may experience feelings of disappointment, frustration, grief or jealousy (Boujbel, 2008; Boujbel et al., 2018). When advertisements and social surroundings, in particular, glorify, and exaggerate, the worth or meaning of certain luxury products, a person might be disappointed once they possess the product themselves. Depending on the perceived relevance, consumption desires can also vary in intensity.

Acknowledging all the above, the next section deals with the desire to possess luxury jewellery.

2.2.5.2 Desiring luxury jewellery.

Existing literature has elaborated on several drivers of luxury possession. A long-established motivator is the evident high quality of luxury products (Garfein, 1989). Elliott (1994, 1997) and Kleine et al. (1995) argued that symbolic possession exceeds the motivation to create an individual's identity and culminates in a social positioning in society. Several examples in the literature support this statement. For example, Bothra (2013), as cited in Thakur and Kaur (2015), as well as Boujbel et al. (2018) stated that motivations for luxury consumption are assumed to be influenced by pleasure seeking, status-seeking and uniqueness seeking. Furthermore, Gajjar (2013), as well as Pajić (2019), considered that cultural, social and personal factors act as motivators, where cultural factors comprise subcultures and social class; social factors include reference groups, family, role and status; and personal factors consist of lifestyle, economic situation and personality. This view differs from that of McFerran et al. (2014) who presumed that pride is the main motivator. They differentiated between authentic pride and hubristic pride, where the first dominates the pre-purchase phase, and the latter dominates the phase of possession. A wider perspective from 2015 emphasizes social, cultural, and personal motivating factors (Thakur & Kaur, 2015), and when precious jewellery was specifically studied, pleasure, status, display of wealth and the need for uniqueness were found to be the main motivators of luxury possession (Maden et al., 2015; Pajić, 2019; Han et al., 2010, as cited in Shao et al., 2019). Although the authors cited above have shown differences in the details, they all recognize the importance of social positioning, personal reputation, and self-differentiation when it comes to possession.

Literature has also described luxury as an idea of pleasure (Eastman & Eastman, 2015), which can be classified as an emotional proposition. In terms of desire, there is a need to elaborate on its dimensions and possible triggers. Its dimensions range from emotional ones, such as pleasure, discomfort, and guilt, to cognitive ones, such as control (Boujbel, 2008). Triggers for desire are, amongst others, the display of wealth, aesthetics, quality, status, uniqueness, price, brand, comfort, the lack of something or pure pleasure (Stavrakakis, 2006; Boujbel et al., 2018; Pajić, 2019).

Following this section's discussion of the key constructs of the present thesis as the dependent variable, the next sections examine the independent variables.

2.3 Examining the influence of one's emotional relationship to objects and the notions of self-improvement and social positioning on the desire for luxury jewellery possession

2.3.1 Introduction

Numerous researchers have confirmed that the external, social, internal and personal aspects of luxury products influence consumers (Aggarwal, 2004; Aggarwal & Law 2005; Belk 1988; Gawronski et al., 2007; Kleine et al., 1993; as cited in Maden et al., 2015). According to Khaniwale (2015) as well as Pajić (2019), self and social factors play a collective role in possession-related behaviour. The process of selecting a product to possess leads to an emotional connection between the owner and the product, and this connection has been underrated in previous literature.

The present study evaluates one’s emotional relationship to objects, self-improvement and social positioning and their influence on the desire to possess luxury jewellery. It is fundamental to distinguish between those three influence factors as they can vary in meaning and effect. Table 4 summarizes the independent variables that are assumed to impact those aspects and that are therefore evaluated.

Table 4

Details of independent variables

Variable	Sources
Emotional relation to objects	Influenced by: • Possession attachment (Kleine & Baker, 2004) • The emotional significance of possessions (Ball & Tasaki, 1992)
Self-improvement	Influenced by: • Self-extension (Belk, 1985; Ferraro et al., 2011; Kleine & Baker, 2004; Sivadas & Venkatesh, 1995) • Consumers’ need for uniqueness (CNFU) (Ruvio et al., 2008; Tian et al., 2001)
Social positioning	Influenced by: • Social identity (Cameron, 2004) • The symbolic meaning of luxury (Hayes, 2005)

The extant literature has provided sufficient indicators to support the selection of these variables but does so primarily by examining them in isolation. Therefore, a holistic view of these factors is needed, which is why the empirical findings of the present study are necessary for expanding the existing body of academic knowledge, as well as for the luxury jewellery industry and luxury jewellery organizations’ customer communication strategies and product positioning.

The following section presents a detailed examination of emotional relation to objects, the emotional significance of possessions and possession attachment.

2.3.2 Emotional relation to objects: Possession attachment and the emotional significance of possessions

Before examining emotional relation to objects and their impact, this thesis defines the concept of emotion and delineates 'emotion' from the closely related concepts of 'mood' and 'affect', since emotions are deemed to be central to this study. In emotion literature, various terms are used to address emotion-related concepts, for example, affect, emotion and mood (Davidson, 1994, as cited in Gross, 2014), and they are used differently by different authors (Buck, 1990, as cited in Gross, 2014). This results in multidisciplinary literature that does not provide one commonly agreed-upon definition of emotions (Mulligan & Scherer, 2012), as there is little consensus on the definition of basic concepts related to emotions in the scientific literature (Schnall, 2010), although this is key when discussing emotions in the scientific context. According to Gross (2014), the challenge of providing a clear-cut definition of emotion arises because it

> [...] refers to an astonishing array of responses, from mild to intense, brief to extended, simple to complex, and private to public. Disgust at a prejudiced comment counts as an emotion. So does amusement at a funny mishap, anger at social injustice, joy at the prospect of receiving a promotion, surprise at a friend's 'new look', grief at the death of a spouse, and embarrassment at a child's misbehaviour. (p.4)

This complexity makes it important to define the concept of emotion for the present thesis. There is consensus in the literature that affect is the umbrella and superordinate term in emotion-related terminology regarding emotion and mood (Gross, 2014; Schnall, 2010). Scherer (1984) refers to 'Affect as the umbrella term for states that involve relatively quick good-bad discriminations' (as cited in Gross, 2014, p.5), which, from a hierarchical perspective, is at the top of the hierarchy and is overarching (Gross, 2014). Emotion and mood differ in their temporal development and objective. Concerning the core features of emotion according to Gross (2014), *when* the emotion arises is relevant. According to appraisal theory, ‘emotions arise when an individual attends to and evaluates (appraises) a situation as being relevant to a particular type of currently active goal’ (Lazarus, 1991; Scherer et al., 2001, as cited in Gross, 2014, p.4).

The meaning causes emotion. As this meaning is not fixed but may change over time, the emotion may also change, and it may be positive or negative (Lazarus, 1993, as cited in Gross, 2014). Furthermore, with regard to emotions according to Gross (2014), the multifaceted nature of emotions is essential, as emotions may cause whole-body responses, such as subjective experience, behaviour as well as central and peripheral physiological reactions (Mauss et al., 2005, as cited in Gross, 2014). Distinct from feelings, emotions cause changes in behaviour and often trigger actions, such as a change in facial features, a shift in posture, aggression or the need to run away. These reactions triggered by emotions may be useful for coping with situations that initially evoked the emotions. Schnall’s (2010) align with the previous views and presume that emotions are the result of a specific stimulus or event and are intense but limited in time, while tendencies and a readiness to act and behave in specific ways are associated with emotions (Schnall, 2010).

Emotions are different from moods in that moods are often not traced back to specific stimuli or events, typically influencing one’s mental state and consciousness but do not trigger actions; they also often last longer and are of lower intensity than emotions (Gross, 2014; Schnall, 2010). Simply put, emotions stimulate arousal and reactions to an event that occurs soon after the emotions are felt.

In terms of luxury products, the emotional component can be assumed to be more influential than it is for non-luxury commodities (Kidwel et al., 2011, p.79; cited in Pop &

Zottu, 2016). Luxury products may be chosen consciously and may lead to positive feelings (Maden, 2015), have a hedonic motive (Kaminakis et al., 2014) and enable a person to build up memories (Maden, 2015, as cited in Pop & Zottu, 2016), which can all be categorized as emotional aspects. The experience with the luxury product itself may also lead to emotional reactions. The possession of a luxury product may trigger an emotional reaction, as it creates satisfaction and contentment and may be of sentimental value (Pop & Zottu, 2016). Moreover, emotions may influence a person's behaviour, excluding rational and objective evaluation, since emotions have a unique influence on behavioural responses (Gross, 2014), and human behaviours depend on the relative efficacy of each emotional state (Kim et al., 2016). This view is supported by the affect-as-information model (Chaudhuri, 2002; Gardner, 1985; Mattila & Wirtz, 2000, as cited in Kim et al., 2016), which states that individuals use affect as information when making judgements and that they cannot differentiate it as being irrelevant for certain judgements. Close examination of consumer emotions during the adornment and possession of luxury products reveals that next to exclusiveness and extravagance, pride is a prevailing emotion experienced with luxury (McFerran et al., 2014). According to Pop and Zottu (2016),

Luxury brands require and trigger an emotional component more powerful than any other consumer good. (p.1013)

Feelings of anger, happiness, comfort and sophistication are also influential (Kim et al., 2016). A relatively early study, which is still pertinent today, mentions emotions of sensory pleasure, aesthetics and excitement as relevant in the consumption process (Vingeron & Johnson, 1999).

Given the impact emotions have on mental states and on resulting behaviour, as well as that certain events or experiences often cause emotions, it is hypothesized that the emotional relation to objects (in this thesis, luxury jewellery) is of considerable importance when it comes to consumer behaviour (in this thesis, the desire to possess luxury jewellery) in general.

The next section deals with the emotional significance of possessions and their impact on emotional relation to objects.

2.3.2.1 Emotional significance of possessions and its impact on emotional relation to objects.

According to Ball and Tasaki (1992):

> … the emotional significance of possessions is the strength of associations with significant events or people in the person's life, both good and bad. A possession with a low attachment will probably (but not always) have little emotional significance, whereas a possession with a high attachment may require some time to acquire emotional significance. (p.159)

Ball and Tasaki (1992) use the term 'strength of associations', which can be transferred to the context of emotional relations. Furthermore, their statement is a clear indication of the significance and relevance of the emotional meaning of possessions, and it serves as the basis for the present thesis' assessment of the emotional significance of possessions and the latent variable of emotional relation to objects in regard to luxury jewellery possession.

The present thesis hypothesizes that if a product is emotionally relevant and important for someone, it automatically means that the person has an emotional relationship with this specific object. In the context of the emotional significance of possessions, this hypothesis is also shared by Belk, who stated that attachments to possessions related to extremely emotional meanings are 'extraordinary, mysterious, and emotion evoking rather than merely functional' (Belk, 1992, p.45). Specifically, this thesis asserts that possessions – related to both the self and goods and, in their widest sense, to people by whom one is surrounded –

have one thing in common: They create emotional significance and thereby an emotional relation to objects. Belk further stated that the acquisition of products with supposed high esteem will have high emotional significance from the possessors' subjective point of view (Belk, 1988). The emotional significance of a certain possession can create feelings of greater worth and consequently a higher status, respect and the possibility of a positive self-display that would otherwise not have been possible (Belk, 1988). The existing thesis builds on those previous results and assumes that the emotional significance of possessions positively influences one's emotional relation to objects, which in turn positively influences the desire for possession. As this thesis assesses the context of luxury jewellery possession, this assumption holds for the corresponding luxury product category.

Based on the above-mentioned discussion, for this thesis and the category of luxury jewellery it is hypothesized that the emotional significance of possessions positively influences one's emotional relation to objects:

H1a) The emotional significance of possessions positively influences one's emotional relation to objects.

The next section describes possession attachment and its impact on emotional relation to objects.

2.3.2.2 Possession attachment and its impact on one's emotional relation to objects.

Attachment is emotionally complex (Kleine & Baker, 2004). Possessions potentially represent personal feelings, ideas and attitudes (McGuire, 1976; Vinson et al., 1977; Belk 1988, as cited in Van den Hoven et al., 2021), thus reflecting possession attachment. Kleine et al. (1995) provide an example that illustrates the affiliation value of possession attachments, namely that 'gift receipt more often is associated with strong attachments than weak attachments. Attachment forms because the gift stands for an important or valued relationship, even when the recipient dislikes the gift' (as cited in Kleine & Baker, 2004, p.9).

Attachment is emotional in that it is grasped in a cognitively emotional perception of the possession's symbolic and individual meaning, characterized by a common past of the product and the person (Kleine & Baker, 2004), indicating that an emotional relation with attachment exists – be it positive or negative. Regarding the interrelationship between the constructs that are the basis for the hypothesis, possession attachment is examined in detail. As suggested by the endowment effect (Bruner et al., 2020), people become attached to products in their possession. This study adopts the formal definition of possession attachment from Kleine et al. (1995):

> ... material possession attachment is a property of the relationship between a specific individual and a specific possession. Possessions of strong attachment are more closely held to the proximal self, are more effectively charged or cathected, [...] and are more positively valenced than objects of lesser attachment. Possessions to which there is attachment help narrate a person's life story; they reflect 'my life' (p.328)

For the sake of completeness, it must be mentioned that the subject of material possession further evolved with Kleine and Baker's (2004) findings nine years later, where the authors referred to material possession attachment as

> [...] a multi-faceted property of the relationship between an individual or group of individuals and a specific material object that has been psychologically appropriated, decommodified, and singularized through person-object interaction. Nine characteristics further characterize material possession attachment and help distinguish it from related concepts. (p.1).
>
> […] Nine characteristics portray attachment: (1) attachment forms with specific material objects, not product categories or brands; (2) attachment possessions must be

psychologically appropriated; (3) attachments are self-extensions; (4) attachments are decommodified and singularized; (5) attachment requires a personal history between person and possession; (6) attachment has the property of strength; (7) attachment is multi-faceted; (8) attachment is emotionally complex; and (9) attachments evolve over time as the meaning of the self changes (p.7)

With an emphasis on material possessions, people are often insecure about their self-perception and have a rather fragile sense of self (Tuan, 1978, as cited in Belk, 1988). Insecurities concerning self-perception are associated with an emotional reaction, and products or possessions are used to cover up for these insecurities. People, in turn, attach meaning, importance and a relationship to possessions (Belk, 1988)**,** which – when uncovered – are expected to provide insights into the underlying reasons for possessing luxury jewellery. Following (or sometimes even before) the possession of a certain piece, a sense of belonging frequently emerges between the possessor and the possessing piece. As this is true for luxury jewellery, it indicates the impact of emotions and the self on the perception of goods, as detected by numerous researchers, who have assumed that emotions can increase the perceived value of a good and thus the possessor's relationship with it (Aggarwal & Law 2005; Belk 1988; Gawronski et al., 2007; Kleine et al., 1993).

In the 'integrative review of material possession attachment' by Kleine and Baker (2004), the authors mentioned that due to its complex emotional character*,* 'possession attachment deserves further empirical attention' (p.26). This aspect is therefore considered in terms of luxury jewellery.

For this thesis and the category of luxury jewellery, it is hypothesized that one's emotional relation with objects is influenced by one's possession attachment. Ball and Tasaki (1992) state that 'As attachment and the time of ownership increase, so should the emotional significance of the object' (p.159), which is why this relationship is hypothesized to be positive:

H1b) Possession attachment positively influences one's emotional relation to objects.

The following section deals with the construct emotional relation to objects and its influence on the desire to possess luxury jewellery.

2.3.2.3 Emotional relation to objects and its influence on the desire for luxury jewellery possession.

Consumers are frequently inspired to satisfy their desires. Their evaluative criteria during this process can be rational and objective (e.g., price) or emotional and subjective (e.g., emotional benefits derived) (Maden, 2015; Lee & Um, 1992). This desire can arise for the possession of luxury jewellery. As findings by Thakur and Kaur (2015) indicate, the perceived emotional attachment to objects is key when it comes to the consumer's interaction with those objects and their reactions to products. A vivid example of this emotional attachment and relationship to a product is when a woman (Sarah) described how she 'fell in love' with a ring she bought at Bulgari (Venkatesh, 2010):

> I bought a three-band ring in 18K gold from Bulgari. Its iconic and linear design features the central spiral and two lateral rims with the double logo engraved. I bought it for my 50th birthday. The ring really dazzled me when I first saw it. (p.466)

Because she bought it for a special occasion, it has a particular meaning for her for several reasons: It reminds her of her birthday, and it makes her proud that she turned 50. Furthermore, she describes her reaction when she saw the ring, indicating the emotional relation evoked by the ring.

An interesting finding in the literature that confirms this emotional attachment to objects showed that in decision-making, people act *mindlessly* rather than mindfully; this finding indicates an underlying affinity for emotional, subjective evaluation criteria and their importance in any decision process (Shiv & Fedorikhin, 1999). As has been stated previously, people personalize their possessions by attaching personal characteristics or symbols to them that subjectively impose their own identity on the possession, hence making it 'one's own' (Belk, 1988). The desired possessions 'become something more than they were when they left the factory or shop […]. They become embedded in our aspirations, our thoughts, and our lives' (Maclaran et al., 2009, p.285). People's emotional attachment to possessions can be also driven by pride, as the consumption of certain products, their ownership or their possession can trigger feelings of pride, which can be particularly strong when it comes to luxury jewellery (McFerran et al., 2014).

Further research has indicated two consumer–product relationships, one preceding the other: First, consumers form relationships with goods based on similar desires for these goods. Thereafter, relationships with possessions emerge, where the desired goods are consumed to satisfy desires (Chen, 2009). Other academic literature has confirmed these relationships, describing the consumer's involvement with certain consumptions – sometimes also called 'participation' (see Belk et al., 2003) – as an emotional 'pulling' that results in desires (Belk et al., 2003, p.329). This indicates a positive relationship between the emotional relation to objects and desires (Chen, 2009).

Belk (1991) presented several characteristics of possessions in which people often invest emotion and meaning: 'Unwillingness to sell for market value, Willingness to buy with little regard to price, Non-substitutability and Unwillingness to discard feelings of elation/depression due to having or not having the object' (Maclaran, 2009, p.286). These characteristics suggest a personal and emotional relationship between a person and an object and a positive relationship between emotional relationships to objects and possessions.

To further illustrate the connection, a final example is presented: Even when one is aware of certain disadvantages of a product, this knowledge does not necessarily diminish one's desire for the product. People know that diamonds are not as scarce as the myth surrounding the stone states, but they might still want a diamond. Product characteristics do not lead people to question their desires, because desires are – by their nature – irrational and emotionally driven.

The above-mentioned discussion is the groundwork for the next hypothesis. For this thesis and the category of luxury jewellery, it is hypothesized that one's emotional relation to objects positively influences the desire for luxury jewellery:

H1c) One's emotional relation to objects positively influences the desire for luxury jewellery possession.

The following section explores possession attachment and its influence on the emotional significance of possessions.

2.3.2.4 Possession attachment positively influences the emotional significance of possessions.

Ball and Tasaki (1992) support a separate, one-dimensional measure of 'emotional significance', that can estimate the degree of emotional attachment an object holds (as cited in Kleine & Baker, 2004). They assume a correlation between attachment and emotional significance:

> … as the time of ownership increases, attachment increases as well, and so should the emotional significance of the object. (Ball & Tasaki, 1992, p.159)

As this explanation shows, Ball and Tasaki (1992) assume that a one-directional, positive relationship exists between possession attachment and the emotional significance of the object, which is the basis for the construction of a hypothesized relationship between these two variables in the present thesis. This thesis adopts the following definition of the emotional significance of possessions:

> The emotional significance of possessions is the strength of associations with significant events or people in the person's life, both good and bad. A possession with low attachment will probably (but not always) have little emotional significance, whereas a possession with high attachment may require some time to acquire emotional significance. (Ball & Tasaki, 1992, p.159)

Ball and Tasaki (1992) thus determine a positive relationship between high possession attachment and high emotional significance, and it is equally hypothesized to be the case in the present thesis (see H1d). This thesis hypothesizes that possession attachment positively influences the emotional significance of possessions in the category of luxury jewellery:

H1d) Possession attachment positively influences the emotional significance of possessions.

Next, the relation between possession attachment and self-extension is considered.

2.3.2.5 Possession attachment positively influences self-extension.

Researchers have explored the field of academic literature regarding possession attachment and self-extension. They include, amongst others, Kleine et al. (1995); Belk (1985); and Ball and Tasaki (1992).

Schultz, Kleine and Kernan's (1989, p.360) previously introduced a definition of attachment focuses on the connection between an individual and a particular possession. However, as stated above, the present thesis adopts Ball and Tasaki's (1992) definition of attachment: something that is, was or will be owned to maintain one's self-concept.

Numerous researchers agree that people make use of attachments to define or strengthen their self-identity (e.g., Ball & Tasaki 1992; Belk 1988; Csikszentmihalyi &

Rochberg-Halton 1981; Dittmar 1992; Kamptner 1991; Myers 1985; Schultz et al., 1989; Wallendorf & Arnould, 1988; Wilcox et al., 2009, as cited in Eastman et al., 2021). It has been stated that the degree to which a possession, or ownership, supports self-definition or the creation of a self-concept or an identity is central to consumption and consumption behaviour (Ball & Tasaki, 1992). Cushing (2011) refers to Odom et al. (2001), who 'draw on attachment as it is defined by consumer behaviourists, who consider self-extension a necessary characteristic of attachment to possessions' (p.1), which indicates the existence of a relationship.

However, some former literature has treated the concepts of attachment and self-extension as different constructs (e.g., Schultz et al., 1989), whereas others have hypothesized that there is a strong connection between the two (Sivadas & Venkatesh, 1995). Belk (1985) stated that the assumption of possessions, which are regarded as an integrated component of self-identity, can be attributed to past research by James in the 1890s. Accordingly, different attachment types could be used to extend the self by highlighting distinct aspects of the self through certain attachments (Kleine et al., 1995). Attachment is even characterized as an implication of self-extension (Kleine et al., 1995). The same authors have concluded that the degree of attachment, varying from high to low, *positively correlates* with the extension of the self, created by this attachment. Furthermore, the meaning of attachment and self has evolved. When societies became more individualistic, with people moving to cities and becoming more anonymous, possessions became an increasingly more meaningful part of the self than they were when societies lived together in social groups and individual actions were less important than those of the group (Belk, 1985).

In summary, possession attachments can impact self-extension. Thus, possessions do not directly represent the self, but are rather *instruments* to make up the self in the past, in the present and most likely in the future (Kleine et al., 1995).

Several authors have acknowledged that possessions with an emotional meaning to the individual tend to determine the individual's growth and personal development (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981; Kamptner, 1989 & 1991; Myers, 1985, as cited in Kleine et al., 1995). This highlights the direct relationship between possession attachment and self-extension. According to Belk (1985), only body parts have been considered a more significant determinant of the self than personal possessions. Because one's intrinsic motivation is to constantly strive to increase self-worth, the possession of something positively influences its appeal and perceived value (Aggarwal 2004; Aggarwal & Law, 2005; Belk, 1988; Gawronski et al., 2007; Kleine et al., 1993).

The points raised above are in line with definitions of materialism, highlighting that the value and meaning of possessions play a leading role in a person's life and therefore also regarding a person's self-extension (Belk, 1984, p.291). Considering the above-mentioned literature, attachment to a possession leads to desirable self-expression and therefore self-extension (Belk, 1988; Jamal & Goode, 2001). For this thesis and the category of luxury jewellery, it is hypothesized that possession attachment positively influences self-extension:

H1e) Possession attachment positively influences self-extension.

Following the previous sections' consideration of all relevant aspects of one's emotional relation to objects, the next section addresses the second building block, namely self-improvement.

2.3.3 Self-improvement: Self-extension and consumers' need for uniqueness

A strong link exists between the self and possessions (Belk, 1988). This link is oftentimes used to indirectly enhance and extend the self through the acquisition of valuable possessions (Ahuvia, 2005; Bauer et al., 2011, as cited in Shao et al., 2019). Moreover, the link is the basis for the existing theory that the factor 'self' will be one of the strongest influencing factors in the present thesis (see, e.g., Ferraro et al., 2011). Literature has demonstrated that displaying unique attributes that make up the self, and thus the need for uniqueness, is a primary goal in self-presentation. According to Sivadas and Venkatesh (1995),

> …Some individuals are more likely to incorporate possessions into the extended self than other individuals. This in turn impacts the degree to which individual possessions are incorporated into the self. (p.410)

The following section evaluates the impact of self-extension and CNFU on self-improvement and the desire for luxury jewellery possession.

2.3.3.1 Self-extension and its impact on self-improvement.

The acquisition of (luxury) possessions, either goods or services, is an act of identification, both for the self and in terms of belonging to a social group (Kang & Park, 2016; Wattanasuwan, 2005). McCracken (1986) stated that without consumption and possessions, the definition of the self is no longer possible. On the one hand, people tend to be bound to certain identities and try to act according to their value concepts and the standards prescribed by these concepts (Kaminakis et al., 2014). On the other hand, the importance attached to possessions and their impact on self-extension varies among individuals and cannot be ignored (Sivadas & Venkatesh, 1995). Still, for individuals to whom possessions are relevant, the likelihood of using products for self-extension is high (Sivadas & Venkatesh, 1995). Luxury goods are frequently used as symbols of and therefore an extension of the self (Vickers & Renand, 2003). A person’s self-concept can be seen as an individual personality, including opinions, feelings and thoughts that indicate who they are as a person and how they perceive themselves (Gil et al., 2012). Previous literature has differentiated between the actual and the ideal self-concept: The actual self-concept relates to how people perceive themselves, whereas the ideal self-concept concerns how people want to be perceived in the eyes of others (Tahur & Kaur, 2015; Sirgy et al., 2008), with the aim of improving the self.

Possessions can thus be used to reflect identity (Thakur & Kaur, 2015). The meaning of goods can define one's own identity.

According to Eastman and Eastman (2015), motivation for status consumption can be external or internal. Self-aspects often originate internally – from private, intrinsic values and attitudes instead of external ones – and they are personally motivated (Eastman & Eastman, 2015; Truong, 2010, as cited in Shao et al., 2019). Existing literature states that internal motivations include, amongst other things, hedonism (pleasure-seeking), perfectionism (desire for quality) and self-reward (Eastman & Eastman, 2015). Even though these categories are considered to be applicable in many contexts, this study extends the concept of self-aspects itself and, unlike Eastman and Eastman (2015), states that the self is perceived not only to be pivotal but also to involve self-extension. Considering the areas of psychology and sociology, Belk (1988) stated that according to the concept of self-extension, an individual's self-concept could extend beyond the body to outside objects or influences. Sivadas and Venkatesh (1995) stated,

> The extended self consists of self plus possessions and is that part of self-identity, which is defined by possessions including gifts, money, body parts, monuments, and places (Belk 1988). The extended self-construct builds upon the idea that consumers prefer products that are 'congruent' with their selves (Belk 1988; Kleine et al., 1993; Sirgy 1982). The self provides a 'sense of who and what we are' and possessions help support our sense of self because to a great extent we are what we have and possess (Belk 1988; James 1890; Kleine et al., 1993; p.406).

People construct their ideal self-image by making use of external objects that may be desirable luxury jewellery. One may ask, 'If I am what I have, and what I have is lost, who then am I?' (Fromm, 1976, p.76). Through the act of possessing goods, people may even be able to feel like a different person and adopt another identity (Dittmar, 1992), as is the case when dressing up. A close relationship exists between identity and the possession of brands. The characteristics of objects are frequently used in the process of self-identification (Venkatesh et al., 2010). Therefore, self-evaluations are transferred to the good, and vice versa (Gawronski et al., 2007). According to Gajjar (2013), the goal of possessing something may not lie in functional value but may deal with the creation of self-identity (Austria et al., 2022). Thus, the incorporation of objects into one's self-definition is a central aspect of the self and the foundation of the extended self, while attachment implicates self-extension (Belk, 1989). The resulting need for self-improvement is considered further. Through the possession and display of certain products, consumers may be perceived in a specific way and may use this perception as a tool to extend the desired self-image accordingly (Elliott, 1997), striving for an improved version of the self.

Extensive literature has found that people continuously strive for self-enhancement, especially after their self-concept has been challenged, even if only slightly (Dommer & Swaminathan, 2012). People strive for their ideal selves and use purchase decisions to gain desirable possessions (Kang & Park, 2016). Self-esteem is defined as a universal emotion of self-liking and self-respect (Leonard et al., 1995). Naturally aiming for positive self-esteem is indispensable for any human being (Truong & McColl, 2011). Desiring self-extension results from triggered feelings of pride and ego (McFerran et al., 2014). People's desire for self-extension emerges due to their need for personal differentiation and improvement in society (McFerran et al., 2014).

The theoretical findings presented above lead to the assumption that the two constructs of self-extension and self-improvement are related. Therefore, the present thesis hypothesizes that self-extension positively influences self-improvement regarding the product category of luxury jewellery:

H2a) Self-extension positively influences self-improvement.

The next section deals with CNFU and its impact on self-improvement.

2.3.3.2 The consumer's need for uniqueness and its impact on self-improvement. From the perspective of social or consumer psychology on the desire to seek 'uniqueness' and 'optimal distinctiveness', another phenomenon is expected to have an influence on self-improvement (Berger & Heath, 2007; Snyder & Fromkin, 1977). Consumers' need for individuation plays a role, as possessions are used to communicate uniqueness (Tian et al., 2001).

Every person desires some degree of uniqueness (Fromkin, 1972; Snyder, 1992; Snyder & Fromkin, 1977, 1980, as cited in Shao et al., 2019), which makes it an omnipresent, natural trait (as cited in Ruvio et al, 2008). When people feel overly similar to one another in certain situations, they tend to seek divergence from others in their choices. To publicly display one's uniqueness, people acquire and present distinctive products (Snyder, 1992; Fromkin & Snyder, 1980; Tian et al., 2001; Ruvio et al., 2008). According to the extended self-theory by Belk (1988), CNFU could lead to possessions acting as an expression of uniqueness (Snyder, 1992), allowing the self to improve and hence extend to some degree (Ruvio et al., 2008, Eastman et al., 2021).

Luxury jewellery, with its superior quality, perceived scarcity, extraordinary design and distinctiveness can be transferred to the self through its possession – be it through brand exclusivity, unaffordable prices (Bian & Forsythe, 2012, as cited in Shao et al., 2019; Li & Su, 2007) or its material composition – can represent such differentiating tools and display uniqueness (Berger & Heath, 2007; Shao et al., 2019; Eastman et al., 2021).

Regarding the concept of luxury possessions, the display of their luxurious and exclusive character was perceived by possessors to be transferred to the self, thereby making the person feel unique and distinct from others. In particular, CNFU is well represented in scientific literature and has been cited and referred to in numerous scientific papers (Ruvio et al., 2008; Tian et al., 2001). The following definition of CNFU itself is grounds for the resulting hypothesized relationship between CNFU and self-improvement:

> …the trait of pursuing differences relative to others through the acquisition, utilization, and disposition of consumer goods for the purpose of developing and enhancing one's self-image and social image (Tian et al., 2001, p.52)

Thus, CNFU enables individuals to enhance their social- and self-image (Ruvio et al., 2008) by using products that facilitate differentiation (Tian et al., 2001). People tend to be motivated to build and keep an individual, unique identity that differentiates themselves from others and thus achieves autonomy and self-improvement; at the same time, they tend to be motivated to retain inter-personal links that impact their identity, and they consequently seek affiliation (Kleine et al., 1995).

The theory of uniqueness by Snyder and Fromkin (1977) is an underlying theory that in situations with high similarity in social groups, people try to differentiate themselves from others. It contains the concept of distinction, which states that social strata are based on the principle of diversification and structure to be different from others (Kang & Bae, 2016; Bordieu, 1984). What follows is the need for uniqueness. Ruvio et al. (2008) in their paper refer to relevant literature that holds for this thesis: CNFU motivates dissimilarity through the consumption of products that are expected to provide a distinctive image (self and social) (Tian et al., 2001). Moreover, a central aspect of the need for uniqueness is consumers' need to express their individuality. Ruvio et al. (2008) further refer to work in 1977 by Snyder and Fromkin, who stated that the need for uniqueness can stand in contrast to social approval and thus to a positive social positioning, making people strive for a positive expression of a need for uniqueness. In 1992, Snyder contributed to the construct again by stating that a high need for uniqueness leads people to be more sensitive to differentiation from and similarities to others. Ruvio et al. also mentioned that the consumption and display of certain differentiating products are a uniqueness-seeking behaviour and a tool to express and establish perceived uniqueness and differentiation from others (Snyder & Fromkin, 1977; Tian et al., 2001).

Thus, consumption and possession are used to communicate a unique identity (Tian et al., 2001). Leibenstein (1950) detected a similar phenomenon and called it the snob effect. Particularly, the snob effect describes unnatural demand behaviour. The snob is a consumer who only becomes active as a buyer on the market when exclusive goods are offered there. However, the quality of the goods is less important to the snob. He buys luxury goods because he wants to stand out from the crowd of other buyers. Thus, high-priced or rare products achieve the attention of products with regard to the snob effect.

One should consider that this phenomenon does not hold for everyone but varies by culture and individual (Stokburger-Sauer & Teichmann, 2013). People in individualistic cultures tend to have a high need for uniqueness and express it noticeably (Gentina et al., 2016). By contrast, people from collectivistic cultures prefer to be part of 'the group' and align with others in their social surroundings, thus not wanting to differentiate themselves or express any unique aspects (Workman & Kidd, 2000).

For some people, the ultimate feeling of being unique can enhance their self-esteem and their desired social improvement (Stockburger-Sauer & Teichmann, 2011). Specifically, high perceptions of uniqueness in comparison with others are perceived to be pleasurable and expected to increase one's own self-esteem (Fromkin, 1970, 1972). Hence, 'consumer need for uniqueness (CNFU) allows individuals to enjoy improved self- and social image' (Ruvio et al., 2008, p.36). Extending this stream of thought, Ruvio et al. (2008) stated that the need for uniqueness has an impact on behaviours such as the desire for certain (rare) products, which is the main basis for the following hypothesis, namely a positive relationship is assumed between CNFU and self-improvement. Thus, for this thesis and the category of luxury jewellery, it is hypothesized that CNFU positively influences self-improvement:

H2b) Consumers' need for uniqueness positively influences self-improvement.

Following the elaboration on the two influencing factors on self-improvement in this section, the next section examines the impact of self-improvement on the desire for luxury jewellery possession.

2.3.3.3 Self-improvement and its impact on the desire for luxury jewellery possession.

As has been hypothesized in the previous sections, both self-extension and CNFU are assumed to have a positive impact on self-improvement. In this section, the expected impact of self-improvement on the desire for luxury jewellery possession is examined in scientific literature to date.

Literature states that personal growth, which is closely related to self-improvement, strongly correlates with the possession of luxury jewellery (Truong & McGoll, 2011): Possessions frequently act as instruments consumers use to characterize, express or define themselves (Belk 1988; Chen, 2008), make claims about their identity (Maclaran et al., 2009) and extend those identities (Belk, 1988). Belk (1988), amongst others, even stated that possessions play a significant role in 'forming and reflecting the self' (Grubb & Grathwohl, 1967; Wicklund & Gollwitzer, 1982). In addition, according to Richins's (1994) statement, which is fundamental to the proposed hypothesis, possessions are valued for their function of expressing, but even more importantly for their function of reinforcing the self. This indicates the link between self-improvement and the desire for luxury jewellery possession. Possessions are said to represent competence, proficiency and achievements, all of which display self-improvement (Richins, 1994) while enabling distinction from others (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981; Furby, 1978b). Given the defining aspect of self-extension, which is expected to contribute to personal growth and self-improvement, it is associated with desires and motivations to make purchases and possessions (Kang & Park, 2016).

In the product category of luxury in general, luxury marketers frequently encourage customers to strive for more and to 'climb the ladder' (Kim et al., 2018). The automobile manufacturer Audi, for example, made a claim that one should 'update one's status' (Web Appendix, Kim et al., 2018). In contrast to other industries, luxury products are frequently bought for their meaning and their value to the self, instead of solely for what they are (Aaker & Keller, 1990). In a further important strand of literature, Richins and Dawson (1992) suggested that the 'desire to possess and consume stems from insecurities or deeper dissatisfactions with oneself and one's life' (p.313). This again indicates a relationship between the feeling of self-improvement and a desire for possession. Thus, the way in which people perceive themselves and the self-worth they attach to this self-perception is fundamental in the formation and extension of the self and represents an influence on the desire for luxury jewellery.

Numerous sources of literature have provided evidence for the relationship between self-improvement and the desire for possessions. This thesis consequently hypothesizes that self-improvement positively influences the desire for luxury jewellery possession:

H2c) Self-improvement positively influences the desire for luxury jewellery possession.

Following the previous section's evaluation of the relevant aspects of self-improvement, the next section explores the third building block, namely social positioning.

2.3.4 Social positioning: Social identity and the symbolic meaning of luxury

The third area studied in this thesis, namely social aspects, complements the previously introduced areas of emotional relation to objects and self-improvement. In the academic literature in the field, luxury consumption has been considered to be a predominantly social phenomenon (Kang & Bae, 2016). That is, next to the subjective, personal meaning one attaches to luxury products that have an impact on the self and self-improvement (Kang & Bae, 2016; Richins, 1994), external, public social values are also assigned to certain products and possession thereof (Kang & Bae, 2016; Richins, 1994). While it has previously been stated that self-improvement is expected to have positive effects on the desire for luxury jewellery possession, this section elaborates on the effects of social identity and its impact on social positioning – in the broadest sense, the two concepts self-extension and social identity share the common aspect of identity. The result, social positioning, which is influenced by social identity and the symbolic meaning of luxury, is elaborated upon next.

First, the term position reflects a relational phenomenon (Lawson, 2022). Menhard-Warwick (2007) refers to Wortham's (2004) definition of social positioning: 'an event of identification, in which a recognizable category of identity gets explicitly or implicitly applied to an individual' (p.166). It should be noted that social positioning is also described as a fluid, dynamic process (Davies & Harré, 1990) since social positions emerge from and are interdependent on social interactions, where people claim certain positions for themselves (Blackledge & Pavlenko, 2001).

Possessing an item, especially luxury jewellery that is symbolically worn on the body and tied to oneself, creates connections in three ways: First, it creates a connection between the self and the object (Gawronski et al., 2007; Morewedge et al., 2009). Second, it creates the frequently desired connection with a specific reference group with which one wants to identify. Third, it creates a silent connection with observers based on drawn conclusions about the person's identity (McFerran et al., 2014). Social identity and the symbolic meaning of luxury each are explored next.

2.3.4.1 Social identity and its impact on social positioning.

The cultural environment heavily influences whether people are more affected by self-identity or by group identity. American consumers, for instance, invest more effort in self-portrayal than in face (Li & Su, 2007), where face represents 'an important cultural value that influences human behaviours particularly in collectivist cultures' (p.238), while in cultures such as China, more effort is invested in the face than in self-portrayal. As the present thesis is conducted amongst a German-speaking population, whom one can categorize as part of the western culture in the US, social identity is examined. Historically, regarding the behaviour and formation of tribes (see e.g., Bauman, 1990), one joined a tribe by acquiring tribe-specific possessions and/or reflecting tribe-specific behaviour (Elliott, 1997). This can be transmitted to social identity and conspicuous consumption today. As indicated in social identity theory, product preferences and product choice are frequently rooted in assumptions about social identity and its accordance with a product (Escalas & Bettman, 2005; Ferraro et al., 2011; White & Dahl, 2007). The concept of social identity has received increasing attention in research on group behaviour and intergroup relations (see, e.g., Cameron, 2004). This thesis adopts Tajfel's (1978) frequently cited definition of social identity:

> … that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his [or her] knowledge of his [or her] membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership (p.63).

This cited example indicates a positive relationship between social identity and social positioning. In addition, Tajfel together with Turner (1979, 1986) modified this definition and referred to social identity as

> … the portion of a person's self-concept derived from his or her membership in relevant social groups, to explain intergroup behaviour, such as prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination. (Dommer & Swaminathan, 2012, p.1036)

Consumer behaviour research has repeatedly acknowledged that certain products are consumed to enhance and communicate identity (Belk, 1988). It has even been stated that specifically luxury goods are consumed to symbolize identity (Vickers & Renand, 2003).

More specifically, luxury consumption and possession are frequently considered to be a social act to demonstrate belongingness to a specific social group rather than an activity to satisfy individual, functional needs (Kang & Bae, 2016). A relevant characteristic when elaborating on social identity is that social identification can have different meanings and importance to different people (Brown & Williams, 1984). In this regard, Cameron (2004) suggested several components of social identity that guide the present thesis. Hinkle et al. (1989) drew attention to several components of social identity, and they identified three specific elements:

> (1) Emotional or affective aspects of group membership (e.g., feeling glad to belong to the group); (2) a second effectively relevant factor, which was interpreted as reflecting 'the opposition between individual needs and group dynamics' (p.310; e.g., feeling held back by the group); and (3) a factor comprising two items (perceiving the group as important and feeling strong ties with the group). (As cited in Cameron, 2004, p.240)

Based on these elements, an analysis by Cameron (2004) determined three characteristics of social identity:

> (1) cognitive centrality (the amount of time spent thinking about being a group member; see Gurin & Markus, 1989), (2) in-group affect (the positivity of feelings associated with membership in the group), and (3) in-group ties (perceptions of similarity, bond, and belongingness with other group members). (p.241)

Identification was described as an 'emotional merging of self with others' (Allport, 1979, as cited in Cameron, 2004, p.293). This feeling of identification, which is a form of 'emotional closeness', is reflected in the proposed measures of social identity. These measures might offer meaningful instruments concerning the social group in general, as they can make assumptions about the likelihood a) of persons acting according to in-groups, b) of persons continuing to belong to in-groups – even in critical situations (Spears et al., 1999), and c) of persons distinguishing themselves from other out-groups (e.g., Perreault & Bourhis, 1999; as cited in Cameron, 2004). While centrality and an in-group effect display the positioning of the group in relation to one's self-concept, in-group ties are concerned with the group's relations to other in-group members; the relations are the subjective aspect of membership and affiliation to in-group cohesion (Bollen & Hoyle, 1990). Moreover, as suggested by social identity theory (Cameron, 2004), a group that is perceived to have a negative impact on oneself (because the group uses, for example, vulgar expressions); it is expected to lead to a negative social identity of the self and will encourage people to strive for a more positive one, for example by leaving the group or challenging the intergroup status hierarchy.

To attract a consumer to a specific product category, luxury companies try to create luxury brands with, amongst other things, clear brand identities, for example by using celebrity endorsement in advertisements (Fionda & Moore, 2009). This is one instrument to create, support and communicate the celebrity's identity (Fionda & Moore, 2009), which is expected to be transferred to the consumer's own identity if the product is used. A common preference for in-groups exists with most people, called the 'in-group bias', where people favour in-groups (groups to which they belong) over out-groups (groups to which they do not belong) (Robertson et al., 2022; Tajfel & Turner, 1986) and in which the belonging to a group (the so-called 'in-group') leads to a positive perception by the self and by others (Robertson et al., 2022; Luhtanen & Crocker, 1991; Oakes & Turner, 1980), indicating a positive influence of social identity on positioning in one's social environment. Therefore, for the present thesis, it is hypothesized that social identity positively influences social positioning.

H3a) Social identity positively influences social positioning.

The next section will elaborate on symbolic meaning of luxury and its impact on social positioning.

2.3.4.2 The symbolic meaning of luxury and its impact on social positioning.

In consumption, people are attracted to purchase luxury goods for the symbolic meanings associated with the goods (Austria et al., 2022), and the symbolic meaning of goods plays a relevant role with regard to one's own positioning in social groups, as indicated by Wattanasuwan (2005):

> Consumption is certainly a significant source of symbolic meaning with which we implement and sustain our project of the self. In our everyday life, we employ consumption symbolism to construct and express our self-concepts as well as to identify our associations with others. (p.180)

Through the growing importance of consumption, consumers increasingly humanize products, leading them to develop personal relationships with products. At times, consumers even perceive products as allies (Thakur & Kaur, 2015). Thereby, their products continuously gain importance in the eyes of the possessor and are being humanized in the mind of the possessors, resulting in conveying a symbolic and socio-cultural value (Thakur & Kaur, 2015). Thus, products exceed functional benefits by providing emotional ones (Thakur & Kaur, 2015). The following question then arises: How is a product’s symbolic meaning determined? Even though there is no external norm, symbolic meaning is socially constructed through interactions with others in a reference group to which one belongs or desires to belong (Venkatesh et al, 2010), as well as through frequent dialogue with the object that is conveying meaning (Wattanasuwan, 2005). Certain products can embody this symbolic meaning, which in turn may impress others and may also be used as a tool to make a statement about the self (Dittmar, 1992, Douglas & Isherwood 1978, McCracken, 1986).

Assumptions about the importance of possessions in one's life constitute materialism and symbolic meaning (Richins & Dawson, 1992, as cited in Kumar, 2019). Thus, what is interesting and relevant is not the goods a person possesses, but rather the importance and value that the person and others attach to the possession of those goods (Belk, 1984; Dommer & Swaminathan, 2012; Fritze et al., 2020).

From Hayes's (2005) results on the symbolic meaning of money, some assumptions can be inferred in the present thesis. Specifically, the meaning attached to an item of jewellery and the resulting actions derived from that meaning might be overlooked, even though they might be more important than the item's objective meaning and value. Also, the symbolic meaning attached to any object is not set but varies individually (Hayes, 2005). What is noteworthy about this attachment of symbolic meaning to possessions is that it is generally accepted and practised in society to make assumptions about other people based on their possessions (Richins 1994; Han et al., 2010). The symbolic meanings of possessions are part of social communication (Richins, 1994) and make people classify other people into a specific social group. In its extreme form, one defines oneself by the possession of specific goods. These goods are humanized and considered to be part of one's extended self (Belk 1988a).

Venkatesh et al. (2010) explained the phenomenon using the example of Tina, who describes the possession of a Gucci tote and how her self-perception changed based on that. Although Tina is not a beautiful person, she believes that carrying her Gucci bag makes her physically attractive and pleasing and that this bag transforms her look. The symbolic meaning of a Gucci bag influences Tina's self-representation and perceived positioning in her surroundings. This example shows that the symbolic meaning associated with luxury products is a tool to communicate and position the self in a specific social environment. The symbolic meaning of certain products can thus improve one's social positioning. This is true not only for individuals but also in the luxury industry: Some organizations have understood the concept and implemented the transfer of symbolic meaning of certain goods to social positioning in their marketing strategies (Austria et al., 2022). For example, the luxury brand community called CELUX, based in Tokyo and operated by LVMH, as well as the BMW Car Club USA (BMW CCA) communicate the symbolic meaning of connectedness to a network of like-minded people from similar social classes and with similar interests and lifestyles (Kang & Bae, 2016). Those luxury brand communities indicate a positive relationship between the symbolic meaning of luxury and one's social positioning, as even social groups may be created around the meanings of luxury products.

Although symbolic meaning is mostly established socially, an individual can always co-determine a symbolic meaning or even ascribe their own meanings, which are influenced by subjective experiences and evaluations (Venkatesh et al., 2010). Kang and Bae (2016) even state that the relationship between the consumer and the product is based on the symbolic meaning of the product. This means that it can be (co-)created by individuals as well as groups and, at the same time, can represent an influence on the individual consumer, as it is an external source of influence. Precisely because it is socially constructed, symbolic meaning is in constant flux and can change at any time (Elliott, 1997).

The symbolic meaning of a specific product may be perceived differently by individuals or groups (Venkatesh et al., 2010). For example, an individual attaches symbolic meanings of rarity, high status and prestige to a luxury jewellery item – a gold 'Cartier love' bracelet. In an informal meeting with friends from the neighbourhood, the individual learns that this group of friends dislikes the bracelet because they consider it to be usual, mainstream and of low status. In this example, there would be a conflict between personal and group perceptions of the symbolic meaning of this 'Cartier love' bracelet.

The entire phenomenon of external influence on the luxury jewellery possession experience is based on the symbolic meaning the individual derives from the item. The luxury jewellery industry, amongst many others, already makes use of the common marketing approach that connects symbolic meaning to a product (Vigneron & Johnson, 1999; Kaminakis et al., 2014). This thesis highlights that this shared symbolic meaning evolved into what it is today by supporting activities such as advertising and marketing, which aim to convey a shared meaning of products in the market. Twitchell (2002) even predicted social positioning somehow by saying, 'you are what you consume'.

Luxury jewellery pieces are publicly perceived and valued for both their material value and their symbolic meaning (Brun et al., 2008; Danziger, 2004). This means that beyond satisfying functional needs, luxury jewellery products can convey symbolism for individuals as well as entire groups. Possession of luxury goods may help people in their self-definition and confirmation of their existential meaning (Elliot, 1995). The symbolic meaning of a certain luxury product can often impact the product's appreciation and valuation in a social group (Escalas & Bettman 2003; Ferraro et al., 2011; White & Dahl, 2007). Elliott (1997) researched consumption and desire and provided evidence of the positive relationship between symbolic meaning and social positioning. First, he stated that symbolic meaning enables individuals to establish, maintain or spread identity and social meaning, clearly indicating its influence on social positioning (Elliott, 1997). In addition, 'By using status goods as symbols, individuals communicate meaning about themselves to their reference groups*'* (p.234). Further citing Elliott (1997), the social, commonly accepted symbolic meanings of certain things enable people to socially differentiate themselves from others while creating a desirable social position (e.g., a desirable way of life).

In summary, by possessing desirable luxury goods that have a symbolic meaning, people create meaning and awareness in their social surroundings (Elliot, 1997) and communicate their identity to others after reaffirming it to themselves (Escalas & Bettman 2003; Ferraro et al. 2011; Kleine et al., 1995; Dommer & Swaminathan, 2012). For this thesis and based on the above, it is hypothesized that the symbolic meaning of luxury positively influences social positioning:

H3b) The symbolic meaning of luxury positively influences social positioning.

Following the discussion of the two influencing factors on social positioning in this section, the next section deals with the impact of social positioning on the desire for luxury jewellery possession.

2.3.4.3 Social positioning and its impact on the desire for luxury jewellery possession.

At the end of the 20th century, researchers posited that prestige, social face, status and membership within a society are reasons for luxury consumption (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). This thesis refers to these under the overarching term social positioning. Truong (2010) identified social orientation as one of two motivating factors for luxury consumption, while Khaniwale (2015) stated that social factors, amongst others, have a significant impact on buying and decision processes in consumption. Specifically, Khaniwale (2015) stated that

> Social factors also have considerable impact on the buyer behaviour as every individual is concerned about how other people from their society see him/her. Their status in the society and people's views about him/her matter a lot to him/her. And therefore, the social factors also impact the way they act and behave, leading to an impact on their purchasing decisions. (p.284)

Kang and Bae (2016) even stated that luxury consumption is a purely social phenomenon. The relevance of social factors on consumer purchase behaviour and thus also on possession-related behaviour is evident (Thakur & Kaur, 2015). People own specific products to confirm belongingness to a certain in-group (Amaral & Loken, 2016; Dommer & Swaminathan, 2012), to reaffirm their identities and to communicate these identities to others (Escalas & Bettman, 2003; Ferraro et al. 2011; Kleine et al., 1995; Kleine et al. 1993). In other words, possessions can be used to extend the self, communicate with others and represent group membership, for example by identification through the same objects (Belk 1988). In this process, consumers' social positions are vulnerable and may change over time, for example when people interact with others (Kirk & MacPhail, 2003). Aside from caring about the self, individuals care about the way in which others perceive them (Husic & Cicic, 2009). The social environment and reference groups must be considered at this stage. Their impact can affect the consumption of luxury (Lea et al., 1995, as cited in Kim & Jang, 2014). The relation between reference groups and luxury consumption is verified by the in-group one wants to impress (Vigneron & Johnson, 2004; as cited in Kim & Jang, 2014).

The relationship between social positioning and the desire for luxury jewellery possession has been clarified in several academic studies. Examples from these studies are highlighted next. People consume products to reaffirm and/or to communicate their own identities to their social surroundings (Escalas & Bettman, 2005; Ferraro et al. 2011; Kleine et al., 1995; Kleine et al., 1993). Kang and Bae (2016) emphasized that values of symbolic meaning are transferred through luxury consumption. The present thesis advances this thought, as can be seen in H3b, stating that symbolic meaning impacts social positioning, which in turn influences the desire for luxury jewellery possession. More specifically, by possessing certain goods and displaying them, one conveys one's social position to a certain group that is expected to favour self-display (Husic & Cicic, 2009). When the underlying behaviour regarding the desire for possession is socially driven, the incentive of this behaviour is evidently external (Truong, 2010). An external motivation for consumption and possessing certain luxury products may be rooted in social effects and may be described by the bandwagon effect, which refers to the 'public, conspicuous consumption of status products' (Eastman & Eastman, 2015), which may be referred to as social positioning and may impact the desire for certain possessions.

According to Kim et al. (2018), possessions and their public display are known to communicate something about the self and perhaps even one's social standing or wealth (Kim et al., 2018). This would explain why people have the desire to possess luxury jewellery. The symbolic meaning of certain goods influences a person's desire to possess those goods, as they are expected to have a positive impact on others' perceptions of the person. Therefore, it is assumed that symbolic meanings impact desires for future acquisitions or possessions (Richins, 1994).

Considering the category of luxury more closely in this specific setting, sociologists perceive that people from the higher class declare their superiority over others through extravagance (Kang & Bae, 2016). A luxury ring made of platinum and set with a 5ct diamond could be such a display of extravagance but will only play a role in one's social positioning when others in one's social surroundings consider the ring to be extravagant as well (Wattanasuwan, 2005). More than with other products, luxury items may be bought for what they mean and how they can offer differentiating characteristics to the self (Aaker & Keller, 1990; Kang & Bae, 2016). This thesis hypothesizes that social positioning positively influences the desire for luxury jewellery possession:

H3c) Social positioning positively influences the desire for luxury jewellery possession.

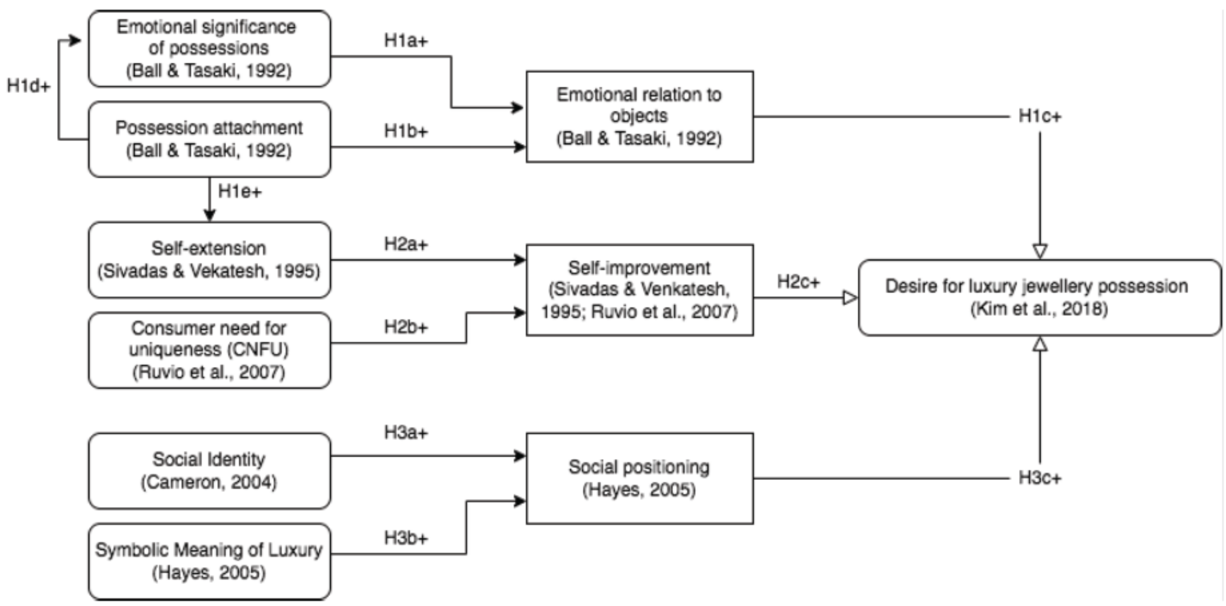
The following section summarizes all the hypotheses, and their theoretical bases, that have been presented in the previous sections.

2.4. Synthesis and conclusion of key findings

The diverse and overarching conceptual fields identified in this chapter are important to facilitate the understanding of the full scope of dimensions influencing the desire for luxury jewellery possession in western societies. Through the literature review, it became evident that this thesis is grounded in both an understanding of consumption and materialism, which is the basis for possession, and a clear definition that narrows the understanding of luxury. Despite acknowledgements that people are motivated or feel desire when it comes to luxury brands, there is little empirical work that explores luxury possession detached from brands and in the specific category of luxury jewellery. Even though this chapter has referred to extensive literature from numerous establishments of scientific relations, the desire for luxury jewellery possession is still extremely under-researched and not yet adequately represented in literature, especially when it comes to a conscious exclusion of the 'brand' aspect. The present thesis addresses this shortcoming. As Figure 5 illustrates, the result is a socio-psychological model for the desire for luxury jewellery possession. Figure 11 in Appendix C presents the proposed model, including the items of the constructs.

Figure 5

Desire for luxury jewellery possession model



The proposed model is based on a diverse range of scientific literature and on the previously discussed latent variables that were revealed to be most relevant in this setting. Those three latent variables as well as their more detailed factors have established the multidimensional influences on the desire for luxury jewellery possession. The themes of conspicuous consumption, luxury goods, luxury jewellery, one's emotional relation to objects, self-improvement and social positioning are central to these theoretical grounds, whether explicit or implicit. Fundamental to these concepts is Belk's (1988) theory of the extended self, which still finds great consideration in contemporary research – as it does in the present thesis. Moreover, whereas a fair portion of the reviewed work primarily focuses on luxury goods or possession in general or considers various influencing factors in isolation, the model proposed in this thesis acknowledges the relevance of emotional, self and social aspects but places particular emphasis on their interrelationships. It is argued here that such a holistic and simultaneously concrete model presented in the context of luxury jewellery offers a clear and interrelated approach by providing the link between the three factors based on the reviewed literature and may therefore constitute a step in the right direction towards a theoretical merger of the currently fragmented area.

In summary, the compiled literature sheds light on possession and consumerism in the luxury area, highlighting the importance of a deeper understanding of desire for luxury jewellery possession and its potential influence factors. For a clear presentation, Table 5 presents a consolidated overview of this study's research hypotheses.

Table 5

Consolidated research hypotheses

H1a)	The emotional significance of possessions *positively* influences one's emotional relation to objects.
H1b)	Possession attachment *positively* influences one's emotional relation to objects.
H1c)	One's emotional relation to objects *positively* influences the desire for luxury jewellery possession.
H1d)	Possession attachment *positively* influences the emotional significance of possessions.
H1e)	Possession attachment *positively* influences self-extension.

H2a) Self-extension *positively* influences self-improvement.

H2b) Consumers' need for uniqueness *positively* influences self-improvement.

H2c) Self-improvement *positively* influences the desire for luxury jewellery possession.

H3a) Social identity *positively* influences social positioning.

H3b) The symbolic meaning of luxury *positively* influences social positioning.

H3c) Social positioning *positively* influences the desire for luxury jewellery.

Based on the literature review, the next step is to acquire real-world data that can capture the multitude of factors presented in the previously introduced model and the relations among them. The subsequent analysis investigates the connections between emotional, self and social aspects as well as their variables, including how these linkages influence one another. The model under consideration is tested using SEM to confirm and/or refute the constructs selected within this specific research setting. Furthermore, through an analysis of the relevant aspects in existing literature, the established hypotheses and their suggested directional relationships can be confirmed or refuted, thereby aiding in clarifying a reliable model. Chapter 3 elaborates on the methodology and methods used for analysis.

Chapter 3. Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

A well-defined research methodology can help in answering the research questions at hand by well preparing the necessary steps to conduct the research (Trochim, 2006). Chapter 3 sheds light on the main topics underlying the methodology governing this study, including its philosophical orientation, research design and the method chosen to collect and analyse data to test the hypotheses. Moreover, it describes the method for data production and provides details of the measurement and scale generation, sampling techniques and the statistical treatment of data. This chapter serves to facilitate full traceability, which enables the reproduction of this study. It focuses on the research approach, including the research philosophy and the epistemological and ontological positions, while it details the research design, namely the research approach, questionnaire design and a comprehensive derivation of the measurement scales. This is followed by an in-depth evaluation of questionnaire testing; the sampling design, including sample size; piloting and the data collection process for SEM. The chapter ends with a brief outlook on the approach to data analysis and its statistical treatment, including the data analysis technique of SEM – both of which are then detailed in the subsequent results chapter.

3.2 Research philosophy

The research philosophy determines the foundations for how the world is examined and understood. These foundations guide the selection of research strategies and appropriate research methods (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Moreover, the research philosophy sets how the researcher understands their investigation (Johnson & Clark, 2006).

The research philosophy is therefore directive when undertaking research. It can have a significant impact not only on what is done but also on understanding the direction and meaning of investigations (Johnson & Clark, 2006); as such, it helps explain the research design. Hence, any research methodology is premised on philosophical orientations, and a methodology is thus more than a summary of approaches, data collection techniques and tools (Avison & Fitzgerald, 1995). Therefore, before the study's design and approach to data analysis are outlined more precisely, the research philosophy that informs the planning and implementation of this research is detailed to provide full transparency and guide further decisions.

A research paradigm is defined as a set of common beliefs and agreements shared between scientists about how problems should be understood and addressed. There are two perspectives of interest in addressing the research objective at hand: first, the consumer's perspective to inform their desire for possessions and, second, the industry's perspective on influencing peoples' desire to possess luxury jewellery to increase sales. The philosophical orientation of this research is the basis for addressing this real-life issue in this study (Crotty, 1998).

Different perspectives and approaches exist to create knowledge; therefore, the research paradigm should be investigated with care. The philosophical stance may influence the overall quality of the research project and how it is conducted. The philosophical stance can be described by ontology (defining what reality is), epistemology (defining how knowledge is derived) and methodology (how to find out about it) (Guba, 1990). Ramanathan (2008) refers to other researchers who introduce the two major philosophical perspectives, as outlined in the following quotation:

> ... Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe (2002) have described positivism and social constructionism as the two major philosophical traditions common in management research. [...] Although these two paradigms [...] share the general empiricist understanding that knowledge results from our senses and experience of the world,

> there are philosophical differences between them about the nature of reality and how it can be assessed. These differences, which involve a set of ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions, lead social scientists to choose certain methodologies over others to achieve desired ends (Rowland, 1995, as cited in Ramanathan, 2008, p.40)

As becomes clear in this quote, philosophical orientation determines the foundations for understanding the world. Positivism and social constructionism (also sometimes referred to as interpretivism) are the two dominant philosophical positions, that guide research strategies and the methods to be applied. That said, certain epistemological positions are likely to result in specific ontological positions. For example, the epistemological position of positivism typically adopts the ontological position of realism, while the epistemological position of interpretivism typically adopts the ontological position of idealism.

The following sections 3.2.1, 3.2.2 and 3.3.3 outline the epistemology, ontology and methodology applied in this research in detail.

3.2.1 General perspective: Epistemology of post-positivism

Next to other assumptions, this research assumes that only measurable knowledge received through observation or measurement is trustworthy, but it also recognizes that imperfection and bias exist in such measurement. Considering that ontology is the science or nature of being (Crotty, 1998), the term epistemology, detached from any context, is defined as the 'nature of knowledge, its possibility, scope, and basis' (Hamlyn, 1995, p.242). It considers how the researcher understands and justifies how knowledge is derived (Crotty, 1998). The question here is consequently 'how do you know something?'

According to Maynard (1994), epistemology offers a philosophical basis to decide what knowledge is appropriate and meaningful in a specific context, providing a context-sensitive philosophical grounding that aligns with the issue at hand. In this study, the key issue relates to how the researcher will know about the underlying drivers for the possession of luxury jewellery. Apart from determining how something is known, epistemology has a major influence on how research is conducted and what kinds of results it can yield (Crotty, 1998).

While various philosophies of science exist (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009), this thesis employs post-positivism. Post-positivism posits that there is uncertainty about whether reality can be observed or measured without error (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). According to this approach, there is one 'real' reality, but it can only be imperfectly perceived and understood with possible bias (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Concerning its epistemological aspects, in post-positivism, the role of the researcher is not entirely independent but may provide some degree of bias in relation to what is researched. The chief difference between post-positivism and positivism lies in their relative assumptions of reality: In positivism, only one true, measurable and observable reality exists, while anything unobservable (e.g., emotions) cannot be real. Moreover, in positivism, the researcher is completely independent, and it is assumed that no biases exist, while post-positivism assumes that bias always exists, and that theory cannot be reduced simply to observations (Zammito, 2004).

With positivism, research is grounded in a hypo-deductive approach, where the hypotheses developed are either accepted or rejected through empirical analysis. Positivism assumes that all data already exists and that the researcher's task is to systematically collect it. In the case of the social phenomenon analysed in this thesis, where the notion of one true reality resulting from analysis contradicts the rather complex context of the social phenomenon, the limitations of positivism become evident, while the stance of post-positivism can accommodate the nature of the research. Therefore, this study follows a post-positivist approach.

Next to positivism, different forms of interpretivism are among the more influential ontological positions. However, interpretivism was not pursued in the current thesis, as explained in the following. Typical philosophical stances and ontological positions in consumer behaviour research involve surveys as well as experimental and quasi-experimental designs. Over time, researchers have explored consumer research from various fields, such as economics, psychology, sociology and philosophy (Holbrook, 1987, as cited in Majeed, 2019). This indicates that there is no right or wrong, but rather that through various considerations, there are different ways to look at things. Interpretivism recognizes the uniqueness of human beings and the importance of understanding the differences between them and the way they make sense of the world. In interpretivism, the researcher's view of the nature of reality or being is socially constructed and subjective, and it may change (Saunders et al., 2009). That being said, the critics of positivism argue that the complex world is full of so many insights that one would simply not be able to grasp by reducing them to 'law-like generalizations', as positivism does.

According to Cronbach (1975), the world contains more things than can be imagined in hypotheses, which is why researchers should observe and be open. This view is shared and supported by Arnold and Fischer (1994), Hirschman (1985) and Hunt (1991), all of whom proclaimed interpretivist philosophies in consumer research.

Considering the absence of prior research in the field of desiring luxury jewellery, as well as the complexity of the proposed theory, taking a post-positivism philosophical position represents an appropriate starting point and an ideal fit for the present thesis. It is also recognized that in consumer behaviour research, multiple approaches should be applied to generate comprehensive knowledge (Majeed, 2019), indicating that future research based on interpretivism may be reasonable.

3.2.2 Ontological position of realism: reality is objective and independent of the researcher

The ontological question asks what reality is in the eyes of the researcher and is concerned with the nature of existence and the understanding of reality itself (Crotty, 1998). According to Ramanathan (2008), the ontological position of realism claims the following,

'Realism assumes that the social world is real, made up of hard, tangible structures that exist irrespective of our individual descriptions. Thus, the social world is real and exists separate from the individuals' perception of it' (Ramanathan, 2008, p.41).

Questions about ontology and epistemology go hand in hand, although there is disagreement in the scientific community as to whether certain epistemological positions necessarily go hand in hand with certain ontological positions due to their compatibility. Two main positions regarding ontology are mentioned: While the ontological position of realism considers reality as something external that exists independent of human beliefs or understandings, the ontological position of idealism claims that reality only exists and derives its meaning from socially constructed meanings (Davis, 1998). Regarding the development of philosophy in science, the methodological debate around different philosophical views continues in all areas of social research (Wang, 2019). The two streams of thought were already differentiated in early Greek times – formerly based on Heraclitus, who referred to a constantly changing world in the flow, and Parmenides, who referred to a constant being. Gray (2013) stated that the latter perspective of Parmenides, which corresponds to the ontological position of realism, has prevailed in western philosophy.

Positivism typically, but not always, adopts the ontology of *naïve* realism, assuming that reality exists outside of peoples' minds (Crotty, 1998) and is thus fully objective. As Gray (2013) explains, the world and the reality that is displayed by science are true and accurate (Chia, 2002, as cited in Grey, 2013), while the external reality and things 'out there' (e.g., cultures or organizations) exist independent of the researcher (Grey, 2013). In comparison with idealism, considering the post-positivistic epistemological position, the present thesis is guided by realism, understood as a perception of the external reality through one's senses. This thesis aims to measure those perceptions and obtain a view of the external reality by drawing these measurements of perception together.

3.3 Methodology and research design

This section first discusses research methodology, followed by research design, including the methods used for data collection, measurement scales and sampling techniques; the data collection process; and finally, the statistical treatment of data and subsequent analysis.

3.3.1 Research methodology: Survey

This section elaborates on the research methodology, which explains how the research is designed systematically and carried out. In terms of possibilities for quantitative and qualitative research, surveys and quantitative observations are the most widespread methodologies and pivotal techniques in descriptive research designs (Malhotra et al., 2015). Surveys are based on the administration of structured questionnaires, which are distributed to a proportional sample that represents the target population under research (Malhotra et al., 2015). Respondents are asked a range of questions about the research topic at hand, while data is collected structurally, meaning that the formal questionnaire contains questions in a pre-arranged order to ensure standardization (Malhotra et al., 2015). The research question at hand, which aims to assess what drives people's desire for luxury jewellery possession, can only be answered through clear responses from the respondents. Therefore, a survey is assumed to be an appropriate methodology for this context. By contrast, the alternative technique of quantitative observations would not yield answers regarding what constitutes the desire for luxury jewellery possession but could only provide information about how many luxury pieces are worn and how participants interact and interrelate with their possessions or the like.

The survey methodology comes with advantages as well as disadvantages. The advantages include, amongst others, its fast and easy administration (specifically when conducting online surveys) and the consistency in obtained data due to the fixed responses, resulting in little variety in the results and relatively easy coding and analysis of the data (Rindfleisch et al., 2008, as cited in Malhotra et al., 2015). With regard to the disadvantages, participants may be unable to provide accurate answers to the requested information, and they may also be unwilling to provide certain information that is requested, for example, because it is sensitive or personal. Moreover, the structured questions and fixed responses may lead to a loss of validity for certain data. Given that the wording of the questions is fixed and imposed on the respondents, the proper language and logic of the questionnaire should be ensured to overcome this issue (Malhotra et al., 2015).

Nevertheless, recognizing that 'the survey approach is amongst the most common methods of primary data collection in marketing research, representing around 72% of all marketing research spending' (Malhotra et al., 2015, p.270), and consciously weighing the advantages and disadvantages as mentioned above, the present thesis applies the research methodology of a survey as the essential tool to obtain primary information.

The next section describes the research design.

3.3.2 Research design

Determined by the research's underlying objectives and in alignment with the selected methodology as presented above (Halcomb et al., 2009), the research design defines a scope for both data collection and its analysis (Bryman, 2004; Kroll & Neri, 2009):

> There are numerous types of research designs that are appropriate for the different types of research projects. The choice of which design to apply depends on the nature of the problems posed by the research aims. Each type of research design has a range of research methods that are commonly used to collect and analyse the type of data

that is generated by the investigations. (Walliman, 2011, p.9)

Descriptive-explanatory research and exploratory research are among the most common research designs. Since the aim of this research is operationalized using structured hypothesis testing (as mentioned in the section 'Purpose of the study, research objective, research question and introduction to research methods'), the most suitable research design is a descriptive-explanatory approach. Descriptive-explanatory research aims to provide evidence regarding the causal relationship between two or more variables (independent and dependent) (Burns & Bush, 2006). The researcher is primarily interested in the cause–effect relationships – the *impact* of the independent variable(s) on the dependent one(s) – and uses manipulation of the independent variables to observe the effects on the dependent variable. Specifically, it aims to describe and provide a general overview of a certain phenomenon, usually following rigid approaches. It helps to describe and measure phenomena by answering questions related to what, where, how, when and who. Its design relies on observation as the primary data collection method, where 'observation' is a wide term that includes interviews, questionnaires, visual recordings and even acoustic or smell recordings (Walliman, 2011, p.9). The important aspect here is the procedure of *recording* to allow for subsequent analysis. Often cross-sectional in nature (Saunders et al., 2000), data is collected in a single time period, providing a current snapshot of the phenomenon (Burns & Bush, 2006). Examples of methods to address causal problems are experiments.

Next, the quantitative research approach and the deductive reasoning underlying this study are outlined.

3.3.3 Quantitative research approach: The role of theory in research with deductive reasoning

In alignment with the research methodology, different research approaches can be used to generate results. The researcher decides what comes first: theory or data. From a methodological perspective, research can be conducted with a quantitative or qualitative approach (Kroll & Neri, 2009). Research following the quantitative approach often sets up hypotheses and tests them through data collection and numerical analysis, as in a deductive process, whereas the qualitative approach often starts from induction by giving more meaning to the word instead of large populations. Thus, in general, quantitative researchers measure, while qualitative ones do not.

While inductive and deductive approaches share the same ultimate goal of answering a research question, they apply different logic to do so. The deductive approach supposes that theory and often hypotheses are developed before any data collection. By contrast, the inductive approach collects data and develops a theory based on that (Saunders et al., 2009). Simply put, deduction tests theory, while induction builds theory (Saunders et al., 2009). Again, notionally, both approaches could be applied in this area of research.

For this thesis, a quantitative approach is used to generate results. Given the range of research that has been undertaken in similar research areas – luxury (Husic & Cicic, 2009; Maden, 2015), purchase intention (Ajzen, 1985), desire (Elliott, 1997; Stavrakakis, 2006) and consumer buying behaviour (Wattanasuwan, 2005; Gajjar, 2013) – as well as the formulation of the research question, the present study uses deduction as a form of reasoning and applies quantitative data to examine the influencing factors for desiring luxury jewellery. This enables the evaluation of the selected theories and previously situated hypotheses for the specific context of the possession of luxury jewellery. The clear focus on the product category of fine luxury jewellery is the unifying and differentiating factor of this thesis, as previous literature has mainly examined luxury products in general and/or considered the impact of branding. The present research assumes that in the category of fine luxury jewellery, the brand is of little or no relevance and that other drivers dominate the desire to possess such objects. Moreover, the focus on 'possession' as it is defined in this thesis is relatively under-researched, as most studies have explored purchase intention and not the act of possession. These aspects differentiate this thesis from previous literature.

The quantitative study design is detailed in the following section.

3.4 Quantitative study design and method

The research takes place among luxury jewellery possessors in western Germany, which is the central site of the researcher. As Germany is a highly developed country with a relatively large luxury target market, it represents an appropriate setting to conduct the study.

Regarding data collection, the three most prominent methods to collect primary data are observations, interviews and questionnaires (Currie, 2005). The research objective and approach dictate the most appropriate method. The objective of this research is to evaluate the desire for luxury jewellery possession based on findings from past literature, encapsulating emotional relation to objects, self-improvement and social positioning, which were determined to be most relevant. This study seeks to explain whether these three principal areas and their related aspects, described in the literature review, hold for the phenomenon of desiring luxury jewellery possession. To fulfil this objective, quantitative data collection using self-completion online questionnaires is considered the most suitable method. Researchers from positivist research philosophies commonly use this type of method:

> Questionnaires are more suitable issues with only a few questions that are relatively clear and simple in meaning. (Phellas et al., 2011, p.202)

Within this quantitative approach, digital, self-completed, structured questionnaires were used for data collection. Structured questionnaires have several benefits: primarily that their length and content-based orientation can be controlled, which is not the case with unstructured interviews (Churchill & Iacobucci, 2002; Saunders et al., 2009). Moreover, questionnaires are uniform in that they ask the same questions in the same order. Considering the ease of administration, respondents can complete the questionnaires by themselves (Bryman & Bell, 2007; Saunders et al., 2009). While interview-administered questionnaires can be conducted via the phone or in a face-to-face setting, there is the possibility of bias due to the presence of an interviewer, since the respondent might not feel ‘free’ to openly communicate opinions. Although questionnaires are a less time-consuming method than in-depth interviews and do not allow for further elaboration during data collection, they enable the production of quantifiable and generalizable data that facilitates the measurement of the desire for luxury jewellery possession and its possible influencing factors. Self-administered questionnaires, where participants fill out the survey on their own, can be distributed via delivery and collection, postal services or the internet. They afford the respondent more control about when and where to complete the questionnaire, and they avoid social desirability bias effects resulting from an interviewer in attendance. Amongst the administration options, the internet is the most suitable option for this thesis because it ensures fast delivery and return in real-time and enables flexibility for both the researcher and the respondent as to when and where to fill out the survey without the need to provide an interview-room or the like. It is also cost-effective and accessible to most people in western countries. For this thesis, which aims to collect a broad amount of data in a relatively short time frame and with no additional financial resources available, the quantitative study design using surveys represents the most suitable procedure to be applied.

The next section elaborates on the questionnaire development and details the measurement scales, followed by an in-depth elaboration of the sampling applied in the present thesis. The sampling section provides sophisticated information about the sampling process, including the initial contact and messaging platforms used.

3.4.1 Questionnaire development

The questionnaire reflects the developed conceptual framework as presented and determined in the literature review. All scale items in the questionnaire are taken from existing scientific literature and adapted to this research topic, with care taken to limit adaptation to the smallest possible degree (see Tables 5–11). The final conceptual framework consists of seven main constructs (desire for luxury jewellery possession, emotional significance, possession attachment, self-extension, CNFU, social identity, symbolic meaning). The questionnaire, consisting of 60 closed-ended questions to retrieve comparable results with prior research, includes simple category scales and multiple rating scales. This results in an instrument of over nine pages. All questions are closed-ended, except for the question on how many luxury jewellery pieces are possessed and for the cases where 'other' is selected, in which case the respondent is asked to clarify their answer in a free-text field.

The following section provides details of each part of the survey instrument and the related questions:

- Page 1 presents the informed consent. It includes project background information as well as relevant information for participation, such as the definition of luxury jewellery and the requirement of owning/possessing at least one piece of luxury jewellery. For the full informed consent, see Appendix A.
- Page 2 evaluates the level of possession by asking respondents how many luxury jewellery pieces they own and how these items were obtained. This information may provide relevant insights or assist in structuring the analysis.
- Pages 3–7 comprise the essence of the questionnaire and elaborate on the factors influencing the desire for luxury jewellery possession. They contain the measurement scales for the independent and dependent variables.

- Page 8 concerns demographics. It is consciously located after the questions on influencing factors, as those require more thought, elaboration and concentration than demographic information does. By answering the demographic questions, respondents complete the last part of the questionnaire.
- Page 9 is the final page and thanks the respondent for participation. It also provides the researcher's contact details in case any questions emerged during participation.

Table 6 presents an overview of the main research constructs, their sub-constructs and their source, as well as a brief justification for their consideration, in line with the literature presented in Chapter 2.

Table 6

Overview of main research constructs, sub-constructs, sources and justification for their consideration in the present thesis

Research construct	Sub-construct	Source	Justification
The desire for luxury jewellery possession scale	-	Kim et al. (2018)	This construct is the dependent variable and the basis of this study.
Emotional significance scale	-	Ball & Tasaki (1992)	Possessions are assumed to be emotionally significant.
Possession attachment scale	-	Ball & Tasaki (1992)	Close personal and emotional relations (= attachment) are assumed to exist.
Self-extension scale	-	Sivadas & Venkatesh (1995)	Luxury jewellery is expected to be a tool to extend the self.
Consumers' need for uniqueness scale	consisting of the following: creative choice, unpopular	Ruvio et al. (2008)	CNFU is expected to be the main contributor to the use of luxury jewellery as a differentiator to display

	choice, avoidance of similarity		uniqueness.
Three-factor model of social identity	consisting of the following: in-group ties, centrality, in-group affect	Cameron (2004)	Social identity (the social standing in one's environment and own reputation) is expected to be a driver for the possession of luxury jewellery that may increase this social identity.
Symbolic meaning scale	consisting of the following: motivation, relative position, control	Hayes (2005)	The uniqueness of the product category of luxury jewellery is expected to be due to its unique symbolic meaning.

3.4.2 Measurement scale

For the main body of the questionnaire, five-point Likert-type measurement scales were used, as research indicates that less than five or more than seven scale points significantly decrease measurement accuracy (Johns, 2010). Rating scales provide several advantages: Among other things, they provide multiple choices and, at the same time, are clear and simple for the respondent to understand; data can be gathered from larger samples; they can provide reliable evaluations and opinions on a personal level, while the data can be not only compared or contrasted but also combined with other methods (Johns, 2010; Nemoto & Baglar, 2014). The disadvantages of rating scales are that respondents will likely not select the highest or lowest ratings, and certain people might be tempted to select the same rating for several questions (Johns, 2010).

Moreover, in common research practice regarding rating scales, be they Likert-type scales or other opinion measures, five-point or seven-point response categories are among the most frequently used (Bearden et al., 1993; Peter, 1979; Shaw & Wright, 1967). Of importance for any measurement scale and true for both options is that an odd number of alternatives allows for a neutral response (Cox III, 1980).

With regard to each point option, seven-point scales seem to be slightly more supported than five-point scales to optimize reliability (Symonds, 1924; Preston & Colman, 2000). However, for the relatively lengthy questionnaire consisting of 60 items in total, five-point scales have been used to reduce complexity (Buttle, 1996). This reduced number of response options is comprehensible and less confusing than seven-point scales, thus positively influencing response rates (Marton-Williams, 1986; Babakus & Mangold, 1992; Devlin et al., 1993; Hayes, 1992) while offering a low 'frustration level' (Babakus & Mangold 1992; Buttle, 1996) and providing the sufficient possibility to express opinions (Marton-Williams, 1986). The use of five-point scales is ultimately expected to increase response quality (Babakus & Mangold, 1992). Moreover, five-point scales have been found to be appropriate for use in Europe (Bouranta et al., 2009). Thus, the five-point Likert-type scale used for the main body of the questionnaire ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

The following section provides details of each scale and the related questions asked. It also discusses the framing conditions of the measurement scales.

3.4.3 Detailed operationalization of measurement scales and questionnaire justification

Measurement scales used to operationalize the constructs in the present thesis originated from theory in and around consumer behaviour and will be introduced construct by construct in the following sections. Every measurement scale consists of at least three or more items (Bearden & Netemeyer, 1999). The first section starts with an explanation of how data around the level of possession was collected, followed by the operationalization of the constructs each.

3.4.3.1 Collection of background data on the level of possession.

One indispensable characteristic is that sample respondents possess at least one piece of luxury jewellery. This was therefore evaluated as a ‘selection question’ at the start of the questionnaire alongside the seeking of informed consent. Background information regarding the potential respondent’s current level of luxury jewellery possession and how this luxury jewellery was obtained is essential for clustering insights based on the ‘number of possessions’ (i.e., the number of luxury jewellery pieces in possession) and the way they were obtained. Furthermore, the route to possession might delineate and enable the clustering of insights. For example, respondents were asked ‘how many pieces of luxury jewellery do you possess?’ with a free-text field to enter a number. Appendix A contains the full list of questions posed.

3.4.3.2 Operationalization of desire for luxury jewellery possession.

To date, no scale exists to measure the complex construct of desire for luxury jewellery possession as it is defined in this research. This is most likely because of the novelty of the topic in the academic field. Existing literature focuses on the point of purchase, not on the possession (i.e., how people relate to objects after purchase and their relationship to what is already owned). The lack of an existing scale may also be due to the specific product category of luxury jewellery, which is not comparable to mundane objects and is under-researched to date.

Therefore, Belk’s (1985) materialism scale was used as a starting point, since a relationship is observed between materialism and the possession of (luxury) goods. However, the scale encompasses aspects of possessiveness, non-generosity and envy as the key aspects of the extended self, which do not correspond to this thesis’ definition of desiring luxury; therefore, these elements were not used.

In further literature, Kim, Park and Dubois (2018) assessed the influence of consumers' political ideology and status-maintenance goals on their desire for luxury goods. Specifically, the authors stated '…that activating the status-maintenance goal among conservatives heightens their preference for social stability, increasing their desire for goods viewed as helping to maintain the social order, such as luxury goods' (Kim et al., 2018, p.133). Even though political ideology is outside the scope of the present thesis, there is a content-related overlap between the desire for luxury and the investigation of applied methods. In six investigations, Kim, Park and Dubois (2018) tested hypotheses by employing different measures of political conservatism and the desire for luxury. The web appendices of their study provide further details on the methodologies used throughout. Amongst other things, Kim et al (2018) claimed that the status-maintenance goal drives the desire for luxury goods. Sample questions of the original scale include the following: 'How important is it for you to maintain your social standing?' (Web Appendix C), 'To what extent does your current social standing make you think about maintaining your social standing?' (Web Appendix D) and 'To what extent does your current social standing make you focus on how to maintain (improve) your social standing?' A possible challenge of the scale is the wording 'maintain (improve)' in the last listed item, as it is comparatively unspecific and may be unclear for respondents. As this is the originally proposed formulation, the present thesis adopted it as is and integrated both terms as proposed in the original, while acknowledging that it could be an issue. Since the present thesis works with Likert scales, the questions were re-formulated into statements to enable proper responses. Table 7 details the original and proposed items. Kim, Park and Dubois (2018) determined the relationship between status-maintenance goals and the desire for luxury goods, and the present thesis applies their measurement scale in the context of desiring luxury jewellery possession.

Furthermore, Study 4 of the six studies conducted by Kim et al. (2018) measured the desire for a certain product in the context of car brands. Originally, a seven-point Likert scale was used, ranging from 1 (not at all) to 7 (very much) (Kim et al., 2018). Even though the product category of cars is quite different from luxury jewellery, and the original scale considers the aspect of the brand, which is not the case for the present thesis, it is considered to be the most appropriate option within the scientific field to date. The present study thus applied this measure by adapting it to the context of desiring luxury jewellery and reformulating it for alignment with a five-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly agree (1) to strongly disagree (5). Reverse scoring was also integrated to increase scale reliability. Moreover, in the original scale by Kim et al (2018), one item asked participants to indicate their desire for seven luxury and seven non-luxury U.S. fashion and car brands. Accordingly, the present thesis assumes that the desire for car brands, in general, can be applied to the desire for luxury jewellery specifically, and therefore the desire for luxury jewellery can also be measured in this manner. The present study thus used an adaptation of this measurement scale.

In summary, the scientific literature to date lacks a pre-established scale to operationalize the desire for luxury jewellery possession, resulting in potential complexities. Therefore, the following measurement scale for the desire for luxury jewellery possession is proposed, based on prior scales that measure the status-maintenance goal, equating the desire for luxury goods to the desire for car brands. The Cronbach's alpha for the construct in the present thesis was 0.896, indicating that data demonstrated consistency if measurement is repeated (Malhotra et al., 2017). The proposed scale was operationalized as follows.

Table 7

Adjustments made to existing scales on status-maintenance goal and the desire for car brands, as used by Kim, Park and Dubois (2018), for use in this research

DESIRE FOR LUXURY JEWELLERY POSSESSION SCALE		
Original Scale	Adjustments made	Scale used in this research
Status maintenance goal (Kim et al., 2018) Web Appendix C		
How important is it for you to maintain your social standing? (Web Appendix C)	Re-formulated into statement	It is important for me to maintain my social standing.
Web Appendix D		
To what extent does your current social standing make you think about maintaining your social standing? (Web Appendix D)	Re-formulated into statement 'You' changed to 'me'	My current social standing makes me think about maintaining my social standing. (Appendix C)
To what extent does your current social standing make you focus on how to maintain (improve) your social standing? (Web Appendix D)	Re-formulated into statement 'You' changed to 'me'	My current social standing makes me focus on how to maintain/improve my social standing. (Appendix C)
Kim et al. (2018, p.142, Study 4):		

Participants indicated the extent to which they wanted a product from six car brands.	Luxury and non-luxury cars replaced by luxury jewellery; reverse scoring applied.	I want to possess luxury jewellery. *reversed to:* I do not want to possess luxury jewellery.
Participants indicated their desire for seven luxury and seven non-luxury U.S. fashion and car brands.	Luxury and non-luxury cars replaced by luxury jewellery.	I like to possess luxury jewellery.

3.4.3.3 Operationalization of emotional significance of possessions.

To the best of the researcher's knowledge, no pre-established scale exists to operationalize the emotional significance of possessions in the context of luxury jewellery. To operationalize this specific construct, different scales were contemplated in this research, resulting in the use of Ball and Tasaki's (1992) Emotional Significance Scale. Literature has also employed alternative measurement scales to measure the same construct, but with lower measures of internal consistency, as indicated by a lower Cronbach's alpha. Therefore, it was decided that Ball and Tasaki's (1992) scale offered the most appropriate basis. The original scale has three items measuring emotional significance. Considering the analysis using SEM, this comparatively small number of items is ideal for this kind of analysis. All three items were applied for the construct operationalization in the present thesis, without removing any item. Sample questions include 'My [X] reminds me of important people in my life' and 'If I lost my [X], another one like it wouldn't be as meaningful'. The scale was originally applied to the context of cars; in this thesis, the product of 'car' was replaced by 'luxury jewellery' as a minor adjustment to the original scale. In addition, in the original study, the scale was measured on a six-point Likert scale ranging from agree (6) to disagree (1). In this comparative study, Cronbach's coefficient alpha was 0.76, whereas Cronbach's alpha for the construct in the present thesis was 0.746, indicating that data demonstrated consistency if measurement is repeated (Malhotra et al., 2017).

Table 8

Adjustments made to Ball and Tasaki's (1992) 'Emotional Significance Scale for the early ownership, mature ownership, and predisposition stages' for use in this research

EMOTIONAL SIGNIFICANCE OF POSSESSIONS SCALE		
Original Scale	Adjustments made	Scale used in this research
My car reminds me of important people in my life.	'car' replaced by 'luxury jewellery'	My luxury jewellery reminds me of important people in my life.
My car reminds me of important things I've done or places I've been.	'car' replaced by 'luxury jewellery'	My luxury jewellery reminds me of important things I've done or places I've been.
If I lost my car, another one like it wouldn't be as meaningful.	'car' replaced by 'luxury jewellery'	If I lost my luxury jewellery, another one like it wouldn't be as meaningful.

3.4.3.4 Operationalization of possession attachment.

Several scales have been elaborated upon to operationalize the construct of possession attachment. Ball and Tasaki's (1992) eight-item scale to measure possession attachment (p.162, Table 1) was perceived to be the most appropriate pre-established scale and was thus applied in the existing thesis. All eight items of the original scale were considered for the operationalization of the construct in the existing study, meaning that no item was removed, resulting in a moderate number of items that are expected to fit with the analysis method using SEM. From those items, sample statements include ‘If I lost my [X], I would feel like I had lost a bit of myself’ and ‘If someone praised my [X], I would feel somewhat praised myself’. The free-text fields indicated by ‘[X]’ enable the researcher to adapt the items to the context of the corresponding research question. The original scale was measured on a nine-point Likert scale, ranging from agree to disagree (Kleine & Baker, 2004). In this comparative study, Cronbach’s coefficient alpha of 0.93 was calculated over all objects for attachment (Ball & Tasaki, 1992). The assumption is that this will hold for the existing study. The Cronbach’s alpha for the construct in the present thesis was 0.912, indicating that data demonstrated consistency if measurement is repeated (Malhotra et al., 2017).

Table 9

Adjustments made to Ball and Tasaki's (1992) possession attachment scale for use in this research

POSSESSION ATTACHMENT SCALE		
Original Scale	Adjustments made	Scale used in this research
If someone ridiculed my __, I would feel irritated.	‘luxury jewellery’ added	If someone ridiculed my luxury jewellery, I would feel irritated.
My __ reminds me of who I am.	‘luxury jewellery’ added	My luxury jewellery reminds me of who I am.
If I were describing myself, my __ would likely be something I would mention.	‘luxury jewellery’ added	If I were describing myself, my luxury jewellery would likely be something I would mention.
If someone destroyed my __, I would feel a little bit personally	‘luxury jewellery’ added	If someone destroyed my luxury jewellery, I would feel a bit

attacked.		personally attacked.
If I lost my __, I would feel like I had lost a bit of myself.	'luxury jewellery' added	If I lost my luxury jewellery, I would feel like I had lost a bit of myself.
I don't really have too many feelings about my __ (reversed scored).	'luxury jewellery' added	I don't really have too many feelings about my luxury jewellery (reversed scored).
If someone praised my __, I would feel somewhat praised myself.	'luxury jewellery' added	If someone praised my luxury jewellery, I would feel somewhat praised myself.
Probably, people who know me might sometimes think of my __ when they think of me.	'luxury jewellery' added	Probably, people who know me might sometimes think of my luxury jewellery when they think of me.

3.4.3.5 Operationalization of self-extension.

Several scales have been elaborated upon to operationalize the construct of self-extension. Sivadas and Venkatesh's (1995) scale of the 'Incorporation into the extended self' was perceived to be the most appropriate pre-established scale and was thus used to measure self-extension. The scale encompassed six items. This comparatively small number of items is particularly favourable for the analysis method using SEM. All six items were considered for the operationalization of the construct in the existing thesis, and no item was removed. Sample questions include 'My [X] helps me achieve the identity I want to have' and 'My [X] is part of who I am'. As the original scale contained free-text fields indicated by '[X]', the researcher proactively adapted the items to the context of the corresponding research question for a successful transfer of the scale to the present thesis. The scale 'Incorporation into the extended self' was measured on a seven-point Likert-type scale (Sivadas & Venkatesh, 1995, p.407). In terms of its discriminant validity, the average variance extracted (AVE) for possession incorporation in extended self is between .62 and .79 – greater than the rule of thumb of .50 (‘indicating that the variance in the measure accounted for by the construct exceeds that due to measurement error’) (Sivadas & Venkatesh, 1995, p.408). The Cronbach’s alpha for the construct in the present thesis was 0.973, indicating that data demonstrated consistency if measurement is repeated (Malhotra et al., 2017).

Table 10

Adjustments made to Sivadas and Venkatesh's (1995) 'Incorporation into the extended self-scale' for use in this research

SELF-EXTENSION SCALE		
Original Scale	Original Scale	Original Scale
My __ helps me achieve the identity I want to have.	‘luxury jewellery’ added	My luxury jewellery helps me achieve the identity I want to have.
My __ helps me narrow the gap between what I am and what I try to be.	‘luxury jewellery’ added	My luxury jewellery helps me narrow the gap between what I am and what I try to be.
My __ is central to my identity.	‘luxury jewellery’ added	My luxury jewellery is central to my identity.
My __ is part of who I am.	‘luxury jewellery’ added	My luxury jewellery is part of who I am.
If my __ is stolen from me, I will feel as if my identity has been snatched from me.	‘luxury jewellery’ added	If my luxury jewellery is stolen from me, I will feel as if my identity has been snatched from me.
I derive some of my identity from my __.	‘luxury jewellery’ added	I derive some of my identity from my luxury jewellery.

3.4.3.6 Operationalization of consumer's need for uniqueness.

Several scales have been elaborated upon to operationalize CNFU. Ruvio, Shoham and Brencic's (2008) scale for the measurement of CNFU was deemed to be the most appropriate pre-established scale and was thus used to operationalize the variable 'consumers' need for uniqueness' in this study. The original scale encompasses 12 items measuring consumers' need for uniqueness by considering the categories of creative choice, unpopular choice and avoidance of similarity. All items of the original scale were perceived to be appropriate for the present thesis, and thus no item was removed initially (see Table 11). Sample questions include 'I often combine possessions in such a way that I create a personal image that cannot be duplicated' and 'the more commonplace a product or brand is among the general population, the less interested I am in buying it'. For two of the 12 items, no adaptations were made to the concrete formulations, while for 10 of the 12 items, adaptations were made to ensure fit for the context of luxury jewellery possession. These adaptations result in deviations from the original scale, and the fit for the existing thesis must therefore be assessed. Regarding its reliability, in the comparable earlier study of Ruvio et al. in which a short-form measurement scale for CNFU was developed and validated cross-culturally, the Cronbach's alpha was assessed for each CNFU dimension for the respective countries used for cross-country validation:

> The Cronbach's alphas in the Israeli, Palestinian, and Slovene samples, respectively, were 0.91, 0.98, and 0.91 for creative choice; 0.84, 0.83, and 0.89 for unpopular choice; and 0.93, 0.95, and 0.93 for avoidance of similarity, all above the required 0.70 level (Nunnally, 1978). They indicate little variation in internal consistency across samples. (Ruvio et al., 2008, p.39)

The Cronbach's alpha for the construct in the present thesis was 0.954, indicating that data demonstrated consistency if measurement is repeated (Malhotra et al., 2017). The scale was measured on a five-point Likert-type scale, ranging from strongly agree (1) to strongly disagree (5) (Tian et al., 2001).

Table 11

Adjustments made to Ruvio et al.'s (2008) Consumers' Need for Uniqueness Scale for use in this research

CNFU Scale		
Original Scale	Adjustments made	Scale used in this research
Creative Choice		
I often combine possessions in such a way that I create a personal image that cannot be duplicated.	'luxury jewellery' added	I often combine luxury jewellery possessions in such a way that I create a personal image that cannot be duplicated.
I often try to find a more interesting version of run-of-the-mill products because I enjoy being original.	No changes made	I often try to find a more interesting version of run-of-the-mill products because I enjoy being original.
I actively seek to develop my personal uniqueness by buying special products or brands.	'buying special products or brands' replaced by 'possessing luxury jewellery'	I actively seek to develop my personal uniqueness by possessing luxury jewellery.
Having an eye for products that are interesting and unusual assists me in	'luxury jewellery'	Having an eye for luxury jewellery products that are interesting and

establishing a distinctive image.	added	unusual assists me in establishing a distinctive image.
Unpopular choice		
When it comes to the products I buy and the situations in which I use them, I have broken customs and rules.	'product' replaced by 'luxury jewellery'	When it comes to the luxury jewellery I buy and the situations in which I use them, I have broken customs and rules.
I have often violated the understood rules of my social group regarding what to buy or own.	'luxury jewellery' added	I have often violated the understood rules of my social group regarding what luxury jewellery to buy or own.
I have often gone against the understood rules of my social group regarding when and how certain products are properly used.	'products' replaced by 'luxury jewellery pieces'	I have often gone against the understood rules of my social group regarding when and how certain luxury jewellery pieces are properly used.
I enjoy challenging the prevailing taste of people I know by buying something they would not seem to accept.	No changes made	I enjoy challenging the prevailing taste of people I know by buying something they would not seem to accept.
Avoidance of similarity		
When a product I own becomes popular among the general population, I begin to use it less.	'products or brands' replaced by 'luxury jewellery piece'	When a luxury jewellery piece I own becomes popular among the general population, I begin to use it less.
I often try to avoid products or brands	'products or brands'	I often try to avoid luxury jewellery

that I know are bought by the general population.	replaced by 'luxury jewellery piece'	that I know is bought by the general population.
As a rule, I dislike products or brands that are customarily bought by everyone.	'products or brands' replaced by 'luxury jewellery piece'	As a rule, I dislike luxury jewellery that is customarily bought by everyone.
The more commonplace a product or brand is among the general population, the less interested I am in buying it.	'products or brands' replaced by 'luxury jewellery piece'	The more commonplace luxury jewellery is among the general population, the less interested I am in buying it.

3.4.3.7 Operationalization of social identity.

Several scales have been assessed to operationalize social identity or the comparable concept of impression management. Cameron's (2004) three-factor model of social identity was deemed to be the most appropriate pre-established scale and was thus used to operationalize the variable 'social identity' in this study. The three dimensions considered were 'centrality', 'in-group affect' and 'in-group ties'. Cameron (2004) conducted five different studies, using slight variations of items. Study 1 detected the highest goodness of fit, which is an indicator of the extent to which the hypothesized model fits the data best (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993, as cited in Cameron, 2004) for the three-factor model. Therefore, the present thesis utilized these items. Social identity was assessed with 11 items in total, while all items of the original scale were considered to be appropriate to the present context. Thus, no item was removed initially, indicating a good basic condition for the applicability of the scale to the existing thesis and its analysis using SEM. Sample statements include 'I really "fit in" with other in-group members', 'In general, being an in-group member is an important part of my self-image' and 'In general, I'm glad to be an in-group member'. As the sample statements show, the social identity scale does not need to be adapted to the context of luxury jewellery, and the scale can be used for the existing thesis without further adaptations. This indicates that the scale is an appropriate measurement for the construct of social identity. Regarding scale reliability, in comparable earlier studies, the internal consistencies were defined as a measure of reliability and an approach to determine whether items on a test (or a subscale of a composite test), intended to measure the same construct, produce consistent scores (Tang et al., 2014). The total scales and subscales were acceptable, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the latter ranging from .76 to .84 for in-group ties, from .67 to .78 for centrality and from .77 to .82 for in-group affect (Cameron, 2004, p.249). The Cronbach's alpha for the construct in the present thesis was 0.879, indicating that data demonstrated consistency if measurement is repeated (Malhotra et al., 2017). Response scales ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree), where higher values indicate greater identification with the statement.

Table 12

Adjustments made to Cameron's (2004) 'Three-factor model of social identity' for use in this research

SOCIAL IDENTITY SCALE		
Original scale	Adaptions made	Scale used in this research
In-group Ties		In-group Ties
I find it difficult to form a bond with other (in-group members).[a]	-	I find it difficult to form a bond with other (in-group members).[a]
I really 'fit in' with other (in-group members).[c]	-	I really 'fit in' with other (in-group members).[c]
In a group of (in-group members), I really feel that I belong.	-	In a group of (in-group members), I really feel that I belong.

Centrality		Centrality
I often think about the fact that I am an (in-group member).[d]	-	I often think about the fact that I am an (in-group member).[d]
Overall, being an in-group member has very little to do with how I feel about myself.[ae]	-	Overall, being an in-group member has very little to do with how I feel about myself.[ae]
In general, being an in-group member is an important part of my self-image.[e]	-	In general, being an in-group member is an important part of my self-image.[e]
I am not usually conscious of the fact that I am an in-group member.[a]	-	I am not usually conscious of the fact that I am an in-group member.[a]
Being an in-group member is an important reflection of who I am.[e]	-	Being an in-group member is an important reflection of who I am.[e]
In-group Affect		In-group Affect
In general, I'm glad to be an in-group member. [e]	-	In general, I'm glad to be an in-group member.[e]
I often regret that I am an in-group member.[ae]	-	I often regret that I am an in-group member.[ae]
Generally, I feel good when I think about myself as an in-group member.	-	Generally, I feel good when I think about myself as an in-group member.

[a] Reverse-scored item
[b]Adapted from Brown et al. (1986).
[c]Adapted from Hinkle et al. (1989).
[d]Adapted from Gurin and Markus (1989).
[e]Adapted from Luhtanen and Crocker (1992).
[f]The modified three-factor model included an additional loading of .62 on the centrality factor.

3.4.3.8 Operationalization of the symbolic meaning of luxury.

To the best of the researcher's knowledge, no pre-established scale for symbolic meaning in the context of luxury (jewellery) exists, meaning that the present thesis identifies and highlights the lack of a theoretically well-defined scale. To best address this lack of a scale for the specific context, the present thesis evaluated similar scales that could be adapted to the context of luxury jewellery.

Hayes's (2005) scale for the measurement of the 'symbolic meaning of money', which is based on that of Thierry (1992), was considered to be the most appropriate pre-established scale and was thus used to operationalize the symbolic meaning of luxury. The original scale includes 31 items measuring motivation, relative position, control and spending related to symbolic meaning regarding pay. However, the transfer from the context of pay to the context of luxury jewellery is a stretch, and it is unclear whether the scale can be transferred to the latter context at all. Furthermore, the large number of items in the original scale could be a potential hurdle, as the concentration of respondents is limited, and too lengthy scales may not be answered properly in turn. To counteract this hurdle, this study excluded certain items (18) and did not integrate them into the scale because they did not translate to the context of this research, remaining with 13 items. Sample questions of the remaining items included are 'My pay should enable me to enhance personal growth' and 'Through my pay I learn how influential my opinion is'. While some items of the original scale did not use elegant wording and formulations, it is expected that this will be compensated for by the translation into German. The items were all scored on a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). In a comparable study by Hayes (2005), the coefficient alpha for the scale was $\alpha = .95$ (Hayes, 2005). The Cronbach's alpha for the construct in the present thesis was 0.98, indicating that data demonstrated consistency if measurement is repeated (Malhotra et al., 2017).

Table 13

Adjustments made to Hayes's (2005) 'Symbolic meaning of money scale' for use in this research

SYMBOLIC MEANING OF LUXURY SCALE		
Original scale	Adjustments made	Scale used in this research
MOTIVATION		
My pay should enable me to enhance my personal growth.	'pay' replaced by 'luxury jewellery'	My luxury jewellery should enable me to enhance my personal growth.
My pay should enable me to establish contact off the job.	'pay' replaced by 'luxury jewellery'	My luxury jewellery should enable me to establish contact off the job.
My pay should enable me to be recognized in society.	'pay' replaced by 'luxury jewellery'	My luxury jewellery should enable me to be recognized in society.
My pay should enable me to achieve a stable way of life.	Not applicable	-
My pay should enable me to show off my success.	'pay' replaced by 'luxury jewellery'	My luxury jewellery should enable me to show off my success.
My pay should enable me to be admired for my success.	'pay' replaced by 'luxury jewellery'	My luxury jewellery should enable me to be admired for my success.
My pay should enable me to be respected for my success.	'pay' replaced by 'luxury jewellery'	My luxury jewellery should enable me to be respected for my success.
RELATIVE POSITION		
Through my pay, I learn how I meet job expectations.	Not applicable	-
Through my pay, I learn the priorities in my work.	Not applicable	-
Through my pay, I learn the extent to which I perform my job efficiently.	Not applicable	-

Through my pay, I learn how well I perform in comparison with my colleagues.	'pay' replaced by 'luxury jewellery' 'with my colleagues' replaced by 'with others'	Through my luxury jewellery, I learn how well I perform in comparison with others.
Through my pay, I learn the amount of effort I put in my job.	Not applicable	-
Through my pay, I learn the extent to which I put the right amount of effort in my job compared with others.	Not applicable	-
Through my pay, I learn the extent to which my performance is valued in relation to my colleagues.	'my performance is valued' replaced by 'my performance is of value'	Through my luxury jewellery, I learn the extent to which my performance is of value in relation to others.
Through my pay I learn how well I took on and completed hard projects at work.	Not applicable	-
CONTROL		
Through my pay, I learn how much freedom I have to do things my own way.	'pay' replaced with 'luxury jewellery'	Through my luxury jewellery, I learn how much freedom I have to do things my own way.
Through my pay, I learn what people think of my work.	'pay' replaced with 'luxury jewellery' 'think of my work' replaced with 'think of me'	Through my luxury jewellery, I learn what people think of me.
Through my pay, I learn how responsible I am for the work of	Not applicable	-

others.		
Through my pay, I learn how influential my opinion is.	'my opinion is' replaced by 'I am'	Through my luxury jewellery, I learn how influential I am.
Through my pay, I learn how important my work is to the organization.	Not applicable	-
Through my pay, I learn how much influence I have upon the activities of my department.	Not applicable	-
Through my pay, I learn how influential I have been concerning the operation of my organization.	Not applicable	-
Through my pay, I learn how satisfied the customers of the organization are.	Not applicable	-
SPENDING		
My pay should enable me to buy what I want.	Not applicable	-
My pay should enable me to go on vacation as I want.	Not applicable	-
My pay should enable me to live a luxurious life.	'pay' replaced with 'luxury jewellery'	My luxury jewellery should enable me to live a luxurious life.
My pay should enable me to attain a desirable standard of living.	'pay' replaced with 'luxury jewellery'	My luxury jewellery should enable me to attain a desirable standard of living.
My pay should enable me to be well off.	Not applicable	-
My pay should enable me to purchase	Not applicable	-

the goods and services I desire.		
My pay should enable me to acquire luxury goods and services.	Not applicable	-
My pay should enable me to live wherever I want.	Not applicable	-

Following this section's outline of the operationalization of each construct, the data collection on demographics is described next.

3.4.3.9 Data collection on demographics.

To ensure that respondents focus their full attention on the construct-relevant questions first, the questions concerning the respondents' demographic data, which require comparatively less concentration, were integrated at the end of the questionnaire. The demographics section aims to enable the classification of participants' characteristics based on age, gender, nationality, education and employment status. The context of Kwon's study (2002) is different from that of the present study; nevertheless, the present study also seeks to evaluate whether correlations between variables could be derived from demographics. For example, gender or age could correlate with consumers' need for uniqueness or their need for impression management in regard to their desire for luxury jewellery possession. The demographics section of the questionnaire employs simple category scales. For example, it asks for the gender of the respondent and offers the following options: 'male', 'female', 'other' or 'prefer not to answer'.

Appendix A contains a complete overview of the questionnaire and its questions. The questionnaire's language and translation to fit the local German setting is elaborated upon next.

3.4.4 Questionnaire language and translation

The original questionnaire was developed and pre-tested in English. However, as the questionnaire was distributed in Germany, translation to the German language was needed. To ensure translation accuracy, the back-translation technique by Behling and Law (2000), as well as Brislin's model (1970), were applied.

Accordingly, three translators with excellent proficiency in both German and English were involved in the translation process. The process was as follows:

- Step 1) The original English questionnaire was translated from English to German by an independent research colleague who is bilingual – English and German are their mother tongue (Behling & Law, 2000; Brislin, 1970).
- Step 2) To ensure questionnaire validation, a second independent research colleague, who is also bilingual and thus a native speaker of both languages, back-translated (blind) the German version into English, without access to the original language version (Behling & Law, 2000; Brislin, 1970).
- Step 3) The researcher, equally fluent in English and German, compared the back translation with the original questionnaire and monitored differences in wording or nuances of formulations. Adaptations were made if needed. The researcher prepared the final draft (Behling & Law, 2000; Brislin, 1970).

Appendix B contains the full questionnaire translated into German.

To ensure successful data collection, the questionnaire was tested prior to data collection, as detailed below.

3.5 Questionnaire testing

The questionnaire's online format was designed and organized using the JISC Online Survey (formerly Bristol Online Survey) platform, which is accessible to students at the University of Gloucestershire. Its structure and content were further advanced based on feedback and results obtained during the pre-testing and piloting stages.

The questionnaire used in this thesis was tested in two main stages. In Stage 1, the questionnaire was pre-tested to examine content (also called face) validity, which is a type of validity that systematically evaluates the representation of the content of a certain scale for the present measurement task (Malhotra et al., 2017). In Stage 2, the questionnaire was piloted to assess its internal consistency (i.e., the reliability of scale items) by using Cronbach's alpha. In the pre-test, respondents, as well as the pilot, were drawn from the same population as the main study target group (Malhotra et al., 2012).

3.5.1 Pre-testing stage

Before piloting, the questionnaire was pre-tested to assess its face validity, as well as the content validity of the measurement scales used. Content validity is a part of internal validity that assesses whether 'the concepts used in the research correspond well to what they are meant to refer to' (Elliot et al., 2016). Pre-testing was performed in two ways: in personal encounters with participants to observe their reactions or comments and digitally with the option to provide feedback via email or phone.

The questionnaire was also reviewed individually by five academic specialists in business management and psychology (Malhotra et al., 2017). The aim here was to assess whether the scale items measure the main characteristics of the concepts to be assessed (Malhotra et al., 2017). Moreover, since the questionnaire was to be distributed to consumers living in Germany and the German language, German language experts were involved to review the clarity and comprehensibility of the questions, wording, spelling and grammar. The pre-test revealed the need for minor adaptations to wording, and elements were re-phrased based on the suggestions generated.

In addition to content validity, this study aims to address the face validity of items. If face validity is not given for the scale, the entire measurement cannot be operationalized for the construct being studied, as stated by Hardesty and Bearden (2004). However, though face validity is necessary, it is not sufficient in providing construct validity. To ensure face validity, ‘items must reflect what they are intended to measure’ (Hardesty & Bearden, 2004, p.99). Specifically, because the measures of the questionnaire were modified for the setting of luxury jewellery possession, evidence for their face validity should be provided to ensure sound scales, which are expected to dramatically increase scale quality (Hardesty & Bearden, 2004, p.99). Face validity was assessed by discussing the procedure of the online survey in general, the sequence of questions, perceived length, intensity of completion, phrasing and wording with a small group of (pre-test and pilot) participants. They were asked for feedback on the comprehensibility of the questions, the survey instructions and their general structure. Moreover, respondents were asked to mention any conspicuous observations during their participation, for example, technicality, the length of the questionnaire and the clarity of questions. The results of this pre-test revealed minor elements of ambiguity regarding the functioning of the questions in the survey platform and the survey structure, and the questions were subsequently adapted accordingly.

3.5.2 Pilot study stage

To test the length, technicalities, clarity and comprehensibility of the questionnaire and its individual questions, the questionnaire was piloted with n = 32 respondents who were previously unrelated to the research (i.e., involved in the pre-test), while belonging to the desired target group. As the final questionnaire was to be distributed digitally and responded to via an online platform, piloting was conducted in the same way. More precisely, the survey was distributed via the researcher’s social network, as well as via three Facebook groups containing more than 5,000 members each and focusing on questionnaire testing for master and doctoral theses. This digital option enabled the respondents to participate whenever and from wherever they feel comfortable. In total, the pre-test data collection period lasted two weeks and took place from June 17th until June 26th, 2020.

Before starting the pilot, respondents were informed that the questionnaire was a pilot test, which is why the researcher was able to ask for feedback from the respondents. Feedback dealt with, inter alia, technicalities, the length of the questionnaire and – most importantly – the comprehensibility of the questions. Consolidated feedback was evaluated, and minor adaptations to the survey were made. Specifically, based on significant qualitative feedback from several pilot respondents regarding incomprehensibility in the specific context of luxury jewellery, two items were removed in the piloting phase. Judges reported the unrelatedness of the items and that they were unrepresentative and a poor indication of the construct. This procedure is common, as reported by Bearden et al. (1989) and Netemeyer et al. (1995, 1996) (as cited in Hardesty & Bearden, 2004). The removal of those two items caused only a minimal change in Cronbach's alpha (.97 changed to .965), which also justifies this decision, as it is insignificant and acceptable. Table 14 lists the adaptations made based on the pre-tests. In the concluding step, the questionnaire was finalized and distributed to the entire sample.

Table 14

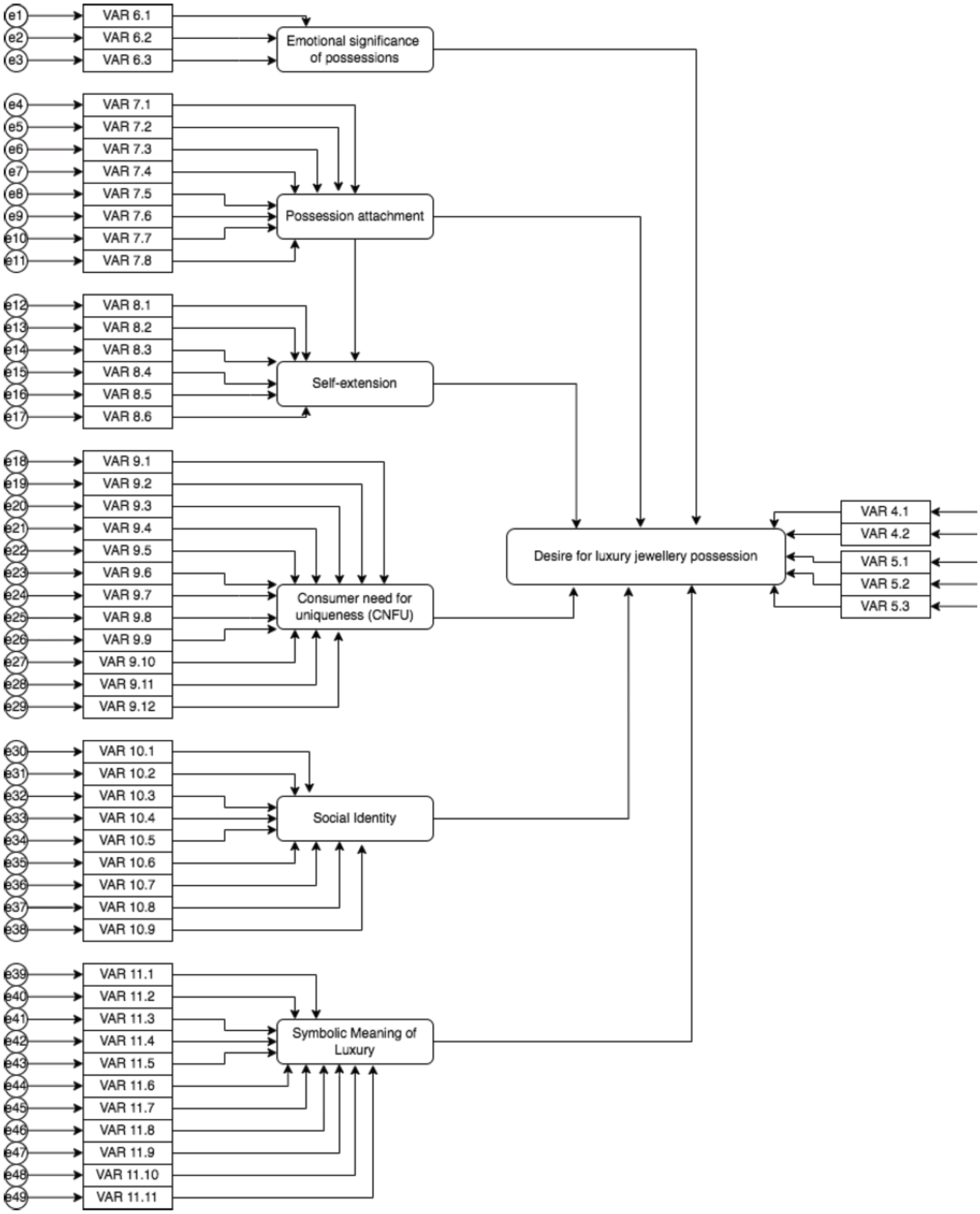
Overview of adaptations made to the survey based on pre-test and piloting

Nr	Adaptation
1.	Certain formulations were adapted; for example, another word was provided for the term 'evaluation', and '…which cannot be duplicated' was simplified.
2.	Two items that were incomprehensible in this study's context were removed from the scale of the 'symbolic meaning of money': 'my luxury jewellery should enable me to be well-off' and 'my luxury jewellery should enable me to confirm my desires'.

What resulted is the final proposed model based on the literature review with regard to the specific context of this thesis (Figure 6):

Figure 6

Final proposed model based on the literature review and following pre-testing



Based on the results of the piloting numerically, Cronbach's alpha was employed to test the reliability and internal consistency of the utilized constructs. All Cronbach's alpha values ranged from .74 to .96, indicating acceptable, good and excellent internal consistency, meaning that data demonstrated consistency if measurement is repeated (Malhotra et al., 2017). Table 15 presents the reliability and validity of the piloting.

Table 15

Results of the reliability and validity of the piloting (n = 32)

Research constructs	Reliability (Cronbach's alpha)
The desire for luxury jewellery possession scale	.879
Emotional significance scale	.739
Possession attachment scale	.825
Self-extension scale	.941
Consumers' need for uniqueness scale	.906
Three-factor model of social identity	.852
Symbolic meaning scale	.965

3.6 Data collection, questionnaire sampling and distribution

The following sections provide an overview of the data collection method, the questionnaire distribution and the procedures applied for questionnaire completion.

3.6.1 Data collection method

The final questionnaire composition and content were determined based on the validity and reliability valuation and the findings of the questionnaire testing. The final online survey includes nine sections, starting with the informed consent and an assessment of the respondent's level of possession, followed by an evaluation of factors comprising the model under research, and concluding with demographic questions. Appendix A and Appendix B present the full survey outline in English and German, respectively.

The distributed survey was set up, designed and managed using the platform JISC 'Online Survey' (formerly Bristol Online Survey [BOS]), to which free access is provided by the University of Gloucestershire.

Data collection was carried out over five months, starting on July 3rd, 2020, and closing on December 8th, 2020. As data collection took place digitally, no compulsory attendance at a specific location was required for participation. Due to the length of the questionnaire, participants needed between 5 and 10 minutes to answer all questions, depending on their familiarity with filling out questionnaires and how difficult or easy this task was for them. Due to the fully digital approach, there was no involvement of the researcher, who was neither present nor in contact with the respondents; they were left to complete the survey themselves. The participant's role was active in that they first had to read the introductory element and instructions and then answer questions by providing a clear score on the given scales to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with certain statements while being as honest as possible.

The next section details the sampling design and the questionnaire distribution.

3.7 Sampling design and questionnaire distribution

The researcher contacted initial potential respondents directly by email or other digital messages (see examples of messaging platforms in Table 37 in the appendix). In both cases, a brief outline of the research aim was provided, followed by a screening question asking if the person possesses luxury jewellery to check their suitability for participation.

The population targeted in this study included people who possess at least one piece of luxury jewellery, as this specific group is expected to best provide insights into the desire for luxury jewellery possession*,* which is distinct from purchase intention, which may also exist for non-possessors.

For this study, a subset of the target population was selected (Mack et al., 2005). This subset – called the sample – is relatively homogeneous (McCracken, 1988) in that the population shares the possession of luxury jewellery and is therefore expected to have a desire to possess luxury jewellery. Two particular aspects are of relevance during target selection. First, the respondent must fit in by owning at least one piece of luxury jewellery (Mack et al., 2005), and second, the respondent must be willing to participate based on the informed consent information presented. This study sample comprises male and female participants aged 18 years or older from consumers in Germany who possess at least one piece of luxury jewellery.

3.7.1 Approach for sampling design

In alignment with the description of the sample design of this research, the derivation of the sampling procedure is explained first. The key difference between probability and non-probability sampling lies in the respondents' chance of being selected. All individuals have a chance of being selected in probability sampling, but not in non-probability sampling. Non-probability sampling is applied in this study based on the following challenges: First, it is difficult to identify the exact number of luxury jewellery possessors (e.g., to the best of the researcher's knowledge, a pre-existing list of the target population does not exist), and no accessible and reliable data (e.g., a list of luxury jewellery possessors) is available that offers this information. Second, the pilot survey revealed that the process of data collection is challenging given the limited number of luxury jewellery possessors and the difficulty of reaching this specific target group. Luxury jewellery possessors are certainly difficult to locate, and people from this target population are not always willing to be identified.

Therefore, this study adopted the non-probability sampling technique of snowball sampling, which relies on the researcher's personal judgement, and the first group of respondents was targeted because they have the desired characteristic of the target population in the present thesis (Malhotra et al., 2017): they possess luxury jewellery. The initial participants were asked to identify other potential respondents who possess luxury jewellery. Subsequent participants were involved based on referrals (Malhotra et al., 2017). The process of receiving referrals from referrals can continue for numerous referral waves, called the snowball effect (Malhotra et al., 2017), and the resulting sample is a non-probability sample. The present thesis utilized this sampling technique because it enables the involvement of research participants who possess luxury jewellery and who are part of a group of people that is difficult to identify. As with any sampling strategy, snowball sampling comes with advantages as well as disadvantages. On the one hand, it is a quick and cost-effective method that significantly increases the probability of obtaining the sample population with the desired characteristics (Malhotra et al., 2017). It is especially suitable for populations that are difficult to identify and reach (Etikan et al., 2016), as is the case in the present thesis. Moreover, the researcher is involved and can therefore control and manage the origination and progress of the sample (Etikan et al., 2016). On the other hand, there is a potential for sampling bias, since respondents tend to suggest further respondents who share similar characteristics to their own; the consequent risk is a loss of variety in the final sample compared with the real-world population (Etikan et al., 2016). To overcome this potential limitation, the researcher ensured that the initial selection of respondents was sufficiently diverse to reflect reality and avoid a skewed sample.

3.7.2 Questionnaire distribution

Sending out the questionnaire *digitally* aims to increase accessibility, the willingness to participate and the flexibility to do so since location and timing do not represent limiting factors for participation. Moreover, digital-only distribution facilitates survey promotion via various platforms, while forwarding to others in one's social network is enabled.

In addition to a desktop version of the questionnaire, a mobile device-friendly version was also presented to enable the completion of the questionnaire on smartphones, for example.

The following distribution approaches were employed:

- Direct, personal emails/messages were sent out to the researcher's network to distribute the questionnaire. Each respondent was addressed personally by name. A clear call to action was formulated in the message to increase participation and completion rates. Moreover, an explicit call was made for respondents to further distribute the questionnaire in their network.
- Contacts were approached via WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Xing and classic email, as these are popular platforms in Germany and accessible via the researcher's personal account.
- As contacts are in the researcher's opt-in list, it increases the likelihood of getting responses as well as their hopefully increasing quality.
- The researcher distributed the digital questionnaire *publicly* via different social media platforms (e.g., *Facebook, LinkedIn*, *Xing* and *Instagram*) and *specifically* in related groups – on Facebook, LinkedIn and Xing, the researcher asked for participation in *specific groups* (see Appendix B, Table 37) related to luxury (jewellery) or conventions for people interested in research. Posts requesting that viewers complete the questionnaire included hashtags related to the topics of luxury jewellery and luxury jewellery possession to increase interest in participation.

- As Instagram works slightly differently (i.e., it does not have groups where one can post content; instead, only individual persons/companies are able to post), the researcher contacted influencers who are known luxury jewellery possessors, as well as luxury jewellery companies and resellers, requesting that they distribute the questionnaire amongst their social networks and Instagram sites.
- To further increase and broaden respondent participation, relevant faculties (e.g., consumer behaviour, marketing and psychology) of approximately 20 well-established universities in Germany were contacted and asked to support questionnaire distribution amongst their networks.
- Moreover, the questionnaire was distributed via the well-known platforms www.surveycircle.com and www.poll-pool.com, where respondents, as well as other researchers, can participate in various studies.

The diversity of the platforms and contacts was expected to increase the diversity of the respondents and to help attract a representative number of respondents. To avoid social desirability bias when friends or family members of the researcher were contacted and asked for participation, several actions were undertaken to reduce any possible effect to a minimum. For example, it was explicitly mentioned that participation is voluntary, it is not necessary to participate to do the researcher a favour, and that participation is not necessary. Please see sections 3.9 and 3.10 for more details on social desirability bias and informed consent.

Given the above, non-probability snowball sampling through the researcher's network and beyond is an effective method for data collection in this specific context. The next section provides details on the sample size.

3.7.2 Sample size

The selection of an appropriate sample size is essential for research and its generalizability to an entire group or population (Hair et al., 2008). If the sample is too large, the researcher will invest valuable time and resources without gaining additional insights from this investment, and if the sample is too small, certain fundamental research insights might be overlooked through invisibility. To reduce errors of inference and maximize the generalizability of results to the population of interest (Osborne & Costello, 2004), a suitable sample size must be determined. The total *N* and the ratio of samples to variables (i.e., the number of sample respondents to the number of questionnaire items) are relevant. According to Osborne and Costello (2004),

> Larger samples are better than smaller samples (all other things being equal) because larger samples tend to minimize the probability of errors, maximize the accuracy of population estimates, and increase the generalizability of the results. (p.1)

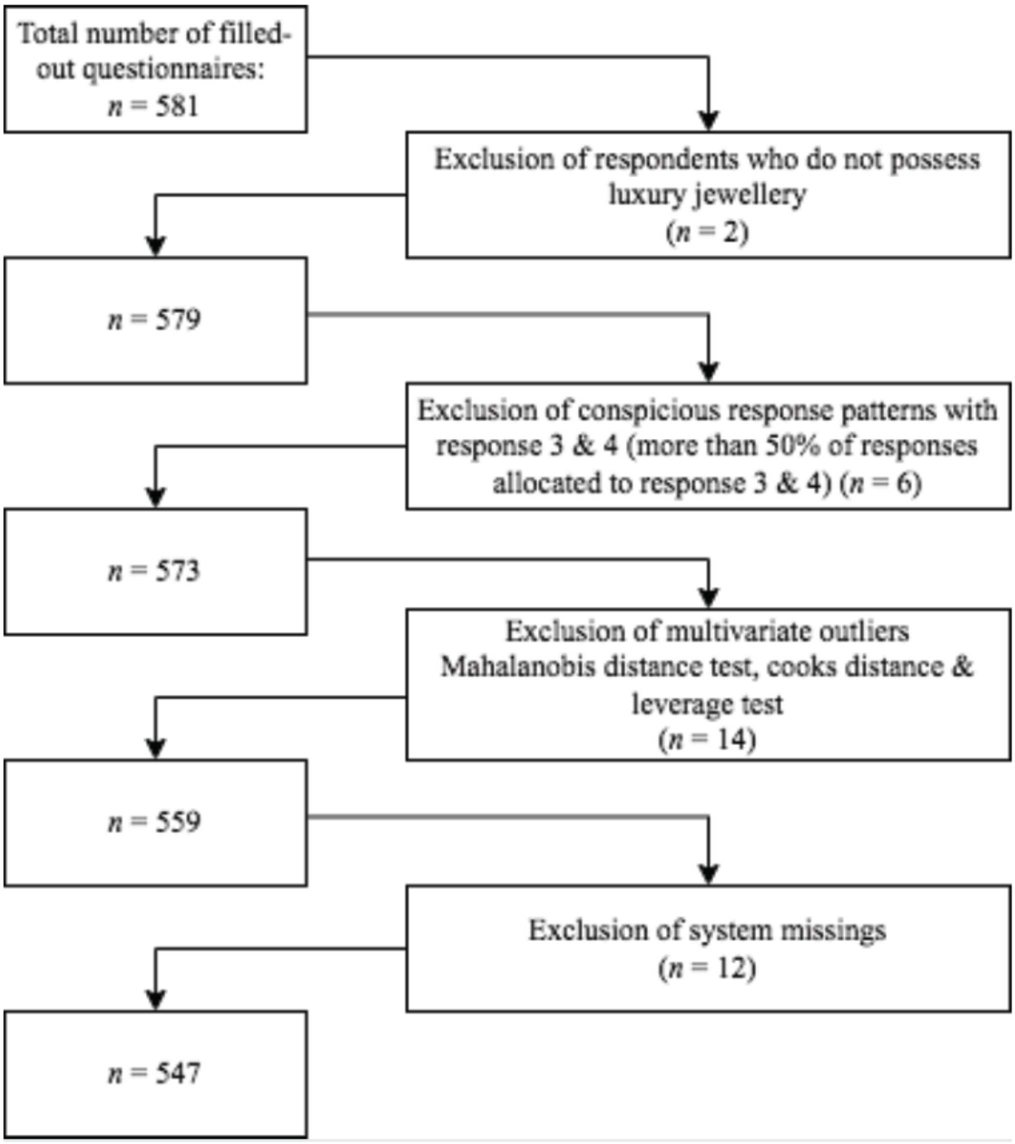
However, solely looking at the total *N*, without considering the number of factors in the survey or the number of items on each factor, is too simplistic. Therefore, the ratio of subjects to items is also considered. Different guidelines exist for determining this ratio. According to Osborne and Costello (2004), there are numerous subject-to-item ratios (3:1, 6:1, 10:1, 15:1 or 20:1). Hence, as this study additionally strives for large *N*s*,* a sample ratio rule of 10:1 is adopted, meaning that each item included necessitates at least 10 respondents. This results in the main study's sample size of 560, representing 10 respondents for each item (10:1) or 560 respondents for 56 items.

3.7.3 Identification of eligible respondents

Before data analysis, certain provisions were made to clean and prepare the data. Figure 7 presents a sampling flow chart of the total respondents and the qualification process for further data analysis. The questionnaire was filled out by 581 respondents, two of whom were excluded from further consideration because they reported not possessing luxury jewellery, which was a mandatory requirement to qualify for inclusion in the sample. Furthermore, a response analysis was conducted to evaluate conspicuous response patterns in the dataset. From the remaining 579 respondents, six were excluded due to conspicuous response patterns with responses ‘neutral’ (3) and ‘agree’ (4). Specifically, more than 50% of their responses were allocated to one of these ratings, which may indicate that the questions were not answered seriously. Then, a multivariate outliers test was performed using the Mahalanobis distance test, Cook’s distance test and the leverage test to identify deviations in the dataset. The cut-off for outlier identification was determined as follows: Data points were removed from further analysis only if they were indicated to be outliers based on all three outlier tests. In this way, excluding too much relevant data was avoided. Based on those three multivariate outlier tests, 14 data points were excluded from further analysis. Finally, 12 system missing values were identified in the dataset, meaning that in 12 cases, one item had not been answered. This number is comparably low when considering the high number of items and the large sample size. Even though means were calculated to conduct the analysis, and those missing values probably would not represent a major issue, the respondents were excluded from further analysis.

Figure 7

Overview of the process to qualify respondents



In summary, it can be stated that from the total of 581 respondents who completed the questionnaire, 547 cases qualified for inclusion in the sample and were considered for further analysis.

3.7.4 Procedure for questionnaire completion

The procedure for questionnaire completion was as follows: Once the respondents started filling out the questionnaire, there was no option to pause and continue later. Instead, they were required to complete the entire questionnaire at one point in time. The questionnaire was divided into nine pages with a fixed sequence of questions, which were identical for every respondent.

3.7.5 Assessing model validity

With SEM, the assessment of validity ultimately specifies the model. Validity is understood as ‘the extent to which a measurement represents characteristics that exist in the phenomenon under investigation’ (Malhotra et al., 2017, p.361).

Model validity is determined by construct validity, convergent validity and discriminant validity. In this study, the reliability and unidimensionality of the model were assessed as well.

- Construct validity addresses the question of what construct or characteristic is being measured by the scale. It indicates the extent to which theoretical questions or assumptions can be represented by measurement items (Malhotra et al., 2017).
- Convergent validity is a measurement of construct validity and assesses the extent to which a scale positively correlates with other measures of the same construct (Malhotra et al., 2017). It indicates the extent to which measures deviate from one another.

To further assess the convergent validity of the measurement model, AVE is defined as ‘the variance in the indicators or observed variables that is explained by the latent construct’ (Malhotra et al., p.798) and was considered in this research. In addition, composite reliability (CR), which is ‘the total amount of true score variance in relation to the total score variance’ (Malhotra et al., p.808), was calculated. AVE and CR were calculated for each latent construct of the measurement model. Their values cannot be retrieved from SPSS or AMOS but must be calculated separately; an Excel sheet was used to do so. To achieve adequate convergent validity and adequate CR, the AVE should be > 0.5 and > 0.7, respectively.

  - To assess convergent validity, factor loadings must be evaluated first. They are considered significant when they are 0.5 or higher (Hair et al., 2006).
  - Second, variance extracted (VE) must be evaluated. VE is the average squared factor loadings divided by the number of items of a construct. It represents the variance shared between a construct and its items. VE should be greater than 0.5, where higher values mean that the items represent the construct (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).
  - Third, reliability must be evaluated. Reliability is the internal consistency of a measure and is defined as 'the extent to which a scale produces consistent results if repeated measurements are made on the characteristic' (Malhotra et al., 2017, p.160). Cronbach's alpha coefficient is used to measure the reliability of a scale. Values of 0.7 or higher represent acceptable internal consistency (Hair et al., 2006).

- Discriminant validity is also a measurement of construct validity and is essential in conducting latent variable analysis (Bollen 1989; Fornell & Lacker, 1981, as cited in Farrell 2010). As Farrel (2010) states, 'Without it, researchers cannot be certain whether results confirming hypothesized structural paths are real or whether they are a result of statistical discrepancies' (p.324). Specifically, discriminant validity is a measure of the degree to which a certain latent construct is different from other latent constructs (Farrell, 2010), which assures that a certain measurement construct is unique in what it represents contextually in the model compared with other measurement constructs in this same model (Hair et al., 2010, as cited in Henseler, 2015). With SEM, discriminant validity can be evaluated by determining whether a construct has more variance with its own measures compared with other constructs of the same model (Hulland, 1999). It is examined by comparing the calculated AVE for each construct and the square root of the AVE to all construct correlations in the model (Voorhees et al., 2016). Discriminant validity 'is said to be achieved […] if a construct's AVE is greater than the shared variance between it and all other constructs' (Voorhees et al., 2016, p.124).

  - If no support is found for discriminant validity, it is unclear whether 1) statistically significant hypotheses can be concluded for the data or 2) the same construct is modelled twice in one present model (Voorhees et al., 2016).

- Unidimensionality, which is the indication of just one underlying construct for a set of indicators, is important for achieving construct validity. In the case of cross-loadings, the model constructs must be adapted. Having a unidimensional model is essential for a successful test of the prior identified underlying theories (Hair et al., 2006).

As soon as the above-mentioned validity is achieved for a certain measurement model in SEM, the structural model of research can be calculated based on certain model fit indices.

A brief overview of the data analysis methods is discussed next.

3.8 Data analysis methods: An overview

The use of statistical programs to assist data analysis is elaborated, and SEM, including CFA, is detailed with typical processes and conditions. Before doing so, certain preparatory steps are considered, specifically data preparation, data screening and sorting of the data. Moreover, backgrounds to normality distribution as well as outliers are considered, while the preparatory assessment of model validity, model fit, fit indices and modifications are elaborated upon.

3.9 Limitations of methodology

Limitations to data collection that result from the methodology are evaluated in this section. The present thesis is limited to social desirability bias, which is a common limitation in any quantitative research since respondents are aware of participation in research when responding to a survey and could therefore be intimidated by potential negative consequences or impacts when not conforming to social desirability norms (Jann et al., 2019). The researcher took necessary steps to reduce this effect to the lowest possible level by guaranteeing anonymity, not asking for personal data and being absent during the survey, to name a few. However, for the present thesis, social desirability bias could not be reduced to zero.

Regarding common method bias, even though several steps were undertaken to reduce the potential effects of common method variance (see Chapter 4 for further details), for example providing a distinction between exogenous and endogenous variables in the online survey, it was not possible to reduce this effect to zero, as indicated by MacKenzie and Podsakoff (2012). However, the undertaken steps reduced this limitation to a minimum.

3.10 Ethical considerations and privacy

This section reviews the ethical considerations and requirements to preserve respondents' privacy rights and ensure voluntary participation. These are relevant aspects of all research, and scientific views on guidelines and codes have hence remained relatively consistent over the past years (Ritchie et al., 2013; Bryman, 2012).

This study's approach to research ethics was approved by the University of Gloucestershire through its formal Project Approval Process and sign-off. This project further complies with the University of Gloucestershire's Research Ethics Handbook of Principles and Procedures (2008). Before questionnaire completion, an informed consent form was presented to participants.

The researcher also ensured that all essential ethical considerations (Ritchie et al., 2013, p.78) were adhered to:

- That research should be worthwhile and should not make unreasonable demands
- That participation in research should be based on informed consent
- That participation should be voluntary and free from coercion or pressure
- That adverse consequences of participation should be avoided, and risks of harm known
- That confidentiality and anonymity should be respected. (p.78).

The questionnaire started with an informed consent page, through which the researcher ensured that participants were transparently and fully informed about boundary conditions regarding questionnaire participation. Specifically, respondents were informed of the research goal, the researcher's expectations of the respondents during survey participation, the required time for participation, the requirement of a minimum age of 18 years, the dissemination of results and the collection of demographic information. Voluntary participation was highlighted, along with confirmation that respondents could withdraw from the session at any time, if desired, with no need to provide a reason and without any consequences. The informed consent concluded by asking the participant to agree to all the information indicated above (Ritchie et al., 2013). If a participant did not possess luxury jewellery, was not at least 18 years old or was not willing to participate, they were asked to close their browser page. Appendix A presents the full informed consent.

To comply with the confidentiality of records, anonymity was ensured by neither recording any individual identifiers in the questionnaire nor collecting any contact details. The only identifiable contact option was for the respondent to contact the researcher by email. However, though this option was provided, no relation could be drawn to the responses provided.

All details of the approach to data analysis and its statistical treatment are presented in the first section of the results chapter (Chapter 4).

CHAPTER 4. Results

4.1 Introduction

Following the research goals and assumptions developed based on the previous extensive literature review, this chapter reports the descriptive and statistical analysis of the data collected. It outlines the findings from hypothesis testing by applying SEM – first conducting a CFA, including model-fit parameters as well as reliability and validity assessment, followed by implementation of a structural model using structural equation modelling–path analysis (SEM-PA). The chapter ends with the development of the conceptual framework and a summary.

4.2 Approach to data analysis

This section clarifies the approach used to analyse the data collected from respondents via the distributed questionnaires. In line with the methods used in the present study, the quantitative data collection process is followed by an analysis of this data to test the hypotheses.

As the data was collected using the JISC Online Survey platform, the data was first downloaded in the form of an Excel file and prepared for upload into SPSS. Data analysis was run using IBM's statistical software packages SPSS Statistics version 27 and AMOS 25. The data were reviewed and categorized for further analysis in SPSS regarding the research variables. SEM was conducted for data analysis. Specifically, this included two steps: CFA to test the measurement model and SEM-PA to test the structural model (Byrne, 2010; Hair et al., 2010). For all inferential statistics, a standard significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$ was applied.

Regarding the data, several analyses were conducted in preparation for data analysis:

- Data preparation: The data was based on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. To facilitate analysis in SPSS, data responses were coded to numbers, where 1 represents 'strongly disagree' and 5 represents 'strongly agree'. Negative items were re-scaled.

- Data screening: The data was screened and investigated by looking for errors in the dataset. The mandatory participation criteria were retrieved at the very beginning of the questionnaire after the informed consent. The final prerequisite conditions before starting the main questionnaire, namely agreeing to the study description and conditions, being over the age of 18 and possessing luxury jewellery (for full extract, see Appendix A), ensured that respondents were targeted in line with the research criteria. Data screening revealed that although two respondents agreed to the terms and conditions, they later indicated that they possessed '0' luxury jewellery pieces. As they did not meet the required criteria for participation, they were removed from further analysis.
- Common method bias: Participants responding to both exogenous and endogenous variables can lead to common method variance. As indicated by Podsakoff (2003), the greatest leverage to avoid common method bias lies in the design of the study procedure. To minimize this effect, several measures were undertaken in the present thesis. At the beginning of the examination of each new variable, a clear separation was integrated to clarify the start of a new section. At the beginning of the evaluation of the dependent variable, the respondent moved to the next section on a new page of the online survey, which came with an additional minimal temporal separation. On the top of that new page, a brief introduction statement was integrated to further strengthen the differentiation between the queried variables. In this way, a clear distinction was made between endogenous and exogenous variables. Furthermore, respondents were informed that their answers were anonymous, that there were no right or wrong answers and that they should be as honest as possible. Moreover, item

bias was minimized by a critical review of item formulations to avoid both social desirability and ambiguity.

- Non-response bias: Wave analysis was conducted to examine whether significant differences existed in the characteristics (e.g., age, gender, educational background and employment status) of early versus late respondents. To this end, the sample of $N = 579$ respondents were divided into quartiles. The chi-square test was used to assess potential differences between the predefined groups and to assess non-response bias. The results indicated no significant differences between early and late respondents in their evaluation of their response behaviour.
- Missing responses: Data was collected using the JISC Online Survey platform. In this tool, a warning notification popped up when there was a missing response on the specific questionnaire page, thus preventing missing data. However, if the warning notification was ignored, respondents could still proceed to the next page. Therefore, the dataset was checked for missing values using SPSS. System missing values were identified, meaning that in 12 cases, one item was not answered. This number is very low relative to the number of items and the sample size, while means were calculated to conduct the analysis, those missing values did not represent a major issue.
- A response analysis was conducted to identify potentially conspicuous answer patterns. These may occur if, for example, someone gave the same answer unusually often. Outliers from the response analysis (Answer Options 3 and 4) were excluded. Finally, outliers retrieved by the Mahalanobis test, Cook's distance test and the leverage test were excluded from further analysis.
- Exclusion criteria: To retrieve a clean dataset, certain filters were applied in SPSS as exclusion criteria for further analysis. For this thesis, the following filter was applied: the minimum number of luxury jewellery pieces possessed must be > 0. Furthermore,

respondents indicating that they did not possess luxury jewellery, even though they agreed on the informed consent, were excluded.

- Reliability analysis: A reliability analysis was conducted to assess Cronbach's alpha levels per construct.
- Construct variables: These variables were calculated as item means to facilitate further analysis.
- Recoding multiple answers: For the question of how one obtained luxury jewellery, multiple answers were possible. Therefore, multiple answers were re-coded to facilitate further analysis.
- By conducting explorative data analysis, normality distribution was assessed. As a result, descriptive tables at the scale level, as well as the item level, were retrieved.

4.2.1 Normal distribution

Data was checked for its normal distribution by testing for skewness (referring to the lack of symmetry of the data distribution, possibly being left-skewed or right-skewed) and kurtosis (referring to peaky distribution, as indicated by a positive value, or flat distribution, as indicated by a negative value, relative to normality distribution), as well as through histograms and Normal Q-Q plots (Hair et al., 2010). Moreover, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests were performed.

Skewness and kurtosis values in certain ranges indicate normality. Specifically, for skewness and kurtosis, the acceptable range is between -1 and +1, but if the standard error is considered, the acceptable range increases to between -2 and +2. For the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests, the significance levels displayed in SPSS are of relevance. Significance levels <.05 indicate a non-normal distribution of the data, while those > .05

indicate a normality distribution. The null hypothesis of both tests is that the data is normally distributed.

However, several authors have indicated that having normally distributed data is not a mandatory requirement when conducting SEM with large sample sizes. Hair et al. (2008) indicate that a sample size larger than $n = 200$ is sufficient to not consider normality distribution. The present thesis followed this recommendation with a sample size of 579 respondents (after dropping two respondents in data screening) on 56 parameters. Therefore, the analysis was conducted without any additional adaptations.

4.2.2 Outliers

Multivariate outliers were assessed using the Mahalanobis distance test, Cook's distance test and the leverage test. Multivariate outliers were considered for this thesis, as they display unusual, extreme scores on at least two or more variables, while univariate outliers display those types of scores on one variable only. Since outliers can impact the results of statistical analysis, they should be removed beforehand. The Mahalanobis distance test identifies the distance between a certain point and a centroid, which is an overall mean for multivariate data space. It only considers independent variables, and the distances are interpreted by using $p < 0.001$. Cook's distance test, which is a further option to assess for outliers, measures the impact of certain points in regression analysis. Compared with the Mahalanobis distance test, it considers independent as well as dependent variables. According to this measurement, if the data point is $> 4/n$, it is considered to be an outlier. Finally, the leverage test measures the distance from the data point to the mean value. According to the leverage test's rule of thumb, values that are three times the mean value are considered to be large (Hadi & Simonoff, 1993). Based on the assessment of outliers, it was decided to keep the cases without any transformations.

4.2.3 Data analysis technique: Structural equation modelling

SEM aims to test the research hypotheses by testing a measurement model and structural model of the research to compute multiple relationships among various constructs that are represented by observed variables and integrated into a single model (Malhotra et al., 2017; Hair et al., 2010). SEM stems from the principles of multiple regression analysis and factor analysis; it is mainly used as a confirmatory approach to determine whether a developed model is valid, instead of an exploratory approach to find a suitable model in the first place (Malhotra et al., 2017). SEM is a multivariate statistical analysis technique used to estimate numerous dependent relationships in a set of constructs that are represented through various measured variables. It analyses the multiple structural relationships between measured variables and latent variables as well as their interrelated dependence in a unified and integrated way by conducting a single analysis (Malhotra et al., 2017). It enables researchers to derive a comprehensive understanding and enables them to test whole theoretical models at the same time, specifically those that are too complex to test entirely with traditional models (Lowry & Gaskin, 2014).

SEM differs from other multivariate techniques in three ways:

1. SEM is a multivariate technique that incorporates observed (measured) and unobserved variables (latent constructs), which cannot be tested with traditional techniques.
2. SEM can estimate multiple and interrelated dependence in a single analysis.
3. SEM provides an explicit estimate of measurement error, acknowledging the imperfectness of the original measures.

In summary, the two main advantages of SEM are the ability to integrate and measure latent, unobserved variables and the ability to measure entire causal relationships simultaneously (Lowry & Gaskin, 2014). The present thesis conducted a CFA as a first step of SEM for data analysis. A CFA is one specific approach to factor analysis. According to Malhotra (2017),

> Factor analysis allows an examination of the potential interrelationships among a number of variables and the evaluation of the underlying reasons for these relationships. (p.707)

As variables may correlate, factor analysis is a practical procedure for data reduction and summarization, and two approaches exist: exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and CFA, each of which is used in distinct stages of data analysis. EFA is exploratory in nature and used early in the research to identify interrelationships between measured variables. It is unable to take measurement error into account and is rather a hypothesis-generating approach. By contrast, CFA is confirmatory in nature and tests and confirms a specific measurement model that is developed based on previous literature (Byrne, 2010; Hair et al., 2010). It is considered a hypothesis-testing approach.

In terms of the statistical technique of SEM used in this study, CFA precedes SEM. With CFA, a factor structure is pre-determined, and hypotheses are tested to confirm or reject this factor structure. CFA is based on identified research constructs and relationships as well as concrete hypotheses. After a CFA is conducted for the measurement model, model fit indices are examined and compared with model fit targets, with the aim of achieving an acceptable model fit. Items with factor loadings lower than 0.5 are removed from the model, most likely resulting in a higher model fit. However, for testing the measurement model, different parameters (indices) are used to establish model fit (Byrne, 2010; Hair et al., 2012): Fit parameters can be categorized into absolute fit indices (assessing goodness or badness of fit), incremental fit indices and parsimony fit indices. CMIN, CMIN/DF, TLI, CFI and RMSEA can be grouped into absolute and incremental fit indices and are well-established and common indices, as stated in the literature (Malhotra, 2017). In addition, PNFI and PCFI represent parsimony fit indices and are useful to compare models.

4.2.4 Terminology and conditions used with structural equation modelling

Certain terminology is used when conducting SEM, and specific characteristics apply when applying path analysis within the AMOS software:

- Exogenous constructs equal independent variables (Malhotra et al., 2017).
- Endogenous constructs equal dependent variables (Malhotra et al., 2017).
- Measured (observed) variables are represented in squared boxes or rectangles.
- Latent (unobserved) variables are represented in circles.
- A dependence relationship is indicated by straight arrows that point from the independent to the dependent variable (Malhotra et al., 2017).
- A covariance (or correlational) relationship is indicated by a two-headed, curved arrow and displays a correlation between exogenous constructs (Malhotra et al., 2017).
- Every dependent variable is imposed with an error term. In the model, one randomly selected regression weight is fixed at 1 to allow for comparison and to determine all remaining regression weights with it. This relation between the latent and the observed variables enables a determination of the variance of the latent variable.

4.2.5 Assessment of model fit and fit indices

This section elaborates on the model fit parameters.

Regarding the absolute fit indices, the Chi-square test (CMIN or x^2) is a ‘badness of fit’ measure that tests the difference in the covariance matrices, where the observed sample covariance matrix is compared with the estimated covariance matrix (Malhotra, 2017).

Smaller values indicate better model fit. This test is heavily biased by sample size and the number of observed variables (Malhotra, 2017). It tests the null hypothesis that the predicted model and the observed data are alike. It is desirable to accept this null hypothesis, meaning that non-significant results for this value would indicate a good model fit. Its limitation is that it is an inaccurate measure for model fit with large samples, which leads to other measures being used (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Schumacker & Lomax, 2010).

To overcome this difficulty, the normed chi-square to the degrees of freedom (CMIN/DF) was established to consider higher model complexity. It adds the normed or relatively normed chi-square to the degree of freedom, where values smaller than 5.0 indicate an acceptable model fit (Schumaker & Lomax, 2010). Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), which is amongst the most common and recommended parameters, examines the difference between actual and predicted covariance and adjusts the chi-square value by factoring in the degrees of freedom and sample size (Malhotra et al., 2017). Thus, it evaluates model fit while considering sample size (Hair et al., 2010). An RMSEA value of 0.08 or smaller is acceptable, where smaller values represent a better model fit.

The incremental fit index, also called the comparative fit index (CFI), is a revised form of the normed fit index (NFI) and compares the specified model with the null model, while variables are assumed to be uncorrelated. CFI values range from 0 to 1, where larger values (0.09 or higher) represent good model fit (Malhotra et al., 2017). The Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) is constructed similarly to the CFI, with the difference being that the TLI is not a normed index, meaning that values can fall outside the range of 0–1. According to the TLI, good model fit is indicated by values close to 1. Considering the parsimony fit indices, it is important to note that those indices are not used to evaluate model fit for a single model but are rather considered when two or more models are compared.

The parsimony goodness-of-fit index (PGFI) adjusts the goodness of fit by using the earlier defined parsimony ratio and ranges between 0 and 1, where higher values (preferably > .5) are preferred. The same value indications hold for the parsimony normed fit index (PNFI), which is more commonly used than the PGFI, except that it adjusts the normed fit index by multiplication with the parsimony ratio. Table 16 lists all model fit parameters.

Having provided an overview of all model fit parameters, the present thesis makes use of at least three indices of distinct types: x^2 with the associated degrees of freedom are reported in addition to the two indices that are least affected by sample size, namely the CFI and RMSEA (Malhotra et al., 2017).

Table 16

Criteria for acceptable model fit parameters

Category of indices	Model fit indices	Model fit indices – full name	Criteria of acceptable model fit
Absolute fit indices			
	CMIN	The chi-square (x^2)	The smaller the better
	CMIN/DF	The normed chi-square to the degrees of freedom	<5.0
	RMSEA	Root mean square error of approximation	≤0.08
Incremental fit indices			
	CFI	Comparative fit index	> 0.09
	TLI	Tucker-Lewis index	Close to 1, > 0.09
	AIC	Akaike Information Criterion	The model with the lower value is the better one

BCC	Browne-Cudeck Criterion	The model with the lower value is the better one

To proceed with the CFA after elaborating on factor loadings and model fit indices, measurement model reliability and validity were assessed. Reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha, which is the average of all possible split-half coefficients (Malhotra, 2017), where values range from 0 to 1, and a value of 0.06 or higher indicates acceptable internal consistency reliability. It is important to note that Cronbach's alpha value increases with more items for a scale. For this study, reliability was assessed because all Cronbach's alpha values were .06 or higher. In addition, convergent and discriminant validity were assessed: The former was assessed using CR and AVE, and the latter was assessed using maximum shared variance (see Chapter 4.8).

After the assessment of reliability and validity, the CFA was completed, and SEM-PA was conducted by examining the structural model to evaluate the research hypotheses.

4.3 Issues affecting the model and its performance in structural equation modelling

Numerous factors affect model performance in SEM. These include sample size, model misspecification, multivariate normality and model complexity. Different indices are affected by various circumstances, while other indices are robust regarding certain circumstances, being outlined in more detail in the following list.

- RMSEA and CFI are least affected by sample size.
- CFI should be focused on when data is not normally distributed.
- CFI is recommended for complex models, as it is less affected by model complexity than other indices.

- RMSEA, GFI and AGFI should be considered for miss-specified models where large discrepancies can be detected with fit indices.

4.3.1 Modification of a misfit model and re-specification

With SEM, an acceptable model fit is rarely achieved initially. When running the measurement model, there is frequently an unacceptable model fit, which is why the model modification is applied to achieve an acceptable model fit. One way to do so in AMOS, specifically when modifying the measurement model, is by elaborating on the modification indices (MIs) and conducting modifications based on them. MIs can identify sources of the misfit in a measurement model, as they are estimates by which the chi-square would be reduced if one restricted parameter was deleted from the model (Garver & Mentzer, 1999). High MIs indicate that model fit improvement is needed for this specific indicator.

However, any modification is an implicit change to the model. Therefore, model fit modifications based on MIs should be carefully considered. As they are a purely data-driven decision for modification that ignores theory, they should be treated and conducted with care and be used as little as possible. However, when used with care, MIs can be beneficial, as they can indicate guidance with more complex models compared with hypothesized theory. Thus, it is essential to evaluate each proposed modification and consider its impact on a theoretical basis while keeping the research goal in mind (MacCallum et al., 1992).

4.4 Demographic characteristics of the study sample and descriptive statistics

This section provides an overview of the sample demographics. They are summarized and presented per characteristic in Tables 17–24.

4.4.1 Sample composition by age

Most respondents were aged 25–44 (51.9%), followed by 45–64 (26.9%) and 18–24 (14.1%), while a small proportion was aged over 64 (6.9%). Each age group accounts for a similar percentage of the total sample, except for the 25–34 age group, which makes up the largest age group in the sample. Most respondents in the whole sample who possess luxury jewellery are aged over 25. Though this is a relatively wide range, it is an expected outcome, since people within this age range are most likely to either purchase, inherit or receive luxury jewellery as a gift, which is not as likely until the age of 24. Table 17 lists the detailed characteristics of the age groups by frequency and percentage.

Table 17

Age characteristics of sample

Age	Frequency	Percentage
18–24	77	14.1%
25–34	180	32.9%
35–44	104	19%
45–54	76	13.9%
55–64	71	13%
64 or older	38	6.9%
Prefer not to answer	1	0.2%
Total	*547*	*100%*

A more detailed analysis of the results with regard to age groups was conducted by means of a univariate ANOVA. The results indicate statistical significance for different answer behaviours on the respective constructs for the characteristic of age, meaning that different age groups have responded differently to the respective constructs assessed. Please see Table 46 in appendix D for the detailed results of the univariate ANOVA. However, the detailed profile pilots for the characteristic of age group per construct (see Figures 13 – 19 in appendix D) indicate that the response behaviour per construct by age group varied evenly, indicating that the differences in response behaviour seem to stem from the general response behaviour of the respective age group rather than from the construct actually measured. Therefore, no further subdivisions were made based on the characteristic of age in further analyses.

4.4.2 Sample composition by gender

The number of female respondents (76.1%) was significantly higher than the number of male respondents (23.6%). This may be simply because more females answered the survey than males. However, another explanation for this composition could be that more women, in comparison with men, possess luxury jewellery, as jewellery, in particular, may be more frequently worn by women. Table 18 presents the detailed sample characteristics regarding gender by frequency and percentage.

Table 18

Gender characteristics of the sample

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	129	23.6%
Female	416	76.1%
Non-binary	0	0%
Prefer not to answer	2	0.4%
Total	547	100%

A more detailed analysis of the results with regard to gender was conducted by means of a univariate ANOVA. The results indicate statistical significance for different answer behaviours on the respective constructs except for the construct of social identity, meaning that males and females have responded differently to the respective constructs assessed, but not on the construct of social identity. Please see Table 47 for the detailed results of the univariate ANOVA in appendix D. However, the detailed profile pilots for gender per construct (see Figures 20 – 26 in appendix D) indicate that the response behaviour per construct by gender varied evenly, indicating that the differences in response behaviour seem to stem from the general response behaviour of the gender group rather than in the construct actually measured. Therefore, no further subdivisions were made based on the characteristic of gender.

4.4.3 Sample composition by nationality

Table 19 presents the distribution of nationalities among the sample. The largest proportion of respondents (94.9%) was German, while the minority of the respondents had a nationality other than German. Specifically, 1.8% were Dutch, followed by 1.3% Austrian and 0.5% Swiss. One participant (0.2%) was of British nationality. This clear majority of participants with German nationality can be explained by the distribution of the questionnaire to people living in Germany.

Table 19

Nationality characteristics of the sample

Nationality	Frequency	Percentage

British	1	0.2%
German	519	94.9%
Dutch	10	1.8%
Austrian	7	1.3%
Swiss	3	0.5%
Spanish	0	0%
French	0	0%
Belgian	0	0%
Nationality not listed	7	1.3%
Total	547	100%

Since most of the sample had a German nationality, any more detailed analyses with regard to the nationality of the sample are not feasible.

4.4.4 Sample composition by marital status

Regarding marital status, the largest proportion of respondents (67.1%) was in a relationship or married, while one-fourth (23.2%) of the respondents were single. The minority of respondents indicated that they were separated/divorced (6.8%) or widowed (1.8%), and 1.1% preferred not to answer the question concerning their marital status. Table 20 details the study sample characteristics in regard to marital status by frequency and percentage.

Table 20

Marital status characteristics of the sample

Marital status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	127	23.2%
In a relationship/married	367	67.1%

Separated/divorced	37	6.8%
Widowed	10	1.8%
Prefer not to answer	6	1.1%
Total	547	100%

A more detailed analysis of the results with regard to marital status was conducted by means of a univariate ANOVA. The results indicate statistical significance for different answer behaviours on the respective constructs for the characteristic of marital status, meaning that people with different marital statuses have responded differently to the respective constructs assessed. Please see Table 48 for the detailed results of the univariate ANOVA in appendix D. However, the detailed profile pilots for marital status per construct (see Figures 27 – 33 in appendix D) indicate that the response behaviour per construct by marital status varied evenly, indicating that the differences in response behaviour seem to stem from the general response behaviour of the respective marital status group rather than in the construct actually measured. Therefore, no further subdivisions were made based on marital status.

4.4.5 Sample composition by educational level

More than one-third of the respondents (34.7%) hold a university master's degree or diploma, while one-fourth of the respondents holds a university bachelor's degree (23.8%), together making up approximately half of the study sample. Furthermore, 9.3% of the respondents hold a completed apprenticeship, 10.8% a high school diploma and 10.1% a high school diploma (A-levels). The minority of respondents hold a doctorate (5.7%), and a secondary school diploma (1.1%). Finally, 1.5% of the sample preferred not to provide answers regarding their educational level. Table 21 outlines the sample demographics in regard to completed educational level in detail, including frequencies and percentages per educational level.

Table 21

Educational level completed characteristics of the sample

Educational level	Frequency	Percentage
No degree	0	0%
Completed apprenticeship	51	9.3%
University bachelor's degree	130	23.8%
High school diploma	59	10.8%
High school (A-levels)	55	10.1%
Secondary school	6	1.1%
University master's degree/ Diploma	190	34.7%
Doctorate	31	5.7%
Prefer not to answer	8	1.5%
Total	547	100%

A more detailed analysis of the results with regard to educational level was conducted by means of a univariate ANOVA. The results indicate statistical significance for different answer behaviours on the respective constructs for educational level, meaning that people with varying educational levels have responded differently to the respective constructs assessed. Please see Table 49 for the detailed results of the univariate ANOVA in appendix D. However, the detailed profile pilots for the educational level per construct (see Figures 34 – 40 in appendix D) indicate that the response behaviour per construct by educational level varied evenly, indicating that the differences in response behaviour seem to stem from the general response behaviour of the respective educational level group rather than in the construct actually measured. Therefore, no further subdivisions were made based on the characteristic of educational level.

4.4.6 Sample composition by employment status

Most respondents (73.1%) were gainfully employed. Most of them were employed full-time (50.1%), while 12.6% were self-employed, and 10.4% were part-time employed. Furthermore, 17% of the sample indicated being a student, while 5.9% of the sample was retired, thus either not yet or no longer belonging to the working society, respectively. The minority of respondents were unemployed (0.4%) or still completing their education (0.7%). Finally, 2.9% preferred not to answer this question. Table 22 details the employment status of the study sample.

Table 22

Employment status characteristics of the sample

Current employment status	Frequency	Percentage
Unemployed	2	0.4%
Pupils (at school)	4	0.7%
Student (undergraduates)	93	17.0%
Employed part-time	57	10.4%
Employed full-time	274	50.1%
Self-employed	69	12.6%
Retired	32	5.9%
Prefer not to answer	16	2.9%
Total	547	100%

A more detailed analysis of the results with regard to employment status was conducted by means of a univariate ANOVA. The results indicate statistical significance for different answer behaviours on the respective constructs for the characteristic of employment status, meaning that people with a different employment status have responded differently to the respective constructs assessed. Please see Table 50 for the detailed results of the univariate ANOVA in appendix D. However, the detailed profile pilots for employment status per construct can be seen in Figures 41 – 47 in appendix D. They indicate that the response behaviour per construct by employment status varied evenly, indicating that the differences in response behaviour seem to stem from the general response behaviour of the respective employment status than in the construct actually measured. Therefore, no further subdivisions were made based on the characteristic of age.

4.4.7 Sample composition by number of luxury jewellery pieces in possession

In a free-text field, respondents were allowed to specify any number of luxury jewellery pieces in their possession. For this thesis, the number of luxury jewellery pieces in possession was categorized in halves to be able to draw meaningful conclusions based on the different category groups when using SEM. As Table 23 indicates, 50.8% of the study sample possessed less than six luxury jewellery pieces, while 49.2% of the respondents possessed between six and 100 pieces. For details of the uncategorized amounts, see the histogram (bar graph of frequencies) in the appendix (Figure 48).

Table 23

Number of luxury jewellery pieces possessed by the sample (categorized in halves)

Halves	Number of possessions – per	Frequency	Percentage

	half		
First half	1–5	278	50.8%
Second half	6–100	269	49.2%
Total		547	100%

4.4.8 Sample composition according to means of obtaining luxury jewellery

With respect to the source of obtainment of the luxury jewellery piece, respondents were able to select between ‘purchased’, ‘inheritance’, ‘gift’, ‘borrowed’ or ‘other’. As Table 24 indicates, the majority of respondents either were gifted their luxury jewellery pieces (74.6%) or purchased them (69.3%). More than one-third of the study sample obtained their luxury jewellery through inheritance (36.6%), while only a few respondents (0.5%) borrowed their luxury jewellery piece/s. Finally, 1.1% selected ‘other’, indicating that no response category was disregarded, though the majority of respondents fitted into the suggested categories. Accordingly, the thesis concentrated on the gift, purchase and inheritance categories.

Table 24

Means of obtaining luxury jewellery pieces

Means of obtainment of luxury jewellery pieces	Frequency	Percentage
Purchased	379	69.3%
Inheritance	200	36.6%
Gift	408	74.6%
Borrowed	3	0.5%
Other	6	1.1%
Total	547	100%

4.5 Descriptive statistics on construct level and examining normality distribution

This section provides an overview of the descriptive findings of the considered items of each construct with regard to mean and standard deviation (*SD*) as well as to normality distribution by using skewness, kurtosis, and the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests. Table 26 presents an overview of the univariate descriptive analysis at the construct level.

4.5.1 Descriptive statistics at the construct level

The mean (also called average), which is the most commonly used measure of central tendency, is a robust measure and does not change significantly if data points are added or deleted, and most responses are within the mean. It is calculated by adding all values in the dataset and dividing it by *N* (Malhotra et al., 2015). The mean is the value that produces the smallest amount of error from all values in the dataset. Means for the present dataset ranged from 2.46 to 4.05 in the setting of responses given on a five-point Likert scale. Given that *SD* is an indicator of how widely spread the data is from the mean, and the values for the present dataset ranged between 0.77 and 1.52, the data points are relatively close to the mean. Typically, 95% of the values will be within two SDs of the mean. Table 38 in the appendix details the descriptive statistics on an item level.

4.5.2 Bivariate correlation analysis

The bivariate correlation analysis displays that all constructs correlate with one another (see Table 25), with the correlation being significant at the level of 0.01. This correlation was expected and is common with such large sample sizes. Thus, a test for normality distribution was needed to assess whether multicollinearity would be a concern. The results of this test for normality distribution are presented in the next section.

Table 25

Bivariate correlations table

		Desire for lux. Jewl. Poss.	Emotional sign. Of poss.	Poss. Attachm.	Self-extension	CNFU	Social identity	Symb. Mean. of lux.
Desire for lux. Jewl. Poss.	Pearson correlation	1	.503**	.805**	.822**	.785**	.598**	.801**
Emotional sign. Of poss.	Pearson correlation	.503**	1	.603**	.505**	.448**	.418**	.402**
Poss. Attachm.	Pearson correlation	.805**	.603**	1	.912**	.832**	.570**	.842**
Self-extension	Pearson correlation	.822**	.505**	.912**	1	.882**	.573**	.910**
CNFU	Pearson correlation	.785**	.448**	.832**	.882**	1	.547**	.874**
Social identity	Pearson correlation	.598**	.418**	.570**	.573**	.547**	1	.511**
Symb. Meaning of lux.	Pearson correlation	.801**	.402**	.842**	.910**	.874**	.511**	1

** The correlation is significant at the level of 0.01.

4.5.3 Results of normality distribution

One assumption to consider when using SEM is the normality of the dataset. As can be seen in Table 26, all values fall within the acceptable ranges for normally distributed data. In regard to skewness and kurtosis, all values except for one are within the acceptable range of -1 and +1. In terms of skewness, negative values represent skewness to the left, while positive values indicate skewness to the right. In terms of kurtosis, negative values indicate flatness, while positive values indicate peaks. When considering the standard error, the acceptable range increases to between -2 and +2. Moreover, results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests show that all significance levels are > .5, indicating a normal distribution of the data (see Table 26). Minor indications of no normal distribution in the data only appear in the histograms and normal Q-Q-plots. However, based on the normality distribution analysis from the standard error, Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and Shapiro-Wilk test, the data was considered to be normally distributed, and all constructs were considered for the CFA.

Table 26

Descriptive statistics on scale level, based on mean, standard deviation, skewness, kurtosis and the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests

Item	Mean	Standard deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis	Kolmogorov-Smirnov		Shapiro-Wilk	
Desire for luxury jewellery possession scale	3.51	1.14	-0.180	-1.274	0.168	*	0.912	*
Emotional significance scale	4.05	1.06	-1.219	0.714	0.198	*	0.831	*
Possession attachment scale	3.17	1.16	0.035	-1.392	0.137	*	0.922	*
Self-extension scale	2.70	1.52	0.257	-1.628	0.165	*	0.838	*
Need for	2.90	1.30	0.153	-1.517	0.152	*	0.894	*

uniqueness scale								
Social identity scale	3.97	0.77	-0.330	-0.932	0.116	*	0.939	*
Symbolic meaning of luxury scale	2.46	1.34	0.289	-1.564	0.171	*	0.848	*

** indicates significance at the .05 level*

4.6 Validation of initial measurement model using confirmatory factor analysis

To assess the proposed measurement model as part of SEM, a two-step approach is applied (Gallagher & Palmer, 2008). The validity and reliability of the measurement model are examined using CFA to assess how well the measured items represent the latent constructs. Specifically, CFA is a technique to estimate the measurement model (Malhotra et al., 2015). Typically, with SEM, a confirmatory rather than an exploratory approach is the standard procedure applied, as it seeks to confirm whether the observed constructs 'conform to what is expected on the basis of theory' (Malhotra et al., 2015, p.798). Ultimately, the researcher examines whether the constructs load as expected on certain factors. This determination allows the researcher to assess the extent to which the observed variables represent the underlying latent constructs (Malhotra et al., 2015; Gallagher & Palmer, 2008). In the present thesis, the validation of the measurement model using CFA was established by assessing the path estimates using factor loadings, CR using Cronbach's alpha, convergent validity using AVE and discriminant validity using the square root of AVE in comparison with inter-construct correlations. The results are presented in Table 42 in the appendix.

The next section elaborates on the measurement model fit indices, as in addition to the CFA, the validity of the measurement model depends on the goodness-of-fit results.

Specifically, model fit is assessed with the Chi-square test (x^2), CMIN/df, CFI, TLI and RMSEA, as outlined in the previous section 'assessment of model fit and fit indices'.

4.6.1 Confirmatory factor analysis for the initial model

Before testing the hypothesized model for the collected dataset in the structural equation model, the results of the CFA and model fit are presented. The initial model, as hypothesized based on theory with no further adaptations, was not valid. The initial results of model fit were not within the acceptable ranges, with x^2 = 7386.3, CMIN/df = 5.049, p = .000, CFI = 0.846, TLI = 0.838 and RMSEA = 0.086. The model fit indices for x^2, CMIN/df and RMSEA were above the acceptable range of adequate model fit, while the fit indices for CFI and TLI were within the range.

Further validity and reliability checks were undertaken with regard to this initial model with unacceptable model fit to identify indications for why the model fit did not work as hypothesized. The results would aid in identifying suggestions for further adaptations in the model. The checks were performed in several steps, and model fit was reassessed after each one.

For convergent validity and the factor loadings indicated as standardized regression weights in AMOS, results showed that four items in total scored below the acceptable threshold of loading: > 0.5 (Hair, 2010). As Table 39 in Appendix D shows, most of the factor loadings were > 0.5 and ranged from 0.543 to 0.957. However, four items, in particular, had factor loadings of 0.253, 0.425, 0.436 and 0.473 each – below the threshold of 0.5 – and were excluded from further analysis. Three of those items were part of the social identity scale, and one item was part of the Consumers' need for uniqueness scale. Regarding convergent validity, AVE and CR for the research constructs, results showed that all AVEs except for one were between .569 and .859 and thus above the threshold of .5. The AVE for the construct emotional significance of possessions was .499 and thus slightly below the threshold. This indicates an issue with this construct validity. Values for CR ranged between .749 and .979 and were thus all above the threshold of .6. Table 42 in the appendix provides all details on the construct level.

Results regarding discriminant validity highlight concerns within the initial model and call for further investigation. Farrell's (2010) comment on the elaboration of insufficient discriminant validity was used as a basis for further elaboration on this insufficiency. To achieve discriminant validity, the square root of each AVE must be higher than the correlations of the constructs. However, the square root of AVEs was lower than the corresponding correlations for the constructs of desire for luxury jewellery possession, possession attachment, symbolic meaning of luxury and CNFU, and it was only higher than the corresponding correlations for the constructs of emotional significance of possessions and social identity. This result suggests that there is a major issue in the initial model or the dataset (Farrell, 2010). Table 42 in the appendix presents details of the discriminant validity for the initial model. Based on this, further investigations, as suggested by Farrell (2010), were undertaken after reliability was assessed.

Next, to assess the reliability of the measurement model, internal consistency was checked using Cronbach's alpha to demonstrate consistency in the data. It was calculated in SPSS and should be 0.7 or higher, as this represents acceptable internal consistency. According to Table 44 (see appendix), all coefficients of Cronbach's alpha were between .746 and .98 and thus higher than .7, indicating high internal consistency between construct items as well as high degrees of scale-item reliability.

To improve model fit, in the process of model respecification or modification, the correlation of error terms by MIs is a common approach used in SEM. As Whittaker (2012) proposes, if the respecification leads to a substantial improvement of model fit that is plausible, it is suitable to correlate error terms based on high MIs. Several error terms of the same latent constructs as indicated by high MIs were correlated one after the other, while the model fit was assessed in between. The correlation of error terms was stopped just before the first modification index arose between an error term and a construct. In total, 11 error terms were correlated. Following this approach, model fit did improve and reached an acceptable level. However, a conspicuous result at this step was that even after correlating error terms for VAR5.1 and VAR5.2 of the desire for luxury jeweller possession scale, the modification index was still high. This is likely because VAR5.2 is the reverse-formulated item of VAR5.1. Furthermore, VAR5.2 had the lowest factor loading on the construct of desire for luxury jewellery possession, which is why it was excluded from further analysis (see Figure 50 in Appendix E). Thus, by correlating 11 error terms indicated by MIs and removing VAR5.2, the measurement model achieved an acceptable model fit (RMSEA = 0.072, x^2 = 4646; CMIN/df = 4.892; TLI = 0.9, CFI = 0.907). However, although both construct validity and discriminant validity improved, discriminant validity did not achieve acceptable levels. Issues were still present for the constructs of possession attachment, symbolic meaning of luxury jewellery and CNFU in particular. Table 44 in the appendix presents all details on discriminant validity without VAR5.2 and with correlated error terms by MIs.

This result revealed that further tests were needed to identify the issue with discriminant validity. Farrell (2010) offers several suggestions for possible next steps if discriminant validity is not achieved in regard to SEM. His first suggestion is to combine certain constructs into one overarching measure if the nature of the original constructs allows for it. To determine the viability of this approach, an EFA was conducted to ascertain whether it confirms the results of the CFA and helps to identify the underlying factor structure. Although this is not a typical step with SEM, as conducting CFA is a confirmatory approach to what is suggested as most appropriate in the literature, the lack of discriminant validity provides sufficient grounds for performing this additional analysis. The EFA was repeated for several rounds, and results revealed that certain components could reasonably be related, specifically from a semantic point of view. However, the overall results of the EFA were rather unspecific: Even after repeating the EFA numerous times, results indicated that 26 items still loaded on Component 1, thus suggesting that the result is not meaningful and does not enable any derivations based on that result. These results provide the reason for further investigation.

Due to high correlations and hence a lack of discriminant validity of the constructs of symbolic meaning of luxury, CNFU and self-extension, a principal component analysis (PCA) was conducted to determine whether there is justification for these three constructs to measure the same construct. PCA is a technique that can increase the interpretability of datasets while reducing complexity and minimizing the loss of information. Specifically, those three constructs indicated high square roots of AVE (DR for symbolic meaning of luxury = .889; DR for CNFU = .828; DR for self-extension = .927). Correlations around .9 are considered conspicuous and may lead to multicollinearity. The comparably high number of items per scale (need for uniqueness = 11 items and symbolic meaning of luxury = 13 items) may be one reason for the aforementioned irregularities in discriminant validity. In the PCA for the three constructs (self-extension = VAR 8; CNFU = VAR 9; symbolic meaning of luxury = VAR 11), loading cut-offs of .6 were referred to. By using this explorative method, the explained total variance indicated that items could be attributed to no more than three components in total (see Table 51 and Table 52, Appendix D). As indicated in Table 52, 21 items loaded on Component 1, three items loaded on Component 2, and only one item loaded on Component 3. All items from the self-extension scale (VAR 8) loaded on Component 1, indicating that this component is best represented by this construct. Therefore, it can be argued that the construct should be maintained for further analysis. Furthermore, 12 out of 13 items of the symbolic meaning of luxury scale (VAR 11) also loaded on Component 1, indicating that in the context of this present thesis, the two constructs self-extension and symbolic meaning of luxury measure the same thing. Because only 12 out of 13 items of the symbolic meaning of luxury scale loaded on Component 1, meaning that split loading occurred, while all items of the self-extension scale loaded on Component 1, the construct of symbolic meaning of luxury was not considered for further analysis. Then, regarding the CNFU scale, items loaded across all three components, while one item cross-loaded, indicating that the construct of CNFU is not specific enough and is not stable, which is why it was also not considered for further analysis. Detailed results of the PCA can be found in Tables 45 and 47 in Appendix D. After the suggestions by the PCA were implemented in the model, discriminant validity, MIs, standardized regression weights and model fit were reassessed. Figure 49 in the appendix illustrates the measurement model after the PCA. The model fit improved significantly (RMSEA = .078) and was thus continued with. However, discriminant validity still raised concerns regarding the constructs of possession attachment and self-extension. Therefore, further investigations were necessary.

Since the possibilities for measurement scale adaptations were exhausted, abnormalities were checked for in the dataset. To this end, conspicuous answer patterns were identified, and answer patterns of 80%, 70%, 60% and 50% of the same answers in the questionnaire were excluded, after which model fit was reassessed. However, the exclusion of conspicuous answer patterns did not result in significant improvements in model fit (Table 52 in Appendix E presents the full details of answer pattern analysis). This result might suggest that the issue with discriminant validity originates from issues in the measurement scales instead of issues in the dataset. Given the lack of clarity in this regard, further investigations into possible issues stemming from the dataset were undertaken.

Specifically, based on a still unacceptable model fit when considering the entire dataset combined with the established measurement model, a cluster analysis was performed to identify certain patterns which indicate homogeneous samples within the dataset that were unknown until this point. To this end, a *K*-means cluster analysis was performed, as it allows for large sample sizes to be analysed and for the resulting clusters to be saved as separate datasets, which can then be used as a basis for model testing in AMOS. In the first round, the *K*-means cluster analysis was conducted with two clusters, as this is the default setting in SPSS. The result was that from the sample, $n = 222$ were assigned to Cluster 1, while $n = 322$ were assigned to Cluster 2. During further analysis of model fit for the two suggested datasets per cluster, an acceptable model fit was achieved for Cluster 2 (RMSEA = .07 for the measurement model; RMSEA = .079 for the structural model).

As the goal was to determine whether there are two or more significant groups that differentiate based on certain characteristics, the *K*-means cluster analysis was repeated with three clusters. What resulted was $n = 269$ being assigned to Cluster 1, $n = 195$ being assigned to Cluster 2 and $n = 83$ being assigned to Cluster 3. The analysis of model fit for those three datasets based on the clusters revealed that model fit was unacceptable for Clusters 2 and 3, while model fit for Cluster 1 was more than acceptable (RMSEA = .058 in the measurement model and .068 in the structural model). Details of the *K*-means cluster analysis with three clusters, as regards final cluster centres, the number of cases per cluster, ANOVA and a dendrogram are presented in Table 54, Table 55 and Figure 51 of Appendix E. Prior steps to assess discriminant validity were repeated, and the results showed that discriminant validity was acceptable, while construct validity was not acceptable. Specifically, the AVE for three out of five constructs was below .5 and thus below the threshold for acceptable construct validity. To dive deeper into this, a discriminant analysis assessed *if* certain patterns of responses existed on the variables that differed per cluster. A univariate ANOVA test was conducted to check *what* exactly those possible differences within the clusters were. The results of this discriminant analysis for the three clusters indicated the following:

- Cluster 1 contains respondents who do not possess many luxury jewellery items and do not have the desire to do so. To them, luxury jewellery has little emotional significance, and they perceive a low need for self-extension. Respondents in this cluster are rather young (18 – 34 years old) and received their luxury jewellery through inheritance; they did not purchase their pieces.
- Cluster 2 contains respondents who have a high desire for luxury jewellery possession and for whom it has high emotional significance. Respondents of Cluster 2 tend to purchase their luxury jewellery and are older.
- Cluster 3 contains respondents for which no specific derivations can be made, which is why this cluster is not considered in more detail.

The result of this discriminant analysis is contrary to what was expected based on theory. Specifically, result patterns for Clusters 1 and 2 were expected to be the other way around. For Cluster 1 (i.e., those not interested in possessing luxury jewellery), the measurement model showed an outstanding model fit. Thus, the model works for those who have come to possess their luxury jewellery primarily through routes other than purchase. For Cluster 2 (i.e., those who are interested in possessing luxury jewellery), an unacceptable model fit is the result (RMSEA = 0.103). Building on that, an investigation was performed to ascertain whether a specific model works for Cluster 2. Numerous models were tested, but no model combination based on the initial model showed an acceptable model fit when applied to Cluster 2. Table 53 in the appendix details the differences.

Based on this cluster analysis, further aspects were elaborated. The datasets of Clusters 1 and 2 were merged, while only the dataset of Cluster 3 was excluded to determine whether this would lead to acceptable results. This resulted in an acceptable model fit as well as acceptable AVEs. However, there continued to be a lack of discriminant validity on the possession attachment scale, and the construct of possession attachment was consequently removed from further analysis. The numerous tests conducted as described in the previous section indicate that certain scales do not work for the specific context.

4.7 Validation of the final measurement model

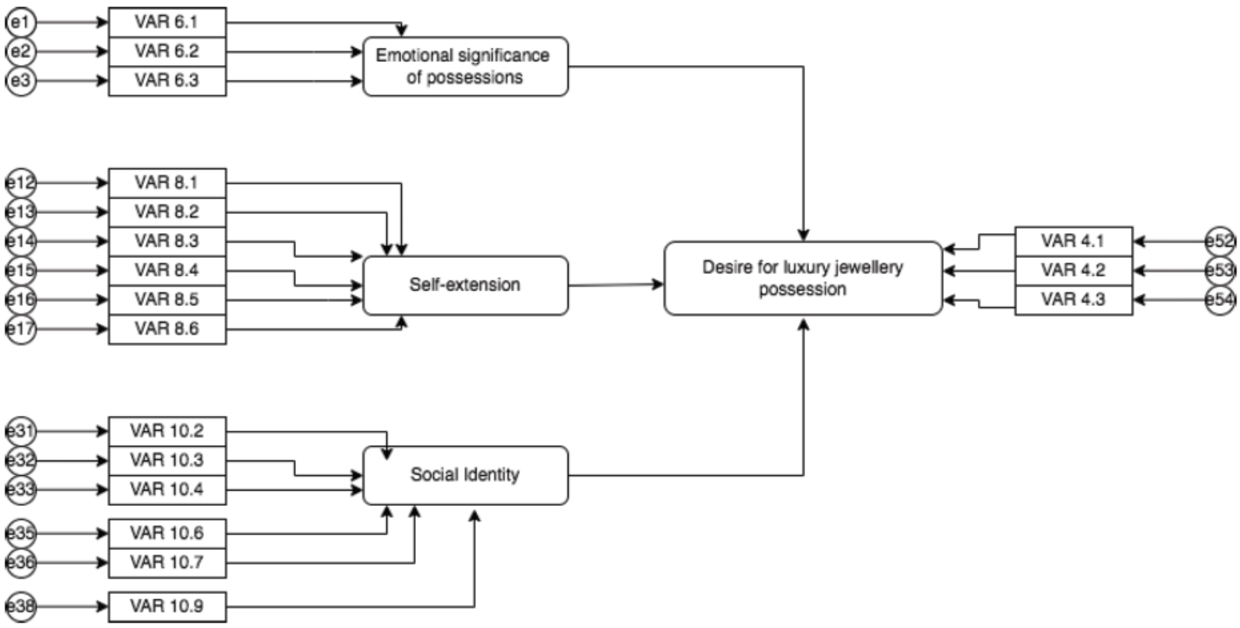
Following the evaluation of the initial measurement model, as hypothesized in theory and considering the results of initial validations conducted as part of the CFA as well as further analyses as described above, the following section presents an overview of the results of validating the adapted measurement model by conducting a CFA before the structural equation model was set up.

4.8 Final measurement model (confirmatory factor analysis)

After several adjustments were made to the initial measurement model, the final measurement was specified and applied to the dataset. To recap the adjustments, the PCA suggested removing the constructs CNFU and symbolic meaning because their meaning is already represented by the construct of self-extension. Unacceptable discriminant validity suggested the removal of the construct of possession attachment, while the assessment of factor loadings suggested the removal of certain items from further analysis. Removing the three constructs of possession attachment, CNFU and symbolic meaning of luxury as well as certain items as described previously resulted in the measurement model depicted in Figure 8.

Figure 8

Measurement model resulting from confirmatory factor analysis (CFA)



The measurement model displayed a relatively acceptable model with x^2 = 621.896, CMIN/df = 4.821, TLI = .942, CFI = .951 and RMSEA = 0.084. The value for RMSEA was slightly above the acceptable threshold of <.08. Two items from the same construct of social identity had high MIs. Hence, the error terms for those two items were correlated. Figure 9 presents the final measurement model after the correlation of one error term. The assessment of the model fit after the correlation of one error term resulted in an acceptable model fit, with x^2 = 517.388, CMIN/df = 4.042, TLI = .954, CFI = .962 and RMSEA = 0.075. Table 27 lists all details on model fit for the final measurement model before and after the correlation of one error term with regard to the acceptable threshold. The results indicate that the proposed measurement model represents the sample data as well as possible.

Figure 9

Final measurement model after the correlation of one error term resulting from confirmatory factor analysis (CFA)

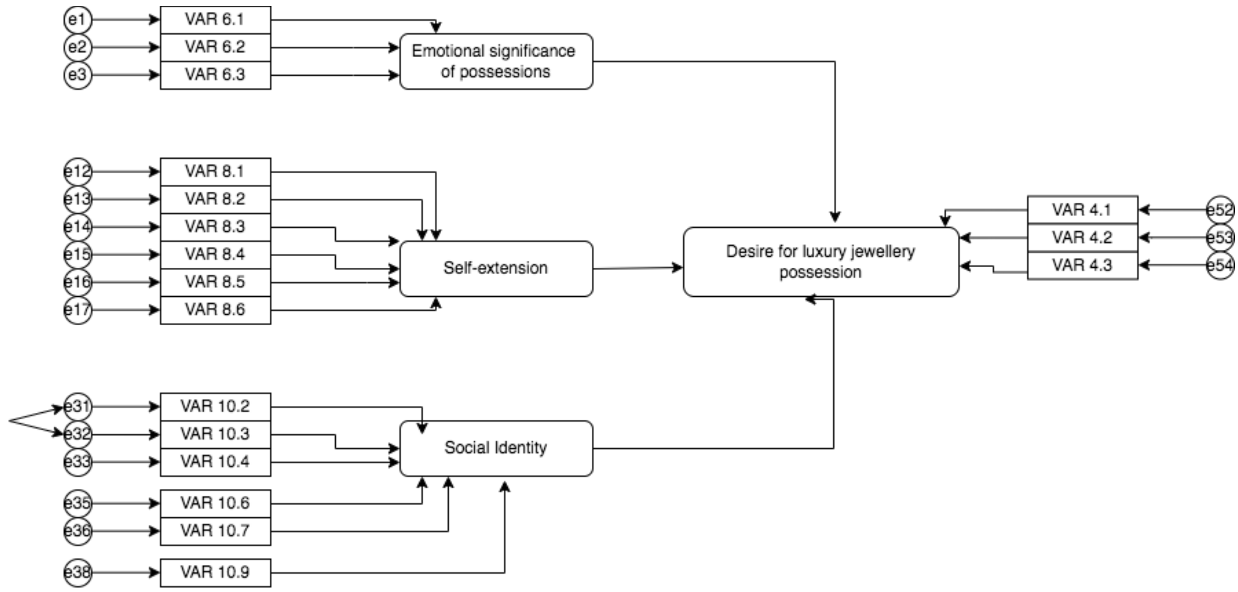


Table 27

Model fit indices of measurement model after CFA

Model fit indices	Final measurement model	Final measurement model with correlated error terms	Threshold criteria
CMIN	621.896	517.388	The smaller the better
CMIN/df	4.821	4.042	< 5.0
TLI	.942	.954	> 0.09
CFI	.951	.962	> 0.09
RMSEA	0.084	.075	< 0.08

4.8.1 Validity of the measurement scale

As part of the CFA and the assessment of model fit, the convergent validity and discriminant validity of the measurement model was examined to establish validity. Thereafter, the reliability of the measurement model was assessed.

4.8.1.1 Results of convergent validity

To assess convergent validity, factor loadings, AVE and CR were assessed for the measurement model. Factor loadings, indicated as standardized regression weights in AMOS, should exceed the acceptable threshold of > .5, as suggested by Hair (2010). Table 28 shows that all factor loadings exceeded the suggested threshold and ranged from 0.710 to 0.973, thus indicating that all items from the measurement model contribute to measuring the construct.

Table 28

Overview of factor loadings per item for final measurement model (indicated as standardized regression weights in AMOS)

Construct	Item	Standardized regression weight
Desire for luxury jewellery possession	VAR4.1	.878
Desire for luxury jewellery possession	VAR4.2	.973
Desire for luxury jewellery possession	VAR4.3	.879
Emotional significance of possessions	VAR6.1	.710
Emotional significance of possessions	VAR6.2	.719
Emotional significance of possessions	VAR6.3	.721
Social identity	VAR10.2	.685
Social identity	VAR10.3	.758
Social identity	VAR10.4	.819

Construct	Item	Standardized regression weight
Social identity	VAR10.6	.862
Social identity	VAR10.7	.848
Social identity	VAR10.9	.818
Self-extension	VAR8.6	.959
Self-extension	VAR8.5	.915
Self-extension	VAR8.4	.901
Self-extension	VAR8.3	,939
Self-extension	VAR8.2	.936
Self-extension	VAR8.1	.932

To further assess the convergent validity of the measurement model, the AVE and CR were calculated for each latent construct of the measurement model (see Table 29). To achieve adequate convergent validity and CR, AVE should be > .5 and > .7, respectively. As can be seen in Table 29, all constructs had acceptable levels of AVE, ranging from .514 to .866, thus exceeding the acceptable threshold of > .5. In terms of CR, all constructs achieved acceptable levels as well, with CR ranging between .760 and .975 and thus also being above the acceptable threshold of > .7. These results demonstrate convergent validity for the final measurement model.

Table 29

Overview of results for average variance extracted and composite reliability for the initial model

Research construct	Number of items	Average variance extracted (AVE)	Composite reliability (CR)

Desire for luxury jewellery possession	3	0.830	0.936
Emotional significance of possessions	3	0.514	0.760
Self-extension	6	0.866	0.975
Social identity	6	0.641	0.914

4.8.1.2 Results of discriminant validity

Results of the assessment of discriminant validity for the final measurement model indicate that discriminant validity is given. As listed in Table 30, the square root of AVE is higher than the correlation values of the respective constructs, which is proof of discriminant validity.

Table 30

Results of discriminant validity for the final measurement model considering square root of AVE and the construct correlations

Constructs	AVE	Square root of AVE (DR)	Desire for luxury jewellery possession	Emotional significance of possessions	Social identity	Self-extension
Desire for luxury jewellery Possession	0.830	0.911	0.911			
Emotional significance of possessions	0.514	0.717	0.546	0.717		
Social identity	0.641	0.801	0.689	0.534	0.801	
Self-extension	0.866	0.931	0.835	0.571	0.699	0.931

4.8.2 Reliability of the measurement scale

To assess for internal consistency, reliability was tested using Cronbach's alpha on the construct level, as suggested for CFA. As listed in Table 31, all coefficients of Cronbach's alpha were between .752 and .974, demonstrating data consistency. All scores above the threshold of > .7 demonstrate high internal consistency between construct items as well as high degrees of scale-item reliability.

Table 31

Reliability of the final measurement model by assessing Cronbach's alpha

Research construct	Number of items	Cronbach's alpha
Desire for luxury jewellery possession	3	.932
Emotional significance of possessions	3	.752
Self-extension	6	.974
Social identity	6	.912

4.8.3 Measurement model summary

In summary, the presented final measurement model represents the best possible model for the context of desiring luxury jewellery in the present dataset sample. Model fit indices represent an acceptable fit, while the model shows both convergent validity and discriminant validity. Based on the numerous previous analyses, this model is the best representation of the context for the dataset; with n = 547, the model enabled maintaining as many respondents as possible. Structural model testing was subsequently conducted based on this measurement model, as outlined in the next section.

4.9 Structural model (hypothesis testing)

This study investigates the relationship between the desire for luxury jewellery possession and its hypothesized influencing factors, namely emotional significance of possessions, possession attachment, self-extension, CNFU, social identity and the symbolic meaning of luxury. To build a satisfactory model, a measurement model of the measures applied for each construct was tested and validated in the previous section. Building on this, the structural equation model was established to test the hypothesized causal relationships proposed in this study. For the measurement model, the structural model containing the previously hypothesized relationships was tested using AMOS Software 25.

The structural model consists of six hypothesized relationships among the desire for luxury jewellery possession, the emotional significance of possessions, self-extension and social identity, from which assumptions regarding emotional relation to objects, self-improvement and social positioning can be derived. The structural model was evaluated by estimating whether correlations between the constructs are statistically significant.

The outcomes of testing the structural model in regard to model fit are as follows. Results of the initial structural model (Final Structural Model 1, see Figure 12 in appendix) indicate an unacceptable model due to an unsatisfactory result for RMSEA, with x^2 = 978.057, p = .000, CMIN/df = 7.466, TLI = .902, CFI = .916 and RMSEA = .109. The x^2 statistic is significant due to the high complexity of the model as well as its large sample size, which is a typical result for x^2 in SEM. Therefore, other values were assessed against a predefined cut-off. The majority of resulting values of the fit indices were within the recommended ranges of good fit, while RMSEA exceeded the acceptable range of <.08. MIs and standardized residuals were evaluated for misspecification, and no abnormalities regarding misspecification were found. Based on this unacceptable result, an alternative structural model (Model 2) was set up, in which the three exogenous constructs are co-varied, as suggested by AMOS. Results of the reassessment of model fit indicate an overall improvement on every model fit parameter; RMSEA specifically met the acceptable fit criteria. In detail, model fit parameters indicate x^2 = 517.388, p = .000, CMIN/df = 4.042, TLI = .954, CFI = .962 and RMSEA = .075. The detailed model fit parameters for Model 1 and Model 2 are listed in Table 32.

When comparing two models, Akaike information criterion (AIC) and Browne-Cudeck criterion (BCC) statistics should be evaluated, where the model with the lower AIC and BCC is said to be the better one. For Model 1, AIC was =1,094.057 and BCC was =1,098.239, and for Model 2, AIC was =639.388 and BCC was =643.787. These values strengthen the previous results of model fit parameters, clearly indicating that Model 2 best represents the present research topic. Therefore, hypothesized Model 2 was used for further analysis and hypothesis testing.

Table 32

Comparison of structural model fit (with one correlated error term) for Model 1 and Model 2

Model fit parameter	Model 1	Model 2	Criteria
CMIN	978.057	517.388	The smaller the better
CMIN/DF	7.466	4.042	<5.0
TLI	.902	.954	>0.09
CFI	.916	.962	>0.09
RMSEA	.109	.075	<0.08
AIC	1,094.057	639.388	The smaller the better
BCC	1,098.239	643.787	The smaller the better

In terms of estimates (regression weight table in AMOS output), two of the hypothesized relationships are statistically significant, while one is not. Statistically significant (p > .001) and positive relationships exist between self-extension and desire for luxury jewellery possession (Estimate = .624) and between social identity and desire for luxury jewellery possession (Estimate = .251). The relationship between emotional significance of possessions is positive (Estimate = .099), though not statistically significant (p = .07). This leads to the conclusion that emotional significance of possessions, as measured by the three indicators suggested by literature and applied in this thesis, does not have any significant impact on the desire for luxury jewellery possession. By contrast, self-extension and social identity have a significant and positive impact on the desire for luxury jewellery possession. Details on parameter estimates are presented next.

4.9.1 Parameter estimates

Parameter estimates were assessed for statistical significance by evaluating the critical ratio (C.R.), as the causal paths of variables are of interest for the structural model. According to the evaluation of these ratios per path relationship, two causal paths were significant (self-extension → Desire for luxury jewellery possession: C.R. = 16.186; social identity → Desire for luxury jewellery possession: C.R. = 4.915), while one path was not significant (emotional significance of possessions → Desire for luxury jewellery possession: C.R. = 1.810). All details are presented in Table 33.

Table 33

Critical ratios of the structural model

Causal path		S.E.	C.R.
Emotional significance of possessions →	Desire for luxury jewellery possession	.055	1.810
Self-extension →	Desire for luxury jewellery possession	.039	16.186
Social Identity →	Desire for luxury jewellery possession	.051	4.915

4.9.2 Results of hypothesis testing

To assess the hypotheses, the present study estimated the expected causal relationships among the exogenous (independent) and endogenous (dependent) latent variables through multiple path analyses as simultaneously as possible with SEM in AMOS (Lowry & Gaskin, 2014). This section presents the results of the hypotheses testing of the structural model. With a relatively large sample size ($N = 547$), the results include the test of six direct hypotheses (H1a, H1c, H2a, H2c, H3a and H3c).

Factor loadings based on standardized regression weights were already assessed throughout the measurement model and indicated statistical significance, as they were > .5. The factor loadings based on the non-standardized regression weights can be found in the appendix (Appendix Table 39).

The study's findings show that emotional significance of possessions had the expected positive influence on the desire for luxury jewellery possession, albeit not significant, as indicated by the standardized path estimate $\beta = .07$ ($p = .07$). Thus, H1a and H1c cannot be supported, meaning that the present thesis could not support the hypothesis that the emotional significance of possessions influences one's emotional relation to objects, and this emotional relation to objects influences the desire for luxury jewellery possession. As possession attachment was excluded from further analysis based on a result of the measurement model assessment, H1b, H1d and H1e are not supported. For clear representation and good traceability, Table 34 displays the results of hypothesis testing for the latent variable of emotional relation to objects.

Table 34

Results of hypothesis testing for the latent variable of emotional relation to objects

Nr	Hypothesis	Result
H1a	The emotional significance of possessions *positively* influences one's emotional relation to objects.	Not supported
H1b	Possession attachment *positively* influences one's emotional relation to objects.	Not supported
H1c	One's emotional relation to objects *positively* influences the desire for luxury jewellery possession.	Not supported
H1d	Possession attachment *positively* influences the emotional significance of possessions.	Not supported
H1e	Possession attachment *positively* influences self-extension.	Not supported

Furthermore, the results revealed that self-extension had the expected positive influence on the desire for luxury jewellery possession at a significant level, as indicated by the standardized path estimate $\beta = .66$ ($p < .001$). This means that self-extension explains 66% of the change in desire for luxury jewellery possession. Thus, H2a and H2c can be supported, meaning that self-extension positively influences self-improvement, and self-improvement positively influences the desire for luxury jewellery possession. As CNFU was excluded from further analysis based on the results of the measurement model assessment, H2b is not supported. For clear representation and good traceability, Table 35 displays the consolidated results of hypothesis testing for the latent variable of self-improvement.

Table 35

Results of hypothesis testing for the latent variable of self-improvement

Nr	Hypothesis	Result
H2a	Self-extension *positively* influences self-improvement.	Supported
H2b	Consumers' need for uniqueness *positively* influences self-improvement.	Not possible to test
H2c	Self-improvement *positively* influences the desire for luxury jewellery possession.	Supported

Finally, the analysis revealed that social identity had the expected positive influence on the desire for luxury jewellery possession at a significant level, as indicated by the standardized path estimate β = .19 (p < .001). This means that social identity explains 19% of the change in desire for luxury jewellery possession. Thus, H3a and H3c can be supported, meaning that social identity positively influences social positioning, and social positioning positively influences the desire for luxury jewellery possession. As the symbolic meaning of luxury was excluded from further analysis based on the results of the measurement model assessment, H3b is not supported. Table 36 displays the consolidated results of hypothesis testing around the latent variable of social positioning.

Table 36

Results of hypothesis testing for the latent variable of social positioning

Nr	Hypothesis	Result
H3a	Social identity *positively* influences social positioning.	Supported

H3b	Symbolic meaning of luxury *positively* influences social positioning.	Not possible to test
H3c	Social positioning *positively* influences the desire for luxury jewellery possession.	Supported

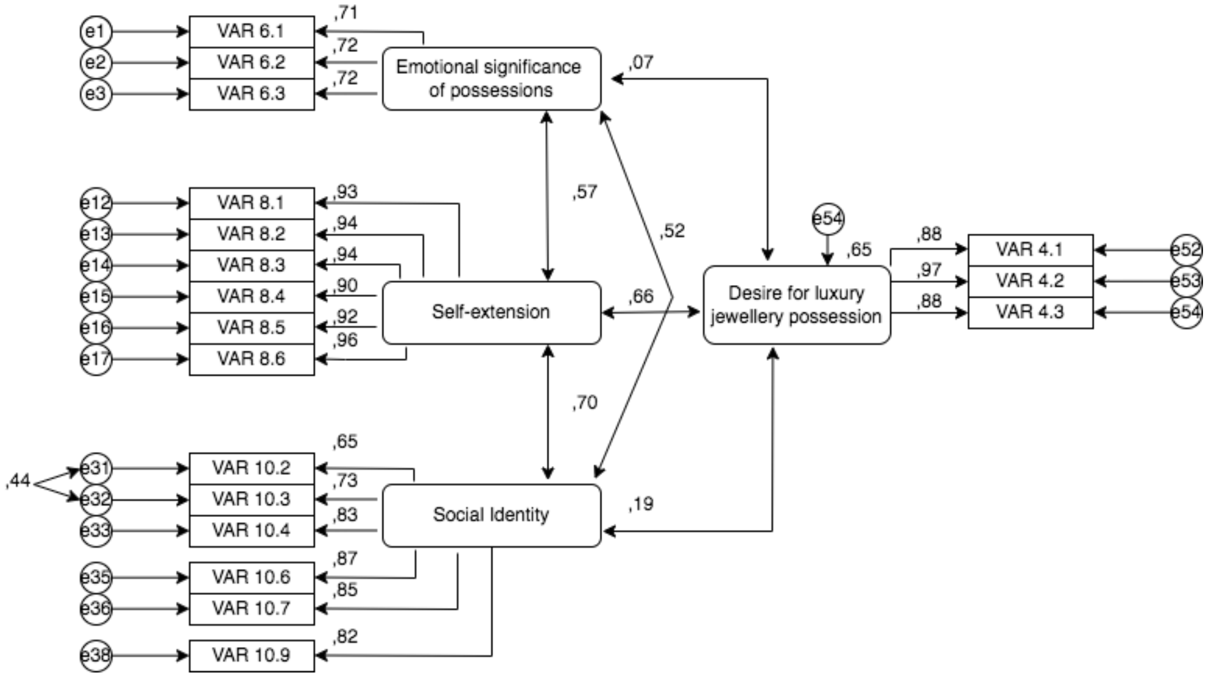
Table 41 in the appendix contains a practical overview of all hypotheses and their results at a glance.

4.10 Summary: Final structural model based on results of hypothesis testing

In summary, based on the results of the final structural model, self-improvement and social positioning positively influence the desire for luxury jewellery possession, and each is influenced by self-extension and social identity. The desire for luxury jewellery possession is not significantly influenced by one's emotional relation to objects, which in turn is not significantly influenced by the emotional significance of possessions. The results confirm the importance of the more self- and socially-based attributes (instead of the emotionally based attributes) when it comes to the desire for luxury jewellery possession. The final model is depicted in Figure 10.

Figure 10

Final conceptual structural model (2) based on results



Chapter 5 discusses the key findings regarding the predefined hypotheses and the theoretical literature that provided the basis for the hypothesized model.

CHAPTER 5. Discussion

5.1 Introduction

Chapter 4 detailed the results of the data analysis in relation to the thesis objectives. Chapter 5 first recapitulates the research context to assist the reader in conceptually grasping the discussion section. An in-depth discussion of the key findings of this thesis follows, specifically in relation to the existing literature addressed in the literature review (Chapter 2). The extent to which the results relate to and differ from findings in other studies is addressed, and the impact of the results on the research problem at hand, the hypothesized relationships, and practice are elaborated. This chapter starts with a brief discussion of the research context and is followed by an analysis of the findings, structured per latent variable.

5.2 Research context

The luxury market is unique and differs from mundane objects and general consumption patterns in other markets. This difference in the luxury market is equally reflected in increased scientific interest in this industry and displayed by increased published research (Kapferer, 2014).

The most relevant concepts for this thesis in the area of luxury jewellery possession and its desire can be categorized into three streams of thought in terms of their conceptual origin: one's emotional relation to objects, self-improvement and social positioning. In the area of emotional relations to objects, the two dominant constructs identified, both shaped and characterized by the previous work of Ball and Tasaki (1992), are the emotional significance of possessions and possession attachment. In the area of self-improvement, the two identified constructs that were expected to dominate are self-extension and CNFU. Belk described self-extension in numerous studies at the end of the 20^{th} century, but in the present context, it is strongly represented through the work of Sivadas and Venkatesh and their theory of incorporation into the extended self. The second construct CNFU was coined by Ruvio et al. (2008) and their theory on it. Lastly, the area of social positioning constitutes the two identified and expected constructs: first, social identity, led by Cameron (2005) and his three-factor model, and second, the symbolic meaning of luxury jewellery, dominated by Hayes's interpretation of Thierry (1992) and their understanding of symbolic meaning in the context of money.

The present study aimed to provide empirical social research based on the collection of numerical data, which, after further statistical processing, enabled the testing of the hypotheses. Specifically, it aimed to examine the relationship between the identified constructs and the desire for luxury jewellery possession. In particular, the thesis explored the following:

1. The relationship between one's emotional relation to objects and the desire for luxury jewellery possession (H1a–1e);
2. The relationship between self-improvement and the desire for luxury jewellery possession (H2a–2c);
3. The relationship between social positioning and the desire for luxury jewellery possession (H3a–3c).

The 11 hypotheses were derived based on the literature review and form the basis for constructing the proposed and hypothesized model for this thesis, followed by a quantitative exploration of possessors of luxury jewellery and an in-depth analysis of the generated results using SEM. The following section interprets and discusses the empirical findings in the context of existing literature and in relation to the research objectives. Key findings include both supported and refuted hypotheses of the final conceptual model. That section is presented in a structured manner, hypothesis by hypothesis.

5.3 Discussion of key findings

5.3.1 The role of the emotional significance of possessions and possession attachment through an emotional relation to objects (H1a–1e)

5.3.1.1 The influence of emotional significance of possessions on emotional relation to objects and desire for luxury jewellery possession (H1a and H1c).

H1a and H1c were tested to understand whether and, if so, to what extent the emotional significance of possessions – through the latent variable emotional relation to objects – influences the desire for luxury jewellery possession. The results of quantitative hypothesis testing show that a relationship exists between the emotional significance of possessions, one's emotional relation to objects and the desire for luxury jewellery possession; however, it is not significant. This means that no general statements can be made about the correlations and that no support could be found for emotional significance of possessions predicting one's emotional relation to objects and in turn one's desire for luxury jewellery possession. However, there is a tendency for a relationship. In other words, indications of a relationship and a correlation between those variables exist. Hence, whilst no support was found for H1a and H1c in this thesis, future research is needed to further investigate the relationship between these constructs. Analysis, here, indicates that the emotional significance of possessions does not significantly lead to an emotional relation to objects, which in turn does not lead to a significant increase in the desire for luxury jewellery possession. With regard to the proposed model in this thesis, this correlation thus does not represent a significant influencing factor on the desire for luxury jewellery possession.

When this outcome is compared with those in the literature, various perspectives become evident. On the one hand, as already mentioned in the literature review, limited information exists on possible correlations between emotions and the desire for possession, or desire itself. The aforementioned non-significant result might indicate why this relationship has not received attention and can be seen as confirming the overall picture to some extent. On the other hand, even with limited literature, albeit non-exhaustive, this result is somewhat unexpected, as it contradicts the hypothesized relationships and is not fully in line with the outcomes of the limited findings that are evident in other research. In 2009, Maclaran et al. highlighted that an emotional relationship exists between the possessor and their desired possessions. This is in line with findings from the present study, albeit non-significant. McFerran et al. (2014) highlighted that emotions motivate consumption and that during consumption, the emotion of pride can dominate when it comes to luxury products. While this stream of thought around pride exceeds the scope of the present thesis, it is in line with the indication of a correlation, although McFerran et al. (2014) conjecture the relationship is more explicit than the results of this research indicate. In a further comparison of the results of the present thesis with findings from Chen (2009), similarities and differences arise. First, Chen (2009) states that product–consumer relationships emerge based on desires. This is not entirely in line with what was hypothesized in this thesis, as it is not assumed that those relationships are always rooted in desires, but rather that the hypothesized factors of the emotional significance of possessions or possession attachment can lead to desire (for luxury jewellery possession). Furthermore, he states that relationships with possessions arise during consumption to satisfy desires. By contrast, the present research offers indications of the emotional relationship to the luxury product that exists before the desire to possess certain luxury jewellery pieces emerges and thus suggests that the emotional relationship with the luxury product is an influencing factor, though not a significant one. Maden's (2015) assumption is in line with the position of this research in that no strong significant statements are made, but rather there are indications of a correlation between emotional motivations when it comes to desire and its fulfilment. This can be transferred to the context of this thesis, which suggests that emotional relationships to objects can impact the desire for luxury jewellery possession. However, future research is needed to derive significant assertions in this context. Considering the aforementioned, there are certain similarities and differences between the existing thesis and current literature in the field. However, there is little clarity and surety; therefore, more detailed consideration and investigation is required.

Though the exact reasons for the non-significance of the result are unclear, a possible explanation may lie in the construct ‘emotional significance of possessions’ containing the term possession, which respondents might not have properly understood when they completed the questionnaire. Issues with the construct of possession attachment were detected in this thesis and are discussed in section 6.6.

Further reflection on the cluster analysis suggested a good model fit for Cluster 1 (stating that people with a low emotional significance of possessions perceive a low desire for luxury jewellery). Though as negatively formulated in this example, it indicates a consistent positive relationship between the two constructs, as indicated by the results of hypothesis testing, albeit not significant. This strengthens the meaningfulness of the indications of correlation and reinforces that future research is needed to further investigate the relationship in this case.

In contrast to significant results that show clear relationships, the present results rather cautiously indicate that the emotional significance of certain possessions does somehow correlate with an emotional relationship to objects and the desire for luxury jewellery, but no clear connection between the constructs could yet be identified. Self-extension and self-improvement remain the most relevant influencing factors, closely followed by social identity and social positioning. Additionally, there is a tendency for a correlation between one’s emotional relation to objects and the emotional significance of possessions.

5.3.1.2 The influence of possession attachment on emotional relation to objects and the desire for luxury jewellery possession (H1b, H1d and H1e).

This section deals with the importance of the concept of possession attachment for the hypothesized model. Specifically, H1b was established to test whether and, if so, to what extent possession attachment, through the latent variable emotional relation to objects, influences the desire for luxury jewellery possession; H1d tested whether and, if so, to what extent possession attachment influences the emotional significance of possessions; and H1e tested whether and, if so, to what extent possession attachment influences self-extension. However, H1b, H1d and H1e could only be evaluated in the measurement model, which resulted in the removal of the construct possession attachment from the final structural model, as it failed to meet the necessary markers for discriminant validity (see Table 34). More specifically, the results of the discriminant validity testing, as one step in the confirmatory factor analysis that precedes the SEM, indicated a significant lack of discriminant validity for the construct of possession attachment itself, which is why the construct was excluded from further analysis. Therefore, all three hypotheses that relate to the construct of possession attachment were not tested in the structural model.

That these three hypotheses could not be tested in the structural model in this research is unexpected when considering the outcomes of previous research, as highlighted in the literature review. Belk (1988), Venkatesh et al. (2010) and Thakur and Kaur (2015) all provided evidence of the relationship between possessions and the emotional meaning of the items, which can be related to attachment. The example of the ring a woman bought at Bulgari, which she fell in love with, clearly indicates this interrelationship (Venkatesh et al., 2010; Thakur & Kaur, 2015), which was the basis for H1b. Ball and Tasaki (1992) as well as Kleine and Baker (2004) also confirm and expand this relationship, highlighting the emotional significance of attachment and stating that attachments are by their very nature emotional, which was the basis of H1d. Finally, not only Ball and Tasaki (1992) but also Odom et al. (2001) and Kleine et al. (1995) highlighted the impact of attachment on one's ability to maintain, add to or strengthen the self-concept, which was the basis for H1e. The fact that the construct did not even seem to be evident given the issues highlighted through a lack of discriminant validity in this research contradicts previous literature that led to the hypothesized assumptions applied in the existing thesis.

The lack of discriminant validity reduces confidence in the measures as well as in the results (Farrell, 2010). Reasons for poor discriminant validity are unclear, but it is assumed that the issue does not lie in the measurement scale itself. Ball and Tasaki's eight-item 'possession attachment scale' from 1992 is well established and has been successfully applied by other authors, and its eight items are an appropriate number for SEM. Furthermore, all eight items were applied, with the only adaptation being the addition of the term 'luxury jewellery' in the free-text field, which was explicitly intended for this purpose. Thus, no issues could be detected in the measurement scale itself that might have led to this result. One possible supposition regarding the measurement scale could be that whilst it has been used in consumer behaviour research before, it has not been previously applied to a product category that is comparable to luxury jewellery.

Moreover, a high desire for luxury jewellery was detected among respondents who obtained luxury jewellery by inheritance and not by purchase, with the latter being the more common route to possession of luxury items in the consumer literature (and concerning everyday practices). This further indicates that the problem might be either attributed to the data collected, or to the context of the thesis.

When considering the cluster analysis results, the outcomes for Cluster 1, for which the proposed model had a very good model fit, revealed that those who primarily obtained their luxury jewellery through routes other than by purchase have a high desire for luxury jewellery possession. The exact reasons for this are unclear, but it may be that the possessors are closely attached to the giver and/or to some surrounding circumstance and create a relationship in that regard, instead of being attached to the luxury jewellery piece itself. Furthermore, considering the cluster analysis results from a different perspective, those who inherited their luxury jewellery still indicated having no or low possession attachment. Possibly, inherited objects are not understood as possessions in the same sense as objects that are purchased.

Given that the present study is one of the first to research the notion of luxury jewellery possession, it would seem prudent to continue to not examine these constructs and their measurement and operationalization in further research.

The following section outlines the results regarding the role of self-extension and CNFU through self-improvement in the desire for luxury jewellery possession.

5.3.2 The role of self-extension and consumers' need for uniqueness through self-improvement (H2a–2c)

5.3.2.1 The influence of self-extension on self-improvement and the desire for luxury jewellery possession (H2a and H2c).

H2a and H2c were tested to understand whether and, if so, to what extent self-extension through the latent variable self-improvement influences the desire to possess luxury jewellery. The results revealed that these two hypotheses are supported. Analysis indicates that self-extension leads to self-improvement, which in turn leads to an increase in the desire for luxury jewellery possession. This result demonstrates that self-extension is the strongest influencing factor on self-improvement and in turn the desire for luxury jewellery possession.

The results for H2a and H2c were expected and are in line with existing literature. The outcomes concerning the overall relationship between self-extension, self-improvement and the desire for luxury jewellery possession are in line with and confirm, the stream of thought from Belk in the field of consumption, consumer behaviour and the self. In his theory of the extended self, he hypothesized that persons incorporate certain objects (amongst other things) into their own identity. It is plausible to apply this observation to the category of luxury and luxury jewellery and to derive some self-improvement from self-extension through the possession of such objects. The present study is thus in line with Belk's work and addresses a gap in knowledge surrounding the product category of luxury jewellery.

Furthermore, the results confirm the association between the self and the desire for possessions, as hypothesized by Kang and Park (2016). They stated that people strive for self-enhancement and specifically for their ideal self (as also confirmed by Austria et al., 2022), where purchase decisions essentially result in desirable possessions (Kang & Park, 2016). To the best of the researcher's knowledge, no divergent literature is available in the field. This absence of contrary opinions may help to explain why self-extension and self-improvement are the strongest influencing factors within the current model.

Additionally, the strength of the results of the hypothesized relationship between self-extension, self-improvement and the desire for luxury jewellery possession, as displayed in H2a and H2c, is in line with the results of previous studies by McCracken in 1986, Sivadas and Venkatesh in 1995 and Gajjar in 2013. Over nearly 30 years, these authors demonstrated the indispensable connection between the self and possessions, whereby self-definition and self-improvement through self-extensions seem hardly conceivable without possessions. Gajjar (2013) even stated that the actual function of a certain good is not the goal of possession, but centres primarily on the importance of the possessed object for self-definition.

Next, regarding the hypothesized relationship between self-improvement and the desire for luxury jewellery possession as displayed in H2c, numerous streams of thought again align with this study's results. The relationship between possessions and self-improvement has been well recognized and acknowledged by, for instance, Elliott (1997) and Truong and McGoll (2011). Truong and McGoll (2011), who mentioned personal growth as being strongly correlated with possessions and luxury jewellery, come closest to the result confirmed in this thesis, namely that self-extension is the strongest influencing factor on the desire for luxury jewellery possession. What should be noted, however, is that the authors do not refer to desire, but instead conclude with the construct of 'possession'. With regard to Belk (1988) again, who stated that possessions play a role in 'forming and reflecting the self', Truong and McGoll's outcomes confirm the relationship, as do the results of the present study, although the direction of the relationship between possession and the self as indicated by Belk (1988) and Truong and McGoll (2011) suggest that possessions impact the self, while the present thesis found that self-extension influences the desire for possession. Aaker and Keller (1990) as well as Vickery and Renand (2003) also examined the correlation between possessions and the self in the context of luxury products. However, most similarities to the results of this study, particularly concerning the facet of desire, are to be found in Richins and Dawson's (1992) work, which states that the desire to possess stems from issues with the self. In summary, the present study's agreement with numerous studies' outcomes confirms the significance of the results and helps to offer possible explanations for the patterns observed in this research.

If issues beyond the fit of the results with previous research are considered, a further potential explanation for the result may be the appropriateness of the measurement scale 'incorporation into the extended self', as applied based on the work of Sivadas and Venkatesh from 1995, which deals with the concept of identity. The scale itself is well established and easily transferrable to the context of luxury jewellery possession, particularly when considering the specific formulations of the items. It contains six items – an appropriate scale length for respondents to answer as well as for SEM analysis. The items are formulated clearly and were thus expected to be understood by the respondents. Furthermore, no adaptations to item formulations were necessary, except for the insertion of the word 'luxury jewellery' in the free-text field, and all proposed items from the initial scale could be applied to the present context without exception. This good scale applicability strengthens the results from hypothesis testing.

Regarding the cluster analysis that indicated a good model fit for Cluster 1, the result that people who are low in self-extension perceive a low desire for luxury jewellery, although negatively formulated in this example, indicates a consistent positive relationship between the two constructs, as confirmed by the results of hypothesis testing. This further strengthens the meaningfulness of the results from the present study.

The last aspect of the discussion entails an evaluation of what the results mean in line with the meaning of previous results and how they relate to practice. The results indicate that in the context of desiring luxury jewellery possession, as previously confirmed for similar settings, self-aspects, even more than social aspects, are among the main influencing factors. This may relate to today's individualistic culture, in which the self, in comparison with social aspects, is by far most relevant to people when it comes to the desire to possess luxury jewellery. This may be because of the aspect of desire: As desires are intrinsic, it seems reasonable that self-aspects score higher than social aspects.

5.3.2.2 The influence of CNFU on self-improvement and the desire for luxury jewellery possession (H2b).

H2b sought to test whether and, if so, to what extent CNFU, through the latent variable of self-improvement, influences the desire for luxury jewellery possession. However, H2b could only be tested in the measurement model, resulting in the removal of this construct from the final structural model, as it failed to meet the necessary markers for discriminant validity (see

Table 35). Specifically, the results of the PCA carried out on three of the six constructs showed that even though a pre-established scale was used as a basis, the measurement construct of CNFU was unstable in the context of this thesis: The items of the CNFU scale could not be clearly differentiated from the constructs self-extension and symbolic meaning of luxury, and the PCA proposed that self-extension has the best overall fit for the present thesis, leading to an exclusion of the CNFU construct. This unexpected finding could be because the construct of CNFU was not sufficiently well defined, there are issues with measurement or CNFU does not play a significant role. Testing this hypothesis in the structural model was thus not possible, meaning that H2b can neither be supported nor rejected. Consequently, it remains unclear whether CNFU influences self-improvement and if this may lead to an increase in the desire for luxury jewellery possession.

This result is somewhat unexpected given evidence from the literature review, and it stands in contrast to established outcomes in the field, as indicated by the chief proponents of CNFU: Ruvio et al. (2008) and Tian et al. (2001). It is unquestionable that the need for uniqueness exists in consumers and that individuals perceive this need for uniqueness to some extent – it is a 'universal trait' (Fromkin, 1970; Snyder, 1992; Snyder & Fromkin, 1977). It is also unquestionable that consumers' possession and display of distinct products can be a common tool to express this uniqueness (Snyder, 1992; Snyder & Fromkin, 1980; Tian et al., 2001, as cited in Ruvio et al., 2008). However, regarding the hypothesized relationship between CNFU and self-improvement, leading to the desire for luxury jewellery possession, the absence of a relationship between the variables as observed in this thesis stands in contrast to certain literature in the field. Ruvio et al. (2008) state that CNFU can allow the self to improve and extend to some degree, while Tian et al.'s (2001) definition of CNFU – '…pursuing differentness through the acquisition, utilization and disposition of consumer goods to develop and enhance one's self-image […]' (p.52) – is not in line with the findings of this study. There are several possible explanations for this result. One explanation could be based on Ruvio et al.'s (2008) assumption that CNFU equally impacts social and self-improvement, while the improvement of social positioning and self-improvement may be in opposition to each other. Snyder and Fromkin (1977) held an opposing view, namely that CNFU can stand in contrast to social approval, whereas in this thesis, social identity and social positioning are relevant influencing factors on the desire for luxury jewellery possession. Another potential explanation may be the situation in which CNFU evolves. Snyder and Fromkin (1977), in their theory of uniqueness, state that people try to be different in social groups with high similarity. Though there are no clear results in this study, as testing could not proceed, it seems possible that the aspect of high similarity in social groups does not hold when it comes to the desire for luxury jewellery possession. A further possible explanation may relate to the resulting self-improvement that is expected: The concepts of distinction and the need for uniqueness hold in general (Kang & Bae, 2016; Bordieu, 1984); however, they are potentially not adopted as a major tool to improve the self, but rather for other reasons, such as to achieve distinction, regardless of whether the self improves with this distinction.

Another conceivable explanation might be attributed to the possibility that desire for luxury jewellery possession simply is not about uniqueness. As the results of this study previously demonstrated, the desire for luxury jewellery possession is influenced by self-extension and social identity. Considering the nature of the constructs, as well as of the construct of the need for uniqueness, uniqueness and social identity may counteract each other. CNFU would implicate consumers' need and desire to be special, unique, exceptional and, therefore, also distinct from others, while social identity may conversely indicate some kind of similarity with one's social surroundings and commonalities with others, which by their nature, are the opposite of uniqueness. This may be a crucial aspect of why CNFU may not drive the desire for luxury jewellery possession, which is unclear, as it could not be tested.

Reflections on the results of the cluster analysis indicate a good model fit for those with a low desire for luxury jewellery possession and no need for uniqueness. The picture that emerges from this indicates that people with a low desire for luxury jewellery can perceive a high need for uniqueness, but this relates neither to the intention to improve the self, nor to desire for luxury jewellery possession. The cluster analysis further showed that people in this cluster mostly inherited their luxury jewellery and did not purchase it, indicating that CNFU is not predominant when obtaining luxury through inheritance, which is primarily related to someone passing away, with the potentially negative emotions and difficult connotations that are likely to be associated with such an event.

Furthermore, since the PCA indicated instability of the scale used in this research, this issue is discussed in this section. The resulting instability of the scale may be due to its nature or its fit in the context of the desire for luxury jewellery possession. Possible interfering characteristics of the scale are varied. The scale was established in 2007, thus making it relatively new. It, therefore, has not necessarily been applied to a diverse range of contexts yet. Furthermore, the scale by Ruvio et al. is based on one that originally encompassed 31 items; its shortening by Ruvio et al. in 2008 may be another reason it did not work in this research context. Nevertheless, the remaining 12 items appear to be an effective scale length for use in SEM.

Considering the details of item formulations, though products/possessions were mentioned, respondents might not have understood that 'products/possessions' refer to luxury jewellery pieces. Moreover, the original scale was split into three areas, namely creative/selective choice, unpopular choice and avoidance of similarity. The creative/selective choice might not have held, as demonstrated in the cluster analysis, indicating that the choice for certain luxury jewellery pieces was not made by the person themself, but that the pieces were inherited. This might be one reason why the first part of this scale did not work within this study context. The same might be the case for the aspect of unpopular choice since there was no active choice when obtaining luxury jewellery through inheritance. Regarding the third aspect, avoidance of similarity, this might hold for CNFU in general, but it possibly cannot be transferred to the context of possessing luxury jewellery. While a consumer might still have a high need for uniqueness, it might not be displayed in their desire to possess luxury jewellery, but rather is reflected in other behaviours or actions, for example wearing extravagant clothes, being funny, driving an expensive car, or frequenting chic restaurants and clubs. All of these can be alternative behaviour patterns and representations of the self to satisfy a potential need for uniqueness. Hence, it remains unclear whether CNFU drives the desire for luxury jewellery possession.

In summary, the issues that affected the ability to test H2b are unclear and require further research, but possible issues centre on the applicability of the current conceptualization of CNFU and its lack of fit within the context of desiring luxury jewellery, the contradictions between self- and social aspects or the aspect of uniqueness, and the instability of the scale given its nature and the context of this thesis. As this study is one of the first to research the notion of luxury jewellery possession, it would seem prudent to continue to examine this construct as well as its measurement and operationalization in further research.

The following section examines social identity and symbolic meaning and their influence on social positioning, along with the consequent impact on the desire for luxury jewellery possession.

5.3.3 The role of social identity and symbolic meaning through social positioning (H3a–3c)

5.3.3.1 The influence of social identity on social positioning and the desire for luxury jewellery possession (H3a and H3c).

H3a and H3c were tested to understand whether and, if so, to what extent social identity, through the latent variable of social positioning, influences the desire for luxury jewellery possession. The results showed that both hypotheses are supported: Social identity leads to social positioning, which in turn leads to an increase in the desire for luxury jewellery possession (see Table 36). This relationship is the second strongest influencing factor on the desire for luxury jewellery possession in the model.

These findings for H3a and H3c were expected and are in line with existing research. Regarding H3a, results match those observed in earlier studies to different degrees. Tajfel (1978), in his definition of the social identity theory, clearly referred to the relationship between social identity and social positioning, as confirmed by the results of this study, while Vickers and Renand (2003) went even further, proffering that the desire for luxury goods is driven by social identity, though they did not explicitly consider the aspect of desire. Fionda and Moore (2009) discussed the stimulation of a consumer's desire for a specific product, which translates well into the hypothesized desire for luxury jewellery possession. Furthermore, certain streams of thought extend beyond the notions explored in this research by referring to situations in which the possession of (and not the desire for) certain products is used as a tool to enhance identity, thus hypothesizing an impact of possession on social identity (e.g., Kang & Bae, 2016; Belk, 1988; Thakur & Kaur, 2015). Thus, the impact of possessions and their relationship to social identity is an area for further research.

It is unclear whether the extension of the hypothesized relationship to the additional impact of possessions on social identity can be related to the construct of social positioning. What is clear, however, is that the result for H3c is in line with previous studies, in which different facets are highlighted: First, the impact of possessions, in general, is in line with findings by Belk (1988), who stated that possessions are used for social positioning. Amaral and Loken (2016) and Dommer and Swaminathan (2012) lend support to this contention. To strengthen the relevance of this stream of thought in contemporary literature, Khaniwale (2015) highlighted the significant impact of social factors on decisions and buying processes, where the 'process' can also include the desire to possess. Although Khaniwale (2015) did not mention the facet of desire explicitly, Thakur and Kaur (2015) did, and their perspective accords with the support found for H3a and H3c. Some authors have also referred to the category of luxury jewellery specifically (Thakur & Kaur, 2015; Kim & Jang, 2014). For example, Truong (2010) and Kang and Park (2016), who refer to Markus and Kitayama (1991), all confirm this association at the general category level of luxury. It is worth highlighting that whilst the literature discussed agrees with the findings of this thesis, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, no contrary positions have been evidenced to date.

It seems possible that the strong results for these hypothesized relationships are due to, or rather a sign of, the suitability of Cameron's (2004) measurement scale. With its 11 items, it appears to be an effective scale length for respondents, but most importantly, no adaptations were made to item formulations, and content adaptations to the category of luxury jewellery were not necessary. Additionally, the picture that emerges from reflections on the cluster analysis indicates that people with low social identity perceive a low desire for luxury jewellery, further strengthening the meaningfulness of the results.

In terms of what the results (in line with those of previous findings) mean and how they connect to practice, the results suggest that in the context of luxury jewellery possession, as previously confirmed for other settings, and unsurprisingly, social aspects are among the chief influencing factors. This may relate to the western culture in which the research was conducted and in which social identity appears to be important to most individuals. The picture that emerges from the above analysis is that the social environment drives desires that help to satisfy social identity, which is the basis for the interrelationships of constructs. People care about what others think of them, and they strive for a desirable self-portrayal. Luxury jewellery is a category of possession that – if worn – is visible to others, making it an ideal means of such expression. Its characteristic of being a tool to socially position consequently acts as the main driver for the desire for luxury jewellery possession.

5.3.3.2 The influence of the symbolic meaning of luxury on social positioning and the desire for luxury jewellery possession (H3b).

H3b tested whether and, if so, to what extent the symbolic meaning of luxury, through the latent variable social positioning, influences the desire for luxury jewellery possession. However, H3b could only be tested in the measurement model, resulting in the removal of this construct from the final structural model because it failed to meet the necessary markers for discriminant validity. Specifically, the results of the PCA conducted on three of the six constructs revealed that this pre-established scale was unstable when measuring the symbolic meaning of luxury in this research context. Its items may not have been clearly differentiated from the two other constructs (self-extension and CNFU); while further analysis might have continued using self-extension alone, it would have rendered this a very different construct from the one originally intended. This situation may have occurred either because the three aforementioned elements are not sufficiently well defined. After all, there are issues with their measurement or because the constructs do not play a significant role in this context. Testing this hypothesis within the structural model was therefore not possible, and it remains unclear whether the symbolic meaning of luxury influences social positioning and if this influence leads to an increase in the desire for luxury jewellery possession.

This outcome is somewhat unexpected given earlier outcomes reported in the literature. It also stands in contrast to Richins's (1994) assumption that the publicly recognized, symbolic meaning of certain goods affects the choice of certain possessions and impacts the desire for future possessions.

Though Thakur and Kahur (2015) stated that symbolic meaning is a motivating factor for luxury possession, this could not be confirmed in this research about the desire for luxury jewellery possession, since it was not possible to test the construct in this thesis.

Therefore, it seems plausible that the results are due to the aspect of desire in the construct of desire for luxury jewellery possession. Amaral and Loken (2016) referred to Escalas and Bettman (2003), Ferraro et al. (2011) and White and Dahl (2007), all of whom highlight that certain luxury possessions hold symbolic meaning, and this is assumed to be the case for jewellery pieces as well, but it does not automatically lead to an impact on the *desire* for (more) luxury jewellery possessions. This finding agrees with Venkatesh's (2010) example of a Gucci handbag and increased social positioning based on its symbolic meaning. In this example, the relation and the positive impact of the symbolic meaning attached to the Gucci handbag enable a certain positioning for the person in possession of the handbag, but they do not necessarily increase the person's desire for further luxury jewellery possession, as their goal of increasing their social positioning has already, potentially, been achieved by this one piece; hence, there is no further need for additional possessions, as would be indicated by continuous desire. However, it should be noted that Stavrakakis (2006) and Garfein (1989) mentioned tangible triggers of desire (e.g., higher quality, price, uniqueness, etc.), rather than symbolic meaning.

Reflection on the results from the cluster analysis indicates a good model fit with a low desire for luxury jewellery possession for those who inherit their luxury jewellery. This model, however, could not clarify whether the symbolic meaning of luxury drives this desire.

A potential explanation for this lack of influence could be that people with a low desire for luxury jewellery have a strong relationship with the giver who has bequeathed the luxury piece to them, instead of a strong relationship with the symbolic meaning of the luxury piece itself – and independent of this specific act of inheritance. The aspect of 'inheritance' is therefore likely to have an incomparable meaning to the bequeathed, but the piece would be deeply personal and thus rather unlikely to be used to 'position' the person inheriting it in a social environment. Furthermore, obtaining a luxury jewellery piece by inheritance is likely to mean that someone has died. In the context of close relatives or significant others, to whom one is emotionally connected, this death is likely to be traumatic for those close to the deceased.

Since instability of the construct was detected in the PCA, it seems possible that the results are due to issues within the scale, its nature and/or its fit in the context of this thesis, which is elaborated upon in section 6.6.

Lastly, the meaning of the results, although not fully in line with previous findings, and their connection to research practice are discussed. The reasons for the inability to test H2b are unclear and would require further research, but the picture that emerges from the analysis regarding the literature is that symbolic meaning is relevant and, to some degree, related to social positioning. People might desire a luxurious lifestyle, in general, to socially position themselves. Symbolic meaning exists, as evidenced by the numerous studies in which the concept was tested; however, when it comes to social positioning and the desire for luxury jewellery possessions, this thesis cannot offer insights into whether symbolic meaning of luxury is a driver for the dependent construct. Given that this study is one of the first to research the notion of luxury jewellery possession, it would seem prudent to continue to discuss these constructs and their measurement and operationalization in further research.

Following the discussion of the results at the hypothesis level, the next section outlines an overarching interpretation of the results and highlights the intellectual value of the output of the results from a holistic perspective.

5.4 Overarching interpretation of results and their intellectual value

After the previous discussion of the present results per construct and at the level of the individual hypotheses, this section aims to highlight the intellectual value of the reported results from an overarching perspective. Since the value of possession may vary across time and between individuals, and the nature of acquisition is often complex and accompanied by diverse influences, both aspects are of considerable importance to the desire for luxury jewellery possession and are thus elaborated below.

5.4.1 The value of possession

In discussions concerning possessions, the way people relate to objects after their acquisition is discussed. Most research in the field of consumer behaviour focuses on the point of purchase and the items people buy for themselves. The present thesis extends this focus by considering different ways of acquiring possessions, which adds a certain complexity. Due to this intricacy and the diverse means of acquisition, varying values of possessions can emerge. Numerous facets impact and co-create the value of possessions. This value exceeds functional benefits in that value can be acquired through one's self-representation and self-identity afforded by the possession (Belk 1988, 1991, as cited in Ferraro et al., 2011).

An interesting aspect that emerges in subjective co-created value stems from research by Amaral and Loken (2016) around counterfeit products, where conveying the perceived symbolic value of the genuine brand is the consumer's main goal. This goal can be realized if others do not know that the product is counterfeit instead of genuine. With a genuine luxury product, the monetary value (i.e., the price paid) is likely to be particularly high, but so is the perceived (emotional) value in the eyes of the consumer. With counterfeit products, by contrast, if it is unknown that the luxury product is an imitation and the consumer assumes that the product is genuine, the perceived (emotional) value is equally high, though the monetary value of the actual imitation product (i.e., its price or the financial investment for it) is low (Amaral & Loken, 2016). In this example, the importance of the value of possessions and the surrounding factors that can impact this perceived value in the eyes of the consumer become evident.

What has been stated so far tends to hold for possessions that were purchased; however, moving away from this view and considering possessions obtained by means other than purchase, other factors tend to create value. For example, possessions acquired as a gift from someone who is personally meaningful to the recipient tend to hold a certain value. For instance, a bracelet received as a graduation gift serves as a memory or a keepsake to commemorate the festive day and one's associated success; it is a piece embedded in a person's thoughts and life (Van den Hoven et al., 2021). This has been confirmed by Maclaran et al. (2013): '…most of our possessions become something more than they were when they left the factory or shop door' (p.285). They become part of one's aspirations, thoughts and life and act as an aid to one's own identity (Maclaran et al., 2013). The same holds for heirlooms. An inherited possession tends to hold immense memorable value and is a keepsake associated with the person who bequeathed it.

Additionally, along the consumption journey, which exceeds the point of acquisition, the role of the consumer and their relationship to the possession can develop and change and, as a result, lead to different value outcomes (Schau et al., 2021). One's experiences and use of a product beyond its purchase, one's interactions with this possession and sometimes even the 'possession rituals' that may develop, impose their own identity on possessions, thereby determining the perceived value of possessions (Schau et al., 2021; Maclaran et al., 2009). Those experiences and interactions with possessions could be cleaning, showing off, photographing and talking about the possession, as well as personalizing possessions by, for example, removing potential traces of previous owners or placing personal belongings inside those possessions to anchor the possessor's identity (Maclaran et al., 2009).

Moreover, as time goes on, the value may change, and the perceived value of an object may increase or decrease (Schau et al., 2021). Once a possession truly becomes part of a person's own identity, they are no longer willing to give it away, even if a de facto excessive price is offered; this is referred to as the endowment effect (Maclaran et al., 2009). In this phenomenon, one's own possessions are valued more when compared with the possessions of others (Kahneman et al., 1990, as cited in Maclaran et al., 2009). Thus, when possessions are lived with and common experiences are lived through, the possessions absorb personal memories and histories. Maclaran et al. (2009) cite an illustrative example of the purchase of a puppy from a breeder:

> At the moment of choice, we may well be relatively indifferent to one puppy versus others in the same litter. However, two weeks later, the situation is likely to be very different. Not only have we invested time and love in caring for and beginning to train the dog, but chances are we also have begun to regard it as having a distinct and unique personality. We have given the dog a name, fed it, cleaned up after it, and held it in our arms. It has become endearing by its dependence on us and we have also bonded with it and become attached (Belk, 1996a) (p.285)

Those feelings of attachment can also emerge for non-animal objects (Kleine & Baker, 2004, as cited in Maclaran et al., 2009), and this thesis expects them to hold for luxury possessions (particularly those that are inherited). In contrast, attachment is unlikely to occur with mundane objects or possessions, which might be disposed of at some point.

When elaborating on the meaning of possessions to a person, which is fundamental to its value, Belk (1991b) identified five characteristics that represent the 'heavenly' meanings of possessions indicating their incomparable value: ‘(1) unwillingness to sell for market value; (2) willingness to buy with little regard for price; (3) nonsubstitutability; (4) unwillingness to discard; and (5) feelings of elation/depression due to having or not having the object’ (as cited in Maclaran et al., 2009, p.286).

Prior findings regarding the loss of possession, as assessed by Ferraro et al. (2011), strengthen the role of possessions in identity construction and the consequent highly individual value. Specifically, findings concerning the involuntary loss of possessions (e.g., through natural catastrophes) have revealed that people often grieve the loss of possessions, and their psychological losses and, most importantly, their grief and negative reactions increase if the possession can represent the self, again strengthening the possession–self-link (Ferraro et al., 2011).

In summary, the value of possession can change over time and can be perceived differently from person to person; this value can also emerge and evolve through consumers’ engagement with the possession (Schau et al., 2021).

5.4.2 Possessions and the nature of their acquisition

Regarding the previously discussed value of possessions, a relevant and related facet to consider in this thesis is the nature of the acquisition, which comes with high complexity and manifold perspectives. This research assessed whether survey participants’ luxury jewellery pieces (the possessions) were obtained by purchase, through inheritance, as a gift, or as a loan. All forms of obtainment are different and hence expected to have an impact on the relationship to the luxury jewellery piece at hand. Moreover, no uniform assumptions can be made for particular means of acquisition; they can generate distinct sentiments. For example, something obtained as a gift may be something one has always desired or received from a person of particular importance, and the possession received as this form of gift may hence be extremely desirable. Previous research around gifts and gift-giving has found that one reason gifts are highly valued is that they indicate a relationship to people and are perceived as symbolic gestures of love and affection (Givi et al., 2022; Belk & Coon, 1993, as cited in Aggarwal, 2004). However, if one receives a certain object as a gift that one does not like at all, the same nature of acquisition may have a completely different value to the owner and lead to quite different, potentially rather negative reactions and emotions instead of leading to desire for that specific possession (Dunn et al., 2008, as cited in Givi et al., 2022).

Furthermore, inheritance is often associated with someone dying, and people deal with such situations differently. Some people cannot part with the things they have inherited because the items are of inexpressible value, irreplaceable and considered a memento of the deceased person, while other people cannot stand to be reminded of certain things because it saddens them. Some may have no connection to the inherited jewellery at all because the deceased person was not close to them, while others still may have had negative associations with the deceased person, which they transfer to the heirloom.

This unpredictability and complexity also occur in the category of purchase. While some people purchase something they have always wanted, which is of high emotional value to them, with which they identify and which should contribute to their self-image, other people generally have a more distanced relationship with material products and buy them for functional reasons. Thus, for certain people, purchased goods may be of high personal value, and the desire to possess them might thus be higher, while for others the value may be low, and there may consequently be no desire to possess them.

As all the examples mentioned above indicate, the nature of acquisition value is frequently generated as a relationship with people, which seems to be a dominant factor. In that regard, the nature of acquisition does not focus on the nature of the object alone, but on whom this nature of acquisition is related and especially how the relationship with this person is or was valued. Though those details were not assessed in detail in the present thesis, this research assumes the relationship with people to be relevant a relevant factor with regard to the nature of the acquisition.

A further aspect to discuss regarding the nature of the acquisition, though it was not assessed in the present thesis, is renting. It was not considered in detail as renting was not prevalent in the luxury jewellery sector when this research was initiated, but recent literature indicates its increasing importance (e.g., Ruan et al., 2022; Gong et al., 2022; Hu et al., 2019). As an access-based and collaborative consumption, rental allows for the temporary use or access, instead of permanently owning, high-end luxury products that would otherwise be inaccessible due to very expensive prices (Ruan et al., 2022). As this is a different kind of consumer behaviour that stems from an underlying desire for luxury consumption, underlying motivations for renting provide an interesting area for elaboration. According to Ruan et al. (2022), the following seven motivations impact consumer engagement with luxury fashion rental, namely: economic benefits, sustainability, social norms, hedonic benefits, smart shopping, uniqueness and ego defence.

Considering the high prices of luxury products, a significantly lower rental fee makes luxury consumption attractive for consumers from an economic perspective (Kim & Jin, 2020). Further, the increased time of usage and the resulting reduced production and waste makes luxury renting attractive from an environmental and sustainability position (Lee & Cho, 2019). That said, even when not able to afford a certain luxury piece, renting allows people to conform to social norms (Akhmedova et al., 2021) while also enjoying the hedonic benefits (Lang et al., 2020). Furthermore, desires for self-improvement through a unique self-image can be satisfied through renting (Kim & Jin, 2020; Shao et al., 2019), while it allows a person to maintain positive self-esteem and protect one’s ego through luxury good consumption (Makkar & Yap, 2018, as cited in Ruan et al., 2022). There is also contradictory literature on renting, arguing that rented goods are not able to convey symbolism and personal attachment and thus status (e.g., Bardhi et al., 2012; Lawson et al., 2016). These issues warrant additional examination and add richness to the central issues examined in this research.

As this brief outline demonstrates, the nature of acquiring possessions is accompanied by many complexities that are expected to have a noteworthy impact on the construct under evaluation, namely the desire for luxury jewellery possession. These complexities should not be underestimated and need further evaluation. This thesis provides starting points for further research in this respect.

5.4.3 One's relationship to objects: Gift-giving vs. gift-receiving

Of the study sample, 74.6% received some of their luxury jewellery as a gift. Thus, having received luxury jewellery as a gift is by far the largest means by which they came to possess the items (e.g., in comparison, luxury jewellery pieces that were purchased accounted for 69.3% of the pieces the sample possessed). Gifting is thus considered in detail in this section.

Concerning existing knowledge in the field, most literature has dealt with buying/purchasing and its related effects (see, e.g., recent literature by Iyer et al., 2020 on impulse buying or Khaniwale (2015) on consumer buying behaviour). In academic discussions around gifting, the gifted person is also focused on frequently (Sternberg, 2022). In the literature on gifting, gift-giving has received considerable attention from anthropologists, philosophers, sociologists and economists (Givi et al., 2022; Ruffle, 1999, as cited in Son, 2019), while comparatively little literature, to date, has explored gifting from the receiver's perspective (Son, 2019).

Berking (1999) defined gifts as 'material and symbolic exchanges designed to capture memories and feelings about a relationship, generate intimacy, and accomplish other relational goals' (as cited in Kizilcec et al., 2018). This definition suggests that a gift, and specifically gift-receiving, is not necessarily about what is desired by the receiver, nor is it about the economic value of the gift but can rather be a tool to express and communicate the value of relationships (Kizilcec et al., 2018). Gifting inevitably involves another person (Givi et al., 2022). The exchange of gifts is an essential element in human relations (Mauss & Halls, 1954, as cited in Kizilcec et al., 2018). Gifts may be given as a categorical relationship between the giver and the recipient (Waldfogel, 1993, as cited in Givi et al., 2022) to express love or affection, celebration or social connectedness (as does, e.g., a friendship bracelet) and to clarify or strengthen the social relationship (Givi et al., 2022), or they may serve as mementoes of certain memories or beliefs (Berking, 1999, as cited in Kizilcec et al., 2018).

This is relevant and presupposes that owners of luxury jewellery may not necessarily have a high desire to possess the luxury jewellery that they have received as a gift. This knowledge may challenge the way the desire for luxury jewellery possession was initially understood. With regard to luxury jewellery possessions that were received as a gift by others, the desire to possess those pieces may not always be prevalent. While with purchases, the possession is always wanted and desired, this is not necessarily the case for gifts received (Givi et al., 2022). People may also receive gifts and call them their possessions even if they did not initially desire those gifts, for instance, because they do not like the product itself; because the product does not have the desired product characteristics, such as certain materials or functions; because the product does not 'fit' or is not needed; or because a completely different product was desired. As the examples indicate, many reasons exist why a gifted product to someone may not be desired; this complexity may be a potential explanation for the issues identified in the present model.

As mentioned earlier, in this study's sample, 69.3% of possessions were acquired via purchase; these kinds of purchases could also be regarded as gifts to the self or self-gifts. For example, people may reward themselves with a gift for certain achievements (e.g., receiving a promotion at work), as a birthday present (to justify buying a product that is, for instance, extremely expensive) or to compensate for negative experiences or events in their lives. However, this thesis recognizes that a precise determination of whether someone has purchased the desired object, or a self-gift is difficult without a clear classification and statement about this distinction from respondents.

5.4.4 Changing relationships over time

When exploring the relationships people have with the objects they possess and, consequently, also the value they attach to them, it is important to explore the potential for these relationships to change over time. Possessions, which this thesis considers to be intense emotional relationships that exceed ownership (see Chapter 1 for the full definition), may be more concrete and immutable for some possessions and some people than for others. It is expected that for the majority of people and possessions, emotional relationships to possessions are dynamic because relationships with people and the surrounding conditions may change. People fall in love, break up, have a child or must part from people who died. These are examples of conditions with a potential impact on one's changing relationship with objects over time.

The data collected in this thesis allowed for the capturing of a snapshot in time regarding how people relate to their desire for luxury jewellery possessions, which is insightful as a first stage; however, it is not sufficient to understand the relationship over time. The purchase of an object, which one calls a possession, takes place at a given point in time, and its usage and importance may be high for a certain period. However, as time passes, the relevance of the possession may decrease, for example when a newer version of the product is released, as may be the case with, for example, a smartphone. As soon as one possesses a newer version of the iPhone, the old iPhone (which has been of exceptional value until then) becomes irrelevant, and so does the desire for its possession. By contrast, the relevance of possession may also increase. For example, a present received from a relative several years ago may become of incomparable value when a person passes away later on, as the gift suddenly becomes a valuable memento of that relative and of shared experiences with them. The aforementioned examples should indicate that fluctuation over time and temporal periods may impact one's relationship with possessions as well as their value and relevance.

With the category of luxury jewellery, in particular, the product itself, as well as its high-quality manufactured materials, represent longevity. A wedding ring, as an example of a luxury jewellery piece, is aimed to be worn for one's entire life/marriage and should be a static symbol of a love relationship. In this example, no variation in one's relationship to the object is expected. Taking a different example of a necklace a girl received from her aunt for her 18th birthday, it may be of significant value at the time of her birthday, but this perceived value may decrease over time, for instance when she is 35 years old and has received more jewellery as gifts. When she is older, the necklace for her 18th birthday may still be of value, and she may have an emotional relationship with it, but its relationship may have changed over time.

The significance of this finding for this research is that the value of possession can change over time. This may mean, for example, that a luxury jewellery piece that the respondent referred to when answering the questionnaire may have a different value than it had two years ago or that it may have in the future. Detailed findings on this are outside the scope of the existing work but again present an opportunity for further research.

5.4.5 The unique character of desire

In this section, the construct of desire, which was examined in this study in regard to luxury jewellery possession, is discussed again with the results in mind.

Desire itself is unique. In the context of the current study, it was quite possible to define and elaborate on the term based on previous literature, but the uniqueness of the construct also provides challenges. As mentioned previously (see Chapter 2.2.5.1), in the academic field, the term ‘desire’ is at times used interchangeably with ‘wants’ and ‘needs’, neither of which fit the actual definition of desire and thus blur its understanding. This may also indicate that ambiguity exists in consumers’ everyday use of the term.

Furthermore, it is important to mention the perception of desire: The ‘…passionate fixation on a particular object’ that is ‘felt at the bodily level as well as envisioned in mental images’ (Maclaran, 2013, p.284) may vary from person to person. Desire is an individual perception that triggers different feelings and reactions. It has different facets, which can be described individually and thus clarified, but which are difficult to standardize and compare. The findings in the present thesis may even indicate that despite some academic knowledge in the field, desire is still not well understood. This uniqueness of perception and the different facets and intensities people can sense may be one reason why the actual operationalization of the desire for luxury jewellery possession was difficult in the study. This illustrates how challenging it is to capture and compare individual desires and may accordingly be one explanation for the difficulty in predicting desires.

As knowledge about what was found to be applicable is just as important as knowledge of what was inapplicable, the meaning and relevance of certain constructs that could not be investigated further in this thesis are explored in the next section.

5.4.6 The meaning of the excluded constructs

The present research on the desire for possessions found that certain constructs represent influencing factors; it also found that certain constructs could not be tested in the current analysis, resulting in their removal from further analysis in this work. Even though this was unexpected, since underlying assumptions were based on existing theory, this section pays special attention to the excluded constructs, as the researcher assumes their relevance in the context of desiring luxury jewellery given that this is an initial study in the field and their exclusion from future work might well be premature.

Specifically, the constructs of CNFU, possession attachment and symbolic meaning were removed from the SEM analysis. However, there is still an assumption that it is of intellectual value to consider these three constructs with the desire for luxury jewellery possession, as existing literature in the field (as outlined in Chapter 2. Literature Review) indicated a potential relationship in theory. The reasons the excluded constructs are expected to be meaningful are elaborated on next.

First, this thesis expects possession attachment and CNFU to still be relevant in the context of this thesis and proposes their further evaluation in future research. Possession attachment and CNFU are still expected to be defining aspects of the self, as possessions can convey personal feelings, ideas and attitudes. When it comes to desiring possessions, possession attachment and a person's need for uniqueness are expected to impact their desire for possessions in some manner. Furthermore, possession attachment may vary based on the nature of the acquisition. Differentiation between groups, based on the nature of acquisition of their possessed luxury jewellery, might provide further insights into the construct of possession attachment. Though this thesis could not demonstrate it, CNFU is still expected to have some form of relationship to the topic of desiring luxury jewellery possession, as this product category can represent a unique, distinguishing feature.

Second, for the construct of the symbolic meaning of luxury, diverse reasons exist that may indicate a relationship with the desire for luxury jewellery possession, though the present thesis could not demonstrate it. It might be relevant that the importance of the symbolic meaning of luxury varies due to the different natures of acquisition; for example, the symbolic meaning of gifts may be stronger than that of purchases. Moreover, the perceived value of possessions, as discussed earlier, may play a role. If a certain product has a perceived high value, then a high desire for its possession is expected. This is expected to hold for symbolic meaning as well, though it was not confirmed in the present research. Given its operationalization with a lack of an appropriate scale in the present thesis, future research should consider either evaluating an appropriate measurement scale for the context of this thesis or assessing the potential fit of an alternative scale.

To conclude this chapter, the following section provides a summary of the discussion chapter.

5.5 Summary: Discussion

This chapter discussed the results of this work and related them to relevant existing literature within the field of possession and consumer behaviour in its broadest sense. It explored how the desire for luxury jewellery possession is affected by the emotional significance of possessions, possession attachment, self-extension, CNFU, social identity and symbolic meaning, via one's emotional relation to objects, self-improvement and social positioning. Though all aforementioned constructs were expected to have an influence, as was indicated by a detailed literature review, results revealed that self-extension and self-improvement, as well as social identity and social positioning, had the strongest effect on the desire for luxury jewellery possession. This result was in line with previous literature. An unexpected finding was that it was not possible to test possession attachment, CNFU and symbolic meaning, as the results of the prior tests led to the removal of these constructs. In addition, the emotional significance of possessions had an influence on desire for luxury jewellery possession, which however was not significant and thus unexpected.

To summarize the discussion on how the results impact the understanding of the research question, several potential explanations were discussed. First, the aspect of desire in the intertwining of constructs has, on the one hand, advanced the scientific field, as certain constructs could be proven to be true when adapted to the *desire* for luxury jewellery possession instead of only to luxury jewellery possession or the like. On the other hand, it has challenged numerous constructs in that context, which could not be supported or rejected as a result of this thesis. Moreover, the context of luxury jewellery is one characteristic of this thesis that might have led to unexpected results, for example, because there may exist a desire for luxury and a luxurious lifestyle in general, but not necessarily for the product category of luxury jewellery, which further differs substantially from other product categories. A strong relation to the giver instead of to the object, as indicated by the lack of support for or rejection of the symbolic meaning of luxury and possession attachment, might be one possible explanation for why the results of prior tests led to the removal of those constructs. A further indication for the removal of the aforementioned constructs may lie in the manner of obtaining luxury jewellery pieces – via inheritance versus a purchase – while another stream of potential argumentation for the result may lie in the lack of differentiation between the concepts of possession, purchase and ownership, which simply might not hold in reality. Finally, the potential instability of certain measurement constructs due to poor fit in the context of this thesis was discussed.

The discussion of the results at the hypothesis level, the overarching interpretation of the results and the resulting intellectual value of the output from a holistic perspective was followed by an examination of the value of possession and the potential of changing relationships to objects over time, as well as an evaluation of possession in regard to their nature of acquisition, with a detailed consideration of gift-receiving as a dominant incidence in the present thesis. Lastly, the uniqueness of the construct of desire and its resulting potential impact on the existing thesis, as well as the meaning of excluded constructs, were assessed further.

Chapter 6 concludes the present thesis by considering the academic and practical implications, alongside possible limitations. It also proposes suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 6. Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

To answer the primary research question, namely 'What factors influence the desire for luxury jewellery possession?', this final chapter first summarizes the main research findings and highlights the study's academic and practical contributions. Thereafter, the limitations of the study that might temper the generalization of the findings are discussed, and suggestions for future research are proposed. The closing section provides a chapter summary.

6.2 Overview of the main research findings

Following an introduction to the constructs of possession and desire, as well as the luxury jewellery market and the importance of those elements, an extensive literature review was conducted and used as the basis to develop the proposed theoretical framework. An exploratory study followed to examine the proposed framework, and the outcomes provided the basis for subsequent adaptations to determine an initial theoretical model. The framework was then tested empirically and resulted in the final conceptual model. In this section, the research objectives are considered retrospectively and discussed as regards the main research findings.

The research objective of the present thesis was to identify what factors influence the desire for luxury jewellery possession among possessors of luxury jewellery and the extent of their desire, by using SEM. The findings revealed that social identity and social positioning, as well as self-extension and self-improvement, represent key influencing factors on the desire for luxury jewellery possession, evidenced by the significant direct and positive effect detected through the SEM analysis. Self-extension, being the enhancement of one's self beyond the body through the acquisition, possession, or utilization of outside objects (Belk, 1988; Tian et al., 2001), through the construct of self-improvement, is the actual improvement or advancement of this self-concept (Truong & McGoll, 2011), had the strongest influence on the desire for luxury jewellery possession. Social identity, being that the self-concept is derived from knowledge of membership to a social group (Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1979, 1986, as cited in Dommer & Swaminathan, 2012), through the construct of social positioning, meaning the identification of the self in reference groups or society (Wortham, 2004, as cited in Menhard-Warwick, 2007), had the second-strongest influence. Furthermore, the emotional significance of possessions and emotional relation to objects also influence the desire for luxury jewellery possession; however, their influence was not found to be statistically significant. It was also unexpected that possession attachment (via emotional relation to objects), CNFU (via self-improvement) and the symbolic meaning of luxury jewellery (via social positioning) could not be tested in the context of this thesis, as these constructs did not meet the initial testing requirements. As a consequence, no statements can be made about the influence of these constructs, and the associated hypotheses cannot be confirmed or rejected.

6.3 Answering the research question

Based on the research findings, the initially proposed research question can be answered: What factors influence the desire for luxury jewellery possession? The thesis determined that self-extension and self-improvement, as well as social identity and social positioning, positively influence the desire for luxury jewellery possession. For example, someone with a high need to extend and improve the self, and for whom their identity and resulting position in their social environment are relevant, is likely to have a high desire for luxury jewellery possession.

As indicated in the introduction of this chapter (section 6.1), this thesis provides an answer to the research question, which in turn offers the opportunity to elaborate on the study's academic relevance and contribution to existing knowledge in the field.

6.4 Academic contributions

The present study attempts to address multiple gaps in current knowledge, thereby making important contributions to the field. It has made several contributions to research on the constructs of possession and desire, as well as to the field of luxury jewellery concerning these two constructs. Model testing using SEM generated novel insights for this area that are distinct and extend what was previously known about purchase intention at the point of purchase, which is the predominant focus of the extant literature, and the wider area of luxury that is frequently driven by the brand. Each academic contribution is addressed in detail in the following sections.

6.4.1 Contributions to the research area

6.4.1.1 Holistic approach.

First, the study extends existing research on the understanding of one's emotional relationship to objects, self-improvement, and social positioning, and on the limited knowledge of its impact on the desire for luxury jewellery possession in Germany from a holistic perspective. To the best of the author's knowledge and based on searches in peer-reviewed databases, this study is one of the first to consider the desire for luxury jewellery possession as a construct itself and the aforementioned constructs as important antecedents to it. Considering the conceptual framework and the debate in the field around luxury consumption, findings to date remained fragmented and tend to consider certain influencing factors in isolation (see, e.g., Truong & McGoll, 2011) or potential influencing factors in full, but within a very general and unspecific scope (e.g., Khaniwale, 2015). In this research, the conceptual framework around the desire for possession in the context of luxury jewellery was established, and a new model was proposed, out of which valid hypotheses resulted, adding a further holistic perspective of this context to the academic field.

6.4.1.2 Novel context.

Second, existing research on desire, possession, and the luxury market has primarily focused on contexts other than luxury jewellery. This is one of the first studies to assess relevant constructs and their impact on the desire for possession in the German luxury jewellery industry. The present thesis provides a significant contribution to the body of knowledge, as it generates the first insights into the specific context of the desire for luxury jewellery possession among people living in Germany and makes them available to the academic field and other researchers. The present findings can be applied to non-German contexts in European and American countries with similar economic, cultural and social structures, which is a relevant contribution. The uniqueness of the issue and context, the lack of research around these aspects, and their novelty support the academic contributions of this thesis. As this work provides a first step to producing academic insights into the desire for luxury jewellery possession, both its literature review and findings contribute to the academic field.

6.4.1.3 Consideration of possession and desire in one coherent construct.

The *third* contribution of the present thesis is the novel consideration of the constructs ‘desire’ and ‘possession’ examined as one single construct, which, to the best of the researcher’s knowledge, has not been addressed in prior work. The current research treats the desire for luxury jewellery possession as a coherent construct, which itself is unique since most prior research has explored either desire *or* possession. Furthermore, little research extends beyond the point of purchase, for example to possession and particularly people’s attitudes towards objects that are already owned. Research into the desire for that possession, namely a person's strong feeling of wanting to have something, which may exist even if a product is never purchased or consumed, is also scarce. The incorporation of the dimension of desire into possession is an advancement in the field. Simply put, initial but not yet all-encompassing evidence of 'beyond-purchase relationships' exists in current discussions in the existing literature that is advanced by the contribution of the present study.

6.4.1.4 Possession extending beyond ownership.

Fourth, an additional aspect evolves from the results of the present thesis, namely the consideration of the construct of possession as distinct from ownership. Both these constructs are part of discussions in the present literature, but the distinction between the act of possession and that of ownership is not always clear, and they might be perceived colloquially. The act of possession extends actual ownership in that it is 'more psychologically salient and ha[s] a stronger effect on feelings of ownership of an object' (Pierce et al., 2003; Rudmin & Berry, 1987, as cited in Reb & Conolly, 2007, p.108), which is exactly what this thesis sought to explore. By extending knowledge of the ownership of luxury jewellery, this thesis contributes to academic knowledge in sociology and psychology around consumer behaviour, desire and possession as a beyond-purchase relationship to objects in that it concentrates on the luxury jewellery possessions that are desired by possessors, which is not always the case with luxury jewellery objects that are simply owned.

6.4.1.5 Identification of two influencing factors on the dependent variable.

Fifth, even though there was high complexity regarding the dependent variable, namely its consideration beyond the point of purchase, beyond mundane products and beyond easily identifiable luxury products categorized by branding, two strong influencing factors were identified and are novel to the research area. Even though there seems to be no obvious functional reason for possessing luxury jewellery, as the jewellery itself has no functional value that could not be provided by a comparable mundane object, the identification of self-extension and social identity as influencing factors explains the as-yet unclear desire for its possession.

6.4.1.6 Exclusion of the 'brand' factor.

Sixth, although several discussions about luxury consumption exist in the literature to date, for example regarding potential influencing factors on luxury consumption and shopping (Husic & Cicic, 2009) or consumers' motivation to purchase luxury brands and their luxury value perceptions (Wiedmann et al., 2009), research on the desire for luxury jewellery possession without it relating to the brand has been limited. In current work that addresses the field of luxury, the aspect of a brand is frequently referred to in this context. For example, Amarall and Loken (2016) examine genuine luxury brands versus their counterfeits, and Aggarwall (2004) assesses branding and brand-based differentiation, while Shao et al. (2019) have shared recent findings on the visibility of branding in luxury consumption. All of these authors consider the aspect of branding to be a relevant factor. Elaborating on relevant influencing factors other than the brand is an important contribution.

6.4.1.7 Advancement of thinking through additional aspects.

Seventh, knowledge of the influencing factors for desiring luxury jewellery possession that the researcher did not consider before changed the researcher's thinking in that surrounding conditions were further explored. Namely, the value of possessions may

- change in time
- may be different from person to person
- may be influenced by changing relationships with the object over time
- may differ due to the diverse natures of acquisition

That said, the desire for possessing luxury jewellery may change because of that. A further aspect may be gift-receiving, which represents an under-researched construct that is related to desiring gift possessions.

In summary, the novel contribution of self-extension and social identity; its impact on the desire for luxury jewellery possession; and the evaluation of the nature of acquisition, the value of possessions and the changing relationships to objects over time in the context of the desire for luxury jewellery possession can be considered as the first step towards a better understanding of consumers' desire for luxury jewellery possession due to emotional, self- and social influencing factors. Not only were relationships between constructs assessed, but this was also done in a new context. The researcher hopes that further research around this topic will extend the initial ideas set out here.

6.4.2 Novelty of the methodological approach in this domain

Next to the above-mentioned contributions to the research area, the present thesis contributes to the methodology in several ways.

First, in the present thesis, the previously established method of quantitative analysis using SEM was applied in a different space, which is novel in itself. Aside from the limited availability of scientific knowledge in the specific context of desiring luxury jewellery possession, the statistical approach of SEM was barely used in the academic field of luxury jewellery until 2016, when the present research was initiated, and only since then has it been used more frequently, for example by Pencarelli et al. (2020), Sharda and Bhat (2019) and Gautam and Sharma (2017). Until the initiation of the present thesis, the most common methods for data analysis in the area of luxury consumption, desire and possession were in-depth qualitative interviews (as used by Wiedmann et al., 2009; Chen, 2009), experiments (as used by Aggarwall, 2004; Shao et al., 2019, or Amaral & Loken, 2016) and interpretive paradigms (as used by Khaniwale, 2015).

Second, the present research further contributes to methodology in the field by identifying the potential of already established scales within the context of desire for possession and consumers' relationship to luxury jewellery objects. Before going into detail, it is relevant to mention that all findings, irrespective of whether they confirm or fail to confirm the applicability of a certain scale to the present context, are relevant contributors to the existing body of knowledge because even identified problems provide insights that are worth knowing. Certain scales work well when applied to this novel context, while the application of others was ineffective. Specifically, the applicability of the measurement scales for ‘emotional significance of possessions’, ‘self-extension’ and ‘social identity’ was possible, while the scale for ‘symbolic meaning of luxury’ did not apply to the context, as it failed to meet the necessary markers for discriminant validity. Future research is needed to establish a scale for this construct in the context of the desire for luxury jewellery possession. As a result of the PCA, the scales for the constructs of CNFU and symbolic meaning of luxury were deemed inapplicable due to the construct of and inappropriateness of the measurement scale for ‘self-extension’. Future research is required to verify and/or adapt the scales for the context at hand. Regarding the measurement scale for the dependent variable of desiring luxury jewellery possession, the proposed measurement scale in this thesis needs further verification, as it was used for the first time in this combination within this research.

Third, a relevant contribution of the present thesis concerns the identification of latent constructs. Through this study, it was possible to measure the latent constructs by pre-defined independent constructs.

Fourth, a further contribution is the study’s relatively large sample size of n = 547 in this specific field. Identifying possessors of luxury jewellery, eliciting their participation by filling out a questionnaire and, thereby, getting them to share their views and motivators constitute key input to the existing field.

6.4.3 Summary of theoretical implications

This research is important to society in that it supports the development of the academic literature for the specific subject area, upon which other authors can build. The integrated approach, which considers the newly defined and coherent construct of desire for luxury jewellery possession concerning six independent constructs, is an advancement in the field. It reveals new insights that have not previously been identified and are hence a cornerstone of and groundwork for future research in the field. It can inform the public debate on the desire for possession and the luxury jewellery field.

Following the presentation of this thesis' contributions to the research context and society as well as to the methodological field, the next section assesses the managerial implications of this work.

6.5 Managerial implications

Taking the theoretical contributions of the present thesis into account and translating them into implications for practice, the present thesis generates several practical contributions for the luxury jewellery industry concerning the main influencing factors as identified in the elaborated model.

6.5.1 Practical implications of the study

From a commercial perspective, when the goal is to increase the desire for luxury jewellery possession, self-extension and social identity are the two major influencing factors that should be considered, assuming that luxury jewellery is obtained through purchase (for oneself or as a gift). This could be done, for example, by clearly emphasizing the possibility of self-extension through a certain product and the positive influence on social identity by possessing a certain product and clarifying this in all product and brand communications.

6.5.2 Benefits to the industry and to organizations

The success of a company is usually measured by its profitability. As mentioned previously, understanding why people desire luxury jewellery and what factors do or do not influence this desire is of considerable importance for the industry. This understanding can enable organizations to formulate strategies to foster more accurate and targeted actions and communication towards not only existing and possible future customers who purchase luxury jewellery for themselves, but also those who purchase it as a gift for others. These strategies would keep customers engaged and interested in luxury jewellery. The impact of positive relationships would lead to improved performance and numerous benefits to the organizations: tangibly through an increase in revenue and profitability, and intangibly in the form of a positive image and referral value. For organizations, specifically the sellers of the product (instead of the manufacturers), it is relevant to distinguish between target groups based on their goals. People who purchase luxury jewellery for themselves are likely to desire it for different reasons than those who purchase it as a gift for others; therefore, communication with each group should be considered with care to maximize the benefit. A successful, personalized customer approach is expected to result in affection and desirability for the specific product, which may ultimately lead to a purchase and generate sales for the organization. Successful implementation of the results of the present study in the organization's product communication will ideally lead to an increase in total sales for certain luxury retailers and thus to the overall growth of the luxury jewellery industry in general.

According to the findings of the present thesis, self-extension and self-improvement were found to have a significant, direct and positive influence on the desire for luxury jewellery possession; being the strongest influencing factor in this thesis. People with a high level of self-extension use possessions to extend and thus improve their sense of self, which in turn impacts their desire to possess luxury jewellery. Accordingly, the luxury jewellery industry should focus on this specific need in their commercialization and marketing communication when addressing customers by conveying that the offered luxury jewellery can, when possessed, enable one to extend the self.

Furthermore, regarding the second finding of the present thesis, social identity and social positioning were found to have a significant, direct and positive influence on the desire for luxury jewellery possession – it is the second strongest influence within this thesis. Specifically, this means that people who derive their identity in part from social groups or their social surroundings and who strive for some sort of positioning in this social group experience desire for luxury jewellery possessions. The luxury jewellery industry could benefit when making use of this knowledge. Two suggestions can be made in this regard: One possible action that is proposed by this study, which is already seen in reality through the coverage of high fashion, is to address and actively involve celebrities and influencers, who are known to have a social positioning to which others aspire and who display a desirable identity to others. Expanding on this thought, the second suggestion made in this study concerns the content that is delivered and communicated by celebrities and influencers. First, they should embody a desirable social positioning and refer to it in the messages conveyed in the promotional content. Second, the message conveyed should highlight the product's ability to extend one's identity and sense of self. Messaging as well as a holistic approach to the promotion can do this. The consideration of these content-specific suggestions can increase the impact of influence and will support organizations in increasing consumers' desire for luxury jewellery possession. Attractive people with a desirable appearance are often used for product communication, while the added value of the existing study recommends a clearer control of the context of communication to promote self-extension and social identity.

In further findings of the present thesis, the emotional significance of possessions and one's emotional relation to objects were found to influence the desire for luxury jewellery possession, though this relationship is not significant. In other words, there are indications that people for whom possessions have emotional significance and who perceive an emotional relation to objects tend to have a higher desire for luxury jewellery possession. Since the relationship is not significant, the luxury jewellery industry should not concentrate on this aspect, but it should not disregard it either. Rather, the industry should keep this aspect in mind for any commercial marketing communication activities. One option would be to address and emphasize the customers' assumed emotional setting by proactively addressing certain emotional needs that are likely to arise regarding the product category of luxury jewellery or its possession.

The following section presents the limitations of the present thesis and provides suggestions for future research directions.

6.6 Research limitations and suggestions for future research

Although this thesis advances knowledge regarding the desire for luxury jewellery possession amongst luxury jewellery possessors living in Germany, and despite the relevant academic and managerial contributions highlighted in the previous sections, this section acknowledges and discusses several limiting conditions of the present thesis that aim to provide a transparent overview to the reader, while it also highlights several reference points for potential future research that were outside the scope of this thesis. By doing so, the existing thesis is the cornerstone of and stimulus for further research in the field of desiring luxury jewellery possession that can stimulate the expansion of knowledge around this topic.

The first sub-section describes limitations and future research suggestions for the context and the model construct, the research design, the sample and the data collection.

6.6.1 Limitations and future research recommendations regarding context and model construct

Starting with the context of the present thesis, the finite scope of this study limits its generalizability. The empirical results obtained must be considered in the context of the particular product category of luxury jewellery, where findings may not apply to other luxury product categories or any other consumer categories at all. Based on the study's context and the specific product category selected, future research is needed to extend the findings to various product categories within the luxury industry (e.g., luxury cars or luxury fashion) and beyond it (e.g., retail). In doing so, researchers could determine whether the results of this thesis can be transferred and applied to other product categories as well.

A further limitation of the present thesis concerns the outcome variable desire for luxury jewellery possession. No pre-assessed and established measurement scale was available in the present literature to measure the construct of desire for luxury jewellery possession, resulting in this dependent variable being measured by scales with the best possible fit. The lack of a pre-established scale is a limiting condition. Given this, future research should be undertaken to assess what has been established here and to further assess the validity and reliability of what has been proposed in this research.

A further limitation is the robustness of the scale, which measures the dependent variable with comparatively few items. Regarding the applied operationalization of this construct, one of the proposed items for the scale of desiring luxury jewellery possession contained the formulation 'maintain/improve'. Though the present thesis aimed to adhere to the original scales as much as possible, this double meaning might have limited the outcome for this specific item response. Future research may be conducted to split up this item into two separate items and re-assess accordingly.

Another aspect regarding the outcome variable desire for luxury jewellery possession is its difficulty to isolate certain effects within this construct. The construct is well defined in theory; however, it might have been difficult to develop a research framework in which people could spontaneously and automatically distinguish and isolate effects within this construct from similar phenomena in practice. For example, in practice, it might have been difficult for respondents to differentiate between the desire to possess something versus purchase intention, between desiring and wanting something, or between the desire to possess and classic ownership. The difficulty of isolating the effects of purchase intention versus the desire to possess versus classic ownership or distinguishing between desiring or wanting something could also be counteracted in future research by identifying a robust measurement scale for use in a re-investigation. If a well-established scale for the construct is identified, future research should be conducted, and the present study should be replicated with consideration of this identified scale for the dependent variable.

The same holds for the construct of possession in general. The degree of consumer knowledge regarding the meaning of possession is expected to be relatively low without the provision of a clear prior explanation; hence, its differentiation from content-related constructs such as ownership or obsession is challenging and can lead to misunderstandings. Although the term ‘possession’ was clearly defined in this thesis and explicitly presented in the questionnaire itself, issues with the construct of possession attachment were detected in this thesis and are discussed in this and the following section. There is a possibility that due to a lack of collective understanding, it was not clearly understood by the respondents. Specifically, it could be that even though clear distinctions were made in theory between possessing, purchasing and owning, people might not automatically differentiate between these constructs in reality. It might be the case that for some respondents, the term ‘possession’ is understood synonymously with ‘ownership’ (in an everyday sense). Thus, some people might understand the term possession as an ordinary product that one owns, but which has no special meaning and value, thus different from how it is defined in this thesis. The terminology itself, especially in the German language in which the survey was conducted, where there are no different vocabularies for the meanings of ownership and possession, could, therefore, be a reason for ambiguity about the colloquial understanding of possession, impacting the non-significant relationship. Thus, though the term ‘possession’ was explained at the beginning of the questionnaire, a lack of clarity concerning the concept of possession in the participants’ understandings (as well as in the literature to a degree) could be one reason for the absence of significant results in this study. In an ordinary understanding of possessions, people possess both what they buy and what they get. This lack of clarity could have led to the possession attachment scale showing poor discriminant validity, simply because it contained the term ‘possession’. Future research may be conducted which provides an even more explicit definition of this term.

A further aspect to mention is the absence of a relationship between the variables of possession attachment and emotional relation to objects, as was proposed by this thesis. This absence of a relationship between the two variables may be due to the context applied or to the present dataset, as is only evident in the present work. Hence, there is the need to re-test with different datasets and potentially also against data developed in relation to different contexts. Another possible explanation for this result might lie in respondents not properly understanding the items of the possession attachment scale in the context of luxury jewellery. What respondents define as ‘attachment’ could exceed their feelings for luxury jewellery as a product, and their perceived attachments could be related to other surrounding circumstances, events or persons instead of to the products themselves. In this sense, jewellery potentially mediates the attachment relationship or acts as a marker for it – and the attachment is related to the object.

Irrespective of the fit of the results of this research with those in prior work, a further possible explanation may lie in the measurement scale of emotional significance by Ball and Tasaki (1992). The scale itself contains three items in total, is well established and has been previously used in the area of consumer behaviour, and its length is appropriate for use in SEM. Initially, the scale was deployed in the context of cars; for this thesis, the items were adapted, and the term ‘car’ was replaced by ‘luxury jewellery’. Though the scale consists of clearly formulated and well-understood items, perhaps the phrasing of the items reflects the potentially less meaningful or personal relationship that might be evident between consumers and their vehicles. The initial product category of cars might be so different that the scale does not hold for a distinct product class, for example, because cars contain characteristics of functionality and are enablers of mobility. Although a potential misfit of the measurement scale might thus exist given the varied nature of the product categories, there is evidence that the non-significant results derive from the nature of the measurement scale.

Furthermore, regarding the symbolic meaning of luxury and the inability to test this in the present thesis, this could possibly have been caused by issues in Hayes’s (2005) original scale. First, the original scale included 31 items, only 13 of which were applied in this thesis. On the one hand, the scale might only work when used in its entirety; on the other hand, 13 items for only one construct is a large number, and potentially too many, for an SEM analysis. Second, the original scale applied to the context of pay was originally split into four areas (motivation, relative position, control and spending). It seems possible that the application and adjustment to the context of luxury jewellery do not work, or one or more of the specific areas might not work for this context, which could explain the result.

Next, with regard to the construct of self-extension, though the present thesis indicated a positive relationship between self-extension, self-improvement and the desire for luxury jewelry possession, further research could consider the direction of the relationship between self and possessions in different contexts, as Belk (1088) as well as Truong and McGoll (2011) indicated an influence to exist from possession on the self. It would be worthwhile to further investigate the relative performance of the various measurement scales per independent construct, as used in this thesis, in future research, with a specific focus on their fit in the context of the desire for luxury jewellery possession, as such an investigation may enable the assessment of those three constructs in the future. One potential suggestion for its future evaluation is to measure the proposed model without the construct of self-extension because the PCA indicated that the three constructs of self-extension, possession attachment and CNFU are related.

With regard to potential constraints from the model construct for this thesis, only a limited number of potential influencing factors on the dependent construct could be assessed, which led the researcher to focus on central aspects of interest. Various other concepts were recognized and considered within this thesis without subsequent analysis, following a broader approach by including even more variables in the analysis may have been helpful.

The next section will assess limitations and future research recommendations with regard to research design and analysis.

6.6.2 Limitations and future research recommendations regarding research design and analysis

Regarding limiting conditions that arose from the research design, the present thesis only quantitatively explored the topic under research. While a quantitative study enables generalizability to a broader population, it misses qualitative insights and detailed, individual and underlying reasons and background knowledge into respondents' personal situations. In terms of the research methodology, following the quantitative analysis in this study, the next logical step is to conduct a qualitative assessment of the present structural model. If the researcher could contact the respondents directly and have them, for example, present their luxury jewellery to the researcher, further valuable insights could be gained around the desire for luxury jewellery possession and how it is influenced. Regarding methodology, to overcome the potential social desirability bias, potential future research could examine this work through a different method, such as observations, while acknowledging that this method comes with its own limitations and biases. Observations could, for example, take place at the point of purchase in luxury jewellery stores and would be a potential approach for future research.

Furthermore, the closed-ended questionnaire only allowed for the selection of one out of certain pre-specified answer options, with no direct option to answer open-endedly if desired. This reduced the free space to answer. Future research could enable more open-ended questions to gain more detailed insights from the respondents.

Moreover, the original measurement scales are in the English language, while the survey was distributed in Germany and therefore translated into the German language. By ensuring translation as well as back-translation by independent bilingual native speakers, the potential for errors was reduced to a minimum. This translation, though conducted with care, might still have led to a lack of semantic equivalence across languages, which might represent a limiting condition (Behling & Law, 2000). Future research could be conducted in an English-speaking environment using the original English survey to evaluate a potential impact or differences emerging due to scale translation.

Furthermore, in the present thesis, each questionnaire could be completed at a freely chosen place and time, which enabled freedom and a comfortable environment for the respondent. Despite this procedure's advantages, a free place and time of completion also have its downside. Because every respondent could complete the questionnaire in a different environment, those diverse environments might have had an impact on the respondents' answer behaviour.

Moreover, anonymity and confidentiality allowed for honest answering, thus not limiting research reliability, but if the researcher had contacted the respondents personally, there might have been higher social desirability in response behaviours. Though this comes with downsides as well, it would display a potential route for future research in this area.

A potential constraint resulting from the method of analysis, namely SEM, is that the measurement model as well as the structural model initially indicated poor model fit, followed by the correlation of certain error terms as indicated by high MIs. On the one hand, this poor model fit may be perceived as an indication of an implausible model, and model modification is not recommended. On the other hand, poor model fit indicates specification errors in the model and suggests a simple discrepancy between what is theoretically hypothesized and the reality in the population, for whom the correlation of error terms (if plausible) is common practice (Witthaker, 2012). The present thesis considers those model modifications as necessary and in no case to be understood as a poor model. A possible reason why adaptations of the model were necessary is, for example, that some of the underlying theories were not suitable for the context of the present work. Another reason could be the equivalence in structural equation models, where the largest effect is dominant and decisive. An alternative analysis methodology could be a potential future research direction.

Limiting conditions and areas for future research that arose from the sample and data collection are elaborated upon next.

6.6.3 Limitations and future research recommendations regarding sample and data collection

The cultural context is a further limitation regarding the sample that stems from the finite scope of the thesis. The study was conducted in Germany, and only a few research participants had a slightly different, but mostly still western cultural background (Dutch, Austrian, Swiss, or British), which is similar to the German culture. Even though Husic and Cicic (2008) identified that luxury jewellery consumers behave similarly around the world, in Europe and specifically Germany the desire for luxury jewellery possession may be perceived differently depending on the region and culture (e.g., America, Asia and Africa) and/or regions with less awareness of luxury jewellery as generated by promotion or in cultures where people attribute less importance to luxury jewellery. This limitation of focusing on Germany potentially represents a limitation regarding the generalizability of the results. Although generalizability of the study results to a population outside of Germany is possible according to Husic and Cicic (2008), it would be interesting to conduct follow-up studies that test the model in countries other than Germany to draw further conclusions and to strengthen or weaken Husic and Cicic's assumptions of generalizability.

Two further limitations arose from the study sample. First, regarding sample size, although n = 547 was a sufficiently large sample size to derive meaningful results for the specific research context, an even larger sample size of n = 840 (56 items*15) or 1,120 (56 items*20) may have strengthened further insights, as suggested by Osborne and Costello (2004). Second, the gender distribution of the sample was overrepresented by women (76.1%), while approximately one-quarter of the sample was comprised of men (23.6%). One rationale for this might be that women are more likely to possess luxury jewellery than men and thus are also expected to have a higher desire to do so. The results obtained could thus be generalized to the female rather than the male population. Given this relative overrepresentation of women in the existing sample, an interesting avenue for future research would be to replicate this study with a significant sample size of males and identify potential similarities and differences between these two gender groups.

Another aspect is that most of the sample had a professional educational background and were occupied with some form of employment. It can thus be deduced that financial strength for purchasing luxury jewellery is present for most of the sample. Considering the relatively high proportion of well-educated/employed respondents in the study sample, further research should be conducted to reveal whether the results of the present model also apply to people with lower educational backgrounds, people with lower incomes and a higher proportion of non-working people. In other words, research should investigate whether their desire for luxury jewellery possession is equally high and influenced by the same constructs as those in the present thesis. Thus, further insights into the queried demographics, and more concretely the financial situation of the individual, might be instructive. Knowing whether a respondent has a job is valuable, but knowing how high their income, financial strength, liquidity or willingness to pay is, could provide deep insights into their potential desire for luxury jewellery possession, as this desire may also be correlated with the probability of possessing a certain kind of product someday. Thus, an assessment of the present research with the inclusion of those additional demographic questions could be an avenue for future research.

Despite the above-mentioned limitations, the present thesis advances the understanding and provides a variety of avenues for future research areas resulting from the limitations. The next section provides an overview of additional future research recommendations that emerged beyond the limitations.

6.7 Additional future research recommendations

Starting with the aspect *value of possessions*, this thesis emphasized that the value of possessions is subjective, can change over time for the individual or may be different for different people. It can also be co-created by surrounding conditions such as the birth of a child, the death of a relative, the memory of a beautiful moment or the relocation to a new country, to name a few examples (Van den Hoven et al., 2021). Future research may dive deeper into these complex characteristics and facets of the desire for possessions. The findings may provide further relevant knowledge around the complexity of this construct and determine its impact on desiring luxury jewellery possession through measurement.

In the previous sections, the relevance of changing relationships to luxury jewellery possessions (e.g., due to interpersonal relationships) was already assessed. In potential future research, it would be interesting to assess those changing relationships more closely and identify what factors influence the change for the individual and, if so, how these changing relationships impact the desire for possessions.

The nature of the acquisition of possessions represents another potential future research area. Though varying means of the acquisition were collected and assessed in the present thesis, no detailed analysis was conducted based on those sources of obtainment. Consumers' desire for products that are purchased, inherited or received as a gift may vary greatly. As these means of acquisition are diverse, generalization without differentiation between these groups comes with a certain level of complexity. Concrete statements per group could be made upon a closer evaluation of the various ways of obtaining possessions, which is why further research in this area is useful.

Though consciously excluded from the present thesis, further studies could also focus on the influence of the aspect of the brand and branding on the desire for luxury jewellery possession. The factor of the brand has been frequently evaluated in the existing literature to date and specifically when it comes to fashion and retail. Therefore, future research could either focus on the desire for luxury possession in another product category considering the aspect of the brand or focus on the desire for luxury jewellery possession concerning pieces that enable the display of branding to glean relevant insights.

Moreover, based on the findings of the present study, it remains unclear whether possession attachment, CNFU and the symbolic meaning of luxury drive the desire for luxury jewellery possession. According to the researcher, these factors remain relevant aspects for further evaluation. Thus, future research could investigate the influence of those three constructs on the desire for luxury jewellery possession.

Furthermore, this thesis made no comparison between possessors and non-possessors of luxury jewellery. This could, however, be an interesting aspect to evaluate. Specifically, it would be interesting to determine whether the influencing factors proposed in this study also hold for non-possessors and to draw a comparison between those two groups of possessors versus non-possessors of luxury jewellery.

Due to the avenues for future research as became evident from the limitations, but also beyond that, this thesis provides a significant contribution to the body of scientific literature. It does so through the relevant findings regarding the desire for luxury jewellery possession and by determining the two key influencing factors: self-extension and social identity. The next and final section summarizes the present thesis.

6.8 Summary

This thesis examined the concept of desiring luxury jewellery, while previous works have disregarded the facet of desire concerning to possessions. Prior work has considered specific factors in isolation and mostly also without a clear focus on luxury jewellery. By contrast, this thesis adopted a holistic approach when analysing whether and, if so, to what extent the desire for luxury jewellery is influenced by the emotional significance of possessions, possession attachment, self-extension, CNFU, social identity and the symbolic meaning of luxury, which scientific literature has found to be relevant influencing factors. Despite the prevalence of knowledge regarding possessions and desire, each in isolation, as well as knowledge about each of the presented factors, the desire for possession has not been studied before in the context of luxury jewellery, further emphasizing the contribution of this thesis to theoretical conceptualization.

The key findings revealed that self-extension and social identity are the main influencing factors on the desire for luxury jewellery possession, while the emotional significance of possessions has a positive, albeit not significant, influence. Furthermore, the existing study highlights the distinctive nature of luxury jewellery and finds that the value of possession and its nature of acquisition have a complex influence on the desire for luxury jewellery possession. The facets of these factors should be further investigated concerning the desire for luxury jewellery possession. Furthermore, this study considered the changing value of possessions over time and amongst different groups of people, which also considerably influences the desire for luxury jewellery possessions. Moreover, the present thesis sheds light on the aspect of gift-receiving, which differs from gift-giving and has received rather limited attention in the scientific field to date, despite playing a significant role when it comes to desiring possessions. Finally, the unique character of desire and the complexity of capturing it is highlighted, though the desire was well defined in the literature. These insights add an academic contribution to the field alongside the identified influencing factors on the desire for luxury jewellery possession.

The findings have several implications for organizations and the luxury jewellery industry itself. The findings encourage the luxury jewellery industry and its organizations to implement strategies for positive customer involvement, and they contribute to raising the awareness of existing and potential future customers about their own perceptions and motivators for certain desires.

From this study, it can be deduced that luxury jewellery retailers should aim to satisfy consumers' needs for self-extension and social identity when approaching potential possessors of luxury jewellery, as this satisfaction can increase the desire for luxury jewellery possession and, in turn, increase the sales volume of luxury jewellery.

The present thesis broadens previous understanding of the concept of desiring luxury jewellery possession; contributes to the understanding of its major influencing factors; and offers insights into the value of possession, the nature of acquisition and the complexity of the construct of desire. It thus not only makes an academic contribution in that it generates insights into the specific context of desiring luxury jewellery but also contributes to the body of knowledge for the luxury jewellery industry.

Further studies could engage in the context of (varying) value in possessions and the nature of acquisitions with special consideration of gift-receiving to add to the quality of findings. A further elaboration on excluded factors could add to the body of knowledge and ultimately provide practical implications for organizations in the realm of luxury jewellery.

References

Aaker, D. A., & Keller, K. L. (1990). Consumer evaluations of brand extensions. *Journal of marketing*, *54*(1), 27-41.

Aggarwal, P. (2004). The effects of brand relationship norms on consumer attitudes and behavior. *Journal of consumer research*, *31*(1), 87-101.

Aggarwal, P., & Law, S. (2005). Role of relationship norms in processing brand information. *Journal of consumer research*, *32*(3), 453-464.

Ahuvia, A. (2005) ,Beyond the extended self: Loved objects and consumers' identity narratives', Journal of Consumer Research, 32(June): 171-184.

Aikhenvald, A. Y. (2013). Possession and ownership: A cross-linguistic perspective. *Possession and ownership: A cross-linguistic typology*, 1-64.

Ajzen, I. (1985) From intentions to actions: a theory of planned behavior. In: Kuhl, J. and Beckmann, J. (eds), Action control: From cognition to behaviour. Heidelberg, Springer, pp.22-39.

Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behavior. Organizational behavior and human decision processes, 50(2), 179-211.

Akhmedova, A., Manresa, A., Escobar Rivera, D., & Bikfalvi, A. (2021). Service quality in the sharing economy: A review and research agenda. International Journal of Consumer Studies, 45(4), 889-910.

Allport, G. W. (1937). Personality: A psychological interpretation.

Allport, G. W., Clark, K., & Pettigrew, T. (1954). The nature of prejudice.

Alvesson, M., & Skoldberg, K. (2009). positivism, social constructionism, critical realism: Three reference points in the philosophy of science. *Reflexive methodology: New vistas for qualitative research*, 15-52.

Amaldoss, W., & Jain, S. (2005). Pricing of conspicuous goods: A competitive analysis of social effects. *Journal of Marketing Research*, *42*(1), 30-42.

Amaral, N. B., & Loken, B. (2016). Viewing usage of counterfeit luxury goods: Social identity and social hierarchy effects on dilution and enhancement of genuine luxury brands. Journal of Consumer Psychology, 26(4), 483-495.

Andreini, D., Bettinelli, C. (2017). Business model innovation: from systematic literature review to future research directions. *Journal of Management & Governance*, *21*(3), 785-792.

Andrews, M. C., & Kacmar, K. M. (2001). Impression management by association: Construction and validation of a scale. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *58*(1), 142-161.

Atwal, G., & Bryson, D. (2018). Global luxury: Organizational change and emerging markets since the 1970s. *Business History Review*, *92*(3), 582-584.

Atwal, G., & Williams, A. (2009). Luxury brand marketing – the experience is everything!. In *Journal of Brand Management, 16, 338-346.*

Austria, E., Peralta, A. G., & Dacara, B. C. (2022). Analyzing consumer behavior towards luxury jewelry brands. *Journal of Business and Management Studies*, *4*(1), 76-90.

Avison, E., & Fitzgerald, D (1995), Information systems development: Methodologies, techniques and tools. Europe: McGraw Hill.

Babakus, E., & Mangold, W. G. (1992). Adapting the SERVQUAL scale to hospital services: an empirical investigation. *Health services research*, *26*(6), 767.

Bagwell, L. S., & Bernheim, B. D. (1996). Veblen effects in a theory of conspicuous consumption. *The American Economic Review*, 349-373.

Ball, A., & Tasaki, L. H. (1992). The role and measurement of attachment in consumer behavior. *Journal of consumer psychology*, *1*(2), 155-172.

Bauer, M., von Wallpach, S., & Hemetsberger, A. (2011). ‘My little luxury’: A consumer-centred, experiential view. *Marketing Journal of Research and Management*, *1*(11), 57-67.

Bardhi, F., Eckhardt, G. M., & Arnould, E. J. (2012). Liquid relationship to possessions. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *39*(3), 510-529.

Beaglehole, E. (1932). *Property: A study in social psychology*. Psychology Press.

Bearden, W. O., & Netemeyer, R. G. (1999). Handbook of marketing scales: Multi-item measures for marketing and consumer behavior research. *Sage publications*.

Bearden, W. O., Netemeyer, R. G., & Mobley, M. F. (1993). Multi-item measures for marketing and consumer behaviour research. *Handbook of Marketing Scales. Sage, New York*.

Bearden, W. O., Netemeyer, R. G., & Teel, J. E. (1989). Measurement of consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence. *Journal of consumer research*, *15*(4), 473-481.

Behling, O., & Law, K. S. (2000). Translating questionnaires and other research instruments: Problems and solutions *(Vol. 133). Sage.*

Belk, R. W. (1984). Three scales to measure constructs related to materialism: Reliability, validity, and relationships to measures of happiness. *ACR North American Advances*.

Belk, R. W. (1985). Materialism: Trait aspects of living in the material world. *Journal of Consumer research*, *12*(3), 265-280.

Belk, R. W. (1988). Possessions and the extended self. *Journal of consumer research*, *15*(2), 139-168.

Belk, R. W. (1989). Extended self and extending paradigmatic perspective. *Journal of consumer research*, *16*(1), 129-132.

Belk, R. W. (1991). Possessions and the sense of past. *ACR Special Volumes*.

Belk, R. W. (1992). Attachment to possessions. In place attachment (pp.37-62). *Springer, Boston, MA.*

Belk, R. W., & Coon, G. S. (1993). Gift giving as agapic love: An alternative to the exchange paradigm based on dating experiences. Journal of consumer research, 20(3), 393-417.

Belk, R. W., Ger, G., & Askegaard, S. (2003). The fire of desire: A multisited inquiry into consumer passion. *Journal of consumer research*, *30*(3), 326-351.

Belk, R., Jansson-Boyd, M. J., & Zawisza, C. (2017). The self in consumption. In *Routledge International Handbook of Consumer Psychology* (pp.167-184). Routledge.

Bell, E., & Bryman, A. (2007). The ethics of management research: an exploratory content analysis. *British journal of management*, *18*(1), 63-77.

Berger, J., & Heath, C. (2007). Where consumers diverge from others: Identity signaling and product domains. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *34*(2), 121-134.

Berking, H. (1999). *Sociology of giving.* Sage.

Bettman, J. R. (1970). Information processing models of consumer behavior. *Journal of Marketing Research*, *7*(3), 370-376.

Bian, Q., & Forsythe, S. (2012). Purchase intention for luxury brands: A cross cultural comparison. *Journal of Business Research*, *65*(10), 1443-*1451.*

Bian, X., & Moutinho, L. (2009). An investigation of determinants of counterfeit purchase consideration. *Journal of business research,* 62(3), 368-378.

Bian, X., & Veloutsou, C. (2017). Consumers' attitudes regarding non-deceptive counterfeit brands in the UK and China. In *Advances in Chinese brand management* (pp.331-350). Palgrave Macmillan, London.

Bih, H.-D. (1992). The meaning of objects in environmental transitions: Experiences of Chinese students in the United States. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, *12*(2), 135-147.

Blackledge, A., & Pavlenko, A. (2001). Negotiation of identities in multilingual contexts.

Bollen, K. A., & Hoyle, R. H. (1990). Perceived cohesion: A conceptual and empirical examination. *Social forces*, *69*(2), 479-504.

Bothra, N. (2013). Luxury, luxury brand and luxury market in India: From class consumers to closet consumers. *Journal of Business and Management*, *15*(1), 18-27.

Boujbel, L. (2008). Never-ending desires: Assessing consumers' propensity to desire consumption objects. *European advances in consumer research*, *8*, 319-324.

Boujbel, L., & d'Astous, A. (2015). Exploring the feelings and thoughts that accompany the experience of consumption desires. *Psychology & Marketing*, *32*(2), 219-231.

Boujbel, L., d'Astous, A., & Kachani, L. (2018). Exploring the psychological mechanisms underlying the cognitive and affective responses to consumption desires. *Journal of Marketing Trends*, *5*(2), 1961-7798.

Bouranta, N., Chitiris, L., & Paravantis, J. (2009). The relationship between internal and external service quality. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*.

Bourdieu, P. (1984). Distinction: A social critique of the judgement of taste. *Harvard university press.*

Brislin, R. W. (1970). Back-translation for cross-cultural research. *Journal of Cross-cultural Psychology, 1*(3), 187-16.

Brown, R., & Williams, J. (1984). Group identification: The same thing to all people?. *Human relations*, *37*(7), 547-564.

Brun, A., Caniato, F., Caridi, M., Castelli, C., Miragliotta, G., Ronchi, S., ... & Spina, G. (2008). Logistics and supply chain management in luxury fashion retail: Empirical investigation of Italian firms. *International Journal of Production Economics*, *114*(2), 554-570.

Bruner, J., Calegari, F., & Handfield, T. (2020). The evolution of the endowment effect. *Evolution and Human Behavior, 41(1),* 87-95.

Bryman, A. (2004). Social research methods 2nd ed., New York; Oxford University Press Inc.

Burns, A. C. & Bush, R. F. (2006). Marketing research 5th ed., New Jersey; Pearson Education Inc.

Buttle, F. (1996). Servqual: review, critique, research agenda. *European Journal of marketing*.

Cameron, J. E. (2004). A three-factor model of social identity. *Self and identity*, *3*(3), 239-262.

Chadha, R., & Husband, P. (2006). The cult of the luxury brand: Inside Asia's love affair with luxury. google.

Chaudhuri, A. (2002). A study of emotion and reason in products and services. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour: An International Research Review*, *1*(3), 267-279.

Chen, Y. (2009). Possession and access: Consumer desires and value perceptions regarding contemporary art collection and exhibit visits. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *35*(6), 925-940.

Chenavaz, R. Y., & Eynan, A. (2021). Advertising, goodwill, and the Veblen effect. *European Journal of Operational Research*, *289*(2), 676-682.

Chiou, J. S. & Pan, L.Y. (2008). The Impact of Social Darwinism Perception, Status Anxiety, Perceived Trust of People, and Cultural Orientation on Consumer Ethical Beliefs. *Journal of Business Ethics.* 78(4), 487-502.

Churchill, G. A. & Iacobucci, D. (2002). Marketing research: Methodological foundations, 8.

Cornell, A. (2002). Cult of luxury: The new opiate of the masses. *Australian Financial Review*, *47*.

Cox III, E. P. (1980). The optimal number of response alternatives for a scale: A review. *Journal of marketing research*, *17*(4), 407-422.

Crotty, M. (1998) The Foundation of Social Research: Meaning and Perspectives in the Research Process. *London: Sage*.

Csikszentmihalyi, M., & Rochberg-Halton, E. (1981). The meaning of things: Symbols in the development of the self.

Cuomo, M. T., Foroudi, P., Tortora, D., Hussain, S., & Melewar, T. C. (2019). Celebrity endorsement and the attitude towards luxury brands for sustainable consumption. *Sustainability*, *11*(23), 6791.

Currie, D. (2005). Developing and applying study skills: *writing assignments, dissertations and management reports*. CIPD Publishing.

Cushing, A. L. (2011). Self extension and the desire to preserve digital possessions. *Proceedings of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, *48*(1), 1-3.

Danziger, P. (2004). Let them eat cake: Marketing luxury to the masses-as well as the classes. *Dearborn trade publishing.*

D’Arpizio, C., Levato, F., Fenili, S., Colacchio, F., & Prete, F. (2020). Luxury after Covid-19: changed for (the) good. Bain & Company.

D'Arpizio C., Levato F., Prete F., Gault C. & de Montgolfier, J., (2021). The future of luxury: bouncing back from Covid-19. Bain & Company

D'Arpizio, C., Verde Nieto, D., Davis-Peccoud, J., & Capellini, M. (2021). LuxCo 2030: A vision of sustainable luxury. https://www.bain.com/insights/luxco-2030-a-vision-of-sustainable-luxury/ (accessed on October 24, 2022)

Davies, B., & Harré, R. (1990). Positioning: The discursive production of selves. *Journal for the theory of social behaviour*, *20*(1), 43-63.

Davis, J. B. (1998). Ontology.

Dewey, D. N. (2009). Back to the future of luxury. *Luxury Marketing Council and The French-American Chamber of Commerce, Houston, TX*, *22*.

Dezutter, J., Waterman, A. S., Schwartz, S. J., Luyckx, K., Beyers, W., Meca, A., ... & Hardy, S. A. (2014). Meaning in life in emerging adulthood: A person-oriented approach. *Journal of personality*, *82*(1), 57-68.

Dittmar, H. (1992). The social psychology of material possessions: To have is to be. *Harvester Wheatsheaf and St. Martin's Press.*

Dommer, S. L., & Swaminathan, V. (2013). Explaining the endowment effect through ownership: The role of identity, gender, and self-threat. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *39*(5), 1034-1050.

Douglas, M. & Isherwood, B. (1978), The World of Goods: Towards an Anthropology of Consumption, *Allen Lane, London.*

Dubois, B., & Laurent, G. (1994). Attitudes towards the concept of luxury: An exploratory analysis. *ACR Asia-Pacific Advances*.

Dubois, B., & Paternault, C. (1995). Observations: Understanding the world of international luxury brands: The "dream formula.". *Journal of Advertising research*.

Duffett, R. G. (2017). Influence of social media marketing communications on young consumers' attitudes. *Young Consumers*, *18*(1), 19-39.

Dunn, E. W., Huntsinger, J., Lun, J., & Sinclair, S. (2008). The gift of similarity: How good and bad gifts influence relationships. *Social Cognition*, *26*(4), 469.

Easterby-Smith, M. T., & Thorpe, R. and Lowe, A. (2002). Management research: An introduction, *2*, 342.

Eastman, J. K., & Eastman, K. L. (2015). Conceptualizing a model of status consumption theory: an exploration of the antecedents and consequences of the motivation to consume for status. *Marketing Management Journal*, *25*(1), 1-15.

Eastman, J. K., Iyer, R., & Dekhili, S. (2021). Can luxury attitudes impact sustainability? The role of desire for unique products, culture, and brand self-congruence. *Psychology & Marketing*, *38*(11), 1881-1894.

Elliot, M., Fairweather, I., Olsen, W., & Pampaka, M. (2016). A dictionary of social research methods. *Oxford University Press.*

Elliott, R. (1997). Existential consumption and irrational desire. *European Journal of Marketing*.

Escalas, J. E., & Bettman, J. R. (2003). You are what they eat: The influence of reference groups on consumers' connections to brands. Journal of consumer psychology, 13(3), 339-348.

Etikan, I., Alkassim, R., & Abubakar, S. (2016). Comparision of snowball sampling and sequential sampling technique. Biometrics and Biostatistics International Journal, 3(1), 55.

Farrell, A. M. (2010). Insufficient discriminant validity: A comment on Bove, Pervan, Beatty, and Shiu (2009). *Journal of business research,* 63(3), 324-327.

Feirstein, B. (1986). Me, my things and I. *New York Times Magazine*, *8*, 24.

Ferraro, R., Escalas, J. E., & Bettman, J. R. (2011). Our possessions, our selves: Domains of self-worth and the possession–self link. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, *21*(2), 169-177.

Fingerman, K., Miller, L., Birditt, K., & Zarit, S. (2009). Giving to the good and the needy: Parental support of grown children. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *71*(5), 1220-1233.

Fionda, A. M., & Moore, C. M. (2009). The anatomy of the luxury fashion brand. *Journal of brand Management*, *16*(5-6), 347-363.

Fishbein, M. (1963). An investigation of the relationships between beliefs about an object and the attitude toward that object. *Human relations*, *16*(3), 233-239.

Fishbein, M., & Ajzen, I. (1975). Belief, attitude, intention, and behavior: An introduction to theory and research.

Fornell, C., & Larcker, D. F. (1981). Evaluating structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error. *Journal of marketing research*, 18(1), 39-50.

Fritze, M. P., Marchand, A., Eisingerich, A. B., & Benkenstein, M. (2020). Access-based services as substitutes for material possessions: the role of psychological ownership. *Journal of Service Research*, *23*(3), 368-385.

Fromkin, H. L. (1970). Effects of experimentally aroused feelings of undistinctiveness upon valuation of scarce and novel experiences. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, *16*(3), 521.

Fromkin, H. L. (1972). Feelings of interpersonal undistinctiveness: An unpleasant affective state. *Journal of Experimental Research in Personality*.

Fromkin, H. L., & Snyder, C. R. (1980). The search for uniqueness and valuation of scarcity. In *Social exchange* (pp.57-75). Springer, Boston, MA.

Fromm, E. (1976). To have or to be? New York, É. *U.: Harper and Row*.

Furby, L. (1978). Possession in humans: An exploratory study of its meaning and motivation. *Social Behavior and Personality: an international journal*, *6*(1), 49-65.

Gajjar, N. B. (2013). Factors affecting consumer behavior. *International Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Sciences*, *1*(2), 10-15.

Gardner, M. P. (1985). Consumer mood states: A critical review. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *12*, 281-300.

Garfein, R. T. (1989). Cross-cultural perspectives on the dynamics of prestige. *Journal of services* marketing.

Garver, M. S., & Mentzer, J. T. (1999). Logistics research methods: employing structural equation modelling to test for construct validity. *Journal of business logistics*, 20(1), 33.

Gautam, V., & Sharma, V. (2017). The mediating role of customer relationship on the social media marketing and purchase intention relationship with special reference to luxury fashion brands. *Journal of Promotion Management,* 23(6), 872-888.

Gawronski, B., Bodenhausen, G. V., & Becker, A. P. (2007). I like it, because I like myself: Associative self-anchoring and post-decisional change of implicit evaluations. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 43(2), 221-232.

Gentina, E., Shrum, L. J., & Lowrey, T. M. (2016). Teen attitudes toward luxury fashion brands from a social identity perspective: A cross-cultural study of French and US teenagers. *Journal of Business Research*, *69*(12), 5785-5792.

Gil, L. A., Kwon, K. N., Good, L. K., & Johnson, L. W. (2012). Impact of self on attitudes toward luxury brands among teens. *Journal of Business Research*, *65*(10), 1425-1433.

Givi, J., Birg, L., Lowrey, T. M., & Galak, J. (2022). An integrative review of gift-giving research in consumer behavior and marketing. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*.

Ginsberg, M. (1937). Social science and social philosophy in the universities. *The Sociological Review*, *29*(4), 321-330.

Gong, Y., Zhang, Q., & Zhang, J. (2022). Does renting luxury make me shine? The mediating role of perceived signals. *Psychology & Marketing*.

Grapentine, T. (1995). Dimensions of an attribute. *Marketing research*, *7*(3), 18.

Gross, J. J. (2014). Emotion regulation: conceptual and empirical foundations.

Grossman, G. M., & Shapiro, C. (1986). Counterfeit-product trade.

Grubb, E. L., & Grathwohl, H. L. (1967). Consumer self-concept, symbolism and market behavior: A theoretical approach. *Journal of Marketing*, *31*(4), 22-27.

Guba, E. (1990). The paradigm dialog. Beverly Hills.

Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. *Handbook of qualitative research,* 2(163-194), 105.

Gumbel, P. (2007). Luxury goes mass market. *Fortune Magazine: The Business of Luxury*., Retrieved Mai 16, 2022, from https://archive.fortune.com/2007/08/30/magazines/fortune/mass_vs_class.fortune/index.htm

Hadi, A. S., & Simonoff, J. S. (1993). Procedures for the identification of multiple outliers in linear models. *Journal of the American statistical association*, 88(424), 1264-1272.

Hair, J. F., Anderson, R. E., Babin, B. J., & Black, W. C. (2010). Multivariate data analysis: A global perspective (Vol. 7): Pearson Upper Saddle River.

Halcomb, E. J., Andrew, S. & Brannen, J. (2009). Introduction to mixed methods research for nursing and the health sciences. *In:* ANDREW, S. & HALCOMB, E. J. (eds.) *Mixed methods research for nursing and the health sciences.* Chichester, West Sussex; Ames, Iowa: Wiley-Blackwell.

Hamlyn, D. W. (1995). Epistemology, history of. *The Oxford companion to philosophy*, 242-245.

Han, Y. J., Nunes, J. C., & Drèze, X. (2010). Signaling status with luxury goods: The role of brand prominence. *Journal of marketing*, *74*(4), 15-30.

Hardesty, D. M., & Bearden, W. O. (2004). The use of expert judges in scale development: Implications for improving face validity of measures of unobservable constructs. *Journal of Business Research*, *57*(2), 98-107.

Hayes, S. (2005). The relationship between the symbolic meaning of money and referent choice under situations of inequity (Doctoral dissertation).

Heine, K., & Phan, M. (2011). Trading-up mass-market goods to luxury products. *Australasian Marketing Journal*, *19*(2), 108-114.

Hennigs, N., Wiedmann, K. P., & Klarmann, C. (2012). Luxury brands in the digital age–exclusivity versus ubiquity. *Marketing Review St. Gallen*, *29*(1), 30-35.

Hines, T., & Bruce, M. (2007). Fashion marketing. *Routledge.*

Hu, L. T., & Bentler, P. M. (1999). Cut-off criteria for fit indexes in covariance structure analysis: Conventional criteria versus new alternatives. *Structural equation modelling: a multidisciplinary journal*, *6*(1), 1-55.

Hu, S., Henninger, C. E., Boardman, R., & Ryding, D. (2019). Challenging current fashion business models: entrepreneurship through access-based consumption in the second-hand luxury garment sector within a circular economy. *In Sustainable Luxury* (pp.39-54). Springer, Singapore.

Hudders, L., & Pandelaere, M. (2012). The silver lining of materialism: The impact of luxury consumption on subjective well-being. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, *13*(3), 411-437.

Hulland, J. (1999). Use of partial least squares (PLS) in strategic management research: A review of four recent studies. *Strategic management journal,* 20(2), 195-204.

Husic, M., & Cicic, M. (2009). Luxury consumption factors. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management: an international journal.*

Iyer, G. R., Blut, M., Xiao, S. H., & Grewal, D. (2020). Impulse buying: a meta-analytic review. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 48(3), 384-404.

Jan, M., Haque, A., Abdullah, K., & Anis, Z. (2019). Elements of advertisement and their impact on buying behaviour: A study of skincare products in Malaysia. *Management Science Letters, 9(*10), 1519-1528.

Jain, V. (2017). Luxury: not for consumption but developing extended digital self. *Journal of Human Values*, *24*(1), 25-38.

Jamal, A., & Goode, M. (2001). Consumers' product evaluation: A study of the primary evaluative criteria in the precious jewellery market in the UK. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour: An International Research Review*, *1*(2), 140-155.

James, W. (1890). The perception of reality. *Principles of psychology,* 2, 283-324.

Jann, B., Krumpal, I., & Wolter, F. (2019). Social desirability bias in surveys – collecting and analyzing sensitive data. *Special Issue.*

Janssen, C., Vanhamme, J., Lindgreen, A., & Lefebvre, C. (2014). The Catch-22 of responsible luxury: Effects of luxury product characteristics on consumers' perception of fit with corporate social responsibility. Journal of Business Ethics, 119(1), 45-57.

Jesson, J., Matheson, L., & Lacey, F. M. (2011). Doing your literature review: Traditional and systematic techniques. *Sage.*

Johns, R. (2010). Likert Items and Scales. *Survey question bank: Methods fact sheet 1* (March 2010).

Johnson, P. and Clark, M. (2006) 'Mapping the terrain: an overview of business and management research methodologies', in P. Johnson and M. Clark. (eds). *Business and Management Research Methodologies.* London: Sage.

Jöreskog, K. G., & Sörbom, D. (1996). LISREL 8: User's reference guide*. Scientific Software International.*

Kaminakis, K., Karantinou, K., & Boukis, A. (2014). The mediating role of self-concept discrepancy in the relationship between values and personal based motivation of luxury products consumers. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *148*, 619-624.

Kamptner, N. L. (1991). Personal possessions and their meanings: A life-span perspective. *Journal of Social Behavior and Personality*, *6*(6), 209.

Kang, M. Y., & Bae, Y. H. (2016). What does make the diffusion of luxury brands possible?: Dynamic model of luxury consumption. *Journal Of Marketing Thought*, *3*(2), 31-39.

Kang, Y. J., & Park, S. Y. (2016). The perfection of the narcissistic self: A qualitative study on luxury consumption and customer equity. Journal of Business Research, 69(9), 3813-3819.

Kapferer, J. N. (1998). Why are we seduced by luxury brands?. *Journal of Brand Management,* 6(1), 44-49.

Kapferer, J. N. (2014). The artification of luxury: From artisans to artists. *Business Horizons,* 57(3), 371-380.

Kapferer, J. N., & Bastien, V. (2009). The luxury strategy: break the rules of marketing to build luxury brands.

Kapferer, J. N., & Valette-Florence, P. (2016). Beyond rarity: the paths of luxury desire. How luxury brands grow yet remain desirable. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*.

Kauppinen-Räisänen, H., Gummerus, J., von Koskull, C., & Cristini, H. (2019). The new wave of luxury: The meaning and value of luxury to the contemporary consumer. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*.

Kettley, S. (2005). Visualising social space with networked jewellery. In *Proceedings of the second workshop on Place, Spatiality and Technology* (pp. 92-98).

Khaniwale, M. (2015). Consumer buying behavior. *International Journal of innovation and scientific research*, *14*(2), 278-286.

Kidwell, B., Hardesty, D. M., Murtha, B. R., & Sheng, S. (2011). Emotional intelligence in marketing exchanges. Journal of marketing, 75*(1), 78-95.*

Kim, Y. (2018). Power moderates the impact of desire for exclusivity on luxury experiential consumption. *Psychology & Marketing*, *35*(4), 283-293.

Kim, D., & Jang, S. S. (2014). Motivational drivers for status consumption: A study of Generation Y consumers. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, *38*, 39-47.

Kim, A. J., & Ko, E. (2012). Do social media marketing activities enhance customer equity? An empirical study of luxury fashion brand. *Journal of Business research,* 65(10), 1480-1486.

Kim, J. C., Park, B., & Dubois, D. (2018). How consumers' political ideology and status-maintenance goals interact to shape their desire for luxury goods. *Journal of Marketing*, *82*(6), 132-149.

Kim, S., Park, G., Y., & Choi, S. (2016). Customer emotions and their triggers in luxury retail: Understanding the effects of customer emotions before and after entering a luxury shop. *Journal of Business Research*, *69*(12), 5809-5818.

King, L. A., Hicks, J. A., Krull, J., & Del Gaiso, A. K. (2006). Positive affect and the experience of meaning in life. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 90, 179–196.

Kim, N. L., & Jin, B. E. (2020). Why buy new when one can share? Exploring collaborative consumption motivations for consumer goods. *International Journal of Consumer Studies,* 44(2), 122-130.

Kizilcec, R. F., Bakshy, E., Eckles, D., & Burke, M. (2018, April). Social influence and reciprocity in online gift giving. *In Proceedings of the 2018 CHI conference on human factors in computing systems* (pp.1-11).

Kleine III, R. E., Kleine, S. S., & Kernan, J. B. (1993). Mundane consumption and the self: A social-identity perspective. *Journal of consumer psychology*, *2*(3), 209-235.

Kleine, S. S., & Baker, S. M. (2004). An integrative review of material possession attachment. *Academy of marketing science review*, *1*(1), 1-39.

Kleine, S. S., Kleine III, R. E., & Allen, C. T. (1995). How is a possession "me" or "not me"? Characterizing types and an antecedent of material possession attachment. *Journal of consumer research*, *22*(3), 327-343

Koltrowitz, S. (2022, January 19) Jewellery helps Richemont sales jump amid post-pandemic luxury revival. Retrieved March 2, 2022, from https://www.reuters.com/business/richemont-sales-jump-by-third-christmas-quarter-2022-01-19/

Kroll, T. & Neri, M. (2009). Designs for mixed methods research. In: Andrew, S. & Halcomb, E. J. (eds.) Mixed methods research for nursing and the health sciences. Chichester, West Sussex; Ames, Iowa: Wiley-Blackwell.

Kumar, S. (2019) The role of mindfulness in socially responsible consumption in India: The mediating effect of self-compassion and materialism.

Kwon, N. (2002). Influences of demographic characteristics of community network users on their perceptions and use of the network. *Proceedings of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, *39*(1), 326-337.

Lang, C., Li, M., & Zhao, L. (2020). Understanding consumers' online fashion renting experiences: A text-mining approach. *Sustainable Production and Consumption*, *21*, 132-144.

Lawson, T. (2022). Social positioning theory. *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, *46*(1), 1-39.

Lawson, S. J., Gleim, M. R., Perren, R., & Hwang, J. (2016). Freedom from ownership: An exploration of access-based consumption. *Journal of Business Research*, *69*(8), 2615-2623.

Lee, J., & Cho, M. (2019). New insights into socially responsible consumers: The role of personal values. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, *43*(2), 123-133.

Lee, W. N., & Um, K. H. R. (1992). Ethnicity and consumer product evaluation: A cross-cultural comparison of Korean immigrants and Americans. *ACR North American Advances*.

Leibenstein, H. (1950). Bandwagon, snob, and veblen effects in the theory of consumers' demand. *The quarterly journal of economics*, *64*(2), 183-207.

Leonard, N. H., Beauvais, L. L., & Scholl, R. W. (1995, August). A self-concept-based model of work motivation. In *Academy of management proceedings* (Vol. 1995, No. 1, pp.322-326).

Lertwannawit, A., & Mandhachitara, R. (2012). Interpersonal effects on fashion consciousness and status consumption moderated by materialism in metropolitan men. *Journal of Business Research*, 65(10), 1408-1416.

Leung, L. (2015). Validity, reliability, and generalizability in qualitative research. *J Family Med Prim Care*. 2015 Jul-Sep; 4(3): 324–327.

Li, G., Li, G., & Kambele, Z. (2012). Luxury fashion brand consumers in China: Perceived value, fashion lifestyle, and willingness to pay. *Journal of Business Research,* 65(10), 1516-1522.

Li, J. J., & Su, C. (2007). How face influences consumption. *International Journal of Market Research*, *49*(2), 237-256.

Lincoln, Y.S. and Guba, E.G. (1985) Naturalistic inquiry. *Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.*

Lowry, P. B., & Gaskin, J. (2014). Partial least squares (PLS) structural equation modelling (SEM) for building and testing behavioral causal theory: When to choose it and how to use it. *IEEE transactions on professional communication*, 57(2), 123-146.

Luhtanen, R., & Crocker, J. (1992). A collective self-esteem scale: Self-evaluation of one's social identity. *Personality and social psychology bulletin*, *18*(3), 302-318.

LVMH (2021) Growth continues at the same pace. Retrieved March 2, 2021, from https://www.lvmh.com/news-documents/press-releases/growth-continues-at-the-same-pace/

MacCallum, R. C., Roznowski, M., & Necowitz, L. B. (1992). Model modifications in covariance structure analysis: the problem of capitalization on chance. *Psychological bulletin,* 111(3), 490.

Mack, N. (2005). Qualitative research methods: A data collector's field guide.

MacKenzie, S. B., & Podsakoff, P. M. (2012). Common method bias in marketing: Causes, mechanisms, and procedural remedies. *Journal of Retailing,* 88(4), 542-555.

Maclaran, P. (Ed.). (2009). The SAGE handbook of marketing theory. *Sage Publications.*

Maden, D., Goztas, A., & Topsumer, F. (2015). Effects of brand origin, fashion consciousness and price-quality perception on luxury consumption motivations: an empirical analysis directed to Turkish consumers. *Advances in Business Scientific Research Journal*, *6*(1), 15-29.

Majeed, M. H. (2019). Pragmatist inquiry in to consumer behaviour research. *Philosophy of Management*, 18(2), 189–201.

Makkar, M., & Yap, S. F. (2018). The anatomy of the inconspicuous luxury fashion experience. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management: An International Journal*.

Malhotra, N. K., Birks, D. F., & Wills, P. (2017). Marketing Research: an applied approach. *England: Pearson Education UK. Fifth Edition*

Marton-Williams, J. (1986). Questionnaire design, in *consumer market research Handbook.*

Mattila, A., & Wirtz, J. (2000). The role of preconsumption affect in postpurchase evaluation of services. *Psychology & Marketing,* 17(7), 587-605.

Mauss, M., & Halls, W. D. (1954). The gift: Forms and functions of exchange in archaic societies (No. 378).

Maynard, M. (1994). Methods, practice and epistemology: The debate about feminism and research. *Researching women's lives from a feminist perspective*, *10*(26), 10-26.

McCarthy, E. D. (1984). Toward a sociology of the physical world: George Herbert Mead on physical objects. *George Herbert Mead. Critical Assessments*, *4*, 215-229.

McCracken, G. (1986). Culture and consumption: A theoretical account of the structure and movement of the cultural meaning of consumer goods. *Journal of consumer research,* 13(1), 71-84.

McCracken, G. D. (1988). Culture and consumption: New approaches to the symbolic character of consumer goods and activities (Vol. 1). *Indiana University Press*.

McFerran, B., Aquino, K., & Tracy, J. L. (2014). Evidence for two facets of pride in consumption: Findings from luxury brands. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, *24*(4), 455-471.

McGuire, W. J. (1976). Some internal psychological factors influencing consumer choice. *Journal of Consumer research*, *2*(4), 302-319.

Menard-Warwick, J. (2008). 'Because she made beds. Every day'. Social positioning, classroom discourse, and language learning. *Applied Linguistics*, *29*(2), 267-289.

Miller, D. (2010). Stuff. *Polity.*

Mitchell, A. A., & Olson, J. C. (1981). Are product attribute beliefs the only mediator of advertising effects on brand attitude?. *Journal of marketing research*, *18*(3), 318-332.

Moorman, M. (2010). Unconscious advertising effects. *Wiley International Encyclopedia of Marketing.*

Moraes, C., Carrigan, M., Bosangit, C., Ferreira, C., & McGrath, M. (2015). Understanding ethical luxury consumption through practice theories: A study of fine jewellery purchases. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *145*(3), 525-543.

Morewedge, C. K., Shu, L. L., Gilbert, D. T., & Wilson, T. D. (2009). Bad riddance or good rubbish? Ownership and not loss aversion causes the endowment effect. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *45*(4), 947-951.

Moureau, N. (2000a). Analyse économique de la valeur des biens d'art: la peinture contemporaine. Paris: Economica.

Moureau, N. (2000b). Formation des valeurs sur le marché de l'art contemporain. Espaces de la culture, politiques de l'art, 255-91.

Mulligan, K., & Scherer, K. R. (2012). Toward a working definition of emotion. *Emotion Review*, *4*(4), 345-357.

Myers, E. (1985). Phenomenological analysis of the importance of special possessions: An exploratory study. *ACR North American Advances*.

Myers, J. H., & Shocker, A. D. (1981). The nature of product-related attributes. *Research in marketing*, *5*(5), 211-236.

Nath, V., & Batra, M. B. (2020) Would luxury loose It's sheen? Understanding luxury market before and during COVID-19.

Nemoto, T., & Beglar, D. (2014). Likert-scale questionnaires. I*n JALT 2013 conference proceedings* (pp.1-8). Tokyo: Jalt.

Netemeyer, R. G., Boles, J. S., & McMurrian, R. (1996). Development and validation of work–family conflict and family–work conflict scales. *Journal of applied psychology*, *81*(4), 400.

Netemeyer, R. G., Burton, S., & Lichtenstein, D. R. (1995). Trait aspects of vanity: Measurement and relevance to consumer behavior. *Journal of consumer research,* 21(4), 612-626.

Noel, J. K., & Babor, T. F. (2018). Alcohol advertising on Facebook and the desire to drink among young adults. *Journal of studies on alcohol and drugs,* 79(5), 751-760.

Noles, N. S., & Gelman, S. A. (2014). You can't always want what you get: Children's intuitions about ownership and desire. *Cognitive development*, *31*, 59-68.

Nueno, J. L., & Quelch, J. A. (1998). The mass marketing of luxury. *Business horizons*, *41*(6), 61-61.

Nunnally, J. C. (1978). Psychometric Theory 2nd ed.

Oakes, P. J., & Turner, J. C. (1980). Social categorization and intergroup behaviour: Does minimal intergroup discrimination make social identity more positive?. *European Journal of Social* Psychology.

O'cass, A., & Frost, H. (2002). Status brands: examining the effects of non‐product‐related brand associations on status and conspicuous consumption. *Journal of product & brand management*.

O'cass, A., & McEwen, H. (2004). Exploring consumer status and conspicuous consumption. *Journal of consumer behaviour: an international research review*, 4(1), 25-39.

Odom, W., Zimmerman, J., & Forlizzi, J. (2011, May). Teenagers and their virtual possessions: design opportunities and issues. In *Proceedings of the SIGCHI conference on Human Factors in computing systems* (pp.1491-1500).

Okonkwo, U. (2009). Sustaining the luxury brand on the Internet. *Journal of brand management*, *16*(5-6), 302-310.

Osborne, J. W., & Costello, A. B. (2004). Sample size and subject to item ratio in principal components analysis. *Practical Assessment, Research, and Evaluation*, 9(1), 11.

Pencarelli, T., Ali Taha, V., Škerháková, V., Valentiny, T., & Fedorko, R. (2020). Luxury products and sustainability issues from the perspective of young Italian consumers. *Sustainability,* 12(1), 245.

Perreault, S., & Bourhis, R. Y. (1999). Ethnocentrism, social identification, and discrimination. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *25*(1), 92-103.

Peter, J. P. (1979). Reliability: A review of psychometric basics and recent marketing practices. *Journal of marketing research*, *16*(1), 6-17.

Phau, I., & Prendergast, G. (2000). Consuming luxury brands: the relevance of the 'rarity principle'. *Journal of brand Management*, *8*(2), 122-138.

Phellas, C. N., Bloch, A., & Seale, C. (2011). Structured methods: interviews, questionnaires and observation. *Researching society and culture*, *3*, 181-205.

Pierce, J. L., Kostova, T., & Dirks, K. T. (2003). The state of psychological ownership: Integrating and extending a century of research. *Review of general psychology*, *7*(1), 84-107.

Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., Lee, J. Y., & Podsakoff, N. P. (2003). Common method biases in behavioral research: A critical review of the literature and recommended remedies. Journal of applied psychology, 88(5), 879.

Pop, N. A. T., & Zottu-Z, M. (2016). Brand significance in the marketing of luxury watchmaking. Qualitative research on the bucharest market. *Annals of Faculty of Economics*, *1*(1), 1011-1020.

Prelinger, E. (1959). Extension and structure of the self. *The journal of Psychology*, *47*(1), 13-23.

Preston, C. C., & Colman, A. M. (2000). Optimal number of response categories in rating scales: reliability, validity, discriminating power, and respondent preferences. *Acta psychologica*, *104*(1), 1-15.

Rai, M., & Gopal, R. (2017). A study on the purchase behaviour of indian women when buying diamond jewellery from different retail formats. *IOSR J. Busi. Manage*, *3*, 1-7.

Ramanathan, R. (2008). The role of organisational change management in offshore outsourcing of information technology services. *Florida: Universal Publishers.*

Reb, J., & Connolly, T. (2007). Possession, feelings of ownership, and the endowment effect. *Judgment and Decision making,* 2(2), 107.

Research and Markets (2021, October 12) Global luxury goods market report 2021 featuring major players - LVMH Moet Hennessy Louis Vuitton, Compagnie Financiere Richemont SA, Kering, Estee Lauder, L'Oreal S.A. Retrieved January 22, 2022, from https://www.globenewswire.com/news-release/2021/10/12/2312466/28124/en/Global-Luxury-Goods-Market-Report-2021-Featuring-Major-Players-LVMH-Moet-Hennessy-Louis-Vuitton-Compagnie-Financiere-Richemont-SA-Kering-Estee-Lauder-L-Oreal-S-A.html

Richardson, C. W. (2012). Consumer demographics as antecedents in the animosity model of foreign product purchase. *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, *3*(4).

Richins, M. L. (1994). Valuing things: The public and private meanings of possessions. *Journal of consumer research*, *21*(3), 504-521.

Richins, M. L., & Dawson, S. (1992). A consumer values orientation for materialism and its measurement: Scale development and validation. *Journal of consumer research*, *19*(3), 303-316.

Rindfleisch, A., Malter, A. J., Ganesan, S., & Moorman, C. (2008). Cross-sectional versus longitudinal survey research: Concepts, findings, and guidelines. *Journal of marketing research,* 45(3), 261-279.

Ritchie, J., Lewis, J., Nicholls, C. M., & Ormston, R. (Eds.). (2013). Qualitative research practice: A guide for social science students and researchers. *sage.*

Robertson, C. E., Pretus, C., Rathje, S., Harris, E., & Van Bavel, J. J. (2022). How social identity shapes conspiratorial belief. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 101423.

Roper, S., Caruana, R., Medway, D., & Murphy, P. (2013). Constructing luxury brands: exploring the role of consumer discourse. *European Journal of Marketing*.

Rosenbaum, J. (1972). Is your Volkswagen a sex symbol?. *Hawthorn Books.*

Rosenberg, M. J. (1950). Cognitive structure and attitudinal affect. *The Journal of abnormal and social psychology*, *53*(3), 367.

Rowland, G. (1995). Archetypes of systems design. *Systems practice*, 8(3), 277-288.

Ruan, Y., Xu, Y., & Lee, H. (2022). Consumer motivations for luxury fashion rental: A second-order factor analysis approach. *Sustainability*, *14*(12), 7475.

Ruvio, A., Shoham, A., & Brenčič, M. M. (2008). Consumers' need for uniqueness: short-form scale development and cross-cultural validation. *International Marketing Review*.

Sahu, A. K., Padhy, R. K., & Dhir, A. (2020). Envisioning the future of behavioral decision-making: A systematic literature review of behavioral reasoning theory. *Australasian Marketing Journal (AMJ), 28(4*), 145-159.

Sanguanpiyapan, T., & Jasper, C. (2010). Consumer insights into luxury goods: Why they shop where they do in a jewelry shopping setting. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, *17*(2), 152-160.

Sartre, J. P. (1943). Being and Nothingness: A phenomenological essay on ontology. 1943. *Trans. Hazel E. Barnes. New York .Philosophical library*.

Saunders, M., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2009). Research methods for business students. *England, Pearson Education Limited.*

Schnall, S. (2010). Affect, mood and emotions. *Social and emotional aspect of learning,* 59-64.

Schultz, S. E., Kleine, R. E., & Kernan, J. B. (1989). 'These are a few of my favorite things': Toward an explication of attachment as a consumer behavior construct. *Advances in consumer research*, *16*(1), 359-366.

Schumacker, R. E., & Lomax, R. G. (2010). A beginner's guide to structural equation modelling. *psychology press.*

Shao, W., Grace, D., & Ross, M. (2019). Consumer motivation and luxury consumption: Testing moderating effects. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, *46*, 33-44.

Shaw, M. E., & Wright, J. M. (1967). Scales for the measurement of attitudes. *McGraw-Hill.*

Sharda, N., & Bhat, A. (2019). Role of consumer vanity and the mediating effect of brand consciousness in luxury consumption. *Journal of Product & Brand Management.*

Sherman, E., Mathur, A., & Smith, R. B. (1997). Store environment and consumer purchase behavior: mediating role of consumer emotions. *Psychology & Marketing*, *14*(4), 361-378.

Shiv, B., & Fedorikhin, A. (1999). Heart and mind in conflict: The interplay of affect and cognition in consumer decision making. *Journal of consumer Research*, *26*(3), 278-292.

Shuttleworth, M. (2008). Quantitative research design. Retrieved august 11, 2017 from Explorable.com*:* https://explorable.com/quantitative-research-design

Silverstein, M. & Fiske, N. (2005) Trading up: Why consumers want new luxury goods, and how companies create them. *New York: Portfolio.*

Sirgy, M. J. (1982). Self-concept in consumer behavior: A critical review. *Journal of consumer research*, *9*(3), 287-300.

Sirgy, M. J., Lee, D. J., Johar, J. S., & Tidwell, J. (2008). Effect of self-congruity with sponsorship on brand loyalty. *Journal of Business Research*, *61*(10), 1091-1097.

Sivadas, E., & Venkatesh, R. (1995). An examination of individual and object-specific influences on the extended self and its relation to attachment and satisfaction. *ACR North American Advances*.

Snyder, C. R. (1992). Product scarcity by need for uniqueness interaction: a consumer catch-22 carousel?. *Basic and applied social psychology*, *13*(1), 9-24.

Snyder, C. R., & Fromkin, H. L. (1977). Abnormality as a positive characteristic: The development and validation of a scale measuring need for uniqueness. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, *86*(5), 518.

Son, L. V. (2019). Gift receiving: Happiness or disappointment?.

Spears, R., Doosje, B., & Ellemers, N. (1999). Commitment and the context of social perception.

Statista (2022a) Consumer markets. Luxury goods - worldwide. In Statista – The Statistics Portal. Retrieved January 22, 20222. From https://www.statista.com/outlook/cmo/luxury-goods/worldwide

Statista (2022b) Consumer markets. Luxury jewelry - worldwide. In Statista – The Statistics Portal. Retrieved January 22, 20222. From https://www.statista.com/outlook/cmo/luxury-goods/luxury-watches-jewelry/luxury-jewelry/worldwide

Statista (2022c) Consumer markets. Luxury goods - Germany. In Statista – The Statistics Portal. Retrieved January 22, 20222. From https://www.statista.com/outlook/cmo/luxury-goods/germany

Statista (2022d) Consumer markets. Luxury jewelry - Germany. In Statista – The Statistics Portal. Retrieved January 22, 20222. From https://www.statista.com/outlook/cmo/luxury-goods/luxury-watches-jewelry/luxury-jewelry/germany

Statista (2022e) Industries & Markets. In-depth report: Luxury goods 2022, In Statista – The Statistics Portal. Retrieved May 15, 2022. From https://www.statista.com/study/61582/in-depth-luxury/

Stavrakakis, Y. (2006). Objects of consumption, causes of desire: Consumerism and advertising in societies of commanded enjoyment. *Gramma: Journal of Theory and Criticism*, *14*, 83-105.

Steger, M. F., Oishi, S., & Kesebir, S. (2011). Is a life without meaning satisfying? The moderating role of the search for meaning in satisfaction with life judgments. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, *6*(3), 173-180.

Stępień, B. (2021). From traditional to post-modern value of luxury. In *The Value of Luxury* (pp.85-126). Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.

Sternberg, R. J. (2022). Identification for utilization, not merely possession, of gifts: What matters is not gifts but rather deployment of gifts. *Gifted Education International*, *38*(3), 354-361.

Stokburger-Sauer, N. E., & Teichmann, K. (2013). Is luxury just a female thing? The role of gender in luxury brand consumption. *Journal of business research*, *66*(7), 889-896.

Symonds, P. M. (1924). On the loss of reliability in ratings due to coarseness of the scale. *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, *7*(6), 456.

Tajfel, H. E. (1978). Differentiation between social groups: Studies in the social psychology of intergroup relations. *Academic Press.*

Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1986). The social identity theory of intergroup behavior. *Psychology of intergroup relations*, *2*, 7-24.

Tajfel, H., Turner, J. C., Austin, W. G., & Worchel, S. (1979). An integrative theory of intergroup conflict. Organizational identity: A reader, 56, 65.

Tang, W., Cui, Y., & Babenko, O. (2014). Internal consistency: Do we really know what it is and how to assess it. *Journal of Psychology and Behavioral Science,* 2(2), 205-220.

Thakur, A., & Kaur, R. (2015). Relationship between self-concept and attitudinal brand loyalty in luxury fashion purchase: A study of selected global brands on the Indian market. *Management: journal of contemporary management issues*, *20*(2), 163-180.

Thierry, H. (1992). Payment: which meanings are rewarding? *American Behavioral Scientist, 35,* 694-707.

Tian, K. T., Bearden, W. O., & Hunter, G. L. (2001). Consumers' need for uniqueness: Scale development and validation. Journal of consumer research, 28(1), 50-66.

Tian, K., & Belk, R. W. (2005). Extended self and possessions in the workplace. *Journal of consumer research*, *32*(2), 297-310.

Trading economists (n.d.) Germany GDP per capita. Retrieved January 22, 2022, from https://tradingeconomics.com/germany/gdp-per-capita#:~:text=GDP%20per%20capita%20in%20Germany%20is%20expected%20to%20reach%2043800.00,according%20to%20our%20econometric%20models

Trochim, M.K. (2006). Research methods knowledge base. Mason. *Atomic Dog Publications.*

Truong, Y., Simmons, G., McColl, R., & Kitchen, P. J. (2008). Status and conspicuousness–are they related? Strategic marketing implications for luxury brands. *Journal of strategic marketing,* 16(3), 189-203.

Truong, Y. (2010). Personal aspirations and the consumption of luxury goods. International Journal of Market Research, 52(5), 655-673.

Truong, Y., & McColl, R. (2011). Intrinsic motivations, self-esteem, and luxury goods consumption. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, *18*(6), 555-561.

Tsai, S. P. (2005). Impact of personal orientation on luxury-brand purchase value: An international investigation. *International Journal of Market Research*, 47(4), 427-452.

Tsaknaki, V., Fernaeus, Y., & Jonsson, M. (2015). Precious materials of interaction: Exploring interactive accessories as jewellery items. In *Nordes* (No. 6). Nordes–Nordic Design Research.

Tuan, Y. F. (1978). Space and place: The perspective of experience. *U of Minnesota Press.*

Turkle, S.E. (2001). Evocative Objects: Things we think with.

Turkle, S. E. (2007). Evocative objects: Things we think with. *MIT press.*

Tynan, C., McKechnie, S., & Chhuon, C. (2010). Co-creating value for luxury brands. *Journal of Business Research,* 63, 1156–1163.

Van den Hoven, E., Orth, D., & Zijlema, A. (2021). Possessions and memories. *Current opinion in psychology*, *39*, 94-99.

Van Esterick, P. (1986). Generating status symbols: You are what you own. In *Annual Conference of the Association for Consumer Research, Toronto, Ontario, Canada*.

Venkatesh, A., Joy, A., Sherry Jr, J. F., & Deschenes, J. (2010). The aesthetics of luxury fashion, body and identify formation. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, *20*(4), 459-470.

Verdict Research (2007) 'Global luxury retailing 2007'. *Sector Report – Published October 2007.*

Vickers, J. S., & Renand, F. (2003). The marketing of luxury goods: An exploratory study–three conceptual dimensions. *The marketing review*, *3*(4), 459-478.

Vigneron, F., & Johnson, L. W. (1999). A review and a conceptual framework of prestige-seeking consumer behavior. *Academy of marketing science review*, *1*(1), 1-15.

Vigneron, F., & Johnson, L. W. (2004). Measuring perceptions of brand luxury. *Journal of brand management*, *11*(6), 484-506.

Vinson, D. E., Scott, J. E., & Lamont, L. M. (1977). The role of personal values in marketing and consumer behavior. *Journal of marketing*, *41*(2), 44-50.

Vogt, W. P., Gardner, D. C., & Haeffele, L. M. (2012). When to use what research design. Guilford Press.

Voorhees, C. M., Brady, M. K., Calantone, R., & Ramirez, E. (2016). Discriminant validity testing in marketing: an analysis, causes for concern, and proposed remedies. *Journal of the academy of marketing science*, 44(1), 119-134.

Waldfogel, J. (1993). The deadweight loss of Christmas. *The American Economic Review*, *83*(5), 1328-1336.

Wallendorf, M., & Arnould, E. J. (1988). "My favorite things": A cross-cultural inquiry into object attachment, possessiveness, and social linkage. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *14*(4), 531-547.

Walliman, N. (2011). Research methods: The basics. *Routledge.*

Wang, Y. Y. (2019, June). The possibility of the third approach to marketing research: Critical realism. *In Kidmore End: Academic Conferences International Limited* (pp.349-357).

Wattanasuwan, K. (2005). The self and symbolic consumption. *Journal of American Academy of Business*, *6*(1), 179-184.

Weller, (2002). https://www.epi.org/publication/webfeatures_snapshots_archive_02062002/

Wheeler, K. (2012). The practice of fair-trade support. In *Fair Trade and the Citizen-Consumer* (pp.85-110). Palgrave Macmillan, London.

White, K., & Dahl, D. W. (2007). Are all out-groups created equal? Consumer identity and dissociative influence. *Journal of Consumer Research,* 34(4), 525-536.

Whittaker, T. A. (2012). Using the modification index and standardized expected parameter change for model modification. *Journal of Experimental Education*, 80(1), 26–44.

Wiedmann, K. P., Hennigs, N., & Siebels, A. (2007). Measuring consumers' luxury value perception: a cross-cultural framework. *Academy of Marketing Science Review*, *2007*, 1

Wiedmann, K. P., Hennigs, N., & Siebels, A. (2009). Value-based segmentation of luxury consumption behavior. *Psychology & Marketing,* 26(7), 625-651.

Wicklund, R. A., & Gollwitzer, P. (1982). M. (1982): Symbolic Self-Completion. *Hillsdale/NJ.*

Wilcox, K., Kim, H. M., & Sen, S. (2009). Why do consumers buy counterfeit luxury brands?. *Journal of marketing research,* 46(2), 247-259.

Wintermeier, N. (2021, January 6). Who is the luxury consumer? A guide to the psychology of luxury. Retrieved March 22, 2022, from https://blog.crobox.com/article/luxury-consumer-psychology

Workman, J. E., & Kidd, L. K. (2000). Use of the need for uniqueness scale to characterize fashion consumer groups. *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal*, *18*(4), 227-236.

Wortham, S. (2004). From good student to outcast: The emergence of a classroom identity. *ethos*, *32*(2), 164-187.

Wright, P., Wallace, J., & McCarthy, J. (2008). Aesthetics and experience-centered design. *ACM Transactions on Computer-Human Interaction (TOCHI)*, *15*(4), 1-21.

Xiao, Y., & Watson, M. (2019). Guidance on conducting a systematic literature review. *Journal of planning education and research*, *39*(1), 93-112.

Yeoman, I., & McMahon-Beattie, U. (2014). Exclusivity: The future of luxury. *Journal of Revenue and Pricing management*, *13*(1), 12-22.

Yeoman, I., & McMahon-Beattie, U. (2011). The changing meaning of luxury. In *Revenue management* (pp.72-85). Palgrave Macmillan, London.

Zammito, J. H. (2004). A nice derangement of epistemes: Post-positivism in the study of science from quine to latour. *University Of Chicago Press.*

Appendices

Appendix A. Final online questionnaire – English version

Luxury jewellery possession

If you own luxury jewellery, please could you spare 10 minutes to share your views about luxury jewellery? As a PhD researcher, I am interested in your opinions and there are no right or wrong answers. Your participation is voluntary and your responses are anonymous. Your time and help are greatly appreciated.

To participate, please read the following information:

- **The prerequisite for participation is that you possess at least one piece of luxury jewellery and are 18 years or older.**
- Luxury jewellery refers to *products like earrings, rings, bracelets, necklaces, brooches, cufflinks and tiepins that are of high-quality in terms of their material composition (platinum, gold, sterling silver, with/without gemstones), design, manufacture, number of copies or price. Fashion jewellery is not meant in this study.*
- The project aim is to evaluate factors that influence our desire to have luxury jewellery.
- The project is not funded by any third party.
- The University of Gloucestershire will disseminate results.
- When presenting the research outcomes, responses will be aggregated and no individual opinions will be reported.

- I understand that participation involves filling out an online questionnaire and is completely voluntary. If I decide to not participate, there are no negative consequences. Even if I decide to participate now, I can withdraw from the session at any time or decline to answer any questions that make me feel uncomfortable.
- I understand that my responses are anonymous, as no data (e.g. name) is required, but some demographic information (e.g. age group) is sought.
- I understand that I am free to contact the researcher (Vivian Alexandra Roth) to seek further clarification and information via: [redacted]

Thank you in advance, your help is greatly valued.

Vivian Alexandra Roth

Given the information outlined above, please indicate that you have read the description of the study, are over the age of 18, and that you agree to the terms as described. *
Erforderlich

- [ ] I agree

If you do not have any luxury jewellery, or if you would prefer not to participate, thank you for your time and please feel free to close this page. No further action is needed.

How many pieces of luxury jewellery do you possess? (Please indicate just one number) * Erforderlich

How did you obtain your luxury jewellery pieces? * Erforderlich

- [ ] Inheritance
- [ ] Gift
- [ ] Purchased
- [ ] Borrowed
- [ ] Other (then specify...)

In case you selected "others" please specify:

Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements:

Bitte wählen Sie nicht mehr als 1 Antwort(en) pro Reihe aus.

Bitte wählen Sie mindestens 3 Antwort(en) aus.

	strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree
It is important for me to maintain my social standing.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My current social standing makes me think about maintaining/improving my social standing.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My current social standing makes me focus on how to maintain/improve my social standing.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

When completing the questions - please think about 'possession' as: ***an intense emotional bond that connects to how you see yourself and that exceeds simply owning an object.***

Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements: *
Erforderlich

Bitte wählen Sie nicht mehr als 1 Antwort(en) pro Reihe aus.

Bitte wählen Sie mindestens 2 Antwort(en) aus.

	strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree

I like to possess luxury jewellery.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I do not want to possess luxury jewellery.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements: *
Erforderlich

Bitte wählen Sie nicht mehr als 1 Antwort(en) pro Reihe aus.

Bitte wählen Sie mindestens 3 Antwort(en) aus.

	strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree
My luxury jewellery reminds me of important people in my life.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My luxury jewellery reminds me of important things I've done or places I've been.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
If I lost my luxury jewellery, another one like it wouldn't be as meaningful.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements: *
Erforderlich

Bitte wählen Sie nicht mehr als 1 Antwort(en) pro Reihe aus.

Bitte wählen Sie mindestens 8 Antwort(en) aus.

	strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree
If someone ridiculed my luxury jewellery, I would feel irritated.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My luxury jewellery reminds me of who I am.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
If I were describing myself, my luxury jewellery would likely be something I would mention.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
If someone destroyed my luxury jewellery, I would feel a bit personally attacked.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
If I lost my luxury jewellery, I would feel like I had lost a bit of myself.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I don't really have too many feelings about my luxury jewellery.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

If someone praised my luxury jewellery, I would feel somewhat praised myself.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Probably, people who know me might sometimes think of my luxury jewellery when they think of me.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements: * *Erforderlich*

Bitte wählen Sie nicht mehr als 1 Antwort(en) pro Reihe aus.

Bitte wählen Sie mindestens 6 Antwort(en) aus.

	strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree
My luxury jewellery helps me achieve the identity I want to have.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My luxury jewellery helps me narrow the gap between what I am and what I try to be.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My luxury jewellery is central to my identity.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My luxury jewellery is part of who I am.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

If my luxury jewellery is stolen from me, I will feel as if my identity has been snatched from me.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I derive some of my identity from my luxury jewellery.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements: *
Erforderlich

Bitte wählen Sie nicht mehr als 1 Antwort(en) pro Reihe aus.

Bitte wählen Sie mindestens 12 Antwort(en) aus.

	strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree
I often combine luxury jewellery possessions in such a way that I create a personal image that cannot be duplicated.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I often try to find a more interesting version of run-of-the-mill products because I enjoy being original.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I actively seek to develop my personal uniqueness by possessing luxury jewellery.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Having an eye for luxury jewellery products that are interesting and unusual assists me in establishing a distinctive image.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

When it comes to the luxury jewellery I buy and the situations in which I use them, I have broken customs and rules.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I have often violated the understood rules of my social group regarding what luxury jeweller to buy or own.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I have often gone against the understood rules of my social group regarding when and how certain luxury jewellery pieces are properly used.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I enjoy challenging the prevailing taste of people I know by buying something they would not seem to accept.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
When a luxury jewellery piece I own becomes popular among the general population, I begin to use it less.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

I often try to avoid luxury jewellery that I know are bought by the general population.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
As a rule, I dislike luxury jewellery that is customarily bought by everyone.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The more commonplace luxury jewellery is among the general population, the less interested I am in buying it.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Seite 6: Factors influencing the desire for luxury jewellery possession

When completing the following questions - please think about 'ingroup' as: **'a social group with shared interests or identity with which you identify and that you feel you are a member of.'**

Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements: * *Erforderlich*

Bitte wählen Sie nicht mehr als 1 Antwort(en) pro Reihe aus.

Bitte wählen Sie mindestens 11 Antwort(en) aus.

	strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree
I find it difficult to form a bond with other ingroup members.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I really 'fit in' with other ingroup members.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
In a group of ingroup members, I really feel that I belong.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I think about the fact that I am an ingroup member.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Overall, being an ingroup member has very little to do with how I feel about myself.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

In general, being an ingroup member is an important part of my self-image.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am not usually conscious of the fact that I am an ingroup member.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Being an ingroup member is an important reflection of who I am.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
In general, I am glad to be an ingroup member.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I often regret that I am an ingroup member.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Generally, I feel good when I think about myself as an ingroup member.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements:

Bitte wählen Sie nicht mehr als 1 Antwort(en) pro Reihe aus.

Bitte wählen Sie mindestens 13 Antwort(en) aus.

	trifft nicht zu	trifft eher nicht zu	teils-teils	trifft eher zu	trifft zu
My luxury jewellery should enable me to enhance personal growth.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My luxury jewellery should enable me to establish contact off the job.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My luxury jewellery should enable me to be recognized in society.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My luxury jewellery should enable me to show off my success.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My luxury jewellery should enable me to be admired for my success.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My luxury jewellery should enable me to be respected for my success.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Through my luxury jewellery I learn how well I perform in comparison with others.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Through my luxury jewellery I learn the extent to which my performance is of value in relation to others.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Through my luxury jewellery I learn how much freedom I have to do things my own way.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Through my luxury jewllery I learn what people think of me.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Through my luxury jewellery I learn how influential I am.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My luxury jewellery should enable me to live a luxurious life.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My luxury jewellery should enable me to attain a desirable standard of living.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Seite 8: Demographics

What is your age? * *Erforderlich*

- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 64 or older
- Prefer not to answer

What is your gender? * *Erforderlich*

- Female
- Male
- Diverse
- Prefer not to answer

What is your nationality? * *Erforderlich*

- German
- British
- French
- Spanish
- Dutch
- Swiss
- Belgian
- Austrian
- Nationality not listed

What is your marital status? * *Erforderlich*

- Single
- In a relationship/married
- Separated/divorced
- Widowed
- Prefer not to answer

- No degree
- Secondary School
- High School Diploma
- High School (A-Levels)
- completed apprenticeship
- University Degree
- Universal Bachelor Degree
- University Master Degree/Diploma
- Doctorate
- Prefer not to answer

What is your employment status? * *Erforderlich*

- Unemployed
- In education
- Student
- Employed part-time
- Employed full-time
- Self-employed
- Retired
- Prefer not to answer

Thank you for participation.

In case any questions emerged in the meantime, feel free to reach out to the researcher Vivian Alexandra Roth via: s1611091@glos.ac.uk.

You can close this window now.

Appendix B. Final online questionnaire – German version

Besitztum von Luxusschmuck

Falls Sie im Besitz von Luxusschmuck sind, könnten Sie 10 Minuten Ihrer Zeit aufwenden, um Ihre Ansichten zum Thema Luxusschmuck zu teilen? Im Rahmen meiner Doktorarbeit bin ich an Ihrer Meinung interessiert. Es gibt kein richtig oder falsch. Ihre Teilnahme ist freiwillig und Ihre Antworten sind anonym. Vielen Dank für Ihre Zeit und Hilfe.

Lesen Sie bitte folgende Informationen bevor Sie teilnehmen:

- **Voraussetzung für die Teilnahme ist, dass Sie mindestens ein Luxusschmuckstück besitzen und 18 Jahre oder älter sind.**
- Als Luxusschmuck bezeichnet man *Produkte wie Ohrringe, (Ehe-)Ringe, Armreifen und -bänder, Halsketten, Broschen, Anhänger, Manschettenknöpfe, Krawattennadeln oder ähnliches, die hochwertig sind im Sinne von Material (z.B. Platin, Weißgold, Gelbgold, Roségold, Sterling Silber, mit/ohne Edelsteine, Perlen), Design, Herstellungsweise, Auflage oder Preis.* Modeschmuck ist nicht gemeint.
- Ziel des Projekts ist herauszufinden, welche Faktoren für das Verlangen nach dem Besitz von Luxusschmuck maßgeblich sind.
- Das Projekt wird nicht von Dritten finanziert.
- Die Universität Gloucestershire wird die Ergebnisse veröffentlichen.
- Die Präsentation der Ergebnisse erfolgt gebündelt, sodass keine individuellen Antworten veröffentlicht werden.
- Bitte nehmen Sie zur Kenntnis, dass die Teilnahme an diesem Projekt das freiwillige

Ausfüllen eines Online-Fragebogens bedeutet. Wenn Sie sich entscheiden, nicht teilzunehmen, entstehen keine negativen Folgen. Auch wenn Sie zum jetzigen Zeitpunkt der Teilnahme zustimmen, können Sie die Sitzung jederzeit verlassen und die Teilnahme bei eventuellem Unwohlsein abbrechen.

- Bitte nehmen Sie zur Kenntnis, dass Ihre Antworten anonym sind, da keine personenbezogenen Daten (wie z.B. Name) erhoben werden. Es werden lediglich demographische Informationen (z.B. Altersgruppe) abgefragt.
- Bitte nehmen Sie zur Kenntnis, dass Sie die Forscherin der Studie (Vivian Alexandra Roth) für weitere Erläuterungen und Informationen jederzeit unter der E-Mail-Adresse [redacted] kontaktieren können.

Vielen Dank im Voraus. Ihre Unterstützung wird sehr geschätzt.

Vivian Alexandra Roth

1. Basierend auf den oben beschriebenen Informationen, bestätigen Sie bitte, dass Sie die Beschreibung der Studie gelesen haben, über 18 Jahre alt sind und den beschriebenen Bedingungen zustimmen. * *Erforderlich*

- Ich stimme zu

Sollten Sie kein Luxusschmuck besitzen oder nicht an der Umfrage teilnehmen möchten, bedanke ich mich für Ihre Zeit. Sie können das Fenster schließen.

2. Wie viele Luxusschmuckstücke besitzen Sie? (Bitte nennen Sie nur eine Zahl) * *Erforderlich*

3. Wie haben Sie Ihren Luxusschmuckstücke erlangt? * *Erforderlich*

Bitte wählen Sie nicht mehr als 4 Antwort(en) aus.

- [ ] Erbe
- [ ] Geschenk
- [ ] Kauf
- [ ] Geliehen
- [ ] Sonstiges

3.a. Falls Sie "Sonstiges" ausgewählt haben, machen Sie bitte genauere Angaben:

4. Bitte schätzen Sie ein, wie stark Sie den folgenden Aussagen zustimmen oder widersprechen:

Bitte wählen Sie nicht mehr als 1 Antwort(en) pro Reihe aus.

Bitte wählen Sie mindestens 3 Antwort(en) aus.

	trifft nicht zu	trifft eher nicht zu	teils-teils	trifft eher zu	trifft zu
Für mich ist es wichtig, meine Stellung in meinem sozialen Umfeld aufrecht zu erhalten.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ich denke darüber nach, wie ich meine Stellung in meinem sozialen Umfeld aufrecht erhalten bzw. verbessern kann.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ich fokussiere mich darauf, meine Stellung in meinem sozialen Umfeld zu erhalten bzw. zu verbessern.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Bitte denken Sie beim Beantworten der Fragen an die Definition von „Besitz“ als: ***eine intensive emotionale Bindung, die damit verbunden ist, wie Sie sich selbst sehen und die über den simplen "Besitz" von etwas hinausgeht***.

5. Bitte schätzen Sie ein, wie stark Sie den folgenden Aussagen zustimmen oder

widersprechen: ✱ *Erforderlich*

Bitte wählen Sie nicht mehr als 1 Antwort(en) pro Reihe aus.

Bitte wählen Sie mindestens 2 Antwort(en) aus.

	trifft nicht zu	trifft eher nicht zu	teils-teils	trifft eher zu	trifft zu
Ich möchte Luxusschmuck besitzen.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ich möchte keinen Luxusschmuck besitzen.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

6. **Bitte bewerten Sie, wie stark Sie den folgenden Aussagen zustimmen oder widersprechen:** ✱ *Erforderlich*

Bitte wählen Sie nicht mehr als 1 Antwort(en) pro Reihe aus.

Bitte wählen Sie mindestens 3 Antwort(en) aus.

	trifft nicht zu	trifft eher nicht zu	teils-teils	trifft eher zu	trifft zu
Mein Luxusschmuck erinnert mich an wichtige Menschen in meinem Leben.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Mein Luxusschmuck erinnert mich an wichtige Dinge, die ich getan habe oder an Orte, die ich besucht habe.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Wenn ich meinen Luxusschmuck verlieren würde, würde ein anderes Luxusschmuckstück wie dieses für mich weniger bedeutungsvoll sein.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

7. Bitte bewerten Sie, wie stark Sie den folgenden Aussagen zustimmen oder widersprechen: * *Erforderlich*

Bitte wählen Sie nicht mehr als 1 Antwort(en) pro Reihe aus.

Bitte wählen Sie mindestens 7 Antwort(en) aus.

	trifft nicht zu	trifft eher nicht zu	teils-teils	trifft eher zu	trifft zu
Wenn jemand sich über meinen Luxusschmuck lächerlich machen würde, wäre ich irritiert.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Mein Luxusschmuck erinnert mich daran, wer ich bin.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Wenn ich mich selbst beschreiben würde, wäre mein Luxusschmuck wahrscheinlich etwas, das ich erwähnen würde.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Wenn jemand meinen Luxusschmuck zerstören würde, würde ich mich persönlich angegriffen fühlen.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Wenn ich meinen Luxusschmuck verlieren würde, hätte ich das Gefühl, einen Teil von mir selbst verloren zu haben.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ich habe keine Gefühle für meinen Luxusschmuck.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Wenn jemand meinen Luxusschmuck lobt, fühle ich mich selbst ein wenig gelobt.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Wahrscheinlich denken Personen, die mich kennen, manchmal an meinen Luxusschmuck, wenn sie an mich denken.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

8. **Bitte bewerten Sie, wie stark Sie den folgenden Aussagen zustimmen oder widersprechen:** * *Erforderlich*

Bitte wählen Sie nicht mehr als 1 Antwort(en) pro Reihe aus.

Bitte wählen Sie mindestens 5 Antwort(en) aus.

	trifft nicht zu	trifft eher nicht zu	teils-teils	trifft eher zu	trifft zu

Mein Luxusschmuck hilft mir dabei, eine Identität zu verkörpern, die ich haben möchte.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Mein Luxusschmuck hilft mir dabei, die Lücke zu verringern zwischen dem, wer ich bin, und dem, wer ich sein möchte.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Mein Luxusschmuck ist für meine Identität von zentraler Bedeutung.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Mein Luxusschmuck ist Teil davon, wer ich bin.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Wenn mir mein Luxusschmuck gestohlen werden würde, hätte ich das Gefühl, dass mir auch meine Identität geraubt wird.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ich leite einen Teil meiner Identität von meinem Luxusschmuck ab.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

9. Bitte bewerten Sie, wie stark Sie den folgenden Aussagen zustimmen oder widersprechen: *✱ Erforderlich*

Bitte wählen Sie nicht mehr als 1 Antwort(en) pro Reihe aus.

Bitte wählen Sie mindestens 12 Antwort(en) aus.

	trifft nicht zu	trifft eher nicht zu	teils-teils	trifft eher zu	trifft zu
Ich kombiniere meinen Luxusschmuck oft so, dass ich ein unverwechselbares persönliches Bild von mir schaffe.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ich versuche häufig, interessantere Versionen von handelsüblichem Luxussschmuck zu finden, da ich gerne originell bin.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ich versuche aktiv, meine persönliche Einzigartigkeit zu entwickeln, indem ich Luxusschmuck besitze.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ein Auge für interessante und außergewöhnliche Produkte zu haben, hilft mir dabei, ein unverwechselbares Image zu etablieren.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Ich habe bereits gegen gesellschaftliche Normen und Regeln verstoßen, wenn ich Luxusschmuck gekauft habe oder ihn in gewissen Situationen getragen habe.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ich habe bereits gegen die anerkannten Regeln in meinem sozialen Umfeld verstoßen, wenn es darum ging, was man kauft oder besitzt.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ich habe noch nie gegen die anerkannten Regeln in meinem sozialen Umfeld verstoßen, wann und wie bestimmter Luxusschmuck richtig zu tragen ist.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ich genieße es, Menschen zu provozieren, indem ich etwas kaufe oder trage, das ihrem Geschmack widerspricht.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Wenn ein Luxusschmuckstück, das ich bereits besitze, bei der Allgemeinheit populär wird, benutze ich es weniger.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ich versuche, Luxusschmuck zu vermeiden, von dem ich weiß, dass er von der breiten Masse gekauft wird.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
In der Regel gefällt mir Luxusschmuck nicht, der von der breiten Masse gekauft wird.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Je beliebter Luxusschmuck bei der Allgemeinheit ist, desto weniger interessiert bin ich an einem Kauf.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Beim Beantworten der folgenden Fragen, denken Sie bei dem Begriff "Gruppenmitglied" (auch "Ingroup" genannt) bitte an: **eine soziale Gruppe mit gemeinsamen Interessen oder gemeinsamer Identität, mit der Sie sich identifizieren, zugehörig fühlen und in der Sie sich wie ein Gruppenmitglied fühlen.**

10. **Bitte bewerten Sie, wie stark Sie den folgenden Aussagen zustimmen oder widersprechen:** * *Erforderlich*

Bitte wählen Sie nicht mehr als 1 Antwort(en) pro Reihe aus.

Bitte wählen Sie mindestens 9 Antwort(en) aus.

	trifft nicht zu	trifft eher nicht zu	teils-teils	trifft eher zu	trifft zu
Ich finde es schwierig, eine Bindung zu anderen Gruppenmitgliedern aufzubauen.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ich passe gut zu anderen Gruppenmitgliedern.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Als Gruppenmitglied fühle ich mich wirklich zugehörig.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Im Allgemeinen ist es ein wichtiger Teil meines Selbstbildes, ein Gruppenmitglied zu sein.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Mir ist häufig nicht bewusst, ein Gruppenmitglied zu sein.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ein Mitglied einer Gruppe zu sein ist ein wichtiges Spiegelbild dessen, wer ich bin.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ich bin generell froh darüber, ein Gruppenmitglied zu sein.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ich bereue oft, dass ich ein Gruppenmitglied bin.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Im Allgemeinen fühle ich mich gut, wenn ich an mich selbst als Gruppenmitglied denke.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

11. Bitte bewerten Sie, wie stark Sie den folgenden Aussagen zustimmen oder widersprechen:

Bitte wählen Sie nicht mehr als 1 Antwort(en) pro Reihe aus.

Bitte wählen Sie mindestens 13 Antwort(en) aus.

	trifft nicht zu	trifft eher nicht zu	teils-teils	trifft eher zu	trifft zu
Mein Luxusschmuck sollte es mir ermöglichen, meine persönliche Entwicklung zu fördern.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Mein Luxusschmuck sollte es mir ermöglichen, außerhalb meiner Arbeit Kontakte aufzubauen.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Mein Luxusschmuck sollte es mir ermöglichen, in der Gesellschaft anerkannt zu werden.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Mein Luxusschmuck sollte es mir ermöglichen, meinen Erfolg zur Schau zu stellen.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Mein Luxusschmuck sollte es mir ermöglichen, für meinen Erfolg bewundert zu werden.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Mein Luxusschmuck sollte es mir ermöglichen, für meinen Erfolg respektiert zu werden.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Durch meinen Luxusschmuck lerne ich, wie gut ich im Vergleich zu anderen bin.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Durch meinen Luxusschmuck lerne ich, inwieweit meine Leistung im Vergleich zu anderen von Wert ist.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Durch meinen Luxusschmuck lerne ich, wie viele Freiheiten ich habe, Dinge auf meine eigene Art & Weise zu tun.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Durch meinen Luxusschmuck lerne ich, was andere Menschen über mich denken.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Durch meinen Luxusschmuck lerne ich, wie einflussreich ich bin.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Mein Luxusschmuck sollte dazu beitragen, ein luxuriöses Leben führen zu können.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Mein Luxusschmuck sollte es mir ermöglichen, einen wünschenswerten Lebensstandard zu erreichen.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Seite 8: Angaben zu Ihrer Person

12. Wie alt sind Sie? * *Erforderlich*

- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 64 oder älter
- Keine Angabe

13. Was ist Ihr Geschlecht? * *Erforderlich*

- Weiblich
- Männlich
- Divers
- Keine Angabe

14. Welche Staatsangehörigkeit besitzen Sie? * *Erforderlich*

- Deutsch
- Britisch
- Französisch
- Spanisch
- Niederländisch
- Schweizer
- Belgisch
- Österreicher
- Nationalität nicht aufgeführt

15. Wie ist ihr Familienstand? * *Erforderlich*

- alleinstehend
- in einer Partnerschaft/verheiratet
- getrennt/geschieden
- verwitwet
- Keine Angabe

16. Welches ist Ihr höchster erreichter Bildungsabschluss? * Erforderlich

- Kein Bildungsabschluss
- Hauptschulabschluss
- Realschule (Mittlere Reife)
- Gymnasium (Abitur)
- Abgeschlossene Ausbildung
- Fachhochschulabschluss
- Bachelor
- Master / Diplom
- Promotion
- Keine Angabe

17. Was ist Ihr jetziger Beschäftigungsstatus? * Erforderlich

- Arbeitslos
- In der Ausbildung
- Student
- Teilzeit-angestellt
- Vollzeit-angestellt
- Selbstständig
- Pensioniert/ in Rente
- Keine Angabe

Vielen Dank für Ihre Teilnahme.

Falls Sie noch Fragen haben, können Sie die Forscherin Vivian Alexandra Roth per E-Mail unter s1611091@glos.ac.uk erreichen.

Für Nutzer von SurveyCircle (www.surveycircle.com): Der Survey Code lautet: JAZZ-1MP9-V7PP-YRDP

Sie können dieses Fenster jetzt schließen.

Appendix C. Methodology

Figure 11

Initial model as proposed based on literature review (without any items being removed)

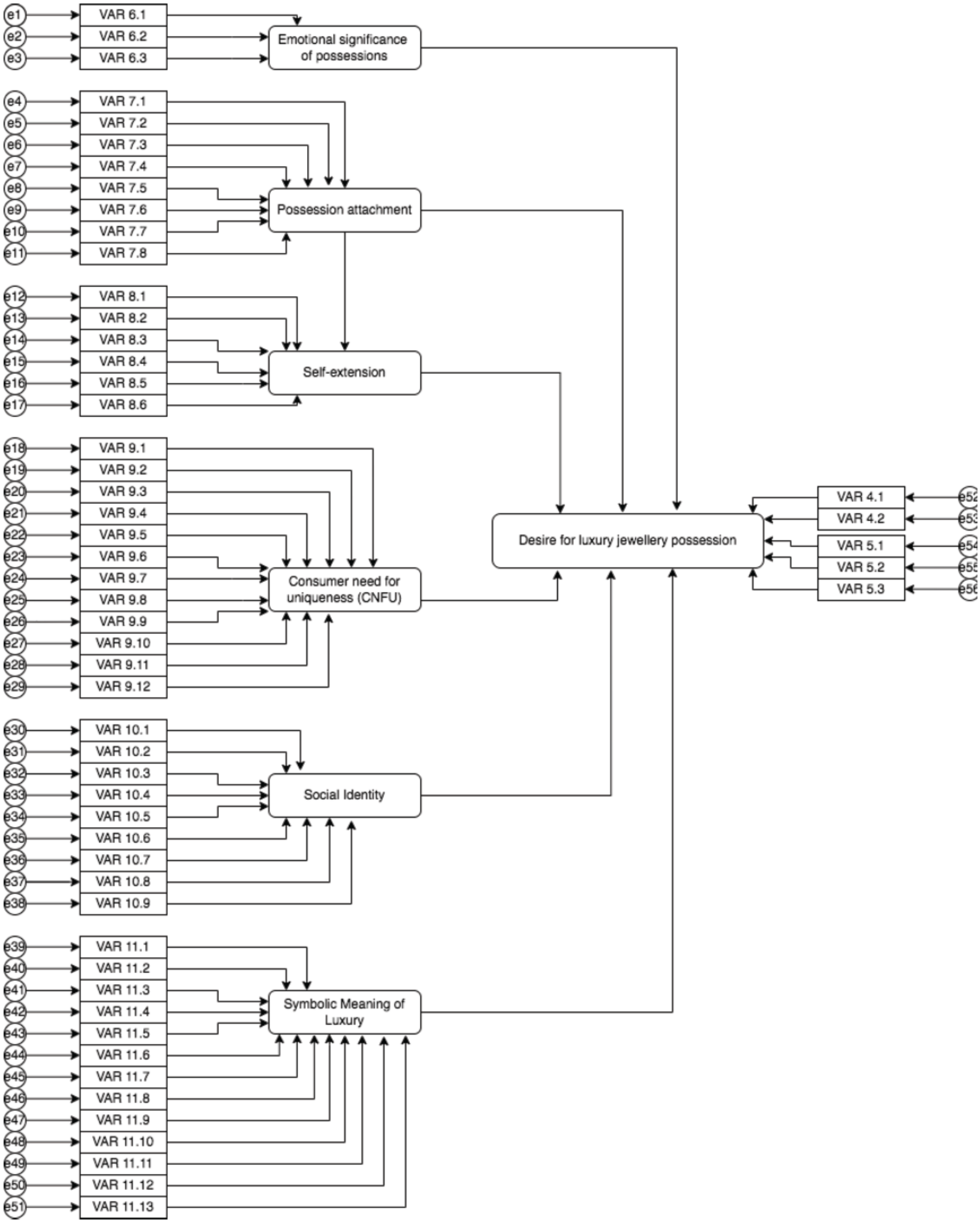


Table 37

Overview of groups for data collection

Platform	Group
LinkedIn	• Survey Exchange – find participants for research studies (for dissertation, thesis, market research) • Umfrageteilnehmer finden (Probanden für Bachelorarbeit, Masterarbeit, Dissertation, Marktforschung) • Respondenten gezocht (underzoek, vragenlijst, enquete, scriptie, bachelorscriptie, masterscriptie)
Xing	• Studien und Abschlussarbeiten • Teilnehmer finden für Umfragen, Studien, Experimente – Probanden für Abschlussarbeit, Studienarbeit, Dissertation, Forschung • Umfrageteilnehmer finden – Umfragen posten, Teilnehmer finden – für Bachelor, Master, Thesis, Studium, Marktforschung
Facebook	• Umfragen & Online-Experimente – Teilnehmer für empirische Studien finden • UoG Research Students • BSc International Business Administration 2012/2013 • Probanden gesucht • MST, European Studies &Public Administration - University of Twente • University of Twente - Germany portal • University of Twente • Umfragen & Umfrageteilnehmer finden • Abi 2011 THG • IBA UT 2014 (study related) • Beverly Kettwig 45219 • Umfrageteilnehmer finden – Umfragegruppe für Bachelor, Master, Studium, PhD

- Study Life and Work - Umfragen und Fragen zu Abschlussarbeiten
- Universität Duisburg-Essen
- Women of Vienna
- FOM Netzwerk
- Heinrich Heine Universität Düsseldorf
- Heinrich-Heine-Universität Düsseldorf (HHU)
- Studien suchen Teilnehmer -Studienteilnehmer gesucht & gefunden (+Umfragen)
- PhD Support Group
- Studienarbeiten // Umfragen // Meinungsforschung
- UMFRAGEN! - Studienarbeiten - Meinungsforschung
- Dissertation Survey Exchange – Share Your Research Study, Find Participants
- Frauen - POWER – Netzwerk
- Umfrageteilnehmer finden – Umfragegruppe für Bachelor, Master, Studium, PhD
- Research participation – Dissertation, Thesis, PhD, Survey Sharing
- Ruhr-Universität Bochum
- Probanden & Umfrageteilnehmer gesucht, Teilnehmer für Umfrage finden
- Studien suchen Teilnehmer -Studienteilnehmer gesucht & gefunden (+Umfragen)
- Women Helping Women Entrepreneurs
- Umfragen

Appendix D. Results

Table 38

Descriptive statistics on Item-level

Item	Mean	Standard deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis	Kolmogorov-Smirnov		Shapiro-Wilk	
VAR4.1	3,46	1,45	-0,414	-1,233	0,209	*	0,848	*
VAR4.2	3,21	1,55	-0,104	-1,523	0,214	*	0,841	*
VAR 4.3	2,87	1,37	-0,051	-1,364	0,222	*	0,874	*
VAR 5.1	3,87	1,27	-0,843	-0,427	0,261	*	0,812	*
VAR5.2	4,14	1,09	-1,111	0,315	0,310	*	0,767	*
VAR6.1	4,31	1,16	-1,716	1,892	0,375	*	0,643	*
VAR6.2	3,84	1,44	-0,904	-0,665	0,295	*	0,760	*
VAR6.3	3,98	1,29	-1,186	0,213	0,264	*	0,754	*
VAR7.1	3,50	1,53	-0,497	-1,299	0,226	*	0,815	*
VAR7.2	3,03	1,48	-0,085	-1,446	0,209	*	0,866	*
VAR7.3	2,38	1,48	0,482	-1,379	0,275	*	0,790	*
VAR7.4	4,01	1,25	-1,123	0,137	0,276	*	0,770	*
VAR7.5	3,42	1,39	-0,458	-1,075	0,218	*	0,865	*
VAR7.6	3,93	1,25	-0,931	-0,323	0,268	*	0,795	*
VAR7.7	3,45	1,40	-0,464	-1,093	0,208	*	0,860	*
VAR7.8	2,49	1,46	0,293	-1,534	0,256	*	0,803	*
VAR8.1	2,92	1,67	0,099	-1,670	0,198	*	0,807	*
VAR8.2	2,55	1,56	0,346	-1,524	0,257	*	0,800	*
VAR8.3	2,51	1,51	0,331	-1,514	0,263	*	0,802	*
VAR8.4	2,84	1,61	0,085	-1,614	0,221	*	0,823	*
VAR8.5	2,79	1,68	0,228	-1,648	0,222	*	0,796	*
VAR8.6	2,57	1,65	0,394	-1,543	0,272	*	0,781	*
VAR9.1	3,11	1,59	-0,077	-1,577	0,191	*	0,836	*
VAR9.2	3,03	1,67	-0,049	-1,667	0,205	*	0,809	*
VAR9.3	2,77	1,69	0,249	-1,654	0,230	*	0,788	*
VAR9.4	3,14	1,59	-0,124	-1,574	0,192	*	0,834	*
VAR9.5	2,61	1,76	0,368	-1,683	0,307	*	0,737	*
VAR9.6	2,75	1,71	0,230	-1,691	0,257	*	0,778	*
VAR9.7	3,30	1,66	-0,269	-1,611	0,249	*	0,796	*
VAR9.8	1,91	1,22	1,165	0,162	0,310	*	0,746	*

VAR9.9	2,81	1,59	0,065	-1,636	0,230	*	0,817	*
VAR9.10	3,16	1,58	-0,241	-1,520	0,223	*	0,831	*
VAR9.11	3,07	1,44	-0,275	-1,343	0,246	*	0,856	*
VAR9.12	3,16	1,56	-0,225	-1,494	0,211	*	0,839	*
VAR10.1	4,37	0,89	-1,505	1,841	0,340	*	0,712	*
VAR10.2	4,15	0,91	-0,959	0,569	0,250	*	0,810	*
VAR10.3	4,07	0,99	-0,918	0,192	0,243	*	0,819	*
VAR10.4	3,69	1,20	-0,654	-0,536	0,227	*	0,865	*
VAR10.5	3,54	1,23	-0,528	-0,752	0,231	*	0,879	*
VAR10.6	3,47	1,35	-0,437	-1,007	0,190	*	0,873	*
VAR10.7	4,05	1,07	-1,078	0,534	0,251	*	0,803	*
VAR10.8	4,47	0,84	-1,782	3,021	0,369	*	0,666	*
VAR10.9	3,94	1,13	-0,984	0,269	0,228	*	0,823	*
VAR11.1	2,38	1,39	0,328	-1,554	0,264	*	0,785	*
VAR11.2	2,32	1,45	0,469	-1,439	0,302	*	0,771	*
VAR11.3	2,66	1,64	0,290	-1,587	0,255	*	0,797	*
VAR11.4	2,69	1,57	0,182	-1,579	0,244	*	0,818	*
VAR11.5	2,58	1,57	0,306	-1,520	0,261	*	0,808	*
VAR11.6	2,46	1,43	0,263	-1,530	0,266	*	0,806	*
VAR11.7	2,18	1,44	0,771	-0,947	0,316	*	0,762	*
VAR11.8	2,27	1,50	0,628	-1,232	0,317	*	0,763	*
VAR11.9	2,25	1,26	0,529	-1,039	0,242	*	0,835	*
VAR11.10	2,30	1,26	0,410	-1,125	0,248	*	0,841	*
VAR11.11	2,28	1,43	0,514	-1,339	0,305	*	0,778	*
VAR11.12	2,76	1,73	0,220	-1,712	0,263	*	0,771	*
VAR11.13	2,84	1,70	0,132	-1,705	0,239	*	0,791	*

** Indicates significance*

Table 39

Overview of factor loadings per item for initial measurement model (indicated as standardized regression weights in AMOS) (<0.5 deleted for further analysis)

Construct	Item	Factor loading
Desire for Luxury Jewellery possession	VAR4.1.Fi	0.888
Desire for Luxury Jewellery possession	VAR4.2.Ii	0.957

Desire for Luxury Jewellery possession	VAR4.3.Ii	0.875
Desire for Luxury Jewellery possession	VAR5.1.Ii	0.659
Desire for Luxury Jewellery possession	VAR5.2.Ii	0.546
Emotional significance of possessions	VAR6.1.Mi	0.682
Emotional significance of possessions	VAR6.2.Mi	0.731
Emotional significance of possessions	VAR6.3.Wi	0.707
Possession attachment	VAR7.1.Wi	0.697
Possession attachment	VAR7.2.Mi	0.826
Possession attachment	VAR7.3.Wi	0.884
Possession attachment	VAR7.4.Wi	0.595
Possession attachment	VAR7.5.Wi	0.731
Possession attachment	VAR7.6.Ii	0.579
Possession attachment	VAR7.7.Wi	0.783
Possession attachment	VAR7.8.Wi	0.873
Social identity	VAR10.1.i	0.473 (deleted)
Social identity	VAR10.2.i	0.719
Social identity	VAR10.3.i	0.782
Social identity	VAR10.4.i	0.807
Social identity	VAR10.5.i	0.253 (deleted)
Social identity	VAR10.6.i	0.839
Social identity	VAR10.7.i	0.857
Social identity	VAR10.8.i	0.436 (deleted)
Social identity	VAR10.9.i	0.819
Symbolic meaning of luxury	VAR11.1.i	0.902
Symbolic meaning of luxury	VAR11.2.i	0.93
Symbolic meaning of luxury	VAR11.3.i	0.95
Symbolic meaning of luxury	VAR11.4.i	0.935
Symbolic meaning of luxury	VAR11.5.i	0.95

Symbolic meaning of luxury	VAR11.6.i	0.926
Symbolic meaning of luxury	VAR11.7.i	0.872
Symbolic meaning of luxury	VAR11.8.i	0.895
Symbolic meaning of luxury	VAR11.9.i	0.637
Symbolic meaning of luxury	VAR11.10i	0.744
Symbolic meaning of luxury	VAR11.11i	0.913
Symbolic meaning of luxury	VAR11.12i	0.924
Symbolic meaning of luxury	VAR11.13i	0.925
CNFU	VAR9.12.i	0.777
CNFU	VAR9.11.i	0.715
CNFU	VAR9.10.i	0.776
CNFU	VAR9.9.Wi	0.84
CNFU	VAR9.8.Ii	0.425 (deleted)
CNFU	VAR9.7.Ii	0.543
CNFU	VAR9.6.Ii	0.891
CNFU	VAR9.5.Ii	0.929
CNFU	VAR9.4.Ei	0.879
CNFU	VAR9.3.Ii	0.945
CNFU	VAR9.2.Ii	0.861
CNFU	VAR9.1.Ii	0.875
Self-extension	VAR8.6.Ii	0.954
Self-extension	VAR8.5.Wi	0.911
Self-extension	VAR8.4.Mi	0.899
Self-extension	VAR8.3.Mi	0.934
Self-extension	VAR8.2.Mi	0.932
Self-extension	VAR8.1.Mi	0.932

Table 40

Overview of factor loadings per item for final measurement model (indicated as non-standardized regression weights in AMOS)

Construct	Item	Non-standardized regression weight
Desire for Luxury Jewllery Possession	VAR4.1	,851
Desire for Luxury Jewllery Possession	VAR4.2	1,000
Desire for Luxury Jewllery Possession	VAR4.3	,795
Emotional significance of possessions	VAR6.1	,791
Emotional significance of possessions	VAR6.2	1,000
Emotional significance of possessions	VAR6.3	,899
Social Identity	VAR10.2	,502
Social Identity	VAR10.3	,617
Social Identity	VAR10.4	,846
Social Identity	VAR10.6	1,000
Social Identity	VAR10.7	,773
Social Identity	VAR10.9	,795
Self Extension	VAR8.6	1,000
Self Extension	VAR8.5	,972
Self Extension	VAR8.4	,916
Self Extension	VAR8.3	,895
Self Extension	VAR8.2	,927
Self Extension	VAR8.1	,988

Table 41

Overview of hypotheses and their respective result based on this thesis

Nr	Hypothesis	Result
H1a	Emotional significance of possessions has a *positive* influence the on emotional relation to objects.	Not supported
H1b	Possession attachment has a *positive* influence on the emotional relation to objects.	Not supported
H1c	Emotional relation to objects has a *positive* influence on desire for luxury jewellery possession.	Not supported
H1d	Possession attachment has a *positive* influence on emotional significance of possessions.	Not supported
H1e	Possession attachment has a *positive* influence on self-extension.	Not supported
H2a	Self-extension has a *positive* influence on self-improvement.	Supported
H2b	Consumer's need for uniqueness has a *positive* influence on self-improvement.	Not supported
H2c	Self-improvement has a *positive* influence on desire for luxury jewellery possession.	Supported
H3a	Social identity has a *positive* influence on social positioning.	Supported
H3b	Symbolic meaning of luxury has a *positive* influence on social positioning.	Not supported
H3c	Social positioning has a *positive* influence on desire for luxury jewellery.	Supported

Table 42

Overview of results for Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and Composite Reliability (CR) for the initial model

Research construct	Number of items	Average Variance Extracted *(AVE)*	Composite Reliability *(CR)*
Desire for luxury jewellery possession	5	.640	.895
Emotional significance of possessions	3	.499	.749
Possession Attachment	8	.569	.912
Self-Extension	6	.859	.973
Consumer Need for Uniqueness	11	.687	.959
Social Identity	6	.648	.917
Symbolic Meaning of Luxury	13	.791	.979

Table 43

Overview of discriminant validity for the initial measurement model considering square root of AVE and the construct correlations

Constructs	N	CR	AVE	DR	desire for lux. Jewl. Poss.	Emo. sign. of poss.	Poss. attachment	social identity	Symb. Mean.ng of lux. Jewl.	CNFU	self-exten.
desire for lux. Jewl. Poss.	5	.896	.640	.800	.800						
Emot. Sign. of poss.	3	.750	.499	.706	.556	.706					
Poss. Attachm.	8	.912	.569	.754	.843	.675	.754				
social identity	6	.917	.859	.805	.687	.516	.676	.805			

Symb. Mean. of lux. Jewl.	13	.980	.687	.889	.831*	.472	.913*	.65	.889		
CNFU	11	.960	.648	.828	.823*	.534	.921*	0.667	.912*	.828	
self-extension	6	.973	.791	.927	.838*	.577	.975*	.68	.936*	.932*	.927

** Indication of construct correlation being higher than the AVE*

Table 44

Reliability of the initial measurement model by assessing Cronbach's Alpha

Research constructs	Nr. of items	Cronbach's Alpha
Desire for luxury jewellery possession	5	.896
Emotional significance of possessions	3	.746
Possession attachment	7	.912
Self-extension	6	.973
Consumer need for uniqueness *(CNFU)* (1 item deleted based on low factor loadings)	12	.954
Social identity (3 items deleted based on low factor loadings)	9	.879
Symbolic meaning of luxury	13	.98

Table 45

Discriminant validity of the initial model without VAR5.2 and with correlated error terms by modification indices

Constructs	Nr of items per scale	AVE	Square root of AVE	desire for lux. Jewl. Poss.	emotional sign. of poss.	Poss. Attachm.	social identity	Symb. Mean. Lux. Jewl.	CNFU	self-extension

			(DR)							
Eesire for lux. Jewl. Poss.	4	.726	.852	.852						
Emotional sign. of poss.	3	.499	.706	.547	.706					
Poss. Attachm.	8	.569	.754	.832	.664	.754				
social identity	6	.859	.805	.686	.514	.679	.805			
Symb. Mean. of lux. Jewl.	13	.687	.889	.823	.477	.922*	.657	.889		
CNFU	11	.648	.828	.819	.541	.931*	.677	.918*	.828	
self-extension	6	.791	.927	.827	.579	.979*	.683	.938*	.938*	.927

** Indication of construct correlation being higher than the AVE*

Figure 12

Final structural model 1 (without covariances)

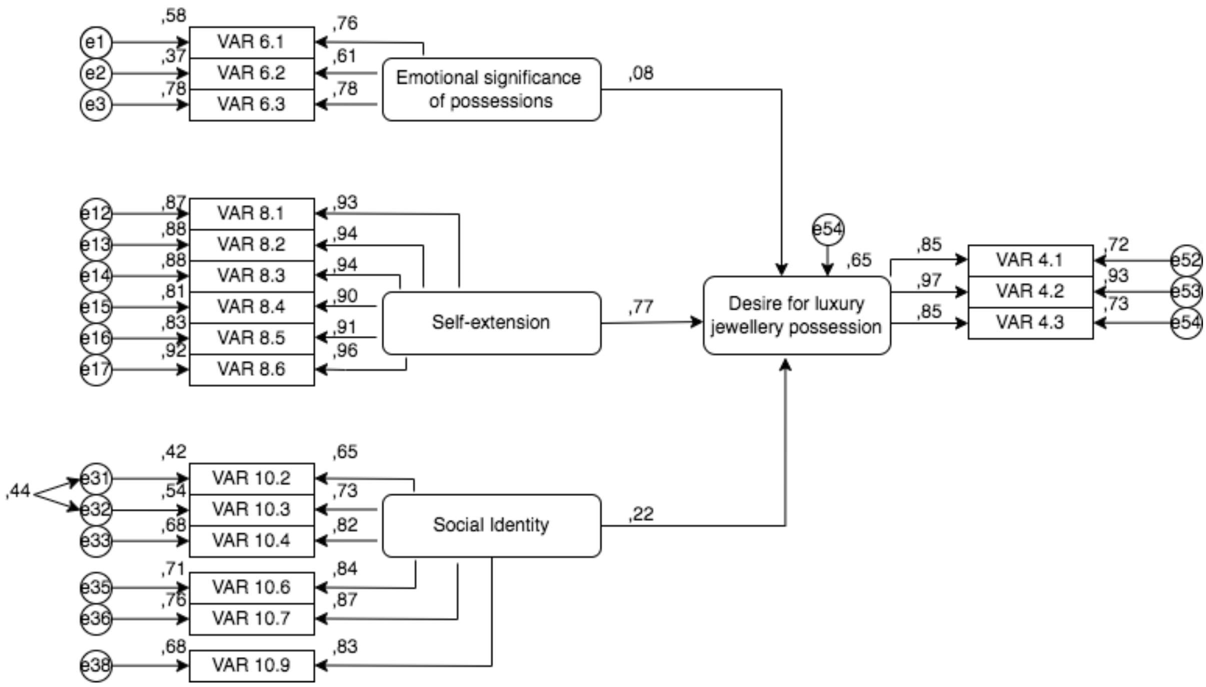


Table 46

Test of Between-subjects Effects on the variable of Age

Source		F	Sig.
Age	desire for luxury jewellery possession	19.105	0.000
	emotional significance	2.836	0.024
	possession attachment	26.127	0.000
	self extension	32.035	0.000
	CNFU	40.151	0.000
	social identity	12.748	0.000
	Symbolic meaning of luxury	28.318	0.000

Degrees of freedom: 4/541

Figure 13

Profile pilot on Age and desire for luxury jewellery possession

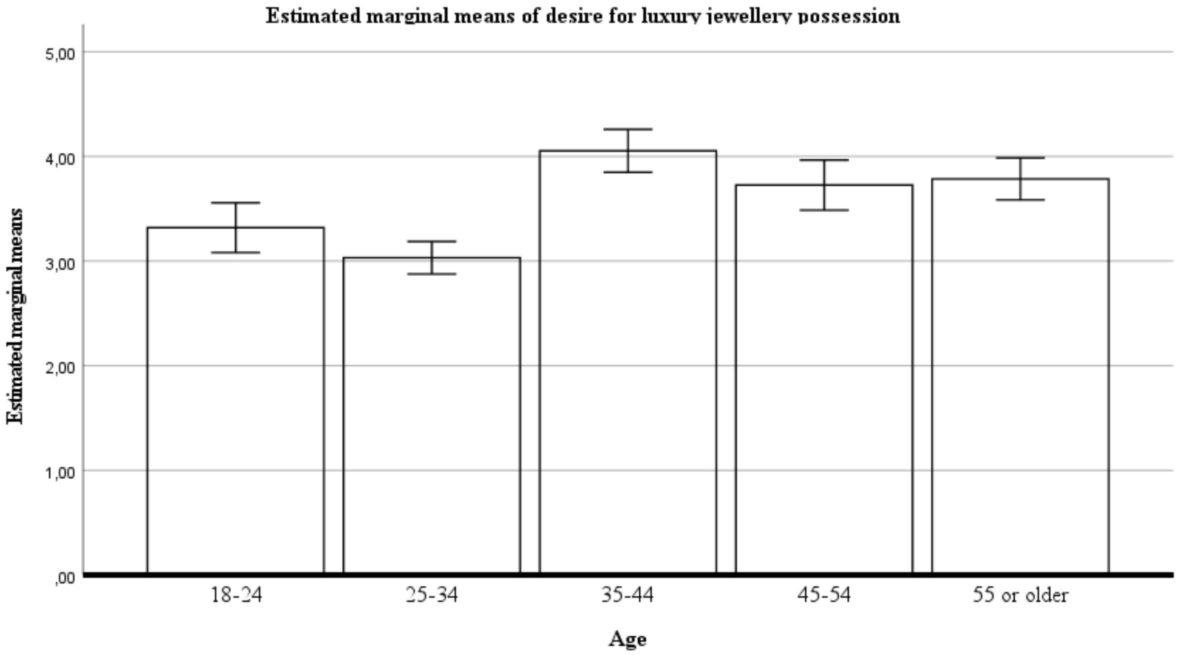


Figure 14

Profile pilot on Age and emotional significance of possessions

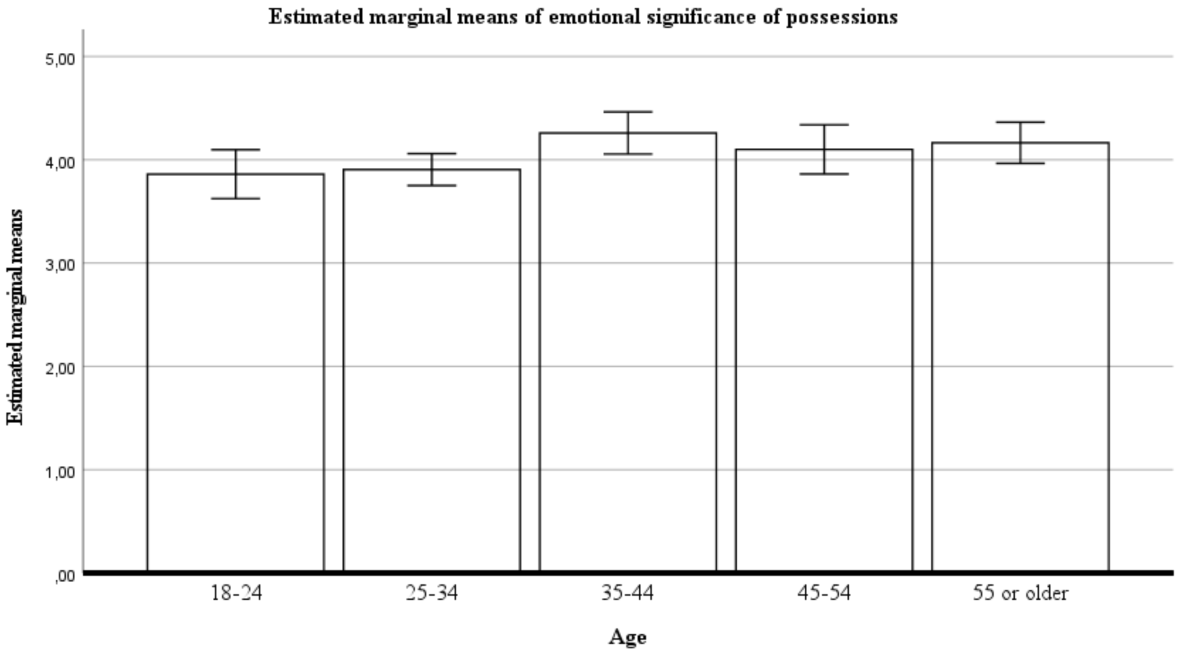


Figure 15

Profile pilot on Age and possession attachment

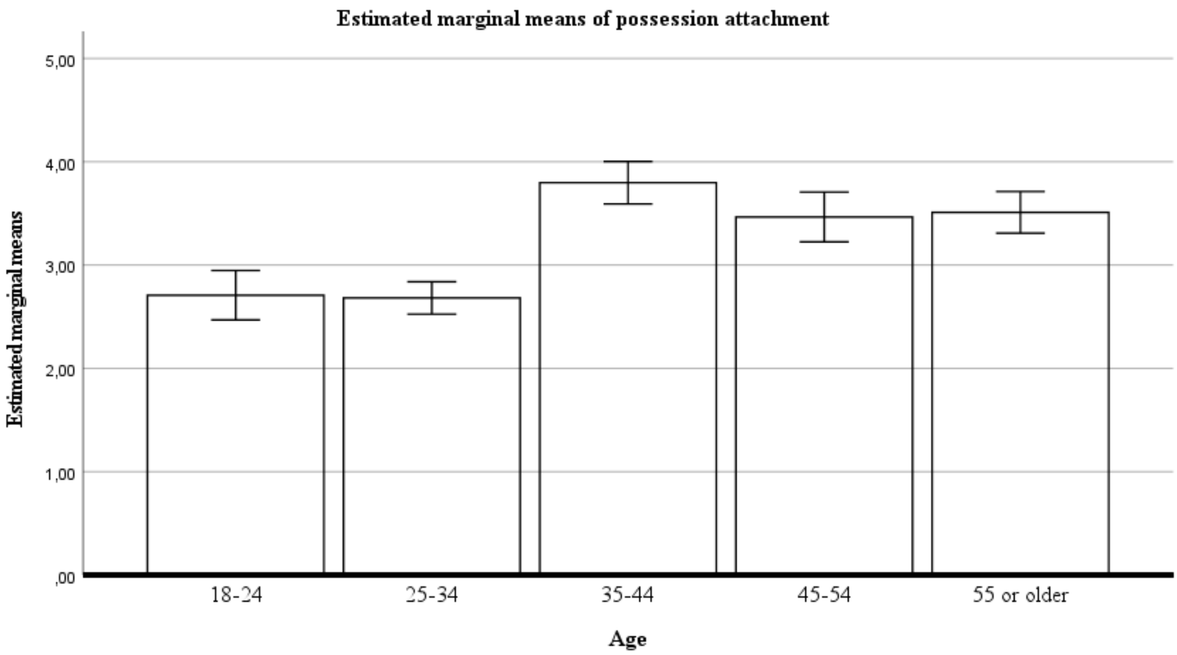


Figure 16

Profile pilot on Age and self-extension

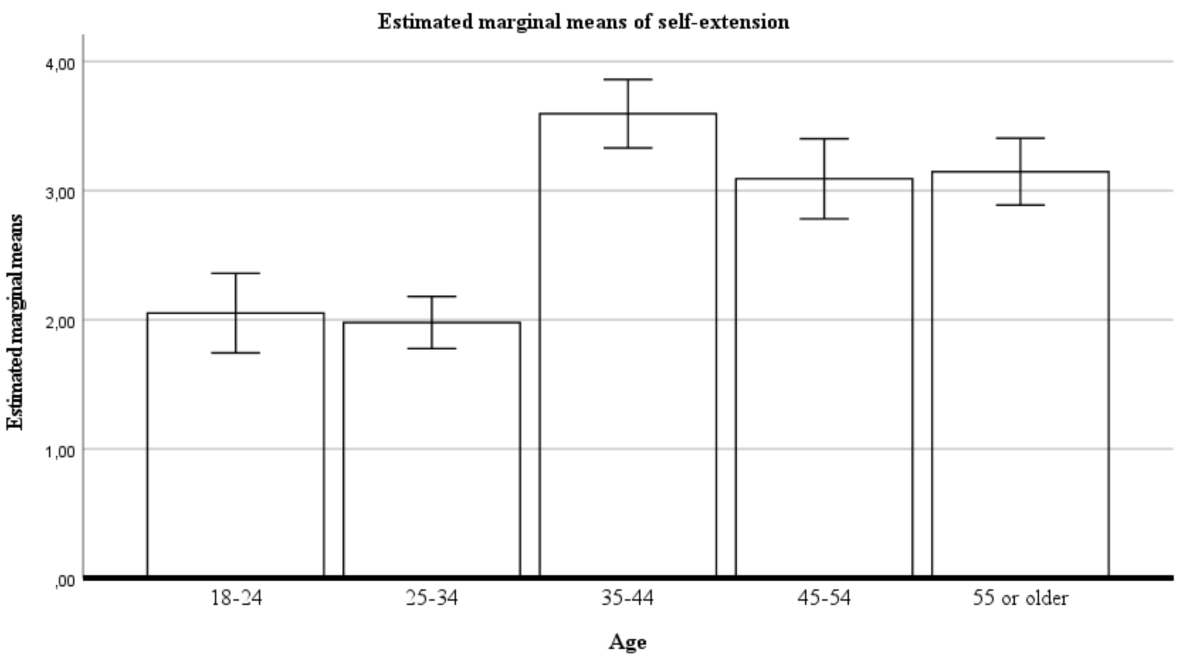


Figure 17

Profile pilot on Age and CNFU

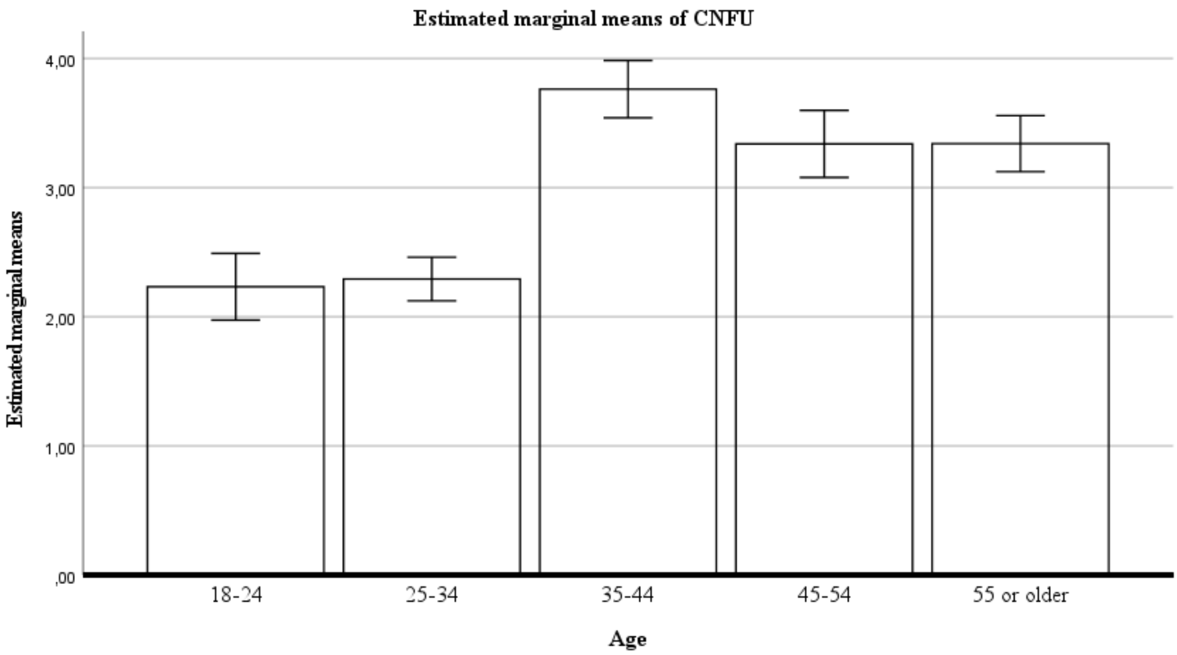


Figure 18

Profile pilot on Age and social identity

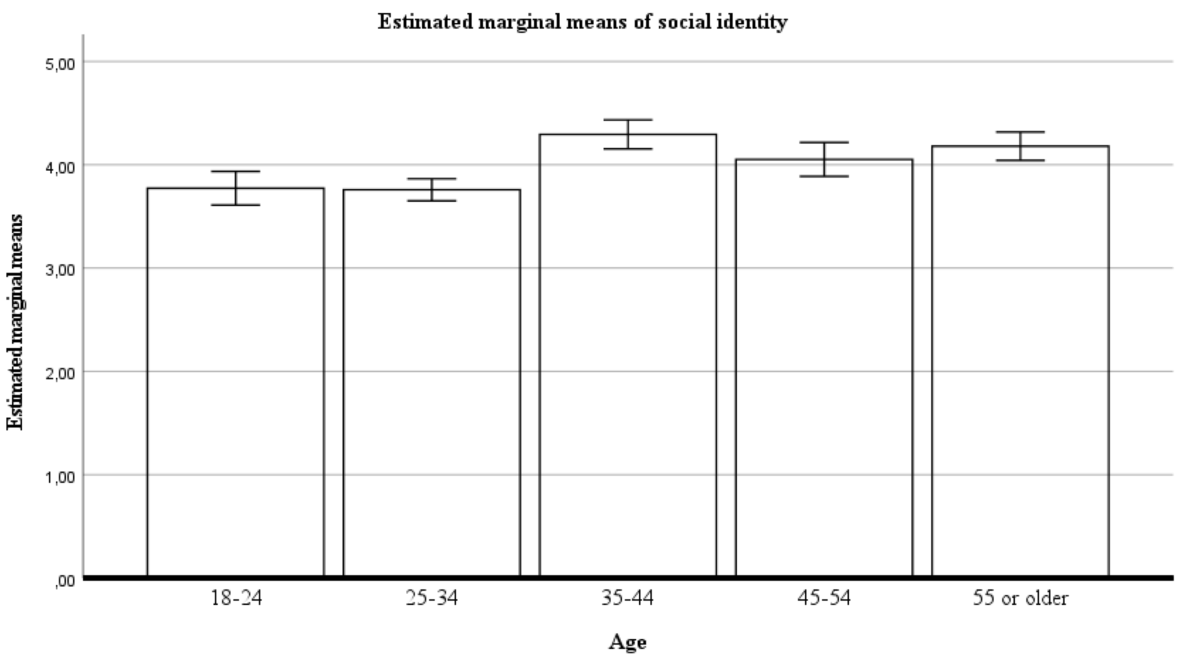


Figure 19

Profile pilot on Age and symbolic meaning of luxury

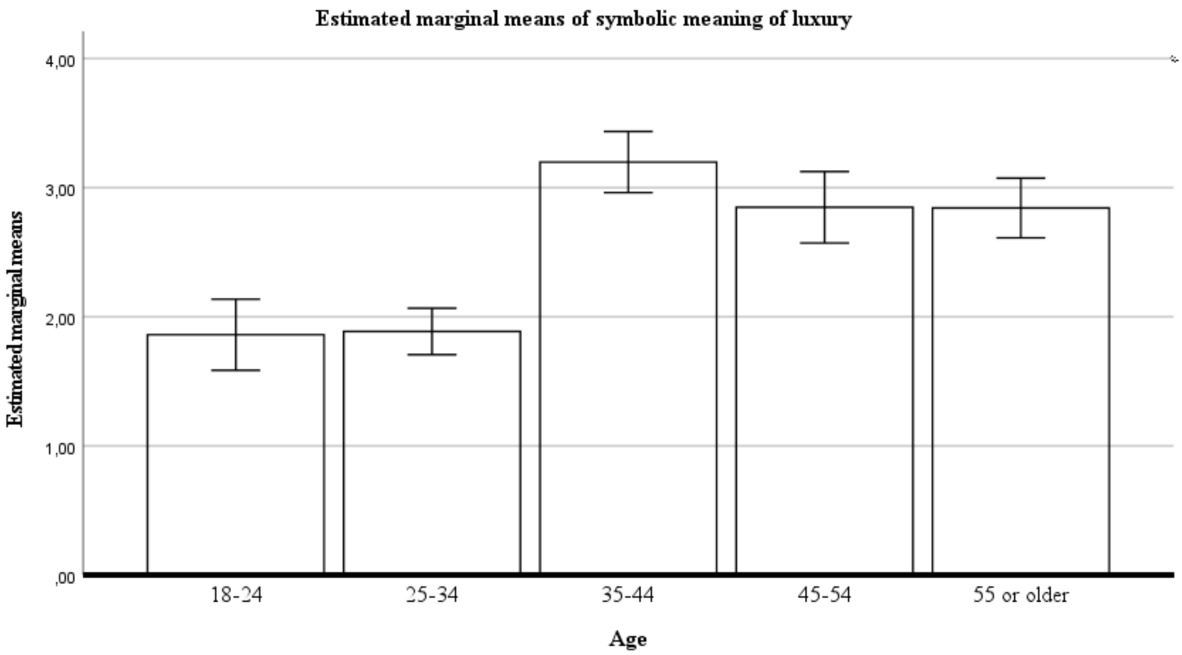


Table 47

Test of Between-subjects Effects on the variable of Gender

Source		F	Sig.
Gender	desire for luxury jewellery possession	17.927	0.000
	emotional significance	4.499	0.034
	possession attachment	18.817	0.000
	self extension	28.300	0.000
	CNFU	26.589	0.000
	social identity	1.081	0.299
	Symbolic meaning of luxury	40.579	0.000

degrees of freedom: 1/543

Figure 20

Profile pilot on Gender and desire for luxury jewellery possession

Figure 21

Profile pilot on Gender and emotional significance of possessions

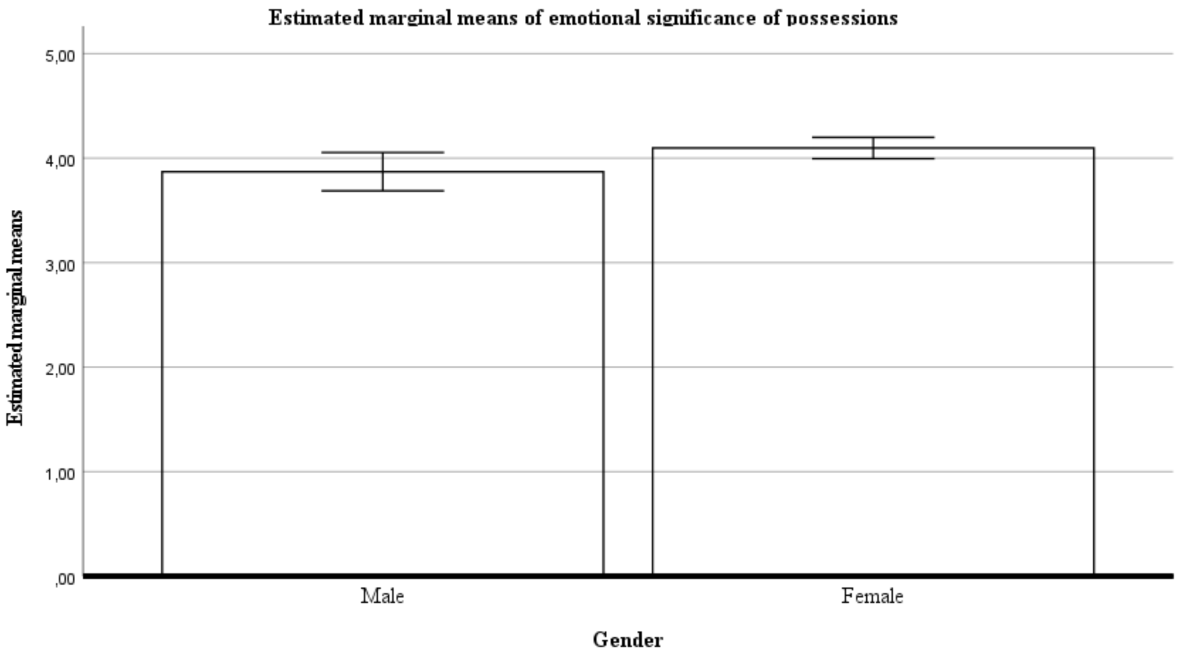


Figure 22

Profile pilot on Gender and possession attachment

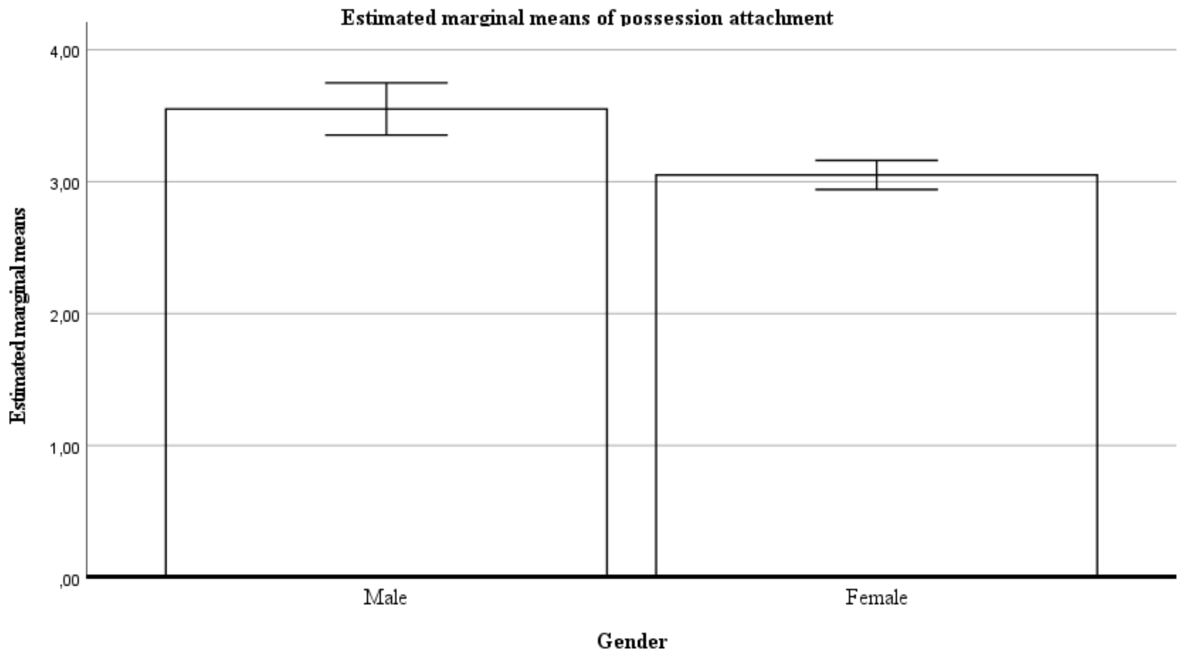


Figure 23

Profile pilot on Gender and self-extension

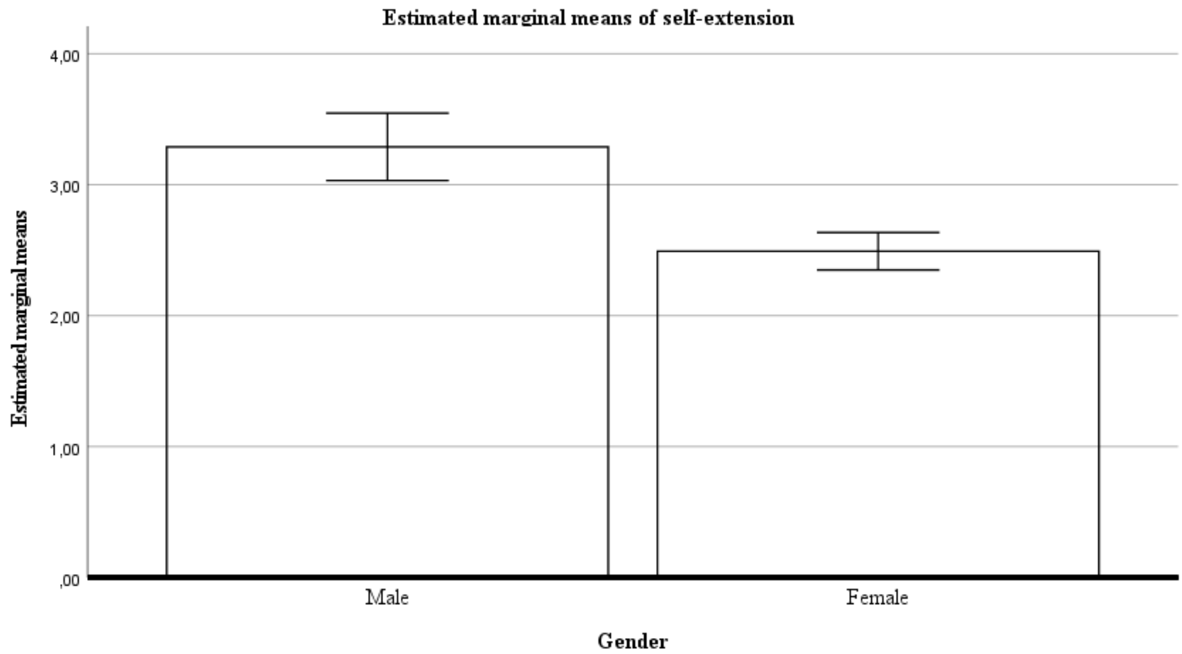


Figure 24

Profile pilot on Gender and CNFU

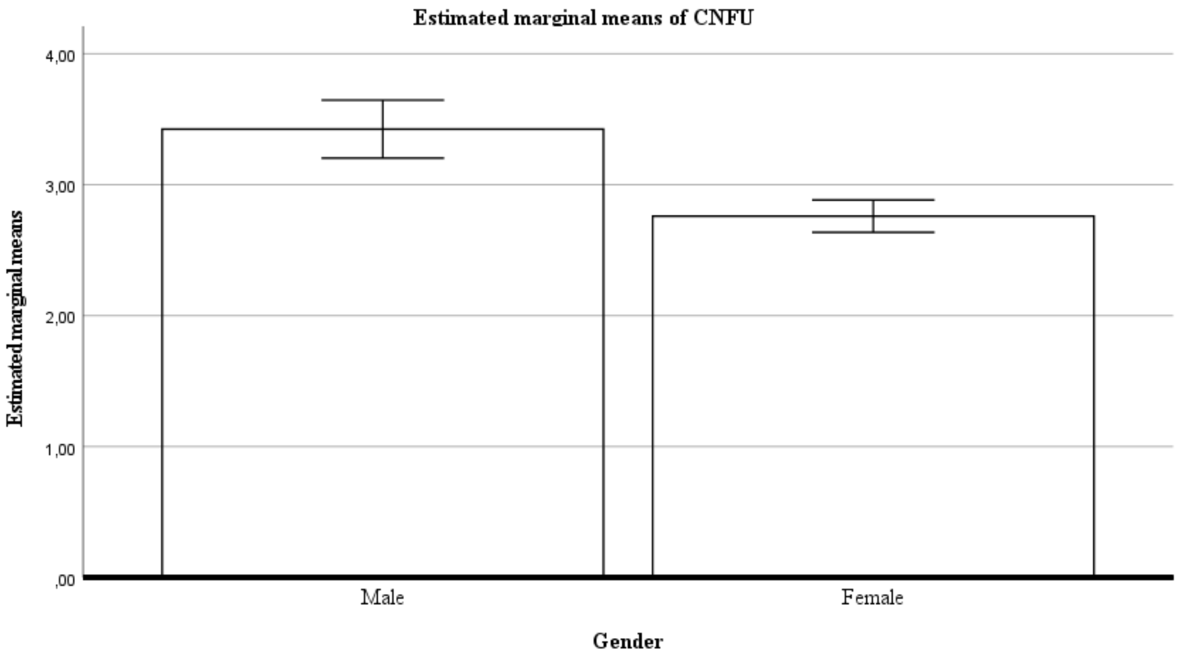


Figure 25

Profile pilot on Gender and social identity

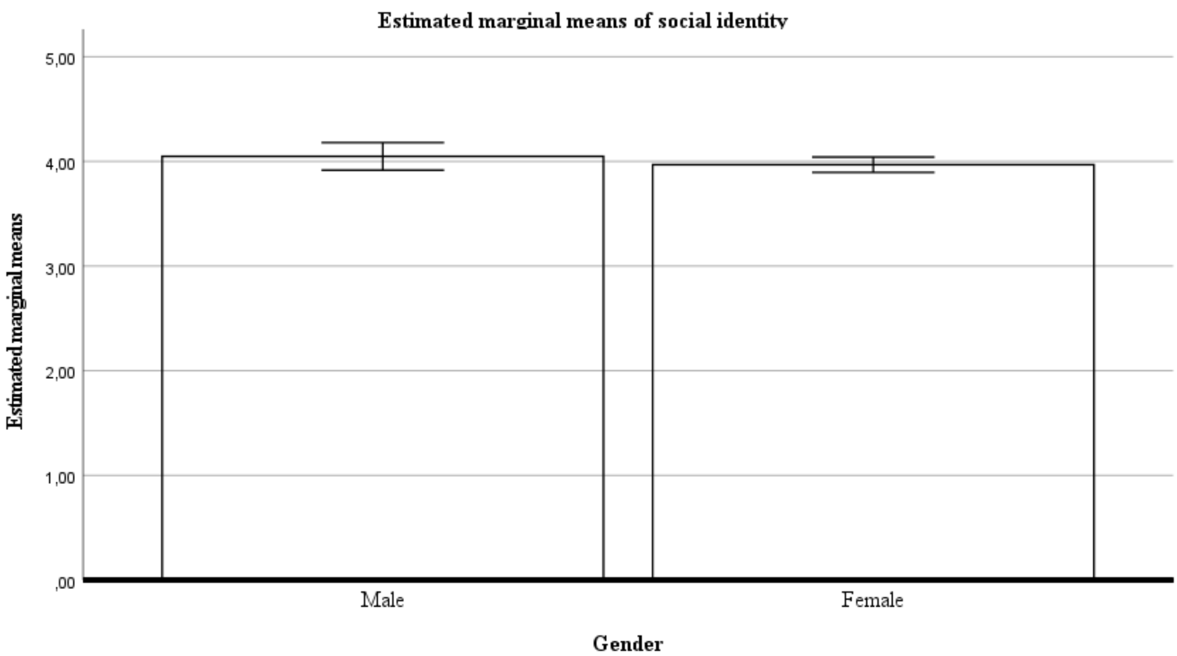


Figure 26

Profile pilot on Gender and symbolic meaning of luxury

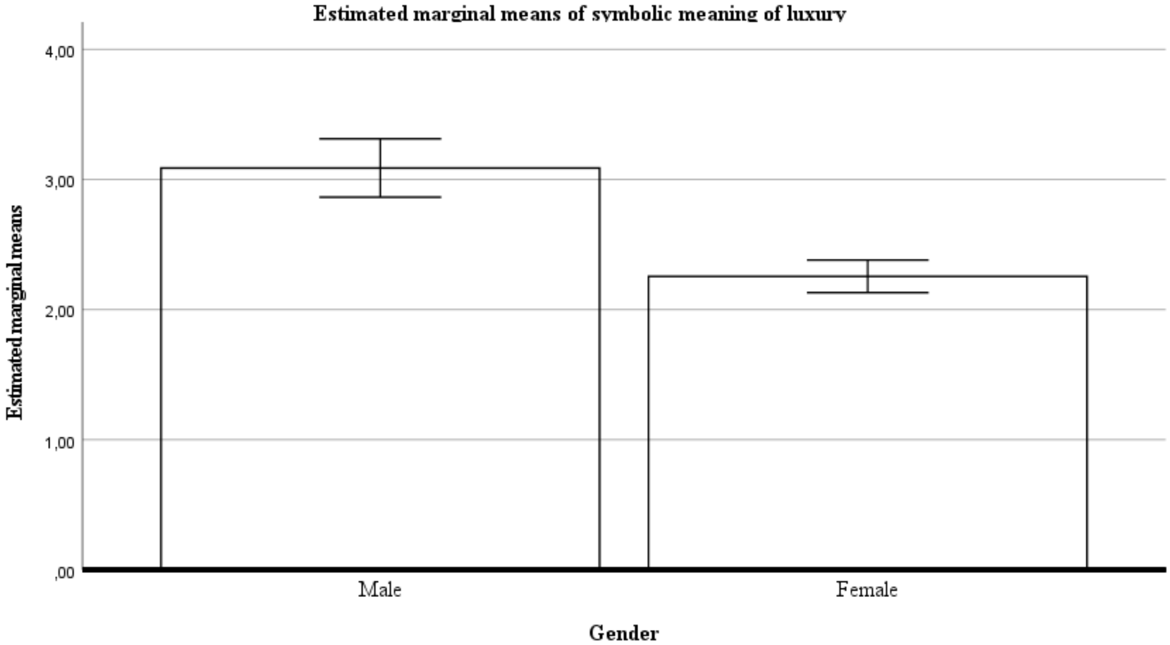


Table 48

Test of Between-subjects Effects on the variable of Marital status

Source		F	Sig.
Marital status	desire for luxury jewellery possession	6.720	0.001
	emotional significance	4.901	0.008
	possession attachment	11.979	0.000
	self extension	11.069	0.000
	CNFU	9.929	0.000
	social identity	4.233	0.015
	Symbolic meaning of luxury	9.465	0.000

degrees of freedom: 2/538

Figure 27

Profile pilot on Marital status and desire for luxury jewellery possession

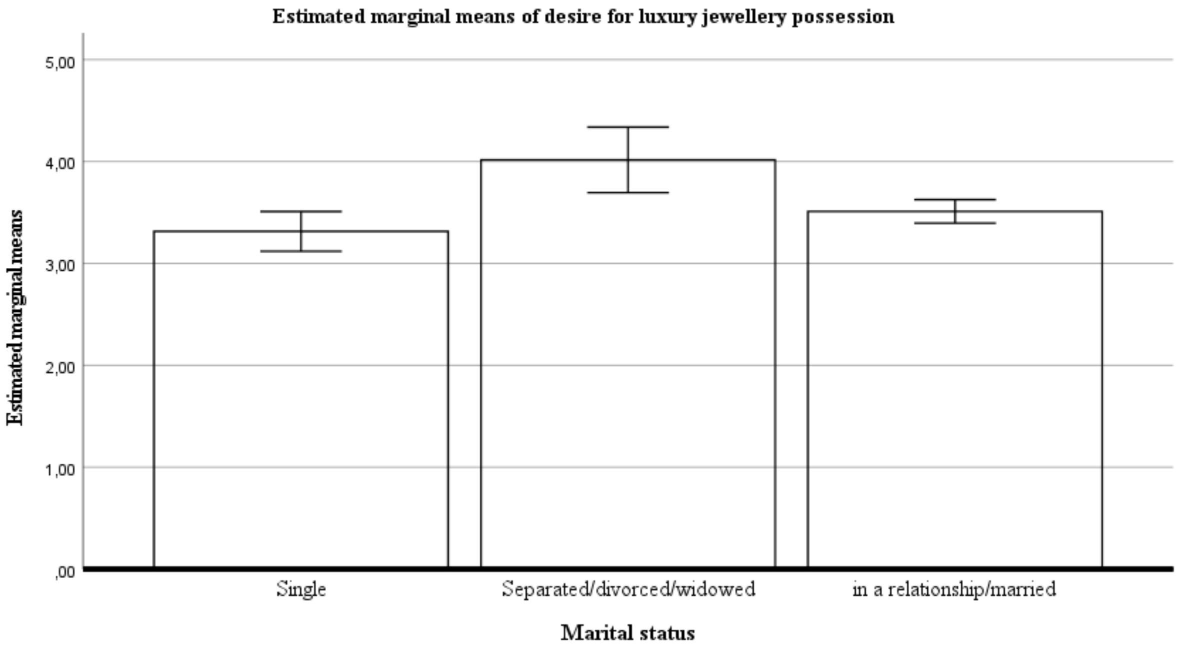


Figure 28

Profile pilot on Marital status and emotional significance of possessions

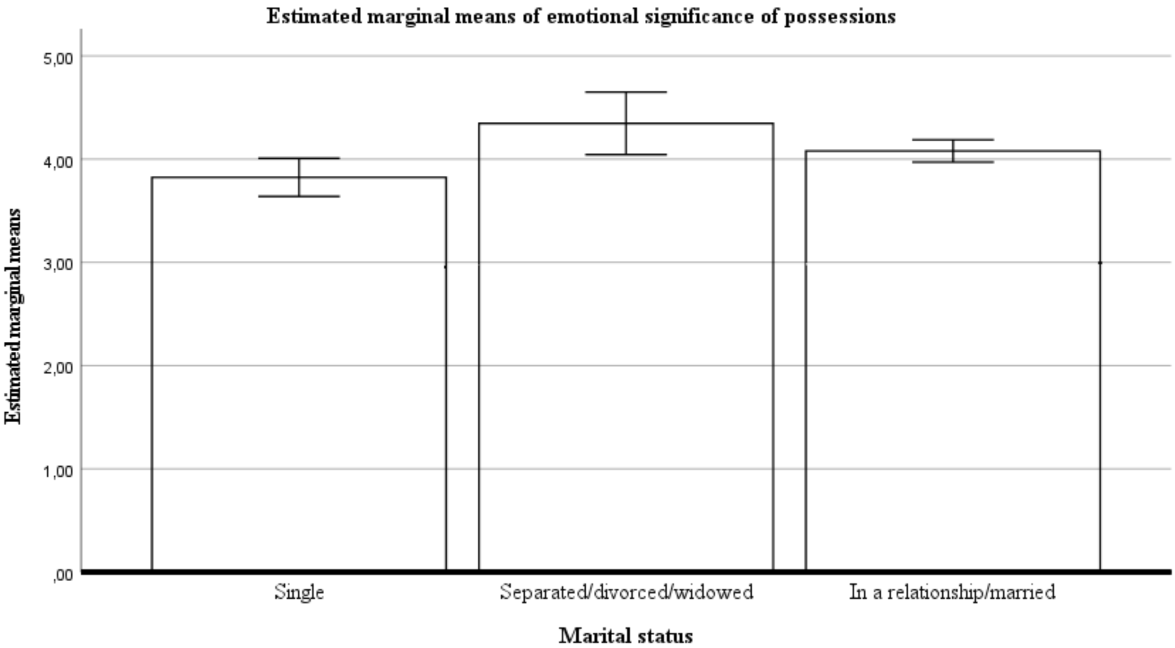


Figure 29

Profile pilot on Marital status and possession attachment

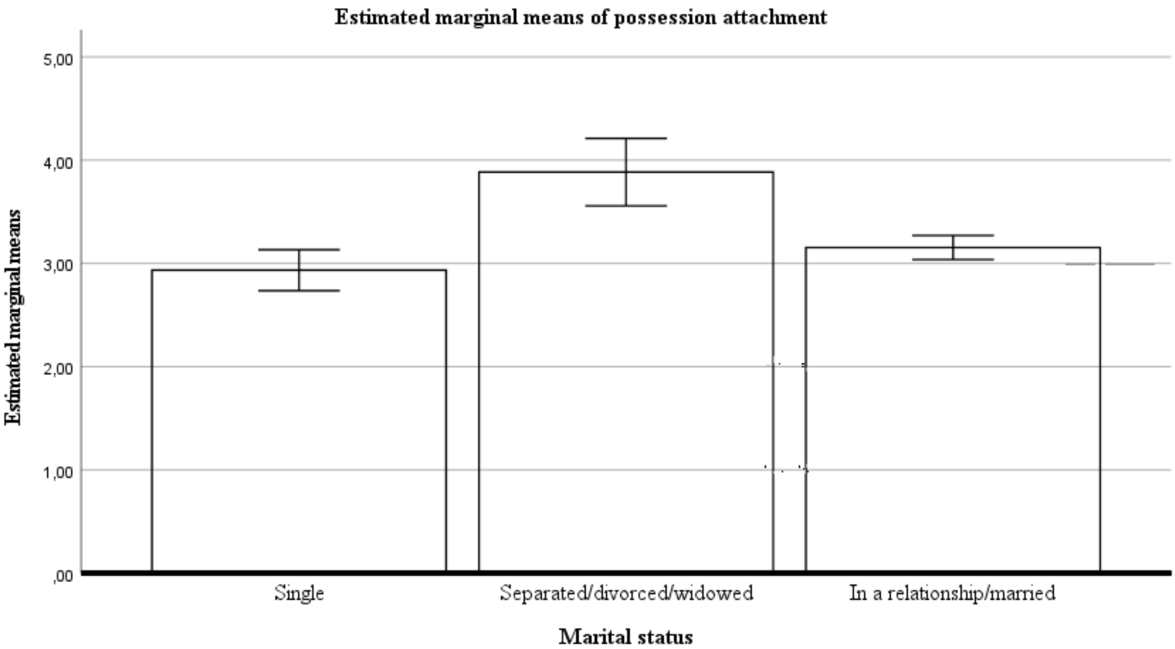


Figure 30

Profile pilot on Marital status and self-extension

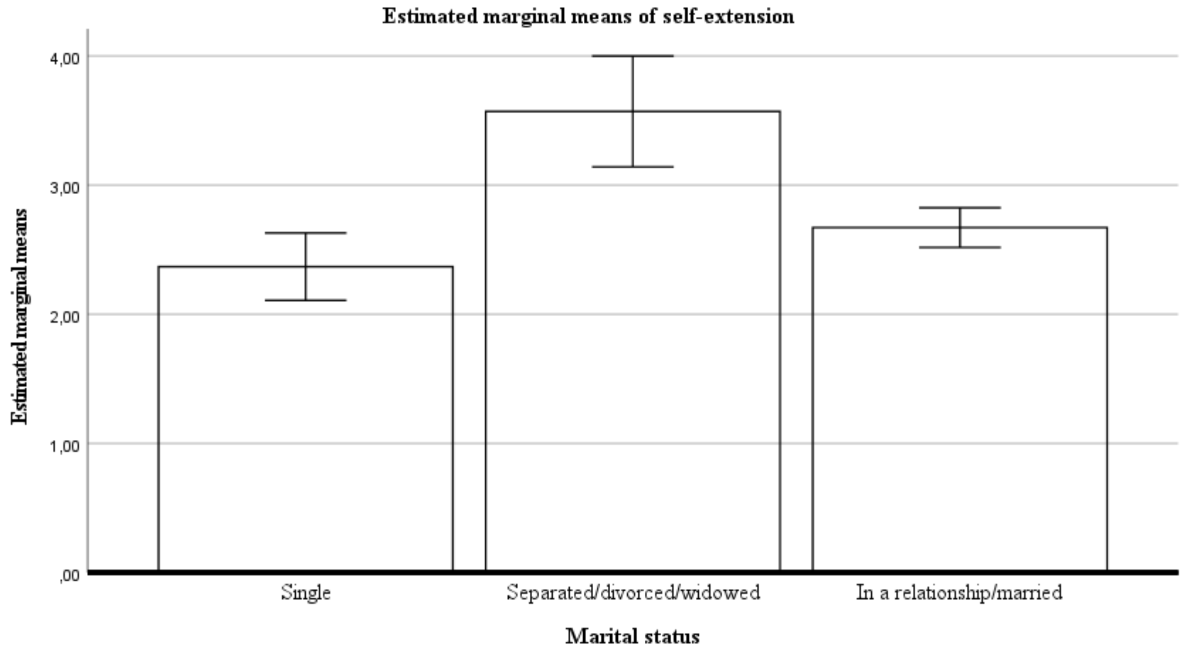


Figure 31

Profile pilot on Marital status and CNFU

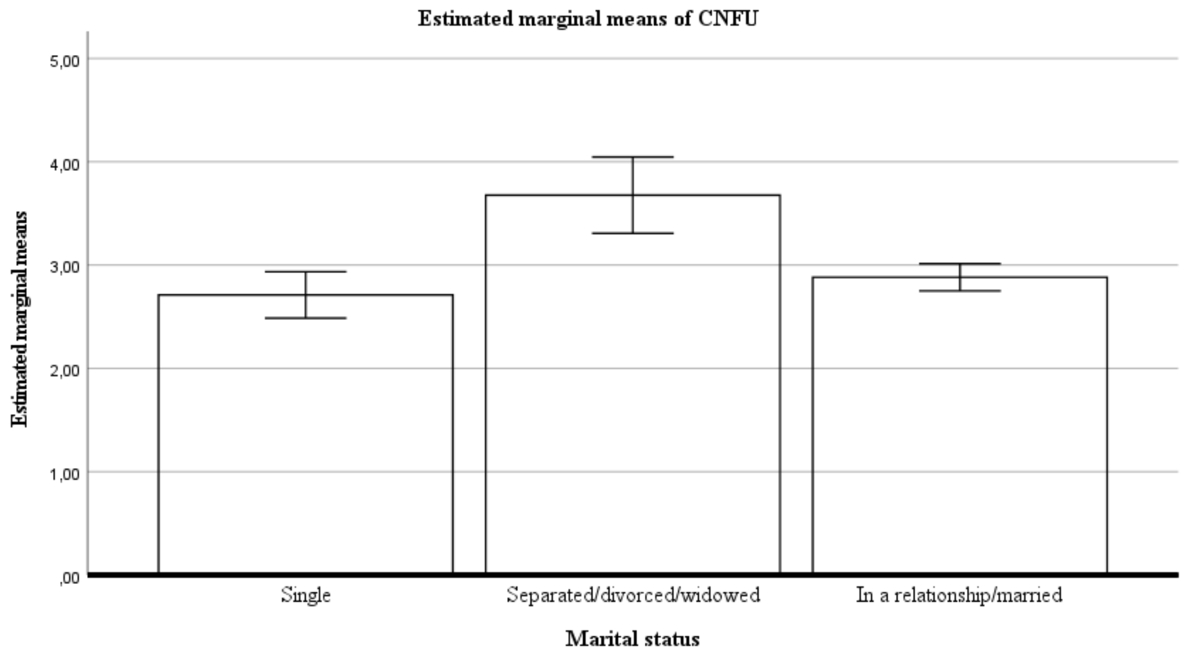


Figure 32

Profile pilot on Marital status and social identity

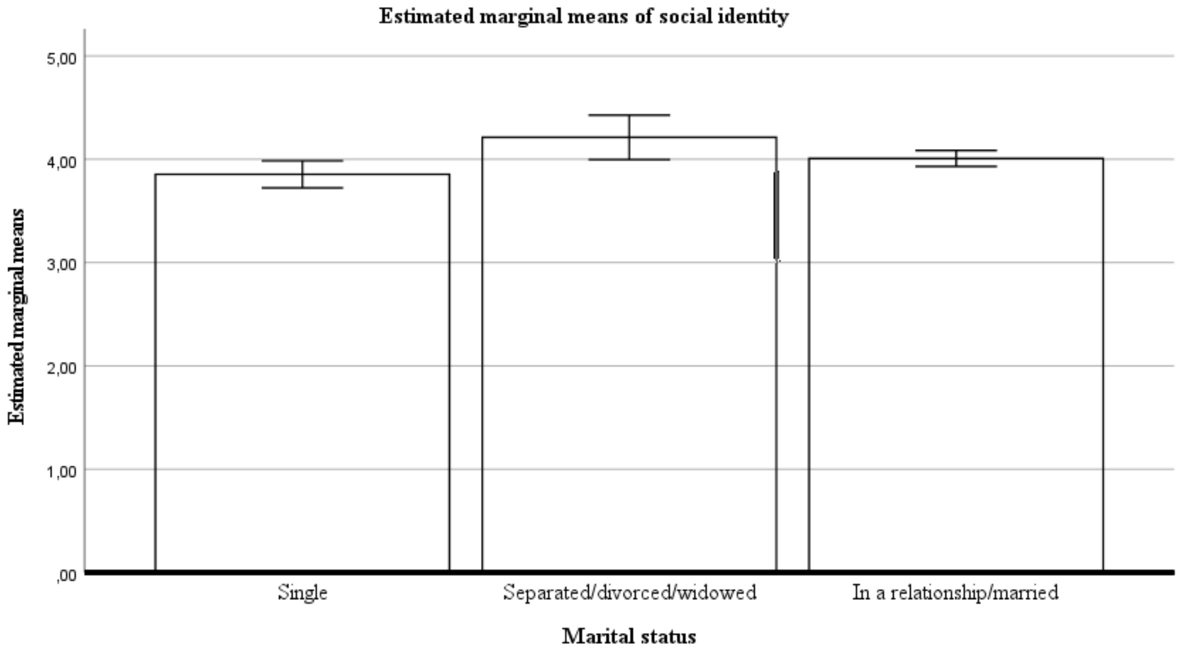


Figure 33

Profile pilot on Marital status and symbolic meaning of luxury

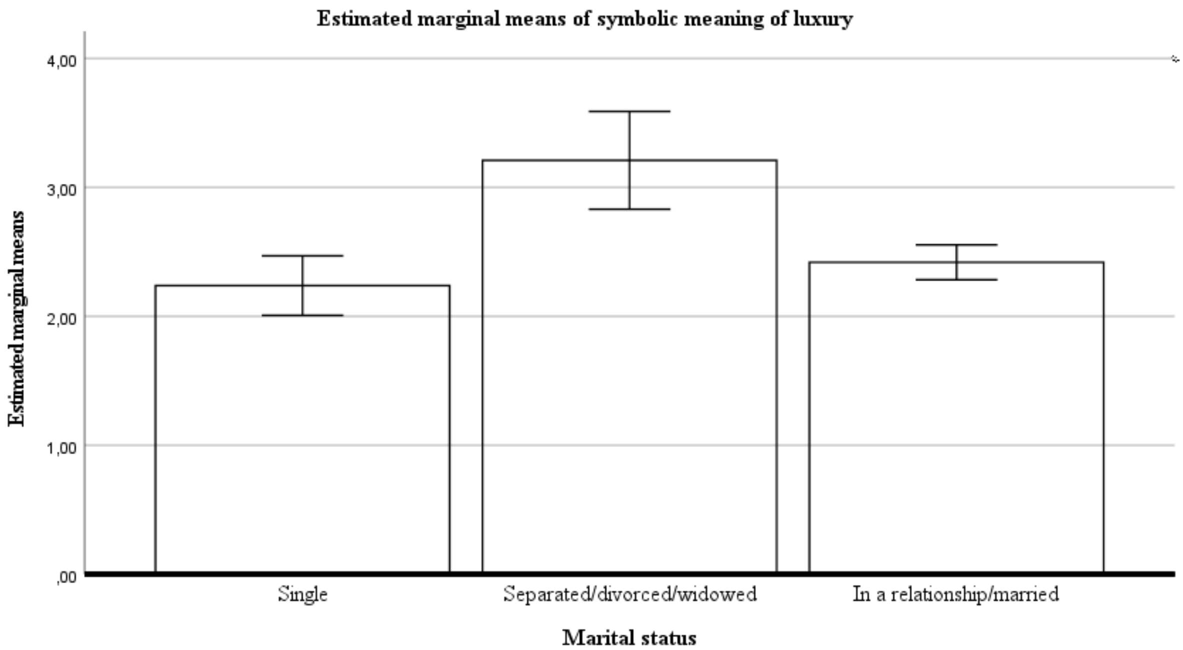


Table 49

Test of Between-subjects Effects on the variable of Educational level

Source		F	Sig.
Educational level	desire for luxury jewellery possession	7.308	0.000
	emotional significance	4.704	0.000
	possession attachment	9.120	0.000
	self extension	8.735	0.000
	CNFU	10.058	0.000
	social identity	13.814	0.000
	Symbolic meaning of luxury	8.075	0.000

degrees o freedom: 6/532

Figure 34

Profile pilot on Educational level and desire for luxury jewellery possession

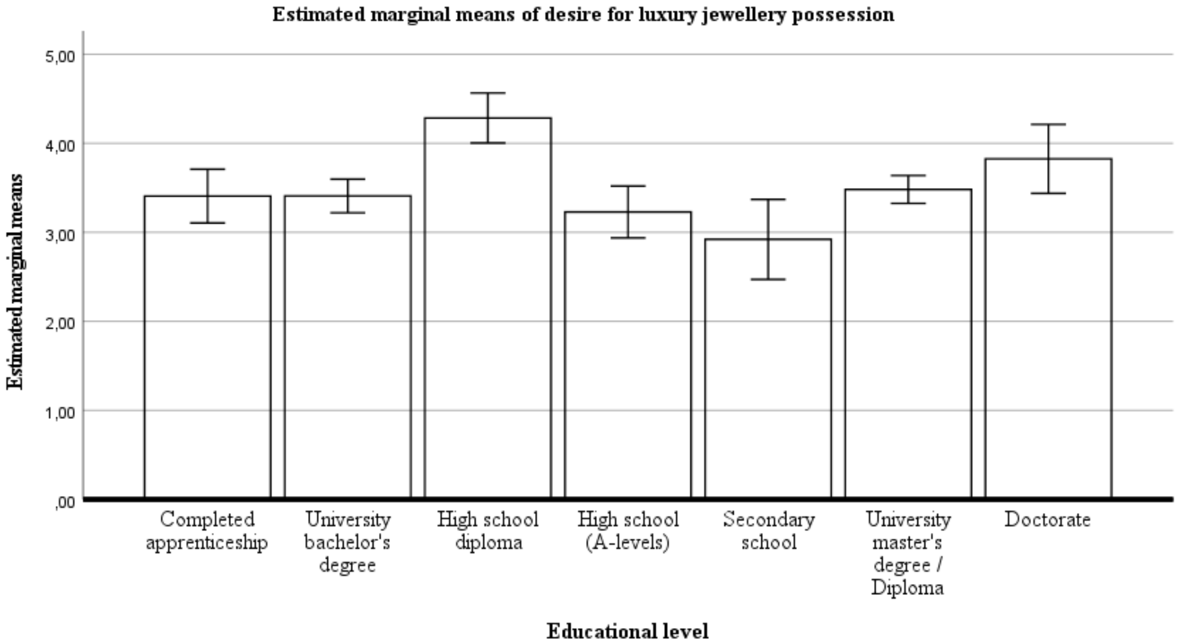


Figure 35

Profile pilot on Educational level and emotional significance of possessions

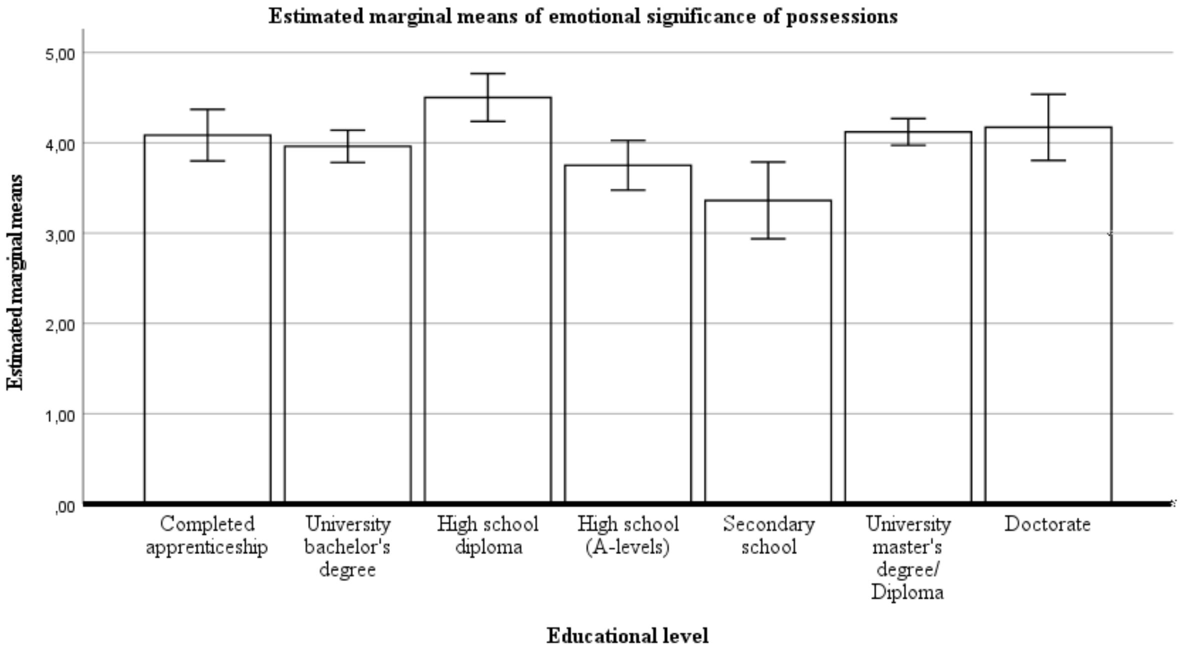


Figure 36

Profile pilot on Educational level and possession attachment

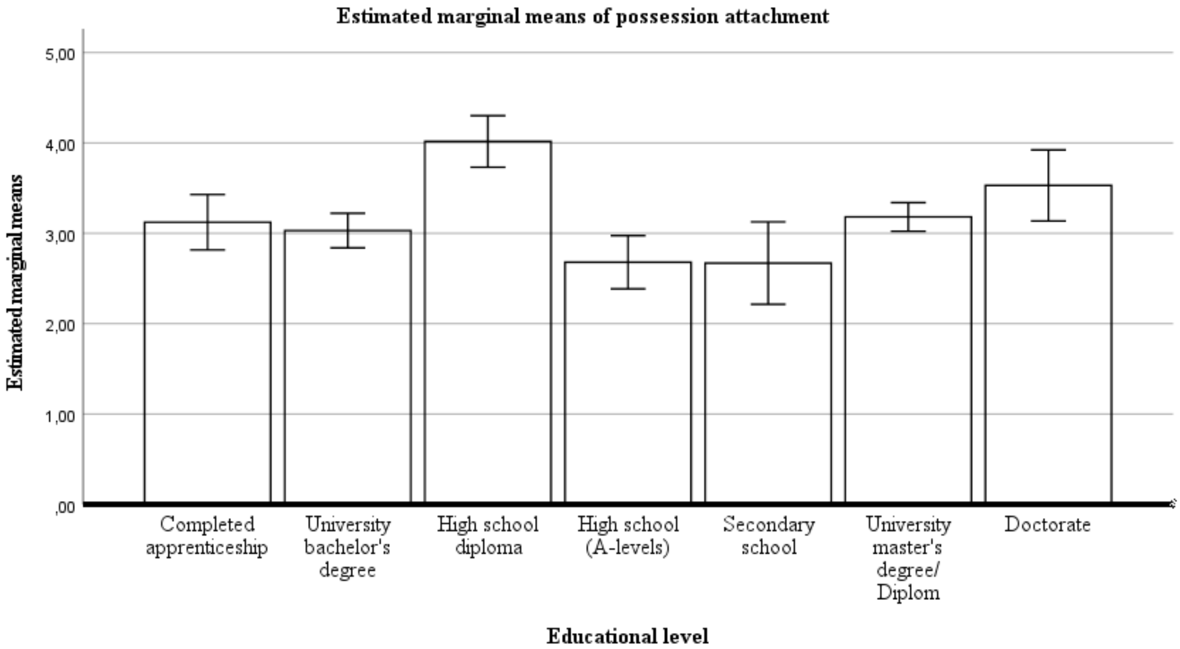


Figure 37

Profile pilot on Educational level and self-extension

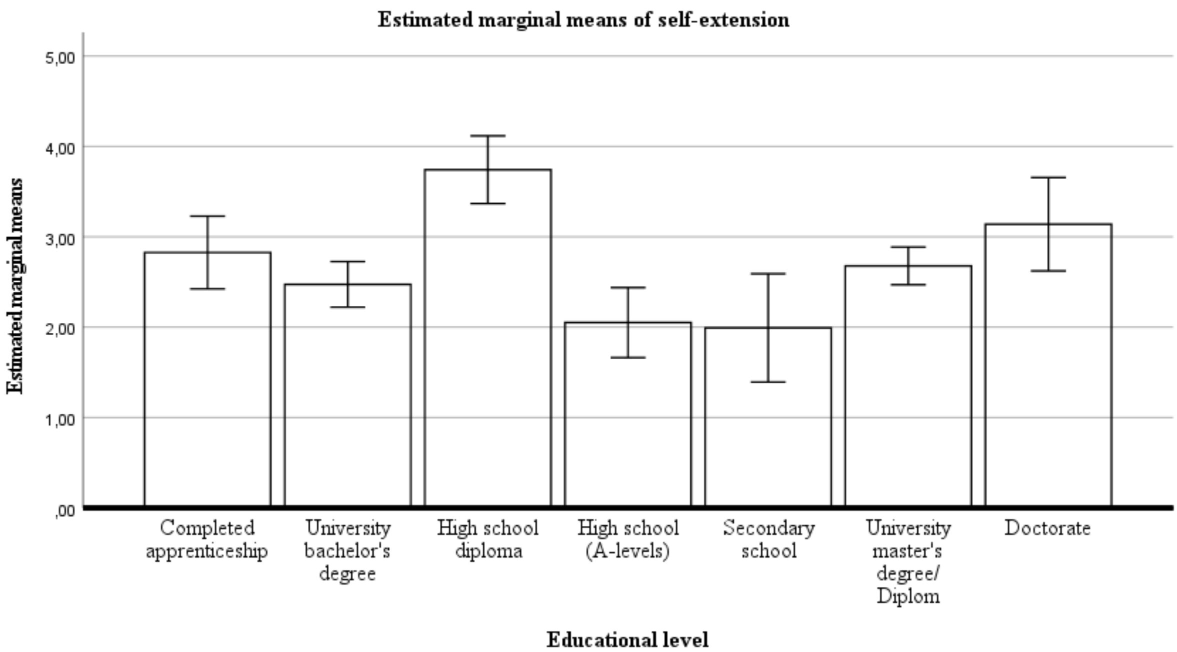


Figure 38

Profile pilot on Educational level and CNFU

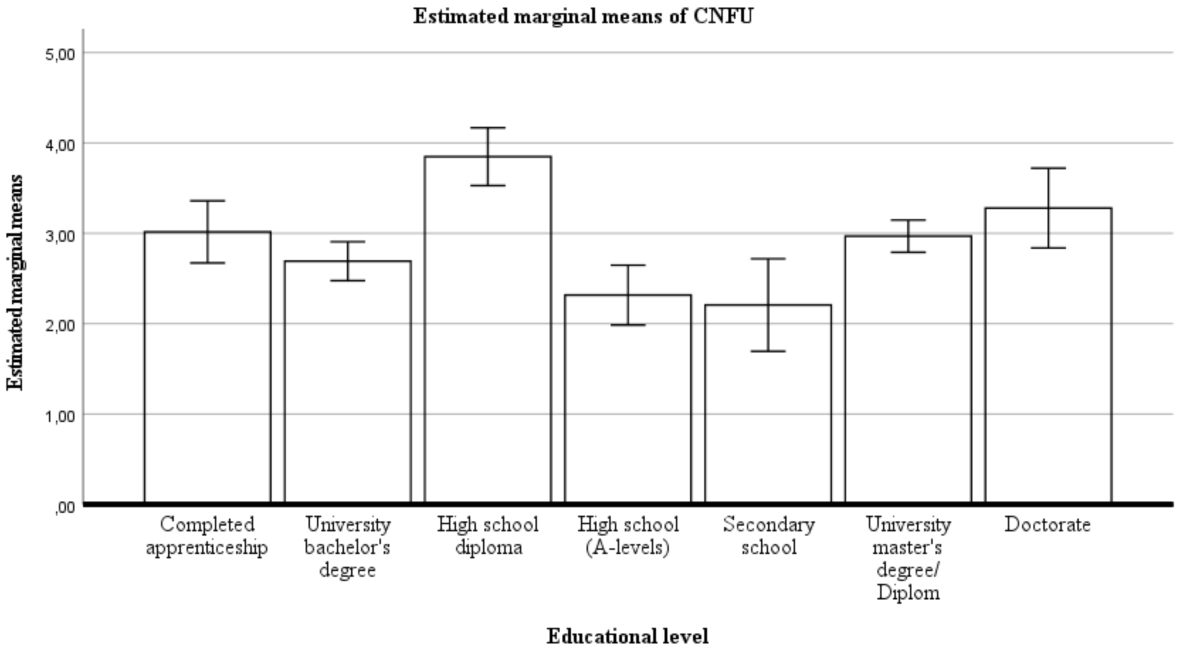


Figure 39

Profile pilot on Educational level and social identity

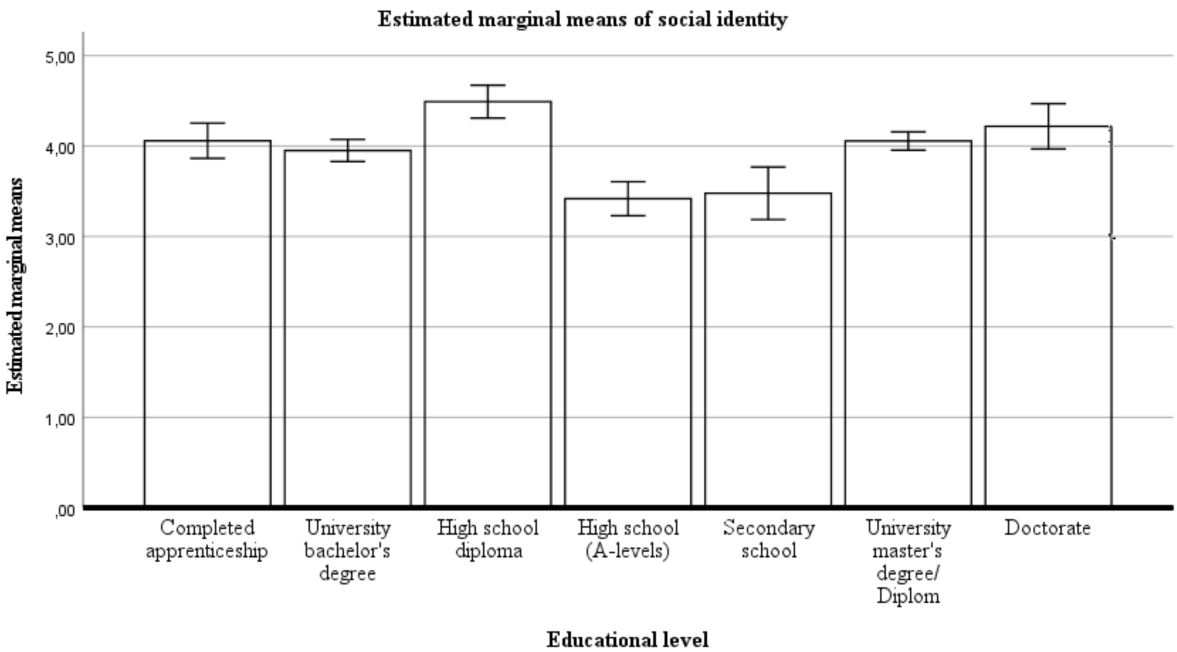


Figure 40

Profile pilot on Educational level and symbolic meaning of luxury

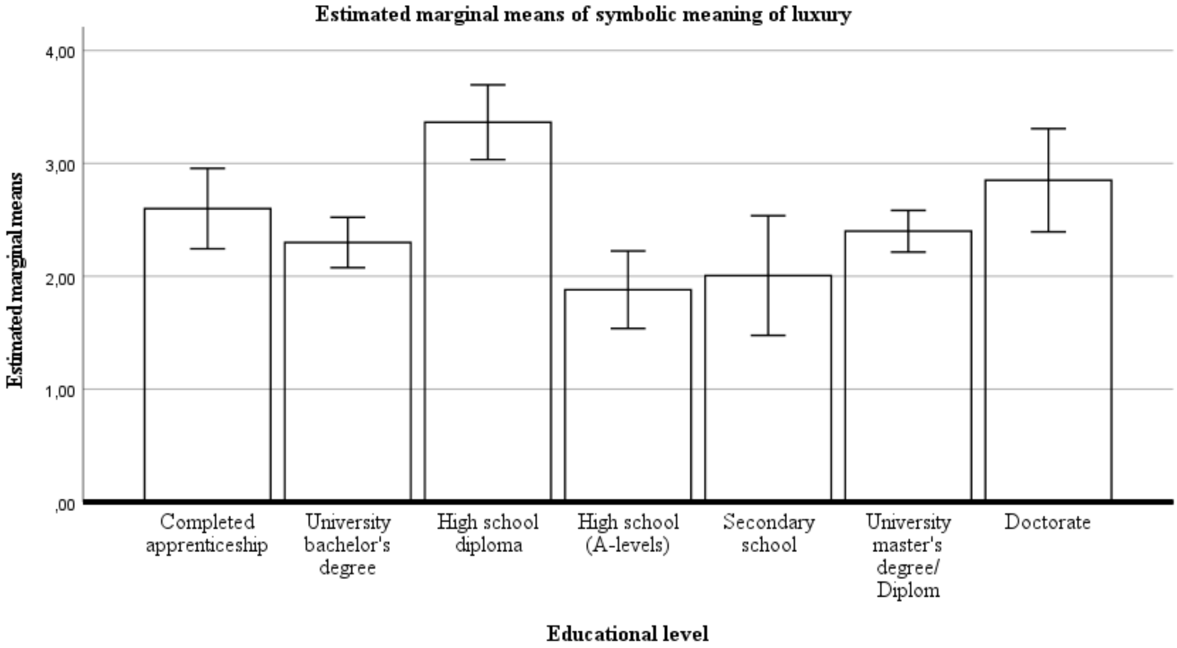


Table 50

Test of Between-subjects Effects on the variable of Employment status

Source		F	Sig.
Employment status	desire for luxury jewellery possession	4.659	0.001
	emotional significance	3.825	0.004
	possession attachment	9.482	0.000
	self extension	9.010	0.000
	CNFU	11.548	0.000
	social identity	6.052	0.000
	Symbolic meaning of luxury	10.390	0.000

Degrees of freedom = 4/526

Figure 41

Profile pilot on Employment status and desire for luxury jewellery possession

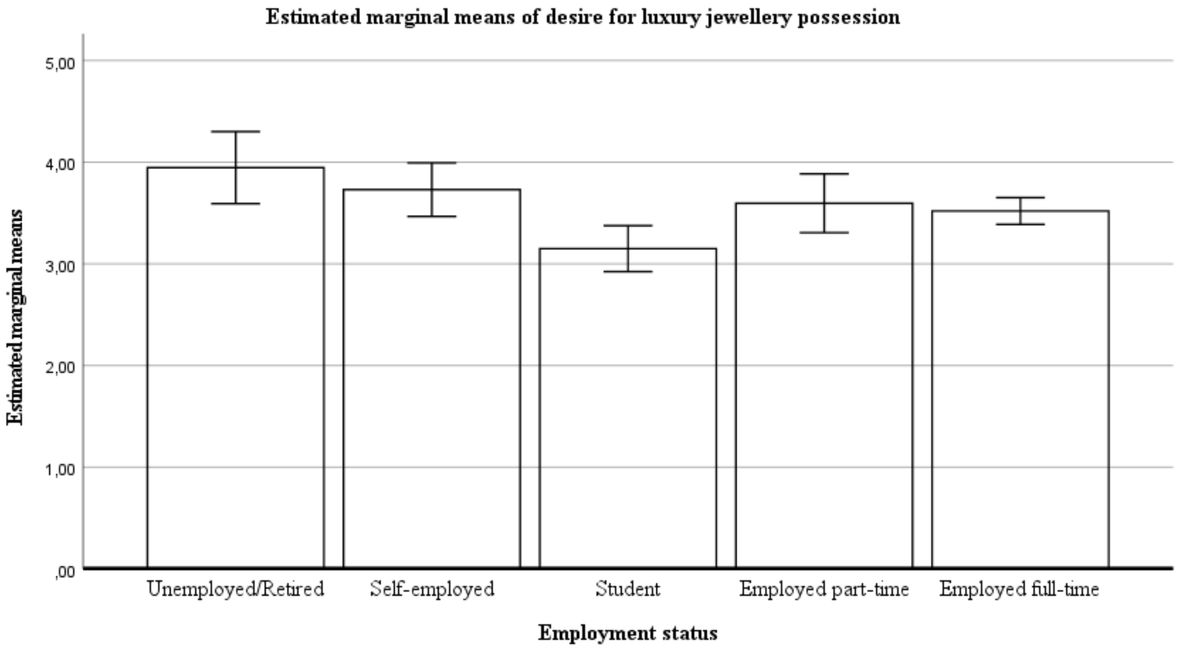


Figure 42

Profile pilot on Employment status and emotional significance of possessions

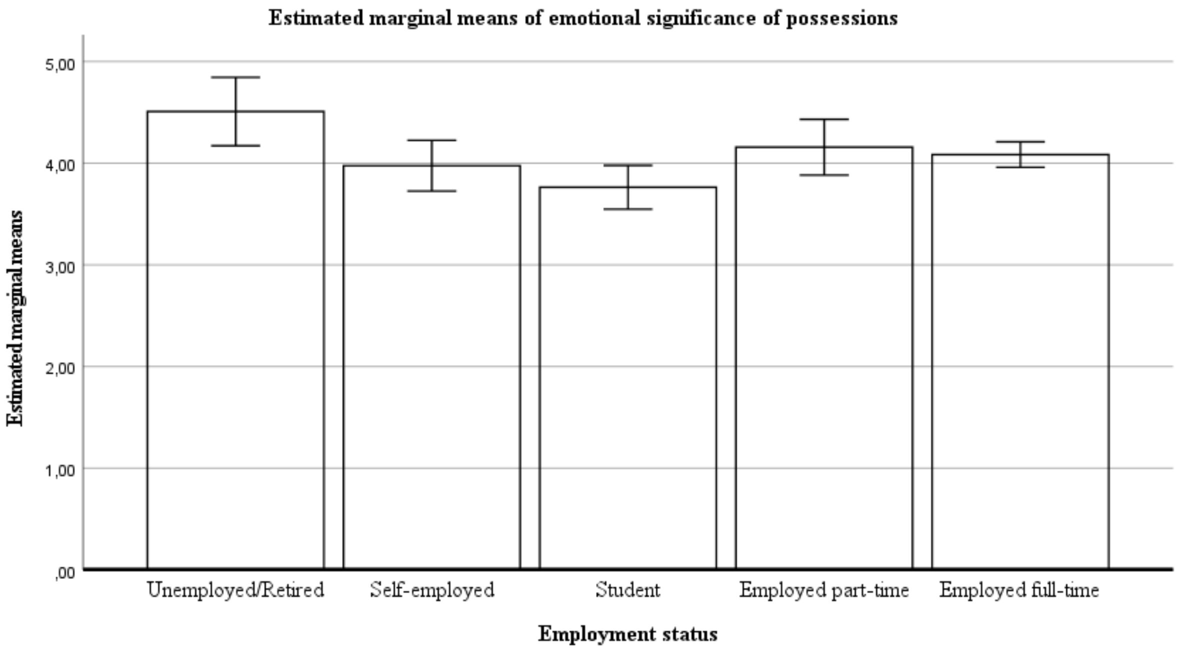


Figure 43

Profile pilot on Employment status and possession attachment

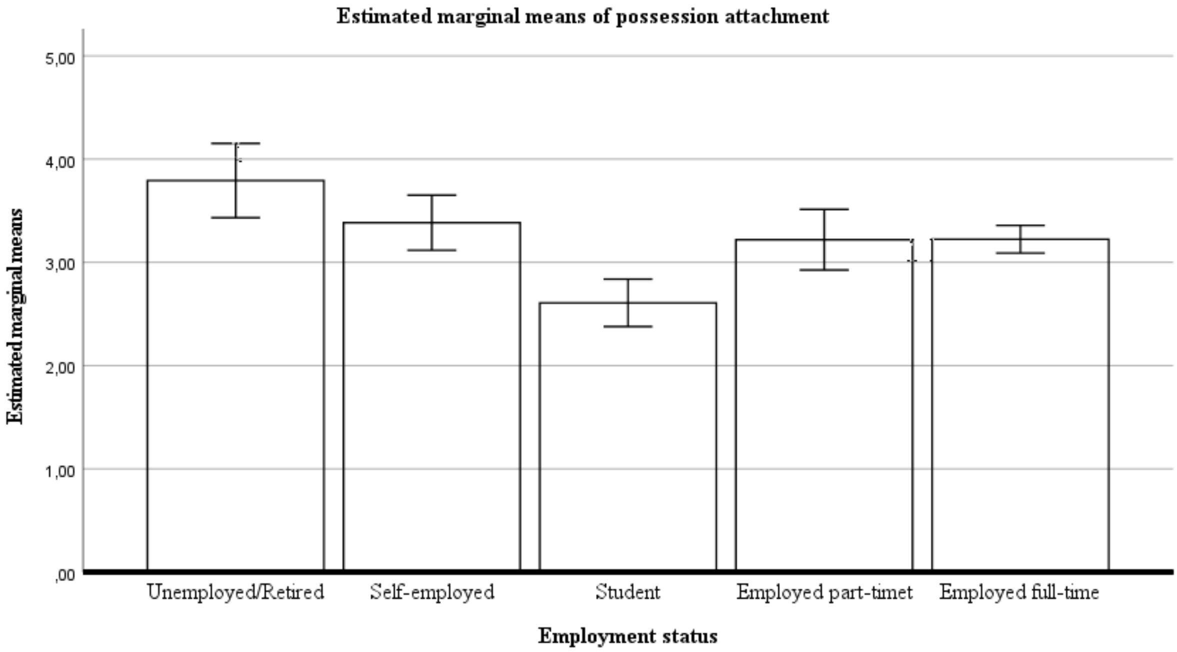


Figure 44

Profile pilot on Employment status and self-extension

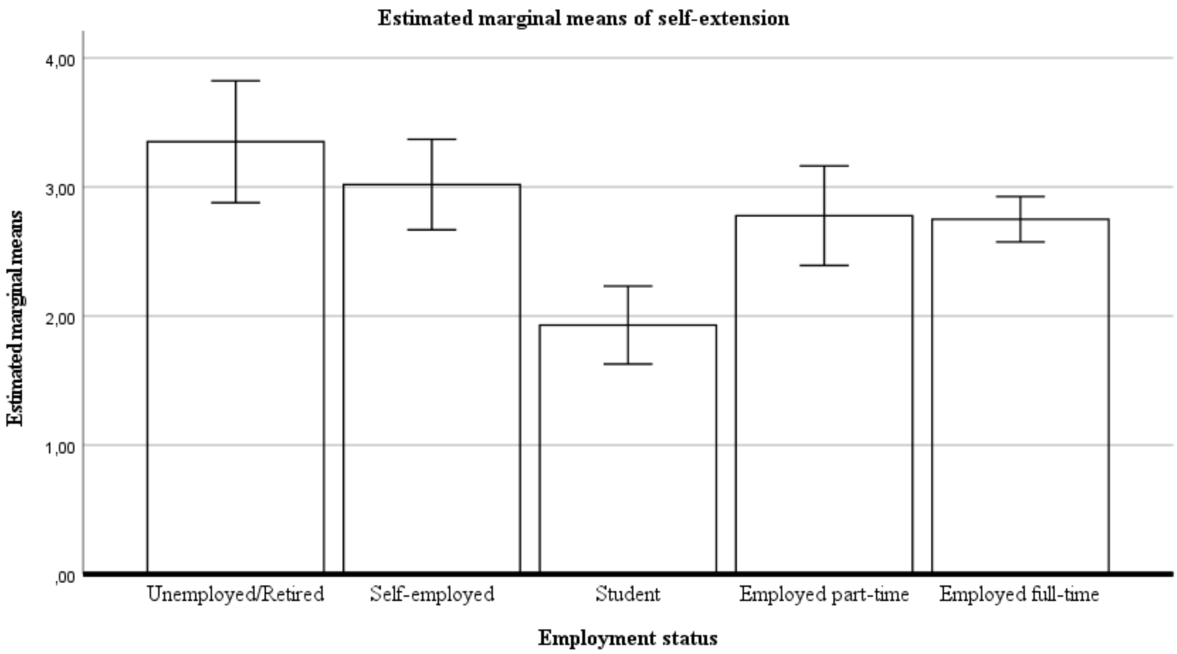


Figure 45

Profile pilot on Employment status and CNFU

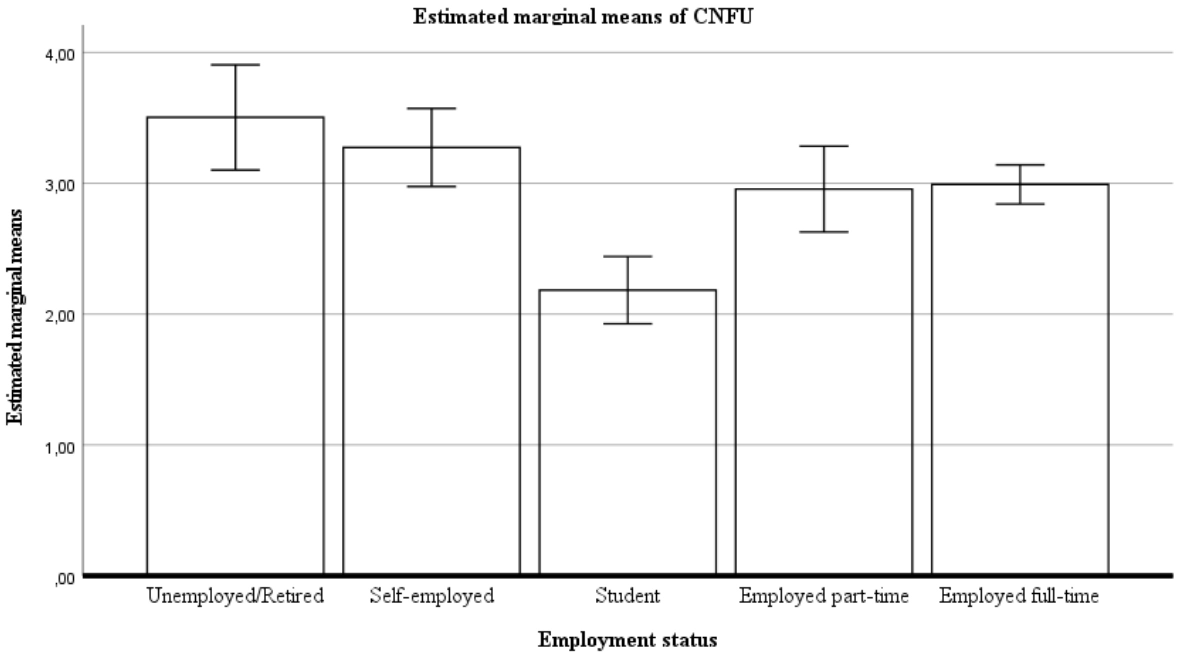


Figure 46

Profile pilot on Employment status and social identity

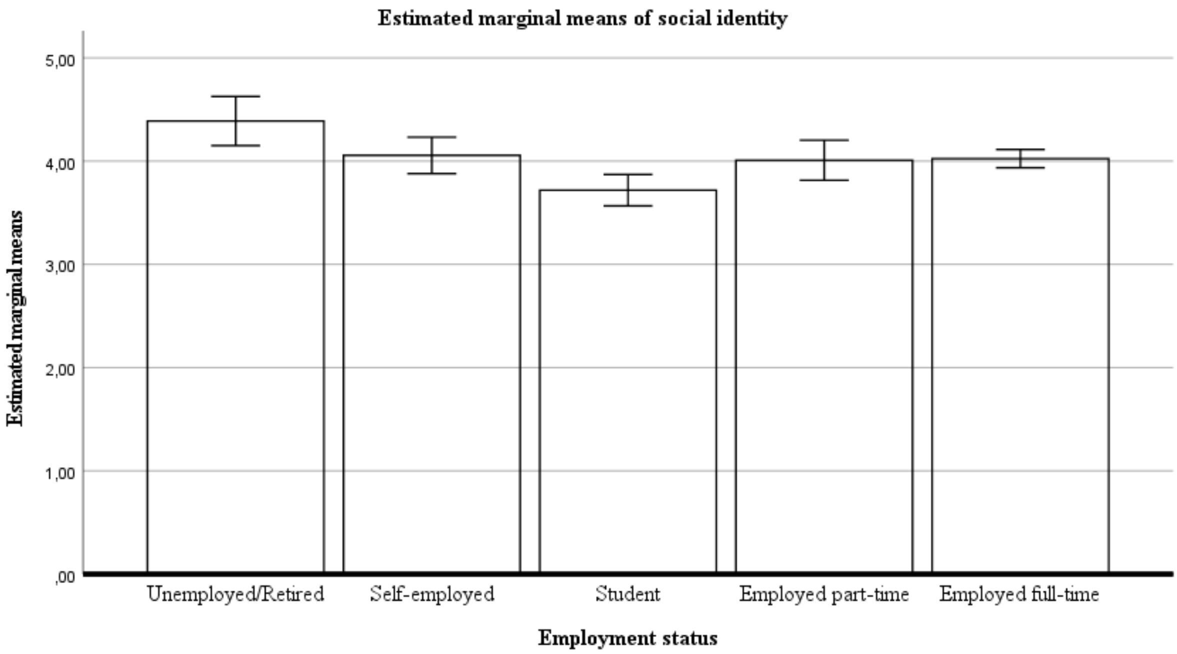


Figure 47

Profile pilot on Employment status and symbolic meaning of luxury

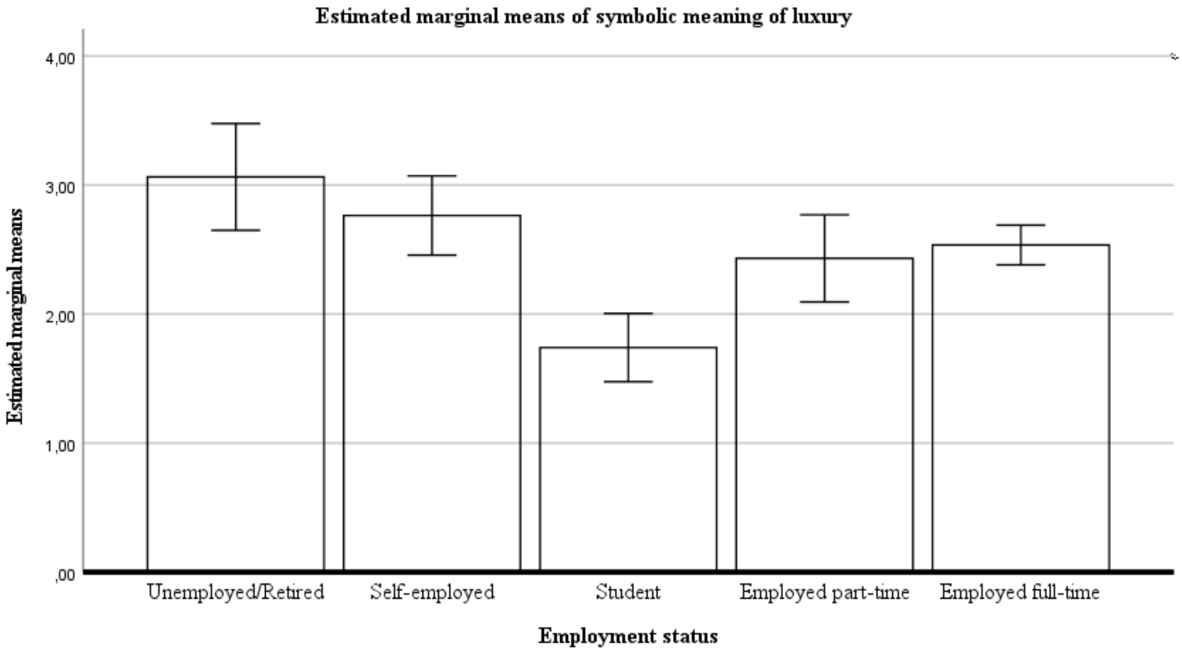


Figure 48

Histogram of amount of luxury jewellery pieces in possession

Appendix E. Results of Principal Component Analysis (PCA)

Table 51 *Results of Principal Component Analysis (PCA)*

Total Variance Explained				
	Initial Eigenvalue			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings[a]
Component	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total
1	22.586	72.859	72.859	22.191
2	1.356	4.375	77.233	14.160
3	1.248	4.027	81.261	3.359
4	.750	2.420	83.680	
5	.562	1.811	85.492	
6	.542	1.749	87.240	
7	.448	1.445	88.685	
8	.354	1.144	89.829	
9	.302	.974	90.803	
10	.266	.857	91.660	
11	.241	.777	92.437	
12	.230	.740	93.177	
13	.197	.636	93.813	
14	.185	.596	94.409	
15	.168	.543	94.952	
16	.162	.523	95.475	

17	.158	.509	95.984
18	.146	.471	96.455
19	.133	.430	96885
20	.121	.390	97.276
21	.116	.373	97.649
22	.109	.353	98.002
23	.093	.301	98.302
24	.088	.285	98.587
25	.081	.262	98.850
26	.074	.238	99.088
27	.067	.216	99.304
28	.061	.198	99.502
29	.057	.182	99.684
30	.053	.169	99.854
31	.045	.146	100.000

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
a. If components are correlated, the sums of squared charges cannot be added to obtain a total variance

Table 52

Principal Component Analysis (PCA) - Pattern matrix

Pattern matrix[a]			
	Component		
	1	2	3
11.3. My luxury jewellery should enable me to attain a desirable	.962		

standard of living.	
11.12. My luxury jewellery should enable me to live a luxurious life.	.930
8.6. I derive some of my identity from my luxury jewellery.	.927
11.4. My luxury jewellery should enable me to show off my success.	.924
8.1. My luxury jewellery helps me achieve the identity I want to have.	.922
11.13. My luxury jewellery should enable me to attain a desirable standard of living.	.919
11.2. My luxury jewellery should enable me to establish contact off the job.	.918
8.2. My luxury jewellery helps me narrow the gap between what I am and what I try to be.	.917
11.5. My luxury jewellery should enable me to be admired for my success.	.915
11.8. Through my luxury jewellery I learn the extent to which my performance is of value in relation to others.	.889
11.6. My luxury jewellery should enable me to be respected for my success.	.882
8.3. My luxury jewellery is central to my identity.	.880
8.5. If my luxury jewellery is stolen from me, I will feel as if my identity has been snatched from me.	.871
9.3. I actively seek to develop my personal uniqueness by possessing luxury jewellery.	.868
11.1. My luxury jewellery should enable me to enhance personal growth.	.857
11.11. Durch meinen Luxusschmuck lerne ich, wie einflussreich ich bin. Through my luxury jewellery I learn how influential I am.	.840
11.7. Through my luxury jewellery I learn how well I perform in comparison with others.	.832

8.4. My luxury jewellery is part of who I am.	.810		
9.5. When it comes to the luxury jewellery I buy and the situations in which I use them, I have broken customs and rules.	.802		
9.1. I often combine luxury jewellery possessions in such a way that I create a personal image that cannot be duplicated.	.797		
9.6. I have often violated the understood rules of my social group regarding what luxury jeweller to buy or own.	.786		
9.7. I have often gone against the understood rules of my social group regarding when and how certain luxury jewellery pieces are properly used.	-.679		
9.2. I often try to find a more interesting version of run-of- the-mill products because I enjoy being original.	.657		
9.4. Having an eye for luxury jewellery products that are interesting and unusual assists me in establishing a distinctive image.	.635		
11.10. Through my luxury jewllery I learn what people think of me.	.527		
9.11. As a rule, I dislike luxury jewellery that is customarily bought by everyone.		-.948	
9.10. I often try to avoid luxury jewellery that I know are bought by the general population.		-.874	
9.12. The more commonplace luxury jewellery is among the general population, the less interested I am in buying it.		-.854	
9.9. When a luxury jewellery piece I own becomes popular among the general population, I begin to use it less.		-.588	
9.8. I enjoy challenging the prevailing taste of people I know by buying something they would not seem to accept.			.710
11.9. Through my luxury jewellery I learn how much freedom I have to do things my own way.	.402		.588

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis
Rotation method: Oblimin with Kaiser-Normalization
a. The rotation has converged in 11 iterations

Figure 49

Illustration of the measurement model after conducting Principal Component Analysis (PCA)

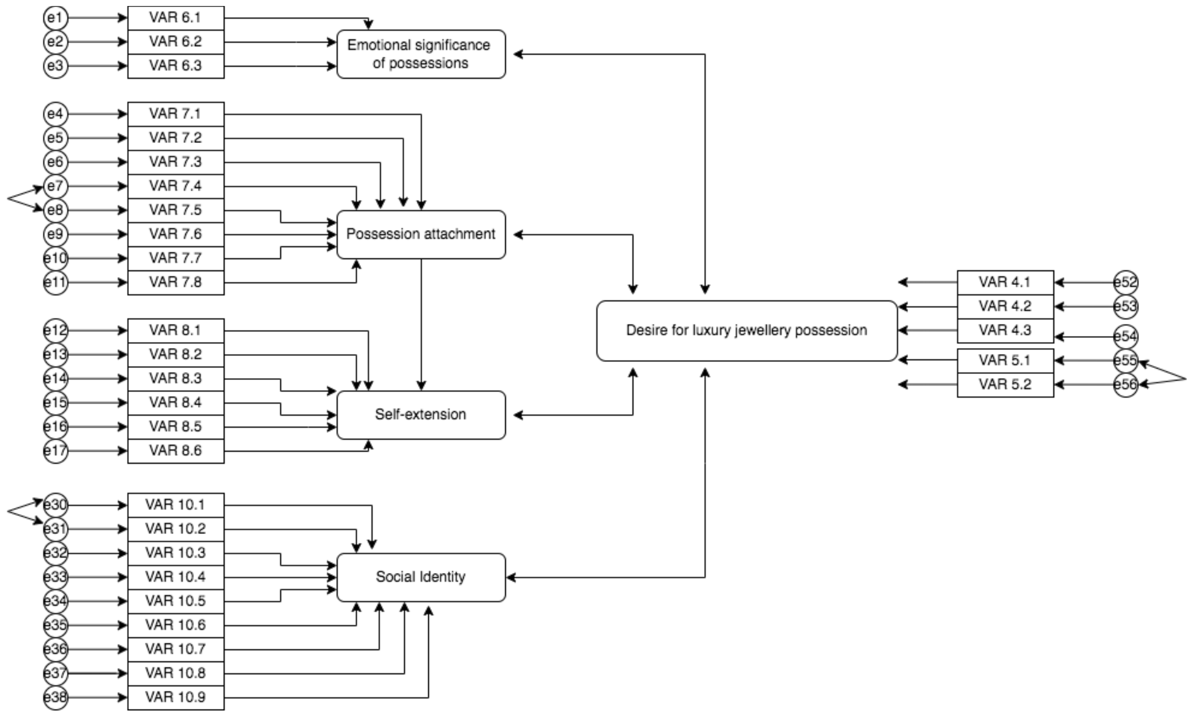


Figure 50

Illustration of the measurement model after conducting Principal Component Analysis (PCA) and after removing VAR5.2

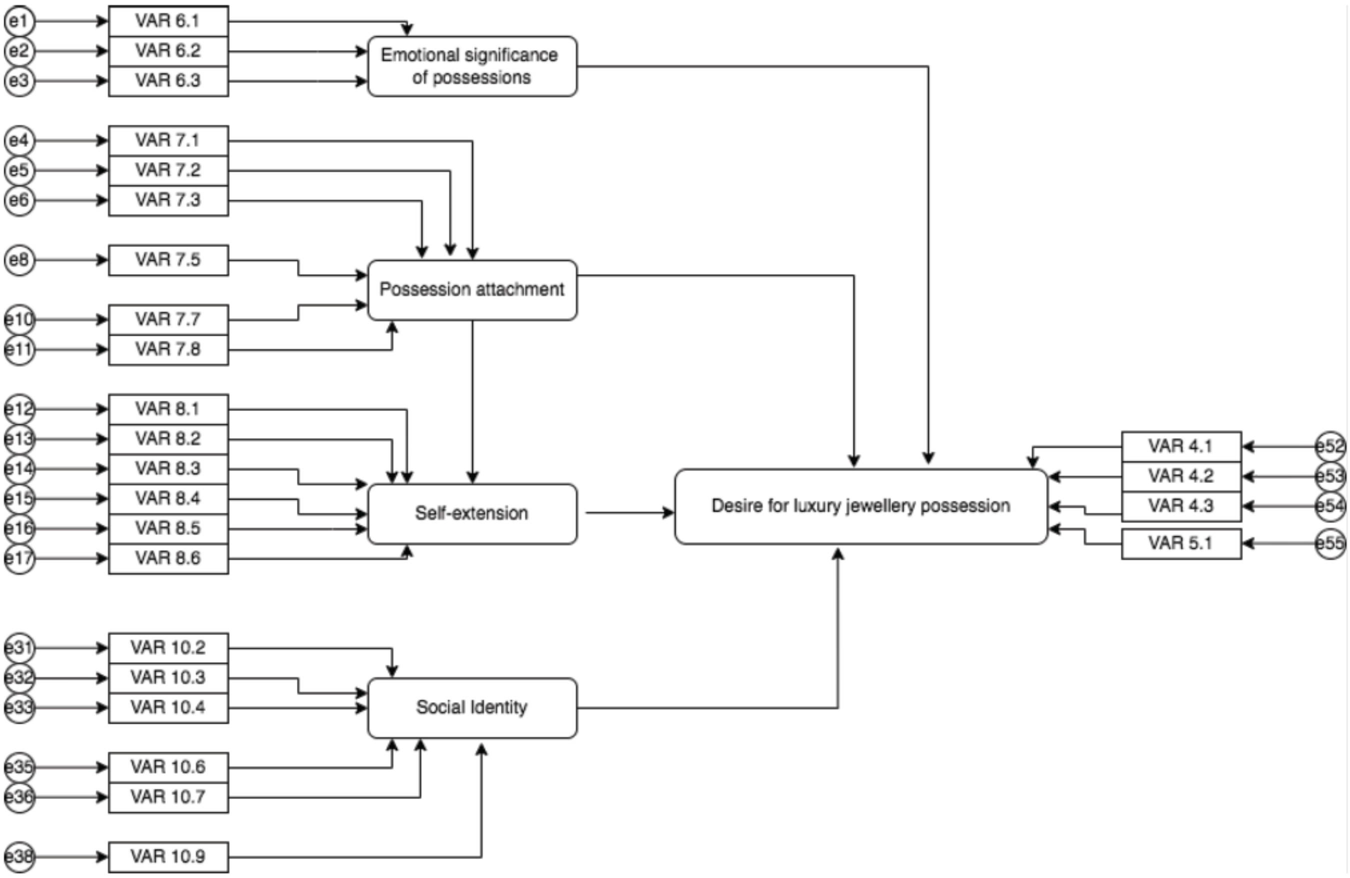


Table 53

Results of answer pattern analysis for conspicious answers

Exclusion of answer patterns	Remaining N	Improvement in model fit
Exclusion of the same answers for 80% of the items	N = 433	RMSEA = .084 (+ .001)
Exclusion of the same answers for 70% of the items	N = 380	RMSEA = .084 (+ .001)
Exclusion of the same answers for 60% of the items	N = 329	RMSEA = .083 (+ .002)
Exclusion of the same answers for 50% of the items	N = 208	RMSEA = .087 (- .002)

Table 54

Cluster analysis. Pairwise comparison of variables between defined clusters

Dependent variable			Mean difference (I-J)	standard deviation	Sig.[b]	95% confidence interval for mean[b] Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Amount of luxury jewellery pieces in possession	1	2	-8.334*	1.089	.000	-10.472	-6.196
		3	.012	1.453	.994	-2.843	2.867
	2	1	8.334*	1.089	.000	6.196	10.472
desire for luxury jewellery possession scale	1	2	-2.112*	.056	.000	-2.223	-2.002
		3	-.866*	.075	.000	-1.013	-.718
	2	1	2.112*	.056	.000	2.002	2.223
emotional significance scale	1	2	-1.169*	.086	.000	-1.338	-1.001
		3	-.070	.114	.543	-0.294	.155
	2	1	1.169*	.086	.000	1.001	1.338
possession attachment scale	1	2	-2.279*	.050	.000	-2.377	-2.182
		3	-.891*	.066	.000	-1.021	-.761
	2	1	2.279*	.050	.000	2.182	2.377
self extension scale	1	2	-3.184*	.045	.000	-3.272	-3.097
		3	-1.339*	.059	.000	-1.456	-1.222
	2	1	3.184*	.045	.000	3.097	3.272
need for uniqueness scale	1	2	-2.628*	.050	.000	-2.726	-2.530
		3	-1.024*	.067	.000	-1.155	-.893
	2	1	2.628*	.050	.000	2.530	2.726
social identity scale	1	2	-1.011*	.054	.000	-1.117	-.904
		3	.098	.072	.177	-.044	.240
	2	1	1.011*	.054	.000	.904	1.117

Symbolic meaning of luxury scale	1	2	-2.755*	.044	.000	-2.842	-2.668
		3	-1.526*	.059	.000	-1.641	-1.410
	2	1	2.755*	.044	.000	2.668	2.842
Obtainment as inheritance	1	2	.268*	.044	.000	.182	.354
		3	.146*	.059	.013	.031	.261
	2	1	-.268*	.044	.000	-.354	-.182
Obtainment as purchase	1	2	-.442*	.039	.000	-.519	-.365
		3	-.122*	.052	.020	-.224	-.019
	2	1	.442*	.039	.000	.365	.519
Obtainment as gift	1	2	.022	.041	.588	-.058	.103
		3	.079	.055	.149	-.028	.187
	2	1	-.022	.041	.588	-.103	.058
Obtainment as borrowed	1	2	-.007	.007	.348	-.020	.007
		3	.004	.009	.689	-.015	.022
	2	1	.007	.007	.348	-.007	.020
Obtainment as other	1	2	.019	.010	.058	-.001	.038
		3	.007	.013	.617	-.019	.032
	2	1	-.019	.010	.058	-.038	.001
amount of luxury jewellery pieces in possession (categorized in halves)	1	2	-.380*	.044	.000	-.467	-.294
		3	-.020	.059	.729	-.136	.095
	2	1	.380*	.044	.000	.294	.467

Based on estimated marginal means

* Mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

b. Adjustment for multiple comparisons: Least significant difference (equivalent to no adjustment).

Cluster 1. n = 269

Cluster 2. n = 195

Cluster 3. n = 83

Table 55

Anova Table

	Wilks-Lambda	F	df1	df2	Sig.
Amount of luxury jewellery pieces in possession	.893	32.549	2	544	.000
desire for luxury jewellery possession scale	.279	704.028	2	544	.000
emotional significance scale	.730	100.646	2	544	.000
possession attachment scale	.205	1056.614	2	544	.000
self extension scale	.096	2554.209	2	544	.000
need for uniqueness scale	.164	1388.777	2	544	.000
social identity scale	.573	202.743	2	544	.000
Symbolic meaning of luxury scale	.121	1968.848	2	544	.000
Obtainment as inheritance	.935	18.772	2	544	.000
Obtainment as purchase	.808	64.812	2	544	.000
Obtainment as gift	.996	1.048	2	544	0.351
Obtainment as borrowed	.997	.711	2	544	0.492
Obtainment as other	.993	1.807	2	544	.165
amount of luxury jewellery pieces in possession (categorized in halves)	.870	40.474	2	544	.000

Cluster 1. n = 269
Cluster 2. n = 195
Cluster 3. n = 83

Figure 51

Cluster analysis. Dendrogram using average linkage (between groups). Combination of scaled distance clusters