MIND OVER LUXURY: UNRAVELLING THE PSYCHOLOGICAL TRIGGERS BEHIND MALAYSIA'S KLANG VALLEY AFFINITY FOR OPULENCE

Kumaran Kanapathipillai[i],
Shirley Ann Lau,
Sashireka Appannah,
Cheok Chuan Yi
Faculty of Business and Technology,
UNITAR International University,
Tierra Crest, Jalan SS6/3,
Kelana Jaya, 47301 Petaling Jaya,
Selangor, Malaysia

Abstract:

Luxury goods and services saw robust growth globally, even during the COVID-19 pandemic when major luxury companies reported resilient revenues. Luxury consumption is no longer confined to the elite, as growing affluence in developing countries creates better affordability and aspirational purchases of luxury goods and services. Published literature has shown that psychological factors play a part in driving luxury consumption. However, more research needs to be done in Malaysia. This study aims to comprehend the psychological factors that drive the consumption of luxury goods among consumers in the Klang Valley, Malaysia. The relationships between the consumption of luxury goods and three psychological factors, namely motivation, perception, and learning, were examined. Employing the convenience sampling technique, the research questionnaires were distributed using Google Forms. A total of 384 respondents took part in this quantitative study. Correlation and regression analysis were used to assess the responses based on the data gathered. Based on the findings, motivation, and learning were the influencing factors in luxury goods consumption. The study reveals that Malaysian consumers purchase luxury products for satisfaction rather than social acceptance or symbolic meaning. Marketers should focus on individual self-image, hedonism, and brand-building to segment customers and position luxury goods effectively. As Malaysia's affluence increases, marketers must understand and exploit the psychological factors driving luxury purchases.

Keywords: consumer behaviour, psychological factors, luxury goods consumption, motivation, perception, learning

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[i]Correspondence: kumar.erapintar@gmail.com

1. Introduction

According to (Anderson et al., 2015), the role of status is shaping human interactions, market dynamics, and organisational frameworks. Achieving high status provides individuals with myriad advantages, while low status can be detrimental. Those who enjoy high status often reap greater economic and social rewards compared to their lower-status counterparts (Manstead, 2018). Thus, the quest for elevated status and its display often demands considerable time and financial investment (Kuwabara, 2015).

The act of purchasing luxury goods has emerged as a prevalent means of signalling status within the commercial realm (Lewis & Moital, 2016). Luxury items, being premium, costly, and limited in availability, epitomise the elevated status of their possessors (Kapferer & Bastien, 2012). Observers tend to bestow tremendous admiration, compliance, and financial favour upon luxury consumers instead of non-luxury ones (Siepmann et al., 2022). Research suggests that an individual's ability to acquire luxury goods and achieve high social rank is often an expensive testament to their unique skills and competence (Scott et al., 2013). However, luxury access does not always arise from unparalleled talents; sometimes, it is rooted in an individual's psychological background. Luxury consumers' highlighting of these backgrounds can dampen the observer's admiration (Lee et al., 2018). While luxury items consistently signify the high-status level of their owners, the exact nature or origins of such status still need to be explored. This study delves into the psychological motivations behind luxury consumption in the Klang Valley, mainly how choices in the luxury domain subtly influence societal perceptions of achieved or inherited status.

Iconic luxury products, such as the Louis Vuitton canvas and the Hermès Kelly bag, symbolise luxury brands' rich history and legacy (Kiygi-Calli, 2018). In contrast, seasonal offerings, like Louis Vuitton's Graffiti line and collaboration with artist Koons in 2017, embody avant-garde designs and aesthetics, setting new benchmarks and trends (Diaz et al., 2023). These two distinct categories illuminate the balance luxury brands strive for between preserving tradition and pioneering new trends (Kapferer & Bastien, 2017). Previous studies have typically contrasted luxury and non-luxury consumers' perceived status (Wang et al., 2022), often overlooking the nuanced symbolic values associated with these luxury categories.

Luxury has historically played a pivotal role in delineating class disparities, with (Waresquiel, 2004) underscoring its significance in maintaining the stratification of societal ranks. As per Statista's projections for 2023, the Malaysian luxury market is poised to generate USD 1.89 billion in revenues, growing at an annual rate of 3.8% through 2028. With the help of hefty price tags, purposeful availability, and sales restrictions, the idea of exclusivity serves as the foundation for understanding luxury in marketing. The overarching umbrella of luxury spans clothing, shoes, leather goods, jewellery, electronics, premium cars, and yachts. This research postulates that factors such as motivation, perception, and learning significantly influence luxury consumption patterns.

The focal point of this research is to unravel the psychological determinants propelling luxury consumption in Klang Valley, Malaysia. Therefore, this study's objectives are structured to examine the interactions between psychological factors (motivation, perception, and learning) and trends in luxury consumption. The COVID-19 outbreak in 2020 brought an 83% dip in international tourists to Malaysia, significantly impacting luxury sales. Nevertheless, the adversity propelled luxury brands towards digital avenues, catering to tech-savvy consumers. With Malaysia poised to become a favoured destination for the affluent, the luxury market is on the brink of a resurgence. The burgeoning realm of e-commerce facilitates easy access to product information and pricing. Consequently, online luxury retailing is anticipated to gain momentum, prompting this study to explore the psychological drivers behind luxury consumption. The forthcoming problem statement will elaborate on the selection parameters for this domain, while the subsequent sections will delve into the research goals and queries.

1.1 Research Problem Statement

Luxury goods consumption has witnessed a significant upsurge in contemporary society. Even with the COVID-19 pandemic's impacts, the luxury market showed resilience, with the top 100 luxury brands accumulating USD305 billion in FY2021. This surpassed their earnings in FY2019 (USD281 billion) and FY2020 (USD252 billion) (Deloitte, 2022). Previously, luxury items were mostly accessible to society's affluent echelons. However, shifts in societal trends mean luxury is not just for the rich, as demographic segmentation based solely on wealth and income becomes less relevant (Hennigs et al., 2013). Modern luxury brands aim to attract diverse consumers driven by their financial status and personalities, values, and lifestyles (Kapferer & Valette-Florence, 2016).

There is an imperative to comprehend the psychological elements behind luxury goods consumption to formulate tailored marketing approaches. However, understanding Malaysian luxury goods consumer psychology remains elusive. Challenges include the luxury market's intricate nature and the unique motivations influencing luxury consumption, such as symbolic values (Wang, 2022; Choo et al., 2012). Researching consumer behaviour necessitates significant resources, prompting the need for meticulous methodology selection (Hoyer & MacInnis, 2010). Traditional methods may not suffice, leading some to embrace techniques like neuroimaging to delve deeper (Harrell, 2019; Bell et al., 2018).

Recent investigations have highlighted that psychological motivations such as conspicuous and hedonic consumption influence luxury goods consumption (Andres & Andres, 2021; Shukla, 2012). For instance, luxury consumption can be driven by desires to flaunt one's success or by the sensory pleasures luxury items confer. Similarly, (Giovannini et al., 2015) identified motivation as pivotal for luxury consumption among Generation Y. However, this is contested, with some emphasizing the fleeting nature of emotional satisfaction from luxury products (Bishnoi & Singh, 2022). Comparably, others emphasize personal rewards, product quality, or self-pleasure as primary drivers (Beverland, 2006; Vigneron & Johnson, 2004; Silverstein et al., 2008; Tsai, 2005).

Perception also plays a pivotal role in luxury product consumption and is seen as a unique identity symbol (Giovannini et al., 2015) or indicative of expertise (Alba & Hutchinson, 1987). Contrarily, a study by (Chai & Ning, 2019) found that price fairness negatively impacts customers' attitudes toward luxury goods from foreign countries. When consumers perceive domestic house prices as higher than those in foreign countries, they are more likely to purchase luxury products from overseas. Conversely, when domestic prices are lower, they are less likely to buy luxury products from overseas. Moreover, a study by (Lee et al., 2008) in Mexico found that perceived quality negatively impacts college students' intention to buy luxury products.

Learning, encapsulating habits formed through recurring luxury interactions, is also integral (Cakici & Shukla, 2017). Positive brand experiences foster brand loyalty, while repeated luxury brand interactions amplify consumers' propensity to purchase (Esmaeilpour, 2015; Jhamb et al., 2020). However, certain findings indicate possible downsides, such as decreased perceived social value of more accessible luxury brands (De Barnier et al., 2012; Fuchs et al., 2013).

Thus, the primary objective of this study is to gain a comprehensive understanding of luxury consumption within the Klang Valley region of Malaysia. Specifically, this research will investigate the impact of motivation, perception, and learning on consumer behaviour in this intricate domain, as notable knowledge gaps exist in this area.

1.2 Research Questions
RQ1: Is there a significant relationship between motivation and consumption of luxury goods?
RQ2: Is there a significant relationship between perception and consumption of luxury goods?
RQ3: Is there a significant relationship between learning and consumption of luxury goods?

1.3 Research Objectives
RO1: To examine the relationship between motivation and consumption of luxury goods.
RO2: To examine the relationship between perception and consumption of luxury goods.
RO3: To examine the relationship between learning and consumption of luxury goods.

2. Theoretical Underpinning, Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

The following sub-sections focus on the theoretical underpinning, literature, and hypotheses development.

2.1 Theoretical Underpinning – Value-expressive function of attitudes
The functional perspective on attitudes posits that attitudes can play crucial social roles, including enabling self-expression (termed the value-expressive role) and aiding in self-presentation (known as the social-adjustive role) (Shavitt, 1990). This perspective

suggests that individuals adopt or convey certain attitudes to meet diverse psychological needs, spanning knowledge, utilitarian, value-expressive, and ego-defense roles. Prior studies have employed this functional approach to elucidate consumer actions, establishing its relevance by highlighting that attitudes influence motivations (Grewal et al., 2013).

Simultaneously, multiple researchers have leveraged functional attitude theories to explore the motivations behind luxury goods purchases for social purposes (Bian & Forsythe, 2012). Functional attitudes theories suggest that through luxury goods consumption, consumers aspire to achieve various social ends, granting them avenues to manifest their identity (a value-expressive role) and to portray a particular image (a social-adjustive role) to their peers (Dubois & Duquesne, 1993). Further, (Snyder & DeBono, 1985) indicate that consumers with a value-expressive outlook towards luxury items are motivated to acquire them to showcase their identity and convey their self-concept. While these consumers are typically drawn to advertisements emphasizing inherent product attributes like quality or reliability (Wilcox et al., 2009), those with a social-conformity viewpoint on luxury items are compelled to use them to earn social validation (Schade et al., 2016). For these consumers, advertisements emphasizing image or design resonate more as they align with their intent of projecting a specific image socially (Snyder & DeBono, 1985).

However, the cognitive processes determining how these two attitude roles influence consumer buying choices remain an area of investigation. Existing research implies that consumer perceptions of luxury brands might intertwine with social adaptation and value expression (Wilcox et al., 2009). This means that objectives linked to self-presentation and self-identity are likely to be prominent when purchasing luxury items. Consumers consider a product's image and inherent qualities, like craftsmanship and material quality.

2.2 Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

The following section provides the relevant literature that led to the development of the hypotheses for this study.

2.2.1 Consumption of Luxury Goods

The term "luxury" originates from the Latin word "Luxus," which represents a state of being extravagant without considering the associated expenses (Mootee, 2004). According to (Danziger, 2005), luxury products contribute to an enhanced sense of comfort and satisfaction in one's life. These commodities possess three fundamental attributes, as identified by (Wang & Foosiri, 2018): superior quality, a substantial price tag, and a non-essential nature. This study centers around examining luxury goods consumption as the acquisition of objects characterized by superior quality, exclusivity, and premium pricing.

Psychological factors, such as motivation, perception, and learning, significantly influence luxury goods' purchase patterns. Jhamb et al. (2020) underscored the

significance of perceptual factors in relation to luxury brands, with particular emphasis on brand image, exclusivity, and quality. These purchases frequently arise from consumers' desire to elevate their social status, bolster their self-worth, or exhibit their accomplishments and personal preferences (Vigneron & Johnson, 1999).

Emotions, which are considered a subset of motivation, play a crucial role in luxury consumption. According to (Vigneron & Johnson, 1999), these experiences frequently evoke emotions characterised by delight, exhilaration, and pride. Moreover, according to (Dubois et al., 2001), there is a perspective suggesting that the emotional benefits derived from luxury goods surpass their functional benefits. The researchers delineate four primary consumer motives: hedonic, social, individualistic, and instrumental. The hedonic drive pertains to the pursuit of pleasure, while the social motivation revolves around the desire for status. The individualistic motivation involves self-expression, while the instrumental motivation focuses on practical benefits.

Additional variables that contribute to the consumption of luxury items include the need for uniqueness and the manifestation of one's individuality (Okonkwo, 2016; Phau & Prendergast, 2000). The influence of cultural background on incentives is evident, as certain societies prioritise status above individualism, while others exhibit the opposite tendency (Chan et al., 2017).

The luxury goods industry has experienced significant changes as a result of the rapid growth of digital technology and the emergence of new markets, particularly in Asia (Amatulli & Guido, 2015; Gao et al., 2018). The market, formerly focused on those with high levels of wealth, has shifted its attention to the developing wealthy, millennials, and Generation Z. This change in consumer demographics necessitates a reassessment of the concept of luxury (Jin & Ryu, 2020). The proliferation of digital technologies, such as social media platforms, online shopping platforms, and mobile applications, has dramatically expanded, offering brands novel opportunities to engage with their client base (Kapferer, 2019; Li et al., 2023). Furthermore, the luxury market has been significantly affected by the COVID-19 epidemic, leading firms to prioritise the improvement of their online presence (Chang et al., 2021).

Hence, in light of the rapid transformation of the luxury market propelled by the emergence of new consumer categories and the widespread adoption of digital technology, it becomes crucial for brands to prioritise their comprehension of consumer behaviour and the identification of emerging trends.

2.2.2 The Relationship between Motivation and Consumption of Luxury Goods

Recent research has highlighted the significant role of individual, societal, and economic motivations in steering luxury purchasing decisions and consumption patterns. Dogan et al. (2020) emphasised that the propensity for luxury goods consumption is a complex structure that affects buying habits. Giovannini et al. (2015) discovered that self-perception, brand awareness, and purchase drives significantly sway luxury fashion choices among Generation Y.

Roy et al. (2018) noted that consumer motivations stem primarily from their inner beliefs and emotions. Hence, the desire for luxury varies, contingent on demographic data, socio-economic conditions, and cultural values. Purchasing luxury items meets diverse consumer needs, such as signalling a specific social affiliation, portraying a chosen image, or boosting one's self-worth (Nia et al., 2000). Consumers also noticeably shift towards more experience-based motivations over mere ownership (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2017). Delving into these motivations is paramount for luxury enterprises in crafting their offerings.

Giovannini et al. (2015) explored luxury fashion consumption among Generation Y. They found that personal drives, especially the aspiration for self-enhancement, predominantly shape their luxury buying behaviours. Brand perception also plays an instrumental role.

Further integrative research on luxury consumption in developing countries, as covered by (Roy, et al., 2018), indicates various influencing factors. Their findings spotlight the weight of functional motivations in luxury purchases, urging luxury brands to adjust their campaigns to resonate with consumers' tastes in developing countries. Dogan et al. (2018) proficiently developed a measurement tool for luxury consumption tendencies, identifying factors like materialism and status pursuit as impactful.

Conversely, aspirational shoppers often mirror the purchasing trends of groups they aspire to join (Dholakia & Talukdar, 2004), but not all consumers are driven by these motivations. Some prioritize product quality (Beverland, 2006; Vigneron & Johnson, 2004) or pursue personal satisfaction (Silverstein et al., 2008; Tsai, 2005). While many studies contend that luxury items act as status indicators, this correlation is inconsistent for everyone, as personal drives can differ (Bharti et al., 2022). Some research even challenges the dominant view, suggesting that luxury items may have a limited role in self-enhancement (Atkinson & Kang, 2022) or offer temporary emotional rewards (Bishnoi & Singh, 2022), with other personal factors holding more sway.

Accordingly, previous studies suggested that various factors that vary depending on the cultural context influence the consumption of luxury goods, with developing nations having particular factors that influence the consumption of luxury goods. Marketers of luxury brands need to understand the motivations behind the consumption of luxury goods and tailor their marketing strategies to cater to the needs and preferences of their target customers. Developing a deeper understanding of the motivations behind the consumption of luxury goods is essential in helping luxury brands maintain their appeal and remain competitive in the luxury market. The above literature has also indicated contrasting findings. Therefore, to delve deeper into the influence of motivation on luxury goods consumption, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H1: There is a significant relationship between motivation and consumption of luxury goods.

2.2.3 The Relationship between Perception and Consumption of Luxury Goods

The booming luxury sector has spurred extensive exploration into the psychological determinants influencing luxury product consumption. Central to this discussion is perception, which steers consumer attitudes towards luxury brands and dictates their inclination to indulge in luxury spending as it embodies the individual's interpretation of sensory data and comprehension of their surroundings (Dimofte, 2015). Recent investigations underscore the profound impact of sensory interactions with a brand on consumer perceptions. For instance, (Kowalczyk & Mitchell, 2022) noted that visual and tactile brand experiences shape consumer perceptions by emphasising material quality and design. Likewise, (Jhamb et al., 2020) pinpointed a significant correlation between consumer brand experiences and consumption behaviours in nascent market settings.

Recent analyses have emphasised the pivotal role of value perceptions in determining luxury buying behaviours. Shukla (2012) argued that these perceptions sway luxury purchasing intentions across mature and budding markets. Concurrently, (Roy et al., 2018) discerned from their research, set in a developing nation's context, that perceived product value and quality are paramount in guiding luxury purchasing choices. Additionally, emerging data also highlights that sociocultural backdrops can shape luxury brand perceptions. Karadag & Erdogmus (2020) discovered that these perceptions are intertwined with social identities and culturally-rooted meanings associated with luxury consumption. In a previous study, (Le Monkhouse et al., 2012) found cultural traits like face and group orientation to sway East Asian luxury perceptions.

Highlighting the importance of marketing, research by (Shin & Jeong, 2022) revealed that advertising messages, particularly emotional pitches, significantly inform consumer perceptions of luxury brands. These studies collectively emphasise the fluidity of luxury brand perceptions, sculpted by myriad elements including brand interactions, sociocultural contexts, brand characteristics, and promotional content. However, perception's multifaceted nature presents challenges in its study.

Nevertheless, numerous investigations have ventured into perception's role in luxury consumption. Zhang & Kim (2013) found perceived brand personality influential in shaping attitudes and purchase inclinations. Similarly, perceived exclusivity was spotlighted as a pivotal determinant in luxury brand attitudes, with a pronounced effect among those with a heightened need for uniqueness (Kim, 2018). Additionally, (Lee, et al., 2019) indicated that luxury brand perceptions significantly predict consumption-related actions.

Beyond societal acknowledgment, aesthetic appeal greatly informs luxury product perceptions. As per (Dogan et al., 2018), luxury items are synonymous with visual allure, adding to their appeal. Furthermore, luxury products' symbolic connotations play a vital role. Giovannini et al. (2015) identified luxury fashion items as self-expression tools for Generation Y, underscoring the symbolism of individuality. However, contrasting views like (Tsai, 2005) suggest differences in luxury perceptions between individualistic and collectivist consumers. Moreover, brand awareness also significantly colours perceptions

of luxury items. Affirmative perceptions of luxury brands amplify the luxury consumption experience (Jhamb et al., 2020), accentuating the importance of brand consciousness in the luxury domain.

Contrarily, according to (Chai & Ning, 2019) study, price fairness perception negatively influences consumers' attitudes toward overseas luxury goods. Their finding suggests that when consumers perceive home prices to be comparatively higher than those in foreign countries, indicating a sense of unfairness, their inclination to purchase luxury goods from abroad increases proportionally to their favourable attitudes towards overseas luxuries. When consumers perceive that domestic prices are comparatively lower than those in foreign nations, their inclination to purchase luxury products overseas diminishes. In contrast, their preference for purchasing luxury goods in China intensifies. In another study by (Lee et al., 2008) in Mexico on college students, perceived quality negatively influences the purchase intention of luxury goods. The findings of (Lee et al., 2008) complement the previous study of (Knight & Kim, 2007) in Japan, who also discovered that perceived quality decreased consumers' purchase intention of luxury goods. Their study mentioned a negative relationship as perceived quality is not evaluated as a driver of purchase intentions.

Even though perception serves as a psychological lever in the consumption of luxury goods, sensory experiences, sociocultural factors, and other factors all contribute to its formation. The above literature has also indicated contrasting findings. Therefore, to delve deeper into the influence of perception on luxury goods consumption, the following hypothesis was developed:

H2: There is a significant relationship between perception and consumption of luxury goods.

2.2.4 The Relationship between Learning and Consumption of Luxury Goods

A pivotal psychological determinant impacting consumer engagement with luxury products is learning. This involves individuals assimilating new knowledge, skills, and attitudes through experience, observation, and formal education (Meece & Kurtz-Costes, 2010). Studies indicate a notable connection between exposure to luxury items through such means and a subsequent inclination toward these goods (Makkar & Yap, 2018). Specifically, early exposure to luxury commodities tends to foster a more favourable outlook towards these items (Makkar & Yap, 2018). Additionally, various mediums like social media, advertising, and direct experiences facilitate consumers in accruing knowledge about luxury brands, subsequently molding their perceptions and purchase willingness (Dionísio & Lopes, 2019). Past research underscores that well-informed consumers regarding luxury brands' prestige and advantages are more likely to manifest a desire for these products (O'Cass & Frost, 2002). This learning moulds their brand perceptions and refines their purchasing choices (Kapferer & Bastien, 2017).

Distinguishing learning, psychological literature identifies cognitive and behavioural types (Schunk, 2012). The former pertains to gathering beliefs and

knowledge, while the latter concerns habit and skill development (Kotler et al., 2018). In luxury goods consumption, advertising, word-of-mouth, and first-hand experiences enable consumers to develop positive cognitive learning about luxury entities, influenced by facets like brand reputation, quality, and cost (Vigneron & Johnson, 2004). Recent studies, such as (Cho & Fiorito, 2019), depict that strong luxury brand personalities bolster cognitive learning, amplifying purchase inclinations. Research by (Lau et al., 2023) reaffirms this, showing cognitive learning's cascading effect on luxury brand attitudes and purchase intentions. In this domain, consumer involvement emerges as crucial, signifying personal relevance to a product. Greater involvement amplifies positive cognitive learning experiences, enhancing brand loyalty (Chen et al., 2021).

Moreover, both cognitive and behavioural learning aspects correlate positively with luxury goods consumption, evidenced by studies like (Kim & Kim, 2019; Park et al., 2018). The latter further attributes learning processes to brand loyalty cultivation, social signalling, and value amplification in luxury commodities. Given the contemporary milieu, brands are increasingly channelling efforts to understand and leverage these learning processes, recognizing the impact of brand personality, consumer involvement, and past brand interactions. This is crucial for brands aiming to enhance consumer brand experiences, foster loyalty, and stimulate luxury consumption.

Behavioural learning revolves around habitual formations from recurrent interactions with luxury items shaped by prior brand experiences (Cakici & Shukla, 2017). Noteworthy findings suggest enriching brand experiences magnify behavioural learning, culminating in stronger brand loyalty (Esmaeilpour, 2015). Continuous engagement with luxury brands has also been correlated with heightened behavioral learning, suggesting a propensity for future luxury acquisitions (Jhamb et al., 2020). Moreover, as several scholars have proposed a significant correlation between cognitive and behavioural learning and the act of purchasing luxury goods (Kapferer & Bastien, 2017), it is crucial for brands and marketers to carefully consider the numerous elements that genuinely influence the patterns of luxury consumption.

Contrarily, certain studies, like (De Barnier et al., 2012; Fuchs et al., 2013), argue that diminishing psychological distances can unfavourably distort luxury brand perceptions. For instance, luxury items designed by typical consumers were found to curtail desires as opposed to those designed by elite professionals, undermining the brand's perceived societal value (Fuchs et al., 2013). This resonates with the premise that the allure of luxury brands hinges on their exclusivity and inaccessibility (Bellezza & Keinan, 2014; Kapferer & Bastien, 2012). Additionally, a study conducted by (Srinivasan et al., 2014) found that education, an approach to learning, does not impact the purchase or consumption of luxury brands. Additionally, a study conducted by (Srinivasan et al., 2014) found that education, an approach to learning, does not significantly impact the purchase or consumption of luxury brands. This suggests that factors other than educational attainment and learning are more influential in consumer behaviour regarding luxury brand consumption.

Furthermore, (Vigneron & Johnson, 1999) elucidated that the correlation between learning processes and luxury goods consumption is insignificant. Their studies have found that prestige-seeking behaviours, emotional resonance, and peer influence often overshadow any direct influence of learning on luxury goods consumption.

Although academic discourses underline learning's significant role in the luxury consumption paradigm, some discrepancies have led to a deeper investigation into the influence of learning on the consumption of luxury goods and the development of the following hypothesis:

H3: There is a significant relationship between learning and consumption of luxury goods.

2.3 Proposed Conceptual Framework

Independent Variables

Dependent Variable

Motivation	H1
Perception	H2	Luxury Goods Consumption
Learning	H3
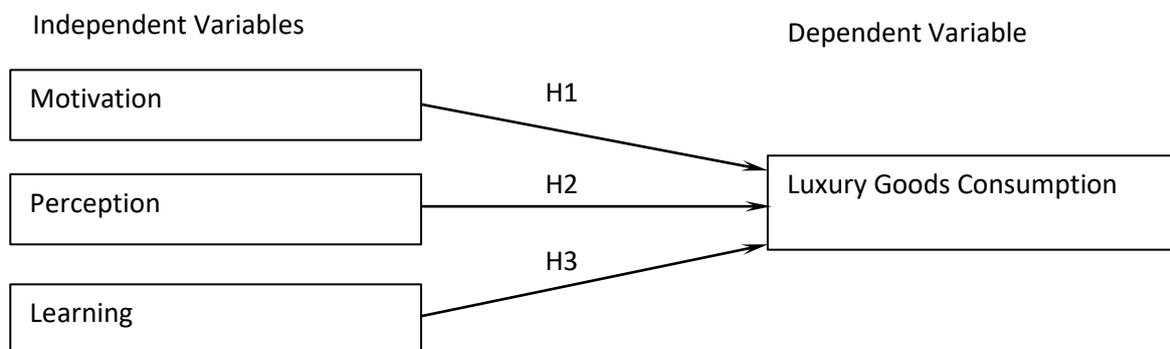
Figure 1: Proposed Conceptual Framework

3. Methodology

The following section provides the population, sampling, measurements, reliability analysis, and descriptive statistics.

3.1 Population, Sampling & Measurements

This research adopted a quantitative approach aiming to identify the relationship between psychological factors (motivation, perception, and learning) and the consumption of luxury goods among adults in the Klang Valley, Malaysia. Two primary methods of data collection were utilised: primary data, sourced from questionnaires adapted from previous academic studies, and secondary data, drawn from public sources like journals, news articles, and online databases.

This research's sampling design encompassed several aspects: the target population involved adults aged 21 years old and above, which is 5.05 million (DOSM, 2022); the sampling location was Klang Valley, chosen for its economic significance in Malaysia; the sampling element included diverse occupational groups assessed through a Likert-scale questionnaire; and the sampling technique was simple random sampling.

A total of 700 closed-ended questionnaires were used to amass the data, which was distributed using Google Docs, emails, and WhatsApp. This study used (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970) tabulation to determine the minimum sample size required for this study. 391 responses were received, with 7 incomplete. Hair et al. (2019) recommend at least 50 samples for regression analysis, so 384 responses were considered very good. The data was analysed using SPSS Version 29.

3.2 Reliability Analysis

Table 1: Reliability Analysis (N = 384)

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
Consumption of Luxury Goods	0.740	5
Motivation	0.827	8
Perception	0.837	8
Learning	0.785	7

Table 1 Reliability Analysis shows the internal consistency of the variables measured using Cronbach's Alpha, with a sample size of 384 respondents. The "Consumption of Luxury Goods" variable has a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.740, indicating an acceptable level of internal consistency. This variable is based on 5 items. The "Motivation" variable, assessed using 8 items, displays a good level of internal consistency with an Alpha value of 0.827. Similarly, the "Perception" variable, measured with 8 items, yields a high Cronbach's Alpha of 0.837, signifying strong internal consistency. Lastly, the "Learning" variable, constructed from 7 items, showcases a commendable internal consistency with a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.785. In summary, all the variables—Consumption of Luxury Goods, Motivation, Perception, and Learning—exhibit acceptable to good internal consistency in the study, with their Cronbach's Alpha values ranging between 0.740 and 0.837.

3.3 Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics (N = 384)

Factors	Mean	SD	Skew	Kurtosis	Min	Max
Motivation	3.088	0.760	0.305	0.313	1	5
Perception	2.825	0.769	0.300	0.316	1	5
Learning	2.860	0.713	0.350	0.403	1	5
Consumption of Luxury Goods	3.440	0.775	-0.019	-0.359	1	5

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics reveal key insights for a sample of 384 respondents about the factors of Motivation, Perception, Learning, and Consumption of Luxury Goods. The mean score for motivation is (3.088 ± 0.760), indicating a variability in the responses. This factor has scores ranging from 1 to 5, with a slight positive skewness of 0.305 and a kurtosis close to a normal distribution at 0.313. The mean score for perception is 2.825 ± 0.769. It exhibits a mild positive skewness of 0.300 and a kurtosis value of 0.316,

suggesting tails similar to a normal curve. Learning's mean score is 2.860 ± 0.713. Its distribution has a slight rightward tail with a skewness of 0.350 and a near-normal kurtosis of 0.403. Among all factors, Consumption of Luxury Goods has the highest mean score of 3.440 ± 0.775. Its distribution is nearly symmetrical, evident from the almost zero skewness of -0.019, and a slightly platykurtic nature, as indicated by the kurtosis of -0.359. All the factors consistently had scores spanning from 1 to 5. The results suggest that respondents, on average, score the highest in the Consumption of Luxury Goods category among all the surveyed factors.

4. Findings & Interpretation

The following section provides the findings of this study, including the respondents' demographic profiles, descriptive analysis, correlation, and regression analysis.

4.1 Demographic Profile
The profile of the respondents studied is displayed in Table 3.

Table 3: Demographic Profile of Respondents (N = 384)

Demographics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Female	183	47.7
Male	201	52.3
Age		
24 Below	2	0.5
25 - 34	89	23.2
35 - 44	194	50.5
45 - 54	73	19.0
55 Above	26	6.8
Education Level		
SPM/O-Levels	8	2.1
Diploma/A-Levels/STPM	11	2.9
Degree/Professional	263	68.5
Master	89	23.2
Doctorate	13	3.4
Occupation		
Manager/Executive	225	58.6
Professional	80	20.8
Business Owner	34	8.9
Clerical/Non - Manager	6	1.6
Student	11	2.9
Retired	5	1.3
Gig Worker/Self Employed/Freelancer	15	3.9
Skilled Trade person	6	1.3
Other	3	0.8
Income Range (RM)		
Less than 4,000	45	11.7

4,000 - 9,999	128	33.3
10,000 - 19,999	130	33.9
More than 20,000	81	21.1
Purchased luxury product or service, either for self or as a gift		
Yes	247	64.3
No	137	35.7
Received luxury item or service as gift		
Yes	201	52.3
No	183	47.7

Table 3 Demographic Profile of Respondents for 384 survey respondents, the majority were male respondents (52.3%). In terms of age, the majority were aged between 35 and 44 at (50.5%), and the predominant educational level was a Degree or Professional qualification at 68.5%. Most respondents were employed as Managers or Executives (58.6%), and the most common income range was RM 10,000 to RM 19,999 (33.9%). Notably, 64.3% had purchased a luxury product or service for themselves or as a gift, and 52.3% had received a luxury item or service as a gift.

4.3 Correlation Analysis
The correlation analysis was conducted to estimate the strength and direction of the association among the variables in this study.

Table 4: Correlation Matrix (N = 384)

Variables	MOT	PER	LER	CLG
Motivation (MOT)	1			
Perception (PER)	0.669**	1		
Learning (LER)	0.581**	0.632**	1	
Consumption of Luxury Goods (CLG)	0.572**	0.430**	0.486**	1
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)				

Based on Table 4 Correlation Matrix involving 384 respondents, several significant relationships are evident between the variables. Motivation (MOT) and Perception (PER) have a high positive correlation ($r = 0.669$; $p < 0.001$). Similarly, there is a moderate positive correlation between Motivation and Learning (LER) ($r = 0.581$; $p < 0.001$), as well as a moderate positive correlation between Motivation and Consumption of Luxury Goods (CLG) ($r = 0.572$; $p < 0.001$). Perception and Learning indicates a significantly high positive correlation ($r = 0.632$; $p < 0.001$). Additionally, Perception shows a moderate positive correlation with Consumption of Luxury Goods ($r = 0.430$; $p < 0.001$), while Learning shows a moderate positive correlation with Consumption of Luxury Goods ($r = 0.486$; $p < 0.001$). All these correlations are statistically significant, emphasizing the strong relationships between these variables.

4.4 Regression Analysis

Table 5: Model Summary

Model 1	R	R square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.603a	0.363	0.358	0.619

From Table 5, Model Summary, the multiple correlation coefficient (R) for Model 1 is 0.603, which means there is a moderately strong linear relationship between the combination of the three independent variables and the dependent variable. The closer this value is to 1 or -1, the stronger the linear relationship. Given that it's positive, it indicates that as scores on the predictors increase, scores on the dependent variable also tend to increase.

The R-square value (0.363) represents the proportion of variance in the dependent variable (Consumption of Luxury Goods) that is explained by the independent variables in the model. In this study, approximately 36.3% of the variability in the consumption of luxury goods can be explained by the variation in Motivation, Perception, and Learning. However, it's worth noting the adjusted R-square value, which is slightly lower at 0.358 or 35.8%. Adjusted R-square takes into account the number of predictors in the model and adjusts for the potential of overfitting. This indicates that after accounting for the number of predictors, 35.8% of the variability in Consumption of Luxury Goods is explained by the model.

Lastly, the standard error of the estimate is 0.619. This value indicates the average difference between the observed values of the dependent variable (Consumption of Luxury Goods) and the values predicted by the model.

Table 6: ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	82.936	3	27.645	72.204	0.001b
	Residual	145.493	380	0.383		
	Total	228.430	383			
Dependent Variable: Consumption of Luxury Goods						
Predictors: (Constant), Motivation, Perception, Learning						

From Table 6 ANOVA, the Regression row represents the variation in the dependent variable (Consumption of Luxury Goods) that is explained by the independent variables. The sum of squares for regression is 82.936. This is the amount of the total variation in Consumption of Luxury Goods that's accounted for by the model with the predictors. With 3 degrees of freedom (df) corresponding to the three predictors (Motivation, Perception, and Learning), the mean square for regression is calculated as 27.645.

The Residual row represents the unexplained variation in the dependent variable after accounting for the model. The sum of squares for residuals is 145.493, which means this is the amount of variation not captured by the model. With 380 degrees of freedom,

corresponding to the number of observations minus the number of predictors minus one, the mean square for residuals is 0.383.

The F-statistic (F) compares the explained variation to the unexplained variation. (F = 72.204; p = 0.001) indicating a significant relationship between the predictors and the dependent variable.

The ANOVA table suggests that the regression model, which includes the predictors Motivation, Perception, and Learning, significantly predicts the Consumption of Luxury Goods. The F-statistic and its associated low p-value provide strong evidence that at least one of the predictors is related to the dependent variable. The model accounts for a certain amount of variation in Consumption of Luxury Goods, but there's still a notable amount of unexplained variation, as evidenced by the residual sum of squares.

Table 7: Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error			
Variables	(Constant)**	1.368	0.147		9.295	0.000
	Motivation	0.451	0.058	0.446	7.783	0.000
	Perception	-0.019	0.060	-0.019	-0.317	0.752
	Learning	0.258	0.059	0.239	4.348	0.000
**Dependent Variable: Consumption of Luxury Goods						

Table 7 Coefficients, provides an insight into the relationships between the dependent variable, "Consumption of Luxury Goods," and the independent variables: "Motivation," "Perception," and "Learning."

The intercept, or constant, suggests that in the absence of any influence from the independent variables, the unstandardized coefficient of "Consumption of Luxury Goods" (B = 1.368). This intercept is statistically significant, (t = 9.295; p < 0.001).

Firstly, "Motivation" emerges as a strong positive predictor for the "Consumption of Luxury Goods." Specifically, for every unit increase in "Motivation," it is anticipating a 0.451 unit rise in luxury goods consumption, assuming all other variables remain constant. This is further evidenced by (t = 7.783; p < 0.001). The standardized coefficient, (Beta = 0.446) underscores its strong positive influence relative to the other predictors in the model.

Secondly, "Perception" indicates an insignificant influence on luxury goods consumption. Even though the model suggests that for every unit increase in "Perception," luxury goods consumption decreases by 0.019 units, this effect is statistically insignificant. The (t = -0.317; p > 0.001), also indicates that "Perception" is an insignificant predictor in the context of this study.

Lastly, "Learning" reveals a positive and statistically significant impact on the consumption of luxury goods. For each unit increase in "Learning," luxury goods consumption is expected to increase by 0.258 units, all else being equal. The significance of "Learning" as a predictor is solidified by (t = 4.348; p < 0.001).

The regression equation represents the relationship between the independent variables (Motivation, Perception, and Learning) and the dependent variable (Consumption of Luxury Goods)

Based on Table 7 Coefficients, the linear regression equation is as follows:

$$CLG = 1.368 + 0.451(MOT) + 0.258(LER)$$

Where,
Consumption of Luxury Goods = CLG;
Motivation = MOT;
Perception = PER;
Learning = LER.

Thus, the findings of this study reveal that "Motivation" and "Learning" are influential predictors for the consumption of luxury goods. In contrast, "Perception" is an insignificant predictor in this study.

4.5 Summary of Hypothesis Test

Table 8: Summary of Hypothesis Results (N = 384)

Hypothesis	P-value	Result
H1: There is a significant relationship between motivation and consumption of luxury goods.	< 0.001	Supported by data
H2: There is a significant relationship between perception and consumption of luxury goods.	> 0.001	Not supported by data
H3: There is a significant relationship between learning and consumption of luxury goods.	< 0.001	Supported by data

5. Discussion

This chapter presents the results of the study which are generated using the IBM Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 27.0 software.

5.1 There is a Significant Relationship between Motivation and Consumption of Luxury Goods

Past studies have shown that personal, social, and economic motivations play crucial roles in influencing consumers' luxury purchase intentions and consumption behaviour. Giovannini et al. (2015) found that self and brand consciousness as well as motivations influence luxury fashion consumption among Generation Y consumers. According to their findings, self-motivation is the primary driver of consumption of luxury goods among this group. Furthermore, (Roy et al., 2018) found that consumers' hedonic and utilitarian motivations are significant factors that drive the consumption of luxury goods.

The significant (p < 0.001) for the relationship between motivation and consumption of luxury goods in this research. Therefore, this result reinforces previous literature that motivation is a psychological factor that drives the consumption of luxury goods. At the same time, this result refutes findings that emotional satisfaction derived from luxury goods might be short-lived (Bishnoi & Singh, 2022) or that the impact on self-enhancement might be minimal or insignificant (Atkinson & Kang, 2022). Hence, the findings of this research have answered the first research question and have narrowed the gap in the literature.

5.2 There is a Significant Relationship between Perception and Consumption of Luxury Goods

A study by (Shukla, 2012) suggests that value perceptions significantly influence luxury purchase intentions in both developed and emerging markets. Another study found that consumers' perceptions of luxury brands were shaped by their social identities and the cultural meanings that are attached to the consumption of luxury goods in their respective societies (Jin & Kim, 2019). However, the significant (p > 0.001) for the relationship between perception and consumption of luxury goods in this study. Therefore, this result negates previous literature that consumers' perceptions of luxury brands were a significant predictor of their intention to engage in the consumption of luxury goods (Lee et al., 2019). Instead, this result supports (Tsai, 2005) finding that individualistic consumers exhibit greater levels of congruity with their internal selves than collectivistic consumers. Moreover, this study also supports previous researchers (Chai & Ning, 2019; Lee et al., 2008; Knight & Kim, 2007) who have found an insignificant influence of perception on luxury goods consumption. People who think that luxury products are flashy and overpriced share similar views about how "others" behave. Hence, the findings of this research have answered the second research question and have narrowed the gap in the literature.

5.3 There is a Significant Relationship between Learning and Consumption of Luxury Goods

Research has shown that individuals who are exposed to luxury goods and services from a young age tend to have a more positive attitude towards the consumption of luxury goods than those who are not exposed to such products (Makkar & Yap, 2018). Consumers also acquire knowledge about luxury brands through various channels, such as social media and advertising (Dionísio & Lopes, 2019). In this study, the significant (p < 0.001) for the relationship between learning and consumption of luxury goods. Therefore, this result supports previous literature that learning plays a significant role in the consumption of luxury goods, as consumers' exposure to luxury goods and services through experience, observation, and education can influence their attitudes towards the consumption of luxury goods (Makkar & Yap, 2018). It also contradicts (De Barnier et al., 2012) that accessible luxury brands had lower social value because they are more similar to the market. Moreover, this study negates the findings of (Srinivasan et al., 2014;

Vigneron & Johnson, 1999) who mentioned that there is an insignificant relationship between learning and consumption of luxury goods. Hence, the findings of this research have answered the third research question and have narrowed the gap in the literature.

6. Conclusion

The objective of this study was to ascertain the psychological elements that underlie the consumption of luxury goods within the Klang Valley region of Malaysia. This study aimed to investigate the relationship between psychological characteristics, such as motivation, perception, and learning, and the consumption patterns of luxury goods. The results suggest that all the research objectives were accomplished, and the identified gaps in the existing literature were addressed. There is a notable relationship between motivation, learning, and purchasing luxury goods within the Klang Valley region of Malaysia. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that an insignificant relationship exists between perception and the purchase of luxury goods in the Klang Valley region of Malaysia.

The first objective of this study was to examine if there is a significant relationship between motivation and consumption of luxury goods in the Klang Valley, Malaysia. The study has revealed a significant relationship between motivation and consumption of luxury goods. Consequently, the present study corroborates the conclusions drawn by prior researchers (Dogan et al., 2020; Roy et al., 2018; Giovannini et al., 2015; Le Monkhouse et al., 2012; Nia & Lynne Zaichkowsky, 2000) regarding the significant influence of personal, social, and economic motivations on consumers' intentions to purchase luxury goods and their subsequent consumption behaviour. Consumer motivations are mostly connected to the consumers' inner ideas and sentiments, according to (Roy et al., 2018). Developing a deeper understanding of the motivations behind the consumption of luxury goods is essential in helping luxury brands maintain their appeal and remain competitive in the luxury market.

The second objective of this study was to examine if there is a significant relationship between perception and consumption of luxury goods in the Klang Valley, Malaysia. This study has exposed an insignificant relationship between perception and consumption of luxury goods. Subsequently, the present study presents a contrasting perspective to the conclusions drawn by prior researchers (Shukla, 2012; Le Monkhouse et al., 2012; Jhamb et al., 2020; Dogan et al., 2020; Giovannini et al., 2015) who argue that factors such as value perceptions, face and group orientation, and attitudes towards luxury play a crucial role in shaping consumers' behaviour regarding luxury consumption. The social and cultural situations in which consumers find themselves can influence their opinions of luxury products. Hence, it is imperative for marketers to customise their advertising and branding methods in accordance with the intricacies of certain communities or cultures. The utilisation of uniform messaging and approaches may not provide comparable levels of appeal. Consumers' attitudes towards luxury

brands were found to be highly influenced by their assessments of brand personality, ultimately impacting their purchase intentions.

The third objective of this study was to examine if there is a significant relationship between learning and consumers' consumption of luxury goods in the Klang Valley, Malaysia. The study has demonstrated a significant relationship between learning and consumption of luxury goods. Therefore, this study aligns with the conclusions drawn by prior researchers (Jhamb, et al., 2020; Giovannini et al., 2015; Wiedmann et al., 2012) who also observed a significant impact of cognitive and behavioural learning on the purchasing behaviour of luxury goods. Repeated exposure to luxury brands, whether through advertising, word-of-mouth, or direct experience, has the potential to positively influence customers' opinion of the brand, thus affecting their intention to make a purchase. In the contemporary digital landscape, brands can harness various digital marketing strategies, including social media and affiliate marketing, to expand their reach and enhance customer engagement. This is particularly relevant because individuals are consistently linked to digital platforms in the present era.

Hence, drawing from the findings of this study, it can be deduced that motivation and learning play pivotal roles as psychological determinants that propel individuals to consume luxury items. According to (Le Monkhouse et al., 2012), luxury possesses a unique capacity to fulfil the psychological desire for a feeling of accomplishment. The projected trend suggests that as Malaysia's population experiences a rise in prosperity, there is an anticipated surge in the demand for luxury goods and services. Understanding consumer behaviour in the context of luxury goods purchases from a psychological standpoint is of utmost importance, particularly in light of the expanding luxury industry that is now available to individuals across many socioeconomic groups, rather than being limited to only elite or high net worth individuals (Yeoman & McMahon-Beattie, 2018). In order to effectively influence and forecast consumer behaviour related to purchasing trends, marketers must acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to comprehend, evaluate, and capitalise on the psychological determinants that underlie luxury buying decisions. According to (Kautish et al., 2021), the expertise of true luxury experts is mostly in their understanding of human behaviour rather than solely in their knowledge of luxury goods, brands, and lifestyles.

7. Limitations and Further Research

The primary focus of this study was only on the purchase patterns of luxury items among adult individuals residing in the Klang Valley region of Malaysia. Hence, it is recommended that additional investigations be carried out on populations residing in different regions of Malaysia, with particular emphasis on prosperous urban areas like Penang and Johor Bahru. Furthermore, the present study centered its investigation on the psychological determinants that underlie the act of engaging in the consumption of luxury items. Additional research can be undertaken to explore the impact of various variables on the consumption of luxury items, including economic, personal, social, and

cultural issues. Moreover, it is essential to note that just depending on self-reported influences and intents may not accurately represent consumers' actual consumption behaviour (Morales et al., 2017). Social desirability bias can impact self-reports, as individuals may be inclined to produce replies that conform to cultural norms rather than accurately representing their actual behaviours (Larson, 2019). The disparity between individuals' self-reported and actual behaviours can result in either underestimating or overestimating the association between psychological factors and consumption. One potential strategy for mitigating this bias is incorporating neuroimaging techniques into administering consumer surveys.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

About the Authors

Kumaran Kanapathipillai, a prominent figure in academia, earned his Ph.D. in management and business from Management and Science University (Malaysia). With an impressive tenure of 22 years in the academic world, he has honed expertise in areas such as Management, Marketing, Supply Chain Management, and Logistics Management. Within academia, he plays a pivotal role in guiding and assessing both Masters and Ph.D. candidates. He also serves as an external examiner for several universities in Europe and Asia. Additionally, he is a peer reviewer for numerous academic journals. Beyond academia, he provides specialised training sessions on entrepreneurship, creative problem-solving, and project management across diverse industries. His scholarly pursuits predominantly concentrate on contemporary entrepreneurship, management, and marketing.

Shirley Ann Lau holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Communications from Monash University and is currently completing a Master of Business Administration majoring in Marketing at Unitar International University. She has over 20 years of experience in corporate affairs, marketing communications, public relations, and branding within banking and professional services.

Sashireka Appannah holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Accounting from University Tenaga Nasional and is currently completing a Master of Business Administration majoring in Management at Unitar International University. She has over 16 years of

experience in auditing, fund management, operations, and business performance management within banking and professional services.

Cheok Chuan Yi holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Actuarial Science from Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman and is currently completing a Master of Business Administration at Unitar International University. With over 8 years of professional experience in capital market services compliance, he possesses a solid background in managing financial crime risks and has a comprehensive understanding of the local regulatory landscape.

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