

The consumer behaviour applied to luxury furniture and decor:

An analysis of the Portuguese scenario

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Abstract

This article aims to analyze the receptivity and motivations of Portuguese consumers for the acquisition of luxury furniture and decoration. Based on a literature review and the adoption of a positivist paradigm, data were collected through the application of an online questionnaire survey between November 2021 and January 2022, to a non-probabilistic convenience sample using the snowball technique, applied to the Portuguese population. The final sample consisted of 402 individuals over the 18-years old of Portuguese nationality. The collected data were quantitatively analyzed using the IBM SPSS Statistics software (version 28.0.0.0). During the analysis were used descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. A total of 11 hypotheses were tested in the conceptual model. The inferential analysis showed a statistically significant correlation to support a total of 8 of the 11 hypotheses formulated in the research model. The results highlight the impact and importance that luxury brands have on consumer emotions, transmitting happiness, authenticity, and sophistication, translating into the consumer's desire to be associated with them. In summary, sensations play a central role in the entire process of buying luxury goods and establishing a relationship between consumers and luxury brands. The main limitation of this study was the sample approach used, that do not allow a generalization to the Portuguese population. For future research, it is recommended to expand this study to other countries, encompassing an international approach.

Keywords: consumer behaviour; consumer decision-making process; luxury; luxury goods; luxury brands.

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1. Introduction

The demand for luxury goods has been gradually increasing, as consumers can enjoy higher incomes and more consumption opportunities due to the conditions of the modern era (Husic & Cicic, 2009). Luxury has shifted from a negative notion, harming public virtue, to an essential promotion of consumption.

In recent years, the concept of luxury has expanded from materialism to time and passion, becoming more accessible. As consumers satisfy their feelings of pleasure and gratification through luxury goods, they also enhance their allure to consumers (Yeoman, 2011). It is noteworthy that luxury goods are no longer exclusively available to the wealthiest social classes, which previously held a significant part of their monopoly. This is due to the introduction of luxury goods for the middle and upper-middle classes (Savitha and Sathyanarayan, 2014, as cited in Bilge, 2015), fueling the growth of the luxury sector (Kapferer & Laurent, 2016; Paul, 2019).

Focusing on luxury furniture and decoration, these consist of movable pieces showcasing the best of elite quality and design associated with a particular period. Often crafted in metal, glass, and wood, they add aesthetic value to environments such as residences, hotels, offices, and other interior or exterior areas. Luxury furniture contributes to a luxurious lifestyle and includes elegant, sumptuous, and indulgent elements (Allied Market Research, 2022; Mordor Intelligence, 2021).

It is important to identify and understand everything that consumers value and seek when purchasing luxury goods, with a particular focus on luxury furniture and decoration. In this context, this study has two research objectives: (1) to analyze the factors influencing the consumer purchasing behavior of luxury furniture and decoration; (2) to examine the entire process of consumer interaction with luxury brands.

This article is structured into five sections, beginning with the present introduction. The second section provides a literature review on the topic, and the third section describes the methodology. The fourth section is dedicated to presenting the results, and the article culminates in the fifth section with the discussion and conclusion.

2. Literature Review

2.1. The concepts: *Luxury and luxury goods*

Luxury is an extremely challenging concept to define and has various interpretations (Vigneron & Johnson, 1999; Yeoman, 2011). The meaning of luxury varies across time and space. What may be considered luxurious to one person could be deemed commonplace to another (Nwankwo et al., 2014), depending on the individual's experiences and needs (Wiedmann et al., 2007). According to Vigneron and Johnson (1999), luxury refers to the highest level of prestigious brands, encompassing various physical and psychological values.

Bilge (2015) notes that consumer goods are commonly divided into three classes: luxury goods, inferior goods, and necessities. Necessities include goods that individuals with lower incomes allocate the majority of their expenses to, such as food and housing. Inferior goods are products consumed less as income levels rise, making way for luxury goods. Beyond their monetary value, luxury goods can also be associated with factors such as experience, originality, and status when viewed from different perspectives (Yeoman, 2011).

Kapferer and Bastien (2009) emphasize that one of the fundamental functions of luxury is to recreate social structure, namely social stratification. Luxury goods can bring additional benefits as symbols of a social stratum. Thus, even though not essential products for consumers, their high prices serve the function of filtering social classes and are accepted by them. In addition to the social function, pleasure and a sense of pride are integral aspects of luxury's personal dimension. Luxury cannot be considered merely as snobbery but rather as the consumption of luxury symbols. However, no luxury brand can rely solely on customer trust interested only in symbols, neglecting quality and other product characteristics. These customers can easily shift their choice from one luxury brand to another with similar recognition (Kapferer, 1997).

Dubois et al. (2001) and Nueno and Quelch (1998) identified six characteristics of luxury goods: (1) a guarantee of high quality; (2) expensive price; (3) scarcity and uniqueness; (4) timelessness; (5) brand heritage and its history; (6) superfluous goods. On the other hand, Heine (2012) describes the characteristics of luxury goods based on price, quality, aesthetics, rarity, uniqueness, and symbolism.

Regarding the categorization of luxury goods, this is done in different ways depending on their unique characteristics. Allèrès (1997) proposed a division of luxury goods into three categories: (1) accessible luxury goods, where the luxury item is available to most consumers due to its affordable price; (2) intermediate luxury goods, where this type of item cannot be acquired and is not accessible to consumers with a limited budget, being only available to certain consumers; (3) unavailable luxury goods, including items that can only be acquired by elite consumers due to their special production conditions and high prices. Silverstein and Fiske's (2008) proposal also relied on three categories of luxury goods: (1) new luxury goods; (2) old luxury goods; (3) common luxury goods.

Siyang (2014) schematized the comparison and facilitated the distinction between these three types of luxury goods through a comparison of price, quality, availability, appeal, and market segment (Table 1).

Table 1 – The three categories of Luxury Goods by Siying

Characteristics	New luxury goods	Old luxury goods	Common luxury goods
Price	Exorbitant	Premium	Low price
Quality	Mass scale manufacturing production	Handmade	Industrial mass production
Availability	Affordable	Private/exclusive	Dominant
Appeal	Attractive	Irrelevant	Moderate
Market segment	Consumers motivated by the luxury	Elites	Loyal consumers

Source: (Siying, 2014)

According to Siying (2014), new luxury goods are characterized by an exorbitant price, large-scale manual production, accessibility, attractiveness, and their market segment consists of luxury-driven consumers.

2.2. Luxury brands

Within the context of luxury brands, there is still no widely accepted definition among researchers (Ko et al., 2019). The difficulty in formulating a precise and universally accepted definition may be attributed to the subjective nature of luxury, subject to various interpretations over time (Cristini et al., 2017; Mortelmans, 2005). In their study, Miller & Mills (2012, p.1471) noted that previous research is characterized by "a lack of clarity regarding a definition, operationalization, and measurement of brand luxury." This observation aligns with earlier calls for a more precise definition of luxury goods marketing (Berthon et al., 2009).

Ko et al. (2019) proposed that a luxury brand is a branded product or service that, from the consumer's perspective: 1) has high quality; 2) provides authentic value through desired, functional, or emotional benefits; 3) has a prestigious image in the market, based on qualities such as craftsmanship, workmanship, or service quality; 4) is capable of charging a premium price, and 5) is able to inspire a deep connection with the consumer. However, it is important to note that the practice of premium pricing or superior quality, although increasing the likelihood of a brand being considered of luxury, it's not the synonym of it. At least, the consumers need to perceive it as one.

Cristini et al. (2017) emphasize excellence, creativity, and exclusivity as key variables in identifying a luxury brand. A brand embodying high levels of these conditions attains the pinnacle of luxury. However, the traditional view linking luxury to these characteristics is fading, and it is increasingly rare for a brand to be perceived as luxurious without embodying all three features (Jackson & Shaw, 2009; Okonkwo, 2016). According to Pereira (2020), a brand with high excellence and exclusivity but low creativity is unlikely to be perceived as luxury.

Hudders and Pandelaere (2012) propose that luxury brands associate with uniqueness, superior quality, aesthetically pleasing design, rarity, and high cost. Consumers predominantly acquire luxury brands for symbolic reasons, reflecting their individual or social goals (Wilcox et al., 2009). Luxury brand consumption is largely determined by social function attitudes, where consumers express individuality and social status through luxury brands (Wilcox et al., 2009). Both Western and Eastern cultures see luxury brands as a means to portray individuality and/or social status (Nueno & Quelch, 1998; Vigneron & Johnson, 2004).

2.3. Attitudes and Perceptions of Luxury Consumers

Consumer attitudes, feelings, and perceptions towards luxury are among the factors shaping the luxury concept. Purchasing behaviors, brand loyalty, and satisfaction with the brand are strongly influenced by how consumers view luxury, the goods they consider luxurious, their relationship with luxury, and their perceptions of luxury (Bilge, 2015).

According to Husic and Cicic (2009), consumers of all social classes perceive luxury as a status symbol. However, Dubois et al. (2005) divided consumers into different groups based on their attitudes toward luxury. Also, Han et al. (2010) categorized consumers based on their preference for ostentatious or non-ostentatious goods and consumption motivations.

In an initial approach to luxury value, Babin et al. (1994) identified two distinct dimensions of luxury value: hedonic value and utilitarian value. Berthon et al. (2009) suggested capturing the total dimensionality of relationships between people, products, and brands to understand luxury value, conceptualized with three dimensions: symbolic, experiential, and functional. Smith and Colgate (2007), based on the three basic consumer needs—symbolic, experiential, and functional—proposed by Park et al. (1986), identified four typologies of value, including symbolic/expressive, experiential/hedonic, functional/instrumental, and cost/sacrifice. Tynan et al. (2010) further expanded the Smith and Colgate (2007) framework by adding rational value.

However, in a study by Alan et al. (2016), focused on the impact of luxury value dimensions on the reacquisition intention of luxury brands, the authors emphasized the lack of total consensus in the literature regarding the dimensions constituting luxury value. They also noted that Shukla et al. (2015) agreed that symbolic value, experiential value, and functional value are the three fundamental dimensions of luxury value.

According to Zhang and Zhao (2019), luxury consists of three important components: a series of unique characteristics such as good quality, high price, majestic materials, and a complex production process; experiential meanings, such as fantasies,

feelings, and fun that individuals can experience and enjoy; and symbolic meanings, such as high recognition and good reputation, as well as symbols of wealth, identity, and social status (Li et al., 2013; Zhang & Kim, 2013; Zhang & Cude, 2018). The identification and systematization of luxury value dimensions have been developed for decades (Zhang & Zhao, 2019).

2.4. Hypothesis and Conceptual Model

Considering that consumer behavior is the process of selecting, purchasing, and consuming products and services to satisfy consumer needs and desires (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018; Ramya & SA, 2016), and the functional value of the product encompasses utility derived from perceived quality, expected product performance, and perceived expected costs (Smith & Colgate, 2007; Sweeney & Soutar, 2001; Wiedmann et al., 2009; Zhang & Zhao, 2019). It is crucial to create brand elements, i.e., characteristics that identify and distinguish it from the competition (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018). Additionally, concern for the environment and sustainability is a topic of growing importance for consumers and society (Chen et al., 2021; Wijekoon & Sabri, 2021).

As mentioned earlier, consumers do not just buy a luxury brand because there are certain motivations that lead them to buy the brand and be satisfied with the purchase. Various factors influence a consumer's motivation to buy a luxury product (Srinivasan et al., 2014). Based on the literature review, eleven hypotheses were formulated and are explicitly stated in Table 2.

Table 2 – Hypotheses

H1	Sensations influence the Product Functional Value.
H2	Sensations are related with Environment and Sustainability.
H3	Sensations are related with Brand Elements.
H4	Sensations influence the Buying Behaviour.
H5	Product Functional Value influence the Buying Behaviour.
H6	The Environment and Sustainability are related with the Buying Behaviour.
H7	The Brand Elements influence the Buying Behaviour.
H8	Sensations influence the Relationship with Luxury Brands.
H9	Product Functional Value influence the Relationship with Luxury Brands.
H10	The Buying Behaviour influence the Relationship with Luxury Brands.
H11	The Brand Elements are related with Luxury Brands' Relationship.

Source: Elaborated by the author

The conceptual model is represented in Figure 1. To achieve the previously established research objectives, a positivist paradigm was adopted, and a quantitative study was conducted.

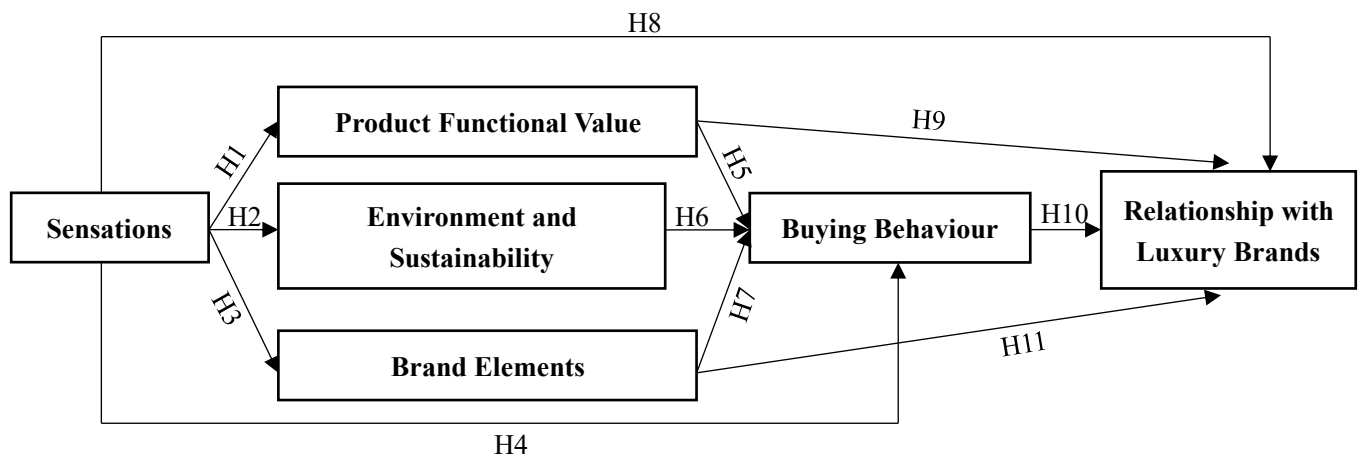


Figure 1 – Conceptual Model

Source: Elaborated by the author

3. Methodology

The study's target population was the entire adult population residing in Portugal. For data collection, a questionnaire survey was applied online to a non-probabilistic convenience sample using the "snowball" technique. Despite being aware of the disadvantages of non-probabilistic sampling, such as not being representative of the study population, it was deemed the most appropriate.

For the questionnaire's operationalization and data collection, the online questionnaire platform FormsUA was used. For the feasibility and adequacy of the questionnaire, it had the consent and approval of the Data Protection Officer (GDPR) of UA.

The questionnaire was available online from November 3, 2021, to January 10, 2022. It consisted of a total of 15 questions divided into four sections: the first section contained 5 questions regarding the socio-demographic characteristics of the participants; the second section referred to 8 questions related to the consumer's contact with luxury brands; the third and fourth sections consisted of 2 questions each, respectively, about the consumer's relationship with luxury goods and the attributes valued in luxury furniture and decoration. Previously validated scales by other authors were used. The questionnaire and the respective scales used are included in the Appendix.

In data analysis, descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were used with the IBM SPSS Statistics software (version 28.0.0.0). The questionnaire received a total of 553 responses, but after monitoring, only 402 valid responses were considered.

4. Results

4.1. Sample sociodemographic characterization

The questionnaire obtained a total of 553 responses, but after monitoring, 402 valid responses were considered.

Out of the total 402 respondents, 268 were female (66.7%) and 134 were male (33.3%). Regarding age groups, the sample proved to be diverse (minimum age: 18 years; maximum age: 81 years), with a greater concentration in the three younger age groups: 18-24 years (N=104, 25.9%), 25-34 years (N=67, 16.7%), and 35-44 years (N=93, 23.1%).

In terms of education, almost 80% of the sample had higher education (N=308, 76.6%), with 73.4% (N=295) holding at least a bachelor's degree, and 38.3% (N=154) having postgraduate qualifications or higher. Regarding socioeconomic status, the majority claimed to be in a middle position (N=215, 53.5%; $X = 5.81$); about one-third (N=132, 32.8%) stated they were in a high or very high socioeconomic position, while only 13.6% (N=53) considered themselves to have a low or very low socioeconomic status.

Regarding the professional situation, about half of the sample consisted of employed individuals (N=198, 49.3%), with a significant portion being students and working students (N=155, 38.5%).

4.2. Consumers' attitudes regarding luxury goods characterization

The participants were questioned regarding the frequency with which they followed luxury brands: more than half of the sample (N=203, 50.5%) responded that they did not follow, or only rarely followed; 18.1% (N=73) stated that they followed luxury brands frequently or very frequently.

Concerning the frequency of acquiring luxury products, the obtained values highlighted that the acquisition of luxury products is not a common practice, with 73.1% (N=294) of the sample responding that they rarely or very rarely acquired luxury products; 21.4% (N=86) stated that they did so regularly, and only 5.4% (N=22) responded that they frequently acquired luxury products.

At the time of purchasing luxury products, the preferred method of acquisition is the brand's physical store (N=162, 40.3%), followed by outlets (N=114, 28.4%). The brand's online store (N=59, 14.6%) and multi-brand stores (N=49, 12.2%) represent other alternatives to consider. The opinions of friends/acquaintances do not play a decisive role in the purchase of luxury products (41.1%, N=165); for 29.4% (N=118), it is indifferent, and only 29.6% (N=119) considered the opinion of friends/acquaintances relevant. Regarding the willingness to pay high prices for products from famous brands, only 14.9% (N=60) of the sample showed receptiveness to this possibility.

About the influence of brand notoriety on the perceived quality of the product, 49% (N=197) of the participants agreed that brand notoriety influences the perceived quality of the product; 23.4% (N=94) were indifferent, and 27.7% (N=111) disagreed with the statement.

Regarding their willingness to invest more in environmentally friendly products, 74.6% (N=300) of the participants stated that they were receptive to this possibility; 19.9% (N=80) were indifferent, and only 5.5% (N=22) were not receptive. In prioritizing the purchase of environmentally friendly products, 57.5% (N=231) said they prioritize the purchase of environmentally friendly products; 30.1% (N=121) were indifferent, and 12.4% (N=50) said they do not prioritize the purchase of environmentally friendly products.

Analyzing the sensations obtained with luxury brands, on a 5-point Likert scale, happiness ($X=3.97$), authenticity ($X=3.68$), and sophistication ($X=3.43$) were the main sensations elicited. Prestige ($X=2.95$), rarity ($X=2.91$), and preciousness ($X=2.85$)

were also felt, albeit with less intensity. Finally, status ($X=2.47$) was a sensation that the majority of the sample ($N=321$, 79.9%) did not associate with the purchase of luxury furniture and/or decoration products.

Regarding the attributes valued in luxury furniture and decoration goods, the quality of materials ($X=4.44$) and product performance ($X=4.42$) were revealed to be the attributes given the greatest weight. The eternity (or durability) ($X=4.34$) of products and their appearance ($X=3.97$) were other attributes that played a relevant role. On the other hand, less importance was given to attributes that were not directly related to the product and its functioning: country of origin ($X=2.78$), brand name ($X=2.62$), and packaging ($X=2.56$).

4.3. Factorial analysis

The principal components method was employed, and the results revealed that the factor analysis was appropriate. Firstly, based on the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO) test value of 0.835. A value close to 1 indicates that correlation patterns are relatively compact, and factor analysis should yield distinct and reliable factors (Field, 2017). Significant correlation among variables was also confirmed, as indicated by the result of the Bartlett's test of sphericity: $p\text{-value} = 0.000 < 0.05$. A seven-component solution was presented as they had eigenvalues greater than 1 (Goretzko et al., 2019), explaining 66.67% of the total variance of the original variables.

Subsequently, each component underwent an internal consistency assessment using Cronbach's Alpha. It allows for evaluating the internal consistency or reliability of the component/factor and represents the proportion of variability in responses resulting from differences among respondents (Vaske et al., 2017). Some variables had to be removed, as their elimination would increase the Alpha value. For the interpretation and evaluation of the Cronbach's Alpha value, the following criteria were considered: between 0.6 and 0.7 – reasonable internal consistency; between 0.7 and 0.9 – good internal consistency; and values equal to or higher than 0.9 – very good internal consistency (Field, 2017; George & Mallery, 2020).

Considering the results of the factor analysis and the reliability of the scales, six dimensions were identified: Sensations (SEN); Product Functional Value (PFV); Relationship with Luxury Brands (RLB); Environment and Sustainability (ES); Brand Elements (BE); Buying Behavior (BB). Table 3 illustrates the dimensions and their respective items.

Table 3 – Dimensions and items

Dimensions	Variables	Factor Loadings	Cronbach Alpha
Sensations (SEN)	SEN1 Preciosity	0,714	0,847
	SEN2 Authenticity	0,667	
	SEN3 Rarity	0,757	
	SEN4 Sophistication	0,691	
	SEN5 Prestige	0,756	
	SEN6 Happiness	0,361	
	SEN7 Status	0,639	
Product Functional Value (PFV)	PFV1 Materials Quality	0,863	0,855
	PFV2 Performance	0,842	
	PFV3 Durability	0,798	
Relationship with Luxury Brands (RLB)	RLB1 I follow luxury brands	0,813	0,804
	RLB2 I acquire luxury goods frequently	0,864	
Environment and Sustainability (ES)	ES1 I invest more money in goods that are eco-friendly	0,844	0,825
	ES2 I prefer the buy of eco-friendly goods.	0,877	
Brand Elements (BE)	BE1 Packaging	0,737	0,653
	BE2 Name	0,602	
	BE3 Country of origin	0,716	
Buying Behaviour (BB)	BB1 I consider important the opinion of friends and family regarding luxury brands and goods.	0,747	0,627
	BB2 I'm able to pay more for goods from luxury brands.	0,488	
	BB3 The brand's notoriety influence the goods' perceived quality.	0,731	

Source: Elaborated by the author

4.4. Hypothesis Tests and Regression Models

In a first approach, the existence of correlation between the 6 dimensions was analyzed using the Pearson correlation coefficient (Table 4). The results show a moderate positive correlation between Sensations and Brand Elements (0.481), Sensations and Buying Behavior (0.454), Sensations and Relationship with Luxury Brands (0.411), as well as Buying Behavior and Relationship with Luxury Brands (0.412). The remaining correlations are weak or nonexistent. In a second phase, the eleven hypotheses formulated in the conceptual model were individually tested. Table 5 presents the results of the respective tests conducted at a significance level of 5%.

Table 4 – Correlations between dimensions

		RLB	SEN	BE	BB	ES	PFV
Pearson Correlation	RLB	1,000	,411	,335	,412	-,028	,074
	SEN	,411	1,000	,481	,454	,019	,354
	BE	,335	,481	1,000	,346	,171	,179
	BB	,412	,454	,346	1,000	,005	,171
	ES	-,028	,019	,171	,005	1,000	,191
	PFV	,074	,354	,179	,171	,191	1,000
Sig. (1 extremity)	RLB	.	<,001	<,001	<,001	,288	0,069
	SEN	,000	.	,000	,000	,349	,000
	BE	,000	,000	.	,000	,000	,000
	BB	,000	,000	,000	.	,458	,000
	ES	,288	,349	,000	,458	.	,000
	PFV	,069	,000	,000	,000	,000	.
N	RLB	402	402	402	402	402	402
	SEN	402	402	402	402	402	402
	BE	402	402	402	402	402	402
	BB	402	402	402	402	402	402
	ES	402	402	402	402	402	402
	PFV	402	402	402	402	402	402

Source: Elaborated by the author

Based on the test values obtained, there was statistically significant evidence to not reject eight out of eleven hypotheses. Only H2 and H6 were rejected, involving the Environment and Sustainability dimension, and H8 regarding the influence of the Product Functional Value on the Relationship with Luxury Brands.

Table 5 – Hypothesis Tests

Hypothesis	Results
H1: Sensations influence the Product Functional Value.	Supported p-value = 0,000<0,05
H2: Sensations are related with Environment and Sustainability.	Rejected p-value = 0,349>0,05
H3: Sensations are related with Brand Elements.	Supported p-value = 0,000<0,05
H4: Sensations influence the Buying Behaviour.	Supported p-value = 0,000<0,05
H5: Product Functional Value influence the Buying Behaviour.	Supported p-value = 0,000<0,05
H6: The Environment and Sustainability are related with the Buying Behaviour.	Rejected p-value = 0,458>0,05
H7: The Brand Elements influence the Buying Behaviour.	Supported p-value = 0,000<0,05
H8: Sensations influence the Luxury Brands' Relationship.	Supported p-value = 0,000<0,05
H9: Product Functional Value influence the Luxury Brands' Relationship.	Rejected p-value = 0,069>0,05
H10: The Buying Behaviour influence the Luxury Brands' Relationship.	Supported p-value = 0,000<0,05
H11: The Brand Elements are related with Luxury Brands' Relationship.	Supported p-value = 0,000<0,05

Source: Elaborated by the author

Next, multiple linear regression analysis was used to test the conceptual model using the Stepwise method. The first partial model tested had CCO as the dependent variable and SEN, VFP, ABS, and ELM as independent variables. The equation of the regression line is presented as follows:

$$BB = 1.112 + 0.375 \text{ SEN} + 0.163 \text{ BE} + \text{error}$$

Considering the equation and the test values for the different coefficients, it can be observed that these significantly differ from zero, indicating a significant regression. Two models were tested, with the two variables that met the entry criteria in the final equation (SEN and ELM). The other two variables did not meet the entry criteria (PFV and ES) and were not considered.

The multiple correlation value between the dependent variable and the independents ($R=0.477$) indicates a moderate positive correlation between them. The coefficient of determination (R^2) shows that about 23% (22.7%) of the variation in buying behavior is explained by SEN and BE. Even using the adjusted coefficient of determination (adjusted R^2), a more rigorous and realistic value, the variation practically does not change (22.4%) (George & Mallery, 2020). The standardized beta value (β) indicates that SEN is the variable with the greatest influence on CCO ($\beta=0.375$). Considering the test values (p), it can be concluded that BB significantly depends on SEN ($p\text{-value} < 0.001$) and BE ($p\text{-value} = 0.001 < 0.05$).

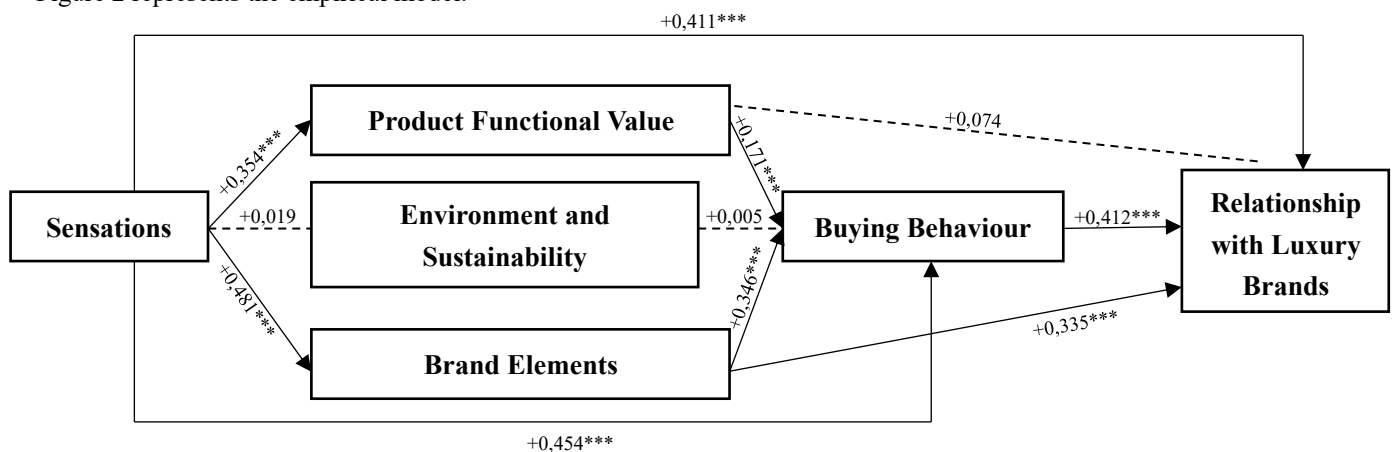
Moving to the second partial model, it sought to test the influence of the variables SEN, PFV, BE, and BB on LBR. The equation of the regression line is:

$$\text{LBR} = 0.130 + 0.296 \text{ BB} + 0.256 \text{ SEN} + 0.149 \text{ BE} + \text{error}$$

Observing the equation and the test values obtained for each coefficient, it is noted that the coefficients significantly differ from zero, indicating a significant regression. Three models were tested with the three variables that met the entry criteria in the final equation (BB, SEN, and BE). The variable PFV did not meet the entry criteria and was not considered in the model.

The multiple correlation value between the dependent variable and the independents ($R=0.497$) indicates a moderate positive correlation. The coefficient of determination (R^2) shows that about 25% of the variation in LBR is explained by BB, SEN, and BE. The standardized beta value (β) indicates that BB is the variable with the greatest influence on LBR ($\beta=0.263$), followed by SEN ($\beta = 0.227$) and BE ($\beta = 0.135$). Considering the test values (p), it can be concluded that LBR significantly depends on BB ($p\text{-value} < 0.001$), SEN ($p\text{-value} < 0.001$), and BE ($p\text{-value} = 0.008 < 0.05$).

Figure 2 represents the empirical model.



Observation: Straight line: Supported hypothesis. Dotted line – Rejected hypothesis. The value that appears in each line it's regarding the correlation between dimensions. *** $p\text{-value} < 0,001$. Confidence level: 99,99%.

Figure 2 – Empirical Model

Source: Elaborated by the author

In summary, the statistical results show that the Sensations dimension significantly, positively moderately influences the Product Functional Value (H2) and Brand Elements (H3). There is a weak positive influence of the Product Functional Value on Buying Behavior (H5) and Brand Elements on Buying Behavior (H7), and a moderate positive influence of Sensations on Buying Behavior (H4). Regarding the Relationship with Luxury Brands, it is weakly positively influenced by Brand Elements (H11) and moderately influenced by Sensations (H8) and Buying Behavior (H10). Observing the model, it is evident that the strongest correlation occurs between Sensations and Brand Elements.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

This study aimed to identify and understand what consumers value and seek when purchasing luxury goods, with a particular focus on luxury furniture and decoration items. It had two research objectives: (1) to analyze the factors influencing the consumer's buying behavior of luxury furniture and decoration items, (2) to analyze the complete process of consumer interaction with luxury brands.

The results lead to the conclusion that the consumer's buying behavior is primarily influenced by Sensations and Brand Elements, which are also cumulatively influenced by sensations. Thus, the purchase of luxury furniture and decoration items is marked by a highly emotional component, with sensations such as happiness, authenticity, and sophistication present, directly and indirectly impacting buying behavior, the latter through the influence of Brand Elements. Buying behavior is also influenced by the Product Functional Value, meaning that consumers place great importance on product-related attributes such as durability, performance, material quality, and appearance, rather than focusing solely on the brand. A significant number of respondents value sustainability and environmental concern, being willing to make higher investments in products created with these considerations, although this dimension did not significantly impact consumer purchasing behavior.

The results also indicate that the process of establishing consumer relationships with luxury brands is primarily influenced by their buying behavior and sensations, and to a moderate extent by brand elements. Once again, sensations play a central role throughout the process. Therefore, marketing and luxury brand managers, especially in the luxury furniture and decoration industry, should focus on creating memorable and strong sensations in consumers, as these are the main motivators for buying and building relationships with luxury brands.

This study has some limitations, notably the non-probabilistic convenience sampling technique, which prevents the results from being generalized to all Portuguese consumers. As a suggestion for future research, it is recommended to replicate the study with a representative sample of Portuguese consumers and propose that the study be replicated in other countries for an international context. Additionally, it would be relevant to incorporate more dimensions in the study and use other statistical techniques for data analysis, including structural equation modeling.

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Appendix – Survey

The following questionnaire is being developed under a Master Thesis regarding the Master's Degree in Marketing at the Higher Institute for Accountancy and Administration of Aveiro University. Its aim is to analyze the consumer's receptiveness to luxury goods, focusing on furniture and decoration. This survey obliges to the GRDP, therefore is confidential and anonymous. The collected data will serve solely for research and academical purposes. The duration should not exceed 5 minutes.

Section	Questions	Answer scenarios	Theoretical basis
Sociodemographic Characteristics	1. Gender?	Female Male Prefer not to say. (multiple answer question, nominal type)	General questions to obtain sociodemographic data about the sample.
	2. Age?	Brief numerical question	
	3. Educational level:	1. Primary School 2. Middle School (until 9 th grade) 3. High School 4. Associate degree / Community College 5. Bachelor's degree 6. Master's degree or higher (Pergunta escalar, ordinal)	
	4. Considering your socioeconomical level, where you consider to be in the scale?	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 – 8 – 9 – 10 (1 = very low / 10 = very high) (scale question, ordinal)	
	5. What is your professional situation at the moment?	Employed by someone – Self-employed – Student-employee – Unemployed – Retired (multiple answer question, nominal)	
The contact with luxury products and brands	6. Its frequent for you to follow famous brands?	1 = Very rarely 2 = Rarely 3 = Sometimes 4 = Frequently 5 = Very frequently (5-point likert scale question)	(Dabbous & Barakat, 2020)
	7. How often you usually acquire luxury products?	1 = Very rarely 2 = Rarely 3 = Sometimes 4 = Frequently 5 = Very frequently (5-point likert scale question)	(B. Zhang & Kim, 2013)
	8. Usually, how do you acquire luxury products?	On-site brand Store(s) – Online brand store(s) – multi-brands shops – Outlets – Social media marketplaces (Multiple answer question, nominal)	(Dauriz et al., 2014)
	9. I consider important the opinion of knew-ones and friends, regarding luxury brands and products.	1 = I totally disagree 2 = I disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = I agree 5 = I totally agree (scale question, 5-point likert scale)	(Dogan-Sudas et al., 2019)
	10. I'm receptive to pay higher prices for famous brands' products.	1 = I totally disagree 2 = I disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = I agree 5 = I totally agree (scale question, 5-point likert scale)	(Tai & Tam, 1997)
	11. The brand awareness influences the product's quality perceived.	1 = I totally disagree 2 = I disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = I agree 5 = I totally agree (scale question, 5-point likert scale)	
	12. I'm able to invest more in eco-friendly products.	1 = I totally disagree 2 = I disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = I agree 5 = I totally agree (scale question, 5-point likert scale)	
	13. Usually, I prioritize the buying of eco-friendly products.	1 = I totally disagree 2 = I disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = I agree 5 = I totally agree (scale question, 5-point likert scale)	
When acquiring luxury goods, in terms of furniture and decoration, classify, between 1 to 5, the sensations that come to your mind.			
The consumer-luxury goods relationship	14. Preciosity	1 = I totally disagree 2 = I disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = I agree 5 = I totally agree (scale question, 5-point likert scale)	(Becker et al., 2018; L. Zhang & Zhao, 2019)
	15. Authenticity	1 = I totally disagree 2 = I disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = I agree 5 = I totally agree (scale question, 5-point likert scale)	
	16. Rarity	1 = I totally disagree 2 = I disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = I agree 5 = I totally agree (scale question, 5-point likert scale)	
	17. Sophistication	1 = I totally disagree 2 = I disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = I agree 5 = I totally agree (scale question, 5-point likert scale)	
	18. Prestige	1 = I totally disagree 2 = I disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = I agree 5 = I totally agree (scale question, 5-point likert scale)	
	19. Happiness	1 = I totally disagree 2 = I disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = I agree 5 = I totally agree (scale question, 5-point likert scale)	
	20. Status	1 = I totally disagree 2 = I disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = I agree 5 = I totally agree (scale question, 5-point likert scale)	

Section	Questions	Answer scenarios	Theoretical basis
Luxury furniture and decoration attributes	When you are buying luxury furniture and decoration, classify between 1 to 5, the attributes that you give the most priority.		
	21. Appearance	1 = I totally disagree 2 = I disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = I agree 5 = I totally agree (scale question, 5-point likert scale)	(Sweeney & Soutar, 2001; R. Zhang, 2019)
	22. Materials quality	1 = I totally disagree 2 = I disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = I agree 5 = I totally agree (scale question, 5-point likert scale)	
	23. Performance	1 = I totally disagree 2 = I disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = I agree 5 = I totally agree (scale question, 5-point likert scale)	
	24. Eternity (or durability)	1 = I totally disagree 2 = I disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = I agree 5 = I totally agree (scale question, 5-point likert scale)	
	25. Packaging	1 = I totally disagree 2 = I disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = I agree 5 = I totally agree (scale question, 5-point likert scale)	
	26. Brand's name	1 = I totally disagree 2 = I disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = I agree 5 = I totally agree (scale question, 5-point likert scale)	
	27. Country of Origin	1 = I totally disagree 2 = I disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = I agree 5 = I totally agree (scale question, 5-point likert scale)	