Bachelor Thesis

Digital Dimension of Luxury Automotive Brands

A multiple case study investigating hedonic value creation online.

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Abstract

In recent years, there has been a notable shift in the conventional strategies employed by luxury automotive brands towards a more digitalized customer journey. This shift reflects the changing landscape of consumer behavior and the growing influence of technology in shaping customer experiences. Customers are increasingly seeking convenience, personalization, and seamless interactions throughout their purchase process, and expect businesses to provide them with engaging and immersive experiences, both online and offline. As a result, luxury automotive brands have recognized the need to establish a strong digital presence and leverage various touchpoints to meet these evolving customer expectations.

Consequently, the purpose of this thesis has been to examine and understand how luxury automotive brands create luxury hedonic experiences online, as well as identify the key touchpoints through which hedonic value is created in a digital context. To achieve these objectives, a qualitative multiple-case study was conducted involving seven businesses operating in the luxury automotive sector. The research methodology employed a combination of semi-structured interviews and a structured questionnaire, and the empirical findings were thoroughly analyzed in conjunction with existing literature to discern similarities and disparities among the cases studied.

The conclusion of this thesis reveals that luxury brands employ a multi-faceted approach, utilizing high-quality digital content, exclusivity, collaborations, innovation, personalization, customer-centricity, and top-quality customer service to create hedonic experiences. Key digital touchpoints include aesthetically pleasing websites, interactive features, social media platforms for community building, and corporate touchpoints that align digital experiences with offline luxury experiences. Moreover, this thesis can serve as a guide for future endeavors in this field, and researchers can utilize its findings as a foundation to further explore the implications for luxury automotive brands.

Keywords

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1 Introduction

The opening chapter of this thesis offers an introduction to the research area, contextualized by a background section. A problem discussion follows, emphasizing both the theoretical and managerial relevance of the study while identifying the research gap. The research questions and purpose of the study are then presented, culminating in a discussion of the delimitations to establish the study's scope.

1.1 Background

Consumer tendencies to purchase luxury products are increasing, and the market for luxury goods has grown consistently in the last two decades, as stated by Vigneron and Johnson (2004). The continued high demand in the luxury segment is reinforced by Deloitte's (2022) findings, which reveal a substantial rise in the total revenue generated by the top 100 luxury goods companies. These businesses showed a 21.5% growth rate between the fiscal years 2020 and 2021, resulting in a combined revenue of US$305 billion. Guan et al. (2022) identified that the profitability and prestige of luxury cars have made them a dominant force in the luxury market. In terms of sales, luxury automotive brands are exceeding their mainstream rivals, with forecasted annual growth rates ranging from 8% to 14% through the year 2031. When the mass market has failed to even achieve single-digit margins, the luxury car category has continuously maintained double-digit margins. One of the reasons behind the growth and success of the luxury car segment is that the number of high-net-worth individuals (HNWI), as well as ultra-high-net-worth individuals (UHNWI), is increasing globally. As a result, the demand for luxury cars is now growing faster in emerging markets in South America and Asia than in traditional markets in regions such as North America and Europe (Guan et al., 2022).

As suggested by Sari and Kusuma (2014), luxury car brands are capable of providing vehicles with a variety of pleasurable features that go beyond the necessities. Tynan, McKechnie, and Chhuon (2010) further argue that luxury products are known for their unique attributes such as rarity, authenticity, and exclusivity. Another key characteristic of luxury goods is their ability to confer a sense of prestige and reputation on their owners, as highlighted by Vigneron and Johnson (2004). Moreover, luxury brands are recognized as a source of hedonic value. Hirschman and Holbrook (1982) state that hedonic value refers to the emotional and experiential aspects, such as the pleasure and satisfaction derived from using or experiencing luxury products.

Küster et al. (2020) found that the conventional strategy when it comes to luxury goods has now shifted towards a more digitalized customer journey. Customers seek seamless customer experiences, and approximately 70% of luxury car buyers expect new channels and methods of engagement, according to Guan et al. (2022). Today's luxury consumers are
highly digitally connected and expect a high level of customization and experience in their purchasing journey (Karadag & Erdogmus, 2020). Köstring et al. (2019) explain that luxury consumers are setting the bar when it comes to integrating digital technology into their shopping experiences. They are relying on digital technology in every stage of their shopping journey, especially at the beginning. As many as 73% of luxury customers begin their buying journey online. Given that luxury consumers are receptive to embracing digital technology, businesses have a great opportunity to provide them with better experiences, not only during the consideration, evaluation, and purchase phases, but also throughout their lifetime as customers (Köstring et al., 2019). Technology enables luxury automotive brands to completely change the way they interact with their customers. To improve the customer experience and enable seamless integration of marketing and retail activities with the digital components, a holistic strategy that considers the many touchpoints of the journey is essential (Küster et al., 2020). Voorhees et al. (2017) imply that the utilization of digital touchpoints such as social media plays a crucial role in influencing consumer perceptions and purchase intentions. Khan et al. (2022) found that brands in the luxury industry have a higher likelihood of outperforming their competitors if they utilize the correct technology when providing experience and value to their customers. Therefore, luxury brands must venture into the digital environment in order to uphold their exclusivity and perceived luxury value (Kim & Kim, 2018).

1.2 Problem Discussion

1.2.1 Theoretical Problematization

According to De Keyser et al. (2020), today's consumers demand a seamless experience across all touchpoints and channels available to them throughout their customer journey. This demand has led to a digital transformation of the retail sector, which has had a profound impact on consumers' purchasing behaviors, as highlighted by Michon, Chebat and Turley (2005). The digital experience, particularly in the context of e-retailing (Rose et al., 2012) and specific technologies such as social platforms (Parise, Guinan & Kafka, 2016) and virtual reality (Flavián, Ibáñez-Sánchez & Orús, 2019), is a growing focus of research. However, Verhoef et al. (2021) emphasize that there is a lack of research examining the impact of these digital transformations on the luxury retail sector, and Kranzbühler et al. (2017) highlight the need for more research exploring consumers' behavioral reactions to this new environment. The increasing prevalence of digital touchpoints has transformed the luxury automotive industry, creating unique challenges (Giacosa, Culasso & Crocco, 2022), with Kauppinen-Räisänen et al. (2019) emphasizing the subjective value of luxury and the importance of a consumer-centric approach to research, considering factors such as demographics, lifestyle, and market maturity. Common luxury characteristics, such as the influence of psychological factors like hedonics and social status on consumer behavior (Dubois, Jung & Ordabayeva, 2021) have been agreed upon by scholars. However, there is a long-standing debate about the impact of
digitalization on the "dream factor" of luxury, rooted in the store atmosphere, sensorial experience, and superior service (Karadag & Erdogmus, 2020). The luxury automotive industry is no exception to this trend, and luxury dealerships must adapt to changing consumer behavior by developing innovative sales formats and technologies to remain competitive (Scherpen, Draghici & Niemann, 2018). In fact, to optimize the customer journey and create meaningful experiences, luxury automotive brands need to focus on the various types of touchpoints that occur in different phases of the journey (Tarquini, Mühlbacher & Kreuzer, 2022). The study of digital touchpoints in luxury retail has been explored by several researchers. For example, Manowicz and Bacher (2020) suggest that touchpoints refer to the individual points of contact and interaction between the customer and the brand and can take many forms, including moments, places, people, products, services, and marketing activities. Further, Straker, Wrigley and Rosemann (2015) categorize digital touchpoints into functional, social, community, and corporate channels and argue that the specific characteristics of each touchpoint result in varying outcomes. Straker, Wrigley and Rosemann (2015) also suggest that the brand's reliance on each touchpoint depends on the consumer's circumstances, preferences, and characteristics. Despite this categorization, there is a gap in the literature regarding the specific strategies that luxury brands can use to effectively communicate their hedonic value online and align their efforts across different digital touchpoints.

The integration of digital touchpoints into the luxury retail sector is a complex and ongoing process. But consumer demand for a more prominent digital presence (Ko, Phau & Aiello, 2016) has led luxury automotive retailers to search for new ways to communicate the hedonic value of their products (Halwani, 2020). According to Ko, Phau and Aiello (2016), in the competitive luxury industry, brands are constantly evolving and utilizing new communication channels. Digital means such as SMS, websites (Kim & Ko, 2012) and social media platforms are viable options to achieve this (Chung & Kim, 2020). But it is important to approach their use with a focus on creating long-term brand engagement rather than solely maximizing short-term profits (Schultz & Peltier, 2013). The digitalization of marketing has had a significant influence on the sector (Karadag & Erdogmus, 2020), and the emergence of new players in the market (Manowicz & Bacher, 2020) is disrupting traditional automotive industries by introducing innovative digital services (Scherpen, Draghici & Niemann, 2018). Luxury automotive brands must develop creative marketing strategies (Nadzri et al., 2016) and focus on the customer experience to remain competitive (Scherpen, Draghici & Niemann, 2018). But luxury automotive brands have yet to completely realize the benefits of using multiple digital touchpoints (Karadag & Erdogmus, 2020). The most successful tactics for automotive brands to create hedonic value online remain undiscovered. More research is needed to properly understand how luxury automotive brands can successfully navigate the digital landscape and create engaging hedonic online experiences using digital touchpoints.
1.2.2 Managerial Problematization

The luxury goods industry has seen a significant increase in combined revenues as a result of continued market demand for luxury brands, driven by consumers' desire for a unique and personalized shopping experience (Karadag & Erdogmus, 2020). Hence, the automotive industry is facing a disruptive effect resulting from digitalization, marking the most significant phenomenon in the industry's history, spanning over 140 years. The industry is experiencing a digital transformation, globalization, and heightened competition as key driving forces (Llopis-Albert, Rubio & Valero, 2021). Wu et al. (2015) imply that customers' shopping motivations and pursuit of specific shopping values apply not only to physical shopping but also to digital consumption. The internet is considered a channel to create unique and enjoyable experiences for consumers, as noted by Won Jeong et al. (2009). However, Richard and Habibi (2016) argue that variables such as the level of hedonism need to be taken into account when creating an online experience. Nunes, Bennett, and Shaw (2015) reinforce the idea that luxury cars fulfill not only basic consumer needs but also elicit feelings of indulgence and hedonistic pleasure. The hedonic value of a product, as proposed by Hirschman and Holbrook (1982), refers to the emotional and experiential aspects of a product, such as the pleasure and satisfaction it brings to the customer. Hedonic consumption, as suggested by Atulkar and Kesari (2017), includes emotional and sensory satisfaction from the entire purchasing experience and applies to both physical and digital environments (Wu et al., 2015). Hence, hedonic consumers consider stores to be places of exploration and entertainment and take great pleasure in the shopping process itself.

Batra and Keller (2016) further imply that current research suggests that successful luxury brand consumer journeys include online touchpoints as an integral part of the experience. In fact, Batra and Keller (2016) propose that studies have shown that it is possible to transfer the superior offline experiences that luxury brands are known for to the digital realm. Luxury car dealerships, which were once the central sales medium for new vehicles, are now facing a major upheaval due to the changing behavior of customers. The internet has become the central information medium for customers to conduct research and make informed purchasing decisions. However, car dealerships remain a critical point of contact with the customer, as customers still want to see and test drive vehicles. Therefore, it is necessary to adapt the function of car dealerships and develop innovative sales formats and communication technologies that are tailored to the customer's needs (Schepen, Draghici & Niemann, 2018). Luxury car buyers, according to Loureiro and Kaufmann (2016), expect to experience pleasure and emotional satisfaction when purchasing a luxury vehicle. The challenge for luxury automotive brands is therefore to ensure that their online presence reflects the same level of quality and exclusivity as their physical touchpoints (Batra & Keller, 2016). However, the rise of new markets and channels and the influence of new generations have shifted the core of luxury towards experiential values and personalization, with a high level of customization and experience expected in the purchasing journey.
(Klaus, 2022). Thus, it is crucial for luxury automotive companies to understand and manage the different touchpoints along the customer journey to create a positive customer experience and maintain a strong brand image (Manowicz & Bacher, 2020). Digital touchpoints play a crucial role in shaping consumer perceptions and purchase intentions (Voorhees et al., 2017). Automotive producers are investing heavily in creating seamless digital experiences for their customers while also developing agile organizational structures that integrate both traditional offline dealership experiences and digital online touchpoints. In fact, in the automotive industry, company-customer touchpoints are becoming increasingly digital, particularly during the lead-generation phase of the customer journey. In today's digital environment, the digital experience of customers is often critical to success and value creation (Giacosa, Culasso & Crocco, 2022). Brands that provide proper value and experience while utilizing the correct technology will outperform their competition and gain customers, even in the luxury industry (Khan et al., 2022). Venturing into the online market is therefore a wise move for luxury automotive brand merchants (Khan et al., 2022) to maintain their luxury value and exclusivity (Kim & Kim, 2018). But luxury automotive companies are facing the challenge of managing massive amounts of data gathered both online and offline, as noted by Giacosa, Culasso and Crocco (2022). Research on the integration of technology and the customer experience in the luxury automotive industry can help companies understand the importance of digital touchpoints and inform the development of strategies that drive growth in the online market while still delivering hedonic value. A deeper understanding of the role that technology and customer experience play in shaping consumer perceptions and purchase intentions will allow luxury brands to make informed decisions on how to integrate digital touchpoints into their business strategies, thereby ensuring the continued growth and success of their brands in the online market.

1.2.3 The Research Gap

The global luxury market has received considerable attention in the literature due to its consistent growth over the past two decades (Vigneron & Johnson, 2004). However, there is insufficient research on the specific tactics and touchpoints that luxury automotive businesses can utilize to effectively convey the hedonic value of their products within the digital domain. Despite the extensive literature on digital marketing and touchpoints, a dearth of studies exists that focus on the unique challenges and opportunities faced by luxury automotive brands in this context. This represents a significant research gap in the literature. Given the increasing importance of the digital space for luxury automotive brands, where consumers demand a personalized and experiential journey (Karadag & Ergogmus, 2020), addressing this research gap is crucial. Therefore, it is necessary to identify the essential elements and touchpoints that enable luxury automotive businesses to communicate the hedonic value of their products effectively. In summary, while previous research has investigated luxury brands online and hedonic consumption, a gap exists in the literature regarding how luxury automotive brands create hedonic value in a digital setting.
1.3 Research Questions

Based on the previous research and the identification of the research gap, the authors have formulated the following research questions for their study:

- How do luxury automotive brands create a hedonic experience online?
- Which digital touchpoints are key in creating hedonic value in the luxury automotive industry?

1.4 Purpose

The purpose of this study is to understand how luxury automotive brands create a luxury hedonic experience online. Through this study, the authors also aim to identify the key touchpoints through which luxury automotive brands can create hedonic value in a digital context.

1.5 Delimitations

This thesis has several important delimitations that should be noted. Firstly, the study is restricted to the automotive segment and does not consider other luxury goods like jewelry, fashion and watches. As a result, the findings cannot be applied to other luxury industry sectors. The study additionally focuses on luxury automotive brands and does not cover non-luxury brands, such as those considered premium or mass-market. The study also does not take into consideration the perspectives of other stakeholders, such as suppliers or customers, since its scope is restricted to the viewpoint of luxury automotive brands. Further, this study will only look at online elements and digital touchpoints; it will not take into account additional channels, such as the in-person or offline experiences of these brands. Finally, the creation of hedonic value by luxury car brands in a digital setting will be the exclusive focus of this study. Although the study will pinpoint the crucial digital touchpoints where luxury automotive brands may increase hedonic value, it will not measure the degree to which hedonic value affects outcomes such as consumer behavior or purchase decisions, for example.
2 Literature Review

This chapter presents existing theories and explains the main concepts on which the thesis is based on. It also includes a summary of the literature review and concludes with a conceptual framework that visualizes how the key concepts are interlinked.

2.1 Luxury Construct

2.1.1 Traditional Luxury Branding

Luxury brands, as determined by Seo and Buchanan-Oliver (2015), cannot formally be categorized as an independent industry given that they provide an extremely wide array of goods. These products range from high-end watches to luxury automobiles, items that are very different from one another. Because of this, the luxury brand industry can be explained as a collection of exclusive companies that excel at projecting a sense of luxury in their respective product segments (Seo & Buchanan-Oliver, 2015). Luxury brands are hard to define and can easily be confused with premium brands, as the terms are sometimes used interchangeably. According to Kapferer (2012), there are considerable differences between luxury and premium. The performance of premium brands is comparable to each other, and they often utilize pricing strategies based on product quality to attract customers. Although premium goods are high in quality, they lack the element of magic that luxury goods embody. This magical aspect of luxury brands is based on the high levels of intangible value derived from their products and services. Purchasing luxury items is a matter of personal indulgence that provides the consumer with a feeling of elevation. This is because luxurious items are able to provide great pleasure as well as social stratification (Kapferer, 2012). The distinctions between the concepts of premium and luxury can be identified in Figure 1.

![Figure 1. Differentiating luxury, fashion & premium (Kapferer, 2012, p.67).](image-url)
Berthon et al. (2009) discern that there are three distinct components of luxury brands: the objective, the subjective, and the collective. The objective aspect encompasses the use of high-quality materials, craftsmanship, and outstanding performance. The subjective element pertains to the consumer's individual hedonic value of the brand. Lastly, the collective dimension refers to how a brand's value is communicated to others. Further, Tynan, McKechnie, and Chhuon (2010) suggest that luxury brands can be identified by their high-quality, non-essential products that represent exclusivity, rarity, authenticity, and prestige. Luxury brands also strive to enhance the customer experience in order to raise the level of emotional pleasure, subsequently increasing customer satisfaction. Seo and Buchanan-Oliver (2015) also reinforce the significance of consumer experiences as a useful strategy for increasing the value derived from luxury brands. There is also a clear distinction between mass-market brands and luxury brands in terms of pricing. Dubois and Duquesne (1993) imply that the luxury goods market is largely dependent on the purchasing power of consumers and that it primarily caters to affluent, upper-income individuals. This becomes evident in various luxury business strategies, such as focusing on advertising in high-end publications and establishing retail stores in prestigious locations (Dubois & Duquesne, 1993). Luxury brands are also characterized by selling goods at a high price point, and as product prices increase, consumers tend to perceive them as more luxurious (Gutsatz & Heine, 2018). As presented, numerous scholars have attempted to provide interpretations for what constitutes a luxury brand, as there is no widely recognized and agreed-upon definition. The table below highlights a selection of these definitions.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Authors</th>
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<tr>
<td>Tynan, McKechnie and Chhuon, 2010</td>
<td>High-quality, non-essential goods that embody rarity, exclusivity, authenticity, and prestige. They also provide customers with elevated levels of hedonic value.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fionda and Moore, 2009</td>
<td>Craftsmanship, excellent quality, distinctiveness, and high transaction value.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nueno and Quelch, 1998</td>
<td>High ratio of intangible and situational value in relation to price, while the ratio of functional utility to price is comparatively low.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Godey et al. 2012</td>
<td>Quality, rarity, beauty, and price.</td>
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Table 1. Luxury Brand Definition.
Even though there is no universally accepted definition, it is feasible to identify some common features of luxury brands. Many authors associate luxury brands with high quality, craftsmanship, rarity and elevated hedonic value, as shown in Table 1. As emphasized in Kapferer and Bastien (2009), luxury brands also have a different approach to brand management and marketing that prioritizes exclusivity and quality over broad appeal. The conventional marketing strategies relied upon by premium and mass-market brands are not appropriate for luxury brands and could potentially cause harm to their brand image. Building a brand identity that accurately conveys its distinct market positioning is essential to its success, and companies in the luxury segment utilize other creative strategies, for example, by employing brand ambassadors (Kapferer & Bastien, 2009). Song and Kim (2020) further propose that leveraging celebrities that have a considerable impact on a variety of societal areas can be effective in luxury marketing. Brands usually use celebrity endorsements in traditional offline media but can also incorporate them into their digital platforms to increase consumer involvement (Song & Kim, 2020). This can, as suggested by Park and Yim (2018), be attributed to the fact that celebrities hold great power in engaging consumer attention and stimulating positive consumer evaluations. Online strategies in general are also argued by Kapferer and Bastien (2009) to be crucial aspects for luxury brands when it comes to CRM (Customer Relationship Management), communication, and advertising. In a digital context, the luxury experience relies heavily on visual elements, hence why focusing on aesthetics and making sure that the brand’s visual language is clear and coherent across different touchpoints is vital (Kapferer & Bastien, 2009).

### 2.1.2 Luxury Automotive Brands

It is highly important to this study that the definitions of luxury automotive brands are outlined. As noted by Sari and Kusuma (2014), luxury car brands offer automobiles that come with a range of pleasant features that go beyond what is essential and, as a result, are accompanied by a higher cost. According to Nunes, Bennett and Shaw (2015), luxury car brands aim to establish a perception of affluence and exclusivity through their use of superior design and engineering, which in turn is associated with extraordinary performance. Loureiro and Kaufmann (2016) further imply that luxury cars are exceptional and unparalleled in the market in terms of their brand, engineering requirements, performance, technology, and price. These distinctive features combined contribute to the exclusivity of luxury automotive brands, which is further upheld by stringent regulation of their distribution networks. It is also noted by Nunes, Bennett and Shaw (2015) that the majority of luxury car manufacturers operate with low-volume production facilities, which allows them to focus on developing their engineering expertise and staying at the forefront of technology development. This approach ensures that these cars remain rare and exclusive, further adding to their prestige and appeal. As argued by Loureiro and Kaufmann (2016), luxury car brands are also characterized by their ability to offer desirable attributes that extend beyond the bare functional requirements. Such brands are
distinguished by strong emotional and symbolic associations, which provide the owner with a sense of pleasure and social status. Nunes, Bennett and Shaw (2015) reinforce the notion that luxury cars not only fulfill basic consumer needs but are also able to elicit feelings of indulgence and hedonic pleasure.

2.2 Luxury Hedonic Experience

2.2.1 Hedonic Luxury Consumption

Hedonism is a Cyrenaic philosophical perspective (Whiteley, 2021) that primarily focuses on seeking pleasure and self-gratification (Emmanuel-Stephen & Gbadamosi, 2021). The term is derived from the Greek word for pleasure, "hedone" (Whiteley, 2021). Tarka, Harnish, and Babaev (2022) suggest that hedonism serves as a motivating force that compels individuals to prioritize positive emotional feelings by actively seeking out gratifying experiences for themselves. Consequently, in the context of consumer behavior, hedonic consumers are driven by the desire to maintain positive emotions and enhance their shopping experience and therefore prioritize the hedonic value of a product or service (Tarka, Harnish & Babaev, 2022). The search for a specific shopping value is based on personal shopping motivations, which are intended to fulfill the internal needs of consumers and are described as the driving force of consumer behavior (Horváth & Adgüzêl, 2018). Consumers are driven by different values, which results in a variety of shopping motivations (Childers et al., 2001). Additionally, Wu et al. (2015) assert that these motivations transcend physical stores and extend into the digital realm as well. These findings suggest that the pursuit of certain shopping values affects both offline and online consumption and is a universal component of consumer behavior.

Further, Lim and Ang (2008) found that consumption is either based on utilitarian or hedonic reasons. Utilitarian motivation is less emotionally charged (Lim & Ang, 2008) and rather rational (To, Liao & Lin, 2007). Since products classified as utilitarian are purchased for their logical appeal, they usually possess practical and functional properties (Emmanuel-Stephen & Gbadamosi, 2021). Hedonic goods, on the other hand, are more based on appearance, symbolic significance and sensory experience (Lim & Ang, 2008), and can consequently be defined as more enjoyable, pleasant, and fun (Alba and Williams, 2013). Hagtvædt and Patrick (2009) propose that utilitarian objectives are typically associated with value goods, whereas hedonic motivations are commonly linked to luxury goods. As highlighted by Kapferer and Bastien (2009), luxury brands place more emphasis on symbolism and hedonism than on the functionality and usability of their goods. Kapferer and Bastien (2009, p. 20) further state that "luxury is an access to pleasure; it should have a very strong personal and hedonistic component". Hence, hedonic consumers can derive joy and satisfaction from consuming luxury goods since they are high in hedonic value (Rosendo-Rios & Shukla, 2023).
Hedonic consumption includes multi-sensory aspects (Hagtvedt & Patrick, 2009) and is driven by the desire to create pleasurable experiences such as sensory stimulation, excitement, and fantasy (Atulkar & Kesari, 2017). According to Hirschman and Holbrook (1982), the fantasy element involves using multisensory input to create a mental image, which in turn evokes an emotional response in the consumer and is characterized by experiential, expressive, and neurophysiological elements (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982). Atulkar and Kesari (2017) also remark that the concept of hedonic consumption extends beyond the product itself and includes emotional and sensory satisfaction derived from the complete purchasing process. As a result, hedonic consumers highly value the experiential aspect of consumption and take great pleasure in the shopping process (Atulkar & Kesari, 2017). Zhou et al. (2023) further emphasize the importance of creating a positive shopping experience by stimulating consumers' senses. This could, in turn, foster positive sentiments towards both the brand and its products. Furthermore, a satisfying hedonic experience may also influence customers' future repurchase intentions (Zhou et al., 2023).

2.2.2 Hedonic Value Creation Online

As previously mentioned, Wu et al. (2015) propose that customers' shopping motivations and pursuit of a specific shopping value apply not only to the physical world but also to consumption in the digital sphere. Won Jeong et al. (2009) describe the internet as an effective channel for creating unique and enjoyable experiences for consumers. It is further suggested that substantial advancements in technology have provided new opportunities to enhance the online shopping experience for consumers by boosting engagement and catering to their preferences (Won Jeong et al., 2009). Shih and Jin (2011) further stress the need for identifying and improving the essential elements of online environments. By doing so, consumers' search for information can be facilitated in accordance with their cognitive processes. Additionally, developing compelling virtual environments might influence customers' affective and emotional processes and, ultimately, their purchasing decisions. Hence, the utilization of technology enhances the competitive edge of companies in the business-to-consumer market (Shih & Jin, 2011).

Won Jeong et al. (2009) remark that using appropriate distribution channels is essential to creating experiential value and fostering relationships between retailers and consumers. It has been determined that key components of providing consumers with experiential value online include website design features like layout and product presentation. Consumers receive sensory or aesthetic information from these elements, which aids their purchase decisions. The experiential value is also increased when consumers can perceive finer and more precise product details and engage in enjoyable cognitive experiences (Won Jeong et al., 2009). Moreover, Richard and Habibi (2016) highlight that variables that affect online consumer behavior, such as the level of hedonism, need to be considered when creating an online experience. It is further proposed that e-commerce should concentrate on creating a hedonic shopping experience for consumers, which, for example, can be achieved by
designing websites that evoke positive emotions. Visiting a website that has a positive impact on their perceptions of its atmospherics can positively influence their purchase intention (Richard & Habibi, 2016). It is also suggested that personalized, hedonic-oriented site management with a focus on delivering a satisfying and enjoyable online shopping experience can be an effective strategy for retailers to attract and retain customers (Scarpi, 2012). When consumers are provided a sensory experience online that is similar in quality and quantity to the physical world, they report a vivid experience that gratifies their senses. Thus, consumers are inclined to spend more time online, which results in longer browsing times, as noted by Lim (2014).

Scarpi (2012) further asserts that virtual environments have the potential to influence consumers' affective states, which can impact their attitude toward companies and their participation in value creation. It is also suggested that a positive online experience that stimulates exploration, curiosity, and entertainment can satisfy the needs of hedonic-oriented consumers. In fact, hedonic consumers can derive added value from digital aspects of the shopping process due to unique sensory features such as colors, music, videos, personalization, etc. (Scarpi, 2012). As proposed by Ha and Stoel (2012), retailers can also leverage various other digital aspects to elicit hedonic shoppers to visualize products and engage in pleasant social interactions, thus enhancing the virtual shopping experience. By providing such features and increasing the experiential value, retailers can enhance their online presence and ultimately influence consumer behavior (Ha & Stoel, 2012).

2.3 Digital Luxury Automotive Experience

2.3.1 Customer Experience

Luxury brands were initially hesitant to engage in online communication and sales, but due to changes in customer behavior noted by Kim and Kim (2018) and technical improvements, the luxury automotive sector (Ko, Phau & Aiello, 2016) is undergoing a "decade of change" (Klaus, 2022). According to Llopis-Albert, Rubio, and Valero (2021), digital transformation, globalization, and increased competition in the sector have made it crucial for organizations to adopt digital strategies that align with the changes brought about by digital technologies. These transformations have not only affected our daily lives, such as our communication, leisure time, buying habits, and information acquisition, as noted by Scherpen, Draghici, and Niemann (2018). But also the luxury automotive and mobility industries, which are converging due to social, economic, and demographic disruptions enabled by technological innovations (Fanderl et al., 2019). Luxury car manufacturers are facing new challenges from the software and service industries (Tian, Chin & Karg, 2016). Tian, Chin and Karg (2016) explain, for example, that companies like Apple and Google are disrupting the market by releasing car platforms tailored for navigation, infotainment, and communication. These platforms provide personalized,
intelligent, and contextual driving experiences, which are a significant departure from traditional car features. This disruption has placed significant pressure on luxury automotive manufacturers to develop similar digital solutions that can compete with these new market players (Tian, Chin & Karg, 2016). While advancements such as autonomous vehicles, connectivity, electrification, and shared mobility will force fundamental changes in the industry (Junge, 2020), it is crucial not to lose sight of the customer experience (Fanderl et al., 2019). Fanderl et al. (2019) continuously argue that luxury automotive incumbents must ensure that their customer experience performance progresses to reflect these changes, as it will be critical for their success as mobility providers. Customer experience remains a vital differentiator, spanning from the sales process to the in-car driving experience and after-sales market (Llopis-Albert, Rubio & Valero, 2021).

Bascur and Rusu (2020) describe customer experience (CX) as the sum of all interactions that a customer has with a company, product, or service, including becoming aware of it, making a purchase, and using it. Customer experience management involves continuously adapting these contacts, or touchpoints to meet customer needs (Scherpen, Draghici & Niemann, 2018). CX refers to how customers perceive their interactions with organizations, encompassing every touchpoint between the customer and the company throughout the customer lifecycle (Behare, Waghulkar & Shah, 2018). CX is a subjective evaluation based on touchpoints within a broader context and is characterized by several traits that ultimately shape the consumer's perceived value (Klaus, 2022). Verhoef et al. (2009) emphasize that CX is the customer's individual response to a sensory, emotional, affective, cognitive, and behavioral environment. Different subjective factors and influences are evaluated by an individual's processing system, leading to varying beliefs, values, and attitudes. These beliefs, values, and attitudes drive behavior and shape how one feels about their behavior (Klaus, 2022). Karadag and Erdogmus (2020) suggest that consumers' cognitive, emotional, sensory, and social reactions to a company's offers during the purchasing process are all included in the idea of CX, which is holistic in nature. Today's smart retail experiences focus on the seamless integration between online and offline channels. Retailers must utilize digital technologies to deliver a seamless customer experience that meets the needs of the digitally savvy consumer, who takes on roles such as value co-creator, information seeker, and provider (Klaus, 2022). Tarquini, Mühlbacher and Kreuzer (2022) further state that luxury brand management is centered on the customer experience, which is co-created by customers and stakeholders at various touchpoints and occasions. To simplify the process, these touchpoints can be analyzed individually and broken down into smaller chunks (Tarquini, Mühlbacher & Kreuzer, 2022).

The digital customer experience, which involves interactions through digital interfaces such as laptops, tablets, and smartphones, has become increasingly important. These experiences may include searching for a product online using a mobile app or website, finding store information, or seeking tech support (Behare, Waghulkar & Shah, 2018). Behare, Waghulkar and Shah (2018) further imply that businesses cannot afford to ignore
the significance of any single customer experience, as it can either make or break the relationship with the customer. Scherpen, Draghici and Niemann (2018) suggest that this approach follows the customer throughout the entire purchasing process, from pre-purchase to post-purchase. According to Lemon and Verhoef (2016), the customer experience can be viewed as a journey that occurs over time with the firm across multiple touchpoints during the purchase cycle. Figure 2 shows the dynamic process divided into three stages: pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase. The pre-purchase stage encompasses the customer's interactions with the brand, category, and surroundings, beginning with the awareness of a need and ending with the fulfillment of that need through purchase. The purchase stage includes the customer's interactions with the brand and environment during the purchase event, whereas the post-purchase stage includes the customer's contact with the brand and environment after the purchase is completed (Kotler, 2017). If the consumer decides to return the goods, the value-adding journey continues, and this step also channels varying degrees of value, depending on the ease, cost, speed, and availability of the return procedure (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). Lemon and Verhoef (2016) also identify four categories of customer experience touchpoints: brand-owned, partner-owned, customer-owned, and social/external/independent. Depending on the nature of the customer journey and stage, each touchpoint performs a varied function and has variable levels of relevance.

Figure 2. Process Model for Customer Journey and Experience (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016, p.77).
Moreover, Junge (2020) highlights the importance of customer experience management as a crucial strategy for fostering long-term customer loyalty and driving enterprise growth in the digital age. In addition, Ko, Phau, and Aiello (2016) emphasize the need for luxury car dealerships to develop innovative sales formats to remain competitive. Marketers recognize that consumers' experience with brands is fundamental to building a robust brand image, which depends on various factors, including company-posted information and marketplace reactions to it based on observable cues such as visible and nonverbal behavior. Branding research has revealed the pivotal role of brand image in fostering consumer loyalty toward a brand. As a result, it is imperative for marketers to prioritize the creation of a positive brand experience that resonates with their target audience. This approach can aid in the establishment of a strong brand image, set the brand apart from competitors, and develop a loyal customer base (Nadzri et al., 2016). Additionally, according to Fanderl et al. (2019), luxury automotive incumbents can successfully transition into mobility providers and thrive in this dynamic market by being attentive to customer demands and consistently improving their customer experience.

2.3.2 Digital Touchpoints
The growth of new markets and channels, the influence of new generations, and digital technology have all impacted the luxury business. As a result, the core of luxury has shifted from physical commodities to experiential values, personalization, and digital encounters (Klaus, 2022). Junge (2020) emphasizes that this transformation is leading to disruptive technology-driven trends such as autonomous driving, electrification, connectivity, and alternative forms of mobility. In addition, the vehicle now generates vast amounts of data, which can provide insights into driver behavior and vehicle health, enabling manufacturers to improve decision-making, increase revenue, and build long-term customer loyalty (Junge, 2020). Moreover, Tarquini, Mühlbacher and Kreuzer (2022) highlight that luxury companies communicate with consumers through various touchpoints, which include physical, sensory, social, and spiritual factors. These factors play a critical role in shaping customers' impressions and motivating their purchase behavior. In today's world, customers encounter a plethora of touchpoints both online and offline, making the luxury customer journey complex and nonlinear (Remy, Catena & Durand-Servoingt, 2015). Scherpen, Draghici, and Niemann (2018) further emphasize the importance for businesses to adopt customer experience management strategies that span the entire customer journey, including before, during, and after the buying decision. According to Hefner (2010), these touchpoints can be categorized into three types: customer information points, customer points of sale, and customer service points, as shown in Figure 3. Remy, Catena and Durand-Servoingt (2015) suggest that by comprehending and optimizing these touchpoints, luxury brands can create a seamless and positive customer experience.
Remy, Catena and Durand-Servoingt (2015) further imply that the luxury customer journey is complex, with various touchpoints that differ by country and category. Scherpen, Draghici and Niemann (2018) note that the rise of digitalization has increased touchpoints between customers and companies, making it crucial for companies to cultivate a customer-centric culture. Meanwhile, Giacosa, Culasso and Crocco (2022) argue that in the luxury automotive industry, touchpoints between companies and customers are increasingly digitalized, particularly during the lead-generation phase of the customer journey. In fact, Scherpen, Draghici and Niemann (2018) emphasize that the internet has become the central information medium for customers to research and make informed purchasing decisions. Furthermore, Manowicz and Bacher (2020) point out that in the luxury automotive industry, for instance, the digitalization of customer interaction has led to new touchpoints, such as online car configurators, and new players, such as car-sharing platforms. Nevertheless, car dealerships remain a crucial touchpoint for customers who want to see and test drive vehicles. Therefore, it is necessary to adapt the function of car dealerships and develop innovative sales formats and communication technologies that cater to customer needs (Scherpen, Draghici & Niemann, 2018). As noted by Batra and Keller (2016), studies have shown that online touchpoints are now an integral part of a successful luxury brand consumer journey, allowing for a seamless transfer of superior offline experiences to the digital realm. Thus, luxury brands should prioritize the development of seamless and engaging digital experiences that match the level of quality and exclusivity offered by their physical touchpoints. This ensures that luxury automotive brands can continue to attract and retain their target audience in an increasingly digital age (Batra & Keller, 2016). Optimizing the customer journey and creating meaningful experiences requires a focus on the various types of touchpoints that occur in different phases of the journey (Manowicz & Bacher, 2020). Moreover, Tarquini, Mühlbacher and Kreuzer (2022) suggest that luxury automotive brands should communicate the effort that goes into creating high-end luxury items to create emotional bonds between consumers and the brand. Understanding the nuances of consumer behavior helps luxury brands create tailor-made and personalized experiences for their customers, ultimately leading to customer satisfaction and loyalty (Tarquini, Mühlbacher & Kreuzer, 2022). Companies must ensure a seamless and cohesive digital experience throughout the customer journey, which involves tracking customer interactions across multiple touchpoints, in order to meet
customer expectations (Klaus, 2022). Luxury automotive producers recognize the importance of creating such an experience and are investing heavily in developing both traditional offline dealership experiences and digital online experiences, as well as implementing agile organizational structures to ensure seamless integration of these touchpoints (Giacosa, Culasso & Crocco, 2022).

Customer touchpoints refer to the various points of contact and interaction between a customer and a brand. These can take different forms, including moments, places, people, products, services, and marketing activities, and can vary in number and type depending on the industry and product (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). Touchpoints can be classified into different categories based on various factors. For instance, they can be allocated chronologically to different stages along the customer journey, with earned touchpoints being deserved due to good work, paid touchpoints being commercially bought, and owned touchpoints being under the direct control of the company. Touchpoints that are operated by a company on third-party sites are called managed touchpoints, while shared touchpoints are shared by customers with others through different channels. Additionally, touchpoints can be categorized by their degree of interaction with the customer, comprising direct and indirect interactions, and by their physical or digital nature (Manowicz & Bacher, 2020). Digital touchpoints are defined as engagements that initiate dialogue between businesses and customers via conventional and digital media (Gao et al., 2022) and are crucial in shaping brand views and purchase intentions (Voorhees et al., 2017). Straker, Wrigley, and Rosemann (2015) suggest that digital touchpoints can be classified as functional, social, community, and corporate channels. Functional touchpoints are characterized by one-way communication, general brand information, purchase reminders, and increased website traffic. Social touchpoints include two-way contact, information, promotional content, and the goal of generating consumer interaction. Community touchpoints rely on groups of internet users to promote content exchange, stimulate consumer participation, and link businesses to potential customers. Corporate touchpoints are one-way contacts with the goals of gathering customer feedback, providing customer service, encouraging loyalty, and providing detailed corporate information (Livias, Skarpalis & Skotis, 2022). Although different touchpoint typologies result in distinct categorizations, they are all founded on the notion that they have varied features and are better suited to achieving particular ends (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). It is important to note that every one of these significantly influences the perception of a brand, and has a lasting effect on the customer's decision-making process. Every contact with the brand represents both an opportunity and a risk, and a poorly treated touchpoint can lead to a negative experience that may signal the end of the customer's relationship with the brand. They may deliver good or negative moments of truth about a brand or product during a customer's journey (Kotler, 2017), shaping consumer responses, defining their involvement with the brand, and forming their entire experience (Livias, Skarpalis & Skotis, 2022).
In the highly competitive luxury industry, brands are constantly adapting and leveraging new communication channels such as social media, according to Ko, Phau, and Aiello (2016). Nowadays, luxury shoppers are highly digitally connected and mobile, empowered by social media and digital gadgets, and have high expectations from their purchasing experiences, as found by Karadag and Erdogmus (2020). Klaus (2022) further suggests that luxury is increasingly associated with experience, indicating a change in the retail environment and luxury brand consumer communication. Technological advancements have also revolutionized corporate marketing techniques, allowing firms to use digital means such as SMS, social media, and websites to enhance brand-consumer relationships. Kim and Kim (2018) note that the growth of the internet and social media has impacted luxury brand marketing and promotions, and venturing into the online market has become a wise move for luxury brand merchants (Khan et al., 2022). The use of social media allows customers to easily and frequently share brand information among their networks (Khan et al., 2022), which has transformed luxury brand consumers' lifestyles and habits (Heine & Berghaus, 2014). Extensive digitalization has also transformed luxury brand consumer psychology and the way firms communicate with their customers (Junge, 2020). Digital marketing has the potential to influence customer perception and behavior towards luxury products, provided that it is completely integrated into the norms of both consumers and enterprises, as found by Livas, Skarparis, and Skotis (2022). It is essential for firms, even luxury ones, to modernize their traditional marketing tactics. If they do not, Khan et al. (2022) underline that they risk losing the target audience. Additionally, the digital world has its own social media engagement stages, with goals such as raising followers and boosting content sharing. Figure 4 shows the primary digital luxury brand-consumer touchpoints together with their sub-categories. They are organized in such a way that the distance from the website tends to show a company's amount of control over a touchpoint, which is shifting away from company-driven (owned channels) toward consumer-driven (social channels) and third-party-driven platforms (paid channels). The website is the center of a luxury brand's digital presence, reflecting the brand's visions and stories, and it is frequently transformed into a digital hub with micro-pages, a blog, an in-house social brand community, and an online store (Heine & Berghaus, 2014).
Moreover, Ko, Phau and Aiello (2016) emphasize that luxury brands must be cautious in how they approach social media as they aim to establish long-term relationships with consumers. Personal factors like gender and generation can impact the way consumers rely on digital touchpoints, with women leaning towards Instagram and men towards YouTube. In fact, YouTube vloggers have emerged as influential players in luxury brand management thanks to their ability to showcase products and experiences in an authentic way that resonates with viewers. Furthermore, younger generations tend to be more dependent on digital touchpoints compared to older consumers (Livas, Skarparis & Skotis, 2022). Additionally, luxury brands can leverage social media as a cost-effective marketing tool to connect with consumers and enhance their brand equity (Ko, Phau & Aiello, 2016). Zimmermann and Auinger (2021) imply that by understanding these preferences, brands can plan successful digital marketing strategies and target their audience effectively. In addition, Khan et al. (2022) assert that luxury brands should embrace the online market to maintain the perceived value of luxury and promote exclusivity and inclusivity. By utilizing the right technology and providing a seamless experience across all touchpoints, Zimmermann and Auinger (2021) emphasize that luxury brands can build strong customer relationships, retain brand loyalty, and outperform their competition.
2.4 Summary

The philosophical perspective of hedonism (Whiteley, 2021) puts emphasis on seeking self-gratification and pleasure (Emmanuel-Stephen & Gbadamosi, 2021). In terms of consumer behavior, hedonic consumers obtain joy and satisfaction (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982) by prioritizing the hedonic value of products (Tarka, Harnish & Babaev, 2022). It is suggested that hedonic consumers experience satisfaction from consuming luxury goods considering that they are high in hedonic value (Rosendo-Rios & Shukla, 2023). Luxury brands represent exclusivity, rarity, authenticity, and prestige. In the automotive industry, they are also known for their superior design and engineering, which translate to exceptional performance (Nunes, Bennett & Shaw, 2015). Luxury cars are also distinguished by strong emotional and symbolic associations that provide the owner with a sense of status (Louieiro & Kaufmann, 2016) and hedonic pleasure (Nunes, Bennett & Shaw, 2015).

Luxury automotive manufacturers are adapting to the digital era (Llopis-Albert, Rubio & Valero, 2021) to keep up with social, economic, and demographic disruptions and the convergence of the luxury automotive and mobility industries (Fanderl et al., 2019). Customer experience (CX) is critical for luxury automotive incumbents to remain competitive, given the rapid changes brought about by digital transformation (Llopis-Albert, Rubio & Valero, 2021). CX encompasses every touchpoint between the customer and the firm throughout the customer lifecycle (Behare, Waghulkar & Shah, 2018). The luxury consumer journey is complex and made up of various touchpoints that differ by country and category. To create a seamless and positive customer experience, luxury brands must optimize these touchpoints (Remy, Catena & Durand-Servoingt, 2015). Today's smart retail experiences focus on the seamless integration between online and offline channels (Klaus, 2022). Luxury brands should prioritize the development of seamless and engaging digital experiences that match the level of quality and exclusivity offered by their physical touchpoints (Batra & Keller, 2016). Furthermore, companies must ensure a seamless and cohesive digital experience throughout the customer journey to meet customer expectations (Giacosa, Culasso & Crocco, 2022).

2.5 Conceptual Framework

To establish a foundation for the study, the authors have developed a conceptual framework through which luxury brands may create hedonic value in a digital context. The conceptual framework is based on five factors which help provide a clear understanding of the key concepts presented in the literature review and their relationships, guiding the research questions and data analysis for the study. The first factor focuses on "key digital touchpoints", referring to the specific digital channels and touchpoints used by luxury automotive brands to engage with consumers. By evaluating the effectiveness of these touchpoints, the study seeks to identify the most impactful channels for creating a hedonic
experience. The second factor, "customer experience", plays a crucial role in shaping consumers' perceptions of the luxury automotive brand based on their interactions with the touchpoints. By understanding how customer experience influences the relationship between touchpoints and perceived hedonic value, the study aims to gain insights into the underlying mechanisms at play. The third factor, "perceived hedonic value", represents consumers' subjective perceptions of the brand's hedonic value. Examining this provides valuable insights into how brands can create a hedonic experience that resonates with consumers and drives their purchase intentions. The fourth factor "luxury automotive brands" recognizes the uniqueness of each brand's approach to creating hedonic value in the digital context. Lastly, the fifth factor, "consumer involvement", acknowledges that the relationship between touchpoints and perceived hedonic value can vary based on the level of consumer engagement. By considering these aspects, the study aims to develop a comprehensive understanding of the factors driving perceived hedonic value in the luxury automotive industry, offering guidance to brands on creating successful digital hedonic experiences.

Figure 5. Conceptual Framework.
3 Methodology

This chapter provides a thorough description of the research process by outlining the various approaches, strategies, and methodologies utilized. Additionally, the cases selected for data collection are presented, along with the operationalization. The chapter concludes with a reflection on the research's quality and consideration of ethical and sustainable factors.

3.1 Research Approach

Bryman and Bell (2011) describe that researchers can choose between an inductive or deductive approach when conducting research. The inductive approach involves collecting data first and then using the findings to develop a theory. This approach is more focused on understanding a specific context rather than generalizing findings (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019). On the other hand, the deductive approach starts with a theory and establishes hypotheses for data collection and analysis. While the deductive approach is commonly used in research (Bryman & Bell, 2011), it can also be used in qualitative research without establishing hypotheses (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019). It is important to note that these approaches are not mutually exclusive and can be combined in an abductive approach, which uses theory and empirical findings interchangeably throughout the research process (Bell, Bryman & Harley, 2019).

Given that the research topic was derived from secondary sources found in the literature review, a deductive approach was deemed appropriate for this study since the research is based on theory. Kumar (2018) note that secondary sources can include peer-reviewed academic articles, journals, books, and other documents. Therefore, for this research, the secondary sources served as the foundation and were gathered by studying academic peer-reviewed articles and books that cover the most significant concepts and theories that support the research. Before the data collection phase, collecting theory was prioritized. The sources were obtained from various databases, such as OneSearch, for example. The combination of luxury automotive brands and hedonic experiences in the digital realm is a relatively unexplored area, which provided a stronger foundation to approach the research from a theoretical standpoint and apply it to the empirical findings through a deductive approach. Although no hypothesis was tested, since the primary goal of this research was to comprehend how luxury automotive brands create a luxury hedonic experience online, this approach displays some elements of an inductive approach, as Bell, Bryman and Harley (2019) suggest. Nevertheless, since the primary approach employed was deductive, the collected data was analyzed and discussed by comparing the empirical findings with the reviewed theory.
3.2 Research Strategy

In the field of business research, there are two primary strategies used to conduct research: quantitative and qualitative (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Quantitative research collects numerical data to draw generalizable inferences about behavior, while qualitative research collects non-numeric data to provide a deeper understanding of a specific context (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019). Quantitative research is more structured, whereas qualitative research is more unstructured and adaptable to participants' responses (Gray, 2019). While researchers should choose a strategy based on their research question, the two methods can be combined in mixed-method research for a more comprehensive understanding of the topic. Despite their differences, both strategies have their own strengths and limitations (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

A qualitative research strategy was suitable for this study as it aims to understand the subjective experiences of luxury automotive consumers in the digital landscape (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019). This approach permits a more thorough comprehension of complex phenomena, such as consumer behavior and attitudes, and can offer valuable perspectives into the distinctive obstacles and prospects confronted by luxury automotive brands in the digital context (Wenzel, Senf & Koch, 2016). The study aims to identify the essential elements and touchpoints that enable luxury automotive businesses to communicate the hedonic value of their products effectively. This requires an in-depth exploration of consumers' perceptions, emotions, and behaviors in response to various digital touchpoints. Therefore, a qualitative research strategy was the most appropriate approach for this study to gain a comprehensive understanding of how luxury automotive brands create a luxury hedonic experience online and which digital touchpoints are key to creating hedonic value in the luxury automotive industry.

3.3 Research Design

The framework for collecting and analyzing research data is known as research design (Bryman & Bell, 2011). When conducting research, the research design outlines how the questions which the research aims to answer will be answered through the ways of data collection (Gray, 2019) and case generation (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). According to Lewis (2015), there are five different research designs that could be used when conducting qualitative research: grounded theory, ethnographic, narrative research, historical, case study, and phenomenology.

For the present research, the most appropriate research design was determined to be a case study design. Case studies are usually deductive and are used when it is not possible to manipulate or control variables during data collection (Gray, 2019). A case study design typically involves a comprehensive analysis of a single person, organization, or location, providing in-depth information about that particular case (Bryman & Bell, 2011). However,
a case study may also involve multiple cases (Yin, 2018). Moreover, the case study design is particularly suited for addressing "how" and "why" questions (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019), making it highly applicable to the present research.

3.3.1 Multiple Case Study Design
The multiple case study approach involves selecting multiple companies for data collection and comparing their perceptions of concepts to determine similarities and differences (Bryman & Bell, 2011). This design is closely linked to the comparative design, as it involves comparing cases to establish any relationships. By collecting detailed information and comparing different cases, it becomes possible to generalize findings. In contrast to single-case study designs, Yin (2018) suggests that evidence from multiple cases is typically viewed as more persuasive. Therefore, for this research, the multiple case study design was selected as the most appropriate method for collecting data to enable the generalization of findings across cases (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019). This approach offers a broader perspective on how various companies create luxury hedonic experiences online, allowing for comparison and contrast between cases.

3.4 Type of Data
This particular study collected primary empirical data. Primary data implies that the authors collect information from original sources for the purpose of the study. There are several primary data collection techniques, for example, interviews, questionnaires, observation, physical measurement, or unobtrusive methods (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). In this research, primary data was collected using the qualitative research method of semi-structured interviews and structured questionnaires. By utilizing interviews and questionnaires, in-depth primary data of the companies' perspectives on hedonic value creation online could be obtained.

3.5 Research Method
According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019), there are various research methods and techniques available to researchers, which should be chosen based on the objectives of the study. The method of research is a crucial aspect that dictates whether or not valuable data can be gathered. In this particular study, a multi-method approach was employed. This implies utilizing more than one data collection technique, something that is a commonly used approach in qualitative research (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019). The specific types of techniques chosen for the multi-method in this particular study were semi-structured interviews as well as a structured questionnaire. These two data collection techniques were chosen as the primary data collection techniques, along with a corresponding qualitative analytical procedure that was utilized to analyze the findings.
3.5.1 Web Questionnaire

An effective instrument for collecting primary data is a questionnaire, which can be categorized as structured, unstructured, or semi-structured depending on its design and content (Ghauri, Grønhaug, & Strange, 2020). Seeing that the research questions aim to gain a deeper understanding of the respondents' perspective on hedonic value creation online, a structured questionnaire with open-ended questions was deemed most appropriate for the purpose of this study. This implies that although the questions were pre-established, respondents were free to answer using their own language and phrasing (Ghauri, Grønhaug, & Strange, 2020). This is suitable considering that the questionnaire created for this study includes questions that allow for extensive answers. According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019), these types of self-completed questionnaires distributed through the internet using a hyperlink are referred to as web questionnaires. Seeing that the participants in this study were geographically dispersed, the web questionnaire was deemed appropriate as it gave the opportunity for participants to respond to the questionnaire using their computer or mobile device at a time and place that suited them, regardless of their time zone or geographic location.

3.5.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

This study also utilized semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews are based on a set of predetermined questions and themes to be discussed during the interview. The interviews are conducted based on these aspects; however, they also leave room for further discussing subjects and asking follow-up questions (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019). Using a semi-structured interview consequently gives the researcher the flexibility to alter the questions' order based on how the interview is progressing as well as ask other questions based on the response of the interviewee (Bell, Bryman & Harley, 2019). Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019) also note that it is possible to conduct these types of interviews through, for example, video telephony services. Bell, Bryman and Harley (2019) also assert that synchronous online interviewing like this is positive since it is more flexible than face-to-face interviewing, as well as time and cost-saving. For the purpose of this study, the semi-structured interviews were held through Zoom.

3.5.3 Data Collection

An interview guide was created prior to conducting the interviews and administering the questionnaire to make sure that key subjects pertinent to the study's research questions were fully covered. The guideline questions were carefully crafted to enable a thorough comprehension of hedonic value creation online, through both the interviews and questionnaire methods. The data collection process was carried out over a period spanning from April 24th to May 8th, during which time the questionnaire was distributed to the respondents via hyperlink. All respondents completed the questionnaire within the allotted time period. Further, the interviews were conducted on the 27th and 28th of April,
respectively, via video conferencing on the Zoom platform, and ranged from 35-55 minutes. Both authors actively engaged in the interviews to guarantee a thorough and productive discussion. Moreover, to assist in the presentation and analysis of the empirical data, the full interviews were recorded on a mobile phone and afterward transcribed into text format.

3.6 Operationalization

After extensively reviewing existing literature and establishing a conceptual framework, an interview guide was developed, taking into consideration the research questions at hand. The guide was thoughtfully designed to steer the respondents toward the key topics deemed critical to the research. To elicit detailed responses from participants, the majority of the questions were open-ended, aiming to foster a more exploratory conversation. The semi-structured interviews and the web questionnaire followed the same interview guide, and the guide was designed to ensure that all participants were asked the same core questions. Hence, the web questionnaire took into consideration the digital realm, and the guide included a written introduction to the topic for the participant to read to get a full context of the study's purpose. In relation to the semi-structured interviews, not all of the main questions included in the interview guide were posed to the participant due to the possibility of redundancy based on their previous answers. Instead, additional non-scripted follow-up questions were asked in order to further explore certain topics, in accordance with the semi-structured interview format. It is also worth noting that although the operationalization (Appendix A) adheres to the structure of the thesis, the notion of customer experience (CX) has been integrated into the various questions and discussions, as all of the mentioned topics are to some extent related. To further enable more meaningful responses from participants who were of both international and Swedish origin, the interview guide was devised in both English and Swedish (Appendices B and C). This strategy was adopted to alleviate any potential language barriers that could have hindered the participants' ability to effectively articulate their thoughts and ideas. Consequently, the authors were cognizant of the likelihood of inaccuracies and made efforts to diligently translate and transcribe the interviewees' answers and responses from the Swedish participants.

3.7 Selection of Cases

Qualitative research aims to gain an in-depth understanding of a particular phenomenon or context rather than generalizing findings to a larger population. Therefore, a non-probability sampling method is considered more suitable for this type of research (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2019) also support this view, stating that qualitative research samples are more subjective, as they are chosen for a specific purpose, rather than according to specific rules during the selection process.
Another essential aspect of non-probability sampling is that the sample size is not the primary concern. The objective is to reach theoretical saturation, which means that the sample must be expanded until no new information that can enhance the quality of the research is obtained (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Therefore, the selected sample should be able to provide in-depth information relevant to the multiple case study and facilitate the answering of the research question through increased theoretical knowledge about the concepts being investigated.

3.7.1 Purposive Sampling

Bryman and Bell (2011) suggest that the majority of sampling methods in qualitative research involve purposive sampling. As a non-probability sampling method, purposive sampling involves selecting a sample that can most effectively answer the research questions and achieve the research objectives (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019). Purposive samples are useful when working with smaller samples, such as in a multiple case study, where the goal is to obtain specific knowledge and information from the participants. According to Bryman and Bell (2011), it is also a commonly used method for gaining a deeper understanding of companies. For this research, the purposive sampling method was chosen due to its aforementioned advantages. This sampling method was selected for the case selection because the focus of the research was directed toward the luxury automotive industry, and a specific criterion for the sample could be used. Additionally, choosing a purposive sample method would facilitate answering the research questions and achieving the purpose of the thesis.

3.7.2 Company Criteria

Bryman and Bell (2011) suggest that in purposive sampling, it is important to establish criteria for the cases being sampled. Hence, for this research, the following criteria were established:

Criteria for Company Selection:
- The company should either be recognized as a luxury automotive manufacturer or have/have had a close working relationship with these manufacturers.

Criteria for the Interviewee:
- Employed in a senior leadership position, such as CEO, or alternatively within the Sales and Marketing Department.
- Extensive experience in the luxury automotive industry.

The companies selected for the multiple case study should have strong brand recognition as a luxury automotive manufacturer or a company that has worked closely with any of these brands. Furthermore, the participants for the study should be employed in positions such as
CEO or Sales and Marketing Department and have extensive experience in the luxury automotive industry. The sampling method for this study involved selecting cases based on the authors' recognition of applicable luxury automotive companies that met the aforementioned criteria. Additionally, an extensive online search was conducted to find the appropriate contact person within each selected company. Once the contact person was identified, a request to participate was sent via email. When the contacted company agreed to participate, a meeting was scheduled to be held virtually over Zoom, or the web questionnaire was sent out to collect their responses.

3.7.3 Tables of Cases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>Interview type</th>
<th>Interview date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pagani Automobili</td>
<td>Marketing Communicator</td>
<td>Anonymous (Taylor Williams)</td>
<td>Zoom</td>
<td>2023-04-28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bentley Motors Limited</td>
<td>Sales Manager</td>
<td>Anonymous (David Smith)</td>
<td>Zoom</td>
<td>2023-04-28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simonsson Israelsson Holding &amp; Consulting</td>
<td>CEO</td>
<td>Ludwig Simonsson</td>
<td>Zoom</td>
<td>2023-04-27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Interview Information Semi-Structured Interviews.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Interview type</th>
<th>Response date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BC sweden / Jaguar Land Rover Sweden</td>
<td>Sales Director and Acting Country Director</td>
<td>Anna Ulfvin</td>
<td>Web Questionnaire</td>
<td>2023-05-05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Callisma AB</td>
<td>CEO and Owner</td>
<td>Fred Mannerfelt</td>
<td>Web Questionnaire</td>
<td>2023-05-06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aston Martin Stockholm</td>
<td>Brand Manager</td>
<td>Patrik Dahlenlund</td>
<td>Web Questionnaire</td>
<td>2023-05-08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H Lindströms Bil Lexus</td>
<td>Service Advisor and Omotenashi Manager</td>
<td>Joe Lapinniemi</td>
<td>Web Questionnaire</td>
<td>2023-05-07</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Interview Information Web Questionnaire.
3.8 Data Analysis

Analyzing data in qualitative research can be a complicated procedure, especially when compared to the analysis of quantitative research data, as noted by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019). Two common methods for conducting qualitative data analysis are grounded theory and thematic analysis (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Grounded theory entails several precise steps that call for a continuous comparison of gathered data and designated categories until no more data can be discovered. However, using this method effectively takes time and requires a certain level of expertise (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019). Contrarily, thematic analysis, which is widely employed as a tool for analyzing qualitative data, lacks this set of specific processes (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

3.8.1 Thematic Analysis

According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019), thematic analysis is a qualitative data analysis method that involves the researcher coding the data to uncover patterns or themes that are relevant to their research question. It is a flexible approach that also allows for a systematic analysis of the data. This systematic approach provides a structured and logical way to analyze large data sets as well as smaller ones, resulting in detailed descriptions, explanations, and potential theories (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019). Hence, thematic analysis helps gain a deep understanding of the data in order to be able to draw meaningful conclusions based on the research objectives. To gain insight into the hedonic value creation online in the luxury automotive industry, a thematic analysis was performed. The analysis involved reviewing and categorizing the set of qualitative data into thematic groups, which were then summarized in the empirical findings section. The selected themes were also linked to the operationalization categories to provide structure. Subsequently, the empirical findings were evaluated against the existing literature review to draw comparisons and address the research questions.

3.9 Validity

According to Bryman and Bell (2011), validity refers to the accuracy and consistency of the conclusions drawn from data gathering and is one of the most crucial factors to be taken into account when doing research. The idea of validity is a vital standard in research because it evaluates the researcher's capacity to do accurate research. Bryman and Bell (2011) further explain that the consistency of study conclusions must be assessed according to internal and external validity standards, which are linked to credibility and transferability, respectively. Internal validity, which is connected to credibility and causation, looks at how well the researchers' findings match their theories. External validity, on the other hand, focuses on transferability and evaluates how well the research findings can be used in different contexts (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The authors took into consideration the concern about transferability and how generalizable the findings would
be. As a result, it was decided to employ a multiple case study rather than a single case study, which could restrict the scope of their analysis to a single, limited perspective. In this manner, the authors intended to collect a wider range of data and empirical evidence that may potentially help generalize their conclusions by looking at many luxury automotive businesses.

### 3.10 Ethical Considerations

In an empirical research study, it is crucial to consider the ethical implications and take measures to ensure that every participant is treated fairly and with respect. To adhere to the ethical principles outlined in Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019), several crucial factors were considered when conducting the research. Firstly, integrity, impartiality, and open-mindedness were maintained throughout the study by avoiding deceit and dishonesty. Additionally, participants were informed about the study's objectives and how their data would be used. Privacy is also a significant concern; hence, the authors obtained informed consent from participants, ensured confidentiality, and informed participants of their right to withdraw consent at any time. Adhering to governmental legislation was necessary to maintain the security of any personal data that was collected. Further, the data collection and findings were handled responsibly, and the data was not manipulated or falsified in any way. Results were presented accurately and transparently, and any errors or limitations were acknowledged. Finally, plagiarism was taken into consideration, and the authors made sure to appropriately recognize and reference the original author whenever necessary and to avoid claiming someone else's work as their own (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019).

### 3.11 Sustainable Considerations

The concept of sustainability is composed of three elements: social, economic, and environmental, collectively referred to as the "three pillars of sustainability" (Allen, 2021). These pillars serve as the framework for the considerations outlined in this study. Regarding social sustainability, efforts were made to create a healthy working environment as the authors worked on their thesis. A comprehensive research and writing strategy was developed, ensuring equal contributions and productivity from both authors. Additionally, an environment that values open communication and mutual respect was fostered to produce a high-quality study in a time- and resource-efficient manner. From an economic perspective, the authors agreed to keep expenses to a minimum and make all project-related expenditure decisions jointly. Digital tools were also used instead of physical materials to minimize material and travel expenses. Moreover, the authors did not offer compensation to businesses and only accepted volunteer collaborations. Finally, as part of their commitment to environmental sustainability, the authors minimized travel during the study to reduce emissions and avoid any actions that may harm the environment.
4 Empirical Findings

This chapter commences with the introduction of the cases involved in the study. It is followed by a comprehensive presentation of the empirical data collected via the web questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The data is presented according to the identified themes in the operationalization table.

4.1 Cases

In order to respect the privacy of two participants involved in this thesis who wished to remain anonymous, they have been given pseudonyms to make the text more fluent for the reader. The respondent from Pagani Automobili is referred to as Taylor Williams, while the respondent from Bentley Motors Limited is referred to as David Smith. This naming convention will be used consistently throughout the thesis to ensure clarity and respect the interviewees' privacy.

4.1.1 Pagani Automobili

Pagani Automobili is a luxury car manufacturer based in Modena, Italy, that was founded in 1992. The company has a rich history of engineering hypercars that combine advanced technology and artistic design (Pagani, n.d. a). Pagani has several model lines, including the Zonda, Huayra, and Utopia, each of which builds upon the proven engineering of its predecessors while pulling forward advancements in technology (Ewing, 2022). Horacio Pagani, the founder of Pagani Automobili, finds his inspiration in the works of the great artist Leonardo da Vinci. He believes that it is not sufficient to manufacture each part of the vehicle using the finest materials and ensure that they function flawlessly; they must also be a work of art (Pagani, n.d. b).

4.1.2 Bentley Motors Limited

The British automotive company Bentley has a rich history steeped in craftsmanship and performance. Since the creation of the first car in 1919, the brand has been dedicated to producing unparalleled luxury vehicles with a human touch. Each vehicle is meticulously handcrafted in Crewe, North-West England, at the Bentley facility by highly experienced craftspeople. Bentley takes great satisfaction in providing breathtaking attention to detail for delightful vehicles (Bentley Motors, n.d. a). Driving a Bentley is a unique and unrivaled experience, with gratifyingly responsive speed and immense power that is summoned with fingertip control. A level of control that allows drivers to safely explore the upper boundaries of performance has been achieved via years of development work by Bentley's engineers (Bentley Motors, n.d. b).
4.1.3 Simonsson Israelsson Holding & Consulting

Simonsson Israelsson Holding & Consulting is a young Swedish consulting firm that was very active in the marketing of the luxury goods industry in its startup days, from 2017 until 2020, under its previous name, "My Digital Management". During this period of time, the firm worked with a number of luxury automotive brands, both directly and through various dealerships internationally. Their focus was mainly on social media work but broadened into the entire digital space with time, giving them expertise within the web as well as general online communication and branding in the luxury automotive industry. By using these metrics, they created a broad network ranging from European brands such as Ferrari to American brands such as Camaro, making their marketing business intelligence highly valuable.

4.1.4 Jaguar Land Rover Sweden

Jaguar Land Rover is a British automotive company that consists of two iconic brands: Jaguar and Land Rover (Jaguar Land Rover, n.d. b). Jaguar's roots can be traced back to 1922. The brand has since become synonymous with luxury and performance, with a reputation for pushing the boundaries of what is possible. Land Rover, on the other hand, debuted in 1948 with the original Series I Land Rover. The brand has a legacy of producing some of the world's most iconic and capable off-road vehicles, with a focus on adventure and exploration. At the heart of Jaguar Land Rover's mission is a dedication to delivering experiences that customers will love, whether it is being fearlessly creative with Jaguar or going above and beyond with Land Rover (Jaguar Land Rover, n.d. a).

4.1.5 Callisma AB

The Swedish "bespoken and iconic" automotive company Callisma Ab was founded in 2003 by the brothers Charlie and Fred Mannerfelt. The company began selling unique cars, including sports cars, luxury cars, and collector cars and focused on meeting their customers' specific needs. Callisma also served as an importer and dealer for various luxury brands, such as Aston Martin, Bentley, Koenigsegg, Rolls Royce, Fisker, Riva, and Pershing, building a market for these brands in Sweden and managing them. Over the past two decades, Callisma has built an international network that spans across all continents. The company also has an authorized General Motors workshop where they provide services for Cadillac, Corvette, Camaro, and other brands. As the automotive industry has evolved, Callisma has established close collaborations with larger auction houses in Europe to sell cars primarily through these platforms (Callisma AB, 2023).

4.1.6 Aston Martin

Aston Martin is a British automotive company with a rich heritage. Founded in 1913 by Lionel Martin and Robert Bamford, it has evolved into a globally recognized and iconic
brand synonymous with luxury, style, performance, and exclusivity. The company's brand vision is to become the most coveted British brand in the ultra-luxury category by producing exquisitely addictive performance cars. To achieve this vision, Aston Martin utilizes a combination of advanced technology, traditional craftsmanship, and sophisticated aesthetics to craft a range of luxury models. The company is headquartered in Gaydon, England, and sells its vehicles in over 55 countries worldwide. Aston Martin's Gaydon facility is responsible for manufacturing its sports cars, while their St. Athan facility in Wales produces the luxurious DBX SUV line. With its unwavering commitment to quality and innovation, Aston Martin continues to capture the imagination of luxury car enthusiasts worldwide (Aston Martin Lagonda, 2023).

4.1.7 Lexus

Lexus is a Japanese automotive brand that was founded in 1989 with a clear goal in mind: to provide the best and most caring car ownership experience in the world. Lexus has established itself as a top-class lifestyle brand, offering extraordinary experiences to its customers (Toyota, 2020). The company celebrates craftsmanship and employs some of the most skilled artisans, "Takumis", in its factories. Through innovation and a commitment to shaping the future, Lexus is constantly pushing boundaries and breaking norms. By going above and beyond to offer luxury products and a unique ownership experience, Lexus has become a global leader in the automotive industry (Toyota, 2020).

4.2 Digital Luxury Automotive Experience

Williams (2023) expresses that luxury can be defined as a state of great comfort and extravagance, often involving high-quality materials, exceptional design, and exclusive experiences. It is further stated that "At Pagani, we see luxury as an expression of art, design, and engineering excellence, and we strive to incorporate these elements into every aspect of our brand, from our vehicles to our online experience". Accordingly, it is explained that when it comes to their online presence, they aim to provide an immersive and engaging experience that captures the essence of what the brand represents. It is believed that the online experience should be just as luxurious and exclusive as the experience of owning and driving a Pagani car. To achieve this, Pagani focuses on creating visually stunning and dynamic online content that showcases the beauty and performance of their vehicles. They also offer exclusive behind-the-scenes glimpses into the design and manufacturing processes, as well as unique insights into the lifestyle that comes with owning a Pagani. Williams (2023) also points out that Pagani invests heavily in digital marketing strategies, such as targeted social media campaigns and interactive web experiences to ensure that their online presence is as engaging and effective as possible. By combining cutting-edge technology with their commitment to luxury and excellence, they aim to create a truly unforgettable online experience for customers and fans. Williams (2023) further remarks that the online experience at Pagani is an extension of the brand's
offline image and hedonic experience. To ensure that the online experience aligns with their brand values, they have a holistic approach that involves careful planning, attention to detail, and a focus on creating a seamless and consistent brand experience across all touchpoints. It is highlighted that they ensure alignment by maintaining a consistent visual identity across all digital touchpoints, including the website, social media channels, and online campaigns. This includes using the same color schemes, fonts, and visual elements to create a cohesive and recognizable brand image. In addition to this, Williams (2023) describes how Pagani focuses on creating a consistent tone of voice and messaging across all digital touchpoints, ensuring that brand values and messaging are conveyed consistently and effectively. This includes using language that reflects the luxury, exclusivity, and passion that is at the core of the Pagani brand. In addition to this, Pagani pays careful attention to the user experience on their website and other digital touchpoints, ensuring that every interaction is intuitive, easy to use, and reflects the luxury and exclusivity of the brand. This includes ensuring that their website is optimized for speed, usability, and accessibility and that every element is designed to reflect the quality and craftsmanship of the vehicles. It is also emphasized that Pagani strives to create a seamless and integrated brand experience across all touchpoints, from the website to physical dealerships and events. This means ensuring that every interaction with the Pagani brand, whether online or offline, is an unforgettable and hedonic experience that reflects the exclusivity and luxury of the brand. Williams (2023) explains that overall, ensuring that the online experience aligns with the brand’s offline image and hedonic experience requires a holistic approach that involves careful planning, attention to detail, and a relentless focus on creating a consistent and unforgettable brand experience across all touchpoints.

When it comes to multisensory marketing, Williams (2023) mentions that it is an essential aspect of luxury branding and plays a critical role in creating a hedonic experience for customers. He further stresses that while online touchpoints do not allow them to utilize all the senses, including smell, sound, and texture, they still believe that it is possible to create an immersive and compelling online experience that engages customers and reflects the luxury and exclusivity of the Pagani brand. To compensate for the lack of sensory experience online, Pagani focuses on creating a visually rich and interactive user experience that incorporates high-quality visuals, including photographs, videos, and 360-degree views, that showcase the intricate details, textures, and finishes of the vehicles. They also pay close attention to the tone of voice, language, and storytelling used across online touchpoints to evoke emotions and create a sense of exclusivity and luxury. Williams (2023) further presents that another key strategy used by Pagani is leveraging digital technologies such as virtual and augmented reality to create immersive and interactive online experiences that allow customers to explore vehicles in a more lifelike and engaging way, such as by allowing them to customize their vehicle, virtually sit inside it, or take it for a virtual test drive. Moreover, Williams (2023) explains that Pagani uses online campaigns, social media, and targeted digital advertising to create a sense of exclusivity and desirability around the brand and to showcase vehicles in unique and
exclusive settings, such as at exclusive events or in scenic locations around the world. By using a combination of these strategies, Pagani aims to create an online experience that is both immersive and engaging and that evokes the same level of emotion and exclusivity as physical products.

According to Smith (2023), Bentley defines luxury as the highest level of quality, craftsmanship, and exclusivity. He further indicates that it is about delivering an experience that goes above and beyond what is expected, making customers feel special and valued. He also remarks that Bentley strives to provide a level of luxury that is unparalleled in the automotive industry. When it comes to incorporating luxury into the online experience, he explains that Bentley aims to provide the same level of excellence that customers would expect if they were visiting the physical showroom. This includes delivering an immersive experience that showcases their products in the best possible light with high-quality images, videos, and interactive features. Additionally, Bentley also strives to make the online experience as seamless and personalized as possible. This is done by offering a range of digital tools and resources that allow customers to customize and configure their dream Bentley, along with an online customer service team that is always on hand to provide support and answer any questions (Smith, 2023).

Smith (2023) also presents that Bentley strives to ensure that the online experience aligns with the brand's offline image and hedonic experience by applying the same level of quality, craftsmanship, and attention to detail to all aspects of the customer journey. This is done by maintaining a consistent visual identity across all online and offline touchpoints. By using the same color palette, typography, and imagery across all channels, Bentley ensures that the brand is instantly recognizable and that the experience is consistent across all touchpoints. It is also ensured that the online experience reflects the same level of exclusivity and personalization as the offline experience. Smith (2023) discusses that Bentley provides a range of digital tools and resources that allow customers to customize and configure their dream Bentley, just as they would in a physical showroom. They also provide online customer service and support that is responsive and personalized, ensuring that customers receive the same level of care and attention as they would in person. Smith (2023) stresses that in addition to these efforts, they also work closely with their dealership network to ensure that the online experience aligns with the offline experience. Training and support is provided to their dealerships to make sure that they can deliver the same level of quality and excellence that customers expect from the Bentley brand, whether they are interacting with them in person or online. According to Smith (2023), Bentley strives to create a hedonic online experience that showcases the craftsmanship, attention to detail, and exclusivity that are central to the Bentley brand, even in the absence of multisensory elements. He states that they focus on creating visually stunning content, such as high-quality images and videos, that showcases the design and unique features of the cars.
Simonsson (2023) expresses that luxury is all about delivering exceptional experiences, products, and services that exceed expectations and reflect the highest levels of quality, craftsmanship, and exclusivity. It is about creating a sense of indulgence and prestige that goes beyond mere material possessions. He further discloses that when he is working with luxury automotive brands online, he incorporates this definition of luxury by ensuring that every aspect of the digital experience is crafted to reflect the brand's values, heritage, and unique selling propositions. This involves paying close attention to details such as website design, user interface, content creation, and social media engagement. Simonsson (2023) describes that this may include working with the brand to create visually stunning websites that showcase the beauty and craftsmanship of their vehicles while also providing users with a seamless browsing experience that reflects the exclusivity and luxury of the brand. In addition to this, it also includes developing targeted digital marketing campaigns that appeal to the brand's target audience and leveraging social media and other digital channels to create buzz and generate interest in the brand. Simonsson (2023) states that "The key to incorporating luxury into the online experience for the brands I work with is to create a cohesive and immersive digital experience that reflects the brand's unique values and selling propositions while also delivering exceptional value and customer service to the brand's target audience". To ensure that the online experience aligns with the brand's offline image and hedonic experience, Simonsson (2023) highlights working with key strategies such as consistent branding, seamless user experience, personalization, and offline-online integration. Consequently, he describes how he works closely with the brand to create a consistent brand image and messaging across all online and offline touchpoints. This involves developing a clear brand strategy that reflects the brand's unique values, heritage, and selling propositions, and ensuring that all online content and campaigns align with this strategy. Further, he emphasizes the importance of ensuring that the online experience is seamless and consistent with the brand's offline experience. This includes creating visually stunning websites and social media content that reflect the beauty and craftsmanship of the brand's vehicles, as well as providing users with a seamless browsing experience that reflects the exclusivity and luxury of the brand. In regards to personalization, Simonsson (2023) asserts that it is a key element of luxury and that he works to ensure that the brand's online experience is personalized to reflect the individual preferences and interests of the audience. This can include offering personalized recommendations, customized content, and exclusive online experiences that are tailored to the user's interests. When it comes to offline-online integration, his work focuses on making sure that the online and offline experiences are integrated seamlessly and that the brand's offline events, campaigns, and activations are promoted and amplified through the brand's online channels. This creates a cohesive brand experience that reflects the brand's values and unique selling propositions across all touchpoints (Simonsson, 2023).

Additionally, multisensory marketing is, according to Simonsson (2023), a powerful tool in the luxury industry, as it allows brands to create a holistic and immersive experience that engages all of the senses, creating a strong emotional connection with the customer.
However, he remarks that online presence presents a challenge in that it limits the ability to convey sensory experiences in the same way as offline experiences. Further, he suggests that while it may not be possible to replicate all aspects of multisensory marketing in an online environment, there are still ways to incorporate sensory elements into the digital experience. For example, high-quality product photography and video can showcase the visual appeal and craftsmanship of a luxury vehicle, while audio can be used to create an immersive experience, such as the sound of a powerful engine. In addition, Simonsson (2023) identifies creative copywriting and storytelling as aspects that brands can leverage to create an emotional connection with the customer by evoking sensory experiences through descriptive language and narrative. Further, he presents that virtual experiences, such as 360-degree video tours, virtual reality test drives, and interactive product configurators, can be used to offer a more immersive and interactive experience for customers.

Ulfvin (2023) defines luxury as something desirable but not achievable for everyone that is often limited in volume and to a high price, but not always. She explains that Jaguar Land Rover is moving their brand strategy towards modern luxury, where the online strategy is one of the core pillars. Further, she expresses that they are moving away from visible pricing and price list available for downloading and also implies that they exclusively offer well-equipped models with no possibility to downgrade, only upgrading. Ulfvin (2023) also explains that Jaguar Land Rover has strict guidelines and retailer standards to ensure that the brand's visual identity, messaging, and tone of voice are consistent across all online and offline channels in all markets. She further describes that, on a product level, Jaguar Land Rover works hard to improve and highlight the quality and craftsmanship of the products and services offered. They are increasing personalized experiences for customers, both online and offline, including recommendations and targeted messaging. Limited models and/or versions that speak directly to specific customers' interests and preferences are also offered. Moreover, Ulfvin (2023) indicates that a lot of effort and development are being conducted to make sure that the online and offline experiences at Jaguar Land Rover are seamlessly integrated. This includes, among many things, a local stock locator to show available cars, flexible leasing offers, and a local customer relationship center in all markets to handle customers' questions and issues. Showrooms are also being upgraded both visually, with fewer sales desks and more of a lounge feel, as well as with different job roles and training. Concerning the fact that multisensory marketing aspects such as, for example, smell and feeling in the real world might be difficult to convey digitally, Ulfvin (2023) expresses that this has not at all affected Jaguar Land Rover's online presence.

Mannerfelt (2023) at Callisma explains that luxury can be defined as something of high quality and elegance, usually associated with a high cost. It doesn't necessarily have to be expensive, but it can cost a significant amount of money. He further points out that the luxury aspect is integrated into the materials provided to Callisma by the brands that they work with. In regards to ensuring that the online experience at Callisma aligns with the
brand's offline image and hedonic experience, Mannerfelt (2023) mentions that this is something they have built up over the past 20 years. Additionally, concerning traditional multisensory marketing in luxury brands where the customer experience is strengthened with sensory aspects, Mannerfelt (2023) suggests that these aspects can still be conveyed online, but in a different manner. Moreover, Dahlenlund (2023) at Aston Martin expresses that by living or being in a way that distinguishes and sets itself apart from the crowd, a unique sense of "luxury" is created. He also explains that by showcasing their fine products in an equally fine environment, Aston Martin creates a "wow experience". Further, the brand ensures that the online experience aligns with the brand's offline image by, for example, having early contact with the customer to be able to answer questions and address concerns. He also describes how this usually leads to booking a physical meeting and perhaps a test drive. Dahlenlund (2023) additionally remarks that as online shopping has become more common than before, one quickly forgets which multisensory marketing tools were effective before. Nowadays, as Aston Martin uses descriptive images or an image that shows something recognizable, a certain effect can be maintained even though it is digital. However, he also stresses that the best way to convey the multisensory aspects is in person.

Moreover, Lapinniemi (2023) at Lexus points out that luxury reflects more than just the product. Of course, the choice of materials, precision, and build quality are of utmost importance, however, he remarks that personal, dedicated service is the most important aspect of their work. Further, he explains that Lexus works according to their "Experience Amazing" philosophy, where the online experience should match the physical visit. This includes being available online through chat, video calls, and virtual tours throughout the entire journey, from purchase, to service maintenance, in case of an accident, or if a guest has any questions or is curious. Ensuring that the online and offline experiences align with each other is done partly through internal groups that follow up on results and partly through incoming feedback from guests (Lapinniemi, 2023). Additionally, he explains that there are new challenges regarding the multisensory aspects when it comes to the online experience. He believes that all of the senses undoubtedly affect customers greatly when it comes to purchasing, especially when it comes to premium products. He further points out how videos could be used to convey multisensory aspects. He exemplifies this by describing how, when launching the previous generation Lexus LS, videos were created showing how the Takumi artisans at Lexus make door trims and Kiriko inlays.

4.3 Hedonic Value Creation Online

Williams (2023) identifies hedonic value creation for online customers, communities, and other interactive online parties as an essential part of the overall brand strategy at Pagani. It is believed that luxury is not just about owning a beautiful and high-performance car but also about the lifestyle and experiences that come with it. Therefore, Pagani aims to create
a community that shares a passion for exceptional design, engineering, and performance by creating unique and memorable experiences for their online customers and community. According to Williams (2023), one way Pagani creates hedonic value is by providing exclusive access to behind-the-scenes content, such as photos and videos of their vehicles in action, as well as insights into their design and manufacturing processes. Further, virtual tours of the factory and design studio are offered, giving the online customers and community a unique and immersive experience that they can't find anywhere else. Williams (2023) discusses that another way of creating hedonic value is through online events and collaborations. For example, by partnering with other luxury brands and lifestyle influencers to create unique and memorable experiences that showcase the best of what both brands have to offer, these collaborations can include exclusive product launches, special events, and even test drives of vehicles. Pagani also engages with their community on social media, responding to comments and questions and sharing user-generated content that showcases the passion and enthusiasm of fans. By creating a strong sense of community and offering unique and engaging experiences, they aim to create hedonic value for online customers and the community that goes beyond the simple act of buying a car (Williams, 2023).

Smith (2023) indicates that to create hedonic value, Bentley focuses on delivering an immersive and engaging online experience that allows customers to fully appreciate the craftsmanship and design of their vehicles. He explains that they use high-quality imagery, videos, and interactive tools to showcase the unique features and benefits of the cars and also offer a range of digital resources to help customers personalize and configure their dream Bentley. In addition to providing a superior product experience, Bentley also strives to create a sense of community among online customers and fans. Smith (2023) describes how social media platforms and other online channels are utilized to connect with customers and share exclusive content and insights into the world of Bentley. He further highlights that they work closely with dealerships and partners to offer a range of online events and experiences that allow customers to engage with the brand in new and exciting ways. Smith (2023) states, "From virtual test drives to online product launches and exclusive behind-the-scenes tours, we are always looking for ways to create hedonic values and deliver a truly exceptional online experience".

Simonsen (2023) remarks that creating hedonic value for a luxury automotive brand's online customers, community, and other interactive online parties involves creating an online experience that goes beyond just the functional benefits of the product or service but also delivers emotional and sensory benefits that create a sense of pleasure, indulgence, and excitement. He suggests that creating hedonic value for luxury automotive brands online can include visual and sensory appeal. Luxury automotive brands are often associated with beauty, elegance, and sophistication. Therefore, he emphasizes creating visually appealing content, such as high-quality images and videos that showcase the brand's vehicles in a luxurious and aspirational way. Incorporating sensory elements such
as sound and animation can also create a more immersive experience for the audience. Simonsson (2023) further views personalization as a key element of luxury and looks for ways to personalize the online experience for the brand's customers and community. This could involve offering personalized recommendations based on their browsing history or creating customized content that speaks directly to their interests and preferences. Moreover, Simonsson (2023) asserts that luxury automotive brands are often associated with exclusivity and limited availability, hence why he looks for ways to create a sense of exclusivity online, such as offering limited edition vehicles or exclusive online content that is only available to a select group of customers or community members. Simonsson (2023) additionally points out that luxury automotive brands have a rich history and heritage that can be leveraged to create an emotional connection with the audience. He highlights the importance of creating compelling brand storytelling content that highlights the brand's unique values, heritage, and achievements. Creating hedonic value for luxury automotive brands online involves creating an online experience that is not just functional but also delivers emotional and sensory benefits that create a sense of pleasure, indulgence, and excitement for the audience.

Ulfvin (2023) presents that one of the ways Jaguar Land Rover creates hedonic value for online customers is by, for example, focusing on personalized content. Moreover, she also highlights that hedonic value can also be created by providing customers with exclusive access to new models or events. Mannerfelt (2023) mentions that Callisma creates hedonic value online by creating exceptional user experiences as well as fostering engagement and loyalty with interactive parties. He additionally places emphasis on providing personalized experiences and offering high-quality content. Moreover, Dahlénlund (2023) points out that Aston Martin creates hedonic value online by describing the feeling in words of the experience one can expect. He further states, "If you close your eyes, you should be able to visualize it, and if you feel like you are a part of what you see, then you have successfully created optimal value." Moreover, at Lexus, hedonic value is created through emotions (Lapinniemi, 2023). This is done by demonstrating, through well-produced videos, graphics, photographs, and animations, how the product is made and the distinct feeling and signature drive of Lexus vehicles. He also believes it is important to convey how the strong cultural heritage influences the work at Lexus through design (L-finesse and Kiriko), production quality (TPS), and the way of welcoming guests both digitally and physically (ichi-go ichi-e).

4.4 Digital Hedonic Experience

Williams (2023) states "At Pagani, we believe that staying innovative and maintaining a competitive edge in the luxury automotive market requires a relentless focus on creativity, quality, and attention to detail". Accordingly, in order to create online hedonic experiences that stand out in a crowded market, Pagani utilizes a variety of strategies. In consonance
with Williams (2023), these include continuous innovation, a customer-centric approach, collaborations and partnerships, brand storytelling, and continuous optimization. Williams (2023) explains that continuous innovation is achieved by constantly looking for new and innovative ways to engage customers and create unforgettable online experiences. This involves experimenting with new technologies such as virtual and augmented reality, developing interactive configurators, and collaborating with top photographers and filmmakers. Regarding a customer-centric approach, Williams (2023) emphasizes that customers are placed at the center of everything they do. Customer feedback and insights are used to inform digital strategies and create online experiences that resonate with the target audience. Furthermore, Williams (2023) implies that collaborations and partnerships with other brands in the luxury space are utilized to create unique and exclusive online experiences that reflect the luxury and exclusivity of both brands. For example, collaborations with top fashion brands such as Versace and Hermès have resulted in one-of-a-kind automotive designs that appeal to fashion-forward customers. Williams (2023) also means that brand storytelling is considered essential for creating a compelling and immersive online experience that resonates with customers. Finally, Williams (2023) remarks that optimization involves the analysis and improvement of digital touchpoints to ensure they are delivering the best possible online experience for customers. This includes regular user testing, tracking key performance metrics, and making data-driven decisions to improve the user experience and drive engagement. In addition, Williams (2023) emphasizes that in order to stay innovative and maintain a competitive edge in the luxury automotive market, it is necessary to have a relentless focus on creativity, quality, and attention to detail. As such, a deep understanding of customers and the ever-evolving digital landscape is crucial. Williams (2023) expresses, "By continuously pushing the boundaries of what is possible and striving to create unforgettable online experiences that reflect the luxury and exclusivity of the Pagani brand, we aim to maintain our position as a leader in the luxury automotive market". When it comes to profiling a new line of products, services, features, or models, there are several key factors that Williams (2023) considers essential. Williams (2023) highlights that visual impact is one of the most critical factors in creating an exclusive hedonic experience online. The company aims to showcase their vehicles in visually stunning and engaging ways by using high-quality photography, videos, and other visual elements to highlight the unique design, features, and craftsmanship of their vehicles. Customization is another vital element, according to Williams (2023), and the company offers a range of customization options, including exterior and interior finishes, performance upgrades, and bespoke features that allow customers to create a truly unique and exclusive vehicle that reflects their personality and style. Further, Williams (2023) expresses that storytelling plays a crucial role in conveying the heritage, philosophy, and values of the Pagani brand and in creating a sense of connection and exclusivity with their customers. By using stories, they can create an emotional bond with their customers that can help differentiate their brand from competitors. Williams (2023) also believes that interactive features are essential in creating an exclusive hedonic experience online. The company provides a range of interactive
features, such as virtual tours, configurators, and virtual reality experiences, that allow customers to engage with their vehicles in a more immersive and interactive way. Finally, Williams (2023) emphasizes that limited availability is another vital factor in creating an exclusive hedonic experience online. Pagani offers their vehicles in limited production runs, and they use this scarcity to create a sense of exclusivity and desirability around their brand. Williams (2023) explains that by limiting availability, creates a sense of urgency among the customers, which can help drive sales and reinforce the exclusivity of the brand. Williams (2023) concludes by stating, "By focusing on these key factors, we aim to create an exclusive hedonic experience online that reflects the luxury and exclusivity of the Pagani brand and that engages and delights our customers".

Moreover, when it comes to Bentley, Smith (2023) explains that one way they stay innovative is by investing in research and development to explore new technologies and trends that can enhance the online hedonic experience. This, according to Smith (2023), includes experimenting with new digital touchpoints, such as virtual and augmented reality, that can create more immersive and engaging experiences for their customers. Smith (2023) also further remarks that Bentley prioritizes customer insights by regularly gathering feedback from their customers and analyzing their behavior and preferences. Smith (2023) emphasizes, "This helps us identify areas where we can improve the online hedonic experience and create new features and services that meet the evolving needs of our customers". Smith (2023) then continues by explaining that another key aspect of staying innovative is having a culture of continuous improvement. Smith (2023) states, "We are constantly testing and refining our online experience, whether it is improving website navigation or adding new features to our online configurator. This allows us to stay ahead of the curve and ensure that we are always providing the best possible online experience for our customers". Smith (2023) also believes that when it comes to profiling a new line of products, services, features, or models, it is important to consider how to create an exclusive hedonic experience online that aligns with the Bentley brand.

Furthermore, Simonsson (2023) outlines his key strategies to maintain a competitive edge in the luxury automotive market and create an exclusive hedonic experience online. These include continuous research and analysis, creative ideation and brainstorming, user-centered design, collaboration and partnerships, and continuous optimization. To stay ahead of the competition, Simonsson (2023) keeps himself up-to-date with the latest trends and developments in the luxury automotive sector and the digital marketing industry. Additionally, he focuses on identifying emerging trends and opportunities and adapting his strategies accordingly. Simonsson (2023) utilizes creative ideation and brainstorming by challenging conventional thinking and pushing the boundaries of what is possible. Simonsson (2023) also collaborates closely with the brand to develop innovative and creative ideas for digital campaigns, social media content, and other online experiences. Moreover, collaboration and partnerships with other industry experts, such as technology partners, creative agencies, and influencers, play an important role in differentiating the
brand from competitors. User-centered design is also a critical component of Simonsson's (2023) approach. He believes in conducting extensive user research and testing to ensure that the online experience is intuitive, engaging, and personalized to the user's preferences. For example, he believes that interactive experiences such as 360-degree video tours and virtual reality test drives can create a sense of engagement and excitement. He also implies that the visual appeal of the product is essential, and high-quality visuals such as images and videos should be used to showcase the unique design and craftsmanship of the product. This approach helps tailor the brand's online experience to the needs and preferences of the target audience, ultimately leading to a better customer experience. Simonsson (2023) also believes personalization is key in creating an exclusive and personalized experience for customers, and for example, allowing them to customize their vehicle to their preferences can create a sense of ownership and exclusivity. By understanding the customer's needs and preferences, brands can create a unique experience that resonates with them on a personal level. Additionally, Simonsson (2023) reminds that brands can form a strong bond with their target audience by crafting emotionally captivating content, such as compelling narratives and stories, that appeals to the customer's emotions. He further states that "by telling stories that resonate with customers, brands can build brand loyalty and ultimately drive sales". Lastly, Simonsson (2023) continuously monitors and optimizes the online experience using data and analytics to identify areas for improvement and refine strategies accordingly. This ensures that the brand's online experience is always evolving and improving, maintaining a competitive edge in the luxury automotive market. In addition, Simonsson (2023) specifies that a seamless user experience must be provided, ensuring the online experience is intuitive and easy to navigate. Overall, by considering these factors and implementing these strategies, Simonsson (2023) states that "a luxury automotive brand can create an exclusive hedonic experience that meets the needs and desires of their customers, while maintaining a competitive edge in the market".

Moreover, Ulfvin (2023) acknowledges that Jaguar Land Rover focuses on differentiating the brand from competitors by offering unique and exclusive online and offline experiences to stay innovative and maintain a competitive edge in the luxury automotive market when it comes to creating online hedonic experiences. Ulfvin (2023) expresses that this could include increasing personalized content, exclusive access to events, and limited and unique editions. When launching and/or profiling a new model or version, Ulfvin (2023) further states "it is important to focus on high-quality visuals, personalization, interactive content, and exclusivity". Furthermore, according to Mannerfelt (2023), Callisma is able to stay innovative and maintain a competitive edge in the luxury automotive market by creating online hedonic experiences in collaboration with their suppliers. Additionally, when it comes to profiling a new line of products, services, features, or models and key factors for an exclusive hedonic experience online, Mannerfelt (2023) further states, "The approach to launching something is to get to the bottom of what one wants to convey based on what one actually needs to convey. A car is still something that can take you from A to B, but you can experience it in different ways, and these are the points you need to identify and define". In
addition, Dahlenlund (2023) at Aston Martin further emphasizes that maintaining a competitive edge when it comes to creating online hedonic experiences can be done by conveying messages in images and words. He further implies that "it provides a digital experience that one wants to experience in reality, one can maintain a certain part of it". Dahlenlund (2023) continues by explaining that he believes that a meeting is the only correct way for luxury products such as cars, etc. to be sold, through relationship sales. He further states, "a customer is not a customer of ours, but should and will feel like a guest. That feeling cannot be achieved digitally, no matter how much one tries". When it comes to profiling a new line of products, services, features, or models and key factors for an exclusive hedonic experience online, Dahlenlund (2023) describes that "It is possible to describe in words, together with some beautiful images, the lifestyle and experience that one can expect from the new thing being presented". When it comes to Lexus, Lapinniemi (2023) highlights that they remain innovative and maintain a competitive edge regarding creating online hedonic experiences through responsiveness. He further explains that Lexus continuously follows guest requests as well as new trends. Lapinniemi (2023) also implies that dedicated training occurs for all Lexus personnel who interact with guests both physically and digitally. He sincerely states, "since its introduction in 1989, we have observed how competitors work and how we can distinguish ourselves through personalized service." Further, Lapinniemi (2023) believes that personality, craftsmanship, exclusivity, and feeling are key factors for an exclusive hedonic experience online when profiling a new line of products, services, features, or models.

4.5 Digital Touchpoints

According to the use of digital touchpoints, Williams (2023) expresses that social media, websites, and online campaigns play a critical role for Pagani in creating a luxury hedonic experience for their customers. Additionally, Williams (2023) specifies that "at Pagani, we believe that every touchpoint should be an opportunity to create a memorable and engaging experience for our customers, and we use a variety of digital strategies to achieve this". Williams (2023) explains that one way Pagani uses digital touchpoints is by creating visually stunning and engaging content that showcases the beauty and performance of their vehicles. This includes high-quality photos and videos, 3D models, and interactive online experiences that allow customers to explore the cars in detail. Williams (2023) also emphasizes that they use social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube to create a sense of community around the brand. Williams (2023) states "We share exclusive content such as behind-the-scenes glimpses of our factory and design process, as well as lifestyle content that reflects the luxury and exclusivity of our brand". Williams (2023) further implies that they use targeted digital advertising campaigns to reach potential customers and create a sense of exclusivity and desirability around their brand. This can, according to Williams (2023), include promoting exclusive events, new product launches, and limited edition models, as well as creating targeted
campaigns that appeal to specific audiences, such as motorsports enthusiasts or luxury lifestyle aficionados. In addition, Williams (2023) expresses that "at Pagani we believe that every digital touchpoint can be effective in communicating hedonic values within the luxury automotive sector, as long as it is executed in a way that reflects the exclusivity and luxury of our brand". Overall, Williams (2023) implies that Pagani believes that digital touchpoints play a critical role in creating a luxury hedonic experience for their customers. With that said, Williams (2023) continuously believes that the website is one of the most effective digital touchpoints for communicating hedonic values. Moreover, Williams (2023) states "Our website serves as the central hub for our brand, providing an immersive and engaging user experience that allows customers to explore our vehicles, learn more about our brand history and philosophy, and customize and build their own dream car". By using high-quality photos and videos, 360-degree views, and interactive configurators, Williams (2023) points out that Pagani aims to create an unforgettable and hedonic experience that reflects the exclusivity and luxury of the Pagani brand. Williams (2023) continues by explaining that by using a variety of strategies and tactics to engage and excite their customers, the aim is to create a brand experience that is unforgettable and truly reflects the exclusivity and luxury of the Pagani brand. By using a combination of social media, email marketing, and other digital channels, Williams (2023) conveys that the aim is to build strong relationships with customers and keep them engaged with the brand over time. Ultimately, Williams (2023) claims "our goal is to create a seamless and integrated digital experience that reflects the values and exclusivity of the Pagani brand, and leaves our customers feeling satisfied and excited about their ownership experience".

Moreover, Smith (2023) also believes that social media platforms are a vital digital touchpoint. Smith (2023) expresses that social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook are important touchpoints for Bentley since they allow them to connect with customers and fans in a more personal and interactive way. According to Smith (2023), they use these platforms to showcase the latest Bentley models, highlight the unique features and benefits of the cars, and share behind-the-scenes content that provides a glimpse into the world of Bentley. Smith (2023) points out "We also engage with our audience through personalized responses and messages, building a sense of community and exclusivity". Smith (2023) also implies that online campaigns are another important way Bentley creates a luxury hedonic experience. Smith (2023) highlights that they create exclusive online campaigns that offer customers unique experiences such as virtual test drives or behind-the-scenes tours of their factory. Furthermore, Smith (2023) expresses that these campaigns are designed to create a sense of exclusivity and excitement around the Bentley brand and to give customers an experience that is truly unforgettable. Additionally, Smith (2023) believes that the website is one of the most effective key touchpoints for both communicating hedonic value and creating a luxury hedonic experience. Smith (2023) continues by explaining that a website can provide an opportunity for customers to configure and personalize their dream car, creating a sense of exclusivity and personalization that is integral to the hedonic experience. Smith (2023) states "We design
our website with the same level of craftsmanship and attention to detail as we do our physical showroom, ensuring that it reflects the quality and exclusivity of the Bentley brand. We use high-quality imagery, videos, and interactive tools to showcase our products and help customers configure and personalize their dream Bentley".

Simonsson (2023) further asserts that he works with digital touchpoints like social media, websites, and online campaigns to create a luxury hedonic experience for the brands he collaborates with. He highlights Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter as powerful platforms for showcasing the beauty and craftsmanship of luxury vehicles to both customers and the brand's community. Simonsson (2023) explains that he creates visually stunning content, such as high-quality images and videos that showcase the brand's vehicles in a luxurious and aspirational way. Simonsson (2023) also highlights that he uses social media to engage with the brand's community, respond to their queries, and create a sense of exclusivity and personalization by offering exclusive content and behind-the-scenes glimpses. Extensively, Simonsson (2023) states "Social media allows brands to showcase their vehicles in aspirational and exclusive settings, creating a sense of hedonic pleasure and excitement for customers and potential customers". Simonsson (2023) also points out that the brand's website is a critical touchpoint for communicating hedonic values. Simonsson (2023) expresses that the brand's website is often the first touchpoint for customers and potential customers, so it is essential to create a luxury hedonic experience that reflects the brand's values and unique selling propositions. Simonsson (2023) describes "I work with the brands to create visually stunning websites that showcase the beauty and craftsmanship of their vehicles, while also providing users with a seamless browsing experience that reflects the exclusivity and luxury of the brand". Additionally, Simonsson (2023) suggests that websites should provide a seamless and personalized browsing experience, with features such as virtual showrooms and personalized recommendations, creating a sense of exclusivity and personalized service. Simonsson (2023) moreover claims that online campaigns, such as digital marketing campaigns, can be highly effective in creating a luxury hedonic experience for the brand's target audience. Simonsson (2023) states "I create targeted digital marketing campaigns that appeal to the brand's target audience, leveraging social media and other digital channels to create buzz and generate interest in the brand". He further believes that these campaigns can incorporate visually stunning content, personalization, exclusivity, and limited availability to create a sense of luxury and exclusivity. Besides this, Simonsson (2023) also believes virtual and augmented reality technologies are highly effective in creating immersive and experiential experiences for customers and potential customers. He indicates that brands can use these technologies to showcase their vehicles in a highly interactive and personalized way, allowing customers to explore the vehicles and customize them to their preferences.

Ulfvin (2023) moreover conveys that Jaguar Land Rover has an active presence on social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, where they share high-quality visuals, videos, and engaging content that align with their modern luxury brand image.
Ulfvin (2023) expresses that these platforms provide an excellent opportunity for Jaguar Land Rover to showcase the products and communicate hedonic value. Ulfvin (2023) states "We use social media to interact with our customers and address their queries, providing a personalized touch while also creating a sense of exclusivity and luxury". Additionally, Ulfvin (2023) implies that the webpage is still an important platform for showcasing the products and providing an immersive experience for the customers. She believes that the website is easy to navigate and creates a seamless and enjoyable user experience. Moreover, when it comes to the fact that Jaguar Land Rover uses digital touchpoints such as online campaigns to create a luxury hedonic experience, Ulfvin (2023) states "We do not use campaign in its traditional meaning in automotive, we do not offer any discount at any time or on any product". Furthermore, Mannerfelt (2023) acknowledges that Callisma creates a luxury hedonic experience on a daily basis by utilizing digital touchpoints such as social media, websites, and online campaigns. According to Mannerfelt (2023), he further believes that the most effective digital touchpoints for communicating hedonic values within the luxury automotive sector are, as he expresses "the usual digital platforms". Continuously Dahlenlund (2023) describes that Aston Martin is quite conservative in the digital area and further points out that this is the case because their sales primarily rely on relationships. In addition, Dahlenlund (2023) states that "however, a first contact can occur when a customer has seen a beautiful image or video of something they also want". When it comes to which digital touchpoints Dahlenlund (2023) believes are most effective in communicating hedonic values, he implies that "the most effective approach is to be visible where the expected customers are, whether it is in digital or analog channels". He further believes that it is important that the communication attract attention and be interesting for the viewer, as he expresses "the first few seconds are crucial". Moreover, Lapinniemi (2023) at Lexus thinks that it can be achieved through a dedicated team, partly in each country but also on each continent. He further emphasizes that materials are actively produced to share via platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc., and that these materials may consist of product news such as upcoming models but also materials aimed at increasing brand loyalty. When it comes to which digital touchpoints Lapinniemi (2023) believes are most effective in communicating hedonic value, he expresses that this varies from guest to guest. Lapinniemi (2023) conveys that the most important thing is to be attentive to each individual and which medium they prefer. He further states that "by being available on as many platforms as possible, the chances of providing the right personalized approach are increased".
5 Analysis

This chapter provides an extensive analysis of the empirical findings from the primary data collection. By comparing the empirical findings with the existing theories, the discussion aims to highlight similarities and differences between the two.

5.1 Digital Luxury Automotive Experience

Examining the empirical findings in conjunction with the literature review reveals a convergence between the participants' definitions and the broader understanding of luxury brands as outlined in existing theory. The perspectives of Simonsson (2023) and Smith (2023), respectively, affirm that luxury embodies the highest levels of quality, craftsmanship, and exclusivity. This aligns with the recognition of high quality, rarity, exclusivity, and authenticity as fundamental dimensions of luxury (Tynan, McKechnie, & Chhuon, 2010). Williams (2023) at Pagani adds that luxury encompasses not only high-quality materials and exceptional design but also exclusive experiences. Similarly, Smith (2023) mentions Bentley's goal of exceeding customer expectations and making them feel special and valued. These findings are consistent with the acknowledgment of the significance of customer experience as a strategy to derive added value from luxury brands (Seo & Buchanan-Oliver, 2015). This also applies to the insights regarding Lexus, as highlighted by Lapinniemi (2023), who emphasizes that luxury goes beyond the product and underscores the importance of personalized and dedicated service.

According to the theory, there is a clear distinction between mass-market brands and luxury brands in terms of pricing, a notion that several participants shared. Mannerfelt (2023) at Callisma defines luxury as something of high quality and elegance, typically associated with a higher cost. This supports the perception that luxury is often linked to a higher price point (Gutsatz & Heine, 2018). In a similar manner, Ulfvin (2023) defines luxury as something desirable but not attainable for everyone, often limited in volume and price, aligning with Dubois and Duquesne's (1993) understanding of luxury brands targeting affluent individuals and the importance of exclusivity. Ulfvin (2023) also emphasizes their online strategy and underscores the significance of the digital landscape in reaching their luxury consumer base. This corroborates Kapferer and Bastien's (2009) findings, highlighting the crucial role of online strategies for luxury brands. Kapferer and Bastien (2009) further argue the importance of prioritizing exclusivity and establishing a distinct market positioning, which is supported by the empirical findings as Dahlenlund (2023) underscores the creation of a unique sense of luxury through differentiation from competitors and presenting fine products in an equally fine environment.
It is also evident that ensuring that the online services provided are as exclusive and personalized as their physical counterparts is of high importance. Smith (2023) offers an example from Bentley, where customers are provided with digital tools to customize their dream cars, replicating the experience of a physical showroom. Smith (2023) further explains that customer service should be of the same high standard as in physical stores. Both Dahlenlund (2023) and Ulfvin (2023) also recognize the significance of well-functioning customer relationship centers to address customers' concerns and inquiries effectively. Moreover, Williams (2023) explains that Pagani aims to create a seamless and integrated brand experience across all touchpoints, spanning from their website to physical dealerships and events. Simonsson (2023) also recognizes the importance of this integration, emphasizing how the synergy between offline and online channels contributes to a cohesive brand experience. These efforts align with the recommendations of Batra and Keller (2016), who propose that luxury brands should prioritize the development of seamless digital experiences that match the quality of their physical touchpoints. Ensuring consistency between the online and offline brand experiences visually is also a crucial aspect. This entails maintaining a consistent visual identity across all platforms, whether physical or digital. As highlighted by Kapferer and Bastien (2009), it is essential for luxury businesses to establish a clear and coherent visual language that resonates with their brand. Williams (2023) exemplifies this approach by describing how Pagani employs specific color schemes, fonts, and visual elements to create a unified and easily recognizable brand image. Similarly, Smith (2023) reveals that Bentley maintains brand recognition by employing consistent color palettes, typography, and imagery across all channels.

The participants further recognize the significance of incorporating multisensory elements into hedonic consumption, as previously discussed by Hagtvedt and Patrick (2009). However, they acknowledge that executing this aspect may differ in the online sphere. Williams (2023) explains that although online touchpoints do not allow for the utilization of all senses, such as smell, sound, and texture, it is still possible to create an immersive and captivating online experience. One effective strategy mentioned by Williams is the use of high-quality visuals, including videos, photos, and 360-degree views, to showcase the intricate details, textures, and finishes of the cars. Similarly, Smith (2023) and Lapinniemi (2023) present that high-quality images and videos can effectively convey multisensory elements. Williams (2023) and Simonsson (2023) also highlight the potential of virtual and augmented reality technologies to create interactive experiences like customization or virtual test drives. The utilization of technologies to create interactive experiences supports the notion that technology enhances the online experience for consumers (Won Jeong et al., 2009; Ha & Stoel, 2012).
5.2 Hedonic Value Creation Online

Most of the participants discuss the importance of providing high-quality digital content in order to create hedonic value online, which is consistent with the theory that the online luxury experience relies heavily on visual elements (Kapferer & Bastien, 2009). Lapinniemi (2023), Williams (2023), Smith (2023), Simonsson (2023), Ulfvin (2023), and Mannerfelt (2023) collectively display their dedication to creating captivating and immersive online experiences to generate hedonic value for automotive brands. Each business utilizes various strategies, such as visually stunning content, high-quality images, videos, and interactive features, to showcase their products in an appealing and aspirational manner. They aim to evoke emotions and create a distinct feel for their vehicles, emphasizing the craftsmanship, quality, and unique driving experiences they offer. By incorporating sensory elements like sound and animation, they strive to engage their audiences and create a sense of luxury and desirability. Ultimately, their efforts focus on providing high-quality content that captivates viewers, creating hedonic value in the online space. This also corroborates Won Jeong et al.’s (2009) findings, which suggest that engaging consumers in enjoyable cognitive experiences allows them to obtain finer and more precise product details, which in turn increases experiential value. In addition to this, participants also mentioned that they aim to create a sense of exclusivity, engagement, and community for their online customers. Bentley, as described by Smith (2023), utilizes social media platforms and online channels to connect with customers, share exclusive content, and provide insights into the world of Bentley. Similarly, Pagani, as stated by Williams (2023), offers behind-the-scenes glimpses into their design and manufacturing processes, providing exclusive access to content and insights. They also offer virtual tours of their factory and design studio, providing a unique and immersive experience for their online community. This corresponds well to previously suggested findings by Kapferer and Bastien (2009) that luxury brands prioritize exclusive experiences.

As Tarquini, Mühlbacher and Kreuze (2022) describe that creating tailor-made and personalized experiences for their customers can be done to increase customer satisfaction and loyalty. The empirical findings align with this, as participants, including Williams (2023), Simonsson (2023), Ulfvin (2023), and Mannerfelt (2023), reinforce the significance of personalized experiences in creating hedonic value for online customers. This involves implementing targeted digital marketing campaigns, offering personalized recommendations, and developing customized content that matches customers’ interests and preferences. Exclusive access to new models or events is also mentioned as a means of generating hedonic value. Overall, personalization and tailored experiences play a vital role in enhancing the online customer journey and delivering a sense of luxury and satisfaction. Moreover, this also supports Scarpi's (2012) findings suggesting that hedonic consumers can derive added value from personalized digital experiences. Another approach for creating hedonic value as presented by Williams (2023) corroborates the previous findings of Song and Kim (2020) as well as Park and Yim (2018), regarding the effectiveness of
celebrity collaborations and endorsements in luxury marketing. Accordingly, Williams (2023) underscores the strategy of partnering with luxury brands and lifestyle influencers to create unique experiences that showcase the best of the brand. This reflects the idea proposed by Song and Kim (2020) that leveraging celebrities who have a significant impact across various societal areas can be effective in luxury marketing. Additionally, the importance of customer service is emphasized as a useful tool to enhance hedonic value. Smith (2023) explains that Bentley has a customer service team on hand at all times in order to provide support to customers. Further, Lapinniemi (2023) states that at Lexus, customer service includes availability online through chat and video calls throughout the entire customer journey. This correlates to the findings of Ha and Stoel (2012), which propose that various digital aspects as well as pleasant social interactions can be leveraged in order to enhance the online experience. Hedonic consumers prioritize positive emotions and seek gratifying experiences.

5.3 Digital Hedonic Experience

The empirical findings from the various luxury automotive companies provide valuable insights into their strategies for creating an exclusive hedonic experience online. Despite some differences in approach, all companies share common goals and recognize the importance of certain key elements such as continuous innovation, customer-centricity, collaboration, and continuous optimization. These concepts, as highlighted by Scarpi (2012), are pivotal in achieving a truly satisfying and pleasurable online encounter. Continuous innovation and experimentation are recognized as pivotal focal points across all companies. Expanding on the proposition presented by Ha and Stoel (2012), retailers have a valuable opportunity to harness a diverse range of digital elements, enabling them to not only evoke a profound sense of hedonic pleasure but also facilitate compelling product visualization and foster delightful social interactions, thereby enhancing the overall shopping experience. Notably, Williams (2023), Simonsson (2023), Smith (2023) and Dahlenlund (2023) demonstrate their unwavering commitment to exploring new technologies, including virtual and augmented reality, to create immersive online experiences. These companies understand that by embracing these cutting-edge technologies, they can establish captivating digital environments that resonate with hedonic consumers, allowing them to truly engage with their brands. Scarpi (2012) emphasizes that hedonic consumers can derive additional value from the digital aspects of the shopping process thanks to unique sensory features such as compelling videos and personalized experiences. Moreover, the findings also align with Ha and Stoel (2012), who highlight the significance of integrating new technologies and collaborations to create immersive online experiences that appeal to hedonic consumers. Williams (2023), Simonsson (2023), Smith (2023) and Dahlenlund (2023) all mentioned their commitment to leveraging digital aspects and embracing collaborations to enhance the virtual shopping experience and solidify their online presence.
Customer-centricity is a shared strategy adopted by various respondents, including Williams (2023), Simonsson (2023) and Smith (2023). These companies recognize the importance of customer feedback and insights in shaping their digital strategies and creating online experiences that resonate with their target audience. According to Richard and Habibi (2016), it is crucial to consider variables that influence online consumer behavior, such as the level of hedonism, to establish an effective online experience. Scarpi (2012) also suggests that personalized and hedonic-oriented site management can be an effective approach for retailers to attract and retain customers. Lapinniemi (2023) points out that Lexus prioritizes understanding and meeting the desires of their guests through personalized service, demonstrating their commitment to customer-centricity. This aligns with the idea proposed by Tarka, Harnish and Babaev (2022) that hedonic consumers value the pleasurable aspects of a product or service. Furthermore, Smith (2023) at Bentley makes the point that they not only collect customer feedback but also delve into analyzing their behavior to pinpoint areas for improvement, showcasing the company's dedication to continuous optimization and enhancement. This approach aligns with Scarpi (2012), who stresses the importance of crafting a delightful and gratifying online shopping experience, acknowledging the potential influence of virtual environments on consumers' emotional states. One prevailing action is brand storytelling, which allows companies to share their history, philosophy, and values to establish a sense of connection and exclusivity with customers, as strengthened by Kapferer and Bastien (2009). Williams (2023), Ulfvin (2023) and Dahlenlund (2023) effectively utilize brand storytelling to evoke emotions and forge strong connections, aligning with Lim and Ang's (2008) emphasis on hedonic consumption and symbolic significance.

Furthermore, the importance of sensory stimulation and experiential value in the shopping process, as suggested by Hagtvædt and Patrick (2009) and Atulkar and Kesari (2017), is highlighted by the companies' focus on visual impact and high-quality visuals. Smith (2023), Simonsson (2023) and Dahlenlund (2023) recognize the significance of captivating customers' attention through visually appealing content, as supported by Zhou et al. (2023), who emphasize creating positive shopping experiences through sensory stimulation. Moreover, Williams (2023), Smith (2023) and Lapinniemi (2023) focus on personalization and customization options, which aligns with Scarpi's (2012) mention of creating a personalized and enjoyable online shopping experience. By tailoring products to individual preferences, these companies enhance the emotional connection between customers and the brand. The integration of technology and advancements in creating compelling virtual environments, as suggested by Won Jeong et al. (2009), is evident in the companies' utilization of interactive experiences, such as virtual tours and configurators. Furthermore, Ulfvin (2023) at Jaguar Land Rover and Dahlenlund (2023) at Aston Martin emphasize that they leverage technology to engage customers in immersive online experiences, aligning with Won Jeong et al.'s (2009) findings on utilizing technology to enhance the online shopping experience.
Exclusivity is another vital driver in the creation of a hedonic experience, according to Tarka, Harnish and Babaev (2022). Ulfvin (2023), Smith (2023) and Lapinniemi (2023) all understand the allure of limited editions, exclusive access to events, and creating a sense of being a valued prospect. By offering unique and limited opportunities, these companies elevate the perceived value of their products and establish a sense of privilege and prestige for their customers, as suggested by Kapferer and Bastien (2009). This approach highlights the experiential aspect of consumption and the pleasure in the shopping process, which are highly valued by hedonic consumers, according to Atulkar and Kesari (2017). It is important to note that while some companies provide specific details about their strategies, others take a broader approach, focusing on the expertise required to curate the desired experience. Mannerfelt (2023) at Callisma, for example, stresses the importance of understanding unique qualities and defining the message accordingly, tailoring it to resonate with their target audience. This approach aligns with Tarka, Harnish and Babaev's (2022) perspective on hedonic consumption and shopping motivations, where hedonic consumers prioritize positive emotions and seek gratifying experiences.

5.4 Digital Touchpoints

According to the empirical findings, luxury automotive brands employ various digital touchpoints to provide a luxurious and enjoyable customer experience. Gao et al. (2022) assert that digital touchpoints are essential as they facilitate interactions between businesses and customers through traditional and digital media, influencing brand perceptions and purchase intentions (Voorhees et al., 2017). The combination of visually captivating content, an active social media presence, aesthetically pleasing websites, targeted digital marketing campaigns and personalized approaches collectively contribute to an immersive and exclusive online experience. These strategies, highlighted by Ko, Phau, and Aiello (2016) and Karadag and Erdogmus (2020), significantly contribute to the creation of a compelling and exclusive online environment. Throughout the empirical findings, there is also a clear connection between the respondents' strategies and the theoretical statements of Straker, Wrigley and Rosemann (2015), who suggest that digital touchpoints can be classified as functional, social, community, and corporate.

One prominent strategy observed among the brands is the emphasis on visually captivating content. Williams (2023), Smith (2023), Simonsson (2023), and Ulfvin (2023) recognize the importance of high-quality photos, videos, and interactive experiences to showcase the vehicles' exceptional design, craftsmanship, and exclusivity while working the different touchpoints. This focus on visual appeal reflects their commitment to creating a visually immersive online experience that resonates with their target audience and evokes a sense of desire and pleasure. Voorhees et al. (2017) emphasize that visually captivating content can be seen as an effective utilization of digital touchpoints to engage customers and shape their perceptions positively. Batra and Keller (2016) advocate that by focusing on visually
captivating content, the companies in the findings demonstrate their commitment to creating a digital experience that aligns with the superior offline experiences they provide. This strategic alignment between the theory and the findings reinforces the importance of visually immersive content in delivering a consistent brand experience across both online and offline channels.

Furthermore, digital platforms play a crucial role for all luxury automotive brands. Williams (2023), Smith (2023), Simonsson (2023), Ulfvin (2023), Mannerfelt (2023), and Lapinniemi (2023) all see social media as a crucial touchpoint, and they understand the significance of utilizing these platforms. The respondents motivate this as a tactic to connect with their customers, share exclusive content, and foster a sense of community, successfully combining the platforms as a combination of social and community touchpoints. According to Khan et al. (2022), social media plays a pivotal role in disseminating brand information and encouraging brand engagement and community. This viewpoint aligns with Klaus (2022), who emphasizes the potential of social media and websites to strengthen brand-consumer relationships. Through the strategic use of social media, these brands effectively communicate their brand values, engage with their audience, and establish a robust online presence, thereby contributing to the creation of a luxurious and pleasurable brand experience. In terms of websites, it is evident that Williams (2023), Smith (2023), Simonsson (2023), Ulfvin (2023), and Mannerfelt (2023) prioritize the development of seamless and visually appealing online platforms that authentically represent their brand values while offering interactive features in order to maintain both the functional and corporate value of the touchpoint. All these brands prioritize leveraging their websites to enhance the customer experience, foster a sense of exclusivity, and deliver personalized interactions. Williams (2023), Smith (2023), and Simonsson (2023) all make a strong note of the effect of interactive features in order to emphasize the personal browsing experience. Both virtual and augmented creations are mentioned here in order to convey that the experience is modern and prioritized. This is something that also connects strongly with the words of Williams (2023) and Smith (2023), who mention the effective contribution to an experience when users can interact with a brand's product through customization and personalization, furthering the experience of exclusivity. This approach aligns with the theoretical viewpoint presented by Heine and Berghaus (2014), which highlights the website as the central component of a luxury brand's digital presence. Heine and Berghaus (2014) further implied that websites serve as reflections of a brand's vision and narrative, reinforcing the notion that luxury brands utilize their websites as digital hubs to deliver comprehensive brand experiences and forge deeper connections with their customers.

Moreover, according to Livas, Skarparis, and Skotis (2022), digital marketing can effectively influence customer perception and behavior towards luxury products when it is seamlessly integrated into both consumer and enterprise norms. This is a statement that is agreed upon by multiple respondents and expressed by Mannerfelt (2023) at Callisma as
something that is focused on daily. In this context, targeted digital marketing campaigns play a vital role in shaping a luxurious hedonic experience. Notably, Williams (2023) and Simonsson (2023) employ such campaigns to effectively connect with potential customers, emphasize exclusivity, and generate interest. Conversely, Smith (2023) capitalizes on exclusive online campaigns to provide unique experiences and foster excitement. By employing these targeted campaigns and strategically utilizing digital marketing channels, luxury automotive brands successfully cultivate a sense of exclusivity and aspiration among their customer base. In addition, Lapinniemi (2023) at Lexus places great emphasis on ensuring their presence across several platforms, recognizing the importance of providing personalized interactions for every guest. This aligns with the viewpoint of Dahlenlund (2023) at Aston Martin, who implies the importance of connecting with customers regardless of their location, whether it be in the digital realm or the physical world. Both Lapinniemi (2023) and Dahlenlund (2023) acknowledge that meeting customers on their terms is vital to deliver a seamless and customized experience. These principles align with the insights of Zimmermann and Auinger (2021), who stress that luxury brands have the potential to cultivate strong customer relationships and nurture brand loyalty in the online marketplace.
6 Conclusion

The final chapter presents the conclusion of the thesis, which begins with answering the two research questions. Further, insights into the theoretical, managerial, social, ethical, and sustainable implications of the study are provided. The thesis concludes with a discussion of the study's limitations as well as suggestions for future research.

6.1 Answering the Research Question

Luxury brands are experiencing a shift towards digitalization, with customers seeking seamless experiences and customized journeys. Businesses must therefore embrace digitalization to meet the expectations of digitally connected consumers. However, previous research is lacking on how luxury automotive brands effectively create hedonic experiences in the digital landscape. Hence, the purpose of this study was to explore this area. Consequently, the thesis aims to answer the following research questions: How do luxury automotive brands create a hedonic experience online? and Which digital touchpoints are key in creating hedonic value in the luxury automotive industry?

6.1.1 How do luxury automotive brands create a hedonic experience online?

To address the main research question, it can be identified that luxury automotive brands create a hedonic experience online through a multi-faceted approach. Firstly, the participants in this study highlight the importance of high-quality digital content as a cornerstone of their approach. They use stunning imagery, compelling videos, and interactive features to present their products in an aspirational and visually appealing manner. By also incorporating sensory elements such as sound and animation, they strive to engage their audience on a deeper level. The creation of an exclusive and privileged atmosphere is another key aspect. Companies can, for example, offer limited-edition products, exclusive access to events, and cultivate a sense of being valued guests. By offering unique and rare opportunities, they elevate the perceived value of their products and establish a sense of exclusivity and prestige, catering to the hedonic desires of their customers. Furthermore, collaborations with luxury brands and lifestyle influencers form another integral facet of their strategy. Leveraging the impact and reach of celebrities across various societal spheres adds to the allure and desirability of their brand, reinforcing their position in the luxury market. Other important aspects for luxury automotive brands in the digital landscape are continuous innovation and experimentation. By utilizing advanced technologies such as virtual and augmented reality, they establish captivating digital environments that enable customers to engage with their brand.

A personalized and tailored approach is also crucial to creating a hedonic experience in a digital setting. Luxury automotive brands implement targeted digital marketing campaigns that cater to individual preferences, offering personalized recommendations and curated
content that aligns with customers' interests. The ultimate goal is to enhance the customer journey and deliver a sense of luxury and satisfaction through personalized experiences. This also ties into the customer-centric approach, which is also a shared strategy among luxury automotive brands. This implies recognizing the significance of collecting customer feedback and insights to shape their digital strategies and ensuring that their online experiences align with customer desires. Additionally, top-quality customer service plays a pivotal role in enhancing the hedonic value of the online experience. Subsequently, luxury automotive brands invest in dedicated customer service teams that provide continuous support to customers throughout the whole digital journey. By prioritizing accessibility through online channels, including chat and video calls, it can be ensured that customers feel valued and supported every step of the way.

6.1.2 Which digital touchpoints are key in creating hedonic value in the luxury automotive industry?

In the luxury automotive industry, various digital touchpoints play a crucial role in creating hedonic value. When examining the research question, it is evident that certain touchpoints stand out and serve as key contributors to this value proposition. Firstly, functional touchpoints, such as aesthetically pleasing websites with interactive features, are instrumental in delivering an immersive online experience. Luxury automotive brands prioritize the development of visually captivating content, including high-quality photos, videos, and interactive experiences, to showcase the exceptional design, craftsmanship, and exclusivity of their vehicles. By offering personalized interactions and utilizing targeted digital marketing campaigns, these brands effectively engage customers and shape positive brand perceptions. Social touchpoints, particularly through social media platforms, hold significant importance in establishing a sense of community and fostering brand-consumer relationships. Luxury automotive brands recognize the power of social media in disseminating brand information, encouraging engagement, and connecting with their customers. By sharing exclusive content and leveraging social media platforms, these brands effectively communicate their brand values and establish a robust online presence, contributing to a luxurious and pleasurable brand experience. Community touchpoints are also integral to creating hedonic value in the luxury automotive industry. Luxury brands utilize social media platforms as community touchpoints, engaging with their audience and fostering a sense of belonging. By strategically using social media and websites, these brands disseminate brand information, encourage brand engagement, and nurture strong customer relationships. This sense of community enhances the overall luxury experience and cultivates brand loyalty. Lastly, corporate touchpoints play a significant role in aligning digital experiences with the superior offline experiences provided by luxury automotive brands. Websites serve as digital hubs that reflect the brand's vision and narrative, offering seamless and visually appealing platforms for customers. By prioritizing personalized interactions, customization, and personalization, luxury brands enhance the customer experience and convey a sense of exclusivity. Ultimately, the key digital touchpoints that
contribute to hedonic value in the luxury automotive industry include functional touchpoints such as aesthetically pleasing websites and interactive features, social touchpoints through social media platforms to foster a sense of community, community touchpoints that emphasize brand-consumer relationships, and corporate touchpoints aligning digital experiences with offline luxury experiences. These touchpoints collectively create a compelling and exclusive online environment, enhancing the overall luxury automotive brand experience.

6.2 Theoretical Implications

From a theoretical standpoint, there is insufficient research on digital transformations in the luxury sector (Verhoef et al., 2021), and this thesis unveils the gap regarding the exploration of how luxury automotive brands effectively communicate hedonic value in the digital realm. Addressing this research gap, the study investigates the strategies and channels through which luxury automotive brands can effectively convey the hedonic value of their products in the digital landscape. By delving into this unexplored territory, the findings of this thesis illuminate the ways in which luxury automotive brands can craft captivating and opulent digital experiences for their customers, ultimately enhancing perceived hedonic value in the industry.

As identified by the findings, the continuation of research in the automotive field holds great significance, as it has the potential to bring valuable insights to the realm of business research. It is evident that a new framework and a broader perspective are necessary to effectively pursue this avenue. Furthermore, it calls for reconceptualizing how luxury automotive brands can effectively convey hedonic value within the digital landscape. The distinct touchpoints and challenges faced by luxury automotive brands necessitate specific management approaches. In terms of other implications for the field of knowledge, this thesis has successfully identified key touchpoints and strategies for cultivating hedonic value in the luxury automotive industry. These add to the previous research concerning luxury digital touchpoints (Tarquini, Mühlbacher & Kreuzer, 2022) and also provide a solid foundation and a definitive direction for future studies in this domain. Consequently, this research significantly contributes to the comprehension of luxury hedonic experiences in the digital context, particularly given the unexplored nature of this topic within the luxury automotive market. It highlights the existence of multiple possible interpretations and meanings, which hold great significance from both theoretical and managerial standpoints. Therefore, these findings assume considerable importance in further research endeavors, aiming to delve deeper into their implications for luxury automotive brands and gain a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter.
In the literature review, previous research in the field was summarized in a conceptual framework. This framework has been updated with the identified key aspects of this thesis in order to get an overall picture. In addition, the elaborated conceptual framework developed in this study expands our understanding of the factors influencing perceived hedonic value in the luxury automotive industry. By incorporating factors such as functional, social, community, and corporate touchpoints (Straker, Wrigley & Rosemann, 2015), the framework provides a more comprehensive model for analyzing the impact of these digital touchpoints on customer experience and perceived hedonic value. Further, the inclusion of the factor "multi-faceted approach" in the conceptual framework highlights the diverse strategies and tactics utilized by brands to evoke hedonic experiences. This expanded framework serves as a foundation for future research, offering a more nuanced understanding of the digital strategies employed by luxury automotive brands.

**Figure 6:** Updated Conceptual Framework.
6.3 Managerial Implications

From a managerial perspective, this thesis provides comprehensive insights that can significantly benefit businesses within the luxury automotive industry. The findings hold great potential for improving the performance of companies operating in this sector by serving as a blueprint and aid the development of efforts geared towards creating captivating online hedonic experiences, particularly through the effective utilization of the digital touchpoints. The in-depth exploration of the creation of a luxury hedonic experience online offers nuanced perspectives on how companies can refine their online strategies, cater to the evolving expectations of customers, and create deeper emotional connections with their customers. By integrating the strategies and recommendations derived from this study, businesses within the luxury automotive industry can gain a competitive edge in the digital landscape. Subsequently, this thesis may also serve as a comprehensive guide for managers, providing actionable recommendations on leveraging the identified key touchpoints to effectively engage customers and deliver exceptional online experiences.

6.4 Social, Ethical and Sustainable Implications

The luxury automotive sector is subject to significant social, ethical, and sustainable considerations, which have been extensively explored from both theoretical and managerial perspectives. This thesis provides a comprehensive analysis of these considerations and presents guidelines and directions for luxury automotive brands to create hedonic value online. It also establishes an important perspective on the use of digital touchpoints to transform the automotive industry, thereby providing a valuable direction for both theory and practice.

6.5 Limitations

Throughout the process of writing this thesis, certain limitations emerged that may impact the effectiveness of answering the research questions and upholding the study's quality. The first limitation pertains to the thesis's focus on the B2C relationship solely from the businesses' perspective, omitting the viewpoint of customers. However, the thesis is intended to primarily explore insights from the luxury automotive businesses' standpoint rather than that of the customers. Although considering the customers' perspective would have enhanced the understanding of online hedonic value creation, it would have deviated from the primary focus. Additionally, another limitation is that the thesis is constrained by a relatively small sample size in relation to the research area of the luxury automotive industry.
6.6 Suggestions for Future Research

Based on the information gathered in this thesis, further research that delves into the customer perspective would offer invaluable insights into their expectations, preferences, and experiences concerning the creation of hedonic value online. Qualitative research methods such as in-depth interviews or focus groups with luxury automotive customers could be employed to gain comprehensive insights from their viewpoint. Another important research avenue involves conducting a comparative analysis between luxury automotive brands and other luxury sectors (e.g., fashion, jewelry, or hospitality), which would enable researchers to identify unique challenges and opportunities specific to the luxury automotive industry. By examining successful strategies employed by luxury brands in other sectors, researchers can uncover transferable practices that can be adapted to the luxury automotive context.

Furthermore, investigating the cultural nuances and variations in hedonic value creation online by luxury automotive brands would be an intriguing avenue for future research. By comparing strategies employed in different cultural contexts, researchers can identify cultural-specific factors that influence consumers' perception of hedonic value and their engagement with digital touchpoints. A longitudinal study could also be conducted to capture the dynamic nature of the digital landscape and evolving consumer preferences. By collecting data at multiple points in time, researchers can analyze trends, patterns, and adaptations made by luxury automotive brands in their digital communication efforts. Quantitative research methods can complement qualitative approaches by providing empirical evidence and statistical analysis. Researchers could employ surveys or experiments to investigate the impact and effectiveness of different digital touchpoints on consumers' perceptions of hedonic value. By addressing these suggested areas of research, scholars can advance knowledge of how luxury automotive brands can create a luxury hedonic experience online and gain a deeper understanding of the unique challenges and opportunities faced by luxury automotive brands in the digital landscape.
References

Books


Online Sources


Scientific Articles


## Appendices

### Appendix A - Operationalization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concepts</th>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Reasoning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Company and Interviewee profile</td>
<td>4-5</td>
<td>These questions were asked in order to get a general view of the organization and the professional role of the interviewee. Asking these questions can provide valuable context, establish expertise, and help build rapport during the interview.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital Luxury Automotive Experience</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>The main objective was to obtain the interviewees' and companies viewpoint regarding luxury in the digital realm. The focus was on aligning the online experience with the brand's offline image and hedonic experience and exploring the potential impact of the lack of multisensory marketing components on the company's online presence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hedonic Value Creation Online</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>The question was asked to gather insights from the interviewee and the company on their methods for creating hedonic value for their online customers, community, and other interactive parties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital Hedonic Experience</td>
<td>10-11</td>
<td>To gain a comprehensive understanding of how companies approach creating digital hedonic experiences, including identifying key factors for delivering an exclusive online hedonic experience and strategies for maintaining innovation and a competitive edge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital Touchpoints</td>
<td>12-13</td>
<td>To get a wider understanding of how companies leverage digital touchpoints to create and communicate hedonic values and experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>The purpose of asking these questions was to gather additional information that the interviewee deemed to be valuable. Furthermore, these questions were designed with ethical considerations in mind, in accordance with the principles of the thesis.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B - Interview Guide, English Version

The questions presented in the appendix have been designed to assist the interviewer during both the web questionnaire and the semi-structured interview. They represent the authors' areas of inquiry, although, during the semi-structured interview, not all questions may be asked, depending on the responses received from the participants. Furthermore, additional follow-up questions, not included in the original script, may arise based on the participants' answers.

General questions

1. I hereby acknowledge that I am okay with the information that I supply within this form to be used within the study that is being conducted:
   ● Yes
   ● No

2. In the study, I wish to be anonymous:
   ● Yes
   ● No

3. After the research has been conducted and the paper has been completed I wish to receive a copy over email in case I would like to view the results:
   ● Yes
   ● No

Questions related to the interviewee and interviewing company

4. The organization I represent is:
5. My professional role at the company is:

Questions related to digital luxury automotive experience

6. What is your definition of luxury and how does your brand incorporate it into the online experience?
7. How do you ensure that the online experience aligns with the brand's offline image and hedonic experience?
8. Multisensory marketing where you strengthen the experience with things such as smell, sound and texture are all obvious in a luxury brand. How do you believe it has affected your online presence not being able to convey these?
Questions related to hedonic value creation online

9. How do you create hedonic value for your online customers, community and other interactive parties?

Questions related to digital hedonic experience

10. How do you stay innovative and maintain a competitive edge in the luxury automotive market when it comes to creating online hedonic experiences?
11. When profiling a new line of products, services, features or models; What are some key factors for an exclusive hedonic experience online?

Questions related to digital touchpoints

12. How do you use digital touchpoints such as social media, websites, and online campaigns to create a luxury hedonic experience?
13. Which digital touchpoints do you believe are most effective in communicating hedonic values within the luxury automotive sector?
Appendix C - Interview Guide, Swedish Version

Frågorna i bilagan är utformade för att guida intervjuaren både genom webbenkäten och de semi-strukturerade intervjuerna. De representerar undersökningsområden författarna främst söker svar till, däremot under de semi-strukturerade intervjuerna kommer eventuellt inte alla frågor att bli ställda beroende på hur respondenterna svarar till tidigare ställda frågor. Uppföljningsfrågor som ej är skrivna kan förekomma till följd av respondenternas svar.

Generella frågor

1. Jag bekräftar härmed att jag är okej med den information som jag tillhandahåller i detta formulär för att användas i den studie som genomförs:
   ● Ja
   ● Nej

2. I undersökningen önskar jag vara anonym:
   ● Ja
   ● Nej

3. Efter att forskningen har genomförts och uppsatsen har slutförts vill jag få en kopia via e-post om jag skulle vilja se resultaten:
   ● Ja
   ● Nej

Frågor relaterade till respondent och företaget

4. Mitt namn är:
5. Organisationen jag representerar är:
6. Min yrkesroll på företaget är:

Frågor relaterade till den digitala lyxbilupplevelsen

7. Vad är din definition av lyx och hur integrerar ditt varumärke de i online-upplevelsen?
8. Hur säkerställs det att online-upplevelsen överensstämmer med varumärkets offline-bild och hedoniska upplevelse?
9. Multisensorisk marknadsföring där man stärker upplevelsen med saker som lukt, ljud och textur är alla självlklara i ett lyxvarumärke. Hur tror du att det har påverkat närvaron på nätet att inte kunna förmedla dessa?
Frågor relaterade till hedonisk värdeskapande online

10. Hur skapar ni hedoniskt värde för onlinekunder, community och andra interaktiva parter?

Frågor relaterade till digital hedonisk upplevelse

11. Hur lyckas ni bibehålla innovativitet och konkurrensfördel på den lyxiga bilmarknaden när det gäller att skapa online hedoniska upplevelser?
12. När ni profilerar en ny linje av produkter, tjänster, funktioner eller modeller; vilka är några nyckelfaktorer för en exklusiv hedonisk upplevelse online?

Frågor relaterade till digitala kontaktpunkter

13. Hur använder ni digitala kontaktpunkter som sociala medier, webbplatser och onlinekampanjer för att skapa en lyxig hedonisk upplevelse?
14. Vilka digitala kontaktpunkter tror ni är mest effektiva för att kommunicera hedoniska värderingar inom lyxbilssektorn?