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UNIVERSITY OF PORTSMOUTH

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Start Date: (or progression date for Prof Doc students)		**01.10.2016**		

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a) Have all of your research and findings been reported accurately, honestly and within a reasonable time frame?	YES ☒ NO ☐
b) Have all contributions to knowledge been acknowledged?	YES ☒ NO ☐
c) Have you complied with all agreements relating to intellectual property, publication and authorship?	YES ☒ NO ☐
d) Has your research data been retained in a secure and accessible form and will it remain so for the required duration?	YES ☒ NO ☐
e) Does your research comply with all legal, ethical, and contractual requirements?	YES ☒ NO ☐

Candidate Statement:

I have considered the ethical dimensions of the above named research project, and have successfully obtained the necessary ethical approval(s)

Ethical review number(s) from Faculty Ethics Committee (or from NRES/SCREC):	BAL/2019/29/SCHNIERLE

If you have *not* submitted your work for ethical review, and/or you have answered 'No' to one or more of questions a) to e), please explain below why this is so:

n.a.

Signed *(PGRS)*:	P.S.	**Date:** August 3rd ,2020

Investigating the determinants of customer experience with affordable luxury sport car brands in Germany

Philipp R. Schnierle

The thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Doctor of Business Administration of the University of Portsmouth

August 2020

Student No: UP838654

Declaration

Whilst registered as a candidate for the above degree, I have not been registered for any other research award. The results and conclusions embodied in this thesis are the work of the named candidate and have not been submitted for any other academic award.

The checklist for research ethics review (from UPR16) is attached to the thesis.

Word count: 51,234 words, excluding bibliographies, tables and diagrams.

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Philipp R. Schnierle, 2nd August 2020

Munich, Germany

Abstract

In today's marketplace, the consumption of luxury goods is at a peak due to increasing global wealth and low interest rates, resulting in a vast supply of goods and services to which customer experiences are more relevant than ever before. One of the most recent developments in this field shows that consumers no longer simply purchase a product or service based on the fact sheet; they are also interested in the experience around the product. Successful brands must develop and maintain individual images to sustain their competitive advantage and build brand equity that is beneficial for customers and firms. Ideally, these will lead to satisfaction and loyalty between a brand, its products, and its customers. Existing research about brand experience and brand equity has mainly focused on functional aspects, which seem to differ for high-value luxury goods. Most studies have focused on industries like retail and fashion brands, sampling university students or visitors to shopping malls, and some have even mixed different types of industries together. This underpins the need for research within a single luxury industry with actual luxury customers who have a solid background with brand experiences.

The purpose of this study was to explore the brand experience spectrum within the automotive industry in Germany, particularly in the affordable luxury sport car sector. Identifying the factors and components that constitute, influence, or leverage/drive a brand experience from their perspective was a clear aim of the study. To achieve this, the study collected data from in-depth interviews with German (n=60) respondents who had experience with affordable and luxury sport cars. The conceptual framework was based on two empirically tested models guiding this exploratory consumer research. The first model to build on was the consumer-based brand equity model, empirically tested by Çifci et al. (2016) and Nam et al. (2011). The second conceptual framework was Lemon and Verhoef's (2016) customer journey model consisting of relevant touchpoints along the following three stages: pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase.

The findings of the research demonstrate that, although the six brand equity concepts – brand awareness, physical quality, staff behaviour, self-congruence, brand identification, and lifestyle – are broadly applicable in understanding customer experience in the affordable luxury car industry, the content of these dimensions differs from that suggested by the previous authors. The research established that cognitive and affective (or symbolic) components build the foundation of customer brand experience and supports Çifci et al.'s (2016) and Nam et al.'s (2011) study results. The study also identified brand trust as an important and highly relevant concept for customer brand experience in the luxury automotive car industry. Brand trust

influences customer satisfaction and loyalty, therefore improving and complementing the existing model. Furthermore, the study confirmed Lemon and Verhoef's (2016) process model of the customer journey and experience; however, it suggested two different customer journeys depending on the customers' previous experience (first-time and experienced buyers). The differences between the two groups and the relevance of the journey touchpoints within the three purchase stages vary significantly in terms and are distinct. Identified key touchpoints for both groups are the contact to a dealer as well as information gathering online. Differences have been found in the length of purchase stages and across the customer journey.

The study highlights the importance of trust, identification, and product quality for customer brand experience. Moreover, the findings of this study complement the brand equity model of Çifci et al. (2016) by adding the new concept of trust, which is highly relevant. The current knowledge is complemented by a new understanding and mapping of the customer journey for luxury sports cars in Germany. This study can assist practitioners and managers by providing a compass indicating which touchpoints are relevant to which customer group. Social value can be achieved by encouraging interactions between brand and consumer (e.g. central product launch events) and through brand-oriented interactions among consumers (e.g. dealer events, clubs, or communities). Customers are motivated to express their distinctiveness through product experience and brand identification (belonging/distinction) and to develop a loyal link to brands.

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Chapter 1:

1 Introduction

1.1 Background of the study

This research explores customer experience with luxury sport automotive brands in Germany. The motivation to conduct a study in this field was identified the author, who works as a brand manager in the automotive industry. Traditional manufacturers face considerable challenges when confronted with rapidly changing customer behaviours and attitudes. These increase the difficulty of implementing measures that effectively shape the experience dimension and influence customers positively. One example concerns German car buyers in the post-war period (1950s and 1960s). Customers mainly bought cars to become mobile again and were driven by product-centric features enabling them to satisfy their needs for transportation and load. Owning a vehicle was a symbol of mobility, success, and later even status when various car models were introduced by manufacturers. At that time, prospects only had the possibility to consult a sales representative in a dealership to gain the best explanation of the product details possible or read articles in automotive magazines. Although car manufacturers still rely on many traditional elements, such as the physical dealerships from our example, society and behaviours have changed significantly. The digital age has introduced many new facets involving sharing experiences with others as well as a shift towards being more individual and flexible when consuming or using products in wealthy societies. Traditional elements might no longer be relevant to customers' individual experience today. The shift from product- to customer-centric approaches is underpinned by the strategy of Harley Davidson Germany to sell a lifestyle – the motorbike is included free of charge (Delekat, 2015).

The seminal theories on this were introduced in the article by Levitt (1960), stressing the myopia of marketing by focusing only on product features instead of a customer orientation. He provided the example of the railroad companies who had overseen that they are in the transportation business, not the railroad business only, as well as the research of Detroit´s automobile industry that was product-oriented, not customer-oriented (Levitt, 1960). Even today marketing has traditionally and still focuses on elements concerning products and services, such as quality, price, functionality, and design (Iglesias, Singh, & Batista-Foguet, 2011; Levitt, 2006; Mascarenhas et al., 2006). Especially in the German car manufacturing industry, representing a traditional backbone of the German economy, the author is still experiencing this product-centric approach in the present. Research has shown that consumers no longer simply purchase a product or service based on the fact sheet of a cell phone; they are also interested in the experience around the product (Morrison & Crane, 2007). Some decades ago, marketing scholars had already pointed out that marketing should shift its focus and take into consideration other elements, such as relationship management (Berry, 1983) and value creation (Webster, 1994). Complementing this, theory showed a constant development in focus alongside customers' increasing expectations: the buying and decision-making process in the 1960s–1970s; customer satisfaction in the 1970s; service quality in the 1980s; relationship marketing in the 1990s; customer relationship management in the 2000s; and customer centricity and a customer focus in the 2010s (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). This evolution clearly highlights the need to adapt permanently to the changing needs of customers. This development took place similarly within the German automotive industry, with a time lag. However, in the sector of luxury sport cars, all these characteristics have been crucial since the beginning of the supply and did not appear sequentially, as they did in the broader mass market. Accordingly, there might be different mechanisms that as yet have not been explored. If so, this could mean that this niche sector acts like an early stage incubator for upcoming trends and consumer drivers that later hit the mass market. Schmitt (1999) was one of the first scholars to emphasise the importance of customer experience. In approximately the same period, the first exclusive car brands launched driving experience programs aiming to increase the engagement between the brand and the customers. Since then, the topic has evolved towards customer engagement by recognising the customers' role in a holistic experience (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016).

The importance of experiencing a holistic brand environment is greater than ever across industries. Customers are bombarded with information every day. Therefore, a brand experience that involves customers at all relevant touchpoints will make a difference in their decision making. Creating strong brand and customer experiences is part of management objectives nowadays (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). There has been extensive interest in the nature of brand and customer experience within the literature and practice. Existing studies have emphasised the crucial role played by experiences within a brand environment (Brakus, Schmitt, & Zarantonello, 2009; Iglesias et al., 2011; Lemon & Verhoef, 2016; Morrison & Crane, 2007; Schwarz & Xu, 2011; Tynan, McKechnie, & Chhuon, 2010).

From a customer perspective, positive brand associations that support the building of opinions and the establishment of a unique promise of difference are fundamental (Farquhar, Han, Herr, & Ijiri, 1992). Before any experience can take place, a brand should be able to integrate two major dimensions, customer participation and connection (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). Several studies have brought up additional dimensions concerning customer experience that have been used extensively when building. In sum, the dimensions of sensory, cognitive/intellectual, emotional, and social/behavioural have been identified as drivers of experience (Atwal & Williams, 2009; Brakus et al., 2009). Although these dimensions have been adopted extensively in various studies (Khan & Rahman, 2015), it is important to highlight that they have been developed for and mainly put into the context of consumer goods. Further studies have stressed the core of experience in the goal of generating relationships and connections through memorable experiences (Pine & Gilmore, 1998; Puccinelli et al., 2009) and emotions (Atwal & Williams, 2009), resulting in emotional or affective commitment (Iglesias et al., 2011; Ramaseshan & Stein, 2014). These forms of ties between a brand and the customers can also have an impact on loyalty (Brakus et al., 2009; Ramaseshan & Stein, 2014). Although most customers make decisions rationally, there is evidence from neuroscience that experiential information alone can lead to decisions that are predominant compared with declarative information (Esch et al., 2012). This increases the complexity for traditional manufacturers, mainly selling their products based on rational facts and figures, in understanding customers' needs.

For traditional companies, it would be important to understand the motives of their customers as well as the determinants of the customer experience – tailored to their products and industry (i.e. not mixing utilitarian and luxury products). The findings of luxury studies have revealed additional experience dimensions, such as hedonic, symbolic, and expressive (Gentile, Spiller, & Noci, 2007; Tynan et al., 2010). The importance of experience is underpinned by the fact that it even has an influence on purchase intentions, and a memorable experience affects repurchasing decisions (Torres, Augusto, & Godinho, 2017). These results further support the importance of exploring the experience dimensions rigorously; however, against this background, there is a lack of qualitative in-depth studies and a focus on decision-making and purchase processes (including services) to gain a better insight into the experience construct (Khan & Rahman, 2015).

Although a considerable amount of literature has been published recently within the field of brand experience, the lack of qualitative in-depth studies and a focus on decision and purchase processes (including services) has been mentioned (Khan & Rahman, 2015). Areas such as retailing, tourism, and event marketing have been researched extensively (Atwal & Williams, 2009); however, brand experience and customer experience in the automotive industry for sport cars have not appeared to be explicitly in the scope of research. Especially when speaking about high-value luxury goods, it is valid to assume that the drivers and success factors of brand experience in this regard might differ immensely. The product and brand experience dimensions of purchasing a luxury handbag or a visiting a five-star hotel might be significantly different from those of evaluating an investment in a luxury performance car. It is also of interest to explore whether a difference in decision making can be justified based on different levels of complexity as a car might represent an investment that is less likely to be bought spontaneously. Additionally, a decision could be either rationally or emotionally (affective) driven depending on the lifestyle of the individual. All these points raise the following question: what are the factors affecting brand experience in the affordable luxury sports car sector?

1.2 Aim of the study

The aim of the study is to explore customers' experience with the affordable luxury sport car brands in Germany. Specifically, the exploration of the drivers that are crucial for customers' experiences as well as decision-making are important. Identifying the factors and components that constitute, influence, or leverage/drive a brand experience from their perspective is the main aim of this study.

Decoding social elements, behaviours, and decision processes across various experience studies will lead to highly heterogeneous results across the customer society and will vary in the field of affordable luxury automobiles. Therefore, a goal is to complement the existing knowledge with novel findings from the German customer perspective on brand experience. It is crucial to conduct a rigorous study alongside a fast-changing and highly diversified society to avoid the risk of overlooking relevant gaps or discussing findings based on outcomes that have already become obsolete. This study will explore customers' motives and preferences regarding experience dimensions in the luxury sports car sector for the first time.

To achieve the purpose of this thesis, the following objectives are articulated:

1. Critically review the literature on luxury branding.

2. Explore the literature on customer experience with luxury brands in the automotive industry.

3. Develop a conceptual framework and a research instrument that allow to determine key drivers for customer brand experience with affordable luxury sport car brands in Germany.

Research questions

- What are the factors affecting brand experience in the affordable luxury sport cars sector in Germany?

- What actions can a luxury sport car manufacturer take to improve the brand experience?

1.3 Contribution of the study

This section discusses the contribution of the research to the existing body of knowledge predominantly identified in the literature. The literature review revealed a lack of detailed scholarly research concerning the brand and customer experience dimensions due to deficiencies in the specifics within the spectrum of affordable luxury automotive brands. Specifically:

1) The majority of studies have focused on retail and fashion brands, with limited or no emphasis on the automotive sector and especially on luxury sport vehicles (Iglesias et al., 2011; Ramaseshan & Stein, 2014). The driving forces behind these industries could be extremely different, and little research has been carried out in the German automotive industry with customers buying sport cars.

2) The sampling structure has primarily relied on a student population or visitors to shopping malls (Brakus et al., 2009; Iglesias et al., 2011; Torres et al., 2017). Although experience dimensions are part of a strong academic debate, little attention has been paid to brand experience from a customer perspective associated with a sample of actual owners and customers. Although the brand experience and customer experience are the driving force in this field, the knowledge on how they influence people's purchase behaviour is scant. In addition, practitioners need to know how to manage their relationships with all their stakeholders to build a competitive advantage.

3) Most studies have evaluated brand experience dimensions on a rather generic level by mixing industries and product categories, which the authors have acknowledged. They have focused mainly on consumer goods, which are especially different from the topic of luxury sports cars. This study concentrates on exploring the experience dimensions within a complex and highly diversified field. It will contribute to closing this gap by collecting empirical data from luxury sports car owners in Germany. The constant changes in consumer behaviour and drivers during the customer journey make it necessary to shed some light on the differences across industries and consumer behaviours. The major aim is to investigate the determinants of customer experience as well as exploring the crucial touchpoints that have strong relevance to customers and therefore to suppliers. This will complement the existing knowledge about consumer and brand experience. Existing elements of science will be researched and validated and new factors will be explored. Here, three main contributions are expected:

- Applying the models of customer experience and satisfaction
- Understanding and mapping the customer journey for luxury sports cars in Germany
- Exploring crucial touchpoints that are relevant to customers (including cognitive and symbolic/affective elements)

Based on this study, key touchpoints for customer experience in the affordable luxury car market have been identified. Furthermore, existing brand equity concepts have been evaluated and are broadly applicable in understanding customer experience in the affordable luxury car industry. The study also identified brand trust as an additional and highly relevant concept for customer brand experience in the luxury automotive car industry.

Table 1.1 summarises the components of the studies consulted and points out the differences that lead to the gaps that this study aims to fill.

Table 1.1: Contribution of the study

Existing studies on brand and customer experience	Difference/gap	Potential contribution
The majority of studies have focused on retail, fast-moving consumer goods, or fashion.	Large differences between behavioural drivers; although a high-priced fragrance can represent a luxury good (still rather affordable mainstream), the experience drivers and customer expectations are completely different from those of a luxury sports vehicle (highly differentiated decision criteria).	Exploring the rich spectrum in the specific context of sports cars: from rational (cognitive) determinants to highly emotional (rewarding, hedonic, and symbolic) aspects.
Studies have mixed industries and goods (i.e. consumer electronics, food, wine, fashion, cars, etc.).	The luxury automotive sports car sector has not been explored in relation to customer experience dimensions. There is diluted validity due to varying factors and drivers regarding the industry or product. Rather generic findings might not fit luxury automotive customers.	Rigorous research in the specific context of sports cars. Many groups of persons have not been represented in broad and generic social research (not mass → highly individual customers). Mapping the customer journey and identifying key touchpoints.
Predominantly quantitative studies	Quantitative studies can lose subtle, implicit, and subconscious information.	Exploratory qualitative methods might reveal new information concerning the perceptions and needs of highly individual consumers.
Sampling: university students and/or random visitors to shopping malls, for example	Lack of focus on the persons and groups that live in a luxury environment. Especially for luxury automotive brands, the feedback from samples is probably based on public image and common knowledge.	Sampling: owners of luxury sports cars in Germany who make repeat purchases and have experienced a brand in sales, after-sales, etc.
Most experience studies have been conducted in specific countries (i.e. Spain, Australia, etc.).	Countries with moderate disposable income, varying market size for sports cars, and different automotive heritage and culture.	Germany

1.4 Structure of the study

Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the study, containing its background, aim, and motivation and including the research questions that guided the researcher as well as its contribution. It identifies the research gaps, justifies the undertaking of this research, and explains the contribution to science. Finally, an outline of the study structure is provided, concluding this chapter (section 1.4).

The next three chapters of the thesis provide the theoretical background of the research in the form of a literature review through which the research topic is articulated and presented. Chapter 2 examines the extant literature relating to the fundamentals of branding, including its functions from manufacturers' and consumers' points of view. This is followed by a section on luxury branding, representing a category within branding. It provides the theoretical basis for the definition of a luxury brand as well as subcategories within the luxury dimension. The researcher reviewed the literature relating to the parent discipline of consumer-based brand equity, representing the essential underpinnings of established works, and the state of contemporary research. Chapter 3 reviews the literature relating to the theory of customer experience. It discusses customer experience from manufacturers' and consumers' perspectives. In addition, this chapter presents the established research work concerning models of customer and consumption experience. Symbolic meaning and consumer motives within the sphere of luxury purchase behaviour are discussed here as well. Chapter 4 explains the industrial and geographical contexts of this study – the luxury automotive sector within the German market. It gives insights into the global development of the luxury market and the luxury automotive industry. Furthermore, it explains the market segments and regional characteristics of the luxury car market. Finally, the cultural context of the automotive sector in Germany is presented.

The subsequent two chapters of this thesis present the research methodology, the findings, and the conclusion to answer the individual research questions. The chapters describe the methods employed during the analysis as well as the linkage between the existing theory and the research topic.

Chapter 5 presents the research methodology adopted for the study. The researcher discusses and justifies the selected research philosophy, critical realism. It also addresses the method of qualitative data research as being the most suitable for achieving the objectives of this research. One of the core elements of this chapter is the development of the conceptual framework that guides this research. Based on this, the research design is underpinned by the data collection methods, data collection instruments, and procedures with respect to ethical considerations. Chapter 5 also contains the different stages of qualitative data analysis, collected from in-depth interviews with real luxury sports car customers. Finally, the author pays attention to the reliability and validity of this research project. Chapter 6 illustrates the findings of the data analysis. The first stage explores the concepts from the customer experience data, leading to a validation of existing concepts as well as the identification of a new concept (see section 6.1.4). The second stage explores the factors from a touchpoint analysis. Here, individual customer journey maps are identified and discussed according to the differences between customer groups.

Chapter 7 forms the conclusion of this study, in which the work in the previous chapters is drawn together. It highlights the findings, contributions to knowledge, and limitations of the study. Implications for theory, policy, and practice are also discussed. The author investigates delimitations of scope that may provide suggestions for further research.

Chapter 2:

2 A Review of Luxury Brand Experience

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to review luxury brand experience. Over the past two decades, there has been increasing interest in research on the growth of the luxury market worldwide (Ko, Costello, & Taylor, 2017; Tynan et al., 2010). The luxury market has recovered from economic uncertainty and geopolitical crises and grew by 5% to an estimated €1.2 trillion globally in 2017 (D'Arpizio, Levato, Zito, Kamel, & Montgolfier, 2017). The world's 100 largest luxury goods companies generated personal luxury goods sales of US$217 billion in 2016 and €262 billion in 2017 (Arienti, 2018; D'Arpizio et al., 2017). A key catalyst of this global demand can be found in the increased consumption of many Asian markets, in particular markets like China, India, and the Middle East (Arienti, 2018; D'Arpizio et al., 2017; Kim & Ko, 2012; Ko et al., 2017).

Truong et al. (2010) mentioned three possible causes of this growth (Truong, McColl, & Kitchen, 2010, p. 346):

1. The wealthy are purchasing more luxuries.
2. There are greater numbers of wealthy people.
3. The middle and lower classes are purchasing luxury brands

These factors are still valid eight years later, as industry reports have shown; however, besides a growing middle class in emerging countries, there has been a change in generation. The main growth of the luxury market came from a generational shift, with 85% of luxury growth in 2017 powered by Generations Y and Z (D'Arpizio et al., 2017). Building on this, industry experts have forecast that millennials and Generation Z will represent more than 40% of the overall luxury goods market by 2025 (around 30% in 2016) (Arienti, 2018). In addition, it is no longer only super-rich individuals (e.g. members of the royal family) who can afford luxury goods. On the contrary, luxury companies are stretching their brands "downwards" to reach new target customers (Albrecht, Backhaus, Gurzki, & Woisetschlaeger, 2013; Reddy, Terblanche, Pitt, & Parent, 2009; Riley, Pina, & Bravo, 2015) and the middle class has been growing during the last decades (Duma, Willi, Nguyen, & Melewar, 2016; Vigneron & Johnson, 2004).

However, it has been argued that luxury is no longer a product-centric subject (Vargo & Lusch, 2004). In the past, it was embodied by goods like jewellery, watches, or cars, for instance (Duma et al., 2016). The traditional consumer behaviour towards luxury is undergoing a repositioning of focus (Duma et al., 2016). The consumption of luxury brands is also driven by the status and aspirational values that they provide, independently from the economic situation of an individual (Vickers & Renand, 2003). Modern generations, like Generation Y, the members of which identify themselves through experiences rather than possessions, influence the current and shape the future society (Duma et al., 2016). Industry analysts have argued that, in societies with relative wealth, consumers are focused on intangible luxuries, like services and extraordinary experiences (Baer, 2013; Bellaiche, 2012). Bellaiche et al. (2012) provided figures for 2011, when 55% of total luxury purchases worldwide could be attributed to the market of experiential luxury, growing 50% faster than the consumption of traditional luxury goods in 2012 (Bellaiche, 2012, p. 2).

While luxury branding has received increasing attention in the academic literature (Berthon, Pitt, Parent, & Berthon, 2009), the aim is to provide relevant discussions according to the research topic at hand. As the term "luxury brand" lacks a widely accepted definition, a review of prior definitions will take place followed by the adoption of an underlying definition for this study.

2.2 What is a brand?

Within the scope of this study, it is of significant relevance to study the concept of branding, as it plays a major role for customers and companies. Seminal studies have shown branding effects from a cognitive psychological view in which the brand represents a node in the memory of customers with different types of associations (Henderson & Cote, 1998; Krishnan, 1996; Lassar, Mittal, & Sharma, 1995). Studies have shown the great importance of brand effects on customer attitudes and decision-making processes (Atwal & Williams, 2009; Esch et al., 2012; Puccinelli et al., 2009; Truong, Simmons, McColl, & Kitchen, 2008). Modern research techniques (i.e. measuring brain responses to brands) bring new facets to the discussion and development of branding and its effect on consumers. Nowadays, consumers show new behavioural links to brands, representing the highest form of branding from a customer perspective, leading to identification with a brand and what it signifies (Algesheimer, Dholakia, & Herrmann, 2005; Burmann & Zeplin, 2005; Grace & O'Cass, 2002; Nam, Ekinci, & Whyatt, 2011; Stokburger-Sauer, Ratneshwar, & Sen, 2012). Additionally, a brand often represents or even defines the subject of luxury in combination with a product or service (Atwal & Williams, 2009; Ko et al., 2017).

This compilation is based on an analysis of international literature performed by de Chernatony & Dall'Olmo Riley in 1998. They identified twelve themes representing a categorisation of the most important propositions in the branding literature, as shown in Table 2.1 (de Chernatony & Dall'Olmo Riley, 1998, p. 418). Within these definitions, clusters can be derived depending on the characteristic, which is relevant either from firms' or from customers' point of view.

Table 2.1: Definitions of brand

View	Brand as…	Definition
Firm	a legal instrument	Legal ownership of title as protection against imitators
	a company	Considering the company as the brand (consistent message across portfolios)
	a logo	A name, sign, symbol, and design, including a combination of them, to differentiate from the competition
	adding value	Differentiating brands, achieving a competitive advantage, and charging a price premium because consumers are willing to buy the added “benefits” on top of the function
	evolving entity	A development process across products and brands themselves (commodity to reference to personality to icon)
	a personality	Defining brands as symbolic devices with personalities that users value beyond their functional utility, differentiation through symbolic values (i.e. colours that imply friendliness)
	an identity system	Extending beyond the brand logo and image, identity is the outcome of a holistic strategy that covers products, organisational values, brand personality, brand image, and heritage
	a relationship	The expression of a relationship between brand and consumer; an extension of brand personality
Customer	a shorthand	A devise of functional and emotional characteristics, enabling rapid recall of information in memory and speeding up purchase decisions
	a risk reducer	Assessing risk/no risk of a product or service, a brand can stand for consistent quality
	an image	Images in consumers’ minds of functional and psychological attributes (acquired and built up over a period of time)
	a value system	A set of values that provides the important link between suppliers and customers

Source: de Chernatony and Dall´Olmo Riley (1998, p.418)

Although many definitions have been suggested in the literature, overlaps exist and definitions can be grouped together. On the one hand, results have led to a cluster of legal and commercial aspects. On the other hand, rather soft factors can be clustered together, describing behaviours according to memories, images, and knowledge (on conscious and subconscious levels) that potentially influence customers' purchase intentions and decisions. Additionally, the symbolic characteristic of a brand personality stresses the importance of investigation.

The multitude of illustrated definitions also represents the result of industries that face difficulties in maintaining meaningful differentiation when just focusing on product quality or price (Mudambi, Doyle, & Wong, 1997). Within the body of branding literature, brands have been conceptualised as having certain tangible and intangible components (Veloutsou & Taylor, 2012). Here, tangible assets are those described as being more rationally understandable via explicit attributes containing the product, the physique of the product, and any additional aspect of the offer regarding its material (Kapferer, 2007; Swait, Erdem, Louviere, & Dubelaar, 1993). Obviously, customers have to be aware of a brand and its products to be able to include them in their decision-making process (Keller, 1993). Even more important, also with respect to the automotive field, are the product knowledge and familiarity that increase the chances of favourable purchase decisions (Çifci et al., 2016; Keller, 1993).

In contrast, brands consist of more than the calculable and tangible assets of the product or the service (McQuiston, 2004). Intangible components are abstract and include the service component and the brand culture as well as its personality (D. Aaker, 1997; de Chernatony, L. & Segal-Horn, 2001; Kapferer, 2007; Veloutsou & Taylor, 2012). Building blocks of new theories were introduced in the seminal article by Aaker (1997), stressing the symbolic use of brands through a distinct brand personality and advocating the constant development of a brand alongside the changing societies, customers' needs, and markets (D. Aaker, 1997). J. Aaker (1997, p. 353) introduced several personality dimensions that tap either an innate part of human characteristics (sincerity, excitement, and competence) or aspirational characteristics (sophistication and ruggedness) that humans rather desire but do not necessarily have. This differentiation is of considerable interest to this study as it stresses the aspect of self-congruity (actual and ideal) and fulfilment via brands. This is evident in the case of a Mercedes Benz advertisement emphasising sophistication by focusing on associations with the upper class and glamour (J. Aaker, 1997).

According to J. Aaker's theory, brands can develop distinctive personality traits, supporting their differentiation in consumers' minds, in the same way as human personalities can differ (J. Aaker, 1997). Since these articles and studies were published in the 1990s, the theory of attributing human characteristics to a brand has increasingly been recognised within the literature. The term "brand personality" was articulated as a non-product-based definition, capturing all the assets that could not be linked directly to a product, its performance, its benefits, or its attributes (Azoulay & Kapferer, 2003). Therefore, it has been defined as "the set of human characteristics associated with a brand" (J. Aaker, 1997, p. 347; Keller & Aaker, 1992) or "the set of human personality traits that are both applicable to and relevant for brands" (Azoulay & Kapferer, 2003,

p. 151). In addition, the elements of brand gender (Grohmann, 2009) and nationality of the brand (i.e. country-of-origin effects) (Balabanis & Diamantopoulos, 2008) have been added to the debate.

Having discussed this, the question arises of how and whether these findings are generalisable and applicable enough within the luxury automotive sector, addressing adults with an established and superior lifestyle. Achenreiner and John (2003) studied the development of the understanding of brand meanings in childhood and compared the results with results obtained from adults. An interesting finding was that younger children are more connected to brands on a perceptual level (cues for products with familiar names and haptic structures) and that conceptual meanings become prominent only later in their personal development. Adults also learn about brands' meanings and identity; however, the knowledge is rather driven by experience with a brand (Achenreiner & Roedder John, 2003).

These findings suggest that a brand has multiple implications for customers at various stages throughout the decision-making process. On a rational level, a brand can guide consumers in their intention to purchase certain products and services that ideally they are familiar with and, based on positive experiences, they will repurchase them. On an emotional level, a brand can complement consumers' intentions to take advantage of the symbolic value of a brand. Considering the aim of this study, the author hypothesises that luxury automotive customers might be driven by rather emotional, symbolic, and self-fulfilling attributes rather than functional attributes. Therefore, the next chapters will evaluate the special characteristics of luxury brands and their perception, later leading to luxury consumption behaviour.

Today, brands are considered as complex entities and their appearance includes the perception of their product characteristics, personality, and values (Veloutsou & Taylor, 2012). Brands comprise functional and emotional values that are best suited to the various needs of potential buyers, including organisational buyers (Lynch & de Chernatony, 2007). Developing a strong, distinctive, and favourable personality can be advantageous for both products and services, since it provides emotional fulfilment (customer view) and may lead to increased brand equity (supplier view) (Freling & Forbes, 2005). The aim of the next section is to discuss the major functions of a brand from both the customers' and the suppliers' point of view.

2.2.1 Introduction to brand functions

Since the various definitions have been explained, this section will address one of the core elements and the reason for existence of a brand. The discussion of brand existence and its functions occupies a great part of the literature. Several authors have indicated that a brand is not extant when solely having a product name, a logo, a corporate colour scheme, or exclusive packaging. These attributes only function as markers of a brand (Holt, 1995, 2004). A product or service requires a history enabling marketers to build a story around it. Design attributes are basically a blank sheet on which to project a fantasy (Hatch & Rubin, 2006). It has been observed that only over time stories about a brand as well as experiences with it accumulate and fill the brand attributes with meaning, resulting in a brand meaning (Achenreiner & Roedder John, 2003). In addition to this, the level of awareness of this brand meaning in consumers' minds is highly relevant (Kapferer, 2007; Kapferer & Bastien, 2009). Franzen and Bouwman (2001) defined this brand awareness as a precondition for the existence of a brand in the evaluation set of a consumer when considering and being involved in a purchase process (Franzen & Bouwman, 2001). Therefore, the two prerequisites of meaning and awareness should be satisfied before a brand can work as a tool with various functions. A product or service brand fulfils different functions depending on the perspective of either the consumer or the supplier. Hereinafter, these will be discussed from manufacturers' point of view, followed by the functions with regard to consumers.

2.2.2 Brand functions from manufacturers´ point of view

While for consumers the focus is primarily on efficient evaluation processes of well-known products, the brand itself has also several economic and strategic functions for the supplier owning it. From suppliers' or manufacturers' point of view, the brand nowadays is mainly associated with a communication function, maintaining and developing the dialogue between a producer and a consumer (Chang & Ming-Hua, 2006). However, a brand represents more than just communication to a company; it also has an economic function. First, the brand supports the differentiation between products and the competition as well as providing a price margin for placing products. In terms of market development, it enables companies to address their products to new target groups with a positive financial impact by winning new markets. Third, a brand can drive overall sales and turnover for products and services across market segments (Grime, Diamantopoulos, & Smith, 2002; Puccinelli et al., 2009).

In addition to the economic functions, the strategic outcomes of brand development have been highlighted within the literature. First, a strong brand can build up customer loyalty, ensuring constant sales and resulting in planning security (Iglesias et al., 2011). Second, the development of a positive brand image and its transferability to new products and services can support a market introduction significantly. Third, the value of an entire corporation can benefit from stronger capitalisation due to high brand equity (Chang & Ming-Hua, 2006; Nam et al., 2011).

Fourth, branded products are less sensitive to cyclical market fluctuations than products without a named brand. This means that the revenues of a corporation are more stable and less exposed to volatility. This in turn creates constant cash flows and enables owners of strong brands to have a solid financial backbone for investments or security in terms of loans.

In summary, it has been shown that a brand has the following core functions, beginning with the first for consumers:

1. Efficiency: better information processing and a shorter decision-making process due to orientation and recognition.
2. Quality: purchasing a product of known quality minimises the risk of failure due to security and trust.
3. Status: ideological values or cultural belonging through identification, self-fulfilment, or prestige.
4. Advantage: brands can lead to a competitive advantage (differentiation, inelastic prices, and loyal customers).
5. Value: brands can contribute to the value of a cooperation (turnover, value increase, and brand equity).

2.2.3 Brand functions from consumers' point of view

First, brands support consumers with orientation functions when purchasing goods or using services. The marking allows identification and supports customers in recognising an individual product (Iglesias et al., 2011; Meyer & Schwager, 2007). The recognition of a brand across different product offers reduces the effort of searching for and processing information, leading to a shorter decision-making process (Esch et al., 2012). This is because a known brand reduces the information complexity as consumers associate certain characteristics, such as quality, value for money, and status, with a product. This also leads to a reduction in the perceived risk of making a wrong decision (Grace & O'Cass, 2002). Furthermore, brands can represent emotional anchors for consumers as they convey certain feelings and images (Brakus et al., 2009; Esch et al., 2012; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). These functions of branding represent the basis, supplemented by further dimensions in the sphere of luxury branding. The main differences between a non-luxury and a luxury brand can be seen in the dimensions that play a role for consumers on a subconscious level. Consumers are likely to link luxury brands with emotional, symbolic, or even self-rewarding aspects. Here, sections 3.2.4 and 3.2.5 will discuss these aspects in depth.

These functions describe the power of an established and known brand, which also contributes to the goal of brand existence and at the same time brand equity.

2.3 Consumer based brand equity

A distinction of the brand equity concept can be made according to a finance-based or a marketing-based view. Authors have posited that the financial perspective aims to estimate the value of a brand more precisely for financial reporting purposes, from incremental cash flows that accrue to branded products over unbranded products to other tangible assets (Keller, 1993; Simon & Sullivan, 1993). From a marketing perspective, brand equity is evaluated by the mental image of a brand in the minds of consumers as a potential prerequisite for decision making (Keller, 1993; Tolba & Hassan, 2009). This leads to added value from consumers' point of view and supports manufacturers in improving their marketing strategies. Within the scope of this thesis, the focus is set on aspects that are relevant to consumers and marketing.

> A product is something that is made in a factory; a brand is something that is bought by a customer. A product can be copied by a competitor; a brand is unique. A product can be quickly outdated; a successful brand is timeless.
>
> Stephen King WPP Group, as cited by (D. Aaker, 1991, p. 1)

Figure 2.1: Brand equity model

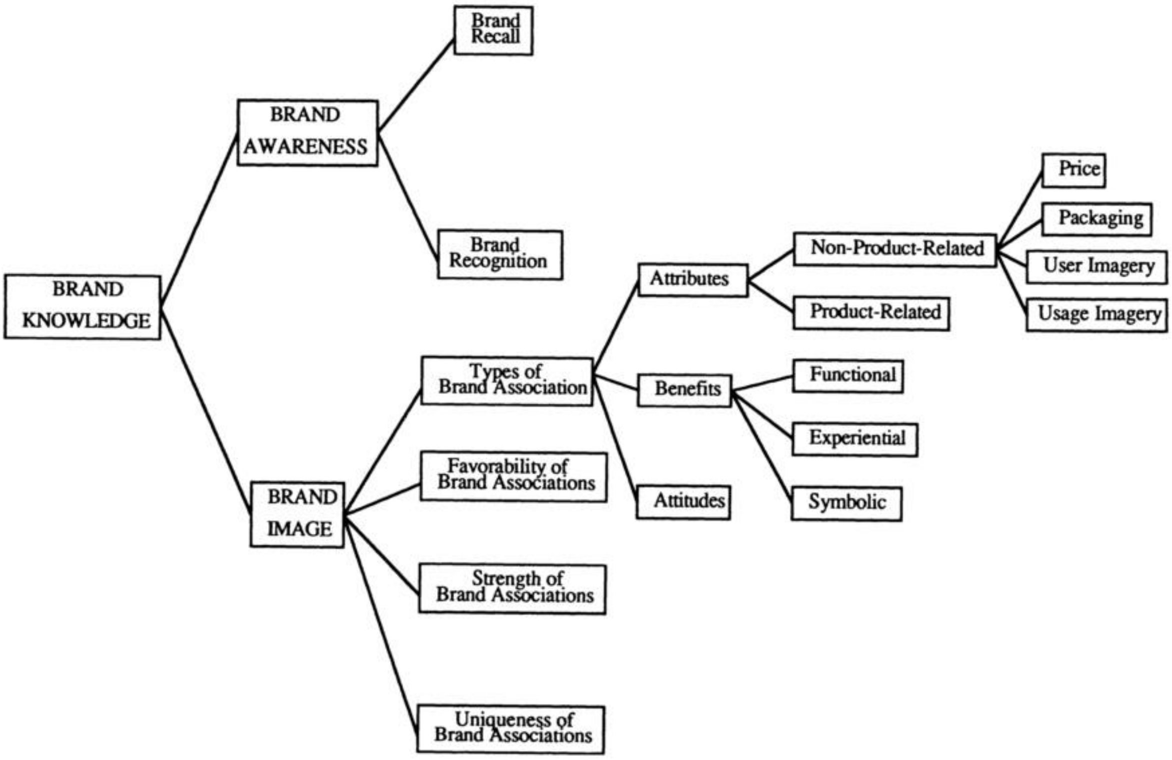
Source: D. Aaker (1991, p.17)

The seminal literature on brand equity was published in the 1990s. At this time, most acknowledgement was credited to the work of the key authors Aaker, Keller, and Farquhar (D. Aaker, 1991; Farquhar, 1989; Keller, 1993). According to them, a brand is a name and a symbol (D. Aaker, 1991; Farquhar, 1989), a “design or mark that enhances the value of a product beyond its functional purpose” (Farquhar, 1989, p. 25). As long ago as 1991, David Aaker concluded the most relevant branding features in his “brand equity model” (see Figure 2.3).

His theory concentrated on managerial and industrial strategies, underpinned by customer behaviour, to provide value via brand equity (D. Aaker, 1991). He defined brand equity as a set of five brand assets (brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality, brand associations, and additional proprietary assets) linked to a brand’s name or symbol to add value to a product or service. Based on his conclusion, it was confirmed that, of the five discussed features, the three generally applicable ones have been brand loyalty, brand awareness, and perceived quality (D. Aaker, 1991, p. 271). In his seminal work, Aaker (1991) stressed the importance of loyalty, since a customer is much less costly to keep than to gain or regain (D. Aaker, 1991, p. 271). A brand that is familiar (awareness) will often be selected over an unknown brand (D. Aaker, 1991, p. 19). This is particularly important in the context of a decision-making process, in which a “brand must first enter the consideration set” (D. Aaker, 1991, p. 19) to be evaluated. According to Aaker’s theory, perceived quality will directly influence purchase decisions and brand loyalty, particularly when a consumer is less motivated or unable to analyse a product (D. Aaker, 1991, p. 19). These features have been the most common ones to be adopted by scholars (Yoo & Donthu, 2001). However, his study failed to explain the terms “quality” and “association” in greater depth, supporting practitioners and firms in fully understanding all the values and the mechanisms for increasing all the values mentioned in his model.

Later, Keller (1993) approached brand equity from a consumer point of view by defining “customer-based brand equity” (Keller, 1993). He introduced the element of brand knowledge and emphasised its importance for customers within a purchasing process, who react more favourably when having a high level of awareness and familiarity with a brand (Keller, 1993). Awareness was identified in the models from Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993); however, the aspect of knowledge and familiarity referred to by Keller can be reflected in product knowledge (i.e. cars) regarding the topic at hand.

Figure 2.2: Customer-based brand equity model



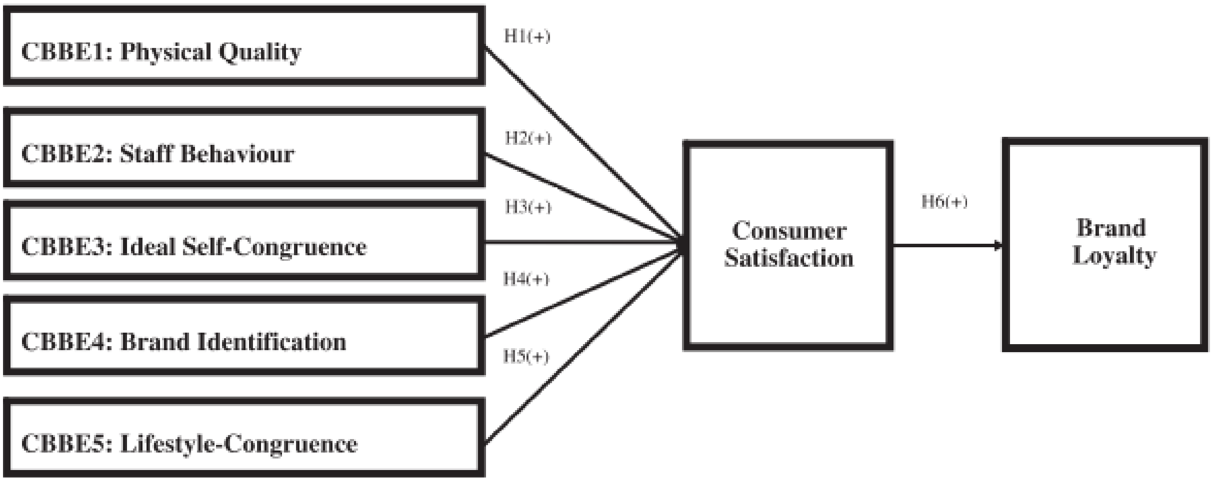
Source: Keller (1993, p.7)

Keller viewed brand awareness as the likelihood that the brand name will come to the mind of a customer (Keller, 1993). Within his model, he additionally showed the knowledge dimension of “brand image” linked to the brand node in the memory containing the meaning of the brand for consumers (or the symbolic value). This represents an important aspect within the scope of luxury brands leading to the symbolic association of a trademark. It signifies the more extrinsic advantages, usually corresponding to non-product-related attributes (Keller, 1993). The prestige, exclusivity, or fashionability of these brands can relate to underlying consumer needs for social acceptance or personal expression. As Keller (1993) mentioned, symbolic benefits have the highest relevance to socially visible “badge” products, which in our case are reflected in luxury car brands. The aspect of luxury consumption will be discussed in section 3.2.3. In addition, the sensory pleasure and cognitive stimulation during an experience were mentioned when consumers seek to fulfil experiential needs. These “benefits” represent the attributes: what consumers think the product or service can do for them (Keller, 1993, p. 4).

Later, in 1996, Aaker introduced a new aspect called brand identity that encompasses the whole complexity surrounding a brand’s evolution. Due to a change in consumer behaviour, a brand has to stand for something besides products or services, which can be organisation-related associations (i.e. local vs. global) or personality associations (D. Aaker, 1996). Because the scope of this thesis encompasses in particular premium and luxury brands, the development of consumer behaviour in relation to brands is a valid aspect to incorporate. Due to a change over time, Kapferer (1998) introduced a new model – the hexagonal identity prism – defining the attributes of what a brand really is and what it represents. Building on Aaker's work, Kapferer added the dimension of culture as well as the relationship between a firm and its customers and emphasised its importance for modern customers (Kapferer, 1992, p. 43). Particularly in luxury markets, customers seek something new rather than ordinary brand and product assets.

Over the course of time, scholars have investigated the relevance of customer satisfaction, which has become especially pertinent across industries. Building on the consumer-based brand equity attributes from Aaker and Keller, the empirical study by Nam et al. (2011) showed valid mediation of consumer satisfaction in brand loyalty as well as positive effects of physical quality, staff behaviour, ideal self-congruence, brand identification, and lifestyle congruence on consumer satisfaction, as shown in Figure 2.5 (Nam et al., 2011).

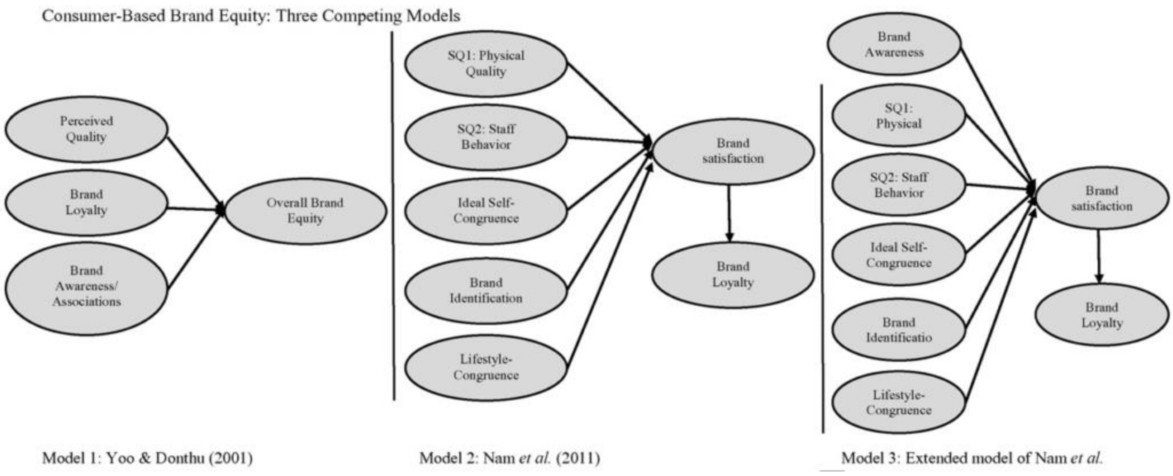
Figure 2.3: Mediation model of consumer satisfaction in brand loyalty



Source: Nam et al. (2011, p. 1001)

However, these results were obtained within the hotel and restaurant industry. It would be interesting to validate the findings in the luxury automotive sector. Recently, the study by Çifci et al. (2016) revalidated Nam's (2011) findings in the context of the retail industry across different cultural settings. Their findings demonstrated that adding the element of brand awareness to Nam's existing model has an influence on brand satisfaction and brand loyalty (Çifci et al., 2016). Especially in the context of this thesis (established powerful car brands), brand knowledge and awareness are more relevant than they are to new or niche brands (Çifci et al., 2016).

Figure 2.4: Consumer-based brand equity: Three competing models



Source: Çifci et al. (2016, p. 3742)

Within the scope of the present study, it is of relevance to understand the connection between a brand, managed by a company, the behaviour of consumers, and the mechanisms that exist on the conscious and subconscious levels. Depending on the given context and perspective, that is, managerial (Aaker, 1991) or consumer (Farquhar, 1989; Keller, 1993), many definitions have been used across an extensive body of literature, so research has lacked a common understanding (de Chernatony & Dall'Olmo Riley, 1998). Therefore, the next section aims to embrace all the given aspects together in relation to the topic of this study.

2.4 Luxury branding

Due to the luxury scope of this study, it is of interest to evaluate the different perceptions of brands and what distinguishes a normal from a luxury brand. Firms view luxury as a main factor to differentiate a brand in a product category (Kapferer, 1997), as an essential driver of customer preference and usage (Dubois & Duquesne, 1993). A generic formula of luxury, that works globally, is difficult due to different perceptions in cultures (Dubois & Paternault, 1995).

2.4.1 Definitions of a luxury brand

A considerable amount of literature has been published on luxury branding; however, there has been little agreement on a broadly acceptable definition of what constitutes a luxury brand. Scholars across different disciplines have tried to define the term "luxury brand", unfortunately with divergent results. Some authors have tried to identify the fundamental elements of luxury that are independent from disciplines and industries (Ko et al., 2017; Maman Larraufie & Kourdoughli, 2014). However, most of the studies in the field have only focused on a particular industry, for instance fashion (Maman Larraufie & Kourdoughli, 2014). Considering the relative dimension of luxury (Mortelmans, 2005), the following question can be asked: is it possible to compose a definition that is relevant and applicable on a generic level? Some scholars have even stressed the complexity due to fluctuating perceptions of what constitutes "luxury" over the course of time (Cristini, Kauppinen-Räisänen, Barthod-Prothade, & Woodside, 2017). This challenge was supported by Ko et al. (2017), drawing on the statement by Miller and Mills (2012, p. 1471) that prior research has been characterised by "… a lack of clarity regarding a definition, operationalization, and measurement of brand luxury". Godey et al. (2012) highlighted the subjective nature of the previous definitions, although luxury is not categorically a subjective construct (Godey et al., 2012). Nevertheless, the aim is to examine the prior definitions of the term "luxury brand" and evaluate useful descriptions according to the topic at hand.

A more systematic literature review was provided by Ko et al. (2017), who first selected relevant articles according to three predefined criteria and subsequently listed the relevant definitions (Ko et al., 2017). The criteria used to filter the results were based on the aim of being 1. general enough to apply to all types of luxury brands (i.e. not only fashion goods or automobiles), 2. based on a solid conceptual framework, and 3. doable in operations (Ko et al., 2017, p. 3). Table 2.2 presents, in chronological order, the definitions of a "luxury brand" that meet these criteria and stresses the inconsistency across the literature.

Table 2.2: Definitions of a luxury brand

Authors	Key Definition
Nueno and Quelch (1998)	Luxury brands are those of which the ratio of functional utility to price is low and the ratio of intangible and situational utility to price is high.
Dubois, Lauernt, & Czellar (2001)	Six facets define and structure the concept of luxury: (1) excellent quality, (2) high price, (3) scarcity and uniqueness, (4) aesthetics and polysensuality, (5) ancestral heritage and personal history, and (6) superfluousness.
Vickers and Renand (2003)	Luxury goods are different from non-luxury goods in the extent to which they exhibit a distinctive mix of three important dimensions of instrumental performance: functionalism, experientialism, and symbolic interactionism.
Berthon et al. (2009)	Luxury is more than a characteristic or set of attributes. Rather than defining a luxury brand in terms of its attributes, the authors conceptualised it in terms of its effects in three spheres: the objective (material), the subjective (individual), and the collective (social). The material consists of exquisite material and craftsmanship, high functionality, and impressive performance. The subjective dimension relates to consumers' personal hedonic value of a brand. The collective element is the value that a brand signals to others and the value of that signal to the signaller.
Hagtvedt and Patrick (2016)	Luxury brands offer premium products, provide pleasure as a central benefit, and connect with consumers emotionally.
K. Keller (2009)	Luxury brands have ten defining characteristics: (1) maintaining a premium image, (2) creating intangible brand associations, (3) aligning with quality, (4) logos, symbols, and packaging as drivers of brand equity, (5) secondary associations from linked personalities, events, countries, and other entities, (6) controlled distribution, (7) a premium pricing strategy, (8) carefully managed brand architecture, (9) broadly defined competition, and (10) legal protection of trademarks.
Tynan and McKenchie (2010)	Key identifiers of luxury brands are high quality, expensive and non-essential products and services that appear to be rare, exclusive, prestigious, and authentic and offer high levels of symbolic and emotional/hedonic values through customer experiences.
Heine (2012)	Luxury brands are associated with consumers' perceptions of a high level of price, quality, aesthetics, rarity, and extraordinariness and a high degree of non-functional associations.

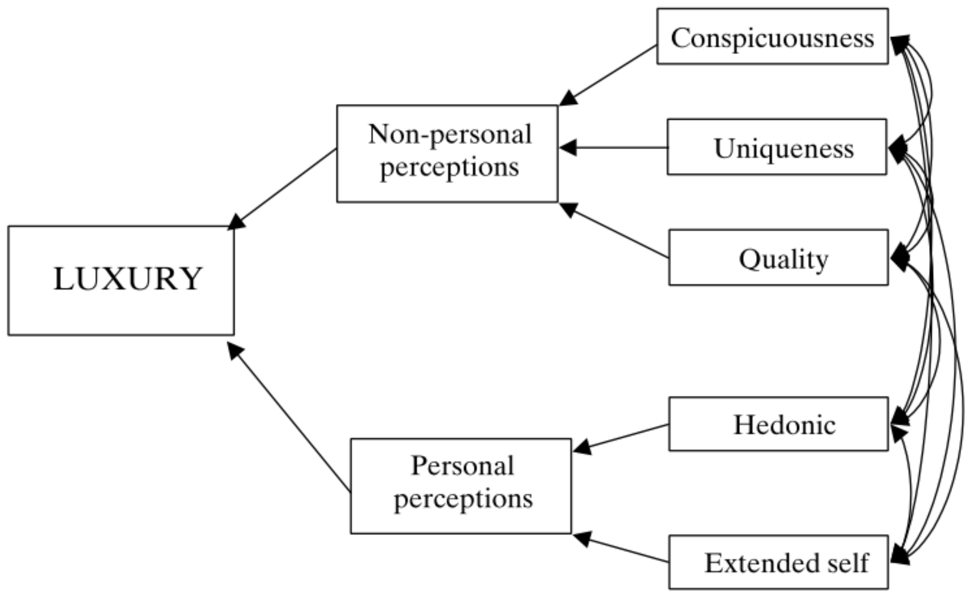
Source: Adapted from Ko et al. (2017, p.3)

Bringing the discussed attributes together, two major clusters can be built. First, the objective dimension of a luxury brand contains high quality and rarity, leading to a high price, as well as personalised services and experienced craftsmen, referring to the heritage of a brand. On the other hand, the analysis revealed the increasingly important, as the development and emphasis over time show (1998–2016), dimension of subjective attributes accompanying a luxury brand. These include social distinction through status, enabling the owner to feel special and privileged (i.e. recognition by third parties). Additionally, symbolic and emotional values can be manifested via extraordinary experiences. Furthermore, personal motives and social aspects play an important role in the body of luxury brands. Therefore, the author discusses aspects of luxury consumption (see section 3.2.3) and aspects of social status and distinction (see section 3.2.5) in the consumer section of this work.

2.4.2 Consumers' perception of luxury vs non-luxury brands

As identified previously, for consumers, a brand has symbolic value. The supposed attributes of a luxury compared with a non-luxury brand enable them to express their self, an ideal self, or specific attributes helping to achieve the desired ideal self (Vigneron & Johnson, 2004). Based on this, studies have carried out overarching measurements, supporting scholars and practitioners in defining what constitutes a luxury brand compared with a non-luxury brand based on the perceived luxury (Vigneron & Johnson, 2004). Vigneron and Johnson (2004) constructed a model of five factors helping to scale the share of luxury, as shown in Figure 2.5.

Figure 2.5: Factors that shape luxury



Source: Vigneron & Johnson (2004, p. 488)

The definition of what separates luxury brands from non-luxury brands was defined operationally in the study by Vigneron and Johnson through five perceived dimensions of a luxury brand (Vigneron & Johnson, 2004, p. 489). According to them, the non-personal perceptions (conspicuousness, uniqueness, and quality) build one stream of luxury. The second is described via personal perceptions (hedonic and extended self) (Vigneron & Johnson, 2004). If consumers view a brand as a luxury brand, they rate all these values as high (i.e. Porsche over Levi's).

> If the luxury image of a car maker was slowly decreasing due to an increasing number of dealers (i.e. weakening uniqueness), then appeals emphasising the limited number of cars available, or informing the consumer about the precious components used in making the car, would be appropriate to reinforce the overall luxury image (Vigneron & Johnson, 2004, p. 501).

Luxury-seeking consumer behaviour is the result of multiple motivations but mainly reasons of an extended self, self-expression, and sociability (Vigneron & Johnson, 1999, 2004). Vigneron and Johnson's framework includes personal aspects, such as hedonistic and extended-self motives. They found that consumers use luxury brands to classify or distinguish themselves in relation to others, but they may also try to integrate the symbolic meaning (i.e. brand/product image or personality) (Vigneron & Johnson, 2004, p. 490). According to Vigneron and Johnson (2004), owning expensive goods with socially visible attributes is the case for people concerned with social acceptance. On the other hand, materialistic consumers relate to luxury products in the form of personal happiness and therefore evaluate the success of themselves and others according to it. An interesting dimension of luxury materialism was stressed by Belk (1995), who saw a dimension of personal success in active collecting and the representation of one's collection to others. This could explain consumption within the luxury automotive sector, as we can observe luxury car buyers as well as luxury car collectors.

Hirschman and Holbrook (1982) studied the experiential aspects of consumption and developed their theory of hedonistic consumption. Their theory added a new element to the traditional consumer decision theory by stressing the fact that consumption is no longer only the satisfaction of needs; consumption itself corresponds to a human need for experience. Here hedonistic, symbolic, and aesthetic motives are predominant instead of functional aspects (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). Hedonistic consumption is characterised by the fact that fantasies, feelings, fun, and emotions are stimulated, leading to the decision on whether to consume a product (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982). Over time, the experiential dimension has gained increased importance due to a considerable oversupply of goods that fulfil the functional needs of consumers, leading to dematerialisation of consumption behaviour (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). At that time, Vigneron and Johnson added an interesting fact to the debate, emphasising that "hedonic consumers are looking for personal rewards and fulfilment" through the purchase and consumption of products delivering emotional benefits and intrinsic pleasure (Vigneron & Johnson, 2004, p. 491). Later, academics explained the further increasing need for hedonic consumption as a result of dissatisfaction with mass products, which no longer fulfil consumers' needs, which have moved towards individualisation and freedom of choice (Wikström, 2008).

Later, Kapferer und Bastien (2012) brought together six core criteria that are all relevant to a luxury brand but may differ in weight for specific types of luxury (Kapferer, 2012, p. 47):

- a very qualitative hedonistic experience or product made to last
- offered at a price that far exceeds what its mere functional value would command
- tied to the heritage, unique know-how, and culture attached to the brand
- available in purposefully restricted and controlled distribution
- offered with personalised accompanying services
- representing a social marker, making the owner or beneficiary feel special, with a sense of privilege

Consumers often mention attributes like high quality and prices, uniqueness, design, and heritage when asked about luxury goods (Duma et al., 2016). Based on this, Duma et al. aimed to bring science and practice together by aggregating the most-cited definitions of luxury from previous studies (Duma et al., 2016, p. 9). The listed attributes are grouped together according to their relevance in decreasing order, starting with the most-mentioned attributes, such as rarity, social distinction (status), high quality, and price. The cluster of moderate attributes contains adjectives like uniqueness, personalised, and immaterial. Heritage, functionality, craftsmanship, and recognisable styles play a role in the luxury brand construct, albeit on a less important level according to Duma et al.'s study. Although these findings offer some evidence on the key attributes, the authors did not give sufficient information on the method behind this analysis.

Although there are valid factors to differentiate brands according to their degree of luxury, there are additional aspects of differentiation across the academic discussion. In contrast to the consumer-centric attributes discussed above, the next section will subdivide luxury into potential clusters in society and product/service segments.

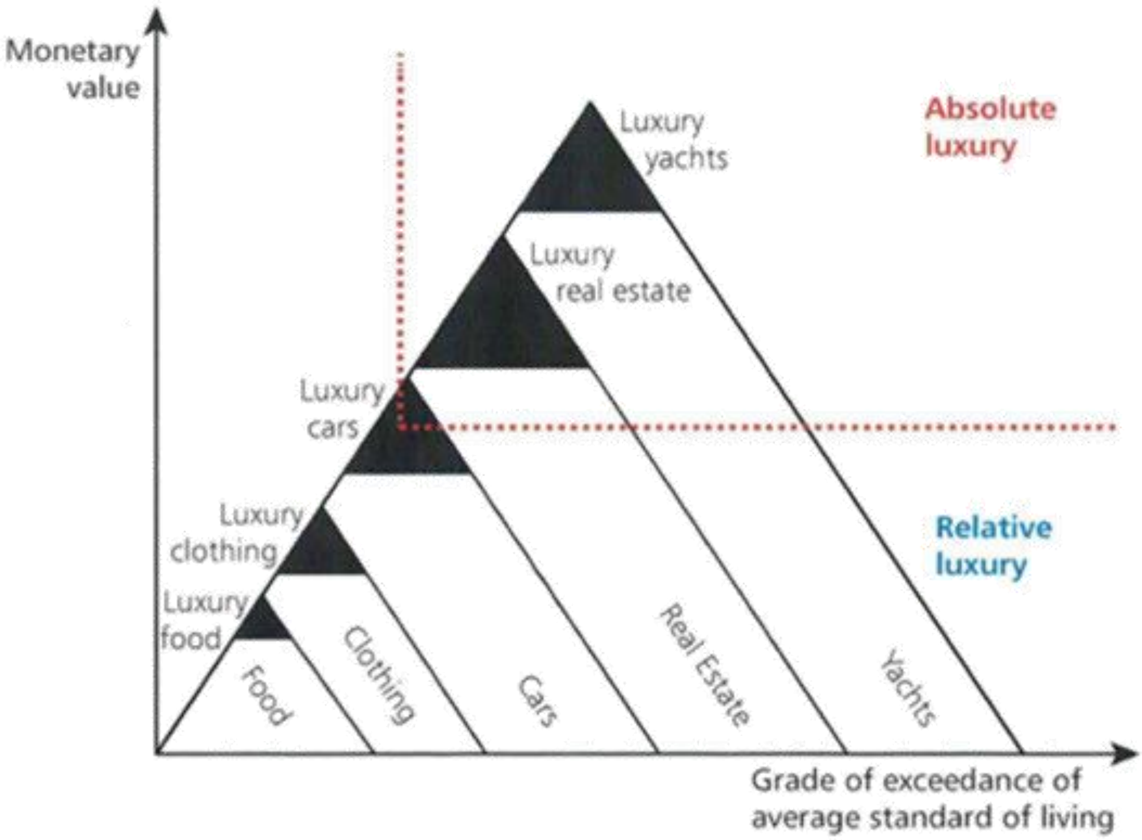
2.4.3 Absolute versus relative or affordable luxury

Within the scope of this study, the definition of affordable luxury goods is introduced. What may sound like a contradiction allows differentiation within the field of luxury. Nowadays, not only super-rich individuals (e.g. members of the royal family) can afford luxury goods. The situation is quite the opposite, with companies stretching their brands to reach new target customers (Albrecht et al., 2013; Reddy et al., 2009; Riley et al., 2015), and the middle class has been growing over the last decades (Duma et al., 2016; Vigneron & Johnson, 2004). Within the scope of this study, the premium and luxury automobile sector is highly differentiated, ranging from high-priced vehicles (e.g. Mercedes Benz AMG) to barely affordable collector cars (e.g. Bugatti, Pagani or Koenigsegg). A review of the literature revealed some discussions concerning this differentiation.

Duma et al. (2016) stressed this distinction due to the dynamic and relatively context-dependent nature of luxury and modern consumer societies with a growing number of mass-produced luxury goods and services. These changes in consumer behaviour, especially in Western societies, have changed the meaning, interpretation, and perception of luxury (Atwal & Williams, 2009). Some authors have described this phenomenon of "premium-to-luxury" (D'Arpizio et al., 2017) or "new luxury" (Silverstein & Fiske, 2003) as products and services that have a higher level of quality, taste, and desirability than normal goods within the category but are still affordable enough to be within reach (Silverstein & Fiske, 2003). Therefore, affordable luxury is a good that is relatively luxurious in a defined category and for a distinct target group (Duma et al., 2016). It typically characterises the high end of its product or service segment and is rather reachable to consumers outside the distinct segment with higher purchasing power than average in the segment (Duma et al., 2016). A customer who cannot easily afford a luxury watch or a higher-priced sports car is still capable of building up savings over time and buying these sort products for a special reason or personal reward. This shift in the meaning and consumption of luxury has been observed in academia as well, stressing this trend of middle-market consumers trading up for products that meet their aspirational needs, referred to as the “luxurification of society” (Yeoman & McMahon-Beattie, 2006, p. 319). Atwall and Williams (2009) provided a prominent example of products designed by Karl Lagerfeld and Stella McCartney at the fashion retail chain Hennes & Mauritz (Atwal & Williams, 2009, p. 339), indicating that, even in the context of an inexpensive volume retail chain, there is, for some customers, a certain degree of luxury in some products. According to Duma et al. (2015), this trend seems to be evident within a global context (Duma et al., 2016); this is supported by Atwal and Williams (2009), who emphasised the rapid growth of middle classes (i.e. in India) that close the financial distance to luxury goods by trading up to meet their future aspirations. Within the scope of this research project, this segment is of particular interest. The big premium car manufacturers (i.e. Mercedes, BMW, Porsche and Audi) offer affordable luxury cars under their sport brands (except Porsche). These products bring a significant revenue contribution as well as visibility on the streets in a growing market (Autogazette, 2020). Due to the increasing sales numbers and resulting high worldwide sales figures this segment of affordable luxury sport cars was chosen by the author and explained in detail in chapter 4.2.2.

In contrast, absolute luxury is represented by goods and services that exceed the average standard of premium products and necessity (Duma et al., 2016). Luxury products are usually scarce and high in absolute prices, reducing their accessibility to the majority of consumers and even being difficult to afford for individuals with high purchasing power in rich economies (Duma et al., 2016). Examples are expensive cars like Lamborghinis, real estate, or yachts with a price that can exceed 330 million euros. Figure 2.6 illustrates the hierarchy and relationship of affordable (relative) to absolute types of luxury.

Figure 2.6: Relative versus absolute luxury



Source: Duma et al. (2016, p. 8)

According to Figure 2.6, Duma et al. (2016) differentiated the two forms of luxury based on the monetary value of the respective asset. The term relative luxury corresponds to the definition affordable luxury of this research. Interestingly, the field of luxury cars represents the division triangle with both relative and absolute luxury cars. Assuming that a car with a transaction price between €70,000 and €200,000 might still be considered as having relative luxury, cars with absolute luxury can reach prices between €0.2 and €2.0 million, which are beyond the reach of consumers with an average standard of living. Luxury real estate and yachts count as absolute luxury according to their assumed monetary value. In contrast, luxury clothing and food are considered as having relative luxury due to their lower absolute monetary value in comparison with cars, real estate, or boats.

2.5 Summary

This section has attempted to provide a summary of the literature relating to branding and luxury branding. Although different articles and studies have emphasised different outcomes, depending on the predominant point of view (i.e. consumer or supplier), it can be concluded that generic attributes exist.

Besides the fundamental functions of brands (i.e. legal, differentiation, signal and identity, risk reduction, etc.), brands can add value to both sides, resulting in customer loyalty and commercial success. To allow this, brand awareness and product knowledge are the key to entering the consideration set of a consumer. Furthermore, the additional elements that make up a luxury brand (price, quality, exclusiveness, hedonic value, social acceptance, etc.) are highly relevant to the decision-making process and consumer satisfaction after purchasing. To maintain customer satisfaction, a brand should deliver sensory pleasure and cognitive stimulation during an experience. Having analysed the key definitions from the literature, the author’s assessment will express a definition that this thesis will follow.

A luxury brand is a branded product or service with objective and subjective assets. Objectively, luxury is underpinned by high quality through craftspersons’ expertise (i.e. heritage and know-how in manufacturing/unique techniques) that is either exclusive to a limited number of people or rarely available. A restricted and managed distribution network ensures personalised services. A high price is the result of the attributes mentioned rather than a predefined dimension. Even more important are the subjective dimensions of luxury. The subjective dimensions relate to consumers’ personal hedonic value. A luxury product or service offers a qualitative hedonistic experience, making the customer feel special. This leads to a social distinction through status and privilege and signals to others the value of the brand, which in return signals to the customer (i.e. the collective mass honours the brand that the owner recognises and intends to purchase). The emotional value of a product or service exceeds the functional value.

Chapter 3:

3 The Theory of Customer Experience

> Creating a strong customer experience is now a leading management objective. According to a recent study by Accenture (2015; in cooperation with Forrester), improving the customer experience received the most number one rankings when executives were asked about their top priorities for the next 12 months. Multiple firms, such as KPMG, Amazon, and Google, now have chief customer experience officers, customer experience vice presidents, or customer experience managers responsible for creating and managing the experience of their customers.
>
> Lemon & and Verhoef (2016, p. 69)

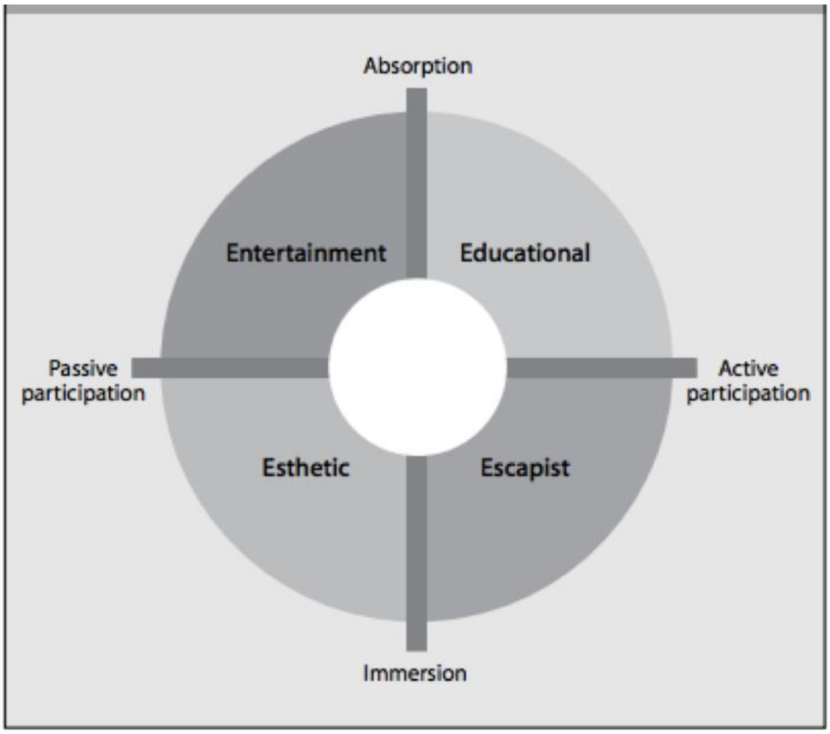
3.1 Introduction

Research has shown that consumers no longer simply purchase a product or service based on the fact sheet; they are also interested in the experience around the product or, even more, they purchase a story, a value, or even a dream (Morrison & Crane, 2007). Moreover, an international survey of the most innovative global companies pointed out customer experience as the most important corporate attribute named by these corporations (Jaruzelski, Loehr, & Holman, 2011). The importance of understanding customers during their experience journey has never been more relevant on the retailers' side (Puccinelli et al., 2009). Understanding consumers can enhance satisfaction and positively affect retail performance, which can lead to increased turnover and profits (Berry, Carbone, & Haeckel, 2002; Puccinelli et al., 2009). For this reason, companies have shifted their focus and invested millions of euros in research, supporting their understanding and ideally influencing consumer behaviour (Puccinelli et al., 2009). This indicates a need to understand the nature of customer experience, which is more important than ever in a society seeking adventure in its leisure time. Therefore, the aim is to understand consumers' expectations at each stage of their contact with a firm, whether it is during the decision-making process or in pre-sale and post-sale interactions. To achieve this aim, the chapter is structured as follows. First, models and theories will highlight the importance and allow the evaluation of features and development over time. Second, the major historical as well as recent definitions from the literature will be reviewed, including a categorisation and elaboration of definitions, effects, and features. Thirdly, customer experience will be considered from manufacturers' as well as consumers' point of view. Finally, a deep analysis of consumer behaviour, luxury consumption, and satisfaction criteria during the consumer journey will be the basis for this research (framework/pinpoints of possible variables for further investigation).

3.2 Definition of customer experience

Seen as seminal work and highly cited in academia is the theory of experiential consumption, emphasising the broader perspective of human behaviour, such as the hedonic as well as the emotional impacts on decision making (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). Continuing along this path, the study of customer experience was taken up by scholars. Pine and Gilmore (1998) and Schmitt (1999) were among the first scholars to emphasise the relevance of customer experience. The former authors' prominent article, vastly cited until today, introduced the logic of market differentiation through outstanding customer experiences – also a result of an increasing number of interchangeable products and services (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). They defined experiences as a distinct economic offering that extends beyond tangible assets by enjoying a series of memorable events that a company orchestrates to engage with customers more personally (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). The providers should consider every touchpoint to design memorable experiences or even construct flagship experiences that are not free of charge (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). According to their theory, the two dimensions of experience are "customer participation (passive & active)" and "connection (absorption & immersion)". According to where an experience falls along the spectra of these two dimensions, four subcategories build the realms of an experience (Pine & Gilmore, 1998, p. 102): entertainment, aesthetic, educational, and escapist.

Figure 3.1: Four realms of an experience



Source: Pine & Gilmore (1998, p. 102)

This rather commercially based view was supplemented one year later by Schmitt (1999), who added a customer-relevant perspective, bringing attributes into the discussion that should result in customer pleasure and satisfaction. His definition was formed by considering a multidimensional view on various types of experiences: sensory (sense), affective (feel), cognitive (think), physical (act), and social-identity (relate) experiences (Schmitt, 1999, p. 53). Building on these studies, the elements of sensory, affective, behavioural, and intellectual have been tested and proved to be significantly relevant to an experience (Brakus et al., 2009). Scholars have found that a firm must orchestrate all the “clues” that consumers detect in a buying process to deliver a satisfactory experience – thus differentiating it from its competitors (Berry et al., 2002).

To develop this approach further, Mascarenhas et al. (2006) proposed the concept of a total customer experience (service process perspective). A total customer experience refers to customers’ satisfaction of material and emotional needs during all the process stages in the personal consumption chain (Mascarenhas et al., 2006). Customer experience can be divided into four stages: searching, finding, using, and post-usage (Mascarenhas et al., 2006, p. 400), each including physical and emotional moments.

Two interesting new elements were included by Verhoef et al. (2009), namely retail atmosphere and loyalty programmes, in their model of customer experience. Considering a potential retail atmosphere in the automotive context, showrooms at car dealers have been the only touchpoint at which customers can physically experience products. The aspect of loyalty programmes is an element for further investigation in the luxury automotive context. In particular, in this context, it can be assumed that loyalty plays a crucial role when targeting customers who have high purchasing power, enabling them to switch products or services easily. The influence of an experience on customer satisfaction and loyalty has been evidenced in science (Brakus et al., 2009; Çifci et al., 2016; Lemon & Verhoef, 2016; Nam et al., 2011; Ramaseshan & Stein, 2014). Developing the term “loyalty”, Ramaseshan and Stein (2014) differentiated between purchase and attitudinal loyalty and stressed experience’s strong positive influence on both. The positive affect from experience on consumer satisfaction and loyalty has been underpinned by scholars (Brakus et al., 2009; Çifci et al., 2016; Nam et al., 2011).

Recently, scholars have stressed the need to include new media channels in the perspective of customer experiences. “Customers now interact with firms through myriad touch points in multiple channels and new media, and customer experiences are more social in nature” (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016, p. 69). This builds the customer journey, which includes all the touchpoints in the pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase stages (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016).

While most of the recent literature has advocated that customer experience and its management should be novel, a deep dive into the literature showed that research has focused on the field for more than two decades. The term experience can be found in extensive bodies of science and research across various disciplines, including marketing, philosophy, cognitive science, and management practice (Brakus et al., 2009).

The discussion in this overview shows that the term has been used heterogeneously, leading to multiple definitions in the literature. Within the scope of this thesis, the focus will be set on the major accepted definitions considered by the author. The following table aims to give an overview of the selected definitions in chronological order.

Table 3.1: Definitions of customer experience

Authors (chronological order)	Definition
Holbrook and Hirschman (1982**)**	Classification into utilitarian and aesthetic products. The experience of consumption appears in the fun that a consumer derives from a product, resulting in feelings of pleasure. The experiential aspects of consumption: consumer fantasies, feelings, and fun (p. 138).
Pine and Gilmore (1998)	"Engage individual customers in a way that creates a memorable event. Commodities are fungible, goods tangible, services intangible, and experiences memorable" (p. 98). Experience has two dimensions: (1) customer participation; and (2) connection (p. 101). Experience in total should consist of "emotional, physical, intellectual, or even spiritual" (p. 99) elements.
Schmitt (1999)	"Experiences provide sensory, emotional, cognitive, behavioural, and relational values that replace functional values" (p. 57).
Pullman and Gross (2004)	"Using that knowledge, companies can orchestrate an integrated series of clues that collectively meet or exceed people's emotional needs and expectations" (p. 1).
Gentile et al. (2007)	The authors built a definition from cited articles as follows: "Experience originates from a set of interactions between a customer and a product across the moments of contact or touch-points. This experience is strictly personal and implies the customer's involvement at different levels (rational, emotional, sensorial physical and spiritual)" (p. 397).
Verhoef et al. (2009)	The authors submitted "that the customer experience construct is holistic in nature and involves the customer's cognitive, affective, emotional, social and physical responses to the retailer" (p. 32). Additionally, the experience is created by elements in the hands of the supplier (interface, retail, look, etc.) but outside a company's control (influence by others, the real purpose of shopping, etc.). The total experience includes search, purchase, consumption, and after-sales phases.
Brakus et al. (2009)	The authors identified five experience dimensions: sensory, affective, intellectual, behavioural, and social.
Grewal, Levy, and Kumar (2009)	"Customer experience includes every point of contact at which the customer interacts with the business, product, or service" (p. 1).
Puccinelli et al. (2009)	The authors focused on seven consumer behaviour research domains that influence the customer experience: (1) goals, schemas, and information processing; (2) memory; (3) involvement; (4) attitudes; (5) affect; (6) atmospherics; and (7) consumer attributions and choices (p. 1).
De Keyser, Lemon, Keiningham, and Philipp (2015)	"Customer experience is comprised of the cognitive, emotional, physical, sensorial, and social elements that mark the customer's direct or indirect interaction with a (set of) market actor(s)" (p. 23).
Lemon and Verhoef (2016)	The authors concluded "that customer experience is a multidimensional construct focusing on a customer's cognitive, emotional, behavioural, sensorial, and social responses to a firm's offerings during the customer's entire purchase journey" (p. 71).

Source: The author

As can be seen from Table 3.1, multiple definitions of the term "customer experience" exist, each with different characteristics. However, within these definitions, clusters can be derived depending on identical statements or subject areas. The work of Holbrook and Hirschmann (1982), Pine and Gilmore (1998), and Schmitt (1999) has been considered as seminal work and has been highly cited in the field of experience. According to the high level of adaptation within academia, the following features can be considered as significant for customer experience.

- Sensory, emotional, intellectual (cognitive), behavioural (social), physical
- Creating memorable events (e.g. through emotions like fun when using a product)
- Connection with or even participation of consumers

In this regard, Brakus et al. (2009, p. 52) conceptualised brand experience as "subjective, internal consumer responses (sensations, feelings, and cognitions) and behavioural responses evoked by brand-related stimuli that are part of a brand's design and identity, packaging, communications, and environments". Verhoef et al. (2009, p. 32) clearly defined experience in a retail scope as a multidimensional concept and highlighted that "the customer experience concept is holistic in nature, involving the customer's cognitive, affective, emotional, social, and physical responses". This should be translated into feelings and physical and interactive experiences when directly or indirectly interacting with a brand (Atwal & Williams, 2009; Brakus et al., 2009; Iglesias et al., 2011). Schmitt, Brakus, and Zarantonello (2009) suggested that every contact point in a service leads to an experience, irrespective of its appearance and form. This extensive view considers customer experience to be holistic in nature, stressing the emotional, sensory, social, and cognitive responses of a person to all his or her interactions with a company (Bolton, Gustafsson, McColl-Kennedy, J. Sirianni, & K. Tse, 2014; Gentile et al., 2007; Lemke, Clark, & Wilson, 2011; Lemon & Verhoef, 2016; Verhoef et al., 2009):

- total experience of search, purchase, consumption, and after-sales phases (information processing, memory):
- set of interactions between a customer and a product across the moments of contact or the touchpoints (every point of contact, atmospherics):
- elements outside a company's control (influence by others, the real purpose of shopping, etc.).

Grewal, Levy, and Kumar (2009) proposed that, in a retailing environment, customer experience can be categorised in parallel to the retail mix (i.e., price experience and promotion experience). This, however, merely reflects the multidisciplinary aspects of customer experience in the year 2018, with an oversupply of goods and marketing messages. This is why it is indispensable to consider elements like information processing, memory, affects, and underlying shopping goals (Puccinelli et al., 2009) in a customer experience definition. The feature of orchestrating an integrated series of clues is accordingly important for a customer experience.

This is also highlighted by De Keyser et al. (2015, p. 23), who emphasised that experience is "comprised of the cognitive, emotional, physical, sensorial, spiritual, and social elements that mark the customer's direct or indirect interaction with (an)other market actor(s)", that is, the cognitive "data" collected in all direct or indirect interactions with a firm or its product shaping an overall experience (De Keyser, Lemon, Keiningham, & Philipp, 2015). Recent definitions have connected these outcomes with the construct of a customer journey (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016).

Generally, it can be concluded that practitioners and scholars have come to define the total customer experience as a multidimensional construct. The most relevant attributes that have been identified are cognitive, emotional, behavioural, sensorial, physical, and social components (Frow & Payne, 2007; Lemon & Verhoef, 2016; Schmitt, 1999; Verhoef et al., 2009; Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2010). Additionally, consumers' participation/involvement may increase the personal relevance and therefore has a higher chance of being manifested in the memory. It is crucial that these stored experiences are outstanding experiences generating significant "contributions" from the customers' viewpoint that are worth remembering. Relevance can also be seen in the consideration of the entire experience journey, that is, the accumulation of touchpoints and their atmosphere in several phases within a pre- and post-decision process (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016; Puccinelli et al., 2009). However, companies can influence some of these elements – elements outside companies' control are relevant as well (influence by others, the real purpose of shopping, etc.). Considering the analysed work, this thesis will follow the definition below.

> The customer experience results from the sum of sensorial, emotional, cognitive, affective, behavioural, and social responses at various contact points with a supplier or brand. These can be perceived subjectively as well as objectively during direct or indirect interactions at all touchpoints. In this regard, a touchpoint is defined for each verbal (i.e. communication and advertisement) and non-verbal event (i.e. design and product experience) recognised by the customer and attributed to a particular brand or company. This applies during the pre-sales, sales, and post-sales phases, including customers' reactions and evaluations at multiple touchpoints over time (customer journey). A high degree of positive memories and repetition (loyalty) as well as recommendation could be used as an indicator of a successful customer experience.

3.2.1 Customer experience from manufacturers' and customers' point of view

As identified earlier, customer experience is characterised by positive impressions and associations between a customer and a supplier and establishes itself at several touchpoints and over time (customer journey). For the sake of completeness, within the literature, the experience term has also been divided into two main perspectives, which are manufacturers and consumers. The suppliers' point of view has often been described by the aim of a firm to design and craft an experience for the customer to receive (Berry et al., 2002). The customer perspective is mainly linked to the "consumption" of an experience itself (Schmitt, 2010), including the interactions between customers in a broader ecosystem (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004).

Considering the focus of this study, a brief discussion about these perspectives is presented below; however, more attention is paid to consumers, who are described in greater depth in the following sections.

Figure 3.2: Customer experience from manufacturers' and customers' point of view

Source: The author

Manufacturers

Why is customer experience important from suppliers' point of view? Authors have clearly identified the economic benefits that are maintained when focusing on experiences (Iglesias et al., 2011; Mascarenhas et al., 2006; Pine & Gilmore, 1998; Puccinelli et al., 2009). A focus on the functional benefits of products or services, especially within a homogeneous product market, often results in price wars and predatory competition. Consequently, most companies flood their customers and prospects due to their emphasis on intense information and advertisement strategies. In this regard, it is important to understand that, "If you sell undifferentiated products, you compete solely on price; but if you provide experiences that consumers want, you offer a differentiated service for which a premium can be charged" (Patterson, Hodgson, & Shi, 2008, p. 30). Providers should consider every touchpoint to design memorable experiences or even construct flagship experiences that are not free of charge (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). The same digital world that changes information behaviour and the process of making purchase decisions (see section 3.2.2) is characterised by a high level of transparency, information density, and small barriers to changing suppliers (Hennigs, Wiedmann, & Klarmann, 2012). Cognitive buying decisions are influenced by emotions, representing a differentiator towards competition by "dazzle their senses, touch their hearts, and stimulate their minds" (Schmitt, 1999, p. 57), potentially leading to a memorable event driving repurchasing and recommendation (Schmitt, 1999). The economic perspective is characterised by concepts such as experience economy (Pine & Gilmore, 1998), experience marketing (Iglesias et al., 2011), and an increase in performance (Bagozzi & Dholakia, 2006; Mascarenhas et al., 2006; Puccinelli et al., 2009). Therefore, an experience-oriented approach can support a firm in differentiating itself even in homogeneous markets and lead to economic advantages.

Consumers

From customers' point of view, authors have emphasised two interesting characteristics to consider when talking about experiences, which are the "social view" (Algesheimer et al., 2005; Atwal & Williams, 2009; Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982) and the "psychological view" (Bogomolova & Millburn, 2012; Esch et al., 2012; Schmitt, 2012; Schwarz & Xu, 2011). The social view is characterised by concepts of hedonistic consumption (Atwal & Williams, 2009; Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982), the influences from society on individuals (Algesheimer et al., 2005), and the experience society. From a psychological perspective, the subjects for discussion are the implications of experiences for consumer behaviour (Biswas, 2009; Bogomolova & Millburn, 2012; Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2010), decision-making processes (Schwarz & Xu, 2011), and theories that explain how the brain processes and evaluates experiences (Esch et al., 2012).

Taken together, the findings from the last chapters stress the experience of a customer at various touchpoints and emphasise the subjective and subconscious nature of the processing of these experiences (Brakus et al., 2009; Pullman & Gross, 2004). Hereinafter, the body of literature on consumer behaviour, consumption, and decision-making processes is evaluated in greater depth.

3.2.2 Customer experience models

Consumers purchase for various reasons besides a specific need for a product or service. Some might articulate a rational reason for buying; however, some may need entertainment, recreation, social interaction, or intellectual stimulation (Puccinelli et al., 2009). Consumers have various expectations during the purchase and post-purchase phases (on the conscious and sub-conscious levels) that, if met, lead to satisfaction. Therefore, the next section will evaluate consumers' purchase decision process in more depth.

Traditional consumer research theories have focused on the rational perspective of decision making when buying products. Quality, utility, and value for money have been identified as key factors in a purchase decision (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016; Puccinelli et al., 2009; Solomon, 2009). Integrated models of the buying process have shown that customers move from need recognition to purchase to post-evaluation of the product after the purchase (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016; Puccinelli et al., 2009). Building on these, authors have added more detailed factors to the discussion on the five stages of decision making (De Keyser et al., 2015; Puccinelli et al., 2009; Solomon, 2009). The stages that a consumer passes through are: problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, product choice, and usage (Solomon, 2009, p. 325). Puccinelli et al. (2009) described a consumer decision process during a buying process in retail as shown in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Consumer decision process

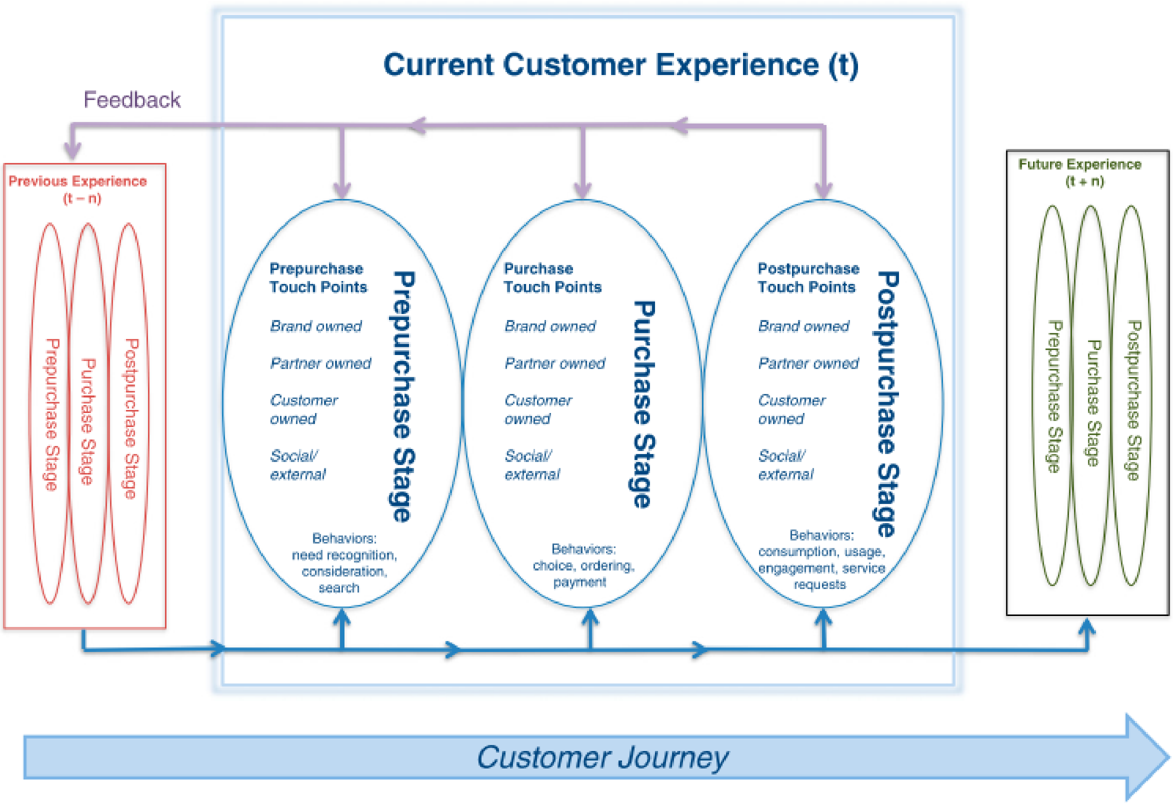
	Need Recognition	Information Search	Evaluation	Purchase	Post-Purchase
Goals, schema and information processing	●	●	●	●	●
Memory		●	●		
Involvement	●	●	●		
Attitudes			●	●	●
Affect	●	●	●	●	●
Atmospherics'			●	●	●
Attributions and choices			●	●	●

Source: Puccinelli et al. (2009, p. 16)

Their review of consumer behaviour in retailing research revealed relevant topic areas that play an important role in various stages of the decision process. First, the conceptual process of consumer decision making contains, in chronological order, need recognition, information search, evaluation, purchase, and post-purchase (Puccinelli et al., 2009). Second, the decision process shown is confronted with theoretical concepts that are linked to specific elements of consumer behaviour and perception, which are relevant to, or affect, the various process steps (Figure 3.4). Puccinelli et al. (2009) stated that shopping goals affect the need recognition, information search, evaluation, purchase, and post-purchase stages and provided examples. A consumer who wants to shop only for ingredients for a dinner is more likely to search and evaluate only according to his or her initial shopping goal and is less attracted by other product advertisements (Puccinelli et al., 2009, p. 18). Additionally, the element of consumers' memory (i.e. product knowledge in this dissertation), described as the recall of information about a product or previous shopping evaluation, affects only the step of information searching and evaluation.

Building on the work of Puccinelli, Lemon and Verhoef (2016) developed a process model in which customer experience is conceptualised in three overall stages – pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase – as shown in Figure 3.3.

Figure 3.3: Process model for the customer journey and experience



Source: Lemon and Verhoef (2016, p. 77)

Here, the customer experience is conceptualised as a customer's "journey" over time during the purchase cycle across multiple touchpoints. In each of the three main stages, the experience contains touchpoints that are owned by the brand itself, by its partners, or by the customers (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). This process also incorporates external factors (i.e. other customers, peer influences, etc.) as well as past experiences (including previous purchases).

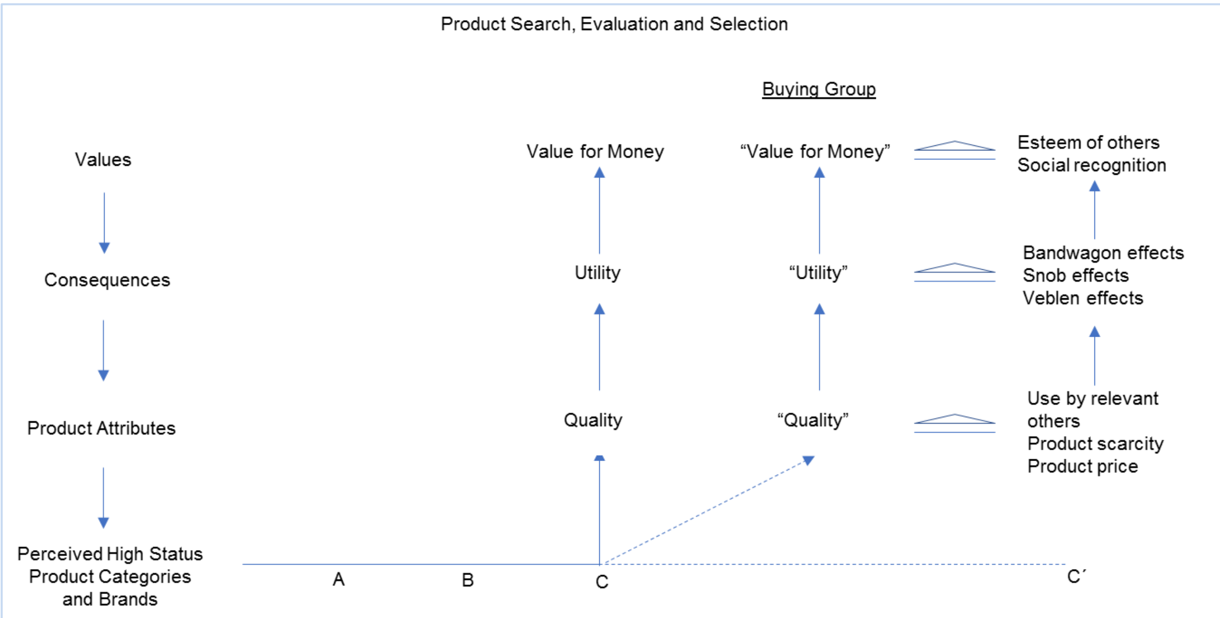
The pre-purchase stage (representing the first stage) includes all the aspects of the interaction between the customer and the brand before the purchase. In theory, this stage might include the customer's entire experience before the purchase as well as the elements of need, goal, and impulse recognition (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). "The second stage, purchase, covers all customer interactions with the brand and its environment during the purchase event itself. It is characterized by behaviours such as choice, ordering, and payment" (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016, p. 76). Traditionally, actions that refer to the marketing mix and atmospherics at the point of sale aim to influence the consumers' decision within this phase (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). The post-purchase stage (third stage) incorporates customers' interactions with the brand and its environment after the actual purchase took place. "This stage includes behaviours such as usage and consumption, post-purchase engagement, and service requests" (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016, p. 76). Within this phase, consumers experience the brand or product/service itself, and it is therefore crucial when it comes to satisfaction, loyalty, and repurchasing (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). Although Batra and Keller (2016) argued that modern consumer decision journeys are more nonlinear and circular, they supported the view that consumers still follow a sequence of steps or stages as they engage with a particular brand. Their generic journey contains: 1) needs/wants; 2) the recall of brands associated with needs; 3) the consideration of a smaller subset of brands; 4) a search for information/learning; 5) likes and trust/confidence (functional and non-functional); 6) willingness to pay (more); 7) choosing and planning the purchase; 8) consumption; 9) satisfaction; 10) loyalty and repeat purchasing; 11) engagement and interaction (offline and online brand activities); and 12) being an active advocate (offline and online with social media) (Batra & Keller, 2016). Supporting the model of Lemon and Verhoef (2016), they also stressed the chances that consumers might skip steps, reject the product at any stage, or move forwards or backwards across stages as well as dropping out of the decision process (Batra & Keller, 2016). In addition, they specified the aspects of social and external activities by distinguishing between engaging with brand activities and advocating a brand proactively.

Within the scope of this study, the discussed process (shown in Figure 3.3) may function as a framework to examine consumer experience in the luxury automotive sector empirically over time during the customer journey as well as to identify empirically relevant touchpoints and their different effects. However, although these models give information that is relevant to the topic at hand, they do not fully integrate additional aspects of status consumption, especially for expensive luxury goods like sports cars.

Touchpoint analysis: Influencing the determinants of a status-linked buying process

The touchpoints within a consumer decision-making process have been identified previously. Additionally, academics have stressed the need for a greater understanding of the three stages within the scope of status-seeking consumers (Mason, 1992). Especially in the context of luxury automobiles, the necessity is more than given. Mason (1992) stressed the difficulties concerning research about status-seeking consumption due to the denial of or ability to conceal status motives when asking consumers. Mason (1992) added an interesting approach to the debate on status-linked consumer research.

Figure 3.4: Product search, evaluation, and selection of status goods



Source: Mason (1992)

First, status-seeking buyers are necessarily directed in their market behaviour by a target group or "audience", the opinions of which are critical to the success or failure of any status-motivated expenditure (Mason, 1992). This is supported by the results from recent studies, showing that purchase intentions are higher for consumers who watch video blogs reviewing luxury products (Lee & Watkins, 2016). A study within the fashion context stressed the enormous social influence of journalists, celebrities, or bloggers, who are considered as experts and trendsetters in the field by consumers, leading to a strong influence on purchase decisions (Sudha & Sheena, 2017). In the next stage, status-seeking consumers evaluate a product and brand according to their income and wealth possibilities and the status values relevant to the group that they are trying to influence (Mason, 1992). This mentioned target group (or audience) selects products according to their values, resulting in consequences that lead them to product attributes and a final product or brand. “Whilst others may select this same brand for its utilitarian merits, status-seekers will be buying for the social status such a purchase is able to confer” (Mason, 1992). Mason stressed the difficulty in research of separating consumers shopping for utilitarian reasons and those emphasising “quality” to explain their choices, although the purchase is based on the attributes, consequences, and values represented by the good’s perceived social status (C´) (Mason, 1992). He pointed out the possibility of separation through interviews focusing on perceived product attributes and not on real product knowledge.

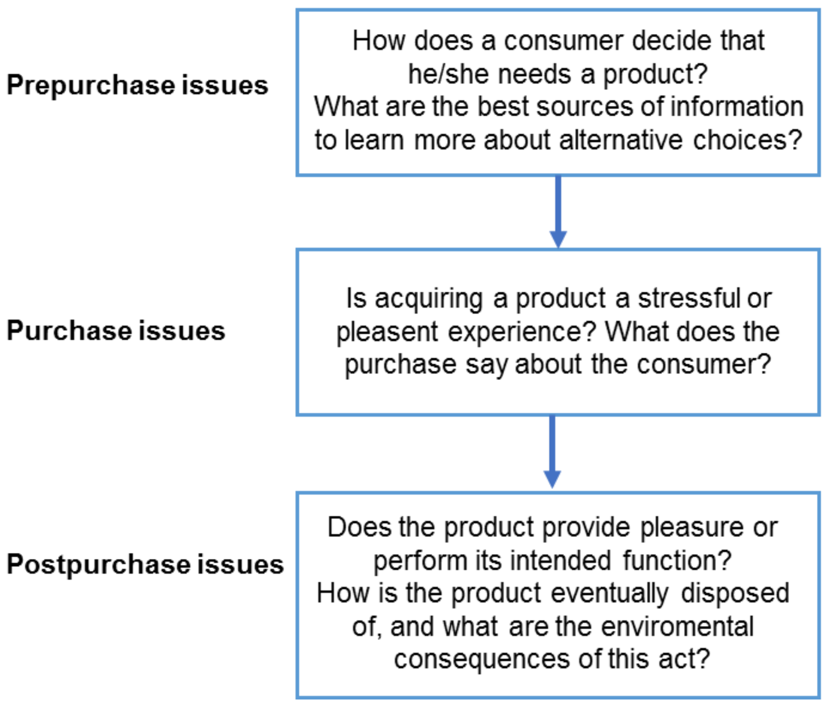
Building on the work of Mason (1992), Vigneron and Johnson (1999) defined relevant factors concerning the decision-making process associated with luxury-seeking consumer behaviour. Luxury-seeking consumers do not stop their evaluation process after brand and function selection (Mason, 1992). Decisions relating to the act of purchasing itself (display purchasing) can be part of the status value, like store-related status gains via restricted opportunities to buy (i.e. the store image and status of the retailer itself) (Mason, 1992). Manufacturers and retailers aim to provide a retail atmosphere that underpins their status goods and meets the expectations of their customers. As shown before, the study by Puccinelli et al. (2009) incorporated the dimension of “atmospherics” into the decision process and found it to be relevant especially during the evaluation, purchase, and post-purchase phases.

Finally, the social visibility of consumption should be kept on a high level along with the involvement of relevant others in the consumption process (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016; Puccinelli et al., 2009). “This explains the importance of social events as vehicles for status display as they allow members of any target audience to observe and to share in the consumption of high-value status goods and to confer status on the donor accordingly” (Mason, 1992). Regardless of the specific goal, consumers have expectations regarding a purchase experience, which ideally leads to satisfaction if the expectations are met throughout the journey (from pre- to post-purchase) (Puccinelli et al., 2009). Satisfaction has primarily been conceptualised as resulting from a comparison of the actual delivered performance with the customer expectations (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). Studies have assessed and confirmed the determinants of consumer satisfaction ideally leading to brand loyalty and firm performance (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016; Nam et al., 2011).

3.2.3 Luxury brand consumption experience

For centuries, people globally have satisfied themselves with the possession of luxury goods; however, today's consumers have a higher disposable income, making the consumption of luxury possible (Husic & Cicic, 2009). The attributes of luxury consumption can be derived from the existing studies and discussions. Beginning with the process of consumption, authors have mentioned three stages through which a consumer passes. The pre-purchase phase involves the questions "How does a customer decide that he/she needs a product?" and "What are the best sources of information to learn more about the choice and alternatives?" (Solomon, 2009, p. 8). The purchase phase contains questions such as "Is the acquisition of the product a stressful or a pleasant experience?" and "What does the purchase say about the customer?" (Solomon, 2009, p. 8). Thirdly, in the post-purchase phase, the focus is on the evaluation of the usage of a product or service, prompting questions like "does it provide pleasure and fulfil the intended function?" (Solomon, 2009, p. 8).

Figure 3.5: Process of consumption – consumers' perspective



Source: Solomon (2009, p. 8)

In 2016, the study by Lemon and Verhoef adapted these stages but added the dimension of "social and external touchpoints" to all three stages (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). Modern consumers are surrounded by external influencers (i.e. other customers, peer influencers, independent information sources, environments, etc.) that may affect the process (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). This also leads to the issue of the potential reactions of third parties when using the product in the post-purchase phase. Especially in the automotive sector, positive as well as negative social reactions can occur when using an extrovert car (i.e. because pollution, size, or loudness → social pressure).

Luxury consumption has its own slightly special dimensions. Husic and Cicic (2009) stressed the features of luxury consumption, starting with the reason for consumers to distinguish themselves and demonstrate prestige (see social status, section 3.2.5) and status, among others (Husic & Cicic, 2009). By using luxury goods, they communicate meaning about themselves to their reference group; consumers purchase luxury goods primarily for symbolic meanings (Husic & Cicic, 2009, p. 234). They also found that luxury consumers behave similarly worldwide, regardless of their economic or social surroundings (Husic & Cicic, 2009). There seems to be uniformity and evidence of a self-image enhancement through luxury consumption; however, the study identified two kinds of luxury users: those who like to have visible brand logos to demonstrate their purchase and those who choose a hidden brand label (Husic & Cicic, 2009).

3.2.4 Luxury brands and symbolic meaning

The research reported in the previous chapters was conducted to identify and conceptualise the dimensions of various brands, and the majority of the focus was on the symbolic use of brands (D. Aaker, 1991; J. Aaker, 1997; Farquhar, 1989; Keller, 1993). It is relevant to understand how consumers perceive brands to translate the knowledge into the decision-making process later and build the framework for this study. Solomon (2009) stressed the process of perception, which consists of three stages, translating raw stimuli into meaning. "Raw stimuli" refers to the immediate response of our sensory receptors (eyes, ears, nose, mouth, and skin) to basic stimuli, such as sights, sounds, smells, taste, and texture (Solomon, 2009, p. 53). These impressions are then selected, organised, and interpreted, describing the process of perception (Solomon, 2009).

Within the scope of this study, it is important to include the influence of luxury on the perception of consumers. As discussed in Chapter 2, attributes like uniqueness, quality, prominent appearance, and hedonic and symbolic values shape the perception of luxury in consumers' minds. The symbolic meaning of a luxury product has been the subject of a debate. On the one hand, the meaning of a luxury purchase plays an important role in the satisfaction of consumer needs and communication to others by displaying a new car, for instance; however, Solomon added the view of products as stimuli for self-attribution depending on the role that the consumer is aiming to represent (Solomon, 1983). If a consumer has reached a certain stage of life and is perceived as being in a "role" (i.e. a successful and high-performing banker), he/she is more likely to purchase a car, for instance, that underlines and fits with the defined role. Vice versa, could inferences be drawn about an individual by evaluating the products that he or she purchases (i.e. do sophisticated brands attract sophisticated consumers, etc.)?

Figure 3.6: Relationship between products and consumers

Proposed bi-directional relationship between products and consumers

	Antecedent	Motivation	Result
Products as responses:	self-image →	need arousal →	need satisfaction product purchase impression management
Products as stimuli:	product symbolism →	role definition →	Self attribution situational self-image role performance

Source: Solomon (1983, p. 323)

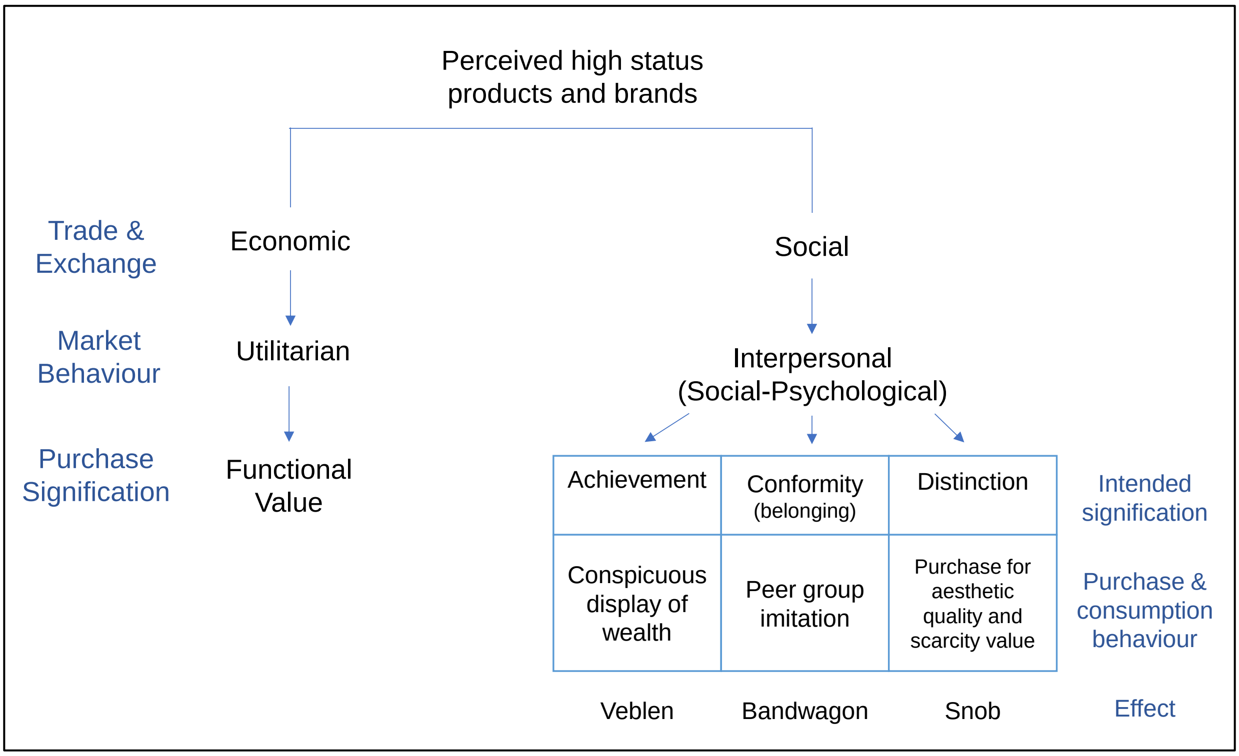
Later, Vigneron and Johnson developed a scale to measure brand luxury perception. Their conceptual framework underpinned the importance of non-personal (quality, uniqueness, etc.) and personal perceptions (see "hedonic and extended self", section 2.3.2) for consumers in the luxury context (Vigneron & Johnson, 2004).

3.2.5 Motives for making luxury purchases

"A man always has two reasons for doing anything:
a good reason and the real reason"
J. P. Morgan

The discussions and findings in the previous section clearly highlight important aspects when investigating the motives for making luxury purchases. These personal aspects should be complemented with interpersonal aspects as they can also be relevant motives within the consumer decision process. Though the need for functional qualities in numerous goods and services is necessary, consumers no longer purchase for practical value alone (Mason, 1992). The desire for social distinction can, in extreme cases, lead buyers to ignore a product's economic utility and purchase exclusively for the social recognition (Mason, 1992). The conspicuous consumption of highly visible goods displays their wealth and aims to gain social status (Truong & McColl, 2011). In his work, Mason (1992) referred to three external effects that have been identified in status consumption. Later, academics also highlighted the importance of functional values as well as self-directed motives.

Figure 3.7: Status goods and market behaviour



Source: Adopted from Mason (1992)

Consumers no longer purchase only for practical value (Mason, 1992). The “Veblen effect” describes the willingness to pay a price premium for a functionally equivalent product that the purchaser perceives to be more prestigious and demonstrative, displaying wealth to gain social status (Mason, 1992; Truong & McColl, 2011). Veblen’s theory was established in 1899 and describes a value system, which assumes that one’s social prestige depends on one’s material standard of living. This conspicuous consumption refers to expensive, luxury consumption, which provides evidence of wealth and status (Niesiobędzka, 2018). Pleasure is achieved not from the products’ utilitarian attributes but from the audience’s reaction to the wealth displayed by the purchaser (Mason, 1992). Although these mechanisms are still relevant in modern times, researchers have recognised a cultural shift (Bronner & de Hoog, 2018; Charoennan & Huang, 2018). Chen et al. (2008), for example, stressed that conspicuous consumption means, on the one hand, the ostentation of wealth but, on the other hand, the demonstration of something symbolic that is more immaterial to displaying one’s status to an important reference group through the consumption of publicly visible products (Chen, Yeh, & Wang, 2008). Later on, Chaudhuri et al. (2011) placed more emphasis on symbolic consumption for self-presentation to express a distinctive self-image to others (Chaudhuri, Mazumdar, & Ghoshal, 2011). Nowadays, in the post-modern society, the primary objects of consumption have become immaterial experiences (travelling, dining, festivals, theatres, etc.) rather than material possessions (Bronner & Hoog, 2018; Niesiobędzka, 2018). Considering this, it would be interesting to investigate this experiential focus within the luxury sports car sector (i.e. whether the possession or experience is a predominant buying criterion of such cars across different age groups).

The highest form of distinction is explained via the “snob effect”, whereby consumers only buy products due to their high price and scarcity value and decrease their purchases once others have increased their consumption of the product (Mason, 1992). Finally the “bandwagon effect” represents the desire to conform to and identify with a particular social group by buying similar products and adopting identical patterns of consumption (Mason, 1992).

Consumers who engage in status-driven consumption often do so to imitate the consumption patterns of the people who are directly above them in the social hierarchy (Ericksen, 1996; Mason, 1998). While social status depends on others’ willingness to grant it, social imitation is normally obvious, and the purchasing and ownership of luxury goods tend to be more public for status reasons than private (Truong & McColl, 2011). Although the theory around the mechanism of gaining status through consumption is more than a century old, it is still valid in modern times (Truong & McColl, 2011). To this day, aspirational consumers tend to imitate the buying behaviour of reference groups to which they would like to belong; however, some consumers seek inconspicuous benefits, such as the quality of the product or self-directed pleasure (Beverland, 2006; Truong & McColl, 2011; Vigneron & Johnson, 1999, 2004).**Quality, self-reward and self-esteem**

Later, researchers added three more elements to this debate, focusing on the self of a consumer within luxury consumption. First, the desire for superior quality has been mentioned as one of the most relevant attributes of luxury products (Kapferer, 1997; Truong & McColl, 2011). Recent studies have often used perceived quality as a dimension of customer satisfaction whereby customer expectations are compared with perceptions (Vickers & Renand, 2003; Vigneron & Johnson, 2004). Second, self-rewarding experiences can motivate consumers to make luxury purchases (Silverstein & Fiske, 2003; Tsai, 2005). Some consumers who trade up to luxury brands (see section 2.3) may not have the highest disposable income but like to spend their increasing income on hedonic (see section 2.3.2) goods and service (Dubois & Duquesne, 1993; Dubois & Paternault, 1995; Silverstein & Fiske, 2003). Self-directed motives extend beyond superior product quality as they are rather driven by intrinsic motivations and emotions. Third, self-esteem refers to feelings of self-worth, self-liking, self-respect, and self-acceptance, that is, a part of humans' ego, with the aim of being enhanced (Truong & McColl, 2011). More precisely, self-gifts can maintain and enhance self-worth, which is an important factor of self-esteem (Mick & Demoss, 1990).

3.3 Conclusion

A brand has fundamental functions for corporations and customers (i.e. legal, differentiation, signalling and identification, risk reduction, etc.). Strong brands have been built up to increase brand awareness, ideally linked to product knowledge, with the aim of entering the consideration set of consumers. Furthermore, the additional elements that make up a luxury brand (price, quality, exclusiveness, hedonic value, social acceptance, etc.) are highly relevant to the decision-making process and consumer satisfaction after purchasing. This brand satisfaction can be achieved through various stimuli, like sensory pleasure and cognitive stimulation during an experience.

Therefore, brands can add value, resulting in customer loyalty and commercial success. This brand equity is therefore important for both sides – customers and suppliers. Brand equity is evaluated by the mental image of a brand in the minds of consumers as a potential prerequisite for decision making. This provides added value from consumers' point of view. Once a customer is aware of a brand, is satisfied with the perceived quality, and has positive brand associations, these can lead to a high level of brand loyalty. Empirical studies have shown valid mediation of consumer satisfaction in brand loyalty as well as positive effects of physical quality, staff behaviour, ideal self-congruence, brand identification, and lifestyle congruence on consumer satisfaction.

Apparently, a core element within this scope is the discipline of experience. Research has shown that consumers no longer simply purchase a product or service based on the fact sheet; they are also interested in the experience around the product. Total customer experience refers to customers' satisfaction of material and emotional needs during all the process stages in the personal consumption chain. Customer experience can be conceptualised in three overall stages: pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase. The most relevant attributes along this journey have been identified as cognitive, emotional, behavioural, sensorial, physical, and social components. It is crucial that these stored experiences are outstanding experiences generating significant "contributions" from the customers' point of view that are worth remembering.

The customer experience of luxury consumption has more interesting elements to consider. Here, dimensions of "social and external" or "self-centric" have been identified in academia. External influences of other customers or peer groups are relevant too. Further motivations for luxury consumption are found in positive as well as negative social reactions, demonstrating prestige, communicating symbolic meaning, or even enhancing the self-image. In the literature, these motives have been summarised as follows: conspicuous display of wealth (achievement), peer group imitation (belonging), purchase of rare and super-expensive products (distinction), and self-reward and self-esteem.

What is still missing in academia?

In all the studies analysed, the author found that the majority of studies has focused on retail, fast-moving consumer goods, or fashion. Although customer experience and luxury have been partially covered by these studies, none of them have deeply explored the rich spectrum of a high-value luxury industry. Moreover, most of them have mixed industries and goods (i.e. consumer electronics, food, wine, fashion, cars, etc.), which potentially biases the results. Aiming to explore the determinants in the luxury field of sport cars also allows the researcher to investigate rational (cognitive) and emotional (symbolic) determinants (rewarding, hedonic, and symbolic).

Most studies have been quantitative in nature, sampling mainly university students, industry experts, or random consumers in shopping malls, for instance. This gives a solid fundament on which to work but simultaneously lacks in-depth insights from customers who purchase luxury automotive products continuously and have reached a certain stage in life (lifestyle) of which products like this are a part. This is particularly reflected in the lack of luxury service studies, as researchers might find it difficult to contact customers who have experienced the entire journey of a luxury product. Empirical studies have shown valid mediation of consumer satisfaction in brand loyalty as well as positive effects of physical quality, staff behaviour, ideal self-congruence, brand identification, and lifestyle congruence on consumer satisfaction. However, these results have been investigated within the hotel and restaurant industry; it would be interesting to validate the findings in the luxury automotive sector.

In this sense, the German market for luxury automotive products is remarkable; the population’s disposable income is considerable and there is a large cultural background for automotive products. This is the reason for the author’s choice of Germany as the context of this analysis (introduced in chapter 4).

Research questions

The purpose of this study is to explore and investigate what determines customer experience within the scope of affordable luxury automobiles. In addition, customers’ insights into their motivations and behaviours contribute significantly to the existing studies, based mostly on non-luxury customers and especially non-luxury automotive customers.

- What are the factors affecting brand experience in the affordable luxury sport cars sector in Germany?

- What actions can a luxury sport car manufacturer take to improve the brand experience?

Chapter 4:

4 The industrial and geographical contexts of the luxury automotive sector

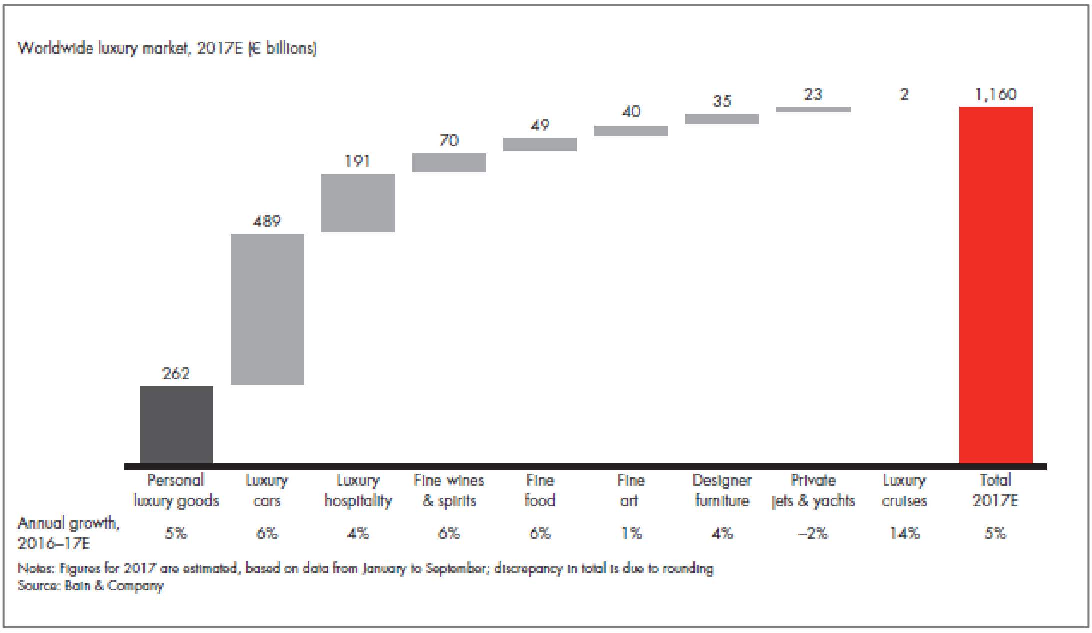
4.1 Introduction

This section discusses briefly the geographical and industrial contexts of this research and provides the additional background necessary for understanding this research. It also presents a brief overview of the automotive industry and some background information on the engineering- and car-centric culture in Germany.

4.2 Luxury motor business and industry

Considering all segments, the luxury market grew by 5% to an estimated €1.2 trillion globally in 2017 (D'Arpizio et al., 2017). Sales of luxury cars continued to dominate the market, increasing by 6% to reach €489 billion in total (D'Arpizio et al., 2017). Asia and upcoming online channels propelled the segment's expansion. Luxury experiences remained particularly attractive to consumers, as illustrated by the sales growth of high-end food and wine (both increased by 6% from the previous year) and sales of luxury cruises (which rose by an impressive 14%).

Figure 4.1: Global luxury market



Source: D'Arpizio et al. (2017, p. 6)

Several industry reports have analysed the global luxury market with a focus on personal luxury goods (including clothing, bags, accessories, fragrances, cosmetics, jewellery, and watches). This market experienced growth worldwide, driven by local consumption (which increased by 4%) and strong tourist purchases (which increased by 6%) (D'Arpizio et al., 2017). China was a clear top performer, powered by renewed consumer confidence and the rapid growth of a fashion-oriented middle class (D'Arpizio et al., 2017). The luxury goods market in Japan grew by 4%, and the American market managed to expand moderately by 2% (D'Arpizio et al., 2017). Europe recovered with growth of 6%, reaching €87 billion in sales and regaining its place as the top region for luxury sales by value (D'Arpizio et al., 2017).

Industry reports have stated that the three German players BMW, Audi, and Mercedes-Benz account for approximately an 80% share of the global luxury car market. Volume-wise, BMW is the global leader in the luxury car segment, followed by Mercedes-Benz and Audi (Daedal, 2018). Across all the segments of premium and luxury cars, the key players are BMW (owning the brand Rolls-Royce), Mercedes-Benz, and the Volkswagen Group (owning among others the brands Audi, Porsche, Bentley, Lamborghini, and Bugatti).

4.2.1 Market development of luxury and luxury automobiles

The main growth of the luxury market came from a generational shift, with 85% of luxury growth in 2017 powered by Generations Y and Z (D'Arpizio et al., 2017). Building on this, industry experts have forecast that millennials and Generation Z will represent more than 40% of the overall luxury goods market by 2025 (around 30% in 2016) (Arienti, 2018). They have also pointed out that this generation of consumers expects to interact digitally with brands as well as still seeking in-store shopping with a high expectation of customised experiences and sustainability (Arienti, 2018). This shift in generation and mindset pushes luxury brands to redefine their experiences and marketplaces. According to industry experts, wholesale remains the largest channel for personal luxury goods, accounting for roughly two-thirds of all sales (D'Arpizio et al., 2017). Retail channels have continued to grow steadily, gaining 8% in 2017, because companies increasingly seek to control the experience that they deliver to customers (D'Arpizio et al., 2017). In contrast, wholesale grew by 3%. The continuous trend towards e-commerce continued, with online sales increasing by 24% in 2017, reaching an overall market share of 9% (D'Arpizio et al., 2017).

Although online shopping is of relevance in the luxury industry (predominantly consumer goods and fashion), this does not fully apply to the luxury automobile industry. However, additional drivers of growth have been identified. First, an increase in the number of wealthy individuals can be noted year after year. High-net-worth individuals (HNWI) are the biggest growth driver for the luxury car market due to their high purchasing power. In 2016, the number of high-net-wealth individuals was 16.5 million, compared with 15.4 million in 2015 (Daedal, 2018). Second, the number of women in the total workforce has been increasing continuously in the last few years; it reached 1.35 billion in 2017, compared with 1.25 billion in 2010 (Daedal, 2018). In recent years, women especially have been the target of luxury car manufacturers. Third is the total growth of the luxury car portfolio, which targets new customers, as the recent example from Lamborghini, launching its first SUV, called the Urus, shows. High pricing allows the manufacturers to introduce state-of-the-art new technologies and features to the market before letting them trickle down to affordable models (Daedal, 2018)

According to industry reports, the volume of the global luxury car market is expected to increase to 12680.7 thousand units in 2022, compared with 11108.5 thousand units in 2018 (Daedal, 2018). The volume of the global affordable luxury sports car market reached 642 thousand units in 2017, compared with 552 thousand units in 2016. The same is expected to increase to 869 thousand units in 2022 (Daedal, 2018). The brands in the absolute (ultra) luxury segment are focusing on the launching of SUVs with the aim of attracting older and female customers and hence increasing the sales. The ultra-luxury segment's volume is expected to increase to 62.2 thousand units in 2022 from 41.6 thousand units in 2018, increasing at a CAGR of 10.6% over the years 2018–2022 (Daedal, 2018).

4.2.2 Segmentation of the premium and affordable luxury car market

A recent industry report showed an interesting segmentation of the luxury car market that also underpins the definitions in section 2.4.3, in which the differentiation of affordable and absolute luxury was discussed. The authors of the global luxury car market report introduced segmentation based on the average price of these cars (Daedal, 2018). Similar to the definition of absolute luxury (see section 2.4.3), the authors of the report named the top segment of luxury cars the "super niche", including brands like Bugatti, Pagani, and Koenigsegg, with prices above EUR 1 million, and the segment of "ultra-luxury" contains brands like Ferrari, Bentley, and Aston Martin, which sell at average prices between EUR 0.2 and EUR 1.0 million (Daedal, 2018, pp. 17–18). A particularly interesting segment, and, from the author's perspective, the most relevant in terms of volume, are the affordable luxury high performance cars – representing the top of the line with the maximum of power output.. Cars in this segment have an average price of EUR 70 –200 thousand, including the sports cars sub-brands of BMW, Mercedes, and Audi at the bottom end and Porsche at the top end of the segment (Daedal, 2018). According to the published sales numbers of Porsche in 2019, they sold worldwide almost 300,000 units (Autogazette, 2020). It can be assumed that the manufacturers BMW, Mercedes, and Audi constitute the same amount of sold cars together, leading to more than 600,000 units sold of affordable luxury sport cars worldwide. Assuming an average price of € 80,000 per car leads to more than € 48 billion of revenue. Automobiles with lower prices constitute the segment of premium cars, like Mercedes, BMW, Audi, Jaguar and so on, representing their volume portfolio.

Segment of affordable luxury sport cars

In 2017, the number of luxury cars sold was 10762.0 thousand (Daedal, 2018). The market is divided into four segments based on average prices (see the previous section). Around 6% of this premium and luxury car market represents luxury cars according to the definition of this study (affordable and absolute luxury cars); the remainder, and therefore the majority, consists of the volume segment of premium cars (Daedal, 2018).

The affordable luxury sports car segment is characterised by relatively high growth and less competition. Brands in this segment have experienced significant growth over the past few years and have stretched their line-up to reach a wider clientele (Daedal, 2018). The absolute luxury car segment is governed by the notion of exclusivity. This segment registered 34.4 thousand vehicle sales globally in 2017. The segment includes brands such as Ferrari, Aston Martin, McLaren, Bentley (VW), Lamborghini (VW), and Rolls Royce (BMW) (Daedal, 2018).

4.2.3 Regional perspective on the luxury car market

The western part of Europe is the largest market for luxury cars as it contains all the big markets, like Germany, the biggest, and France, Britain, Italy, and Spain (by sales volume). Although these markets have reached a high level of saturation, forecasts anticipate growth of about 4% until the year 2022 (Daedal, 2018). Central and Eastern Europe is one of the smallest revenue generators for the luxury car market due to its less developed economies and its dependence on the oil price (Daedal, 2018).

China is one of the fastest-growing economies with a highly dense population. Most high-net-wealth individuals are in China. SUVs are now immensely popular in China. The volume of luxury cars in China is expected to grow at a CAGR of 3.5% over the years 2018–2022 (Daedal, 2018). Audi, the long-time luxury king in China, lost its share to Mercedes-Benz and BMW in the first half of 2017. Less popular brands, the so-called “second-tier” luxury carmakers, have been catching up, reporting explosive growth and gaining larger shares of the market (Daedal, 2018).

Although the Middle East does not show a comparable demand in total numbers, the UAE (United Arab Emirates) is the home to the region’s highest number of luxury cars per capita; moreover, it is estimated that sales of luxury cars in the Middle East and Africa will grow at a CAGR of 7% over the next few years (Daedal, 2018). Japan is one of the fastest-growing and highly advanced countries and is known for its technology. Japan is a developed country with a high number of wealthy individuals. Luxury car sales represent a small share of Japan’s auto industry, which has struggled with a prolonged slide in interest in owning cars among younger consumers (Daedal, 2018).

4.2.4 Luxury consumers’ view of luxury motor brands/country-of-origin effect

The country-of-origin (CoO) effect on consumers’ perceptions and purchase intentions has been a common theme in marketing research and mainly describes a stereotypical image of the country in which a product is manufactured, for instance, that effects consumers’ perceptions of products and services when making a purchase decision (Al-Sulaiti & Baker, 1998; Godey et al., 2012; Haubl, 1996). The study by Haubl used the example of a new car from Mercedes-Benz and found that the country of origin had a predominant effect on consumers’ attitude towards the new automobile (Haubl, 1996). “This indicates that the “Made in” information typically affects beliefs about a car´s product attributes” (Haubl, 1996, p. 90). The CoO is favourably relevant to the topic at hand – German luxury automobiles – as academia has evidenced that “Made in Germany”, particularly in combination with mechanical products, has the highest reputation across internationally conducted studies concerning the CoO (Al-Sulaiti & Baker, 1998).

Although these findings are seminal, they were obtained almost twenty years ago. Since then, manufacturers have become more international, production plants have been distributed around the globe, and more emphasis has been put on the brand of the products, which potentially replaces the CoO information in consumers’ evaluation set. This is underpinned by Godey et al.’s (2012) study, which showed differences in the CoO effect in perception and purchasing behaviour relating to luxury and non-luxury brands. In the specific case of luxury goods, the study highlighted that the impact of the CoO is weaker than that of the brand (Godey et al., 2012, p. 1468). This provides more evidence for the thesis that modern consumers of luxury goods are more interested in the quality promise of a brand than the country of origin would tell them and that therefore brands have now taken the place of the producing country, which was more relevant in former times (with less emphasis on brands and marketing).

4.2.5 Relevance of the automotive sector in Germany

As Europe's largest economy and second-most-populous nation (after Russia), Germany is a key member of the continent's economic, political, and defence organisations (Central Intelligence Agency, 2018). Germany has a population of over 80 million people. The age distribution shows that around 40% are between 25 and 54 years old and 22% are aged 65 years and over (Central Intelligence Agency, 2018). The German economy is the fifth-largest economy in the world and the largest in Europe. Germany is a leading exporter of motor vehicles, machinery, chemicals, and household equipment and benefits from a highly skilled labour force. The total gross domestic product (GDP) of Germany in 2017 was US$4.171 trillion, resulting in a GDP per capita of US$50,400 (Central Intelligence Agency, 2018).

To understand the relevance of the automobile and engineering culture in Germany, a look into the past gives more background information. The German automotive industry started 125 years ago with a three-wheeled cart powered by a petrol engine, developed by Carl-Friedrich Benz (Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Energy, 2018). With his patent on the first petrol car with an internal combustion engine in 1886, he set a milestone and the automobile was born. One year later, Gottlieb Daimler from Stuttgart built a car and founded his own motor company. In 1926, his company and Benz merged and formed Daimler Benz AG, today known as Daimler AG. Additional manufacturers, like BMW, started the production of plane engines, VW built the first passenger car, called the “Beetle” (the world's best-selling model), and Ferdinand Porsche stared to build one of the first sports cars (Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Energy, 2018). The Porsche 911 entered production in 1963. Later, Audi formed from multiple medium-sized vehicle corporations. These five German car brands sell their premium and luxury cars worldwide and have an annual average of 820,200 employees in the plants of motor vehicle makers and vehicle parts only in Germany (VDA, 2018). In Europe, the automotive industry accounts for around 12 million jobs (including related jobs) (Mohr et al., 2013).

This background information indicates that the automobile is part of the German culture, not only because many people live from engineering and the automobile industries but also because the omnipresent focus on technology and automobiles is part of the German culture and daily debates.

4.3 Summary

In summary, sales of luxury cars have continued to dominate the market of luxury goods. The three German manufacturers BMW, Audi, and Mercedes-Benz account for approximately an 80% share of the global luxury car market. This confirms that the study explores a market that is highly relevant and still growing. New generations of customers are pushing luxury brands to redefine their experiences and marketplaces. The trend towards e-commerce is also underpinned by the shopping behaviour of new generations. Furthermore, the global number of high-net-wealth individuals is growing and the number of women in the total workforce is continuously increasing. This also affects the demand positively.

What is surprising and novel is that the country of origin has a predominant effect on consumers' attitude towards new automobiles. Due to the positive association of Germany with the building of high-quality machines, the fact that Germany is a leading exporter of motor vehicles could be an explanation for this. This is also a reason for Germany's culture being influenced significantly by automobiles. Five German car brands sell their premium and luxury cars worldwide, employing an annual average of 820,200 people in the plants making motor vehicles and vehicle parts in Germany alone.

Chapter 5:

5 Research Methodology

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter reviewed the literature related to the parent and immediate disciplines for this research. This chapter begins with an examination of the methodology of this research, in which a critical discussion of its philosophical and methodical foundations is conducted. The research methodology is based on the main purpose of the study, the philosophical worldviews of the scientist, and the research methods as well as the specific strategies adopted to gather and evaluate the relevant data (Creswell, 2013; Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016). From this exploration, the selection of appropriate methods is made. The aim is to answer the fundamental questions regarding the kind of data that should be collected, the sources that should be used to gather date, and the way in which they should be analysed. Doctoral studies are required to make a contribution to knowledge in academia and, in the case of a DBA, to practice. In setting up the research, a balance is needed to ensure the manageability of the research project within the resource constraints – which can relate to time (part-time doctoral study), money, access to data, and the feasibility of data collection, for instance.

The chapter is divided into eight sub-sections. An introduction to the relevance of the research methodology in sub-section 5.1 is followed by the purpose of the study, including the research questions at hand (5.2). Sub-section 5.3 provides a discussion on which research philosophy to follow to achieve the aim of this research. It also contains a debate regarding the choice between a deductive and an inductive reasoning approach. Next, the research design is discussed in sub-section 5.4. This includes justifications for the use of qualitative data methods (5.4.1) as well as the time frame for execution (5.4.2). Sub-section 5.5 discusses and graphically illustrates the framework of the conceptual and processual models, guiding this research. Sub-section 5.6 presents the strategy for data collection as well as the author's access to data. Afterwards, the applied data analysis methods are outlined, including a graphical illustration of the data analysis approach (5.7.1). This section discusses the general approaches adopted within stage I and stage II of the data analysis to maintain transparency. Furthermore, it aims to ensure repeatability by other researchers. Sub-section 5.7.2 presents the structure of the data gathering, coding, and analysis of frequently occurring codes. Next, sub-section 5.7.3 explores the results of stage I of the data analysis to evaluate word frequencies as well as adding meaning to the answers via context analysis. Finally, the author critically discusses the important aspect of the reliability and validity of this research project in sub-section 5.8, which contains a pre-test of the coding structure (5.8.1) as well as an intercoder reliability test (5.8.2).

5.2 Purpose of the study and types of research

The purpose of this study is to investigate what determines customer experience within the scope of affordable luxury automobiles. In addition, customers' insights into their motivations and behaviours contribute significantly to the existing studies, based mostly on non-luxury customers and especially on non-luxury automotive customers.

- What are the factors affecting brand experience in the affordable luxury sport cars sector in Germany?

- What actions can a provider of luxury brands take to improve the brand experience?

A study's methodology, as well as its design, is mainly determined by its purpose, which by nature is to explore a new field from scratch (exploratory), to describe a theory (descriptive), or to explain relationships within phenomena and why they happen (explanatory) (Babbie, 2010; Neuman, 2010; Zikmund, 2010). Considering the questions of this study, the exploratory approach is the most suitable one as it aims to answer "what" questions (Saunders et al., 2016; Zikmund, 2010).

Exploratory research is conducted particularly when there is no or limited knowledge about an issue in an attempt to understand and clarify a phenomenon (Saunders et al., 2016; Sekaran, 2009). It also supports researchers who have limited knowledge about or expertise in the research problems (Zikmund, 2010). Exploratory research has the benefit of being flexible and adjustable to deviations when following new patterns and ideas during the theory-building process (Rubin & Babbie, 2010). According to Zikmund (2010), the major methods for exploratory research are literature reviews, surveys, case studies, focus group discussions, and personal interviews.

5.3 Research philosophy

Before discussing the scope of data and their collection, it is important to emphasise the very first step of research design, that is, explaining why particular choices have been made (Easton, 2002). Therefore, this section is concerned with the overarching principles of philosophies – distinguished via three research assumptions: ontology, epistemology, and methodology (Saunders et al., 2016).

5.3.1 Theory of critical realism

Critical realism is a pragmatic compromise between positivism and interpretivism reached by sharing a foundation ontology with positivism and allows for interpretation, as in interpretivism (Easton, 2002, 2010). The ontological nature of the critical realist shares some similarities with that of the positivist, since the outside world is considered to exist independently of the researcher’s knowledge of it (Easton, 2002; Thomas, 2004). The interpretation of the real world is made by the individuals who make it meaningful and cannot be “formed” (Outhwaite, 1983). More clearly, critical realists observe reality as external and independent – an objective world exists but cannot be perceived via objective methods only – but is not immediately approachable by observation and knowledge only (Easton, 2010; Saunders et al., 2016). Moreover, it focuses on describing how individual experiences and underlying patterns shape the visible outcome (Saunders et al., 2016). A scientist who applies this paradigm attempts to explore, understand, and describe why human beings have different experiences and behaviours (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, Jackson, & Lowe, 2008). Therefore, critical realism is mainly qualitative in nature but embraces a wide range of methods (Easton, 2010). This study will explore real customer insights concerning brand experience within the automobile industry. The research aims to collect qualitative data from participants using semi-structured in-depth interviews as well as document reviews (secondary data).

The author has a background in engineering and business research and therefore is familiar with positivistic assumptions that describe the nature of the world. However, this thesis mainly involves complex relationships and perceptions of both human and experience behaviours, meaning that positivism is inadequate for achieving the research’s aim. In contrast, a purely interpretive paradigm was considered to be too radical, as it would only construct the world based on socially constructed interactions, which would exclude grounded theories and quantitative results from psychology and marketing. Hence, it is critical realism that offers a philosophy that bridges the two philosophies, supporting the methods in answering the questions raised (Thomas, 2004). The author adopted an ontological position that accepts the views and opinions of the research participants as valid social contributions to the research, enabling social methods, such as interviews, to be conducted.

5.3.2 Reasoning: Deductive or inductive?

Having discussed the fact that quantitative data analysis is for theory testing and qualitative data analysis aims to develop theories, it is now important to determine which reasoning approach fits the nature of this study with respect to theory development. Theory mainly stresses two main possibilities: inductive or deductive reasoning (Saunders et al., 2016; Wacker, 2008).

An inductive approach describes the process of moving from data to theories based on observing a phenomenon, analysing it, and finally building the theory (Ketokivi & Mantere, 2010). This represents a bottom-up approach in which theory follows data; according to Cavana et al. (2001), it is associated with qualitative non-positivist research designs. In contrast, a deductive approach describes the process of deriving theories from data, making observations, and analysing them afterwards (Cavana, Delahaye, & Sekaran, 2001). This represents a top-down approach, in which data follow theory, and it is associated with quantitative positivist research designs. However, during the process of constructing theories, studies often mix inductive and deductive reasoning (Saunders et al., 2016), a combination that is accepted in academia (Page & Meyer, 2000).

As this study is explorative in nature and adopts a critical realistic philosophy, the theory development follows the inductive approach. Although this study includes theoretical frameworks, patterns, and theories drawn from the literature review, it focuses predominantly on exploring qualitative data, drawing conclusions, and building theories from data and therefore cannot be defined as following a deductive approach, being purely inductive.

5.4 Research design

5.4.1 Quantitative or qualitative methods?

The next element in the design of research is the determination of an appropriate research method, enabling the researcher to collect, analyse, and interpret data (Creswell, 2013). Research methods can be:

- quantitative, predominantly numerical
- qualitative, predominantly non-numerical
- a combination of the two (mixed methods)

Quantitative research is mainly applied in the world of science, dealing with numbers in an objective way. Moreover, it supports the deductive research approach and is designed to examine relationships among variables (Bryman, 2006; Creswell, 2013). Therefore, it aims to identify theories that can be used to explain and predict the outcomes of a phenomenon accurately (Creswell, 2013). The advantage of quantitative methods can be seen in high levels of reliability and generalisability and the possibility to test specific relationships very precisely

(Bryman, 2006). However, this presupposes a solid hypothesis that can be tested as well as access to a large sample (Saunders et al., 2016).

Qualitative research, in contrast, deals with the development of a deep understanding of the relationships between entities (i.e. a brand and people) as well as with human behaviour to interpret and build up patterns of belief systems (Healy & Perry, 2000; Saunders et al., 2016). Moreover, it supports the inductive research approach and exploratory research aims. The advantage of qualitative methods can be seen in the ability to generate novel theories and the higher degree of validity when focusing on sample groups (Healy & Perry, 2000). Furthermore, stories that emerge in interviews can bring up significant contributions (especially in exploratory studies) and therefore should be considered as a legitimate representable technique in both ways – for research gaining information as well as for marketers who tell a story do identify with (Quinn & Patterson, 2013). However, the results obtained via qualitative methods face difficulties regarding generalisability and reliability (Healy & Perry, 2000). In addition, the justification of outcomes can be problematic for reasons of transparency, as tracking is easier to understand in general in quantitative studies (Barratt, Choi, & Li, 2011; Healy & Perry, 2000; Saunders et al., 2016).

Having contrasted qualitative research with quantitative research, the choice of qualitative methods is apparent. The data for this research are vocal and non-obvious, and the research questions focus on "what"-type questions, which are best answered through qualitative research strategies (Saunders et al., 2016; Yin, 2014). This research will supply in-depth descriptions of the relationships of experience between a brand and people. This research is based on fragmented knowledge but faces the issue of limited information. Therefore, it is exploratory in nature. Qualitative research follows various strategies that include case studies, ethnographies, narratives, grounded theory studies, and action research (Creswell, 2013).

Although many different qualitative research methods are available, they have some typical features in terms of the natural setting, the researcher's own data collection preference, and the collection of multiple data types as well as focusing on the interpretation of the participants' answers on an obvious/subtle conscious/unconscious level (Creswell, 2013). Using qualitative research methods, researchers are embedded in their own research to a high degree. Being embedded implies that they are likely to form opinions, relationships, and values during the judgement-making process based on their individual background of knowledge and experience. Due to this, the displaying of data is also affected by their own personal lens. As this represents an important component of any qualitative research method, it is necessary to highlight the areas in which a researcher's individual background and value systems might influence the research results (Creswell, 2013).

Considering the research questions, the method to be used had to meet and support the following circumstances:

- Exploratory research with evaluative elements (developing theories and models)
- Potential relevance of speaking directly to owners of luxury sport vehicles in person (trust and in-depth information)
- Answering a high number of questions
- In-depth questions with a given framework through which to guide the participants

The qualitative research methods to be applied depend on the participants (in this case owners of luxury sport vehicles) or data that support the researcher in understanding and solving the research problem (Creswell, 2013; Saunders et al., 2016; Yin, 2014). Once the participants have been identified, data collection in a qualitative research method is typically conducted through observations, interviews, questionnaires, or additional materials (Saunders et al., 2016).

5.4.2 Time horizon

Exploring in-depth knowledge (people's experiences) is a time-consuming process – for the researcher as well as for the participants. For both parties, the time frame of execution must be manageable. Due to the time constraints affecting the participants involved (i.e. in-depth interviews) as well as limited repeatability with the same audience (highly individual and time-restricted clientele), this study aims to provide an in-depth "snapshot" leading to a cross-sectional study (Saunders et al., 2016).

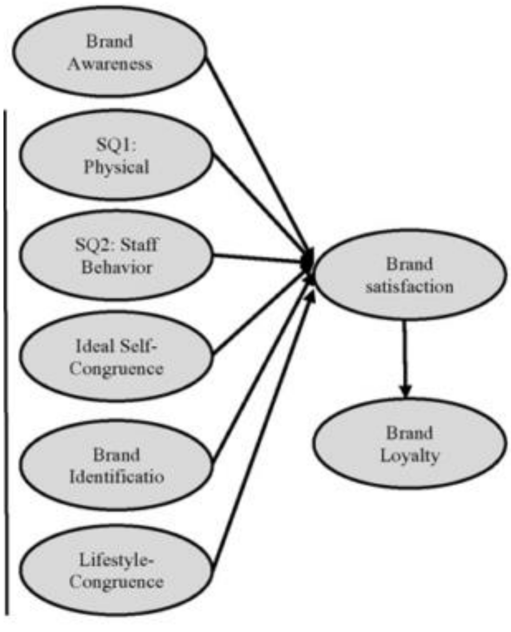
5.5 Development of the conceptual framework

Based on the identified topics and factors discussed in the previous chapters, a conceptual framework was specifically developed, enabling the researcher to explore relevant elements according to the research question. The basis for this was provided by the concepts, frameworks, and models from the literature review. For this purpose, the author reviewed the bodies of literature on "brand", "luxury", and "consumer behaviour". The concept of experience relates to both brand and consumer experience. Within the scope of this thesis, only branded products are of relevance (luxury sports cars), and consumer experience, which contains the experience of branded and unbranded products, is for this reason discussed regarding branded products only. The resultant framework is illustrated and discussed in the next chapter. The framework is by no means comprehensive or exhaustive, but it adequately reflects the study's main theme of research in a comprehensible and applicable way.

5.5.1 Underlying models

To develop the conceptual framework for this thesis, the author identified two relevant and empirically established models that guide this exploratory consumer research in the luxury automotive sector. The first model to build on is the consumer-based brand equity model, empirically tested by Nam et al. (2011) and developed further by Çifci et al. (2016), which shows valid mediation factors influencing consumer satisfaction and brand loyalty.

Figure 5.1: Consumer-based brand equity



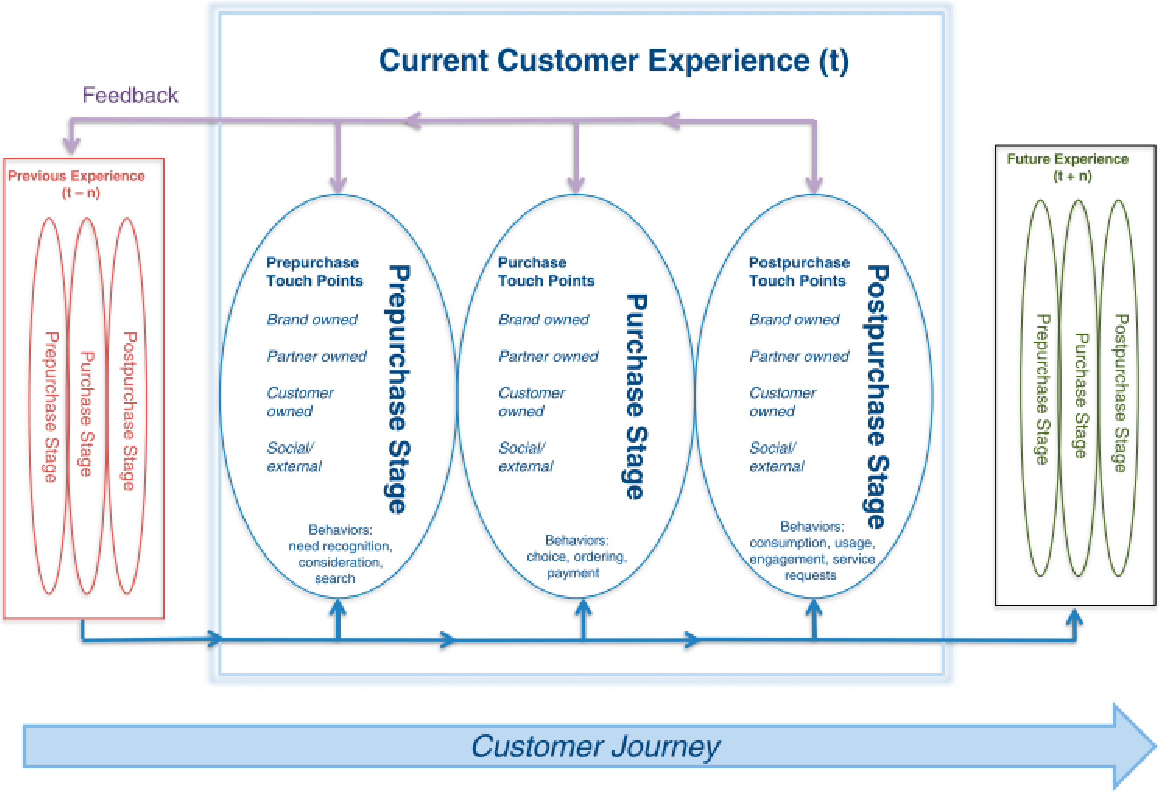
Model 3: Extended model of Nam *et al.*

Source: Çifci et al. (2016, p. 3742)

This model represents a perceptual model that can be "divided" into two layers that are relevant to this study: first, the mental image of a consumer (cognitive perception) containing the awareness of a brand (through either social or traditional media), positive effects from physical quality, and staff behaviour; and second, the affective or symbolic part consisting of factors like ideal self-congruence, brand identification, and lifestyle congruence, referring to social status and self-esteem.

The second suitable model for this framework is Lemon and Verhoef's (2016) processual model, which sets the sequential procedure according to the following three stages: pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase.

Figure 5.2: Process Model of Customer Journey and Experience



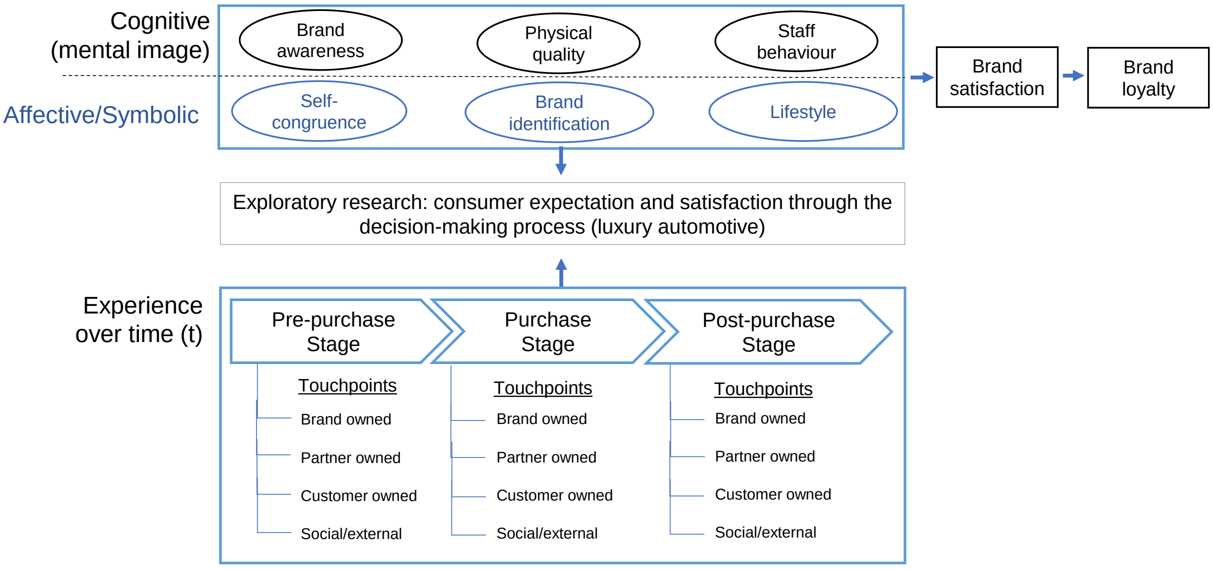
Source: Lemon and Verhoef (2016, p. 77)

This process incorporates owned touchpoints (the brand and its partners, equivalent to the manufacturer and its dealerships) as well as touchpoints that consumers choose and external social touchpoints (i.e. other customers, peer influence, etc.). This process model allowed the author to guide the exploration of the sphere of luxury automotive consumer experience. It also helped in exploring and understanding the key drivers of luxury consumers' experience, including their preferences and usage of channels and touchpoints.

5.5.2 Conceptual framework and discussion

Therefore, the final conceptual framework for this thesis was developed from both the perceptual and the processual model, as discussed previously.

Figure 5.3: Conceptual framework



Source: The author

From the literature review, it became apparent that Aaker's (1991) model captures the basics of brand equity very well; more significantly, it seems to have withstood the test of time, which is evident from its continued popularity. Although his model achieved high acceptance in academia, it partly lacked detailed explanation, especially for practitioners aiming to adapt their findings to real scenario cases. To close this gap, authors like Keller (1993) brought up the concept of consumer-based brand equity, enabling researchers and in particular practitioners to apply the implications given. The extended model from Çifci et al. (2016), who based their work on Nam et al. (2011), added the excellent dimension of consumer perception to this framework. Their established dimensions guided this research in conducting a better exploration of the determinants relevant to luxury car owners. The dimension of "brand awareness" is crucial as it represents consumers' ability to recall and recognise a brand under different conditions and to link the brand name, logo, symbol, and so on to certain associations in their memory (Çifci et al., 2016). Without awareness, no consumer will have a brand in his or her consideration set, meaning that there is no chance of it entering the pre-purchase consideration stage.

The two service quality dimensions "physical quality" and "staff behaviour" represent the cognitive aspects of consumer-based brand equity, whereas "self-congruence", "brand identification", and "lifestyle congruence" represent the symbolic aspects, which are also relevant in differentiating individuals from each other.

Within the scope of this research, the mentioned dimensions might refer to:

- Physical quality → the product (luxury car), showroom, and service quality
- Staff behaviour → the behaviour and competence of staff at touchpoints (i.e. sales and customer service employees)
- Self-congruence → the difference between the ideal and the actual self, the stage in life, and the "perceived" role (i.e. successful businessperson) of the hedonic and extended self
- Brand identification → social status and symbolic value, integration into social groups with similar brands or cars
- Lifestyle congruence → luxury car brands underpin the individual and luxury lifestyle of the customers, self-reward, and self-esteem

Brand satisfaction embodies consumers' post-purchase experience and mediates between the mentioned dimensions and brand loyalty (Çifci et al., 2016). The linkage between these dimensions and Lemon and Verhoef's (2016) processual model allowed the author to explore the topic in a rigorous and systematic way. The model specifies the further procedure and research methodology. It was the aim of this study to explore these touchpoints from the point of view of German consumers of luxury automotive products as well as their preferences for and usage of channels and touchpoints in each of the three stages. The pre-purchase stage allowed the exploration of how these customers identified the need for such a car and the role of such a vehicle in their life as well as their information-related behaviour. The purchase stage sequentially enabled the research to focus on the decision process (why consumers decided on product A and dismissed product B), what expectations they have in the purchase process of a luxury car, and how important staff competence is concerning consultancy. In the post-purchase stage, the exploration of product experience as well as the expectations and experience of after-sales service took place.

The respective touchpoints in each stage could refer to:

- Brand owned → Image, publicity, brand programmes from the manufacturer
- Partner owned → Dealerships, showrooms, sales and after-sales staff
- Customer owned → Own decisions, influence on other persons within a

social group, preferred method of interaction and payment

- Social/external → Peer influence from friends, other drivers, or influencers (i.e. via journalists or social media bloggers)

Finally, having covered the theoretical framework, the next section presents the resultant sampling strategy adopted in this study. The concomitant research aim and its accompanying questions are then also stated.

5.6 Sampling Strategy

A researcher collecting data should identify sources and define sample strategies and methods to support him or her in executing the collection. According to Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007) and Yin (2014), the study design allows multiple sources of data collection, such as documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observation, and participant observation.

Within the scope of this study, the population and especially the potential sample size can be described as a limited number of people in a niche market – the customers of luxury sports cars. Assuming that there is a single customer behind each sold unit of a luxury car would lead to a global potential population of more than 11 million customers based on the industry numbers from 2018 (Daedal, 2018). Additionally, in Western Europe (containing Germany, the biggest market, France, Britain, Italy, and Spain), this would lead to a potential population of around 3.8 million customers (Daedal, 2018). Although these data are correct and report the number of cars sold, the author highlights the importance of further interpretation. According to his professional experience in sales and market research, industry data show that the members of this group of customers have several vehicles in their household. Assuming that each high-net-worth household has one decision maker (customer), owning three cars on average (i.e. one eco/premium and two affordable/luxury cars) would cut the population size in half and lead to 5.5 million globally and 1.9 million in Europe. This still represents a remarkable population size, however, albeit based on a conservative analysis. Although the study aims to draw implications on a worldwide level, participants were sampled from the German market with geographical differences (north, centre, and south). According to this definition, the research population consisted of “people who own an affordable luxury sports car within Germany”. Due to the aim of broadly exploring luxury brand experience, the sample should include owners of cars from various brands with recent experience of acquisition (i.e. through a purchase or at a customer event). This resulted in a sample of 60 in-depth interviews (in accordance with the sample criteria).

To define the scope of the sample, the following recruitment criteria were applied:

- Purchase of a new car (luxury sport car) within the last 5 years
- Main user and decision maker (purchase)
- Owner of a luxury sport car (hpv = high performance vehicle)
- Intention to repurchase an HPV or sports car as a new car

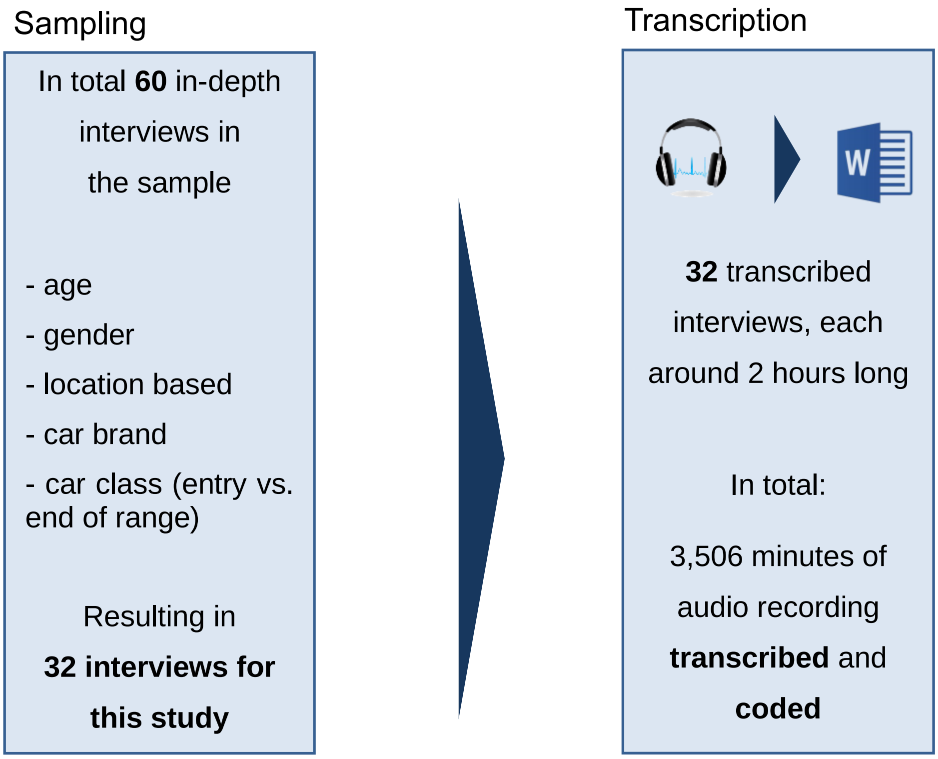
- Experience with after-sales service: customers who had contact with the dealer at least once, for example in services for routine maintenance, other repairs, or tracking in the screener (service experience with the current model)

Exclusion criteria:

- Exclusion if the above criteria are not fulfilled
- Exclusion if the person has participated in car-related research interviews within the last 12 months
- Industry exclusion, for example the automotive industry, journalism, advertising, and market research

According to the research design and the defined scope of potential participants, non-probability sampling was the most practical option (Saunders et al., 2016), leading to the method of interviews to provide valuable information by motivating interviewees to share their experiences in a free-flowing or semi-structured environment (Cooper & Schindler, 2010; Rallis & Rossman, 2011). Due to the difficulties concerning the sample size (it is hard to gain access to owners of luxury cars from competitors' brands, most people might not have the time or motivation to participate in a study, etc.), the sampling was performed via the "snowball technique" (Saunders et al., 2016). To maintain a sufficient degree of heterogeneity, a sample size of 5–30 semi-structured or in-depth interviews has been suggested (Creswell, 2013; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). Although this sample size spread does not look large, the author had to be aware of a theoretical point of saturation (Anderson, 2017). It might be relevant to define preset in-depth criteria to support the researcher in recognising when no new findings are emerging; however, the development of criteria and their application are a result of the analysis process, making it difficult to predefine them purely (Nelson, 2016).

Figure 5.4: Sampling and transcription approach



The number of participants depends on the willingness of customers to participate in market research. In total, 60 in-depth interviews were conducted (lasting 2 hours each). Within the scope of this research, the goal was to have a sub-sample of a minimum of 20 interviews. The exact number depended on the saturation of data and on having the resources to transcribe, translate, and code interviews that lasted around 120 minutes each. Finally, the quality of the content as well as the saturation of information turned out to be satisfactory after 32 interviews had been analysed.

Table 5.1: Demographics of the sample

No	File no.	Nickname	Car	Region	Age	Gender	Experience
1	2	Hartmut	AMG S63	Munich	65	m	Experienced
2	6	Teo	AMG E63	Munich	49	m	Experienced
3	8	Brian	R8	Munich	34	m	Experienced
4	11	Peter	911 Carrera4S	Munich	n/a	m	Experienced
5	13	Markus	Vantage V12	Munich	57	m	First time
6	18	Johannes	911 Turbo	Munich	52	m	Experienced
7	20	Maik	Ferrari 458	Munich	n/a	m	Experienced
8	21	David	DB9	Munich	50	m	First time
9	27	Claudio	Ferrari	Cologne	n/a	m	Experienced
10	30	Andreas	BMW i8	Cologne	n/a	m	First time
11	34	Frank	BMW M5	Cologne	49	m	First time
12	38	Uwe	Audi RS6	Cologne	n/a	m	Experienced
13	43	Klaus	MB C63 Kombi	Cologne	47	m	First time
14	45	Jörg	A45 AMG	Cologne	n/a	m	First time
15	53	Günter	AMG GTS	Hamburg	n/a	m	Experienced
16	56	Frank	M5	Hamburg	48	m	Experienced
17	60	Ralf	RS6	Hamburg	n/a	m	Experienced
18	63	Lars	Lamborghini	Hamburg	48	m	Experienced
19	64	Marco	RS3	Hamburg	37	m	Experienced
20	65	Jeton	Ferrari 458 Spyder	Hamburg	n/a	m	Experienced
21	66	Marvin	RS3	Hamburg	24	m	First time
22	73	Sven	AMG SLS	Hamburg	57	m	First time
23	104	Rolf	Porsche 911	Cologne	n/a	m	Experienced
24	9	Katja	RS3	Munich	28	w	First time
25	29	Martina	Porsche911	Cologne	52	w	First time
26	32	Kirsten	RSQ3	Cologne	n/a	w	Experienced
27	36	Arzu	MBC63	Cologne	n/a	w	Experienced
28	55	Ute	RS5	Hamburg	n/a	w	Experienced
29	70	Anja	Porsche 911	Hamburg	51	w	First time
30	106	Martina	R8 Spyder	Cologne	n/a	w	First time
31	107	Annegret	MB SLS	Cologne	n/a	w	First time
32	108	Margarita	MB SLS	Cologne	n/a	w	First time

Out of 60 audio recordings, a sub-sample (32) was generated to achieve an equal distribution of gender, car type, and location in Germany (north, centre, and south). Although an equal gender distribution could not be reached, female participants are well represented in this research because of the natural dominance of male customers in this industry. Age wise, rather older participants represent the target population well. Age was only analysed during the interview if the participant gave the necessary information. The sample also contained affordable car types (e.g. A45 AMG) as well as absolute luxury cars (e.g. Ferrari).

5.6.1 Data collection

This section outlines the procedures that were adopted when collecting data for this research. Interviewing is a data-gathering tool in many qualitative studies and enables the researcher to have directed conversations, providing in-depth information on the research topic (Charmaz, 2006, p. 25). Particularly, within the scope of exploratory research, interviews might provide a rich data base with more background and insights into the drivers behind the activities being analysed. An interview is a conversation with an objective (Rallis & Rossman, 2011) or a purposeful conversation (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Interviews provide unique insights by encouraging interviewees to share their experiences in a rather informal and free-flowing environment (Cooper & Schindler, 2010). Most interviews ask the sampled participants questions with the aim of finding out what they think, experience, and feel within a given situation. Various kinds of interviews make it simple to compare answers. Usually they are conducted with individuals or groups of individuals on a face-to-face basis (Cooper & Schindler, 2010). Before selecting the appropriate type of interview structure, a description of the commonly used types is presented:

Table 5.2: Types of interviews

Author **(chronological order)**	Types of interviews
Dane (1990)	Unstructured, unfocused, non-directive interviews Partially structured interviews Highly structured interviews
Berg (2007)	Non-standardised interviews (informal) Semi-standardised interviews (guided) Standardised interviews (formal)
Yin (2014)	Open-ended interviews Focused interviews Structured interviews
Saunders et al. (2016)	Unstructured (in-depth) interviews Semi-structured interviews Structured interviews

In sum, all the categorisations feature three major forms of interviews that serve various research purposes. Structured interviews use questionnaires based on predetermined and standardised or identical sets of questions (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 391). They are used to collect quantifiable data and are also referred to as quantitative research interviews (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 391). Semi-structured, semi-standardised, or partially structured interviews with a guide use predetermined questions that are asked in a predetermined order, albeit with a degree of flexibility. The order of questions may also be varied depending on the flow of the conversation (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 391). Additional questions may be required to explore the research question and objectives, and data are captured by audio recording or note taking (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 391). Unstructured interviews are rather informal in nature and aim to explore in-depth knowledge about a general area. The interviewee is given the opportunity to talk freely about events, experiences, emotions, and beliefs in relation to the topic area (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 391).

According to Saunders et al. (2016), semi-structured as well as unstructured (in-depth) interviews are most applicable when the purpose of research has an exploratory and evaluative nature as well as being a particularly effective way of obtaining consumer insights. Therefore, this research used a mixture of the two disciplines, resulting in a semi-structured in-depth approach. A semi-structured interview allows reference to the processual model (pre-purchase, purchase, post-purchase), with its predicted touchpoints, on a generic level. Aiming to explore cognitive and affective aspects additionally during the interviews (referring to the conceptual model of the framework), open-ended questions and the space to let the interviewee talk freely about various aspects ensured the possibilities either to contribute to or to reveal aspects to the discussion.

A semi-structured interview guide (appendix 3) was developed and applied to all the interviews, aiming to guide the conversation and cover the predefined areas of interest. The unique aspects of each interviewee were explored through an open conversation style and the possibility of holding an in-depth conversation about individual and relevant topics.

Due to the features of this study within a DBA programme, the overarching goal was to link academic knowledge with practical approaches. Due to the author’s field of work – brand management and market research – a comprehensive stock of data was available to the author. First, valuable data and consumer insights exist, and permission was given to the author in line with the research questions of this thesis, leading to data collection within the organisation of Audi AG and Audi Sport.

Secondly, a promising source of data concerning in-depth knowledge about customers of sport vehicles was identified by the author within his field of work. The data had been collected in 2016 by a third party (research agency) on behalf of the author’s employer. The investigator (a

DBA student) is an employee of the organisation that authorised the research agency to run a generic service study with customers of the sport car segment in Germany. The author was involved in the process of data collection at that time (primary data); however, he did not collect the data himself.

The researcher reviewed the data from 2016 (at that time primary data) in 2019 and found them to be highly relevant to various extensive and comprehensive automotive studies. The data were identified as having the potential to fill the gaps in the body of knowledge relating to the topic at hand. Before researching and evaluating the data in 2019, the approach to data gathering and analysis was presented to the ethics committee of Portsmouth University as secondary data – obtaining a favourable response.

These secondary data comprise semi-structured in-depth interviews, each two hours long, with more than 60 participants. The qualitative individual in-depth interviews (individual exploration) were conducted via a research agency (gatekeeper) with experienced, qualitative interviewers (in-depth expertise both in the automotive sector and in in-depth psychology techniques). The interviews had been designed and tested beforehand with the research agency. Therefore, the researcher was involved in the process of data collection but not in the actual interviews.

5.6.2 Sources and access to data

A key source was the databases and articles published via the library system of Portsmouth University as well as the EBSCOhost database. Due to the scope of this study, data collection primarily took place within the organisation of Audi AG and Audi Sport. Therefore, a comprehensive stock of secondary data was available, with no restrictions to access and permission for the author. In addition, the focus of the research was on existing in-depth semi-structured interviews that had been conducted in Q3 2016. This sample includes interviews with 60 German participating sports car owners across brands that lasted for 2 hours each. These data were researched in accordance with the new questions at hand under the premises of a new purpose. Due to the enormous amount of available data and the time given for this study, a process of selection was indispensable to reduce the secondary data set of 60 to a likely number of 20 interviews. The criteria followed the aim of attaining an equal distribution of car brands, gender, and age to ensure a reasonable reflective slice (the only demographics available are age and gender). If the author was not convinced that saturation had been reached, the analysis would continue with additional interviews from the data set.

Access and permission were ensured because the author initiated and conducted the research with a gatekeeping agency. This ensured the highest standards of privacy for the participants as well avoiding potentially biased answers by letting the participants know which company was behind the research. All the participants signed a declaration of consent to share their information.

Within the scope of this thesis, it could be important to collect primary data. Within the organisation, the author had the unlimited possibility of sampling and interviewing existing Audi Sport customers participating in driving or brand experiences. Furthermore, contact with Audi's importers and managers in relevant markets (e.g. Germany, the UK, and Japan) was possible. Both would have led to a longer process time (2–4 months for interviewing international contacts; 4–8 months for interviewing customers) due to internal consultations and the need to obtain ethical approval from the University of Portsmouth. Gaining access to customers from other brands would have been possible through a gatekeeping agency, which would have ensured high ethical standards but would have resulted in a budget investment of a minimum of €150,000.

5.7 Data analysis methods

The existing and comprehensive secondary data (non-text documents; recorded audio files) were analysed using qualitative data methods. The overarching goal was to derive information from the words expressed by the participants concerning the decision-making process in relation to luxury automobiles and the elements (i.e. cognitive/affective) that influence this process at each stage.

In this research, the interviews were recorded, transcribed, and subjected to content analysis in accordance with the recommendations of Kumar (2011) using computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software called NVIVO. This software contains a range of tools to analyse qualitative data systematically and evaluate data analytically (Saunders et al., 2016).

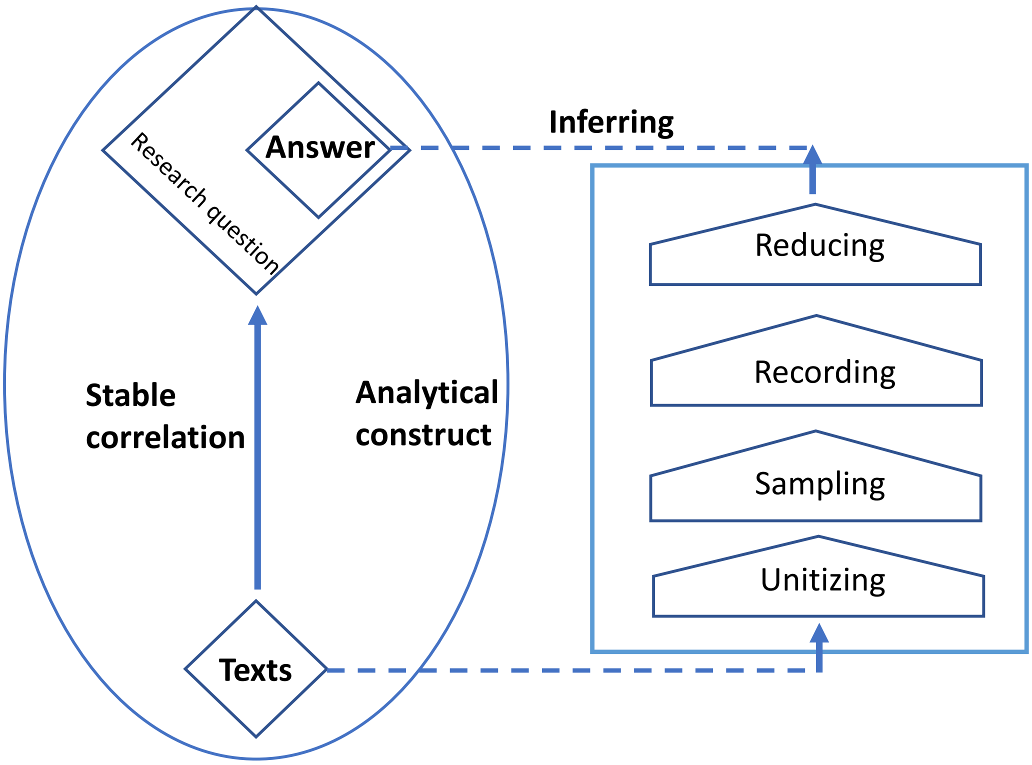
To justify the selected data analysis method, a brief discussion about the fit with this research is necessary. Content analysis is a research method for the objective and systematic description of communication content. This method also relies less on subjective judgement than the researcher's interpretative view (Saunders et al., 2016). If the data collected consist of a large amount of qualitative data, content analysis might be appropriate to analyse and describe some of the content, depending on the research question (Saunders et al., 2016). Additionally, it supports the answering of a research question with a wider exploratory, explanatory, or evaluative purpose (Saunders et al., 2016). A major aspect of content analysis is the explicit explanation of how data are categorised in a consistent and transparent manner to enable understanding and replicability by others (Saunders et al., 2016).

Therefore, it is highly relevant to define explicit rules to categorise and code data in content analysis, and these are typically predetermined by a researcher before the data collection begins (Saunders et al., 2016). In this research, this applied to the predefined framework containing the categories of pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase stages of experience with the touchpoints from the prior research results. It also applied on a generic level to the categories of affective/symbolic and cognitive elements from the framework. However, while there were a number of predetermined categories, in some content analysis approaches, categories are allowed to emerge during the analysis in a way that appears similar to thematic analysis (Saunders et al., 2016). Aiming to explore new aspects within this research's potential themes, categories and coding schemes were expected to emerge from the data at a subsequent stage of data analysis (see 5.7.3 on data analysis stage II). Saunders et al. (2016) emphasised the difference between manifest content (clear data, that is, counting predetermined keywords) and latent content, referring to the interpretation of meanings to code units of data such as sentences and paragraphs. This is important to this study, as the researcher evaluated clear keyword data (i.e. evaluation of the relevance of touchpoints) as well as analysing the context around keywords to explore meanings and subconscious information (i.e. symbolic or cognitive answers linked to a touchpoint that cannot be evaluated via a single keyword or predefined phrase).

Content analysis can be used to identify each individual's positive and negative attitudes towards their experience (Saunders et al., 2016). "The frequencies of different attitudes may be measured and the relative importance of negative or positive ones identified; it would also be possible to examine relationships between these different attitudes and the characteristics of those who hold them" (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 609). Considering the topic at hand, this applied to the different clusters of entry and experienced consumers (see the findings in chapter 6.2.3).

Content analysis is also used to analyse qualitative data generated through interviews, including open-ended questions in questionnaires (Saunders et al., 2016). As discussed earlier (see 5.6.1 and 5.6.2), the data and the interview questions were developed prior to this project as semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions, leaving room for in-depth drifts. Producing a transcript of each semi-structured or in-depth interview is important to maintain a rigorous analysis process and input values for NVIVO. For this research, all the audio files of the sample (for example see appendix 4) were transcribed manually. If the participants emphasised answers (i.e. by using a louder tone of voice), it was indicated in the text (by writing answers in capital letters). The transcription included all words and was not smoothed (e.g. to eliminate pauses, "erms", etc.) to ensure the highest academic standards. The transcription quality also benefited from a four-eyed principle with native English speakers, who additionally have sufficient industry background to understand the context (i.e. car model names).

Figure 5.5: Framework and components of the content analysis



Source: Krippendorf (2004, pp. 30, 86)

The approach to data analysis in this research involved Krippendorf's (2004) graphical framework for content analysis, helping to understand the role and application of this research. According to him, the framework is intended to serve three purposes: "Its prescriptive purpose is to guide the conceptualization and design of practical content analytic research; its analytical purpose is to facilitate the critical examination and comparison of the published content analyses; and its methodological purpose is to point to performance criteria and precautionary standards that researchers can apply in evaluating ongoing content analyses" (Krippendorf, 2004, p. 29).

Content analysis starts with the research question and the collected data (in this case the transcribed texts of the interviews) with the aim of answering the question. Krippendorf (2004) further explained the relevant components of the design of this analysis that analysts need to be aware of step by step. According to him, each component has a descriptive and an operational state (Krippendorf, 2004, p. 83):

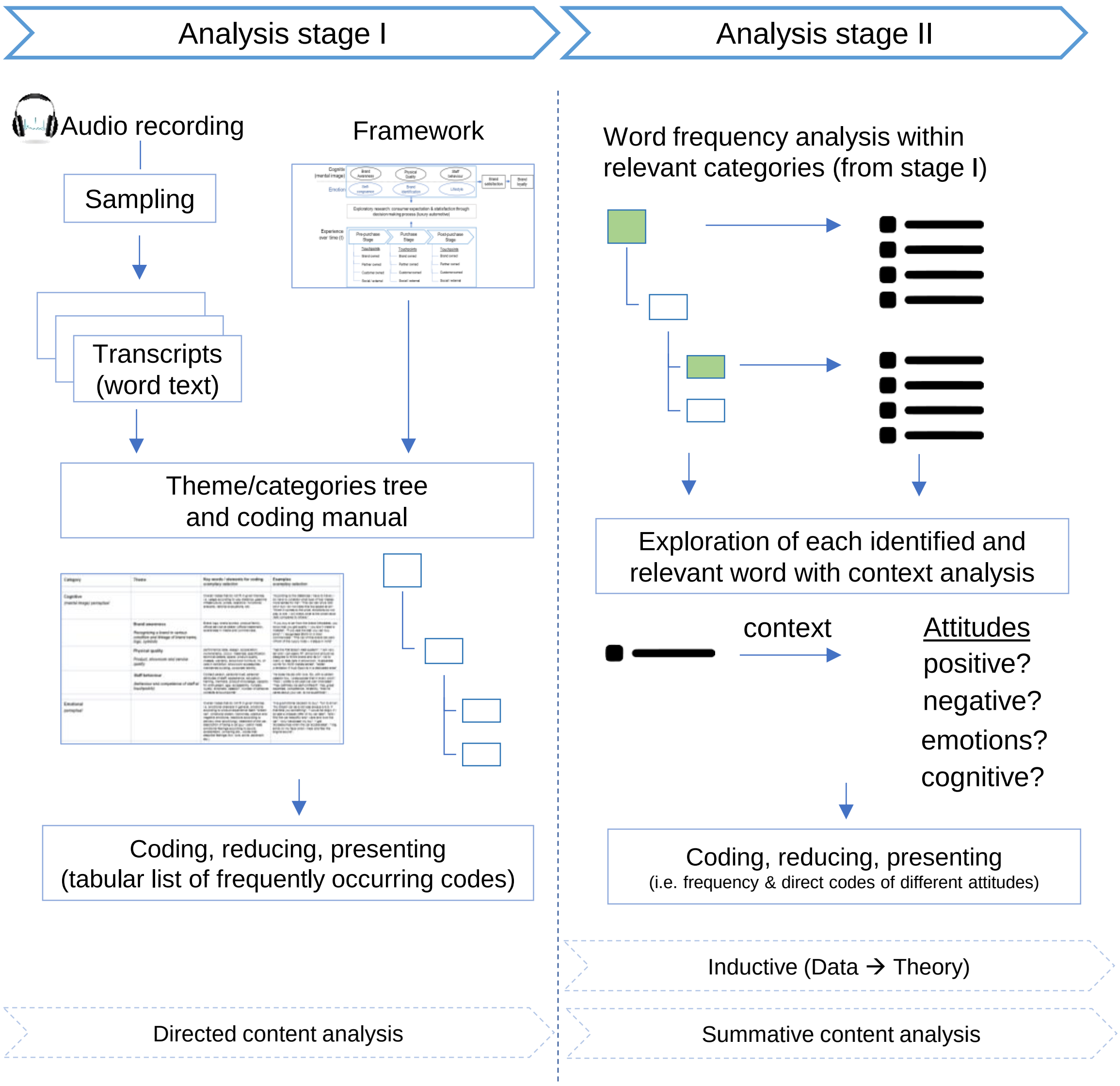
- Unitising: relying on unitising schemes
- Sampling: relying on sampling plans

- Coding: relying on coding instructions
- Reducing data to manageable representations: relying on established statistical techniques or other methods for summarising or simplifying data (i.e. a list of frequencies to reduce the diversity of text to what matters)
- Abductively inferring contextual phenomena: relying on analytical constructs or models of the chosen context as warranted (pointing to unobserved phenomena in the context of interest to an analyst)
- Narrating the answer to the research question: relying on narrative or discursive traditions (explaining the practical significance of the findings or the contributions)

Having identified and justified the appropriate data analysis method for the research at hand, the author will now explain the approach, methods, and process of this analysis.

5.7.1 Data analysis overview

Figure 5.6: Overview Data Analysis Approach



Source: The author

The data obtained through the interviews (audio files) were subjected to content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Krippendorf, 2004; Saunders et al., 2016) in accordance with the procedures suggested by Cavana, Delahaye, and Sekaran (2001). The following section will discuss the general approaches within stage I and stage II of the data analysis to maintain transparency throughout the entire process. Furthermore, this aims to ensure repeatability by other researchers. The coding procedure is essential for this research since, in the interview transcripts, interviewees frequently mentioned some keywords as well as making interesting points. Because coding has a prominent role in content analysis, a detailed discussion of the respective coding schemes will be provided hereinafter.

5.7.2 Data analysis: Stage I

Occasionally, existing theory or previous research exists about a phenomenon that is incomplete or could gain from additional description or application in a different field. A qualitative researcher might choose to use a directed approach to content analysis in this case (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Directed content analysis involves the use of a theoretical framework in applying a coding scheme as a foundation for researching a phenomenon in transcribed data. The textual data in this study were generated through the transcription of audio-recorded in-depth interviews, sampled according to the criteria mentioned in sub-section 5.6.

The goal of a directed approach to content analysis is to validate or extend conceptually a theoretical framework or theory (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). As Figure 5.6 shows, this is undertaken using the underlying conceptual framework (see 5.5) of this research project. The framework consists of processual categories (pre-, purchase, and post-purchase) as well as conceptual categories (affective/symbolic and cognitive). These were derived from the existing theory but not validated within the science of customer experience in the automotive sector. The coding structure was established accordingly, mirroring the categories and touchpoints of the conceptual framework (see Figure 5.7).

“Existing theory or research can help focus the research question. It can provide predictions about the variables of interest or about the relationships among variables, thus helping to determine the initial coding scheme or relationships between codes” (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1281). This research claimed to focus on the inductive and explorative nature; here, the analysis turned out to be focusing on validation. The major goal is to explore the given theory in a new situation or to compare differences in categories (Elo & Kyngas, 2007).

Coding schemes during stage I of the analysis

Zhang and Wildemuth outlined a particular process for conducting content analysis and suggested an eight-step process that was followed in this study (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009, pp. 310–312):

1. Prepare the data.
2. Define the unit of analysis.
3. Develop categories and a coding scheme.

4. Test the coding scheme on a sample of text.

5. Code all the text.

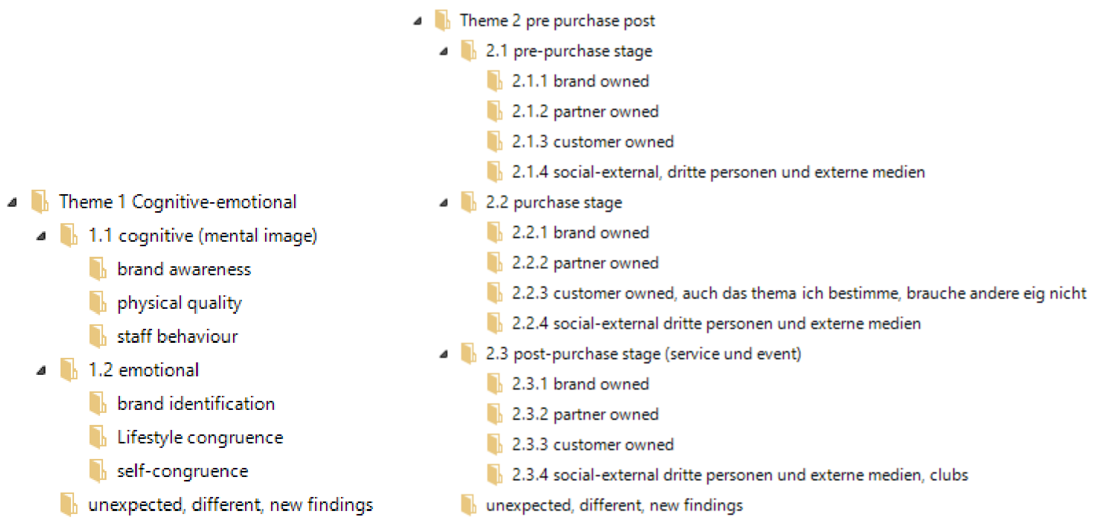
6. Assess the coding consistency.

7. Draw conclusions from the coded data.

8. Report methods and findings.

Due to the focus on coding in this section, a more detailed discussion of the coding process is outlined below.

Figure 5.7: Coding trees in NVIVO (data analysis software)



The codes used in stage I of the analysis were formed from two different sources. First, the main themes (processual and conceptual) as well as their subcategories (pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase and affective/symbolic and cognitive) were derived from terms in the existing theory, building the base for this research framework. These are referred to as “a priori” codes (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 582). When using existing theory or prior research, researchers begin by identifying key concepts or variables as initial coding categories (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Potter & Levine-Donnerstein, 1999).

Second, a coding template that gives a clear guideline to all coders was developed by the author himself. Based on his professional background in the automotive industry as well as the transcription process, the author is confident about having identified and developed robust and sensemaking labels that best describe a unit of data to code. The comprehensive chart of the coding guideline can be found in appendix 5; however, here the structure and an example are provided.

Table 5.3: Example of the coding table – guiding the coding process

Post-purchase *processual*	**Theme**	**Key words / elements for coding** *exemplary selection*	**Examples** *exemplary selection*
	Brand owned *Image, publicity, brand programmes from the manufacturer*	Service at brand subsidiaries, brand experience after sales, factory tour, watching the production	"So Ferrari does that, for example, so that people, if they buy a Ferrari, they say: 'Then and then in Mugello, that's the house test track, is a weekend scheduled with an instructor'"
	Partner owned *Dealerships, showroom, sales and after sales staff*	Contact with after sales, time for appointment (service), preferential/prioritised treatment in the service, overall satisfaction with the after-sales personality of staff, communication style with after sales, consultancy, service, contact with dealer, personal contact person, separate lounge, role of the dealer in the process	"that you reach someone on the phone, at least at the usual workshop hours. If you call that you do not land on hold. The first time I came to the inspection in Munich, I said: 'Hello, inspection'. I wanted to make an appointment. 'Please show your registration. Oh, that's an AMG, a moment. You will have your dedicated AMG service consultant'"
	Customer owned *Own decisions, influence on other persons within a social group, preferred way of interaction and payment, etc.*	Personal information during the after-sales phase, own decision about what to choose, own decision about the process, self-determined, he/she is in control of no one else, time for decision making, decision to travel a greater distance for the service	"I like to drive myself into the workshop (no pick-up service)"; "then I do not want to be conducted from sales calls. I am there privately and want to have fun (meet after-sales employees on racetracks)"; "and so I like to drive these 70 kilometres and know my car is in good hands"
	Social–external *Peer influence from friends, other drivers, or influencers (i.e. via journalists or social media bloggers), external media, clubs*	Peer influence, community, events, exchanges with other drivers, gifts, online communities, blogs, event size, exclusivity of events	"I prefer not to join any clubs"; "I am already registered in the Dießen AMG Club"; "yes, German Maserati Club and sports car friends", "there was a meeting on, I know, on the Tegernsee or something else, which promotes sociability a bit. I think that would be nice"

Third, the coding process started immediately with these predetermined keywords and elements for coding. Data that could not be coded were stored in an “unexpected/new findings” folder to be analysed later to determine whether they represent a new category or a subcategory of an existing code. If neither applied, the information proceeded automatically to stage II of the analysis to be investigated for new elements and findings. The findings from this first stage offer supporting and non-supporting evidence of relevant categories and themes. This evidence is presented by showing codes with exemplars and by offering descriptive evidence (see the findings section 6).

5.7.3 Data analysis: Stage II

Although the previously outlined approach was rather validation driven – due to the first analysis exploring existing theory in a different situation or comparing categories with different consumers – the focus of this research was clear to the author. Aiming to explore new themes and additional subcategories as well as (dis-)proving touchpoints beyond the existing theoretical construct clearly gave this study an exploratory nature following an inductive approach. In the second stage of the data analysis, the author sought meanings that might also lead to finely detailed information and data, resulting in smaller segments or units. Since this study was exploratory in nature, an inductive approach allowed the emergence of new themes, categories, or contextual information beyond the existing prior coding scheme. This combination benefited from the advantages of both disciplines and extended to the existing coding and theoretical construct positively.

The relevant categories and touchpoints identified during stage I of the analysis now represented the areas for further research. To explore interesting elements within these coded categories and nodes, a frequency analysis could bring up certain words or content in the text that were mentioned by the participants multiple times. This quantification was an attempt not to infer meaning but rather to set the basis for further exploration (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Looking for the appearance of a particular word or content in text gives some information about the interviewee’s relevant elements; however, it does not lead to a qualitative evaluation of its meaning and context. Here, summative content analysis comes into play. A summative approach to qualitative content analysis starts with identified and quantified words or content in the text and builds an understanding of the context on top of this (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). This analysis extends beyond simple word counts and includes latent content analysis, meaning the process of content interpretation (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

Coding schemes during stage II of the data analysis

First, stage II of the analysis commenced by building on the identified relevant categories and touchpoints from stage I. This frequency analysis was interested in how often words could be assigned within each identified relevant category. It was undertaken using computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software called NVIVO. This software contains a tool allowing the researcher to analyse the most frequent words within a selected document (in this case the text codes of relevant categories and touchpoints).

The comprehensive tables of all the frequency analysis results can be found in appendix 7. To increase the quality of the analysis, the researcher had to reduce the results via a stop word list. Here, fill words like “but”, “be”, “no”, and so on often biased the outcome of the analysis. A protocol for the stop words for this research can be found in appendix 6.

Table 5.4: Example of the frequency analysis

Word (German)	Word (English)	Length	Count
Händler	dealer	7	67
Probefahrt	test drive	10	60
Auto	car	4	51
rolle	role	5	24
wichtig	important	7	23
Autohaus	dealership	8	20
sehr	very much	4	18

When a word has been mentioned and used by participants very frequently, it is often an indicator of its importance to the interviewee within this category. For instance, looking at the category pre-purchase stage and the touchpoint “partner owned”, the analysis highlighted the words “dealer” and “test drive”, among others. This gave an important indication that “dealers” and “test drives” were mentioned multiple times; however, no meaningful conclusion could be drawn regarding whether these words are relevant elements. Frequency analysis is an elementary first step in content analysis but not the final one due to its purely descriptive nature of counting words only.

Therefore, the author introduced an additional element, called valency analysis, aiming to complete the meaningfulness of this study. Valency analysis also includes the evaluation of the meaning and the context associated with the subject of investigation (in this case the word identified) (Shaikh, Prendinger, & Mitsuru, 2007). This analysis of the context around frequently mentioned words investigates whether certain persons, topics, or elements are judged positively, neutrally, or negatively. Within the scope of this research, the author differentiated between positive, neutral, and negative statements.

Table 5.5: Contextual evaluation of highlighted words

Highlighted word	Context	No. of persons	No. of feedback statements
Test drive			
	Negative	11	14
	Neutral	3	3
	Positive	15	21

Negative: “Test drive? There is no added value for me” (02_Hartmut)

Neutral: “Could be interesting if you are unsure. Maybe if it is your first car” (09_Katja)

Positive: “It is very important. Because without a test drive you cannot evaluate the car. Very important” (08_Brian)

Returning to the previous examples, it was known that “dealer” and “test drive” are relevant words to the touchpoint “partner owned” in the pre-purchase stage. The author screened the context of each word (i.e. test drive) comprehensively across all the coded elements (NVIVO displays the entire paragraph in which a word was identified). Examples are the following:

> I do not like it if the dealer is pushing me and tries to sell. I just want to check out the cars first on my own before I purchase a car.

I love to test drive a car before I buy it – it is just very important, isn't it?

Having analysed the context, a negative statement (here indicated by "I do not like it") emerged around the word "dealer" and was coded accordingly. The same applies to the very positive answer (here indicated with the emotional word "love") obtained in relation to test driving a car during the pre-purchase stage. The findings from this second stage of explorative content analysis offered new knowledge to answer the research question.

The next step in data analysis involves making interpretations based on the data using the descriptions, themes, and data as inputs through abstraction and comparisons (Punch, 2007, p. 202). Essentially, the researcher aims to answer the research questions. Interpretation can take many forms, such as personal interpretation and meanings derived from the results (Creswell, 2009, pp. 189–190). This section aimed to display the approach to data analysis and coding transparently. The results are discussed separately in chapter 6.

5.8 Reliability and validity in research

To ensure that qualitative research methods are reliable and valid, a basically different method from quantitative research is required. Reliability refers to the "consistency or stability" of a set of data (Johnson & Christensen, 2008, p. 144). According to Yin (2003), qualitative reliability is achieved when a researcher's approach is consistent and the processes are documented as much as possible (Creswell, 2009, p. 190). Additionally, reliable methods should include checking transcripts for precision and tight control over codes during analysis to avoid code drift by using a control mechanism such as a coding guideline (Creswell, 2009, p. 190).

Since this study involved the coding of data by one researcher, as well as a reliability test of the coding with third persons (see the following sections), a consistent approach to content analysis was applied. The interpretations have been made by a single person and are stated in the findings section of this research. The coding scheme and coding guideline used are included in appendix 5. However, as the author aimed to reach the highest possible standards, there was a certain level of subjectivity in deciding which code and category applied. To minimise this limitation of qualitative content analysis, the use of a coding scheme (see 5.7.2) supported the focus of coding. Furthermore, the reliability of the coding structure and theme was tested with an additional person (a business student of the author) – illustrated in sub-section 5.8.2.

In qualitative research, validity means that the researcher has used procedures to ensure that the results are correct. The literature has defined it as "the accuracy of the inferences, interpretations, or actions made” based on a set of data (Johnson & Christensen, 2008, p. 150). Validity is enhanced by transparency; that is, the researchers describe the results on the basis of comprehensive, detailed descriptions as well as discussing their personal biases openly (Creswell, 2009, pp. 191–192). Validity is a strength of qualitative research if the results are accurate from the different viewpoints of the researcher, the participants, and the readers (Creswell, 2009). The validity of this study was enhanced by utilising a specific coding scheme and a two-step analysis to combine the deductive and inductive approaches to theory building. These supported the potential pitfall of overlooking important elements due to the limitation of applying one analysis method only. Since the models used for this framework have been built on a solid base of knowledge from the literature and have been used and developed for a long period of time, they were assumed to provide a valid and reliable backbone for this study.

Coding

5.8.1 Pre-test coding scheme

This section will discuss and explain all the relevant details of all the coding and analysis processes applied in this research with respect to reliability and validity, ensuring a transparent and understandable basis for researchers who aim to replicate or develop the results of this project. The necessity of pre-testing a coding scheme has been raised in the previous chapters. Within the eight-step process of content analysis, one step is clearly dedicated to pre-testing the coding scheme on a sample of text (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009, pp. 310–312):

> …
>
> 3. Develop categories and a coding scheme.
>
> **4. Test the coding scheme on a sample of text.**
>
> 5. Code all the text.
>
> …

In addition to this process, a more detailed guideline for pre-testing was provided by Krippendorf (2004), who emphasised the important elements to consider during a pre-test. According to Krippendorf (2004, p. 130), it is essential to ensure that:

a. The literature to be coded made frequent enough reference to the dimensions to be worth coding
b. The dimensions themselves did not overlap with one another (except in a few cases in which some subtle shadings of attitude were being sought)
c. The dimensions themselves were clear and unambiguous enough to assure that independent coders would have strong agreement that a specific article should or should not be coded
d. The three category alternatives in each dimension were as mutually exclusive as possible yet exhaustive of the possible ranges of relevant responses

To incorporate the above-mentioned points into this research, a coding template was developed by the author (see 5.7.2). This served as formulated coding rules. These concrete instructions for the coders (in this research the author himself and two independent persons) gave guidance on how the examined contents must be coded within the concrete categories, touchpoints, and so on, supported by a computer-aided content analysis program (NVIVO). Referring to **(a)**, the transcripts showed enough reference dimensions to code. This also emerged during the data transcription process, when the author was immersed in the data prior to this stage. The importance of dimensions and categories **(b)** that do not overlap turned out to be a theoretical challenge during the pre-test. The processual model of the framework contains the same touchpoints (hence there is a danger of misunderstandings in coding due to overlapping or similar terminology) but is divided into three different stages of customer experience, which are the pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase stages. In reality, during the pre-test, it turned out not to be a problem due to the clear differentiation of process steps during the interview (the interviewer emphasised each step separately – an advantage of the semi-structured interview format). To give an example:

<u>Theoretical overlap</u>:

Categories:	Pre-purchase	Post-purchase
Touchpoint:	**Social–external**	**Social–external**

<u>Pre-test result</u>:

Interview data: "(Interviewer): If you think about the first idea you had about the car, long before you bought it – was there any influence by others, i.e. friends, family, internet blogs, that influenced your search or decision?"

Categories:	**Pre-purchase**	Post-purchase
Touchpoint:	**Social–external**	Social–external

➔ Any answer in the interview could be identified as being directly relevant to the pre-purchase stage and did not face the risk of confusion on the part of the coder, resulting in this information being placed in the wrong coding node.

The coding template clearly states and differentiates between the themes and the keywords/examples for coding phrases as well as providing examples of how to interpret the keywords and phrases (see appendix 5). This was undertaken with respect to the premises mentioned in points **(c)** and **(d)**. In the test phase, a pre-test of the coding scheme was carried out and small adaptations had to be made to the category system. Some new aspects emerged from the text but did not fit into the scheme, which had to be consistent with the framework. Therefore, no substantial adaptions could apply to this theory-driven construct. To avoid skipping or losing valuable data, an extension was made by introducing a temporary category called "new findings". The data that were put into this category were especially relevant to the stage II analysis, in which the aim was explorative and inputs were derived from the data rather than validating a given construct (stage I analysis). When the tests had been completed, the actual coding took place (Krippendorf, 2004). Most of the coding was conducted by the author himself. Two additional persons (one business student and a friend of the author) were involved in the coding process to ensure the highest possible level of reliability. The friend was involved in the pre-test and the business student in the intercoder reliability test (see the next section).

To ensure the greatest possible reliability, intracoder reliability (the same coding result from identical coders in different coding processes) and intercoder reliability (the same coding result from different coders for identical material) were checked (Mayring, 2010, p. 116). The following section will describe how this was applied to this research.

5.8.2 Intercoder reliability

The main aim of intercoder reliability is to ensure a high degree of reproducibility, meaning that the process can be replicated by different analysts working under varying conditions or in different locations (Krippendorf, 2004, p. 215). For instance, if a comparison shows that at least two people working separately from each other have coded the same material similarly, this shows high intercoder reliability (Mayring, 2010, p. 116).

Within this research project, one transcript was given to a business student of the author. She was also trained with the assistance of the coding template developed (see 5.7.2). The same sample transcript (interviewee 02_Hartmut) was coded with the content software NVIVO, allowing multiple coders to work on the same material. Afterwards, the NVIVO tool called "coding comparison query properties" was used for the analysis.

Table 5.6: Coding comparison query between Coder I and Coder II

Nodes / Codes	Kappa-Coefficient
Post-purchase stage	1
Post-purchase stage\2.3.1 brand owned	0,716
Post-purchase stage\2.3.2 partner owned	0,791
Post-purchase stage\2.3.3 customer owned	0,818
Post-purchase stage\2.3.4 social–external	0,496

The Kappa coefficient is generally accepted as valid by qualitative researchers and indicates the level of agreement between different coders (in this case the author and a business student). The Kappa coefficient takes probabilities into account, too. The first column displays the coding structure according to the coding tree. Here, the previous example was chosen, containing all the coding that had been performed in terms of the post-purchase stage. Kappa measures the level of agreement between multiple coders between "0" and "1". Here "0" represents no agreement and "1" means total agreement between coders. Differences between coders can occur due to different sections or different parts of the same section having been coded (i.e. instead of the entire sentence, maybe just important words from it).

Table 5.7: Interpretation of the Kappa coefficient

Kappa Value	Interpretation
Below 0.40	Poor agreement
0.40 – 0.75	Fair to good agreement
Over 0.75	Excellent agreement

Source: NVIVO (2020)

According to the table above, the results of the coding process fall between higher "good" and lower "excellent" on the scale. Both coders were able to replicate a good result due to the coding guidelines. The largest differences between the coders could be found in the section on social and external touchpoints during the post-purchase phase.

Intracoder reliability

The main aim of intracoder reliability is to ensure a high match between the first and the second coding round of the same material (Mayring, 2010). There should be a time interval between the individual coding processes (Mayring, 2010). For instance, if the author codes the same text within a significant time interval, the coded text should be grouped and coded into the same categories and nodes. This shows a high level of intracoder reliability (Mayring, 2010, p. 116).

Chapter 6:

6 Findings – Key Components of Customer Experience

6.1 Emerging concepts from the customer experience data

This part of the findings presents the first set of concepts emerging from the qualitative data analysis. Here, cognitive and affective (including symbolic) components build the foundation of brand equity. Within these components, the concepts of, for example, brand awareness, physical quality, and so on were explored and coded.

Figure 6.1: Conceptual part of the research framework

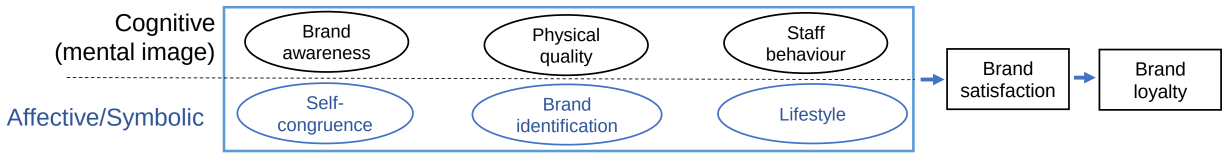


Table 6.1 illustrates the coding distribution within the component "cognitive". It shows how many individual passages of text were coded at a given node (meaning how many individual statements about a topic were made by the participants).

Table 6.1: Cognitive concepts' coding distribution

Cognitive Components	Coded Participants	Coded Statements	
Brand awareness	19	37	
Physical quality	29	154	
Staff behaviour	32	191	

As can be seen from Table 6.1, 32 participants made at least 1 statement (32 data sets = 32 participants) about staff behaviour. Within those 32 sources, 191 individual segments of text were identified and coded accordingly, meaning that those 32 participants made 191 statements referring to staff behaviour in general. Within the category "cognitive", the theme of staff behaviour contains the most fragments, followed by information about physical quality (product, showroom, service quality, etc.). Interestingly, the theme of brand awareness is represented less, probably due to its relevance from customers' point of view (they already are aware of a preferred brand and have bought a product). What stands out in this figure is the dominance of staff behaviour as well as the physical quality of the product or experience at the point of sale. A total of 88 statements did not fit into the predesigned themes and were evaluated in round II of the analysis when the analysis of the context took place.

Table 6.2: Symbolic/affective concepts' coding distribution

Symbolic Components	Coded Participants	Coded Statements
Brand identification	32	206
Lifestyle, including self-reward and self-esteem	30	104
Self-congruence, including ideal/actual self and hedonic consumption	22	69

Table 6.2 shows that most answers were grouped into the theme of brand identification, followed by the theme of lifestyle and self-reward/esteem, and that 22 participants gave implicit or explicit answers (69) that refer to the concept of the ideal and the actual self, their "perceived" role in life, and hedonic consumption. Additional to the pre-grouped and coded answers, the researcher explored a vast amount of comments that could not be coded into the existing groups (i.e. they did not fit ideally). Surprisingly, more than 320 statements from all the participants (32) had to be analysed and coded separately as new insights. Mainly, these statements addressed explicitly the elements of trust and emotions, which led to a new concept or important insights into the customer experience journey. Comparing the two meta concepts (affective/symbolic vs cognitive), it can be concluded that symbolic/affective elements are significantly more important than cognitive aspects within the sphere of affordable luxury automobiles.

Next, the findings from the data analysis are presented. The aim is to identify the key components of the customer experience. Concepts that emerge from these data are explained and discussed as they might produce new findings or validate the existing ones. This evaluation used the framework (Figure 6.1) as a vehicle.

6.1.1 Brand awareness

To recap, Franzen and Bouwman (2001) defined brand awareness as a precondition for the existence of a brand in the evaluation set of a consumer when considering and being involved in a purchase process (Franzen & Bouwman, 2001). Keller viewed brand awareness as the likelihood that the brand name will come to the mind of a customer (Keller, 1993). To allow this, brand awareness and product knowledge are the key to enter the consideration set of a consumer.

Table 6.3: The concept of brand awareness

Cognitive Concepts	Coded Participants	Coded Statements
Brand awareness	19	37

Within the cognitive layer, it is of interest that 19 out of a total of 32 participants provided feedback that was coded as relating to brand awareness issues, ending up in 37 statements by the interviewees. Although this appeared to be a robust basis, the context analysis of all the statements revealed that the information given did not support the concept of brand awareness in particular. A possible explanation for this could be the nature of the study, in which most participants knew the brands very well and had long-term experience (entry criteria). All the participants were well aware of the leading and prominent premium and luxury car brands, although they did not explicitly mention this. Though the issue of brand awareness seems to have lower priority according to the results, some feedback clearly refers to points that are linked to a brand – that is, associations and images of brands and new products.

> Yes, well. Because due to the fact that Michael Schumacher used to drive a Mercedes and I am emotionally such a Mercedes guy, Ferrari has of course been known since then at the latest after he has actively driven for Ferrari. And I also have the feeling that from racing, Michael and other employees have transferred motorsport DNA into serial cars. Like the down force, like the shifting pedals, like various things that you just didn't pay so much attention to Ferrari beforehand. (Maik)

> I read that in the newspaper. Then I say that fits and that’s it. (Hartmut)

> The brand itself. The car, the product itself. That’s all that counts. (Johannes)

According to participants Hartmut, Johannes, and Maik, the brand plays a role as part of the product itself, during information consumption (like newspapers), or through a person who is associated with the brand or product who already has a good image and credibility. This might further indicate that existing associations can be transferred (here, the person of Michael Schumacher to a brand like Ferrari). As mentioned in the literature review, brand awareness is an important asset but so is the association with it – the brand image (D. Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993). Although this dimension was not the main subject of this study and therefore no question was asked about it in particular, interestingly, some participants mentioned several points, clearly addressing the association that they have with a brand forming a sustainable image in their mind.

> So, definitely, at the very front, from the technology, that’s actually the case, they are always at the very front. I’m not a technology junkie, but the advertising and everything they do suggests the whole idea. Loud. Loud and fast. (Brian)

> For me, Audi was always a BRAND that stood for, yes, how can I put it, for elegance, but also for something special. And Audi was somehow always one of the safest cars; I somehow still had that in mind. (Rolf)

Interestingly, various feedback statements clearly refer to the brand as being associated with a symbol of quality and trust.

> And you can buy blind from a Mercedes Benz subsidiary. And, of course, you could have taken an M5 or an RS6, I’ve driven them before, but it is not a Mercedes. (Teo)

> So Porsche has a great quality. And the quality of Porsche is simple, it is a Porsche. (Rolf)

> I have never done a test drive before. Audi, VW, in my opinion, all quite good in point of quality. So nothing that could go wrong. (Marco)

Evidence was given by the participants in accordance with Keller's concept of a functional value in terms of symbolism to others. The results of this section show that symbols are an important factor that can be reached through the body type of the cars, the badging/brand logo, or removing all product badges on purpose. This would mean that no symbol is also a symbol.

> It's just an E-Class. A bit of the "wolf in sheep's clothing". Only insiders can see what that is, even if there is no batch on it. You can already recognise what type of car this is – when you know it. … But I wanted the AMG with the star on top. Successors in the facelift then have the SL grill, where the star is included. I always wanted to see the star on the top (on the hood). (Teo)

> The good RS logo. (laughs) That's if you see that, you know: okay, you're right. (laughs) Trust. Yes. You are right. Example, fruit shop, organic, non-organic. Some people absolutely want to eat organic when they see the organic logo. So if there's an organic label on it, they say, "Yeah, it fits". I'm in the bio department. I am at home there. It is the same for me with the RS logo. (Laughs) (Brian)

> I love that, in addition to the coat of arms that they have at Porsche, of course they also have these wings from Aston Martin, and also the logo, so this whole British understatement, I really like. (Markus)

Another interesting finding was that participants Brian and Peter clearly stated the brand function as a status symbol as well as a tool for representation purposes. This fact underpins the relevance – especially when we consider luxury brands in which companies invest in their brand image and associations that ideally accompany it in customers' or third persons' minds.

> Good, I would not deny that status plays a role. You can't deny that. Because whether I drive around with the Dacia Logan or with the car (Audi R8), that makes a difference. If I drive to a customer of mine with a 20-year-old Golf 1, the customer says: "What are you doing? What are you doing wrong?" (Brian)

> Yes, also for reasons of representation, but it is actually more fun to drive. (Peter)

In summary, each participant identified several aspects of the key concept brand. Although no answer was directly linked to brand awareness, every interviewee was well aware of the relevant brands in this industry. This confirms that brand and brand awareness are a broad concept that has many facets, which have been extended and presented in this section. The findings of this study, however, do not support the initial concept of being aware of a brand (according to "I know/do not know the brand"). This discrepancy could be attributed to the sample of this study, in which all the participants own/have experience in the sphere of high-performance luxury cars. With respect to previous research, in which brand awareness has been defined as cognitive and knowledge-based brand equity (D. Aaker, 1996; Çifci et al., 2016; Keller, 1993; Nam et al., 2011), the findings of this research are in line with the data obtained from reviewing the literature. In particular, the elements of present or past experiences and the knowledge and the image of a brand built the concept and have been presented.

One unanticipated finding was that several participants expressed that trust in a brand that has been established over time rapidly shortens the decision-making process. It also decreases the likelihood of brand switching, making it hard for the competition to win over customers. The fact that a brand also implies a certain degree of quality as well as status was articulated as well; however, these findings were expected by the researcher.

6.1.2 Physical quality

Physical quality is an important concept in this study as it represents the high-value products of luxury cars. However, physical quality extends further than just product quality and experience; it also describes the quality at relevant touchpoints, such as the showroom of a dealer and the service quality (part of the entire product that a consumer is purchasing).

Table 6.4: The concept of physical quality

Cognitive Concepts	Coded Participants	Coded Statements
Physical quality	29	154

Almost all the participants provided feedback about physical quality issues in this study. Of the total of 32 participants, 29 referred to them in more than 150 single statements. This not only represents a huge leap compared with "brand awareness" but also indicates their high significance. This finding could be consistent with the work of Mason, who stressed the difficulty in research of separating the consumers shopping for utilitarian reasons from those emphasising “quality” to explain their choices, although the purchase was based on the value of the good’s perceived social status (Mason, 1992). Concerning the good of a luxury car, it could be argued that status plays a role and might be explained by the participants through product quality; however, the element of quality plays a role on its own, too. Using the large number of statements given, the researcher carefully analysed the information provided by filtering product- and quality-related statements as well as potential subliminal messages that could impart rather status-linked information.

Furthermore, physical quality is a very general concept, although this study was able to extend it with subconstructs due to the amount of information obtained, making this research less abstract and more tangible. Important clusters could be built that are underpinned by the most important statements of the interviewees. The subsequent structure follows the physical journey of visiting a showroom, taking a look at the product and its functions.

Physical quality – showrooms

Exploring the subconcept of a physical showroom provides answers concerning a particularly important part of the customer experience. As mentioned in the literature review, sensory and ambient parts are prominent during a customer experience. In terms of the sensory dimension, a showroom is the ideal touchpoint to smell, touch, and even hear the product itself. Few participants gave answers that clearly indicate the requirement to have a showroom that is well designed and of high quality and therefore in line with the products displayed.

> The materials must be of high quality. I can’t put an expensive car in such a shabby linoleum salesroom, to put it hard. The ambience must, so to speak, match the type of vehicle that is being sold. (Frank)
>
> First of all, of course, a high-quality showroom. That it is not the eighties car salesroom where a brand new car is sold. So the showroom must also fit the product. (Uwe)
>
> Yes. It should look like a fashion show. It should look, should be bright. There should be a lot of glass inside. Ultimately, the cars should be there, they should shine. You should – you have to be able to actually see, smell, and FEEL the car in the end. (Klaus)

Some of these statements are somewhat surprising given the fact that the participants spoke very emotionally about the showroom. This is also in line with a recent study emphasising the emotional relevance of physical bricks-and-mortar retailers compared to pure online shopping (Sit, Hoang, & Inversini, 2018). It seems possible that the showroom is an important part of the customer journey in the luxury automotive segment as it represents one of the few physical touchpoints where the product is displayed and celebrated to a great extent – like high-class jewellery. As a result, it provokes emotions that can be positive when the expectations are met. This also supports the argument of having a brand base where this customer group would like to shop, compared to industries or entrepreneurs seeking for venues where potential customers spend their time with modern concepts like pop-up retail stores (Shi, Warnaby, & Quinn, 2019).

Within the study, the participants were asked whether they prefer a separate showroom section for the high-performance products of a brand. Besides the information about a dedicated showroom and its quality, this section is especially of interest because the results are likely to be related to status-driven attributes like conformity (belonging) or distinction from the "mass" products. If so, this would be in line with the theory about status goods (Mason, 1992).

Almost all the participants who answered this question explained the importance of a separate showroom. Interestingly, interviewees Brian, Uwe, Andreas, Katja, Klaus, Jörg, Ute, Ralf, and Günter emphasised that the cars are special and they would like them to be in a separate environment. Some even underpinned the difference between their aspirational cars and the mass products of the brand, which is a clear indication for separation. Participants Jörg and Ute even explained the aim of belonging when speaking about a "circle" or different perceived "department".

> There is for the R8, which is then alone in the separate room. And I think that's the way it should be. Because the car must be a little off. In relation, it also costs considerably more than a normal Audi car. (Brian)

> So it's a bit separate, that's actually, yes, an AMG department in a Mercedes showroom. That you can already see that, aha, here is the carpet, here I am in the AMG area. (Jörg)

> No, I think that should be separated. Not because you shouldn't see the others, but simply that you have the models in the circle in which they belong. (Ute)

> Yes. It can't be mixed with an A class or anything. Yes, either floor different or painted walls a little different or whatever. (Günter)

An expected outcome of a separate showroom was mentioned by participants Frank and Margarita, highlighting the function of better orientation and recognisability. Additionally, a different ambience plays a role, and customers can spend time with the car in a qualitative and relaxed environment. Interviewee Margarita even stressed this issue by recommending having a bar with coffee and drinks, indicating that this clientele is willing to spend time there and enjoy the experience.

> Whereby I would like that this M series in particular, that it is integrated into the sales room, so to speak, but is spatially separated in order to make this more clearly recognisable. For example, at the dealership where I was, it was not like that. If you search for an M, so to speak, you have to look twice to see it. (Frank)

> That means I have to be able to walk well between the vehicles. The whole thing must be well lit. There must be a multitude of different models and, of course, ideally also different equipment features. There must be a coffee bar/bistro where you can have a drink when you're tired of all these gorgeous vehicles. (Margarita)

Physical quality – product design

An expected outcome within the concept of physical quality is the design of the products. In industry research as well, design remains one of the top purchase criteria for premium and luxury cars. Therefore, the results of this study are in line with industry research but even emphasise its high relevance within the scope of this research.

> And yes, in the end, it was basically only the design that decided. (Annegret)

> That is, of course, this, this design, the look, the power, and then the consumption. (Andreas)

Although design is a rather subtle and very personal taste-driven evaluation, it is interesting to analyse the responses because there is no uniform opinion about a brand. This means that a BMW can be classy and elegant for an owner, whereas for Audi drivers this car might be too clumsy and showy. A possible explanation could be found in the actual and ideal self, which the product owned is used to complement.

> Yes, I think what makes Audi so special is that it is so classic, elegant, chic, modern, but not too bulky, not too showy. (Katja)
>
> A bit smaller from the shape, but still a fast car if possible. (Kirsten)
>
> And the Audi manages this balancing act with a relatively decent amount, so that, for us, it is a good combination. (Uwe)

The interpersonal dimension of distinction was articulated nicely by participant Lars. Although some manufacturers use shared parts across their product range, a high-priced car should not be equipped with the same design features as a lower-priced car or, even worse, have product logos from a lower-positioned brand on it. Here, the potential for negative emotions was given.

> And the nice thing is that Lamborghini no longer uses all the Audi parts. Because when I get into a car for 320,000 euros, I don’t want to have switches from the Audi TT. That contradicts itself. I know that this belongs to the VW group, but if there are Audi Rings (logo) in it – that is a no go. I immediately replaced it. (Lars)

Physical quality – product quality

Product quality represents a particularly important element for all the participants. The majority of the informants expressed the relevance of the product quality, resulting in positive and negative emotions. Some participants described in detail what the product and its experience are about. In line with the theory, this element represents the sensory experience to a high degree. Interviewees Markus and Kirsten provided evidence of these sensory elements of touching, smelling, and hearing. Craftsmanship is also important to them as it is perceived and expected in the range of premium and luxury automobiles.

> The atmosphere when getting in, the sound of the doors opening, the smell of leather, the PRESS on the start button and so on. The bubbling of the cylinders and the aggressive response of the brakes which you have to get used to. And I say that the interior was processed with love to the last detail. That it is really the finest leather, everything colour trimmed. (Markus)

> For example, I really pay great attention to workmanship, for example. And for me, Audi is simply incredibly convincing. This workmanship is something that amazes me incredibly. (Kirsten)

One surprising fact that was found during the interviews is the experience of sound associated with the product quality and power of a car. A high number of interviewees stressed the sound from the engine and exhaust as part of the emotional product experience.

> The R8 from me has an exhaust on it for 9,000 euros. The volume, the sound experience. If you put the paddle to the metal, accelerate, then something also moves you. (Brian)

> The engine noise from Mercedes got me. (Arzu)

> But so from sporty driving and so and from the engine sound and so and all that and the slightly lower seating position that you have and so on, I've already noticed that it was something that I was also very enthusiastic about. (Frank)

When it comes to experiencing the power of a car physically, an expected outcome was feedback concerning the acceleration and power. The direct force exerted on the body during acceleration, for example, is a very emotional element during a product experience. Many people show extreme reactions during their first experience – not unusually ending in screaming, laughing, or misty eyes due to a rush of adrenaline and an increased heart rate. The statements of the participants underpin this.

> Yes, because it is fun to accelerate! (Hartmut)

> Yes, that's the motorisation. Power, speed! (Frank)

> However, the combination of this perfection, that every gram was saved here and there, and it is all about performance, i.e. driving and also fast cornering – this is amazing! (Lars)

Furthermore, safety reasons do play a role for some of the respondents. They explicitly emphasised the need to have the latest safety technology on board when driving sport cars.

> That thing has all the airbags that are available. And I've always wanted a car with the latest safety technology. (Teo)

> And Audi was somehow always one of the safest cars; I somehow still had that in mind. (Martina)

Despite the large number of participants who reported almost positive emotions related to the physical product quality, a few also shared factors that affected the experience negatively. Interviewees Günter and Teo showed in their statements a high degree of frustration when high-quality expectations are not met.

> And at Porsche there were disappointments when it came to quality. That hit me very hard. (Günter)

> What makes me angry is if something breaks and it is expensive. I do not like it. (Teo)

Physical quality – everyday practicality

An unexpected finding during the exploration arose when the participants named an aspect that was not on the radar of the researcher. Thinking of sport cars, some of the expected results have been mentioned previously. Surprisingly, though, a fair number of interviewees stated that these emotional and non-rational products have to offer a certain degree of everyday practicality. Participants expressed their individual lifestyles (e.g. the need to transport children, a large body size of the driver, etc.) and voiced the need to have a product that is capable of serving different needs of the owner. Some explained problems in finding a car that they could fit into (fitness for body size) or having this type of car as an everyday vehicle.

> Because I fit in well. I am 1.95 tall. I'm a little wider. And I still fit in wonderfully (in a Porsche). For example, I sit miserably in the SL. (Johannes)
>
> Lamborghini and so on, these are not vehicles where I feel comfortable. Speaking about the space inside. So, SL, that was just the limit. And Aston Martin is much bigger, so much, much more, not volume wise, but much more space for the passengers. (David)
>
> It is used every day because it is simply terribly comfortable. This is soft driving, it doesn't demand much, very sporty but family friendly. I can transport children – super. (Arzu)

In summary, each participant identified several aspects of the key concept of physical quality. This confirms that physical quality is a broad concept that has many facets and has been extended and presented in this section. The findings are in line with the data obtained from reviewing the literature. Particularly the concepts of perceived quality (D. Aaker, 1991), physical quality as a variable for customer satisfaction (Çifci et al., 2016), and the aspects of educational and entertaining elements during the customer experience (Pine & Gilmore, 1998) have been presented. Sensory stimuli have been identified as a prominent element of this concept.

What is surprising is that a need for suitability was articulated in this segment of sport vehicles as well as the tendency of separation from the mass products/belonging to the high-performance circle of a brand (for instance separate showrooms).

6.1.3 Staff behaviour

Staff behaviour is an important concept in this study due its occurrence at numerous touchpoints. Although the product and its experience are in focus, the attitudes and behaviour of the entire staff during a luxury experience influence customers' satisfaction significantly. In the automotive industry and especially in the niche of luxury cars, the interaction between people is often the key to success and loyalty. Previous studies have evaluated staff behaviour and its relevance to customers as the image projected by the employees' competence, helpfulness, friendliness, and responsiveness (Ekinci, Dawe, & Massey, 2008).

Table 6.5: The concept of staff behaviour

Cognitive Concepts	Coded Participants	Coded Statements
Staff behaviour	32	191

This significance is also represented in the qualitative data. All the participants gave feedback about staff behaviour in this study. The entire sample – consisting of 32 participants – provided 191 individual statements linked to staff behaviour and competence at all touchpoints. Since the questionnaire aimed to explore the factors that customers expect or that satisfy them during interaction, saturation of answers could be reached at an early stage. Therefore, important clusters could be built to extend the concept of staff behaviour underpinned by the most important statements of the interviewees.

Staff behaviour – competence

Within the concept of staff behaviour, it was pointed out by the informants that competence is a particularly important aspect. Beginning with the rather tangible aspect of competence, many of the interviewees reported that good to excellent product knowledge is expected. Participants Rolf, Margarita, and Martina stressed this as being very clearly an important factor for them. Interviewee Annegret commented on this with an interesting comparison with cars that are less expensive. According to her, the higher the price of a product, the better the treatment and product knowledge expected from the sales staff. Complementing this statement, participant Teo expected product knowledge and stated that the staff should drive the products themselves. This implies two dimensions: first, the credibility of one's consultations might benefit from it; second, discussions can be held on an equal level.

> So I definitely expect excellent product knowledge. (Margarita)
>
> Yes. So he should already have good knowledge. But, otherwise, he doesn't have to be a motorsport fan. (Martina)

> So he knows the product very well. He is always on training and drives the cars himself. But of course he has to know all the details. If I notice that there is a gap, then I can't take him seriously. He has to be well trained, has to know his product, that's for sure. (Teo)

In contrast, the study revealed experiences that lead to negative feelings, mentioned by interviewees Hartmut, Reo, and Martina. They expressed their behaviour when the staff members tend to be persuasive in selling items. Whereas Teo noted only moderate benefit, Hartmut formulated this more clearly. Martina even reported a clear defensive attitude when feeling uncomfortable during an exchange – halting the sales consultation. A possible explanation for perceived persuasion from staff might be sales pressure, a person who is less skilled in sales behaviour, or someone who is not as experienced as a senior salesperson.

> And a seller doesn't need to tell me anything; basically I don't need a seller. Maybe because of the price negotiation you have to talk about it. And, well, if I do get some advice, a second opinion about the equipment, what makes sense to combine. The people are well trained, the salespeople, the service masters, the staff. Mercedes is 100 percent correct. (Teo)

> He has to be able to listen. And, yes, respond to the questions I do ask him. And he can't sell anything here by persuading, you can't. With a car like this, you can't say – take this and put that in the car. That does not work. At least not for me. (Hartmut)

> Especially when I go there as a woman, I just expect to be treated accordingly. So, if they really annoy me and then constantly bombard me with things and already push me a bit. Because then I immediately stop and say: No, then I would rather stop it. Or I just go to another dealer. (Martina)

In addition to the negative impressions mentioned earlier, some respondents also stressed the feeling of not being treated equally by the staff. This results in an uncomfortable feeling for the customers during their experience. It seems possible that this is due to a mismatch of expected treatment based on ideal self-congruence – which is not met during such a negative experience.

> I also experienced that they had their nose up like this: Can you afford the car at all? (Kirsten)

> Where they had their nose too high and I said if it doesn't fit, I'll leave. There is, it is always dependent on people. The greeting is important; the ambience is important. Simply about service, not just about the car, but also about the person. They shouldn't crawl up my ass, they should communicate honestly with each other and at a certain level. (Peter)

Staff behaviour – appearance

Within the scope of this study, the participants were asked about the ideal appearance of the staff in the luxury automobile context. Furthermore, additional questions aimed to shed light on their age, gender, and competence from customers' point of view. Contrary to all expectations, this study found a significant consensus referring to an "ideal staff member" with whom the majority of customers felt comfortable.

The participants described the preferred appearance of the staff member as very well kept, rather attractive, courteous, and with good manners. He or she should radiate trustworthiness and possibly also be part of a society similar to that of his customers. Furthermore, a person with self-confidence and a fit between an attractive appearance and the brand were articulated. These factors may explain the attractiveness and sportiness associated with the products and the brand, and, if not fulfilled on the staff level, this mismatch might influence the ideal self negatively.

> I would say a little bit classic. Young, not too stiff, not too formal, but also not too casual. So not like at Apple, for example, where it is a bit, almost too friendly. That would be too close for me, somehow. (Katja)

> He should have an aura of seriousness and not one like from the red light milieu. (Hartmut)

> Yes, should definitely be confident. So not such a little one who sits in the corner and doesn't dare do anything. Because, I think it simply has nothing to do with such large sports cars. You also have to be able to inspire with what you say. So I have when I enter a car dealership and there is such a small, fat sixty-year-old man, I have less desire to go there than when there is just a man. (Annegret)

> He doesn't necessarily have to wear a tie, but a well-groomed outfit, well-groomed haircut and so as a MAN just somehow styled, so far necessary. (Markus)

Staff behaviour – demographics

Asked about their preferred age and gender of the sales staff, the interviewees gave remarkably similar answers independently of one another. In the perception of the interviewees, age seems to be significantly related to credibility, leading to a higher level of acceptance by the customers. Some reported rejection of staff who are too young. The preferred age that the participants expressed is middle age (i.e. 30–45).

> In any case, I would say, over 30. Because everyone that is younger, I guess, will look and feel like dealing with a rookie. (Brian)

> I mean, getting a €200,000 car sold by a 17-year-old is appealing, but I would not believe that he is of high competence at a young age. (Peter)

> So for me it can be a man or a woman, it doesn't matter. Where I would only have difficulty would be to get advice from an 18 year old. (Martina)

> Well, now, such a 20-year-old seller who is negotiating over 100,000 euros with me, I would find that a bit young. So, my salesperson, that was my age now. (Andreas)

The findings concerning the gender of the staff were unexpected to the researcher. Participant David articulated his preference for a male counterpart instead of a female one very honestly. Although in modern societies with the cultural background of Germany, gender discussions were not expected in this regard, it is highly interesting that members of this predominantly male buyer group prefer to conduct business with the same gender.

> So, I once decided for myself that I do not do business with women. I often had very unpleasant conversations and then decided for myself. Because women get sneaky when you corner them. Men are more sovereign. So if I had the opportunity that is there, I would go straight to the seller, not a woman. (David)

> That can also be a woman; I have never seen it myself, because dealerships are almost dominated by male employees, especially when it comes to the premium car segment. (Frank)

Staff behaviour – trustworthiness

A new element of the concept of staff behaviour was identified during the data analysis. Although studies have analysed the concept of staff behaviour, this outcome has not been detected so far. Jeton highlighted the correlation of increased trustfulness with increasing age.

> With the age that's more like that, the older you look, the more trustworthy you are perceived. (Jeton)

In addition to this, some interviewees stressed the prerequisite of trust when conducting business. Participant Hartmut is willing to accept advice from a third party (contrary to his rather dominant own-decision-only attitude) when there is a level of trust. Furthermore, participant Annegret stated that honest communication with the staff results in a trustful relationship. Interestingly, this plays an even more important role for some of the participants when it comes to service employees, like mechanics. Here, trust seems to be important as well. Due to the usage of these cars (i.e. driving at high speed, high-speed cornering, hard breaking, etc.) and a close relationship between some customers and their cars, this is also relevant as it plays a crucial role for health and safety reasons.

> Yes, sure, the basis of trust plays a role in terms that he can give advice on what to do and what room for negotiations we have. (Hartmut)

> Yes, that he advises me and that he doesn't lie or anything, so that he doesn't sell something. But that he really tells me the truth and I can trust him. (Annegret)

> You need a mechanic that you can trust and rely on. Where you say to yourself: please not again another one at my beautiful car. Instead: thank God that the same guy is servicing my car like the last time. (Peter)

In summary, each participant identified several aspects of the key concept of staff behaviour. This confirms that staff behaviour is a valid concept within the scope of customer experience. The second-layer analysis, which has been extended and presented in this section, showed expected as well as unexpected outcomes. Competence is important and linked to solid product knowledge by the participants. Negative feelings can arise when sales staff try to persuade the customer. Additionally, if customers do not feel adequately treated, the interviewees mentioned that frustration can arise. This point may be explained by the theory of Solomon (1983) in which products and services (the staff behaviour part of services) are consumed as a stimulus to build one's own role as well as a mismatch of the ideal self that is not reflected by this experience (Çifci et al., 2016; Solomon, 1983).

In the same vein, the preferred staff appearance, mentioned by the participants, could be explained by this theory. They prefer to meet attractive and sporty people with good manners, who are courteous and ideally operating in a higher level of society themselves. In terms of age, there is less acceptance of staff members who are very young or too old.

What is surprising and novel is that many informants mentioned the dimension of trust within the concept of staff behaviour. Trust was articulated as the basis for the next steps during the customer journey and underpins the crucial role. As a result, the concept of trust emerged from the data analysis (see chapter 6.1.4).

6.1.4 Trust – a new concept found within the data

Brand trust was found as a new concept in the data set. Many of the participants talked about sources of brand trust, which had not been detected in previous research. According to the literature, brand trust can be defined as the willingness of the average consumer to rely on the ability of the brand to perform its stated function (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001, p. 82). Specifically, trust reduces the uncertainty in situations in which consumers feel new because they have evaluated a brand as trustworthy and therefore rely on it (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). Measures encountered during the customer journey should therefore engender a feeling of overall trust and confidence in the brand, the organisation, and its employees (Batra & Keller, 2016). For example, participants Hartmut, Teo, and Annegret described trust as an important factor throughout the entire customer journey. Informant Hartmut made a comparison with a doctor, which represents one of the closest relationships of trust that exist in our society.

> The dealer plays a role for me in that it is trustworthy for me. There are dealerships where I would never buy a car. A dealer is like a doctor. I'm just going to the doctor I trust. (Hartmut)

> He has to be honest. Yes, such a business-friendly, eh, business-friendly level, why not? You feel comfortable there. (Teo)

> Yes, definitely that he advises me and that he doesn't lie or anything, so that he doesn't sell something. But that he really tells me the truth and I can trust him. (Annegret)

Although the concept of trust was mentioned with regard to staff behaviour, the researcher found statements about trust in combination with other brand equity concepts. Interviewee Markus compared the luxury car business with other industries, in which an interpersonal exchange is of benefit, resulting in a trustful basis on which to conduct business together.

> In the sports car business, it's kind of a face-to-face business. Similar to the bank of your trust, I would say. (Markus)

Another interesting finding was that participants Katja and David highlighted the relevance of trust – especially when they considered past experiences with a brand. This shows the importance of investments in the image and measures that help customers to associate a certain level of trust with a brand and its products upfront.

> Interviewer: you trust them more? Interviewee: Yes, because you probably know the brand well and everyone else probably does. Also because of the brand awareness because you probably have some experience with this brand. (Katja)

> So, if I don't trust a company like Aston Martin, Lamborghini, Mercedes, BMW, or whatever you call them, in this segment, then you better not buy such a car for this amount of money. (David)

According to some interviewees, trust in a brand also transfers to its subsidiaries, partners, and licenced dealers. This means that customers clearly trust an official dealership in sales and after sales (service matters) more than independent dealerships for multiple brands. For instance, Lars reflected on the hope that the level of brand trust would be higher in an authorised workshop than it would be somewhere else. From the data, the researcher found clear evidence that the majority of female customers expressed the fear of or had perceived discrimination because of their gender in the rather male-centric environment of sports cars (in sales and after sales).

> But I see and I have trust in this authorised workshop. Otherwise I would not go there. (Lars)

> Ultimately, you know what to expect. And you also have a relatively high level of trust in the dealer. When they says it’s good and that technology is very new. (Jeton).

> That is always the hope and the trust that you have in an authorised workshop. (Arzu)

However, a larger number of participants emphasised the mandatory or positive outcomes of brand trust, and this study found the concept of trust to be related to the physical product quality. It also shows that lost trust can affect the customer experience negatively even up to complete exclusion within the consideration phase. Interviewee Günter showed within his statements a high degree of lost trust in a product after an accident. Furthermore, some participants stressed the relevance of trust in a product based on its quality to avoid facing warranty issues as well as buying a product from the same type and brand in which trust has been built based on past experience.

> And after the accident, I had no trust in the car anymore. We tried to sell the vehicle quickly afterwards because the market for gullwing models was quite good. (Günter)

> Trust. It’s the same with the car. The issue is if you don’t know whether the guarantee from the car will cover all issues that might occur – you had better have a product in which you trust. (Brian)

> I think that’s only because we know AUDI. We also had a Q 3 earlier, and I just had the trust in it. You know, trust, I did know the steering behaviour and so on. That’s why I went for an Audi RS Q3. (Katja)

Brand trust as a basis for business might explain the statements of participant Rolf and Margarita, emphasising the loyalty towards a dealer or salesperson. The underlying pre-condition for loyalty is satisfaction – which might be explained through trust that has been built up during the customer experience at all the relevant touchpoints. Interviewee Rolf also referred critically to past experiences, in which this loyalty was more appreciated than in modern days.

> So I have a seller, I have had him for 15, 20 years, I have no idea. So I bought all Mercedes vehicles from him. I always find it very important to have someone that I can rely on. (Margarita)

> Major role. Great role because I wouldn't have wanted to buy it anywhere else. It's just a relationship of trust that's there. (Arzu)

> They used to have a stronger focus on customer loyalty and a stronger loyal connection between customer and sales rep. But this traditional type of seller/customer relationship no longer exists. It no longer exists at Porsche; it does not exist. (Rolf)

The relational aspect of trust between two parties was also mentioned. Trust can be built in various ways. Interestingly, interviewee Frank gave an example of how he gained trust in his dealership through transparency across the process steps during his after-sales service.

> And, of course, that is especially the case with workshop repairs and that naturally creates trust and transparency, if they say: look here, you can join us all the time when we work on it, etc. (Frank)

In summary, what is surprising and novel is that many informants mentioned the dimension of brand trust across the analysed concepts and therefore that it is a consequence of affective and cognitive associations leading to loyalty. Brand trust was articulated as the basis for business, long-term satisfaction, and loyalty. This finding has not been described in previous studies. Trust is a complex issue and highly debated and researched in academia. Trust can support to build and maintain a long-term relationship between the consumers and brand. Although this study does not aim to explain the concept of trust itself (a field for further research in automotive) it stresses its relevance – particularly with emotional high value goods like luxury sports cars. During the last two years some automotive brands where confronted with issues and a loss in brand trust. A recent study did explore consumer responses to trust repair mechanisms finding that corporate brands can recover trust towards their brands via i.e. honest and transparent communication as well as changes in processes that need to be reformed reform (Bolat et al., 2020). It was the authors need to briefly mention this work due to the current debate and the excellent fit with the results of this research.

6.1.5 Brand identification

The fourth concept in this study is represented by brand identification. During coding, the researcher grouped answers to this concept that imply social status, symbolic value, and feedback referring to the integration of social groups. The review of the literature on prior theory found that identification is relevant to individuals' identity and sense of belonging and is, even more, a definition of their social identity (Nam et al., 2011). As a result, consumers positively value brand with a high reputation in the groups to which they belong or aspire to belong (Nam et al., 2011).

Table 6.6: The concept of brand identification

Symbolic Concepts	Coded Participants	Coded Statements
Brand identification	32	206

This significance is also represented in the qualitative data. All the participants gave feedback about brand identification in this study. The entire sample – consisting of 32 participants – provided 206 individual statements linked to brand identification. To extend the concept, clusters could be built underpinning relevant theories as well as exploring the data in an unbiased way.

Brand identification – social status as a symbolic value

Within the concept of brand identification, it was pointed out by the informants that social status as a symbolic value is a relevant aspect. This is also in line with previous studies emphasising the social status-driven motives behind luxury purchases (Grace & O'Cass, 2002; Mason, 1992). Participant Katja, Margarita, and Markus mentioned the status that this kind of car delivers to them. Interestingly, interviewee Annegret stressed that the motivation is not status but also spoke about the desire to stand out despite her motivation to avoid being noticed by others.

> Yes, it's fancier, of course it's a little status symbol, of course. (Katja)

> I like, but that sounds silly again, a status symbol in the garage. When you sit in it, you feel like you're in a castle. And you are the princess in this castle. Everyone who sees this car says that it is awesome: it simply has a lot of potential for envy. I like that, I tell you honestly. (Margarita)

> And then I thought: yes, this car could be something for me. It is definitely a big vehicle, which I don't really think it is. So, I don't need it now to be noticed. Yes, I want it to stand out, but not as a status symbol. So yes, I saw it, I directly fell in love and then wanted to have it. (Annegret)

In addition to the status-linked answer above, various informants explained their underlying motivation rather in the form of the reactions from others when speaking about their car. Whereas participants Hartmut and Teo referred to the impression that the badges give to themselves or others, interviewees Brian and Martina explained the reaction of others when driving the cars. Interestingly, Brian mentioned a level of joy when third parties recognise him and showed aversion in this situation. He pretends not to recognise how people look at him; however, he stressed this probably important fact by letting the interviewer know that his passengers always recognise it. Participant Martina added a further element that could be linked to the appreciation by others. Her motivation is also based on her personal success, which she would like to demonstrate to others and herself. This is in line with the theory of social recognition and esteem of others (Mason, 1992). Another possible explanation is the motive of self-reward, which is also explored later (see the section 6.1.6).

> And, vice versa, AMG would be synonymous with performance. And everyone who reads AMG says great car, 600 hp. That's the way it is. So it's not more. (Hartmut)

> In such a way that people show you on the peaceful "den Vogel" (the German saying "den Vogel zeigen", meaning to indicate to somebody that they are crazy) on the street. Even if you don't accelerate. They still show you "den Vogel". So it can be attractive, it can also be joy. I don't know. (laughs) So the sound, the acceleration. There may be guys who think that's cool when all people stare at them. If someone drives with me in the car, they always say: "Look how people look at us". I don't even notice. I don't drive the car because I want to be the coolest. But because I just drive the car and that's it. Good, I would not deny that status. You can't deny that. Because whether I drive around with the Dacia Logan or with the car, that makes a difference. (Brian)

> I wanted to have a nice car, especially something special. That's why I chose the R8. You can see it immediately; you can recognise it immediately on the street. But it's not like cars somehow determine my life. So it's not like that. I just wanted to have something nicer, something more striking. Yes, of course it all sounds very superficial, but of course that's a bit of an eye catcher. Sure, it sounds very superficial now, but also the fact that I made something of myself. And I thought it was good that people see it too: "Hey cool, she has a really good car. And she made something of her life, I say." (Martina)

Brand identification – integration into social groups

Exploring interpersonal motivations, some informants made statements that underpin the theory of integration into social groups (conformity/belonging) as well as social groups as influencers during the decision phase. Participants Teo, Markus, and Rolf described the possibilities of meeting like-minded people with luxury sports cars as an appealing benefit. They also emphasised the exclusivity and access to prominent people here.

> I was at Mercedes on Sunday when old timers met in Arnulfstrasse. It's always very funny. And otherwise I don't like this club diary. There are such Mercedes clubs, so I've already considered whether I'm going to take part. Interviewer: what exactly is it that you find great about these events, what inspires you? Yes, the brand, you meet people, you can exchange ideas. I'm interested in cars. Yes, but. I am registered with the AMG, but I haven't done anything yet. (Teo)

> That you are not alone, that you are like-minded. That it may also be a certain exclusivity in groups, because I say so, I cannot imagine that the caretaker of our residential complex would somehow join such an Aston Martin meeting. (Markus)

> Or you invite Hans Joachim Stuck that you invited, a racing driver, here to Essen. They did a huge event, a tennis tournament. Sometimes far too much. But small and fine is enough, but they are a bit different again. Yes, you meet some people. Then you also meet at Porsche events. You also get to know other Porsche drivers who you see every now and then but don't really know. I think that's quite good. (Rolf)

These statements support the idea that consumers make their choices as they identify with the classic group of consumers of the brand, resulting in a desire to integrate themselves into this group. Furthermore, it is part of their lifestyle to become acquainted with each other and share the stories and experiences that unite them.

Brand identification – differentiation from other groups

In contrast to the aim of belonging to a group, the researcher found evidence that the interviewed customers also aim to distinguish themselves from a social group. Participants Hartmut, Teo, Brian, Margarita, Annegret, Markus, and Martina referred to the subject of distinction within a brand from the masses. Ordinary Mercedes cars are for the masses, whereas AMG is exclusive. In addition, Martina stressed the fact that these consumers spend a lot of money and expect preferential treatment, which rather underlines “snob-theory”-driven behaviour.

> If you now have a C-Class, where it is in Germany, I don’t know, drive tens of millions around, but if you have such an AMG car, then it is simply different. (Hartmut)

> Yes, I mean, an E-Class, an E-Class is at the taxi rank. In the vehicle registration documents, the manufacturer is Mercedes AMG not Mercedes Benz. (Teo)

> The TT is of course nice, but every third, every fourth has it already. Then I noticed the R8. Then I thought to myself, you can’t do that. Can’t you drive an R8 at your age? So I assume if I enter such a dealership and spend so much money I am a little bit preferred that I do not have to wait HOURS. That after a while you will know my name at some point. (Martina)

> Good thing I would now deny that status. You can’t deny that. Because whether I drive around with the Dacia Logan or with the car like this, that makes a difference. (Brian)

> So the special attraction is that I can express what I am with the vehicle. Again, don’t get me wrong, unlike the norm. So I don’t want to drive what seven million others drive. I just want to stick out a little. So especially in the car, because that’s important to me. (Margarita)

In summary, each participant identified several aspects of the brand identification concept. This confirms that brand identification is a broad concept that has many facets, which have been extended and presented in this section. The findings are in line with the data obtained from the literature review, particularly regarding the concept of social status as a symbolic value (Solomon, 1983; Truong & McColl, 2011), belonging to a social group as well as distinction from groups (Mason, 1992), and the fact that peer groups influence customers in their decision-making process.

What is surprising is that the desire to stand out and gain recognition from others was indicated by some of the participants. This also leads to the next chapter on lifestyle, containing the concepts of self-reward and self-esteem.

6.1.6 Lifestyle congruence

Lifestyle congruence is an important concept in this study, as it provides insights into participants' way of living as well as how they deal with or treat themselves. Therefore, the author followed the definition from literature, in which lifestyle congruence refers to a person's unique patterns of living expressed by activities, and a brand or product supports and underlines his or her unique lifestyle (Nam et al., 2011, p. 1014). In addition, the author included the dimensions of self-reward and self-esteem in this category due to the fact that self-esteem is part of the lifestyles leading to self-rewarding actions.

Table 6.7: The concept of lifestyle congruence

Symbolic Concepts	Coded Participants	Coded Statements
Lifestyle including self-reward and self-esteem	30	104

Almost all the participants provided feedback about their lifestyle, self-rewarding aspects, and elements of self-esteem in this study. Out of the total of 32 participants, 30 referred to these aspects in 104 individual statements. The data clearly show that there is no significant difference between ages or occupations when it comes to behaviour or customer experience (see the two groups of customer experience in section 6.2.3). Instead, the lifestyle of each individual seems to represent a rather significant role on the meta level. The concept of lifestyle is independent from age and occupation.

The participants described their lifestyle very clearly. For interviewees Annegret, Lars, and Maik, it is important to be independent and a car supports them in executing this freedom and lifestyle. This is often combined with destinations that are typically associated with an upper-class lifestyle (e.g. Côte D'Azur, Milano, Monaco, etc.).

> Vehicles in general, so I think they transfer a bit of freedom. I drive on weekends, or when I have time, I drive across Germany to visit all my friends. (Annegret)

Yes, once I drove to Côte D'Azur or down to Italy and back. (Lars)

Ms. Abarth, for example, I personally know and meet regularly in Monaco or in Kitzbühel. Because she lives either in Kitzbühel or in Monaco. (Maik)

Informants Johannes, Rolf, and Claudio stated that their car is part of their lifestyle and enables them to experience special destinations, like driving on spectacular pass roads or combining car-related topics with visiting cities. Participant Markus emphasised the possibility of having a fully individualised car, which could be consistent with the desire to live an individual, unstandardised life.

Either when I have time to play golf. Otherwise in the air. I like to fly. So I'm a motor pilot. I love driving on mountain passes. There are also books for sale at Porsche, for example. The most beautiful pass roads. (Johannes)

Dresden is a beautiful city and there is a very nice, small Porsche centre in Dresden. And that was connected with a small weekend trip and everything was well prepared. (Rolf)

He always did this event in Mugello, that is, was always very nice, this is a nice event that he does and then a lot of people meet again every year. (Claudio)

The opportunity, let me put it this way, to have the vehicle put together individually. I could, let's put it this way, match the lacquering with my girlfriend's nail polish, if I say so. (Markus)

The information provided by the participants extended further than lifestyle activities and exclusive hobbies. Some also explained that they can express their way of living with the car and that the car should represents values (e.g. being as sporty as they are themselves) that are also relevant to them in terms of self-esteem.

So I live in a penthouse and have 240 square metres, I love going to the theatre, I love going to the opera. I love going to good restaurants, unfortunately you can see that too. So, the special attraction is that I can express what I am with the vehicle. I just want to stick out a little. (Margarita)

> Also, because we are young, because of course we like to do sports and somehow. Of course, we also like to drive fast on the freeway, sometimes too fast. And yes, that simply the sporty, more performance, more, somehow, yes, it all seems somehow younger. More dynamic, it just makes more, like a normal A3, yes. (Katja)

> So, I have to like it and I find classics beautiful. And I think I'm such an age now. I am young at 51, I am not old. But if I don't do that now, when will I do it? At 75 I guess not; I can't get in or out of the seats. (Anja)

In addition, the informants stressed that they would also like to be appreciated by others when they express a way of living, for instance with a luxury car. It refers to feelings of self-liking and the expectation of being liked by others and being a respected person.

> It is the seller's appreciation and it's a little bit, you want to feel a little flattered. (Peter)

> Yes, of course it all sounds very superficial, but of course that's a bit the appreciation from others. Sure, it sounds very superficial now, but something like that also does represent something. And I thought it was good that people see it too: "Hey cool, she has a really good car. And she made something of her life, I say." (Martina)

A somewhat surprising outcome regarding this concept was the amount of feedback given concerning the element of self-rewarding. The participants spoke about motivations to reward themselves either with a dream car from their childhood (Brian) or as a reward for hard work. Interestingly, the phenomenon of rewarding oneself is very pronounced, as the data analysis revealed. This observed outcome might be explained by the participants' value system, which is probably based on performance and reward, as shown by interviewee Uwe, stressing that he worked hard for such a car and did not grow up in a golden cage as a child.

> My dream car as a kid was always a 6.9, if that says something, 450 SEL 6.9. Unfortunately, I never had that. And that is, one can say, a current 6.9. (Teo)

> It is TOTAL nice that you have reached a point where you can afford something, where you can have fun. If you did that, it was in the middle of your life. It is the same somewhere to buy a car like this and not use it every day, it is usually against the mind. But the fact that you can allow yourself that much work is a reward somewhere. But that's something

special to have. Not everyone has to know that. But you know that yourself. The fact that you deserve it, that you have earned it, is a reward for yourself. (Martina)

But that was when I work a lot, I always say, then you should do something good for yourself. (Andreas)

And it is also special for us, or for me, because I also worked for it. So I don’t come from a parental home where it was always normal. So I actually get into my car in the morning and say, “Hey cool. That’s it. You made it.” (Uwe)

In summary, the answers provide evidence concerning the concept of lifestyle congruence, confirming that lifestyle congruence is a broad concept with various facets. The findings based on the interview data seem to support the data obtained from reviewing the literature. Especially, the values of an independent, free, and individual lifestyle were stressed during the interviews. Furthermore, the desire to express this lifestyle with the support of the product was mentioned (Chen et al., 2008). Surprisingly, the topic of self-reward plays a predominate role at this stage (Dubois & Duquesne, 1993; Dubois & Paternault, 1995; Silverstein & Fiske, 2003). It also is consistent with the theory of increasing self-esteem through self-gifts (Mick & Demoss, 1990).

6.1.7 Self-congruence

The concept of self-congruence is an important concept, especially within the scope of luxury sport automobiles. Although the researcher identified statements from 22 participants covering this dimension, the scope of this study was limited due to a lack of explicit questions concerning the sphere of the actual and the ideal self. Therefore, the author explored the data carefully and rigorously to find fragments offering information. In addition, the author included the dimension of hedonic behaviour.

Table 6.8: The concept of self-congruence

Symbolic Concepts	Coded Participants	Coded Statements
Self-congruence including ideal/actual self and hedonic consumption	22	69

According to some interviewees, the degree of one's real capabilities and the inexhaustible possibilities of these cars – saying "you could if you wanted" – show divergence. For instance, participant Peter reflected on his actual self very objectively by mentioning that most drivers think they are the best because the products suggest this through their capabilities (i.e. acceleration, handling, power, etc.). However, in reality, most drivers do not even exploit the potential of their cars at all.

> Even if we think about ourselves that we are the fastest and best. But the reality is very different. And surely it is sometimes nice to drive fast and test your limits and do all of this, but you do that once and then you see young men who then go around the curve faster with less horsepower and then you think, oh oh, I'm not that fast. And as good as you always imagine. And that's why it's enough, I don't want to say to be disappointed. (Peter)

> Yes, I mean, the machine goes, MY goes 300 km/h. You should be able to drive it – of course. And I think I can drive relatively well. (Teo)

> So, the videos I watched were partly on the street, on the racetrack, cool kind of guys drove. (Ute)

The degree of an ideal self-image can also be influenced by the product's image and its capabilities or by other drivers of these cars (functioning as a peer group in which a fit of the ideal self is necessary). This means that no one would like to be seen in a car for which the reference group (i.e. actual drivers) does not have the same image or reputation as you want to be seen to have yourself. Participant Brian stressed a mismatch when driving a Corvette car from his father as he probably sees himself in a rather high-performance ultra-lightweight car considering his information about his career as an athlete.

> There was a young guy with a three-day beard. With sunglasses. And he was wearing leather gloves when driving. And I liked that kind of picture – was cool, somehow. And then I thought to myself: when driving leather gloves. Not real winter gloves, but leather gloves. And the image was really nice to think of. (Brian)

> I'm really a bit extroverted, otherwise I wouldn't have a McLaren or an SLS. And I also have this C1 Corvette from my dad. I mean, I drive it too. But I mean, that's not necessarily a car for a young man. So my bikes, which I used to ride as a competitive athlete, were the lightest mountain bikes back then, which you then made even lighter with titanium screws. Carbon forks, die, carbon rims. (Maik)

An interesting aspect was given by participant Markus. He pointed out that catching up with someone who has a similar background and probably aspirations can also create pressure in a positive or negative way.

> A friend of mine, I say, who works similar like me, just got a Ferrari, so you have to catch up somehow. (Markus)

A car can also be used to build or complement the image of its owner – who would like to be seen differently from his or her actual self.

> But from the image. I mean, I also buy a car because of the image. So, otherwise I can really buy a Fiat. (David)

This discrepancy between the ideal and the actual self leads to symbolic and therefore hedonic consumption. Displaying the wealth or use of these cars is an essential dimension for a significant share of owners.

> So because we are young, because of course we like to do sports and somehow. Of course we also like to drive fast on the freeway, sometimes too fast. And yes, that simply the sporty, more performance, more, somehow, yes, it all seems somehow younger. More dynamic, it just makes more than, like now a normal A3, yes. (Katja)

> I just wanted to have something new. The 7 Series did annoy me at some point. I just wanted to have something nicer, something more striking. And then I came across the R8. When you see it on the street, you turn around. (Martina)

> When you sit in it, you feel like you’re in a castle. And you are the princess in this castle. Everyone who sees this car says that it is awesome: it simply has a lot of potential for envy. I like that, I tell you honestly. (Annegret)

> It’s cool, it’s simply cool and people turn around when you drive it. (Andreas)

In summary, the findings clearly indicate and underline motivations that have been identified in previous research about luxury goods. Therefore, the concept of self-congruence is valid for the topic at hand. The information from the interviewees was found to be consistent with the theory. Moreover, the review of the literature had indicated that the concept of actual and ideal self-congruence is diverse and varies from product to product (Ekinci et al., 2008). Many customers do not exploit the full potential of their cars – pure numbers and the imagination of “they could if they wanted” are enough for most of them. It was found that customers also seek image transfers from the car to their ideal self. Additionally, if there is a discrepancy between the ideal and the actual self, it can result in symbolic and therefore hedonic consumption.

6.2 Factors emerging from the touchpoint analysis

Table 6.9: Coding distribution at the pre-purchase level

Pre-purchase (6.2.1.1)	Coded Participants	Coded Statements
Brand owned	21	34
Partner owned	31	155
Customer owned	30	86
Social owned	29	116

In the pre-purchase stage, the most-mentioned elements belong to the theme of the touchpoint “partner owned”, followed by “social touchpoints” like peer groups, the Internet, or other external sources. Still, a reasonable quantity of answers addressed the customer-owned touchpoints.

Table 6.10: Coding distribution of the data at the purchase level

Purchase (6.2.1.2)	Coded Participants	Coded Statements
Brand owned	4	6
Partner owned	25	98
Customer owned	20	35
Social owned	9	11

Within the process step “purchase stage”, it is interesting that almost 100 statements refer to the partner-owned touchpoint. This is a decrease compared with the pre-purchase stage but still the largest stake within the purchase stage, probably due to the mandatory order and finance modalities. The touchpoints “brand owned” and “social–external” seem to have lower relevance in this process step.

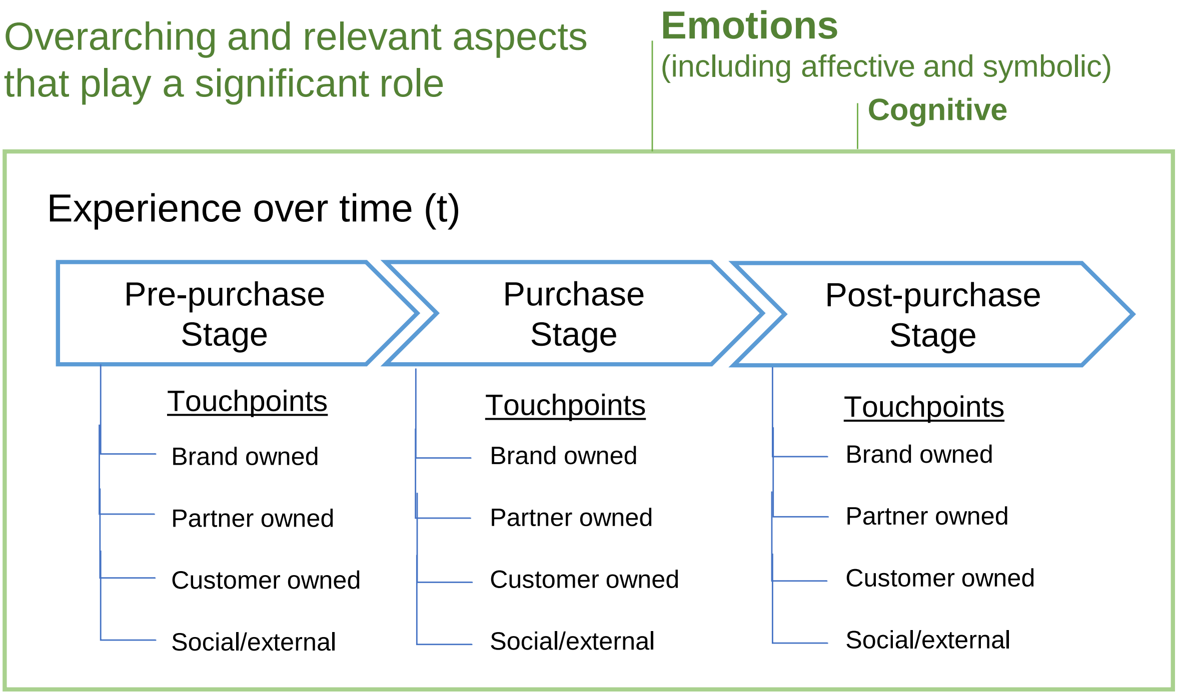
Table 6.11: Coding distribution at the post-purchase level

Post-purchase (6.2.1.3)	Coded Participants	Coded Statements
Brand owned	5	5
Partner owned	16	42
Customer owned	7	8
Social owned	28	108

During the post-purchase phase, all the elements scored lower. It is expected that the social touchpoint, which inherits information about events, clubs, and driving experiences, might involve a larger volume of information.

Overall, the touchpoint partner owned was predominantly mentioned in relation to the pre-purchase phase. Equally, a high number of elements were found for the touchpoint "social–external" in the pre- and post-purchase phases. Information and answers relating to brand-owned touchpoints are underrepresented in all three process steps.

Figure 6.2: Processual part of the research framework



The results of the processual model seem to be consistent with those of Lemon and Verhoef (2016). The answers given by all the participants validate the three steps of purchases as well as the identified touchpoints for the industry of affordable luxury automobiles. Another important finding is that, for these products, emotional aspects are dominant over cognitive aspects during the three stages of experience. Although all the touchpoints are relevant to the research topic at hand, the results might differ to a certain extent in the relevance or the order within each experience step.

A comprehensive analysis needs further interpretation of the data to derive additional inferences, yet it is not possible to tell what the interviewees said about, for example, staff behaviour (good, bad, at which touchpoints, whether staff behaviour is relevant at all, etc.). Therefore, qualitative evaluation and interpretation within each theme, category, and touchpoint were performed. Subsequently, the findings from a word frequency analysis followed by a manual interpretation of the context are presented.

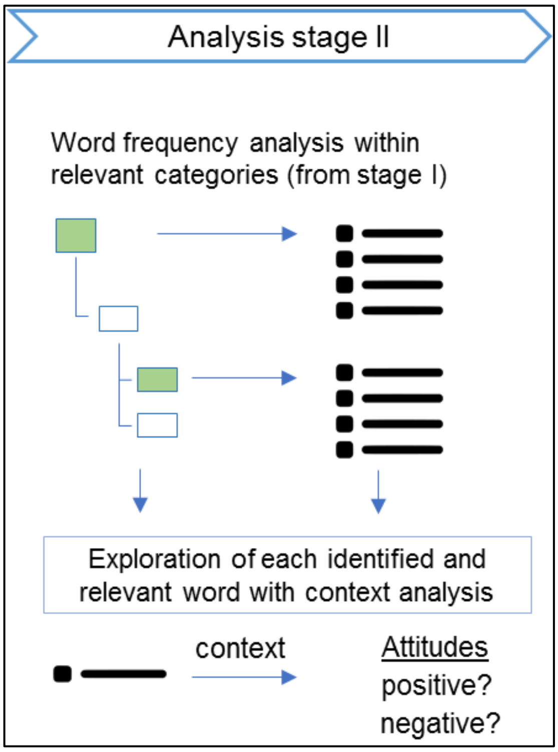
6.2.1 What drives the customer experience in affordable luxury automobiles?

To assess the detailed journey of customer experience in the affordable luxury automotive industry, the raw data of each touchpoint were used for further analysis. The major question to be answered was the following:

What drives the experience during the three stages?

To answer this, a word frequency analysis for each touchpoint was conducted to explore the relevant themes. The outcome of the frequency analysis can be found in appendix 8. For instance, within the touchpoint “brand owned”, during the pre-purchase stage, a number of participants mentioned the words “Internet”, “configurator”, and “events”. Among others, these words were identified as the most promising for forming the basis for an in-depth context analysis (exploring the meaning around the word itself: is the context positively or negatively related?).

Figure 6.3: Analysis approach with an example table from the frequency analysis



Word (original German)	**Word (**English)	**Count**
auto	car	7
Konfigurator	configurator	7
Internet	Internet	5
Mercedes	Mercedes	5
modell	model	4
spaß	fun	4
Audi	Audi	3
autos	cars	3
beifahrer	passenger	3
events	events	3
Ferrari	Ferrari	3

I did configure the car myself. (David)

Yes. This configurator. I mean at the beginning you play with this back and forth. (Uwe)

During the pre-purchase stage, some interviewees mentioned the configurator, brand websites, and events. Aiming to understand the relevance of these words in this context, the entire text was analysed around each coded word. The overall result was a categorisation of positive, neutral, or negative associations with, for example, the word configurator for this experience touchpoint. In accordance with the topic at hand, a large number of participants expressed the high relevance of an online configurator upfront to become involved with the desired brand or car.

Table 6.12: Results of the content analysis at all the purchase stages

Experience over time (t)

*Analysed words of interest and focus (according to word frequency and context analysis)

Pre-purchase stage

Touchpoints	No. of participants	No. of statements	Positive statements i.e. play role	Neutral statements	negative statements i.e. no role
Brand owned	**21**	**34**			
*Internet (brand site)	7	7	4	2	1
*Configurator	19	28	20	5	3
*Events	5	5	3	1	1
Partner owned	**31**	**155**			
*Dealer	31	46	23	15	8
*Test drive	29	38	21	3	14
*3D animation			0	0	8
*Salesman	9	15	9	1	3
Customer owned	**30**	**86**			
*To do (act alone)	2	4		4	
*Spontaneous	8	8	7		1
*Decide	3	3		3	
**Info self determination*	20	25			
Social/external	**29**	**116**			
*Internet	17	25	24		1
*Social media	10	16	15		1
*Blogs / forums	3	3	3		
*Media (journals)	7	8	8		
*Third persons	25	29	25		4

Purchase stage

Touchpoints	No. of participants	No. of statements	Positive statements i.e. play role	Neutral statements	negative statements i.e. no role
Brand owned	**4**	**6**		6	
Partner owned	**25**	**98**			
*Dealer					
*Delivery time	**10**	**11**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**
*Price negotiation	6	8	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**
*Ordering process	6	7	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**
*Contact person					
*Single contact	5	5	5		
*Enthusiasm	**6**	**6**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**
Customer owned	**20**	**35**			
*In control (self)	9	13	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**
Social/external	**9**	**11**			
*Events	2	2	2		
*Partner	2	2	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**

Post-purchase stage

Touchpoints	No. of participants	No. of statements	Positive statements i.e. play role	Neutral statements	negative statements i.e. no role
Brand owned	**5**	**5**			
*Events					
*Brand events	2	2	2		
*Factory tour	2	3	1	2	
*Car assembly	2	4	1	2	1
Partner owned	**16**	**42**			
*Appointment					
*Expect priority	23	36	25		11
Customer owned	**7**	**8**			
*Self-repair	1	1			1
Social/external	**28**	**108**			
*Clubs & community	23	34	10	3	21
*Events	11	14	11	3	
*Exchange with others	15	20	13	1	6

Table 6.12 provides the results obtained from the in-depth context analysis of the relevant identified topic (e.g. Internet, configurator, events) at each touchpoint (e.g. brand owned). Next, the findings will be presented sequentially – starting with the pre-purchase phase.

6.2.1.1 Pre-purchase stage

Brand owned: A low/moderate touchpoint at the pre-purchase stage

The most interesting aspect of this point is the online configurator, which 19 participants clearly addressed as playing an important role. Out of 28 statements, 20 contain positive comments, five are neutral, and three express that a configurator plays no role for them at the pre-purchase stage.

> Sure. You do a pre configuration. Usually we are doing it like this, I pre configurate the car and send the file to him via mail. (Marco)
>
> I did configurate the car myself" (David)
>
> Yes. This configurator. I mean at the beginning you play with this back and forth. (Uwe)

Brand sites from manufacturers are of moderate relevance when it comes to the first information gathering about cars. Five interviewees gave feedback on events, and three of them had been invited to see upcoming products before their market introduction.

Partner owned: One of the most important touchpoints at the pre-purchase stage

The following important themes at this touchpoint were mentioned: the dealer, test drives, and the sales representative. Most participants emphasised the importance of a dealer at the pre-purchase stage. Out of the 46 statements, 23 clearly highlight an important role for them, whereas 15 neutral answers could indicate no or little experience with dealers at this stage. Eight feedback statements reported that dealers do not play a role for them at all, a somewhat counterintuitive result.

An additional strong topic for the partner-owned touchpoint is the test drive. Almost all the participants (29) mentioned this in their interviews. Interestingly, the results show two clear divisions. For some customers, it is a must to test drive and experience a car (21 out of 38 statements refer to this); others do not need a test drive at all (14 feedback statements mention no role here).

> Very important. Because, without this, you cannot evaluate the car. This is very important. (Brian)

> I didn't test drive the car. Yes, if someone hasn't got this type of car before, I guess it is very important. (Rolf)

> Could you do it without a test drive? No, no way! (Martina)

> No. Test drive? What are you supposed to do? Drive across the city or what? (Harmut)

Additional responses highlighted the relevance of the sales representative at this stage. A salesperson often verifies pre-configurations and can give advice regarding the packaging of items that are financially interesting.

> He said, look at this. If you take this navigation, or this function, it is automatically included in the package. And this results in a lot of advantages. (Frank)

> I have to say it was very positive that the sales rep invested a lot of his time. Literally he went through the entire configuration at his PC. (Margarita)

> It really worked, and the sales rep did configurate and calculate it to my favour and gave some advice and at the end it worked out and the purchase was feasible. (Andreas)

An unexpected finding was the fact that all the answers were negative in nature when asking the participants if they could imagine having a 3D animation/virtual experience instead of a real product experience – for instance a test drive. Taking into consideration that many manufacturers also work on virtual reality experiences, as well as the fact that modern consumers are surrounded by animations anyway, this might not be applicable to these highly emotional goods.

Customer owned: A moderate touchpoint at the pre-purchase stage

In the data and answers, this touchpoint turned out to be linked to the individual attitudes of the customers. Here, it is about self-control and self-determination. They make their decision, which might be spontaneous or quick. They have a clear mind and picture of what they want. A note of caution is due here since the number of feedback statements from participants is rather low, meaning that this does not apply to the broad masses.

> Yes, I mean, if I have already made the decision to buy it for myself, then he really doesn't have to convince me anymore. (Martina)
>
> It always works that way; I make my decision. I saw it and then I said I'll get it. (Peter)
>
> But that's because of my personality or my person. For example, if I book a vacation now, I go to the travel agency and say I want this hotel in this country. And if it works for the flight, fine. Please book this package. Same for the car. I choose and see the dealer. (Uwe)

These types of customers also stated that they are informed very well by their own research. These statements may suggest that they have a higher degree of independence than other consumers. They also articulated rather subtly that they have a high level of self-control. Sales consultants and dealers fulfil a support function: "I do not want that someone sells me something".

> I don't really know how much the sales rep is necessary. Yes, at the end, yes, concerning the final purchase process. But for the first experience, I would say a relatively minor one. Because I mostly explored and analysed everything myself, so that I could do it on my own and took my time. (Frank)

Social /external: An important touchpoint at the pre-purchase stage

External information was named by almost all the participants at the pre-purchase stage. Performing the first information gathering online is an established practice. Within the particular channels, YouTube was the most common source of information about a car and its emotional elements (car insights, design, and sound).

> Correct, yes, we watched some videos and yes. All the videos with motor sound, etc. (Katja)

> So, YouTube, so that you can get a feeling of how the car looks like when it is normal driving. And that it is not made up artificially for television. (Annegret)

> Mostly really YouTube, there are a lot of reports, the British always do a lot of driving reports on YouTube. (Claudio)

A smaller group within the sample also emphasised the relevance of blogs, forums, and other social media information. A surprisingly high number of consumers also read journalistic magazines and test reports (established German journals, *Auto Motor Sport*, *Auto Bild*, etc.) to obtain information and independent evaluations. The most surprising aspect within this touchpoint is the fact that almost all the participants are influenced by third persons at the pre-purchase stage. Some consult these people or are even inspired by them. Out of 29 statements, 25 clearly indicate an important role of third persons, whereas only four state that friends or family do not play a role at all.

> So that was a cousin, from my fiancé. He just transferred his enthusiasm. He just spoke about the car and inspired us. And then a friend of mine also ordered this car. And then it kind of infected us, too. (Katja)

> In this case also due to personal contacts. A friend – he also had a Porsche Turbo. (Johannes)

> Yes, a good friend of ours, with whom we also play golf. He also goes crazy about cars, he drives an M 3, and this also played a role. (Jörg)

Another aspect was articulated by the interviewees about the influence of peer persons during the pre-purchase phase. They reported that either close business partners or people from their closer environment had a significant impact on their decision making. This is an indication of the absolutely relevance of social influence on consumer decision making in the pre-purchase phase.

> I don’t know. Maybe it was the neighbour after all. (I: Maybe, yes.) It’s the same colour as mine. It was probably the neighbour. (Peter)

> I would rather consult friends, what kind of experiences they have, whether good or bad and all that. (Hartmut)

> So that was a cousin, from my fiancé. It just gave us the enthusiasm, so to speak. Or he just told us about the car and inspired us, so to speak. And then I had a friend or still have one and he also ordered the car. And exactly and then it was kind of contagious, almost. (Katja)

> So business friends from my ex-husband, or a business friend and his partner, who had that. And then they took me along once and then I was very much in love. (Margarita)

6.2.1.2 Purchase stage

Summary brand owned: Almost no role

At the brand-owned level during the purchase stage, no significant driver was found. Very few participants shared an interaction with the brand during the purchase stage. One example referred to Ferrari, which sends customers a booklet with photographs of the car during the purchase and delivery phases.

Summary partner owned: The only touchpoint that is relevant in a way

The total number of responses for the partner-owned touchpoint was on a good level. Several themes were identified here, mainly about contract negotiation and the price and order details of the car. When asked whether a customer prefers multiple or single contact persons throughout the process, the participants expressed that they prefer to have only one contact person who takes care of all matters. Talking about this, some interviewees mentioned the trust that is built with one person – multiple contact persons would work counterproductively.

> Because I have to repeat everything. I always start from scratch again and everyone tells me a different story – every time. (Hartmut)
>
> It is important for me to have one contact person. It is also about trust. Building up trust you know. (Brian)
>
> Yes, it is important to me personally. Because you are a customer, and if you can say it like this, somehow, you are building a basis of trust. And if you get along with each other and know someone who knows my wishes, that speeds up the entire process, I think that's actually quite good. (Kirsten)

In terms of the delivery time, the customers expect a rather fast delivery. The time frames mentioned here are between one week and three months. A minority of the participants indicated that long delivery times are acceptable due to the special and rare car that is worth the wait. Interestingly, when asking the interviewees about the aspect of differentiation within the showroom (i.e. a separate lounge for AMG compared with normal Mercedes customers) or in terms of the preferential treatment of high-value customers, almost all who gave an answer to this question preferred to have a distinct section or preferential treatment. This question was only of relevance to brands like BMW, Mercedes, and Audi, which produce normal street cars but have additional sub-brands that deliver luxury vehicles.

> Whereby I would wish that this M series in particular, that they, although they have to be integrated into the sales room, however, are separated in order to make it more clearly recognisable that this is the M section. That is for example at the dealer where I have been. There are M models all over the place, you have to look twice to recognise them. (Frank)
>
> There is for the R8, which is then alone in the separate room. And I think that's the way it should be. Because the car must be treated specially. In relation, it also costs considerably more than a normal Audi car. (Brian)

So I think a separation is good, yes. I guess that's the case with many retailers, yes. Interviewer: Why is the separation important to you? Because it's special. Yes, because of course, so if you are interested in one of these cars, you know where to go. And most of the time they are presented in a very special way. Yes, simply because they are even more special. (Katja)

Summary customer owned: Moderate role

Like the pre-purchase stage, this stage is about self-control during the purchase phase and negotiation. The interviewees stressed that they are in control of the decisions themselves and are not driven by others (e.g. salesperson). If they make a decision if might be spontaneous or quick. They have a clear mind and a picture of what they want. Some even emphasised that they do not even need a salesperson.

When I decide, I decide myself and not because of the seller. So he does nothing, no impact, nothing, zero. Yes, he can only influence me if he says he gives it for free to me. (Hartmut)

A seller doesn't need to tell me anything, maybe internal things that I don't know. About delivery time or so. Basically, I don't need a seller. (Teo)

At my desk. Very pragmatic. I needed a new car. Told the dealer what I would like to have. He optimised my query a bit. And then I said, we'll do it. (Uwe)

And I am quick when I shop. I know what I want, that is a matter of half an hour. Done! (Ute)

Summary social external: Almost no role

A small number of participants commented that social or external parties play a role during the purchase stage. Some obtained final input from events and product shows. During the final decision process, a few customers also highlighted the need to clarify the purchase with and gain agreement from their partner.

> Yes, so when I convinced my wife that she also would sign the contract, she is a civil servant and teacher and had to sign too because my financial numbers were not quite enough at that stage. (Andreas)

> Yes, so of course I talked about it with my partner. And then it was about the colour. She went for silver metallic, so she decided that. (Sven)

6.2.1.3 Post-purchase stage

Summary brand owned: Moderate role

A small number of participants commented that, after the purchase, some brand events play a role, albeit on a moderate level. Here, factory tours or the opportunity to observe the entire assembly of the car were mentioned. What clearly emerged during the in-depth context analysis was the interesting fact that participants who bought this type of car for the first time could not really express their ideas of what could have been interesting. On the other hand, customers who had decades of experience with luxury sport vehicles have either experienced all the tours and events or/and are no longer delighted by this brand's offers.

Summary partner owned: Moderate role

The predominant theme that was mentioned by the interviewees referred to the service of the car during its life cycle after the purchase. Within the service, the questionnaire also gave the opportunity to talk about preferred treatments during the service or before the actual service takes place (i.e. preferred appointment scheduling).

> You paid more and yes, why not? I want to get the appointment wherever it suits me. (Teo)

> Generally, yes. Although I think it is also unfair if I have been given preferential treatment. Of course, I have a more expensive car, but for that I have a different service than others,

> who, as I said, would just buy a Polo or a little Audi or something. Therefore, it would be an advantage. (Annegret)

> Yes, let's put it this way, I think it's good, you have to say that honestly. (Frank)

The majority of those who responded regarding this topic (23 participants) reported that priority attention is expected when owning one of these premium products. In sum, 36 comments were made on priority treatment, of which 25 feedback statements clearly contain an expected priority and 11 statements are to the contrary – against differentiation between drivers of non-luxury cars and drivers of other cars of the same brand. Although only a few made this clear, others let the interviewers know more subtly that preferential treatment is a result of their product category.

Summary customer owned:

Only a few customers reported that they are willing to travel longer distances to a good workshop. Additionally, they prefer contract service stations (no service stations that serve multiple brands). Self-repairs or even self-servicing the car were not found to be relevant. Taking into consideration the fact that the sample customers own new cars, this result is not surprising and could be different when considering luxury old timers.

Summary social/external: With pre-purchase again an important touchpoint

One of the most interesting touchpoints within the post-purchase stage is the interest in/need to engage with third persons. From the literature, the author learned that belonging and brand identification might play a particularly important role – especially in terms of luxury products. Due to the good rate of responses, three key drivers could be identified and evaluated – exchange within clubs and communities, events, and the desire for exchanges with others.

The most surprising aspect concerning clubs and communities was that a larger majority raised negative associations with being part of/organised in a club or community. A total of 23 participants gave feedback on this point, resulting in 10 positive (plays a role), three neutral, and 21 negative statements (no role). This means that a large proportion of drivers are not interested in clubs and communities at all.

> Oh no. I am not a club guy. There are some Mercedes clubs, I was thinking of joining. But then you have no time. I don’t really need it. You don’t have to talk about cars all the time. (Teo)

> I am not a fan of this. I always have to think of an Opel community in the backcountry. The bottom line I am not a fan of this. (Brian)

> Yes, I know some Porsche Clubs, but it’s not for me, I don’t have time for it and I don’t like it either. (Rolf)

> No, that's nil, nil, nil, interesting for me. So, I’m not enthusiastic about it at all. I wouldn’t do it either. (Martina)

In contrast to clubs and communities, some interviews expressed an interest in exchanges with other likeminded people. Here, 15 participants expressed 13 positive comments and only were rather negative about exchanges with others.

> Sure. Also to meet other like-minded people. That you can have so-called petrol talks. (Sven)

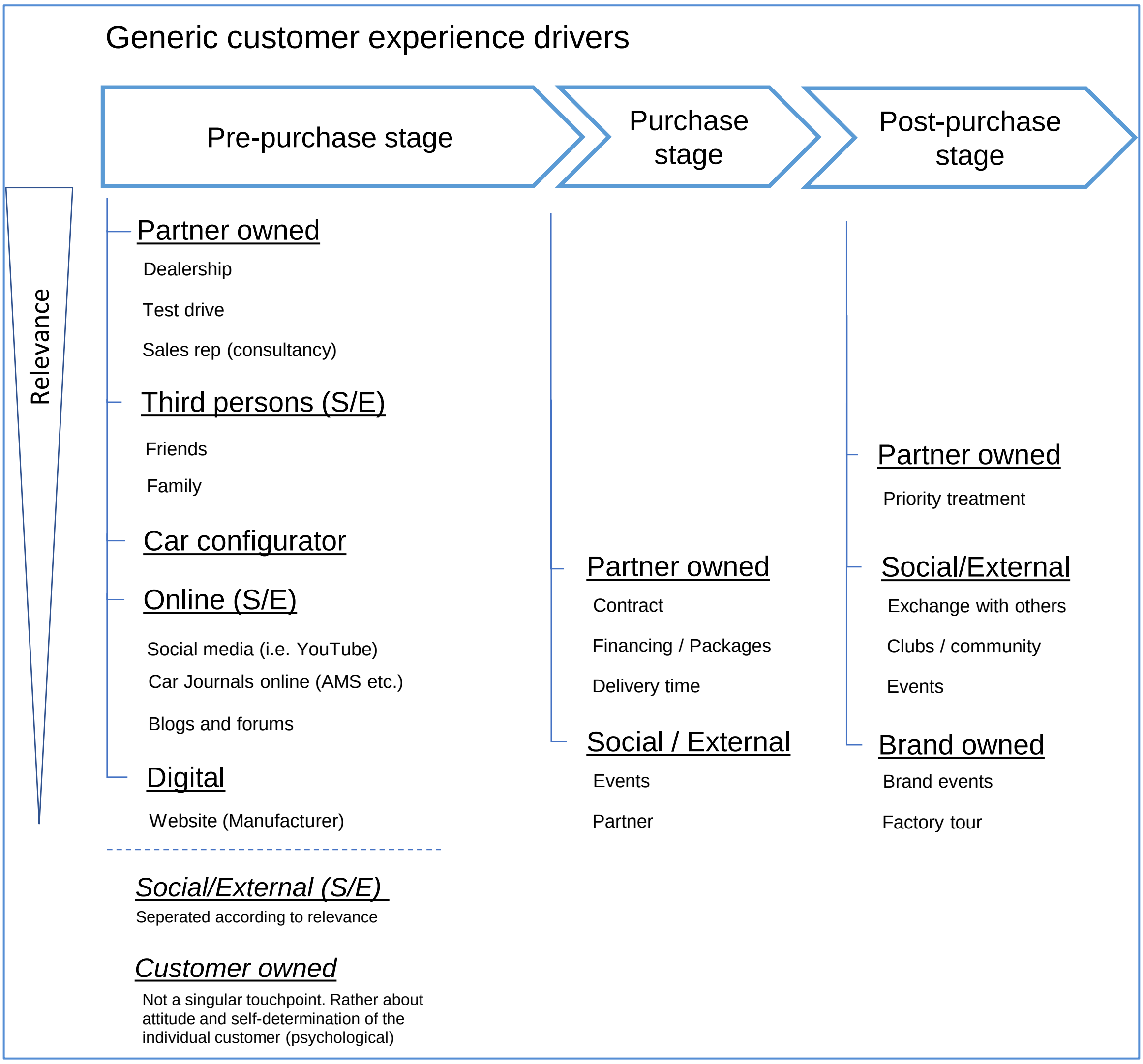
> For tactical reasons I am at the BMW M 1 Club. So that I can get good information. If necessary, spare parts. (Johannes)

Finally, almost all the participants who gave information about events during the post-purchase phase prefer to receive invitations and information about events after the purchase. However, they emphasised that events should be designed exclusively for smaller groups rather than being mass events.

6.2.2 Adjusted customer touchpoint analysis for affordable luxury automobiles

The results presented in the previous section provide important insights into the customer experience as well as the drivers for all three stages. These are based on the feedback from actual customers of luxury sport vehicles. Although this research validates the processual model of Lemon and Verhoef (2016), some adjustments have to be made according to the touchpoints, their relevance, and their hierarchy in the luxury automotive industry.

Figure 6.4: Customer experience journey in the affordable luxury automotive industry



This development of the customer experience process ranks the importance of each process step (pre-, purchase, and post-purchase) as well as the driving themes according to their relevance from customers' point of view. Figure 6.4 aims to explain the results on a generic level. Interestingly, the three process stages do vary in importance. Overall, it can be concluded that the pre-purchase stage is the dominant process. The partner-owned touchpoint has the highest relevance from customers' point of view, due to the need for test drives and sales consultancy. Surprisingly, third parties, like friends and family, play a major role during the pre-purchase stage. Car configurations and online media like YouTube, car journals, and blogs also influence and create desire upfront. On the contrary, the data did not support the existence of a customer touchpoint. Here, statements were only based on the willingness to make decisions and the control and initiative for the purchase itself – always with the customer him- or herself in control. For this reason, no relevance of the customer-owned touchpoint could be confirmed at this point.

An unexpected outcome can be found in the moderate weight of the purchase stage, which is worth considering only for a few participants, mainly due to final contract and negotiation details. It is the least-relevant process step of the three. Finally, at the post-purchase stage, most customers are no longer concerned with the purchase and topic. However, when it comes to service touchpoints, it stands out that the participants explicitly or implicitly expect better and prioritised treatment compared with drivers of non-luxury sport vehicles. Belonging to groups or entering into exchanges with like-minded people is also a relevant touchpoint for this group. In contrast, some participants highlighted that they have no need to meet other people – they would rather spend their valuable time on other activities.

Although we now know more about a specific process in the sphere of luxury automotive customers, the question remains of whether this generic "model" applies to all the participants. During the exploration of the data, the researcher identified groups that potentially differed from each other. Therefore, the author returned to the data analysis (in stage II of the analysis, the context analysis) and researched the data accordingly. The results of this analysis are presented next.

6.2.3 Customer experience journey for first-time and experienced buyers

Two different experiential backgrounds emerged from the data analysis. Two clear groups could be identified in relation to the participants' experience of purchasing a sport vehicle.

One group of participants had long experience and has bought these types of cars for decades, and the other group had recently purchased such a car for the first time. The author screened the raw data to find evidence for these two groups within the sample. Initially, the author defined three different types of potential experience clusters, which are first-time buyers, experienced buyers, and loyal buyers.

Table 6.13: Distribution of first-time and experienced buyers

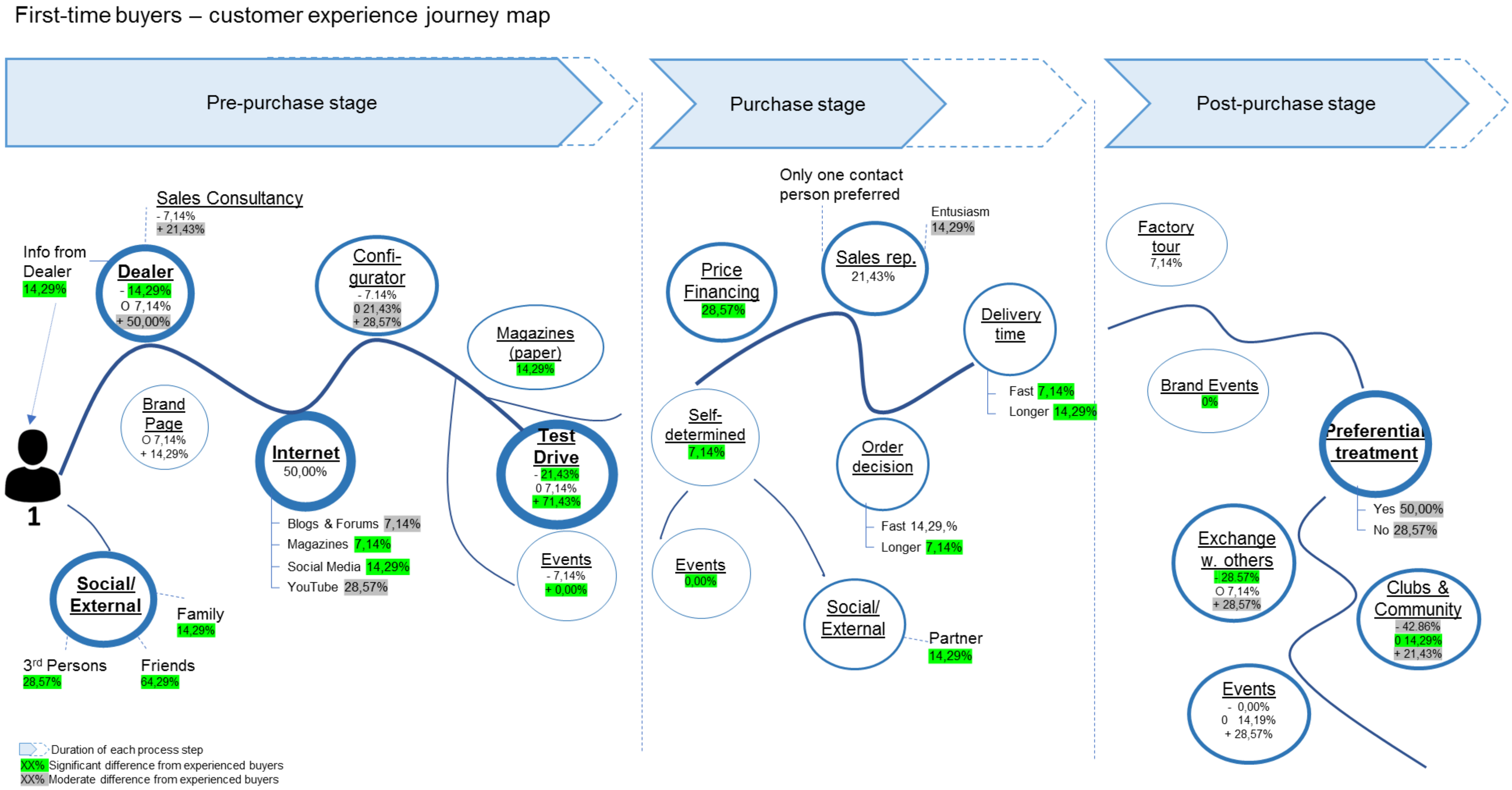
Buying Cluster	Coded Participants	Coded Statements
First-time buyers	14	48
Experienced buyers	18	53
Loyal buyers	*3*	*5*

Unfortunately, there was no evidence of three distinct clusters because fewer people than expected could be identified as loyal customers. Only three participants who had been either first-time or experienced buyers mentioned strong loyalty to a brand. Considering that many of the interviewees own cars of multiple brands, this indicates less loyal behaviour towards one brand only.

However, the research clearly identified two groups: buyers who had bought a sport car for the first time (either when they were young or late entries) and experienced buyers who continuously purchase and own high-performance cars. Referring to Table 6.13, 14 participants expressed that they had purchased a car in this segment for the first time. They represent 43% of the entire sample. On the other side, 18 interviewees reported many years or decades of experience with luxury sport vehicles.

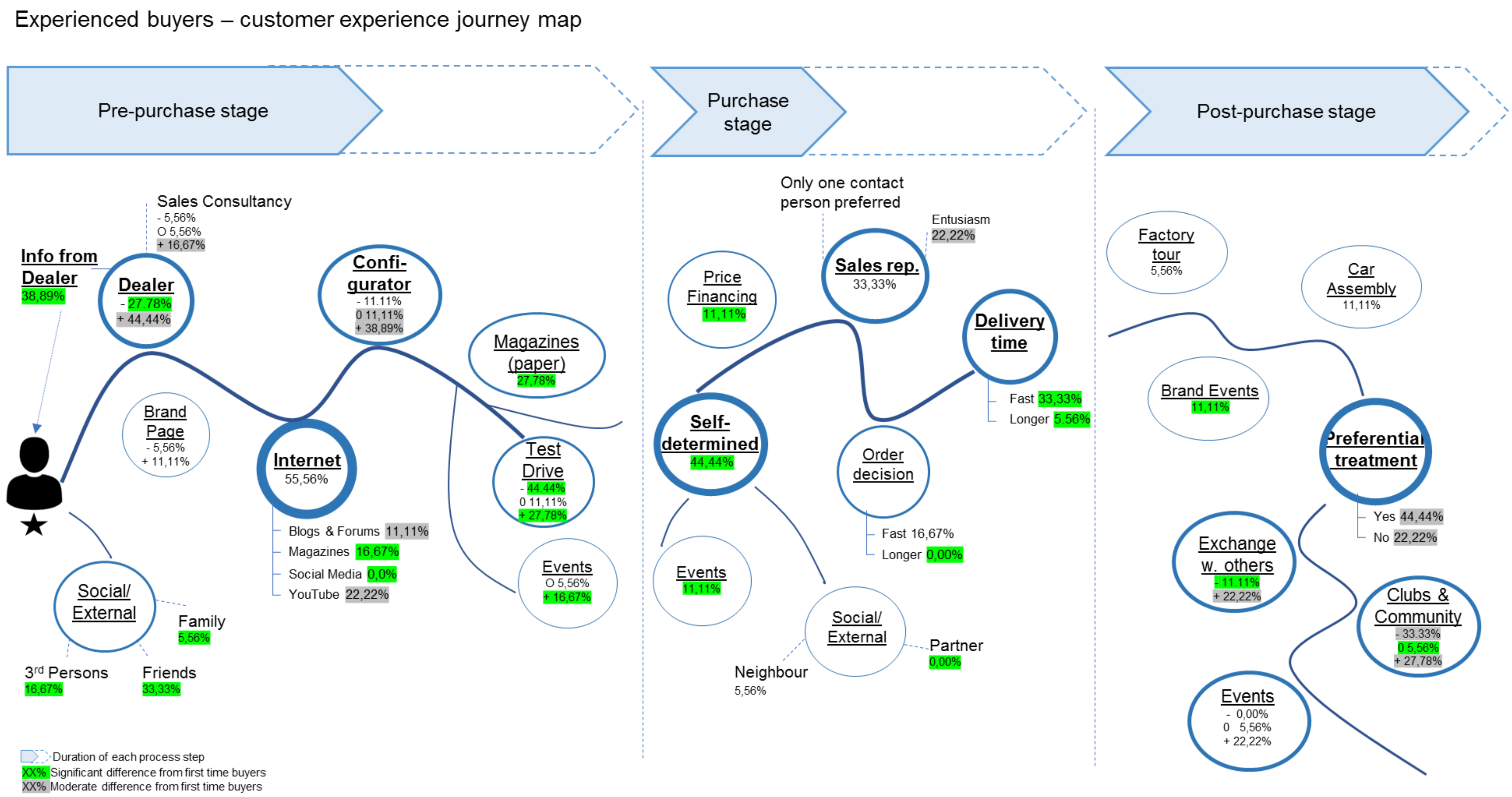
Taken together, these insights provide an additional interesting dimension, enabling the author to cross-analyse the individual answers regarding consumer experience with the information about being a first-time or experienced buyer. The most striking outcome of this analysis is a validated difference in journeys between first-time and experienced buyers.

Figure 6.5: Customer journey map for first-time buyers



Source: The author

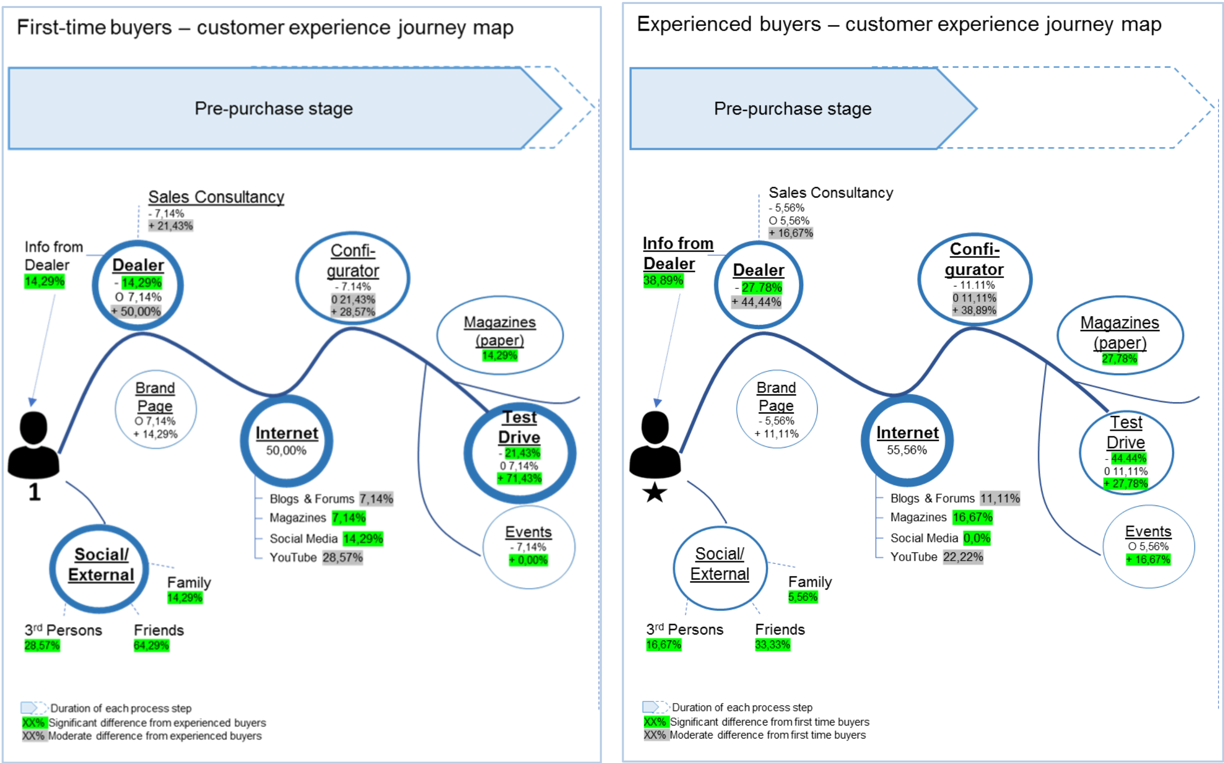
Figure 6.6: Customer journey map for experienced buyers



Source: The author

6.2.3.1 Differences in the customer experience journey in the pre-purchase stage between first-time and experienced buyers

Figure 6.7: Differences in journeys at the pre-purchase stage



Source: The author

Starting with the pre-purchase stage, differences between the two groups can be seen in several touchpoints as well as in the length of the process step itself. This is apparently affected by the number of relevant touchpoints and how time consuming each point is by itself (e.g. a visit to the dealer or a test drive takes more time than reading a magazine article). Regarding this finding, the pre-purchase stage is longer for first-time buyers than it is for experienced buyers.

Considering the data and answers, the touchpoint "dealer" proved to be an important one. Although both groups viewed the dealer him- or herself as being highly relevant, the group of experienced buyers tended to see a slightly less important role (27% see no whereas 44% do see a role). An expected finding arose in the slightly higher need for sales consultancy for first-time buyers. Interestingly, an important point for experienced buyers is to be contacted by the dealer proactively with information about upcoming cars. In many cases, this kicks off the purchase process.

> The dealer gives me a call and informs me. He says I could take the car back and I offer you this and that. This is how it goes. (Hartmut)

The most surprising aspect within the pre-purchase stage concerns the touchpoint “test drive”. Here, a significant difference between the two groups was explored. For more than 71% of all first-time buyers, a test drive plays a role; only for 21.43% it does not. Conversely, for experienced buyers, a test drive is no longer essential. More than 44% do not see the necessity of testing a car before purchasing it. Only 27.78% gave feedback indicating that a test drive is important.

> Very important. Because, without this, you cannot evaluate the car. This is very important. (Brian)

> No. Test drive? What are you supposed to do? Drive across the city or what? (Hartmut)

An interesting finding was that all answers were negative in nature when asking the participants if they could imagine having a 3D animation/virtual experience instead of a real product experience – for instance a test drive.

On the brand level, a potential buyer has the opportunity to obtain information about the product on the manufacturer’s web page. A brand page usually includes information about the products and brand experiences that a manufacturer offers. Concerning the brand page, the two groups differ only slightly; the brand site is slightly more relevant for first-time buyers than for experienced buyers. In total, however, this relevance is at a lower level during the pre-purchase stage. The online configurator, usually embedded in the online presence of the manufacturer, is particularly relevant for both groups, although experienced buyers seem to give this feature slightly higher relevance. The touchpoint “events” is not important for first-time buyers. Experienced buyers gave feedback that they obtained the first information about upcoming cars during a pre-launch event.

The majority of the participants saw huge relevance of the touchpoint “Internet” during the pre-purchase stage. The two groups showed no significant differences here. The only variances that can be found are in the respective channels. Experienced buyers browse the online pages of journalistic car magazines more often and are not interested in social media information. First-time buyers sometimes gain information via social media channels. Both groups emphasised that YouTube is a valid source of product information as well as emotional information (e.g. the sound of the cars and reactions from other people). Interestingly, traditional car magazines with journalistic reviews play a role for both groups, albeit predominantly for experienced car buyers.

The most interesting aspect of the pre-purchase stage, as well as a big difference in groups, can be found in the dimension of social and external influences. This touchpoint plays a significantly more important role for first-time than for experienced buyers. The factor of friends especially shows a subtle difference: 64.29% of the participants who are first-time buyers emphasised the role that friends play before buying such a car.

> So that was a cousin, from my fiancé. He just transferred his enthusiasm. He just spoke about the car and inspired us. And then a friend of mine also ordered this car. And then it kind of infected us, too. (Katja)

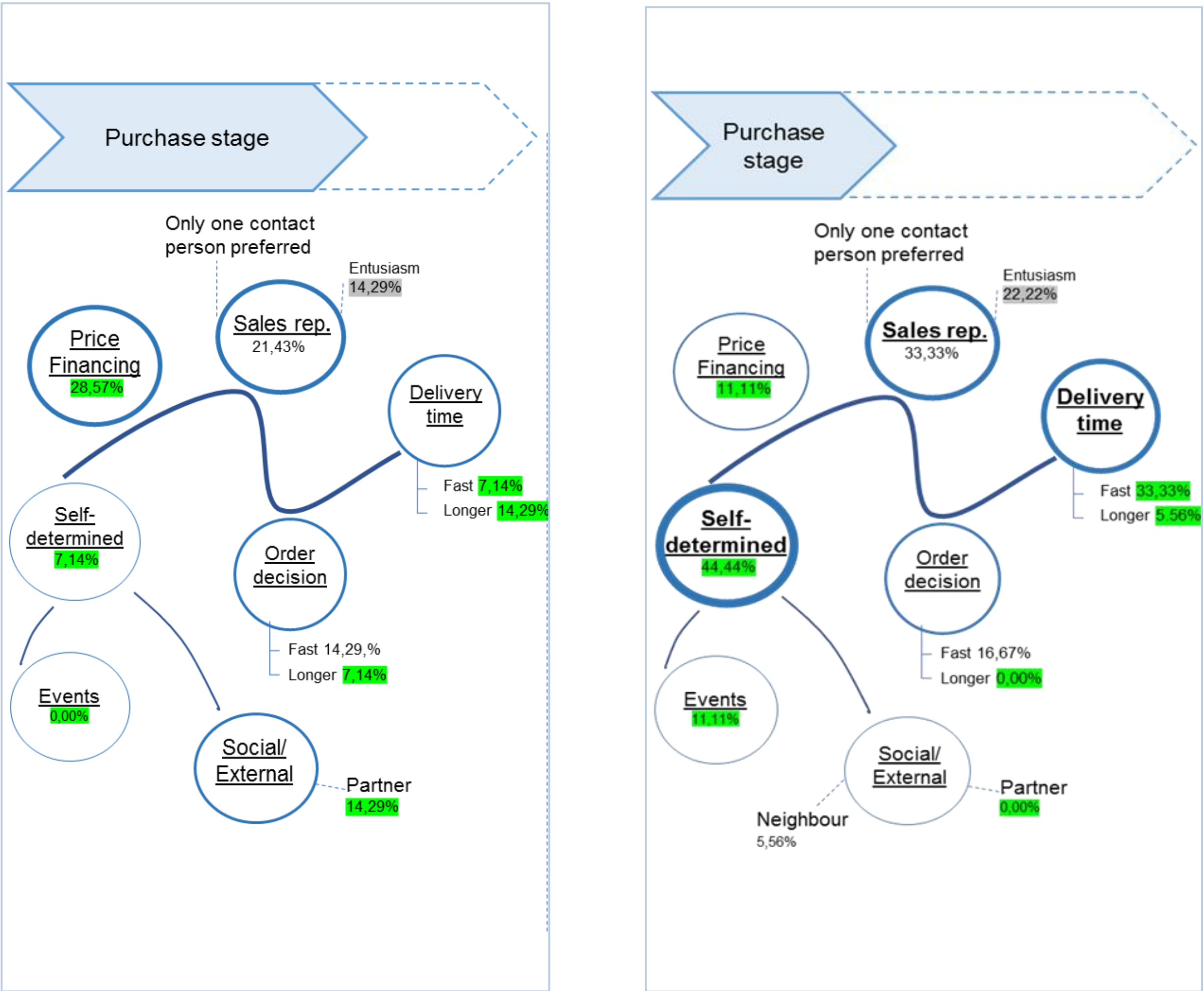
> Yes, a good friend of ours, with whom we also play golf. He also goes crazy about cars, he drives an M 3, and this also played a role. (Jörg)

On the other side, only 33.33% of experienced buyers mentioned the relevance of friends here. Family members and third persons do not show strong relevance for them either. In contrast, first-time buyers mentioned family members and third persons to be relevant touchpoints at this stage.

> In this case also due to personal contacts. A friend – he also had a Porsche Turbo. (Johannes)

6.2.3.2 Differences in the customer experience journey in the purchase stage between first-time and experienced buyers

Figure 6.8: Differences in journeys at the purchase stage



Source: The author (left first-time buyers)

Continuing with the purchase stage, differences between the two groups can be observed here too. The length of the process step "purchase" is different, although not as different as it was at pre-purchase stage. This is due to less different touchpoints and less varying durations per touchpoint. According to this finding, the purchase stage is longer for first-time buyers than it is for experienced buyers. Experienced buyers tend to fly over this process step, so it is reduced to the minimum amount of formal acts between seller and buyer.

The most interesting aspect during the purchase stage was named by the participants themselves and has nothing to do with a classical touchpoint. The theme “self-determined” emerged from the raw data when the analyst discovered that a large share of the respondents emphasised that they have control over the process and variables; however, this was more subtle during the interviews.

> When I decide, I decide myself and not because of the seller. So he does nothing, no impact, nothing, zero. Yes, he can only influence me if he says he gives it for free to me. (Hartmut)
>
> At my desk. Very pragmatic. I needed a new car. Told the dealer what I would like to have. He optimised my query a bit. And then I said, we’ll do it. (Uwe)

Almost half of the participants in the group of experienced buyers made these subtle statements. They also stressed that they know what they want and control the situation; that is, a salesperson is just a consultant and the participants call the shots. In comparison, only 7.14% of all the first-time buyers showed similar behaviour and a similar level of self-determination. They seemed to be comfortable being guided through the process. Furthermore, few interviewees in this group answered that social and external persons (i.e. their partner) played a role in the final purchase decision.

Additional noteworthy differences mainly relate to the touchpoints “pricing and finance”, “sales representative”, and “delivery time”. First-time buyers mentioned more often that price- and finance-related negotiations play a role (28.57%) “to get a good deal”, but experienced buyers mentioned them less, with only 11.11% (however, a few statements related to a good bargain). Unsurprisingly, the sales representative was mentioned as an important touchpoint as well, due to the contract work that must be carried out at the purchase stage. However, for experienced buyers, the personal contact and trust and therefore the importance of a sales representative are ranked higher (33.33%) than for first-time buyers (21.43%). Both groups articulated the importance of salespersons who radiate enthusiasm. Interestingly, there is no difference between the two groups’ responses concerning the number of contact persons that they would prefer at this stage. Everyone who replied to this question stressed the wish to have only one contact person.

A significant difference was apparent at the point “delivery time”. This is also a particularly relevant point at the purchase stage for experienced buyers, 33.33% of whom responded that they expect a fast delivery within a few weeks. If they order quickly, they want the car very soon.

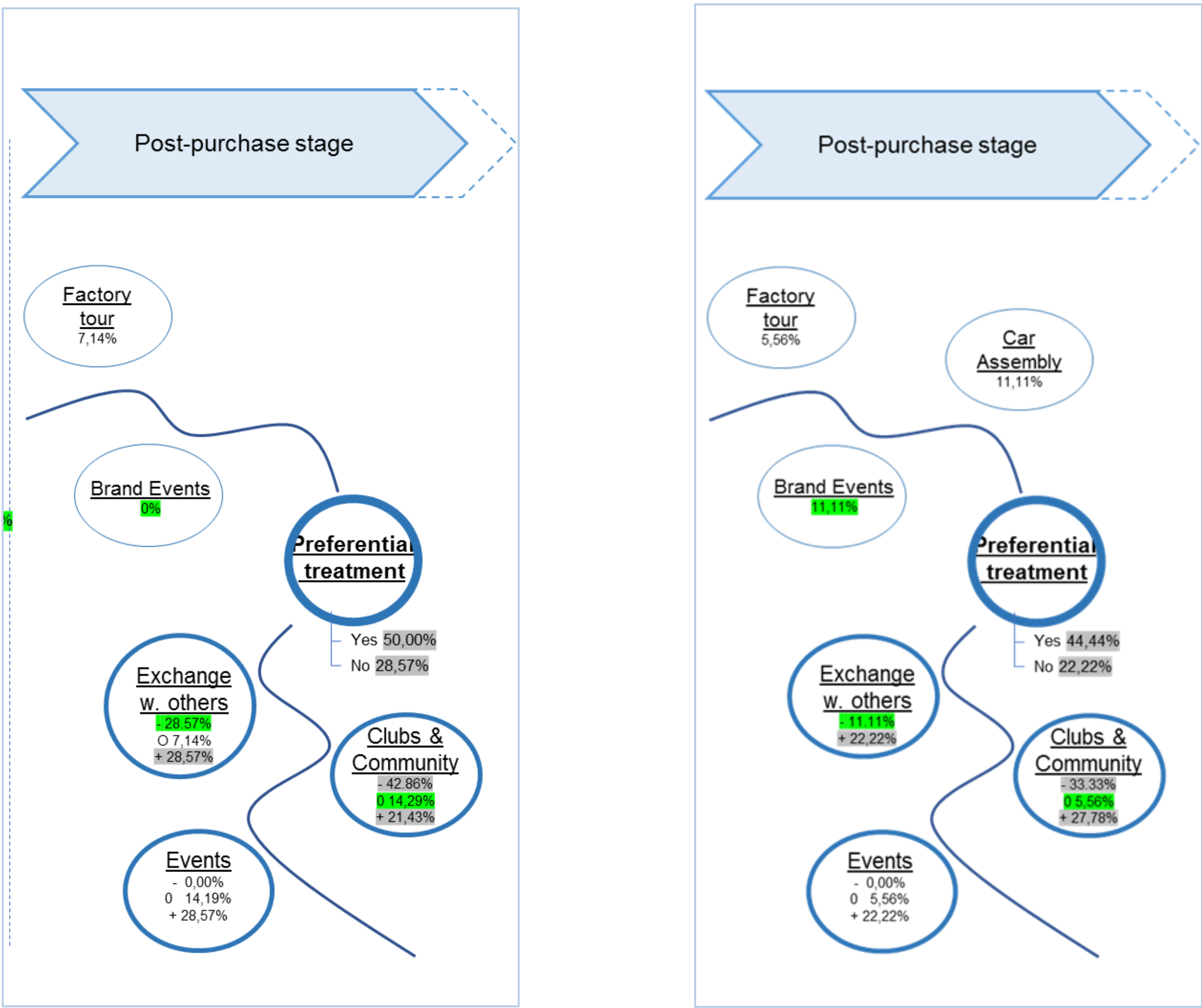
On the other hand, the first-time buyers are comfortable with a longer delivery time. Some interviewees stated that they would wonder whether the car would be available very quickly as well as expressing their willingness to wait longer for an extraordinary product.

> Interviewer: You would be sceptical with a car delivery after two weeks? Would be strange. The production alone would take that long. I once had an off-road vehicle that came from America. It has been on the Atlantic for four weeks. (Teo)
>
> Interviewer: It doesn’t matter if it takes longer? No no. You also have to wait two years for a Birkin. If you like to have one. (Margarita)

Although the feedback given is at a moderate level, some participants gave information about the period when they made their final order decision. Here, experienced buyers make slightly faster decisions, whereas some first timers took more time to consider the purchase.

6.2.3.3 Differences in the customer experience journey in the post-purchase stage between first-time and experienced buyers

Figure 6.9: Differences in journeys at the post-purchase stage



Source: The author (left first-time buyers)

Finally, at the post-purchase level, no major differences between the two groups of buyers can be observed. In addition, there is no difference in the length of the "post-purchase" process step. However, these groups did show differences at the post-purchase level, and two additional groups emerged: one group that is more interested in activities and exchanges (maybe belonging) and one group that seems not to be interested in these and would rather stay by themselves (differentiation and exclusivity?)

In the data and answers, the touchpoints "factory tour", "brand events", and "joining the car assembly" turned out to be rather side themes that some buyers are interested in but the majority are not. The most interesting aspect at the post-purchase stage, which is mainly concerned with after-sales and service-relevant topics, is the treatment that the individuals expect. This mainly concerns preferential treatment during servicing and obtaining an appointment at the dealership. Most of the interviewees (first timers and experienced) expect faster and preferential treatment compared with drivers of non-luxury sport cars (this applies to the brands Mercedes, BMW, and Audi due to the two lines available in their portfolios). Although only a few stated this clearly, others let the interviewers know more subtly that preferential treatment is a result of their product category. Interestingly, the experienced drivers scored lower (44.44%) than the first timers (50%), so, of the smaller sample (14 first-time buyers vs 18 experienced buyers), the participants stated that they expected preferential treatment. An explanation could be the more appealing offer for first timers than for experienced customers.

> You paid more and yes, why not? I want to get the appointment wherever it suits me. (Teo)

> Yes, let’s put it this way, I think it’s good, you have to say that honestly. (Frank)

When it comes to exchanges with others and joining a club or community, the researcher clearly identified two groups according to the data results. The first timers show a higher number of positive and negative attitudes towards exchanges with others (- 28.57% and + 28.57%) – just like the experienced buyers (- 11.11% and + 22.22%). The same principle applies to the touchpoint of potentially joining a club or community, although with a higher level of rejection from the first-time buyers (-42.86% and + 21.43%). Therefore, a large number of buyers are not interested in clubs and communities at all. A moderate number of people are interested in clubs and communities and in exchanges with other drivers and likeminded people. What finally unifies the two groups is the touchpoint events. Almost all the interviewees reported that they would prefer to receive invitations to and information about events after the purchase. However, these events should be exclusive and for small groups.

Chapter 7:

7 Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

The main goal of this study was to explore the determinants of the customer brand experience with affordable luxury sports cars in Germany. The research is presented in six chapters. The findings of the empirical research undertaken were reported in the previous chapter. One of the key challenges of management research, which this DBA is designed for, is to address the findings and contribute to the body of knowledge, but it should also be relevant to practitioners.

The main purpose of this chapter is to bring together the data from the current literature discussed in chapters 2 and 3 and the research results highlighted in chapter 6 and to discuss the findings as well as drawing conclusions and implications for academia and practice. The chapter also highlights the limitations of the study and makes suggestions for further research.

This chapter first outlines the objectives and aim of the dissemination process and the questions posed to guide its achievement. Furthermore, it discusses the findings in relation to the work of the authors in the literature as well as the research framework. This discussion is followed by "looking back" to the research questions to check whether they were answered. To build a bridge between theory and practice, implications of the study are discussed. Finally, the author addresses the limitations of this study and discusses areas for future research.

7.2 Research aim and objective

The aim of the present research was to explore the spectrum and determinants of the customer brand experience within the affordable luxury sport car brands in Germany. Accordingly, multiple theories of customer experience had to be examined to gain sufficient knowledge and understanding of the important theoretical foundations for a rigorous study.

The study set out to understand the subject of branding, the luxury dimensions within branding, and the aspects of brand equity. The exploration of crucial drivers for today's customers during their experience and decision-making process as well as details about purchase motives and symbolic meanings helped to provide an understanding of the determinants that lead to customer satisfaction and loyalty. This also involved the components that constitute, influence, leverage, or destroy a positive customer journey (from the consumer perspective). An additional aim of this study was to overcome the generic results in the existing research, which has mainly been based on a mix of industries and products. This was achieved through a clear focus on one industry (luxury automotive) and context (customer brand experience) to avoid diluting the findings and to establish a more homogeneous ground for the research. Therefore, a goal was to complement the existing knowledge with novel findings from German luxury sports car owners and their individual customer brand experience. To fulfil the aim of this study, the following objectives were articulated:

1. Critically review the literature on luxury branding
2. Explore the literature on customer experience with luxury brands in the automotive industry
3. Develop a conceptual framework and a research instrument that allow to determine key drivers for customer brand experience with affordable luxury sport car brands in Germany.

To achieve the first objective, a discussion of the current state of knowledge concerning branding was conducted (see chapter 2). Chapters 3 and 4 provided the theoretical foundation for the second objective. The development of a conceptual framework (the third objective) emerged from the theory, which was discussed in chapters 2 and 3, and was presented and discussed in the methodology section of this study (see subsection 5.5). To meet the aim and objectives of this study, the framework comprises two dimensions. The first layer consists of a perceptual model, including cognitive as well as affective/symbolic concepts that were explored regarding their relevance to brand satisfaction and loyalty. The second layer is based on a processual model, enabling the researcher to explore the customer journey at various stages and various touchpoints in a structured way. The next chapter discusses the findings in relation to the existing literature (how the results fit) as well as the applied conceptual framework.

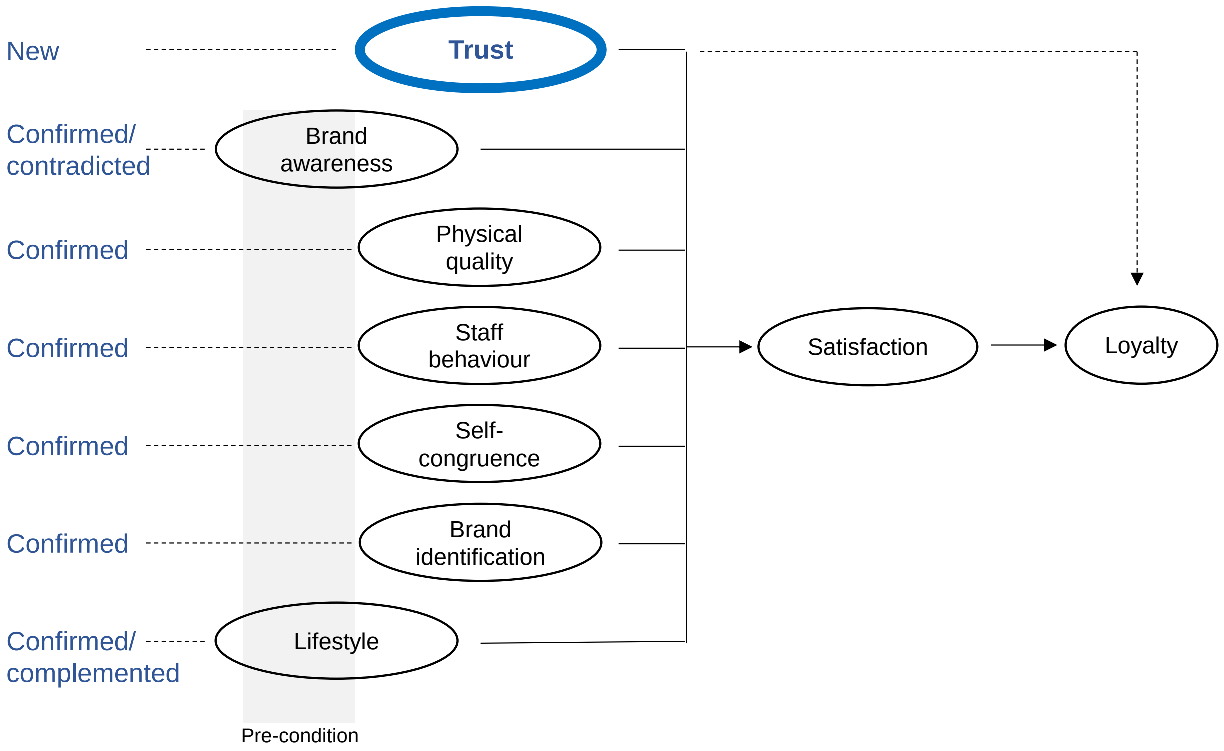
7.3 Discussion of the findings in relation to the literature and the framework

This study extends our knowledge of the determinants of customer experience in the homogeneous environment of luxury sport cars in Germany. This research developed a conceptual framework, based on seminal and recent knowledge on the topic for the exploration of the brand experience and customer journey spectrum. The purpose of this section is to reflect on the findings and discuss them in relation to the work of others. Therefore, the knowledge from the literature and the applied framework will be examined for validation, contradictions, and complements.

7.3.1 Components of customer experience in the luxury automotive industry

To discuss how the findings fit with the existing theory, the first part is concerned with the various concepts of brand equity. The consumer-based brand equity theory is based on Aaker's (1991) four-dimensional model, which contains important concepts of customer equity. This framework influenced many more studies in this field (Çifci et al., 2016; Keller, 1993; Nam et al., 2011; Yoo & Donthu, 2001). Although their findings have been widely accepted and used, the question of the framework's suitability for the latest stage of evolution in the luxury automotive sector remains unanswered. For example, Cifci et al. (2016) tested the brand equity model with service-dominant brands. The current study contributes to the existing body of knowledge through an investigation of brand equity (brand awareness, physical quality, staff behaviour, ideal self-congruence, brand identification, and lifestyle congruence) in the luxury car manufacturing industry. The findings of the study demonstrate that, although all the concepts are applicable, the findings differ from those of other authors. The revised conceptual framework is shown in Figure 7.1.

Figure 7.1: Components of customer experience in the luxury automotive industry



Source: The author

On the basis of the study's results, it can be deduced that the concept of brand awareness has moderate relevance. In contradiction to the existing studies (Çifci et al., 2016; Nam et al., 2011; Yoo & Donthu, 2001), no evidence was given by the participants that brand awareness leads directly to brand satisfaction. It is rather a primary condition for entering the consideration set of the customer. However, brand awareness can play a role in satisfaction and therefore the result is in line with previous theories if the brand symbols and logos are recognised by others and therefore achieve the aim of symbolism. The researcher found that physical quality has high relevance to and a strong impact on satisfaction and loyalty, therefore confirming the revised model (Figure 7.1) and previous theories. Furthermore, the findings of this study help to make brand equity research more tangible, as the seminal research is rather abstract. This is achieved by extending the actual body of knowledge within in-depth insights into physical quality. If customers' expectations concerning the showroom and product quality are met, the relationship between quality and satisfaction is confirmed. Dissatisfaction can lead to immediate refusal and exit. The present study provides additional evidence with respect to the concept of staff behaviour – found to be one of the key concepts for satisfaction. The investigation showed that competence, appearance, age, and gender as well as trustworthiness are associated with staff behaviour.

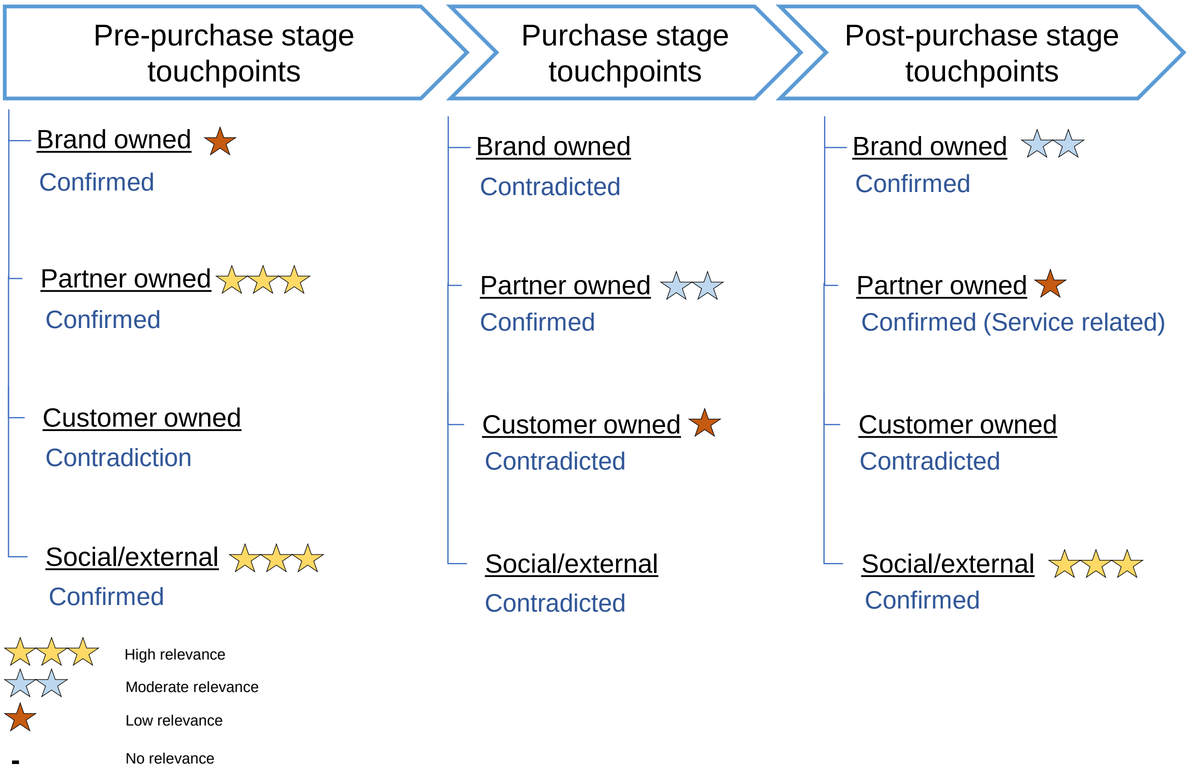
The researcher found that brand identification is highly relevant and can therefore confirm the existing research based on Cifci et al. (2016) and Nam et al. (2011). If brand identification enables a customer either to integrate into or differentiate him- or herself from groups in society, it directly influences customer satisfaction. Overall, this study also strengthens the concept of lifestyle congruence; however, it must be complemented due to the topic at hand. Like brand awareness, the lifestyle of a customer embodies an entry requirement that is independent from age, gender, or occupation. Here, the individual stage of life is relevant and key drivers such as self-reward and self-esteem bring a new element to the debate. At this point, satisfaction would not be a direct outcome of lifestyle congruence. In contrast, if a brand or a product enables a customer to express his or her actual or ideal lifestyle, than lifestyle congruence is relevant to satisfaction. The findings showed that self-congruence has relevance to the topic at hand, thus confirming the model (Figure 7.1). Overcoming a possible discrepancy between the ideal and the actual self from customers' point of view leads to satisfaction. Although previous research has built a robust model of and explanation for satisfaction and loyalty, this study was able to establish a further concept that is highly relevant for the customers of this industry. The concept of trust has been explored across all concepts and feedback from the participants. It represents the basis for long-term satisfaction and loyalty. Furthermore, the data reported a direct association between trust and loyalty. This important insight is significant for both scientists and practitioners.

This study suggests that physical quality, staff behaviour, brand identification, and trust are the key reasons for brand satisfaction and loyalty in the luxury automotive industry.

7.3.2 Factors affecting customer experience journey

To discuss how the findings fit with the existing theory, the second part of the research was concerned with the processual touchpoints during a customer experience journey. Understanding customer experience and the customer journey was an essential part of this research project. Creating a strong customer experience is a leading objective for many practitioners that the author has also perceived in his professional environment. Referring back to subsection 3.2, the author highlighted the first scholars to emphasise the importance of customer experience – like Schmitt (1999) and Pine and Gilmore (1998), who addressed the importance of experience and opportunities, building four realms of an experience. The foundation of the research framework used for this study is based on the processual model of Lemon and Verhoef (2016), who identified four types of touchpoints that influence each of the three stages (pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase) of the customer journey. The findings of the study demonstrate that, although all the stages have a right to exist, differences and varying importance occurred across the touchpoints identified in the theory. The study findings identifies key touchpoints for customer experience in the affordable luxury car market. The research provides noteworthy contributions to the understanding of the relationships among the relevant touchpoints and the influence of each stage of the customer journey. Figure 7.2 shows the relevant touchpoints (with high to low relevance) during each stage based on the data from this study.

Figure 7.2: Experience stages in the luxury automobile industry: touchpoint analysis

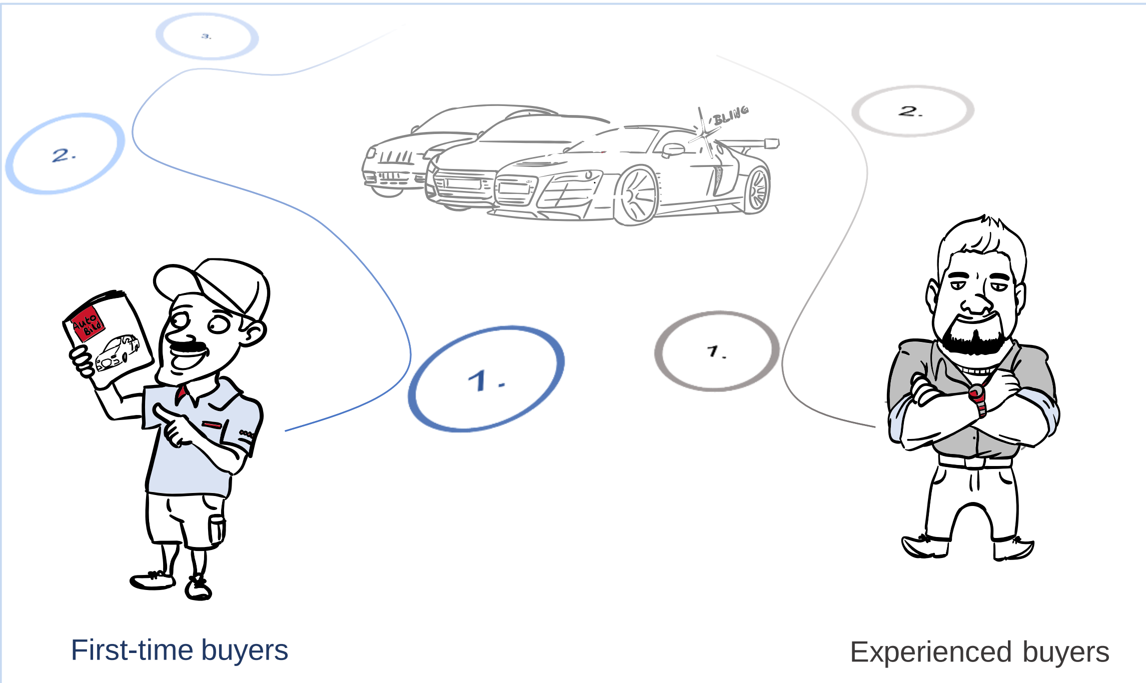


Source: The author

Based on the study's results, it can be confirmed that the process model of the customer journey and experience is valid. However, the researcher found that, on a generic level, the durations of the three stages (pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase) are not the same. The study provides evidence that the pre-purchase stage is significantly more relevant than the purchase stage itself (representing the least-important role). The post-purchase stage is second due to the greater relevance of services, exchanges, or events. At the pre-purchase stage, data confirmed the touchpoint "brand owned", albeit on a low level. The touchpoint "partner owned" is in line with the theory and represents one of the most important ones as potential test drives and dealer visits are highly relevant from customers' point of view. In contradiction to the existing model, the participants provided no evidence for the relevance of the touchpoint "customer owned". Here, the data only gave information about self-determination behaviour as well as the personal desire to be in control of the entire situation. The present study additionally strongly confirms the touchpoint "social/external" with respect to the high relevance reported by the participants. Exchanges with third persons, family, and friends as well as watching product videos on YouTube influence the journey significantly.

Regarding the purchase stage, the data showed contradictory results concerning the touchpoints "brand owned" and "social/external". No significant impact on the journey at this stage could be attributed to these touchpoints. Analogous to the pre-purchase stage, "customer owned" rather meant that the "customer is in control" of the process and not the salesperson. However, "partner owned" can play a role during the contract and payment negotiations. Dissatisfaction can negatively affect the experience. At the post-purchase stage, the touchpoints "brand owned" and "social/external" are in line with the theoretical model and can be confirmed. If expectations concerning brand events as well as social exchange (i.e. clubs, communities, or social events) are met, a relationship between these journey points and satisfaction exists. The "partner owned" touchpoint plays a subordinate role on a moderate level. Only the after-sales service-relevant needs were addressed in this regard; however, negative experiences with mechanics or service quality can lead to a loss of trust and loyalty.

Figure 7.3: Customers' individual journey in the affordable luxury car market



Source: The author

Having explored the process dimensions of a customer experience journey, there is still abundant room for further research. Prior studies have not answered questions regarding differences in the journey according to the stage in life, segmentation, or the possibility of specific customer groups passing through different touchpoints. These are fundamental questions – especially for practitioners and management struggling to adapt generic and theoretical models to individual business case scenarios in dynamic customer segments. Due to the rich data set and exhaustive exploration, this study is one of the first to provide an understanding of diverse journeys. This contribution could be reached through data-based mapping.

This study explored two major segments within the data, based on customers' individual experience with the purchase process of luxury cars. It was surprising that significant differences between first-time and experienced buyers could be proven. The first difference in journeys arises in the stages (pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase) through which the two groups pass. First-time buyers spend considerably more time in the pre-purchase phase, whereas experienced buyers have the shortest purchase phase. This study also critically examined these touchpoints' different degrees of relevance to these groups. The researcher investigated how often and in which context each participant spoke about each individual touchpoint.

The findings validate the importance of social and external contact, the dealership, and test drives for first-time buyers, whereas these touchpoints have less relevance to experienced buyers. The experienced buyers showed high self-determination – meaning that they inform themselves about the products (e.g. through magazines or the Internet) and, based on their network and trust in dealers and salespersons, they initiate the process. This is also underpinned by the difference in results regarding sales representatives at various touchpoints – showing greater relevance for first-time buyers and less relevance for experienced buyers. Interestingly, the touchpoint of preferential treatment at the post-purchase stage is relevant to both groups. In addition, the significance of the differences between the groups decreases at the end of their journeys. These results are of great interest not only because they answer open questions in academia and in practice but also because they act as a compass to assign touchpoints that either have downstream influences or offer opportunities for intervention or influence (positive as well as negative effects).

7.4 Answering the research questions

This study explored the brand experience spectrum within the automotive industry, particularly in the affordable luxury sport car sector. It extends the existing customer brand experience research on the concepts of brand equity, customer satisfaction, and consumer journeys. This study explored customers' motives and preferences for experience dimensions in the field of luxury sport cars for the first time. The factors and components that constitute, influence, or leverage/drive a brand experience from customers' point of view in a single industry form the base on which to answer the research questions.

This thesis built on established concepts for brand equity and customer experience and explored the determinants through empirical research conducted with customers of luxury sport cars in Germany. In contrast to many other studies, by focusing on a single high-value industry with its existing customers, rather than mixing industries and surveying people across the population or university students, this research demonstrates both the challenges and the benefits arising from the data. As a result, the findings have implications for both research and practice.

Two research questions were formulated in this study, each of them developed according to gaps identified in the literature and in practice (from the professional background of the author). The following two parts provide a concise summary answer to each of the questions based on the findings of this study.

Research question 1: What are the factors affecting brand experience in the affordable luxury sport cars sector in Germany?

This study showed that, based on the framework, multiple concepts leading to customer satisfaction and loyalty were identified and confirmed and even new concepts emerged. A detailed analysis of each concept was carried out based on in-depth interviews with customers. The image and awareness of a brand play an important role in the world of premium and luxury goods. A visible brand combined with a defined and known image across the population supports its success in two ways. First, once a brand is presented to potential customers, it enters their consideration set if the awareness of a need is raised in customers' mind. Second, if a customer has the need to change his or her self-image, brand images can help to compensate due to the spillover effects on customers. The core and heart of this industry are apparent – the vehicle itself. Therefore, product quality is a key aspect in terms of success factors. It also embodies an experience dimension with a particularly high degree of involvement. Physical showrooms give potential buyers the chance to see, smell, and feel the details of the cars. A multisensory experience is attained when test driving the cars, hearing the sound, and experiencing the force during acceleration. All the details of craftmanship are somehow expected but still delight customers during a product experience.

An additional critical success factor is represented by the staff of a brand or dealership. Here, competence, a neat appearance fitting the brand image, and a certain age are expected by the customers. A high probability of failure would result from a junior person with limited knowledge of the product and etiquette – which this study revealed. Trustworthiness was explored as a critical success factor for current and further business (in sales and after sales). This also underpinned a new concept that arose during this study: the concept of trust, which was present across the entire study and the answers of the participants and probably represents the most important success factor. The level of financial resources needed to buy one of these products, the effects on personal health (fast-moving cars), and privacy (in the event of indiscretion) make these factor plausible.

In terms of brand identification, customers must have added value when owning a product of the respective brand. Either it should enable customers to integrate into or distinguish themselves from a certain group of reference people or it has to transfer a symbolic value (e.g. to illustrate social status). A successful brand experience allows consumers to establish or strengthen their self-esteem. An experience that allows customers to fulfil their desire for self-reward and express an individual lifestyle will lead to satisfaction. A successful brand experience manages to establish an equilibrium between the ideal and the actual self, playing with the imagination of the capabilities and the possible when entering the world of a particular brand and its products.

Research question 2: What actions can a luxury sport car manufacturer take to improve the brand experience?

Through the structured literature review presented in chapter 3, the concept of customer experience in the context of luxury goods was demonstrated as being multifaceted and often poorly addressed to enable practitioners to make improvements within their businesses. Drawing on research from a wide range of both theoretical and applied papers, it was demonstrated that the concept of customer experience follows a process that is also called the customer journey. This structure helps providers of luxury brands to understand the logical touchpoints that customers experience and identifies possibilities for action and influence.

To improve the brand experience, the concepts of the first research question are fundamental across the entire customer journey. Providers should take action concerning brand and image building as well as increasing the awareness of their brand and products. This is also important for all aspects of symbolic meaning – ideally leading to brand identification on the customer side.

Well-groomed showrooms and highly educated staff improve customers' agreement to conduct business across the stages of purchases. The creation of exchange platforms attracts and satisfies customers seeking belonging or differentiation. These fundamental conceptual findings (chapter 6.1) support firms by highlighting the crucial elements of successful brand experience. However, there is still a missing element that providers of luxury brands need to understand when aiming to improve customers' experience. It is the knowledge about the customer experience journey with relevant and non-relevant touchpoints, enabling firms to target effectively or even influence potential customers.

Through the in-depth interviews, this study explored the important touchpoints that providers can influence. To be even more specific, two different customer groups in the luxury automotive market were identified that have different experience journeys. Here, groups of first-time buyers and experienced buyers were found. To improve the total experience, a provider could adjust a customer's individual journey based on his or her pre-experience. First-time buyers, for instance, need more time during the pre-purchase and purchase stages, leading to a greater need for consultation and test driving possibilities. In contrast, guiding an experienced buyer through the same process would be counterproductive. Here, a lean pre-purchase phase with a focus on proactive information provision by the sales consultant as well as marketing activities (i.e. events, magazines, and online articles) give room for improvement. In the purchase phase, crucial touchpoints can be seen in price and finance discussions for first timers. In contrast, the experience for experienced buyers could be improved by providing only one contact person for the client as well as spending resources on ensuring a fast delivery time. What is highly relevant to both groups is the touchpoint of preferential treatment. Here, a firm should provide the possibility of giving luxury customers the feeling of receiving preferential treatment. This also applies to the desire for exchanges between customers at brand events, in clubs, or at community events.

7.5 Contribution of the study

The findings of this research have several theoretical and practical implications. The principal theoretical implication of this study is multilateral and will be discussed hereinafter. First, the review found limited scholarly research concerning brand and customer experience dimensions in the manufacturing industry in particular. The result of this study indicated that the luxury automotive field has been researched casually so far, with the focus being rather on retail and fashion brands. This study raised important findings about increasing the success of the brand experience within this industry. The concepts explored and the findings of this investigation confirmed and validated, complemented (i.e. new concepts emerged from the data set), or rejected those of earlier studies. This represents a new basis for knowledge, making research on customers' experience in the luxury automotive industry more accurate and less generic. The current body of knowledge is mainly based on a sampling structure that primarily relied on a student population or visitors to shopping malls (Brakus et al., 2009; Iglesias et al., 2011; Torres et al., 2017). Conversely, this research identified the context, information, and motives from actual customers of the luxury car industry. Only limited studies have been in the situation to gain data from luxury car customers. The major theoretical contributions are articulated hereinafter.

This research brings together two models (customer brand equity and processual models) and provides additional in-depth knowledge. First, the findings of this study complement the brand equity model of Cifci et al. (2016) by adding the concept of trust and presenting a new concept of high relevance. These data highlight the importance of trust, identification, and product quality. The existing concepts of the model are confirmed in the automotive industry. The findings concerning trust, identification, and congruence can support future research on consumer psychology. Second, the findings of this study complement the current knowledge by a new understanding and mapping of the customer journey for luxury sports cars in Germany. Based on Lemon and Verhoef's (2016) model of customer experience and journey, a conclusion from the present study can be drawn concerning different paths based on the pre-experience of customer groups. This study raised the question of crucial touchpoints, which are relevant to customers' evaluation of an experience as successful afterwards. A touchpoint analysis identified differences in purchase stages and about the relevance of touchpoints to affordable luxury sport cars. Moreover, different customer experience journeys have been found, depending on customers previous experiences with sportscars. Additionally, this is the first study that provides a customer journey map using touchpoint analysis to share in-depth knowledge about important touchpoints from customer perspective. Here, touchpoints such as social & external, test drives and delivery have shown a high relevance and differ between the two experience groups. Acceptance and rejection can take place at the dealer & sales staff level. Negative emotions can occur very quickly, while satisfaction does not occur as quickly throughout the experience.

Finally, the utility of these two models via sequentially using them can be tailored depending on various factors, such as the level of consumer focus within a brand environment, the number of brands being managed by a manufacturer, as well as the number of brands competing. The next chapter provides recommendations for practical execution.

7.6 Managerial implications of the study

The research has practical implications since it recommends changes that can enhance the brand experience in the German automotive industry based on success factors. These possibilities were mainly discussed within the section on the research questions. The utility of bringing two models together (customer brand equity and processual models) provides managers with additional in-depth knowledge. The order in which to approach the analysis can be tailored according to the focus of business. If in a single branded business with a high level of customer focus, touchpoint analysis should be done prior to the customer brand equity analysis. Vice versa, if managers have to take care of multiple brands with a lower focus on customer touchpoints (e.g. a multinational with dozens of brands in the fast moving consumer goods industry) consumer brand equity might be priority to analyse. This study introduced valid and reliable information on determinants that, if met from the consumers' point of view, lead to a successful evaluation, ending in brand or product loyalty. Furthermore, it gives practitioners and managers a compass indicating which touchpoints are relevant to which customer group. They can direct their marketing activities more effectively (based on the relevant touchpoints), focus on staff training, and ensure that consumers' brand experience provides high social value to achieve their desire for exchange.

Social value can be achieved by encouraging interactions between brand and consumer (e.g. central product launch events) and through brand-oriented interactions among consumers (e.g. dealer events, clubs, or communities). Retail managers should also take into consideration the social environment of a customer, which plays a significant role in the pre-purchase phase. Here, new marketing concepts could be derived involving the friends and family of a prospective customer. Customers are motivated to express their distinctiveness through product experience and brand identification (belonging/distinction) and develop a loyal link to brands. Finally, managers should continue to foster measures to build trust between the organisation, its employees, and its customers through numerous traditional and modern marketing communications, methods providing transparency during the purchase process, and an ecosystem in which trustworthiness can be built between all stakeholders, ensuring a long-term basis for satisfaction, loyalty, and business.

7.7 Limitations and further research areas

The research and development of this doctoral thesis must, by definition, be exclusively the work of a single student author. Being a part-time doctoral student working full time in a management position has different advantages and disadvantages compared with being a full-time student. However, some similar challenges remain. As a result, constraints of time and financial resources influence every study. Nevertheless, it is the task of the author to produce the highest-quality result that is possible within the given conditions. Of course, if financial and time resources were unlimited, a higher number of samples could be acquired, more precise predictions could be drawn, and so on. It is tough that time constraints also limit the time available to share the contribution and knowledge with other scientists. Considering this trade-off, it is the aim of this chapter to discuss limitations that are either the result of the given constraints or due to the chosen approach (i.e. methods, time frame, geography, etc.).

A limitation of this study is its cross-sectional rather than longitudinal nature. A cross-sectional study examines a particular phenomenon at a particular time (Saunders et al., 2016). The author gathered data just once to fulfil the research objectives, meaning that the research forms a snapshot of the situation. Here, the time allocated for completing this research did not allow the author to conduct a longitudinal study. Future research could revisit the same study setting over a longer period, taking into account different governmental initiatives, different streams in society (being green), and the social acceptance of luxury and sports cars (e.g. noise, consumption of resources vs status symbol).

The selection of a predominantly qualitative approach for the research carried out in this study was mainly justified by its exploratory nature given the lack of homogeneous research in this area. The generalisability of the findings might be limited compared with that of quantitative studies. The use of interview methods was particularly useful in the collection of data, and, in subsection 5.6.1, the theoretical benefits and challenges of these approaches were discussed. The quality of interviews is fundamentally linked to the abilities of the interviewer and the relationship that he or she has with the interviewee. This research minimised this weakness by using more than one professional market research interviewer. Regarding the method of in-depth interviews, a potential source of bias is the influence of the interviewer as well as negative chemistry between people, which can lead to less open conversations. An additional uncontrolled factor in face-to-face situations is the risk of feeling uncomfortable when sensitive topics might be discussed (e.g. motives for status, money, social acceptance, and the sustainability of sport cars). The risk of missing real and underlying motivations might be minimised with additional research methods. It would be interesting to assess further the underlying motivations and sensitive information with projective techniques. These are useful in giving the participants the opportunity to express their answers without being personally linked to the answer. This supports the exploration of attitudes and feelings on the subconscious level (e.g. “why do you think people drive luxury sport cars?”).

Interviews are, however, a resource-intensive method for data collection. This also affects the sample size of a study. The author is extremely grateful to have been able to gain access to data sets that were compiled on behalf of his employer (for a different purpose), with the author’s involvement at that time. Without the access to these secondary data, it would not have been possible to build a more than sufficient basis of the 32 best interviews out of the total of 60 conducted. Although the author is convinced of the suitability of the sample size, some limitations need to be acknowledged. With greater resources, it would have been beneficial to undertake more interviews with a greater range of participants; however, the number of interviews represents the result of five months of intensive data collection. The author is extremely grateful to all the participants who engaged in this research and is mindful of his ethical obligations. As a result of this, repetition with the same persons of the sample cannot be conducted due to privacy rules (nicknames and no further personal information shared between the research agency and the researcher) and missing contact details. Additionally, the age of the respondents was not captured during the data collection exercise because such information was considered to be sensitive, unless they gave this information during the interview (voluntarily) and it could be coded.

Although the study successfully explored the determinants of the customer brand experience in the luxury automotive industry, the geographic location is not free of limitations. It was the researcher’s decision to not mix countries in this study and to aspire to a homogeneous picture across the country of Germany (sampling in the north, middle, and south of Germany). However, it should be mentioned for the sake of completeness that Germany has a car-centric culture and therefore sports and luxury sports cars play a significant role. This study could be repeated in additional countries to understand whether cultural differences affect the findings and determinants. In terms of directions for future customer research, further work could investigate the significant differences in customer experience journeys from this study within different luxury or non-luxury industries.

8 Author’s Development during the DBA

Prior to the DBA, I achieved a bachelor’s degree in international industrial engineering and business administration as well as a master’s degree in international management. I commenced my doctoral study of business administration at the University of Portsmouth in the autumn of 2016. At that time, I was a full-time employee of Audi AG working as a project manager in the strategy department of sales and marketing. The motivation to start a long-term project like the DBA was based on the desire to challenge myself intellectually combined with a passion for research. The DBA was therefore the ideal choice for advanced study, combining scientific research with theoretical and practical relevance for full-time managers, ideally working in the field of research.

The structured taught first year also provided the opportunity to refresh and develop my research skills and build a learning environment with other students. In 2016, as part of the first-year taught element of the DBA, I completed a portfolio concerning professional research and personal development in which critical self-evaluation and reflection in the two main areas (the doctoral programme and personal development) were emphasised. At that time, I identified major sections, namely the acquisition of knowledge, the development of academic skills in research, and personal development and growth. The table below demonstrates the reflection of these sections – looking back at the end of this journey in the year 2020.

Table 8.1: Author's development during the DBA

Field of Development	Reflection on Development
Acquisition of knowledge	At the beginning of the doctoral programme, I was mainly confronted with industry-relevant knowledge about strategy, sales, and marketing. The knowledge base mainly came from previous studies, internal market research, and information that my employer was acquiring from outside professionals. In my position as a project manager and later as a brand manager, I had to make decisions based on the information provided in a short period of time. Within this sphere, academic work is used less frequently. During the DBA programme, a deep dive into the seminal and recent literature about the research topic took place. The support of my supervisors, student colleagues, and the librarian was crucial in giving me useful directions towards relevant and high-quality literature and articles. Reading relevant articles, journals, and publications over more than four years raised my in-depth knowledge from professional to expert status in my subject area. Apparently, this elevates one's credibility to a particularly high status in academia and even more in the business environment; however, everyone should be aware that this knowledge is perishable. Furthermore, the challenging certainty in a fast-moving business environment is that there is less demand for highly rigorous academic evaluations than for quick snapshots that reflect the topic at hand on rather the 70 to 80 per cent level. This trend can also be observed in the recent cultural change and is viewed critically by the author. Academic reading is, however, an ongoing task, keeping every expert updated, and is to some extent the responsibility of every person holding a doctoral degree.
Academic skills	The taught elements of the DBA were instrumental in learning how to develop academic skills. This comprised critical reading, advanced research skills, and academic writing for publication or dissemination. Additionally, my presentation skills were developed by holding multiple meetings within a year with an academic audience. An

	important aspect here was peer-reviewed presentations, giving everyone the chance to share feedback and different perspectives. Although presentations were not new to the author, the approach of giving academic presentations to a topic-focused peer group was different since every critical comment helped the author to conceptualise his work better. Presenting the same piece of work to a non-academic audience required a reformulation of my academic ideas in a way that made them more accessible. Although I always re-evaluate information from others, one major development during the DBA came from reading published work critically. Upon starting the doctorate, I was immediately faced with a vast number of articles and literature in the first two years. It was surprising that, although many articles are published and “peer reviewed”, the quality and methodology of many were not high. Being aware of this, the development of critical reading, questioning, and evaluating outcomes from other scientists was crucial to me. Associated with this was the quality of my academic writing. These abilities have been acquired through reading and writing a great deal myself – which is in my nature when drafting a doctoral thesis.
Personal development and growth	Within a time frame of around five years, there is a lot of space to achieve personal and professional development. From my personal viewpoint, the development in business is obvious. During the DBA, one learns more about a logical methodology when approaching new topics as well as a more professional style of argumentation and critical questioning. This apparently supports internal career development. Although this is a very important aspect, my focus is set differently. During this journey, I learned more than simply following a clear goal with a well-designed project plan – which in the end was revised many times and made obsolete and unnecessary to some extent. My major personal learning during the DBA was that this is not a project or study like a bachelor’s or master’s degree – with a preset end and a pass or fail. Many important events occur within five years – new jobs, a marriage, and family life. Here, I learned for the first time that a project should move alongside my personal life and not dominate and subordinate the other beautiful events occurring.

Reflecting on the journey of this DBA research project, it can be concluded that, although the course professors highlighted the magnitude of this challenge, I had underestimated the workload and overall commitment required – probably naturally when starting such a long-term project with no experience. In particular, the part-time course design is perfect for aspiring researchers who would like to stay in business; however, it should be borne in mind that, after an intensive week of full-time work, strong commitment and discipline are mandatory to succeed. It is apparent that there is a big difference between previously experienced projects or academic courses (i.e. a master's degree) and the doctoral level, and the complete time commitment has implications for all other aspects of life. Whilst I am hopeful that this thesis will lead to successful completion of the DBA by contributing and generating new knowledge, there are also other considerations about the implications of a doctoral study. Conducting research within the scope of a thesis leads the researcher to a different way of thinking, which is both naturally critical of what is presented at first glance and seeks to reconcile a given phenomenon with the existing theoretical constructs. Of course, not every society or group of people appreciates critical thinking – but should it not be the responsibility of a person holding a doctoral degree to resist potential uncomfortable positions? Certainly, in an increasingly competitive and fast-moving culture and society, in which loud and provoking voices are heard aiming to generated awareness as well as "clicks" and "likes", it is the author's ambition to advocate evidence-based debates.

Although I could not have predicted the effort of this journey, all aspects of this experience, including frustration and pleasure, represent a unique and exclusive "customer" journey. Therefore, I can state gratefully that I would never have wanted to miss any of the experiences that I have gained over these years.

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10 Appendices

Appendix 1: Selected literature on brand and customer experience

Focus area	Author	Primary focus	Sample/methodology	Summary & Comments
Experience (Brand / Customer)	(Pine & Gilmore, 1998)	Standard work: Change towards experience and the design of memorable events	-	→ Engage individual customers in a way that creates a memorable event. → Commodities are fungible, goods tangible, services intangible, and experiences memorable → Experience has two dimensions 1. Customer participation 2. connection → Identified **five key experience-design principles**: 1. Theme the experience 2. Harmonize impressions with positive cues 3. Eliminate negative cues 4 Mix in memorabilia 5. Engage all five senses
	(Khan & Rahman, 2015)	Review of brand experience research	analyses 73 relevant articles from 38 journals	→ Journal wise breakdown of brand experience studies: Journal of brand management predominant → Excess of empirical studies, lack of conceptual studies + brand experience studies in the services → **after the development of brand experience scale by Brakus et al. (2009) studies extensively adopted the scale in various contexts** → Majority conducted in developed nations. The way an individual experience a brand varies across geographical regions → importance of qualitative studies (in-depth interview) to get more insight into the brand experience construct → few studies have focused on other outcomes like brand equity, brand attitude, brand credibility and purchase intention.

	(Brakus et al., 2009)	Brand experience scale	6 studies to validate scale graduate-level business students (N = 25) to describe their experience with a brand of their choice strong experience; next step = choose additional brand in same category that provided weak experience to them <u>Strong brands</u>: Abercrombie & Fitch, American Express, Apple/iPod, The Body Shop, **BMW**, Crest, Disney, Google, HBO, Home Depot, MasterCard, Nike, Starbucks, Target, W Hotel, Washington Mutual, and Williams-Sonoma <u>Weak brands:</u> Aéropostale, Canon, Dell, Dick's Sporting Goods, Douglas, Dunkin' Donuts, Hilton, Macy's, Microsoft, Reebok, Sony, Sur La Table, Tim Hortons, True Value, Visa, **Volkswagen**, and Wal- Mart Study 1: generate specific items for the proposed dimensions; N= 30 university students paid $5 Study 2: consumers to rate 21 brands on the items from Study 1; pretest N= 68 university students;	→ Identifies five experience dimensions out of LR: sensory, affective, intellectual, behavioural, and social → In Study 3: Exploratory Factor Analysis: Revealed Brand Experience Dimensions → In study 3 Confirmatory Factor Analysis: The **Four-Factor Model**; Sensory (linked to descriptive items), affective, behavioural and intellectual and **12 items** to describe factors → The direct effect of experience on loyalty is higher than the direct effect of experience on satisfaction → Brand experience a stronger predictor of actual buying behaviour than brand personality, which in turn is a better predictor of satisfaction. → LIMITATION/TO DO: positive worded and negatively worded versions of the scale and investigate how positive and negative experiences affect consumer behaviour → LIMITATION/TO DO: should also examine whether the scale can predict specific behavioural outcomes. → LIMITATION/TO DO we encourage research on the experience concept. to explore which patterns occur for which experience dimensions → LIMITATION/TO DO Moreover, we assessed experiences retrospectively; we did not directly assess a consumer's dynamic experience with a brand. Further research should investigate whether retrospective experiences are different from dynamic experiences, in terms of both structure and content

			main study N=267 new student group Study 3: Shorter scale & new consumer sample; N = 193 new set of students Study 4: examination the dimensionality of scale with a non- student population; checks if brand experience is distinct from general brand evaluations +reliability of scale over time **N= 150 consumers** (age 15-56, mean age 23) in **shopping streets** Study 5: examines discriminant validity of scale from other brand scales (N= 144) Study 6: how brand experience is related to brand personality and whether it can predict customer satisfaction and loyalty.	

	(Iglesias et al., 2011)	Brand experience on brand loyalty	survey-based quantitative product studied (cars, laptops and sneakers) N= 195, full-time MBA students in Barcelona, Spain (30.9 y old avg.)	→ Theoretical framework: Brand Experience on affective commitment and brand loyalty → Analysis perception of brand experience (according to scale from Brakus, and explores this influence on brand loyalty also with a potential mediating variable affective commitment → In this sample, findings support the fact that developing brand experience influences customer loyalty only through affective commitment → Experience perceived as superior by consumers will only lead to true brand loyalty if affective commitment between the brand and its customers has also been developed. → LIMITATION/TO DO: Research in service sector due to high interaction of consumer and employee (brand experience), research incorporating the role of employees and role of customers in co-creating brand experiences.
	(Ramaseshan & Stein, 2014)	Connection of brand experience and brand loyalty	empirical cross-brand study from three product categories, consumer products (Cola) & electronics (Apple) and fast food (McDonalds) 372 consumers in Australia in malls and cafes 300 usable datasets; 44% male; 56% female, 17-48 years, average age 24.	→ Investigates brand experience and two components of brand loyalty: 1. purchase brand loyalty 2. attitudinal brand loyalty → Values of brand experience based on the dimensions out of Brakus et al → selected brands were identified by Brakus et al (2009) as experiential brands → To generate and sustain brand loyalty, merely creating positive brand experiences not adequate. → findings highlight that the stimulation of senses through brand experience promotes the creation of a relational tie between the consumer and a firm's brand, which in turn enhances brand loyalty → focus on brand related stimuli, logos, colours, packaging, communications & environment → Experience leads to improved relationship and commitment (loyalty)

				→ Effect of brand experience on brand loyalty is significantly higher when consumers are able to relate to the brand personality characteristics → LIMITATION/TO DO: only using cross-sec- tional data obtained; selected brands maybe not representative of typical brands. Understand the relative importance and strength of each of the brand experience dimensions; how consumers perceive a brand and its intended personality through brand communication and promotion strategies by companies.
	(Saari & Mäkinen, 2017)	brand experiences cross-nationally	Survey Sample size 1008 Finnland N = 506, India N= 502 Tested for smartphone brands Samsung, Apple and Nokia Finland and India	→ Based on Brakus et al → companies can devise a standardized branding approach in sensory, affective, and behavioural dimensions → Dimensions like “intellectual” need to be localized → Experiences are differently interpreted in target countries
	(Gentile et al., 2007)	Components of customer experience	Survey to customers non-statistical sample of N=200, total up to 2368 datasets for all products between 16 and 55 years	→ Clustert according to non-durable and durable (medium and long range) → Gatorade, Pringles, Haute Couture Brand Bars, McDonald´s, iPod, Playstation, Nike, Swatch, Harley-Davidson, Smart(car), Ikea, Swarovski → Positive consumtion experience crucial leading to a emotional tie → important to deliver an adequate **balance** between **utilitarian** and **hedonic value**

				→ Develop Experience-driven innovations; Consider the functional features of the commercial offer; Provide a venue for an integrated Customer Experience
	(Schwarz & Xu, 2011)	Short lasting memory of a experience	Illustrated with a luxury car BMW, Honda Accord, Ford Escort University of Michigan undergraduate's N = 177 Faculty and staff N=91 Web survey N=80	→ Time passes, relevant details fade from memory and draw on our general knowledge about the activity to reconstruct what it (must have) felt like. → Students predicted that driving a luxury car feels better than driving an economy car. Drivers' global reports of how they usually feel while driving their cars "confirmed" this prediction. However, episodic assessments of how drivers felt during a recent specific instance of driving their cars revealed no difference in hedonic experience; according to their episodic reports, drivers felt just as good in an economy car as in a luxury car
	(Lemon & Verhoef, 2016)	Customer experience and journey	Review: bringing together knowledge of customer experience and journey	→ additional research to conceptualize customer experience and journey → Understanding key drivers of how experience can be influenced (existing studies mainly on satisfaction or value) → Topic is dynamic and multidisciplinary

Luxury Branding	(Atwal & Williams, 2009)	Standard work: Luxury Brand Experience	-	→ experiential marketing views consumers as emotional beings, focussed on achieving pleasurable experiences. → Focus on experience and lifestyle that provide**: sensory, emotional, cognitive and relational values** → Creating synergies among meaning, perception, consumption and brand loyalty → Customers are not rational decision-makers, but are rather driven by rationality and emotion
	(Tynan et al., 2010)	Value for luxury brands	Multiple case study 3 Luxury brands (Brand X automotive company, Brand Y designer of fashion clothing, Brand Z is a department store) 4 in-depth interviews with senior practitioners, analysis of official brand websites, a netnography of brand- related blogs, 8 customer interviews and retail observations	→ Study specifically addresses the gap within the literature on the nature and co-creation of value in the luxury market → understand how customers interact with, and experience, the luxury brand → customers and suppliers co-create value as a result of a shift from a firm- and product-centric view of value creation to one that focuses on personalized brand experiences. →the symbolic/expressive, experiential/hedonic and relational types of value are the ones which enable differentiation between various luxury brands → LIMITATION?: low footfall at UK-based luxury car showrooms and most of its customers live overseas, a short postal survey to members of a club of brand enthusiasts →big added value of study is missing, only three brands
	(Vigneron & Johnson, 2004)	Measuring perception of brand luxury – what is luxury and non-luxury	Samples of undergraduate and postgraduate business students from Australian university. Item generation = N=77 (Experts)	→ The research revealed that the concept of luxury is multi-dimensional and substantiated by **a five-factor model** → Conspicuous, Unique, Quality, Extended self, Hedonic

			Reliability = N = 1060 students Validity) N= 1322 students Luxury brands across industries, i.e. Rolex, Mercedes, Porsche	
Other studies with linkage to topic	(Torres et al., 2017)	explore the necessary and sufficient conditions brand identification and repurchase	Portuguese beer brand (Sarge); Undergraduate students from University of Coimbra; 1173 usable answers were obtained; Survey	→ MBE (memorable brand experience) alone is a sufficient condition for high repurchase → affective drivers have more importance than cognitive drivers for obtaining high consumer brand identification → high consumer brand identification is a sufficient but not necessary condition for high repurchase
	(Puccinelli et al., 2009)	Consumer behaviour and decision process in retail	review of consumer behaviour and retailing research	→ five primary decision process stages → Memory; involvement; attitudes; affective processing; atmospherics
	(Esch et al., 2012)	Brain: Brand evaluation via declarative information vs experienced emotions	fMRI study Select strong/weak brands: Pre-test 1 N=950 (53%women and 47% men); pre-test 2 N= 240 (48% women and 52% men) Out of 66 brands, 16 (8strong, 8 weak) were includes in fMRI fMRI study: N=15, men only, in their twenties	→ Strong brands: BMW, Ebay, Coca Cola, Harley-Davidson, Langnese, Lamborghini, Porsche, and Ferrari; weak brands: Kia, Yahoo, Opel, Skoda, Privileg, Oettinger, Württembergische, and Motorola → it is positive experiential information (rather than declarative information) that seems to affect the differential evaluations of strong and weak brands → Experiential information alone can lead to judgments and can have primacy over declarative information in certain judgment contexts “major European market” *probably Germany*

Appendix 2: Approval – Ethical Review

FAVOURABLE ETHICAL OPINION

Study Title: Exploring the determinants of the customer brand experience with affordable luxury sports cars in Germany.

Reference Number: BAL/2019/29/SCHNIERLE

Date Resubmitted: 01/06/2019

Thank you for resubmitting your application to the Faculty Ethics Committee and for making the requested changes/ clarifications.

I am pleased to inform you that the Faculty Ethics Committee was content to grant a favourable ethical opinion of the above research on the basis described in the submitted documents listed at Annex A, subject to standard general conditions (*See Annex B)*.

Please note that the favourable opinion of the Faculty Ethics Committee does not grant permission or approval to undertake the research/ work. Management permission or approval must be obtained from any host organisation, including the University of Portsmouth or supervisor, prior to the start of the study.

Wishing you every success in your research

Peter Scott, Chair of the Faculty of Business and

Law Ethics Committee

<u>Annexes</u>

A - Documents reviewed

B - After ethical review

<u>ANNEX A</u> Documents reviewed

The documents ethically reviewed for this application

Document	Version	Date
Application form	1	01/06/2019
Participant Information Sheet	1	01/06/2019
Consent Form	1	01/06/2019
Questionnaire: Topic List	1	01/06/2019

ANNEX B - After ethical review

1. This Annex sets out important guidance for those with a favourable opinion from a University of Portsmouth Ethics Committee. Please read the guidance carefully. A failure to follow the guidance could lead to the committee reviewing and possibly revoking its opinion on the research.

2. It is assumed that the work will commence within 1 year of the date of the favourable ethical opinion or the start date stated in the application, whichever is the latest.

3. The work must not commence until the researcher has obtained any necessary management permissions or approvals – this is particularly pertinent in cases of research hosted by external organisations. The appropriate head of department should be aware of a member of staff's plans.

4. If it is proposed to extend the duration of the study beyond that stated in the application, the Ethics Committee must be informed.

5. Any proposed substantial amendments must be submitted to the Ethics Committee for review. A substantial amendment is any amendment to the terms of the application for ethical review, or to the protocol or other supporting documentation approved by the Committee that is likely to affect to a significant degree:

   (a) the safety or physical or mental integrity of participants
   (b) the scientific value of the study
   (c) the conduct or management of the study.

   5.1 A substantial amendment should not be implemented until a favourable ethical opinion has been given by the Committee.

6. At the end of the work a final report should be submitted to the ethics committee. A template for this can be found on the University Ethics webpage.

7. Researchers are reminded of the University's commitments as stated in the [Concordat to Support Research Integrity] viz:

   - maintaining the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all aspects of research
   - ensuring that research is conducted according to appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards

- supporting a research environment that is underpinned by a culture of integrity and based on good governance, best practice and support for the development of researchers
- using transparent, robust and fair processes to deal with allegations of research misconduct should they arise
- working together to strengthen the integrity of research and to reviewing progress regularly and openly.

8. In ensuring that it meets these commitments the University has adopted the UKRIO Code of Practice for Research. Any breach of this code may be considered as misconduct and may be investigated following the University Procedure for the Investigation of Allegations of Misconduct in Research. Researchers are advised to use the UKRIO checklist as a simple guide to integrity.

Appendix 3: Interview guideline – Semi structured interview

Method: Personal interviews (IDIs)

Topic: Drivers of high-performance / sports cars

Duration: Approx. 120 min.

No.	Topic	Timeline
A	Introduction and purchasing process	20 min.
B	deleted	~~5 min.~~
C	Service during the purchasing process	25 min.
D	Service after the purchase	30 min.
E	Evaluation of further offers	20 min.
F	Brand expectations for Audi Sport	15 min.
G	Clarifying open questions / saying goodbye to respondents	5 min.
Total planned duration per individual interview approx.		120 min.

Information to Interviewer: *The surname of the respondent may not be mentioned at any time! At the beginning of the discussion, before starting the audio recording, discuss with the respondent how you will address him.*

A. Introduction and purchasing process (approx. 20 min.)

***INT.:** In this block, please keep referring to the information already provided in the homework/warm-up process*

A1 **Introduction of the respondent**

A1.1 ***Short introduction / general:*** First name, occupation, family situation, vehicle that is relevant for the invitation

A1.2 ***Short introduction / lifestyle, leisure time, hobbies***

- What do you like to do in your leisure time? Which hobbies do you have?
- Where/at which places can one find you in your spare time?
- Are you regularly active in clubs, organizations, associations? Which ones?
  ***INT**: Important topic, ask specifically! Where do the respondents spend their time off? Which clubs, organizations and associations? E.g. Rotary Club, etc.*

A2 Which **other vehicles** do you have in your **household?** What do you **use** which vehicles for?

A3 What **role** does the quota model in particular (*INT: always name the vehicle in these instances)* have in your household? What do you **normally use** the vehicle for, for which kinds of **drives** is it **mainly** used?

- Does the use vary according to season? If yes, how? In principle, is the vehicle used all year or sometimes not used deliberately? Why?
- Is it primarily an everyday vehicle or is it used only for very particular functions? What are they? Why?

A4 *If not discussed yet:* Do you also use the vehicle purely for **sports drives**, on a **racetrack** of on special premises? If yes: Where do you drive? How often?

a5 What **role** do **vehicles play in general** and the **quota model** specifically in your **life and recreational activities?**

- Are you active / organized in clubs? (Keep it brief; this is discussed in more detail later)
- Do you like to tinker / work on your own vehicle?

A6 **Preceding vehicle:** Does the quota model replace another vehicle? If yes, which one? What caused you to make this change? Which benefits does the current vehicle offer compared to its preceding model?

- ***INT**: If a standard model / not a sports/high-performance vehicle (HPV) was replaced, ask specifically why the respondent now decided to buy a sports/high-performance vehicle (HPV).*

A7 **Purchasing process & touchpoints**

Now let's talk about the moment you decided to buy the quota model.

***INT**: The intention in this segment is to understand the process behind the purchasing decision and the influencing factors. Was the purchase planned for a long time or did the intention result from coincidental situations? How much do the dealer and experiences with service influence this? What are the general motivators to buy a vehicle in this segment? (incl. performance vs. prestige)*

A7.1 **In your own words, please briefly describe** the time from the first idea to buy your quota model until the final purchase.

***INT**: This is about the process – not about vehicle-specific aspects!*

INT: Now please discuss the following aspects and address what has already been mentioned:

A7.2 Was the **purchase of your quota model planned** for a long time period or did you **spontaneously** decide to buy a new vehicle?

A7.3 **How** exactly did you **notice** your quota model?

- Was this a random situation, e.g. at an event, during a workshop visit or with a friend, or was it the result of specific research?

A7.4 How did you **look for information?** Which **sources** did you use and which **people** did you speak to? Please think about all points of contact, sources and information that you might have **randomly** encountered on the way to the purchase or which you used **deliberately** and that influenced you in any way, playing a decisive role in the final purchase.

- *The respondent should think of official sources such as dealers, websites, etc., but also all other encounters and points of contact that he might have come across in his buying decision. Where does the customer get information about the vehicle (online, trade magazines, through colleagues/friends, calls or personal visits to the car dealership)?*
- ***Important question!** Encourage him to review the process and possible points of contact again in detail.*
- *What did he use? Which sources / information did he come in contact with? How did they influence him?*

A7.5 *If not discussed yet, please determine the specific influence of the following sources / points of contact again:* **What role** did ... play?

- Dealer / personal contact at the dealership
- Events
- Friends / acquaintances / family / club members (if active there)
- Internet research: official manufacturer sources vs. other research

A9 Were you seriously considering other vehicles in addition to your *quota model* ? If yes, which were they and why were they also being considered more closely?

A10 Buying decision

- ***INT**: Note specifically why the respondent decided on an HPV / sports vehicle and ask directly why he decided on the quota model (make/model), especially if he decided between several HPVs.*

A10.1 **Why** did you **decide to buy** the *quota model* in the end? Why did you decide against the other vehicles you were seriously considering?

A10.2 **Where** or **in which situation** did you decide to buy your *quota model* in the end?

- ***INT**: Where was the final buying decision made? In which situation? E.g. during a test drive, from a discussion with the dealer, on the advice of a friend, etc.*

A10.2 Refer to the above-listed **points of contact** / sources / information: **Which** of these **particularly influenced** you in your buying decision? Why?

A11 **Relevance of HPV / sports model**

A11.1 **Why** did you decide on a high-performance / sports vehicle?

A11.2 What is the **special attraction** of such a vehicle for your personally?

- ***INT**: Question sensitively and skillfully – don't address this directly: what is particularly interesting here is whether the respondent appreciates mainly the **engine quality** / technical qualities / **race sports aspects** of this vehicle **or** rather the **prestige** of the vehicle as the top model in its series?*

A11.3 *If not discussed yet:* How **important** is it for you to use the vehicle on the **race track** as well? Did the option of using the vehicle on the race track influence the buying decision? If not, why? If yes, why?

A12 Did you **lease** your vehicle?

- *If yes:* Why did you decide to lease? *If not:* Why did you decide not to lease?
- *If there was no leasing:* Can you imagine a leasing concept that would be so interesting for you that you would consider leasing after all? How would this look? ***INT***: *Please pay attention to the lease conditions here (e.g. 1 year instead of 2 years) and the provider (manufacturer/bank, exclusive community, etc.)*

B. Deleted

C. Service during the purchasing process (approx. 25 minutes)

Now let us talk about your experiences and expectations in respect to service from the authorized dealer during the **buying process.**

C1 **Expectation**

- *INT: Important question! Please discuss and follow up sufficiently. Compile concrete aspects. Always differentiate between the minimum expectations and enthusiasm factors here!*

C1.1 When you think about all the **points of contact** with the **authorized dealer** while buying a high-performance / sports vehicle, which **expectations** do you have? What exactly should the authorized dealer **offer, provide** or **do?**

C1.2 If this was not discussed in enough detail yet: Please also consider the **following phases:**

- **First idea about the purchase**: the thought about a new vehicle arises and you notice the quota vehicle
- **Search for information:** You find out more about the vehicles that you might consider (e.g. online, offline / magazine, dealer)
- **Consideration of alternatives:** You decide on a vehicle
- **Purchase**

C2 **Evaluation of your own experiences**

Now think about the **buying process for your quota model:** In terms of your authorized dealer, what went positively? What might have gone negatively? Was there anything that delighted you in particular and that you perceived as something extraordinary?

C3 Independently of the authorized dealer and your last buying decision process for the quota model: In the past, in general, at your dealer, at other dealers or through stories from others, have you ever heard of aspects and **services in the buying process** that **delighted you in particular?** What were they and why did they have that effect?

Now let's talk **concretely about individual aspects and subsections** in the buying process and how **you ideally would like these to be.**

INT*: Refer to what has been mentioned earlier again.*

*Please compile **concrete expectations and implementations.** General statements like 'friendly appearance', 'easy to reach' are not sufficient!*

Always differentiate between the minimum expectations and from when an implementation / arrangement is really uniquely delightful. Simply being satisfied with an implementation / solution is not enough!

C4 **Sales person**

INT*: First ask openly (C4.1) and the discuss the relevant aspects in detail again (C4.2ff) while referring to what has already been said.*

C4.1 **What do you ideally expect** of your sales person at your authorized dealer? *Ask openly.*

C4.2 How important is it for you to have **one personal contact person** (a 'single contact') during the buying process vs. several different ones? Why?

INT*: If the respondent already refers to the after-sales here, please note this statement and come back to it later.*

C4.3 Which **personality** and which **appearance** would you ideally like from a sales person / your personal contact person?

- Personality
- Behaviors / character
- Appearance
- Social demographics

C4.4 **How** would you like to be **able to reach** your contact person / sales person?

- Accessible times / when?
- Channels / how?
- Which role do new media (e.g. SMS, WhatsApp, Facebook etc.) play in this process?

C4.5 **Expertise / competence**

C4.5.1 What would you ideally like from your contact person / sales person in terms of their **knowledge, background experience** and **competence?**

- *Drivers of Audi Sport / BMW M / Mercedes AMG: Do you expect a* ***specific sales person*** *with specific background experiences and competences or may he also serve the core brand?*
- *To what degree should the sales person have* ***expertise beyond the vehicle****? Do you e.g. expect a motorsports fan with whom you can talk shop?*

C4.5.2 To what degree do you want to speak about technical aspects with the sales person? How important is it to you to discuss technical aspects?

C4.6 Aside from the car dealership, are there **other places, events or situations** where you would find it appealing to have **contact with a sales person or your personal representative?** What are these and for what purpose would you like to have contact with the sales person / representative?

- *INT: If needed, give the respondent examples: e.g. race track, sports events, etc.*

C5 **Mobile sales person – changed sequence**

Explain the concept: When desired by the customer, a mobile sales person meets him at the customer's preferred location and offers all services relating to the sale there. The mobile sales person is an exclusive service and meant to increase the convenience for the customers.

C5.1 Very spontaneously, how do you rate this concept? What thoughts come to your mind?

C5.2 Which **advantages and disadvantages** do you personally see compared to a traditional sales person at the dealership's premises?

C5.3 **How** should the **concept** of a mobile sales person be **implemented** so that it would be interesting to you personally? Which competences should the contact person have?

C5.4 **When / for what purpose** could you imagine using a mobile sales person in the buying process?

C5.5 Would you be willing to pay a **surcharge** for a mobile sales person? How much?

C6 What do you ideally expect of a **showroom?**

- *Drivers of Audi Sport / BMW M / Mercedes AMG:* To what degree may this showroom be integrated into the premises of the core brand? To what degree should it be separated?
- Which **exhibits** and **information** would you ideally like in the showroom? Should this go beyond a pure product presentation? If yes, to what degree?
  INT: Does the customer ideally desire exhibits that go beyond a pure product presentation? E.g. references to racing, technical backgrounds and explanations, information about the brand history, etc.

C7 **Test drive**

C7.1 Did you do a test drive of your quota model during the buying process? If yes: how do you evaluate this test drive in a review?

- ***INT:*** *the respondent should think about the vehicle and especially the service, the treatment and the transaction of the test drive*

C7.2 **How important** do you generally consider the test drive in the buying decision for a new high-performance / sports vehicle? What role does it play? Could you possibly also forego this test drive? If yes, under which circumstances?

C7.3 **Instead of a test drive:** Would a **3D animation at the car dealership** be sufficient for you? To what degree / or to what degree not? Under which circumstances / in which situations?

C7.4 **What expectations** do you have for the test drive with a high-performance / sports vehicle? How should it ideally proceed? What would be the highlights?

C8 **Time interval until delivery**

C8.1 *Respondents who ordered the vehicle:* How long did you have to wait for your quota vehicle? How do you evaluate this time interval?

C8.2 *If they order a new high-performance vehicle:* Realistically, what do you think is the longest acceptable time interval until the delivery? Which time interval would you consider surprisingly short?

C8.3 *If they order a new high-performance vehicle:* Imagine there were the possibility of being present while your model is produced. How do you evaluate this? Would this be interesting for you?

- ***INT****: Please determine in detail whether the respondent actually sees this as an additional value/enthusiasm factor or just as an interesting “nice-to-have”.*

C9 *Only for drivers of Audi Sport / BMW M / Mercedes AMG:*

C9.1 **Differentiation from drivers of the core brand / core model series**

As the driver of a high-performance brand, do you expect different support (treatment) and other / additional services compared to the drivers of the core models? To what degree?
INT*: First ask openly and then question about the below aspects specifically in a second step*

- In terms of the support / treatment at the car dealership?
- In terms of the availability and provisioning of services (as part of the service event or during the purchase)

C9.2 Which differences are you already experiencing now? How do you evaluate these?

- ***INT**: Determination of likes / dislikes*

C10 **Factors of excellence**

C10.1 In regard to all **aspects and services** in the buying decision process: What are the concrete aspects that exceed your expectations with which a dealer could **explicitly delight you in the buying process?** Please think about all contacts, needs and desires that you have in regard to a high-performance vehicle during the buying decision.

C10.2 Also think about all phases:

- **First idea about the purchase**: the thought about a new vehicle comes up and you notice the quota vehicle
- **Search for information:** You find out more about the vehicle(s) that you might consider
- **Consideration of alternatives:** You decide on a vehicle
- **Purchase**

D. Service after the purchase (approx. 30 minutes)

Now let us take a closer look at the **time after the purchase.**

D1 **Previous after-sales experience with the quota model**

D1.1 Have you already had **contact** with your **authorized dealer** and / or another **workshop** with your quota model since the delivery? If yes, for what purpose?

***INT**: Determine in particular whether this was for regular maintenance or a defect.*

If this was a service / workshop contact:

D1.2 **What were the criteria** for selecting the **workshop**? Why did you go specifically to the authorized dealer or an independent workshop? If it was an authorized dealer: was this the same dealer you made the purchase from? Why / why not?

D1.3 **How did** this contact **proceed?** How was the contact organized? How did the scheduling proceed?

***INT**: This asks for a short statement about the contact process; e.g. how was the contact established, who delivered / picked up the vehicle, was there replacement transport, etc. If there was replacement transport,* what was it?

D1.4 **How satisfied** were you with the process of this workshop visit? What was positive and what was negative about it?

***INT**: This is not about the vehicle problem but about the structure, organization and process of the workshop visit!*

For all respondents:

D1.5 When you drop off a high-performance / sports vehicle for repair / maintenance or servicing: how does this usually proceed? What do you do during the time in which the vehicle is being repaired?

***INT**: It is interesting whether the customer waits on site, how he passes the time, or whether he just drops it off and picks it up again*

D2 **General workshop structure of the respondent**

Regardless of whether there are already workshop experiences with the quota model or not:

D2.1 **Which criteria do you use** to select your **workshop** / plan to select your workshop in the future?

D2.2 Do you prefer a **contract workshop**, an **independent workshop** or **another solution?** Why do you prefer this solution? What advantages does this solution offer you compared to others?

D.2.3 *If an independent workshop / another solution is used at least in part:* what are the advantages compared to a contract workshop?
INT*: Please pay particular attention to which role the person of the service mechanic plays here (e.g. high expertise, familiarity, etc.)*

- Does the preferred solution differ according to the issue / vehicle problem?

D2.4 Do you **tackle** some of the vehicle problems yourself? Do you sometimes **'tinker'** on your own?

- What kinds of problems lead you to 'tinker'? What kinds of problems make you go to a workshop?
- Is this 'tinkering' a necessary evil for you or do you like it? To what degree?

D2.5 *Respondents who primarily use an independent workshop / a private mechanic:* Assuming your familiar mechanic transfers to the manufacturer's contract workshop: What do you do? Why?

D2.6 *Respondents who primarily use a contract workshop:* Assuming your familiar mechanic at the contract workshop becomes independent or transfers to an independent workshop: What do you do? Why?

Now let us talk about **service processes, servicing and repair after the purchase from the authorized dealer.**

D3 **Expectation**

- *INT: Important question! Please discuss and follow up sufficiently. Compile concrete aspects.*

D3.1 When you think about **service and workshop visits at the authorized dealer**, what are your **expectations?** What should the authorized dealer of the high-performance / sports vehicle **offer, perform** or **do?**

D3.2 If this was not discussed in enough detail yet: Please also consider the **following areas:**

- **Scheduling**
- **Delivery and pick-up of the vehicle**
- **Information about workshop, service and repair processes**

D3.3 Independently of the authorized dealer and your last buying decision process for the quota model: In the past, in general, at your dealer, at other dealers or through stories from others, have you ever heard of aspects and **services after the buying process** that were **especially interesting** to you or that **delighted you in particular?** What were they and why did they have that effect?

Now let's talk **concretely about individual aspects and subsections** in the buying process and what **you would ideally like to get from your authorized dealer.**

INT*: Refer to what has been mentioned earlier again.*

*Please compile **concrete expectations and implementations.** General statements like 'sufficient information about needed repairs' or 'easy to reach' are not sufficient!*

Always differentiate between the minimum expectations and from when an implementation / arrangement is really uniquely delightful!

D4 **Contact person**

***INT**: For your information: The main question is whether the respondent wants to be supported by a consistent personal representative or whether he wants to be provided with an appropriate 'expert' depending on the issue: Sale -> Sales expert; service / maintenance / repair -> workshop technician, etc.; or the respondent might want a main contact person who would then transfer him to the appropriate expert.*

D4.1 **Which contact person or persons** would you ideally like to have after the purchase from the authorized dealer?

- Is this **one or several different people?**
- **Why exactly this person** / these **persons?**
- Does this contact person change according to the **purpose / request?** *E.g. further inquiries about the vehicle, making appointments vs. vehicle delivery, etc.*
- Would you prefer the **same contact person** for the service as during the vehicle purchase or should this now be **different people?** Which ones and why?
- How important is a personal **contact** to the **mechanic** for you?

D4.2 What do you **ideally expect** of your contact person / persons? ***INT:** first ask openly and then aid the dimensions stated below.*

- Personality / behaviors / character
- Expertise / competence / sports expert
    - *Drivers of Audi Sport / BMW M / Mercedes AMG: Do you expect a **specific sales person** with specific background experiences or may he also serve the core brand?*
    - *To what degree should the sales person have **expertise beyond the vehicle**? Do you e.g. expect a motorsports fan with whom you can talk shop?*

D4.3 **How** would you be able to **reach** your contact person / persons and how should he / they communicate with you?

- Accessible times / when?
- Channels / how?
- Which role do new media (e.g. SMS, WhatsApp, Facebook etc.) play in this process?

D5 **Scheduling**

Within **what timeframe** would you like to get a service appointment? Address the following situations:

- Regular workshop visit, e.g. inspection
- Unexpected workshop visit with mostly incapacitated vehicle, e.g. broken headlights / body damage due to accident
- Unexpected workshop visit with generally functional vehicle, e.g. damaged paint
- Changing a tire

D6 **Vehicle delivery and pick up**

D6.1 How should the vehicle delivery and pick up proceed ideally? What would you prefer? What should this process be like?

D6.2 *If not discussed yet:* How relevant and attractive is a **pick-up and delivery service** for you? I.e., the vehicle is picked up at your home / office for repairs and then delivered there again? Why?

D6.3 How do you rate the following concept: there is a **central, easily accessible drop-off point (e.g. an automatic station)** where you can deliver your vehicle similarly to a rental car drop-off and then pick it up again from there?

- ***INT**: Here please note in particular how the respondent evaluates this concept in respect to the elimination of a personal representative*

D7 **Involvement in repair / maintenance processes**

D7.1 To what degree would you like to be **included and informed in detail** for repair, service and maintenance work? Why / why not?

D7.2 **How** exactly should this **look?** ***INT**: First ask openly and only then support the aspects listed below.*

- Would you like to be **informed** in great detail? To what degree is the contact to the mechanic relevant?
- Would you like to have the option of being present and **watching** during the repair?
- Would you like to get a **video** of the repair?

D7.3 Assuming the authorized dealer / contract workshop for your quota model offers **workshop classes** / 'tinkering workshops' or **technical information events**, e.g. about how ceramic brakes work: would you be interested in such offers?

- Why / why not?
- Exactly what kinds of events would be attractive to you?

D8 **Service intervals**

D8.1 **How often** do you have your quota model serviced? Does this correspond to the service intervals prescribed by the manufacturer or is it more or less frequent? Why?

D8.2 At the moment, the service intervals are often **two years or 30,000 km:** How do you **evaluate** these service intervals? Why?

D8.3 In theory, **shorter service intervals** of e.g. 1 year / 15,000 km are conceivable: how do you evaluate this? Which **advantages or disadvantages** can you see?

D8.4 *List: Preferred service intervals:* In respect to your high-performance / sports car model: **which service interval** would you ideally prefer? (*Time period / kilometers driven*)

D9 **Parts and accessories**

D9.1 **What are your expectations** in terms of parts and accessories?

- Which parts do you use? Original parts vs. parts available elsewhere?
- How do you get these parts?

D9.2 If you have experiences with the quota model: **How satisfied** are you with the experiences you have had so far? Why?

D10 **Tune-ups**

D13.1 Have you used tune-up offers for your quota model or another high-performance / sports vehicle in the past? If yes:

- **What** did you tune up on your vehicle?
- **Which provider** did you use for this? Why exactly that one?
- How satisfied were you with it?

D13.2 In terms of the tune-ups: what would you ideally like from an authorized dealer? Which tune-up options and parts should it offer?

D11 **Replacement mobility**

D10.1 **How important** is the provisioning of replacement mobility for you when your vehicle is in the workshop / being serviced?

- Does this depend on the **purpose** of the workshop / service stay?
- How long does the **repair/ workshop visit** have to take before you need replacement mobility? **How long** can you go **without your car?** ***INT:** Very important question!*

- Do you also expect replacement mobility in case of a breakdown?

D11.2 **Exactly which replacement mobility** would you like? ***INT****: Please explore openly at first. The respondent can mention vehicles, vehicle classes and other types of mobility, such as taxis.*

D11.3 What do you ideally **require of a replacement vehicle? Which vehicle** would you **prefer? *INT****: The respondent should state the vehicle class, furnishing level, novelty of the model, etc. First ask openly. Then discuss the following points:*

- How important is an equivalent vehicle to you? Under which circumstances could another vehicle be even more appealing?
- *For drivers of Audi Sport / BMW M / Mercedes AMG:* How important is a vehicle **from your performance brand** to you? Under which circumstances could another vehicle be even more appealing?

D11.4 *If the respondent has already had experiences with replacement mobility in connection with a workshop visit for a high-performance / sports vehicle:* Which kind of replacement mobility have you used so far? How satisfied were you with it?

D11.5 *Now please place yourself in the **future.*** How do you think your expectations might **change in 5 years?** Are there any differences to what you are expecting today? If yes, to what degree?

D11.6 How do you evaluate the possibility of **other mobility services**, e.g. a **taxi?** If it is interesting, under which circumstances?

D12 *Only for drivers of Audi Sport / BMW M / Mercedes AMG:*
Differentiation from drivers of the core brand

D12.1 As the driver of a high-performance brand, do you expect different support and other services compared to the drivers of the core models? To what degree?

INT*: First ask openly and then question about the below aspects specifically in a second step*
- In terms of the scheduling?
- In terms of the availability and provisioning of services?
- In terms of the replacement mobility / a replacement vehicle?

D12.2 Which differences are you already experiencing now? How do you evaluate these?

D13 **Factors of excellence**

D13.1 In regard to all **aspects and services** in the **service, repair and maintenance process after the purchase from the authorized dealer**: What are the concrete aspects that exceed your expectations with which a dealer could **explicitly delight you?**

D13.2 Please also consider the following areas:
- **Scheduling**
- **Delivery and pick-up of the vehicle**
- **Information about workshop, service and repair processes**

D14 **Availability and logic of offer**

D14.1 Are there any individual services discussed so far that you would be willing to **pay** for? What are they and how much would you pay for them at most?
INT*: First ask openly, then aid the following aspects:*
- Pick-up and delivery service
- Replacement mobility according to customer's request, e.g. special vehicle, special alternative, etc.

D14.2 Would you like to determine these services firmly just once or be able to add to them flexibly?

***INT**: I.e. one pays a certain rate per year and can then use all extra services.*

E. Evaluation of further offers (approx. 20 minutes)

E1 *Aside from the aspects already discussed, which an authorized dealer can offer in terms of service before and after the purchase:* **Can you think of anything else?**

- Is there **another service** or **offer** that you might know from other areas and **would also like from an authorized dealer for high-performance / sports cars?**
- In general, independently of the vehicle as such, is there anything that would be interesting to you or what would delight you as the owner of a high-performance / sports vehicle?

E2 Events

E2.1 Do you visit **events** that have to do with **vehicles in general, motor sports or racing sports?**

***INT**: These could be dealer-specific events and all other motorsports-related events: Refer to the homework / warming up here again.*

- Who organizes this event?
- Are other persons in your family, group of friends or acquaintances active there?
- Are other drivers of high-performance / sports vehicles also at this event?
- Is there an option to contact the representative of a manufacturer / a brand?

E2.2 **What exactly do you appreciate** about these events? What induces you to go? Is there anything that **delights** you in particular? Why?

E2.3 *We have already talked about **contacts to a brand** or a **representative** of this brand **at events:*** At which of these **events** would it interest you to have the **option to contact a representative** of a brand?

- What would you hope for from such a representative?
- What would you use this contact for? What would you want to do with this person?

E2.3 Can you imagine **additional vehicle or motorsports-related events** – those that actually exist or generally desirable / conceivable ones – that you would like to attend and that would **delight** you?

- What are they?
- What about them delights you? What about them would delight you?
- Is there an option to contact the representative of a manufacturer / a brand? Would you want that?

E2.5 In summary, what can a manufacturer do in respect to events to delight you?

E2.6 Have you ever decided on or concluded a vehicle purchase at an event in the past? *Ask for a detailed description.*

E3 Communities / clubs

***INT**: Refer to the information provided in the homework.*

E3.1 Are you active in **clubs or communities that are associated with vehicles or motorsports?**

- Is this club / community primarily online or offline?
- Do you participate more actively or passively there?
- Are other persons in your family, group of friends or acquaintances active there?

E2.2 **What exactly do you appreciate** about these clubs / communities? Is there anything that **delights** you in particular? Why?

E3.3 Can you imagine any **other vehicle or motorsports-related clubs or communities** that might not exist yet but which would interest or **delight** you?

- What are they? How are they organized?
- What would they have to offer so that you would be actually interesting to you / delight you?

E3.4 How important is it for you in general **to discuss** vehicles, motorsports or similar topics with **like-minded people?**

INT: *Important question! Please determine the difference between a technical discussion vs. direct contact to others.*

E4 **Manufacturer / driver community**

Imagine that a manufacturer of high-performance / sports vehicles would offer a customer club or customer community:

E4.1 **How interesting** would you consider such a club / community for yourself in general?

E4.2 **How** should this club / this community be **structured** so that you personally would be **interested in it?**

INT: *First ask openly and only then aid the following dimensions:*

- How does this club / community distinguish itself? How is it structured?
- Do the members have contact to each other? How is this contact structured?
- To what degree is there contact to the manufacturer? How is this structured?
- Which **offers, opportunities, services** etc. would have to be offered to the members? ***INT****: Ask in detail: which services? Only for the club member (exclusive services) or the entire family?*
- What are the features of membership? E.g. membership card, member newsletter, member magazine, etc.?

E5 **Customer card**

E5.1 *Independently of the idea of a customer club / a customer community:* How do you evaluate the idea of a customer card, e.g. analogous to the Lufthansa Miles & More card?

E5.2 Which **services** would have to be associated with this customer card so that you personally would be interested in it?

- Are these national or international services?
- Are they only available to the card owner or also his family members?
- Are there services that you would even be willing to pay a surcharge for? For which ones and how much?

E5.3 How exactly is this customer card implemented? As a plastic card, digitized card or differently?

F. Brand expectations for Audi Sport (approx. 15 minutes)

Now let us talk more directly about one of the performance or sports brands, for example Audi Sport:

INT: *Specifically mention the R8 to R8 customers. The segue to the Audi Sport brand should appear as random as possible.*

F1 Very briefly in **key words**: what do you generally associate with the performance brand **Audi Sport and the RS models / the R8?** Which key words best characterize this brand?

F2 Now thing about the service again – during the buying process and after the purchase: **what image / which concept** do you have here **of Audi Sport and the RS models / the R8?**

- What do you base this image on? What characterizes your perception?
- ***INT:*** *This is primarily about the service image, i.e. filter out to what degree the image of the respondent is based on actual events, but these are not decisive*

F3 **Compared to the competitive environment:** how do you evaluate Audi Sport and its sports model in terms of its service fulfillment / in dealing with customers? Where are the strengths? In terms of which aspects is the competition stronger?

- Compared to other **high-performance brands**, e.g. BMW M, Mercedes-AMG?
- Compared to **sports car manufacturers**, e.g. Porsche, Ferrari?

F4 In terms of the aspects mentioned during the discussion, expectations and concrete implementations (e.g. customer card. Community, replacement mobility, contact person): **What do you expect specifically from Audi Sport with the RS models / the R8**?

- Do you expect certain services and offers from Audi Sport?
- Are there also individual services and offers that wouldn't fit to Audi Sport? Why not?

F5 What are the services and offers with which **Audi** could **differentiate itself** from its **competitors in the sports car segment?** What would be unique in a positive sense? What might create a distinctive note? What would fit to Audi Sport and its RS models / the R8?

F6 Assuming you were the marketing manager for Audi Sport (***INT:*** *If there is already direct experience with Audi Sport, otherwise the owned make of the quota model*) and would have the following tasks: What would you do?

- Credibly **positioning Audi Sport and its RS models / the R8 even more strongly towards sportiness** in the **service area and in respect to sales and after-sales?** I.e., **intensifying the experience of sportiness in the service during the buying process and after-sales?**
  INT*: If the respondent mentions Formula 1, please don't discuss in detail but steer back specifically to the topic of service in the sales process and after-sales.*

- Offer services that **really delight the customers?** Again, please consider all areas here: from the first idea about the purchase to the purchase to the phase of the vehicle use.

F7 *Comparison to the brand of the respondent's* ***quota model***: **How do you evaluate** the service of **Audi Sport** during the buying process and after the purchase in respect to servicing and repair **compared to your own brand?**

F8 *Now let's talk about* ***another brand*** *as well, such as* ***BMW M / Mercedes AMG INT:*** *The brand may not be the same as the quota model):* What do you expect in particular from this brand in terms of the service during the sales / after-sales? ***INT:*** *don't insist too much if the respondent only has limited knowledge of Audi Sport*

F9 **Relevance of individual after-sales services**

INT*: Please refer to the* ***customer's own brand*** *again in this question!*

F9.1 We now talked very much about the service and after-sales area. Here we have a list with individual services. **Please position** the **following aspects according to personal importance:** How attractive are the individual services for you? (***INT****: Use the already prepared vertical scale from 'very important' to 'unimportant')*

- More specifically *Audi Sport / BMW M / MB AMG / all other brands: a representative trained for the model* in the service,
- More specifically *Audi Sport / BMW M / MB AMG / all other brands: a representative trained for the model* mechanic
- Adequate replacement mobility ***INT****: please clarify what the respondent means by 'adequate'*
- Professional vehicle cleaning (e.g. washing by hand and interior cleaning) as part of a workshop visit ***INT****: Please clarify exactly which services are meant by this*
- Prioritized scheduling compared to drivers of the core brand

F9.2 **Which** of these mentioned aspects is most **attractive** to you personally?

F9.3 All in all, **which** of the mentioned aspects do you **expect? Which** of these are desirable but **not absolutely mandatory?** Is there also an aspect that would particularly **delight you?**

F9.4 What would you pay for these individual services? Which ones and how much would you pay for them?

F10 Is there anything else relating to service and contact with the authorized dealer that you would like to tell us that we haven't discussed yet?

G. End of interview

- **Clarify the willingness to participate in future exchanges of experience with other respondents as part of this market research (write down the contact information).**
- **Answer questions by the respondent. Expression of thanks. Say goodbye.**

Appendix 4: Interview transcription – Example English translation.

Since all Interviews have been conducted in German language (mother language of interviewees) all interviews have been transcribed in German. However, this thesis is written in English and aims to support a transparent understanding, one interview has been completely translated into English by a professional translation agency. “I” stands for interviewer, whereas “B” indicates answers from the participant (B = Befragter in German)

Name of the file: 11_Peter_911 Carrera4S_München_120516_LS – ENGLISH TRANSLATION

I: Can I offer you anything to drink?

B: Yes, water? Or what have you got? Coke?

I: A coke, yes.

B: I'll take that.

I: Should we close the windows? Is it a little cold?

B: It's is fine. Thank you.

I: Good. Let me know if you change your mind, just let me know and we can close them in a jiffy. Good. I'm-

B: Do you need this.

I: Oh, I don't need that one. Thank you.

B: You don't need that one?

I: No, we will just talk. My name is -----------. I work for -------. We are an independent market research company. We just do important market research. We are specialized on the automotive industry. I will use your first name throughout this interview for reasons of data protection, but I will, of course, still use the formal address. We are here today to speak about sales, after-sales and car services. We are going to speak about cars but not about the cars themselves. We are looking at about two hours and I think we can cover it in that time. If you don’t have any questions, we can get started. Could we begin with an introduction? Please tell us a little about yourself, including your first name, your profession, your family situation and the car for which we have invited you for.

B: My name is Peter. I’m an engineer and work for myself. I am unmarried, have at least two children and I drive a Porsche Carrera 4S.

I: What do you do in your free time? Where can we meet you?

B: Skiing.

I: Skiing.

B: Golfing.

I: Are you a part of any clubs or organizations?

B: No. Not a not formal member, just a casual one.

I: Where are you a casual member?

B: At the golf club and the Lion's Club. There are a few clubs at the DGO. There are a few more still.

I: Do you take part in these actively?

B: No, Not with the sports. Not actively.

I: We invited you because of your 911 Carrera 4S. Have you got other vehicles in your household as well?

B: Yes.

I: What are those?

B: Mercedes, VW, Ford. What else have I got? Renault, Audi.

I: Are those sporty models, too?

B: No, some are for work.

I: That's right. That's my next question. How do you use these cars differently? If you could especially talk about the 911.

B: The joy of the ride.

I: You use it in your free time mostly?

B: Yes, also for reasons of representation. But to be honest, it is mostly for the joy of driving it and to save taxes.

I: Are there differences across the seasons when you drive the car?

B: Yes, sure. We don't drive ragtops in the winter. Or not as much in the winter, but-

I: Of course. Do you ever frequent the racetrack? Do you ever–?

B: We went a few times, but-.

I: Do you take your own car, or do you use one of the ones there?

B: We went with my car once and three, four times with rented ones.

I: Very good. Let's talk about your previous vehicles. Did the Porsche replace another vehicle?

B: Yes.

I: Which one was that?

B: A Panamera.

I: What made you decide to replace your Panamera?

B: I'm not 60 yet. I can still get out of the 911.

I: I would like to talk about the purchasing process. What interests us the most are all the relevant points? Where did you first see it? When did the idea first come up? When did you decide to actually go ahead with purchasing one?

B: Yes, Porsche. I drove a Porsche before. That was at the time of the Panamera. The deciding reason, the real pivotal-, there were numerous reasons. My neighbor has got one. Not quite the same one, an older model- He would drive past, and I couldn't bear it. Then there were others. As I said, you don't have to drive a Porsche anymore when you are 70 years old. Or no sporty models at all, in fact. That doesn't fly then anymore. You will need something calmer than, something that is easier to get in and out of.

I: Well, if I understood you correctly, your neighbor bought a Porsche, you saw that, and the idea took hold in your mind. Or did you consider it beforehand?

B: Yes, that was it. What am I supposed to do? I drive a car for three years and then you hardly drive it and suddenly the three years are over already. That's why I started looking for my next one after only a year, I look around, look around, get invested or order something. You do it early. You see where there is.

I: Where do you look around?

B: On the streets. That is the best. Sure, there is the internet as well, but to really get an idea or proper feeling of what a car looks like, you only get that on the streets. You don't get that in a shop window or somewhere else. It is easy to drift, when you are window shopping. On the streets, when I drive around, I might see a Golf or something like that and it isn't that big but at least you are getting an idea of the dimensions. Yes, that isn't my taste, but I like getting a first impression of a car on the streets.

I: You get that on the street. In addition to that, do you also do internet research?

B: Yes, sure. You see what there is in magazines when you are looking for something. You look at what is going, what we can do and what I would like, and what looks good on paper. Then you simply see what comes next.

I: Once you have a first idea, how do you carry on, in detail? Do you visit dealerships, or do you let dealers send you offers? What do you do next?

B: Yes, that is right. I drive to the Porsche dealership and tell them that I want to get rid of my old vehicle and want to get the new one. Then there is a certain selection and you already know what you want and then you can go ahead and order.

I: Does the dealer play a role in giving advice for different kind of equipment?

B: Yes, exactly. That's what the dealer does. They can advise you on what one can do or must do. What is needed and what is an add-on. That's what the dealer does. You don't just want to go overboard and take everything. You need to know why, why, why you should take it. Sometimes it's about resale. Sometimes it's for the road. Sometimes it's for comfort or whatever else. It doesn't matter. If the dealer has convincing arguments, like when he knows that I drive more than 1000 km in one go and that I need something comfortable, that's when you let them choose different shocks and tires. And that is what the dealer is there for.

I: And do you go to events too?

B: Yes, of course. Porsche regularly hosts events and you get invited. They always present new cars that you can look at. There is a connection there. If you drive a Porsche once, you will probably always drive a Porsche.

I: Do you go to these events on a regular basis when you are invited?

B: Yes. It depends. You could say that, yes. I have been to others too and some of them were depressing. Sometimes the Porsche events are depressing too. If I think of my dealership in (? Scheibe) Street, they aren't bad at all but then there are other Porsche dealerships that are awful.

I: I would like to talk about the topic of events in more detail. When you selected the 911, did you also consider other models? Or were you rather certain about what you were going to get?

B: Well, the way it works with me, I know what I want. I saw it and I knew that I was going to get it.

I: You didn't compare it to other models a great deal? You went ahead and–?

B: Well, yes. You can compare it with- There aren't many models to compare the 911 to. There is Panamera, and Austin Martin brought one out too, a four-door model That one is hot too. Then there is Maserati, and I had a look around what would work there. But when I saw the 911, I immediately got a feeling for it. I wanted to have that one.

I: Yes, that's a very nice car.

B: Afterwards, none of the others were in the running anymore.

I: That I understand. We have talked about the touch points you have had with the model. You mentioned that your neighbor drove one and you said that you had a good look at them on the streets. Did you look them up on different websites and informed yourself more in detail? What was the point when you felt that you wanted one NOW and that that particular thing had convinced you to go ahead with the purchase?

B: I don't know. Maybe it was my neighbor.

I: Yes. Maybe.

B: His is the same color as mine. It is probable that it was the neighbor.

I: Now you are driving what is known as a high-performance Vehicle, a sports car. What was the appeal to get a car like that?

B: The vibe. Owning something that is beautiful. Both for your eyes and also for your ears. It feels sporty when it comes to the technology and performance. Everything is of highest quality. You don't need a [inaudible 00:14:13,00] or a Brit.

I: You have already mentioned that you are interested in the technology of the vehicle. Are you the sort of person who gets their hands dirty and do some work on your own car?

B: Yes, if I had the time. I even have the equipment.

I: That is something that you are interested in? We talked about the racetrack earlier. Would it make a difference to you if you can drive your car there?

B: Not very important.

I: Why?

B: Why isn't that important? Good question. You don't have to drive a fast car fast. Everybody knows it's fast. I don't think that we are suitable to test out the performance limits on these cars. Sometimes we drive very slowly and sometimes very fast. To push the car to its limits, purposely push it to its limits, isn't something we can do as drivers on the roads. Even if we feel like we are the fastest and the best. The reality is very different. Sure, sometimes, it's nice to drive fast and push limits. But then you do that and then you see younger guys driving cars with less PS faster around the corner and we realize that we aren't that fast. It is as good as you always imagine it to be. That's why once is enough. I don't want to call it a disappointment. You do still have the chance to push down on the accelerator on German motorways. That isn't over yet. I think that it is going to become relevant again, not to drive on German motorways. There are still two or three motorways around Munich where at 2 AM, it isn't too full, and you can give that a go.

I: Do you make use of that too?

B: Well, make use- I drive a lot and I drive at times where there aren't too many people on the roads. I don't like traffic jams. I prefer hitting the road at 3 AM and arriving in Cologne by 7 AM, something like that. That way it goes fast, and you can drive straight through.

I: Now, I'd like to talk about the service you experienced during the purchasing process. More precisely, I want to talk about how you experienced the purchasing process before signing the purchase agreement. What do you expect from the dealership? What do you wish for and what are the lowest baseline expectations you have and what are points that blow you away? What is there that you don't see every day and delights you?

B: Well, firstly, there is the ambiance, in the showroom as well. Then there is the regard you receive from the dealer. It's all about the service you receive and how you are being treated. If you buy a VW, you receive a bottle of sparkling wine as well, but I certainly wouldn't want to drink it. The wife may receive a bouquet of flowers that wilt the next day. That's a little- You aren't buying an expensive car. You are buying a car that costs a mere 52.000. As I said, I have experienced both with Porsche. For me, it's the ambiance and the dealer's gallantry. It's the whole experience. I'm not exaggerating when I'm saying that I truly believe that it is all about their manner. There are some salespeople or dealers that I don't like as much and they disappear when they see me and then there are those that I like better. You can see it immediately and you can move on to someone you get on with better. There are problems in some dealerships; some have more others have less. The thing is, at the end of the day, you want to feel a little spoilt.

I: You mentioned sparkling wine or bouquets of flowers or what the salesperson looks like. There is a certain look or might look unprofessional. Could you dive deeper here into the flowers and the bunch of flowers? That would be very interesting to us.

B: An acquaintance of mine has a Mercedes and wanted to go pick up the car. There was nobody there who was responsible for serving her. She had to wait half an hour to pick up her 100.000 € vehicle. It can't be that nobody is responsible for that. I received better service at VW even. The welcome is important, and the ambiance is important. There is a holistic service, not just regarding the car but towards the person too. I don't want anyone to brownnose me. I simply want honest communication on a certain level. Even if the salesperson's outfit isn't quite right. I still want- I mean, that is a large amount of money that they charge for the vehicle and if the surroundings don't feel right, I will buy something else.

I: You talked about the ambience. How do you tell good ambience apart from bad ambience? What influences that, in the show room for example?

B: It's in the details. Some show rooms seem naked. There is a car there and lots of light and they think they are highlighting something special. And then there are collection service centers that are done up so nicely and you can see that people have put thought into it. They value that you are buying from them and not somewhere else. Or that you buy there more often.

I: Is that like having a certain- Maybe having plants in the room?

B: That's it. Plants, coffee water. I know that you get these things everywhere, but the difference is how you serve it. If it's just put there and they want you to grab it and stuff it down, it's not the same as it being offered in a differential way. Some are pushy and try to push it on you. I'm here to buy a car. I don't need that right now. It depends on how sensitive the salesperson is. In this case it's more about the one in charge of bringing you the car. You need a certain level of class. Then you feel good about them earning their cut.

I: The dealer, did he- How much did help you with the purchase, to put it that way? Did the information you were provided with help you? Did he-

B: I said what I wanted, and he helped me with the accessories. He reminded me of things I might not have thought of and offered me things and asked whether I could imagine others? He told me that would be of use, what would be nice, what would raise the mood if I chose it. That's exactly the way to introduce things. It's the full package. It isn't about price but about the usefulness. It helps to discuss a certain detail that might add efficiency. Whether the car costs 1000 Euros more doesn't matter. A bit more or less, that's zero and a bit percent.

I: What do you expect from the salesperson during the sales process?

B: I need them to present the car and describe very precisely what one might need or what might be a pleasure to have. What I need to hear about is the usefulness, the effect, wrapped up nicely and delivered well. Deciding is up to the client in the end anyway. I don't need a screen on the back of my seat because I always drive alone. It doesn't help to preach five times that it is going to be good the resale value. I will let you know that that isn't something I'm interested in. That's where sensitivity comes in. I feel like if you want something or you want the car to have something, the salespeople at Porsche have- As I said, at Aston Martin, they might brown nose you and I've been to Porsche in Rosenheim, where they were too arrogant. If it isn't a good fit, I will leave again. As always, these things depend on people. I know that that is obvious but it's still something one needs to point out.

I: What were some nice things, that you experienced, that delighted you about a salesperson?

B: Honesty. Or rather speaking to me in a way that I perceived it as honest.

I: That is something to be delighted about.

B: And competence of course. If you don't know something, you don't know it. It's okay to admit that. Just say, you are very sorry, or I don't know, that's the first time I heard this, it's never come up before. If you ask immediately, you will learn something immediately, like what it is and how and why it works. That to me is competence. If I don't know something, I don't know it. I will pivot to a different subject matter then and dig down there and see whether there is knowledge there.

I: How important is it for you to have a dedicated contact person during the sales process?

B: As compared to two or what?

I: Yes, for example, or a dedicated contact person. Someone you can always turn to.

B: Sure, it's nice if you have the same contact person every time but if there is a second person that you get along with just as well, that's fine too. That's what it's like in in Scheibe Street. There are two or three there that I like talking to and I wouldn't know whom to approach first because they are all competent. In that scenario, I don't mind if one of them isn't there. I don't need them to hurry back just because I want to buy a car. You don't need it, but it depends on their performance. If someone isn't there but there is a competent stand-in that's no problem for me.

I: What do you expect from a salesperson. You have spoken about personality. Honesty is important to you. Is there a particular exterior image that is important to you?

B: Sure. If he is wearing long hair and a skirt, you might as well send a woman. Of course the exterior image is important. But they are dressed clean and tidy at VW as well. If you are playing at a higher class than that, you need to reflect that. You can look very put together even in slightly more casual clothes. You don't have to wear a suit and tie every day. Although if I have to squeeze myself into a suit, my counterpart might as well suffer along with me. It isn't mandatory though. You can be well dressed and tidy without wearing suit and tie. It depends on how they carry themselves. And you never look well-groomed if you haven't shaved in a few days. It looks like you have forgotten something.

I: Is there a particular age?

B: I guess it might be a thrill to buy a 200.000 Euro vehicle from a 17-year-old once. But because of his age, you doubt their competence. I wouldn't buy from a 60-year-old either, unless I've grown up with him for 30 years and have already bought 20 cars from him. Then, I'd do it. But to acquire new clients, a nice medium is better. We have all been young and we are all going to age, but we come with certain ideas about how things are going to go. If there is a 17-year-old, they might do it really well. They may be charming and have a radiance about them. If they are knowledgeable, I don't mind their age. But there is the idea that the customer is king, and, in a way, they would have to do a better job than a 31 year old. Because you are always going to scrutinize their work and wait for them to slip up. You would never do that with a 30-year-old. If their phone rang, you would forgive them. But with such a young guy, I'd immediately get impatient and ask whether the call was more important right now. You can see that we measure people with two different yardsticks but that's how humans tick.

I: Yes, I can see that you are painting a very detailed picture. I appreciate that. Thinking about availability, how important is that to you regarding the dealer or the salesperson?

B: With the salesperson? Availability? If they are around sure. If they are on holiday, they are in holiday, That's my opinion. They are an employee, not self-employed. Employees have working hours. Sure, if the conversation takes another hour, they shouldn't be watching the clock and say that they are off now. They have their hours and we are aware of them.

I: There are options, modern Options, such as SMS, WhatsApp, Facebook, to guarantee 24/7 availability. How do you feel about that?

B: Nonsense.

I: Why?

B: Then I don't get to see their face anymore. Well, you see, it depends. I work for myself. I work until late at night, but I don't need FaceTime or Skype because I don't need to see anyone else. It's none of people's business where I am or what I currently look like. If you think of an employee, they need to have their time off. Of course you can write them an SMS or an email, that is not problem. They are going to get back to you when they have a minute. If they have time at 10 PM and write back, that's great. You can't expect that though. People are allowed to go home and switch off. Just because I work until 10 PM, I can't expect others to work until 10 PM every day. That would be presumptuous. For others, that is normal.

I: Would it delight you for example if you received an answer to your question in the middle if the night?

B: No. That wouldn't delight me. Sure, if your car is broken down. If you need to be towed, it's no joke, if there is no one at the other end. Shut the door. But you don't need the salesperson there for that.

I: But a dedicated 24-hour hotline you could phone, would be important to you?

B: No. I want my peace. A car purchase is a car purchase. I'm not looking for a place to sleep. I'm buying a car. There are some people of course who have too much money and who order a car for 500.000 Euro on the internet to be delivered to them. That's fine but that's no fun. If you buy shoes or you have some made, or you are having a suit tailor made- There is a certain expectation that that won't be done in 5 minutes. That's why I-

I: How important is it for you to discuss technical details with the dealer? You mentioned knowledge and competence.

B: Yes, that's important to me. If someone doesn't know that you have to drive a new car for 2000 km before you can measure the oil, that isn't good. If the salesman doesn't know that, that's hard. That has happened before. You definitely have to drive 2000 km, or the electronics don't take and if you try to measure, the level is going to drop. I might ask, what are you looking for and they say the oil dip stick. And then I have to tell them that those don't exist anymore. I don't think that it's right that the salesman doesn't know that. And you make sure never to see that one again because you know you can't ask that one questions. I think I rather talk to the expert. But if you have very specific questions and he doesn't know and he fetches the mechatronics technician to find out how to change something, that's understandable, as long as the salesperson listens with the same amount of interest to the answer. You can feel how knowledgeable the salesperson is. I do think that that is important.

I: You wouldn't expect that specialized knowledge from the salesperson themselves?

B: They couldn't possibly know that.

I: You don't expect the specialized knowledge, but you do expect the level of service to go get the expert to ask the question?

B: Yes, you should do that.

I: Are there other occasions, apart from the events and times we have already spoken about where you would enjoy having a salesperson or a dedicated contact person there?

B: Sure, at the service reception. It looks good for there to be a salesman there. Same with reception. If you walk in or pop in without calling ahead like I usually do. I like to drive past, hop in and say, hello, here I am, this is what I need. Then they are all jumping around and are friendly and things get done on the spot. That's incredibly nice. When your car is busted, it can't be fixed in five minutes, that's for sure. But if it's just something small, just a little detail, it's nice if they can fit you right in. If it can be done immediately, within an hour, that makes me happy.

I: Going back to your car. How would you feel if there was a Porsche contact person at your golf club for instance? How would you like that?

B: What would he do at the golf club?

I: Would you enjoy that?

B: No, I go there to play golf. You can talk about business but not about spending money. Sure, if there is a rep there, you might chat about what is new on the market, but you have to be able to talk about private affairs as well.

I: Maybe for the purpose of accessing information?

B: No, that would be out of place for me.

I: The idea of a mobile salesman has existed for a long time. That's a salesman who comes to your home when you ask them to and offers you the services you desire.

B: No, the appeal is to go there and have a look around there. It is something special. I'm at home all the time. I don't need him to come and look around at my place. No.

I: It would be a disadvantage for you if he came to you?

B: Disadvantage? I want to buy a car what do you want at my place? In the show room, there are many other cars and that gets you going.

I: Let's talk about something else then. How important is the test ride for you when buying a car?

B: If you have never driven the car, you have to drive it. If you have driven it before, you don't need to take it for a ride because you know how it goes. But in general, yes, test rides.

I: Did you make use of that with the 911?

B: Yes, I tried it out from Friday to Monday. I had the car for three or four days and I was completely happy.

I: Is that important to you that it goes the way it went? Do you prefer having it for an entire weekend?

B: Yes, but Monday to Thursday would work too. You want to drive the car on the roads you usually take. If I know the roads, I know the conditions, I know traffic density, that way I don't have to familiarize myself with new roads. That way, I can drive the same 50 km I always drive to work. There I know where to overtake, how to overtake and how fast I can go, how bad the road surface is and all those things. It's much easier to compare your current car to the new one that way. If for instance, there are lane grooves and the car doesn't want to stay in them and you have to constantly hold onto the steering wheel to keep the car steady because it doesn't do that automatically, you will notice that immediately. Or maybe you fall back on your old one. That way, you change twice. You switch from the old to the new and from the new to the old. If you do that from one day to another. It's better to drive the car for three days and switch back to your old one. I believe that it's the best way to get to know the car and get to know whether it works for my age and my bad habits. The new one is going to have advantages, but it has to fit my lifestyle. If you give it a quick spin on the racetrack- I haven't been with my old one. I don't know how my old one would have handled it. I'm a trained craftsman and I probably feel differently about these things but for me it's best to drive the cars on the roads I usually take to see whether it's a good fit or not.

I: And you would need an extended time period? You mentioned Monday to Thursday for example?

B: Yes. Two, three, four days. If you get to drive that car for that long and then you have to revert back to you old one, it really sinks in, what it doesn't have compared to the new one and how slow it is. That motivates me to want to get the new one immediately. That's how it works for me. I can recommend it to anyone. You have to test the car and you have to see whether the steering works for you.

I: Do you have any wishes for this service? How about, for example, if the salesperson got in the car with you and explained all the details about the car during the first hour of your test drive?

B: Well, that's a possibility that they could come along. I don't know. If you jump into a new car, all has been talked about already. You learn about these things and then you do your test ride. If you have the car for three or four days, you get to try out all the buttons and knobs and computer settings. You try all these things out and that's why you keep it for a week. You can drive past every day or call and ask all the questions you have got. Like, how do these mirrors work, they are moving up but not down, for example. And then he might say, I'll turn the dial for you. There are so many little details that you can run into problems with changing all the settings on the computer. Like for example, when I couldn't turn the mirror downwards. Not even the salesperson understood how to do it. He said that rather than fiddling, let's just go to the fitment center. The technician came over, clicked around five times and then it stayed up. I slowly back out of my garage. I need to reverse 50 meters and the mirror turns down. That is great for sidewalks but for when I reverse, I can't see anything, and I don't need that feature because I only ever reverse 50 meters a day. If you don't know how to change these settings, you can look for them for a long time. And then you can just call them and that is great and wonderful. That sort of thing I do like. That's what the service department is there for. During those three or four days of test driving, I may phone twice a day. Sometimes you do feel silly when you can't find something. But if I can't find it, the service technician can't find it and the office person can't find it, then I won't take it. That's why they always say to call.

I: That's not bad. Could you skip the test drive if we offered you a 3D animation in the show room for example?

B: No.

I: Are there any situations where that might be enough after all?

B: No. I don't drive around the show room, I drive on the roads.

I: Well, it isn't it's not- It's a sports car and that's where-

B: It doesn't move. I drive 100 km/h on my drive, that has to feel right, doesn't it? There is a difference between driving at 100 km/h and sitting still where nothing is moving.

I: Yes, that's what you said. Let's move on to the duration of time until delivery. Do you have certain expectations there? What is too long a time or too short?

B: It is nice to go to a dealership, order a car and receive it after a week. That instant gratification is great. But I don't mind waiting for a year for the car to be delivered. I don't see how it works from a profitability standpoint. I used to drive Mercedes, the SL-class. I ordered the SL and had to wait for it for four years. It arrived four and a half years later. I was looking forward to owning it all that time. I don't know what was nicer, the anticipation or the ownership itself. Sure, it's nice and great. You order it and park it in your garage and they you go away for business and then you don't see it for a week. That's crap. It's just parked there, and you can't drive it. That's crap. And the anticipation is nearly nicer than the ownership itself. That's what gives it value, I think. You can't quite describe it. You can't just walk in a buy one of them. That's how it worked with my Mercedes. They won't let you just order one and be done with it. You haven't owned a Mercedes, have you? You have to buy a smaller model first and only after a year may you order an SL. That does a lot for the status of it. You can't just go in and order one, everyone knows that. There is a difference between simply purchasing a car and, how shall I put this, be selected as a client. That offers a different kind of appeal. It takes longer to get your hands on one. There is the excitement of how long it is going to take to get it. Some people have connections and others have even better connections. That's the think that lifts your mood. That's why I don't mind a lengthy lead time. I'm just not sure about economic efficiency when I receive the car. We work in the workshop for two years. I get it, then I get the car and we work for that for that year. They receive another order and someone else wants a car. That way they have secured two years. These days dealerships and car manufacturers can pump them out in 14 days. They produce that crap, I know it's put rather strongly, but if the general public wants to buy a Golf, for example. I got this story from a VW dealer when I bought one. He said that they always want to buy the car immediately and get the car immediately. They don't care whether the car is red or green, or small or large, they want it immediately. That's depressing, isn't it? I have 5 Mark today and I want to spend them now. That's how that seems to me. I think that they buy a car as a substitute gratification. Is it not? It's like hanging 100 pairs of shoes.

I: To summarize what you just said, you wouldn't mind if you had to wait longer for a car, even these days?

B: Yes, especially these days. It would delight me if the German car manufacturers said, buy one of those stupid Japanese or Korean cars. Those are crap. We can wait until they have gone bankrupt. We will only start production once you have placed your order. I'm not just thinking of macroeconomics. At least that way we would know in which time span we can build the car and how many orders they are getting that year. That way the company and the employees have some certainty. These days there is no certainty at all. Just look at VW>

I: I see you have finished your drink. May I offer you another one?

B: A Coke. You don't have beer, do you?

I: No, we don't, unfortunately. We have got coffee, if you like.

B: Give me a Coke.

I: Alright. I'll have one as well. May I give it to you like this?

B: If you look at VW, they are pushing millions into each other's pockets and cut corners when it comes to the little man. That is a huge shame. They don't think long term because the company is not theirs. If they had ever held the tools the workers use, they would probably think differently. This way they are just shouting about the stock market. And it doesn't matter that they don't understand it properly. It doesn't matter if the stock market goes down. It doesn't hurt anyone. Nothing has disappeared, it has just gone to someone else.

I: It simply redistributes. Let's talk about the topic of the purchasing process as a whole again. Is there anything that could delight you during the process of deciding to make your purchase? Is there anything the dealer or manufacturer could do? Is there something you would want? And service you would have wanted? Something that would bring a smile to your face?

B: Not a 3D animation on the screen but maybe a 5D animation.

I: What do you mean?

B: I'm sure you have been to the cinema where the seats move and wind blows in your face? Things like that? That would be something. That would be something one could do. But that will never substitute reality, actually driving. It would be nice to have that, instead of taking a 911 to the racetrack to show the acceleration, or to show how the Jeep handles off road conditions. That way you could see how you drive up and down and how much of an inclined position you may reach. That would be, well, that would be something. But that is no substitute for a test drive.

I: Yes.

B: I went to „Autowelt“ at VW and drove through the off-road park. I did some safety training too. You can’t substitute that. But maybe there would be some appeal for things to move.

I: Okay, great.

B: Otherwise you don’t take bends at such a speed and don’t feel the pressure.

I: Yes, okay. Yes. No, that’s great. Great. Now I would like to speak about another large subject matter. The service you receive after your purchase, the so-called after-sales. Have you ever taken your 911 back to the dealership where you bought it? Or-.

B: Yes.

I: What servicing agent do you use? The authorized workshop?

B: The authorized workshop.

I: The authorized workshop, okay. Why?

B: They do it for a fair price. You can get there or leave there with public transport if you have to leave your car behind. As I said, I just like how they set it up. Something is always changing. The people are all nice and friendly. That’s why I go there.

I: Okay. Well, you mentioned that you like the ambience there. Are there other criteria that you looked at? Did you make your choice consciously?

B: Yes, I tried out a few different ones. You just cruise around and see what different dealers offer you. I was very positively impressed with this dealership; their friendliness, the welcome, the people, the spaciousness. Everything worked together. It is in fact in a back courtyard, and you can’t see the mountains but instead you are looking at the neighboring house. It’s the same as here. But there is only so much you can expect. They are where they are. You could tear it down and build a new one. But where would you stop? When you drive in, it feels modern, doesn’t feel over the top and it just is. You can always look at things there and there is always someone there if I want to ask a question. That’s how I picture a car dealership.

I: Great. What took place when you dropped your car off? Was there- Did you receive a curtesy car?

B: Yes.

I: Did they pick up the car or did you take it in?

B: Yes. Most of the time, the car is still running, and I will drive it. You usually get the opportunity to look at things together and discuss them. You might even go into the workshop and maybe even drive onto the lifting platform. That way, you can really have a good look and see where the problem is. That's what is going on. Or there is where something catches, that's the Corpus Delikti. I like that. It's so relaxed there, and I like having a look under the hood.

I: The chair in the workshop, that is something you enjoy?

B: Yes.

I: Yes, looking over the mechanic's shoulder.

B: Yes, but not on the chair. Nobody could keep me on that chair.

I: Yes, metaphorically speaking. .

B: Yes, but that's great. That's a wonderful thing to see how professionally they work. And if you have ever had problems with a screw, you see that they experience the same. They have the same issues. I didn't think that it would be the same for them too. These things don't come up in a malicious manner or to discriminate against anyone, they happen to everyone. Thank the Lord, it's not just me.

I: Okay, you like watching and being a part of it.

B: Yes.

I: Is that the rule? Or do you usually-

B: Unfortunately, I don't have that much time. But I enjoy it if I have the time, yes.

I: And what do you usually do during repairs?

B: I take another car and drive to work.

I: Okay. I see. And for smaller things you wait?

B: Yes.

I: Okay, I see. Great.

B: And I am not dependent on that particular car. I have-

I: Do you- Is there a trusted contact person you deal with? Anyone you trust to hand over your car to?

B: You can hand over your car to anyone there.

I: So, it's more about the dealership in general?

B: Yes.

I: Okay. Great, okay. Well. What would you- We have already covered that. Making an appointment. What is important for you here? Let's also look at the various problems you may encounter with the vehicle. If for example the car is still running but has some damage to the paintwork.

B: I have never had problems with that. They just give me an appointment and I go there.

I: Have these appointments always been timely?

B: It's always been timely. Well, within one or two days. I think that is rather timely. They are obviously not waiting for me. I'm not the only Porsche driver. That would be silly to assume. But they usually say, bring your car through and we'll see that we will have it done in a day or two. I think that is alright, A Porsche isn't a utility vehicle. It isn't a car I use or need every day anyway. If I need a car for every day, I choose another one, The Porsche is more of a car you own for fun. Sure, if I'm of small means, and I need the Porsche for the ego, then I might need it every day. But that's no me.

I: And-

B: I don't need one to be next to me to up my worth.

I: No. And have you ever heard of after/sales services, anything from repairs or other services that you were delighted by? Have you ever thought that there was anything that an authorized workshop hasn't done before? Or is there any way your authorized dealership delights you?

B: No, I have never heard of that.

I: You haven't?

B: No, I've never heard that one would be better than mine.

I: That is a good reason to stick with that one.

B: Yes, I've heard that some people have been disappointed with their workshop's service. There is one workshop, one dealership, that my friend is never going to again. He has been disappointed five times in a row. Not me.

I: What were the points that he was disappointed by that you would feel the same way about?

B: Yes, I think in this case, the client is the one who isn't approaching things the right way.

I: Could you please dive deeper here?

B: Well, as I said earlier, he is one of these guys who owns a Porsche to be someone. Because he is a nobody without it. If I go in and tell them what is broken and ask how much it will cost to fix it, they give me a quote. When I receive the quote, there is no point saying that it's expensive. If I don't like it, I can go somewhere else. Or if I have it done; I don't need to moan about the price. Sure, sometimes something else comes up. They can't predict the future, after all. These things are mostly about the client. You can't just repair the little bit over there and hope that that other piece is going to hold up. That's crap. If something is broken, it's broken.

I: Yes.

B: If someone doesn't have the money and doesn't communicate that, they can't take it out on the workshop. They are doing the best they can.

I: Okay.

B: If I have to go there five times because I want them to cut corners and do it the cheap way, I don't have to be surprised. You don't have to get annoyed if you have to go there five times. That's on the customer. They need to be honest to themselves. He wanted to pay for a Golf and drive a Porsche. You can't have that. If you go to a VW workshop, you'll get spark plugs, all four of them, for 20 Euros. You don't get that at Porsche. I drive a Porsche, after all, and not a Golf. Well- If you aren't honest to yourself, there will be problems. Maybe they should rather take the train.

I: Okay. We have already spoken about whether you would want a contact person or a few different ones. You were in two minds about that, but you said that you liked the idea of having a single one.

B: Yes, sure.

I: Let's consider the idea that different people may be specialized in different parts of the process. One might focus on sales, the other-

B: Yes, that would be fine.

I: It would-

B: Yes.

I: Yes.

B: That makes sense. The salesperson has different issues than the person at the service reception. The latter will have to be able to access the technicians. The Salesperson is on the surface. I do think you will need separate ones. If those two could connect with each other and communicate effectively with each other, that would be perfect.

I: Okay, great.

B: And if the lady at reception is blonde.

I: That takes us back to appearance.

B: That's right.

I: Yes. You said that you sometimes see the mechanic. Is it important to you to communicate directly with the mechanic without the detour past the sales department?

B: Sure, if you know them. To put it differently, if you drive a new car, you drive with [inaudible 01:15:56,00] What sort of personality do you want to display there? If you see them once a year? If you are only going to see them again next year [inaudible 01:16:10,00]. You might wonder whether you have met them at a funeral. You won't know. You deal with so many people, you won't keep track. If you drive an old Porsche that has to be looked at twice a month, that's something else. Then you need someone you can trust. You won't want to think that there is yet another set of hands at your beautiful car. You will want to thank, thank the Lord, I know I can trust this person. If you just take your car there to be serviced or drive past every now and then because there is a rattle somewhere. They might tell you to take the two Coke bottles out of the cubby hole and the rattle is going to stop. In that case you don't need the personal contact. For the first three or four years, you won't have any contact anyway. At most, they might call them if they can't find something and want the mechanics to look for it. But you will have a lot more contact with the salesperson than the service technicians.

I: Okay, good. I would like to close the window, if you don't mind. It's getting a little chilly for me.

B: You may.

I: Very good. It's getting drafty around my feet. Great. That's done. We have already spoken about the service technicians and the availability.

B: Yes, when I call, they are available around the clock. What else could I want?

I: Yes, that's great.

B: I can pick up my car at any time and drop it off at any time. I drop my keys into the box or take it out of the box. In my eyes, that is nearly a little over the top. But well, that is nice. I can drive at 2 AM and drop off my car, put the keys into the box, pick up the key for the curtesy car and am on my way. What else could I want?

I: If I understand that correctly, the curtesy car is given to you by the Porsche dealer?

B: Yes.

I: Okay, I see. I think we will talk about that more later.

B: Yes, at Christmas, my wife drives me. But I don't want to overdo it. That works quite well for us.

I: And a collection and drop-off service?

B: A collection and drop-off service? Yes, on the one hand, that isn't a bad thing. I use that with VW, but they are only 3km down the road. I call them and ask them to come pick up the car. The stress is on quickly They pick it up and drop it off again and I don't have to do anything. I'm not on their screen either, I don't need any of it. With VW, we have new cars and they even come here to change the tires. They are happy to do that. But with Porsche, I want the personal contact. I chose a dealership where I am happy with the salespeople and the service technicians. I want to see them too. I might buy another one soon. You can't tell them that you want a discount of you only see them once every five years. They will turn you down If you see them on a regular basis and have the occasional chat with them, or talk about the car, that builds relationship. The salesperson thinks that they have convinced you to buy another one of their cars. They are much more enthusiastic then because they feel like they have invested into the relationship and got you to invest into another Porsche. Then they are much more open to some give. You just have to know that.

I: Good. That was very detailed. Do you expect Porsche to have a collection and drop-off service? Or is that superfluous?

B: Yes, that should exist.

I: Okay, that's enough for me. There is one model that work like this: There is a public parking lot or a public square if you want. It might be fenced in. You take your car there and drop your keys in a box or something like it.

B: [inaudible 01:22:20]

I: Yes, the idea is to save the client the drive.

B: Yes, which drive?

I: The one to the dealership, to the workshop.

B: Yes, but I would prefer the collection and drop-off service.

I: No, collection and drop-off-

B: That would have to be closer to me than Porsche.

I: That's how it would be.

B: But you don't know where I live.

I: That's why I'm asking.

B: For 90 percent of people, that wouldn't be the case. For most people, Porsche is close by. And then there is another Porsche that is a bit further away. And then you would have to locate that place very centrally. Then you would need a lot of these lots.

I: Yes, in principle, exactly.

B: And there isn't that much space in the city anyway.

I: This isn't the thing for you?

B: I can't imagine it, practically speaking? I could picture it at the airport where Porsche already has a parking lot. You can use it for short term parking and leave your car. That would work. Maybe they could start that at other public spaces too. If you need a quick start, you might think, Porsche has 10 parking spots there, let's see whether one is free. Or you might even be able to call ahead and reserve your spot. That is something that I'd pay for. But I don't see a difference between a collection and drop-off service from home or from a space like that. That's the same to me.

I: For the reservation of parking spots, could you throw an amount you would be willing to pay into the room?

B: Yes, well, that depends, where. If you were to think of parking spots in the inner city, how much does parking cost there? I hardly ever go there. I don't know but let's say 5 Euros an hour or however much that costs.

I: Okay, I see. Imagine if you workshop did mechanic seminars where you could learn-

B: Yes, those are-.

I: Would you-

B: Yes, those would appeal to me.

I: Yes? Would you go?

B: Yes. Then we can play around with my car.

I: Yes, exactly. Okay. Just a quick addition to my previous question: Apart from watching the mechanic work on your car, how would you feel if you could request a video recording of the repair? Is that something you could imagine?

B: No.

I: No.

B: No, I don't think that's something I need.

I: Okay.

B: I will pass it along. Especially to my wife, in full length.

I: Okay, I see, alright.

B: Why would I want to watch a film about how my car was repaired. That would be a bit perverted, or wouldn't it?

I: I don't know. It could be interesting.

B: You would have to put a nice skirt beneath that car.

I: Okay.

B: Unfortunately, none of those work in my workshop/

I: You mentioned that you have the car serviced around once a year or according to the service intervals of 15.000 kilometers.

B: Yes.

I: Would you like to change that? Would you prefer the yearly one or the kilometers- How would you prefer your service intervals?

B: They are so far apart already. .

I: Do you want short or longer intervals?

B: I would say shorter ones.

I: What would you-

B: Maybe twice a year at least.

I: Every five to seven thousand kilometers?

B: Yes. Just to have a quick look at new cars. I'm excited about engines but with new vehicles you can't see anything at all anymore. You can't get to anything. I can't even check the oil because there is no more dip stick.

I: Okay. Okay, good.

B: Just to drive past, say hello and have a look whether everything is missing or whether anything might be damaged. There are all sorts of animals in the city. You might have martens climbing into your engine compartment and causing havoc or whatever else.

I: Yes. Let's talk about parts and accessories. Do you have any expectations when it comes to originals, anything that comes to mind? If you have to get replacements, is it important to you that you get original parts? Where do you get those parts from?

B: Do we drive a Porsche, or do we drive a spare parts collection? Well, I know that most companies don't keep spares for models older than 10 years. Mercedes has started to keep stock of older spare parts again. Thinking of repairing a car with parts that aren't originals is not irresponsible but shameful, both as a car driver and as a Porsche driver.

I: Okay. Yes, that is clear.

B: If I drive a Rolls-Royce, I don't want Bentley parts. Especially if I am driving a Porsche, would I want tin parts made in Czech Republic?

I: Okay.

B: Sure, the originals were made in Czech Republic as well but those are hopefully being checked. If I buy a fender, I want it to fit. The gap measurements are supposed to fit, and it's supposed to fit. Not three millimeters too small or too large, because they couldn't do it any better.

I: Okay.

B: The same goes for lights; installing lights that aren't the originals. I wouldn't even do that with a VW. Sure, if I have had my car for 20 years and can't afford a w one. I need new lights in a hurry, and I have no money to spare and my car was bought by my grandmother 20 years ago, then I'm obviously going to look for a way to resume driving on the cheap. In that case, I'd say, I accept that, but they wouldn't have a connection to the car because they haven't bought it themselves. If I purchase a high-quality car by myself with my hard-earned money, even if it's tax money that I then don't have to pay, I still bought a car that has value. In that case I wouldn't want to spoil it with such trash.

I: Yes, good. Good.

B: I wouldn't do that for sure.

I: We have spoken about replacement mobility already. You mentioned that it would be very important to you to get a curtesy car if your car had to remain in the workshop for a while. Is that something you expect? How long could you do without your car?

B: Quite honestly, if you are driving a Porsche, you don't need a curtesy car. A Porsche is never your only car. If it is your only car, you should buy a VW or two.

I: Okay. But-

B: I wouldn't use the Porsche [inaudible 01:32:07,00] and drive up to Hamburg and back in a hurry, if I go away on business or on holiday. That's not something you do with a Porsche. [inaudible 01:32:17,00] but that's nonsense. You don't really need a curtesy car because it's nonsense, all the Porsche drivers have another car or two or three at home anyway.

I: But it's still something you want?

B: Yes, sure, I want that. It's easier.

I: Do you want a particular model?

B: Yes, always a different one.

I: A new one maybe? A later model?

B: Yes. I drive a 911. Now the Macan is coming out. I take my car to the workshop and the salesperson knows immediately that I want to drive the Macan. The person at the service reception knows it too. He wants to drive the Macan because he wants to test drive the new model.

I: Does he know that about you specifically?

B: Yes, because we have a personal relationship. You know- It's not the first time I am taking my car in for repairs or to be serviced. You get talking and new models are always exciting. One time you drive the Macan, then the Cayenne, then the Panamera and then a Boxter and then you drive a Cayenne. Then you have tried them all and can tell which one you enjoyed and that you are going to get that one next. If they were to give me a 9q11, I'd say, well, I know that one already. It's the same, I drive one too.

I: Okay, well-

B: But if you give you another one, you can test out whether you like them or not. That one is too slow for me or too fast. This one is too high off the ground for me, that one too low and that one is too wide. My wife has got a Panamera, very wide, that didn't fit into the garage. I told her that she couldn't drive into the garage because I wanted to fix neither the vehicle nor the garage. It's easiest to use these things as test drives. You get to drive them for a day or two and then you get your own car back. You can tell them which model you want to test drive next. There is nothing better for the brand or the dealership. You do a service and you get to tempt the customer at the same time. Some might frighten off some people but at least it cements the certainty that you want to purchase the same model again next time because that is the right one for you. You have to look at both sides here. The mobility aspect is great. I don't strictly need it but it's great.

I: Okay, I see that this is something that delights you.

B: Yes.

I: Do you expect it too? I'm just asking to clarify.

B: I do expect it. With a car like that. I do expect them to offer you a curtesy car.

I: Okay, thank you very much. Yes, great. Let's move on to the subject of tuning then. Do you do that?

B: They are so powerful; I don't need it.

I: You-

B: We did that right at the beginning.

I: Yes? Okay. You didn't tune anything on your 911?

B: No [inaudible 01:36:19,00]

I: No?

B: No. No- A Porsche is a sports car. You know that it's going to be fast. You can't tell immediately what's under the hood. Whether you look at the GT3 from the side or the smallest Carrera or whatever, for example. From the front only insiders would know. That's difficult. From the back, it's easier to see. There it's written in large letters. It's easy if you are capable of reading. Now you just have to be capable of understanding. Whether it's a 310, 315 or maybe even 318- Whether it takes 2.8 seconds to get to 100, or 2.7-. I think that those of us who drive on roads would never know the difference. The fraction of a second or the few percent that the one has on the other, don't make a difference in my eyes.

I: We have already spoken about a collection and drop-off service or replacement mobility. Would you pay a surcharge?

B: Yes, I would.

I: Yes, okay.

B: I don't know whether I do or not and whether the bill secretly includes it.

I: Okay. We have different models here to choose from. Would you rather want to book these things separately or would you prefer to pay a flat rate annually or when you purchase the car, have all the services included? Would you prefer to be flexible when it comes to adding them?

B: What kind of services?

I: Workshop services, for example.

B: Workshop services?

I: Such as collection and drop-off service or the curtesy car, Whichever.

B: Those already exist.

I: How would you feel about a flat rate?

B: With a new car, it doesn't matter. In that case it's all included anyway. I wouldn't need to add a flat rate to that. That is all included in the warranty.

I: Yes.

B: That is like having a flat rate.

I: Well, would you like to be able to add-on services separately rather than having them included in the warranty?

B: No.

I: No?

B: No. I don't know. I always thought that I already had the flat rate. Maybe I don't have it after all, and I don't know it.

I: I don't know how these things work with Porsche.

B: Well, the oil I'm adding twice a year the five or ten liters of oil that are added- I drive a car that costs 200.000 but I couldn't possibly pay for the five liters of oil out of pocket?

I: Yes, I was primarily thinking of services. What could that be?

B: Everything else is free anyway.

I: Yes, exactly. If the curtesy car wasn't free, would you prefer to add it on flexibly or would you prefer a flat rate?

B: Whether I pay once a month, once a year or when I need it, it all works out to the same anyway.

I: Okay.

B: I'd have to pay anyway.

I: Well-

B: If I knew- I don't know the difference.

I: It's- The question is-

B: It's the same as with the telephone when idiots don't know how much phone calls cost.

I: Yes, exactly. It would be the same principle.

B: But the phone doesn't cost anything. It doesn't matter.

I: Okay. Yes.

B: Why would I want a flat rate for the car?

I: Okay, good.

B: Filling up with fuel too? A fuel flat rate.

I: That would be highly speculative business.

B: Yes.

I: Yes. Alright. Let's move on to the additional offers. Is there anything that comes to mind that isn't a part of the purchasing process or the servicing process. Is there anything that the manufacturer could do for you that would impress you

B: Well, what could they do? I would like to drive with Walter Röhrl once. But I don't think that Walter Röhrl could split himself into enough people to satisfy that demand of all the people in Germany that would want to take a drive with him. But that would be quite the nice thing for an event, to offer that. I once did that where they had a Ferrari at an event and I was allowed to take a ride, But Ferrari's turn-over didn't go up. It went down because everyone realized what an awful car it was. That was a deterrent. The latest Ferrari, complete crap, but you are welcome to drive it. [inaudible 01:43:11,00] It showed us how lucky we are at Porsche.

I: Okay.

B: All those who had had a Ferrari said that they wouldn't get in the car. What else could they do? I don't know, off the top of my mind.

I: Okay.

B: Those are great events when they do them by themselves.

I: Excuse me?

B: When they do them by themselves. The car dealerships in Munich have done joint events every two years, I think.

I: You mean the car dealerships by themselves.

B: Yes. That wasn't anything special. It wasn't bad but if the car dealerships do it by themselves, - If every car dealership in Munich did it by themselves- I don't know how the others do it. It has always been much better when they have done it by themselves rather than with all the others. The ambience was nicer, and it was much better. The car demonstrations were much more individual as well. They don't just put them there and let you have a look whether you are going to buy one or not. There was a proper demonstration at the car dealership in Scheibe Street, where the sales director, the most senior director, did a whole show, like Santa in a movie. He explained everything from the seat to the dashboard, the steering wheel and the engine. That was very, very well done. It was really great. He explained everything that was new and nice about the car. Three or four days later I went to an event in Rosenheim, where they presented the same car. They did something too. I thought that the demonstration would be the same in all dealerships I was waiting for it but then they came to an end and still, there was nothing. I was incredibly disappointed. Maybe Porsche themselves should put more thought into how to present a new vehicle. That way, each dealership would only have to add the ambiance around it. But the way Scheibe Street handled it was very, very good. They had groups of eight to twelve people at round tables and the waiters came out and walked around the tables. It was great, the greatest. Then there was a performance on big screen. Then there were the cars that they drove in. That was a true highlight.

I: Okay.

B: I saw two others as well and thought that it was a shame that they hadn't presented it better. It was a flop. They did it completely differently, even though it is the same car. There were people who wanted to play up their importance because it was a Porsche event but, in the end, there wasn't much more than pretzel sticks.

I: What did they serve?

B: They gave us pretzel sticks.

I: I see.

B: Then I said that if it wasn't for that person, we would have gotten nice food. I would have much preferred that to that speech. I said that loudly and clearly. I told them that I had never seen anything as primitive.

I: Okay.

B: They weren't very impressed with me.

I: I heard that already.

B: They could really have done more. They could have- Well, as I said, that event impressed me, but those two other presentations weren't a hit. The ambience was nice but if there is nothing more than a car at the front and someone talking about that- You get the same at Fiat.

I: Yes.

B: He just kelp saying. This is Porsche. Well then. So I said, this is a Fiat. Look how lovely it is. There is a Macan parked there and I asked, is this one five centimeters or fifty centimeters smaller? And they didn't know. And then I asked which car they were comparing it to anyway. They said that they had assumed that I was thinking of the Cayenne. Then I told them that they had gotten lucky. I told them to at least put a Cayenne next to it, that way people can compare them. Otherwise, you can't tell the difference. To me, they are both the same. You can't tell when they are on stage or in a shop window. You have to get out into the streets to see that they are indeed different. These sort of events where there is no energy and no enthusiasm, you don't even get a free meal, I am no fan of.

I: Okay.

B: There is- They do this car performance or an annual summer fete or something like it. Where they do nice things and do performances as such. It would be great to see a whole range of cars, but you also need to do something special.

I: What could that be, for example?

B: Well, for example- Off the top of my head?

I: Yes, sure.

B: I can think of the following: Use a crane, for example and take five cars and put them on top of each other or next to each other or something like that. Then you lift them up and let them circle above everybody. You shouldn't get underneath them, of course. But one could do something else. I was skiing once and they had a Rover in a net, like a spider's net. Rover is [inaudible 01:50:33,00]. The Rover was on the slopes and was on top of the ski jumping hill, as if it was about to take off. They really used their imagination. If I do no more than put five cars next to each other, even in the same color, that's pretty depressing. They have designers, they hire whole companies and then they produce such nonsense.

I: Yes, no, cool. Cool.

B: I'm no designer but I want to go there and see something special.

I: Yes. Just a quick one: If you go to these Porsche events, do you go with friends, acquaintances or family members or do you usually go by yourself?

B: Yes, you always bump into people.

I: Yes? Did these people make you aware of these events?

B: No.

I: No, okay.

B: It's more likely that they found out because of me.

I: Yes, great. Are you interested in the community aspect of these events? Do you enjoy talking about new models with people? Could you imagine getting into a community or club where you could exchange information on those sports cars with other enthusiasts?

B: Sure, yes. You can gossip about the others, that's easier than behaving yourself. That's always easier than being on good behavior yourself. A Porsche club or something like that with a club house or something like that, that would be something that would appeal to me.

I: Aren't you a part of a group like that yet?

B: No.

I: Okay. I see.

B: I haven't found anything specific.

I: Okay. If we could go back to- if we could dive back into the idea of a Club. What would need to be offered?

B: I'd say something like a British Royals Club. Though not as old. Somewhere where there's a good bar, maybe a library, a small one all about Porsche. All the books and magazines. Maybe a little about the competition, where they have failed. Bad reviews. That way you can feel even better about driving a

Porsche. Well, like you would imagine a club like it. Not too big, upper class, no Hip Hop or House music but things for the older generation. Nothing where they serve too much food but maybe some bar snacks. Somewhere where you go for a drink. A smoking room would be nice too, where you can smoke a cigar or something like it, without having to leave the building. I have once seen something beautiful. It was a glass structure and it was impossible to say whether you are indoors or outdoors. That was very well done. You just couldn't figure out whether you were sitting inside or outside. But there were structural pieces, some made from glass that were separating the two. That was beautiful. That was a top boutique hotel and a Designer used their three braincells and made something spectacular. Even non-smokers would go in because when nobody else was inside, you couldn't tell that it was a smoking room. Only when some people started smoking and they would complain about the smoke, would they realize where they were sitting. Most stayed though because suddenly, they weren't bothered by the smoking anymore. That was a very elegant solution. That's what's missing these days, that coziness. These days, wherever you turn, things look naked and there are straight lines and angles everywhere. Whatever else you are doing right in an environment like that, it won't help. It will always be a bit sad. There is a certain kind of client who will enjoy that. I always feel like anyone should be allowed entrance who is going to behave in a sensible manner. It wouldn't be nice if someone appeared with a backpack. But you could even turn that in at reception. I don't always wear a suit and tie and I still feel good. But a certain standard is important.

I: Okay, great. I can picture that vividly. Very good. That would be very nice.

B: That could easily be a part of the Porsche Center, they have more than enough space there.

I: Yes.

B: That would work in a car dealership as well. It would be a good contact point. If you always had to walk through the show room, it would always offer a temptation because you are always seeing the new cars. That would be a great additional income source. In the evenings there is nothing going on in these places anyway.

I: Yes, I see that. Very good idea.

B: What do I know. I'm not being paid for this.

I: Who knows, who knows? Lufthansa has a Miles and More loyalty card. Could you imagine the same for Porsche?

B: Porsche and More?

I: Porsche Miles and More.

B: It would have to be Kilometer.

I: For example.

B: Kilometer and Dents, or something like that. Or Rubber and More, or something like it.

I: Yes.

B: I don't know-

I: You are getting very creative.

B: I don't know what the card should be good for.

I: Yes, well, there are-

B: I could walk into my Porsche dealership and show them how many kilometers I've drive.

I: Yes, and then-

B: I can see how many kilometers I've driven by the end of the year anyway.

I: Could you imagine any other benefits a loyalty program could offer?

B: There already is a Porsche card. You can use it for short term parking at the airport. I could imagine that there is room to add on other benefits.

I: Yes.

B: Parking in the city, parking at the football stadium, parking at the airport, as they already offer it, parking at the train station. I could imagine that that would be popular.

I: Yes.

B: But I didn't take the card because three-day parking at the airport wasn't enough of a draw.

I: I see.

B: The relationship between price and benefit didn't make sense.

I: Okay.

B: Well, you already have so many cards in your wallet, two, three, 24. Now you've got another one.

I: That's an important issue to raise. .

B: It would have to offer you some benefit for the real estate it takes up in your wallet.

I: And imagine if it wasn't a typical plastic card like we usually see it.

B: A card made from glass for example?

I: I was thinking of a digital one?

B: What would that mean?

I: You'd have it on your computer or smartphone.

B: Yes, that sounds more like it.

I: It does?

B: Yes, something you can simply-. I mean, I have all my cards on my phone. You can scan them using a QR code or the bar code. I don't need the traditional cards anymore. I just use my phone. Now I need flight tickets again because stupid Air Berlin can't figure out how to let us check in with our phones. What sort of niggas are they? In South Africa, that wasn't a problem. But no, in Germany, they can't get it right.

I: Great. Yes, well. That's a clear statement.

B: That would be- A card would need to have certain- It shouldn't be free either.

I: No.

B: Neither the car, nor the service. But to get parking sports at particular parking lots at certain places- Places you drive to by car.

I: I see. Yes, great.

B: If you could like that to Miles and More, I'd get a new car every three years.

I: That brings me to my last topic. I would like to talk about the difference between Porsche and other sports brands. Let's look at the Audi sport models, the RS, R8.

B: I didn't like them. I could have bought an R8.

I: That's a statement. Which three key words come to mind when you think of the Audi Sport models?

B: Three key words about the Audi Sport models?

I: Yes.

B: They made a souped up race car out of a middle-class vehicle, without really making it a race car. It's difficult. I might have chosen the RS6. But then I bought the Panamera, because I didn't like dealing with them. Mercedes were even worse. I'm still waiting for a quote from them. Audi is a car that I feel very positive about. I like it from the inside and the outside. It's a bit like the BMW but that one has too many built-in components for my liking. VWs are much more structured. Otherwise- They certainly put thought into making all their models look the same from the front. When you look into the rear-view mirror, you think it might be an R8, or an A8 and then there is an A2, that appeared so quickly behind you. Then you drive away and realize that was only a 110. And you made the effort to pull over to let them pass and now they aren't in your wind shadow and can't keep up the speed. The idea that they all look the relatively similar from the front but if you are driving on the motorway and you want to let a fast car pass, and then realize that they can't get past. And then you will need to use the brakes because the amateur can't get past. That is annoying.

I: Yes.

B: On the other hand, thinking about Audi- I like the A5, I like the A7, I like the R6. Yes, I like those. They have- The interior isn't bad, and the technical elements are all straight from VW. Audi is the same, Porsche is the same. It has the same GPS, it's all the same. Even the buttons. That is all great.

I: If we look at all elements from the exterior, the design and the service. What is your impression of Audi?

B: Audi. I found them difficult. I used to drive an R6. I used to go to Audi and tell them that the radio is giving me trouble. They would tell me that the radio and GPS were one unit. I told them I was having trouble with it. They asked, what kind of trouble. I told them that it never made trouble when I was at the workshop but the minute, I drove away it would switch itself off, screech or lag. Their answer was that they had noticed the same but hadn't found a solution. I then asked what the solution would be, and they said that we would wait until it failed completely. It did fail, two days after the warranty expired.

I: Oh, okay.

B: And Audi made it very clear that it was two days too late.

I: Okay, I see.

B: That cost two and a half thousand Euros in the end. The dealership covered three quarters of that. I think it is very, very wrong that Audi left them hanging. They shouldn't let their dealerships cover what they have messed up. It was two days, just two days. I mean, if it was six months later, I'd say, alright. But the defect was there before. The dealership said, we are very sorry, Audi isn't paying us a penny. And I told them to use their reimbursement income or something. I also said that I didn't want to be unnecessarily hard but that it didn't seem fair for me to have to pay two and a half or three thousand Euros because it's two days past warranty, when I have reported the defect before. They showed me the letter Audi had sent. It was an awful slap in the face. After that, I have to admit, I'm not going to buy another Audi.

I: Yes, okay.

B: It was neither the dealership's fault, nor mine. Audi isn't to blame either, of course. But they did leave us hanging.

I: Yes, still.

B: They left us hanging.

I: Yes. And compared to other performance brands? If you compare the Audi RS with the BMW M or the

Mercedes AMG?

B: BMW-

I: Oh, would you like any more to drink?

B: No. BMW, that isn't a car for me. Well-

I: Just based on their service.

B: I don't know.

I: Okay, I see. No, that makes sense.

B: BMW, I don't know. Mercedes was horribly bad.

I: But-

B: They were very arrogant and full of themselves and on the other hand they were also completely unabashed. Then there was the old saying, only Mercedes would have gotten away with that back in the day. The idea is still there but the quality and execution are awful. I would never buy one again.

I: Okay. Yes, great. That is a strong statement. If you think back to the Audi RS models, do you have any expectations? I understand that you have had negative experiences but if you hear the brand mentioned, are your expectations high or low?

B: Yes, I do have high expectations for Audi. The cars are good. I can't say anything against that.

I: What sort of service do you expect from them?

B: I would say, the same as with Porsche. There are Audis which cost no more than 20.000 and then there are Audis that cost 150. You need to find a happy medium. With Porsche they have cars and don't start below- They also have the Boxter and the Cayman to get more turn-over. But anyway, they are a part of Porsche- Porsche is a luxury brand. You want to be treated well for 60.000 as well.

I: Don't you, for example, expect special services or offers? At Audi compared to Porsche? You mentioned earlier that you could imagine great events. Could you picture that for Audi Sport, more particularly the RS-Modell?

B: Yes, you know for sure that it doesn't exist. You get a balloon or something like it. That's where luxury brands should set themselves apart from the others. It shouldn't be the same as Audi or VW- They have these Open Days or whatever they call them. You get there and you get a glass of water free of charge and a pretzel stick. Then you can look at the cars but make sure not to touch the cars because they have just been washed. That's mass processing. There are a thousand people that they funnel through. There are fewer at Porsche or maybe the spaces are bigger. There you see the grandmother with her nephew, and while you see the same at Porsche too, it's on a different level.

I: Yes but it’s important to position oneself. The R8 goes in a very particular direction, very sporty, very exclusive.

B: Yes, but you can’t just offer them to any clients, you have to do something special.

I: Okay. That would be your expectation, that you-

B: Yes, but [inaudible 02:12:59,00] you need to get a grasp on it. It’s important to filter out those who really want to purchase an R8 and those who are just curious and then drive away with an A2. If someone is on the client list, it will probably say what they are currently driving. But how can Audi find that out? They will have to believe what you tell them you earn.

I: Yes.

B: Well, that’s where this is going or where is has been going for a while now. They know exactly how much you earn. If you earn this particular amount, you are welcome to darken their door posts because you are a potential purchaser. If they manage that, we’ll all know that they are more aware of your financial situation than you are. Who wants to do that to themselves and go there?

I: Yes, okay.

B: “Hello there, I’m so silly, and have published everything online and even Audi knows how much I earn. No, I’m not going to go because if we look into each other‘s eyes, we will both know that they are just as silly as I was.

I: Yes.

B: And with Porsche- I don’t think it’s as targeted. Maybe they do the same. Okay. You have this idea that they don’t invite people who can’t afford a Porsche. Or they only invite those who have previously owned a Porsche and have switched over to Mercedes or Aston Martin or wherever. And you want to offer them an attraction to draw them back in. But it doesn’t feel like a Google analysis of those who earn enough to purchase one. They might just right, alright everybody, come join out summer fete. But the first question with Audi would be, how did they know I can afford one of their cars?

I: Okay. I see.

B: You have to be aware of that.

I: Have you got an idea how Audi Sport can position itself more firmly in the sports car sector?

B: More sportiness would take you back to Porsche.

I: Maybe something in that direction

B: No, they are already a part of the company. I think it would be silly to have two brands within the same company that compete with each other. They have the station wagon that flies off the shelves; they have the R8, great. They have the S5 or the RS-classes with the huge motor. That's the same as the M-class. But now you are entering a field that is in competition with Porsche. They have their TT, and that is all great, but I don't think that they should make any directions towards becoming a secondary Porsche. That's bad for the whole company, I believe. VW brought out the Phaeton. But well, that isn't a car. You can't call that a car unless you pressure the government and threaten to scratch it if they don't drive it. Audi does the same with the A8, BMW with the 7-series, and Mercedes with the S-class too. Now you have four or five of these car manufacturers who build these kids of cars, all for a higher age group. And is that what is needed? Was that a wise decision?

I: Alright.

B: I can't imagine it. I can't imagine they are making money with the Phaeton. Especially seeing that they are manipulating their numbers.

I: Yes.

B: I wouldn't have done it that way.

I: Okay, alright. I have one more task for you before we finish up. It's born from need. I hope you don't mind. I would like to come over to you. We have five subjects matters that we have covered. Could you rank them on a scale from very important to not important at all? Firstly, there is the model of trained contact people in sales service.

B: Important.

I: Important? Do you want to have a look for yourself before you make your decision?

B: I will read through all of them first.

I: Exactly.

B: You could do that better, potentially. Specially trained contact people. Yes, that is both important and adequate.

I: Exactly, both for the service department and the workshop. Then there is the supplementary mobility. And-

B: Vehicle cleaning.

I: Well yes, professional vehicle cleaning. Hand wash or internal detailing, for example.

B: You need that.

I: You need- I don't know whether you need that.

B: Yes, the fifth point doesn't seem to apply to Porsche-

I: What does that mean? Priority appointments for drivers of the key brand.

B: Yes, exactly. At Porsche, everyone drives a high-performance vehicle. Maybe we should rename that to getting an appointment very quickly.

I: Let's scratch that.

B: Let's scratch that out than. Thank you.

I: Let's do that.

B: Well- Now we can move that to second place. This is going to be in third place. And that one number four.

I: A good, timely appointment slot.

B: Yes, let's move that to the fifth spot.

I: Brilliant. Thank you.

B: You are welcome. Now I've got the best for last.

I: You enjoy that while I finish off our interview. We have come to the end, as far as I am concerned. It was great fun to talk to you. It was full of jokes and a great sense of humor. And, yes. You can pick up your reward at reception. It was a real pleasure.

B: It was my pleasure.

I: Hm?

B: Will I get more because this was more than two hours?

I: No, I don't think so.

B: Well, you'll have to be here all day.

I: Thank you very much, I hope it wasn't too bad an experience for you.

B: Are you still looking for someone driving a Porsche? Or are you at capacity? I don't know.

I: Well, I'm not sure.

B: Okay. Goodbye.

I: Thank you. Have a great evening.

B: Thank you.

I: Bye.

B: Goodbye.

Appendix 5: Coding Guideline (Analysis Stage I)

Category	Theme	Key words / elements for coding *exemplary selection*	Examples *exemplary selection*
Cognitive *(mental image) perceptual*		Overall nodes that do not fit in given themes. i.e. usage according to way distance, gasoline infrastructure, prices, objective / functional answers, rational evaluations, etc.	"According to the distances I have to travel, I do have to consider what type of fuel makes more sense for me"; "The car can drive 300 km/h but I do not need this top speed at all"; "When it comes to the price, emotions do not play a role. I will check what is the price/value ratio compared to others."
	Brand awareness *Recognizing a brand in various condition and linkage of brand name, logo, symbols*	Brand logo, brand symbol, product family, official service at dealer (official trademark), awareness in media and commercials,	"If you buy a car from the brand Mercedes, you know that you get quality – you don´t make a mistake", "if you see the star you can buy blind"," I recognised BMW M in their commercials", "The car of this brand did park Infront of the luxury hotel – it stays in mind"
	Physical quality *Product, showroom and service quality*	performance data, design, acceleration, workmanship, colour, materials, specification, technical details, space, product quality, chassis, warranty, showroom furniture, no. of cars in exhibition, showroom accessories, maintained building, corporate identity,	"had the first Bosch ABS system", "I am very tall and I can easily fit", showroom should be designed to fit the brand and its CI", not to many or less cars in showroom, "a separate corner for AMG makes sense", "better orientation if Audi Sport is in a dedicated area"
	Staff behaviour *(behaviour and competence of staff at touchpoints)*	Contact person, personal trust, personal attributes of staff, appearance, education, training, manners, product knowledge, capacity for enthusiasm, age, accessibility, honesty, loyalty, emphatic, passion", number of personal contacts at touchpoints"	"he does his job with love. So, with a certain passion too, I presuppose that in every work"; "Well, I prefer a 20-year-old well motivated"; "Yes, definitely be self-confident"; Yes, great expertise, competence, reliability, "that he cares about your car, is not superficial";
Emotional *perceptual*		Overall nodes that do not fit in given themes. i.e. emotional answers in general, emotions according to product experience itself, "dream car", childhood dream, memories, positive and negative emotions, reactions according to delivery time (short/long), treatment of the car, description of being a car guy / petrol head, emotional feelings according to sound, acceleration, cornering etc., words that describe feelings (fun, love, smile, adrenalin etc.)	"it is a emotional decision to buy", "fun to drive", "My dream car as a kid was always a 6.9, if that tells you something", "I would be angry if I do see a cheaper offer of my car later", "and I find the car beautiful and I care and love the car", "only handwash my toy", "I get Goosebumps when the car accelerates", "I big smile on my face when I hear and feel the engine sound",
	Brand identification *social status & symbolic value, integration to social groups with similar brands or cars*	Statements to image (value, attributes etc.), prestige, social status, symbolic effect on themselves or others, brand loyalty, brand fan, differentiation in general, differentiation from groups, belonging to certain groups, problems	"I am a fan of Porsche – no other brand is like Porsche"; "Yes sure it is a status symbol somehow"; "AMG is synonymous with performance and performance"; "when someone is traveling with me in the car, they

		according to brand and image, representation, communities and clubs, reaction of others,	always say, Look how people look at us."; "If you let them know your model, they know in service who to prioritise and whom not", „I have to justify my fees when customers see me in this car"; "Maybe it was because of my friends and neighbour who drive ones"; "It just has a great envy potential. I like that, I tell you honestly".
	Lifestyle congruence *Lifestyle of the customers, self-reward and self-esteem*	Information of lifestyle in general, statements regarding the esteem of others towards them, reward (from husband, hard work etc.), self-esteem (I am worth it),	"I love to drive to Monaco with my beloved car"; "I love to travel fast to my friends across Germany", "But for such expensive cars he has to take his time for me, I expect that", "my dream car – and then I got it and could keep it after we have been divorced", "But if you work so hard and buy yourself such a car, that is already somehow a reward", "and because I thought, somehow I'm worth it",
	Self-congruence *degree between ideal and actual self, stage in life and "perceived" role, hedonic & extended-self*	Statements regarding the self-perception, stage in life (success, a certain standard that is linked to age, job, social position), statements regarding the between ideal and actual self, hedonic characteristics when using the cars	"And I think I can drive relatively well. I did not have a serious accident yet."; Well, because we're young because of course we like to do sports and somehow-. Of course, we like to drive on the highway sometimes fast, too fast"; "Hey cool, she has a really good car. And she did something out of her life "; "that I can use the vehicle to express what I am. I am not the norm", "Even if we imagine we are the fastest and the best. But the reality is quite different.", "when I drive the people look at me and shake their heads, maybe it's the sound of my car (laughing) I like that",

Category	Theme	Key words / elements for coding *exemplary selection*	Examples *exemplary selection*
Pre-Purchase *processual*		Overall nodes that do not fit in given themes. i.e. product, no touchpoint	"only emotional decision do I like the car or not", its just about the product", "there is no pre-ourchase stage, I just order and pick up"
	Brand owned *Image, publicity, brand programs from manufacturer*	Manufacture dealership (brand predominant over dealer), Configurator (on brand sites), relevant brand sections in subsidiary or dealer, Brand events for new arrivals, brand platforms	"you can buy blind from a Mercedes subsidiary", "enter the BMW M world and videos in the showroom", "they invite me to their brand show before the dealer have it themselves", "I just entered AMG in google"
	Partner owned *Dealerships, showroom, sales and after sales staff*	Dealerships, showroom, sales and after sales staff, sales consultant, Sales service, first contact with dealer, personal contact person, **test drives**, 3D animation of product, look and feel of showroom, separate lounge, sales decision, information and mailing from partner dealer, live presentation at partner dealer, role of dealer in process, sales offers,	"I do not need it – don´t need a dealer", "of course it is important to take a test ride at the dealer", "need to see the cars in the showroom – virtual is nice but need the live experience", "important to get a live presentation of the car", "essential to get all questions answered upfront",
	Customer owned *Own decisions, Influence on other person within a social group, preferred way of interaction & payment etc*	Information about personal process to afford such a car, Own decision about what to choose, own decision about the process, self-determined, he /she is in control no one else, time of decision making, initiative in control of customer,	"I just did my job. And everyone is trying to succeed. And then at some point, it was the point where I thought: well, maybe I can even afford that, such a car", "it was a very short decision from my side", I did want to hear his advice – I do exactly know what I want", "I took the initiative and searched",
	Social external *Peer influence from friends, other drivers or influencer (i.e. via journalist or social media bloggers), external Media*	External sources of information (internet, blogs, YouTube, etc.), social media, journal article out of specialised press, negative / negative peer influence,	"I searched in the internet to get information", "watching youtube videos about the car is good to get information and emotion", "And when people see me driving such a car, they really say, "Now it's really off-hook", "So that was a cousin, just from my fiancé. He just has the enthusiasm, so to speak. Or he just told us about the car, got us excited, so to speak"
Purchase *processual*		Overall nodes that do not fit in given themes. i.e. general information of purchase process	That you were taken seriously, that this Audi City is simply extremely chic.
	Brand owned *Image, publicity, brand programs from manufacturer*	Checking details about product (chassis number and damages), purchase because of brand trust, brand issues when purchasing	"If I would be sceptical, I would also check the VIN.", "yes that is a mercedes, you can purchase blind", "back and forth is very popular at Ferrari – no consistent processes"
	Partner owned	Contact to sales, negotiation, finance, purchase or leasing, delivery time, overall satisfaction with	"final details with sales rep about price via telephone", "a short delivery time would wonder

	Dealerships, showroom, sales and after sales staff	sales and dealer during purchase process, 3D animation of product, personality of staff, communication style with sales, sales staff, consultancy, Sales service, contact with dealer, personal contact person, separate lounge, sales decision, role of dealer in process, sales offers, order process, preferred way of communication (phone, mail, etc.)	me", I would love to have it as fast as possible – hate to wait", "the dealer just ordered – we had not many points with him", "I expect the process to be lean and quick"
	Customer owned *Own decisions, Influence on other person within a social group, preferred way of interaction & payment etc*	Information about personal during purchase phase, Own decision about what to choose, own decision about the process, self-determined, he /she is in control no one else, **time of decision making**, initiative in control of customer, financing, buy / lease	"Really bad when there is some kind of pressure. If I decide, I decide myself and not because of the seller"; "Basically I do not need a seller", "I made the decision. At my desk. Very pragmatic. I needed a new car"; "And I'm quick in buying, I know what I want, that's done in half an hour, done."
	Social external *Peer influence from friends, other drivers or influencer (i.e. via journalist or social media bloggers), external Media*	External sources of information (internet, blogs, YouTube, etc.), social media, journal article out of specialised press, peer influence, events,	"I had to convince my wife as she had to sign as well"
Post-Purchase *processual*			
	Brand owned *Image, publicity, brand programs from manufacturer*	Service at brand subsidiaries, brand experience after sales, factory tour, watching the production	"So Ferrari does that, for example, so that people, if they buy a Ferrari, tey say: "Then and then in Mugello, that's the house test track, is a weekend scheduled with an instructor"
	Partner owned *Dealerships, showroom, sales and after sales staff*	Contact to after sales, time for appointment (service), preferred/prioritised treatment in the service, overall satisfaction with after sales personality of staff, communication style with after sales, consultancy, service, contact with dealer, personal contact person, separate lounge, role of dealer in process,	"that you reach someone on the phone, at least at the usual workshop hours. If you call that you do not land on hold", The first time I came to the inspection in Munich, I said: "Hello, inspection." Wanted to make an appointment. "Please show your registration. Oh, that's an AMG, a moment. "You will have your dedicated AMG service consultant",
	Customer owned *Own decisions, Influence on other person within a social group, preferred way of interaction & payment etc*	Information about personal during after sales phase, Own decision about what to choose, own decision about the process, self-determined, he /she is in control no one else, time of decision making, decision to travel more distance to service	"I like to drive myself into the workshop (no pick up service)"; "then I do not want to be conducted from sales calls. I am there private and want to have fun (meet after sales employees on racetracks)", "And so I like to drive these 70 kilometres and know my car in good hands"
	Social external *Peer influence from friends, other drivers or influencer (i.e. via journalist or social media bloggers), external Media,* ***Clubs***	peer influence, community, events, exchange with other drivers, gifts, online communities, blogs, event size, exclusivity of events,	"I prefer not to join any clubs"; "I am already registered in the Dießen AMG Club", "Yes, German Maserati Club and sports car friends", "there was a meeting on, I know, on the Tegernsee or something else, which promotes sociability a bit. I think that would be nice",

Result of relevant touchpoints according to coding

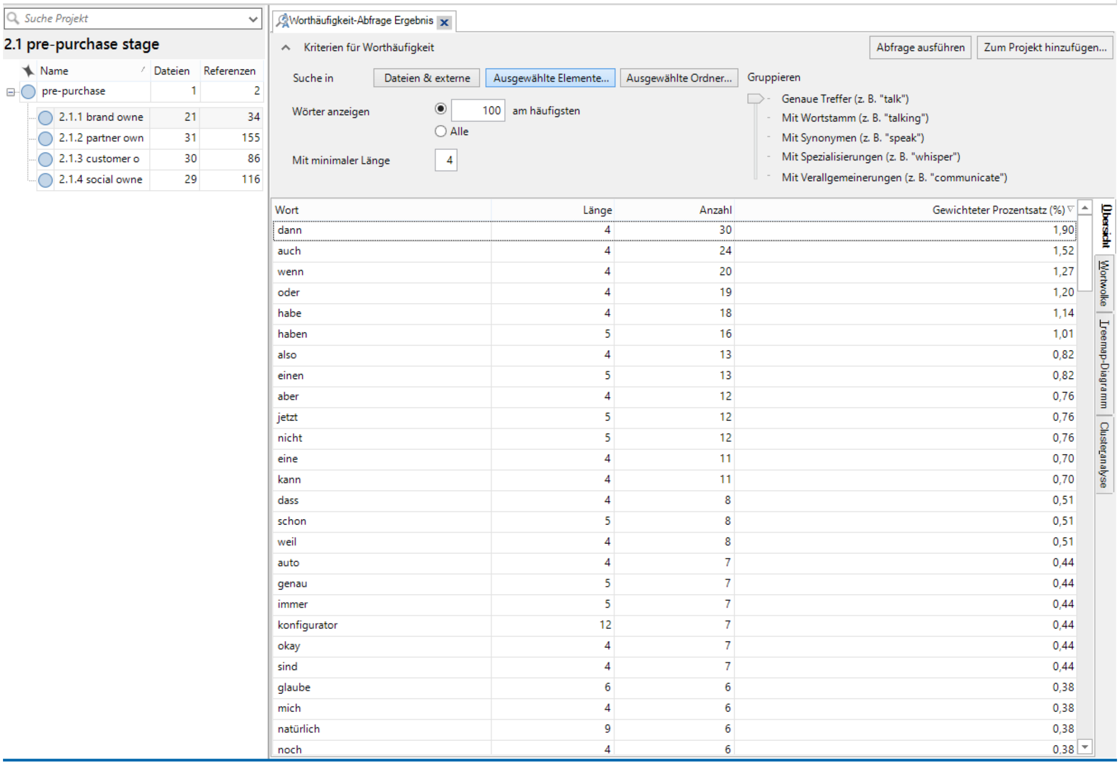
pre-purchase	1	2
2.1.1 brand owned	21	34
2.1.2 partner owned	31	155
2.1.3 customer owned	30	86
2.1.4 social owned	29	116

purchase stage	2	3
2.2.1 brand owned	4	6
2.2.2 partner owned	25	98
2.2.3 customer owned	20	35
2.2.4 social-external	9	11

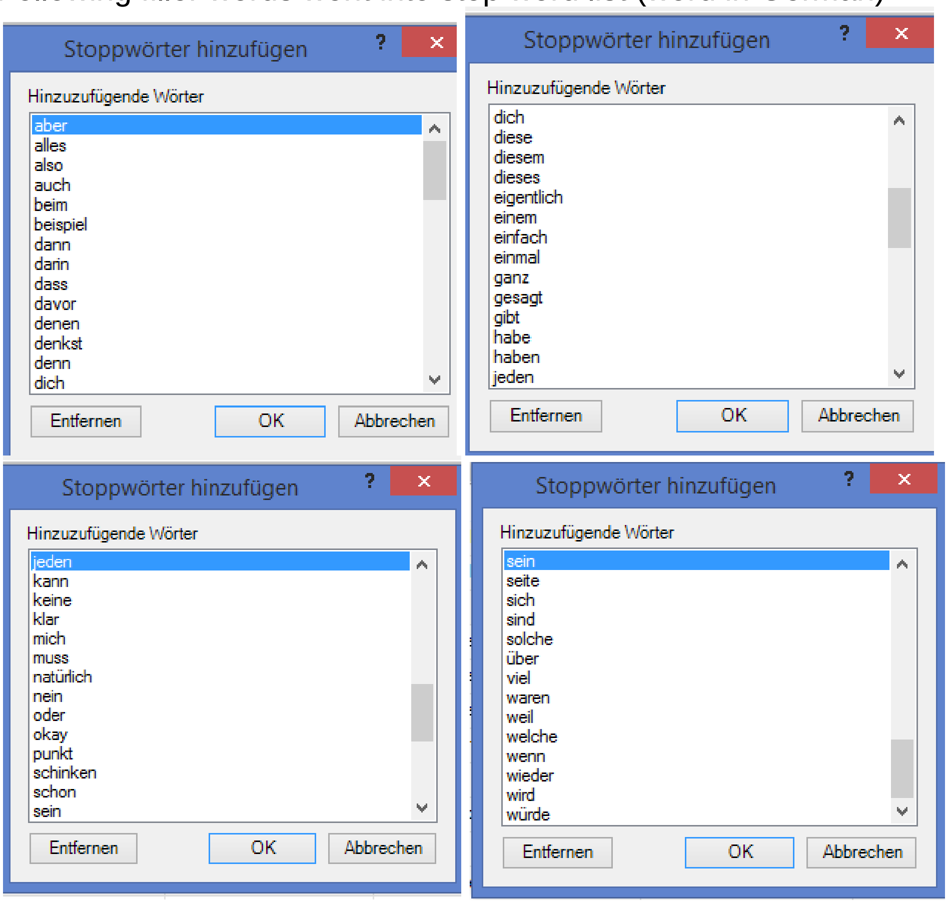
post-purchase stage	0	0
2.3.1 brand owned	5	5
2.3.2 partner owned	16	42
2.3.3 customer owned	7	8
2.3.4 social-external	28	108

Appendix 6: Stop word list preparing frequency analysis

1. Identification of filler words like “than”, “and”, “but a”, “or”, etc. during first frequency analysis



2. Following filler words went into stop word list (word in German)



Appendix 7: Word frequency Analysis according to touchpoints (Analysis stage II)

Check of word frequency within each of the touchpoints coded

Analysis of pre-purchase phase

Brand owned *(selected according do relevance and ex- filler words 2nd round):*

Word (original German)	Word engl.	Length	Count
auto	car	4	7
Konfigurator	configurator	12	7
internet	internet	8	5
mercedes	mercedes	8	5
modell	model	6	4
spaß	fun	4	4
audi	audi	4	3
autos	cars	5	3
beifahrer	passenger	9	3
events	events	6	3
ferrari	ferrari	7	3
flughafen	airport	9	3
händler	dealer	7	3
informiert	informed	10	3
porsche	porsche	7	3
veranstaltungen	events	15	3
begehrlichkeit	covetousness	14	2
blöd	dumb	4	2
cool	cool	4	2
cooles	cool	6	2
daheim	home	6	2
eingeladen	invited	10	2

fahren	to drive	6	2
frechheit	impudence	9	2
gehabt	had	6	2
geschaut	looked	8	2
gesehen	seen	7	2
google	google	6	2
gucken	to look	6	2
herstellerseite	manufacturer's page	15	2
homepage	homepage	8	2
information	information	11	2
kauf	purchase	4	2
kleinigkeiten	trifles	13	2
kopf	head	4	2
kreis	circle	5	2
mclaren	mclaren	7	2
probefahrt	test	10	2
präsentation	presentation	12	2

Worthäufigkeit-Abfrage Ergebnisse 2.1.1 pre purchase brand owned

2nd coding round results (code and analyse the highlighted words), green = relevant; yellow = not relevant /missleading

Internet → brand sites

Konfigurator → configurator on brand site

Spaß → not really relating to fun items on a brand owned level

Beifahrer → related to passenger when at an event and someone from the manufacturer is in the car as well

Events → car shows, car launch evets

händler → doesnt makes any sense because dealer is a own touchpoint later. Participants talk not in particular on brand owned platform about dealer.

Informiert → only linked to the informative character of the internet and configurator.

veranstaltungen → goes into events

Summray:

Brand sites of moderate relevance to first inform about car. Configurator significantly more important. Almost everyone is playing with the configurator upfront. Some are invited on brand events and see new cars.

Word Frequency analysis results (filler words in stop list):

***partner owned** (selected according do relevance and ex- filler words 2nd round):*

Word		Length	Count
händler	dealer	7	67
probefahrt	testdrive	10	60
auto	car	4	51
rolle	role	5	24
wichtig	important	7	23
autohaus	dealership	8	20
sehr	very much	4	18
verkäufer	seller	9	18
gespielt	played	8	17
fahren	to drive	6	14
gefahren	drove	8	11
informiert	informed	10	11
internet	internet	8	11
service	service	7	11
fahrzeug	vehicle	8	10
mercedes	mercedes	8	10
kaufprozess	purchase process	11	9
ansprechpartner	contact person	15	8
audi	audi	4	8
gekauft	bought	7	8
wochenende	weekend	10	8
animation	animation	9	7
gesehen	seen	7	7
kaufen	buy	6	7
probe	test	5	7
kaufentscheidung	purchase decision	16	6
persönliche	personal	11	6

Worthäufigkeit-Abfrage Ergebnisse 2.1.2 pre-purchase partner owned

Händler → sehr gut, spielt rolle, spielt keine rolle, wird lediglich als info kanal gesehen (somit auch eine rolle)

Probefahrt → sehr gut, positive negative ob wichtig oder nicht, many say if its your first car of that kind test drive makes sense → Neues Thema emegred 3D Animation instead of real test drive, animation mit aufgenommen

Rolle → „role of dealer", „role of testdrive", "role of internet research" → not a singular theme , is more linked to the others.

Wichtig → „importance of dealer", „ importance of testdrive", "importance of internet research" → not a singular theme , is more linked to the others.

Verkäufer → information of sales rep support, check of the configuration that customer did already, also new findings of like/dislike of a mobile sales rep out of delaership

Fahren → → „drive of test drive", rather word linked to existing themes, duration of test drive

Informiert → not a singular theme , is more linked to the others.

Internet –> not a singular theme , is more linked to the others.

Kaufprozess → word used by interviewer and is answered from participants with relevance of dealer, test drive etc.

Summray

Important themes are dealer, testdrives, sales rep. We can clearly see that a dealer plays a role ro the majority but still a high number of people that do not see a important role from the dealer at pre purchase stage. Test drive very interesting. Either it is a must or they say do not need a test drive. Many answers also say "if it's the first car you should make a test drive but if you are an established driver no need for it". Internet in respect to partner no relevance. But Configurator or internet per see important at pre-purchase stage. Relevance at partner is the sales rep who verifies pre configurations and gives hints in terms of packaging etc.

Word Frequency analysis results (filler words in stop list):

customer owned *(selected according do relevance and ex- filler words 2nd round):*

Word		Length	Count
auto	car	4	19
wollte	wanted	6	14
fahrzeug	vehicle	8	11
wirklich	really	8	11
probefahrt	testdrive	10	10
machen	to do	6	9
spontan	spontaneous	7	9
entschieden	decide	11	8
kaufentscheidung	Purchase decision	16	8
genau	exactly	5	7
händler	dealer	7	7
letztendlich	after all	12	7
gemacht	made	7	6
gesehen	seen	7	6
kauf	purchase	4	6
kaufprozess	purchase process	11	6
meine	my	5	6
modell	model	6	6
selber	oneself	6	6
zeit	time	4	6
kaufe	buy	5	5
länger	longer	6	5

audi	audi	4	4
beschäftigt	sth. keeps playing on sb.'s mind	11	4
bestimmt	certain	8	4
gedacht	intended	7	4
gefahren	drove	8	4
gehe	go	4	4
lange	long	5	4
mercedes	mercedes	8	4
neues	new	5	4
verkäufer	seller	9	4
autos	cars	5	3
direkt	direct	6	3
entscheidung	decision	12	3
fahren	to drive	6	3

Word frequency analysis results 2.1.3 pre purchase customer owned

Probefahrt → moderate outcome. Rather the dimension of how the individual did emagine the test drive / made a decision linked to the test drive.

Machen → i wanted to check out the car by myself. Making me comfortable with the product without anyone else.

Spontan → spontaneous decision from person itself to buy a car

Entschieden → time of „desicion" „I saw the car decided want to have"

kaufentscheidung→ not a singular theme , is more linked to the others. Test drive etc. and theme of decision

letztendlich → not a singular theme , is more linked to the others. Refers to Test drive etc. and theme of decision

selber → moderate, only one statement that says I do it for myself not for others.

Beschäftigt not a singular theme , is more linked to the others. Refers to Test drive etc. and other themes

Additional cross check by reading all statements in the upper code 2.1.3 pre purchase customer owned with no respect to frequent words to avoid overseeing subtle information

Summary:

Statements that clearly describe the attitude of these people. They decide on their one. If they decide they might decide spontaneous or quick. They have a clear mind and picture of what they want. Attention this is not the majority. Maybe 1/3 of all participants? They also state that they are informed very good according to own research “they do not need a sales consultant” → m<be a signal for independence

Word Frequency analysis results (filler words in stop list):

***Social/external owned** (selected according do relevance and ex- filler words 2nd round):*

Word		Length	Count
auto	car	4	54
internet	internet	8	40
sehr	very much	4	15
youtube	youtube	7	14
informiert	informed	10	13
rolle	role	5	12
freunde	friends	7	11
machen	to do	6	11
motor	motor	5	11
fahren	to drive	6	10
händler	dealer	7	10
sport	sport	5	10
freund	friend	6	9
leute	people	5	9
porsche	porsche	7	9
bekannte	known	8	8
gehabt	had	6	8
mercedes	mercedes	8	8
bekannten	Known persons	9	7
familie	family	7	7
gespielt	played	8	7
modell	model	6	7

andere	other	6	6
begeistert	enthusiastic	10	6
gefahren	drove	8	6
kaufentscheidung	Purchase decision	16	6
probefahrt	Test drive	10	6
videos	videos	6	6
audi	audi	4	5
aufmerksam	attentive	10	5
beraten	Advice/consult	7	5
freunden	friends	8	5
internetrecherche	internet research	17	5

Word frequency analysis results 2.1.4 pre purchase social-external

Bundle of words into codes and themes

Internet → high number of customers is contacting various channels in the internet to get information

Youtube → recent number of customers watching youtube videos to get emotion and facts about cars

Informiert not a singular theme , is more linked to the others. Refers to other themes

Rolle no added value refers to others

Freunde & Freund → some state that friend are good base for information, some do not use this

Fahren → other persons that drive these cars, or a test drive possible by third persons

Bekannten → only few new elements- also synonym for friends etc.

Familie → only few new elements- also same theme like friends and third persons etc.

Begeistert → third persons in social media that talked enthusiastic about the car

Videos → not a singular theme , is more linked to the others. Refers to other themes

Internetrecherche → refers to internet theme obove

Summary finding:

External information's are named by almost all participants. First information via internet is a must. Within the particular channels, youtube is named most to get information and emotional elements of the car. Some (but very few) also read blogs, forums and other social media information. Still a high number of people who read journalistsic magazines and test reports (established German journals, ams auto bild etc.)

Almost the half of participants made statements according to the influence of third persons (including family and friends. Some consult these people or even get inspired by them. Some state that external persons have no influence on pre-purchase stage.

<u>Analysis of purchase phase</u>

Word Frequency analysis results (filler words in stop list):

***Brand owned** (selected according do relevance and ex- filler words 2nd round):*

Word frequency analysis results 2.2.1 purchase brand owned

Word		Length	Count
ferrari	ferrari	7	3
auto	car	4	2
bestellt	ordered	8	2
blind	blind	5	2
abgeholt	picked up	8	1
audi	audi	4	1
autos	cars	5	1
besichtigen	to visit	11	1
brauche	need	7	1
cool	cool	4	1
fahren	to drive	6	1
fahrgestellnummer	chassis number	17	1
fotografiert	photographed	12	1
heftchen	booklets	8	1
hersteller	manufacturer	10	1
händler	dealer	7	1
interessant	interesting	11	1
internetplattform	internet platform	17	1
maranello	maranello	9	1
mercedes	mercedes	8	1

modelle	models	7	1
produktion	production	10	1
produktionsphasen	production phase	17	1
sehen	to see	5	1
skeptisch	skeptical	9	1
werk	factory	4	1

To less words to evaluate, to less statements.

Summary:

Brand owned channels almost no role. Except Ferrari, who send their customers a booklet with photographs during purchase and delivery phase

Word frequency analysis results 2.2.2 purchase partner owned

Word		Length	Count
auto	car	4	27
händler	dealer	7	27
verkäufer	seller	9	24
wichtig	important	7	12
ansprechpartner	contact person	15	8
service	service	7	8
vertragshändler	contract dealer	15	8
begeistern	to be enthusiastic about	10	7
mercedes	mercedes	8	7
probefahrt	test drive	10	7
autohaus	dealership	8	6
erreichbarkeit	availability	14	6
kunden	customers	6	6
whatsapp	whatsapp	8	6
abgeholt	picked up	8	5
ambiente	environment	8	5
autos	cars	5	5
bestellt	ordered	8	5
facebook	facebook	8	5
kaufen	buy	6	5
monate	months	6	5
telefon	phone	7	5
erreichbar	available	10	4

fahrzeug	vehicle	8	4
kaufe	buy	5	4

Händler / vertragshändler → some information about ordering or price negotiations

Verkäufer → expectation towards sales rep (attention – in detail in cognitive chapter), sales rep helps with final items to order

Ansprechpartner → prefer one or more contact persons? How to reach contact person? (attention – in detail in cognitive chapter),

Service → not really deep. Mention service at dealer

Begeistern → "what could delight you in purchase phase?" → special status, partner should delight the customers,

Summary:

Mainly about the negotiation, price and order process. Majority prefers one contact person in this stage.

Word frequency analysis results 2.2.3 purchase customer owned

Word		Length	Count
auto	car	4	9
glaube	think	6	6
machen	to do	6	5
verkäufer	seller	9	5
fahrzeug	vehicle	8	4
probefahrt	test drive	10	4
bestellt	ordered	8	3
kaufentscheidung	purchase decision	16	3
maximal	maximum	7	3
richtige	right	8	3
zugelassen	registered	10	3
akzeptabel	acceptable	10	2
auslieferung	delivery	12	2
ausstattung	equipment	11	2
bauchgefühl	gut feeling	11	2
entscheide	decide	10	2
entscheidung	decision	12	2
erledigt	done / finished	8	2
ferrari	ferrari	7	2
geholt	brought	6	2
gekauft	bought	7	2
geld	money	4	2

gesprochen	spoken	10	2
gestärkt	strengthened	8	2
kaufe	buy	5	2
mitgenommen	taken	11	2
pushy	pushy	5	2
schnell	quick	7	2

Words are not enough to get good themes out of it. Here, we screened the raw data of code and developed sub coding accordingly

Summary:

Its about the final decision. The people emphasis that they do not need a sales man, they know what they do and want. Also about financing and having the money together. Accaptenace of long and short delivery times

Word frequency analysis results 2.2.4 purchase social-external

Word		Length	Count
auto	car	4	6
entschieden	decide	11	5
vielleicht	perhaps	10	4
facebook	facebook	8	3
situation	situation	9	3
events	events	6	2
händler	dealer	7	2
internet	internet	8	2
jahre	years	5	2
kaufentscheidung	purchase decision	16	2
moment	moment	6	2
probefahrt	test drive	10	2
schön	beautiful	5	2
vergleich	comparison	9	2
whatsapp	whatsapp	8	2
attraktiv	attractive	9	1
ausschaut	looks	9	1
austausch	exchange	9	1
autohaus	dealership	8	1
autohäuser	dealerships	10	1
befreundet	friendship	10	1
bierchen	beer	8	1

fahren	to drive	6	1
feeling	feeling	7	1
freunde	friends	7	1
gemeinschaften	communities	14	1

Words are not enough to get good themes out of it. Here, we screened the raw data of code and developed sub coding accordingly

Summary:

Final clearifiction wirth partner. Some to get final input from events during their purchase phase.

Analysis of post-purchase phase

Word frequency analysis results 2.3.1 post purchase brand owned

Word		Length	Count
autos	cars	5	4
porsche	porsche	7	3
schön	beautiful	5	3
events	events	6	2
fahrzeug	vehicle	8	2
ferrari	ferrari	7	2
werk	factory	4	2
abgeholt	picked up	8	1
bugatti	bugatti	7	1
eingeladen	invited	10	1
erwarten	to expect	8	1
essen	to eat	5	1
hausteststrecke	own track	15	1
instructor	instructor	10	1
leistung	performance	8	1
manufaktur	manufacture	10	1
mercedes	mercedes	8	1
molsheim	molsheim	8	1
mugello	mugello	7	1
rennstrecke	race track	11	1
rundführung	guided tour	11	1
sindelfingen	sindelfingen	12	1
stuttgart	stuttgart	9	1
veranstaltungen	events	15	1
werksbesichtigungen	factory tour	19	1

Words are not enough to get good themes out of it. Here, we screened the raw data of code and developed sub coding accordingly

Summary:

Few inputs to factory tours, moderate feedback to join the entire assembling of the car. Some Brand events after purchase.

Word frequency analysis results 2.3.2 post purchase partner owned

Word		Length	Count
auto	car	4	18
mercedes	mercedes	8	11
termin	appointment	6	8
porsche	porsche	7	7
erwarten	to expect	8	6
schneller	faster	9	6
service	service	7	6
behandlung	treatment	10	5
fahre	drive	5	5
fahrzeug	vehicle	8	5
schlüssel	key	9	5
werkstatt	workshop	9	5
besser	better	6	4
cool	cool	4	4
gleich	same	6	4
händler	dealer	7	4
meister	master	7	4
schnell	quick	7	4
services	services	8	4
verkäufer	seller	9	4
zufrieden	satisfied	9	4
ersatzwagen	replacement car	11	3
events	events	6	3
fahren	to drive	6	3
geld	money	4	3
inspektion	inspection	10	3
kunde	customer	5	3
leute	people	5	3
mechaniker	mechanic	10	3
möglichst	as	9	3

performancemarkenfahrer	drivers of performance vehicles	23	3
speziell	special	8	3
terminvereinbarung	making an appointment	18	3
wünschen	to wish	8	3
zeit	time	4	3
abholen	to pick up	7	2
audi	audi	4	2
besonders	particularly	9	2
betreuen	to look after	8	2

Termin → preferred appointments are preferred by the customer group (check also emotional cognitive chapter – some do not feel the need to be preferred)

Erwarten → expect a better treatment,

schneller → no additional info's. Links to topics above

service → no additional info's. Links to topics above

behandlung -> no additional info's. Links to topics above

Summary:

Mainly its about a preferred treatment at service /appointment in dealership. Moszt of the references to expect a faster, and preffered treatment compared to drives of non luxury cars.

Word frequency analysis results 2.3.3 post purchase customer owned

Word		Length	Count
auto	car	4	7
fahre	drive	5	6
freien	free	6	3
werkstatt	workshop	9	3
eingeladen	invited	10	2
fahrzeug	vehicle	8	2
kostet	costs	6	2
mein	my	4	2
selber	oneself	6	2
abholung	pick up	8	1
amüsement	amusement	9	1
angebot	offer	7	1
ansprechpartner	contact person	15	1
austausch	exchange	9	1
autofahrer	driver	10	1
autohändler	car dealers	11	1
bedürfnisse	needs	11	1
begeistert	enthusiastic	10	1
beschämend	shameful	10	1
blechschramme	scratch	13	1
bringservice	delivery service	12	1
club	club	4	1
events	events	6	1

fachleuten	professionals	10	1
geschichten	stories	11	1
gespräch	conversation	8	1
golf	golf	4	1
hersteller	manufacturer	10	1
hochwertigen	high quality	12	1
händen	hands	6	1
interessiert	interested	12	1
kartbahn	go kart track	8	1

Words are not enough to get good themes out of it. Here, we screened the raw data of code and developed sub coding accordingly

Summary:

Only few references that the customr is willing to travel longer distances to a good workshop. And that they prefer a contract service station (not a free one) with original parts).

Word frequency analysis results 2.3.4 post purchase social-external

Wort		Länge	Anzahl
clubs	clubs	5	36
vielleicht	perhaps	10	32
leute	people	5	20
events	events	6	18
auto	auto-	4	16
veranstaltungen	events	15	15
porsche	porsche	7	14
zeit	time	4	13
aktiv	active	5	12
fahren	to drive	6	12
wichtig	important	7	12
autos	cars	5	11
community	community	9	11
mercedes	mercedes	8	11
eingeladen	invited	10	10
motorsport	motorsport	10	10
treffen	meet	7	10
communities	communities	11	9
event	event	5	9
interessant	interesting	11	9
austausch	exchange	9	8
fahrzeug	vehicle	8	8
audi	audi	4	7

begeistern	to be enthusiastic about	10	7
fahre	drive	5	7
gleichgesinnten	like- minded people	15	7
hersteller	manufacturer	10	7
lacht	laughs	5	7
toll	toll	4	7
trifft	meets	6	7
spaß	fun	4	6
vorstellen	to imagine	10	6
cool	cool	4	5
fahrern	drivers	7	5
organisationen	organizations	14	5
privat	private	6	5

clubs + community + Club merge together due to same nature (in questionnaire used clubs and communities) → very good. To they are interested in clubs and communities or not? Do they already participate in a club or community?,

Events & veranstaltungen → generally positive but rather small and exclusive than big events

Zeit → is referring to the limited time why they not go for clubs

Aktiv → is a word that the interviewer has used in terms of clubs and communities

Treffen → refers to meet with others in clubs communities and events

Austausch → exchange with other people with the same hobby of the car

Begeistern → referring to events

Gleichgesinnten → goes into exchange with others „like minded people"

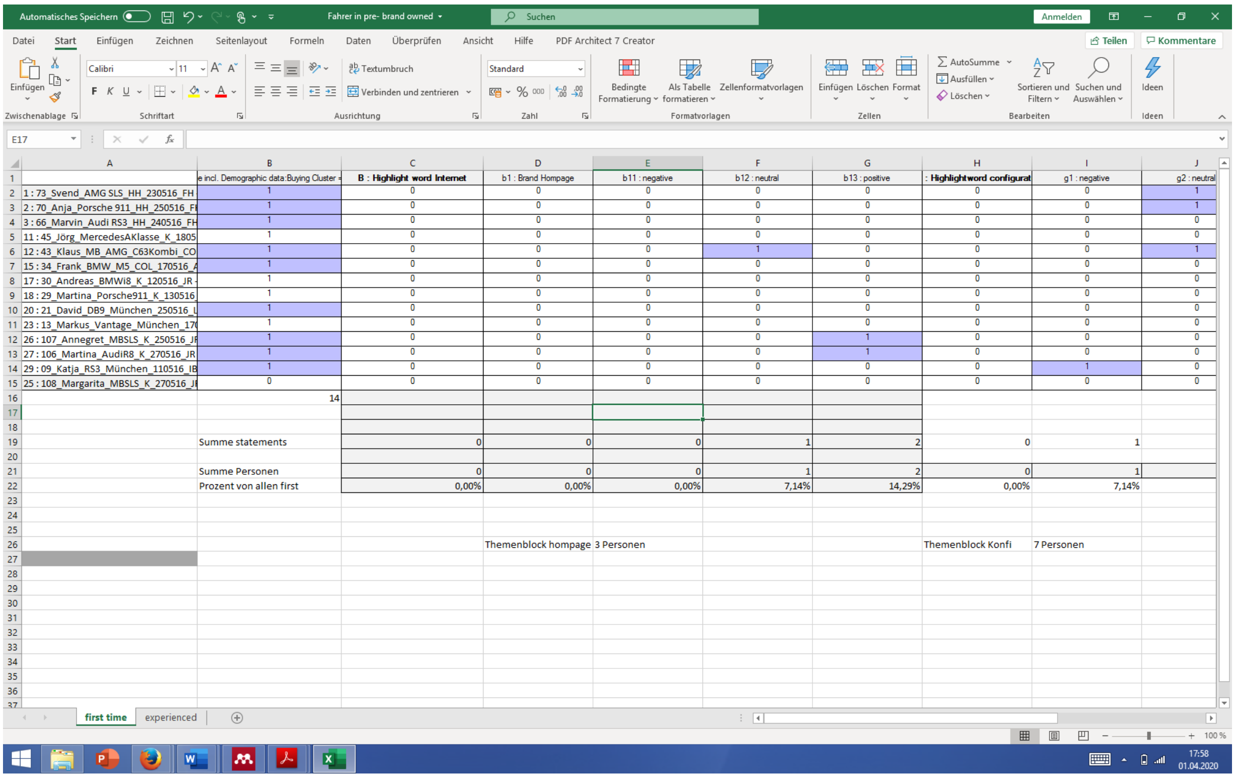
Summary finding:

A high stake is not interested in clubs and communities at all. a moderate number of people is interested in clubs and communities, also in the exchange with other drivers and like-minded people. Almost all reference do prefer invitations and information about events after the purchase. But these events should rather be for small groups and rather exclusive.

Appendix 8: tables with results out of context analysis - basis for customer mapping

Pre-purchase → brand owned

(Highlight words Internet, configurator, Events)



	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1		e incl. Demographic data:Buying Cluster =	**B : Highlight word Internet**	b1 : Brand Hompage	b11 : negative	b12 : neutral	b13 : positive	**: Highlightword configurat**	g1 : negative	g2 : neutral
2	1 : 73_Svend_AMG SLS_HH_230516_FH	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
3	2 : 70_Anja_Porsche 911_HH_250516_FI	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
4	3 : 66_Marvin_Audi RS3_HH_240516_FH	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5	11 : 45_Jörg_MercedesAKlasse_K_1805	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6	12 : 43_Klaus_MB_AMG_C63Kombi_CO	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
7	15 : 34_Frank_BMW_M5_COL_170516_A	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8	17 : 30_Andreas_BMWi8_K_120516_JR	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
9	18 : 29_Martina_Porsche911_K_130516	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
10	20 : 21_David_DB9_München_250516_L	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
11	23 : 13_Markus_Vantage_München_17(	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
12	26 : 107_Annegret_MBSLS_K_250516_JF	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
13	27 : 106_Martina_AudiR8_K_270516_JR	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
14	29 : 09_Katja_RS3_München_110516_IB	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
15	25 : 108_Margarita_MBSLS_K_270516_JI	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
16		14								
19		Summe statements	0	0	0	1	2	0	1	
21		Summe Personen	0	0	0	1	2	0	1	
22		Prozent von allen first	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	7,14%	14,29%	0,00%	7,14%	
26				Themenblock hompage	3 Personen			Themenblock Konfi	7 Personen	

Pre-Purchase – brand owned first-time buyers

	e incl. Demographic data:Buying Cluster =	B : Highlight word Internet	b1 : Brand Hompage	b11 : negative	b12 : neutral	b13 : positive	: Highlightword configurat	g1 : negative	g2 : neutral	g3 : positive	K : highlightword events	k1 : negative	k2 : neutral	k3 : positive
1 : 73_Svend_AMG SLS_H	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
2 : 70_Anja_Porsche 911_	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
3 : 66_Marvin_Audi RS3_H	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
11 : 45_Jörg_MercedesAK	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
12 : 43_Klaus_MB_AMG_(	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
15 : 34_Frank_BMW_M5_	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0
17 : 30_Andreas_BMWi8_	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
18 : 29_Martina_Porsche9	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
20 : 21_David_DB9_Münc	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0
23 : 13_Markus_Vantage_	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
26 : 107_Annegret_MBSLS	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
27 : 106_Martina_AudiR8	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
29 : 09_Katja_RS3_Münch	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
25 : 108_Margarita_MBSLS	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
	14													
	Sum statements	0	0	0	1	2	0	1	3	8	0	1	0	0
	Sum persons	0	0	0	1	2	0	1	3	4	0	1	0	0
	percentage of all first	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	7,14%	14,29%	0,00%	7,14%	21,43%	28,57%	0,00%	7,14%	0,00%	0,00%

Pre-Purchase – brand owned experienced buyers

	l. Demographic data:Buying Clu	B : Highlight word Internet	b1 : Brand Hompage	b11 : negative	b12 : neutral	b13 : positive	: Highlightword configurat	g1 : negative	g2 : neutral	g3 : positive	K : highlightword events	k1 : negative	k2 : neutral	k3 : positive
4 : 65_Jeton_Ferrari 458_HH_	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
5 : 64_Marco_Audi RS3_HH_2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
6 : 63_Lars_Lamborghini_HH_	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
7 : 60_Ralf_Audi RS6_HH_200	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
8 : 56_Frank_BMW M5_HH_17	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
9 : 55_Ute_Audi RS 5_HH_190	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
10 : 53_Günter_AMG GT_HH_	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
13 : 38_Uwe_AudiRS6_K_250	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0
14 : 36_Arzu_MercedesC63_K	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
16 : 32_Kirsten_AudiRSQ3_K_	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
19 : 27_Claudio_Ferrari_K_10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0
21 : 20_Maik_Ferrari458_Mür	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
22 : 18_Johannes_911Turbo_	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
24 : 11_Peter_911 Carrera4S_	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
28 : 104_Rolf_Porsche911_K_	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
30 : 08_Brian_R8_München_1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
31 : 06_Teo_AMGE63_Münch	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1
32 : 02_Hartmut_AMGS63_Mü	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	18													
	Sum statements	0	1	1	0	2	0	2	2	12	0	0	1	3
	Sum persons	0	1	1	0	2	0	2	2	7	0	0	1	3
	percentage of all exp.	0,00%	5,56%	5,56%	0,00%	11,11%	0,00%	11,11%	11,11%	38,89%	0,00%	0,00%	5,56%	16,67%

Pre-Purchase – partner owned I/II first-time buyers

	l. Demographic data:Buying Clus	**B : Highlightword Dealer**	b1 : negative (i.e. no role)	b2 : neutral	21 : dealer calls and takes actio	b22 : dealer gives information	b3 : positive (i.e. plays role)	**T : Highlightword seller and sales rep (sales consultancy)**	t1 : negative	t2 : neutral	t3 : positive	t4 : z_mobile sales rep
1 : 73_Svend_AMG SLS_HH	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
2 : 70_Anja_Porsche 911_H	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3 : 66_Marvin_Audi RS3_HI	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
11 : 45_Jörg_MercedesAKl	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
12 : 43_Klaus_MB_AMG_C6	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
15 : 34_Frank_BMW_M5_C	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0
17 : 30_Andreas_BMWi8_K	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0
18 : 29_Martina_Porsche91	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
20 : 21_David_DB9_Münch	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
23 : 13_Markus_Vantage_N	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
26 : 107_Annegret_MBSLS_	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
27 : 106_Martina_AudiR8_I	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0
29 : 09_Katja_RS3_Münche	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
25 : 108_Margarita_MBSLS_	1	0	0	0	0	2	4	0	0	0	2	0
Summe	14											
	Sum statements	0	3	1	0	3	12	0	2	0	5	1
	Sum personen		2	1	0	2	7	0	1	0	3	1
	Percent of all first time		14,29%	7,14%	0,00%	14,29%	50,00%	0,00%	7,14%	0,00%	21,43%	7,14%

Pre-Purchase – partner owned I/II experienced buyers

	e incl. Demographic data:Buying Cluster =	**B : Highlightword Dealer**	b1 : negative (i.e. no role)	b2 : neutral	21 : dealer calls and takes actio	b22 : dealer gives information	b3 : positive (i.e. plays role)	**: Highlightword seller and sales rep (sales consultancy**	t1 : negative	t2 : neutral	t3 : positive	t4 : z_mobile sales rep
4 : 65_Jeton_Ferrari 458_HH_23	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
5 : 64_Marco_Audi RS3_HH_240	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
6 : 63_Lars_Lamborghini_HH_24	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
7 : 60_Ralf_Audi RS6_HH_20051	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
8 : 56_Frank_BMW M5_HH_170	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	1	1	0
9 : 55_Ute_Audi RS 5_HH_19051	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
10 : 53_Günter_AMG GT_HH_17	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
13 : 38_Uwe_AudiRS6_K_25051	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
14 : 36_Arzu_MercedesC63_K_	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
16 : 32_Kirsten_AudiRSQ3_K_1	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
19 : 27_Claudio_Ferrari_K_1005	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
21 : 20_Maik_Ferrari458_Münc	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
22 : 18_Johannes_911Turbo_M	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
24 : 11_Peter_911 Carrera4S_M	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1
28 : 104_Rolf_Porsche911_K_27	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
30 : 08_Brian_R8_München_18	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
31 : 06_Teo_AMGE63_München	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
32 : 02_Hartmut_AMGS63_Mün	0	0	0	0	1	0	3	0	0	0	1	0
Summe	18											
	Sum statements	0	5	0	2	9	11	0	1	1	4	1
	Sum personen		5	0	2	7	8	0	1	1	3	1
	Percent of all experienced		27,78%	0,00%	11,11%	38,89%	44,44%	0,00%	5,56%	5,56%	16,67%	5,56%

Pre-Purchase – partner owned II/II first-time buyers

	ncl. Demographic data:Buying Cluste	F : Highlightword test drive	f1 : negative (i.e. no test drive)	f2 : neutral	f3 : positive (i.e. important, did test drive)	J : z_3D animation insteadt of test drive	J1 : negative	j2 : positive
1 : 73_Svend_AMG	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
2 : 70_Anja_Porsch	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
3 : 66_Marvin_Aud	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
11 : 45_Jörg_Merce	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
12 : 43_Klaus_MB_	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
15 : 34_Frank_BMW	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
17 : 30_Andreas_B	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
18 : 29_Martina_Po	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
20 : 21_David_DB9	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
23 : 13_Markus_Va	1	0	0	0	2	0	1	0
26 : 107_Annegret	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
27 : 106_Martina_A	1	0	0	0	2	0	1	0
29 : 09_Katja_RS3_	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
25 : 108_Margarita	1	0	2	0	3	0	1	0
	14							
	Sum statements	0	4	1	15	0	5	0
	Sum persons	0	3	1	10	0	5	0
	percent of all first	0,00%	21,43%	7,14%	71,43%	0,00%	35,71%	0,00%

Pre-Purchase – partner owned II/II experienced buyers

	l. Demographic data:Buying Clu	F : Highlightword test drive	f1 : negative (i.e. no test drive)	f2 : neutral	f3 : positive (i.e. important, did test drive)	J : z_3D animation insteadt of test drive	J1 : negative	j2 : positive
4 : 65_Jeton_Ferrari 458_HH_2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
5 : 64_Marco_Audi RS3_HH_24	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6 : 63_Lars_Lamborghini_HH_2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
7 : 60_Ralf_Audi RS6_HH_2005	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8 : 56_Frank_BMW M5_HH_170	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
9 : 55_Ute_Audi RS 5_HH_1905	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
10 : 53_Günter_AMG GT_HH_1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
13 : 38_Uwe_AudiRS6_K_2505	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
14 : 36_Arzu_MercedesC63_K_	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
16 : 32_Kirsten_AudiRSQ3_K_1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
19 : 27_Claudio_Ferrari_K_100	0	0	1	0	2	0	1	0
21 : 20_Maik_Ferrari458_Münc	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
22 : 18_Johannes_911Turbo_M	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
24 : 11_Peter_911 Carrera4S_M	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0
28 : 104_Rolf_Porsche911_K_2	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
30 : 08_Brian_R8_München_18	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
31 : 06_Teo_AMGE63_Münche	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
32 : 02_Hartmut_AMGS63_Mü	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0
	18							
	Sum statements	0	10	2	6	0	3	0
	Sum persons	0	8	2	5	0	3	0
	percent of all experienc	0,00%	44,44%	11,11%	27,78%	0,00%	16,67%	0,00%

Pre-Purchase – customer owned (not used)

Pre-Purchase – social owned first-time buyers

	e incl. Demographic data:Buying Cluster =	B : Internet	b1 : blogs and forums	b2 : online page of magazines	b3 : social media	b4 : youtube
1 : 73_Svend_AMG SLS_HH_	1	2	0	0	0	0
2 : 70_Anja_Porsche 911_HH	1	0	0	0	0	0
3 : 66_Marvin_Audi RS3_HH	1	0	0	0	0	0
11 : 45_Jörg_MercedesAKlas	1	0	0	0	0	1
12 : 43_Klaus_MB_AMG_C63	1	1	0	0	0	0
15 : 34_Frank_BMW_M5_CO	1	1	0	0	0	0
17 : 30_Andreas_BMWi8_K_	1	0	0	0	1	3
18 : 29_Martina_Porsche911	1	2	0	0	0	0
20 : 21_David_DB9_Münche	1	0	0	0	0	0
23 : 13_Markus_Vantage_M	1	1	1	0	0	0
26 : 107_Annegret_MBSLS_K	1	3	0	2	0	2
27 : 106_Martina_AudiR8_K	1	2	0	0	0	0
29 : 09_Katja_RS3_München	1	0	0	0	1	2
25 : 108_Margarita_MBSLS_I	1	0	0	0	0	0
	14					
	SumStatements	12	1	2	2	8
	Sum Persons	7	1	1	2	4
	percent of all first time	50,00%	7,14%	7,14%	14,29%	28,57%

	wee incl. Demographic data:Buying Cluster = Fi	B : Media	B1 : test magazines (like auto motor sport)
1 : 73_Svend_AMG SLS_HH_	1	0	0
2 : 70_Anja_Porsche 911_HI	1	0	0
3 : 66_Marvin_Audi RS3_HH	1	0	0
11 : 45_Jörg_MercedesAKla	1	0	1
12 : 43_Klaus_MB_AMG_C6	1	0	0
15 : 34_Frank_BMW_M5_CC	1	0	0
17 : 30_Andreas_BMWi8_K_	1	0	0
18 : 29_Martina_Porsche91	1	0	0
20 : 21_David_DB9_Münche	1	0	0
23 : 13_Markus_Vantage_M	1	0	1
26 : 107_Annegret_MBSLS_	1	0	0
27 : 106_Martina_AudiR8_K	1	0	0
29 : 09_Katja_RS3_Münche	1	0	0
25 : 108_Margarita_MBSLS_	1	0	0
	14		
	Sum Statements	0	2
	Sum Persons	0	2
	Percent of all first time	0,00%	14,29%

First time buyers; Pre-Purchase, social, third persons				
	e incl. Demographic data:Buying Cluster =	B : third persons	B1 : family	B2 : friends
1 : 73_Svend_AMG SLS_HH_2	1	0	0	0
2 : 70_Anja_Porsche 911_HH_	1	0	0	0
3 : 66_Marvin_Audi RS3_HH_2	1	0	0	1
11 : 45_Jörg_MercedesAKlass	1	0	0	2
12 : 43_Klaus_MB_AMG_C63K	1	0	0	1
15 : 34_Frank_BMW_M5_COL	1	0	0	0
17 : 30_Andreas_BMWi8_K_1	1	0	0	0
18 : 29_Martina_Porsche911_	1	1	0	1
20 : 21_David_DB9_München	1	0	0	1
23 : 13_Markus_Vantage_Mü	1	1	0	1
26 : 107_Annegret_MBSLS_K_	1	0	1	1
27 : 106_Martina_AudiR8_K_2	1	0	0	1
29 : 09_Katja_RS3_München_	1	1	1	1
25 : 108_Margarita_MBSLS_K_	1	1	0	0
	14			
	Sum Statements	4	2	10
	Sum Persons	4	2	9
	Percent of all first time	28,57%	14,29%	64,29%

Pre-Purchase – social owned experienced buyers

	incl. Demographic data:Buying Cluster	B : Internet	b1 : blogs and forums	b2 : online page of magazines	b3 : social media	b4 : youtube
4 : 65_Jeton_Ferrari 45	0	0	0	0	0	0
5 : 64_Marco_Audi RS3	0	0	0	0	0	0
6 : 63_Lars_Lamborghi	0	0	0	0	0	0
7 : 60_Ralf_Audi RS6_H	0	1	0	1	0	0
8 : 56_Frank_BMW M5	0	2	0	0	0	0
9 : 55_Ute_Audi RS 5_H	0	1	1	1	0	1
10 : 53_Günter_AMG G	0	0	1	0	0	0
13 : 38_Uwe_AudiRS6_	0	1	0	0	0	2
14 : 36_Arzu_Mercede	0	1	0	0	0	0
16 : 32_Kirsten_AudiR	0	0	0	0	0	0
19 : 27_Claudio_Ferrar	0	0	0	0	0	2
21 : 20_Maik_Ferrari45	0	0	0	0	0	0
22 : 18_Johannes_911T	0	0	0	0	0	0
24 : 11_Peter_911 Carr	0	1	0	0	0	0
28 : 104_Rolf_Porsche9	0	1	0	0	0	1
30 : 08_Brian_R8_Münc	0	1	0	0	0	0
31 : 06_Teo_AMGE63_I	0	3	0	0	0	0
32 : 02_Hartmut_AMGS	0	1	0	1	0	0
	18					
	Sum Statements	13	2	3	0	6
	Sum persons	10	2	3	0	4
	percent of all flenexperience	55,56%	11,11%	16,67%	0,00%	22,22%

	viewee incl. Demographic data:Buying Cluster = First t	B : Media	b1 : test magazines (like auto motor sport)
4 : 65_Jeton_Ferrari 458_HH_23	0	1	0
5 : 64_Marco_Audi RS3_HH_240	0	0	0
6 : 63_Lars_Lamborghini_HH_24	0	0	0
7 : 60_Ralf_Audi RS6_HH_20051	0	0	1
8 : 56_Frank_BMW M5_HH_170	0	0	0
9 : 55_Ute_Audi RS 5_HH_19051	0	0	0
10 : 53_Günter_AMG GT_HH_17	0	0	2
13 : 38_Uwe_AudiRS6_K_25051	0	0	0
14 : 36_Arzu_MercedesC63_K_1	0	0	0
16 : 32_Kirsten_AudiRSQ3_K_1	0	0	0
19 : 27_Claudio_Ferrari_K_1005	0	0	1
21 : 20_Maik_Ferrari458_Münc	0	0	0
22 : 18_Johannes_911Turbo_M	0	0	0
24 : 11_Peter_911 Carrera4S_M	0	0	1
28 : 104_Rolf_Porsche911_K_27	0	0	0
30 : 08_Brian_R8_München_18	0	0	0
31 : 06_Teo_AMGE63_Münchel	0	0	1
32 : 02_Hartmut_AMGS63_Mün	0	0	0
	18		
	Sum Statements	1	6
	Sum Persons	1	5
	Percent of all experienced	5,56%	27,78%

Experienced; Pre-Purchase, social, third persons

	e incl. Demographic data:Buying Cluster =	B : third persons	B1 : family	B2 : friends
4 : 65_Jeton_Ferrari 458_HH	0	0	0	0
5 : 64_Marco_Audi RS3_HH_	0	0	0	0
6 : 63_Lars_Lamborghini_HH	0	0	0	0
7 : 60_Ralf_Audi RS6_HH_20	0	0	1	0
8 : 56_Frank_BMW M5_HH_1	0	0	0	2
9 : 55_Ute_Audi RS 5_HH_19	0	0	0	2
10 : 53_Günter_AMG GT_HH	0	0	0	1
13 : 38_Uwe_AudiRS6_K_25	0	0	0	0
14 : 36_Arzu_MercedesC63_	0	1	0	1
16 : 32_Kirsten_AudiRSQ3_K	0	0	0	1
19 : 27_Claudio_Ferrari_K_1	0	2	0	0
21 : 20_Maik_Ferrari458_Mü	0	0	0	0
22 : 18_Johannes_911Turbo_	0	0	0	1
24 : 11_Peter_911 Carrera4S	0	0	0	0
28 : 104_Rolf_Porsche911_K	0	0	0	0
30 : 08_Brian_R8_München_	0	1	0	0
31 : 06_Teo_AMGE63_Münch	0	0	0	0
32 : 02_Hartmut_AMGS63_M	0	0	0	0
	18			
	Sum Statements	4	1	8
	Sum Persons	3	1	6
	Percent of all experienced	16,67%	5,56%	33,33%

Purchase – brand owned first time/experienced buyers (not used)

Purchase – partner owned first time buyers

	l. Demographic data:Buying Clu	F : delivery time	f1 : fast prefered	f2 : longer ok	: Negotiation (i.e. price financing	J : ordering	J1 : fast	J2 : longer	N : highlightword enthusiasm	O : highlightword seller sales rep
1 : 73_Svend_AMG SLS_HH_230	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
2 : 70_Anja_Porsche 911_HH_25	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3 : 66_Marvin_Audi RS3_HH_240	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
11 : 45_Jörg_MercedesAKlasse_	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
12 : 43_Klaus_MB_AMG_C63Kor	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
15 : 34_Frank_BMW_M5_COL_1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
17 : 30_Andreas_BMWi8_K_120	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
18 : 29_Martina_Porsche911_K_	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
20 : 21_David_DB9_München_2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
23 : 13_Markus_Vantage_Münc	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
26 : 107_Annegret_MBSLS_K_25	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
27 : 106_Martina_AudiR8_K_270	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
29 : 09_Katja_RS3_München_11	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
25 : 108_Margarita_MBSLS_K_27	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1
	14									
	Summe Statements	0	1	2	5	0	3	1	2	3
	Summe Personen	0	1	2	4	0	2	1	2	3
	Prozent von allen first ti	0,00%	7,14%	14,29%	28,57%	0,00%	14,29%	7,14%	14,29%	21,43%

Purchase – partner owned experienced buyers

	wee incl. Demographic data:Buying Cluster = Fir	F : delivery time	f1 : fast prefered	f2 : longer ok	I : Negotiation (i.e. price)	J : ordering	J1 : fast	J2 : longer	: highlightword enthusias	O : highlightword seller sales rep
4 : 65_Jeton_Ferrari 458	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5 : 64_Marco_Audi RS3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6 : 63_Lars_Lamborghin	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
7 : 60_Ralf_Audi RS6_H	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8 : 56_Frank_BMW M5_	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
9 : 55_Ute_Audi RS 5_H	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
10 : 53_Günter_AMG GT	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
13 : 38_Uwe_AudiRS6_	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
14 : 36_Arzu_Mercedes	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
16 : 32_Kirsten_AudiRS	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
19 : 27_Claudio_Ferrari	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
21 : 20_Maik_Ferrari458	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
22 : 18_Johannes_911T	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
24 : 11_Peter_911 Carre	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
28 : 104_Rolf_Porsche9	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
30 : 08_Brian_R8_Münc	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
31 : 06_Teo_AMGE63_N	0	0	0	1	2	0	1	0	0	1
32 : 02_Hartmut_AMGS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	18									
	Summe Statements	0	7	1	3	0	3	0	4	6
	Summe Personen	0	6	1	2	0	3	0	4	6
	Prozent von allen experienced	0,00%	33,33%	5,56%	11,11%	0,00%	16,67%	0,00%	22,22%	33,33%

Purchase – customer owned first time buyers

	Interviewee incl. Demographic data:Buying Cluster = First time	C : Customer is in control of decision
1 : 73_Svend_AMG SLS_H	1	0
2 : 70_Anja_Porsche 911_	1	0
3 : 66_Marvin_Audi RS3_I	1	0
11 : 45_Jörg_MercedesAK	1	0
12 : 43_Klaus_MB_AMG_(	1	3
15 : 34_Frank_BMW_M5_	1	0
17 : 30_Andreas_BMWi8_	1	0
18 : 29_Martina_Porsche9	1	0
20 : 21_David_DB9_Münc	1	0
23 : 13_Markus_Vantage_	1	0
26 : 107_Annegret_MBSL!	1	0
27 : 106_Martina_AudiR8	1	0
29 : 09_Katja_RS3_Münch	1	0
25 : 108_Margarita_MBSL	1	0
	14	
	Sum Statements	3
	SumPersons	1
	Percent of all first timers	7,14%

Purchase – customer owned experienced buyers

	incl. Demographic data:Buying Cluster	C : Customer is in control of decision
4 : 65_Jeton_Ferrari 458_HH_230516_	0	0
5 : 64_Marco_Audi RS3_HH_240516_F	0	0
6 : 63_Lars_Lamborghini_HH_240516_	0	2
7 : 60_Ralf_Audi RS6_HH_200516_FH -	0	0
8 : 56_Frank_BMW M5_HH_170516_FI	0	0
9 : 55_Ute_Audi RS 5_HH_190516_FH -	0	1
10 : 53_Günter_AMG GT_HH_170516_	0	0
13 : 38_Uwe_AudiRS6_K_250516_JR -	0	1
14 : 36_Arzu_MercedesC63_K_190516	0	1
16 : 32_Kirsten_AudiRSQ3_K_100516_	0	1
19 : 27_Claudio_Ferrari_K_100516_JR	0	0
21 : 20_Maik_Ferrari458_München_2	0	0
22 : 18_Johannes_911Turbo_Münche	0	1
24 : 11_Peter_911 Carrera4S_Münche	0	0
28 : 104_Rolf_Porsche911_K_270516_	0	0
30 : 08_Brian_R8_München_180516_L	0	0
31 : 06_Teo_AMGE63_München_1005	0	2
32 : 02_Hartmut_AMGS63_München_	0	1
	18	
	Summe Statements	10
	Summe Personen	8
	Prozent von allen experiencec	44,44%

Purchase – social owned first time buyers

	I. Demographic data:Buying Clu	B : events during purchase stage	C : neigbour	D : partnerin together decided
1 : 73_Svend_AMG SLS_HH_230516	1	0	0	1
2 : 70_Anja_Porsche 911_HH_25051	1	0	0	0
3 : 66_Marvin_Audi RS3_HH_24051	1	0	0	0
11 : 45_Jörg_MercedesAKlasse_K_	1	0	0	0
12 : 43_Klaus_MB_AMG_C63Kombi	1	0	0	0
15 : 34_Frank_BMW_M5_COL_1705	1	0	0	0
17 : 30_Andreas_BMWi8_K_120516	1	0	0	1
18 : 29_Martina_Porsche911_K_130	1	0	0	0
20 : 21_David_DB9_München_2505	1	0	0	0
23 : 13_Markus_Vantage_München	1	0	0	0
26 : 107_Annegret_MBSLS_K_25051	1	0	0	0
27 : 106_Martina_AudiR8_K_27051	1	0	0	0
29 : 09_Katja_RS3_München_11051	1	0	0	0
25 : 108_Margarita_MBSLS_K_2705	1	0	0	0
	14			
	Sum Statements	0	0	2
	Sum persons	0	0	2
	Percent of allfirst timers	0,00%	0,00%	14,29%

Purchase – social owned experienced buyers

	I. Demographic data:Buying Clu	B : events during purchase stage	C : neigbour	D : partnerin together decided
4 : 65_Jeton_Ferrari 458_	0	0	0	0
5 : 64_Marco_Audi RS3_H	0	0	0	0
6 : 63_Lars_Lamborghini_	0	0	0	0
7 : 60_Ralf_Audi RS6_HH_	0	0	0	0
8 : 56_Frank_BMW M5_H	0	0	0	0
9 : 55_Ute_Audi RS 5_HH_	0	0	0	0
10 : 53_Günter_AMG GT_	0	0	0	0
13 : 38_Uwe_AudiRS6_K_	0	0	0	0
14 : 36_Arzu_MercedesC	0	0	0	0
16 : 32_Kirsten_AudiRSQ	0	0	0	0
19 : 27_Claudio_Ferrari_K	0	1	0	0
21 : 20_Maik_Ferrari458_	0	0	0	0
22 : 18_Johannes_911Tur	0	1	0	0
24 : 11_Peter_911 Carrera	0	0	1	0
28 : 104_Rolf_Porsche911	0	0	0	0
30 : 08_Brian_R8_Münche	0	0	0	0
31 : 06_Teo_AMGE63_Mü	0	0	0	0
32 : 02_Hartmut_AMGS63	0	0	0	0
	18			
	Summe Statements	2	1	0
	Summe Personen	2	1	0
	Percent of all experienc	11,11%	5,56%	0,00%

Post-Purchase – brand owned first time buyers

	ncl. Demographic data:Buying Cluste	B : excitement factor	C : brand events	D : factory tour	E : joining the car assembly
1 : 73_Svend_AMG S	1	0	0	0	0
2 : 70_Anja_Porsche	1	0	0	0	0
3 : 66_Marvin_Audi	1	0	0	0	0
11 : 45_Jörg_Merced	1	0	0	0	0
12 : 43_Klaus_MB_A	1	0	0	0	0
15 : 34_Frank_BMW	1	0	0	0	0
17 : 30_Andreas_BM	1	0	0	0	0
18 : 29_Martina_Por	1	0	0	1	0
20 : 21_David_DB9_	1	0	0	0	0
23 : 13_Markus_Van	1	0	0	0	0
26 : 107_Annegret_	1	0	0	0	0
27 : 106_Martina_Au	1	0	0	0	0
29 : 09_Katja_RS3_N	1	0	0	0	0
25 : 108_Margarita_	1	0	0	0	0
	14				
	Sum Statements	0	0	1	0
	Sum persons	0	0	1	0
	Percentage of all first time	0,00%	0,00%	7,14%	0,00%

Post-Purchase – brand owned experienced buyers

	ncl. Demographic data:Buying Cluste	B : excitement factor	C : brand events	D : factory tour	E : joining the car assembly
4 : 65_Jeton_Ferrari 458_HH_	0	0	0	0	0
5 : 64_Marco_Audi RS3_HH_2	0	0	0	0	0
6 : 63_Lars_Lamborghini_HH_	0	0	1	0	0
7 : 60_Ralf_Audi RS6_HH_200	0	0	0	0	0
8 : 56_Frank_BMW M5_HH_1	0	0	0	0	0
9 : 55_Ute_Audi RS 5_HH_190	0	0	0	0	0
10 : 53_Günter_AMG GT_HH_	0	0	0	0	0
13 : 38_Uwe_AudiRS6_K_250	0	0	0	0	0
14 : 36_Arzu_MercedesC63_K	0	0	0	0	0
16 : 32_Kirsten_AudiRSQ3_K_	0	0	0	0	0
19 : 27_Claudio_Ferrari_K_10	0	0	0	0	0
21 : 20_Maik_Ferrari458_Mür	0	0	0	0	0
22 : 18_Johannes_911Turbo_	0	0	0	0	0
24 : 11_Peter_911 Carrera4S_	0	0	1	0	0
28 : 104_Rolf_Porsche911_K_	0	0	0	0	0
30 : 08_Brian_R8_München_1	0	0	0	0	0
31 : 06_Teo_AMGE63_Münch	0	0	0	2	2
32 : 02_Hartmut_AMGS63_M	0	0	0	0	2
	18				
	Sum Statements	0	2	2	4
	Sum persons	0	2	1	2
	percentage of all experienc	0,00%	11,11%	5,56%	11,11%

Post-Purchase – partner owned first time buyers

	ıcl. Demographic data:Buying Cluste	C : no prefered treatment	D : prefered treatment
1 : 73_Svend_Al	1	0	1
2 : 70_Anja_Por	1	0	0
3 : 66_Marvin_A	1	2	0
11 : 45_Jörg_Me	1	1	0
12 : 43_Klaus_M	1	0	2
15 : 34_Frank_B	1	0	1
17 : 30_Andreas	1	0	2
18 : 29_Martina	1	0	0
20 : 21_David_D	1	1	0
23 : 13_Markus_	1	0	0
26 : 107_Annegı	1	0	2
27 : 106_Martin	1	0	1
29 : 09_Katja_RS	1	0	2
25 : 108_Margar	1	3	0
	14		
	Sum Statements	7	11
	sum persons	4	7
	percentage of all first time	28,57%	50,00%

Post-Purchase – partner owned experienced buyers

	I. Demographic data:Buying Clu	C : no prefered treatment	D : prefered treatment
4 : 65_Jeton_Ferrari 458_	0	0	0
5 : 64_Marco_Audi RS3_H	0	0	2
6 : 63_Lars_Lamborghini_	0	0	0
7 : 60_Ralf_Audi RS6_HH	0	0	1
8 : 56_Frank_BMW M5_H	0	0	2
9 : 55_Ute_Audi RS 5_HH	0	1	0
10 : 53_Günter_AMG GT_	0	0	1
13 : 38_Uwe_AudiRS6_K	0	1	0
14 : 36_Arzu_MercedesC	0	1	1
16 : 32_Kirsten_AudiRSQ	0	0	2
19 : 27_Claudio_Ferrari_	0	0	0
21 : 20_Maik_Ferrari458_	0	0	0
22 : 18_Johannes_911Tu	0	0	0
24 : 11_Peter_911 Carrer	0	0	0
28 : 104_Rolf_Porsche91	0	0	0
30 : 08_Brian_R8_Münch	0	1	1
31 : 06_Teo_AMGE63_Mü	0	0	4
32 : 02_Hartmut_AMGS6	0	0	0
	18		
	Sum Statements	4	14
	Sum persons	4	8
	percentage of all experi	22,22%	44,44%

Post-Purchase – customer owned (not used)

Post-Purchase – social owned first time buyers

	cl. Demographic data:Buying Clus	B : Highlightword clubs and communities	b1 : negative	b2 : neutral	b3 : positive	F : Highlightword events	f1 : negative	f2 : neutral	f3 : positive	lightword exchange with like minded	J1 : negative	J2 : neutral	J3 : positive
1 : 73_Svend_AM	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
2 : 70_Anja_Porsc	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3 : 66_Marvin_Au	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
11 : 45_Jörg_Merc	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
12 : 43_Klaus_MB	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
15 : 34_Frank_BM	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
17 : 30_Andreas_	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
18 : 29_Martina_P	1	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0
20 : 21_David_DB	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
23 : 13_Markus_V	1	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	3
26 : 107_Annegre	1	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1
27 : 106_Martina_	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
29 : 09_Katja_RS3	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
25 : 108_Margarit	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
	14												
	Sum Statements	0	10	2	4	0	0	2	5	0	4	1	6
	Sum persons	0	6	2	3	0	0	2	4	0	4	1	4
	percentage of all first tim	0,00%	42,86%	14,29%	21,43%	0,00%	0,00%	14,29%	28,57%	0,00%	28,57%	7,14%	28,57%

Post-Purchase – social owned experienced buyers

	l. Demographic data:Buying Clu	ighlightword clubs and commur	C : negative	D : neutral	E : positive	F : Highlightword events	G : negative	H : neutral	I : positive	ghlightword exchange with like minded p	K : negative	L : neutral	M : positive
4 : 65_Jeton_Ferrari 458_HH_230516_F	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
5 : 64_Marco_Audi RS3_HH_240516_FH	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6 : 63_Lars_Lamborghini_HH_240516_F	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
7 : 60_Ralf_Audi RS6_HH_200516_FH -	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8 : 56_Frank_BMW M5_HH_170516_FH	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
9 : 55_Ute_Audi RS 5_HH_190516_FH -	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
10 : 53_Günter_AMG GT_HH_170516_F	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
13 : 38_Uwe_AudiRS6_K_250516_JR - T	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
14 : 36_Arzu_MercedesC63_K_190516_	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
16 : 32_Kirsten_AudiRSQ3_K_100516_J	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2
19 : 27_Claudio_Ferrari_K_100516_JR -	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
21 : 20_Maik_Ferrari458_München_27	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
22 : 18_Johannes_911Turbo_München	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
24 : 11_Peter_911 Carrera4S_München	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
28 : 104_Rolf_Porsche911_K_270516_J	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0
30 : 08_Brian_R8_München_180516_LS	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
31 : 06_Teo_AMGE63_München_10051	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
32 : 02_Hartmut_AMGS63_München_1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	18												
	Sum Statements	0	11	1	6	0	0	1	6	0	2	0	7
	Sum persons	0	6	1	5	0	0	1	4	0	2	0	4
	percentage of all experi	0,00%	33,33%	5,56%	27,78%	0,00%	0,00%	5,56%	22,22%	0,00%	11,11%	0,00%	22,22%