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Luxury Consumption Tendency: Conceptualization, Scale Development and Validation

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Abstract

Luxury consumption is an appealing topic among researchers from the disciplines of psychology and marketing. Although past research on luxury consumption has provided a number of measurement tools to measure brand luxuriousness, attitudes toward the concept of luxury, perceptions of luxury, and prestige shopping preference, researchers lack a scale that measures the luxury consumption tendency using a consumer-centric approach. To this end, this paper introduces the luxury consumption tendency scale, which was produced following the conceptualization of the luxury consumption tendency. Across three studies (total $N =$ 1428), we developed an 18-item luxury consumption tendency scale that consisted of five dimensions. In Study 1, we conducted exploratory survey research of 11 Turkish Ph.D. students, and then, exploratory factor analysis was performed with the survey data collected from 520 Turkish undergraduate students. In Study 2, confirmatory factor analysis was performed on the survey data collected from 808 Turkish adults. In Study 3, we tested the validity performance of the luxury consumption tendency scale through a between-subjects experimental design in which 100 U.S. adults were randomly assigned to one of two conditions: a low-construal level condition and a high-construal level condition. The following results were determined across the three studies: the content, concurrent, convergent, discriminant, and nomological validity performances were established through descriptive (Study 1), cross-sectional (Study 2), and experimental (Study 3) designs. Additionally, the luxury consumption tendency was found to be positively associated with conspicuous consumption and status consumption. Furthermore, we demonstrated that as the construal level increases, so does the luxury consumption tendency.

Keywords Construal level · Luxury consumption · Luxury consumption tendency · Luxury consumption tendency scale · Scale development

The concept of luxury dates back to Adam Smith (1776) who divided consumption into subcategories, namely, the categories of necessary, basic, affluent, and luxury. Compared to the eighteenth century, needless to say, more attention has been paid to luxury consumption in society because of better living conditions. Poor living conditions have largely been surpassed. Put more simply, individuals can easily obtain vital products (e.g., water, cloth) in their daily lives. Over the years, individuals' attention has been shifted from basic products to luxury products because of their desire to construct and present the self. People are defining their 'selves' using their possessions so that possessions are the extensions of each person's self (Belk 1988). Luxury consumption is one of the prevalent practices of contemporary individuals used to extend their selves. Expenditures of consumers for luxury products increased by 50% between 1994 and 2004, while expenditures for non-luxury products increased by 7% (Keane and McMillan 2004). Additionally, luxury brands had a total market value of 263 billion US dollars globally in 2007 (Verdict 2007). Furthermore, luxury brands have been evaluated as the fastest growing and most profitable business sector over the last ten years (Han et al. 2010).

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As mentioned above, luxury consumption is a salient topic among consumers. This situation has resulted in the concept of luxury consumption drawing the attention of researchers, especially from the fields of marketing (Dubois and Duquesne 1993; Kastanakis and Balabanis 2014; Sung et al. 2015; Wiedmann et al. 2009; Wilcox et al. 2009; Wong and Ahuvia 1998). Past research on luxury has provided a number of different approaches toward the concept of luxury. To comprehend this cumulative knowledge, past research in the literature can be divided into three subtypes. First, a number of studies have examined how consumers perceive luxury brands (Kapferer 1998; Sung et al. 2015; Vigneron and Johnson 2004). To this end, these studies have benefited from the use of scales, which mainly focus on the measurement of the attributes of luxury brands. Specifically, Kapferer (1998) developed a nine-item scale in which participants rated the degree to which a specific brand has luxury attributes. Additionally, Vigneron and Johnson (2004) developed the *brand luxury index (BLI)*. Simply put, the BLI measures the perceived luxuriousness of a specific brand. Past research within this first literature subtype has used these two scales since these scales focus on measurement regarding a specific brand. Second, there is another literature subtype that has examined consumers' attitudes and perceptions toward the concept luxury (Dubois and Laurent 1994; Dubois et al. 2001; Hansen and Wänke 2011; Hennigs et al. 2012; Nelissen and Meijers 2011; Shukla and Purani 2012). To this end, Dubois and Laurent (1994) developed *attitudes toward the concept of luxury*, whereas Dubois et al. (2001) developed a scale to measure individuals' perceptions of luxury. Past research in this second literature subtype mainly used these two scales since these scales specifically measure the concept of luxury from the consumers' points of view. Third, a great number of past studies have focused on examining the motivations, antecedents, and consequences of purchasing luxury goods (Amatulli and Guido 2011; Husic and Cicic 2009; Kastanakis and Balabanis 2012; Kastanakis and Balabanis 2014; Vigneron and Johnson 1999). In this literature subtype, researchers used a prestige shopping preference scale (PRECON; Deeter-Schmelz et al. 2000) and a single-item, which was specifically designed to examine the purchasing of luxury goods. However, PRECON is limited to clothes consumption, and thus, it provides only a limited understanding.

As it can be inferred from above, past studies have contributed to our understanding of luxury consumption. However, the tendency toward luxury consumption has yet to be examined in the current paper. Notably, this paper is a first attempt to understand the luxury consumption tendency as a trait. Furthermore, across three studies, a luxury consumption tendency scale was developed in this paper. The luxury consumption tendency scale developed in this paper is distinct from the past measures of luxury consumption mentioned in the previous paragraph. Particularly, this luxury consumption tendency scale measures participants' tendencies toward luxury consumption as a trait; past scales have not provided a trait-based approach toward luxury consumption.

To accomplish our research objective, we proposed five dimensions for the luxury consumption tendency, drawing on past research in the literature discussing luxury followed by the definition of the luxury consumption tendency. Subsequently, we developed a luxury consumption tendency scale based on our theoretical framework.

Luxury Consumption Tendency

Living our lives without consumption is almost impossible (Richins 1994). People consume throughout their lives, which makes sending messages to other people in society possible. It is even possible to develop an opinion about individuals by monitoring their consumption tendencies. Let us suppose, for example, that a person who regularly shops at Whole Foods Market would probably be evaluated as either a person who makes good money or a person who cares about food quality. At the same time, a person who regularly wears the same shirt would probably be evaluated as either a person who does not make good money or a person who is humble. Thus, what we consume provides clues about ourselves. Possessions that we own are an important part of the self (Belk 1988). People consume not only to fulfill their physiological needs but also to create their selves and to establish their roles in society (Chaudhuri and Majumdar 2006).

Luxury consumption is a consumption style that people might anticipate has some benefits. By engaging in luxury consumption, people can gain social advantages through following the consumption patterns of the social class of which they desire to be a part of (Kastanakis and Balabanis 2012). Given that the transition between social classes has become easier in today's modern society of consumption, the intensity of this desire cannot be ignored. Current societies have become 'societies without classes' (Kapferer and Bastien 2009), encouraging people to engage in luxury consumption. In other words, luxury consumption is no longer thought of as a consumption practice that belongs to a particular social class (Yeoman 2011). It could be argued that the easier the transitions between social classes are, the higher the possibility is that the consumption of luxury products will be evaluated as appealing.

People can obtain social and psychological benefits through luxury consumption practices (Shukla 2011); therefore, a comprehensive understanding of luxury consumption can be possible with psychological theories. The tend and befriend theory (Taylor 2012), which provides a framework to understanding luxury consumption, is one of these theories. According to the tend and befriend theory (Taylor 2012), when one is socially isolated or is under conditions of threat, the person seeks to affiliate himself/herself with others for protection and comfort. Luxury consumption practices are actions that provide social acceptance from social groups (Wang et al. 2012); as such, when people are socially isolated or excluded by others, they might want to engage in luxury consumption to obtain social acceptance from others who regularly perform luxury consumption. This social acceptance might eliminate the previous social threat of social exclusion. Consistent with this view, a recent study showed that conspicuous consumption can help individuals overcome feelings of social rejection (Wan et al. 2014). To sum up, the tend and befriend theory (Taylor 2012) could potentially offer propositions and understanding about why social exclusion and luxury consumption are related.

On the other hand, the compensatory control theory (Kay et al. 2009) can provide reasons as to why luxury consumption is desired following a lack of power and deprivation of personal control (Rucker and Galinsky 2008). The compensatory control theory posits that people compensate for their lack of personal control by enhancing an external source of control (Alper and Sumer 2017). Past research has found that the external source of control can be a belief in a controlling God (Kay et al. 2010a), endorsing the controlling capacity of the government (Kay et al. 2010b), identification with a national culture (Shepherd et al. 2011), or system justification (Kay and Friesen 2011). We believe that luxury consumption could be another external source of control that people enhance when they experience a deprivation of personal control. Because luxury products and services have the potential to provide social power to their owners (Rucker and Galinsky 2008) and since people intrinsically tend to perform luxury consumption as a response to this deprivation of personal control. It could, therefore, be inferred that people with low self-control tend to buy luxury products and services (Baumeister 2002) since they are deprived of personal control or are experiencing a lack of power. In summary, luxury consumption is a way of obtaining social power that people desire to compensate for their deprivation of personal control.

Luxury is about prestige and symbols, which are abstract concepts. Thus, it is possible to defend the notion that luxury has a mainly abstract (e.g., prestige, symbols) nature. The construal level theory (Trope and Liberman 2010) can offer an understanding of the abstract nature of the concept of luxury since the theory posits that people can have either a mainly abstract mindset (high-construal level) or a concrete mindset (low-construal level). People with high construal levels tend to focus on the abstract and central part of phenomena, whereas people with low construal levels tend to focus on the concrete details of phenomena. Therefore, we contend that people with high-construal levels are more interested in luxury consumption than people with low-construal levels are. Construal levels are not only trait variable but also can be manipulated momentarily. In particular, why-oriented questions (questions beginning with why) increase people's construal levels, whereas how-oriented questions (questions beginning with how) decrease people's construal levels (Liberman et al. 2007b). By manipulating people with why-oriented questions, which increase construal levels, people might be motivated toward luxury consumption.

The phenomenon of luxury consumption has drawn remarkable attention from researchers of consumer behavior. However, their attempts at understanding luxury consumption have been mainly restricted to brand-oriented and concept-oriented approaches. Put more simply, a great deal of previous research has focused on how consumers perceive brand luxuriousness (Hansen and Wänke 2011; Vigneron and Johnson 2004), what makes a brand considered luxury (Kapferer 1998), how big consumers' attitudes toward the concept of luxury are (Dubois et al. 2001), what the antecedents and consequences of luxury consumption are (Amatulli and Guido 2011; Husic and Cicic 2009; Kastanakis and Balabanis 2011), and what kind of personality the luxury brands have (Sung et al. 2015). Therefore, past research on luxury consumption has failed to evaluate luxury consumption as a trait of the consumer and, thus, the literature lacks in evaluating luxury consumption from a consumer-centric approach.

To evaluate luxury consumption with a consumer-centric approach, we first introduced the concept of *luxury consumption tendency*. We defined the *luxury consumption tendency* as *'the extent of an individual's tendency toward the consumption of unique and expensive products/services, with their symbolic meanings that are arbitrarily desired for some reason such as to send a message to his/her surroundings, to display owned status to others, to promote the self, to render the self as distinct from its surroundings and to move toward higher social classes'*. As can be concluded from the above definition, we evaluate the luxury consumption tendency as a trait of the consumer. This approach is consistent with past research practices on an array of different types of consumption, in which researchers evaluated specific consumption practices as traits (Chaudhuri et al. 2011; Eastman et al. 1999). Surprisingly, luxury consumption tendency has yet to be defined and examined in the current literature. Although cultural orientation (Wong and Ahuvia 1998), the goals of consumers (Escalas and Bettman 2003), and in-store environments (Sung et al. 2015) shape luxury consumption, we believe that consumers have an intrinsic tendency toward luxury consumption. Indeed, we claim that low-income consumers could have higher luxury consumption tendencies since this intrinsic tendency is independent from an extrinsic reality (income level).

To summarize, the luxury consumption tendency is a trait that has an intrinsic tendency toward luxury consumption.

Dimensions of Luxury Consumption Tendency

To recall, the current study proposes that the luxury consumption tendency is a trait variable. However, this proposition does not emphasize that luxury consumption cannot be shaped by situational factors. We accept that luxury is shaped by both trait and situational conditions. At the same time, we believe that situational conditions are a boundary condition for the trait nature of the luxury consumption tendency. Furthermore, to draw the boundaries of the scale developed in the current paper, we prefer to examine the luxury consumption tendency as a trait variable. This approach has consistencies with past research on scale development. Particularly, the status consumption tendency scale (Eastman et al. 1999) and the conspicuous consumption tendency scale (Chaudhuri et al. 2011) were developed with this approach, which evaluated the constructs as trait variables, as we do in this paper.

In the current paper, the luxury consumption tendency is evaluated as a multidimensional construct. Drawing on past work on luxury consumption, we segmented the luxury consumption tendency into the following sections.

Uniqueness

People might use brands to shape their selves (Belk 1988). Luxury brands provide special benefits to individuals in terms of expressing their ideal selves (Dubois and Laurent 1994; Gil et al. 2012). One of these special benefits is the feeling that the self is unique. Uniqueness appears to be one of the values provided to consumers through luxury products (Kapferer 1997; Ruvio 2008). Therefore, luxury products are designed with a focus on perfection (Vigneron and Johnson 1999).

Luxury consumption is a special kind of prestige-seeking consumer behavior since prestige is a feature of the concept of luxury. Past research on prestige-seeking consumer behavior has demonstrated that uniqueness, or snobbiness, is one motivation of prestige-seeking consumption (Vigneron and Johnson 1999), indicating that the feeling of uniqueness motivates consumers to buy luxury products. Uniqueness also provides benefits pertaining to self-enhancement. Consumers may want to increase their self-esteem to reduce the discrepancy between their current self and their ideal self. To this end, a luxury brand can serve this purpose. Put more simply, self-enhancement goals motivate consumers to buy luxury brands (Escalas and Bettman 2003).

Uniqueness is also what makes brands luxurious. Luxury brands can be described using two perceptions, namely, personal-oriented perceptions and non-personal oriented perceptions. Under the non-personal oriented perception, Vigneron and Johnson (2004) proposed the uniqueness factor. On the other hand, Wiedmann et al. (2009) claimed that uniqueness is one of the luxury values since consumers aim to feel exclusivity through owning luxury products. Furthermore, uniqueness could be considered a need that is met through luxury consumption (Tian et al. 2001). Particularly, the uniqueness dimension of the luxury consumption tendency makes it possible to understand the snob nature of luxury consumption (Kastanakis and Balabanis 2014).

Luxury consumption plays an important role in helping individuals to make their selves unique and to reach their ideal selves. This motivation is imposed upon consumers through advertisements in today's modern consumption societies (Belk and Pollay 1985). Given that individuals engage in luxury consumption with the aim of differentiating themselves from the rest of the society that they do not want to be similar to, it is probably safe to say that uniqueness is one of the dimensions of the luxury consumption tendency. Moreover, uniqueness is a value that consumers obtain through the consumption of luxury brands that is driven by their luxury consumption tendencies (Wiedmann et al. 2009).

Expensiveness

Luxury products and services are both relatively more expensive than basic products and services (Dubois and Duquesne 1993). The primary reason for this cost difference is that luxury products are designed with a focus on being both hedonic and perfect rather than being affordable (Vigneron and Johnson 1999). It is also known that people pay higher prices for luxury brands that offer prestige to impress their surroundings (Mason 1981). On the other hand, it is also possible to infer that luxury products should be expensive because individuals with higher incomes have a high tendency to buy luxury products and services (Dubois and Duquesne 1993).

The expensive nature of luxury products and services can provide an explanation for the self-protection benefits of luxury consumption. Self-protection is one of the functions of the luxury consumption tendency (Escalas and Bettman 2003), and expensiveness prevents consumers from obtaining luxury products and services easily. This prevention provides self-protection for consumers who regularly buy luxury products and services. Furthermore, expensiveness is frequently associated with quality. Put more simply, expensiveness creates a sense of high quality, which is one of the attributes of luxury products and services (Vigneron and Johnson 2004). Moreover, exploratory past research on luxury attitudes showed that consumers perceive luxury as referring to expensive commodities (Dubois et al. 2001).

Luxury products and services are inevitably expensive (Nueno and Quelch 1998), such that expensiveness should be a dimension of the luxury consumption tendency. Luxury goods provide a feeling of being different from others, that is, the brands with high prices provide this feeling (Dubois et al. 2001). Expensive luxury products can also send subtle signals to consumers. Although these signals are hardly identifiable, consumers are able to notice them (Berger and Heath 2007). This communication through subtle signals is somewhat similar to coded communication, such as the Morse alphabet.

Consumers evaluate brands with high price tags as luxury products (Wiedmann et al. 2009); thus, expensiveness is a remarkable part of the luxury consumption process. In addition, consumers see luxury goods as costly signals (Griskevicius et al. 2007). Consistent with the above, it is probably safe to say that expensiveness has become an almost mandatory characteristic for a product to be classified as a luxury product. Therefore, we propose that expensiveness is another dimension of the luxury consumption tendency.

Symbolic Meaning

Broadly speaking, people purchase luxury products for their hedonic rewards (Bian and Forsythe 2012). Additionally, many people utilize the social meanings and signs of luxury brands (Han et al. 2010). In today's contemporary world, products and services are referenced with their symbolic meanings rather than their physical details (Levy 1959). It is probably safe to argue that luxury products and services carry more symbolic meanings than basic products and services do. Thus, the origin of luxury consumption is saturated in terms of symbolic meaning (Dubois and Laurent 1994). An individual may express his/her ideal self through the luxury consumption process. Similarly, Vickers and Renand (2003) referred to luxury products as a symbol of personal social identity.

One of the salient motivations of luxury consumption is the hedonistic and symbolic meaning of luxury products (Vigneron and Johnson 1999). That is, luxury products and services are designed by emphasizing their symbolic benefits. The symbolic meanings of luxury brands are intangible utilities that feed consumers who are pursuing symbolic gains. Consumers can convey symbolic messages through owning luxury products and services. In a sense, conveying these symbolic messages could be a need for people from high social classes. This situation could be interpreted as hedonism, which is evaluated as one of the personally-oriented motivations of luxury consumption (Vigneron and Johnson 2004). The hedonistic nature of luxury consumption reveals consumers' hedonic pleasures. Consumers' hedonic pleasures might signal their social class such that consumers could diverge themselves from others through their specific hedonic pleasures. Indeed, these hedonic pleasures would meet hedonic needs. Past research on luxury value has claimed that hedonic value is a dimension of the luxury value (Wiedmann et al. 2009) that is proposed by luxury products and services.

The hedonic pleasures of consumers collectively create the concept of fashion. Fashion is also one of the central motivations of luxury consumption (Husic and Cicic 2009). By following a specific fashion trend, consumers are able to define themselves in line with their desired social classes. Broadly speaking, the burden of social class is produced by symbolic practices rather than physical practices (Bourdieu 1984). Furthermore, these symbolic practices lead to self-fulfillment, which is one of the hidden determinants of luxury consumption (Amatulli and Guido 2011).

Accordingly, it is not possible to have luxury products and services without symbolic meanings. Additionally, examining the luxury consumption tendency without taking symbolic motivations into account would be inappropriate. Therefore, we propose that the luxury consumption tendency should be conceptualized with a symbolic meaning dimension.

Arbitrary Desire

Sekora (1977: 23) defines luxury as "something that is not needed". Meanwhile, Webster (2002) defines it as "non-essential items or services that contribute to luxurious living; an indulgence or convenience beyond the indispensable minimum". The definitions above collectively emphasize the arbitrary nature of luxury. The lack of need is an element that is associated with luxury (Berthon et al. 2009). The concept of need should be examined in two different ways. First, physical need focuses on the survival process of human beings, and thus, it is not related to luxury consumption. In contrast, social need focuses on social capital, which can assure people's social belongings. For instance, if a person is a member of a higher social class, purchasing luxury goods would be a social need. From the point of view of social need, luxury would be considered as a kind of need. Luxury has a meaning that does not include the concept of necessity and that can be associated with lavishness. Engaging in luxury consumption is not a necessary action for pursuing a physical life for any social classes within the society. It is known that luxury products are purchased to satisfy a symbolic appetite rather than to fulfill a functional need (Darian 1998). For example, purchasing luxury brands for children is one of the salient strategies among families that is used to exhibit their financial status (Husic and Cicic 2009). Owning luxury brands may have different meanings for different individuals from different social classes. Social classes each have their own internal cultural patterns/values such that they may affect the tendency to purchase luxury products and services (Dubois and Duquesne 1993). However, although luxury is a major aspect of today's modern consumption society, luxury consumption does not satisfy an obligatory functional need. It is obvious that luxury consumption is desired because it allows movement up the social class ladder and across vague social class borders.

The arbitrary nature of luxury consumption focuses on its social side. Needless to say, luxury consumption is shaped by social motivation (Vigneron and Johnson 1999). Social motivations of luxury consumption include the transition between social classes through luxury consumption. Society consists of social stratifications or social classes, in which people can transfer among them. Luxury consumption is one of the practices used to achieve this transition. A consumer's desire to move toward higher social classes in order for their selves to benefit from the desired image of the higher social class. In particular, consumers have a personal orientation toward belonging to a desired social group or class. To this end, consumers purchase luxury brands (Tsai 2005). That is, consumers would prefer to shop in a mall, which is preferred by consumers from the desired social class (Husic and Cicic 2009).

A recent research on luxury value posited that hedonic value is a dimension of luxury value (Wiedmann et al. 2009). Hedonic value focuses on hedonic utilities rather than on functional utilities. Hedonic utilities meet arbitrary desires, whereas functional utilities meet necessary needs. That is, luxury consumption has attributes that stem from the arbitrary desires of consumers. For the majority of people from an array of different social classes, luxury consumption is not a physical need but is rather a social need. This social need has an arbitrary nature. People can survive without meeting social needs; however, they frequently desire to engage in luxury consumption. This desire reveals the arbitrary desire aspect of the luxury consumption tendency. Put more simply, luxury consumption mainly stems from desires and social needs instead of from physical needs. Therefore, examining the luxury consumption tendency without taking arbitrary desires into account would make the analysis deficient.

Belonging to an Exclusive Minority

Kapferer (1998) proposed that luxury brands belong to the minority due to their nature. However, luxury brands do not cover only the highest social class. In other words, the idea that luxury brands no longer belong to an exclusive minority has been defended by many researchers (Kapferer and Bastien 2009; Yeoman 2011). The reason for this contradiction is thought to be due to society evolving toward being a society of consumption (Ritzer 1983). With the advent of shopping malls, the vertical bazaars of modernity, the aims of brands regarding the maximization of their profit through stock turnover and sales volume have reflected the consumption habits of the consumers (Kose 2009). Luxury brands have tried to adapt this new marketing strategy through their advertisements in a way that widens their target consumers in terms of social classes. The ideal self that is represented in the advertisements tempt the consumers. Broadly speaking, these advertisements emphasize that the path to reach the ideal self involves owning luxury products or services. Transitions between the social classes are also possible with luxury consumption (Belk and Pollay 1985). Nevertheless, although the democratization of luxury has started to occur (Kapferer 2006), luxury consumption is still a prevalent strategy used to become part of an exclusive minority.

Intrinsically, people need to belong (Baumeister and Leary 1995). This intrinsic need might stem from an evolutionary or an identity-related reason. The evolutionary reason refers to the situation in which nature forces human beings to be a part of a gathering to increase the probability of staying alive since cooperation is an essential part of human history. On the other hand, the identity-related reason refers the idea that people extend themselves (Belk 1988); thus, a group could provide a good ground to achieve this. Put another way, people extend themselves through the groups to which they belong. Their group would be based on the proximity of blood, leisure preferences, or consumption practices. That is, a consumer would desire to be a part of a group through their luxury consumption practices.

Luxury consumption is somewhat similar to a key that opens a door, making the transition between social classes possible. A person's desired group can be a higher social class. To be a member of their desired group, a person would need to mimic the consumption practices of the people from the desired group. This situation has been referred to as *bandwagon* (Vigneron and Johnson 1999) or *patron status* (Husic and Cicic 2009) in luxury consumption literature, as those two factors were found to affect luxury consumption (Husic and Cicic 2009; Vigneron and Johnson 1999). Moreover, Kastanakis and Balabanis (2012) proposed that a bandwagon is an antecedent of luxury consumption behavior.

Taken together, we claim that the luxury consumption tendency has a dimension of the desire to belong to an exclusive minority.

Study 1

In Study 1, we created and purified an initial item pool. The initial item pool was created according to interviews and conceptual backgrounds. Following the creation of this initial item pool, we tested the items to purify them.

Method

Participants Exploratory survey research was conducted with eleven Turkish Ph.D. students (five females). Four of them were pursuing marketing Ph.D. degrees, whereas seven of them were pursuing Ph.D. degrees in different branches of the social sciences. These eleven Ph.D. students were from either Eskisehir Osmangazi University (Turkey) or Anadolu University (Turkey), both of which are located in Turkey.

Following the exploratory survey research, the survey data were collected from 520 Turkish undergraduate students. Forty-eight participants provided incomplete responses (missing data) and were, therefore, excluded from further analyses. Consequently, the purification of the initial item pool was conducted with the survey data from 502 Turkish undergraduate students (163 females), ranging from 17 to 27 years (M = 19.7, SD = 1.43). The average income of the participants was

TRY 930 (SD = 117.25). The participants were students of Eskisehir Osmangazi University (Turkey).

Materials and Procedure As mentioned above, first, exploratory survey research was administered to eleven Ph.D. students. During the exploratory survey research, eleven Ph.D. students were asked to answer the three following questions: *'How do you define luxury*?', *'What comes to your mind when you think about luxury?'*, and *'What are the main characteristics of luxury products/brands?'*. Participants observed these three questions in the survey, and they provided their answers in blank spaces. Additionally, participants were asked and responded to the exploratory survey research questions in Turkish. We benefited from their answers in that they created the initial item pool, which consisted of 40 items. According to the responses of the participants, we created themes for each question. These themes were created along with the discussions of the researchers regarding the responses of the participants.

Following the creation of the item pool, according to the exploratory survey research and the conceptual background, we requested help from fifteen Turkish adults, whose native language was Turkish, to rate our items as to whether they were clear and understandable. These fifteen native Turkish speakers evaluated the 40 items using a 10-point scale (*0* = *insufficient, 10* = *sufficient*). The data resulting from these evaluations were analyzed with Lawshe's (1975) content validity coefficient, which produces a value between −1 and +1. We calculated the cut-off coefficient for 15 experts within a 95% confidence interval to be .49 (Lawshe 1975). Ten items had coefficients less than this cut-off value and were, thus, removed due to a lack of being clear and understandable.

Following the language-related test of the initial item pool, the remaining 30 items were sent to the researchers, each of whom had a Ph.D. in the field of marketing, to evaluate whether these 30 items demonstrated content validity or not. Our definition of the luxury consumption tendency, which was '*the extent of an individual's tendency regarding the consumption of unique and expensive products/services with symbolic meanings that are arbitrarily desired for some reason, such as to send a message to their surroundings, to display owned status to others, to promote the self, to render the self as distinct from its surroundings and/or to move toward upper social classes',* was sent with these 30 items. Put more simply, the experts evaluated the items according to their degrees of overlap with this definition. Expert researchers rated these 30 items using a 10-point scale (*0* = *item does not capture the phenomenon, 10* = *item captures the phenomenon very well*). Again, we used Lawshe's (1975) content validity coefficient methodology to evaluate each item's performance. Based on the content validity coefficients, five items were removed due to their low validity coefficients, which were less than the calculated cut-off value.

To summarize, fifteen items were removed according to the results of the linguistic and content validity tests. Therefore, we conducted a scale purification study with twenty-five items. The scale purification data were collected through a paper-pencil survey at Eskisehir Osmangazi University. Participants responded to the luxury consumption tendency scale (hereafter LCTS) items using a 5-point scale (*1* = *strongly disagree, 3* = *neither agree nor disagree, 5* = *strongly agree*). The scale, which was created for measuring the luxury consumption tendency, consisted of only twenty-five items.

Results

To provide some findings of the factorial structure of the LCTS, we performed exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses following the inter-item correlation analysis among the items (see Table 1).

The exploratory factor analysis (EFA) results demonstrated that the sampling adequacy was good enough (KMO = .91; approx. $\chi 2$ = 4993.04; $p < .01$). Furthermore, the EFA revealed a five-factor solution with 60.24% explained variance. The EFA was conducted with a maximum-likelihood approach and promax rotation. Although the goodness-of-fit test result was significant, we interpreted this result based on a relatively high sample size such that the significant result did not evaluate in a bad manner. Put more simply, the chi-square to df ratio was acceptable ($\chi 2$ = 504.81; df = 185; $\chi 2$/df = 2.72; $p = .01$).

From the perspective of the factor loading structure, six items were removed due to low loadings or cross-loading problems. Internal consistency performances of the dimensions of the LCTS were acceptable, that is, all the dimensions' alpha levels were higher than .70, which is the recommended value (Nunnally 1978). Additionally, the average extracted variance values for all the dimensions were higher than .50, which is also recommended (Hair et al. 2009). The details are summarized in Table 1.

Following the EFA, we conducted a confirmatory factor analysis with the maximum-likelihood approach (CFA)[1] to check whether the data fit with our five-factor model. In accordance with the criteria proposed by Hu and Bentler (1999),[2] the results of the CFA demonstrated that the data fit with the five-factor model ($\chi 2$ = 242.50; df = 132; $\chi 2$/df = 1.83; $p = .01$; GFI = .96; CFI = .97; TLI = .97; RMSEA = .04). Moreover, to rule out an alternative factorial structure for the LCTS, we tested a unidimensional (one-factor) model, which in turn, demonstrated non-acceptable fit indices ($\chi 2$/df = 10.48; $p = .01$; GFI = .72; CFI = .66;

[1] We used the analysis of moment structures (AMOS) through the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 21.0 package program.

[2] CFI, GFI, and TLI should be higher than .95; RMSEA should be less than .06; $\chi 2$/df should be less than 3.

Table 1 Means, standard deviations, and EFA results for study 1

	Mean	SD	Loading	CA	AVE
Uniqueness_2	3.13	1.11	.81	.79	.51
Uniqueness_3	3.43	1.09	.74		
Uniqueness_1	3.16	1.14	.67		
Uniqueness_5	2.83	1.26	.64		
Uniqueness_6	3.47	1.05	**.45 (CL)**		
Uniqueness_4	2.45	1.13	**.41**		
Expensiveness_2	2.24	1.18	.79	.85	.52
Expensiveness_5	2.44	1.16	.76		
Expensiveness_3	2.45	1.23	.75		
Expensiveness_4	2.24	1.13	.66		
Expensiveness_1	1.98	1.09	.61		
Symbolic meaning_3	2.82	1.20	.88	.82	.55
Symbolic meaning_4	2.78	1.19	.82		
Symbolic meaning_2	2.66	1.14	.64		
Symbolic meaning_1	2.64	1.18	.58		
Symbolic meaning_5	2.50	1.06	**.51 (CL)**		
Arbitrary desire_3	2.67	1.24	.85	.78	.57
Arbitrary desire_2	2.47	1.22	.81		
Arbitrary desire_4	2.62	1.29	.59		
Arbitrary desire_1	2.86	1.66	**.37 (CL)**		
Belonging to an exclusive minority_4	2.62	1.29	.86	.77	.56
Belonging to an exclusive minority_3	2.63	1.23	.74		
Belonging to an exclusive minority_5	2.32	1.15	.63		
Belonging to an exclusive minority_1	2.41	1.21	**.29 (CL)**		
Belonging to an exclusive minority_2	2.47	1.22	**.30 (CL)**		

Bold loadings represent removed items. The CA values were calculated with the remaining 19 items.

CA Cronbach's alpha; *AVE* average variance extracted; *CL* cross-loading problem

TLI = .62; RMSEA = .14). This finding supported that the five-factor solution had a better fit with the data than the one-factor solution did.

Furthermore, we conducted a CFA for each dimension of the LCTS to ensure a factor structure of each dimension. As we predicted, the CFA results demonstrated that *uniqueness* ($\chi 2$ = 2.50; df = 2; $\chi 2$/df = 1.25; p = .17; GFI = .99; CFI = .99; TLI = .99; RMSEA = .03), *expensiveness* ($\chi 2$ = 2.34; df = 2; $\chi 2$/df = 1.17; p = .13; GFI = .99; CFI = .99; TLI = .99; RMSEA = .04), and *symbolic meaning* ($\chi 2$ = 1.42; df = 2; $\chi 2$/df = 0.71; p = .25; GFI = .99; CFI = .99; TLI = .99; RMSEA = .02) each had a one-factor solution. The CFA for the dimensions of *arbitrary desire* and *belonging to an exclusive minority* could not be conducted since they both had three items.

To summarize, the results of Study 1 helped to create the LCTS, which consisted of five factors and 19 items.

Brief Discussion for Study 1

Study 1 provided preliminary support for our five-factor model of the luxury consumption tendency. According to the results of the exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses, the initial item pool, which consisted of 40 items, was reduced to 19 items. Thus, the LCTS was developed within the Turkish culture. The scale included five factors and 19 items.

One might wonder, however, whether the scale was applicable for diverse samples since Study 1 was restricted to undergraduate students. To test whether the scale had a reliability and validity for diverse samples, Study 2 used generalizable survey data collected from 808 Turkish adults.

Study 2

Study 1 provided the LCTS, which consisted of five factors and 19 items. However, the findings of Study 1 were limited to the characteristics of the sample, namely, the student sample. Therefore, testing the LCTS with a more diverse sample was required to assess the generalization performance of the scale. To this end, Study 2 included a test of the LCTS with a more diverse sample. Moreover, Study 2 provided some evidence regarding the validity performance of the LCTS.

To provide convergent validity evidence of the LCTS, we checked whether conspicuous consumption and status consumption were associated with the LCTS. In particular, we hypothesized that conspicuous consumption (H_1) and status consumption (H_2) would be positively associated with the luxury consumption tendency. These hypotheses were based on our theorization that conspicuous, status, and luxury consumption stem from people's desires toward self-enhancement. According to the theory of basic human values (Schwartz 2012), self-enhancement is one of the basic motivations of human beings. For instance, when people achieve their goals or obtain power, the value of their selves increases in their own eyes. Thus, achievement and power are ways in which people experience self-enhancement. Furthermore, the feeling of achievement is obtainable through luxury products (O'Cass and McEwen 2004). That is, purchasing luxury and expensive products might provide a feeling of achievement since these products have the potential to hierarchically promote their owners (Wong and Ahuvia 1998). Obtaining a higher hierarchical position through a lavish lifestyle leads to obtaining social power over others.

Status consumption (Eastman et al. 1999), conspicuous consumption (Chaudhuri et al. 2011), and luxury consumption (Wong and Ahuvia 1998) are sources of feelings of achievement and the sense of having power. Thus, these consumption tendencies are based on the desire for self-enhancement because the self is intended to be highlighted during these consumption practices. Indeed, past research linked these three consumption tendencies via self-enhancement. Among this research, Kastanakis and Balabanis (2012) found that status consumption is positively associated with luxury consumption behavior. On the other hand, conspicuous consumption was found to be positively related to status consumption (O'Cass and McEwen 2004). These findings suggested that the LCTS should be positively related to conspicuous consumption and status consumption.

- The luxury consumption tendency is positively associated with conspicuous consumption.
- The luxury consumption tendency is positively associated with status consumption.

Method

Participants To accomplish our research objective, data were collected from 820 Turkish adults through an internet-based survey. However, 12 participants provided incomplete responses (incomplete data) and were, therefore, excluded from further analyses. Consequently, our final sample size consisted of 808 Turkish adults (420 females). The participants were recruited through a market research company. The participants ranged in age from 22 to 60 years ($M = 29.04$, $SD = 4.07$). The average income of the participants was TRY 2125 ($SD = 510.50$).

Materials and Procedure As mentioned above, the data were collected through an online survey. The participants first read the informed consent form and were requested to confirm this form to move forward. In the informed consent form, participants were informed that the aim of this study was to make a cross-cultural comparison of consumption practices, which was not the real aim of this study. We shared wrong information about the aim of the study since having an opinion about the real aim of the study might have biased the responses.

Following the completion of the informed consent form, participants were asked to respond to the 19-item LCTS, which was developed in Study 1, a five-item status consumption scale (Eastman et al. 1999), and an 11-item conspicuous consumption scale (Chaudhuri et al. 2011) using a 5-point scale *(1 = strongly disagree, 3 = neither disagree nor agree, 5 = strongly agree)*.

To prevent an order effect, the order of the scales was counterbalanced among the participants. Lastly, before being debriefed about the aim of the study, participants were asked what they thought the study was about to test for any possible problems with demand characteristics (Orne 1962; Rosenthal and Rosnow 2009). None of the participants were aware of the hypotheses of the current study.

Results

First, to check whether the data supported the five-factor model of the LCTS, an exploratory factor analysis and a confirmatory factor analysis were conducted. The results are summarized in Tables 2 and 3.

The exploratory factor analysis (EFA) results demonstrated that the sampling adequacy was good enough (KMO = .86; approx. $\chi 2 = 7433.79$; $p < .01$). Furthermore, the EFA revealed the five-factor solution with 67.96% explained variance. The EFA was conducted with a maximum-likelihood approach and promax rotation. Although the goodness-of-fit test result was significant, we interpreted this result based on a relatively high sample size so that the significant result did not evaluate in a bad manner. Put more simply, the chi-square to df ratio was acceptable ($\chi 2 = 550.31$; df = 86; $\chi 2$/df = 6.39; $p = .01$).

According to the factor structure results, one item from the dimension of expensiveness (expensiveness_1) was removed due to low-loading and the cross-loading problem (see Table 2). The internal consistency performances of the dimensions of the LCTS were acceptable, namely, all the dimensions' alpha levels were higher than .70, which is the recommended value (Nunnally 1978). Additionally, all the correlation coefficients among the factors

Table 2 Means, standard deviations, and EFA Results for study 2

	Mean	SD	Loading	Mean	SD	α
Uniqueness_2	3.15	1.06	.80	3.20	.80	.78
Uniqueness_3	3.71	0.96	.73			
Uniqueness_1	3.42	1.07	.71			
Uniqueness_5	2.52	1.10	.53			
Expensiveness_2	2.00	0.99	.83	2.18	.84	.82
Expensiveness_3	2.17	1.11	.82			
Expensiveness_5	2.29	1.01	.70			
Expensiveness_4	2.29	1.06	.56			
Expensiveness_1	1.79	0.84	**.42 (CL)**			
Symbolic meaning_3	2.42	1.14	.91	2.36	.96	.88
Symbolic meaning_4	2.39	1.13	.89			
Symbolic meaning_2	2.33	1.09	.71			
Symbolic meaning_1	2.32	1.11	.68			
Arbitrary desire_2	2.20	1.11	.88	2.16	.90	.80
Arbitrary desire_3	2.10	1.06	.76			
Arbitrary desire_4	2.19	1.01	.65			
Belonging to an exclusive minority_4	2.14	1.07	.86	2.13	.91	.83
Belonging to an exclusive minority_3	2.25	1.08	.80			
Belonging to an exclusive minority_5	2.00	1.00	.74			

Bold loadings represent removed items.

CL cross-loading problem

of the LCTS were positively significant, indicating that those five factors constituted a higher-level construct, namely, the LCTS (see Table 3).

Furthermore, we conducted a CFA[3] with a maximum-likelihood estimation for each dimension of the LCTS to ensure a factor structure of each dimension. As we predicted, the CFA results demonstrated that *uniqueness* ($\chi2 = 3.50$; df = 2; $\chi2$/df = 1.75; $p = .17$; GFI = .99; CFI = .99; TLI = .99; RMSEA = .03), *expensiveness* ($\chi2 = 2.24$; df = 2; $\chi2$/df = 1.12; $p = .13$; GFI = .99; CFI = .99; TLI = .99; RMSEA = .05), and *symbolic meaning* ($\chi2 = 1.31$; df = 2; $\chi2$/df = 0.65; $p = .25$; GFI = .99; CFI = .99; TLI = .99; RMSEA = .02) each had a one-factor solution. CFA for the dimensions of *arbitrary desire* and *belonging to an exclusive minority* could not conducted since they both had three items. Additionally, we tested the measurement model, which represented the 5-factor LCTS, with CFA. In accordance with the criteria that is recommended by Hu and Bentler (1999),[4] the CFA results showed that the data fit with the 5-factor model for the LCTS ($\chi2 = 255.80$; df = 125; $\chi2$/df = 2.04; $p = .01$; GFI = .97; CFI = .98; TLI = .97; RMSEA = .04). Furthermore, to rule out alternative factorial structures for the LCTS, we tested a unidimensional (one-factor) model, which in turn, revealed non-acceptable fit indices ($\chi2$/df = 26.54; $p = .01$; GFI = .64; CFI = .52; TLI = .45; RMSEA = .17). This finding supported that the five-factor solution had a better fit with the data than the one-factor solution did.

To examine the convergent and discriminant validity performances of the LCTS, a measurement model was performed. The LCTS, status consumption scale, and conspicuous consumption scale were lent to be correlated in the measurement model. As it appears in Table 4, all the AVE values for the five factors of the LCTS were found to be higher than the recommended value of .50 (Fornell and Larcker 1981). This finding indicated that the LCTS had a convergent validity. On the other hand, the AVE values of all the factors of the LCTS were greater than the squared latent factor correlation between a pair of constructs (Fornell and Larcker 1981). This finding, therefore, indicated that the LCTS also had discriminant validity. It is possible to say that the LCTS had construct validity since the LCTS demonstrated satisfactory convergent and discriminant validity performances (Bagozzi et al. 1991). As expected, the LCTS was found to be related to conspicuous consumption ($r = .51$, $p < .01$), implying that H_1 was supported. In addition, the LCTS was found to be related to status consumption ($r = .50$, $p < .01$), implying that H_2 was supported. These two findings suggested that the LCTS had a good concurrent validity performance (Bagozzi et al. 1991). In addition, all the factors of the LCTS demonstrated satisfactory reliability performances since the composite reliabilities of them were higher than the recommended value of .70 (Fornell and Larcker 1981).

We also tested whether the LCTS was invariant for gender. Put another way, we wondered whether the factorial structure

[3] We used the analysis of moment structures (AMOS) through the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 21.0 package program.

[4] CFI, GFI, and TLI should be higher than .95; RMSEA should be less than .06; $\chi2$/df should be less than 3.

Table 3 Correlation matrix for the factors of LCTS (study 2)

Dimensions	LCTS	U	E	SM	AD	B
LCTS						
Uniqueness (U)	.60					
Expensiveness (E)	.71	.25				
Symbolic meaning (SM)	.75	.29	.48			
Arbitrary desire (AD)	.66	.26	.33	.31		
Belonging to an exclusive minority (B)	.74	.35	.41	.44	.37	

$p < 0.01$ (All the p-values for the correlation coefficients were less than .01)

of the LCTS was equivalent across gender. To this end, we conducted multigroup SEM with the maximum-likelihood approach in which gender was a grouping variable. We found that the unconstrained model ($\chi 2$/df = 2.10; p = .01; GFI = .95; CFI = .96; TLI = .96; RMSEA = .04) was acceptable across gender, suggesting that the LCTS had a configural invariance across gender. Furthermore, the differences between the unconstrained and constrained models ($\chi 2$/df = 2.04; p = .01; GFI = .97; CFI = .98; TLI = .97; RMSEA = .04) were non-significant ($\Delta\chi 2$ = 11.01; Δdf = 12; p = .52), indicating that the factorial structure of the LCTS had both configural and metric invariance across gender. Put more simply, both the factorial structure of the LCTS (configural invariance) and the factorial loadings of the LCTS (metric invariance) were the same for males and females.

Brief Discussion for Study 2

Study 2 provided further evidence of the reliability and validity of the LCTS. The results of Study 2 demonstrated that the LCTS had satisfactory reliability and validity performances in a diverse sample consisting of 808 Turkish adults. Moreover, the LCTS was found to be positively correlated with conspicuous and status consumption. The results also showed that the LCTS was invariant for gender.

Although both Study 1 and Study 2 provided evidence that supported the five-factor model of the LCTS, these studies are restricted to having a cross-sectional nature. In other words, Study 1 and Study 2 would have both benefited from cross-sectional data collected through a survey, which would have precluded us from concluding causal implications regarding the luxury consumption tendency. To overcome this weakness, Study 3 adopted a between-subjects experimental design that was conducted with participants from the U.S.

Study 3

The results of Study 2 revealed that the LCTS had satisfactory discriminant validity, convergent validity, construct validity, concurrent validity, and reliability performances. However, the findings of Study 2 lacked nomological validity evidence and were limited to the Turkish sample. To provide nomological validity, we conducted an experiment in which the effect of a construal level on the LCTS was tested. Specifically, we hypothesized that as the construal level increases, the luxury consumption tendency would also increase. Put more simply, we based the logic of our hypothesis on the construal level theory (Trope and Liberman 2010).

According to the construal level theory, people might construe a specific object to either a concrete (low) level or an abstract (high) level. Furthermore, people who have a low construal level focus on the concrete details of the object, whereas people who have a high construal level focus on the abstract philosophy of the object (Trope and Liberman 2012). Let us suppose, for example, that one may construe the concept of luxury with either a low (concrete) level or high (abstract) construal level. In the former scenario, luxury can be perceived as products that are sold in a prestigious store or mall. In the latter scenario, luxury can be perceived as status or prestige. Recent research demonstrated that consumers define luxury goods using abstract language (Hansen and Wänke 2011). Furthermore, the same research showed that abstract product descriptions are perceived as luxurious among consumers. Drawing on this finding and on the construal level theory, we hypothesized that as the construal level increases, so does the luxury consumption tendency.

- The construal level has a positive effect on the luxury consumption tendency.

To this end, we adopted a between-subjects experimental design in Study 3. The results of Study 3 would allow a causal inference to be made regarding the luxury consumption tendency. As was mentioned before, Study 1 and Study 2 adopted non-experimental designs, which precluded us from obtaining causal inferences; therefore, we especially preferred the experimental design used in Study 3. Furthermore, the LCTS was developed in the Turkish language and needed to be tested in a culture where English is the native language, such as in the United States of America. To this end, we administered the English version of the LCTS in Study 3.

Table 4 Descriptive statistics for the factors, reliability estimates, and latent factor correlations (study 2)

Dimensions	M	SD	CR	AVE	LCTS	SC	CC
LCTS	2.41	.61	–				
Uniqueness (U)	3.20	.80	.79	.53	.60	.31	.35
Expensiveness (E)	2.18	.84	.82	.55	.71	.64	.52
Symbolic meaning (SM)	2.36	.96	.88	.65	.75	.72	.60
Arbitrary desire (AD)	2.16	.90	.81	.59	.66	.50	.48
Belonging to an exclusive minority (B)	2.13	.91	.84	.63	.74	.55	.57
Status consumption (SC)	1.90	.72	.74	.54	.50	(.81)	
Conspicuous consumption (CC)	1.98	.69	.89	.51	.51	.31	(.88)

$^{**}p < 0.01$, Coefficient alphas are reported with parentheses, *CR* composite reliability; *AVE* average variance extracted

Method

Participants We conducted a between-subjects experimental design with two conditions, namely, a low construal-level condition and a high construal-level condition. To this end, we recruited 110 participants from the U.S. (55 participants per condition) through Amazon Mturk in which participation in the study was restricted to the United States of America. However, four participants (two participants per condition) provided incomplete responses (incomplete data), and six participants (three participants per condition) failed at the attention check question. Therefore, ten participants were excluded from further analyses. Consequently, we continued with the remaining 100 participants (50 participants per condition). The age of the participants ranged from 20 to 79 years ($M = 37.18$, SD = 13.13). The average annual income of the participants was $41,286 (SD = 27,176).

Materials and Procedure First, participants read the informed consent form and were requested to confirm this form to move forward. In the informed consent form, participants were informed that the aim of the study was to make a cross-cultural comparison of the luxury consumption tendency, which was not the real aim of this study. We shared wrong information about the aim of the study since having an opinion about the real aim of the study might have biased the responses. This practice, which is known as a cover story, is prevalent among previous psychological experiments (Chang et al. 2015). However, the participants were debriefed about the real aim of the study. We believe that this debriefing was conducted in an ethical manner.

Following the completion of the informed consent form, participants were randomly assigned to either the low construal-level condition or the high construal-level condition. Participants between the conditions were not different in terms of age ($\chi2 = 38.84$, $p = .43$), gender ($\chi2 = 0.40$, $p = .84$), or income ($\chi2 = 56.00$, $p = .29$), suggesting that the random assignment process was not biased. After providing informed consent, the participants were asked to respond to three questions depending on the condition they were assigned to. Participants assigned to the low construal-level condition responded to the following questions: How do people exercise?, How do people go on a vacation?, How do people earn money?. On the other hand, participants assigned to the high construal-level condition responded to the following questions: Why do people exercise?, Why do people go on a vacation?, Why do people earn money?. To summarize, we manipulated the construal levels of the participants with how (low construal-level condition) and why (high construal-level condition) questions. This approach is widely used for manipulating construal levels (Freitas et al. 2004; Fujita et al. 2006; Trope and Liberman 2012). The participants were instructed to provide a response with at least 150 characters. Following this manipulation, the participants responded to the English version of the eighteen-item LCTS, which was translated into English using a back-translation method (Brislin 1970). The participants reported their responses to the LCTS using a 5-point scale (*1 = strongly disagree, 3 = neither disagree nor agree, 5 = strongly agree*). After responding to the LCTS, the participants were asked to respond to the Behavioral Identification Form (BIF; Vallacher and Wegner 1987), which consists of twenty-five questions with binary response options. The BIF is widely used to measure trait construal levels (Trope and Liberman 2010). To test whether the manipulation was successful or not, we compared the BIF means of the conditions. We found that participants in the high construal-level condition had higher BIF values than participants in the low construal-level condition (t (98) = 5.74, $p < .01$), suggesting that the manipulation was successful. Lastly, the participants were asked to report their demographics.

To prevent an order effect, the order of the scales were counterbalanced among participants. The participants were also asked what they thought the study was about to test for a possible problem with demand characteristics (Orne 1962; Rosenthal and Rosnow 2009). None of the participants were aware of the hypotheses of the current study.

Results

To check that the data supported the five-factor LCTS, we first conducted an exploratory factor analysis (EFA). An EFA using the maximum-likelihood approach and promax rotation revealed a five-factor solution for the LCTS, which was expected (KMO = .80, approx. $\chi 2 = 1194.47$, and $p < .01$, explained variance = 76.22%, $\chi 2 = 114.47$, df = 73, $\chi 2$/df = 1.56, $p < .01$). The results are summarized in Table 5.

As it appears in Table 5, all the loadings were higher than .50, which is the recommended value (Hair et al. 2009). Furthermore, all the Cronbach alpha values were higher than .70, which was evaluated as a cut-off value for internal consistency (Nunnally 1978).

Additionally, all the correlation coefficients among the factors of the LCTS were positively significant, indicating that those five factors constituted a higher-level construct, namely, the LCTS (see Table 6).

Furthermore, we conducted a CFA[5] with a maximum-likelihood estimation for each dimension of the LCTS to ensure a factor structure of each dimension. As we predicted, the CFA results demonstrated that *uniqueness* ($\chi 2 = 0.92$; df = 2; $\chi 2$/df = 0.46; $p = .63$; GFI = .99; CFI = .99; TLI = .99; RMSEA = .01), *expensiveness* ($\chi 2 = 0.60$; df = 1; $\chi 2$/df = 0.60; $p = .45$; GFI = .99; CFI = .99; TLI = .99; RMSEA = .01), and *symbolic meaning* ($\chi 2 = 1.50$; df = 2; $\chi 2$/df = 0.75; $p = .23$; GFI = .99; CFI = .99; TLI = .99; RMSEA = .01) each had a one-factor solution. CFA for the dimensions of *arbitrary desire* and *belonging to an exclusive minority* could not be conducted since they both had three items. Additionally, the CFA was performed for testing the measurement model, which represents the 5-factor LCTS. According to the criteria proposed by Hu and Bentler (1999), the results showed that the data fit with the 5-factor model for the LCTS ($\chi 2 = 140.80$; df = 125; $\chi 2$/df = 1.12; $p = .51$; GFI = .89; CFI = .98; TLI = .97; RMSEA = .04).

Last and importantly, we tested our hypothesis, which stated that individuals who had high construal-levels would have a greater luxury consumption tendency than the individuals who had a low construal-level. To this end, we conducted an independent samples t-test in which the differences between the LCTS means of the conditions were tested. The results showed that the participants in the high construal-level condition ($M = 2.74$, SD = .76) had a greater luxury consumption tendency than did the participants in the low construal level ($M = 2.44$, SD = .61, $t\,(98) = 1.558$, $p < .05$), which supported our hypothesis. This finding also provided evidence regarding the nomological validity of the LCTS. Put more simply, this hypothesis was based on the construal-level theory so the LCTS was used in a model, which was theoretically grounded. Therefore, the LCTS was placed in a theoretical network in which the hypothesis was supported; thus, it is possible to say that the LCTS has nomological validity.

Brief Discussion for Study 3

Study 3 provided causal evidence regarding the relationship between the construal level and the luxury consumption tendency. The results showed that as the construal level increased, so did the luxury consumption tendency. Particularly, the participants with a high construal level had a greater luxury consumption tendency than the participants with a low construal level. This finding suggested that the construal level theory can provide a novel understanding of the luxury consumption tendency.

Moreover, the LCTS, which was originally developed in Turkish culture, demonstrated satisfactory reliability and validity performances on the data collected from the U.S. participants. This finding indicates that the LCTS is applicable for the U.S. culture.

General Discussion

The purpose of this paper was to develop a LCTS to conceptualize the luxury consumption tendency with a trait-based approach. To this end, three studies were conducted. In Study 1, we conducted exploratory survey research with eleven Turkish Ph.D. students, and then, exploratory factor analysis was performed with 520 Turkish undergraduate students. The results of Study 1 produced the five-factor LCTS, consistent with our theoretical background. In Study 2, confirmatory factor analysis was performed with 808 diverse Turkish adults. The results of the confirmatory factor analysis demonstrated that the data supported the five-factor LCTS. Furthermore, the results of Study 2 showed that the luxury consumption tendency was found to be positively associated with status consumption and conspicuous consumption, indicating that the LCTS demonstrated convergent and discriminant validity. In Study 3, we tested the validity performance of the LCTS among U.S. participants and provided nomological validity evidence regarding the LCTS. To this end, we conducted a between-subjects design (two conditions) experiment with 100 participants from the US. The results of Study 3 showed that participants in a high construal-level condition had a greater luxury consumption tendency than did participants in a low construal-level condition, which supported our hypothesis based on the construal level theory.

[5] We used the analysis of moment structures (AMOS) through the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) 21.0 package program. This program was used to conduct the confirmatory factor analysis.

Table 5 Means, standard deviations, and EFA results for STUDY 3

	Mean	SD	Loading	Mean	SD	α
Uniqueness_2	3.65	0.90	.87	3.46	.79	.87
Uniqueness_3	3.59	0.96	.95			
Uniqueness_1	3.31	1.07	.95			
Uniqueness_5	3.29	1.10	.91			
Expensiveness_2	2.61	0.99	1.17	2.37	.89	.80
Expensiveness_3	1.93	1.11	1.02			
Expensiveness_5	2.51	1.01	1.10			
Expensiveness_4	2.45	1.06	1.18			
Symbolic meaning_3	2.66	1.14	1.17	2.37	1.02	.88
Symbolic meaning_4	2.51	1.13	1.21			
Symbolic meaning_2	2.26	1.09	1.20			
Symbolic meaning_1	2.06	1.11	1.16			
Arbitrary desire_2	2.68	1.11	1.22	2.43	1.05	.85
Arbitrary desire_3	2.15	1.06	1.13			
Arbitrary desire_4	2.47	1.01	1.22			
Belonging to an exclusive minority_4	2.20	1.07	1.23	2.59	.70	.92
Belonging to an exclusive minority_3	2.41	1.08	1.13			
Belonging to an exclusive minority_5	2.37	1.00	1.24			

Theoretical Contributions

The theoretical contribution of this paper was fourfold. First, this paper was a conceptual and empirical attempt to understand the luxury consumption tendency with a trait-based approach. Put another way, the luxury consumption tendency had yet to be examined as a trait by the time of the current paper. Past research on luxury consumption have examined how consumers perceive luxury brands (Kapferer 1998; Sung et al. 2015; Vigneron and Johnson 2004), what consumers' attitudes and perceptions are toward the concept of luxury (Dubois and Laurent 1994; Dubois et al. 2001; Hansen and Wanke 2011; Hennigs et al. 2012; Nelissen and Meijers 2011), and what the antecedents and consequences are of purchasing luxury goods (Amatulli and Guido 2011; Husic and Cicic 2009; Kastanakis and Balabanis 2012; Kastanakis and Balabanis 2014; Vigneron and Johnson 1999). The current paper contributes to the growing literature on luxury consumption by proposing that the luxury consumption tendency is a trait, that people can have a certain degree of. Following the defining of the luxury consumption tendency for the first time, we evaluated the concept of luxury consumption from the consumer's point of view. Specifically, we claimed that the luxury consumption tendency is somewhat similar to a personality trait, which can be shaped by an environmental context. Therefore, the concept of luxury consumption should be conceptualized as the interaction between the luxury consumption tendency and environmental conditions. Indeed, we evaluated environmental conditions as a boundary condition for the effect of the luxury consumption tendency on luxury consumption. Particularly, the consumers with high luxury consumption tendencies may not actualize luxury consumption due to a lack of enough purchasing power or a lack of motivation toward a particular luxury product.

Second, we conceptualized the luxury consumption tendency as a multidimensional phenomenon. The dimensions were uniqueness, expensiveness, symbolic meaning, arbitrary desire, and belonging to an exclusive minority. These five dimensions composed the luxury consumption tendency. Based on the concept of work in luxury consumption, we extensively reviewed past research on luxury consumption, which helped us to generate a five-dimension model of the luxury consumption

Table 6 Correlation matrix for the factors of LCTS (study 3)

Dimensions	LCTS	U	E	SM	AD	B
LCTS						
Uniqueness (U)	.65					
Expensiveness (E)	.79	.42				
Symbolic meaning (SM)	.71	.36	.48			
Arbitrary desire (AD)	.65	.29	.40	.26		
Belonging to an exclusive minority (B)	.78	.41	.58	.44	.34	

$p < 0.01$ (All the p-values were less than .01) tendency. We claimed that these five dimensions could be evaluated as the antecedents of the luxury consumption. Thus, this paper adds to the specific past knowledge on the antecedents of luxury consumption (Husic and Cicic 2009; Vigneron and Johnson 1999). We also believe that the relationships between the dimensions of the luxury consumption tendency are worth discussion.[6] Consistently, the relationships among the dimensions of expensiveness, symbolic meaning, and belonging to an exclusive minority were highly correlated across Study 2 and Study 3. These results indicated that expensive luxury products would be heavily loaded with symbolic meanings, which, in turn, would provide a sense of belonging to an exclusive minority. Moreover, symbolic meaning would be an essential requirement for belonging to an exclusive minority.

Third, the current paper contributes to the literature on luxury consumption by providing a LCTS. Across the three studies, consisting of a descriptive design (Study 1), a cross-sectional design (Study 2), and an experimental design (Study 3), we established a five-dimension LCTS scale across Turkish and U.S. participants. This scale was found to have a consumer-centric approach and is the first scale to measure the luxury consumption tendency of people. Previous scale development attempts in the luxury consumption literature produced the brand luxury index (BLI; Vigneron and Johnson 2004), attitudes toward the concept of luxury scale (Dubois and Laurent 1994), perceptions on luxury scale (Dubois et al. 2001), and prestige shopping preference scale (PRECON; Deeter-Schmelz et al. 2000). Although these scales contributed to the literature on luxury consumption, they lacked a consumer-centric approach to measuring luxury consumption. Specifically, the brand luxury index has a brand-centric approach in which participants report their perception regarding the degree of luxuriousness of a particular brand. The attitudes toward the concept of luxury scale and the perceptions of luxury scale utilize a concept-centric approach in which participants report their attitudes and perceptions related to the concept of luxury. The prestige shopping preference scale focuses on prestige consumption through the consumption of clothes, and thus, its measurement is restricted to only the consumption of clothes. However, the LCTS provides a consumer-centric approach to measuring the luxury consumption tendency of people as a trait.

Last and most importantly, the LCTS, which was developed in the current paper, has the potential to increase the theoretical understanding of individual differences in luxury consumptive behavior by facilitating the operationalization of the relevant concepts. In other words, theoretical models aimed at understanding why people perform luxury consumption can be empirically analyzed through the LCTS. From the point of view of psychological theories, the tend and befriend theory (Taylor 2012) can provide an explanation of why people under conditions of threat are inclined to engage in luxury consumption. According to this theory, when one is socially isolated or is under threat, he/she will seek to affiliate himself/herself with others to obtain social protection. Thus, individual differences in the luxury consumption tendency might arise from differences in the degree of social isolation. That is, when people are socially isolated or excluded by others, they might want to engage in luxury consumption practices to obtain social acceptance from others who regularly perform luxury consumption. On the other hand, the compensatory control theory (Kay et al. 2009) can explain why people are inclined to engage in luxury consumption when they experience a lack of power. Luxury products and services are somewhat similar to external sources of control; therefore, the consumption of luxury items may compensate for their perceived lack of power (Rucker and Galinsky 2008). Furthermore, the gist of the concept of luxury can be conceptualized in how people construe luxury products and services. To this end, the construal level theory (Trope and Liberman 2010), which posits that people can construe objects or experiences either in an abstract way (high-construal level) or in a concrete way (low-construal level), can offer a fruitful background on the concept of luxury. According to the results of Study 3, the higher the construal level was, the higher the luxury consumption tendency was. Thus, representing the luxury products and services without mentioning their abstract nature can lead a deficient comprehension of the nature of the concept of luxury.

Limitations and Future Research Suggestions

This paper is not without limitations. First, the LCTS was developed using only two different cultures, namely, those of Turkey and the United States of America. Therefore, the scale needs cross-cultural validation from multiple cultures. Second, the samples were not collected via probabilistic sampling. Therefore, generalizations of the results of this paper should be cautious. Third, the current paper did not provide evidence regarding the predictive validity performance of the LCTS.

The aforementioned limitations come with opportunities for future research. First, a predictive performance comparison among the LCTS and the previously developed scales should be performed in the future. Second, future research can also examine the idea that when the luxury consumption tendency consistently predicts luxury consumption behavior, then what the boundary conditions of this prediction are. Put more simply, how the luxury consumption tendency interacts with purchasing power or environmental contexts (e.g., shopping alone, in-store design, luxury brand logo, crowdedness of the store) to predict luxury consumption behavior. Future research can also dig dipper into the relationship between the construal-level and the luxury consumption tendency. In

[6] The authors would like to thank the reviewers for this suggestion.

particular, future research should examine how and why this relationship occurs. To this end, mediator or moderator variables can be offered in the future. Moreover, in a recent study, the perception of luxury was found to be a culture-dependent construct (Shukla and Purani 2012). To dig dipper into this finding, a cross-cultural comparison of the luxury consumption tendency can be performed in future research and then, differences can be explained by the construal level theory since there are cultural differences in the construal-level theory (Liberman et al. 2007a).

Conclusion

Overall, the current paper introduced an 18-item LCTS (See Appendix) following the conceptualization of the luxury consumption tendency. Across three studies we provided convergent evidence that the LCTS is reliable and valid.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

Conflict of Interest Both authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

Ethical Approval All procedures performed in the studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee and with the 1964 Helsinki Declaration and its later amendments or with comparable ethical standards.

Informed Consent Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

Appendix

Table 7 Luxury consumption tendency scale (LCTS)

Uniqueness	
Uniqueness_1	I buy a product/service since it is different from other products/services. *(Bir ürünü/hizmeti diğerlerinden farklı olduğu için satın alırım.)*
Uniqueness_2	In my purchase decisions, I consider whether the product/service has unique features. *(Satın alma kararlarımda ilgili ürünün/hizmetin benzersiz özelliklere sahip olmasını gözetirim.)*
Uniqueness_3	I am interested in products/services that have unique features that other products/services do not have. *(Diğer ürünlerden/hizmetlerden farklı özelliklere sahip ürünlere karşı ilgi duyarım.)*
Uniqueness_5	I desire to purchase a product/service that is specially produced for me. (Satın aldığım bir ürünün/hizmetin yalnızca bana özel olmasını arzularım.)
Expensiveness	
Expensiveness_2	I happily buy expensive products/services. *(Pahalı ürünleri/hizmetleri satın almaktan mutluluk duyarım.)*
Expensiveness_3	I do not care about finding the best deal/price. *(Ucuz ürünleri/hizmetleri bulmak benim için çok önemli değildir.)*
Expensiveness_4	I do not prefer to buy low-priced products/services. *(Ucuz ürünleri/hizmetleri satın almayı tercih etmem.)*
Expensiveness_5	I prefer an expensive product/service over a cheap product. *(Pahalı bir ürünü/hizmeti ucuz bir ürüne/hizmete tercih ederim.)*
Symbolic meaning	
Symbolic meaning_1	I care more about what a product/service symbolizes than its functional features. *(Bir ürünün/hizmetin fonksiyonel özelliklerinden ziyade sembolik özelliklerini önemserim.)*
Symbolic meaning_2	I would buy a product/service if it has a luxury symbolic meaning for the people around me. *(İçinde yaşadığım toplumda lüks sembolik anlama sahip ürün/hizmeti satın alırım.)*
Symbolic meaning_3	When I am buying products/services, I consider what these products/services make sense to people around me. *(Ürünleri/hizmetleri satın alırken etrafimdaki insanlar için ne ifade ettiğini göz önünde bulundururum.)*
Symbolic_meaning_4	Whether the product/service make senses to other people around me is important for me. *(Bir ürünün/hizmetin başkaları için ne ifade ettiği benim için önemlidir.)*
Arbitrary desire	
Arbitrary desire_2	I shop according to my desires, even when I do not need to shop. *(Hiç ihtiyacım olmadığı halde sadece istediğim için alışveriş yaparım.)*
Arbitrary desire_3	When I am buying products/services, I do not question whether I need this product/service. *(Arzuladığım bir ürüne/hizmete ihtiyacımın olup olmadığını sorgulamam.)*
Arbitrary desire_4	I usually buy products/services that I do not need physically but rather emotionally.

Table 7 (continued)

Uniqueness	
	(Fiziksel ihtiyaç duymaktan daha çok duygusal ihtiyaç duyduğum ürünleri/hizmetleri satın alırım.)
Belonging to an exclusive minority	
Belonging to an exclusive minority_3	I do not enjoy buying a product/service that can be bought by the vast majority of society. *(Birçok kişinin satın alabileceği bir ürünü/hizmeti satın almaktan hoşlanmam.)*
Belonging to an exclusive minority_4	It bothers me when many of the people around me have a product/service that I have. *(Sahip olduğum bir ürüne/hizmete diğer birçok insanın sahip olması beni rahatsız eder.)*
Belonging to an exclusive minority_5	I would like to feel that I belong to an exclusive minority through products/services I purchase. *(Satın aldığım ürünler/hizmetler aracılığıyla kendimi azınlık bir gruba ait hissetmekten hoşlanırım.)*

Table contains English (Turkish) style reporting format

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