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Willingness to Pay Extra With Luxury Approach and the Mediating Role of Perceived Quality and Self-Congruity (Case of Study: Customers of Luxury Restaurants)

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Abstract

One of the main factors in the restaurant industry is attractive investment and its effect on customers' willingness to pay extra for added pleasure. Therefore, this research was conducted with the aim of investigating the effect of perceived luxury on the willingness to pay extra with the mediating role of perceived quality and self-congruity among customers of luxury restaurants in Ahvaz. The current research is applied in terms of purpose, descriptive in terms of method, and causal in nature. The statistical population included all customers of luxury restaurants in Ahvaz city, which was sampled by a non-random method and available to 384 people and analyzed through the standard questionnaire of Lee et al. (2022). The results showed that the unique social and functional values of the restaurant are among the most important values necessary for the willingness to pay extra, and the effect coefficient of perceived luxury on the willingness to pay extra in customers, the effect coefficient of luxury on the variable of perceived quality, the effect coefficient of perceived luxury Based on self-congruity, the coefficient of influence of perceived quality on willingness to pay extra and the coefficient of influence of self-congruity on willingness to pay extra were calculated as 0.35, 0.58, 0.52, 0.31 and 0.24 respectively.

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Keywords: Perceived Luxury, Willingness To Pay Extra, Perceived Quality And Self-Congruity;

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1. Introduction

One of the main factors in the hospitality industry are restaurants. The fact is, not only in Iran, but also in the world and according to the international standard, restaurants are divided into five general categories according to the type of food served, variety of food, environment, price and other parameters; Fast food, fast casual or normal, casual dining or relatively luxury, fine dining or special and casual premium or luxury (Jim, 2022). Meanwhile, luxury restaurants are among the places that people's expectations from them include a wider range. Eating in luxury restaurants is generally a type of luxury that not everyone can accept. Fine dining restaurants fall into the category of luxury restaurants and offer an elegant and even luxurious atmosphere where customers pay a relatively high price (Players, 2021). Luxury restaurants are known for offering innovative menus and beyond the usual customer experience (Jin et al., 2016), high prices compared to non-luxury restaurants (Dwivedi et al., 2018), (Kiatkausin and Sutherland, 2020). According to researchers, the customers of luxury restaurants look at the restaurant beyond the taste and are extremely immersed in the experience of pleasure (Huang and Hyun, 2013). Marketing studies also show that consumers get a hedonistic experience when consuming luxury products or brands and are willing to pay extra (Yang and Mattila, 2016). According to marketers' literature, the luxury variable is an important predictor of customers' behavior and especially the willingness to pay extra, because customers' luxury values affect their consumption preferences for a specific product or service (Liu et al., 2022). In addition, it is well established that quality and individual characteristics such as self-congruity influence the customer's willingness to pay extra (Han and Jeong, 2013; Hwang and Hyun, 2013; Lee et al., 2022).

The most important issue from the point of view of customers is the quality of products during use. The desire for higher quality is one of the most obvious properties of luxury products (Sejasi Khedari et al., 2017) and consumers of luxury goods are more interested in quality than social imitation (Trong and McCall, 2011). Of course, luxury is not limited to a certain welfare class. Sirji (1985) states that self-congruity theory can be defined to explain the matching process between the consumer's perception of himself and his image of a particular brand or product; The more this match is, the more likely it is that the consumer will have a more favorable attitude towards that brand or product (Rezae Keyldbari et al., 2016). In other words, the consumer's behavior is partially determined by the match resulting from the psychological comparison, including the product-user image and the consumer's self-concept. When there is congruence between the brand-user image and the consumer's self-image, a high self-congruence occurs (Okas and Lim, 2002). Congruence with the real self refers to the fit between the customers' perception of their real self and their perception of the restaurant's image (Bakhshizadeh Borj et al., 2019). Based on the mentioned cases, it can be stated that the main goal of the current research is to investigate the effect of perceived luxury on the willingness to pay extra with the mediating role of perceived quality and self-congruity among customers of luxury restaurants in Ahvaz.

According to Giddens (2017), lifestyle is linked with luxury and has become an everyday thing in modernity. The most important threat of promoting this type of lifestyle is, in fact, the promotion of mass lifestyle, as Hogarth (2012) mentions the disappearance of class distance under the title of "glorious barbarism" and also Williams (2009) mentions it as cultural decline. It does (Mehdizadeh, 1400). The concept of luxury has evolved and become multifaceted, and in addition to the traditional understanding of the concept, a new form of luxury, unconventional luxury, has been formed (Thomson et al., 2022).

The new understanding of luxury is epistemologically empirical and agentic, meaning that luxury is seen as an approach defined by the consumer, where most of the meaning of luxury is self-centered, emotional and emphasizing experiences, quality and enrichment of life. (Iloranta, 2022). Self-congruity is one of the most widely used concepts in marketing literature, which is related to the study of branding behavior. The effect of self-congruity on behaviors such as purchase intention and motivation has been widely investigated in the marketing literature (Shagota et al., 2022). Studies show that there are strong relationships between the degree of self-congruity of the customer with the personality of the advertiser and consumer choice, tendencies, perceived quality, brand loyalty, customer behavior and repurchase intention and brand satisfaction. A high level of self-congruity will increase customer satisfaction with the symbolic use of goods, and therefore the customer will have a stronger incentive to buy and use that product (Akbari et al., 2019).

The desire to provide quality services plays an important role in service industries such as banking services, universities and educational institutions (Shajarian et al., 2016). Because the quality of service is vital for the survival and profitability of the organization. In fact, nowadays service quality is considered as a vital issue in most organizations (Ranai et al., 2016). Service quality creates credibility for the business in the eyes of customers and is an important factor that helps a business to gain new opportunities from the environment in which it operates (Melik et al., 2018). When the customer's perception of service quality is high, she shows positive behavioral intentions and becomes loyal to the company that produces the service. Service quality is an important factor in strengthening the performance and increasing the effectiveness of a company, evoking positive emotional responses from customers and creating valuable and lasting relationships between the company and customers (Han et al., 2019).

Perceived luxury: Historically, luxury is an exclusive and changing phenomenon. Definitions of luxury are many and focus between economic and social perspectives. As a result, there is a lack of consensus on the meaning of luxury in both business and non-business environments, mainly due to its subjective nature (Kaupinen, Raisanin et al., 2019). What is important in the definition of luxury is this extreme interest, and otherwise, conventional use and limit of need is not condemned (Fasihzadeh and Berjinjad, 1400). Some people rightly believe that the luxury of paying more than the material value of a product is often paid for the creativity and artistic value of a product. In fact, a luxury product somehow evokes a sense of being distinct and superior to others in people (Players, 2021).

Luxury in consumption: this term was considered for the first time in the theory of welfare class Veblen (1980), an American economist. Luxury in consumption refers to the desire of consumers to express their ability to buy luxury and expensive goods, in order to impress others with their ability to pay high prices, especially for luxury products. Consumer luxury is not limited to a certain welfare class. However, it is observed more in societies that encourage materialism (Ant et al., 2013). A luxury brand is defined as a product or brand service that has high quality, authentic, functional, or emotional value, an authentic image in the market, "imposes merit, higher price, and creates a deep connection with the consumer (Ku et al., 2019). From the consumer's point of view, luxury is defined as a subjective interpretation of a lived experience and mentality as opposed to being exposed to an individual offer (Crevey et al., 2022).

Luxury factors: luxury is relative in the view of consumers; The luxury of a brand is influenced by a number of mindsets. The term luxury extends to describe a wide range of products and services, from luxury cars to fine art. On the other hand, there are many luxury brands that refuse to be called luxury.

Therefore, the idea that a brand is luxury or not is based on context and depends on people, and it makes it difficult to classify products or brands as luxury or non-luxury. researchers define luxury brands as follows: "Those whose ratio of performance to price is low, while the ratio of intangible and situational utility to price is high. These approaches to defining the concept show that luxury has a continuum of luxury levels instead of a categorical variable. This can be seen by observing how some brands are considered luxury in one product category and non-luxury in another category. Recognizing luxury as a continuous variable, some researchers developed a scale to measure the "level of luxury in a brand" by considering non-personal perceptions (visibility, uniqueness and quality) (Jahanshahi and Hashemi, 2013) as well as perceptions They created a personal (enjoyable and developed self).

Some also have different levels of luxury, breaking the continuum into three categories of luxury and having a fourth category that is outside of luxury (non-luxury) considerations. This model labels the brand at the bottom of the pyramid (characterized by the mass series, cost pressure, and quality spiral) as "non-luxury." The upper steps of the pyramid are made up of three levels of luxury products: (a) High-end brand (specs of mass production in a factory and of the highest quality). (b) luxury brand (which is produced in a much smaller series in a workshop and is usually a handmade work with fine craftsmanship) (c) Vala (which is a pure creativity and a unique work that can be described as material perfection) (Davanathan, 2020).

Willingness to pay extra: Willingness to pay more is the amount of monetary income each person is willing to pay to ensure an improvement in welfare or to prevent a decrease in welfare. In market conditions, the willingness to pay for non-market goods is formed based on the assumption of rational choice and maximum utility. For example, if a cost is created for a non-market good or service and a person is willing to pay a part of the cost of information services in order to obtain welfare in some ways, it can be said that in this case, the willingness of the person to pay reflects the economic value of the good. or the service is from a person's point of view (Sifouri et al., 2017). Willingness to pay as the maximum amount that buyers are willing to pay for a product or service is formed based on the individual's perceived value of the desired product and the value and price of competing products (Arfanifar and Bakhshudeh, 2016). Willingness to pay refers to the maximum amount of money that the consumer is willing to pay for a product and can be defined as the attention or understanding of consumers towards the purchase of a product related to the psychological approach to paying the price (Kapelli et al., 2016). By definition, as part of the price perception process, willingness to pay is closer to price judgments (reference price, price acceptability) and is related to other variables that influence the decision process (satisfaction and loyalty) (theoretical and Asharipour, 2015).

Therefore, the concept of willingness to pay extra has become very common in economic evaluation studies and cost-benefit analysis in the field of marketing during the last two decades. Willingness to pay extra in Merriam-Webster's dictionary (2022) refers to a reward or gratuity for a specific action or an amount above the normal price paid mainly as an incentive or incentive. Willingness to pay extra indicates that a customer is ready to pay more for a preferred service brand (product) than for comparable alternatives (Lee et al., 2022). Willingness to pay extra is the result of effective brand management, which constitutes the main aspect of brand equity, predicts its high market share and contributes to higher profitability and competitive advantage for companies (Cassidy and Weimer, 2016). Willingness to pay extra is one of the important indicators of success for brands, because consumers who are willing to pay more are more likely to continue their relationship with the brand and are less sensitive to price increases (Players, 2021).

Persuasive Factors of Willingness to Pay Extra: Willingness to pay extra is the highest level of price a consumer is willing to pay for a good or service and is often used to determine product attributes that are prioritized by consumers. Willingness to pay extra is highly correlated with product price. Studies have confirmed that willingness to pay extra is consistent with other standard methods commonly used by economists (Kung et al., 2021). Certain incentives lead the product to create a successful superior price in the market, some of these factors are; brand equity, product country of origin, brand love (Santos and Schlesinger, 2019), trust, innovation and customer satisfaction (Saygili and Yalchintkin, 2021).

Perceived quality: Quality is one of the concepts that have different meanings in business literature and can be examined from different perspectives and aspects. From the manufacturer's point of view, quality is the product's ability to perform the tasks it is designed for. But from the customer's point of view, quality refers to those features and characteristics of the product or service that influence the ability to create satisfaction in him (Ledehri, 2010). Quality has no meaning except what the customer really wants. In other words, a product is of quality when it meets the demands and needs of the customer. Quality should be defined as compliance with customer needs. The international standards organization has defined quality as follows: all the features and characteristics of a product or service that has the ability to meet customer needs.

Service quality refers to the organization's ability to estimate and exceed customer expectations, which is measured and evaluated by measuring the difference between customer expectations for service delivery and customer perception of the service received (Akhderi et al., 2020). Service quality as an important and strategic lever has a special role in the success of service organizations. This importance is to the extent that service quality, along with cost and operational efficiency resulting from the delivery time of goods and services, is considered as one of the three dimensions of organizational survival. The quality of services provided by organizations and service centers is one of the main factors and perhaps the most key and valuable factor in the success and victory of organizations to attract customers and earn more income (Khancheh Sepehr, 2016). From the definitions of service quality, it can be concluded that it is more difficult for customers to measure the quality of services compared to the quality of products, the evaluation of service quality is based on the comparison of consumer expectations with the actual performance of services, the evaluation of quality is not only based on service results (Suyanto et al., 2019).

Service quality models: Service quality is considered as a fundamental variable that explains customer behaviors in many studies in a variety of customer behaviors and service contexts (Huang et al., 2019).

Various models have been provided by researchers to evaluate the quality of services, an example of which is:

Service quality gap analysis model by Parasuraman et al

The gap model or Sarcoval was presented by Parasuraman et al. in 1988.

This model tries to measure the level of service quality from the customer's point of view by analyzing the gap between customer's expectation and perception.

The Seroquel model evaluates the quality of the provided services from the following five dimensions:

1. Appearance of facilities: This component refers to the appearance of equipment and the appearance of employees.
2. Reliability: This component refers to the ability to provide accurate and continuous service promised to customers.
3. Responsiveness: The willingness and enthusiasm of employees in providing timely service to customers is considered in this dimension.
4. Quality assurance: This component refers to the ability and knowledge of the employees, which leads to the stability of the quality of services and the creation of confidence and trust in customers.
5. Compassion and empathy: in this dimension, understanding the demands and expectations of customers and also focusing on each customer (Irvani and Ateshgar, 2014).

Self-congruity: One of the controversial concepts of marketing and specifically consumer behavior is a concept called self-congruity, which is also referred to by titles such as self-image growth, self-consistency, and mental compatibility. Self-congruence means matching one's own image with the image of another person's personality, place, product, brand, etc. In other words, self-congruence refers to the fit between the consumer's personal image of herself (real self and ideal self) and her mental image of the advertiser's personality. Some researchers define self-congruity as the degree of conformity or non-conformity between the image of the preacher's personality and the individual's self-image, where self-image means the set of thoughts and feelings of the individual about himself as a phenomenon (Akbari et al., 2019). The theoretical foundation of self-congruence originates from the theory of self-concept. The terms "self-image" and "self-congruence" are often used interchangeably (Matzler et al., 2016). This concept is rooted in social psychology and shows that the personality of consumers can be identified to some extent based on the products, services and brands they choose (Yang et al., 2021). True self-congruity reflects the internal norms and duties of a person based on her perception of herself and the image of what she is.

- Ideal self-congruity, the way of perception of what she likes to perceive of herself, or what she likes to be and reflects her hopes, dreams and goals.

The importance of each dimension of self-congruence in a person is in direct interaction with the person's motivations.

That is, depending on the characteristics of the individual and the decision-making situation, one of the dimensions will become more important, therefore, it activates and increases specific motivations (Kazminia et al., 1400).

The theory of homogeneity was first presented by Sirgi (1982). According to congruity theory, people prefer products or places that are very similar to their perception of themselves. The main premise of the self-congruity theory is that by consuming brands or products, people enhance aspects of their self-concept and reflect on themselves and others. Based on this, people tend to choose products and places when they feel similarity between the image they have of products and places and their self-concept or their perception of themselves. Related studies show that congruence affects a person's subjective evaluation of the product and consequently the attitude towards it, so that the greater the congruence between the consumer's self-concept and the image of the product or brand, the more likely the consumer will have a favorable evaluation and attitude towards the product. It is more if it has a product or brand (Mohammadi et al., 2018). The congruence theory is based on the view that beyond their functional uses, products have sensory, experiential and social benefits that can effectively meet the needs of self-concept (Kazminia and Babaei, 2016). Some believe that the more the product image and self-concept of consumers match, the more customers intend to buy it (Yang et al., 2021).

Congruence theory claims that dominant norms, expectations and stereotypes (for example, social roles) are created based on the group behavior of individuals (Anglin et al., 2022). they give:

Functional compatibility: This type of compatibility, which is more related to the functional characteristics and technical performance of the product, refers to the extent to which the functional characteristics of the product are in line with the consumer's expectations. In some products, for example, this homogeneity is related to characteristics such as taste, smell and price.

Person-centered congruence: This type of congruence refers to the degree of concordance between the perceived image of the users of a product and the consumer's self-concept. This means that, for example, consumers often tend to consume products when they imagine that other consumers have symbolic images that are similar to, or complement, their image of themselves.

Compared to previous researches, this research designs and examines a new conceptual model, and the fact that such a research with the considered components has not been done in the studied area is a unique research in itself. Also, by examining the issues of perceived luxury, it has opened the way for the best possible development of restaurants in Hazarede, Ahvaz, and plans to localize this theory in the luxury restaurants of Ahvaz. Therefore, the subject of research among people and in summarizing and analyzing data has innovation. Also, the investigation of Iran Research Institute of Science and Information Technology (Irandac), Sika and Alamnet Nishan Madad systems, which simultaneously investigated the effect of perceived luxury on the willingness to pay extra with the mediating role of perceived quality and self-congruity (case study: customers of luxury restaurants in Ahvaz) It is innovation.

2. Theoretical foundations and research background

Internal researches: Imani Turkmani et al. (1400), a research titled presenting a model to investigate the effect of time focus on customer preference, willingness to pay, and loyalty, considering the mediating role of self-congruity (case study: customers of Apple products in Iran) they did. The results of this research showed that focusing time on the past and future has a positive and significant effect on real and ideal self-congruity. In addition, the results indicated that customer loyalty and customer preference have a positive and significant effect on willingness to pay.

Mojtbavi and Azari Seljooghi (1400) conducted a research titled "Investigation of physical factors affecting satisfaction in a restaurant (case example: Choji restaurant)". The research results show that factors such as physical, environmental, functional, social, semantic and emotional, economic and time factors are effective on customer satisfaction in the restaurant industry, and physical factors with indicators such as light, color, layout and connection with nature in design The interior of the restaurant and increasing customer satisfaction are very important. Among the other results obtained, it can be pointed out that in the studied sample, the physical factor of the arrangement was the most effective factor in creating satisfaction due to the preservation of privacy and the correct separation of private, family and friendly spaces, without crushing the space.

Zarei et al. (1400) conducted a research titled "Investigating the effect of packaging characteristics and perceived brand quality on consumers' willingness to pay with the moderating role of customer type". The most important findings of the research showed that packaging features have a positive effect on consumers' willingness to pay and perceived brand quality, also perceived brand quality has a positive effect on consumers' willingness to pay and the type of customer in the relationship between packaging characteristics and willingness It has a moderating role in paying consumers.

Karimi Alawijeh and Zarinfard (2019) conducted a research entitled "The effect of expected values from luxury brand on the behavioral consequences of consumers". The results showed that the expected values of the luxury brand consist of different dimensions that have a positive and significant effect on the perceived value of the luxury brand, and also the perceived value of the luxury brand has an effect on people's attitudes and these two on the recommended behavior. And willingness to pay more has had a positive effect.

Meimandi and Ghorbani Dinani (2019) conducted a research titled "Investigating the effect of rarity and hedonic value on willingness to pay and customer loyalty: the mediating role of perceived uniqueness". The results of the research indicated a positive and significant effect of rarity and hedonic value variables on perceived uniqueness. Also, the perceived uniqueness variable has a positive and significant effect on the willingness to pay higher and customer loyalty.

Nowrozi et al. (2019) conducted a research titled "Analysis of the effect of self-congruity on the purchase intention of women in Tehran from luxury brands (case of study: clothing industry)". The research results indicate that the hypothesis of the effect of self-congruity on purchase intention has not been confirmed, but other research

hypotheses (emotional attachment to the brand, attitude towards the brand, brand preference and special value of the brand) have been confirmed.

External research: Liu et al. (2022) conducted a study titled *Luxury Values and Willingness to Pay for Michelin-Starred Restaurants: A Sequential Mediation Model with Self-Enhancement and Customer Appreciation*. The results showed that unique, social and functional values are essential values for and willingness to pay extra. The relationship between social and hedonic value and willingness to pay extra was mediated only by self-enhancement, while the relationship between functional value and willingness to pay extra was mediated by self-enhancement and customer appreciation.

Li et al. (2022) conducted a study entitled "Beyond a cup of coffee: When luxury stimulates Chinese consumers' perceptions of quality and self-congruity". The findings show that perceived luxury leads customers to infer high coffee quality and high self-congruity, thereby increasing willingness to pay extra. In addition, cosmopolitanism moderates the effect of perceived luxury only through self-congruity, but not through perceived quality.

Kiatkausin and Han (2019) research titled "What makes customers willing to pay extra for luxury dining experiences in Michelin-starred restaurants?" they did. This study developed a model to explore the symbolic manifestation effects of luxury service consumption. During an extensive interdisciplinary literature review process, other variables such as the snob effect, bandwagon effect, and hedonic effects were identified as influencing factors on prestige consumption. Additionally, food involvement and knowledge were suggested to explain customers' willingness to pay extra for a luxury dining experience. The results confirmed all but one of the hypotheses. The final dependent variable, willingness to pay extra, explained 57.1% of the total variance. Gastrointestinal involvement accounted for 95.3% of the total explained variance.

Therefore, according to the research studies and the study of the background of the research, the following conceptual model was obtained by the researchers:

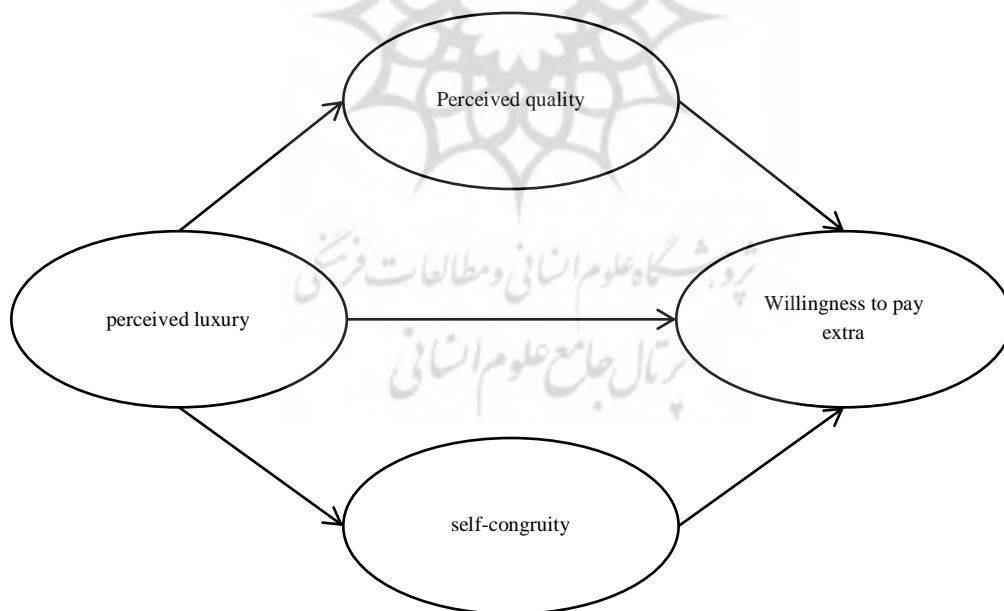


Fig1. Conceptual model of research (researchers)

3. Methodology

The current research is an applied research in terms of its purpose. The present research method is descriptive according to the type of data collection. Also, this research is causal in nature. The statistical population studied in this research is all the customers of the luxury restaurants in Ahvaz city. The reason for the choice of the community from the clients of this region is the presence of special historical and recreational places, pure customs and hospitality of the warm-hearted doctors of Ahvaz, which provide a good opportunity to attract tourists, entertainment and experience good feelings. The cafes and restaurants of this area are very famous among the people and it is considered one of the main centers of Ahwazi people and domestic and foreign tourists. The pleasure of eating a delicious meal by the Karun River in these restaurants is indescribable. In this research, non-random sampling method is available. The sample size was obtained by using Cochran's formula for an unlimited population with a variance of 0.715, the number of 384 people. According to the number of samples, anticipating the possibility that some of the questionnaires will not be completed or submitted by the sample members, 480 questionnaires were distributed among them, and after the investigations, 384 of them were returned out of 397 questionnaires. It was usable and analyzed, as a result, the return rate of the questionnaires was 82%. In this research, a questionnaire tool was used to measure the variables, and SPSS 26 software and Cronbach's alpha method were used to check the reliability. The closer it is to one (more than 0.7), the more internal consistency the reliability shows. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the questionnaire for the variables of perceived luxury, willingness to pay extra, perceived quality and self-congruity was determined as 0.852, 0.867, 0.841 and 0.879 respectively, which indicates the high reliability of the research measurement tool.

4. Analysis of findings

In structural equation models, measurement models or structures are divided into two categories: reflective structures and composite structures. Usually, the first criterion that is examined in reflective measurement models is internal consistency reliability. The traditional criterion for its control is Cronbach's alpha, which provides an estimate for reliability based on the internal correlation of the indicators. If Cronbach's alpha is more than 0.70, the internal consistency and unidimensional of the block is confirmed. In addition to Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability is also used in Smart PLS 3 path models to examine the reliability of internal consistency and one-dimensionality of blocks. If the amount of this index, which is known as P Dillon-Goldstein, is more than 0.70, the composite reliability of the model is confirmed.

Composite reliability is a more suitable index than Cronbach's alpha to determine the one-dimensionality of a block. Because Cronbach's alpha is based on the assumption of homogeneity of the observed variables. But composite reliability does not have this assumption and is based on the results of the model (i.e. factor loadings) to the existing correlation between the variables observed in the dataset; in fact Cronbach's alpha provides a lower limit estimate of reliability. The results and output report of Smart PLS 3 software for this composite reliability index are given in Table 1.

Table1. Composite reliability table and Cronbach's alpha

Composite reliability	Cronbach's alpha	Research variables
0.858	0.728	Perceived luxury
0.856	0.749	Willingness to pay extra
0.822	0.824	perceived quality
0.905	0.860	self-congruence

The values obtained for the composite reliability alpha are more than 0.70, which indicates the optimal reliability of the research variables. Therefore, the measurement models have good reliability.

4-1. Validity evaluation of measurement models

Convergent validity: The first validity examined to confirm the validity of measurement models is convergent validity. Convergent validity means that the set of indicators explain the main construct. Fornell and Larcker (1981)

suggest the use of average variance extracted as a criterion for convergent validity. Minimum AVE equal to 0.5 indicates sufficient convergent validity, which means that an underlying variable can explain on average more than half of the dispersion of its indicators.

Table2. Calculation results of average variance index

AVE	variable
0.601	Perceived luxury
0.655	Willingness to pay extra
0.652	perceived quality
0.704	self-congruence

As reported in Table 2, the AVE value for the current variables is higher than 0.5. Therefore, it can be said that the convergent validity of measurement models is favourable.

Differential and divergent validity: The second validity to be investigated to confirm the validity and reliability of the measurement model is differential validity, which is a supplementary criterion, and in Smart PLS 3 path modelling, two criteria, including the Fornell-Larker criterion and the cross-sectional load test, are used to investigate it. .

Table3. Factor loadings of reagents

significant number	factor load	object	hidden variable
32.966	0.791	Q1	
34.972	0.739	Q2	Perceived luxury
28.250	0.766	Q3	
37.206	0.751	Q4	
50.529	0.835	Q5	
38.153	0.806	Q6	Willingness to pay extra
40.1891	0.805	Q7	
36.708	0.793	Q8	
59.404	0.859	Q9	perceived quality
39.660	0.803	Q10	
29.796	0.775	Q11	
50.755	0.839	Q12	
49.749	0.817	Q14	self-congruence
44.905	0.832	Q15	

As Table 3 shows, the values of factor loadings for all indicators are more than 0.5, therefore, all factor loadings are in the acceptable range and the validity of the structure is confirmed using the transverse load test method. In the table below, the root value of AVE of each construct is shown with correlation values among other constructs.

Table4. Wager validity measurement matrix by Fornell and Locker method

4	3	2	1	Research structures	
			0.776	Perceived luxury	1
		0.816	0.667	Willingness to pay extra	2
	0.808	0.697	0.581	perceived quality	3
0.839	0.714	0.655	0.521	self-congruence	4

In Table 4, it is clear that the root value of the AVE variables in the present study, which are located in the main diagonal houses of the matrix, is higher than the correlation value between them, which are located in the lower and right houses of the main diameter. Therefore, it can be stated that in the present study, the constructs (invariants) in the model interact more with their indicators than with other constructs, in other words, the divergent validity of the model is adequate.

4-2. Model fit

The GOF index is calculated as the geometric mean of R2 and the mean of sharing:

$$GOF = \sqrt{\text{Communality} \times R^2}$$

Table5. Index of the general validity of the main research model

GOF	R ²	Communality	Variables
	---	0.333	Perceived luxury
	0.617	0.328	Willingness to pay extra
0.402	0.338	0.417	perceived quality
	0.271	0.497	self-congruity
	0.409	0.394	Mean

The positive goodness of fit index (GOF) shows the overall fit of the model. Because this value for the main model is equal to 0.402 and more than 0.4, as a result, the overall fit of the models is confirmed.

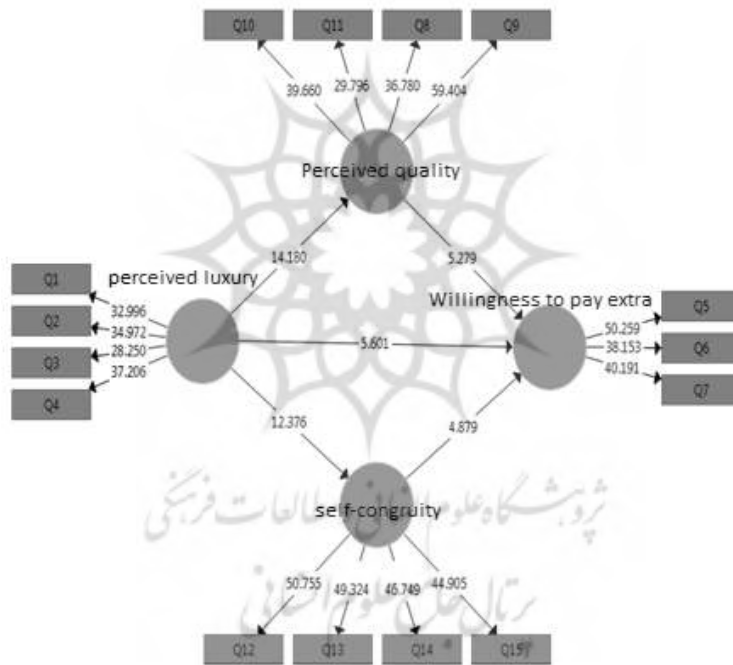


Fig2. The general model and the results of the hypotheses in a significant state

The results of the analysis of structural equations in Table 5 showed that the effect coefficient of perceived luxury on the willingness to pay extra in customers is equal to 0.357 and the value of the test statistic is equal to 5.601. Considering that the value of the test statistic is greater than 96. 1, the null hypothesis of the test is rejected and with a confidence of 0.95 it can be concluded that the perceived luxury has a significant effect on the willingness to pay extra in customers of luxury restaurants in Ahvaz.

According to the results, the effect coefficient of perceived luxury on the variable of perceived quality is equal to 0.581 and the value of the test statistic is equal to 14.180, which is greater than 1.96, which can be concluded that the perceived luxury affects the perceived quality of restaurant customers. The luxury of Ahvaz has a significant effect.

The results of the analysis of structural equations showed that the coefficient of influence of perceived luxury on self-congruity among customers of luxury restaurants in Ahvaz is 0.521 and the value of the test statistic is 12.376. Considering that the value of the test statistic is greater than 1.96 The null hypothesis of the test was rejected and with a confidence of 0.95 it can be concluded that perceived luxury has a significant effect on self-congruity among customers of luxury restaurants in Ahvaz.

According to the results, the coefficient of influence of perceived quality on the willingness to pay extra in the customers of luxury restaurants in Ahvaz city is equal to 0.315 and the value of the test statistic is equal to 5.279, which is greater than 1.96, and it can be concluded that the perceived quality on Willingness to pay extra has a significant effect on customers of luxury restaurants in Ahvaz.

The results of the analysis of structural equations showed that the coefficient of self-congruence on the willingness to pay extra in customers of luxury restaurants in Ahvaz is 0.244 and the test statistic is 4.879, considering that the test statistic is greater than 96. 1, the null hypothesis of the test is rejected and with a confidence of 0.95 it can be concluded that self-congruity has a significant effect on the willingness to pay extra in customers of luxury restaurants in Ahvaz.

According to the obtained results, it can be seen that the value of the Sobel statistic for investigating the mediating role of perceived quality in the effect of perceived luxury on the willingness to pay extra is equal to 4.923, and the values of the calculated Sobel statistic are greater than 1.96, so it can be It was concluded that the perceived luxury has a significant effect on the willingness to pay extra with the mediating role of perceived quality in customers of luxury restaurants in Ahvaz.

According to the obtained results, it can be seen that the value of the Sobel statistic for investigating the mediating role of self-congruity in the effect of perceived luxury on the willingness to pay extra is equal to 4.541, and the values of the calculated Sobel statistic are greater than 1.96, so it can be concluded Perceived luxury has a significant effect on the willingness to pay extra with the mediating role of self-congruity in customers of luxury restaurants in Ahvaz.

5. Discussion and conclusion

Today, visiting luxury restaurants has increased significantly compared to the past, and as a result, the number of luxury restaurants has also increased significantly. The results obtained in the first hypothesis are in line with the results of Mojtavani and Azari-Seljuqi (2014), Melkipour and Shadmehri (2018), Khatni Nesab et al. (2015), Liu et al. (2022) and Kiatkaosin and Han (2019). with the difference that despite the increasing number of luxury restaurants, it is necessary for restaurant owners to pay attention to other influencing factors in addition to the quality of food (as the floor of customer's demands) in order to create a stronger relationship with customers and lead them to pay higher. Meanwhile, it is very important to provide a lovely and memorable environment by focusing on the restaurant's environment and interior design. In this research, the combination of visual design (for example, color and arrangement) and environmental signs (for example, lighting) are considered as signs of luxury. Light, sound, color, textures, facilities related to beauty factors, the environment and the type of arrangement on the table are important environmental elements in creating a difference in experiences. Each of these items has a different effect on the overall feeling of the space.

The results obtained in the second hypothesis are in line with the research results of Lee et al. (2022).

With the difference that in luxury restaurants, customers buy not only service, but also symbol, dignity, luxury, boasting and pride.

The luxury of the restaurant through the visual design, decoration and space affects the customers' inference about the perceived quality, and according to the customers, the restaurant provides high quality services with a luxurious atmosphere.

The results obtained in the third hypothesis are in line with the research results of Lee et al. (2022). With the difference that the recent research showed that going to a luxury restaurant is one of the most important pastimes of people. The society is moving in the direction where most people don't just go to a luxury restaurant to eat, but go

there to spend their time in a different way. This issue has caused the emergence of all kinds of luxury restaurants and coffee shops in order to respond to the widespread need for entertainment, to be at a higher level than normal, to gain image and identity, and to match the image of the restaurant with the customer's mental image. Luxury brands adopt a luxury positioning strategy to serve restaurant customers who understand its symbolic value and enjoy connecting with the global community.

Based on the results obtained in the fourth hypothesis, the perceived quality has a significant effect on the willingness to pay extra in customers of luxury restaurants in Ahvaz. The results of the research are in line with the results of the researches of Zarei et al. (1400), Mohammad Shafiei et al. Recent research showed that the desire to provide quality services plays an important role in service industries such as luxury restaurants. Because perceived quality is vital for the survival and profitability of restaurants. In fact, perceived quality is considered as a vital issue in most restaurants. Therefore, it can be said that luxury restaurants can help the process of keeping customers by guaranteeing the quality of service. If the experience of the high quality of the services provided can stimulate the feeling of pleasure and variety in the customer, it can ultimately increase the willingness to pay extra.

Based on the results obtained in the fifth hypothesis, self-congruity has a significant effect on the willingness to pay extra in customers of luxury restaurants in Ahvaz. The research results are consistent with the research results of Lee et al. (2022) and inconsistent with the research results of Imani Turkmani et al. In the field of luxury restaurants, most customers prefer to spend their time and money in an environment that is closer to their self-concept, and they don't care only about the quality of the restaurant. Of course, this research showed that the basis of the theory of self-congruity, the behavior of restaurant customers is determined to some extent by the match resulting from a psychological comparison including the image of the restaurant and the customer's self-concept. In addition, when the image of the restaurant is consistent with the image of the customer, the emotional bond of the customer with the restaurant is strengthened. Customers value service more when the store's image matches their self-image. Also, when the image of a luxury restaurant matches the image of the customer herself, the customer will have a high emotional attachment to the brand and make more financial, emotional, and behavioral investments in comparison to luxury brands.

Based on the results obtained in the sixth and seventh hypotheses, the perceived luxury has a significant effect on the willingness to pay extra with the mediating role of perceived quality and self-congruity in customers of luxury restaurants in Ahvaz. The results of the research are in line with the research results of Lee et al. (2022). Our findings show that visual aesthetic elements such as color, design, layout, and lighting can create a sense of luxury that indicates a high quality restaurant. In addition, the premium pricing strategy should be aligned with the value of the luxury offered by the restaurant. The distinction of this research was that the financial success of a luxury restaurant depends on its ability to create memorable experiences for users. People's experience in a restaurant is more dependent on their satisfaction, perceived quality and values than what is offered as food in that place. Our findings show that visual aesthetic elements such as color, design, layout, and lighting can create a sense of luxury that indicates the high quality of a restaurant and increase the congruence between the store and the customer's image. Likewise, restaurant managers must carefully manipulate atmospheric cues such as interior visual design, colors, layout, lighting, decoration, and even the menu to create a luxurious atmosphere, thus conveying the value of brand credibility and authenticity of a high-end culture. These symbolic values allow customers to be part of the elite of global society, enhance the customer's visiting experience, and enhance their social status.

5-1. Practical suggestions

According to the results of all research hypotheses, the following suggestions are presented:

- 0 Lighting designers should try to use light as a way to add order and information to the environment. Meaningful clarification of architectural elements makes this work and helps to explain a place and orientation in it. The lighting inside the restaurant is welcoming.
- 0 It is recommended that the managers of the luxury restaurants in Ahvaz city, the matters related to the quality of the food, including the taste, the use of healthy and organic food, the appearance of the food and the way it is presented, as well as food health, and increasing the variety of food that meets different tastes. pay attention to

- 0 It is recommended that restaurant managers pay special attention to the silence and tranquility of the restaurant environment; Because in addition to quality food, customers also want a calm and pleasant environment to eat.
- 0 About matching with the real self and the ideal self, it should be noted that with the restaurant managers, taking into account the dimensions of the restaurant brand personality and shaping it based on the indicators, they should form a personality according to the mentality of the customers and create the context for the understanding of the people's self (real and ideal).) provides
- 0 Managers of luxury restaurants should consider the consistency of their customers' self-image through market research to find out what image they have of themselves in their mind and then adapt the restaurant environment to that image.
- 0 Categorizing for customers with a history through the Internet can actually create a kind of customer database so that profitable customers can also be identified; If it is defined in the policies of a luxury restaurant, special services can be considered for this category of customers in order to create value for them.

5-2. Future offers

This research was conducted in Ahvaz city and the results may not be generalizable to other cities with different cultures. Therefore, it is better to conduct this research in cities with different geographical locations and compare the results with each other. It is also suggested that the current research model be studied in other communities and cities.

While the present study measured willingness to pay extra as a key outcome, which reflects consumer preference (i.e., what consumers say they do), future studies could examine expressed consumer preference (i.e., what consumers are observed to do in they do now). Another avenue for future research is to examine other boundary conditions, such as consumer materialism and self-branding. In particular, it is possible that customers with high materialism are more willing to pay extra when perceived luxuries lead to higher ideal self-congruity for them. Self-branding may also act as a moderator and strengthen the relationship between self-congruity and willingness to overpay. Future research could study the effect of other dimensions of self-congruity (actual, social, ideal, and social ideal) on willingness to overpay. In this way, a more accurate understanding of the relationship between atmospheric cues such as luxury and the willingness to pay extra is provided. Also, in future researches, the modifying effect of other variables such as emotional stability, demographic characteristics and conflict level can also be considered in the relationship between perceived luxury and willingness to pay extra.

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