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Abstract <p>In recent years, the phenomenon of watch collecting has increased drastically in popularity. With the rise of internet and later social media, information has been more readily available making the hobby more accessible. The meaning of value creation has also changed a lot in the 21st century, so new aspects of the concept have risen to challenge the status quo.</p> <p>This study aims to understand how value is created in online communities, focusing on luxury and vintage mechanical watches. The theoretical section reviews the literature and theories on value, luxury, and value creation and presents a framework that was used for the purposes of this study. The approach used was qualitative since the aim was to understand the phenomena in more detail. Netnographic method was used to extract data from relevant internet discussions and analyzed using qualitative content analysis.</p> <p>The main findings were revolved around what value is for mechanical watches in terms of luxury, as well as vintage. For luxury watches quality, self-identity and hedonic values were the most prominent ones whereas in vintage pieces authenticity, nostalgia, design and allegory values were considered to be the most important. All these then intertwine with each other when considering luxury vintage pieces. Value creation in the communities was found to arise from the interactions between the community members the most important ones being information sharing and receiving, hype creation, retention of value through consumer actions and building of allegory. Several different contributors to the community were also identified, with all of them contributing towards the consciousness of the community, which highly increases engagement.</p>			
Key words	Luxury, value creation, online communities		
Further information			





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<p>Kellojenkeräily harrastuksena on noussut räjähdysmäisesti viime vuosina internetin ja sosiaalisen median ansiosta. Tiedon ja sisällön suuren määrän ansiosta harrastus on tullut helpommin lähestyttäväksi myös tavallisille ihmisille. Samalla arvonluonnin käsite on muuttunut suuresti 2000-luvulla, minkä ansioista uusia suuntauksia on noussut haastamaan entistä ymmärrystä.</p> <p>Tämä tutkimus pyrkii ymmärtämään, miten arvonluonti virtuaaliyhteisöissä tapahtuu keskittyen luksus-, ja vintagekelloihin. Teoreettinen osio tutkii olemassa olevaa kirjallisuutta niin näiden molempien arvojen, kuten myös virtuaaliyhteisöjen osuudesta asiaan, joiden pohjalta tutkimuksen kehys on luotu. Tutkimus on laadullinen, koska virtuaaliyhteisöjen osuutta arvonluontiin haluttiin ymmärtää tarkemmin. Netnografisella metodilla saatiin suuri määrä oleellista dataa tietyn virtuaaliyhteisön relevantimmista keskusteluista, joka analysoitiin sisällöllisesti.</p> <p>Suurimmat löydökset liittyivät arvojen eri komponentteihin. Luksuskelloihin liittyen isoimmat arvokomponentit olivat laatu, identiteetti hedonistinen arvo, kun taas vintagekellojen suhteen suurimmat komponentit olivat autenttisuus-, nostalgia-, suunnittelu- ja allegorinen arvo. Vintage luksuskelloissa nämä kaikki taas sitoutuu yhteen vaihtelevasti. Virtuaaliyhteisön rooli arvonluonnissa keskittyy yhteisön jäsenten kanssakäyntien yhteyteen, joista suurimmat arvonluojat olivat tiedonjako, ”hype:n” rakennus, arvon ylläpito kuluttajan toimista ja allegorian rakennus sekä ylläpito. Myös yhteisön rakentamiseen liittyviä tekijöitä pystyttiin osoittamaan, joista kaikki edistää yhteisön ”tietoisuutta”, joka taas rohkaisee edelleen kanssakäyntiin yhteisön sisällä.</p>			
Asiasanat	Luksus, arvonluonti, virtuaaliyhteisö, verkkoyhteisö		
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Economics

VALUE CREATION IN ONLINE COMMUNITIES

A qualitative research on luxury vintage mechanical watches

Master's Thesis
in International Business

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The originality of this thesis has been checked in accordance with the University of Turku quality assurance system using the Turnitin OriginalityCheck service.

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1 INTRODUCTION

“A gentleman's choice of timepiece says as much about him as does his Saville Row suit.”

- Ian Fleming

“Don't touch the Rolex.”

- Patrick Bateman in American Psycho

In the last two decades, the luxury watch market has expanded with an increasing pace. The hobby of watches is one of information, details, art, status and appreciation for fine mechanics and craftsmanship, and has thus attracted more and more people to join the “cult”. A general description of the hobby is that you either “get it”, or just do not know enough about it yet. Once you start, it is difficult to stop consuming information, setting goals on what to buy next, how to build your collection and which pieces to let go. Because of the addicting nature of the hobby, it was chosen as the topic of this research.

1.1 History of timekeeping

Since the dawn of ages, time has been running. The concept of time on Earth is dependent on our planet's movement. A full spin of 360 ° around the Earth's axis marks 24 hours or one day, and a full circle around the sun marks a year, or 365 days. Early methods of timekeeping were seeing sunrise and sunset: great big obelisks and later sundials were used to track the movement of the Sun during day, and the Moon's movement were tracked to follow the passing of time during the night. The oldest sundial yet was found in the Valley of Kings in Egypt, dating back to 1500 BC. (Universität Basel 2013) These timekeeping methods were however useless in the event the sky was not clear. So, in different parts of the world, water clocks were invented. As time passed, these clocks became more accurate, and more decorated with gongs marking hours and figurines moving at specified times. (Aveni 2000)

Different kinds of candle clocks and incense clocks were used until the 14th century, when mechanical escapements were introduced in Europe. After this, table clocks and wall clocks were popularized, and finally, the innovations in the movements made it possible to create wristwatches. In the early days, wristwatches were only worn by women, due to their fragile nature. Men wore pocket watches because of the added protection of the piece being in one's pocket. This changed in the 19th century when military personnel began to wear wristwatches to synchronise precision dependent artillery and infantry operations more easily. (Fondation Haute Horlogerie 2021)

During the latter parts of World War I almost all soldiers wore wristwatches, and after the war the custom was continued. (A Blog to Watch 2011) In 1905, Hans Wilsdorf moved to London to setup his watch business, Wilsdorf & Davis, a company that later became the most valuable watch company in the world, Rolex. (Rolex 2021) Many of the other still today recognized brands were founded in late 19th and early 20th century, such as Omega (Omega 2021), Heuer (Tag Heuer 2021), Breitling (Breitling 2021), Audemars Piguet (Audemars Piguet 2021), Patek Philippe (Patek Philippe 2021) and many others.

In those times, these nowadays luxury brands made watches with normal people in mind, as mechanical watches were the preferred choice of time keeping. In the 50s and 60s many still today iconic pieces were created, such as the Rolex Submariner for divers and the Rolex Explorer released to commemorate the conquering of Mt. Everest by Edmund Hillary & Tenzing Norgay wearing Rolex Oyster Perpetuals in their expedition. (Rolex 2021) Though which exact watches were worn by the mountaineers remains a mystery to this day, Rolex's marketing at the time embraced their own watch as the one. (Crown and Caliber 2016) Other examples from different brands could be the Heuer Monaco that Steve McQueen famously wore on his film *Le Mans*, the Breitling Navitimer with an integrated flight computer in the dial for pilots, and the Omega Speedmaster Professional which accompanied NASA astronauts in their missions to space and the Moon. Above all, these watches were tools built for purpose: to show accurate time in the worst conditions possible with some added functionality.

In the 1969, the first commercially available quartz watch was produced by a Japanese watchmaker, Seiko. What followed was a catastrophe for the mechanical watch industry. Quartz as a timekeeping technology is not only more accurate than mechanical, but also built with less parts, more robust, not in need of regular maintenance and, most importantly, significantly cheaper. The quartz crisis was born. Many of the previously successful mechanical watchmakers were on the verge of bankruptcy, and suddenly

Switzerland was not the largest watch making country in the world anymore, with Hong Kong surpassing it in the late 1970s. Suddenly, mechanical watches were made obsolete. (Hodinkee October 2017)

With the industry in digress, two failed watch groups, SSIH, including brands Omega, Tissot, Hamilton and Bulova, and ASUAG, with brands like Certina, Hamilton, Longines & others, were merged by their creditor banks in early 1980s. The Swatch group was formed. Its purpose was to restore the Swiss watch industry, and their first entry level piece, the Swatch Watch was a huge success. The Swatch watch was still a mechanical piece, but simplified, having only 51 parts, made with mass production methods, made of plastic, packaged in a see-through box, but most of all, it was cheap, and fun.

This helped to revitalise the Swiss watch industry, but still, many of the now higher end brands were struggling. The answer found by the companies, was to go even higher end, to compensate for the lack of demand for traditional mechanical pieces. The answer was to focus on quality of craftsmanship, and status. The first luxury sports watch is considered to be the Audemars Piguet Royal Oak, designed by Gérald Genta and announced in 1972. The roots for true luxury watch making can be considered to begin here. Brands like AP, Rolex and others begun to increase their prices and quality, embracing their new identities as status symbols (Hodinkee December 2017).

During the 90s many reputable companies were brought under the Swatch group, and James Bond switched from Rolex to Omega watches. During the late 2000s the mechanical watch world started booming again. The luxury watch market's marketing had made the pieces highly desirable, and the companies' heritage and history of making reliable tool watches still made them relevant. But the watches were no longer tools. Dive computers replaced diving watches. Mobile phones showed better time than a mechanical watch ever could. Still, even today people are buying expensive watches. Until 2017, Rolex was the most valuable watch brand in the world. Even though Rolex as a private company does not disclose sales numbers, in 2017 the Apple watch was believed to dethrone the Swiss giant. (Business Insider 2017) Still, it is important to consider that the cheapest Apple watch is around 300€, whereas the cheapest new Rolex, the Oyster Perpetual is around 5000€.

The watch collecting phenomenon is a recent one. It can be considered to start in the 1980s, when after wiping out two thirds of the Swiss watch industry the quartz crisis was beginning to ease up. The success of Swatch was one of the key reasons for the revitalisation of the mechanical watch industry. Prior to this, watch collecting was less

prominent due to lack of information and organisation, though naturally people still acquired time pieces they enjoyed. In the 80s the first magazines and books aimed at watch enthusiasts were published, and the first vintage watch auctions started. Watch collection is a very information heavy activity because of the enormous numbers of watches and different configurations and details found in them. With the rise of the internet, information became more widely available, making the hobby more accessible, which saw prices skyrocketing. This all culminated in the iconic Rolex “Paul Newman” Daytona being sold for \$17.7 millions in 2017. (Forbes 2017) In general, the prices for vintage watches are higher than ever, depending on the model and configuration.

Another important aspect is to consider how different business models affect the value propositions of different companies. For example, the most popular Rolex models have waiting lists at authorised dealers, some even several years. Rolex has chosen not to increase their supply to meet with the demand, resulting in artificial shortages, especially on certain models, resulting on the ADs restricting sales of these models to only the most loyal customers. (Bob’s Watches 2020) This has also increased the used market prices to sky-high levels, with the new “Pepsi GMT II selling for over double the MSRP of 8 750€, at over 20 000€ in the used market. Rolex also makes almost all of their parts in-house, from the metals (steel, gold) to the movements, with only minor parts being used from other manufacturers (Rolex 2021).

Comparing to for example Omega, from which the only recent models being hard to acquire are certain special limited edition Speedmasters, for example the 45th anniversary of Apollo 13 “Silver Snoopy” released in 2015 for 5 800€, selling for over 20 000€ used in 2018. The regular edition Speedmaster can be bought off-the-shelf from an Omega AD for a “reasonable” 4 200€. The availability makes it easier to purchase but does also affect the resale value. Rolex pieces are famous for keeping their value, partly because of the limited supply. Omega as a part of the Swatch group can also be considered by some not to be fully in-house, with shared technologies between the different entities within the parent organisation.

These different approaches, (of which there are many others) affect the value proposition of these companies. Although business models are not the main focus of this research, it is important to note that there are differences.

1.2 Research question and structure of the study

The purpose of this study is to understand how online communities participate and contribute to the value creation of luxury mechanical watches, with a focus on vintage pieces. In order to properly understand what kind of value and by which processes online communities participate in value creation, several different aspects of the topic should be understood. Firstly, what is value in luxury mechanical watches and how it is created. Secondly, how the value proposition of vintage luxury mechanical watches differs from modern offerings. Thirdly, what kind of value, by which processes and how does online communities create value in this context. To consider these things, the research question is as follows:

How is value created in online communities focusing on luxury and vintage mechanical watches?

With three sub questions:

- What is the value in luxury mechanical watches?
- What is the value in vintage watches?
- What is the role of online communities in the value creation of luxury and vintage watches?

The sub questions' purpose is to direct the research to ultimately answer the research question. The first sub question will examine how luxury watches are "consumed". What is the value found on these time pieces, is it things like for example collecting, investing or watches as "status symbols"? Luxury items in general have many qualities which motivate consumers to purchase and consume them. Mechanical watches due to their technical and historical nature have many other aspects of value in addition to just luxury ones.

The second sub question aims to uncover how value is viewed in vintage watches, and how the consumption of these time pieces differs from modern luxury watches. The vintage watch market is bigger than ever, and prices are steadily increasing despite technological advancements made in watch movements and material in the last few decades. What constitutes this lasting success of vintage watches?

The third and final sub question aims to discover how online communities participate in value creation, or in other words how they create value. Things of interest especially are what kind of value, through which processes and by whom to whom the value is

created. The online communities related to watches are usually very active, and people from different “stages” of the hobby participate in them. Is the value created by the community different for people with different motivations of participation? How is the value different for example for a person looking to buy their first watch, or for a person with a collection valued in the millions? The study is organized in different sections to support this structure of research question and sub questions. The introductory section provides a brief history of time keeping and mechanical watches.

The theoretical section in chapter 2 presents research and concepts from previous research related to this topic. First the notion of value in general is introduced in chapter 2.1. This is then taken further to the context of luxury to uncover how luxury value is different from regular value. Furthermore, it is studied how value is perceived in vintage goods and what motivates consumers to participate in vintage consumption. Chapter 2.2 focuses on value creation and presents how the perception of value creation has changed from goods dominant view to service dominant view. This section will also discuss the change in the understanding of value creation processes, from value chain to value co-creation together with the customer. Understanding the change is relevant because of the notion that customer is involved in the process of value creation. Chapter 2.3 explains the mentality behind customer value creation and discusses what kind of value, from whom to whom and by which motivations value is created through different processes in the online community. The final chapter of the theoretical section will explain the theoretical synthesis of this study. It includes different aspects from the several theories discussed previously in chapter 2 that have been combined to suit the research question and sub questions.

The research design will be explained in chapter 3. This includes why a specific research approach was selected, and how it was used to conduct the research. The source and collection of data will be explained, as will the analysis and trustworthiness. In the results section the results of the study will be presented. The section is divided into three parts, representing the sub questions and theory synthesis. The final chapter of the results section will present a summary of the results. This paper ends with dedicated chapters for conclusions and summary.

2 VALUE CREATION IN ONLINE COMMUNITIES

This chapter aims to explain what value is and how it is created in this study's context. Chapter 2.1 will explore the concept of value through the definition of value, value in luxury and value in vintage. Chapter 2.2 will explore value creation as a concept, from the original understanding of firm created value, to value co-creation. Online customer value creation will be explored in its own chapter 2.3. Finally, the synthesis of the theory will be presented in chapter 2.4.

2.1 The concept of value in luxury and vintage

2.1.1 *The definition of value*

Vargo, Maglio and Akaka (2008, 146) present the concept of value through Aristotle's notion of "use-value" and "exchange-value". These concepts were born when Aristotle was attempting to differentiate between things and their attributes, including qualities, quantities, and relations. Later, Adam Smith (1776) (in Vargo, Maglio & Akaka, 2008) connected the concept into the wider field of economics.

Still today though, the concept of value remains difficult to define accurately (Khalifa 2004). Eric Jorgenson (Evergreen) gave a broad definition of value as being something created through work, be it mechanical or creative. Beinhocker (2007) stated that value is created by processes, which must be:

1. Irreversible
2. Entropic
3. Fit for purpose

When it comes to watches, not all of these can be agreed upon fully. For example, most watches have cases and movements made from metal. Movements being generally steel, and cases, bracelets steel, or other precious metals, such as platinum or gold. These metals can be smelted into new parts, and such the process is not irreversible. Other parts, however, such as dials, luminova (chemical generally applied to hands and dial markers that shines in the dark), leather straps, silicone balance springs and others can be considered irreversible. Before the strategizing of the mechanical watch industry from

tools to luxury pieces, entropy was seen in the capability to tell time compared to the lump of steel and leather.

2.1.2 The definition of value in luxury

Luxury as a concept is a relatively new one (Chevalier & Mazzalovo 2008). The notion of luxury however, is as old as humanity. Kapferer and Bastien (2009, 313) state that in ancient civilisations, whether it is Egyptians, Chinese or Mesopotamians, luxury items were used as symbols for wealth and power. They were the way to differentiate different classes of society. According to Berry (1994), in ancient Greece and Rome luxury items were seen as a corruption of man's virtue, as did the pre-modern Christian perspective, which considers luxury to be connected to man's sinful nature. The libidinous search for money, glory and power makes the term *luxuria* indistinguishable from lust and lechery.

In the modern world however, the term luxury has acquired many other qualities on top of the previous meanings, such as being a symbol of fashion and an affluent lifestyle (Kapferer and Bastien 2009, 313-314).

According to Jackson and Haid (2002, 161), luxury companies used to be small artisan family-owned businesses, valued for their high quality products and craftsmanship. Kapferer (1997) states that the word luxury "defines beauty; it is art applied to functional items", whereas McKinsey (1990) defines luxury brands as those, whose price and quality ratios are the highest in the market. The brands would then compete on their capability to invoke a sense of exclusivity, brand identity, brand awareness and perceived quality (Phau & Prendergast 2000, 123).

Wiedmann, Hennings and Siebels (2009, 637) found nine different value aspects that when combined, mediate luxury value. Figure 1 shows the relations these values have. In the figure, the first level of values creates the second level of combined values, which then are combined into the concept of luxury value.

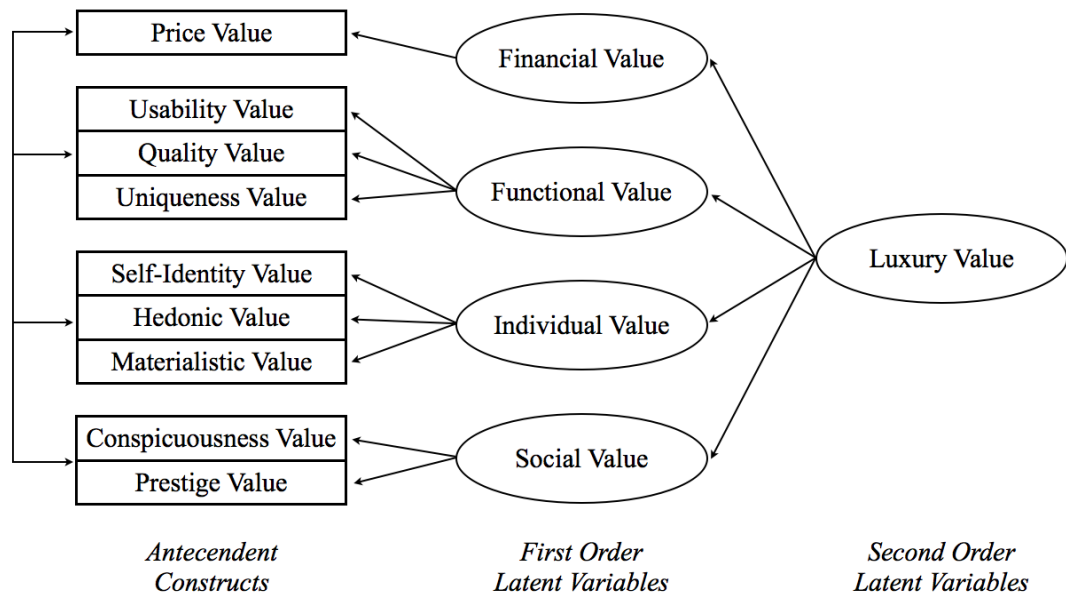


Figure 1 The Conceptual model for perceived value in luxury goods (adapted from Wiedmann et al. 2009)

Price can be a factor in people's perception of what luxury is, however a high price does not define a luxury product. Price is the sole component of a financial value of a product. (Wiedmann, Hennings and Siebels 2009, 629)

Usability value of a luxury products brings valuable and pleasant improvement of life for the owner. Uniqueness value brings feelings of exclusivity for the consumer. Quality value is seen as important due to usually luxury products having a higher level of quality than other products. These three components create the functional value of a luxury product. (Wiedmann, Hennings and Siebels 2009, 637)

Self-identity value mediates on what level the customers see themselves in what luxury represents. Materialistic value is the satisfaction of the need for consumption and improving one's quality of life. Hedonic value is seen in the sensory pleasure, aesthetic beauty and excitement towards luxury products providing experiences to the customer. These three components create the individual aspect of luxury. (Wiedmann, Hennings and Siebels 2009, 631)

Conspicuousness value is linked to how the luxury products might be used as a mean to show social status and representation. Prestige value refers to any added benefits from belonging in a luxury group, for which the membership is gained by owning the particular product. These components then create the social value of luxury. (Wiedmann, Hennings and Siebels 2009, 631-322)

Wiedmann, Hennings and Siebels (2009, 629), supported by Hennings et al. (2012, 1021) found four different categories in luxury consumption, which are as follows:

1. The Materialists
2. The Rational Functionalists
3. The Extravagant Prestige-Seekers
4. The Introvert Hedonists

These clusters hold distinct differences in the rationalisation of consumption of luxury goods. The different perceived values connected to defining the clusters can be found in Figure 1. The first cluster, the Materialists (22,4%) held materialistic and usability values of luxury goods as important. In their opinion, owning more luxury products would mean a better life. They however did not consider impressing others with luxury as important. The second cluster, the Rational Functionalists (23,7%) considered quality, uniqueness and self-identity as the most important values. For them, buying luxury goods did not stimulate emotion, and “showing off” was not important for them. The third cluster, the Extravagant Prestige-Seekers (26%) considered the most important part of luxury to impress others. For them, others’ luxury consumption was seen as important, as was the perceived quality of life increase, and pleasure. The final cluster, the Introvert Hedonists (17,2%) considered hedonic value and self-directed pleasure that bring forth increased quality of life to be the most important aspects. Social value aspects were not as important.

Trueb (2005, 11) stated how the watch industry business models changed after the quartz crisis: “[Mechanical watches] became something rare and very special: high-tech machinery, almost artistic skills and tremendous experience were required to make, assemble and service them... intricate micromechanics are something exclusive and deeply emotional, and only limited quantities of such timepieces can be produced”. Before the quartz crisis, mechanical watches were not luxury, but rather a necessity to tell time. After the crisis and re-emergence of the (Swiss) mechanical watch industry in the 1980s, the underlying business model had changed. Instead of accurate and robust time-telling, the watches were sold with notions of both luxury, and craftsmanship (Raffaelli, 2018, 12).

Kapferer and Bastien (2009, 316-319) found several characteristics for brands looking to succeed in the luxury market. According to them luxury brands should avoid copying and comparing themselves to their competitors, which tends to show a lack of identity. Luxury products should not be perfect, as their flaws are what makes them luxury. A Ferrari is not a family car, and a mechanical watch is not as accurate as an atomic clock.

The flaws are not hidden, but rather assumed, even advertised. Luxury brands do not try to cater to customer's needs, nor do they try to bring their products to everyone. Luxury goods are commonly difficult to purchase on purpose. For example, many watches by Patek Philippe, Audemars Piquet and Rolex have many years long wait lists. According to Statista (2019) 88% percent of luxury goods are sold offline, in Authorised Dealers. Marketing for luxury brands does not aim to create sales, but dreams and awareness, because the status symbol aspect of luxury requires other people to recognize the products. The qualities mentioned, such as copying, product perfection, hidden flaws, ease of purchase and marketing strategies are more suited for premium brands rather than full-on luxury brands. (Kapferer & Bastien, 2009, 316-319)

Berthon, Leyland, Parent and Berthon (2009) found that a luxury brand can be understood through three different dimensions: the functional, the experiential and the symbolic, as presented in Figure 2.

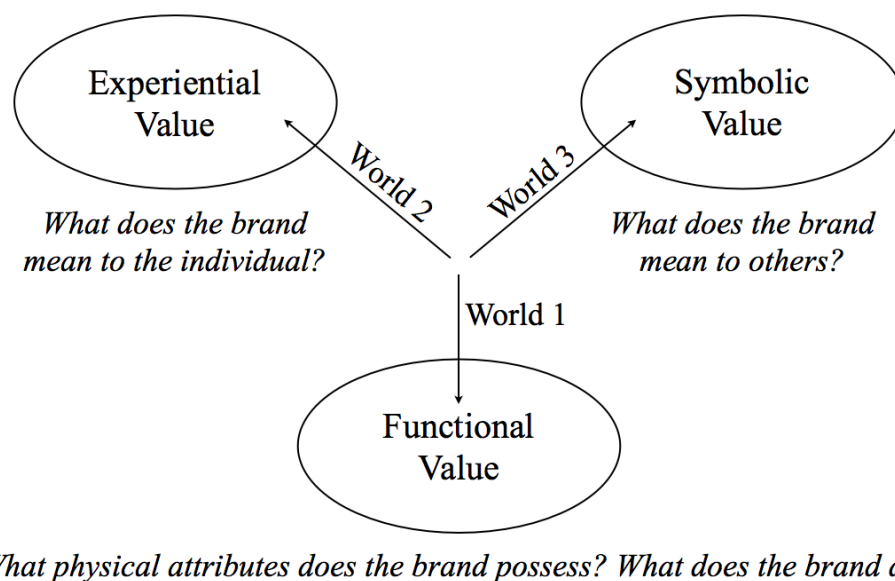


Figure 2 Constituent Value Dimensions of Luxury Brands (Adapted from Berthon et al. 2009, 49)

The functional dimension represents the brand's material embodiment, in other words what it offers physically (Berthon et al. 2009, 48). As an example, Rolex used to create accurate, reliable watches for divers with the Submariner, as Omega used to supply NASA's space going watches with the Speedmaster Professional. Even though today these pieces still represent the highest levels of accuracy for a mechanical watch, but

obviously time has passed for them to be used in serious professional environments with better, modern alternatives on the market.

The second dimension is called the experiential dimension and is related to the person's subjective taste. This dimension includes hedonic aspects, feel, and look and other subjective reactions to a luxury brand or product (Berthon et al. 2009, 48).

The symbolic dimension relates to the social aspects of the brand. It includes what the brand signals to others, and the value of signalling to the individual. The socially collective nature of the symbolic dimension is connected to also brands with non-product related attributes with more of a symbolic benefit (Berthon et al. 2009, 48).

2.1.3 The definition of value in vintage

The vintage phenomenon has been a rising trend in the last few decades. The consumption of second-hand luxury goods holds many qualities compared to brand new, such as frugal and sustainable consumption, as well as treasure hunting, to name a few (Turunen & Leipämaa-Leskinen 2015, 59). Amatulli, Pino, De Angelis and Cascio (2018, 622) found that luxury vintage products allow consumers to satisfy a need for self-identification, recollection of the past and a sense of fulfilment.

Retro (or vintage) brands are classic brands. They were made in a world less commercial with high moral value for craftsmanship. They represent value through time and a more comprehensive world. Possessions from such brands are memories materialized. They give a sense of past. The items were created and used during a time in the past but can and are still appreciated today (Zonnevald & Biggeman 2014, 332). There is however a distinction between retro and nostalgic products found by Cattaneo and Guerini (2012, 685): Nostalgic products are exact reproductions of old products with their charm, but also faults due to their old technology. Retro products are ones combined with old-fashioned looks and form with updated functions.

Turunen and Leipämaa-Leskinen (2015) found several connections of second-hand goods and luxury consumption. Firstly, the luxury experience is transferrable from one customer to another. The second-hand experience is more active due to the activities required to purchase luxury goods second-hand, making it more empowering for the buyer. The emotional thrill of finding, consuming, and possessing the luxury item makes the experience empowering, creating novel meanings to the product from the buyers' perspective. The buyer receives the luxury experience, but without the exclusive service

commonly related to purchasing of luxury goods. The role of the luxury company might be reduced to authenticity checks through retailers, whereas the purchase experience for the consumer is self-created. Thus co-creation in consumption of second-hand luxury goods happens above all between customers. The story behind the item creates emotional commitment in the new owner, and the extending of one's collection is seen as thrill inducing. (Turunen & Leipämaa-Leskinen 2015, 62-63)

Brown et al. (2003, 30) argued that consumers participate in co-creation of brand essence by bringing meaning from beyond the marketplace. They create their own brand stories by listening to others' stories and integrating associations from the past through channels such as mass media, press releases, news, and related celebrities. For retro goods, the most important qualities are their historical period, temporal, national, regional and political connections and associations. The times of the brand or product are idealized, as well as the places associated with the brands. The personal brand thus is alive, but also not alive due to its personal nature. The consumers however include into their own stories others' experiences as well. Consumers in a network then share these stories, developing the participants' personal stories, but also creating a story for the community. The communities not only participate, but they can also function as the setting in which the stories are created. *"The idealized community is both a real community and a pseudo community, moral and amoral, in thrall to a commercial creation and a rebellious uprising, dependent and independent"* (Brown et al. 2003, 30-31).

The structure for meanings of second-hand luxury possessions is shown in Figure 3. The vertical axis signifies the social and self-related motivations for purchases. The *sustainable choice* signifies social, altruistic, and ethical reasons, as well as animal rights and anti-consumeristic views. A more self-related motivations are within the *real deal*, which signifies for example the low price of an item. In the horizontal axis, the level of authenticity gives different meanings to the second-hand items. An item with questionable authenticity might be a *risk investment* which could awaken negative feelings towards the item.

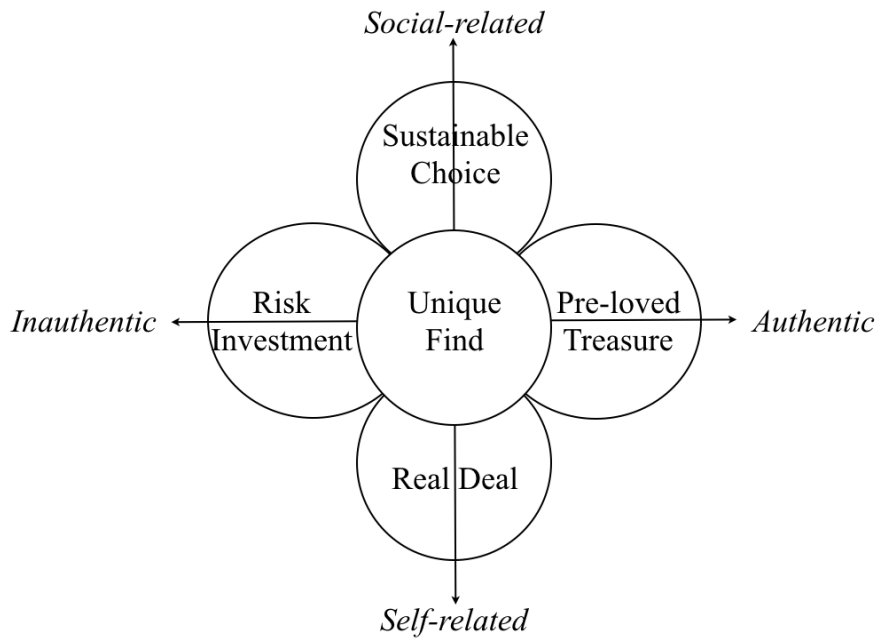


Figure 3 Structuring the meanings of second-hand luxury possessions (Turunen & Leipämaa-Leskinen 2015, 62)

An authentic *pre-loved treasure* however, evokes nostalgia, and appreciation of old luxury manufactured before modern mass production. Old luxury products are seen as better than new due to the stories they have and more authentic manufacturing methods. A *unique find* combines all these aspects of sustainability, nostalgia, good deals and risk-taking making it the type of item second-hand luxury buyers strive for. (Turunen & Leipämaa-Leskinen 2015, 62)

Zonnevald and Biggeman (2014, 332) found several characteristics of vintage items from the perspective of collecting. A defining aspect of an item is its country of origin. Local culture is an important part of the brand, because collecting often is related to what a specific company represents. Collecting can be considered be of symbolic significance, as the collection often represents an extension of one's self and identity. The authors also found evidence to include an extra component to Brown et al.'s (2003) four components that affect the collectability of a brand. The original four components were: *aura* which represents a company's character, core values and authenticity, *allegory* representing the plot or stories of a company, *arcadia* representing the dynamic brand community revolved around the collecting or consumption of a brand, and *antinomy* representing the brand paradox representing the changes in collectability through the times. Zonnevald and Biggeman's (2014, 331-332) fifth added component is the *ardour*, which represents

the emotional attitudes and plans for future generations to carry on the appreciation for collected pieces. Figure 4 shows these components in relation to each other.

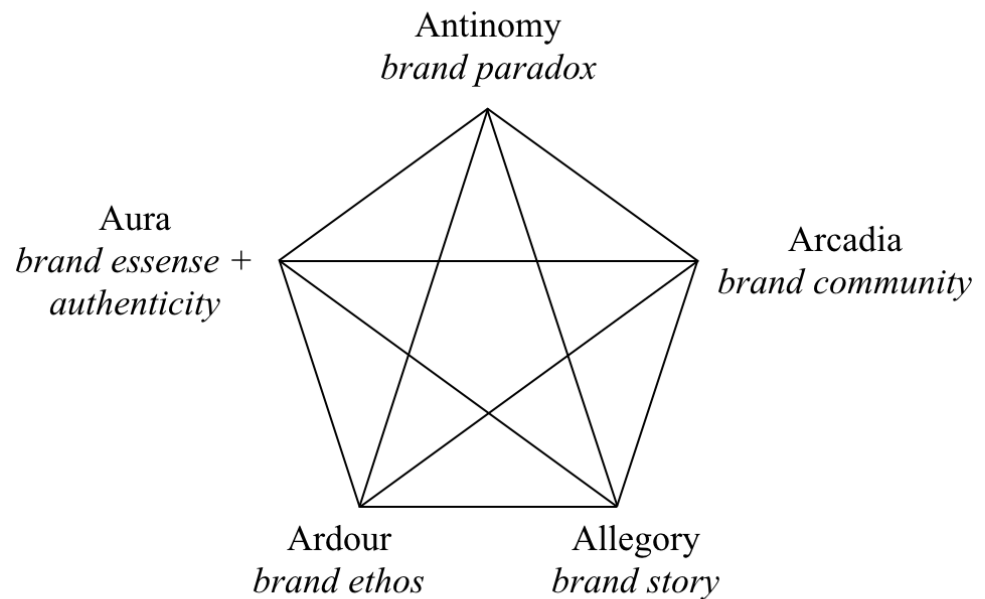


Figure 4 Revised constructs for brand meaning (Zonnevald & Biggeman 2014, 332)

Amatulli, Pino, De Angelis and Cascio (2018, 621-622) also found many aspects of luxury vintage values that enthusiasts found attractive. Uniqueness was seen a very important aspect, as was durability, superior quality, affordability, sustainability and impressing others. The relationship between durability and timelessness was seen as particularly important, as the designs of luxury vintage products are often considered timeless, and with high durability the products are able to better stand the test of time than modern ones.

2.2 Value creation and co-creation in online communities

2.2.1 Value creation

The original understanding in value creation was goods dominant logic, which can be found in the concept of value-in-exchange. (Vargo & Lusch 2004, 2) The basic principle

of value creation by Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004, 5) in goods dominant logic is that a firm creates something of value, that the market then decides the right exchange of for (of the product or service), which the client then obtains through the market. The firm and client are separate entities. By designing, developing production processes, crafting marketing messages, or controlling sales channels firms were able to create value, rather than with customers. One example of such activities is Porter's (1985) theory of value chains. The value created by the firm is distributed through the value chain to the customer, who then acquires the products through an exchange of currency, as shown in Figure 5. (Porter 1985, 11-15)

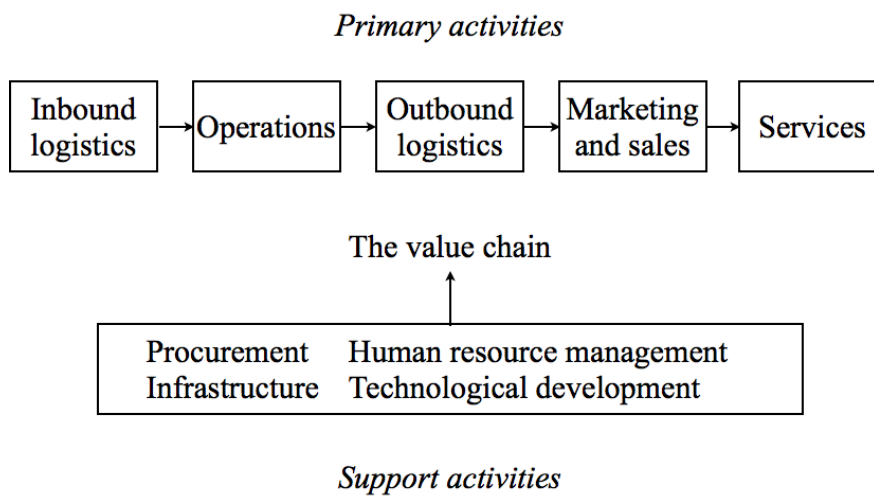


Figure 5 Firm's value chain (Porter 1985, 12)

Before the shift in the watch industry in the 1970s, watches used to be essential tools to tell the time. They were designed, manufactured, marketed, and sold to the customers. Porter (1985, 38) defined the value creation through the value chain as "*The amount of buyers are ready to pay for what a firm supplies them. Value is measured by total revenue*".

Closer to modern times, Raffaelli (2018, 14) referenced a watch company CEO in his paper, who said: "When you buy a Swiss [mechanical] watch it's no longer for just having the time on your wrist. It is first of all to have an accessory that corresponds with your personality and the things you like."

Value creation within the mechanical watch industry shifted from a goods dominant logic, to service dominant logic. The shift to service dominant logic, even if not by name but by changing the products from tools to more desirable luxury goods, a shift in the

understanding of value also happened. The concept of service dominant logic will be further explored in the next chapter.

2.2.2 *Value co-creation*

Somewhere between the 1980s and 1990s a shift happened from goods dominant logic to service dominant logic (Vargo & Lusch 2004, 3). This new paradigm meant that focus changed from tangible and static outputs to dynamic exchange relationships. Table 1 explains the differences between the underlying philosophies between good dominant logic and service dominant logic.

Table 1 Operand and Operant Resources Help Distinguish the Logic of the Goods- and Service-Centered Views (adapted from Vargo & Lusch 2004, 7)

	Traditional Goods-Centered dominant logic	Emerging Service-Centered dominant logic
Primary unit of exchange	People exchange for goods. These goods serve primarily as operand resources.	People exchange to acquire the benefits of specialized competences (knowledge and skills), or services. Knowledge and skills are operant resources.
Role of goods	Goods are operand resources and end products. Marketers take matter and change its form, place, time, and possession.	Goods are transmitters of operant resources (embedded knowledge); they are intermediate “products” that are used by other operant resources (customers) as appliances in value- creation processes.
Role of customer	The customer is the recipient of goods. Marketers do things to customers; they segment them, penetrate them, distribute to them, and promote to them. The	The customer is a co-producer of service. Marketing is a process of doing things in interaction with the customer. The customer is primarily an operant resource, only

	customer is an operand resource.	functioning occasionally as an operand resource.
Determination and meaning of value	Value is determined by the producer. It is embedded in the operand resource (goods) and is defined in terms of “exchange-value.”	Value is perceived and determined by the consumer on the basis of “value in use.” Value results from the beneficial application of operand resources sometimes transmitted through operand resources. Firms can only make value propositions.
Firm-customer interaction	The customer is an operand resource. Customers are acted on to create transactions with resources.	The customer is primarily an operand resource. Customers are active participants in relational exchanges and coproduction.
Source of economic growth	Wealth is obtained from surplus tangible resources and goods. Wealth consists of owning, controlling, and producing operand resources.	Wealth is obtained through the application and exchange of specialized knowledge and skills. It represents the right to the future use of operand resources.

Vargo and Lusch (2004), as well as Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004) argue that firms no more create and deliver value for a passive customer but need to utilize an interactive process that through dialogue helps to co-create value with an active customer.

Critical parts of this process are value co-creation through the exchange of knowledge and skills with customers or partners to create unique experiences in cooperation. (Vargo & Lush, 2004) Within multiple interactions with the customer, firms aim to co-create in conjunction with the customer through not only the point of sale, but through the lifetime of the service. (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004) Luxury watches, when properly maintained can function decades, if not centuries. The possibility of co-creation throughout the lifetime of a watch could be argued to exist. An advert from the luxury watchmaker Patek Philippe, famously states:

“You never actually own a Patek Philippe.”

You merely look after it for the next generation.”

Value co-creation is a concept primarily concerned with marketing (Vargo & Lush, 2004; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). Tynan, McKechnie and Chhuon (2010) found that in luxury brands, many co-creation aspects could be found. Dialogue between the brands, employees and customers was found to be complex, but could provide value only if the parties engage without separation of production and consumption. This type of communication creates cross-systems value from design and marketing communications to technology and innovation. The pressure is on the brand owners to create such a network of communications that makes these kinds of interactions possible.

One example of this kind of exchange could be given from Tag Heuer. In early 2016, the brand launched a competition on a rerelease of one of its most famous vintage watches, the Heuer Autavia. To commemorate the launch, the company designed four different models that fans could vote, and the most voted design was finally released in 2017. The processes described by Tynan et al. (2010) are more focused on day-to-day operations rather than a single event such as the Autavia, but it shows that the industry is aware of the phenomenon, even if the interactions are rudimentary.

2.2.3 Value creation and online communities

Adding to the concepts of value creation and value co-creation, Grönroos and Voima (2013) introduced a third dimension into how value is created. They defined three spheres, the provider sphere, the joint sphere, and the customer sphere to represent the different types of value creation. A firm as a provider of value through different processes uses resources to create something of potential value through different processes. The value is created through production and the consumer is not involved in the activity. This is called the provider sphere. The joint sphere represents the overlap of provider and customer spheres. In this sphere the value-in-exchange changes to value-in-use as ownership is transferred. However, the value is created through the interaction between the provider and the customer. The customer sphere then involves the customer as the sole creator of value, and more specifically value-in-use, as shown in Figure 6. (Grönroos & Voima 2013, 141)

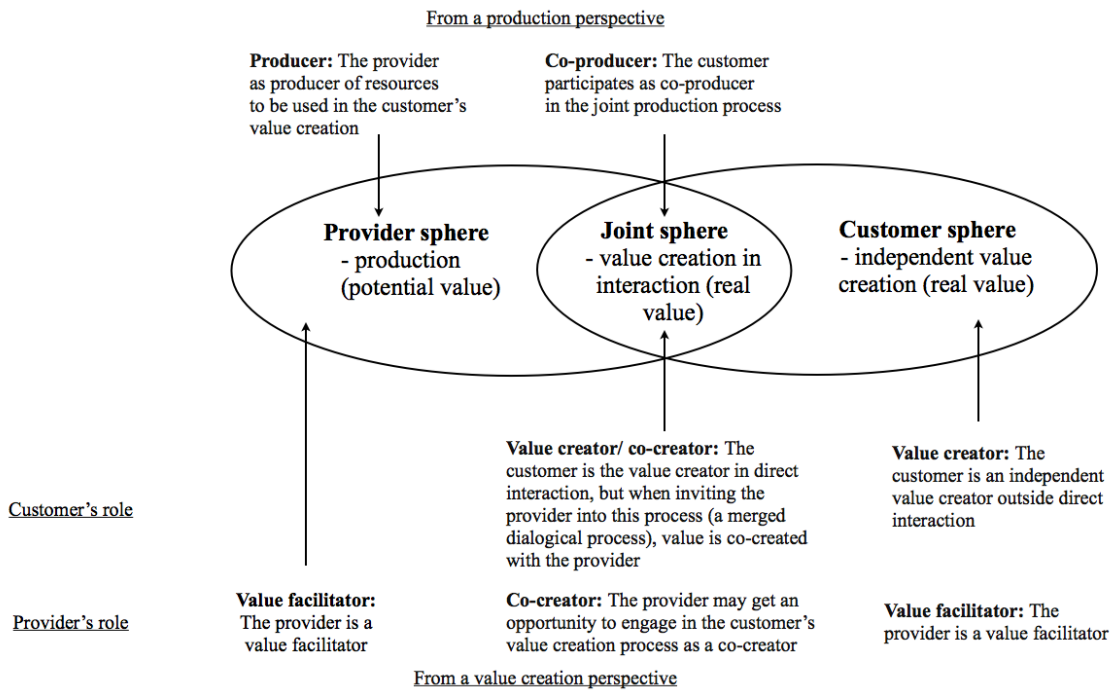


Figure 6 Value creation spheres (adapted from Grönroos & Voima 2013, 141)

By grounding value creation in value-in-use the customer becomes the value creator instead of just co-creator. Grönroos and Voima (2013, 144) state: "...define value as value-in-use, created by the user (individually and socially), during usage of resources and processes (and their outcomes). Usage can be a physical, virtual, or mental process, or it can be mere possession".

A firm can only evoke co-creation if it succeeds in penetrating the customer sphere and engaging the customer in a meaningful way by creating dialogical interaction which allows co-creation. (Grönroos & Voima 2013, 145)

A provider's value proposition is a promise that customers can extract value from an offering, as the firm and customer processes flow in parallel. The providers actively and directly affect and influence the customers' processes and value creation, but the customer is still the one who experiences the value and determines it. (Grönroos & Voima 2013, 146)

Heinonen, Campbell and Ferguson (2019, 99) argued that value creation in online communities arises from processes and activities that the provider can influence. The value created in the customer domain can be on an individual or collective level. Individual value is linked to specific customer unit, and collective value is related to several customers.

Heinonen et al. (2019, 100) found different forms of online customer value formation. The first one is Self-to-provider, which represents individual value creation, happening in the provider domain. It consists of an individual's experiences and firm related interactions which are integrated into the service or community. Capability is seen as the main driver. The second is Collective-to-provider, which is the collective value creation in the provider domain. It includes aspects associated with the service and collective on an aggregate level and relates to functional aspects. Care is the main driver. (Heinonen et al. 2019, 100)

The third form is Self-to-self, which is the individual value created in the customer domain. It includes a customer's idiosyncratic activities and experiences. The value creation is personal because it focuses on individual internal processes. The final form is Self-to-collective which represents the individual within the collective. The customer-collective network is at the core, making interaction between members important. Connection is the main driver of value. (Heinonen et al. 2019, 100)

The interaction between members can be explained as a relationship between social benefit and sacrifice, such as assistance, help or others' positive and negative behaviour. The value is created not through firm activities and processes but actions and behaviour of the online community members. The interactions can be direct or indirect, directed or unintended at the collective. Individuals may experience the collective and vice versa. Such aspects like private messages between community members are individual, even if they are shared individual experiences by or with the collective. Value retention is higher if many individuals are present in the collective. The key driver for this value is social interactions and connection. The value in the collective form is created in the safety of anonymity and distance by the members. As the value is created dynamically in a shared private domain, the firm can rarely control it. This means that any value that is created, can also be destroyed. (Heinonen et al. 2019, 101)

Füller (2010) identified four different types of consumers participating in virtual co-creation. *Reward-oriented consumers* participate in online value co-creation motivated by monetary rewards. They are highly skilled, like to solve problems and fiddle around, late adapters with a moderate interest in virtual new product development, use the web moderately and have previous experience. *Need-driven consumers* take part due to dissatisfaction with existing products. They are low in domain-specific skills and innovativeness, have moderate to low exploratory or novelty seeking behaviour, use the web moderately and are well educated. *Curiosity-driven consumers* are mainly attracted

to co-creation activities by curiosity. They use the web moderately, have little previous innovation experience, have moderate to low novelty seeking behaviour, have high internet specific task involvement and are early adapters in product adaptation. The final type is *intrinsically interested consumers*. They have high exploratory behaviour, are early adapters, novelty seekers and highly skilled, like to fiddle around and solve problems, have high interest in new product development and previous experience in all development stages. (Füller 2010, 112)

Monetary rewards are motivating only for reward-oriented consumers, whereas for others, feedback, recognition and interaction experience are the motivating factors in themselves. The fun factor is what motivates many consumers to take part in co-creation activities (Füller 2010,117). Ha (2018, 114) suggested that the experiences in the online brand community revolve around the consumption experiences of using the focal brand. They accumulate expertise on related topics which functions as cultural capital for other consumers searching for information related to consumption of the brand. The online brand community also has a significant effect on the value creation practises of the community. The value creation practises then have a positive enhancing effect on brand loyalty. The different dimensions of community loyalty, such as cognitive affective and behavioural dimensions, in turn negotiate the relationship between practices of value creation and brand loyalty. (Ha 2018, 114)

Ha (2018, 113) suggested that an online brand community can strengthen in certain conditions. Firstly, when participants perceive and identify a consciousness of sorts with other members. Secondly, when the practices and traditions of the community strengthen, and thirdly when the members of the community have a sense of duty towards the community and its members. The community is a voluntary group, but still holds moral consciousness in the members toward the individual and collective. Loyalty towards the community then evokes loyalty towards the brand (Ha 2018, 114).

Madupu and Cooley (2010) suggested based on Dholakia, Bagozzi and Pearo (2004) that online users might have several motivations for participation. The first is the information motive, be it receiving or sharing information. Posting questions or reading the archives gives the participants information about a brand and consumption experiences related to it. The second, self-discovery motive is the understanding of one's deeper aspects of self through social interaction with others. The third is the social integration motive, which refers to a person's need for social interaction with others. The fourth is the social enhancement motive referring to the need of gaining acceptance and

approval from others. The fifth and final motive is the entertainment motive, which refers to the more casual aspect of participation through pleasure and fun. (Madupu & Cooley 2010, 6-9)

Kozinets, Hemetsberger and Schau (2008, 348) stated on the participation of online consumers as follows: “... *a strong desire to gain expertise and be recognized for their ability, passionate labour and interest-based self-presentation ... many are long term members ... and become enthusiastic perfectionists ... the type of artist who creates a range of digital and material creations.*” Harwood and Garry (2010, 294) found that consumers create personal consumption experiences within their experience environments. Bonsu and Darmody (2008, 361) stated on how online community participation is useful: “the pursuit of self-fulfilment through community engagement, random acts of selfless altruism and creative expression ... is ultimately contributing to the ‘corporate bottom line’ of organizations operating within such contexts”.

Companies create a product, and the best compliment a consumer can give is share it online (Harwood and Garry, 2010, 297). The success of firms is no more dependent on adding or co-creating value by or with the customer because the post-product manipulations by the consumer optimize the consumption experience in the consumer environment. This however requires the continued consumer retention (Harwood & Garry 2010, 298).

The consequences from participation then can be then determining factors on people will continue to participate or if new participants can emerge. Consciousness of kind is the sense of community and connection that the participants have compared to non-community members. They have shared rituals and traditions, which determine the way of communication and interaction. The members have a moral responsibility towards others and the community by integrating, retaining, and giving advice to other members. (Madupu & Cooley 2010, 10-13)

2.3 Synthesis of theories

2.3.1 *Luxury vintage value*

In the previous chapters it was concluded that the definition of luxury value has changed over time. However, there are still some ways to try to define it. Figure 7 Components

of luxury vintage value illustrates the components of luxury vintage value. Price is the sole determinant of financial luxury value, but combined with value retention, value growth and authenticity it affects the financial value for luxury vintage. Price in itself, as defined by Wiedmann, Hennings and Siebels (2009), is not an adequate component of vintage luxury value, since vintage products often experience changes in their financial value. Therefore retention, value growth and authenticity (Turunen & Leipämaa-Leskinen 2015) are added to create a more comprehensive model.

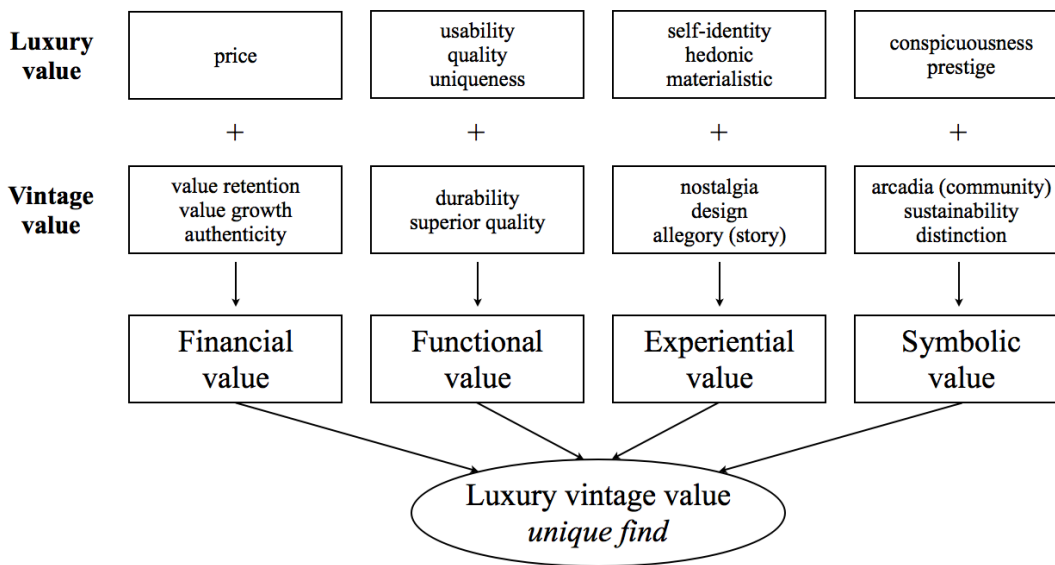


Figure 7 Components of luxury vintage value

Functional luxury value includes usability, quality, and uniqueness (Wiedmann, Hennings and Siebels, 2009). When durability (Turunen & Leipämaa-Leskinen 2015) and superior quality (Cattaneo and Guerini 2012) are added, together they create the functional value for luxury vintage.

Experiential value (Berthon et al. 2009) in luxury is a combination of self-identity, hedonic and materialistic values (Wiedmann, Hennings and Siebels, 2009). To create a more comprehensive model for luxury vintage, nostalgia (Amatulli, Pino, De Angelis and Cascio 2018), design and allegory are included (Zonnevald & Biggeman 2014).

Symbolic value (Berthon et al. 2009) in luxury comes from conspicuousness and prestige (Wiedmann, Hennings and Siebels 2009). When arcadia (Zonnevald & Biggeman 2014), sustainability and distinction (Turunen & Leipämaa-Leskinen 2015) are included, they create the symbolic value for luxury vintage value.

The vintage phenomenon has risen in the last few decades due to enthusiasm towards frugal and sustainable consumption, as well as treasure hunting. The vintage luxury market allows for consumers to satisfy their need for self-identification, recollection of the past and a sense of fulfilment. The difference between retro and nostalgic products is that (new) retro products aim to capture the feeling of past but have modern technology in them, whereas nostalgic products are exact reproductions of old products with all the charm but also the pitfalls. The luxury vintage experience is transferrable from one owner to another, excluding the exclusive service commonly related to luxury purchases, meaning there can be value creation then between the consumers.

Combining the different aspects of luxury and vintage value from the four different value constructor, financial, functional, experiential, and symbolic would negotiate luxury vintage value, and the compromise of these values subjectively by a consumer would results in finding a unique find of a luxury vintage product.

2.3.2 The process of online community value creation

In addition to firm centered value creation and the co-creation of firms and customers; a third sphere of value creation can be considered. This sphere represents the customer domain, where value-in-use is determined by the customers. The customer domain is created by the user through the consumption and social interactions with other consumers. The customers create value based on the firms promise of potential value in a product. In online brand communities, the interactions revolve around the consumption experiences of the products. Through the collective, the community builds a network of experiences that is seen publicly, where participants of different motives can then utilize or expand on. Continued participation is the main facilitator of community relevancy and value creation. Figure 8 shows the proposed process of online community value creation.

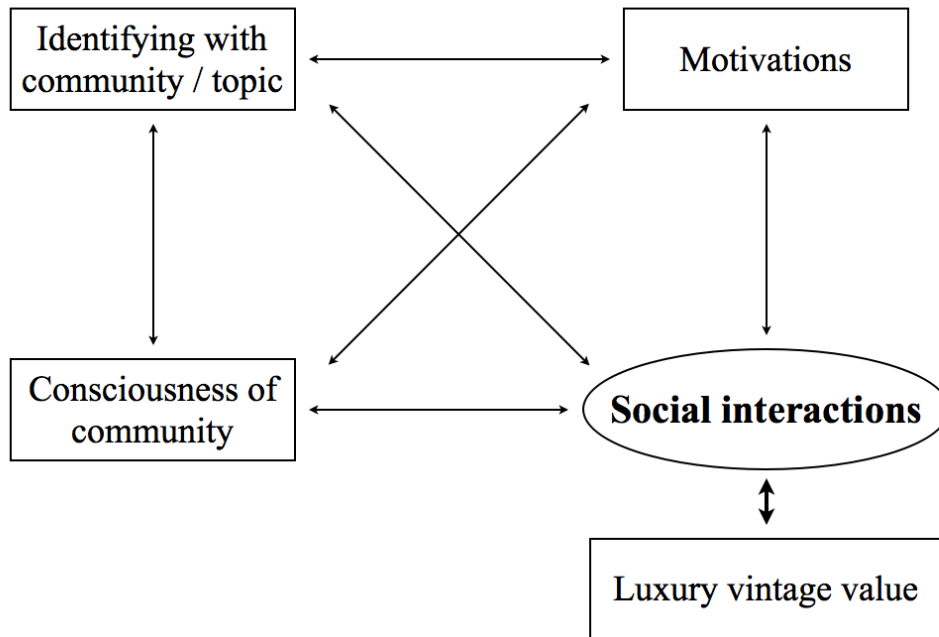


Figure 8 The process of online community value creation

The process of online community value creation begins by identifying with the community and topics (Ha 2018) discussed there. The identification is driven by the participants' own interests towards the topic in question (Darmody 2008). In the context of watches the initial identification could be formed by, for example, an interest in fashion which brings the participant into the watch community.

The participants of the community might have many different motives for taking part in the forum (Füller 2010). They might be looking to search for or share information related to certain models or brands. They might be looking to participate to learn something about themselves (Madupu & Cooley 2010) and their watch preferences through the social interactions in the forum (Heinonen et al. 2019), as well as to participate for the socialising or entertainment aspect of participating in the watch community (Füller 2010).

The value itself is considered to arise from the social interactions in the forum (Harwood & Garry 2010, Darmody 2010, Heinonen et al. 2019, Grönroos & Voima 2013). The sharing and receiving of information especially would increase the value gained. In some luxury vintage watches for example, as the manufacturer does not exist anymore, there might not be an official source of information concerning these pieces, giving the community a chance to be the source of information. Interactions function as creators and mediators of value for luxury vintage by advice giving, sharing newly

acquired pieces and personal experiences, creating hype, building reputation and story, connecting past stories into watches and be a welcoming place for the participants and newcomers.

Consciousness refers to the forums understanding of what the forum is how participants should behave (Ha 2018). It is the sense of community and connection to the members of the group, and include the rules, norms, rituals, and traditions concerning interactions, humour and general behaviour. Consciousness was also found to refer to the relationship the community might have towards non-community members looking to join the community. The consciousness then would affect the individual identification of the community or a topic within the community (Heinonen et al. 2019), making the proposed model a circular, and a dynamic one.

3 RESEARCH DESIGN

This chapter explains how the research was designed and conducted. A qualitative method was selected because it normally tries to uncover deep and detailed information about a particular research problem (Patton 2015). In addition, Ghauri and Grønhaug, (2010, 105) stated that a qualitative approach is acceptable when the focus of the research question is on understanding a new phenomenon or discovering the experiences or behaviour or a certain subject. A qualitative approach is mainly concerned about interpretation and understanding, rather than explaining, and aims towards a holistic understanding of the research topic (Eriksson and Kovalainen 2008, 5). The intention of this study is to examine what how and what kind of value online communities create in the context of mechanical luxury and vintage watches.

3.1 Netnography as a research method

Ethnographic research aims to achieve an emic perspective on cultural happenings by conducting research without trying to impose the researchers own conceptual frameworks into the empiric world. The aim of an ethnographic researcher is to examine how members of a community interact with each other to understand their culture. (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008, 138)

The classical definition of culture as the learned ideas, systems, customs, norms and social behaviour of a particular society or group leaves it open for adaptation. Kozinets (2010, 12) argues that online groups hold similar cultural elements compared to offline communities, which enables a similar ethnographic approach for studying them.

Netnography was chosen as a research method in conjunction with the construction of the research questions. Kozinets (2010, 60) defines netnography as “participant-observational research based in online fieldwork”. It aims to utilise computer-mediated communications as data to achieve an ethnographic understanding and representation of a cultural phenomenon. However, netnography does not necessarily require personal communications with the research subjects, but can focus on an online discussion forum, who may be anonymous depending on the forum. According to Kozinets (2010, 56), netnography is time efficient, hypothetically less mistakable, and cheap compared to other research approaches. The use of this approach has increased, not least because the

aforementioned reasons, in many different fields, such as marketing and consumer research, sociology and cultural studies. Figure 9 demonstrates the simplified flow of a netnographic research project.

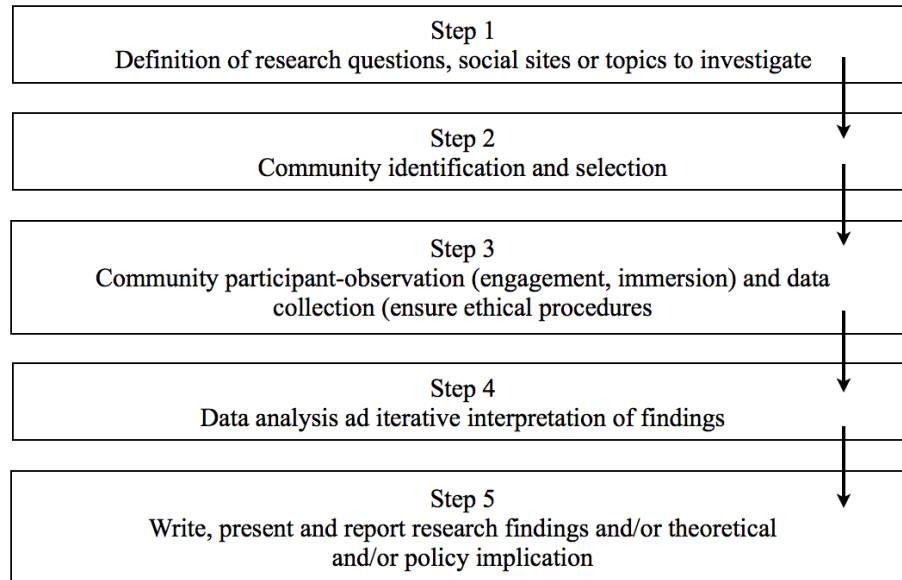


Figure 9 Simplified flow of a netnographic research project (Kozinets 2010, 61)

Kozinets' (2010, 61) principles of netnographic research were used to conduct this research. Special focus was put on research questions, and community identification. Content analysis and thematization were applied during data analysis, which will be explained in chapter 3.3.

Kozinets (2010, 63-64) makes a distinction between research into online communities and research on online communities. Research into online communities can be defined as study of a social or communal phenomenon through online communities or cultures that can be generalised to the whole (Kozinets 2010, 64), which in this paper is the study of value of luxury and vintage mechanical watches through a specific online community, of which the results can be generalised for the larger community of watches. In contrast, research on online communities focuses on a phenomenon that is directly connected to online communities and online culture where the "*online human social interactive elements will be central, core constructs that the research tries to explain*" (Kozinets 2010, 63-64). In the context of this research, the value creation that arises from social communications in the forum and the community building aspects represent this side of netnography.

3.2 Data collection

In ethnographic research, the researcher collects field notes during the observation and directly after it in order to save as much as the details as possible (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008, 147). In netnographic research however, the online nature of the data means it is easy to observe, record, copy and search, making detailed field notes obsolete (Kozinets 2010, 72).

The data used in this study was gathered from a large internet community interested in watches, reddit.com/r/Watches. It is one of the largest online watch communities, having currently over 577 000 subscribers (May 2019). Users can post pictures and/or questions as threads, where people can comment and post their own pictures. On Reddit however, anyone with an account can comment and vote within any of the many subreddits. Users can also select their own usernames. According to Alexa Internet (as of May 16, 2018) Reddit was the 6th most visited site in the world.

Kozinets (2010, 89) states that the online community chosen for a research should be relevant, active, interactive, substantial, heterogeneous and data-rich. r/Watches was chosen as the target of this study due to its active discussion and diverse content regarding watches, particularly mechanical. The subjects did not have knowledge of the researcher observing the threads, meaning the answers collected are authentic in nature because the presence of the researcher did not affect the behaviour of the commenters. All discussion was anonymized before analysis was made to protect the identity of the commenters. What must be mentioned as well is that the focus of this study was on the research question and sub questions, not the commenters themselves, which is another reason for the anonymisation.

Two observation phases were conducted in the making of this study. The first phase was conducted between June and November of 2018 and the second from January to April of 2019. The threads decision for which threads were chosen from these time periods were based on the threads' relevance to the research questions and synthesis of theory. Relevant threads were also used using keywords as presented in Table 2.

Table 2 Keywords used in data collection

Value in luxury	Value in vintage	Online value creation
------------------------	-------------------------	------------------------------

Why buy luxury watch	Why buy vintage	Buying advice
Luxury watch value	What makes vintage special	Speedmaster Tuesday
Hold value	Hold value	Macro Monday

Finding older threads allowed for a more comprehensive understanding of the topic, and gave some essential insight especially concerning vintage watches. The 11 threads chosen from the search results were also chosen based on their relevance to the topic. All the threads chosen can be found in the appendixes. In total, 39 threads were observed, totalling 2625 comments. These comments amount to 98 406 words.

The discussion in r/Watches is mainly based around watch hobbyists. In the forum people exchange opinions, pictures and jokes. However, without finding previous posts in r/Watches from a commenters' post history, it is impossible to say whether a person is active in the community or not. It is also not possible to confirm whether a person owns any of the watches they are displaying or discussing, as the originality of any pictures or stories also cannot be confirmed. Only the original person posting (poster) and the moderators have access to control the posts. The Reddit vote system aims to decrease the visibility of non-relevant content within the threads: a highly upvoted post is displayed at the top of the page, whereas a post with enough downvotes will be hidden unless specifically clicked to show. The Reddiquette, an etiquette on using the vote system, aims to guide users to use voting in a way that is constructive to the conversation. Users should upvote comments that are contributing to the discussion, and downvote irrelevant comments. Many times though, the voting system is used as a tool for showing one's opinion: a comment you agree with is upvoted, and one that you disagree with is downvoted regardless of the comment's contribution to the conversation. It is also common to upvote (subjectively) good jokes, and downvote bad ones. Promotional content and replica watches are not allowed in the forum.

Posters also have to conform to the subreddit's rules, a set of rules created by the moderator team to better the community. For example, when posting a picture to r/Watches, the user must submit a 500-character comment into the thread to start a conversation, where other users can choose to participate in.

The posts are written in English, but the commenters' nationality is not possible to determine. In General, Reddit's user base is around 40% American, 7% British, 6%

Canadian and 3% Australian, with other countries having lower shares. (Statista, July 2018)

3.3 Data analysis

Content analysis is defined by Krippendorff (2004, 2013) as “*research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts to the contexts of their use*”, as well as a technique offering new insight and deepening of understanding of a phenomenon. The aim is to find the relevant discussion concerning the topics mentioned, analyse them and to find possible patterns in the material, and thematise them according to the themes mentioned in the operationalisation table, Appendix 2 operationalisation table. From these themes the data was compiled to the results. The process of data analysis in qualitative research is shown in Figure 10.

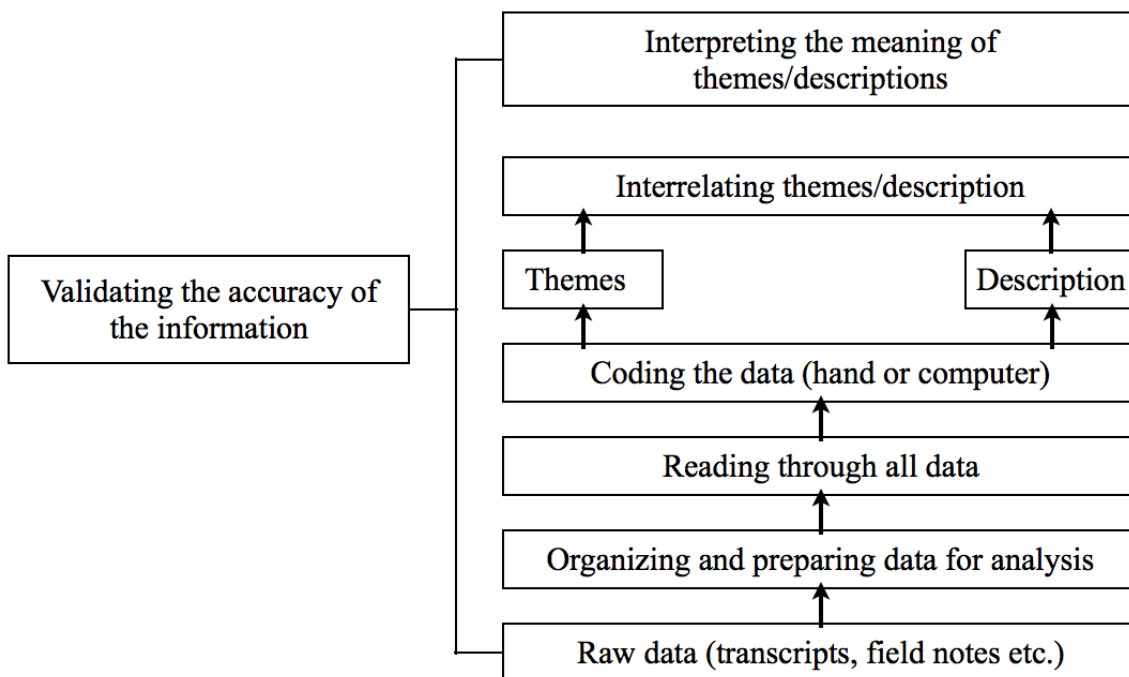


Figure 10 Data analysis in qualitative research (Creswell 2009, 185)

As Creswell (2009, 185) argues that even if the process of data analysis seems linear, it is often not. This became evident when performing the data analysis. The data was split based on the individual threads and imported into QSR International’s NVivo 12 (version

12.3.0) for mac. The threads required a large amount of modification before they could be imported. Figure 11 displays the preparing and organizing the results of the data.



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Farer is killing it with some of there designs. This and the Stanhope are my absolute favorites.

Figure 11 An example of individual comment data before (above) and after (below) organizing

By modifying the threads into text documents and importing them into NVivo, the relationships between the comment was lost. From these it could not be stated which comment was answering to what without looking at the context. In unclear cases the original threads on reddit.com were inspected.

The threads were then coded by hand into nodes based on the components of the theory synthesis (see Figure 7). First, entries with mentions of luxury and vintage value were split into their own components of financial, functional, experiential, and symbolic value. These entries were then split again into the more specific categories of the synthesis, such as usability, quality and uniqueness for luxury functional value, or durability and superior quality for vintage functional value, and so on for each of the categories. From these comments the most relevant comments were chosen to be included the study.

3.4 Trustworthiness

Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008, 290) state that adopting an evaluation criteria improves the transparency of a research, and that by continuously evaluating the study during the research process makes it possible to guide the research into better quality. The criteria used to evaluate this study is by Lincoln and Guba (1985), which uses four different categories to evaluate the trustworthiness of a study. These evaluation criteria are: *credibility*, *transferability*, *dependability* and *conformability*.

Credibility evaluates the confidence in the truth value of the findings. According to the Lincoln and Guba (1985), , the researcher should spend adequate time within the

subject to be able to understand it thoroughly from multiple viewpoints, providing scope, whereas persistent observation creates depth into the subject. The subreddit in focus has been observed by the researcher passively since 2012, as a “lurker”. A lurker is a person on Reddit who has subscribed to a community and follows it but does not participate in the discussion. With this long-time “lurking”, a deep understanding on the topic was achieved, and by not focusing on any single brand or type of watches, multiple viewpoints have been ingested, creating sufficient prolonged engagement. A more triangulated method could have been used to achieve a higher credibility though, with other communities or more in-depth interviews to gain a deeper understanding from the firm perspective, for example. The triangulation was left out however due to the large amount of data that was possible to be collected from a single source, as well as the diverse culture differences that different forums commonly have. Firm perspective was left out in order to better focus on the market perceptions and organic consumer interactions.

Transferability evaluates how well the findings could be applied to another context. The popularity of the forum indicates heterogeneous findings, and the research could be conducted different watch related forums as well. A thick description as defined by Lincoln and Guba (1985) elevates the transferability of a study by providing a detailed account of field experiences. The forum choice is explained clearly by explaining the diverse nature and size of r/Watches. Data collection is explained thoroughly, but the description for choosing the threads for the study is left vague. The difficulty of explaining the decisions arises from fact that the research questions are created subjectively to fit this particular research, and the choosing of data is based on these research questions. Splitting the collected data into themes based on the theory synthesis is explained with detail.

The third criteria, *dependability* establishes how consistent the findings are and could they be repeated by others. A study conducted in a different time, could hold different results. It is difficult to evaluate this criterion due to the lack of other data sources beside r/Watches. However, different watch communities seem to hold a consensus on why they are interested in watches, so an argument could be made that other communities have similar motives and participation on the watch industry.

The final criteria is *confirmability*. Its purpose is to evaluate to what extent the findings are affected by the researcher’s bias, motivation, and interests. By nature, qualitative research is prone to subjective interpretation by the researcher. The intention was to abandon opinions and prejudices on any brands or the industry in general and rely on the

data gathered and results found. A challenge was to select relevant data which was not always easy. Some of the threads chosen were seemingly at random, but the discussion found in them was vital for the findings. Another difficulty was to find (subjectively) informed comments on the topic, rather than overly romanticised ones. The reason this topic was selected was the researchers own interest in the hobby of watches, which could introduce some form of bias into the research. Also, the fact the personalities and motives behind any of the posters cannot be confirmed, leaves a question to be answered: who are the commenters, and who are they not? What are their motives on posting on the forum, could there be for example employees from the companies advertising their product trying to portray themselves as mere watch hobbyists?

4 RESULTS

This chapter aims to present and analyse the data collected, as explained in chapter 3. Chapter 4 is thus structured to reflect this order to find answers to the research question and sub-questions. Chapter 4.1 will explore the value in luxury mechanical watches, and chapter 4.2. the value in luxury vintage watches. Chapter 4.3 will discuss the results on online value creation and 4.4. will present a summary of the findings.

4.1 Value in luxury mechanical watches

4.1.1 Financial value

In the data the concept of price in itself is rarely discussed. Pricing is linked to other aspects of the watch without exception. Different price points relate to different kinds of value but rarely is price the sole factor of value. When it comes to price, a recurring theme is the change in industry dynamics ignited by the quartz crisis, where the increasing of prices is seen to begin.

In a thread, where an advertisement for a watch from the 60s was posted, the discussion revolved around how the industry has changed from the time of the ad.

“Apparently comes out to about \$1,500 today --- Back in the day, watches were a necessity. If you didn't have one, you didn't know the time. They were literal tools. These days they're jewellery and status symbols for men --- You can't compare the market from when they made that ad to today's market. ---” [Thread 26]

The ad was for the Rolex Explorer I, which at the time of writing is sold new by Rolex for 6 150€. When comparing the prices, it must be considered that the new model has widely different, upgraded specifications and materials. The important notion however is that the relative price of high-end watches has irrefutably increased, as has the value proposition of a mechanical watch. A commenter concurred on this view:

“That's a great point. In a way, Rolex (and other watch brands) was a technology company, not a jewelry company.” [Thread 26]

According to Raffaelli (2018, 12) the strategies of mechanical watch companies changed during the 1980s to include notions of luxury in their strategies. This finding can be seen in a number of comments in other threads as well. In a discussion about the unavailability of certain watches, and how that has become the new norm in the high-end of the industry, a person posted:

“It’s been their business model since the Quartz Revolution days. In a market where a \$20 quartz watch keeps better time than even the most hyper-engineered mechanical, --- (a luxury watch company) has to trade on status. Preservation of that market perception comes first- not product volume.---“ [Thread 12]

Commenters seem to be in agreement on what constituted the change in the dynamics in the industry, and what components contribute to the present state. McKinsey (1990) defined luxury brands to be the ones with the highest price and quality ratios. Phau and Prendergast (2000, 123) argued that luxury brands must compete on sense of exclusivity, brand identity, brand awareness and perceived quality. The discussion around price seems to revolve around these concepts and the price of a watch is justified or unjustified based on these aspects.

On a thread about a modded Rolex Milgauss, a person who is not a member of the community (according to his own words) asks, what makes a Rolex Milgauss so expensive.

“Quality and brand pretty much. --- like I said, it’s a Rolex. --- the brand always represents one of the highest standards in quality.” [Thread 14]

This type of response is a common sentiment about how the value is closely linked to the brands’ perceived quality. Whether the discussion is about Rolex or Longines, the brand names give an understanding about what to expect from watch set at a certain price. These expectations are related to the brands’ heritage and reputation, which will be more thoroughly discussed later in the chapter.

As stated by Kapferer (1997), luxury is beauty and art applied to functional items. A common theme found throughout the data is that the high prices are also a reflection of

what mechanical watches represent. They are seen not just as watches but pieces of art and engineering and are heavily romanticized by the participants, as seen in this comment:

“The truly expensive ones are expensive because they are art. They are rare limited pieces made by hand.” [Thread 37]

An interesting comment about how getting into watches can change person’s perception of value and money gives some insight into understanding high prices as well. Collecting watches can be an expensive hobby, and for non-hobbyists it can be unfathomable how a person can justify spending thousands into watches. It is interesting as well that for collectors, the issue of price is even more important than for others. More about collectors’ value is explored later in the vintage value retention chapter. A commenter explained his views on the relativity of the prices:

“But after a few years of hearing people talk about the “value propositions” of luxury watches, you do start to believe that adding a semi-vintage rattrapante for “only” \$5k is a real bargain (which is arguably true, if you don’t look outside the corners of the hobby).“ [Thread 5]

In many threads, especially in ones about watch purchase recommendations, discussions about which watches keep their value over others were common. The participants seemed to agree that one brand is unbeatable in this regard.

*“If holding value is your primary concern though, Rolex is the end all be all”
[Thread 8]*

For other brands value retention can become a problem if bought new, as the secondhand market is not as favorable for them. A watch bought new at retail price will lose a part of its value quickly, which is why many participants recommend buying second hand to get better deals. Another reason for secondhand recommendations is that certain brands or models can be difficult to purchase from an Authorized Dealer. Kapferer and Bastien (2009, 316-319) mentioned that luxury brands should try to keep exclusive to increase brand image. Many participants acknowledged this notion, as seen in the following comment:

“They steadily increase prices with no reason other than to keep the brand image, and the only reason they can get away with it is that same brand image --- They sell exclusivity, while at the same time selling a million mass produced watches a year.” [Thread 12]

Especially for Rolex many participants mentioned the brand image to affect the pricing heavily. It seems that because the brand and its efforts for exclusivity are so well known in the community many polarizing opinions can be seen. However, many still recognized that a watch’s main driver of value are aspects such as finishing, metal used, movement, brand heritage, innovation, expensive hand labour, status, brand premium and other. One commenter compared the watches to a Ferrari, arguing the complexity of answering the question.

4.1.2 Functional value

A recurring theme in the discussion in the forum was the fact that mechanical watches cannot compete with quartz watches when it comes to accuracy. Because of the nature of how mechanical watches work they require more parts and more labour to function effectively compared to quartz pieces. This was well understood in the discussions, as well as the acknowledgement that a phone with online time syncing capabilities is the ultimate way to tell accurate time. As a commenter explained it:

“If you want to tell time accurately use your cell phone or a \$10 Timex. A Rolex or Jaeger-LeCoultre won't tell time as good as those, as much as I love automatic watches they don't hold up in pure time telling” [Thread 37]

When it comes to mechanicals, there was however a lot of appreciation for the amount of work that goes to make an accurate mechanical watch. It was well understood that in different price points one can expect different levels of accuracy. One cannot expect the same levels of accuracy from an entry level Seiko 5 and a COSC-certified Rolex. Kapferer and Bastien (2009, 316-319) explained how luxury brands should not aim to create a perfect product, as the flaws are what make a luxury product. The flaw of not being dead accurate is a drawback, but the way the pieces are built to reach a reasonable level of

accuracy is what make the pieces attainable. When it comes to usability, there were also mentions of luxury quartz watches, which were recommended for people looking for better accuracy but still the level of quality that comes with a luxury brand. The reason these pieces were not as highly regarded as mechanical watches is that the technology in the movement was not considered to have a similar level of skill required to build and thus do not hold the same level of complexity. The usability that comes from the complex engineering and construction of mechanical watches as explained by a commenter:

“Building mechanical watches and calendars isn't all that hard. Doing it well, accurately and so that the clock isn't disturbed by wrist movements is the difficult part.” [Thread 21]

Contrasted by:

“Also, don't immediately hate on quartz. It's not as prestigious and hand-tooled as mechanical movements, but it's accurate and reliable. Isn't that what we all look for in a timepiece? [Thread 13]

One answer to the “problem” of non-perfect mechanical accuracy and the lack of detailing in a quartz piece was present by Grand Seiko in the form of the Grand Seiko Spring Drive caliber 9R65, released in 1999. This movement is built with mechanical components, but instead of an escapement, the regulation of the movement is done with a quartz crystal. In many discussions this movement was mentioned, especially in the context of comparing quartz and mechanical movements as an ideal piece to combine the best of both worlds.

Another recurring theme on usability is the idea of having different watches for different situations. The most popular configuration seems to have three watches, a beater watch for any physically demanding activities (could be a Casio G-Shock or a Rolex Submariner), a dress watch and a chronograph. Zonnevald and Biggeman (2014, 332) mentioned that a collection represents a person's self and identity. Many collections in the conversations seem to be personalised to fit the individual's needs and tastes. Some collections might combine a beater and everyday watch and add a third watch of a different kind whereas some might add or replace the dress watch spot for a vintage piece. If a collection is smaller than 3 watches, it is common to focus on versatile pieces. If it is

larger, then the categories to fill increases to infinity. Some examples of the further categories are pilots watch, a GMT watch, a grand complication, a watch from the “Holy Trinity (Audemars Piguet, Patek Philippe and Vacheron Constantin), a racing watch and many others. The list goes on. To collections shared in the forum are mostly two to four watches, but some outrageous 20-piece collections were also shared. A participant explained his views on collecting.

“I'm rationalizing a potential purchase by recognizing a need for one sport watch and one dress watch, which will be sufficient for my lifetime.” [Thread 5]

Collecting watches does bring however its own issues. The biggest drawbacks of collecting mentioned by the participants were service costs, setting the time and circulating the pieces so all of them are used. A watch needs servicing to be able to function properly. Usually, the regular service interval is around 3-7 years, but if something goes wrong in the movement it needs to be serviced regardless of the interval. Mechanical movement service costs are high, and a big collection means more watches need to be serviced. The second issue of setting the watches comes from the limited power reserve in mechanical watches. A mechanical watch needs winding every one to two days, and an automatic watch needs to be worn to able to continue ticking. If they run out of power reserve, the time needs to be set and the watch wound before it is functional again. The issue become more troublesome when a watch has many complications that need setting, such as calendars or moon phases. One answer to the problem is watch winders, but they only work on automatic watches, leaving regular mechanicals still needing to be wound by hand. A commenter explained his views on these issues as follows:

“Owning a bunch of watches also comes with a fair amount of headache (all of them will need service, you'll have to set them more frequently unless you get a bunch of winders), and you'll probably end up gravitating towards one or two most of the time anyway ---” [Thread 5]

The third issue of circulating one’s collection so that the watches get wrist time is also an interesting one. As the comment explains, many times there are a couple of watches in a collection that tend to be more worn than the others. This might be a sign to the

collector that the collection needs to be purged or rebuilt in order to ensure the usability of all the pieces.

The reason there are different categories in the basic configuration is that the watches are seen to fit different situations the watches were intended for. The discussion on tool watches especially revolves around their durability and reliability, as explained by a participant:

“Not at all. I like tool watches for their ability to go anywhere and do anything. Dress watches are too fragile/formal for me.” [Thread 10]

This point is arguable, since the movement technology is generally the same in dress and tool watches. Especially more expensive dress watches have much of the same modern reliability increasing technology than tool watches. The perception of lesser reliability comes for the lack of water resistance and bracelet commonly found in dress watches, as well as the sense of fragility given by the design language.

As McKinsey (1990) defined luxury brands with those with the highest quality and price ratio, the discussion seems to support this claim. In many instances this point was supported by the discussion. The luxury brands were seen as having a superior quality to lower end ones. The difference in quality is based on the materials, design, finishing, movement, accuracy and reliability. There is however, a tendency of diminishing returns on quality when moving upmarket. The participants acknowledge that an entry level mechanical cannot compete with luxury models in quality. Comparing luxury brands and models to each other becomes more difficult however due to the similarity on quality. After a certain point, a high level of quality is considered to be a certainty. Where this point is however, is difficult to say because of the subjectivity of the issue. Comparing luxury pieces however is about the most minute details in design, finishing of the movement and the philosophy of the brand. A common differentiator of quality is the origin of the movement. An in-house movement is considered to be the ultimate achievement of a watchmaker, as it requires extensive skill, investment and R&D. The quality benefits that arise from an in-house movement can be argued, but they are certainly appreciated by the community. A commenter argued this point by comparing the Tudor Black Bay 36 and the Rolex Explorer I, two watches with a similar aesthetic and intended purpose but a price difference of thousands.

“The price difference is so large between the two that the difference doesn’t justify what is generally the same watch. The only real differences here to me are the cleaner dial and the in house movement...” [Thread 7]

The general understanding of the movement differences is that an off-shelf movement like an ETA will no doubt be serviceable long into the future because of its widespread nature. There are massive amounts of spare parts and skilled watchmakers able to service the movements. These movements are often referred to as “workhorse” movements and their reliability is well appreciated, but usually they are not as accurate as for example a COSC-certified in-house Rolex movement. Luxury brands that use an off-shelf movement or a modified version of one usually improve and regulate the movements to achieve a better accuracy than lower end brands using the same unmodified movements. As highly regarded as in-house movements are, the drawback is that the service costs are usually higher because the watch needs to be serviced by a certified watchmaker, or even sent to the manufacturer to be serviced because any watchmaker does not necessarily have the skills or access to spare parts to be able to service the movement. The problem of servicing in-house movements in the future is not considered to be a problem for the bigger brands though because of the trust in the continuing belief that the brands will continue to exist. As a participant explained his views on the issue:

“I wouldn't care too much about in house vs not, the ETA is bulletproof and will be serviceable forever (this is also true of the Rolex).” [Thread 7]

A common theme on the quality of luxury watches was also the long-term durability that comes from a mechanical piece. With proper maintenance, the watches should be able to function for a long time. The high quality and reparability of the pieces enables this long-term thinking and is usually emphasized in the justification of luxury watch purchases. The view is also quite romanticized as a commenter explains:

“So much of the stuff I use today has planned obsolescence. Gadgets stop getting supported after a few years of revisions, and the pace of technology means things seem dated more and more quickly. So the idea of something that will last my entire life if I take care of it has a lot of appeal.” [Thread 4]

One manufacturer that is commonly brought up when talking about quality is Grand Seiko. It seems that this brand is held above others in its price range when it comes to general quality. Especially in discussions about details and finishing the brand's quality is considered to be superior to others. The Grand Seiko SBGA211 "Snowflake" is often the culmination and example of such a watch. It is often mentioned to be superior than its Swiss counterparts.

Uniqueness is an interesting issue in watches. On one hand Wiedmann, Hennings and Siebels' (2009, 629) and Kapferer and Bastien's (2009, 316-319) notion that perceived exclusivity increases consumer demand and desirability is supported by exchanges like these where the discussion is about the multi-year waitlists of watches due to scarcity:

"show them how you feel by voting with your dollar."

"Soooo... paying MSRP x2?"

"That's one way of voting with your dollar. It's the opposite of what I was saying to do, but it would certainly send Rolex a message about how you feel about their distribution strategy, which is that it's aok." [Thread 12]

On the other hand, some commenters heavily disagreed with the notion of exclusivity and scarcity, be it real or artificial.

"I don't like it, per se, but since there's nothing I can do about it, I don't think there's any point in being upset about it. --- because of all this extra nonsense that I have no interest in dealing with." [Thread 12]

"I see a few people suggesting the OP39mm here. Don't do it. Half the (people) on here have one and nothing sucks as much as having the same watch as everyone else." [Thread 7]

It seems that for watch hobbyists the difficulty of purchasing a watch, especially if it is new, is a negative aspect. Much of the discussion around this topic is criticizing the brands that take part of this business practice. However, many of the watches that are extremely difficult to obtain, tend to still gather more attention than pieces that can be

bought off the shelf. Many participants comment on these threads that they would buy the watch if they could but are either stuck on waitlists or decide to buy something else. It seems that even with the negativity that the community shows towards exclusivity, all the discussion around it elevates the desirability and demand.

Another theme in uniqueness that is central is design uniqueness. Many participants find it important that their watches have an unique design. This issue can be seen as a competition between the established classics and the ones trying to break the status quo. The classics, while appreciated, are not rare in the watch community. Watches like the Submariner or Speedmaster are not rare in the forum, but still gather popularity. The companies trying to introduce more radical design are usually smaller ones, or even micro brands. These companies usually have more daring designs that are considered by many participants as more interesting than the classics, as shown by participants in a thread about a British micro brand:

“I love that they don’t play safe with their designs and colors and work to create something truly unique.”

“I was apprehensive as well, since it is a micro brand. But I have no complaints, it is an amazing piece. They are at least doing something different, especially considering that there are so many brands giving such stale designs for your money.” [Thread 2]

The trade-off that comes from micro brands is usually the lack of history and uncertainty for the future of the brand. Without heritage, there is also the question of quality. These are the trade-offs for design uniqueness that the commenters acknowledge.

4.1.3 Experiential value

The self-identity aspect of luxury value in watches is an important part of why the participants consider luxury watches such an interesting hobby. As Wiedmann, et al. (2009, 631) defined self-identity, it is the symbolic meaning of the product to one’s self. The discussion around this topic is very heavily focused on romanticizing the mechanical aspect of the watches, and how it reflects the owner’s thinking and personality. A participant mentioned their own views on the topic:

“Why I prefer the technology used in mechanical watches, is that this technology is extremely outdated and if humans were rational thinking it should not exist today. But somehow there are still new complications and movements created by some of the brightest people on this planet, just because they think it’s cool..”
[Thread 4]

The important part is how mechanical watches make the wearers feel. They feel like they are wearing a part of history on their wrist. Seeing the smooth sweeping second hand or movement through the display back reminds them of a bygone era of technology, which by no means is still relevant today, but was for so long. A luxury watch with a rich history might make the wearer believe they are a part of that history and are participating in it, regardless of the age of the watch. As the wearer becomes more connected to the watch and learns about its history, it starts to create a story of its own which the wearer then connects to their own life and how it makes them feel. A participant explained his views as such:

“The more I know its history, its function, its authenticity, its strengths and weakness, the more I’m assured of what it is representing.” [Thread 4]

Another self-identity related point is that many participants explained their philosophies on how different watches make them feel different, even to the point that they need a certain watch in order to focus on a certain task. Different watches give different people various kinds of feelings which they then attach to the pieces and wear them accordingly. As a commenter explained it:

“I don’t know if obsession is a right word for me, but I’ve been wearing watches all my life and I feel naked without one, and because of that, putting on a watch is a daily ritual that helps to remind me how I feel or focus on how I should be.”
[Thread 4]

Berthon et al. (2009, 48) defined the experiential value to be the consumers subjective taste’s and opinions of a brand. As explained above, many participants held the subjective reasons for the hobby very important. Many argued that the different historical and

functional aspects make a certain watch special for them, which is why they hope to obtain it. Others argued that these are secondary concerns, as the most important reason is for example the design of the piece. It is clear that these points cannot be resolved without subjectivity, which makes them all the more important.

Another contrasting view on the issue is that watches are just jewellery for men. Many commenters stated this while still acknowledging the aspects which differentiate them from jewellery, namely the mechanics, functional and historical aspects. A participant stated this as follows:

“Watch enthusiasts make a lot more sense when you think of it as jewellery for men.” [Thread 13]

The comment also explains a little about the hobby itself. The people taking part in the hobby might seem overly enthusiastic about watches, but when paralleled with jewellery or sports cars it is easier to understand how the participants view the hobby and justify the monetary aspects of it.

Kapferer (1997) mentioned that “luxury is art applied to functional items“. Wiedmann et al. (2009) defined hedonic value as the sensory pleasure, aesthetic beauty, and excitement of the individual. A participant commented on his reasons for enjoying mechanical watches:

“For me it also helps that when I am looking at gears and levers I can see and somewhat understand how it works. When looking at a computer chip I don't get excited at all since I don't understand what is going on in 99% of the little thing.” [Thread 4]

Another concurred:

“For me it's the mechanical complexity, and it's why I prefer display case backs and sometimes openwork.” [Thread 4]

There seems to be a split in the community about whether seeing the movement is important. On one hand, display backs, open heart or skeletonized movements allow the movement to be seen, admired and inspected by anyone. Many participants stated that

being able to see the movement gives them visual pleasure and allows them to connect to the piece more. On the other hand, some participants stated that it is enough that they know the movement is there to receive similar pleasure. There are some functional differences in these views as well. For example, in many water-resistant watches the movement cannot be seen. In many extremely high-end luxury watches the movement is almost without exception visible through a display case back. Generally, the higher end the watch, the more detail and effort is put into the finish of the watch, including the movement, which is why showing it is so important.

When it comes to hedonic value, the design itself is also an important part, as that is what the wearer will most likely be looking at the most when the watch is worn. The design is again a very subjective quality. In many different comments, participants mentioned that when looking to their watch to find out the time, they forgot to actually check the time as they were admiring their time piece. All the different qualities that result in the design are again very subjective. The most frequently mentioned ones however are size, colour, dial, case shape, complications, and strap/bracelet. A recurring theme is that the watches that respect their intended purpose are considered good design. Dive watches should have certain characteristics which make them dive watches. The historical significance of the Rolex Submariner for example has more or less dictated what a dive watch should be, even today.

The materialistic value in watches is also an important one. When talking about luxury watches, the materialistic aspects are one of the first ones that people generally associate them with. One particular brand not surprisingly holds a special place in this respect, as a commenter noted:

“That's the brilliance of Rolex marketing. For most people it is the ONLY luxury watch.” [Thread 12]

Wiedmann et al.'s (2009, 631) notion of the materialistic value aspect represents desirable possessions and the owner's signaling of their status. For a collector, there are several reasons to lust for certain pieces due to their unique characteristics that make them desirable. For many participants, finding and saving for the right watch is part of the reason they partake in the hobby. This is something often explained to newcomers who at the beginning of their watch journey are inexperienced, buying many cheap watches to

satisfy their initial hype. They are often given advice to slow down and think about their individual tastes and wants before going on a shopping spree, as explained here:

“And remember, you have your entire life to ease into future purchases. You said you enjoy the process, so why end it prematurely? [Thread 5]”

The process of watch purchasing, or collection building is often described as thorough, exciting and never ending. My first real watch -posts are common, where a participant shows the forum their first watch, which the poster considers to be a “real” watch. The definition is very vague, as the posts might be about a person’s first cheap mechanical watch, their first luxury watch or their first watch with historical significance.

Another central concept in watch purchasing is the time period right after acquiring the watch, called the honeymoon period. This the period many participants described their materialistic feelings being satisfied after acquiring a new piece and learning to live with it. It is a feeling of bliss, awe, and satisfaction where the owner finds new details in the piece and where the piece fits into their collection. This period might also be a time for the owner to notice something about the watch they dislike or even cannot live with, meaning they decide to let the piece go. Many commenters urge their fellow enthusiasts to enjoy this period as it will eventually end, whether it takes days, weeks or months. What comes after this period, is of course the lust of another watch. This can become a problem without sufficient self-discipline, as one of the participants acknowledged:

“I avoid buying watches all the time and over indulging, by being poor. Obviously that’s not a strategy that works for everyone, but it keeps me in check ---” [Thread 5]”

Luxury goods and watches are known to be items that signify social status. This aspect is identified by many participants, but emphasis is not put on purchasing a watch for the status. Many times, in suggestion threads the original poster asks advice about a watch, and mentions that they do not want the piece to draw attention. It seems the participants usually do not try to show wealth or status with their watches, or at least that is not the intention. This is an interesting notion, which might be explained by the fact that presumably many of the participants are watch enthusiasts. There are some mentions about watches that seem more expensive than they cost, as explained by a participant.

“A cheap watch that tries to pretend it’s high end for is a person who is trying to pretend he’s high end and cares about that kind of status, while a cheap watch whose design is meant be to fun and unique yet disposable is for someone who is playful and is not concerned with the status quo.” [Thread 4]

An example could be given about homage watches. The Rolex Submariner is the most copied luxury watch. Blatant fakes exist probably as much as the original. It is also possible the watch that the most homages are made of. The homages can vary in quality and price, from a cheap disposable 20€ all the way to a top-grade ETA housing 1000€ watch. These homages have become increasingly popular in recent years, visible also in the material. This phenomenon might be an indication of people wanting so to signify the status aspect more, whether other people notice their watches or not.

4.1.4 Symbolic value

Many commenters dismiss the status signifying aspect entirely as they feel others will not notice watches they wear, as explained by a participant:

“Watches are 100% for the owner to enjoy. They remind me of fine clothes, except while sometimes people will notice your clothes, almost no one will notice your watch. Of those that do, none of them will know if it’s a 200 dollar watch or 20k dollar watch unless you work in a law firm or are in yacht club.” [Thread 34]

This understanding seems to partly nullify the purpose of conspicuousness in luxury watches. People are aware of what their watch signifies to others but are not concerned with being flashy or bringing attention to it. Several commenters do not wish non-watch people to notice their watches due to the stigma they might have among normal people. Especially the most famous luxury brands like Rolex and Omega, many participants worry whether they would get noticed more compared to more niche brands.

Milieu seems to be an important when it come to conspicuousness, as explained by the above comment. Kapferer and Bastien (2009, 313-314) mentioned that luxury has become a symbol of fashion and affluent lifestyle, and in different environments different watches are noticed more than others. Many comments mention that a certain watch in a

suiting environment will get compliments from others, which they appreciate. For example, a pilot's watch among pilots would get more attention than a diving watch. Two commenters shared their views on this:

“Watch is an extension of our personality. It's what we want the watch to say about us. Sometimes we want to be a tough diver, sometimes a pilot or a globe trotter. Sometimes we want to dress up and look sophisticated.”

“Its 2019, watches aren't common. But people do notice. In the age of smart phones, it's a real luxury item again. And I do think it broadcasts to others that you value time.” [Thread 4]

For watches the gap in perception between hobbyists and non-hobbyists appears to be rather large according to many participants. Wiedmann et al. (2009, 631-632) argued that luxury products would be important for individuals seeking social status, but it is difficult to agree with this in terms of watches and hobbyists, even if participants agree that if a non-hobbyist person would recognize a luxury watch, they might have negative preconceptions about them.

Social prestige in watches can be found in the comments. The membership to a luxury “club” as explained by Wiedmann et al. (2009, 631-632) is present in the forum. There are many clubs people might belong in watches, like the afore mentioned posts about people's first real watches. And as explained, it does not matter which kind of watch it is if they feel the belonging to the community after that. There are also mentions about more specific ones, such as finally getting the Rolex membership, or being part of the Speedmaster group. One participant explained his reasoning for being in the club:

“There's just something about owning a Rolex that is satisfying.” [Thread 7]

This symbolic sign of group membership seems to be important to the ones who wish to be a part of the group. Being a part of the owner's club allows them to converse with other owner's and give more detailed and realistic advice to others wishing to join. In the forum the discussions between watch enthusiasts seem to be the core activity, as this allows the participants to converse with fellow hobbyists who might be difficult to find

in the real world. The watch hobby is considered to be a very niche one, which is why finding other enthusiasts is easier online in a hobbyist community.

4.2 Value in vintage watches

4.2.1 Financial value

In vintage watches the value retention seems to be a reoccurring concept. When talking about second-hand watches, for the new ones second-hand is naturally cheaper than retail pricing for most watches. Many times, the cheaper prices for vintage watches is mentioned as well. This supports Turunen and Leipämaa-Leskinen's (2015, 62) notion that lower pricing is one of the central reasons vintage goods are appreciated. In watches, it usually allows for more complicated watches to be obtained through vintage pieces, as explained by one participant:

"I prefer vintage watches, makes higher end brands and different complications more accessible." [Thread 10]

Modern watches with grand complications are extremely expensive, because the whole purpose of these pieces is to showcase the watchmaker's skill, which in today means extremely well finished and luxurious watches, with the prices climbing into the hundreds of thousands. Vintage pieces with these complications are usually much cheaper. Still pricey for vintage pieces but costing closer to some thousands. What makes vintage watches especially attractive is not only the more affordable pricing, but also the way monetary value is considered to stay with the pieces. If the purchase price is good, then many participants consider the pieces to keep their value well. One commenter explained his views on vintage watch collecting:

"(Vintage) Watches are an efficient way for me to scratch the personal collecting itch. They take up very little space, are practical to use, and involve minimal sunk cost." [Thread 4]

Things affecting the value and value retention of vintage watches are very various in nature. Things such as brand, brand heritage, model, model heritage, condition, history, and many others. They are difficult to quantify accurately, because also the desirability of a particular model will affect pricing heavily. Many vintage Rolexes for example have been and are increasing in price and are considered superior in value retention over others, as one participant explained:

“If holding value is your primary concern though, Rolex is the end all be all.”
[Thread 8]

The issue of authenticity will be discussed later, but it must be mentioned that the originality of a vintage watch is very important for its pricing and value retention. Any replacements made in the watch’s parts, be it dial, or movement gears will lessen the desirability of the piece. Many participants emphasized the importance of having the watches serviced by experienced watchmakers specialized in vintage pieces. For example, sending vintage pieces to their manufacturers for service is considered to be risky because many times they will replace any damaged parts rather than repair them, leading to decreased value due to unoriginal parts.

Some participants described their reasoning for buying watches to be for investments. Whether they bought a new watch that they intend to keep for decades or an already vintage piece that they intend to use and sell within a couple of years, they acknowledged the possibility of value growth to be their reasoning. A common perception however is that it is extremely difficult to predict how the vintage market will develop. Thus, people collecting based on these motivations tend to focus on specific brands and models. It seems that the most value growing vintage pieces are ones that when introduced did not gather much attention or demand, leading to having only a limited number of watches produced. Good examples of these kinds of pieces are the original Rolex Daytona or Tudor Monte Carlo. One participant mentioned the reason for the ever-increasing prices of rare vintage watches:

“Is a Paul Newman Daytona worth more than a house? Maybe, maybe not, but the truth is those watches are now being hoarded and traded by dealers and they aren’t making any more.” *[Thread 1]*

Based on the discussion it seems that due to the difficulty of predicting the value development of vintage pieces, it is more common to focus on finding a good deal on a piece and enjoy it rather than seek to only find pieces increasing in value.

As mentioned before, authenticity is very important in vintage watches. A vintage piece with one unoriginal gear in the movement will not have the same price as one with all original parts. This is also the danger that comes from buying vintage watches. A common advice given in the forum is to research the model you are buying, its smallest details, how it should look like down to font sizes, marker placements and movement specifications. The second piece of advice given is to research the seller, and only buy from reputable sellers, be it a company or a private seller. One participant gave a warning to another asking whether they should buy a vintage watch:

“I think it’s really dangerous to get into vintage watches if you don’t know what you are doing..” [Thread 7]

When owning a vintage watch, if value retention is an important aspect, the owner should take care of the piece, especially when servicing. Several commenters shared their concerns over a vintage watch with a damaged part, and how to deal with such a problem:

“What you should do, if you really want a "better" dial is get a second one. Here's a fantastic candidate. A watchmaker would be able to swap them out for you for not a whole lot of money. Then you keep the original locked away somewhere safe.” [Thread 21]

“Never polish it yourself, never try to get a nick or scratch out of it without handing it over to a professional ---” [Thread 11]

The majority opinions till seems to be to keep the original parts as much as possible, because they function as a sort of testament to the brand’s and watch’s authenticity, story and history. A good example of this can be found in a thread about King Harald V of Norway’s Rolex GMT-Master from 1962, where photos of the watch from 1968 and 2018 were shared. A keen-eyed participant noticed that the dial had been changed:

“The dial is from 1976/78, it's an MK3 radial, very rare. Do you have any knowledge of that? Did he change it, or something?” [Thread 17]

This serves as an example of how precise one must be when determining the authenticity of a vintage watch. Turunen and Leipämaa-Leskinen (2015, 62) noted that a questionable authenticity can become a risk investment. In this case the fact the watch is owned by the King of Norway would mean more than its authenticity, as with many celebrity worn watches, like the most expensive watch ever sold to date, the Rolex Daytona of Paul Newman.

4.2.2 Functional value

Durability and superior quality are issues with split opinions. Some participants considered the quality of watches being better before the quartz crisis and rise of the luxury watch industry, and some considered the more expensive, modern luxury watches to be vastly superior in quality compared to vintage pieces. Two participants shared their contrasting views on the issue:

*“I generally prefer vintage. Quality was often better before the quartz crisis.”
[Thread 10]*

“But from a purely technical view, the modern Submariner is a better watch in literally every way.” [Thread 30]

Turunen and Leipämaa-Leskinen (2015, 62-63) argued that the luxury experience is transferrable from one customer to another through second-hand luxury products. The association with higher quality from vintage pieces seems to arise from this notion. As later will be explored, the story of the product being made as a tool originally continues with the watch through different users and owners, and that story is one of the reasons the quality is often being believed to be better. The fact that the watch has been functioning for decades seems to also be a signal of higher quality and durability. The age of a watch though does bring inevitable problems with the reliability of a watch, as pointed out by one participant:

“--- people buy vintage watches without knowing that they require proper care and also have higher maintenance costs due to parts being harder to find and watchmakers who work on them are usually more specialized, Please do not buy a vintage watch without actually knowing what you're getting in to.” [Thread 32]

The cost of maintenance is often emphasized in the discussion. The costs can vary by a lot, depending on the type of movement and complications of a watch. An ETA based vintage watch is generally the easiest one to get serviced, as the service can be performed by most watchmakers. In-house movements become a bigger problem, as a more specialized watchmaker with the required qualifications is needed for these pieces. Even more problematic is a watch with an in-house movement, that is no longer produced, or the company does not exist anymore. In this case finding capable watchmakers for repairs or maintenance becomes even more difficult.

One of the main components that are considered to increase quality of modern pieces compared to older ones are more durable materials. Of the most desirable qualities of a vintage pieces mentioned in the discussion is how the watch shows its age, also called the patina. The materials used in most vintage watches tend to show their age. For example, the dials could fade and discolor with age, making the watch unique in its appearance. The aluminum bezel could fade, changing from the original black to a more blueish or gray color. The glowing material used in the hands and/or indices tends to also fade, discolor, and lose its glowing quality. Most vintage watches use a slightly radioactive material, tritium for lume, which will lose its luminescence quality within 25 years.

In recent years however, many manufacturers have started to build watches with vintage inspired looks, but with modern materials and movements. This phenomenon seems to have started sometime in the 2000s but has really become popular in the last few years. Some examples could be given from the Tudor Heritage-line, from many microbrands and more recently Tag Heuer and Breitling. The reason these pieces have become so prevalent, as explained by one participant:

“I like the idea of vintages watches but am less a fan of the typical wear exhibited by such watches. Happily for me, there are plenty of modern watches who's design and technology hold direct lineage to pieces of yesteryear and present a best-of-both-worlds option.” [Thread 10]

This seems to be the main reason. Consumers wish to have vintage pieces but are not prepared or willing to endure the negative aspects of owning a vintage watch. The fact that these new pieces look and feel like their vintage inspirations, is what enables the owners to attach their own stories from the past, as Brown et al. (2003, 30) explained, to watches that are not in reality from that era.

Another reason for companies to sell these vintage inspired watches could be the fact vintage watches are mainly traded in the private market. This means that be it a company or a private seller, the manufacturing company does not receive any money from the transaction. The vintage market being as popular as it is, the companies are not making any money out of it directly. As explained by a participant, that is the reason these vintage inspired watches have become so attractive for luxury watch brands:

“The vintage watch market is the hottest I've ever seen it in my 20 years of paying attention. Because companies don't make money on the second/third/tenth sale of a watch, they're trying to capitalize on the vintage trend by creating new watches that appeal to vintage buyers.” [Thread 29]

These new vintage inspired pieces could also be called retro watches as per Cattaneo and Guerini's (2012, 685) definition. The timing of this phenomenon is also similar to Turunen and Leipämaa-Leskinen's (2015, 59) notion that vintage goods have been on the rise for the last few decades.

4.2.3 Experiential value

The nostalgia aspect of vintage watches appears to be a large part of what makes them desirable and interesting. As mentioned previously, the rise in popularity of retro watches as defined by Cattaneo and Guerini (2012, 685), is linked closely with people's intrigue with nostalgia. This feel of nostalgia is mentioned by many participants, who explain how the watches used to be better, more interesting, and appealing, as explained by one commenter:

“Great find, and it looks to be in fantastic condition. There's just something about a vintage watch that's really appealing; something that has been doing its job for decades is fun.” [Thread 20]

The notion that the watch industry hit its peak during the 60s and 70s is also a popular one in the discussion. This seems to be one of the most romanticized times mentioned and brings forth appreciation of watches from that period. One participant explained their reasoning for the appreciation of this specific period:

“I chose vintage watches because I think the watch industry hit its peak around 1970 and I love the evolution in movement design up to that point.” [Thread 4]

Many participants mentioned preferring the vintage Rolexes from before due to the feel of having something that was truly functional and intended for a purpose, as explained by one participant:

“That's the Rolex I love! Not today's where it is a status symbol and full luxury item. Rolex kind of reminds me of Land Rover. Once great off road vehicles marketing to adventurers, now turned luxury catering to people who want to spend extra for status/luxury.” [Thread 26]

There are notions of preferring the industry philosophy from the time before luxury. This is especially true for Rolex, which is seen as having the best quality and reliability in watches before quartz was introduced.

A recurring theme in design in vintage watches is the attractiveness of vintage designs, which again ties into the theme of new retro watches. The designs from vintage watches are often praised for being created for a purpose, rather than having design for design's sake. One example given by a participant from a vintage Universal Genève chronograph, which in the minute chronograph dial has special lines in 3, 6 and 9 minutes which are generally absent from modern chronographs:

“One more interesting piece of trivia, you'll notice that there are extra-long lines at the 3, 6 and 9 minute markers on the minute dial for the chronograph. According to (username), here is the reason: It's a remnant of time from the days when (long distance) phone calls were billed in increments of 3 minutes. The markings made it easier to see when you're approaching the next chargeable increment of time so

you could decide whether to end the call or pay a bit more to keep talking.”
[Thread 20]

The example could very well be also about the Rolex Submariner’s big, legible dial and indices, of the high contrast hands helping divers see better underwater, or the contrasted chronograph elements of the Omega Speedmaster Pro, helping astronauts time and see activities in space. The functional design language and real-life usage of vintage pieces is at the center of their desirability. This echoes Turunen and Leipämaa-Leskinen’s (2015, 62) idea that pre-loved treasure evokes nostalgia and appreciation of old luxury before mass production and more authentic methods. Some participants explained their views on the issue:

“CMV: 1965-1975 was the golden age of watch design and we're never getting back there.” [Thread 29]

“I like vintage watches. They have a certain elegance and subtlety that modern watches lack. I prefer the smaller sizes as well, new watches tend to have huge dials, tons of cluttering features, and are generally gaudy and bombastic in design. That's not to say that there aren't some modern watches that I think are beautiful and would own, just as a design trend I like the more subtle and simple vintage watches.” [Thread 10]

Another important difference between vintage watches and most modern watches is the simplicity and relative modern design. Many participants stated that they prefer vintage designs due to their simplicity. The phrase “timeless classic” is mentioned many times in this context. Vintage designs are considered to be timeless, which leads to participants describing them as forward-thinking and still relevant. One of the reasons for this appreciation of vintage design seems to be connected to modern watch design. The modern Rolex Submariner is still almost identical to the original, as are the Omega Speedmaster Professional and Breitling Navitimer. The difference however is the perception of what the designs from different times represent. The vintage designs represent purpose and authenticity, whereas the modern ones are seen as concentrating more on being luxurious and desirable.

Allegory, or the story of a brand or product as explained by Zonnevald and Biggeman (2014, 331-332) is one of the most important aspects of vintage watches. The allegory that watches have is often emphasized by the participants as the reason they feel personally connected to them, as explained by one participant giving advice:

“--- Appreciate the path it traveled from where it started to your wrist every time you wear it. You're lucky to have it, and all that history, on your arm.” [Thread 21]

The allegory of a watch is not only about the piece's and brand's journey, but also about the journey of horology as well, as one participant romantically explained:

“There's something so fundamentally important about horology. Humans harnessed fire, the wheel, and...timekeeping? Modern society exists in part because we've been able to track time. A watch has so much technology in it, but the purpose is so simple. Everything has changed in hundreds of years, and yet nothing has.” [Thread 4]

The appreciation of the journey brings forth personal feelings, opinions, and connections. As Brown et al. (2003, 30) found customers connect their own ideas and connections from the past to brand stories, as they do to the watch's journey through its history. Often with inherited vintage watches especially, the allegory becomes very personal because of the connection through a family member the owner has to the watch, as explained by one participant:

“The thing that got me started as that I inherited both my grandfather's watches. The thought that something close to 90 years old can still work effectively charges me.” [Thread 4]

Another important note about allegory is the transferability of the story of a watch. When vintage watches change owners, the story often transfers over to the new owner as described by Turunen and Leipämaa-Leskinen (2015, 62-63). The new owner understands the story based on what they are told by the old owner, and transforms it

based on their own personal opinions, experiences and associations with the brand or model.

The allegory is also often affected by famous people known to have own or worn the specific model of a watch. A few examples like Paul Newman's Rolex Daytona, Neil Armstrong's Omega Speedmaster Professional, Steve McQueen's Heuer Monaco in Le Mans or Patrick Bateman's Rolex Datejust could be given. Real-life connections and fiction connotations are important all the same. Often participants talking about their own vintage watches mention if any such connections can be found for their watch, as one commenter discussed the Universal Genève Polerouter's history:

"It also has a storied history. Harry Truman wore one at the Potsdam conference and rumor has it that Hermann Goring owned and wore one.." [Thread 23]

The combination of brand allegory, watch allegory and popular culture connections then seem to form the basis of the story that is important for vintage watches especially.

4.2.4 Symbolic value

Zonnevald and Biggeman (2014, 332) described arcadia as being a community for the brand, a club to join. In general, there are some specialised vintage watch communities, for example there are many forum communities that specialize in vintage Rolexes. These kind of specialized communities however, are not often mentioned in the data used for this study. Based on the discussions in this data, the role of a vintage community is quite limited. There are no mentions of a "vintage owner's club" per se, but rather sharing of vintage watches and discussions about them.

The role of the vintage arcadia itself seems to be limited to information sharing and authenticity checks. As mentioned before, the number of details in different watches and models are large, and the community can assist in finding the right details when identifying the authenticity of a watch. This kind of activity does occur a lot in the forum.

Another reoccurring interaction is the sharing and development of watch bucket lists. When participants share their vintage pieces, many times another participant joins the discussion to share their interest in the watch, and then mentions that they have added the watch into their watch bucket list. This would imply that the mere discussion about watches introduces more people into specific models and brands, making them more

desirable for others. These interactions would support Heinonen et al.'s (2019, 99) notion that value can be created individually of a company in a shared private domain.

On a more general note, there are mentions in the discussion about the forum in general being one to keep the passion for watches alive in a world where their technology has been made irrelevant by better alternatives, as explained by one participant:

“--- It's great we're all keeping the watch tradition alive with our love for a relic of years past.” [Thread 26]

It seems that the cherishment of the hobby in itself and keeping it alive is a major part for many participants to participate in the discussion and what adds value to their pieces or collection.

Sustainability is an interesting aspect in watches. On one hand, there are only few mentions of consumerism, consumption practices and sustainable value themselves as concepts, but on the other hand many participants mentioned their reasoning for buying a luxury watch being that it will last them for a lifetime, and their children after that. As an example, a comment from chapter 4.1.5 where the participant explains exactly this reasoning:

“So much of the stuff I use today has planned obsolescence. Gadgets stop getting supported after a few years of revisions, and the pace of technology means things seem dated more and more quickly. So the idea of something that will last my entire life if I take care of it has a lot of appeal.” [Thread 4]

The idea for many seems to be that owning a mechanical watch, be it new or vintage can be a decision for the long-term. The story that the watch has gathered or will gather in the future, creates the personal bond with the owner, and at some point, even a new watch today will be considered vintage in the future. The sustainability aspect as described by Turunen and Leipämaa-Leskinen (2015, 62) does not seem to be a major component of the reasoning in vintage watches by name, but rather in the way that participants described wanting a long-lasting watch with which to build experiences with.

Distinction in vintage watches seems to be an issue connected most closely to the nostalgia, design, and allegory aspects of vintage value. Distinction as described by Amatulli et al. (2018, 621-622) cannot strictly be seen in the data. There are no mentions

of how people wearing vintage watches would be seen by others differently from other luxury watch wearers. It seems that distinction comes mostly from other watch and vintage enthusiasts who already have a certain amount of knowledge of a specific brand or model. For example, a thread about a vintage Rolex Submariner gathered 65 comments [Thread 30], whereas a thread about a Vintage Universal Genève Polerouter only gathered 11 comments [Thread 23]. The more popular vintage models are more well-known and thus will receive more attention from others. A non-watch person would probably not see the difference between a vintage Rolex Comex Submariner and a brand-new Submariner, but a vintage enthusiast will instantly recognize the Comex, and have much more knowledge about the piece than just the price.

4.3 Online value creation

As the theory synthesis of online community value creation is depicted as a dynamic model, where each part affects the others and vice versa, it is important still to be able to isolate relevant aspects of it to better understand how the model could function in practice. Therefore this section of the results is divided into four distinct parts that aim to explain the activities in detail.

4.3.1 *Identifying with the community / topic*

The identification with a community can negotiate the relationship a participant might have with the community. The identification with a topic can also negotiate a participant's willingness to engage in a particular thread about a more specific topic. In the synthesis the identification of a community or topic is depicted as being mediated by the motivations of a person, the social interactions themselves and the consciousness of the community. The different reasons that affect identification also mediate the type of interaction. One participant started a thread by posting this comment:

“This community is one of the most constructive, nicest communities I have had the pleasure of being a part of and am curious about the diverse interests we all have. We are all connected by an appreciation for watches and horology, but what are your other hobbies and interests that you enjoy?” [Thread 35]

From this single starting post, many aspects from the different processes can be seen. Firstly, the participant seems to be able to identify with some positive aspects of the community, friendliness, and constructiveness. These feelings by the poster should have risen from the consciousness of the community, the interactions with/of others and the motivations of the participants. This identification with the community then seems to give the participant the willingness to participate by several motives as described by Madupu and Cooley (2010, 5), mainly information and entertainment motives. The poster then creates the interaction by posting a thread about a different topic than watches directly. This thread received 33 comments of other participants joining in the discussion about their other hobbies. This interaction in particular as it is not about watches specifically cannot be claimed to create luxury vintage value, but it does contribute to the consciousness of the community. The thread keeps its positive tone, and it could be considered to contribute to the positive environment of the community, supporting Heinonen et al.'s (2019, 101) idea that social interactions are the key drivers of online value creation, as well as Ha's (2018, 113) notion that an online community strengthens when members feel and recognize consciousness of a kind with others.

As seen in the previous example, it shows what the community can be when it is identified positively by the members. The next exchange is by two participants replying to a parent comment about not immediately discounting quartz watches as inferior:

“Finally someone said it on this sub...”

“Nobody said this subreddit is only for high-end collectors. It's for everyone who has any interest in portable timekeeping. You're coming off as trying to gatekeep people that don't have the money to afford expensive mechanical watches, or just like the jewelry aspect and don't want to spend time every day winding or setting the time on their watch. ---” [Thread 13]

When looking at these interactions, different kind of aspects can be found. Based on the first comment, the participant seems to have an idea about the consciousness of the community as being negative towards quartz watches. The fact that another commenter first said it out loud, seemed to encourage this participant to voice their concerns about the issue as well. This could be categorized into social integration or social enhancement

motives as per Madupu and Cooley (2010, 5). This interaction then shifts the consciousness of the community more towards being able to enjoy quartz watches publicly without fear of resentment.

The other participant then states more concretely their concerns about the forum's purpose of existence and consciousness. The participant raises a valid concern about gatekeeping, which seems to be a common issue in luxury watches. According to this participant the forum should not be consumed by watch snobbery where only expensive watches are allowed. These comments although directed as replies to a specific comment, contribute heavily to the consciousness of the community, which leads to more diverse users to identify with the community and raise their motivations for participation without having to worry about snobbery or other negative aspects.

4.3.2 Motivations

The question of what makes individuals participate in an online community is an interesting one. Based on the data it seems that the two biggest motivators for participating are information and entertainment. Information in the sense that participants often ask or give advice on questions about models, movements, details, types of watches or collections. Entertainment in the sense of looking at watches, reading or participating in discussions or generally enjoying the community.

The information motive could be categorized as self-to-self, as well as self-to-collective based on Heinonen et al.'s (2019, 100) idea about how customer value is created in the customer domain. In this example, a thread was posted asking advice on a certain Universal Genève model, where one participant counseled the original poster to try a different forum for more specific information:

“If you're looking to do some more research on UG, Omega Forums has a board dedicated to the brand. I'd recommend starting there.” [Thread 32]

In this interaction, the asking and then sharing of information are central to the motives of the participant. It could be speculated whether the original poster is a frequent visitor of the forum or not, but the participant giving the answer seems to be aware of the consciousness of the community not being focused on this specific vintage brand or model. The acknowledgement of this allows the replier to give relevant advice on the

subject. There are also many threads, where the original poster is asking for the community's advice on which watch to buy from a couple of alternatives.

Ha (2018, 113) mentioned that when members feel a sense of duty towards the community and members, the community strengthens. In the following interaction two participants discuss their honest motivations about participation:

"I'm wondering then what compels you to come across my post at all? I highly doubt you came on this sub for the first time and stumbled on this question. I assume you've been here before. ---"

"I think I was compelled to answer your post was simply your earnest desire to ask a real question. I've been looking at watch posts every day for months, and if someone has an earnest question that I feel I could help enlighten, I'll say my humble piece. ---" [Thread 4]

The entertainment motive seems to also be a popular one. Many posts, especially shared pictures of one's watch or watches are often posted with a description along the lines of "wanted to share my watch" or "here is my new purchase". There are also some aspects of Madupu and Cooley's (2010, 5) social integration motive as posters sometimes include a "how did I do" question with their acquisition posts. Finding acceptance from in the community specialized in such a niche class of products also seems to function as motivation for some.

4.3.3 Social interactions

The social interactions in the synthesis are shown as being the activity that in reality create, affect or transform the value aspects discussed earlier in the results chapter. Grönroos and Voima (2013, 145) define customer value creation happening in a sphere of its own, separate from the provider, or the co-creation.

From the aspect of co-creation, there is one example in the data. One participant through back-and-forth interactions with the community founded their own watch company, and continue to engage directly with the community:

“Hey guys. Two years ago I posted a prototype of my first watch, the Bronson, here on r/watches. I was really encouraged (and informed) by your feedback and went on to successfully launch my watch commercially. --- I'm lucky to have gotten so much support from the watch community along the way. --- wanted to share the first images publicly here with you. Would love your feedback and am happy to answer any questions you may have.” [Thread 16]

This could be seen as either value co-creation towards the company or online community value creation towards the watch industry. From value co-creation perspective, the participant founding the firm, through past interactions and status in the community is able to remain in the customer sphere to engage the customers in a meaningful way as per Grönroos and Voima (2013, 145). Through the interaction with the community the founder is able to receive honest feedback and keep the microbrand “break the status quo” image, and remain a part of the userbase, rather than being lifted into a user posing as a company. The community also seem to be very interested towards these sorts of projects, as shown by the attention of the thread. This openness could have given the company founder the confidence to make the post, be it for marketing or information purposes.

There is also at least one other watch company that has its roots in r/Watches. The founder of Orion watches was doing Seiko mods and sharing them in the forum, and through receiving good feedback decided to enroll in a watchmaker school and found the company. After finishing their studies, the founder went through several iterations of design through the forum and finally released the first batches and has then went on to create more lineups. These threads are not a part of the data in this study, but it is still worth a mention as it closely links into the above situation. This is the only example of strict value co-creation from the data. The online value creation speculated in the theory synthesis is different in nature, as explained next.

A trend can be noticed about vintage watches, that sharing them increases the demand for them. The limited number of certain models being sold at any given time means that by sharing information and pictures of these watches, the participants inadvertently affect the market conditions for these watches. Just how big this effect is, cannot be determined based on this research. One participant posted a thread celebrating their new purchase after receiving advice from the community:

“After getting some great advice from the r/watches community, I pulled the trigger on a 37mm Universal Geneve Compur Chronograph (ref.287).” [Thread 20]

In many other comments, participants asked for advice and opinions about purchasing a certain watch, be it new or vintage. Based on these interactions the users usually then post a conclusory comment about their purchase decision. It seems that the community has a lot of influence over the purchase decisions of individuals. It could be speculated whether the motives for participation refined by Madupu and Cooley (2010, 6-9) might have an effect on whether the participants asking advice follow the advice or not. But there seems to be a definite element of building hype towards certain watches or brands in the community. With enough hype, the demand would increase, driving up the prices and general desirability.

Another big part of the advice threads, especially concerning vintage watches, is the way the community gives advice on how to keep authenticity in watches. In one thread the original poster had found a vintage Universal Genève chronograph model, often referred to as the “Universal Genève Nina Rindt” named after Nina Rindt, a model and wife of a famous Formula one driver Jochen Rindt. A model of the watch was worn by Nina Rindt during her years in the pitlane.

The advice given in the thread is very detailed, and aim towards keeping the authenticity of the watch, even if the new owner would get it serviced. There is also a lot of advice concerning the sale of the watch. Being a highly collectible vintage watch, the participants do not recommend the poster to sell the watch privately, as the risks are high. The most upvoted comment in the thread sheds light on the mentality:

“Go to an auction house- you will pay a lot more with regards to commission etc but it’s worth it- you don’t have to deal with scammers, flakers, so on. Other option is to take it to a private dealer but I’d say auction house every time.

Ask the house to advise you with regards to servicing- you want to keep everything as original as possible, but having it in working order is key to the sale value of the watch. When you take it to be serviced, stress the importance of originality- make sure they don’t polish or replace anything unless totally necessary.”
[Thread 22]

Universal Genève is one of the most famous watch companies that do not exist anymore. Based on the thread it could be said that the value creation is now up to the watch communities. In the example above, the owner cannot even contact the manufacturer about inquiries because the company does not exist anymore. Without the interaction and connection with the forum, the owner would not have received such valuable advice as easy. Heinonen et al.'s (2019, 100) notion of interaction and connection be the main driver of value then seems to be true. Another note about the online nature of the interactions is that even if the comments are directed towards the individual, the collective also gained from them. Another person looking for the same information is able to find it by searching past posts rather than have need for a post of their own.

As much as the advice given on the watch helps retain its monetary value, it also means that likely the owner by making sure of the watch's authenticity, helps to retain the nostalgia and allegory value of the watch. This is another large part of the interactions, where the replies are encouraging others to not only remember the stories of their watches, but to build their own on top the old ones.

It seems that the online community is best able to affect financial and experiential aspects of value. Through interactions with more knowledgeable or convincing members participants are able to learn more about the topic and thus take their own enthusiasm into the direction they want, be it building a collection, making sure the maximum monetary value is achieved or just learn to enjoy watches as they are.

Entertainment value created through interactions cannot be also neglected. In the data, there are many threads whose tone is more informal and are more focused on jokes. For example, one thread about a macro picture of a Tudor Black Bay's dial sparks a discussion on what each participant see in the Tudor shield logo or the other detailing:

"The tiny Tudor shield looks like a theatre mask lol"

"I can't unsee happy batman"

"Looks like snow on the snowflake hands"

"Or crystal meth... "[Thread 31]"

The interactions in the online community affect whether newcomers or old members identify with the community, and by which motivations they participate or do not

participate. Through the diverse social interactions in the community, the consciousness of the community is created, transformed, and maintained.

4.3.4 *Consciousness of the community*

The consciousness of the community dictates much of what kind of interactions are considered to be acceptable in the community. The data seems to confirm Ha's (2018, 113-114) requirements for strengthening of an online community, as well as the notion that the online brand community revolves around consumption experiences. Many of the purchase advice threads described in subchapter 4.3.3 conclude with the original poster promising or other members demanding that the acquired watch be posted when received. An example of such a demand is shown here from a thread about a participant which Rolex they should purchase as their first luxury watch:

“If you get that baller Presidential, come post it here.” [Thread 18]

The participants of the forum seem to have a moral responsibility towards others to give true advice as per Madupu and Cooley (2010, 10-13), which furthers others' collections, aspirations, and possessions. Any misinformation is usually quickly given a counter argument on what make the information false. This might also be a part that makes the community's consciousness more attractive to newcomers and motivates members to be friendly towards newcomers and people not knowledgeable in the topic.

The community's consciousness also includes the capability to understand the reality of the hobby. In many threads, participants emphasize the fact that watches are just watches and other participants should not take them too seriously. There is also the understanding of appreciating self-deprecating humour, for example the following exchange in a thread about comparing vintage and new Rolex Submariners:

“PATINAPURECLASS”

“You forgot to add Chuffed to bits on that C.” [Thread 30]

The joking seems to be a signal that the community is not too serious about itself. Being able to make jokes about an issue as contrasting as patina, shows light heartiness

and self-awareness. Combining the joke with common phrases from the YouTube-channel The Urban Gentry, it also shows a larger sense of community among watch hobbyists.

4.4 Summary of the main findings

This subchapter aims to summarize the results of the study based on the research questions in order to provide and answer to them. First, the results for value in luxury watches will be presented.

The financial value is comprised of several aspects. The increasing prices of luxury watches has originated from the increased quality and exclusiveness of the watches. The monetary cost of a luxury watch was found to be subjective, as a better understanding of horology will increase the appreciation as well. In vintage watches, the value retention was seen as an especially important component of value. The lower price of vintage watches allows for more access to complications in watches, the monetary value seems to be stable provided the watch is bought and kept authentic during its life. The value retention of vintage watches allows for a way to enjoy watches without losing money compared to when bought brand new. Value growth was also seen as a component, but more for special models that are climbing in value. The predictions about value growth were found to be difficult. Authenticity was found to be a key part of financial value in vintage watches. A watch with any unoriginal parts will not command and hold the same price as a completely original one. Attention should be put into making sure the watch stays authentic even during servicing, which can be more expensive for vintage watches. To summarize, the financial value is major aspect of luxury and luxury vintage value.

shows the differences found in the results compared to the theory synthesis. **Bolded** sections mean that this aspect was found to be highly important. Aspects written in regular text displays a medium level of importance. *Greyed* aspects were found to be of lesser importance.

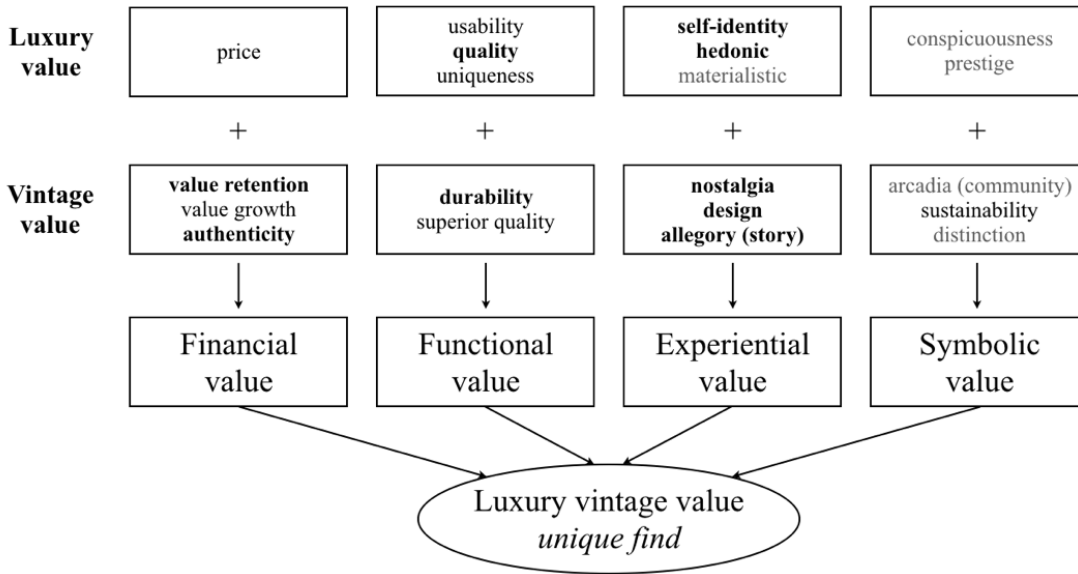


Figure 12 Luxury Vintage value (updated)

The financial value is comprised of several aspects. The increasing prices of luxury watches has originated from the increased quality and exclusiveness of the watches. The monetary cost of a luxury watch was found to be subjective, as a better understanding of horology will increase the appreciation as well. In vintage watches, the value retention was seen as an especially important component of value. The lower price of vintage watches allows for more access to complications in watches, the monetary value seems to be stable provided the watch is bought and kept authentic during its life. The value retention of vintage watches allows for a way to enjoy watches without losing money compared to when bought brand new. Value growth was also seen as a component, but more for special models that are climbing in value. The predictions about value growth were found to be difficult. Authenticity was found to be a key part of financial value in vintage watches. A watch with any unoriginal parts will not command and hold the same price as a completely original one. Attention should be put into making sure the watch stays authentic even during servicing, which can be more expensive for vintage watches. To summarize, the financial value is major aspect of luxury and luxury vintage value.

The functional value aspect also holds some major components that were identified as extremely important. The usability of luxury watches was found to be lacking compared to modern alternatives, as the timekeeping properties of mechanical watches cannot compete with these alternatives, such as quartz watches or cellphones. The appreciation of the craftsmanship that goes into making a mechanical watch usable was however found

to be a central reason on why perfect accuracy was not even desired. Different approaches to watch collecting were found, but the most popular collection based on different needs for different situations was found to be a beater watch, a dress watch and a chronograph. Quality in luxury watches was found to be an especially important aspect of functional value. Higher grade materials and manufacturing methods are used in increasing amounts. One signal of quality in a watch was found to be the origin of the movement, whether it is an off-shelf movement or an in-house movement. The serviceability of some in-house movements was considered as a potential issue in the future. The long-lasting nature of watches through the decades was found to be an important component of quality value. Uniqueness was considered to be a contrasting issue. On one hand, the exclusivity of some luxury brands or watches was seen as a negative notion, but on the other hand these same watches tend to gather the most attention and praise. Uniquely designed watches were seen as a positive thing, as long as the quality aspects are up to par. Durability and superior quality values in vintage watches was seen as arguable in vintage watches. Due to the improvements in materials and manufacturing processes, new luxury watches objectively should have better durability and quality compared to vintage watches. In the last decade or so, companies have started to sell retro watches, which are inspired by past designs heavily, but hold modern components in them. In vintage watches though, a watch worn for decades and still working today is seen as attractive, and durable even if it could not be compared to modern luxury watches. The image of superior quality in vintage watches seems to be based on opinions and subjective experiences, rather than facts. The luxury experience still is transferrable from one watch owner to another when ownership changes.

Next, we will consider the Experiential value aspects. Self-identity value was found to be extremely important. The romanticizing of mechanical timekeeping was an occurring theme. The wearing of a mechanical watch gives the wearer the feeling of wearing a part of history on their wrist. Different moods and tasks call for different watches. Hedonic value was found from seeing the movement function and understanding how it works. Subjective sensory pleasure was also gained from the design of the watch, especially on watches whose design respect their original intended purpose. Materialistic value was considered to be at the early stages the over eagerness to splurge on watches, and with time as personal tastes develop, the more refined and patient way of collecting. With time, the collecting also often changes from cheaper to more expensive luxury watches. Signifying social status was not found to be a determining factor of materialistic value,

but the rise of homage watches could be a signal of a more materialistic development. Nostalgia was perceived as a large part of the attractiveness of vintage watches. The romanticizing of the past industry philosophies before the shift into luxury was prevalent. The watches represented a connection to simpler time. Design in vintage watches was found to be attractive and authentic. The timeless and made-for-purpose design of vintage watches was found to be important. The simplicity and (relative) modernism of the designs were seen to represent purpose and authenticity, compared to modern ones that are seen as more luxurious and desirable. Allegory value, or the story of the watch and brand was found to be very important to the value of vintage watches. The path the watch has travelled makes it more desirable, as well as the allegory of mechanical watches in general. Stories were found to be connected to vintage watches through the eyes of their owners, and when the watch changes owner, some of these stories travel with it. Popular culture references were also seen as important for the allegory.

The symbolic value aspects, perhaps surprisingly, were not considered to be very important except for a few special cases. Conspicuousness was found to be an issue most like to avoid. The gap in perception between watch hobbyists and non-hobbyists was seen as a large one, and thus it is more favorable to not try to draw attention to a luxury watch, even if the wearer acknowledges the implications a watch might have. Prestige value was considered also as a non-vital issue. The ownership of a watch could be a ticket to group participation, but no specific ownership groups could be identified. Arcadia value in vintage watches was not seen as important. The community of vintage watches seemed to be limited to authenticity checks and information sharing, but no impressions of joining a vintage owners club could not be found. Sustainability was seen more from the angle of having a watch that will last decades or even generations. Mentions about enjoying a vintage watch strictly because of its sustainability could not be found, as the focus was on having a watch with history lasting for a long time. Distinction value from vintage watches was not found to be important in itself. The acknowledgement from other watch hobbyists was perceived as a positive aspect in order to discuss the piece, but there no mentions of having distinction as a vintage enthusiast.

Next the results for online value creation will be summarized in Figure 13 The process of online community value creation (updated). The four components of the proposed model for online community value creation were seen as affecting each other dynamically.

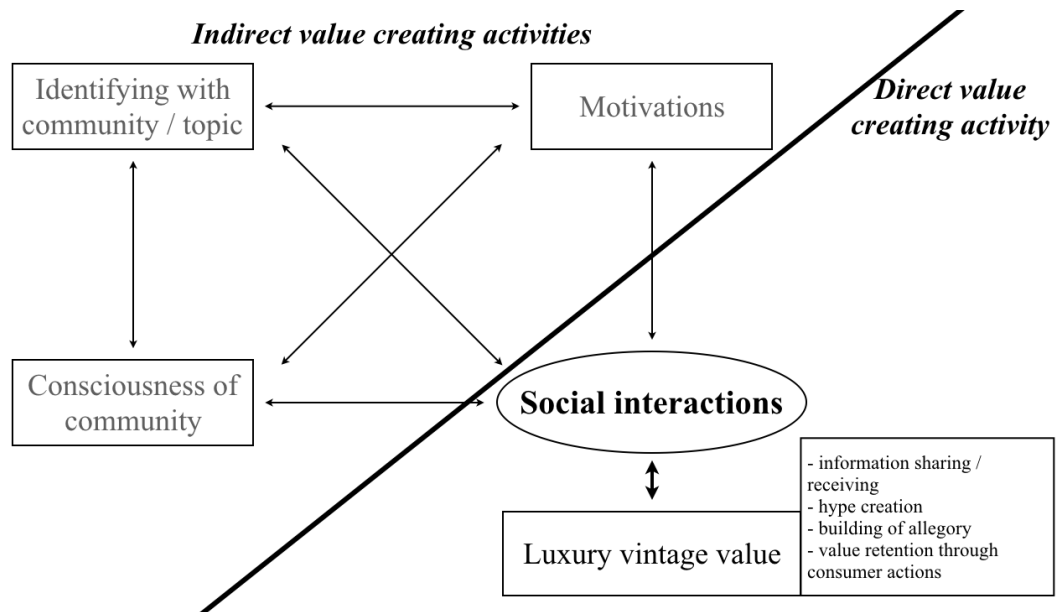


Figure 13 The process of online community value creation (updated)

Identifying with the community or topic was seen as the beginning of participation. Positive associations and experiences with the community were seen as increasing the chance of participation. Identifying with the community in a certain way can also create motivations for users to participate if they feel they cannot identify with the community anymore, sparking a reaction of attempting to change the consciousness of the community. A community that a user cannot identify with, most likely will not encourage participation.

The two most important motivations for participation were found to be information and entertainment. Asking, receiving, or giving information are defined as self-to-self and self-to-collective, as the poster gains from the information as does the community. Entertainment motive is seen in sharing new purchases, aspirations, and findings. Some evidence of social integration motive was also found.

Social interactions were found to be the activity that creates value for the watches specifically, even though all four aspects of the proposed online community value creation can be seen to create value for the community. Receiving advice on different matters creates value for the receiver, such as advice on how to keep the authenticity of vintage watches in order to increase or keep their financial value, as well as the allegory of the watch. Hype creating for vintage models can also influence the prices of the specific vintage watches. Advice on purchase decisions might create value for manufacturers if the purchase is then made. Recommending specialized watchmakers for vintage services create business for them. Advice on vintage watches, whose manufacturers no longer

exist creates information value for anyone seeking similar information. The entertainment value of the community cannot also be forgotten. More informal discussions, jokes and entertaining content makes the community more approachable for newcomers and members alike. A participant was found to have started a watch company based on the community's suggestions and kept consulting the community on coming releases.

Community sense and commitment towards watchmaking and horology was found to be the basis of the consciousness of the community. The appreciation of truthful answers was paramount. The results also illustrated a sort of debt that participants asking purchase advice need to pay back in the form of posting their newly acquired watches. The community was also found to have the tendency of self-deprecating humor and general jokes creating a more approachable and relaxed consciousness.

5 CONCLUSIONS

This chapter presents the conclusions of the study. The chapter is divided into theoretical contributions and managerial implications, after which limitations and suggestions for future research are discussed.

5.1 Theoretical contributions

This study has many theoretical contributions. Many of the components of perceived luxury value by Wiedmann et al. (2009) were found to apply to luxury watches as well, but with some exceptions. Quality, uniqueness and self-identity value were considered to be extremely important, whereas conspicuousness and exclusivity values were seen as having lesser importance. The differences arise from some of the special aspects of watches, such as the micromechanics, historical significance, and the hobbyist aspect of the forum. The previously family-owned watch businesses still emphasize the history of the companies as Jackson and Haid (2002) speculated, but are seen more as competing with a sense of exclusivity, brand identity, brand awareness and perceived quality.

From vintage watches, many other values were found. Authenticity was perceived as extremely important and was considered the main component of financial value supporting Turunen and Leipämaa-Leskinen's (2015) findings. The lower price of vintage luxury watches also gave access to more complicated watches. The luxury experience was also found to be possible to transfer from one customer to another. Other findings supported the importance of vintage design as well. Sustainability was not found to be important in name, but the intent of long-term ownership was an important motive behind vintage ownership.

A new generation of retro watches were found based on Cattaneo and Guerini's (2012) definition, and the connection that these models have allow for the consumers to attach their own historical stories to the watches, even if they are new. Nostalgia factor was also seen as very important in vintage watches, which leads to people creating stories and connections to their watches as Brown et al. (2003) suggested.

The allegory as explained by Zonnevald and Biggeman (2014) was found to be the most important aspect of vintage watches. Appreciation of the story of the industry, brand

and individual watches were the driving force in enjoying vintage watches. The arcadia or community value was not seen as a major component of vintage value.

Distinction value as a vintage owner from the public as explained by Amatulli et al. (2018) was not seen as important but the distinction from other watch hobbyists was seen as a positive aspect.

In terms of online value creation, the study also has several theoretical contributions. Identification with the community or topic was found to affect community participation as suggested by Madupu and Cooley (2010). A positively seen community would awaken different motivations in a participant and lead them joining the discussions. The two most prevalent motivations found were firstly, the sharing or need of information including price discussions, value propositions, authenticity checks and opinions, and secondly just pure entertainment. Some supporting evidence for the social integration motive were also found, such as gaining the respect of the community, positive comments and debating relevant topics with the members.

The value creation was found to be self-to-self and self-to-collective, as the interactions are the drivers of value. This supports Heinonen et al. (2019) theory on online value creation, as well as the idea that customer value creation happens within the customer domain, as explained by Grönroos and Voima (2013). It is difficult to quantify how much exactly the community driven value creation affects for example the prices of certain watches, but the example of the watch company founded by a community member time and again sells out of watches after a new batch is released.

The sense of duty towards the community and other members as described by Ha (2018) was found to contribute to the consciousness of the community, strengthening it, allowing for more users to identify with it. A truthful and playful consciousness should draw in more participants into the community, as moral responsibility keeps the participants in the forum. The above-mentioned prevalent motivations (the sharing or need of information and entertainment) also directly impact the consciousness of the community.

5.2 Managerial implications

The managerial implications of this study are mostly directed at watch manufacturers, and sellers, which can be affected by the online communities. For marketers,

understanding which value components are regarded more highly than others is important. When considering marketing products in these forums, the behavior of the company should be transparent and truthful, rather than deceitful, because many of such online forums consider corporate participation as negative. A brand looking to create a brand community of their own should understand what invokes participation. Emphasizing information sharing and entertainment would allow for the community to grow from the positive consciousness, which leads to more people identifying with the community. Understanding the motivations of the participants is also important so through interactions the community could be directed into the wanted direction.

A seller of vintage watches should try to initiate discussions on pieces they want to sell, and then try to emphasize the watches strengths, or fit the story into the community's preferred values. Creating discussion on certain models should increase their demand through information sharing and entertaining posts. Understanding any forum specific rules and norms is an important part of posting, and anyone looking to do so should first familiarize themselves with the community and its history.

Though this research focused on watches specifically, the results can easily be adapted to other products of similar qualities, namely ones being community driven and ones that have artisanal or luxury aspects. This applies especially well for custom mechanical keyboards, which by nature require heavy community involvement, since the parts for the keyboards themselves are designed, financed, and produced by the community members themselves in very limited quantities. The community is actively creating not only monetary value, but also giving design input and further suggestions for the products. This differs from watches partly, since watch consumption could be considered to be to focus less on the "built it yourself" aspect, except for watch mods which are commonly not done to the more high-end pieces. Another great example for a similar case would be vintage cars and their restorations, again with similar traits to vintage watches.

5.3 Limitations and suggestions for future research

This study focuses on a small subcommunity of one of the largest social network communities on the Internet. The fact that the Reddit community is so large, means that there are also participants in the subcommunity who might not be hobbyists or knowledgeable of the topic. The sheer size and thus generality of the subcommunity

might also mean that the material is general in nature. Reddit as a community also has a majority American representation, so the results might represent American opinions, rather than European, or Swiss, or Finnish. Further suggestions might be to research the differences between different forums, as well as different countries of origin. Many countries have their own unique watch forums outside of Reddit, so comparing those with each other might present some interesting findings on the forums on themselves and the watch world in general.

As mentioned previously in the study, the fact that a single forum was used for the material of the study, the scope is limited. Including other forums could bring forth more conclusive results. By including also other, more specialized forums, the brand specific aspects could be also researched to reach a more holistic understanding of the topic and its specialties. A research from viewpoint of the industry would be interesting as well, to see if the perceived values are similar to the intended ones.

The financial aspect of vintage watches seems an interesting topic. A possible future research could be done it how mentions of certain vintage watches affect their monetary value on the market, and how big of an increase in discussion is needed for the prices to be affected.

For a few years now, due to limiting of off-the-shelf movements from companies like ETA, many companies in need of movement have either changed to other manufacturers or have started to design and manufacture their own movements. Example companies like Tudor and Breitling have started to slowly change their portfolios into these new in-house movements. It would be an interesting topic of research to find out how the value proposition of these companies' different models have changed due to this and how that has affected the communities.

6 SUMMARY

The luxury market is larger than it has ever been, which has also elevated the market for vintage watches. The watch phenomenon and hobby are based on the appreciation of information, details, history, design, luxury, quality, micromechanics, and craftsmanship. The quartz crisis almost destroyed the whole mechanical watch industry, but through changes in value proposition towards luxury products the practice of horology continues in the age of the internet and social media. This study aims to understand how value is created in online communities, focusing on luxury and vintage mechanical watches. This purpose is then divided into three sub questions: what is the value in luxury mechanical watches, what is the value in vintage watches and what is the role of online communities in the value creation of luxury and vintage watches?

The theoretical background of the study consists of multiple theories concerning luxury products, vintage watches, and online value creation. These include components of luxury value, value dimensions of luxury value, structured meanings of second-hand luxury possessions, revised constructs for brand meaning, aspects of luxury vintage values, value creation spheres, online customer value creation and antecedents for online participation. Two models were then created to better suit the research questions: one for luxury vintage value, and the other for online community value creation.

Netnographic methods were used to collect the data from 39 online threads from a watch enthusiast community on reddit.com called r/Watches. The data was collected from June to November of 2018 and January to April of 2019. 11 older threads were also included that were found by using certain search words. The threads were analysed using qualitative content analysis.

The results from the study indicate that in luxury watches, the most important components of value are quality, self-identity, and hedonic values. In vintage watches, the most important components are authenticity, nostalgic, design and allegory values were seen as the most important ones.

The online community value creation was found to arise from the interactions within the community, the most prevalent being information sharing and receiving, hype creation, retention of value through consumer actions and building of allegory. Identifying with the community or topic was found to be the beginning of participation. Personal motivations were found to mediate the interactions. The two most important motives were information sharing and entertainment. Consciousness of the community

was found to be commitment towards the community, emphasizing truthfulness and playfulness.

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APPENDIX 1 THREAD DATA

Number of thread	Title	Posted on	Number of comments
[1]	[Buying Rolex] Grey Dealers or AD Bribes	4/2019	60
[2]	[FARER COBB] Because it's Friday	2/2019	85
[3]	[Longines Legend Diver] Day out with a legend	4/2019	86
[4]	[Philosophy] Why do you love watches	4/2019	43
[5]	[Rolex] On Watch collecting and "addiction"	4/2019	19
[6]	5 years of collecting at 28yo	12/2018	70
[7]	[comparison] best everyday watch between the Black Bay 36 and the Rolex Explorer 14270	1/2019	58
[8]	[Advice] buying an entry level luxury watch	6/2018	28
[9]	[discussion] custom made Rolex	5/2016	28
[10]	[Discussion] Do you prefer modern or vintage watches?	12/2013	54
[11]	[Rolex Explorer II] First big purchase. Been wanting a Rolex since I was a kid!	8/2018	188
[12]	[Rolex] gmt Pepsi. The watch Rolex doesn't want to sell you	8/2018	204
[13]	[article] How To Avoid Classic New Watch Guy Mistakes	2/2019	91
[14]	[Rolex Milgauss] I said I'd post this if I ever got it done	1/2017	410
[15]	[Rolex Pepsi] In the right light	8/2018	57
[16]	[Collins] It all started on Reddit...	4/2019	35
[17]	[Rolex] King Harald V of Norway's 1962 GMT-Master after 56 years of daily wear	7/2018	142
[18]	[Rolex] Looking to purchase my first Rolex, looking for model that will hold value	6/2018	38
[19]	[Omega Speedmaster] Macro Monday	12/2018	38

Number of thread	Title	Posted on	Number of comments
[20]	[Universal Geneve] My first vintage piece, a red gold Compur chronograph ca.1940	1/2014	25
[21]	[Universal Geneve] My first vintage watch.	4/2013	49
[22]	[Universal Geneve] Nina Rindt Found at a garage sale, no info on history, what do I	10/2018	25
[23]	[Universal Geneve] Polerouter Date	10/2018	11
[24]	[Universal Geneve] Rocking my 1950's Universal Geneve Tri-Compax today	1/2019	27
[25]	[Rolex] Modern Versatility	9/2018	28
[26]	[advertisement] Rolex ad from the 60s	7/2017	247
[27]	[Decide] Rolex or Universal Geneve	6/2018	16
[28]	[Serious Question] Something that's making me think twice about buying an Omega Speedmaster Pro	[deleted]	151
[29]	[Rolex] submariner and Daytona from the same era	11/2018	82
[30]	[rolex] submariners 44 years apart	1/2019	65
[31]	[Tudor] Macro Monday	12/2018	20
[32]	[Universal Geneve] THIS is what I want	6/2015	25
[33]	[Meta] Watches Style Guide	10/2013	22
[34]	[Discussion] What % of the price are you happy to pay for the aesthetic?	4/2019	16
[35]	[Discussion] What are your other hobbies?	2/2019	33
[36]	[Question] What do you guys look for in a watch?	1/2019	13
[37]	ELI5 - Why are the best watches so expensive and are they worth it?	3/2014	6
[38]	[Question] Why does movement matter?	3/2019	18
[39]	[Discussion] Winding automatics daily or set time when worn?	2/2019	12

APPENDIX 2 OPERATIONALISATION TABLE

Research ques- tion	Sub questions	Theoretical background	Synthesis	Findings	Updated synthe- sis
How is value cre- ated in online communities fo- cusing on luxury and vintage me- chanical watches?	What is the value in luxury me- chanical watches?	2.1.1 The defini- tion of value	2.3.1 Luxury vin- tage value	4.1 Value in Lux- ury mechanical watches	4.4 Summary of the main findings
		2.1.2 The defini- tion of Value in Luxury			
	What is the value in vintage watches?	2.1.3 The defini- tion of value in Vintage		4.2 Value in vin- tage watches	
	What is the role of online commu- nities in the value creation of luxury and vintage watches?	2.2 Value crea- tion and co-crea- tion in online communities		2.3.2 The process of online commu- nity value crea- tion	