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Book review:

The Emerald Handbook of Luxury Management for Hospitality and Tourism,

Edited by Anupama S. Kotur, Sarabh Kumar Dixit

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The concept of luxury has evolved throughout history and has been affected by changing societal values and economic and cultural shifts. Therefore, defining what luxury means in general and in the context of hospitality and tourism is rather complex, as the concept of luxury is multidimensional and consumer perceptions of luxury are also changing. The book's contribution comes from the discussions in which these different perspectives and notions and the diversity of consumers in contemporary luxury hospitality and tourism are acknowledged.

The book is divided into five thematic sections and 27 chapters. Each thematic division offers a glimpse of the theory and practice of luxury management in tourism and hospitality. Part one of the book focuses on conceptualizing luxury as a constantly developing phenomenon. This part aims to lay a foundation for the book by discussing the multi-disciplinary aspect of luxury. The first chapter attempts to understand the historical developments of luxury tourism and provide directions for future implications. This chapter also acknowledges the broad consumer base and discusses the cross-cultural perspectives in luxury experiences based on different preferences; preferences that are reshaping the concept and the demand for luxury travel. The second chapter explores consumer-centered experiential luxury in yoga retreat holidays from the perspective of the human body. The auto-ethnographic study enriches the understanding of embodied luxury experiences. It discusses the sensory nature of luxury experiences: how our bodies know before our cognitive perception what is happening in experiences and how luxury can be embedded in the things we value even though they are simplistic or mundane. The third chapter examines experience-oriented accommodation and acknowledges the more diverse luxury consumers by investigating their demographic and psychographic backgrounds and how this affects what kind of experiences consumers are looking for. The fourth and fifth chapters approach luxury tourism in contexts that are not so well-known as luxury destinations. Chapter four discusses Vietnam and depicts luxury tourism within this communist country governed by socialist principles; the description goes from Vietnam's past history to contemporary modern luxury tourism in Vietnam, thus offering a perspective on how these somewhat contradictory concepts can work side by side. The fifth chapter, in turn, identifies the challenges and prospects of Oman as a luxury tourism destination. The value of the book's first thematic element is in laying a more diverse base for the discussion on luxury tourism.

Part two of the book consists of seven chapters that approach the issues of managing and marketing luxury experiences. Chapter six focuses on the consumption patterns of luxury travelers in the Czech Republic and identifies the sociodemographic characteristics of luxury consumers, and their motivations and preferences when taking luxury holidays. In the seventh chapter, Norway is

discussed as an emerging luxury destination, highlighting the exclusivity and once-in-a-lifetime experiences provided by Norway's nature. This context creates a discrepancy as nature is basically free and accessible to everyone; however, luxury is attached to exclusivity. Furthermore, the chapter focuses on marketing practices of these kinds of luxury destinations, where the marketing requires a balanced picture of the attractions and attributes whilst also considering sustainability. Butler's acts in luxury accommodation experiences are examined in Chapter eight, including what kind of competencies are needed in service encounters and how to recognize the challenges and changing paradigms and expectations of luxury consumers. The chapter highlights the need for a combination of soft skills and technical skills and also examines the recruitment, training, and retention of butlers. The next chapter, chapter nine, approaches the marketing of luxury tourism experiences from the perspective of gastronomic tourism and identifies marketing strategies employed in Hunter Valley, Australia. This chapter conceptualizes luxury as an affect, which is sensed and felt rather than conceptualizing it from the perspective of performance or value. By studying websites descriptions, images, and website design with content analysis, it adds to the understanding of discourses as well the material cues that can trigger affects; it increases knowledge on how luxury is marketed as an affect. Chapter ten explores human interactions and co-creation between guests and frontline staff in luxury accommodation experiences. The chapter notes the need to describe the experience occurring in the form of the entire customer journey rather than only an experience that takes place during the guests' physical stay at a property. Chapter eleven reviews the language in luxury marketing and decodes the brand portfolio of Marriott International. The study recognizes how different luxury brands collected under one brand portfolio communicate through textual content and differentiate themselves using intangible elements within the brand. The exploration of luxury travel branding is the subject of Chapter twelve; it tackles the intangible nature of services and addresses the understanding of the traveler-brand relationship in luxury travel contexts using the TraveLux brand relationship instrument. This thematic part of the book presents a wider perspective on the marketing and managing of luxury tourism by recommending the sensing of experiences rather than just the mere consumption of the product; it also addresses the skills and competencies of the personnel as well the different perspectives of marketing.

Part three, entitled "Technology and other contemporary facets in luxury", introduces technological innovations and discusses their role in luxury experiences. The section begins with insights into the use of technologies such as VR, AR, and AI in luxury tourism and hospitality and gives practical examples of these technologies, as well as suggestions for further academic research. Chapter fourteen investigates the adoption of voice assistants in luxury hospitality by combining the effects

of openness to change and status consumption. The chapter notes that accommodation facilities can not only rely on their brand name in the contemporary world but need to use the most recent technological innovations that appeal to the consumer. However, managers need to understand their clientele better before investing in these technologies. Chapter fifteen aims to determine guest room selection and the purchase intentions of guests regarding branded amenities in luxury hotel guestrooms. The results showed that guests were willing to pay extra when luxury branded amenities were part of the room experience. However, the demography, the vacation type and the hotel type were all related to the willingness to pay a price premium. Finally, Chapter sixteen, explores how Michelin-starred restaurants have contributed to luxury gastronomy tourism and highlight the sustainability perspective and visitors' active participation in gastronomic experiences. The value of this thematic part is acknowledging the diversity in the types of luxury consumers and their expectations of the various aspects of luxury tourism, as well as the more active role that consumers may have in contemporary luxury tourism experiences. Consequently, understanding the consumers' interests is essential for the service providers.

Part four focuses on sustainability in luxury, examining the ethical and sustainable perspectives in luxury tourism, and highlighting the consumers' shift to requiring responsible consumption to be combined with their luxury experience. Part four starts with a chapter discussing brand sustainability, how luxury business operators can create, communicate, and maintain the brand over time. Chapter seventeen presents a case study of the Four Seasons Hotel and Resorts and notes that brand managers should continuously pay attention to details and strategies to meet customers' needs, while simultaneously monitoring the level of the brand's sustainability. Chapter eighteen contributes to the sustainability discussion by researching sustainable luxury tourism and giving a practical example of the Diphlu river lodge. The study highlights questions for further research and notes the need to market sustainable practices as part of unique and exclusive experiences for luxury tourists. Chapter nineteen focuses on social sustainability and Indigenous tourism by presenting a case study from Martuwarra, Western Australia. The chapter develops a sociocultural sustainable luxury tourism framework, including governance, with legal, management, and social policy perspectives on how sustainable luxury can protect and strengthen Indigenous groups' relationship with their ancestral land. This can be achieved by incorporating Indigenous groups into the management processes and helping create better branding for actual Indigenous products. Chapter twenty links together the concepts of high yield, sustainability, and tourist experiences. Therefore, it aims to add value by assessing how luxury tourism can make an optimal contribution to the economic, social, and environmental aspects of the sustainability aspirations of societies.

Furthermore, the chapter gives suggestions for a renewed understanding in terms of the production and consumption processes of luxury tourism and offers suggestions for further research. Chapter twenty-one considers the modern concepts involved in the negative side of luxury tourism and the part played by hotels in breaches of human rights, modern slavery, human trafficking, and duty of care. Duty of care covers a hotel's relationship with their staff as regards alcohol and drug abuse. This darker side of the industry is discussed in terms of these modern concepts and a practical mindset, acknowledging the moral perspective and issues it may have for luxury brands if not fully considered. This thematic part of the book considers diverse perspectives of luxury hospitality and tourism and not only contributes to the environmental view of sustainability but also takes into account sociocultural and economic sustainability. Furthermore, it acknowledges how sustainability needs to be incorporated into luxury and not something that is seen as being in addition to or a replaceable appendage.

Part five discusses luxury tourism in a post-pandemic world and offers a glimpse of the industry's possibilities during and after the pandemic. Chapter twenty-two uses ethnography to understand travel influencers and their strategies in a pandemic world. The chapter notes how travel influencers can present luxury travel as a safe experience through a transmedia storytelling of their story world and representations of their travel experiences. The visual representations and posts influencers created pre-pandemic have changed into various images of staycations, embracing local tourism and diversifying content; they also present images of luxury travel as a safe experience, which further affects the meaning of luxury. Chapter twenty-three examines Singapore as a commercial environment for luxury tourism and focuses especially on restaurant experiences during the pandemic. In addition to luxury tourism, the chapter discusses the luxury lifestyle and decision-making process of luxury tourists related to the beliefs and values that influence their choices. Chapter twenty-four considers luxury tourism and sustainability from the aspect of consumer travel motivations and the demands of luxury tourism. The chapter highlights the meaning of extravagance and shifts in perceptions and aims to redefine luxury tourism. The traditional perspective on luxury is achieving the second-highest level of esteem in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs by being accepted by others or increasing self-esteem through status consumption. However, the new luxury consumers are aiming at the highest level, that of self-actualization. Therefore, the new definition of luxury is closer to a connection with the environment, personal fulfillment, and brands that share the same values as the consumer, allowing them to transform their identity. Chapter twenty-five approaches the era after the pandemic and how luxury hospitality companies need to adjust or even re-design their experiences for their customers. It also highlights the

personnel's role and targeted training when re-opening services, ensuring hygiene and safety and delivering outstanding service experiences. According to this chapter, the strongest will be those service providers paying attention to minor details, and demonstrating creativity and resourcefulness. Chapter twenty-six focuses on the new strategies adopted in the pandemic by the industry as consumers' motivations, preferences, and behavior changed. The chapter presents Fiji as an example and considers the core of the new forms of luxury travel experiences to be transformative experiences, memorable experiences, and the mindset of luxury tourists in a pandemic world. The last chapter, Chapter twenty-seven, concludes the book and reviews the different perspectives presented for a contemporary understanding of luxury in the hospitality and tourism industry. Furthermore, the chapter presents an agenda for future research by identifying research gaps and new areas of luxury research.

Exploring luxury hospitality and tourism in different contexts with various research methods and acknowledging the heterogeneity of luxury consumers is valuable for understanding the phenomenon. The book initiates reflection on the definitional challenges as well the various aspects of luxury in hospitality and tourism from a wider perspective than previously. It is noteworthy to point out that the contributions to this book cover a wide range of geographical and cultural origins, contexts and also present luxury tourism from the perspective of personal experiences; experiences in which emotions have a role as luxury may induce a feeling of specialness for the consumer. Even though the contribution of some chapters is a little less germane than others, the editors have successfully managed to assemble a book that responds to the needs of the current academic discussion on luxury (Thomsen et al., 2020), luxury tourism (Iloranta, 2022), and luxury services (Wirtz et al., 2020). The book also offers a wide range of possibilities for future avenues of research. Furthermore, the book is easy to read as every chapter begins with the abstract, presents contemporary global case studies, and gives practical examples. Therefore, the book is not only suitable for academic readers but also valuable from a managerial perspective as it offers a comprehensive insight into the phenomenon of luxury hospitality and tourism.

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