

Exploring Tourists' Well-being in Finnish Luxury Tourism

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University of Lapland, Faculty of Social Sciences**Title:** Exploring Tourists' Well-being in Finnish Luxury Tourism**Author:** Pouya Chogan**Degree Program:** Tourism Research, TourCIM (Tourism, Culture and International Management)**Type of the work:** Master's Thesis**Number of pages:** 73**Year:** 2025**Abstract:**

Luxury tourism has changed from material goods to meaningful experiences, which is the result of the experience economy, social change, and sustainability awareness. This “new luxury” enhances tourist well-being through relaxation, growth, and deeper connections with society and nature. While there has been considerable research on tourism well-being, little has been done on tourists' well-being in context of new luxury and Finnish luxury tourism. The purpose of this study is to explore traveler's hedonic and eudaimonic well-being in Finnish luxury tourism and in new luxury tourism. Finnish luxury tourism emphasizes meaningful and nature-based experiences, though little research on tourist well-being in this context has been conducted. This research interviewed with eight international tourists to obtain qualitative data and applied DREAMA framework to interpret the psychological and emotional dimensions of luxury in Finnish Lapland context. Participants described Finnish luxury as a setting that provides peace, silence, nature immersion and effortless and intimate service. Hedonic well-being was gained through environmental stillness, restorative rituals, and effortless hospitality, while eudaimonic results emerged from affirmation of values, connection to nature and travel companion, and fulfillment. This study also showed that the dual aspects of affiliation, social and environmental, are central to well-being. Findings confirmed the applicability of the DREAMA in nature-oriented tourism and contributed the literature on well-being in new luxury tourism.

Keywords: Well-being, Finnish Luxury Tourism, New Luxury, Hedonic well-being, Eudaimonic well-being, DREAMA Model

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1- Introduction

1.1 Background

Since the beginning of the 21st century, the factors to buy services and products have changed due to the shift of luxury consumer values. The evolution of luxury consumption has resulted in customer's focus on experience, emotion, and individual expression. The drivers of this transformation have been technological advancement, evolving sociocultural values and globalization. Traditional consumers prioritized product functionality and reasonable decision-making, while new consumers look for emotional value, interact with brands and society through immersive experiences (Batat, 2019).

Luxury tourism is currently experiencing tremendous growth as well as huge transformations moving from the conventional materialistic concept of experience to experiential and meaningful (Gupta et al., 2023). Conventional luxury or "old luxury" is referred to as possession of high-priced goods, exclusivity, materialism, and flamboyant consumption. This perspective highlighted material elements such as high-end hotels, expensive restaurants and luxury shopping (Iloranta, 2022). However, new luxury as a new standard concentrates on experiential value and personal enrichment (Thomsen et al., 2020). The reason for this change is that societies have been changing and people look for experience that improve their well-being and provide them a sense of purpose that goes beyond material wealth (Iloranta, 2022). This new form of luxury highlights meaningfulness, uniqueness, and authenticity of experiences which provide self-discovery and personal growth. Consequently, this evolution has changed tourism offerings and made them focus on intangible elements, including well-being, individuality, space and time (Lopes et al., 2023).

In this environment, Finnish luxury tourism stands out by focusing on its unique nature, authenticity and well-being, which makes it distinguished from ostentatious traditional luxury destinations. It gives the tourists a combination of natural beauty, peace, safety, and opportunities for self-reflection in a clean environment. The deep connections with nature can be achieved through its vast forests, abundant lakes and magical northern lights. It also encourages tourists to have a meaningful engagement with nature and culture, instead of focusing on excessive materialism, which values the experience itself. In other words, nature and human interactions are the main part of the Finnish luxury (Iloranta, 2019; Iloranta & Komppula, 2022; Visit Finland,

2022). Therefore, Finnish luxury is considered unconventional and a new form of luxury (Iloranta, 2019). However, the commercial and material aspects of luxury are not entirely neglected, but serve as a complement of non-commercial elements. Activities are usually tailored (Visit Finland, 2022) and involve elements from Finnish nature and culture to enrich the travelers' experience and well-being (Iloranta & Komppula, 2022).

The idea of well-being has become important in tourism, reflecting a broader trend where travelers seek experiences that provide both pleasure and personal growth (Konstantopoulou et al., 2024; Liu et al., 2023). Many research shows tourism experiences can enhance travelers' well-being (Vada et al., 2020). The earlier forms of tourism were associated with leisure and recreation, but there is realization of its capabilities to improve a deeper sense of well-being. This leads to the realm of positive psychology that studies characteristics and behaviors of individuals and communities that enable them to overcome difficulties, and the potential role of tourism experiences on the well-being of tourists. Well-being is considered as a comprehensive state that includes different aspects of human experience rather than just a lack of sickness or stress (Câmara et al., 2023; Liu et al., 2023). The key concepts of this investigation are hedonic and eudaimonic well-being. Hedonic refers to happiness, enjoyment, positive emotions, as well as avoiding pain, highlighting the immediate gratification of one's needs and desires through pleasurable experiences. For instance, this can happen in holiday activities such as spending time on a beach, hiking in the forest, dining, or having spa treatments in tourism (Bagheri et al., 2024b; Filep et al., 2024; Huang et al., 2024). Eudaimonic, in contrast, is more than mere instant pleasure: it encompasses meaning, purpose, self-discovery, personal growth, and pursuit for excellence (Bagheri et al., 2024b; Huang et al., 2024). This includes activities consistent with our values that contribute to feelings of fulfillment. In tourism, eudaimonic well-being is obtained through exploration, self-development or deeper understanding of the world or other cultures. Both hedonic and eudaimonic well-being are crucial components of a balanced and meaningful life, and are not mutually exclusive (Bagheri et al., 2024b; Câmara et al., 2023).

Well-being has been a significant concept and popular area of discussion in tourism research (Nikjoo et al., 2023), main player for attracting tourists (Vada et al., 2020) and their satisfaction with tourism services and products (Hwang & Lee, 2019). According to a study by Vada et al., (2020), which reviewed 82 research papers, promoting and highlighting well-being in destination

marketing can help positive word-of-mouth and revisit intentions. When a tourist realizes that an experience is able to improve their well-being, they are more likely want to come back and be a loyal customer. Therefore, the relationship between tourism and well-being should be explored to create ways to improve tourists overall satisfaction (Bagheri et al., 2024a). Previous research reveals that luxury consumption has impact on consumer's well-being and it improves their moods and sense of accomplishment (Loureiro et al., 2019).

The focus on nature, authenticity, experiential experience and Finnish culture makes Finland an ideal destination in luxury tourism (Iloranta, 2021; Lehto, 2023). These criteria can provide an environment for a meaningful experience and can have a huge impact on tourists' well-being; therefore, research on the well-being in this unique environment is crucial and give insight to businesses how tourists feel about the experiences in terms of well-being and how they can provide better experiences for their customers.

1.2 Previous Research

The multidisciplinary investigation of luxury has seen significant growth with two new approaches: the micro and macro analysis. The former deals with the subjectivity and the viewpoints of the luxury actors, e.g., consumers or producers, whereas the latter is driven by societal well-being. Well-being emerges as a very central construct in both approaches as this idea impacts design of public policies, and assessment of marketing practices (S raphin et al., 2023). The value of this topic is highlighted by Batat's works that luxury consumption allows many positive things to transpire regarding community as well as individual well-being (Batat, 2022a, 2022b). However, most research has not discussed the well-being in luxury (Batat, 2022b). In addition, research on tourism and hospitality shows that there need to be more research on luxury in general (Bagheri et al., 2024a; Kay Smith & Diekmann, 2017), unconventional luxury (Thomsen et al., 2020) and experimental luxury (Correia et al., 2016; Iloranta & Komppula, 2022) in particular.

In Finnish luxury tourism, the focus on well-being in luxury experience is highlighted. Iloranta (2019) and Iloranta and Komppula (2021) found that Finnish luxury service providers try to design experiences which are aligned with customer desires, consisting of meaningful moments that improve connection with themselves, nature, and loved ones. This approach makes the luxury

inconspicuous, because it highlights well-being and escapism that contribute to both eudaimonic and hedonic experience (Iloranta, 2021). Tourists are also looking for holistic experience that cater physiological as well as a spiritual perspective, for hedonic pleasure and eudaimonic meaning (Luoma, 2024). Therefore more studies need to examine tourists' point of view about luxury experience and the relationship between well-being and luxury (Iloranta & Komppula, 2022).

One of the crucial items of Finnish luxury tourism is nature (Iloranta & Komppula, 2022; Lehto, 2023; Luoma, 2024), which plays an important role in enhancing hedonic and eudaimonic well-being. Spending time in nature impacts the perception of meaning in a positive manner and improves mental focus, and encourages self-development (Clissold et al., 2022; Richardson et al., 2021). Luoma (2024) states that for developing an experience-oriented wellness products and services in new luxury, all holistic health dimensions, e.g., spirit, mind, body, and environment should be addressed; and nature can be integrated in all of these aspects. According to Iloranta & Komppula (2022) in the case of a Finnish luxury tourism experience, the blend of nature and commercial urges to consider meaning and authenticity. Additionally, the tailored nature of these experiences allows for eudaimonic well-being by providing to the customer's specific needs and desires. Therefore, scholars should consider nature in their studies of new luxury, specifically in contexts where it is a main element of this type of tourism.

Finnish luxury is described as an alternative luxury (Iloranta, 2019). However, how this kind of tourism is understood and experienced in the Finnish context remains unexplored, and more studies need to be conducted on this type of alternative luxury (Batat, 2022b). In addition, the focus of studies on luxury tourism are limited to traditional luxury and in specific geographical areas, e.g. Asia and USA, as the main luxury destinations. Therefore there is a gap in researching luxury experience in Nordic countries (Iloranta, 2022; Lehto, 2023). Another gap identified in literature reviews is that, since quantitative methods are dominant in studying luxury tourism, there need to be more use of qualitative research methods in luxury tourism (Japutra et al., 2022).

1.3 Research Aims and Questions

The purpose of this study was to examine tourists' hedonic and eudaimonic well-being of luxury tourism in Finnish Lapland through the lens of DREAMA framework. In other words, it focused on how Finnish nature-based and experiential luxury tourism contribute to tourists' well-being. The study sought to recognize the aspects of Finnish luxury tourism that promote pleasure, relaxation, personal growth, and meaningful engagement, which relate to tourists' subjective experience and well-being. Based on the gaps found in the literature, the research wanted to expand the understanding of well-being in luxury tourism, specifically in Finnish context and from tourists' perspective.

Therefore, based on the objectives of the research, the primary question of this research was:

How do travelers express their Finnish luxury tourism experiences, and in what ways are these experiences perceived to boost their hedonic and eudaimonic well-being?

The sub-questions which can guide the research were:

- 1- *What factors in Finnish luxury tourism are perceived to enhance tourists' hedonic well-being (e.g., pleasure, relaxation)?*
- 2- *In what ways do tourists describe Finnish luxury tourism as fostering eudaimonic well-being (e.g., connection or achievement)?*
- 3- *Which aspects of Finnish luxury tourism are perceived to contribute most significantly to overall well-being?*

1.4 Conceptual Framework

The researcher used positive psychology approach to examine eudaimonic and hedonic well-being results of experiencing Finnish luxury tourism. Positive psychology is a branch of psychology that explores the factors that make life meaningful and fulfilling (M. E. P. Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2014). This approach has two aspects; hedonic, which incorporates the state of positive emotion and pleasure, and eudaimonic, which denotes purpose, life value and meaning

(Haybron, 2000; Veenhoven, 2003; Zhou et al., 2021). In order to explain well-being, both hedonic and eudaimonic should be considered, since outcomes of various types of tourism and experience are divergent (Nawijn & Filep, 2016; Ryan & Deci, 2001; Zhou et al., 2021). A few models have been proposed to enhance the understanding about the well-being of tourists, including PERMA, DRAMMA, and DREAMA models. PERMA model, proposed by Seligman (2011), puts emphasis on positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment. DRAMMA model highlights detachment-recovery, autonomy, mastery, meaning, and affiliation (Kay Smith & Diekmann, 2017). These models underline that well-being is complex as an empirical construct to explain and necessitates consideration of the general and various interacting elements (Filep et al., 2024).

This study adopted DREAMA model, as an upgraded version of PERMA and DRAMMA, to investigate well-being in Finnish new luxury tourism experiences. The DREAMA model- detachment-recovery (DR), engagement (E), affiliation (A), meaning (M), and accomplishment (A)- redefines well-being through the integration of both social relations and the tourists' interactions with nature within the affiliation dimension (Chang et al., 2024). It is especially relevant in the Finnish context, in which nature plays a central role. By combining hedonic and eudaimonic elements, DREAMA model provides a suitable framework for examining how tourism improves well-being as an enriching and positive experience.

1.5 Data and Methodology

The paradigm of the research was constructive as it focused on understanding subjective experiences. Since the purpose of the study was to discover authentic perception of tourists considering the deeper stages of well-being, a qualitative approach was used. Semi-structured interviews were employed to explore well-being among luxury tourists who traveled to Finland. This approach allowed interviewees to have active engagement through open-ended questions and ability to ask follow-up questions (Bagheri et al., 2024b).

The interviewees were chosen using the following criteria:

- 1- They should be over 18 and recently stayed in a Finnish Lapland certified luxury accommodation for at least one night (Cheah & Parker, 2015; Mihiretu, 2023).

2- They participated in some tourism activities in nature.

This research used purposive sampling technique to find interviewees. Then online interviews were carried out in English; based on participants' consent the sessions were recorded to gather the data. The study followed information privacy and confidentiality laws, e.g., Finnish National Board on Research Integrity guidelines (Tenk, 2019) and EU General Data Protection Regulation, for managing data.

1.6 Structure of the Study

This research is composed of six chapters. Chapter One briefly explores topic, previous studies, research framework and methodology. Chapter Two examines theoretical concepts, including well-being and its interplay with tourism. It also analyzes the components of DREAMA model as the main conceptual framework of this study. Chapter Three explains Finnish new luxury and the effect of nature in tourism experience. Chapter Four provides details on research methodology and justify the selected approach, as well as sampling strategy and questions design. Chapter Five presents research findings and results based on the chosen framework. Finally, these results further discuss in Chapter Six. Limitations of the research and future studies are provided in this chapter too.

2- Theoretical Framework

2.1 Positive Psychology and Well-being

Positive psychology focuses on understanding the strengths, traits, and behaviors of people and societies that lead to positive and meaningful results (Garcês et al., 2020). While Maslow, as one of the leading scholars in this field, coined the term “positive psychology,” and his theories on fulfillment and self-actualization laid the foundation for the discipline (Filep & Laing, 2019), the concept and its aspects were established by Seligman (2002) in the late 1990s. This field of study encourages individuals to amplify their strengths and virtues. The pillars of positive psychology include: (1) positive emotions, which are experienced over time in relation to the past (pride and satisfaction), present (happiness), and future (faith or hope); (2) positive personal characteristics, such as happiness and subjective well-being; and (3) positive institutions, which promote values such as altruism and responsibility (Garcês et al., 2020).

The field of positive psychology dates back in ancient Greek philosophy, particularly Aristotle’s thoughts and studies on the good life and happiness. In the contemporary era, positive psychology derives its foundation from existential psychology, cognitive therapy, behaviorism, and the works of scholars such as Adler’s healthy social motivations, Freud’s pleasure principle, and Frankl’s meaning in suffering. Humanistic psychology also played a crucial role in its development. Based on these works, specific theories for positive psychology emerged in the early 21st century, such as Seligman’s character virtues and strengths (2004) and human flourishing models (2011) (Filep & Laing, 2019).

The goal of positive psychology is to perceive the elements that help people and societies to prosper. Seligman (2011) states that human prosper is the ultimate purpose of positive psychology, with fairness, excellence, and humanity being virtuous qualities. Positive psychology emphasizes personal growth, resilience, and virtues that result in self-sufficiency (Packer & Gill, 2017).

The traditional mental health care system has focused on treating mental illnesses rather than preventing them. However, the positive psychology emphasizes that mental health is not just the absence of disorders but encompasses a holistic state of well-being. Emotions are main players in mental health which are connected to people’s assessment and interpretation of experiences; in other words, different individuals can react emotionally to a situation in different manner (Scott et

al., 2017). Positive emotions are highly significant since they help people to improve their well-being and promote psychological growth over time (Fredrickson, 2001).

The concept of well-being has a crucial role in nearly all activities and everyday life (Kay Smith & Diekmann, 2017). Well-being is generally seen as a reflection of an individual's living conditions within a particular place, such as a region or country (McGillivray, 2007). Various definitions and perspectives of well-being exist in the literature. Dodge et al. (2012) define well-being as an individual's condition when they have attained balance by securing necessary resources and successfully overcoming a specific obstacle. While well-being is traditionally associated with psychology, other fields such as economics, public health, and sociology have also shown interest in it (Pyke et al., 2016). Well-being can be perceived as a sense of fulfillment, contribution to society, life evaluation through a positive approach, or a reaction to personal experiences.

Well-being is influenced by both subjective and objective factors (Bimonte & Faralla, 2015). Objective well-being is measured by indicators such as health (access to doctors per capita), environmental factors (air quality index), social factors (percentage of the population with access to higher education), and economic factors (employment rate or median household income). In contrast, subjective well-being is related to perceived life satisfaction, quality of life, and happiness (Easterlin, 2004). Subjective well-being can be evaluated based on how a person positively perceives different aspects of their life (Powdthavee, 2008). Unlike life satisfaction and quality of life, subjective well-being and happiness can be assessed in the short term. Another reason for prioritizing subjective indicators is their effectiveness in assessing an individual's perceived quality of life, making them significant for evaluating people's livelihood and social welfare (Deaton & Stone, 2013).

Subjective well-being, or subjective happiness, was first introduced by Campbell (1976) who studied personal experiences and their subjective factors. Later, Kammann (1983) identified virtue, wealth, comfort, and health as key influences on individual well-being. Diener (1984) provided a model indicating that subjective happiness is shaped by positive and negative factors, and also overall life satisfaction. When life aligns with an individual's desires, emotional comfort occurs, reflecting positive influences. Conversely, negative influences involve displeasing moods and emotions, which adversely impact health and life events (Diener, 2006). Ultimately, overall happiness is determined by the extent to which positive emotions outweigh negative emotions.

Ethical philosophers have proposed two main approaches to defining a good life: hedonic and eudaimonic perspectives (Huta & Waterman, 2014). The hedonic perspective considers pleasure as the ultimate life goal (Huta & Ryan, 2010). However, the eudaimonic perspective regards this view as superficial and instead emphasizes excellence and virtue as primary goals (Huta & Waterman, 2014). Eudaimonia, which describes a state of prospering by self-realization and development, contrasts with hedonia, which focuses on pleasure and subjective happiness. The eudaimonic approach emphasizes achieving excellence based on an individual's potential (Filep & Laing, 2019).

In recent decades, tourism researchers have shown enthusiasm for studying well-being, as it is considered one of the main benefits of tourism (Sirgy & Uysal, 2016). Positive psychology in tourism enhances the positive effects of travel experiences on well-being (Chen & Yoon, 2019). Tourism positively impacts quality of life (Bagheri et al., 2024a), and well-being is considered a fundamental factor in travel (Garcês et al., 2020) as well as one of the main achievements of tourist experiences (Vada et al., 2020).

2.2 Hedonic and Eudaimonic Well-being:

Well-being is generally categorized into two philosophical traditions: Hedonia and Eudaimonia (Rahmani et al., 2018). Scholars have different explanations for Hedonia as an immediate view of well-being, including sensory stimulation and seeking escape, relaxation, and fun (Voigt, 2016), experiencing positive and negative emotions and the pursuit of happiness (Packer & Gill, 2017). The hedonic perspective traces back to the 4th-century Greek Aristippus. He argued the ultimate aim of life is to maximize happiness and avoid any pain (Voigt, 2016). Psychological hedonism, however, was first articulated by Socrates and Protagoras and later developed by Bentham in the 18th and 19th centuries. In the classical view of hedonism, it was believed that all pleasures are inherently equal. For instance, all sensory experiences such as eating and gratification are as valuable as aesthetic enjoyment. In the 19th century, Mill redefined this view and argued that certain forms of pleasure, specifically aesthetic, moral, and intellectual, have a greater value in nature than bodily pleasures (Heathwood, 2014).

The eudaimonic perspective is rooted in Aristotle's philosophy, translates to "having a happy true spirit," and is connected to his "good life" concept (Cloninger, 2004). The core emphasis in this

view is human potential, and rather than the pursuit of superficial pleasure, the focus is on valuable and meaningful actions and self-discovery (Cloninger, 2004). Although there is no unanimous definition and measurement of eudaimonia (Haybron, 2016), its core notion is rooted in gaining psychological health through self-realization and individual growth (Matteucci & Filep, 2017).

A key distinction between the hedonic and eudaimonic perspectives is that while the hedonic view focuses on pleasure-seeking activities that provide immediate well-being, eudaimonic experiences involve discomfort or hardship in a short-term period but allow long-term positive effects (Knobloch et al., 2017). Therefore, it can be said that hedonia is more focused on the present moment, while eudaimonia is oriented toward future outcomes. For example, adventure tourism activities, which are physically and mentally demanding, like trekking in extreme conditions, might challenge a tourist, but they will contribute to transformative and positive effects in the long run (Taylor et al., 2013). Thus, eudaimonia is linked to full engagement, self-development, self-fulfillment, and personal growth.

Eudaimonia, in contrast to hedonia, offers a more comprehensive conceptualization and contains two primary directives, e.g., self-understanding and self-actualization (Ryff, 2019). Özyurt (2023) posits that hedonic well-being tends to be more individual-centered since it emphasizes distancing from worries. On the other hand, eudaimonic well-being is a humanistic-oriented approach and is connected to greater engagement. Hedonia involves the self-regulation of emotions, enabling individuals to manage their affective states. In contrast, eudaimonic experiences yield cumulative positive effects on affect and reduce distress over time. These experiences are linked to setting goals that help minimize negative emotions and building resilience to effectively manage challenging situations. Overall, hedonia focuses on short-term emotional experiences, whereas eudaimonia promotes deeper cognitive and emotional states of meaning, gratitude, and lasting results.

2.3 Positive Tourism and Tourist Well-being

Building on principles of positive psychology, tourism studies have offered the concept of positive tourism, which explores happiness and well-being in tourists, workers, and local communities. While early research on well-being in tourism tended to focus on the hedonic aspects, Nawijn & Filep (2016) suggested that scholars should explore other aspects of well-being that have more

lasting impacts. Positive tourism's main focus is on hedonic and eudaimonic well-being, with its main goal being the search for meaning in tourists' experiences (Packer & Gill, 2017). Thus, it plays as a bridge between positive psychology and tourism by applying theoretical concepts such as happiness to travel experiences.

Tourist well-being refers to the joy and personal growth that travelers experience as they fulfill their sensory desires and achieve their trip goals (Rahmani et al., 2018). Tourism experiences are associated with fun, relaxation, and pleasure (hedonia), while engaging in tourism activities also allows tourists to experience satisfaction and spiritual enjoyment (eudaimonia) (Su et al., 2023). The tourism sector is regarded as the leading industry among the "Five Well-being Industries" (Zheng et al., 2022), emphasizing its significant role in enhancing subjective well-being. Studies show that travel offers lasting benefits, as it creates experiences that enhance tourist well-being and life satisfaction even after the trip.

2.4 Well-being Conceptual Frameworks

2.4.1 PERMA Model

The efforts to define, measure, and evaluate happiness and well-being lead to the emergence of multiple models across various disciplines (Bolier et al., 2013). Happiness is the core concept of well-being in positive psychology and encompasses hedonic and eudaimonic perspectives (McCabe & Johnson, 2013). Scholars have attempted to conceptualize well-being through various frameworks within different fields of study. One of the most widely recognized frameworks of well-being is the PERMA model (M. Seligman, 2011b), derived from Seligman's authentic happiness theory, which posits well-being is composed of five essential dimensions: Positive Emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Achievement. In contrast to other theories in which the focus is either hedonic or eudaimonic, PERMA integrates both dimensions and provides a holistic approach for well-being research (Filep, 2016). While the initial goal of PERMA is to evaluate overall well-being based on happiness as a basic element of positive psychology, this is not the only component; it also considers achievement and meaning in life, by which a person can flourish (M. Seligman, 2018).

In the model, Positive Emotions (P) consist of joy, contentment, feeling good, pride, hope, and life satisfaction. This element can only be assessed subjectively, while other dimensions encompass both subjective and objective elements (M. Seligman, 2011b). To enhance overall well-being, one should develop all five pillars.

Engagement (E) involves deep focus and absorption in an activity. Like Positive Emotions, it is also measured subjectively and does not depend on other pillars. Engagement is inherently fulfilling, and when a person is totally engaged, they become aware of their self-consciousness and time. In other words, they are so immersed in the activity that they lose awareness of everything else around them and are fully involved in the present moment.

Relationships (R) involve social contribution and building connections (M. Seligman, 2011b), which lead to spirituality, thankfulness, and satisfaction. Scholars mention various aspects of relationships that can enhance an experience. These aspects include support and being supported (Kern et al., 2015) and doing an activity together. Even having an experience with others without direct communication can improve one's overall experience. Creating spontaneous social connections with strangers can improve the well-being of all people involved in an experience (Epley & Schroeder, 2014; Wood et al., 2023).

Meaning (M) is defined as values, identity, and goal in life. It also relates to being part of something larger (M. Seligman, 2011a). Authenticity can provide meaning for a person who experiences an activity, especially experiential ones such as travel.

Accomplishment (A), or Achievement, in the PERMA model refers to reaching a goal, competence, success, and autonomy (M. Seligman, 2011a). It can manifest in different forms, ranging from winning a competition or reaching a career goal to mastering a skill, traveling to a cherished destination, or experiencing spiritual growth. Accomplishment can be a subjective element since it relates to different aspects of individuals such as geographical location, culture, life situation, and personality.

2.4.2 DRAMMA Model

The PERMA model has been broadly used in tourism field, though it is not solely designed for this field of research. The need for a theoretical framework to connect psychology to leisure research led to the development of the first theory in this domain; DRAMMA model (Kay Smith & Diekmann, 2017). This model was introduced to establish a more structured approach to understanding how leisure and tourism experiences influence well-being. In their work, Newman et al., (2014b) reviewed 363 peer-reviewed research papers to explore well-being and leisure activities. They concluded that engaging in leisure activities allows an individual to attain five key psychological benefits: detachment-recovery (taking a break from daily chores), autonomy (independent choices based on personal interests), mastery (developing new skills), meaning (contributing to an activity with greater purpose which aligns with personal values and improve sense of fulfillment), and affiliation (social connections and strengthen relationship with others) (Newman et al, 2014). Research shows that these psychological aspects are similar to elements of PERMA model (figure 1) (Filep et al., 2024; Newman et al., 2014b).

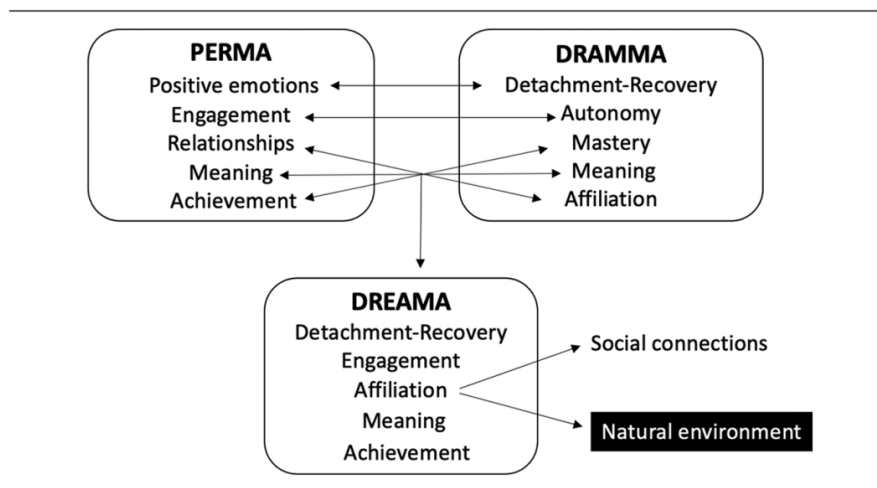


Figure 1: DREAMA Model (Source: Filep et al., 2024)

2.4.3 DREAMA Model

Both PERMA and DRAMMA models have been criticized for providing narrow perspective on the various aspects that contribute to well-being of tourists (Nawijn & Filep, 2016). For instance, connection with nature, which can be linked to well-being through restorative and immersive experience, is neglected in these frameworks. For this reason, Filep et al. (2024) provided a conceptual framework, DREAMA model (figure 1). The five elements of this model are: Detachment-Recovery (DR), Engagement (E), Affiliation (A), Meaning (M), and Achievement (A). This model integrated all elements of both PERMA and DRAMMA and revised affiliation dimension. In previous models, affiliation focuses solely on social connections, while in DREAMA the connection of tourists and natural environment is considered. Therefore, DREAMA provides a thorough understanding of tourist well-being by incorporating human-nature interactions to the model (Filep et al., 2024). According to literature review, since luxury tourism in Finland, specifically Lapland, is connected with nature and social connection, DREAMA model was used for the aim of this study. The model also provides a more comprehensive approach for assessing tourist well-being.

3- New Luxury and Finnish Luxury Tourism

3.1 The Evolution of Luxury: From Traditional to New Luxury

Traditionally, luxury has been interpreted in terms of restricted production space, which focuses on exclusivity, rarity, and indulgent products and experiences inaccessible to the masses. Traditional luxury brands are characterized by unaffordability, rarity, and conspicuous consumption (Silverstein & Fiske, 2003). Such brands are generally associated with power and a person's self-respect (Hudders & Pandelaere, 2012) and maintain identity (Newman & Dhar, 2014), whereby their value is rather producer-driven than consumer-co-created (Dion & Arnould, 2011).

However, luxury consumption took numerous turns in recent times, leading to what is referred to as an "identity crisis" in luxury by scholars (Smith, 2018). This transformation has been caused mainly by globalization, the rise of the middle class, an increase in workforce involvement, and changing family structures (Silverstein et al., 2008). With the start of COVID-19, however, consumer goods faced with economic hardships, which accelerated the changes that occurred in consumer priorities. Such changes have led to a new conception of luxury, which gives more weight to accessibility, meaningful experiences, well-being, self-pleasure, subtlety, and sustainability as opposed to exclusivity and prestige (Atkinson & Kang, 2022).

Different from old luxury, new luxury offers superior quality and breath-taking experience while remaining accessible (Silverstein & Fiske, 2003). The new luxury consumption drivers are: inconspicuousness, sustainability, self-actualization, and well-being (Silverstein et al., 2008). Individual psychological factor, such as self-esteem and self-confidence, experience and responsibility (Kolańska-Stronka & Krasa, 2024), and need to be unique (Das et al., 2021), influence consumer preference in new luxury.

Experiential luxury has actually been an inherent part of this transition: the transformation from exterior, material object ownership to more internal, symbolic value and unique leisure experience (Batat, 2022b). The modern concept of luxury has become highly subjective, whereby experiential consumption will help a consumer achieve self-actualization as well as cultural enrichment and well-being (Yeoman & McMahon-Beattie, 2018). This perspective adheres to post-materialist translation of luxury, which emphasize nature connection, escape from daily life, and a

disconnection from world (Özbölük, 2021). Luxury is now defined not just by material wealth but by the ability to access transformative, meaningful experiences that enhance personal identity (Correia et al., 2020).

3.2 Finnish Luxury Tourism

Finland has a unique perspective on luxury tourism: it redefines luxury through authenticity, nature, and well-being. Finnish luxury does not conform the traditional ideas of excessive opulence and conspicuous consumption by emphasizing simplicity, purity, and personal encounters. Finnish luxury considers nature as a primary element which provides travelers with the unspoiled landscapes, silence, and privacy (Kauppinen-Räisänen et al., 2019). New studies show that respondents describe Finland as one of the last wildernesses in Europe, where snow, ice, and darkness combined with nature create an amazing experience (Iloranta, 2021).

Finnish luxury encapsulates both hedonic and eudaimonic well-being allowing visitors to enjoy pleasure-driven experiences while also engaging in personal growth and self-discovery. The environment of Finnish luxury accommodation is designed to reflect these values, prioritizing functionality, quality, and aesthetics within Nordic simplicity. Elements such as large windows, fireplaces, and natural materials create the feeling of being close to nature while maintaining comfort and warmth (Ariffin et al., 2018).

Finland's luxury service experience involves human interaction and emotional intelligence. Presence, sympathy, and sensitivity towards the situation create personalized and authentic engagement between tourists and luxury. Controlled comfort and quality assurance are parts of Finnish luxury tourism where interaction between personnel and guests proves to be one main determinant of luxury. Moreover, Finnish luxury service providers prioritize authenticity and sustainability as essential components of their offerings, refusing to compromise on these values (Iloranta, 2021).

While typical traditional luxury tourism is associated with five-star accommodations, Finland's luxury experience focuses on tailor-made, private, and deeply personal journeys. Privacy and remoteness are core attributes, which allow travelers to experience luxury through solitude and exclusivity without the need for ostentatious displays of wealth. The integration of local culture,

nature-based experiences, and high-quality service elements contributes to a holistic and meaningful luxury experience (Iloranta, 2019).

The evolution of luxury tourism in Finland corresponds with the global trends' arising of new luxury consumption. The traveler is now searching for genuine, unique, and knowingly stimulating experiences to add novelty and enrichment to their life. Finnish luxury, in this respect, represents a shift toward a more sustainable, experiential, and personally fulfilling form of luxury tourism. Finally, a Finnish luxury experience is not defined by material extravagance but by the ability to create lasting memories through nature, authenticity, and human connection (Lehto, 2023).

3.3 Nature and Social Connection

Nature connectedness refers to subjective sense of association of a person with the nature, which consists of affective, cognitive and behavioral aspects. Several studies indicate that there is a positive link between nature engagement and different forms of well-being. This connection improves mental focus and restoration and fosters sense of meaning (Garza-Terán et al., 2022; Mihiretu et al., 2025). studies confirm that tourism experiences in nature can lower stress, anxiety and depression which results to mental well-being in short run (Avecillas-Torres et al., 2025).

The impact of nature extends to both hedonic and eudaimonic well-being. The former can be achieved by pleasure and relaxation in natural settings, and the latter is obtained by self-discovery, a deeper sense of purpose and personal growth. In tourism, the ambition to interact with nature is manifested with diverse activities like mountain biking, hiking, or being in the natural environments. Scholars emphasize that nature is not a passive factor; it can generate meaningful emotional and physical connections for people (Mihiretu et al., 2025). This human need to be connected to nature enhances eudaimonic aspect of well-being, since it has a meaningful involvement with something larger than oneself (Yan et al., 2024). Therefore, adding natural elements into tourism experience is significant for improving well-being of guests and tourists. Nature is integral element in Finnish tourism in general and when evaluating tourists' experiences, considering it is vital for research.

Beyond the individual's relationship with nature, social connection has equally important role in prospering tourist well-being. Humans are basically social creatures and their well-being is closely

related to their interactions and relationships with others (Mahoney & Granvold, 2005). The need for social connection is a key factor in most well-being theories (Yan et al., 2024). In tourism, social connections can be seen in different forms, from interactions with guides and local communities to encounters with other tourists or strangers. These interactions have impacts on overall quality of the travel experience.

Travel offers some opportunity to create social bonds for tourists. Kruger et al. (2014) indicates that people who have motivations to build or enhance relationships experience more positive emotions after their trip. Social connectedness has a significant role in health; it increases happiness and mitigates depression and loneliness (Chang et al., 2024). Activities such as taking photos with others can increase happiness since people share and talk about these photos with their friends and family after the trip, which result in improving well-being and social bonds. Interactions and building relationships with local residents also impact well-being positively.

From a social constructivist perspective, the value and meaning of social interactions during a trip are interpreted via a tourist's unique view, and are influenced by the cultural background and prior experiences. The co-creation of meaning through shared experience and dialogue is relevant when exploring the impact of social connections on well-being.

The concepts of nature and social connection are deeply related in tourism context, and contribute to a holistic well-being experience (Avecillas-Torres et al., 2025). Both the restorative power of nature and the enrichment quality of human interactions cause profound perception of well-being. These connections and interactions produce positive health effect, like self-esteem, improved confidence and lower stress (Chang et al., 2024). This integrated approach is important for understanding the way tourism contributes to overall subjective well-being. Connecting with a destination by its cuisine, culture, art, interacting with residents, spending time in nature and appreciating natural beauty are some activities by which tourists improve their well-being (Dsouza et al., 2023; DSouza & Shetty, 2024). These experiences have both hedonic and eudaimonic outcome such as sense of purpose and stronger connection to the world.

4- Research Methodology and Data Collection

4-1 Social Constructivism

The foundational paradigm of this research is social constructivism which posits that reality, identity and knowledge are not objective or universal truth; but rather are built via language, social interaction and cultural settings (Berger & Luckmann, 2016; Kay Smith & Diekmann, 2017). This perspective claims that what one perceives as real is not an objective fact, and in fact it is a biosocial interpretation that comes from collective understanding (Boyland, 2019). In other words, this means the world one knows is not fixed, but it is a fluid production of shared meaning-making and human interaction. A key characteristic of this paradigm is the recognition of inherent subjectivity in which individuals have their own unique lens and interpret world and its phenomenon through them. This fact leads to diverse socially constructed landscapes instead of one reality (Creswell & Poth, 2016; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). For the purpose of this research, this perspective highlights that a tourist's experience of well-being is not an internal and isolated psychological state. Instead, it is highly influenced by their interaction with destination's environment and culture, service providers, other tourists, and expectations about that experience.

Due to the core argument of this paradigm, scientific research which adopts constructivism as their framework should use qualitative method for analysis and data collection because social reality is a subjective matter. Since human emotions, such as desire, joy, motivations, pain, etc., as well as opinions and reasons are subjective, using qualitative method is suitable and even necessary for evaluating them (Sagvaag & da Silva, 2021). Since this thesis aimed to explore "subjective well-being", which are mental facts or subjective experiences by nature, choosing qualitative methods was both a philosophical necessity and mere preference. Qualitative methods, like interviews and observation, were used to gather in-depth data on subjective meanings and experiences (Kay Smith & Diekmann, 2017). This approach gave the participants freedom to express their thoughts and feelings, allowing for meaningful and authentic data that reflects the effects of social experiences, like tourism. It also allowed interviewer to have active engagement with the participants and provides flexibility for asking questions, which was important for this research to explore deeper stages of well-being and insights.

4-2 Data Collection

For the goals of this study, and to acquire relevant data, semi-structured interviews were chosen as the main collection method. Interviews are widely recognized in qualitative research for its capacity to evaluate opinions and experiences, especially in areas that there has not been extensive research (Doyle et al., 2020). This type of interview has a flexible framework which allows researchers to use a prepared interview guide while also provide an environment for the interviewees to communicate their feelings and thoughts in their own words (Jamshed, 2014).

Semi-structured interviews are adjustable enough that let the interviewer to ask follow-up questions for clarification, or even explore new themes that may not have expected in advance (Stofer, 2019). This interaction between the researcher and interviewees results in co-creation of data and information (Damyanov, 2023) and facilitate the co-construction of meaning, providing data that is both authentic and reflective of experience.

The interview of this study consisted of warm up questions, main questions and closing questions ([Appendix 1](#)). The questions were designed based on DREAMA framework and two academics reviewed and approved them. The questions included, but not limited to, “When you think about “luxury” in your trip, what comes to mind?”, “How did engaging in these activities affect your feelings during or after the trip?”, “Did you feel any connection with the natural environment?” and “Did any part of your trip feel especially meaningful or give you a sense of purpose?”. During the interviews, the researcher occasionally posed follow-up questions to prompt participants to explain on specific topics. The questions’ goal was to provide space for participant to compare and articulate their perspective more clearly. The interviews took from 40 minutes to 65 approximately based on knowledge of participants.

In this research, given the geographical dispersion of participants, interviews were conducted online in English. Online interviews have become widely accepted in qualitative research since it provides various advantages such as time efficiency, cost effectiveness and accessibility. While some traditional argument still emphasizes the importance of in-person interviews, online platforms can provide high quality response via probes effective use of prompts. Researchers must be aware of potential challenges like network issues absent of physical presence, though these can be minimized through planning and adaptation (Abedi, 2024). All interviews were recorded with

the participants' agreement to support accurate data gathering and enable transcription and analysis.

To obtain rich and relevant data, the choosing of participants is paramount. For this study, they were chosen based on specific criteria to ensure they had relevant experience with Finnish luxury tourism and can provide insightful perspectives of their well-being. The criteria include:

- Being over 18 years old.
- Having stayed in a certified luxury accommodation for at least one night in Lapland during past year.
- Having participated in some tourism activities in nature during their visit.

The purpose of these criteria is to target individuals who have directly experienced blend of luxury, nature, and authenticity of Finnish luxury tourism. Based on this criteria and research objectives, purposive snowball sampling was chosen as a strategy for participant selection. This method was chosen to interview cases with rich information (Palinkas et al., 2015), whose experiences were aligned with research questions on well-being in luxury tourism. Purposive sampling includes purposefully choosing of participants based on their experiences, information, or characteristics to the research phenomenon (Palinkas et al., 2015). This method is effective when the research wants to evaluate a specific element in detail, rather than to generalize findings (Stewart, 2024). In addition, luxury tourists can be niche and difficult-to-reach population. Therefore, purposive snowball sampling can be used as a primary method to ensure that the initial contacts or subsequent referrals meet the criteria for the most relevant data.

For the aims of this study, initial interviewees were chosen based on stays in certified luxury accommodations in Finnish Lapland. Then, these participants referred others with the same criteria. The study interviewed eight participants which have above mentioned criteria. While there is not unanimous agreement about the number of participants in qualitative study, Namey et al. (2016) consider at least 8 participants for this type of study. Before conducting the interviews, the researcher did conceptual and practical preparations, which included familiarization with the subject area and qualitative techniques. Interviews conducted online in a comfortable setting and at the times that were best for the participants (McGrath et al., 2019).

4-3 Thematic Analysis

Following the collection of qualitative data, the next step in this research was the systematic analysis of the transcribed data. The goal of this analysis was to understand the subjective meanings in of participants' experience narratives (Kay Smith & Diekmann, 2017). Since the meaning and reality are viewed as socially constructed, the analytical approach should be able to reveal how people express their experiences to understand the study element more effectively (Hunter et al., 2015). This process requires go beyond surface level of descriptions to find patterns and themes explain research questions.

Thematic analysis is a widely accepted and adjustable analysis method which is used to recognize, evaluate and report themes (patterns) within data. It is suitable for exploring subjective experiences and perceptions people have, which make it an ideal choice for the purpose of this research (Kiger & Varpio, 2020). Thematic analysis allows the researcher to provide a rich and detailed results from data since it is not constrained by theoretical assumptions.

A "theme" in thematic analysis represents a broader level of analysis which involve several codes that share a common significant pattern or meaning. These themes state a more interpretive and abstract of the data that move beyond simple description and provide insights of the experiences and concepts. Thematic analysis is a systematic approach to code and categorize data based on recurring concepts, ideas, or topics that makes it useful and accessible tool for qualitative researchers (McLeod, 2024). This tool has both inductive and deductive nature; the former allows themes to emerge directly from data, while the latter uses already-existed themes which are derived from a theory or framework. Since this study used DREAMA framework, it used deductive coding process from the narratives of participants about their well-being.

4-4 Conducting Thematic Analysis

This study followed the six-phase framework for thematic analysis suggested by Braun & Clarke, (2006), which offer a systematic guide for analysis of qualitative data: data familiarization, initial coding, themes searching, reviewing, naming, and report writing. First step is data familiarization in which the researcher involves themselves in the data to grasp a deep perception of the transcribed interview data, listening to recordings and making initial notes. This step helps the researcher to become familiar with the overall context and interviewees' narratives. Next, the data

is organized into meaningful groups of information. This step, called initial coding, involves giving codes or labels to specific part of the data that create a single idea or concept that is related to the research questions. Once the initial codes have been created, the next phase is to grouping the codes into possible themes. This step looks for patterns or meanings that are important to the study questions. The researcher considers how different codes could form a single theme which reflect a central concept related to well-being in Finnish luxury tourism. The fourth step is to evaluate the identified codes to make sure they are distinct, coherent and represent the data correctly. Themes might be refined, discarded or merged during this process. After reviewing and refining themes, the fifth step involves what each theme represents and what is its scope. Then a name is assigned to each theme to make it understandable for the reader. These names tell their stories and how it contributes to tourists' well-being. The final step consists of writing analysis and presenting data and supporting them with data extracts. The report should state narrative of the findings and show how the themes address the study questions. Some quotations in the findings edited slightly in terms of minor grammatical adjustment for better readability. The original meaning, tone and intent of participants were preserved.

4-5 Research Ethics

All research, in which human participants involve, must follow ethical principles to protect their rights and dignity (Finnish National Board on Research Integrity, 2021). These morals build the foundation of responsible research practice and should be considered in qualitative studies that explore sensitive personal information and experience. Some of these principles are informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality, and minimizing harm.

Before the participation, all interviewees received all information needed about the study purpose, procedure, and anticipated duration (Dankar et al., 2019). They were told that conducting the interview is voluntary and they can skip any question and withdraw at any time (Bhandari, 2024). Written informed consent was taken from all of them before the interview to make sure they agree to the terms ([Appendix 2](#)).

Protecting participants' privacy, anonymity and confidentiality are paramount. The researcher removed all identifiers, such as names, locations, and unique personal details, from transcripts and research outputs. Raw data was only accessible to the researcher and it was kept on password-

protected hard drive. Participants were given numerical codes in transcripts to prevent their identification.

The researcher is also responsible to avoid any potential social, economic and psychological harm to participants (European Commission, 2021). The researcher was sensitive to any signs of discomfort during the interviews. The interviewees were asked to have the interview at their convenient time in order to keep the interview comfortable and free from distractions. They were also reminded of their rights to pause or terminate the interview at any time.

4.5.1 Ethical Considerations in Qualitative Methodology

When a researcher uses qualitative method, they need to consider specific ethical requirements. The researcher is not a neutral observer or interviewer but co-construct meaning along with participants (Hunter et al., 2015). For this reason, reflexivity is a significant factor where the researcher reflects on their own assumptions and biases continuously. This self-awareness of subjectivity is crucial for improving the confirmability and trustworthiness of the findings, which make sure that interpretations are derived from data rather than the researcher's preconceptions (Braun et al., 2016).

4.5.2 Ethical Considerations in Online Data Collection

The risks related to data breaches and unauthorized access in online platforms are crucial. To minimize these risks, the researcher used a secure communication platform, Zoom, for the interviews. Recorded files and transcribed data were transferred to secure local drives and deleted from temporary locations. In addition, while online interviews offer convenience, it is hard for the researcher to observe any sign of discomfort. Therefore, the researcher should pay close attention to verbal signs, tone of voice and participants' statement of any discomfort. Participants were told to have the interview in a private location to maintain the confidentiality and to avoid any interruption.

5- Findings and Analysis

This chapter provides the findings from semi-structured interviews carried out with eight participants who experienced Finnish luxury tourism. The analysis explores how they understood and experienced luxury and how it improved their overall well-being. The DREAMA framework was used as the analytical lens for this study to interpret the data. This framework provided a structured understanding of how the five dimensions- Detachment-Recovery, Engagement, Affiliation, Meaning, and Achievement- are displayed in participant's experiences.

Using thematic analysis, the findings revealed shared patterns and differences in how participants experienced emotional connection, renewal, and personal growth during their stay in Finland. Each section of this chapter examines one dimension of the DREAMA model and shows how these aspects shape the well-being outcomes. Supplementary visual of VOSviewer co-occurrence map was also presented to improve transparency and provide an additional layer for analysis. This co-occurrence analyzed and visualized how key terms (e.g., 'sauna', 'silence', 'northern lights', etc.) cluster together across the dataset to find links between experiences and well-being dimensions. This visualization supports thematic interpretation and helps demonstrate how recurring elements are related to the DREAMA framework. Together, these qualitative and visual approaches provide richer understanding of tourists' well-being in the Finnish luxury tourism.

5.1 Finnish Luxury and Its Tourists' Well-being

This section presents the results from semi-structured interviews and the connection between Finnish luxury and tourists' well-being. The results are discussed in narrative form using broader sub-themes. These sub-themes group participants' activity-based description, for example "sauna" and "dog sledding", into the conceptual categories (for example "restorative practices" and "mastery of new skills"). This step helps to connect data to broader theoretical discussion about hedonic and eudaimonic well-being. Direct quotes from interviewees are mentioned to show how Finnish luxury tourism supports their well-being.

5.1.1 Detachment-Recovery: Hedonic Well-being through silence, hospitality, practices, and design

Detachment-recovery emerged as a fundamental dimension in all interviews. Participants emphasized that they could distance themselves from daily life, and urban pressure, and mentioned arctic environment as a special setting where mind and physical fatigues could be eased. Four sub-themes represent this dimension: Environmental Stillness and Simplicity, restorative practices, effortless hospitality, and accommodation as sanctuary.

A: Environmental Stillness and Simplicity:

Participants referred to Arctic environment (silence, long nights, snow) as the main medium of detachment. Lapland's environment was experienced as slow and quiet, compared to participants' noisy and busy everyday urban living places. This environmental stillness was described even as unusual and sometime confusing, but eventually restorative. For one interviewee, silence was the first thing they noticed on arrival:

“When I got at the place, I noticed the silence right away. No cars or traffic. In my city there is always traffic or noise even at night, but it was nothing there... It was different in a good way.”
(P2)

Another participant tied calmness directly to qualities of surrounding environment.

“... At night it was only the forest and the snow around us, completely quiet... no one else there... I didn't hear cars or people... just the place itself. That made me calm, it wasn't like my normal life” (P4)

Walking in the snow added another layer of environmental stillness:

“... I mean [in my home country] you can't find this [calmness] even in countryside. When I was there, walking on the snow, I only heard snow under my boots and my breathing... I liked it so much.” (P7)

Some deliberately looked for these simple environment qualities for the recovery:

“Sometimes I liked to walk or sit outside in the evening, it was dark and quiet, it was very cold, I know, but no sound at all and I felt calm. For me that was better than spa or sauna... It actually cleared my head.” (P5)

The same participant (P5) stated that the long nights also played a role in detachment through reducing the pressure:

“It was dark most of time, like the days were too short and I was confused. Is it morning or evening? I couldn't tell; it looked the same... but then I stopped thinking about it, like I mean time went slowly for me, at least that was what I felt... it somehow let me rest... and [there was] no pressure on me” (P5)

However, not all responses were instantly positive. One participant admitted that they were struggling during the first night:

“First night it was maybe too quiet for me. I expected some noise in the night... But next day I felt okay. After sauna and dinner, I slept very well.” (P8).

These statements indicate that Arctic environment functioned as a detachment. The elements of this environment worked together to suspend normal routines, focus attention on sensory details, and create distance from the pressures of daily life. The environment slowed down the participants and replaced noise with simplicity and silence. Three mechanisms can be identified through which environment support hedonic well-being: (1) participants pointed out the difference between Lapland's quietness and their noisy cities, which enhance the restorative effect; (2) minimal sounds such as footsteps in snow made participants more aware of their bodies and the place; and (3) darkness reduced pressure to follow the clock and allowed them to rest. Therefore, environmental stillness and simplicity is not passive elements, but they are active resources of luxury. The findings suggest that Finnish luxury tourism uses and turns immaterial phenomenon of environment, such as snow, forest, and darkness, into consumable luxuries, and transform natural simplicity into a valued form of luxury.

B: Restorative Practices

Another emerged sub-theme is related to bodily practices that participants associated with physical and mental recovery. The Finnish sauna was the most frequently mentioned element which described as an embodied experience of release and cleansing. Alternating heat and cold was considered a way to reset body and mind. For example, one participant recalled:

“Walking and lying down on snow after the sauna and spa...when no one’s around... we were laughing a lot, happy, and fully relaxed.” (P3)

This comment conveys that sauna experience was not limited to physical relaxation, but it also produced joy, social bonding and mental relief. The experience of leaving sauna, walking and lying down on the snow was remembered as playful and restorative.

Others described sauna as means of physical restoration and detachment from stress:

“After sauna, I felt lighter, you know like a reset. My head was empty. My thoughts stopped, like nothing complicated... only heat and I felt calm.” (P6)

This kind of reflections conveys the sauna as a practice that combines authenticity and sensory pleasure and emphasize its restorative potential.

In addition to sauna, participants mentioned other activities, such as Arctic floating. One interviewee described this experience as highly detaching:

“ ... When I floated and looked up at the sky, I felt relaxed.... I mean I didn’t feel any tension or worries... and I felt the present [time].” (P1)

The statement shows how bodily practices used in Finnish luxury tourism assists a sense of recovery. In other words, these activities combined sensory stimulation (heat, cold, buoyancy, etc.) with opportunities for detachment, which is aligned with hedonic well-being (pleasure, relaxation).

Moreover, these practices have cultural value. The sauna, specifically, was described as an “authentic Finnish tradition” which participants thought that it improved the meaning of the experience. One participant explained:

“... Our guide told us that everybody here has a sauna in their houses, so it’s not like a show. It is normal for them... and I’m happy I tried it there.” (P3)

This can suggest that cultural traditions and comfort work together to enhance the restorative effect of these kinds of practices. They were considered multisensory and socially-rich activities that facilitated relief from daily stress, detachment and added authenticity to the overall luxury experience.

C: Effortless Hospitality

Several participants highlighted the role of attentive service and amenities with high quality in hedonic well-being. They pinpointed small details and smooth service interactions which removed the need for effort or worry. This means that hospitality functioned as a restorative resource and reduced demands for decision making. The comfort of the room and aesthetic quality of the accommodations and surroundings are more than functional elements; they directly enhance mental detachment by creating a stress-free environment:

“The host, the room and the view, it was exactly what we needed... I didn’t have to think about anything.” (P6)

Another participant praised how service staff anticipated their needs in advance.

“... They even packed breakfast for our early departure, I didn’t expect it... it was a very nice service.” (P7)

This shows that proactive service design is able to transform a potential stress (missing breakfast due to early travel) into a moment of care. This seems minor, but was considered an important contributor to recovery.

Some participants stated that service elements were part of their “luxury” experience. In this sense, the luxury was seen in terms of ease and effortlessness. For instance, participants expressed:

“I didn’t have to organize things... everything was ready, like activities, meals, even the transport... which was nice, [because] It gave me more time just to enjoy.” (P3)

“... They asked what we liked... whenever we wanted to change something, like the tour schedule, that was fine by them... we didn’t have to worry about anything.” (P4)

This indicates that through seamless service, the cognitive load will be reduced which allows guests to detach from their usual roles as planners or caregivers in their daily lives. In turn, this allowed them to immerse fully in the restorative aspects of the Arctic environment and activities.

In sum, the findings show that effortless hospitality is more than convenience. In fact, it actively assists guests' recovery by reducing small stressors and decision fatigue and providing a feeling of cared for. In Finnish luxury tourism, these types of services were not considered excessive; instead they were subtle and invisible form of luxury that enabled mental detachment and well-being.

D: Accommodation as a Sanctuary

According to the participants, accommodation is more than a place to sleep; it is a protective shelter that provides physical comfort and mental detachment. In the interviews, the design of spaces, such as glass igloos, or well-equipped cabins mediated between security, warmth, immersion in nature, and luxury. Therefore, architecture and design of the accommodation became part of the recovery process:

“We had a small simple room, but it was nice and cozy... We had a super comfortable bed... and looking at snowy forest, it was just magnificent... and full of joy.” (P5)

The igloo also created a feeling of being part of nature without exposure to any discomfort:

“... From the igloo I saw snow, forest, sky, [It felt they were] very close [to me]. But inside it was warm, and I could enjoy [watching] without freezing.” (P8)

One participant also talked about the design of sauna:

“The view from the window in the sauna was just wow, beautiful... I could see the nature, you know, trees, clouds... I enjoyed it a lot.” (P6)

These comments show design choices (panoramic windows, warm room, minimalist interiors) formed the experience of luxury. Unlike conventional luxury which is associated with extravagance, the value in Finnish luxury tourism is the combination of comfort and immersion in nature. Participants believed that special accommodation allowed them to feel the nature while still protecting them from cold and lack of safety.

Therefore, accommodation in Finnish luxury tourism supported recovery in three ways. First, it provides physical security, warmth, rest and safety. Second, it creates hedonic pleasure since interviewees enjoyed comfort, aesthetics and views. Finally, it enables guests to enjoy proximity to nature without any risk and stress. In this way, architecture and design are facilitators of well-being that convert Arctic conditions to a restorative and luxurious experience.

5.1.2 Engagement: awe, anticipation and flow

While Detachment-Recovery focused on slowing down and stepping back from daily pressures, Engagement dimension represents moments when tourists are totally absorbed in their surroundings or activities. The study shows that participants were not passive observers, but their attention, energy and emotions were actively engaged with Arctic environment. Engagement is linked to eudaimonic well-being through sense of awe, anticipation and flow that deepen their connection with the place and activities. It is also connected to hedonic concept through novelty and pleasure.

Three sub-themes were identified that illustrate different ways the interviewees engaged with Finnish luxury tourism: awe and spectacle, anticipation and chase, and flow of outdoor adventure. These sub-themes show that luxury experiences in Lapland encourage absorption and attentiveness, and turn short lasting experience into memorable moments.

A: Awe and Spectacle

The northern lights were mentioned as the main phenomenon that participants engaged with during their stays. Tourists confirmed that northern lights captured their full attention, removed ordinary thoughts and created a sense of wonder that went beyond simple visual pleasure. The event was not just a scenic attraction, but it was also perceived as a transformative experience that redefined what luxury meant in this context:

“... When the lights started moving in the sky it was so beautiful and amazing.... I couldn't look away... I don't even know how much time I watched it, maybe ten minutes, maybe more, I don't know.” (P2)

“... Something I'd never seen before... [It was] so big and beautiful... and we just stood and watched.” (P8)

“.... I saw so many photos and videos [of the northern lights] in social media, but watching it when you are there... it's different... you just want to look and enjoy the view.” (P7)

This strong and emotional response to the experience aligns with feeling of awe and creates self-transcendence. The phenomenon provides both hedonic pleasure, through beauty and novelty, and eudaimonic well-being by reflection and a perception of connection to something bigger than oneself. Therefore, the northern lights is a typical example of engagement for a couple of reasons: They contribute to involuntary attention and pull travelers into the moment without effort; and they create loss of temporal awareness which is a key factor for deep engagement. Therefore, awe can transform a natural event into a luxury experience as well as supporting the idea that Arctic environment is a core element in Finnish luxury tourism.

B: Anticipation and Chase

In addition to the spectacle of seeing the northern lights, some participants also stated that pursuit of them was an engaging experience itself. This search was described as a process with attention, hope, and uncertainty. This anticipation enhanced the sense of presence before the lights appeared.

“I was scanning the sky... I felt like something would happen at any moment... even when nothing came, yeah it was disappointing, but that was okay, I mean searching for them was also exciting and created a good memory for me.” (P1)

“... We didn't see strong [lights], only a little bit. But going outside, looking at the sky and waiting... that was also special...” (P3).

“... Everything was arranged for us, but I installed one [tracking] app anyway and checked it, like every two or three hours, to see the forecast... I was waiting so bad to see [northern lights].” (P6).

These reflections suggest that engagement does not only occur in high-arousal moments of spectacle, but also contain in the slower and uncertain process of searching and waiting. This anticipation creates a form of absorption when participants monitored sky and forecasts. The search process increased attention, directed focus outward and involved participants in nature's

unpredictability. This sub-theme shows that engagement can be created through uncertainty, hope and active monitoring.

Therefore, in the context of DREAMA framework, this study shows that anticipation and chase represent a distinctive type of Engagement which is characterized by mental alertness and emotional investment rather than physical activity. This expands the understanding of engagement in luxury tourism; it is not limited to moments of flow but also includes emotional and cognitive anticipation that build uncertain and awaited experiences.

C: Flow in Outdoor Adventure

Active excursions such as husky sledding, snowmobiling, and snowshoeing were mentioned as activities with deep immersion that needed both physical effort and focused attention. Participants stated that these types of activities involved them to the present moment and created joy where ordinary thoughts and concerns disappeared. This reflects the psychological concept of “Flow” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) in which the balance between skill and challenge produce enjoyment and absorption.

“... It was very exciting when [the dogs] were pulling us in the forest... As far as I remember at that moment, I was just enjoying the ride.” (P8)

“... the reindeer safari was something new, not fast like husky sledding, but still fine... The slow speed let me to look around and it felt good, like a meditation.” (P2)

“... For me [snowmobiling] was a big thrill... it was so exciting and fun... I focused on the ride and enjoyed watching the road and forest.” (P3)

For some, the challenge of new activities enhanced their sense of engagement:

“Snowshoeing was not easy for me and some of my friends... and the guide adjusted [the pace] for us... I had to watch every step so I was totally focused... I just wanted to keep going.” (P7)

These statements suggest that outdoor adventure activities in Finnish luxury tourism have the role of structured opportunities for engagement; They combine physical exertion, environmental immersion and novelty. Moreover, these activities were considered energizing and, as one the

participants claimed, provided a good kind of tired that helped them with engagement as well as recovery.

“After Skiing I was very tired, but it was nice tired... my body was exhausted, but my head was free. I mean I felt good and [clear].” (P5)

Analytically, these experiences create flow through concentrated attention which blocks intrusive thoughts. They also generate intrinsic enjoyment, as participants described the activities with adjectives like fun, thrilling, and rewarding. Therefore, within the DREAMA framework, these adventure experiences mainly support Engagement, but also overlap with Detachment-Recovery dimension. This shows how luxury in the Finnish Lapland is not tied to passivity or pleasure, but it also provides opportunities for active immersion that create memorable experiences.

5.1.3 Affiliation: host warmth, intimacy and Connection to Nature

Affiliation is another main eudaimonic dimension which encompasses connection with hosts, companions, and nature. Three sub-themes emerged: host warmth and attentiveness, intimacy with fellow travelers and connection with nature. The first one describes how hospitality interactions improve warmth, appreciation among travelers. Intimacy with fellow travelers emphasized on improving relationship with the companions and connection with nature focuses to how elements of nature enable tourists to feel part of something larger than themselves. All of these sub-themes show that Finnish luxury tourism supports affiliation socially and ecologically, and blur the boundary between human connection and environmental immersion. Moreover, one unique case emerged, friendship with other guests. In this unique case the participant tried to affiliate with other guests through talking and spending time with them.

A: Host Warmth and Attentiveness

Affiliation in Finnish luxury tourism is shaped by the warmth of hosts and cares they provide. Here, hospitality is defined by personal and emotional terms. Attentive gestures and genuine care from hosts created feelings of belonging and appreciation. At the same time, shared setting and communications created intimacy.

It should be noted here that while functional service elements supported Detachment-Recovery dimension through reducing stress and effort (effortless hospitality sub-theme), hospitality gestures also played a deeper role in creating affiliation. In these moments, the convenience of service is not the only important factor; it is the genuine care and emotional connection between hosts and guests that strengthen participants' sense of belonging and community.

One participant recalled how they were impressed by personal service the local hosts offered:

"...They made us feel welcomed, like they really cared about us ... not just like ordinary customers"
(P7)

Two participants remembered a meaningful gesture:

"[The host] and the staff had a surprise birthday for me... I didn't expect that at all... I believe it shows how they care about their guests." (P1)

"... [The host] always asked about my situation, even small things like if I slept well or if I got used to the cold. They really cared..." (P6)

These reveal that in luxury tourism, hosts are not just service providers but they are actually anchors whose actions help participants feel valued and emotionally connected.

These comments illustrate hosts' authentic care produced a sense of being part of something larger than oneself. This sub-theme shows how affiliation was not just about social interaction but also about quality of the connections. In Finnish luxury tourism, personalized services may be interpreted as gestures of care which is beyond routine services. These findings demonstrate that affiliation in Finnish luxury tourism is co-created through professional hospitality which result in strong sense of belonging.

B: Intimacy with Travel Companion

For many participants, affiliation meant strengthening relationships with their travel companions. With the limited distractions in Arctic environment, families and couples had the chance to spend time together. One participant contrasted this with their everyday life:

“I am very busy with my work, and we didn’t spend much time together lately... but in [Lapland] we had all meals together, talked... We were with each other everywhere... for me that was very important, because I wanted to show [my family] that I care.” (P4)

Couples also mentioned how the trip created intimacy for them. One explained:

“This was our first trip as a couple, we wanted some time only for us, just the two of us... we had so many romantic times there and I feel after the trip we are closer.” (P8)

Another participant emphasized sharing moments with their partner:

“... I had so many good times there, but what is more important is that I shared them with my partner. I mean we were both excited..., there were times that we will never forget.” (P3).

These answers show that Finnish luxury tourism provide a space where togetherness can be valued. For families, the experience was about slowing down and reconnecting with each other. For couples, it was about romance and creating shared memories. Therefore, intimacy with fellow travelers does have eudaimonic meaning of improving relationships and producing memorable experiences.

C: Connection with Nature

Affiliation is not limited to the human relationships, but it also encompasses connection to natural world. Engaging with snow, forests, and especially northern lights is what participants mentioned when they were talking about moments of intimacy and humility in relation to nature, and about belonging to something larger than themselves. Moreover, built environments such as glass igloos are tied with the Arctic environment, therefore they mediate the human-nature connection and enable guests to be closer with nature while keeping ease and safety. Since the reflections about this sub-theme are strongly connected to “accommodation as a sanctuary” sub-theme, already discussed under the Detachment-Recovery theme, the researcher will not repeat all participants’ comments here and will focus only on the parts related to nature connectedness.

One participant described the northern lights as a moment of humility:

“When I saw the northern lights, I just remember how big the universe is and how lucky I am to see this.” (P5)

For some, this connection with nature were more simple but still emotional:

“... The time I felt very close to nature was the time I saw snow and trees... Like it was just me and the world... I felt small” (P6)

“I saw so many trees and forests, and of course frozen lake... it actually reminded me how much I love nature and how our lives depend on it... we must protect it for future generations.” (P1)

One participant stated that they had the connection with nature when they had a private husky tour:

“... We had a lot of fun with huskies... and because it was a private tour for our family, it was more intimate... we were in the nature, and these huskies were around us... that was the time I felt real nature.” (P4)

These accounts showed that participants didn't feel separate from nature and the connection is pretty strong. The experienced moments highlight affiliation beyond social ties and encompass nature which align with research on nature connectedness as a form of well-being. In the Finnish luxury context, this type of affiliation underlies how immaterial qualities (e.g., snow, sky, light, etc.) become main components of the luxury experience.

Unique Case: Friendship with other guests

While most participants emphasized intimacy with their fellow travelers or appreciation of hosts, one participant talked about connections with other guests as a part of their experience. The small scale of the resort provided a sense of community for them:

“... We liked that the resort was smaller, because we wanted to meet other guests. Actually, we talked with some of them a little bit and got to know them... there were very friendly.” (P5)

Although this perspective is unique, it explains that affiliation is not limited to family or hosts, and includes other visitors which produce social openness and shared humanity.

5.1.4 Meaning: Values and life transitions

Meaning dimension captured participants' opinions on how their experiences connect to deeper life significance. Meaning is interpreted as something beyond immediate enjoyment and includes values, aspirations and turning point in life. According to the results of this study, for some participants, meaning took the form of affirming personal philosophies, such as preferring memories over possession, for others it involved celebrating milestone and life transitions.

A: Affirmation of values

When participants were asked what made the experience meaningful or personally valuable for them, they often affirmed what really matters to them in life. Their answers revealed a subtle contrast between material and experiential luxury. Participants found the meaning in authenticity, emotional connection, progress and care; The experience was perceived as “worth it” because it aligned with their values, such as time with their families, harmony with nature and growth. It should be noted that the researcher directly probed follow-up questions to encourage participants to compare traditional and material-oriented luxury with experienced-based new luxury. This approach helped researcher to understand participants' perspective about how they distinguished material and experiential form of luxury, and why the latter was perceived more meaningful for them.

“Yes, I could have spent that money somewhere else or bought something else...but I prefer spend money on something that lasts longer, like this trip [to Finland] did this for me... I was with my friends... we did things together... and we had lot of good times.” (P7)

Another interviewee focused on difference between objects and experiences:

“Well, if I want to compare, I can say that a bag or watch or anything expensive you can lose or gets old. But this trip, private moments in nature, the things we did there, don't get old or lose their value. When we look at the photos or when I talk about it with others, the feeling comes back... it's a good memory.” (P3)

Some also pointed out that this kind of experience are more justified:

“I don’t like to spend a lot for very expensive stuff. But when I feel something’s worth it, I don’t mind... These kinds of trips and experiences, I think, yeah, they are worth it, because it feels right, you know, it was made just for me... it gives me something back.” (P6)

“When I buy something fancy, well, yes, it feels good to have something different for sure, but nothing changes. I’m the same person... This trip, and some other trips I’ve had, when I see new places, meet other people, learn about something or about myself, that’s make me think that I use my money better, [because] it gives me something real, not just stuff.” (P5)

These comments show that the experiences were meaningful investments in life and relationships of the participants. The Finnish setting supported this idea by providing activities and moments that are unique and valuable. This sub-theme demonstrates how Finnish luxury tourism affirmed participants’ values for memory, family, and authenticity. Since participants interpreted luxury in terms of lasting life significance, these findings are aligned with Meaning dimension in DREAMA framework.

B: Milestone and Life Transitions

For two participants, the trip to Finland was more than a simple vacation; it was a way to take an important life stage and relationship milestone. Luxury tourism in this sense provided a symbolic setting for them to celebrate personal transitions.

One participant explained that the trip was intentionally connected to their significant life event: *“We did this trip to celebrate our engagement... We wanted something special, something unforgettable, not just a dinner in a fancy restaurant or a big party... and we thought this trip was the perfect way to start our future together.” (P3)*

Another connected the trip to a relationship milestone:

“We were there to celebrate our relationship. We thought it was the best way to enjoy it together. We had a private candlelit dinner...sat next to the open fire... It was very romantic... to me the memories there are worth more than a gift... and this trip gave it to us for sure” (P8)

For these participants, luxury added something extra by providing a special setting that turned an ordinary celebration into a memorable milestone. Their trips became more than an enjoyable

experience; it became part of their life stories as a marker of change, continuity or celebration. These examples suggest that Finnish luxury tourism supports Meaning by creating a significant and lasting life transition.

5.1.5 Achievement: Goals and Progress

Participants described achievement in different ways ranging from small victories in learning new activities to dealing with cold weather. For some of them, success meant mastering unfamiliar skills such as snowmobiling or snowshoeing. Some participant believed that learning to adapt to extreme cold was their victory. Moreover, one unique case emerged in this dimension; one interviewee emphasized the satisfaction of organizing the journey itself and trusting their judgment. These results show that Finnish luxury tourism also provides moments of pride, accomplishment and growth for tourists.

A: Fulfillment of Dreams

For some of the participants, the trip to Finland, and specifically Lapland, and experiencing its attractions represented the fulfillment of dreams. While seeing the northern lights was the main goal for most of them, participants also talked about their desires to visit a Nordic country, experience real snow, or meet Santa Claus homeland. These experiences were considered success since they offered the sense of life satisfaction, completeness and pride from achieving goals they had for years.

One participant explained:

“I always wanted to visit a Nordic country... I saw so many social media posts about them, also some documentaries... but I wanted to see it with my own eyes, you know. Now I have been there, walked in the snow, [visited] Santa Claus home and [crossed] the Arctic circle ... I was waiting for it so long and finally I did it.” (P1)

For some, visiting Santa was a family accomplishment:

“Well, Santa is someone special for me, since he reminds me of my childhood... I organized this trip for my family specially my children and I wanted them to see Santa... but also for me, it was something, I mean I remembered my childhood and the memories.” (P4)

Another comment shows that how the northern lights gave the trip a sense of achievement:

“For me the lights were the reason to come. Of course, the other things were nice, you know sauna, food, nature, but when I saw the light, I told myself okay that’s what I came for... this made [the trip] complete.” (P6)

These reflections show that Finnish luxury tourism enabled participants to achieve their goals that had personal significance. Therefore, it supports well-being by turning dreams into tangible accomplishments.

B: Mastery of New Skills

Several participants stated that learning new skills during their stay gave them a sense of accomplishment. Activities such as snowshoeing and husky sledding were often unfamiliar, and learning them needed focus, effort and sometimes overcoming doubts. Participants stated that engaging in these activities gave them boosted confidence and created a sense of achievement that was extra to their trip.

“Snowshoeing was new... it felt strange to walk like that. I was slow, but after sometime I got better and it became fun... For me reaching to our destination was a success... I felt proud.” (P7).

One participant talked about the challenge of husky sledding:

“... At first, I was a little bit worried, because controlling [the sled] was not that easy... But after the guide told me how to do it, I felt like, okay, I can do it... It was something new for me and I really liked it.” (P4)

These activities provided active enjoyment for the participants. While the activities were designed to be accessible for beginners, it offered enough challenge to create feelings of accomplishment. These feelings can be achieved through overcoming initial uncertainty, developing competence

through practice, and experiencing pride, which give tourists a sense of progress, confidence and hence well-being.

Apart from learning new skills, one participant mentioned coping with extreme cold as learning a new skill. This comment conveys that Finnish tourism offers opportunities for tourists to test boundaries and recognize their capabilities.

“Well, I think the biggest success for me was to learn how to deal with cold weather. It was very cold, like very tough, much colder than I [ever] experienced.... But after a couple of days, I realized how I can handle it.... if you know how to survive in this weather, you can do other [challenges] too.” (P1)

Based on the interviews, the research concludes that for affluent travelers, these achievements did not build basic self-confidence; in fact, they extended it to unfamiliar areas (e.g., Arctic conditions, new activities). Participants perceived these as symbolic accomplishment which is a proof of adaptability and capability outside everyday life.

Unique Case: Trusting one’s Judgment

Apart from physical achievement and fulfilling dreams, one participant stated that their success came from trusting their own decision in an uncertain situation:

“... I always go for the best option in everything. But this time I saw [the resort I stayed in] on internet, and when I read the comments, there were so many negative [ones]... But still I really liked it and the price and packages were so good. So, I decided to take it, and it was better than I expected, like way better... [It was] such a good decision and I’m happy I chose [this resort] for my stay.” [P2]

This unique case conveys that achievement can also take the form of decision-making validation. For this participant, the successful outcome of trusting personal decision became a source of pride and growth. Although this is a unique sample, it extends the understanding of the Achievement dimension by showing that well-being can also be derived from self-affirmation and self-reliance.

5.2 Co-occurrence Map Analysis

To complement the thematic analysis, a co-occurrence map (figure 2) was created using VOSviewer for creating and visualizing bibliometric and textual networks. Developed by (Van Eck & Waltman, 2010), VOSviewer identifies the relationship between words or concepts based on how frequently they appear together within a dataset. In this study, the software was used as a semantic visualization method. In other words, the researcher did not simply insert the raw data to the software for words to be counted; instead, each term was selected manually during reading of interview texts. Recurring words, expressions, and sub-theme titles from DREAMA coding (e.g., awe, hospitality, chase, restorative, affirmation, simplicity, etc.) were included when they represented a participant's experiences. Some words were merged in their broader conceptual equivalents. For instance, trees with forests and room with hospitality were replaced. This step ensured that visualization displayed conceptual language of participants, instead of mere literal vocabulary. The result shows how coded meanings co-occurred normally in participants' reflections. It also improves transparency and validity of the thematic coding.

The purpose of the visualization is to show how frequently and strongly these concepts co-occurred in the dataset in order to identify patterns among them. Each node represents a word or concept and their sizes represent their frequency in the text data. The distance between items conveys the strength of their co-occurrence. As shown in figure 2, each color displays a cluster, which here represents five DREAMA dimensions: green for Detachment-Recovery, yellow for Engagement, purple for affiliation, red for Meaning and blue for Achievement, and therefore validate the qualitative coding.

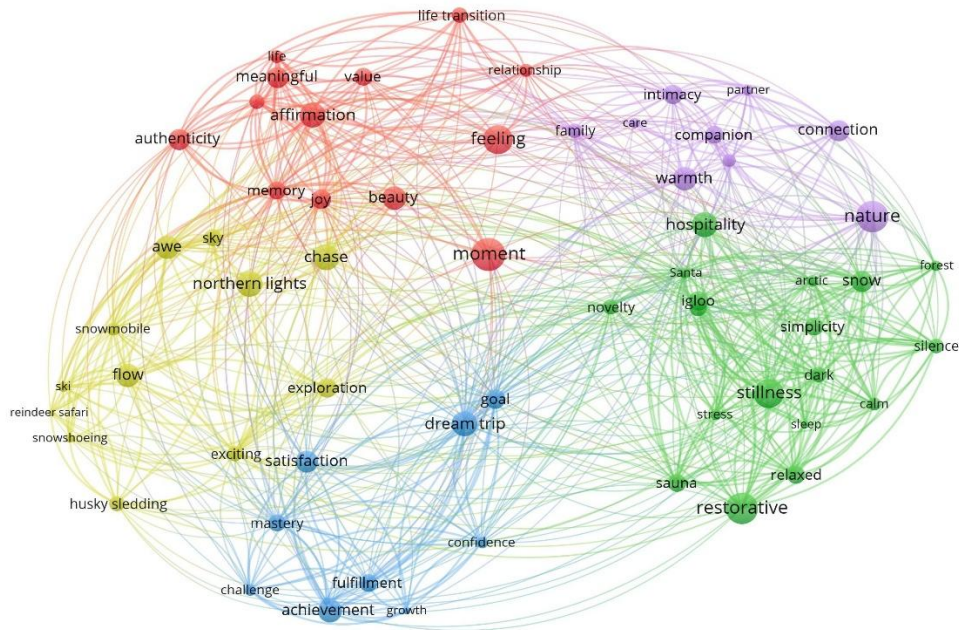


Figure 2: The visualization of sub-themes and key concepts (created by researcher using VOSviewer)

The map shows that clusters are not isolated and actually overlaps in some areas, which interprets the holistic nature of well-being in Finnish luxury tourism. For instance:

- “nature” links the green (Detachment-Recovery) and purple (Affiliation) clusters which confirms that environmental connection mediates rest and belonging.
- “joy” and “memory” connects the red (Meaning) cluster with the yellow (Engagement) cluster, which means that emotional oriented experiences develop lasting meaning.
- “goal” and “moment” bridges blue (Achievement) and red (Meaning) which reveals that success and reflection are emotionally connected.

These bridges confirm the multidimensional nature of DREAMA model in which hedonic pleasure and eudemonic fulfillment reinforce each other. Therefore, the map illustrates the quality of luxury well-being, where sensory, emotional and reflective experiences are linked.

6. Discussion and Conclusion

This chapter explains the finding of the research within broader scope of luxury tourism and well-being context. It answers the primary and subsidiary research questions, assesses the contribution of the study to literature and framework and examines the implications of the results. It also critically evaluates the study's limitations and provides directions for future research. The focus remains on understanding how Finnish luxury tourism contributes to hedonic and eudaimonic well-being from the views of travelers.

The findings of this study confirm the ideas about new luxury and tourist well-being. Participants described Finnish luxury tourism in terms of peace, silence, closeness to nature and discreet service. These features support the shift to post-material and authenticity-oriented values where luxury is connected to modesty, meaning, and personal relevance conspicuous consumption (Iloranta, 2019, 2021; Iloranta & Komppula, 2022) (main RQ). Iloranta describes Finnish luxury as new luxury, which overlaps with wider research that mentions emotion and experience as significant factors in modern luxury (Atkinson & Kang, 2022; Silverstein et al., 2008; Silverstein & Fiske, 2003). The result of this study shows how this orientation works in Finnish Lapland through subtle and nature-based experiences that interpret experiential quality into psychological values (RQ3).

Participants often described low-arousal states, such as calmness and content feelings evoked by gentle multisensory cues, such as snow, light and silence. These experiences are aligned with previous studies which identified nature's restorative power and attention-recovery effects in tourism and positive psychology (Capaldi et al., 2014). This traits also aligns with Attention Restoration Theory, suggesting that soft and fascinating natural stimuli (e.g., snow and soundscapes) creates effortless attention which promotes calm and recovery (Kaplan, 1995). The strong presence of these cues in Finnish luxury supports research that consider nature as a main element Finland's luxury tourism and a reliable source of both pleasure and personal growth (Iloranta & Komppula, 2022; Lehto, 2023) (RQ1, and RQ3). Built environment such as glass igloo, fireplace, and sauna also played as mediators to create emotional comfort while keeping guests close to nature. This design feature appeared in the data and participants' comments (RQ3). In this view, minimalism is not only aesthetic scarcity, but it is a functional enabler of hedonic and eudaimonic reflection (Q1, Q3).

From positive psychology perspective, the results suggest that both well-being concepts can co-exist during a single luxury experience. Participants explained how stillness and comfort rituals first created relaxation (hedonia), which then allowed reflection and self-awareness (eudaimonia). This supports the idea that pleasure and meaning are complementary concepts instead of competing ones (Nawijn & Filep, 2016; Packer & Gill, 2017) (RQ1 and RQ2). The patterns also show how positive emotions can help people find meaning and growth when settings provide mental space and detachment (RQ3).

The DREAMA framework provided a lens to organize these processes and integrate nature into affiliation. The findings confirm two types of affiliation, social and environmental as elaborated in DREAMA, which add nature affiliation to earlier PERMA/DRAMMA models (Chang et al., 2024) (RQ2). These two forms of affiliation appeared central in Finnish luxury and its effect on well-being. Moreover, a participant's description of connecting to nature through huskies during a safari, broadens the DREAMA model by identifying "*interspecies affiliation*" as a distinct nature affiliation in Finnish luxury tourism. Affiliation includes bonds with natural environment, and this study shows that human-husky interactions function as a mediator or channel that develop relatedness to nature, and as a result support well-being. While this contribution is modest, calling this encounter "*interspecies affiliation*" or "*human to animal affiliation*" explains how nature affiliation is realized in Finnish luxury context. Most of sled-dog research emphasized animal ethics and welfare (Fennell, 2022), animals as stakeholders (García-Rosell & Tallberg, 2021), tourists' view on animal welfare (Beuttner, 2022), climate vulnerability of dogsledding (Nilsson & Demiroglu, 2024) and embodied and co-created experiences ((Haanpää & García-Rosell, 2020). While husky sledding overlaps with Engagement (flow) and achievement (mastery), this study positions the human-husky encounters within well-being framework in DREAMA's affiliation dimension.

Engagement appeared as awe and flow in activities such as husky sledding, and as anticipatory absorption (the chase of northern lights) that remained meaningful even when it was uncertain (RQ 2 and RQ3). This process of engagement explains how meaning can be developed when peak stimuli are absent. Achievement involved mastery of new skills and decision validation, which adds a nuance to DREAMA's achievement in addition to performance (RQ2, RQ3).

Moreover, several dimensions of DREAMA often co-occurred in a single experience. For instance, northern lights viewing combined Engagement with Meaning, and activities like husky sledding integrated Engagement with Achievement, which indicates that these dimensions are interwoven rather than separate (RQ2, RQ3). In sum, DREAMA dimensions show how Finnish luxury provides restoration, value-based engagement, two-layered affiliation, meaning and symbolic achievement (RQ1, RQ3).

Regarding Meaning dimension, participant's description of awe during the observation of northern lights, gratitude, and self-reflection, agree with the claim that nature experiences can create purpose by helping people feel part of something larger. This result is conforms the review of positive psychology models (M. Seligman, 2011b) and nature well-being syntheses (Capaldi et al., 2014) (RQ2). Participants also described returning to sensible and preferred self, which the researcher interprets it as "*identity recovery*" (value affirmation). This aspect of eudaimonic outcome is rarely discussed in luxury tourism (RQ2). Research also connects awe with "small self" concept which results in prosocial tendencies (Piff et al., 2015). While this study did not evaluate this type of outcome, participants' expression of humility and connectedness aligns with that pathway. In Finnish luxury, such moments are interpreted as "*quiet moments*" in which natural beauty, solitude, and seamless service provide a space for reflection without social pressure. This notion also emphasizes the role of design and hosting as facilitators for psychological spaciousness (RQ3).

Finally, these findings extend the literature on experiential luxury by showing that in Finnish luxury well-being benefits can be achieved without relying on high-energy activates. Instead, simplicity and authenticity act as enablers of relaxation and growth. This complements previous prestige-oriented views of luxury (Dion & Arnould, 2011; Hudders & Pandelaere, 2012; Silverstein & Fiske, 2003) and extends Finnish specific research on purity, privacy, personalization and memory-making (Iloranta, 2019, 2021; Iloranta & Komppula, 2022; Lehto, 2023) (RQ1, RQ3). Specific mechanism such as gentle challenge, integration of architecture and nature, and reassurance through decision-making help us to explain how hedonic and eudaimonic outcomes are co-produced in this context. (RQ1, RQ3). In conclusion, this study highlights four key contributions: psychological minimalism, co-occurring DREAMA dimensions within single

activity or phenomenon, human-husky encounters as a mediator to nature affiliation, and identity recovery.

6.1 Practical Implications

The findings of this study offer a few actionable recommendations for tourism service providers, whose goal is to design emotionally rich and well-being-oriented luxury experiences, especially in nature-based contexts like Finnish tourism. These implications are based on participants' reflections and are aligned with DREAMA's dimensions.

Participants linked mental clarity and relaxation with the removal of noise and time pressure. For this, managers should design spaces that emphasize low-level of noise and lighting as well as uninterrupted natural views, such as snow, forest, and sky. Operational simplicity such as optimized and seamless check-ins, where the interactions with guests are minimum, and quiet hours even for housekeeping, can improve low-arousal positive states for recovery.

Built environments like glass igloos, modern cabins with glass wall design, and saunas offer guests "outside while being inside" experience. Thermal comfort and amenities suitable for luxury settings improve a sense of "quiet with nature" and support affiliation with both environments and others.

Experiences such as northern lights watching do not only provide awe, but they also emotionally absorbing. Managers should design these activities as a process in expectation and reflective content (silence and sky stories) are offered that keep engagement even in the absence of peak outcomes.

Successful guest-host interactions involve small but meaningful gestures. The hosts are required to anticipate needs, acknowledge milestones, and maintain respectful distance. Service training should include privacy protocols and emotional intelligence to keep the detachment for recovery, and at the same time facilitate human affiliation.

Optional tools suitable for luxury guests such as besides reflection prompts or future-self postcards can make meaning for the guests without feeling forced. Connecting them to local and cultural practices, such as sauna etiquette, can enhance authenticity and symbolic resonance.

Finally, new performance indicators, such as guest calmness, sense of connection, and clarity can help track well-being. Psychological minimalism and ecological goals are aligned with each other which results in reduction of operational load and guest experience enhancement.

6.2 Limitation and Future Research

This study had several limitations which defined the scope and generalizability of the findings. First, the sample of this study was eight purposively chosen participants. While this is consistent with qualitative research goal, the small size limits its transferability. Future studies could add mixed method or surveys with large scale to get in-depth narratives with measurable trends in well-being and luxury perception.

Second, in this analysis affluence was not segmented. Although all participants had access to Finnish luxury experiences, there was no distinction between socio-economic characteristics (ultra-high vs mass affluent individuals) or psychological orientations of luxury. Therefore, differences on how well-being is perceived among wealth categories remain unexplored. Future research should explore this matter and examine how financial status and consumer segment influence the meaning of luxury and the well-being.

Third, all experiences were limited to nature-based Finnish luxury tourism and as a result the findings cannot generalize to urban luxury or luxury accommodations without any nature-based activities. Moreover, only a few activities (sauna, northern lights viewing, husky-sledding and reindeer safari, etc.) were evaluated in the study. There may be other activities needed to examine in luxury and measure their influence on luxury tourists. Scholars could assess other contexts in luxury tourism and compare the results with outcomes of nature-based luxury tourism.

Fourth, for the aim of the research only those participants were interviewed that generally had a satisfactory experience during their travel. Negative experiences, such as disappointment, overcrowding, or dissatisfaction with provider's service were not present in the data. Therefore, subsequent studies can focus on the guests with negative experiences to find potential tensions or unmet needs in the luxury and well-being relationship.

Fifth, the study did not assess animal welfare protocols or measure emotional co-regulation between animals and humans, which may be important for future research on interspecies

affiliation. Future research could examine how tourists' and animals' interactions influence both species' well-being with ethical considerations.

Finally, price and value perceptions did not examine in this study. The researcher did not gather any data on cost, value for money among participants, or willingness to pay which may affect feelings of achievement or meaning. Researchers should use quantitative tools such as pricing data, satisfaction metrics and willingness to pay indicators to explore how tourists' financial status and spending influence perceived meaning and achievement.

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Appendix 1: Interview Questions:

Warm-up Questions

1. Could you tell me a little about your trip to Finland and what motivated you to choose this particular luxury hotel or experience?
 2. When you think about “luxury” in your trip, what comes to mind?
-

Detachment–Recovery (Hedonic Well-being)

3. Can you describe a moment during your stay when you felt completely relaxed or detached from your everyday responsibilities? What adjectives can describe your state?
 4. Did this experience help you recover mentally or physically from stress? In what ways?
-

Engagement

5. Were there any activities or experiences during your trip that fully absorbed your attention? Can you describe them?
 6. How did engaging in these activities affect your feelings during or after the trip?
-

Affiliation (Social + Nature Connection)

7. Did you feel a sense of connection with other people (e.g., staff, locals, or fellow travelers) during your experience?
 8. Did you feel a sense of connection with the natural environment (e.g., forests, lakes, northern Lights)?
-

Meaning

9. Did this trip feel meaningful to you? If so, how?
 10. What made this experience personally valuable compared to other things you could spend on?
-

Achievement

11. Did you gain anything from your experience (e.g., trying something new, overcoming a challenge)?
 12. How did this sense of achievement contribute to your way of thinking or interacting with people or things?
-

Closing

13. Looking back on your whole trip, what aspects contributed most to your quality of life (state of mind and happiness)?
14. If you were to describe to a friend how this trip impacted you, what would you say?

Appendix 2. Letter of Consent

LETTER OF CONSENT

Dear,

My name is Pouya Chogan. I am Master student at University of Lapland, Rovaniemi, Finland under the supervision of Prof. Markku Vieru (markku.vieru@ulapland.fi). You are invited to participate in my master thesis study entitled *Exploring Tourists' Well-being in Finnish New Luxury Tourism*. The purpose of the study is to understand the perceptions of travelers of Finnish luxury tourism and its impact on their well-being. The result of the study will be published as part of my master thesis. The thesis is conducted as part of the Master's Degree Programme in Tourism, Culture and International Management (TourCIM).

By signing this letter, you give consent to use the interview material confidentially and exclusively for research purposes. The research follows the principles for responsible conduct of research dictated by the Finnish Advisory Board on Research. The data will be handled anonymously. Your participation is voluntary and you can withdraw your permission even after signing this document, by informing the below mentioned contact person.

Please feel free to contact me or my supervisor, if you would need further information regarding the study and the use of the research data.

Sincerely,

Pouya Chogan

TourCIM Master student

Email: pchogan@ulapland.fi

I give consent to use the interview as data for the purpose mentioned above.

_____ Signature _____ Date

_____ Print Name