



# The Role Of Masstige Strategies On Perception Of Consumers About Consumption Of Branded Products

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## ARTICLE INFO

## ABSTRACT

Masstige marketing is a distinctive marketing strategy that attempts to create a balance between luxury and mass-market appeal. It's the strategy by which brand managers establish their brands' reputation among the majority of consumers. The concept of masstige, or mass prestige, has obtained relatively minimal focus in the literature. This study examines previous literatures on Masstige based marketing and analyses the formation of the "masstige strategy" with an emphasis on how masstige marketing boosts branded product sales and what indicators all point to a product's ongoing demand. Here we synthesize previous research findings, examine various dimensions, pinpoint research gaps, advocate for the use of recent measures like the "Masstige Mean Score Scale (MMSS)", and create new measures that will aid in the development of luxury/premium brand marketing strategies and enable more research in this specialized field. The findings shows that an increasing brand's chances of success are correlated with its "masstige value (MMS)". And also suggest that marketers can use a mass prestige approach to satisfy customers and build a favourable relationship between masstige and brand satisfaction.

**Keywords:** Masstige marketing, Mass prestige, Brand value, Strategic brand management

## INTRODUCTION

Masstige marketing is a unique marketing strategy that aims to strike a balance between luxury and mass-market appeal. It represents a strategic response to evolving consumer desires and expectations. The phrase "masstige" itself is a combination of "mass" and "prestige," encapsulating the essence of this marketing strategy. "It is a process through which brand managers create prestige for their brands in the minds of majority of the consumers". It involves the creation and promotion of products that possess an aura of luxury and exclusivity, yet remain accessible to a broader consumer base in terms of price points. This innovative marketing approach challenges the traditional notions of luxury, where exclusivity often comes with a hefty price tag, by offering a more inclusive and aspirational experience.

The 2003 Harvard Business Review essay by Michael Silverstein and Neil Fiske is the first major frame research paper about masstige. This study has popularized the notion among researchers and intrigued others to add to comprehension towards masstige. The term "masstige marketing" refers to the practice of marketing standard products at moderate costs to the largest possible audience by establishing mass prestige in the absence of price reductions or promotional offers. "Masstige products are defined as 'premium but attainable', and there are two key tenets: (1) They are considered luxury or premium products and (2) They have price points that fill the gap between mid-market and super premium". Some notable instances of this strategy are Starbucks, Apple, Body Works, Toyota Lexus, and so on. The goal of the masstige strategy is to create mass prestige value for the brand, which entails brand positioning. By delving into the intricacies of consumer behavior, brand positioning, and market dynamics, this research seeks to aid a more profound understanding of the masstige phenomenon and its impact on both businesses and consumers.

In an era marked by increased brand awareness and a growing concern of using branded products, the intersection of masstige marketing strategies and the consumption of branded products presents an intriguing area of study. This study aims to unravel the intricate relationship between masstige strategies—blending the

allure of prestige with mass-market accessibility—and the evolving perceptions of consumers regarding the consumption of luxury or branded products. The advent of masstige marketing, with its ability to balance the aspirational appeal of prestige with affordability, has the potential to redefine how consumers perceive and engage with most branded products.

As consumers become more aware about the impact of their choices, understanding the dynamics of how masstige strategies influence perceptions becomes crucial for both marketers and policymakers. This research stems from the realization that the effective use of masstige strategies into the marketing of branded products has implications not only for businesses but also for the broader societal shift towards sustainability. Masstige strategies, known for their capacity to democratize luxury and exclusivity, could play a pivotal role in breaking preconceived notions about the inaccessibility of eco-friendly options.

The rationale for this study is embedded in the dual goals of advancing scholarly understanding and contributing practical perspectives to the fields of marketing, sustainability, and consumer behavior. Examining this dynamic intersection not only responds to a current gap in academic literature but also addresses the practical imperatives faced by businesses striving to align their branding strategies with the growing demand for product alternatives. As societies worldwide grapple with the imperative of worthy living, this research endeavors to provide insights that contribute to the development of effective and impactful strategies at the intersection of masstige marketing and brand consciousness.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Johnstone and Tan (2015) investigated the ways in which consumer views of environmentally friendly products, consumers, and consumption habits aid in the comprehension of the disparity between environmentally friendly attitudes and behaviors. They also discovered a number of obstacles to moral behavior in the context of environmentally friendly consumption. According to this article, consumers' intentions to buy green products may be influenced by their perceptions of green products.

Kumar and Paul (2018) explore the prestige connected to the top four laptop manufacturers in an effort to add to the body of work based on the masstige theoretical approach: 1) two Asian brands (Lenovo and Acer); 2) two American brands (HP, Dell); and 3) examined the rivalry between these brands in India, the second fastest growing developing market. They employed the “Masstige Mean scale” to calculate Masstige. The results show that as the American firms are acknowledged as prestige brands, Asian businesses are falling behind in masstige value and competition.

Paul (2018) attempts to advance the masstige marketing theory by providing a new theoretical framework that focuses on product, promotion, and place strategies while maintaining price stability. They use Paul's (2015) “Masstige Mean Index (MMI)” to evaluate and compare the marketing strategies of domestic and international auto companies in the USA. Research indicates that adopting a masstige marketing strategy can help firms establish a higher level of mass prestige in overseas markets. The research demonstrates how ‘MMI’ can make masstige score estimations easier, enabling analogies and helping brands come up with plans.

Paul (2019) made another attempt to expand the application of the “Masstige Mean Scale (MMS)” and create a masstige model for brand management. They prove that higher the “Masstige Mean Index (MMI) value (or “MMIV”)” of the brand, the higher the brand awareness among potential consumers. They contend that MMI might enable businesses to assess brand equity across several geographies, both domestically and internationally, in order to get understanding of how well-liked their brands are.

Jain (2019) classifies different reasons related the intention to acquire sustainable luxury goods into four main categories, which are, culture, personal values, social values and economic values. Furthermore, an integrated conceptual framework based on the dual theoretical frameworks of “Schwartz's value theory” and “The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)” is proposed in the study.

Kumar et al. (2020) identifies the characteristics of products that influence consumers' intentions to buy “masstige” goods and goes on to examine the moderating impacts of consumer feelings, social standing, and prestige on those intentions. They created a conceptual model and used the “PLS-SEM” technique. The study demonstrates that while status, pride, and emotion play significant moderating roles in a customer's purchase of masstige products, “perceived prestige value” is vital.

Goyal (2020) uses the free association approach to analyze brand associations, is exploratory in nature and comes from the perspective of masstige customers. It aims to explore how Indian consumers perceive masstige brands relative to luxury brands. It has been determined that practical, economical, cultural, and individual brand values can be used to distinguish masstige brands from premium brands.

Shahid and Paul (2021) look into the underlying elements that affect how customers perceive luxury brands. This research seeks to evaluate the personal “self” components of enriching experiences for luxury customers through the lens of self-determination theory. According to their research, luxury buyers are now motivated by internal reasons and have turned to purchasing luxury items for “self.”

Kumar et al. (2021) links consumer happiness with Brand Happiness, examining the concept of customer happiness based on the principles of ‘masstige, self-consciousness, and social ideal self’. The respondents were from different mobile phone brands: Samsung, Huawei, and iPhone and the respondents were from America, South Korea, and China. The results of ‘moderation analysis, structural equation modeling, and exploratory factor analysis’ showed that masstige brand satisfaction is correlated with masstige brand consumption.

Das et al. (2022) explores if various luxury consumption values are equally relevant in influencing mass-market purchases, however it is limited to women's fashion clothes companies. "PLS-SEM and multi-group analysis" were used for analysis. The results demonstrate that while the consuming value does not motivate masstige fashion buying, practical, experiential, as well as symbolic consumption values do.

Park et al. (2022) investigates The association between the two forms of brand extensions and customer behavior as brand extensions are used by the majority of firms to enter the luxury market. Study 1 conducts value-based segmentation of the market and validates the masstige consumption value's dimensionality. Study 2 finds the linear correlations between the masstige value, brand equity, and buying purpose aspects based on the findings of Study 1.

Purohit and Radia (2022) Purohit and Radia (2022) examined the antecedents of behavioral intention toward masstige brands using a mixed-method approach. Based on the in person interviews with 16 iPhone users, three aspects of value and two aspects of desires rooted in the brand value judgment guidelines and prominent buying theory were recognized as the root causes for purpose to behave towards mass prestige brands. The masstige brands' purchase intention was determined by achievement signaling, vanity value, and functional value, as indicated by the structural equation modeling approach.

Gilal et al. (2022) conducted four studies and the proposed hypotheses were tested using 'regression, processmacro, and structural equation modeling'. A total of 3 studies show that product design raises 'MBP' and this effect is dependent on two moderators—"high mass prestige values and high-level product design cues"—that are theoretically developed and managerially controlled. The findings of fourth study demonstrate that reflective design, as opposed to emotive, cognitive, and ergonomic design features, had the biggest influence on MBP.

Das et al. (2022) portrays RayBan, a masstige brand in the eyewear market and notes the integration, marginalization, and separation groups gave RayBan the lowest masstige score, while the assimilation acculturation group gave it the greatest score. Moreover, underlying process responsible for the variations in masstige ratings among different acculturation groups is found to be cultural worldview.

Kassie and Bang (2022) looks at how masstige purchasing intention is influenced by perceived economic crisis as a moderator as well as distinctiveness, hedonic value, conspicuous consumption, and perceived quality. Hierarchical multiple regression analysis is carried out in the study. The findings indicate that masstige buying intention is significantly influenced by uniqueness and hedonic values, but not by obvious spending or implied quality.

Mansoor and Paul (2022) uses 'brand happiness (BH)' as a mediator to look at the indirect and direct effects of "Mass Prestige of a Brand (MPB), Brand Perception (BP), and Propensity to Pay the Premium (PPP) on Brand Evangelism (BE)." Customers of clothing and cosmetic brands participated in two separate research that were carried out using cross-sectional and time-lagged methods. With only slight variations in impact size, the results for both investigations indicated that 'MBP, BP, and PPP' were significant forecasters of Brand Evangelism through the underlying mechanism of Brand Happiness. All other postulated routes were also supported.

Alagarsamy et al. (2022) delves into whether the multidimensional consumer-based brand equity scale and the masstige scale measure the same variables. Four distinct brands of athletic shoes were examined by a total of 493 participants. The masstige scale may be a good substitute for customer based brand equity and masstige value, according to the multi-trait, multimethod, and confirmatory factor analyses.

Shahid et al. (2023) aims to reveal the ways in which masstige consuming behavior is influenced by both inner and extrinsic motives in a cross-cultural setting. To investigate the proposed link, path analysis was carried out using 'covariance-based structural equation modeling (CB-SEM)'. Extrinsic and intrinsic incentives both affect attitudes and masstige consumption, according to the path analysis, and additional research has shown that attitudes partially moderate the impact of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations on masstige consumption.

Nobre et al. (2023) studies into how brand happiness might result from the bonds that customers form with luxury brands. They demonstrate that consumers build ties with brands based on their prestige and that the mass prestige of brands contributes to their brand satisfaction through the use of structural equation modeling and moderation analysis. Additionally, the masstige brand satisfaction relationship is moderated by customers' perceptions toward luxury brands.

Ishaq et al. (2023) suggests MasCal, a development in the field of strategic brand management, to answer the recent calls for masstige marketing's approach and assessment. It does this by utilizing 'Churchill's (1979)' scale development framework. The 5 dimensional masstige marketing scale encompasses self-awareness, prestige, brand awareness, brand devotion, and readiness to pay the high price.

## **RESEARCH GAP AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Customers prefer to buy the premium product from varied choices. The consumers need something more from the product than the actual utility of the same because the branded product create a sense of self-esteem among the users as they feel a unique class of consumers. Due to the word of mouth and customer feedback promote the most valued brands in the market. As such consumers, who heard about this product inclining to buy them to change their life style, alternatively become a part of this unique class of customers. This study identifies a critical gap in understanding the relationship between consumer views of the use of branded products and

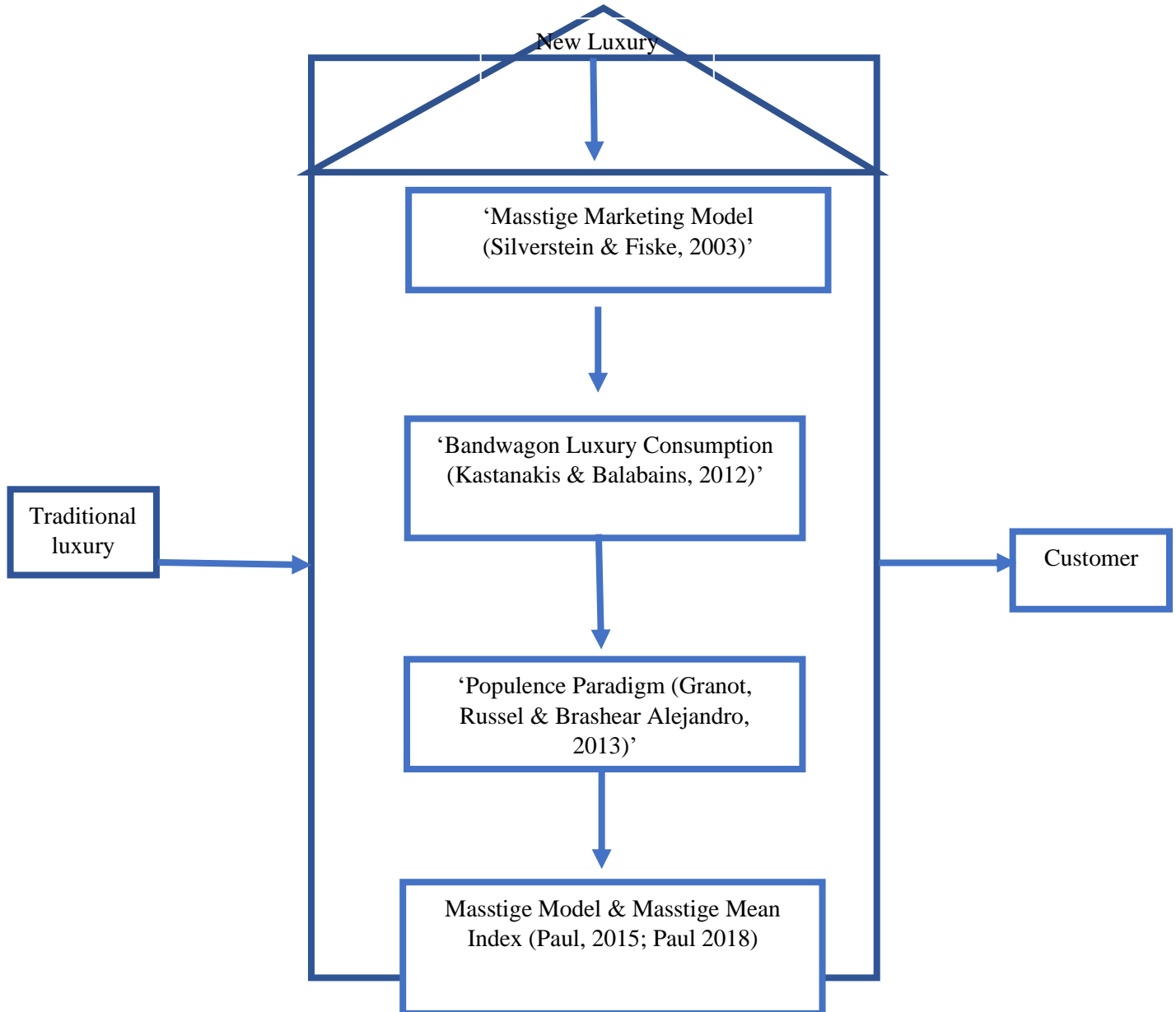
masstige methods, which combine prestige branding with mass-market accessibility. The problem at the core of this study is the need to comprehend how masstige marketing can be strategically employed to reshape consumer perceptions, making green products more appealing, affordable, and culturally embedded in the mainstream market.

**OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

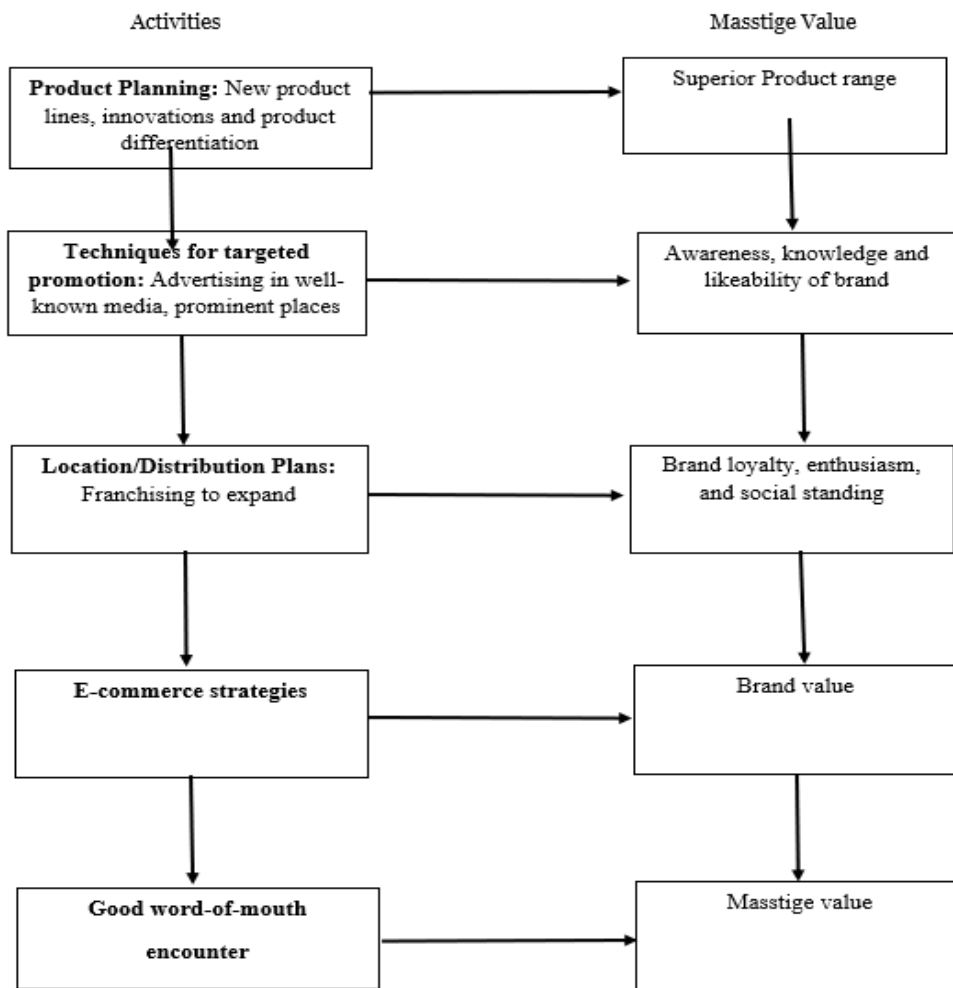
1. To identify the impact of consumers socio-economic back ground on mass prestige brand.
2. To know the brand equity level of brands through masstige marketing strategy.
3. To know the consumers satisfaction on the usage of masstige product.

**THEORETICAL STUDY ON MASSTIGE MARKETING**

**Figure 1: Evolution of Masstige marketing strategy.**

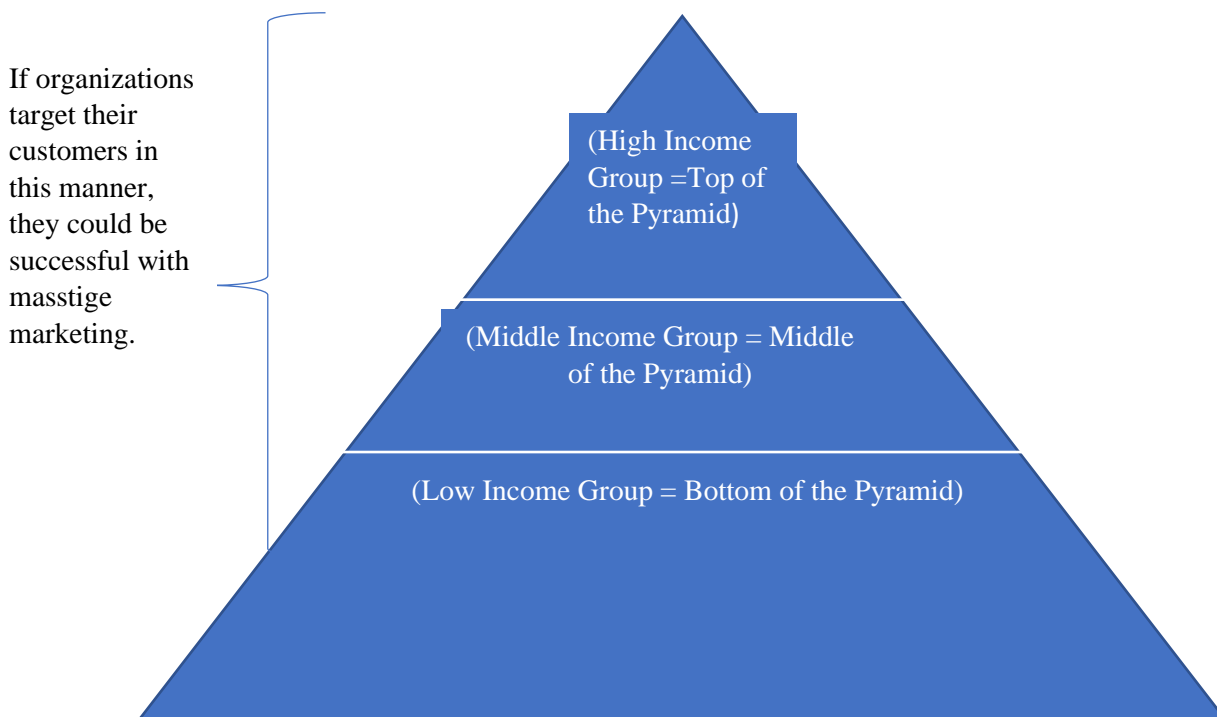


**Figure 2: Masstige Marketing Process**



Source: J. Paul / European Management Journal xxx (2018) 1e14

**Figure 3: Pyramid Model for masstige marketing**



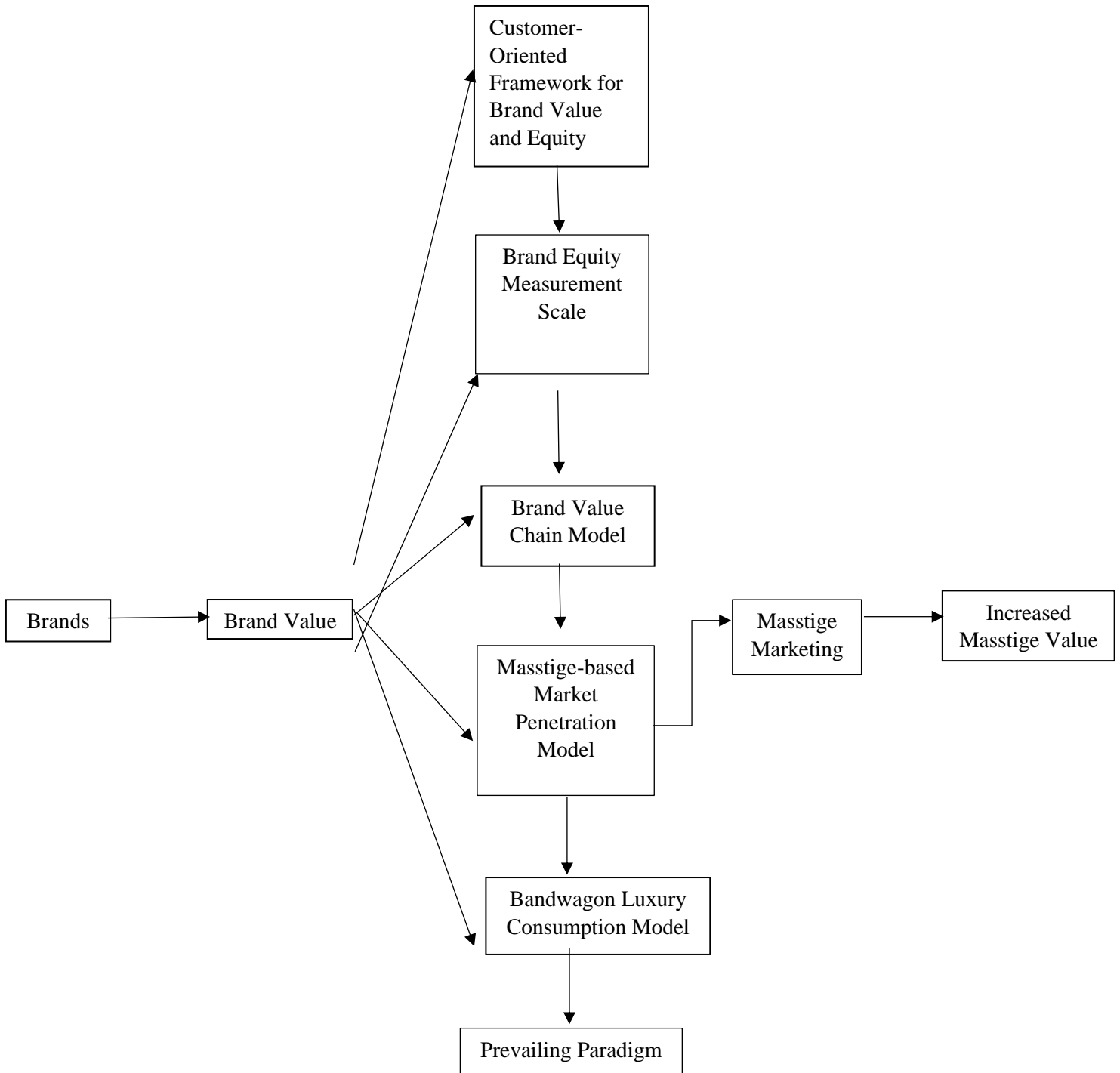
Source: Justin Paul, Marketing Intelligence & Planning Vol. 33 No. 5, 2015

**Figure 4: A model for masstige value creation**

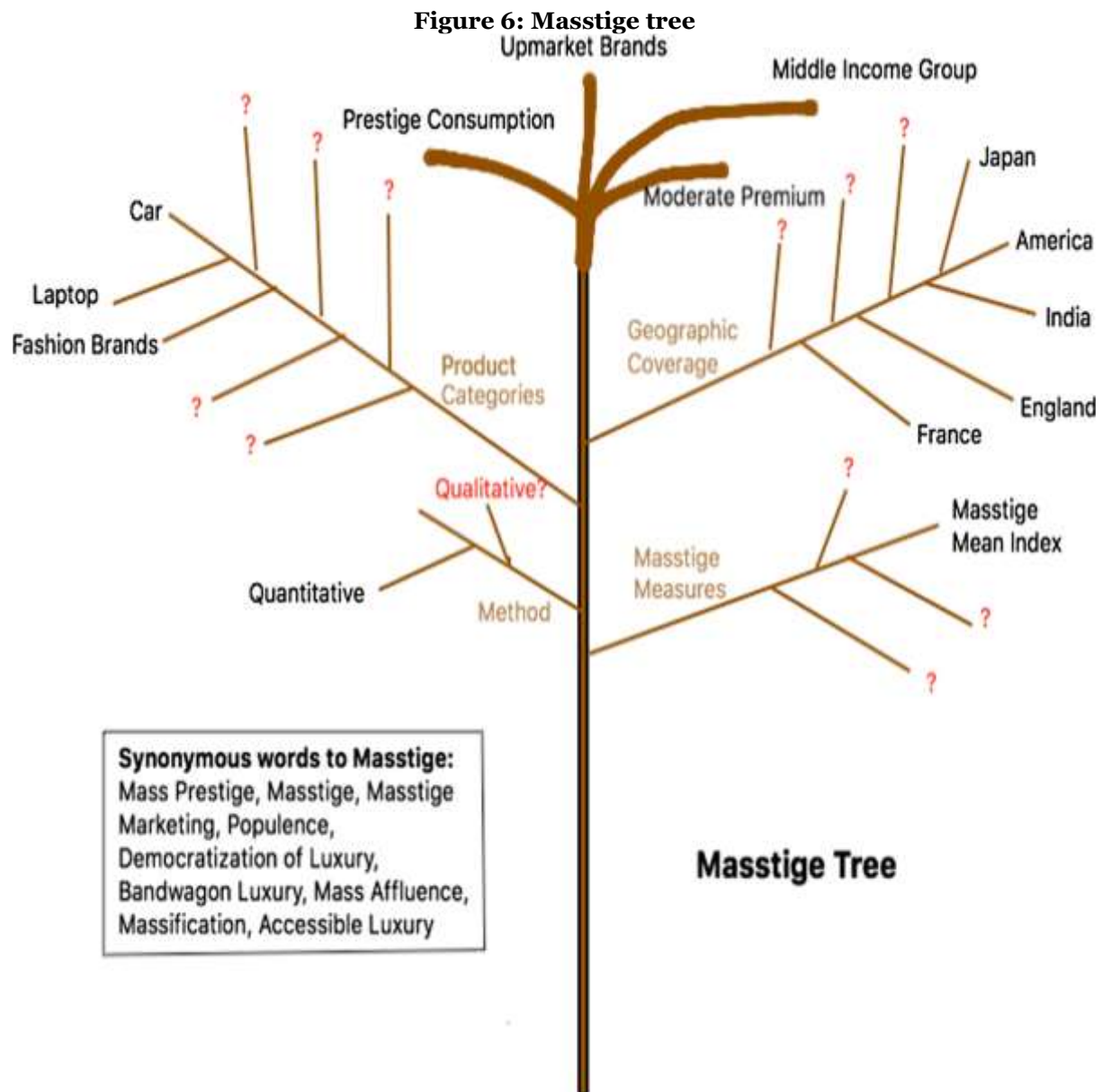
PRODUCT	Introduction of the product	Product uniqueness and distinction.	Supplying new product lines and sub brands (Innovation arbitrage)
PROMOTION	Eye-Catching Advertising over platforms targeting affluent audiences	Advertisements in places like airport lobby areas and city centres, where middle and upper-class customers would probably visit	Strategic brand management and celebrity patronage
PLACE	Restricted allocation to preserve uniqueness	Distribution via direct channels and franchising	Outline at sale starts to draw in new-gen customers
PRICE	No change	No change	No change

Source: Justin Paul, European J. International Management, Vol. 12

**Figure 5: Theoretical foundation and models.**



Source: J. Paul / European Management Journal xxx (2018)



Source: A. Kumar, et al. Journal of Business Research

## FINDINGS

Based on my understanding of the study, marketers should leverage the potential of prestige brands. For New Luxury Brands, status and luxury are distinct concepts. The management of luxury brands differs from that of premium and trading up. Through perceived quality, and risk, brand prestige and credibility positively affect brand purchase intention. In India, luxury consumption serves as a social identity and status marker for individuals. While intrinsic customers are further inclined toward self directed enjoyment and quality, extrinsic customers purchase luxury goods for their ostentatiousness and excellence. Purchase intention was positively impacted by achievement and physical vanity.

Luxurious experiences are temporary and reinforce the independent character of the buyer. Superior quality and self-directed pleasure are the main reasons luxury goods are bought by consumers who are largely driven by internal motivations. Furthermore, self-directed pleasure and self-esteem are closely related. The motivation for this consumption is status and social acceptance. Attitudes about brands, extensions, and buy intentions are influenced by perceived value.]

Brand loyalty is most strongly impacted by emotional attachment. Middle class customers use brands to find their identity without spending a lot of money. A more thorough understanding of the mechanisms underlying customers' luxury discourses is crucial for luxury brand management. Luxury brand expansion affects consumer impression. Their understanding of luxury is based on subjective, experiential, moral, and artistic forms. They also exhibit a less optimistic outlook and less inclination to make purchases. In contrast to luxury hospitality brands, parvenus have a more negative attitude toward their preferred branded goods when confronted with imitation behaviors by less affluent consumers. On the other hand, patricians show comparable degrees of attitude shift in all luxury brands. High cost equates to high perceived luxury.

The findings also suggest that there is a self-oriented component to luxury; people buy premium products for personal as well as social interests. Compared to males, women are more likely to make impulsive purchases of luxury products. Expensive things are associated with luxury. For premium brands, desire is the main factor influencing consumer involvement. Perceptual and experiential factors affect how desirable luxury brands are. Compared to domestic brands, foreign brands are more prestigious.

A brand has a greater capacity to satisfy its customers the more mass prestige it has. Since *masstige* is a widespread occurrence, marketers can use a this approach to satisfy customers and build a positive relationship between *masstige* and brand satisfaction. Regardless of the idealized social self, *masstige* will make customers happy. One's ability to get enjoyment from using a *masstige* brand will decrease the more self-conscious he is. It is possible to satisfy customers using brands. For brands, marketers ought to make an effort to implement a *masstige* approach. On the other hand, this would satisfy their customers.

### CONCLUSION

It may be inferred from the review of *masstige* literature that scholars are becoming more and more interested in *masstige*. Both customers and marketers are happy about it. It is evident that the idea of *masstige* has developed from luxury literature, although it differs greatly from normal luxury. Although *masstige* has drawn more attention, there is still much more to explore theoretically in this area. The investigation of mass prestige is currently restricted to specific product categories, geographical areas, and methodology; nevertheless, by expanding to numerous items, brands, nations, and industry contexts, the idea can be brought closer to maturity. It would also be useful to employ several techniques for analysis. Contributions to *masstige* theory, method, and context are very much in scope. Marketers believe that *masstige* strategy is advantageous when competition is fiercely intensifying. Consumers are turning upward to luxury brands to realize their ideal selves because marketers have been effective in creating a downward extension up until now. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that one of the *masstige*'s possible drawbacks is that it is a relatively new concept. Since *masstige* strategy and theory are still in their infancy, it would be imprudent to draw any broad conclusions about them without supporting data.

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