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'Masstige' marketing: A review, synthesis and research agenda

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ABSTRACT

This article reviews the literature on Mass Prestige (Masstige) based marketing and analyzes the evolution of the 'masstige strategy' with a focus on how this phenomenon evolved from conventional way of marketing premium brands. We synthesise the findings of prior studies, analyse different dimensions, identify research gaps, call for using existing measures like Masstige Mean Score Scale (MMSS) and develop new measures which would facilitate further research in this niche area as well as help the practitioners in developing marketing strategies for luxury/premium brands. It was found that masstige research hitherto has focused on product-based brands and not taken into account the brands from service sector. This review aims to critically examine the previous studies on masstige marketing and identify potential research opportunities. We propose the Mass-Luxury continuum to place product or service brands in terms of mass prestige. Moreover, we develop ideas for future researchers based on the identified research gaps.

1. Introduction

Economic growth has created a huge middle class with immense market potential (Beinhocker, 2007; Farrell, Gersch, & Stephenson, 2006; Kharas & Gertz, 2010). But, branding theory and practice have not fully embraced new ways of thinking in today's dynamic world (Von Wallpach, Voyer, Kastanakis, & Mühlbacher, 2017). Businesses have begun to explore the unconventional way of marketing luxury goods and services which promise status, indulgence, and superior experience for the consumers. In recent years, term 'luxury' has been reframed, giving birth to the concept of new luxury (Eckhardt, Belk, & Wilson, 2015) that involves affordability, market proliferation and availability in the mass market. Marketing luxury brands to the 'mass market' focusing on middle class, with the goal of creating Mass Prestige (masstige marketing) is a new phenomenon and presents a big opportunity. Though Silverstein and Fiske brought 'masstige' into main stream research through their Harvard Business Review article in 2003, the concept is still in its infancy stage. This offers an opportunity to scholars to develop their understanding for the phenomenon called 'masstige'.

Masstige stands for Mass Prestige. Masstige theory can be explained in terms of its relationships with components of marketing mix (Kumar & Paul, 2018; Paul, 2018) which can be presented in form of two equations:

(1) Premium Price = f (Mass Prestige), and
(2) Mass Prestige = f (Product, Promotion, Place strategies) (Paul, 2018).

According to masstige theoretical model, brands which succeed in building mass prestige and brand value, can charge high prices from the consumers and consumers are also willing to pay relatively higher prices for such brands compared to mass brands.

The story of 'masstige marketing' begins from the concept of luxury. Luxury is a latin word that originated from 'luxatio' which means disruption (Kapferer, 2015). Luxury and luxury brands are not new to mankind as the usage of the term luxury can be traced back to the times of ancient Greeks and Romans (Brun & Castelli, 2013). The luxury trade is considered as one of the oldest businesses (Kapferer, 2015). Subsequently, meaning of luxury has evolved over the period of time (Brun & Castelli, 2013). It is argued that recent growth story of luxury started from 1980s (Kapferer, 2015). Of late, countries (even developing countries) across the globe have witnessed upsurge in the consumption of luxury goods (Cavender, 2012) and services which consumers buy to increase their pleasure and create a positive feeling (Petersen, Dretsch, & Loureiro, 2018). Such phenomenal growth in luxury brands has

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attracted the attention of scholars' and they have started picking up luxury as an important marketing construct. In due course of time, research around luxury have increased manyfold. Prior research suggests that an important reason for the popularity of luxury is that luxury consumption can make consumers happy (Loureiro, Maximiano, & Panchapakesan, 2018). An important research area in the field of luxury has been - how to build a prestigious brand. Marketer's efforts and thoughtful positioning give birth to a premium/prestigious/luxury brand.

With time, when luxury became popular, it gave rise to a paradox (Kapferer, Klippert, & Leproux, 2014). For long, luxury has been associated with rarity and status. When a product or service does not afford discrimination, it ceases to be rare and hence not perceived as a status symbol (Veblen, 1992). The concept of rarity was supported by studies which reveal that limited availability of the product or service in market may help in establishing luxury image (Luck, Muratovski, & Hedley, 2014). With increase in purchasing power across the world, more and more people started purchasing luxury goods and services. This scaled up consumption of luxury products made them less rare. For luxury goods and services, growth and rarity come at opposite ends. In actual, growth of luxury brands poses challenge of maintaining rarity to the marketer (Kapferer & Valette-Florence, 2016; Kapferer, 2014). The popularity of luxury goods and services acts against the basic tenet of luxury – rarity. Popularity and widespread adoption changes the perception of luxury goods and services as not rare and hence, the paradox. However, it did not take long for scholars to understand that luxury is not about rarity alone. Prior research (Granot, Russell, & Brashear-Alejandro, 2013; Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2012) show that luxury is not only for the rich and sophisticated; and also, it is no longer about exclusivity alone. The shift of luxury from 'rarity' to 'mass market adoption' and willingness to enhance 'prestige' by spending comparatively less leads to mass prestige. This market and its associated unconventional way of marketing called 'Masstige Marketing' is the subject of this review.

A subject advances when studies are documented logically based on the findings of prior studies. In this context, Masstige strategy require more attention as it has not received the deserving acceptance among the researchers due to it being a relatively recent phenomenon. We feel that masstige marketing is the next big paradigm shift in brand management. The argument find support in earlier literature where almost all studies on masstige agree that masstige has not evolved as a comprehensive theory yet, and work on masstige need more attention of scholars to refine, develop and synthesise a robust theoretical framework (Kumar & Paul, 2018; Paul, 2015, 2018, 2019; Silverstein & Fiske, 2003). Hence, masstige qualifies to be an important research question to be addressed by marketing scholars. Marketers normally do not attempt to overlook this phenomenon of shift from rarity to mass prestige. It is worth mentioning that researchers' effort to develop 'masstige' concept/ theory would contribute towards better decision making of marketers. Despite several remarkable studies on masstige marketing (Eckhardt et al., 2015; Granot et al., 2013; Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2012; Riley, Pina, & Bravo, 2015), there is no review article available on this topic. In this article, we review and revisit the various exploratory and descriptive attempts of researchers which contribute towards 'masstige marketing' and present a platform to the academic community from where they can view the evolution of masstige and take it further for research in the field of masstige marketing in future. Initially, the review differentiates masstige from other related constructs. Then, masstige branding is placed in a continuum to reduce the ambiguity about the masstige construct. Subsequently, we propose an agenda for future research based on the prospects for potential contribution.

The purpose of our review is three-fold. First, we take into account the importance of the topic (masstige marketing), by examining the literature to analyse the theoretical approaches and highlight the findings. Second, we draw upon the assertion (Jones & Gatrell, 2014) that literature reviews are essential for making sense of existing research, and provide new directions for future researches. Third, we propose a mass-luxury continuum as a construct to place masstige in context. Through this article, we review the evolution of 'masstige marketing' and the related literature to have in-depth understanding of the topic using Theory, Methods and Context (TCM) framework (following Paul & Rosado-Serrano, 2019).

The remainder of this article is structured as follows. The method followed for this review is discussed in section two. Section three provides an overview of evolution of 'masstige marketing' from the tenets of luxury marketing. Theoretical underpinnings are explored in section four. Section five is dedicated to summarize the findings of prior studies related to masstige marketing. We propose a new Mass-luxury continuum in section six. Section seven is for discussion. Agenda for future research is outlined in detail in section eight with reference to theory, methods and context. Summary of findings are reported in conclusion in section nine.

2. Method

Following the systematic search method found in the review articles (Canabal & White, 2008; Rosado-Serrano, Paul, & Dikova, 2018; Tranfield, Denyer, & Smart, 2003), we explored online databases such as EBSCO, Google Scholar, Web of Science, Scopus and their reference lists, to identify all articles published in the field of Masstige Marketing during the last two decades. This search strategy of using multiple sources helped us to ensure that we have included all notable studies in our review. To locate the most relevant studies in this area, we used keywords such as *Mass Prestige, Masstige, Masstige Marketing, Populence, Democratisation of Luxury, Bandwagon luxury, Mass Affluence, Massification and Accessible Luxury, Prestige Brands (*These are the keywords we have found to be used in previous literature on masstige). The terms found in these articles (because of which the articles were selected) are specifically mentioned in Tables 2–4 under the columns of "Covering Masstige" and "Use of Synonyms of Masstige". If any of these terms are not mentioned in the article, it was not included in the final selection list. The review focused on the articles published in all well recognised journals after 2003 (as Silverstein and Fiske (2003) coined the term 'Masstige' in 2003). However, articles published before 2003 which refer to prestige and other related constructs are also reviewed to reach at a balanced understanding of masstige and to trace the evolution of the concept over time. Our search yielded a total of 93 relevant articles (Out of these 93 articles, we found 7 articles published before 2003, 2 articles in 2003 and 84 articles after 2003).

The initial collection of articles were reviewed and notes were exchanged among three co-authors to decide which articles to exclude from final sample. Further, the selection criterion was refined to include the articles, which focus on the theme of Masstige Marketing. Following Hao, Paul, Trott, Guo, and Wu (2019), the final selection was restricted to those journals which are either listed on the Social Science Citation Index or ranked in the Association of Business Deans Council, Australia. 2016 (accessed in May 2019). We operationalised this by ensuring that the terms used as key words for search and other related terms of masstige should be mentioned specifically in the articles. This process left us with 36 articles in the final list. The list of these articles is exhibited in Table 1.

Scrutiny of the selected articles gave deep insight into the evolution of masstige marketing. In order to develop the positioning of the paper, we kept on documenting the important aspects related to masstige marketing in these papers. We kept on placing the learnings from the research articles in categories depending on its context and emphasis. Following this process, we could identify three broad categories across which the aspects related to masstige can be segregated. These three categories are: evolution of Masstige Marketing (termed as "From Luxury Marketing to 'Masstige Marketing'"), theoretical differentiation between luxury and masstige (termed as "Theoretical Underpinnings"),

Table 1
Articles included in this review.

Journal Name	Articles	Reference
Journal of Consumer Research	1	(Park et al., 1991)
Academy of Marketing Science Review	1	(Vigneron & Johnson, 1999)
Harvard Business Review	2	(Nunes et al., 2004; Silverstein & Fiske, 2003)
Journal of Strategic Marketing	1	(Truong et al., 2008)
Journal of Brand Management	5	(Kapferer & Bastien, 2009; Kapferer, 2015; Magnoni & Roux, 2012; Miller & Mills, 2012; Truong et al., 2009)
Journal of Customer Behaviour	1	(Eng & Bogaert, 2010)
Journal of Marketing	1	(Monga & John, 2010)
Journal of Product & Brand Management	2	(Hwang & Kandampully, 2012; Kapferer & Valette-Florence, 2016)
Journal of Business Research	5	(Dall'Olmo Riley et al., 2013; Gurzki & Woisetschlager, 2017; Kapferer & Laurent, 2016; Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2012; Zhan & He, 2012)
International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management	1	(Brun & Castelli, 2013)
Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice	1	(Granot et al., 2013)
Marketing Intelligence & Planning	2	(Paul, 2015; Walley et al., 2013)
European Journal of Marketing	1	(Roper et al., 2013)
Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management: An International Journal	3	(Cavender & Kincade, 2014; Hennigs et al., 2013; Kim, Lloyd, Adebeshin, & Kang, 2019)
Business Horizons	1	(Kapferer, 2014)
Journal of Revenue and Pricing Management	1	(Kapferer et al., 2014)
Journal of International Consumer Marketing	1	(Arora et al., 2015)
Journal of Marketing Management	1	(Riley et al., 2015)
International Journal of Business Excellence	1	(Dollet et al., 2017)
International Business Review	1	(Kumar & Paul, 2018)
Current Psychology	1	(Dogan et al., 2018)
European Journal of International Management	1	(Paul, 2018)
European Management Journal	1	(Paul, 2019)
Total Number of Journal Articles	36 articles from 23 journals	

progression of masstige research after Silverstein and Fiske (2003) article (termed as "Masstige Marketing Research"). Based on our reading of the literature on masstige, we realized the need for conceptual clarity on 'what is masstige'. As many as 19 terms are found in the articles that refer to masstige (these terms are mentioned in "Masstige marketing research" section). Another ambiguity to be addressed is where does the luxury end and from where masstige begins. In order to provide clarity on this aspect, another section - "Mass-Luxury Continuum" is added. This section attempts to clarify the relative positioning of masstige from luxury. All these three categories are further enriched by related relevant literature. These three categories are presented in subsequent sections of this paper.

3. From luxury marketing to 'masstige' marketing

Early research on luxury suggested that one of the easiest ways of placing a good or a service as luxury is to launch it at a very high price. Price plays an important role in creating perceptions of luxury in consumers' mind (Kapferer et al., 2014). The importance of price is further substantiated by studies which argue that marketer can use price to position a product or service as a luxury brand, especially when the brand is unknown (Kapferer et al., 2014). Other methods of positioning a brand as luxury, include 'artification' (Kapferer, 2014); being authentic and prestigious (Heine, Phan, & Atwal, 2016) etc. are also reported in literature. There were attempts to develop measurement scales in luxury consumption (Kapferer, 2015).

Another important aspect of luxury research literature is study of luxury consumption from consumer perspective. Riley et al. (2015) examined the role of perceived value in the relationship between brand attitude, perceived fit, extension attitude and consumers' purchase intention of downscale vertical extensions of luxury and premium brands for cars and shoes. Findings suggest that perceived value for downward scale extensions influences purchase intention. Brand attitude was also found to be positively associated with perceived value. In general, it was found that consumer's perceived value is an important parameter that explains the development of the attitude towards the brand (Riley et al., 2015). Desire is reported as an important determinant of luxury consumption (Loureiro et al., 2018). A brand should be able to develop an emotional connect with consumers in order to be on the priority list of consumers (Hwang & Kandampully, 2012). These research efforts contributed towards making luxury a flourishing and mature topic in literature.

The concept of luxury branding is changing (Kapferer, 2015). The notion of luxury has evolved a lot from the time when luxury was meant for a lucky few to the point when it is democratised. When Ford adopted cost cutting and downward extension as a strategy to manage Jaguar, it was called democratisation of luxury (Kapferer, 2015). This downward extension was given many terminologies like, 'masstige' (Silverstein & Fiske, 2003), 'democratisation of luxury' (Brun & Castelli, 2013; Danziger, 2004; Truong, Simmons, McColl, & Kitchen, 2008), 'new luxury' (Brun & Castelli, 2013; Eckhardt et al., 2015; Truong et al., 2008) 'populence' (Granot et al., 2013) 'bandwagon luxury' (Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2012), 'mass affluence'(Nunes, Johnson, & Breene, 2004), 'accessible luxury' (Walley, Custance, Copley, & Perry, 2013), and 'Vertical Brand Extension Model' (Riley et al., 2015). This new concept of luxury is different from the traditional perspective of luxury. Today, consumers use luxury to support their own individual identity projects (Bauer, Wallpach, & Hemetsberger, 2011). Masstige goes with the concept- affordable luxury- as consumers seek prestige status. Consumers can now afford the products which were inaccessible to them in the past. This has escalated the consumption of brands by consumers as a proxy to attain ideal self. Consumers across the globe like this price reduction strategy. From marketers perspective, it gives an opportunity to increase profit by broadening the product line (Kekre & Srinivasan, 1990) and create a new high growth segment - Masstige. There are even evidences that reducing the price of high end products (adopting masstige) can be a master solution to tackle cannibalisation in certain scenarios (Moorthy & Png, 1992). Hence, marketers starting adopting such a strategy. Being a relatively new strategy, marketers across product categories have chances of benefiting in market share by gaining first mover advantage (Murthi, Srinivasan, & Kalyanaram, 1996) as result of masstige strategy adoption. Already there are evidences of marketers exercising different strategies to capture this market like introduction of diffusion brands (diffusion brands are sub brands (low price brands) of their parent brands). For example: Prada is the parent brand and Miu miu is the diffusion brand (Arora, McIntyre, Wu, &

Table 2
Progression of research on Masstige marketing (Phase 1).

Sr. No.	Study	Objective	Methodology	Covering Masstige	Use of Synonyms of Masstige	Brands Referred	Country Context	Findings
1	(Park et al., 1991)	Differentiate between successful and unsuccessful brand extensions	Multi Stage Study using Mean and Anova	Not specifically	Prestige Brands	Timex and Rolex	USA	Concept consistency between brand and extension is important for prestige brands
2	(Vigneron & Johnson, 1999)	Conceptualization of Prestige brands	Review & Theoretical proposition	Prestige seeking consumer behaviour	Prestige	Multiple brands	Australia	5 types of motivations drive prestige-seeking consumers
3	(Silverstein & Fiske, 2003)	To understand changing luxury consumption habits	Perspective	Yes	Mass Prestige, New luxury	–	–	Masstige brands have great potential
4	(Nunes et al., 2004)	–	Perspective	Yes	New Middle Ground	–	–	Marketers should capitalise on Masstige
5	(Truong et al., 2008)	Study of Status and consumption for New Luxury Brands	Factor Analysis	Not Specifically	Democratisation of luxury, New Luxury	Multiple Brands: 9 Car, 9 Fashion and 8 Watch Brands	France	Status and Luxury are different for New Luxury Brands
6	(Kapferer & Bastien, 2009)	To explore management of luxury brands	–	Yes	Democratisation of luxury, New Luxury, Mass luxury	–	–	Luxury brands management is different from premium & trading up
7	(Truong et al., 2009)	Identify positioning strategy of Calvin Klein and Ralph Lauren	Factor Analysis	Yes	Masstige, New luxury	Calvin Klein & Ralph Lauren	France	Both brands are positioned as masstige brands
8	(Eng & Bogaert, 2010)	To understand consumer behaviour for luxury brands in India	Focus groups and personal interview	Yes	–	Versace, Gucci, Vacheron Constantin	India	Luxury Consumption signals status and social identity in India.
9	(Monga & John, 2010)	To study the impact of parent brand on brand extensions in Sport	Multiple Studies, Interview and Anova	Not Specifically	Prestige Brands	Toyota, Mercedes-Benz, HP, Mac	USA	Parent brand affects the brand extensions in Sports
10	(Bauer et al., 2011)	To conceptualize luxury from consumer perspective	Interview, Indicative Categorization Process	Yes	New Luxury, Accessible Luxury, Democratisation of luxury, Luxurification of society	Multiple brands	Austria, Finland, Spain & South Korea	Luxury experiences are transient and support individualistic consumer identity
11	(Hwang & Kandampully, 2012).	Roles of emotional factors for younger consumer-luxury brand relationships	Structural Equation Modelling, Multidimensional Scaling	Yes	–	Louis Vuitton, Burberry, Chanel, RalphLauren, Gap	USA	Emotional attachment has the strongest impact on brand loyalty.
12	(Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2012)	To understand bandwagon consumption	Structural Equation Modelling	Yes	Bandwagon Consumption, Democratisation of luxury, Mass Affluence	Multiple brands - Not Mentioned	United Kingdom, London	Status and social approval form reason for this consumption
13	(Miller & Mills, 2012)	To better understand brand luxury	Multiple lense approach	Yes	New Luxury, Mass luxury, Luxurification	–	–	A clear distinction of brand luxury is provided
14	(Zhan & He, 2012)	Understand motivation of consumer's luxury consumption	Structural Equation Modelling	Not Specifically	No	No Specific brands	China	Middle class consumers seek identity using brands without spending much
15	(Magnoni & Roux, 2012)	To understand the impact of step-down extension on luxury brand	Psudo-experimental	Not specifically	Not specifically	BMW, Peugeot	France	Step-down extension negatively impact luxury brand

Table 3
Progression of research on Masstige marketing (2013–2015. Phase 2).

Sr. No.	Study	Objective	Methodology	Covering Masstige	Use of Synonyms of Masstige	Brands Referred	Country Context	Findings
1	(Brun & Castelli, 2013)	To identify customer dimensions of luxury	Experimental design, Focus Group	Yes	New Luxury, Accessible Luxury, Democratisation of luxury	Beluga Caviar, Gucci, Bang & Olufsen, LeoCut		Luxury customer profiles are identified
2	(Granot et al., 2013)	To understand populence	In-depth Interview, Thematic Analysis	Yes	Populence, New Luxury, Democratisation of luxury, Mass prestige	Respondent selected multiple brands	United States	8 themes of populence emerged
3	(Walley et al., 2013)	Identification of key dimensions of luxury	In-depth Interviews, Factor Analysis	Yes	Accessible Luxury, New Luxury, Democratisation of Luxury	No Specific brands	United Kingdom	Five dimensions of luxury identified.
4	(Roper et al., 2013)	Identify the meaning of luxury in masstige era	Qualitative Study, Discourse Analysis, In-depth Interviews	Yes	New Luxury, Chav, Bling	No specific brands	United Kingdom	Consumers understand luxury in subjective, experiential, moral and artistic forms
5	(Dall'Olmo Riley et al., 2013)	To analyse vertical downscale extensions	Factorial experiment	Yes	Prestige brands	Porsche, Prada, Audi, Diesel	United Kingdom	Consumers hold less positive attitude and express lower purchase intention
6	(Hennigs et al., 2013).	Perception related to luxury brand extensions	Interviews, Implicit Association Test	Not Specifically	Accessible luxury, Democratisation of luxury	H&M, Karl Lagerfeld	Germany	Consumer perception is influenced by luxury brand extension
7	(Cavender & H. Kincade, 2014)	To develop definitions for marketing dimensions of luxury goods	Case study, In-depth Historical Review	Yes	–	Louis Vuitton Moet-Hennessy (Its brands)	–	Success and failure of brand management for luxury brand and their sub variables were identified
8	(Kapferer, 2014)	Understand the role of artification in luxury brands	–	Yes	Democratisation of luxury, New Luxury, Globalization of luxury	Multiple brands	–	Artification is an important method for globalization of luxury.
9	(Kapferer et al., 2014)	Understand the luxury from price perspective	Descriptives	Yes	New Luxury, Accessible luxury	Mauboussin jeweler, Ralph Lauren, Hermès, Louis Vuitton	Paris	High the price, high the perceived luxury
10	(Arora et al., 2015)	Understand consumer response for luxury and diffusion brands	Experiments, ACNOVA, *t* test	Not Specifically	–	Prada, Miu Miu, Wryst, Wryst Airborne	USA	There is a difference between two types of brands
11	(Kapferer, 2015)	To report the changing face of luxury branding	Perspective	Yes	Mass Prestige, Democratisation of luxury	Multiple brands	–	Areas of concern for future of luxury branding are reported
12	(Paul, 2015)	To introduce a theoretical model and a measure to operationalise mass prestige	Content Analysis, Case Study	Yes	New Luxury	Louis Vuitton	Japan & France	Masstige Mean Index is developed
13	(Riley et al., 2015).	Role of perceived value in downscale extensions of luxury brands	Structural Equation Modelling	Not Specifically	Massification, Democratisation of luxury	Porsche, Prada, Audi, Diesel	United Kingdom	Perceived value affect the attitude towards brand, extension and purchase intention

Table 4
Progression of research on Masstige marketing (2015–2018. Phase 3).

Sr. No.	Study	Objective	Methodology	Covering Masstige	Use of Synonyms of Masstige	Brands Referred	Country Context	Findings
1	(Heine et al., 2016).	Exploring essential characteristic of luxury brands	Case study method	Yes	–	Château d'Yquem (Wine), Veuve Cliquot	France	Authenticity and prestige are two important characteristics
2	(Kapferer & Laurent, 2016)	To understand the luxury in context of price	Descriptive	Partly	New Luxury, Mass Prestige	–	France, Italy, UK Spain Germany USA Japan	High expense is related with luxury
3	(Kapferer & Valette-Florence, 2016).	How can luxury brands prevent becoming a victim of their own success?	Factor Analysis, Partial Least Square	Yes	–	Multiple Brands	France	Experiential and perceptual aspects influence the desirability of luxury brands
4	(Gurzki & Woisetschlager, 2017)	Bibliometric Analysis of luxury research	Bibliometric Analysis	Yes	Masstige	–	–	10 clusters of luxury research are presented
5	(Dollet et al., 2017)	To analyse trend of premiumisation	Case study method, Qualitative study	Yes	Democratisation of luxury, Mass luxury, Premiumness	Nespresso and L'Oréal, MH, and Diageo Reserve	–	Premium FMCG is not a threat to luxury brands
6	(Dogan et al., 2018)	Develop a scale for Luxury Consumption Tendency	Factor Analysis & Confirmatory Factor Analysis	Yes	Democratisation of luxury	No Specific brands	United States	18 item luxury consumption tendency scale generated
7	(Kumar & Paul, 2018)	Mass prestige associated with laptop brands in India	Descriptives, Discriminant Analysis, ANOVA, *t* test	Yes	Populence, Mass prestige	Lenovo, Acer, HP, Dell	India	American brands have more prestige in comparison to Asian Brands
8	(Loureiro et al., 2018)	How desire, perceived self, social values and involvement are related to consumer engagement	Factor Analysis, Partial Least Square	Yes	New Luxury	Guess, Gucci, D&G, Prada, Louis Vuitton, Dior, Chanel, Trussardi, Burberry, and Coach	Portugal	Desire is the most significant driver of consumer engagement for luxury brands
9	Paul (2019)	Conceptualize a 3 stage model for Masstige marketing	Scale Validation, Conceptual Model	Yes	Masstige	Louis Vuitton	USA, France & India	Presented a Hexagon Model, 3-P based 3 stage model for Masstige Marketing
10	Paul (2018)	Compare the masstige value of domestic and foreign car brands	Non-parametric tests, ANOVA	Yes	Masstige	Toyota, Honda, GM, Ford	USA	Foreign brands have higher prestige than domestic brands
11	(Kim et al., 2019)	To identify the symbolism associated with masstige brands	Semiotic Analysis	Yes	Masstige	Multiple	–	Identity values are associated with masstige brands

Arora, 2015). Other examples include Georgio Armani's Emporio Armani; and Garnier from L'Oréal. All these proceedings resulted in increased interest in masstige marketing and masstige brands.

People high on self-consciousness are more prone to use these brands (luxury/masstige) to establish their identity and ideal self (Solomon, 2016; Vigneron & Johnson, 1999a). Brands are strong means of consumer's identity (Fournier, 1998; Mehta & Belk, 1991). Consumers seek prestige brands to create their identity (Vigneron & Johnson, 1999a). Research suggests that consumer may also seek alternative means of self-expression (Chernev, Hamilton, & Gal, 2011). It is important to note that middle class consumers who seek identity by using brands may not be willing to spend too much on brands (Zhan & He, 2012), yet they seek the help of brands to establish a desirable self-image. Different terminologies have emerged for such trading up consumers such as "Chav", "Bling" etc. (Roper, Caruana, Medway, & Murphy, 2013). For such consumers, masstige brands are good and affordable options. As an example, a user can book Radisson Hotel without spending too much. Similarly there are smartphone brands like One-Plus which has evolved to occupy affordable luxury positioning and can be used to attain desirable identity without crossing the financial limits. Hence, masstige brands have become important means of self-expression and formidable alternatives to traditional luxury items. This shift from traditional luxury to masstige is also referred to as a shift from old luxury to new luxury (Granot et al., 2013). Masstige marketing is about finding a space between the exclusivity and mass consumption (Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2012). In developing countries with mass consumers at lower socio-economic strata who may not have high disposable income, luxury is extending its reach through masstige brands (Eng & Bogaert, 2010). This has enriched the literature of luxury branding and added masstige marketing as an important element. In this context, we review the important models that are useful for marketing premium/luxury brands grounded in the concepts "Unconventional luxury" and 'Marketing to the Maximum' (see Fig. 1).

3.1. Masstige marketing conceptualisation (Silverstein & Fiske, 2003)

Silverstein and Fiske (2003) introduced the term "masstige" in their Harvard Business Review article based on the middle class consumer behaviour in the United States (US). They considered luxury or premium goods priced between the middle class and the super-premium as possible 'Masstige' products. They elaborated that with the growing number of middle class consumers, and many consumers aspiring for higher levels of quality and taste, luxury goods no longer remain just for the upper-affluent, but they are now within the reach and attainable for mass-market consumers (Silverstein & Fiske, 2003). Brands such as Starbucks, Victoria's secret, etc. were considered as examples of masstige brands in the US. It is worth noting that the article by Silverstein and Fiske (2003) led the marketing practitioners and researchers to view 'Masstige' as an unconventional approach for marketing.

3.2. Bandwagon luxury consumption model (Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2012)

It is evident to see the advancement of scholars towards consumption of luxury brands by masses. The importance was highlighted by the term "bandwagon luxury consumption" coined by Kastanakis and Balabanis (2012). Kastanakis and Balabanis (2012) studied the factors influencing the consumers' propensity to engage in "bandwagon" luxury consumption and described the phenomenon as market penetration and brand position strategies leading to mass consumption of a luxury brand, in particular, among middle class consumers creating mass prestige. They cited that brands such as Gucci, Versace and Louis Vuitton (LV) capitalise on this type of buying behaviour in certain markets. In general, they demonstrated that consumers' interdependent self-identity underlies bandwagon luxury consumption. The concept 'masstige marketing' is grounded in this proposition.

3.3. Populence paradigm (Granot et al., 2013)

Granot et al. (2013) showed that the meaning of luxury has changed based on a comprehensive review of research. They offer theoretical extensions and propose a new luxury paradigm that they refer to as "Populence" based on the recent developments in the US. "Populence," according to them, is the process through which the premium goods can be marketed and popularized towards maximum consumers. The concept of populence was another step towards the acceptability of ideology of luxury for the masses.

3.4. Masstige model and masstige mean index (Paul, 2015)

Paul (2015) developed a pyramid model for marketing luxury brands such as Louis Vuitton (LV) to the middle and upper low income group, based on the marketing strategy of LV in Japan. He also conceptualised 'Masstige value' as an alternative to brand equity and introduced a Masstige Mean Score Scale (MMSS) and Masstige Mean Index (MMI) based on the data from Japan and France, as a benchmark measure for estimating and comparing the 'Masstige value'. This scale measures the masstige score with maximum value of 70 having 10 items on the likert scale. Score on masstige scale represents the masstige value. Higher the masstige score, greater the brand carries prestige. Paul (2015) concludes that MMS score of more than 60 depicts that brand has been perceived as a top of mind masstige brand. Score between 50 & 60 suggests that a brand is seen as a masstige brand but not a top masstige brand while a score below 50 speaks of that the brand has not been able to position itself as a masstige brand.

Paul (2018) in his article titled 'Toward a Masstige Theory and Strategy for marketing' shows that 'masstige' as a concept is grounded in the notion that Price = f (Mass Prestige) and Mass Prestige = f (Promotion, Place, Product/service strategies). Further, Paul (2019) presented a three stage theoretical model for masstige marketing based on certain actions for masstige value creation, and developed a hexagon model to demonstrate how managers can penetrate into maximum number of consumers while marketing luxury brands. Research shows that brands can charge higher price, if they create higher masstige value, citing the example of LV. Masstige Model is developed based on the notion that companies, shops, etc. can keep the prices relatively high, if they implement the appropriate product strategies (focused on quality, innovation, differentiation, etc.), promotion (strategies to attract not only the high and middle income group, but also to attract low income group and young consumers in 20 s) and place strategy (store ambience, location, etc.). Companies that follow Masstige Model include Starbucks, Louis Vuitton, Armani, Apple, Victoria Secret, and Gucci. However, their strategies varies from market to market.

4. Theoretical underpinnings

Consumes have their own understanding of the term luxury (Roper et al., 2013). It is important to note that marketers arguably, are no longer in a position to control the consumers' perception of luxury (Granot et al., 2013). Roper et al. (2013) state that luxury is not only for the affluent few but luxury is already democratised. Hence, terms like masstige have become more relevant. Masstige is different from luxury (Kapferer, 2015). Miller and Mills (2012) also believe that luxury brands are different from prestige brands and this difference is to be accepted. To illustrate the point, a product and service produced at mass level is a non-luxury product (Hennigs, Wiedmann, Behrens, Klarmann, & Carduck, 2013). As per Vigneron and Johnson (1999), prestige brands belong to upmarket and premium segment. Hence, masstige brands sit above the middle range brands in prestige and price (Truong, McColl, & Kitchen, 2009). Another point of difference between luxury and masstige is that quality is an inherent part of luxury goods and need not be mentioned, whereas quality needs to be emphasized for premium or masstige products (Kapferer et al., 2014). The objectives

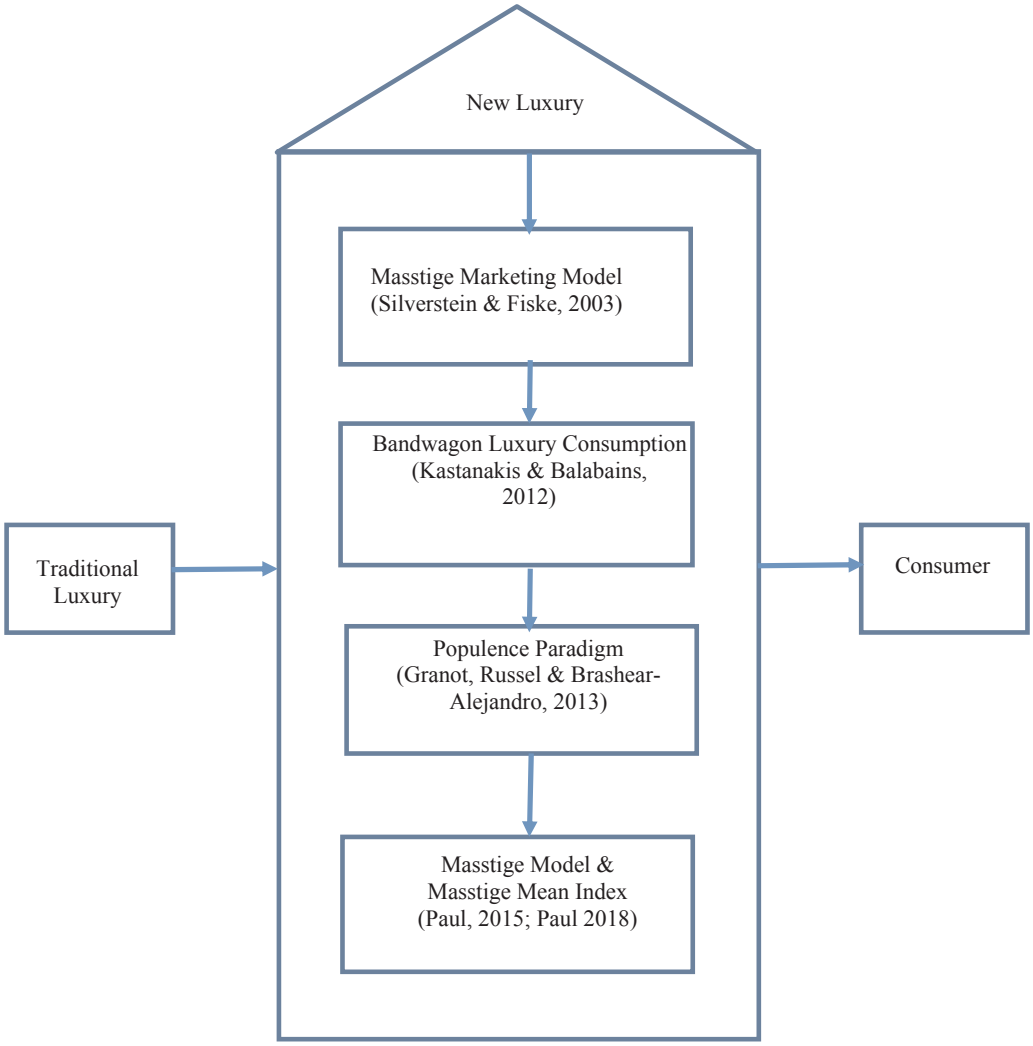


Fig. 1. Evolution of Masstige marketing strategy.

for the consumption of luxury brands and masstige brands are also different (Kapferer & Bastien, 2009; Miller & Mills, 2012). A consumer seeking true luxury looks for heritage, family name and country of origin (Kapferer, 2015) but a consumer of masstige brand looks to portray a desirable ideal-self by using a brand. Prior research show that foreign brands could create higher mass prestige than domestic brands in some markets including the United States, France, India and Japan (Paul, 2019) as foreign brands are considered rare in local culture and they can help in attaining the ideal-self. In a way, masstige brands result from the downward extension of luxury brands. It means that if price of a luxury brand is reduced to the extent that it becomes affordable for masses without sacrificing much of its quality, it qualifies to be a masstige brand. However, masstige strategy is to be executed with caution as simply reducing the price of a luxury brand to make it available to masses may negatively impact the consumer attitude and purchase intention towards this brand (Dall'Olmo Riley, Pina, & Bravo, 2013). It may also change the perception of luxury brand as one with less luxury (Hennigs et al., 2013).

There is evidence that downward extensions may dilute the relationship between the consumer and brand, in the case of luxury brand, negatively (Magnoni & Roux, 2012). Riley et al. (2015) examined the role of perceived value in the relationship between brand attitude, perceived fit, extension attitude and consumers' purchase intention of downscale vertical extensions of luxury and premium brands for cars and shoes. Findings suggest that perceived value for downward scale extensions influences purchase intention. Brand attitude was also found to be positively associated with perceived value. In general, it was found that perceived value partially mediates the relationships of brand attitude and of extension attitude with purchase intention. Therefore, while doing downscale extensions as part of masstige strategy, it is recommended to keep in mind the concept consistency (Park, Milberg, & Lawson, 1991) to reap rich benefits.

The common features of both luxury and masstige consumption are status and conspicuousness. It is important to note that status and conspicuousness are two different constructs (Truong et al., 2008). Those who seek status from brands may or may not use the brands internally and externally both; whereas, those who use brands for conspicuousness will only use it externally (Truong et al., 2008). Status and conspicuousness influence both luxury and masstige consumption. Consumers engage in masstige consumption to reach at specific status and abide by social approval (Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2012), whereas luxury brands are used mostly to maintain the status as part of consumer's lifestyle.

Masstige strategy can help in creating high mass prestige. Paul (2019) discussed the evolution of the literature of masstige and presented a theoretical model to develop a masstige brand. It was advocated that product and promotion are critical for masstige. Even among lower income consumers, the middle class aspires for elitism (Roper et al., 2013). Masstige brand has an affordable price which might be of specific interest for young consumers (Loureiro et al., 2018). This aspect of affordability is so important that consumers tend to overlook their cultural norms including religious norms (even for

Islamic countries) to indulge in prestige consumption if they can afford it (Nwankwo, Hamelin, & Khaled, 2014). Hence, Masstige may be considered as a growth strategy for developing countries. For example, it is strongly argued that India, with low per capita income, young age and status conscious consumers, is a great ground for masstige consumption (Eng & Bogaert, 2010). Additionally, developing countries are better places to study masstige as they explore the foreign brands to display their status (Eng & Bogaert, 2010). For such countries, pure traditional luxury consumption may not be as attractive as masstige consumption.

Luxury and its dimensions are covered extensively through research (Brun & Castelli, 2013; Dogan, Ozkara, & Dogan, 2018; Miller & Mills, 2012; Vigneron & Johnson, 2004; Walley et al., 2013) whereas masstige is a relatively new topic. Vigneron and Johnson (1999) conceptualized five types of effects of prestige-seeking consumer behaviour and classified them as veblenian (conspicuous), snob, bandwagon, hedonist and perfectionist and called for scale development. However, there was no scale for the measurement of masstige or mass prestige associated with brands till Paul (2015) introduced Masstige Mean Score Scale. This scale contained 10 items and the consumer's responses on these 10 items would give a masstige score for a brand. Study also proposed a pyramid model to establish the relevance of masstige brands and to position the masstige brands just below traditional luxury brands. It was stated that middle income consumers would be the best target for masstige brands. Such studies exploring masstige strategy are few at present. On the contrary, the literature for marketing of luxury goods is maturing.

With the above differentiation between luxury and masstige, we define Masstige marketing as - A marketing strategy which envisages to make brands prestigious while retaining its affordability for the mass consumers, by grounding in product and promotion strategies, and keeping prices relatively high.

To understand the above definition, let's try to look at some brands. Louis Vuitton, a well known luxury brand from France generated 20 to 30 percent of their worldwide revenue from Japan because of their strategy to target the middle income and upper part of low income group and yet has retained its prestigiousness (Paul, 2015). Toyota and Honda have offered the comparatively low priced cars in US markets while maintaining its prestige (Paul, 2018). Another known brands who have kept the prices relatively high and targeted upper middle class while retaining its value include Bath and Body works body lotion, Coach, BMW 325 range, Mercedes Benz, Tiffany, Burberry (Silverstein & Fiske, 2003). All these example brands have one thing in common that they have made the brands prestigious, kept their prices high along with maintaining its affordability by emphasising on product and promotion. Masstige brands are able to command a premium over the mass market brands due to their perceptions of quality and cultivated imagery. For example Starbucks is able to charge a premium for the coffee due the prestige perception among customers. They retain the prestigious perception through promotion, maintaining a superior service experience and the judicious use of promotions. At the same time, Starbucks makes their products available for the upper segment of the mass market. Masstige brands enjoy a price premium in comparison with the average reference prices of the mass brands (Lubel & Beard, 2016).

5. 'Masstige marketing' research

After the publication of article by Silverstein and Fiske (2003), terms such as democratisation of luxury, new luxury and masstige became popular. However, literature suggests that 'democratisation of luxury' as part of downward extension was mentioned even before that. Vigneron and Johnson (1999) used the term 'democratisation of luxury' while developing a scale to measure dimensions of brand luxury.

The term 'masstige' was coined in 2003, however the term 'mass prestige' (in different ways and by different names) used to get repeated mention in literature even before 2003. Some researchers used to describe the concept using the simple term- Prestige. After 2003, several articles published on luxury branding topic talked about masstige brands (See Tables 2–4). The importance and growing acceptance of masstige dawns from the fact that 15 noted publications were found on masstige or related terms (Table 2) in the immediate 10 year period (Phase 1) after Silverstein and Fiske (2003) coined the term Masstige, in a Harvard Business Review article (It also include 2 studies which published before 2003 article). Whereas next three years, 2013–15 (Phase 2) witnessed 13 publications on masstige or related terms (Table 3). From 2016 till 2019 (Phase 3), we found 11 publications related to masstige (Table 4). The logic of deciding phases is to depict the increased interest in masstige phenomenon. First phase is taken as the first 10 years after publication of 2003 article (From 2003 to 2012). The logic of taking phase 2 as covering only three years is to demonstrate that for first 13 publications after Silverstein and Fiske (2003) article (There are two studies refereed in above table which were published before 2003), it took 10 years and for next 13 publications it took just three years. That way, the second phase represents a revived interest in masstige research. Thereafter third stage is till 2019. This period (3 years) has seen 11 publications. This depicts the increased interest in this research area and the growth of masstige brands. Gradually, 'masstige' phenomenon grounded in the unconventional approach has become an important part of the literature on luxury branding.

The seminal article by Silverstein and Fiske (2003) has been cited over 500 times. Many of those cited articles are based on luxury branding. We tried to find out the number of articles citing Silverstein and Fiske (2003) which have used masstige or related terms in title and abstract to understand the acceptance and impact of masstige strategy (Terms used in search include: 'masstige', 'trading up', 'bandwagon consumption', 'democratisation of luxury', 'mass affluence', 'populence', 'new luxury', 'mass prestige', 'accessible luxury', 'chav', 'bling', 'massification', 'globalization of luxury', 'premiumness', 'luxurification of society', 'prestige brands', 'mass luxury', 'luxurification' and 'diffusion brands'). In 11 articles, we found use of the following eight terms (masstige or synonyms for masstige) in the title– 'masstige' (Kumar & Paul, 2018; Paul, 2015; Truong et al., 2009), 'trading up' (Ko & Sung, 2007), 'bandwagon consumption' (Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2012), populence (Granot et al., 2013), 'new luxury' (Fujioka, Li, & Kaneko, 2017; Truong et al., 2009), 'mass prestige' (Kumar & Paul, 2018), 'accessible luxury' (Aagerup, 2018), and 'diffusion brands' (Arora et al., 2015). As masstige marketing is a phenomenon based on unconventional way of marketing luxury or premium brands, this relatively low number of articles on masstige also indicate that there are research gaps and opportunities for future research grounded in the idea of unconventional way of marketing premium brands such as Apple, Strabucks, Victoria's secret, Armani, hotels like Ritz Carlton, Singapore Airways, Swiss Airlines etc.

In addition, many other terms which represent masstige are neither found in the title nor in the abstract but they are used elsewhere in the papers. The repeated references and usage of the term masstige in the literature for luxury branding highlights its potential and significance.

6. Masstige-luxury continuum

As masstige marketing is primarily the downward extension of premium brands, it has been a dilemma for scholars to find a place for it in existing luxury branding literature. Different scholars have attempted to segregate the masstige concept from luxury. Yet, there is confusion around the point where masstige consumption ends and luxury consumption begins. The confusion is further substantiated by various terms used for luxury and masstige such as, 'accessible super premium', 'old luxury brand extension' (Silverstein & Fiske, 2003), 'traditional luxury brands', 'new luxury brands', 'middle range brands' (Truong et al., 2009), 'traditional luxury market' (Truong et al., 2008),

'exclusivity', 'mass consumption' (Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2012), 'luxury', 'premium', 'upmarket', (Vigneron & Johnson, 1999b), 'luxury', 'premium', 'massification' (Dall'Olmo Riley et al., 2013), 'uniluxury', 'uberluxury', 'mass exclusivity', 'mass luxury', 'ready to luxe' (Dollet, Díaz, Moya, & Solís, 2017) etc. All this has created confusion about what should be treated as a masstige brand. After a comprehensive review, we have tried to do away with this confusion regarding the positioning of masstige brands by introducing the mass-luxury brand continuum.

We have looked at this placement from multiple dimensions which include price, consumer income, brands, market, consumption, status and exclusivity. Masstige marketing and the associated brands are to be considered as different from other type of brands and their marketing. Masstige is also to be looked as a differentiation strategy. Hence masstige can give rise to a separate segment. Making their products look different is termed as best strategy (Villas-Boas, 1998) which a marketer can afford. Especially if the differences are created to extent the product line by establishing a high end segment or low end segment, the product line would still be profitable (Villas-Boas, 1998). Masstige marketing give marketer a way to achieve this by exercising the downward extension. For prestige brands, brand extensions have generally been accepted by consumers (Monga & John, 2010). The segregation of these extensions from parent brands or from competing brands might looked blurred which need explanation to realise the existing difference. Fig. 2 depicts the mass-luxury continuum which shows how masstige is different from other related constructs/metaphors. The horizontal line for different dimensions depicts the spread or range. To exemplify from the perspective of market (which is the second dimension in the continuum), the market which caters to low income group for necessity-based consumption offers common products at low or moderate price. Similarly, masstige market (purple line) which is called with different names including new luxury (blue line), sells upmarket brands (brown line) to consumers. Further, masstige market is related with prestige consumption (green line) and it is the middle-income group (red line) which is ready to pay moderate premium (pink line) for masstige consumption. The figure also depicts that the spread for masstige market enters into premium brands as extension of upmarket brands. It indicates that the prestige seeking middle class consumer can even stretch to pay more than the moderate premium. Masstige comes below both old luxury and traditional luxury .The lower range of old luxury goods can be clubbed together with the brands which are priced relatively high targeting the middle-class consumers who are willing to pay premium because of the perception of mass prestige. This can be understood through the lens of already documented literature which agrees that consumers would tend to consider a high quality product while still being price conscious (Moorthy, 1988). Consumers indulge in luxury consumption to attain and maintain the desired social class (Dogan et al., 2018) and to achieve uniqueness and status (Stokburger-Sauer & Teichmann, 2013), whereas consumers indulge in masstige consumption to achieve status and to satisfy the aspirations for these brands with their rise in income (Bauer et al., 2011). Keeping this in consideration, the mass-luxury continuum helps to distinguish masstige from other related constructs.

To further understand the Masstige and its role in luxury branding literature, we also propose how a masstige brand can be developed. Fig. 3 depicts the marketing mix which can be followed in order to develop a masstige brand. Brand managers keep the prices relatively high or high once their brand has mass prestige. A product or service should be subjected to innovation right from its birth so that it can be differentiated from others. It is important to communicate the prestige by look and feel of the product or the place. Such a product or service should be supported for its masstige image by introducing it at relatively-high or high price. Once priced, experimentations with the prices should be avoided. The mass prestige attempted in product and price must be supported by the place where the brand is sold. A controlled and selective distribution along with direct marketing is the key. Promotion also has a vital role to play in formulating a masstige brand. The prestige must be supported by premium packaging, selective endorsers and execution of advertising on selective communication media. It is better if below-the-line advertising is used at optimal level to communicate the prestigious-ness of the brand. Further to note is the double-sided arrows in Fig. 3 depicting that all the four Ps are not in isolation,

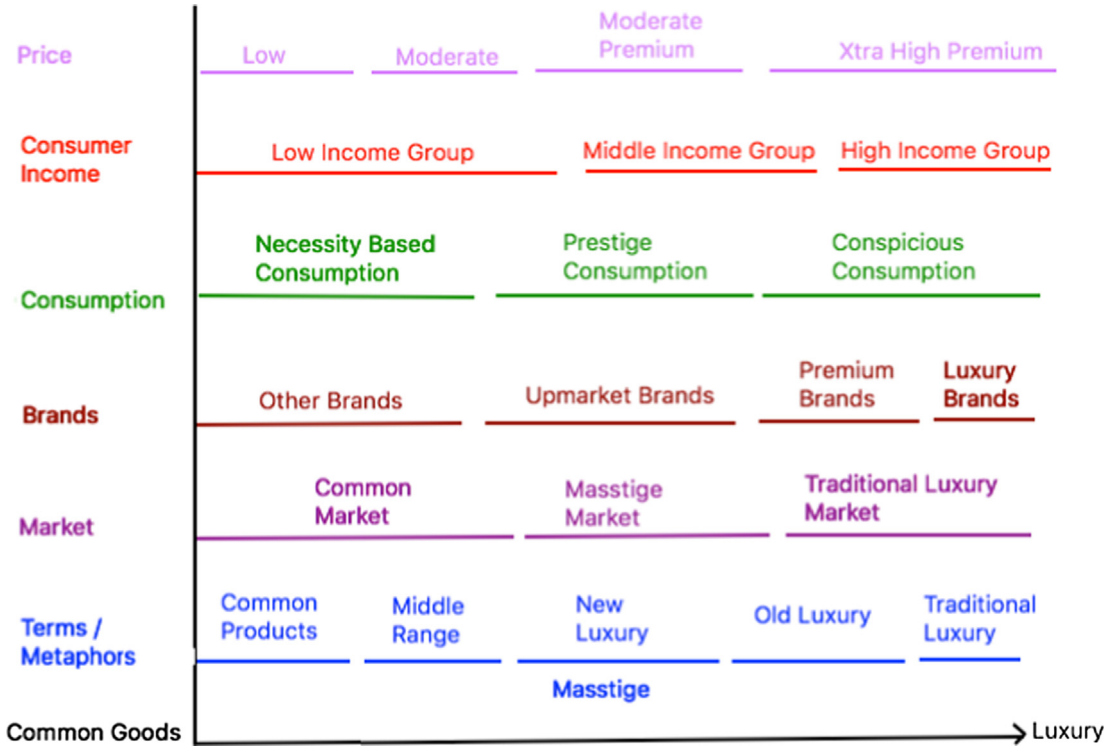


Fig. 2. Mass-luxury continuum.

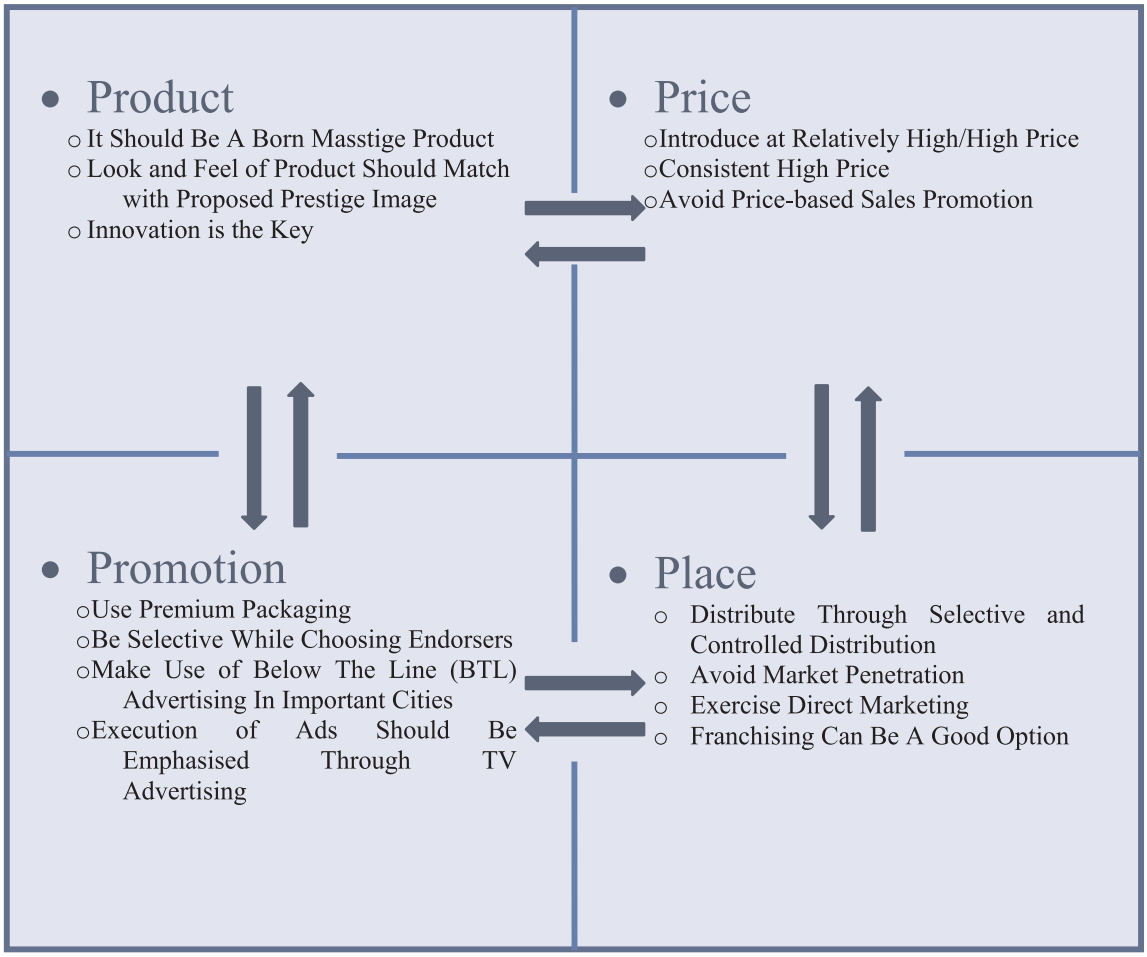


Fig. 3. Developing A Masstige brand and its marketing mix.

they are interconnected with each other. Change in any one would have impact on all other Ps. It can be said that price could be fixed as relatively high or premium, as an outcome of the mass prestige grounded in Product/service, promotion and place strategies. Thus, masstige value is a function of three Ps strategies, i.e. Product/ service, promotion and place; but not price.

7. Discussion

Reviewed Literature demonstrates that masstige marketing is an optimistic strategy to offer premium goods or services at an affordable price to the masses. Over a period of time, it has become an inherent part of the literature on branding. Specifically, it is the downward extension of luxury branding. It is known by different names, however, the term Masstige has gained tremendous acceptance among scholars. Masstige need to be viewed as different from luxury. Masstige brands are mainly used by those who are high on self-consciousness and are trying to achieve their ideal self. To further clarify this distinction and to highlight the significance of masstige, a Mass-Luxury continuum is introduced in this article. This continuum aims to position masstige in branding theory using multiple dimensions. Further, masstige brands have enormous potential ahead with a large market waiting to be explored. For a price conscious middle-income consumer, masstige strategy is an alluring alternative which provides a win-win situation for both the marketer and the consumer.

This review synthesized the themes researched by scholars. For example, till now, we have seen that research in the area of masstige is conducted in few countries, across limited number of brands. Lack of studies in the area of services (brands in sectors such as airlines, banks, insurance etc.) opens up new opportunities to carry out research in services industries too. Until now, we only see quantitative approach being used to understand the concept of masstige. There is only one measure (Masstige Mean Index or Masstige Mean score scale) available to estimate masstige value. Therefore, a synthesis of this masstige literature is depicted in Fig. 4 in a Tree format. The tree depicts the areas of masstige which are researched, along with it also highlights which are unexplored areas. Therefore, the tree speaks of further scope of masstige research in terms of its various aspects like geographic coverage, products, brands, methods used to study and measures.

8. Agenda for future research

Masstige strategy is relatively new and the masstige marketing is a novel topic which has started gaining attention of scholars in recent times. The extant literature has explored the construct from varied dimensions. There is potential to compute masstige value using MMI and compare from cross-cultural perspective. In addition, there are opportunities to explore the construct from many different angles. Following the prior reviews (Paul & Rosado-Serrano, 2019), we provide directions for future research in this area using Theory, Method and Context (TMC) framework.

8.1. Theory

Brand equity tenets have been widely researched so far (Arya, Sethi, & Paul, 2019; Gilal, Paul, Gilal, & Gilal, 2019; Paul & Bhakar, 2018). Nevertheless, masstige tenets have not been replicated in research. As the concept of masstige has emerged from the tenets of brand equity, it

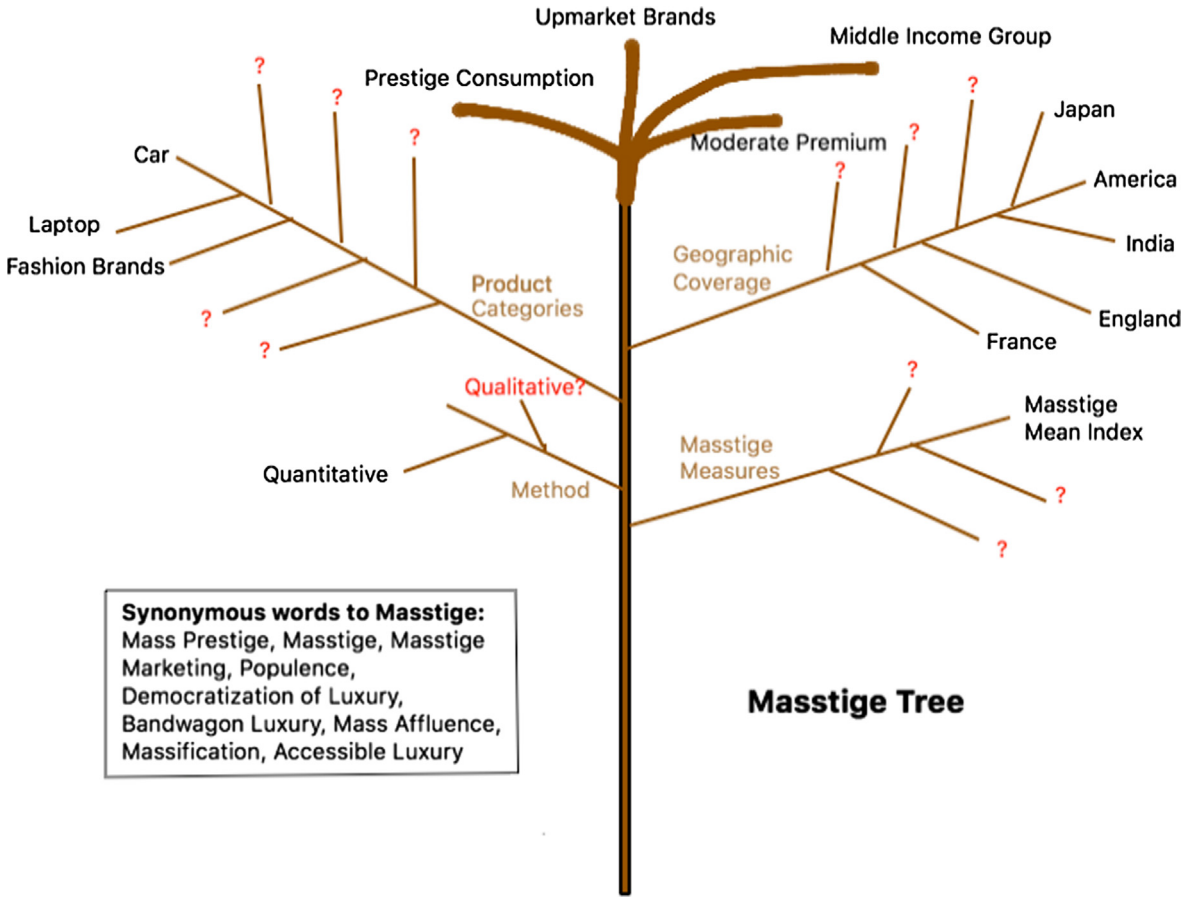


Fig. 4. Masstige tree.

is not an independent stream of study. While luxury is a well-researched topic in marketing literature, masstige is relatively new with scope for further development. Masstige marketing is part of the larger ecosystem of branding literature. Masstige and its measures (Masstige Mean score scale) can be treated as a measure of brand equity (Paul, 2015). Outside the few exceptions such as Kumar and Paul (2018), the contribution of masstige towards consumer-based brand equity has been less explored. Thus, the exploration of the relationship between masstige marketing and brand equity or other brand constructs will be an important contribution towards the theory of branding. This will not only help to increase the share of theoretical contribution of masstige marketing towards brand equity, but also cement the position of masstige in brand equity theory. In addition, we propose to future researchers to extend the application of masstige model, measure and theory in the context of service sector brands as it has so far been focused on product-based brands only. The same methods and measures, for example, Masstige Mean Score Scale and Masstige Index could be used for measuring masstige value for service brands also. For example, there are opportunities to carry out research and estimate the masstige value of hotel brands such as Ritz Carlton, Marriot, Hilton, Best Western Plus, etc. using MMSS. Mass prestige value of service brands such as Uber, Lyft, Ola and MyTaxi, etc. can also be estimated in a given country or across countries or independent studies can be conducted in different states of a specific country and compare the masstige values in different states using the MMSS. Similar studies could be undertaken in industries such as airlines, financial services such as banks and insurance brands. For instance, masstige value of banking brands such as Chase, Citi and Bank of America could be estimated in the United States. The same research could be conducted in developing nations like India estimating the masstige value of foreign banks (Citi, Barclays, etc.) versus domestic public (State Bank of India, Union Bank of India) versus private (ICICI, Axis) banks. This can be proposed as a research question, as follows:

RQ1 - The concept of masstige is equally important in services and it can be applied across all competing services brands to compare the Masstige value to analyse their success or failure in a market.

Thus, we derive a testable proposition, which could be used as a hypothesis in future studies.

Higher the masstige value of a brand, higher the probability to succeed in that market.

Theoretical foundation of masstige is considerably weak to answer important questions such as why consumers involve in such consumption. Though literature has hypothesized the need to attain status and the ideal self as reasons behind masstige consumption (Kumar & Paul, 2018), there is still scope for further empirical evidences and navigate the other underlying motives for such consumption. Luxury consumption has been explored from this perspective quite a lot. There are multiple reasons and explanations for consumption of prestigious goods or services (Garfein, 1989). These explanations can be called as the antecedents of 'masstige consumption'. Some of the important antecedents of masstige/luxury consumption include: traits of consumer (Dogan et al., 2018), symbolic meaning (Dogan et al., 2018), exclusivity (Brun & Castelli, 2013), status (Dall'Olmo Riley et al., 2013), country of origin (Brun & Castelli, 2013), etc. The difference between luxury and masstige indicate that there will be differences in their antecedents. This entice us to propose another set of research questions:

RQ2 - Masstige consumption is linked to attainment of ideal-self through services and products consumption.

RQ3 - Antecendents of luxury and masstige consumption are different from each other.

Barring few studies such as Kastanakis and Balabanis (2012), there are no direct references to the reasons behind masstige consumption by consumers. While the topic is in formative stages, research along this

dimension would be an important contribution towards developing a robust understanding of masstige and theory development in this area. We also propose that masstige strategy is to be looked from theoretical perspective. Literature has to move from masstige strategy to masstige theory. When properly developed, Masstige Theory, in our view would help explaining the relationship of masstige with product/service, promotion and place which points towards development of masstige brands by choosing an optimal mix of product/service, promotion and place. The same can be depicted with an equation:

Masstige = f (Product/Service, Promotion, Place strategies) where prices are kept high. This could have great acceptance from a theoretical lens if more researchers get motivated to engage in this area for theory development and for applying the theoretical models and tenets.

Pertaining to above discussion we propose:

RQ4 - Masstige consumption can be explained as a function of product/service, promotion and place provided that prices are kept higher.

8.2. Methods

Extant literature reveals that quantitative methodology has been predominantly adopted to understand masstige consumption so far. There is only one notable scale available (Masstige Mean Index) to operationalize the masstige value for brands. To comment on the robustness of such existing methods as Masstige Mean Index, the scale can be scrutinized and applied in different conditions, at different places, and on various product or service categories. Unless the existing measures are operationalized and evaluated critically, the advancement will not take place. This process contributes to the maturity of the construct and its measurement. In order to improvise the existing methods, such methods should be subjected to operationalization in wider contexts. This extensive testing will help take the construct and its measurement and the research methods closer to maturity. Scholars could also think about applying other methods such as Factor analysis, Partial least squares, and structural equation modelling for future research in this area using Masstige strategy.

Another dimension of the methodology found missing in present literature is the qualitative aspect of masstige consumption. Theoretical roots of masstige consumption point out that consumers high on self-consciousness are better targets for masstige brands as masstige brands are used to attain social status and are used as an approach towards ideal self. However, the concepts of self-consciousness, social status and ideal self are all grounded in the psychological framework of consumers' mind. In order to understand such complex framework, qualitative method can be a good alternative. The qualitative aspects may enable us to answer the questions such as: Will in-depth interviews, focus groups, personal interviews reveal hitherto hidden dimensions and perspective of masstige? Even luxury consumption (from where the masstige consumption has originated) has been studied from the perspective of such dimensions (Walley et al., 2013). The latent reason for indulging in masstige consumption can be attained by in-depth interviews (For example, a respondent who is using masstige brand may be asked why he/she is using this brand without letting him/her know the reason of the same). It is also recommended to look at luxury consumption from psychological perspective (Husic & Cicic, 2009). This could be taken as a basis to propose that future researchers could attempt to test the propositions pertaining to methods adopted for masstige like:

RQ 5 - Masstige consumption for services/products can be explained equally well or even better with qualitative methodology.

Researchers interested in this proposition and qualitative method of research could carry out primary research interviewing consumers of premium brands with a structured questionnaire on the rationale for their purchase and willingness to pay premium price and delve into the factors determining their consumer behaviour and purchase intention. Such studies can be undertaken in the case of brands in the services industries or brands in non-service sectors.

8.3. Context

Like other marketing constructs, masstige is not immune to variations. Pertaining to existing marketing theories, it can be hypothesized that perception of consumer towards masstige changes when context is changed. The context can be so important that a brand may be perceived differently in terms of its masstige value in different markets. For example, domestic brand Ford is found to score low in terms of mass prestige in USA in comparison with Japanese brands Toyota and Honda (Paul, 2018), similarly, Kumar and Paul (2018) have found that foreign (American) brands have high value of mass prestige in India. Contextualizing such findings, it can be hypothesized that a brand from a developed country might have high mass prestige value in an emerging market. Therefore, context is important and it plays an important role in understanding the construct. It may excite scholars to explore some important context-based research propositions such as:

RQ 6 - How different country/industry context/ situations and circumstances affect the mass-luxury continuum?

RQ 7 - How consumers in developing countries respond to masstige brands in comparison to consumers from developed countries?

RQ 8 - How consumers perceive a masstige brand formed afresh in comparison to a masstige brand formed as a result of downward extension?

Another important research point could be understanding luxury and masstige from the perspective of country of origin. As reported in literature, research on luxury branding and country of origin is skewed towards a few countries (Examples include Italian leather, Swiss Watch, etc.) although the contribution towards luxury branding research has been reported from across the globe. As masstige is a mass phenomenon, masstige (unlike luxury) should find its manifestation across many more markets around the world. However, the geographic spread of research on "masstige marketing' is limited to France, England, America, Japan and India (Fig. 4). With the vast scope of masstige, the past coverage is miniscule. Scholars can attempt to understand masstige around the globe as it is more practical to indulge in masstige consumption as compared to luxury consumption. To measure the 'masstige' value and to compare it with the competing brands in the same industry, scholars can use several brands such as Singapore Airlines, Apple, Starbucks, Victoria's Secret, Gucci, and Swizz watch in a local country context, or any other premium brand in an emerging country context.

Another context related proposition is the scrutiny of masstige along various product categories. It is interesting to note that cars (Paul, 2018; Truong et al., 2008), apparel (Truong et al., 2009), fashion brands (Paul, 2015), laptop brands (Kumar & Paul, 2018) are the product categories which have been explored for masstige brands so far (Fig. 4). Masstige strategy can be extended to all those product and service categories which may be used by consumers to attain their ideal self by paying relatively high prices but without spending excessively. It is an important aspect of the application of masstige brands which has been highlighted by prior researchers. There are some promising applications of masstige in specific services which are hitherto unattended. Some of these can be -

RQ 9 - Mass prestige value of Airline or hotel or banking brands (or any service brand) in a country could be estimated and compared using Massitge Mean Score Scale.

For example, the Masstige value of airlines from the US (American, United, Delta) and foreign airlines in the US (Singapore Airways, Qatar Airways, Cathay Pacific) can be compared and analyzed. Similar studies can be conducted in all other country contexts too. For example, Mass prestige value of domestic airlines (All Nippon Airlines, Japan Airlines) and foreign airlines (Emirates, Thai, American) in Japan, using data from consumers, could be computed and compared and the results will have important practical implications for marketers. On the other hand,

such comparative studies can also be undertaken to compare the Mass prestige of public sector and private sector brands in a country in several industries such as airlines, hotels, banking and financial services etc. The impact of mass prestige on market share can also be analyzed measuring cause and effect relationship between the two applying regression and other techniques. Like any construct, masstige strategy will take time to mature as a concept. At this stage, every study around masstige will be an important contribution in this area. Moreover, there are opportunities to develop robust measures to quantify masstige and propensity to buy masstige brands.

9. Conclusion

Pertaining to the review of masstige literature, it can be concluded that masstige is gaining popularity among scholars. It is equally welcomed by marketers and consumers both. It can be clearly stated that masstige as a concept has evolved from luxury literature but at the same time it is quite different from traditional luxury. Whereas the interest in masstige has increased, yet there is lot of scope in the theoretical evolution of masstige. Currently, the exploration of masstige is limited to certain product categories, geographic regions and methodologies, which can be further extended to many products, brands, countries and industry contexts and thus taking the concept towards maturity. It would be prudent to use different methods for analysis too. There is lot of scope of contribution towards masstige theory, method and context. From marketers' perspectives, when competition is intensifying sky-high, masstige strategy is a boon. Marketers till now have been successful in downward extension and consumers are looking upward to masstige brands for fulfilling their ideal self. This review has provided a window to look back towards masstige from its inception till date. Along with, the review has also contributed towards masstige literature in terms of segregating the masstige from luxury clearly. Nevertheless, it is important to place on record the relative newness of the masstige as a concept is one of its potential limitations. Masstige strategy and theory are still in evolution stage and therefore generalizing anything about it without evidences would not be prudent.

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