

Understanding Masstige through TCCM: A Systematic Review

Jesika^{1*} | Dhun²

¹Student, Indraprastha College for Women, University of Delhi, Delhi.

²Assistant Professor, Indraprastha College for Women, University of Delhi, Delhi.

*Corresponding Author: jesikarajput04@gmail.com

Citation: Jesika, J. & Dhun, D. (2026). *Understanding Masstige through TCCM: A Systematic Review*. *International Journal of Advanced Research in Commerce, Management & Social Science*, 09(01(II)), 216–224. [https://doi.org/10.62823/IJARC MSS/9.1\(II\).8740](https://doi.org/10.62823/IJARC MSS/9.1(II).8740)

ABSTRACT

Masstige is a concept of combining mass accessibility with prestige, emerging as an important marketing strategy. The current research aims to provide a structured and comprehensive understanding of masstige marketing by conducting a Systematic Literature Review using the TCCM framework. A total of 40 peer-reviewed articles were selected from the Scopus database using the PRISMA method. The findings of the research reveal that Masstige theory, Customer-based equity, and Downward Line extension Theory, are the most frequently applied. Most of the studies focuses on emerging markets, like India, Highlighting its importance in rapidly developing countries. The studies mainly concentrate on consumer motivation, brand engagement, social media influence, and purchase intention. The research is mainly centered on industries like fashion, cosmetics, and technology, with a strong reliance on quantitative survey methods. However, key gaps exist, including limited research in service sectors, lack of geographical diversity, minimal exploration of e-masstige, and the dominance of cross-sectional quantitative designs.

Keywords: Masstige, Luxury for the Mass, E-masstige, PRISMA, Systematic Literature Review, TCCM.

Introduction

A totally new concept of luxury emerged in recent years called “masstige” or “luxury for the mass”. The word “Masstige” was first introduced by “Silverstein and Fiske” in 2003 in their “Harvard Business Review article” “Luxury for the mass” meaning products which provide a sense of premium Ness while being affordable for the mass (Michael J. Silverstein & Neil Fiske, 2003). Masstige brands are those brands that make consumers feel luxury, comfort and high status while using these products and services which are priced in such a way that not just rich but middle-class people can also afford them (Rodrigues et al., 2024). In this global competitive environment, branding is now playing an important role in shaping consumers' perceptions (Narake & Dharmadhikari, 2024). Masstige marketing combines luxury to be affordable by the mass, creating products and services that are premium looking yet accessible (Dhingra & Sharma, 2025).

Originally masstige marketing started from the base of providing people with luxury that is easily available and affordable (Fatima, 2024). It is now an important marketing strategy in both new and already established markets. Researchers have examined various dimensions of masstige marketing in past decades, including consumer perception, purchase intentions, brand engagement, and market strategies (Anis et al., 2023; Burhanudin & Septianti, 2024; Mansoor et al., 2024; Suzuki & Kanno, 2022).

In recent times the interest in masstige marketing is increasing, still the research is scattered. Studies use different methods in masstige, which makes it difficult to understand. To solve this gap, this research used the TCCM framework to look at the theory, context, characteristics, and methodology to arrange and analyze past studies. This research will help in providing a clear overview and will further

show areas for future studies. The present research by using the TCCM framework provides a structured overview of masstige, providing clear insights and direction for future study.

The study is guided by several research questions to provide a comprehensive understanding of masstige marketing research. It seeks to identify the most used theories in masstige marketing literature, examine the major contexts explored in existing studies including geographical regions and industries, and analyze the key focus areas and variables addressed by researchers. Additionally, the study aims to evaluate the research methodologies, designs, and data collection approaches adopted in previous research. Finally, it addresses the question of what research gaps exist in the current literature and what directions can be suggested for future research in the field of masstige marketing.

Literature Review

The term "masstige" means products which provide a sense of luxury for the mass and explore the rise of masstige phenomenon (Michael J. Silverstein & Neil Fiske, 2003). Previous studies found that consumers now demand products which are high quality and premium-looking, but they don't want to spend too much on them (Rodrigues et al., 2024). Higher masstige brand value leads to higher positive results such as brand happiness, brand loyalty, and electronic word-of-mouth, which make brand value an important factor (Dhingra & Sharma, 2025; Park & Ahn, 2025; Rodrigues et al., 2024). Previous findings show that both external motivations, like status and prestige, and internal motivations, like self-fulfillment, are driving the masstige consumption and consumer wants are influenced by these motivations and results in outcomes like brand happiness and consumer involvement in masstige situations (Roy et al., 2025).

Existing literature suggests that masstige marketing has emerged as an important strategy that combines prestige with affordability, enabling brands to target aspirational consumers (Silverstein & Fiske, 2003). Studies indicate that masstige brands offer a sense of status and exclusivity while remaining accessible to the middle class (Truong et al., 2009). Researchers have also found that consumer perception of masstige is largely influenced by perceived value, including functional, emotional, and social dimensions (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001).

Several studies highlight the role of psychological and social factors such as the need for the status, need for the uniqueness, and social comparison in shaping consumer behavior towards the masstige brands (Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2014). It has been observed that brand engagement, brand trust, and brand prestige significantly influence purchase intention and consumer loyalty (Shah et al., 2021; Rodrigues et al., 2024). Furthermore, digital platforms and social media play a crucial role, as influencer marketing and electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) strongly impact consumer attitudes and behavior (Park et al., 2021).

The literature also shows that most studies have been conducted in emerging markets such as India and China, where rising income levels and changing lifestyles drive masstige consumption (Hung & Chen, 2012). In terms of industry focus, prior research mainly examines sectors such as fashion, cosmetics, and technology, while service-based industries remain underexplored (Shah et al., 2021).

This study addresses the evolution of masstige, exploring its key theories, contexts, constructs, and methodologies, then identifying the gaps for future study.

Research Methodology

The present study uses a systematic literature review (SLR) to arrange and analyze masstige research. To ensure transparency and consistency in the review process, the study follows the PRISMA 2020 (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines (Page et al., 2021). PRISMA gives a structured framework for identifying, screening, and selecting relevant studies and enhancing the reliability and validity of the review.

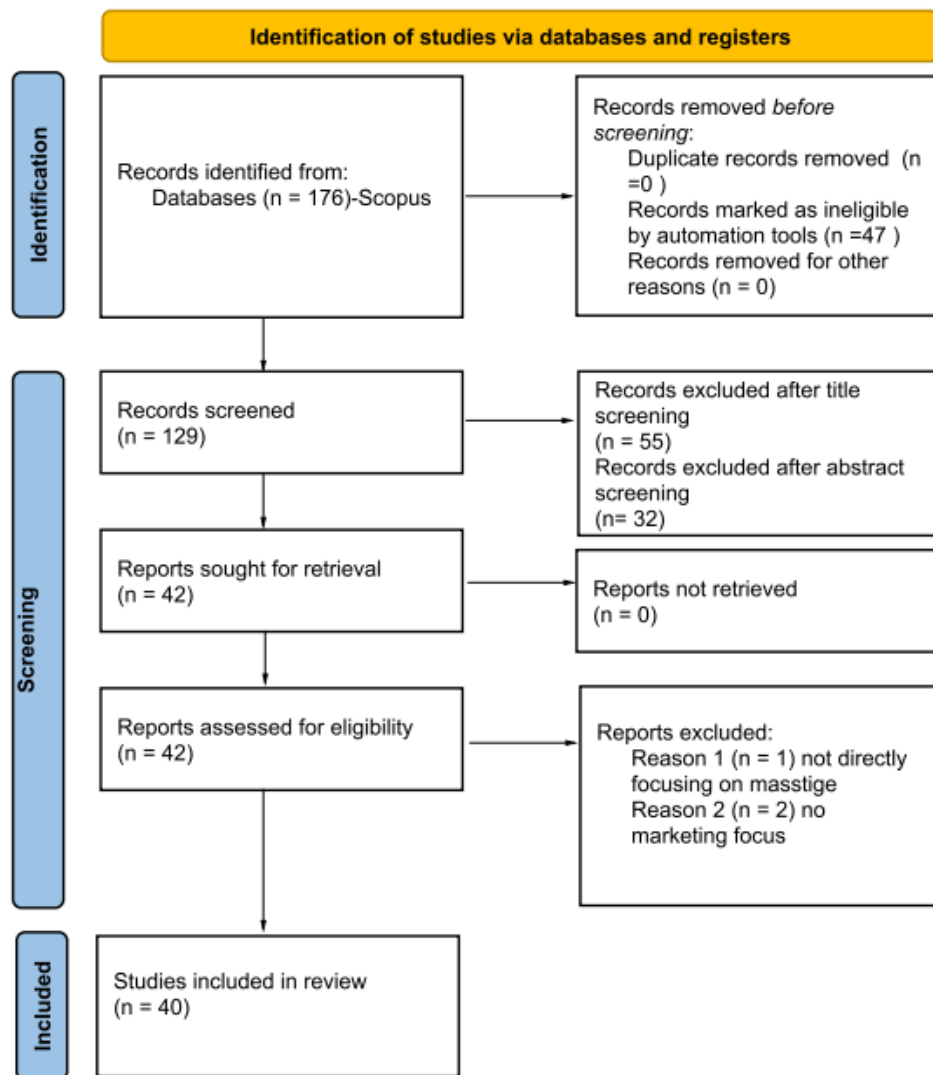


Figure 1: Prisma Framework Adopte by this Review

In the identification stage, relevant studies were retrieved using the Scopus database. Scopus was selected because it is one of the largest and most comprehensive abstract and citation databases of peer-reviewed literature, covering a wide range of high-quality journals across disciplines (Elsevier, 2023). A keyword string was used to ensure comprehensive coverage of the topic.

Title-Abs-Key “accessibility of luxury” OR “luxury for masses” OR “luxury-lite” OR “mass affluence” OR “mass prestige” OR “masstige marketing” OR “masstige brands” OR “masstige”.

To refine the search results, specific filters were applied. Only English-language journal articles were included to ensure consistency and ease of interpretation. Additionally, the focus was on peer-reviewed journal articles, as they are considered more reliable (Paul & Rosado-Serrano, 2019). Other document types such as conference papers, book chapters, and reports were excluded to maintain quality and comparability across studies.

In the initial search, a total of 176 articles were identified. In the screening stage, duplicate records were removed, and titles and abstracts were carefully reviewed to exclude studies that were not directly relevant to masstige marketing.

Lastly, the full texts of the remaining articles were assessed based on predefined inclusion criteria. These criteria included relevance to masstige marketing, availability of full-text articles, and publication in peer-reviewed journals. Studies that did not meet these criteria were excluded.

Finally, 40 articles were selected for in-depth analysis. It uses the TCCM framework (Theory, Context, Characteristics, Methodology) (Rosado-Serrano et al., 2018). The main objective is to identify the dominant theories, research contexts, key constructs, and methodological approaches used in studies examining masstige.

Findings

Following the TCCM study, this paper reviews the main theories, contexts, characteristics, and methodology in existing masstige research.

Theory (T)

The Theory section explains which theories were being used in previous studies. A thorough review of selected 40 articles revealed that 20 distinct theoretical perspectives and frameworks are being used to understand the masstige. These theories help in forming the fundamental basis of masstige, highlighting how consumer perception, motivations and engagements are shaped by brand perspectives (Rodrigues et al., 2024). Among all, Masstige Theory (Paul, 2018, 2019), Consumer-based brand equity (CBBE) (Singh & Alagarsamy, 2020), downward line Extension Theory (Boisvert & Ashill, 2018), and perceived value theory (Jebarajakirthy & Das, 2021; Spears & Singh, 2004) have emerged as the most dominant.

Many studies applied CBBE theory to understand how perceptions of consumers, preferences, and experiences drive success of brands. In the masstige domain, CBBE is used to explore how brand identification, trust, and prestige influence purchase intentions (Rodrigues et al., 2024). Studies in India and UAE (Husain, 2025) examined how brand identification and engagement mediate the effect of brand prestige on consumer behavior. Similarly, another research (Anning-Dorson & Tackie, 2025; Paul et al., 2025) highlighted the mediating role of brand happiness and consumer pride in enhancing masstige brand loyalty. CBBE emphasizes that brand equity is co-created with consumers and that companies must proactively manage brand experiences, promises, and perceptions to maintain competitive advantage (Oh, Kim, & Anselmsson, 2020).

Tools like Masstige Mean Score Scale (MMSS) and Masstige Mean Index (MMI) are frequently used to quantify consumer perceptions. Studies on smartphones and luxury collaborations utilized MMSS to measure how consumer perceived luxury-like qualities in affordable products.

Downward Line Extension Theory explains how luxury brands explain into lower-priced products segments to capture price-sensitive consumers without diminishing brand equity (Boisvert & Ashill, 2018). Pakistan and Indian studies highlight that luxury watch, and smartphones brands use this approach to attract aspirational consumers. By offering entry-level products within premium brand lines, companies extend their customer base and maintain brand loyalty among high-end consumers. Emotional functional, and symbolic benefits influence masstige consumption decision, in studies on Indian cosmetics and fashion products, perceived value was a mediator between masstige brand attributes and consumer loyalty (Singh et al., 2023; Paul et al., 2025; Das et al., 2022). Many studies integrate perceived value with different frameworks, such as S-O-R, or CBBE, to provide a better understanding of masstige consumer behavior.

Some other additional theories to understand the masstige consumption. Theory of planned behavior (TPB) is used for intention, attitude, and behavioral control (Shahid et al., 2024; Saavedra & Bautista, 2020). Social Comparison and source credibility theory includes the use of celebrity endorsements, social media, and brand envy (Gilal et al., 2024). Acculturation and cultural theories help in cross-cultural variations in masstige perception and purchase intention, mainly in India (Gilal et al., 2024). Psychological Trait Theories examined how factors like narcissism, need for uniqueness, and social ideal self-influence conspicuous or inconspicuous consumption (Anning-Dorson & Tackie, 2025; Wang et al., 2022; Kumar et al., 2021). Relationship managed theory explored the impact of e-WOM and social media marketing on perceived masstige brand value and relationship quality (Srivastava & Sinha, 2025). Recent studies applied digital ethnography and semiotic analysis to understand online consumer sentiment and cultural influences on masstige perception (Binshad & Bhattacharya, 2025; Billo et al., 2022).

A notable trend is combining traditional consumer behavior theories with masstige-specific constructs, highlighting a maturing theoretical foundation. Some recent studies adopt modern digital and social media perspectives, signaling the influence of online brand communication on masstige consumption (Infas Malik & Jain, 2024; Binshad & Bhattacharya, 2025; Bilro et al., 2022).

Context (C)

The context section of the research examines Where or in what situations the studies are conducted.

India emerges as the most studied market, reflecting the rapid growth of masstige consumption among millennials and Gen Z (Husain, 2025; Rodrigues et al., 2024; Kapoor et al., 2025; Shahid et al., 2025; Paul et al., 2025; Srivastava & Sinha, 2025; Infas Malik & Jain, 2024; Soni, 2022; Das et al., 2022a, 2022b; Das et al., 2021a, 2021b; Goyal, 2020; Saavedra & Bautista, 2020; Kumar & Paul, 2018). Whereas, other key markets are emerging Asian markets Bangladesh (Chowdhury & Shamsher, 2025), China (Rodrigues et al., 2024; Infas Malik & Jain, 2024), Pakistan (Shah & Shah, 2024). Then Western markets USA (Saavedra & Bautista, 2020; Baber et al., 2020; Goyal, 2020; Kumar et al., 2021), France (Saavedra & Bautista, 2020), Canada (Shahid et al., 2025; Mansoor et al., 2024). Also, some multi-country studied are India & UAE (Husain, 2025), India & Canada (Shahid et al., 2025; Mansoor et al., 2024), Asia & Central Europe (Burhanudin & Septianti, 2024).

In the field of masstige the most dominating sector is Fashion and apparel which is studied in most of the masstige studies. After fashion the next sector on which masstige focused technology and electronics including Smartphones and laptops. Hospitality sector is also included in the masstige field; it includes hotels, restaurants, and airlines. Other sector covered in the masstige studies are cosmetics which includes Indian as well as global brands. Whereas Automobiles were covered which included cars. Few luxury collaborations are also analyzed in this field including Disney and Titan wristwatch.

The studies cover both product-based (fashion, electronics, cosmetics, automobiles) and service-based contexts (hospitality, restaurants), demonstrating the versatility of masstige marketing applications. Emerging markets, especially India, are critical for examining the influence of culture, status aspirations, and purchasing power on masstige consumption.

Characteristics (C)

The Characteristics section explains the main variables of the factors which were studied in the previous research. The variables or factors which are used the most come under consumer motivation, Brand Engagement, Marketing and Communication, Purchase behavior, Cultural and Demographic factors. Recent research emphasizes emotional and symbolic dimensions alongside functional or monetary values. Social media and digital marketing contexts are becoming integral to understanding masstige brand engagement. Firstly The consumer motivation which means the reason why a customer wants to purchase any product or services including desire, uniqueness, hedonic and functional values, conspicuous vs inconspicuous consumption are used in different studies (Park & Ahn, 2025; Anning-Dorson & Tackie, 2025; Mansoor et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2022). Then the factor used by researchers on masstige is brand engagement which means how much a consumer interacts or feels connected to a brand which includes Prestige, identification, trust, relationship quality (Husain, 2025; Shahid et al., 2025; Srivastava & Sinha, 2025). Marketing and communication is another variable used by the past researchers that means the strategy through which any company promotes and talks about its product to customers including Influence of social media campaigns, nostalgic ads, Instagram Stories, e-WOM, and celebrity endorsements (Gilal et al., 2025; Sederevičiūtė-Pačiauskienė & Kamašauské, 2025; Binshad & Bhattacharya, 2025; Gilal et al., 2024; Ishaq et al., 2023). Purchase behavior is another factor which shows how and why customers decide to buy something including (Shah & Shah, 2025; Infas Malik & Jain, 2024; Gupta et al., 2023; Das et al., 2022; Bilro et al., 2022; Goyal, 2020; Baber et al., 2020). Cultural and demographic factors are the cultural, age, gender, income, etc that affects what people buy and studies using Cross-cultural variations, generational differences is seen in previous research (Rodrigues et al., 2025; Shahid et al., 2025; Shahid et al., 2024; Lee & Cho, 2023; Soni, 2023).

Methodology (M)

The methodology section shows how the research was conducted in previous studies. The most common method that is used by previous masstige studies are survey and structured questionnaires (Chowdhury & Shamsher, 2024; Husain, 2024; Rodrigues et al., 2024; Kapoor et al., 2023; Shahid et al., 2024; Paul et al., 2023; Srivastava & Sinha, 2023; Shah & Shah, 2023; Infas Malik & Jain, 2023; Mansoor et

al., 2022; Shahid et al., 2022; Chatterjee et al., 2022; Das et al., 2021; Das et al., 2020; Goyal, 2020; Baber et al., 2020; Paul, 2018; Paul & Kumar, 2019; Paul, 2019). Few experimental studies were also seen including Nostalgic advertising, Disney collaborations, and narrative perspective effects (Gilal et al., 2023; Lee & Cho, 2021). Some of the measurement tools that are frequently used MasCal scale, Masstige Mean Score Scale (MMSS), Masstige Mean Index (MMI), multi-group analysis, PLS-SEM, CB-SEM (Rodrigues et al., 2025; Ishaq et al., 2023; Goyal, 2020; Baber et al., 2020; Saavedra & Bautista, 2020). Focus groups and mind mapping are used to explore symbolic and identity-related values whereas Netnography & Sentiment Analysis is used for social media research (Sederevičiūtė-Pačiauskienė & Kamašauskė, 2023; Binshad & Bhattacharya, 2023; Bilro et al., 2021). Cross-sectional and multi-group designs were used to study moderation and cultural effects (Soni, 2021; Das et al., 2021; Das et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2022). Past researchers also Synthesizing past studies and exploring brand equity formation by Meta-analysis and Semantic network formation (Das et al., 2023; Park & Ahn, 2022).

By analyzing the studies, it can be evidently proved that Quantitative research dominates the field, often coupled with SEM-based analysis. Whereas Experimental designs and social media analytics reflect a shift towards behavioral and digital-focused research.

Research Gaps and Future Direction

The research highlighted a few gaps in the existing masstige marketing literature and suggests potential directions for the future.

First, a theoretical gap exists in the limited diversity of theoretical frameworks used in masstige studies. Many theories are applied, and many studies rely on similar consumer behavior perspectives. Future research should combine interdisciplinary theories from different markets like digital marketing, identity construction, and social signaling which help in interpreting masstige brands.

Second, the geographical distribution of research is very limited. Mainly studies are conducted by India and other emerging Asian markets, developed countries such as Europe and North America receive less attention. Future researchers should explore new geographical regions.

Third, most studies examined traditional products like fashion, cosmetics, and electronics, while service-based industries are largely underexplored. Future studies should explore and focus on industries including digital services, hospitality, etc.

Fourth, in terms of characteristics and constructs, many studies focus primarily on purchase intention, brand prestige, perceived value, and consumer engagement. However, limited attention has been given to long-term consumer behavior, such as brand loyalty, post-purchase satisfaction, and customer advocacy in masstige markets. Future studies should also examine emerging constructs such as consumer well-being, sustainability perceptions, ethical consumption, and digital brand communities, which are increasingly influencing consumer decision-making.

Last, Methodological gap is seen as quantitative survey-based research using SEM is dominating. While this approach helps test theoretical relationships, it may not fully capture the complex psychological and cultural meanings associated with masstige consumption. Future research should adopt mixed-method approaches, including qualitative methods such as interviews and experiments, to provide richer insight into masstige. In addition, longitudinal studies and big data analytics from social media platforms could help researchers understand evolving consumer perceptions and market trends.

Overall, addressing these theoretical, contextual, construct-based, and methodological gaps will contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of masstige marketing and provide valuable directions for future research in this evolving field.

Conclusion

This research is conducted by making a systematic literature of 40 research articles on Masstige using the TCCM framework to analyze the major theories, context, characteristics, and methodologies in masstige. The findings show that masstige research is mainly grounded in theories such as Masstige Theory, Customer-Based Brand Equity, and Perceived Value Theory, with a strong focus on emerging markets, particularly India. Mostly studies emphasize motivations of consumers, engagement with brands and purchase intention using Quantitative survey-based methods. However, gaps remain in terms of theoretical diversity, geographical contexts, and methodological approaches. Future research should explore new markets, incorporate interdisciplinary theories, and adopt mixed method designs to advance masstige marketing research.

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