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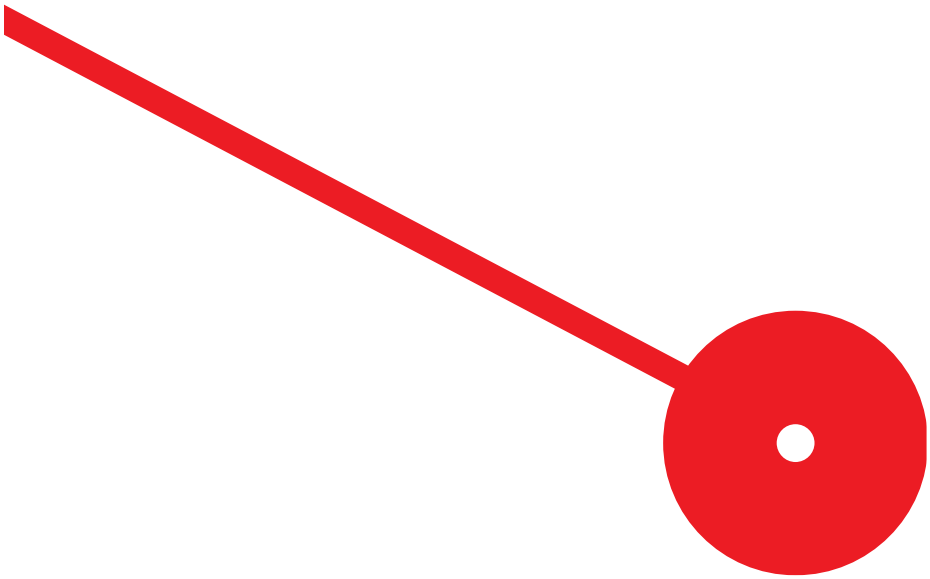
The Impact of User Experience on Masstige Value

Nuno Magro dos Santos

10/2024



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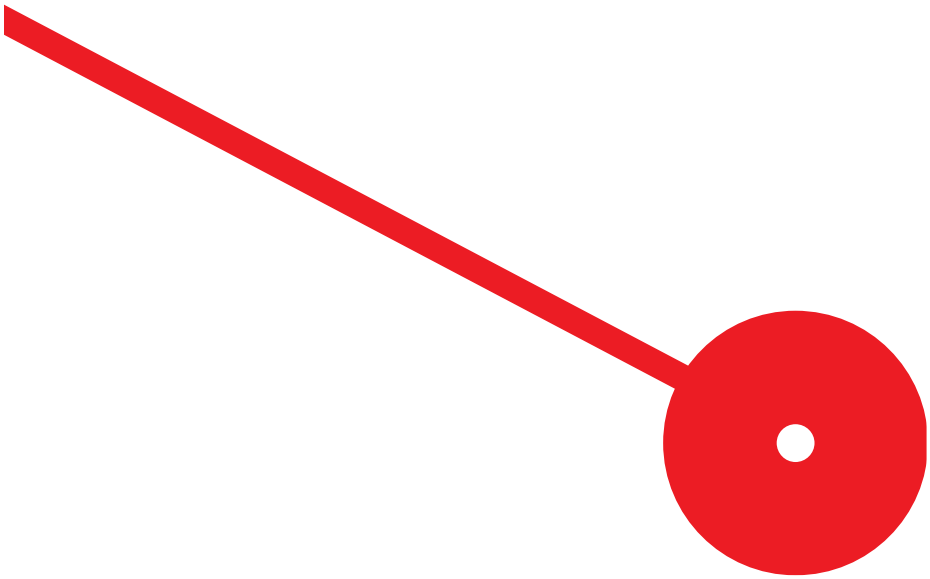
The Impact of User Experience on Masstige Value

Nuno Magro dos Santos

Dissertação de Mestrado apresentada ao Instituto Superior de Contabilidade e Administração do Porto para a obtenção do grau de Mestre em Negócio Eletrónico, sob orientação da Professora Doutora Inês Veiga Pereira.



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Agradecimentos

Expresso o meu profundo agradecimento a todas as pessoas que fizeram parte, de algum modo, neste momento fulcral da minha vida académica e pessoal.

À minha família, agradeço a inabalável força de motivação e resiliência que em mim sempre inspirará.

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À Professora Doutora Inês Veiga Pereira, pelo imprescindível aconselhamento que possibilitou a realização deste trabalho.

Muito obrigado a todos.

Resumo

A presente investigação tem como objetivo explorar e compreender o impacto de User Experience (Experiência do Consumidor) no valor Masstige de uma marca. Foi desenvolvido um modelo concetual de modo a prosseguir com a investigação. Este modelo integra o Standardized User Experience Percentile Questionnaire e a escala Masstige para medir a relação entre User Experience e Masstige.

O estudo empregou uma abordagem quantitativa, através de um questionário online. Foram obtidas 132 respostas, as quais foram analisadas utilizando o software SPSS, que incluiu análises exploratórias fatoriais e testes de fiabilidade.

Os resultados indicam uma correlação positiva entre a experiência do consumidor (User Experience) e o valor Masstige de uma marca. Especificamente, o Conhecimento de Marca e Prestígio, e a Qualidade Percecionada, são os conceitos que mais beneficiam de uma Experiência de Consumidor positiva. No entanto, o conceito de Entusiasmo e Estatuto não apresenta uma significativa correlação positiva.

Sendo o primeiro estudo que procura responder à lacuna que existe entre User Experience e Masstige, esta investigação apresenta conclusões importantes e salienta a necessidade de mais estudos em torno desta correlação. Estas conclusões enaltecem, ainda, implicações práticas, tanto para os estrategas de marca, como para os programadores de User Experience, com a criação de valor Masstige subjacente como objetivo.

Palavras-chave: Masstige, Experiência de Consumidor, Luxo, Online Shopping, E-commerce, Marketing

Abstract

This research aims to explore and understand the impact of User Experience on the Masstige value of a brand. A conceptual model was developed to investigate the research question. This model integrates the Standardized User Experience Percentile Questionnaire and the Masstige Scale to measure the relationship between User Experience and Masstige.

The study employed a quantitative approach, using an online questionnaire to collect data. A total of 132 responses were analyzed using SPSS, which included exploratory factor analyses and reliability tests. Pearson correlation analyses were then performed to examine the relationships between the variables.

The results indicate a positive correlation between a good User Experience and a brand's Masstige value. Specifically, Brand Knowledge and Prestige, along with Perceived Quality, are the constructs that benefit most from a positive User Experience. However, the construct of Excitement and Status does not show a significant positive correlation.

As one of the first efforts to bridge the gap between User Experience and Masstige, this study provides valuable insights and highlights the need for further research. These findings offer practical implications for both brand strategists and User Experience developers aiming to enhance a brand's Masstige value.

Keywords: Masstige, User Experience, Luxury, Online Shopping, E-commerce, Marketing

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1 Introduction

This study is made part of Instituto Superior de Contabilidade e Administração do Porto's Master's Degree in E-Business.

As the subject of Masstige brands is one of growing interest and academic research, more insights are required for it to be held at a higher scientific standard. Building upon how Luxury brands have evolved through time, making way for new terms such as New Luxury (Silverstein & Fiske, 2003), Masstige is a novel approach to the Brand Equity management of brands that are associated with Prestige and deal with mass markets (Paul, 2018).

Due to Masstige's infancy academic research stage (Kumar et al., 2020), its relationship with other subjects relevant to Marketing and Brand Strategists are yet to be studied. User Experience has yet to be studied alongside Masstige. Since Masstige brands are to employ strategies that best take advantage of a brand's Masstige value, through a marketing mix that takes into consideration E-commerce as a component of Placement (Kumar et al., 2020), it is relevant to bridge this gap. Furthermore, brand love, excitement and social status are to be developed through Place and Distribution strategies, which is followed by E-commerce strategies that stimulate Brand Equity, from where Masstige value can arise (Paul, 2019).

How to properly review User Experience is not a recent a topic of discussion. However, it has brought forth instruments of review that focus on different topics. The Standardized User Experience Percentile Rank Questionnaire (SUPR-Q) aims to engage with this topic in a more succinct manner, and having at the forefront items of review that pertain more to the common user's perception of online experiences (Sauro, 2015). Usability, Loyalty, Trust and Appearance are the focus of this questionnaire, which are in line with what Masstige brands can take into consideration, regarding their online presence.

From this assessment, it is understood that investigating the possible positive correlation between a good User Experience and a brand's Masstige value is a viable study.

This study is divided in four chapters.

The first chapter concerns the state of the art, establishing what research has been conducted regarding Masstige and its definition. User Experience is explored, and its academic development is tailored towards our study, according to what is established within Masstige's literary review.

The second chapter establishes how the research will be conducted, its model, hypothesis, quantitative methodology and sample. The third chapter analyses the obtained results. The last chapter, the fourth, caters to the discussion, conclusion and managerial implications of the results, and explains the limitations of this research.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Brand

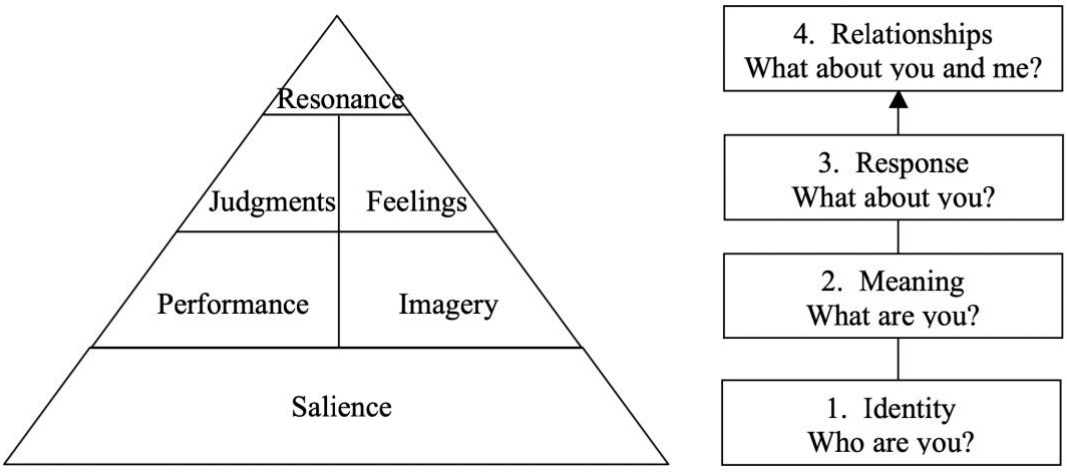
Before exploring what grants a Brand its' Luxury, a definition of the core concept of Brand is required. Brands are defined as "a name, term, design, symbol or any other feature that identifies one seller's goods or service as distinct from those of other sellers." (American Marketing Association, 2023[1]). This definition is followed by various authors, such as Aaker (2012) and Keller (2012). Bennett (1988) defined a Brand as "a name, term, design, symbol or any other feature that identifies one seller's good or service as distinct from those of other sellers", giving emphasis to the idea that differentiation might arise from a component which isn't necessarily tangible.

As such, there's a clear distinction between Brand and Product. Beyond a proposition that is being offered to an end that is rooted at a need or want, a Brand encompasses characteristics that allow for differentiation between products conceived to target the same need (Keller, 2012). With the definition of a brand established, it is consequently relevant to understand how it can be managed, which shall now be studied through Brand Equity.

2.2 Brand Equity

There are multiple definitions of this concept, mainly due to the perspective from which Equity is concerned. Aaker (1996) defines it as a "set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name and symbol, that add to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or to that firm's customers". These elements are brand loyalty, name awareness, perceived quality, brand associations in addition to perceived quality and other proprietary brand assets (Aaker, 1996). Keller (2012) considers Brand Equity to be what "consists of the marketing effects uniquely attributable to a brand", which in turn sheds light on how it is possible for a non-branded product to have better results, marketing wise, to have different results than those of a branded product.

Figure 1 - Keller's Brand Equity Model (Keller, 2012)



With Keller's Brand Equity Model in mind, we understand the hierarchy of how customers interact with brands. They first go through a phase of identification, which will resort to a brand's name. Secondly, visual identity (logo, slogan, colors, typography, etc.) comes into play, alongside its performance. No judgmental response occurs at this moment, as it is a part of the third phase. With judgment, feelings arise regarding the brand, and an opinion is formed. At the top of the pyramid (Figure 1), resonance is the core of the relationships that arise between consumers and brands.

When it comes to luxury brands, Brand equity contributes towards brand management, through intangible assets (Okonkwo, 2009). With the goal of building their brand, luxury brand managers can take into consideration several factors as pricing, market segmentation and marketing. These are pillars that, when approached strategically, contribute to assert relevant brand perceptions through brand uniqueness and conspicuousness (Ko et al., 2019). Furthermore, this is a first step towards an understanding of what makes for a Luxury brand, which then leads us to explore how this very concept has evolved through time.

2.3 Luxury

In Marketing, the concept of luxury does not have a concise definition. In fact, its own definition can be subjected to different connotations, depending on the culture, as the Japanese have specific terms for craftsmanship, *Koukyuu*, one for indulgence, *Zeitaku*, and one for sumptuousness, *Goukana* (Kapferer, 2014). This grouping of concepts is

referred to by Miller & Mills (2012) as “old luxe”. “Old luxe” goes hand in hand with how luxury was, at a time, perceived as to be in relation with a higher-level of quality control and knowledge that fueled production (Kapferer, 2014). This pertains to ancestral heritage and personal history.

Luxury products are perceived to be of excellent quality with a very high price and in scarce availability, which grants uniqueness (Heine, 2011). Not only is this limited availability expected by consumers, but it is also a sign of curation that follows a high standard of quality that, consequently, has its high price justified and made part of what constitutes luxury (Dubois et al., 2001). Beyond functionality, however, luxury satisfies needs that are related to the psychological side of consumers, which is a differentiator of luxury products to that of -non-luxury products. These personal aspects are related to Hedonism, that are mentioned as factors within the perception of luxury brands (Vigneron & Johnson, 2004). Literature has also pointed out other less material factors, such as magic and beauty of the object (Kapferer, 1998). The experience of buying luxury products is, in it of itself, an extension of oneself, allowing for a high level of relatability that conveys refinement (Dubois et al., 2001).

These are the foundations of what the concept of luxury pertains to. These have evolved and mutated over time, because of a higher buying power and technological development, giving rise to a novel concept of luxury – New Luxury.

2.4 New Luxury

The massification of the fashion industry, from both the supply and demand perspectives, has been a trend since the second half of the twentieth century (Cabigiosu, 2020). The parallel growth of the middle class that presents market potential was not negatively affected by the 2013 crisis (Kharas & Gertz, 2010). This middle class is eager to purchase items that were once only in sight of a small few, of a higher status and economical power, resulting in a “democratization of luxury” (Shukla et al., 2022).

The “New Luxury”, as explored by Miller & Mills (2012) and Kapferer & Bastien (2009) pertains to a higher importance of brand symbol, rather than product. As such, the New Luxury consumer is aspirational and can be motivated by conspicuous reasons.

As explored by Silverstein & Fiske (2003), this "New Luxury" pertains to the market of middle-class consumers, whose disposable income made it possible to pay a higher price, at a volume comparable to that of a Massified market. A higher price, as related in luxury marketing studies, is a correlation with a premium categorization to which products or services belong to (Kapferer et al., 2014). However, as Miller & Mills (2012) point out, there is a misguided marriage of the concepts luxury, status, and prestige, that have premium prices at play.

Regarding Prestige, the term was defined by Steenkamp et al. (2002) as the high status of product positioning that is associated with a brand. This positioning is the outcome of several factors, namely high price strategy (Truong et al., 2009) and perceived quality (Steenkamp et al., 2002). As stated previously, there is not a clear outline that separates Prestige from Luxury (Baek et al., 2010).

For one, Kapferer & Bastien (2009) asserts that brand luxury is associated with a quality of timelessness, a dream-like state. Premium brands, however, have a heavier focus on the performance aspect, via functionality. Vigneron & Johnson (1999) state that luxury is one of three parts that pertain to Prestige bands, the other two being up-market and premium.

The most evident distinction between Prestige and Luxury is nestled within a particular perception. Luxury brands fulfill hedonistic needs and desires, ones that are related to a lifestyle of opulence. Prestige, on the other hand, is mainly focused on how a brand or a product has managed to achieve success through quality of its own merit (Dubois & Czellar, 2002). Despite this, in practical terms, both prestige and luxury are subject to a process of massification that affects each brand differently. Masstige bridges the gap between the concepts of *Masses* and *Prestige* from a strategic managerial perspective.

2.5 Masstige

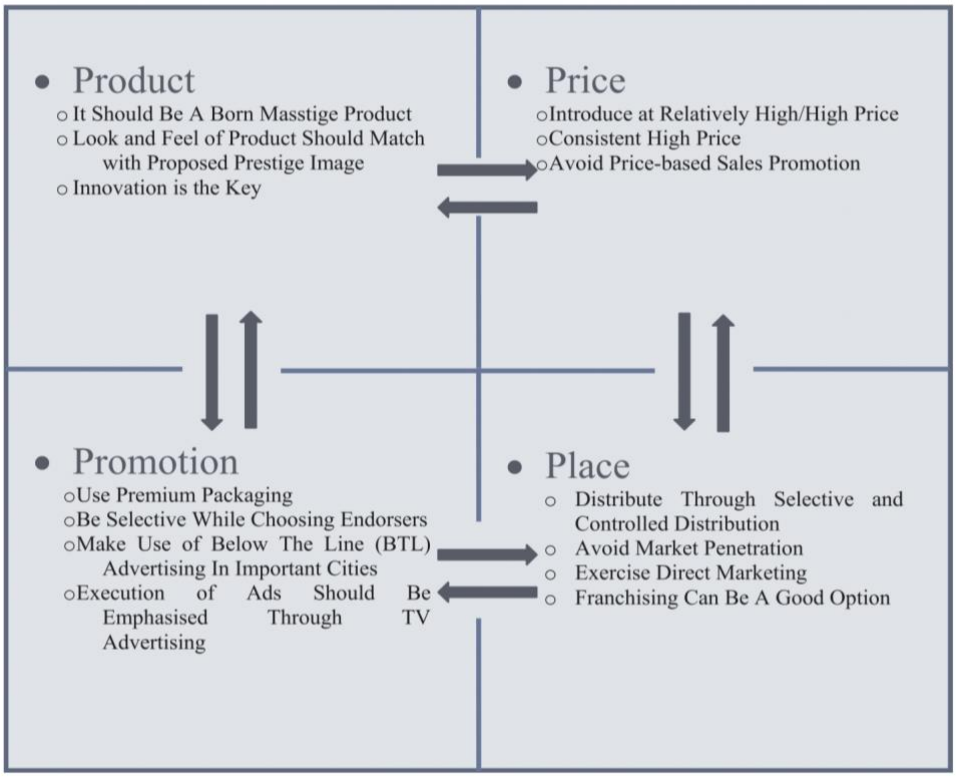
The Masstige concept was introduced by Silverstein & Fiske (2003) as a link between Prestige and the massification of products (mass + prestige). This duality is in line with growing purchasing power, which leads to a demand for better quality products (Farrel et al., 2006). Furthermore, Kapferer & Bastien (2009) has referred to the emergence of

"abundant rarity" as a strategy of more affordable items, such as accessories, than that of typical luxury, that remain profitable as they maintain their associations with luxury brands. Typical luxury pertains to a more exclusive-prone strategy, such as a strategy that relies on lesser availability of products (Luck et al., 2014).
Originally, Masstige was born out of the concept of New Luxury, which Silverstein & Fiske (2003) wrote as to be one of its three manifestations, *Accessible Superpremium* and *Old-Brand Extensions* being the other two. Masstige means Mass Prestige. Despite a recent interest in the concept, it still is in its infancy, literature wise (Kumar et al., 2020).

As stated by Paul (2018), Masstige is a strategy by which moderately high prices are kept constant, while the products themselves are marketed towards a wide audience.
Branding wise, masstige brands develop symbolic benefits through design that can be akin to that of luxury brands. However, due to the massification of their production, certain cuts must be made, quality wise. This does not imply, on the other hand, that pricing is the same as middle range products' price. Masstige brands employ a pricing strategy that is situated in a price range in between luxury brands and middle range brands (Heine, 2011).

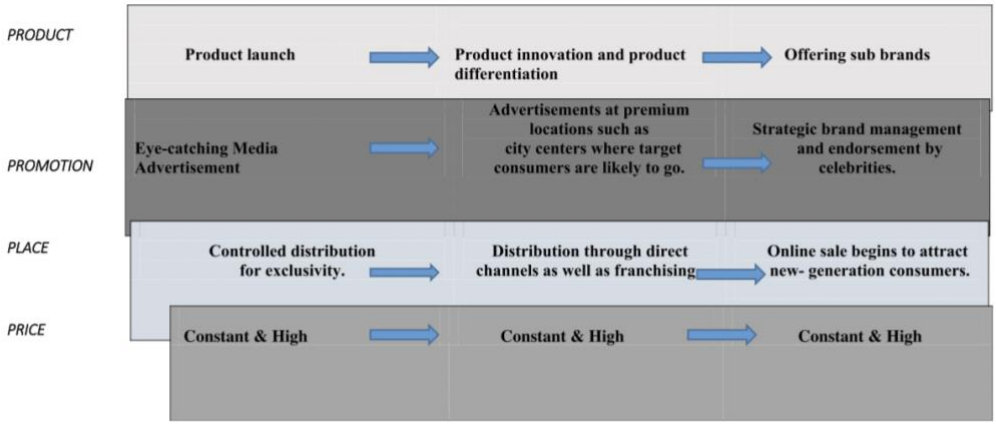
The definition of the Masstige concept has been developed over time and had its first formula conceived by Kumar et al. (2020): Premium Price = f (Masstige); and Masstige = f (Product, Place, Promotion). As such, regarding the Traditional 4 Ps of Marketing, there is a dependent relationship between all of them.

Figure 2 - Masstige Marketing mix (Kumar et al, 2020)



Masstige is thus based on product and promotion strategies, while pricing strategies are mostly constant and unchanged, with a moderately premium value. As such, Masstige pricing does not go through discount campaigns (Paul, 2019). This strategy has been mentioned as a reason for a successful employment of Luxury brands in Japan, South Korea and China, having Louis Vuitton's approach in mind (Oh & Kim, 2011). The Masstige approach can follow a model that eyes growth, as outlined by Paul (2019).

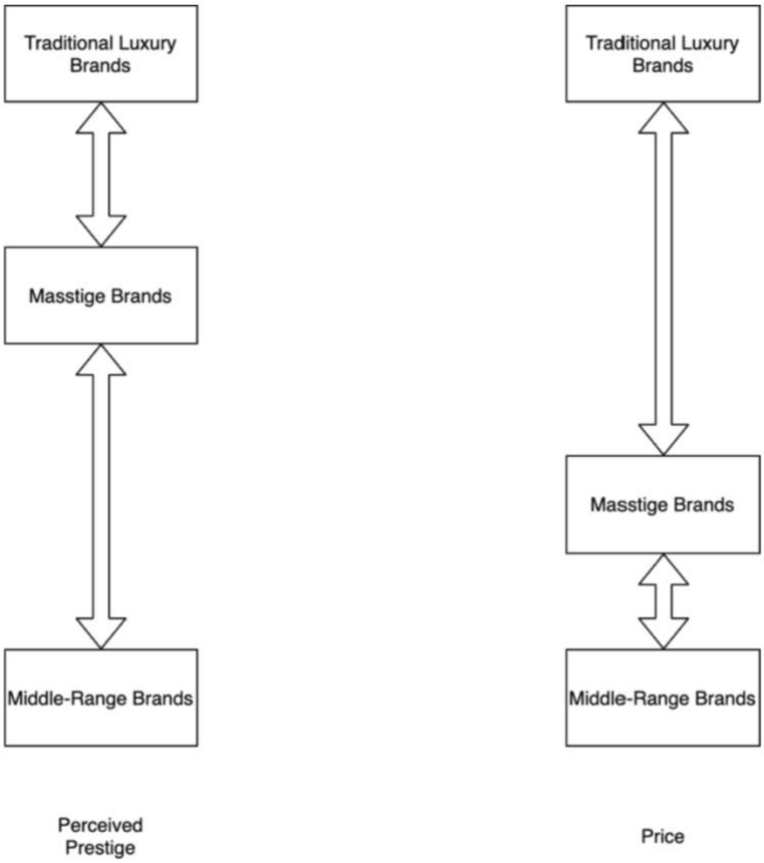
Figure 3 - Three-stage Masstige Marketing Model (Paul, 2019)



Currently, these purchase behaviors have reached luxury categories, highlighting hedonic values (Eckhardt et al., 2015). Masstige consumers aspire to affordable luxury that doesn't compromise on product quality (Singh, 2024). Quality consideration focuses on the functional value of products (Purohit & Radia, 2022). In this sense, the quality of Masstige products needs to be communicated, while luxury brands inherently incorporate these considerations into their branding (Kapferer et al., 2014). Paul (2018) reinforces this very idea, as Masstige relies on Product and promotion strategies for its success. Furthermore, the Masstige strategy can be applied via brand extension (vertical, top-down) through the creation of products, by luxury brands, whose price is more accessible, without giving up the associations with the original brand (Paul, 2018).

Regarding the *mass* aspect of Masstige, there is an argument to be made about how this reality brought forth a paradox between accessibility and *premium* goods, which have let go their exclusivity connotations (Kapferer et al., 2014). Masstige brands are therefore hierarchically inferior to Luxury brands. However, they are positioned as superior to mass consumption brands with medium price strategies (Lo & Yeung, 2020).

Figure 4 - Masstige Brand Positioning (Truong et al., 2009)



As such, the Masstige target consumer is also different, in comparison to that of a luxury brand, as illustrated by Paul (2019 with their two Marketing Models (one for typical luxury brands and masstige brands, respectively).

Figure 5 - Marketing Model for a typical luxury brand (Paul, 2019)

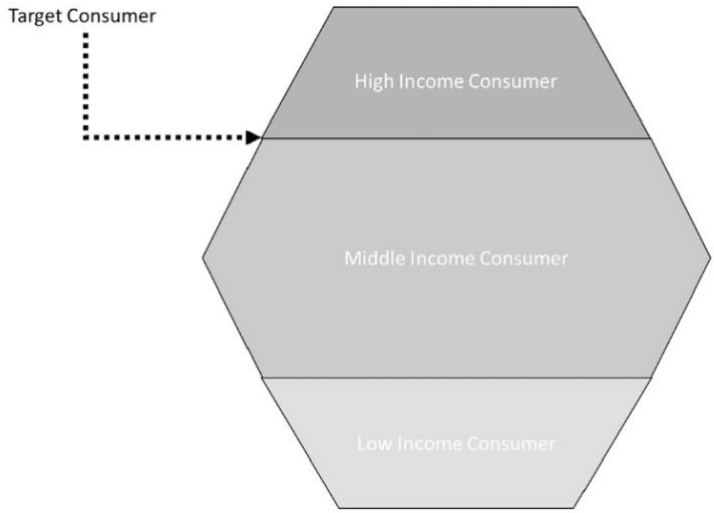
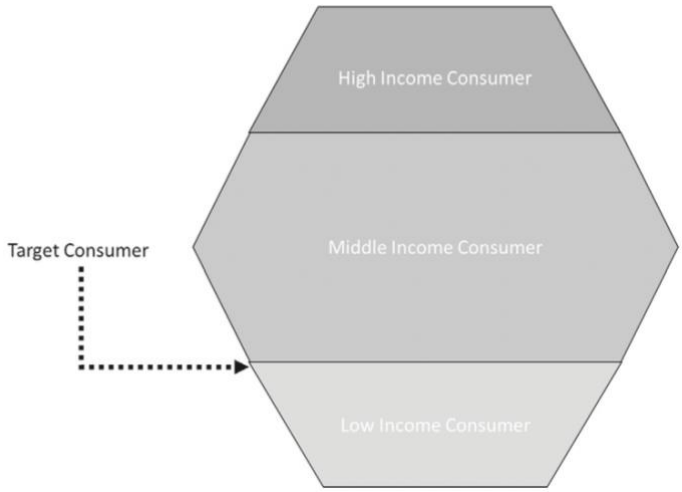
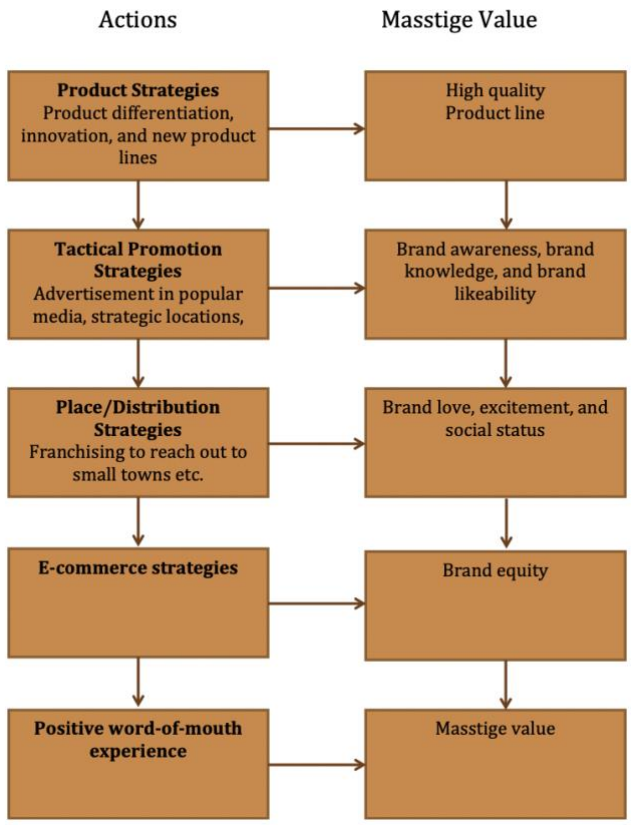


Figure 6 - Masstige Moel for long-term success (Paul, 2019)



Paul (2019) states that Aaker's concept of brand equity remains important for an understanding of Masstige's nature. Since Masstige brands possess rich brand equity, their specific luxury traits are not at the core of the consumption behavior that leads consumers to Masstige products.

Figure 7 - Masstige Value Creation (Paul, 2019)

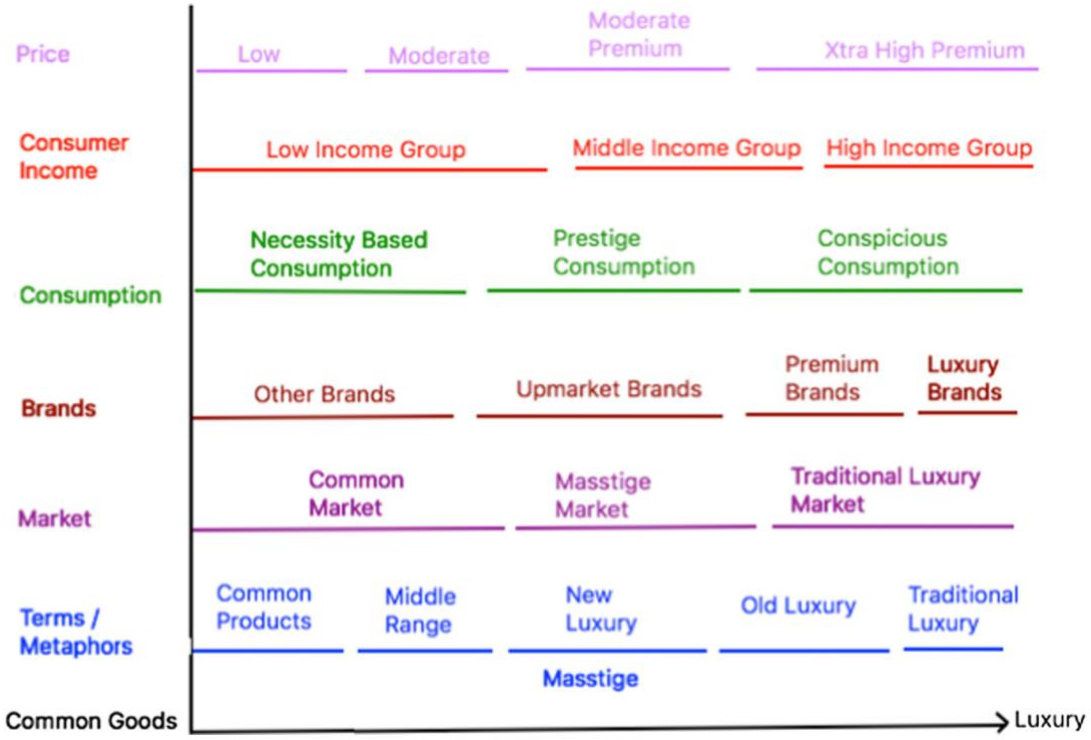


This, however, could be said concerning most brands that are available on a massified scale, regardless of their premium perception.

Park et al. (2022) investigated how Masstige consumption values come to play. It was discovered that there are consumer segments in relation to financial, functional, individual, and social values, which portrays a reality of different consumption needs. Thus, it is a heterogenic market. In this sense, brand equity management is mentioned as playing an important role, further strengthening the idea that Masstige is intimately related to Aaker's Brand Equity.

In this sense, in literature, Masstige's boundaries have yet to be defined in such a way that allows for clear-cut differentiation from luxury. As such, Kumar et al. (2020) have created the *mass-luxury brand continuum*.

Figure 8 - Mass Luxury Continuum (Kumar et al., 2020)



However, when taking in consideration Truong et al. (2009)'s illustration of differentiation between Luxury and Masstige brands, there is no interaction between the perception of prestige and its pricing, nor are there considerations regarding the possible factors underlying the perception of prestige. This is mainly evident once Masstige is studied cross-culturally and through the lens of different brands.

There are brands whose genesis is Masstige, these being Born Masstige brands (Kumar et al., 2020). There is, however, a lack of clarity regarding the distinction between the different Masstige approaches, namely the upward extension and the downward extension of a luxury brand. In addition, management strategies are yet to be outlined in a clear-cut manner (Park et al., 2022). With downward extension, there is a risk of brand dilution (Truong et al., 2009). It has been investigated that the Masstige strategy is not compatible with scarcity values (Rosendo-Rios & Shukla, 2023), however, there is a gap in the

overall understanding of how Masstige brands are perceived differently by Masstige consumers.

On one hand, scientific research considers a wide variety of brands as examples of Masstige, according to different sociocultural contexts. Kumar et al. (2020) mentions Starbucks, Louis Vuitton, Apple and Armani. On the other hand, Purohit & Radia (2022) in their investigation of the antecedents to Masstige consumption, the Zara brand is mentioned as a Masstige preference, given the consumer experience. In contrast, Truong et al. (2009) pursued an investigation that considers Zara and H&M to be middle range brands. This dichotomy opens a margin of subjectivity for which literature has yet to answer. Furthermore, Paul (2018) points out that Masstige allows strategies to be pursued that do not practice discounts. However, there is no clear definition of the prestige underlying Masstige that also factors in the multiplicity of considerations specific to different mass markets. Their findings, circumscribed in the sociocultural context of India, corroborate theories of conspicuous consumption, as Truong et al. (2009) studied, as New Luxury Brands are considered conspicuous and there is an ease in designing Masstige strategies in developing country market contexts (Eng & Bogaert, 2010). Thus, regarding consumer attitude, Pizzetti et al. (2023) conclude that the nationality of consumers is an important factor in understanding the strategies to be adopted. For instance, the western market (France) is much less receptive to sub-brands compared to the eastern market (China). In the case of France, the millennial generation considered that the Masstige sub-brands lacked differentiating characteristics. The receptiveness of Chinese consumers is explained by the greater degree of interdependence, which favors the influence of groups (peers). However, both markets recognized the prestige of accessory product ranges that retained the image of their original brand. As once again is made evident, the masstige market is both heterogenous and culturally different.

But, beyond culture, and in a world in which the Internet is a part of daily life, there is a lack of research that takes into consideration Masstige Brands. The impact of Website User Experience on Masstige brands is yet to be explored. For example, and taking in consideration Das et al.'s (2022) research, how can a Brand’s commitment to quality be conveyed through a user’s website experience? So far, the closest literature has gotten to bridge this gap is buy exploring the Masstige e-commerce behaviour. Regarding online purchasing behaviour, Das et al. (2022) conclude that, when online shopping, the zero-

moment-of-truth value does not influence masstige consumption. Furthermore, heritage values do not contribute to the perceived brand authenticity, nor the functional aspects of a product, in the masstige fashion industry. Instead, it is the commitment to quality and sincerity that drive consumers towards Masstige Fashion Brands. But a gap too arises from these conclusions, as there is no understanding as how these driving criteria can be translated into the online world. Masstige research has yet to place its focus on how a Masstige Brand can be perceived beyond its core communication practices. This, for one, is a missed opportunity for research, since the Four Ps it relies on make way for the importance of a Brand's Website. Even more so if its website allows for online shopping, which,

As such, table 7 presents a wide variety of studies that have been conducted.

Masstige research thus far:

Table 1 - Masstige research thus far

Source	Title / Year	Purpose	Findings
Marta Pizzetti a, Philippe Chereau b Isabella Soscia c Fangyuan Teng d	Attitudes and intentions toward masstige strategies: A cross-cultural study of French and Chinese consumers, 2023	How masstige strategies affect consumers' attitudes toward masstige and their intention to purchase masstige brands.	From a managerial standpoint, companies need to tailor their masstige messaging to different consumer targets: for instance, by emphasizing durability and status for Chinese consumers, but intrinsic luxury values for French consumers.
Manish Das a, Victor Saha b Charles Jebarajakirthyc Anjana Kalai d Nirmalya Debnath e	Cultural consequences of brands' masstige: An emerging market perspective, 2022	Examining how various acculturation patterns (i.e., integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization) assess	Cultural worldview is identified as the underlying mechanism for differences in the masstige scores across various

		the mass-prestige quotient of fashion accessory brands.	acculturation groups.
Jae-Eun Kim Stephen Lloyd Keji Adebeshin Ju-Young M. Kang,	Decoding fashion advertising symbolism in masstige and luxury brands, 2022	Decoding symbolism imbedded in fashion advertising.	Five common, implicit advertising cues were identified as shared by luxury and masstige brands: exclusivity, authenticity, sophistication, accomplishment and pride. The analysis discovered the themes of seasonality, seduction, and renewal in masstige brand advertising
Ajay Kumar a Justin Paul b Slađana Star	Do brands make consumers happy? A masstige theory perspective, 2022	To explore the theory of consumer happiness grounded in the tenets of mass prestige (Masstige), self-consciousness and social ideal self by linking it with brand-induced happiness (Brand Happiness)	Consumption of masstige brands leads to brand happiness. This relationship is moderated by self-consciousness, whereas social ideal self is not moderating the relationship.
Foo Nin Ho a, *Jared Wong b ,Glen Brodowskyc	Does masstige offer the prestige of luxury without the social costs? Status and warmth perceptions from masstige and luxury signals	Explore how signaling through masstige (mass prestige) goods, compared with their luxury counterpart, impacts two important sociometric variables of peer popularity: status and warmth.	Masstige brands do not attenuate the social costs of luxury signaling. For instance, some luxury consumers may be hesitant about wearing luxury brands in the workplace for fear of negative perceptions of warmth.

			As such, these consumers may gravitate towards masstige brands to avoid these social costs.
Mumtaz Muhammad Khan Muhammad Ishtiaq Ishaq Muazma Iqbal Ali Raza	Impact of self-esteem and self-gifting on masstige purchase intentions	To identify the masstige brands in the smartphone industry of Pakistan using the masstige mean index, and (2) to explore the role of self-esteem in consumer consumption behaviour grounded in terms of masstige, self-gifting behaviour, and brand personality.	Masstige brand consumption is influenced by self-esteem; this relationship is mediated by self-gifting behaviour, and brand personality moderates the association.
Jungkun Park a Seung Yub Back a Dongyoup Kim	Masstige consumption values and its effect on consumer behavior	Explore the relationship between the two types of brand extensions and consumer behavior because most brands penetrate the masstige market via brand extensions	Masstige brand products should no longer focus on monetary value by limiting the quantity in an exclusive and rare way like traditional luxury products.
Ajay Kumar[a] Justin Paul	Mass prestige value and competition between American versus Asian laptop brands in an emerging market—Theory and evidence	Examining the prestige associated with the four best-selling laptop brands: 1) two American brands (HP, Dell); and 2) two Asian brands (Lenovo and Acer)	American brands have the potential to be seen as prestige brands while Asian brands are trailing behind in masstige value and competition.
Sheshadri Chatterjeea Ranjan Chaudhuri b,	Masstige marketing: An	Identify product attributes which	That ‘perceived prestige value’ is

Demetris Vrontis c	empirical study of consumer perception and product attributes with moderating role of status, emotion, and pride	impact consumer purchase intention of 'masstige' products, and further analyzes the moderator effects of consumer emotion, status, and pride on purchase intention	important for consumers purchasing masstige products, whereas status, emotion, and pride play important moderating roles in their purchase. Need to improve consumers' perceptions of masstige markets.
Veronica Rosendo-Rios a, *Paurav Shukla b	The effects of masstige on loss of scarcity and behavioral intentions for traditional luxury consumers	To show that masstige branding (vs non-masstige) leads to reduced behavioral intentions for traditional luxury consumers	While earlier research has shown that masstige strategy can lead to greater engagement and acceptance among middle classes we show that such strategy can have a detrimental effect on traditional luxury consumers' behavioral intentions. Consumers with strong or high self-brand connections are especially important because they are often a brand's most loyal customers. Consumers connect with brands to form, reinforce and enhance their self-identity.
Satoko Suzuki a, Saori Kanno b	The role of brand coolness in the masstige co-branding of luxury and mass brands	To propose co-branding as an alternative strategy for luxury brands to achieve masstige.	Brand coolness of mass brand affects perceived fit, which impacts attitude toward the co-branded product and its purchase

			intention. Additionally, self-brand connection with the luxury brand moderates this effect, and product category involvement negatively impacts perceived fit.
Faheem Gul Gilal [a] Naeem Gul Gilal [b], Shadma Shahid [c], Rukhsana Gul Gilal [a], Syed Mir Muhammad Shah [a]	The role of product design in shaping masstige brand passion: A masstige theory perspective	To examine whether product design influences masstige brand passion (MBP)	The impact of product design dimensions on MBP differs significantly amongst generational X, Y, and Z customers. Specifically, our results demonstrate that affective and reflective design characteristics are the most important variables for building a passion for masstige brands among generation Z customers, whereas the impact of these product designs on generations X and Y customers is negligible.
Shadma Shahid a, Mohd Adil b Mohd Sadiqc Ganesh Dash d	Why do consumers consume masstige products? A cross-cultural nvestigation through the lens of self-determination theory	To divulge how extrinsic and intrinsic motivations in a cross-cultural context affect masstige consumption behavior.	Consumers' attitudes and purchase behavior toward masstige brands are positively influenced by intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. Masstige fashion brands can be

			positioned as high-quality products similar to luxury fashion brands but with lower prices.
Paula Rodrigues Ana Sousa Marc Fetscherin Ana Pinto Borges	Exploring masstige brands' antecedents and outcomes	To develop a new conceptual model of consumers' perceptions of – and behaviours towards – masstige brands based on consumer-brand relationship and brand equity theory.	The analyses conducted confirmed that a strong relationship exists between brand love and masstige brand value, which suggests that managers should focus on preserving their brands' uniqueness and enhance consumers' perception of prestige to satisfy these individuals' need for self-enhancement and uniqueness. Masstige brand managers should thus promote online and in- store marketing encounters and prioritize developing emotional aspects to maximize clients' positive experiences. These interactions provide great opportunities to engage customers, improve brand value co-creation and increase consumers' repurchase intention.

The table above establishes an overview of the current literature on Masstige. Masstige has been studied mainly in cores. A focus on intrinsic individual (self) behaviour is evident, while there are traces of a cross-cultural approach that expand on the understanding of what constitutes a Masstige brand. For one, we find that Masstige consumers value uniqueness and self-enhancement (Rodrigues et al., 2024) and that consumers with a high level of self-brand connection are identified as a brand's most loyal segment (Rosendo-Rios & Shukla, 2023).

Furthermore, in relation to luxury brands, Masstige products should not be taken into scarcity strategies (Park et al., 2022). On the contrary, Masstige fashion brands should position themselves as alternatives to luxury brands, through emphasis on product quality that is priced at lower range (Shahid et al., 2024). This goes against the assessment, however, that Masstige brands share exclusivity (among authenticity, sophistication, accomplishment and pride) as an advertising cue with typical luxury brands. While typical luxury consumers may deter from brands that implement Masstige strategies that attract the middle class (Rosendo-Rios & Shukla, 2023), Masstige brands are an option for these consumers that might want to avoid the social cost of typical luxury brands (Ho et al., 2023). Lastly, for as much of an introductory understanding on specific segments there is, the Masstige consumer is still heterogenous enough for more study to be required (Chatterjee et al., 2023). This notion is corroborated when studies are taken into a cross-cultural context, where differences influenced by culture are made evident within the Masstige consumer (Shahid et al., 2024). Cultural worldview has an impact on Masstige scores, regarding acculturation groups (Das et al., 2022). Regarding prestige, the country of origin also influences masstige value (Kumar & Paul, 2018).

When it comes to the online consumer experience, online encounters are to be strategized by Masstige brands as an important opportunity for engagement and brand-value creation. However, there is no additional investigation that explores this subject. As Paul (2019) mentions, Masstige brands are to create brand love, excitement and social status through Place and Distribution strategies, which is followed by E-commerce strategies, bound to develop brand equity, from which Masstige value stems from. In this sense, as Rodrigues et al. (2024) point out, online marketing encounters are to be promoted by Masstige brand managers, as to improve consumers' positive experiences. With our literature review, however, it is possible to identify a gap between the Masstige and User Experience areas,

which are thus foreseen as being an integral part of Masstige strategies. It is, in addition, relevant that these strategies are conceived with the possibility of being reviewed and improved. Alongside this, Masstige consumers, when online, might value different aspects of User Experience differently. For instance, Park et al. (2022), in their conducted studies, assess that hedonic and conspicuous qualities highly value Masstige brands' brand equity. Furthermore, and as made evident by other research, Masstige consumption is heterogenous. Alić et al., (2022) assess that consumers of different generations react differently to Masstige. Hence, Masstige strategies are more difficult to properly implement, as brand managers are required to know different segments.

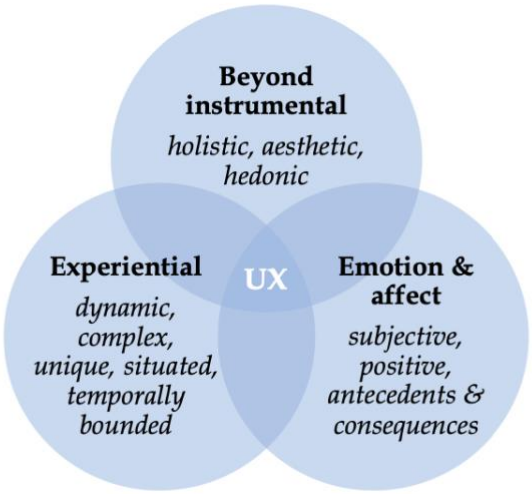
With these considerations, to bridge this literature gap with the goal of better understanding the impact of User Experience on Masstige brands' Masstige value, it is now necessary to establish a theoretical of User Experience that is relevant to our study.

2.6 User Experience

In 2006, the topic of User Experience (UX) was not subject to much academic research, making way for a need to jump-start an investigative interest for it that is up to date with technology.

As such, Hassenzahl & Tractinsky (2006)'s definition of UX was the first made as more definitive – it is the dialogue between a user's internal state (such as predispositions, expectations, needs, etc) and the framework in which interactions occur. Thus, UX is at the heart of the technological support required to bring forth the satisfaction of needs that are beyond instrumental, marking it as a subjective, situated, complex and dynamic encounter.

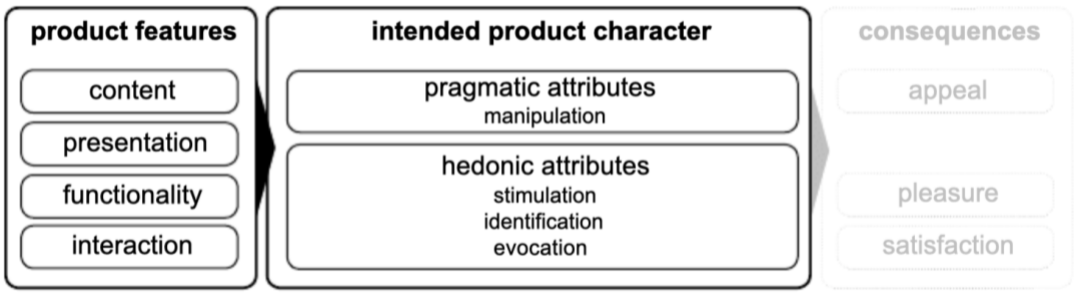
Figure 9 - Facets of User Experience (Hassenzahl & Tractinsky, 2006)



It develops on a previous idea, conceived by one of the same authors (Hassenzahl), on how user's expectations come into play, and how it is dependent on the perspective of both the user and designer. Before encountering a system, the user has a set of expectations that combine pragmatic and hedonic traits. These expectations, when interacting with a system, then give way to consequences that may or may not be in align with both the user's expectations and the intended consequences of the designer (Hassenzahl, 2003).

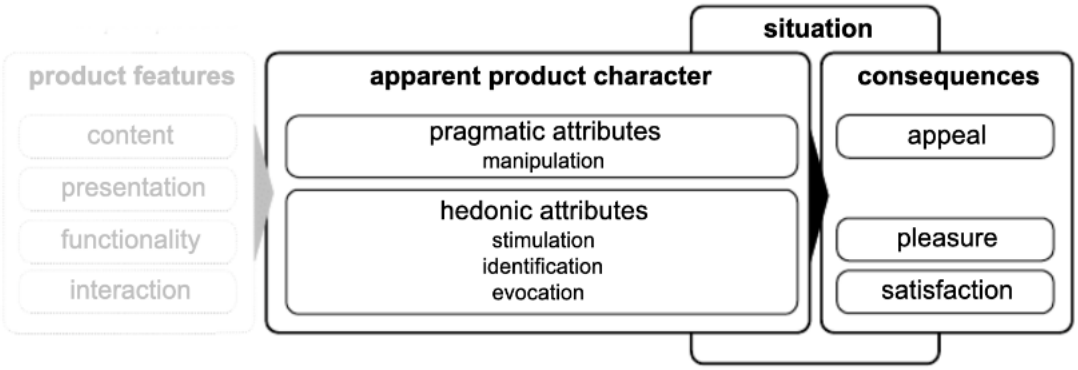
A) Designer Perspective

Figure 10 - Key elements of the model of user experience from a designer perspective (Hassenzahl, 2003)



B) User Perspective

Figure 11 - Key elements of the model of user experience from a user perspective (Hassenzahl, 2003)



As made evident, UX is a term that is implied in multiple concepts. It can be asserted as a phenomenon, regarding interactions that are contextualized within a system. When it comes to a scientific approach, it pertains to the root of user experiences and their development, for example, through the process of design (Roto, 2009). Beyond this, however, UX particularly pertains to the experience that a person has when interacting through an interface with a system that can either be a product or a service (Roto, 2009). User Experience's defintition was further expanded with the mention of considerations such as brand image, presentation, functionality and the user's expectations that arise from their attitudes, skills and personality. It is also said that UX has its focused centered around well-being and not technical performance, brought forth by the interaction that is established between user and product.

With these definitions in mind, UX is perceived as a helpful validation of the relationship between customers and an e-commerce business, when UX is good (Al Sokkar & Law, 2013). It is for that reason that UX is taken in mind as a tool to leverage purchasing behavior from users, because of good UX, which can present a cohesive merging of services and design (Gualtieri, 2009). This is precisely on par with the Hedonic Attributes brought into discussion by (Hassenzahl, 2003). In particular, the attributes of Identification and Evocation go hand in hand with the process of brand communication, as Identification pertains to how an identity is communicated and Evocation is related to how memories are provoked, whether they are related to an experience or a product.

In this sense, UX has later been interconnected with Brand communication. In Kaasinen et al.'s (2015) UX Framework, consisting of five items, , Brand Image is a source of UX

goals. The five items are as follows: (1) Company or brand image (Brand), (2) Scientific understanding of human beings (Theory); (3) Empathic understanding of the users' world (Empathy); (4) Possibilities and challenges of a new technology (Technology); (5) Reasons for product existence and envisioning renewal (Vision). It is a brand's very own identity that should be at the rationale that brings forth UX. The Brand's Image should be in harmony with how it designs the UX of its products, as Brand Image also plays a role in user's expectations. Hence, a Brand's core propositions are to be made evident through UX, as discussed by (Roto & Rautava, 2008).

The different implications from each UX definition raise the problem on how to assert and measure an UX system's quality and appreciation from the user's perspective, in a way that developers know how and what to improve. With that in mind, there are UX review models that have been developed, presented in the following table.

Table 2 - User Experience Review Models developed thus far

Source	Number of Items	Criteria
System Usability Scale (SUS) (Brooke, 1996, 2013)	10	- Ease of Use - Usefulness - Perceived Complexity - Consistency - Ease of Learning
User Experience Questionnaire Laugwitz et ak., 2006, 2008)	26	- Pragmatism (Task-Related) - Hedonism (Non-Task Related)
Usability metric for User Experience- Finstad, 2010	4	- Perceived Usefulness - Perceived Ease of Use
Standardized User	8	- Usability

Experience Percentile Rank Questionnaire (SUPR-Q) Sauro, 2015		- Trust - Loyalty - Appearance

The presented review models encompass a wide variety of criteria. There is a predominancy of review models that focus on functional questions, namely the System Usability Scale (SUS), Usability Metric for User Experience. These review models do not include criteria that pertains to the Hedonistic facet of UX. The User Experience Questionnaire, in contrast, shares its focus in two halves, having Pragmatism and Hedonism. The Usability Metric for User Experience takes a different approach to functional criteria, focusing on the perception of the experience. It is evident how, with time, UX review models forgo functionality as their exclusive concern. Thus, it is only with the Standardized User Experience Percentile Rank Questionnaire that both the hedonic and functional sides are deepened in criteria, prompting valuable information for brand managers (beyond UX developers), by reviewing Usability, Trust, Loyalty and Appearance.

3 Research

3.1 Research Goals, Model and Hypothesis

This study has the goal of understanding the impact of a brand's USPQR result in its Masstige strategy. As such, these are the investigation questions:

Q1: What is the impact of User Experience on the Masstige Mean Index?

Q2: Is there a particular User Experience factor that is more relevant than others for Masstige consumers?

Usability in the context of User Experience goes hand in hand with opportunities for brands to engage with their customers online, as mentioned by Rodrigues et al. (2024). It has been linked with consumer's preferences as a high priority in the context of online experience, through technical quality (Al-Qeisi et al., 2014). Despite their emphasis on emotional considerations, it has been assessed that Usability is important for Digital Marketing, as it stimulates engagement (Sharma, 2023). Furthermore, Usability has been linked towards Brand Equity, mainly when ease of use is experienced by consumers, by contributing towards the positive evaluation of brand quality and loyalty (H. Lee et al., 2018). It is, as such, plausible to link good UX usability to a positive correlation with Masstige.

H1a - Usability is positively correlated with Brand Knowledge and Prestige
H1b - Usability is positively correlated with Perceived Quality
H1c - Usability is positively correlated with Excitement and Status

H2a - Trust is positively correlated with Brand Knowledge and Prestige
H2b - Trust is positively correlated with Perceived Quality
H2c - Trust is positively correlated with Excitement and Status

Trust has been noted to have a positive outcome on customer loyalty in the context of e-commerce, particularly for Generation Y. A lack of trust towards a website turns it

improbable for consumers to return to it (Bilgihan, 2016). Online satisfaction, stemming from trust, helps maintain a level of loyalty (Adwan et al., 2020). In addition, online reviews have an impact on brand equity, particularly regarding perceived value (Bhat & Chakraborty, 2018). Electronic Word of Mouth is also positively contributing towards Online Trust (Adwan et al., 2020). As such, a Trust in a brand's online presence can be presumed to have a positive correlation with its Masstige value, in the same vein it has a positive correlation with its Brand Equity.

H3a - Loyalty is positively correlated with Brand Knowledge and Prestige
H3b - Loyalty is positively correlated with Perceived Quality
H3c - Loyalty is positively correlated with Excitement and Status

As assessed by (Adwan et al., 2020), online loyalty stems from online consumer satisfaction. Consumer satisfaction is defined as a positive judgement that takes into consideration the emotional outcome amid unmet expectations faced with previous feelings towards the consumption experience (Oliver, 1999). Chang & Chen (2009) refer to online satisfaction as the outcome of impressions that arise from a website's overall performance. As perceived quality has a positive impact on brand loyalty (Alhaddad, 2015), an online experience that favors loyalty will, hypothetically, have a positive correlation with a brand's perceived quality.

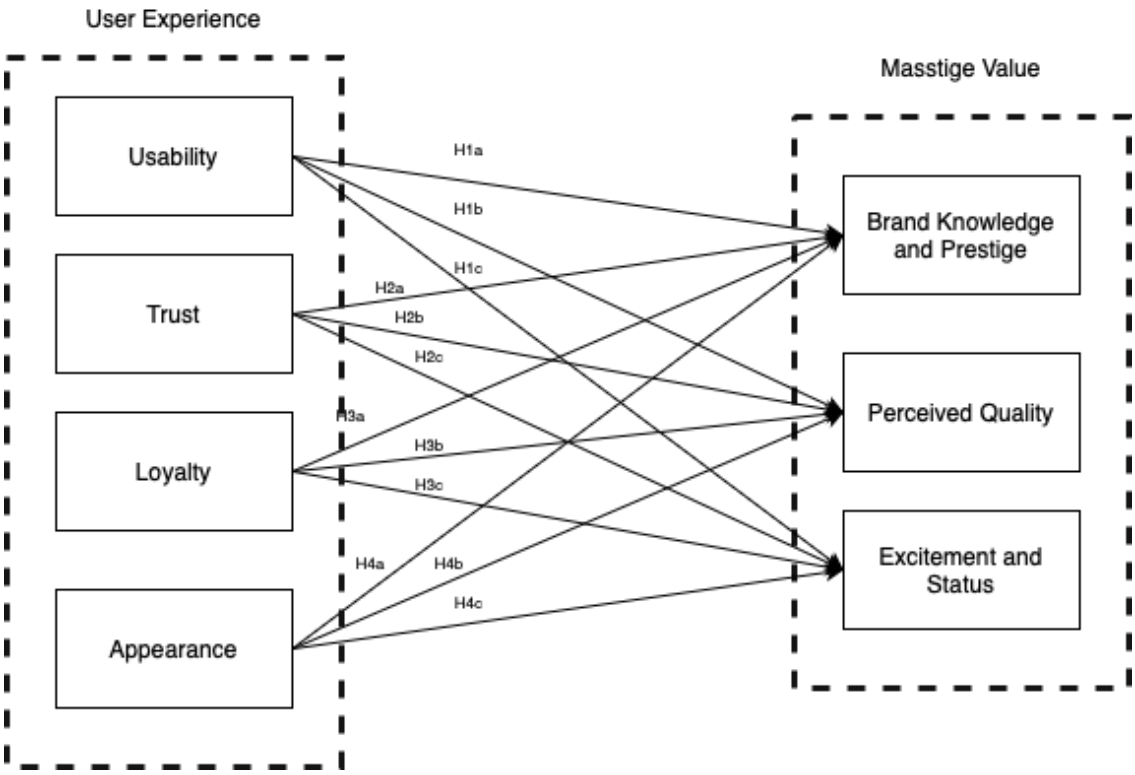
H4a - Appearance is positively correlated with Brand Knowledge and Prestige
H4b - Appearance is positively correlated with Perceived Quality
H4c - Appearance is positively correlated with Excitement and Status

When faced with a product with the intent of asserting its quality, visual cues are a common guide for costumers, decision wise. If consumers find the aesthetics of a product to be pleasing, affective responses are triggered. Brand strength too has a positive correlation (Page & Herr, 2002). This, however, concerns specifically *offline* contexts. When online, Image Interactive Technology (ITT) is a virtual alternative to the possibility of a consumer exploring a product, for example, through 3D images. ITT builds on online shopping enjoyment, a hedonic factor (H.-H. Lee et al., 2010), that, in turn, builds on Brand Knowledge and Prestige (Rodrigues et al., 2024). ITT builds on appearance, which

is the grouping of attractiveness, organization, range of fonts, colors and multimedia that is nestled within a website. When a website has a positive design, it incentivizes usage intentions (Al-Qeisi et al., 2014). With this in consideration, the conception of a hypothetical positive relation between Appearance and Masstige value warrants likelihood.

As such, the model presented in figure 12 shows these hypotheses in accordance to constructs that pertain to User Experience and Masstige, respectively.

Figure 12 - Research Model



Having a research model defined (Figure 12), the research methodology is now presented.

3.2 Research Methodology

The research will follow a quantitative analysis that will examine UX's correlation with the Masstige Mean Index of brands.

As to better pursue this research's goals, a quantitative methodology has been opted. The collected data will be analyzed through statistical methods in order to interpret and bring forth conclusions (Saunders et al., 2009). In Marketing, quantitative research pursues an inductive approach that has the goal of understanding a vast reality with definitive statements, supported by validity and probability (Hanson & Grimmer, 2007).
The gathered data will be analyzed according to Pearson's correlation coefficient. Pearson's correlation coefficient allows us to calculate the covariance between two variables, thus understanding how one variable's change may influence the other in a similar manner (Pearson, 1896). As a normalized measurement, the Pearson correlation coefficient will result in values that range from -1 to 1, -1 signifying a negative correlation, 0 a non-existent correlation, and 1 a positive correlation. Values within the range of 0.1 – 0.3 are considered weak, while moderate values are placed between 0.3 – 0.5, followed by strong values between 0.5 – 1.0. Regarding statistical significance, a low p-value signifies a significant correlation as its randomness factor is unlikely. A low p-value is a value below 0.05 (Field, 2013).

As a means of research, a survey has been developed using a questionnaire as an instrument, Masstige Mean Index (MMI) and the Standardized User Experience Percentile Rank (SUPR-Q).

Following the majority of Masstige literature's models, the questionnaire for this study will be based on the Likert scale, on a range from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 7 (Strongly agree).

All data will be reviewed through SPSS, a statistical data analysis software program.

3.3 Instrument

The questionees will choose one brand of their preference from the following: Ralph Lauren, Tommy Hilfiger, Fred Perry, Lacoste and Lion of Porches. Afterwards, they will review their respective website. These brands fit the Masstige model as they practice prices higher than middle range brands as they maintaining their focus on a mass-market. Ralph Lauren has been used as a case study by Truong et al. (2009), to understand the relation between Masstige brands and Old Luxury brands. These brands carry Prestige connotations as they market their products as of high quality, while also pertaining to

aspirations of lifestyles without a brand positioning of exclusivity (Kapferer, 2014). Furthermore, Sophistication is often associated with these brands, captured by product design and style, that is paired with Authenticity, evidenced through designs that stand the test of time (Kim et al., 2019). These brands are also sought after by consumers looking for quality, which is stems from their Masstige positioning (Kumar et al., 2020). Through varied communication strategies, these brands present their identity through symbolism that is recognizable and made part of their products (Paul, 2019). These communication strategies range from social media content to celebrity endorsements. Lion of Porches positions itself as a high-quality brand, within the Portuguese market, through its pricing strategy and posh aesthetic, akin to English heritage fashion. Beyond these considerations, these brands too share the characteristic of being easily accessible through physical stores (in accordance with franchising strategies) which reinforces their Masstige positioning (Kumar et al., 2020).

The constructs were measured as follows:

Standardized User Experience Percentile Rank – SUPR-Q

Developed by (Sauro, 2015), the SUPR-Q is a generalizable, multidimensional, brief and normed instrument of Website UX measurement that is the final product of a study that sought to fill in the gaps left by other UX measurement instruments.

Unlike other UX measurement questionnaires, the SUPR-Q bears in mind a website in from a general perspective, as other questionnaires focus on specific topics, often technical. Beyond this, the SUPR-Q also presents questions that are relevant to our research, as it bridges UX and Brand Management for it takes into the consideration the general experience of the average online consumer, that is at the heart of a brand's website strategy.

With SUPR-Q, it is possible for online Masstige consumers to be better understood regarding what they value the most, in an online context (Purohit & Radia, 2022).

The criteria reviewed by SUPR-Q (Sauro, 2015) is potentially relevant for Masstige brands as it reviews Hedonic qualities of Websites in a sense that captures user behaviour,

all the while it establishes a benchmark for functional qualities. Furthermore, the SUPR-Q has a holistic approach that takes into consideration user behaviour, not limiting its review items to usability concerns.

This questionnaire approaches four main items: Usability, Trust, Loyalty and Appearance.

Table 3 - Standardized User Experience Percentile Rank Questionnaire (Sauro, 2015)

Items	Construct
The website is easy to use.	Usability
It is easy to navigate within the website.	
I feel comfortable purchasing from the website.	Trust
I feel comfortable conducting business on the website.	
How likely are you to recommend this website to a friend or a colleague?	Loyalty
I will likely return to the website in the future.	
I find this website to be attractive.	Appearance
This website has a clean and simple presentation.	

The following table (4) is the SUPR-Q translated into Portuguese.

Table 4 - Standardized User Experience Percentile Rank Questionnaire (Sauro, 2015) translated into Portuguese

Items	Construct
O website é fácil de utilizar.	Usabilidade
É fácil navegar pelo website.	
Sinto-me confortável em realizar compras no website.	Confiança
Sinto-me confortável em realizar negócios no website.	
Quão provável é que recomende o website a um amigo ou a um colega?	Lealdade
É provável que eu regresse ao website no futuro.	
Considero o website atrativo.	Aparência
O website constitui uma apresentação simples e cuidada.	

Masstige Mean Scale

With the purpose of measuring a Brand's Masstige Marketing Effectiveness, a scale was developed by Paul (2019) that focuses on the following variables: Brand Knowledge, Perceived Quality and Excitement. The Masstige Mean Scale was tested in the United States, France and India, through the measurement of Louis Vuitton's Masstige Marketing efforts. The overall reliability score was of 0.82, deeming the Scale reliable.

The Scale is centered around a 10-item questionnaire, and is as follows:

Table 5 - Masstige Mean Scale Questionnaire (Paul, 2019)

Items	Construct
I like this brand because of brand knowledge.	Brand Knowledge and Prestige
I would buy this brand because of its mass prestige.	
I would pay a higher price for this brand for status quo.	
I would consider this brand a top-of-mind brand in my country, state or district.	
I would recommend this brand to friends and relatives.	
I believe this brand is known for its high quality.	Perceived Quality
I believe this brand meets international standards.	
I love to buy this brand regardless of price.	Excitement and Status
Nothing is more exciting than this brand.	
I believe that individuals in my country, state, or district perceive this brand as prestigious.	

The following table (6) is the Masstige Mean Scale Questionnaire translated into Portuguese.

Table 6 - Masstige Mean Scale Questionnaire (Paul, 2019) translated into Portuguese

Question	Construct
Eu gosto desta marca pelo meu conhecimento da marca.	Conhecimento de Marca e Prestígio
Eu compraria desta marca pelo seu mass prestige (prestígio de massas).	
Eu pagaria um preço mais elevado por esta marca em prol de status quo.	

Considero esta marca top-of-mind (é das primeiras que ocorrem à memória no seu mercado) no meu país, cidade ou distrito.	
Eu recomendaria esta marca a amigos e familiares.	
Acredito que esta marca é conhecida pela sua elevada qualidade.	Qualidade Percecionada
Acredito que esta marca corresponda a padrões internacionais.	
Adoro comprar esta marca independentemente do seu preço.	Entusiasmo e Estatuto
Nada é mais entusiasmante do que esta marca.	
Acredito que indivíduos do meu país, cidade ou distrito percecionem esta marca como prestigiosa.	

The individual total scores range from 10 to 70, with its mean being the Masstige Mean Index Value (MMIV). A higher index value represents a higher Masstige value, being that a score of above 60 is akin to a masstige brand with top-of-mind awareness.

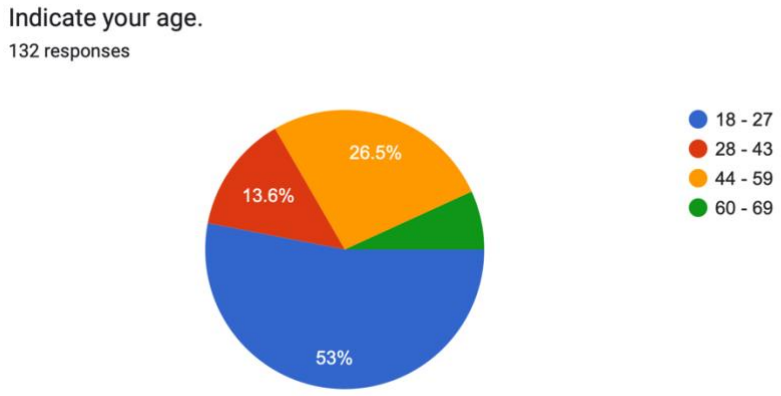
As discussed previously, Masstige brands are also present online. To visit a brand's website is not a rare occurrence for Masstige consumers. Whether they are shopping online or looking for information, regarding either the brand, policy or a product, a brand's website is a part of what constitutes its existence and respective strategy. The online world is not indifferent to the physical world.

As such, reviewing and measuring User Experience for Masstige brands presents itself as a worthwhile consideration.

3.4 Sample

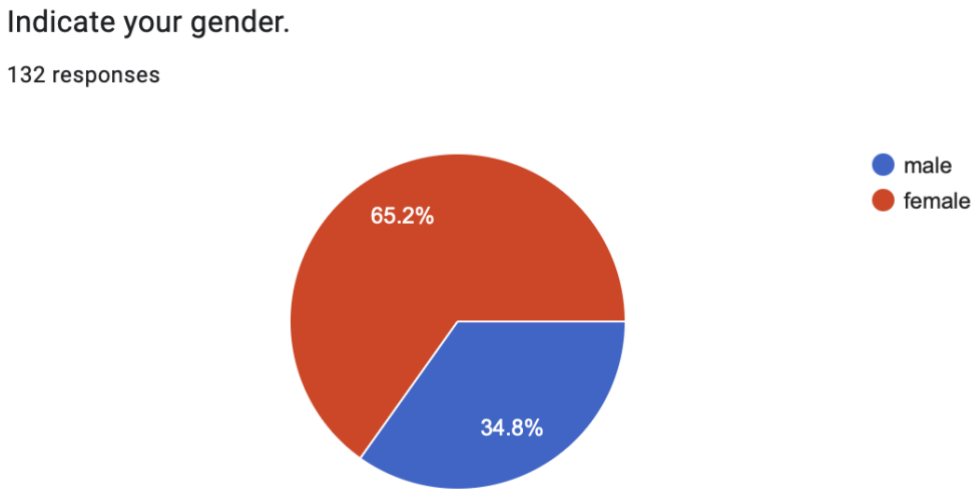
The survey targets individuals between the ages of 20 to 69 that reside in Portugal.
In total, 132 responses were obtained. Most respondents fall within the 18 to 27 age group, representing 53% of the sample, characterizing it as predominantly young. The second-largest group consists of individuals aged 44 to 59, accounting for 26.5% of the sample. This is followed by the 28 to 43 age group, which makes up 13.6%. The smallest group is comprised of respondents aged 60 to 69, representing 6.9% of the total sample.

Graph 1 - First questionnaire question (Age)



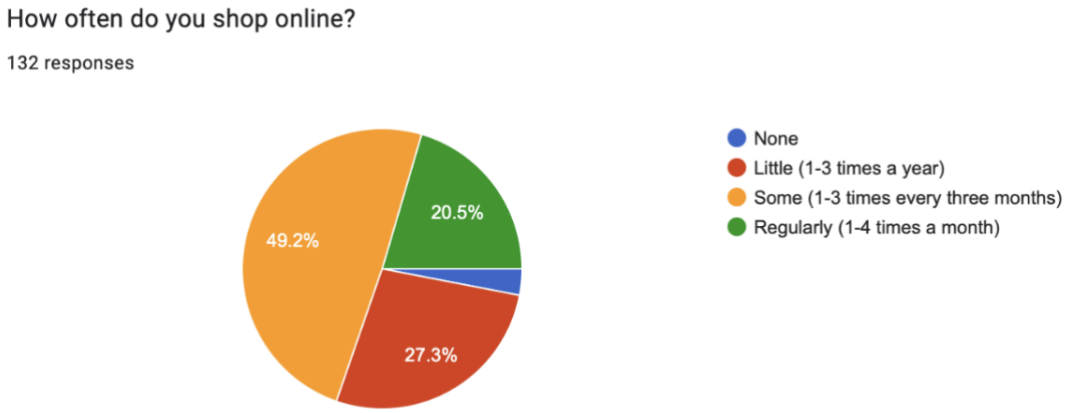
In terms of gender distribution, the sample is predominantly female, accounting for 65.2%, while males make up the remaining 34.8%.

Graph 2 - Second questionnaire question (Gender)



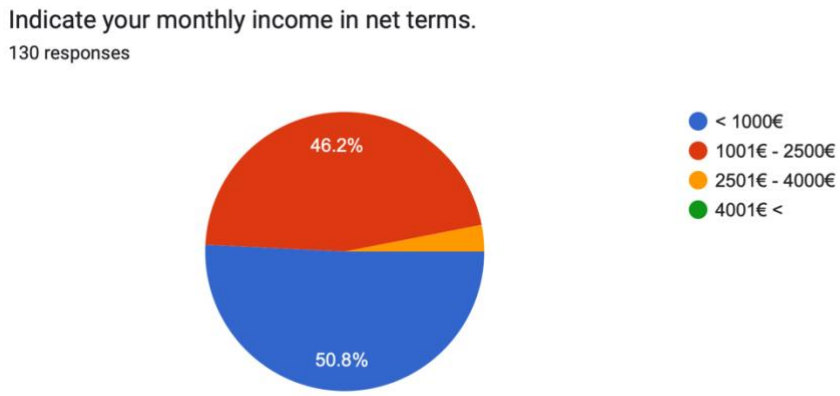
Regarding online buying habits, most respondents report a somewhat frequent purchasing pattern, representing 49.2% of the sample. This is followed by a low frequency of purchases, accounting for 27.3%. Those with a regular online purchasing habit make up 20.5%, while 3% of the sample reported no online purchases at all.

Graph 3 - Third questionnaire question (Online shopping habits)



As for monthly income, not all respondents answered this question (2 outliers). Half of those who responded report a monthly income of less than 1000€, while 46.2% report a monthly income between 1001€ and 2500€. The rest report an income of between 2501€ and 4000€.

Graph 4 - Fourth questionnaire question (Monthly income)



Thus, the sample has now been defined, setting stage for the required validity and reliability evaluations.

4 Results

4.1 Validity and Reliability

All data analysis has been conducted through SPSS.

To conduct a correlation analysis, the collected data was properly prepared beforehand.

The mean of each construct that are consisting of two questions, was calculated, with all constructs displaying Cronbach Alpha values exceeding 0.6 (User Experience - Usability: 0.72, User Experience - Trust: 0.68, User Experience – Loyalty: 0.749, User Experience – Appearance: 0.871), indicating a decent level of internal consistency among the items measuring each construct.

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha
UX - Usability	.838
UX – Trust	.857
UX - Loyalty	.749
UX - Trust	.871
Brand – Perceived Quality	.830

Table 7 - Mean of the constructs that consist of two questions

The remaining constructs, specifically Brand Knowledge and Prestige, and Brand Excitement and Status, were subjected to Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) through Principal Component Extraction (PCA).

Regarding the construct Brand Knowledge and Prestige's items, Q2's extraction communalities (0.684) indicate that it explains a significant portion of this construct's variance. On the lower end, Q1 and Q4 represent a smaller contribution to the constructed, as present with their lower extraction communalities (0.480 and 0.489). From here, a component was created with an initial Eigenvalue of 2.809. An Eigenvalue higher than 1 signifies that the extracted component holds a higher explanatory value than any individual question. As for the total variance, the extracted component accounts for 56.182%, thus representative of a considerable relevance to Brand Knowledge and Prestige. All the questions were strongly loaded into this component, in particular, Q2 with a loading value of .827, and Q3 with 0.786.

Item	Initial Com-munalities	Extraction Communalities	Initial Eigenvalues	Extraction Eigenvalues	% of Variance (Extraction)	Cumulative of % (Extraction)
Q1	1.000	0.480	2.809	2.809	56.182	56.182
Q2	1.000	0.684				
Q3	1.000	0.619				
Q4	1.000	0.489				
Q5	1.000	0.538				
Total			2.809	2.809	56.182	56.182

Table 8 - Brand Knowledge and Prestige: Principal Component Analysis

This construct's items have a high association with the extracted component, as its lowest value is of 0.693 (Q1), with the other items ranging from 0.733 to 0.827.

Items	Component 1
Q1	.693
Q2	.827
Q3	.786
Q4	.700
Q5	.733

Table 9 - Brand Knowledge and Prestige: Component Matrix

As for Brand Excitement and Status' construct questions, Q3 has a notably lower communality value (0.169) in comparison to Q1 (0.763) and Q2 (0.728), thus representing a lesser contribution to the construct. As the Extraction Eigenvalue is higher than 1, the extracted component is confirmed to be relevant towards the explanation of the construct. The total variance is accounted by this component for 54.42%, signifying a notable portion, however, one that is lower than that of the Brand Knowledge and Prestige construct.

Item	Initial Communalities	Extraction Communalities	Initial Eigenvalues	Extraction Eigenvalues	% of Variance (Extraction)	Cumulative of % (Extraction)
Q1	1.000	0.763	1.633	1.633	54.423	54.423
Q2	1.000	0.728				
Q3	1.000	0.169				
Total			1.633	1.633	54.423	54.423

Table 10 - Brand Excitement and Status: Principal Component Analysis

The Component Matrix illustrates each question's association strength with the extracted component. As made evident with the initial communality values, Q1 and Q2 have a higher level of loading (0.858 and 0.853, respectively), while Q3 has a lower level of 0.411, signifying a moderate association strength.

Items	Component 1
Q1	.858
Q2	.853
Q3	.411

Table 11 - Brand Excitement and Status: Component Matrix

Afterwards, general Principal Component Analysis was conducted on both User Experience and Masstige constructs.

As for User experience, one component was extracted, with all constructs' respective items showing high relevancy.

Items	Component 1
Usability Q1	.807
Usability Q2	.878
Trust Q1	.857
Trust Q2	.808
Loyalty Q1	.776
Loyalty Q2	.796
Appearance Q1	.806
Appearance Q2	.861

Table 12 - User Experience: Component Matrix

In the case of Masstige, relevancy is spread out differently between items, with 0.459 (Brand Excitement and Status Q2) as the lowest value and 0.783 (Brand Knowledge and Prestige Q5) as the highest.

Items	Component 1
Brand Knowledge and Prestige Q1	.650
Brand Knowledge and Prestige Q2	.697
Brand Knowledge and Prestige Q3	.712
Brand Knowledge and Prestige Q4	.660
Brand Knowledge and Prestige Q5	.783
Brand Perceived Quality Q1	.766

Brand Perceived Quality Q2	.772
Brand Excitement and Status Q1	.643
Brand Excitement and Status Q2	.459
Brand Excitement and Status Q3	.558

Table 13 - Masstige: Component Matrix

With all data standardized, conducting Pearson Correlation analysis is now viable.

4.2 Results

Firstly, the following table presents the Masstige Scores for each brand. All brands achieve a Masstige Score that confirm that they are Masstige brands. The total Mean Masstige Score being 4.4803 solidifies this statement. While Fred Perry has the highest Mean Masstige Score, its low sample size indicates that this difference might not be statistically significant, which warrants an ANOVA analysis, as shown on table X. Ralph Lauren and Lacoste reach a similar Masstige Score, of 4.5300 and 4.3394, respectively. As for the brand with the highest sample size, Tommy Hilfiger has a score of 4.4455. Lion of Porches, with a sample size of 17, has the score of 4.6941. No brand reaches a level of top-of-mind awareness (6.0).

Brand	Mean Masstige Score	N (Sample Size)	Standard Deviation
Ralph Lauren	4.5300	30	1.08569
Tommy Hilfiger	4.4455	44	0.71543
Lacoste	4.3394	33	1.15649
Lion of Porches	4.6941	17	0.95359
Fred Perry	4.8333	3	1.45717
Total	4.4803	127	0.7476

Table 14 - Mean Masstige Scores

To further understand these results, an ANOVA analysis was conducted. As the table X shows, there is no significant difference in each brand's Masstige Score. The F-value of 0.501 indicates that the disparity between the means of the groups, compared to the variability within each group, is low. The p-value, pertaining to the significance level, is of 0.753, which is much higher than the standard significance level of 0.05

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.

Between Groups	1.934	4	0.483	0.501	0.753
Within Groups	117.787	122	0.965		
Total	127.901	128			

Table 15 - Mean Masstige Scores One Way Variation Analysis (ANOVA)

The following data are the results from the Pearson Correlation analysis, conducted between each individual UX and Masstige construct. Afterwards, a grouped analysis was applied.

As shown by table 6, UX Loyalty is the construct with the highest correlation with Brand Knowledge and Prestige, having a Pearson Correlation value of 0.475, indicating a moderate to strong correlation. The rest of the constructs, too, display a positive correlation, UX Trust being the second highest with a value of 0.472, followed by UX Appearance with 0.427 and UX Usability, with 0.363. Overall, a positive correlation is consistently confirmed. All data shows statistical significance.

Construct	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)
UX Usability	0.363	<0.01
UX Trust	0.472	<0.01
UX Loyalty	0.475	<0.01
UX Appearance	0.427	<0.01

Table 16 - User Experience and Brand Knowledge and Prestige: Pearson Correlation

Conducting a Pearson Correlation analysis on Brand Perceived Quality and UX's constructs imply a moderate positive correlation. UX Trust stands out with the highest Pearson Correlation value of 0.621, indicating a strong positive correlation with Brand Perceived Quality. All the other items display values from 0.519 to 0.552, indicating moderate positive correlations. All data is statistically significant, at the p <0.001 level.

Construct	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)
UX Usability	0.523	<0.01
UX Trust	0.621	< 0.01
UX Loyalty	0.552	< 0.01
UX Appearance	0.519	<0.01

Table 17 - User Experience and Brand Perceived Quality: Pearson Correlation

When running a Pearson Correlation analysis between the UX constructs and Brand Excitement and Status, we find that not all constructs are equally statistically significant. UX Usability stands out as not statistically significant with its p. value of 0.215, paired with its weak positive correlation coefficient of 0.110. UX Appearance displays statistical significance and a weak positive correlation of 0.208. On the other hand, a bigger statistical significance is displayed by the rest of the UX constructs (Trust and Loyalty), albeit both with a weak positive correlation of 0.297 and 0.284, respectively.

Construct	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)
UX Usability	0.110	0.215
UX Trust	0.297	<0.01
UX Loyalty	0.284	0.001
UX Appearance	0.208	0.018

Table 18 - User Experience and Brand Excitement and Status: Pearson Correlation

A general Pearson Correlation was conducted, between User Experience and Masstige, both as a whole, in accordance with the items present in the questionnaire. Both statistic relevance (Sig. = <0.01) and a moderate positive correlation (0.531) are made evident.

	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)
User Experience	0.559	<0.01

Table 19 - User Experience and Masstige: Pearson Correlation

5 Discussion

With the aim of understanding if there is a positive correlation between User Experience and a brand's Masstige Value, four main hypotheses were conceived, each with three sub-hypotheses.

H1is confirmed in all its sub hypothesis (H1a, H1b, H3c), as Usability, Trust, Loyalty and Appearance in User Experience are positively correlated with Brand Knowledge and Prestige. As previously reviewed, ITT contributes to online shopping enjoyment (Lee et al., 2010), that has a positive impact on Brand Knowledge and Prestige. We now understand that Online Shopping, through User Experience, is correlated with a higher level of Brand Knowledge and Prestige. As Brand Knowledge and Prestige is an important factor towards a Masstige Brand's Equity (Paul, 2019), it is showcased that User Experience has a positive correlation, thus, with a brand's positioning in the Masstige scale. Within User Experience, it is the construct of Loyalty that has a higher correlation (0.475) with Brand Knowledge and Prestige, which sheds light on how User Experience can contribute towards the likeliness of a brand being considered top-of-mind, which is what Brand Knowledge concerns (Paul, 2019).
H2 is confirmed with all its sub-hypothesis (H2a, H2b, H2c) verified with moderate to strong correlations. A Brand's Perceived Quality is not forgone when in an online context, making UX a relevant consideration to have. In the sense that perceived quality positively impacts brand loyalty (Alhaddad, 2015), a User Experience that has a high value of Loyalty will, in turn, favor Brand Perceived Quality. Furthermore, online Masstige consumption isn't driven by the zero-moment-of-truth value, as it is the commitment to quality and sincerity that attract masstige consumers (Das et al., 2022). This is confirmed with how highly User Experience Trust is correlated with a Brand's Perceived Quality. As consumers trustingly engage with a Masstige brand's website, the brand's respective superiority to other brands is perceived accordingly. Relevant too is the attitudinal aspect of Perceived Quality (in contrast to the concept of Quality on its own), with which we can now establish a bridge between a consumer's trust in the online context (Paul, 2019).

The hypothesis H3 is not supported, as all the sub-hypotheses (H3a, H3b, H3c) yielded test results indicating a low correlation. This suggests that User Experience Status is weakly related to Brand Excitement and Status. While E-commerce strategies play an

important role in Place and Distribution strategies, often serving as a source of excitement and social connection for Masstige brands (Paul, 2019), this study reveals that User Experience does not significantly contribute to this Masstige construct. Although online marketing interactions remain crucial from the consumer's perspective (Rodrigues et al., 2024), the relationship between a positive User Experience and a high level of Brand Excitement and Status is not direct. Other conditions must be met for this excitement to materialize. In the context of Masstige, excitement and status benefits brand loyalty (Kumar et al., 2020). However, as this study shows, User Experience is not a step towards brand loyalty through excitement and status, due to the absence of a means for consumers to portray their identity (Alagarsamy et al., 2024) for User Experience finds itself limited to the online shopping experience.

On a general level, User Experience is positively correlated with Masstige brand value. However, as our analysis concludes, not all User Experience-related items hold the same relevance. Notably, Brand Excitement and Status stands out as an uncorrelated construct, with the other two positively correlated constructs (Brand Knowledge and Prestige, Brand Perceived Quality) emerging as more significant. Therefore, personal and identity-related aspects of Masstige brand consumption need to be developed in an online context through alternative marketing strategies (Rodrigues et al., 2024). Meanwhile, the other items in the Masstige Scale can derive an advantageous influence, via correlation, from a positive online User Experience, thus improving a brand's Masstige Value (Paul, 2019).

6 Conclusions

6.1 General Conclusions

This study has provided an exploration of how User Experience is positively correlated with Masstige brand value.

Firstly, the opted brands have been confirmed to be Masstige brands, with the total mean score of 4.4803. However, the lack of significant variation between each brand's score indicates that there is room for improvement for each Brand's differentiation, within the Portuguese market, especially when taking into consideration the fact that no brand reaches a level of top-of-mind awareness.

User Experience is confirmed to be positively correlated with Masstige brand value. This indicates that it is not indifferent for a brand to have a good User Experience, regarding its Masstige brand value.

However, not all Masstige constructs are positively correlated with a good User Experience. While Brand Knowledge and Prestige and Perceived Quality benefit from a highly rated User Experience, Brand Excitement and Status does not. This finding suggests that Brand Excitement and Status stems from communication and interaction facets, between consumer and brand, that User Experience does not have a significant hold of. As such, the more personal aspects of the relationship between the consumer and the brand appear less related to User Experience, as opposed to Brand Knowledge and Perceived Quality, which imply a higher degree of critical evaluation.

In summary, within the Portuguese market, the studied Masstige brands are revealed to have limited differentiation. While each brand's Masstige value benefits from a positive User Experience, which all brands achieve, further strategies are required to improve distinctiveness. This finding also illustrates that competition is fierce, and that the consumer's expectation regarding User Experience is high, which demonstrates that Masstige brand strategists should also prioritize its enhancement.

6.2 Managerial Implications

This study introduces new insights into the strategic management of Masstige brands, filling a previously unexplored gap between Masstige and User Experience.

A key finding is the correlation between a positive User Experience and enhanced Masstige brand value. This emphasizes the need for collaboration between Masstige strategists and UX developers to align their objectives. Specifically, strategies aimed at increasing Brand Knowledge, Prestige, and Perceived Quality should integrate UX considerations, as demonstrated by this study. For marketing strategists, the conclusion is clear: the online experience is vital and cannot be overlooked. A poor UX can negatively affect brand associations and perceived quality, as the digital interface is a primary channel through which brands communicate their identity to consumers. This highlights the importance of a seamless, engaging digital e-commerce presence.

Similarly, for web developers working on UX, this study underscores the need for a well-designed and reliable website. As technology evolves, so does the nature of brand communication. UX now plays a pivotal role in how brands express themselves, making it essential for both marketers and developers to prioritize this aspect in their strategies. This collaborative approach ensures that brands not only meet but exceed consumer expectations in the digital space.

6.3 Research Limitations and Future Research

This study, despite its contributions, suffers from certain limitations.

Firstly, the number of respondents is not representative enough of a wide margin of the Portuguese Masstige Market, which opens the possibility of a lack of insights. In particular, the low number of respondents makes it so that no valuable observations regarding age and gender are possible to obtain. There is room for further research on these relations.

In addition, the created survey might not be capable of capturing a consumers' true thoughts regarding an online website, even if it is the one of their brands of choice, as there is no direct correlation that their online shopping habits include Masstige brands.

This could have been an additional question within the survey, which now stands as a potential subject of future research.

Furthermore, the evaluation that was conducted on the Website of brand of choice, when answering the survey, was one that occurred in a non-organic flow of events. An online user's thoughts on a Website's User Experience might occur as truthfully as possible when their navigation is prompted out of their own volition. While more difficult to time correctly, brands could, themselves, conduct such studies by researching their own costumers' feedback.

Lastly, while the Standardized User Experience Percentile Rank and the Masstige Mean Scale hold validity on their own and as joint instrument of research, as this study has proven, it might not fully capture all constructs that can be relevant for a Masstige brand, in an online context. For instance, more emotional components of the User Experience, stemming from visual cues and semiotic messages, might be a worthwhile addition to a future research instrument.

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Appendix

Annex I – Questionnaire (in Portuguese)

Title: O Impacto de Experiência do Consumidor no Valor Masstige

O presente questionário é desenvolvido no âmbito do Mestrado de Negócio Eletrónico do Instituto Superior de Contabilidade e Administração do Porto, com o objetivo de perceber qual o impacto da Experiência do Consumidor, em contexto de website, no valor das Marcas de Prestígio.

O questionário destina-se a residentes em Portugal e tem a duração estimada de realização de 5 minutos.

Todas as respostas fornecidas neste questionário são estritamente confidenciais e serão utilizadas exclusivamente para fins académicos e científicos.

Section I

Indique a sua idade.
a)18 - 27
b) 28 - 43
c) 44 – 59
d) 60 - 69

Indique o seu género.
a) Masculino
b) Feminino
c) (Outro...)

Com que frequência realiza compras online?
a) Nenhuma
b) Pouca (1-3 vezes por ano)
c) Alguma (1-3 vezes a cada três meses)

d) Regularmente (1-4 vezes por mês)

Indique o seu rendimento mensal em termos líquidos.

a) <1000€

b) 1001€ - 2500€

c) 2501€ - 4000€

d) 4001€ <

Section II

Marcas Masstige

As marcas Masstige são marcas cuja qualidade percecionada é elevada, comportando uma comunicação de marca que faz alusão ao prestígio e ao status social.

Como o nome indica, Masstige resulta de "Mass" + "Prestige", pelo que são marcas comercializadas em larga escala, mas com um posicionamento de prestígio.

O preço das marcas Masstige é mais elevado do que os das marcas de produtos de massa, porém, é inferior aos de luxo.

Desta lista, escolha a marca pela qual nutre maior apreciação ou com a qual está mais familiarizado.

a) Ralph Lauren

b) Tommy Hilfiger

c) Lacoste

d) lion of Porches

e) Fred Perry

Section III – User Experience (Likert Scale answers)

Experiência de Consumidor no Website

Responda às seguintes afirmações, relativamente ao website da marca que escolheu, visitando e navegando pelo mesmo, se for necessário, aquando da realização deste questionário.

As respostas seguem uma escala de concordância relativamente às afirmações.

- O website é fácil de utilizar.
Discordo totalmente 1 – 7 Concordo totalmente

- Sinto-me confortável em realizar compras no website.
Discordo totalmente 1 – 7 Concordo totalmente

- É fácil de navegar pelo website.
Discordo totalmente 1 – 7 Concordo totalmente.

- Sinto-me confortável em realizar negócios no website.
Discordo totalmente 1 – 7 Concordo totalmente

- Quão provável é que recomende o website a um amigo ou a um colega?
Discordo totalmente 1 – 7 Concordo totalmente

- Considero o website atrativo.
Discordo totalmente 1 – 7 Concordo totalmente

- É provável que eu regresse ao website no futuro.
Discordo totalmente 1 – 7 Concordo totalmente

- O website constitui uma apresentação simples e clara.
Discordo totalmente 1 – 7 Concordo totalmente

Section IV – Masstige Value (Likert Scale answers)

Valor Masstige de Marca

Relativamente à mesma marca, responda às seguintes afirmações que visam avaliar o valor Masstige da respetiva marca, no que concerne: conhecimento da marca e prestígio, qualidade percecionada e entusiasmo e estatuto.

- Gosto da marca pelo meu conhecimento da marca.
Discordo totalmente 1 – 7 Concordo totalmente

- Eu compraria desta marca pelo seu Masstige (Prestígio em Massa)
Discordo totalmente 1 – 7 Concordo totalmente

- Eu pagaria um preço mais elevado pelo seu estatuto.
Discordo totalmente 1 – 7 Concordo totalmente

- Considero esta marca top-of-mind (é das primeiras que vêm à memória na sua categoria) no meu país, cidade ou distrito.
Discordo totalmente 1 – 7 Concordo totalmente

- Eu recomendaria esta marca a amigos e familiares.
Discordo totalmente 1 – 7 Concordo totalmente

- Acredito que esta marca é conhecida pela sua elevada qualidade.
Discordo totalmente 1 – 7 Concordo totalmente

- Acredito que esta marca cumpre com padrões internacionais.
Discordo totalmente 1 – 7 Concordo totalmente

- Aprecio comprar esta marca independentemente do seu preço.
Discordo totalmente 1 – 7 Concordo totalmente

- Nada é mais entusiasmante do que esta marca.
Discordo totalmente 1 – 7 Concordo totalmente

- Acredito que indivíduos do meu país, cidade ou distrito percecionem esta marca como

uma de prestígio.

Discordo totalmente 1 – 7 Concordo totalmente

Section V

Obrigado pela sua participação.

O questionário foi concluído.

Obrigado pela sua colaboração nesta investigação.