

Exploring the Influence of Consumption Values on Masstige Service Experience



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This study examines how consumption values influence service experience within masstige service sector. Drawing on the Consumption Values Theory, the study explores the relationships between functional, social, emotional, conditional, and epistemic values and the overall service experience. Data were collected from customers of masstige hotels in India through a structured questionnaire. The proposed model was tested using structural equation modeling. The findings provide new insights into how distinct consumption values shape guests' service experiences, offering theoretical implications for masstige research and practical guidance for managers seeking to enhance customer experiences in competitive hospitality markets.

Keywords: Masstige; Consumption Values; Service Experience; Hospitality; Customer Experience

1. Introduction

The notion of luxury has undergone a profound transformation over the past few decades. Traditionally, luxury was associated with rarity, exclusivity, and exorbitant prices, catering primarily to affluent consumers seeking distinction through ownership of scarce and prestigious products (Vigneron & Johnson, 1999; Wiedmann et al., 2007; Kapferer & Bastien, 2012; Wang, 2022). However, contemporary interpretations of luxury extends far beyond material possession, and modern luxury is increasingly characterized by superior quality, craftsmanship, authenticity, and unique, personalized experiences that create emotional and experiential value for consumers (Kapferer & Valette-Florence, 2018; Ko et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2024). This evolution has given rise to the concept of masstige, a hybrid domain that merges the prestige and aspirational appeal of luxury with the accessibility and affordability of mass-market offerings. Masstige brands and services deliver premium-like experiences and symbolic value to a broader audience, particularly the expanding middle-class segment in emerging economies (Mansoor et al., 2024; Unnithan et al., 2024). With rising disposable incomes, growing aspirational consumption, and increased exposure to global lifestyles, middle-class consumers now seek experiences that reflect sophistication and exclusivity without the prohibitive costs traditionally associated with luxury (Atwal & Bryson, 2017; Rosendo-Rios & Shukla, 2023).

The luxury market itself mirrors this democratization trend. The global luxury hotel industry, valued at USD 94.62 billion in 2022, is projected to reach USD 156.76 billion by 2030, expanding at a CAGR of 6.6% (Fortune Business Insights, 2023). Within this dynamic environment, masstige hotels have emerged as a prominent category, bridging the gap between budget and luxury segments by offering high-quality service, aesthetic appeal, and personalized attention at accessible price points. Given this transition, understanding service experience within masstige contexts becomes increasingly important. Unlike traditional luxury, where exclusivity defines value, the masstige service experience emphasizes inclusivity, emotional engagement, and perceived prestige. Service experience in masstige hotels serves as a critical determinant of customer satisfaction, perceived value, and long-term loyalty (Hutami et al., 2023; Vidyanata, 2022). A superior service experience can evoke positive emotions, strengthen brand attachment, and foster word-of-mouth advocacy, which are essential for sustaining competitive advantage in the hospitality industry. Thus, exploring how diverse consumption values influence the service experience in masstige hotels is crucial for both theoretical advancement and managerial practice. Such an understanding not only enriches the masstige branding literature but also offers practical insights for hotel managers aiming to design memorable, value-driven experiences that resonate with the evolving aspirations of the middle-class consumer segment.

2. Literature Review

The concept of "masstige," a blend of "mass" and "prestige," describes a marketing strategy designed to position premium products within the mass market. This approach focuses on providing consumers with affordable access to products that carry an air of exclusivity and high status (Silverstein & Fiske, 2003; Truong et al., 2009; Kumar et al., 2020; Park et al., 2022). Unlike conventional mass-market goods, which often rely heavily on discounts and promotions, masstige brands use a different pricing strategy. They adopt a premium pricing approach, creating an illusion of prestige and rarity, which helps reinforce their image as exclusive and high-end (Ho et al., 2023). To further strengthen this perception, masstige brands make use of selective distribution channels, sophisticated packaging, and high-quality presentation to maintain a sense of luxury.

Additionally, masstige brands often use celebrity endorsements, sponsorships, and social media marketing to enhance their public image and create a deeper emotional connection with consumers (Gilal et al., 2024). By doing so, they effectively cultivate a prestigious reputation without the exorbitant prices typically associated with luxury goods. It's important to differentiate masstige brands from traditional luxury brands, which are defined by their extremely high prices and their association with an unattainable level of exclusivity (Moorlock et al., 2023). However, some luxury brands have employed downward extensions, offered more affordable products while maintained their luxury brand image. This strategy allows consumers to experience a taste of luxury, albeit at a reduced price, without fully entering the exclusive luxury market (Moorlock et al., 2023).

Masstige brands primarily target middle-class consumers who are looking for high-quality, luxury-inspired products but cannot afford the steep prices of traditional luxury items (Truong et al., 2009; Singh, 2023). By positioning their offerings at accessible price points, these brands cater to individuals who desire a sense of prestige without the financial burden of expensive high-end goods. Moreover, the appeal of masstige is not limited to established, high-status brands. Even brands that were once considered ordinary can successfully transition into the masstige category. This can be achieved through careful and strategic marketing, focusing on product development, the adoption of premium pricing, and promotional efforts that convey an aspirational brand image (Kumar et al., 2020; Purohit & Radia, 2022; Chaudhary & Sharma, 2022; Purohit et al., 2023).

The expansion of masstige can also be attributed to the growing mainstream recognition of luxury brands, which were once associated with a select few but are now widely recognized and more accessible than ever before (Kapferer, 2015; Manoff, 2022). Historically, luxury has been defined by limited production, high involvement in the creation process, and an aura of exclusivity that is both recognized and valued by consumers. However, with the rise of e-commerce and the widespread availability of information through digital platforms, the visibility of luxury goods has increased significantly (Hennigs et al., 2012; Godey et al., 2016). This greater accessibility has shifted consumer expectations, opening up new opportunities for masstige brands that cater to middle-class consumers seeking premium-quality products and services without the steep costs traditionally linked with luxury.

As the boundaries between mass-market and luxury goods continue to blur, masstige brands occupy a unique space in the market (Wang et al., 2022). They combine the allure of high-quality, status-signaling products with a price point that remains attainable for a wider audience, capitalizing on a growing demand for accessible luxury experiences (Loureiro et al., 2018). This shift has redefined the consumer experience, allowing individuals to enjoy a taste of prestige and sophistication without breaking the bank.

In the context of the service industry, masstige marketing takes on a slightly different form. Since services are intangible and primarily rely on delivering exceptional experiences rather than physical products, masstige in this sector emphasizes the experiential aspect of the offering (Lo & Yeung, 2020). Consumer preferences have evolved significantly, and as more people move into the middle class with growing disposable income, there has been a corresponding increase in demand for premium services that are still affordable (Loureiro et al., 2018).

Masstige marketing has emerged as a prominent topic in recent marketing scholarship; however, its exploration has been largely confined to consumer goods within advanced economies. The majority of existing studies have focused on tangible product categories such as fashion, cosmetics, automobiles, and electronics (Gupta & Nair, 2021; Moorlock et al., 2023; Chaurasia et al., 2024). Despite the rapid global expansion of the service economy, research investigating masstige in service contexts remains scarce (Lim et al., 2022; Das et al., 2024; Dinç, 2025). This lack of attention represents a significant theoretical and managerial gap, as services differ fundamentally from goods in their intangible, experiential, and relational nature. Consequently, the strategies that create and sustain perceived prestige and accessibility in services require distinctive marketing approaches (Atkinson & Kang, 2022; Wirtz et al., 2022; Holmqvist et al., 2022). Addressing this gap could enrich the understanding of how masstige principles operate in experience-driven sectors, such as hospitality, healthcare, and education, where consumer perceptions of value and prestige are co-created through service encounters rather than product ownership. To address this gap, the present study draws on the Theory of Consumption Values to investigate how different consumption values influence consumers' perceptions and experiences of masstige service experience. By applying TCV within masstige hotel context, this study aims to deepen understanding of the drivers that motivate consumers to engage with masstige brands.

3. Methodology

A quantitative survey method was employed to collect primary data from customers of masstige hotels. Data were gathered using a structured questionnaire designed to measure various constructs on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 to 5. The survey included validated items adapted from prior studies related to the Consumption Values and constructs reflecting service experience dimensions relevant to the context (Sheth et al., 1991).

The study employed a non-probability convenience sampling method, guided by purposive screening criteria. Participants were approached at masstige hotels and shopping malls based on accessibility and willingness to participate. Before administering the full questionnaire, screening questions were included to confirm respondent eligibility. Participants were asked whether they had stayed in or visited a masstige hotel and whether they generally prefer prestige-oriented hotels over purely budget or luxury hotels. Only those meeting these criteria were invited to complete the full survey. A total of 319 valid responses were obtained after data cleaning and screening. The collected data were coded and analyzed using IBM SPSS for preliminary analyses, including reliability and descriptive statistics, and AMOS for advanced analyses such as Confirmatory

Factor Analysis (CFA) and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The study hypothesizes that consumption values positively influence brand evangelism that enhances service experience in masstige services.

4. Results

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was employed to test the proposed hypotheses. The overall model fit indices for the structural model indicated an acceptable fit to the data ($\chi^2 = 755.86$, $\chi^2/df = 2.291$, CFI = 0.979, GFI = 0.862, TLI = 0.976, RMSEA = 0.064). Once the measurement model criteria (HTMT < 0.8, AVE > 0.5, $\chi^2 = 715.770$, $\chi^2/df = 2.196$, CFI = 0.980, GFI = 0.867, TLI = 0.977, RMSEA = 0.061) were confirmed, the structural model was evaluated. The results demonstrated that conditional value ($\beta = 0.171$, t value = 2.816, $p < 0.01$), social value ($\beta = 0.332$, t value = 5.428, $p < 0.001$), and functional value ($\beta = 0.214$, t value = 5.014, $p < 0.001$) have a significant positive relationship with brand evangelism. However, emotional value ($\beta = 0.393$, t value = 0.276, $p = 0.783$) and epistemic value ($\beta = -0.075$, t value = -0.053, $p = 0.957$) do not show significant relationships with brand evangelism. Furthermore, brand evangelism ($\beta = 0.678$, t value = 19.409, $p < 0.001$) has a strong positive effect on service experience, thereby supporting the hypothesized relationships.

5. Implications

The findings reveal that social, functional, and conditional values significantly influence brand evangelism in masstige hotel brands, while emotional and epistemic values do not. This suggests that customers value practicality, social recognition, and situational benefits over emotional attachment or curiosity. Masstige hotels should therefore emphasize superior service quality, value-for-money offerings, and prestige-driven social appeal to strengthen advocacy. Encouraging guests to share positive experiences online may further enhance brand evangelism, which in turn improves overall service experience. The study highlights that in the masstige context, social and functional benefits are key drivers of customer advocacy and satisfaction.

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