How consumption values and perceived brand authenticity inspire fashion mastige purchase? An investigation

Munish Das, Charles Jebarajakirthy, Achchuthan Sivapalan

* Department of Business Management, Tripura University, Suryamaninagar, Belailagh, Agartala, 799022, India
* Department of Marketing, Griffith Business School, Gold Coast Campus, Griffith University, QLD, 4222, Australia
* Department of Commerce, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of Jaffna, PO Box 57, Jaffna, Sri Lanka

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:
Mastige fashion
Luxury consumption values
Consumer inspiration
Perceived brand authenticity

ABSTRACT

Rising income and the aspirations of the middle-class have resulted in the emergence of a new category of luxury brands popularly known as “mastige brands”. Researchers have attempted to establish mastige branding and mastige marketing as a differentiated research domain from luxury marketing. As an attempt to this end, the current study, which is confined to women’s fashion clothing brands, investigates whether various luxury consumption values are equally applicable in inspiring mastige purchase. In addition, this study investigates whether dimensions of perceived authenticity of a mastige brand moderate the association between various consumption values and mastige purchase intention. By employing an online survey, 462 usable responses were collected from middle-income female consumers in India and analysed using PLS-SEM and multi-group analysis. The findings show that functional, experiential and symbolic consumption values inspire mastige fashion purchase but the zero-moment-of-truth consumption value does not. Quality and sincerity (but not heritage) dimensions of perceived brand authenticity enhance the consumption value perceptions leading to mastige purchase. This study is the first of its kind to examine the applicability of various luxury consumption values in mastige consumption besides testing the moderating effect of perceived brand authenticity.

1. Introduction

Global economic activities have resulted in an increase of the middle-income class as well as their associated spending ability and aspirations (Mandel et al., 2017). According to the 2021 Credit Suisse (CS) Global Wealth Report, the size of the global middle-class, defined as ‘adults whose assets are between US$10,000 and US$100,000’, more than tripled between 2000 and mid-2020 that is, this figure increased from 507 million in 2000 to 1.7 billion in mid-2020 (Versace et al., 2021). The total spending of this segment of people is predicted to increase from $37 trillion in 2017 to $64 trillion in 2030 (Khan, 2016). The increase in purchasing power and the desire for social status and self-improvement (Eckhardt et al., 2015) have resulted in growing interest in premium priced products and services among this group of people (Farrell et al., 2006). This desire for premium products has created a new market for products and services: ‘prestige brands for masses’ or ‘mastige’ (mass prestige) brands (Paul, 2015). Owing to such brands’ ability to charge comparatively premium prices over mass-market alternatives (Gillat et al., 2021), marketers and brand managers are increasingly attempting to position their brands on the ‘prestige plank’ in the mass market. Complementing this phenomenon, branding and marketing research started exploring the means of making brands prestigious for the masses (Baker et al., 2000; Kumar et al., 2020; Joshi and Garcia, 2021; Kumar et al., 2021; Das, Sahas & Roy, 2021a). Paul (2018) proposed two prominent equations for mastige marketing; Premium Price = f (Mastige); and Mastige = f (Product, Place, Promotion). Specifically, Paul (2019) proposed mastige marketing strategy as a judicious mixture of product, promotion, and place to fetch a premium price for a brand by appealing to mass-market consumers’ desire for prestige (Kumar et al., 2020; Paul, 2019).

Coined by Silverstein and Fiske (2000) as ‘new luxury’, mastige brands are positioned as “premium but attainable” (Paul, 2015). These brands are marketed to middle-income people to provide them with an upmarket feeling at a price below traditional luxuries but above the mass-market alternatives (Jo and Yeung, 2020). Both luxury brands and ordinary mass-market brands take advantage of ‘prestige for the masses’ as a marketing opportunity. While luxury brands have attempted to use this opportunity by employing downward brand extension strategy,