

# THE INFLUENCE OF MASSTIGE VALUE INDEX ON BRAND PASSION AND WILLINGNESS TO PAY PREMIUM PRICE AND MEDIATING OR MODERATING ROLE OF BRAND EXPERIENCE AND ADVERTISEMENT: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF SPAIN AND PAKISTAN

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## Keywords

Masstige mean index (MMI), Brand Passion, Willingness to pay premium price, Brand Experience, Functional advertisement, Emotional advertisement, Self-satisfaction

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## Abstract

Masstige marketing refers to a market penetration strategy used by medium and large firms to build brand equity by enhancing brand awareness, likeability, and prestige among mass consumers. This study examines the relationship between masstige value, brand passion, and willingness to pay a premium price, while also exploring the moderating role of advertisement and the mediating role of brand experience between masstige value and brand passion.

The study adopts a deductive approach, and data were collected through a structured questionnaire from consumers who owned selected smartphone brands. Consumer responses were compared between Barcelona, Spain (developed country), and Lahore, Pakistan (developing country). Data were analyzed using SPSS and PLS-SEM, including assessment of the measurement and structural models.

The bootstrapping results show that in Pakistan, hypotheses H1, H2, and H5 were supported, while H3 and H4 were not. In Spain, H2 and H3 were supported, whereas H1, H4, and H5 were not. Multi-group analysis using Henseler's PLS-MGA and Permutation tests indicates significant differences for H2, H3, and H5 between the two groups.

## INTRODUCTION

Brands have an important influence on shaping consumer behavior and defining consumers' lives (Ahuvia, 2005; Wallendorf & Arnould, 1988). A stronger relationship combines customers with their preferred brands (Fournier, 1998). In the past few years, economic boom has shaped a pool of middle-class, which caused a tremendous growth in the market (Beinhocker, Farrell, & Zainulbhai, 2007; Farrell, Gersch, & Stephenson, 2006; Kharas & Gertz, 2010) and the market of luxury products extending globally, particularly in developing countries like Asian countries (Goyal, 2020). In the past, the term 'luxury' has been reformulated and the postulation of new luxury discovered (Eckhardt, Belk, & Wilson, 2015),

including market mushrooming, affordability, and availability in the mass market. The masstige term emerged from "Mass prestige". Silverstein and Fiske (2003) redefined the mass-tige strategy in their edition, Trading Up, and in a Harvard Business Review publication, which was based on the principle of the mass extension of downward brands. Therefore, mass-prestige (mass + prestige) brands are seen as prestigious, yet middle-class consumers purchase them. The concept of masstige is defined in the current research as "prestigious but attainable," which focuses on the middle class, with the motive of generating Mass Prestige.

In accordance with Bain & Company, both luxury items and experiences are included in the luxury

sector category. It is divided into nine divisions, with luxury cars, luxury hospitality, and personal luxury items (e.g. smartphone) accounting for almost 80% of the overall market. The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 had a significant impact on the luxury industry. At 2020 exchange rates, the luxury worldwide market, which comprises both luxury items and experience, has fallen from over €1 trillion by 20 percent to 22 percent and returned to 2015 (Claudia D'Arpizio, 2020). In the first quarter of 2021, the industry grew by 0.1 percent compared to 2019, which the industry considers to be the most recent comparable year (D'Arpizio, 2021). According to Nguyen, Melewar, and Chen (2013), the realm of branding and consumer behavior research, brand prestige and brand love have attracted a lot of attention. Students investigated a massive strategy and established measurements to explain the success and failure of the way brand equity, prestige, and affection are generated (J. J. E. J. o. I. M. Paul, 2018; Qiao & Wang, 2019).

The current study seeks to examine the relationship between brand passion and mass prestige (mass prestige associated with brands). The concept of masstige value is relatively new, and research on this topic is in an emerging phase. Researchers are undertaking studies to disentangle various aspects of this popular phenomenon. Affective constructs of consumer-brand relationships appear in branding strategies, such as brand attachment and brand love (Kumar, Paul, Starčević, & Services, 2021). In developing countries, the number of middle-class customers paying more attention to higher-quality, lifestyle, and taste is increasing. Pakistan has a middle class comprising 35% of its population. The masstige strategy aims to provide prestigious products to the middle class. There is a need to advance and promote the masstige strategy so that the organizations can minimize class inequalities and everyone can experience the luxuriousness and trendiness of lifestyle. Most of the existing studies have unraveled the influence of masstige value on purchase intention, J. J. E. J. o. I. M. Paul (2018) compares Ford, a homegrown American vehicle brand, to Toyota and Honda, Japanese automobile brands, in consideration of mass prestige.

Correspondingly, discovered that American brands HP and Dell had a higher masstige value in India than Chinese brands Lenovo and Acer (Taiwan) (Baber, Upadhyay, Kaurav, Baber, & Markets, 2020). (Kumar *et al.*, 2021) also found that the American smartphone brand Apple has high mass-market value, which leads to consumer happiness. J. J. A. p. j. o. m. Paul and logistics (2015) has propounded a "masstige mean mark-scale (MMSS)" for the assessment of brands' mass prestige. It also concludes that a brand with greater mass-appeal value has a better chance of succeeding and has expanded the application of the mass-appeal mean score scale (MMSS) in 2019 to show that it may be used to determine the value of a brand across multiple regions. However, the link between masstige value and brand passion that ultimately goes to willingness to pay a premium price is missing. Furthermore, there is also no evidence that compares the same high-end products in developing and developed countries (Kumar and Paul 2019). The current study responds to this gap by examining the relation between mass value and brand passion, and then the link between brand passion and willingness to pay a premium price for smartphone brands between developing and developed countries, as recommended by Baber *et al.* (2020) and Kumar, Paul, & Unnithan (. Masstige value of smartphone brands calculated using the masstige mean index (MMI), proposed by (J. J. E. M. J. Paul, 2019).

This research aids in the promotion of a masstige strategy in which businesses evaluate their marketing success across markets. This study will help uncover consumer passion for masstige brands by evaluating opinions on masstige value in smartphone brands, which may assist in understanding the difference between masstige and luxury. Managers may gain insight into diverse advertising methods for masstige companies by comparing established and emerging countries, especially in developing countries.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

**Masstige:** Masstige marketing is a key concept for medium-sized and large enterprises to penetrate the market, based on brand equity, affection, and prestige (J. J. M. I. Paul & Planning, 2015). It is

used for the first time as "Masstige" for brands that offer their products and clients a wide range of prices, belonging to socioeconomic categories, as defined by Silverstein and Fiske (2003). It has been identified as a crucial approach, as the amazing increase in the number of middle-class consumers who also want luxury products (Silverstein & Fiske, 2003). Masstige brands are said to be just one step below typical luxury brands and one step above medium-priced products in terms of price and prestige (Truong, McColl, & Kitchen, 2009). According to Kumar *et al.* (2020), a brand is a mass-tige brand with upmarket positioning, prestigious consumption, a medium-income group, and moderate premium pricing. Some brands, such as Baristas, Café Coffee Day, Maruti Suzuki Baleno, and Apple iPhone, understand the mass prestige approach.

The development of the mass prestige value of the brand could be attained by using the brand positioning (Baber *et al.*, 2020). Prior studies have investigated masstige in different cultures by using different brands, such as smartphones (Baber *et al.*, 2020; Kumar *et al.*, 2021), laptops (Kumar & Paul, 2018), Fashion brands (J.-E. Kim, Lloyd, Adebeshin, Kang, & Journal, 2019) and Beauty cosmetics brands (Qiao & Wang, 2019). By following the guidance of choosing masstige brands recommended by (Kumar *et al.*, 2020) We selected the smartphone brands with high market share: Apple, Samsung, Xiaomi, OPPO, Vivo, and Huawei (Counterpoint, 2020). Apple launched the first iPhone on 29 June 2007 in the USA and has launched a series of iPhones till 2020. At the beginning, the iPhone was only available in America and a few other countries, but by the end of 2020, it held 21% of the global market share compared to other smartphone brands. Apple personifies strong customer buying behavior and brand equity. Samsung, a South Korean multinational corporation, entered the smartphone market on June 29, 2009, with the Galaxy series of handsets. At the end of 2020, it had a 16% share of the global smartphone market. The pricing range is moderate premium, extremely competitive compared to competitors like Apple. It is found that the Samsung Galaxy S6 Edge is

considered a masstige product (Paksi & Gunawan, 2017). 'Xiaomi' was launched on 6 April 2010 as a Chinese smartphone company.

It is a mobile internet corporation established in China that researches and develops high-quality smartphones (Shih *et al.*, 2014). At the end of 2020, it had an 11% share of the global smartphone market. The smartphone brand pays attention to the (fan-centered) business strategy designed by Berthon, Pitt, Plangger, and Shapiro (2012) of mass marketing and social media. OPPO, Vivo, and Huawei are Chinese smartphone brands with market shares below 10 percent. According to Global Smartphone Quarterly Market Data, OPPO have 9%, Vivo and Huawei have 8% market share.

**Brand passion:** Consumers and their favorite brands are strongly connected (Fournier, 1998). Similarly, some consumers could have real insanity with some brands (Belk, Tumbat, & culture, 2005). The recently introduced notion of brand passion is linked to strong positive attitudes towards a brand, providing evidence that consumers are passionate about prominent brands. However, it has still been unclear and doubtful that how brand passion relates to other consumer-brand relationships. Swimberghe, Astakhova, and Wooldridge (2014) has described "brand passion as a strong emotional connection to a brand that people value, find important, desire to own or use, incorporate into their identity, and invest resources in over a while" and Albert and Merunka (2013); (Batra, Ahuvia, & Bagozzi, 2012) has defined brand passion as "a psychological construct comprised of excitation, infatuation, and obsession for a brand" and "a feeling which few consumers embrace".

According to the marketing literature review, the framework of Sternberg's triangle theory of Love has been used to discuss this construct (Swimberghe *et al.*, 2014) and recently, brand passion has been investigated in various studies and defined in various ways (Albert & Merunka, 2013; Astakhova, Swimberghe, & Wooldridge, 2017; Hemsley-Brown & Alnawas, 2016; Mukherjee & Planning, 2019; Pourazad, Stocchi, Pare, & Management, 2019; Swimberghe *et al.*,

2014). In terms of consumption, brand passion is described as a predominantly affective, strongly favorable approach to a certain brand that evokes feelings of attachment and sway key behavioral factors (Bauer, Heinrich, & Martin, 2007). According to this concept, consumer-brand connections are characterized by zeal and enthusiasm and reflect a consumer brand's passion and awakened good feeling (Thomson, MacInnis, & Park, 2005). In accordance with the concept of interpersonal passion research (Albert, Merunka, & Valette-Florence, 2013; Baumeister, Bratslavsky, & review, 1999; Hatfield, 1988), excitement, fascination, and obsession with a brand are all psychological concepts we use to describe brand passion (Albert et al., 2013; Hatfield, 1988). It is also found that brand passion in the consumption context has a primarily affective, positive attitude towards a particular brand, which causes emotional attachment and signifies a behavioral factor related to the product and service of the entity (Bauer et al., 2007). Previous studies have investigated the brand passion regarding smartphones (Ghorbanzadeh, Saeednia, Rahehagh, & Management, 2020; Yalcintekin & Saygili, 2020b), Smartphones (Yalcintekin & Saygili, 2020a, 2020b). As a result, in this study, we examine the mass-elite value of brands and brand passion among Pakistani and Spanish consumers of the six well-known smartphone brands. Therefore, the hypothesis is; **H1:** Masstige value has a positive effect on brand passion.

**Willingness to pay a premium price:** Willingness to pay a premium price has been described by Netemeyer et al. (2004) as being prepared to pay more for a particular product or service than for an alternative brand. A brand acquires a premium price when consumers are willing to pay more for products from the brand than for comparable products from other relevant brands (Aaker, 1996). The concept of willingness to pay is well-known and well-tested and first appeared in economics literature over a century ago (Davenport, 1902). Since then, consumer reactions regarding price have been widely incorporated in marketing literature. This is

because the willingness to pay is linked to aspects that are crucial and essential for making decisions, such as satisfaction, loyalty, and even the culture, when examining the price perception process (Le Gall-Ely, 2009). The widely recognized definition is "the utmost price a certain consumer is willing to pay for a product or service" (Le Gall-Ely, 2009). To put it another way, the most competitive pricing for a product or service might be given to customers (Masiero, Heo, & Pan, 2015). According to Thomson et al. (2005), those who are emotionally or spiritually attached to a brand are willing to pay an additional price for it. There is an increase in the competitive service sector in today's world; marketers essentially comprehend the causes and mechanisms that lead to clients' willingness to pay more for one brand over another (Ligas, Chaudhuri, & Services, 2012). Davcik and Sharma (2015) considered willingness to pay a premium price as a result of consumer perceptions of brand quality, with higher prices representing a better level of value and quality. (Nyffenegger, Krohmer, Hoyer, & Malaer, 2015) investigate the quality of the brand and the type of product, and (Chatterjee, Kumar, & Services, 2017) investigate client willingness to pay in the retail sector. It was investigated in earlier studies that brand passion affects the willingness to pay price premiums directly and indirectly (Albert & Merunka, 2013; Bauer et al., 2007; Casidy, Wymer, & Services, 2016). Also, there is limited knowledge that explains the factors that determine willingness to pay premium prices for smartphone brands (Ghorbanzadeh et al., 2020). Vaz (2019) explores the influence of ingredient branding on smartphone purchase intentions and willingness to pay for it in Portugal. We have identified a few studies that explain brand love and willingness to pay a premium price (WPP) (Ghorbanzadeh et al., 2020). This study aims to investigate the relationship between brand passion and willingness to pay more among Pakistani and Spanish smartphone consumers. So, the hypothesis is; **H2:** Brand passion has a positive effect on willingness to pay a premium price.

**Brand experience:** The concept of brand experience is fresh and unprocessed, describing the complete, inclusive consumer's connectivity with brands. Brakus, Schmitt, and Zarantonello (2009) described the brand experience as 'subjective, internal consumer responses like sensations, feelings, and cognitions regarding a specific product. In addition, behavioral responses are elicited by brand-related stimuli, including brand design and identity, packaging, communications, and environments. Brand experience consists of four measurements, namely 1) sensory experience, 2) affective experience, 3) behavioral experience, and 4) intellectual experience.

Sensory experience includes the sensory and aesthetic characteristics that consumers distinguish through their sensory organs (Hwang & Hyun, 2012). It is suggested that sensory experience plays an important role in assessing a prestige brand because it differentiates the brand in terms of the strong desire to be more successful (Dubois & Czellar, 2002). There are various marketers who recommend the formation of sensory experiences through aesthetic styles, such as the color, materials, and design of products, and themes like slogans and visual symbols, which are essentially connected to the content and connotation of the brand (Hulten, 2015). Affective experience is composed of all types of subjective experiences that are correlated with particular feelings and sentiments (Hwang & Hyun, 2012), and it plays an important role in customers' decision-making processes, particularly when they are seeking attractive consumption experiences. Customer would create a perception of the brand, either positive, such as love, desire, and pride after using the product, or negative, such as fear, disgust, and despair (Miao, Lehto, Wei, & Management, 2014). Shim, Forsythe, and Kwon (2015) describe the behavioral experience as some kind of brand behavioral reactions that are induced by specific brand stimuli. In addition, brand that is related to specific stimuli include brand-identifying colors (Bellizzi, Hite, & marketing, 1992; Gorn, Chattopadhyay, Yi, & Dahl, 1997; Meyers-Levy & Peracchio, 1995), shapes (Veryzer Jr & Hutchinson, 1998),

typefaces, background design elements (Mandel & Johnson, 2002), catch phrases, mascots and brand characters (Keller, 1987). The stimuli for the brand appear as part of the brand's design and identity (name, logo, and signs), packaging, marketing communications, and the environments where the brand is sold or marketed (stores and events). Schmitt (1999) describes the phrase "intellectual" as referring to provoking creativity through surprise, mystery, and provocation, as well as creating long and momentous memories of a brand in the minds of clients and (Lee & Kang, 2012) classify Intellectual experience is an occurrence that stimulates people's thinking or makes them intrigued. There are various studies that look over this concept in several sectors. Shahzad, Bilal, Xiao, and Yousaf (2019) probe that smartphone brand experience and brand equity are mediated by the interaction between hedonistic emotions, utilitarian emotion and brand personality. Mostafa, Kasamani, and Logistics (2020) revealed that consumer experiential brands foster extensive loyalty with the brand by cultivating brand passion, self-brand connection, and brand devotion, and Khamwon, Masri, and System (2020) investigate the interrelationship between the premium smartphone's Brand Experience, Brand Love, and Brand Advocacy in Bangkok, Thailand. Also, we found a few pieces of evidence that explain the relationship between brand experience and brand passion (Das, Agarwal, Malhotra, & Varshneya, 2019). Therefore, we expect brand experience to mediate the relationship between the mass prestige value of the brand and brand passion. So, the hypothesis is

**H3:** Brand experience partially mediates the relationship between the mass prestige value of brands and brand passion.

**Functional and Emotional Advertisement:** De Chernatony (2010) describe the advertising is widely used as a visible contact with consumers. R&D and advertising are undoubtedly the most important factors in advanced bestselling products and prolonged adoption. Srinivasan, Pauwels, Silva-Risso, and Hanssens (2009) defines advertising is a marketing gadget used to transmit

information on the product/service and raise brand recognition. When consumers make new, developed products/services purchase decisions, they face the difficulty that they do not know enough about the offerings. Therefore, firms use advertisement strategies in order either to provide information of important features to consumers or to develop an emotional attachment to persuade customers to take final purchasing decisions. The exploration of advertisement literature proposed two main categories of advertising strategies: functional ads and emotional ads, which are dependent on the content of the messages transmitted by the commercials (Y. Lee & Colarelli O'Connor, 2003). Functional ads conveyed technically relevant utilitarian product qualities. On the other hand, emotional advertisements focus on graphic depictions of a beautiful, natural environment (Matthes, Wonneberger, & Schmuck, 2014). What is the most successful ad strategy? There is a never-ending argument and contradictory evidence. Sheth, Newman, and Gross (1991) have explained functional value as “the perceived usefulness derived from an alternative's functional, utilitarian, or physical performance”. Functional value in terms of technology is the assumption that one's daily performance will increase as a result of technological advancements (Davis, 1989). Vigneron and Johnson (2004) also describe functional value as the set of characteristics that distinguishes a product from its competitors, including consumer perceptions of superiority, the capacity to operate or execute at a higher level, and underlying artistry.. Zhang, Liang, and Wang (2016) describe that functional advertisements are more associated with the correspondence of product information and features, whereas emotional ads are more related to the inciting of buyer sentiments. Specifically, beneath the setting of unique product advancement, functional advertisements part with sufficient knowledge, teach customers, and pass along to an advantage in the first place. As a result, when a company announces innovative and breakthrough products, functional advertisement may influence the consumption of masstige brands and brand passion.

**H4a:** Functional advertising has a positive moderating effect on the relationship between masstige value of the brand and brand passion. Sheth *et al.* (1991) describe emotional value as “the perceived utility derived from an alternative's propensity to arouse feelings or affective states.” This value adds value to alternatives by eliciting specific sensations, and it is typically quantified using a “profile of feelings associated with the alternative.” Emotional value is the utility gained in distinction to the pleasure or desire position (i.e. happiness or pleasure) that provoked by product. Emotional responses to advertising were described by Hyun, Kim, and Lee (2011) as the bunch of sentimental returns induced at the time of opening advertising. When consumers see ads, the information they provide generates emotional responses and attitudes toward the brand. Firms can employ emotional ads in conjunction with functional ads to elicit good feelings about products from consumers via peripheral pathways. For instance, consider family love, companionship, or respect. In this case, companies may employ emotional advertisements to communicate brand information that is in line with their customers' wishes and expectations that is hidden (Zhang *et al.*, 2016). These emotive advertisements help companies build deep ties with customers and could lead to increased brand love.

**H4b:** Emotional advertising has a positive moderating effect on the relationship between the brand's masstige value and brand passion.

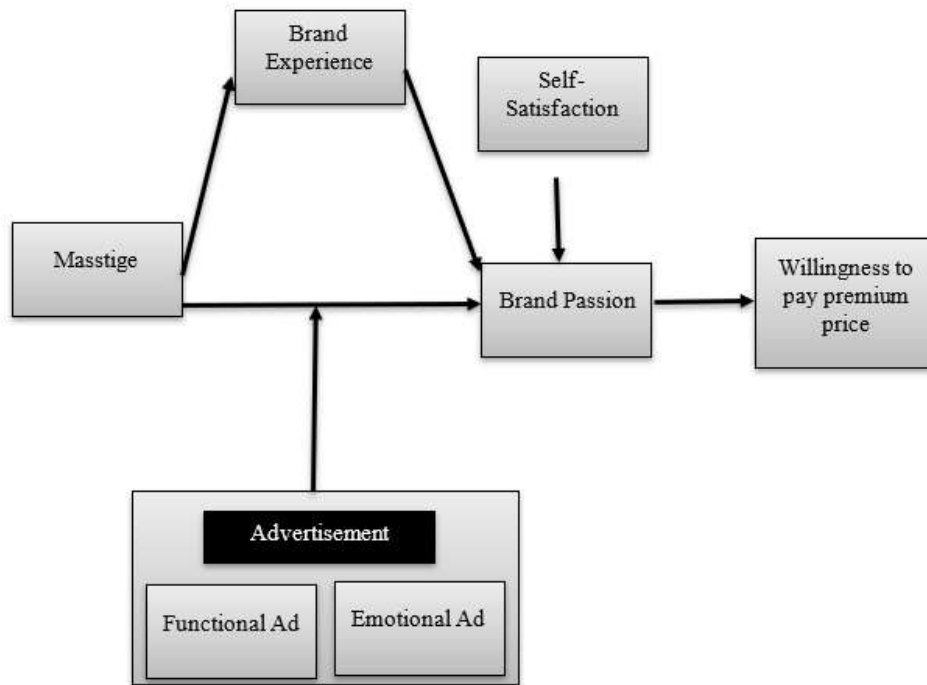
**Self-Satisfaction:** Satisfaction is defined as an evaluation of the suppositions and actual features of a product or service (Oliver, 1999; Thaichon, Lobo, Mitsis, & Logistics, 2014), and satisfaction is also considered an antecedent to trust. The idea of self is described as 'the whole beliefs of the person and sensitive affections that relate to themselves as objects' (Sirgy, 1982; Wylie, 1989). Self-satisfaction narrate what extent to which consumer satisfaction with itself or herself or achievements is provided by products/services. (Park *et al.*, 2015; Park, Han, Kim, Oh, & Moon, 2013). Self-satisfaction refers to how satisfied a user feels with his or her accomplishments as a

result of using a product or service (Park, Han, Kim, Cho, et al., 2013). Self-satisfaction is one's total satisfaction with oneself (Theodorakis, 1996; Twenge & Campbell, 2008). Previous studies investigate self-satisfaction as a sub-element of user value to check the consumer experience (H.-j. Lee, Lee, & Choi, 2018). Park, Han, Kim, Oh, et al. (2013) investigate the user experience of customers related to mobile devices, and in 2015, they developed and verified the questionnaire of user value (Park et al., 2015). Ma, Chan, and Chen (2016) presented self-satisfaction as an

independent variable to investigate and confirm the fundamental influencing elements of smartphone acceptability among Chinese older adults, as well as to explain the life situations of Chinese older adults who use smartphones. There is limited studies who check the role of self-satisfaction in different sectors regarding smartphones. In this research, we expect to scrutinize the impact of self-satisfaction on brand passion. So, the hypothesis is;

**H5:** Self-satisfaction has a positive effect on brand passion.

**Conceptual Model**



**Figure 1: Conceptual model**

**METHODS AND RESULTS**

**Sample Distribution and Data Collection:** The information was acquired using structured questions. The target population will be the people who own the selected smartphone brands. We investigate consumers' response regarding the masstige value of brands between developing (Pakistan) and developed (Spain) countries. In this study, we adopt Barcelona, Spain, as a developed country and Lahore, Pakistan, as a developing country. We choose main cities of both countries;

unfortunately, we could not collect the data from other cities due to COVID-19 restrictions. The reason we chose Spain as a developed country because it is the fifth largest country in Europe by economy and has a strong per capita gross domestic product (GDP). Before distribution, the English form of the questionnaire was converted into Spanish and then Spanish to English to assure that the meaning of items would be the same. The sampling technique used for data collection is convenience sampling. The sample

size of the current study was 422, 205 respondents from Spain and 217 from Pakistan that calculated using the sample calculator. The sample size was appropriate. Firstly, for factor analysis, the sample size should be more than 200 (Comrey & Lee, 2013); secondly, for regression analysis should be 10 individuals or more for each independent variable (Halinski & Feldt, 1970). The questionnaire was distributed through two tactics, distribution by hand or by sharing a link on social media that was generated on Google Forms.

**Product category and brands:** There are several reasons to choose these smartphone brands: 1) In Pakistan and Spain, practically everyone has a mobile phone brand, 2) Certain brands of smartphones are used by consumers to display their status (Suki, 2013), and consumers generate passion towards them after using mobile phones (Ghorbanzadeh et al., 2020), 3) Samsung, Xiaomi, and Apple recently captured more than 50% of the global smartphone market and leaving hundreds of other brands to compete fiercely for the remaining market (Kumar and Paul, 2018). In the second quarter of 2021, global market share of Samsung 18%, Apple 15%, Xiaomi 16%, OPPO 10%, Vivo 10% and Huawei includes in the other smartphone category which capture 31 percent market share (Counterpoint, 2021). According to figures from the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS), Pakistan imported mobile phones worth \$1.860 billion in July-May (2020-21) compared to \$1.138 billion in July-May (2019-20), a 63.40 percent increase and the market share of top six smartphone brands is 24.2% for Samsung, 13.33% for OPPO, 11.97% for Huawei, 4.84% for Apple, 4.44% for Xiaomi and 11.97 % for Vivo (Globalstats, 2021b). In Europe, the market share of these brands is 30.44% for Samsung, 1.55% for OPPO, 11.25% for Huawei, 36.42% for Apple, 11.31% for Xiaomi and 0.22 % for Vivo (Globalstats, 2021a). According to previous study (Kumar and Paul, 2018), the best-selling brands are predicted to have a high level of prestige. This contributes to the strength of these smartphone companies.

**Measures of study:** A research questionnaire split into two parts. The descriptive information of respondents (gender, age, marital status, and employment status or smartphone brand name) is presented in the first section. Constructs are included in the next part of this study. A 34-item scale was utilized in accordance with prior investigation. All respondents clearly answered all the items of the five constructs, established on a five-point Likert scale. It ranges from 1-Strongly Disagree to 5-Strongly Agree (Revilla, Saris, Krosnick, & Research, 2014). For measuring mass prestige value of brands 10-items based Masstige mean index (MMI) seven point scale were adopted proposed by (J. J. E. M. J. Paul, 2019; J. J. M. I. Paul & Planning, 2015), 4-items of brand passion was adopted (Sarkar et al., 2012), 3-items self-satisfaction (H.-j. Lee et al., 2018) developed these items in his paper by follow the measurement development procedure proposed by (Churchill Jr, 1979). Brand experience was measured with 8-items proposed by (Brakus et al., 2009). For the willingness to pay premium price 3-items was adapted from (Anselmsson, Bondesson, & Johansson, 2014; Netemeyer et al., 2004). Two different sorts of advertising strategy, Functional Ad refers to an approach in advertising which employs reasonable calls to show the functionality of masstige companies, Emotional Ad refers to a publicity approach which utilizes emotional calls to show the symbolic sensations of the massive companies. For measuring functional ad and emotional ad, 6 items are suggested by (Hao, Ko, & Taylor, 2010; Y. Lee & Colarelli O'Connor, 2003; Zhang et al., 2016).

For data analysis, the two-step approach has been used that recommended by (Hair et al. 1998). By following this approach, the first is the validity and reliability assessed measurement model using various methodologies like factor analysis (PLS-Algorithm). Secondly, the structural equation model (SEM) was analyzed to test the hypothesis. The distribution frequency of Pakistani participants was 107 males and 110 females out of 217. The percentage of Spanish respondent have 52.2% were females and 47.8% males. The questionnaire listed four age groups: 15-25, 26-35,

36-45, and over 45. For Spain, 18.5% were 15-25, 44.4% 26-35, 28.3% 36-45, and 8.8% were above 45. Similarly, in Pakistan, 79.7% were 15-25, 16.6% 26-35, 2.8% 36-45, and 0.9% were above 45. The percentage of marital status of Pakistani respondents 87.6% were single, 10.6% are married, and 0.5 divorced, and 1.4% do not want to answer (Prefer not to say). For Spanish respondents, 40.0% single, 43.9% married, 13.7% widowed, and 2.4% do not prefer to answer. As a result, the percentages of Pakistani and Spanish students' respondents is 65.9 and 22.0. Pakistani respondents, 25.8% employed, 4.1% unemployed, and 4.1% were not preferred to answer, and Spanish respondents, 54.6% employed, 15.5 unemployed, and 7.8% not prefer to answer the given questions. The percentage of smartphone users in Pakistan were 14.3% Apple, 30.0 Samsung, 9.7 Xiaomi, 22.6 OPPO, 12.4 Vivo, and 11.1 Huawei. For Spain, 21.0% Apple, 42.0% Samsung, 7.3% Xiaomi, 8.3% OPPO, 7.3% Vivo, and 14.1% Huawei users. Table 1

shows the average ratings for the items used in MMI for the smartphone brands evaluated in Pakistan and Spain. The feedback of smartphone customers suggests that multinational smartphone firms selling their goods in Pakistan and Spain were warmly accepted and viewed favourably. Pakistan has Apple with 14.3 percent of smartphone users, Samsung with 30.0 percent, Xiaomi with 9.7 percent, OPPO with 22.6 percent, Vivo with 12.4 percent, and Huawei with 11.1 percent. Spain has 21.0 percent of people who own an Apple device, 42.0 percent own a Samsung device, 7.3 percent own a Xiaomi device, 8.3 percent own an OPPO device, 7.3 percent own a Vivo device, and 14.1 percent own a Huawei device. The Masstige mean score of smartphone brands also changes because of different percentages of data from both countries. Also, some items received the lowest score, showing that, as a status symbol, they were less inclined to pay a premium for their smartphone brand.

**Table 1 Mean Score of Smartphone brands (MMI)**

Mean Score of Smartphone Brands		Apple	Samsung	Xiaomi	OPPO	Vivo	Huawei
MMI	Pakistan	55.93	55.31	53.90	51.51	53.05	50.85
	Spain	50.41	54.64	44.87	43.83	44.8	49.38

To assess the correctness and reliability, tests of validity and reliability were done. In the study, two-sided tests with a significance threshold of 0.05 were used. The research instrument was classified as reliable or dependable because the Cronbach's alpha value was above 0.8 to 0.9. There are three criteria for determining convergent validity, according to these writers. First, for the indication reliability criterion, the item loading is greater than 0.70. (JF Hair, Anderson, Babin, & Black, 2010). The factor loading for each item in a freshly developed item should be greater than 0.5, and the factor loading for each item in an established item should be 0.6 or higher (Awang *et al.*, 2014). The CR Internal consistency requirement must be at least 0.70 in the second phase (Cheung & Wang, 2017; Joe

Hair, Hollingsworth, Randolph, & Chong, 2017), and the construct's Average variance extracted (AVE) value is larger than 0.50 for convergent validity criteria in the third step (Cheung & Wang, 2017; Joseph F Hair Jr *et al.*, 2021). Every variable's Average Variance Extracted (AVE) must be more than 50%, as advised by (Claes Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Kline, 2015). Table 2 shows the loading, reliability, and validity of the research analyzed through Smart PLS 3. All of the items' factor loadings in the table above were above 0.7 and varied from 0.76 to 0.94, and some items show a 0.6 loading. The AVE for all variables was larger than 0.5 and varied from 0.67 to 0.83. The results demonstrate that CR and Cronbach's alphas are higher than the 0.70 value given by (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). These findings reveal a high level of convergent validity.

Table 2 Factor Analysis -Path Coefficient

Factor Analysis: PLS Algorithm									
		Pakistan				Spain			
Constructs Items		Outer Loadings	CA	CR	AVE	Outer Loadings	CA	CR	AVE
<b>Masstige Mean index (MMI)</b>									
1	MMI1	0.715	0.92	0.933	0.583	0.633	0.898	0.916	0.523
2	MMI2	0.751				0.735			
3	MMI3	0.756				0.707			
4	MMI4	0.759				0.742			
5	MMI5	0.807				0.767			
6	MMI6	0.767				0.764			
7	MMI7	0.777				0.800			
8	MMI8	0.758				0.731			
9	MMI9	0.747				0.698			
10	MMI10	0.792				0.636			
<b>Brand Experience (BE)</b>									
11	BE1	0.791	0.924	0.938	0.654	0.715	0.891	0.913	0.570
12	BE2	0.825				0.798			
13	BE3	0.775				0.758			
14	BE4	0.844				0.816			
15	BE5	0.802				0.791			
16	BE6	0.827				0.773			
17	BE7	0.780				0.706			
18	BE8	0.821				0.670			
<b>Advertisement (AD)</b>									
<b>Functional Advertisement (AD-F)</b>									
19	AF1	0.862	0.852	0.910	0.772	0.748	0.698	0.833	0.626
20	AF2	0.879				0.856			
21	AF3	0.895				0.764			
<b>Emotional Advertisement (AD-E)</b>									
22	AE4	0.880	0.856	0.912	0.776	0.780	0.712	0.839	0.635
23	AE5	0.877				0.846			
24	AE6	0.885				0.763			
<b>Brand Passion (BP)</b>									
25	BP1	0.897	0.922	0.945	0.811	0.867	0.833	0.889	0.669
26	BP2	0.919				0.885			
27	BP3	0.901				0.784			
28	BP4	0.885				0.727			
<b>Willingness to pay premium Price (WPP)</b>									
29	WPP1	0.916	0.910	0.943	0.847	0.834	0.766	0.865	0.683
30	WPP2	0.935				0.887			
31	WPP3	0.910				0.751			
<b>Self-Satisfaction (SS)</b>									
32	SS1	0.884	0.881	0.926	0.807	0.826	0.765	0.864	0.680

33	SS2	0.921				0.900			
34	SS3	0.890				0.741			

MMI (Masstige mean index), BP (Brand passion), WPP (Willingness to pay premium price), SS (Self-satisfaction), BE (Brand experience), AD-F (Functional advertisement), AD-E (Emotional advertisement), CA (Cronbach’s Alpha), CR (Composite Reliability), AVE (Average variance extracted)

The hypothesis test results based on the model and the data generated for it are shown in Table 3. The following settings are used to determine the Standard Beta, standard errors, T-statistics, and P values with Smart PLS 3. For all pathways, “PLS-Bootstrapping” has been chosen for an external analysis model for standard errors computation

and P-values. For Pakistan, the p-values of H1, H2, and H5 were below 0.05; these hypotheses were accepted. H3, H4a, and H4b were rejected because of a p-value above 0.05. Similarly, for the Spain data, H2 and H3 were accepted with 0.000 p-values. H1, H4a, H4b, and H5 were rejected because it shows non-significant results.

Table 3 Path Coefficient (PLS-SEM)

Hypothesis Testing-Bootstrap						
	Relationship	Sample Mean	STDEV	t-value	p-value	Decision
<b>Pakistan</b>						
H1	MMI -> BP	0.208	0.084	2.418	0.016	✓
H2	BP -> WPP	0.792	0.029	26.979	0.0000	✓
H3	MMI -> BE-> BP	0.082	0.077	1.096	0.274	✗
H4a	AD-F->MMI-> BP	-0.029	0.105	0.270	0.788	✗
H4b	AD-E->MMI-> BP	0.023	0.103	0.214	0.830	✗
H5	SS-> BP	0.326	0.080	4.118	0.000	✓
<b>Spain</b>						
H1	MMI -> BP	0.104	0.078	1.304	0.193	✗
H2	BP -> WPP	0.646	0.048	13.340	0.0000	✓
H3	MMI -> BE-> BP	0.311	0.052	6.056	0.0000	✓
H4a	AD-F ->MMI -> BP	0.018	0.084	0.170	0.865	✗
H4b	AD-E ->MMI -> BP	0.024	0.086	0.294	0.769	✗
H5	SS-> BP	0.101	0.077	1.355	0.176	✗

P ≤ 0.05 MMI (Masstige mean index), BP (Brand passion), WPP (Willingness to pay premium price), SS (Self-satisfaction), BE (Brand experience), AD-F (Functional advertisement), AD-E (Emotional advertisement)

**Mediation Analysis:** Once the indirect impact's significance has been analyzed, we calculate the strength of the mediator. It can be assessed using the total effect and variance accounted for (VAF) method. Table 4 shows the outcomes of the mediation analysis. The findings of Pakistan indicate that brand experience partially mediates the linkage between Masstige value and brand passion, with a 0.282758 VAF value. Similarly, Spain data findings show partial mediation of brand experience between masstige value and brand passion with a 0.749397 VAF value. In

accordance with Joseph F Hair Jr et al. (2021), when VAF exceeds 0.2, partial mediation is proven, and when it exceeds 0.8, complete mediation is demonstrated. Pakistan's findings show non-significant results since the p-value is larger than 0.05, but Spain's findings show significant results with the suggested P-value of p<0.05. The findings show that both countries have indicated partial mediation with 0.2 and 0.7 scores, but have below 0.05 value. As a result, we reject hypothesis H3 regarding the impact of Brand experience as a mediator for Spain. H3

shows non-significant results for Pakistan, so it should also be rejected for Pakistan.

**Moderation analysis:** Table 5 explained the findings of the moderation analysis. According to Kenny (2016) The moderation approach to the effect size of standard Beta [ $f^2 = (R^2 \text{ include} - R^2 \text{ exclude}) / (1 - R^2 \text{ include})$ ] is 0.005 mean the moderation effect was small, 0.01 is medium, and 0.025 value have large moderation effect (Baron &

Kenny, 1986). The current finding shows that the H4a effect size results of Pakistan have zero, and Spain has a 0.005 value. In addition, both have 0.788 Pakistan and 0.865 Spain p-values, which are above the recommended value ( $p < 0.05$ ). The effect size of H4b is zero for Pakistan and 0.005 for Spain, with 0.830 and 0.769 p-values. Therefore, both countries have shown no moderation and non-significant results, which is why H4a and H4b are rejected.

**Table 4 Mediation analysis: PLS-SEM**

Mediation analysis: PLS-SEM						
		Path		P-value	VAF = Indirect effect/Total effect	Decision
H3	Pakistan	MMI -> BP	Direct effect	0.016	0.282758	Partial
		MMI -> BE -> BP	Indirect effect	0.274		
	Spain	MMI -> BP	Direct effect	0.193	0.749397	Partial
		MMI -> BE -> BP	Indirect effect	0.0000		

$P < 0.05$  MMI (Masstige mean index), BP (Brand passion), BE (Brand experience)

**Table 5 Moderation analysis: PLS-SEM**

Moderation analysis: PLS-SEM						
			P-Values	Std. Beta f2	Effect size	Decision
H4a	Pakistan	AD-F ->MMI -> BP	0.788	0	None	✘
	Spain	AD-F ->MMI -> BP	0.865	0.005	None	✘
H4b	Pakistan	AD-E ->MMI -> BP	0.830	0	None	✘
	Spain	AD-E ->MMI -> BP	0.769	0.005	None	✘

$P < 0.05$  MMI (Masstige mean index), BP (Brand passion), AD-F (Functional advertisement), AD-E (Emotional advertisement)

**Multi-Group Analysis (MGA):** The initial stage in the procedure involves creating data groups, after which you would test the measurement invariance (MICOM) proposed by (Henseler, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2016). MICOM is a crucial step before doing multi-group analysis (MGA) because it ensures that model discrepancies in the middle of groups are not due to variances in the latent variable's content and/or meanings. The researcher can begin examining group differences using MGA in PLSPM after establishing measurement invariance, either partial or full,

using MICOM. MGA is frequently practiced to relate parameters (such as path coefficients, outer weights, and outer loadings) that are known a priori between two or more groups (Joseph F Hair Jr, Sarstedt, Ringle, & Gudergan, 2017). Table 6 explained the results of Henseler's PLS-MGA and permutation test; the p-value for the difference in group-specific route coefficients should be less than 0.05 or bigger than 0.95 for Henseler's PLS-MGA result to reveal significance at the 5% probability level. Permutation p-values greater than 0.05 denote that the cognitive engagement construct passed the measurement invariance test.

Table 6 Henseler's PLS-MGA and Permutation

Henseler's PLS-MGA and Permutation Test							
Pakistan-Spain							
Hypothesis		Path (Pakistan)	Path (Spain)	Diff. (Pak-Spain)	PLS-MGA p-value	Permutation p-value	Sig.
H1	MMI -> BP	0.202	0.102	0.100	0.356	0.386	No
H2	BP -> WPP	0.791	0.643	0.148	0.008	0.012	Yes
	MMI -> BE	0.773	0.713	0.060	0.329	0.371	No
	BE -> BP	0.109	0.439	-0.330	0.014	0.015	Yes
H3	MMI -> BE -> BP	0.084	0.313	-0.239	0.027	0.021	Yes
	AD-F -> BP	0.081	0.139	0.058	0.625	0.672	No
H4a	AD-F > MMI-BP -> BP	-0.028	0.014	-0.043	0.764	0.773	No
	AD-E -> BP	0.259	0.123	0.136	0.279	0.320	No
H4b	AD-E > MMI-BP -> BP	0.022	0.025	-0.003	0.961	0.988	No
H5	SS -> BP	0.330	0.104	0.226	0.039	0.041	Yes

P < 0.05 MMI (Masstige mean index), BP (Brand passion), WPP (Willingness to pay premium price), SS (Self-satisfaction), BE (Brand experience), AD-F (Functional advertisement), AD-E (Emotional advertisement)

## CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The motive of this study was to check the influence of masstige value index on brand passion, the mediating role of brand experience, and the moderating role of advertisement. Also, the impact of self-satisfaction on brand passion and brand passion's effect on willingness to pay premium prices. This study compares the masstige value of the top six smartphone brands (Counterpoint, 2020) between Spain and Pakistan. Baber *et al.* (2020) recommended masstige value of smartphone brands could be studied between developing and developed countries. In this study, we adopt Barcelona, Spain, as a developed country and Lahore, Pakistan, as a developing country. Based on the exploration of masstige literature, it can be determined that masstige is becoming more popular among academics. It is well-received by both marketers and consumers (Kumar *et al.*, 2020). Theoretically, prestige brands are defined as a new type of luxury distinct from traditional luxury. The new luxury, accessible luxury, and mass consumption luxury, referred to in literature as massive brands (J. J. E. M. J. Paul, 2019).

The results indicate that Asian smartphone firms Apple and Samsung showed good performance and popular appreciation in the Pakistani market correspondingly with 55.93 and 53.90 MMI, suggesting that these companies in Pakistan are much loved and have strong brand stock. In Spain, Samsung shows a high MMI value of 54.64 in contrast to other brands. Based on the Pakistan results, we came to the conclusion that masstige value and self-satisfaction have a significant positive effect on brand passion. This means consumers have passion regarding masstige brands, and when they use them, they feel satisfied with themselves. Based on the model, Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 5 were rejected. Hypothesis 2 was accepted, indicating that when consumer passionate about a brand, they are willing to pay premium prices for a specific brand (Thomson *et al.*, 2005). Hypothesis 3 was rejected (p=0.335), which shows non-significant results with partial mediation impact of brand experience on masstige value and brand passion. The mediation effect indicates that the consumer will be passionate regarding a masstige brand if they experience it. It is argued that sensory experience is vital in determining brand prestige because it

distinguishes the brand in the motive of gaining a competitive advantage (Dubois & Czellar, 2002). Various marketers advise the development of sensory experience via aesthetic styles such as color, design, and materials, and topics such as slogans and visual symbols that are fundamentally related to brand content and connotation (Hulten, 2015). Hypothesis 4 rejected ( $p=0.814$ ) indicates that advertisements have no moderate effect on the relationship between masstige value and brand passion. It shows that emotional and functional advertisement does not push consumers' passion regarding masstige brands. The researcher explained advertisements that are both utilitarian and emotive were not always reciprocally incompatible (Calder & Gruder, 1989). Regarding Spain results, Hypothesis 1, Hypothesis 4 and Hypothesis 5 rejected, it reveals that Spanish consumers have not much specifically passionate regarding masstige brands. It also revealed that functional and emotional advertisement dose not push consumers towards luxury brands and have not any effect on the relationship of masstige brands and brand passion. In addition, luxury brands do not satisfied consumers by self and have non-significant reaction on brand passion. Hypothesis 2 accepted that shows brand passion has high significant impact on willingness to pay premium price for masstige brands, indicated that consumers who have passion regarding luxury brand, they are willing to pay extra prices for that brand. South Korean customers' willingness to pay a price premium for a RE100 commodity was revealed by (J.-H. Kim et al., 2019). Using the example of smartphones, (Vaz, 2019) investigates the impact of ingredient branding on purchase intention and willingness to pay for smartphones in Portugal. Ghorbanzadeh et al. (2020) studied the relationship between brand passion and willingness to pay premium pricing regarding smartphone. Hypothesis 3 accepted with high p-value ( $p=0.000$ ) which explains that brand experience partially mediates the relationship between masstige value and brand passion, which explains Spanish consumers, have more passionate towards masstige brands when they experience the brand. It argued that sensory

experience was vital in determining brand prestige because it distinguishes the brand in terms of competitive advantage (Dubois & Czellar, 2002). The findings of a multi-group analysis using Henseler's PLS-MGA and permutation test were analyzed. The results of the parametric test revealed that H1 and H4 are not statistically significant. The results of H2, H3, and H4 are significant. The findings of Henseler's PLS-MGA and Permutation tests, which are non-parametric tests, demonstrate that H2, H3, and H5 have significant values in both tests. H1 and H4 are both non-significant at 0.05. Aside from that, the research could help in the consideration of mass prestige value, different smartphone companies in the market assess and change their marketing strategy. It is not only about cellphones. The MMI may be used to combat the competition of various makers of smartphones. Brands will be skilled to scrutinize and estimates the success of their marketing initiatives by examining the MMI alongside their competitors' brands.

### Conclusion

There are not many studies that link brand usage with passion. Consumers who use high-end brands were more likely to be faithful to them and willing to pay a premium for them, according to this study. This might be thought of as a theoretical development of masstige theory. The linkage between prestige brands and passion could be described by the easy satisfaction of a demand, which might lead to a passionate customer. According to Pakistan statistics, among Samsung, iPhone, and Huawei, only iPhone is in the category of masstige brand with a 55.93 MMI value, while Samsung is a masstige brand with a 54.64 MMI value in Spain. It has been found that Pakistani consumers are more passionate about the brands as compared to Spanish consumers, but if they are passionate about those brands, they are willing to pay a premium price for them. The Pakistani consumers are satisfied with the brands, but Spanish consumers do not satisfy with the brand they passionate about. It has also been demonstrated that functional advertising is not a better target for masstige companies, as these individuals would develop passion from brand

use. Emotional advertising, on the other hand, dampens the relationship between masstige and brand passion. To make people passionate about a brand, marketers in both countries do not need to focus on functional and emotional advertising. In Spain, brand experience can promote brand-induced enthusiasm; in Pakistan, customers do not become passionate when they encounter a brand.

#### Limitations and direction for future studies

There were certain restrictions in the current research that can be solved in the future. This research was carried out among smartphone users in the main city of Lahore, Pakistan, and Barcelona, Spain. If a nationwide survey had been undertaken, the results would have been more varied. Because of the reasons stated previously, generalization for the Pakistan smartphone industry is limited. This research examines and contrasts single cities in Pakistan and Spain. If you compare smartphones from both countries in two or three cities, the results will be more accurate. A limited sample is included in the study. This study does not concentrate on a specific brand or type of product that is not always a defect. It is necessary in general to understand the significance of masstige. More study might be carried out in order to ensure generality, by comparing one or two brands or product categories between two or more nations with big samples. There is also the opportunity to get to know consumers' views depending on demographics such as gender and age. The massive impression of elder customers may vary from the perception of younger ones. The differences in massive amounts between emerging and advanced countries can be investigated. In diverse cultures, which may lead to the generalization of the research and worldwide growth of the massive importance, the importance of masstige brands can be further explored.

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