Exploring Masstige Service Brands: A Study of Brand Happiness and Brand Advocacy Towards Over-The-Top (OTT) Platforms

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Abstract

The present research aims to construct a novel conceptual framework centered on the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) theory for describing how customers feel happy and show advocacy for Over-the-Top (OTT) brands. To achieve this, the model was assessed by employing quantitative data analysis. For evaluating the broader applicability of the suggested model, the data gathered from 246 Indian Over-the-Top (OTT) users were analyzed by using Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). It is found that the predictive power pertaining to the model is moderate, and the data validate all of the proposed associations among the selected variables. Additionally, the current study also provides some insightful theoretical, economic, policy, and managerial implications. The implications for the managers were derived by conducting a priority map analysis to thoroughly examine specific constructs and indicators for understanding the brand advocacy behavior of consumers. This provides insightful information to marketing managers to identify the most important construct and the indicators to focus on.

1. Introduction

For many years, luxury brands have been widely recognized in developed economies. Now, they are growing rapidly in emerging nations, where the proportion of wealthy individuals is on the rise and the emotional and symbolic appeal of these brands significantly impacts their purchase decisions (Sreejesh et al., 2016). A wider spectrum of people is now served with luxury brands that had been formerly confined to a selected few. Due to a rise in their salaries, consumers from the middle class are becoming increasingly interested in luxury brands (Kumar et al., 2021; Alagarsamy et al., 2022; Das et al., 2022a). Further, companies that sell luxury brands are also looking to serve this group of consumers to increase their revenue (Paul, 2018; Singh, 2022).

A more recent segment of luxury brands has further evolved, identified as "new luxury," "mass luxury," or "masstige" brands. By combining the words "mass" and "prestige," the term "masstige" refers to brands that maintain a premium image by offering products at costs that are more affordable for a large number of customers. Masstige brands offer a premium experience to consumers at a mid-price range that is higher than what customers from the middle class usually pay, but still more affordable than high-end luxurious brands (Das et al., 2022a). Although the concept of masstige is relatively new, research indicates that brands including Apple (Kumar et al., 2020), Louis Vuitton (Paul, 2019), Tiffany, Starbucks, Mercedes, and Victoria's Secret (Kumar et al., 2020; Park et al., 2022; Silverstein & Fiske, 2003) have employed certain approaches to cater those customers who belong to the middle class and want prestigious goods without paying the steep costs of traditional luxury. To develop their customer base and access a large number of consumers, luxury companies are taking advantage of the growing financial resources of the middle-income class (Kharas & Gertz, 2010) through the application of mass prestige tactics.

Scholars have displayed an enormous amount of interest in the concept of masstige (Kumar et al., 2020; Barrera & Ponce, 2021). The overwhelming majority of research endeavors so far have concentrated on masstige brands encompassing goods such as mobile phones, laptops, and automobiles (Kumar & Paul, 2018; Kumar et al., 2020; Baber et al., 2020; Kumar et al., 2021; Gupta & Nair, 2021; Iaia et al., 2022; Das et al., 2022a; Khan & Iqbal, 2023; Khan et al., 2024). Still, there is less research concerning the notion of masstige encompassing the services brands.

Research has continually shown how services separate themselves from goods at every step regarding the consumer's journey- before, during, and after purchase (Tsiotsou & Wirtz, 2015). Interactions between customers and service providers might have an impact on the

"customer experience" (Batat, 2022). This is because services can be distinguished from goods by the fact that services have their own special qualities. Services differ from tangible goods in the sense that services are not owned by customers (Lim et al., 2022), but these are identified by attributes that include an intangible and inseparable nature (Hartwig & Jacob, 2022). On account of this aspect, services are basically distinct from goods (Wirtz et al., 2020; Lim et al., 2022).

Furthermore, various studies done in the context of different goods and services measured the effect of the masstige on different variables or the effect of different variables on the masstige. Concerning the goods, the research done by Kumar and Paul (2018) in the context of laptops has found that there is a positive effect of masstige on the brand equity value. Furthermore, focusing on research regarding smartphones, Kumar et al. (2021) have revealed that the consumption of masstige mobile phone brands leads to brand happiness. Additionally, according to the study of Gupta and Nair (2021), the Apple iPhone caters to consumers' egocentric values, for the reason that just the thought of buying it meets ego-driven desires. This impact is further strengthened by the brand's masstige positioning, resulting in an overwhelming and positive sense of egocentric value in consumers.

Hence, these studies, conducted in the context of smartphones, analyzed the effect of masstige on some dependent variable, but there are more studies in the same context where masstige was taken as the dependent variable, such as the study by Baber et al. (2020) which found that decisions to purchase the masstige smartphone brands involving Xiaomi and Apple were influenced by social standing provided by these brands. Additionally, gender and age have a substantial effect on the different dimensions of the masstige, such as mass prestige of brand, brand perception, and propensity to pay a premium. Moreover, the research by Iaia et al. (2022) revealed that consumers who exhibited a greater degree of narcissism purchased masstige smartphone brands in an effort to elevate their social position and to claim superiority over others. Similar results were found in another study where people were more likely to purchase masstige smartphone brands to maintain or build self-esteem (Khan & Iqbal, 2023; Khan et al., 2024). In addition to laptops and smartphones, the study concerning automobiles done by Das et al. (2022a) emphasized that cognitive, affective, and behavioral masstige engagement affects the tendency of consumers to purchase the automobile brands.

Likewise, in the case of services, Lim et al. (2022) found that satiety values such as nutritional value, timely serving of foods, hygiene, and sensory experience in the fine dining restaurant had a positive impact on customer satisfaction, which further led to positive word-of-mouth recommendations among others. Furthermore, the study by Singh (2022) with respect to mobile payment applications found that there is a significant effect of the masstige on the overall value of brand equity. Masstige approaches, when applied to customer experience, as well as relationship-driven services brands such as hotels and airlines, tend to increase happiness among the customers, and this frequently results in behavior patterns including brand loyalty and positive recommendation (Purohit et al., 2023). As evidenced by the fact that affordable prestige may transform pleasant feelings into actual financial benefits, by emphasizing that tourists who cherish masstige experiences are far more inclined to have a deeper connection or affection for a destination, which may affect their readiness to spend money (Atsız et al., 2024).

After extensive examination, Kumar et al. (2020) claim that the masstige value of goods is determined based on the functional utility provided by the goods; however, this may appear distinctly for intangible and dynamic services. The masstige effect pertains to both goods and services. Prestige for goods is largely derived after having their physical possession and their highly consistent superior qualities, while for services, prestige has been affected by the reputation, experience value, and symbolic meaning offered by the brands. Contrary to this, the model given by Roy et al. (2025) illustrates the effect of masstige in several phases: first, it generates motivation, followed by desire, and then ultimately results in outcomes such as customers being ready to pay higher prices and do advocacy for the brand. This result extends to both goods as well as services.

Unexpectedly, there exists a considerable gap in the available research studies. Very few studies have focused on masstige brands across the service industry, and these studies primarily concentrated on fine dining services (Lim et al., 2022), hotels, airlines (Purohit et al., 2023), and mobile payment apps (Singh, 2022). Therefore, the present research intends to address this gap through analyzing the masstige brands adhering to the service industry, especially pertaining to OTT (Over-the-Top) platforms. For many Indians, streaming videos online has transformed from a luxury to a necessity in their daily routines (Sharma, 2022). Given this transformation, it is a relevant field for studying the masstige phenomenon.

The study undertook a quantitative survey coupled with the primary goals to look into the relationship among masstige consumption, brand happiness, and brand advocacy concerning the selected OTT (Over-the-Top) brands. In the wake of recent studies, "brand happiness" is becoming an important focus in marketing (Kumar et al., 2021; Mansoor & Paul, 2022), especially concerning premium experience services (Iloranta, 2019). In the meantime, the concept of "brand advocacy" continues to rise as buyers of luxury goods go more and more to their peers for individualized and credible suggestions (Shimul & Phau, 2018).

2. Theoretical Framework

The SOR theory, which stands for Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR), was propounded by Mehrabian and Russell in 1974. By specifying the three vital elements, i.e., stimulus, organism, and response, the theory establishes an essential conceptual structure for interpreting customer behavior. This concept indicates that a person's psychological or internal emotional state is susceptible to being influenced by external influences, which may then culminate in their behavioral response. The SOR model was centered on an input and output paradigm, asserting that humans make logical choices when they have to make decisions regarding buying something. According to the paradigm, stimuli are external influences that influence a person's internal state and function as triggers for behavioral reactions (Eroglu et al., 2001). The term "organism" denotes the inner psychological and cognitive mechanisms, including some feelings that foster the relationship between a person's ultimate actions or reactions and external stimuli (Bagozzi, 1986). The response component of the S-O-R framework reflects how the customer makes their final behavioral decision, which may occur in the form of an approach or behaviour of avoidance (Donovan and Rossiter, 1982).

The concept of SOR is frequently employed to look into the key interactions among various conceptual entities (Raj et al., 2023). It provides a logical and fact-based structure for figuring out the behavioral patterns of humans (Perez-Vega et al., 2021). According to Song et al. (2022), a framework of SOR is commonly employed in customer behavior research and is considered a fundamental theory of consumer behavior. As a result, the theoretical structure established for the present study is displayed in Figure 1, and the statements related to these three constructs, i.e., masstige, brand happiness, and brand advocacy, were adapted from the study of Purohit et al. (2023).
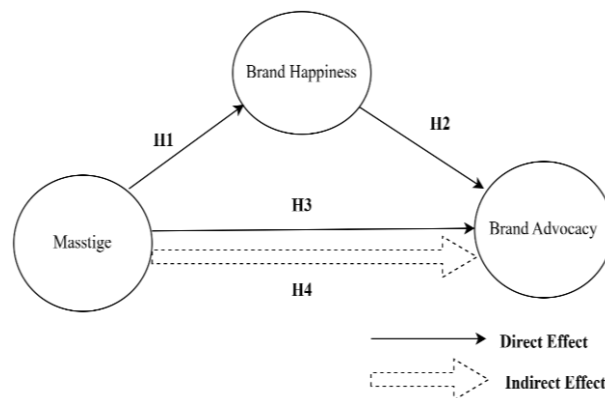
Fig. 1: Theoretical Framework.

3. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

3.1. Masstige and brand happiness

The term happiness is an intricate concept and has connections in marketing concerning the acquisition of goods and services (Bruhn & Schnebelen, 2017). As per Bruhn and Schnebelen (2017), marketers ought to constitute brand happiness as a primary concern for the purpose of maintaining the survival, relevance, and longevity of the brand. Someone's level of happiness towards a brand is closely linked to their self-identity. Consumers generally purchase those brands that represent their present self-identity or the identity they aspire to be (Bauer et al., 2008). By owning prestigious products, customers can strengthen their self-image (Huang & Wang, 2018).

Kumar et al. (2021) also examined the relationship between masstige brands and consumers' happiness and observed that customers feel happy when they own and make use of these masstige brands, but this relationship was found in the case of the smartphone. Furthermore, consumers were happier with a service brand that offers a more substantial masstige potential (Purohit et al., 2023). Marketers offer masstige brands in the market to make the customers happy (Boisvert et al., 2023). The consumers acquire masstige goods mainly for short-term happiness rather than for long-term happiness (Burhanudin, 2022). According to Boisvert et al. (2023), happiness also has an enormous effect on the reputation of a brand and drives customers to contribute more towards masstige brands.

Brand knowledge and perceived quality associated with the brands are considered as the dimensions of the masstige (Paul 2019; Alagarsamy et al., 2022). Concerning the OTT platforms, brand knowledge serves as the cornerstone of the user experience because it fosters their faith in the brand. The knowledge of consumers regarding these platforms, involving their reputation and quality of the content provided by them, makes users more confident when making subscription decisions (Rani, 2025). It was also found that brand knowledge is strongly linked with perceived quality (Palomba, 2022). Users generally perceived the quality of streaming platforms as high when the platforms are technically efficient and provide good content. When platforms are believed to be of superior quality, then they fulfill the aspirations of viewers, which brings pleasure as well as happiness among OTT users (Rani, 2025).

Additionally, customers who hold appealing views concerning masstige brands were more inclined to express their happiness by encouraging friends, family, and peers to check out or buy an identical brand (Mansoor & Paul, 2022). This study attempts to enhance the corpus of current scientific literature on masstige approaches by examining how masstige affects consumer happiness regarding OTT brands. Consequently, the proposed hypothesis is:

H_1: Masstige has a significant influence on brand happiness.

3.2. Brand happiness and brand advocacy

Brand advocacy is represented as an expression employed to describe the support provided by consumers for brands in different ways, such as by fiercely endorsing them, emphasizing the brand's advantages, safeguarding brands from unfavorable comments, and happily ignoring shortcomings of brands (Schnebelen & Bruhn, 2018). Happy customers generally pass on their favorable experiences regarding the brands among others (Peters et al., 2010). Put another way, consumers feel motivated to disseminate positive reviews concerning the brand among other people owing to their brand happiness, indicating that a customer has an intense sense of emotional satisfaction whenever they feel happy with a brand (Schnebelen & Bruhn, 2018).

Additionally, it was also found that customers are more likely to advocate a brand to others once they have a happy experience with it (Schnebelen & Bruhn, 2018). A feeling of happiness, particularly from premium purchases, deepens the emotional connection of consumers with the brand, enhancing their likelihood to advocate and even defend the brand (Wang et al., 2019). Further, brand happiness boosts brand advocacy, prompting consumers to promote the brand to others by sharing their experiences (Purohit et al., 2023). Parrott et al. (2015) also pointed out that, as brand advocates function as both defenders and promoters of the brand, their contributions are essential for creating an efficient marketing approach for luxurious brands.

Furthermore, with respect to the OTT platforms, research indicates that happiness, which consumers derive from watching these streaming platforms, has a favorable effect on brand advocacy (Yum & Kim, 2024). Brand happiness reflects a more profound emotional state, which signifies that viewers of the OTT platforms feel satisfied, as well as have a close emotional bond with the streaming brand, which encourages the users to spread the pleasant experiences about the platform (AK, 2025).

Nevertheless, a gap concerning an enough amount of literature available on the impact of brand happiness on brand advocacy regarding OTT platform brands still exists in the existing literature. Hence, the proposed hypothesis is:

H_2: Brand happiness has a significant influence on brand advocacy.

3.3. Masstige, brand happiness, and brand advocacy

The idea of "masstige", also referred to as "mass-prestige", has been steadily gaining popularity in marketing, indicating a blended approach of elevating prestige by providing mass market goods (Paul, 2015). Brand prestige generally has an enormous impact on the word

of mouth of consumers about the brand. Individuals often talk about that particular brand which led to their prestige in society among their friends or relatives (Upamannyu et al., 2015). Reichheld (2003) specifies advocacy as the likelihood that a person will suggest the goods or services to other people by talking positively about them, whereas Keller (2007) describes it as giving recommendations to use the products or services to others by disseminating their positive experiences.

As the perceived quality and the excitement are the dimensions of masstige (Paul 2019; Alagarsamy et al., 2022). Concerning this, the advocacy behavior of the consumers with respect to the OTT platforms is significantly influenced by perceived quality, which encompasses both the technical functionality as well as the immersive content provided by the streaming platform. By continually offering premium content and making investments in exclusive and valuable productions, the streaming platforms boost viewers' enjoyment and confidence level, which further leads to positive word-of-mouth advertising (Singh et al., 2025).

Furthermore, the users of the OTT platforms get excited when these platforms release some interesting content in the form of movies or series that the users have been eagerly waiting for in the long term. This encourages users to do advocacy for the brands through exchanging their knowledge and experiences with peers via social networking sites (Widener et al., 2025).

Purohit et al. (2023) concentrated on the way masstige consumption influences brand advocacy, particularly brand happiness, appearing as a significant mediator of this relationship. The study was centered around the tourism and airline industries within the field of services, and found that involvement of consumers with masstige brands greatly enhances happiness towards the brands, leading to a greater desire of consumers to defend and advocate for these brands. This reveals how customers may strongly promote a brand and display greater advocacy and devotion behaviors as a consequence of the feelings of fulfillment and sense of happiness they receive through interacting with masstige brands. Hence, the present investigation about OTT platforms is the initial effort that explores the impact of masstige on brand advocacy directly as well as indirectly through the mediating impact of brand happiness. Consequently, the proposed hypotheses are:

H_3: Masstige has a significant influence on brand advocacy.

H_4: Brand happiness mediates the relationship between masstige and brand advocacy.

4. Research Methodology

4.1. Sample overview and survey insights

The current investigation applied a survey-based strategy to examine the advocacy behavior of consumers towards the OTT platforms. Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, and Disney+ Hotstar were chosen for the study as these platforms are considered the key players of the Indian OTT Market (Khan, 2024). The study was conducted in the northern part of India by employing a descriptive research approach with cross-sectional analysis. For the present study, India has been chosen as the place of the research due to a number of considerations. The rapid expansion of the economy, status-seeking consumers, as well as an array of cultures in developing nations like India, render them suitable for exploring masstige brands (Kumar et al., 2020). Additionally, India is solidly establishing its standing as the biggest hotspot for OTT platforms, as it is generating enormous financial possibilities in the revenue of the OTT industries, which are anticipated to surpass $4.5 billion by 2025 (Hemang Palan, 2025). It is also anticipated that the number of users might exceed 500 million by the year 2025, mainly because of an increase in the usage of smartphones, availability of internet services at an affordable rate, and constant developments in digital infrastructure (Tyagi & Anand, 2025). However, this accelerated expansion is transforming customer engagement towards the streaming platforms (Hemang Palan, 2025). In light of these aspects, India has been considered the perfect place for exploring the manner in which users behave when engaging with OTT services.

Additionally, another of the key variables accelerating the explosive development of the OTT sector in India is by offering their content in accordance with the diverse culture and language of the country. As opposed to viewers from Western markets, Indian viewers exhibit an intense liking for content provided in regional dialects, underlining the nation's diverse identity. According to recent statistics, around 65% of Indian OTT users favor content that is offered in the regional language (Khan, 2024). For this reason, India represents a unique context for exploring how masstige branding may effectively resonate with a wide range of viewers from various social and cultural backgrounds. Furthermore, the consumption behavior of Indians varies substantially from the behavior of consumers in several other markets because of the presence of the massive young population, their elite spending habits, and the long-lasting impact of collectivist social values. In addition, OTT users across India frequently link these platforms to indicators of prestige, social standing, and lifestyle identity. In light of this, the Indian market represents an incredibly relevant place for examining brand advocacy and brand happiness of the OTT users in the realm of masstige branding (Gupta et al., 2025).

For this purpose, data were collected through a questionnaire, which consists of five sections. Demographic details of OTT users are shown in the first section, and their usage pattern concerning OTT platforms is included in the second section of the questionnaire. Third, fourth, and fifth sections contain questions related to the masstige, brand happiness, and brand advocacy, respectively, on the 5-point Likert scale. Out of 257 responses collected by the way of contacting the OTT users personally, 246 were considered valid for assessment and evaluation. The size of the sample required has been determined by applying the G*Power software. To execute this computation, a statistical power threshold was set at 0.80, and the level of significance was set at 5% (Faul et al., 2009). Based on these thresholds, it was found that to obtain acceptable and reliable results, a minimum of 159 samples was required. Therefore, it had been determined that the ultimate representative sample of 246 respondents was suitable for investigation.

4.2. Measurement of constructs

The present study used the adapted questionnaire to collect the primary data. As the research focuses on the three constructs, i.e., masstige, brand happiness, and brand advocacy, which collectively have 31 statements. Concerning the first construct, which is masstige, having 10 statements, the second one is brand happiness, and the third one is brand advocacy, which have 12 and 9 statements respectively, and all these statements were adapted from the study of Purohit et al. (2023).

4.3. Approaches for statistical analysis

The study used a non-parametric, variance-based approach known as Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) through the application of SmartPLS 4.0 software to conduct the statistical evaluation as well as test the proposed hypotheses (Ringle et al., 2015). Additionally, robust prediction powers of PLS-SEM render it an incredibly suitable tool for investigating theoretical frameworks in the areas of social as well as the behavioral sciences (Hair et al., 2022). To provide insightful suggestions for managers, the present study

seeks to attain predictive accuracy of the model (Hair et al., 2017). Consequently, CB-SEM is not an effective methodological technique. Constructs about the CB-SEM are expressed as common factors, which can be determined from the covariation among the indicators. However, these common factors are viewed as arbitrary, considering that they are not measurable and are lacking in a specified value range (Steiger, 1979). PLS-SEM, on the other hand, employs regression techniques to maximize the amount of variance explained of the dependent constructs and identifies constructs as composites that are constructed using the weighted sum of chosen indicators (Shmueli et al., 2016).

4.4. Assessment of common method bias and multivariate normality

In an effort to gauge the validity of the construct, Harman's single-factor test and common method bias were examined by following the guidelines laid out by Podsakoff et al. (2003). The outcome revealed that Common method bias (CMB) is not an overwhelming issue in the present study because Harman's single factor explains just 44.048% of the overall variation, which happens to be significantly smaller than the 50% criterion (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Furthermore, according to the full collinearity evaluation, there is no CMB issue because the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) estimates of every single construct vary from 1 to 1.845, satisfying the criterion of value less than 3.3 (Kock, 2015). Additionally, by employing the "Web Power" tool, the authors examined the data in terms of normality (Cain et al., 2017; Zhang & Yuan, 2018). The outcome of the statistical review revealed that the data collected were unable to satisfy the multivariate normality presumption, as p-values of both the kurtosis and skewness are below 0.05. Hence, the non-parametric statistical approach known as PLS-SEM had been contemplated as the most appropriate approach concerning this investigation (Hair et al., 2019; 2022).

5. Results and Analysis

5.1. Descriptive statistics

A brief description of the respondents is outlined in Table 1, showing that there were 133 male and 113 female respondents. The largest portion of respondents, comprising about 34.6% of the total, is within the age bracket of 25 to 35 years. Out of 246 respondents, 32 have completed their senior secondary education, 96 have completed graduation, 85 were postgraduate, and 33 have done other courses like a Diploma or a Doctorate of Philosophy. Further, the majority of the respondents were either employed or students. Additionally, concerning the top choice of the OTT brands, Netflix is considered the most preferred platform by OTT users, and the majority of them spend 1 to 4 hours streaming content.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of the Respondents

Profile	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	133	54.1
	Female	113	45.9
Age	18-24	84	34.1
	25-35	85	34.6
	35 and above	77	31.3
Educational level	12th	32	13.0
	Graduate	96	39.0
	Post Graduate	85	34.6
	Other	33	13.4
Profession	Student	77	31.3
	Employed	88	35.8
	Self-Employed	61	24.8
	Other	20	8.1
Annual family income	Up to 5 Lakhs	194	78.9
	5 to 10 Lakhs	42	17.1
	More than 10 Lakhs	10	4.1
Top choice of the OTT brands	Disney+ Hotstar	78	31.7
	Amazon Prime Video	77	31.3
	Netflix	91	37
Usage frequency	Everyday	79	32.1
	Several times a week	82	33.3
	Fortnightly	34	13.8
	Once a month	51	20.7
Time-based engagement	Up to an hour	99	40.2
	1 to 4 hours	133	54.1
	More than 4 hours	14	5.7

Source: Author's own calculations.

5.2. Testing of the measurement model

The cornerstone for an effective model for measurement is the rigorous and thorough examination of its reliability as well as its validity (Hair et al., 2019; 2022). The reliability measures, such as factor loadings as well as Cronbach's alpha (α) of every indicator of all the constructs, are outlined in Table 2, which also includes internal consistency metrics such as composite reliability (CR). Excluding five items, i.e., BRH1 (0.695), BRH7 (0.671), BRH8 (0.697), BRH10 (0.698), and BRH12 (0.680), factor loadings of every item of each construct are above 0.708 (Sarstedt et al., 2021). These items had been retained in the model since their values were more than the admissible cutoff of 0.60, regardless of whether their factor loading turned out to be under the recommended threshold of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2022). Additionally, the calculated expressions of α as well as CR of every construct are nestled within the recommended range of 0.70 to 0.95, proving appropriate internal consistency (Hair et al., 2019, 2022). Furthermore, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) approach was employed to confirm the convergent validity, where it is observed that the AVE scores of every construct meet the threshold of the minimum accepted criterion of 0.50 (Hair et al., 2022), reflecting good internal validity.

For the sake of validating the discriminant validity, every construct has been evaluated by the HTMT (Heterotrait-Monotrait) ratio, displayed in Table 3, which shows that all the values of HTMT were adhering to the permissible level, i.e., less than the benchmark point of 0.85 (Henseler et al., 2015). Additionally, the scores about the HTMT ratios are intervening within the spectrum on the confidence interval (CI) of 95% (Shaffer, 1995; Hair et al., 2022), confirming the existence of good discriminant validity amongst the constructs taken in the study.

Table 2: Assessment of Reliability and Validity

Construct	Coding	Factor Loading	α	CR rho_a	CR rho_c	AVE
Masstige (MTG)	MTG1	0.719	0.914	0.916	0.928	0.565
	MTG2	0.742				
	MTG3	0.796				
	MTG4	0.773				
	MTG5	0.722				
	MTG6	0.731				
	MTG7	0.749				
	MTG8	0.735				
	MTG9	0.748				
	MTG10	0.795				
Brand Happiness (BRH)	BRH1	0.695	0.913	0.915	0.926	0.512
	BRH2	0.707				
	BRH3	0.717				
	BRH4	0.761				
	BRH5	0.707				
	BRH6	0.786				
	BRH7	0.671				
	BRH8	0.697				
	BRH9	0.719				
	BRH10	0.698				
	BRH11	0.743				
	BRH12	0.680				
Brand Advocacy (BAV)	BAV1	0.794	0.917	0.918	0.931	0.602
	BAV2	0.777				
	BAV3	0.797				
	BAV4	0.799				
	BAV5	0.823				
	BAV6	0.748				
	BAV7	0.764				
	BAV8	0.765				
	BAV9	0.710				

Source: Author's own calculations.

Table 3: Discriminant Validity Along with the Confidence Intervals

Construct	BAV	BRH
BRH	0.762 [0.668, 0.846]	
MTG	0.761 [0.695, 0.824]	0.732 [0.645, 0.812]

Note: MTG Masstige, BRH Brand happiness, and BAV Brand advocacy.
Source: Author's own calculations.

5.3. Analysis of the structural model

The authors assessed the structural model as per the criteria given by Hair et al. (2022). The evaluation commenced with an investigation of collinearity concerns by the examination of the VIF (Variance Inflation Factor). The highest value of VIF was 1.845 (Table 4), substantially lower than the established recognized guideline of 3.3 (Kock, 2015); therefore, multicollinearity was judged as trivial and is not creating any trigger. Furthermore, the observed correlations amongst the constructs under investigation are summarised in Table 4. Thereafter, the coefficient of determination (R^2) of the final dependent variable of the study, i.e., brand happiness and brand advocacy, was examined, and the outcomes reflect that 45.8% of the variance in brand happiness was contributed by masstige and 59.1% of the variance in brand advocacy was contributed by masstige and brand happiness (Figure 2). The results indicate that brand happiness played a moderate role and brand advocacy played a substantial role in explaining the outcome (Chin, 1998). Furthermore, the value of standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) determined for assessing how good the model is, found at 0.062, is substantially below the advisable range of 0.08 (Hair et al., 2019), indicating that the model is fit.

For testing the hypothesis, the authors applied the bootstrap approach with a technique of 10,000 subsamples to arrive at an even more credible projection (Hair et al., 2022). Table 4 and Figure 2 outline the findings of the hypothesis tested in the study. The outcomes concerning the testing of hypotheses are displayed together with p-values as well as the scores of path coefficients (β) for assessing the statistical significance of the connections among the constructs. The confirmation of H1, having a p-value of 0.000 and a β value of 0.677, shows that masstige has a positive as well as significant impact on brand happiness. Likewise, outcomes also confirm the H2, having a p-value of 0.000 and a β value of 0.423, which depicts that brand happiness has a positive as well as significant impact on brand advocacy. Again, the results support H3, having a p-value of 0.000 and a β value of 0.417, demonstrating a positive as well as significant impact of masstige on brand advocacy. Lastly, H4 was also supported, having a p-value of 0.000 and a β value of 0.286, underscoring a positive as well as significant impact of masstige on brand advocacy through the brand happiness.

Cohen's (1988) recommendations for calculating the f^2 value were also used to classify the magnitude of f^2 effects as minor (0.02), moderate (0.15), and large (0.35). By applying these recommendations, the results show that masstige has a very large effect on brand happiness. Nevertheless, the effect was determined to be moderate when it was applied to the connections between brand happiness and brand advocacy. Likewise, masstige also had a moderate effect on brand advocacy.

Table 4: Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Path Relationship	Beta (β)	P value	CI at 5 % and 95%	Significance	VIF Inner	f^2
H1	MTG -> BRH	0.677	0.000	[0.605, 0.752]	Yes	1.000	0.845
H2	BRH-> BAV	0.423	0.000	[0.296, 0.550]	Yes	1.845	0.237
H3	MTG -> BAV	0.417	0.000	[0.306, 0.519]	Yes	1.845	0.230
H4	MTG -> BRH->BAV	0.286	0.000	[0.196, 0.390]	Yes		

Note: MTG Masstige, BRH Brand happiness, BAV Brand advocacy, and CI represent Confidence Intervals.
Source: Author's own calculations.
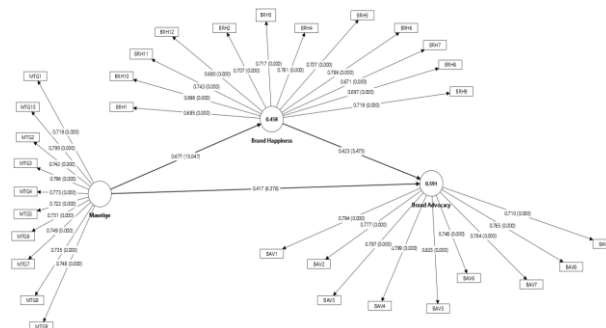
Fig. 2: Analysis of the Structural Model.

Note: MTG Masstige, BRH Brand happiness, and BAV Brand advocacy.
Source: Author's own compilation.

5.4. Analysis of predictive relevance

The methods used by Danka and Ray (2018) and Shmueli et al. (2019) were employed in the present study to figure out how well the suggested framework might predict the brand advocacy concerning the brand happiness derived from the masstige brands on the new set of data to be employed by future researchers. Adequacy of the model, i.e., predictive relevance of the dependent construct of the present study, i.e., brand advocacy, was assessed via the PLS predictive approach. Table 5 summarises the findings related to the Q^2 prediction. Whenever the result concerning Q^2 prediction of the final dependent variable exceeds zero, this suggests that the model predicts the specific variable effectively. Since the prediction errors were symmetrically distributed, for this reason the authors compared the RMSE values of the PLS path model against the RMSE values of the linear regression model (Shmueli et al., 2019). As per the guidelines given by Shmueli et al. (2019), the model has a medium predictive relevance since most of the RMSE values concerning the PLS have lesser prediction errors as against to the RMSE value of the Linear Regression Model.

Table 5: Assessment of Predictive Relevance

Construct	Items	PLS (Partial Least Squares)		LM (Linear Regression Model)		
		RMSE	Q^2 Predict	RMSE	PLS-LM RMSE	Predictive Relevance
Brand Advocacy	BAV1	0.711	0.316	0.674	0.037	
	BAV2	0.592	0.243	0.599	-0.007	
	BAV3	0.671	0.340	0.676	-0.005	
	BAV4	0.604	0.291	0.608	-0.004	
	BAV5	0.631	0.285	0.640	-0.009	Medium Predictive Relevance
	BAV6	0.613	0.248	0.617	-0.004	
	BAV7	0.648	0.239	0.643	0.005	
	BAV8	0.666	0.363	0.666	0.000	
	BRD9	0.701	0.276	0.711	-0.01	

Source: Source: Author's own calculations.
Note: RMSE represents Root Mean Squared Error.

6. Theoretical, Economic, Policy, and Managerial Implications

6.1. Theoretical implications

The SOR framework was largely employed in domains such as traditional luxury brands (Pourazad et al., 2023) and fashion accessories masstige brands (Gupta et al., 2023) to investigate how the feelings and behavioral patterns of individuals are affected by sensory stimulus. The present research expands the usage of this framework by applying the approach to masstige service branding. The current study contributes significantly to the theory by examining the emotional and cognitive patterns of consumers towards a masstige brand. Masstige (stimulus) appears to be a starting point in this approach, which develops feelings and emotions of consumers. Such internal sensations make the customers feel happy about the brand (organism), which in turn motivates them to do advocacy for the brand by spreading positive words about it (response). The observations explicitly show how one phase affects subsequent ones, which complies with the causal relationship of the SOR model. The outcomes of the present study confirm that the SOR theory works effectively in the context of luxury by explaining how an external stimulus like masstige affects the emotions of consumers, particularly brand happiness, which in turn triggers behaviors like brand advocacy. Furthermore, the present research additionally contributes to the S-O-R approach through incorporating masstige being a distinctive stimulus type, providing novel insights regarding premium branding tactics. This approach also offers opportunities for subsequent researchers to look into other marketing trends, such as AI-powered marketing, metaverse marketing, as well as neuromarketing by applying the S-O-R framework.

Additionally, this theory highlights the significance of brand happiness to the entire process, underlining the way emotional contentment encourages consumers to make recommendations of the brand and defend the brand when someone talks negatively or unfavourably about

it. These results lay the foundation for further research exploring how opinions and emotions influence consumer decisions in prestige-driven markets.

6.2. Financial and economic implications

Deploying masstige tactics upon OTT platforms, wherein prestige alongside affordability is both present, may result in substantial financial gains as well as broader expansion of the economy. Such tactics strengthen consumer advocacy and happiness towards the brand, and also foster a greater readiness to spend, encourage consumers to get a subscription to the platform, which ultimately strengthens the return on investment and increases revenue of the OTT providers (Jha, 2023). Furthermore, positive recommendations from happy and delighted users of OTT platforms boost the customer lifetime value (CLV) because these recommendations reduce the turnover of users and also lower the associated expenses of these providers in acquiring new and prospective users. Following that, OTT providers have been rapidly expanding into developing nations such as India through the integration of free and ad-supported content. Hence, about 69% of OTT revenue presently comes from advertising-based video on demand (AVOD), which yields more economic value (Srivastava, 2025). Additionally, masstige brands increase earnings per consumer by portraying a premium image whilst still being widely accessible. Although during times when sales volumes are substantially smaller, not only are the brand expenses met successfully, but profitability is also maintained because of their moderately higher prices (Lah & Sušjan, 2023).

6.3. Policy implications

The operational, accounting, and tactical strategies framed by OTT providers across India are greatly shaped by legal frameworks as well as financial regulations. Particularly, the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, 2023, mandates the strict safeguarding of personal information, which has a big impact on the way these platforms administer their accounting and economic affairs. This legislation mandates OTT service providers to seek users' full permission prior to collecting or handling their sensitive information. Complying with these regulations requires considerable expenditure for regulatory systems, personnel training, and legal assistance services, which further enhance the operating expenses. According to the standpoint of accounting, OTT platform operators must rigorously identify and disperse expenditure towards data protection measures, which include expenses for highly secure technologies, consent management systems, along the creation of grievance redressal mechanisms. Additionally, strong accounting procedures ought to be adopted for the purpose of reducing prospective financial hazards because violation with respect to any rules and regulations of the DPDP Act might lead to severe penalties. As a result, in addition to affecting the operational approach of OTT providers, the DPDP Act necessitates substantial changes concerning their accounting structures to preserve legal compliance and protect them from regulatory exposure (Bose & Tripathi, 2025).

Furthermore, concerning the taxation policy, OTT platforms must adhere to 18% GST in India because they fall under the OIDAR services. This tax regime has an enormous effect on pricing methods, since it compels providers to decide whether to bear some of the higher costs themselves or pass them on to their users, leading to lower profitability (Mani, 2023; RSM, 2023). According to the revenue recognition guidelines stipulated in Ind AS 115 and IFRS 15, the collected GST amount is considered as a liability concerning an accounting perspective until the amount is paid. However, fundamental issues like the obligation of submitting monthly returns on GST and prolonged delays in obtaining input tax credits result in more sophisticated compliance, which persistently affects the cash flows of OTT operators (RSM, 2023). Such legal and economic constraints hinder platforms' liquidity, which subsequently affects their ability to spend on advertising as well as content production. Based on this, the platforms have to make decisions, including price, advertisement expenditure, operational budgets, and cash flow decisions accordingly. However, on a wider spectrum, GST receipts improve the earnings of the government, which they levy on the digital infrastructure. These developments in infrastructure are crucial for the long-term, steady growth of the OTT sector (Joseph & Ramalingam, 2021).

6.4. Managerial implications

The authors conducted a priority map analysis (Ringle & Sarstedt, 2016) to thoroughly examine specific constructs and indicators for understanding the brand advocacy behavior of consumers. This provides insightful information to marketing managers to identify the most important construct and the indicators to focus on. Here, the results are summarized in such a way that a one-unit gain in masstige performance (from 64.066 to 65.066) leads to an upsurge in consumers' brand advocacy behavior (from 66.771 to 67.474). Therefore, this improvement is larger than the one observed for brand happiness, upon which advocacy behavior only rises from 66.771 to 67.194 with a one-unit gain in performance (from 66.477 to 67.477).

In accordance with the findings of the Importance-Performance Map Analysis (IPMA), the most significant construct influencing the brand advocacy behavior of consumers is masstige. Hence, the managers should concentrate on masstige as this construct is considered important by the consumers, but marketers are not performing well on this aspect. Further, it was also found that the performance for the brand happiness is high, but the consumers are not taking the construct of brand happiness as important, so marketers should focus on the area that is considered important by consumers; otherwise, it will only lead to the wastage of resources.

As per the guidelines given by Ringle & Sarstedt (2016), it was identified that MTG10 and MTG9 are the grey indicators on which the marketers have to focus first (indicators whose importance score is high, but the performance score is low); after that, marketers must maintain the performance of indicators such as MTG7, MTG8 and MTG6 (indicators whose importance and performance scores both are high). Furthermore, there is no need to pay much attention to the indicators such as MTG1, MTG5, and MTG4 (indicators whose performance score is high but their importance score is low), as it will only lead to the wastage of time, efforts, and resources (Figure 3).

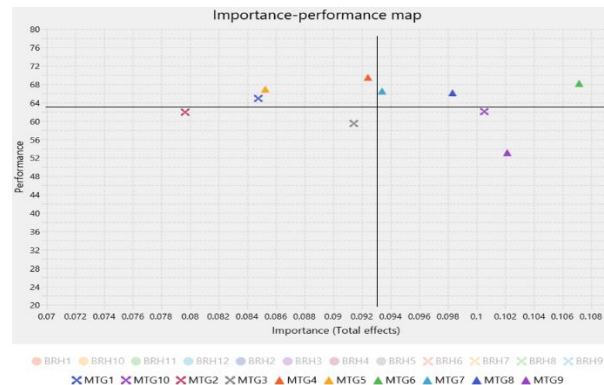| Indicators	
MTG1	"I like this OTT brand because of the mass prestige associated with it."
MTG2	"I like to subscribe to this OTT brand because of its mass prestige."
MTG3	"I tend to pay a high price for this OTT brand for maintaining my status in society."
MTG4	"I consider this OTT as a "top of mind" brand in my district."
MTG5	"I would like to recommend this OTT brand to friends and relatives."
MTG6	"Nothing is more exciting than this OTT brand."
MTG7	"I believe this OTT brand is known for high quality."
MTG8	"I believe this OTT brand fulfills international standards."
MTG9	"I love to buy this OTT brand irrespective of the high price."
MTG10	"I believe that people in my district consider this OTT brand as prestigious."

Fig. 3: IPMA (Indicators Level).

Note: MTG Masstige, and BRH Brand happiness.
Source: Author's own compilation.

7. Discussion and Conclusion

The present research aimed to describe and look into the concept of masstige concerning OTT platforms. The results revealed that the usage of masstige products led to happiness among the consumers, which coincides with the outcomes of the previous study, such as the study carried out by Kumar et al. (2021). Previous studies, like Hwang & Han (2014), Loureiro et al. (2018), and Kruger (2018), also discovered a relationship between the sense of prestige and happiness, which the consumers get after consuming the brand.

Additionally, research has found that investing money in experiencing enjoyable activities, such as hospitality and traveling, may boost the happiness of consumers (Nicolao et al., 2009; Bhattacharjee & Mogilner, 2014). However, only a few studies examined this relationship concerning the consumption of masstige brands and brand happiness, including those by Purohit et al. (2023), which centered around airline and hotel brands, and by Kumar et al. (2021), focused on the smartphone brands. Both of these studies support our findings that consuming masstige products led to brand happiness.

Further, the results indicate that consumers tend to be more inclined to actively support and give a reference to a brand when they are happy with it. Kumar et al. (2021) pointed out that when the consumer's sense of brand happiness is triggered by consumption of masstige brands, it leads to positive word-of-mouth and enhanced loyalty among the consumers. These are merely two instances of positive behavioral implications that comply with the brand happiness. Furthermore, previous studies have shown that consumers' sense of emotional fulfillment from the consumption of masstige brands promotes their brand advocacy behaviors (VanMeter et al., 2018; Schnebelen & Bruhn, 2018; Wang et al., 2019). Although the relationship between brand happiness and brand advocacy has previously been confirmed for service brands such as hotels and airlines (Purohit et al., 2023). However, it has not been investigated concerning over-the-top (OTT) platforms. The present study addresses this gap by proving that brand happiness also has a favorable impact on the brand advocacy behavior of consumers concerning the OTT platforms. Additionally, studies have shown that whenever a brand renders the feeling of happiness among consumers, they are considerably more inclined to show advocacy behavior for a brand to the people in their contacts as well as attempt to convince friends or family to make use of or purchase it (Matzler et al., 2007; Schnebelen & Bruhn, 2018). The research findings also indicate that the brands that keep their clientele happy have an edge in the marketplace because happy consumers deliberately inspire other individuals to explore the brand, along with doing advocacy for the brand (Loureiro & Cunha, 2017).

Rosendo-Rios & Shukla (2023) pointed out that more research work is needed to figure out the influence of masstige consumption on key behavioral variables, like self-congruity, advocacy, and loyalty behavior of consumers to a brand. The current study aims to bridge this gap by showing the direct impact of masstige consumption on the advocacy behavior of consumers for brands. Similarly, individuals who are satisfied with a masstige brand are steadily much more inclined to share favorable experiences with other individuals, resulting in increased advocacy (Jeon et al., 2019), loyalty of the existing customers towards the brand, and encourage new clients to purchase the brand (Hallikainen et al., 2022). Additionally, the present study explored the influence of masstige on the brand advocacy behavior of the consumer in the context of the OTT platforms by examining the indirect effect of brand happiness. Purohit et al. (2023) assert that masstige offerings affect consumers' brand happiness, which subsequently influences their advocacy behavior towards the airline and the hotel brands.

8. Limitations and Directions for Future Research

There are various constraints of the present study. Although it emphasizes masstige service brands but its coverage has been confined to brands concerning OTT platforms. Prospective studies might expand the research by exploring additional service areas comprising banking, education, e-commerce services, and healthcare. Further, the number of brands that have been explored is rather limited. Future researchers might implement the suggested model for studying an expanded variety of OTT platforms to strengthen the generalisability of the outcomes. Along with the fact that the research has geographical constraints, because the study was carried out within India. A greater comprehension of the notion of the masstige might be obtained by extending the research to other geographical boundaries. Comparative studies across nations tend to be relevant for future researchers because a brand having mass prestige in a given nation may not be considered to have it in another nation (Paul, 2018). Furthermore, the forces driving masstige consumption are generally culturally specific, and subsequent investigations should investigate the cultural factors affecting the masstige consumption. Although this study centered around the outcomes of masstige consumption, subsequent studies can explore the underlying causes of masstige consumption in service settings. Additionally, it is essential to comprehend that brand happiness is a multi-dimensional notion (Bruhn & Schnebelen, 2017); hence the future researchers can assess the effect of the masstige consumption of goods and services on different dimensions of brand happiness. To improve on the results of this study and have greater insight, future research studies must look at each aspect of internal and external motives as moderators in the same model as used in the present study.

Declaration of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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Ethical Considerations

Not applicable.

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