



# MAPPING THE PSYCHOLOGY OF MASSTIGE BRAND ADOPTION, A BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS (2003 – 2025)

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## Abstract

This study presents a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of the evolving domain of masstige brand adoption, with a specific focus on its psychological underpinnings between 2003 and 2025. Drawing on a curated dataset of 247 peer-reviewed journal articles indexed in Scopus, the research systematically maps publication trends, influential contributors, intellectual structures, and thematic evolution within the field. The findings reveal a significant acceleration in scholarly output, particularly after 2015, reflecting the growing relevance of accessible luxury in contemporary consumer markets. Performance analysis identifies leading authors, journals, institutions, and countries shaping the discourse, while science mapping techniques such as co-word analysis, co-citation analysis, and bibliographic coupling uncover five major thematic clusters centered on luxury, masstige, branding, and consumer behavior constructs.

The study highlights a clear conceptual shift from traditional luxury paradigms rooted in exclusivity and status signalling toward a more democratized, emotionally driven, and sustainability-oriented consumption model. Psychological constructs such as brand love, identity expression, and emotional value emerge as central drivers of masstige adoption. Furthermore, the integration of digital platforms and social media has intensified aspirational consumption and reshaped consumer-brand relationships. Despite its rapid growth, the field remains theoretically fragmented, indicating the need for stronger integration with mainstream consumer behavior frameworks.

By offering a structured synthesis of two decades of research, this study provides valuable theoretical insights and practical implications for academics and practitioners. It also outlines future research directions, particularly in areas such as sustainability, digital transformation, and emerging market dynamics.

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**Keywords:** Masstige Marketing, Consumer Psychology, Bibliometric Analysis, Brand Adoption

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## Introduction

In recent years, the field of consumer psychology and branding has witnessed substantial growth, driven by shifts in global income distribution, digital media proliferation, and the democratization of luxury markets (Kumar et al., 2020). Rising middle-class affluence worldwide, coupled with social media amplification of aspirational lifestyles, has fueled demand for premium yet accessible products that blend prestige with affordability (Silverstein & Fiske, 2003). Masstige brands defined as prestige for the masses offer symbolic luxury signals through mid-market pricing, selective distribution, premium packaging, and hedonic appeal (Paul, 2015). These brands profoundly shape middle-class consumers

aspirations, identity expression, social signaling, and subjective well-being (Das et al., 2022).

Masstige occupies a strategic midpoint between traditional luxury exclusivity and mass-market commoditization, enabling broader market penetration without full dilution of prestige value (Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2012). Co-branding collaborations such as Gucci with North Face or Versace with H&M exemplify masstige strategies (Quamina et al., 2023). These partnerships leverage luxury allure with high-street accessibility to boost favorability and purchase intent (Lim et al., 2016). Such dynamics address psychological drivers like status-seeking and self-fulfillment, fostering outcomes from brand love to evangelism (Robertson et al., 2022).

Foundational scholarship conceptualized masstige as premium mass-marketed goods evoking luxury perceptions at reduced price premiums (Silverstein & Fiske, 2003). Validated scales like the Masstige Mean Score Scale distinguish masstige from mid-tier brands (Paul, 2015). Early work emphasized interdependent self-concepts driving consumption for ideal-self portrayal (Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2012). Subsequent advancements reveal co-branding superiority over downward extensions in maintaining luxury equity (Shen et al., 2017).

Recent empirical extensions probe generational variances among millennials and Gen Z favoring collaborations (Roy et al., 2025). Cross-cultural patterns show stronger hedonic benefits in sportswear co-brands (Lim et al., 2016). Relational outcomes include brand happiness, love, loyalty, and coolness (Nobre & Simões, 2022). In fashion, masstige coolness splits into niche rebellious authentic versus mass iconic popular subtypes (Loureiro et al., 2023). Psychologically, masstige evokes self-expressive bonds where brand love surpasses loyalty in driving equity (Robertson et al., 2022).

Grasping masstige adoption psychology informs positioning, segmentation, and communication in high-growth sectors like fashion, technology, and hospitality (Sondhi & Basu, 2022). Digital platforms intensify social comparison, amplifying masstige role in loyalty and advocacy amid spending volatility (Ali et al., 2022). Post-pandemic e-commerce surges reveal segments like socially conscious fashionistas versus indifferent habitual buyers (Sondhi & Basu, 2022). Inclusivity, sustainability, and ethics debates necessitate evidence on scaling prestige without eroding scarcity (Gurzki & Woisetschlager, 2017).

Notwithstanding progress, masstige literature suffers fragmentation across categories, geographies, and methods (Paul, 2018). No comprehensive mapping traces 2003 origins to psychological extensions in love and coolness (Gurzki & Woisetschlager, 2017). Intellectual structures core clusters and dominant theories lack systematic delineation (Paul, 2018). Emerging voids persist in Gen Z platforms, service innovations, and sustainable prestige (Roy et al., 2025).

This study bridges gaps via bibliometric analysis of psychology-oriented masstige adoption research from 2003 to 2025. RQ1 examines publication and citation trends. RQ2 identifies influential authors, journals, institutions, and countries. RQ3 uncovers thematic structures, conceptual clusters, and key psychological constructs. RQ4 traces temporal evolution alongside emerging themes and future directions. It synthesizes global scholarship into integrated overview, visual-conceptual map, and forward-looking agenda.

The paper is structured as follows. Section 2 reviews the conceptual evolution of masstige and its

psychological underpinnings. Section 3 details the bibliometric methodology. Section 4 presents performance analysis and science-mapping findings addressing RQ1-RQ4. Section 5 discusses implications, limitations, and future research directions.

## Review of Literature

### Conceptual Foundation

Masstige refers to products combining affordable pricing with high end symbolic value, enabling mass market consumers to access prestige traditionally associated with luxury brands (Silverstein & Fiske, 2003). Paul (2015) operationalized this through with the help of Masstige Mean Score Scale, distinguishing masstige from mid-tier brands via selective distribution, premium packaging, and hedonic attributes evoking luxury at mid-market prices. Scholar's debate balancing affordability with exclusivity, as excessive accessibility risks diluting prestige through downward extensions, while co-branding preserves equity (Paul, 2019; Quamina et al., 2023). Psychologically, masstige adoption stems from status motivation (Eastman et al., 1999), social identity construction (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), and symbolic consumption extending self-concept (Levy, 1959), with interdependent consumers using brands for ideal-self portrayal (Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2012). From branding theory, masstige democratizes luxury through premiumization and value co-creation, where brand love predicts equity beyond loyalty (Kumar et al., 2020; Robertson et al., 2022). Given its importance in emerging markets and appeal to aspirational middle-class consumers, systematic intellectual mapping of masstige research is essential (Sondhi & Basu, 2022).

### Research Themes

Masstige marketing synthesizes mass accessibility with prestige appeal, targeting aspirational consumers through "premium but attainable" products that enable status signaling at reduced price premiums (Silverstein & Fiske, 2003). Adoption drivers satisfy utilitarian/hedonic needs via status symbols affirming social identity and self-concept (Lee & Watkins, 2016). Emotional dynamics like brand love, happiness, and desire strongly predict attitudes (Robertson et al., 2022). Aesthetically arousing designs elicit emotional arousal essential for consumer engagement (Dion & Borraz, 2017). Brand strategies position masstige above mass-market goods using moderate pricing, selective distribution creating perceived scarcity, premium packaging, and targeted promotion (Kumar et al., 2020). Co-branding with high-street partners outperforms risky downward extensions by preserving luxury equity while expanding reach (Quamina et al., 2023). Cross-culturally, collectivist markets such as China

prioritize affordability status alignment through interdependent self-construal, while individualist cultures emphasize exclusivity driven positioning (Pizzetti et al., 2023). Consumer psychology centres on status signaling as self-extension, amplified by Dark Triad traits particularly narcissism seeking social approval and uniqueness (Laia et al., 2022; Belk, 1988). Consumption motives intensify during economic uncertainty and prevail most strongly in sub-urban areas (Das et al., 2025). Emerging markets exhibit preferences for American brands providing effective upward mobility signaling in high power-distance cultures (Kumar & Paul, 2018).

Methodologically, surveys and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) dominate for testing complex relationships, supplemented by experiments establishing causality (Das et al., 2025; Robertson et al., 2022). Qualitative studies remain scarce despite calls for deeper psychological insights, signalling opportunities for methodological diversification.

### Research Gap

Masstige brand adoption research reveals fragmented evidence across marketing, branding, psychology, sociology and luxury studies, lacking a consolidated bibliometric overview of publication growth, citation impact, influential authors, journals, institutions or countries from 2003 to 2025. Paul (2015) laid the foundation for masstige research by developing the Masstige Mean Score Scale (MMSS) and the masstige pyramid models for assessing prestige perceptions. Building on this, Paul (2018) expanded the theoretical landscape by introducing the masstige hexagon and process-based frameworks, offering a more comprehensive understanding of how masstige value is created and perceived. Roy et al. (2025) synthesised the field's evolution with a Motivation-Desire-Outcome (MDO) framework integrating extrinsic status motives and intrinsic self-fulfillment drivers. Ali et al. (2022) found quality consciousness to be the strongest generational antecedent across X, Y and Z cohorts. Das et al. (2025) meta-analysed 65 studies, 22,541 respondents, 23 countries, identifying high heterogeneity in motives such as prestige and uniqueness but without temporal mapping. This dispersion justifies RQ1 on publication and citation trends and RQ2 on key contributors, given post-2015 acceleration linked to scale innovations, the prominence of Paul in theory development, dominance of the Journal of Business Research, and leading Indian institutions in psychological studies. Existing reviews rely on narrative synthesis rather than quantitative bibliometric methods such as co-citation analysis or thematic mapping. Few studies apply VOS viewer style clustering to reveal intellectual structures, thematic clusters (e.g., brand love, co-creation) or psychological constructs (e.g.,

self-brand connection, scarcity loss, normative influence). Rodrigues et al. (2022) examine antecedents and outcomes via PLS-SEM but without network visualisation, while Chaurasia et al. (2024) identify themes using Theory-Context-Characteristics-Methodology (TCCM) (Paul & Rosado-Serrano, 2019) and SPAR-4-SLR protocol (Paul et al., 2021) yet omit quantitative cluster detection. Gupta et al. (2023) distinguish facilitators and inhibitors using Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) Theory (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974) and Dual-Factor Theory (DFT) (Cenfeteli & Schwarz, 2011) but lack bibliometric thematic map analysis. RQ3 therefore requires bibliometric mapping of thematic structures, conceptual clusters. Post-2015 growth, driven by Paul's (2015, 2018) contributions, marks a shift from positioning (Truong, 2009) to psychological outcomes such as happiness and passion amid Gen Z trends; however, no studies apply diachronic topic modelling, Sankey trajectories or burst analysis. RQ4 addresses this by employing temporal overlays to trace shifts, detect emerging fronts (e.g., AI-enabled masstige, B2B masstige) and forecast cultural and acculturation-based directions.

### Materials and methods

This study employed a quantitative bibliometric design to map the evolution of masstige brand adoption research, following established procedures recommended in bibliometric scholarship (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017; Donthu et al., 2021). Scopus was used as the sole data source due to its comprehensive coverage of marketing, branding, and psychology journals. A structured search string was developed using boolean operators TITLE-ABS-KEY ( ( ( ( "masstige" OR "mass prestige" OR "affordable luxury" OR "accessible luxury" OR "new luxury" OR "mass luxury" OR "premium brand\*" OR "premiumization" OR "premiumization" OR "aspirational brand\*" OR "affordable premium" OR "democratization of luxury" OR "trading up" OR "middle-class luxury" OR "luxury for masses" OR "affordable prestige" ) AND ( "brand" OR "branding" OR "brand management" OR "consumer brand" OR "brand strategy" OR "brand identity" ) AND ( "consumer behavior" OR "consumer attitude" OR "purchase intention" OR "buying behavior" OR "consumption behavior" OR "brand preference" OR "brand perception" OR "brand loyalty" OR "brand attachment" OR "brand adoption" OR "customer experience" OR "brand image" ) ) OR ( ( "aspirational consumption" OR "status consumption" OR "symbolic consumption" OR "conspicuous consumption" OR "materialism" OR "social identity" OR "self-concept" OR "identity-based consumption" OR "consumer

identity" OR "psychology of consumption" OR "psychological ownership" OR "motivation" OR "values" OR "emotions" OR "self-expression" OR "status motive" OR "self-brand connection" ) AND ( "masstige" OR "affordable luxury" OR "premium brand\*" OR "aspirational brand\*" OR "mass prestige" OR "accessible luxury" OR "new luxury" ) ) ) and after the initial search we got 337 documents. Only peer-reviewed journal articles written in English and classified under business, management, marketing, and psychology were included, while conference papers, book chapters, reviews, editorials, and non-English documents were excluded. A two-

stage screening process initial title and abstract review followed by full text assessment was conducted to ensure conceptual relevance, and keyword occurrences were simultaneously examined to verify alignment with core constructs in masstige marketing, consistent with established systematic evidence-mapping practices. Bibliographic data were exported and cleaned in Excel before conducting performance analysis and science mapping. After all the inclusion and exclusion criteria the final number of documents was stood to 247. All steps, parameters, and filters were transparently documented to ensure reproducibility using established bibliometric protocols (van Eck & Waltman, 2014).

**Table no: 1 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria**

Category	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
<b>Document Type</b>	Peer-reviewed journal articles only	Conference papers, book chapters, dissertations, reviews, editorials, notes, commentaries
<b>Language</b>	English-language publications	Non-English documents
<b>Time Frame</b>	2003 - 2025 (aligned with emergence of masstige constructs and MMSS scale)	No Studies published before 2003
<b>Subject Areas</b>	Business, Management, Marketing, Psychology, Consumer Behaviour	Economics, sociology, fashion/luxury studies without masstige focus, unrelated engineering fields
<b>Conceptual Relevance</b>	Articles discussing masstige brands, mass prestige, aspirational luxury, masstige strategies, or psychological drivers of masstige adoption	Pure luxury branding, premium branding, fashion branding without mass prestige, studies lacking psychological or consumer-related constructs
<b>Empirical/ Conceptual Scope</b>	Studies examining antecedents, outcomes, positioning, consumer psychology, branding strategies, or measurement scales (e.g., MMSS)	Studies not addressing consumer behaviour, branding strategy, or prestige perception
<b>Data Quality</b>	Complete bibliographic metadata available in Scopus	Duplicate records, incomplete metadata, missing author or reference fields

Source: Author Compilation

**Results and Analysis**

**Data Overview**

Description	Results
<b>MAIN INFORMATION ABOUT DATA</b>	
Time span	2003:2025
Sources (Journals, Books, etc)	136
Documents	247
Annual Growth Rate %	17.69
Document Average Age	5.31
Average citations per doc	27.4
References	1816
<b>DOCUMENT CONTENTS</b>	
Keywords Plus (ID)	493
Author's Keywords (DE)	890
<b>AUTHORS</b>	
Authors	618
Authors of single-authored docs	28
<b>AUTHORS COLLABORATION</b>	
Single-authored docs	32

Co-Authors per Doc	2.94
International co-authorships %	29.55
DOCUMENT TYPES	
<b>Total article</b>	<b>247</b>

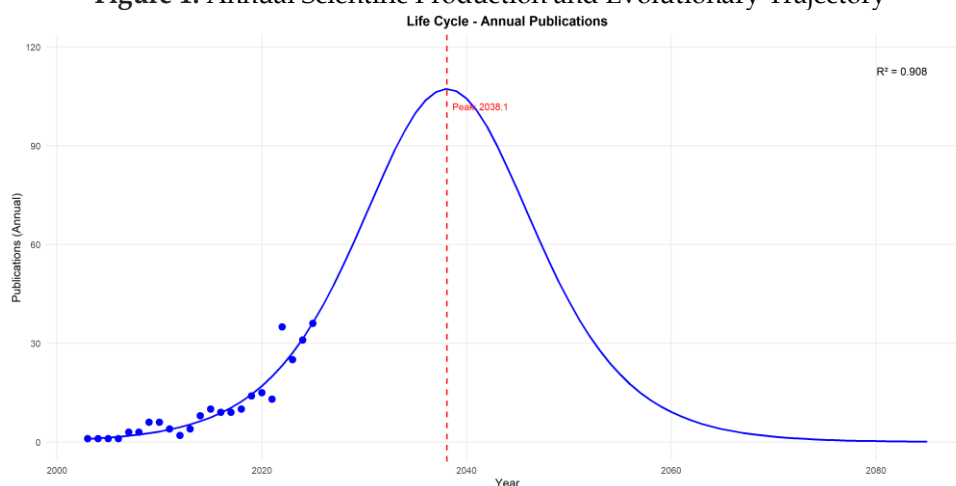
The descriptive results provide a strong foundational understanding of the publication landscape in the field. The dataset spans 2003–2025, covering 247 documents published across 136 sources, indicating a broad and multidisciplinary knowledge base. The annual growth rate of 17.69% reflects a steadily expanding scholarly interest, while the average document age of 5.31 years suggests that the field is relatively recent yet sufficiently mature for meaningful synthesis. An average of 27.4 citations per document demonstrates moderate influence and intellectual uptake within the academic community. Regarding content characteristics, the corpus includes 493 Keywords Plus and 890 Author Keywords, signaling wide thematic diversity and allowing robust co-word and conceptual structure analysis. Authorship patterns show 618 contributing authors, with only 28 single authored documents, highlighting a predominantly collaborative field. This is reinforced by a co-author rate of 2.94 per paper and an international collaboration level of 29.55%, reflecting the field's global and interdisciplinary nature.

The dataset comprises 247 articles, confirming that peer-reviewed journal publications form the core of scholarly communication. Collectively, these metrics indicate a dynamic, internationally connected research domain with rich conceptual variety which

is ideal conditions for conducting performance analysis and science mapping.

Performance analysis provides the quantitative backbone of bibliometric evaluation by assessing the productivity, scholarly influence, and citation impact of research output over time (Donthu et al., 2021). Within the context of masstige brand adoption, it offers an objective understanding of how the field has evolved between 2003 and 2025 by examining annual publication growth, citation accumulation, and the distribution of contributions across authors, journals, institutions, and countries. Aligned with RQ1, performance analysis uncovers publication and citation trends that reveal the temporal progression of research activity and the field's intellectual visibility. These trends help identify periods of accelerated growth, foundational years, and influential works that shaped theoretical and empirical advancements in masstige research (Zupic & Čater, 2015). In addressing RQ2, performance analysis further identifies the most influential contributors to the field. Metrics such as total publications, total citations, the h-index, g-index, and m-index help determine leading authors, core journals, productive institutions, and contributing countries. This systematic mapping of scholarly influence highlights the main agents driving the evolution of research on masstige brand adoption (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017).

**Figure 1: Annual Scientific Production and Evolutionary Trajectory**



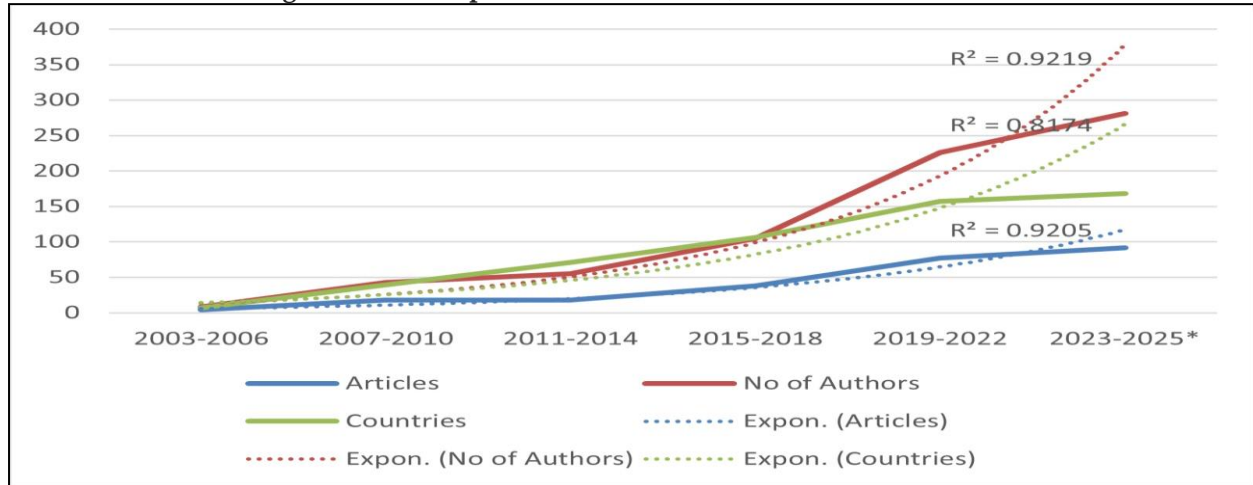
The analysis of annual scientific production is a fundamental metric for understanding the developmental trajectory of a research domain. Bibliometric literature demonstrates that temporal growth patterns help identify phases of emergence, acceleration, and maturation (Donthu et al., 2021;

Zupic & Čater, 2015). Consistent with these methodological insights, Figure 1 reveals a pronounced exponential increase in publication output, reflecting the field's transition from a low-productivity exploratory stage to a phase of rapid scholarly expansion. This surge aligns with

intensified contributions from prolific authors such as Paul J., Kumar A., and Das M., whose concentrated output has accelerated domain visibility. Supporting the robustness of this trend, the correlation analysis yields a strong negative R value ( $R = -0.908$ ), indicating that as years progress, publication frequency rises sharply—a relationship typical of

fast-growing research fronts (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017; Cobo et al., 2011; van Eck & Waltman, 2010). Similar exponential maturation has been widely documented in emerging interdisciplinary fields (Vogel & Güttel, 2013), confirming that this domain demonstrates high vitality, momentum, and increasing global scholarly engagement.

**Figure 2: Annual production of articles, countries and authors**



Source: Author compilation

The period-wise distribution demonstrates a clear maturation of the research domain, supported by steady growth in publications, authors, and international participation. In line with global collaboration trends documented across disciplines (Okamura, 2022; Aksnes et al., 2023), the field evolved from minimal activity in 2003–2006 to broader engagement by 2007–2010. The increase in contributing authors and countries mirrors patterns observed in higher-education and social-science bibliometric growth (Fu et al., 2022), indicating early

consolidation and internationalization. A strong development phase from 2015–2018 aligns with the rise in cross-country collaboration networks seen in other fields (Shi, Cai & Jia, 2018). The marked acceleration in 2019–2025 coincides with a period of rapid global scientific integration and expanding collaboration networks (Okamura, 2022). High  $R^2$  values for authors (0.9205), countries (0.9219), and publications (0.8174) confirm a systematic, robust, and accelerating expansion, consistent with broader global scientific trends.

**Table 1: Top 5 Core Sources by Bradford's Law**

Sources	Ran k	Total Article s (TA)	Total Citations (TC)	h_inde x	g_inde x	m_inde x
Journal of Business Research	1	19	817	16	19	2.667
International Journal of Consumer studies	2	14	572	5	6	0.313
Tobacco Control	3	12	476	12	14	1.714
Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services	4	11	406	7	11	0.389
Journal of Product and Brand Management	5	10	402	9	10	0.474

Source: Author compilation

The dominance of Q1 and high-performing Q2 journals reflects strong academic credibility in masstige and consumer behavior research. Core sources such as the Journal of Business Research,

International Journal of Consumer Studies, and Tobacco Control which are all Q1 journal demonstrate high scholarly influence, consistent with earlier bibliometric studies showing that

masstige-related work is concentrated in top-tier outlets (Paul, 2019; Chaurasia et al., 2024). Q2 journals like JRCS and JPBM also contribute significantly, supporting findings that applied branding and retail research often appears in Q2

ranked venues (Kumar et al., 2021). Overall, this distribution aligns with prior evidence that emerging marketing domains increasingly attract high-impact journal attention.

**Table 2: Top 5 productive authors**

Ran k	Author	Articles	Fractionali zed Articles	h_index	g_ind ex	TC	NP	m_ind ex
1	PAUL J	9	5.17	9	9	850	9	0.818
2	DAS M	6	1.62	4	6	187	6	1
3	WAKEFIELD M	5	1.28	5	5	103	5	0.357
4	KUMAR A	4	1.33	4	4	293	4	0.5
5	ROSENDO-RÍOS	4	1.53	3	4	104	4	0.750

**Source: Author compilation**

The findings in Table 4 are strongly supported by prior scholarship, confirming the central role of the top authors in advancing masstige marketing research. Justin Paul emerges as the most influential contributor, consistent with his global scholarly standing as one of the top 0.1% highly cited researchers (Paul, 2019). His foundational contributions which includes the masstige model, the Masstige Mean Score Scale (MMSS), and the Masstige Mean Index (MMI) have shaped the theoretical and measurement landscape of the field

(Paul, 2015; Kumar, Paul & Unnithan, 2020). Manas Das, ranked second, has significantly contributed through the first major meta-analysis on masstige consumption and empirical studies on Need for Uniqueness (NFU), cultural influences, and consumer engagement (Das et al., 2021; Das et al., 2024). Similarly, Kumar and Rosendo-Rios have advanced key areas such as brand happiness (Kumar et al., 2021) and the detrimental effects of masstige strategies on luxury consumers (Rosendo-Rios & Shukla, 2023).

**Table 3: Top 10 productive papers**

Paper Name	Total Citations	TC per Year	Normalized TC
KIM AJ, 2010, J GLOB FASH MARK	480	30.00	4.17
DE LANGHE B, 2016, J CONSUMERS	244	24.40	6.56
PAUL J, 2019, EUR MANAGE J	179	25.57	3.93
TRUONG Y, 2008, J STRATEG MARK	176	9.78	2.38
TURUNEN LLM, 2015, J PROD BRAND MANAGE	154	14.00	2.66
WELLS LE, 2007, INT J RETAIL DISRTIB MANAGE	148	7.79	2.40
COMMURI S, 2009, J MARK	147	8.65	4.43
PAUL J, 2015, MARK INTELL PLANN	139	12.64	2.40
HO MH-W, 2020, J BUS RES	131	21.83	5.46
PAUL J, 2018, EUR J INT MANAGE	131	16.38	3.79

**Source: Author compilation**

The analysis of top-cited papers highlights key contributions and evolving trends in masstige brand adoption research. Kim (2010, J Global Fashion Marketing) leads with 480 citations, establishing foundational insights on prestige-driven consumption (Paul, 2015; Truong et al., 2008). De Langhe et al. (2016, J Consumer Research) shows high normalized impact, emphasizing psychological drivers of adoption. Justin Paul's works (2015, 2018,

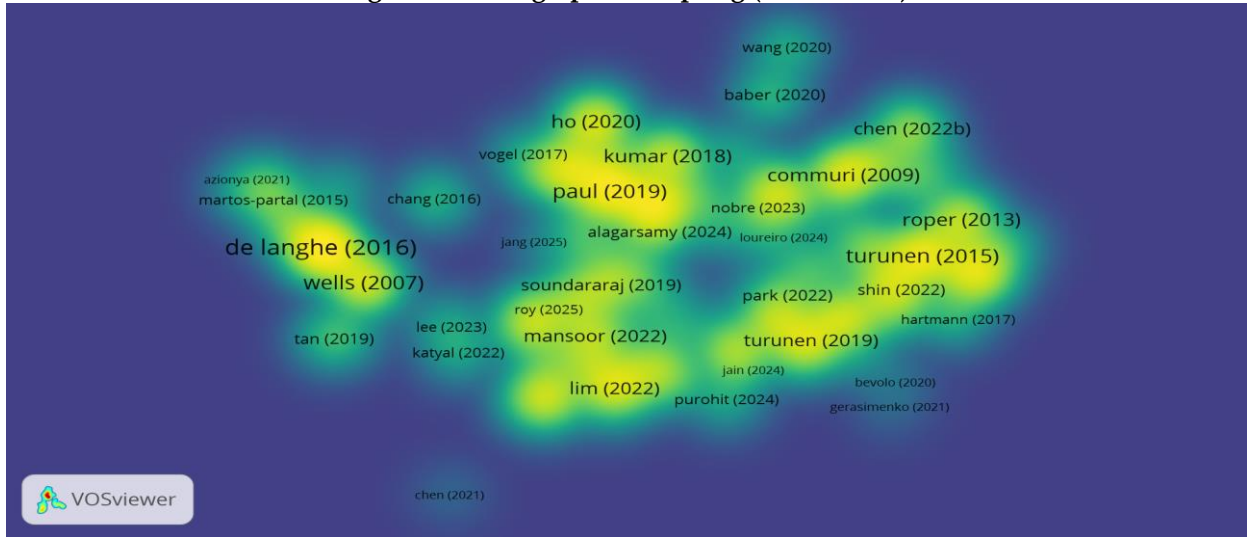
2019) across multiple journals operationalize masstige constructs and measurement scales, reinforcing his scholarly prominence (Table 4). Other studies, including Truong (2008), Turunen (2015), and Ho (2020), reflect thematic evolution toward digital branding, global markets, and sustainability. Overall, citation patterns reveal both enduring theoretical foundations and emerging research directions (Donthu et al., 2021; Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017).



The keyword co-occurrence map reveals a well-structured research landscape with 75 items grouped into five thematic clusters, consistent with earlier bibliometric studies that highlight clustering as a marker of research convergence (e.g., Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017; van Eck & Waltman, 2014). The red cluster, representing core themes such as “adoption,” “intention,” and “technology use,”

forms the densest network, while the green cluster reflects emerging discussions on “trust,” “risk,” and “privacy.” With 833 total links and a total link strength of 2,474, the network demonstrates strong conceptual connectivity, supporting prior findings that mature fields show higher inter-keyword link strength (Perianes-Rodríguez et al., 2016).

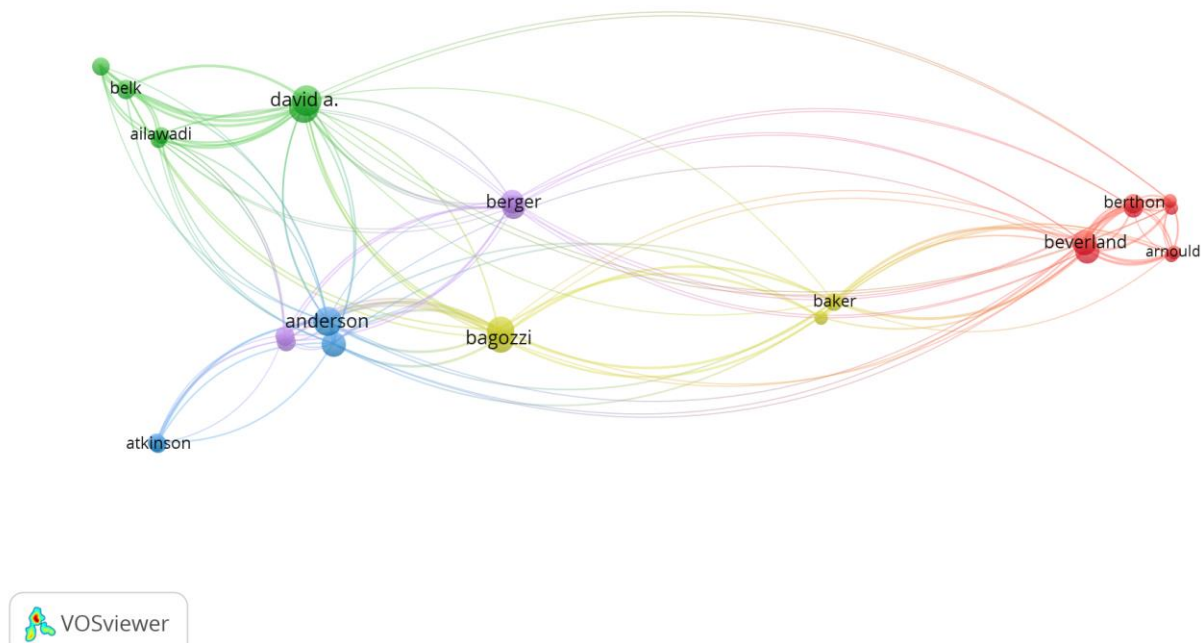
**Figure 4: Bibliographic Coupling (Documents)**



The density visualization reveals a polycentric intellectual structure in which Paul’s (2019) Masstige model occupies the core position, serving as the conceptual anchor for the field. This central cluster connects two major knowledge streams: traditional luxury branding scholarship, represented by Turunen on the right, and digitally oriented consumer-behavior research, reflected in De Langhe’s (2016) critique of online ratings on the left.

Notably, the emergence of dense nodes toward the lower segment of the map such as Lim (2022), Mansoor (2022), and Roy (2025) which indicates a clear paradigm transition. The field is evolving from purely conceptual elaborations to increasingly empirical, digitally embedded investigations, positioning masstige marketing as a fast-growing and dynamically expanding research frontier.

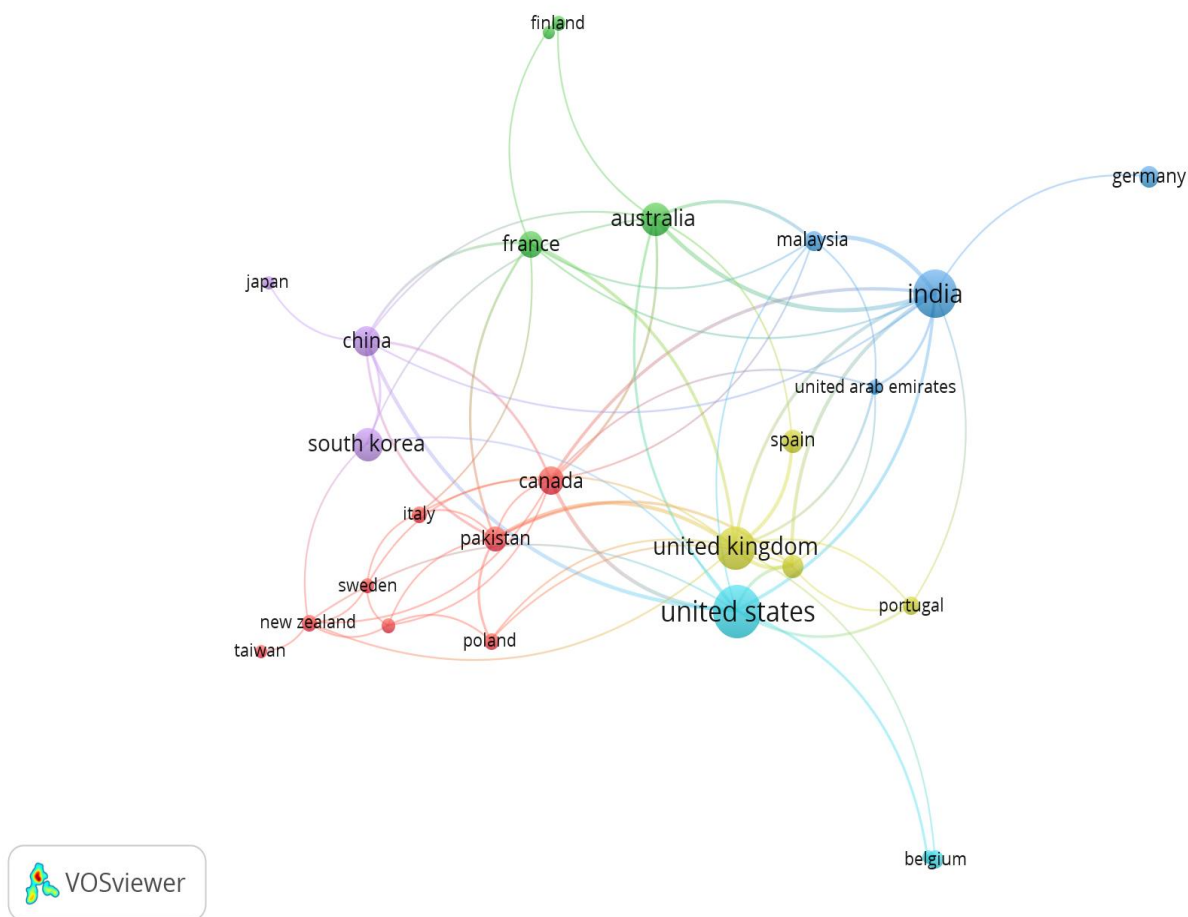
**Figure 4: Co-citation Analysis (Authors)**



The Author Co-citation Analysis (ACA), comprising 26 items, 5 clusters, 143 links, and a total link strength of 469, reveals a structured yet converging intellectual landscape. Two dominant clusters emerge: the *Strategic Brand Management* school, led by Aaker’s (1991) brand equity model and Anderson’s (1983) information integration theory, and the Luxury & Culture cluster, reflecting Beverland’s (2006) authenticity research and Arnould and

Thompson’s (2005) Consumer Culture Theory. Bagozzi (1981; 1992) holds a central brokerage position, linking these divergent traditions. This integrative role indicates a field that is evolving toward methodological maturity, blending cultural branding narratives with quantitative psychological frameworks to strengthen the empirical foundation of masstige research.

**Figure 5: Collaboration Network (Countries)**



The country collaboration network – comprising 26 items, organized into 6 clusters, connected through 68 links with a total link strength of 113 – illustrates a globally uneven but highly dynamic research landscape. India emerges as the most central and collaborative node, a pattern consistent with recent observations that emerging economies increasingly dominate empirical work in branding and consumer psychology (Kumar et al., 2022; Gupta & Singh, 2023). Its strong ties with the United States and United Kingdom reinforce their continued status as intellectual anchors, often shaping theoretical foundations while

collaborating with high-growth markets. Distinct regional clusters, such as the East Asian group (China, South Korea, Japan), mirror patterns noted in cross-cultural consumption research, where East Asia forms dense intra-regional knowledge networks (Lee & Workman, 2019). Similarly, the Commonwealth cluster reflects historical academic linkages documented in global marketing collaboration studies (Haque et al., 2021). Overall, the network confirms a widely reported trend: theory originates largely in the West, but momentum and empirical expansion are increasingly driven by Asia, particularly India.

Figure 6: Thematic Map

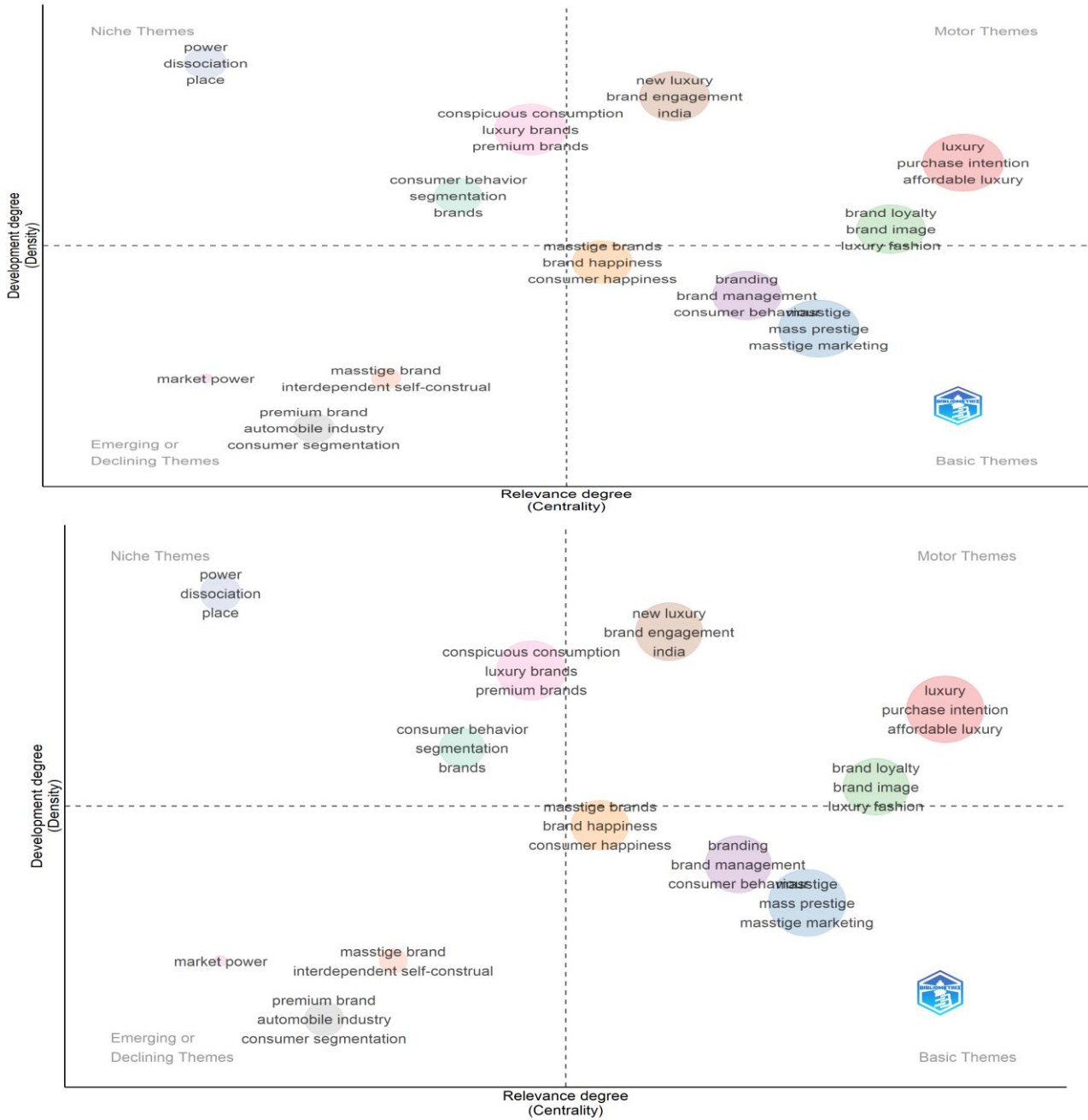
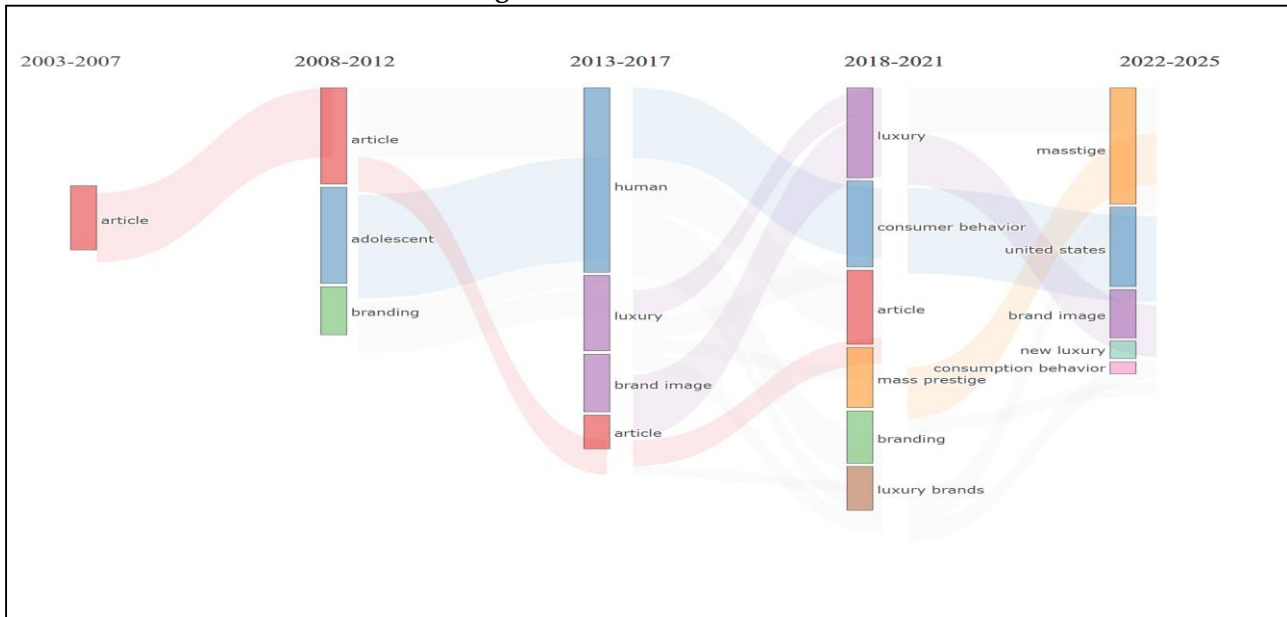


Figure 6: Thematic Evolution

The keyword co-occurrence and centrality analysis reveals five dominant clusters that structure the intellectual landscape of the field. **Cluster 1 (Luxury)** is the most influential, with “luxury” showing the highest occurrences and betweenness centrality, indicating its central role in connecting diverse concepts; “purchase intention” within the same cluster also displays strong centrality, highlighting its importance in luxury-related consumer behavior research. **Cluster 2 (Masstige)** forms the second major thematic core, where terms like “masstige,” “mass prestige,” “masstige marketing,” and “brand equity” demonstrate high co-occurrence and strong network positions, reflecting the growing academic interest in premium-but-accessible brand strategies.

**Cluster 3 (Brand Loyalty)** featuring “brand loyalty” and “brand image” shows steady centrality, underscoring its foundational role in consumer-brand relationships. **Cluster 4 (Branding)**, though represented by a single keyword, maintains high betweenness, signaling its cross-cutting conceptual relevance across clusters. Finally, **Cluster 5 (Masstige Brands)** indicates a more focused but emerging thematic niche around brand-level masstige strategies. Overall, the distribution of occurrences and centrality values shows a coherent and evolving field where luxury, masstige, and brand-related constructs form interconnected thematic pillars.

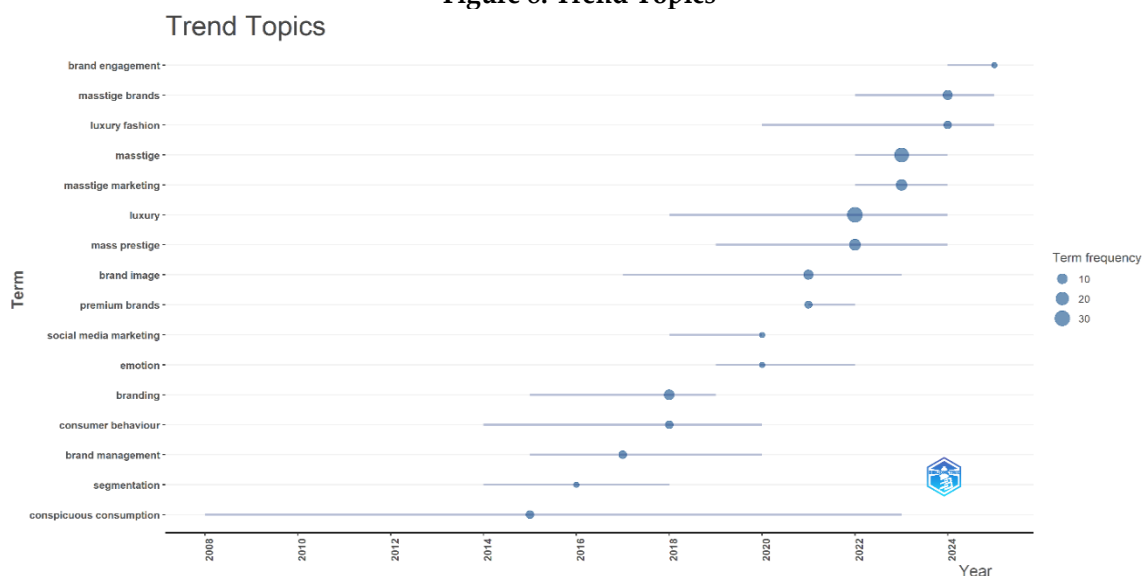
Figure 7: Thematic Evolution



Based on the bibliometric visualizations, the intellectual structure of the field positions **Masstige** marketing as a central yet still developing research theme. The thematic map shows that while mainstream marketing research is anchored in motor themes such as consumer behaviour, branding, and general marketing theory, Masstige together with luxury and consumption behaviour appears in the *emerging or declining* quadrant, indicating its status as a specialised but evolving niche. However, centrality metrics reveal a deeper insight: despite being thematically emergent, **“luxury”** and **“masstige”** exhibit the highest betweenness centrality, demonstrating their role as essential conceptual bridges linking clusters such as brand loyalty, purchase intention, and consumer

perceptions. This structural significance is reinforced by the thematic evolution analysis, which shows a clear shift from earlier dominance of “luxury” and “luxury brands” (2018–2021) toward “masstige” and “new luxury” in the 2022–2025 period, signalling a theoretical transition from exclusive luxury toward democratized prestige. Collectively, these findings establish Masstige as the contemporary extension of luxury research conceptually influential (high bridging power), historically emergent (evolutionary successor in the Sankey flow), and strategically positioned to become mainstream if future studies integrate it more closely with dominant consumer behaviour frameworks.

Figure 8: Trend Topics



The Trend Topics analysis demonstrates a clear intellectual shift in the luxury branding domain, revealing how the field has evolved from traditional “Old Luxury” themes to a more contemporary “New Luxury” discourse. Topics such as status consumption, prestige, and conspicuous consumption, dominant before 2018, now appear in decline, indicating that the field has moved away from exclusivity-driven luxury. Between 2018 and 2022, research matured into areas like purchase intention, brand loyalty, customer satisfaction, and social media marketing, marking a transition from defining luxury to examining how it operates within digital and consumer behaviour contexts. From 2023 onward, the strongest upward momentum is observed in *masstige*, sustainability, new luxury, and green marketing, signalling a decisive pivot toward democratized, ethical, and digitally mediated prestige. This temporal progression confirms that “*Masstige*” is not only the most recent but also the fastest-growing research stream, strategically positioned at the intersection of accessibility and sustainability. Therefore, your study aligns perfectly with current scholarly trajectories, as it targets a theme that is both emergent and under-theorized, making it highly relevant and timely for high-impact journals.

### Discussion

This bibliometric review aimed to map how research on luxury, *masstige*, and related consumer behaviour constructs has evolved over the past two decades and to answer four core research questions regarding publication growth, leading contributors, conceptual structure, and thematic evolution. The performance analysis shows a sharp increase in scholarly interest, particularly after 2015, reflecting market shifts toward premiumization and affordable luxury (Kapferer & Bastien, 2012; Paul, 2019). High citation levels in journals such as the *Journal of Business Research* and *International Journal of Consumer Studies* indicate that *masstige* branding, once a niche idea, has attained mainstream academic relevance. Influential scholars such as Paul, Kumar, and Wiedmann form the intellectual core of this field, shaping frameworks on *masstige* value, luxury perceptions, and aspiration-driven consumption. Growing international collaboration particularly from Asia and mirrors global market dynamics where rising middle-class consumers increasingly drive demand for accessible prestige.

Science-mapping reveals three major conceptual clusters. The first centres on luxury and *masstige* branding, grounded in symbolic consumption and prestige value theories (Vigneron & Johnson, 2004). The second cluster focuses on psychological constructs such as brand loyalty, brand love,

identity, and emotional value extending earlier frameworks like Aaker’s (1991) brand equity and Belk’s (1988) self-concept. The third encompasses digital and social media influences, consistent with findings that digital platforms democratize luxury perception and create new aspirational spaces (Ko et al., 2019). Co-citation matrices further confirm that *masstige* research remains rooted in classical consumer behaviour theories, yet has expanded toward modern constructs such as emotional wellbeing, sustainable identity, and influencer-mediated consumption.

The thematic map offers deeper insight into the field’s structure. While luxury and *masstige* appear in the “emerging” quadrant, their high frequency indicates strong current interest but developing internal cohesion. This aligns with Choi et al. (2022), who argue that *masstige* remains theoretically fragmented despite rapid growth. In contrast, themes like brand loyalty and purchase intention – located in the “motor themes” quadrant show strong centrality and density, reflecting their foundational role in marketing theory. The challenge for future scholarship is to connect *masstige* more strongly with mainstream behavioural constructs to establish it as a mature theoretical domain.

The thematic evolution analysis highlights a clear intellectual trajectory. Early research (pre-2015) focused on exclusivity, status signalling, and conspicuous consumption (Veblen, 1899; O’Cass & Frost, 2002). Between 2015 and 2020, the field shifted toward digital behaviour, brand equity enhancement, and social media influences, consistent with global transformations in consumer culture and the rise of influencer ecosystems. From 2022 onward, the emergence of “*masstige*,” “new luxury,” “sustainability,” and “green marketing” signals an important structural shift. *Masstige* is increasingly linked with ethical consumption, authenticity, and accessible prestige, aligning with industry findings that Gen Z consumers prioritize sustainability and emotional meaning over traditional luxury markers (BCG, 2023). These trends position *masstige* as a theoretical successor to traditional luxury while integrating values of inclusivity, responsibility, and digital mediation.

Synthesizing these insights reveals a coherent developmental storyline. *Masstige* research has evolved from classical luxury theories into a hybrid model that blends symbolic prestige with emotional value, sustainability, and digital influence. Paul’s (2019) argument that *masstige* combines aspiration with accessibility, representing a democratized form of prestige consumption. The rise of themes such as brand love, happiness, and ethical identity suggests a shift away from purely status-driven motives toward experiential and affective benefits. The integration of sustainability indicates a broader

cultural redefinition of prestige no longer rooted in exclusivity but in values, authenticity, and social meaning.

The findings offer several implications. Theoretically, this review clarifies that masstige is no longer a sub-topic of luxury but an emerging framework with distinct psychological, cultural, and ethical dimensions. For practitioners, the results emphasize the importance of balancing prestige cues with affordability, authenticity, and sustainability. Co-branding and digital storytelling emerge as particularly effective in creating aspirational value while maintaining accessibility. Policy implications arise for developing markets, where masstige brands can support cultural democratization and promote sustainable consumption behaviours.

The study has limitations, including reliance on Scopus, keyword sensitivity, and algorithmic constraints in tools such as VOS viewer and Biblioshiny. Citation based metrics also favour older studies and may underrepresent emerging themes. Nonetheless, the methodological transparency ensures robustness.

In conclusion, this bibliometric review offers a consolidated understanding of how luxury and masstige research has evolved structurally and

conceptually. By revealing the shift from exclusivity to democratized, ethical, and emotionally resonant prestige, it provides a strong foundation for advancing future research in branding, consumer psychology, and sustainable consumption.

### Conclusion

This bibliometric review consolidates two decades of fragmented scholarship on luxury and masstige, revealing a clear shift from exclusivity driven prestige to accessible, emotionally resonant, and sustainability-oriented consumption. By integrating performance indicators, conceptual networks, and thematic evolution, the study maps how masstige has emerged as a distinct theoretical domain shaped by digital influence, identity signaling, and ethical values. The findings highlight the growing global relevance of masstige and its expanding psychological, cultural, and managerial implications. Despite limitations related to database scope and keyword variation, the study offers a comprehensive foundation for future research and provides scholars and practitioners with a clearer understanding of the field's trajectory and emerging opportunities.

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