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THE ROLE OF MASSTIGE STRATEGIES ON BRANDING: GERMAN CUSTOMERS RELATIONSHIP WITH MOBILE BRANDS, ITS STATUS AND PRESTIGE?

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ISCTE Business School

September, 2021



BUSINESS
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Acknowledgements

Submitting this dissertation, I am finishing my master's in marketing at ISCTE Business School after two years. The opportunity to share my knowledge and experiences with fellow students whilst learning from theirs, provided an optimal environment for me to prosper and learn whether it be on a personal or professional level. Looking back, I think of this incredible chapter in Lisbon as one of the best times in my life, making me to the person I am today. Thus, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to having this opportunity and appreciation of having such privilege. Lisbon will be forever in my heart.

First and foremost, I would like to thank my thesis supervisor Prof. Ricardo Bilro, guiding me with patience, encouragement, trust and precious advice. He always supported me with direction and commitment during my work.

A big thank goes to my parents, who have supported me unconditionally and with much love throughout my academic career and life so far. I feel privileged to have my parents by my side, to whom I owe this unforgettable time and support. Without them I would not be where I am today.

Another big thank you goes to my sister, who I can always rely on and who always strengthens my back.

Finally, I would also like to thank the voluntary participants answering my survey and thus helping me accomplish my research goal.

Lisbon, August 2021

Victoria Sauter

Abstract

Luxury used to be a niche and confined to a fortunate minority, who were the only ones who could pay for it. Through the boost in purchasing power around the world, people increasingly buy luxury goods and services, blurring the line separating traditional luxury brands from others. As a result, exclusivity and rarity began to disappear and the phenomenon masstige, commonly known as mass prestige was born. Masstige is a strategic marketing activity, focusing on effective market penetration with premium but attainable products. Although masstige is a proven and effective strategy, it has been widely ignored and underestimated, except for a few researchers. Therefore, the purpose of this dissertation is to contribute to the research of masstige and its strategy. The approach and core of this thesis is the role of masstige strategies on branding within marketing, aiming to understand how German customers relate to their smartphone brand in their everyday lives and, to investigate the relationship that is established with the brand in terms of associated status and prestige. The topic is inspected through the different constructs: self-brand connection, communal-brand connection, brand coolness, masstige theory, brand happiness and passionate desire to buy more.

Data collection and analysis have been performed through quantitative analysis, in form of a questionnaire, distributed online and built based on the literature of various authors regarding the previously mentioned topic. Brand coolness positively impacts the perceived masstige of a brand, which in turn has a positive influence on brand happiness and a passionate desire to buy more. Additionally, results show the role of masstige strategies on branding. This way, managers and marketers should recognize the importance of masstige strategies, since it has a huge impact on driving potentials for company success.

Keywords: masstige, mass prestige, masstige marketing, branding, brand management

JEL: M31, M39

Resumo

O luxo costumava ser um nicho e confinado a uma minoria afortunada, que eram os únicos que podiam pagar por ele. Através do impulso do poder de compra em todo o mundo, as pessoas compram cada vez mais bens e serviços de luxo, esbatendo a linha que separa as marcas de luxo tradicionais das outras. Como resultado, a exclusividade e a raridade começaram a desaparecer e o fenómeno *masstige*, vulgarmente conhecido como *prestígio em massa*, nasceu. *Masstige* é uma actividade de marketing estratégico, centrada na penetração efectiva no mercado com produtos premium mas alcançáveis. Embora o *masstige* seja uma estratégia comprovada e eficaz, tem sido amplamente ignorada e subestimada, excepto por alguns poucos investigadores. Desta forma, o objectivo desta dissertação é contribuir para a investigação do *masstige* e da sua estratégia. Esta tese foca-se no papel das estratégias de *masstige* sobre a marca no marketing, com o objectivo de compreender como os clientes alemães se relacionam com a sua marca *smartphone* na sua vida quotidiana e, investigar a relação que se estabelece com a marca em termos de estatuto e *prestígio* associados. O tema é analisado através das diferentes construções: ligação com a marca, aspecto ‘cool’ da marca, teoria do *masstige*, felicidade associada à marca e desejo apaixonado de comprar mais.

A recolha e análise de dados foi realizada através da análise quantitativa, sob a forma de um questionário, distribuído online e construído com base na literatura de vários autores sobre o tópico anteriormente mencionado. É possível verificar que o efeito ‘cool’ da marca tem um impacto positivo na percepção ‘*masstige*’ de uma marca, o que por sua vez tem uma influência positiva na felicidade da marca e um desejo apaixonado de comprar mais. Além disso, os resultados mostram que o papel das estratégias de *masstige* sobre o branding. Desta forma, os gestores e marketers devem reconhecer a importância das estratégias de *masstige*, uma vez que tem um enorme impacto no potencial de sucesso da empresa.

Keywords: *masstige*, mass prestige, marketing *masstige*, branding, gestão de marcas

JEL: M31, M39

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1. Introduction

Formerly, luxury started as a niche and was limited to the happy minority, who were the only ones who could pay for it (Kapferer & Valette-Florence, 2016). Over the years, exclusivity and rarity began to disappear and the line separating traditional luxury brands from other brands has become blurred (Truong et al., 2009). This is owed to the boost in purchasing power across the world, since thereby people increasingly started buying luxury goods and services (Kumar et al., 2020). Brands realized, they have to grow fast in order to sustain in the market and need to head where the market is (Kapferer, 2015). New luxury and with it the phenomenon masstige marketing (composition of “masses” and “prestige”) was born.

The term “masstige” may first sound like a catch phrase but describes the unconventional marketing of the new market mass prestige with “premium but attainable” products. Masstige means affordable but still with a reasonable status of prestige but, however, the prices are only little above those of comparable middle range products in an effort to attain an expanded target compared to niches of traditional luxury brands (Silverstein et al., 2005).

There are two types of masstige strategies. One is the “trading-down” method, where luxury brands are broaden their product range more accessible to average consumers (Kapferer & Bastien, 2009; Truong et al., 2009). The second type is the application of masstige strategy as of masstige brands, such as Apple, Victoria’s Secret, Starbucks, etc.

Although masstige is a proven and effective strategy, it has been widely ignored and underestimated, except for a few researchers (Kumar et al., 2020; Paul, 2015; Paul & Kumar, 2020). The lack of research is that huge that even the two scholars Paul and Kumar (2020) invite to engage in further research about masstige in a special issue with call for papers for the Journal of Business Research. Hereby this dissertation aims to make a contribution to the branding literature and to investigate the concept masstige further.

To analyze this area in a deeper manner, an industry was chosen, in which, nowadays consumers can build a close connection to their product and brand. The choice pointed on mobile brands, since nowadays almost everyone has one. Thirteen years after the launch of the iPhone, smartphones have already fundamentally changed the reality of life and society and this industry is growing expeditiously. Especially the way we are connected and communicate with each other has changed and an everyday life without smartphones, is no longer imaginable. In two decades, smartphones are a high priority for us in life and people care about which mobile brand they buy from.

The purpose of this paper is to understand and investigate better how German customers relate to their mobile brands in their everyday lives, in terms of different branding components and constructs. Furthermore, it will be demonstrated, how constructs of brand relationships influence each other and how they tie together. The thesis will help to explore the established relationship of German customers with their mobile brand linked to status and prestige. Finally, the role of masstige strategies on branding is being argued. In order to properly conduct this research, secondary and primary data is collected.

In order to address the research objectives, this dissertation is divided into four major parts, excluding the introduction. The first part, literature review, serves as a basis and contextualizes the research problem, through understanding the main concepts of this study. Secondly, in the methodology part, the research conceptual model with hypotheses and the method for the gathered data are introduced. After, in the third part results, the collected data is presented and analyzed. In the last part, theoretical and managerial contributions as well as limitations are concluded from this dissertation, with suggestions of future research.

Figure 1 – Structure of the Dissertation



Source: Own Elaboration

2. Literature Review

In order to contextualize the research problematic and to receive a global overview, different objectives are analyzed and defined. First, the focus is to study the nowadays mobile market with the consumption of smartphones, secondly to explain masstige theory through the change of the luxury brand concept to new luxury, and finally to define the theoretical concept of brand relationship with various related constructs.

2.1. The Mobile Phone Industry

2.1.1. The Global Mobile Phone Industry

The extremely innovative mobile phone industry offers today indeed different types of mobile devices but comes into existence on April 3, 1973 by the Motorola researcher and executive Martin Cooper. Through this innovation, mobile devices subsequently gain acceptance worldwide. Later, in the end of 2006, Blackberry was introduced onto the market and smartphones became a commercially successful product. But the important change of the mobile phone industry and the real journey of smartphones starts with the tech-giant company Apple. The brand Apple entered the market in 2007 by introducing the first revolutionary product iPhone and shortly after in June 2008, Samsung released the model Samsung Instinct, a direct iPhone competitor. From then on, competition in the market has been very intense and harsh, as well as among incumbents and incumbents and new participants (Cecere et al., 2015). Today, the smartphone industry is one of the leading industries within the technological age and is still growing. It arose all of a sudden in the marketplace and gets the fastest growth besides the internet (Alam, 2020). The development and number of new products or smartphones has remarkably increased over time, leading to many continuing changes in terms of both technological innovations and industrial dynamics. Technical features are constantly improving over time, thanks to new functionalities both on the hardware and software side (Cecere et al., 2015).

Smartphones are popular, empowering consumers to buy a phone with high-quality camera, strong battery life, available apps and tools, electronic commerce transaction capability, much storage capability with a cloud computing facility, location traceability, more customization facility and more support through Artificial Intelligence technology at affordable price (Alam, 2021). Today, there are over six billion smartphone users worldwide and the number will further grow by several hundred million in the next years. Leading smartphone brand suppliers are

Samsung and Apple, accounting for about half of all global smartphone shipments (Statista, 2021a).

2.1.2. The Mobile Phone Market in Germany

In recent years, the number of smartphone users and demand in Germany has constantly grown, leading to 60.47 million smartphone owners by a population of ca. 83 million in 2020. Back in 2009, this number was merely 6.3 million (Statista, 2021b). Thus, a smartphone is one of the most standard tech accessories in this century or even an essential for some in Germany. With rising prices of smartphones nowadays, products and brands almost reach a premium range (Statista, 2020). Therefore, they are kind of subject to masstige theory, a phenomenon that will be discussed in more detail later and represents the core of this thesis. In 2020 amongst German population, the most popular smartphone brand was Samsung, followed by Apple as second well-liked brand, thirdly by Huawei and fourthly by Nokia. LG Electronics and Sony are very close to each other in 5th and 6th place (Statista, 2021c).

Today communication has become more diverse and changed. Besides messenger services such as WhatsApp, users also interact millions of times a day with texts, videos and pictures via social media platforms such as Instagram, Snapchat and Facebook. Professional communication, where e-mail continues to play a leading role, is now also handled to a large extent via the smartphone. Thus, smartphones do not only permanently enable internet access, but more over are personal devices that indicate social identity and status (Panova & Carbonell, 2018). The question is, if different smartphone brands consequently result in different status and prestige.

2.2. Masstige Theory

2.2.1. The Luxury Brand Concept

The Latin word luxury originates from “luxatio” and means disruption. Luxury trade, considered as one of the oldest businesses, today still has no clear, universal and accepted definition of what determines a luxury brand in comparison to a non-luxury brand (Kapferer, 2015). For instance, the American Marketing Association’s dictionary of terms does not include a description of “luxury”, “luxury brand”, or “luxury marketing”. The meaning of luxury therefore has evolved over the lapse of time (Brun & Castelli, 2013).

Luxury brands began to establish an efficient market, providing products and services for people of a niche, who could afford premium prices linked with prestige, quality and

exclusivity. Closing a market gap, these brands were able to develop and maintain a strong market position (Kapferer & Valette-Florence, 2016). Recently, since the 1980s, luxury began to grow (Kapferer, 2015). Across the world, countries and even developing countries have experienced an extreme increase in luxury goods consumption. This huge growth has raised the attention of scholars and research about luxury, making it to an important marketing construct. Marketers today commonly use the term “luxury” for most product or service categories to communicate to their consumers a specific category of offer, with the purpose to persuade them to “trade up” (Dubois et al., 2001; Tynan et al., 2010).

With no absolute distinction between luxury and utilitarian brands or products, luxury remains on a continuum. Where luxury starts and ordinary ends is a matter of judgement by consumers. This may be one of the reasons why the measurement and definition of luxury has been highly subjective, although luxury is not an inherently subjective concept itself. Luxury is both, earned and learned; and not obvious (Berthon et al., 2009; Godey et al., 2012; Tynan et al., 2010). Moreover, it is a relative concept (Mortelmans, 2005). While a student could be observing a Volkswagen Golf as a luxury car, an Audi A8 might be just an ordinary car to a wealthy person. Thus, luxury is a relative term that could mean almost anything or nothing, depending on the person one is asking.

Even when there are as many definitions as there are researchers going on and change over time, various scholars from different subject areas have tried to determine of what composes a luxury brand without a clear consensus (Ko et al., 2019). Luxury has been associated with status and rarity for a long time. The consumption of luxury can make consumers happy and luxury goods or services are therefore used to enhance their pleasure and create a positive feeling (Correia Loureiro et al., 2018; Petersen et al., 2018).

Researchers over all define luxury brands on the basis of consumer perceptions and/or dimensions, such as product attributes and marketing activities which are determined by management. Every definition includes at least one similarity, namely using multiple dimensions (ranging from two to ten), to determine a luxury brand. Particularly the dimensions such as premium pricing, rarity, high quality, and a high level of aesthetics exist in multiple definitions (Ko et al., 2019). After identifying existing key dimensions of the literature, Ko, Costello & Taylor (2019) established five components as fundamental to any luxury brand and proposed the following theoretical definition of a luxury brand: A luxury brand is perceived as a branded service or product, which consumers consider as:

- Be high quality;
- Offer authentic value via desired benefits, whether functional or emotional;

- Have a prestigious image within the market built on qualities such as artisanship, craftsmanship, or service quality.
- Be worthy of commanding a premium price; and
- Be capable of inspiring a deep connection, or resonance, with the consumer (Ko et al., 2019)

In order to create perceptions of luxury in consumer's mind, price takes on a big role. Prior research suggests, one of the easiest ways of positioning a product or service as luxury, is launching it at a very high price. Especially brands which are unknown (Kapferer et al., 2014). Other positioning techniques comprise characteristics such as authentic, prestigious or "artification" (Heine et al., 2016; Kapferer, 2014). But despite of increasing the likelihood of a brand being considered as luxurious by consumers through certain managerially strategies such as excellent quality or premium pricing, the perception of a luxury brand is not definitely the result. In the end, the consideration whether a brand is luxury or not relies on the brand evaluation of consumers (Ko et al., 2019).

2.1.2. New Luxury

Limited to the happy minority and the only ones who could pay for it, luxury started as a niche (Kapferer & Valette-Florence, 2016). But according to previous research, luxury is not only for the sophisticated and rich, and further, it is no more about exclusivity alone (Granot et al., 2013; Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2012). Due to the boost in purchasing power across the world, people increasingly began buying luxury goods and services (Kumar et al., 2020). Two main reasons clarify this growth: First of all, better economic factors worldwide created a more advantageous environment, involving rising disposable incomes, lower production costs, lower unemployment rates, an increasing wealthy class in developing countries and a growing work rate among women (Silverstein et al., 2005; Silverstein & Fiske, 2003; Yeoman & McMahon-Beattie, 2006). Secondly, more lower classes of society in most countries have started to consume luxury goods (Nueno & Quelch, 1998; Silverstein & Fiske, 2003). There are several reasons why consumers buy more luxury commodities today than before. One could be the desire to imitate the lifestyle of the richest or the social class right above them, or the higher quality of products and, on a more hedonic level, due to self-rewards (Amaldoss & Jain, 2005; O'Cass & McEwen, 2004; Silverstein et al., 2005; Vigneron & Johnson, 2004).

The popularity and scaled up consumption of luxury products and services work paradox to basic perception of luxury, thus relating it beyond rarity towards the mass market. The line

separating traditional luxury brands from other brands has become blurred (Truong et al., 2009). Ever since during previous years and especially today, luxury is changing value and form and therefore the concept has been reframed, creating the term of “new luxury”: Products and services of higher aspiration, taste and quality, compared to other goods of the same category, but still not that expensive to be out of reach (Atwal & Williams, 2009; Silverstein & Fiske, 2003). Businesses have started investigating unconventional ways of marketing luxury goods and services, including affordability market proliferation and availability in the mass market in contrast to prior promise of indulgence, status and superior experience for consumers (Eckhardt et al., 2015; Kumar et al., 2020). Traditional methods of attracting consumers are exchanged with many organizations willing to experiment and trying out innovative methods to stimulate the market (Paul, 2019). Positioning strategies of new luxury brands frequently combine high perceived prestige with reasonable price premiums to attract middle class consumers. These strategies completely differ from those executed by traditional luxury brand companies, which hold an extreme consistency between considered price premiums and prestige, in order to keep their brand’s exclusivity (Truong et al., 2009). Being affordable but still with a reasonable status of prestige, differentiates new luxury brands from middle range products, but however, their prices are only little above those of comparable middle range products in an effort to attain an expanded target audience compared to niches of traditional luxury brands (Silverstein et al., 2005).

As an actively growing sector, modern luxury is consistently facing new challenges, such as levers of desire for their brands today, or how to compensate the loss of rarity and the diluting impact through an increased penetration of the market with higher sales and higher accessibility (Kapferer & Valette-Florence, 2016). Compared as how clients of the old luxe used to be, customers of the new luxury are younger, far more numerous, earning their money far more sooner and are far more flexible when it comes to financing and flighty choices, leading to an intense competition for their attention, with constantly changing consumption patterns (Truong et al., 2009). To sustain in the market, brands have to prosper fast and have to follow the market (Kapferer, 2015). This made luxury brands also change their priority of their investment, shifting from production to the development of memorable retail experiences, to individualized services and to connecting symbolic prestige and value to the label name itself through communication, social networks, social influence, celebrities, brand ambassadors and many more. New luxury brands are therefore more characterized by feelings of exclusivity than factual exclusivity and by simulated scarcity strategies (Kapferer & Valette-Florence, 2016).

2.1.4. Masstige Theory and Marketing

The evolution of the luxury market is described as “democratic luxury”. Kapferer & Bastien (2009, p. 314) specify “a luxury item that extraordinary people would consider ordinary is at the same time an extraordinary item to ordinary people”.

In their Harvard business review article “Luxury for the Masses”, Silverstein & Fiske (2003a) were the first who brought the term “masstige” into mainstream research. Masstige (composition of “masses” and “prestige”) marketing, originates from the concept of luxury. As the name already says it delivers prestige to the masses and describes the modern marketing and branding of companies, targeting on the mass market and thereby middle class consumers by launching new product lines, new brands and product extensions to market with some feeling of luxury and is a new phenomenon, that offers a big opportunity (Kumar et al., 2020; Vigneron & Johnson, 2004). More precise, through the strategic term masstige, premium but attainable products are marketed to a maximum number of customers, while the price is reasonable between the middle class and super premium, making it more accessible (Silverstein & Fiske, 2003). Aim is, to generate brand knowledge, love, likability and attachment based on prestige (Paul, 2019).

Unlike old-luxury goods, new-luxury goods can create high volumes besides their relatively low prices. According to Silverstein & Fiske (Silverstein & Fiske, 2003), three main categories can be found for companies: accessible super premium, old-luxury brand extension and mass prestige or “masstige”. Products of accessible super premium possess a price at or near the lead of their category, with middle class consumers still being able to afford them, over all because they are relatively low-ticket things. An old-luxury brand extension contains products that are lower-priced editions of wares, traditionally only affordable by the rich. Companies sell these cheaper products parallel to their traditional ones. The authors describe the last category “masstige” with goods, conventional, still premium and a reasonable status of perceived prestige, differentiating them from middle range products. At the same time, the products exhibit a price spot between mass and class, namely prices that are between the middle class and super premium or old-luxury goods. New luxury brands are significantly closer to traditional luxury brands than middle range brands, in relation to perceived prestige. However, in terms of the price, they are significantly closer to middle class brands than traditional luxury brands (Truong et al., 2009).

Masstige Marketing is a procedure built on brand positioning and extension (Paul, 2019). Within masstige strategies, two umbrella terms can be stated. In order to grow as a brand and

the case of “trading-down”, luxury brands are widening their product range with masstige products which are, as mentioned before, more accessible to average consumers (Kapferer & Bastien, 2009; Truong et al., 2009). This strategy is especially used inside the fashion industry, with various companies launching brand (line) extensions, targeting casual or new luxury buyers. Outstanding examples are the launch of Karl Lagerfeld at the fashion retail stores of Hennes & Mauritz in 2004 and the collaboration of Louis Vuitton with Supreme 2017. Stated as “luxurification of society”, middle market consumers are grading up for products, meeting their aspirational needs (Yeoman & McMahon-Beattie, 2006).

Among these findings, it is important to address masstige not only about a price reduction of luxury brands but product innovation, careful promotional strategies combined with supportive placement and keeping the price relatively high (Kumar et al., 2020). Besides luxury brands making use of the masstige approach, the strategy is also applied by many middle range brands. In contrast to the prior discussed “trading-down” strategy, one can talk within this case about “trading-up” and so-called masstige brands. Apple, Starbucks, Victoria’s Secret and MAC cosmetics are typical companies that made use of the strategy of accessible luxury (Silverstein & Fiske, 2003). Even if these brands are not luxury brands, they still rate higher than middle market brands on major dimensions of luxury products. Also, in this case masstige successfully differentiates itself from middle range brands by its prestige and from luxury brands mainly by its reasonable pricing. Both strategies have proven successful. The aim is to reach the middle class, who is willing and able to pay higher prices if they can be persuaded to do so (Paul, 2015).

In their research, Bilro et al. (2021) show that fashion brands cannot only use masstige campaigns to hold social media followings and customer attitudes towards the brand but promote customers towards the brand and attract them in social media platforms. An important finding, as digital natives dominate the market in the future more and more. So, although masstige is a proven and effective strategy, the phenomenon has been widely ignored by scholars, except for a few (Kumar et al., 2020; Paul, 2015; Paul & Kumar, 2020). In the special issue with call for papers of the Journal of Business Research, Paul and Kumar (2020) therefore invite scholars to engage in research about masstige. This again highlights the importance of the topic chosen for this dissertation.

2.3. Brand Relationship

As research shows, theory on consumer-brand relationships today is still evolving (Alvarez & Fournier, 2016). Besides practical product value, brands also offer symbolic value, creating a form of identity and support goals of self-expression for consumers (Chernev et al., 2010; He et al., 2012). Much more, brands are a marketing instrument to establish experiences for consumers through relationships and bonds, whether in the private or social field (Schmitt et al., 2015). Self-brand connection, communal-brand connection, brand coolness, brand happiness and passionate desire to buy more are important components of branding.

2.3.1. Self-Brand Connection

Consumers naturally have a drive to express and define themselves through their purchases and direct their behavior to enhance or maintain their self-concept, meaning the way consumers think and feel about what and who they consider themselves to be (Grubb & Grathwohl, 1967; Rosenberg, 1981). This self-concept of consumers can be connected to a brand, leading in self-brand connections and are highly consumer-driven and subjective personal relationships. This means people utilize brands and products in order to accomplish their identity goals. Consumers value symbolic and psychological brand benefits, helping them build their self-identity and/or presenting themselves to others. Either for social integration or as a link to the past a brand can be used. In addition, brands serve as symbols of personal achievement, convey self-esteem, enable people to distinguish themselves and express individuality, and help people during life transitions. During the procedure of using brands to develop self-identities, the set of brand associations can be connected to the consumer's mental representation of self (Escalas & Bettman, 2009). More precisely, this self-brand connection is the amount to which consumers integrate a brand into their self-concept and leads to different strengths of relationships between consumers and brands (Escalas & Bettman, 2003; Fournier, 1998).

Self-brand connection is an important element as it relates to the way consumers build a sense of attachment to a brand (Park et al., 2010). Furthermore self-brand connection is positively linked to enduring positive brand attitudes and brand loyalty, thus in turn is associated with increased and sustained purchase behavior and intentions, recommendations and price insensitivity, representing a significant value for brands (Escalas & Bettman, 2003; Oliver, 1999). The strength of self-brand connection depends on the level a brand is symbolic to the consumer, meaning the brand says something about the user (Escalas & Bettman, 2005). Strong ties lead consumers to maintain their affection for a brand even when the brand is

associated with a negative user group by balancing the symbolic meaning attributed to that brand (Hammerl et al., 2016). According to these findings, preserving self-brand connections of consumers benefit brands in the modern competitive marketing surroundings.

2.3.2. Communal-Brand Connection

How much a human being wants to be in social relations or accepted by others depends on the degree of need of belonging and motivates individuals to search for and keep social relationships (Aron et al., 2004; Leary et al., 2013). From this innate wish of being in close social relationships with other individuals originate consumer tribes, subcultures and brand communities, where members have a connection to the brand but also experience a communal meaningful connection and moral responsibility with fellow consumers, such as brand consumers, leading to a sense of togetherness (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001; Thomas et al., 2013). Here one speaks of the term communal-brand connection, which describes the extent a consumers feels socially connected to other brand consumers (Rindfleisch et al., 2009).

Fostering communal or social links among consumers is a smart strategy to increase brand and firm performance, because members of brand communities valuing their social connections with other brand consumers, have higher repurchase rates and brand loyalty intentions than non-consumers (Algesheimer et al., 2005). However, brand community members do not only have a higher purchase rate, they further have a higher probability of preserving the brand from negative news or sprawling positive word-of-mouth (Marzocchi et al., 2013; Pongsakornrunsilp & Schroeder, 2011). Beneath significant benefits for companies, communal-brand connection also provide advantages among consumers and build the social system or structure, which is essential to form an individual's identity (Schouten & McAlexander, 1995). Consequently, brands offer a social networking value when connecting brand consumers with others via social relations (Cova, 1997). Moreover, communal-brand connections and its supportive social system help people forming friendships, develop identities and perhaps strengthen their self-worth (Algesheimer et al., 2005; Thomas et al., 2013).

2.3.3. Brand Coolness

Although the question of what makes a cool brand still cannot be clearly answered today, marketers know how important a cool brand is as it is an important driver in achieving success. A lot of consumers spend a lot of money on cool brands and can help a company grow

tremendously, such as the former start-up Facebook many years ago. With increasing popularity among consumers, a cool brand can also help exceed competitors (e.g. Myspace).

To this day, the term “cool” persists unstable (Belk et al., 2010; Dar-Nimrod et al., 2012; Sundar et al., 2014; Warren et al., 2019; Warren & Campbell, 2014). In the marketing literature coolness is defined as a way of understanding the amount to which people consider a product as transformative, relevant, salient, and having strong symbolic value (S. M. C. Loureiro et al., 2020). But there is still no universal definition of the word “cool” (Warren et al., 2019). This thesis will stick to the authors Warren and Campbell (2014, p. 544), who determine coolness as “a subjective and dynamic, socially constructed positive trait attributed to cultural objects inferred to be appropriately autonomous”.

Research exposes, consumers associate cool with typically desirable characteristics and thereby cool brands as extraordinary, aesthetically appealing, energetic, original, authentic, rebellious, high status, subcultural, iconic, and popular. Even if not all characteristics remain with every cool brand or consumer section, increasing every single one turn a brand into a cooler brand and are related to a perceived cool brand (Warren et al., 2019).

Though the term coolness is not defined completely, theory says coolness and brands are dynamic by nature (e.g. Gladwell, 1997; Parmentier & Fischer, 2015). This happens because brand characteristics change during the process from niche to mass cool and eventually uncool brands. Before a brand is considered cool for a mass, brands are first usually considered cool for a niche within a small in-group or a particular outsider subculture. Typical niche cool characteristics are for instance aesthetically appealing, original, rebellious, authentic, extraordinary (Warren et al., 2019). To name an example, in its beginnings Apple was highly innovative and is now known by its catchy and extremely aesthetical appealing design. As a consequence, people of this circle have a supportive brand attitude, are willing to pay high prices for their brand and feel a strong-brand connection and strong brand-love. During the diffusion and adoption of a broader audience, mass cool brands are perceived to be more familiar, master a larger market share, command a higher price premium and produce more word of mouth. Accordingly, the brand eventually becomes more popular and a high status (e.g. adidas). However, mass brands need to pay attention not to lose characteristics, such as autonomy or desirability, that made them cool in the first place. In this case brands become mainstream and the brand is considered normal or less differentiated from its competitors (Warren et al., 2019).

To conclude, coolness is a currency from which all brands can benefit (Southgate, 2003). Popular examples, such as Nike, Coca-Cola or Harley Davidson to name a few, impressively

shown, brand coolness is not only an adolescent award. Much more does brand coolness have a demonstrable pervasive effect on firms (e.g. Kerner & Pressman, 2007; Pountain & Robbins, 2000).

2.3.4. Brand Happiness

Happiness is the highest goal that people constantly strive to achieve. Although scholars have pointed to the increasing importance of brand happiness, marketing researchers have paid little attention to this new concept so far (Bruhn & Schnebelen, 2017). Happiness as more “feeling good than being good” is the prevailing understanding in literature today (McMahon, 2006, p. 43). This suggests, happiness has an affective interpretation, which was examined from two different angles: the hedonistic and emotional view (Brülde, 2007). From the hedonistic view, happiness is determined as a balance between positive and negative affects (e.g. Bradburn, 1969). According to the emotional view, brand happiness is the experience of several positive emotions, such as joy, excitement, contentment, euphoria, elation, pleasure and satisfaction (Delle Fave et al., 2010; Shin, 2010). This comprehension considers the experience of happiness as an emotional condition which has different degrees of intensity. On the one hand happiness can occur in its intense form, with people experiencing excitement or joy and on the other hand in its mild form, with people feeling peaceful and calm (Mogilner et al., 2012; Russell, 1980). Besides these findings, scholars also indicate happiness can be of cognitive character, meaning happiness is life satisfaction with positive and favorable evaluations of life (Diener et al., 2010; Veenhoven, 2012).

Only few scientists have addressed happiness in marketing so far. Schuchert-Guler et al. (2001) define three attributes in their study about consumer happiness: First, happiness is an emotional status that is temporary and short-lived. The second characteristic is the experience of happiness, varying in intensity and having a subjective quality. Third, the experience of happiness is situation-specific and thus induced by purchases, consumption, and events. Even when these characteristics delimit the meaning of this concept, a specific definition still does not exist. In sum, authors explain brand happiness in the marketing context as a consumer’s greatest emotional fulfillment, a temporary experience of enjoyable high and low stimulated emotions, triggered at various touchpoints (e.g. advertisement, consumption) (Bruhn & Schnebelen, 2017).

Indeed, companies profit from happy consumers in various ways. Happy consumers involve in brand-supportive behavior, since consumers then have a higher intention to (re-) purchase the brand and are willing to pay higher prices. Subsequently consumers experiencing

brand happiness engage in word-of-mouth, persuade other consumers and are more willing to forgive a brand. Thus, with these valuable emotion-focused adapting behaviors in mind, marketers are not only able to strengthen existing consumer-relationships but gain new consumers for their brand (Bruhn & Schnebelen, 2017).

Making consumers happy through the brand is an extremely promising construct for companies and provides many advantages as shown. It is important to build the required conditions to influence brand happiness. Bruhn and Schnebelen (2017) conclude in their research, important requirements are establishing a strong relationship between consumer and brand, designing brands that are appropriate to consumers and consistent with their goals as well as their concrete and ideal self-concept, and last but not least building fair, particular and enjoyable brand touchpoints.

2.3.5. Passionate Desire to Buy more

In literature research the two terms passion and love have been investigated from two different perspectives: emotion (i.e. single, particular feeling related to affection) and relational (i.e. it can last for decades and encompass numerous affective, cognitive, and behavioral experiences) (Fournier, 1998). The two authors Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) point out depending on the consumer-brand relationship paradigm, brand love is formed by five dimensions: passion, attachment, positive evaluation of the brand, positive emotions in reply to the brand, and declaration of love for the brand. Passion is here defined as an aspect of brand love, meaning the “desire to invest mental and emotional energy in increasing or maintaining the extent to which an object is integrated into the self” (Ahuvia et al., 2006, p. 353). Other studies also confirm that passion is a dimension of brand love, besides affection and connection (Thomson et al., 2005). Albert et al. (2008) present two main components of brand love, also found in the interpersonal literature. The seven first-order dimensions of love have been introduced to be idealization, pleasure, intimacy, long during relationship, dream, memories, and uniqueness (Albert et al., 2008). These proposed seven elements provide a second-order solution with two factors labeled passion and affection. According to Albert et al. (2008), eleven dimensions underlie brand love: passion, a long duration relationship, self-congruity, dreams, memories, pleasure, attraction, uniqueness, beauty, trust (satisfaction), and a willingness to state this love. Brand love is specified as the level of passionate emotional connection a satisfied consumer has for a specific trade name (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006). Thus passion and love walk hand in hand and are the core of a strong brand relationship, leading to infatuation, selfishness, and even obsessive dependency (Loureiro, 2012).

Consumers who are passionate about a specific product will enjoy displaying that and be admired for their choices and end in communicating their consumption experience and recommendations (Loureiro et al., 2016). There is a significant impact of social influence on individuals regarding passionate desire about products. This happens particularly in agreement with expectations or others, group members, and thereby the family and close friends (Loureiro et al., 2016).

Batra et al. (2012) disclose in their study when people have a passionate desire, they feel a sense of natural fit or harmony between themselves and the loved brand. This sense of “rightness” about the relationship associated a strong desire for the specific brand. Passion is argued to be the most managerially relevant aspect of brand love (Bauer et al., 2009). Further academic research on brand love examines, it is related with an increased willingness of consumers to pay a price premium, positive word of mouth, forgiveness of brand failure and brand loyalty (Bauer et al., 2009; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Fournier, 1998; Thomson et al., 2005). Consequently, to direct this now to passionate desire to buy more, this means, a higher brand love achieved among others through passion, leads to a higher brand loyalty, thus, to repeat purchases and passionate desire to buy more of a brand.

3. Methodology

This chapter comprises the methods used to investigate and analyze available information regarding the research problems of this thesis. Besides the data collection, the conceptual model, the hypotheses, the questionnaire design and the data treatment, the sample design is mentioned.

3.1. Secondary Data Collection

In purposing to prepare a good core of this dissertation research topic and to fulfil an important component to obtain reliable data in a research project, it is crucial to investigate previous data already gathered for other purposes than the questions at hand (Malhotra et al., 2017). This does not only allow to generate new insights with nowadays ease of access of research but is timesaving and offers through the wide variety of sources a longitudinal analysis, since the study spreads over a long period of time. With the collection of this data, a broader overview and perspective of the certain subject is made, and possible gaps are identified. Furthermore, secondary data comprises a significant amount of research, since it offers the direction for research questions and hypothesis (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This helps to determine the sample design for participants as well as the structure of the data collection and the criteria for the evaluation of responses more easily.

For the external data sources, primarily academic journals of marketing science and research, consumer and business research are used. Further external sources are reports, blogs, books or other websites.

3.2. Research Conceptual Model

In recent years researchers and scholars have been very devoted in publishing studies about masstige theory cohesive with luxury fashion or new luxury fashion brands. Especially the democratization of the luxury market, such as cooperation and brand line extensions between a luxury brand and a mass market brand or completely new luxury fashion brands fell into focus. Other sectors and areas than fashion therefore have been neglected in the past years. Therefore, it is time to move forward and try out other areas. Scholars are invited to engage in the masstige research dialogue, through expanding theoretical and empirical manuscripts to further understand masstige theory and measure. This would help managers in the whole world to improve their brand management decisions.

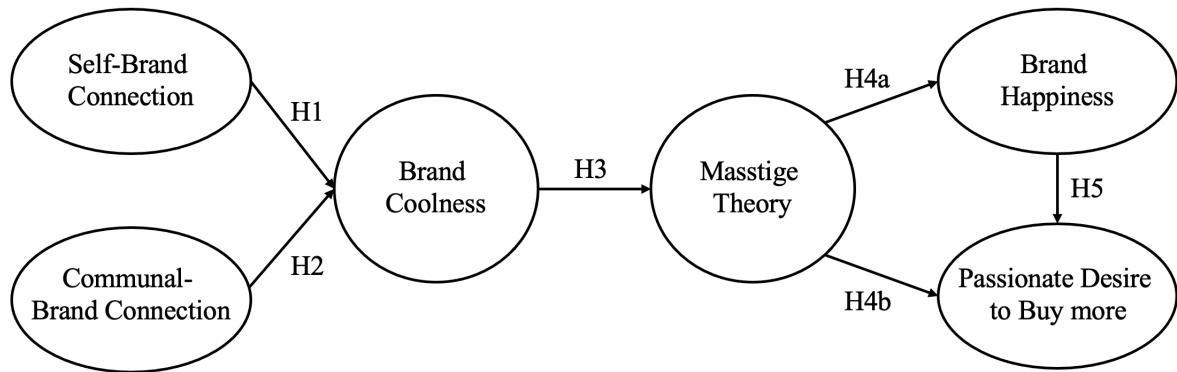
Today almost everyone is in possession of a smartphone. Brands such as Apple are considered or have a sense of prestige and are able to reach the masses. Since there is no scientific research yet, investigating the role of masstige strategies on branding within another context, namely on the mobile phone brand market, an analysis would be an added value and delivers new insights for the area of masstige marketing and studies. Therefore, this thesis focuses on exactly this kind of innovative research problem and thus introduces a masstige research novelty. In order to better illustrate interrelationships, validated scales and masstige theory are going to be applied to the thesis study. The advantage of almost everyone having a smartphone makes the questioning and explanation of the subject matter particularly easy for study participants. Concerning the scope, only one country is examined for the study. As the largest single market in the European Union, Germany is the most suitable country and the best and most explorations with reliable statements are hoped for. Currently there are 60.47 million smartphone owners by a population of ca. 83 million in 2020, who allow to solve the problem at hand.

To conclude, the overall approach and core of this master thesis is the role of masstige strategies on branding within marketing, aiming to understand better how German customers relate to their smartphone brand, such as Apple, Samsung, Huawei or others, in their everyday lives and, in particular, to investigate the relationship that is established with the brand in terms of associated status and prestige. In particular and as demonstrated in the conceptual model, the topic is inspected through the different constructs: self-brand connection, communal-brand connection, brand coolness, masstige theory, brand happiness and passionate desire to buy more.

3.3. Hypotheses

Based on previous literature and the conceptual model, the following hypotheses can now be established (figure 2).

Figure 2 – Conceptual Model with Hypotheses



Source: Own Elaboration

Consumers are able to develop a link to a brand by using the brand’s association for self-construction (Escalas & Bettman, 2003). Before a brand is considered cool for the mass, brands are first usually considered cool for a niche within a small in-group or an outsider subculture. People within such subcultures sense a strong self-brand connection, leading in satisfaction of being part of something different. These findings of Warren et al. (2019) also state people have a stronger self-brand connection toward cool brands. Therefore, for this study, the first hypothesis is:

H1: Self-brand connection positively affects brand coolness.

The communal-brand connection is related to the degree a person feels connected to other brand consumers on a social level. When consumers are part of a small in-group or an outsider subculture, as explained above, consumers are socially connected to other brand users (Rindfleisch et al., 2009; Warren et al., 2019). With this in mind, the following hypothesis can be indicated:

H2: Communal-brand connection has a positive effect on brand coolness.

In this study, we follow the fact that brands which are considered cool to the mass, are perceived as having high status and thus are associated with prestige (Warren et al., 2019). Based on this, the following hypothesis can be noted:

H3: High levels of brand coolness lead to high levels of masstige theory.

Masstige theory is the core concept of this thesis. As stated in the literature review, masstige brands exhibit reasonable prices and the products are considered premium but attainable. According to Schnebelen and Bruhn (2018), consumers who are happy about a brand also show

a higher willingness to pay a higher price. Therefore, for the context of brand happiness a positive correlation with masstige theory can be expected:

H4a: Masstige theory is positively related to brand happiness.

When individuals consume new products or services, they can be significantly influenced by the perceived utility that is acquired and identified within their own social group, by using these products. For instance, prestige may significantly influence the evaluation and tendency to purchase or consume luxury products (Wiedmann et al., 2007). In addition, the author Paul (2015) makes masstige theory responsible for the success of luxury brands in Japan. Meaning when brands are masstige, more consumers will buy them. The derived hypothesis is:

H4b: Masstige Theory is positively related to passionate desire to buy more.

When a brand is loved, it provides both extrinsic and intrinsic rewards. Extrinsic rewards mean consumers have to perform an act to get something which is immediately fulfilled by the direct purchase of the product. On the other hand, intrinsic rewards are thus developed by people doing something because they love it. This is the case, when consumers receive psychological states, such as happiness, by using a product. Happiness then is perceived as part of the product and love for the brand is created, leading in consumer passion-driven behaviors such as the passionate desire to use a certain product of a brand (Batra et al., 2012). Thus, if consumers experience happiness they also have a higher intention to (re)-purchase the brand (Schnebelen & Bruhn, 2018). Regarding these conclusions the following hypothesis can be made for this thesis:

H5: Brand happiness has a positive effect on passionate desire to buy more.

3.4. Primary Data Collection

For the execution of the methodology and in order to properly test the conceptual model, a primary research method with a quantitative approach in the form of a survey is being conducted. The quantitative method with primary data is best for describing, interpreting, contextualizing, and gaining in-depth insight into specific concepts or phenomena, a solid approach to answer the research questions for this master thesis. Furthermore, a quantitative method offers the possibility to test a larger sample, including more subjects and ensuring more generalizable knowledge about a cause of a phenomena, making it more replicable by other researchers by using controlled variables. Above all, using the quantitative approach the

collection of data can be made faster, easier and permits a high number of respondents in a small period of time, making it in addition most suitable to answer the research questions of this thesis.

According to Malhotra et al. (2017) a survey utilizes structured questionnaires administered to a sample of a target population, so to comply with this and to execute this survey, a well-structured and direct questionnaire was generated for this research topic to collect the required and maximal possible data. A survey is a technique to acquire information about peoples “behavior, intentions, attitudes, awareness, motivations and demographic and lifestyle characteristics” (Malhotra et al., 2017, p. 269). Within marketing a quantitative approach in form of a questionnaire is a very popular and common standard methodology and therefore does not require any more justification. Goal is to conclude causal relationships, even when the construct of causality is complex and contains cause and effect, meaning causality can never be ultimately proven, concluding only cause-and-effect relationships. Moreover, the possibility of potential true causal measures not being identified, exists (Malhotra et al., 2017).

Besides sending the questionnaire to friends and acquaintances via private message, the survey was shared and distributed exclusively online via personal social media, such as Instagram, LinkedIn and Xing and in thesis survey groups with a wide area of members, making use of the social snowball principle, to obtain a convenient, objective and individual sample of people with different levels of ages, education and wealth.

3.5. Questionnaire Design

The survey consisted of a total of 96 questions, wherein respondents had to answer 90 with a 7-point Likert scale, four demographic and two closed selection questions. Using over all a standardized questionnaire with uniformized measurements in form of Likert scales that require respondents to select from a predetermined set of responses, the variability in responses is reduced and comparability of the data is ensured. The aim was to conduct the survey with at least 300 consumers from Germany who are in possession of a smartphone and participants were given 7-10 minutes to fill in the questionnaire anonymously. The survey was online from 18th of March until the 24th of May 2021.

Regarding the structure of the survey, the questionnaire was divided into seven blocks and clustered in several existing constructs that have been considered essential and important for the research of this thesis through the prior investigation and adaption of secondary data (table 1):

First: In the first block respondents were introduced to the survey and cleared up about the use of their data and participants told us about their smartphone brand and the frequency of buy of such products.

Second: This block was the beginning of the Likert scales, starting with ten areas about the topic brand coolness. Each area was divided into four questions, except for the last one which was only divided by two. Brand coolness was evaluated with an adapted 7-point Likert scale (1=not at all, 7=extremely) through the measures previously developed by Warren et al. (2019).

Third: Within the third part the questionnaire included ten Likert scales about constructs of the masstige theory, five about self-brand connection and four about communal-brand connection. All three constructs were appraised with the help of adjusted 7-point Likert scales (1=not at all, 7=extremely). Regarding the content, masstige theory was measured via research by Paul (2015), self-brand connection via Escalas and Bettman (2003) and communal-brand connection via Rindfleisch et al. (2009).

Fourth: In the following block, participants were asked about four areas of brand happiness, grouped into twelve applied 7-point Likert scale (1=not at all, 7=extremely) questions in total. The interrogation of this questionnaire stage was shaped by articles from Schnebelen and Bruhn (2018).

Fifth: The next block consisted of the construct passionate desire to buy more. The three 7-point Likert scale (1=not at all, 7=extremely) questions about the passionate desire to buy more were adapted from Wiedmann et al. (2007) and Batra et al. (2012).

Sixth: The last block of the questionnaire comprised requests about demographic data: age, gender, education and country of residence.

Table 1 – Literature of Constructs

Construct	Source
Brand coolness	(Warren et al., 2019)
Masstige theory	(Paul, 2015)
Self-brand connection	(Escalas & Bettman, 2003)
Communal-brand connection	(Rindfleisch et al., 2009)
Brand happiness	(Schnebelen & Bruhn, 2018)
Passionate desire to buy more	(Batra et al., 2012; Wiedmann et al., 2007)

Source: Own Elaboration

3.6. Data Treatment

From the Qualtrics website the sample data from the questionnaire were exported to a SAV file in order to properly start the data treatment. Subsequently, the information was imported to the software IBM SPSS Statistics Version 27 and its extension PROCESS. While cleaning the data, respondents from other countries than Germany and with half or empty answers have been excluded, leading in a total of 327 valid responses, being used as a basis for the sample analysis. Besides simple descriptive statistics, an exploratory, single regression and multiple regression analyses and models were developed through the SPSS software.

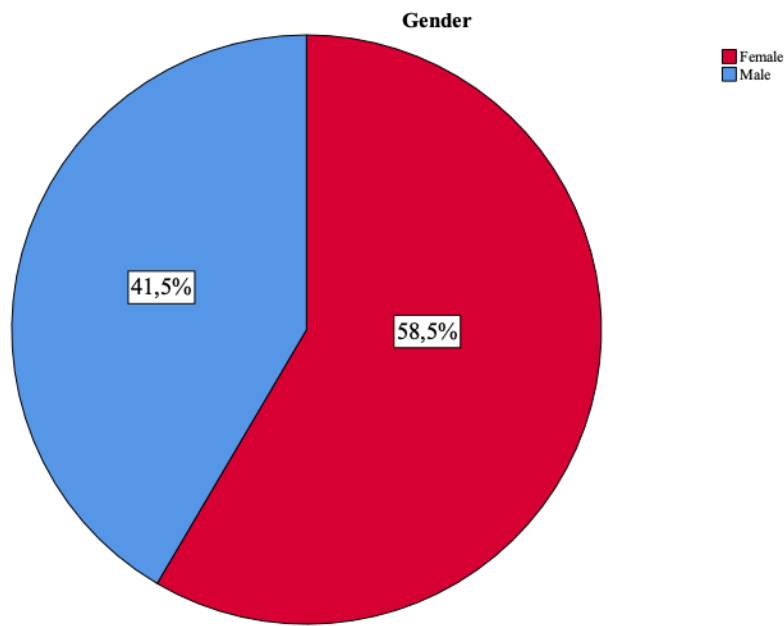
To accurately analyze the data, the correct measure level for each variable was previously selected. Due to categorical questions but without a meaningful rank, gender, Q1 and Q2 were indicated as nominal variables. The variables age and level of education questions were on basis of categories with a meaningful rank specified as ordinal, Likert scale questions as scale.

3.7. Sample Design

In order to receive a good survey, the target population of the study should include a good mix of female, male and diverse individuals from Germany. Spreading the study through social media and private message, a wide area of members with different age was reached.

In total, 327 people participated in the survey. The analysis of the first variable gender results in 190 female and 135 male participants, whereas the gender diverse is not named and two participators do not mention their gender at all. Thus, the sample corresponds to a percentage of 58.5% females and 41.5% males (figure 3). The balance of the gender is acceptable, since the female and male gender is almost even-tempered and almost everyone nowadays owns a smartphone. Reasons for justifying the lack of the diverse gender can be based on the fact that the possibility of this sex has been little used so far. Until the 30th of September 2020 a total of 394 people chose the diverse gender entry in Germany (Jung, 2021).

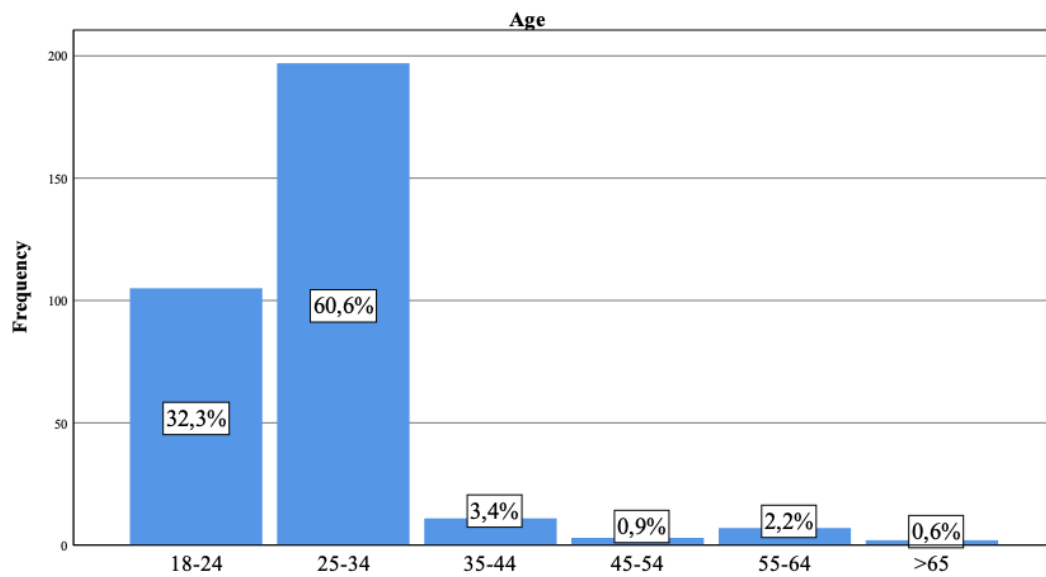
Figure 3 – Pie Chart of Gender



Source: SPSS Data

To get a better overview, six different age groups were created for the survey: 18 to 24 years old; 25 to 34 years old; 35 to 44 years old; 45 to 54 years old; 55 to 64 years old and more than 65 years old. Analyzing the variable age according to the age groups leads to a significant majority of 197 (60.6%) respondents of the age of 25 to 34 years, as presented in figure 4. The age sector 18 to 24 years was the second most powerful one with 105 (32.3%). In summary it can be said, the survey consists of significant 92.9% young participants between the age of 18 to 34 years. Due to the age ranges, the mean is between the age of the participants that are 25 and 34 years old.

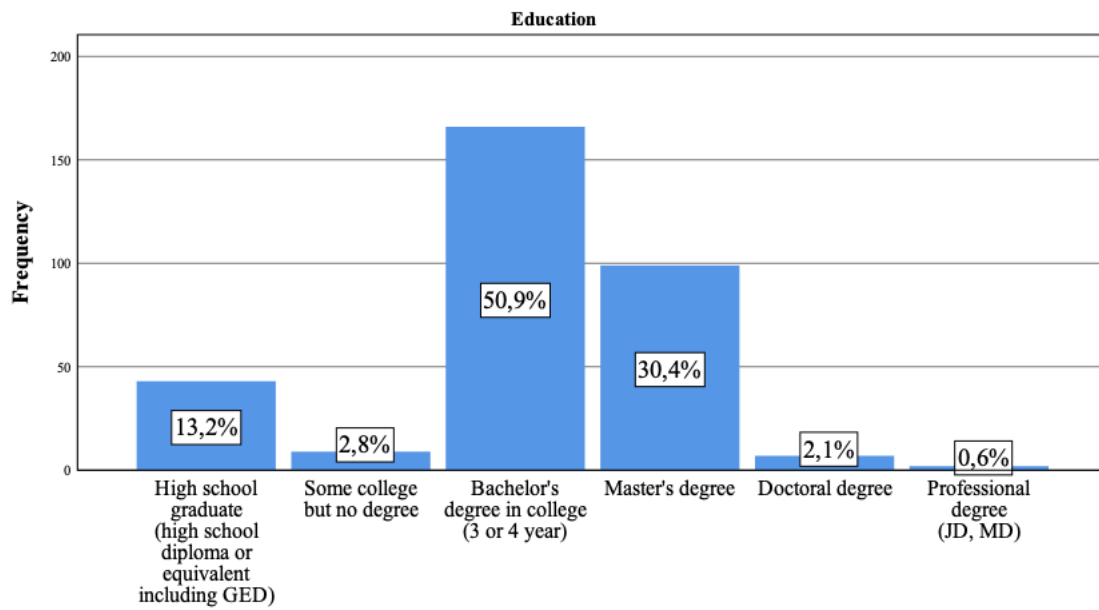
Figure 4 – Bar Chart of Age Groups



Source: SPSS Data

For the analysis of the education, six different options were created: High school graduate, some college but no degree, Bachelor's degree in college, Master's degree, Doctoral degree and Professional degree. Half of the respondents and thus 166 (50.9%) people have a Bachelor's degree and 99 (30.4%) of the participants count to the group of Master graduates, leading to a very well-educated sample (figure 5). The third best classification high school graduate accounts for 43 (13.2%). Reasons for the good education among the respondents could be the participation in various thesis portals, where one student is answering other thesis surveys in order to receive more answers for their surveys, and thus help each other out.

Figure 5 – Bar Chart of Education



Source: SPSS Data

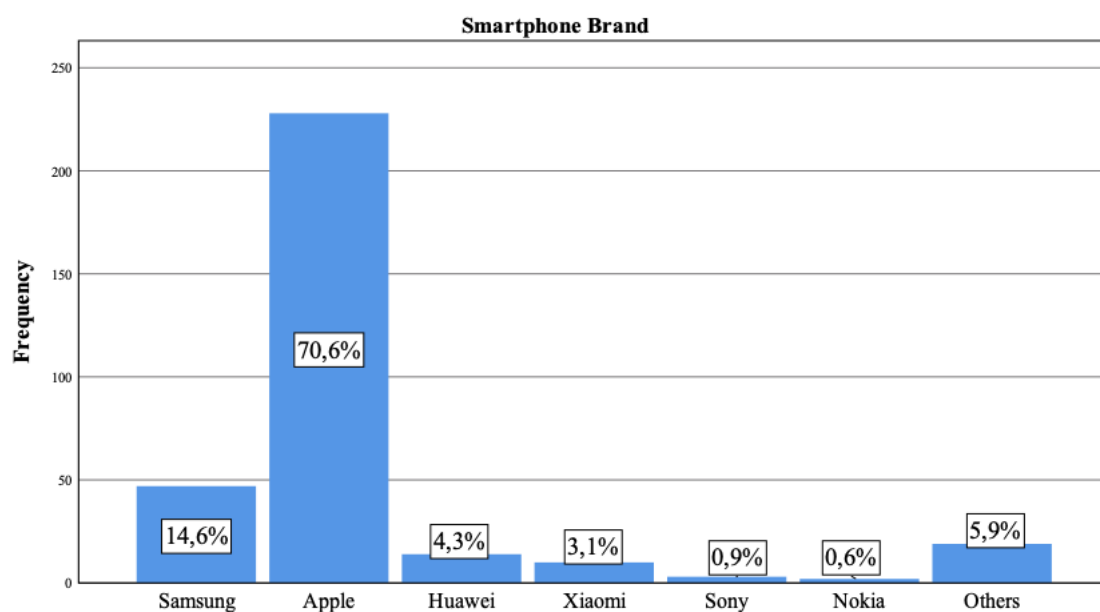
The analysis of the country of origin of the participants was not necessary, since the survey was only distributed in Germany. Due to the fast dissemination on the internet, there may be outliers at any time. If there were any, where respondents from other countries participated, they were not included in the analysis and were removed directly during the data cleaning.

4. Results

4.1. Descriptive Statistics

After the introduction, the survey began with asking the participants about their current smartphone brand. As we can see from figure 6, the majority, a significant number of 228 people and thus 70.6% of the respondents, are currently in possession of an Apple iPhone. Only 47 (14.6%) of those questioned have a Samsung mobile phone brand. All other smartphone brands are below a value of 6%.

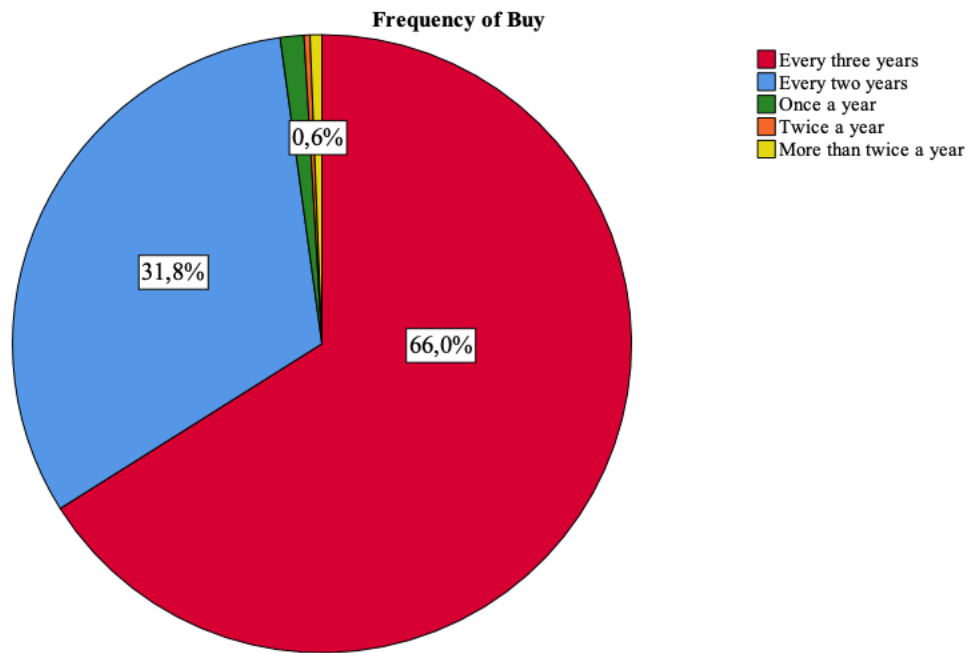
Figure 6 – Bar Chart of Smartphone Brands



Source: SPSS Data

In the next step and before the study of the single variables, respondents were asked to tell, how frequent they buy their smartphones. In figure 7 we can see, the majority of 214 (66.0%) people are buying a new smartphone every three years and 103 (31.8%) participants buy their smartphones every two years, making up to almost all respondents.

Figure 7 – Frequency of Buy Pie Chart



Source: SPSS Data

Brand Coolness (BC)

The analysis of the descriptive statistics begins with the construct BC. For a solid research basis, the studies from Warren et al. (2019) were used and 37 questions in form of a 7-point Likert scale created. Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics of the values mean, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis.

Within the study the value with the highest mean of 6.1590 was Q5_1 – “This mobile brand looks good”. This result suggests, respondents very much or almost extremely like the visual nature of their smartphone. Other high mean values with almost extremely agreement are Q5_2 – “This mobile brand is aesthetically appealing” with a mean value of 6.0734, Q5_4 – “This mobile brand has a really nice appearance” with a mean value of 6.0275, Q10_3 – “This mobile brand is popular” with a mean value of 6.0428 and Q10_4 – “This mobile brand is widely accepted” with a mean value of 6.0031.

By far, the lowest mean value has statement Q11_4 “People who use this brand are unique” with a mean value of 2.6269, meaning participants do not agree with this element.

With a value of 1.9817 the statement Q12_1 – “This mobile brand is a cultural symbol” has the highest standard deviation and thus is the least reliable element of the questions of BC. In contrast the lowest standard deviation has the statement Q5_1 – “This mobile brand looks good” with a value of 1.0298.

The construct variable of BC was composed through the mean of all means of the questions of BC and thus results in a value of 4.8782 and a standard deviation of 0.9167. With the mean value being over the average of the 7-point Likert scale, the BC construct is more positive but also a middle range value. Observing the skewness and kurtosis factor of BC, the results are -0.708 and 1.328, and therefore are in the interval of [-2;2]. This means, the skewness and kurtosis are considered as acceptable to state a symmetrical and normal distribution of the sample data.

Table 2 – Descriptive Statistics of Brand Coolness

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness Statistic	Skewness Std. Error	Kurtosis Statistic	Kurtosis Std. Error
exceptional	5.1774	1.3404	-0.989	0.135	1.131	0.269
superb	5.2569	1.1517	-0.684	0.135	0.903	0.269
fantastic	5.2966	1.2188	-0.840	0.135	0.931	0.269
extraordinary	4.8777	1.4391	-0.704	0.135	0.311	0.269
energetic	4.8135	1.4181	-0.524	0.135	-0.098	0.269
outgoing	4.8165	1.4261	-0.510	0.135	-0.193	0.269
lively	4.9817	1.4119	-0.606	0.135	0.083	0.269
vigorous	4.6636	1.4044	-0.388	0.135	-0.167	0.269
looks good	6.1590	1.0298	-1.662	0.135	3.949	0.269
aesthetically appealing	6.0734	1.1190	-1.480	0.135	2.627	0.269
attractive	5.8257	1.2398	-1.317	0.135	2.141	0.269
has a really nice appearance	6.0275	1.1087	-1.468	0.135	2.808	0.269
innovative	5.5535	1.3256	-0.999	0.135	1.136	0.269
original	5.4709	1.3940	-0.897	0.135	0.535	0.269
does its own thing	5.0153	1.6569	-0.647	0.135	-0.270	0.269
authentic	5.2905	1.3285	-0.846	0.135	0.727	0.269
true to its roots	5.2018	1.4577	-0.720	0.135	0.163	0.269
doesn't seem artificial	4.5505	1.4933	-0.479	0.135	-0.192	0.269
doesn't try to be something it is not	5.0398	1.6152	-0.794	0.135	0.094	0.269
rebellious	3.5902	1.5459	0.146	0.135	-0.578	0.269
defiant	3.7125	1.4643	0.001	0.135	-0.357	0.269
not afraid to break rules	4.1254	1.7478	-0.176	0.135	-0.901	0.269
nonconformist	3.7676	1.6093	0.001	0.135	-0.697	0.269
chic	5.3884	1.4837	-0.921	0.135	0.317	0.269
glamorous	4.9052	1.6261	-0.677	0.135	-0.297	0.269
sophisticated	5.0489	1.5038	-0.737	0.135	0.080	0.269
ritzy	4.5872	1.4854	-0.419	0.135	-0.168	0.269
liked by most people	5.6728	1.3176	-1.152	0.135	1.193	0.269
in style	5.8043	1.2864	-1.187	0.135	1.288	0.269

popular	6.0428	1.3146	-1.775	0.135	3.188	0.269
widely accepted	6.0031	1.3118	-1.589	0.135	2.150	0.269
Differentiates people using it from others.	3.8624	1.9806	0.037	0.135	-1.205	0.269
If I use it, it makes me stand apart from others.	3.1040	1.8390	0.474	0.135	-0.916	0.269
Helps people who use it stand apart from the crowd.	3.0856	1.8366	0.492	0.135	-0.910	0.269
People who use this brand are unique.	2.6269	1.6949	0.834	0.135	-0.303	0.269
a cultural symbol	4.2966	1.9817	-0.355	0.135	-1.114	0.269
iconic	4.7768	1.9063	-0.640	0.135	-0.684	0.269
ConstructBrandCoolness	4.8782	0.9167	-0.708	0.135	1.328	0.269

Source: Own Elaboration through SPSS Data

Masstige Theory (MT)

In the third block of the questionnaire, the variable MT was determined. The output of the descriptive evaluation of this variable shows the values mean, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis, as in table 3.

For this variable MT was measured through the elements defined through research by Paul (2015). Looking at the table, it can be determined, the attribute Q13_5 – “I would recommend this mobile brand to my friends and relatives”, having the highest mean with 5.9083. As the interrogation was carried out with a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from not at all (1) to extremely agree (7), this means, respondents strongly agree with this statement, manifesting also the lowest standard deviation 1.2547.

On the other hand, the statement Q13_6 – “To me, nothing is more exciting than this mobile brand”, has the lowest mean with 3.4251 and the highest standard deviation of 2.1191.

The construct of MT was measured through the sampled mean of the individual elements mean, which results in 4.5232, a middle value of the respective Likert scale with a standard deviation of 1.2355. Regarding the skewness and kurtosis analysis, both factors are in the interval of [-2;2] with a skewness of -0.409 and kurtosis of -0.434, leading to a symmetric and normal distribution of the sample data.

Table 3 – Descriptive Statistics of Masstige Theory

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness Statistic	Skewness Std. Error	Kurtosis Statistic	Kurtosis Std. Error
I like this mobile brand because of its mass prestige.	3.7125	1.8108	0.029	0.135	-1.095	0.269
I feel like buying this mobile brand of mass prestige.	3.5352	1.8145	0.092	0.135	-1.217	0.269
I tend to pay high prices for this mobile brand because of status quo.	3.7187	1.9831	-0.052	0.135	-1.331	0.269
I consider this as a 'top of mind' mobile brand in my country/state/district.	4.9266	1.8603	-0.819	0.135	-0.369	0.269
I would recommend this mobile brand to my friends and relatives.	5.9083	1.2547	-1.523	0.135	2.842	0.269
To me, nothing is more exciting than this mobile brand.	3.4251	2.1191	0.332	0.135	-1.296	0.269
I believe this mobile brand is known for high quality.	5.6667	1.2662	-1.287	0.135	2.095	0.269
I believe this mobile brand is of international standard.	5.8471	1.2875	-1.560	0.135	2.831	0.269
I love to buy this mobile brand regardless of the price.	4.0765	1.9668	-0.190	0.135	-1.280	0.269
I believe that people in my country/state/district consider this mobile brand as a synonym for prestige.	4.4159	1.8956	-0.522	0.135	-0.894	0.269
ConstructMasstigeTheory	4.5232	1.2355	-0.409	0.135	-0.434	0.269

Source: Own Elaboration through SPSS Data

Self-Brand Connection (SBC)

The SBC was investigated through five questions, on the basis of the studies of Escalas and Bettman (2003). Table 4 provides the results and the analysis regarding the mean, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis factor of this variable.

With a minimum advantage, the statement Q14_1 - “A cool mobile brand reflects who I am” exhibits the highest mean, amounting to 3.0887. The lowest mean within this concept and also with a minimal difference is attributed to the element Q14_4 - “A cool mobile brand reflects who I consider myself to be” with a value of 2.5951. Besides these values, offers the attribute Q14_2 - “I identify myself with a cool mobile brand” the highest standard deviation 1.9092, closely followed by Q14_1 – “A cool mobile brand reflects who I am”.

Computing the variable for the construct of SBC, results in a mean of 2.8789, which is a more negative value under the average, in respect of the 7-point Likert scale, ranging from not at all (1) to extremely agree (7), meaning the participants themselves feel less connected to their smartphone brand. With a skewness factor of 0.560 and a kurtosis factor of 0.269, a normal and symmetrical distribution can be concluded, as they are in the interval of [-2;2].

Table 4 – Descriptive Statistics of Self-Brand Connection

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness Statistic	Skewness Std. Error	Kurtosis Statistic	Kurtosis Std. Error
A cool mobile brand reflects who I am.	3.0887	1.9077	0.459	0.135	-1.064	0.269
I identify myself with a cool mobile brand.	3.0710	1.9092	0.438	0.135	-1.139	0.270
I use cool mobile brands to communicate who I am to other people.	2.5933	1.7609	0.811	0.135	-0.506	0.269
A cool mobile brand reflects who I consider myself to be.	2.5951	1.7476	0.820	0.135	-0.532	0.269
I feel a personal connection to this mobile brand.	3.0706	1.8773	0.512	0.135	-0.951	0.269
ConstructSelfBrandConnection	2.8798	1.6704	0.560	0.135	-0.856	0.269

Source: Own Elaboration through SPSS Data

Communal-Brand Connection (CBC)

In the next questions within the survey, the CBC was investigated with the research previously developed by Rindfleisch et al. (2009). As seen on table 5, the SPSS extract provides again information about the mean, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis factor.

It can be determined, that the element with the highest mean value 3.2393 is Q15_1 – “I identify with people who use this mobile brand”. In contrast, the lowest mean value 2.3815 is ascribed to the attribute Q15_4 – “I feel a deep connection with others who use this mobile brand” with the lowest standard deviation of 1.6393. The statement Q15_3 – “This mobile brand is used by people like me”, unlike has the highest standard deviation with a value of 1.8632.

Also, in this calculation the construct variable of the CBC results from the mean of all question means and therefore 3.0583. This value is considered as a middle value with the Likert scale as a base. Since the skewness and kurtosis value, namely 0.404 and -0.833, are lying within the interval of [-2;2], indicate a symmetric and normal distribution of the sample data.

Table 5 – Descriptive Statistics of Communal-Brand Connection

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness Statistic	Skewness Std. Error	Kurtosis Statistic	Kurtosis Std. Error
I identify with people who use this mobile brand.	3.2393	1.8358	0.262	0.135	-1.155	0.269
I feel like I almost belong to a club with other people using this mobile brand.	2.8457	1.8101	0.607	0.135	-0.840	0.270
This mobile brand is used by people like me.	3.7669	1.8632	-0.013	0.135	-1.091	0.269
I feel a deep connection with others who use this mobile brand.	2.3815	1.6393	1.022	0.135	-0.018	0.270
ConstructCommunalBrandConnection	3.0583	1.5585	0.404	0.135	-0.833	0.269

Source: Own Elaboration through SPSS Data

Brand Happiness (BH)

The construct BH was retrieved through twelve questions about the generic terms: joy, vigor, pride and serenity with the help of the studies of the two researchers Schnebelen and Bruhn (2018). As the analyses before, the output about the mean, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis was generated.

Observing table 6, it can be determined, the highest mean value 4.6544 applies to the element Q19_3 – “This mobile brand makes me feel comfortable”, followed by the attribute Q16_3 – “This mobile brand makes me joyful” with 4.2997 and Q16_1 – “This mobile brand makes me glad” 4.2783. On the other hand, the statement with the lowest mean value of 3.2905 is Q18_2 – “This mobile brand makes me feel superior”, closely followed by Q18_3 – “This mobile brand makes me feel worthy” with a value of 3.3425, also showing the highest standard deviation with 1.7511.

Taking a look at the construct of BH, the calculated mean value is 3.9636, which is considered as a middle range value on the 7-point Likert scale. The construct variable also shows a skewness factor of -0.468 and kurtosis factor of -0.177 within the interval of [-2;2], thus implying a symmetric and normal distribution.

Table 6 – Descriptive Statistics of Brand Happiness

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness Statistic	Skewness Std. Error	Kurtosis Statistic	Kurtosis Std. Error
glad	4.2783	1.5662	-0.469	0.135	-0.387	0.269
cheerful	4.1070	1.5717	-0.378	0.135	-0.436	0.269
joyful	4.2997	1.6248	-0.523	0.135	-0.430	0.269
lively	4.1529	1.6055	-0.430	0.135	-0.544	0.269
peppy	3.8440	1.5199	-0.145	0.135	-0.487	0.269
vigorous	3.8196	1.5312	-0.178	0.135	-0.384	0.269
proud	3.7095	1.7280	-0.018	0.135	-0.929	0.269
superior	3.2905	1.7368	0.274	0.135	-0.912	0.269
worthy	3.3425	1.7511	0.249	0.135	-0.855	0.269
relaxed	4.0336	1.6859	-0.362	0.135	-0.666	0.269
at ease	4.0306	1.6833	-0.274	0.135	-0.670	0.269
comfortable	4.6544	1.6485	-0.643	0.135	-0.143	0.269
ConstructBrandHappiness	3.9636	1.3479	-0.468	0.135	-0.177	0.269

Source: Own Elaboration through SPSS Data

Passionate Desire to Buy more (PD)

In order to properly receive data about the passionate shopping behavior of the respondents, three questions in form of a 7-point Likert scale, adapted from Wiedmann et al. (2007) and Batra et al. (2012). Table 7 represents the values mean, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis factor.

Analyzing the data determines the statement Q20_1 – “I desire to buy this mobile brand again” with the highest mean value of 5.8098. This suggests that participants strongly agree with a repurchase of their smartphone, with the value being above the average and on the basis of a Likert scale ranging from not at all (1) to extremely agree (7). Regarding the lowest mean value, the element Q20_2 – “I feel a sense of longing to use this mobile brand” can be recorded with a value of 4.8733, which also shows the highest standard deviation of 1.7321. Conspicuous is that all attributes are over the average of 3.5 and thus resulting in a positive repurchase of their smartphone. Therefore, through table 7 it can be assumed the construct of passionate desire to buy more is having a positive value of 5.4557. In addition, a symmetric and normal distribution is present with a skewness value of -1.080 and kurtosis value of 0.965 in the interval of [-2;2].

Table 7 – Descriptive Statistics of Passionate Desire to Buy more

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness Statistic	Skewness Std. Error	Kurtosis Statistic	Kurtosis Std. Error
I desire to buy this mobile brand again.	5.8098	1.3612	-1.368	0.135	1.952	0.269
I feel a sense of longing to use this mobile brand.	4.8773	1.7321	-0.703	0.135	-0.329	0.269
I feel like I want to buy this mobile brand again.	5.6697	1.4467	-1.488	0.135	2.223	0.269
ConstructPassionateDesireToBuymore	5.4557	1.3694	-1.080	0.135	0.965	0.269

Source: Own Elaboration through SPSS Data

4.2. Exploratory Data Analysis

In the next step an exploratory data analysis with the following tests is executed: reliability analysis, validity analysis, cluster analysis and multiple regression analysis using moderation and mediation models.

4.2.1. Reliability and Validity Analysis

In order to evaluate the quality of the sample the reliability and the validity analysis can be used. They demonstrate how well a method, test or technique measures something. While reliability deals with the consistency of a measure, validity is about the accuracy of a measure. To perform the reliability of the study the Cronbach's Alpha were calculated for every item and construct, assuming any value between 0 and 1. Cronbach's alpha tests whether items representing a scale or construct have internal consistency. The so-called inter-item correlation should be high in order to obtain a reliable scale. Therefore, values between 0.6 and 0.7 are just acceptable, values between 0.7 and 0.8 are considered good and values between 0.8 and 0.9 are very good or moreover the consistency is right. Values equal or above 0.9 are considered excellent.

Table 8 shows the results of the analysis. All main constructs examine a Cronbach's Alpha higher than 0.8, indicating very good to excellent values with high reliabilities and internal consistencies. Brand happiness is the construct with the highest excellent value (0.956) followed closely by brand coolness (0.954). The sub-constructs demonstrate a value over 0.7 and are thus all accepted as reliable and considered as good values (Appendix 3).

Table 8 – Reliability Analysis for all Constructs

Main Construct	Cronbach's Alpha
Brand coolness	0.954
Masstige theory	0.887
Self-brand connection	0.946
Communal-brand connection	0.892
Brand happiness	0.956
Passionate desire to buy more	0.882

Source: Own Elaboration through SPSS Data

The Cronbach's Alpha reliability test was also implemented for the six constructs as summated variables (table 9) and leads to a value of 0.900, thus indicating again a high reliability value.

Table 9 – Cronbach's Alpha for all summated Constructs

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.900	6

Source: Own Elaboration through SPSS Data

4.3. Single and Multiple Regression Analysis

The single and multiple regression analyses were conducted in order to understand the connections between the different constructs and to properly test the conceptual model previously presented in this study. Whereas a single regression is characterized as model with a single independent variable, a multiple regression analysis describes a model with two or more independent variables. This means the impact of two or more variables on a nominated dependent variable can be examined (Malhotra et al., 2017).

4.3.1. Assumption of the Multiple Regression

The research conceptual model was explored in three different analyses which were subject to the same assumptions. This is possible since the independent variables or mediators of the conceptual model in all configurations are the same and are also valid in each model, so making them present for each configuration. For all intervals, the confidence level is 95.000. So that a multiple regression analysis can be performed, the following various requirements must be fulfilled (Gauß-Markov Theorem):

- Linearity of the Model
- Random sample
- Linear independence (no multicollinearity)
- Exogeneity of the independent variables
- Constancy of the residuals variances across predicted values (homoskedasticity)
- Normally distributed error component

In the following, the requirements and assumptions are dealt with in more detail. If all assumptions are fulfilled, the model can be used for further statistical inference and if not, it is only valid for this sample.

Linearity of the Model

The theoretical model assumes by construction linearity between independent and dependent variables. For the established conceptual model, the multiple regression model is as follows:

$$\textbf{Passionate Desire to Buy more} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \times \textbf{Self-Brand Connection} + \beta_2 \times \textbf{Communal-Brand Connection} + \beta_3 \times \textbf{Brand Coolness} + \beta_4 \times \textbf{Masstige Theory} + \beta_5 \times \textbf{Brand Happiness} + \varepsilon$$

Random Sample

Since the goal of this study is to generalize the results of the sample to the population, it is important that the sample is randomly selected and has the same characteristics as the population. In case of this thesis, the study is based on a random sample, thus the assumption is fulfilled. This assumption holds.

Linear Independence (No Multicollinearity)

A strong linear relationship between the explanatory variables is called multicollinearity and can lead to problems within the research. In order to guarantee no multicollinearity among predictors, an investigation by the tolerance and VIF values through the collinearity statistics can be executed. If one of the tolerance values is below 0.1 or one of the VIF values is above 10, this would be a strong indication of multicollinearity. As illustrated in table 10, all tolerance values are above 0.1 and all VIF values are below 10, resulting in no multicollinearity. More precisely, there is no correlation among the explanatory variables. This assumption holds.

Table 10 – Collinearity Statistics

	Tolerance	VIF
SBC	0.299	3.344
CBC	0.358	2.789
BC	0.352	2.837
MT	0.318	3.141
BH	0.418	2.393

Source: Own Elaboration through SPSS Data

Exogeneity of the Independent Variables

This assumption of multiple regression states independent variables not being correlated with residual terms. Table 11 presents, all constructs show a Pearson correlation equal to 0.000 with the residuals, meaning the constructs are not correlated to residuals. The minimal correlation of communal-brand connection with 0.001 can be neglected for this study. The assumption holds.

Table 11 – Correlations between Independent Variables and Residual Terms

	SBC	CBC	BC	MT	BH	Residual
SBC	1	0.786	0.606	0.696	0.661	0.000
CBC	0.786	1	0.533	0.621	0.622	0.001
BC	0.606	0.533	1	0.766	0.678	0.000
MT	0.696	0.621	0.766	1	0.662	0.000

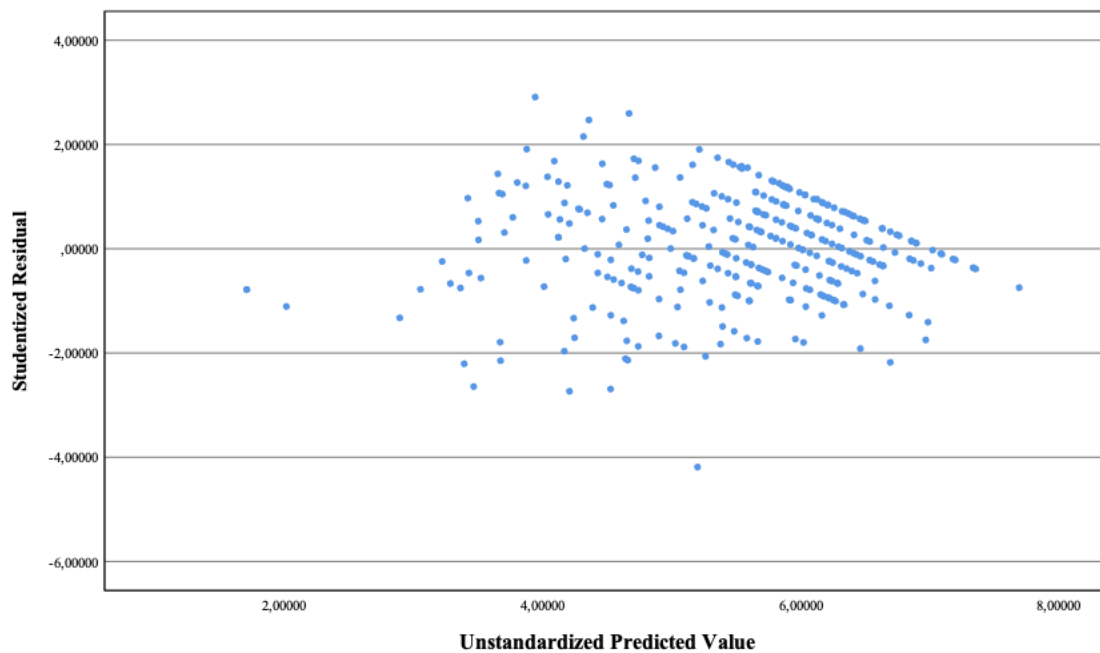
BH	0.661	0.622	0.678	0.662	1	0.000
Residual	0.000	0.001	0.000	0.000	0.000	1

Source: Own Elaboration through SPSS Data

Constancy of the Residual Variance across predicted Values

Homoscedasticity of residuals is an important requirement for regression models, as it should be assumed that a model should make equally good predictions across all values. Therefore, the variance of the residuals must be constant across the predicted values. For equality of variance to exist, the points in the scatterplot must be evenly distributed across the horizontal axis. In figure 8 the residuals do not seem to be horizontally completely evenly distributed. For this study, the assumption fails.

Figure 8 – Scatterplot of the Distribution of the Residuals

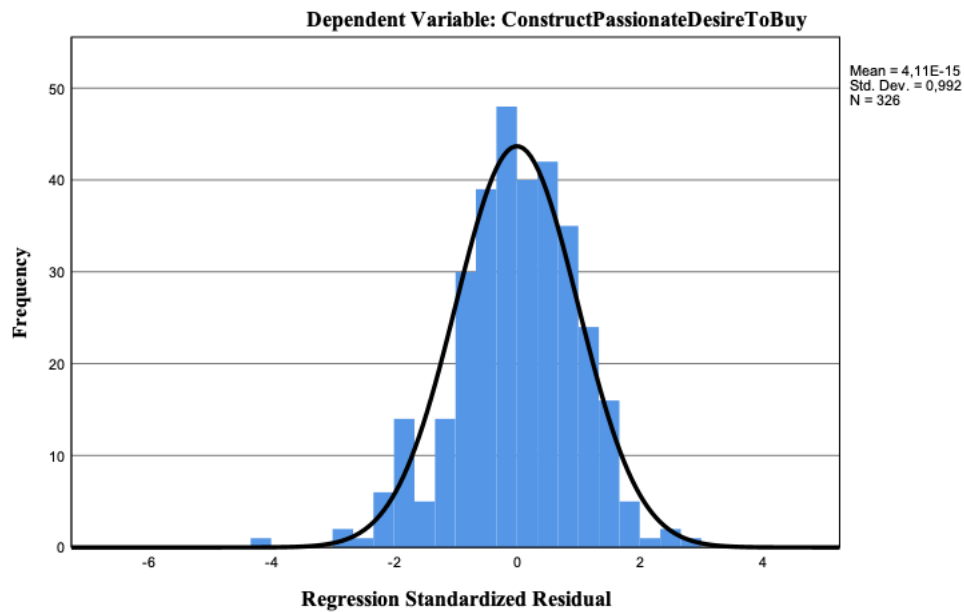


Source: Own Elaboration through SPSS Data

Normally distributed Error Component

The first graph (figure 9) is a histogram of the standardized residuals with a normal distribution curve superimposed. This is suitable for visually checking the normal distribution. The residuals in this study correspond quite exactly to the normal distribution curve. In the top right corner, the mean and standard deviation are also shown. The mean value should be (approximately) 0 and the standard deviation (approximately) 1, which is the case here.

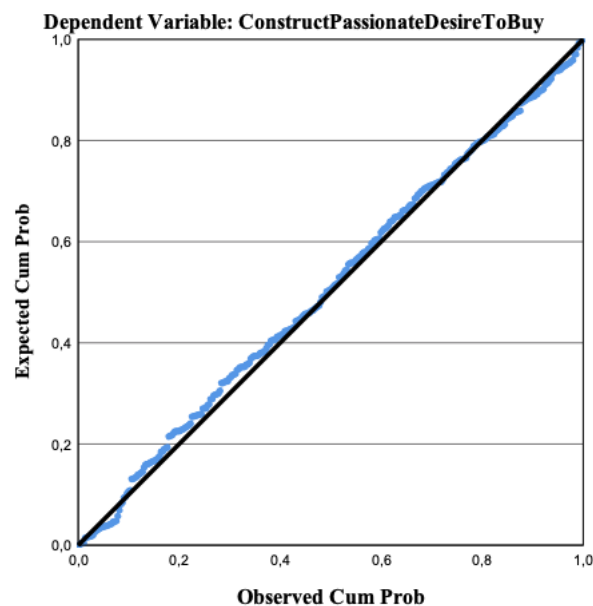
Figure 9 – Histogram of the Distribution of the Residuals



Source: Own Elaboration through SPSS Data

The P-P Plot illustrates the expected against the observed cumulative probability. Perfectly normally distributed data would lie exactly on the sketched diagonal. The further the data lie from the diagonal, the less normally distributed the data. Thus, the P-P Plot is also a visual method for assessing normal distribution. In figure 10 the points lie quite exactly on the diagonal. Normally distributed residuals therefore can be again assumed. The assumption holds.

Figure 10 – Normal P-Plot of Residuals



Source: Own Elaboration through SPSS Data

Correlation of the Residual Terms

To properly perform a multiple regression analysis, it is mandatory that an independence of the residuals is present, otherwise the analysis exhibits autocorrelation. This means that a variable correlates with itself at another time. The independence of the residuals can be tested with the Durbin-Watson statistic. In this analysis the Durbin-Watson value is 1.983 and also very close to 2, resulting in no correlated residuals (Appendix 4). This assumption holds.

Evaluation of the Model

After checking all the requirements for the multiple regression analysis, it can be finally determined how suitable the model is. This includes how well our model can predict our observed values. In table 12 the multiple correlation coefficient results in 0.728, meaning there is a strong correlation between the predicted and actual values. The adjusted R^2 for the overall model was 0.522 ($R^2 = 0.530$), indicative for a high goodness-of-fit according to Cohen (1988).

Table 12 – Modell Summary of the dependent Variable PD Construct

	R	R²	Adjusted R²
PD	0.728	0.530	0.522

Source: Own Elaboration through SPSS Data

Whether the predictors significantly predict the criterion can be checked in the ANOVA table (table 13). The predictors self-brand connection, communal-brand connection, brand coolness, masstige theory and brand happiness statistically significant predict passionate desire to buy more, $F(5,320) = 72.094$, $p < 0.001$.

Table 13 – Significance of the Model via ANOVA

		df	F	Sig.
PD	Regression	5	72.094	0.000
	Residual	320	-	-
	Total	325	-	-

Source: Own Elaboration through SPSS Data

Since one assumption of the six requirements is not fulfilled, the multiple regression analysis can only provide a characterization of the sample. It is not possible to make a generalization for the population and the model cannot be used for inference.

4.3.2. Multiple Regression – SBC, CBC as independent, BC as dependent variables

With the conceptual model in mind, it can be exactly determined which variable takes on which role. To evaluate if the constructs self-brand connection and communal-brand connection positively affect the construct brand coolness (H1, H2), self-brand connection and communal-brand connection are the independent variables and brand coolness is the dependent variable. From the regression coefficients it is now possible to calculate the adjusted regression equation (table 14):

$$BC = 3.834 + 0.271 \times SBC + 0.086 \times CBC + \varepsilon$$

In this model we have the two predictors SBC and CBC with the criterion brand coolness. The variable SBC has a regression coefficient of 0.271 (SE = 0.039), meaning for every increase in SBC, BC rises by 0.271. Analog to this, the variable CBC has a lower regression coefficient of 0.086 (SE = 0.042), thus every increase in CBC leads in a 0.086 rise of BC.

Both SBC (sig = 0.000 < 0.050) and CBC (sig = 0.041 < 0.050) show a linear correlation to BC and are therefore well suited for prediction. In addition, the 95% confidence interval of each independent variable is higher than zero and thus contains only positive values. Therefore, the effects of SBC and CBC are always positive. These results support the hypotheses:

- H1: *Self-brand connection positively affects brand coolness;*
- H2: *Communal-brand connection has a positive effect on brand coolness.*

Table 14 – Coefficients of the Multiple Regression, BC as dependent Variable

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error		Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Dependent Variable BC	(Constant)	3.834	0.090	0.000	3.657	4.010
	SBC	0.271	0.039	0.000	0.194	0.348
	CBC	0.086	0.042	0.041	0.004	0.168

Source: Own Elaboration through SPSS Data

4.3.3. Single Regression – BC as independent, MT as dependent variable

For the relationship whether high levels of brand coolness lead to high levels of the construct of masstige theory (H3), brand coolness is the independent and masstige theory the dependent variable. A review of table 15 yields in the following adjusted regression equation with BC as predictor and MT as criterion:

$$MT = -0.510 + 1.032 \times BC + \varepsilon$$

The variable BC has a regression coefficient of 1.032 (SE = 0.048). This means every increase in BC leads to a 1.032 increase in MT. Furthermore BC (sig = 0.000 < 0.050) correlates

linear to MT and is therefore well suited for the prediction. With a 95% confidence interval higher than zero, the independent variable BC can only have positive values. Effects of BC on MT are thus always positive as well. The next hypothesis evaluation is:

- *H3: High levels of brand coolness lead to high levels of masstige theory.*

Table 15 – Coefficients of the Single Regression, MT as dependent Variable

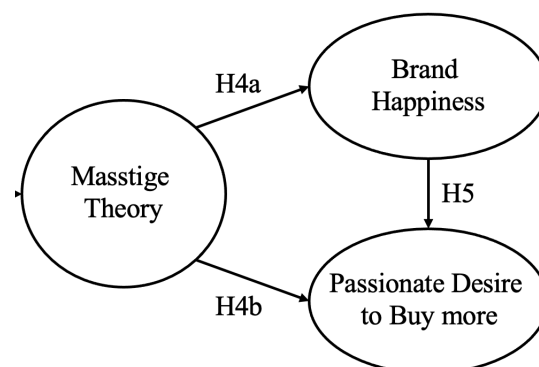
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error		Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Dependent Variable MT	(Constant)	-0.510	0.239	0.033	-0.980	-0.040
	BC	1.032	0.048	0.000	0.937	1.126

Source: Own Elaboration through SPSS Data

4.3.4. Mediation – MT as independent, PD as dependent variable, BH as mediator

The next step in the conceptual model is the investigation of the construct of masstige theory and if it is positively related to brand happiness and passionate desire to buy more (H4a, H4b). In these cases, masstige theory is the independent variable and brand happiness and passionate desire to buy more are the dependent variables. Finally, to find out if brand happiness has a positive effect on passionate desire to buy more (H5), brand happiness takes on the role of an independent and passionate desire to buy more a dependent variable. To simplify the equation, a mediation is used for the three constructs. Mediation explores the effect of an independent variable (MT), on a dependent variable (PD), through a mediating or intervening variable (mediator = BH) (figure 11).

Figure 11 – Mediation of the Conceptual Model



Source: Own Elaboration

First, the independent variable MT and its relationship to BH is analyzed (table 16). The model summary exhibits a R^2 of 0.4386, meaning BH is explained by 43.86% of MT. With a positive coefficient of MT (C_MT), it can be concluded, with a one-point increase of MT on the Likert scale, leads in a 0.7225 (SE = 0.0453) rise of BH. In addition, MT has a significant influence ($p = 0.000 < 0.050$) on BH. The result for the hypothesis is:

- *H4a: Masstige Theory is positively related to brand happiness.*

Table 16 – Regression Model with Outcome Variable BH

OUTCOME VARIABLE: Construct Brand Happiness						
Model Summary						
R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
,6623	,4386	1,0230	253,9373	1,0000	325,0000	,0000
Model						
	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	,6954	,2126	3,2714	,0012	,2772	1,1136
C_MT	,7225	,0453	15,9354	,0000	,6333	,8117
Level of confidence for all confidence intervals in output: 95,0000						

Source: Own Elaboration through SPSS Data extended via PROCESS

The next step is the analysis of the independent variable MT and the mediator variable BH on the outcome variable PD. Here table 17 presents a direct and indirect effect. According to the model summary, the R^2 shows a value of 0.4779, resulting in an 47.79% explanation of PD through MT and BH. Looking first at the direct effect, the positive coefficient of MT (C_MT) states, with a one-point increase of MT on the Likert scale, PD rises by 0.5425 (SE = 0.0594). Also, in this case, MT has significant influence ($p = 0.0000 < 0.0050$) on PD.

For the indirect effect, BH (C_BH) has a positive coefficient, resulting in an increase of 0.2660 (SE = 0.0544) of PD, if BH rises one-point on the Likert scale. BH also correlates positively with PD ($p = 0.0000 < 0.050$).

Table 17 – Regression Model with Outcome Variable PD

OUTCOME VARIABLE: Construct Passionate Desire to Buy						
Model Summary						
R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
,6913	,4779	,9852	148,2660	2,0000	324,0000	,0000
Model						
	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	1,9474	,2120	9,1854	,0000	1,5303	2,3646
C_MT	,5425	,0594	9,1353	,0000	,4257	,6593
C_BH	,2660	,0544	4,8867	,0000	,1589	,3731
Level of confidence for all confidence intervals in output: 95,0000						
Source: Own Elaboration through SPSS Data extended via PROCESS						

Table 18 examines the total effect model with the dependent variable PD. The total effect of MT on PD is 0.7347 (SE = 0.0460) and is highly significant ($p = 0.000 < 0.050$). On the other hand, the indirect effect of MT on PD is 0.1922. Since the confidence interval of the indirect effect, partially and completely standardized indirect effect of X on Y do not contain the value zero, it can definitely be said, there is an indirect effect. The conceptual model has an indirect effect of MT on PD through the mediator BH. The last two hypotheses are supported by these results:

- H4b: *Masstige theory is positively related to passionate desire to buy more.*
- H5: *Brand happiness has a positive effect on passionate desire to buy more.*

Table 18 – Total Effect Model with Outcome Variable PD

OUTCOME VARIABLE: Construct Passionate Desire to Buy							
Model Summary							
R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p	
,6629	,4394	1,0545	254,7204	1,0000	325,0000	,0000	
Model							
	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	
constant	2,1324	,2158	9,8803	,0000	1,7078	2,5570	
C_MT	,7347	,0460	15,9600	,0000	,6441	,8253	
Level of confidence for all confidence intervals in output: 95,0000							
***** TOTAL, DIRECT, AND INDIRECT EFFECTS OF X ON Y *****							
Total effect of X on Y							
Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	c_ps	c_cs
,7347	,0460	15,9600	,0000	,6441	,8253	,5365	,6629
Direct effect of X on Y							
Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	c'_ps	c'_cs
,5425	,0594	9,1353	,0000	,4257	,6593	,3962	,4895
Indirect effect(s) of X on Y:							
	Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI			
C_BH	,1922	,0439	,1075	,2783			
Partially standardized indirect effect(s) of X on Y:							
	Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI			
C_BH	,1403	,0298	,0813	,1982			
Completely standardized indirect effect(s) of X on Y:							
	Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI			
C_BH	,1734	,0369	,1000	,2446			
Level of confidence for all confidence intervals in output: 95,0000							

Source: Own Elaboration through SPSS Data extended via PROCESS

In conclusion, it can be summarized, all hypotheses are supported through the results and analysis, thus indicating the conceptual model is valid (table 19).

Table 19 – Hypothesis Validation

Hypothesis	Validation
H1: Self-brand connection positively affects brand coolness.	Yes
H2: Communal-brand connection has a positive effect on brand coolness.	Yes
H3: High levels of brand coolness lead to high levels of masstige theory.	Yes
H4a: Masstige theory is positively related to brand happiness.	Yes
H4b: Masstige theory is positively related to passionate desire to buy more.	Yes
H5: Brand happiness has a positive effect on passionate desire to buy more.	Yes

Source: Own Elaboration

5. Conclusion and Implications

Today, there are various examples of world leading brands – including Louis Vuitton, Toyota, Honda, Starbucks, Victoria's Secret or Mercedes – that demonstrate that masstige is not to underestimate, but so to speak a matter of boardrooms (Paul, 2015, 2018, 2019; Silverstein & Fiske, 2003). What may seem like a nice side effect of branding strategies can have a demonstrable effect on success (e.g. Kumar et al., 2020; Paul, 2015; Paul & Kumar, 2020). However, there is still a huge lack of research about masstige and its strategy. This thesis attempts to make a contribution against this deficit.

This section will revisit the research objectives of this dissertation in the form of theoretical and managerial implications. The theoretical implication is devoted to the aim of this thesis to investigate and understand better how German customers relate to their mobile brands in their everyday lives, in terms of self- and communal-brand connection, brand coolness, masstige theory, brand happiness and passionate desire to buy more. Interrelationships between these important components of branding are presented and analyzed in more detail. Additionally, research about the established relationship of German customers with their mobile brand with regards to associated status and prestige is conducted. The managerial implication will address the general approach and core of this thesis, namely the role of masstige strategies on branding.

5.1. Theoretical Contribution

Although, as introduced earlier, Samsung is the actual number one in total Germany, this study refers to 70% Apple owners and young participants, predominantly between 25 – 34 years old (61%). The majority of surveyed has a every three years frequency of buy.

This study provides support for all suggested hypotheses and thus the conceptual model. Passionate desire to buy more ($\bar{x} = 5.4557$), brand coolness ($\bar{x} = 4.8782$), and masstige theory ($\bar{x} = 4.5232$), are thereby the most dominant constructs where respondents agree most in relation to their smartphone products.

The results support the theory and definition of Escalas and Bettman (2003), who found a self-brand connection leads to different strengths of relationship between consumers and brands as well as the research from Warren et al. (2019) with the accompanying of self-brand connection and cool brands. In this survey, the more German customers integrate the mobile brand into their self-concept, tend to find their mobile brand cooler, because of the good looks, aesthetically appealing, popular or widely accepted.

The same happens for German customers who feel connected to other brand consumers on a social level, fostering their individual identity. Although self- and communal-brand connection have met the expectations and positively impact brand coolness in this study, both constructs are weak, and participant's mobile brand does not reflect fully who they are, or they do not feel a deep connection to other brand consumers that much.

Furthermore Warren et al. (2019) state in their study a perceived cool brand has high status. Again, this thesis survey confirms these expected findings, as German customers who consider their mobile phone brand as cool, also associate this brand with higher prestige, as brand coolness positively influences masstige theory. 85% of the surveyed indicated they own an Apple or Samsung mobile phone (of which 70% are Apple owners). This means, by German customers both and especially Apple are perceived to be much closer to the degree of prestige. In fact, a high value of prestige or masstige results in recommending the mobile brand to friends and relatives and this way believing it is of international standard. As follows, German customers relate to their smartphone brand in terms of status with a high level since the mobile brand is then equated with high quality or a "top of mind" brand. With masstige theory being one of the most clearly relatable constructs of German customers, highlights again that brand prestige can be established even when a mass targeting strategy is implemented and supports the phenomenon of masstige marketing.

Results provide evidence that German customers evaluating their mobile brand with high prestige and status are also happier about this brand. Consequently, the findings of this study somehow provide a reverse conclusion to the scholars Schnebelen and Bruhn (2018) who indicate, consumers who are happy about a brand, also show a higher willingness to pay a higher price. Nevertheless, this must be viewed with caution, as a high price is not always perceived with high status. Particularly feeling comfortable, joyful or glad makes German customers happy about their mobile brand.

From the quantitative analysis, results show a significant positive influence of masstige on passionate desire to buy more. So, if the mobile brand is considered as masstige or high status by German customers whether this is by their own influence or others, they have a sense of passion to buy more of this brand. The author Paul (2015) states with an analysis of luxury brands in Japan that brands which are perceived as masstige are more successful. This finding can be supported, as the result of this study also show repurchase rate would be higher by German customers. Probably, consumers want to maintain their current high status and prestige of their actual brand.

As explained earlier in the hypotheses, happiness can be transferred to products by simply using them, if the product is connected to something people somehow love doing. This happiness is then perceived as part of the product and love for the brand is created, leading in consumer passion-driven behaviors (Batra et al., 2012). In this survey, high levels of brand happiness conduct high levels of passionate desire to buy more. Thus, the research of Batra et al. (2012) is approved. When German customers are happy about their smartphone brand, they have a feeling of comfort towards the specific brand. Experiencing supplemental joy, they are motivated to buy more from this brand. Additionally, the study delivers evidence for Schnebelen and Bruhn (2018), claiming, happy consumers also have a higher intention to purchase the brand (again). However, results show, German customers are not longing to use the mobile brand again.

Given all this it can be concluded, German customers relate to their mobile brand especially in terms of high loyalty, associate it with desirable characteristic and consider their mobile brand cool because of design, and perceive it as prestige or high status. Again, these conclusions relate over all to the brand Apple (70% of participants are Apple owners).

5.2. Managerial Contribution

Based on the study, it is recommended for mobile brands to focus on brand coolness in the first place, as it positively impacts the perceived masstige of a brand, which in turn has a positive influence on brand happiness and a passionate desire to buy more of a mobile brand. Brand happiness thereby delivers another extra positive impact on passionate desire to buy more, a crucial point, as this determines the success of a brand.

Brand coolness is an important driver in achieving success and manifests as demonstrable prevalent effect on firms. Consumers who perceive a brand as cool spend a lot of money on it, examine a supportive brand attitude with strong brand connection and brand love. It is important for marketers to find out if their brand is considered cool. Warren et al. (2019) provide a valuable tool to help firms create and manage cool brands. Additionally, firms need to assess, whether their brand is niche, mass or uncool and work on the consequences. Sometimes it is a narrow degree, that a brand is considered cool and suddenly uncool. Here, mobile brands should especially pay attention when they are a brand represented worldwide, since the cool could change within different cultures and countries. Moreover, while consumers may think a brand such as Apple is cool, others begin to consider these brands uncool because they no longer see them as rebellious or as examining characteristics, which primarily made them cool. Furthermore, the characteristics extraordinary, aesthetically appealing, energetic, original,

authentic, rebellious, high status, subcultural, iconic, and popular are associated with cool and can help marketers, since increasing every single one, turn a brand into a cooler brand (Warren et al., 2019).

With this cornerstone, marketers can positively influence the status and prestige of their mobile brand, achieving a higher recommendation of the mobile brand from customers to other consumers, generating more word-of-mouth and offering the possibility to expect a higher price for the mobile brand product. The result is a higher brand happiness, and indeed mobile brands can take only profit out of it. Brand happiness is of great relevance and one of the most important components of successful branding. It is an effective way for marketers to retain actual consumers and gain new ones for the brand. Happy consumers therefore have a higher intention to (re-) purchase the mobile brand. In addition, to properly achieve brand happiness, marketers can perform typical brand happiness strategies and create situational conditions for brand happiness. For instance, mobile brands could use experience marketing, storytelling, gifts for consumers, and cheerful and vibrant colors for their branding and design. Always in mind, the execution needs to be consistent with the consumers goal and perhaps self-concept. Furthermore, mobile brands could emphasize fair, particular and enjoyable brand touchpoints.

Higher prestige and status of a mobile brand as well as happy customers consequently also result in higher passionate desire to buy more of this mobile brand. This is also an important anchor point for firms, as passion goes hand in hand with brand love, generating the possibility of continuous preference among other mobile brands. Consumers developing a sense of passion for a brand, also enjoy displaying the products, affecting word of mouth. Mobile brands should get to know their customers and self-concept more, especially what they are looking for when using the products. Furthermore, mobile brands could integrate emotional or soft factors to their brand, to create brand identity and foster passion. Apple, for instance, once positioned themselves with a “think different” approach, creating a whole identity of the brand. Another example is an aesthetically appealing design, which could make a brand be associated with luxury in the eyes of consumers.

To conclude, the role of masstige strategies on branding is therefore a big one, since it has a huge impact on driving potentials, namely brand happiness, passionate desire of consumers to buy more and associated with this, higher price premium of brands, consumer’s forgiveness of brand failure, brand-supportive behavior, consumer-brand relationship and last but not least brand loyalty.

5.3. Limitations

Every study and research project have limitations due to many constraints on research design, methodology, time or cost. First, this research's limitations are over all owed to the size of the sample, less detail, artificiality and limiting. Using a quantitative research, results are based on numerical responses and thus do not offer much insight into thoughts and behaviors, which can lead to a lack of context. In addition, the survey can be conducted in an unnatural environment without any control of settings, meaning results might diverge to 'real world' findings. Through the use of pre-set answers due to prior researchers and adapted Likert scale questions, answers of how people really behave or think might be masked. The spread of the survey via different online survey portals and social media, as a tool to gain access to as much participants as possible, could also create problems, that need to be addressed. Distributing a survey through social media and online thesis survey groups, no limit of geographic scope exists, which means that respondents can access the survey from any part of the world. This could perhaps impact the results of the study, in consequence of cultural differences of different regions. In order to lower the level of geographical spread, the study only focused on German participants. Conducting the research online also narrows the level of accuracy and honesty of respondents because there is nobody observing which answers are being chosen throughout the survey. To secure the measurement and to examine properly the relationship of participants to their smartphone brand, respondents were explained to treat the survey honestly and professionally by highlighting the importance and reason of the research problematic in the introduction.

This thesis was written in 2021, when the world was and is suffering from the pandemic COVID-19. It can be inferred that this situation damages the global smartphone industry, such as reducing the customer's purchasing power due to income loss, unemployment and shutdown from economic activity. These consequences could affect the constructs, such as passionate desire to buy more or questions about how often participants buy mobile brands. However, the pandemic could have also positively impacted the demand and thus the study about mobile brands, since in times of quarantine and social distance, people increasingly rely on mobile phones for interpersonal communication, whether it should be work, learning or entertainment.

5.4. Future Research

Regarding this thesis and acknowledging the former limitations, future explorations should include other research methods to receive further insights into thoughts and behaviors of participants, bringing masstige for mobile brands into a broader context. It would be also interesting to investigate, if there are certain consumer profiles of mobile brands and if the

examined brand constructs are thus differently connected in relation to the brand. In addition, the mass prestige value of each mobile brand could be calculated with other scholars' measures, such as the masstige mean index, developed by Paul (2015). Researchers can also demonstrate whether the thesis findings could be replicated in other geographical surroundings, different religions or ethnicity.

In general, for the conceptualization of masstige, theoretical foundation is still considerably weak, especially to answer essential questions, including why consumers involve in such consumption. Research is limited to particular product categories, industries, geographic regions and methodologies. Scholars are invited to engage in future research about masstige to enhance the understanding of this phenomenon and expand theoretical models in order to improve brand management decisions.

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Appendix 1 – Online Survey

This study aims to understand better how customers relate to their mobile brands, such as Apple, Samsung, Huawei or others in their daily lives, especially in the relationship they build with the brand and its related status and prestige.

This study will respect all the distinct requirements of an ethical research process, ensuring the anonymity and confidentiality of the data obtained, and the disclosure is reserved for academic and scientific purposes only. Data collection and processing will be solely the care of the research team.

In this questionnaire, there are no right or wrong answers, we just want to know your sincere opinion. We remember that your responses are confidential and anonymous. So, we would like to be able to count on your cooperation in this research. Your participation is essential!

Thank you very much for your cooperation in this work.



Please tell us the brand of your smartphone.

Please tell us how often you buy smartphones.



Now, please think about the brand of your actual phone and answer the following questions.



This mobile brand is:

	1 (= not at all)	2	3	4	5	6	7 (= extremely)
exceptional	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
superb	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
fantastic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
extraordinary	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	1 (= not at all)	2	3	4	5	6	7 (= extremely)
energetic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
outgoing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
lively	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
vigorous	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	1 (= not at all)	2	3	4	5	6	7 (= extremely)
looks good	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
aesthetically appealing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
attractive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
has a really nice appearance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	1 (= not at all)	2	3	4	5	6	7 (= extremely)
innovative	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
original	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
does its own thing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	1 (=not at all)	2	3	4	5	6	7 (=extremely)
authentic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
true to its roots	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
doesn't seem artificial	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
doesn't try to be something it is not	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	1 (= not at all)	2	3	4	5	6	7 (=extremely)
rebellious	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
defiant	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
not afraid to break rules	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
nonconformist	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	1 (= not at all)	2	3	4	5	6	7 (=extremely)
chic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
glamorous	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
sophisticated	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ritzy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	1 (= not at all)	2	3	4	5	6	7 (=extremely)
liked by most people	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
in style	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
popular	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
widely accepted	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

This mobile brand:

	1 (= not at all)	2	3	4	5	6	7 (= extremely)
Differentiates people using it from others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If I use it, it makes me stand apart from others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Helps people who use it stand apart from the crowd.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
People who use this brand are unique.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

This mobile brand is:

	1 (= not at all)	2	3	4	5	6	7 (= extremely)
a cultural symbol	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
iconic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Please evaluate the following statements:

	1 (= not at all)	2	3	4	5	6	7 (= extremely)
I like this mobile brand because of its mass prestige.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel like buying this mobile brand of mass prestige.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I tend to pay high prices for this mobile brand because of status quo.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I consider this as a 'top of mind' mobile brand in my country/state/district.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would recommend this mobile brand to my friends and relatives.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To me, nothing is more exciting than this mobile brand.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I believe this mobile brand is known for high quality.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I believe this mobile brand is of international standard.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I love to buy this mobile brand regardless of the price.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I believe that people in my country/state/district consider this mobile brand as a synonym for prestige.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	1 (= not at all)	2	3	4	5	6	7 (= extremely)
A cool mobile brand reflects who I am.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I identify myself with a cool mobile brand.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I use cool mobile brands to communicate who I am to other people.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A cool mobile brand reflects who I consider myself to be.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel a personal connection to this mobile brand.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	1 (= not at all)	2	3	4	5	6	7 (= extremely)
I identify with people who use this mobile brand.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel like I almost belong to a club with other people using this mobile brand.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This mobile brand is used by people like me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel a deep connection with others who use this mobile brand.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

This mobile brand makes me:

	1 (= not at all)	2	3	4	5	6	7 (= extremely)
glad	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
cheerful	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
joyful	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	1 (= not at all)	2	3	4	5	6	7 (= extremely)
lively	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
peppy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
vigorous	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	1 (= not at all)	2	3	4	5	6	7 (= extremely)
proud	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
superior	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
worthy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	1 (= not at all)	2	3	4	5	6	7 (= extremely)
relaxed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
at ease	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
comfortable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Please evaluate the following statements:

	1 (= not at all)	2	3	4	5	6	7 (= extremely)
I desire to buy this mobile brand again.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel a sense of longing to use this mobile brand.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel like I want to buy this mobile brand again.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	1 (= totally disagree)	2	3	4	5	6	7 (= totally agree)
It makes sense to buy this mobile brand instead of any other brand, even if they are the same.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Even if another brand has the same features as this mobile brand, I would prefer to buy this brand.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If there is another brand as good as this mobile brand, I prefer to buy this one.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Even if another mobile brand doesn't differ itself from this brand in any way, it seems smarter to purchase this brand.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The brand campaigns of these products are similar to other mobile campaigns.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The brand campaigns of these products are like other mobile brand products.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	1 (= do not care at all)	2	3	4	5	6	7 (= extremely care)
While selecting from many types and brands available on the market, would you say that you care about a great deal?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	1 (= not important at all)	2	3	4	5	6	7 (= extremely important)
How important would it be for you to make a right choice about this product?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	1 (= not concerned at all)	2	3	4	5	6	7 (= extremely concerned)
When selecting a product, how concerned would you be about the outcome of your choice?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	1 (= not at all)	2	3	4	5	6	7 (= extremely)
I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal level with others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel that I have a number of good qualities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
All in all, I tend to feel that I am a failure.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am able to do things as good as most other people.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel like I don't have much to be proud of.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I take a positive attitude towards myself.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Generally, I am satisfied with myself.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I wish I could have more respect for myself.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I certainly feel useless at times.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
At times I think I am no good at all.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Age

Gender

What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

What is your country of residence?



Appendix 2 – List of Scales and Sources used

Brand Coolness	Extraordinary	Q3	BC Ex1 BC Ex2 BC Ex3 BC Ex4	Is exceptional Is superb Is fantastic Is extraordinary	(Warren et al., 2019)
	Energetic	Q4	BC Ener1 BC Ener2 BC Ener3 BC Ener4	Is energetic Is outgoing Is lively Is vigorous	
	Aesthetically appealing	Q5	BC AA.1 BC AA.2 BC AA.3 BC AA.4	Looks good Is aesthetically appealing Is attractive Has a really nice appearance	
	Original	Q6	BC Orig.1 BC Orig.2 BC Orig.3	Is innovative Is original Does its own thing	
	Authentic	Q7	BC Aut1 BC Aut2 BC Aut3 BC Aut4	Is authentic Is true to its roots Doesn't seem artificial Doesn't try to be something it's not	
	Rebellious	Q8	BC Reb1 BC Reb2 BC Reb3 BC Reb4	Is rebellious Is defiant Is not afraid to break rules Is nonconformist	
	High Status	Q9	BC HS1 BC HS2 BC HS3 BC HS4	Is chic Is glamorous Is sophisticated Is ritzy	
	Popular	Q10	BC Pop1 BC Pop2 BC Pop3 BC Pop4	Is liked by most people Is in style Is popular Is widely accepted	
	Subcultural	Q11	BC SC1 BC SC2 BC SC3 BC SC4	Differentiates people using it from others If use it, it makes me stand apart from others Helps people who use it stand apart from the crowd People who use this brand are unique	
	Iconic	Q12	BC Ic1 BC Ic2	Is a cultural symbol Is iconic	

Brand Happiness	Joy	Q16	Joy1 Joy2 Joy3	Glad Cheerful Joyful	(Schnebelen & Bruhn, 2018)
	Vigor	Q17	Vigor1 Vigor2 Vigor3	Lively Peppy Vigorous	
	Pride	Q18	Pride 1	Proud	
			Pride 2	Superior	
			Pride 3	Worthy	
	Serenity	Q19	Serenity1	Relaxed	
			Serenity2	At ease	
			Serenity3	Comfortable	
Passionate desire to buy more		Q20	PDB1	I desire to buy this mobile brand again	(Batra et al., 2012; Wiedman et al., 2007)
			PDB1	I feel a sense of longing to use this mobile brand	
			PDB3	I feel like I want to buy this mobile brand again	
Brand Dilution		Q21	BDI1 1	It makes sense to buy this mobile brand instead of any other brand, even if they are the same	(Macias & Cervino, 2017)
			BDI1 2	Even if another brand has the same features as this mobile brand, I would prefer to buy this brand	
			BDI1 3	If there is another brand as good as this mobile brand, I prefer to buy this one	
			BDI1 4	Even if another mobile brand doesn't differ itself from this brand in any way, it seems smarter to purchase this brand.	
			BDI1 5	The brand campaigns of these products are similar to other mobile brand products.	
		Q22	BDI1 6	The brand campaigns of these products are like other mobile brand products.	
			BDI1 7	During selecting from the many types and brands available on the market, would you say that:	
			BDI1 8	How important would it be for you to make a right choice of this product?	
		Q24	BDI1 9	When selecting a product, how concerned would you be about the outcome of your choice?	
Self-esteem		Q25	Sest 1	I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal level with others.	(Jackson et al., 2010; Rosenberg, 1965)
			Sest 2	I feel that I have a number of good qualities.	
			Sest 3	All in all, I tend to feel that I am a failure.	
			Sest 4	I am able to do things as good as most other people.	
			Sest 5	I feel like I don't have much to be proud of.	
			Sest 6	I take a positive attitude towards myself.	
			Sest 7	Generally, I am satisfied with myself.	
			Sest 8	I wish I could have more respect for myself.	
			Sest 9	I certainly feel useless at times.	
			Sest 10	At times I think I am no good at all.	

Appendix 3 – Reliability Analysis for all Items

Main Construct	Sub-Construct	Items	Cronbach's Alpha	
Brand Coolness	Extraordinary	BC Ex1 BC Ex2 BC Ex3 BC Ex4	0.873	0.954
	Energetic	BC Ener1 BC Ener2 BC Ener3 BC Ener4	0.922	
	Aeshetically Appealling	BC AA 1 BC AA 2 BC AA 3 BC AA 4	0.932	
	Original	BC Orig 1 BC Orig 2 BC Orig 3	0.765	
	Authentic	BC Aut1 BC Aut2 BC Aut3 BC Aut4	0.812	
	Rebellious	BC Reb1 BC Reb2 BC Reb3 BC Reb4	0.904	
	High Status	BC HS1 BC HS2 BC HS3 BC HS4	0.902	
	Popular	BC Pop1 BC Pop2 BC Pop3 BC Pop4	0.920	
	Subcultural	BC SC1 BC SC2 BC SC3 BC SC4	0.908	
	Iconic	BC Ic1 BC Ic2	0.857	
Masstige Theory	-	MT1 MT2 MT3 MT4 MT5 MT6 MT7 MT8 MT9 MT10	-	0.887
Self-Brand Connection	-	SBC1 SBC2 SBC3 SBC4	-	0.946

		SBC5	
Communal-Brand Connection	-	CBC1 CBC2 CBC3 CBC4	- 0.892
Brand Happiness	Joy	Joy1 Joy2 Joy3	0.941
	Vigor	Vigor1 Vigor2 Vigor3	0.943
	Pride	Pride 1 Pride 2 Pride 3	0.926
	Serenity	Serenity1 Serenity2 Serenity3	0.913
Passionate Desire to Buy more	-	PDB1 PDB1 PDB3	- 0.882

Appendix 4 – Assumption of the Multiple Regression

Correlation of the Residual Term

Model Summary ^b					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	,728 ^a	,530	,522	,9443	1,983

a. Predictors: (Constant), ConstructBrandHappiness, ConstructCommunalBrandConnection, ConstructBrandCoolness, ConstructMasstigeTheory, ConstructSelfBrandConnection

b. Dependent Variable: ConstructPassionateDesireToBuy more

Source: SPSS Data

Significance of the Model

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	321,451	5	64,290	72,094	,000 ^b
	Residual	285,361	320	,892		
	Total	606,811	325			

a. Dependent Variable: ConstructPassionateDesireToBuy more

b. Predictors: (Constant), ConstructBrandHappiness, ConstructCommunalBrandConnection, ConstructBrandCoolness, ConstructMasstigeTheory, ConstructSelfBrandConnection

Source: SPSS Data