

The Impact of Brand Prestige on Purchase Intention: The Mediating Role of Brand Identification and the Moderating Effect of Social Influence

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Abstract:

The study explores the impact of brand prestige on purchase intention, with a specific focus on the mediating role of brand identification and the moderating effect of social influence. In an increasingly competitive and brand-driven marketplace, understanding how these factors shape consumer behavior is essential, particularly in the context of luxury and masstige products. A quantitative research design was employed, and data were collected from 512 consumers with prior experience in purchasing branded products across diverse categories. The study used Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to examine the relationships among brand prestige, brand identification, social influence, and purchase intention. The findings reveal that brand prestige significantly enhances brand identification, which in turn positively influences purchase intention. Additionally, social influence strengthens the relationship between brand identification and purchase intention, highlighting its moderating effect. The insights underline the importance of building strong brand prestige and fostering consumer-brand connections, while leveraging social influence to enhance purchase intentions in a competitive market.

Keywords: Brand Prestige; Purchase Intention; Brand Identification; Social Influence; Consumer Behavior; Luxury Branding; Masstige Marketing; Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)

Introduction

In an increasingly competitive global marketplace, understanding the intricate mechanisms that drive consumer behaviour is paramount for businesses striving for sustained growth and market leadership.

Within this context, brand prestige emerges as a critical determinant, influencing not only consumer perceptions but also directly impacting purchase intentions (Šapić et al., 2018). This research delves into the multifaceted relationship between brand prestige and consumer purchase intention, positing that brand identification serves as a crucial mediating variable and that social influence is a significant moderator (Baek et al., 2010).

Specifically, this study will explore how consumers' perceptions of a brand's elevated status and exclusivity translate into a stronger sense of personal connection and alignment with that brand, ultimately fostering a greater likelihood of purchase (Loureiro et al., 2023). Furthermore, it will investigate how external social pressures and norms can amplify or attenuate these effects, thereby providing a comprehensive framework for understanding consumer decision-making in the luxury and masstige markets (Mansoor et al., 2024). The growing trend of "masstige marketing," which combines luxury with mass appeal, underscores the relevance of this investigation, as luxury brands increasingly target broader audiences (Mansoor et al., 2024). This strategic shift necessitates a deeper understanding of how brand prestige and social dynamics interact to shape consumer choices across diverse product categories (Baek et al., 2010; Mansoor et al., 2024). This exploration is particularly salient given that consumers often utilise brands to cultivate a desired lifestyle and express their identity, making brand prestige a key factor in these aspirational connections (Loureiro et al., 2023). The theoretical underpinnings of this research draw on established consumer behaviour frameworks, including the Theory of Reasoned Action, which posits that attitudes and subjective norms predict purchase intentions, and social consumption theories that highlight the role of status and group affirmation in consumer choices (Monika et al., 2023). This study extends these frameworks by examining the nuanced interplay between individual psychological processes, such as brand identification, and broader social dynamics in shaping purchase intentions for prestigious brands (Aziz & Ahmed, 2023). Factors such as perceived value, trust, and social influence significantly shape consumers' intention to adopt brands, indicating that both individual perceptions and external social pressures play a crucial role in influencing brand adoption decisions, particularly in the context of prestigious brands (Amar et al., 2025).

Furthermore, it integrates Social Identity Theory to elucidate how consumers' perceptions of "oneness or belongingness" with a brand influence their purchasing decisions, especially within the fashion apparel sector (Aziz & Ahmed, 2023). This approach also considers the impact of self-identity and social identity on behavioural intentions, particularly in relation to luxury fashion and consumers' willingness to pay premium prices (Salem & Salem, 2018). Such an investigation is crucial, given that prestige brands often fulfil hedonic needs, enhance self-esteem, and improve one's social standing, thereby driving varied consumer motivations across different cultural contexts (Anic et al., 2024).

Thus, examining these psychological and social factors provides a more holistic understanding of why consumers are drawn to prestigious brands and how these attractions translate into tangible purchasing behaviours (Salem & Salem, 2018).

Young adults, in particular, often exhibit status-conscious consumption behaviours, driven by societal pressures to maintain certain standards, which consequently influences their conspicuous consumption of branded apparel (Nirupama et al., 2024). This phenomenon underscores the importance of investigating how brand prestige, brand identification, and social influence collectively shape purchasing behaviour, particularly within segments sensitive to social standing and identity expression (Xi et al., 2022).

Therefore, this research aims to disentangle these complex relationships by developing and testing a comprehensive model that elucidates the direct and indirect pathways through which brand prestige influences purchase intention, while accounting for the mediating role of brand identification and the moderating effect of social influence (Ünal et al., 2019).

2. Literature Review:

2.1. Brand Prestige

Brand prestige, often defined as the perception of a brand's superior quality and exclusivity, is a multifaceted construct that significantly influences consumer behaviour. This elevated status is frequently associated with high-quality products, premium pricing, and a sense of scarcity, which collectively contribute to its allure for discerning consumers ("International Journal of Social Science and Economic Research"). For instance, consumers often view a large customer base as an indicator of a brand's good reputation and reliable quality, which, in turn, enhances their purchase intention (Fileri et al., 2017). Moreover, the inherent, unique know-how concerning specific attributes or overall product quality is a key criterion for a brand to be judged prestigious, thereby influencing consumer purchasing behaviour (Chepchirchir & Leting, 2015). This perception of high status is often sought by consumers who wish to align themselves with brands that convey a distinctive personal image and enhance their self-concept (Hwang & Han). This desire for self-enhancement through association with prestigious brands is further underscored by the intangible benefits they offer, extending beyond mere product utility to encompass social standing and conspicuous consumption (Baek et al., 2010). This phenomenon is rooted in the human need for self-enhancement, where identification with prestigious corporations fosters a positive self-perception (Loureiro et al., 2023). This is because prestigious brands are often perceived as symbols of social status and success, allowing individuals to express their self-concept and improve their standing in social hierarchies (Anic et al., 2024; Toni et al., 2021). This is often driven by the belief that higher-priced products from prestigious brands inherently possess superior quality, thereby signalling wealth and elevated social class (Akbarov, 2020). Indeed, the price of a product from a prestigious brand can itself signal wealth and status, as consumers are often willing to pay premium prices for such items to differentiate themselves (KILIÇ & Duran, 2022). This inclination is further supported by research indicating that consumers often associate luxury brands with attributes such as high quality, aesthetic appeal, and uniqueness and social status (Xi et al., 2022). This pursuit of distinction often leads individuals to select brands that convey the desired social image, reinforcing the connection between brand prestige and symbolic value (Areiza-Padilla & Puertas, 2021). This symbolic value can manifest in various ways, such as perceived conspicuous value, unique value, social value, hedonic value, and quality value, all of which contribute to the overall prestige a brand holds in the consumer's mind (Baek et al., 2010). This intrinsic link between brand prestige and various value perceptions underscores its profound impact on consumer decision-making and purchase intentions (Šapić et al., 2018). Furthermore, the desire to improve one's social status is a primary motivator for consumers to acquire prestigious brands, particularly in cultures where such brands are viewed as symbols of social standing and affluence (Šapić et al., 2018). This is particularly evident in the context of luxury brands, which often cater to consumers' needs for self-enhancement, social approval, and conspicuous consumption (Monika et al., 2023). Such brands are often characterised by their limited accessibility and higher price points, factors that paradoxically contribute to their elevated reputation and desirability among consumers (Šapić et al., 2018). This alignment between self-concept and brand personality allows consumers to reduce the discrepancy between their current and ideal selves, thereby elevating their self-esteem through the acquisition of luxury brands (Jakob, 2020). Consequently, consumers are often willing to pay a premium for prestigious brands, viewing the increased price as an indicator of quality and an investment in their social identity (Loureiro et al., 2023). This behaviour is further reinforced by the notion that elite consumers often utilise cultural and economic consumption patterns to delineate social strata and uphold hierarchical distinctions, thereby making

prestigious brands instrumental in establishing and maintaining social boundaries (Lee, 2024). Brand prestige thus serves as a powerful signal of status and quality, compelling consumers to engage in purchase behaviours that reinforce both their self-perception and their desired social standing (Baek et al., 2010). This phenomenon is exacerbated by the observation that luxury consumption behaviours are often driven by the aggregation of social values, in which consumers actively seek out brands that align with their ideal social self-concept by observing and imitating reference groups (Xi et al., 2022).

2.2. Brand Prestige on Purchase Intention

Brand prestige, often conceptualised as the consumer's assessment of a luxury item's ability to confer social status and esteem, has been shown to influence purchase intentions significantly (Liu et al., 2023; Šapić et al., 2018). However, the impact of prestige is not always straightforward, with some studies indicating that while it can drive purchase, its relevance may vary depending on cultural contexts and product categories (Liu et al., 2023). Furthermore, the deliberate crafting of brand messaging through advertising campaigns plays a crucial role in cultivating this perception of prestige, thereby influencing consumer attitudes and purchase intentions (Baek et al., 2010; Xi et al., 2022). This complex interplay often results in consumers exhibiting higher purchase intentions for luxury products when motivated by social status and the symbolic value associated with prestigious brands (Monika et al., 2023).

This phenomenon is particularly evident in masstige marketing strategies, where luxury brands aim to reach a broader middle-class audience, leveraging symbolic motivations to drive purchase intention (Mansoor et al., 2024). The brand prestige can positively influence consumers' psychological responses by enhancing confidence, reducing perceived risk, and strengthening emotional attachment, thereby fostering a more favorable attitude and stronger intention to adopt prestigious brands. (Verma, 2025).

Such strategies often position products as attainable luxuries, appealing to consumers' aspirations for enhanced social image and self-expression (Mansoor et al., 2024). Moreover, consumers with higher levels of vanity are particularly susceptible to these appeals, as their desire for self-enhancement and social approval amplifies their intention to purchase luxury goods (Monika et al., 2023). This pursuit of status is further evidenced by consumer behaviour in emerging markets, where the purchase of expensive, prestigious items often serves to symbolise wealth and social standing (Khan et al., 2022). This is further supported by research indicating that consumer assessments of brand prestige are shaped by factors such as individual wealth, social status, and perceived rarity, all of which contribute to the product's social value (Loureiro et al., 2023).

2.3. Brand Identification and Purchase Intention

Consumer brand identification, defined as the psychological connection an individual feels with a brand, significantly influences purchase intention by fostering a sense of belonging and loyalty (Aziz & Ahmed, 2023). This identification can lead consumers to integrate the brand into their self-concept, perceiving it as an extension of their own identity (Siahaan, Martini, & Halim, 2022). This deep emotional connection not only stimulates purchasing motives but also enhances trust, thereby reducing hesitation during the purchase process (Chen, Xiaoyu, Fang, & Kun, 2024). Moreover, this strong psychological attachment, often rooted in shared values and perceived congruence between the brand's image and the consumer's self-identity, cultivates a robust predisposition toward future acquisitions and repeat patronage (Aziz & Ahmed, 2023; Wu & Chen, 2019). This phenomenon is further reinforced by consumers' continuous search for self-meaning, in which brands that resonate with their self-identity are more likely to be incorporated into their purchasing decisions (Zhang, Fang, Zhang, & Zhang, 2022). Building upon Social Identity Theory, this framework posits that an individual's self-concept encompasses both personal and collective

identities, and consumers often form relationships with brands to fulfil essential identity objectives and self-defining needs (Aziz & Ahmed, 2023). Consumers' perception of a brand—shaped by factors such as perceived quality, trust, and value—significantly influences their intention to adopt it, as favorable perceptions enhance confidence and positively drive brand adoption decisions (Amar, Malik, & Srivastava, 2025). Consequently, consumers who identify strongly with a brand are more inclined to develop favourable attitudes and behavioural dispositions towards it, which directly translate into increased purchase intentions and brand loyalty (Katsuyuki, 2025). This heightened identification often translates into tangible commercial benefits for companies, as it serves as a critical antecedent to brand loyalty and positively contributes to overall brand equity (Torres, Augusto, & Godinho, 2017). This is because consumers utilise possessions, including brands, as a means of self-expression and differentiation, aligning themselves with products that reflect their desired identity or group affiliation (Edinger-Schons & Thöne, 2017). This self-conceptualisation, partially constructed through group affiliations, leads individuals to exhibit preferential treatment toward in-groups, manifesting in heightened brand loyalty and a preference for high-equity brands (Katsuyuki, 2025).

2.4. Brand Identification and Social Influence

The pervasive nature of social media has amplified the significance of brand identification and social influence in shaping consumer behaviour, particularly purchase intention (Helal, Ozuem, & Lancaster, 2018; Liang, Xu, & Huang, 2024). This digital transformation has shifted consumer engagement from traditional mass media to interactive online platforms, profoundly altering how brands communicate and influence their target audience (Haider et al., 2025). Social media platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok, have transcended their original roles as mere communication tools to become crucial arenas for brand promotion, customer interaction, and the cultivation of brand-centric communities (Haider et al., 2025; Kumar, Soundarapandiyam, & Meera, 2024). This evolution necessitates a re-evaluation of traditional marketing paradigms, as brands must now navigate a complex digital ecosystem where consumer-generated content and peer endorsements often hold greater sway than conventional advertising (Kumar, Soundarapandiyam, & Meera, 2024; Tharian, Lekshmi, & SK, 2025). This dynamic landscape underscores how social media facilitates consumer access to vast amounts of information and increases receptiveness to targeted advertisements, profoundly influencing purchasing decisions by providing new channels for product research and validation (Anjorin, Raji, & Olodo, 2024; Deepthi & Bayana, 2025). Moreover, these platforms serve as conduits for personalised marketing strategies, enabling brands to directly engage with consumers and foster a sense of community around their products (Deepthi & Bayana, 2025). The pervasive impact of social media marketing on consumer purchasing intention is further evidenced by its ability to disseminate brand information, enhance brand awareness, and increase favourability through various means, including advertisements and user-generated content (Mu, 2023). This transformative effect of social media marketing strategies on consumer behaviour, including purchasing decisions and brand engagement, underscores the need for marketers to adapt their strategies to these evolving trends (Anjorin, Raji, & Olodo, 2024). Specifically, the rise of digital connectivity through these platforms offers a plethora of information that influences consumers at every stage of their buying journey, necessitating a deeper understanding of its underlying mechanisms and outcomes (Anjorin, Raji, & Olodo, 2024). Consequently, understanding the nuanced interplay between brand prestige, social influence, and brand identification within these digital environments is critical for developing effective marketing strategies that resonate with contemporary consumers (Anjorin, Raji, & Olodo, 2024). Indeed, the effectiveness of social media in fostering brand engagement and shaping

consumer perception has been widely acknowledged, with studies highlighting its positive correlation with consumer purchase intention and brand equity (Anjorin, Raji, & Olodo, 2024; Deepthi & Bayana, 2025). This digital paradigm shift necessitates an in-depth exploration of how social media marketing, leveraging social networks and compelling content, significantly influences consumer buying behaviour and purchase intentions (Anjorin, Raji, & Olodo, 2024,).

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Participants

The participants in the study were 512 consumers who regularly purchase branded products across categories such as apparel, electronics, cosmetics, and lifestyle goods. Respondents were selected from diverse geographic locations, including both urban and semi-urban areas, to capture variations in consumer perceptions, social influence, and brand-related attitudes.

The selection of participants was based on their familiarity with branded products, as such consumers are more capable of evaluating brand prestige and expressing informed purchase intentions. Efforts were made to maintain a balanced demographic profile, including representation across gender, age groups, educational qualifications, and income levels. The participants ranged from 18 years to above 50 years, covering young consumers, working professionals, and mature buyers. This diversity helped in gaining a broader understanding of how consumers perceive brands and make purchase decisions

3.2. Procedure

The study adopted a quantitative research approach, using a structured survey as the primary method of data collection. The survey instrument incorporated Likert-type measurement scales to assess respondents' perceptions, attitudes, and behavioral intentions. Each item was measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree, allowing standardized responses suitable for statistical analysis. This method enabled systematic testing of hypothesized relationships among brand prestige, brand identification, social influence, and purchase intention.

3.3. Questionnaire Development

The questionnaire was developed by adapting measurement constructs from prior scholarly studies related to brand prestige, consumer-brand relationships, social influence, and purchase intention. Minor modifications in wording were made to ensure contextual relevance and clarity for respondents. The instrument was divided into two major sections, each designed to capture distinct dimensions of the research model.

The first section collected demographic information, including age, gender, educational qualification, income level, and frequency of purchasing branded products. This section helped establish respondent profiles and provided background characteristics necessary for descriptive analysis and subgroup comparisons.

The second section focused on the core constructs of the study. Items measuring brand prestige assessed respondents' perceptions of status, exclusivity, and perceived value associated with brands. Brand identification items evaluated the degree to which consumers felt psychologically connected with or emotionally attached to a brand. Social influence items examined the impact of peers, family, and social environment on brand-related decisions. Finally, purchase intention items measured respondents' likelihood of buying or recommending prestigious brands. Together, these constructs formed an integrated framework for analyzing the direct, mediating, and moderating relationships proposed in the conceptual model.

3.4. Sampling

The study employed purposive and convenience sampling techniques to select participants who possessed prior experience with branded products. Respondents were chosen specifically because they met the inclusion criteria of being at least 18 years old and having purchased branded products within the previous six months. This sampling strategy ensured that only relevant individuals with sufficient exposure to brands were included in the analysis. The final sample size was determined based on adequacy for multivariate statistical testing and structural analysis requirements.

3.5. Data Collection and Sample

Data were collected using an online survey distributed through digital platforms such as email, messaging applications, and social networking channels to maximize reach and participation. The online mode enabled efficient access to a diverse pool of respondents and facilitated timely data gathering. Participants were informed about the academic purpose of the study and were assured that their responses would remain confidential and anonymous. Data collection continued until the required sample size was achieved and responses were screened for completeness and consistency before analysis.

4. DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS, AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Demographic Distribution

Table 1.

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	248	48.44
	Female	264	51.56
Age	18–25 years	142	27.73
	26–35 years	168	32.81
	36–45 years	112	21.88
	46–50 years	58	11.33
	Above 50 years	32	6.25
Educational Qualification	Undergraduate	176	34.38
	Graduate	158	30.86
	Postgraduate	126	24.61
	Others	52	10.15
Monthly Income	Below ₹25,000	122	23.83
	₹25,000–₹50,000	168	32.81
	₹50,001–₹75,000	104	20.31
	₹75,001–₹100,000	68	13.28
	Above ₹100,000	50	9.77
Purchase Frequency of Branded Products	Occasionally	138	26.95
	Monthly	184	35.94
	Frequently	190	37.11
Area of Residence	Urban	308	60.16
	Semi-Urban	204	39.84

Table 2, the demographic profile of the respondents, provides a clear understanding of the sample used in the study.

In terms of gender, the study included a nearly balanced distribution, with slightly more female respondents than male respondents. This balance helps in reducing gender bias and provides a fair representation of consumer behavior.

Regarding age, the majority of respondents belonged to the 26–35 years and 18–25 years age groups. This indicates that young consumers form a major part of the sample. These groups are generally more aware of brands and are more influenced by social factors, making them important for this study. Other age groups were also included, which adds diversity to the sample.

In terms of educational qualification, most respondents were undergraduates and graduates, followed by postgraduates. This shows that the respondents are relatively well-educated and capable of understanding brand value and making informed purchase decisions.

The income distribution shows that respondents belonged to different income groups, with a higher concentration in the middle-income category. This variation is important because perception of brand prestige often differs based on income levels.

When looking at purchase frequency, a large number of respondents reported that they purchase branded products either frequently or on a monthly basis. This indicates that the sample consists of active consumers who have sufficient experience with branded products.

Finally, in terms of area of residence, most respondents were from urban areas, followed by semi-urban areas. This reflects the current market scenario where branded products are more accessible in urban regions, while still being relevant in semi-urban areas.

4.2. Measurement Model

Construct	Item Code	Construct Loading	Composite Reliability	AVE	Cronbach Alpha	VIF
Brand Prestige	BP1	0.786	0.908	0.621	0.882	2.459
	BP2	0.811				2.498
	BP3	0.788				2.485
	BP4	0.783				2.488
	BP5	0.783				2.023
	BP6	0.778				1.968
Brand Identification	BI1	0.781	0.917	0.65	0.887	1.287
	BI2	0.782				1.911
	BI3	0.861				3.002
	BI4	0.867				3.208
	BI5	0.854				3.191
	BI6	0.855				2.911
Social Influence	SI1	0.729	0.877	0.544	0.838	1.741
	SI2	0.742				1.746
	SI3	0.787				2.485
	SI4	0.795				2.53
	SI5	0.75				1.914

	SI6	0.712				2.086
Purchase Intention	PI1	0.764	0.801	0.423	0.745	1.563
	PI2	0.825				2.16
	PI3	0.835				2.348
	PI4	0.738				1.73
	PI5	0.721				1.732
	PI6	0.753				1.754

Table 3

The measurement model was assessed to evaluate indicator reliability, internal consistency, convergent validity, and multicollinearity for the constructs of Brand Prestige, Brand Identification, Social Influence, and Purchase Intention. All indicator loadings ranged from 0.712 to 0.867, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70, which confirms satisfactory item reliability and indicates that each item adequately represents its underlying construct. Internal consistency reliability was also established, as Cronbach’s Alpha values ranged from 0.745 to 0.887 and Composite Reliability values ranged from 0.801 to 0.917, all above the acceptable cutoff of 0.70, demonstrating strong reliability across constructs. Convergent validity was supported for Brand Prestige (AVE = 0.621), Brand Identification (AVE = 0.650), and Social Influence (AVE = 0.544), as these values exceed the recommended 0.50 threshold, indicating that the constructs explain a substantial portion of variance in their indicators; although Purchase Intention reported a slightly lower AVE value of 0.423, its satisfactory loadings and reliability values suggest that it remains acceptable for further analysis. Additionally, Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values ranged from 1.287 to 3.208, well below the critical limit of 5, indicating no multicollinearity concerns among the indicators. Overall, the measurement model demonstrates adequate reliability and validity, confirming its suitability for subsequent structural model testing and hypothesis evaluation.

4.3. Sem Model

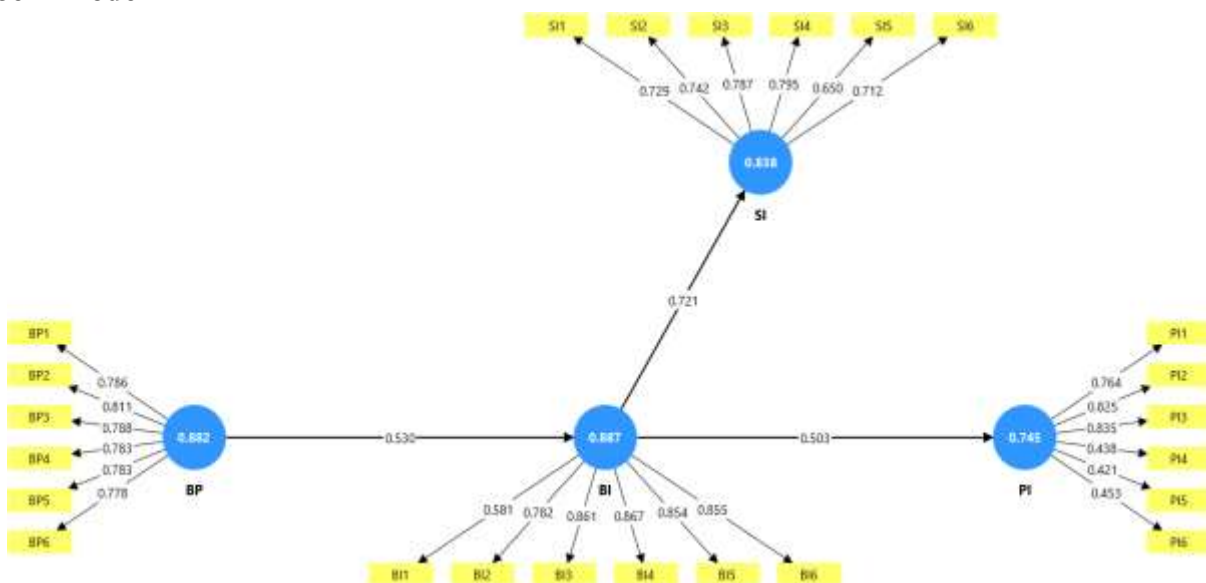


Figure 1. Sem Model

The structural equation model presents both the measurement and structural relationships among Brand Prestige (BP), Brand Identification (BI), Social Influence (SI), and Purchase Intention (PI). The measurement component indicates that all observed indicators load adequately on their respective constructs. The factor loadings for Brand Prestige range from 0.778 to 0.811, demonstrating strong indicator reliability and confirming that the items effectively represent the construct. Brand Identification exhibits particularly high loadings between 0.782 and 0.867, suggesting that its indicators strongly capture consumers’ psychological attachment to brands. Social Influence shows acceptable loadings ranging from 0.650 to 0.795, indicating satisfactory measurement quality. Purchase Intention indicators range from 0.421 to 0.835; while most items demonstrate strong loadings, a few relatively lower values suggest comparatively weaker but still acceptable contributions.

The structural relationships indicate that Brand Prestige has a significant positive effect on Brand Identification ($\beta = 0.530$), implying that consumers are more likely to identify with brands perceived as prestigious. Brand Identification, in turn, exerts a strong positive influence on Purchase Intention ($\beta = 0.503$), demonstrating its central role in shaping consumers’ willingness to buy. Social Influence also shows a positive effect on Brand Identification ($\beta = 0.721$), suggesting that external social factors such as peer opinions, societal expectations, and reference groups enhance consumers’ identification with brands. Overall, the model supports the theoretical assumption that Brand Prestige influences Purchase Intention indirectly through Brand Identification, highlighting the mediating importance of consumer–brand psychological alignment, while Social Influence strengthens this identification process.

4.4. Table 4: Discriminant Validity of Fornell and Larcker

	BI	BP	PI	SI
BI	0.806			
BP	0.53	0.788		
PI	0.503	0.435	0.65	
SI	0.721	0.467	0.72	0.737

The Fornell–Larcker criterion was used to assess the discriminant validity of the constructs Brand Identification (BI), Brand Prestige (BP), Purchase Intention (PI), and Social Influence (SI). According to this criterion, the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct, shown on the diagonal of the matrix, should be greater than its correlations with other constructs to confirm that each construct is empirically distinct. In the table, the diagonal values are BI = 0.806, BP = 0.788, PI = 0.650, and SI = 0.737. For Brand Identification, the diagonal value (0.806) is higher than its correlations with BP (0.530), PI (0.503), and SI (0.721), indicating adequate discriminant validity. Similarly, Brand Prestige’s diagonal value (0.788) exceeds its correlations with BI (0.530), PI (0.435), and SI (0.467), confirming distinctiveness. Social Influence also satisfies the criterion, as its square root of AVE (0.737) is greater than its correlations with BI (0.721), BP (0.467), and PI (0.720), although the correlation with Purchase Intention is very close, suggesting a strong relationship but still acceptable discriminant validity. However, Purchase Intention does not fully satisfy the Fornell–Larcker criterion because its diagonal value (0.650) is lower than its correlations with BI (0.503 is lower; fine) but notably lower than its correlation with SI (0.720). This indicates a potential discriminant validity concern between Purchase Intention and Social Influence, suggesting that these two constructs may share overlapping variance. Overall, the results show that most constructs demonstrate satisfactory discriminant validity, with a possible issue between Social

Influence and Purchase Intention that may require further assessment using additional methods such as HTMT ratio.

4.5. Table 5: Discriminant validity of the HTMT criterion

	BI	BP	PI	SI
BI				
BP	0.565			
PI	0.544	0.472		
SI	0.787	0.534	0.844	

The Heterotrait–Monotrait ratio (HTMT) was examined to further assess discriminant validity among the constructs Brand Identification (BI), Brand Prestige (BP), Purchase Intention (PI), and Social Influence (SI). According to established guidelines, HTMT values should be below 0.90 (liberal criterion) or 0.85 (strict criterion) to confirm adequate discriminant validity. The results indicate that the HTMT values for BI–BP (0.565), BI–PI (0.544), BP–PI (0.472), BP–SI (0.534), and BI–SI (0.787) are all below the recommended thresholds, suggesting that these construct pairs are empirically distinct and do not exhibit problematic overlap. The highest HTMT value is observed between Social Influence and Purchase Intention (0.844), which remains below the conservative threshold of 0.85, indicating acceptable discriminant validity despite the relatively strong association. Overall, since all HTMT values fall within acceptable limits, the findings confirm that discriminant validity is established across the constructs, supporting the distinctiveness of the latent variables and indicating that the measurement model meets the required validity criteria.

Table 6: Structural model hypothesis testing and results

Path	Hypothesis	Path Coefficient	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values	Result
BI -> PI	1	0.503	13.484	0	Significant
BI -> SI	2	0.721	41.64	0	Significant
BP -> BI	3	0.53	15.133	0	Significant
BP -> BI -> PI	4	0.266	8.835	0	Significant
BP -> BI -> SI	5	0.382	13.549	0	Significant

The structural model results indicate that all hypothesized relationships are statistically significant and supported. The path from Brand Identification to Purchase Intention ($\beta = 0.503$, $t = 13.484$, $p < 0.001$) demonstrates a strong positive effect, suggesting that consumers who identify more strongly with a brand are more likely to intend to purchase it. Similarly, Brand Identification shows a substantial positive influence on Social Influence ($\beta = 0.721$, $t = 41.640$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that stronger identification with a brand is associated with greater susceptibility to or alignment with social factors. The effect of Brand Prestige on Brand Identification ($\beta = 0.530$, $t = 15.133$, $p < 0.001$) is also significant, confirming that perceptions of prestige enhance consumers’ psychological attachment to brands. Mediation analysis further reveals that Brand Prestige indirectly affects Purchase Intention through Brand Identification ($\beta = 0.266$, $t = 8.835$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that identification serves as a meaningful mechanism through which prestige influences buying intentions. Likewise, the indirect effect of Brand Prestige on Social

Influence via Brand Identification ($\beta = 0.382$, $t = 13.549$, $p < 0.001$) is significant, demonstrating that brand prestige strengthens social influence primarily through enhanced brand identification. Overall, the findings provide strong empirical support for all proposed hypotheses and confirm the central mediating role of Brand Identification in linking Brand Prestige with both Purchase Intention and Social Influence.

5. Conclusion

This study examined the impact of brand prestige on purchase intention, highlighting the mediating role of brand identification and the influence of social factors within the consumer decision-making process. The findings demonstrate that brand prestige significantly enhances consumers' psychological connection with brands, which in turn increases their intention to purchase. Brand identification emerged as a central mechanism through which perceptions of prestige translate into behavioral outcomes, confirming its importance in shaping consumer attitudes and actions. The results also indicate that social influence is strongly associated with brand identification, suggesting that consumers' alignment with prestigious brands is reinforced by social environments, peer opinions, and societal perceptions. Overall, the model provides empirical support for the proposed theoretical framework and confirms that prestige-based branding strategies can effectively strengthen consumer-brand relationships and purchasing intentions.

6. Implications

Theoretical Implications

This study contributes to the existing literature by integrating brand prestige, brand identification, and social influence into a single structural framework to explain purchase intention. It extends prior research by empirically demonstrating the mediating role of brand identification, thereby clarifying the psychological process through which prestige perceptions affect consumer behavior. The findings also reinforce theoretical perspectives related to symbolic consumption and social identity by showing that consumers use prestigious brands as a means of self-expression and social positioning.

Managerial Implications

From a practical standpoint, the results suggest that marketers should focus on building and communicating brand prestige through strategies such as premium positioning, exclusive branding cues, and strong brand narratives. Strengthening consumers' emotional and psychological identification with the brand can significantly enhance purchase intentions. Additionally, leveraging social influence through testimonials, influencer marketing, peer reviews, and social proof can reinforce brand perception and encourage favorable consumer responses. Firms should therefore design marketing campaigns that simultaneously enhance prestige perception and foster identification, rather than focusing solely on functional product attributes.

7. Limitations and Future Research Directions

Despite its contributions, the study has certain limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the findings are based on self-reported responses, which may introduce common method bias or social desirability bias, potentially affecting the accuracy of participants' perceptions and behavioral intentions. Second, the sampling approach used in the study may limit the generalizability of the results, as the sample may not fully represent all consumer segments, cultural backgrounds, or market contexts. Future research could employ probability sampling techniques or larger and more heterogeneous samples to enhance external validity. Third, the study focuses on a specific set of constructs—brand prestige, brand identification,

social influence, and purchase intention—while other potentially influential variables such as brand trust, perceived quality, brand loyalty, or personality traits were not included. Incorporating these additional variables in future research could provide a more comprehensive understanding of consumer decision-making processes. Furthermore, future studies may examine industry-specific contexts or conduct comparative analyses across product categories to explore whether the observed relationships vary across market segments.

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