


Seyahat ve Otel İşletmeciliği Dergisi/
Journal of Travel and Hospitality Business
Cilt/Vol:23(1),Yıl/ Year:2026 ss/pp:205-221
Gönderim Tarihi/ Received:17.02.2025
Kabul Tarihi /Accepted:01.03.2026
DOI: 10.24010/soid.1641665

Araştırma Makalesi/ Research Article

The Power of Masstige: A New Lens for Understanding Tourist Destination Image

Prestijli Kitle (Masstige) Ürünü Olarak Destinasyon Algısının Destinasyon İmajı Üzerindeki Etkisi

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Öz

Masstige (prestijli kitle) markalar diğer bağlamlarda yaygın olarak çalışılmış olsa da araştırmalar bu markaların turizm endüstrisi üzerindeki etkilerini büyük ölçüde göz ardı etmiş ve akademik literatürde önemli bir boşluk yaratmıştır. Bu nedenle, mevcut araştırma, bir "masstige" ürünü olarak destinasyonun; duygusal, davranışsal ve bilişsel imajı içeren destinasyon imajını nasıl etkilediğini anlamayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu doğrultuda, masstige ile duygusal, bilişsel ve davranışsal imaj arasındaki ilişki nicel araştırma yaklaşımıyla test edilmiştir. Veri toplama süreci anket tekniği aracılığıyla tamamlanmış ve araştırma verileri, Yapısal Eşitlik Modellemesi (YEM) ile analiz edilmiştir. Sonuçlar, masstige algısının destinasyonun duygusal, bilişsel ve davranışsal imajı üzerinde anlamlı bir etkiye sahip olduğunu göstermiştir. Çalışma kapsamında teorik ve pratik katkılar sunulmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Masstige, Destinasyon imajı, Bilişsel imaj, Davranışsal imaj, Duygusal imaj

Abstract

Although masstige brands have been widely studied in other contexts, research has largely overlooked their impacts on tourism industry, creating a significant gap in academic literature. Therefore, this research aims to understand how destination as a masstige product influence on destination image including affective, conative and cognitive image. Thus, the relationship between masstige and affective, cognitive and conative image through quantitative research approach were tested. Through the questionnaire technique, the data collection is completed. The data is analysed through SEM. The results illustrated that masstige has significant influence on affective, cognitive and conative image of destination. Theoretical and practical contributions were provided.

Key Words: Masstige, Destination image, Cognitive image, Conative image, Affective image

Extended Summary

Purpose

This research aims to understand how destination as a masstige product influence on destination image including affective, conative and cognitive image

Background

In modern tourism, luxury destination marketers face the challenge of balancing exclusivity with broader market appeal. 'Masstige' marketing, combining mass-market accessibility with prestige positioning, has transformed consumer behavior and brand perception in tourism. This approach focuses on creating widespread prestige through accessible luxury offerings while maintaining brand prestige. The destination image comprises cognitive, affective, and conative elements, significantly influenced by tourist-destination personality similarity (TDPS)—the alignment between tourists' self-image and the destination's perceived characteristics. This psychological alignment enhances visitation likelihood and loyalty behaviors. Contemporary luxury tourism shows increasing focus on experiential personalization and social status signaling. The correlation between masstige and destination image is influenced by evolving tourist anticipations, particularly regarding sustainability and cultural authenticity. Tourists increasingly seek destinations aligned with their values and aspirations. This research aims to understand how destination as a masstige product influence on destination image including affective, conative and cognitive image As destinations position themselves as unique products offering distinctive experiences, understanding this interplay becomes crucial for effective branding strategies. The study proposes an integrated theoretical framework synthesizing empirical findings on consumer perception and brand loyalty.

Method

This research used quantitative research method. This research was carried out in Alaçatı, Turkey, a luxury tourism destination known for its historical architecture, boutique hotels, and upscale dining. Data collection involved a four-section survey measuring masstige perception and destination image components, utilizing a seven-point Likert scale. Through purposive sampling, 203 valid responses were collected from Turkish travelers familiar with Alaçatı. The study employed PLS-SEM analysis using SmartPLS 4 software to test the proposed association between masstige and destination image dimensions.

Findings

According to the results, the influence of masstige on affective, cognitive and conative image of destination were confirmed.

Result

The outcome of the research showed that masstige has significant influence on affective, cognitive and conative image of destination. Theoretically, this study extends the understanding of masstige as a pivotal concept in luxury tourism by

elucidating how accessibility and prestige coalesce to shape multidimensional tourist images. The findings reveal that masstige democratizes luxury experiences and enhances perceived destination value, thereby influencing preferences and behaviors. By addressing a notable gap in service sector research, particularly in tourism, this study broadens the discourse on destination image and facilitates a deeper understanding of tourist choices in competitive markets. Establishing this link provides a framework for future research to explore the evolving nature of luxury consumption where tourists seek unique experiences at accessible price points. Ultimately, this investigation underscores the importance of aligning marketing tactics with consumers' aspirations, contributing to enhanced brand loyalty and sustainable practices.

Practically, the implications are substantial for destination marketers, service providers, and policymakers. Stakeholders should focus on strategic positioning by framing destinations as masstige products, emphasizing both quality and accessibility to attract a broader audience seeking enriched experiences without prohibitive costs. Enhanced marketing campaigns should leverage these insights by designing communications that showcase high-quality services at accessible prices, which significantly influences cognitive and affective images to encourage higher engagement. Furthermore, understanding masstige's influence enables more nuanced consumer segmentation; tour operators can tailor packages for distinct groups based on their specific perceptions and motivations, thereby enhancing satisfaction and loyalty. For service providers, investing in staff training focused on exceptional quality and personalized services will resonate with tourists' expectations of masstige products and reinforce positive image formations. By applying these practical implications, stakeholders can harness the power of masstige to effectively enhance destination images and drive growth in the competitive landscape of luxury tourism.

1. Introduction

In the contemporary tourism landscape, luxury destination marketers face the challenge of maintaining exclusivity while accommodating diverse consumer segments, underscoring the role of stakeholders in cultivating market perceptions (Cerović et al., 2019; Genç, 2019). The emergence of 'masstige' marketing—an innovative synthesis of mass-market accessibility and prestige positioning—has transformed consumer behaviour and brand perception, particularly in tourism contexts (Atsız et al., 2024; Kumar et al., 2021). Masstige's conceptual framework centres on cultivating widespread prestige through accessible luxury offerings that maintain brand cachet while expanding market reach (Paul, 2018).

Luxury brands implement this paradigm by positioning attainable product lines that preserve their prestigious heritage while capturing broader market segments through calibrated pricing strategies (Park et al., 2022). This strategic paradigm, which simultaneously cultivates exclusivity while maintaining broader market accessibility, has demonstrated efficacy in enhancing destination appeal. Through masstige principles, destinations can effectively engage diverse tourist segments seeking distinctive experiences aligned with their aspirational self-concept (Jabbar et al., 2023). As noted by Kassie and Bang (2022), balancing exclusivity with accessibility can substantially boost brand equity while deepening consumer connections. "This framework holds particular relevance in tourism,

where experiential and emotional dimensions fundamentally shape consumer perceptions and behavioural intentions" (Das et al., 2022: 521).

The conceptualization of destination image represents a multidimensional construct comprising cognitive, affective, and conative elements. Contemporary research demonstrates that destination perception is significantly influenced by tourist-destination personality similarity (TDPS)—the congruence between tourists' self-image and the destination's perceived personality characteristics (Bekk et al., 2016). This psychological alignment catalyses positive attitudinal formations, enhancing visitation propensity and loyalty behaviours (Abdallat, 2012). The psychological dimensions of destination perception, including service quality and host community interactions, serve as fundamental determinants in forming comprehensive destination image (Haarhoff and De Klerk, 2019).

Contemporary luxury tourism consumption patterns reveal an increasing emphasis on experiential personalization and social status signalling (Iloranta, 2022). The intersection of masstige and destination image is further nuanced by evolving tourist expectations regarding sustainability and cultural authenticity (Aydin and Alvarez, 2020). As destinations increasingly position themselves as unique products, understanding the interplay between masstige and destination image becomes crucial for effective branding. This research aims to understand how a destination, as a masstige product, influences affective, conative, and cognitive image. By synthesizing empirical findings, this study proposes an integrated theoretical framework to advance the understanding of interactions between luxury-related constructs and their behavioural manifestations (Joshi and Garg, 2021; Mundel et al., 2017).

2. Literature review

The term masstige, a combination of "mass" and "prestige," links mass-market accessibility with luxury quality. Silverstein and Fiske (2003) introduced the concept, noting that masstige goods retain exclusivity while remaining within reach for a wider audience. These products integrate luxury features—such as quality, design, and brand prestige—without prohibitive pricing. This strategic balance has made masstige a popular marketing strategy across various industries, including fashion, electronics, and hospitality (Atsiz et al., 2024; Kumar et al., 2021).

Luxury tourism consumption involves purchasing high-quality travel experiences imbued with symbolic, experiential, and social value (Kapferer, 2012). Unlike traditional consumption focused on tangible products, luxury tourism emphasizes personalized services, exclusivity, and memorable experiences (Iloranta, 2022). As highlighted by Atwal and Williams (2017), luxury tourism has shifted from material-based to experience-driven luxury, where emotional fulfilment and personal growth are paramount (Stokburger-Sauer and Teichmann, 2013). This aligns with masstige tourism trends, where tourists seek prestige at an affordable price (Iloranta, 2019). Thus, luxury consumption in tourism combines social display and experiential enrichment, serving as a core element in high-end service design (Kim et al., 2019).

In the modern tourism industry, masstige is a key strategy for attracting experience-seeking tourists. Destinations and service providers adopt masstige

principles by offering high-quality products at accessible prices (Atsız et al., 2024; Paul, 2018). By positioning according to these principles, tourism operators expand their consumer base without losing premium brand image, ensuring long-term loyalty and competitiveness (Iloranta, 2019; Kumar et al., 2020; Kumar et al., 2021).

However, research on masstige brands in the service sector remains limited. Since the distinction between luxury items and services is significant, luxury services should be studied independently (Wirtz et al., 2020). Despite its popularity in brand management, masstige research in the tourism context is still scarce (Joshi and Garg, 2021). Recent literature has employed masstige theory to examine perceived brand value (Joshi and Garg, 2021), brand interaction (Mundel et al., 2017), brand happiness (Mansoor and Paul, 2022), and consumption value (Atsız et al., 2024). Most luxury travel studies have focused primarily on hotel or airline brands (Atsız et al., 2024; Iloranta, 2019). The emergence of masstige has weakened conventional notions of luxury, complicating the contextualization of luxury tourism companies (Iloranta, 2019). Therefore, this research addresses this gap by examining how masstige influences tourist destination image, considering destinations as “products” offering unique experiences.

2.1. Destination image regarding Luxury

Luxury tourism has emerged as a significant segment with growing demand for high-end experiences (Peng et al., 2021; Zain et al., 2023). Destination competitiveness in this sector relies on attracting luxury-driven consumers through high-quality accommodations, services, and overall travel experiences (Zain et al., 2023). Recently, “masstige” (mass prestige) has been discussed in relation to luxury tourism and destination image (Genç, 2019). Masstige refers to the democratization of luxury, making exclusive experiences accessible to a broader consumer base. This requires destinations to balance exclusive, high-end branding with inclusive offerings to cater to both luxury and masstige segments (Genç, 2019).

A luxury destination brand combines products, services, and experiences perceived as prestigious (Krupka et al., 2021). Destination image is crucial as it influences tourists' perceptions, attitudes, and behavioural intentions (Morando and Platania, 2022; Muntean et al., 2023). Factors contributing to perceived luxuriousness include accommodation quality, dining, shopping, and overall reputation (Krupka et al., 2021; Michael and Fusté-Forné, 2023). Furthermore, innovative approaches like customized activities and luxury services significantly shape the luxury tourism experience (Cerović et al., 2019).

Destination image comprises three components: conative, affective, and cognitive (Stylos et al., 2017). The cognitive dimension defines beliefs about destination attributes, such as infrastructure, amenities, and overall quality (Dean et al., 2019; Kuswardani et al., 2023). This cognitive image directly affects the affective image—the emotional response toward the destination (Chiu et al., 2016; Stylos et al., 2017). In luxury and masstige tourism, tourists hold specific cognitive beliefs regarding exclusivity and prestige (Das et al., 2022; Rodrigues et al., 2024).

Scholars have investigated cognitive image's role in this context. Kim et al. (2019) found that luxury brands emphasize sophistication, while masstige brands focus on accessibility and mass appeal. Das et al. (2022) noted that middle-class consumers purchase masstige services to enhance self-image and social status. Furthermore, a destination's cognitive image correlates with perceived value and satisfaction, impacting loyalty and revisit intentions (Hasan et al., 2022; Jiang et al., 2023; Zhang and Niyomsilp, 2020). While strong cognitive images allow for higher pricing (Hasan et al., 2022), these relationships may be moderated by event quality and memorable tourism experiences (Jeong and Kim, 2020; Wong et al., 2019).

2.2. Conative image

The conative image represents the behavioural component, reflecting tourists' intentions to visit, revisit, or recommend a destination (Woosnam et al., 2020). Luxury destinations strive for a favourable conative image to retain high-end travellers (Krupka et al., 2021; Zain et al., 2023). Quality accommodations, services, and overall experience contribute to perceived luxuriousness, shaping aspirations and consumption patterns (Liu et al., 2019; Michael and Fusté-Forné, 2023; Stylos et al., 2017).

Social media and influencer marketing significantly shape these conative aspirations (Creevey et al., 2022; Ritter, 2022). Visual storytelling by luxury hotels enhances the perception of luxuriousness and influences visitation intentions (Michael and Fusté-Forné, 2023). Furthermore, culinary experiences and luxury gastronomy, such as Michelin-starred restaurants, play a substantial role in building a destination's distinctive image and attractiveness (Batat, 2021).

The affective dimension—referring to emotional responses toward a destination—is equally crucial in luxury and masstige tourism, significantly influencing behavioural intentions (Stylos et al., 2017; Wong et al., 2019). Tourist involvement is a key determinant, as the level of engagement dictates the affective image before, during, and after a trip (Wang et al., 2016).

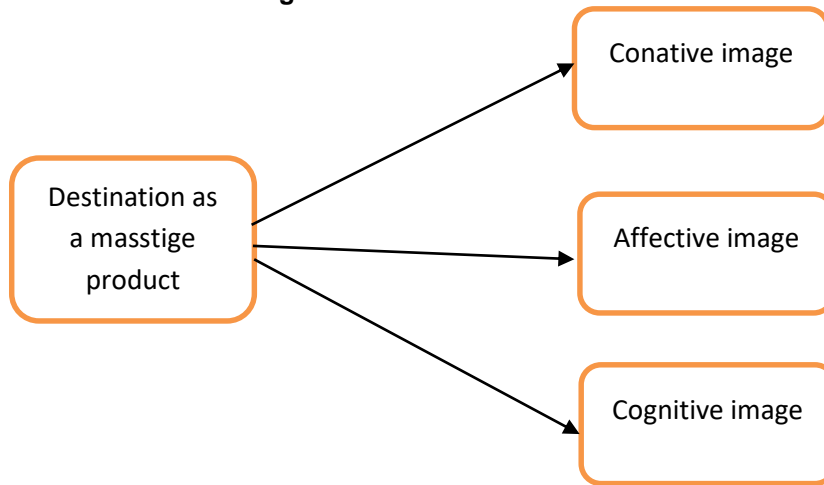
High-quality social media information also positively influences affective image formation (Dinc, 2024; Llodra-Riera et al., 2015). Affective cues received from online platforms are critical given the increasing dependence on digital information. Additionally, social responsibility efforts can shape affective image and loyalty, especially when a destination's values align with tourists' self-concepts (Yu and Hwang, 2019). This underscores the importance of responsible practices in luxury contexts.

Research suggests that affective image can sometimes exert a greater influence on behavioural intentions than cognitive image (Sharma and Nayak, 2019). For example, food image as an affective component moderates attitudes toward luxury dining (Peng et al., 2021). Finally, the affective image is a determinant of general competitiveness and sustainability (Pavlič et al., 2021). Linking responsible tourism to sustainability further highlights the role of emotional components in this process (Rasdi et al., 2022). Consequently, social media, involvement, and social responsibility strongly influence the affective image, impacting tourist behaviour and destination competitiveness. Conceptual

framework of the study is shown in figure 1. From the above discussion, the hypotheses are stated as follows:

- H₁:** Masstige significantly influence tourist affective image
- H₂:** Masstige significantly influence tourist cognitive image
- H₃:** Masstige significantly influence tourist conative image

Figure 1: Research model



3. Methodology

This research aims to understand how destination as a masstige product influence on destination image including affective, conative and cognitive image. Thus, this study tested the relationship between masstige and affective, cognitive and conative image through quantitative research approach.

3.1. Research setting

Alaçatı has evolved into a premier luxury tourism destination characterized by its distinct blend of historical architecture, boutique accommodations, and refined dining establishments. The destination aligns with Dłużewska and Kemp (2023) definition of luxury tourism through its emphasis on personalized service and exclusive experiences. The region has successfully incorporated sustainable practices into its luxury offerings, responding to wealthy travelers' growing environmental consciousness, as identified by (De Nisco et al., 2015). This commitment to sustainability is evident in eco-friendly lodgings and farm-to-table dining experiences. Alaçatı's luxury status is further enhanced by prestigious events like the Herb Festival, which serves both cultural and high-end branding purposes. Additionally, as Avcı and Barışık (2015) note, the area's exceptional windsurfing conditions attract affluent sports enthusiasts seeking premium experiences in an exclusive setting. These combined elements—sustainability, cultural authenticity, and specialized activities—have solidified Alaçatı's position in the luxury tourism market.

3.2. Research instrument

In order to investigate the association between the variables proposed in current research model, five-section survey was designed. The first section measured the destination as a masstige product (Singh, 2024), whereas second section assessed the conative image (Stylos et al., 2016). Third section delved into affective image (Stylos et al., 2016). Conative image is further evaluated in fourth section. Finally, participant demographics were captured in the fifth section. A seven-point Likert-type scale is utilized to measure all items in questionnaire. Prior to implementing the main study, the survey instrument underwent expert validation through review by four scholars with expertise in the research domain. Following minor refinements based on expert feedback, a pilot study was administered to 25 travellers to test the instrument's validity, reliability, and practical applicability. The pilot study results indicated no necessity for further modifications to the measurement items, thus enabling the commencement of the primary data collection phase.

3.3. Data collection

Data collection employed purposive sampling, targeting Turkish travelers who were familiar with Alacati and perceived it as a luxury destination. Before initiating the data collection process, ethical approval was obtained in accordance with the guidelines of Nevşehir Hacı Bektaş Veli University's ethics committee. To validate this perception, respondents were required to answer to two screening questions with regards to their assessment of the destination's luxury status. The survey was administered electronically, with 400 questionnaires distributed online. A total of 203 valid responses were obtained, provided an adequate sample size for testing both the measurement and structural models. Respondents' demographics are illustrated in detail in table 1 below.

Table 1: Demographics of research participants (n-203)

	Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	116	57.4
	Female	86	42.6
Age	18-25	96	47.5
	26-40	85	42.1
	41-55	17	8.4
	56-70	4	2.0
Income	19.999 TL and under	20	9.9
	20.00-29.999 TL	36	17.8
	30.000-39.999 TL	46	22.7
	40.000-49.999 TL	49	24.2
	50.00 TL and over	51	25.2

3.4. Data analysis

Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) is utilized to analyze the data, given its capability to assess and modify theoretical models. As Hair Jr, Hult, Ringle, and Sarstedt (2016) note, PLS-SEM provides researchers with the flexibility to expand existing structural theories. This analytical approach was particularly appropriate as it emphasizes predictive accuracy and remains robust regardless of sample size and data normality assumptions. The analysis was conducted through SmartPLS 4 software to evaluate the proposed theoretical models.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1. Measurement model

The data analysis started with an evaluation of the measurement model, examining discriminant validity, convergent validity, internal consistency, and item outer loadings. After conducting measurement model test, insufficient factor loading for some of the questionnaire items are recognized. After deleting items, measurement test was reconducted. All factor loadings have adequate score recommended threshold of 0.70 (Sarstedt et al., 2017) meaning that all items has adequate loading score. Internal consistency was tested through three measures: composite reliability, Cronbach's Alpha, and rho_A values. The composite reliability values ranged from 0.905 to 0.953, surpassing the acceptable threshold of 0.70 (Hair Jr et al., 2014a). Similarly, Cronbach's Alpha coefficients demonstrated satisfactory reliability with values between 0.882 and 0.927. All rho_A values exceeded the required threshold of 0.70, further confirming internal consistency.

Convergent validity was established through Average Explained Variance (AVE) analysis. The AVE values ranged from 0.515 to 0.872, providing sufficient value the recommended threshold of 0.50 (Hair Jr et al., 2014a). One item from the destination as a masstige product construct was eliminated due to its adverse impact on the AVE value. Discriminant validity was tested via the Fornell-Larcker ratio, a contemporary approach gaining prominence in recent literature (Hair Jr et al., 2016). Collectively, these results confirm the establishment of both convergent and discriminant validity for the measurement model.

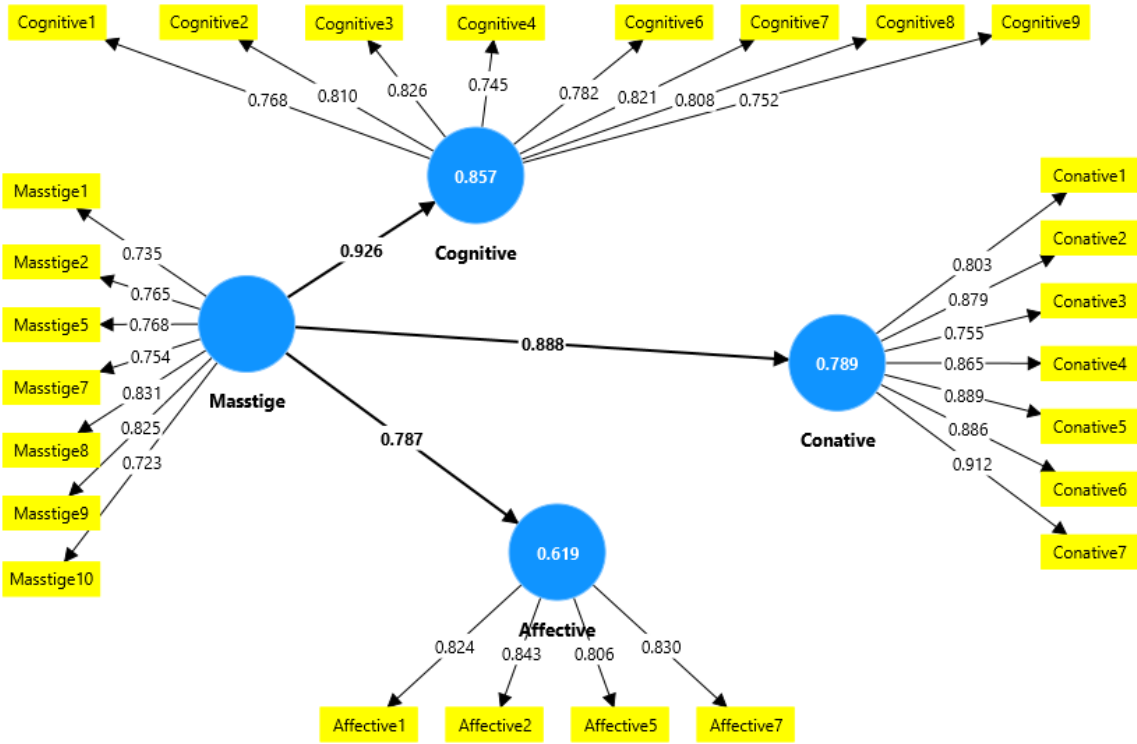
Table 2: Assessment of measurement model

Constructs	Item	Outer loading	Cronbach's alpha	rho_a	CR	AVE
Masstige	1	0.735	0.888	0.898	0.912	0.597
	2	0.723				
	3	0.765				
	4	0.768				
	5	0.754				
	6	0.831				
	7	0.825				
Affective image	1	0.824	0.844	0.845	0.896	0.682
	2	0.843				
	3	0.806				
	4	0.830				
Cognitive image	1	0.768	0.913	0.917	0.930	0.623
	2	0.810				
	3	0.826				
	4	0.745				
	5	0.782				
	6	0.821				
	7	0.808				
	8	0.752				
Conative image	1	0.803	0.939	0.945	0.951	0.735
	2	0.879				
	3	0.755				
	4	0.865				
	5	0.889				
	6	0.886				
	7	0.912				

Table 3: Discriminant validity

Construct	Affective image	Cognitive image	Conative image	Masstige
Affective	0.848			
Cognitive	0.837	0.926		
Conative	0.826	0.888	0.957	
Masstige	0.787	0.789	0.878	0.882

Figure 2: The results of the measurement model



4.2. Structural model

This study tested the relationship between the destination as a masstige product and destination image including affective, cognitive and conative image. According to the results of the structural model, the influence of masstige on affective, cognitive and conative image of destination were confirmed.

Figure 3: The results of the structural model test with p values

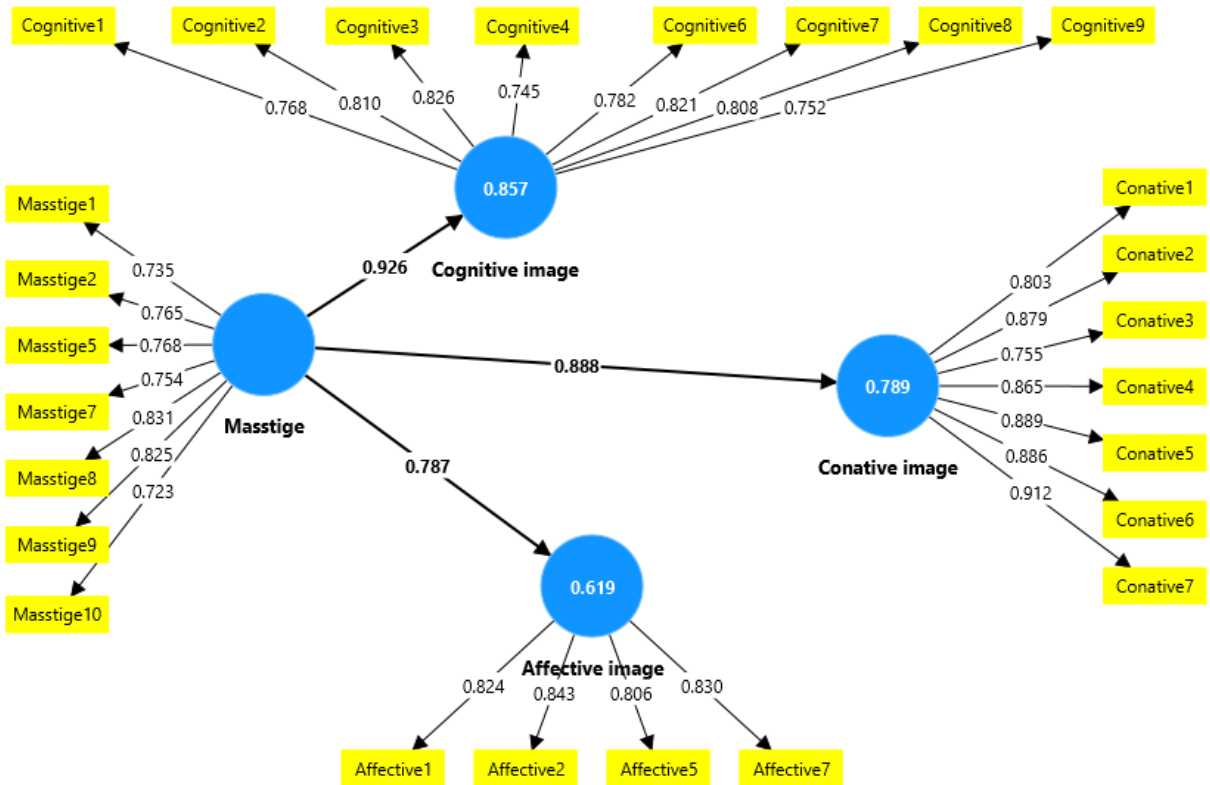


Table 4: The result of the structural model

Path	β	S.d	t	p	R-square	Hypotheses
Masstige -> Affective image	0.787	0.023	34.412	0.000	0.619	H1-accepted
Masstige -> Cognitive image	0.926	0.009	106.843	0.000	0.857	H2-accepted
Masstige -> Conative image	0.888	0.015	60.358	0.000	0.789	H3-accepted

As can be seen from the table 4, the findings of the study confirmed significant evidence for all three hypotheses. The analysis pertaining to H1, which postulated a significant relationship between masstige and tourist affective image, revealed a substantial positive association ($\beta = 0.787$, $t = 34.412$, $p < 0.001$). The coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.619 indicates that masstige explains approximately 61.9% of the variance in tourists' affective image formation. This result shows similarity with results of the previous studies. Several scholars have emphasized the importance of affective image in tourism contexts (Ghorbanzadeh et al., 2022; Peng et al., 2021; Sharma and Nayak, 2019). The present study's findings complement this literature by demonstrating that masstige serves as a significant determinant in forming affective destination images. This relationship is particularly noteworthy given recent research highlighting the role of high-quality information in shaping affective images (Ghorbanzadeh et al., 2022) and the

influence of affective components on tourist attitudes and behavioural intentions (Stylos et al., 2016).

With regard to H2, which theorized a significant influence of masstige on tourist cognitive image, the findings yielded the most pronounced effect among the hypothesized relationships. The analysis revealed a remarkably strong positive relationship ($\beta = 0.926$, $t = 106.843$, $p < 0.001$), with an R^2 value of 0.857, suggesting that masstige accounts for 85.7% of the variance in cognitive image formation which is in line with prior studies by Dean et al. (2019) and Stylos et al. (2016) regarding the fundamental role of cognitive image in destination perception, while extending our understanding of how masstige specifically influences these cognitive elements. The strength of this correlation is particularly noteworthy in the context of luxury and masstige tourism, where Kim et al. (2019) and Das et al. (2022) emphasized the significance of exclusivity, prestige, and high-quality experiences in shaping tourists' perceptions. Our findings suggest that masstige effectively influences tourists' cognitive beliefs about a destination's level of luxury and quality of offerings, supporting (Kuswardani et al., 2023) assertions about the importance of destination attributes in cognitive image formation.

As for the examination of H3, which proposed a significant relationship between masstige and tourist conative image, yielded compelling empirical support ($\beta = 0.888$, $t = 60.358$, $p < 0.001$). The R^2 value of 0.789 indicates that masstige explains 78.9% of the variance in tourists' conative image formation. The substantial explained variance (78.9%) aligns with and extends Woosnam et al. (2020) conceptualization of conative image as a critical behavioural component influencing tourists' intentions to visit, revisit, or recommend destinations. Within the realm of luxury tourism, this relationship assumes heightened significance, corroborating previous scholarly work by Stylos et al. (2016) and Woosnam et al. (2020) that emphasizes conative image as a fundamental determinant of tourist aspirations and consumption behaviors. The present findings extend contemporary research, demonstrating the efficacy of masstige strategies in cultivating positive conative images that resonate with high-end travelers (Krupka et al., 2021; Zain et al., 2023).

As a result, the statistical analysis revealed that all path coefficients were found statistically meaningful at $p < 0.001$, with t -values substantially exceeding the critical thresholds. The magnitude of the standardized path coefficients (ranging from 0.787 to 0.926) provides strong evidence for the substantial positive influence of masstige across all three dimensions of tourist image formation. These results collectively highlight the pivotal influence of masstige on moulding tourists' affective, cognitive, and conative image formations.

5. Conclusion

This research aims to understand how a destination, as a masstige product, influences destination image across affective, cognitive, and conative dimensions. The results confirm that masstige has a significant influence on all three components, providing substantial theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, this study extends the understanding of masstige as a pivotal concept in luxury tourism by elucidating how accessibility and prestige coalesce to shape multidimensional tourist images. The findings reveal that masstige

democratizes luxury experiences and strengthens perceived destination value, thereby influencing preferences and behaviors. By filling a critical gap in service sector research, particularly in tourism, this study broadens the discourse on destination image and facilitates a deeper understanding of tourist choices in competitive markets. Establishing this link provides a framework for future research to explore the evolving nature of luxury consumption where tourists seek unique experiences at accessible price points. Ultimately, this investigation underscores the importance of aligning marketing strategies with consumer aspirations to enhance brand loyalty and sustainable practices. Practically, the implications are substantial for destination marketers, service providers, and policymakers. Stakeholders should focus on strategic positioning by framing destinations as masstige products, emphasizing both quality and accessibility to attract a broader audience seeking enriched experiences without prohibitive costs. Enhanced marketing campaigns should leverage these insights by designing communications that showcase high-quality services at accessible prices, which significantly influences cognitive and affective images to encourage higher engagement. Furthermore, understanding masstige's influence enables more nuanced consumer segmentation; tour operators can tailor packages for distinct groups based on their specific perceptions and motivations, thereby enhancing satisfaction. For service providers, investing in staff training focused on exceptional quality and personalized services will resonate with tourists' expectations of masstige products and reinforce positive image formations. By applying these practical implications, stakeholders can harness the power of masstige to effectively enhance destination images and drive growth within the competitive landscape of luxury tourism.

6. Limitations and recommendations

This study presents several limitations that future research should consider. First, the focus on Turkish travelers familiar with Alacati as a luxury destination, combined with purposive sampling, limits the generalizability of the findings to other demographics or geographical contexts. Future research would benefit from a more diverse participant pool, encompassing different nationalities, age groups, and income levels to capture a broader range of perceptions regarding masstige. Second, the reliance on self-administered surveys may introduce social desirability or response biases. While measures were taken to enhance validity, future studies could incorporate mixed methods, including qualitative techniques such as interviews, to gain a deeper understanding of tourists' experiences. Moreover, examining Alacati as a single case study restricts the broader understanding of masstige. Future research should explore multiple destinations to compare masstige's effects on destination images across varied cultural and infrastructural settings. Finally, while this study concentrated on affective, cognitive, and conative dimensions, it did not examine factors such as cultural influences, environmental sustainability, or social responsibility. Future investigations could expand this focus to include these elements, offering a more comprehensive understanding of destination image formation.

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Katkı Oranı Tablosu

Hakem Değerlendirmesi: Dış bağımsız.	Bilgilendirilmiş Onam Formu: Tüm taraflar kendi rızaları ile çalışmaya dâhil olmuşlardır.
Teşekkür: Katkılarından dolayı hakemlere teşekkür ederiz.	Araştırmacıların Katkı Oranı: Yazarlar çalışmaya eşit oranda katkı sağlamıştır. Yüzde yüz.
Destek Bilgisi: Yok	Etik Kurul Onayı: Nevşehir Hacı Bektaş Üniversitesi, Bilimsel Araştırmalar ve Yayın Etik Kurulu, 10.01.2025 Tarih ve karar numarası 2025.01.30
Çıkar Çatışması: Yazarlar arasında çıkar çatışması yoktur.	