

## The Consequences of Social Comparison on Price-Quality Schema, Prestige Sensitivity, and Willingness to Purchase

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### Abstract

*Consumers interact with other consumers and often compare themselves with others. This consumer tendency shows social comparison. Masstige, which stands for prestige for the masses, may involve this case. However, it has received less attention in previous studies. This study examines the consequences of social comparison on price-quality schema, prestige sensitivity, and willingness to purchase a masstige brand. This study also examines the mediation of price-quality schema and prestige sensitivity on the effect of social comparison on willingness to purchase. A consumer survey was conducted to test these effects, and 240 respondents participated. The data in this study were analyzed using structural equation modeling. The analysis results show that social comparison affects price-quality schema and prestige sensitivity and subsequently affects willingness to purchase. This study also found mediation of price-quality schema and prestige sensitivity on the effect of social comparison on willingness to purchase. The above findings indicate that marketers of masstige brands can utilize social comparison to market their products.*

**Keywords:** prestige sensitivity; price-quality schema; social comparison; willingness to purchase

## INTRODUCTION

The number of middle-class people in Indonesia provides promising business opportunities. Around 115 million Indonesians were heading toward the middle class (databoks.kadata.co.id, 2022). The middle class is a significant market segment with strong purchasing power and diverse needs. They are looking for products and services to fulfill their increasingly modern lifestyles. The middle class seeks quality products and services for a better lifestyle (Lotulung, Mandey, et al., 2023). This increasing lifestyle causes the middle class to have a close relationship with purchasing masstige products (Kumar et al., 2020).

Masstige is synonymous with affordable luxury. Masstige has recently stood out with luxury branding strategies in recent years (Firmansyah & Burhanudin, 2023; Kumar

et al., 2020). This makes many middle-class people dare to target them as prestige product category. Hermawan (2020) states that the character of the middle class in Indonesia relies on emotional connection to satisfy desire to improve their quality of life. Being in a community with a social status that is different from individuals certainly creates a reality of its own (Rahyu Fasya & Burhanudin, 2022; Suzuki & Kanno, 2022). The reality of social comparison may motivate social status preferences that want to be achieved to encourage fulfilling needs.

Social comparison plays an essential role in perception and preference. The existence of social comparison makes consumers often compare themselves with others. Le (2020) states that individuals often compare themselves in two aspects, namely, the ability aspect and the opinion aspect. This opinion is a response that can help understand how they are accepted or rejected by the social environment (Panjaitan et al., 2021). Factors such as price-quality schema and prestige sensitivity influence social comparison. However, Pillai & Nair (2021) research is limited to luxury products, not prestige.

Concerning the massive social comparison, this link to price-quality schema in the prestige context requires deeper exploration. Price-quality schema makes consumers assess product quality and price based on how much the product meets their expectations and needs (KM & Jaidev, 2022). Consumers are constantly assessing the performance of a product. Rukmana Poha et al. (2022) state that this can be seen from the product's ability to create quality and specifications to attract consumers to make purchases. This makes consumers compare the price and quality of products from similar brands before deciding to buy.

Apart from quality, consumers also often consider prestige value. Prestige sensitivity relates to the perception of profitability where price indicates exclusivity. In prestige sensitivity, the perceptions of others are considered necessary, and individuals want recognition from others (Tjahjawati et al., 2022). Prestige-sensitive consumers tend to see products as limited and only accessible to a select few. They feel the benefit when they can obtain or use products with this exclusive status because this exclusivity can increase their confidence and social status (Nguyen, 2020).

After understanding a product's quality, price, and prestige value, consumers may become more motivated to make a purchase. Willingness to purchase refers to a consumer's behavioral intention to purchase a particular product. The willingness to buy can also be influenced by personality traits, beliefs, and the need for touch (Hermes et al., 2022). Consumers tend to buy a product if they consider it useful for their needs or desires (Lai et al., 2022). Talwar et al. (2021) state that understanding customers' willingness to buy can help companies develop marketing strategies.

This study examines the relationship between social comparison and willingness to purchase by mediating price-quality schema and prestige sensitivity. This research is necessary both theoretically and practically. From a theoretical point of view, research on social comparison affects willingness to purchase has never been done in the context of prestige brands, even though, based on Pillai & Nair (2021), social comparison influences price-quality schema and prestige sensitivity. KM & Jaidev (2022) also state that price-quality schema and prestige sensitivity affect consumer purchases. From a practical point of view, this research can be a benchmark for managers in increasing consumer willingness to buy by utilizing the perception of social comparison by prioritizing quality, price, and value perceptions that can make consumers feel superior and confident.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT**

### **Social Comparison**

Social comparison is the basis of this study. Social comparison refers to individuals evaluating themselves, starting from their abilities, opinions, attitudes, feelings, physique, features, achievements, and other aspects related to others (Todd & Shackelford, 2020). Comparing oneself is the most basic way to develop an understanding of who one is. The existence of comparison makes someone want to buy items that can support their appearance. Purchases that occur are intended to seek social validation from society (Todd & Shackelford, 2020). Shukla & Purani (2012) state that personal judgment and perceived value are considered essential because they act as the main drivers behind the intention to buy luxury goods, especially in developing countries.

Social comparison is needed in sales strategy. Previous social comparison research has only examined luxury purchases (Pillai & Nair, 2021). Prestige brands are "new luxury" brands that offer higher quality products than mass-market goods (Kumar et al., 2020; Rahyu Fasya & Burhanudin, 2022). Prestige brands are less expensive than luxury brands, so middle-class consumers widely target them. Social comparison research on prestige brands has not been conducted by previous researchers (Firmansyah & Burhanudin, 2023; Rahyu Fasya & Burhanudin, 2022).

### **Price-Quality Schema**

Price quality plays an essential role in consumer decision-making. Price-quality schema refers to price and its relation to product quality (Lichtenstein et al., 1993). Consumers tend to use price to assess overall product superiority or inferiority. Consumers who choose products with better quality tend to prefer to pay high prices (Rahman et al., 2020; Tsalis, 2020). High prices give customers an instinctive positive

relationship between product price and quality which will determine the purchase (Tsalis, 2020).

Price-quality schema can help consumers filter their choices by choosing products according to preferences and budget. Price-quality schema has been investigated in previous research in comparing the US and Chinese markets (Zhou et al., 2002) and in organic food (KM & Jaidev, 2022). The research found that price-quality schema is essential for marketers to understand because price-quality will impact consumer purchases (KM & Jaidev, 2022; Zhou et al., 2002). Research on price-quality schema in the context of masstige brands has yet to be conducted in Indonesia. Appropriate pricing by aligning product quality can help companies build a strong brand image and win the competition in the market.

### **Prestige sensitivity**

Prestige sensitivity has an involvement with dignity. Prestige Sensitivity is based on situations where consumers send signals of being willing to pay higher prices to accentuate a sense of status and good perception (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2020). As a result, prestige-sensitive buyers are willing to pay higher prices for prestige goods to impress others. To improve their self-ideal, they use prestige to reflect the desired image (KM & Jaidev, 2022). Thus, brand purchasing behavior reflects a person's desire for a public self-image.

Prestige sensitivity is essential in consumer purchasing decisions. Previously, research has been conducted in the fashion sector in Australia (Casidy, 2012) and cell phones in Vietnam (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2020). The research shows prestige sensitivity as a criterion for effective market segmentation as a brand attraction (Casidy, 2012; Nguyen & Nguyen, 2020). Previous research on prestige sensitivity in Indonesia in the context of masstige brands has yet to be conducted.

### **Willingness to Purchase**

The main factor in willingness to buy is the consumer's desire for the usefulness of a product. The probability of willingness to purchase can be seen as a consumer's objective preference to choose a brand with positive benefits (Chen & Lin, 2019). Before buying, consumers will search for relevant information based on their experience and the external environment before buying. After collecting a certain amount of information, consumers begin to evaluate, consider, and compare and then become willing to purchase (Chen & Lin, 2019).

Willingness to purchase is used as a key in consumer purchasing behavior. Previous research has examined the perspectives of new store brands (Zielke & Dobbelstein, 2007) organicfood (Talwar et al., 2021), and luxury brands (Pillai & Nair, 2021). The research shows that willingness to purchase depends on price and consumer trust in

the brand (Pillai & Nair, 2021; Talwar et al., 2021; Zielke & Doppelstein, 2007). A willingness to purchase has yet to be investigated in the context of masstige brands, especially in Indonesia. Therefore, this study explores willingness to purchase masstige products to provide novelty.

## **HYPOTHESIS**

### **The effect of social comparison on price-quality schema**

Marketers need to analyze how to know social comparison affects price-quality schema. Social comparison and price-quality schema compare traits that make someone want to buy quality products to support their appearance (Pillai & Nair, 2021). Marketers need to set prices that match the quality of the product to attract consumer interest. Tsalis (2020) states that consumers have an instinctive positive relationship between product price and quality which will determine the purchase. Social comparisons can strengthen consumers' price-quality schema, thus influencing decisions in choosing products based on the price and quality associated with the product.

This study argues that social comparison has a significant effect on price-quality schema. When consumers make a social comparison, consumers often compare the price and quality of the products they buy with others (Pillai & Nair, 2021; Tsalis, 2020). This can affect consumers' perceptions of the relationship between price and product quality, especially if consumers see that other people buy products with higher prices but quality (Todd & Shackelford, 2020). This argument underlies this study to formulate the following hypothesis.

### **H1: Social comparison has a significant effect on price-quality schema**

### **The effect of social comparison on prestige sensitivity**

Social comparison is essential in understanding prestige sensitivity. Social comparison and prestige sensitivity are related to a person's sensitivity to their social status or position. Todd & Shackelford (2020) state that by making social comparisons, consumers can understand their social position and the social rewards achieved. Consumers choose products with higher and exclusive prices because they believe that these products are in a particular social class status (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2020). Seeing the rapid economic growth in Indonesia, marketers need to analyze consumers' sensitivity to social status and product prestige.

This study argues that social comparison has a direct effect on prestige sensitivity. Based on the research results by Pillai & Nair (2021), social comparison has a positive effect on prestige sensitivity. Social comparison can trigger prestige sensitivity because of the comparison between oneself and others who are considered more successful or have higher prestige (Le, 2020). Pillai & Nair (2021) also mentioned

that social comparison is essential in understanding prestige sensitivity. This statement underlies the research to formulate the following hypothesis:

**H2: Social comparison has a significant effect on prestige sensitivity.**

**The effect of price-quality schema on willingness to purchase**

Understanding how price-quality schema affects willingness to purchase in the context of prestige brands in Indonesia is essential. The relationship between price-quality schema and willingness to purchase has previously been carried out in the UK and India (Pillai & Nair, 2021). KM & Jaidev (2022) argues that consumers with a price-quality schema believe that what is paid is what is obtained. Pillai & Nair (2021) also explain from this relationship that consumers tend to like products that have quality equivalent to the price given. Superior quality can foster consumer confidence to purchase (Talwar et al., 2021).

This research is based on consumers in Indonesia. Consumers believe that product quality is the primary consideration in purchases (KM & Jaidev, 2022). Pillai & Nair (2021) also argue that price-quality schema is a driver of luxury purchases, but this only applies to the UK as an individualist and developed country, while in India, it was found that price-quality schema did not affect willingness to purchase. It is necessary to test again whether price-quality schema affects willingness to purchase the same as previous research. This argument underlies the research to formulate the following hypothesis:

**H3: Price-quality schema has a significant effect on willingness to purchase**

**The effect of prestige sensitivity on Willingness to purchase**

The effect of prestige sensitivity on willingness to purchase is essential to examine. Pillai & Nair (2021) argue that the effect of prestige sensitivity on willingness to purchase shows an essential part of understanding purchases. KM & Jaidev (2022) also argue that prestige sensitivity makes consumers sensitive in purchasing. Chen & Lin (2019) also state that willingness to purchase can be seen as a favorable consumer preference for choosing a product or brand. Seeing the rapid consumer buying interest in prestige brands, connecting prestige sensitivity and willingness to purchase is essential.

Prestige sensitivity has a strong influence on willingness to purchase. Pillai & Nair (2021) state prestige sensitivity significantly affects purchasing willingness. KM & Jaidev (2022) also believe that prestige sensitivity strongly influences the continuation of buying. In the principle of prestige sensitivity, price is an indicator that represents the social significance that consumers expect from purchasing and using products (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2020). These arguments underlie this study to formulate the following hypothesis.

**H4: Prestige sensitivity has a significant effect on willingness to purchase**

**The effect of social comparison on willingness to purchase through the mediation of price-quality schema**

Investigating whether price-quality schema mediates the relationship between social comparison and willingness to purchase is essential. Social comparison can trigger brand perception and self-confidence, encouraging consumers' willingness to purchase (Moorse et al., 2021). Tsalis (2020) states that consumers often pay attention to better prices and quality because consumers think this can show luxury that can support social status. The effect of social comparison on willingness to purchase through the mediation of price-quality schema in the context of masstige has not been carried out, even though masstige is often targeted by middle and upper-class consumers as a form of self-reward or pleasure (Kumar et al., 2020).

This study argues that price-quality schema is a mediating variable for the effect of social comparison on willingness to purchase. This is based on Pillai & Nair (2021) who state that increasing social comparison shows how consumer purchasing perceptions influence willingness to purchase. This consumer purchase perception refers to product quality commensurate with price (Pillai & Nair, 2021). This means that if consumers have a price-quality schema perception, the willingness to buy consumers will continue to occur due to the influence of social comparison. Referring to the arguments above, this study formulates the following hypothesis:

**H5: Social comparison has a significant effect on willingness to purchase through price-quality schema mediation.**

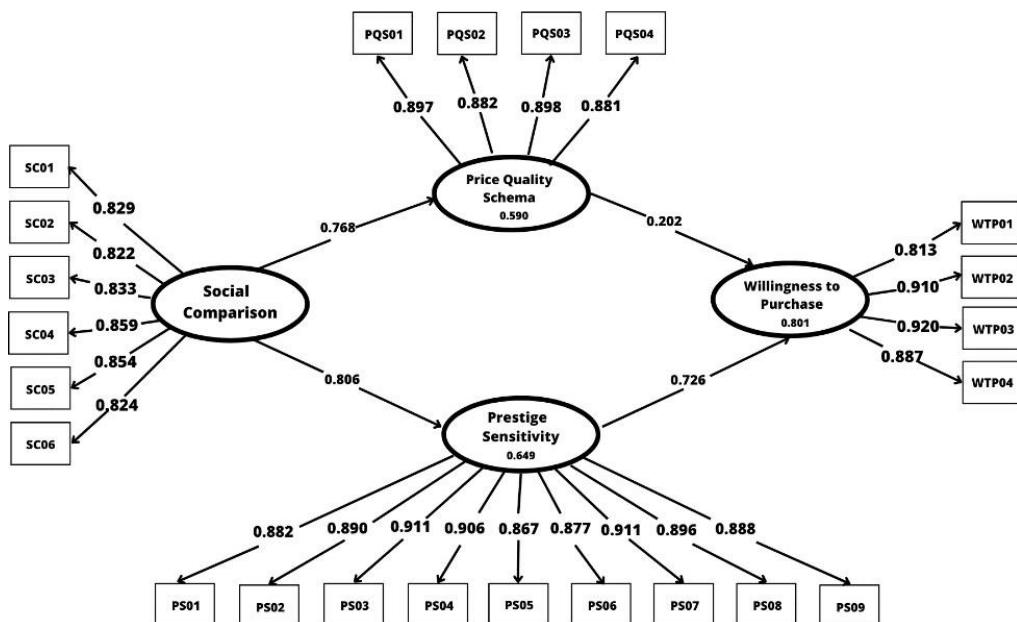
**The effect of social comparison on willingness to purchase through the mediation of prestige sensitivity**

Further understanding of the effect of social comparison on willingness to purchase through the mediation of prestige sensitivity is essential. Todd & Shackelford (2020) state that social comparison is a factor that influences consumers to feel sensitive to their status and self-image. The existence of a social class drives the willingness to purchase from consumers, often used as a social comparison (KM & Jaidev, 2022). The effect of social comparison on willingness to purchase through the mediation of prestige sensitivity in the context of masstige brands has yet to be done. This is the basis for research to examine the effect of social comparison on willingness to purchase through the mediation of prestige sensitivity.

This study argues that prestige sensitivity mediates the influence of social comparison on willingness to purchase. This is supported by previous research, which states that consumer willingness to buy can be influenced by social comparison, where individuals often compare themselves with others (Pillai & Nair, 2021). Moorse et al.

(2021) state that consumers who compare themselves with others are often more sensitive to the opinions of others, so prestige and self-esteem are essential. This can continue to happen if consumers are influenced by social comparisons in their environment, which causes consumers to be willing to buy goods that they think are luxurious and able to improve. Their social status this argument makes this study formulate the following hypothesis:

**H6: Social comparison has a significant effect on willingness to purchase through the mediation of prestige sensitivity.**



Sumber :

**Figure 1. The results of structural model assessment**

## RESEARCH METHOD

Social comparison can influence individuals to create a perception of assessing and comparing both themselves and perceptions of others regarding their abilities. This makes individuals use luxury goods as proof of status (Soni, 2022). In connection with this, previous research only refers to luxury brands (Pillai & Nair, 2021) and brand addiction (Le, 2020), so current researchers chose to focus more on a masstige brand, The Body Shop.

The respondents of this research are consumers in Indonesia. To examine whether The Body Shop brand is a masstige brand, researchers surveyed by distributing questionnaires to 101 respondents, and the results showed that The Body Shop has a masstige brand score of 55.90 (Paul, 2015). It is also supported by previous research, which states that The Body Shop is one of the masstige brands (Goyal, 2020). Furthermore, this research data is collected through purposive sampling by distributing questionnaires to consumers who meet the criteria. These, namely consumers, have purchased The Body Shop products. The distribution of questionnaires was carried out and got 240 respondents. The number of respondents met the minimum requirement of 200 respondents for data analysis with structural equation models (Kline, 2022).

This study uses previous research as the basis for preparing the questionnaire. The social comparison was measured using six question items from Le (2020), one of which was, "In social situations, I sometimes compare my appearance with the appearance of others." The price-quality schema was measured using four question items from Pillai & Nair (2021) one of which is "The higher the price of The Body Shop products, the higher the quality." Prestige sensitivity was measured using nine question items from Pillai & Nair (2021), one of which was "People notice when I buy the most expensive The Body Shop products." Willingness to purchase was measured using four question items from Pillai & Nair (2021), one of which is "I will consider buying The Body Shop products." This study used a seven-point scale, where one represents strongly disagree, and seven represents strongly agree, as an optimal number of response alternatives (Preston & Colman, 2000). Furthermore, Smart PLS 3.0 was used for the analysis of testing research instruments and hypotheses.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study uses a measurement model with several procedures to ensure the validity of whether the questions in the questionnaire can be trusted. The first step in evaluating the measurement model is to check the indicator loading. A loading value

above 0.708 indicates that this value can explain more than 50 percent of the indicator variance, indicating item reliability (Hair et al., 2019).

**Table 1.**  
**Loading factor and AVE**

<b>Variabel</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>Loading</b>	<b>AVE</b>
Price-Quality Schema	PQS01	0.897	0.791
	PQS02	0.882	
	PQS03	0.898	
	PQS04	0.881	
Prestige Sensitivity	PS01	0.882	0.796
	PS02	0.890	
	PS03	0.911	
	PS04	0.906	
	PS05	0.867	
	PS06	0.877	
	PS07	0.911	
	PS08	0.896	
	PS09	0.888	
	SC01	0.829	
Social Comparison	SC02	0.822	0.701
	SC03	0.833	
	SC04	0.859	
	SC05	0.854	
	SC05	0.824	
Willingness to Purchase Luxury Brand	WTP01	0.813	0.784
	WTP02	0.910	
	WTP03	0.929	
	WTP04	0.887	

**Note:** AVE, Average Variance Extract

The results in Table 1 show that all factor loading values more than 0.708, so the variance of the indicators on all variables is more than 50 percent. This shows that the reliability of the question items on the questionnaire is acceptable. This study uses AVE indicator to test convergent validity (Hair et al., 2019). The AVE value of each acceptable variable must be more than 0.50 to explain at least 50 percent of the variance of the existing items.

AVE value in Table 1 shows that all variables are above 0.50, so it can be concluded that at least 50 percent of the objective variance supports the construct convergently (Hair et al., 2019). The next step is internal consistency testing looks at Cronbach's

Alpha and Composite Reliability. Internal consistency is acceptable if the variable value of Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability is above 0.7 (Hair et al., 2019).

**Table 2.**  
**Reliability Test**

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
Price-Quality Schema	0.912	0.938
Prestige Sensitivity	0.968	0.972
Social Comparison	0.915	0.933
Willingness To Purchase Luxury Brand	0.907	0.936

Table 2 shows that Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values on the variables are above 0.70. The next test is discriminant validity, used to show empirically the differences between variables, where the Average Variance Extract (AVE) squared must be larger than the correlation of one variable with another. Table 3 shows that the discriminant validity of the variables is fulfilled so that the variables are empirically different or have significant differences from other variables(Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

**Table 3.**  
**Discriminant validity**

	1	2	3	4
1	Price-Quality Schema	<b>0.889</b>		
2	Prestige Sensitivity	0.796	<b>0.892</b>	
3	Social Comparison	0.768	0.806	<b>0.837</b>
4	Willingness to Purchase	0.780	0.887	0.779
				<b>0.886</b>

**Note:** The bold diagonal shows the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE)

The results of the structural model evaluation presented in Table 4 are illustrated in Figure 1. All hypotheses were supported. Social comparison significantly affects the price-quality schema (0.768,  $p < 0.001$ ), so H1 is supported. Social comparison significantly affects prestige sensitivity (0.806,  $p < 0.001$ ), so H2 is supported. A price-quality schema significantly affects willingness to buy (0.202,  $p < 0.05$ ), so H3 is supported. Prestige sensitivity significantly affects willingness to buy (0.726,  $p < 0.001$ ), so H4 is supported. Social comparison significantly affects willingness to purchase through the price-quality schema (0.155,  $p < 0.05$ ), so H5 is supported. Social comparison significantly affects willingness to buy through prestige sensitivity (0.585,  $p < 0.001$ ), so H6 is supported.

**Table 4.**  
**Hypothesis Test Result**

<b>Hypothesis</b>	<b>Direct Effect</b>	<b>Indirect Effect</b>	<b>Total Effect</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>
H1: Social Comparison → Price-Quality Schema	0.768***	-	-	Supported
H2: Social Comparison → Prestige Sensitivity	0.806***	-	-	Supported
H3: Price-Quality Schema → Willingness to Purchase	0.202***	-	-	Supported
H4: Prestige Sensitivity → Willingness to Purchase	0.726 ***	-	-	Supported
H5: Social Comparison → Price-Quality Schema → Willingness to Purchase	-	0.155**	0.923	Supported
H6: Social Comparison → Prestige Sensitivity → Willingness to Purchase	-	0.585***	1.391	Supported

**Notes:** \*\*\*Significant at  $p \leq 0.001$ , \*\*Significant at  $p < 0.05$ , ns Not significant at  $p > 0.05$

The increasing middle class in Indonesia has changed consumers' willingness to buy products. Consumers are increasingly willing to buy products with high prices but still affordable (Chatterjee et al., 2023), this makes masstige brands often targeted by the middle class. Social comparison can influence the desire of the middle class to improve their social status. Research on social comparison is still limited to luxury brand research conducted abroad. This research was conducted in line with the suggestions in previous research (Casidy, 2012; KM & Jaidev, 2022; Le, 2020; Pillai & Nair, 2021). The findings of this research provide an understanding of social comparison in consumers' willingness to buy (Pillai & Nair, 2021). This research has four essential findings related to this matter.

First, social comparison affects price-quality schema. This study confirms Le (2020) that managers should be able to improve quality and set aligned prices because consumers often make price and quality comparisons with similar products. The results of this study are consistent with Pillai & Nair (2021) research which states that social comparison makes consumers selective in purchasing choices and must meet standards related to product price and quality. This study focuses on social comparison, which helps increase consumer purchase willingness on masstige brands. At the same time, Pillai & Nair (2021) research was conducted in the context of luxury brands. The above findings indicate an essential result that social comparison can influence consumer perceptions of product price and quality.

Second, the findings of this study reveal that social comparison also affects prestige sensitivity. The results of the current study are consistent with the previous research (Pillai & Nair, 2021). The difference from this study focuses on consumers in Indonesia who have bought masstige products. At the same time Pillai & Nair (2021)discusses consumers in the UK and India regarding luxury brands. Social comparison encourages consumers to pay attention to their social status by arousing sensitivity or sensitivity to consumptive behavior. These findings are significant because they indicate the consistency of the influence of social comparison in increasing prestige sensitivity. Respondents in this study were dominated by women, which Todd & Shackelford (2020) state that women more often compare appearance and price, while men tend to make comparisons on the meaning of life.

Third, price-quality schema has a significant effect on willingness to purchase. This study's results align with KM & Jaidev (2022) but need to be fully in line with the results of the previous study (Pillai & Nair, 2021).Pillai & Nair (2021) reveal that if the price-quality schema significantly affects willingness to purchase, it only applies in the UK as an individualist and developed country, while in India, it has no effect. The difference is that this research focuses on masstige brands in Indonesia, while KM & Jaidev (2022) on organic food in India, and Pillai & Nair (2021) on luxury brands in the UK and India. The results of this study are essential in connection with the development of masstige brands in the world of shopping. The character of the respondents of this study is dominated by consumers who have bought masstige products, so they emphasize the importance of the relationship between price and product quality in purchasing decisions. This is in line with Tsalis (2020) that consumers rely on price information as a clue to assess product quality.

Fourth, prestige sensitivity is significantly related to willingness to purchase. This study's results align with the research of Pillai & Nair (2021) and KM & Jaidev (2022). The difference is that this study focuses on masstige brands in Indonesia, KM & Jaidev (2022) on organic food in India, and Pillai & Nair (2021) examine luxury brands in the UK and India. These findings are essential for understanding consumer patterns sensitive to social status and respect from others. The character of the respondents in this study is dominated by consumers who think buying the most expensive product can make consumers feel classier. This is in line with Casidy (2012), who states that consumer confidence significantly influences consumer willingness to buy from consumers.

Fifth, social comparison significantly affects willingness to purchase through price-quality schema mediation. The results of this study are consistent with those (Pillai & Nair, 2021). Pillai & Nair (2021) research states that social comparison has a positive direct impact on price-quality schema, as well as price-quality schema, which has a significant effect on willingness to purchase (Pillai & Nair, 2021). This research

differs from previous research, namely Pillai & Nair (2021) which focuses on luxury brands in the UK and India, and KM & Jaidev (2022) on organic food in India. Many consumers consider price and good quality to avoid getting a frivolous view in society in making purchases. This finding is essential, as social comparison often occurs in society, increasing people's willingness to buy prestige brands. This study has findings that show the effect of social comparison on willingness to purchase through price-quality schema mediation.

Sixth, social comparison significantly affects willingness to purchase through prestige sensitivity. These results are consistent with Pillai & Nair (2021) research which states that social comparison has a significant effect on prestige sensitivity, as well as prestige sensitivity which has a significant effect on willingness to purchase (KM & Jaidev, 2022; Pillai & Nair, 2021). This study differs from previous research, namely Pillai & Nair (2021) which focuses on luxury brands in the UK and India, and KM & Jaidev (2022) on organic food in India. The social comparison that consumers feel can encourage prestige sensitivity and willingness to purchase a product. This finding is important; the higher the willingness to purchase, the greater the product's prestige.

### **Theoretical Implications**

The results of this study have theoretical and managerial implications. The theoretical implications are, first, social comparison has a significant effect on the price-quality schema. This theoretical implication is essential because social comparison and price-quality schema compare traits. However, studies examining both constructs are limited (Pillai & Nair, 2021). Second, social comparison has a significant effect on prestige sensitivity. Social comparisons make people more sensitive to social position, making them choose exclusive products to achieve a particular social class but receive little attention from the previous studies (Todd & Shackelford, 2020). Third, the price-quality schema has a significant effect on willingness to purchase. This theoretical implication is essential to advance our understanding that every consumer does not want to regret what has been purchased, where the price must match the quality obtained (KM & Jaidev, 2022). Fourth, prestige sensitivity has a significant effect on willingness to purchase. This theoretical implication is essential because the nature of consumers who tend to fulfill their prestige can make them willing to make purchases, especially on goods that can support their confidence (KM & Jaidev, 2022; Pillai & Nair, 2021). Fifth, social comparison significantly affects willingness to purchase through the mediation of price-quality schema. This theoretical implication is essential because the nature of comparing narratives in humans makes consumers try to look better. It encourages consumers' willingness to buy (Moorse et al., 2021). Buying commensurate goods, starting from price and quality, becomes a determining factor (Tsalis, 2020). Sixth, social comparison

significantly affects willingness to purchase through the mediation of prestige sensitivity. This theoretical implication is essential because social comparison makes consumers challenging to be satisfied and advances our understanding of why they tend to be impulsive and willing to purchase (Pillai & Nair, 2021; Todd & Shackelford, 2020). Prestige sensitivity helps advance the understanding of the relationship between social comparison and willingness to purchase a masstige brand (KM & Jaidev, 2022; Pillai & Nair, 2021; Rahyu Fasya & Burhanudin, 2022).

### **Managerial Implications**

This study provides several implications for marketing masstige brands. The first managerial implication of the study is that marketers of masstige products can utilize social comparison to improve price-quality schema. Marketers need to show product advantages compared to competing products to increase sales. Managers can show that the products offered have a good reputation by displaying positive reviews from consumers or users. Managers can increase consumer confidence through the quality of the products offered. But keep in mind that, the use of social comparison in marketing must be done carefully so as not to hurt consumers.

Second, marketers of masstige products can utilize social comparison to influence the level of prestige sensitivity in consumers. Managers can use repositioning to improve the status or condition of the products offered in the market. Product repositioning strategies can be carried out by changing product quantity, form of promotion, target market, and price. Product prices can affect consumer perceptions of the product's social status, products with higher prices tend to be perceived as having higher social status. Therefore, the right marketing strategy can help managers to achieve success in a business.

Third, marketers of masstige products can improve the price-quality schema to get consumers' willingness to purchase. Marketers must ensure that consumers understand the value of the products offered. By providing clear information about the advantages and benefits of the product and the reasons why the price is worth the quality. Managers can use effective communication in marketing such as websites or sales channels to illustrate product advantages. Prices that are too low can trigger perceptions of low quality, while prices that are too high can reduce appeal to price-sensitive consumers. Therefore managers must find the right price point to communicate quality and provide value to consumers.

Fourth, marketers of masstige products need to encourage consumers' willingness to buy by increasing prestige sensitivity. Manufacturers can make products prestigious by adding a well-known brand or logo to the product. Managers can build exclusivity into the brand by increasing credibility. Managers can also offer products or services that are limited in number so that the product seems exclusive.

Fifth, marketers of masstige products need to use social comparison to encourage price-quality schema so that consumers are willing to buy. Marketers can take advantage of consumers' comparing behavior by creating quality products. Managers also need to pay attention to prices to create prices that are relevant to the product. This can increase consumer willingness to buy. Consumers believe that the product has good quality and can reflect a good self-image.

Sixth, marketers of masstige products can utilize social comparison to encourage prestige sensitivity which will end in willingness to purchase. Marketers can work with relevant influencers. Consumers tend to compare themselves with influencers they admire and consumers will tend to follow in their footsteps. Marketers can build the perception that the brand is attention-grabbing. This sensitivity can influence consumer spending behavior, where consumers who have prestige sensitivity are willing to buy products that can improve their social status and confidence.

## CONCLUSION

This study provides theoretical strengthening related to examining the effect of social comparison on price-quality schemes and prestige sensitivity and the effect of both on willingness to purchase. This study also examines the mediation of price-quality schemes and prestige sensitivity on the effect of social comparison on the desire to buy. Based on the results of the research, the conclusions that can be drawn are, that social comparison has a positive effect on price-quality schema, the social comparison has a positive effect on prestige sensitivity, price-quality schema has a positive effect on willingness to purchase, prestige sensitivity has a positive effect on willingness to purchase, the positive effect of social comparison on willingness to purchase through price-quality schema mediation, the positive effect of social comparison on willingness to purchase through prestige sensitivity mediation. The suggestions for further research are suggested because this research still has limitations, so future researchers are expected to be able to examine other related variables in order to obtain more varied results.

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