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# Brand experience and consumers' social interactive engagement with brand page: An integrated-marketing perspective

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## ABSTRACT

As consumers increasingly go online to communicate about brands, brand marketers have been utilizing a popular platform to interact with them and create brand communities, namely a brand page. Prior studies have examined factors that promote the success of a brand page by narrowing focusing on only two influencing factors of engagement with the brand page: individual consumer characteristics and brand page features. Taking an integrated marketing perspective, this study extends that research by examining a broad range of influencing factors affecting engagement with brand page, such as sensory, affective, intellectual, and behavioural brand experiences. Building upon the fundamental motive framework, we demonstrate that brand experience enhances consumers' motivation to participate, socialize, and perceive benefits from others involved within the brand page regardless of individual propensity to socialize online. Furthermore, as consumers are engaged in social interaction within a brand page, they are more likely to be involved in positive WOM about the brand. The theoretical and practical contributions of our study are further discussed, along with suggestions for future research in this important and growing field.

## 1. Introduction

Online presence in 2020 has increased by nearly 10% over the previous year, with the number of internet users reaching 4.5 billion and those engaged with social media reaching 3.8 billion (Data Reportal, 2020). This dramatic increase in internet and social media users has attracted marketers, who primarily rely on Facebook (93.7%) and Twitter (84.4%) to market their brands (Buffer, 2019). Moreover, 496 of the Fortune 500 companies have used social media platforms to engage customers (Rasool et al., 2020). However, statistics showed that consumers' engagement in the brand page varies across brands (Statista, 2020). Thus, it is important to understand the factors that influence consumers' engagement on the brand page.

Research supports that marketing efforts in online presence produce positive outcomes such as purchase behaviour, positive WOM, greater brand awareness, brand search and brand equity (Yang et al., 2016; Tsai and Men, 2013). Despite its attractiveness, investment in online

presence is extensive as it involves various hidden costs such as design, endorsement, maintenance and management, updates, customization, and re-platforming (Silva, 2017; Rasool et al., 2020). Moreover, because not every online presence can benefit the brand (Rasool et al., 2020), it is critical to understand factors that promote an online presence that also benefits the brand.

An extensive literature review revealed several research gaps. First, as the company heavily invests in their online presence, they need to understand factors that influence consumers' responses to the brand page (Islam et al., 2018; Rasool et al., 2020). Previous studies examining the antecedents of consumers' engagement in the brand page generally focus on individual aspects and the features of the brand page (Mortazavi et al., 2014; Voorveld et al., 2018; Islam et al., 2020). Although consumers' engagement in the brand page varies across brands (Statista, 2020), the influence of brand aspects on consumers' engagement in the brand page has received little attention. Thus, this study is amongst the first to examine the influence of brand aspects (i.e. brand experience) on

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consumers' engagement within the brand-page.

Second and more importantly, previous studies tend to regard online presence as a predictor of brand experience (Khan et al., 2019; Hollebeek et al., 2014; Khan et al., 2016; Islam et al., 2019). Those studies generally built upon the argument that "consumers need to be engaged in the brand to create a positive brand experience." (Nysveen and Pedersen, 2014; Islam et al., 2019). However, as brand experience extends to incorporate the customer's entire journey including prior and post actual usage experience, such as prior and post to joining a brand page (Islam et al., 2019; Hollebeek and Andreassen, 2018), consumers are likely to establish brand experience prior to engaging in the brand page. For instance, a study by Hepola et al. (2017) found that consumers' sensory experience leads to brand engagement as the sensory experience influenced individuals' cognitive, affective, and activation responses toward the brand. Consistently, prior studies have found that positive brand experience increases consumers' psychological states leading to consumers' engagement within the brand pages, such as consumers' identification and emotional attachment with the brands (Tsai and Men, 2013; Khan and Rahman, 2017; Kumar and Kaushik, 2020; Kabadayi and Price, 2014). However, the examination on the direct influence of brand experience on consumers' engagement within the brand page has been overlooked. Taking a unique perspective that brand experience precedes consumers' engagement within the brand page, this research proposes brand experience as an important antecedent of consumers' social interactive engagement within a brand page and subsequently positive WOM about the brand.

Third, although it is important to promote consumers' social interactive engagement on the brand page, branding literature suggests that consumers' engagement in the brand page does not necessarily produce a positive outcome for the brand (Rasool et al., 2020). Thus, this research extends the literature by examining the influence of brand experience on consumers' social interactive engagement within a brand page and eventually on positive WOM about the brand.

Built upon a fundamental motive framework and the literature on consumers' engagement, this research proposes that brand experience leads to consumers' engagement, particularly social-interactive engagement. Subsequently, we also propose that brand experience indirectly influences consumers' WOM about the brand, mediated by social interactive engagement. Specifically, positive brand experience increases consumers' social interactive engagement in the brand-page and subsequently leads to positive WOM about the brand. In addition, we also extend the existing literature and examine the role of an individual characteristic, namely general online social interaction propensity (GOSIP), on the brand experience – WOM relationship.

Accordingly, this research aims to establish the role of brand experience and consumers' online social interactive engagement within brand pages. To do so, we conducted a survey that aims to understand consumers' evaluation of a brand in which they have recently accessed and had significant engagement with the brand-page. Furthermore, the survey aims to understand whether consumer's experience with the brand interacts with their individual aspects (i.e. GOSIP) and the subsequent influence on response toward the brand page (i.e. social interactive engagement), and ultimately their intention to engage in positive WOM about the brand. Importantly, the main contribution of this paper is to provide empirical evidence detailing the relationship between brand-experience, social interactive engagement, and WOM from an integrated marketing perspective.

## 2. Theoretical background and research framework

### 2.1. Fundamental motive framework

The fundamental motive framework is built upon the evolutionary perspective in psychology, such that humans are evolved to perform behaviours that help them overcome ancestral challenges (e.g. avoiding physical harm and disease, being sociable, attaining status, acquiring

and keeping a mate and kin caring) and hence, give them an evolutionary advantage (Confer et al., 2010). As each specific ancestral challenge is qualitatively different, humans' psychological systems are developed distinctly to deal with each unique challenge (Griskevicius and Kenrick, 2013; Maner et al., 2012). Accordingly, there are seven types of fundamental motives identified, including motives for protecting ones' selves, avoidance from disease, being affiliated, gaining or maintaining status, acquiring mate, keeping mate, and caring for kin (Griskevicius and Kenrick, 2013). In this study, we will focus on the single motive most closely related to engagement on social media, namely the *affiliation motive*, which is defined as a motive to form and maintain cooperative alliances or to engage in social contacts (Hill, 1987).

Literature suggests that by making internal or external cues salient to individuals, fundamental motives will be actuated (Kenrick et al., 2010; Paramita et al., 2020; Septianto et al., 2018). For example, the internal cue of gratitude can elicit affiliation motives to increase participation and donation behaviour (Paramita et al., 2020). And external cues, such as direct personalized contact through social media groups, can prime affiliation motives (Griskevicius and Kenrick, 2013). Fundamental motives influence individual decision making, such as in an organizational setting, within social circles, or within a consumption context (Griskevicius and Kenrick, 2013; Griskevicius et al., 2011; Griskevicius et al., 2006).

Prior studies suggest that when ones' affiliation motives are activated they are more likely to be aware of their social attention and are fundamentally moved to perform social behaviour (Griskevicius et al., 2006; Anderson and Simester, 2014; Maner et al., 2012; Neuberg and Schaller, 2014) For example, within a consumer context alone, activation of affiliation motive renders individuals to reinforce their existing friendships and encourages them to initiate behaviour to make new friends (Maner et al., 2007), increase donation behaviour (Paramita et al., 2020), increase spending to buy products that allow them to share and enjoy together with others (Mead et al., 2011), and leads to greater preference for products that can increase contact with others (e.g. social media apps like Facebook, or devices like smartphones) (Alexandrov et al., 2013; Griskevicius and Kenrick, 2013).

Applied within this study, we propose that brand experience and GOSIP represent internal cues that will activate individuals' motivation for affiliation (e.g., form an alliance and engage in social contact), which subsequently lead to positive WOM about the brand. The notion here is that brand experience and GOSIP increase individuals' propensity to demonstrate higher social interactive engagement that leads to positive WOM about the brand. We will elaborate on each variable in the following section.

### 2.2. Social interactive engagement

Brand engagement is about facilitating conversations and sharing information amongst existing and potential customers in hopes to build a robust and deep relationship between these customers and the brands and to develop an active brand community (Coelho et al., 2018). One important mechanism that facilitates such engagement is referred to as brand pages. Consequently, it is important to examine whether brand pages are effective for achieving their goal in facilitating communication and brand-community development. Prior studies argue that consumers are more responsive to advertisements of a brand when they are engaged in the media vehicle (Voorveld et al., 2018). Hence, considering the impact of social interactive engagement with brand pages as an alternative measure for social media advertisement effectiveness is deemed important.

Prior studies measure customers' engagement with brand-pages by assessing consumers' liking and comments to content, sharing the contents with others, as well as posting their own content (i.e. customer-generated content) (Huang et al., 2013; Chen et al., 2011; Barger et al., 2016; Wang and McCarthy, 2020). However, some argue that

although those behavioural indicators represent online advertisement effectiveness, they do not actually represent engagement (Calder et al., 2009; Pagani and Mirabello, 2011). In the current research, engagement is conceptualized as a multilevel and multidimensional construct that comes out of the thoughts and feelings about one or more rich experiences that emerges when individuals are involved in activities that aim for reaching their personal goals (Calder et al., 2015). In other words, consumers' engagement is influenced by the intrinsic values provided by the object of experience and the motivational experience (Calder and Malthouse, 2008; Hollebeek and Macky, 2019). For example, consumers might be engaged with a brand page because they have prior experiences with it, such as getting relaxation, enjoyment, and reinforcement for personal values (Calder et al., 2009; Hollebeek and Macky, 2019). Also, consumers might be engaged with a brand page because of the social interaction experience such that they can communicate and share with others (Tsai and Men, 2013).

Calder and Malthouse (2008) divide media engagement into two types: personal engagement and social-interactive engagement. Personal engagement can be expressed through various experiences such as stimulation and inspiration, social facilitation, temporal, self-esteem, intrinsic enjoyment, and utilitarian (Calder and Malthouse, 2008; Hollebeek and Macky, 2019). Consequently, personal engagement is strongly associated with experiences related to a broad range of media such as magazine, television, and radio (Calder et al., 2009; Calder et al., 2015; Pagani and Mirabello, 2011).

In contrast, social-interactive engagement is based on experiences related to websites, particularly associated with participation and socialization as well as online community brand engagement (Calder et al., 2009). Such that, when people experience social-interactive engagement, they will obtain more value from socializing and participating as well as receiving inputs from other users in the online community (Pagani and Mirabello, 2011; Hollebeek and Macky, 2019). The value associated with the interaction amongst the customers and the recognition and friendships developed often motivates consumers to engage in brand communities (Tsai and Men, 2013; Coelho et al., 2018).

Past research examined several aspects that influence consumers' social interaction engagement such as individual consumer aspects (i.e. intention to engage in social media, consumers' attachment to social media, extraversion), brand-page features (e.g. usefulness and ease to use) and content (e.g. sentiment vs. commercial content) (Blazevic et al., 2014; Kabadayi and Price, 2014). Previous studies also found that consumers' social interaction engagement within a brand page is influenced by consumers' identification and emotional engagement with the brand, along with consumers' psychological states (i.e. consumers' identification and emotional engagement with the brand) that can be triggered by consumers' positive experience with the brand (Tsai and Men, 2013; Khan and Rahman, 2017; Kumar and Kaushik, 2020; Kabadayi and Price, 2014). In other words, brand experience has the potential to induce consumers' social interactive engagement within a brand page.

### 2.3. Brand experience

Brand experience is conceptually defined as a subjective, internal consumer response and behavioural response evoked by brand-related stimuli that represent the identity of the brand, such as good packaging, communication, or service encounter experiences (Khan et al., 2019; Islam et al., 2019). Specifically, the brand experience can be manifested through some specific sensations, feelings, cognitions, and behavioural responses that are triggered by stimuli related to the brand (Khan et al., 2019; Islam et al., 2019). Prior studies demonstrate that brand experience produces various positive outcomes for the brand, such as emotional bonds with the brand (Brakus et al., 2009; Hulten, 2011; Kumar and Kaushik, 2020), brand love (Roy et al., 2013), and satisfaction and loyalty (Marinova et al., 2008; Valenzuela et al., 2009). Subsequently, the literature on brand experience shows that each

dimension of brand experience leads to different outcomes (Roy et al., 2013; Lee and Kang, 2012).

As a sensory response, researchers propose that brand experience can be detected by consumers through their five sensory means such as scent, sound, sight, taste, and touch sensors (Hulten et al., 2009). Sensations represent a feeling or emotion that deliberately connects individuals' cognition with their senses (Hulten, 2011; Brakus et al., 2009). For instance, sensations are transferrable to the human mind and form perception, image, mental conceptions of interactions and inputs from products or services (Hulten et al., 2009). Prior studies reveal that sensory brand experience induces approach behaviours (Matilla and Wirtz, 2001; Krishna, 2012), whereby consumers are more receptive to interaction and offers that involve sight (e.g. waitress, salespeople, library service, survey interviewer) (see Krishna, 2012 for a review). Accordingly, we propose that sensational responses (e.g., brand experience) increase behaviour responses (e.g., social interactive engagement).

Emotion is defined as: "a state of physical and mental readiness that involves directional force, evaluative appraisal, an object or stimulus and behavioural tendency" (Morrison and Crane, 2007). Emotions represent an important element of brand experience (Nysveen et al., 2013; Roy et al., 2013). For instance, the retail industry literature has been focusing on managing the retail environment to create positive emotions for consumers, both in an online and offline retail environment (Naylor et al., 2008; Imschloss and Kuehnl, 2017). Prior studies conclude that interaction with the brand that can spark positive (negative) emotions leads to approach (avoidance) behaviour (de Farias et al., 2014; Lucia-Palacios et al., 2016). Such as, when consumers perceive that companies deliver social responsibility, they are more likely to experience positive emotions and hence, are more willing to engage in brand advocacy (Xie et al., 2019). On the contrary, when consumers experience negative emotions with the brand (e.g. anger, discontent, dislike, embarrassment, sadness, and worry), they are less likely to be loyal and more likely to complain as well as to engage in negative word-of-mouth (Ou and Verhoef, 2017; Hegner et al., 2017). Furthermore, research within the domain of psychology suggests that positive (negative) emotions enhance social connectedness (social disconnectness) such that individuals are more likely to engage in a close relationship with others that are mutually satisfying and allow them to form a cooperation with others (Mauss et al., 2012).

The intellectual aspect of brand experience represents the ability to engage the consumers' divergent and convergent thinking or conscious mental process when they interact with the brand (Gentile et al., 2007; Zarantonello and Schmitt, 2010). When an interaction with a brand can elicit interesting cognitive processing, this may generate positive brand evaluation (Bapat and Thanigan, 2016). Research has demonstrated the positive outcomes associated with the intellectual brand experience (Kumar et al., 2013; Japutra and Molinillo, 2019). Findings suggest intellectual brand experience is associated with customers' willingness to help other customers form strong connections with the brand (Xie et al., 2017; Ahn and Back, 2018), such as through their involvement within a brand page (Sicilia et al., 2016).

Lastly, brand experience includes behavioural experience, which is defined as the bodily experience induced by the consumer – brand interaction (Ahn and Back, 2018; Brakus et al., 2009). Behavioural brand experience can be induced by both humanic and functional cues of the brand (Kumar et al., 2013). Theoretically, behavioural experience may stimulate customer inferences about excitement (Ahn and Back, 2018). Behavioural experience allures consumers' physical experiences, lifestyles, long-term behavioural patterns or interactions with other people and subsequently stimulates their behaviours and intentions (Ding and Tseng, 2015). Some examples of marketing activities aimed at enhancing brand experience include event marketing, consumer incentive programs, product launches, open days, conferences, contests, exhibitions, corporate entertainment, charity fundraisers, trade shows, and product visitor attractions (Zarantonello and Schmitt, 2013; Wood,

2009). Prior studies have demonstrated that behavioural brand experience promotes brand relationship quality, customer-brand engagement, behavioural intention and customer citizenship behaviour (Xie et al., 2017; Ahn and Back, 2018). For instance, behavioural experience such as event marketing may elevate the perceived company's image and brand attitude that subsequently promotes customers' willingness to strengthen their bond with the brand (Xie et al., 2017; Ahn and Back, 2018; Zarantonello and Schmitt, 2010). Thus, we propose that behavioural experience leads to customers' engagement on the brand page.

In sum, we propose that brand experience with all its dimensions serve as an internal cue that will activate customers' affiliation motive, especially affiliation with the brand and other customers. With this, we propose the following hypothesis:

H1: Brand experience positively influences social interactive engagement: (a) community and (b) participation and socialization.

2.4. General online social interaction propensity (GOSIP)

General online social interaction propensity (GOSIP) represents an individual trait that explains the difference in individuals' tendency to join online discussions (Blazevic et al., 2014). The notion here is that people demonstrate variety in their frequency for interacting online, the tendency to consider online channels (or other channels) to engage in social interaction, and their interaction intensity within the online forum (Blazevic et al., 2014; Wiertz and de Ruyter, 2007; Hammond, 2000). GOSIP is regarded as a stable individual predisposition that may interact with contextual aspects and influence consumers' behaviour (Blazevic et al., 2014; Shoda et al., 1994).

An individuals' proneness to interact in an online community is essential for value formation within an online community (Muniz & O'guinn, 2001; Schau et al., 2009). That is because those consumers are valuable sources of information, have a positive impact on experience sharing, and generate greater participation by other customers and greater perceived value (Libai et al., 2010; Blazevic et al., 2014). Therefore, we believe that GOSIP will enhance customers' social interactive engagement. Subsequently, as GOSIP is related to one's preference for online media to express themselves, we also propose that the interaction between GOSIP and Brand Experience increases individuals' propensity to engage with the brand page (Blazevic et al., 2014). Based on this logic, we hypothesize:

H2. GOSIP positively influences social interactive engagement: (a) community and (b) participation and socialization

H3. The relationship between brand experience and social interactive engagement: (a) community and (b) participation and socialization, is positively moderated by GOSIP

2.5. Word-of-mouth (WOM)

WOM represents an interpersonal non-commercial communication among acquaintances that can resemble various forms of communication, such as a direct-oral communication or indirect-online communication (Cheung and Lee, 2012). The literature suggests that people who are engaged in WOM fall into two motivation categories: self and social motivations (Alexandrov et al., 2013; de Matos and Rossi, 2008). Notably, prior studies show that sense of belonging (social motivation) influences consumers' intention to engage in WOM (Cheung and Lee, 2012; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). Such that, when individuals involve with a group, they are more likely to identify themselves with the group and represent themselves as a part of the group externally (Dholakia et al., 2004).

People are more inclined to conduct WOM to tell others some aspects of themselves. Also, consumers will be more inclined to go above and beyond by spreading positive information and aspects of the brand to others when they are satisfied with the interaction with brands (Sun-daram et al., 1998). In contrast, a study by Kahr et al. (2016) reveals that

negative brand experience can promote negative engagements such as negative WOM and customer retaliation. Furthermore, recent findings suggest that consumers' engagement with the brand page (social interactive engagement) produces positive outcomes for the brand, such as brand trust, repurchase intention, brand loyalty, self-brand connection and brand usage intention (Pongpaew et al., 2017; Kaufman et al., 2016). Despite those findings, the literature also suggests that consumers' engagement with the brand page doesn't necessarily lead to positive outcomes for the brand (Rasool et al., 2020). Thus, understanding the effect of positive brand experience and the consumers' brand-page engagement that lead to positive outcomes for the brand remains important.

To address the gaps within the branding literature, the main objective of this research is to examine the influence of experiential points of the brand, namely brand experience, on consumers' engagement with the brand page. From an integrated marketing perspective, it is important to further examine the effect of other marketing elements on the efficacy of online advertising (i.e. brand page) (Schultz, 1992). Drawing from an integrated-marketing perspective, we suggest that customers' intention to engage in positive WOM about the brand is an outcome of customers' social interactive engagement. Additionally, we propose that consumers who have positive brand experience and consequently have stronger social interactive engagement are more likely to be involved in positive WOM about the brand:

H4. Brand experience indirectly influences consumers' intention to engage in WOM about a brand, mediated by consumers' social interactive engagement: (a) community and (b) participation and socialization.

The proposed overall research framework and all hypotheses can be seen in Fig. 1.

3. Research method

3.1. Sample and data collection

A survey was conducted in Vietnam through a consumer panel. Vietnam was selected as a developing country with a younger population and high growth in internet users (Doan, 2020). Moreover, Vietnam consumers are increasingly spending more time online (i.e. 58% of their total time) (Deloitte, 2020). Importantly, one of the primary motives in using the internet for Vietnamese consumers is to follow brands (Q&Me Vietnam Market Research, 2019). On average, each consumer in Vietnam follows 35 brands (Q&Me Vietnam Market Research, 2019). Consequently, Vietnam consumers represent a suitable context to examine engagement with brand pages.

Initially, a solicitation email was broadcasted to the respondent data base. Potential respondents who met the screening criteria (i.e. had accessed a particular brand page in the past one week) could voluntarily

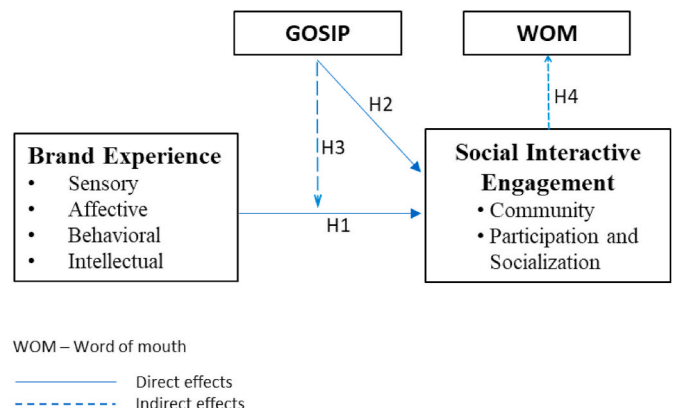


Fig. 1. Research framework and hypotheses.

participate in the survey. Such that, we asked the respondents to mention a particular brand-page that they accessed in the past one week. Subsequently, the respondents were instructed to respond to the survey items that represent the main constructs of the study: brand experience, social interactive engagement with the brand page, and WOM intention of the corresponding brand. Consumers were also asked to answer survey items about their propensity to socialize online (GOSIP). In the final section, consumers answered several demographic questions. Respondents who completed the survey received remuneration according to the research panel's standard.

Amongst the total 286 respondents that were eligible and decided to participate in the survey, female respondents made up 56% ( $n = 159$ ) and male respondents 44% ( $n = 127$ ). Furthermore, the age of the respondents is nearly proportional to that of the population: between 18 and 24 years (25%), 21–31 years (29%), and 32–38 years (27%). A large portion of the respondents hold a bachelor's degree (62%) and currently work as white-collar worker (34%). See Table 1 for a sample profile.

### 3.2. Measurement instrument

The measurements used for the focal constructs within this study were adapted from prior studies. Brand experience was measured using a scale adapted from Brakus et al. (2009) that consisted of four dimensions: sensory, affective, behavioural and intellectual, with three items for each dimension. A sample item to gauge sensory dimension was: "this brand makes a strong impression on my visual sense or other senses". For the affective dimension, the sample item was: "this brand induces feelings and sentiments". For the behavioural and intellectual dimensions, the sample items were: "I engage in physical actions and behaviours when I use this brand" and "I engage in a lot of thinking when I encounter this brand," respectively.

The social interactive engagement was measured as a second-order construct that consists of two dimensions (i.e. community, and participation and socializing), adapted from Calder et al. (2009). For participation and socializing, we used four items, for example: "I do quite a bit of socializing on this site" and "I contribute to the conversation on the site". To assess the community dimension, six items like: "I'm as interested in input from other users as I am in the regular content of this site" and "A big reason I like this site is what I get from other users" were used. We adapted a scale from Blazevic et al. (2014) to assess general online social interaction propensity (GOSIP) that consisted of eight items, for example: "In general, I am someone who, given a chance, seeks contact with others online" and "I am someone who likes the

**Table 1**  
Demographic characteristics of the respondents.

Respondent characteristics		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	127	44%
	Female	159	56%
Age	18–24 years	72	25%
	21–31 years	84	29%
	32–38 years	79	28%
	39–45 years	49	17%
	Above 45 years	2	1%
Education	High school	104	36%
	College	176	62%
	Post graduate	7	2%
Occupation	Professional	20	6%
	Business owners	10	3%
	White collar workers	96	34%
	Skilled workers	17	6%
	Salespersons	19	7%
	Blue collar workers	17	6%
	Freelancer	18	6%
	Government officer	12	4%
	No Employment	32	11%
	Students	47	16%
Other	2	1%	

interaction with like-minded others online". Lastly, to measure word-of-mouth (WOM) we used a three-item scale adopted from Kowalczyk and Pounders (2016) such as: "I recommend this brand to others", "I would say positive about this brand to others", "I would speak favourably of this brand". All scales and properties are presented in Table 2.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Assessment of measurement model

Prior to examining the hypotheses, we tested the measurement validity and reliability. As presented in Table 2, the factor loading of all items of the main constructs is above the cut-off value of 0.5 (Hair et al., 2010), except for the reversed-coded items in red. The results for a few of the reverse-coded items are consistent with the literature, which discourages the use of reversed-coded items in a survey (Swain et al., 2008; Weijters et al., 2013). As such, respondents might be inattentive to the questions or have difficulty understanding the wording of the items or the logic in reverse wording (Swain et al., 2008). Thus, we did not include the reversed items that did not meet minimum requirements in the subsequent analysis.

In addition, the scores for composite reliability (CR) ranging from 0.799 to 0.960 indicates a satisfactory value for the convergent validity test (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994). Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values were examined to measure discriminant validity of the scales that then compared with the correlations amongst the focal constructs. The discriminant validity results presented in Table 3 show that all AVE values are significantly greater than all correlations. Thus, the results confirm the discriminant validity of the focal constructs. Lastly, we examined the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) scores to detect any multi-collinearity problems. The VIF scores ranging from 1.234 to 4.079 are significantly lower than the maximum acceptable value of 10, as suggested by Hair et al. (2010). In conclusion, there are no significant multi-collinearity problems being detected.

### 4.2. Test for common-method bias

A test for common method bias aimed to detect the variance due to the measurement method rather than to the constructs that are represented by the measures (Podsakoff et al., 2003). To assess common method bias, we used a marker-technique developed by Lindell and Whitney (2001), by selecting a construct that is theoretically unrelated to the constructs of interests in the measurement model. Subsequently, we selected epistemic motivation in this research as it is theoretically dissimilar with all other constructs (i.e. non-significant correlations with other constructs) (Ngo et al., 2016; Lowry and Gaskin, 2014). The result of the marker technique test shows that the correlations amongst all latent variables are below 0.3, with the squared values ranging between 0.044 and 0.25, indicating low shared variance amongst the constructs (Lowry and Gaskin, 2014).

### 4.3. Hypothesis testing

Path analysis was performed using partial least squares (PLS) structural equation modelling (SEM) with Smart-PLS 3 software to examine the proposed hypotheses. PLS-SEM was selected as the main purpose of this study is for predicting the relationship amongst the constructs of interest instead of evaluating the model (Hair et al., 2014). The path analysis demonstrates the support for  $H_1$ , such that brand experience positively influences social interactive engagement. Specifically, brand experience significantly influences both dimensions of social interactive engagement: community ( $\beta = 0.536$ ,  $p = .000$ ), and participation and socializing ( $\beta = 0.244$ ,  $p = .000$ ).

Subsequently, we found that GOSIP is significantly related with both dimensions of social interactive engagement (community:  $\beta = .376$ ,  $p =$

**Table 2**  
Scale items and latent variable evaluation.

Construct	Measurement item	Loading
General online social interaction propensity (GOSIP) (CR = .960; AVE = .752)	1. "In general, I am someone who, given the chance, seeks contact with others online"	.852
	2. "In general, I am someone who answers questions of others in online discussion forum"	.856
	3. "In general, I am someone who enjoys initiating a dialog online"	.868
	4. "I general, I like to get involved in online discussions"	.866
	5. "I find the idea of belonging to an online discussion group pleasant"	.812
	6. "I am someone who likes actively participating in online discussions"	.837
	7. "I am someone who likes interaction with like-minded others online"	.778
	8. "In general, I thoroughly enjoy exchanging ideas with other people online"	.873
Social-interactive engagement (SIE)		
Participation and socializing (PS) (CR = .946; AVE = .898)	1. "I do quite a bit of socializing on this site"	.949
	2. "I contribute to the conversation on this site"	.946
	3. "I often feel guilty about the amount of time I spend on this site socializing"	.086
	4. "I should probably cut back on the amount of time I spend on this site socializing"	.061
	5. "I am as interested in input from other users as I am in the regular content of this site"	.661
Community (C) (CR = .905; AVE = .615)	6. "A big reason I like this site is what I get from other users"	.797
	7. "This site does a good job of getting its visitors to contribute or provide feedback"	.794
	8. "I'd like to meet other people who regularly visit this site"	.799
	9. "I've gotten interested in things I otherwise wouldn't have because of others on this site"	.818
	10. "Overall, the visitors to this site are pretty knowledgeable about the topics it covers so you can learn from them"	.810
	Brand experience (BE)	
sensory (CR = .909; AVE = .833)	1. "This brand makes a strong impression on my visual sense or other senses"	.910
	2. "I find this brand interesting in a sensory way"	.915
	3. "This brand does not appeal to my senses" (R)	.051
Affective (CR = .912; AVE = .839)	4. "This brand induces feelings and sentiments"	.915
	5. "I do not have strong emotions for this brand" (R)	.009
Behavioral (CR = .811; AVE = .590)	6. "This brand is an emotional brand"	.922
	7. "I engage in physical actions and behaviors when I use this brand"	.809
	8. "This brand results in bodily experiences"	.828
	9. "This brand is not action oriented" (R)	.722
Intellectual (CR = .799; AVE = .571)	10. "I engage in a lot of thinking when I encounter this brand"	.757
	11. "This brand does not make me think" (R)	.716
	12. "This brand stimulates my curiosity and problem solving"	.807
Word-of-mouth (WOM) (CR = .934; AVE = .825)	1. "I would recommend this brand to others"	.757
	2. "I would say positive things about this brand to others"	.716
	3. "I would speak favourably of this brand"	.807

R – indicates reverse-scaled.

.000, and participation and socialization:  $\beta = 0.606, p = .000$ ). Thus, H<sub>2</sub> is also supported. However, we found no support for H<sub>3</sub>, such that no significant moderating effect of GOSIP on the brand experience – social interactive engagement relationship (participation and socialization:  $\beta = -.056, p = .466$ ; community:  $\beta = -0.035, p = .793$ ) was found.

Lastly, the indirect relationship between brand experience and WOM via social interactive engagement is significant only for the community dimension of social interactive engagement ( $\beta = .350, p = .000$ ), yet non-significant for participation and socialization ( $\beta = -0.013, p = .584$ ). To confirm the indirect relationship between brand experience and WOM via social interactive engagement, we ran mediation analysis using Hayes Process Model 4 resulting in consistent results. Specifically, the indirect effect of brand experience on positive WOM was only significant via the community dimension ( $B = 0.252, SE = 0.0.081, 95\% CI: 0.094, 0.411$ ); but not via participation and socialization ( $B = -0.565, SE = 0.049, 95\% CI: -0.152, 0.043$ ). Thus, H<sub>4</sub> is supported only for the community dimension of social interactive engagement. The results for hypotheses testing are presented in Table 4, while the total path analysis results are presented in the Appendix.

### 5. Discussion

Using the fundamental motive framework, this research examines the roles of brand experience and social interaction engagement on WOM behaviour. Results suggest that the success of a brand page, represented by consumers' social interactive engagement, is influenced by their various experiences with the brand (i.e., sensory, affective, behavioural, and intellectual). This result represents a novel contribution in the literature as previous studies tend to establish a reverse directionality – that consumers' engagement with the brand, both online and offline, leads to a favourable brand experience (Khan et al., 2019; Hollebeek et al., 2014; Khan et al., 2016). Brand experience represents an internal cue that activates consumers' affiliation motive and shows a differential engagement when exposed to a brand page. Such that, consumers who experience the brand positively tend to have higher social interactive engagement with a brand page (Hollebeek and Macky, 2019). They are more likely to enjoy participating and socializing with other consumers on the brand page as well as perceived benefits from the input and information from other brand community members (Calder et al., 2009).

Furthermore, this research demonstrates that GOSIP, as an individual characteristic, activates consumers' motive for affiliation. Specifically, consumers with a high level of GOSIP have higher social interactive engagement within the brand page (Blazevic et al., 2014). Those consumers enjoy their participation and socialization within the brand page as well as perceive benefits from the input and information shared by others (Calder et al., 2009). Interestingly, our findings show that GOSIP does not moderate the relationship between brand experience and social interactive engagement within the brand page. In other words, the relationship between brand experience and social interactive engagement is stable regardless of consumers' propensity to engage in online interaction (i.e. GOSIP).

Finally, this research also confirms the indirect relationship between brand experience on positive WOM about the brand via the community dimension of social interactive engagement. Although consumers have various motivations to engage in brand-pages (Hollebeek and Macky, 2019), only consumers who are engaged with the brand page because of interest in and benefits they receive from others are likely to engage in positive WOM about the brand. However, consumers who are simply engaged in participation and socializing on the brand page do not necessarily always give positive WOM about the brand. Understanding this is critical for brand managers as consumers who are engaged online with the brand do not necessarily share either positive aspects of the brands nor dissatisfaction publicly. Thus, managers need to handle or mitigate the occurrence of negative expressions about the brand (Rasool et al., 2020). The results of this study suggest that brands should keep

**Table 3**  
Discriminant validity.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Word of mouth (WOM)	<b>0.909</b>								
2. Sensory	0.525	<b>0.913</b>							
3. Affective	0.635	0.52	<b>0.919</b>						
4. Behavioral	0.568	0.546	0.557	<b>0.788</b>					
5. Intellectual	0.656	0.604	0.601	0.7	<b>0.761</b>				
6. Participation and socializing	0.439	0.442	0.416	0.508	0.502	<b>0.947</b>			
7. Community	0.636	0.533	0.511	0.616	0.705	0.729	<b>0.782</b>		
8. GOSIP*Brand Experience	-0.202	-0.219	-0.272	-0.089	-0.109	-0.165	-0.078	<b>1</b>	
9. GOSIP	0.42	0.403	0.383	0.462	0.439	0.743	0.649	-0.123	<b>0.867</b>

The bolded diagonal values indicate the square root of AVE, whereas the other values are correlation scores amongst the constructs.

**Table 4**  
Hypotheses testing.

Hypotheses	$\beta$	T value	p-value	Decision
H1. Brand experience-social interactive engagement				
a) Brand experience-participation and socializing	0.244	4.822	0.000	Supported
b) Brand experience-community	0.536	11.046	0.000	Supported
H2. GOSIP-social interactive engagement				
a) Participation and socializing	0.606	11.834	0.000	Supported
b) Community	0.376	7.059	0.000	Supported
H3. GOSIP*brand experience-social interactive engagement				
a) Participation and socializing	-0.056	0.793	0.428	Not supported
b) Community	-0.035	0.254	0.799	Not supported
H4. Brand experience-social-interactive engagement- word of mouth (WOM)				
a) Community	0.350	5.959	0.000	Supported
b) Participation and socializing	-0.013	0.568	0.057	Not supported

providing benefits to consumers who engage in the brand-page in order to promote positive WOM about the brand.

**6. Theoretical contributions**

The study results offer three main contributions. First and from a theoretical perspective, the study results add to the fundamental motive literature by demonstrating and confirming that sensory, affective, behavioural, and intellectual experience with the brand can serve as extrinsic cues that elicit affiliation motive for consumers (Griskevicius and Kenrick, 2013). As a result, consumers react more positively to the brand (via brand page) and are more engaged with the brand page by participating and socializing with others as well as utilizing and engaging with the input and information shared by others. Additionally, our results suggest that the influence of brand experience was stable, regardless of the individual characteristic (i.e. GOSIP). However, we also found that GOSIP can elicit individuals' motivation to be engaged in a brand community and higher participation and socializing within the brand page independently.

Second, this research highlights the importance of an integrated marketing perspective in designing a marketing strategy, particularly when integrating online branding and marketing content. Marketers need to create a unified and seamless experience for consumers to interact with the brand. Our findings demonstrated a carry-over effect between the brand experience and the success of a brand page. This is also practically important such that, by organizing a marketing event that produces a positive behavioural and intellectual experience, brand marketers can expect an increase in consumers' social interactive engagement with the brand through their brand page (Xie et al., 2017; Wohlfeil and Whelan, 2005).

Third, this research shows that brand experience enhances consumers' social interactive engagement and subsequently promotes

positive WOM about the brand. Although consumers have various motivations to engage in a brand page (Hollebeek and Macky, 2019), only when consumers are interested and perceive benefits from the input and information shared by others within the brand community (via brand page) they are likely to share positive aspects about the brands.

**7. Practical implications**

As retailers and firms have been highly concerned about their spending to establish their presence online (Grewal et al., 2020), understanding the positive relationship between brand experience with consumers' social interactive engagement may assist them in online marketing investment decisions. Such that, when retailers and firms have strongly established brand experiences offline, it is likely that the consumers will also respond positively to their online presence.

To succeed, marketers should continue to focus on improving the brand page's features (Blazevic et al., 2014; Kabadayi and Price, 2014), but should also create superior brand experiences such as by providing useful information, entertainment, and social communities (Kaur et al., 2020). More importantly, we found that the influence of brand experience takes place regardless of the individual's propensity to engage in an online community. Such that, when a brand can create superior experiences for their consumers, they are more likely to engage within the brand page.

Furthermore, as the brand's online presence produces positive marketing outcomes such as positive WOM about the brand, brand equity, brand love, and emotional attachment with the brands (Vo et al., 2021; Lim et al., 2020), marketers might benefit by establishing the brand's online presence. However, our study specified that consumers are more willing to engage in positive WOM about the brand when they experience being a member of a community where they get benefit from other members and social interaction within the brand page. Thus, marketers should promote a sense of community where the members of a brand page discuss and share their experiences with the brand and support each other (Kaur et al., 2020). Marketers might also use a strategy for nurturing a community identification within a brand page, such as by providing rewards for members who often help answering other members queries about the brand (Gallicano, 2009). Consequently, it is expected that consumers are more likely to engage in positive WOM about the brand.

**8. Limitations and future research**

We acknowledge that this research may contain several limitations. First, the literature has a rich and diverse background supporting several interpretations of affiliation motive, including connection seeking (Maner et al., 2007), need for belongingness (Mead et al., 2011), and social-closeness (Ward and Broniarczyk, 2011). Whereas in this study, we capture affiliation motive as participating, socializing, and interest in a community (i.e. brand page). Thus, we suggest future studies to examine the relationship whether those different representations of affiliation motive capture an identical conceptual understanding and in

different contexts.

Secondly, although this research contributes by demonstrating the importance of brand experience in influencing consumers' responses to the brand page, the sources of brand experience come from various marketing activities (Brakus et al., 2009). For example, the brand experience can be elicited by joining event marketing (Xie et al., 2017), enjoying the store ambience (de Farias et al., 2014), and the brand website (Yoon and Youn, 2016). Future research may get a better picture of how each marketing element can improve consumers' social interactive engagement in the brand page and positive WOM. Third, the literature suggests that cultural difference significantly influences brand experience (Chang and Chieng, 2006; Candus, 2015). However, this study was conducted within a single country, Vietnam; thus, generalization from this study's results should be made cautiously. And further research comparing/contrasting our findings in other cultural contexts

would be an important contribution in understanding the universality of the fundamental motive framework.

To conclude, this current study contributes theoretically to the literature and empirically demonstrates the effect of brand experience and GOSIP on consumers' social interactive engagement and positive WOM about the brand. Also, the results of this study empirically highlight the importance of an integrated marketing perspective to design marketing and branding strategy, especially when developing online brand communities (brand pages).

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## Appendix. Results of path analysis

Path Analysis	$\beta$	T value	p-value
1. Sensory-brand experience	0.271	22.046	0.000
2. Affective-brand experience	0.279	23.827	0.000
3. Behavioral-brand Experience	0.324	22.599	0.000
4. Intellectual-Brand experience	0.325	22.390	0.000
5. Sensory-brand experience-participation and socializing	0.066	4.579	0.000
6. Affective-brand experience-participation and socializing	0.064	4.855	0.000
7. Behavioral-brand experience-participation and socializing	0.080	4.957	0.000
8. Intellectual-brand experience-participation and socializing	0.080	4.847	0.000
9. Sensory-brand experience-community	0.142	8.552	0.000
10. Affective-brand experience-community	0.138	10.578	0.000
11. Behavioral-brand experience-community	0.170	10.166	0.000
12. Intellectual-brand experience-community	0.171	9.235	0.000
13. GOSIP-participation and socializing	0.614	13.073	0.000
14. GOSIP-community	0.385	7.301	0.000
15. GOSIP*brand experience-participation and socializing	-0.056	0.728	0.466
16. GOSIP*brand experience-community	-0.053	0.263	0.793
17. GOSIP*brand experience-participation and socializing-WOM	0.003	0.210	0.834
18. GOSIP*brand experience-Community-WOM	-0.024	0.260	0.795

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