

Experience Engagement and Connection: Role of Social Media Interactivity among Moroccan Customers of luxury goods

Malika Ait Nasser^{1*}, Fatima Bensaid²

^{1,2} Research Laboratory LARSLAM, University Ibn Zohr-Agadir, Kingdom of Morocco

Abstract

Aim: The present study aims to determine that perceived social media interactivity significant impact on self-brand connection and intention to purchase. Brand experience play as mediating role and customer brand engagement as moderating among Toyota and Honda vehicles Moroccan customers.

Methodology: The cross-sectional approach used for data collection from customers of Moroccan Toyota and Honda vehicles. Total 400 participants, through email filled up online survey to help in data collection. The study analysed by Smart Partial Square (Smart-PLS) statistical software 3.0.

Findings: The results of study has significant relationship between social media interactivity, mediating role of customer experience, and moderating role of customer brand engagement with self-brand connection and intention to purchase. Implications/Novel Contribution: This study emphasizes how crucial it is to take cultural differences into account when developing successful marketing plans for luxury car brands. It also adds insightful information to the worldwide conversation on premium branding and customer behavior. The study contributes only customers, managers, marketers that used services of Toyota and Honda vehicle, how customers interact and stimulate to intent in luxury car purchasing.

Keywords: Perceived Social Media Interactivity, Brand Experience, Self-Brand Connection, Customer Brand Engagement, Intention to Purchase, Theory of Planned Behavior

Received: 28 August 2024/ **Accepted:** 19 October 2024 / **Published:** 30 December 2024

INTRODUCTION

Every month, around 4 billion users worldwide actively use Facebook and Instagram (Al-Qudah, 2020; Ibrahim & Aljarah, 2024). According to Hazzam* (2022), 50% of Millennials and Generation Z plan their travels in part because of or due to Social Networking Platforms like Facebook (Bozkurt, Gligor, Locander, & Ahmad Rather, 2023). Social networking platforms such as Facebook, Weibo, and Instagram are among the many SM platforms where consumers are interacting with peer-produced content (textual, visual, and video) about goods and services (Al-Qudah, 2020; Ibrahim & Aljarah, 2024). Customers post content on social media that has a neutral, negative, or positive valence regarding goods and services. Friends and acquaintances watch, consider, and act upon this content, forming the interactive format of electronic word-of-mouth. Users can communicate their identities and disseminate product information by interacting with friends and sharing special memories on social media interaction (Ye, Lei, Shen, & Xiao, 2020). Customers co-create "value in-use," which includes advantages resulting from the consumption of goods and services, by exchanging consumption experiences on social media interaction.

Several billion people utilize it globally (Al-Qudah, 2020; Ibrahim & Aljarah, 2024). The extensive appeal of social media is ascribed to its distinct features, which are uncommon in traditional media. One important feature is how quickly and affordably it can reach a large number of people. The advent of two-way interaction has eclipsed traditional one-way mass media and broadcast advertising, altering the dynamics of the consumer-brand relationship (Zaidun, Muda, & Hashim, 2021). The shift away from traditional communication methods has been driven by industry-wide social media interactivity, which is made possible by interactive digital platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat (Molina-Prados, Munoz-Leiva, & Prados-Peña, 2022).

*Corresponding author: Malika Ait Nasser

†Email: m.aitnacer@uiz.ac.ma

In the digital age of today, social media use has ingrained itself into our daily lives. Seldom does a social media user go a day without monitoring his accounts across various social media networks. Globally, several billion individuals utilize social media. It stands for all of the social media sites and apps, like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, that facilitate content sharing, interactions, and engagement (Bozkurt et al., 2023; Garg, Gupta, Dzever, Sivarajah, & Kumar, 2020). Undoubtedly, the rise of social media brought about many changes in the business sector. The introduction of social media has brought about a major shift in marketing, one of an enterprise's primary operations that is crucial to its success and the accomplishment of its objectives. This shift is associated with the shift in marketing from traditional to social media (Bozkurt et al., 2023; Ibrahim & Aljarah, 2024). The latter relies on using various social media platforms to engage and pique the attention of current and potential clients in order to promote the business (Arasli, Abdullahi, & Gunay, 2021; Cao, Meadows, Wong, & Xia, 2021; Bozkurt et al., 2023).

In addition, it has created channels for consumers to discuss their experiences with specific brands or products. Businesses must acknowledge the importance of consumer opinions on their products and brand identity (Al-Qudah, 2020; Drummond, O'Toole, & McGrath, 2020). With around 2.2 billion active members, Facebook is one of the most widely used social networking sites globally. Social media and social networks are now considered essential components of consumers' everyday lives (Ibrahim & Aljarah, 2024; Molina-Prados et al., 2022; Zaidun et al., 2021). According to Hazzam* (2022), this paradigm change has also changed how individual customers interact with one another and seek out information. Marketers have been using social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter to promote companies for about 20 years (Al-Qudah, 2020; Bozkurt et al., 2023; Garg et al., 2020; Nadeem, Tan, Tajvidi, & Hajli, 2021). As of January 2020, 4.54 billion people used the internet globally, and 3.8 billion of those users actively used social media, accounting for roughly 49% of all internet users. According to (Hazzam*, 2022), more than 90% of brands use several social media networks for advertising, and businesses use social media strategies and techniques to enhance brand consumption in a proactive manner (Molina-Prados et al., 2022). More importantly, because social media is such a vital part of customers' lives, marketers heavily rely on the platform to promote their products.

According to Seminari et al. (2022), "the extent to which individuals have integrated brands into their self-concept" is the definition of the self-brand connection idea. When customers believe that, the way a brand projects itself and how they see themselves align a strong self-brand connection is created. Customers can use this relationship to maintain and improve their sense of who they are, including qualities like confidence and self-worth (Fazli-Salehi, Torres, Madadi, & Zúñiga, 2021; Nadeem et al., 2021). Additionally, a strong self-brand connection serves as a catalyst, encouraging people to develop favorable opinions of a brand and make repeat purchases. According to Ibrahim and Aljarah (2024), creating a strong and expressive connection between a particular brand and a customer's self-identity is a key component of the self-brand relationship. Consumers are essentially biased toward certain brands if the brand's image, which is conveyed through packaging, retail shop design, or advertising, aligns with their perception of themselves (Chand & Fei, 2021). Owning products from a specific brand is seen to play a major role in assisting customers in creating and expressing their self-concepts (Sarkar et al., 2021). As a result, consumers frequently acquire goods because they want them to do more than just meet their basic wants (Chand & Fei, 2021; Nadeem et al., 2021).

The term "purchase intention" describes a customer's readiness or schedule to purchase a specific good or service later (Al-Qudah, 2020). It is a crucial idea in marketing, and business since a company's ability to comprehend and influence buy intention has a big impact on its success. When original luxury brands are purchased, customers are typically satisfied.

Remarkably, when customers buy fake luxury labels today, the same situation occurs (Onofrei et al., 2022; Ye et al., 2020). Over the past ten years, the demand and accessibility for fake luxury brands have grown by more than 12% annually, with the total amount traded reaching 416 billion dollars (Chen & Yang, 2021). The prevalence of counterfeit goods is growing along with the significant rise in the consumption of luxury items (Kumar & Kaushik, 2020). Even worse, emerging nations are witnessing an increase in fake luxury brands (Canguende-Valentim & Vale, 2021; Mulyawan & Suyanto, 2022). The rate of counterfeit usage is rising despite the efforts made by the luxury business to draw customers to original premium brands (Mulyawan & Suyanto,

2022; Ye et al., 2020).

Customers' perception of a brand's social media marketing interactivity which is defined as their comprehension of different interactive elements within the context of their self-brand connection becomes crucial, in forming a favorable self-brand connection and, ultimately, influencing their intention to make a purchase (Nadeem et al., 2021). According to Kumar and Kaushik (2020) research revealed that a brand's social media page involvement and regular sharing of intriguing posts improve the followers' overall brand experience. If these causes could be sufficiently determined, particularly in developing nations, then practical measures to stop the spread of luxury brand counterfeiting may be put into place. Consequently, the current study investigates the degree to which customers knowingly buy associated luxury counterfeit goods because of feeling connected to those companies. Previous studies on the buying of counterfeit luxury brands indicate that psychological elements like the self-brand link have a role in customers' decision to buy a counterfeit luxury brand (El Mouqtafi & Barzi, 2023; Hwang, Choe, Kim, & Kim, 2021). Nevertheless, there is conflicting evidence from these research about the relationship whether good or negative between the self-brand link and the intention to buy the fake luxury brand (Ye et al., 2020). The present study determines that social media interaction with self-brand connection and intention to purchase among Moroccan customers of luxury goods, as well as the theory of planned behavior, involved. Brand engagement play as moderating role and brand experience as mediating variable between social media interactivity and self-brand connection and intention to purchase.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Luxury Brand

Luxury products, traditionally associated with exclusivity, power, and riches, are acknowledged for satisfying cravings that are not necessities (El Mouqtafi & Barzi, 2023). Luxury, according to Husain, Paul, and Koles (2022), is the perception of superior quality combined with a high cost, attractive appearance, and scarcity. The literature continuously emphasizes that luxury items are unique due to their scarcity and exclusivity, according to Mulyawan and Suyanto (2022). Accordingly, the salient characteristics of luxury products include beauty, uniqueness, quality, and price, in addition to the product's endorsement by an inspirational brand (Husain et al., 2022). It is difficult to define luxury because it cuts across many fields and eras, including sociology, psychology, economics, and art. Sociologists, psychologists, and economists have had a particularly significant influence on the conversation around luxury. Chand and Fei (2021) asserts that buying a luxury brand is a way to express one's social status and that the social communicative aspect of luxury is what defines it. In "Eternal Luxury" (Mulyawan & Suyanto, 2022) that, in societies that have undergone defilement, luxury arises as a perpetuation of legendary ideas. Essentially, the meaning of luxury is shaped by interpersonal and personal factors, mainly from the perspective of the consumer. Our research indicates that a wide range of factors impact the consumption of luxury goods. Research by Canguende-Valentim and Vale (2021); Chand and Fei (2021); El Mouqtafi and Barzi (2023); Husain et al. (2022) provides evidence that personal factors are important. Furthermore, Canguende-Valentim and Vale (2021) examined how psychological factors and social factors influence patterns of luxury consumption. Canguende-Valentim and Vale (2021); Chand and Fei (2021); El Mouqtafi and Barzi (2023); Husain et al. (2022) support these findings. Furthermore, as studies by Canguende-Valentim and Vale (2021); Chand and Fei (2021); El Mouqtafi and Barzi (2023); Husain et al. (2022) have shown, factors specific to luxury goods have a significant impact on consumer choices.

Perceived Social Media Interactivity

Although the concept of interactivity has received a lot of attention in the literature, agreement on what constitutes interactivity is still difficult (Arasli et al., 2021). Researchers using a variety of criteria, including characteristics Bozkurt et al. (2023), processes Koay, Ong, Khoo, and Yeoh (2020), and perceptions Garg et al. (2020) have defined interactivity. While some interpretations focus on perceptual qualities, others characterize interactivity in terms of technological elements like website speed (Nadeem et al., 2021; Zaidun et al., 2021). Ye et al. (2020) propose that some characteristics, such as message quality and response speed, contribute to the perceived level of involvement. Customers anticipate quick responses when interacting with chatbots or other comparable web interfaces. Fulfilling these expectations makes the website appear more interactive to users. Researchers investigate social media interaction, paying particular attention to message substance and response time. Recipients

evaluate the promptness and content of the reply to determine how responsive the sender is, creating an impression of a timely and attentive exchange (Ibrahim & Aljarah, 2024). Users can create portals or pages, convey their thoughts and feelings, and customize content utilizing different media elements thanks to interactivity. Benefits from interactivity in media include synchronous and reciprocal interactions Arasli et al. (2021), increased involvement (Bozkurt et al., 2023), control over the medium (Drummond et al., 2020), and heightened involvement Cao et al. (2021).

Brand Experience

It is still early in the development of the brand experience domain (Safeer, He, & Abrar, 2021). The information that customers obtain from their interactions with the entire company constitutes the experience, according to Zaidun et al. (2021). Furthermore, brand experiences record customers' reactions in real-time, especially when they are shopping for items, researching products, and assessing them after using them (Mostafa & Kasamani, 2021). Kumar and Kaushik (2020) contend that consumers are also influenced by a variety of visual stimuli, such as logos, designs, shapes, colors, and other elements that contribute to brand identification. While much of the prior research on experiential marketing has concentrated on specific aspects of brand experience, such as utilitarian elements related to service Garg et al. (2020) and product experiences Hwang et al. (2021), consumers are also influenced by other visual stimuli. Moreover, academics have underscored the significance of tailoring frontstage staff services to individual customers in order to maximize customer satisfaction (Coelho, Bairrada, & de Matos Coelho, 2020). As a result, brand experience is a complex concept that needs to be evaluated thoroughly (Chen & Yang, 2021). For instance, it has been proposed that cellphones have both utilitarian and hedonic qualities. Features such as the phone's color, design, and softness are examples of hedonic qualities. Conversely, utilitarian aspects include things like software, sound systems, and battery life (Garg et al., 2020). Prior research in the smartphone sector suggests that hedonic rather than utilitarian value is the primary factor that initiates brand experience (Safeer et al., 2021). This is explained by consumers' close bond with their mobile devices, which they use often even before going to bed during the day (Mostafa & Kasamani, 2021). Chen and Yang (2021) presented the notion of brand experience, with a focus on how it affects consumers' perceptions. "Subjective, internal consumer responses (sensations, feelings, and cognition) and behavioral responses evoked by stimuli that are part of a brand's design, identity, packaging, communications, and environment" is the additional definition of brand experience provided by Husain et al. (2022). Four dimensions make up this conceptualization: emotive, behavioral, sensory, and intellectual. Consumers' intuitive and robust intellect is captured by the sensory dimension; their intentions and emotions are captured by the affective dimension; their interactions with the brand are captured by the behavioral dimension; and their thoughtful engagement with the brand is highlighted by the intellectual dimension (Garg et al., 2020; Mostafa & Kasamani, 2021). The idea is conceived as a second-order factor that includes a sensory dimension that involves tactile and visual stimuli, and an affective dimension that reflects feelings generated by the brand (Coelho et al., 2020; Hwang et al., 2021).

Self-Brand Connection

The consumer-brand relationship and the self-brand connection are both highlighted by self-concept theory the latter fully satisfies. Husain et al. (2022) claim that "we are what we have." Strong self-brand connections happen when customers discover a good fit between their perceptions of themselves and a brand. The term "self-brand connection" refers to "the extent to which individuals have incorporated brands into their self-concept" (Sarkar, Sreejesh, Sarkar, & Dwivedi, 2021). Customers can improve and preserve their self-perception (confidence, self-esteem, etc.) with the support of such a relationship (Husain et al., 2022). Recurring purchases and positive brand attitudes are also encouraged by a strong self-brand link among consumers. According to Husain et al. (2022), the self-brand connection is establishing a powerful and expressive bond between a particular brand and a customer's sense of self. Put another way, consumers tend to purchase particular brands when they perceive the brand image which is conveyed through advertising, retail store design, or even packaging design to be consistent with their perceptions of themselves (Ibrahim & Aljarah, 2024; Molina-Prados et al., 2022). Customers frequently purchase products that do more than just meet their fundamental wants since having goods from a specific brand can help them develop and express their self-concepts (El Mouqtafi & Barzi, 2023; Sarkar et al., 2021). The

study of self-concept dates back to the 1960s (Sarkar et al., 2021). The concept of self-concept was frequently operationalized as a unidimensional entity in these early investigations. Subsequent research revealed that an individual may be the host of several "selves" (Ibrahim & Aljarah, 2024). It is therefore acknowledged that self-concept can be operationalized as a multifaceted construct (Hazzam*, 2022).

Intention to Purchase

Canguende-Valentim and Vale (2021) discovered that customers' purchasing intentions are positively influenced by the quantity and quality of online interactions. Marketers and businesses feel online interactions influence purchase decisions on social media and the influence of these interactions. The declared tendency or willingness of consumers to purchase high-end, premium, or luxury goods is referred to as their intention to purchase luxury goods (El Mouqtafi & Barzi, 2023). This idea determines a customer's propensity or willingness to purchase goods that are frequently connected to exceptional quality, exclusivity, and a high price tag. When it comes to luxury goods, the intention to buy signifies a deliberate choice to invest in things that represent status, distinction, and a particular way of life rather than just a basic desire for a particular item (Husain et al., 2022). In addition to showing interest in the object itself, consumers who indicate a favorable desire to purchase luxury items also demonstrate a propensity to engage with the brand, its image, and the symbolic value associated with the luxury item. A person's intention to buy luxury products may be influenced by several factors, such as social standing, perceived quality, product uniqueness, brand reputation, and total luxury brand experience value (Mulyawan & Suyanto, 2022). The luxury business employs marketing methods that emphasize exclusivity, workmanship, and the aspirational lifestyle associated with its products to enhance and appeal to consumers' purchase intentions (Chen & Yang, 2021).

Customer Brand Engagement

Drummond et al. (2020), the term "engagement" refers to "task behavior that promotes connections to work and to others," encompassing emotional, cognitive, and physical expressions that increase employee motivation and support personal growth. According to Zaidun et al. (2021), affective commitment, participation, trust, and calculative commitment all work together to produce the psychological process of engagement. Interactions are at the core of engagement, which develops from the bond between the engagement object and the engagement subject. Customers or consumers are the engagement subject, according to references in the literature, and brands, offerings, organizations, and organizational activities that go beyond simple purchases are the engagement objects (Bozkurt et al., 2023; Molina-Prados et al., 2022). Many subtypes of engagement are covered, including online brand management (Nadeem et al., 2021), customer engagement behavior (Hazzam*, 2022), consumer engagement (Siman, 2022; Tong & Chan, 2023), and community engagement (Zaidun et al., 2021). The concept of "customer/consumer brand engagement" is becoming increasingly important, as seen by the rise in popularity of the word (Drummond et al., 2020; Garg et al., 2020). While consumer engagement (Bozkurt et al., 2023; Hazzam*, 2022) and customer engagement (Molina-Prados et al., 2022) are the main subjects of marketing engagement studies, the object of engagement can take many forms, with a common emphasis on brands (Onofrei, Filieri, & Kennedy, 2022; Samarah, Bayram, Aljuhmani, & Elrehail, 2022). This research is based on the emerging field of social media consumer brand engagement, which has been described in some ways in the field of social media marketing studies. Although there is disagreement in the literature regarding what constitutes consumer engagement, previous studies by Tong and Chan (2023) are thought to have made a substantial contribution to the measurement and conceptualization of consumer brand engagement. Ibrahim and Aljarah (2024); Molina-Prados et al. (2022), these three dimensions treated as a higher-order construct have been used in this study to quantify the concept of customer brand engagement on social media platforms.

Hypothesis Testing

Previous scholars have recognized the importance of media interaction in a variety of media contexts, but there has not been much focus on investigating this facet in the context of social media (Nadeem et al., 2021; Zaidun et al., 2021). Given the unique benefits of social media as a communication medium over traditional media, this research suggests that it is imperative to investigate the effects of interaction in social media advertising contexts. Initially, social media's perceived balance between information acquisition and sharing via its interactive

elements encourages users to spend more time on the site (Ibrahim & Aljarah, 2024). The restricted interactivity of conventional media prevents users from actively contributing their knowledge or entertainment, in contrast to traditional media, where consumers primarily rely on the medium for information acquisition or enjoyment. Second, users can choose, search, and customize content based on their interests thanks to the user-to-user contact that social media interactivity facilitates (Arasli et al., 2021). According to Onofrei et al. (2022), the entirety of a person's thoughts and emotions about themselves as an object is their self-concept. According to Samarah et al. (2022), consumers are driven to associate with a brand to safeguard their psychological predisposition toward self-concept. Robust brand associations have the potential to establish a relationship that is so fundamental to the self-concept that it mirrors the thoughts and emotions of the individual (Ibrahim & Aljarah, 2024). The research has long acknowledged self-brand connection as a factor influencing consumers' preference for original brands.

H1: Perceived social media interactivity has a significant impact on self-brand connection.

Kumar and Kaushik (2020) suggests that media interactivity reduces the gap between real and mediated environments, which enhances the visceral user experience. This improvement leads to increased processing of materials related to the main function of social interaction. Hwang et al. (2021) argue that social media's interactive elements are vital to strengthening the fundamental goal of relationship building, which is accomplished by expediting and simplifying interactions within one's social group. Moreover, extant research on social media platforms contends that these platforms have unique technical characteristics that direct users into interactions that are centered on socialization (Mostafa & Kasamani, 2021). As a result, a highly participatory setting like social media directs users toward a platform that is more instinctive and natural, which aids in the cognitive absorption of fundamental materials. Kumar and Kaushik (2020) suggest that the increased modality interactivity promotes heightened cognitive engagement with primary communications by focusing attention on advertisement content and dissociating from periphery content. Numerous investigations have underscored the importance of perceived social media engagement in shaping consumers' buying intentions (Nadeem et al., 2021; Safeer et al., 2021). Chen and Yang (2021) found that higher levels of consumer-brand interaction are associated with greater favorable purchasing intentions. Chand and Fei (2021) expanded on this viewpoint by demonstrating how objective interaction like consumers' engaging product simulation experiences helps create vivid mental images that influence their intention to buy. Safeer et al. (2021) found that players' perceptions of social media interaction during gameplay greatly increased their propensity to make a purchase when compared to non-interactive settings. Garg et al. (2020) found a positive correlation between increased intent to purchase a brand and active interaction on its Facebook page.

H2: Perceived social media interactivity has a significant impact on the intention to purchase.

Another hypothesis is presented in this study, which suggests that brand experience acts as a mediating component in the relationship between self-brand connection and perceived social media involvement. Perceived social media engagement, as mentioned earlier, serves as a stimulant in the social media context (Chen & Yang, 2021). The idea is that it will set off the customer's brand experience, which will then influence consumer-based brand equity as a reaction. Four dimensions make up the concept of brand experience: sensory, affective, intellectual, and behavioral. It is defined as "subjective internal consumer responses (sensations, feelings, and cognitions) and behavioral responses evoked by brand-related stimuli that are part of a brand's design, identity, packaging, communications, and environments" (Arasli et al., 2021). It is important to remember that a consumer's total purchasing, consuming, and product experiences can all contribute to a positive brand experience, which in turn fosters brand satisfaction and loyalty (Coelho et al., 2020). Therefore, this research intends to clarify how perceived social media interactivity promotes self-brand connection through the complex mechanism of consumer responses and brand experiences by investigating the mediating role of brand experience (Al-Qudah, 2020). Because people are inherently drawn to intellectual and sensory stimulation and enjoyment Bozkurt et al. (2023), brand experience has become a relevant and controllable aspect of brands. According to Chen and Yang (2021), the scholarly discussion on brand experience has had a minimal impact, despite its importance. According to Bozkurt et al. (2023), brand experience is a multifaceted construct that is conceptualized as subjective, internal consumer responses including sensations, feelings, cognitions, and behavioral reactions evoked by brand-related stimuli integral to a brand's design, identity, packaging, communications, and environments. This includes an intellectual dimension measuring the brand's capacity to pique customers' analytical and creative thinking, a behavioral dimension

involving experiential and motor actions, and a sensory dimension involving visual and tactile stimulations. It also includes an affective dimension relating to brand-generated emotions and the emotional connection with the customer. The literature has not done much to examine the antecedents of brand experience, despite its acknowledged significance. El Mouqtafi and Barzi (2023) discovered that event marketing also influenced brand experience and Fazli-Salehi et al. (2021) recognized a store's environment, originality, and hedonic shopping value as factors in brand experience. Fazli-Salehi et al. (2021) define brand experience as subjective, internal consumer responses evoked by brand-related stimuli across sensory, affective, intellectual, and behavioral dimensions. Notably, Bozkurt et al. (2023) highlight the somewhat limited impact of brand experience on the academic debate, signaling a gap in understanding despite its recognized importance. However, past studies have underscored the positive outcomes associated with delivering brand experiences, including stronger brand personality associations, consumer satisfaction, brand loyalty Hazzam* (2022), brand equity (Husain et al., 2022), word-of-mouth (Hwang et al., 2021), and brand trust and love (Ibrahim & Aljarah, 2024). Garg et al. (2020), underscore the human desire for sensory and intellectual stimulation in the pursuit of pleasure. Within this framework, the concept of brand experience is posited as a crucial mediating factor between perceived social media interactivity and the intention to purchase.

H3: Brand experience has a mediating impact between perceived social media interactivity and self-brand connection.

H4: Brand experience has a mediating impact between perceived social media interactivity and intention to purchase.

(Drummond et al., 2020) defined engagement as a "psychological process that models the underlying mechanism by which customer loyalty forms for new customers of a service brand as well as the mechanisms by which loyalty may be maintained for repeat purchase customers of a service brand." Garg et al. (2020) have directed their attention towards particular forms of engagement behavior, characterizing it as "the behavioral manifestation of a customer with a brand or company focus, resulting from motivational drivers, beyond purchase." Onofrei et al. (2022) agreed with this definition, highlighting the fact that an engagement is not considered complete unless a consumer purchases the company. Nadeem et al. (2021), extending the discussion to online engagement, defined it as a "cognitive and affective commitment to an active relationship with the brand as personified by the website or other computer-mediated entities designed to communicate brand value" (Garg et al., 2020; Drummond et al., 2020; Bozkurt et al., 2023)), on the other hand, have made the case for a thorough definition of involvement that considers behavioral, emotional, and cognitive aspects. As a result, it is acknowledged that consumer brand engagement is a multifaceted construct that has three distinct dimensions: activation, affection, and cognitive (Ibrahim & Aljarah, 2024; Molina-Prados et al., 2022). Through brand-customer engagement, organizations may engage, contribute, and shape the dialogue surrounding their brand. Furthermore, successful brand customer engagement increases customer discussion and buying behavior as well as brand experience (Garg et al., 2020). High brand appreciation users interact with major companies on social media by "liking," "sharing," and leaving comments (Cao et al., 2021; Nadeem et al., 2021; Tong & Chan, 2023). Every brand interaction whether it is through a purchase, a social media post, or any other exposure to the brand builds and rebuilds brand-customer engagement (Bozkurt et al., 2023). The development of social and video-sharing platforms like Facebook, Twitter, blogs, YouTube, and Vimeo has made it much harder to understand the nature of the interaction between a company and its customers (Hazzam*, 2022; Nadeem et al., 2021). The primary objective of brand-customer engagement is customer engagement and interaction (Samarah et al., 2022). According to Husain et al. (2022), engagement is defined as the degree of a person's involvement, interaction, closeness, and impact with a brand over an extended period. Individuals' actions are determined by their "judgment of what is appropriate with respect to self-maintenance and enhancement," as well as their innate tendency to "actualize, maintain, and enhance the experiencing organism" (Onofrei et al., 2022). Research on ideas of consumer self-concept suggests a connection between a customer's self-concept and their purchase habits. A consumer's choice of a certain brand or item is influenced by how they see themselves. Purchased purpose is the most common variable arising from online social conversations, according to Husain et al. (2022). Online consumer information, whether favorable or negative, significantly affects how consumers feel about particular brands and goods. Online network recommendations have a favorable correlation with purchase

intents and have the potential to influence and directly impact customer purchasing decisions (Chand & Fei, 2021). Customers' inclinations to buy were found to be positively influenced by both online quantity and quality (Ye et al., 2020). Online interactions effect social media purchasing decisions, which in turn impacts brands and marketers.

H5: Customer brand engagement has a moderating impact on brand experience and self-brand connection.

H6: Customer brand engagement has a moderating impact on brand experience and intention to purchase.

Conceptual Framework

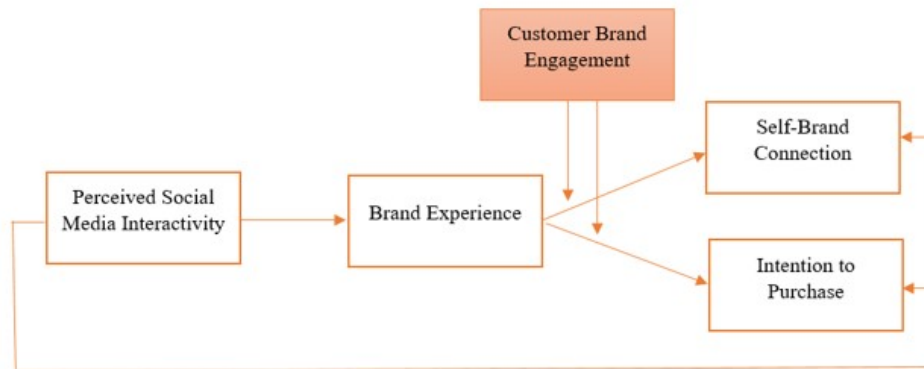


Figure 1. Conceptual framework

METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted in Morocco and customers of luxury car brands were the targeted population. The core purpose was to investigate the self-brand connection and intention to purchase due to perceived social media interactivity through the mediating role of customer brand engagement and moderating effect of brand experience. For that instance, the research approach used for this study was quantitative and descriptive. To conduct this research, primary data was collected by using the survey approach. Where questionnaires were filled out through online channels of responding. These responses were cross-sectional in terms of the time horizon, as the respondents filled out these questionnaires just once. The email data was obtained from country dealers of Toyota and Honda working in Morocco. The population was known as the record was available, which is why a probability sampling approach was used where the questionnaire was shared to all the email addresses. The data was collected and saved through online mode to test the hypotheses and for that purpose the tool Smart PLS was used. All the required statistical tests were performed in this tool based on the research model and data provided by the respondents.

Unit of Analysis

This research was conducted in the context of car brands working in Morocco and only customers of luxury car brands were requested to fill out the online questionnaire. The data was collected from the country dealers of Toyota and Honda working in Morocco. They were approached for the record and it was explained to them that the provided information will be used for research purposes only. So this research is only based on users of Toyota and Honda brands. As the population was known which is why all the available email addresses were taken into consideration and the instrument was shared for their response. A total of 400 responses were recorded through an online survey and customers of luxury cars filled out the questionnaire.

Instrument

This research is based on primary data which was collected through a survey approach. These surveys were conducted online and a questionnaire method was used. The questionnaire was adapted by using the different sources against each variable and these items were based on 5 point Likert scale. Complete information regarding the study was explained in the questionnaire so that the respondents could understand easily. Demographical questions were also asked of the respondents by providing the close-ended options in terms of ranges. These questions were related to gender, age, education, hour's usage, and media credibility. After this, the questions related to variables were asked and these were also close-ended based on 5 point Likert scale. The only predictor variable of the study was perceived social media interactivity and it was measured by adapting the 7 items-based scale developed by Tong and Chan (2023). Brand Experience was the mediating variable in this study and it was measured by using the scale of Mostafa and Kasamani (2021) and 6 items were adapted according to the context of the study. The moderating variable of the study was customer brand engagement and 6 items were adapted from Molina-Prados et al. (2022) to measure this variable. The two outcome variables were included in this study based on the research framework and gap analysis. The first dependent variable was self-brand connection and it was measured through the scale of Ibrahim and Aljarah (2024) and 6 items were adapted for this variable to measure its impact. The Intention to purchase was the other dependent variable and it was measured by using the scale developed by Chen and Yang (2021) and 3 items were adapted according to the context of the study. After adopting all the items against each variable, the instrument was validated by using the content validation and face validation approach. It was ensured that the respondents could easily understand the language of the questionnaire and respond according to the context and aim of the study.

Table 1: Demographic profile

Demography	Description	Responses Rate
Gender	Male	71%
	Female	29%
Age	Less than 20 Years	22%
	20-35	26%
	35-50	28%
	Above 50 Years	24%
	Primary and Secondary Schooling	30%
Education	Under-Graduate	45%
	Post-Graduate	25%
	Less than 3 hours	26%
Hours Usage	4-6 hours	22%
	6-8 hours	28%
	More than 8 hours	24%
	Instagram	27%
Media credibility	Facebook	21%
	Twitter	25%
	Other Social media apps	25%

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Measurement Model

Smart PLS software version 3.0 was used to assess the structural and measurement models through partial least squares analysis. The use of PLS in studying relationships between latent variables has gained popularity in marketing research. The choice of PLS was informed by its effectiveness without the need for a large sample size or assumptions on normality. Additionally, Partial Least Squares (PLS) is more appropriate than covariance-based SEM when studying moderation effects (Hair Jr, Howard, & Nitzl, 2020). There were two phases to the data analysis: first, the measurement model and subsequently the structural model were evaluated.

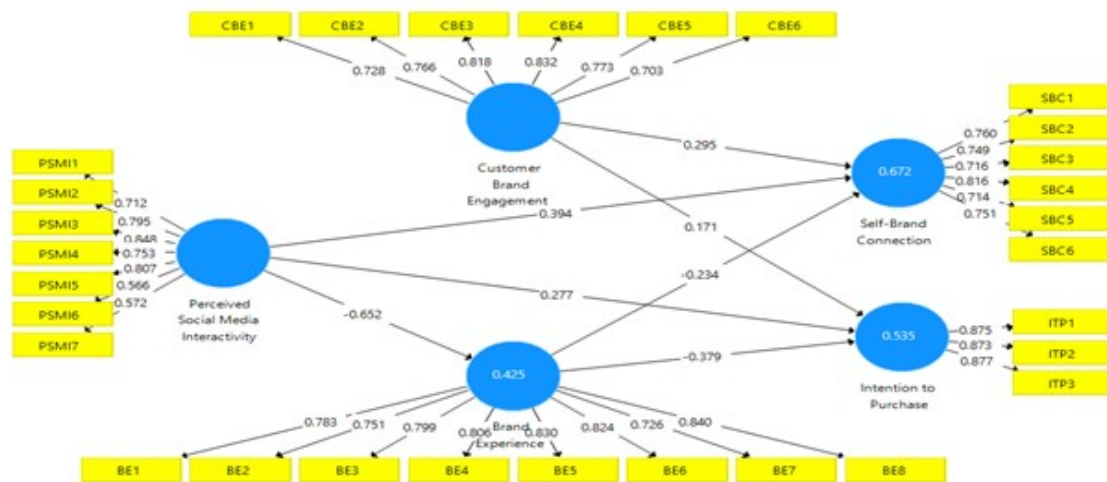


Figure 2. Measurement model

First, every item loading was significant (t -value > 1.96) and varied from 0.701 to 0.843. Item loadings had to exceed the reflective models' typical threshold of 0.7 in order to demonstrate indication reliability (Hair Jr et al., 2020). As a result, the indicator dependability of the model is verified. For internal consistency to be confirmed, both Cronbach's alpha (α) and Composite Reliability (CR) need to be more than 0.7 (Hair Jr et al., 2020). Table 2 findings demonstrate that all constructs and dimensions have α and CR values that are higher than the 0.7 cutoff. As a result, internal consistency is also proven.

Table 2: Reliability and validity

Construct	Item	Load-ings	CA	CR	AVE
Perceived Social Media Interactivity	PSMI1	0.712	0.849	0.886	0.532
	PSMI2	0.795			
	PSMI3	0.848			
	PSMI4	0.753			
	PSMI5	0.807			
	PSMI6	0.566			
	PSMI7	0.572			
Brand Experience	BE1	0.783	0.917	0.932	0.633
	BE2	0.751			
	BE3	0.799			
	BE4	0.806			
	BE5	0.830			
	BE6	0.824			
	BE7	0.726			
	BE8	0.840			

Construct	Cont.....		CA	CR	AVE
	Item	Load-ings			
Customer Brand Engagement	CBE1	0.728	0.863	0.898	0.595
	CBE2	0.766			
	CBE3	0.818			
	CBE4	0.832			
	CBE5	0.773			
	CBE6	0.703			
Self-Brand Connection	SBC1	0.760	0.846	0.886	0.565
	SBC2	0.749			
	SBC3	0.716			
	SBC4	0.816			
	SBC5	0.714			
	SBC6	0.751			
Intention to Purchase	ITP1	0.875	0.848	0.908	0.766
	ITP2	0.873			
	ITP3	0.877			

Table 3 displays the results of the model's discrimination validity test. The data has stronger discriminatory validity since all of the coefficient values on the diagonal line of the correlation coefficient matrix are bigger than the correlation coefficients between this construct and other constructs. Interestingly, construct B's AVE value is 0.47, which is higher than 0.45 but lower than 0.5. We decide to retain construct B since it fits the data well enough for the subsequent hypothesis test. This is indicated by the model's overall fitting degree (Hair Jr et al., 2020).

Table 3: Discriminant validity

	BE	CBE	ITP	PSMI	SBC
Brand Experience	0.796				
Customer Brand Engagement	-0.617	0.771			
Intention to Purchase	-0.665	0.607	0.875		
Perceived Social Media Interactivity	-0.652	0.731	0.649	0.730	
Self-Brand Connection	-0.672	0.727	0.726	0.762	0.752

Structural Model

The path-based PLS consistent method and the consistent bootstrapping technique with 1000 resamples and 95% confidence intervals were used to test the hypotheses. In order to determine the suggested correlations, the PLS-SEM bootstrapping procedure was used to derive path coefficients from a structural model. The relationships between latent variables and their observable indicators are best represented using a structural equation model (SEM). SEM is a trusted and established method in statistics for testing and validating complex theoretical models and theories. To present both direct and indirect paths among the variables, this procedure integrates regression analysis, path analysis, and factor analysis into an encompassing framework. In this framework, there are two types of variables: one set represents observable variables, and the other represents latent variables. The significance of the path coefficients was assessed in the second step by employing standards set along with the bootstrap method based on 5000 subsamples (Hair Jr et al., 2020). The findings indicate that each hypothesized link is supported empirically; therefore, the structural model can be trusted (Table 4). A relationship in which the impact of an independent variable on a dependent variable is modified by the presence of a third variable is referred to as a mediating effect. This concept helps understand how an independent variable influences a dependent variable. On the other hand, a moderating influence modifies the direction or intensity of the link when there is a weak or inconsistent relationship between the independent and dependent variables. In order to reduce bias effects, researchers used the accelerated bootstrap confidence interval technique and compensated for bias. They also

assessed the possible effects of measurement errors and aggregated scores on path coefficients. By carefully examining each path coefficient, this approach guarantees the validity and consistency of the statistical conclusions drawn from them, mitigating biases resulting from measurement mistakes and total scores.

Table 4: Hypothesis results

	Original Sample	T Statistics	p Values	Decision
Perceived Social Media Interactivity -> Self-Brand Connection	0.381	3.428	0.001	Supported
Perceived Social Media Interactivity -> Intention to Purchase	0.218	7.060	0.000	Supported
Perceived Social Media Interactivity -> Brand Experience -> Self-Brand Connection	0.165	5.005	0.000	Supported
Perceived Social Media Interactivity -> Brand Experience -> Intention to Purchase	0.304	7.492	0.000	Supported
Moderating Effect 1 -> Self-Brand Connection	0.250	1.247	0.013	Supported
Moderating Effect 2 -> Intention to Purchase	0.219	4.397	0.000	Supported

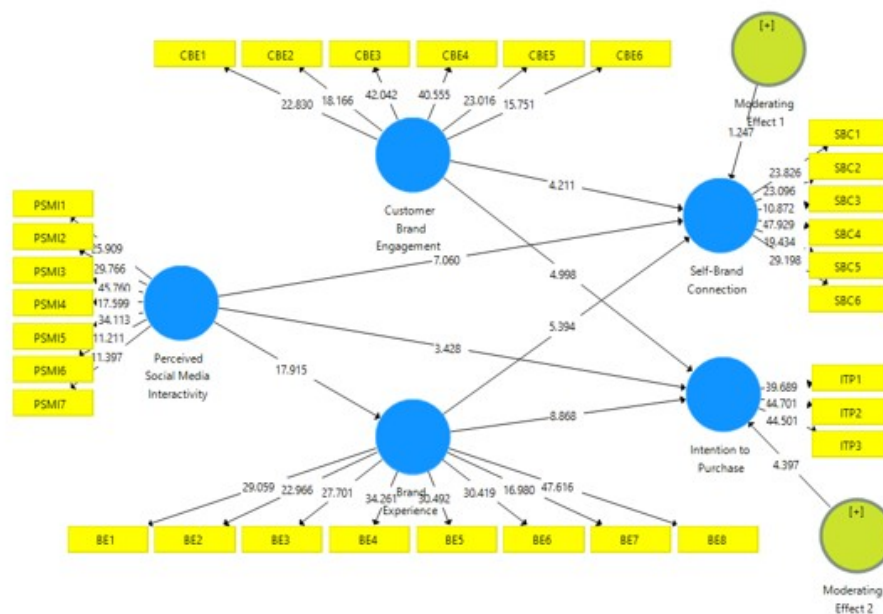


Figure 3. Structural model

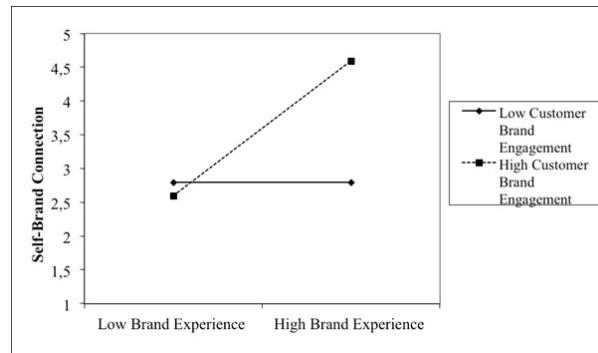


Figure 4. Moderating effect 1

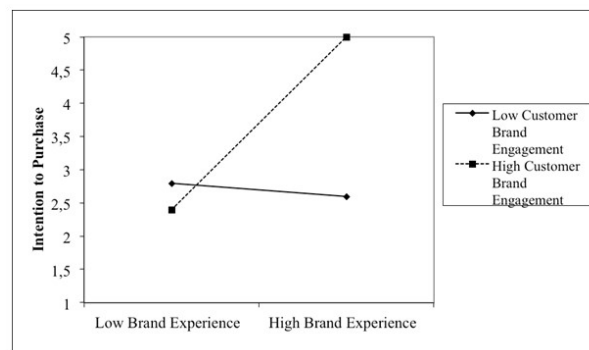


Figure 5. Moderating effect 2

Figures 4 and 5 demonstrate significance for low, moderate, and high levels of findings, despite differences in the slopes of the linkages impacted by moderation. In the context of Morocco and consumers of luxury car brands, special attention was paid to the moderating role of customer brand engagement, especially in light of the robust and favorable relationships that exist between brand experiences, self-brand connection, and purchase intention. Particularly when brand experience, self-brand connection, and purchase intention were rated negatively, it was discovered that customer brand engagement increased. The rationale behind the somewhat less pronounced improvement in the correlation between brand experience, self-brand connection, and buy intention displayed by consumers who gave growing consumer brand engagement more weight. This clever method highlights the strategically significant role that customer brand engagement has in influencing consumer perceptions and purchase intentions, particularly in circumstances when opinions over what defines a brand may diverge (Hair, Risher, Sarstedt, & Ringle, 2019).

DISCUSSION

This study expands on the framework of the Theory of Planned Behavior by examining the dynamics of experience engagement, connection, and the influence of social media interactivity within the setting of Moroccan luxury goods customers. The impact of self-brand connection and purchase intention on perceived social media interaction; brand experience acts as a mediating factor; and customer brand engagement acts as a moderating factor. Every theory was approved. The result shows that perceived social media interactivity has a significant impact on self-brand connection and intention to purchase. Based on the results, consumers are more likely to build reliable relationships with similar and experienced sources who share high-quality information on SNPs (such as Facebook and Instagram) if they interact with the content created by friends, peers, and acquaintances there. Finding excellent information from sources that have similar values encourages users to buy the same goods and services that other users in their networks have shared on social media. Furthermore, behavioral engagement with the shared content (likes, shares, and comments) is triggered by repeated contacts with homophiles and reliable

sources. According to earlier research, social media intensity boosts users' desire to see user-generated material (Bozkurt et al., 2023; Chand & Fei, 2021). This is consistent with the body of research that highlights how social media affects the attitudes and intentions of consumers (Bozkurt et al., 2023). Customer's intention to make a purchase is positively influenced when they consider a brand highly interactive on social media platforms, where they can actively connect with the brand (Cao et al., 2021; Coelho et al., 2020). This improves the consumer's overall brand experience. Social media's interactive features provide users with a feeling of engagement and connection with brands, which shapes their opinion of the brand and, eventually, their desire to buy (Arasli et al., 2021). Prior research has acknowledged the mediation role of brand experience and emphasized its importance in creating a link between actual purchase decisions and perceived social media interactions. Garg et al. (2020), claim that the sensory, emotive, cognitive, and behavioral components of a brand experience are all interconnected. Garg et al. (2020), assert that the quality of these interactions directly influences customers' overall experiences with a brand, which in turn influences their intention to make a purchase. This is shown by the mediating effect of brand experience in the context of perceived social media interactions.

The result shows that customer brand engagement has a moderating impact on brand experience and self-brand connection and intention to purchase. Previous research has focused on the moderating role of customer brand engagement, emphasizing how it helps to reinforce the relationship between brand experience and consumers' purchase intent (Garg et al., 2020). More interaction and participation from engaged customers improves the brand experience and has a positive impact on their inclination to purchase (Gligor & Bozkurt, 2021). Bozkurt et al. (2023) emphasize the importance of customer brand involvement in contemporary marketing strategies, particularly in the digital era where consumers actively seek for personalized and interactive experiences. This findings is in line with the understanding that a customer's deeper and more positive connection with a brand is the consequence of their active interaction and engagement, and that this connection affects their entire brand experience and buy intentions (Zaidun et al., 2021). As a result, they tend to define social media strategy more narrowly, primarily as a tool for engagement and communication as opposed to as a component of a relationship's potential resource and activity (Kumar & Kaushik, 2020). Hence, we contribute to the literature by highlighting the importance of characterizing social media as a resource involved in interaction as well as its use as a communications tool. The current study was carried out in the Moroccan context and adds to the general understanding of social media customer brand engagement (Al-Qudah, 2020; Canguende-Valentim & Vale, 2021; Drummond et al., 2020). Examining the importance of social media brand interaction and experience (Coelho et al., 2020; Garg et al., 2020) as well as significant brand-related outcomes like brand self-connection and intention to purchase (Bozkurt et al., 2023; Hwang et al., 2021; Nadeem et al., 2021).

Implications

There are numerous theoretical and practical Implications for the research's conclusions. Our study has added to the scant body of research on social media marketing by emphasizing the role that social media plays in influencing consumers' propensity to buy certain companies. The TPB assumptions have been verified by the study's data, indicating that customer behavior to revisit is consistent with what happens when certain circumstances influence each individual's behavior. This is based on the theory that the antecedent variables might not indirectly affect the intention to buy. As a result, the tourist's choice is determined by carefully evaluating the luxury goods (planned behavior). The intention of customers to participate is a crucial determinant of their engagement behaviors. However, social media contextual elements, such as media richness and trustworthiness, considerably impact the extent to which the intention influences actual consumer participation. Priority should be given to brands strengthening their relationship to their own brand and consumers' intention to buy. This study has elucidated the significance of social media marketing and the ways in which various platforms, such as Instagram and Facebook, may be leveraged to support brands in augmenting their connection to their own brand and buy intention. Managers can use this information and upper management to help them decide which platform is best for the business. They will have a better understanding of it thanks to this research. The brand managers, who can use them to inform choices, can view the research findings. It is also evident that the ties formed through social media interaction are crucial in strengthening the sense of self-branding and the desire to buy luxury goods. Luxury brands in Morocco should not pass up the chance to be active on social media and utilize these platforms to their full potential.

Social media marketing tactics ought to guarantee that the content is engaging, fashionable, and personalized, and promotes communication and involvement with clients. The brand can reap numerous benefits from the inclusion of these activities in its social media profiles. Businesses benefit from social media marketing because it allows them to establish a strong brand identity, which is regarded as the cornerstone of any successful brand. Through the development of a positive and strong brand self-connection and purchase intention, as well as by raising brand awareness and helping the brand reach new customers, social media marketing activities are a strategic tool that aids in the process of generating brand equity.

Limitations and Future Research

Although our research has yielded significant insights, it is imperative to recognize its inherent constraints. First off, there is a chance of bias when measuring the dimensions of interest through online surveys. Future studies might find it useful to include secondary data sources' perspectives on our findings. Second, to truly determine causality and reveal underlying behavioral features, future research should include experimental designs and priming approaches as the bulk of constructs were evaluated using questionnaires and scale measures. Another weakness is the use of convenient sampling, especially through mall intercepts. To improve the robustness and generalizability of findings, future research should investigate alternate data collection approaches such as laboratory experiments and participant observation. As such, the results of our study would be most useful to customers whose cultural backgrounds are comparable to those of the samples used; hence, care should be taken when extrapolating findings to larger consumer groups. It is also critical to recognize that this study might not provide a thorough understanding of the connection between consumer brand engagement, self-brand connection, and purchase intention. By definition, cross-sectional studies only sample a portion of the population at one particular point in time, which may limit our understanding of causality. In order to overcome this constraint and offer a more comprehensive examination of the relationships between these concepts, further studies may utilize experimental or longitudinal methodologies. Surveys conducted at various intervals would allow for a more comprehensive analysis of response continuity and variations over time, leading to a more sophisticated comprehension of the causal links involved. The research was conducted in a particular cultural setting; its applicability to the Moroccan consumer market may be limited. To improve the external validity of the findings, future research should try to repeat the study in various cultural contexts. Furthermore, a significant portion of the study's data came from self-reports, which raises the possibility of response bias and social desirability effects. Using observational data or mixed-methods approaches could yield a more thorough knowledge of the relationships analyzed. Additionally, the present study mainly concentrates on the suggested theoretical framework; further investigation may look into other factors or moderators that might affect the relationships found. Finally, considering how quickly social media platforms and consumer behavior are changing, longitudinal research may be able to shed light on how the variables being studied are dynamic over time.

CONCLUSION

Since the great majority of us rely on social media for knowledge, communication with others, and self-brand connection, its pervasiveness in our daily lives is evident. Social media has developed into a useful instrument for a strategy that benefits both people and companies in many ways. The study is noteworthy for its examination of the importance of social media interaction for Moroccan consumers of luxury automobile brands, particularly those connected to the nation's Toyota and Honda dealerships. The increasing interest among academics in comprehending how social media participation affects the luxury car industry's consumer experience in Morocco is reflected in this study. The results highlight the complex interactions among these variables and highlight the critical function of perceived social media interaction as a driver of increased brand engagement. Our comprehension of the mental processes driving customer decisions in the luxury goods industry is further enhanced by the incorporation of the Theory of Planned Behavior. Practically speaking, these observations have significant ramifications for companies doing business in Morocco. Companies can use these insights to proactively adjust their digital strategy and create engaging social media profiles that cater to Moroccan consumers' tastes. Businesses that adopt these insights are better positioned to manage and prosper in the competitive landscape of the Moroccan luxury goods market, as customer behavior patterns continue to change in the digital era.

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APPENDIX

Variables	Items	Source
Perceived Social Media Inter-activity	1. My fast luxury cars brands enables content sharing with others on social media. 2. My fast luxury cars brands interacts regularly with its followers and fans on social media. 3. My Fast luxury cars brands facilitates two way interaction with others on social media. 4. The brand listens to what I have to say. 5. The brand allows me to communicate directly with it. 6. The brand would respond to me quickly and efficiently. 7. The brand will talk back to me if I post a message.	Tong and Chan (2023)
Brand Experience	1. This brand makes a strong impression on my visual sense or other senses 2. This brand does not appeal to my senses 3. I engage in physical actions and behaviors when I use this brand 4. This brand results in bodily experiences. 5. This brand is not action oriented 6. I engage in a lot of thinking when I encounter this brand 7. This brand does not make me think 8. This brand stimulates my curiosity and problem solving.	(Mostafa & Kasamani, 2021)
Customer Brand Engage-ment	1. I leave messages on the wall of the brand's social media pages. 2. I post my comments on the brand's social media pages. 3. I help other people by providing them with information about the product/brand on the brand's social media pages. 4. I join events organized through the brand's social media pages. 5. I recommend the brand's social media pages to my friend 6. I send invitations to ask others to become a fan to the brand's social media pages.	Molina-Prados et al. (2022)
Self-Brand Connection	1. This brand's social media pages reflects who I am. 2. I can identify with this brand's social media pages. 3. I feel a personal connection to this brand's social media pages. 4. I use this brand's social media pages to communicate who I am to other people. 5. I think this brand's social media pages (could) help(s) me become the type of person I want to be. 6. I consider this brand's social media pages page to be "me".	Ibrahim and Aljarah (2024)
Intention to Purchase	1. Given the chance, I would consider purchasing the product/service depicted in the post shared by people in my social media network in the near future. 2. It is likely that I will purchase the product/service as shown in the post shared by people on my social media network. 3. Given the opportunity, I intend to purchase the product/service as shown in the post shared by people on my social media network.	Chen and Yang (2021)