

The Influence of Brand Credibility towards Words of Mouth of Fashion Brand

Shindy Shindy, Evo Sampetua Hariandja*

Universitas Pelita Harapan, Tangerang, Indonesia

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 01 November 2020

Revised 17 February 2021

Accepted 03 March 2021

JEL Classification:

D12, M31, M37

Key words:

Brand Credibility; Brand-Self Connection; Brand-Social Connection; Positive Word of Mouth; Memorial Brand Experience

DOI:

10.14414/jebav.v23i3.2386.

ABSTRACT

This research tries to examine the factors influencing the positive word of mouth of Indonesian's consumer towards fashion brand. The factors studied include brand credibility and brand-self connection as independent variables, brand-self connection and brand-social connection as the mediating variables, and memorial brand experience as the moderating variable. This study is quantitative research with data collection method using the electronic questionnaires of Google forms. This study uses 300 respondents of Prada Italian brand in Indonesia and the data is analyzed using structural equation modelling. The results show that brand credibility, brand self-connection, and brand social connection have a positive effect on word of mouth. Both brand self-connection and brand social connection mediate the influence of brand credibility on word of mouth. This study suggests that by preserving the relationships with consumers as well as consumer relationships with other consumers, managers would be able to produce more positive word of mouth.

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mencoba menguji faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi word of mouth positif konsumen Indonesia terhadap merek fashion. Faktor-faktor yang diteliti meliputi kredibilitas merek dan hubungan merek-diri sebagai variabel bebas, hubungan merek-diri dan hubungan merek-sosial sebagai variabel mediasi, dan pengalaman merek memorial sebagai variabel moderasi. Penelitian ini adalah penelitian kuantitatif dengan metode pengumpulan data menggunakan kuesioner elektronik Google forms. Penelitian ini menggunakan 300 responden merek Prada Italia di Indonesia dan data dianalisis menggunakan model persamaan struktural. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kredibilitas merek, hubungan merek, dan hubungan sosial merek berpengaruh positif terhadap word of mouth. Baik brand self-connection maupun brand social connection memediasi pengaruh kredibilitas merek dari mulut ke mulut. Studi ini menyarankan bahwa dengan menjaga hubungan dengan konsumen serta hubungan konsumen dengan konsumen lain, manajer akan mampu menghasilkan word of mouth yang lebih positif.

1. INTRODUCTION

The fashion industry is a modern urban industry that has its own characteristics, and closely related to the transformation and development of the fashion industry. It is not an independent industry but through the fusion of various high-tech, creative, media, the traditional industry resources integration, promotion, the combination formed a relatively unique product, service, product operation mode. With innovation and personalized service instructions from their derivatives, the fashion industry is not only limited to fashion, jewelry, and other industries (Ma & Hu, 2017). The fashion business is currently experiencing very

rapid development in the era of globalization (Gazzola et al., 2020). It operates in a highly competitive market dominated by the presence of global brands. Rapid changes in fashion season impulse people to not stop buying fashion items. That is why fashion retail sector will always expand greater and be more attractive to be contemplated (Sugih & Soekarno, 2015).

Nowadays, more and more people are interested in entering the fashion business and competing to improve their products and services. This development of the fashion business is due to an increase in the income and lifestyle of people in big cities. The increase in consumer demand

* Corresponding author, email address: evo.hariandja@uph.edu

worldwide for the luxury fashion segment reached US\$ 5,363 million and is expected to increase annually by \$6.2 (Statista, 2020). This also happens in Indonesia, when a product that is considered new by the community appears. Consumer interest in luxury goods in Indonesia is expected to expand due to changes in lifestyle, in which Indonesians are able to spend more money on luxury goods. Revenue in Indonesia in the luxury fashion segment will reach US\$ 429 million in 2020, and each year it is estimated to experience growth of around 8.4 percent (Statista, 2020). In order to obtain more customers, marketers are required to build an effective strategy so that they can build customer loyalty in the long run due to the significant demand for luxury fashion items (Soh, Rezaei & Gu, 2017).

In a highly competitive market environment, every brand in the fashion industry is faced with a credibility crisis as consumers are both alerts and experienced in the dynamic collaborative digital web environment. This fashion crisis has prompted every brand to issue old products and attract new products through various innovative processes (Lee, Workman & Jung, 2016). One of the best way to attract the attention of new consumers is positive word-of-mouth communication because most consumers will give what other consumers say as they have used the products and services of a company. Word of mouth (WOM) has a very influential and effective role in the survival of a company because WOM can spread quickly and the potential consumers tend to trust on it. New consumers will be fixated on a company, its products, and services that lead to loyalty (Ngoma & Ntale, 2019). This increases consumer confidence in the company and its products and services and makes consumers feel that they have made the right choice (Suleiman & Einolahzadeh, 2018).

The need for positive word of mouth is important for a product because it will increase the demand for that product. On the other hand, a product that is liked will give off a feeling of dislike for other products because a product often competes with other brands. Substantial weakening effect in the competitive environment will appear on other products in the same category if there is a positive word of mouth (Chen, Luo & Wang, 2017). Many factors effect positive word of mouth. Previous studies show that brand credibility has a positive impact on word-of-mouth (An et al., 2018), brand loyalty and purchase intention (Martín-Consuegra et al., 2018; Wang & Yang, 2010). Positive word of mouth is also influenced by brand-self connection and brand social connection (Eelen, Özturan &

Verlegh, 2017; Kwon & Mattila, 2015, Wilson et al., 2017). In addition, brand social connection may mediate the effect of brand credibility and brand-self connection on positive word of mouth (An et al., 2018).

This study examines the factors influencing positive word of mouth in fashion industry. The study focuses on Prada as one a luxury Italian fashion brand. The Italian fashion brands have their own characteristics and characters which are influenced by the designers behind them. Prada, initially this trendy outfit attracted young consumers of fashion, this is because Prada has outlets all over the world and is more accessible to several other top brands. The most expensive clothing products in the world are known for their simple, distinct, and comfortable designs.

The product was made into a film with the title "Devil Wears Prada" (Izzah, 2018). In 2020, as the economy is in decline, nothing can predict sales and growth for luxury brands as accurately as online popularity today. As you can see from the above data provided, Prada, The brand has grown to become one of the most well-known luxury brands in the industry with the appearance of a product of sports shoes and designer sneakers that propelled Prada to the top of the most popular luxury brand, and successfully attracted consumers' interest. However, these efforts were not sufficient to keep up with the competition. Prada lost four points in 2020 and finished in thirteenth (Beauloye, 2020). Based on the explanation described above, the researchers are interested in Prada luxury Italian fashion brand credibility from the Indonesian people's perspective. The researcher raised the topic of Global luxury Italian fashion brand because Italy has a very strong history and influence in the world of fashion, as previously mentioned.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES

Global Luxury Fashion Brand

Global brands are characterized by having the awareness and use of the same name and logo. It is internationally managed, and can be accessed in various parts of the world; and at least 5 percent of the brand's sales from abroad. For many global brands, especially those that have been global for a long time, a similar positioning is not possible because the local image may be different from the global image, while its position is outstanding in most other markets as a global brand. Global brands have the same marketing strategies and plans in major markets (Rahimnia & Sarvari, 2019).

Currently, the luxury goods industry is the sector with the strongest presence in global brands. Luxury brands must not adapt to local customers and markets. Manufacturers must develop and produce goods that they can and can, following their heritage and knowledge, to increase sales and adapt to new markets: 'brands must always dominate their clients' (Donzé, 2020).

Luxury brands represent authentic, prestigious, exclusive, and prestigious products even though the product is not important. Besides that, luxury brands also offer a symbolic value and high level of emotional (Giovannini, Xu & Thomas, 2015). Several studies have emphasized how luxury goods offerings provide consumers with the best possible experience as well as symbolic benefits (i.e., social recognition or prestige, etc.), which derive from the intangible assets of the brand (Codignola, 2018). Nowadays, luxury fashion consumers continue to appreciate the opportunity to see and touch the products they are about to buy, as this requires a satisfying experience and offers the opportunity to evaluate product quality (Mir-Bernal, Guercini & Sádaba, 2018). Therefore, by using luxury brands, consumers can show a high level of welfare, because brand products can increase social status by triggering the aspirations of their group (Makkar & Yap, 2018). The global luxury culture is formed by the desire of consumers for luxury products that have crossed national and regional cultural boundaries (Liu et al., 2016). Luxury brands are now facing the variety of the world and a variety of multicultural consumer interpretations. Luxury fashion brands are now being challenged to find a balance with the specific characteristics of their respective markets as globalization makes brands available in diverse cultural contexts. (Bilgin et al., 2017).

Signaling Theory and Brand Credibility

From a company value perspective, the value in brand assets will be realized if shareholders are aware of it. Signaling theory is used to reduce uncertainty and assist stakeholders (brand signal recipients) in perceiving the quality and value of brand offerings (Karanges et al., 2018). This research uses signaling theory as a framework for the analysis of positive word of mouth and the adoption of a signaling framework for the analysis of brand impact on consumer behavior, and investigates the critical role that brand credibility could perform in positive word of mouth (WOM).

Signaling theory explains the relationship between the sender and the receiver of the 'signal',

in the sense of communication in the delivery of positive things from the sender. According to this theory, the sender chooses how to communicate with the receiver and the receiver decides how to digest it (Na et al., 2019). The assumption of signaling theory is that there is information asymmetry, in the sense that there are internal parties who have accurate information about something that is not known by external parties.

Due to information asymmetry, internal parties are required to signal to external parties (Puspitaningtyas, 2019). Brand signals have various meanings and are used in various contexts, brand signals are their offerings that send information about the quality and value of the brand offering. However, brand signals do not include information about the brand in detail because they are extrinsic, so brand signals only provide conclusions or basic information about the actual brand features (Karanges et al., 2018). Brand value as a credible signal is consumer-based brand equity. The credibility of a brand's signal creates intangible benefits, reduces the risk and cost of information perceived by consumers, and also improves the perceived quality because consumer utility increases the added value of the brand. The central construction in this case is the credibility of the brand as a signal (Erdem & Swait, 2016).

Credibility can be broadly defined as the trustworthiness of a brand at any given time. Therefore, brand credibility is a belief in the information that is owned by a brand, that is, consumers tend to notice that the brand has the expertise or ability, and also has the will and trust to deliver what has been promised (Vidyanata, Sunaryo & Hadiwidjojo, 2018). A brand is considered credible if the brand shows that it can be relied on from a brand positioning that increases brand consideration, evaluation, and choice, therefore it can be said that evaluation and consumer brand intentions are preceded by brand credibility (Mandler, Bartsch & Han, 2020). The core definition of brand credibility has two components, which are, ability in the delivery of information offered by the company (i.e. expertise) and also the company must be considered to have the ability and can be trusted in delivering what has been promised (i.e. trustworthiness) (Nayeem, Murshed & Dwivedi, 2019).

A brand has the trust and expertise obtained in the cumulative impact of the previous marketing carried out by a brand, so it is no wonder that brand credibility is reflected in marketing strategies such as advertising, because as has been explained that

brand credibility places product positioning. This allows consumers to see less risk during the decision-making process. In line with that, an important factor that contributes to the overall corporate image is brand credibility (Martín-Consuegra et al., 2018). Therefore, it can be said that brand credibility is able to reduce the level of risk and cost of information related to products and services, and is also able to improve the perceived quality, this affects the thoughts or responses of consumers if the two same products are offered (Ladeira, Santini & Jardim, 2020).

Social Identity Theory

Social identity is an individual belief that he come from members of certain social groups and this belief arises from comparisons between groups that have been selected with other groups (Caricati & Sollami, 2018). Social identity consists of individuals in groups, where individuals have adopted the group's point of view and behave as members of the group. The group itself is a collection of individuals who have the same mindset where they perceive themselves with other people in the group as similar, behave similarly, identify with each other, and share the same opinion (Mangum & Block, 2018). By using social identity theory as its framework, this research not only focuses on self-connection but also focuses on interactions within the group. In social identity theory, group outcomes are very important, therefore, group members have more extreme behavior in protecting their social identities. In this theory, it is important for group members to protect their identity in order to protect their self-esteem (Jansen & Delahaij, 2019). Members in groups tend to create positive self-identities, so it is natural for members to think more positively about inner groups and more negatively about outside groups. Individuals will value the group more if they are members of the group, so this can create gaps between the inner group and the outer group (Guan & So, 2016)

Self-brand connection focuses more on consumer tendencies towards brand characteristics that will form relationships related to self-image. Therefore, the development of self-brand connections in consumers can have several additional benefits, such as social approval, expression of individuality, and increased self-esteem (Lee et al., 2019). Self-brand connection not only forms a different self-concept but also encourages different consumer motivations and a unique self. Self-concept consists of public and private self-awareness (Ye et al., 2015). As already

explained, self-brand connections arise due to a certain level of familiarity with the brand you like. However, consumers will show their negative attitude towards a brand if the brand is considered unfavorable (Tan et al., 2018).

Brand Social Connection in social groups can produce emotional connections. In searching for information for a particular brand, customers interact with various types of social media platforms. Website reviewers and other bloggers, build brand social relationships with like-minded people (Zhang et al., 2017). When trademarks are used as visual branding, people need to have, the fundamental human motivation, to enhance and enhance social relationships, play an important role in shaping responses. So it can be said that if the need for social relationships cannot be met, then people will feel lonely and try to compensate for it (Orth et al., 2017). The tendency of consumers to create social bonds with brands can lead to strong and meaningful relationships with brands, this has resulted in positive results (Panigyrakis, Panopoulos & Koronaki, 2020)

Word of Mouth

Word of mouth (WOM) is one of the oldest ways to communicate information and has been identified throughout many ways (Huete-Alcocer, 2017). WOM is defined as informal communication that conveys or informs other consumers about the use, control, and quality of certain goods and services (Ahmadi, 2019). These statements can be either positive, neutral, or even negative (Ngoma & Ntale, 2019). Communication between consumers is a consumer evaluation of the shopping experience (Mehrad & Mohammadi, 2017). It can be said that the information obtained by word of mouth doubles as interpersonal, online, and direct communication. In every company, marketing managers have long been interested in word of mouth that has a major impact on consumer buying behaviour (Paley, Tully & Sharma, 2019). Things like listening to suggestions from friends, reading reviews on the internet, or reading complaints on social media can influence purchasing decisions and potential customers' attitudes towards a brand. When people get a WOM message, they process the quality of the message content and source characteristics. Both elements have been shown to influence individual WOM attitudes and acceptance (Le, Dobebe & Robinson, 2018).

The WOM is informal communication regarding the evaluation of goods or services. Cognitive and emotional elements are involved in

word of mouth. This is sought after by consumers who are not familiar with the product or service because according to consumers experienced personal sources are considered more credible and trustworthy (Bond, He & Wen, 2019). In the real world market, it is not only products that are integrated, but also product features, so that Word-of-Mouth is assessed in a complex manner by humans collectively. Brand loyalty and brand trust in the same product tend to support each other. The potential enforcement will be applied to other products with the same brand which will lead to positive word of mouth. On the other hand, a product that is liked will give off a feeling of dislike for other products, because a product often competes with other brands. Substantial weakening effect in the competitive environment will appear on other products in the same category if there is a positive word of mouth (Chen et al., 2017).

Memorial Brand Experience

So far, experience has been a central element. Moreira, Fortes & Santiago (2017) stated that a successful experience is a feeling that the customer feels as memorable and unique, an experience that wants to be repeated and maintained over time and remains enthusiastically promoted. Brand experience is a personal subjective feeling, sensation, and cognition caused by external stimuli of the brand, such as packaging, environment, communication, design and identity. Therefore, brand-related stimuli can drive consumers with the brand (Kim & Chao, 2019). Satisfaction, brand attitude, and consumer feelings impact brand experience (Aiswarya & Krishnan, 2019). Brand experience focuses not only on product-oriented sales, but also on the customer experience. This applies to all types of products and services, as it allows consumers to interact and engage with brands (Li, 2018). Not only that, but the brand experience can also be used as a precedent in product behaviour. This can be a full evaluation or assessment of a brand based on features and advantages as well as product recognition, and it can be an increase in brand valuation (Omar, 2020).

Brands must be able to offer a memorable experience because, in an increasingly competitive business environment, it is important for brands to create experiences for customers if brands are to build and differentiate themselves from competitors. Memorial brand experience can increase affective commitment, strengthen brand equity, increase customer satisfaction, and also improve brand-consumer relationships (Iglesias,

Markovic & Rialp, 2019). Therefore, there is no doubt that many companies try to make consumers experience the brand experience first, this is done so that consumers can find the advantages of the brand and the company can use this to develop and enlarge, as well as compete in the market (Zhang, 2019). This cause, the brand experience becomes a concern that is being pursued by business people.

Brand Credibility and Brand-Self Connection

In this research, the researcher assumed that the credibility of a brand could form a more effective brand-self connection. The needs of brand in developing relationships with consumers are very important. This is necessary so that consumers can develop a personal identity with the brand and also a positive attitude or preferred behavior, this action is necessary so that consumers can tie themselves with them (Ferreira et al., 2019). An important aspect of brand engagement is a brand-self connection, this is manifested in the emotional and cognitive relationships between consumers and brands (Rosli et al., 2019).

When more than one brand claims to be the best product or service, it's a time like this a source of credibility is needed. Positive consumer dependence can be obtained if consumers believe that a brand can be trusted in delivering its promises (Jeng, 2016). The brand is the signal giver and the consumer as the receiver who interprets the signal. Brands use credibility in "signaling" to consumers and will be an added value if the brand has a good reputation. Then consumers will think that the brand is trusted. Informing an individual identity, a brand is the right element. When individuals reflect their identity in a brand, individuals will identify through the brand and use the brand in communicating with other people. Consumers use a credible brand in reflecting and communicating their self-concept (Black & Veloutsou, 2017). In social identity theory, in increasing self-esteem, individuals tend to identify with social categories (De Veirman & Hudders, 2020). Before individuals identify in social categories, individuals must evaluate their social groups and categories in increasing their self-esteem (Thuy & Von der Heidt, 2018). In identifying social categories and groups, consumers tend to evaluate specifically and positively, credibly. Therefore, if a brand is credible in terms of brand value, consistent in the delivery of the brand, then consumers will be better able to recognize them with the brand. Hence, the research proposes:

H₁ Brand credibility positively affects brand-self connection

Brand Credibility and Brand-Social Connection

Individuals will choose groups that have identical characteristics or attribute to identify themselves in order to feel greater self-esteem (An et al., 2018). Research conducted by Hayes & Carr (2015) states that social groups are important to consumers because this confirms the identity of consumers who often buy and use brands in social groups. Brand is a tool used to connect consumers with other consumers, this is shown in a research of brand communities (Seo & Buchanan-Oliver, 2015). In organizations, signaling theory has proven useful in explaining how organizations attempt to communicate signals to external parties regarding the potential and quality of the brand (Park & Patel, 2015). Application of this theory can help individuals in understanding about the signal the organization comes from, what flows from the source, and its impact on the decisions of parties outside the brand (Drover, Wood & Corbett, 2018).

According to social identity theory, individuals in having social groups to increase their self-image tend to choose groups with distinctiveness, characteristics, and a good reputation (Brown, 2020). In social groups, individual identification will be reflected. The theory of social identity states that a sense of belonging can be grown from consumers who support a brand. This concept shows broadly that self-concept is a factor of self-identity and also social identity obtained from social groups (Kuo & Hou, 2017). Emotion in the community is a social identity, where consumers can enhance brand relationships through their social identity (Vernuccio et al., 2015). From the above discussion, the research argues that consumers will perceive a brand as attractive if the brand is credible, and with the same brand, consumers can increase self-esteem by identifying or comparing other customers. Therefore, the research proposes:

H₂ Brand credibility positively affects brand-social connection

Brand-Self Connection and Brand-Social Connection

Social identity theory is used in explaining the brand-self connection and brand-social connection. Social identity theory suggests the research of identity motives, customer self-expression, self-improvement, and self-esteem in building meaningful brand-self connection relationships.

Therefore, this theory tends to be used in understanding consumer behavior because every consumer is different, however consumers see themselves as part of a social group (Rather, 2018). Social identity theory states that in increasing self-esteem, individuals will associate with individuals or groups that match or reflect the desired identity (Mousavi, Roper & Keeling, 2017). According to the theory, self-concept is an individual's belief about himself, and social identity is a self-concept that partly comes from social groups (O'Connor et al., 2018). Self-concept is a person's description of themselves based on their personal attributes and the roles they play. It is important to know that what individuals see in themselves will be different when other people see because of their different values (Banahene, 2017). Individual psychological needs can be met if a relationship with a brand is achieved, not only psychological needs, but individuals can determine their identity and also relate to other people (Hermenda, Sumarwan, & Tinaprillia, 2019). Therefore, consumers will share their positive experiences with a brand to others if their consumers are comfortable with the brand.

The concept of comfort can be realized if the relationship with the brand is established, and the brand can reflect consumers. Therefore, it is necessary to identify ourselves first before identifying users of other brands (An et al., 2018). This research uses social identity theory in explaining the brand-self connection with brand-social connection. According to the theory, developing and maintaining social identity is something individuals do as members of a group, and brands are one way to reflect their personality or identity. Consumers will recommend a brand to others if they feel connected to the brand and the brand is seen as a reflection of the consumer's social relationships. This will make consumers a "brand ambassador" to build stronger relationships (McKeown et al., 2016). Therefore, through brand-self connection activities, it will create a brand-social connection. The research then proposes the hypothesis as the following:

H₃ Brand-self connection positively affects brand-social connection

Brand-Social Connection and Positive Word-of-Mouth

Brand social connection produces emotional connections made with social groups. Customers tend to look for information about a particular brand and this is related to various social media platforms.

It can be argued that both website reviewers and bloggers build brand social relationships with like-minded people. This is how in a customer-centric marketing strategy it can build emotional connections and lead to high levels of word of mouth (Zhang et al., 2017). In social identity theory, individuals who have identified themselves with a social group, individuals tend to protect and promote group interests in building and maintaining consistent self-esteem and self-image (Jansen & Delahaij, 2019). There are many driving factors in the concept of word of mouth. In building and maintaining the relationship between the company and stakeholders it is very important; more especially with customers in getting the benefits of positive word of mouth (Babić et al., 2015). What can affect the attractiveness of a brand in customer reference is word of mouth (Syahrivar & Ichlas, 2018).

According to Poturak et al. (2018), in creating positive word of mouth, a relationship between the brand and its consumers is needed which is promoted by the brand-social connection. Several studies have found that brand social connections produce positive word of mouth promotion. According to research conducted by Wu, Fan, & Zhao (2018) states that many individuals tend to be motivated to develop and maintain social identity if they have become part of a group where the brand is the result of their personality. If consumers have become part of the social group of a brand, consumers tend to be involved in word of mouth which is more towards showing their uniqueness, personality, expertise, and status (An et al., 2018). In line with the research done by Um (2016), found that the social identity of consumers, in showing a high social identity, the Positive Word-of-Mouth will also be greater. Therefore, the research proposes:

H₄ There is a positive effect of brand-social connection towards positive word-of-mouth

Brand Credibility, Positive Word-of-Mouth and Mediating Role of Brand-Self Connection and Brand-Social Connection

Brand credibility is a strong basis for individuals in dealing with beliefs, values, and the symbolic identity of a brand, and when dealing with other brand users, consumers will be more confident (An et al., 2018). The needs of brand in developing relationships with consumers are very important. This is necessary so that consumers can develop a personal identity with the brand and also a positive attitude or preferred behavior, this action is

necessary so that consumers can tie themselves with them. The more the brand relates to the consumer, the more the brand will benefit from the relationship, one of which is positive word of mouth (Ferreira et al., 2019). Signaling theory stated that due to information asymmetry, internal parties are required to signal to external parties (Puspitaningtyas, 2019). Social identity theory, group outcomes are very important, therefore, group members have more extreme behavior in protecting their social identities. In this theory, it is important for group members to protect their identity in order to protect their self-esteem (Jansen & Delahaij, 2019). By using these two theories, the researcher assumes that consumers will connect with a brand if the brand has high credibility. Consumers tend to maintain, improve, and also promote both within themselves, which are brand-self connection, and in social groups, which are brand-social connection.

Brand credibility is a signal or product position, where consumers must trust the information provided by a brand, and whether a brand is able and consistent in fulfilling what the brand promises. According to El-Baz, Elseidi, & El-Maniaway (2018), having a reliable source of information that is more credible, such as word of mouth, can affect credibility positively or negatively. Word of mouth is a power that can make or break a brand. Morhart et al. (2015), states that credibility has a positive effect on word of mouth. Furthermore, Folkvord et al (2019) states that brand credibility (trust) is a good predictor of customer loyalty (including positive word of mouth), and it has also been confirmed that the relationship of brand credibility (trust) to positive word of mouth.

Brands help consumers express who they want and who they are. Brand-self connection symbolizes who a person is or wants to be and the extent to which the brand is incorporated into oneself. According to Eisingerich et al (2015), brands will be more closely related to consumer identities than others, and this will get consumers involved in WOM so that brands communicate the identity they want to others. A strong brand-self connection can increase and show the extent to which consumers will use the brand to express themselves. This can promote positive word of mouth about the brand (Eelen et al., 2017). Previous research done by Stephen & Lehmann (2016) states that the brand-self connection relationship is very strong and if there is a consumer desire to promote the brand to many other consumers quickly, loyal consumers tend to be motivated to get involved in word-of-mouth.

Therefore, an assessment of whether personality is a good predictor of behavior will not be clear if there is no relevant information about the brand-self connection (Sicilia, Delgado-Ballester, & Palazon, 2016). Therefore, the research introduced the role of brand-self connections in better explaining positive word of mouth behavior.

One of the significant factors in producing word of mouth (WOM) is a social identity because individual identification has an important role in their social environment, this is ideal in expressing individual needs (Borges-Tiago, Tiago, & Cosme, 2019). In building the social identity of consumers, it allows brands to fulfill their own needs and build relationships with other members in the group. Therefore, it is important to analyze brand-social connections when researching about individuals and also the formation of individual relationships in groups (Hajli, 2018). Several studies on the brand-social connection have a relationship with WOM. The results of the research from González-Soriano et al (2020) show that brand-social connection has a positive effect on word of mouth. As such, the effect of WOM can occur, social capital is the channel. As discussed above, it can be concluded that if a brand is capable and trusted in delivering what is given, it will tend to produce a brand-self connection. Then, with brand involvement, individuals will tend to connect with the brand community in building social relationships, this can increase their self-esteem. Therefore, the research proposes the hypothesis as the following:

H₅ Brand-self connection and brand-social connection, respectively, mediates the relationship between brand credibility and positive word of mouth

Brand Credibility, Brand-Self Connection, and Moderating Role of Memorial Brand Experience

So far, this research has explained that brand credibility acts as a signal that makes consumers comfortable in categorizing themselves with a brand or in other groups or other users in the same brand

by generating positive word of mouth. It can also protect and maintain consumers' social identities. In shaping each consumer experience will be different because this is related to the consumer's consumption experience of the brand (Hussein, 2018). Brand credibility is basically a cognitive assessment of brand experience and trust. The assessment is imbued with an emotional and positive experience of the brand, which helps the customer to develop a stronger relationship with the brand (An et al., 2018).

Brand experiences that have positive or memorable memories will make it easier for consumers to identify and distinguish the brand from other brands (An et al., 2018). Brand experiences are affective, behavioral, sensory, and intellectual responses that arise as a result of stimuli associated with the brand. So, in describing the brand experience associated with the brand through relationships, in this case, the consumer shows the relationship between self-brand connection and brand experience (Schmith, Joško Brakus, & Zarantonello, 2015). Not only do consumers use and dispose of a product or service to fulfill their needs, but consumers also buy brands for experiences related to them (Biscaia et al., 2017). In the process of building a lasting consumer-brand relationship, the benefits of self-transformation are not enough, but the brand experience with the brand is also a consideration. This is because self-experience provides consumers with self-verification (Trudeau & Shobeiri, 2016). Brand experience is the result of forming consumers on the brand-self connection. Consumer brand identification is influenced by a distinctive and memorable experience, which will result in brand loyalty. Consumers tend to create relationships or interest in, and these relationships are strengthened and enhanced through self-verification (Granitz & Forman, 2015). As discussed above, therefore, the research proposes:

H₆ Memorial brand experience moderates the relationship between brand credibility and brand-self connection

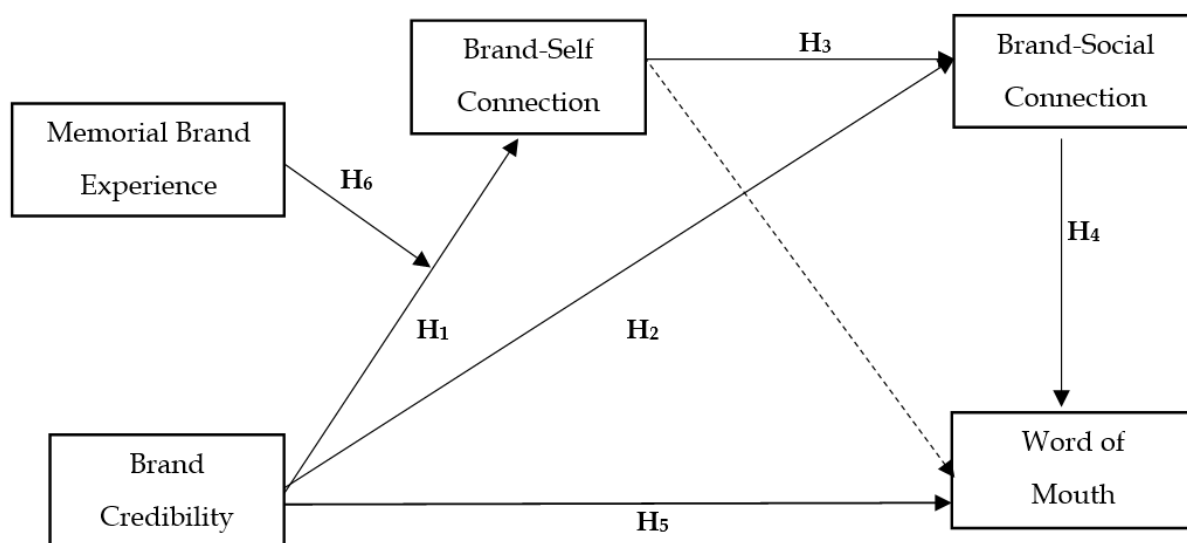


Figure 2.1 Conceptual Model

3. RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses primary data, obtained directly through electronic media, which is online questionnaires using Google form and distributed to Indonesia consumers personally through social media as a mediation to help distribute questionnaires more quickly and efficiently. Researchers also used interview by phone to obtain the data, which is an efficient way to collect data when it requires fast responses and covers a sample that spread across different geographic areas to get responses.

The study used judgmental sampling to get the data, also known as purposive sampling with subjects are selected according to the expertise of the subject being analyzed. The sample consists of the respondents who understood and have bought the Prada Italian fashion brand. From both type data collection, the only valid amount to 312 due to criteria sampling, the researcher decided to use 300 questionnaires for data analysis to achieve a sample size. Twenty-three questionnaires are not eligible because do not meet the criteria.

Likert scale is used to test all subjects agree or disagree with statements (Table 1) on a five-point scale between 1 (strongly disagree) – 5 (strongly agree). Data collected was processed using the outer model and inner model by Partial Least-Structural Equation Modeling Square (PLS-SEM) approach and path estimate. According to Raykov &

Marcoulides (2006), there are two main reasons for using SEM. First, SEM provides a method for including measurement error in the observed variables. On the contrary, traditional regression analysis ignores the measurement error in the observed variables. Consequently, the regression result is possible to be incorrect and misinterpret the substantive conclusions. Second, SEM applications have the purpose of studying the indirect effects. Therefore, SEM enables the researcher to develop, estimate, and test complex multivariable models and studies both the direct and indirect effects of the variables.

Direct effects define the effects that go directly from one variable to another variable. Yet, the indirect effects represent the effects between two variables that are mediated by one or more intervening variables which are often referred to as mediating or moderator variables. Correspondingly to the research model of this research, SEM is used as the basic model for the study because it involves two mediating variables and one moderating variable to analyze the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. PLS-SEM is usually used to focus researchers on prediction and theory development and is more ideal for exploratory research with weak theories. It estimates the outer and inner models simultaneously, more suitable for testing moderation effects (Usakli & Kucukergin, 2018).

Table 1. Measurement Scales

Construct	Items	Code	References
Brand Credibility	Prada is dependable.	BC_1	An et al., (2018)
	I trust Prada's name.	BC_2	
	Prada has the potential to deliver on what it promises.	BC_3	
	Prada generates what it promises.	BC_4	
	Over time, the experience with the product makes me hope that Prada will keep its promises in delivery.	BC_5	
Brand-Self Connection	Prada has become a part of who I am and makes me who I am.	BSeC_1	An et al., (2018)
	I personally feel connected to Prada.	BSeC_2	
	Prada reflects who I am.	BSeC_3	
	Prada identifies who I really am.	BSeC_4	
	Prada can be used to communicate to others who I am.	BSeC_5	
	Prada helped shape me to be the kind of person I want to be.	BSeC_6	
	Prada suits me well.	BSeC_7	
Brand-Social Connection	Through Prada, I am considered a member of the community.	BSoC_1	An et al., (2018)
	Through Prada, I connect with other users.	BSoC_2	
	Through Prada, I can get to know many new people.	BSoC_3	
	I think people judge me on that basis for this brand, so this Prada is important to me.	BSoC_4	
Positive Word of Mouth	I recommend Prada.	PWOM_1	Issock Issock et al., (2019); Esenyel & Emeagwali, (2019)
	When I use Prada, I am proud to say it to others.	PWOM_2	
	I talk highly about Prada.	PWOM_3	
	I'm talking about the good side of Prada.	PWOM_4	
	I mostly convey positive things about Prada to others.	PWOM_5	
	I have outspoken positively about Prada to others.	PWOM_6	
	I advise people to purchase products from Prada.	PWOM_7	
	I encourage others to buy Prada.	PWOM_8	
Memorial Brand Experience	Prada makes me think.	MBE_1	Jeong et al., (2017)
	Prada left a strong impression on my memory.	MBE_2	
	Prada increased my interest in the products offered.	MBE_3	
	Prada evokes my sense of excitement about the product being offered.	MBE_4	
	I actively participate in monitoring the products of Prada.	MBE_5	
	I have special thoughts regarding Prada.	MBE_6	

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This research aims to examine the positive word of mouth of the Indonesian consumer in terms of brand credibility, brand-self connection, brand-social connection, and memorial brand experience in the use of Prada Italian fashion brand using data from 300 respondents of the Indonesian consumers. Data were calculated using SmartPLS 3.2.9 software to

answer existing research problems using statistical methods and models. This research is aimed at respondents who understand and have bought the previous global brand used in this research. Table 2 shows that the most dominant respondents were female (64.3%), aged 20-24 years (81%), and statuses as a college student (76.7%).

Table 2. Description of Respondents

Brand	Demographics	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Prada Italian Fashion Brand	Gender	Female	193	64.3%
		Male	107	35.7%
	Age	16 – 19 years old	39	13.0%
		20 -24 years old	243	81.0%
		>24 years old	18	6.0%
		Students	1	0.3%
	Profession	College Student	230	76.7%
		Employee	52	17.3%
		Entrepreneur	17	5.7%

The researchers firstly evaluated the measurement model to verify indicators and latent variables that can be tested later before testing the hypothesis, to predict the relationship between latent variables in the structural model. The results in Table 4 shows that all value of the factor loadings from indicators has values above 0.7, so, overall, each latent variable has been able to explain the variance of each of the indicators that measure it (Hair et al., 2017). The next criteria are composite reliability, Cronbach alpha and convergent validity (AVE) is presented in Table 4. Based on the composite reliability and Cronbach alpha value presented in Table 4, it shows that the five

latent variables have a composite reliability value above 0.7. This means that the predetermined indicators have been able to measure each latent variable (construct) well or it can be said that the five measurement models are reliable. The better Convergent validity value is indicated by the higher correlation between the indicators that make up a construct. The AVE value in Table 3 shows that the five latent variables have an AVE value above the minimum criterion, which is 0.5 so that the convergent validity measure is good or it can be said if it has met the convergent validity criteria.

Table 3. Variables, Factor Loading, Composite Reliability, Cronbach Alpha, and AVE

Variables	Code	Mean	Standard Deviation	Factor Loading	AVE
Brand Credibility CR= 0.929 CA= 0.905	BC_1	3.690	0.938	0.835	0.724
	BC_2	3.590	0.943	0.854	
	BC_3	3.580	0.971	0.848	
	BC_4	3.553	0.949	0.851	
	BC_5	3.610	0.937	0.866	
Brand-Self Connection CR= 0.939 CA= 0.925	BSeC_1	3.787	0.987	0.845	0.689
	BSeC_2	3.853	1.016	0.801	
	BSeC_3	3.437	0.996	0.856	
	BSeC_4	3.470	0.967	0.849	
	BSeC_5	3.427	0.965	0.837	
	BSeC_6	3.723	0.976	0.824	
	BSeC_7	3.557	1.003	0.796	

Variables	Code	Mean	Standard Deviation	Factor Loading	AVE
Brand-Social	BSoC_1	3.570	0.989	0.867	0.741
Connection	BSoC_2	3.537	1.031	0.873	
CR= 0.920	BSoC_3	3.687	1.001	0.836	
CA= 0.884	BSoC_4	3.553	0.994	0.867	
Positive Word of Mouth	PWOM_1	4.093	0.904	0.840	0.660
	PWOM_2	4.000	0.990	0.791	
	PWOM_3	3.847	1.109	0.777	
	PWOM_4	3.907	1.088	0.799	
	PWOM_5	3.833	0.952	0.812	
	PWOM_6	3.893	0.967	0.838	
	PWOM_7	3.857	0.968	0.839	
	PWOM_8	3.883	0.943	0.803	
Memorial Brand Experience	MBE_1	3.860	0.997	0.807	0.697
	MBE_2	3.883	0.964	0.821	
	MBE_3	3.807	0.947	0.830	
	MBE_4	3.883	0.947	0.897	
	MBE_5	3.907	0.958	0.876	
	MBE_6	4.030	0.988	0.774	

Furthermore, Table 4 shows that all variables achieved discriminant validity according to the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT). To ensure discriminant validity between the two reflective structures, the HTMT value must be less

than 0.9 (Hair et al., 2017). The HTMT criterion was met (Table 5) because the mutual variance between constructs was lower than the cut-off values of 0.90, thus indicating the distinctiveness of our constructs.

Table 4. Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio

	BC	BSeC	BSoC	MBE
BC				
BSeC	0.487			
BSoC	0.740	0.552		
MBE	0.156	0.590	0.317	
PWOM	0.384	0.393	0.355	0.654

The next structural model evaluation stage is the next stage of the PLS-SEM analysis. The results of the Common Method Biases Test (CMB), Goodness of Fit (GoF), R square values, Q square value will be shown

at this stage, and the path coefficients (T-value and P-value) to directly or indirectly get the effects of each variable.

Table 5. Outer Variance Inflation Factor

Brand Credibility		Brand-Self Connection		Brand-Social Connection		Memorial Brand Experience		Positive Word of Mouth	
Indicators	VIF	Indicators	VIF	Indicators	VIF	Indicators	VIF	Indicators	VIF
BC_1	2.298	BSeC_1	3.373	BSoC_1	2.381	MBE_1	2.325	PWOM_1	3.008
BC_2	2.548	BSeC_2	2.777	BSoC_2	2.538	MBE_2	2.384	PWOM_2	3.351
BC_3	2.349	BSeC_3	3.601	BSoC_3	2.100	MBE_3	2.576	PWOM_3	2.668
BC_4	2.550	BSeC_4	2.999	BSoC_4	2.463	MBE_4	3.576	PWOM_4	2.311

Brand Credibility		Brand-Self Connection		Brand-Social Connection		Memorial Brand Experience		Positive Word of Mouth	
Indicators	VIF	Indicators	VIF	Indicators	VIF	Indicators	VIF	Indicators	VIF
BC_5	2.647	BSeC_5	3.370			MBE_5	2.272	PWOM_5	2.527
		BSeC_6	3.005			MBE_6	1.866	PWOM_6	2.969
		BSeC_7	2.798					PWOM_7	2.762
								PWOM_8	2.402

To show whether the issue exists or not is to test the variance inflation factor (VIF) value in testing the CMB on the research model. VIF can be explained as an indicator of the influence of other independent variables on the standard error of the regression coefficient, where a large VIF value indicates the high level of multicollinearity (Hair et al., 2017). According to Garson (2016), the rule of thumb has a limit of 5. Thus, to show the absence of bias and

multicollinearity in the indicator, the VIF value can't exceed 5. Table 5 shows the outer VIF column shows that all indicators have a value of less than 5 so that it can be said that the model is free from common method bias problems. Subsequently, The results shown in Table 6 in the VIF column show that all relationships have a value of less than 5 so that it can be said that the model is free from common method bias problems.

Table 6. Inner Variance Inflation Factor

	Brand Credibility	Brand-Self Connection	Brand-Social Connection	Memorial Brand Experience	Positive Word of Mouth
Brand Credibility		1.021	1.254		1.783
Brand-Self Connection			1.254		
Brand-Social Connection					1.783
Memorial Brand Experience		1.021			
Positive Word of Mouth					

The structural suitability will be acknowledged if the suitability of the measurement is proven. The structural model consists of factors and arrows that connect one factor to another. Goodness of Fit (GoF) is applied to test whether the research model can adequately explain empirical data (Garson, 2016). The GoF value lies between 0 and 1, where the value is sufficient to explain the empirical result. GoF values

between 0 and 1, with a value of 0.10 (small), a value of 0.25 (medium), and a value of 0.36 (large) indicating the global validation of the path model. Table 7 show the results of the calculations of GoF. It can be concluded that the empirical data is suitable and fits the model because the AVE is higher than 0,50.

Table 7. Goodness-of-Fit Index Calculation

Variable	AVE	R-Square
Brand Credibility	0.724	
Brand-Self Connection	0.689	0.463
Brand-Social Connection	0.741	0.492
Positive Word of Mouth	0.660	0.150
Memorial Brand Experience	0.697	
AVERAGE	0.702	0.368

Table 8 shows the summary of fit model based on the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR), Normed Fit Index (NFI), and RMS Theta. The results of the fit model summary shows an SRMR value of $0.136 > 0.100$ and an NFI value of $0.810 < 0.9$,

therefore this cannot be concluded directly to show the suitability between the data and the model. Moreover, the RMS data is 0.117 which indicates a good fit model because the rule of thumb is < 0.12 .

Table 8. Model Fit Summary

Estimated Model	
SRMR	0.136
NFI	0.810
RMSTheta	0.117

In measuring the structural model of a research, it is better to evaluate the R-square. Based on Table 9, we can see the R-square adjusted values for brand-self connection, brand-social connection, and positive word of mouth is 0.539, 0.554, and 0.299 with R-square values of 0.541, 0.556, and 0.302. R-square values are in the interval of 0.12 to 0.67, so that the influence between variables is moderate. Furthermore, in evaluating the research model, predictor relevance is used, just like R-squares where the strength of the research model is predicted

through Q2. The Q2 value for the brand-self connection, brand-social connection, and positive word of mouth are 0.371, 0.427, and 0.188, because the value of Q2 is more than zero then the model has met the predictive relevance where the model has been reconstructed well. According to Hair et al. (2017), the categorization of Q2 values are 0.02 (weak), 0.15 (moderate), and 0.35 (strong). Table 9 shows that the relative impact of the structural model on the measurement of the dependent variable is moderate.

Table 9. R-Squared and Q-Squared Coefficients

	R-Square	Adj. R-Square	Q-Squared
Brand-Self Connection	0.463	0.457	0.311
Brand-Social Connection	0.492	0.488	0.361
Positive Word of Mouth	0.150	0.144	0.091

Table 10 shows the results of hypothesis testing. Based on the result of the research, the first hypothesis stating brand credibility has a positive impact on brand-self connection is supported. After all, it does meet the rule of thumb, because it is confirmed the criteria of T-statistics with value of 9.565 is higher than T value which is 1.645. The results obtained are similar to An et al (2018) that founded there is a significant result in the relationship between brand credibility and brand-self connection. In social identity theory, in increasing self-esteem, individuals tend to identify with social categories, before individuals identify in social categories, individuals must evaluate their social groups and categories in increasing their self-esteem (De Veirman & Hudders, 2020). In identifying social categories and groups, consumers tend to evaluate brand credibility. Moreover, in signalling theory states that due to the asymmetry of information, consumers will look for other relevant information, therefore the brand is the

signal giver and the consumer as the receiver who interprets the signal. Brands is use to signal to consumers and it will add value if it has a good reputation (Black & Veloutsou, 2017). Prada as a brand has the ability in the delivery of information offered by the company and it has been considered to have the ability and can be trusted in delivering what has been promised. So that it can be concluded that the brand credibility of Prada is able to reduce the level of risk and cost of information related to products and services, and is also able to improve the perceived quality, this affects the thoughts or responses of consumers if the two same products are offered. Then, the consumer in Indonesia uses the Prada Italian fashion brand to reflect and communicating self-concept. Therefore, if the Prada Italian fashion brand is credible in terms of brand value, consistent in the delivery of the brand, then consumers will be better able to recognize themselves with the brand.

Table 10. Path Analysis and Hypothesis Test

Path	Coefficients	T-Statistic	P-Value	Conclusion
Brand Credibility → Brand Self Connection	0.384	9.565	0.000	Supported
Brand Credibility → Brand Social Connection	0.547	7.890	0.000	Supported
Brand Self Connection → Brand Social Connection	0.257	3.316	0.000	Supported
Brand Social Connection → Positive Word of Mouth	0.164	2.227	0.000	Supported
Brand Credibility → Brand Self Connection → Brand Social Connection → Positive Word of Mouth	0.016	1.711	0.044	Supported
Memorial Brand Experience* Brand Credibility → Positive Word of Mouth	0.130	3.404	0.000	Supported

The second hypothesis stating that brand credibility positively impact brand-social connection is supported. The results obtained are similar from the results obtained by An et al (2018) that founded there is a significant result in the relationship between brand credibility and brand-social connection. Individuals will choose groups that have identical characteristics or attribute to identify themselves in order to feel greater self-esteem. In organizations, signaling theory has proven useful in explaining how organizations attempt to signal to external parties regarding the potential and quality of the brand (Park & Patel, 2015). The theory of social identity states that a sense of belonging can be grown from consumers who support a brand. This concept shows broadly that self-concept is a factor of self-identity and also social identity obtained from social groups (Vernuccio et al., 2015). In conclusion, Indonesian consumers find Prada as a credible brand. They perceive Prada as attractive and Indonesian consumers can increase self-esteem by identifying or comparing other customers.

Moreover, the third hypothesis stating that brand-self connection positively impact brand-social connection is also supported. This is in line with An et al (2018) showing a significant result in the relationship between brand-self connection and brand-social connection. The result of the hypothesis is supported by social identity theory, stating that self-concept is a person's description of themselves based on their personal attributes and the roles they play (O'Connor et al., 2018). Consumers will share their positive experiences with a brand to others if their consumers are comfortable with the brand. The concept of comfort here can be realized if the relationship with the brand is established, and the brand can reflect consumers. It is important to know; maybe what individuals see in them will be different when other people see because of their different

values. Developing and maintaining social identity is something individuals do as members of a group, and brands are one way to reflect their personality or identity. In conclusion, Indonesian consumers recommended the Prada Italian fashion brand to others because they feel connected to the brand and the brand is seen as a reflection of the consumer's social relationships, this will make consumers a "brand ambassador" to build stronger relationships (McKeown, Haji & Ferguson, 2016).

Subsequently, the fourth hypothesis stating that brand-social connection positively impact positive word of mouth is supported. Again, this is in line with An et al (2018), Eileen et al., (2017), and Um (2016) proving a significant relationship between brand-social connection and positive word of-mouth. In building and maintaining the relationship between the company and customer is very important in getting the benefits of positive word of mouth. Brand social connection produces emotional connections made with social groups. Customers tend to look for information about a particular brand and this is related to various social media platforms. Many individuals tend to be motivated to develop and maintain social identity if they have become part of a group where the brand is the result of their personality (Jansen & Delahajj, 2019; Wu et al., 2018). In expressing uniqueness, personality, expertise, and status, consumers tend to use social factors, which are brand capabilities. It means that the higher the social identity of consumers, the positive word of mouth will also be greater. In conclusion, Indonesian consumers, especially young consumers have become part of the social group of the Prada Italian fashion brand, and consumers tend to be involved in word of mouth which is more towards showing their uniqueness, personality, expertise, and status.

Furthermore, the result of the fifth hypothesis stating that brand-self connection and brand-social

connection mediates the relationship between brand credibility and positive word of mouths supported. The result of the hypothesis is supported by the social identity theory stating that if a brand is capable and trusted in delivering what is given, it will tend to produce a brand-self connection. Then, with brand involvement, individuals will tend to connect with the brand community in building social relationships, this can increase their self-esteem (Ferreira et al., 2019). In social identity theory, group outcomes are very important, therefore, group members have more extreme behavior in protecting their social identities. It is important for group members to protect their identity in order to protect their self-esteem (Jansen & Delahaij, 2019). As mentioned before, the needs of brand in developing relationships with consumers are very important. This is necessary so that consumers can develop a personal identity with the brand that lead to a positive attitude or a preferred behavior (Folkvord et al., 2019; Morhart et al., 2015). In conclusion, Prada Italian fashion brand help consumers express who they want and who they are and fulfil their own needs and build relationships with other members in the group, therefore the more the brand will benefit from the relationship, one of which is positive word of mouth.

Last, the sixth hypothesis stating that memorial brand experience moderates the relationship between brand credibility and brand-self connection is supported. This is in line with An et al (2018) and Granitz & Forman (2015) proving that the relationship between brand credibility and brand-self connection is moderated by memorial brand experience. In the process of building a lasting consumer-brand relationship, the benefits of self-transformation are not enough; rather that it must be supported by brand experience (An et al, 2018). Distinctive and memorable brand experiences can influence the consumer's brand identification with oneself, which will result in brand loyalty. Consumers tend to create relationships or interests, and these relationships are strengthened and enhanced through self-verification because not only do consumers use and dispose of a product or service to fulfill their needs, but consumers also buy brands for experiences related to them (Trudeau & Shobeiri, 2016).

Inspected from an international business perspective, global brand products have a big role for consumers. The high brand credibility of Prada Italian fashion brand product can produce a strong brand that can affect Indonesian consumers' emotional attachment and positive word of mouth. Prada Italian fashion brand product are displayed as part of their identity, especially to today's young

consumers. Young consumers aged 16-24 years are more exposed to global brand products due to advanced technology and globalization. Young consumers use Prada Italian fashion brand products to describe who they are in social groups and become part of society that results in consumer behavior for Prada Italian fashion brand to survive in social groups, peer groups, and communities and also Prada Italian fashion as brand representative the Indonesian consumer self-concept and generate positive word of mouth.

5. CONCLUSION, IMPLICATION, SUGGESTION, AND LIMITATIONS

This research analyzes Prada Italian global fashion brands. In the concept of brand credibility and brand-self connection as well as brand-social connection, the findings show somewhat similar to the previous research, where a brand is considered trustworthy by customers and customers prefer a specific brand to represent themselves in a community member. The same applies to the brand-self connection and brand-social connection relationship with customer-developed brands, where a brand succeeds in becoming part of the customer's self and representing the customer in the social community as well. In addition, it also proved that the concept of brand credibility generates a positive word of mouth mediated by brand-self connection and brand-social connection, i.e. if the brand is considered credible by consumers to represent the customer in a community member, the customer would act as a 'brand ambassador' and contribute to a positive word of mouth.

This research also showed that the impact of the experience of the memorial brand as a moderation of the relation between brand credibility and brand-self connection, brand experience is required to support brand credibility. This research, therefore, provides a theoretical contribution to the advancement of the idea of brand reputation in marketing and global branding in the academic field.

Managerial implications of this research is that a branding and global marketing strategy can be applied to build a global brand around the world, especially in the Prada Italian fashion brand in Indonesia. A key strategic asset of any business is building strong brand credibility, but this result shows that not only brand credibility that capable of maintaining a positive word of mouth. In marketing strategies, marketers can concurrently recognize to form of connection that is intended to improve the brand's perceived credibility. Moreover, this

research results indicate that by preserving their relationships with consumers as well as consumer relationships with other consumers, managers would be able to produce more positive word of mouth. The strategies of managers to optimally produce word of mouth can be ineffective if the value of brand-social connection is neglected. Therefore, by incorporating a social identity perspective, the understanding of managers of the effect of signaling in building brand credibility needs to be enhanced. In other words, efforts should be made to stimulate brand credibility signals in creating a brand-self connection and brand-social connection while stimulating positive word of mouth.

This study suggests that future research could also extend the scope of the research by bringing digital-related constructs, such as online feedback, influencer credibility, and negative e-WOM into the current theoretical model. In consideration of the credibility issues facing corporate brands in the digital era, such an attempt could make the investigation more specific. Future research could also investigate whether there are different effects on self-brand relationships or socio-brand relationships in influencing word-of-mouth content. Finally, this research did not examine any moderating factors that could affect the mediating mechanisms, thereby adding variable moderators that could have an impact on positive words of mouth, such as service quality, country of origin, brand image, and social pressure, and many more. For example, brand credibility can lead to positive word of mouth through brand-self connection or through brand-social connection, depending on the type of service or current customers.

REFERENCES

- Ahmad, A., & Thyagaraj, K. S. (2015). Impact of brand personality on brand equity: The role of brand trust, brand attachment, and brand commitment. *Indian Journal of Marketing*, 45(5), 14–26.
- Aiswarya, G. & Krishnan, D. J. (2019). Role of Brand experience in Fashion brands. *Restaurant Business*, 118(1), 57–64.
- An, J., Do, D. K. X., Ngo, L. V., & Quan, T. H. M. (2018). Turning brand credibility into positive word-of-mouth: integrating the signaling and social identity perspectives. *Journal of Brand Management*, 26(2), 157–175.
- Babić, A., Sotgiu, F., Valck, K. De, & Bijmolt, T. H. A. (2015). The Effect of Electronic Word of Mouth on Sales : A Meta-Analytic Review of Platform, Product, and Metric Factors. *American Marketing Association*, 53(3), 297–318.
- Banahene, S. (2017). The Impact of Brand Personality and Students' Self-Concept on Brand Engagement. *International Journal of Business and Social Research*, 7(8), 12–25.
- Beauloye, F. E. (2020). *The 15 Most Popular Luxury Brands Online In 2020*. Luxe.Digital. <https://luxedigital.com/business/digital-luxury-ranking/most-popular-luxury-brands/>
- Bilgin, M. H., Danis, H., Demir, E., & Can eds., U. (2017). *Empirical Studies on Economics of Innovation, Public Economics and Management: Proceedings of the 18th Eurasia Business and Economics Society Conference*.
- Biscaia, R., Trail, G., Ross, S., & Yoshida, M. (2017). A model bridging team brand experience and sponsorship brand experience. *International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship*, 18(4), 380–399.
- Black, I. & Veloutsou, C. (2017). Working consumers: Co-creation of brand identity, consumer identity and brand community identity. *Journal of Business Research*, 70, 416–429.
- Bond, S. D., He, S. X., & Wen, W. (2019). Speaking for “free”: Word of mouth in free-and paid-product settings. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 56(2), 276–290.
- Borges-Tiago, M. T., Tiago, F., & Cosme, C. (2019). Exploring users' motivations to participate in viral communication on social media. *Journal of Business Research*, 101(November), 574–582.
- Brown, R. (2020). The social identity approach: Appraising the Tajfellian legacy. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 59(1), 5–25.
- Caricati, L., & Sollami, A. (2018). Contrasting explanations for status-legitimacy effects based on system justification theory and social identity theory. *Journal of Theoretical Social Psychology*, 2(1), 13–25. \
- Chen, K., Luo, P., & Wang, H. (2017). An influence framework on product word-of-mouth (WoM) measurement. In *Information and Management* (Vol. 54, Issue 2). Elsevier B.V.
- Chin, W. W. (1998). The Partial Least Squares Approach To Structural Equation Modeling. *Modern Methods for Business*, 8, 295–358.
- Codignola, F. (2018). Luxury Fashion Brands and Furniture Design: Investigating Strategic Associations. *European Scientific Journal, ESJ*, 14(4), 44–60.
- De Veirman, M., & Hudders, L. (2020). Disclosing sponsored Instagram posts: the role of material connection with the brand and message-

- sidedness when disclosing covert advertising. *International Journal of Advertising*, 39(1), 94–130.
- Donzé, P. Y. (2020). The transformation of global luxury brands: The case of the Swiss watch company Longines, 1880–2010. *Business History*, 62(1), 26–41. 2
- Drover, W., Matthew.S, W., & Corbett, A. (n.d.). *Toward a cognitive view of signaling theory: individual attention and signal set interpretation* Will Drover , Ph . D . Assistant Professor of Entrepreneurship University of Oklahoma Michael F . Price College of Business 307 W . Brooks St ., AH B6 Norman.
- Eelen, J., Özturan, P., & Verlegh, P. W. J. (2017). The differential impact of brand loyalty on traditional and online word of mouth: The moderating roles of self-brand connection and the desire to help the brand. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 34(4), 872–891.
- Eisingerich, A. B., Chun, H. E. H., Liu, Y., Jia, H. M., & Bell, S. J. (2015). Why recommend a brand face-to-face but not on Facebook? How word-of-mouth on online social sites differs from traditional word-of-mouth. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 25(1), 120–128.
- El-Baz, B. E.-S., Elseidi, R. I., & El-Maniaway, A. M. (2018). Influence of Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) on Brand Credibility and Egyptian Consumers' Purchase Intentions. *International Journal of Online Marketing*, 8(4), 1–14.
- Erdem, T., & Swait, J. (2016). The information-economics perspective on brand equity. *Foundations and Trends in Marketing*, 10(1), 1–59.
- Esenyel, V., & Emeagwali, O. L. (2019). The relationship between perceived corporate reputation and employee's positive word of mouth behavior: The mediation effect of trust to managers. *Management Science Letters*, 9(5), 673–686.
- Ferreira, P., Rodrigues, P., & Rodrigues, P. (2019). Brand Love as Mediator of the Brand Experience-Satisfaction-Loyalty Relationship in a Retail Fashion Brand. *Management and Marketing*, 14(3), 278–291.
- Folkvord, F., Bevelander, K. E., Rozendaal, E., & Hermans, R. (2019). Children's bonding with popular YouTube vloggers and their attitudes toward brand and product endorsements in vlogs: an explorative study. *Young Consumers*, 20(2), 77–90. <https://doi.org/10.1108/YC-12-2018-0896>
- Garson, G. D. (2016). *Partial Least Squares: Regression & Strutural Equation Models*.
- Gazzola, P., Pavione, E., Pezzetti, R., & Grechi, D. (2020). Trends in the fashion industry. The perception of sustainability and circular economy: A gender/generation quantitative approach. *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, 12(7), 1–19.
- Giovannini, S., Xu, Y., & Thomas, J. (2015). Luxury fashion consumption and Generation Y consumers: Self, brand consciousness, and consumption motivations. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management*, 19(1), 22–40.
- González-Soriano, F. J., Feldman, P. S. M., & Rodríguez-Camacho, J. A. (2020). Effect of social identity on the generation of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) on Facebook. *Cogent Business and Management*, 7(1), 1738201.
- Granitz, N. & Forman, H. (2015). Building self-brand connections: Exploring brand stories through a transmedia perspective. *Journal of Brand Management*, 22(1), 38–59.
- Guan, M., & So, J. (2016). Influence of Social Identity on Self-Efficacy Beliefs Through Perceived Social Support: A Social Identity Theory Perspective. *Communication Studies*, 67(5), 588–604.
- Hair, J. F., M, G. T., Hult, Ringle, C., & Sartetd, M. (2017). *A Primer on Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM)*. United States of America: SAGE.
- Hajli, N. (2018). Ethical Environment in the Online Communities by Information Credibility: A Social Media Perspective. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 149(4), 799–810.
- Hayes, R. A., & Carr, C. T. S. B. A. (2015). Does Being Social Matter? Effects of Enabled Commenting on Credibility and Brand Attitude in Social Media. *Journal of Promotion Management*, 21(3), 371–390.
- Hermada, A., Sumarwan, U., & Tinaprillia, N. (2019). the Effect of Social Media Influencer on Brand Image, Self-Concept, and Purchase Intention. *Journal of Consumer Sciences*, 4(2), 76–89.
- Huete-Alcocer, N. (2017). A literature review of word of mouth and electronic word of mouth: Implications for consumer behavior. *Frontiers in Physiology*, 8(JUL), 1–4.
- Hussein, A. S. (2018). Effects of brand experience on brand loyalty in Indonesian casual dining restaurant: Roles of customer satisfaction and brand of origin. *Tourism and Hospitality Management*, 24(1), 119–132.
- Iglesias, O., Markovic, S., & Rialp, J. (2019). How does sensory brand experience influence brand

- equity? Considering the roles of customer satisfaction, customer affective commitment, and employee empathy. *Journal of Business Research*, 96(August 2017), 343–354.
- Issock Issock, P. B., Mpinganjira, M., & Roberts-Lombard, M. (2019). Modelling green customer loyalty and positive word of mouth: Can environmental knowledge make the difference in an emerging market? *International Journal of Emerging Markets*, 15(3), 405–426.
- Izzah, I. (2018). *10 Brand Fashion Termahal di Dunia, Kamu Punya yang Mana?* Malangtimes.Com.
- Jansen, M. M., & Delahaij, R. (2019). Leadership Acceptance Through the Lens of Social Identity Theory: A Case Study of Military Leadership in Afghanistan. *Armed Forces and Society*, 1–20.
- Jeng, S. P. (2016). The influences of airline brand credibility on consumer purchase intentions. *Journal of Air Transport Management*, 55, 1–8.
- Jeong, G. Y., Im, C. C., & Kim, M. S. (2017). The effect of brand experience provider on brand experience: focus on korean cosmetic brand shop. *Journal of Applied Business Research*, 33(6), 1205–1228.
- Junior Ladeira, W., de Oliveira Santini, F., & Carvalho Jardim, W. (2020). The Influence of Brand Credibility on Consumers' Attention to Sales Promotions. *Journal of Promotion Management*, 26(6), 855–873.
- Karanges, E., Johnston, K. A., Lings, I., & Beatson, A. T. (2018). Brand signalling: An antecedent of employee brand understanding. *Journal of Brand Management*, 25(3), 235–249. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41262-018-0100-x>
- Kim, R. B., & Chao, Y. (2019). Effects of brand experience, brand image and brand trust on brand building process: The case of chinese millennial generation consumers. *Journal of International Studies*, 12(3), 9–21.
- Kuo, Y. F. & Hou, J. R. (2017). Oppositional brand loyalty in online brand communities: Perspectives on social identity theory and consumer-brand relationship. *Journal of Electronic Commerce Research*, 18(3), 254–268.
- Kwon, E. & Mattila, A. S. (2015). The Effect of Self-Brand Connection and Self-Construal on Brand Lovers' Word of Mouth (WOM). *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly*, 56(4), 427–435.
- Le, T. D., Dobe, A. R., & Robinson, L. J. (2018). WOM source characteristics and message quality: the receiver perspective. *Marketing Intelligence and Planning*, 36(4), 440–454.
- Lee, M., Maeng, L.-S., Jeon, C., & Lee, D. (2019). Endorser-Brand Congruence, Endorser Authenticity, and Self-Brand Connection: Three-Way Interaction Effects of on Brand Attitude in Sport. *International Journal of Human Movement Science*, 13(03), 1–15.
- Lee, S. H., Workman, J. E., & Jung, K. (2016). Brand relationships and risk: Influence of risk avoidance and gender on brand consumption. *Journal of Open Innovation: Technology, Market, and Complexity*, 2(3), 1–15.
- Li, B. (2018). The Influence of Brand Experience on People's Revisit and Purchase Intention in the Context of China's Museum. *American Journal of Industrial and Business Management*, 08(03), 563–578.
- Liu, S., Perry, P., Moore, C., & Warnaby, G. (2016). The standardization-localization dilemma of brand communications for luxury fashion retailers' internationalization into China. *Journal of Business Research*, 69(1), 357–364.
- Ma, J. & Hu, Y. (2017). Analysed with Shanghai international fashion the development of creative industry. *Journal of Arts and Humanities*, 6(5), 66–69.
- Makkar, M., & F., Y. S. (2018). The Anatomy of The Inconspicuous Luxury Fashion Experience. *Journal of FashionMarketing and Management: An International Journal*, 22(1), 129–156.
- Mandler, T., Bartsch, F., & Han, C. M. (2020). Brand credibility and marketplace globalization: The role of perceived brand globalness and localness. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 1–32.
- Mangum, M. & Block, R. (2018). Social identity theory and public opinion towards immigration. *Social Sciences*, 7(3), 1–16.
- Martín-Consuegra, D., Faraoni, M., Díaz, E., & Ranfagni, S. (2018). Exploring relationships among brand credibility, purchase intention and social media for fashion brands: A conditional mediation model. *Journal of Global Fashion Marketing*, 9(3), 237–251.
- McKeown, S., Haji, R., & Ferguson, N. (2016). *Understanding Peace and Conflict Through Social Identity Theory*. 3–17.
- Mehrad, D. & Mohammadi, S. (2017). Word of Mouth impact on the adoption of mobile banking in Iran. *Telematics and Informatics*, 34(7), 1351–1363.
- Mir-Bernal, P., Guercini, S., & Sádaba, T. (2018). The role of e-commerce in the internationalization of Spanish luxury fashion multi-brand retailers. *Journal of Global Fashion Marketing*, 9(1), 59–72.
- Moreira, A. C., Fortes, N., & Santiago, R. (2017).

- Influence of sensory stimuli on brand experience, brand equity and purchase intention. *Journal of Business Economics and Management*, 18(1), 68–83.
- Morhart, F., Malär, L., Guèvremont, A., Girardin, F., & Grohmann, B. (2013). Brand authenticity: An integrative framework and measurement scale. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 25(2), 200–218.
- Mousavi, S., Roper, S., & Keeling, K. A. (2017). Interpreting social identity in online brand communities: Considering posters and lurkers. *Psychology and Marketing*, 34(4), 376–393.
- Na, S., Kunkel, T., & Doyle, J. (2020). Exploring athlete brand image development on social media: the role of signalling through source credibility. *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 20(1), 88–108.
- Nayeem, T., Murshed, F., & Dwivedi, A. (2019). Brand experience and brand attitude: examining a credibility-based mechanism. *Marketing Intelligence and Planning*, 37(7), 821–836.
- Ngoma, M. & Ntale, P. D. (2019). Word of mouth communication: A mediator of relationship marketing and customer loyalty. *Cogent Business and Management*, 6(1), 1580123.
- O'Connor, C., Kadianaki, I., Maunder, K., & McNicholas, F. (2018). How does psychiatric diagnosis affect young people's self-concept and social identity? A systematic review and synthesis of the qualitative literature. *Social Science and Medicine*, 212(January), 94–119.
- Omar, A. M. (2020). Brand Experience: How Does It Affect Brand Personality and Brand Loyalty in the Egyptian Telecommunications Industry? *International Journal of Marketing Studies*, 12(2), 104–120.
- Orth, U. R., Cornwell, T. B., Ohlhoff, J., & Naber, C. (2017). Seeing faces: The role of brand visual processing and social connection in brand liking. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 47(3), 348–361.
- Paley, A., Tully, S. M., & Sharma, E. (2019). Too constrained to converse: The effect of financial constraints on word of mouth. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 45(5), 889–905.
- Panigyrakis, G., Panopoulos, A., & Koronaki, E. (2020). All we have is words: applying rhetoric to examine how social media marketing activities strengthen the connection between the brand and the self. *International Journal of Advertising*, 39(5), 699–718.
- Park, H. D., & Patel, P. C. (2015). How Does Ambiguity Influence IPO Underpricing? The Role of the Signalling Environment. *Journal of Management Studies*, 52(6), 796–818.
- Poturak, M., & Turkyilmaz, M. (2018). The Impact of eWOM in Social Media on Consumer Purchase Decisions: A Comparative Study between Romanian and Bosnian Consumers. *Management and Economic Review*, 138–160.
- Puspitaningtyas, Z. (2019). Empirical evidence of market reactions based on signaling theory in Indonesia Stock Exchange. *Investment Management and Financial Innovations*, 16(2), 66–77.
- Rahimnia, F. & Sarvari, T. (2019). Investigating the Effect of Global Brand on Willingness to Pay More by Mediation of Brand Perceived Quality, Brand Image, and Brand Prestige. *Proceedings of 2019 15th Iran International Industrial Engineering Conference, IIIEC 2019*, 70–75.
- Rather, R. A. (2018). Investigating the Impact of Customer Brand Identification on Hospitality Brand Loyalty: A Social Identity Perspective. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing and Management*, 27(5), 487–513.
- Raykov, T., & Marcoulides, G. A. (2006). *A First Course in Structural Equation Modeling Second Edition*.
- Rosli, N., Che Ha, N., & Ghazali, E. M. (2019). Bridging the gap between branding and sustainability by fostering brand credibility and brand attachment in travellers' hotel choice. *Bottom Line*, 32(4), 308–339.
- Schmitt, B., Joško Brakus, J., & Zarantonello, L. (2015). From experiential psychology to consumer experience. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 25(1), 166–171.
- Seo, Y. & Buchanan-Oliver, M. (2015). Luxury branding: the industry, trends, and future conceptualisations. *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*, 27(1), 82–98.
- Sicilia, M., Delgado-Ballester, E., & Palazon, M. (2016). The need to belong and self-disclosure in positive word-of-mouth behaviours: The moderating effect of self-brand connection. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 15(1), 60–71.
- Soh, C. Q. Y., Rezaei, S., & Gu, M. L. (2017). A structural model of the antecedents and consequences of Generation Y luxury fashion goods purchase decisions. *Young Consumers*, 18(2), 180–204.
- Soleimani, A. G., & Einolahzadeh, H. (2018). The influence of service quality on revisit intention: The mediating role of WOM and satisfaction

- (Case study: Guilan travel agencies). *Cogent Social Sciences*, 4(1), 1560651
- Statista. (2020). *Consumer Market Outlook in Luxury Goods in Indonesian*. Statista.Com. <https://www.statista.com/outlook/21030000/120/luxury-fashion/indonesia>
- Stephen, A. T., & Lehmann, D. R. (2016). How word-of-mouth transmission encouragement affects consumers' transmission decisions, receiver selection, and diffusion speed. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 33(4), 755–766.
- Sugih, I. L. & Soekarno, S. (2015). Lesson Learned from Indonesian Biggest Fashion Retailer Company to Encourage the Development of Small Fashion Business. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 169(August 2014), 240–248.
- Syahriwar, J., & Ichlas, A. M. (2018). *The Impact of Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WoM) on Brand Equity of Imported Shoes: Does a Good Online Brand Equity Result in High Customers' Involvements in Purchasing Decisions?* 11(1), 57–69.
- Tan, T. M., Salo, J., Juntunen, J., & Kumar, A. (2018). A comparative study of creation of self-brand connection amongst well-liked, new, and unfavorable brands. *Journal of Business Research*, 92(July), 71–80.
- Thuy Hang Dao, K. N., & von der Heide, T. (2018). Why Consumers in Developing Countries Prefer Foreign Brands: A Study of Japanese Brands in Vietnam. *Journal of Promotion Management*, 24(3), 398–419.
- Trudeau H, S., & Shobeiri, S. (2016). The relative impacts of experiential and transformational benefits on consumer-brand relationship. *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, 25(6), 586–599.
- Um, N. H. (2016). Predictors of the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement on facebook. *Social Behavior and Personality*, 44(11), 1839–1850.
- Usakli, A., & Kucukergin, K. G. (2018). Using partial least squares structural equation modeling in hospitality and tourism: Do researchers follow practical guidelines? In *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management* (Vol. 30, Issue 11).
- Vernuccio, M., Pagani, M., Barbarossa, C., & Pastore, A. (2015). Antecedents of brand love in online network-based communities. A social identity perspective. *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, 24(7), 706–719.
- Vidyanata, D., Sunaryo, S., & Hadiwidjojo, D. (2018). the Role of Brand Attitude and Brand Credibility As a Mediator of the Celebrity Endorsement Strategy To Generate Purchase Intention. *Jurnal Aplikasi Manajemen*, 16(3), 402–411.
- Wang, X. & Yang, Z. (2010). The effect of brand credibility on consumers' brand purchase intention in emerging economies: The moderating role of brand awareness and brand image. *Journal of Global Marketing*, 23(3), 177–188.
- Wilson, A. E., Giebelhausen, M. D., & Brady, M. K. (2017). Negative word of mouth can be a positive for consumers connected to the brand. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 45(4), 534–547.
- Wu, J., Fan, S., & Zhao, J. L. (2018). Community engagement and online word of mouth: An empirical investigation. *Information & Management*, 55(2), 258–270.
- Ye, S., Li, J., Zeng, Z., & Hao, S. (2015). Research on the Impact of Social Circles on Self-Brand Connection: Regulation of Self-Awareness and Brand Value. *Open Journal of Business and Management*, 03(02), 155–162.
- Zhang, M., Hu, M., Guo, L., & Liu, W. (2017). Understanding Relationships among customer experience, engagement, and word-of-mouth intention on online brand communities: The perspective of Service Ecosystem. *Management Research Review*, 35(9), 857–877.
- Zhang, X. (2019). Research on the Influence Factors of Brand Experience on Consumers' Brand Loyalty. *Open Journal of Business and Management*, 07(02), 556–561.