

Timeless Connections Beyond Timepieces: The Role of Digital Experiences in Shaping Consumer Relationships with Luxury Watch Brands on Social Media

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KEYWORDS <i>Digital Brand Experience, Consumer Trust, Consumer Engagement, Social Media Interactions, Luxury Watch Brands, Shopping Behavior</i>	ABSTRACT This study explores the impact of digital experiences on consumer trust, engagement, and shopping behavior within the luxury watch sector, focusing on interactions via official social media channels. By examining the digital brand experience's role in shaping perceptions and loyalty towards luxury watch brands, this research aims to highlight how social media influences luxury brand dynamics in the digital era. Through a structured methodology employing the Partial Least Squares (PLS) approach, this study investigates the relationships between digital brand experience, brand trust, brand engagement, and brand loyalty. Findings suggest that a positive digital brand experience significantly enhances consumer trust and engagement, leading to increased brand loyalty. The study underscores the importance of cohesive online and offline strategies to maintain brand exclusivity and integrity, providing insights for luxury watch brands to optimize their social media presence for improved consumer loyalty.
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1. INTRODUCTION

The perception and understanding of luxury brands by consumers have evolved significantly beyond traditional notions of exclusivity and high cost. In the contemporary digital landscape, the evaluation of customer happiness and loyalty is increasingly influenced by consumers' attitudes and beliefs about a brand's digital experience (Hudders et al., 2013; Remy et al., 2015). The brand experience, encompassing sensational, emotional, cognitive, and behavioural reactions to a brand and its stimuli, plays a crucial role in shaping these attitudes and beliefs (Brakus et al., 2009). Luxury consumption extends beyond the mere ownership of high-end products to include an appreciation and understanding of the symbolic value associated with luxury brands (Wang, 2022). This symbolic value, in turn, fosters an emotional connection between consumers and brands, driving emotional bonding and loyalty (Thomson et al., 2005; Kim et al., 2005). In this context, the influence of social media on luxury brands and their consumer bases becomes a critical area of investigation (Creevey et al., 2022). The advent of digital brand experiences introduces a new dimension to consumer engagement with luxury brands, particularly in the realm of luxury watches. This study aims to illuminate the impact of digital experiences with luxury watch brands on consumer trust, engagement, and shopping behavior through the lens of official social media interactions. By delving into how digital encounters can bolster consumer trust and engagement, this research seeks to uncover pathways to enhance loyalty towards luxury watch brands. Understanding the complexity and significance of the brand experience is pivotal for comprehending consumer perceptions and fostering brand loyalty. The brand experience not only contributes to the formation of an emotional bond with customers but also underpins the development of trust, satisfaction, and loyalty towards the brand (Merdiaty & Aldrin, 2022).

Theoretical background

In the dynamic digital ecosystem, luxury brands encounter the challenge of digitalizing their inherently exclusive and tactile brand experiences. The essence of luxury brand experience, traditionally encapsulated within the confines of physical stores and direct interactions, has transitioned into the digital domain, necessitating an innovative approach to maintain exclusivity



and allure online (Kapferer & Bastien, 2012; Okonkwo, 2009). The digital brand experience, comprising website aesthetics, social media engagement, and online customer service, plays a pivotal role in shaping consumer perceptions and behaviors, extending luxury's reach while preserving its unique identity (Tynan, McKechnie, & Chhuon, 2010). Cognitive theory elucidates how the presentation of a brand's heritage, values, and offerings can significantly impact consumers' information processing, suggesting that clear, consistent, and emotionally charged communications are more likely to foster engagement and memorability (Smith & Johnson, 2018). Similarly, social identity theory highlights the potential of digital platforms to cultivate exclusive communities, offering consumers not only a sense of belonging but also avenues for expressing their identities in alignment with the brand's image, thereby reinforcing brand loyalty and affiliation (Chen, 2020). The affective aspects of consumer interactions with luxury brands are illuminated by affect theory, which posits that emotional storytelling and immersive digital experiences, such as those offered through AR and VR technologies, can evoke positive emotions, deepening the consumer-brand connection (Garcia & Lee, 2019). Trust theory further emphasizes the importance of building digital trust through transparency, authenticity, and consistency across all online interactions, critical for fostering strong relational bonds and brand loyalty (Morris & Patel, 2021). Engagement theory underscores the significance of interactive and co-creative experiences in enhancing consumer participation and engagement. Luxury brands leveraging digital tools for customization and personalization can significantly amplify consumer engagement, making individuals feel valued and integral to the brand's narrative (Kim & Park, 2022). As luxury brands navigate the digital transformation, the strategic application of these psychological theories and techniques becomes essential. The development of digital marketing strategies—encompassing personalization, storytelling, community building, authenticity, and transparency—can effectively harness consumer behavior, motivations, and emotional connections, guiding luxury brands in creating meaningful and engaging digital experiences. This holistic approach not only addresses the challenges posed by the digital shift but also capitalizes on the opportunities to reinforce brand trust, engagement, and ultimately, consumer loyalty in the digital age.

Luxury brand experience in digital world

In the rapidly evolving digital landscape, luxury brands face the challenge of translating their traditionally exclusive and high-touch brand experiences into the digital realm.

The digital brand experience encompasses all aspects of a brand's digital presence, including website design, social media interactions, and online customer service, which collectively influence consumer perceptions and behaviors (Tynan, McKechnie, & Chhuon, 2010). For luxury brands, the digital experience is particularly crucial as it extends the essence of luxury to a broader audience while maintaining exclusivity and brand integrity (Okonkwo, 2009). The digital revolution has significantly altered how luxury brands engage with their clientele, necessitating a reevaluation of traditional marketing strategies to maintain exclusivity and allure in the digital realm (Okonkwo, 2009). The luxury brand experience, once confined to physical stores and personal interactions, has expanded to digital platforms, where the challenge is to replicate the bespoke and exclusive nature of luxury in a virtual environment (Kapferer & Bastien, 2012).

The transition of luxury brands into digital marketing was initially met with skepticism, as there were concerns about diluting brand prestige through widespread online visibility (Chevalier & Mazzalovo, 2012). However, early adopters demonstrated that digital platforms could enhance brand value by creating unique, immersive online experiences that reflect the brand's heritage and exclusivity (Kim & Ko, 2012). This evolution underscores the necessity for luxury brands to adapt and innovate continually to meet the high expectations of their discerning clientele in the digital age. Social media has emerged as a pivotal platform for luxury brands to engage with customers, offering a space for direct interaction and personalized communication. Studies have shown that effective social media marketing can significantly enhance customer equity and positively influence consumer perceptions of luxury brands (Kim & Ko, 2012). Furthermore, Godey et al. (2016) found that luxury brands' social media marketing efforts have a substantial impact on both brand equity and consumer behavior, highlighting the importance of a strategic, consistent social media presence.

Technological advancements, particularly in augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR), have provided luxury brands with new avenues to create compelling digital experiences. AR and VR enable customers to engage with products in a virtual space, offering a level of interactivity and personalization previously unattainable online (Mortara & Robert, 2012). This has opened up new possibilities for luxury brands to differentiate themselves and offer exclusive digital experiences that mirror the sophistication and personal touch of their physical stores. The digital brand experience significantly influences consumer perceptions and behaviors in the luxury market. Dauriz, Remy, and Tochtermann (2014) argue that a well-crafted digital experience can enhance brand perception, increase customer loyalty, and drive sales. Moreover, the opportunity for personalized engagement through digital platforms allows luxury brands to create deeper connections with their customers, fostering a sense of exclusivity and belonging (Tynan, McKechnie, & Chhuon, 2010). As luxury brands navigate the challenges and opportunities presented by digital platforms, the focus must remain on creating unique, exclusive experiences that reflect the brand's heritage and values.

Brand trust

Trust in a brand encompasses both indexical and iconic dimensions. Indexical trust emerges from a brand's connection with past facts or contextual interactions, while iconic trust is based on the accurate representation of the brand as it relates to its original physical form (Leigh et al., 2006). Brand trust can effectively enhance brand engagement (Södergren, 2021). It



manifests in the brand's origin, originality, and uniqueness, signifying the extent to which a brand is perceived as authentic, transparent, and honest in upholding its values and commitments (Bruhn et al., 2012). Crafting a trustworthy luxury experience necessitates the formulation of integrated online and offline strategies. A meticulously curated and seamlessly executed online presence for luxury brands guarantees their accurate portrayal across all digital platforms (Hennigs et al., 2012). The transparency and authenticity of brand communications significantly influence brand trust (Luo, 2002). Social media and digital platforms have become essential in facilitating transparent, two-way communication between brands and consumers, further emphasizing the role of digital engagement in building trust (Hajli, 2014). Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) demonstrate that brand trust leads to greater loyalty and a higher likelihood of repurchase. Additionally, brand trust can mitigate the perceived risk associated with purchasing decisions, especially in online environments, thereby increasing consumers' willingness to buy (McKnight, Choudhury, & Kacmar, 2002). It emerges as a critical component of brand equity, acting as a mediator between brand knowledge and consumer response (Keller, 1993). Trust in a brand also enhances consumer willingness to engage in word-of-mouth promotion, extending the brand's reach and influence (Sirdeshmukh, Singh, & Sabol, 2002).

Brand engagement

Brand engagement arises when consumers form an affectionate or emotional connection with a brand, leading to active commitment and fostering a long-term relationship (Thomson et al., 2005). Brand engagement is defined as the emotional and cognitive attachment a consumer has with a brand, which can significantly influence their purchasing behavior and loyalty (Brodie, Hollebeek, Juric, & Ilic, 2011). Engagement encompasses various dimensions including cognitive, emotional, and behavioral engagement, each playing a vital role in building strong brand relationships (Vivek, Beatty, & Morgan, 2012). The foundational characteristics of brand engagement are encapsulated and quantifiable through two main dimensions: brand-self connection and brand prominence, as identified by Park et al. (2010). Brand-self connection refers to the mental and emotional association established between an individual and a brand. Brand prominence emerges as positive sentiments and memories concerning a brand become entrenched in a consumer's psyche. Digital and social media platforms have transformed the landscape of brand engagement, offering new avenues for brands to interact with consumers. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and other social media channels facilitate direct communication, allowing brands to create personalized experiences for consumers (Hollebeek, Glynn, & Brodie, 2014). Moreover, these platforms provide consumers with spaces to share their experiences and engage with content, enhancing the visibility and influence of brands (Tafesse & Wien, 2018). Engaged consumers are more likely to exhibit loyalty, make repeat purchases, and advocate for the brand through word-of-mouth (Baldus, Voorhees, & Calantone, 2015). Engagement also influences consumer satisfaction and perceived value, further cementing the relationship between the consumer and the brand (Pansari & Kumar, 2017). High levels of brand engagement have been linked to increased consumer spending and a greater willingness to participate in co-creation activities, suggesting that engagement not only benefits brands in terms of loyalty but also encourages active consumer participation in brand development (Patterson, Yu, & de Ruyter, 2006). Effective brand engagement strategies are rooted in creating valuable and relevant content, fostering community, and ensuring consistent, two-way communication (Kozinets, de Valck, Wojnicki, & Wilner, 2010). Personalization and the use of interactive technologies are enhancing brand engagement by offering immersive and tailored brand experiences (Javornik, 2016). While digital platforms offer numerous opportunities for brand engagement, they also present challenges, including the need for constant content innovation and the management of consumer feedback, which can be both positive and negative (Smith, 2013).

Development of Hypotheses

Luxury brands can provide holistic marketing by delivering virtual experiences that satisfy consumers and integrate into distinct and persistent brand value, which can help transform into luxury brand trust (Choi et al., 2015). In the digital environment, a brand provides experiences to consumers, still having to consider how the experiences turn into a real trust and authenticity. Digital brand experiences that offer high-quality, engaging, and immersive content are likely to enhance consumer perceptions of a luxury brand's credibility and reliability, thereby increasing brand trust (Chevalier & Mazzalovo, 2012; Tynan, McKechnie, & Chhuon, 2010). Hence, we hypothesize that:

H1: Digital brand experience positively influence consumer trust in luxury watch brands.

Brand trust on brand engagement

Brand trust is correlated with brand engagement emerging from the brand confidence, emotional experience or quality (Kim et al., 2005; Paxton & Moody, 2003). There is positive influence between brand trust and brand engagement. That brand trust could predict brand engagement in sports brands and food brands (Choi et al. 2015; Assiouras et al. 2015). Trust in a brand is likely to increase consumers' willingness and engagement (Hollebeek, Glynn, & Brodie, 2014). Trust in a brand encourages consumers to engage frequently with brands in digital world (Morgan-Thomas & Veloutsou, 2013; Melancon, Noble, & Noble, 2011; Vargo & Lusch, 2004). The impact of brand trust on brand engagement also influences consumers' shopping behavior and shopping intention. As consumers seek for trust more consistently, they tend to bond emotionally to brands that are trustworthy. Therefore, we posit that



H2: Brand trust has a positive influence on brand engagement for luxury watch brands

Digital brand experience on brand engagement

When accepting holistic brand experiences, the experiences can become memorable and takeaway impression that takes shape in consumers' minds (Carbone & Haeckel, 1994; Klaus & Maklan, 2007). Brakus et al. (2009) proved that evoking brand experience would lead to emotional engagement. High-quality digital experiences can help luxury brands foster deeper emotional connections, encourage social sharing, and enhance consumer interaction with the brand, thereby increasing engagement (Willems, Brengman, & Joye, 2012; Kim & Ko, 2012). Based on previous research, experiences can motivate affection changes in consumers' minds. However, there is limited research answer if the digital brand experience can generate the same consequences in enhancing brand engagement. Thus, the following hypothesis is developed:

H3: Digital brand experience has a positive influence on brand engagement for luxury watch brands.

Brand experience and brand loyalty

Emotional connections formed through engagement with a brand significantly contribute to brand loyalty. Consumers who feel an emotional attachment to a brand are more likely to exhibit loyal behaviors, such as repeat purchases and brand advocacy (Thomson, MacInnis, & Park, 2005). Emotional engagement acts as a strong predictor of loyalty because it transcends transactional relationships, creating a bond based on shared values and experiences. Cognitive aspects of brand engagement, which include consumers' thoughts, beliefs, and attachments to brand narratives, also play a crucial role in fostering brand loyalty. Engaged consumers invest time and effort to learn about and understand a brand, leading to a more informed and committed relationship (Hollebeek, Glynn, & Brodie, 2014). Behavioral Engagement: Behavioral engagement, such as participating in brand events, using branded apps, or joining loyalty programs, reinforces consumers' loyalty by integrating the brand into their daily lives. Such activities not only provide value to the consumer but also create opportunities for the brand to demonstrate its appreciation and recognition of loyal customers (Bijmolt et al., 2010). The brand experience and brand loyalty are mediated by engagement (Iglesias et al., 2011; Ahn et al., 2009; Lee & Sung, 2001). Brand loyalty interprets the extent of engagement a customer has for a brand and is also related to user experience (Liu et al., 2012). Therefore, we posit the following hypotheses:

H4: Brand engagement has a positive influence on brand loyalty for luxury watch brands.

The loyalty conveys the motivation of a consumer to purchase one brand incessantly and repeatedly (Liu et al., 2012; Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001) and recommending the same to others also (Wu & Ai, 2016). Such positive brand experiences represent gratifying effects (Ramaseshan and Stein2014). A seamless, engaging, and personalized digital experience aligns with consumers' expectations from luxury brands, thereby increasing their propensity to remain loyal (Morgan-Thomas & Veloutsou, 2013). The journey from customer's experience to online luxury brand community engagement results in augmentation of loyalty toward a brand (Dessart et al., 2015; Godey et al., 2016). Thus, this research would like to discuss whether the brand experience in the digital environment (Instagram) positively affects brand loyalty. Thus, we posit the following hypotheses:

H5: Digital brand experience has a positive influence on brand loyalty for luxury watch brands.

Methodology

Measurement

This research study adopts a structured approach to measure the impact of digital brand experiences on brand trust, engagement, and loyalty within the context of luxury watches. The conceptual model, illustrated in Figure 1, encompasses four primary constructs: digital brand experience, brand trust, brand engagement, and brand loyalty. These constructs form the foundation of our investigation into the dynamics of consumer interactions with luxury watch brands in digital environments. The constructs within the model are quantified using scales based on well-established measures in the literature, ensuring a rigorous and reliable assessment of each variable. Table 1 details the references for the scales utilized for each construct, indicating the source and basis for their selection. The measurement items were carefully adapted and reworded to align with the context of luxury watches and digital environments, enhancing the survey instrument's relevance, reliability, and validity. The measurement of digital brand experience is grounded in the scales proposed by Brakus et al. (2009), which have been widely recognized for their comprehensiveness and applicability across various brand contexts. The items for this construct assess the sensory, affective, intellectual, and behavioral dimensions of consumers' experiences with luxury watch brands in digital spaces. This multidimensional approach captures the essence of digital brand interactions and their impact on consumer perceptions. All items across the four constructs were measured using a seven-point Likert scale, ranging from 'strongly disagree' (1) to 'strongly agree' (7). This scale allows for nuanced responses from participants, providing a detailed understanding of their attitudes and perceptions regarding digital brand experiences, trust, engagement, and loyalty towards luxury watch brands. The use of established scales and careful adaptation of items ensures that the methodology is both robust and tailored to the specific context of this study. By employing a systematic approach to measurement, this research aims to uncover insights into the complex interplay between digital brand experiences and key



outcomes such as brand trust, engagement, and loyalty in the luxury watch sector.

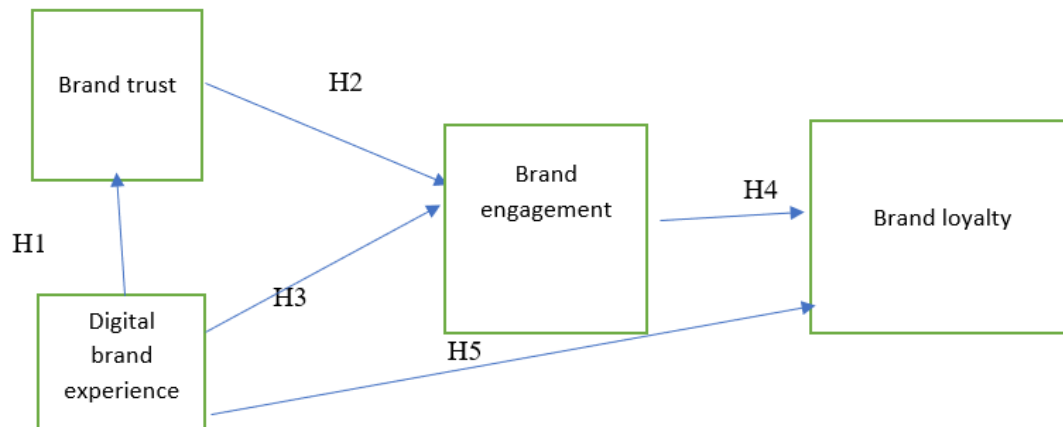


Figure 1: The conceptual model

TABLE 1: Measurement scales.

Constructs	Subconstructs	Sources
Digital brand experience	Sensory, Affective, Behavioural, Intellectual	Brakus, J. J., Schmitt, B. H., & Zarantonello, L. (2009).
Brand a trust	Authority, Fashionability, Consistency, Innovativeness, Sustainability, Origin, Heritage	Choi, T. Y., Leung, R., & Lee, G. K. (2015).
Brand engagement	Brand-self connect, Brand prominence	Park, C. W., MacInnis, D. J., & Priester, J. (2010).
Brand loyalty	Behavioural loyalty, Attitudinal loyalty	Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001); and Ramaseshan and Stein (2014)

Digital Brand Experience

This construct assesses how consumers interact with and perceive luxury watch brands through digital mediums. The subconstructs—Sensory, Affective, Behavioural, Intellectual—provide a multidimensional view of the digital brand experience, capturing everything from the initial sensory impression to the intellectual engagement consumers have with the brand online.

Brand Trust

Brand trust is measured through a variety of factors including Authority, Fashionability, Consistency, Innovativeness, Sustainability, Origin, and Heritage. These elements reflect the depth of the relationship and trust that consumers place in luxury watch brands, which is critical for long-term loyalty and engagement.

Brand Engagement

This construct focuses on the connection consumers feel with the brand (Brand-self connect) and the prominence of the brand in their minds (Brand prominence). High levels of brand engagement indicate a strong, personal connection that goes beyond casual or transactional interactions.

Brand Loyalty

Measured through Behavioral loyalty (actual repeat purchase behavior) and Attitudinal loyalty (a consumer's positive attitude toward the brand that makes them likely to continue choosing it in the future), this construct is essential for understanding the long-term commitment of consumers to the luxury watch brand. These constructs and subconstructs, grounded in the literature, provide a robust framework for analyzing the intricate relationship between digital brand experiences and



consumer outcomes such as trust, engagement, and loyalty in the context of luxury watches.

Data collection

This research aims to find out how the Instagram experience affects engagement, trust and loyalty to a luxury watch brand. Thus, each participant is asked to answer the survey based on their experience with one specific luxury watch brand. The total number of samples collected was 234. Regarding demographic variables, of the 234 participants, participants, 74.9% were males, and 25.1% were females.

Data analysis

The Partial Least Squares (PLS) approach is a robust statistical method suitable for theory building and prediction in empirical research, as highlighted by Fornell and Bookstein (1982). Given its efficacy in handling complex models and its orientation towards prediction, PLS regression is an appropriate tool for validating research models and testing hypotheses, especially in contexts where the theoretical underpinnings are still evolving or the focus is on the practical application of theory. This study employs the PLS regression approach to scrutinize the relationships between various constructs related to digital brand experiences, brand trust, brand engagement, and brand loyalty within the luxury watch sector. The choice of PLS is strategic, aiming to explore the significance of these relationships and the predictive power of the model's dependent variables. The application of PLS is conducted through a two-step analysis procedure, ensuring a comprehensive examination of both the measurement and structural components of the research model.

Assessment of the Measurement Model

The first step involves assessing the measurement model to ascertain the reliability and validity of the instruments used to measure the research constructs. Following the guidelines proposed by Chin (1998) and Fornell and Larcker (1981), this phase focuses on evaluating the internal consistency, convergent validity, and discriminant validity of the constructs. This rigorous assessment ensures that the measurement instruments accurately and reliably capture the constructs of interest, forming a solid foundation for the subsequent analysis.

Evaluation of the Structural Model

Upon validating the measurement model, the second step addresses the structural model to investigate the significance of the hypotheses and evaluate the predictive ability of the research model. This phase involves examining the relationships between constructs to identify significant paths and assess the model's overall explanatory power. The structural model analysis provides insights into how digital brand experiences influence brand trust, engagement, and loyalty, offering valuable implications for theory and practice. The application of PLS in this study is instrumental in navigating the complexities of digital brand experiences and their impact on consumer behavior in the luxury watch market. By employing a two-step PLS analysis, the research aims to uncover nuanced insights into the dynamics of brand-consumer interactions in digital spaces, contributing to the broader understanding of digital marketing strategies in the luxury sector. The PLS approach not only facilitates the validation of the research model but also enhances the robustness and relevance of the findings, providing a compelling narrative on the predictive relationships among key marketing constructs. The Partial Least square approach is appropriate for testing applicability with theory building and prediction (Fornell & Bookstein, 1982). Therefore, to validate a research model and test the hypotheses we utilized Partial Least Squares (PLS) regression approach to examine the significance of the relationships between research constructs and the predictive power of the dependent variables. This study adopts a two-step analysis procedure to examine the research model. Firstly, the assessment of the measurement model will be demonstrated to test the reliability and validity of the measurement instrument (Chin, 1998; Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Secondly, the structural model will be applied to investigate the significance of the hypotheses and the predictive ability of this research model.

2. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Measurement model

Results: Confirmatory Factor Analysis and Validity Assessment

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

The research employs a conceptual model incorporating a second-order hierarchy to explore the relationships among digital brand experiences, brand trust, brand engagement, and brand loyalty. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) results, as presented in Table 2, demonstrate that each factor loading surpasses the 0.70 threshold, indicating strong indicator reliability under their respective constructs. This finding is crucial as it confirms that each item robustly measures its intended construct, aligning with the recommendations for ensuring indicator reliability (Hair et al., 2009). Further, the analysis reveals that Cronbach's alpha, composite reliabilities (CR), and rho_A values all exceed the 0.70 benchmark, signaling high scale reliability. Moreover, the average variance extracted (AVE) values surpass 0.45 for all but two constructs within the second-order measurement, still indicating acceptable levels of convergent validity. These results underscore the adequacy of the measurement scale in capturing the constructs accurately and reliably, with AVE values exceeding 0.45 being considered sufficient to demonstrate convergent validity (Hair et al., 2009). Discriminant validity was assessed through the heterotrait-



monotrait (HTMT) ratio, as detailed in Table 3. The HTMT ratio serves as a modern and more rigorous criterion for evaluating discriminant validity by comparing the geometric mean of item correlations across constructs against

TABLE 3 : Heterotrait-monotrait analysis results.

Constructs	Digital brand experience	Brand trust	Brand engagement	Brand loyalty
Digital brand experience	-	-	-	-
Brand trust	0.727	-	-	-
Brand engagement	0.624	0.718	-	-
Brand loyalty	0.593	0.577	0.746	-

correlations within constructs. The results indicate that all HTMT values are below the 0.85 threshold, thus supporting the discriminant validity of the constructs (Henseler et al., 2015). This outcome is significant as it confirms that the constructs are distinct and measure different phenomena, an essential aspect of construct validity in a research model. The findings from the confirmatory factor analysis and validity assessments provide a solid foundation for the research model's integrity and robustness. Indicator reliability, scale reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity all meet or exceed the established thresholds, thereby affirming the model's measurement properties. These results lend credence to the subsequent analysis of the structural model and the investigation of hypotheses within the context of digital brand experiences in the luxury watch sector. The rigorous validation of the measurement model ensures that the research findings are built on a solid empirical basis, enhancing the study's contribution to understanding the nuances of brand-consumer interactions in digital environments.

TABLE 2: Confirmatory factor analysis results of the measurement model

Second order	First-order	Items	Loading	α	CR	AVE	rho_A
Digital brand experience*	Sensory	The official Instagram presence has a strong impression on visual	0.867	0.850	0.909	0.770	0.853
		I find this luxury brand interesting in a sensory way	0.897	-	-	-	-
		This luxury brand's official Instagram content appeal to my sense	0.883	-	-	-	-
	Affective	The content includes feelings and sentiments	0.816	0.728	0.847	0.649	0.747
		I do have strong emotions for this luxury brand	0.727	-	-	-	-
		The luxury brand is emotional	0.727	-	-	-	-



	Behavioural	I engage in actions and behaviour when I see the official account	0.875		0.904		
		The content appeal to me to result in bodily experiences		0.840	-	0.759	0.851
		The content prompts me to become action-oriented.	0.912	-		-	-
	Intellectual	I engage in much thinking when I receive the content of the brand	0.907		-		
		This luxury brand's Instagram content makes me think		-	0.838	-	-
		The content stimulates my curiosity and problem solving	0.786	0.711	-	0.635	0.734
			0.879	-	-	-	-
				-		-	-
			0.807				
			0.717				
Brand trust**	Authority	This luxury brand is unique and easily recognised by people	0.757	0.821	0.881	0.650	0.826
		This luxury brand is socially approved			-		
		I have a positive image of this luxury brand	0.830	-	-	-	-
		This luxury brand is excellent and makes me feel self-confident	0.855	-	-	-	-
		This luxury brand is espousing fashion	0.815			-	
	Fashionabili	This luxury brand		0.87	0.913	0.72	0.87



	ty	leads the trend This luxury brand is contemporary, never out of fashion This luxury brand can reflect my style and taste	0.887 0.878 0.917 0.754	1 - - -	- - - -	5 - - -	7 - - -
	Consistency	This luxury brand has identical images This luxury brand maintains consistency in style This luxury brand has a consistent price	0.919 0.913 0.645	0.753 - -	0.862 - -	0.681 - -	0.799 - -
	Innovativeness	This luxury brand is at the cutting edge of fashion luxury I can distinguish this luxury brand from other luxury brands This luxury brand is creative	0.869 0.854 0.877	0.818 - -	0.892 - -	0.734 - -	0.820 - -
	Sustainability	This luxury brand is environmentally friendly This luxury brand concerned about public affairs This luxury brand takes social responsibility	0.886 0.916 0.842	0.852 - -	0.910 - -	0.772 - -	0.858 - -



	Origin	This luxury brand shows its country of origin This luxury brand has an exotic image This brand can show its national identity	0.876 0.855 0.915	0.847 - -	0.908 - -	0.766 - -	0.852 - -
	Heritage	This luxury brand has a long history. This brand is timeless and has an international reputation	0.854 0.921	0.721 -	0.875 -	0.778 -	0.769 -
Brand Engagement	Brand-self Connection	This luxury brand represents part of me and who I am I feel personally connected to this luxury brand I feel emotionally bonded to this luxury brand This luxury brand says something to others about who I am My thoughts toward this brand often automatic coming to mind. My thoughts towards this brand come to my mind instantly. My thoughts and feeling towards this luxury brand occur naturally The luxury brand name automatically evokes many good thoughts about past, present and future	0.879 0.950 0.882 0.879 0.837 0.921 0.834 0.794	0.917 - - - - - -	0.941 - - 0.902 - -	0.801 - - 0.698 - -	0.918 - - 0.866 - -
	Brand Prominence						



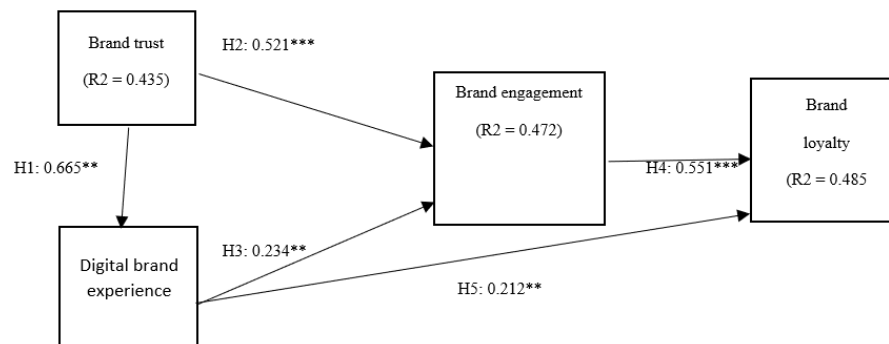
Brand loyalty	Behavioural	I will buy this luxury brand next time	0.820	0.785	0.862	0.610	0.787
		I intend to continue buying this luxury brand	0.769	-	-	-	-
		I do not buy from other brands when this brand is available	0.841	-	-	-	-
		I buy this brand instead of other brands that offer similar products	0.727	-	-	-	-
	Attitudinal	I would be willing to pay a higher price for this brand	0.768	0.778	0.857	0.600	0.785
		I am dedicated to this luxury brand	0.837	-	-	-	-
		I say positive things about this luxury brand to other people	0.773	-	-	-	-
		I would recommend this luxury brand to friends and family	0.725	-	-	-	-

CR, composite reliabilities; AVE, average variance extracted.

**, CR = 0.913; AVE = 0.469; **, CR = 0.949; AVE = 0.461; , CR = 0.942; AVE = 0.673; , CR = 0.905; AVE = 0.546*

The path analysis for the structural model and hypothesis testing was carried out using bootstrapping with 5000 iterations. Summary of path analysis results of the proposed model: Figure 2 summarizes the path analysis results of the proposed model in the form of standardized regression coefficients above each path which describe the relationship of four constructs - digital brand experience, brand trust, brand engagement, and brand loyalty.

The relationship between brand trust, digital brand experience, and brand citizenship behavior was significantly influenced by brand trust (Path Coefficient = 0.521, $p < 0.001$) and digital brand experience (Path Coefficient = 0.234, $p < 0.01$); thus, the path association between brand trust and brand citizenship behavior was mediated by brand experience on a digital platform. Additionally, brand engagement (path coefficient = 0.551) and digital brand experience (path coefficient = 0.212, $p < 0.01$) have significantly influenced purchase brand loyalty, supporting hypotheses H4 and H5, respectively. The proposed conceptual model's hypotheses are tested at a significance level of $p < 0.05$. Furthermore, the R-square value indicates that brand trust is 0.435 (H1), brand engagement is 0.472 (H2 and H3), and brand loyalty is 0.485 (H4 and H5), demonstrating the research model's sufficient explanatory ability. Moreover, the Q-square values for brand trust, brand engagement, and brand loyalty are 0.171, 0.312, and 0.254, respectively, indicating predictive relevance. Q-square values above zero suggest that the model is well-constructed and has predictive relevance. This path analysis provides substantial evidence on the direct and indirect effects of digital brand experience on brand trust, engagement, and loyalty within the context of luxury brands on digital platforms, particularly Instagram.



**** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$.**

H, hypothesis; R2

, coefficient of determination.

FIGURE 2: Partial least square regression outcomes for the model.

Digital Brand Experience and Brand Trust (H1)

The analysis reveals a significant positive relationship between digital brand experience and brand trust. Consumers perceiving a positive brand experience on a luxury brand's digital platform are more likely to consider the brand as trustworthy and authentic. This finding underscores the importance of a well-crafted digital brand experience in enhancing perceptions of trustworthiness among consumers. It suggests that the digital experience acts as a pivotal factor in shaping consumers' perceptions of a luxury brand's authenticity and reliability, which are critical components of brand trust. Path analyses in this research confirm that a higher perception of digital brand experience can lead to more positive results of brand trust, engagement, and loyalty. Firstly, digital brand experience significantly affects brand trust (H1). The result of the study reveals that consumers perceiving the brand experience on the luxury brand's digital platform to be useful taking into account that luxury brand to be more trustworthy. This result may also imply that brand trust is essential for consumers to decide whether an experience is valuable. This research delineates the impactful roles of digital brand experience and brand trust on brand engagement, quantified by direct effect sizes of 0.234 (H3) and 0.521 (H2), respectively. Additionally, the analysis unveils that brand trust serves as a formidable mediator, with the indirect influence of digital brand experience on brand engagement marked at 0.344. This finding accentuates the necessity for luxury brand marketers to prioritize brand trust as a strategy to boost brand engagement. The connection between brand engagement and brand loyalty is also empirically confirmed (Hypothesis 4), with brand engagement playing a partial mediating function, thereby exerting an indirect effect of 0.124 on their interrelation. An enhanced cognitive and emotional connection with a brand, coupled with the development of favorable feelings and memories, directly correlates with heightened brand loyalty. This phenomenon leads to a consumer's increased propensity to make repeat purchases and exhibit a deep-rooted commitment and endorsement of the brand. This observation corroborates previous findings by Thakur and Kaur (2016), who highlighted the critical nature of emotional attachment and attitudinal loyalty for luxury brands. Moreover, the current study validates the influence of digital brand experiences on Instagram on brand loyalty, demonstrating a direct effect of 0.212 (Hypothesis 5). Acceptance of a luxury watch brand's Instagram experience prompts varying degrees of brand engagement among customers, influenced by their unique interests, lifestyles, and sense of identity. This mirrors the findings of Dessart et al. (2015), who found that online brand community experiences play a significant role in fostering consumer engagement and enhancing brand loyalty.

3. DISCUSSION

Luxury watches brands have discerned a pronounced susceptibility among male consumers to form positive emotional attachments and demonstrate attitudinal loyalty. This inclination is grounded in the intricate interplay between brand trust and engagement, echoing Carlston's seminal 1992 study on the significance of associative connections in fortifying consumer-brand relationships. Carlston's research provided an early framework for understanding how diverse associations impact the consumer-brand dynamic, setting a precedent for subsequent inquiries into brand engagement and loyalty. Expanding upon Carlston's foundational work, Assiouras et al. (2015) elucidated the role of brand heritage in nurturing a robust self-brand connection. They posited that elements such as history, tradition, and origin are instrumental in deepening consumer engagement by fostering an affinity that transcends mere product appreciation. Similarly, Napoli et al. (2014) highlighted how perceived authority significantly influences trust and engagement, suggesting that consumers' perceptions of a brand's trustworthiness are pivotal in shaping their attitudes toward the brand. This insight underscores the necessity for luxury watch brands to leverage their storied heritage and craftsmanship as core components of their brand narrative, enhancing their perceived authority and, by extension, consumer trust. The digital revolution, particularly the rise of social media, has radically transformed how luxury brands engage with their audience. Ko et al. (2016) championed the strategic employment of social media as a means to bolster brand loyalty and influence consumer behavior, citing its cost-effectiveness



and broad reach. Content that is visually compelling, emotionally engaging, and reflective of the brand's heritage can significantly strengthen consumer engagement and loyalty. This digital paradigm shift mandates that luxury watch brands curate social media content that not only showcases their authority and heritage but also resonates with contemporary values like sustainability and social responsibility. Implications for Luxury Watch Marketers: For luxury watch marketers, the pathway forward involves harnessing social media to cultivate brand experiences that are perceived as authentic, trustworthy, and emotionally engaging. This entails a strategic focus on content that underscores the brand's unique selling propositions, heritage, and authority, while concurrently aligning with modern consumer concerns. Drawing on the contributions of Yangxi Zhou et al. (2023), Tao Zha et al. (2023), and Wenting Feng, Dihui Chang, Hongjie Sun (2023), this research scrutinizes the impact of digital brand experiences on consumer trust, engagement and loyalty. It reveals that positive digital experiences not only enhance consumer trust and engagement but also serve as a crucial intermediary in this relationship. This study highlights the essential role of brand trust in optimizing social media strategies for luxury watch brands, advocating for emotionally resonant marketing approaches that align with consumer expectations. These insights pave the way for further exploration into the intricacies of digital brand experiences in the luxury sector.

4. CONCLUSION

In the contemporary digital landscape, Instagram has emerged as an indispensable tool for luxury brands, offering unparalleled opportunities for storytelling and visual engagement. This shift towards digital platforms necessitates a reevaluation of brand experience strategies, extending beyond the physical environment to embrace online tools effectively. Instagram serves as a pivotal platform for luxury fashion brands, allowing them to connect with consumers through rich storytelling and visual content. The platform facilitates a multifaceted digital brand experience, encompassing sensory, affective, behavioral, and intellectual dimensions, which are crucial for fostering deeper consumer engagement and loyalty. The digital brand experience on Instagram can significantly enhance consumer loyalty, fostering a sense of attachment and authenticity towards luxury fashion brands. According to Lou & Xie (2021), positive experiential assessments on social media can lead to a more enjoyable mood and a stronger bond with brands. This demonstrates the critical role of brand authenticity in establishing effective emotional connections with consumers. For luxury fashion brands, emphasizing exclusivity and creating a sense of myth are essential when developing digital marketing strategies on Instagram. Understanding the factors that drive positive consumer attitudes and behaviors enables brands to seamlessly integrate their digital and offline marketing efforts, ensuring a comprehensive and exclusive brand experience in the omnipresent online environment. Instagram has become a vital platform for luxury brands to engage with consumers, offering a unique blend of storytelling and visual content that enhances the digital brand experience. By focusing on authenticity and exclusivity, luxury fashion brands can cultivate deeper emotional connections with their audience, reinforcing brand loyalty and engagement. In this digital age, a holistic approach that combines both online and offline strategies is essential for maintaining the exclusivity and allure of luxury brands.

5. LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

The digital landscape, particularly social media platforms like Instagram, is in a constant state of flux, with features evolving to meet user demands. This dynamic nature poses challenges and limitations to research studies focusing on digital brand experiences and consumer engagement. The ongoing updates on Instagram can significantly impact users' experiences, potentially affecting the generalizability of the research findings. As these features evolve, so too does the way in which consumers interact with luxury brands on the platform. The research primarily involved male participants, limiting insights into how different genders perceive and engage with luxury brands on social media. This focus restricts the ability to make broader generalizations about consumer behavior across genders. With the study's participants hailing from India, the findings may not fully encapsulate the global luxury consumer market. Cultural nuances and consumer behaviors in India may differ significantly from those in other countries, limiting the study's applicability to a broader audience. Future studies should aim to include a more balanced gender representation to uncover potential differences in how men and women engage with luxury brands on social media. Investigating other moderating effects, such as age, income level, or social media usage patterns, could provide deeper insights into consumer-brand interactions on digital platforms. Considering the growing emphasis on sustainability, further research could explore how sustainability practices within luxury watch marketing strategies influence consumer perceptions and brand loyalty across different cultures.

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