

Stimulating brand image through brand awareness using online social networks

Mahwish Sindhu¹, Shabir Hassan Banday²

¹Assistant Professor, ALDAR University, Dubai-United Arab Emirates (UAE)

²Associate Professor, City university college of Ajman, UAE.

¹mahwish41@gmail.com., ²shbanday@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

Research Objectives: This study's core objective is proposing and empirically evaluating a theoretical framework concerning brand image through Word of Mouth (WOM) in Online Social Networks (OSNs). With their unique communicative and interactive abilities, this empirical study, a framework of OSNs, has been developed to enable hospitality and tourism organizations to strengthen their overall brand image.

Design/Methodology/Approach: For this empirical taxonomy, a survey among 362 social networking sites was administered to evaluate brand awareness's proposed theoretical framework.

Analysis: The data was analyzed using PLS-SEM (Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modelling) approach.

Key Observations: Many tourist spots and hospitality sector organizations are investigating OSNs to generate brand awareness and stimulate the perspective of positive Word-of-Mouth (WOM) relative to brand image.

Outcomes: The outcomes demonstrate that establishing brand awareness in OSNs significantly enhances the WOM process, leading to brand image. Moreover, the system quality significantly moderates the relationship between WOM and brand image. Aiming to engender brand awareness in OSNs, it is essential to develop a virtually interactive climate, enabling consumers to swap credible, reliable, trustworthy, and up-to-date insights on time.

Keywords

Online Social Networks, Word of Mouth, brand awareness, virtual interactivity, and information quality.

Introduction

With their exceptional communication and interactive abilities, the mantra of OSNs (Online Social Networks) ensures the provision of new horizons for organizations (Kim & Hastak, 2018). Most of the organizations indulge with OSNs as an appealed for collaborating and engagement with their customers. Yet, OSNs could also elevate and enhance brand awareness). The mantra of brand awareness has focal implications on customer selection decisions (ElAydi, 2018). It is, hence, a significant notion related both with the taxonomies of consumer behavior and marketing. It has been found that consumers rely upon more than OSNs when formulating selection decisions. The impact of OSN-driven organizational campaigns on customer's perception relative to brands and services have yet to be effectively conceptualized (Alalwan, 2018). OSNs have emerged as a framework that could engender and elevate brand awareness resulted from their substantial usage. Each user with a profile on popular social networking sites, such as Facebook, is viewed by an average of 35% of their mutual profiles or friends (Pegoraro, Scott, & Burch, 2017). Hence, it is essential to obtain the basic branding right in online social networks.

The effective organizational demonstration concerning its contribution towards a brand is known as brand awareness, which demonstrates the customer's ability to recognize and recall the brand when an indication is provided. When asked plenty of individuals regarding "what destinations come to your mind when you think about a skiing destination?" answers would deliver an essential comprehension relative to skiing destination's concerning awareness of brand over the market. Undoubtedly, social networking groups nurture

and cultivate new horizons for mobility sector firms coupled with tourist spots to create awareness and significance when created and implemented more effectively.

The greater level of brand awareness characterized by recognition and recall could mainly affect the market share and significantly contribute to developing other related brand factors, including brand loyalty, brand equity, and brand image (Kasmad, Maddinsyah, & Budiyati, 2019). Furthermore, the mantra of brand awareness is conceptualized as a framework that enables individuals to become informed and adapted to the name of the brand and identify and recall the brand.

The mantra of Word-of-Mouth (WOM) is crucial for sustainable organizational performance. Organizations that can use WOM for marketing goals are perceived to be more robust and dynamic than those that are not. When asked about the fundamental goals relative to their OSN campaigns, most decision-makers close to marketing asserted that enhancing brand reputation or awareness is among the most crucial goals (Meilatinova, 2021).

Firms unusually endeavor to establish a brand reputation/awareness based on communicational and interactional platforms. Yet, in contemporary work settings, online social networks enable firms to engender two-way communication with customers involving creating a destination brand image, loyalty, and identity. Besides, consistent assertions and debate concerning the OSNs-driven brand activities (Lim & Kumar, 2019). Online social networks undoubtedly provide an innovative gateway for corporate brands to engender and cultivate customer relationship management, whereas others perceive the opposite. It has been evident from the past literature about the essential role that online social networking plays in customer relationship

management. Yet, the impact of OSNs in establishing a brand reputation or awareness is under-researched. It has been found an essential need across the available literature to investigate further the implications of branding on marketing constructs related to social networking sites (Kaur, Dhir, Rajala, & Dwivedi, 2018). Hence, this empirical study aims to fill the existing literature gap by examining online social networks' role in engendering and cultivating organizational brand awareness. Provided the significance of brand awareness and potential likelihood to elevate brand awareness, the current empirical taxonomy has crafted a theory-centric formwork (see Figure.1) that proposes related constructs and the OSN-driven outcomes relative to organizational brand awareness.

The flow of arguments in the current manuscript is based on the following sections: The first section of this draft explains the utilization of social networking sites by the travel sector firms coupled with the brand awareness predictors and develops a conceptual model and hypothesis. This section lagged by an illustration of the study design. Outcomes of the study are then presented and discussed. Finally, we conclude this manuscript by adding the theoretical and practical implications and study limitations, and future guidelines for the potential researchers.

Theoretical Background

Travel Sector Organizations and OSN

Online Social Networks (OSN) refers to an assortment of online information sources that are nurtured, cultivated, dispersed, and utilized by customer's choice decisions to educate each other regarding issues, personalities, services, brands, and products (Kim & Hastak, 2018). The framework of OSNs incorporates common social networking sites such as Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, Myspace, Bebo, and Facebook. Such social networking platforms also encompass Vlogs, podcasts, message boards, blogs, and wikis (Alalwan, 2018). Furthermore, OSNs could also engender a virtual social context where users can interact and communicate by writing reviews, posting comments, pictures, and videos. The critical functions of OSNs have been emerged over the last couple of years, presenting a new avenue for marketing professionals to engender and cultivate brand awareness. Hence, the framework of OSN provides new horizons to travel sector organizational marketing professionals to engender and develop their digital marketing campaigns. It has been strongly emphasized by (Creevey, Kidney, & Mehta, 2019) OSNs-driven implications on the travel sector organizations. According to their findings, the OSNs frameworks are significantly capable of sharing experiences and insights among tourists. The relationship between the impact of insights-driven by OSNs and the differences made to vacation plans is significantly evident. User-created content on social networking sites is relatively more reliable than the other travel agents, tourism websites, and digital media marketing. Provided the extensive and widespread investment in OSN marketing, it is vital to communicate with marketing professionals using social networking sites to engender and cultivate brand awareness from such core platforms (Langaro & Rita, 2018).

The Focal Contributions of Brand Awareness in the Context of OSN

In the B2C context, the notion of brand awareness conceptualizes decision-makers ability to identify or recall a particular brand. Brand awareness is evident as a focal component relative to the communication process to survive. For tourists to acquire services from travel sector firms or choose a particular spot of the holiday, they should first be familiar with the available tourist points and organizations. The process of brand awareness enacts a focal contribution relative to sets the brands that interest customers while choosing a service or a product. The likelihood of the selected brand is in the function of the number of other brands in the set of considerations (Litterio, Nantes, & Larrosa, 2017). The customer's capacity to recognize a brand under different circumstances is a function of their brand awareness relative to the brand association (Meilatinova, 2021). It has been evident that brand awareness significantly contributes to customer buying behavior. It comprised of individual identification, the dominance of knowledge, as well as brands, recall. Like a conventional explanation of brand awareness, with the context of OSN, the notion of brand awareness is illustrated as the extent to which clients are familiarized with the characterization of a particular brand of products and services over social networking sites. The notion of awareness is eminent in terms of two categories: extent and intensity. The size is concerned. It refers to brand awareness related to the likelihood of obtaining and using brand products and services by using online social networking, more specifically, when the brand evolves in customers' thoughts and perceptions (Farzin & Fattahi, 2018). On the other hand, brand awareness's intensity exhibits how seamlessly customers recognize or recall a specific brand based on online social networks. Hence, it is essential for travel and tour sector brands to retain the categories relative to brand awareness in OSNs.

The Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses

The current study's theoretical framework relies upon two leading taxonomies of marketing: the WOM factor and the awareness factor (Farzin & Fattahi, 2018). These two viewpoints are dynamic in illustrating how users of online social networks nurture and cultivate brand awareness and how the brand awareness level could be aligned with the intent to produce WOM. It has been evident by (Plidtookpai & Yoopetch, 2021) the positive implications of online social networks on customer WOM activities as well as brand awareness. Because of brand awareness's significance as a focal component of WOM in a digital context, this research investigates the antecedents relative to brand awareness in marketing through OSNs. In the subsequent portions, this study proposes a hypothesis concerning the impact of the antecedents of brand awareness in the spectrum of online social networks and the linkages between WOM and brand awareness. The relationship between the proposed hypothesis has been evident in Fig.1.

Predictors of Brand Awareness in OSN

Plenty of studies widely identify brands are far tend to be anticipated and thus chosen compared to unknown brands. The more identifiable a brand is, the greater the promises individual customers would tend to purchase and advocate to other potential customers (Manideep, Reddy, & Reddy, 2019). Hence, creating strong awareness of the brand among online social network users to endorse and manipulate the purchase decision. Consumers are familiar with low-recognized travel products/services (for instance, travel spots located in unknown locations). Their experience at specific OSNs, their potential recognition, recall, intention to indorse coupled with a visit, the travel spot will be supported (Sarker, Hughe, Dwived, & Rana, 2020).

The Implications of Virtual Interactivity (VI) on Brand Awareness

The previous studies relative to the interactivity perspective elucidate the auspicious frameworks of multimedia and interactivity attributes of the digital media in elevating various relationship management avenues with the consumers in the digital context (Liu, Zhang, & Zhang, 2020). The notion of VI refers to a multi-faceted and complex definition. There has been no consensus relative to a group of comprehensive but precise practical and theoretical definitions related to the mantra of virtual interactivity. The current study has been adopted the definition asserted by Steuer (1992), which indicates that the mantra of VI is "the extent to which online users might participate in adjusting the website's content in real-time." This study refers to VI as users of social networking sites and travel companies directly communicating with one another regardless of time and distance and swapping inquiries, and creating travel-centric insights in a more effective and timely manner by using online social networks. The definition mentioned above concerning interactivity signifies the significance of approaches that elevate interactivity with and between profile holders and share insights on travel firms' websites (Chiang, Tu, & Wang, 2018). Plenty of studies have conducted investigating the immediate repercussions of VI on developing a greater level of branding components. Hence, studies examining individual user's brand's existence knowledge resulting from the manipulation of VI have not been elucidatorily investigated, more specifically in the travel sector domain. It has been asserted that the mantra of VI refers to the frameworks that align an individual consumer to the brand (Duncan & Moriarty, 1998). Furthermore, it has also been asserted by (Matikiti-Manyever & Roberts-Lombard, 2020) that the VI frameworks significantly influence an individual's brand awareness with time. They oppose the complementarity of marketing communications, demonstrating the firming manipulations of consumers' intentions towards interactivity. The mantra of VI undoubtedly contributes to accomplishing both the recall and recognition from the user's conscientiousness beyond the user's interactivity options. Also, it has been suggested by (Li, Teng, & Chen, 2020).

that VI can either elevates or reduce the level of brand awareness. On the other hand, the empirical taxonomy conducted by Duncan and Moriarty (1998) demonstrates that the positive and sustainable implications of VI on the

consumer's brand awareness. Likewise, the study of (Lian & Yoong, 2018) showed that writing interactive posts by OSNs users significantly increases the number of likes and shares on such platforms. The mantra of interactivity is attributed to many-to-many communication. It has been evident from past studies that communication driven through social networking sites significantly engender and cultivate brand equity. When travelers interact with travel brands and others through social networking sites, they recognize or recall the brand more easily. Hence, this study elucidates the following proposition connecting VI with the mantra of brand awareness:

H1: Virtual Interactivity significantly impacts the brand awareness associated with the travel sector organizations promoted by using online social networking.

The Impact of Compensations on Brand Awareness

Organizational practices based on rewards manifest both the financial and psychological rewards levels relative to online social networks' committed users. Reward-driven activities are the focal predictors that impact brand awareness (Barreda, Nusair, Wang, & Okumus, 2020). In the current research, reward-driven activities refer to the degree to which social networking site users receive plenty of privileges in terms of psychological, monetary, and membership. When effectively leading to engender awareness in the user's minds, Rewards-driven activities significantly manipulate customer's behavior to choose a specific brand from the set of competitive considerations. Sufficient literature documented the effect of both the monetary and psychological benefits for activities concerning brand recall or recognition factors that exhibit outcomes relative to brand awareness. For example, (Barreda, Nusair, Wang, & Okumus, 2020) speaks that firms need to deploy both psychological and financial rewards to generate customer awareness in terms of preference for and interest in specific products or services. When customers obtain monitory or psychological benefits from a brand, they tend to recall or identify the brands' components more effectively. It has been evident from past studies that both the psychological and monetary rewards are significantly associated with the brand awareness level (Kujur & Singh, 2020). Likewise, it has been asserted by Cliford (2010) that rewards or loyalty programs are mainly related to engender and cultivate a positive level of brand awareness through social networking sites. Users of social networking sites can generate social values while communicating and interacting with others. The societal benefits that users generate from social networking platforms could strengthen the consumers' overall brand awareness level. Hence, the following proposition is asserted:

H2: Rewards-driven organizational practices significantly impact the travel sector organization's brand awareness promoted through online social networks.

The Impact of System quality on Brand Awareness

The system's quality components comprised the consumer's perceptions regarding the system's security, user-friendliness, and ease of navigation. Hence, in this study, the notion of system quality exhibits how social networking

sites are protected, user-friendly, and easy to navigate. The less complex a system is attributed, the more successful the procedure is attributed (Ramli, Abu Baka, Ismail, & Aziz, 2017).

Comparatively, bundles of a system characterized by a greater system security level are eminent as part of the greater level of quality systems. The ease of navigation associated with the system demonstrates that online social networks' insights are retrieved with minimal effort. The mantra of user-friendliness highlights the system's level at which a system is easy to channelize, accessible, and understood under different contextual settings. The greater quality social networking sites are conceptualized as more user-friendly and easier to navigate, conceptualized as greater supportive and effective performance. The available studies concerning the system's quality investigate customer awareness (Chakraborty, 2019). Also, it has been asserted by Ethier, Hadaya, Talbot, and Cadieux (2006) that in a digital environment, the system's quality serves as the comprehensive organizational environment. The system's quality elevates the likelihood of the preliminary impression as the consumer responds to recall and identify the visual components associated with a brand. A user characterized with a strong awareness of the brand is more likely to become a consumer. Suppose a consumer conceptualizes that the system is illustrated with a greater level of quality. In that case, they tend to be recognized or recall the brand more effectively and produce WOM in return (Ran, Zhenpeng, Bilgihan, & Okumus, 2021). Hence, the subsequent proposition connecting brand awareness with the system's quality is as follows:

H3: The system's quality significantly impacts the travel sector organization's brand awareness promoted through online social networks.

The Impact of Information Quality on Brand Awareness

The information characterized by a greater level of quality in social networking sites enables users to comprehend relative to a brand effectively, feel facilitated by other consumers, and formulate effective decisions. The greater level of information quality enables those consumers who intend to receive insights regarding a product or a service and generate a recommendation for a specific notion. The quality of information significantly contributes to engendering and cultivating plenty of benefits for the individual consumers. The social networking sites that provide up-to-date, reliable, trustworthy, and rich insights to users have a sustainable competitive edge over the entire market (Park, Im, & Sung, 2017). Hence, the online social networks that offer information quality may be conceptualized as more attractive and striking (Gorla, Somers, & Wong, 2010). Consequently, consumers are predicted to hear regarding social networking platforms attributed to a more significant information quality level. In the current research, the quality of information exhibits the extent to which travel-based online social networks offer authentic, credible, trustworthy, and up-to-date, and rich insights.

In OSNs, an extreme level of consumer contribution attributed with low-quality level could lead towards entitled information overload, which exhibits a context where consumers perceived that they are exchanged with undesirable information. The mantra of information overload could result in consumer's withdrawal from using social networking sites. The quality of data impacts the individual's level relative to brand awareness with time (Zollo, Filieri, Rialti, & Yoon, 2020) and enables users to recall and identify the brand using related travel-centric digital platforms. In this sense, we may argue that if the information communicated over digital networking platforms is characterized with a more significant quality level, it will intensify the overall brand awareness. Hence, the following proposition connecting brand awareness with information quality is as follows:

H4: The quality of information significantly impacts the travel sector firm's brand awareness promoted through online social networks.

WOM is the Key Factor of Brand Image

The mantra of brand awareness exhibits the strength of the brand's presence in the customer's mind. In the current empirical taxonomy, the notion of brand awareness exhibits decision-makers ability to recall or identify a brand (Park J. H., 2021). The mantra of brand awareness is the percentage amount relative to the target market familiar with the corporate name. It is a focal component of a brand and has been illustrated to affect WOM, the most comprehensive brand awareness dimension. The mantra if WOM is conceptualized as a focal predictor in the past taxonomies concerning consumer behavior, the development of various digital or internet-driven platforms, for instance, online social networks, has mainly linked with the acceleration of new ways of WOM-driven communications. Undoubtedly, WOM-centric communication is a focal source for an individual user to generate reliable insights. It establishes the essence of interpersonal communications and contributes to buying behavior and consumer purchase decisions (Rahman, Abir, Yazdani, & Hamid, 2020).

Furthermore, it has been evident that by using social networking sites, consumers can communicate their professional and personal viewpoints, share their emotions, standpoints, and experiences regarding a specific brand to other consumers. Such a new dimension of WOM, which is also termed as WOM, has received growing attention as a focal predictor of product-service-related insights and a comprehensive and robust strategy relative to marketing communication (Krishnamurthy & Kumar, 2018). The framework we adopt is an amalgamation of the assertions asserted by Weber and Aaker (2009): The robust type of brand awareness is regarded as Word-of-Mouth (Weber, 2009). The users of social networking sites who have a greater level of brand awareness endorsed the brand to others (Liao, Wu, Widowati, & Chen, 2012). It is predicted that when consumers are familiar with a specific brand, they will be discussed regarding the brand if they like the brand. Hence, Thus.

H5: Travel sector firm's OSN-driven brand awareness practices significantly impact the WOM process.

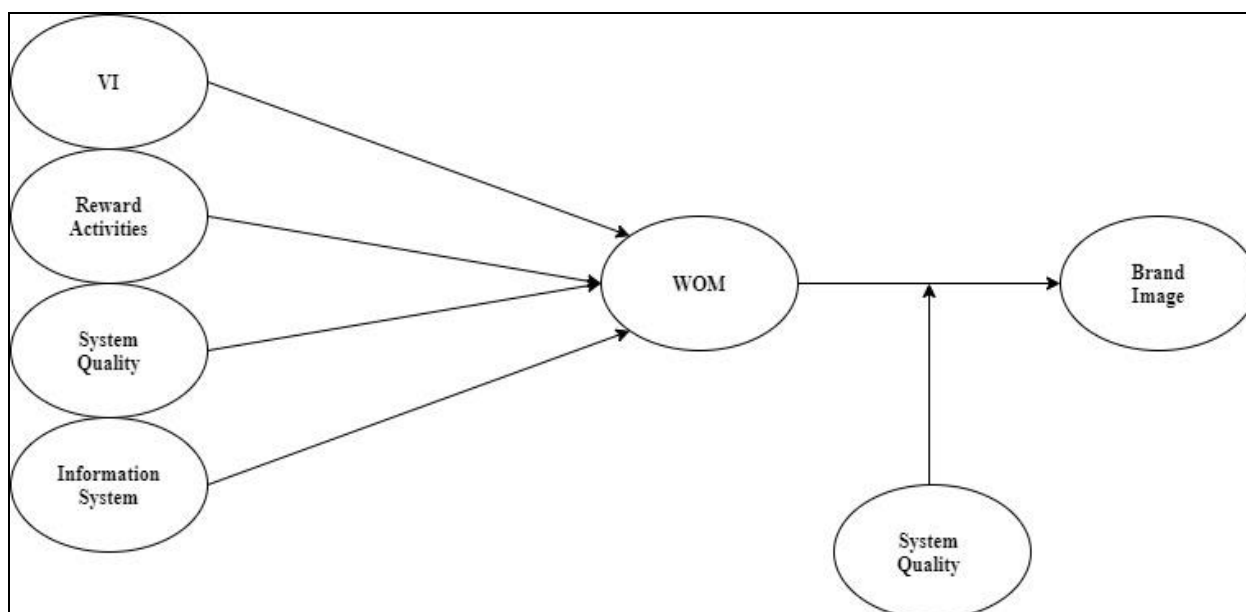


Figure 1: Proposed Theoretical Framework of Brand Awareness_ A Mediated Model

Research Methodology and Data Gathering

Methodology

This study follows the survey-based method, appropriate for the study's correlational descriptive nature (Hernandez Sampieri, Fernandez Collado, & Baptista Lucio, 2006). The population for this study is the tourism and hospitality sector. A significant representation of a sample from the United Arab Emirates (UAE) travel-related social media networks has been considered to achieve the research objectives. A web-based survey was designed using google forms. The survey questionnaire was shared with 10,000 people based on the simple random sampling technique using online social media networks and emails collected from the small private firms. A brief guideline and an ethical note related to data privacy were mentioned at the top of the questionnaire. A survey-based questionnaire was based on the 5 Likert scales is strongly disagree to 1 strongly agree. The first section was based on participants' demographics, including gender, age, education, and income level. The second section of the survey questionnaire was about the latent constructs.

To calculate the minimum sample size, G*Power 3.1.9.2 tool was used based on multiple linear regression with the effect size 0.15, power (1-β err prob) 0.99, α err prob 0.05 as suggested by Cohen (1988). The minimum sample of 128 participants is sufficient based on the population of 10,000 based on a priori calculations.

Furthermore, (Qureshi, Singh, & Almessabi, 2020) defined the sample selection criteria that the required sample size at the population of 10,000 is 370 and considering the response rate of survey-based studies, which is 68% in UAE. A total of 545 survey questionnaires were shared out of 380 responses were received while 362 responses were considered final for the analysis 18 questionnaires were discarded due to incomplete and missing values. The response rate of the current study is 66%. The data collection process is completed in the first two weeks of September 2020. The questionnaire survey being used in the

current study is adapted from the literature. The final version of the survey questionnaire consisted of 33 items to measure the constructs. The current study considered the PLS-SEM technique to achieve the current study's research objectives, and the SEM technique was performed using Smart PLS 3.2.9. the underpinning assumption of Smart PLS is not normally distributed (Al-Marouf & Al-Emran, 2018).

Results and analysis

To achieve the research objectives of the current study using structural equation modeling technique in two steps. The first step is an assessment of convergent and discriminant validity (assessment of measurement model). The second step is structural model assessment for testing of hypothesis. The current study's underpinning objective is to test the impact of WOM on brand image with the moderating role of system quality. Furthermore, WOM is considered a multidimensional construct considering virtual interaction, brand awareness, reward activities, and information quality. The current study assessed the second-order approach to achieve the research objectives of the present study.

Measurement Model

Convergent validity

The convergent validity assessment is a critical step to validate the findings; the convergent validity assessment is based on the Cronbach alpha, rho_A, composite reliability, and average variance extract. The cut-off value for the Cronbach alpha is 0.70, rho_A is 0.50, composite reliability is 0.70, and for the intermediate variance, the extract is 0.50 (Hair, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2017). The current study followed the second-order approach to achieve the research objectives of the current study. The results of first-order convergent validity were reported in Table 2.

Table 2: Convergent Validity (First-order)

	Loadings	Cronbach Alpha	rho_A	CR	AVE
VI1	0.914	0.877	0.878	0.925	0.803
VI2	0.901				
VI3	0.873				
BA1	0.862	0.839	0.840	0.903	0.757
BA2	0.882				
BA3	0.866				
RA1	0.908	0.940	0.577	0.757	0.534
RA2	0.528				
RA3	0.521				
IQ1	0.711	0.906	0.909	0.924	0.576
IQ2	0.655				
IQ3	0.703				
IQ4	0.797				
IQ5	0.869				
IQ6	0.797				
IQ7	0.761				
IQ8	0.801				
IQ9	0.712				
WOM1	0.856	0.937	0.937	0.948	0.695
WOM2	0.789				
WOM3	0.826				
WOM4	0.830				
WOM5	0.858				
WOM6	0.793				
WOM7	0.870				

WOM8	0.841				
BI1	0.778	0.919	0.920	0.934	0.639
BI2	0.804				
BI3	0.735				
BI4	0.837				
BI5	0.844				
BI6	0.774				
BI7	0.816				
BI8	0.800				
SQ1	0.832	0.844	0.845	0.895	0.682
SQ2	0.822				
SQ3	0.862				
SQ4	0.786				

Note: VI= virtual interaction, BA= brand awareness, RA=reward activities, IQ=information quality, WOM=word of mouth, BI=brand image, SQ=system quality

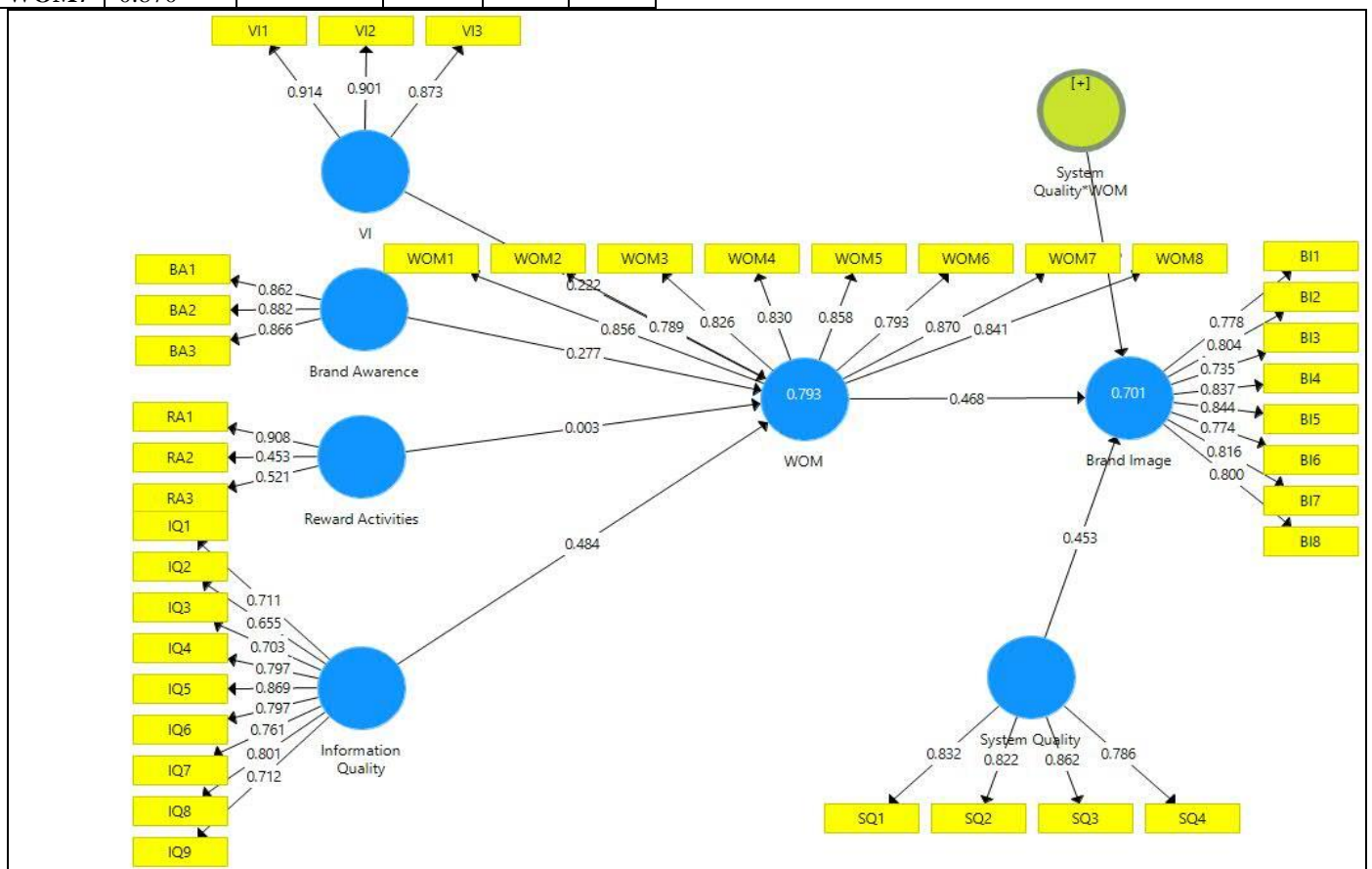


Figure 1: Measurement Model (First-order)

The results of Table 2 indicate that values of Cronbach alpha, rho_A, composite reliability, and AVE much higher than cut-off values. Hence, we can conclude that data meet

the conditions of convergent validity. The results of convergent validity for second-order were reported in Table 3. The convergent validity findings at second-order indicate

that all the values of loadings, Cronbach alpha, rho_A, composite reliability, and average variance extract are higher than cut-off values. Hence, we conclude that the second-order construct meets the conditions of convergent validity.

Table 3: Convergent validity (second-order)

	Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	CR	AVE
BA	0.872	0.763	0.879	0.783	0.625
IQ	0.916				
RA	0.761				
VI	0.884				
Brand Image	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
System Quality	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000

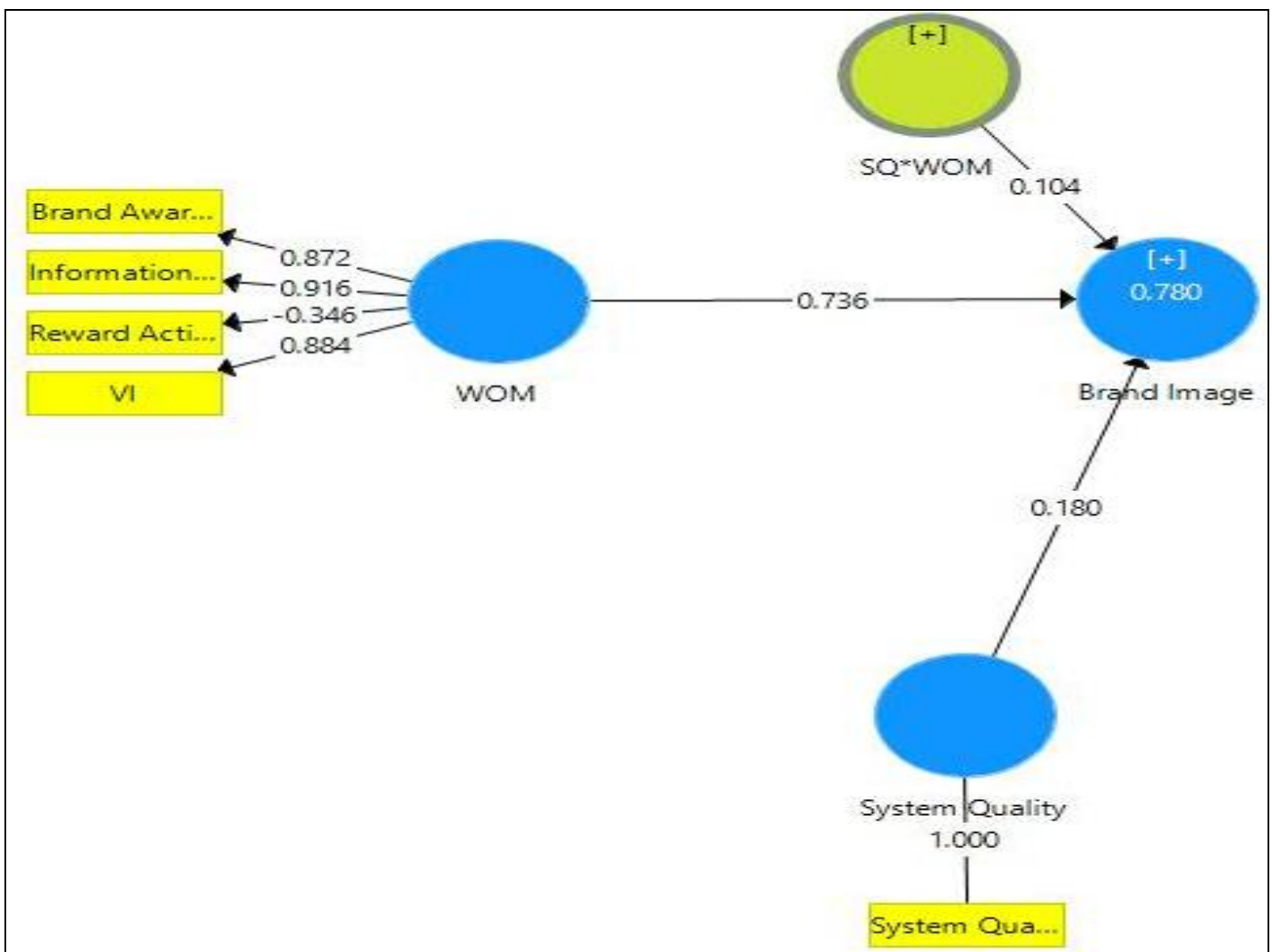


Figure 2: Measurement Model (Second-order)

Discriminant validity

The second part of the measurement model is the assessment of discriminant validity. The underpinning objective of discriminant validity is to assess the inter-correlation among the latent construct (Shaffer, Degeest, & Li, 2016). The

assessment results of the first order's discriminant validity were reported in Table 3, while the second-order was reported in Table 4. Literature indicates the three most prominent techniques for assessing discriminant validity cross-loadings, Fornell-Larcker, and Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) (Al-Marroof & Al-Emran, 2018). Moreover, the

literature indicates some limitations for cross-loadings and Fornell-Larcker hence, the current study considered the HTMT appropriate technique for the assessment of discriminant validity.

Furthermore, two schools of thought on the cut-off value of discriminant validity one school of thought indicate 0.85 (Kline, 2011) cut-off value while the other school claims 0.90 (Gold, Malhotra, & Segars, 2001) a threshold value. This current study considered the cut-off value of HTMT as 0.90 for the assessment of discriminant validity. The current study's findings indicate that all the value of discriminant validity is within the cut-off 0.90.

Table 3: Discriminant Validity (First order)

	BA	BI	IQ	RA	SQ	VI	WOM
Brand Awareness							
Brand Image	0.864						
Information Quality	0.810	0.331					
Reward Activities	0.482	0.467	0.353				
System Quality	0.769	0.857	0.722	0.309			
VI	0.748	0.808	0.860	0.269	0.844		
WOM	0.856	0.818	0.219	0.287	0.171	0.850	

Table 4: Discriminant validity (Second-order)

	Brand Image	System Quality	WOM
Brand Image			
System Quality	0.763		
WOM	0.551	0.875	

Structural Model Assessment

The second step of PLS-SEM is assessing the structural model, and structural model assessment is used to explain the extent of the relationship among the latent constructs based on a theoretical framework. The structural model assessment results were reported in table 5 for the first-order construct's direct hypothesis testing. At the same time, the hypothesis of indirect hypothesis was reported in table 6. The structural model assessment was reported based on the coefficients, standard deviation, t-values, p-values.

The current study's findings reveal that virtual interaction has a positive and significant association with word of mouth ($\beta = 0.222$, $t=4.422$, $p<0.000$). Brand awareness indicates a positive and significant association in direction

association with word of mouth ($\beta = 0.277$, $t=6.483$, $p<0.000$). However, reward activities indicate a positive but insignificant association with word of mouth ($\beta = 0.003$, $t=0.024$, $p>0.05$). Information quality suggests a positive and significant association with word of mouth ($\beta = 0.484$, $t=8.546$, $p<0.000$). In addition to that, results affirm that WOM of positively and significantly linked with the brand image ($\beta = 0.468$, $t=8.332$, $p<0.000$). System quality also indicates a positive and significant association with the brand image ($\beta = 0.453$, $t=7.634$, $p<0.000$). Furthermore, the moderating relationship's interaction term also indicates a positive a significant association while affirms that system quality significantly moderates the association between the word of mouth and brand image ($\beta = 0.176$, $t=4.081$, $p<0.000$).

Table 5: Direct-Testing Hypothesis (first-order)

	Coeff.	SD	T-values	P-values
VI -> WOM	0.222	0.050	4.422	0.000
Brand Awareness -> WOM	0.277	0.043	6.483	0.000
Reward Activities -> WOM	0.003	0.024	0.141	0.888
Information Quality -> WOM	0.484	0.057	8.546	0.000
WOM -> Brand Image	0.468	0.056	8.332	0.000
Moderating Effect 1 -> WOM	0.176	0.043	4.081	0.000
System Quality -> Brand Image	0.453	0.059	7.634	0.000

In the indirect association, the findings indicate that word of mouth positively and significantly mediates the association between brand awareness and brand image ($\beta = 0.129$, $t=5.210$, $p<0.000$). Word of mouth positively and significantly mediates the association between information quality and brand image ($\beta = 0.227$, $t=5.444$, $p<0.000$). However, in reward activities, results indicate that word of mouth positively but insignificantly mediates the association between reward activities and brand image ($\beta = 0.002$, $t=0.140$, $p>0.05$). Moreover, virtual interaction word of mouth positively and significantly mediates the association between virtual interaction and brand image ($\beta = 0.104$, $t=4.125$, $p<0.000$).

Table 6: Indirect-Testing Hypothesis (first-order)

	Coeff.	SD	T-value	P-values
Brand Awareness -> WOM -> Brand Image	0.129	0.025	5.210	0.000
Information Quality -> WOM -> Brand Image	0.227	0.042	5.444	0.000
Reward Activities -> WOM -> Brand Image	0.002	0.011	0.140	0.889
VI -> WOM -> Brand Image	0.104	0.025	4.125	0.000

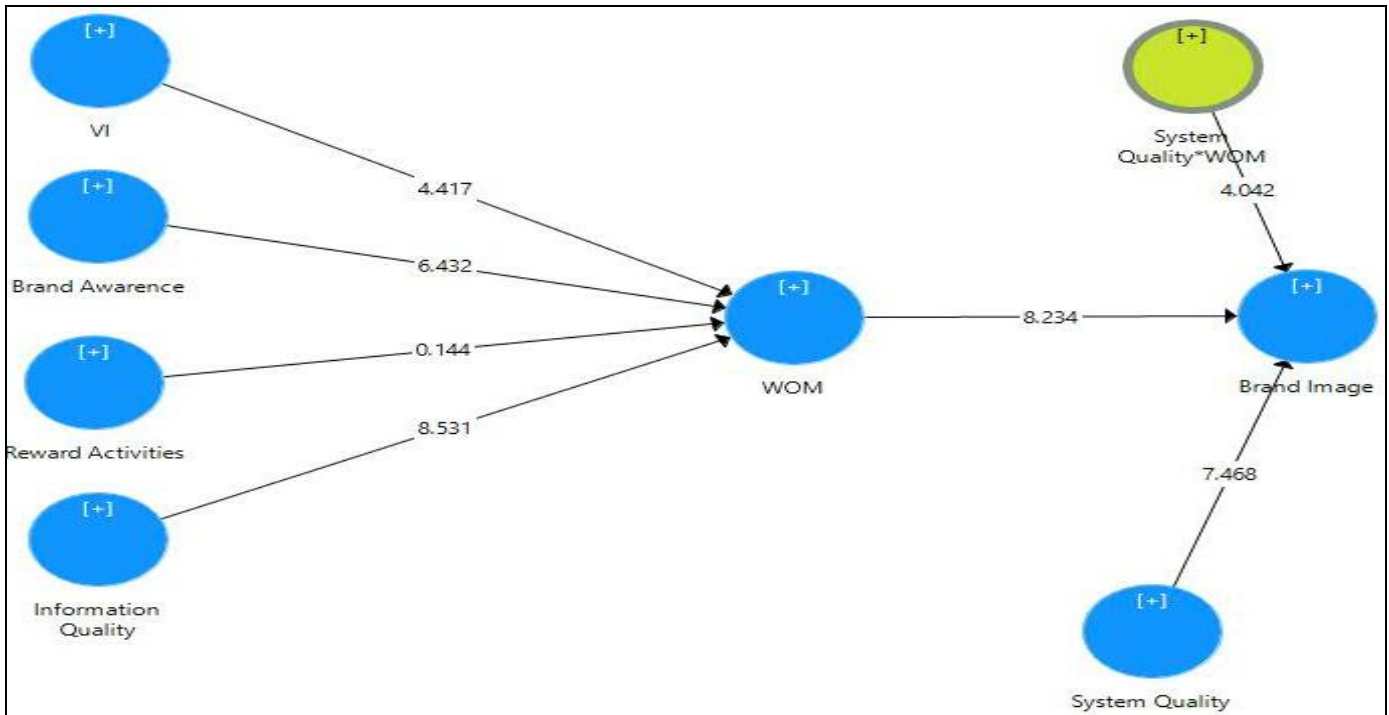


Figure 3: Structural Model (first-order)

The results of structural model assessment at the second-order constructs were reported in table 7. The findings indicate that word of mouth is positively and significantly linked with the brand image ($\beta = 0.736$, $t = 12.809$, $p < 0.000$). The results indicate a positive and significant association with the brand image ($\beta = 0.180$, $t = 2.967$, $p < 0.000$). The interaction term results show that system quality

significantly moderates the association between word-of-mouth and brand image ($\beta = 0.104$, $t = 2.723$, $p < 0.006$).

Table 7: Direct-Testing Hypothesis (second-order)

	Coeff.	SD	T-values	P-values
WOM -> Brand Image	0.736	0.057	12.809	0.000
System Quality -> Brand Image	0.180	0.061	2.967	0.003
SQ*WOM -> Brand Image	0.104	0.038	2.723	0.006

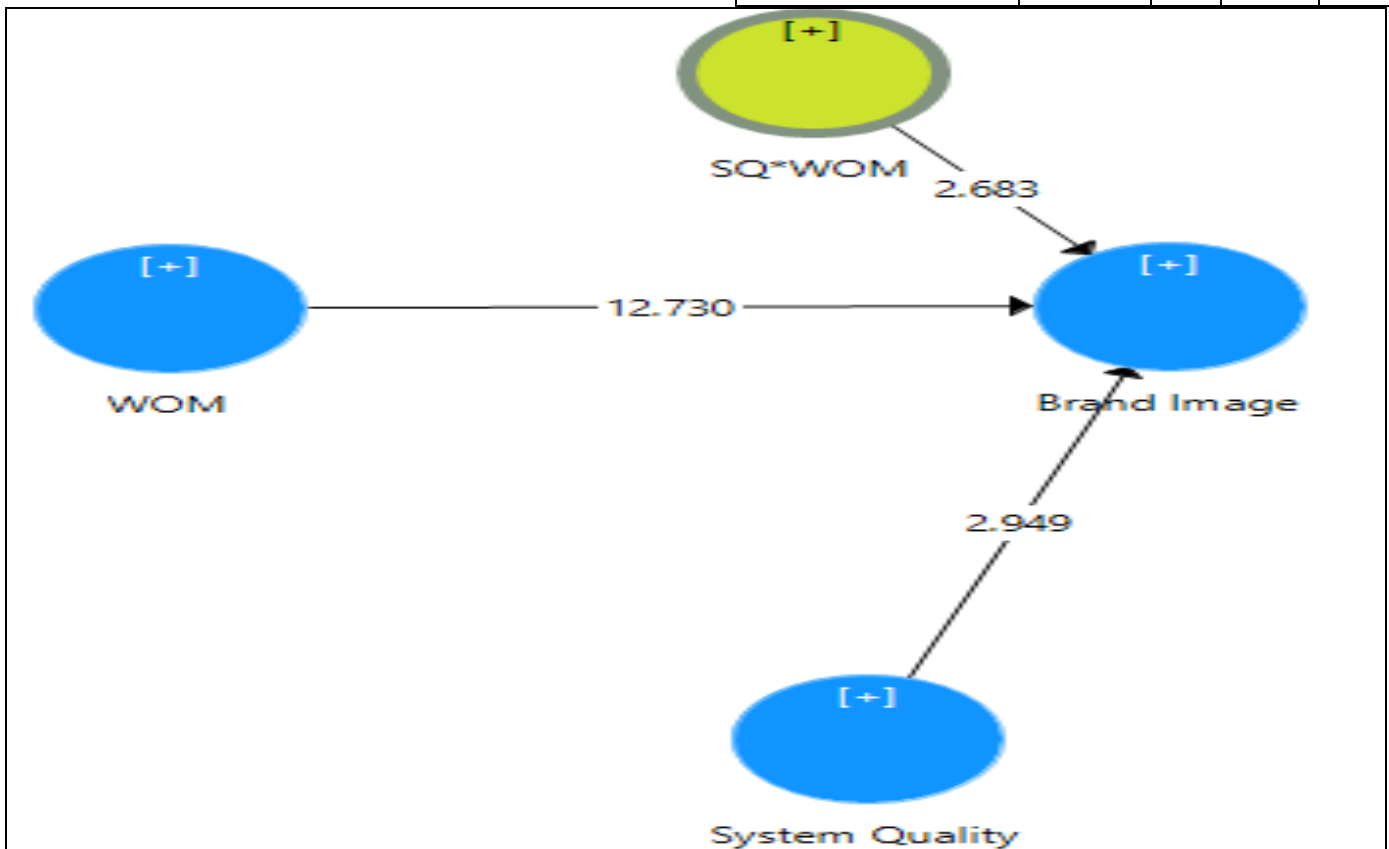


Figure 4: Structural Model (second-order)

Discussion and conclusions

The current study's underpinning objective is to assess the role of virtual interaction, brand awareness, reward activities, and information quality with mediating role word of mouth towards the brand image. Furthermore, the current study considered that system quality as moderating factor. The present study's finding reveals that virtual interaction, brand awareness, and information quality positively and significantly linked with word of mouth. At the same time, reward activities indicate a positive but insignificant association with word of mouth. Furthermore, word of mouth and system quality indicate a positive and significant association with the brand image.

The current study findings are well aligned with the recent literature that indicates that virtual interaction positively and significantly linked with word of mouth (Qiao, Song, & Wang, 2019). Furthermore, literature also affirms that brand awareness positively and significantly explains word of mouth (Maria, Pusriadi, Hakim, & Darma, 2019). Moreover, the current study findings reward activities indicate a positive but insignificant association between the literature (Islam & Rahman, 2017). The reason as the reward activities were not offered by the hospitality and tourist organizations in UAE. The literature also validates the current study's findings that information quality is positively and significantly linked with word of mouth (Balaji, Roy, & Lassar, 2017).

Moreover, the current study results align with the literature that word of mouth positively and significantly mediates the association between virtual interaction, brand awareness, information quality, and brand image. The current study's findings indicate that system quality significantly and positively moderates the association between word of mouth and brand image. The recent literature supports the results of the current study. The present study concludes that virtual interaction, brand awareness, information quality positively and significantly leads to word of mouth and brand image. Moreover, system quality positively and significantly moderates the association between word of mouth and brand image. The current study suggests the future studies can test government support in online social networking, the influence of regulatory pressure on online social networking.

Implications

The findings of the current study have implications for the managers/owners of hospitality and tourist organizations. The managers/owners need to consider the present study results to assess online networking platforms' effectiveness in which these organizations participate or facilitate the customers. Moreover, these organizations need to revisit the reward activities and ensure the system's quality significantly influences the brand image. Furthermore, the findings of the current study had implications for the regulatory authorities. Based on the results, regulatory authorities need to participate in effective and efficient development such online social networking platforms as these positively and significantly creating the brand image

of local organizations and translated into employment generation economic growth.

References

- [1] Alalwan, A. (2018). Investigating the impact of social media advertising features on customer purchase intention. *International Journal of Information Management*, 42, 65-77.
- [2] Aljuhmani, Y. H., & Emeagwali, L. O. (2017). The roles of strategic planning in organizational crisis management: The case of Jordanian banking sector. *International Review of Management and Marketing*, 7(3), 50-51.
- [3] Al-Marouf, A. R., & Al-Emran, M. (2018). Students acceptance of Google classroom: An exploratory study using PLS-SEM approach. *International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning*, 13(6), 112-123.
- [4] Balaji, M. S., Roy, S. K., & Lassar, W. M. (2017). Language divergence in service encounters: Revisiting its influence on word-of-mouth. *Journal of Business Research*, 72(1), 210-213.
- [5] Barreda, A., Nusair, K., Wang, Y., & Okumus, F. (2020). The impact of social media activities on brand image and emotional attachment. *Journal of hospitality and tourism technology*.
- [6] Battaglia, D., Neirotti, P., & Paolucci, E. (2018). The role of R&D investments and export on SMEs' growth: A domain ambidexterity perspective. *Management Decision*, 1-10. doi:10.1108/MD-02-2017-0136
- [7] Byrne, M. B. (2005). Factor analytic models: Viewing the structure of an assessment instrument from three perspectives. *Journal of personality assessment*, 85(1), 17-32.
- [8] Chakraborty, U. (2019). The impact of source credible online reviews on purchase intention: The mediating roles of brand equity dimensions. *Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing*.

- [9] Chiang, I., Tu, S., & Wang, L. (2018). Exploring the social marketing impacts of virtual brand community engagement. *Contemporary Management Research*, 14(2).
- [10] Creevey, D., Kidney, E., & Mehta, G. (2019). From dreaming to believing: A review of consumer engagement behaviours with brands' social media content across the holiday travel process. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 36(6), 679-691.
- [11] ElAydi, H. (2018). The effect of social media marketing on brand awareness through Facebook: An individual-based perspective of mobile services sector in Egypt. *Open Access Library Journal*, 5(10), 1-5.
- [12] Farzin, M., & Fattahi, M. (2018). eWOM through social networking sites and impact on purchase intention and brand image in Iran. *Journal of Advances in Management Research*.
- [13] Gold, A. H., Malhotra, A., & Segars, A. H. (2001). Knowledge management: an organizational capabilities perspective. *Journal of Management Information Systems*, 18(1), 185-214.
- [14] Hair, J. F., Hult, G. M., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2017). *A Primer on Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) (2nd Ed ed.)*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- [15] Hair, J. F., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2013). Partial least squares structural equation modeling: Rigorous applications, better results and higher acceptance. *Long Range Planning*, 46(1-2), 1-12.
- [16] He, H., & Harris, L. (2020). The Impact of Covid-19 Pandemic on Corporate Social Responsibility and Marketing Philosophy. *Journal of Business Research*, 116(1), 176-182.
doi:10.1016/j.jbusres.2020.05.030
- [17] Hernandez Sampieri, R., Fernandez Collado, C., & Baptista Lucio, P. (2006). *Metodologia de la investigacin*. Mexico: McGraw-Hill Interamericana.
- [18] Islam, J. U., & Rahman, Z. (2017). The impact of online brand community characteristics on customer engagement: An application of Stimulus-Organism-Response paradigm. *Telematics and Informatics*, 34(4), 96-109.
- [19] Kasmad, A., Maddinsyah, A., & Budiyati, Y. (2019). Building The Awareness Brand Through Digital Marketing And Celebrity Endorser Koper Products Lojel Empirical Study in Pt Buanacitra Internusa Bumi Serpong Damai (Bsd) South Tangerang City. *International Journal of Social Science and Economic Research*.
- [20] Kaur, P., Dhir, A., Rajala, R., & Dwivedi, Y. (2018). Why people use online social media brand communities: A consumption value theory perspective. *Online Information Review*.
- [21] Kiessling, T., Isaksson, L., & Yasar, B. (2016). Market orientation and CSR: Performance implications. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 137(2), 269-284.
- [22] Kim, J., & Hastak, M. (2018). Social network analysis: Characteristics of online social networks after a disaster. *International Journal of Information Management*, 38(1), 86-96.
- [23] Kline, R. B. (2011). *Principles and practice of structural equation modeling*. New York: Guilford Press. Teo, T. S. H.
- [24] Kottika, E., Ozsomer, A., Ryden, P., & Theodorakis. (2020). We survived this! What managers could learn from SMEs who successfully navigated the Greek economic crisis. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 88(1), 352-365.
- [25] Krishnamurthy, A., & Kumar, S. (2018). Electronic word-of-mouth and the brand image: Exploring the moderating role of involvement through a consumer expectations lens. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 43, 149-156.
- [26] Kujur, F., & Singh, S. (2020). Visual communication and consumer-brand relationship on social networking sites-uses & gratifications theory perspective.

- Journal of theoretical and applied electronic commerce research, 1, 30-47.
- [27] Langaro, D., & Rita, P. (2018). Do social networking sites contribute for building brands? Evaluating the impact of users' participation on brand awareness and brand attitude. *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 24(2), 146-168.
- [28] Lawal, A. F., Worlu, E. R., & Ayoade, E. O. (2016). Critical success factors for sustainable entrepreneurship in SMEs: Nigerian perspective. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 7(3), 338-340.
- [29] Li, M., Teng, H., & Chen, C. (2020). Unlocking the customer engagement-brand loyalty relationship in tourism social media: The roles of brand attachment and customer trust. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 44, 184-192.
- [30] Lian, S., & Yoong, L. (2018). Customer Engagement In Social Media And Tourism Brand Performance Implications. *Journal of Design, Art and Communication*, 1186-1194.
- [31] Lim, H., & Kumar, A. (2019). Variations in consumers' use of brand online social networking: A uses and gratifications approach. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 51, 450-457.
- [32] Litterio, A., Nantes, E., & Larrosa, J. (2017). Marketing and social networks: A criterion for detecting opinion leaders . *European Journal of Management and Business Economics*.
- [33] Liu, C., Zhang, Y., & Zhang, J. (2020). The impact of self-congruity and virtual interactivity on online celebrity brand equity and fans' purchase intention., (p. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*).
- [34] Manideep, A., Reddy, M., & Reddy, P. (2019). Impact of Social Network Advertisements on Brand Equity of Wellness Firms and the Mediating Role of Brand Awareness: An Empirical Analysis. *Int. J. Manag. Bus Res*, 9(2), 46-53.
- [35] Maria, S., Pusriadi, T., Hakim, Y. P., & Darma, D. (2019). The Effect of Social Media Marketing, Word of Mouth, and Effectiveness of Advertising on Brand Awareness and Intention to Buy. *Jurnal Manajemen Indonesia*, 19(2), 107-122.
- [36] Matikiti-Manyever, R., & Roberts-Lombard, M. (2020). Perceived Guest House Brand Value: The Influence of Web Interactivity on Brand Image and Brand Awareness. *Journal of Promotion Management*, 27(2), 250-277.
- [37] Meilatinova, N. (2021). Social commerce: Factors affecting customer repurchase and word-of-mouth intentions I. *International Journal of Information Management*, 57, 102-300.
- [38] Mshelia, G. A., & Abdulrahman, A. (2018). Entrepreneurial skills training needs in business education for internally displaced persons (IDPS) on boron state for sustainable development. *Nigerian Journal of Business Education*, 5(2), 250-263.
- [39] Novel, R. C. (2020). The epidemiological of an outbreak of 2019 novel coronavirus diseases (COVID-19) in China. *Zhonghua liu xing bing xue za zhi= Zhonghua liuxingbingxue zazhi*, 41(2), 145-147.
- [40] Omar, C. A., Ishak, S., & Jusoh, A. M. (2020). The impact of Covid-19 Movement Control Order on SMEs' businesses and survival strategies. *Geografia-Malaysian Journal of Society and Space*, 16(2), 139-141.
- [41] Park, J. H. (2021). A study of antecedents and outcomes of social media WOM towards luxury brand purchase intention. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 58, 102-272.
- [42] Park, J., Im, I., & Sung, C. (2017). Is social networking a waste of time? The impact of social network and knowledge characteristics on job performance. *Knowledge Management Research & Practice*, 15(4), 560-571.
- [43] Paul, S., & Chowdhury, P. (2020). A production recovery plan in manufacturing supply chains for a high-demand item during COVID-19. *International Journal of*

- Physical Distribution and Logistics Management, 2-3.
- [44] Pegoraro, A., Scott, O., & Burch, L. (2017). Strategic use of Facebook to build brand awareness: A case study of two national sport organizations. *International Journal of Public Administration in the Digital Age (IJPADA)*, 4(1), 69-87.
- [45] Plidtookpai, N., & Yoopetch, C. (2021). The electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM) trustworthiness, brand image and other determinants of purchase intention of the middle class to luxury hotel services. *Kasetsart Journal of Social Sciences*, 42(1), 61-68.
- [46] Qiao, L., Song, M., & Wang, N. (2019). Virtual brand community experience, identification, and electronic word-of-mouth. *Journal of Computer Information Systems*, 1-14.
- [47] Qureshi, T., Singh, A., & Almessabi, B. (2020). Green Human Resource Management for Organizational Sustainability: A Need of the Hour for Modern Workplace. *Journal of Southwest Jiaotong University*, 55(4).
- [48] Rahman, M., Abir, T., Yazdani, D., & Hamid, N. (2020). Brand Image, eWOM, Trust and Online Purchase Intention of Digital Products among Malaysian Consumers. *Journal of Xi'an University of Archit.*
- [49] Ramli, R., Abu Baka, A., Ismail, R., & Aziz, N. (2017). The trust effect towards online seller in social commerce.
- [50] Ran, L., Zhenpeng, L., Bilgihan, A., & Okumus, F. (2021). Marketing China to US travelers through electronic word-of-mouth and destination image: Taking Beijing as an example. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*.
- [51] Ruan, Q., Yang, K., Wang, W., Jiang, L., & Song, J. (2020). Clinical predictors of mortality due to COVID-19 based on an analysis of data of 150 patients from Wuhan, China. *Intensive care medicine*, 46(5), 846-848.
- [52] Sarker, P., Hughe, L., Dwived, i., & Rana, N. (2020). Social commerce adoption predictors: A review and weight analysis. In *Conference on e-Business, e-Services and e-Society* (pp. 176-191). Springer, Cham.
- [53] Scuotto, V., Caputo, F., Villasalero, M., & Del Gi. (2017). A multiple buyer-supplier relationship in the context of SMEs' digital supply chain management. *Production Planning & Control*, 28(16), 1378-1388.
- [54] Shaffer, A. J., Degeest, D., & Li, A. (2016). Tackling the problem of construct proliferation: A guide to assessing the discriminant validity of conceptually related constructs. *Organizational Research Methods*, 19(1), 80-110.
- [55] Suh, J. C., & Lee, T. i. (2018). An empirical study on the manufacturing firm's strategic choice for sustainability in SMEs. *Sustainability*, 10(2), 572-574.
- [56] Taber, S. K. (2018). The use of Cronbach's alpha when developing and reporting research instruments in science education. *Research in Science Education*, 48(6), 1273-1296.
- [57] Talaiekhosani, A. (2019). A Short Communication on COVID-19 Outbreak. *Journal of Infertility and Reproductive Biology*, 7(4), 21-22.
- [58] Tzeng, H. G., Chiang, H. C., & Li, W. C. (2007). Evaluating intertwined effects in e-learning programs: A novel hybrid MCDM model based on factor analysis and DEMATEL. *Expert systems with Applications*, 32(4), 1028-1044.
- [59] Umar, A. A. (2019). An Evaluation of Business Strategies Adopted by SMEs in Nigeria: A Case Study of Apo, Abuja Municipal Area Council. *Nile Journal of Business and Economics*, 4(10), 19-33.
- [60] Zollo, L., Filieri, R., Rialti, R., & Yoon, S. (2020). Unpacking the relationship between social media marketing and brand equity: The mediating role of consumers' benefits and experience. *Journal of Business Research*, 117, 256-267.