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Influence of integration on interactivity in social media luxury brand communities

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ABSTRACT

Luxury brand marketers have recently turned their attention to customer-driven social media communities devoted to their brands. The key concepts of integration and interactivity provide the theoretical foundation to investigate social media luxury brand communities (LBCs). Data were collected from 252 luxury brand Facebook fan page members in South Korea. The study examines the effects of: (1) LBC integration on interaction as a process; (2) interaction as a process on perceived interactivity of LBCs; and (3) integration and interactivity on attitudes, brand loyalty, and purchase intentions. The findings confirm: positive effects of LBC integration on interaction as a process and positive effects of interaction as a process on perceived interactivity of LBCs. The results also confirm the effects of interactivity on brand attitude, brand loyalty, and purchase intentions. It is the first to offer a theoretical framework to analyze social media LBCs using the key concepts of integration and interactivity.

1. Introduction

Luxury fashion brand marketers and advertisers have recently turned their attention to luxury consumers in social media communities devoted to their brands (Ko & Megehee, 2012). Consumers are drawn to luxury brands for more than just the acquisition of materialistic or superficial possessions. They may also be drawn by perceptions of profound value, exceptional craftsmanship, and identification with a particular country (Keller, 2009; Miller & Mills, 2012; Phau & Prendergast, 2000). Luxury consumption is therefore multidimensional and embraces financial (e.g., exclusivity), functional (e.g., product excellence), individual (e.g., personal enjoyment), and social value (e.g., prestige and status) components (Hennigs, Wiedmann, Klarmann, & Behrens, 2013; Miller & Mills, 2012). As a result, luxury brand managers recognize that complex and psychological motivations drive consumers to purchase their items.

The consumer perception that a product is luxurious depends on subjective consumer experiences, individual needs, and product categories (Ko, 2011). Currently, luxury brand images have expanded to include brand heritage, quality, artistic value, and customer relationships (Kim & Ko, 2012). In an effort to communicate these images more effectively with customers, luxury fashion brands, in particular, are expanding their use of social media communities (Kim & Ko, 2012).

Since Cartier established the first online luxury brand community on

MySpace (Goldie, 2005), other luxury brands such as Chanel, Louis Vuitton, and Prada, have created many online and social media communities devoted to their brands. If luxury brand managers want to successfully manage their brand communities in the face of an ever-changing social media environment, they need to understand how to effectively communicate deeper values around their luxury brands through their brand communities (Chi, 2012; Fujita, Harrigan, & Soutar, 2017; Jung & Kim, 2016; Lewis, Brown, & Billings, 2017; Porter & Dontsu, 2008).

In general, brand communities are specialized, non-geographically bound, and based on a social relationship among the brand users (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001) who share both particular and common devotion to the brand. Social brand communities, where members have a relationship in the social media context, can create trustworthy experiences for customers, inspire interactivity, improve brand attitudes, augment brand loyalty, and increase purchase behaviors (Chelladurai, 2016; Gu & Kim, 2016; Kim, Ko, & Kim, 2015; Kim & Leng, 2017; Porter & Dontsu, 2008; Sabah, 2017; Yu, Cho, & Johnson, 2017).

This study uses the key concepts of integration and interactivity to provide a theoretical foundation to investigate luxury brand communities (LBCs) on social media. The study examines: (1) the effects of LBC integration on interaction as a process; (2) the effects of interaction as a process on perceived interactivity of LBCs; and (3) the effects of integration and interactivity on attitudes, brand loyalty, and purchase

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intentions. It also discusses the implications for luxury brand management academia as well as practitioners.

2. Theoretical framework of luxury brand communities

To enhance their brands, create customer relationships, and increase sales, luxury brands need to develop more unique brand identities, and through those, offer exclusive brand relationships. Luxury brand communities are inherently oriented toward acquiring new and refined experiences (Freire, 2014), and boosting brand relationships (Hagtvedt & Patrick, 2009).

Since most luxury brands try to appeal to customers through their symbolic and emotional aspects, brands that create positive associations for luxury consumers, in terms of fun, fantasy, refinement, and entertainment, are essential for this specific brand category (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982). Every luxury brand product needs outperforming qualities to succeed in its market that are then implicitly or explicitly communicated in the brand community to consumers. Thus, a luxury brand can take full advantage of brand communities to create distinctive brand relationships. Existing research convincingly implies that luxury brand communities are critical and the multi-faceted experiences they create can enhance relationships with customers.

To investigate luxury brand communities, this study employs the key concepts of integration and interactivity to offer a conceptual underpinning to investigate social media LBCs. Table 1 details the previous studies on this topic that use the concepts of integration and interactivity. Stewart and Pavlou (2002) highlighted that to undertake a comprehensive consumer behavior study in an interactive context, researchers must consider the structural context of the interaction. At the same time, many researchers differentiate brand community in the social media context (Zaglia, 2013). Thus, the concepts of integration and interactivity are useful here to study the context of the interactions in social media LBCs. Capturing insights and building a conceptual foundation for LBCs considering interactions in the social media context would be important to academics and practitioners.

2.1. Integration of LBCs

Brand community integration is a multicomponent concept that includes customer relationships with brands, products, companies, and other customers (McAlexander, Schouten, & Koenig, 2002). When the brand community is well integrated, socially aggregated members share both customer–brand relationships (Grubb & Grathwohl, 1967) and customer–customer brand relationships (Muniz & O’Guinn, 2001). Customer-centric models of brand community extend the customer–customer brand model and conceptualize brand–community integration as one that includes significantly loyal relationships with brands (Holt, 1995; Schouten & McAlexander, 1995), products, companies, and other customers (McAlexander et al., 2002). At the same time, brand community integration is positively related to customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, purchase behavior, and repurchase intent (McAlexander et al., 2002). Table 1 also details the current research in terms of brand community integration concepts that reflect relationships with brands, products, companies, and other customers.

Regarding online or social brand-community integration, Tambyah (1996) used the term “net *communitas*” to define how internet users seek a sense of community, engagement, and dependence when they join online communities. Consequently, they tend to create strong bonds with each other (Rheingold, 1993). In this study, LBC integration refers to customer-centric relationships (McAlexander et al., 2002) with brands, products, companies, and other customers. The integration of customer-centric relationships generates a sense of unity among group members (Hogg & Terry, 2000) and entails adjustment to group norms, feelings of social acceptance, and peer approval (Bauer, Bodner, Erdogan, Truxillo, & Tucker, 2007).

2.2. Interactivity of LBCs

This LBC research focuses on interactivity in social media LBCs in the context of interactive marketing communications embedded in this social media environment. Interactivity is a multifaceted concept that has a long academic history. In fact, the concept of interactivity has been studied in terms of three research streams: functional features, actions and/or processes, and perceptions of interactivity over time (Blattberg & Deighton, 1991; Coyle & Thorson, 2001; Kim, Spielmann, & McMillan, 2012; Liu & Shrum, 2002). Research on interactivity as a function focuses on illuminating manifest features of interactivity (Okazaki, 2005). The second stream of research focuses on interactive processes, or the real actions that go into making something interactive. Among the processes seen as interactive is the exchange of information and user responsiveness (Blattberg & Deighton, 1991; Coyle & Thorson, 2001; Liu & Shrum, 2002).

The third research stream focuses on what individuals perceive as interactive (Day, 1998; Kim et al., 2012). Timeliness and engagement also become important from the perspective of perceived interactivity. Perceived interactivity, in turn, corresponds to three correlated but distinct dimensions: control, two-way communication, and time (Kim et al., 2012). As the concentration here is on social media LBCs in the context of interactive marketing communications, this research specifically examines interaction as a process and perceived interactivity in the continuum of the multifaceted interactivity research streams.

2.3. Relationships between integration and interaction as a process of LBCs

The extent of the integration in the relationship will determine how the members interpret communications and how they behave; integration, thus, determines interaction based on members’ goals (Stewart & Pavlou, 2002). Integration leads to interaction as a process (Casaló, Flavián, & Guinalú, 2013; Koh & Kim, 2004; Stewart & Pavlou, 2002), including sharing, advocating, socializing, and participating, which then determines whether the community will be sustainable and successful (Casaló et al., 2013; Koh & Kim, 2004). Members who have ongoing relationships with each other are more involved with the community and ensure strong community interaction (Algesheimer, Dholakia, & Herrmann, 2005).

This type of group integration influences how members respond and act within the group (Casaló et al., 2013). If members feel that they belong to the group, they will act in accordance with collective norms (e.g., Algesheimer et al., 2005). In the integration of customer-centric relationships, members who feel positively and strongly connected to the brands, products, companies, and other customers will usually actively participate in the group activities (Casaló et al., 2013).

Interaction as a process means that members reproduce, share, diffuse, and advocate their collective meanings and values (Kim et al., 2012). Group members ensure interaction as a process within a community by sharing information and experiences; advocating brands, products, and companies; socializing with other members; and, participating in group activities (Casaló et al., 2013; Muniz & O’Guinn, 2001). Thus, strong integration in the LBC and actual interaction will be positively related in the social media context. Consequently, this research suggests the following hypothesis:

H1. LBC integration will positively affect the interaction as a process.

2.4. Relationships between interaction as a process and perceived interactivity of LBCs

As previously discussed, many studies have identified multiple interactivity facets including interactivity as a process and interactivity perceptions (Blattberg & Deighton, 1991; Coyle & Thorson, 2001; Liu & Shrum, 2002). Interactivity as a process includes user control, responsiveness, and the exchange of information (Chan & Li, 2010; Kim

Table 1
Integration and interactivity of brand communities.

Dimensions	Brand communities		Online and social brand communities	
	Authors	Contributions	Authors	Contributions
Integration Customer–Brand Relationships; Customer–Customer Brand Relationships; Customer-Centric Relationships	Grubb and Grathwohl (1967)	Define brand communities as customer–brand relationships	Tambyah (1996)	Net “communitas,” Net users’ social interrelationships refer to how individual net users bond with other net users and experience a sense of common and shared destiny. Involve social acceptance and adjustment to group norms, feeling liked and accepted by peers.
	Muniz and O’Guinn (2001)	Define brand communities as customer–customer brand relationships	Casaló et al. (2013)	
Interaction Routine; Consumption Pattern; Values; Actual Interaction	McAlexander et al. (2002)	Define brand communities as structured social relations among brand admirers. Define brand communities as customer-centric relationships		
	Garbarino and Johnson (1999), McAlexander et al. (2003) Muniz and O’Guinn (2001) Schouten and McAlexander (1995)	Conceptualize and empirically test brand community integration as a multicomponent construct: relationships with brands, products, companies, and other customers Examine brand community integration as positively related to customer loyalty and satisfaction Propose traditional markers of community: shared consciousness, rituals and traditions, and sense of moral responsibility. Shared consumption pattern of a distinctive subgroup of society that self-selects on the basis of a shared commitment to a particular product class, brand, or consumption activity. Shared values characterized by shared beliefs and values, rituals, and symbolic expression.	Kozinets (1997) Muniz and O’Guinn (2001), Koh and Kim (2004), Casaló et al. (2013)	Shared Value X-philes as subcultures of online communities; Reproduce, share, diffuse, and advocate their collective meanings and values as core community components; Include sharing, advocating, socializing, and participating in a community.

et al., 2012).

Perceptions of interactivity correspond to three correlated but distinct dimensions: control, two-way communication, and time (Kim et al., 2012; McMillan & Hwang, 2002). Chung and Zhao (2004) distinguished the relationships between interaction as a process and interactivity as perception. They showed that interactivity can be either a process or a perception of interaction. Additionally, Chung and Zhao highlighted that the measures of interactivity should include details of the interaction process, or real actions, as well as perception.

Interaction as a process positively affects perceived interactivity. Overall, interactivity perceptions come from interactions as processes including sharing and diffusing information and experiences; advocating the brand, product, and company; socializing with other members; and participating in activities (Chung & Zhao, 2004; Kim et al., 2012). Thus, this study expects interaction as a process and perceived interactivity to be positively related in the LBC social media context and suggests another hypothesis:

H2. The LBC interaction as a process will positively affect perceived interactivity.

2.5. LBC consequences of interactivity

2.5.1. Relationships between perceived interactivity and attitude

Perceived interactivity has been shown to positively affect attitude, which has been shown to positively affect purchase intentions (Kim et al., 2012). In the online context, the more interactive a website is, the more likely it will be to receive positive evaluations by experts (Ghose & Dou, 1998). Moreover, the intention to interact with a website has been shown to positively influence attitude (Yoo & Stout, 2001). A high degree of interactivity results in better attitudes and evaluations, with different relationships among different motivation clusters (Chung & Zhao, 2004; Kim & Lee, 2013; Lee, Choi, Quilliam, & Cole, 2009). Enhanced interactions generated by dynamic product show higher effects on the attitude of consumers (Lee et al., 2009). The dynamic integration of products can lead to increased interest in the use of the advertised product, while virtual product experience can affect consumer attitude toward real products (Mallinckrodt & Mizerski, 2007). The level of interactivity of an advertisement positively influences attitude toward the advertised product or brand (Sundar & Kim, 2005). For example, the integrated dynamic advertising in video games has the potential to develop increased interactivity. Such increased interactivity then leads to a positive attitude toward the brand and greater efficiency in delivering the brand message. Based on this, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H3. Perceived interactivity will positively affect luxury brand attitude.

2.5.2. Relationship between attitude and purchase intention

When consumers have positive attitude about a brand, they have stronger intentions to purchase the brand in the future (Bian & Forsythe, 2012; Compeau, Grewal, & Monroe, 1998; Gountas & Gountas, 2007).

In other words, attitude is a good indicator of purchase intention (Batra & Ray, 1986; MacKenzie, Lutz, & Belch, 1986; Petty, Cacioppo, & Schumann, 1983). Specifically, attitude toward luxury brands impact behavioral intention, especially intention to purchase luxury brands (Batra & Homer, 2004; Bian & Forsythe, 2012; Loureiro & de Araújo, 2014). In the interactive context, attitude leads to similar consequences. As mentioned, perceived interactivity positively influences attitude, which influences purchase intention (Kim et al., 2012; Yoo & Stout, 2001). Thus, perceived interactivity is associated with positive attitude, which then influences purchase intention (Bian & Forsythe, 2012; Kim et al., 2012), which leads to another hypothesis:

H4. Luxury brand attitude will positively affect purchase intention.

2.5.3. Relationship between attitude and brand loyalty

Building brand loyalty is more dynamic and complex than the satisfaction-loyalty continuum (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; McAlexander, Kim, & Roberts, 2003; Oliver, 1999). Brand attitude strongly and positively impacts brand loyalty (Brexendorf, Mühlmeier, Tomczak, & Eisend, 2010; Cho, Rha, & Burt, 2015; Grace & O'Casey, 2005; Keller, 1993).

In brand communities, members gain positive impressions, brand evaluations, and brand loyalty through their interactions with the brand, product, company, and other customers (McAlexander et al., 2003; Oliver, 1997, 1999). Therefore, by integrating customers into the brand community, marketers can ensure synergistic effects on attitudes by strengthening interpersonal ties and interactions, and consequently, increase brand loyalty (McAlexander et al., 2003). Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H5. Luxury brand attitude will positively affect luxury brand loyalty.

2.5.4. Relationship between brand loyalty and purchase intention

In brand communities, brand loyalty that is based on relationship-oriented consumer experiences can reflect purchase intentions (McAlexander et al., 2003). Attitudes toward a brand positively affect brand loyalty, which positively affects purchase intentions (Holland & Baker, 2001). Several studies confirm that brand loyalty is positively related to purchase intention (Baldinger & Rubinson, 1996; Chi, Yeh, & Yang, 2009; Oliver, 1999). Oliver's study (1999) found that brand loyalty represented a repurchase commitment to a future purchase. Under different situations, consumers did not change their brand loyalty but still bought their favored brands. Chi et al. (2009) revealed that brand loyalty, including action loyalty and affective loyalty, positively influenced purchase intention. Other studies (Baldinger & Rubinson, 1996; Washburn & Plank, 2002) also corresponded to the finding that brand loyalty positively affects purchase intention. This study then suggests the following hypothesis:

H6. Luxury brand loyalty will positively affect purchase intention.

Fig. 1 describes the hypothetical model.

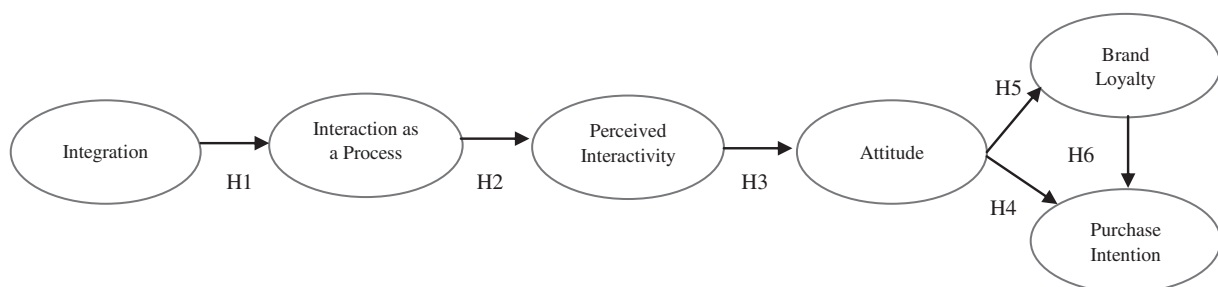


Fig. 1. Hypothetical luxury brand community model.

3. Methods

The study investigates key questions about associations among integration, interactivity, attitude, purchase intention, and brand loyalty by surveying 252 members of social media LBCs in South Korea. The participant pool included 120 men (47.6%) and 132 women (52.4%) from 20 to 49 years old (mean = 32.2 years). Specifically, this survey recruited members of luxury brand Facebook fan pages. Before completing the entire survey, participants were asked whether they were LBC members, specifically of a luxury brand Facebook fan page. The full survey only allowed LBC members to respond to all the questions.

Facebook is a social network platform that is prevalent, globally accessible, and offers abundant and diverse examples of brand-related communities (Zaglia, 2013). Hence, Facebook fan pages were appropriate for this empirical study on social media LBCs. The Luxury brands with Facebook fan pages were grouped according to the percent of participants involved in the specific LBC. These were in descending order as follows: Chanel (33.73%), Louis Vuitton (20.63%), Gucci (10.71%), Prada (4.37%), Burberry (2.78%), Armani (2.38%), and Saint Laurent (2.38%). These luxury brands are consistent as the most preferred luxury brands among consumers in the 20 to 40 year age range in South Korea (i.e., Chanel, Louis Vuitton, Gucci, Prada, Burberry, and Armani (MK News, 2013)).

The study used a structural equation model to analyze the collected data and also assessed the validity/reliability of the measurements.

3.1. Measures

Table 2 describes the measures for integration, interaction as a process, perceived interactivity, attitude, purchase intention, and brand loyalty.

3.1.1. Integration

Integration is operationalized as relationships with brands, products, companies, and other owners (i.e., the consumers who own the product). To measure LBC integration, a seven-point Likert-type scale (1 = *strongly disagree*; 7 = *strongly agree*) was used and adapted from the integration scale of McAlexander et al. (2002). The study originally measured community integration as owner-to-product, owner-to-brand, owner-to-company, and owner-to-other owners. The customer-product relationship was measured to capture product owner feelings about the product. The owner-brand relationship was measured to capture brand-related values or associations that have been promoted by the marketer of the product. The owner-company relationship was measured to capture the feelings product owners have about the company that sponsors the community. The owner-owner relationship was measured to capture the feelings product owners have about other product owners. The study measured luxury brand community integration by adopting original Jeep brand community integration.

3.1.2. Interaction as a process

By considering participants' choices and inputs, the study operationalized interaction as a process as the behaviors and engagement in LBCs. Interaction as a process was measured by capturing (1) *sharing*: co-building and sharing information, knowledge, and experience among LBC members; (2) *advocating*: advocating brands, products, and ways to use the LBC; (3) *interacting*: co-developing attitude, norms, and community language; (4) *socializing/diffusing*: connecting and diffusing information and experiences regarding the LBC; and (5) *participating*: participating in LBC promotions.

These measurements focus on intentions to interact within the community. Previous studies have used behavioral intentions to measure consumer behaviors as well (e.g., Venkatesh, 1999) because intentions indicate how people may behave (McKnight, Choudhury, & Kacmar, 2002). Behavioral intentions and real behaviors are highly correlated (e.g., Venkatesh & Davis, 2000). This study uses

intention to interact in a community as a proxy to indicate interaction as a process and measured it in LBCs based on a seven-point Likert-type scale (1 = *strongly disagree*; 7 = *strongly agree*) adapted from the scale from Brodie, Ilic, Juric, and Hollebeek (2013).

3.1.3. Perceived interactivity

Perceived interactivity was measured by user evaluations of interactivity in the LBC using the measures of perceived interactivity (MPI) from McMillan and Hwang (2002).

3.1.4. Attitude

Luxury brand attitude was measured using a seven-point semantic scale (MacKenzie et al., 1986), indicating whether participants liked or disliked the luxury brand the LBC supported.

3.1.5. Purchase intention

Purchase intention was measured by three seven-point semantic differential scales (likely/unlikely, probable/improbable, possible/impossible) (MacKenzie et al., 1986) indicating whether participants would purchase products supported in the LBC.

3.1.6. Brand loyalty

Brand loyalty was measured by a seven-point semantic differential scale adapted from the scale developed by Nambisan and Watt (2011).

4. Results

In terms of validity and reliability (see Table 2): the measurement model had an acceptable overall goodness-of-fit (Chi-square = 1176.776, DF = 647, $p < 0.001$, Chi-square/DF = 1.819, RMR = 0.045, CFI = 0.904, RMSEA = 0.057). The reliability coefficients of the integration measures (product, brand, company, and other owners) were 0.815, 0.779, 0.719, and 0.800, respectively. The reliability coefficient of all five interactions as a process was 0.816. The reliability coefficient of all 10 perceived interactivity measures was 0.892. The reliability coefficients of attitude, purchase intention, and brand loyalty were 0.834, 0.850, and 0.867, respectively. Composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE) for evaluating the validity were also acceptable.

Table 3 shows the inter-correlation matrix of the nine factors from Table 2.

The proposed path model, as shown in Fig. 2, had an acceptable overall goodness-of-fit (Chi-square = 1139.647, DF = 658, $p < 0.001$, Chi-square/DF = 1.732, RMR = 0.051, CFI = 0.912, RMSEA = 0.054) and the regression coefficients indicated the acceptable reliability of the measures.

Integration showed statistically significant positive effects on interaction as a process ($\beta = 1.039$, $p < 0.001$). Thus, H1 was supported. Interaction as a process showed statistically significant positive effects on perceived interactivity ($\beta = 0.757$, $p < 0.001$). Thus, H2 was supported. Perceived interactivity showed statistically significant positive effects on luxury brand attitude ($\beta = 0.912$, $p < 0.001$) and luxury brand attitude showed statistically significant positive effects on purchase intention ($\beta = 0.160$, $p < 0.001$). Thus, the results supported H3 and H4. Luxury brand attitude showed statistically significant positive effects on luxury brand loyalty ($\beta = 1.053$, $p < 0.001$) and luxury brand loyalty showed statistically significant positive effects on purchase intention ($\beta = 1.111$, $p < 0.001$). Here again, the results supported the hypotheses H5 and H6 (see Table 4 and Fig. 2).

5. Discussion

This study makes three key contributions that have implications for academics and practitioners. First, the study offers a theoretical framework to analyze social media LBCs using the key concepts of

Table 2
Descriptive statistics, reliability, and model fit indices.

Factors	Measurement items	Mean	SD	Reliability/ CR/ AVE	
Integration	Product	I love this LBC product.	3.54	0.738	0.815/
		I am proud of this LBC product.	3.54	0.795	0.878/
		This LBC product is one of my favorite possessions.	3.44	0.911	0.642
		This LBC product is pleasant to use.	3.59	0.776	
	Brand	I value this LBC product heritage.	3.80	0.768	0.779/
		If I were to replace my luxury product, I would buy another LBC brand.	3.80	0.738	0.857/
		I would recommend this LBC brand to my friends.	3.65	0.825	0.600
	Company	The LBC brand is of the highest quality.	3.57	0.822	
		The luxury division understands my needs.	3.42	0.751	0.719/
	Other owners	The luxury division cares about my opinions.	3.27	0.846	0.875/ 0.778
		I have met wonderful people because of LB owners.	3.01	0.890	0.800/
		I feel a sense of kinship with other LB owners.	3.37	0.947	0.882/
		I have an interest in a club and/or a community for LB owners.	3.48	0.858	0.714
Interaction as a process	Sharing: Co-building and sharing information, knowledge, and experience among LBC members.	3.51	0.886	0.816/	
	Advocating: Advocating brands, products, and ways to use the LBC.	3.48	0.830	0.879/	
	Interacting: Co-developing attitude, norms, and community language.	3.35	0.864	0.645	
	Socializing/diffusing: connecting and diffusing information and experience regarding the LBC.	3.46	0.810		
	Participating: Participating in LBC promotions.	3.40	0.894		
Perceived interactivity	Enables two-way communications.	3.44	0.799	0.892/	
	Enables concurrent communications.	3.47	0.825	0.911/	
	Keeps my attention.	3.57	0.777	0.507	
	Is interactive.	3.42	0.802		
	Enables information selection.	3.58	0.718		
	Enables information sharing.	3.78	0.702		
	Enables news sharing.	3.83	0.690		
	Enables photo and video sharing.	3.75	0.790		
	Enables participation.	3.57	0.767		
	Enables social exchange.	3.39	0.741		
Attitude	Attitude toward brand: bad/good.	5.42	1.207	0.834/	
	Attitude toward brand: unfavorable/favorable.	5.04	1.350	0.898/	
	Attitude toward brand: negative/positive.	4.84	1.506	0.747	
Purchase intention	Likely/unlikely.	5.63	1.004	0.850/	
	Probable/improbable.	5.43	1.174	0.909/	
	Possible/impossible.	5.35	1.092	0.770	
Brand loyalty	I will buy this brand the next time I buy the product.	3.70	0.699	0.867/	
	I intend to keep purchasing this brand.	3.81	0.681	0.901/	
	I am pleased to buy this brand instead of other brands.	3.64	0.773	0.602	
	I prefer this brand.	3.67	0.745		
	I consider this brand my first choice when I buy luxury products.	3.71	0.763		
	I recommend this brand to those who ask my advice.	3.64	0.736		

Table 3
Inter-correlation matrix of the factors.

	Product	Brand	Company	Other owners	Interaction as a process	Perceived interactivity	Attitude	Purchase intention
Brand	0.896							
Company	0.783	0.718						
Other owners	0.715	0.734	0.804					
Interaction as a process	0.715	0.608	0.731	0.827				
Perceived interactivity	0.706	0.654	0.699	0.627	0.869			
Attitude	0.274	0.391	0.376	0.292	0.168	0.224		
Purchase intention	0.583	0.67	0.556	0.468	0.488	0.557	0.451	
Brand loyalty	0.763	0.819	0.605	0.553	0.626	0.675	0.314	0.726

integration and interactivity. Second, the findings confirm a relationship between the key concepts: positive effects of LBC integration on interaction as a process and positive effects of interaction as a process on perceived interactivity of LBCs in the social media context. Finally, the study identifies the effects of social media LBC interactivity on attitude, brand loyalty, and purchase intentions.

Key factors that influence interaction include LBC integration that reflects a customer-centric relationship with the brand, products, companies, and other customers. Interaction as a process and perceived interactivity are identified as the nexus of LBC integration. With the interaction process and perception of interactivity as the conceptual framework of multifaceted interactivity, a positive causal relationship

between LBC interaction as a process and perceived interactivity ultimately affects positive outcomes regarding luxury brand attitude, luxury brand loyalty and purchase intention.

These findings contribute to marketing theory regarding luxury brand management. In applying the key concepts, the findings reveal that accumulated experiences and customer willingness to interact on social media LBCs are more powerful factors for building brand loyalty than overall positive brand evaluations.

Marketing practitioners can benefit from new ideas regarding how to develop and manage strategies that consider integration, interaction as a process, and perceived interactivity within the social media LBC context. The importance of actual interaction and perceived

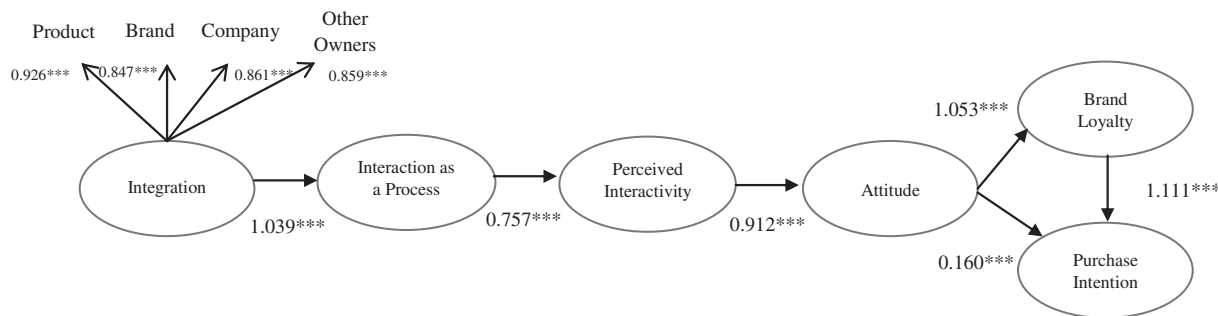


Fig. 2. Regression coefficients of model of luxury brand communities.

Table 4
Hypotheses tests for luxury brand communities.

		Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	
H1	Integration → Interaction as a process	1.039	0.115	9.045	< 0.001	Supported
H2	Interaction as a process → Perceived interactivity	0.757	0.082	9.212	< 0.001	Supported
H3	Perceived interactivity → Luxury brand attitude	0.912	0.209	4.366	< 0.001	Supported
H4	Luxury brand attitude → Purchase intention	0.160	0.041	3.892	< 0.001	Supported
H5	Luxury brand attitude → Luxury brand loyalty	1.053	0.237	4.452	< 0.001	Supported
H6	Luxury brand loyalty → Purchase intention	1.111	0.131	8.486	< 0.001	Supported

Chi-square = 1139.647, DF = 658, p < 0.001, Chi-square/DF = 1.732, RMR = 0.051, CFI = 0.912, RMSEA = 0.054.

interactivity to LBC members was confirmed here as well as the interdependencies among interactivity and its effects on new perspectives for traditional brand community models that focus solely on member identification and satisfaction as the key drivers of loyal behavior.

Given the strong effects of interactivity on essential relationship outcomes, such as attitude, brand loyalty, and purchase intention, marketers are advised to include greater interactivity as a main objective in social media LBCs. Thus, luxury brands should try to strengthen their interactivity and reflect positive values, thus creating an interactive competitive advantage based on value, inimitability, and non-substitutability (Balmer, 2008). Luxury brands can benefit from the concept of interactivity because of its positive long-term impact on the customer-brand relationship.

Luxury brand marketers are challenged by the need to encourage or create brand communities that better support their brands. This study used a survey to overcome previous empirical research limitations. In future research, long-term studies might better identify integration in brand communities. Such longitudinal research could assess whether community sustainability could be enhanced by exit barriers that encourage long-term engagement. LBC research should be extended to different cultural settings where members may react differently to integration, interactions, and outcomes. Individual differences that drive consumers to join LBCs would be interesting to further explore as well.

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