Brand connection platforms: customer engagement and branding in interactive media

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Structured Abstract:

Purpose – The present research aims to explore the relationship between customer engagement with the firm and brand image during the first purchase experience in a brand connection platform (BCP). It empirically studies whether cues included in the BCP and customer emotions elicited during interactions originate non-transactional (i.e. customer engagement and brand image) and transactional (i.e. purchase intentions) responses.

Design/Methodology – Building on current branding theories, the present paper carries out two studies. Study 1 adopts an experimental approach to explore C2C interactions- and personalization-related cues. Study 2 focuses on the importance of customer emotions and also analyzes the effect of customer engagement and brand image on purchase intentions. It employs structural equations modeling (SEM) techniques. Both studies analyze the effect of customer engagement on brand image.

Findings – Findings corroborate that, during interactions in the platform, customer engagement with the firm influences brand image. BCP cues improve customer engagement and brand image. Moreover, the pleasure and arousal experienced by customers influence their engagement while dominance modifies brand image. Finally, customer engagement and brand image have a positive effect on their purchase behavior.

Implications – This paper contributes to research demonstrating how brand image is defined through interactions of multiple actors in interactive media. It builds on the importance of fostering interactive experiences to enhance the level of customer engagement with the firm in first interactions, stating that this engagement influences brand perceptions. Finally, our research demonstrates that engagement develops customers’ transactional behaviors and not only non-transactional ones, as seen in previous literature.

Originality – In digital worlds, BCPs emerge as touch points beyond purchase that allow individuals to integrate resources and co-create value between them and with the firm. Despite the interest of BCPs, few works have analyzed how interactions in these platforms contribute to developing customer engagement and brand image, key factors for understanding customer participation and behavior in interactive media.

Keywords: Brand image, Customer engagement, Brand connection platforms, Emotions, Online cues.
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1. Introduction

Branding in a digital context has become a challenge for marketers, evolving from a firm-focused perspective to a customer-focused one, due to the influence of the Internet and the sophisticated platforms that have emerged. These brand connection platforms (BCPs) are described as touch points that go beyond purchase and allow individuals to integrate resources and co-create value between them and with the firm (Breidbach et al., 2013; Sawhney et al., 2005). These platforms are specifically focused on facilitating customer-brand interactions and include a variety of cues that offer customers greater interaction possibilities, foster their collaboration and promote commercial exchanges from a more social approach (Fiore et al., 2005; Varadarajan et al., 2010; Wang et al., 2007). Likewise, BCPs create value through relationships, facilitating user-generated contents and enriching the experience (Kim et al., 2009; Malthouse and Hofacker, 2010; Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004a).

Managing a brand in these computer-mediated environments implies that different types of interactions need to be considered, due to their potential influence on customer brand-related perceptions (Leeflang et al., 2014; Libai et al., 2010; Yadav and Pavlou, 2014). While traditional, static websites promoted mainly customer-firm interactions, the emergence of web 2.0 and the integration of social networking and other interactive applications have promoted the importance of customer-to-customer (C2C) interactions. Branding in these media becomes a dynamic activity, which means that the brand evolves because “the fact that consumers buy and use brands and share their experiences with others implies a constant state of change” (Ind et al., 2012, p.22). Despite the interest of BCPs and their potential to engage customers, few works have analyzed how interactions in these platforms contribute to developing customer engagement, a key factor for understanding customer participation and behavior in interactive media.

Customer engagement has attracted a lot of attention in recent marketing literature, being highlighted as a new approach to capture customer value and a key concept for understanding contemporary marketing and branding dynamics (Verhoef et al., 2010). However, several gaps need to be addressed. First, the relationship between customer engagement and branding has not been analyzed in the first stages of the customer lifecycle (i.e. customers’ acquisition and first interactions with the firm through the BCPs). Research related to the topic has mainly addressed situations in which the customers know the brand and have interacted with it, so some level of engagement has been previously developed. While the risks for brand reputation and of losing control for well-established brands have already been pointed out, the benefits of managing brands digitally for new or lesser-known brands have not been addressed (Leeflang et al., 2014; Verhoef et al., 2013). Second, research on the topic has focused on the non-transactional consequences of engagement (e.g. Mollen and Wilson, 2010; Van Doorn et al., 2010) and has ignored the transactional consequences that it may have. Consequently, it is necessary to gain a better understanding about the influence of customer engagement and brand image on the transactional customer responses.

The present paper tries to fill these gaps examining how BCPs promote customer engagement with the firm and positive brand image. In doing so, it studies two kinds of factors: (1) extrinsic or platform-related factors (i.e. cues included in the BCP) and (2) intrinsic or customer-related ones (i.e. emotions elicited in the BCP). Moreover, it analyzes whether customer engagement and brand image influence transactional customer responses. More specifically, it addresses the following research questions:
RQ1: Is there any relationship between customer engagement with the firm and brand image in brand connection platforms?

RQ2: How do brand connection platforms foster customer engagement with the firm and brand image?

RQ2a: Which extrinsic factors influence customer engagement and brand image?

RQ2b: Which intrinsic factors influence customer engagement and brand image?

RQ3: Do customer engagement with the firm and brand image influence purchase behavior in brand connection platforms?

Building on current branding theories, the present paper carries out two studies which examine the relationship between customer engagement with the firm and brand image. Study 1 adopts an experimental approach to explore the role of extrinsic or platform-related factors. It analyzes whether cues included in the BCP related to customer to customer interactions (i.e. C2C interactions-related cues) and customer-firm interactions (i.e. personalization-related cues) generate positive customer responses (Figure 1). Study 2 focuses on intrinsic factors to test the importance of the emotions elicited during the customer interaction in the BCP and also analyzes the effect of customer engagement and brand image on purchase intentions. It employs structural equations modeling (SEM) techniques (Figure 2).

This paper goes beyond traditional, firm-focused perspectives on branding and contributes to research demonstrating how brand image is defined through interactions of multiple actors in interactive media, aligning with theories that consider branding as a social process (cf. Vallaster and Von Wallpach, 2013). Moreover, this research builds on the theoretical relevance of customer engagement with the firm to define branding concepts, stating the importance of fostering interactive experiences to enhance the level of engagement with the firm in first interactions, since this engagement influences brand perceptions. Finally, our research demonstrates that engagement develops customers’ transactional behaviors and not only non-transactional ones, as seen in previous literature.

2. Brand image and customer engagement with the firm in BCPs

The importance of branding in contemporary marketing has been highlighted in research since the 90s, especially in the relationship marketing paradigm, which is focused on the influence of brand strategy on customer-firm relationships. Aspects related to how customers internalize brand information that the firm makes available to them have been broadly analyzed (Kapferer, 1992; Keller, 1993). Brand equity models (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 1993) reveal the importance for brands to create value and reflect the social image that the consumer desires, demonstrating that they can satisfy the customer’s symbolic and internally generated needs, such as self-enhancement and self-identification (Park et al., 1986). These models consider that the firm defines brand identity and transmits it to the customer through a dyadic process, in the form of a clearly defined branding proposition (Balmer, 2001; Payne et al., 2009).

In recent years, academics have been intensifying their attention towards understanding brand meaning and value, which is modifying the branding process logic (Merz et al., 2009; Schouten et al., 2007). The conceptualization of brand as a firm-provided attribute is no longer applicable; a new brand logic has emerged that states that brand value is co-created and built on experiences between the firm and its stakeholders (Leitch and Richardson, 2003; Melewar et al., 2012; Payne et al., 2009; Vallaster and Von Wallpach, 2013). Branding has therefore become a “collaborative, value co-creation activity of firms and all of their stakeholders” (Merz et al., 2009, p.329). Customers buy and use brands adopting an active
role, so they collaborate with the firm and share their experiences with others through the variety of interactions that they are able to establish. Likewise, they form network relationships with brands, which imply interesting challenges for brand meaning creation and management (Aggarwal, 2004; Payne et al., 2009). Studies related to brand communities have shown how brand attributes and meanings are constructed dynamically through social interactions and have corroborated that brand value resides in the customers’ and other interest groups’ experiences with the brand (Schau et al., 2009; Ouwersloot and Odekerken-Schröder, 2008; Vallaster and Von Wallpach, 2013). Consequently, traditional branding concepts should be revised (Arnould et al., 2006) and focused on brand experiences, consumer interactions and collaborative participation (Keller and Lehmann, 2006).

Brand image is an important concept for managers in order to manage and design brand-related strategies. The Associative Network Theory defines brand image as a mental scheme formed by several concepts interconnected by linkages and associations (Anderson, 1983; Martinez and Pina, 2009). Brand image symbolizes customer brand knowledge, it is developed from the first customer-firm interaction, and depends on the customer’s experiences. It provides consumers with a meaning for the brand, differentiating the firm’s offering from those of its competitors and forming affect-oriented relationships (Padgett and Allen, 1997). When the customers’ mental scheme is coherent with the firm-determined associations, customers will assimilate brand image with no significant alterations. On the contrary, if brand results substantially differ from the customers’ initial scheme, their perceived brand image will change and adapt to the new associations (Park et al., 1993). These adaptation or assimilation processes act as an anchor that influences customer behavior, adjusting to the new information and interactions.

However, and according to the latest trends in branding, brand image is also turning from a firm-determined aspect to an increasingly networked approach. It refers not only to information that consumers employ about a particular brand from the results that they have obtained (Grohs and Reisinger, 2014) but also to the knowledge that other customers create and the experiences about the brand that they share. Branding in interactive media constitutes a social process in which different actors create meanings that transform brand image through interactions (Merz et al., 2009; Vallaster and Von Wallpach, 2013). Keller (2003) states that any potential encounter with a brand can change the mental representation of it, so interactions between different actors are an important source of brand knowledge that is likely to influence brand image (Keller, 2003; Payne et al., 2009). Therefore, brand image is an evolving concept that should be defined from a multi-dimensional perspective and contingent on community experiences and customer-customer and customer-firm relationships. In this context, customer engagement with the firm emerges as a key concept for understanding customers’ participation and the brand image they create through social interactions and experiences (Brodie et al., 2011a).

Customer engagement is taking a prime role in the marketing literature and is considered a driving force in contemporary consumer behavior research (Gambetti and Graffigna, 2010). It has been posited as a central factor to describe individuals’ specific interactions and contributes to understanding the new dynamics related to customer experiences, post-purchase behavior and customer retention (Bowden, 2009; Brodie et al., 2011b; Van Doorn et al., 2010). As can be observed in the literature, different subforms of engagement have recently emerged; some of them stress emotional aspects (Hollebeek, 2011; Mollen and Wilson, 2010; Vivek, 2009) while others take a behavioral approach (Bijmolt et al., 2010; Van Doorn et al., 2010). Despite the great interest of this concept, research on customer engagement is still fragmented, there being no consensus regarding the conceptualization and the role of engagement in branding strategy.
We focus on customer engagement with the firm, because this concept reflects the importance of involving the customer in “interactive and co-creative experiences”, aspect that is especially important at first stages of the customer-firm relationship (Bijmolt et al., 2010; Brodie et al., 2011a). Customer engagement is defined as a highly interactive concept, usually characterized as an individual’s psychological state resulting from the interactions between a focal engagement subject (e.g. the customer) and an object (e.g. the firm) (Brodie et al., 2011a; Hollebeek, 2013). We propose that customer engagement should be approached from an attitudinal perspective since it addresses emotional relationships that may result in transactional and non-transactional customer behaviors (Hollebeek, 2013). Moreover, it has been highlighted that customer engagement has a contextual-dependent nature and is particularly relevant for understanding consumers’ first experiences with a brand in computer-mediated environments (Bowden, 2009; Hollebeek, 2011; Mollen and Wilson, 2010; Sawhney et al., 2005). Consistent with Brodie et al. (2011a) and Mollen and Wilson (2010), we study BCPs as online environments where customer engagement with the firm may be encouraged, leading to meaningful relationships with the brand.

BCPs are developed by firms in order to support specific actor-to-actor interactions in the online environment, both customer-customer and customer-firm interactions. In contrast to traditional brand websites, they are geared to the co-creation process and promote active customer participation. BCPs create a relaxed atmosphere through their interactive possibilities that aim to strengthen ties and go beyond the purchase. Following Wu and Fang (2010), we suggest that BCPs allow customers to actively participate and co-create their purchase experiences, which constitutes a relevant aspect in the engagement process. As a result of the positive co-creative experiences in the BCP, customers become engaged with the firm, increase their trust, and feel pride and passion for the brand (McEwen, 2004). Thus, the better brand experience customers enjoy, the more engaged they will be and the more positive brand image they will perceive. Despite the importance of the relationship between engagement and brand perceptions, there are no studies that have empirically tested it in the first purchase context for new or less known brands (Leeflang et al., 2014; Verhoef et al., 2013). In this context, the customer has little information about and no relationship with the firm, so there is no other experience that conditions brand image. If we consider that customer engagement with the firm is developed through interactive brand experiences in BCPs (Brodie et al., 2011a), it is feasible to propose that positive brand image perceptions are a consequence of engagement development. We hypothesize the following relationship:

\[ H1. \text{Customer engagement with the firm developed in the BCP positively influences brand image.} \]

3. Study 1: The role of extrinsic cues in BCPs

3.1 Extrinsic antecedents: the role of cues in BCPs

BCPs have been defined in different ways, including engagement platforms (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004a; Ramaswamy and Gouillart, 2010) and connection platforms (Malthouse and Hofacker, 2010). Most definitions agree in considering visualization and dialogue as the two most prominent aspects that characterize them (Ramaswamy and Gouillart, 2010). We propose that these two aspects are achieved through the cues included in the platform, which promote customer interactions with other customers and with the firm. Furthermore, we concur with Vallaster and Von Wallpach’s (2013) view that consider brands as online social processes, since the virtual space offers individuals the possibility to express opinions and share brand associations with others (Bruns and Jacobs, 2006; Vallaster and Von Wallpach, 2013). Building on this, we consider the importance of cues related to C2C interactions
customers and cues related to personalization that favor different kinds of interactions. These cues offer interesting possibilities to integrate resources and to collaborate during the purchase, promoting customer value-creating activities and generating meaningful experiences.

Figure 1 describes the conceptual model in Study 1, which proposes the hypotheses related to the influence of cues included in the BCP as well as the relationship between customer engagement with the firm and brand image.

C2C interactions are defined as the active or passive interactions between customers during the purchase experience but also during pre- and post-purchase stages (Johnson and Grier, 2011). They are closely related to the definition of customer social influence and encompass both verbal and non-verbal communications between customers that condition their preferences, feelings and behaviors (Blazevic et al., 2013; Libai et al., 2010).

C2C interactions-related cues in BCPs offer networking possibilities and foster interactions because they allow customers to publish their own contributions and create new content, increasing customer connectivity and participation (Blazevic et al., 2013; Bolton et al., 2013; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2010; Libai et al., 2010). These cues also provide opportunities for customers to see and learn from other customers’ behavior (Chen et al., 2011; Libai et al., 2010; Zhang, 2010). So, C2C interactions-related cues empower customers by allowing them to access to more information about the firm, the offering and previous experiences of other customers. They reduce the problem of the lack of physical presence inherent to interactive media and elicit social responses that may condition consumers’ behavior (Adji et al., 2010; Moon, 2000; Trusov et al., 2009). Moreover, C2C interactions-related cues have been considered important to achieve “compelling engagement experiences” (Ramaswamy, 2009) since interactions are one of the conceptual foundations of customer engagement (Lusch and Vargo, 2010). According to Van Doorn et al. (2010), customer engagement results from motivational drivers like word-of-mouth and C2C interactions.

We propose that C2C interactions-related cues foster participative customer behavior and generate positive attitudes towards the firm and the brand (Berger and Fitzsimons, 2008). C2C interactions-related cues constitute a source of connection for customers with other customers and with the firm because the interactions that they can carry out in the BCP makes them feel acknowledged, increasing the quality of the experience. This experience may result in tighter bonds with the firm, which improves customer engagement and brand image (Ballantyne and Varey, 2006; Brodie et al., 2011a; Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004b; Van Doorn et al., 2010; Wang et al., 2007). We hypothesize the following relationships:

\[ H2a. \text{C2C interactions-related cues positively influence customer engagement with the firm in BCPs.} \]

\[ H2b. \text{C2C interactions-related cues positively influence brand image in BCPs.} \]

Personalization has been studied in various academic fields but there is still some confusion among researchers about what the term actually means (see Kwon and Kim, 2012). In the marketing arena, Vesanen (2007) proposes that personalization is a broad concept that encompasses execution, marketing outputs in the form of products/services, promotion/communication, price and delivery, and the creation of value for both the customer and the marketer. This concept implies the customers’ capacity for designing the offering that they are going to purchase, which has also been called co-design.

Personalization-related cues enable customers to interact with the firm and design their own offering (Bendapudi and Leone, 2003; Etgar, 2008). The inclusion of these cues in BCPs
promotes customer participation in the purchase experience since they encourage the tailoring of each choice to his/her own preferences and the recognition of individualized needs (Füller and Matzler, 2007). Having the possibility to design a product or service allows customers to obtain more information and to anticipate the potential value derived from the future use of the offering, although they do not have direct contact with it. Consequently, personalization cues act as a source of learning and their presence may improve customer evaluations, which conditions their relationship with the firm and brand perceptions (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004a). Moreover, according to Ariely and Norton (2007), customers value the offering they can produce more than the offering the firm supplies, even when the latter is objectively higher in value.

We propose that personalization-related cues included in BCPs constitute a form of customer-firm interaction that improves brand image and the development of customer engagement with the firm (Cheung and To, 2011; Mohr and Bitner, 1991). If the BCP provides customers with cues to facilitate decision-making and to collaborate in the elaboration of the offering that they may purchase, they will perceive that they are taking an active role in the experience and are powerful actors (Bendapudi and Leone, 2003; Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004a). These cues give customers a better knowledge of the product and of the firm, increase their loyalty beyond a transactional focus and build positive outcomes for their relationship with the firm and the brand (Auh et al., 2007; Bendapudi and Leone, 2003; Brodie et al., 2011a). Thus, we hypothesize the following relationships:

\[ H3a. \text{Personalization-related cues positively influence customer engagement with the firm in BCPs.} \]

\[ H3b. \text{Personalization-related cues positively influence brand image in BCPs.} \]

Personalization has advanced greatly in conjunction with the evolution of interactive marketing (Lee et al., 2012) since implementing the possibility of personalizing the offering requires an environment that is information-rich and well-suited to interactions between customers and with the firm (Malthouse and Hofacker, 2010; Montgomery and Smith, 2009). C2C interactions-related cues benefit consumer decision-making and promote a more personalized marketing strategy. They permit the collection of information and expertise from other customers, cultivating an environment suitable for personalization activities (Auh et al., 2007; Montgomery and Smith, 2009; Yadav and Varadarajan, 2005). Moreover, learning derived from C2C interactions-related cues contributes to minimizing the information overload in online environments and the negative effects of an increasing variety of options that are involved in personalization strategies. C2C interactions-related cues allow customers to access and provide more pertinent data with less effort and, hence, they receive personalized value in terms of services and information (Lee et al., 2012; Miceli et al., 2007; Montgomery and Smith, 2009).

Following these ideas, we propose the importance of the presence of both kinds of cues in BCPs for two reasons. First, C2C-interactions related cues reduce the uncertainty and complexity related to personalization cues, diminishing perceived risk and improving customer attitude. Second, social information provided by C2C interactions-related cues is an important support for customers to also interact with the firm and personalize their product. Consequently, we hypothesize that the interplay between personalization and C2C interactions-related cues increases customer engagement and brand image during the purchase experience.

\[ H4a. \text{The interplay of personalization-related cues and C2C interactions-related cues in BCPs increases customer engagement with the firm.} \]
H4b. The interplay of personalization-related cues and C2C interactions-related cues in BCPs increases brand image.

3.2 Instrument and experimentation process

To test our hypotheses, an online platform was designed and a purchase situation simulated. The experimental design used was two-way factorial between subjects: two levels of C2C interactions-related cues (high and low) and two levels of personalization-related cues (high and low). First of all, the participant was requested to fill in a short online questionnaire which contained control variables related to individual features that could affect the further development of the experiment and the participant’s subsequent behavior. These control variables were (1) individual innovativeness and (2) his/her frequency of Internet access. Then, each participant was randomly assigned to one of the four experimental scenarios and seated in a separate booth, ensuring that no interaction between subjects was possible during the experiment (Franke et al., 2009). They were asked to buy a pair of sneakers, performing different interactions depending on the scenario provided. In order to ensure the same conditions in each scenario for all the participants, they were told to read all the instructions from the screen and an extra instruction sheet was provided. Moreover, the online platform did not allow the participants to continue with the experiment unless all the instructions were followed. In this way, we made sure that all the participants were aware of the available cues provided in the experienced scenario and could properly evaluate the analyzed variables.

In the two scenarios with high personalization-related cues, participants had to design the sneakers they wanted to buy selecting the colors and patterns for different parts of the sneaker. On the contrary, in the two scenarios with low personalization-related cues, participants did not have these possibilities and they could only select the sneaker they wanted to buy from the gallery. Moreover, participants in the scenarios with high C2C interactions-related cues were asked to interchange messages and information through several tools: e-mail, forums and social networks. They were also asked to vote for their preferred sneaker and comment on the designs that other customers had uploaded in the "most viewed" gallery (Figure 2). C2C interactions- and personalization-related cues were obtained from research on the topic and from practice carried out by firms in the virtual environment (Ramaswamy, 2008; Song and Zinkhan, 2008; Wang et al., 2007). Subsequently, the respondents in the four scenarios were redirected to a second online questionnaire about their perceptions and experience with the platform and the purchase they carried out.

<<Insert Figure 2 here>>

3.3 Scales and sample

Previous to data gathering, the scenarios were pre-tested with a convenience sample of 30 individuals in each scenario in order to improve the platform design as well as to refine the manipulations used and the measurement scales. In the experimentation process, we gathered a sample of 196 university students aged between 20 and 38 (109 females) who participated voluntarily. We consider that a population sample based on university students is an adequate choice for our research purposes due to their intensive usage of the Internet and social media. At the end of the experiment, the participants received a refreshment voucher. The experiments were carried out in the university computer labs over a seven-week period during May and June, 2010.

Control variables were measured as follows: (1) individual innovativeness: “If I heard about a new information technology, I would look for ways to experiment with it” and “Among my peers, I am usually the first to try out new information technology”, measured with a 7-point Likert scale, the lowest perception being scored with 1, and (2) Internet frequency access: “How
often do you access the Internet?”, measured with seven ordinal answers ranging from “Never or almost never” to “Several times per day”, measured with a 7-point Likert scale, the lowest perception being scored with 1. There were no significant differences in any of these variables between participants in the scenarios analyzed, indicating that the random assignment to the four experimental scenarios was successful.

In the second questionnaire, participants were asked to score the personalization and C2C interactions-related cues in order to check that the manipulations were adequate. Moreover, they had to evaluate their engagement with the firm and brand image. All the variables were measured on a 7-point Likert scale, the lowest perception being scored with 1, and the items included in the survey were adapted from prior research (Table I). The brand image scale gathers items which attempt to assess functional and affective attributes and benefits (Martinez and Pina, 2009; Weiss et al., 1999). For the customer engagement scale, Medlin and Green’s (2009) and Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel’s (2009) scales have been taken into account to manifest the interactive nature of this construct and the importance of the individual’s proactive role. Moreover, Sprott, Czellar and Spangenberg’s (2009) scale of brand engagement in self-concept (BESC) has allowed us to include the emotional aspects of customers’ self-identification and connection with the firm. Taking the works of these authors as our starting point, we designed parsimonious scales, focused on the interactive media. Because our study addresses a fictitious company, the responses are not biased by previous opinions about the firm.

3.4 Validation of the measuring scales

The measurement model was evaluated on the basis of the result of a confirmatory factor analysis through Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), using the robust maximum likelihood estimation method and the statistical software EQS, version 6.1. (Bentler, 1995). This analysis purifies measures and reduces possible confusions in interpretation (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988). First of all, we checked the criteria proposed by Jöreskog and Sörbom (1993): weak convergence, strong convergence and the explanatory coefficient (R²< 0.5) (Steenkamp and Van Trijp, 1991) and we progressively eliminated, one by one, the indicators which did not satisfy one or more of them. The fourth item of the brand image factor (BRAN_4) was excluded, as it did not attain a sufficiently high R². Next, the analyses were repeated, reaching acceptable values for all the indicators tested (Table II). The goodness-of-fit indices exceeded the optimal levels recommended by Hair et al. (1999): SB χ²= 59.30, d.f. 26, NFI: 0.956, NNFI: 0.965, CFI: 0.975, IFI: 0.975, RMSEA: 0.08, SB χ²/ d.f.= 2.27.

Measurement properties of the final model were evaluated in terms of reliability and construct validity that implies both convergent and discriminant validity (Churchill, 1979; Gerbing and Anderson, 1988). The reliability of the scales was tested using the Composite Reliability Coefficient (CRC) and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE). In all cases, the results achieved overcame the recommended limit of 0.6 (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988) and 0.5 (Fornell and Larcker, 1981) respectively, so we can state that the items used in each scale were measuring the same factor (Table II). As for convergent validity, the standardized loadings were higher than 0.5 and they were also significant at the 99% confidence level (Steenkamp and Van Trijp, 1991). Discriminant validity of the measures was established by calculating the 99 per cent confidence interval of the latent factor correlation matrix and verifying that 1 was not included (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988). Moreover, we checked that the AVE for each construct exceeded the shared variance between the two factors (i.e. the squared correlation) and that no correlation between factors surpassed 0.8 points (Fornell and
Larcker, 1981) (Table II). After performing the analysis, we conclude that our customer engagement and brand image measures provided evidence of reliability and validity.

3.5 Relationship between customer engagement and brand image

In order to analyze the influence of customer engagement with the firm on brand image, we applied SEM and the robust maximum likelihood estimation method. The results of the model obtained good fit indexes: $SB \chi^2=59.3$, d.f.= 26, $p= 0.00$; RMSEA= 0.079; NFI= .956; NNFI= .965; CFI= .975; IFI= .975; $SB \chi^2$/ d.f.=2.27.

We find that customer engagement with the firm positively influences brand image ($\beta_1=.753; p<0.01$), so we corroborate the significance of the relationship and verify H1. The explanatory power achieved by the model is 57%.

3.6 The influence of cues: manipulation checks and experimental results

In order to test the adequacy of the manipulations, independent-means t-test analyses were performed. For the C2C interactions-related cues manipulation, the means are $M_{high\ C2C}= 5.84$ and $M_{low\ C2C}= 3.57$ ($t_{194}= 10.868, p< .001, r=.61$), showing that this manipulation is successful. Similarly, the personalization-related cues manipulation means are $M_{high\ personalization}= 5.92$ and $M_{low\ personalization}= 2.98$ ($t_{194}= 13.168, p< .001, r=.68$). These results show both significant different means and effect sizes of the manipulations applied in the experiment.

As we are testing the effects of manipulated variables on several dependent variables, multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) is the most appropriate method (Hair et al., 1999). Considering the large sample size and the robustness of MANOVA to departures from multivariate normality (Swait and Adamowicz, 2001), violations of multivariate normality are not expected to be severe. Moreover, as MANOVA assumes linear relationships between dependent variables in each scenario, we plotted the dependent variables and obtained a clear indication of linear relationships. Correlations between the two dependent variables were also significant. Results of MANOVA analyses are displayed in Table III. The multivariate effects of the C2C interactions-related cues (Wilks’ $\lambda= 0.876$, F= 13.547, $p< .001$) and personalization-related cues (Wilks’ $\lambda= 0.935$, F= 6.631, $p< .05$) are both significant.

Follow-up univariate analyses were used to test our hypotheses. The univariate results for the influence of the C2C interactions-related cues reveal that there are significant main effects for both the customer engagement (F$_{1,192}= 23.634$, $p< .001$, $\omega^2=.31$) and brand image (F$_{1,192}= 21.601$, $p< .001$, $\omega^2=.29$) factors, which supports H2a and H2b.

The main effects for the influence of the personalization-related cues on the dependent variables were also significant for both customer engagement with the firm (F$_{1,192}= 13.263$, $p< .001$, $\omega^2=.20$) and brand image (F$_{1,192}= 6.831$, $p< .001$, $\omega^2=.10$), corroborating H3a and H3b.

The interaction effects of the stimuli on the dependent variables were not significant for the customer engagement factor (F$_{1,192}= 1.885$, $p>.1$), rejecting H4a. However, the interaction effect was significant for brand image (F$_{1,192}= 3.832$, $p=.05$, $\omega^2=.10$), so H4b is corroborated. This result highlights that the presence of both stimuli in the platform increases the brand image compared to that obtained for the stimuli separately.

4. Study 2: The role of emotions in BCPs
4.1 Intrinsic antecedents: the role of emotions in BCPs

Having corroborated the importance of the platform cues in Study 1, Study 2 focuses on the role of emotions in BCPs as antecedents of customer engagement, brand image and the potential transactional consequences for customer behavior (i.e. purchase intentions).

Individuals' emotional responses to the environmental factors is a broadly recognized aspect in psychology research and it has been applied to research in marketing areas such as advertising and customer purchase behavior (e.g. Batra and Holbrook, 1990; Westbrook, 1987). In the online environment, most research is based on the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework. This research studies how different stimuli contribute to eliciting positive emotional responses from customers (Eroglu et al., 2003), influencing cognitive evaluations about their experiences and encouraging purchase intentions (Fiore et al., 2005; Mazaheri et al., 2011; Nambisan and Baron, 2007). One the most used approaches to emotions has been the pleasure-arousal-dominance (P-A-D) model or dimensional approach. This model has been successfully applied to the analysis of aspects related to the interface design (e.g. colors, size and display of information, quantity of content, visuals...) and others related to interactivity (Fiore et al., 2005; Oh et al., 2008), checking their effects on customer emotions and later behaviors (Machleit and Eroglu, 2000; Machleit and Mantel, 2001).

As explained previously, BCPs are characterized by their potential to foster co-creative experiences, exchange-related activities and interactions between several agents. BCPs empower customers and allow them to adopt an active role that conditions not only their emotional response to the experience but also the relationship established with the brand and the firm. We propose that the emotions elicited as a consequence of customer interactions in the BCP are intrinsic drivers of customer responses, influencing customer engagement and brand image. Moreover, customer engagement and brand image increase customer purchase intentions. Figure 3 describes the conceptual model proposed for Study 2.

The definition of customer engagement as a cognitive and affective process derived from interactive and co-creative experiences implies the importance of emotions in its development. During these experiences, if customers feel pleasure and dominance, they will have positive perceptions about the product and the firm (Mazaheri et al., 2014). Moreover, co-creative experiences require a high level of activation in individuals, an aspect that will also influence their level of engagement (Brodie et al., 2011a; Hollebeek, 2013; Vivek et al., 2012). Some conceptual research has proposed the key role of emotions and other emotional concepts, such as flow and involvement (Hollebeek, 2011; Vivek, 2009), to define and develop customer engagement (Brodie et al., 2011a; Hollebeek, 2011; Mollen and Wilson, 2010). Nevertheless, and despite the apparent interest of this relationship, it has not been previously tested.

Regarding brand image, if emotions derived from the experience have been pleasurable and positive, it is plausible to think that they will be reflected in the customer’s brand perceptions (Drengner et al., 2008). Customers positively evaluate not only the experience but also its “cause” that is the brand. Following de Chernatony’s (2006) experiential definition of brand, we can consider that brand image encompasses a cluster of functional and emotional values related to the customers’ experience with the brand. If customers undergo a collaborative experience with the firm during their purchase, the emotional connection of the customer with the brand is likely to improve (Demirbilek and Sener, 2003).

According to this reasoning and consistent with research that builds on environmental psychology theories (Mazaheri et al., 2011; Wang et al., 2007), we propose that emotions...
experienced by customers during their interaction in the BCP will influence customer engagement with the firm and brand image, formulating the following hypotheses:

\[ H5a. \text{Pleasure experienced by customers in brand connection platforms positively influences customer engagement with the firm.} \]

\[ H5b. \text{Arousal experienced by customers in brand connection platforms positively influences customer engagement with the firm.} \]

\[ H5c. \text{Dominance experienced by customers in brand connection platforms positively influences customer engagement with the firm.} \]

\[ H6a. \text{Pleasure experienced by customers in brand connection platforms positively influences brand image.} \]

\[ H6b. \text{Arousal experienced by customers in brand connection platforms positively influences brand image.} \]

\[ H6c. \text{Dominance experienced by customers in brand connection platforms positively influences brand image.} \]

4.2 Transactional consequences: purchase intentions

We consider that going through co-creative and interactive experiences in the BCP is critical for understanding customer purchase intentions, so we test the importance of customer engagement and brand image as two pivotal factors in this context (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004a). Customer engagement can be developed in any of the customer lifetime stages and is an important factor to evaluate customer value both at a transactional and non-transactional level (Bijmolt et al., 2010; Kumar et al., 2010). If the customer’s experience in the BCP develops customer engagement with the firm, this engagement will influence his/her purchase intentions. Regarding the effect of brand image, it is remarkable that consumers buy products or brands not only because of their attributes and functional consequences, but also for the symbolic benefits associated with them (Padgget and Allen, 1997). Levy (1959, p. 118) states that people buy things both for what they can do and for what they mean. Consequently, brand image that has been created and modified during customer interactions in the BCP is likely to influence attitudes towards purchasing brand products (Teng and Laroche, 2007), which may result in sales for the firm (Suntornpithug and Khamalah, 2010). We formulate the following hypotheses:

\[ H7. \text{Customer engagement with the firm developed during his/her interactions in the BCP influences purchase intentions.} \]

\[ H8. \text{Brand image developed by customers during their interactions in the BCP influences purchase intentions.} \]

4.3 Methodology

We used the platform with high levels of both cues developed in Study 1 as our research context for this study. In order to make the purchase experience as realistic as possible, the participants were asked to navigate through the platform and carry out several activities related to the available cues. We followed a similar procedure to that in Study 1 and used the same control variables. Likewise, all the participants went through a similar simulated purchase and the response variability was only dependent on the importance that each participant gave to the cues provided by the platform.
The study was carried out in a European university’s computer labs. We obtained a sample of 332 students (135 males) aged between 20 and 38; all of them were experienced Internet and e-commerce users.

The participants first answered questions related to their innovativeness and previous Internet surfing experience. Then, they were asked to imagine that they wanted to buy a pair of sneakers, so they visited a fictitious company website called My Favorite Sneaker, performed different personalization and C2C interactions activities, and finalized the purchase. Finally, the participants were asked to complete a questionnaire about their experience, emotions, engagement with the firm, brand image and purchase intentions. All the variables were measured on a 7-point Likert scale, the lowest perception being scored with 1, and the items included in the survey were adapted from prior research (Table IV). Regarding customer engagement and brand image, the same scales from Study 1 were used to verify their convenience and stability across samples. The other variables were measured using scales that are frequently used in the literature. Before the validation of the measuring scales, we checked that the participants had perceived their interaction with the platform and the specific cues. They valued items related to C2C interactions and personalization with an average above 5.

<<Insert Table IV here>>

4.4 Validation of the measuring scales

In order to guarantee the psychometric properties of the unidimensionality, reliability and validity of the measurement scales, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was carried out by Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), using the robust maximum likelihood estimation method and the statistical software EQS 6.1. (Bentler, 1995). We progressively eliminated, one by one, the indicators which did not satisfy one or more of the criteria proposed by Jöreskog and Sörbom (1993): weak convergence, strong convergence and explanatory coefficient (R²< 0.5) (Steenkamp and Van Trijp, 1991). After excluding BRAN_4, the results suggest that our measurement model provided a good fit to the data (Hair et al., 1999): SB $\chi^2$= 455.51, d.f.= 237, p= 0.00; RMSEA = .053; NFI = .924; NNFI = .956; CFI = .962; IFI = .962; SB $\chi^2$/ d.f. = 1.9.

The reliability and validity of the constructs were analyzed (Churchill, 1979; Gerbing and Anderson, 1988). The reliability of the scales was tested using the CRC and the AVE. In all cases, the results achieved surpassed the limit of 0.6 (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988) and 0.5 (Fornell and Larcker, 1981), respectively (Table V).

We also studied the construct validity, i.e. convergent and discriminant validity, and the nomological validity. For convergent validity, we checked that the standardized loadings were higher than 0.5, significant at the 99% confidence level (Steenkamp and Van Trijp, 1991) (Table V). Therefore, we can conclude that the items that comprise each scale converge to the same measurement. As can be seen in Table VI, evidence for the discriminant validity of the measures was provided by checking that none of the 99 per cent confidence intervals of the latent factor correlation matrix contained a value of 1.0 (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988). Moreover, we checked that no correlation between factors exceeded 0.8 points (Bagozzi, 1994) and confirmed that the AVE for each construct surpassed the variance shared with any other factor in the model (i.e. the squared correlation between the two factors) (Fornell and Larcker, 1981) (see Table VI).

In order to analyze the nomological validity, we undertook a $\chi^2$ differences test to compare the revised measurement model (CFA) with the proposed theoretical model that posits the causal relationships between the factors, which is analyzed next. The theoretical model will attain nomological validity if there are no significant differences between the fit of
The two models, which means that the scales used are able to establish predictive relationships that have similar goodness-of-fit indices (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988). The $\chi^2$ differences test consists of subtracting the measurement model's $\chi^2$ from the theoretical model's $\chi^2$ (in our model $456.18 - 455.51 = 0.67$). The degrees of freedom (d.f.) for this test are the difference between the d.f. of the two models (238 – 237 = 1). The critical value of $\chi^2$ when d.f. = 1 is 10.83 (p<0.001). Consequently, as 0.67 < 10.83, we can confirm that the scales used attain nomological validity. The scales have been able to reveal relevant relationships between the factors that achieve the above-mentioned fit.

On the basis of these results, we can state that the measures in the study satisfy reliability and validity properties.

4.5 Structural analysis

We tested the structural relationships between concepts using SEM. The results indicate that the data fit our conceptual model acceptably: $SB \chi^2 = 456.19$, d.f. = 238, p= 0.00; RMSEA= .053; NFI= .924; NNFI= .956; CFI= .962; IFI= .962; $SB \chi^2$/d.f. = 1.91.

We find that customer engagement with the firm positively influences brand image ($\beta_1 = .73$), so we corroborate the significance of the relationship, also found in the Study 1, and verify H1.

Regarding emotions, pleasure, arousal and dominance positively influence customer engagement with the firm ($\beta_5a=.28$; $\beta_5b=.23$; $\beta_5c=.14$), so H5a, H5b and H5c are supported. Nevertheless, for brand image, results demonstrate that only dominance ($\beta_6c=.11$) has a significant effect, satisfying H6c and rejecting the influence of pleasure and arousal, i.e. H6a and H6b, respectively.

Customer engagement and brand image positively influence the customer’s purchase intentions ($\beta_7 = .48$; $\beta_8 = .50$), so H7 are H8 are confirmed. It is noteworthy that brand image channels the influence of customer engagement on purchase intentions, reporting a total engagement effect of .85. Moreover, pleasure, arousal and dominance exert an indirect effect on brand image and purchase behavior through customer engagement. The explanatory power of customer engagement is 28%, that of brand image is 61% and that of purchasing intentions is 38%.

5. Conclusions

In recent years, interactive media have been developing rapidly providing customers and firms with greater access to information and networking possibilities. These media favor the development of brand connection platforms through which customers, firms and other stakeholders interact and create compelling experiences with brands. Our paper contributes to current research on customer engagement and branding, positing the importance of interactions in BCPs to develop engagement at first stages of customer-brand interactions, and addressing the relevance of this engagement to determine branding concepts.

From our results, several key findings emerge for further discussion.

First, our results demonstrate the relationship between customer engagement with the firm and brand image. During the first purchase experience, BCPs allow customers to relate to others and jointly create co-creative experiences, developing customer engagement. Likewise, customer engagement not only depends on the customer’s individual evaluation but also on
the interactions in which he/she participates in the platform. This engagement positively influences customer evaluation of the brand.

Second, our findings verify that the extrinsic characteristics of the platform, such as C2C interactions- and personalization-cues, empower customers and condition their relationship with the firm and the brand. Specifically, our results corroborate that the main drivers for engagement and brand image are C2C interactions-related cues, which confirms that interactions between customers are shaping branding and customer perceptions in interactive media. The influence of C2C interactions- and personalization-cues is especially important for brand image since there is an interaction effect between them that substantially improves the customer’s brand perceptions. Therefore, the presence of these stimuli in BCPs can establish affective bonds between customers and both the firm and the brand, beyond utilitarian purposes. C2C interactions- and personalization-related cues are a reliable source of information and learning for customers through the behaviors of others and the actions they can carry out, which inspires them and condition their behavior.

Third, our research also obtains interesting results regarding the influence of customers’ intrinsic mechanisms, through the emotions elicited during the interaction in BCPs, on their brand image and engagement. The more positive the emotions that the customer experiences, the more engaged he/she will feel and the better brand image will be. So, brand image and customer engagement depend not only on the information provided by the firm and the possibilities of the platform but also on the customers’ emotions derived from value-creating activities performed in the BCP. These emotions consequently influence the long-term relationship with the firm and offer new possibilities to manage branding issues in online environments. Pleasure during the experience in BCPs drives customer engagement with the firm. It is also interesting to highlight the influence of arousal on customer engagement, which is aligned with previous works that consider activation as an important dimension of this concept (see for example Hollebek, 2011; Mollen and Wilson, 2010). For brand image, dominance is the most important customer emotion, which corroborates that customers create brand meanings while feeling in control of their interactions in BCPs.

Finally, our findings show that customer engagement and brand image explain purchase intentions, which demonstrates the importance of these variables in fostering not only non-transactional responses but also transactional ones.

6. Implications

This study offers several implications related to BCPs and the importance of value-creating activities that customers can perform.

Firms cannot control their brand position but must face the challenge of generating customer engagement through interactions in order to improve their brand meanings and purchase behavior. Branding has evolved in a networked collaborative social process, so firms should monitor how interactions influence brand perceptions in order to support positive associations to the brand and diminish negative effects that may occur. Customers emerge as the center of branding decisions and the cornerstone of collaborative processes from the early stages of their relationship with the firm. So, providing an environment such as the BCP that favors high levels of engagement is crucial to the branding strategy and profitability of the firm. BCPs allow firms to link their brands with values and topics that customers consider relevant and to take brand decisions based on their customers’ opinions. They should be managed as participative environments where firms and brands can be involved with individuals in order to focus all their activities on co-creative aims, to engage
customers and leverage brand image. As far as we know, no research has addressed the transactional consequences derived from the collaborative process experienced in BCPs. We have demonstrated that, for new or lesser-known brands, customer engagement with the firm results in positive transactional and non-transactional consequences, promoting long-term relationships, brand image and purchase behavior.

**Firms should design BCPs with cues that drive value-creating activities and improve the management of branding.** Taking BCPs as our starting point, we contribute to a better understanding of how they offer the customer possibilities for voluntarily undertaking value-creating activities and participating. This participation increases the engagement of customers and results in better brand perceptions because they perceive that the firm values their feedback. In this context, the presence of certain features in the platform matters since they provide enhanced experiences. Firms should design platforms that include cues that allow customers to interact with other individuals and with the firm, establishing relationships that go beyond the online environment. C2C interaction-related cues allow customers to learn what others do or how they interact, which develops meaningful relationships. These cues include forums, networks and chats to motivate not only individuals but also communities to give their opinions, to share their experiences and, thus, to engage customers and define brand image. Personalization-related cues give customers the freedom to design their own product and generate value, which has positive effects on the development of a closer customer relationship with the firm and brand, as well as on the willingness to pay for the resulting outcome.

**Firms should encourage customers’ positive emotions during their interactions in BCPs to improve their engagement with the firm and brand image.** Firms should provide environments that make customers feel good during their experience in the platform, including stimuli that generate their pleasure and encourage their active participation during the process. Pleasure and arousal make customers feel that they are a relevant agent of the relationships established in the BCP, improving their engagement with the firm. Regarding brand image, the firm should work on the dominance sensation that the individual perceives during the experience. Likewise, the firm should be creative about how to pull the customer into the process in order to promote his/her participation without feeling a loss of control. For example, it would be interesting if customers could access relevant information during their interactions and perceive their ability to decide what to do and where to go.

Our study presents some limitations that should be taken into account in future research.

First, we should highlight that both studies have collected data from questionnaires to a sample of participants who have gone through a shopping experience in a simulated BCP. This approach has allowed us to analyze individuals’ emotions, perceptions and intentions during the experience. Nevertheless, it does not facilitate objective data about the real behavior of individuals. In future research, it would be interesting to observe and collect real information about the individual’s behavior during his/her experience in the platform, analyzing, for example, the amount and type of interactions that occur and his/her final decision related to the purchase.

Second, our studies are focused on the purchase experience as a fundamental context, corroborating the influence of brand image on purchase intentions. However, other contexts not directly related to the purchase are also relevant to manage a brand in interactive media, as for example the importance of online brand communities in defining brand meanings and the role of non-customers in creating and conditioning brand image. In future research, it would be interesting to carry out longitudinal analyses in order to consider these contexts in the customer evaluation of brands.
Finally, we analyze whether direct interactions through C2C interactions-related cues included in BCPs influence customer engagement and branding but we do not study customers that merely observe how others interact (i.e. indirect interactions). While C2C interactions have been conceptually defined as a source of observational learning (cf. Libai et al., 2010), it would be interesting to evaluate differences (if any) between direct and indirect customer interactions in the development of customer engagement and brand perceptions.

References


research priorities for the science of service”, Journal of Service Research, Vol.13 No.1, pp.4-36.


**Figure 1.**
Conceptual model of Study 1

- C2C interactions -related cues
- Personalization -related cues
- C2C interactions x Personalization

**Figure 2.**
The purchase platform
Figure 3.
Conceptual Model of Study 2

EMOTIONS

PLEASURE

AROUSAL

DOMINANCE

CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT

H5

H1

H6

BRAND IMAGE

H7

PURCHASE INTENTIONS

H8
### Table I.
Measurement scales of Study 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT (ENG)</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ENG_1</td>
<td>My interaction with this firm makes me feel valuable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENG_2</td>
<td>I feel I have a special bond with this firm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENG_3</td>
<td>I feel I have a close personal connection with this firm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENG_4</td>
<td>I feel I have a special relationship with this firm</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BRAND IMAGE (BRAND)</th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BRAN_1</td>
<td>The products of this brand have better characteristics than their competitors’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRAN_2</td>
<td>The products are of high quality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRAN_3</td>
<td>The brand has a personality that distinguishes it from its competitors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRAN_4</td>
<td>It is not likely that buying this brand causes any inconvenience or trouble</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRAN_5</td>
<td>This brand is nice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRAN_6</td>
<td>Buying this brand reflects the kind of person I am</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>

### Table II.
Confirmatory factor analysis test results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Factor loading</th>
<th>Robust t-value</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>CRC</th>
<th>AVE</th>
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<tr>
<td>CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT</td>
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<td></td>
<td>ENG_2</td>
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<td>18.02</td>
<td>.817</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ENG_3</td>
<td>.876</td>
<td>18.84</td>
<td>.768</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ENG_4</td>
<td>.944</td>
<td>22.46</td>
<td>.891</td>
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<tr>
<td>BRAND IMAGE</td>
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<td>.644</td>
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<td>BRAN_3</td>
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<td>BRAN_5</td>
<td>.813</td>
<td>13.94</td>
<td>.662</td>
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<td></td>
<td>BRAN_6</td>
<td>.729</td>
<td>12.54</td>
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Confidence interval: ENG-BRAN (.673 -.833)  
Shared variance: .56

### Table III.
MANOVA and ANOVA analyses

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<th>Independent Variables</th>
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<th>P</th>
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<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>P</th>
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<tr>
<td>C2C interactions-related cues</td>
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<td>58.005</td>
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<td>1.909</td>
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<td>CxP</td>
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Table IV.
Measurement scales of Study 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EMOTIONS (EMO)</th>
<th>PLEASURE</th>
<th>AROUSAL</th>
<th>DOMINANCE</th>
<th>PURCHASE INTENTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PLE_1</td>
<td>Angry (1)....(7) Content</td>
<td>ARO_1</td>
<td>Indifferent (1).... (7) Surprised</td>
<td>DOM_1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLE_2</td>
<td>Unhappy (1)....(7) Happy</td>
<td>ARO_2</td>
<td>Calm (1).... (7) Excited</td>
<td>DOM_2</td>
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<tr>
<td>PLE_3</td>
<td>Displeased (1).... (7) Pleased</td>
<td>ARO_3</td>
<td>Relaxed (1).... (7) Stimulated</td>
<td>DOM_3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLE_4</td>
<td>Sad (1).... (7) Glad</td>
<td>PUR_1</td>
<td>Given the chance, I would consider buying products from this seller in the future</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLE_5</td>
<td>Disappointed (1).... (7) Delighted</td>
<td>PUR_2</td>
<td>It is likely that I will buy from this seller in the near future</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>PLE_6</td>
<td>Uninterested (1).... (7) Enthusiastic</td>
<td>PUR_3</td>
<td>Given the opportunity, I intend to buy in this platform</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table V. Confirmatory factor analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>indicador</th>
<th>Factor loading</th>
<th>Robust $t$-value</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>CRC</th>
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<tr>
<td>PLE_1</td>
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<td>22.66</td>
<td>.780</td>
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<td>96</td>
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Confidence interval

- PLE-ARO (.521 - .705)
- DOM-ENG (.206 - .418)
- PLE-DOM (.317 - .537)
- DOM-BRAN (.236 - .464)
- PLE-ENG (.372 - .568)
- DOM-PUR (.396 - .592)
- PLE-BRAN (.287 - .535)
- ENG-BRAN (.716 - .824)
- PLE-PUR (.335 - .546)
- ENG-PUR (.422 - .610)
- ARO-DOM (.134 - .390)
- BRAN-PUR (.549 - .713)
- ARO-ENG (.334 - .558)
- ARO-PUR (.247 - .479)
- ARO-BRAN (.202 - .474)

Table VI. Discriminant validity

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Note: Values on the diagonal are the average variance extracted (AVE). Off-diagonal elements are the shared variance between constructs. On-diagonal elements are the correlations between constructs.