

The Impact of Digital Brand Engagement on Consumer Purchase Intention

-- A Study based on Brand Experience and Brand Attachment

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Abstract

Social media and short-video applications have changed the way brands meet their audiences, and a good deal of that contact now takes place through comment sections, live streams, and user-generated content instead of the old one-way advertising model; what has received far less attention is the psychological route that such engagement travels through before it shows up in a purchase decision. Working from the S-O-R framework, this paper traces that route from digital brand engagement to purchase intention, treating brand experience and brand attachment as two mediators arranged in sequence. The evidence comes from a literature review, case work on Pop Mart and Florasis, and questionnaire data gathered from 178 consumers, and it points to a fairly clear pattern: five kinds of digital interaction - informational, emotional, user-participation, personalized, and community/UGC - feed a multi-dimensional brand experience, the positive experience that piles up over time gives rise to brand attachment, and that attachment then feeds back into a stronger willingness to buy. For firms that want their digital engagement to work harder, the results also suggest where the practical effort is best directed.

Keywords

Digital Brand Engagement; Brand Experience; Brand Attachment; Purchase Intention; S-O-R Model.

1. Introduction

1.1. Research Background

The internet, together with the smart devices people carry all day, has redrawn the map of how brands and consumers meet. Where brands once talked at audiences through one-way advertising, they now hold something closer to a conversation on Douyin, Xiaohongshu, Weibo, and Taobao, where anyone can leave a comment, send a private message, follow a brand topic, or put out content of their own; digital interaction has therefore stopped behaving like a supplementary channel and turned into the main ground on which consumer relationships are built.

Nor is the functional side of a product enough on its own anymore, since shoppers also chase sensory pleasure, emotional resonance, and the approval of people around them, and as thinking has moved away from transactions and toward experiences, brand experience has come to sit at the center of how attitudes take shape. Add to that the sheer volume of

information people have to wade through, and it becomes easier to see why consumers will sometimes pin their sense of self to the brands they feel close to, which is what makes brand attachment so useful when one tries to account for loyalty and the repeat buying that follows it. Each of the three pieces - digital interaction, brand experience, and brand attachment - has a substantial literature behind it, yet the pieces are more often studied apart than together, and not many papers follow the full chain that runs from interaction through experience and attachment and on to purchase intention. It is that full pathway that the present paper sets out to trace, against the backdrop of China's unusually interactive digital market.

1.2. Significance of the Study

On the theoretical side, the study stretches the S-O-R framework by slotting brand experience and brand attachment in as a pair of mediators, which takes it past earlier work that had treated interaction as a single stimulus or had confined its attention to cognitive responses; it also puts forward a five-dimensional way of operationalizing digital brand interaction and assembles a chain-mediation model, answering calls from earlier studies that stressed how multidimensional and interactive consumer brand engagement really is [1, 2].

On the practical side, the results make the point that digital interaction reaches purchase intention by more than one route, acting on it directly as well as indirectly through experience and attachment. The implication for companies is that an omnichannel engagement strategy cannot stop at delivering information, and that it needs to weave together sensory, emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and relational strands instead. The chain-mediation part carried by brand attachment says something further: brands are better off putting resources into emotional bonds that hold over the long run than running after short-lived traffic, since that is how a relational advantage - the kind competitors cannot easily copy - gets built in a market already crowded with alternatives.

1.3. Research Question

Out of the background and the gaps just described, three research questions take shape.

RQ1: Does digital brand interaction have a significant bearing on consumers' purchase intention, and do the five dimensions - informational, emotional, user-participation, personalized, and community/UGC - pull different amounts of weight?

RQ2: Do brand experience and brand attachment each mediate the link between digital brand interaction and purchase intention when taken on their own?

RQ3: Can the two be strung into a chain-mediation pathway, running from digital interaction through brand experience and brand attachment to purchase intention, that accounts for more variance than a model with only one mediator?

1.4. Research Approach and Research Methods

The study moves along a "theory - model - empirical test" line and draws on three methods. One is a literature review that pins down the key concepts and sorts out the theoretical relationships among digital brand interaction, brand experience, brand attachment, and purchase intention, which gives the research model something to stand on; another is a case-study treatment of Pop Mart and Florasis, whose engagement strategies across social media and e-commerce are taken apart so that the theoretical model can be anchored in what firms actually do; the third is a questionnaire survey that gathered responses from 178 people through adapted scales, with SPSS used for descriptive statistics and Pearson correlations as a way of checking the hypotheses.

1.5. Research Content and Framework

Six chapters make up the paper. The opening one lays out the background, significance, questions, methods, and framework; Chapter 2 then reviews the literature on digital brand

interaction, brand experience, brand attachment, and purchase intention and puts the theoretical foundation in place; Chapter 3 works out the transmission mechanism built on S-O-R; Chapter 4 walks through the Pop Mart and Florasis cases; Chapter 5 reports what the survey turned up; and Chapter 6 gathers the findings together and draws out their managerial implications.

1.6. Research Innovations and Limitations

Three contributions are worth flagging. One is that digital brand interaction is placed inside the S-O-R framework with both an experiential and an attachment mechanism added, which produces a “Stimulus–Dual Organism–Response” model and moves past the single-pathway designs that came before it; another is that Holbrook’s experiential view, Schmitt’s strategic experiential modules, Thomson’s attachment theory, and Park’s self-concept theory are brought together within the digital marketing setting; the third is the focus on China’s highly interactive digital environment, which adds material to the study of consumer behavior on its home ground.

The limitations also need to be stated plainly: cross-sectional data put a ceiling on how much can be said about causation, an online sample may carry selection bias, and no distinction is drawn between the moderating effects of product type and those of platform. Later work could turn to longitudinal or experimental designs, bring in data from more than one source, and probe boundary conditions such as the line between hedonic and utilitarian products.

2. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

2.1. Digital Brand Engagement

The idea of brand engagement has shifted considerably since the move into digital settings, and consumer engagement has been described as a dynamic, multidimensional process in which interactive experience and value co-creation both have a part ^[1]. Hollebeek, Glynn, and Brodie gave the concept a more specific shape for social media, framing consumer brand engagement as the positively valenced cognitive, emotional, and behavioral activity that goes on during, or in connection with, consumer–brand interactions ^[2].

For the purposes of this study, digital brand engagement is sorted into five dimensions. The informational one covers product updates, promotional material, and the brand storytelling that circulates through digital channels; the emotional one takes in comment replies, messaging that leans on empathy, and holiday campaigns meant to build affective ties; the user-participation one has to do with hashtag challenges, online events, and co-design work in which consumers have a real hand in shaping what the brand puts out; the personalized one refers to answers tailored to individual comments or to the content recommendations that algorithms assemble; and the community/UGC one gathers the user-to-user exchanges that happen inside brand spaces, which get louder whenever a brand reposts or spotlights what consumers have made. Taken together, the five give a reasonably complete frame for measuring digital engagement.

2.2. Brand Experience

Work on brand experience keeps coming back to one point: consumption draws out experiential responses and is not purely a matter of rational evaluation ^[3], and the experiential perspective presses the same thought further by stressing how much a memorable consumer experience can do. Brakus, Schmitt, and Zarantonello went on from there to build a four-dimensional brand experience scale, with sensory, affective, intellectual, and behavioral components ^[3].

Carrying that framework over into the digital setting, this study defines digital brand experience as the bundle of psychological and behavioral responses, spread across several dimensions, that gets produced when consumers come into contact with a brand's digital touchpoints [3]; those responses run from the sensory - interface aesthetics and audiovisual effects - through the emotional, where pleasure and belonging sit, and the cognitive, such as learning and problem-solving, on to the behavioral, with ease of navigation and participation, and then the relational, which covers community identification and cultural resonance. The definition keeps classical experience theory intact while still picking up the features that digital settings have added.

2.3. Brand Attachment

Brand attachment names the emotional bond that can form between consumers and brands, and it has been built up as a construct in its own right within consumer research [4,5], which has also kept emphasizing that the emotional relationships consumers strike up with brands can last [4].

Thomson, MacInnis, and Park put together a scale for measuring that emotional attachment and marked it off from neighboring constructs such as satisfaction, involvement, and brand attitudes [4], making the point that attachment runs deeper and holds longer than the kind of evaluation that is tied to a single transaction.

Park and colleagues then conceptualized the construct further and distinguished it from brand attitude strength, showing what difference it makes to consumers' behavioral outcomes [5]. In digital settings, the steady stream of personalized feedback keeps producing fresh chances for emotional connection, and taking part in online communities, feeling resonance with brand content, and moving through smooth human-machine interactions all tighten the brand-self associations. This study accordingly defines brand attachment as an emotional bond that takes shape through digital interaction, marked by Brand-Self Distance and Brand Connection, which acts as a central mediator between engagement and the behavioral intentions that hold over the long term.

2.4. Purchase Intention

Purchase intention is the willingness consumers say they have to buy a product or brand, and it is one of the behavioral intentions that consumer research comes back to most often; strong brand equity works on the cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses and gets converted into a higher intention to buy and a stronger loyalty. Within the S-O-R framework that Mehrabian and Russell put forward, external stimuli (S) act on internal states (O), and those states then give shape to approach or avoidance responses (R) [9], so purchase intention, read as an indicator of approach behavior, has to be understood as the outcome of psychological processes that came before it.

In digital marketing, the concept reaches past the single act of buying and also takes in subscribing to a brand's services, engaging with its digital content, and staying inside the brand's ecosystem; leaning on S-O-R, the study treats digital brand interaction as the external stimulus that stirs brand experience and brand attachment into motion, with purchase intention taking shape at the end of that chain. That is the frame behind the chain-mediated model: Digital Brand Interaction → Brand Experience → Brand Attachment → Purchase Intention.

2.5. Literature Review

Earlier studies have already tied digital brand interaction, brand experience, brand attachment, and purchase intention to one another, yet a fair number of holes are still left open. For one thing, single variables tend to be examined on their own, without any systematic test of the full chain that runs from interaction through experience and attachment to purchase intention; for

another, the theoretical step that carries experience over into attachment has not been thought through in much depth; and the bulk of the work sits in Western settings, leaving China's highly interactive digital ecosystem comparatively untouched. The present study takes those gaps on by testing a dual-mediation chain model.

3. The Mechanism by Which Digital Brand Engagement Influences Consumers' Purchase Intentions

Digital brand engagement works on purchase intention through two layers of psychological processing, and this chapter looks at how the five types of interaction produce a multi-dimensional brand experience, how the experience that accumulates turns into brand attachment, and how attachment then pushes purchase intention along; the thread running through all of it is the S-O-R logic, which has the effects of interaction passing through the consumer's psychology before they ever surface as behavior.

3.1. The Shaping of Brand Experience through Digital Brand Engagement

Brand experience gathers in sensory, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral responses [3], and the five types of digital interaction line up with those dimensions in a fairly direct way: informational interaction builds the cognitive experience, emotional interaction brings affective responses out, user-participation interaction fosters behavioral engagement, personalized interaction mixes cognitive and emotional effects, and community/UGC interaction adds a relational layer on top [9]; Table 1 gathers those mappings in one place.

Informational interaction - product details, usage guides, technical explanations - is what gives the cognitive experience its shape. When consumers look up ingredient analyses on Xiaohongshu or set features side by side on Weibo, they are processing information at a deep level, and content that does its job well cuts the risk they perceive and builds trust in what the brand knows; Florasis offers a useful example, since the detailed breakdowns it published of traditional makeup culture and ingredient sourcing firmed up an image that managed to look Eastern in its aesthetics and rigorous in its science at the same time.

Emotional interaction - storytelling, the expression of values, holiday campaigns - is the part that calls affective responses out, and on Douyin brands lean on short films and visually striking content to get empathy moving. Pop Mart works the same lever by designing surprise into the opening of blind boxes and building out the world of its IPs on social media, which turns the opening into a kind of emotional release and makes shopping feel closer to entertainment than to a transaction.

User-participation interaction - voting, challenges, check-ins - is what builds behavioral engagement, and the moment consumers join a livestream Q&A or a topic challenge they stop being passive receivers and move into the role of active co-creators; getting their hands involved like that lengthens the time they spend interacting and deepens the experience through a psychological mechanism in which investment comes back as return.

Personalized interaction - content tailored through big data and algorithms - engages cognition and emotion together, since precise recommendations make consumers feel understood and also make information-gathering more efficient, while the simple sense of being valued sets positive feelings off. E-commerce platforms put browsing histories to work by serving up personalized coupons or trial products, which gives exclusivity and satisfaction a nudge upward.

Community and UGC interaction - the user-to-user exchanges that happen inside brand spaces - blends behavioral participation with emotional experience, and on Xiaohongshu consumers write reviews, join fan groups, and swap experiences, picking up social recognition while their

understanding of the brand deepens; exchanges like that take what starts as an individual experience and turn it into something closer to a collective social phenomenon.

Table 1. Correspondence Between Digital Brand Interaction Types and Brand Experience Dimensions

Types of Digital Brand Engagement	Mainly Stimulated Experiential Dimension	Brief Description of the Mechanism	Typical Platforms/Scenarios
Information Interaction	Cognitive experience	Provide structured knowledge, reduce uncertainty, and enhance professional insight.	Brand official website, Zhihu, popular-science posts on Xiaohongshu
Emotional Interaction	Emotional experience	Evoke resonance, pleasure, and similar emotions through narrative and visual stimulation.	Douyin short videos, Weibo emotional marketing
User-Participation Interaction	Behavioral participation experience	Build a sense of control and accomplishment through proactive engagement.	E-commerce livestreams, social-media challenges
Personalized Interaction	Cognitive + emotional experience	Match needs precisely and create a sense of exclusivity through being truly understood.	E-commerce platform recommendations, app push notifications
Community/UGC Interaction	Behavioral engagement + emotional experience	Social identity and the co-creation of value strengthen the sense of belonging.	Xiaohongshu notes, WeChat fan groups

Experience, in other words, is shaped through several formats at once rather than through any single channel, and that is the ground on which brand attachment can later form.

3.2. The Transformation of Positive Brand Experience into Brand Attachment

Brand experience tends to be more fleeting and tied to the situation, while brand attachment stands for an emotional bond that holds for longer ^[4, 5], and getting from one to the other rests on two mechanisms - repeated positive exposure, and the brand's working its way into the consumer's sense of self.

Repeated positive exposure builds attachment through the mere-exposure effect and classical conditioning, and every interaction that goes well - useful information picked up, emotional resonance felt, a community found - adds a little more favorability; given enough time, those small pieces settle into stable attitudes. Consumers who keep coming back to Florasis's cultural content on Xiaohongshu, or to Pop Mart's creative videos on Douyin, slowly build the trust and favorability that attachment has to pass through first. ^[6]

The more important part, though, is that attachment takes hold once a brand becomes a piece of self-identity, because consumers signal who they are through the brands they pick and pass on. Let a brand's values resonate with the self someone actually is, or the self they would like to be, and the brand stops being merely a place to buy things and turns into a symbol of self-expression ^[10]; UGC has a particularly large hand in this, since consumers who post about a brand and get likes and comments back are not simply sharing a product but affirming an identity. Take a young consumer drawn to guochao culture who keeps sharing Florasis content and winning recognition from peers, and it becomes easy to see how the brand could come to stand for the identity of someone who values Eastern heritage - and that is exactly the point where attachment is most likely to set in

There is also the fact that digital interactions leave a trace and can be displayed, since interaction histories, wish lists, and saved content add up to a visible record of the relationship; going back through that archive lets consumers see how far the relationship has traveled, which deepens the attachment and helps it hold steady. ^[8]

3.3. The Driving Role of Brand Attachment on Purchase Intention

Once attachment has formed, it reaches purchase intention through emotional identification and a degree of behavioral tolerance, and attached consumers do not limit themselves to buying; they can also be found preferring the brand, defending it, and arguing on its behalf ^[11].

What attachment does, in effect, is to turn a rational decision into an emotional preference, since consumers who are attached choose a brand less by weighing features and prices than by falling back on an emotional default; Pop Mart fans make the point neatly, as they will often skip the price comparisons altogether and buy a new series out of affection for the IP, and the purchase itself turns into a way of keeping the attachment alive.

Attachment builds in a tolerance for setbacks as well, and no brand ever dodges defects or public-relations crises entirely. An ordinary consumer may switch after a single bad experience, but an attached one tends to read the trouble as an isolated incident rather than a flaw at the root, giving the brand another chance and keeping the support going; that resilience, fed by trust and by the emotional costs already sunk into the relationship, is what helps brands ride out the ups and downs of the digital public sphere.

Proactive behavior gets pulled along in the same way, with attached consumers keeping up with new launches, joining pre-sales, posting recommendations on social media, and weighing in on the choices their peers make; the word of mouth that results does two jobs at once, expressing the attachment and strengthening it at the same time ^[7].

3.4. Summary of the Overall Transmission Mechanism

The whole mechanism runs along the S-O-R frame: digital brand interaction, the stimulus, shapes brand experience and brand attachment, the organism, and those two together drive purchase intention, the response.

The five types of digital interaction - informational, emotional, user-participation, personalized, and community/UGC - act as the external stimuli, and they set two layers of psychological processing in motion. On one layer, consumers put out multi-dimensional responses, sensory, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral, and those responses add up to brand experience; on the other, repeated exposure and the integration of self-concept work those experiences inward until they become brand attachment. Attachment then sets the positive responses in motion - a stronger intention to buy, a standing preference for the brand, room given to setbacks, and advocacy that happens without being asked for.

The mechanism makes one thing clear: digital platforms deserve to be treated as spaces where relationships get built, rather than as sales channels and nothing more, and engagement that works fosters attachment by delivering experience that stands out, which is how loyalty gets held in place once the market turns competitive.

4. Case Analysis

4.1. Explanation of Case Selection

Pop Mart and Florasis are the two cases the study takes on, and both have done conspicuously well in Chinese digital marketing. Pop Mart stands for the trendy-toy category and puts blind-box mechanics together with community culture to stir participation and emotion; Florasis stands for national-style beauty and leans on cultural storytelling and user-generated content to grow cognitive and affective experiences. The two strategies differ enough that comparing them gives a good deal to work with.

4.2. Case One: POP MART

4.2.1. Digital Interaction Methods

Blind boxes sit at the center of Pop Mart's digital strategy. On Douyin and Xiaohongshu, the brand and its KOLs put out unboxing videos, guides to the hidden figures, and customization tutorials, and blind-box randomness gets turned into entertainment people can take part in; on Weibo, hashtags such as #PopMart# and #MOLLY# push users to show off what they bought and to trade with one another. The Tmall and JD.com live rooms tie real-time unboxing to prize draws and limited editions, while Pop Mart also keeps its own app and WeChat mini-program running, complete with virtual gashapon machines, membership points, and a secondhand market, so that the pieces close into a digital loop.

4.2.2. Consumer Feedback Characteristics

Pop Mart's interactions run hot on emotion and are pointed toward the community. On Xiaohongshu and Weibo, users share more than the figures themselves, passing on the tension, surprise, and even disappointment of opening a box, along with the stories that go with trading and venting; the fan groups keep enthusiasts talking to one another often enough that a collective identity can grow. Chasing hidden variants and arguing over the worldviews behind the IPs shows how far the interactions reach past the product and into cultural and emotional ground, and complaints about quality or after-sales service tend to get worked out inside the community rather than outside it.

4.2.3. Shaping the Brand Experience

Emotional and behavioral engagement are the parts Pop Mart cultivates hardest. Unboxing videos and live streams work on the senses and feelings together, and uncertainty gets converted into delight that people look forward to; users customize their figures, share their purchases, and sink into the brand's ecosystem, and community interaction keeps the social dimension reinforced. The cognitive experience sits off to the side, since emotion and social motivation are what do most of the driving.

4.2.4. Manifestations of Brand Attachment

Attachment to Pop Mart shows up as a deep emotional tie to IPs such as MOLLY and SKULLPANDA and as a strong sense of belonging to the community. Collecting works as a hobby and, for some, as a way of living, with the figures serving as a means of self-expression; fans will defend the brand online with a loyalty that is hard to miss, and the brand has moved into the core of what it means to be a trendy-toy enthusiast.

4.2.5. Potential Impact on Purchase Intention

Strong attachment carries strong purchase intent in its wake, and fans keep close track of new series and pay premiums for the IPs they like, which keeps their buying fairly steady even when economic pressure is on. The same attachment feeds word of mouth and the community-driven buying that goes with it; the caveat is that it can turn fragile, since weak quality control or scarcity marketing handled badly can set a backlash off and pull purchase intent down for a while.

4.3. Case Study Two: Florasis

4.3.1. Digital Interaction Methods

Eastern aesthetics sit at the center of how Florasis positions itself. On Xiaohongshu and Douyin it posts traditional makeup tutorials, pieces of cultural education, and showcases of intangible heritage, and its work with KOLs who have taken up guofeng trends steers consumers toward appreciating the aesthetics for themselves; the Weibo campaigns keep the Eastern makeup positioning reinforced through holiday themes and cultural co-branding. Even the e-commerce

live rooms act as cultural spaces, where hosts dressed in traditional clothing pass on the stories behind the products.

4.3.2. Consumer Feedback Characteristics

Interactions around Florasis carry a clear aesthetic pull and a strong cultural resonance. On Xiaohongshu, users talk through packaging design, the inspiration behind the colors, and the cultural significance, putting out content such as Florasis-inspired makeup looks and outfits in traditional clothing; the comments keep returning to remarks along the lines of “so beautiful” and “rich in cultural heritage,” which shows how deep the approval runs. What criticism there is tends to cluster around value for money and shade-matching, and the cultural values themselves almost never come under fire.

4.3.3. Shaping the Brand Experience

Cognitive and emotional experiences are what Florasis cultivates in depth. The steady stream of cultural education leaves consumers with a clear grasp of Eastern makeup and puts Florasis in the position of category flagship, and the polished visuals and cultural storytelling call national pride and aesthetic delight out; taking part through makeup looks and shared experiences works both as engagement and as a way of expressing an emotional response. When the product range gets too wide to navigate easily, personalized recommendations help consumers find their way.

4.3.4. Manifestations of Brand Attachment

Attachment to Florasis turns on consumers lining themselves up with Eastern aesthetic values. Using the brand becomes a way of expressing a cultural attitude, and buying and sharing both carry identity-building with them; consumers defend the brand’s cultural image online and push back against remarks that dismiss the preference as blind admiration for anything foreign. Attachment of this kind reaches past the function of the product and up into culture and shared values, which gives it a stability that outside influences have trouble shaking.

4.3.5. Potential Impact on Purchase Intention

Attachment built on cultural identity brings high loyalty and a willingness to pay premiums with it, and core users take Florasis as their first choice for color cosmetics; the UGC that attached consumers create pulls new followers in. What the attachment asks for in return is consistency, since innovations that drift away from Eastern aesthetics, or marketing that starts to feel too commercial, can set disappointment off and make people pull back.

4.4. Cross-Case Comparative Analysis

Table 2. Comparative Analysis of Digital Brand Engagement Between Pop Mart and Florasis

Comparison Dimension	POP MART	Florasis
Core interaction strategy	Blind-box mechanism + community culture	Cultural storytelling + aesthetic product recommendations
Dominant experience dimension	Emotional experience, behavioral engagement experience	Cognitive experience, emotional experience
Foundations of attachment formation	IP emotional connection, sense of community belonging	Cultural value identity, aesthetic identity
Purchase intention drivers	Sense of surprise, social capital, the desire to collect	Cultural expression, aesthetic satisfaction, support for domestic brands
Tolerance performance	Some tolerance for quality-control and after-sales issues, but this can easily trigger backlash in the community	More tolerant of practicality issues, but zero tolerance for deviations in cultural positioning
Main interactive platforms	Douyin (unboxing), Weibo (community), proprietary app	Xiaohongshu (product recommendations), Douyin (aesthetic videos), e-commerce livestreams
Attachment stability	Relatively high, but influenced by product scarcity and community sentiment	High, but constrained by brand-culture consistency

To make the comparison between the two cases easier to follow, the relevant material has been arranged into Table 2.

4.5. Comprehensive Case Discussion

Taken together, Pop Mart and Florasis bear out the interaction–experience–attachment–purchase intention mechanism worked out in Chapter 3; each brand built a distinctive experience through a different digital strategy, grew attachment out of it, and converted that attachment into purchase intent and loyalty, which confirms that the mechanism can hold across settings.

The cases also bring some boundary conditions to the surface. Pop Mart leans on a fast feedback loop between behavior and emotion, and its attachment rests on the surprise and community belonging that come up during interactions, which leaves it sensitive to operational pace and the mood of the community; Florasis puts its weight on the deepening of cognition and emotion, with attachment rooted in cultural identity and a stricter demand for consistency between brand and culture. Digital engagement, in other words, reaches purchase intention along two routes at once, one driven by emotion and the other by cognition and values.

Nor is attachment the only thing pushing purchase intention, since product quality, price, and distribution still sit at the foundation; what digital engagement and attachment do is help brands stand apart in the competition, build loyalty, and ask for premiums. Later work could keep track of how the mechanism moves through the product life cycle, and look at how firms cut the mix of engagement to fit their strategic position.

5. Consumer Surveys and Supporting Analyses

5.1. Questionnaire Design

A structured questionnaire was put together to put the theoretical model to the test, and every item was adapted from scales that already had a track record and then reworked to fit the digital brand interaction setting, with answers running along a five-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

The questionnaire spreads across four modules plus a background section. Section A, perceived digital brand interaction, carries 12 items that cover informational, emotional, and functional interaction; Section B, brand experience, carries 10 items taken from Brakus and colleagues that measure sensory, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral responses; Section C, brand attachment, carries 6 items drawn from Thomson and colleagues and from Park and colleagues; Section D, purchase intention, carries 4 items; and Section E gathers demographic and media-use data as controls.

A pilot run with 30 respondents gave the instrument a good bill of reliability, with every Cronbach's alpha coming in above 0.75, and a handful of items that read ambiguously were reworked in light of the feedback; the finished version came to 32 measurement items and 5 background items.

5.2. Basic Characteristics of the Sample

The questionnaire went out through Wenjuanxing and social media to consumers who had interacted with brands online over the previous three months; of 200 copies distributed, 178 survived the screening, which removed answers that came in too fast, repeated the same pattern, or left data missing, for an effective response rate of 89%.

Women made up 62.4% of the sample and men 37.6%, which lines up with the demographics of social commerce. The 18–24 group came in largest at 58.4%, followed by the 25–30 group at 28.1%, the 31–35 group at 9.6%, and the 36-and-over group at 3.9%, which reflects how young the audience for digital brands still leans; the platforms that came up most often were

Xiaohongshu at 52.2%, Douyin at 41.0%, Weibo at 18.5%, and others at 8.4%. Direct interaction with a brand was reported by 86.5%, which supports the relevance of the sample.

5.3. Descriptive Statistics and Mean Analysis

The descriptive analysis of the 178 valid questionnaires turned up moderately high scores across the board. Digital brand interaction landed at a mean of 3.81 (SD 0.62), brand experience at 3.74 (SD 0.58), purchase intention at 3.65 (SD 0.66), and brand attachment at 3.51 (SD 0.71); with every standard deviation below 1, perceptions look fairly consistent from one respondent to the next.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Key Variables

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Number of Items
Perceived Digital Brand Interaction	3.81	0.62	12
Brand Experience	3.74	0.58	10
Brand Attachment	3.51	0.71	6
Purchase Intention	3.65	0.66	4

Emotional interaction came out on top at 3.92, ahead of informational interaction at 3.76 and functional interaction at 3.68, which suggests that emotional care and personalized communication are valued more than the plain delivery of information. On the item asking whether a brand's responsiveness in the comments changed how favorably people saw it, 67% agreed or strongly agreed and 21.3% went all the way to strongly agree; the reading is that digital interaction works as a two-way process of building relationships rather than a one-way transmission of information.

5.4. Simple Correlation Analysis

The Pearson correlations point to significant positive relationships all along the chain: digital interaction with brand experience at $r = 0.56$ ($p < 0.01$), brand experience with brand attachment at $r = 0.61$ ($p < 0.01$), and brand attachment with purchase intention at $r = 0.58$ ($p < 0.01$). The pattern reads as one in which richer interaction goes together with richer experience, which then goes together with stronger attachment and a stronger intention to buy. Digital interaction also correlated with purchase intention on its own at $r = 0.48$ ($p < 0.01$), which leaves room for indirect routes through experience and attachment while also hinting at a direct route; the coefficients span 0.48 to 0.61, which puts the associations somewhere between moderate and strong and keeps the worry about serious multicollinearity low.

5.5. Comparison of Survey Results with Theory and Case Analysis

What the survey found lines up with both the theory and the case work, and the data support the S-O-R chain, with digital interaction as stimulus, experience and attachment as internal states, and purchase intention as response. The strong experience–attachment correlation at 0.61 fits the established view that brand experience can feed the consumer–brand relationship. The case discussion had already pointed out that brands build emotional connections through personified interaction on platforms such as Xiaohongshu, and the survey backs that up with numbers: emotional interaction scored highest at 3.92, and 67% of respondents set store by a brand's replies. The high sensory and emotional scores fit the instant feedback and multisensory immersion that were described as features of digital interaction earlier. What stands out more than anything is that brand attachment carried the lowest mean, 3.51, and the largest standard deviation, 0.71, which suggests that digital interactions can stir positive experiences fairly readily but still struggle to convert them into attachment that runs deep and lasts; that validates the theoretical claim of a nonlinear relationship between interaction depth

and attachment strength, and it underlines why quality and emotional depth deserve priority over frequency by itself.

6. Research Conclusion and Marketing Strategy Recommendations

6.1. Main Research Findings

Putting the theoretical analysis and the empirical tests together, the study reaches the conclusions that follow.

Digital brand interaction stands as a major antecedent of purchase intention, working on it directly and also through the chain mediation of brand experience and brand attachment; in the digital space, interaction marks where the consumer's psychological transformation begins, rather than where the marketing ends.

Brand experience and brand attachment look like sequential links in the relationship between digital interaction and purchase intention, with interaction first shaping the four dimensions of experience and quality experience then fostering the emotional attachment that gets converted into buying decisions. Emotional interaction carried the highest mean of the interaction dimensions measured, which points to how much weight consumers put on it.

Perceptions of emotional interaction ran well ahead of informational and functional interaction, and in a digital environment where attention is scarce, content that carries personal warmth and emotional resonance gets the stronger response. The standardized delivery of information still has its place, but it is not enough on its own to build the deep relationships that brands are after.

6.2. Insights for Corporate Digital Brand Management

6.2.1. From One-Way Communication to Two-Way Relational Interaction

Digital brand engagement is in the business of building relationships and is not limited to putting information out. Companies have reason to move from communication led by the brand to dialogue driven by the relationship, setting up community engagement that runs on a regular schedule and keeping a steady presence in day-to-day operations rather than showing up only for campaigns; dedicated community managers ought to be put in place to answer comments in person and keep automated scripts out of the way. When UGC is encouraged through co-creation and fan submissions, consumers get to take on the role of active co-authors, and involvement and belonging - the ground on which a richer brand experience gets built - deepen as a result.

6.2.2. Optimize the Multi-Dimensional Digital Brand Experience

Because brand experience sits at the hinge of the mediation, experience has to be optimized across every digital touchpoint. On the sensory side, visual aesthetics should be matched to the tone of the platform; on the emotional side, storytelling and the expression of values are what firm up brand personality; on the cognitive side, content that gives people something to think about and invites them in works best; on the behavioral side, interactive mechanisms with a low barrier, such as check-in challenges and AR try-ons, are what to design. Optimizing the dimensions in a coordinated way is what gets the most psychological conversion out of digital interactions.

6.2.3. Committed to Fostering Brand Attachment and Building Emotional Bonds

Given that attachment scores came in relatively low and spread out, cultivating brand attachment deserves to be treated as a long-term strategy rather than a side project. Once the transactional layer is taken care of, identity and belonging can be strengthened through a lively community culture, rituals with a distinct shape, and member benefits that feel exclusive — online fan meetups, brand anniversaries run live, campaigns built around user stories; value

consistency and authenticity have to be kept up in the digital space, and marketing that gets excessive enough to eat into emotional bonds is best avoided. Treating each interaction as a chance to tighten the emotional connection is how companies can grow attachment that holds for longer [4, 5].

6.3. Research Limitations and Future Prospects

The limitations are easy enough to list. Convenience sampling puts a ceiling on generalizability, especially across age and gender groups; cross-sectional data cannot catch the way the interaction–experience–attachment relationship moves over time; and perceptions of digital interaction rest on subjective recall, which lets memory bias creep in. No distinction is drawn between the moderating effects of platform types either.

Several directions sit open for later work. Longitudinal tracking or diary methods could capture shifts in experience and emotion while the interactions are actually happening; experiments could manipulate interaction type, frequency, and response style to put causality to a sterner test; moderators such as platform type, brand category, and consumer involvement could be brought in; and neuroscientific tools like eye-tracking and EEG might uncover the physiological mechanisms underneath.

7. Conclusion

Grounded in the S-O-R framework, this study has looked at how digital brand engagement reaches consumer purchase intention through the sequential mediation of brand experience and brand attachment. The five dimensions of engagement - informational, emotional, user-participation, personalized, and community/UGC interaction - each shape a different side of brand experience, and the positive experiences that pile up slowly turn into brand attachment through repeated interaction and the connection between self and brand; that attachment then strengthens purchase intention by way of emotional preference, tolerance for setbacks, and advocacy that comes forward without prompting. Read together, the results support a chain-mediated pathway along which engagement shapes experience, attachment develops out of that experience, and purchase intention is influenced at the end. The Pop Mart and Florasis cases, set alongside the survey data from 178 respondents, offer converging evidence that fits the proposed mechanism.

The study adds to the digital marketing literature by pulling experiential and attachment perspectives into a single S-O-R model, and it also gives firms practical guidance for getting past traffic acquisition and using digital engagement to build consumer relationships that hold.

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