

Influence of Experiential Marketing on Online Engagement of the Consumer in the Fashion Industry in the City of Aguascalientes

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Abstract

This research has the general objective of analyzing the influence of experiential marketing on consumer engagement online in the fashion sector of the City of Aguascalientes. The most relevant aspects found in the review of the theoretical-empirical literature are presented, to later propose the possible direct and positive relationship between the variables: Experiential Marketing and online engagement, through the design of a theoretical model that presents the causal relationship between them. The type of research that was carried out was non-experimental, cross-sectional and with a correlational-causal scope, which leads to the development of an empirical study through the application of a questionnaire to young people between 20 and 34 years old, allowing to obtain quantitative data that was analyzed with the SPSS software and modeled using the structural equation technique to test and contrast the research hypotheses.

JEL classification numbers: L67, L81, M15, M31.

Keywords: Experiential Marketing; online engagement; online consumer behaviour, electronic commerce; digital marketing; fashion.

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1. Introduction

This section reflects the context in which companies are currently developing at a global level and which will serve as a starting point to delimit the problem they face and concerns to the present study. Subsequently, the reader is informed of the main studies and investigations that have been carried out previously and that make up the background of the variables considered in this investigation.

Throughout history, the exchange of goods and services has evolved according to changes in consumer buying habits and behaviour, as well as the adoption of new communication technologies (Ruíz, 2016), which have caused e-commerce the business formula where many companies have found new business opportunities.

Therefore, it is important to mention that, with the increase and presence of brands online environments, the market has become saturated as a result of the expansion and range of offers to which the consumer has access to, that are more homogeneous and standardized. (López, 2017), making complicated their differentiation. Given the aforementioned technological context, according to López (2017), the competitive and globalized environment in which companies are immersed has made it difficult for them to develop business strategies that guarantee their success and permanence in the market in a long period of time.

In this scenario, the new marketing paradigm is immersed, in which, according to De Aguilera and Baños (2017), the consumer and the brand establish a relationship in which each of them perceives the other as a provider of value, which is why Companies that want to be at the forefront will have to face a competitive battlefield in which they bet on generating experiences for the consumer, since as goods and services become basic products, the experiences that companies create will be the most important (Pine and Gilmore, 1998).

Now they must not only offer products at low and innovative prices or make great promotional efforts that in the long term only affect their earnings, but also focus on customer experience or experiential marketing as a differentiating factor of a company, which includes all the points of contact in which the consumer interacts with the organization, product or service, thus generating exchanges of values of mutual benefit, otherwise, the consumer will avoid resorting to those that are unable to provide him with a good experience (Grewal, Levy and Kumar, 2009) that strengthens the emotional ties between them.

In this way, some companies that have not understood how important it is to execute experiential marketing strategies have only disoriented and overwhelmed the consumer with the oversupply of poorly differentiated goods and services to which the consumer has access, thereby causing insensitivity to his part in the presence of conventional marketing strategies (López, 2017). Today these companies are losing the opportunity to generate a greater long-term commitment from the client, they decrease the possibility of charging a higher price for their products or services as a consequence of the value perceived by the consumer and they do not find a solid way of differentiation and consistency (López, 2017). In short, they are seeing clients pass by and losing their own.

In addition, a recent IBM report identifies customer experience as a key factor for companies to use in building brand loyalty (Verhoef et al., 2009) and in the way it is improved and standardized, these organizations may transmit a message of unity to the consumer, in order to generate engagement with the brand (Asociación Mexicana de Venta Online [MVO], 2018); being this the main metric of the strength of a relationship. In this sense, it is important to emphasize that “the conceptual roots of consumer engagement lie in those theories that take into account the interactive experiences of the consumer” (Domínguez, 2017, p. 127). Therefore, by not applying experiential marketing strategies, brands are missing the opportunity to engage with the consumer.

The problem is that, in the desire of many companies to migrate to an online environment, they have misinterpreted engagement and have ventured to seek interaction with consumers through the use of social networks without a content strategy, limiting themselves only to feeding and evaluating the sets of clicks regardless of whether they really contribute to the company's strategy, that seeks to cultivate relationships with the customer (Elósegui, 2015), and it is part of a purchasing decision-making process, to which the organization wants to influence (Martínez, 2014).

Because of this, instead of understanding engagement globally, brands focus more on capturing customers than loyalty; once the purchase is made, they forget about them. The worrying thing is that if brands are not clear about what engagement is and how to achieve it in an online environment, they will ultimately fail (Elósegui, 2015). For this reason, the suggestions of some authors are taken up when proposing to research deeply into the conceptualization of online engagement; since there is still a lot of discrepancy in its definition, and delving into its dimensions, as well as its consequences (Mollen and Wilson, 2010; Van Doorn et al., 2010; Domínguez, 2017), developing and testing scales in different contexts (Bowden, 2009; Vivek Beatty and Morgan., 2012) and their antecedents (Van Doorn et al., 2010).

Likewise, this study presents some recommendations about how companies can generate online engagement between the consumer and the brand, I mean, it is necessary to provide them with knowledge that can be a means to the creation, construction and improvement of relationships with their clients (Brodie, Ilic, Juric, and Hollebreek, 2013), so this becomes a long-term strategic priority that builds consistent brand differentiation and superior competitive advantage for companies (Rose, Clark, Samouel and Hair, 2012).

In this way, despite the theoretical evidence found and the importance of the subject in the business field, there are no empirical studies that evaluate the relationship of experiential marketing with online engagement, so it is imperative to strengthen this area of knowledge by conducting empirical studies that help to determine the degree of influence between the first variable on the second.

In conclusion, this research work responds to the need of companies, mainly in the fashion sector, to differentiate themselves in an increasingly competitive online environment due to the oversupply of goods, both tangible and intangible, that leads them to have a long-term competitive advantage, thereby generating a greater

probability of survival and profitability, and this can be achieved if they develop an approach to experiential marketing and pay attention to consumer behaviour and purchasing habits, which have changed dramatically being more reflective now, and eager to actively participate with brands and live pleasant experiences; brands that do not understand that the consumer is in this search will be doomed to failure.

This need that companies have to provide consumers with pleasant experiences becomes more relevant so the online engagement can be generated between them, constituting a long-term competitive advantage, a difficult situation to achieve in a globalized and highly competitive world.

Despite the theoretical evidence found and the business significance of the subject, it can be considered that companies in the fashion sector with an online presence have little experience in experiential marketing, in addition to the widespread ignorance of online engagement regarding to its concept and dimensions, so it is imperative to strengthen this area, improving companies' prospects for success, which constitutes one of the main contributions of this work.

Based on the foregoing, this research is based on an in-depth understanding of online consumer behaviour through an empirical study whose objective is to analyze the influence of experiential marketing on online consumer engagement in the fashion sector of the City of Aguascalientes. The variables that make up the proposed theoretical model are: Experiential marketing and online engagement. This model establishes the possible relationship between these variables, which are supported by the scientific literature consulted and which is presented below.

For decades, the marketing study had remained unchanged until the importance of emotional impact on consumer purchasing decisions began to be evaluated in the 1980s through studies on hedonic, aesthetic and symbolic consumption. (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982). In this model it was highlighted that consumers direct their consumption both rationally and emotionally by being in search of fantasies (imagination or unconscious desires, feelings (positive emotions) and fun (hedonism derived from pleasurable activities and entertainment). They were the first to noted that companies must improve not only their physical attributes of products, but also focus on generating experiences for consumers when they are in contact with products, since in the experience resides the power to generate emotions.

In this sense, Novak, Hoffman and Duhachek (2003) affirm that the nature of the consumer experience has been extensively studied in traditional settings (Holbrook and Hirshman, 1982; Unger and Kernan, 1983; Hirschman, 1984; Havlena and Holbrook, 1986; Mano and Oliver, 1993), mainly focused on the impact of the environment of a commercial establishment and the type of product that is commercialized in the imaginative, emotional and evaluative responses of the consumption experience.

Almost a decade later, books such as those by Schmitt and Simonson (1997) began to be published about the incorporation of marketing sensory experiences in products or brands that contribute to the organization's identity or brand recognition; or other theoretical studies such as those carried out by Pine and Gilmore (1998),

who assured that there is a new economic context called "Economy of Experiences" which consists of generating economic value through four stages: commodities, goods, services and experiences.

But the term Experiential Marketing had not been recognised until Schmitt (1999) resumed these works one year later and carried out a comparative analysis of traditional marketing and experiential marketing, providing a broad strategic framework on this topic, being one of the most representative researchers of this area. From his perspective, consumers are emotional and rational beings who do not choose a product or service only because of its cost-benefit ratio, but are concerned with obtaining pleasant experiences before, during and after their purchase or consumption.

It is important to highlight that Schmitt was the one who proposed that organizations put experiential marketing into practice through five strategic modules (MEE) that include sensory experiences (sensation), emotional experiences (feeling), creative cognitive experiences (thinking), physical, behavioural and lifestyle experiences (action) and experiences of social identification resulting from interaction with a reference group or culture (identification). It also defines that a brand can implement these experiences from experience providers (ExPros) such as communication, visual and verbal identity, product, presence, electronic media, etc. Experiential marketing seeks to create holistic experiences and replace the functional values of a product or service.

Although this concept initially emerged in the United States, little by little it has been taking interest in Europe, mainly in countries like Spain. Authors such as Lenderman (2008) take up what Schmitt (1999) mentioned and contribute to the definition of experiential marketing by affirming that it is a comprehensive marketing strategy through which companies provide consumers with organized experiences before, during and after purchase, favouring sensory and emotional connections to create a bit of magic.

In this way, it can be affirmed that Experiential Marketing has as its main objective to manage in a planned and intentional way the stimuli that the consumer receives at the different points of contact or interaction with the company in order to provide him, besides the goods or services that constitute the core of its offer a superior, original and pleasant experiences through the provision of experiential benefits (Pine and Gilmore, 1998; Schmitt, 1999; Mathwick, Malhotra and Rigdon, 2001; Moreira, Fortes and Santiago, 2017).

In the last decade, authors such as Schmitt (2003) and Meyer and Schwager (2007) have developed the concept of "Customer Experience Management" as a new level to generate value for both companies and consumers; Customer value cannot be reduced to the functionality-price ratio of a product, but add emotional benefits to consumers first and subtract financial and non-financial burdens, thereby strengthening customer loyalty through the generation of holistic experiences (Berry, Carbone and Haeckel, 2002). An important part of the value proposition to customers, which is recognized by them, is related to the characteristics of the experience; regardless of the environment, customers want to live positive

consumption experiences (Gentile, Spiller and Noci, 2007).

Recently, both theoretical and empirical studies have aimed to study the effectiveness of sensory stimulation in the brand experience, persuasion and purchase intention (De Garcillán, 2015; Moreira et al., 2017), the efficiency of experiential marketing as an innovation and competitiveness strategy (Sandoval, 2017), its importance at the point of sale (Magro, 2013), its effects on communication (Segura and Garriga, 2008; Cerezo, 2015), its relationship with the satisfaction of clients (Alvitres and Burga, 2018; Castro, 2019) as well as its impact on loyalty (Delgado, 2018; Quispe, 2018) and its influence on image (Farías and Miller, 2019).

In Mexico, and specifically in Aguascalientes, there is no study on experiential marketing in an online environment, which strengthens the conduct of this empirical study by contributing to the field of knowledge of this discipline in these contexts. Next, the background of online engagement will be discussed.

According to Hollebeek (2011), the origins of the concept of engagement go back to studies carried out in disciplines other than marketing, such as sociology, psychology and business organization, mainly focused on engagement with employees. In this way, the literature review indicates that it is a new topic in the field of marketing (Brodie et al., 2013) and that despite the fact that the concept began to be studied from 2005 with some authors such as Patterson, Yu and De Ruyter (2006) who studied the concept of consumer engagement in the field of services, so far there is no broad theoretical basis for the concept.

In relation to this, Vivek et al. (2012) and Brodie et al. (2013) mention that despite the wide use of the term engagement related to brands, the review of the academic literature on engagement reveals that there is no consensus on the nature of the concept and its meaning. Some authors define it as a psychological process (Ilic, 2008; Bowden, 2009), others as a state or intensity levels (Patterson et al., 2006; Hollebeek, 2011; Brodie, Hollebeek, Juric and Ilic, 2011; Vivek et al., 2012); and its role in the field of marketing because it has been little explored; and even more, its dimensions are unknown; if it is multidimensional (Patterson et al., 2006, Ilic, 2008; Bowden, 2009; Van Doorn et al., 2010; Hollebeek, 2011; Vivek et al., 2012), two-dimensional (Mollen and Wilson, 2010) or one-dimensional (Heath, 2007; Spratt, Czellar and Spangenberg 2009).

The aforementioned makes it necessary to carry out studies, not only of an exploratory or descriptive theoretical nature, but empirical studies that allow the concept to be unified and its components to be determined, specifically in the online sphere, the strong drive for engagement marketing by companies has been possible thanks to the Internet's foray into the marketing strategy that allows brands to establish relationships that involve connecting with consumers through different tools such as discussion forums, newsletters, chats, emails, web pages, social networks, blogs, among others, creating interactive experiences like, where and when you want to participate (Domínguez, 2017).

In this sense, Fiore, Kim and Lee (2005) and Nambisan and Baron (2007) are among the first researchers to highlight the need to investigate consumer engagement in the context of the online brand, highlighting the first ones in engagement of the brand within an online context appearing as an instrumental value (utility and relevance) and an experiential value (level of emotional consistency) that are perceived by the consumer. These studies laid the foundations so that some years later Mollen and Wilson (2010) proposed two dimensions: cognitive and affective and defined online engagement.

Interest in online engagement led to Calder, Malthouse, and Schaedel. (2009) to carry out an experimental study of the relationship between online engagement and advertising effectiveness in which they discuss consumer engagement with a website and examine the different types of engagement generated by specific experiences.

Subsequent to these studies of online engagement, researchers suggest that it is a behaviour that goes beyond buying (Van Doorn et al., 2010; Verhoef, Reinartz and Krafft, 2010; Wei, Miao and Huang, 2013; Jaakkola and Alexander, 2014), others that emphasize that co-creation is an engagement behaviour (Grissemann and Stokburger-Sauer, 2012; Jaakkola and Alexander, 2014) and some more that address it in contexts of social networks and online communities relating it to variables such as loyalty (Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, 2015; Islam and Rahman, 2017; Bowden, Conduit, Hollebeek, Luoma-aho and Solem, 2017, Harrigan, Evers, Miles and Daly, 2017), the brand image (Islam, Rahman and Hollebeek, 2017, Islam, Rahman and Hollebeek, 2018), and digital representation through symbolic actions (Ballesteros, 2019).

In conclusion, studies of online engagement have been increasing due to its importance; however, it is necessary to deepen the knowledge in this discipline through empirical works that validate or not the proposed theoretical models.

From the review of the literature of theoretical-empirical studies, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Experiential marketing directly and positively influences consumer engagement online in the fashion sector of the City of Aguascalientes.

2. Research Methodology

It starts from the review of the existing scientific literature with the aim of identifying the research problem and proposing the general objective and hypotheses to be tested, which led to the approach of the theoretical model on which this research focuses. In figure 1, you can see the steps that were followed for the development of this research and that are described below:

The present investigation is multistage because it involved five phases. The first step to carry out the research consisted of a review of the existing scientific literature, managing to identify important antecedents of the variables and current situation in which companies are in the online environment, which was integrated into the

problem statement to give greater context to the investigation and thus be able to delimit the problem of the same. On the other hand, an important part of this research on secondary data served to build the theoretical framework of the study, which refers to the next phase that was developed. After that, the basic theoretical model was designed, the general objective and the hypothesis were proposed.

To measure the study variables presented in the model, an instrument was designed from the adaptation of scales that were previously tested in other contexts individually. Once the instrument was developed, it was subjected to a pilot test to corroborate the adequate understanding of each of the items that make it up, applying it to 10 study subjects.

As a result of this test, the changes made to the instrument according to the suggestions issued by the participants were as follows:

- The introduction and instructions placed at the beginning of the instrument were reduced due to the fact that the respondents manifested confusion and tedium in them.
- The wording of some questions that the study subjects did not fully understand was corrected, such as the one that makes reference to the "sensory perspective", replacing these words with "stimulates the senses".
- The fifth section that was originally proposed corresponding to the identification of the Socioeconomic Level established by the Mexican Association of Market Intelligence and Opinion [AMAI] (2018) was eliminated and instead the approximate monthly income of the respondent was added in the first section of the questionnaire with the intention of outlining the respondent from the beginning and not making it extensive.
- The Likert scale was reduced to 5 points in those items that had 7 points, this in order to standardize the evaluation criteria and make the evaluation easier for the participant. Once these changes were made, no other need for correction was detected.

According to INEGI (2017) through the Statistical and Geographical Yearbook of Aguascalientes in its 2017 version and AMVO (2017; 2018), the universe corresponds to 1,266 online consumers between 20 and 34 years old in the city's fashion sector from Aguascalientes, so a probabilistic sample was calculated from it using the formula for finite populations, with a confidence level of 95% and a $\pm 5\%$ sampling error, thus obtaining a sample size of 295 people. However, 440 valid questionnaires were obtained.

From the applied questionnaires, a database was created in the SPSS 23.0 software, through which the descriptive analysis of the sample used was generated. Subsequently, this database was migrated to the EQS 6.4 software to perform a confirmatory factor analysis (AFC) to corroborate the validity and reliability of the scales, firstly subjecting an AFC to each construct that makes up the theoretical model individually and finally, the same analysis was performed on the integrated model with all its variables.

It is important to point out that as part of the AFC process, a purification of the items raised at the beginning was carried out to measure each variable until obtaining the goodness of fit indexes recommended by the literature. Immediately, and once the refined scales were obtained, we proceeded to carry out the analysis of structural equations that allowed us to test the hypotheses of this investigation. Finally, the empirical results obtained, analysis and discussion are presented, as well as the conclusions and recommendations of the study.

Now, one of the most notable contributions of the article in the methodological plane, in the first instance, is the design and application of an instrument made up of scales that have been previously tested in isolation in other contexts, and not together. As in this case, to measure the two variables that arise in the theoretical model: experiential marketing and online engagement.

In addition to the above, another contribution to the methodological question is the application of the multivariate statistical analysis technique better known as "structural equation modeling", which allows the comparison of models in which causal relationships between variables are considered, estimating the effect they have on each other. Although this technique is not new, much less proposed by the author, it has been widely used in research in recent years. The following table shows the technical information of the empirical research:

Table 1: Technical data sheet of the research

TECHNICAL DATA SHEET OF THE INVESTIGATION	
Nature of the investigation	Correlational-Causal and transversal quantitative
Collection technique	Electronic survey with structured questionnaire application whose sampling was by snowball.
Geographical scope	Aguascalientes city
Population	1,266 online consumers from 20 to 34 years old in the fashion sector of the City of Aguascalientes.
Study subject	Online consumers from 20 to 34 years old in the fashion sector of the City of Aguascalientes.
Sample	440 people
Pilot test	Application of the instrument to 10 consumers.
Quantitative investigation	Application of the instrument made up of 5-point Likert-type measurement scales and a general information section.
Data collection and field work	Electronic survey applied in the month of September 2019
Analysis of data	SPSS 23.0 and EQS 6.4 software were used Descriptive analysis of the sample used were performed. Carrying out a confirmatory factor analysis to check the reliability and validity of the instrument used. Carrying out modeling using the structural equations technique to test the research hypotheses.

Source: Own elaboration

3. Main Results

3.1 Descriptive analysis

3.1.1 Profile of the online consumer in the fashion sector of the City of Aguascalientes.

Once the results of the descriptive statistics of some variables have been obtained and analyzed, the profile of the online consumer in the fashion sector of the City of Aguascalientes can be described as follows.

It is defined that the gender of the consumer is female, being a woman between 20 and 24 years old, with an undergraduate or engineering education and approximate monthly income between \$ 0 and \$ 6,799.00. In the last six months, she bought two to five times, mainly for comfort and practicality, variety of products and their promotions. She prefers to make her purchases alone from a Smartphone once she is at home. She mainly buys clothes in stores like Amazon, Mercado Libre and Sheln, investing an amount of \$ 201.00 to \$ 1,000.00.

3.1.2 Descriptive analysis of the variable Experiential Marketing

According to the results obtained in the empirical research, an average of 3.71 is obtained for the cognitive dimension, 3.16 for the affective one, 2.93 in the case of the behavioural one, 3.34 for the social dimension and, finally, the sensory dimension reached an average of 3.93, the latter being the dimension of the experiential marketing construct that obtained the highest average, as established in Table 2.

From the above data, it can be deduced that consumers of online fashion items agree by pointing out that the website through which they made their last purchase stimulates their senses. On the contrary, the dimension that had the lowest mean was that of behaviour (2.93), a value close to 3, which, according to the Likert scale used, can ensure that consumer opinion is neutral regarding their behaviour, that is to say, it does not motivate them to take action, but it does not discourage them either.

Now, when looking at the data in this same table, it is identified that the minimum value of the behaviour dimension is closest to 2 (2.26), which allows us to infer that some of the consumers disagree that the website invite actions. On the other hand, the maximum value of the sensory dimension confirms that consumers agree that the e-commerce site affects their senses.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics by factor of experiential marketing

Factor	Frequency	Minimum	Maximum	Media
Sensorial	440	3.80	4.26	3.93
Cognitive	440	3.49	4.11	3.71
Affective	440	2.78	3.40	3.16
Behavior	440	2.26	3.29	2.93
Social	440	3.20	3.58	3.34

Source: Own elaboration based on the results of the research.

3.1.3 Descriptive analysis of the Engagement Online variable

The results obtained from the means of the factors that make up online engagement are shown in Table 3, observing that social facilitation is the one that obtained a higher media than those that measure personal engagement, as its value reached was 3.01, and can be infer with this that the online consumer has a neutral opinion about if the websites provide a topic of conversation with other people. For its part, the average value of self-esteem and civility was 2.44, a situation that allows us to deduce that the consumer disagrees that by visiting and / or buying on these websites, makes him or her a better person.

Considering the factors that make up social-interactive engagement, it is estimated that participation and socialization is the one that obtained a lower media, which is close to number 3 established in the Likert scale used (2.68) and from which infers

that consumers are neutral about the amount of time they spend socializing on the website. In the same way, although the average of the utilitarian factor is the highest (3.09), it remains in a neutral sense, assuming from this that the consumer does not agree or disagree that the website visited helps them make good decisions.

Finally, it is important to note that both the minimum and maximum values of all the factors are aligned towards a neutral opinion, at best, or towards an opinion of disagreement on the part of the consumer, so companies must work on these aspects to achieve online engagement with the customer.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics by factor of engagement online

Factor	Frequency	Minimum	Maximum	Media
Stimulation and inspiration	440	2.66	3.23	2.95
Social facilitation	440	2.92	3.06	3.01
Temporal	440	2.31	2.97	2.58
Self-esteem and citizenship	440	2.34	2.56	2.44
Intrinsic enjoyment	440	2.78	3.13	3.01
Utilitarian	440	3.01	3.33	3.09
Participation and socialization	440	2.48	3.15	2.68
Community	440	2.75	3.32	3.01

Source: Own elaboration based on the results of the research.

3.2 Analysis of structural equations

Once the reliability and validity tests have been carried out for each of the scales used and that make up the proposed theoretical model, the results obtained are presented according to the analysis of the System of Structural Equations (SEM) using the maximum method plausibility, for which the EQS 6.4 and SPSS 23.0 software were used. The results obtained are given based on the statistical treatment of the sample corresponding to 440 research subjects.

The research model is made up of two variables that present different levels of complexity, since none of them is observed, that is, they can be measured directly, on the contrary, they are all not observed (latent variables), making reference with this because its measurement is given from specific dimensions and factors that give evidence of it (Kerlinger, 1988). Thus, the latent variables of this model are experiential marketing and online engagement. The directly measurable variables or factors, which allow the measurement of latent variables, are known as manifest or observable variables or factors, so that through these, loads are obtained that directly pay for the measurement of an unobserved variable.

Thus, once the theoretical model was supported by the theory, it was subjected to an analysis that corroborates the hypotheses proposed based on the testing of the

sample variances and covariances, conformed with the parameters of the theoretical model. Part of the basic analysis generated by the EQS 6.4 software is the consideration of the following indicators that allow determining the good fit of a structural model, as can be seen in Table 4.

Table 4: Index of goodness of fit

VALIDITY MEASURES	RECOMMENDED LEVELS	
Cronbach's Alpha	> 0.70	Nunnally y Bernstein, 1994
Composite Reliability Index (CRI)	> 0.70	Fornell y Lacker, 1981
Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	> 0.50	Fornell y Lacker, 1981
Standardized factor loading "t"	> 0.60	Bagozzi y Yi, 1988
ADJUSTMENT MEASURES	RECOMMENDED LEVELS	
Fit Index (IFI)	> 0.90 on proven scales > 0.80 on new scales	Bentler, 2006 Segars y Grove, 1993 Hair, Anderson, Tatham y Black, 1998
Non Normed ed Fit Index (NNFI)	> 0.90 on proven scales > 0.80 on new scales	Bentler, 2006 Segars y Grove, 1993
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	> 0.90 on proven scales > 0.80 on new scales	Bentler, 2006 Segars y Grove, 1993
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	< 0.08 acceptable fit	Steiger, 1990

Source: Own elaboration.

3.2.1 Direct effects between the variables that make up the theoretical model

Next, the results of the structural analysis regarding the direct effects between the two variables that make up the theoretical model are shown in Table 5, in correspondence with the hypothesis proposed in the present investigation.

Table 5: Direct effects between the variables that make up the theoretical model

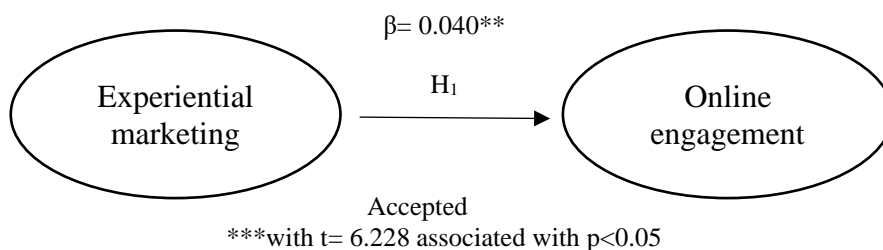
HYPOTHESIS	STRUCTURAL RELATION	STANDARDIZED COEFFICIENT (β)	VALUE t	CRITERION
H ₁	Experiential Marketing ↓ Engagement online	0.040**	6.228	Accepted

N= 440 ***p<0.01; **p<0.05; *p<0.1
S-B X² (p) = 15842.259 (0.00000), df= 7187; NFI = 0.741; NNFI = 0.822; CFI = 0.837; IFI = 0.840; GFI = 0.621; AGFI = 0.578; RMSA = 0.052

Source: Own elaboration based on the results of the research.

Taking into account the results obtained from the analysis of the direct effect between the variables of the proposed model where the factor load is significant ** $p < 0.05$ and the value of t is 2.57, it can be seen that in hypothesis H₁ that links to experiential marketing and the online engagement of consumers in the fashion sector of the City of Aguascalientes, the effect of the former, although positive, on the latter, is not highly significant ($\beta = 0.040$, $t = 6.228$), given that its influence only represents the 4% of the total to consider in order to assume a robust influence. However, the value of " t " is greater than 2.5, so this hypothesis is not rejected. The values obtained in this link allow us to establish that experiential marketing influences directly and positively the online engagement of the consumer in the fashion sector of the City of Aguascalientes.

Figure 1 presents the model shown graphically with the values of the direct effects of the variables according to the aforementioned table.

**Figure 1: Experiential marketing-online engagement relationship**

Source: Own elaboration based on the results of the research.

3.2.2 R² results obtained from the structural analysis of the model

Another evaluation criterion of the proposed model is the use of the determination coefficient (R²), which according to Hair, Bush and Ortinau (2010) is a statistical measure of the goodness of fit or reliability of the model estimated to the data, which estimates the predictive power, indicates the proportion of the total variation in the dependent variable, that is, it measures the explanatory capacity of the estimated model. Therefore, the values of R² must be as high as possible so that they can have explanatory capacity.

In relation to this, some authors have established parameters for measuring R², including Falk and Miller (1992) who propose a minimum value of 0.10; or Chin (1998) which suggests that the values 0.19 for R², they have a weak explanatory capacity, but if they are 0.33 or higher, their explanatory capacity is increased to moderate and, finally, if as a result values greater than 0.67 are obtained, then a substantial explanatory capacity is established.

Based on the values proposed by Chin (1998), this section explains the values obtained in the analysis of the structural model through the coefficient of determination of R². As observed in Table 5, the results show that there is explanatory capacity in R² in the relationship, obtaining weak levels in the relationship between experiential marketing and online engagement (0.16%).

Table 5: R² results obtained from the structural analysis of the model

EXPLANATORY VARIABLES	VARIABLE EXPLAINED	R ²
Experiential marketing	Online engagement	0.16%

Source: Own elaboration based on the results of the research.

4. Discussion

The main objective of experiential marketing is the planned and intentional management of the stimuli that the consumer receives at the different points of contact or interaction with the company in order to provide them with superior, original and pleasant experiences by providing experiential benefits together with the goods or services that form the core of their offer (Pine and Gilmore, 1998, 1999; Schmitt, 1999; Mathwick *et al.*, 2001).

Therefore, experiential marketing is a marketing approach that conceives the consumer as a rational and emotional human being who cares about achieving pleasant experiences and no longer chooses a product or service only for the cost-benefit ratio, but for the experience that it offers you before, during and after your purchase or consumption (Schmitt, 1999). This definition maintains consistency with the results presented in this doctoral thesis.

In addition to the above, the results obtained are also consistent with the findings found in the studies by Schmitt (1999) and Pine and Gilmore (1999), who consider that the consumer now does not choose a product or service due to its tangible or utilitarian aspects, but for the experiences that consumers live in a commercial

atmosphere (De la Morena, 2016), having a fundamental role in determining consumer preferences, which later influence purchasing decisions (Gentile *et al.*, 2007) favouring the acquisition of products (De la Morena, 2016) in a variety of settings (Brakus, Schmitt and Zarantonello, 2009), both offline and online.

On the other hand, there is theoretical and empirical evidence of the positive and direct relationship between both variables (Ledoux, 1978; Tan and Sutherland, 2004; Damásio, 2005; Ha and Perks, 2005; Gentile *et al.*, 2007; Morrison and Crane, 2007; Calder *et al.*, 2009; Van Doorn *et al.* 2010; Zarantonello and Schmitt, 2010; Mollen and Wilson, 2010; Iglesias, Singh and Batista-Foguet., 2011; Brodie *et al.*, 2011; Vivek *et al.* , 2012; Moral and Fernández, 2012; Ishida and Taylor, 2012; Nysveen, Pedersen and Skard, 2013; Nysveen and Pedersen, 2014; Khan and Rahman, 2015; De la Morena, 2016; De Aguilera y Baños, 2017; Domínguez, 2017).

The results obtained from this relationship coincide with investigations such as those of Gentile *et al.* (2007), who demonstrated in their study the relevance of the customer experience, stating that the customer seeks to live positive experiences regardless of the context (offline or online) and that they promote the generation of an emotional bond between the organization and the consumer, this link being understood as engagement according to some of its definitions.

For their part, the results are also consistent with Brodie *et al.* (2011), who conclude that online engagement is a psychological state that happens through the interactive and co-creative experiences of consumers with a brand on their website (Calder *et al.*, 2009) or other computer mediated entities, generating Thus, different levels of commitment within service relationships that create value beyond purchasing (Patterson *et al.*, 2006; Vivek *et al.*, 2012; Hollebeek, 2011; Van Doorn *et al.*, 2010; Mollen and Wilson, 2010).

Remember that experiential marketing focuses on creating value for the consumer through the generation of experiences that brands provide them in addition to products or services, being very important that experiences are pleasant before, during and after the purchase, using for this to the conception of strategic experiential modules proposed by Schmitt (1999) that arise from the dimensions that comprise it.

In this sense, the results obtained in this study show a positive relationship between experiential marketing and online engagement, which is why companies in the fashion sector must create experiential websites through MEEs to generate a positive impact on online engagement in the consumer of the City of Aguascalientes, coinciding these results with the aforementioned scientific investigations, establishing a significant relationship between these variables.

Therefore, taking as reference the definitions, previous investigations and the results obtained in the present investigation, H3 is accepted. In other words, H3: Experiential marketing influences directly and positively the online engagement of the consumer in the fashion sector of the City of Aguascalientes. However, one aspect to consider is that, although there is a direct and positive relationship between both variables, it is not substantial.

5. Conclusion

Regarding the definition of experiential marketing, several authors' proposals can be found in the literature, but based on their analysis, it was identified that they coincide in their foundations, from which the most convenient concept in this research could be determined. Thus, the approach with which the present investigation was worked was conceiving it as the planned and intentional management of the stimuli that the consumer receives at the different points of contact or interaction with the company in order to provide superior, original and pleasant experiences through the provision of experiential benefits together with the goods or services that constitute the core of its offer (Mathwick *et al.*, 2001; Pine and Gilmore, 1998, 1999; Schmitt, 1999).

To measure this variable in empirical research, the scale designed by Schmitt (1999) and Brakus *et al.* (2009) and used by Fernández and Delgado (2011), which was adapted in its writing, reduced from 7 points to 5 points on the Likert scale and made up of 35 items in total. It should be noted that 1 item had to be removed to obtain an adjusted model. This scale has been validated and has consistent reliability in other geographical contexts, so a reliability and validity analysis had to be carried out for the present investigation, obtaining positive results, which allows establishing a precedent for future studies on the topic. In this way, it is possible to conclude that the affective dimension is the one that most explains experiential marketing.

Likewise, according to previous studies of online engagement, which arose primarily from the offline environment, and in recent years, some of the online context, a definition was proposed considering it as a vehicle for creating and maintaining relationships between the consumer and company characterized by being a psychological state that happens under certain conditions that depend on the context in which the interactive and co-creative experiences of consumers with a brand are developed, whether on a website or other computer mediated entities, thus generating different levels of commitment within service relationships that create value beyond purchase (Patterson *et al.*, 2006; Vivek *et al.*, 2012; Hollebeek, 2011; Van Doorn *et al.*, 2010; Mollen and Wilson, 2010; Brodie *et al.*, 2011).

The literature suggests (Calder *et al.*, 2009) that online engagement is a second-order construct made up of two first-order ones: personal and social-interactive; and multidimensional: Stimulation and Inspiration, social facilitation, temporal, self-esteem and civility, intrinsic enjoyment, utilitarian, participation and socialization and community. For the purposes of analysing this construct, the scale proposed by Calder *et al.* (2009) composed of 37 items that measure the eight dimensions of online engagement, which was subjected to an analysis of reliability and validity, obtaining favourable results.

In accordance with the general objective, after performing the analysis of the scientific literature, it can be asserted that there is a positive and direct relationship between experiential marketing and online engagement. The results confirm that experiential marketing influences online engagement.

Regarding the results obtained from the analysis of the hypothesis formulated, the existence of support is observed that indicates a direct and positive influence of experiential marketing on online engagement, and therefore to accept said hypothesis when obtaining values of $\beta = 0.040$, with a $p < 0.05$, conclusive from a value $t = 6,228$, that is, that the experiential marketing provided by the websites of the fashion sector is explaining 4% of the online engagement of the consumer in the fashion sector of the City of Aguascalientes, being a meaningful relationship.

This contribution to knowledge coincides with what was mentioned by De Aguilera and Baños (2017) in an online context, when they affirm that the current marketing practice is aimed at being experiential and having as one of its main objectives the search for engagement. In the same way, the results corroborate that unique experiences make the senses and emotions flourish, increasing the level of memory, attention and engagement (Ledoux, 1973; Damásio, 2005), so the more positive the experience that a brand provides to the consumer in an environment, the stronger the connection between these actors is, increasing engagement (De la Morena, 2016).

Likewise, the results are also consistent with the conclusions of De la Mora (2016) by demonstrating that the use of experiential and sensory stimuli influence consumer engagement with brands in online advertising environments. In this sense, the results indicate the relationship between experiential marketing and online engagement in a different environment than advertising, revealing another contribution to the knowledge.

On the other hand, the results are partially consistent with what Zarantonello and Schmitt (2010) proposed in their study of brand experience to predict consumer behaviour, in which they identify a group of holistic consumers who prefer brands that provide them with sensory, affective and cognitive (holistic) experiences and induce behavioural engagement, leaving aside this approach of behavioural and relational experiences of experiential marketing as proposed in this article.

Therefore, it is necessary to consider the R^2 value of the proposed model since it can explain to what extent the consumer's online engagement of goods purchased in an online environment is jointly impacted by experiential marketing and the online shopping experience, being 0.16%, so it is concluded that in the proposed model experiential marketing shows a direct influence on online engagement.

5.1 Implications

From the results obtained, it is possible to conclude that this research provides a series of methodological, theoretical and business implications in relation to experiential marketing and online engagement in companies dedicated to the online sales of tangible goods through the behaviour of the consumer of articles of fashion purchased via the Internet, highlighting that at the date of the present study, no evidence of empirical research was found regarding the online marketing of fashion items in Mexico and Aguascalientes. For this reason, the following implications emerge from the theoretical, empirical and context analysis:

This research contributes to the development of future studies by researchers who contribute knowledge in the same line of research, specifically in the local context since, as mentioned from the beginning, in Aguascalientes and Mexico there is no history of research both theoretical as empirical that deepen the study of the variables involved and their relationship, so the present will serve as an antecedent to even relate these variables to others.

Academic enrichment and constant updating of students and professionals in marketing is an essential aspect that will benefit from the dissemination of the results of this study, since, as demonstrated at the beginning, websites require consumers to offer experiences and brands seek to engage with the consumer; however, lacking the theoretical support and empirical knowledge on the part of the professionals in the area, mistakes will continue to be made to avoid reaching the goals set by the companies, so it is recommended that higher education institutions enrich their plans and programs through the knowledge and skills in these disciplines.

Related to the previous point, it is also recommended to strengthen the link between the business sector and the universities by entering into agreements that promote the training of human capital in the productive sector in those institutions, in topics such as experiential marketing and online engagement.

On the other hand, according to the results obtained, practical proposals can be made to those companies that already carry out or want to carry out e-commerce of fashion items, and also to all those companies that sell their products through a website, regardless of the business they are in. These recommendations will be aimed at improving the performance of organizations and obtaining long-term sustainable competitive advantages in terms of executing experiential marketing strategies and online engagement.

Initially, companies should consider developing a relationship marketing approach with the objective of building long-term satisfactory relationships with the consumer as a priority, beyond concentrating their efforts on attracting new customers. In this way, organizations will benefit from the efficiency of resources and acquisition of greater income in the long term, in addition to strengthening their image and achieving brand promoters, all of which translated into obtaining a competitive profitable advantage.

Secondly, it is recommended that companies that sell fashion articles on the Internet and those that sell any type of goods online, increase their material, economic, creative and human resources training to design their website according to consumer needs.

In this sense, it is necessary to establish strategies aimed at providing the consumer with sensory, affective, cognitive, behavioural and social experiences, specifically affective and social, that allow endowing the consumer with experiential marketing in an online environment: trigger feelings and awaken emotions, motivate them to participate and interact with other consumers, seeking the generation of true virtual communities, for which you must also assign a space within your website to their official community, as well as incorporate links to their respective social networks,.

By making these kinds of efforts, brands will develop experiential websites with a positive impact on the online shopping experience and indirectly on consumer online engagement.

It is also important for companies that its website reflects the values of the consumer and makes them feel better as a human being, so they must take care that all the stimuli, visual and auditory, that can be provided to the consumer, maintain a concordance with the philosophy of the customer otherwise, they will not generate engagement with the client. If the consumer feels that the website is contributing to their growth as a person, then they will have more confidence in it to visit and buy. The aforementioned can be achieved if organizations have a deep understanding of their market profile.

Likewise, they must increase their strategies so that the consumer has an interest in visiting the e-commerce website at all times, that they begin their day by visiting it, receive news from it and make it part of their daily life, the above with the intention that through these strategies an online engagement can be generated. In order to achieve the above, it is necessary for companies to carry out market research and make use of data mining to detect consumer needs and, in addition, through digital marketing and direct marketing strategies, send them news, advice, promotions and even design loyalty plans.

Definitely, if an e-commerce organization wants to generate online engagement with the consumer, it is essential that the design and creation of the website involve experiential marketing activities and, above all, manage to generate online purchases to be more effective.

5.2 Future lines of research

Firstly, based on the idea that the present study was carried out specifically in the fashion sector, it would be interesting for future research to replicate the model proposed in this doctoral thesis, but now assessing a context of purchasing goods of a utilitarian nature such as those of electronics and / or household appliances, health; or intangible assets in which the user seeks functional benefits, such as messaging and parcel services, educational, financial and / or government. This could lead to a comparative analysis of various business sectors that leads to generalizing online consumer behaviour.

As another alternative in this regard, it is worth mentioning that in future research, in addition to the applied instrument, the consumer could undergo neuromarketing techniques to contrast their textual responses with those found unconsciously in the individual and thus measure their emotions more precisely.

Finally, some other theoretical constructs could also be added to the model, such as loyalty, which was reflected both in the formulation of the hypotheses and in the theoretical framework, as a consequence of online engagement.

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