



User engagement on global social networks: Examining the roles of perceived brand globalness, identification and global identity

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Active and passive user engagement
Brand globalness
Global identity
User identification
Social networks

ABSTRACT

Building on the global branding literature, brand relationship theory and social identity theory, this study investigates the relationship between perceived brand globalness (PBG) and user engagement (active/passive) on global social networks (GSN). Additionally, the study investigates the mediating effects of two distinct forms of user identification (i.e., user identification with the GSN brand and user identification with the GSN community) as well as the moderating effects of user global identity on the relationship between PBG and user engagement with such brands. Covariance-based structural equation modeling was used to analyse data collected from users of a GSN (i.e., Facebook) in the United Kingdom (UK) and India. The results indicate that PBG significantly influences both active and passive user engagement. This relationship is mediated by users' identification with a GSN brand and community. Additionally, the findings indicate that the associations between PBG and user engagement (active/passive) on GSN vary as a function of users' global identity. The results also demonstrate some country-specific variations in key relationships. Finally, the study offers useful recommendations for social media managers to rethink and redesign their user engagement strategies, keeping in mind global cultural diversity.

1. Introduction

The internet and digital transformation have facilitated the growth of several emergent brands in global markets (He and Wang, 2015; Vial, 2019). As a result, vast populations in developing economies have been exposed to global brands. Huge prospects in the global markets and limitations in the domestic markets have allowed many brands to expand internationally and penetrate global markets (Makri et al., 2019; Swoboda et al., 2012). The globalness of these brands renders them resilient to the vagaries of the market (Hassan et al., 2015). Perceived brand globalness (PBG) refers to users believing that “the brand is marketed in multiple countries and is generally recognized as global in these countries” (Steenkamp et al., 2003, p. 54).

Due to the breadth of social engagement and connection opportunities, social networking sites have become a vital part of consumers' daily lives. Social networking sites provide consumers with plenty of

opportunities to interact with global brands and community. In contrast to physical brands, digital brands, particularly social networking sites, lack traits such as tangibility, which is a critical concern for customers when it comes to global or local businesses (Davvetas and Diamantopoulos, 2016). Despite the recognised significance of global brands in shaping global consumer culture and their buying preferences, research on the influence of PBG on consumers' choices for global/local brands, particularly digital businesses, is limited (Bartsch et al., 2016). Global branding research has primarily focused on customers' preferences for global/local material products, with little attention paid to digital global brands, notably social media networks (Makri et al., 2019).

Global social media networks (GSNs) have attracted increasing attention in recent years due to their ability to promote two-way communication and interaction. For global brands, this has made GSNs even more important because they let businesses interact with

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<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2022.121771>

Received 30 December 2021; Received in revised form 22 May 2022; Accepted 24 May 2022

Available online 1 June 2022

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their customers, who can then become co-creators of value by commenting on, evaluating, and sharing information about their brands on the web (Bhimani et al., 2019; Dwivedi et al., 2021a; Tandon et al., 2021). Social media platforms provide ideal opportunities for brand-related promotion, customer-led content generation and product innovations, and customer participation in the knowledge development process (Dolan et al., 2016). While social media, due to its interactive nature, is an important platform for boosting customer engagement (Hinson et al., 2019), little is known about the drivers of customer engagement in global social networks (Liu et al., 2019; Santos et al., 2022). Moreover, it is unclear how consumers' perceptions of brand globalness translate into their engagement on global social media platforms such as Facebook. Therefore, this study seeks to examine how and why consumers' perceptions of a brand's globalness influence their active and passive engagement on global social media networks such as Facebook.

Further, literature points towards the importance of users' identification with the global social networks' (GSN) brand and the community. Sichtmann et al. (2019) argue that perceived brand globalness has a positive effect on brand identification which in turn strengthens purchase intention. While prior research has shown that customer identification with brands results in a wide range of benefits such as increased positive word of mouth, higher repurchase intentions, brand preference and customer loyalty (see Sichtmann et al., 2019), there is a lack of empirical research examining customer engagement as an outcome of customer-brand identification (Popp and Wilson, 2018; So et al., 2017). Given the significance of customer engagement for sustaining competitive advantage, especially online (Bozkurt et al., 2021), research is required to understand if significant resource investments in building customer identification with a brand/community in global social networks, result in greater user engagement.

While consumer groups with a favourable attitude towards globalisation and global consumer culture are defined by a global identity, those with a negative attitude towards globalisation and global consumer culture are defined by lack of a global identity (Bartsch et al., 2016; Zhang and Khare, 2009). A global identity develops when an individual identifies with all of humankind and perceives themselves to be a citizen of the world (Cannon and Yaprak, 2002). Since consumers with a global identity tend to have a more positive view towards globalisation and show more interest in global events (Makri et al., 2019), the effects of PBG on GSN users' active and passive engagement may not manifest equally among all users: those with higher levels of global identity may be more receptive towards globalisation and thus may react more positively. To address this critical issue, our study explores the moderating effects of user global identity on the relationship between PBG and GSN users' engagement.

Drawing on brand globalness, global identity theory, brand relationship theory and GSN literature, this study develops a theoretical framework that enables consumers' active and passive engagement on GSN to be analyzed and understood. This study offers prospective academic and contextual contributions by illustrating the implications of users' perceived brand globalness, identification and global identity on user engagement through a cross cultural comparative analysis. *First*, this study contributes to the relevant international branding literature by examining the yet unexplored issue of how and why PBG influences consumers' engagement on GSN. *Second*, the study provides a path of theoretically motivated relationships that aims to explain how the decomposition of user identification, in terms of users' identification with GSN brand and GSN community, predicts their engagement in GSN. This is a topic that we believe needs more research to provide a fine-grained understanding of the influence of user identification on engagement in GSN. *Third*, the study investigates the moderating role of user global identity on the effects of PBG on users' active and passive engagement and advances our understanding of individual variations in user engagement. *Finally*, we test our conceptual framework in both developed (the UK) and developing (India) countries to provide a more

nuanced understanding of user engagement on GSN. From a practical perspective, this study provides guidance for digital brand managers seeking to increase consumer engagement for their global social media brands sites, particularly in emerging markets. Specifically, this study provides useful insights to the marketers of global social media platforms into the key factors that shape passive and active user engagement, and how the identity parameters on their digitally transformed global social media platforms can be addressed.

The remainder of the article is organised into the following sections: Sections 2 and 3 are devoted to theoretical foundations and hypotheses development; Sections 4 and 5 discuss research methodology, data analysis and results; and Sections 6 and 7 cover discussions and conclusions, as well as implications.

2. Literature review

Global social networks (GSN) have transformed the nature of global business in recent years. Businesses are more likely to combine GSN and technology improvements than to keep working on conventional business dynamics (Makri et al., 2021; Özsomer, 2012). These days, with the advancement of GSN and technology, consumers and markets are more integrated than ever. However, recent research suggests that consumers' identity-related antecedents are of greater importance than other traditional variables (Makri et al., 2021; Nysveen, 2005; Thorbjørnsen et al., 2007). Many firms are working on developing identity-related constructs to represent consumers' global orientation and their engagements with GSN (Arnett, 2002; Zhang and Khare, 2009).

Global social networks (GSNs) are becoming more important in establishing a global oriented culture among consumers. These GSNs have all the basic features of global brands, such as global acceptance, availability and desire (Kim et al., 2019; Steenkamp et al., 2003). With these features, GSNs are an attractive means of user identity creation. While there are several studies on the impact of social media on consumer behaviour, academic research on the topic of consumer engagement in global social media is still lacking. This study attempts to reveal identity-related components that are currently under-explained in translating users' active and passive interactions with GSN. Previous research has shown favourable effects of hedonic and utilitarian motivations on users' inclinations to engage via social media (Lin and Lu, 2011; Malik et al., 2016; Sledgianowski and Kulviwat, 2009; Vrabie, 2015; Xu et al., 2012); however, this research has failed to address how the user identification with GSN brand and GSN community influence users' active and passive engagement with GSN. Developing previous research on the subject, this study examines social networking sites' brand globalness as a predictor of users' active and passive engagement on such platforms.

2.1. Perceived brand globalness

The literature offers a plethora of global brand definitions (Akram et al., 2011; Alden et al., 2006; Davvetas et al., 2015; Steenkamp et al., 2003; Strizhakova and Coulter, 2019; Swoboda et al., 2012). Global brands are those that have a physical presence in multiple countries and produce a significant amount of their revenue outside of their native country, or those that are owned by global corporations and marketed uniformly and centrally (Sichtmann et al., 2019; Steenkamp et al., 2003). The concept of digital global brands and how they differ from physical products are critical to our research since they serve as the basis for our analysis. GSNs are an intriguing collection of digital services that act as virtual forums for people with common interests to interact, trade and discuss ideas (Makri et al., 2019). However, there should be a conceptual separation between the usage of GSNs as global brands and the purchase and consumption of other goods and services through social media platforms. According to Denegri-Knott and Molesworth (2010), digital consumption is different from material consumption due to the lack of material substance in the object of consumption. Hence,

the material product category is characterised by certain intrinsic traits, including limited opportunities for social presentation and consequently, social signalling as well as limited exposure. As social signalling and visibility help in understanding global brand preferences (Davvetas and Diamantopoulos, 2016), their limited availability may affect users' engagement. Nonetheless, the motivations for using GSN are similar to those for purchasing tangible consumer items, including obtaining status and prestige and expressing oneself. To further understand the distinction between digital products and digital brands, Makri et al. (2019) propose a useful schematic structure. In their study, the schemata for product categories elaborates a fundamental segmentation of the marketplace. These schemata seek to segment the market into discrete segments with similar content, based on taxonomic classification.

The literature on global branding has primarily concentrated on the importance of brand globalness in consumers' attitudes towards global brands, with little consideration of customers' reactions/engagements to/with differing brand perceptions in developing and developed countries (Elbedweihy et al., 2016; Loebnitz and Grunert, 2019). For example, while in developing/emerging economies, global brands are often assumed to have a higher level of quality and prestige (Halkias et al., 2016), in developed countries, where individuals are more receptive to native culture, customers have a preference for indigenous brands, (He and Wang, 2017; Mohan et al., 2018). To contribute to this knowledge base, we conducted a comparative analysis of users' perceptions of brand globalness in the developing and developed countries to explain how users' differing brand globalness associations translate into their engagement on global social networks (He and Wang, 2017).

2.2. Social identity and brand relationship theory

Social identity theory (SIT) explains the interconnections between individuals and the social groups to which they belong in order to explain how membership of a recognised social group may influence an individual's behaviour (Makri et al., 2021; Tajfel and Turner, 2004). Thus, SIT encapsulates the phenomena of in-group preference, favourable evaluations and preferential treatment for individuals sharing an in-group. This kind of in-group favoritism is a natural outcome of basic social identification requirements. SIT insights not only grasp the requirement for social identity, but also the need for individuals to distinguish between in-group and out-group. A similar sequential process of identification among users is prompted by the demand for positive distinctiveness, social identity identification and differentiation between in-group and out-group in the context of GSN brand globalness. A user identification with GSN is essentially a user self-identification notion that leads them to determine their active/passive engagement with GSN.

This study also makes use of brand relationship theory, which asserts that the consumer-brand relationship is more akin to an active intimate relationship than to a possessor-possession relationship (Fournier, 1998; Sichtmann et al., 2019). With these insights from consumer-brand relationship theory, researchers believe that users' participation in GSN enables them to develop a strong consumer-brand bond, which they may validate by their engagement on GSN. Moreover, to maintain the consistency and stability of their global identity attributes, users also demonstrate their cognitive behaviour through active/passive participation in GSN (Makri et al., 2019).

2.3. User identity

Globalisation and digital transformation have had a significant impact on user behaviour globally, and individuals are not only becoming more integrated into global networks, but also actively engaging in various discourses and communities. Global brands, according to the literature, allow consumers to develop a perceived global identity that they might share with like-minded others (Kolbl et al., 2019). Additionally, digital global brands such as GSN may help users to

identify matching desirable user groups sharing similar characteristics. Individuals gain a feeling of identity via belonging to spatial groups such as a nation or the entire world. This phenomenon is termed location-based identification (Cleveland et al., 2011). Consumers believe in the positive effects of globalisation, prefer similarities over differences among individuals worldwide, and are interested in global events. An individual's group identity influences their attitudes and preferences towards brands, particularly global brands. The benefits of brand globalisation and shared experiences instigates varied identity patterns among individuals. Some develop their user identification with GSN, and some are more drawn to more to developing their user identity with specific GSN communities, which further prompts their active/passive engagement behaviour (Makri et al., 2019).

The literature shows that GSN users have a variety of requirements, such as amusement, information seeking, social engagement, and social network surfing. Researchers have proposed three categories: users with hedonic motives; users with utilitarian motives; and users with social motives (Park et al., 2009). A study by Westjohn et al. (2012) demonstrates that surfing on GSN also carries a global identity which plays a critical role in consumer decision-making processes. The global identity trait also helps consumers adopt attitudes and behaviours that, in return, promote the notion of self-identity. Self-verification is a popular term for this process of identity reinforcement. Individuals seek self-consistency by ensuring and defending the stability of their identities (Makri et al., 2019). Individuals aim to engage in regulating processes and behaviours that are consistent with their identities. As a result, involvement in GSN helps users with a strong global identity to validate their social identities through identity-consistent behaviour, which also improves users' active/passive engagements with GSN.

2.4. User engagement

Since GSN have become crucial sources of information and content for consumers, attractive social media platforms, which businesses can use for promotional activities, are critical for initiating customer engagement (Gupta et al., 2018; Santos et al., 2022). Among the numerous social media marketing activities, businesses are progressively integrating GSN into their marketing and business processes to endorse their brands, as in the modern era, the desired target audience is more connected to brands via GSN. Additionally, GSN are seen as reputable sources of information by their followers, which creates a favourable environment for growing both active and passive engagement. This is especially advantageous for businesses that incorporate social media to benefit from the engagement effect of the discussions on the GSN communities strategies (Dwivedi et al., 2021b; Jiménez-Castillo and Sánchez-Fernández, 2019; Kaur et al., 2021; Nadeem et al., 2021).

In recent years, user engagement with brands has also gained prominence in brand management research and practice. Despite considerable gains, the general knowledge structure of user engagement research remains unclear (Deep Prakash and Majumdar, 2021; Giakoumaki and Krepapa, 2020; Kizgin et al., 2020). A bibliometric analysis study by Hollebeek et al. (2021) divides user engagement into various themes such as online user engagement; user engagement's value co-creating capacity; user engagement conceptualization; and customer/consumer brand engagement; the authors suggest that user engagement can occur with a variety of objects such as brands, goods or firms. Different theoretical views have influenced scholars' conceptualization, operationalization and nomological networks of user engagement, either in the form of active engagement or passive engagement. For instance, users may actively and/or passively engage on GSNs. Active engagement may include posting and commenting on pictures, videos and status updates, sharing links, chatting on GSN chats. Since GSNs offer a wide range of activities including online games and the newsfeed, Gerson et al. (2017) argue that passive engagement may not involve the same level of social connection as actively engaging in activities (such as posting on a friend's wall or writing a Facebook status). Users may spend

the majority of their time consuming content created by others such as simply viewing photos and videos, browsing the newsfeed passively (without liking or commenting on anything), looking through others' profiles (see Gerson et al., 2017). This pattern of engagement, whereby users consume but do not create content, has been termed as passive engagement (Burke et al., 2011; Gerson et al., 2017).

Extant literature highlights that the context on GSN, the expertise of community members of GSN, varied campaigns on GSN, and the utilitarian/hedonic value of services on GSN are key drivers of engagement (Hughes et al., 2019). A study by McLean and Wilson (2019) also suggests that the use of technology, the usefulness and enjoyment that technology brings, and subjective norms, enhance users' engagement, which supports our notion of users' engagement on GSN based on a range of similar factors. The findings of McLean and Wilson's study persuasively suggest that new technologies enable brand engagement, which results in increased brand usage intent.

3. Hypotheses development and conceptual model

This study's key theoretical underpinnings are derived from international marketing and social media literature, which provide a range of theoretical approaches to understand the key concepts of perceived globalness, user identification, global identity and user engagement. More specifically, the theoretical framework (see Fig. 1) draws on brand globalness, global identity theory, brand relationship theory and social media literature in order to generate a coherent understanding of consumers' active and passive engagement on GSN. The next section explains the connections between the different constructs in the conceptual model.

3.1. Perceived brand globalness and user engagement

Various studies have been conducted on the impact of social media on consumer behaviour (Bhatti et al., 2020; Demmers et al., 2020; Dwivedi et al., 2021a; Hinson et al., 2019; Shareef et al., 2020). However, few studies have been conducted from the perspective of developing countries that predict the extent to which user identification with

GSN brand and GSN community aids in determining active and passive user engagement on GSN (Hollebeek et al., 2021; Swoboda et al., 2012). This study provides a more focused explanation for the engagement patterns of consumers on GSN due to PBG. Moreover, GSN as global brands are now reshaping consumers' global orientation culture and engagement behaviours; for example, consumers who use Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, or any other recognised GSN, are more receptive to updated information, diversity, global acceptance and availability features than users of local social networking sites (Makri et al., 2021). Additionally, organizations that have attractive GSN channels for their promotional activities designed to initiate client involvement, experience more consumer engagement (Gupta et al., 2018). As target audiences are increasingly more connected to businesses via global social media than via local social media platforms, businesses are progressively adopting global social media passages into their business processes to promote their brands.

According to Steenkamp (2020), the important components of PBG include: a globally consistent marketing strategy; presence in several parts of the globe; and brand recognition that adds value to the business and expands its worldwide customer base. Extant research indicates that customers leverage brand knowledge via global social media platforms to make purchasing and information-seeking decisions (Low and Lamb, 2000). Similarly, based on consumer views of global availability, acceptance, and attractiveness, the idea of brand globalness (BG) was developed by Steenkamp et al. (2003), which theorises that global brands foster greater engagement among users/groups of users than local brands. Based on these literature insights, we postulate the following hypothesis:

H1. (a, b): Brand globalness of GSN positively influences (a) active and (b) passive user engagement on GSN.

3.2. User identification with GSN brand and GSN community

Although the literature proposes several explanations about the relationships among perceived brand globalness, global SNS usage, SNS value, purchase intention, etc. (Makri et al., 2021, 2019; Sichtmann et al., 2019), this study has attempted to establish the direct impact of

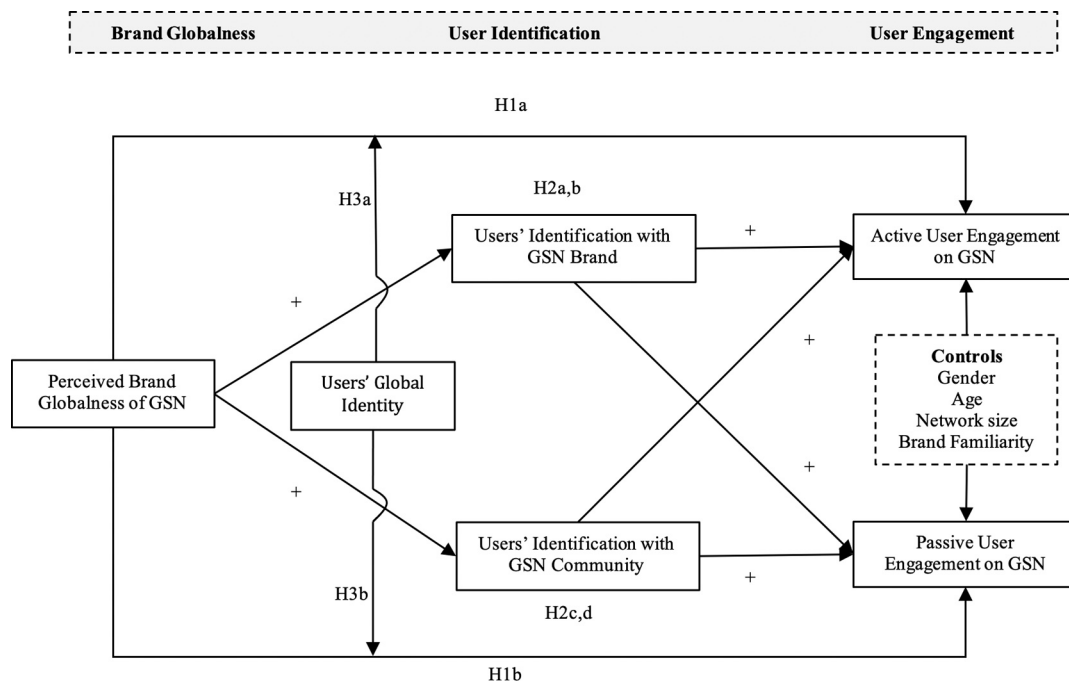


Fig. 1. Conceptual model
 Note: GSN = Global Social Network.

PBG on user engagement patterns on GSN in H1. In addition to explaining the impact of PBG of SNS on users' engagement, this study also highlights the mediating role of user's identification with global SNS brand and the global SNS community. A study by Belk (1988) suggested that products/services are critical components of the extended self-concept of users and that they contribute to the definition of an individual's self-identity. In general, brand value in global marketplaces encompass a broader range of brand functions, which includes triggers for individuals' identity narratives, mental anchors for interpersonal interactions, and symbols of users' self-views (Sichtmann et al., 2019).

Social identity theory posits that individuals make sense of the world by categorizing themselves and others into groups (Tajfel and Turner, 2004). Consumer brand identification, according to Stokburger-Sauer et al. (2012), evolves as a cognitive representation of the consumer-brand link. This cognitive reflection is supported by self-identity and categorization theories (Brewer, 1991), which explain why consumers identify with brands (e.g. products/services) on a variety of levels, including their willingness to interact with, validate and communicate a social identity, as well as their intention to develop a distinctive self that differentiates them from other users with conflicting values (Sichtmann et al., 2019). Davvetas and Diamantopoulos' (2017) study shows that consumers use global social signalling in their identity construction because global brands have the advantage over local brands. Other scholars have found similar effects of social signalling (Strizhakova et al., 2008; Strizhakova and Coulter, 2015). For instance, Sichtmann et al.'s (2019) study demonstrates that users' brand globalness influences consumers' brand identification, which leads to purchasing intentions. Perceived brand globalness is thus argued to represent a key source of identity signalling, brand distinctiveness and prestige. PBG satisfies consumers' nostalgia- and warmth-seeking motivations, which foster consumer-brand relationships (Sichtmann et al., 2019).

Customer-brand identification instils a strong psychological attachment towards the brand, which predicts future behaviour and a long-term relationship. As theoretical models have shown a positive relationship between customer-brand identification and customer-brand engagement (van Doorn et al., 2010), consumer identification may be a critical antecedent of customer-brand engagement (Rather et al., 2018). According to Rather et al. (2018), service brands can operate as a facilitator of social identity expression and construction, and customers can identify with a service brand that matches their self-concept. This satisfies users' self-definition or verification requirements, which results in a rise in their attitudes or behaviours towards the service brands (Elbedweihy et al., 2016). Su et al. (2016) also demonstrate that greater shared values between service brands and their users foster continued relationship commitment. Rather et al. (2018) show that customer-brand identification aids in the strategic development of customer-brand engagement, emotional brand commitment and brand loyalty. According to their findings, brand identification positively promotes customer-brand engagement, confirming that consumers who are highly identified are more likely to engage with an offering/brand.

Given the mediating role of users' identification with global SNS brand between PBG and users' varied engagements over global SNS, this study also stresses that users' identification with global SNS community acts as a mediator between the relationship of PBG and users' diverse engagements on global SNS. In this regard, extant research has established the efficacy of brand communities, and has explored users' brand social networks, in which individuals identify their affiliation with groups of like-minded brand enthusiasts and develop their psychological sense of brand community, which further progresses their brand commitment (Carlson et al., 2008). For instance, Strizhakova et al. (2008) and Strizhakova and Coulter (2015) show that local purchases decrease with the consumer's perception of global connectedness through global brand communities because consumers regard global brands as providing access to global consumer culture and their affiliation with the global community. As consumers utilise global social signalling in their identity construction (Davvetas and Diamantopoulos,

2017), consumers perceive brand globalness as an identity currency that promotes their self-image as modern and cosmopolitan, helping them to addressing their need for connectedness with communities over global brands (Strizhakova et al., 2011), which stimulates their identification with global brand communities.

Prior studies on brand communities demonstrate that consumers who identify with a community of a brand tend to support the brand in different ways. For instance, Popp and Wilson's (2018) study on online (brand) communities establishes the positive influence of community-identification on brand loyalty. Carlson et al. (2008) provide intriguing insights about the functional nature of identification with communities that assemble around a variety of outcomes in the shape of brand preference, word of mouth preferences and varied brand engagement patterns. Algesheimer et al. (2005) too highlight that social interactions of users with other community members or interaction and cooperation with other community members, have a significant positive effect on their level of community engagement. As a result of the above insights from the extant literature and reasoning, it is expected that PBG enhances users' active and passive engagement by influencing their identification with global SNS brands and their identification with the GSN community. Hence, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H2(a, b). : Users' identification with GSN brands mediates the relationship of brand globalness of GSN and (a) active (b) passive user engagement on GSN.

H2(c, d). : Users' identification with the GSN community mediates the relationship of brand globalness of GSN and (c) active (d) passive user engagement on GSN.

3.3. The moderating role of global identity

While global and local identities are not mutually exclusive, consumers gravitate towards either a global or a local identity (Arnett, 2002; Strizhakova and Coulter, 2019), depending on whether they find local or global identities more accessible and exciting for processing identity-consistent information (Brewer, 1991). Alden et al. (2006) offer the concept of global consumption orientation, which categorises consumers into segments along a local, hybrid and global continuum. In this respect, Zhang and Khare's (2009) study demonstrates that global identity consumers view PBG as accessible and diagnostic for their engagement. Zhang and Khare (2009) argue that consumers look for information that is consistent with their identities; thus, global brands are preferred by global identity consumers over local identity consumers. Consumers with high global identity tend to view themselves as part of the global culture as a high global identity provides them with a sense of belonging to a worldwide culture (He and Wang, 2017). Since global brands appeal more to consumers with high global identity (Zhang and Khare, 2009), they tend to be more receptive towards global brands, and are likely to react more positively as global identity becomes an approachable tool for them to process information for a global brand (Wheeler et al., 2005). Thus, consumers with high global identity maintain more positive attitudes towards global brands (Guo, 2013). For instance, users' higher levels of global identity have been shown to lead to the enhancement of the relationship between digital global brands and consumer engagement (Rather et al., 2018).

As such, consumer perceptions of brand globalness and engagement on GSN are expected to differ according to their global identity. Moreover, GSN users with high global identity are likely to engage more on GSN platforms. Therefore it is expected that the link between PBG and the active and passive engagement of GSN users will be stronger at higher levels of global identity and vice versa. Hence, we postulate the following hypothesis:

H3. (a, b): Users' global identity moderates the relationship between perceived brand globalness of GSN and their active/passive engagement on GSN such that the higher the global identity, the stronger the

relationship.

Fig. 1 illustrates how perceived brand globalness of social networking sites affects active/passive users' engagements on GSN; additionally, it illustrates 1) the mediating role of users' identification with GSN and GSN community; and 2) the moderating role of user global identity on diverse pathways in translating active/passive users' engagements on GSN.

4. Method

4.1. Context

To accomplish the study's objectives, data was collected through an online survey of Facebook users in a developed (UK) and a developing (India) country. Facebook use is relatively high in both the UK and India. Facebook was chosen for this research because it has over 3 billion active users, making it the GSN with the biggest global presence (InternetLiveStats, 2021). As a result of the widespread usage of social media, both of these countries are excellent representatives of nations that leverage global digital brands. As of 2021, the UK has over 44 million while India has over 415 million Facebook users, (InternetWorldStats, 2021). These numbers demonstrate a significant disparity in Facebook penetration between the two countries: the UK has around a two-thirds penetration, whereas India has approximately a one-third penetration.

Furthermore, the literature indicates that, among other aspects, national culture has a substantial role in GSN usage (Dwivedi et al., 2020; Makri et al., 2021). The UK and India have significant cultural differences (Hofstede et al., 2010). While the UK represents an individualistic culture, India is more collectivistic in nature (Triandis, 2001). A comparison of the UK and India using Hofstede's cultural dimensions reveals substantial variations in all dimensions (i.e., power distance, individualism, masculinity, uncertainty avoidance and indulgence) except long-term orientation (see Fig. 2). It is anticipated that focusing on countries with major cultural variations would aid in better understanding the link between brand globalness and GSN involvement across cultures and therefore, increase the generalizability of the results (Makri et al., 2021; Saleh Al-Omouh et al., 2021; Steenkamp and Maydeu-Olivares, 2021).

4.2. Measurement

The measurement items for each of the six latent constructs were derived or adapted from relevant prior research. Three measures used to assess a brand's globalness were adopted from Steenkamp et al. (2003) and were anchored by a seven-point bipolar scale. User identification with GSN and with the community was measured by five items each

adapted from Popp and Wilson (2018). Four items to measure users' global identity were adapted from Tu et al. (2012) and Makri et al. (2021). User identification and global identity were quantified using a seven-point Likert scale anchored by strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7). Finally, active and passive user engagement was measured by four items each adapted from Gerson et al. (2017). The level of user engagement was assessed using a seven-point frequency scale ranging from never (1) to very frequently (7). Additionally, the study included demographic questions on users' gender, age, education, job status, average daily time spent on Facebook, and network size.

Before beginning the final data collection, the survey instrument was validated for content validity. Six professionals with knowledge in the target audiences, both academic and non-academic, were approached for this purpose. Specific revisions were made in response to their feedback to clarify certain items and improve the readability and organization of the survey instrument. Additionally, a pre-test with a random sample of 30 persons from each of the target markets, namely India and the UK, was conducted. The pilot test findings indicated that there were no statistically significant differences between the two countries. By and large, the pilot test findings were adequate for conducting the entire survey.

4.3. Sample and procedure

In recent years, internet-based surveys have gained increasing popularity as a consequence of the several advantages they provide when compared to traditional data collecting methods employed in the past (Smith et al., 2016). Qualtrics was used to generate an online survey. A description of the research was included at the start of the survey to ensure that respondents understood the study's primary purpose. Participants from the United Kingdom (developed) and India (developing) were recruited through Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk). MTurk is an easy-to-use crowdsourcing platform that enables researchers to quickly recruit and gather data from a large and diverse population of participants situated across the world for a relatively low cost (Thomas and Clifford, 2017). Though there has been debate about the credibility of data acquired through online surveys conducted via crowdsourcing platforms such as MTurk, recent research suggests that there is no discernible difference in the findings gained from MTurk data vs data from other known sources (Ladhari et al., 2020; Rauschnabel et al., 2019; Youn, 2020). Additional quality assurance measures were used to confirm that the survey participants had a satisfactory MTurk experience. For example, only those with significant experience with MTurk (number of approved hits >100) and a hit approval rate of more than 95% were permitted to participate in the survey. Furthermore, 58 cases (UK = 15; India = 43) were discarded during the initial screening stage for various reasons, such as respondents' taking too little or too

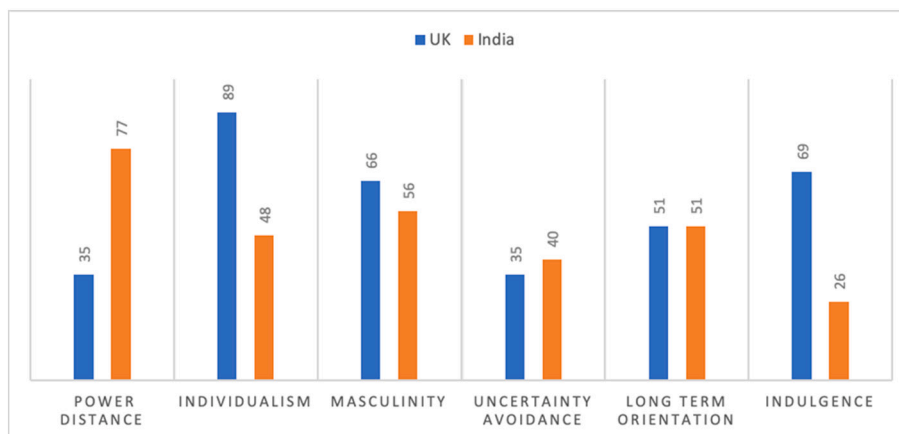


Fig. 2. UK-India comparison based on Hofstede's cultural dimensions.

much time to complete the survey (less than a minute or more than 20 min), or respondents incorrectly answering the attention check questions.

To participate in the study, the individuals had to be Facebook users. This was ensured by asking a yes/no screening question at the beginning of the survey: "Are you a Facebook user?" Only respondents who answered "Yes" to this question were eligible to participate in the survey. The total sample size was 798 respondents (406 from the UK and 392 from India). Most of the respondents in both countries were female (62.3% in the UK and 53.1% in India). The participants varied in age from 18 to over 55 years. The majority of the respondents in both samples had an undergraduate degree or less (59.4% in the UK and 54.3% in India) and were employed full-time (62.6% in the UK and 60.7% in India). Table 1 contains detailed demographic information of both samples.

5. Results

The data analysis was split into two stages: measuring the scale's psychometric properties and testing hypotheses using a structural model (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988). The theoretical model was empirically validated using covariance-based structural equation modeling, which is a technique that is preferred to partial least squares approaches for theory testing, since it has no limitations in terms of the goodness of the model fit measurement (Zhang et al., 2021). The measurement and structural models were both assessed using AMOS 26 (Kline, 2010).

5.1. Measurement invariance

Prior to conducting meaningful cross-national comparisons, a certain level of measurement invariance is essential (Hair et al., 2017; Steenkamp and Maydeu-Olivares, 2021). Therefore, before testing the hypothesised relationships in the conceptual framework, the scales were examined for cross-national measurement invariance.

In a multigroup confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) involving two samples from the UK and India, all items were significantly loaded to their respective constructs. In addition, the fit indices of the multigroup CFA model (unconstrained model) were perfect, indicating configural invariance (see Table 2). However, configural invariance is not sufficient to establish measurement invariance (Hair et al., 2017; Steenkamp and Maydeu-Olivares, 2021). Therefore, after achieving configural

invariance, multigroup comparisons were performed to assess metric and scalar invariances by comparing the baseline unconstrained model with the constrained models.

On each pair of constrained and unconstrained models, a χ^2 difference test was applied. Table 2 shows that the χ^2 difference test was significant for all pairs except for the comparison between unconstrained and measurement weights (factor loadings) constrained models ($\Delta \chi^2 = 28.333$, $\Delta df = 18$, $p > 0.05$). The non-significant value of χ^2 difference test between unconstrained models and factor loadings constrained models indicates that the two groups (India and UK) responded consistently to the items, allowing for meaningful cross-group comparisons. The results of the measurement invariance study are summarised in Table 2.

5.2. Reliability and validity

The reliability and validity of the scale were tested by using a measurement model that included all the latent constructs. The goodness of fit indices of the measurement models were all within acceptable limits for both data sets (UK and India), indicating an adequate model fit (Hu and Bentler, 1999; Nunnally, 1978). Cronbach's alpha (α) and composite reliability (CR) had been used to assess the reliability of the instrument. Across the samples, the Cronbach's alpha and CR values for each latent construct in the measurement model were significantly higher than 0.7, indicating the scale's reliability (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Moreover, each item was strongly associated with the corresponding latent construct and the average variance extracted (AVE) values for each construct were significantly more than 0.5 in both the country-specific samples (see Table 3), confirming the scale's convergent validity (Fornell and Larcker, 1981).

Voorhees et al. (2016) have advocated for the simultaneous use of Fornell and Larcker's (1981) and Henseler et al.'s (2015) discriminant validity techniques to establish the discriminant validity. We therefore assessed the scale's discriminant validity using both techniques. To achieve discriminant validity, Fornell and Larcker (1981) recommended that the AVE values for each construct should be greater than the corresponding shared variances ($AVE > \text{Shared variance}$) whereas Henseler et al.'s (2015) recommended an Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT) value of less than 0.85 for each underlying construct (Voorhees et al., 2016). Each of these criteria was met in both the groups, indicating that there were no concerns with the data's discriminant validity (See

Table 1
Sample characteristics.

Measures	Items	UK		India	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	153	37.7	184	46.9
	Female	253	62.3	208	53.1
Age (in years)	18–24	69	17	89	22.7
	25–34	167	41.1	155	39.5
	35–44	124	30.5	83	21.2
	45–54	29	7.1	65	16.6
	55 or older	17	4.2	392	100
Education	Undergraduate or below	241	59.4	213	54.3
	Postgraduate or above	165	40.6	179	45.7
Employment	Employed full time	254	62.6	238	60.7
	Employed part time	82	20.2	95	24.2
	Unemployed	35	8.6	44	11.2
	Student	35	8.6	15	3.8
How much time do you spend on Facebook in an average day?	Less than an hour	179	44.1	56	14.3
	1–3 h	179	44.1	255	65.1
	4–6 h	38	9.4	60	15.3
	more than 6 h	10	2.5	21	5.4
What is your Network size (number of friends/followers)?	< 100	86	21.2	43	11
	101–300	145	35.7	138	35.2
	301–500	87	21.4	148	37.8
	>500	88	21.7	63	16.1

Note: Sample size = 406 UK and 392 India.

Table 2
Measurement invariance statistics.

Model	χ^2	df	$\Delta\chi^2$	Δdf	P-value	χ^2/df	CFI	RMSEA
Unconstrained model (configural invariance)	964.607	474	–	–	–	2.035	0.963	0.036
Measurement weights	992.941	492	28.333	18	n.s.	2.018	0.962	0.036
Measurement intercepts	1561.703	516	597.095	42	<0.001	3.027	0.921	0.050
Structural covariances	1734.134	537	769.526	63	<0.001	3.229	0.910	0.053
Measurement residuals	2143.495	561	1178.887	87	<0.001	3.821	0.881	0.060

Table 3
Reliability and validity statistics.

UK	α	CR	AVE	PBG	UIB	UIC	PUE	AUE	UGI
PBG	0.896	0.897	0.744	0.863	0.453	0.271	0.449	0.321	0.064
UIB	0.874	0.877	0.588	0.453***	0.767	0.724	0.637	0.587	0.476
UIC	0.890	0.891	0.62	0.257***	0.711***	0.788	0.592	0.632	0.515
PUE	0.850	0.856	0.599	0.443***	0.611***	0.576***	0.774	0.791	0.433
AUE	0.873	0.874	0.635	0.311***	0.578***	0.630***	0.772***	0.797	0.293
UGI	0.898	0.899	0.747	0.073	0.478***	0.507***	0.432***	0.295***	0.865
$\chi^2 = 530.735; df = 237; \chi^2/df = 2.239; CFI = 0.952; RMSEA = 0.055$									

India	A	CR	AVE	PBG	UIS	UIC	PUE	AUE	UGI
PBG	0.948	0.948	0.86	0.927	0.515	0.617	0.500	0.435	0.393
UIB	0.912	0.913	0.678	0.520***	0.823	0.453	0.522	0.561	0.333
UIC	0.891	0.894	0.628	0.623***	0.452***	0.793	0.496	0.595	0.262
PUE	0.886	0.888	0.666	0.503***	0.517***	0.505***	0.816	0.62	0.234
AUE	0.903	0.904	0.702	0.435***	0.558***	0.594***	0.606***	0.838	0.212
UGI	0.923	0.923	0.800	0.392***	0.329***	0.261***	0.229***	0.209***	0.894
$\chi^2 = 433.876; df = 237; \chi^2/df = 1.831; CFI = 0.972; RMSEA = 0.046$									

Note: *** $p < 0.001$; α = Cronbach's alpha; CR = Composite reliability; AVE = Average variance extracted; PBG = Perceived Brand Globalness of GSN; UIB=User Identification with GSN Brand; UIC: User Identification with GSN Community; UGI = User Global Identity; AUE = Active User Engagement on GSN; PUE = Passive User Engagement on GSN; the diagonal values represent the square root of the AVE, the values below the diagonal are inter-construct correlations, and the values above the diagonal represent HTMT ratios of correlations.

Table 3).

5.3. Assessment of common method variance and endogeneity

Cross-sectional data derived from a single source may be susceptible to common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003; Steenkamp and Maydeu-Olivares, 2021). While there are several potential sources of common method variance in survey design, there is no one technique that addresses this issue completely. However, if implemented early in the research design phase, various procedural and statistical measures may aid in reducing the risk of CMV (Guide and Ketokivi, 2015). *Ex-ante* measures included measuring each latent construct on a well-established scale, assuring respondents of the anonymity of their responses, not collecting personally identifiable information, and randomly ordering questions in the online survey so that they were displayed to different respondents in random order. *Ex-post* remedies, such as a single factor CFA, a marker variable, and a common latent factor, were also employed to assess CMV. First, a single factor CFA was carried out by loading all the items to a single common factor. In both the samples, however, the fit indices of the single factor model were far weaker than the seven-factor measurement model. Second, to see if there were any significant changes to the coefficients of other variables in the measurement model, a marker variable technique was used (Lindell and Whitney, 2001). Social desirability, being conceptually unrelated to the other variables in the study, was used as a marker variable. However, the significance of the resulting coefficients did not change substantially after introducing the marker variable. Finally, we compared the standardised regression weights of all the items in the measurement model with and without a common latent factor. These differences, for both the samples, were very small (<0.20). All of these suggest that CMV is not a serious concern with the data.

Additionally, we examined the data for any endogeneity concerns

prior to testing the hypotheses (Hill et al., 2021). While the structural model was constructed using solid theoretical underpinnings from global branding, brand relationship theory and social identity theory, its robustness and absence of endogeneity concerns were evaluated by comparison to two viable alternative models (Chowdhury et al., 2019). The model fit indices of the original structural model was far better than those of the alternative models, suggesting that the original structural model offers a relatively accurate description of the data. Moreover, we assessed whether the R^2 values of the final endogenous variables (i.e., active and passive engagement) changed significantly when control variables were included in the structural model (Dubey et al., 2019). After the control variables were included, there was no significant change in the R^2 values of active and passive engagement. R^2 increased by 0.034 for active engagement and 0.037 for passive engagement in the UK data set, but decreased by 0.003 for active engagement and 0.007 for passive engagement in the India data set. Therefore, the data sets are unlikely to suffer from endogeneity concerns.

5.4. Hypotheses testing

Using AMOS's multi-group function, the structural model was utilised to analyse the conceptual model's hypothesised direct, indirect and moderating effects. The analysis was conducted in three stages. To begin with, we studied the direct influence of PBG on active and passive user engagement on global social networking sites (GSN) in the absence of any mediating or moderating variables. Second, indirect impacts were evaluated in the structural model using two mediating variables (users' identification with the GSN brand and users' identification with the GSN community). Third, using interaction methods, we examined the moderating impacts of global identity on each of the pathways leading from PBG to active and passive user engagement on GSN.

5.4.1. Direct effects

In hypothesis H1(a,b), it was hypothesised that the PBG of GSN positively influences active and passive user engagement on GSN. To investigate the impact of PBG on active and passive user engagement, we first assessed PBG's direct effects on active and passive user engagement in the absence of mediators and moderators. The fit indices of the structural model were within accepted levels (see Table 4). The results indicated that the PBG of GSN had a significant positive effect on both active and passive user engagement on GSN (See Table 4). Even though there were some small differences, the results from both data sets largely supported the proposed hypotheses H1a and H1b.

5.4.2. Mediation effects

Hypotheses 2 posit that users' identification with the GSN brand and GSN community serve as a mediator between PBG and active/passive user engagement on the GSN. To determine whether the impact of PBG on active or passive user engagement is mediated by identification with the GSN brand and GSN community, we estimated specific indirect effects via each of the mediators. This resulted in four indirect paths from the predictor (perceived brand globalness) to the two outcome variables (active user engagement and passive user engagement). The structural model's fit indices indicated that the model fits the data adequately. [$\chi^2 = 1565.357$; $df = 684$; $\chi^2/df = 2.289$; $CFI = 0.936$; $RMSEA = 0.040$]. Moreover, the indirect effects across each of the pathways were significant in both the data sets. This demonstrates that both users' identification with the GSN brand and their identification with the GSN community served as a mediator between the perceived globalness of the GSN brand and active or passive user engagement on GSN. Consequently, H2(c, d)(a-d) were supported.

To further illustrate the nature of mediation, we examined the change in direct effect produced by the mediating factors (Hair et al., 2021). In the UK data, the direct effect of PBG on active user engagement had changed to insignificant, whereas the direct effect of PBG on passive user engagement remained positive and significant (See Table 5). Interestingly, UIB and UIC behaved similarly when it came to Indian data. In this case, PBG's direct effect on active user engagement became insignificant, whereas its direct effect on passive user engagement remained significant and positive (See Table 5). This indicates that UIB and UIC exhibit a full (indirect-only) mediation impact on the link between PBG and active user engagement, but only a partial (complementary) mediation effect on the association between PBG and passive user engagement (Hair et al., 2021; Zhao et al., 2010).

5.4.3. Moderating effects

Mediation analysis helped in the understanding of the mechanism through which PBG results in higher user engagement on social media platforms. On the other hand, moderation facilitated our further analysis of the linkages between PBG and AUE or PUE by delineating the boundary conditions within which theorised relationships vary at

Table 4
Impact of PBG on active and passive engagement.

Predictors	UK		India	
	Outcomes (Standardised estimates)		Outcomes (Standardised estimates)	
	AUE	PUE	AUE	PUE
PBG	0.291***	0.417***	0.416***	0.486***
Age	0.084	0.046	-0.083	-0.024
Gender	-0.006	-0.081	-0.015	-0.018
Network Size	0.214***	0.189***	0.011	-0.029
Familiarity	-0.06	-0.031	0.054	0.087
Model fit measures	$\chi^2 = 309.294$; $df = 146$; $\chi^2/df = 2.118$; $CFI = 0.973$; $RMSEA = 0.037$			

Note: *** $p < 0.001$; PBG = Perceived Brand Globalness of GSN; AUE = Active User Engagement on GSN; PUE = Passive User Engagement on GSN.

various levels of an individual's global identity orientation. In H3, it was hypothesised that users' global identity acts as a moderator on relationships between the PBG of GSN (predictor) and the outcomes (i.e., active or passive engagement on GSN), such that the relationships are stronger when global identity is higher.

We estimated the moderating effects of global identity on both of the pathways from PBG to active and passive user engagement on GSN using the AMOS product indicator approach. The interaction approach provides a more accurate explanation of moderating effects since it explains not only how the predictor variable affects outcome variables, but also how the predictor variable's influence on the outcome variables varies depending on the moderating variable (Zhang et al., 2021). This was accomplished by calculating the interaction term (predictor variable* moderator variable) and assessing its influence on the outcome variable.

The analysis of the interaction term's effect on the outcome variables showed that global identity significantly moderated both the proposed relationships. However, the effects were not consistent across the two data sets (See Table 5). In the Indian sample, global identity had significant moderating effects ($P < 0.001$) on both the relationship between PBG and active engagement on GSN and the link between PBG and passive engagement on GSN. By contrast, for the UK sample, the moderating impact of global identity was not significant at $p < 0.05$ but was significant at $p < 0.10$. In other words, the moderating effects of global identity were relatively weaker in the UK sample. Despite these variations, the association between PBG and active engagement, as well as PBG and passive engagement, was stronger in both samples for higher user global identity and vice versa (See Fig. 3 and Fig. 4).

6. Discussion

Drawing on the brand relationship theory, social identity theory and the global branding literature (Fournier, 1998; Steenkamp et al., 2003; Tajfel, 1978), this research aimed to provide a deeper understanding of the relationship between PBG and users' active and passive engagement on GSNs. Specifically, the research examined users' identification with the GSN brand and the GSN community as the two key underlying mechanisms by which PBG may influence GSN users' active and passive engagement. Additionally, the study analyzed if the PBG's impact on GSN users' active and passive engagement was regulated by users' global identity orientations. Facebook was used as a proxy for GSN due to its global recognition and ubiquity. The study makes important theoretical and contextual contributions to the social media and international branding literature.

From a theoretical standpoint, the research complements the notion of digital GSN branding (Makri et al., 2021) and advances the discussion by incorporating brand relationship (Bhattacharya and Sen, 2003; Fournier, 1998; Hinson et al., 2019; Veloutsou, 2009) and social identity (Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel and Turner, 2004) theories. In particular, this research contributes to enhancing our understanding of the mediating and moderating mechanisms in the relationship between perceived globalness of a GSN and user engagement on GSN platforms; to the best of our knowledge, this is the first study to empirically investigate this connection. While prior research has investigated the relationship between PBG and user brand identification (Sichtmann et al., 2019), it is unclear how PBG influences user engagement on social networking sites where users are simultaneously subjected to different targets of identification (Popp and Wilson, 2018). Our findings, in both the UK and Indian contexts, suggest that PBG enhances users' active/passive engagement on GSN directly (in the absence of mediators) as well as indirectly through stimulating their identification not only with the GSN brand but also with the GSN community. Hence, our study suggests that users' identification with the GSN brand and the GSN community provide explanatory mechanisms for understanding how and why PBG translates into user engagement.

This study further advances our understanding of the relationships between PBG and GSN users' active and passive engagement by

Table 5
Direct, indirect and interaction effects.

	Predictors	UK				India			
		Outcomes (Standardised estimates)				Outcomes (Standardised estimates)			
		UIB	UIC	AUE	PUE	UIB	UIC	AUE	PUE
Direct effects	PBG	0.478***	0.390***	0.043	0.215***	0.526***	0.592***	0.058	0.247***
	UIB			0.283***	0.238***			0.347***	0.249***
	UIC			0.463***	0.303***			0.413***	0.230***
	GI			-0.014	0.110**			-0.017	0.114**
Indirect effects	PBG→UIB→AUE			0.135**				0.183***	
	PBG→UIB→PUE				0.114**				0.131***
	PBG→UIC→AUE			0.181**				0.244***	
	PBG→UIC→PUE				0.118**				0.136***
Interaction term	PBG*UGI			0.081 [†]	0.078 [†]			0.172***	0.248***
Controls	Gender			0.018	-0.065			-0.015	-0.023
	Age			0.086*	0.032			-0.069	-0.006
	Familiarity			0.031	0.059			-0.017	0.024
	Network Size			0.158***	0.134**			-0.007	-0.05
Model fit measures		$\chi^2 = 1565.357; df = 684; \chi^2/df = 2.289; CFI = 0.936; RMSEA = 0.040$							

Note: *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$; [†] $p < 0.10$; PBG = Perceived Brand Globalness of GSN; UIB=User Identification with GSN Brand; UIC: User Identification with GSN Community; UGI = User Global Identity; AUE = Active User Engagement on GSN; PUE = Passive User Engagement on GSN.

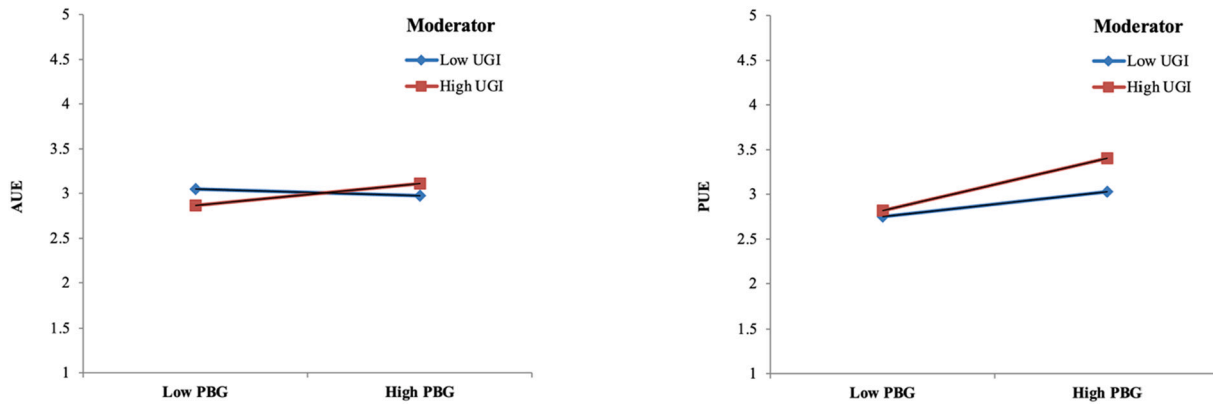


Fig. 3. UGI's moderating effects in the UK sample.

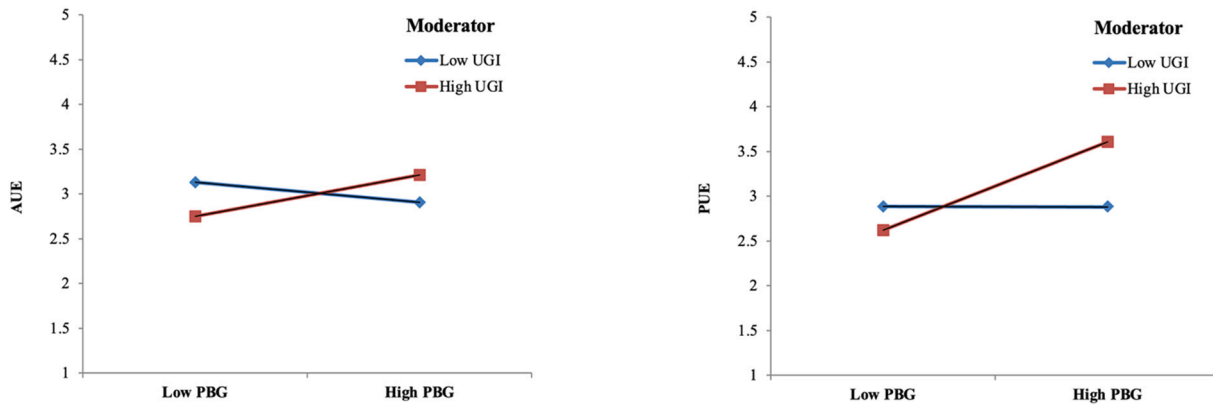


Fig. 4. UGI's moderating effects in the Indian sample

Note: PBG = Perceived Brand Globalness of GSN; UGI = User Global Identity; AUE = Active User Engagement on GSN; PUE = Passive User Engagement on GSN.

examining the moderating role of users' global identity. The findings confirmed that the influence of PBG on GSN users' active and passive engagement was stronger at higher level of global identity and vice versa. Thus, our study provides novel insights into how PBG and global identity work together to boost users' active and passive engagement on GSNs. While it was observed that users' global identity strengthened PBG's impacts on active and passive engagement of GSN users in both the UK and India, the magnitude of the moderating effect was found to

vary across the two groups. In particular, the moderating effect was found to be more pronounced in the Indian sample as compared to the UK sample. Possibly, people in developing countries tend to identify as "global citizens" more often than those in developed countries (Holt et al., 2004). Moreover, prior research demonstrates that consumers in developing countries prefer global brands and exhibit more positive attitudes and behavioural responses towards such brands than consumers in developed countries (Steenkamp and de Jong, 2010). Thus,

consumers with high global identity in developing countries such as India, are likely to actively and passively engage more on social networks that are perceived to be global. By focusing on India and the UK, two countries with significant cultural differences (Hofstede et al., 2010), this research highlights the cross-country variations in the association between GSN users' perceived brand globalness and their engagement with such brands.

6.1. Theoretical contributions and implications

This research draws on three closely connected theoretical foundations: global branding, brand relationship theory and social identity theory, in order to investigate the relationship between PBG and active/passive engagement among GSN users, and the mechanisms that underpin this relationship. By employing Steenkamp et al.'s (2003) concept of brand globalness, this research extended the notion of PBG to GSNs, which may be regarded as a subset of global digital brands (Halkias, 2015; Makri et al., 2021). GSNs such as Facebook exhibit all of the qualities of a global brand, including a globally consistent marketing strategy, presence in several regions of the world and brand recognition outside the company's core customer base.

While there has been research on the causes and effects of user engagement (Deep Prakash and Majumdar, 2021; Demmers et al., 2020; Giakoumaki and Krepapa, 2020; Gupta et al., 2018; Hinson et al., 2019; Hollebeek et al., 2021), there is a lack of empirical evidence regarding active and passive user engagement on GSNs as an outcome of perceived brand globalness of GSNs. Similarly, perceived brand globalness has been investigated in a variety of contexts as a predictor of a range of behavioural and psychological outcomes, including an individual's attitude, intent and willingness to pay (Akram et al., 2011; Kolbl et al., 2019; Mohan et al., 2018; Swoboda and Hirschmann, 2016; Vuong and Khanh Giao, 2020; Xie et al., 2015). However, there is little empirical evidence linking brand globalness to users' active and passive engagement behaviours on social media platforms. Additionally, previous research on brand globalness has mostly focused on material products, with little attention paid to digital social media brands (Makri et al., 2021). Addressing these important gaps in the literature, this study empirically demonstrates the relationship between PBG and user engagement, and significantly contributes to the brand globalness theory and user engagement literature.

Extending current understanding of the established relationship between PBG and brand identification (Sichtmann et al., 2019), and between brand identification and user engagement (Rather et al., 2018), this study provides empirical evidence for the associations between PBG and users' identification with the GSN brand and community, as well as between users' identification with the GSN brand/community and active/passive engagement on GSN. In particular, the research uncovers two conceptually distinct types of user identification - users' identification with the GSN brand and with the GSN community - as the key underlying psychological mechanisms to elucidate the association between PBG and users' active and passive engagement on GSNs. In both the UK and Indian situations, significant support was found for the mediating effects of users' identification with the GSN brand and community. Hence, this study not only provides a more nuanced understanding of the link between PBG and brand identification (e.g. Sichtmann et al., 2019) but also extends and supports prior social media literature that has highlighted the need to understand the multiple targets of identification perceived by consumers on social networking sites (e.g. Popp and Wilson, 2018).

By examining the moderating effect of user global identity on the relationship between PBG and GSN users' active/passive engagement, this study further advances our understanding of the development of user engagement on GSNs. Specifically, this study contributes to the stream of research that highlights the moderating role of global identity (Guo, 2013; He and Wang, 2017; Swoboda et al., 2012) by enhancing our understanding of its novel consequences. For instance, our study is

perhaps the first to reveal that high global identity can greatly help strengthen the effects of PBG on users' active/passive engagement on GSNs. Further, by empirically demonstrating that the moderating effects of global identity on PBG - active/passive engagement relationship are more pronounced among users in India as compared to those in the UK, the research also adds to the growing body of knowledge on international branding (Liu et al., 2021), besides user engagement.

6.2. Implications for practice

Social media platforms, particularly GSNs such as Facebook, have opened up a plethora of opportunities for users to interact with one another and engage within their communities. Both active and passive users contribute to the total value of a GSN. This study provides direction for digital brand managers wanting to increase user engagement on their global social media platforms by highlighting the primary drivers of passive and active user engagement. Considering GSNs as global digital brands (Makri et al., 2021; 2019), the research focused primarily on Facebook users. However, we anticipate that the results will be beneficial to the management of other GSNs such as Twitter, Instagram, etc. with comparable features.

Brand globalness has emerged as a key predictor of both active and passive user engagement on GSN. This suggests that in order to increase user engagement on GSN platforms, GSN providers may diversify their operations and expand into worldwide markets. Based on the results of this study, GSN managers may consider strengthening their global brand positioning and diversification strategies such as expanding into new markets or augmenting their platforms with new features that enable interaction to enhance the 'global image' of their social networking sites.

Given that both users' identification with the GSN brand and the GSN community predict their engagement on GSN, GSN managers are required to concentrate not just on strengthening user-brand relationships but also on building different communities in which individuals may participate. As members of global digital brands such as GSN, users will experience a sense of community and will acquire status and modernity. Since users' global identity was found to bolster the effects of PBG on user engagement, managers should also endeavour to develop or grow their brands' global appeal in order to ensure that their products and services appeal to the global identity of their target audience, especially in developing countries where users are more likely to identify as "global citizens" (Holt et al., 2004).

6.3. Limitations and future research direction

While the study offers important managerial and theoretical implications for social media managers and international branding literature, it does have certain shortcomings that need additional consideration in future research. To begin with, we examined the process through which PBG leads to active and passive engagement on global social media platforms. While we considered users' identification with the GSN brand and identification with the GSN community as mediators of this relationship, additional behavioural, social and psychological characteristics (e.g., perceived value, perceived empowerment, perceived usefulness, interdependent or independent self, etc.) may also have an effect on these connections. So, building on this work, future research may expand the framework by incorporating such traits. *Second*, this research was based on a single GSN, i.e., Facebook. As a result, these findings may not be generalizable to all types of GSN. Furthermore, some GSN (e.g., Weibo, WeChat) are more popular in certain regions or communities than others. Thus, future research may concentrate on these different types of GSNs in order to include and analyse the effects of perceived brand localness or country of origin in this context. *Third*, since the study was limited to respondents with prior experience with GSN, it is unlikely to rule out nonresponse bias. *Fourth*, we did take precautionary measure to minimise the concerns of CMV. However, completely eliminating CMV bias is very unlikely in a survey-based

study (Hill et al., 2021; Podsakoff et al., 2003; Steenkamp and Maydeu-Olivares, 2021). Therefore, we propose that research based on longitudinal data or an experimental design may aid in resolving the problem to some degree. *Fifth*, while the conceptual framework was built on robust theoretical underpinnings and statistical measures were utilised to ensure the instrument's validity, endogeneity concerns, such as omitted variable bias, measurement error etc. may not be totally ruled out (Hill et al., 2021). Future research may include more rigorous analyses of the various relationships suggested in the conceptual framework, for example, via the use of an experimental design or the inclusion of additional relevant control variables to reduce the threat of heterogeneity. *Sixth*, consumer-brand relationships are not static and may evolve over time (Fournier, 1998; Sichtmann et al., 2019). Future studies may adopt longitudinal study designs to examine the association between PBG and GSN engagement over time. *Finally*, sampling biases, such as choosing MTurk users as a sample and using non-native survey language for Indian respondents, may limit the generalisability of the findings. Moreover, users from diverse backgrounds are likely to have varying perceptions of PBG and engagement on GSN. Future studies may concentrate on users from a range of countries with varying social, cultural and economic backgrounds to assess the concept.

7. Conclusions

This study has examined the relationship between PBG and active and passive user engagement on global social networking sites. The suggested conceptual model provides greater clarity on user engagement with GSN by offering a comprehensive framework delineating the interconnections among users' perceived brand globalness, identification (with brand and community) and their global identity. While the study looks at active and passive engagement behaviours on GSN in both developing and developed countries, it emphasises the importance of user-brand interaction through identification with GSN brands and communities. The findings of this study demonstrate that PBG positively influences user identification with both the GSN brands and the GSN community, which in turn result in increased active and passive user engagement. The study further demonstrates that the impact of PBG on both active and passive user engagement on global social networking sites vary as a function of the user's global identity orientation. Finally, the research provides practical recommendations for social media managers on the need to rethink their user engagement strategies in light of global cultural diversity.

CRedit authorship contribution statement

Muhammad S. Akram: Conceptualization, Methodology, Data Analysis, Writing, Reviewing and Editing; **Neeru Malhotra:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Data Analysis, Writing, Reviewing and Editing; **M. Awais Shakir Goraya:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Data Analysis, Writing, Reviewing and Editing; **Mahmud A. Shareef:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing, Reviewing and Editing; **Aneela Malik:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing, Reviewing and Editing; **Banita Lal:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing, Reviewing and Editing.

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