

# The role of instructor experiential values in shaping students' course experiences, attitudes and behavioral intentions

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – Students' experiences with instructors and courses determine an institute's identity. With the instructor analogous to a brand spokesperson and the course to a brand, this study aims to examine the impact of the instructor experiential values on the student's course experiences, as well as their attitudes and behavioral intentions towards the instructor.

**Design/methodology/approach** – This study uses a mixed-method approach that combines literature review and qualitative research, with two stages of empirical validation using structural equation modeling.

**Findings** – The instructor experiential values comprise appearance, entertainment, escapism, intrinsic enjoyment, efficiency and service excellence. The course experiences are composed of sensory, sentimental, behavioral and intellectual experiences. Strong effects of the instructor experiential values on the course experiences and, in turn, on the students' attitudes and behavioral intentions are found.

**Research limitations/implications** – This study contributes to higher education literature by leveraging the theories of meanings transfer, experiential value and brand experience for a unique perspective to the students' interactions with higher education institute instructors and courses.

**Originality/value** – The paper's analogy of an instructor as a brand spokesperson endorsing the course brand is an original contribution to this domain.

**Keywords** Higher education, Brand experience, Experiential value, Normative influence, Brand spokesperson

**Paper type** Research paper

## 1. Introduction

Globally, the number of higher education institutes (HEIs) has grown significantly, especially in developing economies with around 1,000 HEIs added every year in India (AISHE, 2016). This causes many of the HEIs to struggle, with most having few high-quality instructors delivering value-reflecting collegiate experiences for students (Alwi and Kitchen, 2014; Curtis *et al.*, 2009; Sujchaphong *et al.*, 2015; Yousaf *et al.*, 2018). Hence, instructors, with the ability to deliver excellent courses/programs, serve as the key differentiators for the best HEIs (Edushine, 2017). For example, in India, Inside IIM annually nominates the instructors across top business schools, who not only teach well but also significantly influence the students to achieve their potential [1]. A similar exercise is done by Poets & Quants globally [2]. Interestingly, of the studies that provide the principles for building an HEI's unique identity, few explore it from the perspective of the students' experiences with instructors and courses (Whisman, 2009).

Like a high-performing salesperson, a capable instructor works directly for the HEI, values his/her subject, understands the audience, seeks attention to deliver messages, convinces the

audience of the subject's relevance, uses audiovisual aids and invites queries [3]. Such an instructor also shows traits of a brand endorser as he/she has visual appeal, displays classiness, enthruses trust in students and portrays expertise (Ohanian, 1990; Sebastian and Bristow, 2008). In alignment with DeShields *et al.* (1996), who consider both an endorser and a salesperson as brand spokespersons in essence, this study uses the same nomenclature for an instructor. This analogy is supported by Miciak and Shanklin (1994) who suggest that brand endorsers are, in effect, mass-media salespersons feeling similar performance pressures, and are expected to uphold the highest level of behavioral standards. Brands dissociate themselves with the endorsers who fail to perform (O'Neal by Reebok; Bhonslay, 1997) or indulge in professional misconduct (Tiger Woods by Accenture; Hock and Raitchel, 2019). The same holds true for instructors at HEIs.

Extant studies in higher education indicate an instructor-brand spokesperson similarity with multiple desirable attributes, such as gender, ethnicity and age (Kogan *et al.*, 2010; Wilson *et al.*, 2014); teaching techniques and skills (Boysen *et al.*, 2014); reputation, position and rank (Kogan *et al.*, 2010); communication abilities (Sheer and Fung, 2007);

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Journal of Product & Brand Management  
© Emerald Publishing Limited [ISSN 1061-0421]  
[DOI 10.1108/JPBM-11-2019-2645]

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On behalf of all authors, the corresponding author states that there is no conflict of interest.

Received 17 November 2019

Revised 3 April 2020

13 June 2020

Accepted 20 July 2020

appearance (Riniolo *et al.*, 2006); social media presence (Johnson, 2011); and environmental interactions in determining students' evaluations (Ginns and Ellis, 2007; Harnish and Bridges, 2011). Many of these attributes appear in the brand endorser and salesperson personality literatures, making the instructor-brand spokesperson analogy apt (DeShields *et al.*, 1996; Liu *et al.*, 2007; Merk and Michel, 2019; Wang and Scheinbaum, 2018).

Consumers' brand experiences are enabled by their interactions with a brand spokesperson – a concept that is readily applicable to higher education (Yuan *et al.*, 2016). The classroom is an interactive environment where the consumption value, knowledge, is co-created by the consumer (student) and the spokesperson (instructor; Andreu, *et al.*, 2010). This study considers the experiential value and brand experience perspectives to operationalize the students' experiences with the instructor and the course, respectively, and measures the influence of the former on the latter. Further, based on prior studies in related contexts (Chen and Liu, 2004; Mishra and Gupta, 2018), this work examines the impact of course experiences on the students' attitudes and behavioral intentions towards the instructor. The moderating role of the students' susceptibility to peer influence in shaping their attitudes/behaviors is also investigated.

Deploying a mixed-method approach, the study involved generating construct measures through in-depth interviews with 25 HEI students and mapped to existing scales. The measures and the model were empirically evaluated with data from 465 HEI students using structural equation modeling (SEM). The instructor experiential values are composed of six dimensions: visual appeal, entertainment, escapism, intrinsic enjoyment, efficiency and service excellence. The course experience is proposed to reflect sensory, sentimental, behavioral and intellectual experiences. In the model, all the main effects are found significant, except for the influence of instructor entertainment and escapism values on the course sentimental and intellectual experiences, respectively; and the impact of the course behavioral experience on students' attitudes towards the instructor. The moderating effect of students' susceptibility to peer influence on their behavioral intentions was not found significant. Theoretically, the study contributes by employing a unique perspective to examine the role of instructor experiential value and course experiences in driving students' attitudes/behaviors. It also helps managers to understand the importance of instructors and courses as components of the overall HEI experiences of students.

The remaining paper is arranged as follows. First, we review the relevant theories, followed by hypotheses, analysis and results. The paper concludes with general discussion, theoretical and managerial implications and limitations/future research directions.

## 2. Theoretical background

### 2.1 Meaning transfer

The theory of meaning transfer explains the transfer of various brand spokesperson characteristics to the endorsed brand (Echchakoui, 2017; McCracken, 1989). Brand endorsers, though largely celebrities, can also be non-celebrities, with research suggesting that celebrity endorsers may not be

significantly better than non-celebrity ones in shaping brand attitudes (Roozen and Claeys, 2010). Early works investigate the aspects of endorsers relevant to brands, including personality, physical appearance and lifestyle (Langmeyer and Walker, 1991; Ohanian, 1990). Later, Walker *et al.* (1992) consider the image congruence between the endorser and the endorsed brand. Recently, studies have established the effect of endorser characteristics such as trustworthiness (Spry *et al.*, 2011; Wang and Scheinbaum, 2018), expertise (Eisend and Langner, 2010), attractiveness and likeability (Liu *et al.*, 2007) on consumers' attitudes towards endorsed brands. In certain cases, products are launched with the endorser's name to enable the consumers to strongly project the endorser's associations to the brand (Air Jordan shoes from Nike with 33 different editions [4]).

Such meanings transfer is also relevant for salespersons. Effective salespersons identify with the promoted brands, which enhances brand identification in their manifested behaviors, and creates interactive experiences with consumers that convey the intended brand associations (Hughes and Aheame, 2010; Hughes *et al.*, 2019). Such salesperson behaviors benefit the brand with enhanced sales, as well as the consumers' likeability of the salesperson (Echchakoui, 2017; Hughes *et al.*, 2019). Further, Echchakoui (2017) argue that salespersons can become popular, because of their unique personalities, bringing them closer to brand endorsers. For example, some excellent salespersons, such as John H. Patterson, Mary Kay Ash and David Ogilvy, gained endorser status later [5]. Combining both pieces of literature, it can be argued that the interactive experiences with the brand spokesperson simultaneously activate associated brand impressions; further, when a new instance with the spokesperson is registered, the existing brand perception evolves (Banister and Cocker, 2014).

Like a brand spokesperson, the instructor reflects the core values of the HEI, and is responsible for consumer adoption of the endorsed brand, a course in this context (Alwi and Kitchen, 2014; Miciak and Shanklin, 1994; Sujchaphong *et al.*, 2015). Thus, based on prior works (Newell *et al.*, 2011; Hughes *et al.*, 2019), this work argues that the instructor in an HEI through unique interactive experiences, both personal and consultative, shapes a student's overall course experiences. The concept of meaning transfer has seen limited application in higher education research. Hence, by leveraging this theory, this work answers the calls by Curtis *et al.* (2009) and Khanna *et al.* (2014) for more studies on education from a branding perspective.

### 2.2 Consumption experience

Meaningful student-instructor interactions drive the course learning experience, because the instructor ensures knowledge transfer in the learning environment (Kuh, 2008; Stone and Chapman, 2006). Like brand spokespersons, instructors achieve a great level of interaction with students by displaying high immediacy behaviors and low psychological distance (Woods and Ebersole, 2003). High immediacy behaviors enable significant instructor presence and ensure that the students' consumption experiences with an instructor lead to rewarding episodic interactions (Echchakoui, 2017; Newell *et al.*, 2011; Stone and Chapman, 2006). Hence, the

consumption experience perspective that encapsulates most value sources during immersive consumption with the brand spokesperson is apt in this context (Gallarza *et al.*, 2017; Mathwick *et al.*, 2001; Sánchez-Fernández *et al.*, 2009).

The consumer–spokesperson interaction constitutes an important antecedent to the brand's performance (Darian, *et al.*, 2001). Consumers reflect on their direct/indirect experiences with the brand spokesperson to shape their perceptions towards the contextual brand (Dwivedi, *et al.*, 2015). Hence, the consumers' experience with the spokesperson is an important antecedent to the overall brand experience, defined as the subjective, internal and behavioral responses evoked by the brand (Brakus *et al.*, 2009). Across multiple services, brand spokespersons have evolved as consultative value creators, creating superior and meaningful brand experiences (Baumann and Le Meunier-FitzHugh, 2014). The salesperson and the endorser, as brand spokespersons, epitomize the brand's values, which modulates the consumer's brand perceptions contingent on the interactive experiences with the spokesperson (Gammoh, *et al.*, 2014). For example, the salespersons of Apple are trained to indulge in therapeutic conversations with the customers, to project the firm as one which empathetically listens to its customers [6]. Interestingly, in the education literature, there are no studies that consider the course as a brand and examine the effects of the instructor experiential values on the students' course experiences (Chen and Liu, 2004).

### 3. Model constructs

#### 3.1 Instructor experiential value

We adopt the experiential value scale (EVS) proposed by Mathwick *et al.* (2001) to measure students' experiences with an instructor. While Mathwick *et al.* (2001) empirically validate EVS in the context of catalog and internet shopping, the framework itself has been developed and implemented by other studies in the context of physical retail environment (Wu and Liang, 2009; Gallarza *et al.*, 2017). The dyadic physical interaction between the spokesperson and the consumer arguably creates the best opportunities for value co-creation (Blocker, *et al.*, 2012). In our context, the classroom is akin to a retail environment with the instructor as the brand spokesperson, making the deployment of EVS appropriate (Andreu, *et al.*, 2010).

Mathwick *et al.* (2001) propose seven experiential value dimensions: visual appeal, entertainment, escapism, intrinsic enjoyment, efficiency, economic value and service excellence. We consider all dimensions except economic value, a benefit-for-price measure which is difficult for students to apportion to a brand spokesperson/instructor from the total program fee. The visual appeal component indicates the instructor's physical attractiveness, which has a known influence on the students' ratings and evaluations (Riniolo *et al.*, 2006; Westfall *et al.*, 2016). The second dimension is entertainment, which refers to the unique experiences derived from the engaging showmanship in an instructor's teaching style (Ginns and Ellis, 2007; Keeley *et al.*, 2006).

The next dimension is escapism, which represents a classroom environment that enables students to temporarily forget their outside life and become immersed in the classroom

experience (Mathwick *et al.*, 2001). Further, if students can achieve intrinsic enjoyment from the experience generated by the instructor, which represents the fourth dimension, the overall consumption experience will be positive (Ginns and Ellis, 2007; Keeley *et al.*, 2006). The fifth dimension is efficiency, which is the instructor's ability to use the class time to ensure adequate course coverage, as well as appropriate clarifications of doubt (Ginns and Ellis, 2007). The final dimension is service excellence, which indicates the subject-matter expertise, as well as the task-related performance of the instructor, through which they can deliver maximum intellectual value (Keeley *et al.*, 2006; Mathwick *et al.*, 2001). Such tasks may include organization, presentation, relationship management, assessment and evaluation of the class (Elton, 1998).

#### 3.2 Course experience

The course experience encapsulates all encounters, including instructors, lectures, discussions, assignments, projects, in-program internships, course material and academic advisory (Ginns and Ellis, 2007; Moore *et al.*, 2018). Such encounters add value to students' learning and generate a rewarding academic experience (Ng and Forbes, 2009). The courses taught in an HEI represent the institute's strategy in shaping students' expectations, and such course experiences increase the desirability of an HEI (Diseth, 2007; Moore *et al.*, 2018). A case in point is the introductory computer science course taught at Harvard [7].

Using the brand experience framework, the course experience is conceptualized as consisting of sensory, sentimental, behavioral and intellectual experiences (Brakus *et al.*, 2009). Sensory experiences refer to aspects of the course that enable student experiences by appealing to their receptive senses; sentimental experiences refer to the effects of the course on students' moods/emotions; behavioral experience indicates students' utilitarian outcomes regarding knowledge gained from the course; and intellectual experiences drive students' primary need for learning following the course exposure (Ding and Tseng, 2015).

#### 3.3 Experience outcomes: attitude and behavior

During consumption, a consumer's spokesperson and brand nodes are activated and not only are meanings of the spokesperson transferred to the brand but reciprocally, attitudes towards the spokesperson are formed/confirmed/evolved (Abimbola *et al.*, 2010; Newell *et al.*, 2011; Till, 1998). For example, in 2015, Liam Neeson turned out to be the most liked endorser for Supercell Games which registered the highest memorability [8]. Thus, brand consumptions become intrinsic cues for consumers to form utilitarian and hedonic attitudes, in the form of positive/negative evaluations, towards the spokesperson (Alwi and Kitchen, 2014; Bergkvist *et al.*, 2016; Newell *et al.*, 2011; Zarantonello and Schmitt, 2010). Utilitarian attitude is an outcome of the cognitive appraisal of the spokesperson's functional values, whereas hedonic attitude is the emotional outcome of such experiences (Voss *et al.*, 2003).

Extant literature also refers to the role of brand experiences in creating behavioral responses towards the brand spokesperson (Khan and Rahman, 2016). Memorable brand

experiences create satisfied consumers, who develop positive behavioral intentions towards the spokesperson in the form of re-engaging with the spokesperson and recommending the spokesperson to others (Abimbola *et al.*, 2010; Brakus *et al.*, 2009). For example, Joe Girard, who holds the record for selling 1,425 cars in the year 1973, formed thousands of personal long-lasting relations with customers, who liked and advocated him (Peebles, 2006). In the current context, these behavioral intentions are proposed as the student's disposition to re-engage with the instructor by subscribing to other courses taught by him/her and to recommend him/her to peers/others.

## 4. Proposed framework

### 4.1 Instructor experiential value and course experience

Extant research supports the impact of a spokesperson's visual appeal on subsequent brand judgments (DeShields *et al.*, 1996; Wang and Scheinbaum, 2018). These judgments are based on immediate affective responses to the visual aesthetics of the spokesperson, referred to as the visceral effect (Norman, 2004). However, under the reflective effect, the consumer, a student, invokes elaborate processing of the stimulus, the instructor, and builds sensory brand perceptions through more careful consideration of the spokesperson's visual characteristics (Riniolo *et al.*, 2006; Westfall *et al.*, 2016). Thus, we hypothesize the following:

*H1.* Visual appeal value of an instructor positively influences students' sensory course experience.

A hedonic component of spokesperson consumption experience is the entertainment value that evokes sensory brand experience for consumers (Holbrook, 2000; Hyun *et al.*, 2011; Jeong *et al.*, 2009). Consumers rely on tangible/intangible attributes of a spokesperson, including entertainment cues, to evaluate such sensorial brand experiences (Jensen and Hansen, 2007). The entertainment value of the spokesperson also provides diversion/relief for consumers, wherein they display positive sentiments for the brand (Sit *et al.*, 2003). In this context, when the spokesperson, the instructor, creates entertainment value for students, they not only find the course a sensorial "treat," but also form positive emotions/sentiments towards it. Hence, we hypothesize the following:

*H2a.* Entertainment value of an instructor positively influences students' sensory course experience.

*H2b.* Entertainment value of an instructor positively influences students' sentimental course experience.

Escapist experiences with the spokesperson, through active involvement, allow consumers to attain a new self by transcending to a different time/place (Hosany and Witham, 2010). Such experiences are highly personal, allow consumers to feel comfortable by escaping from daily concerns and, in turn, enhance their positive sensory brand experiences (Triantafillidou and Siomkos, 2014). Beyond sensory appeals, escapist experiences with a spokesperson can also stimulate consumers' cognitive capabilities and enable consumers' creative thinking, thereby enhancing their intellectual evaluations of the brand (Brakus *et al.*, 2009; Hosany and Witham, 2010; Triantafillidou and Siomkos, 2014). In this

context, an instructor who provides escapist experiences not only enables positive sensory stimulations for the course, but also triggers students' learning desires. Thus, we hypothesize the following:

*H3a.* Escapism value of an instructor positively influences students' sensory course experience.

*H3b.* Escapism value of an instructor positively influences students' intellectual course experience.

Intrinsic enjoyment with a brand's elements keeps the users engaged, sometimes putting them in a state of deep absorption, referred to as flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975; Lin *et al.*, 2008). The role of intrinsic enjoyment provided by the spokesperson generating sentimental experiences is evident in several consumption settings, including tourism, high-technology products and gambling (Loroz, 2004; Turel *et al.*, 2010). Intrinsic enjoyment with the spokesperson serves as a non-instrumental hedonic drive that motivates consumers to emotionally experience the brand (Turel *et al.*, 2010). Thus, we argue that enjoyment with an instructor makes the course playful/fun and creates a sentimental experience for students, and hypothesize the following:

*H4.* Intrinsic enjoyment value of an instructor positively influences students' sentimental course experience.

A spokesperson's efficiency in communication helps consumers to evaluate the brand's extrinsic utilitarian values, which include its product/service utility and quality (Alan *et al.*, 2016; Mathwick *et al.*, 2001). Extant research suggests that favorable perceptions of a spokesperson's efficiency enhance consumers' perceived value of the brand's products/services and help consumers to rationally evaluate consumption-derived functional benefits (Silvera and Austad, 2004). Such perceived effective value delivery by the spokesperson shapes consumers' overall appraisal of the brand and enhances behavioral and intellectual brand experiences (Alan *et al.*, 2016; Brakus *et al.*, 2009). In an education context, the instructor efficiency is expected to create behavioral course experiences, where the course is perceived as useful/applicable, and intellectual experiences, where the course is perceived as cognitively stimulating. Thus, we hypothesize the following:

*H5a.* Efficiency value of an instructor positively influences students' behavioral course experience.

*H5b.* Efficiency value of an instructor positively influences students' intellectual course experience.

Service excellence represents the subjective expertise of the spokesperson that positively shapes consumers' brand perceptions. Mathwick *et al.* (2001) and Wu and Liang (2009) additionally indicate that service excellence reflects task-related performance of the spokesperson during value delivery. Like efficiency, the spokesperson's service excellence is an extrinsic source of value that enables consumers to derive utilitarian product/service value, which is a measure of behavioral and intellectual brand experiences (Eisend and Langner, 2010; Izogo and Jayawardhena, 2018; Silvera and Austad, 2003). In this context, the excellence of the instructor is his/her expertise

in delivering the course content, through effective performance in various class-related tasks, and influencing the behavioral and intellectual elements of the course experience (Alan *et al.*, 2016; Mathwick *et al.*, 2001). Thus, we hypothesize the following:

- H6a.* Service excellence value of an instructor positively influences students' behavioral course experience.
- H6b.* Service excellence value of an instructor positively influences students' intellectual course experience.

#### 4.2 Course experience and student attitude/behavior

Enriching brand experiences evoke pleasure-evoking hedonic evaluations, which are a strong source of conative engagement entailing re-engagement intentions and advocacy (Brakus *et al.*, 2009; Choi and Rifon, 2012; Puccinelli *et al.*, 2009). Extant literature indicates that emotions triggered by the largely hedonic sensory and sentimental brand experiences, enabled by the spokesperson, also create a positive consumer motivation to re-experience the spokesperson, as well as to recommend him/her to others (Zarantonello and Schmitt, 2010; McCormick, 2016). Thus, we argue that sensory and sentimental course experiences evoke behavior-driven outcomes for students, and hypothesize the following:

- H7a.* The course sensory experience positively influences students' intention to recommend the instructor.
- H7b.* The course sensory experience positively influences students' intention to re-engage with the instructor.
- H8a.* The course sentimental experience positively influences students' intention to recommend the instructor.
- H8b.* The course sentimental experience positively influences students' intention to re-engage with the instructor.

Meaningful brand experiences, driven by a spokesperson, create stable long-term utilitarian and affective attitudes toward the contextual spokesperson (Brakus *et al.*, 2009; Zarantonello and Schmitt, 2010). Utilitarian attitudes toward the spokesperson are outcomes of the functional value derived from brand consumption, whereas affective attitudes toward the spokesperson are emotional outcomes of the overall cognitive investment in the brand (Echchakoui, 2017; Newell *et al.*, 2011). Thus, consumers' attitudes toward a spokesperson are a consequence of exhaustive cognitive evaluations, beyond sensorial and emotional connections, that are shaped primarily through behavioral and intellectual brand experiences (Alan *et al.*, 2016; Puccinelli *et al.*, 2009). Hence, we propose that behavioral and intellectual course experiences are key drivers of utilitarian and hedonic attitudes towards the instructor, and hypothesize the following:

- H9a.* The course behavioral experience positively influences students' hedonic attitude toward the instructor.
- H9b.* The course behavioral experience positively influences students' utilitarian attitude toward the instructor.

- H10a.* The course intellectual experience positively influences students' hedonic attitude toward the instructor.
- H10b.* The course intellectual experience positively influences students' utilitarian attitude toward the instructor.

Normative social influence implies modifying one's behavior to conform to that of others because of the proneness to interpersonal influence (Cialdini and Goldstein, 2004; Smith and Fowler, 1984). Peer influence is the nomenclature used to indicate the interpersonal influence of people outside family. Multiple studies show that the behaviors of youth in adolescence or early adulthood are much more significantly influenced by their peers, than of higher age people (Barry and Wentzel, 2006; Lee, 2014). Hence, college students, as early adults, are expected to demonstrate enhanced behaviors contingent to peer opinions/perceptions (Bastiaensens *et al.*, 2016; Lee, 2014; Monahan, *et al.*, 2009; Schultz *et al.*, 2008; Vollet *et al.*, 2017).

Mangleburg *et al.* (2004) indicate that normative influence has a limited effect on attitudes, which are possibly more personal and stable, and has a greater impact only on manifested behaviors. Thus, based on studies on social development, it can be argued that if a student has a negative sentimental or sensory course experience, he/she will develop a negative attitude toward the instructor. However, if the peer group holds a positive view of the instructor, a student with higher susceptibility to peer influence will display recommendation/re-engagement intentions, without necessarily changing the primary attitudes (Bastiaensens *et al.*, 2016). Thus, we hypothesize the following:

- H11a.* Susceptibility to peer influence positively moderates the relation between course sensory experience and students' intention to recommend the instructor.
- H11b.* Susceptibility to peer influence positively moderates the relation between course sensory experience and students' intention to re-engage with the instructor.
- H12a.* Susceptibility to peer influence positively moderates the relation between course sentimental experience and students' intention to recommend the instructor.
- H12b.* Susceptibility to peer influence positively moderates the relation between course sentimental experience and students' intention to re-engage with the instructor.

The proposed framework is depicted in [Figure 1](#).

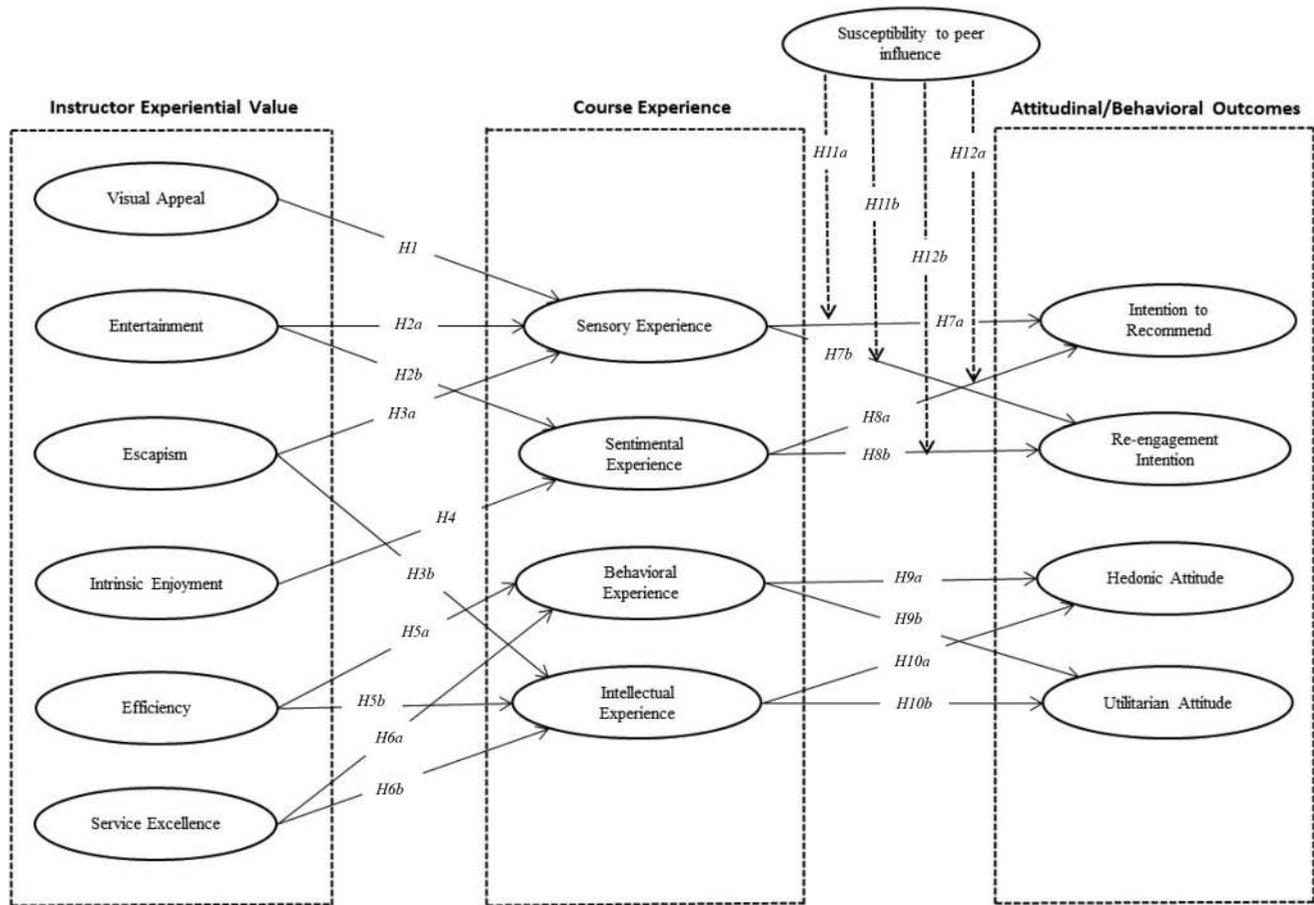
## 5. Methodology

We followed the step-by-step process suggested by Churchill (1979) and Gerbing and Anderson (1988) to ensure a robust scale for measuring each model construct.

### 5.1 Item generation and reduction

We used a combination of inductive and deductive approaches for item development and reduction, where items generated

Figure 1 Proposed framework



from interviews (inductive) are mapped to pre-existing scale items (deductive) for theoretical rigor (Tanwar and Prasad, 2017). To capture students’ instructor/course experiences, we conducted semi-structured in-depth interviews with 25 randomly chosen students out of a cohort of 540 students at a prominent Indian business school. Each interview lasted around 50–60 min, and was voice recorded. Manual axial coding enabled the capture of participant voices thematically, which were then integrated to the specific proposed constructs. The verbatim responses were also mapped to specific scales available in the literature, and, wherever necessary, new items were added. The scales were taken from Brakus *et al.* (2009), Bearden *et al.* (1989), Ginns and Ellis (2007), Goyette *et al.* (2010), Keeley *et al.* (2006), Mathwick *et al.* (2001) and Voss *et al.* (2003). In total, 50 items were generated; these were shown to a four-member expert panel for validation and modifications. Table 1 depicts the final mapping.

**5.2 Data collection**

The study population was HEI students in India, which means a total of 345 million students in 2016 (86%: bachelor’s courses, 9.6%: master’s courses and 0.6%: doctoral courses; 36%: arts, 17%: engineering/technology, 19%: science and 16%: commerce/management/others; AISHE, 2016). The population consisted of 46% females, with an average age of 21 years. The questionnaire was

pilot tested with five students to ensure clarity of the items. The final data were collected from management students at a premier business school in India, different from the one in the qualitative phase. The instructor and the course about which students responded had to be one from their undergraduate studies. The entire group, consisting of 1,780 students, was divided into four strata based on their undergraduate specialization, namely, engineering (1,039), management (209), commerce (281) and science (251). Within each stratum, proportionate random sampling was applied, and 700 students were ultimately shortlisted. Data were collected from these students in two time periods, three months apart (July 2016 and October 2016), to avoid any transient conditions affecting the study outcomes. To prevent a priori common method bias, we randomized the items in the questionnaire. In the first group, 200 valid responses were received, whereas in the second group, there were 265 valid responses, leading to an overall response rate of 66.42%.

**5.3 Sample profile**

The sample comprised 44% females, and 91% of the students were, as expected, in the age category of 20–25 years, which matched closely with the population break-up. The data breakdown by strata (both stages combined) were as follows: management 12%, engineering 58%, commerce 16% and

Table 1 Item generation and mapping

Construct	Respondents quotes	Items	Mapped scales*
Instructor experiential value (Visual appeal)	"He has the kind of attractive looks and accent" (RP8) "...professional in his looks and talk made him so special and memorable" (RP13)	The way the professor carries himself/herself is attractive (VA1) The professor's appearance is aesthetically appealing (VA2) I like the way the professor looks (VA3)	M
Instructor experiential value (Entertainment value)	"His class is always entertaining" (RP3) "I like his energy and evaluation" (RP11)	I think that the professor's class is very entertaining (EV1) The enthusiasm of the professor is catching, it picks me up (EV2) The professor doesn't just teach – he/she entertains me (EV3) The professor maintains nice energy in class* (EV4)	K, M
Instructor experiential value (Escapism)	"The class of my professor was a different zone for me" (RP16) "Her classes were very immersive, and she had my full attention" (R8)	Attending the professor's class gets me away from it all (ES1) Attending the professor's class makes me feel like I am in another world (ES2) I get so involved when I attend the professor's class that I forget everything else (ES3)	M
Instructor experiential value (Intrinsic enjoyment)	"He used to make the classes fun to attend" (RP7) "Extremely funny – taught using stories and innovative ideas" (RP10) "She was a friendly teacher" (RP4) "She knew her subject very well and would never undermine the questions students put up" (RP14) "He was a good listener" (RP22) "She was my idol and gave personal attention" (RP16)	I enjoy attending the professor's class for its own sake, not just for the content (IE1) I attend the professor's class for the pure enjoyment of it (IE2) His/her friendly nature made the classes enjoyable* (IE3) He/she listened to students' opinions which made classes enjoyable* (IE4) I idolize the professor and want to be like him/her* (IE5) I liked the personal touch he/she maintained* (IE6)	G, K, M
Instructor experiential value (Efficiency)	"The professor was known for his punctuality" (RP15) "He gives a lot of practical scenarios to make us understand the complex topics in a simple way" (RP17) "His method of teaching was unique" (RP10) "His class is fun and exciting, of course, ... the way he communicates the information is fun" (RP11) "He focused on case-based learning, real-life examples" (RP25) "The way she used to help me was great" (RP21) "The pace with which he teaches, examples, solving a difficult question, overall amazing" (RP 19)	I like the way the professor manages class time (EF1) The professor's use of technology makes a student's life easier (EF2) I feel his/her style of teaching is unique* (EF3) Difficult concepts appeared easy because of his/her style of teaching* (EF4) I liked his/her capability to communicate* (EF5) He/she related concepts well with real-life examples* (EF6) I appreciated his/her availability outside the class* (EF7) The tempo of the class was always high* (EF8)	G, K, M
Instructor experiential value (Service excellence)	"He delivers excellent performance" (RP12) "He had an in-depth knowledge of the subject and delivered it well" (RP14)	When I think of the professor, I think of excellence (SE1) I think of the professor as an expert in the class he/she teaches (SE2)	G, K, M
Course experience (Sensory)	"The course was a great experience for me overall" (RP16) "His method of teaching made the course very interesting" (RP23)	This course made a strong impression on my senses (SS1) I found this course to be interesting to my senses (SS2)	G, B1
Course experience (Sentimental)	"The course was very interesting, and I was really sad when it finished" (RP18) "I liked the course since he cared a lot about the emotions of the students" (RP2) "The course experience is etched on my memory" (RP6)	This course induced feelings and sentiments (SN1) This course aroused strong emotions in me (SN2) I become sentimental when I remember the course (SN3)	G, B1

G, B1  
(continued)

Table 1

Construct	Respondents quotes	Items	Mapped scales*
Course experience (Behavioral)	"The way the instructor taught the class- incorporating everyone, giving practical examples, made the course really useful" (RP8) "The in-class exercises were really useful" (RP12)	I was able to apply what I learnt in this course (BH1) The course enabled me to convert the learnings into action (BH2)	
Course experience (Intellectual)	"He gave a fun side to learning which is now permanently with me" (RP4) "The course deeper understanding of concepts" (RP18) "The course created genuine curiosity in me" (RP23)	I still think about what I learned in this course (IL1) I engaged in a lot of thinking when I attended this course (IL2) This course stimulated my curiosity (IL3)	G, B1
Intention to recommend	"I recommended all my juniors to take the course" (RP16) "In my college, this course was taught twice in the same year, across two trimesters, I suggested my other friends to definitely take it" (RP11)	I will spread positive word of mouth about the professor (IR1) I would recommend the professor to my friends (IR2) If they were looking for a course, I would recommend that they subscribe to this professor's course (IR3)	G2
Re-engagement intention	"After I studied from this professor, I ended up taking two more courses from him" (RP25) "When the elective list came up during elective choice, I was looking for this instructor" (RP14)	I intend to subscribe to another course taught by the same professor* (RP1) I will actively look for another course floated by this professor* (RP2)	Author-
Attitude (Utilitarian)	"There was a focus on quality, he was knowledgeable, and his teaching methods were overall effective" (RP19) "She was always full of information and very helpful" (RP12)	The professor is effective (UA1) The professor is helpful (UA2) The professor knows his/her subject (UA3)	G, K, V
Attitude (Hedonic)	"He developed a good emotional connection with students. He was able to understand their mentality" (RP23) "He was beneficial for our learning and enjoyable in class, I felt happy to be in his class" (RP13)	The professor creates excitement in class (HA1) The professor is fun (HA2) The professor is delightful (HA3) The professor is inspiring (HA4) I am thrilled to attend his/her class (HA5) The professor creates an enjoyable atmosphere (HA6)	G, K, V
Susceptibility to peer influence	"I take the course which my friends are subscribing to for better company" (RP17) "It is very difficult to know what there is in a course beforehand, so I consult my friends" (RP3) "For most purchases, I always bounce it off with my family" (RP7) "I am generally a follower, buying stuff which is popular with others" (RP21)	I often consult other people to help choose the best alternative (SPI1) If I have no experience with something, I often ask my friends about it for their suggestions (SPI2) I frequently gather information from friends or family before buying something (SPI3) I make my buying decisions based on what others are buying (SPI4)	B2

**Notes:** RP: respondent; not all respondents are indicated for brevity, besides their comments being similar to ones depicted here; \*B1: Brakus, *et al.* (2009); B2: Bearden, *et al.* (1989); G1: Ginns and Ellis (2007); G2: Goyette, *et al.* (2010); K: Keeley, *et al.* (2006); M: Mathwick, *et al.* (2001); V: Voss, *et al.* (2003)

science/others 14%. The undergraduate stream distribution did not follow that of the population as the business school had a heavy skew towards engineering students. The first data set of 200 students was used to establish the psychometric properties of the measures, whereas the second data set of 265 students was used for model evaluation (Bagozzi and Heatherton, 1994).

## 6. Results: measurement model (Data set 1)

SEM was used for data analysis through the partial least squares-SEM (PLS-SEM) software SmartPLS3. The constructs were first tested for univariate normality, and skewness/kurtosis values were found to be within the prescribed limits (Curran *et al.*, 1996). An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was first executed in the first sample of 200 using

SPSS21, and none of the items was dropped. Next, to test the psychometric properties, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted. Table 2 summarizes, for each construct, the factor loadings for the EFA (FL-EFA) and for the CFA (FL-CFA) for each item's respective construct, along with the composite reliability (CR), Cronbach's  $\alpha$  (C- $\alpha$ ), average variance extracted (AVE) and maximum squared correlation (MSC) with other constructs in the model.

The CR and C- $\alpha$  values for all constructs were above the threshold value of 0.70, indicating indicator reliability (Churchill, 1979). Convergent validity was examined by measuring the construct AVEs, which were found to be greater than 0.50 (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Further, the discriminant validity was established by comparing the MSC with the AVE of each construct (Fornell and Larcker, 1981).

Table 2 Measurement model (first data set)

Items (code)	FL (EFA)	FL (CFA)	AVE	CR	C- $\alpha$	MSC
<i>Visual appeal</i>			0.816	0.929	0.886	0.526
VA1	0.772	0.898				
VA2	0.713	0.935				
VA3	0.729	0.874				
<i>Entertainment value</i>			0.796	0.936	0.897	0.731
EV1	0.714	0.899				
EV2	0.772	0.924				
EV3	0.791	0.852				
<i>Escapism</i>			0.812	0.928	0.884	0.764
ES1	0.819	0.932				
ES2	0.792	0.895				
ES3	0.764	0.875				
<i>Intrinsic enjoyment</i>			0.625	0.911	0.833	0.564
IE1	0.741	0.806				
IE2	0.723	0.843				
IE3	0.782	0.787				
IE4	0.701	0.718				
IE5	0.729	0.799				
IE6	0.737	0.786				
<i>Efficiency</i>			0.671	0.937	0.923	0.655
EF1	0.712	0.772				
EF2	0.791	0.858				
EF3	0.785	0.843				
EF4	0.738	0.777				
EF5	0.756	0.842				
EF6	0.773	0.816				
EF7	0.718	0.857				
EF8	0.707	0.780				
<i>Service excellence</i>			0.881	0.936	0.864	0.761
SE1	0.824	0.937				
SE2	0.836	0.940				
<i>Sensory experience</i>			0.863	0.926	0.841	0.526
SS1	0.881	0.934				
SS2	0.815	0.924				
<i>Sentimental experience</i>			0.777	0.912	0.856	0.348
SN1	0.734	0.876				
SN2	0.716	0.865				
SN3	0.828	0.903				
<i>Behavioral experience</i>			0.863	0.926	0.841	0.505
BH1	0.873	0.923				
BH2	0.815	0.935				
<i>Intellectual experience</i>			0.792	0.912	0.883	0.756
IL1	0.882	0.894				
IL2	0.835	0.858				
IL3	0.895	0.917				
<i>Intention to recommend</i>			0.923	0.973	0.958	0.754
IR1	0.834	0.974				
IR2	0.835	0.953				
IR3	0.827	0.955				

(continued)

Table 2

Items (code)	FL (EFA)	FL (CFA)	AVE	CR	C- $\alpha$	MSC
<i>Re-engagement intention</i>			0.916	0.956	0.909	0.754
RE1	0.826	0.958				
RE2	0.829	0.956				
<i>Utilitarian attitude</i>			0.804	0.924	0.877	0.701
UA1	0.844	0.913				
UA2	0.838	0.894				
UA3	0.837	0.882				
<i>Hedonic attitude</i>			0.813	0.963	0.954	0.730
HA1	0.853	0.928				
HA2	0.826	0.884				
HA3	0.879	0.918				
HA4	0.855	0.895				
HA5	0.816	0.880				
HA6	0.854	0.906				

## 7. Results: structural model (Data set 2)

Once the reliability and validity of the measures had been established, the structural model was assessed. Table 3 shows the results of the measurement model with the second data set of 265 respondents.

The psychometric properties of the constructs remained intact. Next, hypotheses were tested with the completely disaggregated structural model. The path beta values were tested at a 95% level of significance (cut-off  $t$ -value:  $>1.96$ ; cut-off  $p$ -value:  $<0.05$ ). Table 4 depicts the path values.

All the main paths were significant except those for  $H2b$ ,  $H3b$ ,  $H9a$  and  $H9b$ . Thus, entertainment and escapism values of the instructor were found to play an insignificant role in evoking sentimental and intellectual course experiences, respectively. Further, behavioral course experience has no impact on hedonic and utilitarian attitudes, which are largely driven by the intellectual course experience. In line with recommendations by Hair *et al.* (2013),  $R^2$  values are all above 0.25 for endogenous constructs; hence, the model explains a substantial percentage of variance therein. Similarly, the  $Q^2$  values were above zero for all endogenous constructs, indicating strong predictive relevance (Hair *et al.*, 2013).

A moderation test was conducted using hierarchical moderated regression analysis. The moderator was classified depending on the significance of the coefficients of the interaction term as well as those of the predictor and moderator variables. The results are shown in Table 5.

Examination of the table reveals that the interaction terms of susceptibility to peer influence are nonsignificant for both dependent variables. This implies that the effect of the course sensory/sentimental experience on either of the two behavioral outcomes is not moderated. Thus, none of the four moderating hypotheses,  $H11a$ ,  $H11b$ ,  $H12a$  and  $H12b$ , are supported.

## 8. General discussion

The current work considers the instructor as a brand spokesperson endorsing the course brand and leverages the experiential value and brand experience theories to measure

student experiences with the instructor and the course. Using the EVS, the student interactions with an instructor, like that of a brand spokesperson, are proposed to be perceived through six values: visual appeal, entertainment, escapism, intrinsic enjoyment, efficiency and service excellence (Mathwick *et al.*, 2001). Similarly, course experience is proposed as a combination of sensory, sentimental, behavioral and intellectual experiences (Brakus *et al.*, 2009).

The study findings show that the overall instructor experiential value has a strong effect on the course experience. Specifically, the visual appeal, entertainment and escapism values of the instructor are strong determinants of students' sensory experience with the course. When it comes to course sentimental experience, the intrinsic enjoyment value generated by the instructor is found to be a significant antecedent, while entertainment value is not. This implies that providing entertainment, but with little in-class enjoyment through high-quality delivery, is ineffective in creating emotional course experiences. Similarly, the course knowledge, represented through intellectual experience, is deeper than knowledge for brands, and cannot be delivered only through escapist spokesperson experiences. We also find that the efficiency and service excellence values of the instructor are instrumental in creating behavioral and intellectual course experiences. These two instructor qualities are mandatory if a course is to be considered intellectually stimulating and practically applicable.

The overall course experience positively affects students' utilitarian/hedonic attitudes and drives them to re-engage with and recommend the instructor. More specifically, students' sentimental and sensory experiences with the course are key enablers to the two behavioral intentions. While intellectual experience is found to be a key driver of attitudes toward the instructor, behavioral experience is not. This implies that, ultimately, students need to find the course intellectually stimulating to develop a positive attitude toward the instructor, and that the applicability of the concepts taught is not in itself sufficient. The moderating effect of susceptibility to peer influence on the outcomes of course experience is found to be

Table 3 Measurement model (second data set)

ITEMS (CODE)	FL (CFA)	AVE	CR	MSC
<i>Visual appeal</i>		0.842	0.941	0.541
VA1	0.940			
VA2	0.906			
VA3	0.906			
<i>Entertainment value</i>		0.851	0.944	0.634
EV1	0.923			
EV2	0.913			
EV3	0.932			
<i>Escapism</i>		0.741	0.895	0.688
ES1	0.789			
ES2	0.917			
ES3	0.871			
<i>Intrinsic enjoyment</i>		0.659	0.921	0.513
IE1	0.785			
IE2	0.883			
IE3	0.826			
IE4	0.747			
IE5	0.855			
IE6	0.766			
<i>Efficiency</i>		0.669	0.937	0.629
EF1	0.784			
EF2	0.889			
EF3	0.891			
EF4	0.762			
EF5	0.841			
EF6	0.812			
EF7	0.756			
EF8	0.794			
<i>Service excellence</i>		0.895	0.945	0.669
SE1	0.948			
SE2	0.944			
<i>Sensory experience</i>		0.851	0.919	0.558
SS1	0.925			
SS2	0.920			
<i>Sentimental experience</i>		0.791	0.919	0.492
SN1	0.899			
SN2	0.848			
SN3	0.920			
<i>Behavioral experience</i>		0.872	0.932	0.517
BH1	0.931			
BH2	0.938			
<i>Intellectual experience</i>		0.815	0.921	0.795
IL1	0.906			
IL2	0.877			
IL3	0.925			
<i>Intention to recommend</i>		0.956	0.985	0.792
IR1	0.985			
IR2	0.973			
IR3	0.976			

(continued)

Table 3

ITEMS (CODE)	FL (CFA)	AVE	CR	MSC
<i>Re-engagement intention</i>		0.945	0.972	0.744
RE1	0.974			
RE2	0.971			
<i>Utilitarian attitude</i>		0.839	0.939	0.703
UA1	0.945			
UA2	0.929			
UA3	0.872			
<i>Hedonic attitude</i>		0.771	0.952	0.731
HA1	0.925			
HA2	0.948			
HA3	0.946			
HA4	0.940			
HA5	0.901			
HA6	0.932			

Table 4. Structural model (second dataset)

Path, hypothesis and outcome		<i>B</i>	<i>t</i> -value	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>Q</i> <sup>2</sup>
Instructor visual appeal → Course sensory experience	<i>H1</i> (S)	0.227**	3.001	0.339	0.336
Instructor entertainment value → Course sensory experience	<i>H2a</i> (S)	0.180**	2.147		
Instructor entertainment value → Course sentimental experience	<i>H2b</i> (NS)	-0.063	0.813	0.299	0.281
Instructor escapism value → Course sensory experience	<i>H3a</i> (S)	0.252**	3.360		
Instructor escapism value → Course intellectual experience	<i>H3b</i> (NS)	0.023	0.438	0.559	0.497
Instructor intrinsic enjoyment value → Course sentimental experience	<i>H4</i> (S)	0.676**	7.745		
Instructor efficiency → Course behavioral experience	<i>H5a</i> (S)	0.452**	4.580	0.450	0.336
Instructor efficiency → Course intellectual experience	<i>H5b</i> (S)	0.465**	4.613		
Instructor service excellence → Course behavioral experience	<i>H6a</i> (S)	0.238**	2.339		
Instructor service excellence → Course intellectual experience	<i>H6b</i> (S)	0.289**	2.862		
Course sensory experience → Intention to recommend	<i>H7a</i> (S)	0.559**	9.737	0.411	0.385
Course sensory experience → Re-engagement intention	<i>H7b</i> (S)	0.556**	10.163	0.451	0.412
Course sentimental experience → Intention to recommend	<i>H8a</i> (S)	0.131**	2.088		
Course sentimental experience → Re-engagement intention	<i>H8b</i> (S)	0.179**	2.921		
Course behavioral experience → Hedonic attitude	<i>H9a</i> (NS)	0.017	0.296	0.361	0.344
Course behavioral experience → Utilitarian attitude	<i>H9b</i> (NS)	0.012	0.311	0.439	0.423
Course intellectual experience → Hedonic attitude	<i>H10a</i> (S)	0.501**	4.567		
Course intellectual experience → Utilitarian attitude	<i>H10b</i> (S)	0.568**	6.363		

Notes: \*\* $p < 0.05$ ;  $\beta$ , standardized path coefficient;  $R^2$ , explained variance of a dependent variable;  $Q^2$ , predictive relevance; S: supported; NS: not supported.

insignificant. This implies that the attitude and behavioral response of students – their intentions to re-engage and recommend – are outcomes independent of their peers' views.

## 9. Theoretical implications

The study has five theoretical contributions. First, prior works investigate various instructor attributes that lead to positive student evaluations in an HEI context (Boysen et al., 2014; Johnson, 2011; Kogan et al., 2010; Wilson et al., 2014). However, none of these studies develops a comprehensive framework that enables measurement of a student's perception of his/her experiences with an instructor. Further, very few studies (Kuh, 2008; Harnish and Bridges, 2011) investigate the joint role played by the

instructor experiential values and the course experience in driving students' subsequent attitudes and behaviors towards the instructor. Previous scale development efforts (Ginns and Ellis, 2007; Keeley et al., 2006) tend to either combine perceptions of the instructor and the course in the same scale or have unclear scale dimensions.

This work proposes separate measures for the student-perceived instructor experiential values and course experiences, based on the consumption and brand experience theories, respectively (Brakus et al., 2009; Mathwick et al., 2001). Additionally, based on the work by DeShields et al. (1996), the instructor is considered analogous to a brand spokesperson, with traits such as a salesperson and a brand endorser. This brings a unique branding perspective to the higher education literature (Curtis et al., 2009; Khanna et al., 2014; Yuan et al., 2016).

Table 5 Moderation results

Independent variables	DV: Intention to recommend		
	Model 1 Standardized $\beta$	Model 2 Standardized $\beta$	Model 3 Standardized $\beta$
<b>Main effects</b>			
Course sensory experience (SS)	0.453**	0.363**	0.359**
Course sentimental experience (SN)	0.289**	0.224**	0.219**
<b>Moderator</b>			
Susceptibility to peer influence (STPI)		0.147*	0.139*
<b>Interaction terms</b>			
SS $\times$ STPI			-0.018
SN $\times$ STPI			-0.024
$R^2$	0.542	0.553	0.554
Adjusted $R^2$	0.446	0.442	0.441
<b>DV: Re-engagement intention</b>			
<b>Main effects</b>			
Course sensory experience (SS)	0.435**	0.366**	0.352**
Course sentimental experience (SN)	0.277**	0.264**	0.259**
<b>Moderator</b>			
Susceptibility to peer influence (STPI)		0.128**	0.124**
<b>Interaction terms</b>			
SS $\times$ STPI			-0.020
SN $\times$ STPI			-0.019
$R^2$	0.434	0.454	0.455
Adjusted $R^2$	0.431	0.439	0.445

Note: Significance: \*\* $p < 0.05$ ; \* $p < 0.10$

Second, leveraging the meaning transfer theory, the effect of the students' experiences with an instructor, a brand spokesperson, has been validated on the course, a brand. Such transfer of meanings from the brand spokesperson to the brand is established generally, but not in the higher education literature (Dwivedi, et al., 2015; Hughes et al., 2019; Wang and Scheinbaum, 2018). Hence, this work serves as an application of the theory, rooted in the brand endorsement and sales literature, in the higher education context (Echchakoui, 2017; McCracken, 1989).

Third, this work proposes six experiential value components for the instructor, based on the EVS by Mathwick et al. (2001), and four components for the course experience, based on the brand experience theory by Brakus et al. (2009). Except for the effect of entertainment and escapism values by the instructor on the course's sentimental and intellectual experiences, respectively, the results confirm that the instructor experiential value is an important antecedent to the overall consumer brand experience (Brakus et al., 2009). The specific relationships proposed and evaluated among different dimensions of instructor experiential values and those of course experiences contribute to the extant branding and higher education literature (DeShields et al., 1996; Liu et al., 2007; Wang and Scheinbaum, 2018). Findings of this work provide a unique direction for evaluating a similar model for brand endorsers and salespersons across contexts.

Fourth, the positive effect of the course sensory and sentimental experiences on students' behavior toward the instructor, and intellectual experience on students' attitude

toward the instructor, revalidates the forward effects model in the branding literature (Zarantonello and Schmitt, 2010). The findings provide the argument that while the consumers' behavioral responses towards the spokesperson can be shaped by sensory and sentimental brand experiences, stable attitudes towards a spokesperson require exhaustive cognitive evaluations and intellectually stimulating brand experiences, beyond the sensorial and emotional connections (Alan et al., 2016; Puccinelli et al., 2009).

Finally, within the theory of normative influence, the impact of susceptibility to peer influence has been little explored in the education literature. While Vollet et al. (2017) report the impact of this variable on student engagement, the present study suggests that students' personal experiences related to the instructor and the course are free of peer influence. The finding that students do not conform to group beliefs in the case of higher education, where personal experiences with instructors/courses are key to a successful future, is contradictory to suggestions by Schultz et al. (2008) and Bastiaensens et al. (2016). The findings also disagree with the argument by Steinberg and Monahan (2007), who indicate that beyond the adolescence years, aged 14–18, the impact of peer-influence stabilizes, as this study reports an absence of such influence in the education setting. The finding confirms that the education consumption process is deeply personal, and that if experiences help consumers reach personal goals, the post-consumption outcomes are less susceptible to normative influences (Ding and Tseng, 2015).

## 10. Managerial implications

The findings have three practical implications for HEI managers. First, the six dimensions of instructor experiential value are useful for HEI managers in two ways. One, they help managers to develop a rubric that, based on student feedback, can enable them to identify/hire high-quality instructors. This is analogous to a firm identifying/hiring high-performing salespersons or brand endorsers, based on the desired experiential values to be delivered to consumers (Echchakoui, 2017; Gammoh, *et al.*, 2014; Miciak and Shanklin, 1994). Two, just like brands leverage effective brand spokespersons for consumer marketing, HEI managers can promote the institute through such high-quality instructor values, such as visual appeal (appearance, communication style), entertainment (ability to engage, energy), escapism (immersive engagement in fun-to-attend sessions), intrinsic enjoyment (personal attention to students, friendliness), efficiency (punctuality, practical applications of knowledge, real-life examples) and service excellence (expertise, task-related performance). An example of such marketing is an article on the platform Poets&Quants, titled “Why Darden’s Professors Are the Best MBA Teachers on the Planet” [9].

Second, HEI managers can leverage the multi-dimensional measure of course experiences, reflected as sensory, sentimental, behavioral and intellectual. The marketing campaigns of such institutes should focus not only on the intellectual content of the courses with practical applicability but also on the sensorial and emotional experiences they include to complete the classroom experience. The study shows that such rewarding course experiences create positive instructor-oriented attitudes and behavioral intentions for the students. Thus, student testimonials, in the form of appreciation for such instructors and immersive courses, should be the theme for HEI advertising. A case in point is the video campaign, titled “Discover our classroom experience,” by Booth School of Business, University of Chicago [10].

Third, the study reveals that the entertainment and escapism values of instructors do not create sentimental and intellectual course experiences, respectively. These values instead arise from other instructor values, such as intrinsic enjoyment and excellence/efficiency, respectively. Hence, for all the four course experiences to be imparted, HEI managers need to ensure that their instructors develop all experiential capabilities. When such qualities are ensured as part of recruitment and training processes, such instructors can be marketed as “complete-packages” that deliver promising pedagogical experiences.

## 11. Limitations and future directions

This study has certain limitations that give rise to future research recommendations. First, the findings have limited generalizability because the data were collected from a specific HEI that has a nonrepresentative distribution of undergraduate backgrounds. The use of data from a single HEI, rather than multiple HEIs, adds to this limitation. Future researchers can replicate this work using data from many HEIs, across geographies, with a more representative distribution of student backgrounds.

Second, some research indicates that students may develop attitudes towards instructors because of nonexperiential

parameters, such as the instructor’s gender, ethnicity, age or even position (Kogan *et al.*, 2010; Wilson *et al.*, 2014). These aspects were not considered in the present work, and future research could incorporate them to obtain deeper insights.

Third, consumption experience derived from the instructor and the course, and in turn from the HEI itself, is also dependent on other environmental variables, such as HEI infrastructure, classroom quality, residential facilities, IT facilities and sports facilities, which this study ignored. Future researchers can also include these variables in their frameworks.

Fourth, the dynamics of the model may vary across cultures, given that each may have a different pedagogical practice based on factors such as power distance and individualism-collectivism. Hence, future researchers may conduct a comparative study across countries to understand the impact of cultural factors on the overall model.

Finally, the model does not consider the impact of technological aids, deployed in many modern HEIs, in the delivery of course experience. Future researchers may also investigate the role of such technologies regarding their moderating effects on the relation between the instructor experiential value and overall course experience.

## Notes

- 1 <https://insideiim.com/professor-of-the-year-2020>
- 2 <https://poetsandquants.com/>
- 3 <https://mybrainware.com/what-great-teachers-and-great-salespeople-have-in-common/>
- 4 <https://thestacker.com/stories/1830/30-notable-celebrity-endorsements#2>
- 5 [www.inc.com/ss/10-greatest-salespeople-of-all-time](http://www.inc.com/ss/10-greatest-salespeople-of-all-time)
- 6 <https://qz.com/267590/working-as-an-apple-salesperson-is-a-lot-like-being-a-therapist/>
- 7 <https://fortune.com/2019/08/29/harvard-computer-science-cs50-edx/>
- 8 [www.nielsen.com/us/en/insights/article/2015/they-really-like-me-the-most-liked-celebrity-endorsers-of-q1-2015/](http://www.nielsen.com/us/en/insights/article/2015/they-really-like-me-the-most-liked-celebrity-endorsers-of-q1-2015/)
- 9 <https://news.darden.virginia.edu/2020/02/17/poets-quants-best-mba-teachers/>
- 10 [www.youtube.com/watch?v=q0qPj0O53z0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q0qPj0O53z0)

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