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# The Relationship between Other Customer Perception and Experience with Role of Interpersonal Mindfulness in Brand Distribution

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## Abstract

**Purpose:** The study investigates the moderating impact of interpersonal mindfulness (IM) on the link between perceived similarity (OPS), physical appearance (OPA), and suitable behavior (OSB) – three key factors of other consumer perception (OCP) and brand experience (BE) in distribution of OCP and brand. **Research design, data, and methodology:** This study collected data from 612 consumers at shopping malls. SmartPLS 3.3.9 software were used to assess the measurement model and structural model. **Results:** According to the study's findings, IM has a negative modality in the impact between BE and OPS, OPA, and OSB. That also demonstrates how distribution of OCP and brand can affect a person's brand experience. **Conclusions:** The distribution of OCP and IM interactions have a significant influence on the brand experience in brand distribution. The study's results show that IM including mindfulness will function as a moderator between perceived similarity, physical appearance, suitable behavior regarded proper by other consumers, and brand experiences; therefore, they impact to brand distribution. The findings give a foundation for further IM research and add to the brand distribution theory that already exists. The findings also have some managerial implications in brand distribution.

**Keywords:** Interpersonal Mindfulness, Distribution of Other Customer Perception, Perceived Similarity, Physical Appearance, Suitable Behavior, Brand Experience, Distribution Brand.

**JEL Classification Code:** M16, M31, M37.

## 1. Introduction

Other customer perception (OCP) - one of the main social factors – is a key factor in creating the customer's brand experience (Baker, 1986). Distribution of other customer perception (OCP) can affect brand experience through three components: (1) perceived similarity (OPS); (2) physical appearance (OPA); and (3) suitable behavior (OSB) (Brocato et al., 2012; DeVellis, 2016; Gerbing & Anderson, 1988; Netemeyer et al., 2003). The study to date has tended to concentrate on distribution of OCP and brand

rather than on each element of OCP and does not consider how perceived similarity, physical appearance, and acceptable conduct impact brand experience in brand distribution. Additionally, the majority of OCP research has only been done in a select few industries, such as private country clubs (Hwang & Han, 2015), luxury cruise travelers (Hyun & Han, 2015), tourism (Grove & Fisk, 1997), restaurants (Brocato et al., 2012), bowling alleys (Martin, 1996), and to date the relationship between distribution of OCP and brand experience has received scant attention in the brand distribution research literature.

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Future research might examine differences in opinions and other aspects in distribution of OCP. Additionally, there are yet no thorough studies on how other factors connected to distribution of OCP may affect the brand experience in the context of in-store purchasing, when customers have the option to do so. Consumers are more likely to "spread" their favorable or negative experiences of a particular individual to others if they are in close proximity to one another at the same point of purchase, whether selecting a product, discussing a brand, or having the chance to vocally communicate between customers.

However, this relationship is actually an interpersonal interaction (verbal and/or non-verbal) with other customers that results in behavioral responses (Grove & Fisk, 1997; Martin & Pranter, 1989; McGrath & Otnes, 1995). Extensive research has shown that mindfulness plays an important role in interpersonal interaction (interpersonal mindfulness) (Pratscher et al., 2019). Therefore, a much debated question is whether interpersonal mindfulness moderates the relationship between perceived similarity (OPS), physical appearance (OPA), and suitable behavior (OSB) and brand experience. This issue has grown in importance in light of the COVID-19 pandemic that has changed people's daily lives in general, such as, health, daily life has become extremely stressful, which has caused panic and anxiety (Wang et al., 2020). Although, some research has been carried out on the relationship between OCP and brand experience, there have been few empirical investigations into the moderating role of interpersonal mindfulness in this relationship in brand distribution. The nature of interpersonal mindfulness remains unclear, therefore, the response of IM to the relationship between distribution of OCP and BE is not fully understood, especially, in the link of brand distribution.

The paper attempts to show that three factors of the OCP dimension—perceived similarity, physical appearance, and appropriate behavior—affect brand experience and critically examines the view that IM moderates the relationship between OCP and BE in brand distribution. The main aim of this study is to investigate the differences between perceived similarity, physical appearance, and appropriate behavior when these factors affect BE, whether it is moderated by IM or not. The study was conducted in the form of a survey, with data being gathered via the mail intercept method (Bush & Hair, 1985), in which the interviewers in the mall stopped shoppers and screened them to see if they were suitable for the survey's target demographic. The significance and uniqueness of this study are that it investigates the value and function of IM in interpersonal interactions that influence OPS, OPA, OSB (in distribution of OCP to BE (in brand distribution)). It is hoped that this research will contribute to a deeper understanding of perceived similarity, physical appearance,

and appropriate behavior within the relationship with BE in managerial activities of brand distribution. Due to practical constraints, this paper cannot provide a comprehensive review of all fields, which only focus to explain the shopper's behavior in brand distribution of mall center.

## **2. Conceptual Development and Hypotheses**

### **2.1. OCP Perceived Similarity (OPS) and Brand Experience (BE)**

The notion that "customers will alter the service experience of other customers" has drawn the attention of a wide range of scholars. Social signals—a component of the service environment (Baker, 1986) have been proven by Lehtinen (1991) to be the outcome of interactions between customers that take many forms. Through the purchasing process and other interactions with the company, for instance, these clients will monitor and assess how well the services are provided (Lehtinen, 1991). Another scenario is when a person sees another customer using the product, they will have a more favorable opinion of it as a result of the brand's active contagion response (Argo et al., 2008). However, the way that consumers interpret social references may spread negatively. If they use the same product or are wearing the same clothes, it could lead to unpleasant self-comparisons or negative product reviews (Dahl et al., 2012).

This can be explained by the individual observing other customers and comparing others to themselves, in accordance with the observable similarities or differences. In a retail environment, this can affect an individual's overall service brand experience as this brand experience is linked to brand identity, in which, brand recognition is the degree to which a brand is attached to a person's self-image (Escalas & Bettman, 2005). Matching or similarity among customers will both affect the overall brand experience and have a positive effect on attitudes towards the service, other customers, and behavioral intentions. Therefore, the research hypothesis, in accordance with a number of previous studies that are relevant to this research context, is put forward as follows:

**H1:** Perceived similarity between customers (OPS) will have a positive influence on an individual's evaluation of brand experience.

### **2.2. OCP Physical Appearance (OPA) and Brand Experience (BE)**

According to social identity theory, individuals who are alike physically or in other ways will associate with one

another and form strong emotional bonds (Hwang & Han, 2015; Stets & Burke, 2000). The similarity of customers, however, is not the only factor that will affect perception. In fact, a person's perception of a brand may be influenced by the overall external appearance of another person.

The aesthetic factor and its impact on service delivery have been extensively studied. The issue is that, according to the majority of earlier studies (Keh et al., 2013; Söderlund, 2011), the service staff's appearance, particularly their beauty, was the focus of attention. Argo et al. (2008) found that the "positive contagion" effect in product consumption, as opposed to being connected to the total service brand experience, determines how other consumers are perceived in a retail environment. According to Söderlund (2011) the physical attractiveness of other consumers can affect the overall evaluation of a business." It follows that the impact of other customers' appearances on product evaluation will also have an impact on how well a service experience is received.

The following hypothesis is proposed as follows:

**H2:** Perceived physical appearance of other customers (OPA) will have a positive influence on an individual's evaluation of brand experience.

### 2.3. OCP Suitable Behavior (OSB) and Brand Experience (BE)

The environment is a determinant regarding the quality of the customer's brand experience that consists of three components, namely time, place, and behavior (Belk, 1975). The behavior of other customers can have a greater influence on the evaluation of the customer's brand experience than that of service providers (Lehtinen, 1991). When customers adhere to a set of behaviors that are accepted as common and appropriate in certain situations, customers expect a more friendly, inclusive, and less threatening environment (Brocato et al., 2012).

Positive and negative behaviors that have the potential to affect the experiences of those around them (Grove & Fisk, 1997) can be divided into two groups: (1) the "ritual" incident group: related to an explicit or implicit code of conduct; (2) the "social" incident group: related to the attitudes and behaviors of other customers. To be more specific, the positive and negative behaviors in both of these groups affect the overall perceived atmosphere of the service environment. As a result, focal customers will report more positive evaluations of the retail experience, whereas other customers will adhere to social behavioral norms (Söderlund, 2011).

The experimental data in the study of Huang and Wang (2014) demonstrated that the participants had higher levels of dissatisfaction when they were with friends compared to when they were alone. Besides, the presence of a strong

relationship will have an inhibitory effect on the expression of dissatisfaction compared to the presence of a weak relationship, whereas the effect of the weak relationship will depend on the group size and consumption goals. Consequently, the behavior of other customers has an influence on the customer experience, in which a weak or strong relationship makes the customer experience change. In other words, the research hypothesis is put forward as follows:

**H3:** The perceived suitable behavior of other customers (OSB) will have a positive influence on an individual's evaluation of brand experience (BE).

### 3. The Moderating Effect of Interpersonal Mindfulness

That the consumer is mindful means that "the person's full attention is on the experiences occurring in the present moment, in a way that is not judgmental or accepting" (Baer et al., 2006). In other words, mindfulness helps individuals stay "in the present" and enhances "non-judgmental" awareness; therefore, mindfulness can make precision consumption a choice, rather than impulsive impulses clouded by the illusion of choice, or uncertainty, of the "future" (Matta et al., 2022). Mindfulness can overcome the demands for gratification, which characterize modern society (Kabat-Zinn, 2019), in the direction of increasing life satisfaction levels because people who are mindful will perceive and adopt self-regulatory strategies (Waterschoot et al., 2021) through increasing awareness and enhancing interaction among people.

Clinical psychology research has demonstrated that during times of emergency or crisis, such as the Covid-19 pandemic, cognitive mechanisms are necessary to control our behavior because the primitive part of the human brain frequently prods us to act in a way that is necessary for survival (Arafat et al., 2020). As a "antidote" to mindless consumption and to minimize the harmful impacts of materialism in our culture, Bahl et al. (2016) advocated the practice of mindfulness. Customer perception, on the other hand, is influenced by tangible stimuli because customer expectations of service are formed through means other than actual physical contact with the product they buy (Booms & Bitner, 1982). According to Brocato et al. (2012), the fundamental requirement of positive customer reviews that would have an additive effect on positive brand experience ratings forms the basis for businesses to promote engagement between customers and customers.

In accordance with the assertion by Langer and Moldoveanu (2000) that mindfulness allows people to participate more fully in the various activities assigned to

them and that socio-environmental factors influence the tendency to wakefulness, Ngo et al. (2016) predicts that awakening activation may act as a mechanism between socio-environmental factors and other factors. Perceived consumers are called for an individual's focus and mindfulness of the socio-environmental factors that will trigger their awakening tendencies. The socio-environmental factors that affect the brand experience proposed by Baker (1986) include perceptions and evaluations of other customers (including similarity attributes) regarding the perception, the appearance, and the behavior of other customers, besides the personalized services (listed as quantity, frequency, and behavior).

The relationship between other elements of customer perception (specifically, similarity, appearance, and appropriate behavior), taken into account as environmental factors, and the customer experience in a diverse and complex retail trade environment, is thus expected to be taken into consideration by this mechanism. The degree to which each person processes information internally, engages in self-reflection, and practices mindfulness can all have an impact on how other customers perceive and rate a company. To be more precise, mindfulness enables people to observe social-environmental aspects in their current state without passing judgment. Therefore, interactive mindfulness will have the effect of reducing emotional exhaustion and improving satisfaction at both the intra-individual and interpersonal levels in certain contexts (Hülshager et al., 2013), as well as eliminating impulsive buying and any emotional negativity while modifying behavior and increasing self-control (Fetterman et al., 2010). At the same time, mindfulness will cause individuals to engage in more conscious experiences and self-development that depend on intrinsic, rather than extrinsic, values (Sermboonsang et al., 2020). The whole process leading to the end result implies that the consumer has a positive experience with increased trust and commitment to the brand so that they can perceive what they absolutely need to buy and engage in rational consumption behavior.

Therefore, the study proposes the hypothesis as follows:

**H4:** Interpersonal mindfulness (IM) will moderate the relationship between distribution of other customer perception (OCP) and brand experience (BE), specifically, IM will moderate the effects of (H4a) OCP perceived similarity, (H4b) OCP physical appearance, and (H4c) OCP suitable behavior on BE.

As such, the research framework is proposed (Fig. 1)

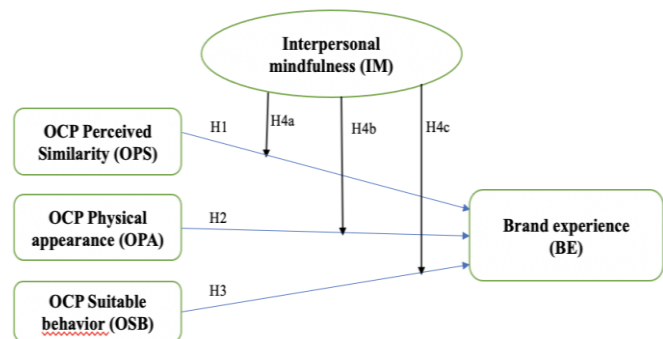


Figure 1: The research framework

## 4. Research Methodology and Data Collection

### 4.1. Measurement Instrument

To construct the scale, the topic follows the steps that were given by Churchill (1979) and proposed by Andrews et al. (2004). The scale of other customer perception consists of three factors as follows: perceived similarity (five items), physical appearance (four items), and suitable behavior (four items). These three factors were built by Brocato et al. (2012) on the basis of selecting three services representing different categories of services: amusement parks—actions invisible to humans; restaurants—tangible actions towards people; and the retail clothing store—the tangible act on the property. What these industries have in common is that customers stay at the point of sale long enough to feel the impact of other customers.

Experience components have different propositions, for example: sensory pleasures, emotional responses, pleasurable activities, and aesthetic symbols (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982); cognitive, emotional, and relational (Holt, 1995); sensory, affective, cognitive, creative, physical, behavioral, lifestyle, and social identity associations (Schmitt, 1999, 2009); emotion, reason, and physical activity (Pine & Gilmore, 2013). The internal (subjective) component is emotional, rational, and social experience, whereas the extrinsic (objective) component is to provide differentiated and practical products (Mascarenhas et al., 2006). In accordance with the psychological concept of Pinker and Fodor, (2005) and psychological studies of the time, they provided a basic system of experiences: sensations, emotions, perceptions, pragmatic behavior and lifestyle, and relationships. Brand experience, from the study by (Brakus et al., 2009), is developed from a broader product category that includes four aspects of experience: sensory, emotional, rational, and behavioral.

The study by Nysveen et al. (2012), with the purpose of supporting the study by Gentile et al. (2007), re-validated the relationship factor for the brand experience scale proposed by (Brakus et al., 2009). Brand experience, in this study, is considered in relation to distribution of other customer perceptions. To be more specific, brand experience is not limited to experiences that evolve along purchase stages (Keller et al., 2020; Neslin et al., 2006) and "spreads" positive experiences across multiple retail channels in customer interactions in the store. Therefore, this study examined the brand experience scale with relational elements (three items)—proposed by Nysveen et al. (2012) besides inheriting the scale of Brakus et al. (2009)—including sensory (three) items; affective (three items); intellectual-cognitive (three items); and behavioral (three items).

According to Sternberg (2000) three characteristics—cognitive ability, personality traits, and cognitive style - are used to measure mindfulness. Five elements of mindfulness were put forth by Leary and Tate (2007): (1) attentive attention; (2) diminished self-talk; (3) nonjudgment (nonjudgment); (4) inaction (non-doing); and (5) particular philosophical, ethical, or therapeutic convictions. Scientists like Demick (2000), Langer (1989, 2000), Rosenberg (2004), and Brown and Ryan (2004) all strongly support the "perceptual capacity" element among these characteristics.

Mindfulness can encourage attention to the thoughts and feelings of others by recognizing nonverbal communication signs in a more subtle way when coupled with cognitive quality and complete attention to interpersonal interactions (Barnes et al., 2007; Quaglia et al., 2016). As a result, present-time attention is the definition of interpersonal mindfulness, which is understood as attentiveness in interpersonal interactions. As a way to comprehend the process of mindfulness in interpersonal encounters, Pratscher et al. (2019) presented a conceptual structure of interpersonal mindfulness with four unidirectional components and 27 observable variables: (1) Presence (seven items); (2) Awareness of self and other (ten items); (3) Nonjudgmental Acceptance (four items); (4) Nonreactivity (six items).

#### 4.2. Data Collection and Sampling

When doing research using the judgmental sampling approach, also known as the non-probability intentional sampling method, respondents are chosen based on judgments of the relevant traits that they will represent (Hair et al., 2017; Zikmund et al., 2014), example is when

consumers purchase branded goods or services from a point of sale while other customers are already there.

The survey's chosen sites are shopping malls in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam which are the places where foreign and domestic investment in the retail sector occurs most frequently and initially. As a result, Ho Chi Minh City is home to the majority of retail shopping stores targeted at middle-class.

The data collection method used was the mall intercept method (Bush & Hair, 1985), in which the interviewers in the mall stopped shoppers and screened them to see if they were suitable for the survey audience.

The study cleans the data using the following procedures: (1) direct correction; (2) using Excel software; and (3) using SPSS software. As a result, the official quantitative research included 612 valid responses; 130 votes were disqualified owing to inadequate criteria. The following details regarding the study sample are 47.1% male and 52.9% female. Ages were randomly distributed with 8.3% of respondents in the 18-25 group, 31.7% of respondents in the 36-45 group, 30.9% aged 26-35 group, 29.1% aged 45+.

### 5. Data Analysis and Findings

#### 5.1. Measurement Model Evaluation

The results of the quality assessment of observed variables showed that outer loadings of variables OPS4, OPS5, OPA3, OSB3, IMA6, IMA8, IMA9, IMA4, IMNA3, IMN2, IMN5, IMP2, IMP4, IMP5, IMP7 < 0.708 (Hair et al., 2017). Therefore, the study removed these observations and conducted a second outer loadings analysis.

After the second analysis, all the outer loading coefficients of the variables were higher than the allowed value of 0.708, meaning that the latent variable explained 50% of the variation of the observed variable (Hair et al., 2017; Hair et al., 2012) and all were significant. All Cronbach Alpha ranged between 0.821 and 0.924, exceeding the threshold of 0.7, and all composite reliability (CR) of the variables ranged between 0.894 and 0.952, indicating that all latent variables satisfy the composite reliability (Hair et al., 2017; Nunnally, 1978). The squared roots of the average variance extracted (AVE) value (from 0.687 to 0.868) were above the recommended threshold of 0.5. Therefore, all 14 factors respond well in terms of convergence (Hair et al., 2017). The results are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Validity and Reliability Analysis

Constructs and items	Loading
OCP - perceived similarity (OPS) adapted from Brocato et al., (2012); 5-point scale 1 = "strongly disagree" and 5 = "strong agree"; Cronbach's Alpha = 0.888; AVE = 0.817; CR = 0.930	

Constructs and items		Loading
OPS 1	I could identify with the other patrons in the facility.	0.904
OPS 2	I am similar to the other patrons in the facility	0.917
OPS 3	The other patrons are like me.	0.890
OCP - physical appearance (OPA) adapted from Brocato et al., (2012); 5-point scale 1 = "strongly disagree" and 5 = "strong agree"; Cronbach's Alpha = 0.924; AVE = 0.868; CR = 0.952		
OPA 1	I liked the appearance of the other patrons	0.915
OPA 2	The other patrons were dressed appropriately	0.947
OPA 4	The other patrons looked like they were my type of people.	0.933
OCP - Suitable behavior (OSB) adapted from Brocato et al., (2012); 5-point scale 1 = "strongly disagree" and 5 = "strong agree"; Cronbach's Alpha = 0.902; AVE = 0.836; CR = 0.939		
OSB 1	The behavior of the other customers were appropriate for the setting	0.905
OSB 2	The other patrons were friendly towards me.	0.921
OSB 4	The other patrons' behavior was pleasant	0.917
Brand experience (BE)		
Brand Experience – Sensory (BES) adapted from Brakus et al., (2009); 5-point scale 1 = "never" and 5 = "always"; Cronbach's Alpha = 0.896; AVE = 0.828; CR =0.935		
BES 1	This brand makes a strong impression on me either visually or in another way	0.927
BES 2	I find this brand interesting because it moves my senses	0.915
BES 3	This brand appeal to my sense	0.887
Brand Experience – Affective (BEA) adapted from Brakus et al., (2009); 5-point scale 1 = "never" and 5 = "always"; Cronbach's Alpha = 0.872; AVE = 0.796; CR =0.921		
BEA 1	This brand induces agreeable feelings and sentiments	0.904
BEA 2	I have strong emotions for this brand X	0.890
BEA 3	This brand X is an emotional brand	0.884
Brand Experience – Intellectual (BEI) adapted from Brakus et al., (2009); 5-point scale 1 = "never" and 5 = "always"; Cronbach's Alpha = 0.889; AVE = 0.818; CR =0.931		
BEI 1	I engage in a lot of thinking as a customer of brand X	0.915
BEI 2	This brand X makes me think	0.907
BEI 3	This brand X stimulates my curiosity and problem solving	0.890
Brand Experience – Behavioral (BEB) adapted from Brakus et al., (2009); 5-point scale 1 = "never" and 5 = "always"; Cronbach's Alpha = 0.907; AVE = 0.844; CR =0.942		
BEB 1	I often engage in actions and behaviors when I use this brand X	0.917
BEB 2	This brand results X in bodily experiences	0.944
BEB 3	This brand is action-oriented	0.894
Brand Experience – Relational (BER) adapted from Brakus et al., (2009); 5-point scale 1 = "never" and 5 = "always"; Cronbach's Alpha = 0.827.; AVE = 0.744; CR =0.897		
BER 1	As customer of the Brand X I feel like I am part of a community	0.826
BER 2	I feel like I am part of the Brand X family	0.889
BER 3	I am a member of the community so I tend to consume the brand X	0.871
Interpersonal mindfulness - Awareness of self and other (IMA) adapted from Pratscher et al., (2018); 5-point scale 1 = "never" and 5 = "always"; Cronbach's Alpha = 0.907; AVE = 0.687; CR =0.929		
IMA 1	When interacting with others, I am aware of their facial and body expressions	0.835
IMA 2	I am aware of moods and tone of voice of others while I am listening to them	0.869
IMA 3	When I am interacting with another person, I get a sense of how they are feeling.	0.780
IMA 5	When speaking to another person, I am aware of how I feel inside.	0.893
IMA 7	I accept that another person's current situation or mood might influence their behavior.	0.876
IMA 10	I notice how my mood affects how I act towards others	0.705
Interpersonal mindfulness - Nonjudgmental Acceptance (IMNA) adapted from Pratscher et al., (2018); 5-point scale 1 = "never" and 5 = "always"; Cronbach's Alpha = 0.870; AVE =0.797; CR = 0.921		
IMNA 1	When in a discussion, I accept others have opinions different from mine	0.934
IMNA 2	I listen carefully to another person, even when I disagree with them.	0.797
IMNA 4	When I am with another person, I try to accept how they are behaving without wanting them to behave differently	0.940
Interpersonal mindfulness - Nonreactivity (IMN) adapted from Pratscher et al., (2018); 5-point scale 1 = "never" and 5 = "always"; Cronbach's Alpha = 0.868.; AVE = 0.716; CR =0.910		
IMN 1	I think about the impact my words may have on another person before I speak	0.870
IMN 3	When I receive an angry text/email from someone, I try to understand their situation before responding.	0.869
IMN 4	When I am upset with someone, I notice how I am feeling before responding.	0.844
IMN 6	Before I speak, I am aware of the intentions behind what I am trying to say	0.799

Source: compiled by the author, using PLS3, 2023

Note: "Brand X" will be replaced by the brand name of the retailer that the interviewee trust and regulary purchase "Other customers" are the customers who are in the same facility at the same time and may not be familiar with the interviewee

To evaluate the discriminant validity of each construct in the proposed measurement model, the Fornell–Larcker ratios of each latent variable (from 0.829 to 0.932) are greater than all the correlations between the latent variables. Consequently, the scales are discriminatory (Fornell & Larcker, 1994). The Heterotrait - Monotrait (HTMT) ratios

for all reflective constructs in the model are all less than 0.9, indicating that the HTMT ratios were significantly difference from 1. To sum up, the research variables all have discriminant values (Henseler et al., 2016). As show table 2.

**Table 2:** Discriminant validity- Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

	BEA	BEB	BEI	BER	BES	IMA	IMN	IMNA	IMP	OPA	OPS	OSB
BEA												
BEB	0.428											
BEI	0.500	0.396										
BER	0.592	0.424	0.543									
BES	0.456	0.365	0.411	0.419								
IMA	0.077	0.054	0.110	0.175	0.046							
IMN	0.049	0.046	0.054	0.089	0.035	0.501						
IMNA	0.125	0.043	0.115	0.055	0.031	0.371	0.377					
IMP	0.069	0.045	0.046	0.098	0.060	0.489	0.457	0.258				
OPA	0.563	0.522	0.451	0.561	0.395	0.087	0.073	0.083	0.077			
OPS	0.561	0.434	0.563	0.548	0.357	0.145	0.181	0.204	0.142	0.548		
OSB	0.445	0.397	0.429	0.497	0.555	0.127	0.064	0.113	0.079	0.466	0.480	

Source: compiled by the author, using PLS3, 2023

## 5.2. Structural Model Evaluation

### 5.2.1. Evaluation of Multicollinearity (VIF coefficient)

When the study analyzed the VIF coefficient (Inner VIF) to determine whether multicollinearity occurred. The VIF coefficients range from 1.00 to 1.896, all of which are less than 3, According to the study by Hair et al. (2017), the structural model does not demonstrate multicollinearity.

### 5.2.2. Research Model and Hypothesis Testing

The significance of the path regression coefficient was tested using bootstrapping with 5,000 samples, and this study considered a P value ≤ 0.05 to indicate that the amount of impact is statistically significant (Hair et al., 2012). According to Table 3's analysis finding

**Table 3:** Path Analysis Results

Hypothesis	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics ( O/STDEV)	P Values*	Results
H1: OPS -> BE	0.254	0.255	0.035	7.203	0.000	Supported
H2: OPA -> BE	0.328	0.330	0.036	9.149	0.000	Supported
H3: OSB -> BE	0.240	0.240	0.032	7.400	0.000	Supported

Note: \* < 0.05

Source: compiled by the author, using PLS3, 2023

### 5.2.3. The Direct Impact of Relationships

All effects are significant at 5% level because the t-test p-value is less than 0.05 and the order of the standardized regression coefficient (Original sample) shows the order of effects of factors on variables (Table 3). Therefore, hypotheses H1, H2, H3, and H5 are supported at the 95% significance level.

**Examining The Moderating Impact of Interpersonal Mindfulness.** Hypothesis 4a predicted interpersonal mindfulness (IM) moderate the effect of OCP perceived similarity (OPS) on brand experience (BE). As shown in

Table 4, OPS positively affects both BE (p-value = 0.000, t-statistics = 7.203) and OPS\*IM has significant effect on BE since p-value t test equals 0.020 < 0.05. Therefore, IM has the role of regulating the relationship from OPS to BE. In addition, that the original sample (O) = -0.075 < 0 shows that the increasing IM will reduce the impact of OPS on BE and vice versa. In support of Hypothesis 4a, the fact that IM partially moderates the effect of OPS on BE means that: when the consumer is in a highly mindful interaction, the similarity of other customers has a weaker effect on the consumer’s brand experience.

**Table 4:** Moderator Analysis

Hypotheses	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	P Values*	Results
H4a: OPS*IM -> BE	-0.075	-0.074	0.032	0.020	Supported (Negative)
H4b: OPA*IM -> BE	-0.131	-0.131	0.037	0.000	Supported (Negative)
H4c: OSB*IM -> BE	-0.086	-0.085	0.034	0.011	Supported (Negative)

Note: \* < 0.05

Source: compiled by the author, using PLS3, 2023

The study found that OCP physical appearance (OPA) positively affected brand experience (BE) (p-value = 0.000, t-statistics = 9,149) and OPA \* IM affected BE (p-value = 0.000 and t-statistics = 3.542). Therefore, IM has a role in regulating the effect of OPS on BE. In addition, original sample (O) = -0.131 < 0. As a result, when IM increases, OPA will have a weaker effect on BE and vice versa. In support of Hypothesis 4b, the fact that IM partially moderates the effect of OPA on BE means that when a consumer is in a highly mindful interaction, the external appearance of another customer has a weaker effect on the consumer's brand experience.

When testing Hypothesis 4c, the t-test p-value of the relationship OCP suitable behavior (OSB) affects brand experience (BE) which is equal to 0.000 < 0.05, indicating that OSB has an effect on BE. Original Sample (O) = 0.240 > 0 shows that OSB positively affects BE: The more relevant the behavior of other customers is, the more positive the brand experience is. Besides, the t-test p-value of the OSB\*IM relationship on BE is 0.011 < 0.05 and t-statistics = 2.528. Therefore, IM has the role of regulating the impact from OSB on BE; at the same time, original sample (O) = -0.086 < 0. When IM increases, the impact from OSB on BE will be reduced; therefore, Hypothesis 4c was supported. This can be implied that: when a consumer is in a highly mindful interaction, the behavior of other customers has a weaker effect on the consumer's brand experience.

After assessing collinearity, testing the coefficient of determination R<sup>2</sup>, the impact coefficient f<sup>2</sup>, the detection and the prediction relationship Q<sup>2</sup>, and analyzing the results, the research model has been found to be satisfactory. The study's findings also validated the validity of the moderator variable's effects (H4a, H4b, and H4c), which are supported by the proposed hypotheses (H1, H2 and H3).

## 6. Conclusions and Implications

Prior studies that have noted the importance of brand distribution in interaction personal, however, very little was found in the literature on the question of the relationship between OCP's components and BE in brand distribution, especially, there is the moderating role of IM. This study set out with the aim of assessing the importance of perceived

similarity, physical appearance, and suitable behavior in the process of creating a BE and determine the effect of IM in the relationship between OPS, OPA, OSB and BE in the distribution of brand to customer.

The results of this study indicate that brand experience is considered as a dependent variable in the impact relationship of three independent other customer perception variables (perceived similarity, physical appearance, and suitable behavior). Therefore, the "spread" of experience among customers can be facilitated through interactions with customers who shop together at a point of sale in brand distribution. Supporting this view, Argo et al. (2008) noted that these touch experiences do not necessarily involve both objects (other customers and focal customers) shopping at the same selling point. An individual may only sense or assess a product or brand by seeing the actions of other customers (such as handling or touching the goods) or their look (for example, clothing, accessories, and so forth). According to a natural mechanism, someone will make a comparison with themselves throughout the observing process based on the similarities or differences they notice. The brand experience will be favorably molded if the other customers are thought to be appropriate for this individual (in terms of image, look, style, hobbies, and so on). In addition, Belk (1975) argued that behavior is one of the essential dimensions of environmental factors that impact the quality of a customer's brand experience. Therefore, the customer experience will be more favorable and beneficial if customer behavior is generally acceptable and suitable with the activities of brand distribution in retail environment. According to social identity theory (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Scheepers & Ellemers, 2019; Stets & Burke, 2000), "people like to be surrounded by others who have similar characteristics" and even, on occasion, bias between "within-group" and "outside-group". Research findings on the relationship between distribution of other customer perceptions and brand experience support this research hypothesis.

One interesting finding is the association between other customers' perceived similarity, physical appearance, suitable behavior, and brand experience (BE) among individuals is negatively moderated by interpersonal mindfulness (IM). The influence of other customers' perceptions and interpersonal mindfulness interaction (OPS\*IM, OPA\*IM, and OSB\*IM) on brand experience is



significant when it comes to retail buying. This also accords with our earlier observations, which showed that brand experience is a result of a combination of subjective and internal consumer reactions and behavioral stimuli related to external elements, reality demonstrates that distinct customer perceptions are affected by visible and invisible stimuli.

These results corroborate the findings of a great deal of the previous studies in the brand distribution of retail environment, such random friction between customers has been shown to have a positive effect on willingness to spend and brand experience compared to when customers are left untouched (Martin, 2012), and in the context of hotel service studies, other customers were also identified as one of the factors affecting human emotional experience in the process of the customer receiving the service (Hwang et al., 2015; Miao et al., 2011; Miao & Mattila, 2013; Ryu & Feick, 2007). As such, different aspects of customer-customer interactions affect the individual's evaluation of these customers, and this assessment will affect the individual's overall satisfaction with the service experience (Wu, 2007) or influence customer image and behavioral intention (Jang et al., 2015). It is important to note that these stimuli are frequently employed by marketers to persuade people to purchase things and encourage thoughtless consumption decisions.

Moreover, these results confirm the association between IM and the relationship distribution of OCP-BE that mindfulness in interpersonal interactions will operate as a moderating factor in the relationship between perceived similarity, physical appearance, and suitable behavior deemed appropriate by other customers and brand experiences in brand distribution of retail enterprises. These relationships may partly be explained by customers connect with one another in the same area while maintaining a state of mindfulness, which is the ability to pay close attention to environmental or stimulus aspects in the store without passing judgment. An individual's own brand experience will be less affected by emotions and other customer-related elements as a result of greater interpersonal interaction mindfulness. These findings indicate that IM plays a role in controlling the negative impact of OPS, OPA, and OSB on BE; as IM increases, the effects of OPS, OPA, and OSB on BE become weaker, and vice versa, so that when a consumer meets another customer who is also in a state of trait mindfulness, the similarities that they perceive in other customers, such as good-looking appearance or polite behavior, ... will have little impact on their brand experience when shopping. This is because IM makes the customer's brand experience come from their own internal rather than external factors, related to distribution of other customer perceptions and brand distribution. In contrast to earlier findings, however, no evidence of IM was detected in the

relationship between distribution of OCP and BE of brand distribution's activities. This might be explained by the fact that much of modern consumer behavior is spontaneous and thoughtless; many purchases are the consequence of unconscious choices rather than deliberate ones. Businesses must deal with intense competition in a developing market like Vietnam because competitors frequently conduct strong marketing efforts that rely on the overwhelming majority to shape consumption habits. When this happens, consumers are more likely to make snap decisions without carefully analyzing the evidence or comprehending the value the provider offers, which may be detrimental to both the branded product in issue and the retail sector as a whole. Langer's (1989, 1992, 2000) idea of "mindful consumerism" highlights the participatory role that "mindfulness" plays in the creation of good brand distribution for businesses.

These findings about IM may be somewhat limited by state or trait mindfulness of each individual and may be viewed as a person's internal or interpersonal process (Anand et al., 2021; Khoury et al., 2022). It is therefore likely that such connections exist between those individuals who practice mindfulness. These statistics suggest that although the perceived influence of other customers on a brand experience may seem uncomplicated, it actually requires a certain amount of individual perception, attention, and awareness. Therefore, the term "interpersonal mindfulness" refers to a novel latent effect technique that may be utilized to alert a person to external effects (Ngo et al., 2016). Further studies, which take these variables into account, will need to be undertaken.

The aim of the present research was to examine OPS, OPA, OSB effecting to BE with the mediator role of IM and one of the more significant findings to emerge from this study is that the interaction between OPS, OPA, OSB, and BE suffers when IM is present. The evidence from this study suggest that it will be challenging for external circumstances to influence individuals' purchasing behavior when they are mindfulness; the more mindful people are the less external influences can affect them. This study has raised important questions about the nature of BE and if the components of BE are influenced by outside factor in brand distribution of retail companies.

## 7. Limitations and Future Research Directions

Without comparing data from several time points, this study collects data across the same time period (for example, the timelines before and after the individuals practice mindfulness training methods like meditation, yoga, self-connection, and so on). The comparisons across various timelines, as well as those of the person's state and/or

attentive features during the conversation, are so limited. In order to accurately and completely measure mindfulness interaction and distribution of other customer perceptions for in-depth consideration of how brand experience, brand trust, and brand engagement change over time, future research should include probabilistic sampling and sampling of respondents at various times.

Most data collection occurs in Hochiminh city, research can be expanded in the future to include growing economies like Vietnam. This line of inquiry will contribute to the generalization of the interaction awareness theory as well as other consumer perceptions and brand-related challenges in the retail industry.

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