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## Online Brand Experience Creation Process Model: Theoretical Insights

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### Abstract

*Many brands are turning digital due to the changing market requirements and consumer demands. In order to digitize the brand, it is not enough just to move the brand to the electronic environment. Marketing plans and other brand activities shall be revised and adopted to the electronic environment. The focal point for the digital transformation of the brand is the online brand experience. It is increasingly recognized as a vital tool for the success of the brand. The impact of brand experience on the consumer trust and loyalty is empirically proven and explained in existing research, however the process of the online brand experience building is not well understood and in practice based on trial-and-error rather than research framework. This paper studies conceptual issues of the online brand building. Online brand experience concept is examined in order to set the framework for the online brand creation model. The study reveals that online brand experience may be based on the traditional brand experience models, that is - consumer's perceptions and responses to brand evoked stimuli. This definition is assumed for further analysis of the online brand creation process. Comparative analysis of existing brand experience creation models allows identification of the main building blocks and creation steps for the online brand experience. The paper concludes that online brand experience creation is based on the adaptation of the traditional marketing models ("4P" marketing elements) to the specifics of the online environment and processes. The modified model nicknamed 3PoP is proposed. The 3PoP model embraces the 3 traditional P's - product, place, people, filtered through the online process as the core of the online brand creation. The 3PoP model enables further research and management applications leading to the holistic online brand experience.*

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### Key Words

*Online brand, brand experience, consumer experience, marketing mix, online brand experience building blocks.*

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Significance of brand is doubtless in marketing context, especially for the online business [8, 15, 9]. Its essence is fulfilled through such brand constructs as brand attitudes, brand involvement, brand attachment, customer delight, brand personality and brand experience [5, 48]. As more customers are getting used to shopping online, brand managers are shifting their focus to digitization of the brand and the attributes, which could increase the brand attractiveness and satisfy their customer's needs. The most significant construct for the brand attractiveness traditionally is brand experience [25, 16]. For the online commerce this means that customer's offline store experience has to be transferred to the online environment, thus transforming costumers into the online brand consumers. Consumption is very much related to the experience. Each brand brings it to their consumers through interaction or touch points. Online businesses are highly restricted with the interaction points and the area where they can use them to create consumer experience. Mainly it can be done only through the screen, which is seen by the consumer. The web sites are the first point of consumer and brand online interaction. They are the primary tools engaging consumers. By implementing them in the correct manner and based on the effective principles, online brand experience can be much increased, and consumer's trust [20, 21] and loyalty [21, 22] ensured. De Chernatony and Horn see experience as essential condition of brand existence defining brand as "<...a cluster of functional and emotional values which promise a particular experience>" [18, p. 1100]. In A. T. Kearney global management consultancy and executive search firm white paper it is highlighted that "<...there is no better way to create customer loyalty and enthusiasm than through a positive ... experience.>" [29, p. 1]. Brand experience is met in all touch points of the brand and its consumers, starting from searching (how it is easy or difficult to find it), ending with purchasing and services thereafter [14]. So it is vital to ensure brand experience which brings positive consumers attitude towards the brand. It can assure greater chance of success for the brand owner, but also in case of failure, it can cause a huge damage [42]. It can impact brand and consumers equity growth [3, 29] and can be used as the main differentiator from the competitors [4, 7]. These advantages of brand experience have already attracted a lot of the marketer's attention [5]. Recent studies have presented its significance to the development of marketing strategies [9, 49].

*Scientific issue.* Despite the fact that brand experience is becoming one of the most discussed topic in studies of marketing assets to ensure successful business in online environment, there is a lack of commonalities in the existing studies, which describe how to create and manage it [23, 48]. Several papers draw attention to the creation process of the brand experience and provide managerial suggestions about the factors, which should be fulfilled to ensure great brand experience for its consumers. But all of the given models provide different view of the brand experience factors and guidance's for their implementation. Additionally there is a lack of empirical research of online brand experience creation and managing process. Quite often brand experience is used interchangeably with consumer experience or web experience [13, 29, 42]. Thus, a question of online brand experience concept is proposed along with the analysis of whether the traditional brick and mortar commerce brand experience concept can be used for the online brand experience definition. The answer to this question is necessary in order to have clear understanding of online brand experience, which provides the background for the creation

and management process of the online brand experience. Finally, investigation of the building factors of the online brand experience defines the fundamental building blocks vital for the brand creation process online.

*Object of the research* – key features and the building blocks of the online brand experience.

*Purpose* – is to propose the online brand experience creation process model, which shall encompass essential positive brand experience building blocks and ensures consumer satisfaction, trust and loyalty.

*Objectives:*

1. To analyze brand experience definitions and conceptualize online brand experience;
2. To conduct comparative analysis of brand experience creation models, and to identify the most important factors for successful online brand experience creation;
3. To propose the online brand experience creation process model and to identify the main building blocks thereof.

*Methodology* – the paper relies on the theoretical-systematic, conceptual comparative and phenomenological analysis as well as meta-analysis of the previous studies. A method of dynamic modeling is also applied.

*Practical significance* – the online brand experience creation process model proposed in the paper may serve for the business foundation of the comprehensive approach to online brand experience, as well as set the planning guidelines and responsibilities.

## **II. DEFINING THE ONLINE BRAND EXPERIENCE**

Brand experience is becoming synonym of a brand [43]. Sometimes it is used interchangeable with brand familiarity [20] or mixed with other brand constructs such as brand attitudes, brand involvement, brand attachment, or brand personality [5]. This misunderstanding can be derived from insufficiently defined brand experience concept used in managerial and scientific literature. It is essential to clearly define the online brand experience concept in order to design the framework for the brand experience creation process. Not many studies on online brand experience exist to date. Brand experience in the traditional brick and mortar environment is commonly investigated as the basis for the online brand experience. The analysis of several brand experience definitions are given below in chronological order (see Table 1).

It is noticeable that conceptualization of the brand experience is closely related to the customer experience. But as Kapferer characterizes online purchaser as consumer, not a customer, so this concept will be used in further study [28]. Consumer concept is more suitable to describe the gaining ways and outcomes of the online brand experience. Experience in most cases is viewed through a person who is engaging with a brand, so consumer experience can be considered as concurrent with brand experience, and used interchangeable. As Wright et al highlights “<people do not simply engage in experiences as ready-made, they actively construct them through a process of sense making...>” and reflect sensually, emotionally and behaviorally [48].

This is already represented in the definitions given above, which encompass behavioral, sensational, cognitional and emotional aspects. These aspects are most related to consumer perceptions and responses towards brand acquired through the time and shaped by marketing activities, which Klaus and Maklan calls holistic offer of a brand [30].

TABLE I: BRAND EXPERIENCE DEFINITIONS

Author	Definition
Smith and Wheeler, 2002, p. 6	<b>Brand experience</b> is: intentional in delivering a <b>customer experience</b> to support the brand; <b>consistent</b> in delivering that experience over time and location; <b>differentiated</b> from competing brands; valuable in offering a customer proposition which meets target customer needs.
Ha and Helen Perks, 2005, p. 440	Brand experience is a coalescing of symbolic meaning with allied <b>behavior, thoughts and feelings</b> that occur during the consumption of the service/product.
Alloza, 2008, p.373	Brand experience is the <b>perception</b> of the <b>consumers</b> , at every moment of contact they have with the brand, whether it is in the brand images projected in advertising, during the first personal contact, or the level of quality concerning the personal treatment they receive.
Brakus et all, 2009, p. 53	Brand experience is subjective, <b>internal</b> consumer responses (sensations, feelings, and cognitions) and <b>behavioral responses</b> evoked by brand-related stimuli that are part of a brand's design and identity, packaging, communications, and environments.
Iglesias and Singh, 2011, p. 571	Brand experience is a takeaway <b>impression</b> (Carbone and Haeckel, 1994) that is formed in the mind of the consumers as a result of the encounter with the holistic offer of a brand (Klaus and Maklan, 2007).
Sahin et all, 2011, p. 1290	Brand experience is <b>not an emotional relationship concept</b> . Experiences are <b>sensations, feelings, cognitions, and behavioral responses</b> evoked by brand related stimuli.

Brand experience is often mixed with other brand elements mentioned above because of its inputs and outcomes. Nevertheless it should be admitted as distinct construct, especially from the perspective of brand personality, which is defined as brand associated human characteristics [1], originating from the brand involvement, because <...brands that consumers are highly involved with are not necessarily brands that evoke the strongest experiences> [5, p. 53]; from brand attachment, which encompasses strong consumer's affection to brand and refers to emotional relationship concept [5, 39]; and from brand familiarity, which is more the outcome of the brand experience [20].

Examination of all given definitions above, suggests common features for all of them. Alliance

of the brand experience with the consumer's behavioral, emotional and sensational responses, which are evoked by the brand related stimuli, is the joining link. It comes via the product experience occurring during the search, purchase or interaction with the product/service in other ways (i.e., through advertisement or when the product is presented virtually) process, shopping, service and consumption experiences, which are the parts of overall brand experience [5]. These experiences raise internal and external consumer's reactions. Overall, the above analysis enables to conceptualize brand experience as the consumer's perceptions and responses to brand evoked stimuli.

Switching focus to the business in electronic environment the concept of the web experience is commonly encountered. Constantinides explains web experience as follows – „<...web experience: a combination of online functionality, information, emotions, cues, stimuli and products/ services, in other words a complex mix of elements going beyond the 4Ps of the traditional marketing mix>“ [13, p. 112]. Operating in such environment the term of web experience can be used interchangeably with the online brand experience, because this is the primary tool for the businesses to ensure consumers interaction with a brand. The website is the first touch point which can be seen and tried by the consumer, therefore this is the place for the online brand experience creation. Combination of functionality, information, products, services and other stimuli impacts consumer's responses and provided information, emotions, cues are the sources of perception. Constantinides web experience concept definition is closely related with traditional brand experience concept, expressing consumer's perceptions and responses to brand evoked stimuli, but it might focus marketers too much on the web site technical solutions, leaving the strategic decisions about brand experience creation in this environment [13].

Ha and Perks also emphasize web site as a primary touch point [20]. The experience gained through this tool they identify as the website brand experience and define it as follows: „<...a consumer's positive navigations (i. e. using web-based communities and participating in events) and perceptions (i. e. the attractiveness of cookies, variety and uniqueness of visual displays and value for money) with a specific website>“ [20 p. 440]. Thus, the main task for the web site is to create positive experience to consumers, which reassures that consumers return to a particular web site as to the favorite one. Analyzing this definition, the necessary actions, such as, positive navigation of the consumers, to be ensured by the marketers, is mentioned. This definition provides the cues to the outcomes of company's insights and strategy, focusing not only on technical web site decisions, but also considering, what could ensure consumers satisfaction in different brand touch points. That, as Ha and Perks highlight, is the preliminary condition for consumers to participate in e-commerce [20].

Kahn characterizes experience as a “<...result of encountering, undergoing or living through situations” [26, p. 14]. More explanations of this concept can be found in Jack Morton Worldwide global brand experience agency “Best Experience Brands” study, which provides brand experience term definition as “<...it is referring to any of the interactions you have with either the specific company or its products or services. This can include your own personal use of the product or brand, your conversations or interactions with employees or people who represent the

brand or anything you learn from that brand's marketing, word-of-mouth, recommendations from your friends, colleagues or social network.>" [24, p. 6]. This comprehensive definition is very close to the online brand experience concept used by A. T. Kearney, which emphasizes that this experience encompasses all consumers' interaction points with online business [29]. These brands "touch points" can be defined as brand related stimuli. According Jack Morton Worldwide study the main important stimuli, or in other words drivers of online brand experience are: efficient purchasing experience; products and services that meet the consumer needs; easiness of buying services, whenever and wherever consumer is shopping; understanding consumer needs; exceeding their expectations; and initial impression the brand makes on consumers [24].

Summarizing the above analysis, it may be concluded that some of the definitions are more related to the stimuli, which drive the brand experience, rather than explaining what online brand experience is. The other definitions are focused more on the technical side of the online brand experience, such as web site usability, design or information relevance, rather than strategic approach to the online brand experience creation. The commonalities for all of them are brand evoked stimuli and consumers' perceptions and responses to these drivers. Thus, traditional notion of the brand experience is still useful for the definition of the online brand experience concept. The difference is only in its implementation process [29], because of the distinct brand and consumer touch points. In subsequent study this online brand experience definition – consumers perceptions and responses to brand evoked stimuli, will be used, focusing to the process and drivers which could create positive experience, ensuring brand familiarity, satisfaction, brand trust and set the conditions for consumers high involvement in participation in e-commerce.

### **III. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF BRAND EXPERIENCE CREATION MODELS**

Internet had expanded the space for the evolution of business. Also, it set specific additional rules for the making business. Although the online consumers might be the same as in the traditional environment, their online behavior differs. Kotler highlights that "<internet consumers have around-the-clock access to varied information sources, making them better informed and more discerning shoppers>" [31, p.235]. The consumers are demanding more and more from the online brands [15]. They want not only to get the information about the brand, but also experience it while visiting the web site, to talk about what they had experienced through the different stages of getting familiar with a brand, share that experience in online communities, which they trust more than brand owners [19, 20, 45]. Thus, brand experience here is becoming one of the most influential marketing paths. It is empirically proved that brand experience is the primary factor to create consumers trust and loyalty [5]. It is recognized as a vital driver to the business success online [39]. The companies such as Amazon acknowledged this early during their evolution and thus captured the leading positions among online retailers by providing most experiential brand. New generation businesses, like Amazon, realized that the *process of how* is "<...more critical than what is being sold>" [29, p. 3]. The question of how to provide positive brand experience for the consumers was subsequently raised in the online marketing world. The correct answer to this question is that positive brand experience is the tool to assure high results of business performance not only by increasing conversion into sales rates

[10, 38], but also by enlarging the volume of loyal consumers, who broaden brand existence boundaries and help to occupy top brand positions. Positive brand experience provides premises for brand familiarity, satisfaction and influences further purchases [36]. While purchasing consumers expect not only rational benefits, but also memorable brand experience [34]. To meet their expectations companies need to clarify how to provide such experience for the consumers of their brands. Experience might be gained in physical, audible and visual ways [46], therefore analysis of the use of these means is necessary to have all-inclusive picture of online brand experience creation process. Several creation models are presented and analyzed below. They enable conclusions on what tools the online brand owners have to ensure positive online brand experience for their consumers and what online brand experience building blocks are necessary to succeed in this process.

Analyzing the online brand experience creation models several studies are worth to be scrutinized in details. Wood and Masterman proposed the "7I" model, which enhances the event experience [47]. A. T. Kearney developed the "7C" online brand experience creation model, which is based on the McCarthy "4P" marketing mix tools [29, 33]. Constantinides suggested the model of three online brand experience building blocks, focused mainly on the web applications [13]. Smith and Wheeler propose people, product and services as the main tools which lead to brand experience [43].

Wood and Masterman proposed "7I" event experience enhancement model although originally focusing on the event marketing is also relevant to this study [47]. Web site visits can be analyzed as the event case. Proposed model shall broaden the overall understanding of the online brand experience and event experience can be assumed as consumer or even consumption experience [46]. For it the main factors are: (i) the brand's ability to involve consumers emotionally; (ii) brand's interaction with consumer; (iii) all senses of immersion (deepening of sensual experiences); (iv) memorable intensity; (v) customized individuality; (vi) creative innovation, which encompasses web site content; (vii) sound and authentic integrity providing the value to the consumer [46]. The high consumer involvement can be achieved by the attractiveness of the brand, additional benefits besides product or services consumption or the value which consumer sees as a "cherry on the cake". This "cherry" is the integrity factor, ensured through the additional value perceived by the consumers. Interaction provides conditions for the networking with other people, who are brought together by the brand and jointly share individual experience, gained through the customized approach to the consumer engagement by the brand.

A. T. Kearney "7C" model designated (i) content, (ii) convenience, (iii) customer care, (iv) communication, (v) connectivity, (vi) community, and (vii) customization as the main tools "<...to deliver a tangible...experience in the virtual space>" [29, p. 10]. The author of this model highlights that content must be relevant and useful for the consumer. It shall be closely related to product or service offering (accurate product description) in order to compete with the offline business. Describing the convenience Kearney is noticing that easy navigation and speed of the web site are essential, for the consumers not to waste their time waiting for it to load [29].

Communication has to ensure intensive interaction with the consumer, two way dialogue in a way which is tailored for exact consumer. Consumer care is inconceivable without guaranties and assistance in every step. Also it is closely related to security risks and issues, such as the violation of the consumer's data or privacy and result in the consumers mistrust. Connectivity is created through the affiliate marketing tools. They enable the brand to meet its target audience efficiently throughout the collaborators web sites. Building community brings people together to express their opinions, perceptions and experience about particular brand. This factor fulfillment enhances brand's boundaries and when carefully monitored it builds stronger brand experience. A. T. Kearney also suggests customization of the online experience for the consumer by creating special product offering [29].

Constantinides also provides the rich study of factors influencing online experience. He constructs three main building blocks from (i) functionality, (ii) psychological factors, and (iii) content (iii) [13]. Each of these blocks is divided into bricks, and implements whole online brand experience creation process. Web site functionality is divided into usability and interactivity. Usability creates user-friendly web site, while interactivity presents consumer with grater web experience by communicating as brand-consumer, and consumer-consumer (chance to build a community). Psychological element encompasses online trust creating tools, which for pure-plays are the main focus for designing the web site [13]. Content block proposed by Constantinides consists of the aesthetic and marketing elements presented in the web site. Aesthetics in this model is seen as critical driver for consumer purchasing decision making process. Traditional "4P" marketing mix with its elements is augmented by Constantinides with such additional drivers as communications (to cover lack of physical contact), fulfillment of the orders and product or service characteristics.

Smith and Wheeler associate (i) people, (ii) product and services, (iii) process to the online brand experience building process [43]. In order to explain this model Smith provides triangle of main factors influencing online brand experience (see Figure 1):

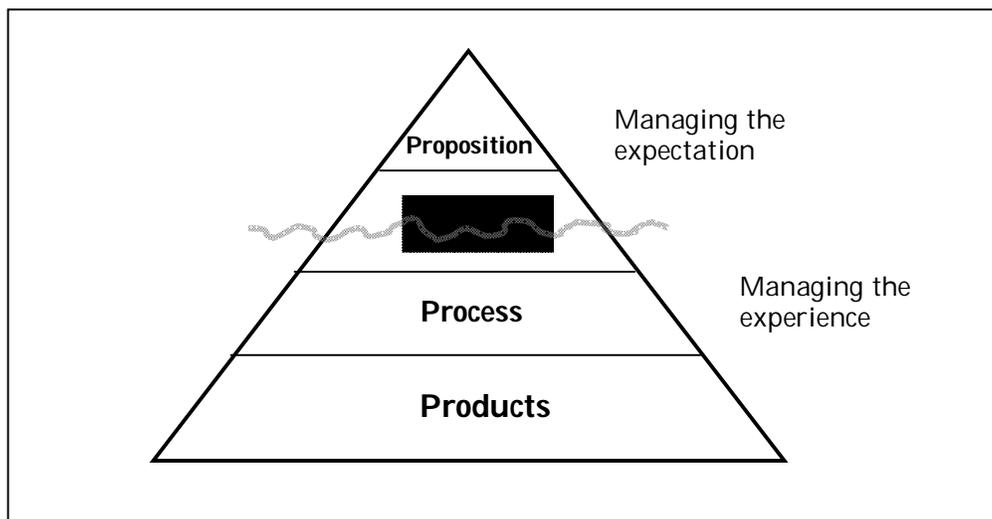


FIGURE 1: THE BRAND MANAGEMENT ICEBERG. SOURCE: SMITH, WHEELER, 2002, P. 99

Smith suggests to start from the clear page, but at the same time differentiating from competitors propositions, which brings precise idea of what and how should be delivered to consumer [42].

This idea will help to manage consumer expectation and set the directions for comprehensive approach to brand experience creation process. The main tool for that, according Smith, is *People*. It requires a lot of investment to the employees, especially those who are communicating with the consumers directly, but such investments are paying dividends by bringing company's employees as brilliant brand ambassadors, who create differentiated experience for the consumers of the brand. Electronic marketing tools such as customer relationship management (CRM), voice-activated response systems or direct e-mails do not assist in creating experience, if they are poorly managed by the business personnel (people) [40]. When describing elements of the process, Smith [42] brings as an example Amazon "One-Click" ordering solutions, which highly enhanced consumers satisfaction by shortening the time spent on the ordering process. These kinds of tools implement given brand promises and create memorable experience, which ensures consumers trust and loyalty.

Products or provided services influence overall brand experience, but the degree of influence significantly depends on the differentiation and the value that the product or service of the business provides. If extra benefit is provided for the consumer, he or she is going to be highly involved in brands existence. That requires contemplation on the deliberate ways on how to create unique product/ service experience, which shall include not only products characteristics or packing design, but also such elements as online ordering systems, automated e-mails, return policies and other tools.

Main analyzed online brand experience creation models are summarized below for the comparative analysis (see Table 2).

All compared models can be seen as a continuation of the traditional marketing mix implemented in online environment with an aim to create comprehensive online brand experience. Traditional "4P" + "1P" (People) model [42] is transformed into "7I", "7C", "3P" or "3 building blocks". All of them include requirements for products/ services and place – web site. Price is excluded from almost all of the models as not essential element in online brand experience [13]. According Constantinides [13] promotion also can be excluded from the list of essential online brand experience factors. All of these models can be employed in creating the online brand experience and they provide some guidance for the businesses trying to reach better results in online environment, but they fail to emphasize the digitization of the brand itself.

TABLE II: ONLINE BRAND EXPERIENCE CREATION MODELS. SOURCE: COMPILED BY THE AUTHORS.

Wood & Masterman (2007) "7I" model	A. T. Kearney (1999) "7C" model	Constantinides (2004) online brand experience "3 building blocks"		Smith and Wheeler (2002) "3P" model
<b>Individuality</b>	<b>Convenience</b> Ease of use Navigation Speed of delivery Dependability	<b>Functionality factors</b>		<b>Process</b> How can our processes deliver our products and services in a valuable way?
		<b>Usability:</b> - Convenience - Site navigation - Information architecture - Ordering/payment processes - Search facilities and process - Site Speed - Find-ability/ accessibility	<b>Interactivity:</b> - Customer service/after sales - Interaction with company personnel - Customization - Network effects	
<b>Interaction</b>	<b>Customization</b> Ability to tailor interface Product offering	<b>Psychological factors (trust)</b> Transaction security Customer data misuse Customer data security Uncertainty reducing elements Guarantees/return policies		<b>People</b> What must be distinctive about our people
	<b>Communication</b> Integrated two way dialogue Visual presentation and aesthetics.			
<b>Integrity</b> Real benefits and value to the consumer	<b>Customer care</b> Integrated customer management: - Contact management - Pre-/post-sales support service strategy	<b>Content factors</b>		<b>Product/Service Offering</b> What must be unique about our products and services?
<b>Involvement</b>				
<b>Immersion</b> Of all senses	<b>Community</b>			
<b>Innovation</b>	<b>Content</b>	<b>Aesthetics:</b> - Design - Presentation quality - Design elements - Style/atmosphere	<b>Marketing mix:</b> - Communication - Product - Fulfillment - Price - Promotion - Characteristics	
<b>Intensity</b>	<b>Connectivity</b> Site to site connectivity: - High quality related links - Leveraging of alliance sites			

#### IV. DESIGNING ONLINE BRAND EXPERIENCE CREATION PROCESS MODEL

The comparative analysis of online brand experience creation models enables us to depict most important factors in the process of building the effective experience for the brand consumer in the online environment. All analyzed models can be combined in order to reach integrated holistic

improvement in online brand experience building process accounting for the digitization of the brand itself (see Figure 2).

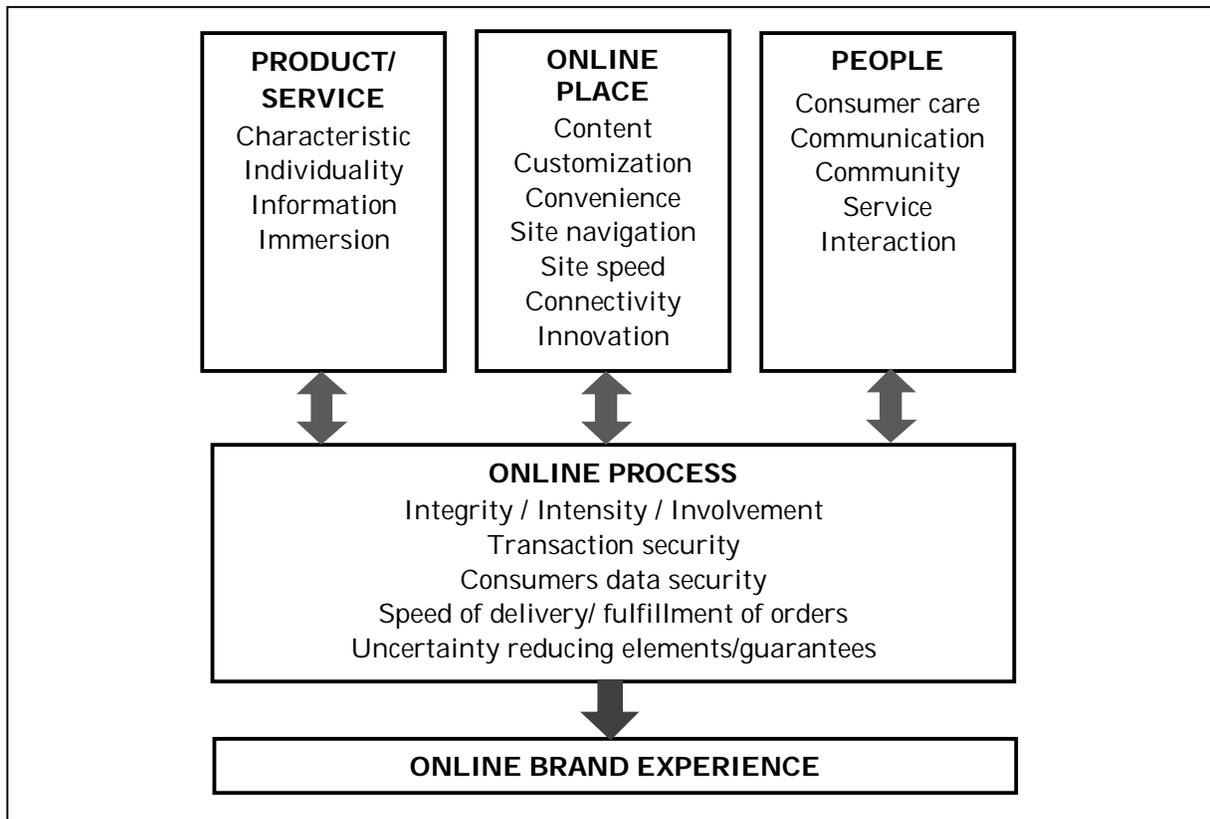


FIGURE II: ONLINE BRAND EXPERIENCE CREATION PROCESS MODEL. SOURCE: COMPILED BY THE AUTHORS.

Proposed model covers most predominant online brand experience building blocks – *product/services*, *place*, which is brand/company's web site, *people*, who are brand ambassadors, and *online process*, which is essential for all building blocks of the brand experience. Product and place alone ensures basic consumer needs, but only in combination with the well managed online process they can provide sophisticated online brand experience.

*Product/service* element, which enhances online brand experience, means proper presentation, providing of the assortment, which shall meet to the advertised characteristics and consumer needs, but at the same time shall assume that it is customizable for a particular individual. Products and service of the brand must integrate into consumer life [48] and help to express consumer itself. The more it is self-expressive, the more it can involve consumer to be converted into the brand advocate [45]. Marketing practitioners also suggest exploiting multi-sensorial elements while presenting product/services offerings [11]. It is quite difficult to implement all five senses in online environment, but at least sound and visual elements shall be exploited accurately in order to support brand's message. Also the other senses shall be stimulated indirectly using appropriate visual elements, which can evoke consumer's memories about the smells and tastes (for example: picture of a lemon or the smell of cut grass). Kotler also mentions the virtual reality capabilities "<...that allows users to experience three-dimensional, computer

generated environments through sound, sight, and touch>” [31, p. 150]. These tools help enhance the consistency of proposition and create holistic online experience, which lets the consumers know what the brand stands for and what benefits or values will be delivered to them every time that they are interacting with it.

*Place* is where consumers meet the brand. It can be either web site of the business or the brand, or other online place of affiliated partners, communities, social networks, where consumer can be engaged by the brand or at least can get know the brand. All of these places need to ensure well managed brand and consumer interaction points. Content, customization, convenience, site navigation and speed, connectivity (search facilities, accessibility) and innovation are most predominant factors in all proposed models presented before. According to Treiblmaier research content is a “<...major success factor and has a great influence on how customers perceive a company and rate the e-brand>” [44, p. 92]. Customization differs from individuality (Product element) by letting the consumer to decide and pick his/her own preferences, while individuality is automatically set by the web site content offering. Convenience, site navigation and speed are about letting the consumer to use web site easily. Search facilities and accessibility describe web site connectivity. They enable the consumers to find online brand easily in the environment overcrowded with information. It is always a challenge to choose between web site design, aesthetics and usability while ensuring all the factors listed above. But it is necessary to ascertain, what the users of that web site (*place*) demand from particular brand and to remember that experience can be gained only if the consumer can make use of the offerings of that web site. Thus, usability should be considered as paramount to the implementation of creative and aesthetic solutions. When deciding what usability tools have to be implemented, intuitiveness factor should be taken into account. Consumers are not willing to spend their time on long learning on how to use the web site. Thus, the technology used to support the web site has to include the functions of auto-complete, on-site search, with high degree of typing errors tolerance [37]. All elements and tools described above must be revised constantly and innovated to create the better online brand experience for their consumers.

Place as one of the building blocks of online brand experience is only part of the rationalized online brand experience. To provide emotional benefit to consumer and to create greater experience, a *third block – people*, has to be used. People can be divided into two groups – people, who are employed to be brand ambassadors, and another group – people, who love the brand and are connecting in online communities or in other places provided by the social media channels (brand evangelists). The first group of *people* delivers consumer care, communicates with them to ensure well managed relationship, keeps interacting with consumers by two way dialogue, mentors brand experience within the communities and provides all necessary service to enhance online brand experience [6].

Service is one of the main factors influencing consumer's satisfaction [10]. This element demands fast reaction to consumer needs in order to ensure the quality of experience [32]. Communication in Treiblmaier study is presented also as one of the most important elements. Treiblmaier distinguishes three forms of possible communications: (a) cross-media

communication, (b) pure online communication, and (c) pure offline communication [44]. Cross-media communications are based on combination of online and offline media capabilities. Pure online communication is more used by pure online players [44], however pure offline communication is no longer suitable for both categories of companies – online and also for traditional bricks and mortar businesses, especially if they have intentions to shift part of their business to online environment. Communication element can be compensated by passive information to a certain degree, but it cannot totally reduce consumer's uncertainties [13]. This can be done by providing guaranties, taking care of consumer data and transaction security, providing excellent fulfillment of the orders. Second group of people, in the *people* building block, are the consumers themselves. The *people* engaged by brand and gathered together are brand evangelists next to the *people* employed by the brand owners. Their provided reviews are "<...16 times more trusted than other reviews>" [27, p. 9]. Consumers interact with each other and share their perceptions and by this way enhance the overall online experience of the brand. Also consumers need to socialize has to be considered as an important factor. It draws attention to social media and its marketing tools offered by it in order to engage consumers. If a brand provides this opportunity by setting at least the fan page in the Facebook or Twitter, in this way it ensures that brand interaction with consumer is more intense and brings consumers into social conversation. Social network interaction is also an option for seeking consumer's feedback on the brand, ensuring deliberate communications and reinforcing the consistency of brand experience. Everything what is happening in the social communities or social media fan pages needs be monitored by the business in order to actively manage and respond to it. This way the consumer interaction returns to the first group of *people* – brand ambassadors, as the building block of the online brand experience, which manage the correct selection of marketing tools and implement the strategy for creation of positive online brand experience.

The fourth online brand experience creation block is the *online process* element. It consist of such sub-elements as integrity, intensity, involvement, transaction security, consumer's data security, speed of delivery, fulfillment of orders, uncertainty reducing elements and guaranties. Note that the challenges and processes online are very different that in offline bricks and mortar business environment. Some of these sub-elements were already explained as the online brand experience building blocks above. The online process element is all-inclusive element which filters the *products/services*, online *place* and *people* elements ("*what*" elements) implementation turning into the sophisticated effective and holistic experience. It answers the questions "*how*", "*when*" and "*what*" should be provided to the consumer in order to create holistic online experience. It ensures that various marketing tools are implemented completely and consistently. This element if effectively employed can become the primary differentiator means for online brand owners. Holistic online brand experience can be ensured by making the web site relevant for the consumers, offering integrity, intensive involvement and reliability. Additionally holistic online brand experience means proactive management of the consumer engagement at every interaction point. Already existing analytics engines provides the ability to monitor how successfully *online process* is implemented and decide what should be improved in order to enhance positive online brand experience for the consumers.

Proposed online brand creation process model is conceived by combining different existing models and focusing them on the online event brand experience management and web-site brand experience management. Although the main building blocks, fulfilled by appropriate sub-elements, are identified, further research is necessary to validate and reshape them for the dynamic online environment. Based on the central role of the *online process* the proposed model may be nicknamed - 3PoP (Production, Place, People, online Process).

Proposed model can be useful not only for the pure online businesses, but also for offline businesses. Although online brand experience can be created by the similar building blocks as the brand creation in the traditional environment, however the touch points of the brand with the consumers are distinct and specific in the online environment, therefore their implementation process is going to be different. The 3PoP model proposed in this paper helps account for these differences at both research and management levels. It is necessary to mention that such complexity requires contribution of all internal business processes [18]. It cannot be implemented only through marketing measures [42]. The comprehensive 3PoP marketing approach shall ensure the consistency of overall holistic brand experience online.

## **V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Positive brand experience provides conditions for brand familiarity, satisfaction and influence further purchases. Consumer's loyalty and trust are strong positive outcomes of the online brand experience. In order to reach these outcomes in e-business, multiple digital interaction channels need to be engaged, merged and managed. Memorable, intensive and integrated experience for the consumers creates differentiation of online brand and ensures top positions among similar brands. This requires thorough understanding and analysis framework of the online brand experience concept and the process of creation thereof. Review of existing literature provides extensive brand experience conceptualization, however it is not sufficiently applied to the online environment. The dominant characteristics of the brand experience include internal and external consumer responses, evoked by brand-related stimuli. Internal responses include sensations, feelings, and cognitions, while external responses assert in consumer behavior. This is a commonality of both offline and online brand experience concepts. Thus, the online brand experience definition proposed in the paper is focused on *consumer perceptions and responses to brand evoked stimuli*.

2. Our analysis of the process of the online brand experience creation concludes that most existing online brand experience creation models are restated continuation of traditional "4P" marketing complex. In the existing research products/services and place are main factors influencing online brand experience. Other essential brand experience building blocks are the people and the marketing process. Analysis suggests that specific online processes and their role are insufficiently reflected in the existing models. We argue that the online processes are central for the holistic online marketing mix and online consumer experience. Based on this, the paper proposes a modified online brand experience creation model - 3PoP, which is delineated by the main building blocks:

- Product/service – the object (or “what”) which provides to consumers the fulfillment of rational and emotional needs;
- Place improved by the online marketing tools is where strong online brand experience is felt;
- People as the brand mediators delivering online brand experience. This includes two groups of people – people, who are employed by the brand owners (brand ambassadors), and people who are in love with the brand and gather together into online communities to share their experience and to enhance other brand consumer experience by provided reviews and other responses (brand evangelists);
- Online process - the main filter and transforming factor for the product/service, place and people into the holistic online brand experience. It defines “how” and “when” something should be done to ensure completeness and consistency of online brand experience.

3. The proposed model is based on theoretical insights from the meta-analysis of the current scientific literature and attempts to merge the main factors suggested in preceding research. Proposed modified online marketing model focused on the online brand experience creation shall be useful for online-businesses, as well as for offline businesses. Identified main building blocks are essential for better understanding and strategic management of online brand experience creation. Implementation of these blocks needs to be customized for the specific business environment and needs to be considered as a comprehensive complex. The contribution of all business processes (not only the marketing process) is necessary in order to ensure holistic online brand experience. Further research, empirical studies and case studies are needed in order to validate the proposed 3PoP model, along with the continuation of the theoretical discussion on the creation of the online brand experience.

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