

# Expanding the Oil and Gas Sector of Indonesia through Better Marketing Performance: Analysing the Role of Online Engagement, Interactivity and Brand Attachment

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The present study attempts to examine the role of online engagement and online interactivity in improving the marketing performance of the Indonesian oil and gas sector. Along with the direct relationships, the mediating role of brand attachment is also investigated. The primary data has been drawn from a sample size of 294. To examine the impact of incorporated variables on marketing performance, Confirmatory factors analysis and the Structural equation modelling approach is incorporated in the study. Several tests were applied including: descriptive analysis, KMO and Bartlett's test, rotated component matrix, convergent and discriminant validity. The direct effects indicated that online engagement and online interactivity are the significant and positive drivers of marketing performance, creating a significant impact on the improvement of marketing performance. Similarly, the indirect effects show that brand attachment acts as the significant mediator between online engagement and marketing performance. Also, brand attachment significantly mediated the relationship of online interactivity and marketing performance. The study embraces several theoretical, practical and policy making implications for the marketing management practitioners and strategy developers to attain high levels of marketing performance and business expansion. Finally, various limitations have been given along with recommendations for in-depth findings by future researchers.



**Key words:** Marketing performance, Online engagement, Interactivity, Brand attachment, Indonesia.

#### Introduction

Relationship management and marketing performance have emerged as a prominent concept in the last two decades with the multiple conceptualisations of performance drivers. Also, it becomes extremely significant for organisations to establish and maintain relationships with their stakeholders, specifically with customers in order to operate with high profitability, as the underlying purpose of every business and industry is the maximisation of profits and the attainment of loyalty and satisfaction of customers. These expectations are met with the alignment of marketing strategies with business strategies (Le Meunier-FitzHugh & Le Meunier-FitzHugh, 2017; Santoso, et al., 2019). The development of new communication technologies has altered the ways in which companies interact with their customers. In the market place, the role of relationship marketing has emerged as a strategy that has contributed towards the determination of a firm's value and its high levels of performance (Jabeen, Aliyu, & Mahmood, 2016). It enables the firms to foster profitable exchanges and boost satisfaction of customers. With its positive effects on businesses, the technological advancements also affect expectations of customers, their preferences and needs, which requires the constant evaluation of market dynamics and emerging trends in order to adapt to the changes in the environment. New interaction channels of communication have emerged, comprising e-mails, Web 2.0 tools and mobile phones to maintain and enhance relationships with customers (Horvat, Behdani, Fogliano, & Luning, 2019; Santoso, 2020).

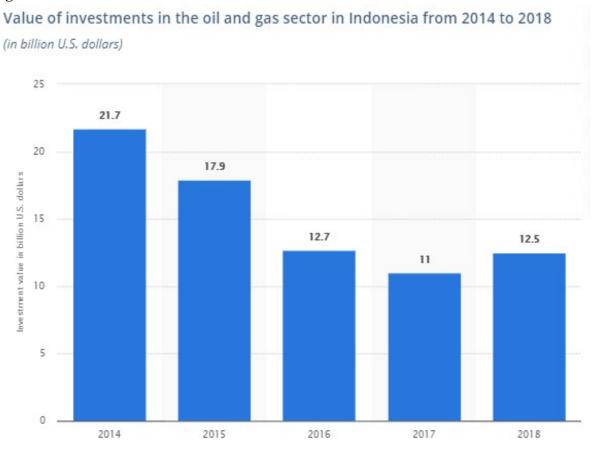
Almost every industry is facing the challenge of high completion and customer retention due to dynamic business environments which require the implementation of market specific strategies to maintain relationships to survive in the business industry and to attract and retain customers. Thus, it is imperative for successful businesses to realise the importance of the role played by relationship marketing in the overall performance of a business and the creation of brand attachment among customers. Hence, to overcome this challenge, several studies have been conducted around the globe to explore successful and effective relationship marketing strategies and activities in order to achieve high marketing performance and expansion of energy sectors. It is claimed that relationship marketing results in improved performance and results in business expansion (Boso, Story, Cadogan, & Ashie, 2015; Rapini, et al., 2018).

Therefore, in view of the discussed findings, it is observed that researchers have been focused on the impact of various relationship marketing approaches on overall business performance and its expansion (Ardyan & Sugiyarti, 2018; Sestino, 2019; Sugandini &



Wendry, 2017), but no such studies have been conducted to analyse the role of online engagement, and interactivity on marketing performance, particularly in the oil and gas sector. Also, the mediating role of brand attachment in the relationship between online engagement, interactivity and marketing performance has not been examined. The oil and gas sector was among the prominent emerging sectors of Indonesia from 2014-2015, but started to decline from 2016, reviving its position from 2017 as shown from the statistics on investments carried out in the oil and gas sector in Indonesia from 2014 to 2018 (Purwanto et al., 2016). In 2018, the investment value in oil and gas amounted to 12.5 billion U.S. dollars [see: Figure 1]. Also, Indonesia has been a net importer of oil since 2004, and it is the sixth largest net exporter of natural gas, but the contribution of oil and gas to Indonesia's national revenue experienced the sharpest decline during the oil crisis which occurred during 2014 to 2015. Due to falling demand for oil, as well as an oversupply of the commodity, however, as a result of Indonesia's complex business environment, Indonesia has struggled to attract investment sufficient to meet its energy development goals and attract new firms (Dutu, 2016; Maryanti, et al., 2019). Also, in the presence of various substitutes for oil and gases worldwide, it becomes essential for the sector to maintain its relationships with existing stakeholders for the expansion.

Figure 1.





The above mentioned observations highlighted the literature gap which needs to be fulfilled, therefore in order to fulfil the identified gap, by following the suggestions of previous studies of (Afriyie, Du, & Musah, 2019; Arya, Verma, Sethi, & Agarwal, 2019; Boateng, 2019) the present study proposed the following research objectives:

- 1. To determine the impact of online engagement on the marketing performance of the oil and gas sector of Indonesia.
- 2. To analyse the impact of interactivity on the marketing performance of the oil and gas sector of Indonesia.
- 3. To investigate the mediating role of brand attachment in the relationship between online engagement, interactivity and the marketing performance of the il and gas sector of Indonesia.

Moreover, unlike previous studies, the current study incorporated advanced methodological techniques such as Structural equation modelling, and Confirmatory factor analysis. The explanation of the proposed mechanism is significant for the marketing management practitioners to develop marketing strategies for relationship management and the enhancement of firms' marketing performances. Thus, the rest of the paper covered the relevant literature on antecedents of marketing performance and formulation of hypotheses, in section three the methodology of the study is discussed, whereas in section four data analysis and results are discussed, while section five includes the conclusion and future policy implications.

#### **Literature Review and Theoretical Background**

The framework of "Online Relationship Marketing (ORM)" (Kormin & Baharun, 2016) and Signaling theory (Boateng, 2019) is incorporated in the study in order to analyse the role of online attachment and online interactivity on marketing performance. The ORM is the marketing framework that considers the utilisation of marketing communication tools enabled with web and internet for the establishment and maintenance of relationships with customers. These tools include management of social media pages and websites through which relationship maintenance activities are coordinated, as they are recognised as the most effective methods for the management of relationships due to the facilitation of interaction and communication. For building long-lasting relationships, these online activities are integrated with high interactivity, engagement and attachment features (Boateng & Narteh, 2016). Hence the ORM framework plays a vital role in the design and development of marketing strategies targeted towards relationship management (Abashidze, 2017; Wiyati, et al., 2019).



Similarly, "Signaling Theory" is incorporated for the explanation of the phenomenon pertaining to choice of customers. It comprises three major elements i.e. signaller: the provider of services or products, receiver: customer and the signal itself. The firm influences the opinions of its customers by providing various signals through the communication of attributes of brands and proficient quality in the delivery of service (Banalieva, Cuervo-Cazurra, & Sarathy, 2018). The firm's desire to gain the trust of customers and foster brand attachment through information is converted into multiple signals through a variety of mediums (Su, Peng, Tan, & Cheung, 2016). In the current era, organisations rely on IT enabled features for sending signals to their customers and stakeholders with the intention of creating positive perceptions and behavioural intentions related to brand offerings (Xie & Mao, 2017). Thus the present study considers online engagement and online interactivity as signals or the sources to create brand attachment among customers and improve marketing performance for the purpose of business expansion.

Several studies have incorporated the theories for an in-depth understanding of marketing performance drivers (Li, Fang, Wang, Lim, & Liang, 2015; Story, Boso, & Cadogan, 2015). Thus, the present study proposed the following conceptual model based on ORM framework and signaling theory, presented in Figure 2 by taking into consideration online engagement and online interactivity (independent variables) as the determining factor of marketing performance (dependent variable). The study also assumed that brand attachment acts as a significant mediator in the relationship between online interactivity and online engagement; online interactivity and marketing performance.

#### **Online Engagement and Marketing Performance**

The engagement of customers is defined as "the intensity of an individual's participation and connection with the organisation's offerings and activities initiated by either the customer or the firm" (p. 1) (Willems, Brengman, & Van Kerrebroeck, 2019). It is considered as a medium to gauge the preferences and needs of customers through their loyalty and attachment to a brand, it also determines the predictive purchase intentions of the customers (Vohra & Bhardwaj, 2019). The online engagement of customers emerged through social media and results in the creation of potential opportunities for providing improved services to the customer. The behaviour was reflected through the liking and commenting process on the shared content on the social media managed by the firm (Vohra & Bhardwaj, 2019). Similarly, it was evidenced from the findings of Cambra-Fierro, Melero-Polo, and Sese (2018) that the relationship marketing aspects are among the crucial success factors for the company, which enhances customer engagement and trust towards them and leads ultimately towards profitability. Also, it was postulated that developing relationships with customers through social media presence and online engagement fosters trust, sharing of information, and positive behaviours that led towards customer as co-creators of value and led towards



business expansion and marketing performance (Iglesias, Markovic, Bagherzadeh, & Singh, 2018).

In addition, online engagement plays a prominent role in determining the value creation strategies of a business and aims to find solutions in order to meet the needs of customers as customers contributed with their feedback and marketing agents (Joy, Belk, Charters, Wang, & Peña, 2018). A well-designed social media presence results in the effective recognition of opportunities and market insights to cope with the dynamic environment and leads towards effective marketing performance (Degville, 2018). Many studies have emphasised the importance of customer engagement for the growth of the company and ultimately for attaining customer attachment and loyalty. While studying the major determinants of marketing performance, the findings of Cawsey and Rowley (2016) highlighted the importance of implementation of online engagement for the growth and expansion of the company. Therefore, based on the reviewed literature and the recognition of importance of online engagement in the determination of marketing performance, the current study hypothesised that:

**H1:** Online engagement has a significant impact on marketing performance.

#### Online Interactivity and Marketing Performance

Online interactivity can be defined as, "the degree to which a dialogue can be established between a firm and its customers online, through information sharing" (Abdullah, Jayaraman, Shariff, Bahari, & Nor, 2017). Four main aspects are considered vital for the interactivity, which includes: responsiveness by the firm, non-verbal communication, reciprocity and the speed through which the response was given (A. A. Barreda, Bilgihan, Nusair, & Okumus, 2016). It is argued by the authors that online interactivity helped in finding out solutions to the underlying problems faced by the customers. Without the adoption of social media communication, the companies are unable to gauge customer feedback and resolve immediate problems and fulfil the needs of customers and it has a significant impact on the profitability and performance of the firm (Yu, Roy, Quazi, Nguyen, & Han, 2017). Also, it has been noted by (Wang & Kim, 2017) that the process of two way communication is the most prominent source of online interactivity and plays a pivotal role in positive behavioural intentions and attachment of customers towards the brand. Moreover, it leads towards consistency in developing high customer value and brand performance targeted towards improved solutions of the product ranges (Todor, 2016). In addition, the interactivity with customers helped to explore the current trends and needs of customers for the development of solutions and products for enhancing the customer base. In order to achieve high levels of performance and customer trust, the firms incorporate the activities comprising refining solutions to gauge efficiency in the market place which also results in effective marketing management practices



(Casablancas-Segura & Llonch, 2016). The firm's desire to gain the trust of customers and foster brand attachment through information is converted into multiple signals through a variety of mediums (Su et al., 2016). In the current era, organisations rely on IT enabled features for sending signals to their customers in the form of online interactivity.

Also, multiple studies have emphasised the importance of interactivity through online mediums for marketing performance and ultimately for attracting customers. While studying the major determinants of marketing performance and high brand satisfaction, the findings highlighted that the use of e-mails and social media pages results in instant communication between the firm and its stakeholders, through which their feedback, questions and responses were gathered to improve the business performance. According to signaling theory, it is effective in designing marketing and business solutions, which creates a favourable environment for the customer satisfaction and positive emotional bonds (Schweitzer, Palmié, & Gassmann, 2018). It has been postulated superior perceived brand values were created with effective communication channels by a firm (Takata, 2016). Also, it was highlighted by Powers and Valentine (2019) that online marketing practices act as a significant element in the process of relationship management and achieving high levels of performance. Scholars of marketing management have analysed the drivers of marketing performance and emphasised the incorporation of online interactivity (Jones, Comfort, & Hillier, 2018). In addition, a prominent role is played by interactivity in determining the value creation strategies, as mentioned in signaling theory, of a business and aims to find solutions in order to meet the needs of customers as customers contributed with their feedback and marketing agents (A. Barreda, Okumus, Nusair, & Bilgihan, 2016).

Therefore, based on the reviewed literature and the recognition of the importance of online interactivity in the determination of marketing performance, the current study hypothesised that:

**H2:** Online interactivity has a significant impact on marketing performance.

#### **Mediating Role of Brand Attachment**

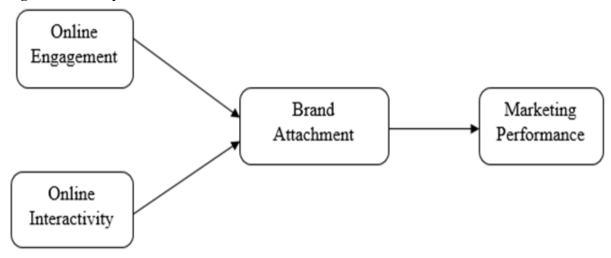
Brand attachment is the "relationship of emotional bonds associated with the usage of particular brands" (Ahmad & Thyagaraj, 2015). It is indicated from the previous studies that emotional bonds are developed by using the brand which a person is using and it creates a sense of security with regards to the brand (Gonçalves Filho, Júnior, Lopes, & Braga Chinelato, 2018). It is argued by the authors that brand attachment is created with online interactivity and results in effective marketing strategies. With brand attachment, the companies are able to integrate emotional values to their offerings as demanded by customers and it has a significant impact on current profitability of the firm and creates loyalty among

customers (Bahri-Ammari, Van Niekerk, Ben Khelil, & Chtioui, 2016). Also, a brand attachment provides ways for the customer centred marketing strategy according to their emotional towards high marketing performance (Bahri-Ammari, 2018). Also, it was highlighted by Anam and Faiz (2016) as a significant element in the process of relationship management and achieving high levels of performance in various sectors. Thus in view of the existing indirect relationship between online engagement, online interactivity, brand attachment and marketing performance, the present study hypothesised that:

**H3:** Brand attachment has a significant mediating role in the relationship between online engagement and marketing performance.

**H4:** Brand attachment has a significant mediating role in the relationship between online interactivity and marketing performance.

Figure 2. Conceptual model



#### **Research Methodology**

#### Population and Sampling

Marketing performance play an important role in enhancing market share and expanding existing businesses because, with advanced and social media market strategies, one can create positive word of mouth about his or her business. This proposed study has been conducted for observing the impact of online engagement and online attachment on the marketing performance, in the mediating role of brand attachment. In this study, the population of the study is the oil and gas sector of Indonesia, as Indonesia has several reserves of oil and gas and has also been considered, in 2016, as the sixth largest producer of gas in the world. Moreover, Indonesia earns a lot revenue through the export of oil and gas to other countries. In this study, the researcher aimed to examine the market performance in the context of an advanced level of marketing strategies and to observe whether the oil and



gas sector expanded with increased marketing performance or not. The researcher used the purposive sampling technique for selecting managers and managerial employees of the government departments related to the oil and gas business, because if the respondents had knowledge about the oil and gas sector, then only they can describe the impact of the proposed study. A survey strategy has been used for data collection, distributing 340 questionnaires among respondents. The researcher received only 310 responses, from which a few were incomplete and a few invalid, so that the researcher only considered the 294 valid responses.

#### Data Collection Procedure

In this proposed study, the data collection procedure is a survey-based questionnaire, which enables the researcher to collect numeric, quantitative data, which can easily be analysed through statistical analysis techniques. The researcher asked variable scale closed ended questions for evaluating the role of specific variables in the study. The questionnaire was originally written in the English language, but for the data collection process, it has been converted into native language and after completing the data collection procedure, it was again translated back into English for data analysis. Before finalising the questionnaire, the researcher checked the content validity of measures and minimised errors in the structure and wording of the questionnaire through feedback from specific respondents, which were collected through the pilot study. Further, the researcher administered the questionnaire through the self-administering technique, as it was then possible to solve queries regarding specific terms in the questionnaire by self-visiting the respondents.

#### Measures

For measuring the variables of the study, different measurement items have been adapted from the research studies of various other researchers who have already conducted similar research studies from different perspectives. The researcher adapted several different items, such as for online engagement constructs, four variable scale items from (Cobos, Wang, & Okumus, 2009) & (Guo, 2014), for online interactivity, and the five measurement items from the research studies of (Farquhar & Rowley, 2006) & (Cobos et al., 2009). Moreover, brand attachment has been measured through four survey items from (Arya, Verma, Sethi, & Agarwal, 2019) and for market performance measurement, the researcher takes into consideration the research work of (Katsikeas, Morgan, Leonidou, & Hult, 2016) and adapts three survey items. On the grounds of the 5-point Likert scale, the researcher measured the measurement items responses; in this scale 1 refers to strongly disagree and 5 refers to strongly agree.



#### Data Analysis

Reliability has been assessed through SPSS and by the accompanying two criteria of composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha. The threshold limit for both criteria is 0.70, as its values have to exceed 0.70, for attaining internal consistency and items reliability respectively. For convergent validity assessment, the researcher utilised two criteria under AMOS, (1) items loading, where its values have to be greater than the cutoff value 0.70 and (2) average variance extracted, where its values have to fall in the threshold range such as greater than 0.50. On the other hand, discriminant validity has been assessed through a single criterion under AMOS, where the square root of AVE has to be greater than all other corellated constructs. Structure equation modelling has also been performed for testing the hypotheses of the proposed study, SEM runs under AMOS and the path analysis approach has been used for hypothesis testing. On the bases of standardisation of path and relative significance analysis, the researcher reports the acceptance or rejection status of the hypotheses.

#### Data Analysis and Interpretation

In this study, 294 questionnaires were distributed among the participants. The demographic details of respondents were that, there were 123 males and 171 females, according to which the number of females were high; education-wise 23 of the respondents had graduated, 141 of the respondents had completed their postgraduate studies, 120 of the respondents had completed their masters and ten had some other degrees. In terms of age, 53 of the respondents were between 21 to 30 years old, 112 of the respondents were from 31 to 40 years old, 107 of the respondents were from 41 to 50 years old and 22 were 50+ in age.

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics** 

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD	Skewness	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	SE
OnlineInt	294	1.00	5.00	3.4959	1.06687	692	.142
OnlineEng	294	1.00	5.00	3.5289	1.08865	748	.142
MarketPerf	294	1.00	5.00	3.4218	1.12194	503	.142
BrandAttach	294	1.00	5.00	3.5646	.99147	737	.142
Valid N (listwise)	294						

The above Table 1 is showing the descriptive statistics of the study, with a detailed explanation about the variables of the study, showing that the descriptive coefficients give a complete summary of the data. This set of data represents the entire sample of the population. The data is showing that there is no outlier in the given data because the maximum values are in the threshold range of 5-point Likert scale and the value of skewness is between -1 to 1,



which is the threshold range of normality so, the given data is normal and valid. The data is valid to go for further testing.

**Table 2:** Rotated Component Matrix

	Component				
	1	2	3	4	
OE1		.765			
OE2		.826			
OE3		.840			
OE4		.806			
OI1	.735				
OI2	.782				
OI3	.805				
OI4	.780				
OI5	.776				
BA1				.747	
BA2				.767	
BA3				.763	
BA4				.649	
MP1			.817		
MP2			.853		
MP3			.852		

The above Table 2 with details of the rotated components matrix is showing that almost all of the indicators have factor loading of more than 0.7, which means that all indicators are eligible to be exposed to further hypothesis testing techniques, because all the factors are in suitable threshold levels and all the factors are in suitable and valid sequence and range. So, this data is ready for further testing techniques. There is no cross loading in the data shown in RCM, so the data is reliable.

Table 3: Convergent and Discriminant Validity

	CR	AVE	MSV	MaxR(H)	OI	MP	OE	BA
OI	0.890	0.619	0.537	0.892	0.787			
MP	0.881	0.712	0.356	0.941	0.513	0.844		
OE	0.892	0.674	0.489	0.960	0.536	0.459	0.821	
BA	0.769	0.655	0.537	0.965	0.733	0.597	0.699	0.774

The validity master sheet was used in order to confirm the convergent and discriminant validity for the research model variable. The discriminant validity provided the

discrimination between variables while the convergent validity was measured with the help of composite reliability and average variance extracted. The results of the validities are shown in Table 3. The results and convergence of each variable is more than 70%. The average variances extracted are more than 50%, while the discriminate validity showed that the loading of each variable discriminates form each other. Every variable has maximum loading with itself as compared with others. So, these validities prove the authenticity of the collected data.

Table 4: Confirmatory Factors Analysis

Indicators	Threshold range	Current values
CMIN/DF	Less or equal 3	2.317
GFI	Equal or greater .80	.917
CFI	Equal or greater .90	.956
IFI	Equal or greater .90	.957
RMSEA	Less or equal .08	.067

Table 4 is of CFA, which is the confirmatory factor analysis used to confirm the fitness of the hypothetical model before structural equation modelling. The current results are showing that CMIN is less than 3, GFI is more than 0.80, CFI is more than 0.90, IFI is more than 0.90, and RMSEA is less than 0.08. All of the results showed that the data is in the valid range and is ready for further testing. Following is the screen shot of CFA in Figure 3.

Figure 3. CFA

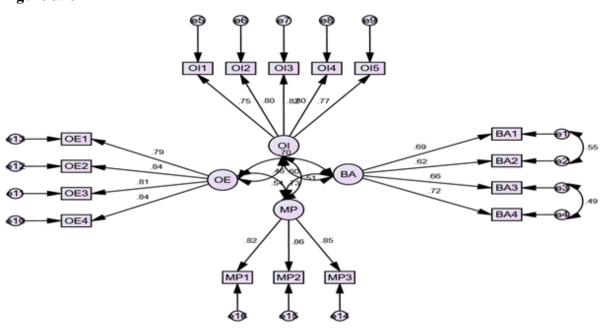


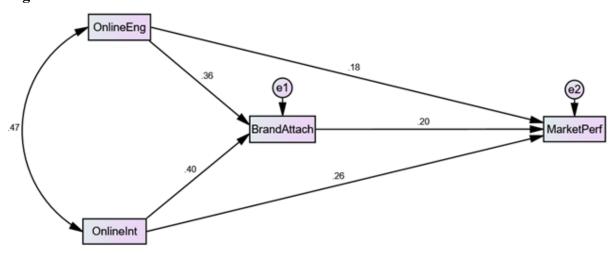


Table 5: Structural Equation Modelling

Total Effect	OnlineInt	OnlineEng	BrandAttach
BrandAttach	.398***	.358***	.000
MarketPerf	.339***	.254***	.202**
Direct Effect	OnlineInt	OnlineEng	BrandAttach
BrandAttach	.398***	.358***	.000
MarketPerf	.259***	.181*	.202**
Indirect Effect	OnlineInt	OnlineEng	BrandAttach
BrandAttach	.000	.000	.000
MarketPerf	.080**	.072**	.000

The above Table 5 of SEM is showing the relationships of different variables with each other and what impact they have on each other. The impact of OI on BA and MP is significant and positive, the impact of OE on BA and MP is positive and significant and the impact of BA on MP is significant and positive as well.

Figure 4. SEM



#### **Discussion and Conclusion**

#### Discussion

The target of this study was the oil and gas sector of Indonesia and the aim of the present study was to know the impact of online engagement (OE) on marketing performance (MP) and to know the impact of online interactivity (OI) on MP. The study took brand attachment (BA) as a mediator between OE, OI and MP. The first hypothesis proposed by the study was that, "OE has a significant impact on MP". This hypothesis is accepted by the study and past literature also supports that OE with the customers enhances the trust of the customers on the



firm and it also enhances the level of connection of the customers with the brand. This gives rise to a positive kind of brand attachment, which is significant for both the customer and the brand (Hasegawa & Matsuoka, 2015). The second hypothesis proposed by the study was that, "OI has a significant impact on MP". This hypothesis is accepted by the study and is supported by the evidence from previous literature (Kirono et al., 2016). Online attachment and OI enhances the performance of any brand to a great extent because it also enhances the level of response to the customers, which makes the whole process problem free and increases the attachment and performance of the brand. The third hypothesis proposed by the study was that, "the mediating role of BA between OE and MP is significant". This hypothesis is accepted by the study and is supported by past evidence, according to which OE increases the BA with the customer and contributes to increasing the MP (Kis-Katos & Sparrow, 2015). The fourth hypothesis proposed by the study was that, "BA significantly mediates between OI and MP". This hypothesis is accepted as well and is supported by the theory that OI is important for direct customer attachment and is included in positive aspects of the enhancement of marketing performance (Mukhlis, Utomo, & Soesetio, 2015).

#### Conclusion

The target of this study was the oil and gas sector of Indonesia and the aim of the present study was to analyse the impact of online engagement (OE) on marketing performance (MP) and the impact of online interactivity (OI) on MP. The study took brand attachment (BA) as a mediator between OE, OI and MP. 294 questionnaires were distributed to the 300 participants of this study, the results concluded that OE and OI have a significant impact on MP and the mediation of BA was seen to be significant and positive.

#### **Implications of the Study**

The study makes a significant addition to the literature regarding the importance of OE and OI, with the customers, the study has significantly elaborated how marketing teams can efficiently enhance the performance of a brand by taking into account simple steps like OE and OI, practically implementing brand attachment in a better way. This also applies to the enhancement of efficiency of the marketing team, in which the performance of the brand will be enhanced as well. The policy of the BA will be very significant for organisations worldwide who are thinking of boosting their marketing performance.

#### **Limitations and Future Research Indications**

Future researchers are recommended to work on a rather complex and large sample, so that the results can become more valid and so that generalisation will be easier. Another recommendation is to select diversified sectors for the sake of the study. The sample size was small with respect to the study of the oil and gas sector, for this kind of influential sector



the sample size must be large for the sake of more reliable and generalised results. Future researchers can use more than one data collection tool to collect data more efficiently and quickly.



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