

Effect of brand experience to brand equity of smartphones in Beijing, China

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Abstract

This study examined the effects of brand experience on the brand equity of smartphone brands in Beijing, China. This specifically, determined the profile of the respondents in terms of sex, age, highest educational attainment, average monthly income, and brand of smartphone use. Moreover, brand equity with its determinants namely, brand quality, Brand associations and brand loyalty was assessed. On the other hand, the extent on how customer perceived the intensity of using brand experience was also determined through the variables namely sensory experience, cognitive experience, behavioral experience, relational experience and emotional experience. Lastly, a brand strategy roadmap was developed. The researcher used a descriptive method to gather the necessary data and information to answer the questions concerning the present status of the study. Likewise, the researcher also used data-gathering instruments like survey questionnaires to gather the information needed in the assessment of brand experience and brand equity. Likewise, there are a total of 400 respondents that participated in the conduct of the survey. The respondents are smartphone users in Beijing, China. The researcher used statistical treatment to analyze the data namely, frequency and percentage, mean, analysis of variance and Pearson's correlation. Findings show that sensory experience has a significant effect on brand quality, brand association, and brand loyalty. Cognitive experience has a significant effect on brand quality and brand association but no significant effect on brand loyalty. Behavioral experience has a significant effect on brand quality and brand association but no significant effect on brand loyalty. Relational experience has a significant effect on brand loyalty but no significant effect on brand quality and brand association. Emotional experience has a significant effect on brand quality but no significant effect on brand association and brand loyalty. Brand Strategy roadmap was proposed based on the results of the study.

Keywords: brand experience, brand equity, brand quality, brand associations, brand loyalty, sensory experience, cognitive experience, behavioral experience, relational experience, emotional experience

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1. Introduction

The smartphone industry continues to evolve nowadays. As technology advances, the way smartphone brands look for creative ideas is a challenge. In an era where communication is convenient with a mobile device, those in the smartphone industry faced pressure to make the market choose them. There are a lot of rising brands in the smartphone industry which leads to the increase in competition within the market. These brands find unique ways to interact with their market and try to find a unique proposition that can make them different and stand out in a highly competitive industry. A brand gives a product perception to its customers. According to Kenton (2023), a brand gives a distinct identity to customers. The brand can be created through elements of design, packaging, and even advertising. The brand itself can distinguish one's product from its competitors.

As smartphone brands distinguish themselves against competitors, it is important to acknowledge the importance of brand experience. According to Perritt (2024), brand experience is the sum of all the sensations, thoughts, feelings, and reactions that individuals have in response to a brand. It is ultimately how a customer feels about a brand before, during, and after their interaction with the brand. Brand experience can be developed through different strategies such as advertising, events, and other marketing initiatives. Brand experience somehow creates perception to customers. According to Hayes (2023), brand equity refers to the value premium that a company generates from a product with a recognizable name when compared to a generic equivalent. Companies can create brand equity for their products by making them memorable, easily recognizable, and superior in quality and reliability. Understanding how brand experience affects a customer's perception is something that can help brands understand more how to serve and satisfy the needs and wants of the market. This study aims to assess the effect of brand experience on the brand equity of smartphones in Beijing, China.

Objectives - This study assessed the customer-perceived intensity of experiential marketing usage of smartphones. Specifically, it aimed to answer several key questions. Firstly, it sought to profile the respondents based on sex, age, average monthly income, highest educational attainment, and the brand of the smartphone being used. Secondly, the study aimed to evaluate brand equity in terms of brand quality, brand associations, and brand loyalty. Additionally, it examined the extent to which customers perceive the intensity of brand experience in relation to sensory, cognitive, behavioral, relational, and emotional experiences. Another objective was to determine if there were significant differences in respondents' assessments when grouped according to their profiles. Furthermore, the study investigated whether brand experience significantly affects brand equity. Finally, based on the findings, it aimed to propose a suitable brand strategy.

2. Materials and Methods

The researcher conducted a survey to determine the profile of the respondents and their assessment of brand experience and brand equity of smartphone brands. The study included a total of 400 respondents who were smartphone users in Beijing, China, predominantly from the young to middle-aged demographic. Various statistical treatments were used to test the hypothesis.

3. Results and Discussion

Based on the data gathered, the following significant findings were revealed in the study:

1. The majority of the respondents are 45 years old and above, showing a frequency of 112 and a percentage of 28 this is followed by ages 35-44 years old showing a frequency of 100 and a percentage of 25. Meanwhile, there are a total of 96 respondents that belong to the age group of 25-34 years old showing a frequency of 96 and a percentage of 24. Respondents ages 25 years old and below have the lowest percentage of 23 and a frequency

of 92. There is an equal distribution of the respondents with an average monthly income amounting to 5,000-10,000 and 10,000-20,000 both with a frequency of 108 and a percentage of 27. This is followed by those with an average monthly income of 20,000 and above showing a frequency of 96 and a percentage of 24. Those with an average monthly income of below 5,000 have the lowest frequency of 88 and a percentage of 22. The majority of the respondents are undergraduate or college graduates showing a frequency of 103 and a percentage of 25.8. This is followed by respondents that have doctoral degrees showing a frequency of 101 and a percentage of 25.3%. Meanwhile, there are a total of 100 respondents who are high school graduates showing a frequency of 25. Lastly, the lowest percentage of respondents comes from those with a master's degree showing a frequency of 96 and percentage of 24. The majority of the respondents uses the Xiaomi brand as their smartphone showing a frequency of 108 and a percentage of 27. While, both iPhone and Huawei have a total of 100 users with a percentage of 25. There are 92 respondents who use other brands, with a percentage of 23.

2. Assessment of brand quality shows a composite mean of 6.44 with a verbal interpretation of excellent for. The highest mean is 6.47 with a verbal interpretation of good. On the other hand, the lowest mean of 6.38 with a verbal interpretation of good. The assessment of brand association shows a composite mean of 3.61 and a verbal interpretation of moderate. The highest mean is 3.71 with a verbal interpretation of moderately high while lowest mean is 3.48 with a verbal interpretation of low. The assessment of brand loyalty resulted in a composite mean of 5.93 and a verbal interpretation of quite very high. The highest mean is 6.07 with a verbal interpretation of very high while the lowest mean is 5.88 both with a verbal interpretation of very high.

3. Based on the assessment of sensory experience, results show the overall mean of 6.42 with a verbal interpretation of to a very great extent. The highest mean is 6.43 and a verbal interpretation of to a very great extent and the lowest mean is 6.40 with a verbal interpretation of to a very great extent. Based on the assessment of cognitive experience, results show an overall mean of 5.91 and a verbal interpretation of to a very great extent in the assessment of cognitive experience. The highest mean is 5.96 with a verbal interpretation of to a very great extent. There is the lowest mean of 5.87 and a verbal interpretation of to a very great extent. The assessment of behavioral experience revealed an overall mean of 5.88 and a verbal interpretation of it to a very great extent. The highest mean is 5.92 with a verbal interpretation of to a very great extent. There is the lowest mean of 5.86 and a verbal interpretation of to a very great extent. The assessment of relational experience shows an overall mean of 5.44 and a verbal interpretation of it to a considerable extent. The highest mean is 5.54 with a verbal interpretation of to a very great extent. The lowest mean is 5.34 with a verbal interpretation of to a very great extent. The assessment of emotional experience revealed an overall mean of 5.89 and a verbal interpretation of it to a very great extent. The highest mean is 5.96 and a verbal interpretation of to a very great extent. The lowest mean is 5.80 and a verbal interpretation of to a very great extent.

4. There is no significant difference on the assessment of the respondents when grouped according to sex towards all variables of brand equity namely brand quality with a p-value of 0.371, brand association with a p-value of 0.148 and brand loyalty with a p-value of 0.238 all accepting the null hypothesis of the study. Meanwhile, there is no significant difference on the assessment of the variables of brand experience when grouped according to sex showing a p-value of 0.259, 0.505, 0.828, 0.816, and 0.089 thus accepting the null hypothesis respectively. Findings revealed that there is no significant difference on the assessment of the respondents towards all variables of brand equity namely brand quality, association and loyalty when grouped according to average monthly income showing a p-value of 0.179, 0.56, and 0.407 all accepting the null hypothesis. On the other hand, results show that there is no significant difference in the assessment of the respondents towards all variables of brand experience namely sensory, cognitive, behavioral, relational, and emotional experience. Findings show the p-value of the said variable of 0.238, 0.478, 0.961, 0.97, and 0.48, all accepting the null hypothesis.

Findings revealed that there is no significant difference on the assessment of the respondents towards all variables of brand equity when grouped according to highest educational attainment showing a p-value of 0.172, 0.023, and 0.859 thus accepting the null hypothesis. Meanwhile, there is no significant difference on the

assessment of the respondents towards their smartphone brand experience showing a p-value of 0.745, 0.18, 0.222, 0.429, and 0.997 thus accepting the null hypothesis. Based on the findings, there is no significant difference in the assessment of the respondents towards all variables of brand equity when grouped according to the brand of smartphone used showing a p-value of 0.544, 0.223, and 0.053 thus accepting the null hypothesis. Meanwhile, there is no significant difference on the assessment of the respondents towards their smartphone brand experience in all variables showing a p-value of 0.02, 0.185, 0.921, 0.394, and 0.397 thus failing to reject the null hypothesis.

5. Based on the results, sensory experience has a high significant effect on brand quality at all levels with a p-value of .0001 and beta level of 0.4308 at 0.25, a p-value of 0.0001 and a beta value of 0.4455 0.50 and a p-value of .0001 and a beta value of 0.3615 at 0.75. On the other hand, cognitive experience has a high significant effect on brand equity in terms of brand quality at 0.25 with a beta level of 0.1493 and a p-value of 0.0015 and at 0.75 with a beta level of 0.127 and a p-value of 0.0016. Cognitive experience does not significantly affect brand equity at 0.50 with a beta level of 0.0571 and a p-value of 0.2034. Meanwhile, behavioral experience has a significant effect on brand equity in terms of brand quality at 0.25 with a beta level of 0.0936 and a p-value of 0.0204 and at 0.50 with a beta level of 0.1169 and a p-value of 0.0383. Behavioral experience does not significantly affect brand equity at 0.75 with a beta level of 0.0757 and a p-value of 0.1249. On the other hand, relational experience does not significantly affect brand equity in terms of brand quality at all levels with a beta value of 0.0512, 0.0331, and 0.0081 respectively. Data also shows the p-value of 0.1046, 0.3964, and 0.8031 at all levels. In addition to this, emotional experience has a high significant effect on brand quality at 0.25 level with a beta value of 0.1387 and a p-value of <.001, while it has a significant effect at 0.50 level with a beta value of 0.1322 and a p-value of 0.0409. Emotional experience does not significantly affect brand quality at 0.75 level with a beta value of 0.0463 and a p-value of 0.3167.

Based on the results, sensory experience has no significant effect on brand association at 0.25 level with a beta value of 0.1595 and a p-value of 0.3019. On the other hand, sensory experience has a high significant effect on brand association at 0.50 and 0.75 with a beta value of -0.273 and -0.333 with a p-value of 0.0047 and <.0001 respectively. Meanwhile, cognitive experience has no significant effect at 0.25 and 0.75 level with a beta value of 0.0924 and 0.0673 and a p-value of 0.2665 and 0.534 respectively. In addition to this, at 0.50 level, cognitive experience has a high significant effect on brand association with a beta value of 0.0034 and a p-value of 0.9639. On the other hand, behavioral experience has no significant effect on brand association at 0.25 and 0.50 level with a beta value of -0.1377 and -0.876 and a p-value of 0.2247 and 0.4058 respectively. Also, behavioral experience has a high significant effect on brand association at 0.75 level with a beta value of -0.163 and a p-value of 0.0386. While, both relational experience and emotional experience have no significant effect on brand association at all levels. Relational experience shows a beta value of -0.0891, -0.1548, and 0.0509 and a p-value of 0.2593, 0.0148, and 0.0509. On the other hand, emotional experience shows the beta level of -0.05, -0.1616, and -0.1442 and a p-value of 0.6484, 0.0822, and 0.0735 respectively.

Based on the results, there is a high significant effect on sensory experience to brand loyalty at all levels showing a beta value of 0.4987, 0.4748, and 0.4618 respectively and a p-value of <0.001 at all levels. On the other hand, cognitive experience does not significantly affect brand loyalty at all levels with a beta value of 0.1009, 0.0275, and 0.0486 respectively and a p-value of 0.317, 0.6219, and 0.4501. Meanwhile, behavioral experience does not significantly affect brand loyalty at all levels with a beta value of 0.1251, 0.1191, and 0.0348 respectively and a p-value of 0.1461, 0.0636, and 0.636. On the other hand, relational experience significantly affects brand loyalty at 0.25 level with a beta value of 0.1272 and a p-value of 0.0387. In addition to this, relational experience has a high significant effect on brand loyalty at 0.50 level with a beta value of 0.1438 and a p-value of 0.0015 and at 0.75 level with a beta value of 0.176 and a p-value of 0.0003. Lastly, emotional experience does not significantly affect brand loyalty at all levels with a beta value of 0.098, 0.0036, and 0.0806 and a p-value of 0.2183, 0.9502, and 0.3129 respectively.

6. The researcher proposed a brand strategy roadmap that can serve as a guide to different smartphone

brands on how to improve brand experience. A brand strategy roadmap is a one-page strategic plan that can help brands to visualize what they want to do in terms of improving customer brand experience and brand equity. Based on the findings, the weakest area in terms of brand experience is the relational experience. This roadmap focuses on how to strengthen the weaknesses of a smartphone brand in delivering brand experience to its market while making improvements on other areas of brand experience.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusion

- The majority of respondents were aged 45 years and above, held an undergraduate or college degree with an average monthly income of 5,000-20,000, and predominantly used Xiaomi as their smartphone brand.
- The brand equity has a verbal interpretation of good for brand quality, moderately high for brand association and very high for brand loyalty.
- The assessment of the variables of brand experience namely sensory, cognitive, behavioral, and emotional has a verbal interpretation of to a great extent. While the assessment of the respondents towards relational experience has a verbal interpretation to a considerable extent.
- There is no significant difference in the assessment of the respondents towards all variables of brand equity when grouped according to age, there is no significant difference in the assessment of the respondents towards variables of brand experience except cognitive experience. There is no significant difference in the assessment of all of the variables of brand equity and brand experience when respondents are grouped according to average monthly income. There is no significant difference in the assessment of the respondents towards the variables of brand equity except brand association. Meanwhile, there is no significant difference in the assessment of the respondents towards all variables of brand equity. There is no significant difference in the assessment of the respondents towards all variables of brand equity when grouped according to brand of smartphone used. On the other hand, there is no significant difference in the assessment of the respondents towards variables of brand experience except sensory experience.
- Sensory experience has a significant effect on brand quality, brand association, and brand loyalty. Cognitive experience has a significant effect on brand quality and brand association but no significant effect on brand loyalty. Behavioral experience has a significant effect on brand quality and brand association but no significant effect on brand loyalty. Relational experience has a significant effect on brand loyalty but no significant effect on brand quality and brand association. Emotional experience has a significant effect on brand quality but no significant effect on brand association and brand loyalty.
- A brand strategy roadmap was proposed, based on the findings.

Recommendations

After the findings and conclusions were presented, the researcher laid down the following recommendations:

- Smartphone brands may consider strengthening customer brand experience in terms of relational aspects while making necessary improvements in other areas.
- Smartphone brands may continue to refine smartphone features.
- Brand experience may be used as a form of competitive advantage as it can be used by customers as a

point of reference for brand equity and differentiation.

- Consider the use of the recommended brand strategy roadmap as a guide on creating and enhancing strategy.
- Further studies may be considered in other cities or areas to validate the information gathered in this research.

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