

Experiential Marketing, Customer Engagement, and Brand Loyalty in the Luxury Fashion Industry: Empirical Evidence from China

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ABSTRACT

The fashion industry in China faces fierce competition and variability in fashion trends. Customer experience plays a vital role for companies to remain competitive; however, traditional marketing has been unable to fully consider customers' needs and to provide an immersive experience, which can be addressed by experiential marketing. This kind of customer engagement contributes to creating value and increasing recognition for businesses, enhancing brand loyalty, and contributes to long-term and continuous business success. This study explores the relationship between experiential marketing, customer engagement and brand loyalty. Survey responses of 200 participants in the experiential marketing activity of Shanghai's Chanel pop-up store were collected. Drawing on Schmitt's five different types of experiences, we find the importance of experiential marketing in spurring customer engagement and brand loyalty. Our study enhances the understanding of experimental marketing in the fashion industry. Theoretical and practical implications are provided.

Keywords: Experiential Marketing, Customer Engagement, Brand Loyalty, Fashion Industry.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Fashion companies are confronted with fierce competition and the winners-take-all effect (McKinsey & Company, 2021), while there is huge variability in fashion trends. The customer group ranging from 18-35 years pays great attention to feelings for the brands to which they subscribe, which may be influenced by a variety of factors (Gudiel et al., 2021). For companies to avoid falling behind, customer experience has demonstrated its vital role

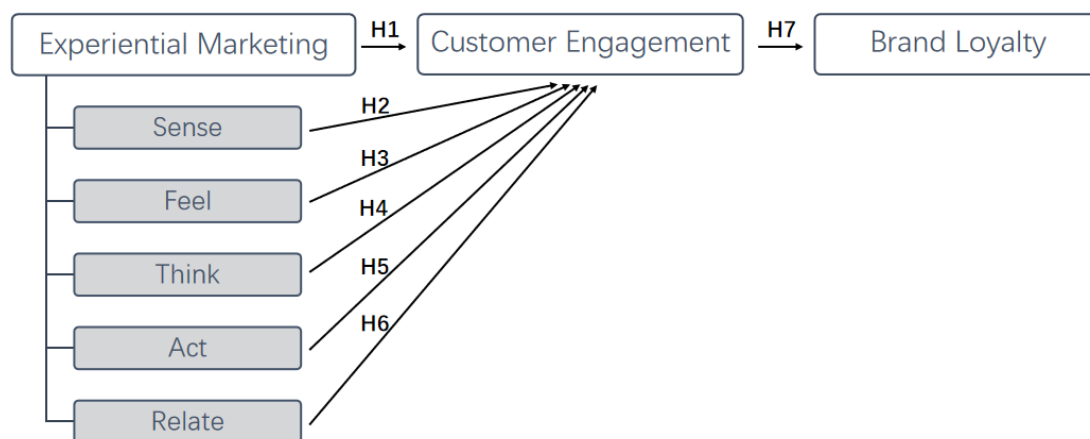
(Pine and Gilmore, 1998, Bhattacharya and Raghuvanshi, 2019). Traditional marketing has been unable to satisfy the needs of all stakeholders (Susilowati and Sugandini, 2018), therefore, innovative methods have been necessary (Abalos, 2020) including experiential marketing. Companies can provide customers with an immersive experience which stands out compared to competitors, helps build a stronger brand and increases customer repurchase intention (Tresna et al., 2021). Customer engagement, which is the process of enhancing the interactive relationship between the brand and customers through a series of channels, creates value through increased recognition of the businesses by potential and existing customers (Pansari and Kumar, 2017, Hollebeek, 2011). Customer engagement and brand loyalty, an indicator of intangible brand value, simultaneously bring long-term and continuous business success (Nam et al., 2011, Dick and Basu, 1994) by enhancing the brand-customer relationship through higher customer retention and higher satisfaction with products.

Experiential marketing creates specific scenes to allow customers to connect or interact with a brand, allowing for two-way communication (Song et al., 2015a). Schmitt (1999) proposed five different types of experience as part of the strategic experiential modules (SEMs): 'sense', 'feel', 'think', 'act', and 'relate'. Studies have shown the importance of experiential marketing, especially in spurring customer engagement (Chattopadhyay and Laborie, 2005; Schmitt and Zarantonello, 2013). However, few studies have focused on investigating SEMs in detail, especially the effectiveness of experiential marketing's SEMs on customer engagement in the fashion industry. The importance of experiential marketing has already been demonstrated in online game applications and tourism (Sari and Aprialita, 2020, Rather, 2020). Chang (2020) and Andreani (2007), among others, have analyzed the importance of experiential marketing on brand loyalty but the role of customer engagement as an intermediate factor has not been sufficiently examined. This study aims to answer the following questions: Firstly, does experiential marketing positively impact customer engagement? Secondly, to what extent do the five strategic experiential modules proposed by Schmitt (1999) impact customer engagement? Thirdly, does customer engagement have a positive impact on brand loyalty? Finally, how does customer engagement influence the relationship between experiential marketing and brand loyalty as a mediator, particularly in the fashion industry? To answer these questions, this study analyzes the results of questionnaires collected from participants of the experiential marketing activity of the Chanel pop-up store.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

This article three constituent elements: experiential marketing, customer engagement, and brand loyalty. The following will situate this framework in current literature to develop the hypotheses between experiential marketing (including the five dimensions of experiential marketing), customer engagement, and brand loyalty (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Theoretical Framework



Experiential marketing is composed of five different types of experience (called strategic experiential modules, SEMs): “sense”, *feel*”, “think”, “act,” and “relate” (Schmitt, 1999). Each of these components or their sum can impact customer engagement, which impacts brand loyalty.

2.1 *Experiential marketing and customer engagement*

The concept of experience in marketing was initially proposed by Hirschman and Holbrook (1982). Experiential marketing as part of the complete consumption experience is crucial in understanding customer behavior (Coudounaris and Sthapit, 2017; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016). The experiential aspects of consumption have increased in importance since the development of mature economies in the 1990s (Miller Jr, 2020; Pine and Gilmore, 1998b). The aim of economic activities is not just output-focused but should provide for a series of experiences brought by consumption (Quan and Wang, 2004). Pine and Gilmore (1998) argue that experience, as a unique form of economic offering, contributes to a crucial competitive advantage that is difficult to duplicate. Traditional relationship marketing is less relevant and is being replaced in part by electronic Customer Relationship Management (CRM) (Hendriyani and Auliana, 2018), by social media influences (J. Lin et al., 2019), and by experiential marketing each of which better meets the needs of contemporary customers (Schmitt, 1999). Customers are attracted by high-quality products and in-depth communication and marketing activities that touch their senses, affect their emotions, stimulate their thoughts, trigger their actions, and integrate into customers' lifestyles.

Schmitt, and Zarantonello (2013) defined experiential marketing as a practice of marketers stimulating customers' enthusiasm by making the brand a part of daily life experience. Such marketing is effective because customers are rational and perceptual when consuming. Experiential marketing has been applied to many industries and proved to be closely related to customer satisfaction (Brakus et al., 2009). The interaction in experiential marketing can create a strong association among brands, customers, and products (Cuellar et al., 2015).

As a result, marketers use experiential marketing to create relationships with customers (Homburg et al., 2015; Le et al., 2019). Schmitt (1999) proposed strategic

experiential modules (SEMs) which have been used marketers to generate various types of customer experiences and to trigger customer engagement (Song et al., 2015b; Tsaur et al., 2007b).

2.1.1 Customer engagement

Brodie et al. (2011) characterized customer engagement as a particular activity between customers and a brand. Van Doorn et al. (2010, p.254) define customer engagement as “behaviors that go beyond transactions and may be specifically defined as a customer’s behavioral manifestations that have a brand or firm focus, beyond purchase. Customers’ engagement may give the impression that they are crucial to the brand, enhancing their association with the brand and creating brand value (Brodie et al., 2013).

Previous research has confirmed that allowing customers to invest time or energy in interacting with the brand on social media enhances customer engagement and results in positive brand performance (Marjerison et al., 2019; Marjerison and Gan, 2020; Sawhney et al., 2005). Customer engagement establishes the relationship between brands and customers and helps brands better predict the changes in the market (Y. Lin et al., 2019). Bolton et al. (2018) claim that customer engagement could be achieved by involving customers in a series of activities, and this can be the experiential marketing provided by marketers. Aprialita and Dewi (2020) stated that experiential marketing forms customer engagement within the online gaming sector. Simultaneously, experiential marketing improves the customer engagement of online brands directly and effectively to help brands gain or sustain competitive advantage (Herrera et al., 2020).

H1: Experiential marketing has positive significance to customer engagement.

2.1.2 Strategic experiential modules (SEMs) and customer engagement

Schmitt (1999) put forward five measurements of experiential marketing, which are ‘sense’, ‘feel’, ‘think’, ‘act’ and ‘relate’, as part of the concept of strategic experiential modules (SEMs). These five dimensions attract different customer groups according to different aspects, which helps customers get an exceptional experience and allows the brand to accomplish specific targets (Maghnati et al., 2012).

2.2 Senses

Vision, hearing, smell, taste, and touch constitute human sensory involvement; stimulating these senses keeps customers interested in brand marketing and allows for value creation (McCole, 2004). Through these senses, customers can intuitively recognize what really attracts them to diverse products or services. Experimental marketing can use the distinct features of a firm’s products and its brand itself to unconsciously engage customers with the brand (Schmitt, 1999). An enhanced in-store experience associated with a brand creates a customer brand relationship and the perception of added value. Customers’ positive emotions will be directly associated with the brand and its image.

H2: Sense has positive significance to customer engagement.

2.2.1 Feel

Customers experience a positive feeling amid the experimental marketing experience (Schmitt, 1999). Yuan and Wu (Yuan and Wu, 2008) claimed that experiential marketing employing feelings centers around fortifying customer engagement from emotional

perspectives. When customers are in a good mood due to their recent, positive experience, they tend to be willing to connect with the brand. For high-end fashion brands, strong feelings and emotions of pride and joy can be generated by customers' association with the exclusiveness of the product and the recognition through social media.

H3: Feel has positive significance to customer engagement.

2.2.2 *Think*

The Think dimension in marketing utilizes stimuli onto individuals' intellect through problem-solving or cognitive experiences to engage customers creatively. Therefore, customers are encouraged to think innovatively to reevaluate the brand to help it develop in a new direction (Schmitt, 1999). Based on what he has advocated, thinking works well in stimulating the interaction between customers and the brand. Wiedmann et al. (2018) found that when customers have positive thoughts about the brand, the virtual value will increase. Fashion brands can engage their customer's convergent and divergent thinking via provocation, surprise, or intrigue (Tsauro et al., 2007a).

H4: Think has positive significance to customer engagement.

2.2.3 *Action*

Action enables customers to engage in social interactions through physical, behavioral, and lifestyle experiences (Schmitt, 1999). Customers can physically participate in marketing activities and the number of participants involved in the interaction can go beyond existing customers. Experiential marketing may change customers' behaviors, which are often emotional, inspirational, motivational, and inspired by movie stars or athletes. When applied in the fashion industry through novel make-up or clothing trends displayed by celebrities, this can influence customers' purchase intentions (Tsauro et al., 2007a).

H5: Act has positive significance to customer engagement.

2.2.4 *Relate*

The Relate dimension of marketing empowers customers to express their individual viewpoints on what the brand needs to convey. Social-identity experiences can be generated by relating to relevant groups or cultures (Schmitt, 1999). According to Yu and Ko (2012a), Relate marketing establishes a more fundamental relationship between customers and the brand covering most aspects. That is to say, the width of engagement tends to be broader. For fashion brands, Relate appeals to customers' need to be positively recognized by their family, peers, and colleagues, providing an opportunity for well-recognized, high-end fashion labels.

H6: Relate has positive significance to customer engagement.

2.3 *Customer engagement and brand loyalty*

Brand loyalty, which can be a competitive advantage to the brand, is defined as a customer inclination for the products or services of a brand shaped by customers for the long term and characterized by a high level of customer stickiness to the brand (Liu et al., 2012). Loyalty enables customers to dismiss other options and to proceed with purchasing their favored products repeatedly (Oliver, 1999). Generally, brand loyalty has two different aspects - behavior and attitude (Ling et al., 2014). Behavioral loyalty refers to repeated purchases, while attitudinal loyalty tends to be psychological commitments, such as the

purchase or recommendation intention, but without actual purchase behavior (Nam et al., 2011). Independent of the brand loyalty type, brand loyalty is a huge asset to an enterprise, and it helps the underlying company obtain a long-term and stable source of income (Chan and Astari, 2017; Srinivasan et al., 2002). This study explores and analyzes the degree of brand loyalty based on both behavior and attitude.

Customer engagement is critical to a brand's competitiveness in the market, and its importance is growing because it aids in the formation of loyalty (Khaloud and Hour El Houda, 2020; Surriadi et al., 2019). The best way to gain customers' attention and favor is to build a relationship with them so that they become brand advocates through active participation and experience (France et al., 2016). In other words, brand loyalty is a customer-created relationship that necessitates customer engagement. Huang and Chen (2022) investigated the relationship between customer engagement and brand loyalty to chain stores and reported that customer engagement positively impacts brand loyalty, and emotional engagement is the main driving force of brand loyalty. Adhikari and Panda (2019) reported that establishing the relationship between brand and customers is fundamental to customer loyalty, customer engagement is the vital link between them.

H7: Customer engagement has positive significance to brand loyalty.

3 METHODOLOGY RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1 Measurement

In order to collect data to test the above-developed hypotheses, a questionnaire was developed based on previously validated surveys. A set of 16 questions regarding the strategic experiential modules was adapted following Alsaïd and Amor (2020). For customer engagement, four questions were adapted based on the research from Agyei et al. (2020), and the last four questions on brand loyalty were adapted from Fernandes and Moreira (2019). Questions were translated into Chinese separately by two native Chinese speakers fluent in English and familiar with the topic of experimental marketing, customer engagement, and brand loyalty. The survey was then back-translated to ensure consistency of the translation.

The first question of the questionnaire classified participants into those who were Chanel customers versus those who were not Chanel's customers or did not buy Chanel products. Then, five demographic questions (age, gender, disposable income, educational level, occupation) were asked to understand the general population characteristics. Questions about the demographic characteristics of respondents of this research are derived from prior studies (Huang and Chen, 2022); Yuan and Wu, 2008; Rather, 2020). Generally speaking, research into experiential marketing in the form of the pop-up store is relatively few and contemporary, with few samples to draw upon. Questions, including demographics, were adjusted by the pilot study and tailored to the Chanel pop-up store marketing activity. Based on the results of the pilot test, the scope of income has been expanded, possibly because Chanel is a luxury fashion brand, and the respondents had comparatively higher disposable income. After the demographic questions, the participants were asked to express their degree of agreement with a five-point Likert-type scale, where 1 = extremely disagree

and 5 = extremely agree.

In the next step, the questionnaire was pilot tested based on 20 participants within the target group. Participants were invited to comment on the understandability of questions and any potential additions or omissions. The results of the pilot study were used to improve the questionnaire for clarity. Compliance with ethical standards was ensured by going through the ethical approval process. Participants were also provided with an invitation letter to explain the purpose and confidentiality prior to distributing the questionnaire and participants' consent forms were collected without any personal information of survey participants.

3.2 Chanel case company and data collection

Chanel opened its Coco pop-up stores in cosmopolitan cities like Singapore, Tokyo, London, and Shanghai where the store attracted social media coverage and triggered increasing sales while attracting vast numbers of customers by offering snacks, drinks, and a glance at Chanel's new product range. Such pop-up stores and events aim to create among visitors a feeling of curiosity, mystique, and due to the limited time for which they are set up, exclusivity, the attributes essential to luxury fashion companies' brand image. Customers' curiosity is triggered during the building process of a pop-up store, and this curiosity needs to be satisfied prior to this temporary store's closure. These pop-up stores combine unique experience centering around food and fashion, unique photo opportunities, or an exterior extension of the pop-up shop's footprint.

The Coco Café offered themed drinks such as 'beauty bubble tea' or perfume-inspired juices, along with a special edition of 'The Coco Daily'. In order to complement this experience, the pop-up store offered beauty counters for customers to receive a free mini makeover or to change nail shades, explore tattoo stickers, and obtain some 'Chance fragrance'. The photo booth with Chanel-themed digital stickers allowed customers to share their experiences online. Visitors were offered a sneak preview of new products. This pop-up store which focused on the experiential marketing campaign "the N°1 De Chanel Garden", was chosen to test these hypotheses within the fashion industry (Cattani et al., 2022).

The survey population was all visitors of the pop-up store. The questionnaire was anonymous which encouraged respondents to participate and provide truthful responses. After omitting questionnaires with missing or invalid responses, 200 responses were used for the analysis.

3.3 Data analysis

The theoretical framework and underlying concepts were subjected to reliability and validity tests. Data analysis techniques were applied including regression analysis, ANOVA, and t-test. In order to test hypothesis 1, a simple linear regression equation is established, in which the independent variable is experiential marketing (X) and the dependent variable is customer engagement (Y). Its mathematical model can be expressed as $Y = C + \beta X$, in which C is the constant-coefficient, and β is the regression coefficient. As for hypotheses 2-6, a multiple linear regression model is established as $Y = C + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 X_5$, where X_1, X_2, X_3, X_4, X_5 are used as sense, feel, think, act and

relate respectively. As for testing hypothesis 7, Its verification method is the same as hypothesis 1, except that the independent variable becomes customer engagement and the dependent variable becomes brand loyalty. Besides, analysis of variance (ANOVA), which is a set of statistical models, was used to examine whether one or some variables have significance to a factor. A t-test was used to compare the groups who said yes or no to the first question: “are you a Chanel customer/ have you purchased Chanel products recently” (Gelman, 2005).

4 FINDINGS

4.1 Profile of Participants

Table 1 illustrates that 200 questionnaire responses were collected in March 2022. The sample consists of 81% of respondents who are Chanel customers or have recently purchased Chanel products; the remaining 19% were neither Chanel customers nor purchased Chanel products elsewhere after they visited the Chanel Shanghai pop-up store. For gender, women account for 78.5%, while men accounted for 21.5% of respondents, showing that the proportion of women is significantly higher than that of men. While the Chanel pop-up store targeted both genders, females made up a higher proportion of participants in this pop-up store. In terms of age, the participants who visited the Chanel pop-up store are mainly concentrated within the group of 19-30 years old and 31-45 years old, accounting for 53.5% and 37.5%, respectively.

Meanwhile, only 2% of the participants are under the age of 18. As for disposable income, the proportion of income from 14,001 to 25,000 is the highest, accounting for 41%, followed by 8,501 ~ 14,000 (29%). The proportion of participants who have bachelor's degrees is the largest on the educational level, accounting for 50.5%. In terms of occupation, it is mainly concentrated in students (20.0%), accountants (33.5%) and salesman (19.5%).

Table 1- Descriptive Data Summary

Item	Answer	Respondents (n=200)	%
Chanel customer	Yes	162	81.0%
	No	38	19.0%
Gender	Male	43	21.5%
	Female	157	78.5%
Age (in years)	≤18	4	2.0%
	19~30	107	53.5%
	31~45	75	37.5%
	≥46	14	7.0%
Disposable Income (in RMB)	≤4,000	9	4.5%
	4,001~8,500	11	5.5%
	8,501~14,000	58	29.0%
	14,001~25,000	82	41.0%
	≥25,001	40	20.0%
Educational Level (Degree)	Less than bachelor's	54	27.0%
	Bachelor's	101	50.5%
	Master's or above	45	22.5%

Occupation	Student	40	20.0%
	Doctor	4	2.0%
	Accountant	67	33.5%
	Teacher	2	1.0%
	Engineer	18	9.0%
	Salesman	39	19.5%
	Internet celebrity	8	4.0%
	Others	22	11.0%

Based on the demographic results, 81% of the people who participated in this Chanel experiential marketing activity are Chanel customers or have recently purchased Chanel products. This implies that most of the people targeted by experiential marketing are existing customers, but nearly 20% of the group have not bought products but are willing to participate in the activity. These should be targeted by the brand to develop them into customers. The gender ratio of participants also shows that women may be more sensitive and motivated by experiential marketing in the fashion industry. These results show that most people who participate in Chanel’s experiential marketing activity are well educated and well-paid, which is understandable because of Chanel's brand positioning.

4.2 Empirical Analysis

4.2.1 Experiential Marketing – Customer Engagement (H1)

Taking experiential marketing as the independent variable and customer engagement as the dependent variable for simple linear regression analysis, it can be seen from the following table that the value of R² is 0.593, which means that the 59.3% change in customer engagement can be explained by experiential marketing (Table 2).

Table 2 EM → CE

Panel A Model 1 Summary						
R	R Square	Adj. R Square	Std. Error			
0.770a	0.593	0.591	0.69223			
Predictors: (Constant), EM						
Panel B - ANOVA						
	Squares	Sum of	df	Mean	F	Sig.
Regression		138.272	1	138.272	288.56	0.000
Residual		94.877	198	0.479	2	b
Total		233.150	199			
Dependent Variable: CE; Predictors: (Constant), EM						
Panel C - Coefficients						
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta			

(Constant)	-0.462	0.257		-	0.07
EM	1.150	0.068	0.770	1.798	4
				7	0

Dependent Variable: CE

An F-test was conducted on hypothesis 1, and it shows that F value = 288.562 and Sig. < 0.05, indicating that experiential marketing does have an impact on experiential marketing (Table 2, Panel B). From the coefficient (Panel C), the standardized coefficient of experiential marketing is 0.77, and Sig. < 0.05, indicating that experiential marketing has a significant positive impact on customer engagement.

4.2.2 *Experiential Marketing (SEM components) – Customer Engagement (H2-H6)*

Take sense, feel, think, act and relate as independent variables and customer engagement as the dependent variable for multiple linear regression analysis. It can be seen from the following table that the value of R² is 0.596, which means that the 59.6% change in customer engagement can be explained by these factors (Table 3–Panel A)

Table 3 SEM → CE

Panel A Model 2 Summary

R	R Square	Adj. R Square	Std. Error
0.772a	0.596	0.586	0.69660

a. Predictors: (Constant), SENSE, FEEL, THINK, ACT, RELATE

Panel B - ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	139.011	5	27.802	57.29	0.000
Residual	94.139	194	0.485	4	b
Total	233.150	199			

Dependent Variable: CE; b. Predictors: (Constant), SENSE, FEEL, THINK, ACT, RELATE

Panel C - Coefficients

Dependent Variable: CE

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	
(Constant)	-0.411	0.268		-1.536	0.126
SENSE	0.259	0.058	0.253	4.503	0.000
FEEL	0.259	0.044	0.297	5.880	0.000
THINK	0.163	0.048	0.182	3.427	0.001
ACT	0.223	0.048	0.219	4.656	0.000
RELATE	0.233	0.048	0.246	4.811	0.000

An F-test was conducted on hypothesis 2 to hypothesis 6, and it shows that F value = 57.294 and Sig. < 0.05, indicating that at least one variable among them does have an impact on experiential marketing (Table 3–Panel B).

From the coefficient table, the standardized coefficients of sense, feel, think, and act are 0.253, 0.297, 0.182, 0.219, and 0.246, separately. Meanwhile, their significance is less than 0.05, showing that the hypotheses established before were right and have significant

positive effects on customer engagement altogether (Table 3–Panel C).

4.2.3 Customer Engagement impact on Brand loyalty (H7)

Taking customer engagement as the independent variable and brand loyalty as the dependent variable for simple linear regression analysis, it can be seen from the following table that the value of R^2 is 0.366, which means that the 36.6% change in brand loyalty can be explained by customer engagement (Table 4 Panel A).

Table 4 CE→BL

Panel A Model 3 Summary						
R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error			
0.605a	0.366	0.363	0.89114			
a. Predictors: (Constant), CE						
Panel B - ANOVA						
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
Regression	90.881	1	90.881	114.442	0.000	
Residual	157.236	198	0.794	b		
Total	248.117	199				
a. Dependent Variable: BL, b. Predictors: (Constant), CE						
Panel C - Coefficients						
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
(Constant)	1.480	0.232			6.378	0.000
CE	0.624	0.058	0.605		10.69	0.000
8						

Dependent Variable: BL

An F-test was conducted on hypothesis 7, and it shows that F value = 114.442 and Sig. < 0.05, indicating that customer engagement does have an impact on brand loyalty (Table 4 Panel B). From the coefficient table, the standardized coefficient of customer engagement is 0.605 and Sig. < 0.05, indicating that customer engagement has a significant positive impact on brand loyalty (Table 4 Panel C).

4.3 Reliability and Validity analysis

Reliability refers to the stability and consistency of questionnaire results. Often the reliability test is based on Cronbach's alpha and it is generally believed that it should range from 0.70 to 0.95 (Tavakol and Dennick, 2011). The results, shown in Table 5, indicate that the Cronbach's alpha value of the whole questionnaire is 0.93. The reliability of the questionnaire is excellent. Among all concepts, the Cronbach's alpha values of sense, feel, think, act, relate, experiential marketing, customer engagement, and brand loyalty are 0.871, 0.929, 0.905, 0.883, 0.919, 0.877, 0.941 and 0.921 respectively, which shows that the reliability of this study is up to standard and can be analyzed in the next step.

Table 5 Construct Reliability

Concept	Sub concept	Alpha	Cronbach's	Items	N of
marketing	Experiential		0.871		3
		SENSE			
		FEEL		0.929	4
		THINK		0.905	3
		ACT		0.883	2
marketing	Experiential		0.919		4
	marketing	Experiential		0.877	16
engagement	Customer engagement	Customer engagement		0.941	4
	Brand loyalty	Brand loyalty		0.921	4
Total	Total		0.93		24

Validity refers to the degree to which a test or measuring instrument truly measures or reflects the objectives and requirements (Oluwatayo, 2012). Each item's standardized factor loading (SFL) is evaluated to verify the item load. According to Hair et al. (2010), when the standardized factor loadings are more than 0.7, the results have significant convergent validity. It can be seen from Table 3 that the numbers are all more than 0.7, indicating that the results are valid. The convergent validity of each concept is maintained by calculating the average variance extracted (AVE), and the internal consistency is measured by composite reliability (CR); see Table 6. As it can be seen that the AVE of each factor is greater than 0.5, and the CR is greater than 0.7, indicating that the data convergent validity is accepted and suitable (Fornell and Larcker, 1981).

Table 6- Composite reliability

	SFL	AVE	CR	\sqrt{AVE}
SENSE1	0.822	0.642	0.843	0.801
SENSE2	0.804			
SENSE3	0.777			
FEEL1	0.879	0.761	0.927	0.873
FEEL2	0.855			
FEEL3	0.885			
FEEL4	0.871			
THINK1	0.857	0.741	0.896	0.861
THINK2	0.887			
THINK3	0.838			
ACT1	0.913	0.821	0.902	0.906
ACT2	0.899			
RELATE1	0.867	0.747	0.922	0.864
RELATE2	0.842			
RELATE3	0.88			
RELATE4	0.867			
CE1	0.712	0.534	0.821	0.731
CE2	0.737			
CE3	0.694			

CE4	0.778			
BL1	0.852	0.697	0.902	0.835
BL2	0.816			
BL3	0.831			
BL4	0.84			

4.4 T-test analysis

A t-test is an inferential statistic used to see if there is a significant difference in the means of two related groups (Kim et al., 2021). In this study, a t-test is used to test the comparison of experience marketing, customer engagement, and brand loyalty in the two target groups: people who are Chanel customers or have recently purchased Chanel products and who are non-Chanel customers or have not recently purchased Chanel products. As seen in Table 4, the results show that there is a significant difference in experiential marketing between these two groups ($t = 2.38, p < 0.05$); There is a significant difference in customer engagement between these two groups ($t = 3.098, p < 0.05$); There is a significant difference in brand loyalty between these two groups ($t = 3.608, p < 0.05$). The performance of participants who are Chanel customers or have recently purchased Chanel products is significantly better than non-customers. The mean difference between the two groups gradually increases from experiential marketing to customer participation and then to brand loyalty, which also shows its influence relationship to a certain extent.

Table 7 T-test: Customer vs. Non-Customer

	Chanel customer	N	Mean	SD	t	p
M	yes	62	3.797	0.669	2.38	0.021
	no	8	3.437	0.876		
CE	yes	62	3.963	0.998	3.098	0.003
	no	8	3.243	1.357		
BL	yes	62	4.043	0.928	3.608	0.001
	no	8	3.125	1.503		

As indicated, the data supports hypotheses 1-7. Experiential marketing and its strategic experiential modules (SEMs): ‘sense’, ‘feel’, ‘think’, ‘act’, and ‘relate’ have a significant and positive impact on customer engagement. Customer engagement has a significant impact on brand loyalty.

The results also indicate that customers and non-customers perceive experimental marketing experiences differently. Non-customers have less engagement and show less affection for the brand.

Table 8 - Hypothesis Summary

Hypothesis	Paths	β	R ²	T- value	Sig.	
H1	EM	CE	0.593	16.987	0.000	Supported
H2	SENSE	CE	0.596	4.503	0.000	Supported
H3	FEEL	CE		5.880	0.000	Supported
H4	THINK	CE		3.427	0.001	Supported
H5	ACT	CE		4.656	0.000	Supported
H6	RELATE	CE		4.811	0.000	Supported
H7	CE	BL	0.366	10.698	0.000	Supported

EM-Experiential marketing, CE-Customer engagement, BL-Brand Loyalty

5 DISCUSSION

The primary goal of experiential marketing is to manage the stimulation received by consumers at various interactive points with the company to provide them with pleasant experiences by providing experience benefits other than products or services (Schmitt and Zarantonello, 2013). This study finds that “feel” serves as the primary driver of experiential marketing for customer engagement. By stimulating consumers' feelings, it helps to gain a good impression of the brand. The results coincide with the study of Gentile et al. (2007), stating that experience can significantly promote the emotional bond between organizations and consumers. Additionally, “think” has the least impact on customer engagement, which indicates that the strategy of generating thoughts through experiential marketing to strengthen customer engagement is relatively ineffective.

Additionally, this study demonstrates the impact of the mediator, customer engagement, on brand loyalty. The results show that customer engagement has a positive and significant impact on brand loyalty. A partial explanation may be that in such a relatively low-involved context of the fashion industry, when customers get involved, they may feel that they are valued by the brand, which makes them more satisfied and loyal to the brand. Prior work also emphasized the importance of customer engagement on brand loyalty (Huang and Chen, 2022). In that study, by comparing customers and non-customers, it can be seen that nearly a fifth of the people who came to participate in the Chanel marketing campaign are non-customers. Although customers perform better in terms of experiential marketing, customer engagement, and brand loyalty than non-customers, non-customers show a certain degree of engagement and loyalty to the brand, which indicates that most of these non-customers are interested in the brand and probably are potential customers who may play a crucial role in the long-term development of the brand (Radu et al., 2020).

5.1 Theoretical implications

Experiential marketing is through a series of ways to leave unforgettable experiences for customers. By using the study of Chanel's pop-up store, a typical representative of experiential marketing, the results show a positive impact on customer participation, and customer engagement, as an intermediary factor, also has a positive impact on brand loyalty. As a mediating factor, customer engagement plays a positive role because, according to Chang (2020b) experiential marketing has a negative impact on customer loyalty. However,

this study shows that with customer engagement as a mediator, experiential marketing can take advantage of this and further promote brand loyalty. The study also shows that the five strategic experiential modules: “sense”, “feel”, “think”, “act,” and “relate” proposed by Schmitt (1999) all have a positive impact on customer engagement. Among them, “feel” has the most significant impact on customer engagement while the contribution of “think” is the least. The results are not expected because “feel” was considered unattractive to people according to Yu and Ko (2012) and “think” was shown to be the most frequent dimension for expressing experience (Musa et al., 2015). The reason may be that the five strategic experiential modules play different roles in different research settings, which is acceptable. Experiential marketing is essential to customer participation. If there is no experience, customer engagement presents negative, leading to a reduction in customers' loyalty to the brand. The t-test further suggests that brand loyalty is reflected in behavior, and in attitude (Nam et al., 2011). Although attitudinal loyalty is not as good as behavioral loyalty in its performance and stability, it still plays a role. Moreover, the difference in the mean between the two groups of samples changes with the model structure, which suggests the relationship among experiential marketing, customer engagement and brand loyalty implicitly.

5.2 *Managerial implications*

This study provides marketing suggestions to further improve brand loyalty, especially in the fashion industry. In general, this study has proved that experiential marketing has a positive impact on brand loyalty, while feel experiential marketing has the most positive significance to customer engagement to maximize the impact on brand loyalty. In practice, feel experiential marketing is often achieved by appealing to customers' inner emotions (Schmitt, 1999). Therefore, an effective way to achieve this can be by putting the target group in a specific surrounding by improving the environmental atmosphere or design of the marketing object (Chui, 2018). This study also demonstrates the impact of customer engagement as an intermediary factor on brand loyalty. Therefore, this study suggests that customers should be encouraged by the brand to maintain a high degree of engagement. It is undeniable that the way to improve customer engagement is far more than experiential marketing. It has been proved that social networks, digital technology, and other ways that help contribute to customer relationship management (CRM) will significantly improve customer engagement (Matosas-López and Romero-Ania, 2021, Kim et al., 2021). People who are not a brand's customers will participate in the brand's experiential marketing activity and express a certain degree of brand loyalty. People who show attitudinal loyalty to a brand but have not purchased any products for some reason are probably potential customers, and experiential marketing helps to attract them. However, the key target objects of experiential marketing need to be studied further to optimize the use of marketing resources. Mulhern (1999) reported that customer profitability should be considered to help the brand target the most profitable groups, however, others have found that potential customers can contribute to the long-term development of the brand and the focus of marketing should be on the absorption of new customers. This supports the expression form of experiential marketing, where marketers group potential customers according to specific characteristics to carry out more targeted marketing activities (Agyei, Sun, et al., 2020)

5.3 Limitations and future research

Although this study has presented some interesting findings, it also has some limitations.

Research content selection - Chanel pop-up store is selected as the background of experiential marketing. This is an experiential marketing activity for people in certain areas, so the survey results may be closely related to geographical factors. Usually, the scope of brand experiential marketing activities should be broader, not limited by geographical location. In future research, if the pop-up store is studied, it should consider selecting national or global activities rather than specific to a region.

Design of this questionnaire - Due to research constraints, the design of this questionnaire adopts the research of the non-fashion industry, which undoubtedly has to make the corresponding adjustments to the topic, so the reliability of the adjusted questionnaire needs to be considered. Although the questionnaire has been proven to be effective, future research can better design the questionnaire.

Number of questionnaires collected - Due to limited time and epidemic, the results from the 200 participants do not appear to be generalizable, lowering the quality of the findings. As a result, a bigger sample size is suggested in future studies.

Demographic differences - Demographic data show that most people who participated in the Chanel pop-up store are concentrated in women. Therefore, the result that “feel” will have the greatest impact on customer engagement may be gender-biased. Also, the results show that there is a vast difference in the sample size of other questions like age and income, so the collected results may not be very universal.

Sample size difference in t-test - In the t-test, the numbers of the two groups who said yes or no to the first question were 162 and 38 separately. The difference between the two groups is large, and the sample size of 38 is too small to measure the group characteristics. Therefore, the comparison results of the two groups of data may not be typical and representative. In future studies, tests with similar and larger sample sizes are recommended.

6 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study solves the questions that were put forward before, and the results are: 1) Experiential marketing has a positive impact on customer engagement. 2) In terms of strategic experiential modules, ‘feel’ has the most significant impact on customer engagement, followed by ‘sense’. Meanwhile, ‘think’ has the least significance on customer engagement. 3) Customer engagement has a positive impact on brand loyalty. 4) Experiential marketing has a positive significance on customer engagement, and by taking advantage of its positive influence on brand loyalty, it helps to improve brand loyalty.

In the fashion industry, the market competition is fierce, and customer engagement, as a positive result of experiential marketing, plays an indelible role in improving brand loyalty. China’s luxurious fashion market has seen a rise in competition, and for brands to stand out, experiential marketing provides a venue to generate customer engagement and brand loyalty. Our findings provide novel evidence for the high-income customer group, which is very responsive to experiential marketing. The study also finds that non-customer

groups are also positive for brand loyalty. As an essential way to attract these people, experiential marketing can play a vital role in transforming them into behavioral brand loyalty. Therefore, an excellent experiential marketing strategy can bring significant results to the brand. After testing, the theoretical framework of this study is reliable and valid. However, limitations still exist. The most critical aspect is that the samples are too few and unbalanced. In this way, the results may be biased. Due to the defects of pop-up store marketing, the results obtained may not be universal. Even though the recommendations based on the results make sense. 'Feel' has the most positive effect on customer engagement; therefore, the focus of experiential marketing should be on establishing good customer emotions to optimize the significance of experiential marketing on customer engagement and then further enhance brand loyalty. Marketers can set specific themes to bring the target group into specific moods and ensure that the customers have a positive emotional experience. The results of this study also remind us that experiential marketing activities need to be well-planned. The results show that experiential marketing activities will attract potential customer groups. If the experience does not meet the expectations of these customers, unlike the existing customers who tend to have relatively firm brand beliefs, they may give up the brand or even have an aversion. Therefore, only a comprehensive experiential marketing that considers customers' emotional needs can increase customer engagement, strengthen brand loyalty, and enhance competitive advantage.

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