

The Mediating Effect of Brand Trust on the Relationship between Experiential Marketing and Brand Loyalty: With Special Reference to Retail Industry of Sri Lanka

Brand Trust

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Abstract

Nowadays, consumers are more concerned about how they feel while using a product package rather than the quality. Therefore, experiential marketing has started to gain acceptance as a new tactic for subverting standard marketing methods. Subsequently, trustworthiness towards the brand and loyalty from the consumers' side will be created. Furthermore, even in the retail industry creating a memorable experience is the most important challenge due to higher competition in the industry. However, if there are several studies conducted in several industries by revealing the available relationship between experiential marketing and customer loyalty, there is no exact implication for investigating the relationship between experiential marketing on customer loyalty while the mediation role of brand trust in the retail industry of Sri Lanka. The population of the study was customers who have already experienced retail service in Sri Lanka. Under non-probability sampling techniques, a convenient sampling technique was adopted. The sample size was 384. The self-administrative questionnaire was used for collecting data. Through Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) revealed that experiential marketing impact on customer loyalty while there is a mediating role of brand trust. The outcomes of the study indicated that markers should concern the powerfulness of experiential marketing when creating marketing strategies and tactics.

Keywords: Brand trust; Customer loyalty; Experiential marketing; Retail industry



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Introduction

People in marketing capabilities felt that there would be a need of finding new ways that enhance the consumers' attraction (Carmo, Marques & Dias Carmo, 2022) because economic development and differentiation among businesses could be able to achieve by using new marketing techniques (Setyoviyon & Sin, 2020). Further, in the competitive business environment, marketers always try to use various mechanisms for pushing customers in to purchase decisions (Wanninayake & Chovancova, 2012). Subsequently, one of the concepts of experiential marketing has emerged recently (Carmo et al., 2022). Traditional marketing strategies are not the same as experience marketing (Pratminingsih, Astuty & Widyatami, 2018). Rather than relying just on passive marketing approaches, it infuses new value forms into products and services (Pratminingsih et al., 2018). When it comes to promoting consumer behavior, experiential marketing is effective because it focuses on customer engagement, creates a pleasant environment, and caters to the customer's unique and diverse demands (Chao-Chien, 2014). The idea of experience marketing will eventually displace traditional marketing as the next battleground in the marketing wars in specific industry (Wahyuningtyas, Achmad & Zainul, 2017).

Furthermore, responsible parties in the marketing divisions should take the necessary steps for establishing the link between customers and the product brand (Tafesse, 2016). In the process of maintaining long-term relationships and obtaining competitive advantages in the target markets, an important role is played by loyal customers (Carmo et al., 2022). Therefore, marketing concepts, activities, and techniques can be considered the most important for achieving long-term relationships with consumers and external parties of the organization (Kotler, Keller, Goodman, Brady & Hansen, 2019). Because, by spreading or using the tools and activities of experiential marketing, it would be possible for enhancing the loyalty and emotional attachment of consumers to the product package (Pratminingsih et al., 2018). At the same time, consumers within their purchasing decisions there are highly attached to the brand of the product package (Huaman-Ramirez & Merunka, 2018). Subsequently, marketers always should try to build up a strong emotional association between the brand and individual customers in the target market. Consequently, considering trust in the brand indicated that higher level of performance in terms of loyalty, and effectiveness (Huaman-Ramirez & Merunka, 2018).

Presently, there are many different ways to measure, handle, and control customer experience (Katherine & Lemon, 2016). However, experiential marketing contrasted traditional marketing's emphasis on product features and benefits with experience marketing's focus on customer experiences (Schmitt, 1999). Within this study uses the model of experiential marketing introduced by Schmitt, (1999). Even though there is more experience in marketing theories, well established and accurate theory and framework is Schmitt's framework. But consider the retail industry has questions to use the same theory. Because of the retail industry, it is difficult to deliver experiences to the customer such as the hotel sector and professional services. Consequently, the validity of Schimtt framework will be tested within this study. Furthermore, several authors revealed that there is a relationship between experiential marketing on customer loyalty in a different context (Khoa, 2022; Nadya, 2020; Soliha, Aquinia, Hayuningtias & Ramadhan, 2021; Su & Lai, 2017). At the same time, when capturing more market share in the

retail industry by facing higher competition, marketers need to introduce novel marketing methods while enhancing the trustworthiness of customers. But, there is no exact implication for investigating the relationship between experiential marketing on customer loyalty while the mediation role of brand trust exists in the retail industry of Sri Lanka. Therefore, this study targets how experiential marketing elements impact on increasing customer loyalty to retain the customer base and the role of brand trust.

The goal of experiential marketing is to provide people with personal experiences that relate to a product or service. Practical experience has shown that providing good products and services is insufficient to keep clients for a long time. There is no better way to accomplish this than to establish a customer-company interaction experience. This contact allows people to take part in the process and enjoy it. This article examines the use of experiential marketing to boost market competitiveness, which can assist businesses in doing experience marketing and retaining more loyal customers while increasing brand trust, and has significant practical implications for businesses. Therefore, this study investigates how experiential marketing features affecting on customer loyalty while mediating the role of brand trust in the retail industry of Sri Lanka? is the study's research problem.

Literature Review

Experiential Marketing

Professionals in the marketing function should be able to capture the behavior of the customers and decide how firms should produce the right product that matches with identified behaviors (Soliha et al., 2021). Subsequently, experiential marketing can be defined as marketing activities that are done through sense, emotion, action, thinking, and relations (Carmo, et al., 2022). Experiential marketing can be considered the concept that derives from the experience of customers (Soliha et al., 2021). Its main goal is to increase product sales to build a strong relationship between businesses and consumers. In this article, the term experiential marketing is defined from the standpoint of businesses. Experiential marketing is thought to be the production, provision, and stimulation of experiences by businesses in the customer-consuming process, to provide customers with the highest level of physical and spiritual happiness so that they can be satisfied with products. It's a marketing tactic that impresses customers with services and influences their purchasing decisions. Experiential marketing is not restricted to perceptual experience as a brand-new marketing strategy (Gautier, 2003). Experiential marketing mainly focuses on emotional factors of behavior in the customers and the value of delving superb experiences (Carmo, et al., 2022).

Features of Experiential Marketing

Furthermore, experiential marketing will lead to identifying the nonfunctional features of the product package (Carmo, et al., 2022). Therefore, marketers could be able to touch with sense, feel, act, think, and relate to create a positive (Soliha et al., 2021). Through experiential marketing, customers could be able to obtain special experiences (Nadya, 2020). Experiential marketing's strategic underpinnings are as follows: The strategic experience module is a complicated and diversified experience, but it can be broken down into numerous forms and

each has its structure and procedure. These sorts of marketing can be achieved through the use of unique experiential media (Schmitt, 1999). When it comes to marketing, organizations should think about the five dimensions of sensory, emotion, thinking, action, and relevancy (Schmitt, 1999). Simultaneously, he noted that successful experiential marketing must include these five characteristics as a whole and design the enterprise's overall experience marketing. At the same time, this study uses the model of experiential marketing introduced by Schmitt (1999). In his book, the "Experiential Marketing" contrasted traditional marketing emphasis on product features and benefits with experience marketing's focus on customer experiences (Schmitt, 1999). Instead of concentrating on a small number of well-defined product categories, Sensing, feeling, thinking, acting, and relating are all part of Schmitt's framework for strategic experiential modules.

Sense

Customers consume, and corporations employ sensory marketing to tailor them to build interactions and produce a nice and pleasant experience for customers, both physically and spiritually, and one based on quality assurance (Xu, 2020). Sense marketing aims to generate sensory experiences through sight, sound, touch, feeling, and scent. Sense marketing may be used to differentiate organizations and products, encourage consumers, and give value to products (Krishna, 2014). The term "sensory marketing" refers to the practice of marketing professionals using the five senses of sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell to engage customers in an actual, in-person shopping experience (Hulten, 2011). Customers can engage in the perceptual experience and be successfully motivated to acquire a marketing model using this method. Sensory marketing may be broken down into two categories: companies and goods (identification), which are used to motivate people to buy, and products (Yuting, 2019).

Feel

This feel represents the consumer's heart mood and emotional feelings (Santhi, Sutomo & Zahara, 2020). Feel Induce the sentiments and emotions of customers to further affect their attachment, according to Schmitt (1999). Emotional marketing begins with the psychological desires of customers and then continually appeals to those desires until the hearts of customers are stirred. Emotional fulfillment and psychological identity are more important to consumers than quantity, quality, or price in today's age of emotional consumerism. Emotional marketing aims to create an emotional experience by appealing to clients' inner sensations and emotions. It might be as mild as a tender, good mood, or as robust as a joyful, proud, or even passionate strong mood. Emotional marketing involves an in-depth knowledge of both the stimuli that elicit a particular feeling and the inherent virus that people carry, and the ability to seamlessly integrate into both of these situations (Galletto, 2017).

Think

The Think method encourages customers' intellectual abilities and inventiveness (Santhi et al., 2020). According to Schmitt (1999), the think method encourages users to think creatively and reassess the website, goods, and services. Experience inspires customers to come up with fresh ideas or ways of thinking about a firm or its products (Maghnati, 2012). Consumers'

surprise, curiosity, and concentrated or dispersed thinking about issues in a creative approach are a result of thinking about marketing in this way, which provides cognitive and problem-solving experiences for customers. The strategy of thinking activities is widely utilized for high-tech items. Many other sectors have also incorporated thinking marketing into product design, advertising, and consumer relations.

Act

Act works to produce beneficial experiences for consumers, physically as a behavioral pattern and long-term lifestyle, and socially as an experience with others (Fransisca, 2007). The encounter is closely related to the physical and social conduct of the persons who interact. Interaction is a top objective for both professionals and customers on Act. The act is an experience that allows consumers to acquire experiences related to their physical body, behavior, and lifestyle, as well as the experience derived from social connections with other people (Maghnati, 2012). The Act's elements will have a favorable impact on the customer's relationship with the firm and the corporation should deliver a compelling and good Act experience to develop the customer-seller connection (Maghnati, 2012). The act aspect, like the other factors, is linked to consumer loyalty and satisfaction. All writers agree that Act experiential marketing components and consumer loyalty have a positive relationship, according to the findings of Indrawati & Fatharani (2016); Santi et al (2020); Udurawana & Wanninayake (2020).

Relate

The related approach is concerned with the culture of consumers and their communities, which might result in the formation of social identity (Santhi, Sutomo & Zahara, 2020). Also, Schmitt (1999) defines the related strategy as "creating relationships between customers and other users of the brand to build their preferences for the brand." Experience helps customers to strengthen their bonds with social communities and social entities via the purchase and consumption of products and services (Chang, 2011). The aspects of Relate will have a positive influence on the customer's connection with the company and the company should provide a compelling and positive Relate experience to strengthen the customer-seller relationship (Maghnati, 2012). Consumer loyalty and satisfaction are tied to the related aspect, as are the other variables. According to the findings of Indrawati & Fatharani (2016); Santi et al (2020); Udurawana & Wanninayake (2021), there is a favorable association between experiential marketing components and consumer loyalty. Furthermore, other studies in several fields have come to the same conclusion.

Customer Loyalty

Customer loyalty will be created through a positive attitude of consumers toward the product package that the organization is delivering (Soliha et al., 2021). Customer loyalty refers to consumers' preconceived notions about what will they buy and from whom they will buy their needs. This implies that satisfied customers will make a continuous purchase from the specific brand which they are most satisfied with (Santhi, Sutomo & Zahara, 2020). Customer loyalty can be explained as a higher level of guarantee for purchasing a specific product package in near future again (Rusmahafi & Wulandari, 2020). In another word, consumers in the target market

will be loyal enough to repeat purchasing from the same organization (Rusmahafi & Wulandari, 2020). Furthermore, researchers have attempted to define the concept of customer loyalty as mentioned earlier, but they have yet to reach a consensus. Scholarly opinions can be categorized into three categories in general: Customer loyalty is a type of emotional loyalty and customer attitude is the degree of the favorable tendency of customers toward the company's products or services they consume (Ajzen, 1980). Second, it is believed that customer conduct, rather than attitude, should be utilized as a measure of customer loyalty (Jacoby, 1978) Customer behavior covers things like customer maintenance time, repeat purchases, and corporate product purchases. The third approach is to combine attitude and behavior orientations, as advocated by Oliver (1999) who believe that high customer loyalty requires a high degree of consistency in consumer attitude and behavior. Due to customer loyalty, buyers attempt to repurchase frequently and continuously from the specific product package from specific firms (Soliha et al., 2021).

Relationship between Experiential Marketing and Brand Loyalty

In the process of creating customer loyalty, these days, it is impossible to neglect the concept of experiential marketing (Nadya, 2020). Several studies were conducted to find the relationship and impact of experiential marketing factors on brand or customer loyalty from different perspectives. Experiential marketing impacts on positively creates customer loyalty (Khoa, 2020). Importantly, customers reported higher levels of happiness and loyalty after being exposed to experiential marketing (Udurawana & Wanninayake, 2020). Furthermore, there is a strong correlation between consumer happiness and experiential marketing (Ayse-Ozturk, 2015). It will lead to customer loyalty at the end. Furthermore, it has been found that experience marketing and consumer loyalty have a good correlation (Soliha et al., 2021). Consumers always consumed the product package using the five senses; therefore, if consumers obtained a higher quality experience, it would have resulted from higher loyalty through repeated purchase intention (Soliha et al., 2021). At the same time, experiential marketing has a considerable influence on customer loyalty (Khoa, 2020).

The Mediating effect of Brand Commitment

Considering the commitment trust theory that was revealed by Morgan & Hunt, (1994), explained that in the process of building relationships from firm to customer trust can be played a mediator role. In the business context, there is an already established relationship between experience from the product or service and customer loyalty. However, this association will be moderated by the brand's trust in the product or service (Su & Lai, 2017). The available association between experiential marketing and brand loyalty can be strongly mediated by brand trust in the product or service (Şahin, Zehir & Kitapçı, 2011).

Hypotheses

Relationship between Experiential Marketing and Customer Loyalty

Consumer satisfaction and experience marketing have a favorable association (Oliver, 1999). A positive experience can be defined as a high level of consumer satisfaction. Better

products acts as a mediator and moderator variable on the impact of experiential marketing on customer happiness and loyalty (Hung et al., 2010). According to the research, experiential marketing has a favorable relationship with consumer happiness. As a moderator variable, Sahin et al., (2012) examines the influence of experiential marketing on consumers' satisfaction with personal behavior. Customer satisfaction is influenced by the senses, feelings, relationships, and actions as a whole, according to his study (Wu, 2015). Based on those findings, this study took into consideration that total Experiential Marketing Elements have a positive relationship with customer loyalty. Based on the above findings, H1 is suggested as follows,

H1: There is a relationship between experiential marketing and customer loyalty in the retail industry of Sri Lanka.

Relationship between Sense and Customer Loyalty

As per the literature review, Schmitt (1999) initially introduced experience marketing elements to satisfy customer needs and wants. Customers will be able to create a logical experience as a result of their sensory experience, and they will be able to utilize that logical experience to form personal value judgments to differentiate the items and services they are receiving (Maghnati, 2012). According to his study, he stated that experiential marketing elements including sense have a positive relationship with customer satisfaction. Also, Indrawati et al., (2016); Santi et al., (2020); Udurawana & Wanninayake (2020), all authors were stated that Sense elements have a positive relationship between experiential marketing elements and customer loyalty. Also, many researchers in different fields stated the same scenario. Based on those findings, this study takes into consideration that the sensing factor has a positive relationship with customer loyalty. Based on the above findings, H2 is suggested as follows,

H2: There is a relationship between sense and customer loyalty in the retail industry of Sri Lanka.

Relationship between Feels and Customer Loyalty

This study is mainly based on the model introduced by Schmitt (1999). After introducing this model most of the authors based their research on this method and study several areas to test the validity of the model in specific areas. The Feel experience will have a favorable impact on the customer's relationship with the firm (Maghnati, 2012). To increase the customer-seller connection, the organization should deliver a powerful and good Feel experience (Maghnati, 2012). Same as the sensing element, the Feel element also, has a positive relationship with customer loyalty and customer satisfaction. As stated by Indrawati et al., (2016), Santi et al., (2020), Udurawana & Wanninayake (2020), all authors stated that feel elements have a positive relationship between experiential marketing elements and customer loyalty. Also, many researchers in different fields stated the same scenario. Based on those findings, this study was taken into consideration that the feel factor has a positive relationship with customer loyalty. Based on the above findings, H3 is suggested as follows,

H3: There is a relationship between feel and customer loyalty in the retail industry of Sri Lanka.

Relationship between Think and Customer Loyalty

Consumers evaluate the firm and its brand during the process of developing a new concept or way of thinking (Maghnati, 2012). As previously explain Schmitt (1999) was initially introduces experience marketing elements to satisfy customer needs and wants. It is believed that the thinking aspects will have a positive influence on the customer's connection with the company. To improve the customer-seller relationship, the company should provide a powerful and positive thinking experience (Maghnati, 2012). Think aspect, like other elements, has a good association with customer loyalty and satisfaction. According to the findings of Indrawati et al., (2016), Santi et al (2020), Udurawana & Wanninayake (2020), all writers believe that experiential marketing aspects and consumer loyalty have a favorable link. Moreover, numerous studies in many fields have come to the same conclusion. Based on those findings, this study was taken into consideration that the feel factor has a positive relationship with customer loyalty. Based on the above findings, H4 is suggested as follows,

H4: There is a relationship between think and customer loyalty in the retail industry of Sri Lanka.

Relationship between Act and Customer Loyalty

The Act's elements will have a favorable impact on the customer's relationship with the firm and the corporation should deliver a compelling and good Act experience to develop the customer-seller connection (Maghnati, 2012). The acting aspect, like the other factors, is linked to consumer loyalty and satisfaction. All writers agree that Act experiential marketing components and consumer loyalty have a positive relationship, according to the findings of Indrawati et al., (2016), Santi et al., (2020), Udurawana & Wanninayake., (2020). In addition, variety of sectors has reached the same result. Based on those findings, this study was taken into consideration that the feel factor has a positive relationship with customer loyalty. Based on the above findings, H5 is suggested as follows,

H5: There is a relationship between act and customer loyalty in the retail industry of Sri Lanka.

Relationship between Relate and Customer Loyalty

The aspects of Relate will have a positive influence on the customer's connection with the company and the company should provide a compelling and positive Relate experience to strengthen the customer-seller relationship (Maghnati, 2012). Consumer loyalty and satisfaction are tied to the related aspect, as are the other variables. According to the findings of Indrawati et al., (2016), Santi et al., (2020), Udurawana & Wanninayake (2020) there is a favorable association between experiential marketing components and consumer loyalty. Furthermore, other studies in several fields have come to the same conclusion. Based on those findings, this study was taken into consideration that the feel factor has a positive relationship with customer loyalty. Based on the above findings, H6 is suggested as follows,

H6: There is a relationship between relate and customer loyalty in the retail industry of Sri Lanka.

Mediating Role of Brand Trust

Firstly, brand can be viewed as a method that create the coordination between customer and seller with the aim of building long term association of consumer and the brand (Perera, Dissanayake & Wanninayake, 2018). According to the commitment trust theory Morgan & Hunt (1994), it is indicated that trust can be considered as the mediator for building associations. Brand trust in a certain product package would mediate the available association between the obtained experience and the product brand (Su & Lai, 2017). There is a relationship between experiential marketing and brand loyalty while there is a mediatory role of brand trust (Şahin et al, 2011). In an extended view, brand trust results in enhancing the available relationship between experiential marketing and brand loyalty (Şahin et al., 2011). Based on the above findings, H7 is suggested as follows:

H7: Brand trust mediates the relationship between experiential marketing and customer loyalty in the retail industry of Sri Lanka.

Methodology

The study used a quantitative method, a deductive approach, and a survey strategy as the research strategy. This study was mainly conducted to identify the experiential marketing factors affecting on customer loyalty while the mediating role of brand trust in the retail industry of Sri Lanka. Customer who has already consumed retail services in Sri Lanka was the study population. In the process of selecting sampling, there is no exact population framework. Therefore, under non-probability sampling, a convenient sampling technique was adopted (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019). Subsequently, considering the Krejcie & Morgan (1970) table, the sample size for the study was 384 because the population of the study was unknown (Bougie & Sekaran, 2019; Krejcie & Morgan, 1970; Saunders et al., 2019).

This study used a self-administrative questionnaire to collect the primary data. Finally, data is collected using a cross-sectional strategy in the study process. The questionnaire consisted 5 sections. From question 1 to 4 is section 1 asked open questions. Considering, question 4 to 27 is section 2 which is indicated experiential marketing questions under 5 factors. Again, from question 28 to 32 revealed the section 3 while questions of customer loyalty. In section 4, from question 33 to 40, related to the questions of brand trust. And, in the section 5, questions form 41 to 46 revealed the questions of demographics. All constructs were assessed using a five-point Likert scale, with 5 indicating strongly agree (SA), 4 indicating agree (A), 3 indicating moderately agree (MA), 2 indicating disagree (DA), and 1 indicating strongly disagree (SDA). Scales for experiential marketing elements were adapted. For the data analysis process Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software 26 version and SPSS Amos 26 version were used.

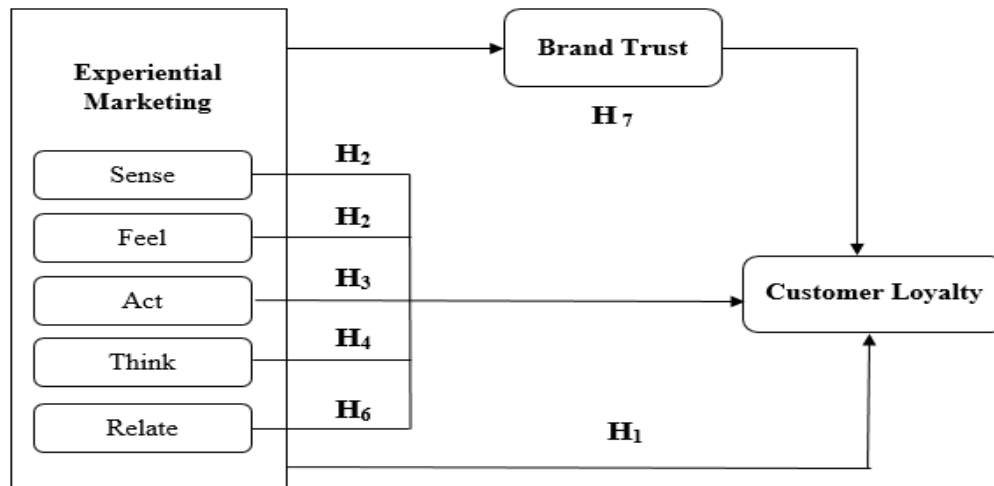


Figure 01. Conceptual Framework

Data Analysis

Sample Profile

The sample consists of 384 respondents and among them 61.20% of respondents was male and the rest 38.80% of them were female. Age analysis represents the distribution of age among respondents. 5 respondents of the study represent the 40-49 age category which was 1.30% of the total sample. Maximum respondents were recorded from ages 20-29 and it was 75.78% of the total sample. None of them reported from age of more than 50 years. 3.13% of the respondents represented the age group below 19 years and 19.79% of the respondents reported an age between 30-39 years. Majority of the respondents are unmarried and it reported as 75.78% of the sample and 24.22% of the respondents are married. The majority of the respondents were having bachelor's degrees which will denote 61.72% of the sample and a minority of the respondents has educational qualifications up to O/l and A/l and which denotes 3.91% of the total sample. 14.32% of the respondents from the sample have a diploma and professional level qualification and other 20.05% of the respondents have a masters degree or higher education qualification. Majority of the sample represents the private sector staff which denotes 72.14%. Government sector employees also contribute to the study 38 of the respondents worked in the government sector and this denotes 9.90% of the total sample. 9.38% of the respondents represent the students. 4.17 % of the respondents are represented self-employees and 4.43% has other occupation. Before directly testing established hypotheses, four parametric assumptions called normality, linearity, homoscedastic, and multicollinearity and reliability tested and confirmed.

Structural Model and Hypotheses Testing

Based on the explained theoretical and empirical arguments, this study suggested seven hypotheses of which are considering investigating the direct relationship between experiential marketing, sense, feel, think, act, and relate on customer loyalty and customer trust while the other two test the mediating effect of brand trust. Firstly, the measurement model was validated, and two structural models were established for testing to test these hypotheses. Before that

confirmed the validity needs to be tested. The corresponding GOF indices of the model are presented. Consequently, CIMIN/DF should be less than 3, RMSEA should be below 0.08, while PRATIO should be 0.9. GFI and AGFI values should be closer to 0.9, and IFI, TLI, and CFI have met 0.9. Subsequently, the GOF of the measurement model and two structural models met the cut off criteria. Furthermore, it can be suitable to test the hypotheses of the study (Hair et al., 2009). Tables 1 indicated the outcomes of the hypotheses. Results indicated that the H1, H2, and H6 (Direct paths) are significant at the 95 percent confidence level while H3, H4, and H5 (Direct paths) are not. At the same time, outcomes of table 2, it indicated that H7 (Indirect paths) are significant at the 95 percent confidence level.

Table 1. Results of the Hypotheses Testing on Direct Paths

Hypotheses	β	P	Result on Hypotheses
H1: There is a relationship between experiential marketing and customer loyalty in the retail industry of Sri Lanka	0.820	0.000	Supported
H2: There is a relationship between sense and customer loyalty in the retail industry of Sri Lanka	0.132	0.030	Supported
H3: There is a relationship between feel and customer loyalty in the retail industry of Sri Lanka	0.540	0.378	Not Supported
H4: There is a relationship between think and customer loyalty in the retail industry of Sri Lanka	0.103	0.157	Not Supported
H5: There is a relationship between act and customer loyalty in the retail industry of Sri Lanka	0.016	0.825	Not Supported
H6: There is a relationship between relate and customer loyalty in the retail industry of Sri Lanka	0.738	0.000	Supported

Source: Authors' estimation

Table 2. Results of the Hypotheses Testing on Indirect Path

Hypotheses	Result on Moderation	Result on Hypotheses
H7: Brand trust mediate the relationship between experiential marketing and customer loyalty in the retail industry of Sri Lanka	Significant	Supported

Source: Authors' estimation

Discussion, Managerial Implication, and Conclusions

The main objective of this study was to contribute to our understanding of the domain, dimensions, features, and logic of experiential marketing by examining them in greater depth. There is a higher level of loyalty at the customer point of view, when the elements of experiential marketing are available (Ayse-Ozturk, 2015; Hung, et al., 2010; Khoa, 2020; Soliha et al., 2021). Further, considering the sense and relate which are other tools of experiential marketing factors will lead to enhance the level of loyalty (Indrawati et al., 2016; Maghnati, 2012; Santi et al., 2020). In addition to that brand trust mediated the available relationship between experiential marketing and customer loyalty (Şahin et al., 2011; Su & Lai, 2017). Therefore, results of current studies aligned with the results of previous studies. Consequently, it can be summarized that there is a

relationship between overall experiential marketing and its factors such as feel and relate and customer loyalty in the retail industry of Sri Lanka.

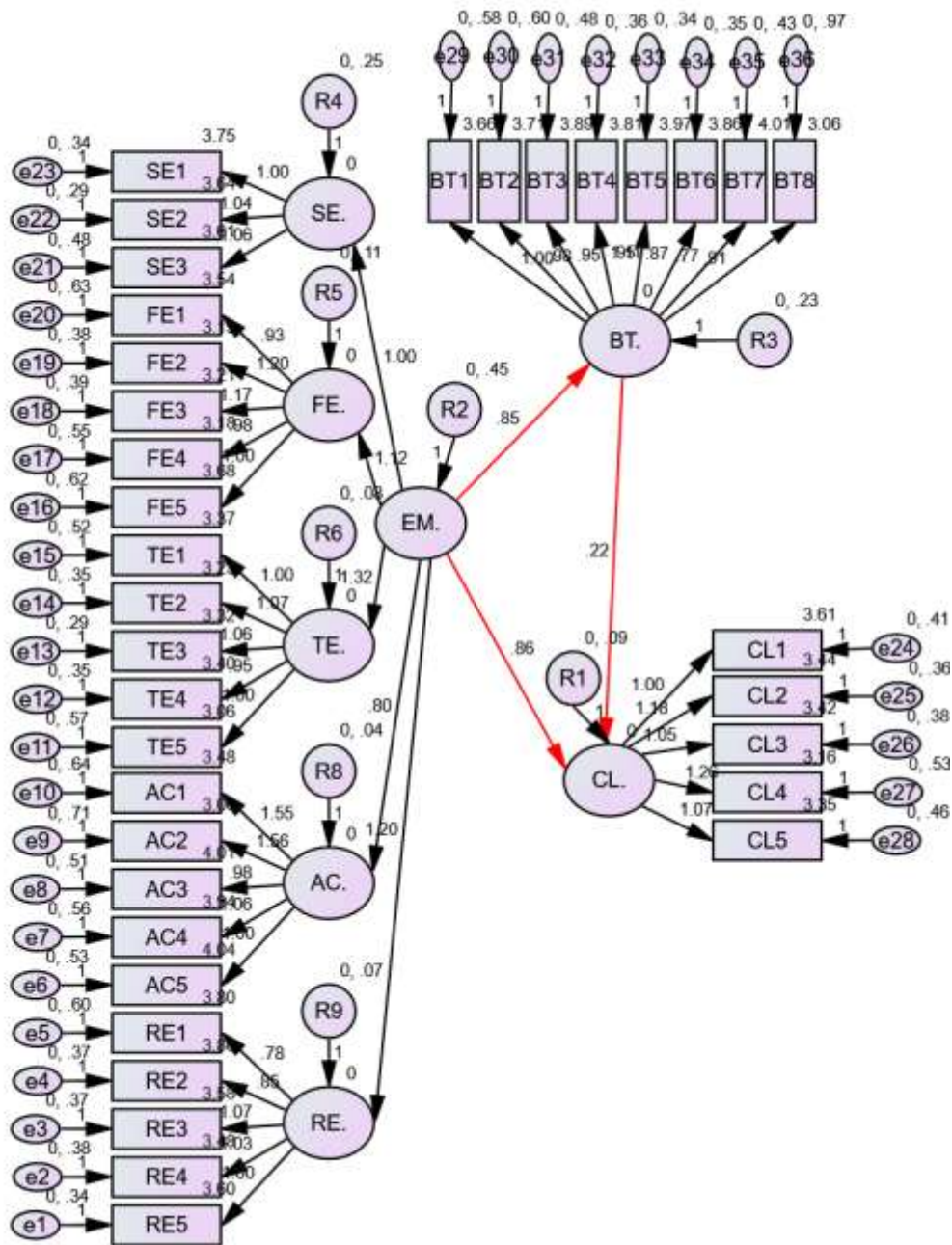


Figure 02. Structural Model for Testing Mediating Effect

Additionally, factors of experiential marketing factors such feel, think, and act resulted for creating customer loyalty (Indrawati et al., 2016; Maghnati, 2012; Santi et al., 2020). However, results of current studies do not aligned with the results of previous studies. Therefore, current study extend the experiential marketing literature by opening a new path because current study revealed that there is a relationship between factors of experiential marketing such as feel, think, and act and level of customer loyalty in the retail industry of Sri Lanka. Subsequently, these findings answer research questions. It will lead to achieve the respective research objectives.

Importantly, several well-known retail firms do not employ experiential marketing techniques to attract clients. Possibly, the lack of recognition of experiential marketing may be because the sector hasn't been well defined and assumptions haven't been clearly stated. According to the findings of the study, experiential marketing is a very complicated kind of marketing that differs significantly from traditional products and services marketing. Therefore, retail firms should improve differences in emotional advantages and develop a distinct emotional connection with customers to win in the competition while continuing to provide excellent products and services. Because emotional marketing is a marketing strategy that involves stimulating and gratifying customers' emotional experiences depending on their inner emotions. Considering issues from the perspective of customers, paying great attention to customer needs, and supplying them with satisfied products are at the heart of emotional marketing.

Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

The study used a quantitative research approach. Consequently, it is unable to summarize the findings by watching, describing, and summarizing the interviewee's behavior and psychology. Furthermore, in addition to the self-administrative questionnaire, face-to-face interviews and interviews are included in to the survey plan. Because of the social setting, when the researcher conducts face-to-face interviews, it resulted to gather sufficient and objective facts and information from the interviewee. Consequently, this study can be conducted with a qualitative approach will ensure the more rich perspective. Furthermore, this study considered the overall retail industry. But in the future, it is possible to conduct this study by segments such as fashion retail, and supermarkets specifically. Furthermore, this study mainly focused on the retail industry in Sri Lanka. This study can carry out in different industries in the future such as tourism, banking, and healthcare. Consequently, it could be able to reveal the findings and compare changes of those findings at several sectors and several industries. Current study considers the brand trust as mediating factor which creates the customer loyalty through experiential marketing. However, the available relationship between experiential marketing and customer loyalty can be strong or weak through brand trust. Therefore, future researchers should investigate role of brand trust as moderating role to the proposed framework.

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