

INFLUENCING BRAND EXPERIENCE ON SPORT BRAND LOYALTY: UNIVERSITY STUDENT IN GUANGXI PROVINCE, CHINA

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ABSTRACT

As competition in the sporting goods market becomes increasingly fierce, many sports brands are facing the problem of brand loyalty, College students are the main force of consumption. This article studies the relationship between brand experience and sports brand loyalty. This article uses qualitative and quantitative methods to study Guangxi college student groups, and a total of 340 questionnaires were distributed. Research shows brand loyalty including recommendation, dedicated, attitude and behavior, Brand experience consists of five separate dimensions: sensory, emotional, intellectual, behavioral and social. Sports brands that provide excellent brand experiences are differentiated from other brands and are more favored, thereby building brand loyalty and promoting the spread of the sports brand. The consumption of good experience of college students can better enhance college student sports brand loyalty.

Keywords: brand experience, sport brand loyalty, University Student in GuangXi Province, China

INTRODUCTION

With the development of the times, sports consumption has gradually increased with the people's growing spiritual wealth. How sports brands retain their customers and add new customers is the main problem, and college students are the main force in sports goods consumption, and the brand's Experience will affect college students repurchase and recommendation behaviors, which puts forward higher requirements for increasing sports brand consumption. It is imperative to explore brand experience and sports brand loyalty.

University Student in GuangXi Province, China: Guangxi university students refer to a group of people who are receiving basic higher education and specialized higher education in Guangxi universities and have not yet graduated.

College students: College students refer to a group of people who are receiving basic higher education and professional higher education but have not yet graduated, or who have graduated from higher education and entered society. As a cutting-edge group of new technologies and new ideas in society and high-level professional talents trained by the state, college students represent a young and

energetic group, are the main force in pioneering construction and creation, and are the main group of people who promote social progress.

Research question

1. What is the current situation of brand experience on sport brand loyalty of university student in GuangXi Province, China?
2. What is the relationship between brand experience on sport brand loyalty of university student in GuangXi Province, China?

Research Objective

1. to understand the current situation of brand experience on sport brand loyalty of university student in GuangXi Province, China?
2. to analyze the relationship between brand experience on sport brand loyalty of university student in GuangXi Province, China?

LITERATURE REVIEW

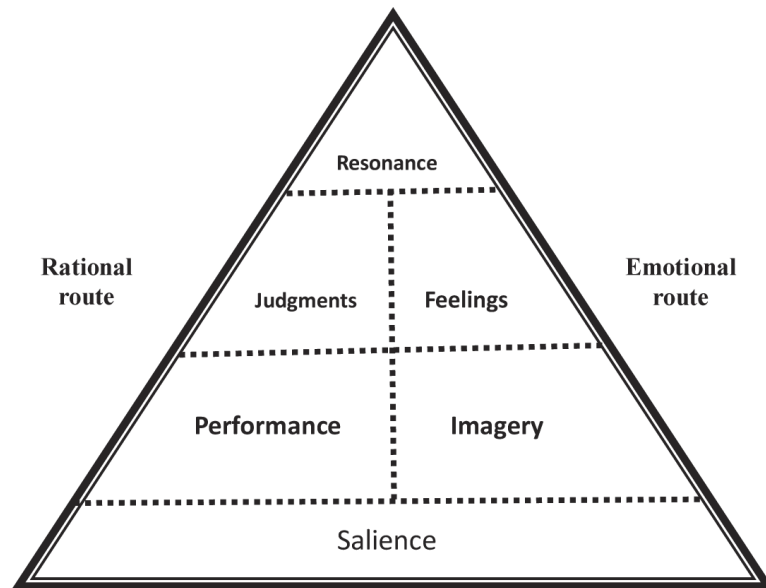
Brand Loyalty

Definition of Brand loyalty

Brand loyalty is the fourth dimension of brand equity. Loyalty integrates a huge area of research in the field of relationship marketing. Loyalty, defined as a customer's attachment to a brand (Aaker, 1991), is considered a dimension of brand equity. An important source of brand equity. (Gill, 2012) claims that loyalty to a place or an event can be assessed based on a scale used in marketing, i.e., brand loyalty. For event visitors and participants, brand loyalty is based on "consumer" happiness and experience, representing participants' willingness to recommend and revisit the same event or destination. Event brand equity is an important tool to help organizers identify the value of an event in terms of experience, event image, or participant satisfaction, and its impact on variables such as revisit intention, recommendation intention, and on-site image.

Brand resonance model

The brand resonance model proposes that brand resonance, such as brand loyalty and brand satisfaction, is initially stimulated by marketing cues, such as service environment and advertising, to evoke consumer cognition and responses. It can ultimately be achieved through two pathways: rational and emotional (Keller, 2001, 2013). The rational route includes elements like performance (such as price, efficiency, durability, and reliability) and judgments (such as quality and credibility), while the emotional route includes elements like imagery and feelings (such as fun and excitement) (Keller, 2013). In this study, the pre-purchase stage of university consumers is regarded as marketing cues (stimuli), the service period is considered their psychological processes, encompassing both rational and emotional routes, and ultimately leading to behavioral outcomes, namely, post-purchase and loyalty cycles.



Note(s): Salience includes those dimensions, such as category identification, awareness; resonance includes those, such as loyalty, attachment, community and engagement

The detailed brand resonance model is illustrated in Figure 1.

The process of brand loyalty creation can be analyzed from a psychological perspective (Kim et al., 2008). The impact of loyalty programs on customer loyalty varies depending on the level of engagement (Yi & Jeon, 2003). Sponsorship has been found to have a positive influence on brand effects and brand trust through a two-step persuasion process (Mazodier & Merunka, 2012). Different types of brand loyalty develop based on consumer, brand, and social characteristics (Gounaris & Stathakopoulos, 2004). Various antecedents have a positive impact on brand loyalty.

Recommend: Recommendation refers to customers or consumers expressing positive opinions or suggestions to others based on their positive experience and satisfaction with the brand, encouraging others to try or purchase the brand's products or services.

Dedication: Loyalty represents a consumer's strong trust and loyalty to a specific brand, which is manifested in continued choice of the brand, willingness to pay a premium for it, and insensitivity to competing brands.

Attitude: Attitude refers to a series of consumers' evaluations, opinions and emotions towards a specific brand. A positive brand attitude indicates that consumers have a favorable impression of the brand and are willing to establish a positive relationship with it.

Behavior: Behavior refers to the actions displayed by consumers during the actual purchase and use process. In the context of brand loyalty, this includes behaviors such as continued purchase of the brand's products, participation in brand events, and positive word-of-mouth communication.

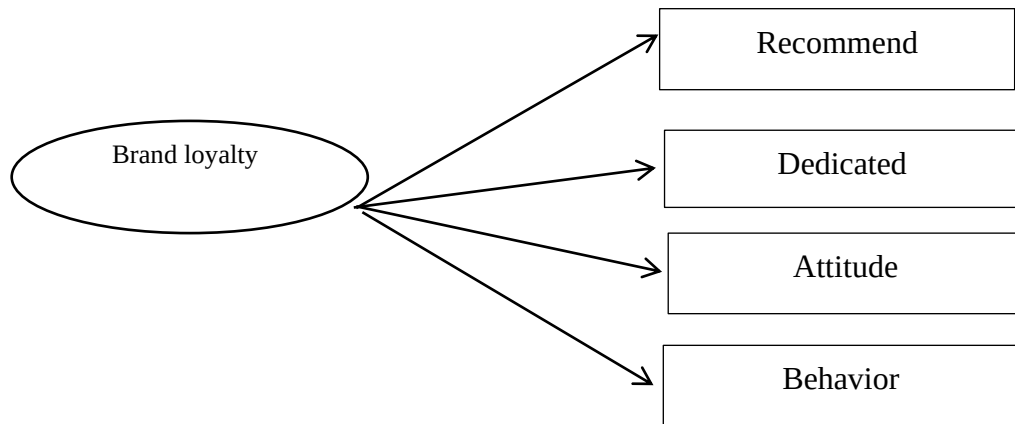


Figure 2: The dimension of Brand Loyalty

Brand Experience

Definition of brand experience

Brand experience is the individual feeling of individual customers in response to certain experiences of the brand (including the marketing efforts of operators during the customer's consumption process and before and after the purchase of brand products or services). Brand experience is the customer's specific experience and feeling about the brand. It allows customers to experience "happy", "cool" and "happy" through refreshing brand logo, distinctive brand personality, rich brand associations and passionate brand activities. "Cool" thereby establishing a strong relationship with the brand and achieving a high degree of brand loyalty. The connotation of "experience" goes far beyond the products and services under the brand banner. It encompasses every interaction between a customer and a brand or supplier, from initial understanding, through selection, purchase, use and persistence in repeat purchases.

Brand experience theory

Brand experience theory, also known as experiential marketing theory, is a framework for understanding and managing consumer brand experiences. It focuses on creating meaningful and memorable brand experiences through various touchpoints including advertising, packaging, customer service and product interaction.

According to the brand experience theory, brand experience is multidimensional, covering sensory, emotional, cognitive and behavioral aspects. These experiences influence consumers' perceptions, attitudes, emotions and behaviors towards the brand. The theory emphasizes the importance of creating a positive and consistent brand experience to foster brand loyalty, engagement, and market differentiation.

Brand experience theory believes that brands should strive to create unique and immersive experiences to satisfy consumers' needs, desires and values. By delivering exceptional experiences, brands can create emotional connections with consumers, enhance brand equity, and increase customer satisfaction and loyalty. The theory has been widely adopted by marketers and brand managers as a strategic approach to achieving brand differentiation and creating competitive advantage in today's experience-driven marketplace.

Brand experience consists of five separate dimensions: sensory, emotional, intellectual, behavioral and social.

Sensory: The sensory dimension involves consumers' experience when they perceive the brand through their senses, including vision, hearing, touch, taste, smell, etc. These sensory stimulations play an important role in shaping consumers' impressions and perceptions of the brand. For example, the design of brand logo, product appearance and packaging, store decoration, etc. Can all attract and retain consumers through sensory experience.

Affective: The emotional dimension focuses on the emotional experience consumers have when interacting with the brand. Brands establish emotional connections with consumers through emotional connection, emotional resonance and emotional transmission. Positive emotional experiences can help consumers establish emotional bonds with brands and enhance brand identity and loyalty.

Intellectual: The intellectual dimension emphasizes stimulating consumers' thinking and cognition through the knowledge, information and innovation provided by the brand. Brands can be conveyed to consumers through storytelling, product features and advantages, brand concepts and values, and create cognitive experiences related to the brand on an intellectual level.

Behavioral: The behavioral dimension focuses on the behavioral reactions and behavioral intentions displayed by consumers when interacting with the brand. Brands influence consumers' continued participation and loyalty to the brand by guiding consumers' behaviors, such as purchasing, recommending, sharing, participating in activities, etc.

Social: Sociality refers to the elements that involve interacting with society, sharing experiences, and participating in communities in the process of consumers using a brand. This social brand use experience reflects the interactive relationship between individuals and others, society and brands, emphasizing the role and influence of brands in social environments.

These five dimensions together constitute the comprehensive characteristics of brand experience. They are intertwined and influence each other, jointly shaping consumers' overall perception and evaluation of the brand. By focusing on these dimensions, brands can create unique, consistent, and memorable experiences that strengthen their competitiveness and market position.

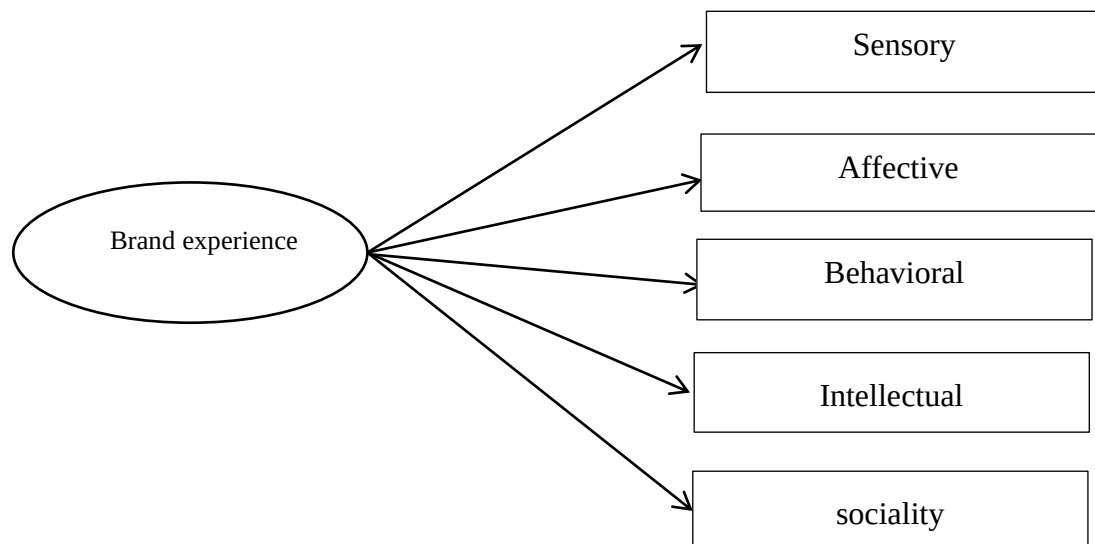


Figure 3 : The dimension of Brand experience

Kang et al. (2017) claimed that brand experience is a key factor that plays a key role in achieving and maintaining success for businesses and in building a long-term bond with consumers. In

addition, prior studies showed a significant positive association between BE and loyalty (Ong et al., 2018; Sahin et al., 2011). Finally, the significance of BE stems from its impact on brand loyalty (Brakus et al., 2009; Ramaseshan and Stein, 2014; Huang, 2017; Choi et al., 2017). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

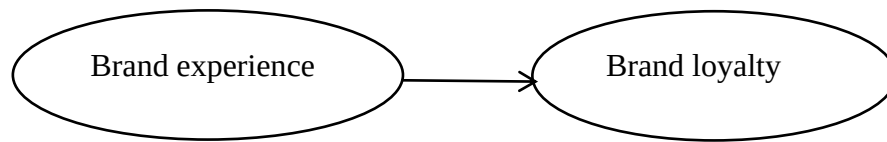


Figure 4: The relation of Brand experience brand loyalty

Related research

Successful brands form close bonds with their consumers, which in turn drives them away from other competing brands. The first step in establishing these bonds is encountering and experiencing the brand. Brand experience is a concept that was introduced by (Schmitt,1999)into the experiential marketing literature and whose importance has increased in recent times(Schmitt et al., 2014).Brand experience is defined as subjective internal (e.g. sensations, emotions, and cognition) and behavioral responses of consumer associated with stimuli that are a part of a brand’s design, identity, packaging, communication, and environment(Brakus et al., 2009). Experiences occur when shopping, buying, and consuming directly and interacting with media, including print and electronic media, indirectly (Rajumesh, 2014). (Brakus et al,2009) discuss brand experience in four dimensions: sensory, affective, intellectual (cognitive), and behavioral. Sensory brand experience expresses the experiences resulting from the visual, auditory, olfactory, taste, and touch stimuli provided by the brand. In contrast, the brand’s affective stimuli provide brand experience to consumers (Brakus et al., 2009). That is, it includes the mood, emotion and feeling of consumers (Ding and Tseng, 2015). Intellectual brand experience involves thinking differently and convergingly and enables consumers to change their thinking about brand (Hult, 2011). Behavioral experience activates consumer behaviors or intentions by appealing to physical experiences, lifestyles, long-term behavioral patterns, or interactions with other people (Ding and Tseng, 2015). Researchers have asserted that experience with products and services is an essential factor affecting consumers’ future behavioral and emotional intentions (Mostafa and Kasamani, 2020). Thus, true brand loyalty occurs when customers tend to both affect the emotional attachment factor and brand trust (He et al., 2012). Generally, brands that provide excellent brand experiences are differentiated from other brands and are more favored, thereby building brand loyalty and promoting the spread of the brand (Brakus et al., 2009).

Therefore, consumers will be more likely to repurchase from these brands, recommend them to others, or move away from the brand (Yu et al.,2020). Previous studies in different sectors have shown that there is a significant positive relationship between brand experience and loyalty (Huang, 2017; Ong et al., 2018; S,ahin et al., 2011). Brand experience is the outcome of stimulations that trigger customers’ enthusiasm and enjoyment; thus, customers will be encouraged to repeat those experiences frequently over time (Ong et al., 2018). Furthermore, “brand experience should affect not only past-directed satisfaction judgments but also future-directed consumer loyalty” (Brakus et al., 2009). Therefore,

consumers would be more probable to purchase products from this brand again, suggest it to others and less probable to purchase from competitors (Yu et al., 2020; Oliver, 1997).

Moreover, Kang et al. (2017) claimed that brand experience is a key factor that plays a key role in achieving and maintaining success for businesses and in building a long-term bond with consumers. In addition, prior studies showed a significant positive association between BE and loyalty (Ong et al., 2018; Sahin et al., 2011). Finally, the significance of BE stems from its impact on brand loyalty (Brakus et al., 2009; Ramaseshan and Stein, 2014; Huang, 2017; Choi et al., 2017).

METHODOLOGY

Research design

This study adopted a mixed research design that combined quantitative and qualitative research methods. First, through a literature review, we understand the existing knowledge and research results in this research field. Through literature review, potential influencing factors and related theoretical frameworks were identified to guide subsequent research design. Based on the literature review, a quantitative study was designed and implemented, and a large amount of data was collected. Quantitative research uses questionnaires and statistical analysis to quantify the relationship between brand experience and sports brand loyalty.

Following the quantitative study, focus group validation was used to provide further understanding and interpretation of the findings. Focus groups are a qualitative research method that uses group discussion and interaction to capture the views, experiences, and opinions of participants. Focus group validation can supplement and enrich quantitative research findings, validate quantitative research results, and gain deeper understanding.

Quantitative methodology

Population and sample

The target population used in the study is college students studying in Guangxi, there are 78 universities in total, including 1076408 full-time college students. (Education in Guangxi, 2023) Indeterminant the sample size, we need to consider the resource constraints and feasibility of the study, as well as the desired level of statistical significance and effect size. In this study, we will select a sample of 340 from 9 municipalities. The variables in this study include perceived value, event quality, service quality and customer loyalty. According to related research, 3-7 items are needed to measure each variable, and 9 measurement items are proposed to be selected in this study. The target population of this study is the college students attending Guangxi colleges and universities. First, a list of Guangxi colleges and universities is obtained, and a few schools are taken. First, and randomly select some students from the schools for the survey, then 340 members were selected as the research sample by simple random sampling. Simple random sampling can ensure that each member has equal probability of being selected and is representative. By utilizing the above sampling technique and ensuring a sample size of 340 based on the criterion of 20 times the number of observed variables (Wang et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2021), we will be able to obtain a sample that is both representative and statistically powerful enough to support our research objectives and draw meaningful conclusions.

Qualitative research methodology

Population and sample

Population and sample the target population is college students in Guangxi, into focus groups, with 8 Keys informant. These members have the knowledge and experience to participate in physical activities and services. In determining the focus group size and total sample for this study's qualitative inquiry, relevant methodological authorities were consulted, and the results were selected with a degree of scientific validity and reliability.

Population characteristics

When selecting focus group participants, a diverse mix was chosen, including individuals of varying ages, genders, engagement and loyalty levels, to obtain rich data with varying perspectives and experience in the focus group study, there were focus groups with eighth participants each. Teachers, experts, and college students in Guangxi were selected. This study used a sampling technique and designed groups, consisting of 8 people. Participants were selected from different roles within sports associations, including member representatives, staff and managers. The focus group design was based on research objectives, research questions, relevant literature, and theoretical framework.

RESULTS

In today's era of economic globalization, there are many sporting goods brands on the market. If a sporting goods brand wants to win the favor of more consumers, in addition to product quality and price, it should also pay attention to the connection between the brand and consumers. Sports brands that provide excellent brand experiences are differentiated from other brands and are more favored, thereby building brand loyalty and promoting the spread of the sports brand. The consumption of good experience of college students can better enhance college student sports brand loyalty.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

As an exploratory study on the brand experience and sports brand loyalty of college students in Guangxi, this article has made some useful attempts in quantitative research methods and methods on the motivations and effects of college students purchasing sports brands. At the same time, it has also made some A lot of thinking, but it can be further deepened in many aspects in order to obtain more valuable research results. Issues that can be explored in depth include the purchase process, brand services, the relationship between brand attachment and brand equity, and better research conclusions on college student sports brand loyalty. Of course, we still have many issues to explore. College students are the main force of consumption, I believe that research on college student sports brand loyalty will definitely attract more scholars and sports workers to participate, including the participation of some companies. In this regard, the author is full of confidence.

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