A Brand Preference and Repurchase Intention Model: The Role of Consumer Experience

Authors

Ebrahim, Reham [a]
Ghoneim, Ahmad [b]
Irani, Zahir c

[a] Dr Reham Sh. Ebrahim
Faculty of Commerce, Tanta University, Tanta-Egypt
PhD – Brunel Business School, Brunel University London, UK

[b] Dr Ahmad Ghoneim
College of Business, Arts, and Social Sciences, Brunel Business School, Brunel University London, UK

[c] Professor Zahir Irani
College of Business, Arts, and Social Sciences, Brunel Business School, Brunel University London, UK

Abstract

Consumer brand preference is an essential step towards understanding consumer choice behaviour, and has therefore always received great attention from marketers. However, the study of brand preference has been limited to traditional marketing focusing on functional attributes to maximise utility. But now the shift to experiential marketing broadens the role of the brand from a bundle of attributes to experiences. Technological advancements have helped to increase the similarities between brand attributes and product commoditisation. Consequently, consumers cannot shape their preferences among brands using rational attributes only. They seek out brands that create experiences; that intrigue them in a sensorial, emotional and creative way. This study seeks to develop a model that provides an understanding of how brand knowledge and brand experience determine brand preference and to investigate its impact on brand repurchase intention. Accordingly, exploratory focus group discussions are employed followed by a survey of mobile phone users in Egypt. The findings provide insights into the relative importance of consumer perceptions on different brand knowledge factors in shaping brand preferences. It also demonstrates the significance of consumers' experiential responses toward brands in developing their brand preferences that in turn influence brand repurchase intention. The model therefore offers managers a new perspective for building strong brands able to gain consumer preferences.

Keywords: Branding, brand preference, brand experience, brand knowledge, mobile phones, mixed-method methodology

Introduction

Brand preferences have long been explained using traditional models, which largely focus on consumers' cognitive judgement of brand attributes on a rational basis. However, the shift to experiential marketing, the cornerstone of branding, has expanded the role of the brand from a bundle of attributes to experiences. It also considers both the rational and irrational aspects of consumer behaviour (Schmitt, 1999; 2009). Additionally, technological advances have increased the similarities between brands and product commoditisation. Therefore, consumers find it difficult to differentiate between brands on functional attributes alone (Petruzzellis, 2010; Temporal and Lee, 2001). Instead, they seek the brand that creates an experience; that intrigues them in a sensorial, emotional and creative way. Such experiential appeals are important components of a brand, and are used in brand differentiation and enhancement of consumer preference (Berry, Carbone and Haeckel, 2002; Schmitt, 2009; Zarantonello and Schmitt, 2010). Therefore, companies competing in such markets face difficulties, since their survival requires building competitive advantage by delivering memorable experiences (Gentile, Nicola and Giulano, 2007; Schmitt, 1999; 2009). Currently, such experiences are fundamental to the creation of consumer brand preferences, and the stimulation of future purchasing decisions (Gentile *et al.*, 2007; Schmitt, 1999; 2009).

Even though some studies indicate the potential role of experience for the development of consumers' preferences toward brands, this impact has not been explicitly addressed. Such experiences provide experiential values leading to the preferential treatment of a brand similar to the value of utilitarian attributes ((Brakus, Schmitt and Zarantonello, 2009). Therefore, it is postulated that the experiential view will supplement the hegemony of traditional information processing theories to understanding consumers' preferences for brands. The possible interactions between cognitive information processing and experience are considered essential in analysing consumer preference dynamics.

Thus, this research seeks to provide a better understanding of brand preference development by providing answers to three questions; first, what is the impact of different brand knowledge factors on consumer brand preferences? Second, how do brand experiences affect consumer brand preferences, and how do they interact with brand knowledge factors in shaping consumer preferences? Finally, how do consumer brand experiences and brand preferences motivate repurchase intention?

The paper proceeds as follows. In the 'Theoretical background and research hypotheses' section, we explain the conceptual background to our study and derive hypotheses for investigation. In the 'Research Methodology' section, we introduce the context of our study and illustrate the methods of data collection and analysis. In the 'Results' section, we present the data analysis results of the empirical study and offer a summary of the research findings; we then highlight our theoretical contribution, draw several implications for practitioners as well as noting the study's limitations. Finally, in the last section, we offer our conclusions including suggestions for further research.

Theoretical background and research hypotheses

Brand preference

Consumer attitude models, such as Fishbein's model (1965), which are based on the expectancy-value model, are commonly used to understand consumer preferences. According to this model, the consumer's preference for a brand is a function of his/her cognitive beliefs about the brand's weighted attributes (Bass and Talarzyk, 1972; Bass and Wilkie, 1973). This model contributes to the study of preferences and is still widely used (Allen, Machleit, Kleine and Notani, 2005; Muthitcharoen, Palvia and Grover, 2011). However, it has been criticised over the years for the following: First, brand preference is measured by a single value, the

result of an algebraic equation (Bagozzi, 1982), and focuses on utilitarian beliefs as the main driver of consumer evaluation responses. Second, it ignores other sources, such as emotional responses (Agarwal and Malhotra, 2005; Allen *et al.*, 2005), which contribute to preference development (Bagozzi, 1982; Grimm, 2005; Zajonc and Markus, 1982). Third, the narrow view of this model limits its use to certain types of mainly utilitarian products (Park and Srinivasan, 1994). However, the applicability of multi-attribute models to products with tangible attributes that contribute only in a minor way to consumer preferences has been questioned (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982; Zajonc and Markus, 1982). Fourth, the inclusion of weightings as a part of the algebraic equation presented in this model decreases its predictive power (Churchill, 1972; Sheth and Talarzyk, 1972). Besides, the halo effect of this model can lead to wrong decisions related to brand design and positioning (Leuthesser, Kohli and Harich, 1995). This has sparked the need to consider other paths to brand preference formation other than the consumer's salient beliefs of brand attributes.

Moreover, psychologists view preference as a learning construct and define experience and information processing as the two main sources of consumer preference learning (Howard and Sheth, 1969; Sheth, 1968; Amir and Levav, 2008). Howard and Sheth (1969) suggest that brand preference refers to consumers' predisposition towards certain brands that summarise their cognitive information processing toward brand stimuli. This theory and other information processing models (Bettman, Capon and Lutz, 1975) emphasise both the central control unit and the mental abilities of consumers. Therefore, it follows that a consumer's perception about brand attributes leads to preferences or attitudes, which affects his/her intentions and brand choices (Bagozzi, 1982). Thus, preference represents a transition state between the inputs and outputs of the consumer choice model. It is the link between information processing and the intention to actually purchase or choose (Bagozzi, 1983). It is suggested that experience should be combined with the brand meaning stored in consumers'

minds to develop preferences. This research defines brand preference as a behavioural tendency that reflects a consumer's attitude towards a brand.

As a direct source of consumer preferences, it is suggested that experience promotes better memory with vivid and concrete information (Paivio, 1971). Schwarz (2004) indicates that consumers rely on their experiences as trusted sources of information, to judge between alternatives and make choices. Consumers prefer brands that provide a meaningful experience (Goode, Dahl and Moreau, 2010).

Brand experience

The concept of consumer experience emerged at the beginning of the 1980s (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982) to overcome the limitations of traditional consumer behaviour theories. This view highlights the importance of neglected variables such as considering consumers as emotional beings as well as thinkers (Addis and Holbrook, 2001). It investigates consumer responses to the symbolic, aesthetic, imaginative and fantasy meanings of the product, raising the role of multisensory experience aspects (Addis and Holbrook, 2001; Hansen, 2005; Hirschman, 1989; Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982; Tsai, 2005). Accordingly, this view expands and supplements the information processing perspective, enriching it with the experiential perspective.

Despite this trigger, the concept of consumer experience did not return to the fore until the end of the 1990s, with Pine and Gilmore (1998) introducing experience as an upgrade or progression of economic value. Schmitt (1999) then positioned the consumer's holistic experience into brand marketing, discussing the reasons behind the shift from traditional marketing to experiential marketing, and proposed Strategic Experiential Modules (SEMs). According to Gentile *et al*. (2007), experience is a continuous concept that reflects the

irrational aspects of consumers interacting with the brand, and goes beyond the bounded rationality assumption. From this perspective, while the brand is therefore perceived as a rich source of experience providing value to consumers (Schmitt, 1999), according to Tynan and McKechnie (2009), value is not an added component to the brand but is created whilst consumers are experiencing the brand.

Brand experience is defined as consumers' internal subjective and behavioural responses induced at different levels of interaction, both direct and indirect, with brand-related stimuli (Brakus *et al.*, 2009; Meyer and Schwager, 2007). The results of these interactions are the experiential responses stored in the consumer's memory (Pine and Gilmore, 1998). This implies a new role for the brand as an experience provider rather than as an identifier (Schmitt, Brakus and Zarantonello, 2014). Consumer experience is holistic and distinguishes between basic cognitive, affective and sensorial systems (Gentile *et al.*, 2007). It starts before the actual purchase, continues during the purchase or live experience and lasts as a memorable experience (Carù and Cova, 2003; Tynan and McKechnie, 2009). Brand experience captures the sensorial, emotional, intellectual, behavioural, (Brakus *et al.*, 2009), social (Chang and Chieng, 2006; Schmitt, 1999), pragmatic and lifestyle experiential aspects of the brand (Gentile *et al.*, 2007). The psychological responses, cognitive interpretations and behavioural expressions from the mutual overlapping interactions with inputs constitute consumer experience (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982). Through these interactive experiences, consumers will build their preferences and purchasing decisions (Carbone, 2004; Holbrook, 2007).

The emotional component is an important aspect of consumer experience (Halvena and Holbrook, 1986). Consumers engage emotionally with the brand and develop positive feelings towards it (Schmitt, 1999). The role of emotional responses in understanding

consumer preferences (Grimm, 2005) and repurchase intention (Tsai, 2005) has been demonstrated. Zajonc (1980) suggests that sensorial responses from a consumer's exposure to a brand precede affective responses. Despite the existence of different types of responses that define consumers' brand experiences there is no set of definite responses to describe consumer experiences with brands.

The experiential cues evoked during consumption can determine consumer preferences (Berry *et al.*, 2002). It is argued that brand experience plays a fundamental role in determining consumer preferences and future decisions (Brakus *et al*., 2009; Gentile *et al.*, 2007). The consequences of brand experience include enhancement of consumers' behavioural intentions, verified in an online context (Morgan-Thomas and Veloutsou, 2013; Rose, Hair and Clark, 2011), and brand loyalty (Brakus *et al.*, 2009; Pullman and Gross, 2004; Ismail, Melewar, Lim and Woodside, 2011).

Based on the aforementioned, it can be hypothesised that:

H1. Brand experience will have a direct positive effect on brand preference (H1a) and repurchase intention (H1b).

Brand Knowledge

The holistic perspective of brands was emphasised by the content of brand knowledge described by Keller (1993; 2003). Cognitive beliefs are not limited to consumer perceptions about brand knowledge constituted at the conscious level (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982). Such non-attributed associations have been proven to contribute towards shaping consumer brand preferences (e.g. Chitturi, Raghunathan and Mahajan, 2007; Okada, 2005; Overby and Lee, 2006; Grimm, 2005, Sirgy *et al.*, 1997). Brand knowledge is conceptualised based on the meanings that consumers learn about and associate with the brand in their minds. These

meanings include utilitarian and functional, economic and rational attributes/benefits associations, and symbolic or imaginative, sensory associations (Erdem *et al.*, 1999; Keller, 1993; Plummer, 2000). Keller (1993) argues that brand-related attributes are elicited from intrinsic cues, while non-related attributes of brands can be developed from information about price, appearance, brand personality and self-congruity. Petruzzellis (2010) identifies brand knowledge as symbolic/emotional, utilitarian and economic associations.

In studying consumer preference, economists consider price as a constraint in utility maximisation. High importance is given to price prior to purchasing decisions (McFadden, 1996). Price is an important extrinsic cue (Zeithaml, 1988), and should be included as an independent component in a utility model predicting consumer preferences (Hayakawa, 1976). It is a significant factor affecting consumer choice apart from intrinsic brand cues (Horsky, Misra and Nelson, 2006). Price is a dimension of brand equity, which affects brand preference (Chang and Liu, 2009; Cobb-Walgren, Ruble and Donthu, 1995; Tolba and Hassan, 2009), and measures brand loyalty (Simon and Sullivan, 1993).

Appearance is considered by Keller (1993) to be a non-product attribute, unrelated to brand performance or functionality. A product's appearance can have a symbolic, aesthetic value that affects consumers' product evaluation (Creusen and Schoormans, 2005), and acts as a major differentiating attribute in consumer preference and choices (Reimann *et al.*, 2010). Firms are shifting from tangible and functional product attributes towards creating aesthetically appealing designs. Additionally, associations such as brand personality (Aaker, 1997) and self-congruity (Sirgy *et al.*, 1997) have been demonstrated to build consumer preferences.

Therefore, the cognitive information that constitutes consumer brand knowledge is composed of their perceptions on attributes, price, appearance and symbolic associations such as brand

personality and self-congruity. These factors reflect the functional, economic, aesthetic and symbolic/emotional brand meanings.

1.1.1 Attribute Perception

Attribute perception refers to consumers' salient beliefs about a brand's intrinsic cues, including product-related attributes and associated functional and experiential benefits (Czellar, 2003; Grimm, 2005; Keller, 1993; Park and Srinivasan, 1994). Consumer perceptions of brand (product-related) attributes positively affect their preferences (Cobb-Walgren *et al.*, 1995; Myers, 2003; Park and Srinivasan, 1994). Traditional views, such as the Fishbein model (1965), consider consumer preferences to be based entirely on consumers' cognitive beliefs about the brand attributes (Allen *et al.*, 2005). In the broad sense, these beliefs define the cognitive structure and constitute consumer expertise (Alba and Hutchinson, 1987). Consumer perceptions about a brand's physical, functional and utilitarian attributes contribute to brand experience (Gentile *et al.*, 2007; Rondeau, 2005; Tynan and McKechnie, 2009). Yet, the verbal cues are important stimuli enhancing consumer brand experiences. Therefore, it can be hypothesised that:

H2. Attribute perception will have a positive effect on brand experience (H2a) and brand preference (H2b).

1.1.2 Price

Price as an extrinsic cue is encoded by the consumer to constitute an important component of monetary value perception (Zeithaml, 1988). It is an important factor in brand purchase and

consumer choice (Erdem, Swait and Valenzuela, 2005). The economist's assumption of rationality conceives price as an aspect of consumer rationality (McFadden, 1996). However, irrational consumers seeking hedonic brand benefits also perceive brand price as an important factor in brand choice (Lee, 2009; Park, Kim, Funches and Foxx, 2011). Although Petruzzellis (2010) verified that rational consumers who focus on tangible brand attributes assign greater importance to price than irrational consumers, price remains an important positive or negative cue in consumer behaviour (Lichtenstein, Ridway and Netemeyer, 1993). The role of price as an independent factor on consumer brand preferences has been demonstrated (Alamro and Rowley, 2011; Petruzzellis, 2010; Schoenfelder and Harris, 2004). In experiential marketing, price is the cost of delivered experiences and the consumer's perceptions of price fairness, which contribute to his/her experience (Brakus *et al.*, 2009). Pine and Gilmore (1998) presume that the product price contributes to the creation of consumer experience. The authors suggest that the consumer price experience can be considered as a progression of the economic value (Pine and Gilmore, 1998; Schmitt, 1999), or that the traditional mix of price and quality goes beyond money (Mathwick, Malhotra and Rigdon, 2001). Consumers may be willing to pay a premium for the brand experience, but not its cost (Pine and Gilmore, 1998; Verhoef *et al.*, 2009). Empirically, the price of service positively affects the consumer experience in hospitality marketing (Ismail, 2010). Moreover, Verhoef *et al*. (2009) consider price as an important stimulus of consumer experience in a retailing context.

H3. Price perception will have a positive effect on brand experience (H3a) and brand preference (H3b).

1.1.3 Appearance

Appearance is a non-product related attribute (Keller, 1993); it is hedonic (Chitturi, Raghunathan and Mahajan, 2008; Lee, Ha and Widdows, 2011) or symbolic (Creusen and Schoormans, 2005). Value is derived from consumer beliefs on the brand's aesthetic appeal. This reflects the beauty of the brand design and sensory attributes (Reimann *et al.*, 2010; Sheng and Teo, 2012; Veryzer, 1993). Brand appearance is a source of pleasure (Decker and Trusov, 2010; Petruzzellis, 2010; Schoenfelder and Harris, 2004; Veryzer and Hutchinson, 1998) and a significant differentiating attribute that enhances consumer preferences (Reimann *et al.*, 2010). Consumer senses are enhanced by the brand design qualities such as colour, shape, and proportions; thus, creating positive feelings (Hulten, 2011; Lee *et al.*, 2011; Schmitt, 1999). The aesthetic aspects are considered among the brand-stimuli that sustain consumers' experience of the brand (Brakus *et al.*, 2009; Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982). The brand aesthetic enhances consumer senses (Hulten, 2011; Schmitt, 1999), and affects their experiential responses (Gentile *et al.*, 2007). In this respect, Pine and Gilmore (1998) suggest that the most powerful themes that create and deliver memorable experiences are those related to consumer senses. Research findings support the notion that the consumer's perception of the brand appearance or aesthetic is associated with his/her experiences (Sheng and Teo, 2012).

H4. Appearance perceptions will have a positive effect on brand experience (H4a) and brand preference (H4b).

1.1.4 Brand Personality

Brand personality is a symbolic and emotional (non-product-related) attribute (Keller, 1993), defined by Aaker (1997) as a set of human characteristics assigned to a brand. This definition

has been perceived as a loose statement; it is too general and includes demographic and personality traits; therefore, it affects the construct validity (Azoulay and Kapferer, 2003; Bosnjak, Bochmann and Hufschmidt, 2007; Geuens, Weijters and De Wulf, 2009). Therefore, this research adopts the definition by Geuens *et al*. (2009) that specifies the personality traits descriptive of a brand. Practitioners perceive brand personality as an efficient differentiating tool that can enhance consumer preferences (Aaker, 1997; Heding, Knudtzen and Bjerre, 2009). Brand personality appeal acts as an emphasis to salient brand attributes, and is used as a heuristic, self-expressive cue by consumers (Wang and Yang, 2008). It is an important component in the brand identity prism (Kapferer, 2008), which presents a non-verbal cue that triggers consumer experiential responses (Brakus *et al*., 2009). The personality characteristics of and sensory impressions about the brand stored by consumers affect their experiences (Sung and Kim, 2010) and emotional responses (Aaker, 1997; Biel, 1992; Phau and Lau, 2000). Brand personality provides the consumer with better comprehension about the brand image because it is transformed into an experiential manifestation (Clatworthy, 2012). Therefore, brand personality can affect consumer attitudes (Folse, Netemeyer and Burton, 2012), brand affect (Sung and Kim, 2010), brand preferences, and create long-term behavioural responses such as loyalty (Folse *et al.*, 2012).

H5. Brand personality will have a positive effect on brand experience (H5a), brand preference (H5b), and repurchase intention (H5c).

1.1.5 Self-congruity

Self-congruity refers to the degree of congruence between the brand image and the consumer's image (Sirgy, Lee, Kohar and Tidwell, 2008). Therefore, the self-congruity

reflects the degree of match (Sirgy *et al.*, 1997; Sirgy, 1982). By referring to the self-congruity theory, it proposes that consumer behaviour is affected by the degree to which he/she perceives that his/her self-concept matches the product-user image (Sirgy *et al.*, 1997). It reflects a brand's symbolic benefits that affect consumer preferences, purchase intentions, and loyalty (Belk, 1988; Ericksen, 1996; Grimm, 2005; Kressmann, Sirgy, Hermann and Huber, 2006; Sirgy *et al.*, 1997). Accordingly, consumer preference for a brand increases with higher congruence between his/her self-image and brand-user image (Sirgy *et al.*, 1997). Research findings demonstrate that self-congruity is an important driver of consumer brand preferences (Jamal and Goode, 2001; Jamal and Al-Marri, 2007; Kressmann *et al.*, 2006).

H6. Self-congruity will have a positive effect on brand preference (H6a), and repurchase intention (H6b).

Preference-repurchase intention model

Figure 1 presents a preference-repurchase intention model. In this model, brand preference drivers are defined by consumer brand knowledge and brand experience. The five factors that define brand knowledge are attribute perception, price perception, appearance perception, brand personality and self-congruity. The model outcome is brand repurchase intention. The repurchase intention reflects the consumer's intention of repeating the behavioural action of buying the brand (Hellier, Geursen, Carr and Rickard, 2003). Theoretically, consumer preference is a direct antecedent of his/her intentions (Bagozzi, 1982). Hellier *et al.* (2003) demonstrate that brand preferences reflect a learned disposition for perceived alternatives is strongly related to repurchase intention.

H7. Brand preference will have a direct positive effect on brand repurchase intention.

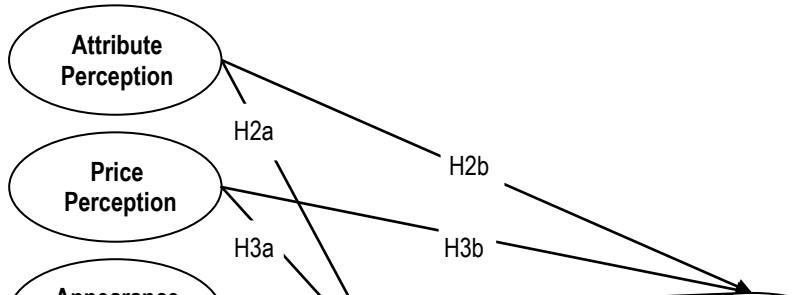

Figure 1: Brand preference-repurchase intention model

Research Methodology

Data collection

This research investigates brands of mobile phones, an advanced technological product. Mobile phones are now a global phenomenon and the number of subscribers increases daily. The data was collected from Egyptian mobile phone users after obtaining the ethical approval from the Brunel Business School Research Ethical Committee. Egypt is experiencing an increase in mobile phone subscribers, exceeding those of fixed phones. At the end of 2011, the number of mobile subscribers was 76.4 million, an increase of 29.6% over the previous year (CAPMAS, 2011). The study followed the Churchill paradigm for developing measures (Churchill, 1979). The questionnaire was developed following a multi-stage process. The initial pool of items was generated from the literature review and focus groups. Focus groups were used at the exploratory stage of this study, in order to explore consumers' behaviours, experiences and preferences toward brands. This aided model refinement through the

identification of major determinants and outcomes of consumer brand preferences. Additionally, focus groups are an effective method at the stage of item generation (Churchill, 1979), both to identify key themes and items, and to gain familiarity with the respondents' vocabulary (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012). Therefore, the focus groups helped with the identification of brand experience dimensions, brand personality using the 'Big Five', and the salient attributes/benefits consumers assigned to the studied product within the research context.

Semi-structured questions were posed (e.g. describe your experiences with brands of mobile phones). There were four focus groups, each consisting of eight participants, and the average session time ranged from 60-90 minutes. Through the focus groups, the authors were able to identify key themes and items, and become familiar with consumer vocabulary. The items were evaluated using a panel of expert academics and non-experts to assess the content and face validity. This panel judged the quality of the survey in terms of the wording, structure, content and presentation. The questionnaire was then translated into the Arabic language using direct translation, which is considered to be an easy and fast method (Usunier, 1998). A pre-test of the translated questionnaire was conducted using a convenience sample of 53 respondents. The reliability of the items was evaluated using inter-item correlation, item-to-total correlation, and Cronbach's alpha. Accordingly, the item is subject to deletion if it does not meet the cut-off point of 0.3 for both the inter-item correlation and item-to-total correlation (Field, 2005; Pallant, 2010), or the value of alpha goes below the specified level of 0.7, or if its deletion will increase the value of alpha (Hair, Black, Babin and Anderson, 2010).

Primary data for the main survey was collected using self-administrated questionnaires. The study depended on convenience sampling, a frequently used non-probability sampling

method (Hair, Babin, Money and Samouel, 2003). The target respondents were approached in shopping malls located in Cairo over a one-month period beginning on the 1st of September, 2011. A total number of 325 valid responses were obtained. The sample included 215 males and 110 females of different ages, with a sample mean of 30.7 years of age. The majority of the respondents had bachelor's degrees and were married, constituting 68.6% and 56.3% of the sample respectively. The ratio of employed to unemployed respondents was 2.5:1. All of the variables were measured on the five-point Likert scale, which is deemed to be clearer in appearance and easier to handle than the seven-point scale (Malhotra and Birks, 2003). Different response anchors were used, and ranged from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree, for all constructs except for the response anchors for the brand personality construct which were anchored with "not at all descriptive" and "very descriptive".

Measures development

Only reliable items were included in the final questionnaire used to collect data in the main survey. The attribute perceptions construct was measured by the respondents' evaluation of eleven items (physical characteristics, Interfaces (3G, GPRS, Wi Fi), memory capacity, functionality, ease of use, durability, country of origin, language adaptability, memory capacity, multimedia features and fun features). These items represent the attributes of the products specified by the participants in the focus groups sessions (Grimm, 2005; Kressmann *et al.*, 2006). To measure the attribute perception respondents were asked to state to what extent they perceive that each attribute is associated with their current brand. Price perception was measured by three items adapted from Duarte and Raposo (2010), Park *et al.* (2011), Petruzzellis (2010) and Zeithaml (1988). To measure appearance perception, the study used three items from Lee *et al.* (2011) and Petruzzellis (2010).

Brand personality is commonly measured by Aaker's (1997) developed scale. This scale is based on Aaker's definition of brand personality as "the set of human characteristics associated with a brand" (Aaker, 1997, p.347). Aaker (1997) defines five dimensions of brand personality. These dimensions: sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication and ruggedness, are used to measure brand personality. Each of these dimensions is described by a group of personality traits. For example, the sincerity dimension reflects the meaning of honesty and modesty (Lunardo, Gergaud and Livat, 2015) and is defined by four traits; they are; down-to-earth, honest, wholesome and cheerful (Aaker, 1997). This definition is too wide, and includes other facets in the brand identity prism other than brand personality, which can be considered as human characteristics, such as, the inner values of the consumer and the physical traits of the typical user. Although Aaker (1997) focussed on the personality traits associated with a brand, this loose definition causes problems with the construct validity of the concept, and consequently its dimensions, that do not cover personality traits (Geuens *et al*., 2009). Therefore, the factor structure of this model could not be generalised at the brand level (Austin, Siguaw and Mattila, 2003) and could not be replicated cross-culturally (Azoulay and Kapferer, 2003; Geuens *et al*., 2009). This article adopted a stricter definition, proposed by Azoulay and Kapferer (2003, p.151), which describes brand personality as "the set of human personality traits that are both applicable and relevant for brands". Thereafter, recent studies uncovering brand personality have relied on this definition since it is more rigorous and can be used cross-culturally without confusion (e.g. Bosnjak *et al.*, 2007; Geuens *et al.*, 2009; Milas and Mlačić, 2007). Therefore, a new scale is needed based on a rigorous definition excluding all non-personality items. Personality traits describe the internal characteristics of human beings from which their behaviour in different situations can be predicted and explained (Heding *et al.*, 2009, p.122). Applicability of the big-five traits to describe brand personality has been proven in several studies (e.g. Bosnjak *et al.*, 2007;

Caprara, Barbaranelli and Guido, 2001; Geuens *et al.*, 2009; Huang and Mitchell., 2012; Lin, 2010; Sweeney and Brandon, 2006). Goldberg (1990) developed the big-five factor (agreeableness, extraversion, conscientiousness, emotional stability and openness to experience) to describe human personality. A group of human personality traits is used to define each factor. The extroversion factor is defined by eight traits (active, energetic, bold, strong, happy, resolute, competitive and dominant). Through focus group discussions, applicable and relevant personality traits for the brands were elicited. For example, only six traits (active, energetic, bold, strong, happy and competitive) were approved to describe the extroversion factor. Participants among the four focus groups agreed that only these human personality traits can be used to describe a brand of mobile phones. Consequently, the evaluation of items used to define each factor resulted in 27 descriptive traits for brands.

Self-congruity was assessed by the three items developed by Sirgy *et al.* (1997). Participants in focus groups described their experiences with brands using five dimensions. These dimensions are similar to those identified by Schmitt (1999); namely: sensorial, emotional, intellectual, behavioural and social. Therefore, items generated from the qualitative sessions, and the items developed by Brakus *et al.* (2009) and Chang and Chieng (2006) were used to measure brand experience. The five dimensions of brand experience were measured by 25 items. Brand preference was measured by six items adapted from different sources, namely, "I like this brand more than any other brand of mobile phone", "This brand is my preferred brand over any other brand of mobile phone", "I would use this brand more than any other brand of mobile phone" (Jamal and Al-Marri, 2007; Sirgy *et al.*, 1997), "When it comes to making a purchase, this brand of mobile phone is my first preference" (Overby and Lee, 2006), "This brand meets my requirements of mobile phone better than other brands" and "I am interested in trying other mobile phones from other brands" (Hellier *et al.,* 2003). Finally, repurchase intention was measured by three items developed by Hellier *et al.* (2003).

Analysis and discussion of results

Item reduction and uni-dimensionality

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was used with principal component analysis and VARIMAX orthogonal rotation for item reduction. The items with low commonality of less than 0.5 or loads on two or more factors with values exceeding 0.4 were candidates for deletion (Field, 2005). The results show the load of items on seven factors, which account for 69.8% of the total variance. These factors represent brand preference, price perception, appearance perception, self-congruity and repurchase intentions, but the items measuring attributes perception were loaded on to two factors. Therefore, the first factor represents the general attributes of the brand, while the second factor refers to the brand's functional benefits.

The test of uni-dimensionality refers to the loading of the measurement variables on a single factor (Hair *et al.*, 2010). In order to include the multi-dimensional constructs (i.e. brand experience and brand personality) in the proposed model, a summated scale was formed (e.g. Brakus *et al.*, 2009; Kim, Magnini and Singal, 2011). Accordingly, the summated scale was measured by the average of the items loading together as one factor. By conducting EFA, the brand experiences items loaded on to four factors describing the sensorial, emotional, intellectual and behavioural experiences as shown in Appendix A, and similarly, the items of brand personality loaded on to four factors describing different personality types of the brand. The first factor was peacefulness, which combined the traits of agreeable and extrovert personality types (Aaker, 2000; Aaker, Benet-Martinez and Garolera, 2001), as shown in Appendix B. The three other factors describe the conscientiousness, emotional stability and openness to experience personality types. These multi-dimensional constructs are presented in the model at the aggregate level. These dimensions will be reflected as measuring items of

each construct; therefore, a test of uni-dimensionality was required (Hair *et al.,* 2010). The four dimensions of brand experience and brand personality loaded as one factor with a total variance of 67.1% and 70.5% respectively.

Measurement model assessment

The validity of the measurement model was assessed using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), maximum likelihood estimation technique, and AMOS (v.18) software. The first run of the measurement model had an acceptable fit. However, the results indicated the possibility of obtaining higher fit indices through the purification process. The respecified measurement model had an acceptable fit with chi-square being 523.60 and 314 degrees of freedom, at a significant level of $p<0.005$. The other fit indices were within the acceptable range (χ^2/df = 1.6, GFI = 0.90, AGFI = 0.88, IFI = 0.95, CFI = 0.95, RMSEA = 0.045 and SRMR = 0.048). The results indicated that all of the standardised loadings were above 0.5, with the lowest value equalling 0.58. The composite reliability of constructs was above the threshold of 0.7 (Hair *et al.*, 2010), indicating a good reliability, as shown in Table 1. Discriminant validity was assessed by comparing the average value extracted with squared correlation estimate. The results are depicted in Table 2, showing higher values of AVE than squared correlation. Thus, the results suggest acceptable discriminant validity.

Table 1: Factor loadings for the items and CR

Constructs	Factor loading	CR*

General attributes		0.80
Interfaces (3G, GPRS, Wi Fi)	0.74	
Memory capacity	0.81	
Multimedia features (camera, video, MP3, *etc).*	0.73	
Functional benefits		0.76
Functionality	0.66	
Ease-of-use	0.81	
Durability	0.67	
Price perception		0.81
The brand is reasonably priced	0.70	
This brand offers value for money	0.80	
The price of this brand is a good indicator of its quality	0.80	
Appearance perception		0.77
This brand is aesthetically appealing	0.71	
The visual appearance of this brand is attractive	0.84	
This brand has an appealing design	0.64	
Brand personality		0.86
Peacefulness	0.82	
Conscientiousness	0.78	
Emotional stability	0.65	
Openness to experience	0.85	

Constructs	Factor loading	CR*
Self-congruity	0.80	0.78

People similar to me own the same brand	0.75	
This brand is consistent with how I see myself	0.67	
This brand reflects who I am		
Brand experience		0.83
Sensorial experience	0.82	
Emotional experience	0.75	
Intellectual experience	0.72	
Behavioural experience	0.70	
Brand preference		0.80
I like this brand more than any other brand of mobile phone	0.67	
This brand is my preferred brand over any other brand of mobile phone	0.82	
When it comes to making a purchase, this brand of mobile phone is my first preference	0.80	
Repurchase intention		0.77
I would be inclined to buy the same brand of mobile phone again	0.96	
I will probably buy the same brand again	0.60	

Table 2: Correlation matrix (discriminant validity)

	EXP	BP	CON	APP	PR	ATT 2	ATT 1	RPI	PRF
Brand experience EXP	0.56								
Brand personality BP	0.46	0.60							
Self-congruity CON	0.00	0.01	0.55						
Appearance APP	0.19	0.20	0.00	0.54					
Price PR	0.07	0.01	0.00	0.03	0.59				
General attributes ATT2	0.25	0.37	0.00	0.15	0.03	0.51			

Functional benefits ATT1	0.40	0.36	0.00	0.10	0.06	0.30	0.58		
Repurchase intention RPI	0.04	0.05	0.08	0.04	0.00	0.06	0.02	0.64	
Brand preference PRF	0.50	0.34	0.01	0.21	0.01	0.33	0.37	0.11	0.59

Assessment of common method variance

The common method variance (CMV) is "attributable to the measurement method rather than to the constructs the measures represent" (Podsakoff, Mackenzie and Lee, 2003, p.879). It implies that "covariance among measured items is driven by the fact that some or all of the responses are collected with the same type of scale" (Hair *et al.*, 2006, p.833). Method biasedness is a crucial problem that represents an important source of measurement error. Therefore, several procedures were used to reduce method biases, such as assuring the respondents that there were no right or wrong answers, and to answer honestly based on their opinions. In addition, the questions were designed in a simple way, lacking ambiguity or double-barrelled and confusing questions. To assess the potential of such a problem among the measured variables used in the study, Harman's single-factor test was used. Accordingly, using principal component analysis (PCA) and an unrotated factor solution all of the variables were loaded. The basic assumption of this technique is that if a single factor accounts for more than 50% of the covariation, then the results indicate the existence of a method bias problem (Podsakoff, Mackenzie and Lee, 2003). Based on CMV analysis, the variables used in this study are not constrained by CMV; thus, there was no concern.

Hypotheses testing

For the hypotheses testingSEM approach was used using AMOS software.The model yielded adequate fit with chi-square at 531.4 and 319 degrees of freedom, significant at the level of $p<0.005$. The other fit indices were within the acceptable range ($\chi^2/df = 1.6$, GFI = 0.90, AGFI

= 0.86, IFI = 0.95, CFI = 0.94, RMSEA = 0.045 and SRMR = 0.049). Diagnosing the path estimates using critical t-value tested the hypotheses. Of the thirteen hypotheses, only ten were supported while three were rejected. Table 3 summarises the results of the hypotheses testing. The results reveal partial support of H1, confirming the significant, positive impact of brand experience on brand preference but not on repurchase intention. The results provide evidence that brand experience generates evaluations and judgements toward a brand and that it is a source of preference as postulated by Brakus *et al.* (2009) and Gentile *et al.* (2007). The idea that consumers learn from their experiential responses induced either directly or indirectly is also supported (Daugherty and Frank, 2008). These responses gleaned during experiencing of the brand are stored in the consumer's memory, providing an informational base for evaluating the brand (Goode *et al.*, 2010). On the other hand, the repurchase intention refers to consumers' decision about repeating the action of purchasing the brand. The insignificant impact of brand experience on repurchase intention suggests that consumers have to evaluate their experiences to achieve a behavioural consequence. However, the indirect impact of consumer experiences on repurchase intention has been supported by Rose *et al.* (2011) in an online context through satisfaction and loyalty (Iglesias, Singh and Batista-Foguet, 2011). The second hypothesis postulated the significant impact of attribute perceptions on brand experiences and brand preferences. According to the results, consumers' attribute perceptions were divided into two constructs, namely: brand general attributes and functional benefits. The results support the brand general attributes construct as being positively and significantly related to brand experience. This finding is consistent with Sheng and Teo (2012), demonstrating the significant impact of product attributes on consumer brand experiences. However, the functional benefits were not related to consumer brand experiences, showing consistency with the study by Lee *et al*. (2011), which revealed that users' perception of the utilitarian benefits of technological products is not related to

consumer emotional responses. The results yield strong support for the impact of both the general attributes of a brand and the functional benefits on brand preferences; therefore, the results show partial support of H2. The data does not support the positive influence of price perception on brand experience (H3a). This means that consumer responses to price perception, the fairness of the monetary value or as an indicator of quality, do not create positive experiences with the brand. Ward, Light and Goldstine, (1999) suggest that consumers have misconceptions about the price of technological products. However, price significantly and positively influenced consumer brand preferences, in support of H3b, and showed consistency with Alamro and Rowley's (2011) study findings. The data supports H4, confirming the significant, positive impact of appearance perception on both brand experience and brand preference. This finding is consistent with the majority of studies (e.g. Chitturri *et al.*, 2008; Lee *et al.*, 2011), demonstrating that the hedonic attributes of a brand, including appearance or aesthetic design, contributes to consumers' experiential responses. Also, the visual appeal of a brand generates a positive attitude towards the brand (Lee, 2009), and enhances consumer preference (Veryzer, 1993). Brand personality had a significant impact on brand experiences (H5a), but an insignificant impact either on brand preference (H5b) or on repurchase intention (H5c). The significant positive impact of brand personality on brand experience reveals that consumer experiences reflect symbolism consumption (Addis and Holbrook, 2001). Additionally, the brand's symbolic meaning, measured by self-expression, has been proven by Lee *et al.* (2011) to have a significant impact on emotional experiences. In addition, the results confirmed the significant impact of self-congruity on brand preferences and repurchase intention; thus, supporting H6. In this study, the symbolic aspects of a brand are denoted by brand personality and self-congruity. The results supported the significant, positive impact of self-congruity on brand preference and repurchase intention, which is analogous with the majority of empirical studies (Jamal and Al-Marri, 2007; Ericksen, 1997;

Sirgy *et al.*, 1997). Surprisingly, the results did not confirm the brand personality relationship with either brand preference or repurchase intention. Rather, the findings revealed that the five factors of brand knowledge; attribute perceptions, price, appearance, self-congruity and brand experience, significantly influence brand preference. These factors explain 62.5% of the variance in brand preference. As expected, there was a direct, positive relationship between brand preference and repurchase intention (H7)..

Table 3: Summary of SEM results

Hypotheses				Standardised Path Estimate	Critical Value	Significance
H1a:	EXP	→	PRF	0.450	4.726	0.001
H1b:	EXP	→	RPI	0.096	0.850	0.395
H2a:	ATT1	→	EXP	0.320	4.013	0.001
	ATT2	→	EXP	0.014	0.182	0.855
H2b:	ATT1	→	PRF	0.192	2.338	0.019
	ATT2	→	PRF	0.208	2.627	0.009
H3a:	PR	→	EXP	-0.112	-2.042	0.041
H3b:	PR	→	PRF	0.128	2.638	0.008
H4a:	APP	→	EXP	0.130	2.104	0.035
H4b:	APP	→	PRF	0.147	2.320	0.020
H5a:	BP	→	EXP	0.398	4.714	0.001
H5b:	BP	→	PRF	0.006	0.066	0.889
H5c:	BP	→	RPI	0.176	1.808	0.071
H6a:	CON	→	PRF	0.110	2.062	0.039
H6b:	CON	→	RPI	0.296	2.298	0.022
H7:	PRF	→	RPI	0.245	2.280	0.023

Testing mediation

The model identified both brand experience and brand preference as mediators. The role of the mediators was examined following Baron and Kenny (1986) and Hair *et al.* (2010). The results reveal a direct significant impact of the brand general attributes (ATT1), appearance (APP), on both brand experience and brand preference. In addition, brand personality has a direct significant impact on brand experience, and an insignificant impact on brand preference. However, in the absence of brand experience, a significant relationship between brand personality and brand preference was confirmed. The test of mediation supported the assertion that the relationships between brand general attributes and appearance, and brand preference are partially mediated by brand experience. Additionally, brand experience fully mediates the relationship between brand personality and brand preference. The results also confirm full mediation of brand preference on the relationship between brand experience and repurchase intention. The significance of indirect paths via mediators was examined using Sobel's (1982) test. The results of the Sobel test support the significance of indirect paths, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Decomposition of effects analysis

Direct path	Direct effect	Significance	Indirect path via mediator	Indirect effect	Significance	Total effect
ATT → PRF	0.19	0.019	ATT → EXP → PRF	0.14	0.042	0.34
APP → PRF	0.15	0.020	APP → EXP → PRF	0.06	0.033	0.21
BP → PRF	0.012	0.889	BP → EXP →PRF	0.18	0.044	0.18
EXP → RPI	0.19	0.006	EXP → PRF → RPI	0.13	0.036	0.13

Discussion

The results of the hypotheses testing provide various insights to consumer preferences for brand with regard to the product type, mobile phones, and the context, mobile phone users in

Egypt, where the study was conducted. Through these insights optimal answers to the research questions have been reached. Firstly, the study demonstrated that consumer perceptions on different brand meanings build their brand preferences. The slight differences between the impact of attribute and non-attribute associations indicate that these factors are at the same level of importance in shaping consumer preferences. Secondly, most prior studies focus on the impact of experience referring to the accumulated knowledge (e.g. Heilman, Bowman and Wright, 2000) or the usage impact on changing consumers perception on the weight or importance of brand attributes or benefits (Hamilton and Thompson, 2007). However, the results provide evidence that brand experience reflecting consumer responses to various brand-stimuli and the acquired knowledge can be a source of preference, and generate evaluations or judgements toward a brand. These responses are induced regardless to the type or level of experiences (Brakus *et al.*, 2009; Daugherty, Li and Biocca., 2008; Gupta and Vajic, 1999; Meyer and Schwager, 2007), ensuring the delivery of the brand value to consumers (Gentile *et al.*, 2007; Sheng and Teo, 2012). The results were also consistent with Hoeffler and Arilely, (1999), thus emphasising that consumer experience is the foundation of preferences. Thirdly, the results show support for the significance of the link between the disposition of the consumer to favour certain brand and his/her willingness to buy that brand again. This result extends the role of preferences from motivating the consumer intentions to the repetition of the act. In addition, the study findings of the mediating role of brand preference to the relationship between the brand experience and the repurchase intentions add new insights: first, it suggests that consumer decisions to repurchase the brand and repeat their experiences will not occur unless it results in favourable predispositions toward a certain brand among the alternatives. Thus, brand preferences stand as an evaluation of consumer experiences, with the brand interpreting his/her desire to repeat the experiences and repurchase the brand. Second, based on the results, the indication of preferences can be considered as a linkage between the informational processing and the psychological and experiential responses on the one hand, and the consumers' willingness and

volition on the other hand. Third, the positive impact of preferences on future acts might be an indication of consumer intentions for consistent preferences.

Study Implications

A number of theoretical and managerial insights can be drawn from the model which will be discussed in detail in the following sections.

Theoretical implications

The present research contributes to existing marketing and branding literature in five ways: First, the research fills the gap in the extant literature by building a model which provides an understanding of consumer brand preferences and future purchase intentions. The model addresses consumer brand preferences using a balanced position between consumer rationality and irrationality. Unlike the traditional model, which focuses on brand utilitarian beliefs as the main drivers of brand preferences, this model combines the objective and subjective meanings of brand and holistic consumer experience. Therefore, the research contributes to the theory by supporting the importance of integrating consumers' experiential responses into cognitive information processing in developing their preferences, which link to future psychological responses. Second, the model expands the dominant role of experience and includes it as a direct source of brand preference. The holistic nature of consumer experience emphasises other non-cognitive responses in building consumer preference such as emotional responses, investigated in prior studies (Allen *et al.*, 2005; Grimm, 2005). These experiences play a significant role in delivering perceptual values created from the brand attributes. Therefore, the model implies the important role that brand experience plays in transferring the inherent values of brand attributes to brand preferences. The insignificance of

a direct relationship between brand experience and repurchase intention points to a phenomenon that brand preference can act as an evaluation of consumer experience. Therefore, consumers, having the intention to repurchase the brand, reflect on their desire to repeat the experience. Third, the findings enhance the understanding of consumer cognitive information processing in preference development. It indicates that functional, utilitarian attributes are not the focal interest of a consumer trade-off between multiple brand alternatives. The economic factor presented by price plays a significant role. Other symbolic and aesthetic associations are important in developing a biased predisposition by the consumer towards certain brands. Fourth, the study differentiates between the impact of brand imagery associations addressed by brand personality and self-congruity. A key finding concerns the role of brand personality; the extant literature supports the significant direct impact of brand personality on brand preference (e.g. Aaker, 1997). However, the findings did not support the direct impact of brand personality on brand preference, except indirectly through brand experience. This indicates the importance of experiencing the brand in order to transfer the brand personality to symbolic meanings, and thus to enhance consumer preference. Therefore, the direct impact of brand imagery associations on brand preference is reflected by the self-congruity theory. Finally, an important methodological implication is the utilisation of the 'big five' personality traits to measure brand personality, in addition to the use of the aggregate level to measure their impact on brand preference. The study addresses consumer brand preferences in a different geographical area than the majority of the studies that focus on America or European countries. This provides an understanding of cultural conditioning on consumer brand preferences and behavioural responses.

Practical implications

One of the primary goals of practitioners is to build strong brands that are able to influence consumer preference and stimulate future purchasing decisions. This study has implications for practitioners wishing to build consumer preference for brands of technological products, based on brand meanings and delivered experiences. The study suggests three levels for building high-tech brands. The first level represents the brand attribute cognition related to its functional attributes and benefits. The second level is positioning the brand in consumers' minds using its aesthetic attributes and symbolic associations. At the third level are the brand experiences, where companies build their competitive advantage. At this level managerial attention should be drawn to the importance of brand experience subjective aspects. In order to build strong brand and position it is important for mangers to recognise the strategic significance of both sensorial and emotional experiences. Price is important in developing consumer preferences. However, the impact that price can have on consumer preferences and experiences provides important insights about the pricing strategies of advanced technological products. Consumers differentiating between brands give weight to the price and prefer the alternative at a reasonable price offering good value for money. However, price still reflects consumers' monetary sacrifice to experience the brand. Therefore, it is suggested that managers need to develop pricing strategies that stimulate consumer irrationality by reflecting the experiential value in the price to reduce consumer consciousness about low prices. The study reveals the importance of functional attributes/benefits related to brand performance rather than unrelated attributes on building consumer preferences. Moreover, brand experience is revealed to be a significant direct antecedent of brand preference in addition to its mediating role. These insights are important for technological product design in the mobile phone domain. The study suggests that it is the

balance between the functional, hedonic and symbolic attributes of mobile phones that enhance consumer preferences by shaping their brand experiences. The differentiation between the discrete impact of symbolic associations explicated by brand personality and self-congruity reveal important insights on positioning brands. It is important to reflect on the brand personality appeal, the superiority of the personality type and the novelty of attributes of the brand via its personality or symbolic meaning and in addition, through experienced managers, can build consistent consumer predisposition toward the brand. This biased position provides the link between brand experience and repeat purchasing behaviour. Accordingly, brand experience is an important long-term strategic tool for mangers used to build long-standing preference, thus influencing the behavioural tendencies into actual repeating behaviour.

Conclusions

This study attempts to understand consumer brand preferences from the experiential viewpoint. The research goes beyond the notion of experience used in prior preference studies; examining its impact on the relationship between the attributes and preferences. These studies focus on the impact of experience level or type changing consumer's preference level. The research considers experience reflected by consumer responses resulting from interactions with the brand. It then focuses on the sub-conscious private experiences stored in the consumer's memory, reflecting the holistic responses to the brand stimuli as a source of developing brand preference. This extension of experience meaning contributes to the research significance in several ways. The brand experiences include the subjective, internal and behavioural responses evoked by consumers interacting with the brand. This holistic nature of experience offers insight into the importance of responses other than only the emotional experiences investigated in prior studies. Additionally, the value

embedded in brand offerings is delivered by, and linked to, consumer experiences toward brands that build consumer predispositions. Yet, this does not imply that consumers neglect brand functional attributes and benefits. The paper proposes that gaining consumer preferences requires delivering an adequate balance of the brand meanings. Moreover, differences are clarified in the overlapping terms reflecting symbolic brand associations. The research implies that the symbolic effect of the brand on preference is exerted through its power to reflect or express the favourable identity of the consumer. Consumers perceive this impact either by matching or experiencing the brand, not by describing the brand using human traits. It suggests the importance of experiencing the brand in order to transfer the inherent value of brand attributes into brand preferences. In the context of technological products, the role of brand personality in shaping consumers' brand experience is emphasised. Thus, it draws an important insight into how consumers perceive the symbolic value of humanising the brand.

The findings of this study would enable managers to develop an experiential branding strategy; position, build and conceive the brand in consumers' minds, hence, aligning the brand experience. This strategy will allow companies to build the brand meaning in consumers' minds, determine the appropriate pricing strategy, position the brand, specify its image, and target the marketing segment. Subsequently, companies will be able to engage the experiential marketing by building consumer experience and creating experiential values for the brand.

Limitations and proposed future research

This study is not without limitations; the proposed and validated model of the current research depends on the consumer-brand relationship. Therefore, the focus is on brand signals, defined by consumer perceptions and experiences relative to the brand inputs shaping

his/her preferences and future purchasing decisions. Other factors representing the relationship between consumers and a company, such as corporate credibility, should be considered in the future.

The study did not investigate the impact of consumer demographics, therefore, a proposed direction for future research is to uncover the role of individual differences affecting their perceptions and experiential responses in developing brand preferences. Other limitations are related to the research design; the study was reliant on convenience sampling, a non-probability sampling technique. The main constraint with this lies in its limited ability to assure the legitimacy of generalising the research results to the population, although the relatively large sample size and the demographic representativeness of the sample allow the assessment of external validity, to an extent. Moreover, the study findings are limited to a single geographical area. Therefore, it is recommended for future work to test the model in different developing countries using larger populations. The study addresses one type of technological product namely the mobile phone; therefore, future studies could address other types of technological products such as laptops, tablets and digital TVs to support the study findings.

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Appendix A: EFA of brand experience

	Component			
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**
EXT01 I engage in a lot of thinking when I encounter this brand	.808			
EXT02 I am thinking what the new model of this brand will look like	.763			
EXT03 This brand provide solution to communication problems	.751			
EXT05 This brand is more than a mobile phone	.711			
EXT04 I am always up-to-date with this brand	.675			
EXB04 This brand gets me to think about my behaviour		.883		
EXB05 This brand is part of my daily life		.853		
EXB03 This brand tries to remind me of activities I can do		.732		
EXB06 This brand fits my way of life		.546		
EXE06 This brand tries to put me in a certain mood			.830	
EXE01 This brand is an emotional brand			.805	
EXE05 I am pleased with this brand			.700	
EXE02 There is an emotional bond between me and this brand			.594	
EXS02 This brand excite my senses				.836
EXS01 This brand makes a strong impression on my visual sense				.781

EXS03 This brand is interesting in a sensory way				.748
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.				

Appendix B: EFA of brand personality

	Component			
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**
BP_AG05 Friendly	.749			
BP_AG02 Altruistic	.742			
BP_AG04 Generous	.727			
BP_EX05 Happy	.677			
BP_AG06 Faithful	.655			
BP_AG07 Pleasant	.576			
BP_EX01 Active	.571			
BP_CS03 Efficient		.777		
BP_CS01 Reliable		.765		
BP_CS02 Precise		.753		
BP_CS04 Practical		.719		
BP_EM02 Calm			.811	
BP_EM04 Stable			.781	
BP_EM03 Level-head			.756	
BP_EM01 Patient			.666	
BP_OP03 Innovative				.774
BP_OP02 Intelligent				.733
BP_OP04 Modern				.707
BP_OP05 Up-to-date				.702
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.				