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Brand Experience: What Is It? How Is It Measured? Does It Affect Loyalty?

Brand experience is conceptualized as sensations, feelings, cognitions, and behavioral responses evoked by brand-related stimuli that are part of a brand's design and identity, packaging, communications, and environments. The authors distinguish several experience dimensions and construct a brand experience scale that includes four dimensions: sensory, affective, intellectual, and behavioral. In six studies, the authors show that the scale is reliable, valid, and distinct from other brand measures, including brand evaluations, brand involvement, brand attachment, customer delight, and brand personality. Moreover, brand experience affects consumer satisfaction and loyalty directly and indirectly through brand personality associations.

Keywords: experience marketing, brand experience, customer experience management, scale development, marketing communications

How do consumers experience a brand? How is brand experience measured? Does brand experience affect consumer behavior? Many useful constructs and measurements have been developed recently in the branding literature, including brand personality, brand community, brand trust, brand attachment, and brand love (Aaker 1997; Carroll and Ahuvia 2006; Delgado-Ballester, Munuera-Alemán, and Yagüe-Guillén 2003; McAlexander, Schouten, and Koenig 2002; Thomson, MacInnis, and Park 2005). However, a conceptualization and scale for measuring brand experiences has not yet been developed. In addition, research has studied contexts in which specific product and service experiences arise (Arnould, Price, and Zinkhan 2002). However, research has largely ignored the exact nature and dimensional structure of brand experiences.

Notably, brand experience has attracted a lot of attention in marketing practice. Marketing practitioners have come to realize that understanding how consumers experience brands is critical for developing marketing strategies for goods and services. Many trade writings have appeared that present useful concepts as well as some ad hoc experience measurements (Chattopadhyay and Laborie 2005; Pine and Gilmore 1999; Schmitt 1999, 2003; Shaw and Ivens 2002; Smith and Wheeler 2002).

In this article, we present both a conceptual analysis of brand experience and a brand experience scale. As with other brand research, the development of a brand experience scale must go hand-in-hand with conceptual development of the construct itself. We need to identify the underlying dimensions of brand experience (analogous to the "Big Five" dimensions of brand personality or the dimensions of affection, connection, and passion that make up

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brand attachment) and develop a scale that can measure the strength with which a brand evokes each experience dimension. However, the experience construct is not as clearly associated with one particular basic discipline (e.g., psychology) as other brand constructs are. For example, brand personality and brand attachment have been defined on the basis of equivalent concepts in personality and developmental psychology; as a result, the development of scale items was relatively straightforward. In contrast, writing on experience can be found in a wide range of fields, including marketing, philosophy, cognitive science, and management practice. Therefore, we must clearly conceptualize our construct and develop scale items based on this conceptualization.

To define and conceptualize the brand experience construct, we begin with a review of consumer and marketing research, which examines when experiences occur and how they affect judgments, attitudes, and other aspects of consumer behavior. Next, we review the literature in philosophy, cognitive science, and applied management to distinguish brand experience dimensions and develop a brand experience scale. We then examine the psychometric properties of the scale using standard scale validation procedures. Finally, we test whether brand experience affects consumer satisfaction and loyalty.

The Experience Concept in Consumer and Marketing Research

Consumer and marketing research has shown that experiences occur when consumers search for products, when they shop for them and receive service, and when they consume them (Arnould, Price, and Zinkhan 2002; Brakus, Schmitt, and Zhang 2008; Holbrook 2000). We discuss each in turn.

Product Experience

Product experiences occur when consumers interact with products—for example, when consumers search for products and examine and evaluate them (Hoch 2002). The product experience can be direct when there is physical

contact with the product (Hoch and Ha 1986) or indirect when a product is presented virtually or in an advertisement (Hoch and Ha 1986; Kempf and Smith 1998). Respondents are typically asked to reflect on a combination of direct and indirect product experiences to investigate how the combination affects product judgments, attitudes, preferences, purchase intent, and recall (Hoch and Deighton 1989; Hoch and Ha 1986; Huffman and Houston 1993).

Shopping and Service Experience

Shopping and service experiences occur when a consumer interacts with a store's physical environment, its personnel, and its policies and practices (Hui and Bateson 1991; Kerin, Jain, and Howard 2002). Thus, research in this area investigates how atmospheric variables and salespeople affect the experience (Arnold et al. 2005; Boulding et al. 1993; Jones 1999; Ofir and Simonson 2007). Several articles have investigated customers' interaction with salespeople and how that experience affects customers' feelings, brand attitudes, and satisfaction (Grace and O'Cass 2004).

Consumption Experience

Experiences also occur when consumers consume and use products. Consumption experiences are multidimensional and include hedonic dimensions, such as feelings, fantasies, and fun (Holbrook and Hirschman 1982). Much of the interpretive research on consumption experiences has analyzed hedonic goals that occur during and after the consumption of, for example, museums, river rafting, baseball, and skydiving (Arnould and Price 1993; Celsi, Rose, and Leigh 1993; Holt 1995; Joy and Sherry 2003).

In summary, experiences arise in a variety of settings. Most experiences occur directly when consumers shop, buy, and consume products. Experiences can also occur indirectly—for example, when consumers are exposed to advertising and marketing communications, including Web sites.

Conceptualizing Brand Experience

Most of the research on experiences to date has focused on utilitarian product attributes and category experiences, not on experiences provided by brands. When consumers search for, shop for, and consume brands, they are exposed to utilitarian product attributes. However, they are also exposed to various specific brand-related stimuli, such as brand-identifying colors (Bellizzi and Hite 1992; Gorn et al. 1997; Meyers-Levy and Peracchio 1995), shapes (Veryzer and Hutchinson 1998), typefaces, background design elements (Mandel and Johnson 2002), slogans, mascots, and brand characters (Keller 1987). These brand-related stimuli appear as part of a brand's design and identity (e.g., name, logo, signage), packaging, and marketing communications (e.g., advertisements, brochures, Web sites) and in environments in which the brand is marketed or sold (e.g., stores, events). These brand-related stimuli constitute the major source of subjective, internal consumer responses, which we refer to as "brand experience."

Thus, we conceptualize brand experience as subjective, internal consumer responses (sensations, feelings, and cognitions) and behavioral responses evoked by brand-related stimuli that are part of a brand's design and identity, packaging, communications, and environments. In the following sections, we explicate the brand experience construct further and differentiate it from other brand concepts. Most important, we distinguish various dimensions of brand experience.

Further Explication of the Brand Experience Construct

Brand experiences vary in strength and intensity; that is, some brand experiences are stronger or more intense than others. As with product experiences, brand experiences also vary in valence; that is, some are more positive than others, and some experiences may even be negative. Moreover, some brand experiences occur spontaneously without much reflection and are short-lived; others occur more deliberately and last longer. Over time, these long-lasting brand experiences, stored in consumer memory, should affect consumer satisfaction and loyalty (Oliver 1997; Reicheld 1996).

Differences Between Brand Experience and Other Brand Constructs

Brand experience is related but also conceptually distinct from other brand constructs. In particular, brand experience differs from evaluative, affective, and associative constructs, such as brand attitudes, brand involvement, brand attachment, customer delight, and brand personality.

Attitudes are general evaluations based on beliefs or automatic affective reactions (Fishbein and Ajzen 1975; Murphy and Zajonc 1993). In contrast, brand experiences are not general evaluative judgments about the brand (e.g., "I like the brand"). They include specific sensations, feelings, cognitions, and behavioral responses triggered by specific brand-related stimuli. For example, experiences may include specific feelings, not just an overall "liking." At times, experiences may result in general evaluations and attitudes, especially evaluations of the experience itself (e.g., "I like the experience"). However, the overall attitude toward the experience captures only a small part of the entire brand experience.

Brand experience also differs from motivational and affective concepts, such as involvement (Zaichkowsky 1985), brand attachment (Thomson, MacInnis, and Park 2005), and customer delight (Oliver, Rust, and Varki 1997). Involvement is based on needs, values, and interests that motivate a consumer toward an object (e.g., a brand). Antecedents of involvement include the perceived importance and personal relevance of a brand (Zaichkowsky 1985). Brand experience does not presume a motivational state. Experiences can happen when consumers do not show interest in or have a personal connection with the brand. Moreover, brands that consumers are highly involved with are not necessarily brands that evoke the strongest experiences.

If involvement can be characterized by mild affect, brand attachment refers to a strong emotional bond (i.e., "hot affect") between a consumer and a brand, as evidenced by its three dimensions—affection, passion, and connection

(Park and MacInnis 2006; Thomson, MacInnis, and Park 2005). In contrast to brand attachment, brand experience is not an emotional relationship concept. As we described previously, experiences are sensations, feelings, cognitions, and behavioral responses evoked by brand-related stimuli. Over time, brand experiences may result in emotional bonds, but emotions are only one internal outcome of the stimulation that evokes experiences.

As with brand attachment, customer delight is characterized by arousal and positive affect; it can be considered the affective component of satisfaction (Oliver, Rust, and Varki 1997). Customer delight results from disconfirming, surprising consumption (Oliver, Rust, and Varki 1997). In contrast to customer delight, brand experiences do not occur only after consumption; they occur whenever there is a direct or indirect interaction with the brand. Moreover, a brand experience does not need to be surprising; it can be both expected or unexpected.

Finally, brand experience is distinct from brand associations and brand image (Keller 1993). One of the most studied constructs of brand associations is brand personality (Aaker 1997). Consumers tend to endow brands with human characteristics that result in a brand personality, which consists of five dimensions—sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, and ruggedness (Aaker 1997). Brand personality is based on inferential processes (Johar, Sengupta, and Aaker 2005). That is, consumers are not sincere or excited about the brand; they merely project these traits onto brands. In contrast, brand experiences are actual sensations, feelings, cognitions, and behavioral responses. Thus, because brand experience differs from brand evaluations, involvement, attachment, and customer delight, brand experience is also conceptually and empirically distinct from brand personality.

Dimensions of Brand Experience

To identify dimensions of brand experience, we next review pertinent work in philosophy, cognitive science, and applied writings on experiential marketing and management. In this literature, across a variety of disciplines, a fairly consistent set of experience dimensions, which are highly relevant to brands, has been proposed.

Philosophical Investigations

The philosopher John Dewey (1922, 1925) views experience as the intertwining of human beings and their environments. He critiques the purely cognitive Kantian view of experience as knowledge, arguing that knowledge (classifying, analyzing, and reasoning about things) is only one part of a person's understanding of the world. In addition to intellectual experiences resulting from knowledge, experiences also include perceiving (through the senses), feeling, and doing. Moreover, human beings are fundamentally connected with other people. Following Dewey, Dubé and LeBel (2003) distinguish four "pleasure dimensions": intellectual, emotional, social, and physical pleasures.

Cognitive Science

Cognitive scientists have investigated "mental modules," or special purpose computational systems that respond to specific environmental cues and solve a restricted class of problems (Fodor 1998). Pinker (1997) identifies four mental modules that correspond closely to the experiences that Dewey (1922, 1925) postulates: sensory perception, feelings and emotions, creativity and reasoning, and social relationships. However, Pinker does not list a separate "doing" module; he considers bodily experiences and motor actions and behaviors part of the "sensory-motor module," similar to Lakoff and Johnson's (1999) concept of embodied cognition.

Applied Writings on Experience Marketing and Management

Pine and Gilmore (1999) study "staged experiences" in retail environments and events. For these settings, they distinguish aesthetic (including visual, aural, olfactory, and tactile aspects), educational, entertaining, and escapist experiences. Although Pine and Gilmore's framework is limited to retail settings and events, their four experience dimensions nonetheless overlap with some of the dimensions of experience we discussed previously, thus confirming the need for conceptualizing a sensory/aesthetic, intellectual/educational, and emotional/entertaining dimension.

Schmitt (1999) proposes five experiences: sense, feel, think, act, and relate. The sense experience includes aesthetics and sensory qualities. Consistent with recent research in consumer behavior (Richins 1997), the feel experience includes moods and emotions. The think experience includes convergent/analytical and divergent/imaginative thinking. The act experience refers to motor actions and behavioral experiences. Finally, the relate experience refers to social experiences, such as relating to a reference group. The five experiences are closely related to Dewey's (1922, 1925) categorization, Dubé and LeBel's (2003) pleasure construct, and Pinker's (1997) mental modules, especially if we view Pinker's sensory module as including sensory and behavioral components.

Summary

There has been considerable agreement in the categorization of experiences by philosophers, cognitive scientists, and management thinkers. Therefore, for the scale development that follows, it is necessary to generate items along the five experience dimensions that broadly emerged from our literature review: sensory, affective, intellectual, behavioral, and social.

In line with our conceptualization, the experience dimensions are evoked by brand-related stimuli (e.g., colors, shapes, typefaces, designs, slogans, mascots, brand characters). Note that there is no one-to-one correspondence, such that a certain stimulus type would trigger a certain experience dimension and only that dimension. For example, although colors, shapes, typefaces, and designs usually result in sensory experience, they may also result in emotions (e.g., red for Coca-Cola) or intellectual experiences (e.g., when designs use complex patterns). Similarly,

although slogans, mascots, and brand characters may result in imaginative thoughts, they may also trigger emotions (e.g., "Bibendum," the Michelin Man) or stimulate actions (e.g., Nike's "Just Do It"). In addition, when consumers complete brand experience scales, such scales are usually not directly assessing the dynamic, "online" experience of the consumer in the here and now; rather, such scales typically assess a lasting trace stored in long-term memory based on multiple exposures to brand-related stimuli.

Before we develop the actual scale, we first report the results of an exploratory, qualitative study that we designed to determine whether the conceptualization of brand experience presented here was in line with consumers' conceptions of brand experience.

Consumers' Conceptions of Brand Experience

Are consumers' conceptions of experience similar to our conceptualization? To address this question, we asked graduate-level business students (N = 25) to describe their experience with a brand of their choice. We instructed participants to choose a brand that provides a strong experience for them, to list the brand, and then to describe their experience in an open-ended way on one sheet of paper. Next, we asked them to choose a brand in the same or a related category that provides a weak experience for them or no experience at all and to describe in an open-ended way the "sensations, feelings, thoughts, and behaviors that they might have or engage in, alone or with others." Note that, given the instructions, participants needed to rely on their own conceptions of experience for the experiential brand, but they were primed with terms related to experience dimensions for the weak experiential brand. This allowed for a conservative assessment of whether consumers shared our conception of experience and whether they perceived a difference between strong experiential and weak experiential brands.

Participants in the study provided open-ended responses for a variety of goods and service brands. They rated the following brands to be strong experiential brands: Abercrombie & Fitch, American Express, Apple/iPod (chosen by six respondents), The Body Shop, BMW, Crest, Disney, Google, HBO, Home Depot, MasterCard, Nike (chosen by four respondents), Starbucks, Target, W Hotel, Washington Mutual, and Williams-Sonoma. Participants provided descriptions of weak experiential brands for Aéropostale, Canon, Dell, Dick's Sporting Goods, Douglas, Dunkin' Donuts, Hilton, Macy's, Microsoft, Reebok (chosen by two respondents), Sony, Sur La Table, Tim Hortons, True Value, Visa (chosen by two respondents), Volkswagen, and Wal-Mart. Some respondents defined "category" more broadly than others (e.g., consumer electronics rather than MP3 players). Six respondents did not provide a specific weak experiential brand in the same category but described weak experiential brands in the category generically. Although these respondents did not strictly follow instructions, we included their responses to avoid biasing the results.

A content analysis of the open-ended responses indicated that all consumers had a concept of brand experience.

Respondents reported brand experiences that occurred when they shopped and consumed brands. They also viewed brand experiences as being evoked by brand-related stimuli. For each experiential brand, we asked two raters to select descriptions that corresponded with our conceptualization of sensory, affective, cognitive, behavioral, and social experiences. As an illustration, in Table 1, we present three descriptions per strong experiential brand, which had been selected by both raters. (For Apple and Nike, which had been selected as strong experiential brands by more than one respondent, we provide six descriptions each.) As Table 1 shows, participants provided descriptions of sensations (e.g., "touch and feel," "appeal to different senses," "smells nice and is visually warm"), a wide range of feelings (e.g., "fun," "refreshed," "inspired," "nostalgia"), analytical and imaginative thoughts (e.g., "the brand intrigues me," "I think of topics like animal testing, purity and wellness," "reminds me to use my imagination"), and behaviors (e.g., "I change the way I organize and interact with information," "I want to work out," "It's a place I want to go"). Participants also made occasional references to the social context of branded experiences (e.g., "It's like a membership in an exclusive, country-clubish community," "I am part of a 'smarter' community," "I feel like an athlete"). We also analyzed the descriptions for the weak experiential brands. In contrast to the strong experiential brands, participants described weak experiential brands mostly in terms of price and promotions, as well as functionality and basics, even though they were explicitly primed with an experiential terminology. For example, consider the following descriptions of Wal-Mart, Visa, and Aéropostale: "They focus on price as low as price can be; their retail stores are incredibly basic" (for Wal-Mart); "Visa is not about experience. Visa promotes being accepted everywhere. Visa is about convenience and reliability and less about how I as a customer feel about the brand"; "Aéro's brand stands for little more than cheap clothing" (for Aéropostale).

Two other findings are noteworthy. First, almost all descriptions of strong experiential brands were positive; only 2 of the 25 respondents provided some negative descriptions (see Table 1). Moreover, many descriptions were at the general level of experiences at which we provided our conceptualization. Only 6 respondents provided detailed descriptions of highly specific elements of their experiences—for example, by referring to the colors and design of Apple products, the background music or visual design in stores, or the way a BMW drives ("I love the sensations I get from BMW: The noise of the motor during acceleration; the grip on curves, the resistance on the steering wheel when I turn"). In summary, the qualitative study shows that consumers' conceptions of brand experience are aligned with the concept of brand experience we developed from prior research and theoretical writings in various disciplines.

Developing the Brand Experience Scale

Next, we develop a brand experience scale that captures the dimensions of brand experience and the level of experience

TABLE 1
Descriptions of Experiential Brands

Abercrombie & Fitch
- It's a complete experience when you enter the store.
- Stimulates me; sexy.
- It's like a membership in an exclusive, country-clubish community.

American Express
- It's an interactive experience.
- Part of luxury, sophistication, and exclusivity.
- Because of sponsoring activities, I feel fun, excitement, and entertainment.

Apple/iPod
- I love the touch and feel of the products.
- I enjoy playing with all the products.
- I am part of a "smarter" community.
- This brand intrigues me.
- I really feel Apple products go with my way of life.
- I use the iPod when I am jogging, and I exercise more because of the iPod.

The Body Shop
- Appeals to different senses.
- I think of topics like animal testing, purity, and wellness.
- I want to be with people that share the values that the brand promotes.

BMW
- I feel young; I feel stylish.
- It's just great to drive.
- A BMW is the symbol of my success.

Crest
- I feel refreshed.
- Don't really like the smell.
- Feels clean, fresh, and healthy.

Disney
- Stimulates my senses.
- I feel like a child; I feel warm and safe; I want to discover things; the brand reminds me to use my imagination.
- I feel part of the magic.

Google
- The search is elegant; it creates a mood of playfulness and curiosity.
- I feel happy and proud because I am "smart" and "in-the-know."
- With Google, I change the way I organize and interact with information.

HBO
- Puts me in a good mood.
- It's "discussion inducing"; I want to discuss the shows with others.
- I enjoy the entertainment.

Home Depot
- I did not know anything about construction, but I felt really comfortable.
- I felt confident and in good hands.
- Provides the experience that any customer can tackle any home improvement project.

MasterCard
- Makes me think about precious things in life.
- I feel more youthful than using American Express or Visa.
- Initially the "Priceless" campaign was emotive, but it's now simply a way of identifying the brand for me.

Nike
- Makes me think of how to live an active lifestyle.
- Makes me feel powerful.
- I want to work out.
- I feel inspired to start working out.
- I feel like an athlete.
- The store incites me to act, like swing the baseball bat, or put on the running shoes.
- I enjoy designing my own shoe that perfectly fits my personality.

Starbucks
- Smells nice and is visually warm.
- It's comfortable and puts me in a better mood.
- It's like being around a Barnes & Nobles crowd.

Target
- Shopping experience is very pleasant.
- Products are displayed to please the eye.
- Many stores are putting in Starbucks for an even more enhanced shopping experience.

W Hotel
- Being part of something fun, happening, and exciting.
- It was an amazing feeling to hang out in the lobby.
- Service is disappointing.

Washington Mutual
- I have positive feelings because of their friendliness.
- It's a place I want to go and do not have to go.
- I also had a negative one-time experience.

Williams-Sonoma
- I had a feeling of nostalgia.
- Full of memories of home.
- It's relaxed and unhurried.

evoked by the brand on each dimension. As part of the scale development, we must address methodological challenges. First, in contrast to some other brand scales adopted from existing scales in psychology, the development of a brand experience scale requires a broader search for acceptable items. Second, the items of the scale should focus on the degree to which a consumer has a sensory, affective, intellectual, behavioral, or social experience with a brand; they should not measure the specific sensory, affective, intellectual, behavioral, or social content of the experience (e.g., whether the experience is visually exciting or emotionally warm; what specific imaginary thoughts or behavioral actions come to mind). Several scales already provide highly specific measures for specific experiences, such as the visual product aesthetics scale (Bloch, Brunel, and Arnold 2003), emotions scales (Izard 1978), or the need-for-cognition scale (Cacioppo and Petty 1982). These scales focus on individual reactions to specific stimuli (e.g., well-designed products) or tasks (e.g., abstract thinking). They use multifaceted items to measure specific sensations (e.g., "I enjoy seeing displays of products that have superior design"; "When I see a product that has a really great design, I feel a strong urge to buy it"; Bloch, Brunel, and Arnold 2003), specific emotions (e.g., "affectionate," "attached," "passionate"; Thomson, MacInnis, and Park 2005), or specific intellectual processes (e.g., "I would pre-

fer complex to simple problems," "The notion of thinking abstractly appeals to me"; Cacioppo and Petty 1982). Although reviewing such scales is important, the specific items on these scales are of limited value given our objective of measuring more generally whether and to what degree a consumer has a sensory, affective, intellectual, behavioral, or social experience.

In Study 1, we conduct an extensive literature review, select initial items along the five proposed dimensions, and ask experts and consumers to screen these items. In Study 2, we ask consumers to rate 21 brands on the remaining items of Study 1, and we conduct an exploratory factor analysis to determine the dimensionality of the scale; moreover, we show that the scale has criterion validity. In Study 3, using a shorter scale and a new sample of consumers and brands, we use exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses to further determine the scale dimensionality. In Study 4, we examine the dimensionality of the scale with a nonstudent population; in addition, we show that brand experience is distinct from general brand evaluations and that the scale is reliable over time. Finally, in Study 5, we examine the discriminant validity of the scale from motivational and affective brand scales, such as brand involvement, brand attachment, and customer delight.

Study 1: Item Generation and Selection

The objective of Study 1 was to generate specific items for the proposed dimensions of brand experience and to select the items that have face validity in terms of describing relevant brand experiences. To generate the items, we conducted an extensive literature search and review focused on concepts related to the five dimensions of experience. For sensory experiences, we examined research related to aesthetics and sensory perceptions (Arnheim 1974; Berlyne 1974; Bloch, Brunel, and Arnold 2003; Parsons and Conroy 2006; Schmitt and Simonson 1997). For affective experiences, we reviewed the literature on affect and emotions in psychology and consumer research (Edell and Burke 1987; Izard 1978; Plutchik and Kellerman 1989; Richins 1997). For intellectual experiences, we reviewed research on intelligence and cognitive style and literature on creative thinking and applications of creative thinking in advertising (Guilford 1956; Smith and Yang 2004). For behavioral experiences, we reviewed the literature on physical/behavioral and lifestyles aspects of consumption (Helman and De Chernatony 1999; Solomon 2004). Finally, for social experiences, we reviewed the literature on brand communities and relationships (Fournier 1998; McAlexander, Schouten, and Koenig 2002; Muniz and O'Guinn 2001).

From the literature review, we selected or constructed 131 items to refer to sensory impressions and appeals (25 items); feelings, sentiments, and emotions (30 items); curiosity, thinking, and problem solving (26 items); physical and bodily actions and behaviors (25 items); and relationships and belonging (25 items). Some of the selected items needed to be reworded to create linguistic style consistency for the scale so that the word "brand" appeared in each item and referred to or implied a consumer experience with the brand. We then included the items in a question-naire in random order. After the initial screening and face validity check, we retained 125 applicable items: 24 sensory, 29 affective, 26 intellectual, 23 behavioral, and 23 social items.

Next, 30 university students were paid $5 each to participate in a study on brand experience. We modeled instructions after the work of Thomson, MacInnis, and Park (2005). After explaining the concept of brand experience, we asked the participants to evaluate the extent to which the 125 items described their experiences with brands, using a seven-point Likert scale (1 = "not at all descriptive," and 7 = "extremely descriptive"). One-third of the items were negatively worded. We retained items with a mean value greater than 4.0 and a standard deviation less than 2.0, for a total of 83 items: 23 (7 negative) for sensory, 13 (7 negative) for affective, 10 (8 negative) for intellectual, 18 (7 negative) for behavioral, and 19 (7 negative) for social experiences.

Study 2: Item Reduction and Dimensionality of the Scale

We designed Study 2 to reduce the number of items and to examine two questions:

1. How many brand experience dimensions are there?
2. What experiences are captured by these dimensions?

In a pretest, we asked 68 university students to think of three product categories and to pick one brand in each category that they believed was marketed in an experiential way and another brand that they believed was not marketed in an experiential way. We retained brands with the highest frequency of mention, for a total of 21 brands (16 experiential and 5 nonexperiential). The chosen experiential brands were (frequencies of mention are in parentheses) Apple (13), Nike (10), Whole Foods (9), BMW (8), Sony (5), Jet-Blue (5), Tiffany (4), Virgin (4), Target (4), McDonald's (4), Coca-Cola (4), Abercrombie & Fitch (4), Reebok (4), W Hotels (4), Barnes & Noble (4), and Starbucks (4). The nonexperiential brands were Wal-Mart (7), IBM (6), Gristedes (5), Poland Spring (4), and Dell (4).

In the main study, we asked a new sample of students (N = 267) to indicate the extent to which the 83 items described their experiences with each of five brands listed (1 = "not at all descriptive," and 7 = "extremely descriptive"). We prepared five different versions of the questionnaire; each version included four experiential brands and one nonexperiential brand. To examine the consistency of ratings across the five groups, we included Apple, one of the experiential brands, in each version of the questionnaire. Each respondent received one of the five versions randomly. To reduce primacy and recency effects, in each version, we varied the order of presentation of brands and items.

Following Thomson, MacInnis, and Park (2005), we removed the items that more than 10% of participants did not rate, assuming that these items were poorly understood. This resulted in the deletion of 4 items. We then conducted a factor analysis using Varimax rotation. The factor analysis revealed a nine-factor solution with eigenvalues greater than 1 (variance explained = 71%), but only the first four factors were significant based on a scree plot (variance explained = 62%). To interpret the four-factor solution, we examined

items that had a loading greater than .4 (88% of items had loadings greater than .4 on at least one factor). The four-factor analysis on the 83 items revealed two factors that were easy to interpret: Factor 3 (sensory experience) and Factor 4 (behavioral experience). Factors 1 and 2 included a mix of items: Factor 1 focused primarily on intellectual items, and Factor 2 focused on social and affective items.

To determine whether the four-factor solution could provide a more distinct structure and to reduce the number of items further, we also conducted an exploratory factor analysis that restricted the number of factors to four (variance explained = 62%) and then used a stricter loading criterion (>.7) to evaluate the Varimax rotated factors. Twenty items fulfilled the criterion. The results show a distinct pattern: Only sensory items loaded on the first factor (6 items), only intellectual items loaded on the second factor (6 items), and only behavioral items (2 items had loadings of greater than .7, and 1 item had a borderline loading of .69) loaded on the third factor. Finally, both affective and social items loaded on the fourth factor (5 items), suggesting that the socially worded items include strong emotional aspects. In line with Nunnally's (1978) criterion of .7, the Cronbach's alphas were satisfactory: They were high for intellectual items (.93), sensory items (.93), and social/affective items (.92), and they were adequate for behavioral items (.78).

To check the criterion validity of the new, shorter scale, we calculated the mean value of the 20 items for each of the 21 brands. Ratings on the Apple brand were high and consistent (all means ranged from 4.87 to 5.07), indicating that respondents in the five groups used the scale in a similar way. Moreover, the data support the criterion validity of the scale. Specifically, all the experiential brands had higher mean values than the nonexperiential brands. The means of experiential brands ranged from 3.44 to 5.01: 3.44 (Reebok), 3.60 (Abercrombie & Fitch), 3.65 (Target), 3.72 (W Hotels), 3.86 (Virgin), 4.00 (Coca-Coca), 4.02 (McDonald's), 4.09 (Barnes & Noble), 4.10 (JetBlue), 4.22 (Starbucks), 4.24 (Sony), 4.32 (Tiffany), 4.63 (Nike), 4.67 (Whole Foods), 4.83 (BMW), and 5.1 (Apple). In contrast, the means of nonexperiential brands were all lower: 2.92 (Gristedes), 3.08 (Wal-Mart), 3.20 (IBM), 3.27 (Poland Spring), and 3.33 (Dell). We performed 80 t-tests to examine statistically whether the mean of each experiential brand was significantly different from the mean of each nonexperiential brand. A total of 75 comparisons (94% of all comparisons) resulted in significant differences ($ps < .05$). The nonsignificant comparisons included Reebok and Abercrombie & Fitch. Specifically, the mean of Reebok was not significantly different from the means of Dell, Poland Spring, and IBM, and the mean of Abercrombie & Fitch was not significantly different from the means of Dell and Poland Spring.

Study 3: Further Item Reduction and Confirmation of the Dimensions

In Study 3, we reduced the number of scale items further and conducted both exploratory and confirmatory analyses. To test the stability of the scale, we employed a new sample of brands and respondents. This enabled us to examine

whether responses to the scale items were truly brand and respondent independent and, thus, indicative of a general brand experience.

To reduce the number of items further, two independent judges closely examined the 20 items in terms of semantic similarity. They omitted 8 items (3 sensory, 3 intellectual, and 2 social items of the social/affective dimension). The new scale resulted in 12 items, including 3 items for each of the four types of experience dimensions (see Table 2, Column 1).

We also prepared a different sample of 30 strong experiential brands (based on expert judgments). We divided them randomly into six groups of 5 brands each (see Table 3, Columns 1 and 2). Next, we asked a new sample of 193 students to evaluate the extent to which the 12 items were descriptive of their experience with each brand using a

TABLE 2
Study 3: Exploratory Factor Analysis: Revealed Brand Experience Dimensions

Item	Factor		
	Sensory/ Affective	Behavioral	Intellectual
This brand makes a strong impression on my visual sense or other senses.	**.75**	.34	.19
I find this brand interesting in a sensory way.	**.63**	.47	.15
This brand does not appeal to my senses.a	**.59**	.35	.22
This brand induces feelings and sentiments.	**.82**	.13	.27
I do not have strong emotions for this brand.a	**.72**	.12	.38
This brand is an emotional brand.	**.75**	.13	.17
I engage in physical actions and behaviors when I use this brand.	.18	**.80**	.22
This brand results in bodily experiences.	.33	**.77**	−.03
This brand is not action oriented.a	.13	**.72**	.27
I engage in a lot of thinking when I encounter this brand.	.39	.12	**.76**
This brand does not make me think.a	.26	.11	**.80**
This brand stimulates my curiosity and problem solving.	.15	.24	**.75**

aItems are negatively phrased and reverse coded.
Notes: Factor analysis uses Varimax rotation. Bold values indicate the factor on which each item predominantly loads.

TABLE 3
Study 3: Means by Brand for Overall Experience and Experience Dimensions

Brand	Group	Overall Experience	Sensory	Affective	Intellectual	Behavioral
LEGO	3	5.34[c]	5.34[b]	5.24	5.60[c]	5.19[a]
Victoria's Secret	1	5.28[b]	5.78[c]	5.67[b]	4.18	5.51[b]
iPod	5	5.15[b]	5.70[b]	5.03	4.63[b]	5.24[b]
Starbucks	2	4.95[a]	5.55[b]	5.27[a]	4.35[a]	4.62
Disney	6	4.90	5.72[c]	5.78[c]	4.26	3.84
Puma	1	4.72	5.26[a]	4.63	3.50	5.51[b]
Viagra	4	4.70	4.70	4.82	3.85	5.35[b]
Ferrari	6	4.64	5.79[c]	4.75	3.36	4.67
Toys "R" Us	6	4.64	5.25[a]	5.16	3.62	4.52
Gatorade	4	4.56	4.85	4.33	3.55	5.52[b]
Hallmark	1	4.47	4.71	5.47[b]	4.39[b]	3.33
Ben & Jerry's	3	4.42	5.13[a]	4.42	3.56	4.58
Harley-Davidson	4	4.41	4.66	4.38	3.66	4.97
Adidas	5	4.33	4.46	4.02	3.14	5.68[c]
Nokia	1	4.26	4.63	3.71	4.14	4.56
Hershey's	5	4.17	4.90	4.75	3.22	3.80
Sudoku	6	4.07	4.03	3.31	5.27[c]	3.65
Blackberry	2	3.92	3.92	3.80	4.00	3.86
Samsung	3	3.86	4.32	3.32	3.87	3.91
L'Oréal	3	3.85	4.40	3.75	3.26	3.88
Gillette	3	3.74	4.14	3.46	2.87	4.49
Tropicana	5	3.63	4.42	3.76	2.95	3.39
Clinique	2	3.62	4.17	3.53	3.18	3.62
American Express	4	3.60	3.67	3.67	3.94	3.12
Prada	2	3.58	3.90	4.26	3.46	2.69
Motorola	5	3.52	3.57	3.20	3.56	3.73
Dannon	1	3.51	4.07	3.76	2.97	3.23
Calvin Klein	6	3.39	4.25	3.75	2.68	2.89
Crate & Barrel	4	3.27	3.55	3.31	3.35	2.91
La Prairie	2	2.97	2.99	3.01	2.80	3.08
Overall		4.18	4.60	4.25	3.71	4.17

[a]Moderately differentiated.
[b]Highly differentiated.
[c]Unique.
Notes: all $ps < .10$.

seven-point Likert scale (1 = "strongly disagree," and 7 = "strongly agree"). The students were paid $5 each to participate.

An exploratory factor analysis revealed three factors with eigenvalues greater than 1. The three factors explained 67% of the variance. After Varimax rotation, a clean factor structure emerged. As Table 2 shows, the 3 sensory and 3 affective items loaded on the first factor, the 3 behavioral items loaded on the second factor, and the 3 intellectual items loaded on the third factor (see Table 3).

Because we did not anticipate that both sensory and affective items would load on a single factor, we considered the possibility that these 6 items would load first on two first-order factors "nested" within the second-order sensory/ affective factor. Thus, we conducted another exploratory factor analysis on the 6 sensory and affective items only. After Varimax rotation, this subsequent analysis revealed two nested factors—the sensory factor and the affective factor—which explained 74% of the variance. We also assessed the internal reliability of the four dimensions of brand experience by calculating a Cronbach's alpha for each dimension using the 12-item scale. All values were satisfactory: the 3 sensory items = .83, the 3 affective items = .81, the 3 behavioral items = .76, and the 3 intellec-

tual items = .79. In addition, all individual items within each dimension averaged item-to-total correlations of .68, and all exceeded .52, indicating satisfactory levels of internal consistency.

On the basis of these results, we investigated the following models further: (1) the three-factor model (sensory/ affective, behavioral, and intellectual factors), (2) the four-factor model (sensory, affective, behavioral, and intellectual factors), and (3) the nested model (two first-order factors— behavioral items loading on one factor and intellectual items loading on another—plus two other first-order factors, sensory and affective, loading on a second-order factor).

To determine which measurement model fit the data best, we used structural equation modeling to conduct confirmatory factor analyses. In addition, we analyzed a model that assumed that all items loaded on a single brand experience construct (i.e., one-factor model), a one-factor second-order model with four subdimensions, and a one-factor second-order model with three subdimensions. For each model, except for the simple one-factor model, we investigated two cases: a case in which factors were allowed to be correlated and a case in which the factors were assumed to be orthogonal. Finally, we grouped the observations by

brands and centered the means of 12 items at zero to remove any brand effects.

The confirmatory factor analyses revealed that the best model was the four-factor model with correlated factors (for details, see Figure 1). The fit measures for that model suggested a reasonable fit: The goodness-of-fit index (GFI) = .92, the comparative fit index (CFI) = .91, and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = .08, all indicating acceptable fit, and $\chi^2(48) = 278.61$, $p < .001$. Bagozzi and Heatherton (1994) question the usefulness of

the chi-square statistic in similar models; thus, we considered other fit statistics more valuable in this context. In addition, the ratio between the chi-square statistic and the number of degrees of freedom was 5.8, close to 5, indicating an adequate fit (lower values are more desirable; Thomson, MacInnis, and Park 2005). The fit measures for this model were better than those for all other tested models, and the chi-square statistic of this model represented a significant improvement over any of the competing models, except for the one-factor second-order model (with four

FIGURE 1
Study 3: Confirmatory Factor Analysis: The Four-Factor Model
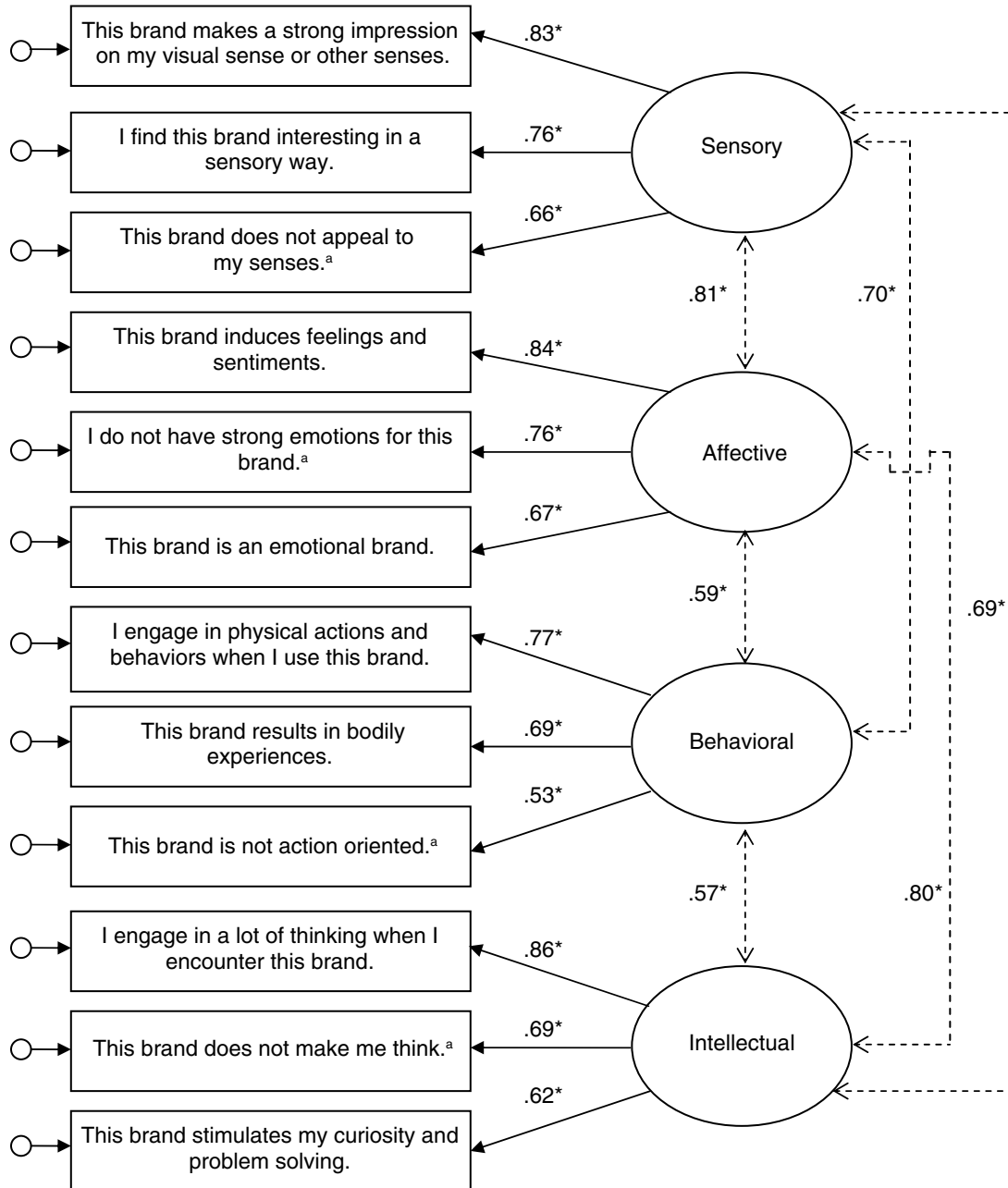
aReverse coded.
*p < .01.
Notes: All coefficient values are standardized and appear above the associated path. Dotted lines represent correlations.

correlated subdimensions), which had the same chi-square statistic of 278.61 (d.f. = 44) (for details, see Table 4) but a higher (i.e., inferior) RMSEA (.09).

Table 3 (Columns 3–7) shows the means of the 30 brands on the overall brand experience scale and its dimensions, ranked by degree of overall experience. Recall that experts preselected all brands to be experiential brands. Thus, any differences among the brands must be interpreted relative to the notion that all are experiential and that some of the perceived differences in the degree of experience may be specific to our sample. To assess whether an experiential brand is viewed as being differentiated from other experiential brands by our respondents in terms of its sensory, affective, intellectual, or behavioral experience, we conducted pairwise comparisons among the 30 brands on each experience dimension. For the comparisons, we treated all data as between subjects (all $ps < .10$). In Table 3, we refer to the group of brands with high means that were significantly different from all other brands (labeled with a superscript "c") as "unique." Excluding these, we refer to the group of brands that had high means and were significantly different from all other brands (labeled with a superscript "b") as "highly differentiated." Finally, excluding these, we refer to brands with high means that were significantly different from all remaining brands (labeled with a superscript "a") as "moderately differentiated."

As Table 3 shows, from the tests and cutoff criteria, on the sensory dimension (Column 4), Ferrari, Victoria's Secret, and Disney are unique; iPod, Starbucks, and LEGO are highly differentiated; and Puma, Toys "R" Us, and Ben & Jerry's are moderately differentiated from the other experiential brands. On the affective dimension (Column 5), Disney is unique, Victoria's Secret and Hallmark are highly differentiated, and Starbucks is moderately differentiated. On the intellectual dimension (Column 6), LEGO and Sudoku are unique, iPod and Hallmark are highly differentiated, and Starbucks is moderately differentiated. Finally, on the behavioral dimension (Column 7), Adidas is unique; Gatorade, Puma, Victoria's Secret, Viagra, and iPod are highly differentiated; and LEGO is moderately differentiated. Overall, respondents rated LEGO, Victoria's Secret,

iPod, and Starbucks as the most experiential brands; these brands were unique, highly differentiated, or moderately differentiated on overall experience (see Column 3) and on three of the four experience dimensions (see across columns).

Some of the comparative data among the experiential brands may seem surprising. For example, the iconic Harley-Davidson brand ranks only 13 on the list, behind brands such as LEGO, Victoria's Secret, iPod, and Starbucks, which stand out in terms of their overall experience. In addition, participants rated Toys "R" Us as a more sensory brand than Crate & Barrel. A reason for the relatively low ranking of these brands may be our sample of respondents; that is, students may have less direct experience with Harley-Davidson and Crate & Barrel than with other brands, and they may view these brands as icons of a prior, not their, generation.

To assess the criterion validity of the scale, we asked two experts to categorize each of the 30 brands as either a "highly experiential brand" or a "moderately experiential brand" and, on each dimension, as delivering either a "highly" or a "moderate" sensory, affective, intellectual, or behavioral experience. Interrater agreement was 85%; we included only agreed-on brands (overall and per dimension) in the subsequent analyses. Compared with brands that experts judged as moderately experiential, participants rated highly experiential brands significantly higher on overall experience (M = 4.81 versus M = 3.65) and on each of the experience dimensions (for sensory, M = 5.13 versus M = 3.89; for affective, M = 4.92 versus 3.64; for intellectual, M = 3.88 versus 3.21; and for behavioral, M = 5.03 versus 3.60; all $ps < .01$).

Study 4: Additional Reliability and Validity Tests of the Brand Experience Scale

The purpose of Study 4 was to validate the brand experience scale further in several ways. First, to provide evidence of consistency across populations, we conducted Study 4 in a real-life consumer setting with a nonstudent population. Interviewers intercepted 150 consumers (ranging in age

TABLE 4
Study 3: Confirmatory Factor Analysis Model Fit Comparisons

Model	Chi-Square	d.f.	Chi-Square Difference[b]
Null	5079.50	66	—
One factor	1043.50	54	4036, $p < .001$
Three factor	527.90	51	515.60, $p < .001$
One-factor higher order (three subdimensions)	1497.16	48	969.26, $p < .001$
"Nested"[a]	1209.89	48	287.27, $p < .001$
Four factor	278.61	48	931.28, $p < .001$
One-factor higher order (four subdimensions)	278.61	44	0
	GFI	**CFI**	**RMSEA**
One-factor higher order (four subdimensions)	.92	.91	.09
Four factor	.92	.91	.08

[a]For details on this model, see the text.
[b]Chi-square differences represent comparisons of subsequent models (e.g., null versus one-factor model, one-factor model versus three-factor model).

from 15 to 56 years; mean age = 23 years) in the shopping streets of two medium-sized cities and asked them to rate one brand (Nokia) on the 12-item brand experience scale. Second, to assess the discriminant validity of the scale from brand attitude, we asked consumers to evaluate the brand on three seven-point scales ("good/bad," "do not like/like very much," and "not attractive/very attractive"). Finally, to assess the test–retest reliability of the scale, two weeks after completing the scale for the first time, 72 consumers (mean age = 22.7 years) volunteered to fill out the brand experience scale for a second time for the same brand.

The nonstudent sample results were highly similar to the student sample results in the previous study. Using confirmatory factor analysis, the best-fitting model was again a four-factor model with correlated factors ($\chi^2(48) = 102.85$, $p < .00001$; RMSEA = .088). Each item loaded on the predicted factor, with standardized coefficients raging from .77 to .9.

Moreover, the brand experience scale displayed high discriminant validity from overall brand evaluations. In several exploratory factor analyses, the experience scale and its dimensions were distinct from overall brand evaluations by loading on separate factors. Specifically, a factor analysis that did not restrict the number of factors resulted in four factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 (variance explained = 74%). After Varimax rotation, Factor 1 had loadings greater than .68 for the affective and intellectual items, Factor 2 had loadings greater than .79 for the behavioral items, Factor 3 had loadings greater than .78 for the evaluation items, and Factor 4 had loadings greater than .68 for the sensory items. All other loadings were less than .4. Another factor analysis (variance explained = 79%) that restricted the number of factors to 5 (thus examining whether the items of the four experience dimensions and the evaluation items would load on different factors) provided a similarly distinct rotated factor pattern that could easily be interpreted as follows: Factor 1 was "behavioral experience" (all loadings > .80), Factor 2 was "affective experience" (all loadings > .72), Factor 3 was "sensory experience" (all loadings > .68), Factor 4 was "overall brand evaluation" (all loadings > .78), and Factor 5 was "intellectual experience" (all loadings > .69); all other loadings were less than .37. A final factor analysis that restricted the number of factors to 2 (variance explained = 58%) resulted in an overall experience factor (all brand experience item loadings > .65) and a separate brand evaluation factor (all evaluation item loadings > .78); all other loadings were less than .2.

Finally, we examined the test–retest reliability of the brand experience scale by correlating the ratings at the two measurement points, separated by two weeks. The test–retest reliability for the overall scale was r = .77, ranging from r = .69 to r = .73 for the dimensions. Given the time frame, participants, and environments, the test–retest reliability seems adequate.

Study 5: Discriminant Validity of the Brand Experience Scale

We conducted Study 5 to provide additional evidence for the discriminant validity of the scale in relation to brand evaluation and, in particular, key motivational and affective brand constructs. Participants (N = 144) completed the 12-item brand experience scale and four seven-point general brand evaluations items ("bad/good," "unfavorable/favorable," "dislikable/likable," and "disagreeable/agreeable"). In addition, participants completed items related to the following motivation and affective scales: Zaichkowsky's (1985) brand involvement (six items, seven-point scale: "unimportant to me/important to me," "of no concern to me/of concern to me," "irrelevant to me/relevant to me," "means nothing to me/means a lot to me," "useless to me/useful to me," and "insignificant to me/significant to me"); Thomson, MacInnis, and Park's (2005) brand attachment (ten items, seven-point scales: "affectionate," "loved," "peaceful," "friendly," "attached," "bonded," "connected," "passionate," "delighted," and "captivated"); and Oliver, Rust, and Varki's (1997) customer delight (ten items, five-point scale: "astonished," "surprised," "contented," "happy," "cheerful," "pleased," "excited," "enthused," "stimulated," and "elated"). To create variation in brand experience scores, we manipulated "experience strength," asking one-third of the respondents each to think about a brand that provides a "strong experience," a "moderate experience," or a "weak, or almost no, experience" for them. The manipulation was successful. On the composite experience index, participants felt a stronger experience when asked to report on a "strong" brand than when asked to report on a "moderate" or "weak" experiential brand (M = 5.15, M = 3.84, and M = 2.95, respectively; all ps < .01).

To prepare the data for further analyses, we reverse-coded negatively worded items and computed composite scores for the four brand experience dimensions (sensory, affective, intellectual, and behavioral), overall brand evaluation, brand involvement, the three brand attachment dimensions (affection, connection, and passion), and customer delight. From a factor analysis, we considered customer delight a one-dimensional scale.

Next, we conducted a factor analysis on the ten composite brand scales, which revealed a three-factor solution (explaining 75% of the variance). Table 5 shows the factor

TABLE 5
Study 5: Exploratory Factor Analysis (Promax Rotation), Brand Experience Dimensions, and Other Brand Scales

	Factor		
	1	**2**	**3**
Sensory experience	.07	**.75**	.01
Affective experience	.21	**.48**	.32
Intellectual experience	.26	**.82**	−.13
Behavioral experience	−.23	**.58**	.54
Overall brand evaluation	.19	.14	**.81**
Brand involvement	−.05	.33	**.68**
Affection	**.55**	.00	.45
Connection	.44	−.02	**.58**
Passion	**.73**	.23	.05
Customer delight	**.88**	.02	.00

Notes: Standardized regression coefficients. Bold values indicate the factor on which each item predominantly loads.

pattern after oblique (Promax) rotation. As Table 5 shows, two of the three brand attachment dimensions (affection and passion), as well as customer delight, had their highest loadings on Factor 1; the third brand attachment dimension, connection, also had a considerable loading on this factor. We interpreted the factor as "brand feelings." All four experience dimensions (sensory, affective, intellectual, and behavioral) had the strongest loadings on Factor 2; no other scale loaded strongly on this factor. We interpreted the factor as "brand experience." Finally, brand evaluation, brand involvement, and the brand connection dimension of brand attachment loaded high on Factor 3, which we interpreted tentatively as "brand relationship." Interfactor correlations among the three factors were moderate, ranging from .48 to .54. In summary, brand experience, as measured by the brand experience scale, seems to be distinct, but related, to other constructs, such as brand involvement, brand attachment, customer delight, and brand evaluation.

We also examined a Varimax-rotated three-factor pattern that forces the scales into an orthogonal structure. Again, brand experience emerged as Factor 2, with high loadings, ranging from .58 to .73, for all experience dimensions on the factor; no other scale had substantial loadings, except for a .48 loading of brand involvement. However, as in the oblique solution, involvement had a higher loading again on Factor 3 (.69), together with brand evaluation (.76) and the brand connection dimension of brand attachment (.63).

Finally, we examined a four-factor solution, which explained 81% of the variance. In both the oblique and the orthogonal solutions, we obtained the same factor patterns for the brand feelings and brand relationship factors. However, the brand experience dimensions now loaded on two separate factors: The affective and behavioral dimensions loaded on one factor (.71 and .83, respectively), and the sensory and intellectual dimensions loaded on the other factor (.87 and .61, respectively). These results further attest to the discriminant validity of the brand experience scale from other brand scales.

Conclusion

The 12-item brand experience scale captures in a reliable and stable way four dimensions of brand experience: sensory, affective, behavioral, and intellectual. The scale is short and easy to administer, and it is internally consistent and reliable. Importantly, the brand experience scale is related to, but distinct from, other brand scales. From the results of Studies 3, 4, and 5, the scale as a whole can also be viewed as indicating the overall degree to which a brand evokes experiences, in the sense of a single higher-order factor. In the next study, we examine how brand experience is related to brand personality and whether it can predict behavioral outcomes.

Study 6: Using Brand Experience to Predict Consumer Behavior

In Study 6, we focus on two key behavioral outcomes—customer satisfaction and loyalty (Chandrashekaran et al. 2007; Oliver 1993). On the basis of prior consumer research, we expect that brand experience affects these behavioral outcomes through a direct and indirect route (Chaiken, Liberman, and Eagly 1989; Petty and Cacioppo 1986). If a brand evokes an experience, this alone may lead to satisfaction and loyalty. In addition, an experience may be the basis for more elaborative information processing and inference making that results in brand-related associations (Keller 1993). In turn, these associations may affect satisfaction and loyalty.

One prior study considers how experience affects consumer behavior. Specifically, Chang and Chieng (2006) examine how experiences and brand personality affect brand relationships. However, they do not use various brands but rather focus on coffee retail shops in Shanghai and Taipei, including only one dimension of brand personality—namely, excitement.

Hypotheses Development

In the following section, we first discuss the direct effects of brand experience on consumer behavior and then the indirect effects mediated by brand personality. People seek sensory stimulations (McAllister and Pessemier 1982) and show negative effects under sensory deprivation (Goldberger 1993). They seek pleasure and avoid pain (Freud [1920] 1950), and they need intellectual stimulation to avoid boredom (Cacioppo and Petty 1982). Thus, experiences provide value and utility similar to utilitarian attributes (Brakus, Schmitt, and Zhang 2008). The notion of experiential value is also inherent in the applied work on experience, especially in the work Pine and Gilmore (1999). Because experience provides value, we expect that the more a brand evokes multiple experience dimensions, and therefore has a higher overall score on the scale, the more satisfied a consumer will be with the brand.

Moreover, because experiences result from stimulations and lead to pleasurable outcomes, we expect consumers to want to repeat these experiences. That is, brand experience should affect not only past-directed satisfaction judgments but also future-directed consumer loyalty. Consumers should be more likely to buy a brand again and recommend it to others and less likely to buy an alternative brand (Mittal and Kamakura 2001; Oliver 1997; Reicheld 1996).

> H_1: Brand experience affects consumer satisfaction positively.
> H_2: Brand experience affects consumer loyalty positively.

In addition to these direct effects, brand experience is also likely to result in further processing and thus affect satisfaction and loyalty indirectly. One construct—and measurement scale—that has been discussed extensively as a key inferential-associative concept is brand personality, which is defined as "the set of human characteristics associated with the brand" (Aaker 1997, p. 347). Both brand experiences and judgments of a brand's personality occur in response to brand contact and include a categorization process; however, the formation and updating of brand personality is a highly inferential process (Johar, Sengupta, and Aaker 2005). According to Aaker (1997), a brand's personality may be inferred from people associated with the brand (e.g., users, company representatives, endorsers), product attributes, category associations, brand name, or communi-

cations. A useful input in this inference is likely to be brand experience. A trait judgment about a brand's sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, or ruggedness can be facilitated when the consumer attends to specific sensory, affective, intellectual, or behavioral experiences. For example, to conclude that Hallmark is "sincere" (Aaker 1996), a consumer may attend to his or her feelings of happiness, romance, or nostalgia or thoughts of holiday activities. Similarly, to conclude that a clothing brand, such as Levi's, is "rugged" (Aaker 1996), a consumer may attend to his or her sensory experiences based on the brand's colors, thoughts about the "Wild West" origin of the brand, or bodily experiences based on the fit and texture of the jeans. Thus, experiences are used as information (Pham 2004). This information, in conjunction with other information, may be combined into a brand personality judgment.

As a result, we expect that brand experience is an antecedent of brand personality. The higher the overall score on the brand experience scale, the more likely the consumer will endow the brand with personality associations. The reverse process—brand personality preceding brand experience—is conceptually less plausible; it is not clear how sensory, affective, intellectual, or behavioral experiences could easily result from a summary judgment such as brand personality.

> H_3: Brand experience affects brand personality positively.

Brand personality provides differentiation, increases preference, and enhances trust and loyalty (Biel 1993; Fournier 1998). Moreover, selecting a brand with a certain personality enables consumers to express themselves (Aaker 1999). Thus, brand personality offers value to consumers similar to experiences. Therefore, the more a brand is associated with human characteristics, the more satisfied and loyal a consumer will be.

> H_4: Brand personality affects consumer satisfaction positively.
>
> H_5: Brand personality affects consumer loyalty positively.

Finally, it has been shown that consumer satisfaction affects loyalty. When a consumer feels good about the relationship and appreciates the product or brand, a high level of commitment and loyalty results (Anderson and Sullivan 1993; Mittal and Kamakura 2001; Oliver 1997). Thus:

> H_6: Consumer satisfaction affects consumer loyalty positively.

Procedure

A total of 209 students participated in Study 6 for a compensation of $5. Each participant rated the extent to which the items described his or her experiences with the brands listed, the personality of the brands listed, and feelings of satisfaction and loyalty toward the brands.

The brand experience scale included the 12-item scale we used in Studies 3, 4, and 5. To measure brand personality, we included a version of the scale that consisted of the 15 brand personality items that represented the five brand personality dimensions: "down-to-earth," "honest," "wholesome," and "cheerful" (for sincerity); "daring," "spirited," "imaginative," and "up-to-date" (for excitement); "reliable," "intelligent," and "successful" (for competence); "upper-

class" and "charming" (for sophistication); and "outdoorsy" and "tough" (for ruggedness) (Aaker 1997, p. 352). We measured items on a seven-point Likert scale (1 = "not at all descriptive," and 7 = "extremely descriptive") and provided the instructions in line with the work of Aaker (1997).

We measured consumer satisfaction using five items modeled after Oliver (1980): "I am satisfied with the brand and its performance," and "If I could do it again, I would buy a brand different from that brand" (negative item, reverse coded); "My choice to get this brand has been a wise one," and "I feel bad about my decision to get this brand" (negative item, reverse coded); and "I am not happy with what I did with this brand" (negative item, reverse coded). Each seven-point Likert scale was anchored by "strongly disagree" (1) and "strongly agree" (7).

Finally, to measure consumer loyalty, we adopted five standard loyalty items from the work of You and Donthu (2001): "In the future, I will be loyal to this brand"; "I will buy this brand again"; "This brand will be my first choice in the future"; "I will not buy other brands if this brand is available at the store"; and "I will recommend this brand to others." Again, we measured the items on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (7).

Participants rated a set of 12 brands for six categories: Apple and Dell (computers), Fiji and Poland Spring (water), J. Crew and Liz Clairborne (clothing), Puma and New Balance (sneakers), Volkswagen and Saturn (cars), and the *New York Times* and *USA Today* (newspapers). Each participant evaluated two categories and both brands within that category. We counterbalanced the order of presentation of the category and the order of brands within each category.

Results and Discussion

Before estimating the structural equation model based on our conceptual model, we examined the discriminant validity of the brand experience scale from the brand personality scale. Given the large sample size, we were able to conduct an exploratory factor on the entire set of original items—the 12 items of the brand experience scale and the 15 items of the short version of the brand personality scale that address the five dimensions of brand personality (sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, and ruggedness). The exploratory factor analysis revealed five factors with eigenvalues greater than 1, but the scree plot exhibited a significant dip between the fourth and the fifth factor. The first four factors explained 62% of the variance. After Varimax rotation, a clean factor structure emerged (see Table 6). In general, brand experience and brand personality exhibited high levels of discriminant validity: The respective items loaded on separate factors. Factor 3 was the only factor that included both personality and brand experience items, namely, behavioral experience and ruggedness items.

We also conducted a factor analysis on the composite scores of each brand experience and brand personality dimension, which further confirmed the discriminant validity of the scales. Two factors had eigenvalues greater than 1. After Varimax rotation, the experience dimensions and the personality dimensions loaded separately on the two factors; however, on the three-factor solution, the behav-

TABLE 6
Study 6: Exploratory Factor Analysis (Varimax Rotation) with Brand Personality Dimensions and Brand Experience Dimensions

	Factor			
	1	2	3	4
Sensory 1	.36	**.67**	.25	.17
Sensory 2	.25	**.60**	.41	.15
Sensory 3	.22	**.62**	.13	.07
Affective 1	.23	**.71**	.20	.15
Affective 2	.08	**.73**	.12	.05
Affective 3	.15	**.58**	.32	.08
Behavioral 1	.03	.28	**.73**	.09
Behavioral 2	−.01	.22	**.78**	.11
Behavioral 3	.11	.27	**.47**	−.03
Intellectual 1	.25	**.78**	.08	−.08
Intellectual 2	.15	**.74**	−.13	−.09
Intellectual 3	.27	**.72**	.11	.05
Sincerity 1	.03	.07	.14	**.86**
Sincerity 2	.34	.17	.06	**.79**
Sincerity 3	.16	.04	.16	**.86**
Sincerity 4	.45	.08	.33	**.50**
Excitment 1	**.69**	.25	.41	−.06
Excitment 2	**.68**	.25	.40	.09
Excitment 3	**.63**	.29	.29	.07
Excitment 4	**.80**	.26	.05	.05
Competence 1	**.63**	.15	.06	.42
Competence 2	**.77**	.31	−.05	.27
Competence 3	**.77**	.24	−.05	.22
Sophistication 1	**.69**	.19	.07	.08
Sophistication 2	**.57**	.21	.36	.26
Ruggedness 1	.15	−.12	**.66**	.32
Ruggedness 2	.33	.06	**.55**	.10

Notes: Bold values indicate the factor on which each item predominantly loads.

ioral experience dimension and ruggedness formed their own factor.

Figure 2 shows the estimated structural equation model. To estimate the proposed model given the number of observations, we used composite measures of the four brand experience and the five brand personality dimensions to reduce the number of parameters. Internal consistencies of the composite measures were satisfactory (Cronbach's alphas: the sensory dimension = .77, the affective dimension = .74, the intellectual dimension = .79, the behavioral dimension = .72, sincerity = .85, excitement = .88, competence = .86, sophistication = .72, and ruggedness = .71).

The estimated model fits the data reasonably well: GFI = .86, CFI = .91, and RMSEA = .08, with $\chi^2(146)$ = 793.9, $p < .001$ (ratio between chi-square and the number of degrees of freedom = 5.4). All path coefficients in the model are significant (ps < .05). As we predicted, experience affects satisfaction and loyalty both directly and indirectly through brand personality. The direct and indirect effects of brand experience on loyalty are roughly equal: The total direct effect on loyalty (through satisfaction) is .33 (.24 + .15 × .59), and the total indirect effect is .36 (.69 × .67 × .59 + .69 × .13), resulting in a total effect of .69. The total effect of brand personality on loyalty is .53 (.13 + .67 × .59), which is higher than the total direct effect of

experience on loyalty. Notably, there are differential effects of brand experience and brand personality on satisfaction and loyalty. The direct effect of experience on loyalty (.24) is higher than the direct effect of experience on satisfaction (.15); however, the direct effect of brand personality on loyalty (.13) is lower than the direct effect of brand personality on satisfaction (.67). Thus, brand experience seems to be a stronger predictor of actual buying behavior than brand personality, which in turn is a better predictor of satisfaction. This result may be related to the very nature of experience. If a brand stimulates the senses, makes the person feel good, and engages the mind and body, a stimulation-seeking organism may strive to receive such stimulation again. In contrast, the private nature of experiences may make them less malleable and less subject to situational influences than the more social and self-expressive brand personalities (Aaker 1999).

In addition to the proposed model, we tested an alternative model that considered that brand experience and personality may affect consumer behavior independently. Therefore, in this model, we did not include the path that links brand experience to brand personality. The alternative model had a worse fit: GFI = .84, CFI = .88, and RMSEA = .096, with $\chi^2(146)$ = 1186. The difference in chi-square values between the two models was 392.1 ($p < .001$).

General Discussion

Brand experiences arise in a variety of settings when consumers search for, shop for, and consume brands. Accordingly, we conceptualized brand experience as subjective consumer responses that are evoked by specific brand-related experiential attributes in such settings. We demonstrated that brand experience can be broken down into four dimensions (sensory, affective, intellectual, and behavioral), which are differentially evoked by various brands.

The brand experience scale that we constructed is short and easy to administer, consisting of only 12 items. Psychometrically, the scale is internally consistent and consistent across samples and studies. The scale also successfully passed various reliability and validity tests, including test–retest reliability and criterion validity. Most important, the brand experience scale displays discriminant validity from some of the most widely used branding measures and scales, including brand evaluations, brand involvement, brand attachment, customer delight, and brand personality. Finally, brand experience has a behavioral impact; it affects consumer satisfaction and loyalty directly and indirectly through brand personality.

The scale will be useful not only in academic research but also in marketing practice. As marketers engage in projects to understand and improve the experience their brands provide for their customers, they can use the scale for assessment, planning, and tracking purposes.

We encourage further research on the brand experience scale. The scale currently does not measure whether an experience is positive or negative. As we have conceptualized and shown empirically, having experiences in and of themselves seems to have value and results in positive outcomes. However, further research should explore positively
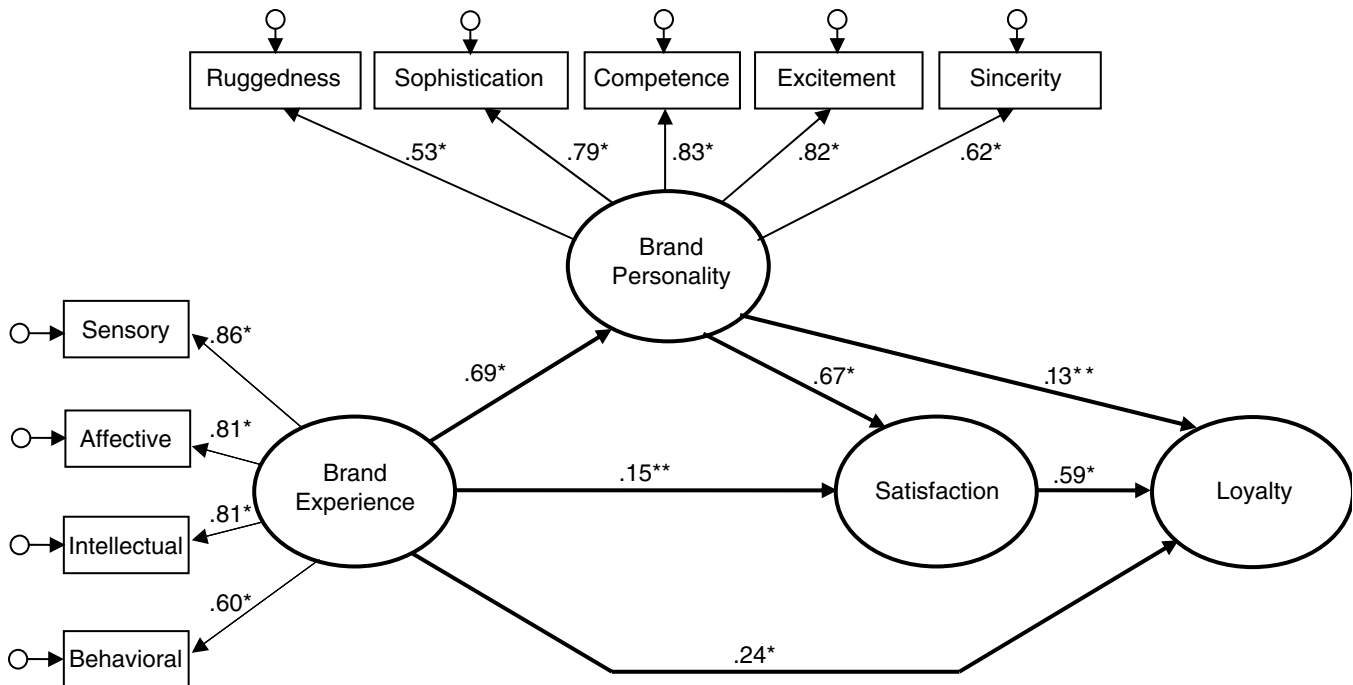
*p < .01.
**p < .05.
Notes: All coefficient values are standardized and appear near the associated path.

worded and negatively worded versions of the scale and investigate how positive and negative experiences affect consumer behavior. There seems to be two ways to create valenced versions of the scale. One way is to reword the scale items slightly by including the words "positive" or "negative"—for example, "This brand makes a strong positive/negative impression on my visual sense or other senses," "This brand induces positive/negative feelings and sentiments," "This brand results in positive/negative bodily experiences," or "I engage in a lot of positive/negative thinking when I encounter this brand." The second way is to add a phrase and a bipolar response scale after each scale item—for example, "… and this results in an experience that is 'very positive' (1) or 'very negative'(7)." Further research should determine which method is more reliable and valid.

Further research should also examine whether the scale can predict specific behavioral outcomes. On the basis of our theorizing, we would expect the sensory dimension to predict future design and aesthetics perceptions and usages, the affective experience to predict emotional judgments, the intellectual dimension to predict creative usages of the brand, and the behavioral experience to predict specific actions and physiological reactions when interacting with a brand.

In addition to research on the scale, we encourage research on the experience concept. For example, many experiences, especially in the services industry (e.g., restau-

rants, spas, airline flights), extend over time. Research has shown that the pattern of extended experiences (e.g., increasing or decreasing in intensity) can affect how experiences are evaluated (Ariely 1998; Ariely and Zauberman 2003). Such research has used the term "experience" generically to refer to responses within a certain time frame. From the studies reported here, it would be worthwhile to explore which patterns occur for which experience dimensions. Moreover, we assessed experiences retrospectively; we did not directly assess a consumer's dynamic experience with a brand. Further research should investigate whether retrospective experiences are different from dynamic experiences, in terms of both structure (i.e., the type of dimensions that are most commonly involved) and content (i.e., the specific sensations, feelings, cognitions, and behaviors that are involved).

Finally, further research should focus on the antecedents and long-term consequences of brand experiences. For example, regarding antecedents, how exactly are brand experience dimensions evoked by brand-related stimuli? In addition, although we have shown the impact of brand experience, both directly and indirectly, on short-term consequences, such as satisfaction and loyalty, the question arises whether brand experiences affect customer lifetime value (Rust, Zeithaml, and Lemon 2000; Vogel, Evanschitzky, and Ramaseshan 2008). That is, can brand experiences build customer equity, and how should marketers manage brands to create experiences that build such equity?

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