The impact of brand experience on customers’ trust and satisfaction
Case study: Computer brands

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Abstract
Experiential marketing is a new marketing technique that focuses on the use of the five senses in the production of goods and provision of services in order to create an enjoyable experience for customers. This research seeks out to study the impact of brand experience on customers’ trust and satisfaction. Current study is a kind of descriptive-correlational study which is based on applied researches. The study population consisted of all customers of computer brands, Asus, Apple, HP, Lenovo, and Dell that 385 customers were selected randomly as the research samples. In order to collect data, Ueacharoenkit depending standard questionnaire (2013) was used. Face validity and content validity of the questionnaire was confirmed by marketing professionals and academics and its reliability was confirmed by using Cronbach’s alpha test (90/0). Pearson correlation test and regression test results showed that brand experience has a positive and significant relationship with customers’ trust and satisfaction of computer brands. Therefore, it is recommended to computer brads owners to use experiential marketing techniques in order to raise customers’ trust and satisfaction. Some of these techniques are as follows, using the right colors for goods and billboards, play music appropriate to the environment in stores, let touching products by retailers to customers and spray the air smells in stores.

Keywords: Brand experience, customers’ satisfaction, customers’ trust, computer brands.
Introduction

With an overview of trends in marketing management philosophy, getting this point would not be out of reach that These trends have changed their focusing from production, quality and sales by encouraging policies (Production orientation, product and selling) to keep focused on customer-oriented features (trends, social marketing and experiential marketing). Focus singly on quality and price of goods and services, are not able to respond to the needs of today's customers. Today, customers in return for the money, they are demanding more value. It is worth mentioning that the number of brands on the market as well as the volume of propaganda in the media has been rising sharply. This situation has made choice hard for customers and on the other hand, countless propaganda done by the brands has led to customers’ dissatisfaction. As the brands and introducing them to the market have been raising, marketers have relied on massive propaganda in order to introduce their products and for lasting brand’s name in the consumer's mind, they reach to repeat their brand name on. Contrary to what was expected, relying too much on advertising media shows reverse outcome. Customers not only have not been attracted to the brands, but also researches showed that 50 percent of customers in American and England, 69 percent of customers in China have claimed that they do anything to get rid of advertisements (Razorfish, 2015).

One of the new approaches that have emerged in the field of marketing and a lot of brands, like computer brands and sport brands have used it for the sale of goods, to attract and retain their customers, is the experiential marketing. Experiential marketing was used first by Schmitt. He has formulated marketing in a new and different manner from its traditional form. Schmitt believed that this method can establish a permanent relationship between the company and the customer through the emotional experience associated with the brand (Freemantle, 2004). Marketing experts have offered numerous definitions of experiential marketing that goes on to refer to some of them. Krishna (2010) pointed out that experiential marketing is the marketing that involves the senses of customers and will affect their behavior. Martin Lindstrom, father of experiential marketing, defines experiential marketing as: “the process of identifying and meeting the needs and interests of customers in a profitable way through their involvement in the mutual interaction which brought brands’ character into the life and provide more value for their customers.” America Marketing Association (AMA) defines experiential marketing as the marketing techniques which aims to persuade customers using the five senses (sight, hearing, touch, taste, smell) and influence the emotions and behavior of customers (Valenti & Riviere, 2008). The goal of experiential marketing is to create an enjoyable experience for customers. In this approach, internal arousal by affecting the sensory and positive emotional state was used for the satisfaction and trust of customers (Kumar, 2014; Lindstrom, 2005 & Schmitt, 1999). In this approach, customers can get more value for their money.

Today, emotions play an important role in marketing. In fact, any product should have to aspects, ‘functional characteristics’ and ‘emotional characteristics’. Functional characteristics are also taken into consideration in traditional marketing, but the second aspect of experiential marketing is more under attention. The human senses for a long time have been neglected in marketing till the researchers were aware of the importance of this issue (Schmitt, 1999; Domenico, 2010). Company Sensory marketing executive named Jack Merton, during his research showed that 75% of marketing research conducted in the countries of America, Europe, China and
Australia in 2008, showed more funding on experiential marketing compared to previous years (Razorfish, 2015). Many brands such as Mercedes-Benz, Singapore Airlines, Apple, Harley-Davidson, Adidas and Nike use experiential marketing in order to establish a permanent and long-term relationships with their customers (Lindstrom, 2005; Krishna, 2010). Brakus and et.al (2009) Claimed that customer satisfaction affects their perception of the brand and this concept is used in the experiential marketing literature. Customer experience is one of the most important factors that contributed to customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction and it is associated with their loyalty. Customers’ previous experience of shopping can have a positive or negative effect on their trust (Delgado & Aleman, 2005; Lau & Lee, 1999). If customers have a good experience or a bad experience, this experience can affect their level of trust (Yoon, 2002; Jonker & Treur, 1999). Most companies and retail provide a real experience to customers in order to attract satisfaction and loyalty of their customers which senses have a great role in creating such experience (Pine & Gimore, 1999).

Research Methodology

This study is a descriptive-correlational study and applied research. The study population consisted of all customers of computer brands, Asus, Apple, HP, Lenovo, and Dell that 385 customers were selected randomly as the research samples. In order to collect data, Ueacharoenkit depending standard questionnaire (2013) was used. In order to assess the main part of the study, Likert scale was used in fifth value scales {strongly agree (5) - agree (4) - Neutral (3) - Opponents (2) - strongly disagree (1)} which this scale is one of the most widely used scales, specifically in behavioral science. After translating the questionnaire and reconcile it with the culture of the country, the questionnaire was sent to 15 experts in marketing and management in order to verify the validity and content validity. To obtain the reliability of the questionnaire, first, 40 research samples were selected randomly (introductory examination) and then, the questionnaire reliability was obtained by Cronbach’s alpha test. The reliability of the variables are presented in Table 1. Furthermore, exploratory factor analysis was used to verify the validity of the structure and construct validity was verified by Ueacharoenkit (2013) and other researchers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Variables</th>
<th>Cronbach’s alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>brand experience</td>
<td>0/82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trust</td>
<td>0/82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>satisfaction</td>
<td>0/74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this study, descriptive statistics were used to assess demographic characteristics and also determine the importance of the variables. In order to analyze the research hypotheses, inferential statistics methods (Pearson correlation and simple regression) were used. All data analysis was performed by using SPSS version 18.

Research findings

Demographic characteristics of research samples were analyzed by descriptive statistic (mean, standard deviation, etc.). The results showed that the highest frequency in brand’s choice was
related to the Apple brand (36/2) and lowest frequency of the brand was related to the HP (14/8), respectively. Out of 385 study participants, 195 were female and 190 were male. Moreover, 174 of participants were married and 211 of them were unmarried. Academic distribution of participant was as follows: 10/5 percent high school diploma, 30/5 percent diploma, 30/4 bachelors, 18/1 masters and 10/5 PhD, respectively. To review the research hypotheses, Pearson correlation test and simple regression was used. Brand experience as independent variable and trust and satisfaction as dependent variables were considered. To clarify two-dimensional relationship between the dependent variables with independent variables, Pearson correlation coefficient test were used. Its results were provided in Table 2.

Table (2) Pearson correlation coefficient test between the research variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Variables</th>
<th>Trust</th>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brand Experience</td>
<td>0/19**</td>
<td>0/41**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0/25*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td>0/25**</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

P<0/01

Pearson correlation test results showed that the brand experience has a positive and significant relationship with trust and customer satisfaction. Then to determine the impact of brand experience on dependent variables, regression test was used which its results were presented in table (3) and (4).

Table (3) simple regression for satisfaction variable as the predictor variable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent variable</th>
<th>Standardized coefficient β</th>
<th>T values</th>
<th>Significant</th>
<th>result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brand experience</td>
<td>0/41</td>
<td>8/77</td>
<td>0/001</td>
<td>Confirmed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dependent variable: satisfaction, adjusted index $F = 77/22$, $0/16 = (r^2)$, significant= $0/001$ & P<0/05

Table (4) simple regression for trust variable as the predictor variable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent variable</th>
<th>Standardized coefficient β</th>
<th>T values</th>
<th>Significant</th>
<th>result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brand experience</td>
<td>0/19</td>
<td>3/89</td>
<td>0/001</td>
<td>Confirmed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dependent variable: trust, adjusted index $F = 15/14$, $0/036 = (r^2)$, significant= $0/001$ & P<0/05

According to the column t and significant statistic value at 05/0 percent error, the results of table (3) and (4) have shown that brand experience has a positively significant effect on trust and loyalty of customers of computer brands.
Discussion and conclusion

Trust is one of the important components that have been effective in maintaining customer satisfaction and it is associated with customers’ loyalty. Customers’ previous experiences of shopping can affect their trust whether negatively or positively (Lau & Lee, 1999; Delgado & Aleman, 2005). If customers have good or bad experience of their shopping, it can affect their trust (Yoon, 2002; Jonker & Treur, 1999). In this current research, brand experience has a positive and significant effect on trust to the brand. Given that the standard beta coefficient was equal to 0/19, it can be said that the brand experience was the predictor of trust variable. Parks (2005), Sahin & et.al (2011) and Ueacharoenkit (2011) have shown that brand experience has a positive and significant impact on trust of customers (Ueacharoenkit, 2013).

In a study that was done by Ueacharoenkit, he has collected the data in both qualitative and quantitative forms (Ueacharoenkit, 2013). The researcher has tested 483 of participants by using questionnaire and 20 of them through interview. Demographic results of this research that was done on brands of cosmetics showed that 338 of participants were single, 139 of them were married and 6 samples were divorced, 194 masters or higher, 275 bachelors, 5 high school student and 9 participants were under diploma. This study was done only on women which percent of them aged 23 to 35 years old. Multiple regression analysis results showed that brand experience at a confidence level of 95% has a significantly positive effect on customer trust and has a correlation coefficient of 0/41 while the current research was done on computer brands and the participants were 385 people from both male (190) and female (195) gender. According to this point that Ueacharoenkit research was done only on female, but both researches have shown positive effect of brand experience on trust of customers. Customers who receive more emotional experience, their trust to their brands and the relationship between the customer and the brand gets stronger and when they feel that their brand is more affective, they trust more. If customers enjoy simultaneously in different ways of emotional, behavioral, intellectual and sensual, in this case, the brand will be more trustful (Lee & Kang, 2012). If brand experience was positively perceived by customers, it can be helpful in terms of developing trust to brand (Lau & Lee, 1999; Parks, 2005). Brand experience was divided into four components, sensual, emotional, behavioral, and intellectual, according to the research literature. Aspects of brand experience consisted of 1 to 15 items of the questionnaire. According to the items of the questionnaire, it can be pointed out that if computer manufacturers and sellers of these products apply the shopping experience appropriately to their job, they can create a pleasant experience for their customers in their shopping and based on this experience and outcome of research hypothesis, brand trust on customers also will increase. Findings of this research showed that brand experience has a significant effect on trust to brand, however its value is small. Perhaps, one of the reasons for this is that most brands of computers in Iran do not give sufficient guarantee for their products. If retailers and computer manufactures apply brand experience in a more practical way, they can increase brand trust in their customers and thereby earn more profits. Brakus & et.al (2009) claimed that customers’ satisfaction has impact on their perception of the brand and this concept is used in experiential marketing literature. Customer experience is one of the most important factors that affect customer satisfaction or dissatisfaction (Anderson & Sullivan, 1993) and brand experience is associated with customer satisfaction (Anderson & Sullivan, 1993; Brakus & et.al, 2009).
One goal of this study was to investigate the relationship between brand experience and customer satisfaction in terms of brand of computer. The researchers concluded that brand experience has a positive and significant correlation with customer satisfaction. According to the research findings, it is recommended that holders of computer brands stimulate the senses of customers and provide an enjoyable environment for their customers in order to increase rate of their customers’ satisfaction. Research results of Parks (2005), Brakus & et.al (2009), Serini & et.al (2010), Kang & et.al (2011), Sahin & et.al (2011), Ueacharoenkit (2013), Marist & et.al (2014) were in line with the current study. All these researchers emphasized on the effect of brand experience on customers’ satisfaction. In this research, brand experience has been identified as an influential factor on customer satisfaction and creating a favorable environment for customers so that their five senses can be affected to thereby increase their satisfaction. Brand experience is one of the essential factors affecting customers’ satisfaction (Brakus & et.al, 2009; Parks, 2005). Customer experience leads to the satisfaction or non-satisfaction based on the value that customer receives from products or services (Anderson & Sullivan, 1993). So, if the customer receives a pleasant experience of the brand, it can be led to the customer satisfaction.

Therefore, computer brand owners should pay more attention to sensory and experiential marketing. They can use brand experience in order to increase customers trust. For this purpose, computer brand owners must produce products that can stimulate the senses of clients. Encouraging music, lovely design, allowing clients to touch goods, spray good smells inside the stores and so on should be used in stores’ environment in order to provide a lovely and an enjoyable circumstance for their customers to raise their satisfaction and trust.
References


Razorfish. (2015). Digital Dopamine: Global Digital Marketing Report. This study was conducted in partnership with the Center for the Digital Future.

