

# Exploring the Relationship between Experiential Marketing and Experiential Value in the Smartphone Industry

Farshad Maghnati<sup>1</sup>, Kwek Choon Ling<sup>1</sup> & Amir Nasermoadeli<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Faculty of Business and Information Technology, UCSI University, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Correspondence: KwekChoon Ling, Faculty of Business and Information Technology, UCSI University. No. 1, JalanMenaraGading, UCSI Heights, 56000 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Tel: 60-16-688-6248. E-mail: kwekcl@ucsi.edu.my

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## Abstract

The rapid evolution of marketing that focuses from product to service to experience has challenged the marketing researchers to engage experiential marketing approach in designing the marketing strategies by involving customers (Maklan & Klaus, 2011). Most of the smart phone producers have started to embed the concepts of experiential marketing and experiential value in positioning and promoting their products via a series of advertising campaigns. The objective of this research is to investigate the relationships between experiential marketing and experiential value among the current smart phone users in Malaysia. Quantitative research was conducted through the self-administered survey and a total of 550 questionnaires were distributed based on the cross-sectional study. Regression analysis was used to analyse the statistical data through the SPSS software version 20. The research confirmed the significant positive relationships of sense experience, feel experience, act experience, relate experience, and think experience with experiential value.

**Keywords:** experiential marketing, sense experience, feel experience, act experience, relate experience, think experience, experiential value

## 1. Introduction

Marketing practices and research areas have been evolved in the past few decades; shifting from the focusing on product and brand management to building customer relationship marketing and finally to creating compelling customer experience through experiential marketing strategy. The stiff competition in the smart phone industry has forced the companies to engage various experiential marketing strategies and campaigns to outdo their counterparts. According to the statistics from Euromonitor International (2011), the value of mobile phones has grown around 14% and recorded RM2.6 billion in sale for year 2010 because smart phone can perform various functions such as connecting to Wi-Fi, performing instant messaging and downloading mobile apps. Thus, the ability of the companies to influence smart phone users' experiential value in certain extent will be determined by the experiential marketing strategy created by the companies. Therefore, this research would like to investigate the relationships between experiential marketing and experiential value among the smart phone users in Malaysia.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Experiential Value

According to Lee and Overby (2004), value is subjective and it is created based on the exchange of experience that incurred in the process of transaction or individual perceptions. Value is not refined to utilitarian value (also known as functional value) but also includes hedonic value (also known as experiential value) (Addis & Holbrook, 2001). Gentile et al. (2007) stated that experiential value can be created via consumption experience. Holbrook (2000) argued that consumption experiences such as contact fantasies, feeling and fun will create impacts toward the customer decision making process. Therefore, Holbrook (2000) proposed to incorporate three elements, such as extrinsic value/intrinsic value, active value/reactive value, self-oriented value / other oriented value in the traditional concept of experiential value. In addition, Chou (2009) asserted that the experiential value will be determined by consumers in the process of assessing aesthetic, playfulness, service excellence, and consumer return on investment (CROI). Whereas, Wu and Liang (2009) argued that the experiential value can be

evaluated based on the service efficiency, service excellence, aesthetic and playfulness in the service counter. Based on the concepts proposed from Wu and Liang (2009) and Holbrook (2000), Boztepe (2010) presented the traditional concept of experiential value in Table 1. The study from Wang and Lin (2010) had concluded that there is a positive relationship between experiential marketing and experiential value and its literature shows that an effective experiential marketing is able to generate positive experiential value. The following content will elaborate the concept of experiential marketing in detail.

Table 1. Traditional concept of experiential value

	Extrinsic	Intrinsic
Self-oriented	<b>Utilitarian:</b> Efficiency (eg. Convenience) Excellence (eg. Quality)	<b>Emotional:</b> Play (eg. Fun) -- Active Aesthetics (eg. Beauty) -- Reactive
Other-oriented	<b>Social:</b> Status (eg. Impression) Esteem (e.g. Possession)	<b>Altruistic:</b> Ethics (eg. Justice) -- Active Spirituality (eg. Sacredness) -- Reactive

Source: Adopted from Boztepe (2010).

## 2.2 Experiential Marketing

According to Kotler (2003), there are two types of marketing: traditional marketing and modern marketing. Modern marketing has overtaken traditional marketing due to the emphasizing on the concepts of customer experience and experiential marketing. Kotler (2003) also mentioned that there are more and more companies start to develop non rational image and they ask from psychologist and anthropologists to create and improve messages to make deep soul touch for the consumers. Holbrook (2000) believed that when markets enter into the period of experiential marketing, the major focuses will change from product performance to experiences entertainment. Table 2 describes a differentiation between traditional marketing with modern marketing.

Table 2. Traditional marketing versus modern marketing

	Traditional Marketing	Modern Marketing (Experiential Marketing)
Focus	Product features and benefits	Holistic consumer experience
Scope	Narrow definition of product categories and consumption	Broader consumption situation and socio-cultural context
Customer Mental Model	Rational decision maker	Rational and emotional beings --- Feeling, Fantasies and Fun
Marketer's Approach	Analytical, verbal and quantitative	Eclectic, verbal, visual and intuitive

Source: Adopted from Kotler (2003).

Schmitt (1999) came up the phrase of experiential marketing and defined experiential marketing as the customers' recognition of and purchasing of goods or services from a company or brand after they experience activities and perceive stimulations. Lee et al. (2011) defined experiential marketing as a memorable memory or experience that goes deeply into the customer's mind. Schmitt (1999) further argued that these experiences enhance the value of a product, a brand, or a company. Nevertheless, experiential marketing does not overlook the quality and functions of products and services; rather, it enhances customers' emotions and sense stimulation. The main point of experiential is to relate with customers in a multiple level approach. Based on the strategic experience model, Schmitt (1999) further divided the types of experiential marketing into five dimensions: Sense Experience, Feel Experience, Think Experience, Act Experience and Relate Experience.

### 2.2.1 Sense Experience

McCole (2004) referred sense experience as the experience that customers gain from their sight, taste, scent, touch and sound. Based on Yuan and Wu (2008), sense experience is a message that customers formed towards products or services by their sense. Through sensory experience, consumers will able to develop experience logic and subsequently they use the experience logic to form personal value judgements to differentiate the products and services being experienced by them (Vargo & Lusch, 2004).

### 2.2.2 Feel Experience

Feel experience is referred to the customer's inner emotion, mood and feeling that customer derived from the consuming of products and services (Yang & He, 2011; Yuan & Wu, 2008). The feel experience may take various forms, and usually ranges from temperate to intense mood (Yang & He, 2011). With the positive feelings

that generated in the consumption process, consumer develops a positive emotion (Schmitt, 1999). According to Mattila (2001), strong and positive emotion in the feel experience will improve the customer relationship management between the customer and seller.

### 2.2.3 Think Experience

Think experience emphasizes on the intelligence of the consumer in generating cognitive experience (Lee et al., 2008). According to Schmitt (1999), think experience stimulates customers' creative thinking in developing a new idea or thinking about a company or its products. Through the processing of creating a new idea or thinking, consumers form their own evaluation towards the company and its brand (Schmitt, 1999).

### 2.2.4 Act Experience

According to Schmitt (1999), act experience enable consumers to develop experiences that deal with the consumer's physical body, behaviour and lifestyle and the experience gained from the social interaction with other people. Through the experience of action, consumers develop a sense of sensation, influence and relationship with the products or services offered (Schmitt, 1999).

### 2.2.5 Relate Experience

Relate experience allows consumers to build their connection with the social communities and social entities through the process of purchasing and consuming the products and services (Chang et al., 2011). In other words, relate experience that promoted via relate marketing campaign enables consumer for self-improvement, being perceived positively by others and integrate individual to a social community (Schmitt, 1999).

## 2.3 Research Gap and Justification

Customer experiential value is a very dynamic construct and it is subjected to change due to the advancement of adopting various experiential marketing strategies in the smart phone industry. Although Wang and Lin (2010) have conducted a study in Taiwan to investigate the relationship between experiential marketing and experiential value as well as Conway and Leighton (2011) have evaluated the experiential marketing in Great Britain, the similar study of the conceptual framework in the context of evaluating the impact of experiential marketing on experiential value in the smart phone industry is not yet available in Malaysia. By doing this study, the findings may provide a clear picture how the experiential marketing (such as sense experience, feel experience, think experience, act experience and relate experience) affects the experiential value among the smart phone users.

## 2.4 Proposed Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this research was adapted from the Wang and Lin (2010) model. Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual framework which is developed for this research.

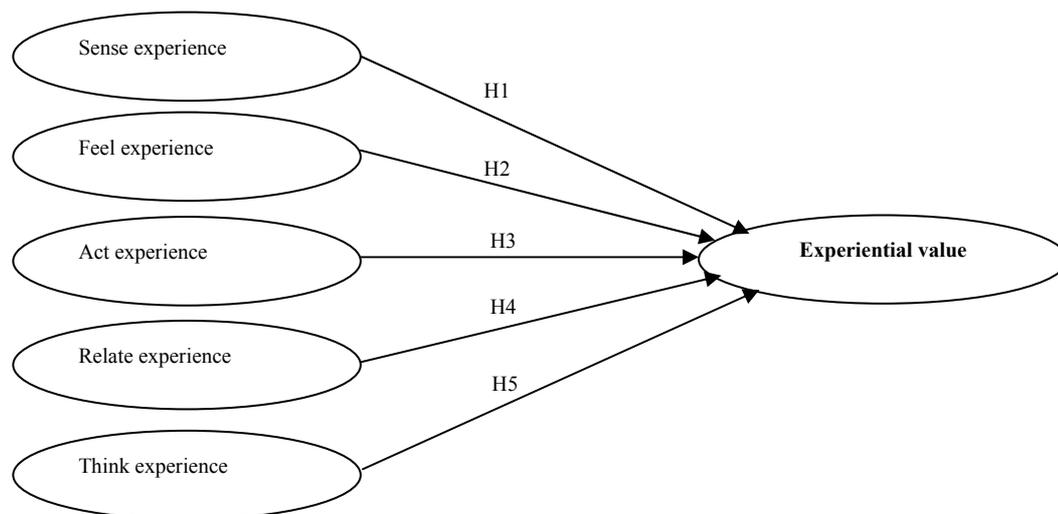


Figure 1. The Proposed Conceptual Framework

Source: Developed for this research.

### *2.5 Hypotheses*

Prior discussion has led to a brief examination of the existing literature review and the development of the hypotheses in this research. The five tested hypotheses are:

H1: There is a positive relationship between sense experience and experiential value.

H2: There is a positive relationship between feel experience and experiential value.

H3: There is a positive relationship between think experience and experiential value.

H4: There is a positive relationship between act experience and experiential value.

H5: There is a positive relationship between relate experience and experiential value.

## **3. Research Methodology**

### *3.1 Research Design*

The quantitative research that adopted in this study permitted the researcher to search for the actualities of the observation by empirically testing the relationship between experiential marketing and experiential value through the hypothetico- deductive method (Jankowicz, 2005). Descriptive research design has adopted for this research because of having clear tested hypotheses (Malhotra, 2004).

### *3.2 Questionnaire Design*

The questionnaire was divided into three (3) sections, namely Sections A and B. The variables that appear in the Section A include the demographic profiles, such as gender, age, nationality, ethnic group and highest academic qualification level. All the variables that measure the tested constructs were listed in Section B of the questionnaire. A total of 4 items that measure the constructs 'sense experience', 'feel experience', 'think experience' and 'act experience' respectively were adapted from Yang and He (2011). Another 3 items that measure the constructs 'relate experience' was adapted from Yang and He (2011). Lastly, the 'experience value' construct was measured by 10 items that sourced from Keng et al. (2007). All the tested constructs were measured by 5-point Likert Scale (1-strongly disagree to 5- strongly agree).

### *3.3 Sampling Design*

The study will focus on the full time students who are currently studying in the one of the private universities that situated n Kuala Lumpur. Tertiary students were selected in this study because most of them own smart phones. Due to the inability of obtaining a sampling frame, judgmental sampling technique was adopted because the technique itself allows the researchers to consciously select respondents in the study (Burn & Bush, 2003). Large sample size was required in this research for the purpose of minimizing the sampling error of the non-probability sampling and enhancing the precision of the sampling outcome. Therefore, a total of 550 respondents were set as the sample size in this research. A pilot study will be conducted in advance to ensure that the questionnaire is error free and easy to understand. A full scale of self-administered survey will be launched immediate after receiving the feedbacks from the pilot test. Self-administered survey method in the form of drop-off surveys technique was used to ensure the confidentiality and non-obligation aspects of participating in the survey. The survey was conducted in the lecture halls where respondents could return the questionnaires immediately to the researchers. The voluntary nature of the participation was explained verbally as well as being indicated in the survey questionnaire. Students were invited to complete an anonymous survey questionnaire that took approximately 15 minutes of their time to complete. A total of 550 sets of questionnaires were distributed and 500 questionnaires were collected.

### *3.4 Data Analysis*

The statistical program SPSS version 20.0 has been used in this study to perform the statistical analysis. Descriptive analysis, scale measurement (reliability and validity tests) and inferential analysis (multiple regression analysis) will be carried in the data analysis. Cronbach's alpha with the value of more than 0.60 would be used as a guideline to measure the reliability of the measurement in this research because the test of Cronbach's alpha is an appropriate index to indicate the inter-item consistency reliability (Hair, et al., 2006). As part of the validity tests, factor analysis in the form of principal component analysis will be adopted in this research. Principle component analysis is "an approach to factor analysis that considers the total variance in the data" in which "the diagonal of the correlation matrix consists of utilities and full variance is brought into the factor matrix" (Malhotra, Hall, Shaw & Oppenheim, 2006). Principal components analysis was adopted in this research because the researchers intend to "determine the minimum number of factors that will account for

maximum variance in the data” (Malhotra, et al., 2006).

#### 4. Research Results

##### 4.1 Respondents' Demographic Profiles Analysis

A total of 500 valid respondents were analyzed in this study. Based on the finding, 67.8% of the respondents are Malaysian and the rest of 32.2% of the respondents is non-Malaysian. According to the survey, the gender distribution of the respondents consists of male (42%) and female (58%). Bults of the respondents are youngsters. The age of less than 21 years old is the largest respondents' group (56%; 280 people); followed by the age group between 21 to 25 years old (45.8%; 229 people) and the age group between 26 to 30 years old (36%; 180 people). In term of nationality, most of the respondents are Malaysian (67%) and the rest of the respondents are non-Malaysian (32.2%). Chinese is the largest ethnic group and it represented 59.4% among the various ethics groups that took part as respondents in the study. Most of the respondents are currently studying undergraduate degree programme (61.4%).

##### 4.2 Reliability Test

One of the tests in which can be used to ensure the stability and consistency of the measures is known as reliability test. A scale is called reliable if it produces consistent results when repeated measurements are made (Hair et al., 2003). A popular approach to measure reliability is to use the coefficient alpha (Malhotra, 2006). The value of coefficient alpha or Cronbach's alpha with the range of greater than 0.60 is considered acceptable and good (Hair et al., 2003). The results from Table 3 indicated that the Cronbach alpha for all the five constructs were well above 0.60 as recommended by Hair et al. (2003). Cronbach alpha for the constructs ranged from the lowest of 0.626 (act experience) to 0.696 (think experience), as indicated in Table 3. In conclusion, the result concluded that the measurement scales of the constructs were stable to measure the constructs.

##### 4.3 Validity Test

Validity of a scale is defined as the extent to which differences in observed scale scores reflect the true differences among objects on the characteristics being measured (Malhotra, 1996). Validity can be measured by examining through content, criterion and construct validity. Construct validity was adopted in this research as validity measurement and exploratory factor analysis was used to measure the construct validity (Cavana et al., 2001). For the exploratory factor analysis, Bartlett test of sphericity and Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sample adequacy were used to measure the appropriateness of the factor model (Malhotra, 2004). Bartlett test of sphericity is a “statistical test for the overall significance of all correlation within a correlation matrix” (Hair et al., 2006, p.102). “It provides the statistical significance that the correlation matrix has significant correlations among at least some of the variables” (Hair et al., 2006, p.114). KMO can be used to measure the sampling adequacy by comparing “the magnitudes of the observed correlation coefficient to the magnitudes of the partial correlation coefficients” (Malhotra, 2004, p.564). According to Malhotra (2004, p.561), “high values (between 0.5 and 1.0) of KMO indicate factor analysis is appropriate” and “values of KMO below 0.5 imply that factor analysis might not be appropriate”. Eigenvalue is defined as “column sum of squared loadings for a factor, also referred to as the latent root. It represents the amount of variance accounted for by a factor” (Hair et al., 2006, p.102). The value of Eigenvalues that is greater than 1.0 was used as a guideline to determine the number of factors in this research. VARIMAX procedures inorthogonal rotation was used in this research to minimize “the number of variables with high loadings on a factor” in order to enhance “the interpretability of the factors” (Malhotra, 2004, p.567-568). The value of the factor loading of 0.50 was used as a guideline in the factor analysis.

The output of the factor analysis showed in Table 3 indicated that the factor analysis was appropriate because the value of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) was 0.764 (between 0.5 and 1.0) and the statistical test for Bartlett test of sphericity was significant ( $p=0.000$ ;  $df=406$ ; Approx. Chi-Square=3652.140) for all the correlations within a correlational matrix (at least for some of the constructs). Based on the principal components analysis and VARIMAX procedure in orthogonal rotation that were adopted in the factor analysis, the results showed that the Eigenvalues for all the tested constructs were greater than 1.0 as indicated in Table 3, ranging from the lowest of 1.183 (service excellence) to the highest of 5.302 (sense experience). In term of convergent validity, the factor loadings for all items within the constructs showed in Table 3 were more than 0.50. According to Table 3, discriminant validity indicated that all items were allocated according to the different constructs. Therefore, the items were not overlapping and they supported respective constructs.

Table 3. Factors identified by the principal components factor analysis

Factor's Name	Variable	Factor Loading	Eigen-value	Percentage of Variance Explained	Cronbach's Reliability Coefficients
Sense experience	The smartphones try to attract my senses very much	0.600	5.302	7.554	0.668
	The product design of smartphones is very attractive	0.665			
	It is very interesting to touch the screen of smartphone	0.651			
	The product features of smartphones are very special	0.740			
Think experience	The product features of smartphones try to intrigue me from the uniqueness of the operating system of smartphone	0.726	2.035	7.468	0.696
	The functions provided by the smartphone stimulate my curiosity toward product features that embedded in the smartphone	0.724			
	The characteristically experiential activities of smartphones stimulate my interest.	0.605			
	Personally experience gained from the usage of smartphone tries to intrigue me to know more in the smartphone technology.	0.741			
Relate Experience	I can relate to other people through the usage of the smartphone	0.746	1.332	6.272	0.671
	The functions provided by smartphone make me closer to this product	0.798			
	The features of smartphones try to get me to think about important of having any function with this product	0.620			
Act experience	The souvenirs provided by the smartphones remind me to buy more cell phone accessories	0.692	1.746	7.020	0.626
	When I am using the new feature of smartphones, it reflects my lifestyle	0.674			
	Every indication in the smartphones is obviously make me easy to understand the unique features of the smartphone	0.680			
	The website information of the smartphones attracts me to buy a particular brand	0.583			
Feel experience	Using of smartphones keeps me comfortable	0.635	1.506	6.971	0.630
	The customer services provided by the smartphone company make me respond in an emotional manner	0.651			
	The experiential activities of using smartphone let me feel very interesting and fresh	0.664			
	The relevance functions performed by the smartphones make me respond in a very joyful emotional manner.	0.711			
Customer return on investment (CROI)	Using of smartphones makes my life easier	0.783	1.444	6.853	0.719
	Using smartphones fits my plan schedule	0.749			
	The feature assortment that embedded in the smartphones fits my needs	0.716			
Experiential value	Playfulness	0.805	1.805	7.130	0.738
	I feel happy when I use smartphones	0.797			
	Using of smartphones makes me forget my problem encountered	0.730			
Aesthetic	Smartphones are aesthetically appealing	0.906	1.253	5.903	0.802
	I like the design of the smartphones	0.894			
Service Excellence	When I think of smartphones I think of service excellence	0.867	1.183	5.542	0.702
	I think of particular smartphone brand as an expert in the merchandise it offer	0.831			

Note: KMO Measures of Sampling Adequacy = 0.764;  $p = 0.000$  ( $p < 0.05$ );  $df = 406$ ; Approx. Chi-Square = 3652.140.

Source: Develop for this research.

#### 4.4 Regression Analysis

##### 4.4.1 Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis is the appropriate technique to analyze the linear relationship between a dependent variable and multiple independent variables by estimating coefficients for the equation for a straight line (Hair et al., 2006). Multiple regression analysis will be carried out to test the five hypotheses (H1, H2, H3, H4, and H5) in this research.

Based on Table 4, the Tolerance Value was ranged between 0.794-0.870 in which were all more than 0.10 and the VIF value ranges from 1.149-1.259 in which are all less than 5 (Hair et al., 2006). Thus, the findings showed that there is no multicollinearity problem among all the independent variables in this research. According to Table 4, the p-value for all the five independent variables are less than 0.05, indicating that sense experience, feel experience, think experience, act experience, and relate experience had significant relationship with experiential value. In other words, the findings from this research confirms that sense experience, feel experience, think experience, relate experience, and act experience are positively related to the experiential value in the smartphone industry in Malaysia. In conclusion, all the five hypotheses are supported.

Table 4. Result of Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>							
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	13.821	1.986		6.958	.000		
Sense experience	.237	.094	.108	2.526	.012	.841	1.189
Feel experience	.197	.093	.090	2.110	.035	.844	1.185
Think experience	.186	.084	.093	2.221	.027	.870	1.149
Act experience	.546	.107	.216	5.109	.000	.862	1.160
Relate experience	.649	.121	.236	5.358	.000	.794	1.259

Note: <sup>a</sup> Dependent Variable: Composed Experiential Value; R = 0.490; R Square = 0.240; Adjusted R Square = 0.233.

Source: Develop for this research.

## 5. Conclusion

### 5.1 Implications of Research Findings

This study helps the smartphone industry to gain further understanding the impacts of sense experience, feel experience, think experience, act experience, and relate experience on the experiential value.

By understanding the antecedents of experiential value, the research allows the smartphone industry players to use experiential marketing effectively in producing the best products and services ever rendered to the smartphone users.

The research study provides insights for the smartphone industry to have an in-depth understanding towards the factors (ie., sense experience, feel experience, think experience, act experience, and relate experience)that contributing to the experiential value with their customers. Therefore, this understanding enables the smartphone producers in identifying relevant approaches to build strong experiential value with their valued customers.

### 5.2 Limitations of the Research

Although the research findings provide some insights to the researchers, these findings should be viewed in light of some limitations. To summarize, the limitations associated with the research findings are: (1) This study was adopting judgemental sampling technique method. Thus, the result could not be generalizable; (2) This study was conducted via cross sectional study. Thus, the changes of the customer's experiential value over a period of time cannot be identified.

### 5.3 Recommendations for the Future Research

Due to the limitations of this research which is mentioned above, it is recommended to adopt probability sampling method and longitudinal study for the future research.

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