



# Journal of Applied Sciences

ISSN 1812-5654

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## Brand Management Innovation: A Construction of Brand Experience Identification System

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**Abstract:** Brand Experience is a bridge of connection between brand and consumer and is a hot issue on Brand Research currently. With the Brand Experience Identification system (BEIs) construction and research as study object, this paper presents the concept of BEIs at the perspective of consumers' real Brand Experience and by the approach of human psychological experience cognitive. Subsequently, trying to allow enterprises to have a better application of this system to create or manage the User Experience of brand and be able to make the brand and consumer to establish a real connection, it expounds the content, construction methods and process of the BEIs.

**Key words:** Brand identification, brand experience, brand experience identification, construction

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### INTRODUCTION

In modern commercial field, it can be known that the appearances and Functions differentiation gradually weakened on products and services provided by most of brands. To survive and develop in the fierce competition, many enterprises have utilized advertising, packaging, promotion and other means to promoting their products. While ubiquitous advertising promotional information leads consumers to receive information overload. Especially some enterprises that exaggerate or embellish their products or services in order to attract customers increase consumers' choice problems.

Consumers are tired of constantly receiving the questionable impression manufactured by companies and they would prefer to have the opportunity to explore brand advantages by themselves and to associate and interactive with certain brands in life which makes the Brand Experience more and more popular among consumers. Through Brand Experience to build a good image in the minds of consumers becomes an important way for enterprises to win customer loyalty and gain competitive advantage and strategic policies. On the other hand while visual elements are no longer a focus, (Ruzzier and de Chernatony, 2013). When come to brand building and managing, enterprises still refer to the traditional Corporate Identification System (CIS) to locate their own brand. In a word, there is lack of a brand identification system which can be seemed as a reference and can be consistent with the current economic situation for enterprises to standardize the management or build brand.

### THE PROPOSAL OF THE BRAND EXPERIENCE IDENTIFICATION (BEI)

To have a better understand of the brand experience identification, two related concepts that the brand identification and brand experience should be clearly defined.

**Brand identification (BI):** BI as one of the core concepts of Brand Research, first proposed by the French scholar Kapferer (1992), emphasizing the brand to create brand Identification in the core and strategic. Kapferer pointed out that "Brand Identification means that the brand has its own character, unique different ambitions and aspirations." Sometimes we express the BI with another Phrase: "Brand Identify" which indicates BI is both an essential attribute of the brand and a description of the specific movement behavior.

According to the book "brand leadership" written by Aaker (2000) Brand Identification is defined as associated things which could create and maintain a good impression to association things created by brand strategist. This association objects implies that the corporate members have a commitment to consumers. BI provides a brand with the brand direction, objectives and the meaning of existence, can increase salesperson effort behind a specific brand and ultimately improves brand performance, even in the face of control systems to the contrary (Hughes, and Ahearne, 2010). It is the core of the brand strategic vision and also the brand association driver of the brand equity. At the level of brand identification, BI concludes "core identification of brand"

and “extended identification of brand” brand experience: Scholars have conducted a lot of researches on the concept of Brand Experience (BE) from the issues of characteristics, formation, type and mechanism and so on but had not yet come to an agreement.

With the use of the concept “psychological modules”, Schmitt (1999) put the consumer experience as a “Strategic Experiential Modules” (SEMs), from the process of consumers’ psychology cognitive. The SEMs (Fig. 1) contains five dimensions including sensory experiences (SENSE), affective experiences (FEEL), creative cognitive experiences (THINK), physical experiences, behaviors and lifestyles (ACT) and social-identity experiences that result from relating to a reference group or culture (RELATE)

Among them, the sensory experience, the emotional experience and the thinking experience are unique to the individual experience. While the act experience and the related experience are usually derived when interaction, are the “shared experience”. The sensory experience to the senses as a selling point; the emotional experience to lead customers feelings and emotions as the goal; the thinking experience aims to create a way for customers to use creative problem solving experience; the act experience to create mobile experiences that affects the body’s physical experience, lifestyle, consumer interaction as the target; the related experience with other people or culture for the sake of appeal points, including the senses, emotions, thinking and act experience other dimensions. These five types of Schmitt’s experience was applied by many scholars to the division of the brand experience dimensions.

Brandkus *et al.* thought that the BE is associated with the brand, belonging to brand design, image, packaging, promotion and environmental components of

stimulation of the senses, emotions, thinking, Act and related experience. Simply put, BE is the consumers’ accumulated experiences and impressions when contacting with brand or using brand related products and is a concept that marketers applied new marketing concept-“experience” to the formation of the brand. The biggest advantage that enterprises committed to the establishment of the BE is that can improve customer satisfaction and loyalty, strengthen customer-brand relationships and enhance brand value.

Chinese scholars Zhang and Bian, (2011) thought that Brand Experience is consumer’s perception, attitudes, cognitive, emotional and other reactions triggered by brand-related stimulus that created by the company; brand-related stimulus including products, brand design, packaging, sales, purchasing and other environmental and related experiences; BE throughout the search, purchase and use of various stages of the consumption. Similar with Schmitt’s SEMs, Zhang (2003) makeS the system into five areas: sensory experience, emotional experience, achievement experience, spiritual experiences and heart experience.

**The concept of BEI:** Based on the above existing BI and BE relevant theories, BEI can be defined as that starting from consumer psychology cognition, the business or brand managers come to the characteristics that the brand should have with the BE actual cognitive processes (sensory experience, emotional experience, thinking experience, act experience, related experience) of the target group of brand for research objects.

Bei is based on the user experience perspective, also can be understood as the identification of the brand experience. This kind of brand identification mode different from the previous visual forms of identification: not only includes tangible Brand Sensory Identification but also contains associated identification which at level of an active action to identify and psychological. BEI would greatly expand the spread and dimensions of manifestations.

The key of these advantages is that the brand should have always been from the consumer’s inner User Experience. It should be noted that, as a group, the consumer’ needs of experience are highly social. Inseparable from economic and social situation, trends and socio-political led these needs dynamic characteristics. Therefore BEI needs to pay close attention to changes in consumer demand. On the other hand, consumers as a group of individuals, the personality is very prominent. The focuses and difficulties on BEI should not only reflect on the individual concerned but also to reconcile different personality.

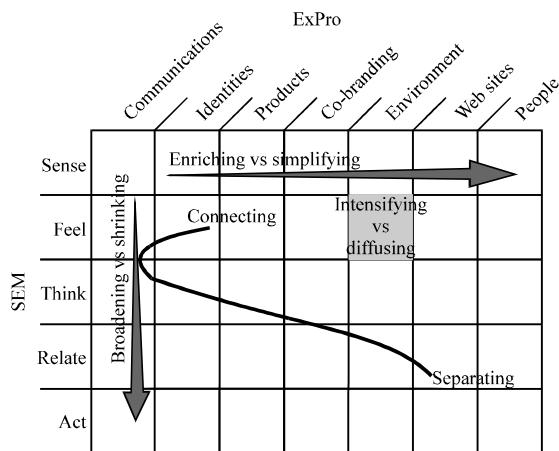


Fig. 1: Strategic experiential modules (SEMs)

## **BRAND EXPERIENCE IDENTIFICATION SYSTEM**

Brand Experience Identification system (BEIs) includes Brand Sensory Experience Identification (BSEI), Brand Emotional Experience Identification (BEEI), Brand Thinking Experience Identification (BTEI), Brand Related Experience Identification (BREI) and Brand Act Experience Identification (BAEI), the relationship among them showed in Fig. 2. The BTEI is the core identification of the system, the rest go to the extended identification. Further subdivided, the extended identification can be divided into two levels: First level, including the BEEI is as the transitional role; Second level, including BSEI, BAEI and BREI, this level of Identification is directly facing the brand experience consumers but also to show the form of the final system.

Each element in BEIs is closely related with others. BSEI, BEEI and BTEI are personal experience of identifying the brand, the other two are usually derived from the shared experience of interpersonal Identification.

**Brand sensory experience identification:** The BSEI refers to the part of the brand that gives consumers vision, hearing, smell, taste and tactile form of sensory stimulation to form aesthetic pleasure, excitement, beauty and satisfaction. Its content should cover the following aspects: (1) Brand Visual Experience Identification, including everything the visual feel about the brand experience, like brand LOGO identity, brand color experience, etc., (2) Brand taste experience identification, companies make customers feel relaxed, such as increase mood by providing foods or a cup of coffee, a glass of wine, or some candy, etc., (3) Brand listening experience identification, brand or products to create an environment that can cause additional memories, triggering emotional voice, (4) Brand tactile experience identification, whether it is a feeling of the product itself, shop facilities, room temperature, or even a floor or door armrests are an aspect of the BE and (5) Brand olfactory experience identification,

brand better able to subtly evoke emotions of customers' odor, such as an indoor system or fresh aroma baked snacks, flowers, etc. are ways to increase the aroma.

When users contact or understand the brand, their senses are the first to play a role, also are the base above which brand establishes contact with the user.

**Brand emotional experience identification:** The BEEI targets initiating customer inner feelings and emotions as the goal and is the brand's emotional reaction generated on the basis of the customers' sensory experience. In other words, BEEI is composed of the positive and negative mood and passion that caused by the BE. Moreover, emotion generated during interactive exposure and consumer periods is the most intense. Morrison and Crane (2007) thought true customer excitement and loyalty will stem from the design and management of the relational aspects of the emotional brand experience during the service consumption process. It is concerned with the most powerful aspects of human character: beyond the material needs and experience the emotions harvest. A brand is suitable to do that, because it can be injected into this desire to stimulate this intrinsic human motivation. Its content should include the following aspects: Brand Loyalty, brand brings consumers a status symbol, psychological ownership and intimacy; brand humane, services or products of the brand make consumers feel warm, comfortable, loved and it can fully consider the details of the user experience; brand innovation degree, consumers can experience a new way, fun and so on.

In today's competitive market, only by product or service is not enough to open up new markets, companies even harder for to maintain existing markets or the customer. It is the emotional factor in products and brands that become the key factor consumer ultimate choice and are willing to pay.

**Brand thinking experience identification:** The BTEI aims to create the BE that inspires the customer use creative ways to solve problems and is user resonance generated through further reflection on the brand value after personal BSEI and BEEI. It can be concluded that BTEI is the core of BEIs. In order to attract consumers' attention and trigger curiosity and inspire excitement, BTEI can be induced and stimulated to Produce by creating a sense of wonder.

To measure the success of a brand, it is not the user's sensory experience on the brand very comfortable or profound emotional experience but is whether consumers can enter thinking experience of brand which means customers can enter the thinking state and form

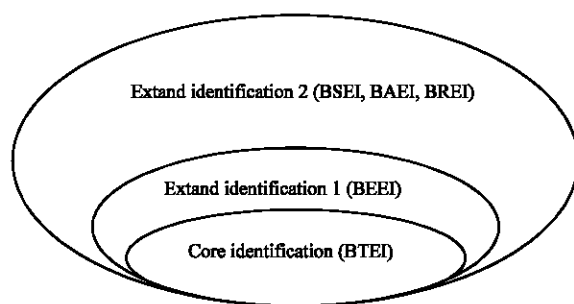


Fig. 2: The levels of the BEIs

new values with stimulation of brand sensory and emotional experience. Such thinking would be imprinted on the brand which reflects the value of the brand, making the customer loyalty to the brand.

**Brand act experience identification:** The BAEI wishes to create a kind of tangible experience, lifestyle or consumer interaction which affects the body. Formed by creating physical feelings Behavior patterns, life style and interactive relationship, BAEI is consumer's subjective action result of recognition of the Brand Value after thinking experience.

As a consumer's feedback on BE, the BAEI plays a crucial role in brand communication. For example, consumers significant setbacks encountered during the BE, then consumers in the comments box will give "bad" or comments denigrated the brand image and complain to the people around them that is a fatal blow for the reputation of the brand. If the situation is reversed, then it is a great help for the brand promotion, so the BAEI can't be ignored.

**Brand related experience identification:** The BREI refers to building a unique social identification by creating cultural or community that consumers want to participate in. This level of Identification related with cultural values, social roles and groups' vested of the brand, is a strong long-term "ecosystem" built up by the brand and is to examine the advantages and brand loyalty. For example, if a company builds a band, it not only should design a unique logo, provide consumers with good products and services but also should participate in public welfare activities and organize various branding campaign etc. There are some approaches to get the BREI of the band, customer research is an important way. Customer research should study existing and prospective customers, former customers, industry experts and intermediaries (Ghodeswar, 2008).

The BREI strengths associated with beliefs and values are the most powerful and most difficult to imitate. Brand image is the perception in the mind of the customers about the brand and its associations.

## THE CONSTRUCTION OF BEIS

When creating a recognition system, consistent with human cognitive law is a prerequisite. That is, the establishment should meet the target group cognitive processes of things. To build this BEIs, we must first clarify the process of user experience identification that is the formation of the brand in user's mind. According to the user's experience of identifying cognitive processes, we construct a reasonable identification system from the perspective of brand managers.

**The user's BEI progress:** The user touches brand starting from BSEI, for example, through television advertising, the use of branded products, around user groups' comments and so on. This Sensory Experience Identification will generally cause emotional feedback: love, hate, good impression etc. There are also some people inspired into thinking experience from the BEEI. Thinking experience is the core of the brand experience, the brand's success is based on whether broad cause others to think of the BE, so the user emotional experience return to the thinking experience finally. When coming into the BEI, the user will have the corresponding Act experience, such as the purchase of products of the brand, dissemination the brand. After these series of the experience, there will be a comprehensive process of association experience and achieve brand image formation. The detail progress of user's BEI shows in Fig. 3.

**Procedure of BEIs construction:** From the flowchart of BEIS construction (Fig. 4), it can be known that BEIs

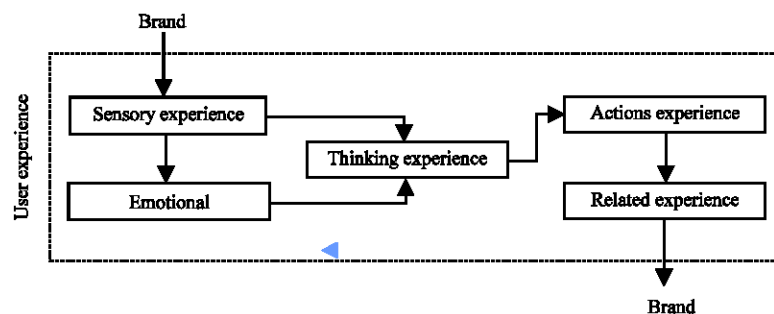


Fig. 3: The user's BEI progress

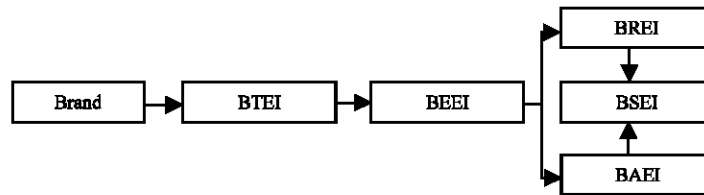


Fig. 4: Procedure of BEIs construction

model conveys meaning and philosophy can be summarized as follows: First, BEIs is a combination of five BEI factors for the purpose of establishing a real connection between brand and consumers. Starting from the view point of consumer, the BE and BI, as well as enterprises and consumers closely linked together to form an effective BEI frame of discernment; second, the core part of BEIs is the BTEI and whose fundamental nature determines the content of BEEI. According to the direction of the BEEI, then successively formulate BAEI, BSEI and BREI. Among them, the key task is to accurately grasp target consumer groups BTEI needs. It can be seen that the BEEI has a close link with others except BSEI. Of all five parts of this system that has a direct relationship with consumer only three kinds that are the BREI, BSEI and BAEI. BSEI is the basic identification. While the BAEI and the BREI play a supporting role, serve to strengthen the brand loyalty and brand value, important role can't be ignored;

Finally, as a whole, all elements such as brand building, identification, dissemination, experience and marketing included in this BEIs around the brand thinking as well as Brand Experience all Constitute a full range of brand communication and shaping three-dimensional models.

**The application of the BEIs:** Focuses on the future of the “experience economy”, the system has a good application value for creative brand or strong interaction with consumers to create and manage brand. When companies are ready to create or manage the brand, the first need to determine consumer groups of the brand and products or services that they would provide, then combine with psychological methods to identify best means of the BTEI that embodied the brand by user interviewing. For example, if a brand target consumers at age 20-30 years and like online shopping, then the BTEI can be define as “creative shopping lifestyle”. On the base of that, BEEI can be set as pleasant, quiet, goodwill and so on. Final presentation to the consumer is the BSEI (including logo experience, color experience etc.) and the BAEI and the BREI based on this step. It should be noted that the

consumer demand for BTEI is dynamic which requires companies or brand managers regularly assess experience changes in demand and adjust the BEIs reflected in the provision of products and services.

## COMMENTARY AND INSPIRATION OF THE BEIS

In the market context of “full experience consumption patterns”, the “experience” has gradually become a dominant factor of modern brand building and brand management. In practice, many companies have been fully aware of the value of the brand experience, have a good guide to create brand experiences (such as apple’s brand experience stores, Ikea experiential marketing). But this single kind of experience way could not meet future consumption by higher demand. The research on BEIs is an attempt to apply “experience” to the actual operation which not only provides a reference but also develops a new brand vision for the enterprise. Brand loyalty may be viewed as a link in the chain of effects that indirectly connects brand trust and brand affect with the market performance aspects of brand equity (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001). Compared with the traditional vision-based Brand Identification system, the proposing of the BEIs has a greater significance: is a subversion, greatly expanded and refined the modern brand dimensions and elements to better link consumers, enhancing brand appeal and brand loyalty. However, due to time and the profession constraints, inevitably with some limitations of this research, mainly in the following aspects: (1) Various factors within the system is not enough refinement, the next level is not included in the contents of the specific list, (2) Various factors not specified scale to assess the scientific and testing and (3) Different brands factors in the types of the system will be slightly different, is not reflected in this study.

In a long term, the current research on the brand experience is still in the exploratory stage experiments, theoretical research has lagged far behind in practice, can't play its due role in guiding, this paper as an attempt to draw the attention of scholars and to further deepen this regard research.

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