

Received: May 2023 Accepted: June 2023

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.58262/ks.v11i02.203>

# The Impact of Brand Experience on Brand Resonance: A Case Study of Retail Supermarkets in the Mekong Delta Region, Vietnam

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## Abstract

*This research aims to unravel the dynamics between brand experience and brand resonance in the specific context of retail supermarkets in Vietnam's Mekong Delta region. The comprehensive study comprises qualitative exploration and quantitative investigation. In the qualitative phase, initial stages focus on conceptual exploration and model generalization, followed by meticulous adjustments of measurement scales to harmonize with the unique retail market and socio-economic landscape of the Mekong Delta. The qualitative findings lead to the development of precise measurement scales for the constituent factors of Brand Experience and the dimensions of Brand Resonance. Transitioning to the quantitative phase, a convenient sampling method is employed, involving direct interviews with 232 consumers from Can Tho city, Vinh Long city, and An Giang province. Rigorous testing procedures, including Cronbach's alpha for reliability and Exploratory Factor Analysis, pave the way for the application of Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling. The outcomes affirm the acceptance of all hypotheses. Sensory Experience emerges as a pivotal driver, positively influencing Brand Engagement, with subsequent impacts from Intellectual Experience, Affective Experience, and Behavioral Experience. A distinctive descending influence is observed in the variables affecting Community Consciousness, namely Affective Experience, Sensory Experience, Intellectual Experience, and Behavioral Experience. Examining factors influencing Brand Commitment highlights Sensory Experience as the predominant variable, succeeding in impact over Intellectual Experience, Behavioral Experience, and Affective Experience. This research provides nuanced insights valuable for crafting strategic marketing approaches tailored to the retail supermarket landscape in the Mekong Delta.*

**Keywords:** Brand experience, brand resonance, retail supermarket, mekong delta, vietnam.

## 1. Introduction

in the face of increasingly fierce competition, businesses are compelled to not only focus on technological advancements to enhance product and service quality while reducing costs but also emphasize brand-related activities to gain a competitive edge. Strategic brand management is regarded as the key to achieving a competitive advantage over rivals. Keller's (2012) brand relationship theory posits that a brand functions as a connecting element for both consumers and suppliers, asserting that a brand significantly influences consumer choices. In the service industry, the concept of brand experience is garnering attention from researchers and management. Schmitt (2003) suggests that companies should adopt innovative brand

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experience strategies instead of traditional marketing strategies to dominate the market since consumers, as experiential beings, seek novel experiences.

The role of brand experience in predicting consumer behavior is crucial, encompassing interesting and memorable experiences, positive emotions, and thoughts that significantly impact the formation of brand resonance. Particularly in the retail business, the role of brand experience becomes increasingly important, as consumer experiences from sensations and emotions to behaviors throughout their interactions and shopping at retail outlets significantly influence brand resonance. Consumer brand experiences are foundational elements contributing to brand resonance. In other words, brand experience has become one of the effective brand strategies in the era of industry 4.0. However, there is a limited exploration of the nature of brand experience and its implications in the retail market in Vietnam. Therefore, this study aims to comprehend the essence of brand experience and verify its relationship with brand resonance in the context of retail supermarkets in the Mekong Delta Region, Vietnam. The findings will provide a foundation for tailored solutions to assist retail supermarkets in constructing and enhancing consumer-oriented brand experience policies, thereby fostering brand resonance between consumers and supermarkets.

## **2. Theoretical Foundation**

### **Brand experience**

The concept of consumer brand experience is defined as the internal and subjective responses when individuals directly or indirectly engage with a product/brand/store. Brakus et al. (2009) defines brand experience as the internal and subjective responses of consumers (feelings, emotions, and perceptions) and the behavioral responses activated by brand-related factors such as brand identification, packaging, design, environment, and communication. Therefore, brand experience is a multifaceted concept encompassing sensory, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral experiences of consumers with a brand (Brakus et al., 2009). The components of brand experience include:

**Sensory Experience:** Experiences derived from the five senses (sight, smell, hearing, touch, and taste) provided by a brand (Schmitt, 2003; Brakus et al., 2009). In retail, information about sensory experiences is likely to be remembered, and such information can influence purchasing intentions and repeat purchases (Ishida & Taylor, 2011). In retail shopping, sensory experiences are manifested through stimuli from the store to consumers' senses, such as the store's atmosphere creating a sensory feel or the store's layout stimulating visual senses.

**Affective Experience:** Consumers' emotional and affective experiences, including emotions generated by the brand and emotional connections with consumers (Schmitt, 2003; Brakus et al., 2009). Emotions are related to consumers' experiences when engaging in shopping activities at the store, the emotions consumers experience during store visits, and shopping.

**Intellectual Experience:** Consumers are stimulated creatively and develop thinking through interactions with the brand (Schmitt, 2003; Brakus et al., 2009). Consumers' experiences in retail stores have the potential to generate thoughts and curiosity about the brand, services, and can create awareness about the store.

**Behavioral Experience:** Consumers' experiences when using the brand, leading consumers to physical actions (Schmitt, 2003; Brakus et al., 2009). The value created for consumers lies in changes in behavior and lifestyle through interactions with the brand.

## Brand resonance

The Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) model, developed by Keller (1993), is a pyramid model that describes the step-by-step construction from a solid foundation of brand identity towards the highest level, representing Brand Resonance. The first level is Brand Awareness, ensuring that the brand is prominent and recognized by consumers. The goal of the second level is to identify and communicate the brand's meaning to consumers through marketing channels or word of mouth. The third level, Brand Perceptions, reflects consumers' emotional responses and evaluations of the product and brand.

Brand Resonance, at the pinnacle of the pyramid, signifies a positive relationship between consumers and the brand. This level is the most challenging as it reflects the deep empathy of consumers with the brand. It includes brand loyalty, where consumers become frequent users, emotional attachment as consumers favor the product, community feeling as consumers engage positively with the brand or other consumers, and active attachment, demonstrating the highest loyalty when consumers actively engage and participate in the brand community and may become advocates, promoting the brand's image.

By dividing into four levels, businesses can understand what consumers want and need. Brand Resonance is the special result of building brand equity value. When brand activities and consumer emotions are highly synchronized, this synchronization leads to a synergistic effect, causing the brand to spread strongly within the community and receive enthusiastic support from consumers. Consumers who resonate with the brand are also the most positive advocates for the brand in case of any issues or unfavorable situations. They create a community of brand enthusiasts, making the brand more appealing in the eyes of consumers in general.

In summary, achieving Brand Resonance means gaining positive loyalty from consumers and their attachment to the brand. This is what any brand manager expects, and it is considered the ultimate achievement of brand equity value.

The components for measuring brand resonance include:

**Brand Engagement:** Consumers are considered engaged with a brand when they exhibit a tendency to purchase multiple products from a particular brand and engage in repeat purchases (Chaudhuri, 1999). Brand engagement also reflects the consumer's attitude; if a consumer trusts and holds a positive impression of a brand, they are more likely to prioritize purchasing products from that brand (Yoo et al., 2000).

**Community Consciousness:** This is a significant social phenomenon where consumers feel a close relationship (similarity in nature) with others who use the same brand (Keller, 2012).

**Brand Commitment:** This is an active commitment to the brand, occurring when consumers are willing to invest time, effort, money, or other resources in addition to purchasing and using the brand (Keller, 2012).

Based on the model by Brakus et al. (2009), which has been widely validated by numerous studies across different fields, including the manufacturing of goods/services and retail services, to assess the overall influence of brand experience on various levels in the Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) model (Keller, 1993). However, this model has yet to deeply explore the impact of each factor constituting brand experience on each aspect of brand resonance—the highest level of the CBBE pyramid. This is also a novel aspect of the research. Previous studies have indicated that brand experience activities bring long-term value to the brand. Therefore, the proposed hypotheses (H) include:

### **The relationship between Brand Experience and Brand Engagement**

**H1:** *Sensory Experience has a positive influence on Brand Engagement of consumers towards retail stores in the Mekong Delta region, Vietnam.*

**H2:** *Affective Experience has a positive influence on Brand Engagement of consumers towards retail stores in the Mekong Delta region, Vietnam.*

**H3:** *Intellectual Experience has a positive influence on Brand Engagement of consumers towards retail stores in the Mekong Delta region, Vietnam.*

**H4:** *Behavioral Experience has a positive influence on Brand Engagement of consumers towards retail stores in the Mekong Delta region, Vietnam.*

### **The relationship between Brand Experience and Community Consciousness**

**H5:** *Sensory Experience has a positive influence on Community Consciousness of consumers towards retail stores in the Mekong Delta region, Vietnam.*

**H6:** *Affective Experience has a positive influence on Community Consciousness of consumers towards retail stores in the Mekong Delta region, Vietnam.*

**H7:** *Intellectual Experience has a positive influence on Community Consciousness of consumers towards retail stores in the Mekong Delta region, Vietnam.*

**H8:** *Behavioral Experience has a positive influence on Community Consciousness of consumers towards retail stores in the Mekong Delta region, Vietnam.*

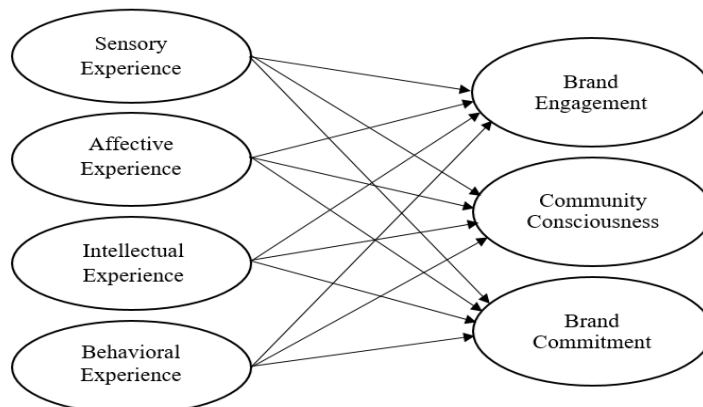
### **The relationship between Brand Experience and Brand Commitment**

**H9:** *Sensory Experience has a positive influence on Brand Commitment of consumers towards retail stores in the Mekong Delta region, Vietnam.*

**H10:** *Affective Experience has a positive influence on Brand Commitment of consumers towards retail stores in the Mekong Delta region, Vietnam.*

**H11:** *Intellectual Experience has a positive influence on Brand Commitment of consumers towards retail stores in the Mekong Delta region, Vietnam.*

**H12:** *Behavioral Experience has a positive influence on Brand Commitment of consumers towards retail stores in the Mekong Delta region, Vietnam.*



**Figure 1:** Conceptual Framework

## 4. Research Method

The research unfolds through two phases: (1) a qualitative exploration and (2) a quantitative investigation. The qualitative phase comprises two stages. The first stage aims to explore research concepts, generalize the research model. The second stage of the qualitative research adjusts the measurement scale to align with the retail market and the socio-economic conditions in the Mekong Delta region. The results of the qualitative study have yielded measurement scales for the constituent factors of Brand Experience and the dimensions of Brand Resonance, specifically, the scales include: (1) Sensory Experience (SE) – with 4 observed variables; (2) Affective Experience (AE) – 4 observed variables; (3) Intellectual Experience (IE) – 5 observed variables; (4) Behavioral Experience (BEx) – 5 observed variables; Brand Engagement (BEn) – 3 observed variables; Community Consciousness (CC) – 4 observed variables, and (5) Brand Commitment (BC) – 4 observed variables. These scales, after the final adjustments through a preliminary study, serve as the foundation for constructing the survey instrument for the formal quantitative research.

The quantitative research employs a convenient sampling method, conducted through direct interviews using a questionnaire with 232 consumers in Can Tho city, Vinh Long city and An Giang province. Initially, data will undergo reliability testing using Cronbach's alpha to eliminate unreliable measurement scales. Subsequently, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) is applied with a group-splitting strategy. Following this, Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling is employed to test hypotheses and validate the research model.

## 5. Research Results

### Sample Characteristics

Through the data collection process, 232 completed questionnaires were obtained, meeting the requirements for data quality. In terms of gender distribution, females accounted for 66.4%, while males constituted 33.6% of the total 232 survey participants. This gender distribution accurately reflects the real-world scenario where females exhibit a higher frequency of shopping in supermarkets than males. Additionally, the surveyed consumers reported an income range of 200 – 600 USD per month. The majority falls within the age group of 31 to 38 years, comprising the highest percentage at 35.8%. Regarding their residential and working areas, participants from Can Tho city constituted the highest proportion at 39.2%, followed by An Giang province at 33.2%, and finally, Vinh Long city at 27.6%.

**Table 1.** Demographic Characteristics of the Study Sample

Characteristics	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Income		
Under 200 USD/month	34	14.7
200 – 400 USD/month	87	37.5
400 – 600 USD/month	61	26.3
600 – 800 USD/month	33	14.2
Over 800 USD/month	17	7.3
Age		
18 – 22	41	17.7
23 – 30	29	12.5

Characteristics	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
31 – 38	83	35.8
38 – 45	32	13.8
Over 45	47	20.3
Gender		
Female	154	66.4
Male	78	33.6
City		
Can Tho	91	39.2
Vinh Long	64	27.6
An Giang	77	33.2
Total	232	100.0

### Scale Validation

The reliability and validity testing of the scales in this study followed the guidelines proposed by Hair et al. (2016), involving assessments of internal consistency, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. The scale validation results indicate that all scales exhibit satisfactory internal consistency (Cronbach's Alpha values exceeding 0.7, and the composite reliability of the scales surpassing 0.7). Furthermore, all factor loading coefficients exceed 0.7 (squared values greater than 0.5), and the average variance extracted values are all higher than 0.5. Consequently, the proposed scales demonstrate convergent validity.

**Table 2:** Scales, Reliability, and Validity

Factor	Outer Loadings	Cronbach's alpha	CR	AVE
Sensory Experience	0.638 – 0.826	0.715	0.815	0.727
Affective Experience	0.739 – 0.921	0.838	0.882	0.776
Intellectual Experience	0.693 – 0.883	0.793	0.827	0.729
Behavioral Experience	0.629 – 0.872	0.812	0.831	0.748
Brand Engagement	0.732 – 0.794	0.896	0.904	0.810
Community Consciousness	0.715 – 0.827	0.825	0.879	0.752
Brand Commitment	0.747 – 0.865	0.847	0.893	0.794

In the evaluation of discriminant validity, the Fornell-Larcker criterion has traditionally been a common approach in prior research. However, Henseler et al. (2015) introduced the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) as a superior measure of distinctiveness, a choice substantiated by various methodological investigations. Consequently, this study adopts the HTMT index to assess the distinctiveness among constructs. The established criterion for achieving discriminant validity is an HTMT value of 0.85 ( $\leq 0.85$ ) for each pair of constructs (Kline, 2015).

**Table 3:** Heterotrait Monotrait Ratio coefficient

	SE	AE	IE	BEx	BE <sub>n</sub>	CC	BC
SE							
AE	0.216						
IE	0.035	0.393					
BEx	0.142	0.036	0.365				
BE <sub>n</sub>	0.414	0.197	0.082	0.587			
CC	0.296	0.027	0.015	0.044	0.393		
BC	0.187	0.374	0.158	0.103	0.126	0.019	

## Multicollinearity Testing

The study assesses the independence of independent variables within the same estimation equation through the variance inflation factor (VIF) according to O'Brien (2007). The results in Table 4 indicate that the research model does not exhibit a severe multicollinearity issue, as all VIF scores are below 10 (VIF scores ranging from 1.138 to 1.936)

**Table 4:** Hypothesis testing results

Relationship	Hypothesis	Original weight	P - Value	2.5%	97.5%	Result
SE → BEn	H1	0.326	0.024	0.212	0.494	Accepted
AE → BEn	H2	0.221	0.031	0.163	0.309	Accepted
IE → BEn	H3	0.285	0.000	0.197	0.421	Accepted
BEx → BEn	H4	0.140	0.007	0.069	0.197	Accepted
SE → CC	H5	0.207	0.000	0.158	0.285	Accepted
AE → CC	H6	0.241	0.002	0.177	0.365	Accepted
IE → CC	H7	0.183	0.001	0.151	0.264	Accepted
BEx → CC	H8	0.172	0.000	0.105	0.239	Accepted
SE → BC	H9	0.289	0.005	0.206	0.453	Accepted
AE → BC	H10	0.154	0.000	0.084	0.201	Accepted
IE → BC	H11	0.275	0.000	0.182	0.387	Accepted
BEx → BC	H12	0.232	0.000	0.174	0.312	Accepted

The results of the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) analysis indicate the acceptance of all hypotheses.

Sensory Experience exhibits a positive influence on Brand Engagement, followed in sequence by Intellectual Experience, Affective Experience, and Behavioral Experience. The confirmed relationships suggest a nuanced interplay between the sensory aspects of brand interaction and the subsequent engagement of consumers. The positive impact of Sensory Experience on Brand Engagement underscores the significance of sensory stimuli in shaping consumer perceptions and fostering engagement. Furthermore, the sequential influence of Intellectual, Affective, and Behavioral Experiences elucidates the intricate cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions contributing to the overall brand engagement process. This comprehensive understanding provides valuable insights into the nuanced dynamics that drive consumer engagement with the brand, thereby contributing to the broader comprehension of consumer-brand relationships.

When examining the variables influencing Community Consciousness, a noticeable descending impact unfolds in the following sequence: Affective Experience, Sensory Experience, Intellectual Experience, and Behavioral Experience. This research result contributes to the comprehensive model.

Affective Experience emerges as the primary driver, exerting the most substantial impact on Community Consciousness. This denotes the emotional dimension as a pivotal determinant, suggesting that consumers' emotional connections significantly contribute to their Community Consciousness.

Among the factors influencing Brand Commitment, the variable with the most pronounced impact is Sensory Experience, followed sequentially by Intellectual Experience, Behavioral Experience, and Affective Experience.

Sensory Experience emerges as the most influential factor, indicating that the sensory aspects associated with the brand play a pivotal role in fostering consumer commitment. This suggests that the tangible and sensory elements of the brand, such as product quality or packaging, significantly contribute to the establishment of brand commitment.

## **6. Discussion**

The PLS-SEM results offer valuable insights into the key drivers of consumer behavior and brand-related outcomes for retail supermarkets in the Mekong Delta. Sensory Experience emerges as a pivotal factor with a strong and consistent impact across multiple dependent variables, including Brand Engagement, Community Consciousness, and Brand Commitment. This suggests that retail supermarkets should prioritize enhancing the sensory aspects of their brand interactions, such as product quality, packaging, and overall customer experience.

Affective Experience also stands out as a significant influencer, notably affecting both Community Consciousness and Brand Commitment. This underscores the importance of cultivating emotional connections with consumers to foster a sense of community and commitment. Retail supermarkets should consider strategies that evoke positive emotions in their customers, emphasizing the emotional aspects of the brand.

Intellectual Experience, while influential, shows a slightly lesser impact compared to Sensory and Affective Experiences. Behavioral Experience, while still contributing to the overall model, appears to have a relatively lower impact in comparison. These insights suggest that while cognitive and behavioral dimensions play roles, the tangible and emotional aspects of the brand are particularly critical for retail supermarkets in the Mekong Delta.

In summary, for retail supermarkets in the Mekong Delta, focusing on enhancing Sensory Experience and Affective Experience should be prioritized in their strategic initiatives. Strengthening these dimensions is likely to have a broad and robust impact on various aspects of consumer engagement, community consciousness, and brand commitment, ultimately contributing to long-term success in the competitive retail landscape.

## **7. Conclusions**

The study results clearly demonstrate positive correlations between the elements constituting brand experience, including Sensory Experience, Affective Experience, Intellectual Experience, Behavioral Experience, and various facets of brand resonance such as Brand Engagement, Community Consciousness, and Brand Commitment. These findings not only align consistently with prior research conducted globally, encompassing works by Brakus et al. (2009), Sahin et al. (2011), Choi et al. (2011), Ramaseshan and Stein (2014), but also affirm the reliability of the applied measurement scale within the Vietnamese context.

This research contributes scientifically by synthesizing theory and brand experience metrics. The model measuring the influence of the elements constituting brand experience on different facets of Brand Resonance in the modern retail distribution sector has been constructed and validated, providing a foundation for crafting experiential marketing strategies for retail supermarkets in the Mekong Delta.

However, the study has some limitations. The research scope is confined to only three provinces/cities in the Mekong Delta, limiting the representativeness and generalizability of



the results. To enhance this, future studies should broaden the research scope and increase the sample size.

The study currently applies a scale validated in other countries and transfers and applies it to the reality of the Mekong Delta. While this is a significant contribution, in the future, it is necessary to consider and adjust the scale to more accurately reflect the Vietnamese reality in the retail distribution and other service sectors.

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