



ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACTS OF EXPERIENCE MARKETING ON THE BRAND IMAGE OF TEXTILE COMPANIES IN LATVIA

Vita Zarina, Velga Vevere*, Inga Shina, Blesson Baby

EKA University of Applied Sciences, Latvia

Abstract: This research aims to fill knowledge gaps in Latvian textile companies' brand image impact of experience marketing. Despite existing literature, Latvian textile enterprises have received less attention. Data is collected through a questionnaire survey and statistical analysis. This comprehensive evaluation contributes to understanding experience marketing in the Latvian textile industry and fills knowledge gaps in academic literature. This research aims to evaluate the impacts of the experience marketing strategies on the brand image of the companies in the textile industry of Latvia. This study uses a quantitative approach, using internet-based questionnaire survey. The authors collected 162 responses using convenience sampling method. The aim is to demonstrate the impact of experience marketing on the brand image of Latvian textile industries through an analysis procedure. The research question of the study: "What is the impact of experience marketing strategies on the brand image of companies in the textile industry of Latvia?" The study found a significant relationship between experience marketing strategies in the Textile Industry of Latvia and all independent variables, with a moderate correlation observed except for customer satisfaction. The analysis confirmed that these strategies positively enhance the brand image of companies in the industry, as confirmed by the results of the Chi square test and Spearman correlation.

Keywords: Textile Industry, Brand Image, Experience Marketing, Chi Square Test, Spearman Correlation.

1. INTRODUCTION

Experiential marketing refers to a customer-centric approach that goes beyond the conventional practise of just highlighting the features and advantages of goods. It encompasses the whole customer journey, including the pre-purchase, actual purchase, and post-buy phases, with a focus on creating enjoyable and memorable experiences for consumers. The evaluation is derived from the firsthand encounters of consumers with a certain brand, retail establishment,

* Corresponding author: velga.vevere@gmail.com

Vita Zarina, ORCID: 0000-0001-5580-6114

Velga Vevere, ORCID: 0000-0001-9752-5353

Inga Shina, ORCID: 0000-0001-6362-6383

Blesson Baby, ORCID: 0009-0001-7023-0587

or online platform. Experiential marketing is on the interactions and engagements that customers have with a particular brand, physical retail establishment, or online platform. These experiences are acquired during several phases of the purchasing process, including the initial consideration of making a buy, the actual act of purchasing, and the subsequent post-purchase phase (Rinallo et al., 2010). The differentiation of brands is facilitated by the distinct experiences that consumers have throughout their buying interactions with them. It engenders instances that may be recollected in a certain manner. By effectively addressing the desires and requirements of consumers, a product or brand has the potential to establish enduring connections, hence fostering prolonged engagement (Schmitt, 2010). Experiential marketing refers to a customer-centric approach that goes beyond the conventional practise of highlighting product characteristics and advantages. It emphasises the need of engaging consumers across the whole consumer journey, including the pre-buy, actual purchase, and post-purchase phases (Morgan et al., 2019). Experiential marketing offers a valuable alternative method. This approach enables organisations to cultivate client loyalty and enhance brand awareness by delivering products and services that align with consumer preferences and desires. The garment industry's success is contingent upon the implementation of effective marketing strategies (Kiron, 2022). Marketing plays a pivotal role in enabling organisations to gain a competitive edge and attain their business objectives via the strategic promotion of goods, consumer attraction, cultivation of a strong brand identity, and fostering a favourable perception of the company and its offerings. By enhancing the prominence of their brand, augmenting sales figures, and adopting a proactive strategy to outperforming competitors, organisations may effectively secure widespread exposure and consumption of their goods and services. In light of increasing competition within the garment sector, it is essential for organisations to capitalise on efficacious marketing techniques (Kiron, 2022).

The existing body of research on the influence of experience marketing on brand image within the Latvian Textile Companies setting is currently minimal. Although there exists a body of literature examining the efficacy of experience marketing in other contexts, less scholarly attention has been devoted to investigating its influence on the brand image of textile enterprises specifically within the Latvian context.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Instead of using conventional ways to reach consumers, experiential marketers focus on creating a memorable and meaningful experience. One of the most effective methods to engage with consumers is to provide an enjoyable and distinctive experience that piques their interest and makes them want to learn more about the company and the products it offers. Experience marketing, also known as 'engagement marketing', is a marketing strategy that encourages audience participation and interaction with a business in real-world scenarios. By utilising interactive and tangible branding materials, the business can effectively communicate its values and offerings to customers. Every product or service offered in the marketplace may be thought of as an experience, making them all valuable in the business and technological worlds. In the broadest sense, an experience is each time a consumer interacts with a business (brand, product, or service). Customer traits and product, service, or brand traits interact to form an experience. Everything you do, from moving your body to seeing, investigating, utilising, remembering, comparing, and comprehending, will add to the overall quality of the experience (Same & Larimo, 2012).

The level of competition in the fashion retail business is becoming noticeable, as buyers now have a greater number of buying options compared to previously. Organisations often modify their brand strategy to maintain a strong connection between the client and their brand.

With the emergence of the fast fashion idea, it is no longer enough to just provide a product that meets the needs of clients, especially in the fashion business where both local and foreign organisations have begun to offer reasonably priced luxury items.

In the Latvian textile sector, the cost of attracting new customers is much higher, ranging from 5 to 10 times the cost of selling to existing customers. Additionally, existing customers have 67% higher spending behaviour than new buyers. Therefore, it is crucial for companies operating in the textile industry in Latvia to develop strategies that encourage consumers to make repeat purchases and build strong brand loyalty. Identifying and using factors that contribute to customer loyalty not only increases customer trust but also increases a company's competitiveness in the industry. The importance of establishing and maintaining brand loyalty in the Latvian textile industry for long-term business success cannot be overstated (Linina & Zvirgzdina, 2020)

Modern consumers are faced with a multitude of choices when it comes to purchasing clothing. In order to cultivate client loyalty in situations when switching costs are minimal, it is essential to use a well-defined plan and appropriate resources. Electronic Word-of-Mouth (E-WoM) and influencer marketing are two strategies in social media marketing that may assist firms in fostering customer loyalty. Numerous studies primarily examine the impact of e-WoM and influencer marketing on purchase intention, while comparatively fewer studies investigate their influence on brand loyalty (Malmgren, 2022).

Brand familiarity has a crucial role in shaping consumers' perceptions of a brand. As customer awareness of a brand increases, along with their understanding of factors such as price, quality, and durability, their inclination to purchase things from that brand also increases. The amount of loyalty is positively correlated with the age and experience gained from past use of items from the same brand. Family and friends are the most influential reference groups. Social media and its many platforms have a significant impact on consumers, shaping their behaviour and choices. Consumers who prioritise status are more inclined to purchase branded things, since they believe it sets them distinct from others (Sravani et al., 2020).

Marketers use experiential marketing to provide customers with the opportunity to directly experience and engage with a brand. Occasionally, this kind of marketing is also known as "live marketing" or "event marketing experience." Its purpose is to create a memorable experience that fosters an emotional connection between the company and the customer. The emergence of experiential marketing has provided customers with the opportunity to physically engage with and establish a feeling of loyalty towards a brand, which was not available in conventional marketing. This marketing tactic employs a comprehensive approach to not only raise customer awareness of the product, but also to successfully convert them into regular and loyal users (Prajapati & Goswami, 2023).

The development of an immersive experience that elicits strong emotional responses from customers, resulting in sentiments of happiness, satisfaction, and ultimately fostering loyalty. The objective of this research is to examine and elucidate the impact of Sense, Feel, Think, Act, and Relate, as well as the variable Experiential Marketing Customer Satisfaction, while also analysing and explaining the correlation between Customer Satisfaction and Customer Loyalty (Wahyuningtyas et al., 2017).

Customer satisfaction in the textile sector is determined by the alignment between customer expectations and their in-store encounters. The industry recognizes that deficiencies cause dissatisfaction, while meeting expectations ensures satisfaction. With increasing consumer awareness, salespeople are expected not only to present products or services, but also to provide consultation, demonstrating the need for broad experience and attention to specific requirements. Sellers' appearance and behaviour are important in leaving a positive impression on customers. Satisfaction can be affected by social variables, including the quantity and

behaviour of other customers. Crowded stores, in particular, are likely to discourage unnecessary purchases. The environment in retail establishments, which are carefully designed and managed by friendly workers, plays a crucial role in promoting a positive and efficient customer experience, leading to increased customer satisfaction in the Latvian textile industry (Jegere, 2018).

Experiential marketing methods aim to comprehensively comprehend customer desires and consistently fulfil their demands. By using this approach, marketers may create unforgettable experiences that not only make consumers feel understood, but also evoke emotional responses. Experiential marketing endeavours to enhance consumers' long-term loyalty by offering a distinctive experience that sets it apart from other firms, ensuring that customers remember and value the things they have purchased. Experiential marketing is a method of understanding and fulfilling customer wants and desires by engaging in interactive communication, which helps establish the brand's image in the consumer's mind. Experiential marketing may be conveyed via five distinct components, specifically: sensory perception, emotional response, cognitive engagement, behavioural involvement, and interpersonal connection (Widowati & Putra, 2018).

3. DATA AND METHODOLOGY

Currently, the textile industry has significant prominence within the Latvian industrial landscape, effectively amalgamating traditional expertise with industrial and technical acumen. The proficiency in this field has resulted in the development of high-value-added commodities, like threads made from silver and amber. Approximately 10,826 individuals are now engaged within a total of 1,955 textile enterprises in Latvia, mostly consisting of small and medium-sized establishments. In the year 2020, the sector's contribution to the overall manufacturing output amounted to 3%. The primary sub-sectors within the textile industry include lingerie manufacture, sewing, weaving, technological textile manufacturing, and artisanal textile production (Statista Research Department, 2023). The sector has a strong focus on exports, with a notable emphasis on the lingerie section. There are many competitive benefits associated with collaborating with Latvian textile enterprises. These advantages include factors like as reduced lead times, the ability to accommodate small and varied production quantities, and a favourable balance between price and quality. The industry has been able to sustain its positions in the present extremely dynamic market due to the presence of reliability and long-term mutually beneficial collaborations. The sewing enterprises within the sector mostly function as outsourced manufacturing facilities for European Union (EU) brands.

The wearing clothing manufacturing business in Latvia saw a decline in output value in 2020 with a fall of 7.2 million euros (-4.38 percent) compared to the previous year, 2019. This can be attributed to the inefficiency of the marketing among the textile industries of Latvia. The current situation is very advantageous due to the expedited production and delivery timeframes, as well as the sophisticated technological capabilities encompassing various processes such as embroidery, laser cutting, and waterproof-garment fabrication. Latvian sewing enterprises provide personalised services, including pattern creation and other design-related provisions. For the purpose of solving this issue, the author conducts this research (Investment and Development Agency of Latvia, 2022).

Sewing enterprises that serve as outsourced manufacturing facilities for EU brands dominate the sector. The convenience lies in the quick production and delivery periods, as well as the extensive technological capabilities, including embroidery, laser cutting, and waterproof-garment manufacture. Latvian sewing enterprises provide tailored services, which include pattern-making and other design services (Prem, 2020).

Additionally, there are many local small- and medium-sized enterprises that produce their own assortments using jersey, knitwear, and other fabrics, leading the way in natural and environmentally friendly clothing designs. Latvia's home textile industry encompasses a wide range of workshops, both small and big, that share similar beliefs and lifestyle views. Latvia's expertise in glass fibre manufacture has proven advantageous for several globally recognised automotive and aerospace businesses. Latvia has several highly creative enterprises in this industry, which have significant potential for future growth and development (Prem, 2020) (see figure 1).

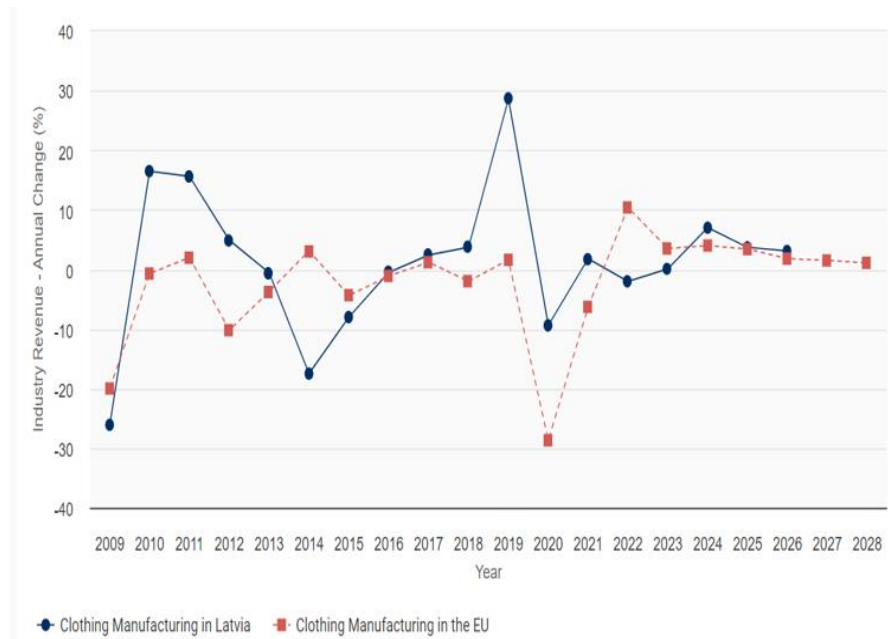


Figure 1. Comparison Chart Between Clothing Manufacturing of Latvia and Eu (IBIS world, 2022)

The figure 1 shows the statistics comparing the clothing manufacturing of Latvia and EU. The Clothing Manufacturing industry in Latvia has a valuation of €211.1m and is positioned 22nd among the 26 European Union countries in 2023. The industry's ranking has remained consistent since 2018, holding steady at 22nd place. In 2023, the Latvian clothing manufacturing sector ranks 68th among IBISWorld's 260 overall sectors

The authors of this research used questionnaire which was prepared using online platform Google Forms. The questionnaire consisted of 17 questions. The survey participants were Product Managers, Marketing Managers, Sales and Business Development Executives in textile companies, customers of textile company, academic researchers and Entrepreneurs of textile companies. The survey was focussed on the geographical areas of Latvia.

The questionnaire was divided into 3 different sections. The first section consists of general information related to survey respondent. The general information includes age, gender and profession. The second section consists of questions related to experience marketing strategies. The third section is dedicated to impacts of experience marketing on enhancing brand image of textile industries in Latvia. The questions 9 and 10 is related to impacts of experience marketing on the brand loyalty in the textile industry of Latvia. The questions 11 and 12 is related impacts of experience marketing on the brand perception of textile industry in Latvia. The questions from 13 to 14 related to impacts of experience marketing on customer retention. The remaining questions 15, 16 and 17 related to impacts of experience marketing on the brand identity, brand personality and customer satisfaction of textile industry in Latvia respectively.

The sampling method used in this research was the Convenience sampling. This method involves selecting people from the target group based on practical considerations such as ease of access, proximity, availability or their voluntary inclination to participate in the study. Convenience sampling involves selecting subjects that are readily available to the researcher. It is also called “occasional sampling” where subjects are selected based on their proximity to the researcher’s location during data collection (Etikan et al., 2016). Altogether the number of respondents of the current survey reached 162.

All statements were assessed on a five-point LIKERT scale. Likert scale is a widely used measurement tool that was developed specifically to assess individuals' opinions, attitudes, or behaviours. The scale generally consists of a statement or question with a set of five alternative answer options. Participants choose the option that best fits their feelings or views about the statement or question. Likert scales are a useful tool for capturing accurate and detailed answers, as well as for assessing the level of agreement or disagreement on a particular topic. This is because they offer diverse options for respondents to choose from.

The authors conducted the Cronbach’s alpha test on the results of the survey for testing its reliability and validity and obtained a score greater than 0.9 which suggests that the survey results are reliable.

The authors of this study analyse the survey data obtained from Google Forms using SPSS 28 software. Using this software, the authors conducted a Chi-Squared Test and the Spearman Correlation analysis. The Chi-Squared test is used for identifying the impacts of Experience Marketing on the Brand Image of the Latvian Textile Industry. The impacts were proved as a result of proving the several impacts of Experience marketing on the several aspects of brand image such as the Brand Loyalty, Brand Perception, Customer Perception, Brand Identity, Brand Personality, Customer Satisfaction.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To know the profile of respondent, the first three questions are allotted which is from question 1 to question 3. The profile information includes age, gender and profession. The first question was related to age of the respondent. About 33.3% of respondents were from age group 18 to 24 and majority of the survey participants were from between 25 and 34. Only 1.2% were age over than 55. The second question was related to gender of the participants. The participants of the survey were majority women (56.8%) which was more than half of the total respondents. Males constituted 40.7%. 1.2% of respondents were from the category other and same percentage of people did not want to reveal their gender. The third question is related to profession of the participants. Various professions mentioned in survey questionnaire are product managers, marketing managers, sales and business development executives in textile company, academic researchers, entrepreneurs of textile company and customers of textile company.

Altogether the survey covered several blocks of questions – general attitude to experience marketing; impact of experience marketing on brand image in textile industry; impact of experience marketing on brand loyalty; impact of experience marketing on brand perception; impact of experience marketing on customer retention; impact of experience marketing on brand identity and brand personality; impact of experience marketing on customer satisfaction.

The impacts of experience marketing on the brand loyalty of the textile industry are checked by utilizing the Chi- Squared Test initially and the Spearman Correlation analysis later with the help of SPSS 28. In this test the authors checked for a statistically significant

relationship between the variable brand loyalty towards the variable experience marketing in the textile industry of Latvia (see table 1)

Table 1. Chi Squared test results for variable Brand Loyalty (Authors’)

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	106.858	16	.000
Likelihood Ratio	93.474	16	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	56.479	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	162		

As described in the table 1 above the "Pearson Chi-Square" group's results comprise the bulk of the investigation. The p-value for χ^2 is 0.000, indicating that the findings is statistically significant. A P value below 0.05 signifies that there is a statistically significant relationship between the experience marketing strategies of the Latvian Textile Industry and brand loyalty. The following table 2 describes the interpretation of the spearman correlation values.

Table 2. Chi Squared test results for variable Brand Perceptions (Authors’)

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	77.967	16	.000
Likelihood Ratio	76.240	16	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	55.792	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	162		

As described in the above table the Significance value of the variable Brand perception is 0.000 which is less than 0.05 the threshold value. Thus, it can be quantified that the Experience marketing has significant impact on Brand perception. The Chi Square results can be used only to check whether the variables have a statistically significant relationship.

Table 3. Chi Squared test results for variable Customer Retention (Authors’)

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	87.238	16	.000
Likelihood Ratio	84.225	16	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	52.840	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	162		

As explained in the table above, the significance value in the column Asymp. Sig (2 Sided) is 0.000 which is less than the value of 0.05. Thus, it can be concluded that the Customer Retention has a statistically significant relationship with the Experience Marketing Strategies.

Table 4. Chi Squared test results for variable Brand Identity (Authors')

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	58.531	16	.000
Likelihood Ratio	58.185	16	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	39.958	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	162		

As seen in the table above the results can be said as statistically significant since the value of significance is 0.000 which is less than 0.05. Thus, the variable Brand identity has a significant relationship with the variable experience marketing strategies.

Table 5. Chi Squared test results for variable Brand Personality (Authors')

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	73.564	16	.000
Likelihood Ratio	79.435	16	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	49.782	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	162		

As described in the table 5 above, the significance value is 0.000 which is less than 0.05 and hence it can be deduced that the value is statistically significant and hence the variable can be accepted. Therefore, the experience marketing strategies has an impact on the brand personality.

Table 6. Chi Squared test results for variable Customer Satisfaction (Authors')

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	98.269	16	.000
Likelihood Ratio	94.631	16	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	63.949	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	162		

As seen in the above paragraphs and tables, in this case also the significance value is less than 0.05 which is 0.000. This indicates that the Chi Square test proves the significant relationship between the variables Experience marketing and the customer satisfaction.

After performing the Chi Squared tests, there followed the Spearman correlation analysis for each variable. The summary results can be seen in figure 2.

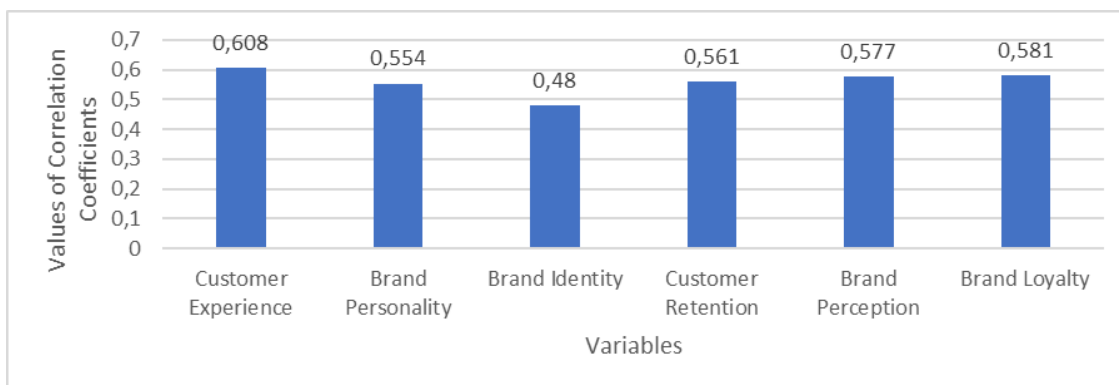


Figure 2. Summarization of the Correlation Coefficients of Independent Variables (Authors')

In the figure 2 depicted above and from the analysis performed by the authors, it can be deduced that the experience marketing strategies has a moderate positive impact on the several aspects of brand image except for the variable customer satisfaction. For the variable customer satisfaction, the value is 0.608 and hence the experience marketing has a strong positive relationship with the variable customer satisfaction.

5. CONCLUSION

The survey on the google forms were performed using the selected experts in the field of marketing and advertising in the textile industry yielded a sample size of 162 responses obtained using snowball sampling. The authors conducted the Cronbach's alpha test on the results of the survey for testing its reliability and validity and obtained a score greater than 0.9 which suggests that the survey results are reliable.

The results of chi square test conducted on the survey data revealed that the dependent variable experience marketing strategies in the Textile Industry of Latvia has a statistically significant relationship with all the independent variables.

Based on the findings of the Spearman Correlation study and the resulting model, customer satisfaction is the dependent variable in experience marketing that exhibits a robust positive correlation.

It can be deduced that the experience marketing strategies has a moderate positive impact on the several aspects of brand image except for the variable customer satisfaction. For the variable customer satisfaction, the value is 0.608 and hence the experience marketing has a strong positive relationship with the variable customer satisfaction. In order to retain consumers in the fashion retail industry, Latvian companies must modify their experience marketing strategies in response to increased competition. Due to the rapid evolution of fashion, there is a demand for luxe items that are reasonably priced. This requires the companies Latvian textile industry to provide intangible advantages alongside their superior products. Purchasing, utilising, and observing the products of the brand collectively constitute the brand experience. It is the most essential factor in generating revenue.

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