A review and future directions of brand experience research

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Imran Khan[a]*, *Zillur Rahman*[b]

[a] *Research Scholar, Department of Management Studies, IIT Roorkee, Roorkee, 247667, India*
[b] *Associate Professor, Department of Management Studies, IIT Roorkee, Roorkee, 247667, India*

A B S T R A C T

Brand experience has been gaining increased importance in marketing literature, as marketers consider it a vital strategy in building long term consumer-brand relationship. This study attempts to do a comprehensive assessment and synthesis of academic literature on brand experience. To do this, authors take up a systematic review, identifies and analyses 73 relevant articles from 38 journals. The analysis provides significant information about–empirical versus conceptual studies, industry focus, country of research, research design, data analysis techniques and nature of sampling method and respondents. This study presents methodological trend in brand experience studies with reference to Meredith, Raturi, Amoako-Gyampah, and Kaplan (1989) framework, and it has been found that majority of the studies are based on people's perception of object reality (logical positivist/empiricist paradigm based researches). A conceptual framework about brand experience antecedents and consequences is also presented. At last, we provide discussion and suggestions for future research, followed by limitations of the study.

1. Introduction

Over the past decade, branding literature has emphasized the need to create better and unique consumer experience to develop stronger brands (Keller & Lehmann, 2006; Morrison & Crane, 2007). This school of thought has been supported by both practitioners and academics who believed that experiences arising out of contact with brands had a substantial impact on consumer behaviour (Brakus, Schmitt, & Zarantonello, 2009; Pine & Gillmore, 1998; Schmitt, 1999). The term *brand experience* was first coined by Brakus et al. (2009) in the '*Journal of Marketing'*. They explored and integrated various concepts in the fields of cognitive science, marketing, philosophy and management practices to understand the meaning of this term, and stated that consumption, products, services and shopping experiences together constitute the overall brand experience. Brand experience viewed as an important construct in branding literature that builds the consumer-brand relationship (Chang & Chieng, 2006; Schembri, 2009). Brakus et al. (2009) stated that with a better understanding of brand experience, the entire range of experiences evoked by brand-related stimuli could be understood. Although the investigation by Brakus et al. (2009) in the field of brand experience research was commendable and has gained attention of researchers. But, the direction in which brand experience research is now headed is unclear. A comprehensive study offering a deeper understanding of the brand experience concept is absent.

Despite popularity of brand experience concept among practitioners (Alloza, 2008; Coomber & Poore, 2013) and academics (Brakus et al., 2009; Chang & Chieng, 2006; Schmitt, 1999), no study has accurately determined the stage at which present brand experience research stands, nor has any study in the past indicated the direction in which brand experience research is headed. In order to have a clear idea of one's position in any area, frequent and honest reassessments are required (Cooper, 2010). The domain of brand experience is in nascent stage (Schmitt, 2009), which warrants a review to ensure that brand experience studies will move in the right direction. The particular emphasis of the study is to assess the state of methodologies used in brand experience research, and identify antecedents and consequences. Thus, the objectives of this paper are: (1) to bring general understanding about the brand experience in the fields like distribution of articles across the main journals, time period, nature of studies and type of data, industry focus and country of

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +919897674886 ; fax: + +919897674886
E-mail address: imrankaifi@gmail.com

research, (2) to recognize methodologies employed in previous brand experience studies, this study explains methodological trend employing a framework suggested by Meredith et al. (1989), and (3) to provide a conceptual framework that highlights the antecedents and consequences of brand experience. To sum up, this study addresses the following questions:

(1) What is the present state of brand experience research?
(2) What important issues should future studies address in this area?

Moreover, this study answers the call of Schmitt (2009) and Brakus et al. (2009) by providing a conceptual framework of brand experience (Fig. 3) that comprises its antecedents and consequences. Researchers are encouraged to empirically test this framework using qualitative and quantitative approaches. This systematic review entailed a comprehensive study of 73 articles published in various peer reviewed journals on brand experience research. This systematic review of brand experience to offer academics as well as practitioners, a clear view of the position at which brand experience research stands, and suggest areas in which further research needs to be conducted.

This paper is structured as follows: First, the research methodology used in this study, and the parameters on which the literature was searched and analysed, are discussed. Second, results of the analysis were presented into following headings: empirical versus conceptual studies, industry focus, country of research, research design, data analysis techniques and nature of sampling method and respondents. Third, the state of methodological trend was presented using Meredith et al. (1989) framework. Fourth, this study presents the brand experience conceptual framework. Finally, the paper ends with the discussion and conclusions drawn from findings of the review and proposes areas for future research.

2. Literature review method

This study conducts a systematic review of brand experience literature, as it is arguably the most efficient, reliable and high-quality method for examining extensive bases of literature (Denyer & Tranfield, 2006). Systematic reviews "summarize in an explicit way, what is known and not known about a specific practice related question" (Briner, Denyer, & Rousseau, 2009, p.19). On the other hand, traditional narrative reviews generally lack thoroughness, are unable to accurately comprehend and interpret the findings of multiple studies (Petticrew & Roberts, 2006; Tranfield, Denyer, & Smart, 2003), and are also limited in scope due to lack of objectivity in approach (Keränen, Piirainen, & Salminen, 2012).

This study presents a review of published research articles on brand experience in academic journals, since its inception (that is year 1991). Further, the classification of articles has been done through content analysis. Content analysis is a systematic technique used for analyzing different types of texts by coding the texts according to explicit rules (Weber, 1990). It is a "technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages" (Holsti, 1969, p. 14). This technique allows researchers to find out and explain the focal point of the study (Weber, 1990).

2.1. Search strategy and data analysis

The authors in this study used the following data bases: Scopus, Elsevier, EBSCO, Emerald and ProQuest to search for published articles on brand experience. To collect the articles, a two-step approach was followed: First, the following keywords were searched in the title or abstract of the above mentioned data bases across all experience literature so that no keyword related to brand experience was left out: Brand experience, Experience branding, Customer/consumer experience, Total experience and Experiential marketing. A review panel was formed to plan the review and resolve any dispute over the exclusion and inclusion of studies (see Tranfield et al., 2003). The review panel comprised three marketing professors and one practitioner (brand manager), all the experts in the review panel had more than five years of experience in their respective field. The relevance of the selected keywords checked by conducting discussion with review panel as well as by repeating the search process. Hence, by searching for these key words, we are confident that we have identified the most relevant articles on brand experience. The authors selected only those studies that were found relevant after a discussion with a review panel. In the second stage, references of studies were checked to make sure no study was left without review. This ensured reliability of the search process. The last search of articles was conducted in February 2015, and included all the published articles until that time. Similar to David and Han (2004), studies that were published in peer-reviewed journals were considered because they represented the highest quality of research. This process resulted in 226 studies screened in. Due to repetitions, 27 entries were removed resulting in 199 different studies. To ensure relevance, all conference papers, newspaper articles, editorials, textbooks, viewpoint and working papers were removed, and only articles published in journals were kept. Both practitioners as well as academics prefer articles published in journals for reliable information and accurate results (Ngai, Moon, Riggins, & Yi, 2008; Schibrowsky, Peltier, & Nill, 2007; Azoury and Salloum, 2013). After carrying out this process of exclusion, 120 relevant articles were selected for further study. Details of the exclusion and inclusion criteria are given in Table 1.

Table - 1 Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Inclusion	Exclusion
Published academic journal articles	Books, conference proceedings, editorials, viewpoints, newspaper articles, working papers
Articles on which review panel showed consensus	Articles on which disagreement existed within the review panel
Full text available	Full text unavailable
	Non-English articles

To carry out a detailed evaluation of the full text (as advocated by Tranfield et al., 2003), content analysis [that uses small units of text for analysis-paragraphs, words and sentences (Unerman, 2000)] was performed. Nevertheless, Stock (1997) argued that full articles can also be considered as units for content analysis. In the present study, full text of research papers was taken as the unit of analysis. Therefore, content analysis was performed by reading and understanding the articles carefully to confirm the relevance of included articles in the context of brand experience. To ensure reliability of the selected articles, services of two independent researchers were taken at this stage (Tranfield et al., 2003). Each researcher independently went through all the units of the analysis and compiled a list of research papers falling under two categories-relevant and not relevant. Relevant articles were those that discussed the brand experience concept as per the definition of Brakus et al. (2009). The two lists showed a high level of uniformity among them, with a correlation of 87.3 percent. Holsti (1969) suggested that a consensus level of 85 percent or more between experts could be considered enough to determine agreement. The inter rater reliability was quite high between the two lists, and services of an independent scholar were taken to resolve the differences between the judgment of the two researchers (Schibrowsky et al., 2007; Salloum et al., 2014). After this assessment, 47 articles that had used the selected keywords but were found unrelated and irrelevant to the concept of brand experience were excluded. For instance, the article titled 'The impact of customer experience on brand equity in a business-to-business services setting' by Biedenbach and Marell (2010) was excluded. The remaining 73 relevant studies (see Appendix) were analyzed on different criteria, the required information coded and entered in a MS Excel worksheet.

3. Results

Studies on brand experience concept were initiated by Ortmeyer and Huber (1991) in the paper titled, 'Role of brand experience in moderating the negative impact of promotions', but it was defined and measured by Brakus et al. in year 2009. Before 2009, studies on brand experience were few, but by 2005 researchers had started explaining the brand experience concept (Chattopadhyay & Laborie, 2005). The studies on brand experience were published in the following academic journals (see Table 2).

Table 2 Journal-wise breakdown of brand experience studies

Name of the journal	No. of Studies	% (J)
Journal of Brand Management (JBM)	13	17.80
Journal of Business Research (JBR)	04	5.48
The Journal of Product and Brand Management (JP&BM)	04	5.48
Corporate Reputation Review (CRR)	03	4.10
Marketing Letters (MLs)	03	4.10
Advanced Materials Research (AMR)	02	2.73
International Journal of Advertising (IJA)	02	2.73
International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management (IJCHM)	02	2.73
International Journal of Market Research (IJMR)	02	2.73
Journal of Advertising (JA)	02	2.73
Journal of Advertising Research (JAR)	02	2.73
Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services (JRCS)	02	2.73

Academy of Marketing Studies Journal (AMSJ)	01	1.36
Annals of Tourism Research (ATR)	01	1.36
Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics (APJM&L)	01	1.36
Australasian Marketing Journal (AMJ)	01	1.36
Contemporary Management Research (CMR)	01	1.36
Design Management Journal (DMJ)	01	1.36
European Business Review (EBR)	01	1.36
International Journal of Business and Information (IJBI)	01	1.36
International Journal of Hospitality Management (IJHM)	01	1.36
International Journal of Research in Marketing (IJRM)	01	1.36
International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management (IJR&DM)	01	1.36
International Journal of Sports Marketing & Sponsorship (IJSM&S)	01	1.36
Journal of Brand Strategy (JBS)	01	1.36
Journal of China Tourism Research (JCTR)	01	1.36
Journal of Consumer Behavior (JCB)	01	1.36
Journal of Consumer Psychology (JCP)	01	1.36
Journal of Consumer Research (JCR)	01	1.36
Journal of Consumer Satisfaction, Dissatisfaction and Complaining Behavior (JCS/D&CB)	01	1.36
Journal of Enterprise Information Management (JEIM)	01	1.36
Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management (JFM&M)	01	1.36
Journal of Marketing (JM)	01	1.36
Journal of Promotion Management (JPM)	01	1.36
Journal of Strategic Marketing (JSM)	01	1.36
Journal of Targeting, Measurement and Analysis for Marketing (JTM&AM)	01	1.36
Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science (JAMS)	01	1.36
Journal of Travel Research (JTR)	01	1.36
Managing Service Quality (MSQ)	01	1.36
Marketing Intelligence & Planning (MIP)	01	1.36
Marketing Review St. Gallen (MRSt.G)	01	1.36
Psychology & Marketing (PM)	01	1.36
The International Review of Retail, Distribution and Consumer Research (TIRRD&CR)	01	1.36
Town Planning Review (TPR)	01	1.36
Total	73	100

Table 2 shows the classification of articles by journals. The major contributions in the field of brand experience are made by the Journal of Brand Management (13 studies), followed by Journal of Business Research (4 studies), Journal of Product and Brand Management (4 studies), Corporate Reputation Review (3 studies) and Marketing Letters (3 studies). Results show that 17 studies on brand experience were published in journals (JBM and JPBM) that focus specifically on brand management area, which constitutes 23 percent of all studies carried out in the field of brand experience. While remaining 56 studies were published in journals that were not brand management specific. This shows that brand experience research is advancing not only in brand management specific journals, but in marketing journals too.

All the 73 research articles have been analyzed on various criteria, namely, empirical versus conceptual studies, industry focus, country of research, research design, data analysis techniques and nature of sampling method and respondents. Then, the trend of research paradigms is analyzed employing the Meredith et al. (1989) framework and a conceptual framework of brand experience that includes antecedents and consequences is presented.

3.1. Empirical versus conceptual studies

45 percent (33 studies) were published in the years 2012, 2013 and 2014 alone, which shows a phenomenal increase in the importance of brand experience concept in recent times. Of all the studies carried out in the field of brand experience, 76 percent (57 studies) were empirical in nature. The remaining 24 percent (16 studies) are conceptual (non-empirical in nature) and most of them were published between the years 2009 and 2013. 57 empirical studies have further been analyzed considering the type of data used for the study. Results show that 86 percent (49 studies) were based on quantitative data and the remaining 14 percent (8 studies) utilized qualitative data, out of 57 empirical studies. This shows that there has been relatively less focus on qualitative data based research for examining brand experience. Further, before 2003, there had been no qualitative data based study, and out of total 49 quantitative data based studies, only 6 studies were conducted before 2003. Only three years, namely, 2012, 2013 and 2014 together constitutes 55 percent of quantitative studies (see Table 3). This shows a phenomenal increase in quantitative researches in last three years.

Table -3 Trend of nature of studies and type of data (Year wise)

Year	No. of papers	Empirical		Conceptual
		Quantitative	Qualitative	
1991	1	1	------	------
1996	1	1	------	------
1997	1	------	------	1

1998	1	1	------	------
2001	2	2	------	------
2002	2	1	------	1
2003	1	------	------	1
2004	2	1	1	------
2005	5	3	1	1
2006	3	2	------	1
2007	2	1	------	1
2008	2	1	1	------
2009	5	2	1	2
2010	5	2	------	3
2011	5	3	1	1
2012	9	7	1	1
2013	15	13	------	2
2014	09	7	1	1
2015	02	1	1	------
Total	73	49	8	16

3.2. Industry focus

Out of 73 studies, 57 empirical studies specified the industries surveyed. A total of 68 products/services were identified [total would be 68 instead of 57, because few studies took more than one product or service, as in the study conducted by Iglesias et al. (2011), three different products - car, laptop and sneakers were taken]. A total of 32 product categories have been studied, of which, food and beverages constitute a major proportion with 15 studies. The remaining categories comprise automobile, consumer electronics, and footwear and apparel with seven, six and four studies, respectively. The service sector comprises a total of 17 studies, based on different industries such as tourism and hospitality (6), financial services (8) and telecommunication (3), while 7 studies were carried out in the retail sector. Three studies have chosen brands that were most familiar to respondents. In addition, some studies have touched niche areas, namely, media and entertainment, social networking sites, cosmetic brands, oil and gas, health and beauty etc.

3.3. Country of research

To identify the extent of research carried out on brand experience across the globe, it is important to know how many studies have been conducted in which country. To determine which study was specific to which country, we recorded sample locations as well as locations of the first authors at the time of publication (for papers that didn't mention sample location) from the 73 articles (please see Fetscherin & Usunier, 2012; Glanzel, 1996; Mladen & Silva, 2001; Moed, Burger, Frankfort, & Van Raan, 1985). It has been observed that most studies were from developed economies like USA, UK and Australia. Among the developing countries, China has published most of the literature on brand experience. USA is the major contributor in this area with a total of 23 research studies (31 percent) followed by Australia, UK and China with 7, 5 and 5 studies each respectively. Out of the 73 studies, the remaining 33 have been published among 21 countries, with each country publishing either one or two or three. Taiwan and Norway contributes three studies each. Countries with two studies are-France, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Finland, India, Ireland and Netherland, while Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Germany, Hong Kong, Italy, Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Pakistan and Turkey have one each. If all the countries mentioned above be grouped into developed and developing economies (IMF, 2014), it was found that developed economies were the major contributors with 62 studies (85 percent), whereas developing nations contributed 11 studies (15 percent) to the brand experience field.

3.4. Research design

The authors observed that the most prominent research design used in all the 73 studies was the survey design (34 studies), which included 4 telephonic, 12 online and eighteen field survey based studies conducted with the help of structured and semi-structured questionnaires. Experimental research designs such as factorial designs, mixed design, online experiments (randomized design) and quasi-experiments were also found in 10 studies. In-depth interviews (6 studies), single company case studies (3 studies), expert panels (2 studies) archival study (1 study) and action research (1 study) were not very popular among researchers.

3.5. Data analysis techniques

The use of multiple data analysis technique has been found in researches on brand experience. Most of the researches have used quantitative techniques as compare to the qualitative research approach in 57 empirical studies. Factor analysis (32 studies) was the most popular technique used under the quantitative research approach. Also, the use of structural equation modeling (31 studies), correlation (26 studies), and descriptive analysis (18 studies) was found in brand experience researches. Further, techniques like ANOVA (6 studies), regression (3 studies), MANOVA (1 study), ANCOVA (1 study) and MANCOVA (1 study) were also used in some of the studies. Qualitative data analysis techniques did not find much place in brand experience studies; only content analysis (4 studies) and interpretive structural modeling (1 study) was used. The sum of 'data analysis techniques' has not been considered here because they are not mutually exclusive and many research papers have applied a combination of these techniques.

3.6. Nature of sampling method and respondents

The use of non-random sampling technique was found to be higher (47 studies) as compared to the random sampling technique (7 studies), and case based approach was observed in three research papers. The most employed non-random sampling technique was convenience sampling method, used in 24 research papers. The sample sizes adopted in brand experience studies varied according to the type of study. Sample sizes ranged from 18 focus group members to 64,000 questionnaire respondents.
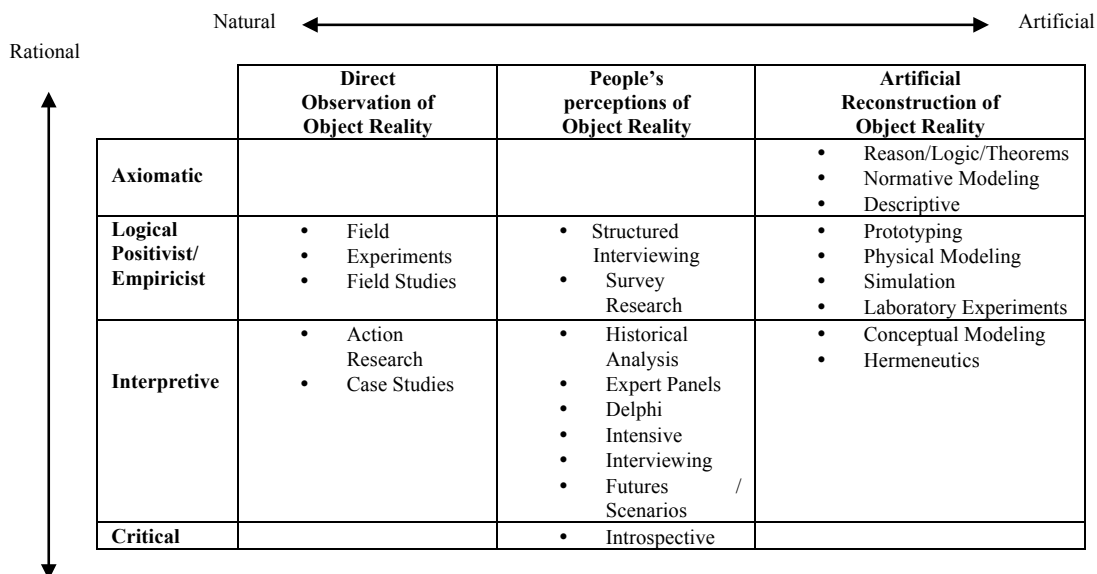
Furthermore, respondent profiles of reviewed studies have also been studied by the authors of this study. The respondents can be categorized into three profiles: students, non-students and users (users are those respondents who are using particular brands relevant to the study at the time of filling the questionnaires or giving interviews). A majority of the studies (23) have chosen non-students as sample units, of which 19 followed non-random type sampling, and 4, random type sampling. Also, it has been found that 17 studies used students as their sample units, of which 16 followed non-random type sampling, and 1, random type sampling. In addition, 3 studies considered both students and non-students in their respondent profile. Lastly, 11 studies were conducted with their respondents being users.

4. Framework on methodological trend

For analyzing the methodological trend in literature, this study adopted the Meredith et al. (1989) framework, shown in Figure 1. Meredith et al. (1989) developed this framework in the field of operations management and suggested its use in other research areas. In fact, this framework has been used in several other disciplines. For instance, it has been used in the field of supply chain management (Sachan & Datta, 2005), corporate social responsibility (Taneja, Taneja, & Gupta, 2011) etc. More specifically, Pillai (2012) used this frame work in the field of corporate branding to explain methodological shifts. Following the studies mentioned above, the authors have adopted this framework to understand the trend of methodologies used in brand experience studies.

This framework comprises two continuums on two axes—rational to existential continuum on the vertical axis and natural to artificial continuum on the horizontal axis. The rational to existential continuum can be viewed according to four perspectives—axiomatic, logical positivist/empiricist, interpretive and critical theory. One end of this continuum (rational) uses a formal and structured research instrument/method to measure reality, whereas the other end (existential) observes human interactions with their surroundings. Axiomatic perspective is based on the assumption that there exists prior knowledge, and it is tested by using formal procedure and theorems. In case of logical positivist/empiricist assumptions, a particular phenomenon can be studied using laws and theories, and is independent of the context in which it occurs. The interpretive perspective gives importance to the context of the phenomenon under study, and focuses on interactions of human beings to understand their interpretation of events and concepts. Critical theory is a combination of dialectically interrelated positivist and interpretive perspectives, where researchers study the contradiction between the behavior of people in practice, and the way they perceive themselves to be behaving.

Natural to artificial continuum comprises three perspectives that explain the sources and methods of data collection. The natural end consists of empirical studies whereas the artificial end focuses on subjective aspects. The three perspectives along this continuum are: direct observation of object reality (field experiments, action research, case study), people's perceptions of object reality (survey research, interviews, expert panels, introspective reflection) and artificial reconstruction of object reality that focuses on the modeling aspect (analytical models, simulation, conceptual modeling and so on).

Natural ← → Artificial

Rational

	Direct Observation of Object Reality	People's perceptions of Object Reality	Artificial Reconstruction of Object Reality
Axiomatic			• Reason/Logic/Theorems • Normative Modeling • Descriptive
Logical Positivist/ Empiricist	• Field • Experiments • Field Studies	• Structured Interviewing • Survey Research	• Prototyping • Physical Modeling • Simulation • Laboratory Experiments
Interpretive	• Action Research • Case Studies	• Historical Analysis • Expert Panels • Delphi • Intensive Interviewing • Futures / Scenarios	• Conceptual Modeling • Hermeneutics
Critical		• Introspective	

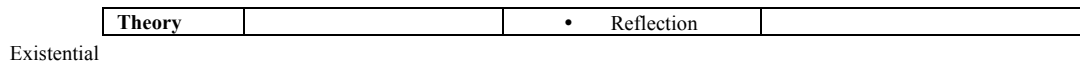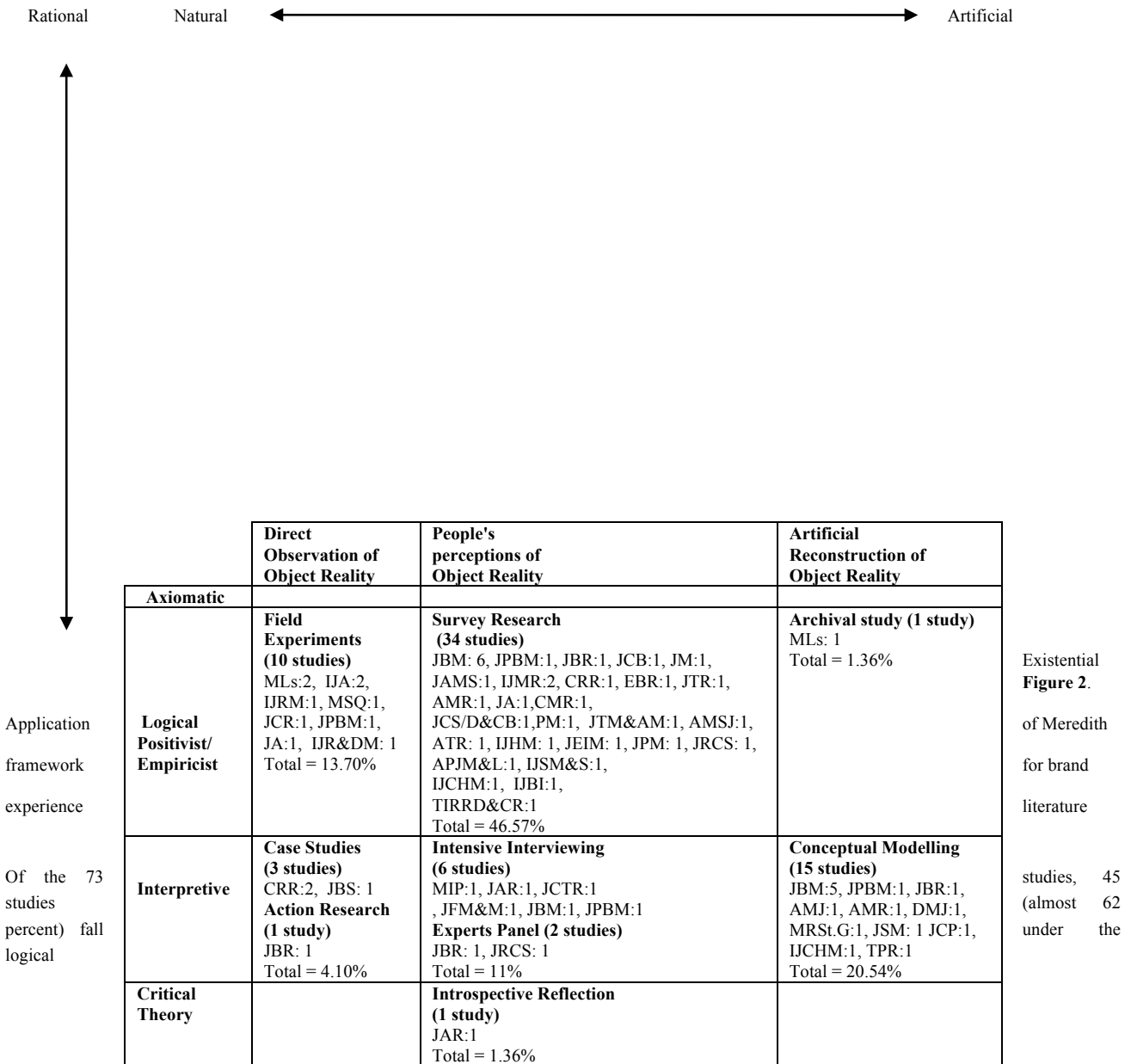| **Theory**		• Reflection	

Existential

Figure 1. A framework for research methods (Meredith et al., 1989)

The framework mentioned above has been applied in this study (Fig. 2) to analyze the trend of methodologies adopted in brand experience research. When this framework was observed through the x-axis (natural to artificial continuum), it was found that 59 percent (43 studies) of a total of 73 studies were based on people's perception of object reality. According to Meredith et al. (1989), perception of object reality means doing research "through somebody else's eyes", it is "an assessment of people's perceptions that may yield significant insights into the underlying explanation of the phenomenon" (p. 308). The second most prominent data collection sources and methods came under artificial reconstruction of object reality as seen in 16 research papers. In the remaining 14 studies, data was collected through direct observation of object realty.

Rational　　　Natural　⟵—————————————⟶　Artificial

		Direct Observation of Object Reality	**People's perceptions of Object Reality**	**Artificial Reconstruction of Object Reality**
	Axiomatic			
Logical Positivist/ Empiricist		**Field Experiments (10 studies)** MLs:2, IJA:2, IJRM:1, MSQ:1, JCR:1, JPBM:1, JA:1, IJR&DM: 1 Total = 13.70%	**Survey Research (34 studies)** JBM: 6, JPBM:1, JBR:1, JCB:1, JM:1, JAMS:1, IJMR:2, CRR:1, EBR:1, JTR:1, AMR:1, JA:1,CMR:1, JCS/D&CB:1,PM:1, JTM&AM:1, AMSJ:1, ATR: 1, IJHM: 1, JEIM: 1, JPM: 1, JRCS: 1, APJM&L:1, IJSM&S:1, IJCHM:1, IJBI:1, TIRRD&CR:1 Total = 46.57%	**Archival study (1 study)** MLs: 1 Total = 1.36%
Interpretive		**Case Studies (3 studies)** CRR:2, JBS: 1 **Action Research (1 study)** JBR: 1 Total = 4.10%	**Intensive Interviewing (6 studies)** MIP:1, JAR:1, JCTR:1 , JFM&M:1, JBM:1, JPBM:1 **Experts Panel (2 studies)** JBR: 1, JRCS: 1 Total = 11%	**Conceptual Modelling (15 studies)** JBM:5, JPBM:1, JBR:1, AMJ:1, AMR:1, DMJ:1, MRSt.G:1, JSM: 1 JCP:1, IJCHM:1, TPR:1 Total = 20.54%
Critical Theory			**Introspective Reflection (1 study)** JAR:1 Total = 1.36%	

Application framework experience

Of the 73 studies percent) fall logical

Existential

Figure 2. Application of framework of Meredith for brand experience literature. Of the 73 studies, 45 studies (almost 62 percent) fall under the

positivist/empiricist perspective lying on y-axis (rational to existential continuum). Logical positivist/empiricist perspective includes experimental work

(uses efficacy of small groups for improvement programs), surveys (that relate the experience to product/firm success) and simulation (an artificial way to improve management strategies). Most of the studies (34) in the logical positivist/empirical perspective were survey based and attempted to: identify the antecedents and consequences of brand experience (Gabisch, 2011; Kumar, Dash, & Purwar, 2013; Ramaseshan & Stein, 2014; Shamim & Butt, 2013); examine online brand experiences (Ha & Perks, 2005; Keng, 2013; Morgan-Thomas & Veloutsou, 2013); investigate brand experience in multi-channel settings (Jones & Runyan, 2013). On the other hand, 27 studies fall under the interpretive perspective, with 15 on conceptual modeling, 6 on intensive interviewing, 3 case studies, 2 on expert panels and 1 on action research. The last perspective in rational to existential continuum is critical theory which consists of one critical review based study (Pettit, 2005).

5. A conceptual framework of brand experience

To understand the antecedents and consequences of brand experience, this study presents a conceptual framework of brand experience (Fig. 3).

5.1. Antecedents of brand experience

Variables considered antecedents of brand experience in extant literature belong to the following categories:

Event marketing—It is defined as 'the practice of promoting the interests of an organization and its brands by associating the organization with a specific activity' (Shimp, 1993, p. 8). It includes customer involvement with the brand, offers first-hand brand experiences (Whelan & Wohlfeil, 2006), and is recognized as an opportunity to provide brand equity and increase sales through BE (Akaoui, 2007; Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2013). Event marketing plays an important role in customer engagement and creating long-lasting brand experience (Fransen, Van Rompay, & Muntinga, 2013).

Brand contact—Points at which a brand comes in contact with consumers is termed 'brand contact' (Mascarenhas et al., 2006; Meyer & Schwager, 2007). Chattopadhyay and Laborie (2005) explained the 'brand contact' concept from the perspective of psychology and emphasized its significance as an antecedent of brand experience. They argued that 'point-of-sale' is the most effective of all other various brand contacts.

Brand-related stimuli— Brand-related stimuli can be associated with any inherent characteristics of a brand that signify its presence or absence (Morrison & Crane, 2007). These characteristics bring along experiences for customers and could be listed as: brand name (Srinivasan & Till, 2002); simple touch points such as order forms, application forms, invoices given to customers once a sale is made (Coomber & Poore, 2012); physical infrastructure (Hanna & Rowley, 2013). Previous studies on the *experience* concept have considered brand-related stimuli (or clues) very crucial in managing experiences that evoke during the entire buying process (Berry, Carbone, & Haeckel, 2002).

Storytelling— Storytelling generates positive feelings in customers' minds and is perceived to be more convincing than facts (Kaufman, 2003; Kelley & Littman, 2006). Stories hold customers' interest (Escalas, 2004) and appeal to their emotions and dreams, thus creating experiences (Fog, Budtz, & Yakaboylu, 2005; Silverstein & Fiske, 2003). Brand stories fascinate people, are easier to remember than facts, and can be used to reinforce brand associations by offering brand experience (Liljander, Gummerus, & Van Riel, 2013). Storytelling as an antecedent of BE is a newly coined term that requires more attention (Lundqvist et al., 2013).

Furthermore, several studies have viewed trust and perceived usefulness as antecedents of brand experience in an online context (Chen et al., 2014; Morgan-Thomas & Veloutsou, 2013). Perceived usefulness means the extent to which an individual believes that using the online system (website) will augment their performance (Davis, 1989) and is seen as an antecedent of online brand experience. In relation to trust, literature offers different views as to whether trust is an antecedent (Morgan-Thomas & Veloutsou, 2013) or a consequence of brand experience (Ha & Perks, 2005). Jin and Park (2006) in their model saw trust as an outcome of the purchase environment that resulted into loyalty. In contrast, Tan and Sutherland (2004) viewed trust as a significant factor that enhances individual engagement with online brands and influences brand experience. Lee and Turban (2001), also held similar views and considered trust an antecedent of online brand experience. Following the same line, Morgan-Thomas and Veloutsou (2013) examined trust as an antecedent of brand experience, and supported the concept of perceived usefulness as an antecedent of brand experience in an online context.

5.2. Consequences of brand experience

Although customer satisfaction and brand loyalty are specified as two main consequences of brand experience, other variables like brand attitude (Fransen et al., 2013; Grace & O'Cass, 2004; Roswinantoa & Strutton, 2014; Shamim & Butt, 2013; Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2013), brand credibility (Shamim & Butt, 2013), brand equity (Chen 2012; Kumar et al., 2013; Shamim & Butt, 2013; Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2012), brand recall (Bauman, Hamin, & Chong, 2015; Fransen et al., 2013) and purchase intention (Gabisch, 2011; Morgan-Thomas & Veloutsou, 2013) have also been found important as brand experience consequences in extant literature. Here, we discuss customer satisfaction and brand loyalty as viewed by major studies:

Customer satisfaction as the outcome of brand experience was studied by Brakus et al. (2009). Extant literature provides a deep understanding of customer satisfaction as an outcome of brand experience for services (Barnes, Mattsson, & Sørensen, 2014; Nysveen, Pedersen, & Skard, 2013; Nysveen & Pedersen, 2014), retail brand (Khan & Rahman, 2015); internet based marketing (Ha & Perks, 2005) and online brands (Lee & Jeong, 2014; Morgan-

Thomas & Veloutsou, 2013). Brand experience not only affects past-directed satisfaction judgments (Brakus et al., 2009), but also influences future-directed loyalty (Brakus et al., 2009; Chen et al., 2014; Francisco-Maffezzolli, Semprebon, & Prado, 2014; Ramaseshan & Stein, 2014). Brand loyalty has been identified as the outcome of brand experience in services (Morrison & Crane, 2007; Nysveen et al., 2013; Nysveen & Pedersen, 2014), retail (Ishida & Taylor, 2012; Khan & Rahman, 2015), and through affective commitment, in products (Iglesias, Singh, & Batista-foguet, 2011). Based on the literature reviewed, the study presents a conceptual framework of the antecedents and consequences of brand experience (Fig. 3).
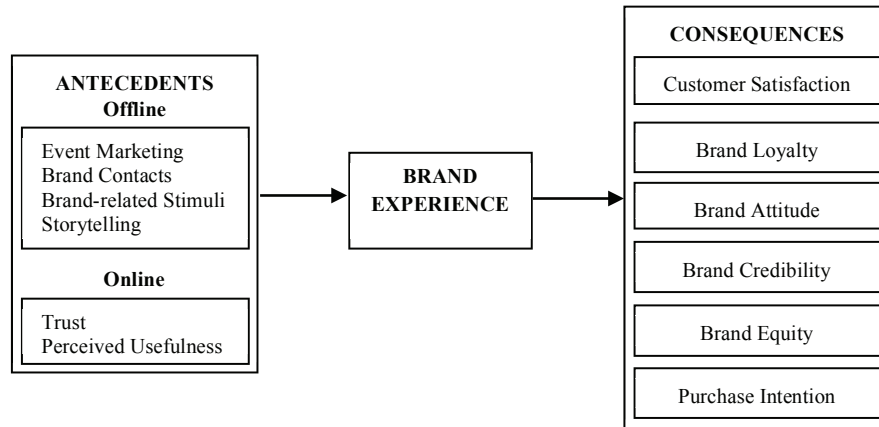
Figure 3. A conceptual framework of brand experience

6. Discussion and suggestions for future research

This study presents a review of the brand experience literature. The findings suggested that many significant facets of brand experience research have been ignored in prior studies. In this section, authors point out some of the shortcomings of existing research and provide directions for future research.

- An excess of empirical studies in brand experience is not desirable; future research should emphasize more on conceptual studies in order to establish the brand experience construct. Also, there is a lack of brand experience studies in the services.

It has been observed that after the development of brand experience scale by Brakus et al. (2009), studies adopted this scale to measure brand experience in various contexts. This caused an excess of empirical studies in brand experience, which, after 2009, increased exponentially, 2013 being the year in which maximum empirical studies in this area were conducted. Further, a lack of brand experience studies in services is also a crucial issue that needs to be addressed. Services are highly experiential in nature (Berry et al., 2002), which brings more relevance of brand experience measurement in services (Nysveen et al., 2013). Brand experience should be studies in sectors like hospitality, tourism, banking, airlines etc.

- Brand experience research found mainly in two-three developed economies. More brand experience research should be done in emerging economies that have big consumer market.

A majority of the brand experience studies have been conducted in developed nations. Anthropology and Ethnology see experience as the living pattern of individuals within a culture, which varies region wise (Throop, 2003; Turner & Bruner, 2004). This leads to differences in customer taste and preferences across nations (developed and developing), also, the way an individual experiences a brand vary across geographical regions which further highlights the need to interpret experiences considering an individual's culture and native place (Thompson, Locander, & Pollio, 1989). This requires viewing brand experience through different lenses across different regions.

- A lot of quantitative studies have been carried out in brand experience. Majority of researches are based on survey methods.

Studies have perceived experience as subjective (Kierkegaard, 2009) and it is understood as a takeaway impression which reflects its subjectivity (Morrison & Crane, 2007). Subjectivity being inherent in brand experience (Brakus et al., 2009), which necessitates qualitative insight into this area (Nyvseen et al., 2013). A deep qualitative insight in any emerging area is important, so that better practical applications of a construct can be determined (Edmondson & McManus, 2007). However, most of the brand experience studies have used survey research design and quantitative data analysis techniques such as factor analysis, structural equation modeling, correlation, regression etc. The fact that an extensive application of quantitative tools in a newly emerging domain that has not achieved maturity "…is not likely to produce compelling field research" (Edmondson & McManus, 2007). Thus, we emphasizes the importance of qualitative studies (in-depth interviews, Netnography etc.) to get more insight into the brand experience construct.

- A majority of the studies are based on people's perception of object reality (logical positivist/empiricist paradigm based researches). Future researches should use more of interpretive perspectives in order to gain deeper insight into consumer experience with brands.

While brand experience studies cover diverse research themes, a majority of researches (62 percent) are based on logical positivist/empiricist perspectives and comprise mainly experimental, survey researches and archival study. As discussed earlier, logical positivist/empiricist paradigm is based on using laws and theories for a study and is independent of the context in which it occurs, whereas the interpretive perspective gives importance to the context of the phenomenon under study and focuses on human interactions with the environment. However, in the context of brand experience, experiences are about interactions (contacts) of customers (human being) with brands and depend upon the environment (Chattopadhyay & Laborie, 2005). Thus, there is a need to use interpretive perspectives for measuring brand experience to gain a deeper insight into customer experiences with brands. The emergence of new qualitative research methods like online Ethnography (Netnography) may further facilitate brand experience measurement.

- Customer satisfaction and brand loyalty are highly discussed brand experience outcomes, only a few studies have focused on other outcomes like brand equity, brand attitude, brand credibility and purchase intention. There is a need to examine these brand and non-brand related outcomes in different settings, especially in services.

On the basis of the variables identified in brand experience literature, a conceptual framework (Fig. 3) has been provided to bring brand experience antecedents and consequences together. Researchers need to examine the antecedents of brand experience in different contexts and evaluate their possible outcomes. In future, researchers should not only determine the validity of this framework in different product/service categories, but also empirically highlight the significance of each antecedent in the creation of brand experience. It is further necessary to determine the controllability of these antecedents, in other words, to what extent these variables are controllable, partially controllable or uncontrollable by the firm.

On the whole, this study will help researchers to understand the present state of research in brand experience, and will facilitate future studies by highlighting the important issues that need to be addressed. These issues include the fact that brand experience is an emerging area, requires more attention due to its practical relevance. Focusing on brand-building strategies around brand experience will help marketers devise better and effective marketing strategies to enhance brand experience, and in return, build stronger brands. In the end, it is not being the product/service per se that actually matters to the customer; it is the experience that counts.

6.1. Limitations of the study

Although this study covered several databases and considered every possible article related to brand experience, it has some limitations: First, the decision of considering only the articles published in journals posed some limitations, as it involved excluding most recent researches because of time consuming peer-review practices. Second, this paper searched research articles for study by searching for the term brand experience, and selected only those papers that appeared in response to the searched term. This could have led to the automatic exclusion of papers that might have dealt with similar topics such as sensorial responses, as they did not appear in the search. As articles titled with topic sensorial responses might have been related to the dimensions of brand experience like sensory experience, they were excluded in the initial search itself.

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APPENDIX: List of reviewed research papers (not included in reference list)

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