



# The dimensionality of fashion-brand experience

## Aligning consumer-based brand equity approach

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### Abstract

**Purpose** – This study aims to understand the multifaceted fashion-brand experience. By identifying the constructs and conceptualizing the building process of fashion-brand experience, this study also aims to demonstrate the cognitive, affective, and behavioral brand experience dimensions in accordance with the customer-based brand equity hierarchy. In addition, by comparing two rivaling fashion brands, this study seeks to empirically depict the exclusivity of the Korean apparel market.

**Design/methodology/approach** – Based on three studies conducted in South Korea, the fashion-brand experience scale was validated. Confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling revealed that the scale consisted of brand awareness, brand performance, brand imagery, customer judgments, customer feelings, and customer-brand resonance according to cognitive, affective and, behavioral brand experience dimensions. Additionally, the brand effect was controlled by comparing the composition of the two brands.

**Findings** – Fashion-brand experience highlights the robust affective dimension that is created via the relational extension of brand imagery, customer feelings, and customer-brand resonance. In addition, as a condition necessary for affective experience, the cognitive brand judgment is created by a credible opinion related to brand performance. On a comparison of the disparity of hypothetical relationships between brands, it may be inferred that Polo proffers both cognitive judgments and affective feelings prior to the resonance experience, while Giordano augments the affective experience by engaging exclusive customer feelings.

**Research limitations/implications** – Structural relationships among six dimensions of brand experience may vary when different product categories and brands are compared. To improve the generalization of empirical findings, varied consumer samples should be employed, and other control effects, such as personal and cultural factors, should be considered.

**Originality/value** – To provide insight into the transition of a fashion-brand experience toward the global consumer experience archetype, this study underscores the unique nature and dimensional structure of fashion-brand experience by theorizing a customer-based brand equity approach.

**Keywords** Customer-based brand equity, Fashion-brand experience, South Korea, Brand equity, Customers, Fashion industry

**Paper type** Research paper

### 1. Introduction

Fashion is the style that a large group of people accepts during a specific period of time (Kefgen and Touchie-Specht, 1986). Most often associated with apparel, the notion of style is connected to a multitude of consumer products and also linked to consumer behaviors such as shopping and lifestyle. In a postmodern consumer culture context, a subculture refers to a network of meanings, styles, outlooks, and lifestyle practices (Thompson and Troester, 2002) that are uniquely expressive of a particular socioeconomic milieu (Thorton, 1997). In comparison to a classic subculture, however,



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the symbolic boundaries of a consumption subculture highlighting sociocultural facets of these consumer-based affiliations are relatively permeable.

The increasing affluence of postmodern consumers, known as the “wealth effect,” is one of the most salient fashion brand experiences. Conspicuous consumption among increasing numbers of people in rich households is driving the demand for luxury goods (Kim *et al.*, 2007b). This demand for luxury goods is redefining products by type, price, and shopping experience. Luxury brands that were once available only to upper-income consumers are now available to masses of affluent consumers who have annual incomes of \$50,000 plus in US dollars (Kim *et al.*, 2007b). Attracted to entry-level luxury items, these consumers trade-up to more expensive goods as their income and wealth increase (McIntosh and Valerio, 2005). For instance, Polo Ralph Lauren serves well as an American example illustrating the growth of luxury goods due to the fact that it experienced a 45 percent increase in net income from 2006 to 2007 (DeCarlo, 2007). This brand is expanding product lines at both ends of the luxury continuum: at the low end a product line called American Living partnered with JC Penney Company, and at the high end Ralph Lauren entered a joint venture with Cartier and Van Cleef and Arpels (Hoppough and Stone, 2007). Through the luxury brand experience, fashion becomes a dynamic social process when the consuming public widely accepts new styles (Sproles, 1979).

However, exponential growth of affluent experiences creates a gap in researchers’ understanding of consumers’ brand experience in theoretical and diverse geographic contexts based on reliable empirical data (Brakus *et al.*, 2009). If information, consumption, and experiences are intersecting across the global market, the global fashion industry can make an informed decision, and tools for predicting, measuring, and configuring this uncharted experiential paradigm can be developed. Yet generalized brand knowledge from utilitarian products makes it difficult to address the inimitable nature of the multifaceted brand experience. Fashion brands have been described as uniquely “experiential” (Aaker, 1996) as many consumers have to coordinate all of their branding signals to express the experience as a whole (Kendall, 2009). Fashion brands provide a visible cue that reflects consumers’ identity, lifestyle, and interests, reinforce symbolic and social values, and generate emotional responses (Hameide, 2011). Since the symbolic meaning attached to fashion brands provides additional value (Levy, 1959; Sirgy, 1982), the dynamics of the fashion process can be crucial to understanding a consumer’s brand experience within and across times and situations (Miller *et al.*, 1993). Thus, fashion brands have especially rich and salient meanings that make them fertile ground for international research.

Consumers in different cultures are expected to be diverse in terms of the way they perceive a particular brand. Image and symbolic meanings attached to brands are shaped by a local culture where economic and social values of brands might differ based on collective ideas about the brand (Jung and Sung, 2008). Evidence suggests that particular brands are considered more valuable in one country than in others, suggesting that brand experiences can vary based on different cultural contexts. In fact, consumption in China is growing faster for luxury services brands than for luxury product brands: 20 percent of these consumers were spending more on experiences, and only 13 percent were spending more on products (Atsmon *et al.*, 2011). Russian consumers spend more of their income (3.1 percent) on fashion brands than those in any other country surveyed by Eurostat, including Poland, Hungary, China, Germany, and the USA (Sukharevsky and Magnus, 2011). Every year since 2006, sales of luxury brands in the Korean market have risen at least 12 percent, to an estimated

\$4.5 billion in 2010. According to McKinsey's survey, the percentage of household income that luxury consumers spend on luxury is already higher in South Korea (5 percent) than in Japan (4 percent), while the Japanese luxury market has been stagnant in recent years (Kim and Shin, 2011). Indeed, these challenges call for a major transformation of the Korean fashion industry, which focusses on value-added activities such as branding, marketing, and designing (Korean Federation of Textiles Industries (KOFTI), 2008). Nevertheless, few studies offer a description of consumer-brand interaction that explores the form and dynamics in brand experience within a particular cultural context such as that of South Korea.

To provide insights into fashion brand experiences taking a view of multifaceted interaction between consumers and brands, this study construes the fashion brand experiences by means of a customer-based brand equity approach. The objectives of this study are: to identify the underlying dimensions of fashion brand experience concepts; to configure the building process of fashion brand experiences by testing hypothesized relationships; and to compare the brand effect by controlling two rival brands (i.e. Polo and Giordano). In this dynamic process, neither problem-directed nor experiential components can be ignored. With a systemic investigation, this experiential perspective expands the scope of brand research and explains practical applications of brand experience research to the marketplace.

## 2. Literature review

A brand is an entity which is a set of functional and experiential features with a promise of a value reward relevant to customers, and an economic return to its producer through the brand equity (Hameide, 2011). Upon considering the multifaceted fashion brand and customer relationship, the research model is conceptualized as the notion that fashion brand experience is construed by synchronizing brand equity approach in line with the consumer's cognitive, affective, and behavioral experience perspective. By focussing on the Korean fashion market, this approach also permits brand research to better specify the precise role of psychological perspective in mediating and regulating experience behavior within a specific cultural context. Consumers in different cultures have different construals of the self and of others, in which individuals in collectivistic or individualistic cultures hold an independent or interdependent view of the self and seek to maintain their selves by discovering and expressing their unique inner attributes (Mesquita and Frijda, 1992). Thus, these construals can influence the nature of individual experience, including cognition, emotion, and motivation (Markus and Kitayama, 1991).

### 2.1 Brand experience

Experiences occur when consumers search for products, when they shop for them and receive service, and when they consume them (Brakus *et al.*, 2009). Product experiences occur when consumers interact with a product (Hoch, 2002), shopping, and service experiences occur when a consumer interacts with a store's atmospheric and personnel variables (Arnold *et al.*, 2005), and consumption experiences happen to multidimensional constitution (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982). Specifically, studies on the experiential aspects of human consumption propose two different types of consumption: that of utilitarian products with tangible or objective features and that of hedonic products with intangible or subjective features that produce a pleasurable response from consumers (Babin *et al.*, 1994; Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982; Spangenberg *et al.*, 1997). Consumer expectations for meaningful experiences in the

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consumption process are transitioning the global fashion industry, which is becoming a network of experiences connected across diverse consumer products lines (Kim *et al.*, 2007a, b).

Recently, brand experience has attracted a lot of attention in marketing practice research (Brakus *et al.*, 2009) because brands are a complex of symbols that embody and represent the values underlying customers' experiences with products or services (Fournier, 1998). Although many useful constructs have been examined in the branding literature, including brand equity, brand community, brand trust, brand attachment, and brand personality (Aaker, 1997; Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006; Delgado-Ballester *et al.*, 2003; Keller, 2008; McAlexander *et al.*, 2002; Thomson *et al.*, 2005), brand experience affects consumer satisfaction and loyalty directly and indirectly through consumer-brand dynamics with its unique nature and dimensional structure (Brakus *et al.*, 2009).

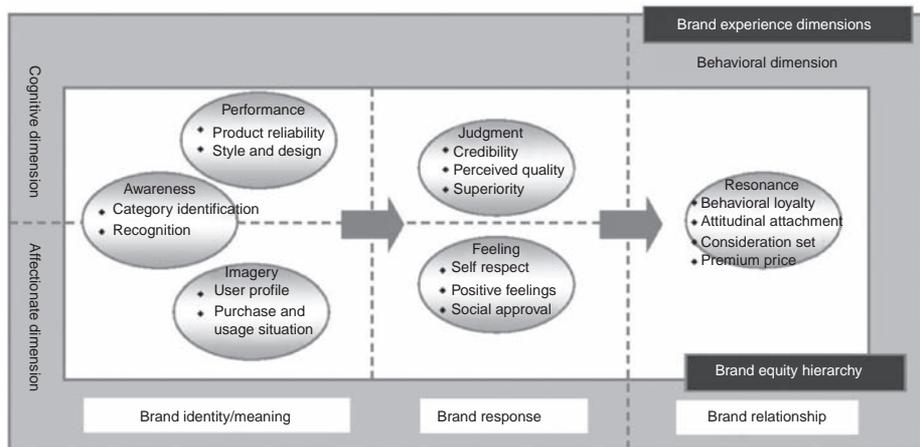
These meaningful consumer experiences often entail the subjective hierarchical preference which synchronizes cognitive processes that are more subconscious and private in nature where emotion becomes an important substrate of consumption. More specifically, Schmitt (1999) proposes five experience dimensions: the sense experience includes aesthetics quality; the feel experience includes moods and emotions; the think experience includes convergent/analytical thinking; the act experience refers to the behavioral dimension; and finally the relate experience refers to social experience. Upon considering the intricacy of brand experience, researchers (Brakus *et al.*, 2009) conceptualize brand experience as subjective, internal consumer responses including the four dimensions of sensory, affective, intellectual, and behavioral responses evoked by brand-related stimuli. Interestingly, this customer-focussed meaning of brand experience is allied with mental, relational, and behavioral brand equity dimensions (Franzen and Moriarty, 2009). The mental dimension of brand equity is related to brand cognition as a network in people's memory that consists of everything a person associates with a brand and its evaluation; the relationship equity dimension is about the brand affective connection between a consumer and a brand on the basis of acquired experience; and the behavioral dimension of brand equity is the conscious or unconscious repeat purchase of a brand in response to category need (Franzen and Moriarty, 2009). Thus, this study deals with the brand experience aligned with the brand equity hierarchy.

### *2.2 Structuring fashion brand experience aligned with the CBBE hierarchy*

Fashion brands have come to reflect consumer preference, needs, and desire (Kendall, 2009), having the highest magnitude of equity when compared to any other product categories (Simon and Sullivan, 1993). Brand equity delivers incremental utility and value added to a product (Farquhar, 1989; Yoo and Donthu, 2001) and increases the effectiveness of the firms' marketing mix activities as evidenced by consumer behavior toward the brand (Faircloth *et al.*, 2001). As a result of deficiencies in the traditional accounting and finance approaches to measuring the relative value perception of consumers and the successful drivers of consumer loyalty, the concept of customer-based equity was introduced as an alternative (Hameide, 2011). It appears that the power of a brand lies in what customers experience over time and in their perceptions of the brand (Keller, 2008), which hinge at their core on psychological associations with the brand. This differential effect of brands on consumer response to the marketing of the brand is well defined under the concept of customer-based brand equity (hereafter CBBE) (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001; Keller, 1993). CBBE implies

that the stream of brand associations that occur during consumption may be equally important experiential aspects of consumer behavior. The basic premise of CBBE is that the power of a brand lies in what customers have learned, felt, seen, and heard about the brand as a result of their experiences over time. Keller (1993, 2001, 2008, 2010) incorporates recent theoretical advances and managerial practices in understanding CBBE. He emphasizes three perspectives: brand equity arises from differences in consumer response; these differences in response are a result of consumers' knowledge about their brand experiences over time; and the differential response by consumers that makes up the brand equity is reflected in perceptions, preferences, and behavior related to all aspects of the marketing of a brand. As a result, the CBBE model prescribes a series of sequential steps for brand building that induce establishing the proper identity, creating the appropriate meaning, eliciting the right response, and forging relationships with consumers (Keller, 2001).

To build a strong brand and maximize its equity, marketers ensure that customers have the right type of experiences with their products and services and accompanying marketing strategies so that the desired thoughts, feelings, images, beliefs, perceptions, and opinions become linked to the brand (Keller, 2010). Upon synchronizing CBBE approach in line with the consumer experience dimensions, six constructs drawn from the CBBE hierarchy (Keller, 2001, 2008) are assimilated to the cognitive, affective, and behavioral fashion brand experience dimensions, as illustrated in Figure 1. The depth and breadth of brand awareness define the salient characteristic of how easily and frequently the brand is thought of under various situations and circumstances of purchase and consumption experiences. The set of brand associations can be distinguished broadly in terms of more functional, performance-related meaning (cognitive experience) vs more abstract, imagery-related meaning (affective experience). Based on the previous associative experience, brand attitudes can be formed by cognitive judgments focussing on customers' personal opinions and evaluations (cognitive experience) and affective feelings emphasizing customers' emotional reactions and responses (affective experience). Therefore, the psychological strengths of the behavioral loyalty, attitudinal attachment, consideration set, and premium price are the pinnacle of the fashion brand experience (behavioral experience).



**Figure 1.**  
Conceptual framework  
for a fashion-brand  
experience

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The following section describes how cognitive, affective, and behavioral experiences assimilate with brand identity/meaning, brand response, and brand relationship dimensions by explicating hypothesized relationships among six CBBE constructs.

*Brand awareness.* Brand awareness is the ability of potential buyers to recall the brand from its product category (Aaker, 1996) when customers are exposed to various specific brand-related stimuli such as brand name, typefaces, slogans, mascots, and brand characters (Brakus *et al.*, 2009) in which the brand competes and can link products sold under the brand name (Keller, 2001). Nearly all conceptualizations of brand equity are similar in that equity perception involves the addition of value to an offering via consumers' perceptions based on the brand name associations (Aaker, 1996; Balinger and Rubinson, 1996; Holbrook, 1992; Keller, 1993). For instance, consumers have positive emotions toward national brands due to the mere-exposure phenomenon (Vanhuele, 1995). Because familiarity breeds positive feelings, consumers are likely to choose familiar brands over newer entrants into the market. Researchers (Alshban *et al.*, 2002) support the notion that the more standardized the brand name is worldwide, the higher the firm's cost savings and the higher the product's sales volume as perceived by marketing executives.

The awareness of brands refers to the presence of the brand name and other features of the brand in long-term memory and the ability of consumers to bring them to consciousness (Franzen and Moriarty, 2009). Cognition is about consumers' awareness of a brand and the notion of what it basically stands for – its core meanings, or the core concept (Franzen and Moriarty, 2009). Therefore it is argued that the aspect of brand cognition is related to the cognitive dimension of the fashion brand experience.

*Brand performance.* Brand performance refers to the intrinsic properties of the brand, including the inherent product characteristics (Keller, 2001). To give meaning to a brand, it is important to establish what the brand is characterized by and should stand for in the customer's mind. In terms of consumer-object relations (Shimp and Madden, 1988), consumers first decide to purchase a particular consumption object in the absence of any strong emotional attachment to the object (i.e. functionalism), and develop attachments to and fondness for a particular consumption object due to repeated purchasing (i.e. utilitarianism). The memory network model supports the notion that the consumers' memory network activates brand association characteristics underlying brand equity (Krishnan, 1996). The subset of the total amount of information stored in memory that is relevant to product purchase and consumption is defined as consumer knowledge (Blackwell *et al.*, 2001), which covers the cognitive dimension of the fashion brand experience.

*Brand imagery.* Brand image encompasses the feelings a brand seeks to evoke, as well as those actually brought to the mind of consumers when they encounter the brand (Wheeler, 2006). Brand image generates brand meanings that are associated with the extrinsic properties of the product, including the ways the brand attempts to meet customers' more abstract psychological or social needs through abstract, imagery-related considerations (Keller, 2001). Brands with upscale images frequently promise a high level of quality, creativity, exclusivity, and a premium price (Hameide, 2011), so these brands may aspire to emphasize prestige and status (Blackson, 2000). This relational building process between social, hedonic experience and brand can be explicated based on the attachment theory (Bowlby, 1980). Attachments to a brand (Schouten and McAlexander, 1995), individual self-expression (McCracken, 1986), and

identity development (Kleine *et al.*, 1995) are well illustrated as emotion-laden target-specific bonds between consumers and a brand. It implies that brand imagery is deeply bonded with consumers' affective dimension in their fashion brand experience.

*Customer judgment.* Customer judgment is defined as the willingness of consumers to rely on the ability of the brand to perform its stated functions (Keller, 2001). This focusses on customers' personal opinions about the brand relative to its performance and imagery associations. Keller (2001) suggests four types of judgments (i.e. quality, credibility, consideration, and superiority) are particularly crucial to create a strong brand. In line with the reciprocity perspective (Blau, 1964), consumers who invest in valuable resources create psychological ties that motivate consumers to maintain the relationship and set an expectation of reciprocation from the brand. Other studies demonstrate that relationship marketing efforts such as tangible rewards, preferential treatment, and interpersonal communication play a consistent positive role in affecting perceived relationship assets (De Wulf *et al.*, 2003; Kim, 2007). Specifically, customer judgment is closely related to trust because trust reduces the uncertainty in an environment in which consumers feel especially vulnerable because they can rely on the trusted, experienced brand (Moorman *et al.*, 1992; Morgan and Hunt, 1994). Doney and Cannon (1997) suggest that the construct of trust involves beliefs about reliability, safety, and honesty and that consumers operationalize trust in their own individual ways.

A brand is experienced when a logical connection is observed between the core concept of the brand and the need, goals, and evaluative criteria of the consumer (Franzen and Moriarty, 2009). This information-processing paradigm regards consumer behavior as largely objective and rational and as oriented toward problem solving. Thus, positive customer judgment toward a particular favored brand may be greater when the utilitarian value of the product category is high in terms of tangible product attributes, such as quality and credibility (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001). Therefore, the following hypotheses are tested to show the cognitive dimension of the fashion brand experience, which refers to the concurrence of brand identity/meaning constructs including brand awareness, performance, imagery, and customer judgments as shown in Figure 1:

*H1a.* Brand awareness positively affects customer judgments.

*H1b.* Brand performance positively affects customer judgments.

*H1c.* Brand imagery positively affects customer judgments.

*Customer feeling.* Customer feeling refers to a brand's potential to elicit a positive emotional response as a result of customers' experience with it (Keller, 2001, 2008). Rather than examining attributes or their perception about attributes, consumers use a holistic approach in which they choose the alternative that elicits the most positive feeling (Hoyer, 1984). The central approach for positioning the product in relation to consumption feelings is to focus on the positive feelings while reducing negative ones (Blackwell *et al.*, 2001). In fact, successful fashion brands evoke emotions and opinions, speak to consumers' hopes, and seek to lessen their fears (Gobe and Zyman, 2001).

Specifically in the experiential view, the consequences of consumption appear in the fun that a consumer derives from a product – the enjoyment that it offers and the resulting feeling of pleasure that it evokes (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982;

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Klinger, 1971). More hedonic products, having intangible, symbolic benefits, are likely to encourage a greater potential for positive brand affect. When emotional pleasures are high and positive for a product category, consumers should experience more favorable affect toward the brand consumed (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001). Hence, the criteria for successful consumption are essentially aesthetic in nature and hinge on an appreciation of the product for its own sake, apart from any utilitarian function that it may or may not perform (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982; McGregor, 1974).

Keller (2001) points out six important types of feeling related to brand, including warmth, fun, excitement, security, social approval, and self-respect. Morgan (1999/2000) also specifies the consumer perceptions of brand equity in terms of emotional characteristics including prestige, acceptability, and approval. This feeling of brand equity is comparable to brand attachments, consumer delight, and involvement (Brakus *et al.*, 2009) when consumers experience brands. Involvement can be characterized by a mild effect of consumer experience (Zaichkowsky, 1985) while brand attachment refers to a strong emotional bond as evidenced by affection, passion, and connection (Park and MacInnis, 2006) when consumers experience specific sensations of brand feeling. These relations are hypothesized as follows and propose that customers' emotional reactions to brands are related to the social currency brand evokes. Thus, relationships among brand awareness, performance, imagery, and customer feelings can be assimilated with the affective dimension of brand experience:

*H2a.* Brand awareness positively affects customer feelings.

*H2b.* Brand performance positively affects customer feelings.

*H2c.* Brand imagery positively affects customer feelings.

*Customer-brand resonance.* Customer-brand resonance occurs when brand awareness, performance, imagery, judgment, and feeling are synchronized with customer needs, wants, and desires (Keller, 2008). It is characterized by the depth of the psychological bond which customers have with the brand as well as with how much activity this loyalty engenders. Fournier (1998) posits that the strength of a customer-brand relationship is a function of such emotional factors as passion, self-connection, interdependence, commitment, intimacy, and compatibility, which are experienced by the consumer. Keller (2001) proposes that brand resonance comprises behavioral loyalty, attitudinal attachment, sense of community, and active engagement.

A brand with strong equity leads to greater commitment in the form of attitudinal loyalty and willingness not only to revisit the store but also to pay a premium price for the pleasure involved (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001). Brand loyalty may derive from greater trust in the reliability of a brand or from the favorable affect experienced by customers who use the brand. This loyalty, in turn, may be determined by feelings or affect elicited by the brand (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001). Gundlach *et al.* (1995) suggest that the commitment is associated with positive affect and that though this may prevent the explanation of other alternatives in the short run, steady customer benefits are likely to accrue from such affective bonding in the long run. Interestingly, researchers view such an affective attachment to be most beneficial in uncertain environments. Dick and Basu (1994) propose that brand loyalty should be greater under conditions of more positive emotional mood or affect. Thus, brands that make

consumers “happy” or “joyful” or “affectionate” should prompt greater purchase and attitudinal loyalty (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001).

Taking an extensive point of view, Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) embrace the brand-consumer relationships as a “brand love” that is greater for brands in hedonic product categories and for brands that offer more symbolic benefits. Further, brand love is related to higher levels of brand loyalty and positive word-of-mouth (Kim, 2007). This brand love often results in a brand community defined as a specialized, non-geographically bound community, based on a structured set of social relations among admirers of a brand (Muniz and O’Guinn, 2001). Decisively, this brand affinity is experienced through the assimilation of all CBBE constructs.

The study proposes that the pinnacle of fashion brand experience has a behavioral dimension on the basis of cognitive and affectionate brand experiences. These notions are hypothesized as follows:

*H3a.* Customer judgments positively affect customer-brand resonance.

*H3b.* Customer feelings positively affect customer-brand resonance.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 Study 1: item generation and selection

Study 1 was implemented by employing the mixed methods approach of an open-ended question survey and five focus group interviews. The objective of Study 1 was to select a product category and specific brands and to generate the items that have construct validities in terms of describing relevant fashion brand experiences.

*Open-ended questionnaire survey.* To reduce categorization effects of product-category cognition likely preceding thoughts and feelings about brands (Lurigio and Carroll, 1985; Sujun, 1985), product categories, stimuli brands, and target markets should be controlled. In an open-ended question survey, 60 students from two universities in Seoul were asked to think of product categories and to pick stimuli brands. The convenience sample of college students was suitable for evaluating the fashion brand experience because they are the consumers who are the primary targets of the casual apparel category and are reported to be generally perceptive in terms of fashion and shopping (Rutherford-Black *et al.*, 2000; Stith and Goldsmith, 1989). A casual apparel product category was selected to fit the following criteria: the market penetration of the companies’ products had to be sufficient to raise adequate consumer awareness; and the product category needed to be mature to ensure that consumers would recognize a large number of brands with which it competes (Kirmani and Zeithamal, 1993; Na *et al.*, 1999). Two stimuli brands (i.e. Polo and Giordano) were retained with the highest frequency of mention among 31 casual apparel brands from 60 respondents. The selected two brands had the highest ranks of the Korea Brand Power Index (KBPI) and the Korean Customer Satisfaction Index (KSCI) in recent years. Particularly, Polo, a global premium fashion brand, secured the second place of KBPI in casual apparel categories in all of the years since 2006. Giordano, a Hong Kong retailer of men’s, women’s, and children’s quality apparel, operates 1,800 stores worldwide in 40 countries and online through Giordano Australia as of January 2008. Giordano Korea, a mass-market brand, won the Super Brand place in consecutive years from 2004 to 2006 in the Institute for Industrial Policy Studies (IPS) in Korea. In Korea, these two fashion brands mainly target consumers in their 20s (Kim and Lim, 2002, 2004).

*Focus group interview.* To generate specific items, five focus group interviews were conducted. A total of 35 students from three universities in Seoul participated. This method allowed participants the opportunity to express in-depth experience, views, and ideas (Fontana and Frey, 2000) and is appropriate to capture consumers' perspectives on their experiences (Wengraf, 2001). When five focus groups are used, they should be demographically and socioeconomically homogenous to avoid possible differential dynamics of each group. Thus, each group consisted of four females and three males with an average age of 20-22. The average monthly income ranged from \$200 to \$500, and fashion brands were purchased by every member of each group at least two times during last year.

As for the interview instrument, the semi-structured questions started with open-ended questions (thoughts about casual apparel), went on to specific questions (perception of fashion brand entity), and ended with contrast questions (evaluation of brand preference, loyalty, and satisfaction). For the content analysis of the data from five focus group interviews, the constant comparative method and open coding were used (Kim *et al.*, 2007a). A total of 1,042 responses relating to general brand experience were primarily extracted. Within each response, broad themes were identified, and then subthemes were traced and analyzed to create a unit of meaning. Following the elimination of superfluous phrases and sentences, themes and subthemes were coded. After the coding of each response, relationships between themes and subthemes for each question across participants were analyzed and conceptually labeled. To verify the accuracy and reliability of the coding, a researcher and three doctoral students reviewed all responses that the other researcher had coded. A total of 126 measurement items were generated as follows, with a sufficient inter-coder reliability of 0.93: brand awareness (14 items), brand performance (39 items), brand association (31 items), customer satisfaction (ten items), brand loyalty (17 items), and others (15 items).

### 3.2 Study 2: item reduction and dimensionality of the scale

Study 2 was piloted by the quantitative method approach of three surveys, which were conducted, respectively, by employing different sample sets. The objective of Study 2 was to prepare the fashion brand experience scale by reducing the number of items and examining the dimensionality of the fashion brand experience.

*Pilot 1 survey.* A total of 579 respondents from three universities in Seoul evaluated the initial listing of 126 measurement items from the focus group interview and indicated to what extent the items described their experiences with the fashion brands listed (1 = "not at all descriptive" and 7 = "extremely descriptive"). Three different versions of the questionnaire were prepared to reduce primacy and recency effects on items. Following Thomson *et al.* (2005), the items that more than 10 percent of participants did not rate were removed assuming that these items were poorly understood, resulting in the deletion of 24 items. In all, 41 items were retained by employing an exploratory factor analysis using a varimax rotation scheme, yielding the six factors solution (with eigenvalues of 7.94, 4.71, 3.71, 3.45, 2.25, 1.56 that explained 57.61 percent of variance) with reliable Cronbach's  $\alpha$ 's ranged from 0.70 to 0.89.

*Pilot 2 survey.* A new sample of respondents ( $n = 326$ ) from a university in Seoul evaluated 41 items according to two stimuli brands, respectively, and tested the stability of the scale. Two different versions of the questionnaire were used to reduce the primacy and recency effects of brands and items. The results of the exploratory factor analysis yielded the four-factor solution (i.e. brand awareness, brand

performance/customer judgment, brand imagery/customer feeling, and brand resonance) consisting of 27 items that explained 61.68 percent of the variance with eigenvalues of 6.26, 5.28, 3.97, 2.38. Each factor's reliability ranged from 0.67 to 0.93 and exceeded the criteria outlined in Bearden *et al.* (1991). Regarding this item purification, items were retained based on their theoretical contribution to the construct and the ability to explain variance therein. A further check of the discriminant validity was achieved when each between-factor correlation was  $<1$ , by an amount greater than twice the standard error (Bagozzi and Baumgartner, 1994).

After the conducting of Studies 1 and 2 with an extensive literature review focussed on concepts related to the three brand experience dimensions and six brand equity constructs, the questionnaire prepared for the main study consisted of 27 fashion brand experience items (see Table A1) on a seven-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree) was employed. In addition, demographic characteristics (i.e. age, gender, university, grade, major, residency, monthly incomes, and the clothing expenditure per season) were asked for in order to clarify the invariance of questionnaire distribution.

*Pilot 3 survey.* This survey was implemented employing 17 graduate students to review the design and content of the questionnaire for its validity and completeness. Minor adjustments were made to the questionnaire based on the graduate students' feedback to improve readability.

### 3.3 Study 3 (the main study): discriminant validity of the fashion brand experience scale

The objective of Study 3 was to discriminate a six-factor model of fashion brand experience by testing measurement invariance and confirmatory factor analysis. For the main study, the self-administered questionnaires were distributed to college students from six universities in Seoul, Korea during regularly scheduled courses by means of convenient sampling. Participants who were at least 18 years of age were informed that completing the questionnaire was anonymous and voluntary and that there were no incentives for participating.

The questionnaire for the main study consisted of 27 fashion brand experience items using a seven-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree), and each respondent evaluated two brand experiences, respectively. A total of 696 usable surveys with a response rate of 92.8 percent were analyzed for this study. The demographic profile of the respondents indicated that 47 percent were male and 53 percent were female, with the mean age of 20.5 years. Approximately 48.4 percent of the respondents were majoring in social sciences, followed by 19.5 percent in natural sciences and engineering, 18.8 percent of the respondents were in liberal arts and education, and 10.3 percent were fine arts majors. Their expenditures of clothing purchases demonstrated that 50 percent of the respondents spent  $< \$200$ , while the rest (48.3 percent) spent  $> \$201$  every season (i.e. three months). The mean value of the respondents' brand experiences were as follows: brand awareness (Polo of 6.18 and Giordano of 5.72), brand performance (Polo of 4.88 and Giordano of 3.91), brand imagery (Polo of 5.07 and Giordano of 4.42), customer judgment (Polo of 4.68 and Giordano of 4.08), customer feeling (Polo of 4.72 and Giordano of 3.48), and brand resonance (Polo of 3.42 and Giordano of 3.22). Overall, all experiences for Polo were greater than those for Giordano, sufficing to demonstrate its positive brand perception.

*Measurement invariance testing.* Because the mean values of brand experience between the two brands were different, it was considered important to control the brand-specific effect in further analyses. Confirmatory factor analysis (hereafter CFA)

using maximum likelihood with AMOS 7.0 program validated measures of constructs. If the measurement properties were the same for two brands, factor patterns and factor loadings would be equal (Calantone and Zhao, 2001; Yoo and Donthu, 2001). Thus, the multi-group CFA employing the full and partial constrained invariance tests was conducted. The unconstrained multi-group CFA model was initially produced based on the assumption of same factor pattern of two brands' estimations. Although the  $\chi^2$  was significant ( $\chi^2 = 969.800$ ,  $df = 172$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) due to the large sample size, the RMSEA of 0.058 indicated an acceptable fit, and two other practical fit indices (CFI = 0.988 and TLI = 0.981) were also above the recommended level.

Then the full constrained invariance model across brands was tested by restricting the matrix of factor loadings to be invariant. Although the alternative fit indices did not decrease substantially ( $\chi^2 = 1,051.41$ ,  $df = 182$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , CFI = 0.933, TLI = 0.911, and RMSEA = 0.059), there was a significant increase in  $\chi^2$  ( $\chi^2_{(10)} = 81.61$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) between the unconstrained and the full constrained invariance models. Thus, the full constrained invariance model was not supported. To further test the partial constrained invariance, the constraints on three parameters in the full constrained invariance model were sequentially relaxed, starting with the factor loading that had the largest modification indices. The statistics for overall fit of the partial constrained invariance were still acceptable ( $\chi^2 = 988.86$ ,  $df = 179$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , CFI = 0.937, TLI = 0.916, and RMSEA = 0.057). Since the  $\chi^2$  difference between the unconstrained and the partial constrained invariance models was insignificant ( $\chi^2_{(7)} = 19.06$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ), the partial constrained invariance model (with three out of 16 invariance constraints relaxed) was supported by demonstration of the invariant factor structure across two stimuli brands.

*CFA for the measurement model.* Upon validation of the measurement invariance, CFA finally generated 16 items to estimate six latent constructs: brand awareness, brand performance, brand imagery, customer judgment, customer feeling, and customer-brand resonance. The CFA among the Polo sample suggested a good fit overall with a  $\chi^2$  of 392.839 ( $df = 86$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ), GFI of 0.933, CFI of 0.955, and RMSEA of 0.072. The result also showed adequate reliability estimates for the six values ranging from 0.66 to 0.90 of coefficient  $\alpha$  with all significant factor loadings (all  $t$  values exceeded 3.2,  $p < 0.001$ ). The Giordano sample's CFA was conducted with the 16 items restricted to load on one of the six factors as described in the Polo measurement. The result suggested an acceptable fit with a  $\chi^2$  of 579.960 ( $df = 86$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ), GFI of 0.908, CFI of 0.919, and RMSEA of 0.091. The result also showed adequate reliability estimates for the six values ranging from 0.66 to 0.87 of coefficient  $\alpha$  with all factor loadings significant (all  $t$  values exceeded 3.2,  $p < 0.001$ ), demonstrating adequate convergent validity. Discriminant validity was supported because the average variance extracted (AVE) between each pair of constructs was  $> \phi^2$  (i.e. the squared correlation between two constructs) in each brand (Table II). Standardized factor loading estimates resulting from the six factors measurement model for each brand are shown in Table I.

## 4. Results

### 4.1 Hypothesis testing

Structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis was employed to test hypothesized relationships in building the fashion brand experience. The structural model specified three variables (i.e. brand awareness, brand performance, and brand imagery) as exogenous latent constructs, while others (i.e. customer judgment, customer feeling, and customer-brand resonance) were specified as endogenous constructs.

Constructs	Mean (SD)		SFA <sup>a</sup>		AVE <sup>b</sup>	
	Polo	Giordano	Polo	Giordano	Polo	Giordano
<i>Resonance</i>						
Re1: behavioral loyalty	3.07 (1.70)	3.29 (1.51)	0.905	0.885	0.70	0.61
Re2: attitudinal attachment	3.32 (1.72)	3.26 (1.02)	0.912	0.890		
Re3: consideration set	4.14 (1.71)	3.77 (1.58)	0.772	0.707		
Re4: premium price	3.16 (1.69)	2.58 (1.24)	0.758	0.589		
<i>Judgment</i>						
Jd1: credibility	4.81 (1.28)	4.36 (1.17)	0.891	0.849	0.75	0.70
Jd2: perceived quality	4.70 (1.26)	4.13 (1.17)	0.894	0.836		
Jd3: superiority	4.52 (1.26)	3.76 (1.19)	0.817	0.816		
<i>Feeling</i>						
Fe1: sell respect	4.54 (1.46)	3.09 (1.19)	0.798	0.710	0.67	0.62
Fe2: positive feeling	4.80 (1.36)	3.82 (1.26)	0.856	0.880		
Fe3: social approval	4.83 (1.41)	3.54 (1.22)	0.796	0.764		
<i>Performance</i>						
Pe1: product reliability	4.91 (1.27)	3.79 (1.27)	0.745	0.729	0.51	0.52
Pe2: style and design	4.84 (1.22)	4.02 (1.18)	0.668	0.704		
<i>Imagery</i>						
Im1: user profile	4.76 (1.52)	3.99 (1.51)	0.740	0.733	0.50	0.49
Im1: purchase and usage situations	5.37 (1.43)	4.84 (1.54)	0.673	0.660		
<i>Awareness</i>						
Aw1: category identification	6.02 (1.01)	5.23 (1.32)	0.849	0.860	0.61	0.55
Aw2: recognition	6.33 (1.03)	6.20 (1.13)	0.701	0.592		

**Notes:** df, degree of freedom, GFI, goodness of fit index; CFI, comparative fit index; PMFI, parsimony normed fit index; RMSEA, root mean square of approximation. Polo fit indices:  $\chi^2 = 392.839$ ,  $df = 86$ , GFI = 0.933, CFI = 0.955, PNFI = 0.676, RMSEA = 0.072. Giordano fit indices:  $\chi^2 = 579.960$ ,  $df = 86$ , GFI = 0.908, CFI = 0.919, PNFI = 0.649, RMSEA = 0.091. *df* = <sup>a</sup>Standardized factor loading; the first item for each construct was set to 1; <sup>b</sup>calculated as  $[\sum(\text{standard loading}^2)]/[\sum(\text{standard loading}^2)] + \sum \xi_i$

**Table I.**  
The measurement model results

	Resonance	Judgment	Feeling	Performance	Imagery	Awareness
Resonance	1.00	0.51	0.58	0.66	0.46	0.33
Judgment	0.46	1.00	0.78	0.94	0.43	0.60
Feeling	0.48	0.76	1.00	0.84	0.48	0.48
Performance	0.52	0.86	0.79	1.00	0.38	0.53
Imagery	0.44	0.58	0.77	0.65	1.00	0.49
Awareness	0.26	0.55	0.61	0.62	0.58	1.00

**Table II.**  
Correlation of constructs

**Note:** The top half of the diagonal shows correlation for the Giordano and the bottom half shows correlation for the Polo

The hypothesized structural model yielded a good fit ( $\chi^2 = 771.56$ ,  $df = 180$ , GFI = 0.935, CFI = 0.954, RMSEA = 0.049). The model explained 82.5 percent of the variance in customer feeling, 80.8 percent in customer judgment, and 35.8 percent in customer-brand resonance.

*H1* examined whether brand awareness (*H1a*), brand performance (*H1b*), and brand imagery (*H1c*) had positive effects on customer judgments. No significant relationships were found between brand awareness, brand imagery, and customer judgment, while brand performance robustly affected ( $\beta = 0.89, p < 0.001$ ) customer judgments. Thus, only *H1b* was supported, demonstrating the importance of brand performance to institute customers' judgment. Consumers judged the brand based on their cognitive trust and belief in how great brand reliability and style/design perform (Keller, 2010). In building the cognitive fashion brand experience, brand performance is the key condition.

*H2* tested whether consumers' perceptions of brand awareness (*H2a*), brand performance (*H2b*), and brand imagery (*H2c*) positively affected customer feelings. The affirmative path from brand performance ( $\beta = 0.72, p < 0.001$ ) and brand imagery ( $\beta = 0.30, p < 0.001$ ) were significant; therefore, *H2b* and *H2c* were supported, but *H2a* was rejected. Brand performance and imagery are antecedents in eliciting positive customer feelings. Brand performance and imagery exist for a brand and could possibly be transferred to the affective fashion brand experience (Keller, 2010). Research supports this finding in that in certain circumstances, the image and reputation of a brand can play a significant role in creating a customer affective experience (Lee and Shavitt, 2006). Therefore, reliable brand performance and attractive brand image are essential brand stimuli for a strong, positive, and favorable affective fashion brand experience.

*H3* examined the positive impact of customer judgments (*H3a*) and customer feelings (*H3b*) on customer-brand resonances. Only customer feeling was significantly related to customer resonances ( $\beta = 0.57, p < 0.001$ ); hence, *H3b* was supported, while *H3a* was rejected. To build a strong attachment and loyalty with a fashion brand, the affirmative feeling was the determinant in fashion brand experience. This finding cannot support the connection between cognitive experience and behavioral experience in fashion brands. Thus, a success factor in fashion brand experience is the conversion from affective experience to behavioral experience.

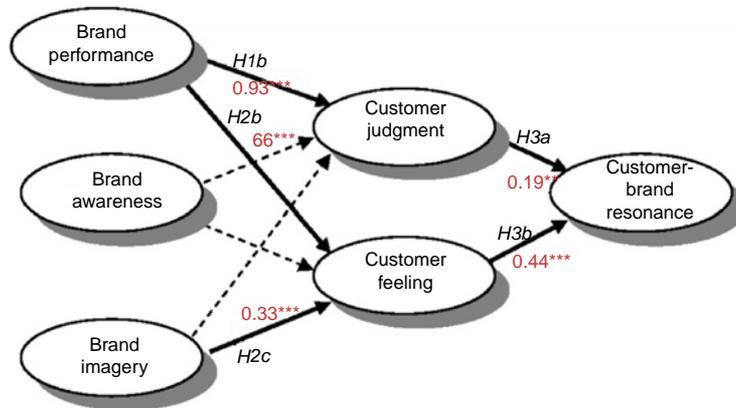
#### 4.2 Moderating effects of brands

Polo is a premium brand that borrows elements from both the luxury brand and the mass-market brand categories, while Giordano is known as a mass-market brand with affordability, accessibility, and wider distribution with acceptable quality and support (Hameide, 2011; Kim and Lim, 2002, 2004) in the Korean market. Because the descriptive information of participants in terms of their experience perception with the two brands differs, it is interesting to control the brand-specific effect.

To examine the moderating effects of the relationship between the two brands, the multi-group SEM was conducted. Prior to the multi-group SEM, it was necessary to test the invariant structure between two brand groups. The unconstrained model assumed that the invariance had the same factors and path patterns in the two brand estimations. The fit of the unconstrained model was satisfactory ( $\chi^2 = 771.559$ ,  $df = 180$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $RMSEA = 0.049$ ,  $GFI = 0.935$ , and  $CFI = 0.954$ ), with highly significant  $t$ -value in terms of factor loadings exceeding 0.60. The full invariance model was tested by constraining the matrix of factor loadings and path coefficients to be invariant across the brands. There was a significant increase in  $\chi^2$  ( $\chi^2_{(24)} = 139.51$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) between the unconstrained model and the full constrained invariance model, although the fit did not decrease much in terms of alternative fit indices ( $\chi^2 = 911.066$ ,  $df = 204$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $RMSEA = 0.050$ ,  $GFI = 0.924$ , and  $CFI = 0.945$ ). As the full

constrained invariance model was not supported, the next step was to impose partial invariance of factor loadings on the model. Successively relaxing these six constraints of factor loading yielded an improvement in fit as compared to the full invariance model. The partial constrained invariance model fit was not worse than the fit of the unconstrained model, as shown by the following:  $\chi^2 = 783.914$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ; RMSEA = 0.048, GFI = 0.934, and CFI = 0.954. The increase in terms of  $\chi^2$  was not significant ( $\chi^2_{(6)} = 12.36$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). Hence, the partial invariance on the factor loadings was supported; the two brands' structural models were assumed invariant.

Upon validation of the invariance of SEM, the multi-group SEM was conducted to compare the structure of brand experiences process between the Polo and Giordano. The Polo experience was built through three paths: from "brand performance" through "customer judgment" to "customer-brand resonance," with a total effect of 0.18; from "brand performance" through "customer feeling" to "customer-brand resonance," with a total effect of 0.29; and from "brand imagery" through "customer feeling" to "customer-brand resonance," with a total effect of 0.15. See Figure 2 and Table III. The robust mediation of customer feeling leads the customer-brand resonance, in which the



Notes: \*\* $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0.001$

Figure 2. Structural model for Polo's brand experience

Hypothesized relationships	Polo			Giordano		
	$\beta$	SE	CR	$\beta$	SE	CR
H1a: brand awareness $\rightarrow$ customer judgment	-0.05	0.098	ns	0.16	0.068	2.962**
H1b: brand awareness $\rightarrow$ customer feeling	-0.01	0.080	ns	-0.04	0.072	ns
H2a: brand performance $\rightarrow$ customer judgment	0.93	0.126	10.685***	0.84	0.062	16.215***
H2b: brand performance $\rightarrow$ customer feeling	0.66	0.084	10.320***	0.78	0.062	14.387***
H2c: brand imagery $\rightarrow$ customer feeling	0.33	0.069	4.980**	0.23	0.049	4.250***
H3a: brand imagery $\rightarrow$ customer judgment	0.00	0.086	ns	0.02	0.046	ns
H3b: brand imagery $\rightarrow$ customer feeling	0.19	0.083	2.747***	0.14	0.078	ns
H3c: customer judgment $\rightarrow$ C-B resonance	0.19	0.083	2.747***	0.14	0.078	ns
H3d: customer feeling $\rightarrow$ C-B resonance	0.44	0.095	6.107***	0.68	0.097	8.524***

Table III. The multigroup comparisons of path coefficients

Notes:  $\beta$ , the path coefficient; SE, standard error; CR, critical ratio; ns, not significant. Partial invariant structural model fit indices:  $\chi^2 = 783.914$ ,  $df = 186$ , RMSEA = 0.048, GFI = 0.934, CFI = 0.954. \*\* $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0.001$

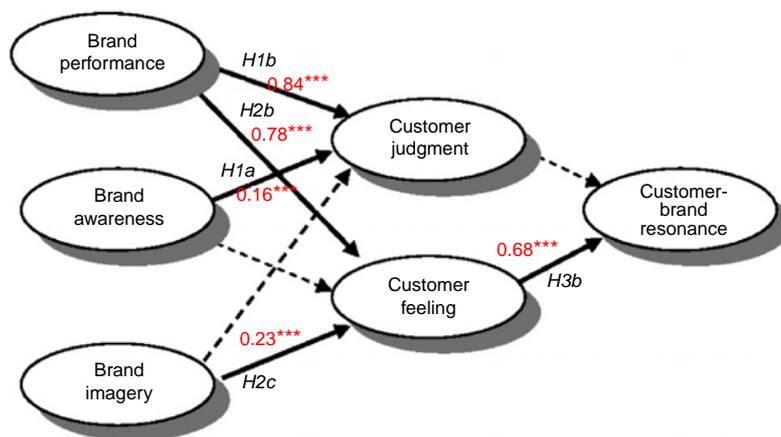
affective dimension is emphasized, to elicit the behavioral dimension of the fashion brand experience.

The Giordano experience process was demonstrated differently, as follows: from “brand performance” through “customer feeling” to “customer-brand resonance,” with total a effect of 0.53; and from “brand imagery” through “customer feeling” to “customer-brand resonance,” with a total effect of 0.16 as demonstrated in Figure 3 and Table III. Interestingly, the robust direct effect from “brand performance” to “customer judgment” ( $\beta = 0.84$ ) and from “brand awareness” to “customer judgment” ( $\beta = 0.16$ ) did not extend to “customer-brand resonance.” Although the respondents trusted Giordano as a result of the reliable brand performance and familiar brand awareness, these cognitive brand experiences did not expand to behavioral brand experiences such as brand loyalty, attitudinal attachment, and price premium.

### 5. Discussion and limitations

Immersing consumers in meaningful experiences has become important (Pine and Gilmore, 1999), and much research has focussed on utilitarian product attributes and general category experience (Brakus *et al.*, 2009). Focussing on fashion brands, this study defines the fashion brand experiences as having cognitive, affective, and behavioral composition and underscores the dimensionality of identification (brand awareness), meaning (brand performance and imagery), responses (customer judgment and feeling), and relationships (customer-brand resonance) aligned with the CBBE perspective. Indeed, this study introduces a theoretical assimilation of brand experience and the CBBE framework. Additionally, the exclusive brand experience in South Korea employs the self-construal perspective to apply research findings within a specific cultural context.

First, the dimensionality of the fashion brand experience can be manipulated through the CBBE constructs, including brand awareness, brand performance, brand imagery, customer judgment, customer feelings, and customer-brand resonance. Fashion brand experiences also provide a hierarchical composition of customers’ cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions according to the CBBE constructs. When consumers search for, shop for, and consume fashion brands, they are exposed



Notes: \*\* $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0.001$

**Figure 3.**  
Structural model for  
Giordano's brand  
experience

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to various specific brand-related stimuli, which are referred to as the fashion brand experience. Because of the multifaceted interactions among consumers and brands, the fashion-brand experience may synchronize cognitive processes that are more subconscious and private in nature with affective processes during which emotions become an important substrate of consumption (Brakus *et al.*, 2009). The composition of the fashion brand experience suggests that future research should emphasize the role of fashion brands, the multifaceted dimensions of fashion brand performance, fashion brand-related imagery, feelings arising from consumption, and the role of play in providing emotional attachment and behavior loyalty in resonance experience.

Second, upon the testing of the hypotheses, this study concludes that brand imagery and performance influence customer feelings, which directly induce customer-brand resonance. However, brand performance affects only customer judgment, without advancing further to brand resonance. Although brand performance can build a credible cognitive experience, it is not able to transfer to the affective experience without an assimilation of brand imagery. Additionally, the affective dimension of the fashion brand experience is evoked by the robust progression from brand imagery through customer feelings to customer-brand resonance. If a fashion brand stimulates the senses, causes the customers to feel good, and engages the resonance behavior, brand experience makes customers more subject to the most profitable behavioral outcomes, such as loyalty and price premium. This is supported by the notion that brand experience seems to be a stronger predictor of satisfaction and loyalty (Brakus *et al.*, 2009). In conclusion, brand performance is a necessary condition while brand imagery is a sufficient condition in building a fashion brand experience. This study has confirmed the substance of the fashion brand experience with reliable and valid predictors of equitable fashion brand constructs.

Third, this study reveals the disparities of the fashion brand experience process between two rivaling brands, suggesting a proposition regarding future marketing in South Korea. The consensus are: brand imagery and customer feelings are vital in determining the increase or decrease in lucrative consumer-brand resonance; and brand performance is essential when establishing credible customer judgment and favorable customer feelings. These findings suggest the value of cognitive brand experience (e.g. product reliability and quality perception) necessary to induce the affective fashion brand experience.

Regarding disparities, Polo proffers both cognitive judgments and affective feelings prior to the resonance experience. As a result of a blending of credible knowledge and enjoyable experiences, the experience outcomes can lead to a greater brand resonance of Polo products. In fact, Polo has the ability to open full-price stores. Because the Asian market currently accounts for about 15 percent of the \$202.5 billion global luxury market, Polo can capitalize on a strong appetite for premium brands by Asian consumers (Dodes, 2010). It suggests Polo needs to be careful regarding its later entry into different markets by keeping the cognitive credibility and positive affective experiences.

Giordano employs an exclusive building process from brand performance and imagery through customer feelings, whereas there is no significant path from customer judgments to experiences of brand resonance. Findings suggest that Giordano augments the affective experiences only by engaging exclusive customer feelings, while Polo proffers both cognitive judgments and affective feelings prior to resonance experiences. This makes sense because the affective experience focussing on customer feeling has been a prevailing strategic factor for Giordano. Based on the value marketing concept of "quality, service, speed, and simplicity," Giordano makes basic

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and practical men's, women's, and children's T-shirts and denims similar to those of the American-based retailer The Gap. Although Giordano has targeted the value-oriented mass market, they have differentiated themselves by implementing prestigious in-store atmospherics and dynamic and fun "Live Giordano" Campaigns (Anonymous, 2002). By comparing compositions of the fashion brand experience, marketing managers can interpret these results as helping to justify expenditures on design, communication, and merchandising strategies that create long-term profitable brand outcomes.

Capturing and synthesizing the multifaceted nature of brand experience in the Korean fashion market provides tremendous challenges and opportunities that can improve brand management practices. In fact, affluent Korean consumers are seeking more distinctiveness and are more willing to try out new brands, and they are becoming more price-sensitive and are getting value for their purchase (Kim and Shin, 2011). A McKinsey Korea Luxury Consumer Survey in 2011 reveals that 39 percent of heavy buyers of luxury brands and 26 percent of all respondents increasingly prefer luxury brands that differentiate the individual from the crowd. This desire for individuality is leading to the introduction of new contemporary luxury brands such as Miu Miu and Alexander McQueen, while the sales of Gucci and Dior dropped in real terms in 2010 (Kim and Shin, 2011). During their affective experience, consumers have tended to buy luxury brands as a way of signaling social status and for self-indulgence in purchasing the conspicuous brand. Another complicating factor of the cognitive experience is that consumers are becoming more assertive about seeking out the best prices (Kim and Shin, 2011).

Upon considering Korean market and fashion brand experience, this study suggests the following priorities: first, engage consumers in the creative endeavor to provide affective experiences in the purchase encounter. For instance, to create merchantainment, a new term emphasizing the hedonic experiential nature of fashion brands (Kendall, 2009), the fashion industry can offer innovative shopping experiences through unusual shopping venues, one-of-a-kind interactions, and destinations. They should strive to develop multi-sensory fashion experiences that include sight, sound, scent, touch, and taste stimuli. Another idea is to ritualize fashion consumption by offering consumers transcending experiences during which they can escape from the everyday life (Kim *et al.*, 2007a,b). Second, incorporation of social value to the fashion brand can be the growth engine for relational experiences of the next decade. Personalizing and digitalizing the social interactions by exploiting social media, such as blogs and Twitter, can create vigorous brand interactions with the consumer. Third, to enhance the cognitive experience, a brand portfolio should consider products and prices since Korean consumer segments are becoming more diverse, while brands need to maintain a clear identity. That requires creating multiple tiers in products and pricing and building capabilities to cope with the ensuing complexity (Kim and Shin, 2011).

This study has several limitations that present opportunities for further research and recognizes its limitations in relation to data collection. Because of the limitations regarding brand selection targeting the young casual apparel market and convenience sampling of college students, ability to generalize the results of this study is restricted. Furthermore, causal relationships among six constructs may differ if different product categories and brands are compared. By employing extensive brand cases and different target markets, the predictability and explicability of the fashion brand experience scale can be enhanced. There remains a need to examine sensory experiences that arise from other product- and brand-related aspects of consumption. With the extension of

brand equity scales, future research should synchronize cognitive processes with affective processes, employing a viable measurement model. Also, an important issue is the interaction effect of fashion brand experience dimensions. To check this possibility empirically, researchers should consider the control of personal factors such as gender, user and non-user, and brand involvement. The cultivation and assimilation of fashion brand experience into a general brand/experience research paradigm highlights the important role of consumers' experiential nature and creates strategic possibilities for consumers and marketers in their decision circle.

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**Further reading**

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**Appendix**

Brand experience		Indicator	Measure of item
Behavioral dimension	Customer-brand resonance	I am a client of Brand X*	Behavioral loyalty
		I consider myself loyal to Brand X	
		I have many Brand X products in my closet*	Attitudinal attachment
		I really love Brand X	
		When I purchase casual clothing, I should consider Brand X*	Consideration set
Affective dimension	Customer feeling/	Even if "brand X's price goes up. I purchase it"	Premium price
		I feel confidence with Brand X because of its reputation*	Self-respect
		I have experienced positive feeling when I put on or purchase Brand X*	Positive feeling
		My experience with Brand X products is useful	

**Table AI.**  
Brand experience measures

(continued)

Brand experience	Indicator	Measure of item		
Cognitive dimension	Brand imagery	My experience with Brand X products is thrilling	Social approval	
		My experience with Brand X products is fun		
		When I put on Brand X, I might be graded in good value*		
		When people wear Brand X, I can easily associate their images of profile*	User profile	
		I really identify with people who use Brand X	Purchase and usage situations	
		Brand X is used by people like me		
	Brand X's products to enhance my personal style			
	Customer judgment/	Brand performance	Brand X reminds me of specific style*	Credibility
			Brand X induces feelings and sentiments	
		Brand awareness	I can trust Brand X*	Perceived quality
			My experience with Brand X is useful	
			Brand performance	The quality of Brand X is consistently (always) well*
Brand X is superior to any other competitors in all aspects*				
Brand awareness	The quality of Brand X is good*	Product reliability		
	Brand X is the only brand of this product I need			
Brand awareness	The design of Brand X is good*	Style and design Category identification Recognition		
	Brand X is one of the most popular brands*			
	I have heard Brand X name*			

**Note:** \*Final item employed in the CFA and SEM analyses

**Table AI.**