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LINGERIE BRAND EXPERIENCE STUDY IN THE PUNE MARKET

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Abstract
Brand experience has attracted a lot of attention in the Marketing practice. The customers are seeking an emotional connect with the brands which they choose, apart from the obvious functional benefits that they pay for. Lots of study is being done in order to measure brand experience and then implement the same in enhancing customer's satisfaction and in turn brand loyalty. This paper aims to identify the parameters which enhance the lingerie brand experience of consumers in the Pune market, and identify whether the market leader in that category incorporate the same.J Josko Brakus, Bernd H Schmitt and Lia Zarantonello prove in their article "Brand experience: What is it? How is it measured? Does it affect loyalty?" in the Journal of Marketing that brand experience positively affects consumer satisfaction and loyalty. In addition, they provide an empirically validated brand experience scale based on the dimensions sensory, affective, intellectual and behavioural. This paper applies Brakus et al. (2009) model of four brand dimensions to identify the factors which impart positive product, shopping & service & consumption brand experience to lingerie buyers in Pune.
An empirical study was conducted from Jan to April 2014 on 109 women respondents around Pune from the age group 21- 36 and above. The questionnaire aimed to analyse the parameters which impart positive brand experience to lingerie buyers in Pune The study revealed details about the lingerie buying habits of consumers in Pune. It identified the factors which a lingerie buyer seeks before choosing one brand over another, It also identified the formats of lingerie buying, the ones most preferred by the consumers and why. The second part of the study aims to ratify that brands which meet the customer expectation of creating positive brand experience as anticipated by them are the one which are the undisputed market leaders in their category. This study has its limitations as one, it only utilizes Brakus et al's 2009 model to study brand experience, and secondly its focus is only on the lingerie market, which is typical because of the intimate nature of the product and closed door Indian sensibilities involved in the same .Further exploration will be required while conducting a similar study for other products.

Keywords: Experience Marketing, Experiential Marketing, Brand Experience.

1. Introduction

The American Marketing Association (AMA) defines a brand as a "name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or a group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors". These different components of a brand that identify and differentiate it can be called brand elements. Consumers associate the product with the brand through these brand elements; this is a psychological response. If they are removed from a product, only the physiological response to the product remains. Branding is a fundamental concept within the marketing discipline. Branding has become so strong that hardly anything goes unbranded, even fruits and vegetables. Consumers view a brand as an important part of a product, and branding can add value to a product. The difference between a brand and a commodity can be summed up in the phrase 'added values'. In a world where consumers are getting increasingly sophisticated and have the means and resources enabling them to compare various brand attributes, decision making towards choosing one brand is getting increasingly complex. Never had consumers so much of choice earlier. They can buy whatever they want from wherever at whatever price from hundreds of suppliers. So how does a brand stay afloat? How can a brand stay in the consumers head, so that they return to it again and again?

Our views about life are shaped by, our personal positive and negative experiences. Brands today believe in creating those positive experiences while interacting with the consumers. If they ensure that the experiences are engaging, surprising, beneficial and consistent they have a greater chance of staying on top of the consumers head. Brand experience can thus be defined as feelings, sensations,

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subjective thoughts which are evoked in the consumers mind, by the brand design, colors, packaging, store environment and brand communication.

This paper intends to present both a conceptual analysis of brand experience and a brand experience scale. This is done by observation of factors which influence the buying decision of lingerie buyers in the Pune market. Lingerie buyers were taken as objects of study predominantly because of the complex nature of the product itself and secondly because of cultural/social issue it. This paper tries to examine the brand experience of lingerie buyers in the Pune market. As with other brand research, the development of a brand experience scale must go hand-in-hand with conceptual development of the construct itself. Most of the research done on this subject focuses on the product specific utility that brands offer to the consumers. However when consumers shop for products they do not select one brand over another just by the functions and the utility it offers to them but also because brand related stimuli like brand color,shapes,signages, mascots, store environment, packaging etc, which evokes a response or feeling that can be categorized as brand experience.

There is an experience gap today, as the consumers are getting increasingly disgruntled and dissatisfied as brands are unable to live up to their expectations. According to the Harvard business review, Bain and company interviewed customers of 362 brands and only 8% described their experiences as superior yet 80% of companies believed that the experience they have provided were indeed superior (Source Best Experience brands 2013-Josh McCall).Hence there was quite a gap between the actual 8% as quoted by the consumers vs the 80% as perceived by the brands. More recently in 2012 Forrester asked customers to rank 154 large North American brands according to the strength of their experience. Only 8% fell into the “excellent” experience category. Almost two out of three (61%) offered experiences that customers considered “okay”, “poor” or “very poor”. Again, that reveals a big experience gap, with the majority of brands either failing to differentiate or disappointing customer expectations.

2. Lingerie Market in India

According to accounting firm Ernst & (E&Y), the Indian lingerie and nightwear market was valued at about $2 billion in 2011 and is expected to grow at CAGR of about 15% till 2015. The market is largely unorganized, with the organized players accounting for less than a third of the market. Then again, it's a market that's highly fragmented. Most new brands are focusing on the middle to premium segment and it's the super-premium category which is growing the fastest at a CAGR of about 30%, albeit on a small base. A study by US-based fashion consultancy Just Style titled "Global Market Review of Lingerie and Intimate Apparel - Forecasts to 2017", found out that the worldwide lingerie retail market grew just 0.7% in the seven-year period from 2004 to 2011. But the emerging markets grew at 14%. The report - in its fifth edition - pegs the emerging markets, particularly the BRIC nations, as the key growth driver for lingerie brands considering they account for 40% of the population of the world. Brands like Jockey, Enamour and Bwitch are ruling the medium segment with the prices starting from 300 INR. International brands like Triumph, Marks &Spencer ,La Senza are reigning superior in the premium and super premium segments where Marks &Spencer bra range starts at Rs 1,299, La Senza and Triumph at Rs 700 and Rs 799 respectively. Nearly 100 million women make up the ‘value premium’ segment or the richest fifth of consumers targeted by the premium lingerie brands. The key segments of this industry are still the bra and panties, and while the other segments like loungewear, negligees, shape wear are present, but their variety is limited not for lack of production but shelf space.

India is largely a conservative market and talking about lingerie in public is still considered a taboo. But with westernization looming large and advent of international players in the market, stylish lingerie is now a must for every lady. However the market is still facing hitches, which prevent any

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one player from being the market leader just yet. Indian women shun bright colored bras under transparent blouses or let thongs ride up over low rise jeans. Various cultural sensibilities even within the country prevent one brand from adopting a common marketing strategy for the entire country. In North India, which accounts for 40 percent of Amante sales, fashion is loud and colorful, as people and personalities they are also loud. Mumbai is the market most likely to accept ‘Agent Provocateur’ type fashion; it’s cosmopolitan, classy and understands fashion from an international sense. The South is just the opposite dominated by black, white and skin color bras and briefs. Sizes are also smaller. Eastern cities like Calcutta are also tight fisted and people look for value. Companies need to be careful to not be hung up about Indian cultural stereotypes nor be too flaunty with its designs.

2.1. Hitches in the Indian lingerie Market

Lack of open advertising is one of them, as lingerie is still not advertised widely both in print and media leading to consumers not having a clear perception about the best brands in the market. Most store owners resort to in store branding and restrict outdoor branding to modest sports bra instead of racy lingerie so as not to offend sensibilities. The consumers lack the real knowledge about the right fit, style or fabric suitable to the Indian body type and climatic conditions. Most people assume their size to be either a 34B or 36 B and do not know the real fit, not understanding that lingerie needs to fit exactly like a shoe fits ones feet, exactly. The science of arriving at the exact cup and girth size is relatively unknown to the Indian women, reflecting in the way they purchase the same.

Indian women are largely unaware of other categories of lingerie. They are still unaware of various kinds of innerwear, styled and made differently to suit different body types and to be worn under different attires. Different category of bras, like t-shirt bras, melded, strapless, push-ups or seamless or various segments of lingerie like loungewear, sleepwear, comfort wear, maternity wear, shape wear are relatively unknown to most consumers.

The Indian woman still has to develop the perception of coordinating function and style together to fit the occasion for the longest time lingerie was relegated to the drawers of the Indian women and treated as an “undergarment” one which is not to be seen. However consumption experiences which are multidimensional and include hedonic dimensions, such as feelings, fantasies, and fun (Holbrook and Hirschman 1982) were largely unexplored in the Indian context as unlike their western counterparts. The concept of creating a unique experience has just emerged with numerous western brands hitting the Indian market.

2.2. Formats for Buying Lingerie

When it comes to buying lingerie, the market offers different retail experiences here are what to expect out of a few of them covered in this report.

Department Store

Department stores work because they capitalize on the impulsive buying behaviour of consumers as they review and buy lingerie even if they are in the store to buy something else like grocery or home utility objects. The lingerie section is situated usually in the furthest most, secluded corner of the store. The staffs quiz the customer on their cup size and offer them a fitting session for the same. There is no help forthcoming to help the customers identify their right size or style. There are no separate trial rooms for lingerie buyers which makes it a less private, intrusive affair. The department store traffic usually spills into the lingerie section also making it a less private affair. The staffs are generally in-experienced and cannot tell the difference between one styles from another.

Online Stores

The offline lingerie market is just above $2 billion and online is insignificant. The value proposition

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for an online innerwear store is fourfold. First, the choice online offers to buyers or, in trade parlance, the sheer number of stock keeping units (SKUs) of lingerie is far higher than for any other category. Retail stores stock only the fast-moving category and sizes and not all the 85 sizes and 35 different styles of bras. Second, online ensures privacy of purchase. Third, lingerie portals offer unlimited shelf space and, finally, online rises above the problems of physical distribution. The top 10 cities account for 70-75% of online sales. A buyer in either Dimapur in Nagaland, Surat in Gujarat or in Bangalore has access to the whole inventory. Hence privacy, convenience, more segments- like shape wear and baby dolls - than a physical store and a wide array of styles and color ways are the unique selling proposition of an online store. The hitch is that they lack the touch and feel of a real store. And of course, there is no way to check the fit. Another problem is that a large percentage of population is not computer savvy and is unaware of online means and methods of online buying.

Standalone Stores

Standalone store format has emerged the real winner when it comes to lingerie buying. The standalone store usually offers a more discreet and a personalized brand experience to the customer as they deal with lingerie alone and not with any other item of clothing. In a conservative country like India where talking about lingerie is still considered a taboo and consumers Hence the consumer gets a discreet and personalized buying experience right from a dedicated lingerie trial room to a personal interaction with the sales woman and the buying experience is more discreet as compared to a departmental store. This is especially important in a country like India where lingerie is still under wraps and customers prefer to be discreet about buying it than flaunting the same. There is usually a saleswoman present who can answer basic queries about the size or product, yet lacks the technical knowhow of measuring the right size, cup or style as per the body type of the customer. This format works the most because of comfort and ease of buying and over the counter discounts which a stand-alone store offers. The hitch for standalone store format is that they do not stock the Premium segment of lingerie. Most stop at Lovable, Enamor and Bewitch and that too the basic line. There are not much of style or color options available, and black and whites are the bestsellers.

Boutique

The boutiques stores stock the stylish collections, the entire product range of even teddies & negligees stuff customers love to buy, but not regularly. The collection stocked is high on young, in-trend style and not much of older styles are available. Even they provide a discreet and personalized buying experience to the customers, and the customers can experiment with more stylish innerwear than regular ones. Boutique stores usually are brand showcases and work because of brand loyalty and brand building.

Budget/Second Hand Store

The second hand store concept is relatively unknown in India as people desist from buying used second hand clothing as compared to the west where vintage clothing as well as second hand clothing stores has quite a few takers. For lingerie especially which is an intimate wear garment this format of store is of little use to buyers who worry about cleanliness and hygiene. This format is of no relevance in the Indian context. Budget stores however are in plenty, which focus on cheap innerwear, which need not be of great fabric quality or fit, but is cheap. The consumer who usually buys out of these stores is majorly price conscious rather than brand or quality.

3. Literature Review

30 years ago authors (Holbrook and Hirchman, 1982) in their iconic publication "The Experiential Aspects of Consumption: Consumer Fantasies, Feelings, and Fun "identified new consumption behaviors "that relate to the multi-sensory, fantasy, and emotive aspects of product use." According

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to the authors, emotional motivation apart from the practical usage of the product leads is required to create a positive brand experience for the consumers. The grounds for this paper was based on three reasons, overexposure to traditional formats of advertising, globalization and saturation of markets and similarity of functional features within products of the same category making it difficult for one product to stand out over another. They claim that the existing theory of the rational consumer needs to be supplemented by emotional components of buying behaviour. This pioneering article launched an academic debate and encouraged further research on this subject. Since then, experience marketing has established itself within marketing theory and plays nowadays an essential role within consumer marketing. Various studies have tried to understand the effect of experience marketing and have tried to measure the outcome of the same. Different ways to portray customer experience -have been presented.(Schmitt, 1999)distinguished sensory experiences (sense),affective experiences (feel), creative cognitive experiences (think), physical experiences, behaviours and lifestyles (act), and social identity experiences that result from relating to a reference group or culture (relate). These experiences are implemented through so-called experience providers such as communications, visual and verbal identity, product presence, electronic media, etc. to create an impact on the consumer.(Morris B Holbrook & Elizabeth C Hirschman)writes about consumption to be seen as involving a steady flow of fantasies, feelings and fun encompassed by what we call the "experiential view". Just the way each product differs from other in terms of utility or performance, similarly brand experience differs from one brand to another. Some brands evoke a stronger response than others. For instance some brand experiences can be positive and also vary in variance while some others can be negative. Brands which wish to stay top of the mind of the consumer, try to evoke a strong brand experience in the mind of the consumer, which stays for a longer time and ultimately results in brand loyalty (Oliver 1997; Reicheld 1996).(Eric J Arnould, Linda Price & George M Zinkhan 2002)In their book consumers analyze how consumers purchase and consume the way they do. According to them experiences occur when consumers search for products, when they shop for them and receive service, and when they consume them. The same has been ratified in the writings of (Brakus, Schmitt, and Zhang 2008; Holbrook 2000).

Product experience occurs when the consumers shops for product, searches it, and evaluates the same for personal consumption. This happens when the consumer is exposed directly or indirectly via advertising or virtually to a product. Respondents are typically asked to reflect on a combination of direct and indirect product experiences to investigate how the combination affects product judgments, attitudes, preferences, purchase intent, and recall (Hoch and Deighton 1989; Hoch and Ha 1986; Huffman and Houston 1993).Shopping and Service Experience-Shopping and service experiences occur when a consumer interacts with a store's physical environment, its personnel, and its policies and practices (Hui and Bateson 1991; Kerin, Jain, and Howard 2002). Thus, research in this area investigates how store atmosphere and quality of salespeople affect the experience (Arnold et al. 2005; Boulding et al. 1993; Jones 1999; Ofir and Simonson 2007). Several articles have investigated how interaction with a store's salesperson creates a brand experience for the consumer by affecting their feelings, brand attitudes, and satisfaction (Grace and O'Cass 2004). Consumption experiences also occur when consumers consume and use products.

Consumption experiences are multidimensional and include hedonic dimensions, such as feelings, fantasies, and fun (Holbrook and Hirschman 1982). Much of the interpretive research on consumption experiences has analyzed hedonic goals that occur during and after the consumption of, for example, museums, river rafting, baseball, and skydiving (Arnould and Price 1993; Celsi, Rose, and Leigh 1993; Holt 1995; Joy and Sherry 2003).In summary, experiences arise in a variety of settings. Most experiences occur directly when consumers shop, buy, and consumer products. Experiences can also occur indirectly—for example, when consumers are exposed to advertising and marketing communications, including Web sites. Several authors have already written about specific

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brand experience scales. Visual aesthetics like product design affect consumer experience (Bloch, Brunel, and Arnold 2003), emotions being motivational scales, and how various emotions affect and motivate consumers (Izard 1978, Ackerman et al. 1997) or the need for-cognition scale (Cacioppo and Petty 1982). Pine and Gilmore (1999) write about emotional, physical, intellectual, spiritual experiences while Carbone and Haeckel (1994) talk about sensory experiences alone. The only definition of brand experience that conveys dimensionality is the one by Brakus et al. (2009), which identifies four underlying experience dimensions. Brakus, et al. (2009) hypothesized that brand experiences would positively affect consumer satisfaction and consumer loyalty, and that brand experience would positively affect brand personality. They conducted a research study to explore the relationship between brand personality and brand experience. Brand personality is inferred by the consumer from any number of brand associations, including the following:

1. Types of people associated with the brand
2. Attributes of the product
3. Associations with the product category
4. Brand name
5. Messaging and communications about the brand

For the purpose of lingerie brand experience in the Pune market, three dimensions of brand experience were studied: Functional-(Price ,Style, Brand Name, Product Fit, Product Quality, Product Fabric, Product Color), shopping and service experience (convenient location, store atmosphere, nature of Store, customer service) and consumption experience (advertising, brand ambassador). The respondents were asked to rate their product, shopping & service and consumption experiences through a set of 12 questions which were given to them via a questionnaire.

4. Methodology

An empirical study was designed to test the research framework and relation of positive brand experience on lingerie buying behavior of customers. This study focused mainly on brand experience in a consumer-brand relationship spectrum. Thus, the appropriate measurement of these constructs was the focus of this research. From an overall consideration, lingerie was selected as the exchange context for this research. Data was collected through random questionnaires answered by consumers. The study was based on the development and administration of a self-administered survey. Sample was randomly drawn from the population of consumers who reside within the metropolitan area of Pune. An extensive literature review was performed in order to identify the effects of brand experiences to build long-lasting brand and customer relationship with brand trust, satisfaction, and loyalty. Then, questionnaires were developed using the Likert scale. All constructs were measured using five-point Likert scales where weight age was given Very Unimportant (= 1) and very important (= 5).The main aim of this was to study the lingerie brand experience of the consumers in the Pune market and to identify the experience factors which influence the final buying behaviour of the consumer. A total of 109 women from the age group 21 to 36 were interviewed to identify their brand experience while buying lingerie and the same was catalogued to identify the factors which influence them most. This thesis hence tries to establish which out of the three experiences, product, shopping and customer service reign superior in the consumer’s heads, enabling them to choose one brand over another or retain loyalty to the same.

The Group was equally divided into three Segments

Students: Women in the age group 21-25 who want to be fashionable, and look smart, but do not have a large pool of disposable income for spending on being so. This segment has potential for future sales.

Housewives: Women in the age group 25-36 and above .This segment is conservative and traditional

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and do not have a large pool of disposable income to spend on looking fashionable. This segment focuses more on the utilitarian functions of the product and seeks high product quality and value for money. Convenience of shopping is of high priority for them.

Working Women-Women in the age group 25-36 and above. This segment is the main market. This segment is career oriented, who thrive on being fashionable, and who have large amounts of disposable income. The requirement for this segment is to buy new styles which are fashionable and are trendy. Price is not a constraint for this segment as they value shopping experience higher than other experiences. Hence the target group for the "lingerie brand experience study in the Pune Market" was strong, independent, empowered women with a defined sense of fashion, aged 21-36 and above.

4.1 Developing the Brand Experience Scale

Next, a brand experience scale was developed that captured the dimensions of brand experience and the level of experience evoked by the brand on each dimension. As part of the scale development, the methodological challenges must be addressed. First, in contrast to some other brand scales adopted from existing scales in psychology, the development of a brand experience scale for lingerie buyers requires a broader search for acceptable items, because of the complexity of the product. Since lingerie buying is still a closed door experience for Indian consumers and they prefer not to be too flamboyant or expressive about it, it is important to incorporate items which are highly important to them.

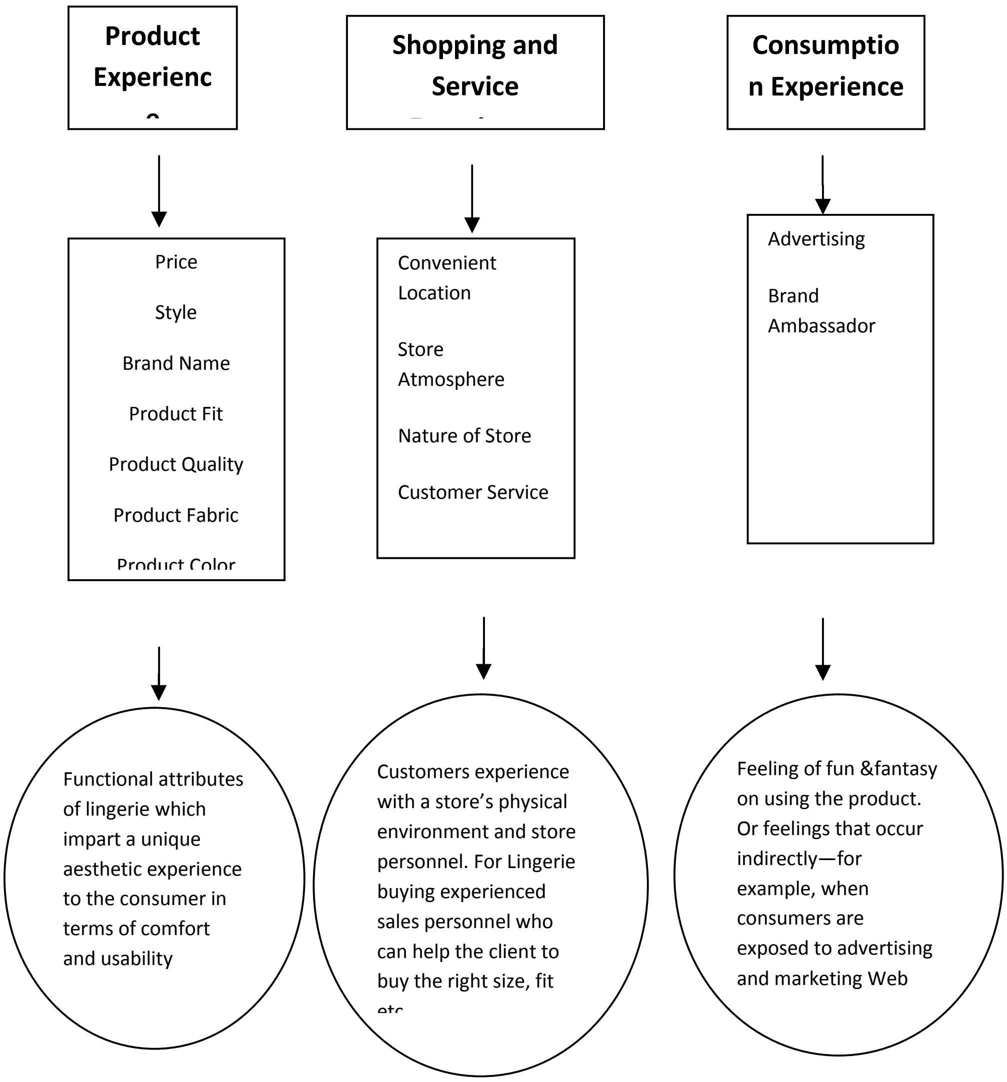

Fig 1-Factors Affecting Lingerie Brand Experience

	Brand	Central Meaning	Core Purpose	Customer Role
Functional	Think	"What it does for me?"	Solves problems	User
Experiential	Sense	"What it does to me?"	Creates pleasure	Experiencer
Relational	Relate	"What it does with	Helps belong	Member
Social	Project	"What it says about	Enhances status	Communicator
Psychological	Reflect	"What it says to me?"	Heightens self-	Actualizer

Table 1-Value Domain Brand type Central Meaning Core Purpose Customer Role
Source: Liyanage, U. (2003). A Customer Value Typology: Beyond the Functional – Emotional Dichotomy, Sri Lankan Journal of Management, 8(3 & 4), 147-171

5. Research Objective and Hypothesis

Based on the research paper by Brakus et al. (2009), which showed that brand experience directly or indirectly through brand personality and customer satisfaction influences customer satisfaction and loyalty. In order to validate the findings of Brakus et al,'s 2009 findings, a market study was conducted on 109 women respondents in the age group of 21-36 and above in and around Pune to test the following hypothesis

1. H1: Identification of factors which impart positive brand experience to lingerie buyers in the Pune Market.
2. H2: Lingerie brands which impart positive brand experience are the undisputed market leaders in their category in the Pune market.

Study 1-

In study 1 a total of 109 women respondents were studied around Pune aged between 21-36 years and above. Out of 109, 40 (36.4%) respondents were working women, 34 (30.9%) housewives, 34 students (30.9%) and 2 others, and their responses were collected via a questionnaire and measured on a brand experience scale. The results were analysed as follows-

How often do you shop for lingerie for yourself?	Responses	%
Once a month or less	97	90.7%
2-3 times a month	9	8.4%
More than 3 times a month	1	0.9%
Total	107	100.0%

On average how much do you spend on lingerie per month?INR	Responses	%
Up to 500 INR	27	24.5%
500-1000 INR	44	40.0%
1000-2000 INR	29	26.4%
2000-3000 INR	8	7.3%
3000 INR and above	2	1.8%
Total	110	100.0%

How Old are you	Responses	%
20-25 years old	37	33.9%
25-30 years old	14	12.8%
31-36 years old	40	36.7%
36 years and older	18	16.5%
Total	109	100.0%

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What is your work status	**Responses**	**Percentage**
Working	40	36.4%
Housewife	34	30.9%
Student	34	30.9%
Other	2	1.8%
Total	110	100.0%

What is your annual gross income INR?	**Responses**	**Percentage**
Below 500,000 INR	24	22.4%
500,000 to 10,00000 INR	16	15.0%
Above 12,00,000 INR	22	20.6%
I prefer not to reveal this information	45	42.1%
Total	107	100.0%

Table 2-Age, Work status, annual gross income, frequency of lingerie purchase, Average spent on lingerie per buy and frequency of lingerie purchase.

The study depicted that 90.7% of the women consumers shop for lingerie once a month or less. On average 40% of women respondents shop for lingerie in the price range of 500-1000 INR /Month with 26.4% shopping in the price range of 1000-2000 INR /month dispelling the myth that lower price lingerie is the fastest selling in its category. As the consumers are getting more aware about various Indian and international brands and the concept of the right fit for right body type is becoming increasingly clear to them, they are opting for brands and styles which suite their body type rather than being low priced. This is the reason when asked to choose the top preferred lingerie retailer ,the respondents out of total 279 mentions , chose premium brands like Marks and Spencers(10%) and La Senza (9%) which are high on style, and price quotient. Thus even when the Pune consumers are price ,quality and fit conscious, the influx of foreign brands is slowly gaining momentum and with the consumers getting increasing aware of lingerie not only being an essential part of their wardrobe but also an expression of self, are opting for higher priced products.

How important are the following features of a shopping experience to you?							
	Very Unimportant	Unimportant	Neutral	Important	Very Important	Responses	Weighted Average
Price	4	6	33	**55**	11	109	3.58 / 5
	3.67%	5.50%	30.28%	**50.46%**	10.09%		
On Trend	3	26	**40**	28	12	109	3.18 / 5
	2.75%	23.85%	**36.70%**	25.69%	11.01%		
Brand Name	0	6	25	**55**	23	109	3.87 / 5
	0.00%	5.50%	22.94%	**50.46%**	21.10%		
Convenient Location	4	5	28	**52**	20	109	3.72 / 5
	3.67%	4.59%	25.69%	**47.71%**	18.35%		
Store Atmosphere	0	1	27	**46**	35	109	4.06 / 5
	0.00%	0.92%	24.77%	**42.20%**	32.11%		
Product Quality	3	0	3	18	**84**	108	4.67 / 5
	2.78%	0.00%	2.78%	16.67%	**77.78%**		
							3.85 / 5

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Indicate the frequency of where you shop for lingerie at the following places.							
	Never	**Occasionally**	**Sometimes**	**Often**	**Always**	**Responses**	**Weighted Average**
Department store	**33**	17	23	24	8	105	2.59 / 5
	31.43%	16.19%	21.90%	22.86%	7.62%		
Online	**78**	11	8	7	0	104	1.46 / 5
	75.00%	10.58%	7.69%	6.73%	0.00%		
Stand Alone stores	4	10	23	**39**	29	105	3.75 / 5
	3.81%	9.52%	21.90%	**37.14%**	27.62%		
Boutique	**45**	20	19	16	2	102	2.12 / 5
	44.12%	19.61%	18.63%	15.69%	1.96%		
Second Hand stores	**100**	1	0	1	1	103	1.08 / 5
	97.09%	0.97%	0.00%	0.97%	0.97%		
							2.21 / 5

Table 3-Customers rating of lingerie buying shopping experience and the frequency of purchase at various outlets.

According to the study it emerged that 77.78% of consumers found product quality most important & 16.67% as an important factor influencing their buying decision. For an intimate product like lingerie, women value quality most over color and style, as they feel that being an innerwear garment which undergoes numerous washes, it is important that the quality of product is much better, instead of style or color as the garment is not visible outside. This rationale is extremely different from their western counterparts where lingerie, is a way of expression, where women do not desist from flashing it hence like well fitted, racy and fashionable garments which can double up as outerwear also. Store atmosphere came second where 32.11% people ranked it as most important & 42.20% as important factor in lingerie buying. By store atmosphere, the women were looking to get a personalized, intimate experience which enables them to get a discreet lingerie buying experience. They also preferred stores which have women sales attendants over male. Brand name was the third important factor of shopping experience to the consumers with 21.10% ranking it as most important & 50.46% as an important factor, veering them towards making a buying decision. Once the lingerie buyers were convinced of a brands prowess in delivering their requirements of quality, fit and fabric they repeatedly chose the brand name over others, just based on its past performance. This buying behavior is typical of lingerie buyers who desist from moving out of their comfort zone and do not experiment with new products especially when they are comfortable with the quality, fit and price of the brand they are currently using.

In terms of location, standalone stores ranked supreme with 27.62% people buying always and 37.14% often from the same. The personalized, intimate and discreet experience of buying at a standalone store was definitely more appealing to the women in Pune as compared to a departmental store experience which came second with 7.62% people buying always and 22.86% buying often from there. Departmental stores are figuring in this survey mainly because of the advent of malls and departmental stores over the last 3 years in a tier B city like Pune, leading the consumers to get more experimental and venture out from their comfort zone. The consumers are trying out new brands at departmental stores which attract them with colorful displays, large array of store attendants and more style, color,size variations. However Indian lingerie buyers unlike other apparel buyers do not get heavily swayed by the attractions of a departmental store and still veer towards stand alone stores which impart a far more discreet and personalized experience lingerie experience to them which

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gets mitigated in a departmental store. Availability of dedicated trial rooms and personal attention from store attendants at the stand alone store are some of the reasons why consumers want to shop there often as against departmental stores where the trial rooms are common for all shoppers and the attendants are not very well trained specially to assist buying of lingerie. Boutiques ranked third with 1.96% consumers buying always and 15.69% consumers buying often from there. However since most boutiques are brand showcases, and not all brands are available there, the consumers prefer them lesser over other options. Surprisingly enough research revealed that 75% of people had never shopped online and had reservations regarding the same. This was mainly because of them either being technically unskilled or feared quality fit or color of the product which they couldn't touch or feel.

How relevant are the following factors to you when choosing a lingerie brand?

	Very Irrelevant	Irrelevant	Neutral	Relevant	Very Relevant	Responses	Weighted Average
Advertising	5	15	**50**	36	2	108	3.14 / 5
	4.63%	13.89%	**46.30%**	33.33%	1.85%		
Online Shopping Options	24	**33**	**33**	16	1	107	2.41 / 5
	22.43%	**30.84%**	**30.84%**	14.95%	0.93%		
Brand Ambassador	31	34	**36**	6	0	107	2.16 / 5
	28.97%	31.78%	**33.64%**	5.61%	0.00%		
Styles	0	7	12	**59**	29	107	4.03 / 5
	0.00%	6.54%	11.21%	**55.14%**	27.10%		
Product Quality	1	0	1	15	**91**	108	4.81 / 5
	0.93%	0.00%	0.93%	13.89%	**84.26%**		
Product Fit	1	0	1	7	**98**	107	4.88 / 5
	0.93%	0.00%	0.93%	6.54%	**91.59%**		
Product Fabric	0	0	1	18	**87**	106	4.81 / 5
	0.00%	0.00%	0.94%	16.98%	**82.08%**		
Product Color	0	0	11	38	**58**	107	4.44 / 5
	0.00%	0.00%	10.28%	35.51%	**54.21%**		
							3.83 / 5

Please indicate how attractive the following features of a lingerie store are to you?

	Very Unattractive	Unattractive	Neutral	Attractive	Very Attractive	Responses	Weighted Average
Latest Fashion Trend	2	4	34	**58**	9	107	3.64 / 5
	1.87%	3.74%	31.78%	**54.21%**	8.41%		
Quality	0	0	1	40	**67**	108	4.61 / 5
	0.00%	0.00%	0.93%	37.04%	**62.04%**		
Customer Service	0	0	4	**56**	46	106	4.40 / 5
	0.00%	0.00%	3.77%	**52.83%**	43.40%		
							4.21 / 5

Table 4-Factors which influence customer's decision while buying lingerie and the most attractive features of lingerie store to a customer.

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While choosing a lingerie brand 91.59% customers were influenced by product fit and rated it as most relevant and 6.54% as a relevant factor influencing their buying decision as the product needs to be well fitted, being an intimate wear apparel. This was closely followed by 84.26% customers getting influenced by product quality as most relevant & 13.89% as a relevant factor when buying lingerie as an intimate wear product goes through daily wear and washes and needs to be of a high quality to retain its shape ,color and fit. As the third most influencing factor 82.08% customers rated product fabric as most relevant and 16.98% as a relevant factor influencing their buying decision. Judging by the Indian weather conditions the consumers preferred cotton, and absorbent fabrics over other synthetic fabrics which look good but don't feel comfortable .Thus respondents preferred brands which they perceived give them good fit and had higher quality over brands which might be visibly appealing in terms of styling, or brand ambassador, but fell short on the customers requirement of product fit, quality or fabric quality. Thus brands which consistently matched the top factors which influenced the lingerie buying behavior of customers in Pune were indisputably the market leaders.

When identifying the most attractive feature of a lingerie store due to which the consumers chose one store over another, consumers chose quality (62.04% very attractive & 37.04% attractive) as the predominant factor attracting them towards a store. The second most attractive feature of a lingerie store as per the consumers in the Pune market was customer service where 43.40% consumers rated it as most attractive &52.83% as an attractive factor. This is especially true for lingerie buyers where they seek a personalised,discreet and an attentive store environment which veers them towards standalone stores instead of department stores despite the latter having a large assortment of goods and a large number of sales staff to attend to them. This phenomenon is unique to Indian lingerie buyers as they seek personalized and discreet attention which they get more from the stand alone store attendant instead of those in a department store, where other department traffic spills over to the lingerie section too and the staffs is trained to be overall effective, & not specifically for lingerie. Thus the customers get the desired store experience in a standalone store where they can discuss their queries in details with attentive sales personnel and have a dedicated trial rooms all to themselves.

Latest fashion trend was the third attractive feature while choosing a store (9% very attractive & 58% attractive),but it is clear that quality over visible appeal or latest fashion trend is the most important factor for the Pune consumer, leading them to choose one store over another.

Top 3 Lingerie retailers by order of preference(For all age groups)				
Order	**Brand**	**No of times the brand was chosen**	**% times the brand was chosen**	**Total number of responses**
1	Enamor	23	21%	107
2	Enamor	22	21%	103
3	Bwitch	10	14%	73

Table 5-Top 3 preferred lingerie brands by the respondents by order of preference.

According to the market study it emerged that the brand which occupied the Top two positions was Enamor. For the top most preferred brand , enamor was chosen 23 times out of 107 (21%) & for the second most favored brand 22 (21%)respondents out of 103 again chose Enamor .Bwitch occupied the third most favored brand status with 10(14%)out of 73 respondents chose it. The results are in tandem with consumer rating the most attractive features of a lingerie store/brand to them.

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Based on the chosen top retailer above, please indicate how attractive the following features are to you.							
	Very Unattractive	**Unattractive**	**Neutral**	**Attractive**	**Very Attractive**	**Responses**	**Weighted Average**
Latest Fashion trend	2	1	40	**48**	17	108	3.71 / 5
	1.85%	0.93%	37.04%	**44.44%**	15.74%		
Quality	1	0	4	39	**65**	109	4.53 / 5
	0.92%	0.00%	3.67%	35.78%	**59.63%**		
Customer service	1	0	10	**56**	41	108	4.26 / 5
	0.93%	0.00%	9.26%	**51.85%**	37.96%		

Table 6-Most attractive features of the chosen Top Retailer as rated by the customers.

When asked about the top three factors which the consumers found most attractive about their chosen brand ,which was Enamor the findings corroborated with consumer preferance.According to the respondents Enamor ranked Top in quality (59.63% found as most attractive & 35.78% as attractive),second on customer service (37.96% found as most attractive & 51.85% as attractive)and third on latest fashion trend (15.74% found as most attractive & 44.44% as attractive).Enamor was ranked the Top favorite because the brand is value priced from 300 INR ,and is high on quality ,fit ,style and appropriate fabric suiting Indian weather conditiions.Enamor is mostly sold through stand alone stores, a format well appreciated by Indian women consumers because of the intimate and personalized shopping experience it delivers to them.Other channel of distribution is department store ,which is again gaining popularity because of advent of malls and change in lifestyle for a B tier city like Pune.

6. Conclusion & Implications

To conclude, the above theses "Lingerie Brand Experience Study In The Pune Market" aims to ratify the hypotheses propounded by Brakus, et al. (2009) that brand experiences would positively affect consumer satisfaction and consumer loyalty. As a conclusion to Hypotheses 1-H1:Identification of factors which impart positive brand experience to lingerie buyers in the Pune Market, the study revealed that the most important features of shopping buying experience for lingerie buyers in Pune were product Quality, Store Atmosphere and Brand name. Indicating the frequency of where they shop for lingerie, the consumers chose stand alone stores, over department stores and boutiques. Regarding relevant factors while choosing a lingerie brand the consumers chose product fit above product quality and product fabric .The attractive features of a lingerie store as per the consumers were quality, customer service and latest fashion trend. Thus brands which identify and incorporate the above customer requirement for lingerie products in their brand portfolio are likely to retain the top favourite position in the customers mind, and also be the market leaders.

As a conclusion to Hypotheses 2 - H2: Lingerie brands which impart positive brand experience are the undisputed market leaders in their category in the Pune market, the study revealed that the top favorite brand that emerged was Enamor. Consumers rating of the most attractive features of a lingerie store which were quality (62.04% very attractive & 37.04% attractive), store atmosphere (43.40% consumers rated it as most attractive &52.83% as an attractive factor) and brand name (9% very attractive & 58% attractive) were in tandem with consumers choosing the favorite qualities of their chosen top brand. According to the respondents Enamor ranked Top in quality (59.63% found as most attractive & 35.78% as attractive),second on customer service (37.96% found as most attractive & 51.85% as attractive)and third on latest fashion trend (15.74% found as most attractive & 44.44% as attractive).

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Since brand experience has emerged as a new subject of study it has emerged that marketers and branders can effectively utilize brand experience studies in context to their product and use the findings to enhance the brand experience for their customers ultimately resulting in brand loyalty This study is limiting itself to lingerie which is an intimate wear apparel and is limited by the customers sensitivities specially in the Indian context where lingerie buying is a discreet. However a similar study can be conducted for other apparel, lifestyle, or consumer durable brands in order to identify the triggers which enhance the customers brand experience while shopping for the same.

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