



**EFFECTS OF TRADITIONAL AND DIGITAL
EXPERIENTIAL MARKETING ON BRAND LOYALTY:
A RESEARCH ON SEPHORA BRAND**

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Master's Thesis

Graduate School
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ABSTRACT

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Öztürk, Burcu

Master's Program in Marketing Communication and Public Relations

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Experiential marketing is a marketing concept that aims to leave a favourable impression on the hearts and minds of consumers by catching their attention. Strong relationships bring brand loyalty, which is expressed as becoming brand advocate, and not switching to another brand despite the pressure of the competitors. Developing technologies and marketing communication tools provide brands with opportunities to offer experiences addressing the senses, feelings, opinions, behaviours, and relationships of their consumers. Unique experiences enable brands to stand out from the competition and create loyal customers. This study aims to explore the experiential marketing activities of the Sephora retail brand in Turkey from the perspective of Schmitt's strategies experience modules and discover their effect on brand loyalty with in-depth interviews of a sample of 22 women, aged 18–45 years old, who shop at Sephora frequently. Results of the study indicate that Sephora consumers in Turkey are mostly affected by senses and feelings in experiential marketing according to

Schmitt's strategic experience modules. Sephora consumers in Turkey are not aware of digital experiential marketing opportunities, although they are familiar with online shopping. This research has implications for brands that want to use experiential marketing methods to increase their brand loyalty. The findings show that experiential marketing activities have a great impact on customer satisfaction, which in turn has a strong impact on brand loyalty. It can be said that the feel and sense dimensions of experiential marketing emerged as the most significant dimensions in the cosmetic and personal care of customers.

Keywords: Experiential Marketing, Strategic Experience Modules, Brand Loyalty, Customer Experience



ÖZET

GELENEKSELDEN DİJİTALE DENEYİMSEL PAZARLAMANNIN MARKA BAĞLILIĞINA ETKİSİ: SEPHORA MARKASI ÜZERİNE BİR ARAŞTIRMA

Öztürk, Burcu

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Deneyimsel pazarlama, tüketicilerin dikkatini çekerek onların kalplerinde ve düşüncelerinde pazarlanan ürünlerle ilgili olumlu bir izlenim bırakmayı amaçlayan bir pazarlama kavramıdır. Güçlü ilişkiler, marka savunucusu olma ve rakiplerin baskısına rağmen başka bir markaya geçmeme şeklinde ifade edilen marka sadakatini beraberinde getirir. Gelişen teknolojiler ve pazarlama iletişimi araçları, markalara tüketicilerinin duyularına, hislerine, düşüncelerine, davranışlarına ve ilişkilerine hitap eden deneyimler sunma fırsatı sağlamaktadır. Benzersiz deneyimler markaların rekabette öne çıkmasını ve sadık müşteriler yaratmasını sağlamaktadır. Bu çalışma, Sephora perakende markasının Türkiye'deki deneyimsel pazarlama faaliyetlerini Schmitt'in stratejik deneyim modüllerine göre araştırmayı ve Sephora'dan sıklıkla alışveriş yapan 18-45 yaş arası 22 kadın örnekleme derinlemesine görüşmeler yaparak bu faaliyetlerin marka sadakati üzerindeki etkisini keşfetmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Çalışmanın sonuçları, Türkiye'deki Sephora tüketicilerinin Schmitt'in stratejik

deneyimsel modüllerine göre deneyimsel pazarlamada en çok duyular ve hislerden etkilendiğini göstermektedir. Türkiye'deki Sephora tüketicileri online alışverişe aşina olmalarına rağmen dijital deneyimsel pazarlama faaliyetlerinden haberdar değildir. Bu araştırma, marka sadakatini artırmak için deneyimsel pazarlama yöntemlerini kullanmak isteyen markalar için çıkarımlar içermektedir. Bulgular, deneyimsel pazarlama faaliyetlerinin müşteri memnuniyeti üzerinde olumlu bir etkisi olduğunu ve bunun da marka sadakatini büyük ölçüde etkilediğini göstermektedir. Ayrıca bu araştırma, marka sadakatini güçlendirmek için deneyimsel pazarlama yöntemlerini kullanmak isteyen markalar için çıkarımlar içermektedir. Deneyimsel pazarlamanın duygusal ve duygusal boyutlarının müşterilerin kozmetik ve kişisel bakım ürünleri deneyiminde en önemli boyutlar olarak ortaya çıktığı görülmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Deneyimsel Pazarlama, Stratejik Deneyimsel Modüller, Marka Bağlılığı, Müşteri Deneyimi

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Rapid changes experienced throughout the world have been reflected in the demands and needs of all consumers in marketing, and accordingly, radical changes have occurred in the understanding of marketing. In the past, for businesses to be considered successful, it was sufficient to sell the things produced, but due to all the changes experienced over time, success has been measured according to the degree to which consumer demands and needs can be met. The importance of communication is increasing day by day with rapidly changing consumer behaviour and an intense competitive environment. As a result of the development in the marketing concept, the modern marketing concept has placed communication at the centre of marketing activities. The communication between the producer and the consumer does not end with selling the product once. The aim of marketing communication is to create a loyal customer group that will always be willing to buy the product, communicate with the brand, and trust the brand (Elden, Ulukök and Yeygel, 2005).

In today's world where competition is increasing day by day, brands need to resort to many ways to make a difference and be recognised by consumers. In an intensely competitive environment, brands that use marketing communication efforts effectively gain a competitive advantage.

In this exploratory study it is aimed to understand main psychological and social reasons for creating a good customer experience. The main research question is "How does experiential marketing affect brand loyalty?". The research question is explored by learning consumer opinions of Sephora brand which offers various digital and traditional experiences to its consumers. It is also aimed to understand these experiential marketing activities effect on brand loyalty.

According to Pine and Gilmore (1999) and Schmitt (1999), experiential marketing is one of the most powerful elements of the marketing world. Considering the data obtained from the literature review, it is seen that previous studies have focused on the importance of experiential marketing. Therefore, this study focuses on how experiential marketing affects consumers and their loyalty to a personal care brand from the perspective of Schmitt, who offered strategic experience modules to create favourable experiences for consumers.

In the other sections of the thesis, experiential marketing, Schmitt's (1999)

strategic experience modules in the concept of experiential marketing, brand loyalty, the effect of experiential marketing on brand loyalty and the activities of Sephora brand on experiential marketing and the effect of these activities on brand loyalty are explained.

In the research, the definitions of experience, experience dimensions, and experiential marketing concepts are discussed and analysed. The relationships between customer loyalty and experiential marketing concepts are evaluated. Within the framework of the research, it examines whether customer loyalty is formed among customers shopping at Sephora, a cosmetics and personal care brand, thanks to experiential marketing activities. The results of the analyses of 22 in-depth interviews examined in this direction are included in the findings section of the study.



CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Experiential Marketing

The actions businesses take to inform, engage with, and respond to the needs of their target customers are called as marketing communication by Reklaitis and Pilelien (2019). Marketing communication is the whole of promotion activities aimed at promoting products, services, or ideas. Marketing communication activities are vital for brands to realise their goals and improve their current problems. It is possible to match the concept of marketing communication with promotion activities within the concept of marketing (Çiftçi, 2017). Experiential marketing is recognised as a new marketing communication technique to improve customers' overall perceptions of their interactions with a business (Chaney, Lunardo, and Mencarelli, 2018). Experiential marketing is a successful marketing communication strategy because it moves the target audience from being a passive buyer to interacting with the brand; it enables customers to establish a meaningful bond with the brand (Srinivasan and Srivastava 2010). With globalisation and increase competition, businesses are battling to create a one-of-a-kind experience for their consumers beyond products and services. As a result, businesses attempt to develop their competitive strategies based on the unique experiences. In this setting, the experiential marketing notion arises, and businesses gain a competitive edge by providing customers with an experience that incorporates their brands (Özgören, 2013).

The roots of traditional marketing go back to the most primitive times when production and consumption were carried out through simple barter transactions. Marketing emerged in these periods when one-to-one trade was carried out and the economy was limited and continued with the industrial revolution. After the industrial revolution and technological revolutions in the marketing world, various marketing communication searches have started. With fast consumption and mass production, brands started to produce new products. In the first years when branding started to become widespread, consumers started to look for features that would stand out in brands. It is argued that experiential marketing emerged in the early 1980s when consumers started to look for differences in products with historical developments (Uysal, 2018).

Experiential marketing practices can be applied in all fields of marketing

communication, both online and offline. Sales points, events and marketing areas, social media and mobile applications constitute all experiential marketing application areas (Bati, 2018).

The foundation of experiential marketing is the creation of pleasurable experiences. According to Wood (2009), the event's popularity is due to a lack of compelling ways to reach the target market via traditional marketing, customers' desires for novelty and additional value, and greater interest in developing emotional ties with the brand.

As a noun, an experience is something that influences your feelings, knowledge, or ability as a result of doing, seeing, or experiencing things. The term "experiential" denotes something that is based on personal experience. This emphasizes the necessity of experience as a foundation for the field (Same, and Larimo, 2012). According to Schmitt (1999), experience is the process that occurs as a result of marketing efforts made before and after the purchase of the product by the consumer. The marketing endeavours applied here enable individuals to encounter and participate in a number of interactions related to experiences and reflect the individual's own characteristics (Schmitt, 1999). Experiential marketing was first devised and examined in one of Schmitt's studies (1999), and it has since accepted as an effective instrument for communication strategy that influences consumer behaviour (Kailani, and Narcisa 2015). Schmitt (1999) came up with the term experiential marketing and stated that through observation or participation in an event, the individual customer is motivated to develop motivation, generate conceptual recognition, or consume behaviour and increase product value. According to Joy, and Sherry (2003), personal experience is simply the comprehension of an object or emotion through the senses or cognition. According to Petrick, Morais, and Norman (2001), businesses can improve customer satisfaction by offering them a better personal experience. In other words, the quality of services or goods provided by businesses will have an impact on consumer happiness. In marketing initiatives aiming at elevating consumers' senses, enriching the sensory experience, and stimulating their intellect through interactive activities, consumers' needs would be prioritized (Schmitt, 1999). Many organisations are now using experiential marketing to attract new consumers. Experiential marketing is a marketing concept that aims to communicate marketed products to consumers by capturing their attention and touching their hearts in order to leave a positive

impression of the products in their hearts and thoughts (Schmitt, 1999). Traditional marketing campaigns, concentrate on promoting the benefits of a product, whereas experiential marketing tries to completely immerse consumers in a product or service to enhance their emotions and sensory stimulation (Maghnati, Ling, and Nasermoadeli, 2012). In this sense, experiential marketing can apply to a range of advertising strategies, from modest, one-off initiatives to noteworthy events, product demonstrations, or sponsorships, all the way up to extensive guerrilla marketing (Schmitt, 1999). However, it is crucial to focus on a variety of activities as well as create a multisensory experience that is predominantly induced by marketing activities as part of a brand management plan in order to develop a full and distinctive experience (Lindstrom, 2005). Experiential marketing technique involves not only selling goods but also impressing clients and making them experience profound emotion towards the promoted products. The notion of experiential marketing is a widely accepted concept for perfecting the benefits of experiences (Hannam, 2004).

To improve the brand experience, marketing experts could begin by "strengthening the brand's rights and values" (Österle, Kuhn, and Henseler, 2018). Experiential marketing, according to Schmitt (1999), is an approach that encourages customers to "feel, sense, act, think, and relate" to a brand. Sensory stimuli need to contribute to the experience and the central theme of the business, so that the experience is more powerful and memorable. For example, in a store that sells only leather shoes, the customers feeling the smell of leather and being welcomed in leather seats will strengthen the experience, as it will appeal to the senses (Özgören, 2013). Cuellar, Eyler, and Fanti (2015) investigated how firms can use experiential marketing to increase their market share by improving customer interactions, and as a result of this research, they stated that experiential marketing activities should be designed in a way that customers will remember. Chang (2020) suggests that experiential marketing experts should focus on the customer consumption experience to elicit both emotional and rational engagement (Chang, 2020).

With the impact of variables such as culture, values, and technology, consumption has evolved into a structure that is continually expanding, gaining more significance, and encompassing all aspects of life. Today's idea of "consumer society" encapsulates this level of consumption. The consuming society summarises the society's consumption traditions, style, and form. The economic values acquired from

products and services are changing nowadays as a result of fast changing technology. Economic values have evolved through four phases of societal transformations: commodities, products (goods), services, and experience. The last level of consumption culture is centred on the notion of experience (Deligöz, and Ünal, 2016).

Through emotional impulses, experiential marketing strategies build a deeper connection based on the unique demands that each customer has, turning consumption into an unforgettable experience (Gómez-Suárez, and Yagüe 2021). Furthermore, the most significant aspect of experiential marketing is to develop communication touchpoints around products or services through experience, with this notion serving as a tool for encouraging affirmative word-of-mouth (Masterman, and Wood, 2008). Marketers who aim to establish brand intimacy are increasingly implementing an experiential marketing strategy. Brand intimacy refers to the "feeling of closeness" that comes from a favourable customer brand connection (Almubarak, Pervan, and Johnson, 2017).

Experiential marketing has several advantages, including increasing customer loyalty, communicating with customers by presenting the company's values, learning more about consumers' wants and needs in service development and quality improvement efforts, creating a unique identity for the company, managing customer expectations, and increasing sales (Edvardsson, Enquist, and Johnston, 2005).

The ability to transmit feelings of pleasure, interest, and joy among customers is a hallmark of a successful marketing event (Khotimah, Sari, and Kaltum, 2016). Today, technology is one of the main factors driving experiential marketing to successful outcomes (Kumar, 2014). For this reason, marketing professionals carefully select the tech tools that will be used to develop an experiential touchpoint (Moise, Bogdan and Daniel, 2012). Marketing experts concentrate their efforts on creating experiential marketing events that meet customers' expectations and wishes on the "cognitive, and social, affective levels " (Tsai, 2005). Furthermore, brand experiences must align with the requirements, values, and desires of customers (Battarbee, and Koskinen, 2005).

Holbrook and Hirschman published an influential article on the consumer experience in 1982. About 30 years ago, marketing experts identified the relevance of experiential components in customer behaviour. Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) developed a helpful model that contrasts the differences between the logical and

experiential views of information processing. Carbone and Haeckel claim to have started the "experience movement" in 1994.

In their review paper "Experience Marketing: a Review and Reappraisal," Tynan and McKechnie (2009) discuss the lack of clarity in marketing literature around "what exactly defines an experience" and the conflation of terminology associated with experience marketing. Schmitt wrote the essential paper and book, "Experiential Marketing," in 1999. Experiential marketing has the goal of "creating holistic experiences that combine individual encounters into a comprehensive Gestalt" (Schmitt, 1999). What distinguishes Schmitt's (1999) definition from other definitions is that it treats the experience holistically.

Pine and Gilmore (1999) proposed the notion of an "experience economy" in response to these shifts. They said that today's firms are shifting their focus from selling products and services to selling experiences based on customer feedback. Schmitt (1999), on the other hand, developed the concept of experiential marketing and introduced the notion of the experience economy. Schmitt's (1999), consumers are viewed not just as rational decision-makers, but also as people who act on their emotions and consume in this manner, according to perspective.

Experience is the result of what is lived, exposed, and encountered, and marketing should aim to create experiences for consumers (Schmitt, 1999). Experience is the total of a person's value gained at each point in the chain, from pre-purchase through shopping to post-consumption (Aksoy, 2014). The buyer's entire process from the status quo (before to starting the buying experience) through the actual purchase is referred to as the buying experience (the final step that moves someone from buyer to customer). Businesses that provide a superior purchasing experience grow twice as quickly as those that provide an average experience throughout the purchasing process (Gartner, 2019). Pre-consumption, actual consumption and post-consumption interactions are the three phases of the consumer altering experience. Customers may have been aware of a company's existence through indirect channels such as advertisements, promotions, or word-of-mouth. These pre-purchase experiences may have a substantial influence on whether a consumer chooses to continue with the supplier for a consumable experience. Customers will have a varied palate of experiences at different stages of the consumption process, which implies that businesses must be aware of these differences and plan appropriately

(Schmitt, Zarantonello, and Brakus, 2009). The buying experience should be understood from the buyer's point of view, because only from the buyer's point of view can the steps that need to be taken to achieve a purchase, what is needed at each step of the buying process, and the level of satisfaction throughout the buying experience be described (Gartner, 2019).

Companies aim to create experiential marketing strategies that include multiple stimuli meant to be touch points with the company in order to give a positive consumer experience (Swinyard, 1993). The standard or expanded marketing mix of branding components aimed at eliciting positive feelings, sensations, cognitions, and behavioural reactions toward the provider are examples of these stimuli (Schmitt, Zarantonello, and Brakus, 2009). These strategies must be created with the customer's values and requirements in mind in order to optimise the possibility of attracting consumers to connect and participate with the product or service while also providing outstanding emotional and physical experiences (Palmer, 2010). The values, demands, and preferences of a company's customers are likely to modification, and an effective customer experience management (CEM) strategy must be aware of this and be ready to adapt. To adapt to these changes, touchpoints and stimuli are often designed to be interactive and repeatable to evoke a sense of flow in the customer, resulting in engagement and a sense of achievement (Hoffman, and Novak, 1996).

Companies offer a variety of experiences to their consumers to increase contact with products and positively influence customer experience. Companies should consider the behaviour of customers when offering these experiences. Customer behaviours distinguish between different objects and create positive or negative experiences (İhtiyar, Barut, and İhtiyar, 2019). As these experiences, information, and digital technologies evolve, there is a need for a new marketing strategy that allows consumers to encounter marketing touchpoints throughout their journey through individualised interface design and the latest technology for customers in the digital world (Kuzior, and Lobanova 2020), because understanding how customers react to their interactions with a particular brand is one of the main goals of marketing today. The number of recent academic publications on the effects of experiential marketing strategies on consumers has greatly increased. The complex topic of experiential marketing implementation and evaluation procedures, however, is not as well studied as other paradigms in the huge area of marketing, as evidenced by both theoretical and

empirical studies (Ihtiyar, Barut, and Ihtiyar, 2019). As a result of the benefits that experiential marketing touchpoints provide to both businesses and consumers, more research is required on the subject (Urdea, and Constantin, 2021). With the aim of generating positive responses from them, whether through direct contact or indirect involvement with the business through intermediaries, an experiential marketing approach seeks to engage customers in the product or service and engage them in the experience. (Gopalani, and Shick, 2011).

Every one of the five senses, and especially a harmonic relationship, has the capacity to elicit favourable emotions, which can result in a strong emotional bond between the client and the company (Hulten, 2011). Perceived brand experience is an important indicator of whether and to what extent brand management operations benefit the experiential marketing goal. The necessity of providing a sensory brand experience is discussed as a way to generate customer perceived value (CPV), which may contribute to long-term brand strength. In this context, it's especially important to figure out which CPV components are impacted by perceived brand experience and multisensory marketing, and which ones go completely ignored when it comes to the perceived brand experience (Wiedmann et al., 2017).

Concept of experiential marketing is that consumers make decisions based on emotion and prioritize pleasurable experiences (Atwal, and Williams, 2009). By offering consumers unforgettable experiences, effective experiential marketing appeals to their senses and connects them to the business on an emotional and personal level (Pine and Gilmore, 1999). The emotional and experience value of luxury brands is in addition to their functional and symbolic value, giving customers emotions of exclusivity and/or pleasure (Berthon, Parent, and Berthon, 2009). Because it may emotionally connect with customers and put the brand in a unique position to set it apart from other brands that emphasize functional qualities, experiential marketing is crucial in the luxury market (Hagtvedt, and Patrick, 2009). Luxury brands may accomplish two goals through experiential marketing: maintaining a high-end image to keep customers interested in buying the products and boosting purchase intent by giving them a sense that the premium brand is approachable (Lee, and Youn, 2020).

Retailers are investing in experiential marketing methods to promote sales as consumers' decisions are more influenced by emotional rather than rational grounds (Clarke, Perry, and Denson, 2012). When purchasing a product or service, consumers

are also evaluating the experience they will have rather than only contemplating the utilitarian advantages. This consumer trait eventually leads marketers to use novel retail techniques to establish customer loyalty based on experience in marketing. As a result, businesses should offer a distinct in-store experience to set themselves apart from their competition. This is particularly important for fashion retailers, as the in-store fashion-brand experience is a complex encounter that has a favourable impact on customer-based brand equity (Michon et al., 2007).

The use of experiential marketing in businesses has some advantages in the market and as a result of its widespread adoption (Edvardsson, Enquist, and Johnston, 2005). According to Lenderman (2006), the benefits of experiential marketing are as follows: it provides communication by acting as a bridge between consumers and the business; enables customers to understand brand value; involves customers in the marketing process; satisfies consumers emotionally and intellectually; provides superiority in competition; and establishes an emotional bond between the customer and the business. Schmitt (1999) mentioned the dimensions of experiential marketing with strategic experiential modules. Experience's multidimensional structure, sensory experiences (sense); affective experiences (feel); creative cognitive experiences (think); physical experiences, behaviours, and lifestyles (act); and social-identity experiences resulting from relating to a reference group or culture (relate).

2.1.1 Strategic Experience Modules

2.1.1.1 Sensory Experiences (Sense)

The application of marketing strategies by appealing to the senses of sight, taste, touch, hearing, and smell in order to create sensory experiences constitutes sensory marketing (Furtun, 2012). It is essential to appeal to the majority of these five senses to enrich consumers' experiences (Williams, 2006).

According to Nagasawa (2008), main characteristics of sensory experiences are cognitive consistency and sensory diversity. These experiences provide customers with aesthetic pleasure and excitement by appealing to all five senses through the cognitive coherence and emotional diversity they offer (Nagasawa, 2008). With a presentation that creates a sensory experience, the customer's aesthetic satisfaction, enthusiasm, and sense of beauty are increased (Gentile, Spiller, and Noci, 2007). Sense marketing may be used to distinguish businesses and goods, as well as to stimulate

customers and add value to brands (Schmitt, 1999).

It has been revealed that sensory marketing experiences such as store features, product variety, and physical characteristics of the store affect the consumer's emotional states as well as positive or negative emotions. In stores where the experience area is the most effective, it is seen that the entrance area, shelves, signage, window layout, labelling method, music, and all physical points affect the purchasing action by creating a sensory experience for the consumer (Yoo, Park, and MacInnis, 1998).

In sensory experience, the sensitisation of products is achieved by having intrinsic motives that influence experiences. Sensory experience is a direct way of making the product and service experiential. Thus, this is a way that will strengthen the consumer's sensory interaction with the product (Pine, and Gilmore, 1999).

Sensory experiences appeal to consumers' perceptions. In order to manage consumers' perceptions, marketing practitioners should identify consumer touch points well and endeavour to increase consumers' experiences positively. Sensory experience should be given importance in order to understand the message given by the brand image correctly and to design the experience without using the product and service (Schmitt, and Simonson, 2000).

The senses combine people's values, emotions, and excitement in the memory where they are stored. Memory begins to accumulate material from the moment human beings are born (Bati, 2018). According to Bati (2018), a musical sound that has traces in the memory, even if it comes from a distant place, surpasses all the sounds heard around that moment and reaches the inner world of the consumer, making him sad or cheerful. When the five senses are used effectively, a magical experiential bond is formed between the brand and the consumer. Bati (2018, p. 58) defines sensory experiences as follows:

“Sensory experiences involve discovering the power of the five senses and realising these senses. In other words, in experiential consumption, the consumer buys ‘not the tenderloin, but the smell of the tenderloin cooked on the grill’.”

Bati (2018, p. 135) exemplifies this as follows:

“The best example of this is Nescafe's slogan ‘There is an invitation in its smell’. By giving such messages, brands clearly target not only the minds but also the hearts.”

2.1.1.2 Affective Experiences (Feel)

Feel marketing uses customers' emotions and thoughts to create affective experiences that vary from modestly favourable moods related with a brand to powerful sentiments of pride and delight. Emotional experiential marketing requires the ability to understand how emotions can be triggered as well as the ability to empathise with customers by looking at the experience from their perspective. Designing successful campaigns on a global basis is challenging because the culture of readiness to both feel and empathise in a given scenario varies from culture to culture (Schmitt, 1999).

An emotional experience is the design of experiences that will create strong and lasting emotions in the consumer by emphasising emotions in the consumer. Emotionality is at the forefront of most advertisement studies. Businesses that design similar advertisements repeat each other, and consumers no longer pay attention to these standardised advertisements. In order to have an emotional experience, more effective and creative messages with real emotional experiences should be conveyed to the consumer rather than ordinary content messages (Deligöz, 2016). According to Castano and Rajogopal (2015), emotions play a key role in creating a strong emotional bond between the product and the consumer and boosting brand loyalty. These feelings stand in for the focal point of the consumer experience (Castano, and Rajogopal, 2015).

In today's world, consumers want companies to offer unique, engaging, and disruptive emotional experiences to their customers, because businesses and products that provide users with emotional experiences are preferred over those that provide practical or functional qualities (Deligöz, 2016).

When making purchasing decisions, consumers are influenced by objective evaluations, such as the advantages and practicality of goods, as well as the emotional values attributed to the product and brand. Customer loyalty is influenced by emotional factors that determine purchase frequency and purchase behaviours, so when consumers form an emotional bond with brands and companies, they incorporate brands into their identity and lifestyle (Michelli, 2014).

Consumers also attach importance to the feelings and emotions created by the products and services they buy, in line with their habits when purchasing products and services. Thus, emotional experience is the creation of environments that will revive all emotions related to the company and brand in the consumer's mind. While activating emotions, it is important to first determine the wishes and desires of the targeted consumers in marketing and communication methods and then to determine the feedback to be received (Kurşun, 2018).

Emotions and meanings are two important elements of experiential marketing. In order to create a holistic effect, visual and verbal symbols must create strong emotions and meanings. Advertising copywriters try to persuade the target market to buy by making use of emotional tendencies, which can be negative messages such as fear, guilt, or positive messages such as love, humour, pride and fun. Many brands give inviting messages to their target audience by utilising emotions (Bati, 2018).

2.1.1.3 Creative Cognitive Experiences (Think)

According to Schmitt (1999), purpose of generating an intellectual experience is to surprise the customer, pique his or her curiosity, and convert the consumer's ideas into action. Thus, when the consumer performs the act of thinking and thinks creatively, he/she experiences a cognitive experience (Schmitt, 1999). Consumers' thinking is influenced by the messages they receive, resulting in a brand difference in the consumer's mind regarding the brand and the product. Intellectual experience approaches are employed in this area to draw attention to details, develop demand for the product, and motivate customers to assess the brand linked with the product (Deligöz, 2016, p. 8).

Schmitt (1999) defines think marketing as a style of marketing that appeals to the mind to provide experiences that stimulate customers' cognitive and problem-solving abilities. Think appeals to the divergent and convergent thinking of its target audience using surprise, provocation, and intrigue. Think campaigns for new technology products are common. Think has been used by many different sectors for marketing, communication, shopping, and product design (Schmitt, 1999). This type of experience, named by Spiller, Gentile, and Noci (2007) focuses on consumers solving problems or turning their ideas into creativity, as well as executing their ideas and forming their own opinions about the product. Thus, it is important to have

information about the ideas and interests of consumers.

2.1.1.4 Physical Experiences (Act)

Act marketing targets customers' bodily experiences and shows them alternative methods of doing things as well as various lifestyles and interactions, improving their quality of life. One of the several options for physical change is rational approaches of physical adjustment. For instance, Nike's "Just do it" has become a timeless tagline in the field of marketing (Schmitt, 1999). The research by Gentile, Noci, and Spiller (2007) has some commonalities with the so-called utilitarian component, the physical experience, which is linked to the term usability, but is not limited by it.

The goal of physical experience, which encompasses all sensory, intellectual, emotional, and relational experiences, is to create custom experiences for customers by analysing their movement patterns and lives. It provides experiences with different methods of interacting with customers to modify their habits. Consumers are frequently motivated and inspired to improve their behaviour by role models and famous persons (Deligöz, 2016).

One of the areas where physical experience is used effectively is to celebrate the important days of our loved ones and to send flowers as gifts to make them feel special. Offering this experience to its consumers in an effective way, ÇiçekSepeti virtual store sends flowers that can be designed individually. However, in addition to these specially designed flowers, ÇiçekSepeti also sends cakes and cookies, which can be defined as a different gift. In this way, consumers have a behavioural experience while sending gifts consisting of delicious and pleasant tastes to their relatives (Deligöz, 2016).

2.1.1.4 Social Identity Experiences (Relate)

In the relate experience approach, consumption is considered as a holistic experience. Four components of relate marketing are sense, feel, think, and act. Relate marketing looks beyond a person's own, personal feelings and allows that person to be linked with something other than their own personal circumstance. Relate experience adverts play on people's desire to improve themselves. Relate experience plays on the desire to be liked by certain people. Social identity experience module connects the

person to a wider social network. Harley- Davidson is a brand that creates social identity experiences. For many people, Harley-Davidson represents a way of life. From the motorcycles themselves to the merchandise, and to the tattoos on devotees' bodies, consumers consider Harley to be a part of their identity. Unsurprisingly, Harley Davidson owners develop close relationships throughout their respective brand communities (Schmitt, 1999). This experience, which includes scenarios in which people idealise themselves and others, their social position, and their relationships with others, encourages people to consume the things and services they desire in relation to others around them. Some items or services might take the role of representing a social group. As a result, people either buy or don't buy these items or services in order to be a part of this group or to be isolated from it (Gentile, Noci, and Spiiler, 2007).

Relational experiences aim for people to experience feelings and sensations of belonging by taking into account sensory, emotional, and intellectual experiences. Consumers often prefer a brand or product by associating the product not with their own identity but with the ideal personality they want to have. Thus, the consumer's preferences that reflect who they are or who they want to be guide their relational experiences (Deligöz, 2016).

Relational experience offers a different perspective than marketing and communication processes. Relational experience is a process that starts in production before the marketing phase of a brand (Deligöz, 2016). For example, BMW, a car manufacturer, uses the phrases "Buy yourself one of BMW's new models." and "Let your preference reflect you." in the promotion of its new model. By delivering the "It will express you the most, it will have details that belong to you." slogan, BMW applied a relational experience strategy in its advertisement. Thus, the message is given here that the differences between consumers are accepted (Bati, 2018).

Relational experience is an important factor in shaping the experience. Relational experience affects whether there will be a long-term relationship between the consumer and the brand and whether there will be an increase in consumer adoption of the brand (Bati, 2018). While some brands establish short-term relationships, others establish long-term ones. In this case, marketers aim to attract consumers into a relationship to create a successful experience. When a mutual relationship is established between the consumer and the brand, both parties get what they need (Halloran, 2013).

2.1.2 The Role of Communication in Experiential Marketing

Experiential marketing applications can be applied in all areas, both online and offline. Stores, events and marketing areas, social media and mobile applications are among the experiential marketing application areas. With the integration of marketing communication, the impact of experiential marketing activities is also felt in marketing communication applications. Experiential marketing practices used in marketing communication activities create unforgettable experiences for consumers (Bati, 2018). Thus, brands can create effective experiences for consumers to make marketing communication practices more effective on all online and offline platforms.

The change in consumer behaviour has led to the necessity of using experiential marketing practices in marketing communication. Creating different experiences personalised for each consumer is very important for brands. The applied marketing communication methods are realised not only through high-budget or entertaining promotional content, but also as a result of the experience that brands experience at every point where they reach consumers. Brands focus on the consumer mind after completing their branding processes. With the use of the product, it creates experiences about who consumers can be, what kind of life they want to live and what kind of situation they want to be in. According to consumer demands and desires, brands actively use experiential marketing practices within the scope of marketing communication (Aksoy, 2012).

Brand awareness, visual identity, stimulation of the senses and the creation of attitudes towards the brand created in marketing communication are more effective in the minds of consumers with experiential marketing activities. Consumers are looking at whether the product they want to buy will fit their lifestyle or whether it will give them an experience they desire. In recent years, Sephora has launched a marketing communication campaign that goes beyond the usual beauty standards. With this campaign, the Sephora brand invites everyone to meet the unlimited power of beauty and break the known beauty moulds. "Discover the power of your own beauty and embrace it!" says the brand in the slogan "The Unlimited Power of Beauty" emphasised in its new global marketing communication campaign. The aim of this campaign is to increase brand awareness and emotionally mobilise customers to use cosmetics at any age (JR Editör, 2020). In addition, Sephora brand uses many communication networks such as online blogs, online make-up trainings, skin care and

make-up application videos on YouTube channel within the scope of marketing communication (Sephora, 2022).

2.2 Brand Experience

Brand experience is one of the fundamental ideas in developing marketing strategy, hence marketing experts are interested in it. While brand experience and other brand concepts like brand image, brand awareness, and brand attitude are theoretically related, they are not the same (Chang and Chieng, 2006). The brand experience definition claims that "brand-related stimuli that are part of a brand's design, identity, packaging, communications, and surroundings" generate "subjective, internal consumer reactions (sensations, ideas, and cognitions) and behavioural responses" (Schmitt, Zarantonello, and Brakus, 2009).

Of all the different categories of experience a customer can have with a business, the brand experience is certainly the broadest. Brand experience includes both customer experience and product experience. The brand experience helps customers understand what the brand is and who it is for. A business can communicate its brand experience through multiple channels such as websites, paid media, slogans, and product offerings. The key elements of the brand experience are consistent and recognisable design and voice, which are then used to create marketing campaigns. The aim of this is to build a loyal customer base (Drexler, 2022).

In experiential marketing, it is significant to focus on creating an engaging experience for the consumer when creating brand equity (Pine, and Gilmore, 1999). The concept of brand experience better conveys the core of branding than other brand concepts like brand value, brand equity, brand personality, brand attitudes, and brand association, which are analytical and intellectually focused. Consumers ultimately care about whether brands can give them engaging experiences. According to Pine and Gilmore (1999), consumers do, after all, seek out value as well as the appropriate features, connotations, and brand personalities. However, the same is true with goods. Consumers expect distinctive brands. They seek experiences that appeal to their senses and hearts, anything that interests them or thrills them. They want the experience that marketers can offer them. They are seeking something genuine and real, not simply slogans and messages from advertisements. They don't only want slogans and messages from advertisements that are meant to influence their mental perceptions;

they want something genuine and true (Schmitt, 2009).

Branding theory has recently concentrated on the development of the consumer-brand relationship. A brand provides a platform for both buyers and sellers to engage in sustained engagement with a brand (Fournier, and Mick, 1999). Consumer consumption patterns are rapidly evolving, and this has influenced marketing techniques in several ways. The desire of consumers to engage with products and the rise in demand for experiential marketing have given firms the opportunity to develop strategies in this approach.

The most important input into this connection is brand experience, and the most important output is brand loyalty. The conventional style of brand marketing focuses on practical connections with customers, but today's consumers want a more engaging experience (Schmitt, 1999). According to Schmitt (1999), experiential marketing has been shown to be a solid beginning point for consumer-brand relationship research. He also believed that customer experience shapes the consumer-brand connection.

From a brand experience standpoint, this research focuses on how to develop a consumer-brand relationship. The desire to feel the product through adding emotions in the advantages and practical characteristics of the product has evolved in today's society, as customer purchasing patterns have changed. In this regard, it can be argued that in order to reach customers, brands focus all communication channels on creating stunning, unique, and unforgettable experiences in their thoughts. Consumers desire to repeat brand encounters because they are stimulated and result in enjoyable consequences. Brand experience have an impact on both past and future satisfaction, as well as customer loyalty. Consumers should be more inclined to buy a brand again and suggest it to others, and less likely to buy a competitor's brand (Oliver, and Rust 1997).

Customers build brand experience when they use the brand, talk about their experience with others, look for brand information, promotions, and events, and so on (Ambler et al., 2002). Consumers should be connected to brands by staging entire brand experiences (Pine, and Gilmore, 1999).

Consumers' "mind-set" regarding a brand, or what they know and feel about it, is influenced by brand-related marketing activities. Everything that exists in the thoughts of customers regarding a brand is referred to as a "customer mind set." The customer mind set, for example, is made up of ideas, experiences, feelings, images,

beliefs, perceptions, and attitudes (Ambler, 1997).

Experiential marketing practices offered by brands before consumer purchase decisions position customer experience at the centre of today's purchasing behaviours. Brands are trying to develop experiential marketing activities through digital and mobile applications. As digitalisation rapidly manifests itself in all consumption areas, consumers' product and brand preferences have started to be shaped by experiential marketing elements. Experiential marketing elicits pleasant feelings in customers by providing a variety of experiences, and it leaves a lasting impression on them (Şeker kaya, and Erdoğan, 2019). Experiential marketing attempts to integrate not just a product's features and advantages, but also a product's benefits with unique and fascinating consumer experiences (Keller, 2013).

The function of experiential marketing in the building of brand personality and brand loyalty is investigated by Şeker kaya, and Erdoğan (2019). The study discovered that brand personality, brand satisfaction, and emotional attachment are all influenced by brand experience; brand personality is influenced by brand satisfaction and emotional attachment; and brand satisfaction and emotional attachment are influenced by brand loyalty.

The brand experience has different dimensions. According to philosopher John Dewey (1922), experience is the interaction between a person's environment and themselves. Dewey (1922) argues that knowledge—the categorization, analysis, and reasoning of objects—is just a small component of a person's understanding of the world, and that the solely cognitive Kant's view of experience as knowledge is inadequate. Experiences encompass not just the mental processes brought about by knowledge, but also sensing, experiencing, and doing. Additionally, there is a basic bond between all people. Dubé, and LeBel (2003) define four "dimensions of pleasure," including intellectual, emotional, social, and physical pleasures, in the tradition of Dewey (1922).

2.3 Customer Experience

Everyone thinks he/she knows what the term "experience" entails. It is a key term in the philosophical lexicon, as well as a word that is meaningfully employed in everyday conversation by individuals who are unfamiliar with philosophy. The definition of the term "experience" in current philosophy differs from what it means

in common conversation. Everyday discourse is the language in which philosophers and non-philosophers, scientists and laypeople communicate about the world they share. The substance of that which is common to everyone was dubbed "life-world" by Husserl. Of course, the meaning of a word changes as it moves from everyday speech to philosophical language; this is true not only for the term "experience," but also for many other words (Landgrebe, 1973).

Hohr (2013) discussed three different kinds of experience against the backdrop of John Dewey's (1922) definition of experience. As mentioned before, philosopher John Dewey (1922) defined the experience is the result of how a person interacts with their surroundings and themselves. Dewey (1922) contends that knowledge—the classification, analysis, and reasoning of things—is just a tiny part of a person's understanding of the universe and that Kant's concept of experience as knowledge, which is purely cognitive, is insufficient. Even if the distinct modes do not appear in a person's life at the same time, they do not form a hierarchy, and all three are considered important. Hohr (2013) agree with Dewey, experience is defined by the integration of these elements. The level of integration of the four fundamental components of experience—action, emotion, cognition, and communication—can help to distinguish the modes.

The customer experience is a group of interactions that take place between a client and a service, a business, or a part of its organization and result in a response. This is an extremely intimate event that involves several layers of consumer interaction (LaSalle, and Britton, 2003).

Customer experience and brand experience are different concepts. Brand experience is used to attract consumers to the brand using marketing strategies. Brands that gain customers using brand experience create customer experience by interacting with the customer. One of the differences between brand experience and customer experience is that brand experience is a long-term strategy that develops and changes over time. Customer experience is considered short-term because it creates instant reactions. Long-term brand experience includes user interface, marketing, activation, and interaction. On the other hand, customer experience includes service, support, and satisfaction (Drexler, 2022)

Customer experience refers to how effectively the total experience fits customer expectations throughout the customer journey. From customer service to

product and service packaging, the customer experience encompasses every area of a firm. Customers' purchases and use of your service have direct effects on their customer experience. On the other hand, word-of-mouth reviews, advertising, and news stories, have an indirect influence on customer experience (Steele, n.d.).

Customer experience is defined as an individual's contact with various parts of a context produced by the marketers. As a result, the customer experience framework starts with the most fundamental aspect of the customer experience: the individual (Gupta and Vajic, 2000). According to Gopalani, and Shick (2011), there are several theories and facts that emphasise the necessity of putting the customer at the center of marketing. At various times, different customers have diverse and frequently unique needs and objectives. To create value, the organization must create goods and services that satisfy these requirements. This is the main justification behind a company's customer-centric strategy.

Palmer (2010) emphasised the importance of taking into account the individual's personal characteristics as well as interpersonal interactions in determining the quality of their experiences. According to Park, Jaworski, and McNis (1986), functional, symbolic, and experiential needs are the three basic customer needs that constitute value dimensions. Functional needs are the needs that enable the search for products that address consumption-related issues. Symbolic needs are the desire for things that satisfy internally created needs for self-realisation, role position, or self-enhancement. Desires for goods that offer sensory pleasure, variety, or intellectual stimulation are known as experiential needs. Value perceptions are based on customer needs, wants, and preferences (Park, Jawarski, and MacInnis, 1986), whereas Sheth, Newman, and Gross (1991) defined five different value categories that affect customer choice. These categories are contingent value, epistemic value, social value, emotional value, and functional value. Understanding these beliefs and demands is critical to developing a successful marketing plan (Nasution et al., 2014).

Individual variances, as Palmer (2010) points out, may lead the same set of stimuli to be received differently, resulting in a range of customer experiences. Academics and practitioners have created a plethora of tools to optimise and assess the marketing strategies and experiential strategy success in offering the greatest customer experience, such as service design, customer journey mapping, etc. The experiential strategy used to provide the brand experience in a physical environment contributes

both to the active meeting of marketing communication with customers and to the brand's strategy other than products. With the experiential marketing practices used in marketing communication activities, these practices are adopted more by customers (Bati, 2018). Marketers can get customers to interact with the products and services that a company offers by using the correct set of experiential strategies, which will take them to the next step of the customer experience process (Nasution et al., 2014).

According to Gentile, Noci, and Spiiler (2007), the customer experience is a psychological construct that is a cameralistic, subjective reaction that occurs as a result of customer engagement with the store and can entail various levels of customer involvement. These stimuli interact with the customer and produce six separate responses, which are classified as sensorial/physical, emotional/affective, cognitive, pragmatic, lifestyle, and relational, and form the customer experience. These contacts and customer involvement increase the likelihood that customers will develop an emotional attachment to the product since knowledge, value, and perceived quality build at each stage of the experience process (Nasution et al., 2014).

Customer experience is a marketing investment that pays off big time. It's important because the customer experience can be improved by time. Customer experience that creates differentiation in a competitive environment can enable brands to move forward. By mapping customer experience, marketers can understand general human behaviour and can develop a baseline understanding of how customers perceive the firm. Enhancing the customer experience will result in more loyal, satisfied, and repeat customers as well as favourable evaluations and word-of-mouth marketing (Steele, n.d.).

2.3.1 Customer Journey

The path a customer takes to access or use a company's service is referred to as the "customer journey" (Flstad, and Kvale, 2018). In recent years, the idea of the customer journey has received considerable attention from both academics and practitioners. This interest shows the growing importance of customer-centric philosophy in the marketing field (Crosier, and Handford, 2012).

A customer journey map is a visual description of the customer journey that displays two things: how a customer travels through and encounters each step of the customer journey and how a customer moves through and experiences each phase of

the customer journey (Stickdorn, and Schneider, 2010).

The important idea behind CJM is simple: it is a visual representation of the series of interactions that customers could have with a service organization throughout the course of a purchase. CJM makes a list of all potential organizational touchpoints. The goal of these techniques is to enhance customer service provider experiences as well as the accompanying consumer experience. When a customer goes through the purchasing process from understanding to evaluation, quest, purchase, and post-purchase behaviour, the consumer purchase map details the choice paths and primary encounters with a firm or brand. The map outlines the company's most relevant consumer touchpoints in each target group, depicts the various choice directions these markets follow, and allows a marketer to assess the relative importance of each touchpoint (Følstad, and Kvale, 2018).

The phrase “all aspects of a customer's interaction with a company, its products, and services” has been used to characterize the customer experience (Alben, 1996). Therefore, the customer experience is based on three elements: the consumer, the good or service, and the usage setting (Battarbee, 2004). To better understand the person's unique experiences at a particular time, it looks at the wider relationships that exist between these elements (McNamara, and Kirakowski, 2006). A customer experience occurs when "a consumer feels any sensation or obtains knowledge via some level of engagement with the elements of a context produced by a service provider" (Pullman, 2004). CJM is a method for examining a customer's actions, feelings, and motives as they engage with a service. The customer experience includes both duties and issues that are pertinent to how the service is provided from the customer's perspective. The customer journey will cover aspects like looking forward to and getting to an event, leaving, and enjoying.

The present customer experience is very different. There are many channels available for communicating with clients. There are other alternative ways to buy something, including online, through a smartphone app, in-store, or even a combination of these with the development of click and grab. Customers' journey from information to purchase has been a maze of roads and technologies. A customer journey describes every interaction a consumer has with a firm from their point of view. The digital customer experience collects data from every digital connection a customer has ever had with a company, including fundamental online consumer data, purchase

histories, browsing habits across all platforms, and online customer care encounters (Zaheer, 2020).

In today's omni channel world, customer journey mapping is an effective strategy for deeper understanding of consumer behaviour. The process of mapping allows companies and brands to see how touchpoints communicate, to decide the most important message at each stage and system, and to properly envision and comprehend dropouts in the purchase process (Peltola, Vainio, and Nieminen, 2015).

The customer journey describes how customers move through a company's many touchpoints. Identifying client journeys helps company's spot important roadblocks and opportunities that can help them enhance their customer experience (Steele, n.d.).

2.4 Brand Loyalty

Loyalty is defined as making multiple purchases of the same service or product over a period of time (Yi and Jeon, 2003). As a result, purchase frequency (Brody and Cunningham 1968) and purchase possibility (Farley, 1964) of a specific brand are frequently proposed as measures of brand loyalty (Yi, and Jeon, 2003). Brand loyalty is defined as the customer not only purchasing the brand multiple times, but also advocating for the brand with which he is associated and refusing to change the brand with which he is associated despite marketing pressures from rival brands (Kotler, and Keller, 2006).

Competition is increasing day-by-day. Therefore, companies need to constantly renew and develop themselves (Kusi, Opata, and Narh, 2015). The achievement of a business depends heavily on its capacity to draw consumers to its brands. For a business to be successful in the long run, it is crucial to keep its current customers and cultivate their brand loyalty (Mellens, Dekimpe, and Steenkamp, 1996). Customer loyalty is crucial (Ibojo, and Asabi, 2015), particularly in times of fierce competition and slow growth. Customer loyalty is required in this situation in order for the company to survive (Napitupulu, and Aditomo, 2015). An endeavour to maintain customer loyalty, on the other hand, is a strategic effort as compared to gaining new consumers. Many organisations are now using experiential marketing to win new customers (Bricci, Fragata, and Antunes, 2016). This technique involves not only selling exceptional products but also impressing clients and having them

experience profound emotion towards the offered products (Hannam, 2004).

Especially since the 1980s, businesses have been trying to create consumer loyalty. They use relational marketing methods to increase its intention. One of these methods Loyalty programs, which are based on new consumer acquisition strategies, is more. It aims to focus on existing consumers. Loyalty, unlike other marketing strategies, focuses on increasing the quantity and frequency of purchases. Loyalty programs allow businesses to collect information about their consumers, retain them, and improve customer relations. They are among the most common marketing tools businesses use to increase their loyalty (Kang, Alejandro, and Groza, 2015).

In the context of relational marketing, the creation of customer loyalty is realised through the implementation of loyalty programs. These programs are a brand's marketing effort to increase the customer's attitude and behavioural commitment to the offer (Sharp, and Sharp, 1997).

For both academic and practical reasons, brand loyalty has been thoroughly researched. A brand's loyal client base is a competitive advantage. However, good measuring methods are required to efficiently maintain brand loyalty (Mellens, Dekimpe, and Steenkamp, 1996).

The term "brand loyalty" has a long and illustrious history. Copeland (1923) was the first to present the idea, and more than 200 definitions have subsequently been published in the literature (Jacoby, and Chestnut, 1978). This concept's diversity of interpretations demonstrates its importance in marketing philosophy. Marketing has always placed a premium on acquiring "loyal" customers. Brand loyalty has also been used to gauge marketing strategy performance and as a partial indicator of brand equity. Despite common view in the benefits of the fundamental idea of loyalty, measuring and precisely defining it have not progressed very quickly. The arguments on this issue are even more entwined with the debates about how their purchases are actually for consumers (Knox, and Walker, 2001).

The ability of a brand to create repeat purchase is considered by marketing experts as they improve new tactics and techniques to ensure customer loyalty and retention in today's market. Customer loyalty among the target demographic is the primary goal of experiential marketing, which is accomplished by arousing feelings and fostering affirmative experiences around a product (Wibisono, and Yahya 2019).

O'Shaughnessy (1992) asserts that the foundation of loyalty is always trust, or

the readiness to act without first considering the risks and rewards. Brand loyalty therefore requires confidence. In industrial marketing, the idea of trust has been well explored (Ganesan, 1994; Doney, and Cannon, 1997), and much work has gone into determining how to establish and uphold it. The basis of trust depends on interpersonal connections.

Trust has always been considered to be a crucial concept in creating connections with customers (Lewis, and Weigert, 1985). Brand trust is often described as consumers' readiness to rely on a brand's ability (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001).

Trust expectation is one that is formulated within particular contextual bounds and restrictions. Trust, according to Lewis and Weigert (1985), is confidence in the face of risk in addition to predictability.

The importance of trust in building and sustaining brand loyalty in both consumer and business-to-business buying circumstances has been extensively studied (Cowles, 1997). It is well established that trust is essential for boosting both behavioural and attitudinal loyalty, which affects marketing result components including market share maintenance and price elasticity. About e-loyalty, a number of structural models of trust have been proposed, along with their connections to repeat visits to e-commerce websites (Jevons, and Gabbott, 2000).

Marketers have long been fascinated by the concept of brand loyalty, which is a measurement of a customer's attachment to a brand (Aaker, 1991). Brand loyalty benefits the company in a variety of ways, including repeat purchases and referrals to friends and relatives. According to brand management consultants, brand loyalty is important, but despite a long history of research, the concept is not well defined. According to Guest (1955) and Jacoby (1971), brand loyalty has two components: brand loyal behaviour and brand loyal attitudes.

The mindset that underpins the purchase is crucial because it influences behaviour. While situational factors such as availability influence brand loyalty behaviour (Jacoby, 1971), attitudes are more durable.

The opinion of others about a brand's quality and dependability is referred to as its reputation (Keller, 2013). Advertising and public relations can help build a brand's reputation, but product quality and performance are also likely to have an impact. If a consumer believes that other people think a brand is good (i.e., it has a good reputation), they may be keen on purchasing it. If the brand at least satisfied the

consumer's expectations, a solid reputation helps to maintain that trust following the usage experience. In contrast, if a brand has a bad reputation, consumers are more likely to be sceptical. Customers may become more sensitive to defects in the brand due to their increased awareness. This may cause the brand to lose credibility and consumers' belief in the brand to decrease (Lau, and Lee, 1999).

Consumers' faith in a brand can be influenced by the characteristics of the firm that created it. It's possible that a consumer's perception of a brand will be influenced by his or her knowledge of the company that established it. The company traits cited to influence a consumer's trust in a brand include the consumer's faith in the company, the company's reputation (Yamagishi, and Yamagishi, 1994), the firm's perceived intents (Scheer, and Steenkamp, 1995), and the company's perceived integrity (Lau, and Lee, 1999). A brand may become "institutionalized" and the consumer may develop a mental image of the company, which may affect the consumer's attitude and behaviour toward the brand.

Butler (1991) suggested promise fulfilment as an antecedent of trust. This circumstance is akin to promise fulfilment when a customer is satisfied with a brand after utilising it. Because the brand has kept its word, the customer is more likely to trust it (Lau, and Lee, 1999).

Firms frequently focus on perks and value savings, such as coupons, discounts, redeemable points, and special treatment for memberships, to create consumer loyalty through loyalty campaigns (Ong, Wei Lee, and Ramayah, 2018). However, loyalty efforts do not always lead to commercial success and loyalty projects' short-term payoffs may be a liability for businesses (Shugan, 2005). According to Dowling and Uncles (1997), customer loyalty built on loyalty efforts is not sustainable because consumers are more interested in saving money in such programs. As a result, clients will be more likely to switch quickly to another alternative to take an advantage of a better deal given by competitors.

Customers will be motivated to repeat such encounters over time if the brand experience is the result of stimuli that pique their interest and satisfaction (Ong, Wei Lee, and Ramayah, 2018). Furthermore, not just past-directed satisfaction judgements but also future-directed consumer loyalty should be influenced by brand experience (Schmitt, Zarantonello, and Brakus, 2009). As a result, customers are more likely to buy from this brand again and recommend it to others, while less likely to buy from

competitors (Oliver, 1997).

Furthermore, Kang et al. (2017) stated that brand experience is a critical aspect in creating and sustaining corporate success as well as establishing a long-term relationship with customers. Brand experience's importance arises from its influence on brand loyalty (Schmitt, Zarantonello, and Brakus, 2009).

There are many levels of brand loyalty. Each level requires its own unique marketing attitude, management, or behaviour. Aaker explains brand loyalty at five different levels (Aaker, 1991). At the lowest level of David Aaker's five levels, unengaged customers are located. The brand does not have an excessive influence on the purchasing preferences of its customers at this level. These are labelled as unaffiliated consumers in the studies. Consumers in this situation are sensitive to price increases, and loyalty to a different brand is not possible. Different buyers are also influenced by promotional activities. At this stage, the brand name has little influence on the purchase decision, brand loyalty is a temporary situation. In the discount, cheap brands are selected. At the second level, consumers think that there is no reason to change the brand they use. This is when consumers get used to the brand they use or are happy with the brand they use. It does not include customers who are satisfied with the product and at least one different negativity. The term for these buyers is also referred to as "accustomed buyers." Such segments may be vulnerable to competitors who have a clear incentive to change the brand. They are convinced that they have reached the point of consumer satisfaction with the brands they use and do not feel the need to examine different brands. At the third level, customers who feel satisfied with different costs are being created. For these customers, their preferred brands have provided satisfaction. But if they decide not to prefer the brand they use, consumers think that differentiating the brand will lead to new costs. In order to influence buyers at this level, competitors should produce solutions that can overcome variable costs. For competitors to attract these customers to themselves, they need to either eliminate the damage that users may be affected by or provide a benefit that will not make them seek the other brand. At the fourth level, emotional bond between the brand and consumers, customers are referred to as "friends of the brand" due to the existence. Consumers in this style are a continuous user of brands. The reasons for preference in these customers can be based on the experience of associations such as symbols or perceived dominant quality. Buyers at the fifth level are called "committed buyers".

Buyers at this level feel honoured to have found or used the brand. From the point of view of businesses, reaching the target audience at this level provides a great advantage over rival companies. For these consumers, since they trust the brand to an extraordinary degree, they will recommend the brand to others (Aaker, 1991).



Figure 1. The Brand Loyalty Pyramid (Source: Aaker, 1991, p. 40)

2.4.1 Attitudinal Loyalty

Marketing theory and practice have focused on creating and maintaining brand loyalty in order to achieve a long-term competitive advantage (Reichfeld, 1996). The concept of brand loyalty has been extensively discussed in traditional marketing literature, with an emphasis on the two key components of the term: behavioural and attitudinal loyalty. Oliver (1997) provided a conceptual framework for brand loyalty that is based on a hierarchy of effects model and includes elements for cognitive, emotional, behaviour intention, and action (repeated purchase behaviour). A firm decision to repurchase or use a preferred product or service regularly in the future, leading to repeated purchase of the brand. The relationship between satisfaction and loyalty is asymmetrical (Oliver, 1999). Customer satisfaction arising from the customer experience, especially in the retail context, is a key determinant of brand loyalty (Bloemer, and Ruyter, 1998). According to Oyman (2002), customers will see this relationship as an investment just as businesses see their relationships with their

customers as an investment.

The typical definition of attitudinal brand loyalty includes cognitive, emotional, and behavioural intent components. Traditional brand loyalty building initiatives have focused heavily on the establishment of brand image through mass media communications. Contrarily, database technology enables e-marketplaces to place a larger emphasis on the cognitive factor by offering specialized information. The roles of trust, privacy, and security become more prominent in e-loyalty in order to improve the emotive component (Gommans, Krishnan, and Scheffold, 2001). Customer or brand loyalty is changing in cyberspace, moving from a distribution-driven, consumer-controlled, and technology-enabled idea to one that is product-driven and marketer-controlled (Schultz, and Bailey, 2000).

2.4.2 Behavioural Loyalty

Recurring purchases have typically been used to describe behavioural loyalty. As a subset of repeat purchase behaviour and repurchase intention, brand loyalty was defined (Brown, 1952). Examples of conceptual and measuring difficulties related to behavioural loyalty are provided by Dick, and Basu (1994). Various manifestations of behavioural loyalty exist. The conceptual and quantitative problems get trickier when behavioural loyalty is used in the e-marketplace. The number of times a user returns to a website without making a purchase as well as the time spent there must be taken into account. In comparison to a customer whose purchase was driven by other considerations like time restrictions or a lack of knowledge, a satisfied customer is more likely to stay loyal to a brand/store over time. The Internet exaggerates this problem because a customer may quickly access a wealth of pertinent information about a product or retailer, which unquestionably influences the purchasing decision. In other words, behavioural loyalty is far more sophisticated and challenging to gain in the digital environment than it is in the physical one, where customers are usually forced to make judgments based on scant information (Schultz, and Bailey, 2000).

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Aim

The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of experiential marketing practices on consumer behaviour and brand loyalty through sensory, emotional, intellectual, behavioural, and relational experiences offered by Schmitt. The research examines the effect of experiential marketing practices on brand loyalty based on customer experience. In this direction, it is aimed to contribute to the literature by analysing the effects and behaviours of experiential marketing habits on consumers in both traditional and digital channels. In-depth interview questions are aimed at finding out which or which of the sense, feel, think, act, and relate elements of experiential marketing are used in the shopping experience of consumers shopping at Sephora stores. In addition, the participants were asked about their preference for a traditional store or a digital store, and which element of experiential marketing is used in the digital shopping experience of the consumers who perform the shopping experience through the website or mobile application, unlike the store shopping experience.

3.2 Research Method

Cosmetics have a history that predates the history of humanity, and they have played a wide variety of significant roles in people's daily lives. The progress of technology in numerous domains has mirrored the history of skin care and cosmetics products. In the past, as civilizations became more complicated, there was a corresponding rise in the demand for cosmetics. Perfumers, cosmetologists, and barbers took the lead in advancing cosmetic techniques that had been developed over time. In addition, archaeological excavations have revealed much about ancient civilisations through the discovery of cosmetics (Blanco-Dávila, 2000).

The cosmetics industry is a rapidly growing and changing sector, but as it expands and develops with society, it creates higher profit margins and has more power in popular culture. In the past of cosmetics, there were products developed by pharmaceutical companies and sold in most drugstores. Perfumes, in particular, were one of the first cosmetic products to be displayed in American drugstores. When make-up, hair, and skin products went beyond perfumes, personal care products gradually joined the shelves of pharmacists (National Museum of American History, n.d).

The Turkish cosmetics sector started to develop with the industrialisation of soap production in the Ottoman period. In the mid-1900s, manual labour was replaced by mechanised labour, and thus different products started to be produced. Attempts by foreign companies to enter the Turkish cosmetic market have brought about the concept of imports, and Turkey has become a foreign-dependent market in the cosmetics sector (Özçelik, and Bebekli, 2015).

How did the beauty industry, which is as old as the concept of beauty, become not only mainstream but also hailed as one of the best areas in which to start a business? To answer this question, Sephora brand is analysed to understand how they approach (and solve) the problem of attracting consumers, building brand loyalty, and creating unique experiences, both traditionally and digitally.

The Sephora brand, which belongs to the LHMH group, was deemed appropriate for this research because it is a brand that has stores almost everywhere in the world, where we can find world-famous cosmetics and personal care brands as well as new generation cosmetics and personal care brands and is preferred by consumers. In addition, this brand, which has 36 stores in the cosmetics and personal care sector in Turkey, contains brands that we cannot find in other cosmetics stores in Turkey.

Consumers frequently purchase new things depending on how they appear, what colour they are, what design they have, and whether or not they are popular among other users. Furthermore, brand perceptions are influenced by brand awareness, perceived quality, brand affiliation, brand affection, brand image, and product country image (Foroudi et al., 2018). To better understand how customers view a brand, all of these variables must be evaluated. Furthermore, brand perceptions may fluctuate depending on the generation. Accordingly, the current study is based on an in-depth interview model to further investigate experiential marketing influencing customer loyalty.

In many studies that deal with the individual as a social being, it may be insufficient for researchers to make observations based only on numerical data. In this context, only the qualitative paradigm can provide the ground that enables the researcher to realise an insight. Even among individuals who grow up in the same social environment and have similar genetic codes, there can be incredible differences in behaviour. Likewise, there can be cultural and social differences between societies that are geographically very close to each other. It is extremely difficult to talk about

the existence of a valid numerical data that can explain these differences. In such studies, qualitative research is a frequently used method (Gulcan, 2021). Qualitative research is a research method that focuses more on words and expressions than numbers in data collection and analysis (Bryman, 2012).

The research focuses on understanding the perceptions of the target audience of the Sephora brand towards experiential marketing activities. Firstly, the participants of the research were selected among the target audience of the Sephora brand: women aged between 18 and 45 who care about personal care and shop at Sephora stores. In-depth interviews were conducted within the scope of this research. In-depth interview is a qualitative research method that entails conducting in-depth individual interviews with a limited number of respondents to learn more about their viewpoints on a certain topic, program, or issue. The procedure for conducting in-depth interviews is similar to that for other types of research: plan, construct tools, collect data, evaluate data, and distribute findings (Boyce, and Neale, 2006).

The in-depth interview questions used in this study are given in Appendix. Since the research is qualitative, while preparing the in-depth interview questions, attention was paid to ensure that the questions were open-ended and that the questions were not directed. The questions were prepared with a focus on understanding the customer-brand relationship in depth. In addition, questions were asked to understand whether customers are aware of the brand's experiential marketing activities and whether these activities affect customer loyalty. The questions for the in-depth interview were prepared under the following headings: brand-related questions; experiential marketing questions; traditional experiential marketing questions; digital experiential marketing questions (Schmitt, 1999); brand loyalty questions (Kotler and Keller, 2006); and finally, the effect of experiential marketing on brand loyalty. In most cases, it will be useful to conduct a pilot study before conducting the actual study. Since in-depth interviews will be conducted only once with the same participants in the same environment, a mistake may negatively affect the whole research. For this reason, a possible error can be prevented by conducting a pilot study before the interview. The interview does not need to be fully realised for a pilot test. The main purpose at this stage is to understand whether the minimum conditions are met and whether there is a major detail that has been overlooked (Gülcan, 2021). For this reason, pilot interviews were conducted before in-depth interviews in this study. The questions

to be used in in-depth interviews were reorganised based on the findings from the pilot interviews.

3.3 Sample Selection

Criterion sampling, which is one of the purposeful sampling approaches for qualitative data collection and data analysis processes, was used to pick the participants for this study. The choice of one of the purposeful sample methods was deemed appropriate because this study was designed as qualitative research. Individuals that meet particular criteria established prior to the sample selection procedure are selected using the criterion sampling approach (Palinkas et al., 2015).

The criterion for this study is women between the ages of 18–45, the target audience of Sephora, who regularly shop from the Sephora brand. According to a study by Palinkas et al. (2015), criterion sampling, which involves selecting participants based on their ability to satisfy the study's objectives, will yield more accurate results. Qualitative research is a research method that aims to examine the subject being investigated in depth for information. It is a method that aims to investigate and understand social phenomena within the social environment they are connected to with an understanding based on theorising. This methodology is less controlled and more interpretative. Research consists of conversations, opinions, impressions, and subjective ideas of Sephora customers. The aim of qualitative research is to gain deeper knowledge about direct personal experience, externally observable behaviours and internal states in context (Patton, 2015). In this study, in-depth interviews were conducted. Participants are customers who shop online or/and offline at Sephora. Although the use of personal care products by men is quite high today, the target audience of the brand is women. For this reason, female customers between the ages of 18-45, Sephora's target group, were interviewed. The selection of people who shopped at or visited the traditional Sephora store or the digital store of the Sephora brand helped to understand brand loyalty for this research. The interviews with the participants were conducted online and recorded with the consent of the participants. The interviews started in mid-April 2022 and ended at the end of May 2022. These dates are within the Covid-19 period. Due to the pandemic period, inflation has risen in Turkey as well as in the whole world, so people have started to avoid unnecessary shopping by minimising their spending. This situation affected all sectors (Sülkü,

Coşar, and Tokatlıoğlu, 2021). Since people are usually at home, they have reduced their use of cosmetic products such as make-up and perfume. Another effect of the pandemic period is that people started shopping in digital environments instead of traditional stores.

This paper presents the findings and participants' views to better explain these findings. All participants were coded as participant 1, participant 2, participant 3 ... participant 22. The table below shows the cities where the participants live, their ages, and how loyal they are to the Sephora brand. In in-depth interviews, brand loyalty questions were included to understand the level of participants' loyalty to the Sephora brand. Based on the answers given by the participants, the levels of brand loyalty of the participants were determined according to Aaker's (1991) the brand loyalty pyramid.

Table 1. Demographic information of the participants

Participants	Age	Location	Loyalty of Sephora (The Brand Loyalty Pyramid of Aaker, 1991)
Participant 1	29	Mersin	Committed Buyer
Participant 2	30	Mersin	Committed Buyer
Participant 3	28	İzmir	Committed Buyer
Participant 4	29	İzmir	Committed Buyer
Participant 5	38	İzmir	Like the Brand
Participant 6	28	İzmir	Satisfied Buyer
Participant 7	26	Istanbul	Switchers/Price Sensitive
Participant 8	30	Istanbul	Committed Buyer
Participant 9	22	İzmir	Committed Buyer
Participant 10	30	Adana	Committed Buyer
Participant 11	29	Istanbul	Switchers/Price Sensitive
Participant 12	29	Bursa	Switchers/Price Sensitive
Participant 13	27	Mersin	Switchers/Price Sensitive
Participant 14	38	Mersin	Committed Buyer
Participant 15	33	Mersin	Satisfied Buyer
Participant 16	35	Mersin	Switchers/Price Sensitive
Participant 17	24	İzmir	Satisfied Buyer

Table 1 (continued). Demographic information of the participants

Participant 18	29	İzmir	Switchers/Price Sensitive
Participant 19	25	Mersin	Satisfied/Habitual Buyer
Participant 20	34	Mersin	Satisfied Buyer
Participant 21	26	Istanbul	Committed Buyer
Participant 22	23	İzmir	Switchers/Price Sensitive

3.4 Data Collection

The questions in Appendix are designed to help you identify the best group to undertake in-depth interviews with. Conducting in-depth interviews with a group of people who aren't interested will hinder you from getting useful information. To acquire more reliable results, the participant group for this study should be selected using criterion sampling, as suggested by Palinkas et al. (2015). Firstly, a pilot study was undertaken to understand if the in-dept interview questions are well-understood by the sample are check with the pilot study. According to Boyce and Neale (2006), in-depth studies should include open-ended questions, because they provide clearer answers and allow for greater in-depth interview of the research issue. The accuracy of the questions to find out what female participants aged 18 to 45 think about Sephora and Sephora's experiential marketing initiatives. As a result, gathering as much information and data as possible is critical in uncovering the underlying reasoning and concepts. In the in-depth interview, open-ended questions can be crafted to cover all the components and elements to be covered. Brand image (cognitive image and emotional image), brand trust, brand loyalty (store visits, return visits, brand recommendations, brand advocates), brand experience (sensory, affective, creative cognitive, physical, and behavioural, and social identity experiences) are the main themes examined in this study. In addition to the participants' brand experiences, their perceptions of the brand and brand loyalty were also investigated.

The in-depth interviews conducted within the scope of this research lasted between 40 and 60 minutes. To uncover Sephora's customers' true feeling and ideas to understand experiential marketing efforts effect on brand loyalty. Unexpected responses are also be analysed throughout the interview process, which can add to the study because it is expected to better comprehend and explain the researched issue. Open-ended questions will help in this direction by allowing participants to openly

express their actual feelings and ideas (Boyce, and Neale, 2006). The in-depth interviews were analysed in a purely qualitative way. The videos recorded during the interviews were watched one by one and transcribed systematically, and then the findings obtained from the interviews were coded. Categories were created from the codes obtained. The categories created through these coding enabled the determination of themes. In addition, common points obtained from in-depth interviews were noted and direct quotations were made from the transcript.



CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

In order to understand Sephora brand widely and deeply, it is critical to highlight emergence of Sephora brand and its experiential marketing activities before reporting the responses of the participants. Therefore, after giving information about the brand, the findings of the study will be reported.

The name of Sephora comes from Ancient Greece. Its name comes from the Greek word "sephos" meaning "beautiful" and "zipporah" which is the name of one of Moses' wives. She is characterised as a stunning woman who is also intelligent, generous, and free. These characteristics share a lot of similarities with the Sephora stores' principles of freedom and creativity (Putnal, 2009).

Dominique Mandonnaud opened a small fragrance shop in France in 1969. The name of the shop was also Shop 8. At that time, there was no experimentation when purchasing perfumes. At that time, you could buy perfumes first and then smelled them. Mandonnaud understood that giving people an experience can led to great results and revolutionised it by allowing customers to try products before they buy them. In 1979, Mandonnaud opened a new perfumery called Shop 8 in Limoges. Unlike the typical small perfume shop, the store provided a large and open sales area and an environment where customers could more easily access and try products.

Sephora made a big breakthrough in 1997. Sephora was acquired by Louis Vuitton and Moët Hennessey (LVMH) for 344 million euros. Mandonnaud retired when he turned 50. Sephora's doubled since LVMH. The brand opened its first overseas store in 1998 in New York, USA. Later, it expanded to Italy, Portugal, Spain, and Poland. Sephora opened stores in Japan in 1999 and in Portugal and Greece in 2000. In 1999, Sephora also launched online sales. By the end of 2000, Sephora had become a major international brand, with more than 460 stores (Marka Fikirleri Editör n.d.).

As a leader in prestige omni-retail, Sephora strives to provide a friendly environment for all customers to purchase for beauty products and to encourage confidence in the brand community. With over 2,700 locations across 35 countries, including over 500 coming to the Americas, Sephora also has a top-notch online presence. Since opening its first store in New York's SoHo neighbourhood in 1998, Sephora has been an industry-leading proponent of diversity, inclusiveness, and

empowerment in the country, guided by enduring business ideals.

Dominique Mandonnaud established Sephora in France in 1970. The company is known for its distinctive open-sell environment and ever-expanding selection of goods from carefully chosen brands, including hot new releases, time-tested favourites, and Sephora's own line, Sephora Collection. The largest luxury goods company in the world, LVMH Mot Hennessy Louis Vuitton, is the owner of Sephora. Rihanna's Fenty Beauty and Selena Gomez's Rare Beauty are two exclusive brands that Sephora introduced to the market first. Sephora also continues to choose new goods, offering a large clean beauty selection. Due to Sephora's unrivalled selection of high-end products in every category, unbiased advice from beauty experts, interactive shopping experience, and constant innovation, including an ever-growing number of ways for customers to shop with Sephora, Sephora is now a significant player in the global beauty market.

Diversity and inclusion objective at Sephora is simple: to never cease courageously advocating all things beauty and to create inclusive settings for workers of the brand, customers, and communities. Sephora's new tagline and ideology, 'We Belong to Something Beautiful' was introduced in 2019 to emphasise the company's commitment to promoting a sense of belonging among all customers and staff, as well as to openly aim for a more inclusive vision of retail in the Americas. Sephora began its Diversity and Inclusion Heart Journey in 2020 to support the ambition of becoming the retail industry's Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity Champion (Sephora, 2022).

Sephora has also been a huge success outside of the United States. The firm built a 15,000-square-foot flagship shop in Shanghai on January 31, 2013. This magnificent cosmetics and fragrance store had a tremendous opening and foreshadows the launch of other headquarters stores in Asia. There are 118 distinct brands in the store, with 17 of them being Asian labels. There is already a large shop in Hong Kong, as well as 143 more locations in Asia, 24 in the Middle East, and 900 in Europe and Russia. Naturally, as a French firm, the world's largest cosmetic and personal care shop is located on Paris's Champs Elysee (Loeb, 2013).

Sephora stores sell many brands. Some of these brands are: Chanel, Dior, Hermes, Sephora Collection, Benefit, Nars, Huda Beauty, Fenty Beauty, Too Faced, Drunk Elephant, Foreo, Olaplex, Briogio, Moraccon Oil, Lancome, Armani, Yves Saint Laurent, Estee Lauder, Clinique, Tomford, Givenchy, Balmain, Guerlain, Gucci,

La Mer, Mario Badescu, Anastasia Beverly Hills, Armani, Atelier Rebul, Balmain, Burberry, Lancome, Zoeva, Zadig & Voltaire, Youth to the People, Varsace, Benefit, Valentino, Tiffany, Too Faced, Tom Ford, Tarte, Tangle Teezer, Shiseido, Salvatore Ferragamo, Bumble and Bumble, Roberto Cavalli, Paco Rabanne, Prada, Origins, Narciso Rodriguez, Milk Makeup, Michael Kors, Lancaster, Mugler, Montblanc, Aquis, Azzaro , Gisou, Bade Natural, Baija, Bottega Veneta, Briogeo, Bvlgari and many more brands... (Sephora, 2022).

Sephora offers its customers the chance to access both premium and affordable brands in its stores, where they are free to touch, feel, and test. Sephora has a unique range of 250 brands and 16 thousand product options. Innovative beauty trends are combined with those who adore cosmetics at Sephora, which consistently delivers a cutting-edge product selection under the Sephora Collection brand.

Sephora, which belongs to the largest luxury group in the world, Louis Vuitton Moët Hennessy (LVMH) Group, operates in 34 countries in total, including Europe, the Middle East, America, and Asia. Turkey In addition, Sephora has 38 stores across Turkey (Sephora, 2022).

Sephora is a renowned cosmetic brand based in Paris. The Sephora retail brand has a chain of stores with more than 2000 locations in more than 30 countries and more than 3,000 different cosmetics and personal care brands. Consumers recognize the company as a high-value brand in the cosmetics industry. Sephora also has its own brands, which distinguishes it from its competitors. Cosmetics, fragrances, skin care products, bath products and other products are part of the brand's own product range.

The target audience is upper middle class urban women who are beauty and status conscious. The positioning of the brand is reasonable in price and high in quality (MBA Skool Team, 2021).

The company offers its customers about three hundred brands under its own private label, which includes about fifteen thousand products. Sephora stores work with an innovative sales team for personalised service. Although the target audience was women at the beginning, men were added later. Sephora has launched itself as a unique and quality brand, offering the best products at affordable prices, offering incentives and discounts to its customers.

Sephora's Beauty Insider program, which debuted 12 years ago, is still a model for firms looking to develop loyalty programs (PostFunnel, 2021). Based on annual

expenditure, Beauty Insider is classified into two tiers: White Card and Black Card. The brand's loyalty program, which employs gamification tactics, tries to get clients to the highest tier—the Black Card—creating a sense of exclusivity (Sephora, 2022). The customer loyalty program (Beauty Insider) they offer provides many privileges, such as birthday discounts, priority access to discounts for Sephora users, this program is of great importance in building brand loyalty (Onigo n.d.).

The marketing strategy is centred on meeting consumer requirements, with the primary purpose of meeting those needs through particular product or service offers. Brands create a marketing plan that defines their target market and the 4 Ps (price, place, promotion, and product) that are in line with their strategies in this method (Kotler, and Armstrong, 2006). Promotion serves as a tool for companies to advertise their products or services and deliver their messages to their target customers as part of this marketing strategy. Brands may use a variety of media in their promotional efforts, including TVs, radios, newspapers, magazines, and outdoor advertising, as well as tools such as public relations activities, sales promotion tools, direct marketing tools, personal selling, and interactive tools (Belch, and Belch, 2006).

The marketing mix, which consists of the four Ps, is used in Sephora's marketing strategy to analyse the brand. Marketing methods include things like product innovation, price strategy, promotion planning, and more. The company's positioning in the market as well as the accomplishment of its corporate goals and objectives are both supported by Sephora's marketing plan.

The skincare and cosmetics are the emphasis of Sephora's product strategy. The target market is women, especially extroverted and upper-middle class women. The marketing mix used by the organization consists of more than 15,000 components. Cosmetics include things like lipstick, eyeliners, perfumes, makeup kits, skin care items, and more. Although more recent products like Urban Decay are also doing well, traditional Sephora brands like Lancome and Clinique are also doing well. Sephora offers its customers additional services in addition to tangible goods. For instance, one of the services offered to customers within the businesses is makeup tutorials. The brand's position in the internet market has been strengthened by strategic acquisitions and partnerships.

Sephora's pricing strategy is to offer a wide range of product prices, including both mass-market and high-end items, thanks to its enormous diversity of product lines

and 300 sub-brands. Because of increased operational effectiveness and reduced overhead expenses, Sephora might be able to provide competitive pricing. It may have larger margins because of the decreased operational costs, which it can employ to entice retailers and enhance its marketing tactics. Also accessible through Beauty Insider are reduced deals. The brand's "Beauty Insider" feature, which enables customers to sign in and peruse the store's merchandise while also receiving rewards and discounts, also influences the price in its marketing mix. In addition, the brand looks at market trends while setting its pricing.

Sephora's positioning approach for the marketing mix is as follows: In Sephora stores, the products are organised in a supermarket-like manner. The sales staff in the stores are likewise qualified. They can advise you on the best cosmetics to use and can even show you how to apply make-up. As a result, brand shopping has a lot of experiential value. The consumer feels empowered after such an encounter. Since 2006, Sephora has been selling its own goods through this business. This made it easier for Sephora to expand in the United States, where it already had roughly 600 shops. The products are available for purchase and viewing on Sephora.com.

Customers can pin their favourite products and colours on Pinterest and share them with others, which is a novel feature of online purchasing, as part of Sephora's advertising and promotional activities. These shares garner a lot of interest and draw a sizable following. As a result, a distinctive fusion of online visibility and word-of-mouth. Because Sephora is a high-end business, it employs a push marketing and advertising strategy. Another aspect of the promotion involves providing free samples for women to try on. By allowing customers to actually touch the products, the samples, which are provided by the company itself, increase the likelihood that they will make a purchase. With numerous brand histories built around it, Sephora has become a favourite brand of women over time. Other Sephora sub-brands can use the brand name and packaging to boost their marketing efforts. The most typical kind of advertisement is print advertising, which appears on magazine covers. Additionally, it is not common for models and celebrities to feature in advertising. Retailers like Beauty Insider are also given print catalogues. The business's official website serves as an online storefront where customers may order any of the company's products and have them delivered to their homes (MBA Skool Team, 2021).

Since 1999, Sephora has been connecting with its customers online with a

network of 17 online shopping portals that can be accessed in 10 different languages, enabling anybody to access the Sephora world from anywhere at any time (Sephora, 2022). Sephora was a leader in e-commerce when it launched its first website in 1998. The company's initial website was entirely outsourced, and in-house web development was essential to moving the brand towards a digital future, according to an interview with Julie Bornstein, Sephora's former Chief Marketing Officer and Chief Digital Officer, conducted by the Harvard Business Review in 2014. The redesigned website aimed to give customers more visual appeal, product details, and communication possibilities.

In 2013, Sephora merged its conventional and digital marketing operations. Julie Bornstein, headed the team, ensuring that digital was prioritised among the company's top executives. Julie Bornstein wants to double her budget for social media and other digital marketing activities in 2011. A lot of digital initiatives started over the last two years appear to be paying off, and Sephora's social media, online video, and mobile presence are all being emphasised (Ofek, and Wagonfeld, 2011)

Customer profiles were updated using data from both in-store and online sources (online and in-store purchases, interactions with beauty associates, etc.). Metrics that have been redefined depending on consumer behaviour leading up to a sale (number of customers who browsed online and purchased in-store, etc.). Benefits that combine online and in-store loyalty rewards (personalised product recommendations based on what a customer has browsed online and in-store).

In addition, a subset of the newly created team works on bridging the gap between physical and digital shopping experiences. Makeup artists, for example, now download beauty goods to a client's profile following in-store makeovers, which the consumer may use to purchase online or in-store. Sephora Virtual Artist users may also buy goods online or find them in stores after trying on makeup in the application.

The company's US headquarters in San Francisco are close to Silicon Valley and offer a short turnaround time for digital activities. The Sephora Innovation Lab, which opened in 2015 to assist the firm in investigating technologies that may be used across online, mobile, and in-store to provide a more integrated purchasing experience, is located in San Francisco. Sephora Virtual Artist smartphone app came out of the Innovation Lab more recently.

Sephora brand has invested considerably in developing a high-tech in-store and

online experience to satisfy expanding personalization demands and reinforce its "try more, buy more" credo. Colour IQ, a technology that allows clients to scan their faces and obtain a reference colour to locate items that match their skin tone, is now available in Sephora stores. Sephora has also released an augmented reality app that allows shoppers to visually test on several lipstick colours in the store. All of this technology enables Sephora to provide real-time customization to its clients while also driving product sales (Hulson, 2017).

Advances in technology, customer loyalty may be utilized to develop or extend commercial possibilities. The contemporary world we live in is filled with new technology, and as a result, customers must adjust to these new dynamics. Furthermore, newer, and more sophisticated items are being developed, and various consumers have varied reactions to them (Parasuraman, 2000). With the rapid expansion of the world and technology, many businesses feel the need to adapt to this new situation. Looking at past practices, it is seen that companies that cannot keep up with digitalisation cannot meet the expectations of customers because they cannot develop themselves. Companies and brands that have become aware of this have started to use the methods of digital marketing. Methods such as digital media channels, interactive campaign content, and multi-media usage constitute the infrastructure of today's digital marketing (Mestçi, 2013).

The current marketing strategy used by Sephora focuses on integrating online and in-store interactions with brand engagement on social, mobile, and digital platforms. With the help of this data, Sephora developed the Sephora mobile app, which aims to provide customers with a customized mobile experience. The app is made to make it simple for users to make purchases, much like a personal shopper or a Sephora sales associate would do when giving basic product recommendations, reviews, and pricing information.

Many company models have changed as a result of digitization, and retail has been particularly affected. Brands are experimenting with new methods to respond to customer requirements, blurring the lines between digital and physical experiences. Augmented Reality (AR) is a solution to this problem that may be applied to organisations' web platforms (Javornik, 2016). AR could improve and broaden brand communications in order to better engage customers. Furthermore, augmented reality is a great tool that businesses should use to capture their consumers' attention (Baratali

et al., 2016). From a marketing standpoint, augmented reality is a goldmine that any firm should be utilising to get customer attention. The technology is engaging, fosters brand loyalty, and is entertaining to use (Vidal, 2014). Nowadays, it stands to reason that many businesses want to help clients experience the benefits of their products. Augmented reality enables them to do this for free with more expensive and complex items. Additionally, firms can quickly gain a competitive advantage thanks to augmented reality (Baratali et al., 2016).

Sephora has created Sephora Virtual Artist, an e-commerce platform with augmented reality capabilities. With the app's new artificial intelligence (AI) function, users can virtually test out cosmetics using facial recognition technology. After that, the app can either inform users to buy the items online or point them in the direction of a store where they can purchase them (eTail Palm Springs, n.d.).

Sephora is able to enhance the mobile shopping experience for customers both in-store and online, by evaluating in-store purchase patterns and adapting to them using its mobile application. The purpose of Sephora's mobile application is to make customers feel safe about purchasing products in store and online. This expertise has become much more advanced since the October 2021 merger of Sephora's digital and physical retail departments.

The decision to unite the teams was a sign of the times, according to Mary Beth Laughton, who had been the company's Senior Vice President of Digital since 2014 but earned the new title Employee value proposition of Omni Retail when the program debuted. The collaboration of the two teams, Sephora enabled to create user profiles with 360-degree data that tracked the entire customer experience, from online browsing and purchases to in-store contacts with salespeople and over-the-counter sales. Sephora can now track certain physical and online actions of customers that lead to a sale as a result. Also, with this data, they can understand whether a consumer has researched an item on the internet and then bought it in the store. Their new systems allow them to better understand their online and offline networks. Laughton's view on this is that they are better coordinated and move more quickly between in-store, online and mobile tactics.

Through the data that consumers provide while using the mobile application, Sephora can obtain additional information about customer behaviour and make necessary improvements. These adjustments and improvements help influence

customers' purchasing decisions.

One of Sephora's main goals is to provide a high-quality shopping experience for every consumer, online, on mobile, or in-store. Sephora uses it to create educational marketing materials that use data from their customers' purchasing behaviour to create educational marketing materials that are both useful to a broad segment of their target audience and customised to the needs of a single consumer.

One way that Sephora can obtain this information is through the activities that a customer performs after being presented with a product page. The decisions a shopper makes help Sephora detect the customer's intents and provide a more tailored user experience that takes into consideration whether the shopper is studying and comparing items, planning a purchase for later, or ready to buy right now.

A shopper who adds an item to their basket, for example, may want to make an online purchase, but a shopper who looks for a local store may mean to make a purchase in person. Regardless, these two customers are on separate paths to making a Sephora purchase (eTail Palm Springs, n.d.).

Sephora started using the Google Analytics 360 Suite in November 2021 to better analyse the purchase path when customers see a Sephora ad online but buy in a store. The company collaborated with Google to merge data from online and in-store transactions. Sephora was able to acquire a greater understanding of the consumer journey as well as the effect of its digital marketing initiatives, which revealed that online advertising was driving in-store transactions. Sephora experienced a 3.9X better return on ad spend and a 3X increase in conversion rates from their digital advertisements when in-store sales were incorporated the route to buy. Furthermore, they discovered that if clients visited the Sephora website less than one day before purchasing, their in-store order values increased by 13% on average (Think with Google, 2017).

Sephora Pocket Contour Class offers advice on how to use the retailer's products properly and could suggest items that are suitable for various skin tones. Additional instructional material can be found in Sephora's catalogue, mobile app, and the website. Since most consumers of beauty products search for reviews and how-to information on websites like YouTube before making a purchase, Sephora has also placed a strong emphasis on video content. The company has significantly grown its video output over the past few years, moving from 250 films in 2016 to over 600 in 2017. Calvin

McDonald, (President and CEO of Sephora USA) said:

"We've always been a fun atmosphere. It's one of the revolutionary efforts that Sephora introduced to the market, breaking the glass camera, and truly creating an impartial beauty experience. As more and more customers began to purchase online, we were faced with the task of bringing that difference of play out of the store and onto the phone."

Sephora increases qualifying sales while providing a superior online and in-store experience. This is done by fostering consumer confidence through product expertise and satisfying shopper needs. These data-driven strategies have allowed Sephora to dominate the retail marketing sector for the past ten years (eTail Palm Springs, n.d.).

The Sephora loyalty program was first established in 2007 in the USA to learn more about customers. The program rewards Sephora consumers with free samples or services, access to pre-launch products, special events, and birthday gifts. Membership is free and open to the public. Points are accumulated as purchases are made. Each dollar spent is worth one point, and different membership types are awarded depending on the number of points accumulated in a year. Participation requires a purchase, an email address, and a birthday. Most of these programs are based on discounts, but this one is based on benefits. As of 2010, the program had 15 million registered members and 9 million active members (those who had made a purchase in the last 12 months), with 80% of sales coming from these customers.

The basic membership is called "Beauty Insider" and allows you to have beauty classes, a birthday gift, and some pre-launches. To be included in this segment, the annual spend at Sephora must be between 1 and 349 USD. The next step is the "Very Important Beauty Insider," or VIB, for consumers who spend between US \$350 and US \$1,000 in a calendar year. All purchases over \$1000 qualify for VIB Rouge and receive the most exclusive benefits, such as exclusive celebrity events, free shipping, free Sephora Beauty Studio services, and Beauty Concierge (Penning, 2013).

Sephora announced in an e-mail to its customers registered in the digital newsletter that it provides activities such as free eyebrow mapping service, free skin care service, and free make-up application from its stores. Such applications are among

the brand's experiential marketing activities in Turkey (Sephora, 2022).

The Sephora loyalty programme is also available in Turkey. Sephora offers privileges to its customers with its loyalty program. These privileges consist of special opportunities such as a blog giving beauty tips, surprise gifts, product launches, and birthday gifts. Each 1₺ expenditure is reflected on the card as one point. Every 600 points entitles you to a 10% discount. In addition, every 600 points entitles you to one gift from Sephora Collection products, Sephora's own brand. There are typically three membership tiers for nations. The terms "white-card," "black-card," and "gold-card" are used to describe these levels (Sephora, 2018). There are just two membership tiers used by Sephora Turkey: "White-card" and "Black-card." The level of "Gold-card" will not be taken into consideration in this study because it is based on Turkish consumers (Sephora, 2022). Consumers have indicated a need for the marketing communication channels utilised to provide information to loyal members (Korkala, Pikkarainen, and Conboy, 2009). To examine their influence on brand loyalty, this thesis will define distinct one-way and two-way marketing communication drivers. The customer loyalty program at Sephora Turkey now uses a lot of emails as its primary marketing communication channel, which may be out of date for its target market. The results of this study may provide managers of CRM operations with guidance on how to interact with customers more effectively.

The research investigates the impact of experiential marketing on customer loyalty. The recorded interviews were analysed, and several themes emerged from the response. The findings are analysed under the titles of brand image, brand loyalty, experiential marketing, and the effect of experiential marketing on brand loyalty. Direct quotes from the participants will provide in-depth information about their perceptions of the Sephora brand. Therefore, this study attempts to evaluate the impact of experiential marketing on brand loyalty. In this direction, the effect of experiential marketing activities of the Sephora brand on brand loyalty was investigated with a series of questions.

Direct quotes from the participants will provide in-depth information about their perceptions of the Sephora brand. Almost all of the participants (n=22) are people who pay attention to their personal care and love cosmetic products. This study was conducted to understand the feelings and loyalty of female participants aged 18-45 who shop at Sephora brand. When participants were asked to describe the Sephora

brand, different attributes of the brand were emphasised. Everyone may have seen a different aspect of the brand and listed this aspect to describe the Sephora brand. As mentioned above, the most emphasised attributes of the brand are quality, reliability, and having a wide range of products. One of the common findings of this study is that the participants find the Sephora brand of good quality. Participant 3 said:

“Since Sephora has so many luxury brands, I can say that the Sephora brand provides both quality and economical shopping without straining the budget. My skin is sensitive, and I cannot use every product easily. For me, it is important that skin care and cosmetics do not cause allergic reactions and that the ingredients are clean. Sephora brand also meets these criteria for me. As someone who uses both makeup and skin care products, I can say that so far it has not caused any sensitivity on my skin and the content of the products has not deteriorated in the long term.”

Participant 9 said:

“I find it high quality because when I enter the store, I see that the brands it carries are expensive, well-known, and high-quality brands. I trust it because I am sure of the authenticity of the products. The reason why I chose the adjective attractive is that when I enter a shopping mall, I always want to enter a Sephora store.”

Four of the participants stated that they liked only some of the Sephora collection products. For example, participant 6 stated the following:

“I think some of the make-up products are of good quality, but I am not very satisfied with the skin care products. I am also not happy with the packaging design.”

Participant 22 said:

“Sephora Collection products give me the impression of mid-range products,

but I think the quality of some of their products is high.”

Participant 15 said:

“Quality, reliable, they have sales promotion campaigns. When I look at the prices, the high prices make me feel that the product being sold is genuine. I think it is reliable because there are banderols on the products. I said that it was a campaign based on the discounts made on the mobile application. I think that the brands it has, and its own collection are of high quality.”

One of the common findings of this study is that the participants defined Sephora as a reliable brand. For example, participant 3 stated:

“Apart from that, Sephora is one of the first places I visit to buy a gift for my friend or a family member's birthday, Mother's Day, or New Year's Day. With the gift sets it prepares and the quality of its products, I think it makes the person I give a gift to feel special.”

4.1 Brand Image

Brand image is related to how customers use a brand to express their symbolic meaning of consumption and identity in self-expression (Lau and Phau, 2007). Customers connect high-end brands with superior products (Rubio et al., 2014). Consumer brand recognition could help firms host new brands and boost sales of current products (Burt and Davies, 2010). Integrated marketing communications and word-of-mouth also significantly affect brand perception (Romaniuk and Sharp, 2003). The brand image consists of all of a product's positive or negative, emotional or aesthetic impressions in the target market. In other words, it may be seen as a person's entire emotional and cognitive assessment of a product or service. Based on these criteria, it is plausible to assert that the brand image is formed in the minds of customers as a consequence of their views of a product or service, as well as the brand's marketing activities. In other words, customers may form an image of a brand in their brains as a result of brand associations. In certain ways, the consumer's attitude toward a product may shape the brand image. A positive brand image influences brand loyalty

and ensures customer loyalty (Özdemir, 2009).

Brand personality, brand identity, brand association, brand behaviour and attitude, brand competence and benefit are all components of brand image. Brand identity is the first dimension (Keller, 1993). The term "brand identity" refers to a company's or a product's physical or tangible attributes that enable customers to quickly recognize and distinguish it from competing products or brands. Examples include logos, colours, sounds, smells, packaging, locations, corporate identities, slogans, and others. Brand personality constitutes the second dimension. Brand personality is the unique quality of a brand that gives it certain human characteristics, such as assertive character, stiff, dignified, noble, friendly, warm, compassionate, sociable, dynamic, creative, independent, etc., so that consumer audiences can easily distinguish it from other brands in the same category. Aaker (1997) listed numerous qualities of brand personality as competence, sincerity, excitement, sophistication, and ruggedness. A brand association is the third dimension. Brand association refers to elements that should be or are always associated with a brand. These elements can include a product's unique selling proposition, ongoing and consistent activities like sponsorship or social responsibility projects, issues that are strongly connected to a brand, person, or owner, and specific symbols and meanings that are strongly associated with a brand. Brand behaviour and attitude is the fourth dimension of brand image. Brand behaviour and attitude refers to how a brand behaves and feels when interacting and talking to customers to give them advantages and values. In other words, the attitude and behaviour of a brand are the attitudes, attitudes, and actions that the brand and all its characteristics exhibit when interacting and communicating with customers, which in turn influences customers' opinions and evaluations about the brand (Wijaya, 2012). Competence and benefit for brands is the fifth dimension of brand image. This dimension influences the values, benefits, and skills that a brand offers in solving consumer problems, the benefits of customers as their desires, their obsessions are embodied in what they have to give. Here, advantages and values can be utilitarian, emotional, symbolic, or social (Keller, 1993).

4.1.1 Cognitive Image

Participants were asked about Sephora's Collection products in order to obtain more findings about the brand. It was found that all participants had opinions about

Sephora Collection products. One third of the participants stated that Sephora Collection products are of good quality in terms of price/performance. For instance, participant 1 stated:

“I find it very high quality and useful in terms of price/performance. I have used many of its products. I was satisfied with all the Sephora Collection products I used. I would recommend you to try the eyeshadow palettes and under-eye concealers.”

Participant 18 stated:

“I can define it as reliable, accessible, and stylish. Sephora is a brand I have been going to since my childhood. The fact that it is corporate and international makes this brand reliable and accessible for me. I find this brand stylish because I like the design of its stores and the logo of the brand.”

While all but one of the participants defined the brand as an upper segment brand, one of the participants defined the brand as a middle-class brand. participant 11 stated:

“I define it as middle class, current and vibrant. Because it is neither a very low segment nor a very high segment brand. Whenever a new brand or a new product comes out, I can find it in Sephora stores.”

Participant 5 expressed that:

“Their products are in line with today's trends; they create collections with clean ingredients in skin care, a wide range of cosmetics, and I can find everything I am looking for.”

For example, participant 8 said:

“They have product collections that will appeal to every age and every person. I started using them when I was 25 years old. Now I am 30 and I still use them.”

My 55-year-old mother also uses Sephora products with love.”

Participant 9 stated:

“I like Sephora collection products. As far as I know, the ingredients are clean. I like this brand because the ingredients are clean, and the prices are reasonable compared to other brands available in Sephora stores. In addition, Sephora collection products did not cause any problems for me, even though I have sensitive skin.”

Participant 13 expressed that:

“Sephora is, of course, more affordable than other top-segment brands it contains, and I think it is also of high quality. I can say that when I use Sephora's products, as long as they meet my expectations, they make me feel good and I can say that I am making smart purchases.”

Participant 21 said:

“Their own line of products is of better quality than most well-known brands. I find it successful in terms of price/performance.”

4.1.2 Emotional Image

Emotional image is a brand image that is used in marketing communication and directly addresses the emotional state, needs and desires of the consumer.

Participant 1 said:

“I can say that the Sephora brand makes me feel the importance of looking well-groomed and healthy. This brand is valuable to me because it is a quality brand that I can easily meet my needs and that I trust. In addition, the fact that the brand produces the packaging of its products in accordance with recycling, the contents of its products are clean, and the value it attaches to the environment makes me feel positive about this brand.”

Participant 7 said:

“Colourful, characteristic makeup. I feel like I care about my skin. For me, Sephora is a store with a wide variety of products where everyone can find something for themselves. That's why its popularity is reflected in its wide audience. For me, this brand is a store where I know I can find what I need when I need it. The fact that it has vegan products shows the importance it gives to the environment, and this impresses me a lot.”

According to the findings obtained through in-depth interviews, some of the participants stated that the brand made them feel happy. For example, participant 9 expressed that:

“I can say that this brand makes me happy. My energy rises when I enter a Sephora store. My desire to shop increases. As someone who loves cosmetics and cares about personal care, the Sephora brand is very valuable to me.”

Participant 20 said:

“The brand gives me a feeling of happiness. I usually buy skin care products like masks, etc. Everything I buy for myself or for my personal care makes me happy. Therefore, Sephora is a valuable brand for me. And most importantly, shopping at Sephora stores makes me feel valuable.”

4.2 Brand Trust

Consumers trust a particular brand more than competing brands, leading to increased brand loyalty and a willingness to pay a higher price for the brand (Lassar, Mittal, and Arun, 1995). Companies with high brand equity gain a competitive advantage and have the opportunity to grow successfully; they can resist promotional demands from competitors (Ling, 2013).

When the participants were asked about their feelings towards the Sephora brand, approximately one third of the participants stated that the brand gave them a

sense of confidence. For example, participant 2 expressed that:

“The Sephora brand gives me a feeling of trust. It is a place where I can buy the cosmetics I love with confidence in their authenticity.”

Participant 3 said:

“Having access to every product of every brand in Sephora adds value to the brand. Since there is no question mark about the authenticity of any product I buy from Sephora, I trust the brand. Apart from that, Sephora is one of the first places I visit to buy a gift for my friend or a family member's birthday, Mother's Day, or New Year's Day. With the gift sets it prepares and the quality of its products, I think it makes the person I give a gift to feel special.”

According to the findings obtained from in-depth interviews, almost all of the participants stated that they trust both the traditional store and the digital store of the Sephora brand. For example, participant 1 said:

“I absolutely trust Sephora stores and it's very reassuring to know that I can easily contact them if I have any problems or any requests. Also, I haven't had any problems so far. Many of the people around me shop at Sephora. I know they don't have any problems either, so I trust this brand. Thanks to the digital shopping I used before, I trust their digital stores.”

Participant 8 stated that:

“I have confidence because when I told the store sales consultants about my skin type and the product I wanted to buy, they recommended the right products for me. I have always been satisfied with the products I bought from Sephora. I have confidence because my digital purchases have always met my needs. The product packaging was careful, and the delivery time was fast. I also had the opportunity to benefit from special discounts for online shopping.”

Participant 14 expressed that:

“I trust Sephora stores 100% and I feel this trust because I am sure of product authenticity. The same trust I have in Sephora's traditional stores, I also have in their digital stores. I had never had any problems until today. My shopping experiences have always been smooth.”

Participant 15 said:

“I trust Sephora because I believe that the products are genuine and I know that if I have any problems, I can get the necessary help from customer service and stores. I trust the Sephora digital store because I have not experienced any negativity.”

Participant 19 said:

“I trust Sephora because I use their products and I know that they are good for my skin. Also, the store staff make me feel special. My trust in the store also applies to the website. I trust Sephora because I know the products.”

Participant 21 stated:

“I trust Sephora. It has been a cosmetics store for years, and I trust this brand. Likewise, I trust the Sephora digital store because, nowadays, I don't see any difference between online shopping and traditional store shopping.”

One of the participants stated that she does not trust the brand. For example, participant 22 said:

“I do not trust the brand because I do not find their working system professional. I absolutely do not trust the digital store. I had problems in the product return process. I was able to complete my product return process after 2 months.”

4.3 Brand Loyalty

4.3.1 Store Visits

In the in-depth interviews, the participants were asked questions to understand whether they preferred the traditional store or the digital store and on what basis they made this choice. According to the findings, participants prefer to shop at the traditional store. For example, participant 14 stated:

“I prefer the traditional store. Trying products is an important criterion for me. Whenever possible, I shop at physical stores. Sometimes there are special campaigns for the mobile app. For example, although there is a discount on the digital store for Mother's Day, there is no discount in the stores. At such times, I prefer to shop from the mobile app.”

Participant 19 said:

“I prefer traditional shopping because there I discover new products with the help of store staff. I like to experience products.”

Participant 20 expressed that:

“I prefer traditional shopping as I like to shop by looking, touching, and trying things out.”

As mentioned above, most respondents prefer the traditional store. Only some of the participants prefer the digital store. For example, respondent 4 stated the following:

“I prefer online shopping because discounts usually start earlier in online stores. And it is convenient that the products I buy arrive at my doorstep quickly. I don't always have time to go to the store.”

One-third of those participants said they prefer both the traditional and digital stores. For example, participant 5 stated the following:

“I shop in physical stores to look at testers of skin care products and perfumes that I have not used before and to shop by experiencing the colours and textures of make-up materials. However, if there are products that I know I have used before, I also shop from the mobile application. It completely depends on my needs.

Participant 9 said:

“If there is a product I want to try, I prefer a physical store. I don't have a clear preference except for the trial situation. I like to shop both in the digital store and in the physical store. If I have limited time, I prefer the digital store because I spend a lot of time in the physical store.”

Within the scope of in-depth interviews, all the participants stated that the behaviour of the store staff affected the shopping experience, either positively or negatively. While some of the participants were positively affected by the attention of the store staff, others expressed that they were uncomfortable with this attention. According to the findings, the behaviour of store personnel varies depending on the location of the store, the store, and the store sales representative. In addition, this situation also varies according to the customer's wishes and shopping habits. For example, participant 3 stated that he was disturbed by the excessive attention of the store staff. She said that:

“I am uncomfortable with the sales representatives constantly walking around me and waiting while I examine the products. I have had many experiences like this in Sephora stores. If a visitor or a customer has any questions about a product or products, there is already an environment where they can ask the sales representatives. For this reason, I think it is a disturbing behaviour for the customer to be followed by the representatives while walking around the store. Some sales representatives, of course, maintain a more distant attitude, but they always show an attitude that they are always ready to help. This behaviour seems more correct to me.”

Participant 4 stated:

“I would feel more comfortable if the attitude of Sephora store personnel was not interested in and not aimed at direct sales. It is important for me to have information about the product I want to buy or the product I am looking at. It shows me that they prioritize the product. It bothers me when the store staff are directly sales oriented. because I don't always go to the store to buy products. Sometimes I want to examine the products and see them. In this case, if the employee shares this information with me rather than sells me, the thought of purchasing for the future is directly formed in me. Trying to make a sale from the first moment is difficult for me.”

Participant 11 stated:

“In general, Sephora store staff can be too pushy for sales purposes. I prefer store staff to communicate with me according to my needs and not to push me to sell products rather than spend the entire shopping process with me. Likewise, I have experienced situations where I was overly insistent on some products that I stated that I was not interested in. This situation causes me to waste my time and exceed my budget. It can affect me negatively.”

Participant 16 said:

“The behaviour of store staff affects me either positively or negatively. Sometimes at Sephora, I feel like I am being overly followed by the store staff, which has a negative impact on my shopping experience.”

Some of the participants expressed their satisfaction with the attention of Sephora store staff. For instance, participant 1 said that:

“Their patience, care, and friendliness are very important factors for me. I am happy that I have not had any problems with this issue in the Sephora store so far. I shop at the Sephora store in Mersin Forum shopping center. The sales

representatives in this store have a great influence on my shopping. The fact that they are not insistent, recommend products according to my needs, and are friendly positively affects my shopping experience.”

Participant 7 stated:

“The behaviour of Sephora store staff is very important to me. As long as they don't act like waiters trying to clear the table before the meal is over, I like their attention. The Sephora store staff are helpful. This situation affects me positively.”

Participant 12 expressed that:

“The behaviour of Sephora store staff is generally positive. I have encountered caring staff who are eager to help and find alternatives. They also do not constantly follow me around and bother me. They only come to me when we make eye contact when they feel I need them.”

Participant 14 said:

“The Sephora store staff are helpful. Even if the product I am looking for is not in the store, they guide me on how to access it. So, I have never encountered a negative situation before.”

Participant 15 said:

“Sephora store staff are interested. This affects me positively. The attitude and interest of the store employee can make it possible for me to try a new product.”

Some of the participants evaluated this situation in a neutral way, that is, in a way that could be either negative or positive. These participants did not make an evaluation of the Sephora store sales staff but generalized this issue and expressed their opinions. For example, participant 9 said:

“The behaviour of the Sephora store employees has a significant impact on me. If she recommends the right and appropriate product, it has a positive impact on me. But if she has an attitude aimed at direct sales, I will not shop at the physical store. I buy what I want to buy on the website or mobile application.”

Participant 10 stated that:

“The attention of a friendly staff is something that I am sure would please every customer. It can be uncomfortable to be in a store with store staff who have a negative attitude and make me feel uncomfortable by constantly watching which product I am looking at. However, I don't recall ever feeling uncomfortable in Sephora.”

Participant 17 expressed that:

“Certainly, the verbal and physical behaviour of the sales consultant changes the customer's attitude, first about shopping and then about the product. At the beginning, I wanted to experience the store myself. I don't want to be pressured. Afterwards, the fact that I am taken care of or answered in a friendly and sincere way when I ask questions, frankly, sometimes pushes me to shop that day, even just not to waste the effort of the person in front of me. Therefore, the training of the store employees, their knowledge of the product, their experience, and the advice they will give according to the customer in front of them are very important criteria for the buyer customer.”

Participant 18 said:

“I usually like to be left alone when I walk around the store. Insistent store employees who follow me every step of the way make me very uncomfortable, and I leave that store immediately. I would rather that the employees don't pay any attention to me at all. Rather than that, I go to the store after doing my research. Apart from that, I expect the same courtesy and respect from store employees as I expect in daily life.”

Participants were asked whether they were loyal to the Sephora brand. Half of the participants stated that they were loyal to the brand. The participants who said that they are loyal to the brand, they stated the reason for their loyalty to the brand is reliable, and the brand has a wide variety of brands and products. They also stated that their shopping experience was pleasant. For example, participant 9 stated the following:

“I am a loyal customer of Sephora because it has brands that I enjoy using that are not available in other stores.”

In addition to that, participant 1 stated:

“I am a loyal customer of Sephora because I consider it a trusted brand that meets all my cosmetic and skin care product needs.”

Participant 2 expressed:

“I am a loyal customer of the Sephora brand. Because I love Sephora's collection products and I trust the authenticity of the products of other brands within Sephora.”

A quarter of the participants stated that they were not affiliated with the Sephora brand. For example, participant 18 stated that:

“I am not loyal to the Sephora brand because I don't think it has a very specific product or service that really appeals to me. Even though I love the brand, the brand does not meet my expectations.”

Participant 7 expressed:

“I'm not affiliated with Sephora. Because I try to shop as little as possible in the capitalist world.”

Participant 13 said:

“I am not loyal to Sephora because I like to use Korean products more. In terms of price/performance, I can say that I get more efficiency from Korean cosmetics and care products than from Sephora.”

In addition, a small number of the respondents stated that they are brand loyal only for certain product purchases. For example, respondent 6 stated that:

“I am a loyal customer of the Sephora brand. Because I can get the brands and products I am looking for and like to use, but there is one thing I am not loyal to the brand. I don't like Sephora's skin care products.”

Participant 5 expressed that:

“I am a loyal customer of Sephora because I trust the brand. I am not loyal to the Sephora brand because if I can get the product I am going to buy from another corporate store at more affordable prices, I can also prefer that store.”

Another finding obtained from in-depth interviews is that almost half of the participants prefer Sephora when they are going to buy personal care and cosmetic products. For example, participant 19 stated the following:

“When I buy personal care and cosmetics, I only prefer Sephora because the brands it carries are of high quality and I trust Sephora.”

Participant 21 said:

“When I buy personal care and cosmetics, I only prefer Sephora because the brands I use are not sold elsewhere.”

Participant 10 expressed that:

“When I buy personal care and cosmetics, I prefer Sephora only because I have no doubt that I am buying quality and original products.”

Most of the respondents prefer only Sephora when purchasing personal care and cosmetics, only some of them do not prefer Sephora. For example, participant 18 stated the following:

“When I buy personal care and cosmetic products, I do not only prefer Sephora because I buy dermo cosmetic products for my personal care needs. It is also a Korean brand that I have been using for years, and I meet my needs for products such as roll-on and body lotion by buying more affordable products. Even though I like makeup products, I generally prefer chains such as Gratis, Watsons, and Rossman, which are close to my home, because they are both more affordable. I also prefer to try makeup products in the store. I do not prefer Sephora because it does not sell dermo cosmetics, Korean brands, and affordable cosmetics that I use constantly.”

Participants prefer Sephora the most when purchasing personal care and cosmetics. However, they also stated that they also shop for other brands. For example, participant 1 stated:

“When I buy personal care and cosmetics, I usually prefer Sephora. It is a store where I can find many brands and products together.”

Participant 8 said:

“When I buy personal care and cosmetics, I do not only prefer Sephora, but Sephora is my priority. I choose products according to my budget. If I can find a product that suits my budget and that I have tried and am satisfied with among Sephora's collection of products, I prefer to buy it from Sephora. Because the prices of collection products are more affordable than those of other brands sold in Sephora.”

Within the scope of in-depth interviews, participants were asked about the reasons for visiting the Sephora store. Three-fifths of the participants stated that the purpose of visiting the store was to try products. Most of the participants who visited the store to try the products also stated that they also visited the store to buy products. Considering the findings, the opportunity to try products is of great importance for all of the participants. For example, participant 9 stated:

“I don't really need a reason to go to Sephora. It is one of the stores I always go to when I go to the mall. I go there to try new products; to buy skin care products or perfumes; to buy gifts.”

Participant 11 said:

“I usually go to try new products. For example, when I buy mascara, I want to see the brush, or when I buy a perfume, I have to try it.”

Participant 17 said:

“If I am curious about a new product or a product I have not experienced before, I go to the store to test it. I prefer not to buy it without trying it.”

Participant 17 said:

“When I am going to buy products that I already use, it is easier for me to shop from the website in order not to waste time. In addition, I also use the Sephora digital store for new product tracking.”

Most of the participants stated that they started to visit the digital store more frequently due to the pandemic period. For example, participant 14 said that:

“I used the digital store to shop, especially during the pandemic. I also visit the mobile app to follow campaigns. Since I live in the district, I do not always have the opportunity to visit the physical store. Therefore, I visit the digital store when

I want to look for or buy a product.”

Participant 1 said:

“During the pandemic, I shopped from the digital store, which is very easy to access, and I can get what I need immediately, even when I don't have time.”

Based on these opinions, it can be concluded that the participants are Sephora brand followers.

4.3.2 Return Visits

In general, customers who are loyal to the brand visit the digital or traditional store on a regular basis. Another finding from the in-depth interviews was the impact of the participants' in-store experience on their return visits. All the participants stated that their in-store experience would have a positive or negative impact on their return visits and purchases from the store. Participants stated that if their in-store experience was positive, they tended to return to the store and shop there. Likewise, if their in-store experience was negative, they did not want to shop the store and go back to it. For example, participant 1 said:

“The behaviour of store staff is highly influential. The fact that the store staff are polite, try to help me, guide me correctly and do not pressure me to shop positively affects me and makes me go to that store again.”

Participant 3 stated that:

“In previous years, a brand had a stand for eyebrow plucking in the Sephora store. The time I am talking about was a period when I was trying to fix my eyebrows. The fact that the employee had experience with this subject, which eyebrow structure was right for which face shape, and guided me by using the brand's products, caused me to go to the store again. I was very pleased to be taken care of in this way, and it attracted me to buy the products of the relevant brand.”

Participant 4 said that:

“The knowledge and attitude of the employees would influence me to go back to the store and shop again. In addition, the stock status of the products and the campaigns are among the factors that affect my decision to shop from the store again. Also, shopping in a traditional store means having the product without having to wait for cargo, and this leads me to prefer shopping in a traditional store.”

Participant 8 stated that:

“The in-store experience influences me to go back to the store because everything I can touch and try gives me confidence. The sales staff are polite. They can do makeup. When I sit in that chair and get my makeup done, I feel very good.”

Participant 11 said that:

“The experience inside a Sephora store influences my return visits. The use of testers and gift products affects me positively, but the pressure of in-store employees affects me.”

According to the findings, obtained from in-depth interviews, it can be said that the participants regularly visit Sephora traditional and/or digital stores. It can be said that the traditional in-store experience and digital store experience affects the participants. Participants stated that they revisited the digital store if their digital store experience was positive. Likewise, participants stated that if their digital store experience was negative, they did not want to shop from the digital store and did not want to visit the digital store again. For example, participant 9 expressed:

“I did not have any problems when I shopped from the digital store. The packaging of my products was careful and there was a trial-size product in the

package. Considering these things, I would visit the digital shop again. I would definitely visit the store again because it was a good shopping experience.”

Participant 12 said that:

“My experience with the Sephora store's digital environments may positively or negatively influence my decision to visit the digital store again. I would shop from the digital store again because I did not have any problems with my previous purchases and I found the price product comparison, user reviews and evaluations useful.”

Participant 14 said that:

“My experience with Sephora's mobile app positively influences me to visit the mobile app again. Campaign tracking and app-specific discounts make me visit the mobile app again.”

The findings from the in-depth interview show that three quarters of the respondents prefer the traditional store for the return process. According to these findings, it is understood that the majority of the participants prefer the traditional store for the return process. A few of the participants stated that they preferred both channels for the return process. Half of the participants stated that the reason for return was that the product was defective or faulty. For example, participant 6 expressed that:

“If the product is not what I expected, or if it is broken or difficult to use, I will return it, and I prefer to do it in a traditional store.”

Participant 22 stated:

“If the product is old, poorly packaged, opened, or defective, I will return it. I prefer to make the return through the digital channel. I can send the cargo from home; it's easy.”

Almost half of the participants stated that they had never needed a return at Sephora before and that they were satisfied with the product they bought. For example, participant 12 stated the following:

“I haven't made a return yet, but I would prefer to do it the traditional way as there is a store near me. Because it feels safer for me to make the return by communicating.”

4.3.3 Recommendations

According to the findings obtained from in-depth interviews, almost all the participants stated that they would recommend the Sephora brand to people around them. The reasons for recommending the brand are that they think the brand is reliable; their shopping experience was positive; and they can access all kinds of brands and products in Sephora stores. For example, participant 3 stated the following:

“I recommend Sephora to everyone around me. Since it is important to me that the content of its products is clean, I can directly recommend it when I am asked for advice about the products I use. In addition, the fact that they sell original products and that their campaigns are advantageous are among the other issues I can recommend.”

Participant 7 stated:

“The interest, experience, and suggestions of the staff are a major criterion for me. For example, they help me choose products according to my skin type. This makes me go back to the store again.”

Participant 12 said:

“I don't report Sephora in a negative way. I can recommend it. If a friend asks me for a product, I tell her that she can find it at Sephora and to go there because there is a lot of variety in Sephora stores.”

Participant 16 expressed that:

“I recommend the Sephora brand to those around me because I think it is a reliable brand. I have not had any problems. I like the collection of products from the Sephora brand.”

Participant 11 stated that she would recommend it, but she did not like the attention of the store staff. She said:

“I can recommend Sephora to people around me. Sephora gathers many brands under one roof. They also give trial-size products. Thus, my shopping experience was positive. I would not recommend it only in terms of customer relations. Sephora used to make shopping carts in two different colours in their stores in Europe. One of the baskets emphasised shopping with the store staff, and the other emphasised shopping by yourself. If Sephora made such a practice again, people like me who like to shop alone would shop more from Sephora.”

Participant 22 emphasised that she would not recommend Sephora to people around her and that her shopping experience was negative. She stated that:

“No, I would not recommend Sephora because I think the service provided is of poor quality according to the payments made. As I mentioned before, I bought a product from Sephora. My money was not sent properly, and after my return was approved, I waited 2 months for my money to be credited to my account.”

4.3.4 Brand Advocates

Within the scope of in-depth interviews, most of the participants stated that they would advocate for the Sephora brand on the authenticity of its products and the quality of the brand. For example, participant 7 said:

“I advocate the brand on the basis of its reliability. Unfortunately, too many products are sold with a negligent disregard for authenticity. It has become a privilege to shop at a store you trust. The digital store has become much more

important nowadays. Sephora provides a very convenient shopping experience with an easy to use search engine and filters on the Sephora website and mobile app.”

One of the participants stated that she could advocate for the brand by talking about Sephora's return process and the cleanliness of its stores. Participant 4 stated:

“I can advocate for the brand in terms of not causing problems in return processes and that its stores are organized and clean. I tell my close circle about the easy return process. Other than that, I cannot assure anyone that they will have a very good shopping experience. The interest and attitude of the store employees vary from store to store, so people can have different experiences.”

All but one of the participants stated that they would defend the brand. Participant 22 stated that he would never defend the brand with the following words:

“Considering the product prices, I think the service provided is of poor quality compared to the payments made. I do not advocate for the brand. I think the physical store experience is mediocre, and the digital store experience is very bad. I had problems in the product return process. They refunded my money after 2 months.”

4.4 Brand Experience

4.4.1 Sensory Experiences (Sense)

In the in-depth interviews, many findings related to Sensory Experiences, one of Schmitt's (1999) strategic experiential marketing modules, were found. Respondents were asked about the elements that provide them with a store experience. In the in-depth interviews, participants stated that the main element that provided them with a store experience was the store layout. For example, participant 10 stated the following:

“In terms of store experience, the product layout of Sephora stores always feels spacious and organized, and I can say that it gives an energetic feeling because it has a colourful look.”

After the store layout, the second most important factor for the participants was the store smell and the third one is attention of the store staff. Participant 1 stated:

“Sephora is one of my favourite stores to visit with its friendly and caring staff, uncluttered store layout and interesting products. I feel energised while walking around the store. My last store experience was quite good. I was taken care of by a store staff who loved their job and was knowledgeable about the products. She recommended products according to my needs. I spent a long time in the store, tried the products that I thought were suitable for me and bought the products I liked.”

Participant 5 said:

“When I went to the last store, the store employee's help, and information about the product I was looking for encouraged me to buy the product. In addition, the shelf layouts, the lighting of the store and the smell of perfume inside encouraged me to shop.”

Participant 22 commented that:

“The smell of the store is nice; the music is uplifting, and I like that the interior is organised and bright.”

Participant 12 stated:

“My last store experience was a long time ago; I still remember that the product layout and the smell of the store made me enjoy my visit. Each brand has its own stand. This makes it easy to find the product I am looking for.”

Participant 8 said:

“The smell of the store impresses me a lot. The Sephora store keeps me there for

hours with its pleasant perfume scents. I can easily find everything I want with the product layout. It also makes me feel special because it is an elite store.”

All participants emphasised the importance of being able to experience the product when buying cosmetics or skin care products. For instance, participant 14 stated the following:

“The possibility to try the products in the Sephora store on test papers or on my wrist is my main reason for visiting Sephora. I usually go to try perfumes, but I also can try other products. My purchase decision is influenced by the opportunity to try products.”

Participant 17 expressed that:

“The possibility to try the products in the Sephora store on test papers or on my wrist affects my shopping experience. If I'm there to try a different product, this is definitely a very important element. In addition, I think that the products recommended by the relevant staff member in accordance with the customer's demand bring people closer to making a better choice. Especially when there is an informative conversation about the content of the perfume, it is an extra quality shopping experience because there is an educational aspect for me.”

Participant 18 stated:

“Since I'm interested in perfumes, I prefer to shop in traditional stores. I try the perfume on my skin and decide whether it suits me or not. When shopping for cosmetics, the possibility of experience positively affects my shopping experience.”

Participant 12 said:

“At Sephora, the opportunity to try the products on test papers or on our wrists positively affects my shopping experience. For example, fragrance smells

different on everyone's skin. A fragrance you like very much may not smell the way you want it to on your skin. That's why it's very important for me to try. You can experience and love a product you didn't know about before.”

Participant 9 stated that:

“It is very important for me to try a product before I buy it. I don't want to buy a product I haven't tried because I have sensitive skin. Not every product is good for my skin. I use a product that is not good for my skin once and give it to my sister or friend because I cannot use it again. Since the products I buy from Sephora are usually high-priced, this affects my budget negatively. Also, before I buy a perfume, I always want to try it on my wrist. Because perfumes have a different effect on every skin type, especially in cosmetics and skin care products, the opportunity to try them out positively affects my shopping experience.”

Participant 7 said:

“It is definitely important to me that we can try the products on our wrists. Because it doesn't make sense for me to buy a cosmetic product without trying it and seeing how it looks on my skin tone. I can never buy a perfume without trying it.”

Participant 4 expressed that:

“If I'm undecided before buying a product, it influences me to look at the texture of the product I want to buy, to see how it looks on my skin, and to experience the texture of the product to see if it will be compatible with my skin. Therefore, trying products and feel them in the store brings me closer to making a purchase.”

Participant 3 expressed that:

“In my last Sephora store experience, I purchased Sephora branded products. Since I visit the store closest to my home very often, I know more or less which

brand products are sold in which aisle in the store. I think that most of its stores are organised and designed in a way that makes it easy to find the product we are looking for. Going to the store I know encourages me to buy products more because I know the sales representatives and I know the store.”

4.4.2 Affective Experiences (Feel)

The in-depth interviews, findings related to Affective Experiences, one of Schmitt's (1999) strategic experiential marketing modules, were found. It aims to create experiences that appeal to consumers' inner emotions and feelings (Castano, and Rajogopal, 2015). These experiences appeal to emotions. For example, participant 16 stated:

“If I have a negative experience, such as a problematic or late arrival of the cargo, this will affect me negatively. Likewise, if I am satisfied, I feel happy, and it affects me positively. For example, when I shopped from a digital store, my entire order was cancelled because one of the products I ordered was out of stock. I had to add the products one by one to my cart and buy them again. This affects me negatively.”

Based on the findings, it can be said that the whole shopping process has an impact on the brand experience. Experiential marketing elements that come first in the brand experience affect the participants. These experiences appeal to the emotions of the participants. For example, participant 1 stated the following:

“Sephora is one of the stores that I enjoy visiting the most with its caring and friendly staff, uncluttered store layout, and interesting products. I feel energised while walking around the store. My last store experience was quite good. I was taken care of by a store staff member who loved their job and was knowledgeable about the products. She recommended products according to my needs. I spent a long time in the store, tried the products that I thought were suitable for me, and bought the products I liked.”

Only two of the participants stated that they were not satisfied with their digital store

experience. Only one of the participants stated that they have never shopped from a digital store. For example, participant 16 stated the following:

“I don't like the interface of the website. It can give a stock error for a product and show the old price of that product.”

Participant 22 said:

“The mobile app fails because there is not enough information about product features. The reason I use the digital store is ease of access. Not finding enough information about the product affects me negatively. Also, when I shopped from the digital store, I was never sent a trial size product.”

One of the participants stated that the digital store experience did not affect them positively or negatively. Participant 13 stated the following:

“The experience in the digital store does not affect me positively or negatively.”

According to the in-depth interview findings, more than half of the participants stated that if Sephora stores were to close, it would upset them but would not create a significant change in their lives. For example, participant 5 stated the following:

“I'll be sad if Sephora stores close. Because the product range in Sephora stores is very wide and it is a store I love to shop at. But it would not make a change in my life. I shop for other cosmetic brands.”

Considering these answers, it can be said that the Sephora brand has an important place in the lives of the participants. Although some of the participants stated that the closure of the stores would not make a change in their lives, they stated that this situation would affect them. The findings of this study were based on Schmitt's (1999) classification of experiential marketing (sensory, emotional, cognitive, behavioural, and relational). Experiential marketing aims to emotionally connect consumers to the brand, arouse their interest, and provide unforgettable experiences with every product

they buy. The answers given by the participants of this study provide important insights for experiential marketing and brand loyalty. The details of these two elements will be explained in the discussion section.

4.4.3 Creative Cognitive Experiences (Think)

The purpose of the Creative Cognitive Experiences module, one of Schmitt's (1999) experiential marketing models, is to encourage customers to think. Participants think about which product is more suitable for them while reading product reviews, product comparisons, and price research. Participants stated that one of the reasons for visiting the digital store was to review products, make comparisons, and read user reviews. For example, participant 11 stated that:

“I visit Sephora digital environments to learn more about products and make comparisons. I can access detailed information about the products in the digital store. I can see the content and weight of the product I will buy in the description section below the product. I am also very impressed by the user comments about the product. I can compare products. If it is a product I need to try, I research the product in the digital store and try it in the traditional store.”

Participant 12 said:

“I prefer to shop through the Sephora website. I think I will buy products that are more suitable for me when I have time to research more products and compare them calmly. The extra attention shown by the store staff can be stressful and cause me to choose the wrong product.”

Some of the participants stated that they visit the store to try on and buy products, as well as to examine and learn about campaigns, visit the store, and learn product prices. For example, participant 3 stated:

“I visit stores not only to shop but also to walk around and discover new products. I wonder what the prices of products I have been using for years have been and if there is a new campaign. The atmosphere of the stores is quite nice.

The smell of perfume inside tempts me to enter the store even if I am not going to buy anything. I feel happy and enjoy myself while walking around in the fragrance and looking at the products.”

The participants stated that they visit Sephora's digital stores to be informed about discounts and campaigns. They also stated that they save time by visiting the digital store. For example, participant 5 stated the following:

“I visit Sephora digital environments to review product prices and to be informed about campaigns. I also visit to review the sets created by various brands for special occasions and to meet my needs.”

4.4.4 Physical Experiences (Act)

One of Schmitt's (1999) experiential marketing modules, Physical Experiences, aims to mobilize consumers and make them feel unique. By analysing consumers' actions and lifestyles, physical experience—which encompasses all sensory, intellectual, emotional, and relational experiences—aims to give them unique experiences (Deligöz, 2016). Participants prefer Sephora for brands and products that are available in the Sephora store and not available in other stores. Because they think that the Sephora brand gives them a unique experience. For example, participant 13 expressed:

“Rather than needing make-up or care products, I go to Sephora to purchase a unique product that is not available from other beauty brands or to discover new products. I can experience cosmetic brands of celebrities such as Rihanna and Selena Gomez that are not available in other stores. I prefer to go to the store, especially because of the wide range of colours in make-up and the opportunity to physically try the products.”

Participant 6 said:

“I prefer to visit traditional store. I have the chance to reach and experience many top-tier brands at the same time. In addition, every year on my birthday,

the Sephora brand chooses a special product for me and presents it to me as a gift.”

4.4.5 Social Identity Experiences (Relate)

The Social Identity Experiences include sensory, emotional, intellectual, and behavioural experiences and aim to create a sense of belonging. It appeals to consumers' desire for self-development, the need to be perceived positively and the idea of the 'ideal self' (Tsai, 2005). In the in-depth interviews, there were findings linked to Relate Experiences, which is one of Schmitt's (1999) strategic experiential marketing modules. Brand advocates and brand recommendations were formed under the brand loyalty findings. Although these titles are under brand loyalty, they can also be given under social identity from Schmitt's (1999) strategic experience modules. According to the findings obtained from in-depth interviews, based on the answers given to brand loyalty questions, it can be said that customers who advocate and recommend the brand are also satisfied with their brand experience. For instance, participant 9 said:

“If someone mentions something negative about the authenticity of the products, I can advocate for the brand. As I mentioned before, the Sephora brand is valuable to me. Whether in-store or in the digital store, this brand meets my expectations. Depending on the attitude of the store's staff, my satisfaction level may vary from store to store. However, aside from that, I can say that my experience has been positive.”

Participant 6 said:

“I can recommend the brand to my close circle by telling them about my experiences, especially the ease of product finding and no problems with return or exchange. In my traditional store experiences, I especially mention the behaviour of the employees in the store. If there are campaigns in the online store, I mention these issues.”

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Brands operating in mature markets and established economies confront severe competition, making it difficult to establish a solid and long-term position. In such a complex market, brands' ability to differentiate themselves is mainly dependent on their ability to create superior consumer experiences that engage customers in long-term relationships. As a result, one of the most difficult tasks facing marketing managers today is proactively controlling the brand experience. However, there has been little conceptual and empirical research on this area, which is critical for practitioners.

Customers' wishes and requirements are of great importance to brands. If brands can understand what their customers really want and need, they can serve them in the best way possible. What is in question here is not the stance of brands on this issue, but the expectations of their customers. Understanding the impact of any promotional tool on informing or persuading target markets to accept a brand's products or services, making them aware of the products or services, and, beyond sales, achieving customer satisfaction and loyalty, is a concept that marketers must grasp to better create promotional efforts and serve the interests of their customers. The primary goal of this research is to look at the influence of experiential marketing on consumer loyalty in the personal care and cosmetic chain store industry, especially in Turkey's Sephora brand. In order to achieve this goal, the link between customer happiness and loyalty and experiential marketing, as well as Schmitt's strategic modules such as sense, feel, act, think, and relate marketing, has been examined. As a result, a detailed literature assessment was given, and a conceptual framework was developed based on the review. The conceptual framework was then put to the in-depth interview and moulded for the chosen target market, which is the Turkish personal care and cosmetic chain store market.

Sephora has had a lot of success in the beauty sector, and it's no surprise. This cosmetics company has sold millions of units in retail locations throughout the world since 1969 and is still going strong today. But what distinguishes Sephora's marketing strategy from those of its competitors? What is it about them that other companies can't match? In a nutshell, the key is loyalty. How do they leverage individualised loyalty to establish a community of beauty enthusiasts?

In today's world, thanks to advances in technology, customer loyalty can be used to improve or expand business opportunities (Baratali et al., 2016). Sephora offers innovative ways to keep customers across all channels, whether it's through online sales, in-store sales, or at events. As seen by their remarkable online sales and expanding range of retail locations, they do an excellent job of informing their network about their loyalty program (Onigo n.d.).

According to Schmitt (1999), what consumers want are products, communication, and marketing campaigns that stimulate their senses, touch their hearts, and have a stimulating effect. Consumers want products, communications, and campaigns that offer experiences. The extent to which a company provides experiences to its customers, as well as its use of information technology, brands, and integrated communication, will determine its success in the global marketplace (Schmitt, 1999). Experiential marketing aims to emotionally connect consumers to the brand, arouse their interest, and provide unforgettable experiences with every product they buy. Sensory marketing appeals to the senses to create sensory experiences through sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell. Sensory marketing can be used to differentiate firms and products to mobilise consumers and add value to products. One of the most important elements of sensory perception is cognitive consistency and sensory diversity. A successful sensory campaign is necessary to understand which stimuli are the most appropriate (Schmitt, 2009). Although Sephora brand has social networks, it is seen that it cannot display a successful experiential marketing activities in Schmitt's Social Identity Experience module. Since this module covers all modules, it plays an important role in the success of a brand. Sephora brand should increase its experiential marketing activities and marketing communication activities to create Social Identity Experience.

According to the research, brand experiences have a favourable impact on brand satisfaction, trust, and loyalty. Schmitt, Zarantonello, and Brakus (2009) support these conclusions. Brand experience establishes and maintains a platform of trust between the brand and the customer. When people search for, shop for, and consume brands, they have a variety of brand experiences.

Considering the findings, it is seen that brand trustworthiness, product variety and a satisfying shopping experience play a key role in brand loyalty. According to Schmitt (2009), there is only one valid definition of marketing purpose: "To create a

valuable consumer experience". This is good business: its consumers will thank it for creating valuable experiences, will remain loyal to it and will be willing to pay a high price for it (Schmitt, 2009).

Brand loyalty is when a customer continues to buy from a company not because you are the only choice, but because they trust the company (Jacoby, and Kyner, 1973). Consumer behaviour patterns show that consumers will continue to buy from a company that has developed a relationship of trust (Jacoby, and Kyner, 1973). Customers' repeated purchase behaviour over time is linked to a positively biased emotional, evaluative, and/or behavioural predisposition towards a branded, tagged, or graded alternative or product option (Jagdish, and Sheth, 1974). Integrated marketing communications are critical in persuading customers to stay loyal to a business (Šerić, and Gil-Saura, 2012). Similarly, their purchase decisions for the same goods are influenced by brand loyalty (Martenson, 2007). In other words, people develop brand loyalty and stick to well-known brand names, as well as use them for social recognition (Sun, Horn, and Merritt, 2004).

Creating and properly utilizing experiences in brands is important for loyalty. The more experiences the consumer has had with brands as a result of using the same product or service in the past, the better they will understand the brand and their loyalty will increase (Çetin, 2017).

A remarkable store service atmosphere, customer satisfaction, experiences during shopping time, and stimuli experienced during the time in the store, reveal the positive effects of the customer. Along with the conditions provided, the attitude of the store employee is also the decision-making centre for the consumer, taking into account the one-to-one marketing technique. Customers who leave the store in a satisfied manner transfer their experiences with word-of-mouth advertising to the people around them from that moment on (Uysal, 2018).

Brand satisfaction has a considerable beneficial impact on brand loyalty. In previous studies, brand satisfaction has been shown to have a major impact on brand loyalty. One of the determinants of brand loyalty is satisfaction with the brand.

Returns have become a normal part of the shopping process. They are also a business for retailers. According to statistics, returns account for 8% of retail sales (Çağdaş, 2020). When it comes to returns, customer experience is not the only reason for dissatisfaction. Regret about the product purchased is another factor that increases

consumers' interest in returns (Çağdaş, 2020).

Perceived value encompasses the consumer's perception of the brand's quality as well as other extrinsic and intrinsic features, whereas perceived costs include not only the price but also non-monetary advantages. In this way, advantages should be viewed holistically. In the service industry, perceived value is defined as a customer's total assessment of the economic, technical, and relational advantages they obtain in exchange for the price they pay and the costs they incur in comparison to the business's competing alternatives (Han, Kim, and Kim, 2011). Because of the nature of perceived value, it is one of the most crucial aspects for gaining a competitive advantage and a key indication of repurchase intentions. As a result, high perceived value is associated with strong loyalty, and perceived value is viewed as a key component in determining loyalty (Tabaku, and Kushi, 2013).

Another finding is that the brand's experiential marketing activities are at a low level of awareness by customers. In-depth interviews research that while some of the customers were aware of experiential marketing activities, some of them were not aware of these activities. Experiences of customers have a great role on the brand loyalty. The brand can increase brand loyalty by increasing brand awareness of experiential marketing activities and providing unforgettable experiences to its customers.

The target audience for the brand is women. Therefore, this study is based on female customers. However, personal care and cosmetic products are also used by men today. If this situation is taken into consideration, more diverse data can be accessed, and a broader perspective can be created. The fact that the brand sees only women as the target audience prevents it from appealing to a wider audience.

In addition to all these, the marketing manager of the Sephora brand could not be reached during this research. Therefore, we can say that secondary research was conducted. If the officials of the brand could have been interviewed, more information about experiential marketing and marketing communication activities could have been obtained.

According to the findings, it was understood that the trial products were not distributed equally to the customers. Equal treatment of the customers by brand will positively affect the brand image. Also, the brand has remained in the minds of consumers in different ways. It is possible to say that the positioning of the brand is

not clear. This negatively affects the brand image.

As previously mentioned, the purpose of this study is to investigate the effects of brand experiences on brand loyalty through brand experiences. Customer satisfaction is critical in many industries, but it is especially critical in cosmetics and personal care items. Also, this study helps to understand the impact of experiential marketing on brand loyalty, from traditional to digital. Existing literature has identified key experience-centred roles, why they have become so important, and how they impact businesses, and brands. This report attempts to comprehensively examine how experiential marketing through various means enhances customer experience and the impact of customer experience on brand loyalty.

The questions used in the in-depth interviews were prepared under the headings mentioned before. The answers given to experiential marketing questions and brand loyalty questions clearly show that there is an interaction between these concepts. The experiences of the participants affect their brand loyalty. Considering all the findings, it is more accurate to evaluate experiential marketing activities and brand loyalty as a whole.

Brand loyalty is the purchase of a brand and its transformation into behavioural intention. Brand trust is one of the most important precursors of brand loyalty. Trust strengthens the bond between the brand and the customer and encourages the emergence of brand loyalty (Kalyoncuoğlu, 2017).

The study's findings, which are consistent with the literature research on the profile of Sephora customers, demonstrate that Sephora caters to a consumer group ranging from 18 to 45 years old. From this standpoint, it is possible to recommend that Sephora establish marketing practices that appeal to a variety of age groups. Act marketing and related marketing such as tactics may be successful in forming a link with these customers. Sephora may enhance brand penetration and market share in these specific target groups by satisfying the demands of its consumers in low-penetration target groups by delivering superior service and focusing on the most rewarding experiential marketing components.

All brand information plays an important role in the formation of customers' brand and product preferences. In this direction, businesses can make changes in product pricing or innovations in product features to create and maintain brand loyalty. According to the in-depth interviews, as a result of increased brand loyalty, consumers

prefer to shop from brands they know and trust rather than competing companies. High brand loyalty significantly affects the image of the brand by increasing the future sales of the business. It can be also said that personal care and cosmetic sector is quite sensitive. Consumers can easily switch brands for affordable prices. This can be valid for Turkish consumers who face a critical economic crisis and high-rate inflation in the period of research. This situation can be also investigated in other countries and price-sensibility level of the consumers can be explored.

Changes in customer expectations, aspirations, and requirements, as well as their perspectives on goods and services, have a significant impact on marketing techniques. Customers' expectations and wishes, which place a higher value on the goods or services' experience qualities than on the actual advantages of the goods or services, create the foundation of the competition. The importance of sensory, emotional, behavioural, intellectual, and relational experiences, which will replace existing benefits in the purchase of goods or services, is growing day by day in the understanding of experiential marketing, which is to create positive customer experiences and effectively implement them. Customers' experiences are used as the basis for this experiential marketing concept, which aims to give consumer satisfaction. Experiential marketing aims to give customer pleasure by leveraging customers' experiences as a marketing tool, and it aims to grow market share by attempting to raise the profit rate. In the personal care and cosmetics sector, which has become one of the sectors of experiential marketing, customer experiences are extremely important. With their applications in the field of experiential marketing, cosmetics and personal care companies try to differentiate themselves from their competitors, boost client satisfaction and brand loyalty.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

The purpose of this research is to determine and explore experiential marketing and their influence on brand loyalty. It is possible to develop and improve the finding of this research which depends on qualitative technique that generates fresh data for future investigations (Patton, 2015). In future studies, experiential marketing can be evaluated within a broader framework and the study can be extended to more consumers. Experiential marketing activities can be evaluated within the scope of artificial intelligence applications.

There are differences between the traditional cosmetics sales model and the Sephora model, such as order, recommendation, access to brands and products, blog, and loyalty program. Sephora's digital strategy has positioned Sephora as one of the most innovative retailers in the world. Sephora has a spacious and clean store layout with a friendly spatial composition that invites you to walk around the store and experience the products with the advice of the sales staff. In other words, advice is optional and tailored to each consumer's level of need. Too often, the salesperson or consultant negatively influenced the discovery and purchase process, but it seems that Sephora has successfully solved these problems in most of its stores. Considering the experience of consumers, we can understand that the majority are satisfied with Sephora. Most women are unfamiliar with the best product for their skin type or specific needs, as well as the best way to apply the products or the tools required to do so. The questions that can arise at the time of purchase are extremely varied, and often the constant monitoring by the store's sales staff creates some obstacles and discomfort in testing the product and asking questions freely. The way Sephora organises the products in the stores shows its focus on the consumer experience. By eliminating the middleman and making products available for unlimited use, the experience becomes complete, but more importantly, each person can create the experience they want. That is, one can go through the various stages of research, trial, and purchase alone, or with a consultant, or any combination of the two. This allows the consumer to choose freely. By allowing unlimited product experiences, the Sephora brand has made it easier for consumers to access the right product for their needs. Because it is obvious that shopping with experience affects consumers positively. This situation is also repeated in online sales. Consumers have a good shopping experience because they can learn

about other people's experiences with the product by reading reviews and sharing their own experiences. In the new economy, the consumer has power, and Sephora derives this influence from its roots in the physical world. Today, with the internet at the center of our lives, changes are taking place in all sectors. Sephora has quickly adapted from the traditional world to the digital world. This is an important point to understand the success of the brand in future initiatives.

It can be said that Sephora has not only changed the way cosmetics are displayed, tested, and sold, but also brought different brands to different audiences with different purchasing power. The diversity of brands and products appeals to a wide range of women with different economic levels and different levels of engagement with the categories. Sephora brings together many brands under its own roof. It is a one-stop shop due to its product and brand diversity. Sephora emphasises the opportunity to experience the products. In its traditional stores, consumers can experience the products and buy the product that suits them best. Likewise, consumers have the opportunity to try most products using AR technology in digital environments. Sephora allows for unlimited in-store product comparisons, both with its store and product layout and the opportunity to try products. In addition, Sephora adds younger consumer segments to its customer base when combined with new, niche, and exclusive brands. Sephora's main segment is millennials. In connection with demographic changes, the Sephora brand is adapting its product and brand diversity and marketing to engage consumers and attract new generations. Millennials value content and peer recommendations and need peer approval to buy. In the US and Europe, Sephora has several blogs and comment channels on this topic. These are the platforms that Sephora provides to its users, such as Beauty Talk, Sephora Glossy, and Beauty Board. In Turkey, these are limited to the loyalty program, social media accounts, and the Sephora blog page. Therefore, it is possible to say that the brand is not very active in the Turkish cosmetic sector in terms of communication. It was observed that the brand's marketing communication activities in the Turkish cosmetics market were inadequate, and it can be said that customers are not aware of most of the brand's experiential marketing activities in Turkey.

Social shopping strengthens sales of more prestigious products and increases profitability. While price is important, discounts and loyalty programs reward consumers to the point where they are willing to provide more information to continue

enjoying the benefits. Sephora capitalises on this by developing platforms and building communities that facilitate communication between consumers and the brand. Today, consumers expect digital integration in every aspect of their lives, and women readily embrace technologies that make their lives easier. Sephora is developing both its digital store and its traditional stores in terms of usability, thinking about how the experiences in each can make consumers' lives easier. Consumers who are satisfied with their shopping experience establish an emotional connection with the brand. This in turn affects brand loyalty. The search for information is wide and varied, and for most consumers, references from friends and other users are more important than expert opinion. Information is excellent and empowering, but it needs to be processed correctly. According to the findings of in-depth interviews, most consumers use their smartphones in stores for different purposes other than online shopping, such as search and evaluation. So, for the consumer, the mobile app and website are another touchpoint that integrates with the traditional store. The consumer using a mobile app is always connected to the same device, which makes the experience more personalised and faster, which is an advantage in terms of loyalty. It is clear from the in-depth interviews that the majority of consumers have the mobile app. A user with a mobile app can complete their shopping much more quickly and easily of Sephora. Likewise, users with a Sephora membership can connect to their accounts on the website and shop easily. Since information such as address information and credit card information is registered in their own accounts, the shopping process goes faster. Consumers interviews state that they can shop who want to save time prefer the digital store. However, another finding obtained from the interviews is that the customers who use Sephora's mobile application do not find the application sufficient.

Sephora's marketing model does not distinguish between traditional and digital but seeks to maximise the strengths of each through the presence of the other. In-store mobile initiatives explain this, and vice versa; online invitations to in-store events or the online display of in-store stock are clear examples. Both channels are geared towards facilitating the new, different, and dispersed shopping process through information search, trial (physical or technology-assisted with colourIQ), virtual shopping bags, points accumulation, subsequent purchase, and all after-sales services. Sephora's value chain is being built around consumer experience and touch points. Experience is always prioritised. Integrated multi-channel strategies are being

developed that address digital marketing more fully and combine it with retail. This is being done to create a situation where the consumer is at the centre and technology facilitates the shopping experience, aiming to improve the shopping experience. The value of the social experience is best expressed through the creation of communities, thereby creating a distinct brand promise that strengthens consumer loyalty. The loyal consumer becomes an ambassador, collaborating and working with the brand on new experience structures. Brand-loyal consumers are the biggest supporters of the brand.

According to results of this research, it can be said the brand trust, brand satisfaction, brand experience are factors which affect brand loyalty. Customers' views of their brand experiences appear to influence their satisfaction with the brand. This research backs up Schmitt, Zarantonello, and Brakus (2009)'s claim that brand experience influences brand satisfaction. Creating engaging and memorable brand experiences helps customers build good emotions in their long-term memories, which leads to higher levels of satisfaction with products and services, as well as brand loyalty.

According to the findings, brand experience has a beneficial impact on emotional commitment. This research demonstrates that customers' emotional attachment to a brand is influenced by their brand experiences over time. Marketing managers who want to get customers emotionally engaged with their companies should focus on developing comprehensive, innovative, and memorable experiences that can favourably affect customers' emotions. Consumers' emotional connection to companies will grow when they have remarkable experiences that cause them to feel pleasant emotions, and they will become less receptive to competing brands' marketing efforts. It will also assist customers in identifying with the brand, becoming more loyal to the brand in terms of both attitude and behaviour, and becoming less price sensitive and willing to spend more.

There are several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the study findings. First, since the proposed framework was tested using a sample from a single country, Turkey, the generalisability of the results is limited. As a result, data from different nations can be used to expand and improve future research projects. The number of people in the sample is quite tiny. The study could be improved by extending the sample size and bringing in people from different parts of the world. Secondly, this study is limited to the cosmetics industry. Research covering various

sectors can be conducted to examine the effect of experiential marketing on brand loyalty. This study and its findings contain a number of flaws, but they do point in the right direction for future research. The current research shows that there is considerable evidence for links between brand and future behaviour, such as experience, brand satisfaction, trust, and loyalty. In general, it is critical to learn more about the relationship between brand loyalty and other commitment-related variables that are crucial to relationship marketing. Understanding and managing the ideas of brand trust and loyalty require brand experience conceptualization (Schmitt, Zarantonello, and Brakus, 2009).

From a broad viewpoint, this research makes a significant contribution. This research essentially backs up Schmitt's (1999) experience-based marketing approach. The influence of Sephora's experiential marketing operations in the Turkish market on consumer behavioural outcomes such as customer satisfaction and loyalty are investigated in this study. Furthermore, for practitioners, this research gives a greater knowledge of the experiential marketing method, as well as insights into the cosmetics chain store industry and recommendations for marketers on which strategic experiential marketing activities or aspect they should prioritise. As a result, this study sheds light on which parts of the strategic experiential marketing modules, or which individual experience elements, should be prioritised when creating marketing campaigns for various target groups.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A. In-depth Interview Questions

1. How would you describe the Sephora brand? If you had to choose three adjectives to describe it, what would they be?
2. How do you feel about the Sephora brand, and how valuable is it to you?
3. What do you think about the Sephora collection products and how do you feel about them?
4. Why do you go to the Sephora store?
5. Why do you visit Sephora digital environments?
6. Do you prefer shopping at Sephora physical stores, the Sephora website, or the Sephora mobile app? Why?
7. Consider your most recent Sephora shopping experience. How did the elements that gave you the store experience (product layout, in-store look, background music, and store scent) affect you?
8. How does the opportunity to try products in the Sephora store on trial sheets or on your wrist affect your shopping experience?
9. How do you feel when you spend time in a Sephora store?
10. How does the behaviour of Sephora store staff affect you?
11. When you shop at Sephora's store, what motivates you to shop on the website? Why?
12. What do you think the online shopping experience on the Sephora website is like?

And how do you think the shopping experience on the mobile application is?

13. Think about your last Sephora digital store experience. How did the elements that provided you with a digital store experience (special offers for the mobile app, trial size gift for online purchases, discounts starting a day earlier in the digital store, some products sold only in digital environments, some discounts exclusive to digital environments, Sephora blog experiences) affect you (sensory, emotional, relational, cognitive)?

14. When shopping on Sephora's digital platforms, what would lead you to shop in a traditional store? Why?

15. Under what circumstances would you return a product you bought from Sephora? Which channel (traditional or digital) do you prefer to complete the return process? Why?

16. I am a loyal customer of the Sephora brand because...

17. I am not loyal to the Sephora brand because...

18. When I buy personal care and cosmetics, I only prefer Sephora because...

19. If an alternative brand to Sephora was cheaper, would you still shop at Sephora? Why?

20. How would you feel if Sephora stores closed one day? Would there be a change in your life?

21. Do you trust Sephora stores? If yes, how is this trust ensured? If no, why?

22. Do you trust Sephora digital stores? If yes, how is this trust ensured? If no, why?

23. Would you recommend Sephora to people around you? If yes or no, why?

24. Would the experience inside a Sephora store influence you to visit the store again?
If so, which store experiences are these?

25. In which situations do you advocate for Sephora in your close circle? How do you talk about your in-store experiences? How would you describe your digital store experiences?

26. How do the trial products that come with Sephora products affect your loyalty to the Sephora brand?

27. How would your experience with the Sephora store's digital environments influence your decision to visit the digital store again?

Appendix B. Ethical Board Approval

SAYI : B.30.2.İEÜ.0.05.05-020-206

31.03.2022

KONU : Etik Kurul Kararı hk.

Sayın Prof. Dr. Sema MİSCİ KİP ve Burcu ÖZTÜRK,

“Gelenekselden Dijitale Deneyimsel Pazarlamanın Marka Bağlılığına Etkisi: Sephora Markası Üzerine Bir Araştırma” başlıklı projenizin etik uygunluğu konusundaki başvurunuz sonuçlanmıştır.

Etik Kurulumuz 31.03.2022 tarihinde sizin başvurunuzun da içinde bulunduğu bir gündemle toplanmış ve Etik Kurul üyeleri projeleri incelemiştir.

Sonuçta 31.03.2022 tarihinde **“Gelenekselden Dijitale Deneyimsel Pazarlamanın Marka Bağlılığına Etkisi: Sephora Markası Üzerine Bir Araştırma”** konulu projenizin etik açıdan uygun olduğuna oy birliğiyle karar verilmiştir.

Gereği için bilgilerinize sunarım.
Saygılarımla,

Prof. Dr. Murat Bengisu
Etik Kurul Başkanı