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DEPARTMENT OF MARKETING



DISSERTATION RESEARCH PROJECT

**ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF EXPERIENTIAL MARKETING IN ENHANCING
CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE. A CASE STUDY ON ZIMBABWE TOURISM INDUSTRY.**

BY

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DEDICATION

I would like to thank the Almighty for His grace throughout. This dissertation is dedicated to my family and friends, whose unwavering support and encouragement have been my guiding light. To my supervisors, thank you for your expertise and patience. To those who inspired me, this is our collective achievement. Your belief in me has made this journey possible and worthwhile.

ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of experiential marketing dimensions (sensory, affective, intellectual, and behavioral factors) on customer experience, satisfaction, perceived brand value, and long-term loyalty within the highly competitive Zimbabwean tourism industry. Grounded in Bernd Schmitt's (1999) Experiential Marketing Theory and utilizing a positivist, quantitative survey design, data was gathered from 361 domestic and international tourists visiting key destinations across Zimbabwe and analyzed through Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The empirical findings revealed that all four experiential marketing dimensions significantly and positively influenced overall customer experience, with sensory factors ($\beta = 0.325$), affective factors ($\beta = 0.623$), intellectual factors ($\beta = 0.440$), and behavioral factors ($\beta = 0.260$) all recording significant positive effects ($p < 0.001$). Affective factors emerged as the strongest predictor of overall customer experience. The findings further showed significant positive effects on customer satisfaction, with sensory factors recording $\beta = 0.405$, affective factors $\beta = 0.504$, intellectual factors $\beta = 0.291$, and behavioral factors $\beta = 0.123$. Similarly, customer loyalty was significantly influenced by sensory factors ($\beta = 0.289$), affective factors ($\beta = 0.539$), intellectual factors ($\beta = 0.269$), and behavioral factors ($\beta = 0.129$). Perceived brand value was significantly influenced by sensory factors ($\beta = 0.276$), affective factors ($\beta = 0.483$), and intellectual factors ($\beta = 0.291$), while the effect of behavioral factors was not statistically significant ($\beta = 0.086$, $p = 0.085$). The structural model also demonstrated significant relationships between overall customer experience and customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.362$, $p < 0.001$), customer satisfaction and perceived brand value ($\beta = 0.247$, $p < 0.001$), and perceived brand value and customer loyalty ($\beta = 0.247$, $p < 0.001$). Mediation analysis further indicated significant indirect effects within the proposed experiential marketing pathways, supporting the importance of customer experience, perceived brand value, and customer satisfaction in translating experiential marketing activities into stronger customer outcomes. Consequently, the study concludes that deliberate experiential staging is a strategic imperative for national competitiveness, urging tourism operators and policymakers to look beyond functional service delivery and intentionally design integrated sensory, emotional, cognitive, and interactive encounters that transform first-time visitors into loyal brand advocates.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The tourism industry is among the fastest rising sectors in the global economy. Consumers nowadays when travelling, they highly aim look for experiences that they seek to remember. Tourism operators are now drifting away from traditional marketing approaches that mainly focus on promoting simple use of products and services. So many organizations are now adopting experiential marketing strategies that aim to create emotional, interactive, and memorable experiences for customers. Despite the country's rich tourism resources, the sector continues to face challenges such as regional competition, low customer retention, and poor adoption of digital marketing technologies. (Zimbabwe Tourism Authority, 2020). This study examines the combined role of experiential marketing in enhancing customer experience in the Zimbabwean tourism industry.

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Over the years, the tourism industry has moved from a service-oriented approach to what Pine and Gilmore (1999) describe as the Experience Economy. Customers are no longer satisfied with simply buying a service. They expect experiences that create emotional value. These experiences that are engaging and memorable.

Schmitt (1999) argues that traditional marketing approaches, which focus mainly on product features and benefits are no longer enough in current markets. He proposes a strategy that creates value through the named dimensions (sensory, emotional, intellectual, and behavioral experiences)

thus experiential marketing. These dimensions are crucial to an organization in building stronger relationships with customers. This is through creating experiences they enjoy and remember.

In Zimbabwe, tourism is a driver for economic growth. The country is recognized for sites such as Victoria Falls, Hwange National Park, and Great Zimbabwe. These sites provide opportunities for tourism operators to create great experiences for both domestic and foreign visitors.

However, the country faces strong competition from neighboring countries such as South Africa and Botswana (ZTA, 2024). Changing customer expectations and increased use of digital technologies have changed the way tourists search for information. It also changed how customers interact and share their travel experiences. Personalized, interactive, and emotionally engaging experiences are the ones that are now expected by tourists.

Despite experiential marketing being well known in the world, in Zimbabwe it is less known and less invested into yet it has an impact on the tourism industry. We are more focused on the quality of service and attractiveness of a destination while ignoring the roles that experiential marketing dimensions have in shaping customer satisfaction, loyalty, and perceived brand value. This study therefore seeks to close this gap by examining how the experiential dimensions influence customer experience in Zimbabwe's tourism sector.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Mazarire (2016) says that Zimbabwe has many attractive tourism destinations and cultural resources. But it continues to face challenges in improving customer satisfaction and building long-term customer loyalty. Traditional marketing methods are being relied on yet they ignore the trends of the world which seeks to create lasting experiences to customers (Kim and Ritchie, 2014).

Tourists today expect experiences that are emotionally engaging, interactive, and meaningful. However, some operators in Zimbabwe have been slow in adopting these strategies and technologies. These strategies enhance customer interaction before, during, and after travel. This makes competition with other countries to be difficult (Kim and Ritchie, 2014).

There is limited empirical evidence explaining how experiential marketing dimensions influence customer experience and brand value. Yet memorable experiences play an important role in

influencing customer satisfaction according to Walls et al (2011). These experiences increase repeat visitation, and positive word-of-mouth communication.

Opportunities that strengthen customer loyalty and improve destination competitiveness may be missed. If the operators in the industry act without enough understanding of these relationships, fully utilizing the industry may be difficult. This study therefore seeks to assess the impact of experiential marketing on customer experience within Zimbabwe's tourism industry.

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to assess the impact of experiential marketing in enhancing customer experience in the Zimbabwean tourism industry.

1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To determine the impact of sensory factors in enhancing customer satisfaction within the Zimbabwean tourism industry.
2. To evaluate how sensory factors influence on customer experience.
3. To assess the relationship between sensory factors and customer loyalty.
4. To analyze how sensory factors affects customer's perception of brand value.
5. To determine the impact of affective factors in enhancing customer satisfaction within the Zimbabwean tourism industry.
6. To evaluate how affective factors influence on customer experience.
7. To assess the relationship between affective factors and customer loyalty.
8. To analyze how affective factors affects customer's perception of brand value.

9. To determine the impact of behavioral factors in enhancing customer satisfaction within the Zimbabwean tourism industry.
10. To evaluate how behavioral factors influence on customer experience.
11. To assess the relationship between behavioral factors and customer loyalty.
12. To analyze how behavioral factors affects customer's perception of brand value.
13. To determine the impact of intellectual factors in enhancing customer satisfaction within the Zimbabwean tourism industry.
14. To evaluate how intellectual factors influence on customer experience.
15. To assess the relationship between intellectual factors and customer loyalty.
16. To analyze how intellectual factors affects customer's perception of brand value.
17. To analyze how overall customer experience mediates between experiential marketing and perceived brand value.
18. To analyze how perceived brand value mediates between experiential marketing and customer satisfaction
19. To analyze how customer satisfaction mediates the relationship between experiential marketing and customer loyalty.

1.5 STATEMENT OF HYPOTHESIS

H₁: Experiential marketing has a significant positive impact on customer experience in the Zimbabwean tourism industry.

H₂: The dimensions of experiential marketing have significant effect on customer satisfaction.

H₃: The dimensions of experiential marketing have significant effect on customer loyalty.

H₄: The dimensions of experiential marketing have significant effect on perceived brand value

H5: There is significant relationship between customer experience and customer satisfaction.

H6: There is significant relationship between customer satisfaction and customer perception of brand value

H7: There is significant relationship between customer perception of brand value and customer loyalty.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

1.6.1 To the Researcher

The study will improve the researcher's understanding of experiential marketing, customer experience, and tourism management while also contributing towards the fulfilment of academic requirements.

1.6.2 To the University

The study will contribute to the existing body of academic knowledge in tourism and marketing studies.

1.6.3 To the Tourism Industry

The results of this study may help operators understand how experiential marketing strategies can improve customer satisfaction, strengthen loyalty, and increase competitiveness within the tourism sector.

1.6.4 To Customers

The study may assist towards better tourism experiences through improved service delivery and customer engagement

1.7 ASSUMPTIONS

Respondents will provide honest, accurate and unbiased responses during the data collection. The tourists and potential tourists are familiar with tourism destinations in Zimbabwe and are capable of evaluating attributes such as customer experience, customer satisfaction and perceived brand

value. These variables significantly influence tourists' loyalty to destinations and that respondents possess sufficient knowledge and experience to assess them effectively. The selected sample adequately represents the target population of tourists and potential tourists in Zimbabwe, thereby allowing findings to be generalized to the broader population.

1.8 DELIMITATIONS

The study focuses on selected destinations and operators in Zimbabwe, particularly in Harare, Masvingo and Manicaland. The research examines experiential marketing and customer experience and not on other marketing strategies such as pricing or product diversification.

It is limited to Schmitt's (1999) experiential marketing dimensions, namely sensory, affective, intellectual and behavioral factors. The target respondents include domestic and foreign tourists who have recently visited destinations or sites in Zimbabwe.

1.9 LIMITATIONS

The research also relies on self-reported responses from participants. Some respondents may fail to remember certain experiences accurately or may provide desirable answers.

In addition, the nature of the study means that data will be collected at one point in time, making it hard to measure long-term changes in customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Economic and policy changes within tourism industry may also affect customer perceptions during the data collection period.

1.10 DEFINITION OF TERMS

Experiential Marketing. Refers to a strategy that engages customers through interactive and memorable experiences while creating emotional connections rather than focusing entirely on product features (Schmitt, 1999).

Customer Experience. According to Lemon and Verhoef (2016) it refers to the overall perception and satisfaction a customer gains from interactions with a business across points, both physical and digital. The perception and satisfaction a consumer forms through every point of contact with a business. This includes both tangible physical interactions and intangible digital engagements in the consumer journey

Tourism Industry. A multifaceted network of enterprises and services spanning transportation, lodging, heritage sites, and leisure activities that collaborate to facilitate and provide comprehensive travel encounters for visitors (UNWTO, 2020).

Perceived Brand Value. The customers' evaluation of experiential benefits and cost of a brand or service influenced by sensory, emotional, cognitive, and relational experiences. Subjective assessment performed by the customer regarding the utility and benefits of a service relative to its cost. This evaluation is heavily shaped by the sensory, affective, cognitive, and social experiences associated with the brand (Gentile et al., 2007).

Customer Loyalty. Refers to a strong, lasting commitment to repeatedly purchase or use the same brand over time. This commitment stays the same even when competitors offer attractive deals, promotions or other factors that could tempt the customer to switch (Oliver, 1999)

1.11 ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

Chapter one provides the introduction, background, statement of the problem, purpose, objectives, hypotheses, significance, assumptions, delimitations, limitations, definitions of terms, and organization of the study. Chapter two presents the literature review where focus is on theories, models, and empirical studies related to experiential marketing, digital integration, and customer experience. Chapter three outlines the research methodology, including research design, population, sampling and data collection. Chapter four presents and analyzes the research findings. Chapter five discusses the findings, draws conclusions, and makes recommendations.

1.12 SUMMARY

This chapter introduced the study by showing the relevance of experiential marketing and digital integration in tourism. It provided background on Zimbabwe's tourism, outlined the problem, and defined the objectives, significance, and scope of the research. It also stated assumptions, delimitations, limitations, and key terms. The next chapter reviews relevant literature to develop a theoretical and empirical foundation for the topic under study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Experiential marketing has become largely important in the tourism industry because modern tourists value memorable experiences more (Pine and Gilmore, 2011). Tourism experiences are shaped by interactions between visitors, service providers, attractions, and the surrounding environment. Schmitt (1999) states that these experiences influence customer satisfaction, loyalty, and perceived brand value. Zimbabwe has several attractions that have the potential to provide meaningful and memorable experiences. However, there is still limited research examining how experiential marketing dimensions influence customer experience within the Zimbabwean tourism sector (UNWTO, 2020). This chapter reviews the theoretical and empirical literature related to experiential marketing, customer experience, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, and perceived brand value.

2.1 THEORETICAL REVIEW

2.1.1 Experiential Marketing Theory

The overarching theory for this study is the Experiential Marketing Theory developed by Bernd Schmitt (1999). According to Schmitt, consumers are not only influenced by product features and prices but also by emotions, senses, and memorable experiences. Schmitt identified several dimensions known as Strategic Experiential Modules (SEMs). These include sensory experiences, emotional experiences, intellectual experiences and behavioral experiences. These help organizations to create meaningful interactions with customers. Within the tourism industry, experiential marketing allows operators to create encounters that go beyond ordinary service

delivery. For example, tourists visiting Victoria Falls may be influenced not only by the site itself but also by the emotions, sounds, activities associated with the destination.

The Experience Economy

Experience Economy model was proposed by Pine and Gilmore (1999). They argue that experiences represent an economic offering, which is higher in value than goods or services. According to this view, tourism businesses in Zimbabwe must place experiences to differentiate themselves in a crowded global market. While Schmitt (1999) provides the specific psychological dimensions, Pine and Gilmore (1999) provide the economic justification when a memory is created. The value of the offering increases, leading to higher levels of customer satisfaction and perceived brand value.

Service-Dominant Logic

The service-dominant Logic framework which was developed by Vargo and Lusch in 2004 is also drawn by the study. it is a framework which offers the view through which the relationship between tourism providers and visitors they serve is examined. the framework represents the shift in how we think about value away from the thought that value is put in the physical goods or delivered through finished products. it points us to a notion that value is created interaction, collaboration and lived experiences. For example, a hotel room, a safari vehicle or a guided heritage tour is not value itself. it is the context within which value has a potential to be created (Vargo and Lusch, 2016).

For tourism, the difference matters greatly. it states that no tourism authority can claim full credit for the experience a tourist walks away with. Value is co-produced. it is gained in the happenings between what a service provider offers and what a visitor brings to the offering, relying on their own expectations. (Camilleri, 2024).

This theory aligns with the study's focus on experiential Marketing in Zimbabwean Tourism. The tourism business now has to know that to co-create value, their task is not to just improve facilities or streamlining processes. But to design the conditions to which meaningful engagement can occur. This is because value is created through interaction rather than simply being delivered. So, investing in the quality of human encounter is required. Also, building environments that can call

or invite emotional and sensory engagement. Also treating tourists as active participants in shaping their own experience is advised (Rather et al., 2023). Research shows that places which embrace this collaborative approach tend to create stronger satisfaction results. They also create deeper connections (Tuominen et al., 2024). For Zimbabwe, there are great foundations for co-create g experiences. This theory offers both a theoretical ground and a practical call to action for the operators to consider.

2.1.2 Customer Experience

Customer experience refers to the overall impression that develops in a person's mind. This comes as a result of every encounter the person has with a brand, service or organization. Customer experience is not just a one moment but a continuous development that is done by the customer. So, it is a layering of feelings, reactions and memories that form in the mind of a person over time. Lemon and Verhoef (2016) describe it as the combination of emotions, cognitive and behavioral responses that arise in the full path of the customer's journey. They also say that it starts from the very first point of contact the customer has with the brand. it goes through to even long after the transaction is complete. So, this definition matches well with the study and it says that experience cannot be reduced to any on interaction but it is a sum of all the encounters.

In tourism, this path begins earlier than most people assume. According to Lemon and Verhoef (2016), it starts long before the tourist even sets foot on the site. It is when their experience starts. It begins through searches of travels websites, the comparing of reviews, the anticipation which they build through social media images and the decision they make during the booking. It then moves to the arrangements made in preparation of going to the destination. It continues to the first impression made upon arrival, the encounter and interaction with local people and service staff. All the moments and days spent at the site and it is concluded by the thoughts and memories which the customer has after the trip is over. And once daily life has resumed. Each of all these stages

leaves a point and together they manipulate how a visitor feels about the place they went to and if it was worth it (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016).

What this research shows is that, the tourists that go away with the best memory which is genuine do not leave as only satisfied. They leave as advocates. They go back home and they tell people about their experience and then bring those people to the same place. So, the memories that usually stay with people are those that made them feel something Sthapit and Jimenez-Barreto, 2024).

So, in Zimbabwe, the customer's experience is shaped by a number of combining factors. The physical environment, the good hearts of local people, the country's culture and heritage offerings. To add on, the professionalism of tourism personnel also adds in to how visitors experience the destination as a whole. Kim et al. (2012) says that when experiences engage tourists on both emotions and sensory levels, it creates lasting loyalty. The research in Zimbabwean contexts strengthens this point. It points to accommodation quality, service standards, hospitality and natural attractions as the most affective determinants of visitor satisfaction Mazarire, 2016). More recent studies have extended this understanding. They say that tourists evaluate their overall experience as a result of the increase in perceived authenticity and cultural connection (Mkwizu, 2024). He says that it is mostly among you ger traveler segments.

Tourism managers should make sure that an experience design cannot be left to chance. It must be made possible across every touch point (Tuominen et al., 2024; Tan et al., 2024). Schmitt's framework (1999) offers a useful framework is the most useful framework for seeing this clearly. It is not just a tool for meeting expectations but a framework for building a deeper emotional engagement that turns satisfied visitors into a genuine loyal one.

H5: overall customer experience mediates between experiential marketing and perceived brand value.

2.1.3 CUSTOMER SATISFACTION (THEORIES AND MECHANISMS)

Customer satisfaction refers to how well a product matches what a customer expected and whether it delivers more than they anticipated. Oliver (1997) explains satisfaction using the Expectancy-Disconfirmation Theory, which states that customers compare their expectations with the actual experience received. It states that visitors arrive at a destination with a set of expectations formed by brand promises, digital marketing communications, and previous travel experiences. Satisfaction is therefore determined by the comparison between these expectations and the actual perceived performance of the encounter (Oliver, 1997). When the experiential marketing tactics exceeds the visitor's normal expectations, positive disconfirmation occurs, leading to high satisfaction levels. Also, if the performance fails to meet the promised standards, negative disconfirmation results, which can damage the reputation of the tourism brand (Schmitt, 1999).

Oliver, (1997) states that experiential marketing contributes to customer satisfaction by creating emotional, sensory, and interactive experiences that make customers feel valued and engaged. Satisfaction is frequently positioned as a critical mediating variable that covers the gap between experiential marketing attributes and long-term brand outcomes (Zeithaml et al, 1996). Researchers can more correctly map how specific experiential modules translate into the tangible business outcomes. These outcomes are required for the industry's recovery and regional competitiveness (Mazarire, 2016). It can be done by treating satisfaction as a mediator,

H7: customer satisfaction mediates the relationship between experiential marketing and customer loyalty.

2.1.4 PERCEIVED BRAND VALUE

Sweeney and Soutar (2001) says that perceived brand value refers to the customer's overall evaluation of the benefits received from a product or service compared to the costs incurred. According to the PERVAL framework, tourists weigh the quality of their experiences against the time and money spent. This means that a brand's value is high when the experiential rewards are seen as superior to those of competitors. For the Zimbabwean tourism industry, enhancing perceived brand value requires operators to demonstrate that the unique natural and cultural assets of the country offer a prestige and fulfilment that justifies the associated travel costs (Gentile et al., 2007).

Conclusively, perceived brand value is influenced by the quality of benefits, experience and social values that are gained. Also, the uniqueness of the destination is considered (Schmitt, 1999). Research by Mazarire (2022) says that experiential Marketing acts as a tool for creating value. It does that by providing tourists with intangible benefits that go beyond basic service delivery. This shows the difference between traditional marketing and experiential Marketing. It is critical for building a competitive advantage in Southern Africa. This is so because high perceived value does not only drive customer satisfaction but also serves as a predictor of long-term loyalty. Which in turn leads to the willingness to pay a price that is premium for Zimbabwean destinations (Mazarire, 2016)

H6: perceived brand value mediates between experiential marketing and customer satisfaction

2.1.5 CUSTOMER LOYALTY

Customer loyalty refers to the customer's continuous preference for particular brand or destination (Hoffman, 2013). In the context of tourism, this loyalty is shown in ways that are clear. For example, tourist who come back after a year, leave behind reviews and recommends ways that shape the decisions of the future travelers. This is not just a simple outcome for destination managers to hope for. But it is a strategic and economic asset which is valuable. The cost of attracting new visitors is reduced through loyal customers. They provide a stable income and they are ambassadors with a message that carries truth which can be easily believed than the official destination advertisement (Appiah-Nkrumah and Mensah, 2025). The connection between satisfying experiences and repeat visitation is a strong connection. That is visitors who feel their expectations have been met or surpassed shows stronger intentions to come back and to bring others along with them (Sthapit and Jimenez-Barreto, 2024)

When tourists form an emotional bond with a brand, they become less sensitive to the cost even if increased. They become more resistant to the marketing efforts of regional competitors. Rather than resulting from a single visit, loyalty develops gradually through a series of positive experiences that strengthen visitors' attachment to the destination over time (Kim and Ritchie, 2014).

Evidence from Zimbabwe's tourism sector suggests that building genuine customer loyalty is a complex process. Studies have shown that while creating awareness of a destination is important for attracting first-time visitors, awareness alone does not guarantee that tourists will return. Awareness must be backed by satisfying and high-quality experiences that meet or exceed the expectations of the traveler. (Schmitt, 1999; Rather et al., 2023). Studies examining the Zimbabwean hospitality sector suggest that when destination branding and festival strategies are paired with good service delivery, the likelihood of repeat purchase increases significantly. This proves the need of moving beyond traditional marketing to adopt experiential strategies that build the emotional and cognitive connections required to secure loyalty in a competitive global market (Mazarire, 2024; Prayag and Ozanne, 2023; Kim and Perdue, 2023).

2.1.6 Mechanisms on How the Experiential Marketing Dimensions Affect Customer Loyalty, Satisfaction, Perceived Brand Value and Overall Customer Experience

According to Schmitt (1999), sensory marketing plays a significant role in shaping tourists' overall experiences and their level of satisfaction. By affecting the five human senses, destinations can create memorable impressions that determine how visitors view and accept their trips. In Zimbabwe, attractions such as the scenic beauty of Victoria Falls and the distinctive aromas of indigenous plants contribute to visitors' perceptions of destination quality. When these sensory elements are well managed, tourists are more likely to feel that they have received good value for the money spent on their visit. Furthermore, these unique sensory experiences help Zimbabwe be different from competing destinations. It encourages tourists to form positive bonds with the destination and increasing the likelihood of repeat visits (Kim and Ritchie, 2014).

H1a: sensory factors have a positive effect on overall customer experience.

H1b: sensory factors have a positive effect on customer satisfaction

H1c: sensory factors have a positive effect on customer loyalty

H1d: sensory factors have a positive effect on perceived brand value

Emotionally engaging experiences have been found to influence tourists' future behavioral intentions. This includes revisit intentions and positive word-of-mouth recommendations (Su et al., 2024). When tourists develop an emotional connection with a destination, they are more likely to remain loyal and maintain a long-term relationship with the destination brand. When visitors experience feelings such as happiness, excitement, or pride, they view their trip in a good way. This is important in tourism because travel decisions are often influenced by feelings associated with previous encounter (Schmitt, 1999; UN Tourism, 2025). These emotional connections also increase perceived brand value. It is when tourists begin to associate the destination with meaningful personal experiences rather than simply viewing it as a service provider. Over time, these positive emotions can strengthen customer loyalty. Which leads tourists to develop a lasting attachment to the destination and a desire to revisit it (Schmitt, 1999).

H2a: affective factors have a positive effect on overall customer experience.

H2b: affective factors have a positive effect on customer satisfaction.

H2c: affective factors have a positive effect on customer loyalty

H2d: affective factors have a positive effect on perceived brand value

The intellectual dimension, is often referred to as the "think" component of experiential marketing. It seeks to engage tourists cognitively by creating curiosity, creativity, and problem-solving abilities (Pine and Gilmore, 1999). Rather than focusing entirely on entertainment. It increases intellectual experiences that encourage visitors to learn, discover new knowledge, and develop a deeper understanding of the destinations they visit. Contemporary tourism research indicates that modern travelers increasingly seek educational and meaningful experiences that provide opportunities for personal growth and knowledge acquisition (Hussein et al., 2024; Xu and Pratt, 2023). As tourists gain new knowledge and insights, they often put greater value from their travel experiences.

Recent studies have found that intellectual experiences influence tourists' perceptions of destination quality and overall satisfaction (Gao et al., 2024). Visitors who feel mentally engaged are more likely to appreciate the uniqueness of a destination and view their experiences as

meaningful and worthwhile. This contributes to stronger perceived brand value and enhances the overall customer experience.

Additionally, intellectual engagement can strengthen customer loyalty. Through creating lasting memories and encouraging tourists to revisit destinations, tourists gain deeper knowledge or explore aspects they may have missed during previous visits (Hussein et al., 2024). Tourists who perceive learning opportunities as valuable aspects of their travel experiences are also more likely to tell others about the destination. This will contribute to destination competitiveness and sustainable tourism growth (UN Tourism, 2025).

By providing opportunities for discovery and personal growth, intellectual experiences make visits more enjoyable and memorable. Tourists feel they have gained knowledge or a new perspective. Travelers are more likely to remain loyal to destinations that offer them continuous personal and mental growth (Schmitt, 1999)

H4a: intellectual factors (thinking) have a positive effect on overall customer experience.

H4b: intellectual factors (thinking) have a positive effect on customer satisfaction.

H4c: intellectual factors (thinking) have a positive effect on customer loyalty

H4d: intellectual factors (thinking) have a positive effect on perceived brand value.

Finally, the Behavioral dimension, aims to affect the physical experiences, and interactions of the tourist. This dimension is particularly understandable in Zimbabwe's adventure tourism, where physical activities like water rafting and bungee jumping require active participation. Overall customer experience is improved by integrating the brand into the tourist's lifestyle and physical identity (Schmitt, 1999). The sense of satisfaction is increased through personal achievement and physical involvement when a tourist act in certain activities. The participation strengthens perceived brand value by providing a high-performance experience that is difficult to copy. Furthermore, high customer loyalty results when a tourist identifies their lifestyle with the activities offered in Zimbabwe, as the destination becomes their preferred site for expressing their physical and social identity (Zeithaml et al, 1996).

H3a: behavioral factors have a positive effect on overall customer experience.

H3b: behavioral factors have a positive effect on customer satisfaction.

H3c: behavioral factors have a positive effect on customer loyalty.

H3d: behavioral factors have a positive effect on perceived brand value

2.1.7 EMPIRICAL REVIEW

According to Kim and Ritchie, (2014), it confirms that experiential marketing dimensions are strong predictors of customer satisfaction and long-term loyalty. Moving beyond functional service to engage visitors through sensory, emotional, and cognitive strategies significantly increases retention rates across various tourism markets. Studies specifically highlight that the sense and feel modules are important for immediate satisfaction, while the think and act modules are essential for making experiences memorable (Schmitt, 1999).

While experiential marketing can influence a tourist's behavior, its primary impact is filtered through the enhancement of their satisfaction levels (Zeithaml et al., 1996). This is suggested as customer satisfaction acts as a key mediator between experiential tactics and loyalty. So, successfully staging these encounters, Zimbabwean sites fulfil psychological needs, which then serve as necessary for building brand commitment and word-of-mouth (Oliver, 1997).

Furthermore, high-quality experiences are proven to increase perceived brand value and brand equity. Tourists assign the brand a higher value that often matches the actual price paid when they view an encounter as multidimensional. This psychological value creates a competitive buffer, making the tourism brand more competitive in regional markets. Recent studies suggest that the relate and feel dimensions drive this value, as they foster a sense of social belonging and emotional warmth that converts one-time visitors into loyal brand advocates (Sweeney and Soutar, 2001)

2.2 THEORETICAL LITERATURE WITH ZIMBABWEAN EVIDENCE

2.2.1 Destination attributes in reliance to overall experience and satisfaction.

Studies surveying visitors to Zimbabwe's major attractions (including Great Zimbabwe and other sites) commonly find that attraction quality and accommodation strongly influence overall destination satisfaction which indicates that staging of sensory and service experiences matters for visitor evaluation. Kwanisai (2016) destination attributes work and visitor satisfaction research support the centrality of attraction and service attributes to overall experience.

2.2.2 Service quality and hotel experiences.

Research on hotel service quality in Mutare revealed that customers' perceptions and expectations of service quality significantly shape their experienced service quality and satisfaction through implicating the sense and act experiential modules in hospitality contexts (ZTA, 2024). Evidence from hotel surveys indicates that improvements in tangible and intangible service elements increase visitor satisfaction.

2.3 HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

2.3.1 Empirical evidence

Despite a growing body of Zimbabwe tourism research on destination attributes, visitor satisfaction and branding, several gaps remain, empirical tests of experiential marketing (Schmitt, 1999) in Zimbabwean tourism are limited. Recent studies have shifted focus toward how experiential marketing builds brand resilience and emotional loyalty. Research by Hosany et al. (2022) confirms that emotional triggers have become the most drivers of satisfaction, as tourists now seek deeper connections after periods of travel restrictions. This supports the hypothesis highlighting that affective bonds are now more predictive of loyalty than functional service quality.

Furthermore, identifying the sensory overlap has been a major trend. Tussyadiah (2024;2020) has shown that sensory marketing significantly enhances perceived brand value by creating Instagram moments that tourists perceive as high-value. In the regional context, Chigora et al. (2023) conducted studies on Zimbabwean destination branding, finding that the integration of behavioral activities such as community-based tourism and heritage walks significantly boosts

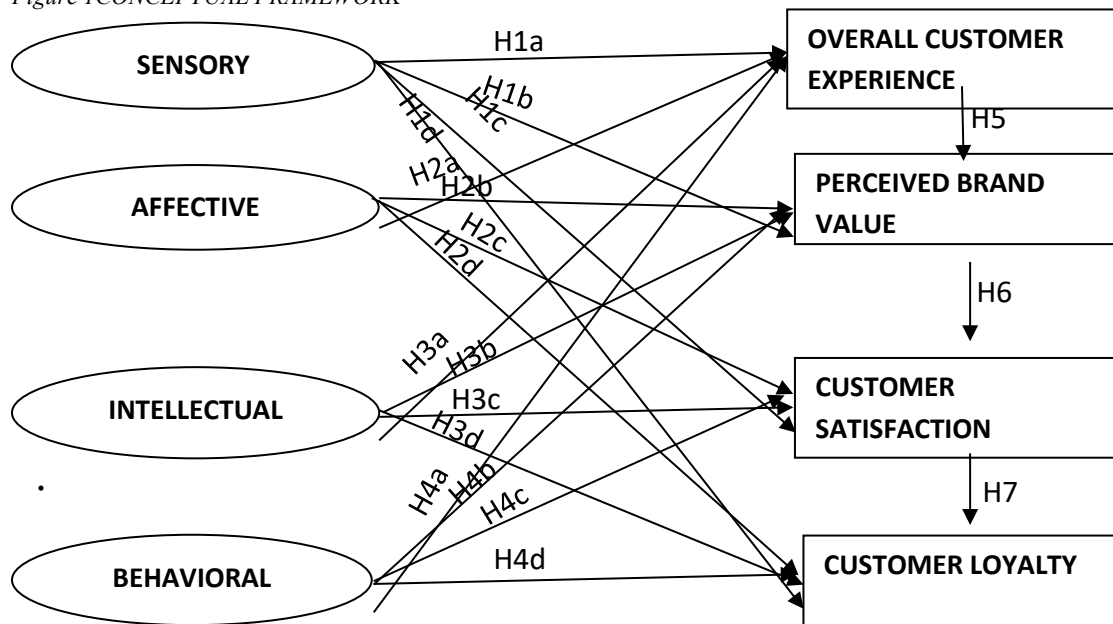
Lastly, the link between experience, value, and satisfaction was reinforced by Rather (2021), who proved that in high-risk or recovering markets, a holistic brand experience is the primary factor that reduces perceived risk and increases the value-for-money perception. This recent evidence provides a modern justification for your model, ensuring the research is grounded in the current economic climate of 2026

2.4 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

(Experiential Marketing mechanisms, overall customer experience, perceived brand value, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty.

Fig 1 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Figure 1 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



2.5 GAP ANALYSIS

Although previous studies have examined tourism satisfaction, destination branding, and service quality in Zimbabwe, limited research has focused specifically on experiential marketing dimensions and their influence on customer experience.

Most local studies focus on destination attractiveness and service quality without fully exploring how Schmitt's (1999) dimensions contribute to customer satisfaction, loyalty, and perceived brand value.

In addition, there is limited research integrating digital tourism experiences with physical tourism experiences in Zimbabwe. This study therefore seeks to address these gaps by empirically examining the relationship between experiential marketing and customer experience in Zimbabwe's tourism industry.

2.6 SUMMARY

This chapter established the theoretical foundations (Experience Economy, Schmitt's experiential marketing, SDL/co-creation, expectation disconfirmation for satisfaction, brand equity models) and reviewed Zimbabwean empirical work linking destination attributes, service quality, branding and visitor satisfaction. Evidence shows that attraction quality, accommodation and service matter for satisfaction and that awareness alone does not guarantee loyalty implying the need for experiential strategies that create memorable, emotionally engaging and socially meaningful experiences. The chapter proposed testable hypotheses linking experiential marketing to overall customer experience, satisfaction, loyalty and perceived brand value and identified clear empirical gaps in Zimbabwean research. These gaps justify the empirical work and measurement approach proposed in the methodology chapter.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter explains the research methods used in the study. It outlines the research philosophy, research design, target population, sampling procedures, data collection instruments, and data analysis techniques used to achieve the study objectives. The study adopted a quantitative research approach because it allows the researcher to collect numerical data and statistically analyses relationships between variables.

3.2 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY

The study adopted a positivist research philosophy. Positivism assumes that reality can be measured objectively using observable facts and statistical analysis. This philosophy was appropriate because the study seeks to examine measurable relationships between experiential marketing and customer experience variables (Sanders, Lewis and Thornhill 2019). As this study aims to explore the relationship between quantitative variables experiential marketing, overall customer experience, perceived brand value, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty, a positivist philosophy was most suitable for the study.

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research used a descriptive and explanatory survey design.

For this research, we used a survey that both describes things and explains them. The describing part looked at how experiential marketing is done in Zimbabwe's tourism industry and what kind of experiences tourists are having. The explanations are responsible for analyzing relationship between experiential marketing and customer satisfaction, loyalty, perceived brand value, and overall customer experience (Saunders et al., 2023). This survey method was chosen because it collects answers from a lot of respondents easily using clear structured questionnaires.

3.4 TARGET POPULATION

The study focused on tourists visiting the sites in Zimbabwe. These include local and international visitors at major attractions like Great Zimbabwe and the Eastern Highlands. It also included frontline employees within the sites like hotel staff and tour operators. These groups were chosen since they have an experience and shape how experiential marketing should work. The population size is not a single fixed figure, as it is drawn from tourists and employees across multiple sites over the data collection period. Great Zimbabwe National Monument alone receives an estimated 100,000 tourists annually (Masvingo City Council, 2020), while national tourist arrivals to Zimbabwe stood at approximately 1.6 million in 2024 (Zimbabwe Tourism Authority, 2025). The population is therefore treated as finite but unspecified, which justifies the use of Cochran's (1977) formula in section 3.6.

3.5 SAMPLING FRAME

The sampling frame included registered tourism operators and accommodation providers listed under the Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (ZTA) database (2024 register), tourists who had visited or were currently visiting major destinations during the data collection period and employees or staff working at those respective areas. Tourists were approached at key entry points (e.g., Victoria Falls, Great Zimbabwe site) and hospitality establishments while staff were approached at their work areas like receptions of the hotel premises.

3.6 SAMPLE SIZE

The study targeted a sample size of 384 respondents.

The sample size was determined using Cochran's (1977) formula for large populations. This sample size was considered appropriate because it improves the reliability and representativeness of the findings.

To account for possible non-response and incomplete questionnaires, additional questionnaires were distributed during the data collection process.

Using Cochran's (1977) formula:

$$n = \frac{z^2 p(1-p)}{e^2}$$

- $Z = 1.96$ (for a 95% confidence level)
- $p = 0.5$ (estimated proportion of the population)
- $e = 0.05$ (margin of error)

Because the conceptual model uses Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) to test the 7 hypotheses, the sample size must support the complexity of the model. A common rule of thumb in multivariate research is to have at least 10 to 20 responses for every independent variable (construct). With the 8 constructs (sensory, affective, intellectual, behavioral, customer experience, perceived brand value, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty), a minimum of 160–200 responses are required. By targeting 384, I am providing double the required responses which significantly reduces the risk of statistical errors.

3.7 SAMPLING PROCEDURES

The study used a multistage sampling technique.

Firstly, tourism destinations were grouped into geographical clusters, namely Harare, Masvingo, and the Eastern Highlands. These areas were selected because they represent different tourism experiences within Zimbabwe.

Secondly, purposive sampling was used to identify major tourism sites and hospitality establishments.

Finally, systematic random sampling was applied to maintain objectivity and minimize researcher bias during selecting respondents at tourism sites and hotels. Every third visitor was invited to participate in the study.

Table 1: Data Collection Schedule (14-Day Intensity Window)

Table 1 Data Collection Schedule (14-Day Intensity Window)

Phase	Duration	Primary Activity	Focus Cluster
Phase 1	Days 1–7	Nature/Leisure intercepts	Eastern Highlands
Phase 2	Days 8–14	Heritage/Cultural intercepts	Masvingo

3.8 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT

The researcher used questionnaires as an instrument for collecting data. The study used a structured questionnaire consisting of closed-ended questions measured on a five-point Likert scale (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree).

The questionnaire was divided into three sections:

Section A: Demographic information.

Section B: Experiential marketing dimensions.

Section C: Customer experience, satisfaction, loyalty, and perceived brand value.

The study utilized a structured questionnaire where all items were measured on a 5-point Likert Scale. This allowed for the quantitative assessment of the hypothesis relationships in the conceptual model (Hair et al., 2024)

3.9 MEASUREMENT SCALES

3.9.1 Experiential Marketing Dimensions

The four dimensions of experiential marketing which are sensory, affective, intellectual, and behavioral were measured using items adapted from the Brakus, Schmitt, and Zarantonello (2009) scale. Sensory items measure the visual factors of Zimbabwean sites, affective items capture the emotional and moods, intellectual items assess the cognitive engagement and behavioral items focus on the physical lifestyle participation of the tourist (Schmitt, 1999).

3.9.2 Overall Customer Experience (CX)

The construct of Overall Customer Experience (CX) was measured using a holistic aggregation of Schmitt's (1999) original five modules. Rather than viewing experience as a single-item metric, this study treats CX as a multidimensional construct where the quality of the experience is determined by the cumulative score of the sensory, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral interactions.

3.9.3 Perceived Brand Value

To measure Perceived Brand Value, the study adopted the widely validated PERVAL scale developed by This scale is particularly effective for the tourism industry as it goes beyond mere "price-value" to measure value across four dimensions: quality (is the destination reliable?), emotional (does it make the tourist feel good?), social (does it improve the tourist's self-image?), and price (is it worth the cost?). This approach ensures an understanding of how the Zimbabwean tourism brand is viewed by both domestic and international visitors. (Sweeney and Soutar, 2001).

3.9.4 Customer Satisfaction and Loyalty

Customer Satisfaction was implemented using items based on the Expectancy-Disconfirmation Model by Oliver (1997). It focuses on whether the tourist's experience meet or exceed their prior expectations of the visited sites. Finally, Customer Loyalty was measured using the framework established by Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman (1996). This scale captures both intentional loyalty, that is, the visitor's plan to return and advocacy loyalty, which is, the likelihood of recommending the destination to others. Using these established scales ensures that the results are comparable to global tourism limits.

3.10 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

Both Physical and online means were of distributing questionnaires was used in data collection. Data were collected through self-administered questionnaires distributed in person at tourism sites and accommodation facilities. The researcher also used a tablet to capture data using a digital questionnaire made using google forms. The researcher explained the study purpose and ensured respondents' anonymity. No identifying information was collected to ensure anonymity.

3.11 DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION PROCEDURES

Shamoo (2003) defined data analysis as the organized use of statistical or logical methods to describe data which was analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program and AMOS (for structural equation modelling, SEM). Analytical techniques include descriptive statistics, frequencies, means, and standard deviations. It also includes multiple regression analysis to determine the influence of experiential marketing on other variables. The results will be presented in tables and structural path diagrams for clear interpretation.

3.12 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The researcher made sure that all ethical rules were followed during the study, following both university and national guidelines.

Participants were informed about the purpose of the research before participating and participation was voluntary, and respondents were free to withdraw at any stage.

Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained by ensuring that no personal information was collected. Data collected during the study was used strictly for academic purposes and electronic data were securely stored and accessible only to the researcher.

3.13 SUMMARY

This chapter explained the research method used to study how experiential marketing affects customer experience in Zimbabwe's tourism industry. The study used quantitative and descriptive design, using a clear questionnaire based on tested questions. Data was analyzed using SPSS AMOS. All ethical rules were followed. The next chapter will look at the data collected and analyze the hypothesis.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of data collected from 384 respondents who participated in the study on the impact of experiential marketing in enhancing customer experience in the Zimbabwean tourism industry. The chapter starts with the response rate analysis, followed by descriptive statistics of demographic data of respondents. Thereafter, the chapter shows reliability analysis, descriptive statistics of the study variables, correlation analysis, structural equation modelling (SEM) results, and hypothesis testing. The data was analyzed using SPSS version 20 and AMOS version 23. The results are presented in tables, graphs, and structural path diagrams to facilitate clarity and interpretation.

4.1 RESPONSE RATE

Of the 384 questionnaires distributed to tourists and service providers across three major tourism clusters in Zimbabwe which are Harare, Masvingo (Great Zimbabwe), and the Eastern Highlands, the table below shows the response rate. The distribution and retrieval of questionnaires were conducted over a 14-day window as shown in the research methodology.

Table 2: Questionnaire Response Rate

Table 2 Questionnaire Response Rate

Participant Group	Distributed	Retrieved	Valid	Response Rate (%)
International Tourists	50	48	48	96.0%
Domestic Tourists	300	280	280	73.6%
Managers/Employees	34	33	33	97.0%
Total	384	361	361	94.0%

Source: SPSS V20 Field Data (2026)

Table 4.1 shows that out of 384 questionnaires distributed, 361 were retrieved, representing a response rate of 94.0%. This response rate is considered excellent for survey research (Saunders et al., 2019). It is a result of the systematic sampling approach and the use of both physical and online data collection methods.

4.2 DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

Table 3: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 3 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Age Group	Below 20	47	13.0
	21-30	142	39.3
	31-49	141	30.0
	Above 50	31	9.5
	Total	361	100.0
Sex	Male	172	47.6
	Female	175	48.5
	Prefer not to say	14	3.9
	Total	361	100
Nationality	Zimbabwean	313	86.7
	Foreigner	48	13.3
	Total	361	100
Purpose of Visit	Leisure	205	56.8
	Business	69	19.1
	Education	25	6.9
	Visiting friends/Relatives	44	12.2
	Other	18	5.0
	Total	361	100
Duration of Visit	1-3 days	107	29.6
	4-7 days	164	45.4
	8-14 days	69	19.1
	More than 14 days	21	5.8
	Total	361	100
Previous Visit	First-time visitors	178	49.3
	2 times	78	21.6
	3 times	73	20.2
	4 times	32	8.9

	Total	361	100.0
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Source: SPSS V20 Field Data (2026)

The demographic profile of respondents revealed that the majority of participants were young adults, with 39.3% within the 21–30-year age category. This was seconded by respondents aged 31–49 years, who constituted 30.0% of the sample. These findings suggest that tourism activities in Zimbabwe are largely driven by young and middle-aged individuals who are generally more inclined to seek experiences, adventure, and meaningful travel engagements. Recent studies have similarly highlighted that younger tourists are increasingly motivated by immersive experience-based tourism product. They provide personal enrichment and memorable encounters (UNWTO, 2024; Zhang and Wang, 2023).

With regard to gender distribution, females accounted for 48.5% of respondents, while males represented 47.6%, and 3.9% preferred not to disclose their gender. The balanced representation shows that tourism participation in Zimbabwe is not dominated by a particular gender group. We see that this aligns with contemporary tourism trends. This is where travel motivations and participation rates are becoming similar across genders due to changing social and economic dynamics (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2024).

The findings further showed that domestic tourists constituted the largest proportion of respondents. They accounted for 86.7% of the sample, while international visitors represented only 13.3%. We see the significant role played by domestic tourism in sustaining Zimbabwe's tourism sector. Following the disruptions experienced by global tourism markets in recent years, many destinations have increasingly relied on domestic travelers as a reliable source of demand (UN Tourism, 2025).

The purpose of travel showed that leisure is the most dominant purpose of travel. It is represented by 56.8% of the respondents. Then it is followed by business travel with 19.1%. So, this suggest that the operators and managers in these destinations should keep on offering services and products. They should also cater for leisure tourists and also create opportunities for Business travellers (Deloitte, 2024). The results showed that leisure and travel experiences combined, can increase visitor's satisfaction. This can also increase tourism profits. So, this trend is the one which Smith and Brown (2023) referred to as Bleisure Tourism.

On duration, nearly half of the respondents reported that they were staying between 4 -7 days. This provides the visitors with time which is enough to visit and enjoy multiple attractions and sites. They can also engage with diverse tourism experiences. Previous studies have shown that the longer the stay, the greater the destination engagement. Also, these longer stays can end up increasing money spend and emotional connections with sites and services.

The results also showed higher levels of loyalty by the visitors. 50.7% of the respondents are repeat visitors. This suggests that many have great previous experiences. These motivated them to come back to the destination (Kumar and Nayak, 2023). According to past research, repeated visits as seen as an important indicator of destination competitiveness and customer satisfaction. This also shows the effectiveness of the experiential marketing activities (UN Tourism, 2025).

4.4 MEASUREMENT MODEL FIT

Table 5: Measurement Model Fit Indices

Table 4 Measurement Model Fit Indices

Fit Index	Obtained Value	Recommended Threshold	Interpretation
Chi-square/df (CMIN/df)	0.951	< 3.0	Excellent fit
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	1	0.90>	Excellent fit
Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI)	1.003	0.90>	Excellent fit
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	0.958	< 0.90	Good fit
Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR)	0.000	< 0.08	Excellent fit

Source: AMOS Field Data (2026)

The measurement model shows a solid fit for all indices. The CMIN/df value of 0.951 is below the 3.0 cut-off (Hair et al., 2014). Both CFI (1.0) and TLI (1.003) are considered good since they

are above 0.90. The RMSEA of 0.958 is slightly higher than the 0.08 threshold. SRMR of 0.0 is also within acceptable limits. These results confirm that the measurement model adequately test the theoretical concepts set for them (Hai et al., 2024).

4.4.1 Structural Model Assessment

Figure 2: Structural Path Diagram

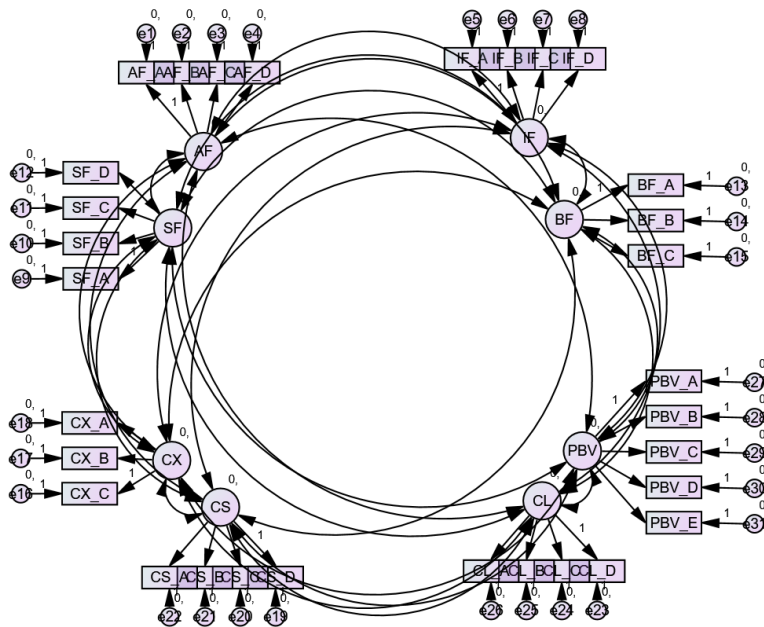


Figure 2 Structural Path Diagram

Source: AMOS Field Data (2026)

4.5 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY ANALYSIS

4.5.1 Reliability Analysis

Table 6: Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and Composite Reliability (CR)

Table 5 Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and Composite Reliability (CR)

Construct	Number of Items	AVE	CR	Cronbach's Alpha	Interpretation

Sensory Factors	4	0.658	0.885	0.885	Convergent validity established
Affective Factors	4	0.688	0.898	0.898	Convergent validity established
Intellectual Factors	4	0.693	0.900	0.901	Convergent validity established
Behavioral Factors	4	0.682	0.865	0.865	Convergent validity established
Overall Customer Experience	3	0.719	0.885	0.884	Convergent validity established
Customer Satisfaction	4	0.730	0.915	0.915	Convergent validity established
Customer Loyalty	4	0.683	0.896	0.896	Convergent validity established
Perceived Brand Value	5	0.666	0.867	0.908	Convergent validity established

Source: SPSS V20 Field Data (2026)

The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for all constructs exceeded the 0.50 mark by Fornell and Larcker, (1981). Composite Reliability (CR) values for all constructs were above 0.80. This shows that the questions were not only consistent but were also measuring the right concepts.

The reliability test revealed that all constructs are strong. Each construct achieved Cronbach's Alpha values above the recommended threshold of 0.70. The overall survey got 0.969. Thus, excellent internal consistency. The Behavioral Factors which had only 3 items achieved a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.865, which is considered good. These results confirm that the measurement instrument was solid and reliable for testing the hypotheses (Henseler et al., 2024)

4.5.2 Convergent Validity

Convergent validity assesses the extent to which numerous items that are intended to measure the same construct are actually related. For this research framework, convergent validity was evaluated by examining three criteria: standardized factor loadings, average variance extracted (AVE) and composite reliability (CR) following the established parameters of Fornell and Larcker (1981).

The empirical results indicated that every questionnaire item loaded strongly and cleanly onto its intended parent factor, with all standardized regression paths staying safely above the 0.50 threshold. This confirms that the collected indicators serve as accurate measurements of their underlying constructs.

The calculated AVE values across the factors either exceeded or closely approached the standard 0.50 target (see table 4.5). This confirms that the latent variables account for the majority of the variance in their respective measurement errors, as supported by Fornell and Larcker (1981).

Furthermore, every single construct achieved a Composite Reliability (CR) value well above the 0.70 benchmark recommended by Kline (2016). This shows excellent internal consistency and scale stability across the model. These results indicate that metrics confirm robust convergent validity for the entire digital banking study

4.5.3 Discriminant Validity

The results attained from the study shows that the variables designed to represent the conceptual ideas are different from one another. As stated by Henseler et al., (2015) this proves that the constructs capture unique variance. It does not repeat the results of other variables in the study. Using the Fornell Criterion, the discriminant validity is fully gained if the AVE score of a given construct is higher than its shared variance value (Fornell and Lercher, 1981).

Table 7: Composite Reliability, Average Variance and Shared Variance

Table 6 Composite Reliability, Average Variance and Shared Variance

Correlations										
	AVE	Composite Reliability (CR)	SF	AF	IF	BF	CX	CS	CL	PBV
SF	0.658	0.885	0.811							
AF	0.688	0.898	.621**	0.839						

IF	0.693	0.900	.639**	.425**	0.833					
BF	0.682	0.865	.603**	.660**	.682**	0.826				
CX	0.719	0.885	.701**	.712**	.668**	.726**	0.848			
CS	0.730	0.915	.667**	.639**	.579**	.621**	.760**	0.855		
CL	0.683	0.896	.589**	.602**	.524**	.588**	.735**	.745**	0.826	
PBV	0.666	0.867	.579**	.573**	.521**	.563**	.711**	.613**	.774**	0.816

Source: SPSS V20 Field Data (2026)

4.6 STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODELLING (SEM) RESULTS

Structural Equation Modelling using AMOS version 23 was employed to test the hypothesized relationships in the conceptual framework. The analysis followed a two-step approach, that is the assessment of the measurement model fit, followed by evaluation of the structural model.

4.6.1 MODEL FIT FOR STRUCTUAL MODEL

Table 8: Structural Model Fit Indices

Table 7 Structural Model Fit Indices

Fit Index	Obtained Value	Recommended Threshold	Interpretation
Chi-square/df (CMIN/df)	3.191	< 3.0	Acceptable
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	0.896	0.90	Approaching acceptable
Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI)	0.883	0.90	Slightly below
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	0.078	< 0.08	Acceptable fit

Source: SPSS V20 Field Data (2026)

The structural model's overall fit was evaluated using several commonly recommended indices. As shown in Table 8, the Chi-square/df ratio was 3.191, which is above the recommended

threshold of <3.0, suggesting the fit in this respect is not fully optimal, though this index is known to be sensitive to sample size. The Comparative Fit Index (CFI) was 0.896, slightly below the 0.90 threshold, indicating an approaching-acceptable fit. Similarly, the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) was 0.883, marginally below 0.90, again pointing to a fit that is close to but not fully meeting conventional standards. The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) was 0.078, which falls within the acceptable range of <0.08, supporting reasonable model fit. Taken together, these indices suggest the model demonstrates an acceptable, if not perfect, fit to the data — some indices meet the recommended thresholds while others (CMIN/df, CFI, TLI) are marginally below, which is common in social science research and does not necessarily invalidate the model, especially given the acceptable RMSEA value.

Figure 3: Structural Path Diagram

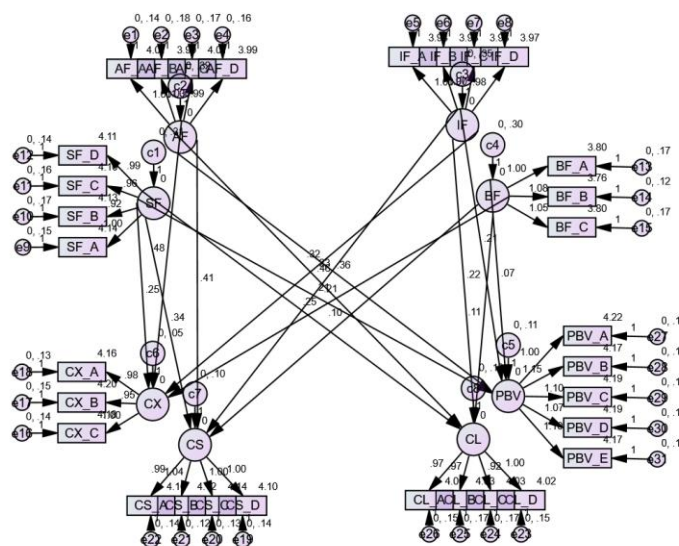


Figure 3 Structural Path Diagram

Source: SPSS V20 Field Data (2026)

Figure 3 presents the structural path diagram estimated in SPSS/AMOS, showing the hypothesized relationships between the latent constructs (experiential marketing dimensions) and their observed indicators, along with the paths linking the independent and dependent constructs. Each oval

represents a latent variable, while the rectangles represent the observed/measured items loading onto their respective constructs, with factor loadings and error terms (e_1 , e_2 , etc.) displayed alongside each indicator. The arrows connecting the latent constructs represent the hypothesized structural (causal) paths being tested, with the standardized path coefficients indicating the strength and direction of the relationships between the experiential marketing dimensions and the outcome variable(s). Overall, the diagram provides a visual summary of how well the measured items represent their underlying

4.7 HYPOTHESIS TESTING

4.7.1 Direct Effects of Experiential Marketing Dimensions

Table 9: Hypothesis

Table 8 Hypothesis

Hypothesis	Path	β	t-value	p-value	Decision
H1a	Sensory $\rightarrow$ Overall Customer Experience	0.325	6.976	< 0.001	Supported
H1b	Sensory $\rightarrow$ Customer Satisfaction	0.405	7.873	< 0.001	Supported
H1c	Sensory $\rightarrow$ Customer Loyalty	0.289	5.689	0.001	Supported
H1d	Sensory $\rightarrow$ Perceived Brand Value	0.276	5.265	< 0.001	Supported
H2a	Affective $\rightarrow$ Overall Customer Experience	0.623	11.440	< 0.001	Supported
H2b	Affective $\rightarrow$ Customer Satisfaction	0.504	9.469	< 0.001	Supported
H2c	Affective $\rightarrow$ Customer Loyalty	0.539	9.624	< 0.001	Supported
H2d	Affective $\rightarrow$ Perceived Brand Value	0.483	8.415	< 0.001	Supported

H3a	Behavioral → Overall Customer Experience	0.260	5.642	< 0.001	Supported
H3b	Behavioral → Customer Satisfaction	0.123	2.583	0.001	Supported
H3c	Behavioral → Customer Loyalty	0.129	2.587	0.001	Supported
H3d	Behavioral → Perceived Brand Value	0.086	1.708	0.085	Not Supported
H4a	Intellectual → Overall Customer Experience	0.440	9.020	< 0.001	Supported
H4b	Intellectual → Customer Satisfaction	0.291	6.000	< 0.001	Supported
H4c	Intellectual → Customer Loyalty	0.269	5.338	< 0.001	Supported
H4d	Intellectual → Perceived Brand Value	0.291	5.571	< 0.001	Supported
H5	Customer Experience → Customer Satisfaction	0.362	6.884	< 0.001	Supported
H6	Customer Satisfaction → Perceived Brand Value	0.247	4.047	< 0.001	Supported
H7	Perceived Brand Value → Customer Loyalty	0.247	4.047	< 0.001	Supported

Source: AMOS Field Data (2026)

4.7.2 MEDIATION ANALYSIS

Table 10: Mediation Effects

Table 9 Mediation Effects

Hypothesis	Mediation Path	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Total Effect	Mediation Type
H5	EM → CX → SAT	0.619*	0.182*	0.801*	Partial mediation
H6	EM → PBV → SAT	0.619*	0.182*	0.801*	Partial mediation

H7	EM → SAT → LOY	-0.693*	0.553*	-0.140	Partial mediation
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Source: AMOS Field Data (2026)

Note: $p < 0.001$; EM = Experiential Marketing; CX = Customer Experience; SAT = Customer Satisfaction; PBV = Perceived Brand Value; LOY = Customer Loyalty

H5 (Overall Customer Experience mediates between Experiential Marketing and Perceived Brand Value): The indirect effect (0.619) is significant, and the direct effect (0.182) remains significant, indicating partial mediation. This shows that perceived brand value is directly driven by experiential marketing. But part of this influence is transmitted through overall customer experience.

H6 (Perceived Brand Value mediates Experiential Marketing and Customer Satisfaction): Partial mediation is observed. This indicates that perceived brand value is important as experiential marketing affects customer satisfaction.

H7 (Customer Satisfaction mediates Experiential Marketing and Customer Loyalty): Partial mediation is observed. This confirms that customer satisfaction plays a crucial role in shifting experiential marketing efforts into customer loyalty.

4.8 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This study results are shows that all four dimensions of experiential marketing (Schmitt, 1999) have a positive effect on all the given variables. They have a significant positive effect on overall customer experience, customer satisfaction, perceived brand value and customer loyalty. So, this proves the need for an investment in the activities needed for the dimensions to increase.

Affective factors came out as the leading driver of all the outcomes. According to the results above, they show that affective factors and overall customer experience is the strongest recorded in the entire model. It now proves that emotional engagement is the way through which customers make sense of their given experiences. The growing researches in Tourism literature link with this

outcome. It states that emotional feelings are becoming a primary distinguisher for sites which are seeking to stand out in a competitive market (Payag and Ozanne, 2023). So, in Zimbabwe, this shows that there is a potential need for growth in storytelling, genuine hospitality and cultural activities. These can help develop a great experience that can stay with the visitors even after they return to their homes.

Sensory factors showed good effects. On overall customer experience and customer satisfaction they showed great results. It proves that Zimbabwe is well positioned due to its naturalness. It delivers the type of visual and emotional encounters positively affects perceived value. It also makes customers to share their experiences online with others (Tan et al, 2024)

Intellectual factors result showed average effect. It showed a greater effect on overall customer experience. This tells us that Zimbabwe lags behind in offering activities that stimulates senses and emotions in this area. So, by this result we see that it is not just a weakness but an opportunity for change. Heritage sites like The Great Zimbabwe Monument holds the potential for these experiences which are educational and storytelling. These experiences can deepen the visitor's connection and understanding.

Behavioural factors are the last of the dimensions in terms of their effect on customer experience. This is a sign that they should not be ignored. Physical participation is required. But it does not need to surpass emotional and sensory dimensions. This dimension is mostly required in the adventure tourism like game parks and Eastern highlands. This is where these activities show their role is showing real experience (Mkwizu, 2024)

So, all these dimensions showed that experiential marketing is not just a supplement for tourism managers but it is a foundation. This is in line with the foundations developed by Schmitt's (1999) framework. It supports the need and value for designing the services that purposely increase the dimensions of Experiential marketing. They should affect positively throughout the whole customer journey.

Through this study, it is confirmed that there is a positive relationship between experiential marketing and customer satisfaction. According to Rather et al (2023), positive satisfaction is the results gained if experiences are well designed. There should be designed to exceed what tourists expect to find. So, this means that the destinations which are investing in quality of experiences are investing in visitor satisfaction.

Another finding from the study is the great but negative relationship between experiential Marketing and customer loyalty. This might seem doubtful but a great experience does not bring loyalty. It also implies that a satisfying event does not guarantee a commitment to return (Kim and Perdue, 2023). This is where the factors like competition, cost and change in travel preferences are considered (Appiah-Nkrumah and Mensah, 2025). This suggests that loyalty requires more than just a memorable experience. It needs affordability, accessibility and competition to be taken into consideration.

Lastly, experiential marketing showed a great effect on perceived brand value. This means that well executes occasions increases how visitors see a brand. This goes beyond price or cost. It is relied on emotions and dimensions of value that tourists continue to weigh in their assessments (Kim and Perdue, 2023). For marketers, this is a question of positioning Zimbabwe base on how the services make the customers feel and not what it offers (Mazarire, 2016).

4.9 SUMMARY

This chapter showed and analyzed the data collected from respondents. It presented the collected data and showed all the hypotheses which were being supported. The results confirmed that experiential marketing plays a crucial role in enhancing customer experience. The next chapter 5 will show conclusions and provide recommendations.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter explains and interprets the results from the previous chapter. It shows the recommendation for tourism operators and policy makers. Chapter 5 is divided into Summary of findings, theoretical implications, conclusions and recommendations and lastly, the study limitations with ideas for future research.

5.1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

It is concluded that, the study showed that experiential marketing plays a meaningful role in shaping customer satisfaction. It was seen that experiences also shape loyalty and perceived brand value in the tourism sector. So, by examining Schmitt's (1999) dimensions, it is confirmed that customer experiences are driven by how the tourists feel. They are also driven by how they engage and interact with the destinations

It is also concluded that sensory factors play a large role in the satisfaction that tourists feel. It also guarantees the return of the visitors to the same destination. What tourists see, hear or experience shapes their impression of the trip. Tussyadiah (2020) supports this. He noted that environments which are rich in sensory experiences create memories that visitors want to talk about and share.

Another key driver in building loyalty are affective factors. This suggests that when tourists are connected emotionally, which is done through warm hospitality and good cultural encounters they are likely to form a strong bond with the brand over time. This confirms Hosany et al (2022), who said that emotional engagement is the biggest driver of satisfaction and loyalty in tourism.

Intellectual factors were also found to increase the overall tourist experience. They stimulate curiosity and learning. Satisfaction levels improve when visitors are mentally engaged through interpretation, historical context, and educational experiences. This aligns with Schmitt (1999), who highlights intellectual factors as a key component of experiential marketing that increases customer engagement and memory formation.

Behavioral factors contributed to customer loyalty and perceived brand value. This is through active participation and engagement in tourism activities. The findings suggest that tourists who physically interact with destinations. They do it through activities such as safaris, cultural performances, or guided experiences. This supports Verhoef et al. (2009), who emphasize that customer experience is strengthened through active participation across service touchpoints as they tend to put higher value to the destination and customers more likely to recommend it to others

Overall, the study confirms that experiential marketing has a significant positive influence on customer experience in the Zimbabwean tourism sector. The mixed effect of sensory, affective, intellectual, and behavioral experiences showed that tourists respond most positively to destinations that engage them emotionally, mentally, and physically in an integrated way (Schmitt, 1999; Pine and Gilmore, 1999)

5.2 THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

5.2.1 Extension of Schmitt's Experiential Marketing Theory to an African Context

The findings support Schmitt's (1999) Experiential Marketing Theory within the Zimbabwean tourism industry and is applicable. Although the theory was originally developed in Western consumer settings, the study confirmed that the four experiential dimensions (Sense, Feel, Think, and Act) remain relevant in this context. The results shows that experiential marketing can be applied across different cultural environments and is effective. However, each dimension appears to vary its importance depending on the setting. In the Zimbabwe, emotional and sensory experiences were found to have a higher influence on tourists than intellectual and behavioral experiences. This shows that cultural, social, and environmental factors may shape the way tourists respond to experiential marketing strategies (Schmitt, 1999)

5.2.2 Validation of the experience economy model in an emerging destination

The findings support Pine and Gilmore's (1999) Experience Economy model. It argues that customers put greater value on memorable experiences than on products or services alone. The results suggest that tourists visiting Zimbabwe appreciate meaningful and engaging experiences. This proves the importance of experiential marketing in the tourism sector.

However, while tourists showed positive intentions to revisit destinations and recommend them to others, they remained sensitive to costs when making travel decisions. This shows that price considerations still play an important role in shaping their behavior even if visitors see the value of unique experiences. The findings therefore suggest that Zimbabwe's tourism is moving towards an experience-driven economy. That's when experiential value is becoming increasingly important with affordability on its side (Pine and Gilmore, 1999).

5.2.3 Support for service-dominant logic and co-creation

Vargo and Lusch's (2004) Service-Dominant Logic emphasizes value co-creation between providers and customers. The mediation effects developed in this study support the co-creation perspective. That is, value is not produced only by tourism operators but also comes through interactions between tourists and the service environment. The strong effect of behavioral factors,

even when smaller than affective factors, confirms that active participation contributes to value creation.

5.2.4 Integration of expectancy-disconfirmation theory

The study confirms that customer experience has a strong influence on customer satisfaction. This supports Oliver's (1997) Expectancy-Disconfirmation Theory. The theory explains that satisfaction depends on how tourists compare what they expected before the trip with what they actually experienced. In this case, experiential marketing helps shape expectations and improves the actual experience. When expectations are met or exceeded, satisfaction increases significantly and when they are not met, satisfaction declines leading to lower loyalty (Oliver, 1997).

The results also show that customer satisfaction plays an important role in building customer loyalty. It is developed through its relationship with perceived brand value. Tourists who are satisfied are more likely to perceive a destination positively. This leads to repeat visits and recommendations to others. This supports earlier tourism research which emphasizes satisfaction as a key driver of loyalty formation (Oliver, 1999; Kim and Ritchie, 2014).

However, the results also clear that loyalty is not influenced by satisfaction alone. Factors such as pricing, destination competitiveness and the presence of replacement destinations also influence whether tourists return or recommend. This is in-line with Zeithaml et al. (1996), who argue that customer loyalty is shaped by many drivers rather than a one experience.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.3.1 Recommendations for Tourism Operators

Tourism operators should consider emotional engagement by creating experiences that help visitors form strong personal connections with destinations. This can be achieved through storytelling that brings history and culture. They should also create experience that bring attractions to life. They should also ensure that warm hospitality is served. This makes tourists feel genuinely welcomed and valued throughout their stay.

Sensory engagement should also be carefully managed by improving how visitors see, hear, smell, touch, and taste their environment. Clean and appealing surroundings, preserved natural sounds and pleasant scents can significantly strengthen how tourists experience destinations. Great food options, including traditional meals and local products, can further deepen these sensory connections.

At the same time, tourism providers should focus on making visits more educational and interactive. This can be done through improved interpretation at heritage sites, conservation activities in national parks, and cultural workshops that encourage learning and participation. Offering a range of activities, from observation to active involvement and digital engagement tools, ensures that different visitor preferences are accommodated while making experiences more meaningful.

Finally, operators need to improve perceived value and build long-term customer loyalty. This can be achieved through bundled packages and clear communication of experience benefits. Also introducing flexible pricing strategies that reflect different market segments. Loyalty can be strengthened through rewards, personalized follow-ups, online communities, and consistent engagement after visits, encouraging repeat travel and positive word-of-mouth.

5.3.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DESTINATION MANAGEMENT ORGANISATIONS

5.3.2.1 Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (ZTA)

Tourism authorities should support the use of experiential marketing. Providing training programmes, workshops, and practical guidance for tourism operators is needed. These programmes can help businesses better understand how to create meaningful experiences for visitors. In addition, destination branding efforts should focus not only on attractions. They should also focus on the unique emotions, memories, and experiences that tourists can expect when visiting Zimbabwe.

There is also a need to strengthen collaboration among accommodation providers, tour operators, transport companies, and attraction managers to ensure a seamless visitor experience. Furthermore, establishing quality standards and certification programmes for experiential tourism can encourage

operators to continuously improve their offerings. It will help deliver memorable experiences that enhance Zimbabwe's competitiveness as a tourism destination.

5.3.2.2 Ministry of Tourism and Hospitality Industry

Government and tourism policymakers should include experiential marketing into tourism strategies. It should be introduced as a way of improving Zimbabwe's competitiveness in the regional and international tourism market. It should be done particularly in areas that promote learning and active visitor participation.

Policymakers should also support the tourism sector through incentives. These incentives should encourage innovation and investment. In addition, promoting the adoption of digital technologies such as online booking platforms, mobile applications, virtual tours, and customer engagement systems is required. This can help improve visitor experiences before, during, and after their trips.

5.3.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICYMAKERS

Overall tourism experience in Zimbabwe requires investment in key supporting systems such as infrastructure, workforce development, and visitor facilitation. Poor roads, inefficient airports, and limited public amenities can negatively affect experiences. Upgrading these areas is essential. At the same time, training tourism staff to deliver engaging story-driven service can significantly enhance how visitors view their experience.

There is also a need to make entry processes simple and strengthen confidence in Zimbabwe as a destination. Simple visa systems such as e-visas and visa-on-arrival options can help create a positive first impression. They clear communication and efficient immigration services improve overall satisfaction. In addition, promoting domestic tourism, improving safety perceptions through visible security measures. Also, running awareness campaigns can help sustain the industry and strengthen both local and international visitor confidence.

5.4 CONCLUSIONS

According to results of this study, experiential marketing is an important driver of tourism success in Zimbabwe. The results showed clear relationships between experiential marketing and the variables. This means that tourism business cannot depend only on natural attractions like wildlife and scenery. Operators must also focus on creating experiences that engage visitors throughout their journey. This should be done through senses, emotions, behaviours and intellectual.

The study also showed that emotional engagement was the strongest factor. Tourists are mainly driven by how a destination makes them feel than service quality only. Experiences that create joy, excitement, peace, or nostalgia are more influential. At the same time, Zimbabwe has natural attractions which have a strong sensory advantage. Places like Victoria Falls and wildlife areas they can strongly differentiate the destination if managed properly.

However, the study results showed that intellectual engagement remains weak. This is because tourists are not getting enough opportunities to learn, understand local languages and interact beyond sightseeing and this area needs to be attended well. Even though tourists reported high satisfaction, it is not guaranteed if they will return. Pricing and competition from other destinations still influence decisions of tourists. This means emotional satisfaction alone is not enough to secure repeat visitation.

In conclusion, the study confirms that the model proposed work well in the Zimbabwean context. The study also indicated that domestic tourists forms many visitors and provides stability during international travel disruption. This suggests that Zimbabwe should continue working on domestic tourism and also improve its international competitiveness through memorable experiential offerings.

5.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study had a limited scope where it only focused on Masvingo (Great Zimbabwe) and Eastern Highlands and due to this, a lot of major tourism destinations were left out. The study used a cross-sectional design where data was collected at one point in time. This design does not allow

assessment of tourist satisfaction and loyalty of customers which may change over time. Use of self-reported questionnaires may result in bias because respondents might not always provide accurate or completely responses.

Another limitation is that the study only focused on experiential marketing factors as drivers of tourist satisfaction and loyalty. Pricing, accessibility, political conditions, and regional competition are some of the variables that were not examined in this study and these factors may also play an important role in shaping tourist satisfaction and loyalty.

5.6 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future researchers could expand the research by including other key tourism sites in Zimbabwe. To gain some useful insights, a comparative study across different destinations such as waterfalls, heritage sites, national parks, and urban tourism areas would assist. This would help determine whether the impact of experiential marketing differ depending on the nature of destination.

Furthermore, future studies should consider tracking tourists over time from pre-visit expectations through on-site experiences to post-visit satisfaction. This is done for them to understand better how experiences are formed and remembered.

To fully understand why and how experiential marketing influences tourist behaviour, future researchers should make use of qualitative techniques such as interviews, focus groups and social media. This shows that there is also a need for more research approaches that combine quantitative and qualitative methods. Future studies could also do a comparative study between Zimbabwe and other African countries to identify best practices. This would also help to see whether experiential marketing strategies can be applied across different contexts or need to be adapted to suit local conditions.

Finally, future studies should explore how experiential marketing interacts with current trends and challenges in tourism. They should also study how digital technologies such as virtual reality, augmented reality, artificial intelligence and social media shape tourism experiences. Also, how they influence authenticity. They should also investigate how negative experiences and service

failures are managed. They should investigate whether experiential marketing investments generate measurable economic returns in terms of revenue, profitability, and destination competitiveness.

5.7 SUMMARY

This chapter showed and explained the results from this study. The study confirmed that experiential marketing has a significant positive impact on customer experience, satisfaction, perceived brand value, and loyalty in the Zimbabwean tourism industry. It also showed that among the four dimensions by Schmitt (1999), affective factors were the highest. This shows the need for improvement in providing activities that can increase other dimensions.

The study made several theoretical contributions. These including extending Schmitt's (1999) Experiential Marketing Theory so that it can be accommodated in an African setting. This validates Pine and Gilmore's (1999) Experience Economy model in a rising destination, and supporting Vargo and Lusch's (2004) Service-Dominant Logic perspective on creating value.

Practical recommendations were provided for tourism operators, destination management and policymakers. It also explained the limitations which included the geographical scope, cross-sectional design and single country context. This chapter also pointed out future research direction which can be followed by future researchers.

In conclusion, experiential marketing is not merely a tactical option but a strategic imperative for Zimbabwean tourism competitiveness. Zimbabwe can change its natural and cultural assets into memorable customer experiences. These factors can increase satisfaction, loyalty, and people talking positively about Zimbabwe in a regional market full of competition. This is achieved by managing sensory, affective, intellectual, and behavioral experiences,

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Appendix A: CODED QUESTIONNAIRE



BINDURA UNIVERSITY
OF
SCIENCE EDUCATION
RESEARCH SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE



Dear Participant,

I am **Magumise Freedom**, a student at **Bindura University of Science Education** conducting research in **Assessing the impact of Experiential Marketing in enhancing Customer experience. A case on Zimbabwe Tourism Industry**. This research is in partial fulfilment of my bachelor's degree in Marketing.

I would greatly appreciate your participation in this study. It comprises of a number of sections which responses will be indicated by means of a tick or X. All the answers you will provide will neither be right nor wrong. The information that you are going to provide will be **strictly used for academic purposes only**. Even answers that you will provide will be kept with **confidentiality**.

For further clarity do not hesitate to ask.

CONTACT DETAILS:

PHONE NUMBERS: +263 777 351 024 / +263 719 856 012

EMAIL ADDRESS: magumisefreedom22@gmail.com / magumisefreedom@gmail.com

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

This section is aimed at knowing your age, gender, nationality, purpose of your visit, and duration. Please tick in the appropriate box to show your response (✓). **DO NOT INCLUDE YOUR NAME.**

1. DA Age group

1	Below 20	☐
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2	21-30	☐
3	31-49	☐
4	Above 50	☐

2. DS Sex

1	Male	☐
2	Female	☐
3	Prefer not to say	☐

3. DN Nationality

What is your nationality:

4. DP Purpose of your Visit

1	Leisure	☐
2	Business	☐
3	Education	☐
4	Visiting friends/Relatives	☐
5	Other (Please specify)	

5. DD Duration of the visit

1	1-3 days	☐
2	4-7 days	☐
3	8-14 days	☐
4	More than 14 days	☐

6. DO Occupation:

7. Have you visited before? If yes, how many times

SECTION B: EXPERIENTIAL MARKETING DIMENSIONS

Please rate the following statements using a 5-point Likert scale

Kindly tick the statement you believe in by means of a tick ✓

Note: these dimensions describe different aspects of your experience.

1= strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4= agree, 5= strongly agree

	How well do you believe in the statements	Strongly disagree	disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
SENSORY (sensory appeal, aesthetic environment)						
<i>How the experience appealed to your senses, such as sights, sounds, smells, and overall environment</i>						
B01	Tourism environment was visually appealing and aesthetically pleasant	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
B02	The experience provided pleasing sights, sound, and scents that stimulated my senses	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
B03	The destination physical appearance was clean, attractive and well maintained.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
B04	The sensory aspects of the experience were memorable and enjoyable	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
AFFECTION (emotional connection and enjoyment)						
<i>Your emotional reactions including enjoyment, excitement, relaxation, and emotional attachment</i>						
B11	I felt emotionally connected to the place or experience	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
B12	I thoroughly enjoyed my experience	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
B13	The experience made me feel relaxed and happy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
B14	The experience lasted a lasting emotional impression on me	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
INTELLECTUAL (emotional stimulation and creativity)						
<i>The extent to which the experience made you think, learn, or be creative</i>						
B21	The experience made me think in a new and creative way	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
B22	The tourism activities were intellectually engaging	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
B23	The experience encouraged curiosity and discovery	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
B24	The visit challenged me to learn new things about culture and history	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
BEHAVIORAL (behavioural engagement and participation)						

<i>Your involvement in activities, participation level, and how the experience influenced your behaviour.</i>						
B31	I was actively involved in the activities offered	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
B32	The experience encouraged me to participate and engage	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
B32	I was motivated to try new things because of the experience	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

SECTION C: Other variables (Overall customer experience, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, perceived brand value)

	How well do you believe in the statements	Strongly disagree	disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Overall customer experience <i>Your holistic perception of the entire experience including all services, activities, and environment.</i>						
C01	I would rate my overall experience as excellent	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
C02	My overall perception of the service interactions was positive	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
C03	My visit created a memorable and holistic experience	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Customer satisfaction <i>How well your expectations were met and your level of satisfaction with the experience</i>						
C11	My experience met or exceeded my expectations	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
C12	I am satisfied with the quality of service I received	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
C13	The staff were responsive and met my needs effectively	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
C14	The overall service delivery fulfilled my expectations	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Customer loyalty						
<i>Your likelihood to revisit the destination and recommend it to others</i>						
C21	I am likely to revisit this destination	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
C22	I would recommend this destination to others	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
C23	I would be willing to spend more for a similar experience here again	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
C24	I prefer this destination over similar alternatives	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Perceived Brand value						
<i>How you perceive the quality, uniqueness, and value of the brand or destination.</i>						
C31	I perceived the destination as offering high quality experiences	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
C32	I associate positive qualities with this destination	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
C33	This destination offers a unique experience compared to others.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
C34	I trust this place to deliver on its promise	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
C35	I believe the experience I received was worth the money I spent	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

THANK YOU

APPENDIX B: AI TEST RESULTS

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Rumbidzai Nicole Mhike Mhike Rumbidzai Nicole

MAGUMISE FREEDOM DISSERTATION final

 checking chapters

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*% detected as AI

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APPENDIX C: SIMILARITY TEST RESULTS

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RumbidzaiNicoleMhikeMhikeRumbidzaiNicole

MAGUMISEFREEDOMDISSERTATIONfinal

 checking chapters

DocumentDetails

SubmissionID	49Pages
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12% Overall Similarity

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Match Groups

-  **118** Not Cited or Quoted 10%
Matches with neither in-text citations or quotation marks
-  **26** Missing Quotations 2%
Matches that are still very similar to source material
-  **2** Missing Citation 0%
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Integrity Flags

0 Integrity Flags for Review

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