

# Exploring the Mediating Effect of Conspicuous Consumption by Utilizing Mobile Phone Brands

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## Abstract

**Purpose:** The purpose of this study is to investigate the mediating effect of conspicuous brand usage between brand experience and brand loyalty in relational perspective, and to probe the difference between the positively experienced consumers and the negatives. **Research design, data and methodology:** Apple iPhone, Samsung Galaxy, and other brands were suggested as consideration set to be selected from 223 Amazon Mechanical Turk respondents, and they answered the structured survey of 33 questions made by Qualtrics with 5-point Likert scale. Structural Equations Model (SEM) was employed to test the hypothesized model, and RStudio and SPSS 18 were used to analyze the dataset. **Results:** It was confirmed that the more consumers have positive brand experience, the more they are loyal to brand. Conspicuous brand usage can be positively mediated, and consumers who experienced high conspicuous brand usage are more likely to be loyal to the brand. **Conclusions:** It is noteworthy to find the mediating effect of conspicuous brand usage, and the hidden mechanism between brand experience and brand loyalty. Managers can promote positive conspicuous brand usage when consumers get in touch with product and service channels. By providing impressive conspicuous brand experience, the brand loyalty of the band can be enhanced.

**Keywords:** Brand Experience, Brand Loyalty, Conspicuous Consumption, Mobile Phone Brands

**JEL Classification Code:** E21, M30, M31, M37.

## 1. Introduction

Mobile phones are necessities in modern society because of their functional and symbolic needs for consumers. In the area of conspicuous consumption, prior researches have been found to be aimed to categories such as mobile phones, fashion accessories, other private accessories for the youth segment (O’Cass & Frost, 2002). Mobile phone brands have been attempting to acquire customers, by making use of social media, mass media, WOM as well as to keep their customers by developing customers’ brand relationships (Huang, 2017).

In the recent research, mobile phone brands such as Apple, Samsung and Huawei are chosen as the research contexts, not only because mobile brands are so popular with consumers of the study, but also they are designed to

stimulate and satisfy experiences, rather than their functional needs (Huang, 2017). By using mobile phone brands as research theme, the results of the studies were valid, therefore mobile phone brands can be appropriate research context for the study of brand experience. There was also an exploratory study to investigate purchasing motives of students in mobile phone markets, and showed brand was the most important factor (Rahman, Ismail, Albaity, & Isa, 2017).

Even though previous researches have shown the antecedents and consequents of brand experience (Andreini, Pedeliento, Zarantonello, & Solerio, 2018), there are little research about mediating effect of conspicuous consumption of brand among brand constructs such as brand experience, brand loyalty. Because conspicuous consumption has been mainly investigated in the aspects of brand symbolism and what brands mean to the consumers and the wide spectrum of feelings that they purchase and use (O’Cass & Frost, 2002). Brand conspicuousness and consumers’ choice of conspicuous or non-conspicuous brands were another main topic of the research (Berger & Ward, 2010; Han, Nunes, & Drèze, 2010).

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The purpose of this study is to investigate the mediating effect of conspicuous brand usage between brand experience and brand loyalty in relational perspective, and to probe if there is any different result between the customers who have experienced mobile phone brands positively and negatively. If we can find any difference, it is noteworthy to show the hidden mechanism in major brand constructs, and it can contribute the future research of them.

In this research, it is expected to have the result that there will be an positive effect of brand experience on brand loyalty, and conspicuous brand usage can positively mediate them, and it can be confirmed that consumers who have experienced conspicuous brand usage are more likely to be loyal to the brand.

## 2. Literature Reviews

### 2.1. Brand experience

According to interpersonal relationship theory (Fournier, 1998), the brand relationships are similar to human relationships qualities, and regarding to relationships between consumers and brands, they are not merely a passive object of marketing transaction, but are active, contributing component of the relationship dyad (Ramaseshan & Stein, 2014). Experience occurs when consumers consume the objects when they are looking for them, shopping for them, and receiving services (Arnould et al., 2002; Brakus, Schmitt, & Zarantonello, 2009; Holbrook, 2000). Experience also occurs in a variety of settings, and most experience occurs directly when consumers shop, buy, and consume a product. Experience may arise directly when consumers are exposed to marketing communications and advertising such as websites (Brakus et al., 2009).

Brand experiences are defined as subjective, internal consumer responses such as sensation, feelings, cognitions, behavioral responses recalled by brand-related stimuli which are components of the brand's design, identity, package, communication, and environment (Brakus et al., 2009). It is noteworthy that both internal and behavioral responses of consumers' interaction with brands are the major components of consisting brand experience construct. Brand experience is also regarded as a multidimensional concept in relation to mind theory (Tooby & Cosmides, 2000).

The concept of brand experience is differentiated from other concepts such as hedonic consumption (Elizabeth & Morris, 1982), trial purchase (Oliver, Rust, & Varki, 1997), brand trust (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Delgado-

Ballester, 2004), and brand attachment (Thomson, MacInnis, & Park, 2005).

Firstly, even though the hedonic consumption is defined as features of consumer behavior which relate to multisensory, fantasy, emotional aspects of product usage experience (Elizabeth & Morris, 1982), and focused on behavioral and usage aspects of consumption, the brand experience is different from this construct in terms of both internal and behavioral responses of consumers to especially brand-related stimuli.

Secondly, comparing brand experience, the concept of trial purchase is defined as consumers' repetitive purchase behavior of branded product and service, and this can be one element of the responses from brand experience concept. Trial purchase which are referred as the initial outcome of purchase intentions to purchase repeatedly on new product or service has been mainly focused on the connection with purchase forecasting for frequently purchased branded products. Many researchers have shown positive associations between intention and purchase have been less predictive of actual purchase behavior (Jamieson & Bass, 1989).

Thirdly, brand trust is the intent of consumers to depend on the brand's ability to perform promised functions (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001) and a confident expectation of the brand's reliability and intent in situations that involve risks to consumers (Delgado-Ballester, 2004). Comparing to the concept of brand trust which is focused on performance and confidence of brand, brand experience is different from it in terms of simultaneous internal and behavioral interaction with brand.

Finally, in contrast to brand attachment which is referred as strong emotional bond with brand (Park & MacInnis, 2006), brand experience is not an emotion-related concept. On the one hand, emotions are an only internal outcome of simulation that evokes experiences (Brakus et al., 2009), on the other hand, experiences may happen when consumers do not show preference or personal connection with the brand, and brand that consumers are highly involved with do not necessarily evoke the strongest experiences (Brakus et al., 2009).

The most conspicuous perspective of brand experience is that it varies in valence. Some experiences are more positive than others, and others may even be negative (Brakus et al., 2009). Therefore, the operational definition of brand experience can be consumers' inward and outward overall estimation on brand-related stimuli regarding to its traits.

In terms of antecedents and consequents of brand experience, previous researches have shown that brand loyalty can be one of the conspicuous consequents of brand experience (Andreini et al., 2018; Brakus et al., 2009). In recent researches, the elements of experience in theme

parks were important antecedents which can make the perceived value of customers (Cheng & Kim, 2019), and those experiences consequently can lead consumers to positive or negative brand loyalty. Therefore, it is possible to insist there is positive effect between brand experience and brand loyalty in this research.

**H1:** The more consumers have positive brand experience, the more they are loyal to brand.

## 2.2. Brand Loyalty

Brand loyalty is defined as two major components which are behavioral and attitudinal. Behavioral loyalty is defined as customers' steady purchases of a brand as well as their intentions to buy in the future, and attitudinal loyalty mentions to customers' degree of commitment and attitude toward the brand (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001).

In some previous researches, the antecedents of brand loyalty were suggested as brand experience, customer satisfaction, brand trust, brand love, brand relationship (Brakus et al., 2009; Francisco-Maffezzoli, Smpreon, & Prado, 2014; Veloutsou, 2015; Huang, 2017), and there are relational positive effects between customer satisfaction, brand trust, love, relationship and attitudinal, behavioral brand loyalty. In other previous brand related researches, it was found that brand experience has positive direct effect on brand attachment (Dolbec & Chebat, 2013), and customer satisfaction, brand loyalty through brand personality (Brakus et al., 2009). Consumers who have positive brand experiences are more likely to purchase a brand again and promote it to others, and less likely to purchase an alternative brand (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001), and positive brand experiences strengthen a brand's value, and can make consumers loyal to the brand (Brakus et al., 2009). On the basis of reviews on brand related constructs above, brand loyalty can be defined as consumers' favorable attitudes and behaviors to the brand even if it is in trouble.

In recent researches, it is shown that marketers need appropriate promotions and management to lead their customers to re-purchase and recommendation which are brought by satisfaction and reliability with private brand (Chun, Choi, & Park, 2014), and perceived difference, value, consumer-brand relationships are not significant on brand loyalty in terms of omni-channel purchasing conditions (Han, 2017). Customer satisfaction contributes positively to customer delight, and that customer delight plays a significant role in the relationship between customer satisfaction and loyalty (Kim & Park, 2019). Even though there are many researches on brand loyalty, it still needs to investigate additional underlying mechanism of brand loyalty and other brand related constructs.

## 2.3. Conspicuous Brand Usage

Veblen (1994) originally developed a framework of conspicuous consumption. In this theory, preferences are determined socially in relation to individuals' positions in the social hierarchy in contrast to the approach that focuses on individual's maximization of utility on the basis of exogenous preferences (Shukla, 2008). In other words, conspicuous consumption is behavior of acquisition that people tend to consider as an extension of themselves and the way they want others to see them (Belk, 1988). It is behavior that individuals can display wealth by vast leisure activities and luxury expenditure (Trigg, 2001), and the bandwagon and snob effects can be essential factors influencing conspicuous consumption (Leibenstein, 1950). Even though status consumption is the process of earning status or social prestige from the consumption of products and services that others see to be high in status (O'Cass & Frost, 2002), conspicuous consumption involves expenditures which are made for the purpose of expanding the ego (Veblen, 1934).

According to some prior researches, in order to facilitate expression of the self, there must be a transition in brand value moving from instrumental to symbolic (Belk, 1988), and even third-world countries are attracted to and nourish in terms of conspicuous consumption before they have assured sufficient food, clothing, shelter (Belk, 1988). In other words, brand symbolism is what brands mean to the consumers and the wide spectrum of feelings that they purchase and use (O'Cass & Frost, 2002). Additionally, the findings of recent research provide a holistic perspective in the understanding of luxury brand constructs and why consumers involve symbolic consumption (Becker, Lee, & Nobre, 2018).

The consumers' buying behavior of conspicuous brands is affected by personal factors such as "who I am", "enhance my image" instead of societal factors such as "gain respect", "interested in status" (Shukla, 2008). Other researches have focused on brand conspicuousness, examined consumers' choice of conspicuous or non-conspicuous brands (Berger & Ward, 2010; Han, Nunes, & Drèze, 2010).

On the basis of previous researches that have shown conspicuous consumption has been linked to brand construct, conspicuous brand usage is defined as attention-getting behavior with regard to brands such as flaunting or name-dropping, and it mentions to situations in which consumers draw attention to the brand (Ferraro, Kirmani, & Matherly, 2013). In terms of behavioral aspect of brand loyalty, it can be affected by buying behavior of consuming conspicuous brands (Shukla, 2008), and conspicuous brand usage itself can play a role as mediator to explain the mechanism between brand experience and brand loyalty, in

turn, it can be regarded as correlated brand constructs theoretically. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate empirically if there is any actual mediating effect of conspicuous brand usage between brand experience and brand loyalty, and if the consumers who have higher conspicuous brand consumption are more likely to attain higher loyalty of the brand.

**H2:** Conspicuous brand usage is positively mediated between brand experience and brand loyalty.

**H3:** The higher consumers experience conspicuous brand usage, the higher consumers have brand loyalty.

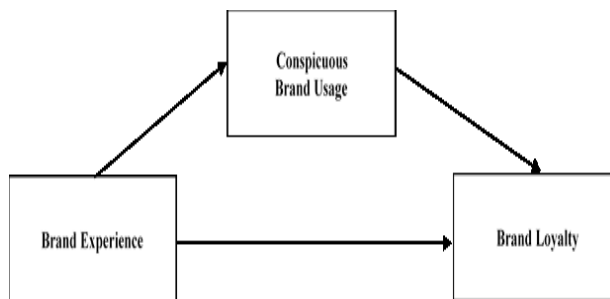
**Table 1:** Literature Review

	Authors	Definition	Key Findings
Brand Experience	Holbrook & Elizabeth (1982)  Brakus et al. (2009)	[experiential perspective] Considers consumption as a subjective condition of consciousness with a various symbolic meanings, hedonic responses, esthetic criteria. Internal consumer responses and behaviors such as sensation, emotion, and cognition that are subjective and triggered by brand-related stimuli that are part of the brand's design and identity, package, communication and environment.	The experiential view explores the symbolic meanings of subjective characteristic that are cheerfulness/sociability/elegance.  Brand experience can be divided into four dimensions (sensational, emotional, intellectual, and behavioral) that are differentiated by various brands. Brand experience influences directly or indirectly on customer satisfaction and loyalty.
Brand Loyalty	Aaker (1991)  Dick & Basu (1994)  Chadhuri & Holbrook (2001)	Symbolizing a constructive mind set toward a brand that leads to steady purchasing of the brand over time.  The relational strength between repeat patronage and an individual's relative attitude.  Behavioral loyalty is consumers' steady purchases of a brand as well as their intention to purchase, and attitudinal loyalty refers to consumers' degree of commitment as well as their attitude toward the brand.	It not only represents the repurchase index but also other symbolic aspects, attitudes and behaviors.  Incorporating the notion of attitudes will likely lead to the increased ability of loyalty models.  Brand loyal customers pay a premium because of the higher value they perceive. Another positive consequence can be favorable 'word of mouth'.
Conspicuous Brand Usage	Trigg (2001)  O'Cass & Frost (2002)  Berger & Ward (2010)  Ferraro et al.(2013)	Conspicuous consumption is behavior that an individual can show his/her wealth through vast leisure activities, luxury expenditure.  Brand symbolism is the brand's meaning to consumers, and the spectrum of feelings in purchasing and using it.  A particular type of in-conspicuous consumption is the use of signals which are noticeable to people with the requisite knowledge to interpret meaning.  Conspicuous brand usage can be defined as attention-getting behavior with regard to brands such as flaunting or name-dropping.	Conspicuous brand usage is differentiated from other types of branding alliance.  The status-conscious market is likely to be affected by brand's symbolic characteristics.  People who are with more cultural capital in a certain domain prefer subtle signals because they are differentiated from mainstream.  Conspicuous brand usage mentions to situations in which a consumer overtly evokes attention to the brand.

### 3. Research Method

#### 3.1. Research Model

The related research questions can be drawn as follows. Can brand experience have positive effect on brand loyalty? Can the conspicuous brand usage be an alternative mediating role between brand experience and brand loyalty? In this study, these questions will be investigated by making the research model as follows in Figure 1.



**Figure 1:** Research Model

### 3.2. Measurement

Apple iPhone, Samsung Galaxy and other mobile brands were suggested to be selected from Amazon Mechanical Turk respondents as consideration set in this research. 223 Amazon Mechanical Turk respondents answered the structured 33 survey questions made by Qualtrics with 5-point Likert scale and were compensated with 1\$.

Questions about constructs were brought by the former empirical study of the marketing articles. Brand experience was measured by former research. Respondents were asked about their sensory brand experiences: 'I find this brand interesting in a sensory way', 'This brand makes a strong impression on my visual sense or other senses', 'This brand does not appeal to my senses'. Affective brand experiences: 'This brand induces feelings and sentiments', 'I do not have strong emotions for this brand', 'This brand is an emotional brand'. Intellectual brand experiences: 'This brand stimulates my curiosity and problem solving', 'I engage in a lot of thinking when I encounter this brand', 'This brand does not make me think'. Behavioral brand experiences: 'I engage in physical actions and behaviors when I use this brand', 'This brand results in bodily experiences', 'This brand is not action oriented' (Brakus et al., 2009).

Brand loyalty was measured by four statements to reflect either the purchase-related or attitudinal aspects. Purchase loyalty was measured by agreement with two statements: 'I will buy this brand the next time I buy', 'I intend to keep purchasing this brand'. Attitudinal loyalty was measured by two statements: 'I am committed to this brand' and 'I would be willing to pay a higher price for this brand over other brands' (Chadhuri & Holbrook, 2001).

Conspicuous brand usage was measured by three statements which were modified into the questions related to mobile phone usage in this research: 'Do you think you use mobile phone brand to impress other people?', 'Do you think you use mobile phone brand to show off?', 'Do you think you use mobile phone brand to gain the approval of others?' (Ferraro et al., 2013).

## 4. Results

The survey began with an introductory statement for respondents to answer their own experience about the mobile phone brand usage, and data were collected randomly. The respondents in this research presented their responses according to their own brand experiences. The description of respondents was presented in Table 2. They were asked to report their demographics information at the end of the survey including gender, age, education, race. They were almost White, university graduated and over 30s.

We conducted Structural Equations Model (SEM) to test the hypothesized model, and RStudio was used to analyze the dataset and to examine model fit. T-test analysis and regression analysis were executed by SPSS 18 to find if there is any difference between high versus low brand experience of consumers to brand loyalty.

**Table 1:** Description of the Respondents (N=223)

Variables		Ratio (%)
Gender	Male	59.6
	Female	40.4
Age	19-29	30.9
	30-39	42.2
	40-49	14.8
	50-59	8.5
	Over 60	3.6
Education	High school	12.6
	Some college	26.9
	Bachelor's	51.6
	Master's/Doctoral	9.0
Race	White	81.2
	Black	9.4
	Hispanic	5.4
	Asian	4.0

According to traditional view of mediation model (Baron & Kenny, 1986), the independent variable should be significantly related to the dependent variable, and the mediator should be significantly related to the dependent variable, and the mediator should be significantly related to the dependent variable while controlling for the effect of the independent variable. To examine a mediation chain, one might fit two sequential regressions to approximate the chain. But the related statistical theory dictates the simultaneous fitting of paths is parsimonious and will show better results. In regression, a problematic alternative model would be a non-recursive relation. The paths or structural links among theoretical constructs are not easily taken in by regression but are fit easily by in SEMs (Iacobucci, 2009).

### 4.1. T-test analysis

Brand experience can vary in valence, in other words, some experiences are more positive than others, and others may even be negative (Brakus et al., 2009). If there is actual difference between consumers who have positive experiences and others who have negative ones, it should be confirmed by the T-test. In the same way, it also needs to be tested whether high conspicuousness and low conspicuousness can affect brand loyalty or not.

SPSS 18 were used to execute T-test. According to Figure 2, consumers who have higher mean scores of brand experience have higher brand loyalty ( $F=59.443$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ,  $t=5.887$ ,  $df=141.772$ ). According to Figure 3, consumers

who have higher mean scores of conspicuous brand usage have higher brand loyalty ( $F=14.151, p < 0.01, t=3.079, df=216.691$ ). These results show that the higher consumer have brand experience and conspicuous brand usage, the higher they have brand loyalty.

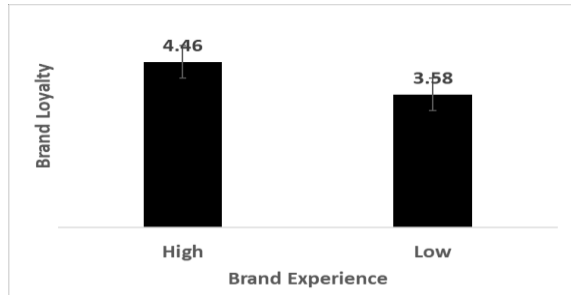


Figure 2: Brand Experience vs. Brand Loyalty

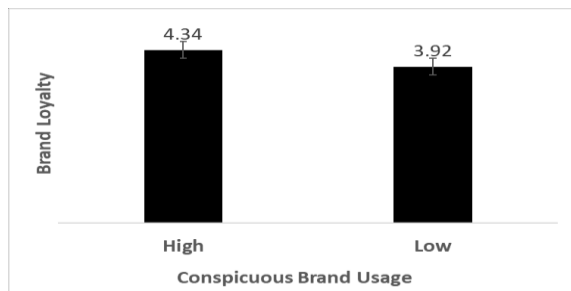


Figure 3: Conspicuous Brand Usage vs. Brand Loyalty

### 4.2. Correlation Analysis

We calculated means and standard deviations for each variable and made a correlation matrix of variables to test hypotheses in this research by SPSS 18. They are shown in Table 3. After analyzing table, relations between brand experience, conspicuous brand usage and brand loyalty is positively correlated in the level of  $p < 0.01$ . Cronbach  $\alpha$  greater than 0.70 is generally considerate reliable (Peterson, 1994). In this research, Cronbach  $\alpha$  of total was 0.536, brand experience was 0.611, conspicuous brand usage was 0.881, and brand loyalty was 0.929. Therefore, the model is generally reliable.

Table 3: Mean, Standard Deviation, Cronbach  $\alpha$ , Correlation Analysis

	Mean	SD	$\alpha$	1	2
Brand Experience	3.0987	0.622	0.611	-	-
Brand Loyalty	4.0717	1.117	0.881	0.385	-
Conspicuous Brand Usage	2.0090	1.298	0.929	0.412	0.223

N = 223,  $p < .05$

### 4.3. Factor analysis

To concentrate the effect of variables, every variable was operated with factor analysis. The data's best fit was attained with a principal component analysis with varimax rotation. The factor loadings of brand experience, brand loyalty, conspicuous brand usage are seen in Table 4. Some factors (Sensory 3, Affective 2, Intellectual 3, Behavioral 3) of brand experience were excluded from the analysis because of their inappropriate loadings, but KMO scale were 0.877 ( $p=0.000$ ), thus they are highly reliable.

Table 4: Factor analysis result

Measurement Factors	Brand Experience	Brand Loyalty	Conspicuous Brand Usage
Brand Experience	Sensory 1	.494	
	Sensory 2	.548	
	Sensory 3	-	
	Affective 1	.655	
	Affective 2	-	
	Affective 3	.594	
	Intellectual 1	.669	
	Intellectual 2	.685	
	Intellectual 3	-	
	Behavioral 1	.749	
	Behavioral 2	.687	
Behavioral 3	-		
Brand Loyalty	Behavioral 1		.849
	Behavioral 2		.878
	Attitudinal 1		.832
	Attitudinal 2		.730
Conspicuous Brand Usage	Usage 1		.884
	Usage 2		.932
	Usage 3		.904

N = 223,  $p < .01$

We earned the result of measurement model of the model fit by using RStudio. They are shown in Table 5. Comparative Fit Index (CFI) is 0.863, Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) is 0.834, Akaike (AIC) is 9116.825, Bayesian (BIC) is 9229.262, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) is 0.130, Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMSR) is 0.092. It shows the model fit is marginally good.

**Table 5:** Measurement Model Fit

Test statistic	413.573
Degrees of freedom	87
P-value (Chi-square)	0.000
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	0.863
Tucker-Lewis (TLI) index	0.834
Akaike (AIC)	9116.825
Bayesian (BIC)	9229.262
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	0.130
Standardized Root Mean Square Residual	0.092

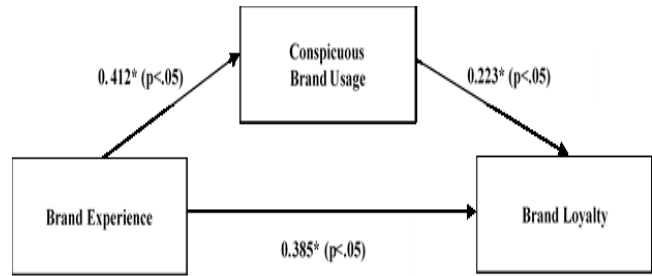
**4.4. Regression Analysis**

To confirm suggested hypotheses in this research, three separate regression analyses via SPSS 18 were applied. In this regression model, independent variable is brand experience and dependent variable is brand loyalty, and conspicuous brand usage is mediating variable. To confirm the mediating effect of conspicuous brand usage between brand experience and brand loyalty, multiple regression was applied. Table 6 shows that the regression model was statistically significant (Model 1,  $R^2=0.149$ ,  $F=38.571$ , Standardized  $\beta=0.385$ ,  $t=6.211$ ,  $p < 0.01$  / Model 2,  $R^2=0.170$ ,  $F=45.166$ , Standardized  $\beta=0.412$ ,  $t=6.721$ ,  $p < 0.01$  / Model 3,  $R^2=0.050$ ,  $F=11.600$ , Standardized  $\beta=0.223$ ,  $t=3.406$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Thus, Hypothesis 1, brand experience is positively associated with brand loyalty, was supported, and Hypothesis 2, conspicuous brand usage is positively mediated between positively mediated between brand experience and brand loyalty, was also supported.

**Table 6:** Regression analysis (Total)

	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	B	SE	Standardized $\beta$	t	Sig.
(Model 1) Brand Experience → Brand Loyalty	0.385	0.149	38.571	0.692	0.111	0.385	6.211	<b>0.000</b>
(Model 2) Brand Experience → Conspicuous Brand Usage	0.412	0.170	45.166	0.860	0.128	0.412	6.721	<b>0.000</b>
(Model 3) Conspicuous Brand Usage → Brand Loyalty	0.223	0.050	11.600	0.192	0.056	0.223	3.406	<b>0.001</b>

SE=Standard Error,  $p < .05$



**Figure 4:** Model Result

Table 7 shows that the regression model of high conspicuous brand usage was statistically significant (Model 1,  $R^2=0.049$ ,  $F=4.010$ , Standardized  $\beta=0.222$ ,  $t=2.002$ ,  $p < 0.05$  / Model 2,  $R^2=0.087$ ,  $F=7.330$ , Standardized  $\beta=0.295$ ,  $t=2.707$ ,  $p < 0.01$  / Model 3,  $R^2=0.153$ ,  $F=13.917$ , Standardized  $\beta=0.391$ ,  $t=3.731$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ).

**Table 7:** Regression analysis (High Conspicuous Brand Usage)

	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	B	SE	Standardized $\beta$	t	Sig.
(Model 1) Brand Experience → Brand Loyalty	0.222	0.049	4.010	0.306	0.153	0.222	2.002	<b>0.049</b>
(Model 2) Brand Experience → Conspicuous Brand Usage	0.295	0.087	7.330	0.411	0.152	0.295	2.707	<b>0.008</b>
(Model 3) Conspicuous Brand Usage → Brand Loyalty	0.391	0.153	13.917	0.386	0.104	0.391	3.731	<b>0.000</b>

SE=Standard Error,  $p < .05$

**Table 8:** Regression analysis (Low Conspicuous Brand Usage)

	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	B	SE	Standardized $\beta$	t	Sig.
(Model 1) Brand Experience → Brand Loyalty	0.400	0.160	27.003	0.855	0.164	0.400	5.196	<b>0.000</b>
(Model 2) Brand Experience → Conspicuous Brand Usage	0.053	0.003	0.401	0.032	0.050	0.053	0.633	<b>0.528</b>
(Model 3) Conspicuous Brand Usage → Brand Loyalty	0.009	0.000	0.010	0.031	0.300	0.009	0.102	<b>0.919</b>

SE=Standard Error,  $p > .05$

Table 8 shows that the regression model of low conspicuous brand usage was statistically insignificant except for main effect between brand experience and brand loyalty (Model 1,  $R^2=0.160$ ,  $F=27.003$ , Standardized  $\beta=0.400$ ,  $t=5.196$ ,  $p < 0.01$  / Model 2,  $R^2=0.003$ ,  $F=0.401$ , Standardized  $\beta=0.053$ ,  $t=0.633$ ,  $p > 0.05$  / Model 3,  $R^2=0.000$ ,  $F=0.010$ , Standardized  $\beta=0.0090$ ,  $t=0.102$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). Thus, H3 was partially supported.

## 5. Discussion

This research has suggested that the more consumers have positive brand experience, the more they are loyal to brand. This finding is also supported by previous researches (Brakus et al., 2009; Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2010). Even though brand experience can create and develop relationship between brand and consumer, and it can arise in variable settings when consumers search for brands, it can generally be connected to brand loyalty. Therefore, brand experience should be managed carefully when consumers are unbiased experience to brand of focal company. It was confirmed that brand experience is positively associated with brand loyalty, and conspicuous brand usage is positively mediated between positively mediated between brand experience and brand loyalty. But, only the regression model of high conspicuous brand usage was statistically significant.

There are two major academic contribution of this research. Firstly, in contrary to inconspicuous consumption of previous research (Berger & Ward, 2010), conspicuous brand usage has a positive mediating effect between brand experience and brand loyalty. This was further research on conspicuous brand usage that it can play a positive role to enhance brand loyalty. Secondly, on the basis of previous research about brand symbolism (O'Cass & Frost, 2002) to show off of consumers in relation to the public, conspicuous brand usage also fundamentally is linked to it.

For the managerial implication, marketing managers need to develop alliance with other brands for the consumers be exposed to more brand-related experience such as conspicuous brand usage promotions of the focal company to enhance positive effect of conspicuous brand usage.

For example, when consumers visit the mobile section of Samsung Electronic's "d'light shop", they can directly experience Virtual Reality machine putting on goggle loaded with Samsung mobile phones, and touch and experience brand-new handsets which are newly released in the market. These consumer brand-related experiences and consumptions are all very conspicuous to the consumers who already knew Samsung mobile phone brand or did not. This kind of conspicuous touches can lead current and

prospect consumers earn more positive memories and experiences, therefore their behavioral and attitudinal loyalty toward the brand can be positively enhanced (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001).

Regarding the result of this research, managers can promote positive conspicuous experiences of brand usage when consumers get in touch with product and service channels, by doing so, the brand loyalty of mobile phone brands and those of companies can be enhanced. Brand managers need to reorganize lay-out of brand stores and assortments of products to show off their brand logo, brand slogan more conspicuously to the customers to get stronger brand loyalty. Additionally, marketers can give attention to brand public's characteristics, and provide the ways members of brand public engage the brand to enhance brand loyalty (Choi, Wang, & Chen, 2019).

## 6. Limitations and Future Research

There are several limitations in this research and directions for future research. Firstly, the sample size is relatively small, therefore it needs to increase the sample size in the future. Secondly, the primary limitation is that it explored the general mediating effect of conspicuous brand usage, the degree of usage of brand should be investigated. Thirdly, it needs to investigate a more concrete and detailed understanding the relationship among relational marketing related brand variables, and to examine deeper understanding of the effects of brand experience, brand trust, brand attachment on building brand loyalty.

Future research needs to focus on the antecedents and consequents of brand experiences and alternative mediating variables between brand experience and brand loyalty. Additionally, it needs to be explored how exactly brand experience dimensions are evoked by brand related stimuli in variable situations, and direct and indirect brand experiences should be investigated. Secondly, target brands which were mobile phone brands in this research should be expanded to those of other categories of the industries such as fashion accessories, automobiles. Finally, it needs to be examined that brand experience may build customer equity, brand equity, and how marketers should manage brands to create positive experiences that build the equity.

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