ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Event Marketing and Its Impact on Brand Loyalty - An Empirical Study on Vietnamese Higher Education Institutions

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ABSTRACT
The stiff competition among higher education institutions (HEIs) has made brand awareness and brand loyalty significantly critical in HEIs' marketing activities, promoting a higher enrollment rate. This study examines the impact of event marketing on brand awareness, brand image, and brand loyalty within HEIs in Vietnam. Using a quantitative research design, data were collected via an online questionnaire administered to 324 high school students who had participated in events hosted by Vietnamese universities before university admission. The proposed research model was tested using Structural Equation Modeling. The findings indicate that various dimensions of event marketing, including "sense, feel, think, act, and related experiences", positively influence brand awareness, which in turn enhances brand image. Furthermore, brand awareness and image have a statistically significant and positive effect on brand loyalty. These findings provide HEIs and their stakeholders with valuable implications in formulating event marketing strategies effectively to attract and recruit prospective students.

1. INTRODUCTION

Since the 1986 economic reform, Vietnamese higher education (HE) has significantly transformed and contributed to national economic development. In fact, the numbers of students enrolling in Vietnamese tertiary education has been substantially increasing, reaching over 2.2 million students in 2023 (MOET, 2023). The gross enrollment ratio (GER) in tertiary education reached approximately 28.5% in 2022, reflecting improved access (World Bank, 2020). The Vietnam HE market has been experiencing significant shifts, driven by the adoption of innovative educational content delivery methods and the internationalization of the education sector. These shifts are mainly due to the expansion of private education provision, which plays an essential role in growing the domestic capacity of the Vietnamese HE system (World Bank, 2020). Noticeably, the Technavio's market research report estimated that the Vietnam's HE market size will increase by $616.5 million at a growth rate of 15.6% between 2024 and 2029 (Technavio Report, 2025).

Alongside the rapid growth and internationalization of the Vietnamese HE system, HEIs face fierce competition and significant pressure. In recent years, many HEIs, including flagship universities in major cities like Ha Noi and Ho Chi Minh City, could not meet the requirement of their admission quotas (Ngoc et al., 2023). Notably, HEIs facing difficulties in enrollment targets include both private schools and public universities with high entrance standards.

Facing increasingly intense competition, HEIs realize that only external marketing is insufficient to secure competitiveness in the education and training sector. Indeed, strong university branding and brand value enhancement efforts are also necessary to differentiate and facilitate themselves in achieving recruitment goals. University branding is an important marketing tool to attract, engage, and retain prospective students and secure their position in the competitive HE environment (Wilson & Elliot 2016; Sultan & Wong 2014). Pinar (2010) points out that branding and brand management are crucial to seeking competitive advantages in such severe competition in the educational sector. Empirical evidence suggests that a successful branding endeavour could improve university services, as well as attract and retain students (Watkins & Gonzenbach 2013; Sultan & Wong, 2014).

In the field of education, a brand is the representation of a HEI's academic reputation, and the key advantage of branding is the attraction it brings to a HEI (Gupta & Singh, 2010). To build a strong brand, universities must enhance the public awareness of their existence and quality of their educational services to distinguish themselves from their competitors and gain market share. Research also proves that building a strong image has always been an important aspect of product and brand management (Abbas, 2019). The stronger brand is created, the greater will be the revenue both in the short and long term (Kapferer, 2004). It is the concerns about brand awareness and brand images of education institutions that inspire this current study.

Among different branding activities, event marketing has emerged as a vital strategy for HEIs in promoting brand image and fostering student loyalty. As the educational landscape evolves, HEIs increasingly focus on experiential marketing through events such as college fairs, open houses, and educational seminars. These initiatives build brand visibility or brand image, and provide potential students with an immersive understanding of campus life and academic offerings (Vietnam Education and Training Services Industry Snapshot, 2023). As HEIs seek to position themselves in the education market, effective event marketing becomes pivotal in attracting and retaining students.

Despite the growing importance of HEIs branding, few studies have been undertaken on this issue (Chapleo, 2011), specifically event marketing in the Vietnamese HEIs context. Without fully understanding event marketing measurements and their impact on the university brand, HEIs could face financial constraints, human resource shortages, and a limited understanding of effective marketing techniques, which can hinder their ability to execute successful events.

Therefore, our study aims to answer the following questions: What factors of event marketing affect brand awareness of HEIs in Vietnam?; What are the correlations among brand awareness, brand image, and brand loyalty in HEIs in Vietnam?; What are some insights and implications that universities can consider in designing effective event marketing strategies to attract and recruit prospective students?

This paper is constructed as follows. Section 1 provides an introduction and the research background. Section 2 represents the literature review on event marketing and brand loyalty. Section 3 delineates the research design and procedures. The research results are presented in section 4. Finally, section 5 discusses the theoretical and practical implications of the study, along with its limitations and directions for future research.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Constructs

2.1.1. Event Marketing and its measurements

Event marketing has been one of the popular corporate marketing strategies for decades; which includes company-sponsored activities and programs designed to create daily or special brand-related interactions with consumers (Kotler & Keller, 2016). The method is experiential and aims to transform not only attendees' perceptions but also their behavior (Setiawan, 2022). In educational institutions, event marketing refers to the strategic use of events, such as open days, career fairs, graduation ceremonies, conferences, workshops, as tools to promote the institution's brand, to engage current and prospective students, and to build relationships with stakeholders such as parents, alumni, and the community. Abbas (2019) points out that event marketing is used by educational institutions to foster emotional connections and loyalty, communicate institutional values, and enhance brand awareness through experiential engagement.

Schmitt (1999) argues that the most essential construct of measuring experimentation is strategic experiential modules, which managers in the organizations can adopt to create different customer experiences. Schmitt (1999) also proposes the experiential modules to manage experiential marketing including sensory experiences (SENSE),

affective experiences (FEEL), creative cognitive experiences (THINK), physical experiences, behaviors, and lifestyles (ACT), and social-identity experiences relating to a reference group or culture (RELATE).

2.1.2. Brand awareness

Brand awareness refers to the power and familiarity of a brand about which a customer or consumer is fully aware of (Abbas, 2019). Keller (2009) emphasizes that brand awareness reflects the brand's presence and strength in consumers' memories, enabling them to remember or recognize the brand in various situations. Brand awareness urges customers to reduce search time and perceived risk when considering and purchasing products. Then, consumers are more likely to choose brands with prior information readily available. Furthermore, Farjam and Hongyi (2015) state that brand awareness refers to consumer familiarity with a specific brand. It denotes the consumer's ability to identify and associate the brand when exposed to visual cues, such as logos, packaging, or other sensory stimuli. On the other hand, brand recall represents the consumer's ability to retrieve the brand from memory when consumers have a range of product options. Hence, the active recall of the brand relies on previous exposure or knowledge (Farjam & Hongyi, 2015).

2.1.3. Brand image

Brand image reflects consumers' symbolism, encompassing their definitions and evaluations related to the brand (Iversen & Hem, 2008). Keller (2009) defines brand image as the collection of consumer perceptions and preferences for a brand, manifested through various types of brand associations stored in consumers' memory. These associations are formed through consumers' interactions with the brand and encompass their beliefs, attitudes, and emotions toward the brand (Keller, 2009). The brand image encapsulates consumers' information and ideas that consumers hold about the brand's products and features (Lee et al., 2011). Brand image is a mental representation that consumers have developed as a result of exposure to marketing communication, consumption experiences, and social influences (Riezebos, 2003).

2.1.4. Brand loyalty

The importance of client loyalty in today's fiercely competitive marketplaces is becoming more widely acknowledged (Anderson & Mittal, 2000; Perreault et al., 2013), highlighting firms' need to create efficient plans for building and preserving strong customer connections. The fact that obtaining new consumers is more expensive than keeping existing ones further emphasizes the importance of this imperative (Lee et al., 2003; Kumar et al., 2011; Keisidou et al., 2013). The behavioral aspect of loyalty is evident when customers consistently purchase the same brand, displaying a repeat purchase behavior that reflects their commitment to the brand (Lam et al., 2004; Jones & Taylor, 2007). Reichheld and Schefter (2000) argue that customers exhibiting behavioral loyalty possess desirable characteristics, including reduced price sensitivity, increased purchase frequency, and a higher likelihood of recommending the brand to others. These loyal customers contribute directly to the company's revenue and act as advocates, influencing and attracting new customers to the brand.

2.2. Underlying theories

2.2.1. Associative network theory and spreading activation theory

Two key theories, namely associative network theory and spreading activation theory, underpin the importance of the congruence and success of communication-oriented events. These theories illuminate how memory functions and how the strength of associations between brand and events influences perceived awareness. As posited by Collins and Loftus (1975), the associative network theory explains memory as a network of interconnected nodes. Each node represents a piece of information. Activating a node stimulates the retrieval of related information. This activation process is known as spreading activation (Anderson, 1983). In the context of brand-event congruence, the more links between the brand and the event, the stronger the associations become. This phenomenon results in a higher perceived congruence between the two. In contrast, incongruent brand-event relationships have weaker links, leading to inferior memory retrieval for these relationships (Cornwell et al., 2006).

Some academic works empirically supported the impact of the congruence of event marketing on brand awareness (i.e., Johar & Pham 1999; Koo et al., 2006). These studies have found that congruence between an event and a brand positively influences brand awareness. This congruence can be due to the enhanced memorability and recall of congruent relationships. When the event aligns with the brand in terms of their image, values, or positioning, customers create a cohesive and unified impression, making it easier for customers to recognize and remember the

organization's brand. Phan et al. (2022) indicate that positive interactions during events can foster emotional connections with institutions, leading to stronger brand loyalty and retention.

2.2.2. Customer-Based Brand Equity

In the context of branding, Keller's (1993) Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) model provides a theoretical framework to understand how brand awareness and brand image contribute to brand loyalty. The model conceptualizes brand equity from the perspective of the consumer, proposing that building strong brand equity involves sequential stages beginning with brand salience (awareness), followed by brand performance and imagery (brand image), and culminating in brand resonance, which reflects the strength of brand loyalty. When brand awareness and brand image are positively established, they shape favorable consumer responses and foster a deeper emotional connection, ultimately leading to brand loyalty (Keller, 1993). This model highlighted the critical role of awareness and image as psychological antecedents that drive consumers' commitment and repeated purchasing behavior toward a brand.

In conclusion, the underlying theories discussed above help to explain the relationship between event marketing to brand awareness, and the relationship between brand awareness, brand images to brand loyalty.

2.3. Hypothesis development

Sense Experience (SE)

Sense experience crucially shapes one's perceptions and interactions with goods and services. According to McCole (2004), sense experience refers to clients' diverse experiences with their senses, including the tactile, aural, gustatory, olfactory, and visual aspects. These sensory inputs are critical in influencing how consumers view various products and how they feel about them. Yuan and Wu (2008) emphasize that sense experience is a sophisticated cognitive process that consumers use to create messages and impressions about goods and services based on the sensory data.

Vargo and Lusch's (2004) research also highlights the importance of sensory experience. They contend that consumers acquire what is known as "experience logic" as a result of the integration of sensory stimuli. Experience logic is a conceptual framework that consumers use to interpret their interactions with goods and services. This framework forms a cognitive structure directing the consumers' subsequent decision-making processes.

H1: Sense experience in an event has a positive effect on brand awareness.

Feel Experience (FE)

Feel experience explores customers' inner feelings, moods, and emotions while interacting with goods and services. Feel experience refers to customers' individualized and highly subjective reactions (Yuan & Wu, 2008; Yang & He, 2011). Each customer's experience with a product or service is contingent on a unique combination of contextual elements, past experiences, and individual preferences, which combine to create this spectrum of emotions.

Customers are more likely to develop favorable emotional connections with items when getting positive feelings from their consuming experiences. This concept is consistent with Schmitt's (1999) that happy emotions positively influence consumer views and brand relationships. Good feeling is a stimulant, consequently raising brand loyalty, improving consumer happiness, and promoting repeat business. The buyer-seller relationship's emotional aspect significantly impacts the relationship quality between the two parties (Mattila, 2001). Customers with satisfying emotional interactions with a seller or brand tend to form strong emotional attachments with its brand, increasing advocacy, loyalty, and trust. Hence, we posit the second hypothesis as follows:

H2: Feel Experience in an event has a positive effect on brand awareness.

Think Experience (TE)

Think experience takes the lead, emphasizing the mental component of how customers engage with goods and services. Think experience explores consumers' cognitive capacities and intelligence, providing insight into how they produce cognitive experiences while engaging in consumption activities (Lee et al., 2008). Think experience is a potent inducer of creative thinking in consumers (Schmitt, 1999). Customers' cognitive processes lead to exploring new concepts, viewpoints, and connections when these processes are exposed to distinctive, thought-provoking, and innovative features of a business or its products. When consumers devote more mental effort to understanding and

valuing the offering's complexities, this cognitive stimulation may result in greater engagement and involvement. As follows, we can deduce the third hypothesis:

H3: Think Experience in an event has a positive effect on brand awareness.

Act Experience (AE)

Act experience explores how customers interact with goods and services through physical experiences and behaviors. Act experience concerns the concrete and observable elements of consumer encounters, including the customer's physical attributes, behavior, and way of life, as well as the social dynamics that emerge from these contacts (Schmitt, 1999). Moreover, act experience gives customers a sense of control over their goods and services. Through active engagement with the consuming process, customers can mold their own experiences, personalize products to align with their preferences, and influence the results. This sense of influence makes the experience more meaningful and individualized by enhancing customer empowerment, contentment, and a sense of ownership. Hence, we propose the fourth hypothesis.

H4: Act Experience in an event has a positive effect on brand awareness.

Related Experience (RE)

Related experience relies on the social aspect of consumer interactions, highlighting the influence of relationships, social identity, and belongingness on consumer behavior and perspective. The key component of related experience is a product or service's capacity to encourage people to improve themselves and their perceptions of others. Related marketing strategies aim to appeal to people's innate desire for social acceptability and a sense of belonging, as Schmitt (1999) explains. Customers are more likely to see themselves favorably and receive approval and affirmation from their social networks when they discover products that speak to their goals and social identities. We can infer the fifth hypothesis as follows:

H5: Related Experience in an event has a positive effect on brand awareness.

Previous research has consistently demonstrated that brand awareness positively influences on brand image. Some have proven this assertion through various studies across different sectors; for example, the context of packaged drinking water products (i.e., Bilgin, 2018; Permana & Ilham, 2018), the beverage industry (Saleem et al., 2015), the realm of social media communication (Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2015), the fast fashion industry (Su & Chang, 2018), and the tourism industry (Tran et al., 2019). Hence, we can infer the sixth hypothesis as follows:

H6: Brand awareness has a positive effect on brand image.

Brand loyalty is a valuable asset for businesses that helps with long-term success and market competitiveness. Brand loyalty is a source of long-term competitive advantage, giving companies a solid platform to stand out from the competition and win over and keep customers (Moisescu, 2014). Jiang and Zhang (2016) draw attention to the advantages of brand loyalty for keeping customers, boosting revenue, and building brand equity. Through fostering brand loyalty, businesses can enjoy higher customer lifetime value, lower marketing expenses, and more consumer advocacy. As a result, we can deduce the following about the seventh hypothesis:

H7: Brand image has a positive effect on brand loyalty.

Likewise, Kotler and Keller (2016) contend that brand awareness correlates with the depth of brand-related information, enabling marketers to gauge consumers' capacity to recognize brands under diverse circumstances. Additionally, brand awareness represents a valuable asset that shapes perceptions, preferences, and even consumer actions. Its influence can extend to purchasing choices regarding brands, ultimately fostering brand loyalty (Mathew et al., 2014). Following the above review literature, the eighth hypothesis has been developed as follows:

H8: Brand awareness has a positive effect on brand loyalty.

2.4. Conceptual framework

As a result of our analysis, we suggest the following framework for this study:
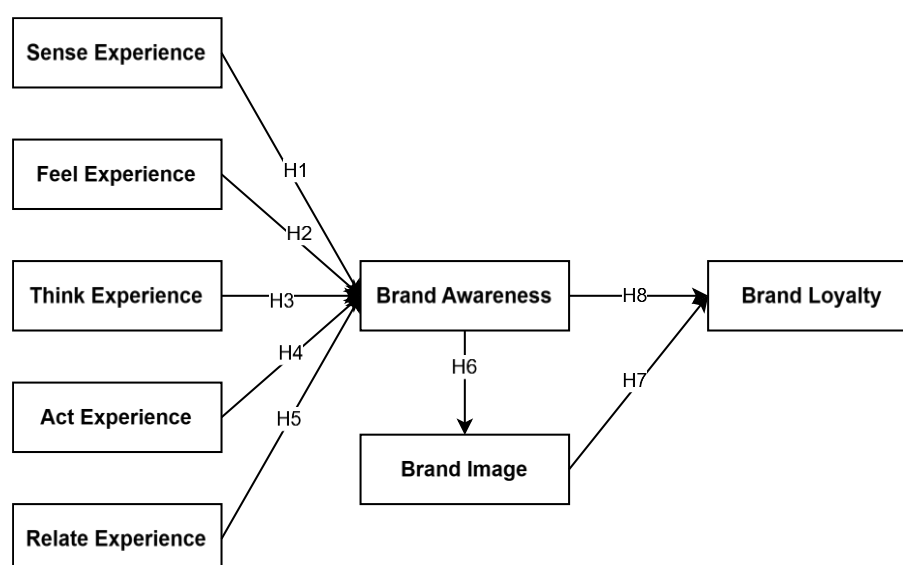
Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

We sent out 350 questionnaires to students who had participated in events hosted by HEIs to conduct the study. The questionnaires were distributed online via Google Forms to target respondents. Screening questions, "Have you ever been to an event hosted by a university" was included to ensure that the data from the intended audience was collected. Then, 324 qualified forms were selected for the data testing. The reason we choose students to conduct the survey is because we want to examine their awareness toward a school's brand and their perceptions toward brand loyalty after joining events hosted by that specific school.

This investigation employs a questionnaire with 35 measurement items using a 6-point Likert scale, from 1 (totally disagree) to 6 (totally agree), which were inherited and modified from Yang and He (2011), Maghnati et al. (2012), Seo and Park (2018), Sasmita and Suki (2015) (See Appendix B). We used SPSS 20.0 and AMOS 24.0 for data analysis, including Cronbach's Alpha, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), and Structural Equation Modeling. The measurements are accepted when the value of Cronbach's Alpha is at least 0.6, and the total variable correlation is greater than 0.3 (Peterson, 1994). In addition, the EFA analysis used the principal components' analysis extraction method along with the Varimax rotation. As a result, the minimum value of the KMO coefficient is 0.6, and the value of factor weight is at least 0.3 (Hair et al., 2010). With CFA and SME analysis, the model is evaluated based on the CMIN/df less than 3, other factors GFI, CFI, TLI greater than 0.9, the RMSEA factor less than 0.08 08 (Hair et al., 2010).

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1. Descriptive statistics

We delineate the demographic characteristics of respondents in Appendix A. First, male learners make up the majority (57.7%) of the sample, while female learners account for 31.5% (others prefer not to say). Second, the age range is between 15 and 18 years old (65.7%), and most respondents (75.3%) enrolled in high school. Third, a noteworthy percentage of respondents (66%) have contemplated studying at HEIs after attending the events hosted by that HEI, underscoring the program's appeal and potential for future enrollment.

4.2. Reliability and Validity

We assess the reliability of measurement using Cronbach's alpha analysis. The results of Cronbach's Alpha analysis for the eight variables are presented in Appendix B. Specifically, all of Cronbach's Alpha values are higher than 0.8, indicating that the study's instruments are highly reliable in measuring the constructs. As a result, all observed variables are reliable and suitable for use in the exploratory factor analysis (EFA). EFA was suggested as a technique for creating and gaining access to measurement quality (Hair et al., 2010). EFA generates a factor load

estimate for each variable on all factors by loading all measured variables. Most of observed variables in our study have factor loading larger than 0.5 (see Appendix B), denoting that these observed items have good statistical significance (Hair et al., 2010). Additionally, the value of KMO (Kaiser, Meyer, and Olkin measure of sample adequacy) is 0.908, above 0.5, indicating that the data used for factor analysis was adequate. Furthermore, the Bartlett's test result was statistically significant at 0.05 level.

Table 1 describes the CFA and model fit of CFA. All of the indicators including Chi-square/df, p-value for the model, CFI (Comparative Fit Model), GFI (Goodness-of-Fit index), TLI (Tucker Lewis Index), RMSEA (Root Mean Squared Error of Approximation) meet the requirements. The regression weights from items toward its constructs are higher than 0.7 with a statistical significance of 0.01. Therefore, our research model is sufficient for the Structural Equation Model analysis.

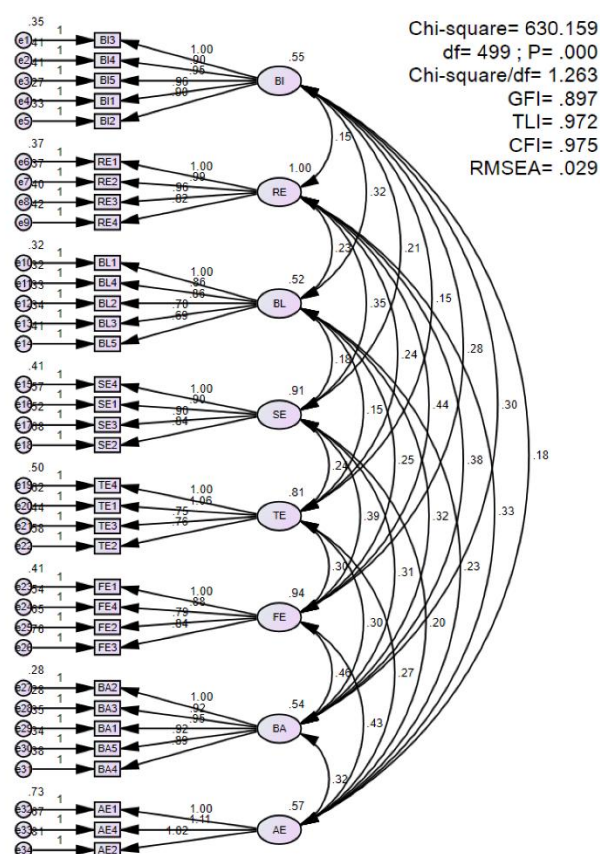*Figure 2. CFA result*

Table 1. Confirmatory Factor Analysis and Model Fit of CFA

Items	Acceptance range	Result	Evaluation
Chi-square/df	< 3	1.263	Good
P-value for the model	< 0.05	0.000	Very good
CFI	> 0.9	0.975	Very good
GFI	> 0.9	0.897	Acceptable
TLI	≥ 0.9	0.972	Good
RMSEA	≤ 0.8	0.029	Good

R-squared shows how well the independent variables explain the dependent variable in an effect link. R-squared must typically be more than 50% for a model to be considered appropriate. However, not all R-square coefficients must fulfill more than 50% because of their dependency on the type of investigation. The R-squared value of brand awareness (0.393) shows that the independent variables explain 39.3% of the variation of brand awareness. Similarly, the R-squared of brand image and brand loyalty is 0.246 and 0.391, respectively. It means that the brand awareness variation explains 24.6% and 39.1% of the variation in brand image and brand loyalty.

4.3. Structural Equational Modeling

The research result in Table 2 shows that brand awareness was statistically and significantly associated with sense experience ($\beta = 0.139$, p = 0.014), feel experience ($\beta = 0.317$, p = 0.000), think experience ($\beta = 0.163$, p = 0.004), act experience ($\beta = 0.215$, p = 0.007) and related experience ($\beta = 0.182$, p = 0.002). It suggests we cannot reject the H1, H2, H3, H4, and H5. Among these variables, feel experience has the strongest impact on brand awareness, followed by act experience. The results also indicate that brand awareness statistically influences the brand image ($\beta = 0.559$, p = 0.000) and brand loyalty ($\beta = 0.388$, p = 0.000). Furthermore, the brand image positively affects the brand loyalty ($\beta = 0.373$, p = 0.000). These results indicate that we cannot reject hypotheses proposed at the statistically significant level 0.01.
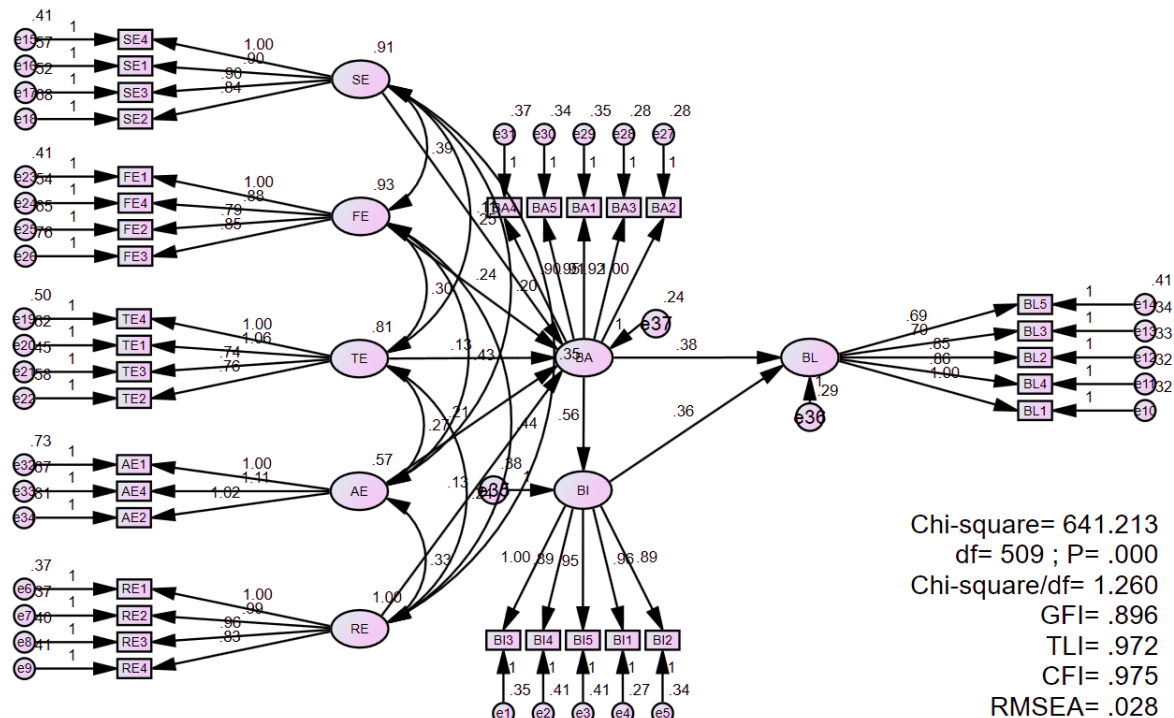

Figure 3. Structure Equation Model Results

Table 2. Hypothesis Testing Results for Brand Experience and Brand Equity Dimensions

	Hypothesis	**Standardized Coefficient**	**P-value**	**Results**
H1	Sense Experience → Brand Awareness	0.139	0.014	Supported
H2	Feel Experience → Brand Awareness	0.317	***	Supported
H3	Think Experience → Brand Awareness	0.163	0.004	Supported
H4	Act Experience → Brand Awareness	0.215	0.007	Supported
H5	Related Experience → Brand Awareness	0.182	0.002	Supported

H6	Brand Awareness → Brand Image	0.559	***	Supported
H7	Brand Image → Brand Loyalty	0.373	***	Supported
H8	Brand Awareness → Brand Loyalty	0.388	***	Supported

5. CONCLUSION

The research results indicate that various dimensions of event marketing, including sense, feel, think, act, and related experiences, positively influence brand awareness, which in turn enhances brand image. Furthermore, brand awareness and image have a statistically significant and positive effect on brand loyalty. These findings provide HEIs and their stakeholders with valuable implications in formulating event marketing strategies effectively to attract and recruit prospective students.

5.1. Theoretical implications

Our study contributes to the theoretical understanding of brand loyalty by extending the application of event marketing and experiential marketing concepts (Schmitt, 1999) to the context of Vietnamese HEIs. While previous research has primarily explored event marketing in commercial sectors, this research confirms that the experiential dimensions play a pivotal role in raising brand awareness, brand image and enhances brand loyalty in the education sector.

Importantly, the findings support the associative network theory and spreading activation theory, which suggest that consumer experiences activate memory nodes associated with a brand, forming stronger connections that influence attitudes and behaviors. Among the five dimensions, feel experience is the strongest predictor of brand awareness, which aligns with emotional branding theory, emphasizing the importance of emotional engagement in shaping consumer perceptions (Yuan & Wu, 2008; Yang & He, 2011). The act experience, on the other hand, reinforces the idea that interactive and personalized engagement can empower students, fostering a sense of control and involvement. This factor has not been adequately examined in educational marketing literature in the past.

Moreover, the study highlights the mediating role of brand awareness to the relationship between brand image and loyalty. This supports earlier findings (Saleem et al., 2015; Bilgin, 2018), but also nuances them by demonstrating that in the higher education field, brand awareness has a stronger effect on loyalty than brand image. In the context of the Vietnamese education sector, there are only few papers that confirmed this finding, so our research made a decent contribution to the existing literature.

5.2. Practical implications

Based on the analysis discussed earlier, this study proposes changes related to event marketing activities at HEIs. Firstly, emphasizing strong emotions of participants is a powerful factor in improving brand awareness. Universities should pay more attention to content design and activities in workshops, making participants feel happy and engaged when attending events. Additionally, HEIs managers should prioritize customer services before, during, and after each workshop session, ensuring participants feel comfortable throughout their workshop experience. These initiatives also reflect professionalism on the organizer's part.

Secondly, both the act experience and related experience are crucial in enhancing brand awareness (Schmitt, 1999). The institutions should design activities, hands-on experiences, and group discussions that help participants retain information from the workshops for future. Engaging in activities throughout the workshop makes the overall experience more enjoyable and leaves a strong impression and enhances brand awareness. Furthermore, encouraging communication and questions during workshops should be promoted.

The institutions should create opportunities for participants to express their thoughts and inquiries during the events. Additionally, customizing the customer service team for different customer profiles is advisable. This service provision allows HEIs to cater to various types of participants, such as introverts and extroverts, thereby improving brand awareness.

Furthermore, improving cognitive and sensory experiences should also be prioritized to enhance brand awareness. Since most event participants may have limited background knowledge in specific industries where they want to further study in the future, the schools should design events' content that is easy to understand and accessible to young learners, avoiding jargon and technical terms within the field. Additionally, gradually introducing technical knowledge through real-life examples can help ease the learning curve for participants who are new to the field.

Furthermore, this action can help reduce the pressure of understanding technical concepts for beginners. On the other hand, designing events' materials such as slides and presentations should also focus on color schemes, layouts, and visual appeal. These elements can contribute to the improvement of brand awareness for the institution.

5.3. Limitations and suggestions for future research

This study still has several limitations. First, the study primarily examines the effectiveness of experimental events of HEIs by identifying only five driving factors. The R-squared values in our study are less than 0.5, suggesting that future studies should expand the research model by incorporating additional variables to gain a more comprehensive understanding of factors impacting brand loyalty. Furthermore, this study has a limited sample size and research locations. Hence, to improve generalizability, we suggest a more comprehensive examination and diverse target respondents (such as parents or guardians) of a similar topic as this study.

It also draws attention to the gender-based differences in brand loyalty, necessitating further research and specific marketing plans to consider these nuances. These findings strengthen our understanding of brand management and customer behavior and have practical ramifications for companies in the educational technology industry. We suggest further exploration on the complexity of these interactions, and potential tactics for boosting brand loyalty among various demographic groups.

Appendix A

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Male	187	57.7%
Female	102	31.5%
Age		
Prefer not to say	35	10.8%
15 – under 18	213	65.7%
18 – under 22	93	28.7%
22 – under 26	6	1.9%
26 – under 29	2	0.6%
Other	10	3.1%
Educational level		
High school	244	75.3
Vocational college	15	4.6%
Undergraduate	56	17.3%
Other	9	2.8%
Have you ever been to an event hosted by a University		
Yes	324	100%
Not yet	0	0%
Have you ever thought about studying at the university after joining the event?		
Yes	214	66%
No	110	34%

Note: Sample size is 324 respondents.

Appendix B

Measurement Items

Constructs	Adapted items	Mean	S.D.	Factor	Cronbach's Alpha	References
Sense Experience (SE)	SE1. The event tried to attract my senses very much.	4.70	1.143	0.788	0.847	Yang and He (2011), Maghnati et al. (2012)
	SE2. The activities designed in workshops and seminars were very attractive.	4.12	1.153	0.702		
	SE3. It was very interesting to experience the demo course in the event.	4.03	1.126	0.764		
	SE4. The features of the event were very special.	4.07	1.152	0.821		
Feel Experience (FE)	FE1. Trying the event made me comfortable.	3.99	1.162	0.787	0.829	Yang and He (2011), Maghnati et al. (2012)
	FE2. The customer services provided by the Educational Institution made me feel positive.	4.07	1.112	0.694		
	FE3. The experiential activities in the event let me feel very interested.	3.97	1.197	0.676		
	FE4. The relevant activities performed in the event made me respond in a very joyful emotional manner.	3.95	1.124	0.724.		
Think Experience (TE)	TE1. The company's product features tried to draw me in from the uniqueness of the activities in the event.	3.90	1.238	0.784	0.821	Yang and He (2011), Maghnati et al. (2012)
	TE2. The activities offered in the event stimulated my curiosity about the features of the course product at the Educational Institution.	4.76	1.023	0.645		
	TE3. The characteristically experiential activities in the event stimulated my interest.	4.75	0.948	0.662		
	TE4. Personal experience gained from joining the other event at Educational Institution intrigued me to learn more about the field.	30.90	1.145	0.812		
	AE1. The souvenirs provided by the university remind me to	4.58	1.141	0.711	0.778	Yang and He (2011),

Act Experience (AE)	register for another event at this Educational Institution.				Maghnati et al. (2012)
	AE2. Every indication in the event obviously made it easy to understand the unique features of the course in this Educational Institution.	4.53	1.187	.581	
	AE3. The information sharing in the event of the Educational Institution motivated me to buy a particular course.	4.35	0.795	*	
	AE4. The instructor in the event gave me enough chances to talk about all my problems.	3.90	1.171	0.690	
Related Experience (RE)	RE1. I could relate and communicate to other participants in the event through the support of the instructor and host.	4.15	1.172	0.913	Yang and He (2011), Maghnati et al. (2012)
	RE2. The benefit provided in the event brought me closer to the course.	4.10	1.165	0.839	
	RE3. The features of the demo course in the event got me to think about the importance of having that feature in this course.	4.10	1.156	0.791	0.900
	RE4. There were chances for discussion and exchange of opinions in the event of the Educational Institution.	4.77	1.049	0.769	
Brand Awareness (BA)	BA1. I am always aware of this University	3.98	0.914	0.714	Seo and Park (2018)
	BA2. I am aware of the characteristics of this University.	3.89	0.905	0.883	
	BA3. I can always remember the logo of this University.	3.94	0.861	0.826	0.878
	BA4. This University comes to my mind very quickly when I think about universities.	4.53	0.898	.524	
	BA5. I am familiar with the features of this University.	3.94	0.889	0.696	
Brand Image (BI)	BI1. This University is a leader in its sector.	3.71	0.884	0.736	0.872	Seo and Park (2018)

	BI2. I have fun memories regarding this University.	3.77	0.882	0.622	
	BI3. This University is customer-centered.	4.58	0.949	0.867	
	BI4. In comparison to other University, this University has high quality.	4.58	0.922	0.761	
	BI5. I can reliably predict how this University will perform.	4.51	0.956	0.760	
Brand Loyalty (BL)	BL1. I am satisfied with this University that organized the event.	3.77	0.919	0.881	0.831
	BL2. I usually choose this University as my first choice in comparison with the other University.	3.84	0.844	0.696	
	BL3. I would recommend this University to others through events and workshops that this University organizes.	4.71	0.772	.495	Sasmita and Suki (2015)
	BL4. I would speak positively about the event.	3.83	0.842	0.784	
	BL5. I will participate in other events of this University in the future.	4.73	0.814	.467	

: Exclude from dataset for structural equational modelling analysis

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