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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
Brand Experience (BE), Brand Authenticity (BA), Self-Authenticity (SA), Customer Loyalty (CL)	The focus of this study is to explore the effect of brand experience on customer loyalty focusing specifically on the mediating function of brand authenticity and moderating function of self-authenticity. This research has been conducted by using structured questionnaires that were distributed to the audience belonging to various age groups and educational backgrounds in Karachi. The questionnaire was based on 23 questions. A total of 120 responses has been gathered to generate the results. For generating results, Smart PLS 4 has been used in this research. PLS algorithm was applied to estimate the model and then bootstrapping was done to critically assess the significance of the model. The findings indicate that brand experience has statistically meaningful effect on customer loyalty. On top of that, self-authenticity does not exhibit significant moderating effect, hence, moderating role of brand authenticity is not justified. However, mediating role of brand authenticity was positive. Therefore, except for moderator all proposed hypothesis were supported. This research enriches the literature on branding and offering a deep insight on the pathway through which customer loyalty can be developed. This study will be helpful for brand manager and marketer. The finding recommends greater attention on making persisting and meaningful brand experiences to build sustainable relationship with the customer. Future studies may examine this model in different industries and culture to determine whether the findings remain consistent across various context. Furthermore, other moderating and mediating variables can be considered in future. Additionally, more extensive and heterogeneous samples can be used to improve broader relevance of the findings.
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Introduction

Background of The Study

Now current societal context, customers are not judging a brand on the basis of quality or price. They are considering the feelings after the exposure with the brand, they consider how a brand communicate and whether it is genuine or trustworthy. Across various industries competition has been intensified, therefore, companies must foster valuable and meaningful relationships with customers instead of prioritizing only short-term transactions. Hence, Brand experience and brand authenticity have become essential elements in today's business environment. After the interaction with the brand, customer's feelings, thoughts, sensations, and behavior explains customer experience. The customer's perception for genuineness, reliability consistency and trustworthiness of a brand refers to brand authenticity. By virtue of this, the customer exhibit sustained commitment to the brand, they choose the same brand repeatedly for their needs, and they recommend it to others too. This loyalty is known as customer loyalty. Whereas, self-authenticity refers to the degree to which individuals perceive that they are acting according to their real values and beliefs.

A stimulus from a brand's name, logo, packaging, advertising, store environment, website, social media communication, product use, and customer service can generate internal sensations, feeling, thoughts, behavioral responses, these sensations are known as brand experience (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). According to (Safeer et al., 2020), a brand may make customers feel excited, respected, happy, confident, or emotionally connected. Brand authenticity is customer's subjective evaluation that a brand is genuine, sincere, original, credible, and consistent with its core identity. What a brand promises and what it actually delivers helps to evaluates its brand authenticity. If communication and actions of brand are consistent and sincere then customer tends to recognize the brand entity as legitimate. (Fritz et al., 2017).

Problem Statement

In the modern marketplace, due to intense competition, rapid changing preferences of consumer and wide alternatives, customers are no longer judging a brand on the basis of quality or price. They are also considering the feelings after the exposure with the brand, they consider how a brand communicate and whether it is genuine or trustworthy. Hence, fostering incredible experiences for customers is essential thing. However, solely experiences might not always lead to customer loyalty. Authenticity, credibility and genuineness also matters.

Gap Analysis

Existing literature has established that brand experience is an integral antecedent of CL. Previous evidences show that brand experience can impact loyalty intentions. Other studies has separately examined authenticity for customer loyalty but no study has demonstrated the combined model with brand authenticity. Similarly, previous studies has found that BA can impact loyalty because good experiences can make the customer loyal to brand. (Fritz et al., 2017; Kim et al., 2021). The

literature is incomplete for the combined effect of these variables. There is no evidence that could show how brand authenticity mediates the relationship between brand experience and customer loyalty, and how self-authenticity alter them.

Research Objectives

Following are the study objectives:

- To analyze the relationship between brand experience and BA.
- To analyze the effect of brand authenticity on CL.
- To investigate the mediating effect of brand authenticity between BE and CL.
- To examine whether self-authenticity moderates the relationship between BE, BA and CL.

Research Questions

Following are the study objectives:

RQ1. What is the relationship between brand experience and brand authenticity?

RQ2. What is the effect of brand authenticity on customer loyalty?

RQ3. What is the mediating effect of brand authenticity between brand experience and customer loyalty?

RQ4. Whether self-authenticity moderates the relationship between brand experience, brand authenticity and customer loyalty?

Literature Review

Now a day, customers are not judging a brand on the basis of quality or price. They are considering the feelings after the exposure with the brand, they consider how a brand communicate and whether it is genuine or trustworthy. Across various industries competition has been intensified, therefore, companies must foster valuable and meaningful relationships with customers instead of prioritizing only short-term transactions. Hence, Brand experience and brand authenticity have become essential elements in today's business environment. After the interaction with the brand, customer's feelings, thoughts, sensations, and behavior explains customer experience. If they perceive a brand as genuine, reliable, consistent and trustworthy then it refers to brand authenticity. As a result, the customer becomes loyal to the brand, they choose the same brand repeatedly for their needs, and they recommend it to others too. This loyalty is known as customer loyalty. Whereas, self-authenticity refers to the extent to which individuals feel that they are acting according to their real values and beliefs.

Brand Experience

A stimulus from a brand's name, logo, packaging, advertising, store environment, website, social media communication, product use, and customer service can generate internal sensations, feeling, thoughts, behavioral responses, these sensations are known as brand experience (Brakus et al., 2009). A brand may make customers feel excited, respected, happy, confident, or emotionally connected. (Safeer et al., 2020) According (Brakus et al., 2009) four dimensions of brand experience exists: sensory, affective, behavioral, and intellectual experience. These dimensions stimulus can be anything like taste smell, touch, color design or physical experience. It can also be attractive packaging or any emotions or feelings that the person gets after interacting with the brand.

Brand Authenticity

Brand authenticity is customer's perception that a brand is genuine, sincere, original, credible, and consistent with its identity. What a brand promises and what it actually delivers helps to evaluates its brand authenticity. If communication and actions of brand are consistent and sincere then customer tends to perceive the brand as authentic. (Fritz et al., 2017) Basically, a company can't evaluate its brand authenticity by itself. Only customer's interpretations can help to determine whether a brand is authentic or not. Because a company may find itself honest but only customers can accept this through their experiences with the brand. It is not determined only by the company. (Murshed et al., 2023).

Self-Authenticity

In this study, self-authenticity was measured through three items focusing on authentic living, including being true to oneself and acting according to personal beliefs. (Wood et al., 2008) The items were adapted from the authenticity concept developed by Wood et al. (2008). When a person's feelings and beliefs are reflected in his behavior then this refers to Self-authenticity. In consumer research, self-authenticity has become essential now a days as consumers may respond positively to brands that aligns with their value and identity. A person valuing honest originality may be more attracted to brands that has same personalities. Also Authenticity-related consumption can also provide identity benefits, such as self-expression, connection, and a sense of personal control (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010)

Expected Role of Self-Authenticity as A Moderator

The study was conducted, considering self-authenticity as a moderator of the relationship between brand authenticity and brand experience, while keeping in view the connection between brand authenticity and customer loyalty as a remarkable feature. (Guèvremont & Grohmann, 2016). A moderator means any variable that might impact the strength or direction of the connection between two or more variables. (Hayes, 2022). Therefore, it was concluded that the relationship between the brand and the customer depends on the customer's own level of authenticity. A self-authentic person respond positively to brand that has similar characteristics. That person also

observe to brands communication whether its true. On contrary they may not prefer the brand that are inconsistent, misleading or appear artificial. Previous study has proved that self-authenticity can play a moderating role between brand experience and brand authenticity. Another study on world top brand found moderating role of self-authenticity between brand experience and brand authenticity. (Rodrigues et al., 2024)

H1: Self-authenticity moderates the relationship between brand experience and brand authenticity.

H2: Self-authenticity moderates the relationship between brand authenticity and customer loyalty.

H3: Self-authenticity moderates the relationship between brand experience and customer loyalty.

Brand Experience and Brand Authenticity

Researches has proven that repeated meaningful interaction of brand with customers create trust. Research shows that when consumers repeatedly interact with a brand in meaningful ways, they have greater propensity to perceive the brand as genuine and true to its identity. Recent studies have proven this relationship. Global brand were assessed and it was found that brand experiences through senses and behavior has affected brand authenticity.(Safeer et al., 2020). (Rodrigues et al., 2024) also found that brand experience has positive impact on brand authenticity for high tech brand like apple. They also demonstrated that self-authenticity moderated this relationship but the impact was small. In another study, BE had a large impact on authenticity and suggests that deep engagement of customer with brand helps the brand to be perceived as more authentic (Tran & Nguyen, 2022). These findings suggest that brand experience is not exclusively an end result of marketing activities but also a source of authenticity formation. Hence:

H4: Brand experience has a positive effect on brand authenticity.

Brand Experience and Customer Loyalty

A customer's memorable interaction with the brand is essential for repeat purchase and eventually for a sustainable relationship. Satisfying experience would facilitate customer to choose it over other substitutes. (Brakus et al., 2009).Hence BE has a pronounced effect on customer loyalty because positive and memorable interactions can encourage long-term commitment. Customers with positive experiences with a brand tends to get loyal more with a brand and keep choosing it over other alternatives. Studies have reported the direct influence of brand experience on loyalty(Murshed et al., 2023). Therefore, this relationship is to strengthen loyalty which is possible by repeated satisfactory experience instead of quality products alone. In a nutshell, Customers who perceive brand as authentic are more likely to become loyal. Hence:

H5: Brand experience has a positive effect on customer loyalty.

Brand Authenticity and Customer Loyalty

BA is a reliable predictor of customer loyalty because customers demonstrate sustained commitment to brand they see as real, sincere, and aligned with their values. Recent studies have suggested that brand authenticity makes has positive effect on purchase intentions brand loyalty etc. Similarly, critical review literature on the authenticity-loyalty shows that authenticity strengthens emotional commitment and supports the development of long-term loyalty. Empirical studies also provide support for this link. Research in footwear market demonstrated the prominent impact on brand loyalty (Deng et al., 2025). Another recent study suggests that brand authenticity shapes customer commitment with a brand hence influencing brand loyalty. This loyalty comes from trust and attachment (Kim et al., 2021). These findings confirm that authenticity is a major relational resource for brands striving to cultivate sustainable loyalty.

H6: Brand authenticity has a positive effect on customer loyalty.

Brand Authenticity as A Bridge

Substantial proportion of literature demonstrated BA and BE roles but in one study, perceived BA acted as a mediator between BE and brand love, suggesting that customer experience becomes more powerful when it creates authenticity perceptions (Carroll et al., 2022). In another study BE positively affects BA and that authenticity contributes to downstream effects such as customer satisfaction and brand equity.(Södergren, 2021) This means BA can be consider as a mediator. And that quality only does not impact loyalty but brand authenticity in customer's mind is also necessary for the loyalty. This helps explain why authenticity appears repeatedly in contemporary branding research as a key mechanism connecting experience and loyalty-related outcomes.

Interactions Among the Variables

Considering all above mentioned variables and their previous studies, It is crystal clear that they all have coherent pattern. Brand experience has the tendency of shaping the brand authenticity and customer loyalty. While self-authenticity tells how customer reacts to BA, BL BE . Repeated positive results between all these relationships suggests that the relationship with customer can be built with live experience and brand authenticity. Similarly, Self-authenticity can make the effect stronger when the customer already values being true to themselves.

Conceptual Model Development and Hypothesis

Conceptual Model Development

Conceptual model development in this thesis is based on the expected relationships among the study variables. Here, Brand experience is independent variable, brand authenticity is mediator, customer loyalty is dependent variable, and self-authenticity is moderator. The model shows that

brand experience can effect customer loyalty directly and indirectly through brand authenticity, while self-authenticity may strengthen or weaken these relationships.

Interrelationship of Variables and Theory

The variables are meaningful in this research. Brand experience is the starting point because customers form impressions through their interaction with the brand. Brand authenticity explains whether those experiences feel genuine and true, while customer loyalty is the final response shown through repeat buying, commitment, and positive word-of-mouth. The theory suggests that a strong brand experience can increase perceptions of authenticity, and this authenticity can then lead to greater loyalty. In addition, self-authenticity may change the strength of these relationships because customers who value being true to themselves are more likely to respond positively to an authentic brand. So, the model shows both a direct path from brand experience to loyalty and an indirect path through brand authenticity, with self-authenticity shaping how strong these effects are.

Mediation Analysis

Mediation analysis examines whether the effect of BE on CL occurs indirectly through brand authenticity. In this study, it helps explain not just whether brand experience influences loyalty, but how that influence happens. If the analysis shows a significant indirect effect, it means that brand experience improves loyalty because it first strengthens brand authenticity, and that authenticity then fosters customers to stay loyal to the brand.

Conceptual Model

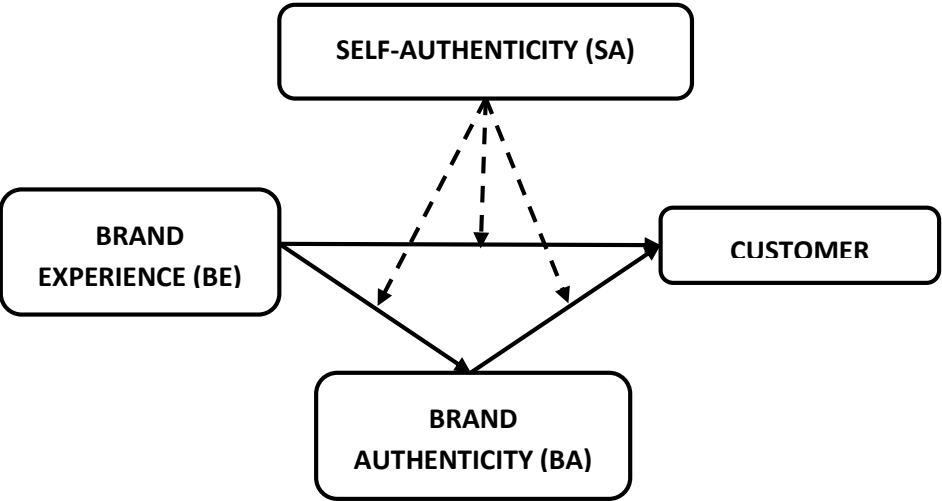


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Research Methodology

This study used quantitative research design to investigate the effect of brand experience on customer loyalty. This research also investigates mediating role of brand authenticity and moderating role of self-authenticity, while taking into account job satisfaction as a mediating variable. Existing research was used to develop the hypothesis. A deductive approach was employed to test the hypothesis. To objectives, data preparation, collection, and analysis processes were carried out systematically. Standard questionnaires were given to audience from different education background and ages online. Questionnaire was based on 23 questions. 120 responses have been generated. The first part aimed at giving information on demographics while the second one focused on research variables like CL, BE, SA etc.

Research Paradigm

Positivist approach was utilized in epistemology to look at the relationships among variables. These hypotheses were put through quantitative and statistical tests on their patterns.

This research follows positivist research paradigm because it uses quantitative research approach to test the proposed hypothesis. The data were collected through structured questionnaires and analyzed using smart PLS 4. The relationship among variables were examined using statistical technique. Therefore, positivist paradigm is appropriate for this research.

Research Design

Causal and Quantitative Approach

In this study causal research approach and quantitative approach to determine relationship among distinct constructs. Whereas quantitative approach supports our ability to retrieve data and do statistical analyses to test proposed hypothesis.

Normality Test

A normality test was done to check if the data follows a normal distribution. The results show that most items have negative skewness, that indicated concentration of responses toward the higher end of likert-scale. Some items had high kurtosis values, indicating a peaked distribution. Collectively, the data is not perfectly normal, but PLS-SEM works well even with non-normal data, so the analyses is still valid.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire used in this study was divided into two parts. The first part collected demographic information such as gender, age, education, experience, and designation. The second

part measured the four research constructs using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Details of questions are in table number 10

Table 1 Demographic Questions

Items	Questions	References
1	What is your gender?	
2	What is your age ?	
3	What is your highest level of education?	
4	What is your current work	

Table 2 Constructs Questions

Items	Variables	Reference
	Brand Authenticity	(Ligaraba et al, 2024)
BA1	This brand clearly distinguishes itself from other brands	
BA2	I think this brand is unique	
BA3	This brand creates a distinctive impression	
BA4	This brand is legitimate	
BA5	This brand is sincere	
BA6	This brand offers product of real quality	
BA7	This brand has been consistent over time	
BA8	This brand offer continuity	
BA9	This brand has a clear concept that it consistently pursues	
BA10	I trust the quality of this brand's product	
BA11	High-end products from this brand would be of very high quality	
BA12	High-end product from this brand offer excellent features	
	Brand Experience	(Brakus et al. 2009)
BE1	This brand makes a strong impression on my senses	
BE2	I find this brand interesting in sensory way	
BE3	This brand induces feelings and sentiments	
BE4	This brand is emotionally engaging	
	Self-Authenticity	(Wood et al. 2008)
SA1	I think it is better to be yourself than to be popular	

SA2	I always stand by what I believe in
SA3	I'm true to myself in most situations
Customer Loyalty	
(Pitchayadejanant and Nakpathom)	
CL1	I'm pleased to recommend this brand to other people
CL2	The next time I need this type of product/ service, I intend to choose this brand again.
CL3	This brand is my first choice
CL4	This brand is very attractive to me

Construct, Coding, and Items

This study used four constructs measured with a 5-point Likert scale. Brand Experience (BE) had 4 items. Brand Authenticity (BA) had 12 items. Customer Loyalty (CL) had 4 items. Self-Authenticity (SA) had 3 items. All items were coded as BE1-BE4, BA1-BA12, CL1-CL4, and SA1-SA3 for analysis in Smart PLS 4.

Likert scales

This study follows Likert Scales for the construct analysis. It 5 options that starts from strong disagreement to strong agreement.

Measures Utilize

Table 3 Measures Utilize

Construct	Items	Coding	Likert Scale
Brand Experience	8 questions	BE	(Brakus et al. 2009)
Customer Loyalty	questions	CL	Nechirwan Burhan Ismael et al.
Self-Authenticity	8 questions	SA	Nechirwan Burhan Ismael et al.
Brand Authenticity	12 questions	BA	(Ligaraba et al, 2024)

Sampling Size

This study was specific for only Karachi. Individuals belonging from different age groups and different education and work background participated in this study. Questionnaires has given

online to the participants. Due to the limitation of time only 120 responses could have been generated.

Data Collection

Questionnaires has been given online to the participants in Karachi. Due to the limitation of time only 120 responses could have been generated.

Descriptive Head

Measurement Model Assessment

Measurement Model Analysis shows whether the items used to measure variables are reliable and valid or not. Outer loadings above 0.70 shows that values are acceptable.

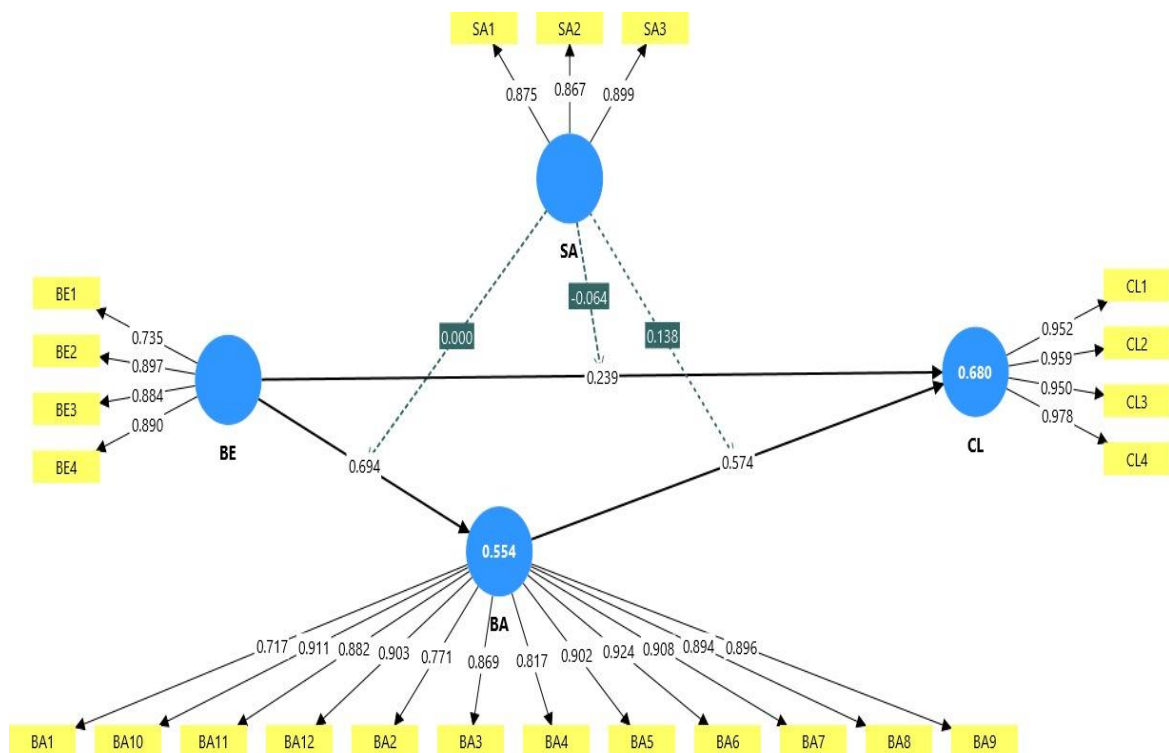


Figure 2 Measurement Model Assessment

Structural Model Assessment

The structural model analysis determines whether the relationships between the variables are supported or not. Discriminant validity ensures whether one construct is distinct from other

construct. The square root of the AVE for each construct should be higher than its correlations with other constructs.

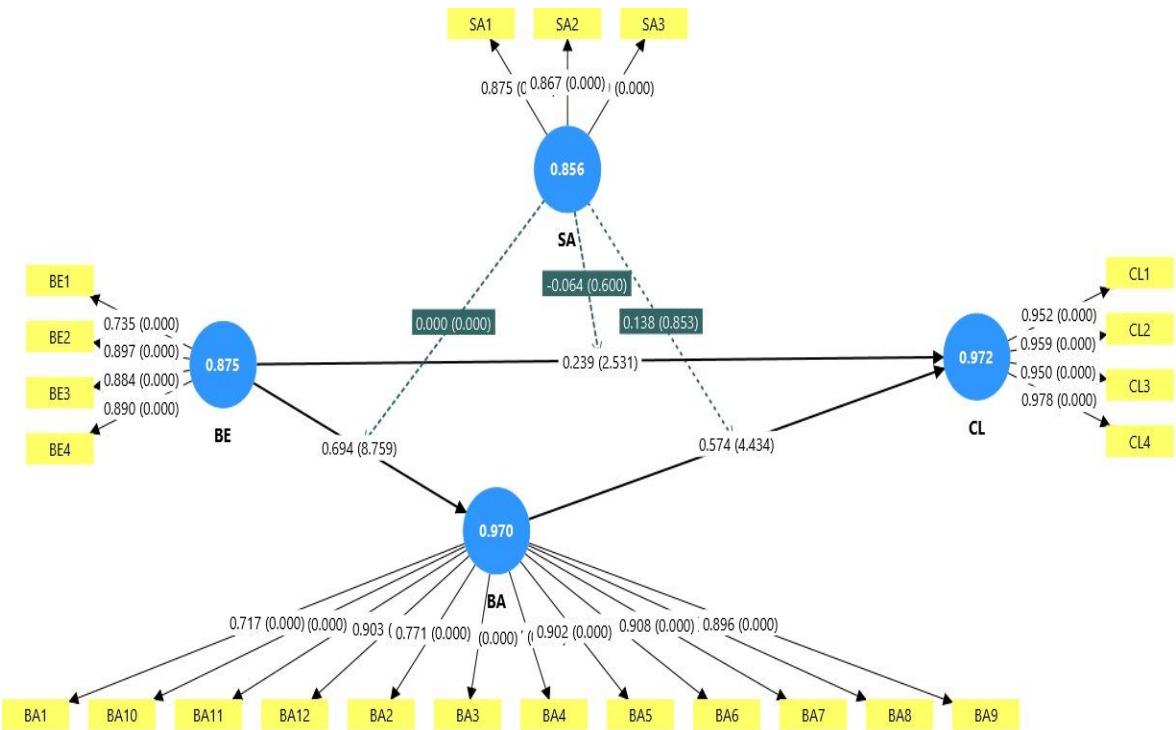


Figure 3 Structural Model Assessment

Data Analysis and Result

In this study following results has been generated by using smart PLS 4:

Table 4 Demographic Profile

Demographic Profile		
Gender	Female	60.8%
	Male	39.2%
Age	Below than 18 years	3.1%
	18-25	29.9%
	26-34	42.3%
	35-44	16.5%
	45-54	5.2%
	55 or above	3.1%
Highest Level of Education	Less than high school	5.2

Current Work	Completed high school	13.4
	Bachelor degree	37.1%
	Advance degree	44.3%
	High-school student	5.2%
	University student	9.3%
	Unemployed	17.5%
	Employed	60.8%
	Retired	3.1%
	Others	4%

Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive analysis table shows how research participants answered in questionnaire. Most of the mean values above 4.0 and on 5-point scale indicated that participants agreed or strongly agreed with the statements. The SD are mostly below 1.2, indicated that the answers are showing low variability that means participants answered similarly. The negative skewness show that most responses are towards the higher end of the scale. Collectively, this table summarizes that customers have high levels of BE, BA, SA, and CL.

Measurement Model Analysis

Measurement Model Analysis shows whether the items used to measure variables are reliable and valid or not. All outer loadings above 0.70 shows that values are acceptable.

Construct Reliability and Validity

These values shows that each item is reliable for respective construct. The interaction terms (SA × BE and SA × BA) have loadings of 1.000 because they are created as product indicators in PLS. Collectively, It has been determined that MMA is strong and valid. Outer loadings shows the reliability and validity of the constructs. This table supported the reliability and validity of the constructs.

Table 5 Outer Loadings

	BA	BE	CL	SA	SA × BE	SA × BA
BA1	0.717					
BA10	0.911					
BA11	0.882					

BA12	0.903		
BA2	0.771		
BA3	0.869		
BA4	0.817		
BA5	0.902		
BA6	0.924		
BA7	0.908		
BA8	0.894		
BA9	0.896		
BE1		0.735	
BE2		0.897	
BE3		0.884	
BE4		0.890	
CL1			0.952
CL2			0.959
CL3			0.950
CL4			0.978
SA1			0.875
SA2			0.867
SA3			0.899
SA _x BA			1.000
SA _x BE			1.000

Heterotrait & Monotrait Ratios (HTMT)

HTMT also validate whether the constructs are discriminant. HTMT values below 0.85 validate satisfactory discriminant value. In this table, the HTMT values are below 0.85, which means each construct is sufficiently different from the others. Collectively, the HTMT results confirm that the constructs are distinct and discriminant validity is satisfied.

Table 6 Heterotrait & Monotrait Ratios (HTMT)

Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT)	
BE <-> BA	0.782
CL <-> BA	0.817
CL <-> BE	0.726
SA <-> BA	0.358
SA <-> BE	0.329
SA <-> CL	0.437

All Cronbach's alpha values are above 0.85 verified that each variable is consistent and reliable. Composite reliability values are also high (all above 0.90), confirming strong reliability. The AVE values are all above 0.50, has supported good convergent validity. Collectively, all construct are adequately measured and date reliable for the research.

Table 7 Cronbach's alpha, Composite Reliability & AVE Values

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
BA	0.970	0.972	0.973	0.754
BE	0.875	0.902	0.915	0.729
CL	0.972	0.972	0.979	0.921
SA	0.856	0.865	0.912	0.776

Structural Model Analysis

The structural model analysis determines whether the relationships between the variables are supported or not. BE shows strong positive influence on BA, and both BE and BA have favorable effects on CL. SA also has a positive effect on CL, which indicates that the individuals who perceive themselves as authentic feel are more likely to be loyal to the brand. However, the moderation

effects are not significant, which means SA does not alter the relationship strength between BE, BA, and CL in this study. Collectively, the results confirm that BE, BA, and SA are important for building CL, but SA does not act as a moderator in this data.

Table 8 Mean, STDEV, T values, p values

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
BA → CL	0.574	0.546	0.129	4.444	0.000
BE → BA	0.733	0.736	0.061	11.989	0.000
BE → CL	0.239	0.240	0.094	2.542	0.011
SA → CL	0.170	0.188	0.081	2.092	0.036
SA × BA → CL	0.139	0.117	0.162	0.858	0.391
SA × BE → CL	-0.065	-0.056	0.107	0.604	0.546

Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity ensures whether one construct is distinct from other construct. The square root of the AVE for each construct should be higher than its correlations with other constructs. All of these values are higher than the correlations between the constructs. This indicates that all constructs are adequately differentiated. Collectively, the Fornell–Larcker criterion is positive, demonstrating satisfactory discriminant validity.

Table 9 Fornell-Larcker Criterion

	BA	BE	CL	SA
BA	0.868			
BE	0.733	0.854		
CL	0.795	0.682	0.960	
SA	0.330	0.279	0.403	0.881

Path Coefficient

This table shows the strength and direction of the constructs relationship. The path coefficient from BE to BA strong and positive, indicating better brand experience leads to higher brand authenticity. The path from BA to CL is also strong and positive, showing authentic brands create more loyal customers. The path from BE to CL indicate positive and significant, showing that BE directly increases loyalty. The path from SA to CL shows positive and significant relation, meaning people who feel true to themselves are more loyal. The interaction paths (SA × BA and SA × BE)

are not significant, so SA does not moderate these relationships. Overall, the path coefficients confirm that BE, BA, and SA all positively influence CL.

Table 10 Path Coefficients

Path coefficients	
BA → CL	0.574
BE → BA	0.694
BE → CL	0.239
SA → BA	0.137
SA → CL	0.169
SA × BA → CL	0.138
SA × BE → BA	0.000
SA × BE → CL	-0.064

Cross Loadings

This table shows how each questionnaire item loads on its own construct compared to other constructs. For good measurement, each item should have the highest loading on its own construct. It can be seen in the following table, that all items load highest on themselves. This means each item clearly belongs to its intended construct and does not confuse with others. Overall, the cross loadings confirm that the measurement model is valid and the constructs are well defined.

Table 11 Cross Loadings

	BA	BE	CL	SA	SA × BE	SA × BA
BA1	0.717	0.579	0.574	0.164	-0.168	-0.088
BA10	0.911	0.675	0.784	0.333	-0.299	-0.241
BA11	0.882	0.632	0.744	0.226	-0.212	-0.145
BA12	0.903	0.675	0.747	0.286	-0.265	-0.218
BA2	0.771	0.562	0.566	0.029	0.062	0.091
BA3	0.869	0.629	0.676	0.227	-0.218	-0.140
BA4	0.817	0.598	0.636	0.421	-0.211	-0.243
BA5	0.902	0.712	0.725	0.421	-0.334	-0.312
BA6	0.924	0.664	0.719	0.317	-0.218	-0.158
BA7	0.908	0.668	0.705	0.359	-0.295	-0.282
BA8	0.894	0.598	0.692	0.341	-0.166	-0.197
BA9	0.896	0.620	0.680	0.255	-0.022	-0.067
BE1	0.477	0.735	0.400	0.288	-0.278	-0.357
BE2	0.762	0.897	0.669	0.210	-0.224	-0.270

BE3	0.619	0.884	0.592	0.215	-0.199	-0.207
BE4	0.600	0.890	0.622	0.267	-0.182	-0.245
CL1	0.754	0.630	0.952	0.425	-0.265	-0.232
CL2	0.773	0.646	0.959	0.426	-0.258	-0.199
CL3	0.760	0.668	0.950	0.363	-0.203	-0.165
CL4	0.767	0.673	0.978	0.331	-0.130	-0.097
SA1	0.326	0.274	0.396	0.875	-0.306	-0.272
SA2	0.272	0.240	0.318	0.867	-0.348	-0.363
SA3	0.269	0.217	0.340	0.899	-0.481	-0.439
SA $\times$ BA	-0.200	-0.306	-0.181	-0.401	0.876	1.000
SA $\times$ BE	-0.233	-0.252	-0.223	-0.425	1.000	0.876

Model Fitness

This table shows how well the overall model fits the data. The SRMR value below 0.08 indicates acceptable fit. In this study, SRMR value is 0.079 which is acceptable fit. The NFI value is 0.731, which is moderate but acceptable for PLS-SEM, as NFI tends to be lower in this method. Other fit parameters such as d-ULS (1.713) and d-G (1.921) are within acceptable thresholds for PLS-SEM. Collectively, the model fits the adequately and is appropriate for study.

Table 12 Model Fitness

	Saturated model	Estimated model
SRMR	0.069	0.069
d_ ULS	1.327	1.327
d_ G	1.848	1.866
Chi-square	865.080	856.535
NFI	0.731	0.734

Discussion

Present study has supported all hypothesis except for the moderating role of SA. BE is impacting CL directly and also indirectly with a mediator of BA. Strong positive impact can be seen between BE and CL interpreting that meaningful experience for customer has tendency to gain customer loyalty. The first pivotal research finding is that BE has a strong positive and significant influence on brand authenticity ($\beta=0.733$, $\beta = 0.733$, $p < 0.001$). This result point out that customers whose brand experiences are positive are most likely to perceive the brand genuine and trust worthy. This result is similar to the results of Murshed et al. (2023), who reported that brand experience contributes to the formation of perceived BA. Likewise, Safeer et al. (2020) also reported that behavioral brand experiences can positively influence customers' authenticity perceptions.

This finding is congruent with Carroll et al. (2022), who found that BA was positively associated with BL. Their research further showed that consumers with higher self-authenticity tended to perceive higher brand authenticity and, consequently, demonstrated stronger loyalty. Similarly, Kim et al. (2021) revealed that consumer-based brand authenticity contributed to brand trust and brand loyalty in the Korean coffee-shop market. The current research supports these findings by showing that BA is also an important predictor of loyalty among Karachi consumers. Carroll et al.'s two retail field studies similarly found positive associations among SA, BA, and BL.

The third key finding is that BE has a significant positive direct effect on CL ($\beta=0.239$, $\beta=0.239$, $p=0.011$, $p=0.011$). This result implies that customers who have favorable experiences with a brand are more likely to repurchase from that brand, consider it their first choice, recommend it to others, and develop a long-term relationship with it. Although the effect of BE on loyalty is weaker than the effect of brand authenticity on loyalty in the present study, it remains statistically significant. This suggests that positive experiences are important for loyalty formation, but their influence becomes more meaningful when customers also perceive the brand as authentic.

Limitations of the Study

This study merely focuses on the relationship between brand experience, brand experience, brand authenticity, customer loyalty and self-authenticity, so other variables may also impact loyalty which are not included in this research. Second, the study is only Karachi-specific in Pakistan and does not address other regions or countries. Third, limited number of responses has been collected to carry out this research so this may reduce reliability of findings. Finally, the study has been conducted at a specific period, so this study may not provide the full picture of customer loyalty shift so it cannot fully show how customer loyalty changes over an extended period.

Recommendations

Practical recommendations can be made while keeping in view the findings of this study. First, brands should prioritize developing meaningful experiences for customers, as it is likely to support brand authenticity. This can be accomplished by emotional storytelling, IMC or sensory engagement. Second, brands should maintain their brand authenticity by being true to its value, because sincerity and genuineness has significant positive impact on CL. It can be implemented by ensuring transparency, Brands can achieve this by being transparent, acting on commitments, and sustaining consistency over a long period time. Third, self-authenticity did not significantly moderate the relationships, brands should focus on building overall authenticity rather than segmenting customers based on their personal authenticity values. In a nutshell, for sustaining business over a long period of time customer loyalty is important which is possible to achieve by building good customer experience and brand authenticity as it would encourage repeat customers and positive word of mouth, however there is no significant need of segmenting customers based on self-authenticity.

Future Research Direction

Future researchers should test this model in different industries, like high tech, food, hospitality, healthcare to check if the current results vary or not. Second, researchers may also address other countries or regions to examine the relationship remain same or not in other cultural contexts. Third, this research can be replicated but with some other mediating factors such as brand love, customer satisfaction etc to explore how they affect customer loyalty. Moderating role of social media brand involvement or different generational differences (eg , millennials, gen Z, alpha) could also be examine the factors strengthening or weakening these relationships. Fifth, broad number of samples can be collected to carry out this research so this may increase the reliability of findings. Finally, longitudinal studies could be conducted to analyze the changes over the time rather than relying on one point in time.

Conclusion

This present study examined the influence the effect of BE on CL, with BA as a mediator and SA as a moderator. The empirical evidences show that BE has a significant positive impact on BA, and BA, in turn, the findings indicate that BE has significant and positive impact on CL indicating that creating meaningful brand experiences for customer helps to build loyalty. So marketer should focus on that. On top of that, mediating role of brand authenticity was positive too. Indicating that it's not necessary that good experiences will always bring loyalty without focusing on brand authenticity. This study would add value to marketing research by explaining how BE facilitate CL through BA. SA on the other hand does not exhibit substantial moderating effect, hence, moderating role of brand authenticity is not justified. So, except for moderator all proposed hypothesis were supported. So brand manager should focus on both, customer experiences and brand consistency and genuineness in order to develop sustainable relationship with customers.

Within the present investigation, the effect of BE on CL has been explored, with mediating role of brand authenticity and the moderating role of self-authenticity. The study demonstrated consumer decision- making pattern and the impact of their interaction with the brand. It was explained that how consumers experience with the brand make them loyal customers. Also this relationship gets stronger or weaker depending on brand authenticity.

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