Demographics and fashion brand experience: emerging economy perspective

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Abstract: Brand experience is critical in consumer behaviour; however, the impact of demographic factors and their effect on emerging brands has been overlooked in consumer studies regarding garment brands from developing countries. The aim of this study is to examine demographic characteristics and brand experiences based on sensorial, affective, behavioural, and intellectual brand perspectives. A quantitative approach was used where 289 participants were conveniently sampled. A non-parametric statistic, the Mann-Whitney U test, was used to analyse the data. The research provides important insights into the impact of demography on brand experience, which is crucial in market segmentation, targeting and positioning of fashion brands. Given the changing population dynamics of most countries, the results offer managerial implications by providing retailers with consumers' behaviour towards garment brands based on their experiences with those brands. This paper fills a gap by presenting the predictive effect of demographic characteristics on brand experience. It departs from previous research by examining the impact of collective demography (age, gender and education) on multi-dimensional brand experiences (sensory, affective, intellectual and behavioural).

Keywords: branding; brand experience; demographic characteristics; fashion.

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1 Introduction

Following the publication of Holbrook and Hirschman (1982), and Hirschman and Holbrook (1982), which emphasised the experiential perspective within the context of consumption experiences, the influence of consumer experience relating to brands has gained tremendous traction in marketing research (Bae and Kim, 2023; Lin et al., 2023; Lucia-Palacios and Pérez-López, 2023). However, there is scant evidence on how demographic characteristics impact brand experience dimensions in the fashion literature, and some studies have called for testing the relationship between demographic characteristics and brand experiences due to geographic limitations in current literature in relation to emerging economies (Husain et al., 2022; Kim, 2012; Kumar et al., 2020; Sannegadu et al., 2023; Steevensz, 2016). For example, Brooksworth et al. (2023) noted that researchers were yet to explore fashion marketing theories, strategies, and activities systemically in emerging markets although they recognised marketing activities within the emerging market. Others such as Soetan et al. (2021) and Bang et al. (2016) have noted that successful marketing strategies could be ineffective in emerging markets unless tested. Finally, following a systematic review by Sestino et al. (2023), it was observed that there are scant studies that underline fashion consumption in emerging markets. Given the fact that the right demographic characteristics in the context of strategic marketing can help fashion businesses understand consumer dynamics, conduct segmentation, targeting and positioning, fashion scholars have often taken a fragmented approach to demography by focusing only on specific groups such as older populations or

younger ones, or men versus women (Appiadu et al., 2022; Guan et al., 2022; Jin et al., 2018; Kim, 2012; Rahman et al., 2021; Rocha et al., 2005; Su et al., 2023). Others have also focused only on select demographics as a mediating or moderating factors when examining aspects of brands (Baswan and Fatima, 2019; Hart et al., 2007; Japutra and Molinillo, 2019; Kassir, 2024; Khan and Rahman, 2016). Considering the literature gap, this study argues and provides practical reasons why demographic characteristics of age, gender, and education should be examined together in relation to brand experience dimensions (sensory, intellectual, affective and behavioural) from an emerging economy perspective. Hence, the aim of this study is to examine demographic characteristics and brand experiences. Specifically, the study seeks to first, examine gender differences in fashion consumers' response to specific brand experiences (sensory, affective, behavioural, intellectual); secondly, examine age differences in fashion consumers' response to specific brand experiences (sensory, affective, behavioural, intellectual); and finally, examine the educational level differences in fashion consumers' response to specific brand experiences (sensory, affective, behavioural, intellectual). In accordance with the explanations of Brakus et al. (2009), this paper operationalises sensory brand experience to mean experiences relating to the senses, while affective experiences relate to feelings, sentiments, and emotions. Behavioural experiences relates to physical actions, behaviours, or bodily experiences, and finally, intellectual experiences encompass thinking, curiosity or problem solving in relation to the brand.

Given its status as a foundational industry for many global economies, the fashion industry serves as an emblematic starter industry for countries engaged in export-oriented industrialisation. Consequently, the fashion industry heavily relies on demographic data for trend forecasting and the development of marketing strategies in alignment with population changes. The significance of this study is that it explores demographic characteristics and brand experience within the fashion sector, specifically focusing on indigenous fashion design brands of Ghana.

The study is structured as follows: the second section reviews literature on brand experience and develops hypotheses. Section 3 outlines the methodology, while Section 4 presents data analysis along with discussions. The final section, Section 5, offers conclusions, implications, and suggestions for future studies.

2   Literature review

2.1   Brand experience

In the context of this study, brand experience is conceived and defined by adopting the definition of Brakus et al. (2009, p.53), who defined brand experience as "sensations, feelings, cognitions, and behavioural responses evoked by brand-related stimuli that are part of a brand's design and identity, packaging, communications, and environments". This is based on the fact that consumers' relationship with a brand is not only based on the attribute of the brand but also a reflection of the consumers' personal traits, character, or knowledge (sensory, affective, behavioural and intellectual). Again, although several studies (Parasuraman et al., 2020; Samarah et al., 2022; Shimul, 2022) have focused on general associations of brands and their respective consumer responses such as brand loyalty, attachment, and involvement among others, they do not capture the actual hedonic dimensions that constitute an equally important aspect of consumer brand

experience (Brakus et al., 2009). The multi-faceted nature of brand experience has been featured in most academic studies often in relation to costumer experiences whether online or offline (Mo et al., 2020; Panda et al., 2020), consumption experience (Bhattacharya and Sen, 2003; Hirschman and Holbrook, 1982), and services (Kim and Sullivan, 2019; Mantik et al., 2022; Van Slyke et al., 2002). How consumers interact with brands on any given occasion may be direct or indirect through a product or service (Brakus et al., 2009; Khan and Fatma, 2017; Khan and Rahman, 2015; Lee, 2020). On one hand, direct product engagement often involves the search for service or product information, the buying process, usage, or utilisation (Hultén, 2011; Sheets, 2021). On the other hand, indirect product engagement product engagement often takes the form of advertisement. In both direct and indirect interactions, brand-related stimuli require consumers to apply their responses in ways that are objective or subjective. Therefore, brand experience refers to the responses that consumers put forward at every point of their interaction with the brand in a way that results in long-term memory (Brakus et al., 2009; Hultén, 2011).

Brand experience responses occur through sensory, affective, intellectual, and behavioural dimensions (Brakus et al., 2009). With that in mind, sensory brand responses involve the utilisation of vision, taste, smell, sound and touch through which the senses are stimulated (Hultén, 2011; Schmitt, 2000). Visual sensory is viewed as the most influential, as images have a stronger connection to consumers' minds and inform their experiences with both products and services (Chang and Ko, 2018; Mo et al., 2022). Through visuals, the sensory responses provide a significant sense of brands through logos, slogans and general imagery (Mo et al., 2020). However, sensory responses generally depend on the type of product or service. For example, touch and taste provide direct engagement of experiences compared with smell and sound, which offer indirect experience (Wei et al., 2022).

Affective brand experience involves the visceral feelings associated with brands and the emotions that arise when interacting with them (Brakus et al., 2009). Often originating from consumers' minds, affective responses generate positive or negative reactions (Ahn and Back, 2020; Iglesias et al., 2019) Constructs like brand love, brand passion, as well as brand hate and disgust, often emerge as elements of affective brand experience (Cleff et al., 2018; Iglesias et al., 2011). Intellectual brand experience encompasses the utilisation of imaginative or critical analytical thinking stimulated by brands or attributes associated with the brand (Brakus et al., 2009; Huaman-Ramirez and Merunka, 2019). Through imaginative stimuli, customers engage in spontaneous and creative responses processing information and applying analytical thinking in relation to the brand, as well as employing logical reasoning in their interaction with the brand (Japutra and Molinillo, 2019; Safeer et al., 2021; Zarantonello and Schmitt, 2010). Behavioural brand experience encompasses the observable actions that result from brand exposure (Huaman-Ramirez and Merunka, 2019). This involves the engagement of one or multiple parts of the body in response to brand-related stimuli, such as in sports, recreation, or performance contexts (Brakus et al., 2009). Within the realm of behavioural brand experience, physical actions are prompted by specific aspects of the brand, and customers engage with the brand through their behaviour, whether in the short or long term.

2.2   Hypothesis development

2.2.1   Gender and brand experience

In recent times, scholars have been raising awareness of the fact that gender is not necessarily binary (Lindqvist et al., 2021). Brand experiences of gays, lesbians, transgender individuals, and others have been recognised in marketing research (Boyd et al., 2020). Some studies Braig and Witt (2024), Chauhan et al. (2021), Jones et al. (2023), that have reported on the experiences of gays, lesbians, transgender individuals, and the larger LGBTQ+ community have noted that such individuals struggle or, in some cases are unable to express their identity through brand experiences due to a lack of options (Braig and Witt, 2024) or, in some cases, stigmatisation (Meyer et al., 2023). Furthermore, Braig and Witt (2024) noted that experiences of gays and lesbians have been mixed, and more research is needed to inform the literature. Ultimately, it is important to contextualise gender.

In the context of this research, gender is conceptualised from a biological sex perspective as a relevant segmentation variable to enhance the practicality of the study. This approach aligns with previous research in consumer-based studies (Khan and Rahman, 2016; Kolyesnikova et al., 2009; Palan, 2001). Gender plays a vital role in buying decisions and significantly impacts brand experience as well (Bapat and Kannadhasan, 2022; Baswan and Fatima, 2019; Rojas-Lamorena et al., 2022). Brand experience is multifaceted, and studies that have explored the relationship between gender and brand experience have often done so from various perspectives. The most common perspective among these studies focuses on brand experiences related to shopping. Many of these studies have reported notable differences between males and females in terms of their shopping-related brand experiences (Hart et al., 2007; Passyn et al., 2011). For instance, (Hart et al., 2007) discovered that men experience more re-patronage enjoyment compared to women in the context of shopping. Wahyuddin et al. (2017) observed that women tend to derive hedonic value from shopping, whereas men associate utilitarian value with the experience.

Several studies have also investigated gender-based variations in brand experience behaviour between men and women, revealing significant differences (Bakewell and Mitchell, 2006; Darley and Smith, 1995; Iacobucci and Ostrom, 1993; Rocha et al., 2005). For example, Rocha et al. (2005) highlighted that female fashion consumers prioritise the physical attributes and brand quality of products more than males. Gender's role as a mediating factor among brand experience constructs has also been explored in the literature (Khan and Rahman, 2016; Rojas-Lamorena et al., 2022). For instance, (Khan and Rahman, 2016) uncovered that gender moderates the relationship between online retailing and both online brand trust and online brand loyalty. Marketers are continually optimising the ways in which they connect, communicate, and coordinate marketing efforts directed at consumers, recognising the significance and impact of experiences on consumers' attention, satisfaction, and loyalty (Brakus et al., 2009). Brand experiences evoke a range of emotions and familiarity that influence decision-making, encompassing both positive and negative experiences that can shape consumption choices. Consequently, conveying exceptional experiences through gender can grant brands substantial power to shape and influence consumer mindsets and emotions (Hultén, 2011; Khan and Rahman, 2015).

However, given the multifaceted nature of gender and evolving definitions of gender, it is important to note integrative approach needed to understand gender. This is because traditional definitions of gender can impact the evaluation of cross-gender branded products. This is also the reason why it is interesting to note that despite the depth of studies exploring the relationship between gender and brand experience, to the best of our knowledge, no studies have comprehensively investigated gender and brand experience from a multi-dimensional perspective encompassing sensory, attitude, intellectual and behaviour (Brakus et al., 2009; Schmitt, 2000). Even though Kim (2012) emphasised the need for empirical research on the interaction of fashion brand experience dimensions, a literature gap exists concerning gender and multi-dimensional brand experience. Thus, the study proposes the hypothesis that:

H1 – 4   There is a statistical difference between gender (male and female) of consumers of fashion and their responses to brand experience (sensory, affective, behavioural, and intellectual).

2.2.2 *Age and brand experience*

The influence of age on branding, a critical demographic characteristic, has been extensively covered in the literature (Bapat and Kannadhasan, 2022; Huaman-Ramirez and Merunka, 2019; Kacprzak and Dziewanowska, 2019; Passyn et al., 2011; Ye et al., 2019). However, regarding age and multi-sensory brand experience dimensions, some researchers have called for further testing and exploration not only across various age groups but also within different country contexts (Huaman-Ramirez and Merunka, 2019; Husain et al., 2022; Kim, 2012; Kumar et al., 2020; Paul, 2018). This study posits that significant differences exist between age groups (young adults and older adults) in relation to brand experience dimensions. Undoubtedly, age categorisations vary geographically with some overlaps in certain countries. For example, the UN defines youth as the age group between 15 and 24 years (United Nations, 1985). In Romania, the Youth Law defines youth as 14 to 35 (Moisa, 2010), while in Malaysia, it is between 15 and 49 (Ministry of Youth and Sports Malaysia, 2006). Consequently, the Ghanaian definition of youth (15–35) was the operational definition for young adults (Ghana Statistical Service, 2021; Ministry of Youth and Sports, 2022). Age groups 36 and above categorised as older adults.

Within these distinct age groups, individuals who have encountered positive experiences influenced by brand dimensions (sensorial, intellectual, behavioural, and affective) may be more inclined to pay higher prices and engage in repeat purchases. In the realm of fashion consumption, young adult consumers have access to both online shopping platforms and traditional brick-and-mortar opportunities, enabling them to influence and be influenced by branding experiences (Majeed et al., 2021; Su et al., 2023). These young adults seek brands that mirror their identity, preferences, culture, and aspirations (Guan et al., 2022). Given their awareness of multi-sensory marketing and exposure to a higher number of brand interactions, they are more susceptible to the impacts of various brand experience dimensions. Conversely, the older adult population, known for emotional restraint, avoidance of emotional experiences, and familiarity with work attire, uniforms, and local cultural brands that often have limited online presence, are less susceptible to the influence of brand dimensions. Thus, the study proposes the hypothesis that:

H5 – 8   There is a statistical difference between age groups (young adults and older adults) of consumers of fashion and their responses to brand experience (sensorial, affective, behavioural, and intellectual)

2.2.3   *Educational level and brand experience*

Education holds a significant role in shaping how consumers perceive products, which indirectly influences their brand experiences, as well as their perceptions of product attributes, benefits, and quality (Saari et al., 2020). Education is strongly intertwined with self-identity (Griffiths, 1993; Idris et al., 2012; Matta and Alam, 2023), and self-identity is known to impact various facets of brand experience (Hustvedt and Dickson, 2009; Silintowe and Sukresna, 2022; Smith et al., 2008). Consequently, educational levels have an indirect effect on factors like income, which in turn affects consumers' perceptions of products and services within the brand experience context. Moreover, education is correlated with purchasing decisions (Daziano et al., 2017), as consumers need to discern where to find product information, make purchases, and navigate the buying process. Well-educated consumers, armed with more information, are likely to engage with brands differently from those with less education (Daziano et al., 2017; Saari et al., 2020). Research on the impact of education on sensory, affective, intellectual, and behavioural brand experiences is limited, but using data from the lingerie context, Singh et al. (2020) found that sensory, affective, intellectual and behavioural brand experiences did not differ based on educational qualification among Indian women. Thus, those with and without higher education qualifications experience brands the same. However, more research is needed to explore the potential influence of education on brand experiences. This study contends that since education determines the value individuals place on brand-related quality, a higher educational level is likely to lead consumers to consider and utilise various elements of brand dimensions in their purchase decisions and consumer experiences, and vice versa. Consequently, education level will impact disparities in brand dimensions. In this study, educational levels are categorised into two tiers: individuals with high education (tertiary) and those with lower education (non-tertiary), aligned with the education level classifications of the Ghana Statistical Service (2021). Essentially, brand experiences that provide enhanced value might be more attractive to highly educated individuals compared to those with lower levels of education. Therefore, it is hypothesised that:

H9 – 12   There is a statistical difference between educational levels (low and high) of consumers of fashion and their responses to brand experience (sensorial, affective, behavioural, and intellectual).

3   Methodology

Aligned with the paper's objective, we employed a quantitative approach along with the cross-sectional data collection method to survey fashion consumers for our study. The quantitative method facilitated the collection of numerical responses to empirically test the study's hypotheses. As Bayley (2013) points out, quantitative studies are well-suited for large samples and are particularly suitable for hypothesis testing, making it an appropriate choice for our study. The cross-sectional method was selected due to its

capacity to capture respondents' viewpoints at a specific point in time, in contrast to the longitudinal method, which involves data collection over an extended period (Kesmodel, 2018; Wang and Cheng, 2020). The study obtained ethical clearance from the Directorate of Research Innovation Publication and Technology Transfer (DRIPPT) of Accra Technical University with Ethics ID: RE #04-2024-DRIPPT. Prior to participating, all respondents were provided with an explanation of the study's aims and objectives. Their informed consent was sought before engaging in the questionnaire completion. In accordance with regulations of DRIPPT, the first page of the questionnaire contained informed consent request for which respondents were required to tick their response. Participants were assured of the confidentiality and exclusive research use of their responses, with no personal identifiers collected. To gather our sample, we employed the convenience sampling method, resulting in 289 participants who are fashion consumers. These individuals were sampled from three well-known shopping centres in the city, renowned for offering quality fabrics, affordability, and a diverse range of fashion products. The study specifically focused on consumers who possess basic reading and writing skills, as our data collection approach involved face-to-face interactions with participants using a process called mall intercept technique (Ali et al., 2021; Muposhi et al., 2022). The mall intercept technique is a method of soliciting responses of shoppers in shopping malls (Junaid et al., 2024). Usually, enumerators engage respondents and seek their consent to participate in a survey (Ali et al., 2021). Using the mall intercept technique, there was face-to-face interaction with respondents to facilitate data collection, as it allowed researchers to directly observe participants, determine their suitability for the questionnaire, and offer clarification to those who might require assistance in completing the questionnaire. This approach enhanced the quality of data gathering by ensuring accurate comprehension and responses from the participants. The sample size of 289 participants utilised in this study was determined based on the recommendation of Charan and Biswas (2013), who suggest that a sample size ranging from 30 to 500 or more is appropriate for quantitative studies. Consequently, the selected sample size for our study is deemed suitable. Out of a total of 350 questionnaires distributed with the assistance of three enumerators, 289 were deemed valid for analysis because some questionnaires had missing responses, others had multiple responses, and the rest were incomplete or contained wrong answers. As recommended by Sjöström et al. (1999), these questionnaires were not added to the data for analysis. We specifically targeted walk-in customers who had made a purchase from a fashion brand and were willing and available to complete the questionnaire. To enhance the validity of the responses, certain questions were formulated with negative phrasing (reverse statement) to assess whether respondents carefully read the questionnaire before providing answers. Employing this approach, as suggested by Weijters and Baumgartner (2012), assists researchers in gauging respondents' comprehension of the questions and ensures the collection of high-quality data. Before proceeding with subsequent and final analyses, we conducted a reverse coding analysis on the data. This process involves adjusting the scoring of certain questions to ensure consistent interpretation and accurate analysis. Moreover, the study adapted and modified constructs from existing sources. For each of the four constructs (sensorial, affective, behavioural, and intellectual brand experience), we employed three items sourced from Brakus et al. (2009). These items underwent modifications to align with the preferences and characteristics of fashion consumers. These constructs were designated as the test variables, while the demographics served as the independent variables. The aim was to conduct a comparative mean differences analysis, specifically

utilising the Mann-Whitney U-test. In comparative mean difference analyses, the test variables (brand experience variables) are compared across groups defined by the group variable (demographics). To execute this, we employed the Mann-Whitney U-test, a non-parametric statistic suitable for comparing two independent groups measured with ordinal outcomes. This choice was warranted since the normal distribution analysis did not meet the required threshold ($p < 0.05$) and the results were statistically significant, indicating non-normality of the data (Brown, 2015). Prior to the main data collection, we conducted a pre-test involving 30 respondents to assess questionnaire comprehensibility and completion speed. The Cronbach's alpha computed on the pilot data yielded a value of 0.78, indicating that the items demonstrated reliability and internal consistency. Additionally, we made slight adjustments to certain statements to enhance clarity.

Table 1   Descriptive results of fashion brand experience

Code	Constructs	Mean	SD
	Sensorial	*3.36*	*1.34*
S1	This brand makes a strong impression on my visual sense or other senses	3.29	1.60
S1	I find this brand interesting in a sensory way	3.29	1.57
S3	This brand does not appeal to my senses(R)	3.49	1.51
	Affective	*3.54*	*1.05*
A1	This brand induces feelings and sentiments	3.59	1.25
A2	I do not have strong emotions for this brand(R)	3.66	1.33
A3	This brand is an emotional brand	3.36	1.60
	Behavioural	*3.54*	*1.13*
B1	This brand is an emotional brand. I engage in physical actions and behaviours when I use this brand	3.36	1.60
B2	This brand results in bodily experiences	3.60	1.55
B3	This brand is not action oriented(R)	3.65	1.28
	Intellectual	*3.50*	*1.24*
I1	This brand does not make me think(R)	3.74	1.33
I2	I engage in a lot of thinking when I encounter this brand	3.42	1.55
I3	This brand stimulates my curiosity and problem solving	3.34	1.61

Source: Researcher compilation, 2023

4   Analysis

4.1   Demographics outcome

The demographic analysis unveiled that 59.9% of the respondents were female. This observation could potentially be attributed to the fact that women generally exhibit a stronger affinity for fashion compared to men, as indicated by the outcomes. Additionally, 68.5% of the participants possessed a higher level of education, and 59.4% fell within the young adult category. During the survey, participants were presented with a list of 31 fashion brands and instructed to select the one with which they had

experienced sensorial, affective, behavioural, and intellectual brand encounters. The outcomes revealed three prominent fashion brands: Abrantie at 25%, Nallem Clothing at 21%, and Woodin at 15%. Furthermore, the study computed the average of the averages for the constructs under examination, yielding the subsequent mean scores: 3.36 for sensorial, 3.54 for affective, 3.54 for behavioural, and 3.50 for intellectual experiences. These scores reflect that, on the whole, the majority of respondents were undecided regarding whether the fashion brand evoked sensory appeal. In contrast, the other constructs provided evidence that fashion consumers generally concurred that the brand sparked emotional attachment, stimulated their curiosity, and influenced their behaviour.

4.2   Common method bias

Additionally, a common method bias (CMB) analysis was conducted to ascertain the absence of biases within the dataset. This analysis was employed given the adoption of a cross-sectional survey design, where participants responded to the questionnaire on a single occasion. Utilising the principal component approach in SPSS, all 12 items across the four constructs were simultaneously loaded. The result yielded a total variance extracted of 24.64%, which falls below the 50% threshold. This indicates that the data is devoid of CMB. It is important to note that reverse coding treatments were implemented on the negatively phrased statements prior to the subsequent and final analyses. This procedure ensures uniformity in scoring and facilitates accurate interpretation of the responses.

Table 2   Factor loading, reliability, and average variance extracted of brand experience

Code	Loading	Reliability	AVE	CR
Sensorial [TVE 24.02%]			*0.607*	*0.889*
S1	0.802		0	0.907
S1	0.852	0.903		
S3	0.672	0.908		
Affective [14.72%]			*0.634*	*0.903*
A1	0.757	0.920		
A2	0.789	0.915		
A3	0.841	0.903		
Behavioural [10.82%]			*0.649*	*0.905*
B1	0.831	0.903		
B2	0.666	0.907		
B3	0.901	0.923		
Intellectual [17.56%]			*0.643*	*0.907*
I1	0.809	0.919		
I2	0.795	0.904		
I3	0.801	0.903		

4.3   Reliability and multi-collinearity diagnosis test

In a similar vein, the study employed the inter-factor correlation matrix to determine the presence of multi-collinearity, a situation where high correlations exist among the variables under investigation. As presented in Table 3, the correlation coefficients among all the employed constructs remained below 0.8, thus confirming the absence of multi-collinearity issues (Hair et al., 2014). To assess the reliability and internal consistency of the chosen measurement items, both Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability analyses were conducted. As depicted in Table 2, all reliabilities surpassed the 0.7 threshold, supporting the recommendation of Hair et al. (2010). This implies that the measurement items satisfy the internal consistency and are appropriate to be used.

Table 3   Inter-factor correction matrix

Constructs	AVE	1	2	3	4
Sensorial	0.607	0.779			
Affective	0.634	0.711**	0.796		
Behavioural	0.649	0.630**	0.750**	0.805	
Intellectual	0.643	0.744**	0.703**	0.717**	0.802

Note: **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

4.4   Factor analysis

The study employed exploratory factor analysis (EFA) utilising the principal axis factorial method to determine the appropriateness of the borrowed constructs (Hair et al., 2014). The results of the Kaiser-Meyer Olkin test and Bartlett's test of sphericity yielded KMO = 0.573, χ^2 = 3455.216, df = 226, $p < 0.001$ with a total of 12 items comprising three items each for the four uni-dimensional factors: sensorial (24.02%), intellectual (17.56%), affective (14.72%), and behavioural (10.82%) (refer to Table 2). Notably, the total variance extracted reached 67.12%. Both the loading scores and the average variance extracted (AVE) scores (as seen in Table 2) exceeded the established threshold of 0.50, affirming the convergent validity within this study. To establish discriminant validity, the study adhered to the recommendation of Fornell and Larcker (1981). The square roots of AVE values were consistently greater than the inter-factor correlation matrix values (refer to Table 3), providing evidence that the constructs indeed maintain distinctiveness from each other.

4.5   Hypothesis test

4.5.1   Mann Whitney U test analysis

The independent groups encompassed gender (male and female), educational levels (low and high education), and age groups (young adults and older adults). The outcomes of the U-test revealed noteworthy variations between male and female respondents in their responses to sensorial brand experience [(U (10,104.00) = 2.036, p = 0.042], affective brand experience [(U (10,390.50) = 2.492, p = 0.013], behavioural brand experience [(U (10,004.50) = 1.98, p = 0.05], and intellectual brand experience [(U (10,971.00) = 3.376, p = 0.001], thereby supporting H1 to H4. Similarly, significant differences were observed

between age groups (young adults and older adults) concerning their levels of agreement on sensorial brand experience [(U (6,378.50) = –3.402, p = 0.001], affective brand experience [(U (7,433.50) = –1.992, p = 0.05], behavioural brand experience [(U (7,219.00) = –2.084, p = 0.037], and intellectual brand experience [(U (6,751.00) = –2.818, p=0.005], corroborating H5 to H8. Conversely, there was no significant difference between low and high educational level consumers' agreement regarding sensorial brand experience [(U (6,773.50) = –0.314, p = 0.754], affective brand experience [(U (6,201.50) = –1.308, p = 0.191], behavioural brand experience [(U (6,139.50) = –1.414, p = 0.157], and intellectual brand experience [(U (6,345.00) = –1.058, p = 0.29], thus not supporting H9 to H12.

Table 4   Mann-Whitney U-test of fashion brand experience

U-Test	Sensorial	Affective	Behavioural	Intellectual
	Gender			
Mann–Whitney U	10,104.00	10,390.50	10,004.50	10,971.00
Wilcoxon W	30,607.00	30,901.50	30,507.50	31,474.00
Z Score	2.036	2.492	1.98	3.376
Asymp. Sig (2-tailed sig)	0.042	0.013	0.05	0.001
	Age groups			
Mann–Whitney U	6,378.50	7,433.50	7,219.00	6,751.00
Wilcoxon W	9,864.50	10,919.50	10,705.00	10,237.00
Z Score	–3.402	–1.992	–2.084	–2.818
Asymp. Sig (2-tailed sig)	0.001	0.05	0.037	0.005
	Educational Levels			
Mann–Whitney U	6,773.50	6,201.50	6,139.50	6,345.50
Wilcoxon W	8,664.50	8,092.50	8,030.50	8,236.00
Z Score	–0.314	–1.308	–1.414	–1.058
Asymp. Sig (2-tailed sig)	0.754	0.191	0.157	0.29

5   Discussion

As fashion companies explore novel avenues to engage consumers and extend their existing customer base, multi-dimensional brand experience research offers a pivotal opportunity to glean insights into how customers' sensorial, affective, behavioural, and intellectual dimensions impact their current experiences. This is particularly pertinent in the Ghanaian context, where fashion companies encounter challenges in accessing consumer-based surveys and face limitations in raising the necessary financial resources for such endeavours on an individual basis. Consequently, the research's primary objective was to investigate the demographic characteristics of fashion consumers in relation to brand experience dimensions. Aligned with this objective, the initial aim was to ascertain gender disparities among Ghanaian fashion consumers in their responses to multi-dimensional brand experiences. The study's outcomes underscore a noteworthy gender variance concerning brand experience dimensions demonstrated by the significant results (β = Gender and sensorial: 0.042, gender and affective: 0.013, gender and

behavioural: 0.05, gender and intellectual: 0.001). In essence, male and female fashion consumers encounter sensorial, affective, behavioural, and intellectual aspects of brands in distinct manners. This discovery holds significance, as it highlights the predictive influence of gender on brand experience, consistent with prior research that underscores gender disparities in various facets of brand experiences (Bakewell and Mitchell, 2006; Darley and Smith, 1995; Hart et al., 2007; Iacobucci and Ostrom, 1993; Passyn et al., 2011; Rocha et al., 2005). While previous studies frequently explored age in conjunction with associative constructs like brand attitudes and brand attachment (Marsasi and Yuanita, 2023; Singh, 2018), and sometimes even as a mediator or moderator in such constructs (Marsasi and Yuanita, 2023), it is imperative to acknowledge, as noted by Brakus et al. (2009), that brand experience delves beyond mere evaluative judgments of the brand. It extends further to encapsulate specific sensations, cognitions, and behavioural interactions. In light of this, our study deviates from associative viewpoints and offers an angle that delves into age and distinct sensations linked to brand-related stimuli (sensory, intellectual, affective, and behavioural) in alignment with Brakus et al. (2009) conceptualisation. In the Ghanaian context, this finding can be elucidated by the fact that within the globally interconnected economy, brand experiences tend to hold a universal appeal even when specific brands differ across countries. Furthermore, the availability of multi-dimensional brand experiences has expanded to encompass a wide cross-section of Ghanaians, catalysed by Ghana's liberalised economy, which has facilitated access to both local and international fashion products. The study's outcomes, nevertheless, offer indispensable insights into brand experiences tailored to the Ghanaian milieu, rooted in the experiences of Ghanaian consumers and their engagement with local products. These insights are well-suited for the application of fashion marketing strategies within Ghana.

The study's second objective was to investigate the impact of age on brand experiences. The significant findings regarding age and brand experiences (β = age and sensorial 0.001, age and affective 0.05, age and behavioural 0.037 and age and intellectual 0.005) underscore a significant relationship between distinct age groups (young adults/older adults) and brand experience dimensions. Consequently, the hypotheses concerning age and sensorial, behavioural, intellectual, and affective dimensions found support in the obtained results. Several researchers, who similarly observed significant differences between age and brand experience dimensions, have emphasised the necessity of testing age-related dynamics within brand experiences across various countries due to the geographical limitations of their own research (Huaman-Ramirez and Merunka, 2019; Husain et al., 2022; Kim, 2012; Kumar et al., 2020; Paul, 2018). In this vein, the present study corroborates their findings, establishing that age disparities indeed contribute to varied brand experience dimensions. However, a departure from the aforementioned previous studies lies in the focus of investigation. While those prior works examined age's impact on brand attributes like loyalty, attachment, or repurchase intentions – attributes characterised by evaluative or associative dimensions of the brand – this study's scope encompasses age within the realm of hedonic characteristics (sensory, attitudinal, intellectual, and behavioural). Moreover, within the context of Ghanaian fashion consumers, the observed outcomes can be attributed to the demographic landscape of Ghana, akin to several African countries, marked by a young adult population profile (Ghana Statistical Service, 2021; Ministry of Youth and Sports, 2022). This demographic dynamic signifies that older consumers often adhere to traditional brick-and-mortar shopping, where companies establish a stage for

transactions (Majeed et al., 2021). Conversely, younger consumers predominantly engage with producers, sellers, and brands across various touch points, thereby influencing potential customers. Consequently, ensuring each interaction yields a positive experience across age groups becomes vital (Appiadu et al., 2022; Majeed et al., 2021).

Finally, the study's third objective was to ascertain the significant influence of educational levels on multi-dimensional brand experiences. The study's outcomes indicate that no statistical disparity exists between the education levels of fashion consumers and their reactions to multi-dimensional brand experiences. Thus, the results were insignificant (β = education and sensorial: 0.745, education and affective: 0.191, education and behavioural: 0.157, education and intellectual: 0.29). Specifically, no statistical variations emerged between education levels and all the multi-dimensional constructs (sensorial, affective, intellectual, and behavioural). These findings deviate from prior research, which had previously established that individuals with higher educational levels differed from their less educated counterparts in multi-dimensional brand experiences due to factors like self-identity, value judgments, and purchasing decision-making processes (Daziano et al., 2017; Hustvedt and Dickson, 2009; Saari et al., 2020; Silintowe and Sukresna, 2022; Smith et al., 2008). Within the context of Ghanaian fashion consumers, this discovery may be attributed to the realisation that while a consumer's level of education can impact brand loyalty, there are shared attributes between consumers with varying education levels. This is largely due to the notion that a consumer's brand relationship, cultivated over time, is primarily shaped by their experiences and is evaluated through multiple metrics such as customer satisfaction, word-of-mouth referrals, repurchases, and brand endorsements, among others (Kim, 2012; Safeer et al., 2021). The bedrock of this loyalty comprises perceived service quality, managerial strategies, and promotional initiatives – concepts explored extensively in prior research on the influences of brand relationship quality and brand experience on satisfaction and loyalty (Huaman-Ramirez and Merunka, 2019; Iglesias et al., 2011; Safeer et al., 2021; Zarantonello and Schmitt, 2010). Consequently, over time, educational levels appear to wield limited influence on how fashion consumers engage with brand experiences. Nonetheless, this finding carries noteworthy implications for the Ghanaian fashion industry, underscoring the significance of socio-cultural brand equity and enduring brand relationships for fashion consumers, irrespective of their educational backgrounds.

5.1 Conclusions and implications

The study delved into the demographic attributes of fashion consumers in Ghana, exploring their connection to multi-dimensional brand experiences. Drawing insights from the literature review, it formulated the hypothesis that significant distinctions exist between demographic characteristics such as gender, age, educational levels, and the dimensions of brand experiences (sensory, affective, intellectual, and behavioural). Subsequently, twelve hypotheses were subjected to testing, revealing that while pronounced dissimilarities indeed emerged between gender, age, and brand experiences, the projected associations between educational level and brand experience did not find support. Thus, eight hypotheses garnered validation, while the remaining four were refuted by the findings. Consequently, it can be concluded that within the context of Ghanaian fashion consumers, while brand experiences elicit reactions across the board, notable divergences manifest when age and gender come into play. Notably, this study

diverges from its predecessors, which typically examined demography based on individual characteristics or, in some instances, employed demography as a mediating or moderating construct. This research, however, examined the interplay of demographic attributes and brand experience by considering the key characteristics of age, gender, and educational level collectively, while focusing on fashion marketing experiences from a hedonic perspective. Consequently, marketing strategies directed towards fashion consumers should encompass considerations of age and gender disparities. Despite the lack of support for differences in educational level uncovered by this research, it is imperative to note that this does not render educational level inconsequential. Previous research has extensively demonstrated that educational levels do influence brand experiences. However, this isn't necessarily the case when fashion companies establish enduring brand relationships grounded in brand loyalty.

5.2 Implications

The study holds significant implications for the domain of brand experience literature. Primarily, it sheds light on the profound impact of demographic factors on the dimensions of hedonic brand experiences. Essentially, the research underscores that beyond employing age, gender, and education in conjunction with associative, evaluative, motivational, and judgmental constructs, the collective demographic attributes of consumers (including age, gender, education, income, and more) exert a multi-dimensional influence on their overall brand experiences. This perspective bears immense importance for the strategic development of fashion marketing approaches. Moreover, the study's second implication pertains to the examination of collective demographic attributes across diverse locations and contexts. Clearly, global shifts in population dynamics lead to dynamic shifts in demographic data worldwide. In this vein, the study affirms the notion that distinct age groups (young adults/older adults) and gender (male/female) do indeed exhibit significant variations in how they engage with various dimensions of fashion brand experiences (sensory, intellectual, behavioural, and affective).

The study's findings offer valuable insights into how the demographic composition of Ghana's young adult population influences brand experience dimensions, underscoring the significance of segmentation and targeted approaches. As articulated by Moschis et al. (1997), market segmentation entails categorising customers based on shared characteristics to facilitate effective marketing, enhance customer satisfaction, and adapt to shifts in demand. Therefore, the observed variations in brand experience dimensions among different age groups and genders underscore the necessity for fashion brands in Ghana to implement customer segmentation strategies. This can be achieved by gathering customer data and categorising them into distinct groups, such as young adults and older adults, as well as males and females. Subsequently, tailored marketing strategies should be devised to engage these diverse consumer groups, leveraging the sensory, affective, behavioural, and intellectual dimensions of brand experiences as guiding principles. For instance, sensory brand experiences can be employed to target younger consumers with visually appealing elements like logos, slogans, and imagery. On the other hand, adult customers, often more conservative in their preferences, can be approached with neutral and emotionally restrained sensory cues.

5.3 Limitations and future research

This study has provided valuable insights into the influence of demographic characteristics on brand experience dimensions. However, there are three notable limitations that should be acknowledged. Firstly, it is evident that educational level does not exert a significant impact on brand dimensions within the Ghanaian fashion context. It is recommended that future research explores the potential impact of educational levels on brand dimensions in different cultural and regional contexts, to ascertain the generalisability of the current findings. Additionally, it would be beneficial to investigate the relationship between brand loyalty and brand experiences, specifically within the context of brand dimensions. Secondly, considering the study's exclusive focus on Ghana and its utilisation of a non-probability sampling approach, caution should be exercised when attempting to extend the findings to fashion consumers in other countries. Finally, the study conceptualised gender as male and female. Given the fact that the needs of gays, lesbians, transgender individuals, and members of the general LGBTQ+ community and their experiences with brand may differ, it is strongly suggested that future researchers explore the brand experiences of these groups from emerging market perspective.

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