

# Creating Moments, Building Brands: The Strategic Role of Event Marketing in Consumer Engagement

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## Abstract

Event marketing emerged as a significant strategic tool for organizations seeking to strengthen consumer engagement, improve brand awareness, and develop long-term customer relationships in competitive business environments. This study examined the strategic role of event marketing in influencing emotional engagement, customer participation, purchase intention, and brand loyalty among consumers. A quantitative research design was adopted, and primary data were collected from a sample of 320 respondents who participated in branded events, promotional campaigns, and experiential marketing activities. Structured questionnaires based on a five-point Likert scale were used for data collection, while SPSS was applied for statistical analysis. The findings revealed strong positive relationships between event marketing effectiveness and consumer engagement variables, including emotional engagement ( $r = .71$ ), purchase intention ( $r = .69$ ), and brand loyalty ( $r = .74$ ). Regression analysis indicated that event marketing explained 61% of the variation in consumer engagement outcomes ( $R^2 = .61$ ,  $p = .000$ ). The results further demonstrated that experiential and interactive event activities enhanced emotional attachment, strengthened customer participation, increased brand awareness, and improved loyalty intentions. Digital and hybrid event experiences also contributed significantly to consumer interaction and social media engagement. The study concluded that event marketing functioned as a powerful branding and relationship-building strategy that created memorable consumer experiences and sustainable competitive advantage for organizations in modern technology-driven marketplaces.

**Keywords:** Brand Awareness, Brand Loyalty, Consumer Engagement, Event Marketing, Experiential Marketing, Purchase Intention

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## **Introduction**

Event marketing became a powerful and effective marketing tactic that allowed companies to engage consumers directly and on a personal level by implementing experiential marketing activities, real-time interactions, trade shows, sponsorships, festivals, and branded events. The traditional advertising strategies started to lose their effectiveness as consumers became more selective in their consumption of messages and started to reject the repetition of promotional messages across all types of media. As a result, organizations began to use event marketing to build emotional bonds, boost brand awareness and make a memorable experience that helps build customer engagement and loyalty. When consumers engage with the brand through experiential and interactive marketing activities, their recall, emotional connection with the brand, and purchase intent are enhanced as a result of their active role in creating the brand experience as opposed to passively receiving promotional messages (Whelan & Wohlfeil, 2006; Davey et al., 2024). Today's consumers were avid for real experiences and individualized interactions, motivating companies to spend a lot of money on event-based marketing campaigns throughout industries from retail to hospitality, travel to entertainment, and technology.

Digital communication technologies and social media platforms rapidly grew and brought a new multi-dimensional strategy to event marketing, moving beyond face-to-face experiences. Brands used the tools of virtual reality, hybrid events, influencers, live streaming and social media interaction to get the audience more involved and to increase reach beyond the event. Emotion was noted as a key driver of increased engagement and consumer-brand relationships in an immersive digital experience, particularly with younger consumers who were more likely to prefer interactive and technology-driven experiences (Bogicevic et al. 2024). Digital technologies were also integrated to event marketing, improving consumers' involvement in events before and after, and therefore their long-term engagement and brand advocacy. Consumers were more likely to talk about their experience with the branded events publicly, as social media interactions increased the visibility of the branded events which resulted in stronger electronic word of mouth communication and brand awareness (Xiao & Chen, 2025).

Consumer engagement emerged as a key marketing concept in recent years as it was proven that engaged consumers had higher levels of emotional attachment, involvement and brand loyalty. Event marketing played a major role in this engagement by providing opportunities for the consumers to experience the product, service and brand representatives in an emotionally

stimulating environment. Experiential event activities were shown to increase brand trust, customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions because consumers view branded events as a more authentic and relationship-based experience, as opposed to a traditional advertisement (Ndhlovu & Maree, 2024). Relikewise, the engagement transfer mechanism was achieved through the branded marketing event, which, when a positive experience was created, led to an increase in the emotional bond of the consumers with the host brand and changed their purchasing behavior and loyalty intentions towards the host (Altschwager et al., 2024).

In today's business climate, experiential marketing is becoming more of a critical function and researchers and practitioners sought to understand the impact of branded events on consumer perceptions, emotional reactions and engagement results. In fact, organisations realised that consumers had come to appreciate more the emotional experiences, entertainment, personalisation and community involvement that brands offered, as well as the quality of the products and price. To meet this evolving consumer attitude and shift in expectations, event marketing emerged to make the event itself memorable and build a brand's psychological and emotional bond. Recent studies revealed that compared to traditional marketing methods, interactive and experiential marketing campaigns were more effective in boosting consumer engagement, brand advocacy, and fostering long-term customer relationships (Setiawan et al., 2022; van Berlo & Chen, 2024).

### **Background of the Study**

With the increasing need for organisations to differentiate their brands through well-inventive methods and to communicate with the consumers on an emotional level, event marketing became an important part of IMC. Experiential marketing was a response to the change in focus from transaction marketing to relationship marketing, with the focus on consumer involvement and emotional engagement. Researchers noted that event marketing provided customers with the opportunity to experience brands in an immersive way, as they engaged with the brand's sensory, emotional, cognitive and social elements. These relationships increased customer engagement as customers saw these branded events as a real experience that offered a combination of entertainment, education, and socialization (Whelan & Wohlfeil, 2006).

Event marketing had a significant impact across all global markets due to its growing reliance on digital and social media tools. Brands started to combine virtual events, live streaming, digital interaction, and hybrid events to reach customers outside event venues. Modern event marketing strategies involved combining the online and offline components to create a constant presence with

the listeners even before, during and after the event. Digital experiential marketing proved to enhance consumers' participation and emotional involvement by enabling consumers to share their experiences immediately via social media platforms and online communities (Bogicevic et al., 2024).

In the field of marketing research, consumers' engagement grew in relevance since they actively interacted with the brands, they created positive word of mouth communication and they showed higher intentions of loyalty. Branded events found to provide opportunities for direct contact, entertainment, emotional connection and memorable experiences, thereby developing a powerful tool for stimulating this engagement: event marketing. In previous studies, emotional, sensorial, pragmatic and relational experiences of experiential events proved to significantly impact on consumer brand engagement and behavioural intentions (Altschwager et al., 2024). Branded marketing events had a positive impact on purchase intention and customer participation as consumers linked with meaningful event experiences the authenticity and value creation of the brand (Conduit et al., 2017). Experiential marketing provided more emotional engagement and trust for the brands as compared to traditional marketing, drawing the scholars toward the idea that consumers are nowadays more interested in personalized and engaging experiences than in traditional marketing approaches (Davey et al., 2024). Additionally, the role social media plays in event marketing was further amplified by the ability of the platform to promote consumers' experiences, recommendations, and brand-related content online, thereby enhancing the visibility of the event and participation (Xiao & Chen, 2025).

### **Research Problem**

As event marketing became more prevalent in today's business landscape, numerous companies still struggled to unlock the true value event experiences had for meaningful consumer engagement and brand loyalty. There were several companies that spent substantial resources on branded events, sponsorships, experiential campaigns and promotions, but with less consideration as to whether these efforts were effective in increasing emotional connection, customer engagement and in driving behavior. The literature primarily addressed the impact of traditional advertising while only a few studies investigated consumer engagement outcomes in the strategic context of event marketing for various types of events in both traditional and new media environments. Organizations did not have a good grasp of the precise nature of event marketing impact on consumer perceptions, emotional reactions, and brand relationships.

### **Research Objectives**

1. To examine the strategic role of event marketing in enhancing consumer engagement.
2. To analyze the influence of experiential event activities on consumer emotional attachment toward brands.
3. To investigate the relationship between event marketing and brand loyalty.
4. To evaluate the role of digital and hybrid event experiences in strengthening consumer participation and interaction.

### **Research Questions**

Q1. How did event marketing influence consumer engagement?

Q2. What impact did experiential event activities have on consumers' emotional attachment toward brands?

Q3. How did event marketing affect brand loyalty and purchase intention?

Q4. What role did digital and hybrid event experiences play in consumer participation and interaction?

### **Significance of the Study**

This study has made a significant contribution to the marketing literature by analyzing the strategic value of event marketing in the process of building consumer engagement and the consumer-brand interaction for the development of relationships. The research offered theoretical perspectives on experiential marketing, consumer behavior and engagement theory, by understanding the impact of branded events on emotional attachment, participation, loyalty, and purchase intention. It also developed from earlier studies related with Digital technologies, Hybrid experience in event marketing and the role of social media in event marketing. The study also offered insights for marketers, event organizers, and organizations seeking innovative strategies to better engage customers and improve brand performance. The results helped organisations to formulate more effective event marketing strategies to create memorable consumer experiences, build emotional bonds with customers and foster long-term customer loyalty. Further, the study helped the businesses to understand the role of the experiential and interactive marketing activities in providing competitive advantage and brand differentiation in the contemporary business scenarios.

### **Research Hypothesis**

**H1.** Event marketing significantly and positively influences emotional engagement, customer participation, and brand awareness among consumers.

**H2.** Emotional engagement, customer participation, and brand awareness significantly and positively influence overall consumer engagement.

**H3.** Consumer engagement significantly and positively influences purchase intention and brand loyalty.

**H4.** Event marketing has a significant indirect effect on purchase intention and brand loyalty through consumer engagement.

## **Literature Review**

### **Event Marketing and Experiential Consumer Engagement**

The rise of event marketing as an important experiential marketing is due to the fact that it allows brands and consumers to have direct contact with each other, with immersive experiences. Experiential marketing was found to increase consumer involvement, evoke emotions, and trigger brand recall as consumers were more likely to engage in brand-related activities rather than watching ads, thus aligning with the findings from the literature. Consumers' experience with the brand was found to increase their involvement, feelings, and recall of brands, which is consistent with the literature findings as consumers were given the experience of engaging in brand-related activities instead of passively viewing ads. Recent research showed that interactive event experiences had a positive impact on customer satisfaction and engagement, especially for digitally connected customers who appreciated the authenticity and the personalization of marketing communication (Davey et al., 2024; Bogicevic et al., 2024).

Markets became more competitive, organizations were turning to strategies for their events that focused on engagement and entertaining participants and immersing them in an emotional experience. Experiential value significantly affected on the customers' engagement, scholars reported that the consumers related the experiences they have had with the brand with its value and relationship quality, therefore if they are enjoyable and interactive, they will give the brand a higher value and better relationship. It was also found that experiential marketing activities boost consumers' intentions to join a brand community and social sharing, which, in turn, further increased brand visibility and customer retention (Rasool et al., 2025; Rather, 2020).

The way through technological innovation, the way through which traditional event marketing became a communication strategy that is integrated with technology and is digital. Brands were using virtual reality, gamified experiences, live streaming and interactive digital platforms to enhance consumer engagement at their events, which increasingly were held in locations away

from home. Research indicated that the immersive digital experience led to greater emotional and cognitive involvement, as consumers viewed the technology-based interactions as innovative and entertaining, compared to the traditional marketing approach (van Berlo & Chen, 2024; Kapoor et al., 2026).

### **Relationship between Consumer Engagement and Brand Loyalty**

The concept of consumer engagement in marketing was born and has been incorporated into marketing literature because of the fact that engaged consumers showed increased emotional attachment, participation and loyalty towards the brands. The researchers pointed out that event marketing opened up opportunities to generate meaningful psychological links between consumers and the organizations, through direct interaction and experiential involvement. Research showed that events that resonate with the emotions significantly increased consumers' intent to have long-term interactions with brands and their attachment to the brand (Zhang et al., 2022; Blut et al., 2023). In the field of tourism and entertainment, a study carried out in this area showed that the experiential marketing has a significant influence on customer retention, satisfaction, and repurchase intention, as the consumers value the experiential and emotionally rewarding experiences (Fu, 2026; Bogicevic et al., 2024).

The digital communication platforms further reinforced the link between consumer engagement and loyalty. Emotional engagement with brands was reinforced online through social media sharing of event experiences. Event experiences were increasingly shared on social, building online communities. Both researchers pointed out that the multiple communication channels used for customer engagement efforts greatly bolstered consumer involvement and brand advocacy behaviors (Blut et al., 2023; van Berlo & Chen, 2024). Digital engagement thus extended the reach of event marketing beyond attendance, and helped to enable consumers to be active brand evangelists and promoters in online networks and social communities.

### **Digital Transformation and Strategic Event Marketing strategy**

The digital transformation came the change in structure and implementation of event marketing across industries. Hybrid events, augmented reality, influencer marketing, digital engagement tools etc. became integral components to reach a wider audience and bring interactivity to events. Hybrid events, augmented reality, collaboration with influencers and digital engagement tools became major pillars to reach a larger audience and interactive forms of events. The benefit of technology-enhanced experiential marketing was that it had the ability to create an immersive

experience for consumers, with the use of digital tools allowing them to engage with the product in real time, making it more personalised and interactive (Davey et al., 2024; Kapoor et al., 2026). Social media platforms also helped enhance the strategic event marketing by allowing the consumers to share their experience, recommendations and brand content publicly. Research indicated that EWOM, which is achieved via social media, positively affected consumer trust, event visibility and brand reputation. Additionally, cross-cultural research on digital consumer communication found that the online engagement activities had a positive impact on the consumers' perceptions and involvement in various markets and demographic groups (Kusawat & Teerakapibal, 2023; Rasool et al., 2025).

Event marketing was increasingly surrounded by literature that highlighted personalization and customer centric approach to engaging with them. AI was used to personalize events based on consumer preferences and behaviour across the data-driven communications and messaging systems used by organisations. Personalized marketing communication is perceived as more relevant and meaningful to the consumer, which in turn enhances their satisfaction and boosts the performance of engagement outcomes (Jeunen et al., 2026; Abboud et al., 2025). In the process, strategic event marketing became a multi-dimensional process of engagement, incorporating technology, personalization and experiential interaction to establish lasting customer-brand connections in today's business context.

### **Conceptual Framework Model**

The conceptual framework model of the present study showed the relationship between Event Marketing and Consumer Engagement; the experiential interaction and Purchase Intention: Purchase Intention and Brand Loyalty. The framework introduced event marketing as an independent variable which affected the consumer's perception and subsequent behavioral results because of experiential and interactive brand activities. Event marketing is defined as branded events, sponsorships, trade exhibitions, promotional campaigns, experience activities, and digital/hybrid events that established direct interaction between the organisations and consumers. The framework suggested that successful event marketing had a positive impact on the consumers in terms of creating memorable experiences, emotional attachment and active engagement in brand related activities. The model also proposed that the more that consumers were able to be involved in an immersive and engaging event experience, the greater the psychological and emotional connection they formed with the brands.

Emotional engagement, customer involvement and brand awareness were included as mediating factors as these are the factors that explain the influence of event marketing on overall consumer engagement. Emotional engagement is expressed as consumers' emotional connections, enjoyment, excitement and memorable experiences with branded events. Customer participation was defined as the interactions, involvement and co-creations of the consumers in the event activities, and brand awareness was defined as the recognition, recall and familiarity of consumers with the brand after engaging in the experiential marketing activity. The framework proposed the positive influence of event marketing on these mediators and how these Mediators ultimately enhanced consumer engagement levels.

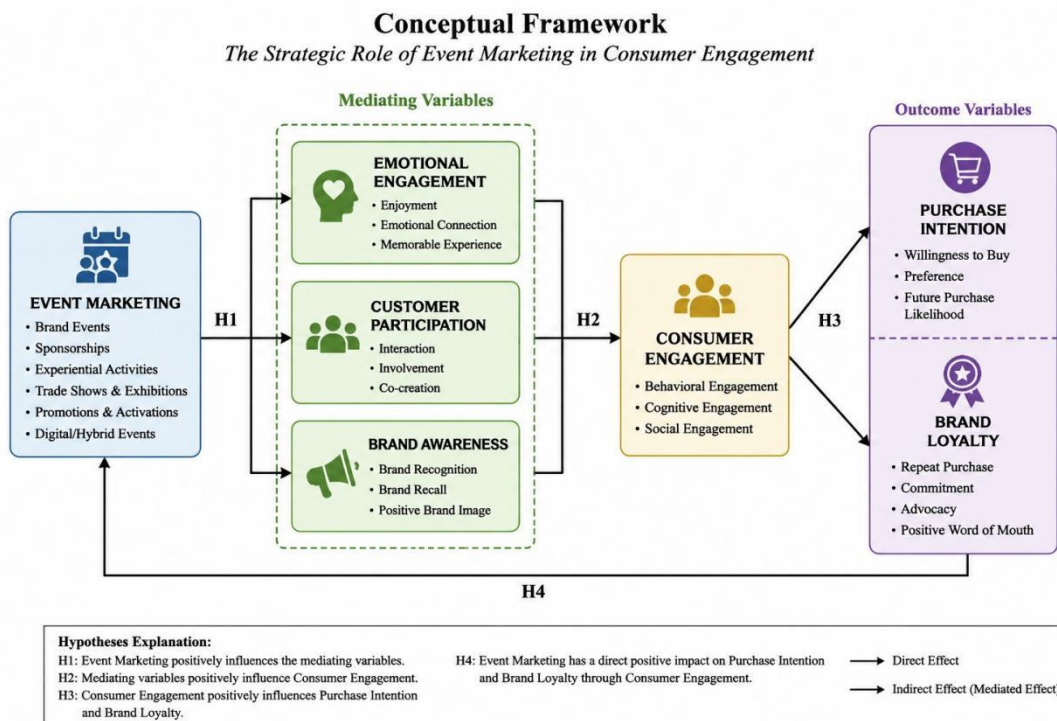


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework Model

## Research Methodology

### Research Design

The study employed a quantitative research design to explore the role of event marketing strategically in terms of consumer engagement. The quantitative method provided a systematic method to analyse the relations between event marketing activities and the engagement variables of consumers such as emotional attachment, brand loyalty, purchase intention and consumer participation. Descriptive and explanatory research designs were used in the study since it involved

the exploration of consumers' perceptions as related to the experiential marketing activities and an explanation of the effects of branded events on engagement outcomes. The research design also facilitated the measurement of the data from a large number of participants, thus enhancing the validity and applicability of the results.

### **Sample Size of the Study**

The study took place with a target group of consumers who participated in the various consumer experiences organized by different organizations and businesses reflecting the concept of experiential marketing. The study was conducted with a set of consumers that participated in experiential marketing events organized by various organizations and businesses within this concept and attended the events of the brand. The sample comprised people of varying age groups, educational levels and job categories who were active in the event marketing activities, both in a physical and digital environment. It was decided that the consumers would be studied as they were directly involved in the event-based interaction with the brands and could provide us with the valuable insights regarding the consumers engagement, emotional attachment and purchasing behavior.

### **Sample and Sampling**

A total of 320 respondents were randomly selected, a relatively representative sample of respondents. The sample comprised of the participants at various branded marketing events and promotional activities during the period of data gathering. Convenience sampling technique was used because this helped the researcher gain access to the respondents involved in event marketing and willing to fill out the researcher's survey questionnaire. The sampling method also assisted in data collection in a time and resource efficient manner. A representative sample size was chosen to ensure there were enough data to analyse and interpret the consumer engagement with the event marketing experiences.

### **Data Collection Method**

The data collected was primarily structured questionnaire, based on the research objectives and literature on event marketing and consumer engagement. The questionnaire consisted of closed-ended questions with a 5 point Likert scale (disagree, strongly disagree, agree, strongly agree, and non opinion). The measurement of experiential engagement, emotional connection, brand awareness, customer satisfaction, purchase intention and brand loyalty were measured on the survey instrument. Data was collected through online and paper-based means to ensure optimum

access to the participants and responses. Please note that the questionnaire was voluntary, and the respondents were attending brand events/experiential marketing.

### **Research Instrument**

The main research tools used for data collection was the questionnaire. There were two main parts to the instrument. The first section included demographic information such as gender, age, level of education and attendance of the events. The second section had been on consumer perceptions of the effectiveness of event marketing, emotional involvement, participation and intentions to be loyal. The items of the questionnaire were based on previous studies in the field of experiential marketing and consumer engagement, thus providing content validity and consistency with theoretical frameworks and studies. Language was kept simple and easy to understand to ensure that the respondent understands and accurately responds to the questions.

### **Data Analysis Technique**

The data obtained was analysed by using the Statistical Package for Social Studies (SPSS). The data from the respondents on demographic characteristics and consumer perceptions were summarized using descriptive statistical techniques such as frequency distribution, percentage analysis, mean values and standard deviation. To explore the relationships among event marketing activities and variables used to measure consumer engagement, inferential statistical techniques were used, such as correlation analysis and regression analysis. The effect of experiential event marketing on emotional attachment, brand loyalty, purchase intention and customer participation was assessed by statistical analysis. The results were also displayed in tabular and graphical forms and interpreted.

## **Results and Analysis**

### **Demographic Analysis of Respondents**

The demographic analysis presented the background information of respondents who participated in the study. The analysis included gender, age, education level, and frequency of participation in branded events.

**Table 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents (N = 320)**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Frequency Percentage (%)</b>	
Gender	Male	182	56.9
	Female	138	43.1

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	18–25 Years	94	29.4
	26–35 Years	128	40.0
	36–45 Years	68	21.3
	Above 45 Years	30	9.3
Education	Intermediate	52	16.3
	Bachelor’s Degree	146	45.6
	Master’s Degree	98	30.6
	Other	24	7.5
Event Participation Frequency	Occasionally	118	36.9
	Frequently	146	45.6
	Very Frequently	56	17.5

The demographic findings showed that male respondents made up 56.9% of the total respondents, female respondents made up 43.1% of the total respondents. The results revealed relatively equal gender mix of consumers, thus making the study more diverse and representative. Age distribution showed that the largest group of the respondents were aged 26-35 years (40.0%) and followed by the age group 18-25 years old (29.4%). The results indicated that younger consumers had higher intentions of experiential marketing activities and branded events. Analysis of educational background indicated that the majority of respondents who had bachelor's degree were 45.6%, whereas 30.6% had master's degrees. Results indicated that educating consumers had better knowledge and active participation in experiential marketing activities. Furthermore, the frequency of participation in events showed that 45.6% of the respondents were quite regular at participating in branded event, indicating that consumers' interest in immersive and interactive marketing messages increased over time. The results found that event marketing was still a communication strategy that influenced consumers' attraction and involvement in the business world in modern times.

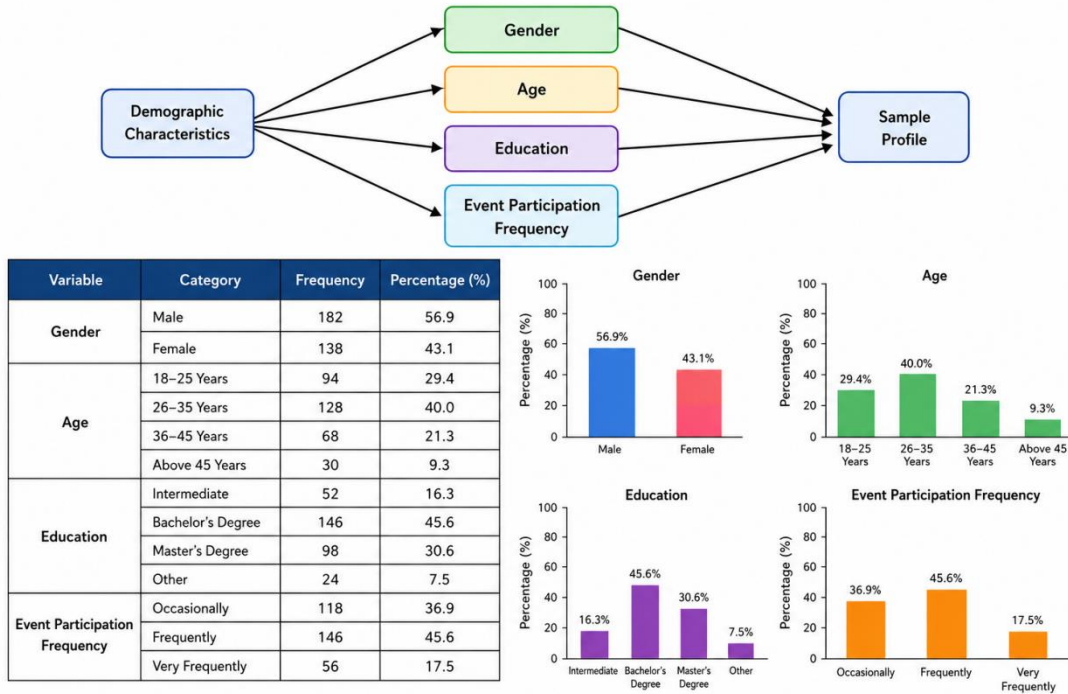


Figure 2. Demographic Profile of Respondents (N = 320)

### Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

The descriptive statistical analysis evaluated consumer perceptions regarding event marketing effectiveness, emotional engagement, brand loyalty, purchase intention, and customer participation. Mean values and standard deviations were used to measure the central tendency and variation among responses.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Event Marketing Effectiveness	4.28	0.62
Consumer Emotional Engagement	4.16	0.71
Brand Awareness	4.21	0.67
Customer Participation	4.09	0.74
Purchase Intention	4.13	0.69
Brand Loyalty	4.18	0.65

According to the descriptive analysis, the mean value of event marketing effectiveness was the highest with value 4.28, with a standard deviation of 0.62. The mean values were relatively consistent and the standard deviation was relatively low, which suggests that event marketing strategies are effective in capturing the attention of the consumer and making the brand memorable. The consumer emotional engagement and brand awareness also showed high mean values of 4.16 and 4.21 respectively. The results of this study showed that the experiential marketing activities could successfully create emotional attachment and to build brand recognition among consumers. Brands were viewed as fun and interactive, and emotionally resonant experiences, and respondents felt these branded events reinforced psychological linkages with brands.

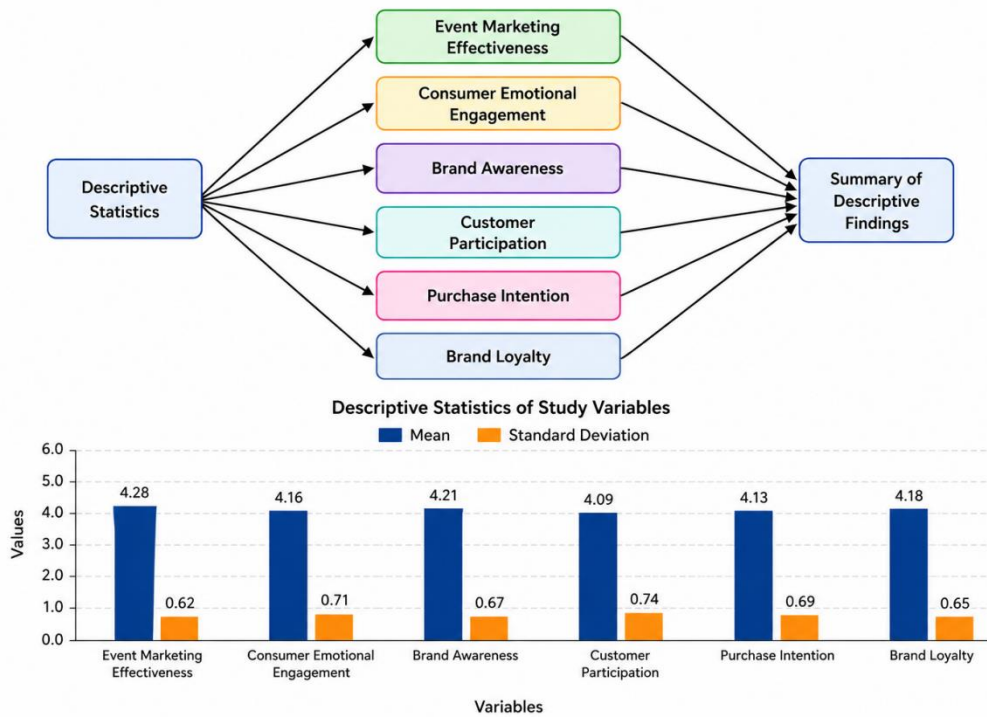


Figure 3. Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

### Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation analysis was used to determine the strength and direction of relationships among the variables. Positive correlation values indicated that improvements in event marketing effectiveness increased consumer engagement outcomes.

Table 3. Correlation Analysis of Study Variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Event Marketing Effectiveness	1					
2. Emotional Engagement	.71	1				
3. Brand Awareness	.68	.65	1			
4. Customer Participation	.63	.60	.58	1		
5. Purchase Intention	.69	.66	.64	.61	1	
6. Brand Loyalty	.74	.70	.67	.63	.72	1

Note:  $p < 0.01$

The correlation analysis showed that all the variables related to consumer engagement were highly positively correlated with the event marketing effectiveness. There was a strong correlation between event marketing effectiveness and brand loyalty ( $r = .74$ ), emotional engagement ( $r = .71$ ) and purchase intention ( $r = .69$ ). The results indicated that successful event marketing measures had a substantial impact on enhancing consumer emotional loyalty and commitment to the product. The results showed positive correlation between emotional engagement and purchase intention ( $r = .66$ ), suggesting that an emotionally engaged consumer was more likely to be willing to buy products and services related to branded events. The findings showed that the positive correlation between customer participation and purchase intention and between customer participation and brand loyalty meant that the more positive, the more positive customer behavioral intention.



*Figure 4. Correlation Analysis of Study Variables*

**Regression Analysis**

Regression analysis evaluated the impact of event marketing effectiveness on consumer engagement. The analysis examined whether experiential marketing activities significantly predicted emotional attachment, purchase intention, and brand loyalty among consumers.

**Table 4. Regression Analysis of Event Marketing Effectiveness on Consumer Engagement**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Beta (<math>\beta</math>)</b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>p-value</b>
Event Marketing Effectiveness	0.78	18.64	0.000

<b>Model Summary</b>	<b>Value</b>
R	0.78
R <sup>2</sup>	0.61
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.60
F-value	347.45
Significance	0.000

The results of the model indicated that the model achieved an R<sup>2</sup> of 0.61, which implies that 61% of the variance in the consumer engagement outcome was explained by the effectiveness of event marketing. This uncovered a substantial impact of branded events and experiential activities on perceptions and behavioral intentions. The model proved to be very explanatory, which confirmed the relevance of event marketing in today's branding and customer relationship management context. The value of the statistical significance ( $p < 0.000$ ) and F-value (347.45) showed the overall reliability and predictive power of the regression model. The results showed that event marketing is a strong contributor toward consumer engagement and also for the development of the long term relationship with the brand.

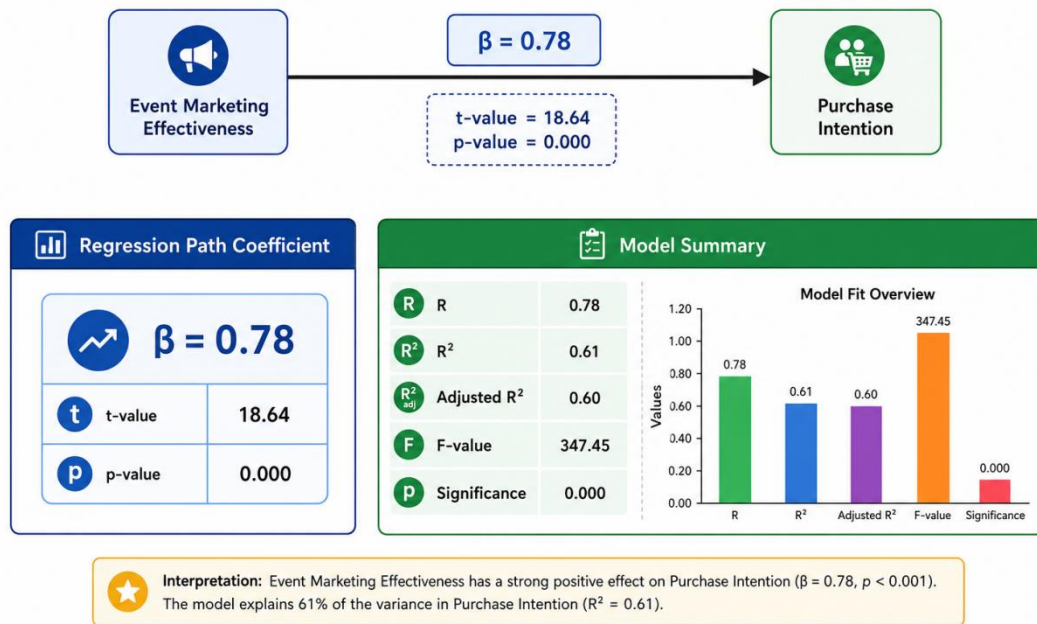


Figure 5. Regression Analysis of Event Marketing Effectiveness on Consumer Engagement

## Discussion

This study proved positive results for the event marketing in the following aspects: event marketing had significant effect on consumer engagement, emotional attachment, purchase intention and brand loyalty. The results showed that consumers were positive towards immersive and interactive brand experience as this yielded a deeper emotional and psychological relationship with brands. The results were congruent with the prevailing marketing theories at the time, which gave more prominence to experiential interactions in the development of consumer behavior and relationship building. Experiential experiences had a positive impact on trust, fun and brand recall, leading to a preference for participatory and emotionally rewarding marketing activities over traditional promotional approaches among today's consumers (Hwang & Lee, 2018; Tafesse, 2016).

The findings showed that consumers who actively engaged in experiential marketing activities had higher emotional satisfaction and brand-related behavioral intentions. This was a result of the increasing importance of a consumer-centred marketing approach that called for an interaction with the audience rather than a unilateral advertising communication. The same has been found in previous research, which found participatory marketing to enhance customers' engagement in this

way as customers believed that interactive experiences were authentic and relationship-oriented communication (Dessart et al., 2015; Hollebeek et al., 2022).

The positive relationship between event marketing and brand awareness also suggested that event marketing was more effective in boosting brand recognition and recall compared to traditional marketing methods. Experiential experiences activated emotional, social and sensory reactions, which facilitated the retention of brand messages by those consumers who had experienced branded events. Experiential stimuli were found to provide greater cognitive processing and emotional resonance, leading to greater brand memorability and customer retention (Rather & Hollebeek, 2021; Leckie et al., 2022).

The results of this study showed that, indeed, event marketing is influencing the intention to purchase, which underscored the business value of experiential engagement strategies. Consumers who attended branded events showed their increased readiness to buy products/services related to positive event experiences. The result of this study corroborated with earlier studies which showed that emotional and experiential satisfaction had a direct effect on consumers' purchasing decisions and consumption behavior (Kim et al., 2021; Roy et al., 2023). The results also showed that digital and mixed reality event experiences improved customer engagement and involvement. Consumers were made more accessible and more appealing to consumers through the integration of social media platforms, live streaming technologies, virtual reality tools, and digital engagement channels at branded events. Attendees who interacted with brands via digital event platforms said they felt more emotionally connected to brands and more satisfied with the brand communication experience. In recent marketing literature, it was also argued that technology-based engagement strategies led to improved experiential value for customers and the ability to maintain ongoing communication between consumers and organizations (Yuan et al. 2022; Wongkitrungrueng & Assarut 2020).

Another key finding of the study was the correlation between event marketing and brand loyalty. The consumers who had positive branded events had greater commitment to brands and intentions to maintain their long-term relationship with the organizations. The emotional and relational aspects of experiential marketing were reflected in these findings, as the consumer became loyal when brands were able to reach consumers with meaningful, memorable interactions. Previous research also indicated that the formation of positive emotions led to greater customer trust and attachment and drove them toward sustainable brand relationships, thereby positively influencing

their brand advocacy behaviours (France et al., 2016; Islam et al., 2021). This result was in line with previous studies that said that the younger generations' marketing preferences were related to being immersed and enhancing their marketing experiences with technology used for participation and social behaviors (Lim et al., 2022; Djafarova & Bowes, 2021).

The emotional responses created from experiential marketing activities had a positive effect on customer satisfaction and long-term commitment to the relationship. Consumers who felt excited, enjoyed and connected in branded events, reported higher levels of positive attitude towards brands and increased likelihood of advocating for them. In the past, it has also been found that emotional involvement played an important role in customer retention and the growth of a brand community as customers created more psychological links with companies through meaningful experiences (Bazi et al., 2023; Fernandes & Moreira, 2019). The results of the present study confirmed the significance of the emotional branding strategies in event marketing tactics. The communication by electronic word of mouth, as a result of social sharing, was found to have a positive impact on the consumer perceptions and his/her reputation of the organization. Consistent results were obtained in more recent marketing research where the use of social media increased consumer trust and helped to build more robust online brand communities (Molinillo et al., 2020; Cheung et al., 2021).

## **Conclusion**

Results showed that experiential and interactive marketing activities had a strong impact on consumer perceptions and the strengthening of long-term customer-brand relationships. The statistical results showed strong positive correlations between the effectiveness of the event and the variables of engagement in general, especially brand loyalty ( $r = .74$ ), emotional engagement ( $r = .71$ ) and the intention to buy ( $r = .69$ ). Finally, regression analysis also demonstrated that event marketing accounted for 61% of the variation in consumer engagement outcomes, emphasizing the key role of experiential campaigns in today's marketing landscape. The findings of the study showed that consumers were positive towards the branded experiences that were immersive and emotionally engaging, as it was found that these branded experiences were creating memorable moments and having a stronger psychological connection with the brands. The digital and hybrid events also enhanced participation and engagement, by allowing consumers to interact with brands in several communication points. The results showed that the use of event marketing strategies

was beneficial for organisations as experiential marketing strategies had positive impact on customer satisfaction, brand visibility, loyalty intentions and purchase behaviour.

### **Recommendations**

Event marketing companies ought to invest in experiential marketing methods that emphasize emotional involvement, interaction, and customized customer interactions. By creating branded events that foster active engagement from the consumers, companies can build a strong emotional connection and also enhance customer loyalty in the long term. Businesses should also consider adding sensory experiences, storytelling and fun to marketing strategies to ensure that the brand has memorable interactions with consumers that positively impacted their perception and buying decisions. The use of digital tools and technologies needs to be more optimised in the event marketing, such as: VR, live streaming, gamification, and social media engagement. Digital integration made it easy to access and helped the brands connect with the consumers before, during and after the event. In addition, user-generated content and sharing online via social media should be encouraged as social media interaction increased brand visibility and helped to improve electronic word-of-mouth communication.

### **Future Directions**

Future studies are necessary to expand the understanding of the relationship and its sustainability as a strategy of customer retention, as well as brand advocacy in the various industries and cultural contexts, regarding the long-term effects of event marketing. Studies comparing the attitudes of consumers towards experiential marketing activities across the different countries and/or of different multinational and demographical groups could enhance knowledge of the differences in consumers' attitude toward experiential marketing activities. Furthermore, the relationship between the cultural values, lifestyle and technology acceptance with consumers' participation in branded events should be investigated. There's much to look forward to in the future of event marketing and how new technologies like artificial intelligence, augmented reality, metaverse experiences and data-driven personalization will shape the industry. In this digital age, emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, augmented reality, experiences in the Metaverse and data-driven personalisation hold great promise to shape the impact of event marketing. With the incorporation of cutting-edge technology into experiential campaigns, consumer interaction patterns and new opportunities for immersive brand engagement can be changed. Researchers can

examine the different segments of consumers and how they are impacted by personalized digital experiences in terms of their emotional attachment, trust and buying behavior.

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