

BRANDING HERITAGE CRAFTS IN SRI LANKA: CONTRIBUTION OF EXPERIENTIAL ARCHITECTURE VIA STRATEGIES OF EXPERIENTIAL MARKETING

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Abstract: This paper investigates the relationship between heritage crafts store architecture and consumer experiences to brand heritage crafts through experiential architecture and marketing. The research establishes a theoretical framework to qualitatively measure consumer experiences in the context of heritage crafts branding, drawing upon Schmitt's Experiential Marketing theory (1999), Klingmann's Experiential Architecture theory (2010) and Lee's characteristics of interior space (2022). To refine and validate the framework, the research explores three local heritage crafts stores, consults with professionals and experts and conduct a questionnaire survey with 50 respondents. The results indicates that architectural elements predominantly influence consumers' emotional and intellectual responses, creating a distinctive atmosphere. Key architectural appeals include the use of rustic and weathered textural finishes, the integration of large volumes with multiple heights, spatial adaptability reminiscent of old traditional houses and providing sense of belonging through culturally and historically familiar elements. Moreover, the architectural program significantly impacts consumers' engagement, retention and immersive experiences within the crafts store, such as incorporating complementary functions like a cultural centre, café, exhibition space in addition to crafts selling and providing visits to craft villages. In conclusion, the research contributes a set of architectural appeals that can be integrated into experiential architecture for heritage crafts.

Keywords: *Heritage Crafts, Experiential Architecture, Experiential Marketing, Strategic Experiential Modules, Value-added Branding*

1. Introduction

This paper investigates the relationship between heritage crafts store architecture and consumer experiences to brand heritage crafts through experiential architecture and marketing. Here branding is not referring merely as an identity or a symbol but in a qualitative, experiential and ethical manner that provides a holistic and memorable experience to the customers (Schmitt, 1999). In the context of built environments trying to emotionally bond with the user, experiential architecture (EA) can be used as a tool to narrate stories through what we sense, feel and experience. Therefore, it also become a potential tool for branding and to create commercial values.

During the post-independence era in Sri Lanka, there was a movement to revive and preserve Sinhalese arts and handicrafts. However, at the same time, Sri Lankan heritage crafts also faced challenges associated with globalization and industrialization. Despite, an increase in the number of craft outlets between 1980 and 2020, it remains uncertain whether the industry has evolved into a sustainable, economically viable and socially innovative sector (Karunaratne, 2020).

In Kandyan era local arts and crafts relied on the patronage of king (Jones,2008). However, in the present day, the situation is questionable, as royal and elite class patronage is no longer exists. Therefore, if the heritage crafts industry is to survive, there is a need to address 21st century patronage. This patronage should be based on the appreciation of craft practices driven by emotional value, aesthetics and social responsibility. Branding based on experiential architecture could be used for this purpose.

Furthermore, Heritage crafts are now often perceived as commoditized products with high economic value due to their associated concepts such as history, community and culture and the process of crafts making. Therefore, they require a responsible and sensitive branding approach that goes beyond product attributes. This approach should also impact people's lives, social context, cultural value and most importantly foster emotional connections with consumers such as through experiential marketing.

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In today's market, it is the experience associated with a product, rather than the product itself, that drives sales (Klingmann, 2010). To enhance the heritage sector, we need to shift towards an experiential approach that prioritizes exceptional visitor experiences, rather than just offering basic products (Leighton, 2007). Hence, experiential marketing (EM) addresses people's sensory perceptions while recognizing them as both rational and emotional beings. The built environment serves as one of the experiential providers in this marketing approach. The research explores how architecture can play a crucial role in this modern value-added branding process.

2. Literature Review

Heritage crafts are considered intangible cultural heritage according to UNESCO (n.d.), defines as skills and experiences belonging to a particular group or a society, inherited from past generations, especially in relation to object-making. Despite Sri Lanka's rich cultural heritage that supporting traditional industries like handicrafts, these industries are struggling to maintain customers interest (Koswatte, 2021). According to the Sri Lanka Export Development Board (2017), there has been a 7.34% growth in exports over the last five years. In contrast, in countries like Italy, the craft industry accounts for 24% of the national export volumes (Noella, 2017; as cited in Koswatte, 2021).

In Sri Lanka, both the government and non-government organizations have undertaken various efforts over the years, including providing financial assistance, providing equipment and retail outlets, developing craft villages, organizing exhibitions, and award ceremonies which have only minor successive rate. Therefore, the study focuses on EM strategies that view consumption as a holistic experience, expand the concept of a product category and explore the meaning of specific consumption situations within a broader socio-cultural context. It acknowledges that consumers are rational and emotional beings and their choices are driven by both logic and the emotions they derive from their experiences (Schmitt,1999).

EM goes beyond product attributes and focuses on holistic experiences. It not only impacts people's lives, social context and cultural values but also built-up emotional connections with consumers, thereby shaping society (Schmitt, 1999). Consequently, branding through EM extends beyond functional features and symbols, encompassing emotional and logical associations that culminates unforgettable brand experiences (Schmitt, 1999).

Within EM theory, Schmitt (1999) introduces two essential concepts for managing consumer experiences: Strategic Experiential Modules (SEM) and Experiential Providers (ExPros). According to Schmitt (1999), the aim of SEMs is to make various kinds of experiences by understanding how consumers perceive a product or service. The SEMs include: SENSE; Sensory experiences that appeals to the senses, FEEL; Affective experiences that predominantly target people's inner feelings, THINK; Creative cognitive experiences that primarily engage people's intellect, ACT; Physical experiences that aim to affect bodily sensations and RELATE; Social identity experiences, which involve relational experiences with specific individuals or cultures. ExPros serve as the implementation tools of EM, namely 1. Communications, 2. Visual and verbal identity and signage, 3. Product presence, 4. Co-branding, 5. Spatial environments, 6. Electronic media and 7. People.

In experiential marketing, ExPros such as spatial environments, visual identity, signage, product presence and people are closely linked with the field of architecture. This illustrates that, architecture can play a crucial role in the implementation of EM for product categories like heritage crafts. In the experience economy, architecture has shifted its focus from "what it has" and "what it does" to "what you feel" and "who you are" (Marty, 2003 as cited in Klingmann, 2010). Buildings should also prioritize engaging senses by designing interiors like stage sets. Instead of creating plain spaces, architects should design distinctive and meaningful spaces that establish personalized and memorable connections with consumers (Pine, 2006).

With regards to architecture as an experience, Klingmann (2010) suggests that, SEMs can be effectively utilized in the design of buildings to create a variety of different experiences. She further elaborates on SEMs in relation to architecture as follows: SENSE Architecture; Turn the relationship between user and architecture into an interactive, sensual environment, FEEL Architecture; Appeals to the senses through strategic handling of traditional building techniques which evokes people's inner feelings, THINK Architecture; Convergent and divergent thinking through surprise, intrigue and provocation – Ex: subvert preconceived notion of familiar building typologies, ACT Architecture; Assess architecture according to its ability to perform as a catalyst for social experiences, alternative lifestyles and communal interfaces and RELATE Architecture; Where architecture become not merely an aesthetic artefact but an icon for the community – association between architecture and representation – power to reflect a social system.

The primary function of architecture is now seen as enhancing our experiences and enriching our lives (McCarter, 2016 as cited in Lee, 2022). In this evolving context, as architecture begins to incorporate experiential elements along with functional aspects, the experiential architecture of a store can emotionally connect a product and consumer. Furthermore, Lee (2022) introduces a framework for exploring spatial experiences and emotional connections within an interior space. He identifies three characteristics of interior space that directly engage with the body: 1. Morphological Factor (Form and pattern); volume, scale, rhythm, order, proportion, contrast, 2. Sensual Factor

(Material connection); texture, light, shadow, color, temperature, sound, smell, 3. Influential Factor; cultural symbolism, local/social issue.

Thereby, this literature review focuses on establishing a theoretical foundation for an effective marketing strategy (Schmitt,1999), potential architectural contributions (Klingmann,2010) and a qualitative method to measure consumer behavior (Lee,2022) regarding architectural space for the purpose of branding heritage crafts through EM and EA.

4. Methodology

This section explores how to incorporate SEMs into the design of heritage crafts stores and how to qualitatively measure them using the characteristics of interior space to brand heritage crafts in an effective, authentic and meaningful manner.

As per Klingmann’s (2010) suggestions, SEMs introduced by Schmitt (1999), can be used in the design of buildings to create a variety of different experiences. Due to the close link between the built environment and several other ExPros associated with architecture, architecture can function as a branding tool in the context of EM. Therefore, the incorporation of SEMs: namely SENSE, FEEL, ACT, THINK, and RELATE, within a heritage crafts store, will contribute to branding heritage crafts by creating an emotional connection between the product and the consumer. According to Lee’s (2022) framework for exploring spatial experience and emotional connections, we can examine SEMs under the morphological, sensual factors, and influential factor, as they are directly related to the fundamental architectural elements and design principles. For further progress in the research, Figure1 shows the developed theoretical framework using above-mentioned theories.

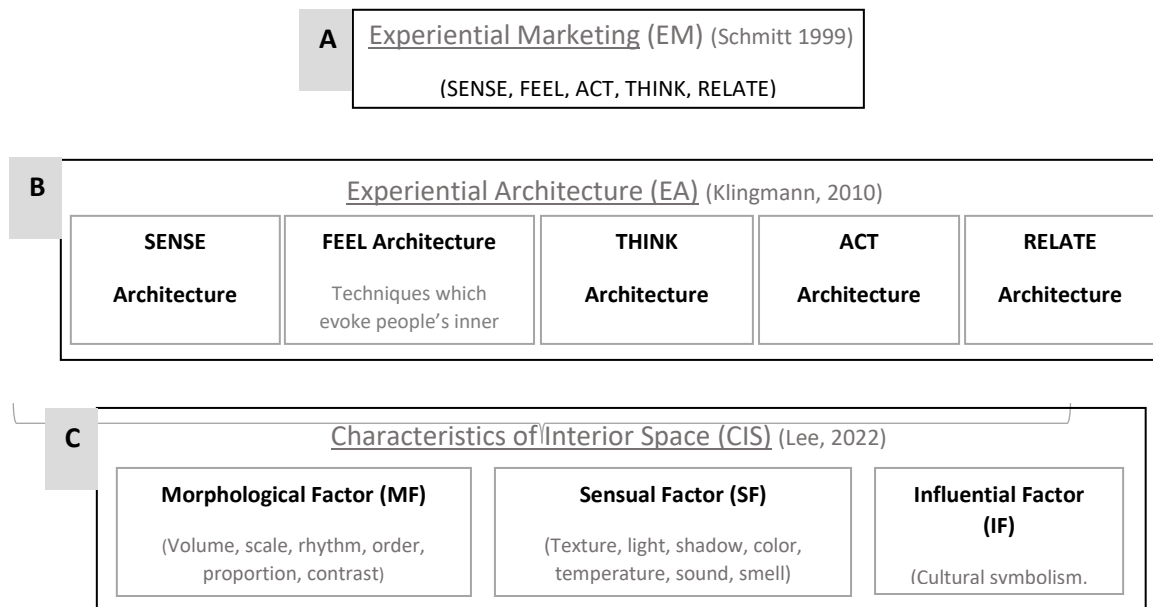


Figure1, Theoretical Framework for branding heritage crafts (Source: Author)

To identify the SEMs specific to a heritage crafts store, the research will explore three local heritage crafts stores, as well as consult with experts and professionals. This examination focuses the characteristics of the interior space in order to understand the appeals related to architecture for branding heritage crafts through experiential architecture. The case studies analyzed with observations and in-depth interviews. Findings of the case studies and in-depth interviews were cross-analyzed with the mainstream consumer experience, which was gathered from a randomly selected audience of 50 craft consumers.

For this purpose, observations were made during field visits, starting with brief scoping visits, followed by close examination and photographic documentation, and in-depth guided visits with shop owners or designers. Semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted with purposively sampled group of 8 respondents. These respondents included two expert consumers (EC) who frequently visit all the selected craft stores as craft collectors, managers (SM) or owners (SO) from a particular store and three architects (RA) related to the heritage crafts. Unfortunately, due to the limitations, the researcher able to interview only 5 respondents including two EC, one SM and two RA. These interviews provide knowledge on how consumers perceive the built environment of the store and to gain professional expertise on using experiential architecture to brand heritage crafts. The questions included their opinions on heritage crafts, how they experience SEMs through morphological, sensual and influential factors within the store, their perceptions on SEMs in branding heritage crafts and any other suggestions. All the interviews were conducted as one-to-one conversations. A close-ended questionnaire survey was conducted with a randomly selected group of 50 respondents, including architects, designers, researchers, design students, entrepreneurs and all the

respondents had experienced at least two of the selected stores as consumers or craft lovers and it can be answerable with binary answers or on a Likert scale.

5. Findings

Findings draws on case studies, experts and professionals' consultation and mainstream consumer experience.

5.1 CASE STUDIES

The research chose case studies deliberately due to the limited conscious and experiential efforts in designing heritage crafts stores. They have the potential to apply and analyze the developed framework and architects were involved in the design process. These selected shops have gained recognition for their efforts in preserving Sri Lanka's craft heritage and attracting other 21st century patrons. Since the research focused on addressing the new class of patronage through value-added branding, these shops serve as key destinations for studying the consumer experience associated with heritage crafts.

5.1.1 Case 1 – Barefoot Ceylon (BC)

Barefoot Ceylon, located in Colombo, is a renowned craft shop in Sri Lanka, founded by the artist Barbara Sansoni. It comprises a collection of buildings around old 1920s town houses (Barefoot, n.d.). It's not just a store but an immersive experience, rich in color, design, art and music. The entrance incorporates locally familiar elements such as "*pahana*" (traditional oil laps), stone steps, human-scale double door found in temples and kovils in Sri Lanka, creating sense of belonging. Additionally, they use pastel yellow for the wall and blue and white for the door to symbolize the crafts they sell, which showcase local vibrant colors as an introduction to the store.

Consumers say that even though the products feature bold colors, they have a pastel-like and matte finish. With these products, the textures on the walls, mossy stones in the garden, hibiscus trees, and the colors on the walls and rooves align more with the crafts than a polished building (EC1). The store's atmosphere, achieved through textures, colors, temperature, light and shadow, open courtyards and landscaping, immerses consumers in a more relaxed, clam and cozy environment, which is entirely different from the city's hustle and bustle and resembles ambiance of craft villages. According to EC2, Barefoot offers various spaces, some with air conditioning and others with natural ventilation, creating an interesting and well-arranged change. These courtyard areas provide a homely and cozy mood that complements the cottage products, which are domestic and handmade in small quantities.

In the spatial arrangement, as it is a town house, each room is used for a particular craft or function, guiding consumer on a journey. It creates experiential pathways with open courtyards, level differences, play with light and shadow, waiting spaces similar to living rooms, and volumes, scale and proportions that resemble traditional vernacular architecture. Furthermore, in consumer experience, they express it as,

"I think small spaces in different levels are really good. When we move from one small space to the other it changes. Even in museums and craft villages in India has that quality. So, different craft are given different spaces and that enhances the meaning of those crafts. Then we tend to see and buy those crafts. That architecture gives a meaning to the crafts they are selling (EC1)"

According to observations, their shelves and product displaying tables are all accessible and provide a hands-on-feel. For example, in the kids' product displaying area, the proportions are designed to match kid's scale, allowing children to engage with and enjoy the products. Additionally, they display products on a larger scale, using the volume of the space to showcase the crafts rather than folding and storing them on shelves. The walls are painted white, serving as backdrops for the crafts, the floors have titanium matt finish, and doors and windows are wooden, helping the crafts to stand out within the space. The architecture act as a catalyst to enhance the products. Moreover, the artificial lighting employes several lighting strategies such as high color rendering index and various light levels (ambient, accent, and task), along with warm-color temperature lights to create cozy, homely mood and to display color of the products accurately. The product arrangements are related to consumer lifestyles, as they primarily feature home-based products and the use of separate rooms for each type of product relates to specific craft community or village such as "Dumbara craft community".

Incorporating other functions, including art gallery, book shop and a courtyard café provide a holistic experience to the consumer. Experientially, it guides consumers in to a particular mood by affecting their experience of time, space and matter. According to EC1:

"There are lot of activities inside barefoot. There is lot to see and lot to do. You can spend even a whole day at that place. When I go inside Barefoot, I don't need to rush back unless I have some other work. If there is an exhibition I go there, visit around the shop, check the new books, and even don't get hungry because the restaurant is also there, where I can eat something. So, I feel comfortable spending time there."

The backyard of the store is multifunctional and adaptable space that can serve a variety of functions. They demonstrate the process of handloom crafts making, as their major product is handloom craft, allowing consumer to

experience it with an artisan. The space connects with the natural environment and in comparison, to the context where it sits, is a large open area. The openness provides comfort to the consumer when arranging workshops related to crafts making.

Finally, Barefoot Ceylon is not just a craft store but also a brand that provides a vibrant experiential journey through Sri Lankan heritage crafts and architectural appeals they provided to achieve SEM can be identified as in Table 1. According to EC2:

“I think Barefoot is a very good place to buy crafts, but Barefoot relates the story of Babara Sansoni and how she perceived Sri Lanka, Multicultural, colorful and vibrant Sri Lanka. This is bit different from artisans, their lives, history and craftsmanship. If somebody can relate the story of artisans, craft and heritage just as Barefoot narrates the story of Sansoni, that would be great.”

Table 1, Analysis of findings in Case 1: Barefoot Ceylon (Source: Author)

		Appeals	SEM				
			SENSE	FEEL	ACT	THINK	RELATE
Characteristics of Interior space (CIS)	MF	Play with volume	√	√			
		Scale and proportions that resemble traditional vernacular architecture	√	√			
		Scale of the shelves and other displays to have hands-on experience	√	√			
		Providing spacious areas			√		
		Create high volumes to exhibit large scale products				√	
	Spatial journey creates through small scale spaces resembles the quality of artisanal villages					√	
	SF	Matte and weathered textural finishes	√	√			
		Pastel colors	√	√			
		Colors symbolizing the particular craft	√	√			
		Use of white color as a backdrop	√	√			
		Comfortable temperature	√	√			
		Play of light and shadow	√	√			
		Spatial arrangements to have hands-on experience	√	√			
		Use of high CRI	√	√			
	IF	Use of artificial lighting layers (ambient, accent, task)	√	√	√		
Warm color temperature lighting		√	√				
Other Factors	Sense of belong through locally familiar elements (pahana, stone steps, double door similar to temples and kovils)		√				
	Traditional look in the appearance	√					
	Accessibility to have hand-on-feel	√					
	Weathered landscaping and open courtyards		√				
	Experiential pathways		√				
	Spatial arrangements relate to lifestyle		√				
	Incorporating complementary functions to the architectural programme		√				
	Multifunctional and Adaptable			√			
	Openness and connection to the natural environment		√	√			
Space allocation for a particular craft					√		

5.1.2 Case 2 – Paradise Road (PR)

Paradise Road, a renowned Sri Lankan craft shop established in 1987 by design entrepreneur Udayshanth Fernando. Their representation of traditional arts and crafts have created a strong design brand identity in Sri Lanka. They have two retail outlets: one in Colombo 7, located in a repurposed traditional townhouse and the other is the Paradise Road Gallery Café, which used to be Geoffrey Bawa’s office.

They create a setback from the road through the choice of paving material, entrance foyer, use of plumeria trees and the repurpose of human-scale old buildings with traditional inspirations to guide consumers to a different mood from the city atmosphere. From a consumer’s perspective, EC2 explains it as follows:

“When you enter the Paradise Road gallery café, it has a quite unique ambiance which drives you away from the chaotic Colombo. And I feel it a right combination of heritage or may be tradition and the modernity, may be that is what Bawa’s buildings always stands for. But in this case, it quite suits my state of mind as craft consumer.”

Paradise Road, specializes in selling distinctive heritage crafts with a unique style and color palette. Their shop arrangement is visually appealing and they use architecture as a canvas to project their products. The products were displayed in separate room areas since it is a house. To enhance the presentation, products are displayed in separate room areas within the house-like structure of the shop. Use of artificial lighting appeals to consumer’s visual sensory, highlighting delicate, finely finished luxurious crafts. They use several lighting techniques such as warm and cool color temperatures according to the product being displayed, high-color rendering index lights and lighting layers including accent, ambient and task lighting to guide consumers through different emotional ambiances.

Unfortunately, since they exhibit an excessive number of crafts of one particular type and due to the lack of space and volume within the room areas, consumers perceive this as a negative factor. They feel there is a lack of opportunity to have hands-on experience and it does not encourage visitors to stay, feel and experience the crafts (EC1). In contrast, at the Paradise Road Gallery Café, they maintain a relaxed environment while adding several functions to the programme, such as a café and an art exhibition area with a small craft retail outlet. Here, the café act as a magnet point to the shop, positively affecting consumers’ mood. Finally, Paradise Road represents a modern approach to branding heritage crafts with their own theme. However, they do not incorporate programs or approaches to address ACT and RELATE SEMs. The summary of the analysis illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2, Analysis of findings in Case 2: Paradise Road (Source: Author)

		Appeals	SEM				
			SENSE	FEEL	ACT	THINK	RELATE
MF	Rhythmic display arrangements		√				
CIS	Incorporating different textural materials		√	√			
	Use of a color palette that unique to crafts		√	√			
	Matt finish and rustic feel		√	√			
	Use of lighting for visual clarity		√				
	Warm and cool color temperature lights depending on the craft		√	√			
Other Factors	Introduction of an entrance foyer			√			
	Use of landscape elements that are historically significant			√			
	Repurpose of human-scale old buildings			√			
	Incorporating separate rooms for a particular craft			√			
	Incorporating complementary functions to the architectural programme			√		√	

5.1.3 Case 3 – Kandy arts association (KAA)

The Kandy Art Association, is a significant government architectural aimed at providing market access for craft communities. It was established by the British government in 1882, parallel to the arts and crafts movement with the purpose of bringing traditional artists and craftsmen together. In 1924 it has moved to the current location where the place earlier called ‘*kunam maduwa*’ and later used by the British military hospital. An expansion to the original building was designed by Archt. Minette de Silva. New functions were added to the program such as cultural center, artists demonstration area, exhibition space and a food outlet, bringing considerable changes to the building’s atmosphere. This also added emotional value and encouraged curiosity and thought among visitors.

The sense of place and belonging that is provided through the reuse of the old building, the context and the history of the place attract people to this location. Unfortunately, the interior arrangement, including light levels, product displays, wall colors and shelf arrangement does not appeal to the consumers. EC2 stated, “*That building is interesting, I think it could have used nicely, that open verandah with huge pillars gives a good feel. But that is not used properly I think.*” According to the M;

“We categorize them according to the craft. Jewelry in one place, brass ware in one place, fabric product in one place, likewise.” However, the lack of hands-on experience and poor visual clarity do not showcase the product quality and discourage the consumer. For instance, according to EC2, “*There, I have to spend hours to select a good product, since they are not arranged properly and also it is bit hard to concentrate in that place.*”

Here, considering the context of Kandy, an area where traditional artisans still practice their Inherited crafts, an essential step has been taken to provide a space for nearby artisans to come and practice. Management adding it to the programme as a demonstration to attract consumers. As stated by M; “*Previously artisans were coming to this place and they work in the verandah. Tourists are very attracted to that. Sometimes they buy from those artisans directly without buying from our shop. Actually, it is not allowed officially since we are giving them a salary, but we don’t investigate it too much.*” The verandah has become an adaptable space with adequate room for craft activities, allowing consumers to connect with artisans and their processes. This adds experiential value addition to the product in terms of branding.

Table 3, Analysis of findings in Case 3: Kandy Arts Association (Source: Author)

		Appeals	SEM				
			SENSE	FEEL	ACT	THINK	RELATE
CIS	IF	Sense of belong and Sense of place through reuse of old building, the context, and history of the place		√			√
		Providing space for nearby artisans to work			√		√
Other Factors		Incorporating complementary functions to the architectural programme		√		√	
		Contextual response		√			√
		Colonnade veranda		√			
		Categorization of the crafts through allocating separate spaces		√			
		Open, spacious and adaptable spaces				√	

5.2 EXPERTS AND PROFESSIONALS' CONSULTATION

An in-depth interview was conducted with two expert consumers who frequently visit craft stores as craft collectors. This interview aimed to further understand how SEMs and experiential architecture help in perceiving crafts in a more valuable and meaningful way. To gain professional expertise in using experiential architecture for branding heritage crafts, two pioneer architects were interviewed. Interviewed sample characteristics are shown in Table 4.

Table 4, Analysis of findings in Case 3: Kandy Arts Association (Source: Author)

Interviewee	Interview Category	Interviewee ID	Interview Duration
Sulari de Silva	Consumer	EC1	01:41:01
Kalathri Guruge	Consumer	EC2	01:11:37
Shiranthi Manamperi	Manager	SM	00:40:05
Anura Rathnavibhushana	Architect	RA1	01:04:46
Ashley de Vos	Architect	RA2	01:02:00

5.2.1 Sense

SENSE involves appealing to people's senses to create connection between product and the consumer. Tactile experiences, lighting, visibility, color usage, acoustics and the volume of the space are all different features that architects must consider when designing craft-related building. Furthermore, RA1 stated that,

"What are the qualities generally in architecture historically and now, that really can help us to do effective marketing of products to an audience? One is large spaces for hanging big tapestries - For example that is large volumes with multiple heights like Oberoi. For the products which are small like buddha statue, sculptures, lighting is critical. The Most important thing to display well is visibility: Proper visibility of the product and the tactile sensation so it is critical, lighting that will enhance the product. Light and tactile are essential to buy anything. If you sell traditional musical instruments like pantheru or raban, you can give headsets to listen. But good acoustics should be there for the areas where sound essentials for the sale. There should be good acoustics, isolation from other areas, not to be disturbed, if you are selling musical or any such thing."

Moreover, he describes that how the background color and finishes supported highlighting the details of crafts displayed in the Japan Ceylon Pavilion, a project he was involved in with architect Geoffrey Bawa: *"We displayed jewels. Used all white background and floors and walls to display them. Ceilings white... Floors white... White sets off anything."* According to expert consumers, the tactile experience is the most prominent sensory factor they concerned when buying and experiencing crafts. EC1 stated, *"I like the rough feeling of hand made products. I don't like much all the polished items. I like the organic, rustic looks."* Furthermore, EC2 also mentioned, *"Most important sense to me when buying crafts is the tactile experience. There you can sense the product quality and the material quality as well."*

5.2.2 Feel

FEEL is about to give an affective experience that strongly appeals largely to people's inner feelings and creates specific mood settings. This can trigger consumer's imagination and establish a strong connection between the consumer and the heritage craft. According to Klingmann (2010), Architecturally we can evoke people's inner feelings through strategic handling of traditional building techniques. EC2 expresses this idea: *"feel or the ambiance of a shop, motivates me or I would say supports me to explore crafts and spend time with them. Eventually leading me to buy some."*

As a well-experienced architect, RA1 describes that proper morphological factor like volume, scale, proportions and adaptability in spatial arrangements are advantageous when it comes to traditional buildings for display arts and crafts. He states, *"I think old walawwa are extremely good for display arts and crafts. Specially, traditional buildings are so flexible, and there can be places of display of objects. And Sri Lanka has plenty of them."*

5.2.3 Act

This is about physical experience: aims to affect bodily experiences, lifestyles and interactions. Hand crafted products are more valuable because of the process associated with them. Architecturally it is about providing spacious, multifunctional and adaptable space. According to EC1, she says,

“Definitely, I would like to see the process of the crafts, but I don’t like it much inside a closed shop. But I would like to participate in a village or a more open space, where I can sit and work comfortably, not like just observing artisans. But sometimes some crafts like Laksha it is very interesting to observe how they are doing it. But I prefer to go and see the process in a village.”

Her explanation leads to an architectural programme that emphasizes providing visits to craft villages rather than just offering a space for a demonstration. This approach is more meaningful, as it allows consumers to experience craft production in a village setting, attracting them and they can actually engage with the artisan who makes the product.

5.2.4 Think

THINK primarily appeals to people’s intellect, involving surprise, intrigue and provocation. According to RA1, this aspect is about creating spaces and using architecture and its elements to showcase who we are in the sense of heritage. Further he explains that,

“When we doing the Ceylon pavilion in Japan what we wanted to present was the feeling of wesak. We showcased crafts but it was majorly brought out from the atmosphere. The entire building was like a large lantern when lit up. We cut out paper triangles and pasted them to the glass walls, to give the Sri Lankan character and create the ambiance. It was a great hit. Ena de Silva did Batik flags for that. Show there, large banners done by Ena de silva was hang in that double height exhibition pavilion. That was to show off what Sri Lanka has. So, it was not kept folded like you said.”

Furthermore, he explains the application of think architecture involves creating an atmospheric feeling with meaning, encourage visitors to think and contemplate. As an example, he mentioned a design decision to evoke the atmosphere of the Kandy during the ‘dalada perahara’ and ‘vesak’ seasons in a hotel by using batik-designed fabric with backlighting. He also mentioned that this can be achieved through careful management of light, materials, colors, space volume and maintaining proportions. He illustrates this with an example,

“Architecture, will it serve the purpose of displaying Buddha statues or religious statues. With all the glass walls and all will that be a better place or that gives dark room with brilliant lights: which is better? I think it is better when you have enclosure, concentration possible, it will be much more effective. If you do full glass building, with window divisions and all, actually if you want people to enjoy aesthetically the objects you are selling, it's good to help them to not have distractions from too much of architecture.”

5.2.5 Relate

Table 5, Analysis of findings in experts and professionals’ consultation (Source: Author)

		Appeals	SEM				
			SENSE	FEEL	ACT	THINK	RELAT _F
CIS	M _F	Large volumes with multiple heights	√				
		Careful handling of volume, scale and proportions		√		√	
	SF	Tactile experiences	√				
		Lighting that will enhance the product and for good visibility	√				
		Color usage (white sets off anything)	√				
		Background color and finishes	√				
		Good acoustics (where sound is essential for the sale - ‘pantheru’, ‘raban’)	√				
		Organic, rustic look	√	√			
Other Factors		Careful management of light, material and colors				√	
		Adaptability in spatial arrangements (reuse of old ‘walawwa’ buildings provides)		√			
		Providing visits to craft villages			√		
		Designing open, spacious, multifunctional spaces			√		
		Façade treatment and use of architectural elements to showcase who we are in the sense of heritage				√	
		Use of crafts in a large scale as architectural elements				√	
		Building should not overplay the craft products				√	

In RELATE, it refers to social identity experiences that result from relating to a reference group or culture. Architecturally, it involves becoming an icon for a community, representation and reflection. In today’s world, people value heritage crafts due to the concepts attached to them, such as community, history and skills developed over generations. EC1 elaborates on the emotional value behind artisanal crafts, saying, “I would love to buy something, wearing over, how it’s really made and created with people, skills, attention and effort.” Further she explains the need to use the RELATE SEM in branding heritage, stating that, “Sometimes in paradise road I have felt like whether I can meet these people get my own design done. I have asked from the shop, who are making these. So, at that time its better I could have met the artisan than an intermediate person.”

RA2, explains that the values of heritage crafts extend to the culture and society. He mentions, “When we go to Kelani Perahera in our childhood, there are terracotta toys, elephants...peacocks...handcrafted and painted. Fifty cents or one rupee. We used to buy them and play. Actually, those were made by children of those artisans. So actually, it’s an industry and a community.” Therefore, if a crafts shop can relate its products to the community or the story behind them through architectural program or spatial arrangements, it creates a significant attachment between product and the consumer. Additionally, consumers value heritage crafts more because of the stories attached to it. Finally, All the comments relating to each theme, analysed and presented the architectural appeals that can use in EA as in Table 5.

5.3 MAINSTREAM CONSUMER EXPERIENCE

The mainstream consumer experience was assessed using a sample of 50 randomly selected respondents. From the overall responses, 92% of the 50 respondents believe that craft-based products can be valued more in line with current market trends and 90% feel that the architecture of a crafts store motivates them to observe crafts. Furthermore, one of the respondents mentioned, “Architecture should have more significance when designing craft shops because it really adds to the whole experience.”

In the questionnaire, there were two questions focused on the SENSE and FEEL SEMs:

1. Normally, when you observing craft products, do you want to touch and feel them? The answer was ‘yes’ from 90% of the respondents.
2. Which of the following factors that you noticed in a craft shop that help you to feel the crafts? factors and responses are detailed in Figure2.

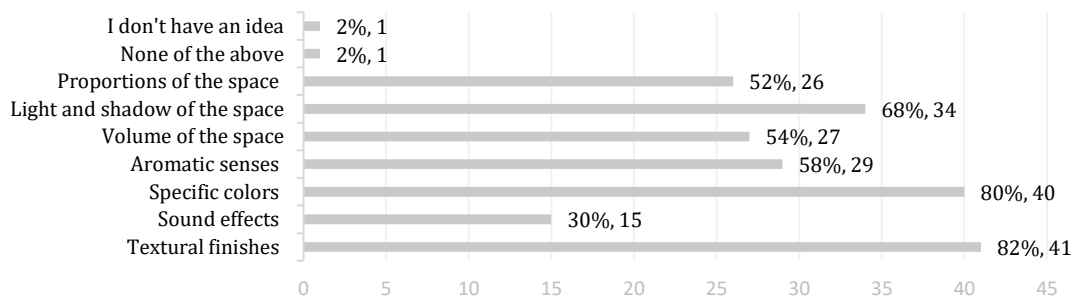


Figure2, Factors affect to feel (Source: Author)

Further, out of the 50 respondents, 66% have not physically experienced the process of craft making, while 34% have experienced the crafts making process in a craft shop. Additionally, 84% of them expressed an interest in visiting a craft village to experience it. Furthermore, 88% of respondents indicated a preference of 3 to 5 on a 1-5 Likert scale, where 1 represents dislike and 5 represents like, regarding the availability of a facility to visit a craft village within a craft shop.

Focusing on the RELATE SEM, the questionnaire inquired about what additional information respondents would like to know when purchasing a craft-related product, apart from product specification and price. The results show that 62% of respondents want to know about the community, 70% are interested in historical stories behind the craft, 76% desire information about the craft-making process, 72% wish to know about special techniques, 8% do not need any of the above. Two additional points were raised: the cultural context behind the process and the use of local materials. Finally, when evaluating their opinion on case studies regarding spatial arrangements and displays, it was found that the best consumer experience is provided by the Barefoot Ceylon. Responses were detailed in Figure3.

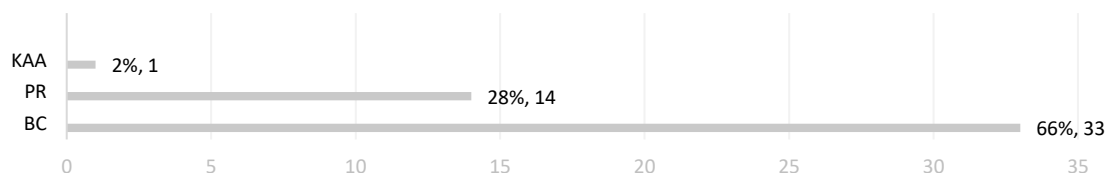


Figure 3, Opinion on consumer experience at selected case studies (Source:

6. Discussion

Findings of the mainstream questionnaire survey confirmed the analysis of the primary data, gathered from case studies, experts and professional opinions. It demonstrates that branding heritage crafts through experiential architecture is feasible and SEMs significantly impacts consumer’s perception of the value of the heritage crafts through their experience.

Table 6, Other design-related factors to achieve SEMs (Source: Author)

Other design-related factors	Appeals	SEM				
		SENSE	FEEL	ACT	THINK	RELATE
Contextual & Historical Response	Traditional look in the appearance	√				
	Use of landscape elements that are historically significant		√			
	Repurpose of human-scale old buildings		√			
	Introduction of an entrance foyer		√			
	Colonnade veranda		√			
Immersive Design	Contextual response		√			√
	Accessibility to have hand-on-feel	√				
	Weathered landscaping and open courtyards		√			
	Experiential pathways		√			
	Openness and connection to the natural environment		√	√		
Flexibility & Adaptability	Providing visits to craft villages			√		
	Multifunctional and Adaptable			√		
Integration of Crafts and Culture	Adaptability in spatial arrangements (reuse of old ‘walawwa’ buildings provides)		√			
	Separate space allocation for a particular craft		√			√
	Use of crafts in a large scale as architectural elements				√	
	Building should not overplay the craft products				√	
	Façade treatment and use of architectural elements to showcase who we are in the sense of heritage				√	
	Spatial arrangements relate to lifestyle		√		√	
	Incorporating complementary functions to the architectural programme		√			

The research provides a detailed list of SEM appeals through CIS, as depicted in Table 1, 2, 3, and 5 which can be integrated in to EA. Furthermore, the findings emphasize various other design-related factors that are crucial for achieving SEMs, as illustrated in Table 6. As a result, Part ‘C’ of the theoretical framework can be adjusted based on these findings, as shown in Figure 2. This framework can serve as a guide and source of inspiration for future architectural intervention related to heritage crafts, and for research focused on branding heritage crafts.

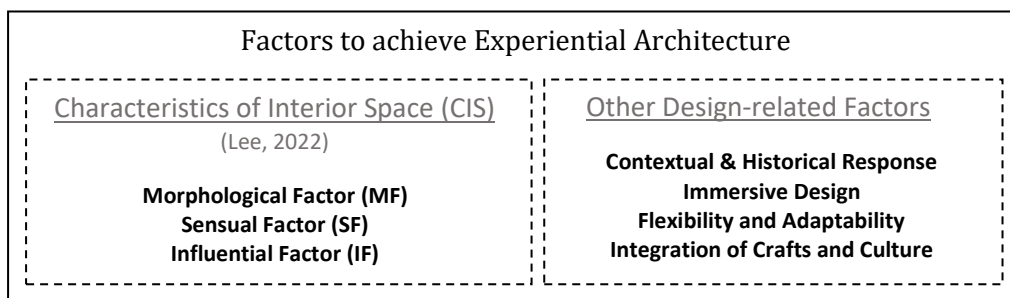


Figure 4, Developed Theoretical Framework based on research findings (Source: Author)

Based on observations and expert opinions, case 1: Barefoot Ceylon appears to excel in achieving most SEMs. Moreover, the questionnaire survey reveals that 66% of mainstream consumers believe that Barefoot Ceylon offers the best consumer experience compared to the other two cases. Therefore, it is evident that experiential architecture, which incorporates SEMs in a crafts shop, contributes to value-added branding.

Finally, the research is constrained by several factors, including a limited time frame and economic crisis in the country, which restrict the study to only three case studies. A broader examination of heritage crafts store may reveal more appeals. Additionally, three planned interviews had to be cancelled due to scheduling issues. Increasing the sample size for interviews and questionnaire survey could strengthen the findings, and these limitations can be addressed in the future for more profound results.

7. Conclusion

Experiential architecture is not widely understood as a means of branding heritage crafts. Nevertheless, research has revealed that experiential architecture can play a crucial role in the context of value-added branding for Sri Lankan heritage crafts sector, thus contributing to its sustainable as an industry. The study focused on SEMs to explore the relationship between consumer experience and architecture, with the aim of addressing this scenario through experiential architecture. Utilizing CIS as a measuring tool, the research identified SEMs and its appeals relevant to a heritage crafts store that can be incorporated into experiential design.

The findings suggest that the role of architecture, in the context of value-added branding, primarily involves creating atmospheric feel that influences people's inner feelings and intellectual perceptions. Several appealing factors have been identified such as the use of rustic and weathered textural finishes, the incorporation of large volumes with multiple heights, spatial adaptability similar to old traditional houses and creating sense of belonging through culturally and historically familiar elements. Furthermore, the architectural programme plays a significant role in enticing consumers to engage with, remain in and experience the crafts within a shop. Consequently, the research outcome provides a list of appealing factors that can be integrated into experiential architecture for heritage crafts store.

The developed research framework is intended to serve as a guide and a source of inspiration for future experiential design interventions, especially in the context of heritage crafts. It can be utilized by future researchers in their own work to further explore this particular phenomenon.

8. Citation and References

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