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스포츠매니지먼트 석사 학위논문

# The Influence of Brand Experience on Switching Costs

Focus on Golf Equipment Industry

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## **ABSTRACT**

# **The Influence of Brand Experience on Switching Costs**

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Building strong brands has been the main objective for many marketers in order to increase profits over a long period of time. Up-to-date, research has been carried out examining the effects of brand experience on different brand related factors, such as brand loyalty, satisfaction, and brand awareness to build powerful brands. Yet, there is no empirical evidence showing its effect on switching costs, a substantial factor to retain customers for a long lasting relationship.

This study commenced with a primary purpose to examine the influence of brand experience on switching costs in the context of golf

equipment since it has the biggest sport equipment market share; and to provide valuable insights to sport academia and marketing practice to further retain customers and increase profits.

This study carried out an online survey obtaining 386 valid samples. The participants of the study were all golf players owning golf clubs. Thereafter, the study conducted data analysis for descriptive and reliability analysis, multivariate analysis of covariance, and Bonferroni post-hoc analysis using SPSS 20.0 to analyze the data.

The results of this study clearly indicated that brand experience had an actual influence on switching costs. For golfers who had higher levels of brand experience, the cost of switching were also the highest. On the other hand, results revealed that players who had lower levels of brand experience had a tendency to change brands more easily due to the smaller costs when switching brands. To measure the absolute effect of brand experience on switching costs, golfer's expertise and switching experience was controlled in the study since both factors have a negative effect on switching costs. In other words, the higher the level of a golfer's expertise or switching experience, the lower the cost of switching to other brands.

Sport managers can utilize the information provided in this research to

better understand the impact that experiences of a brand can generate, and to make customers not to deter from the current using brand. This in turn, will help golf brand companies not only to make their brand stand out from the others, but also create a long lasting segment of customers.

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**Key Words: Brand Experience, Switching Cost, Golf Equipment,  
Expertise, Switching Experience**

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# **1. Introduction**

## **1.1 Research Background**

Building strong brands is one of the most important goal of product and brand management. Strong brands result in higher revenue streams, both short-term and long-term (Aaker, 1991; 1996; Kapferer, 2004). For brand managers the strategic goal is to build brands that last for decades and can be leveraged in different product categories and markets (Aaker, 1996).

For the sport market, precisely creating a strong brand is one of the most important goal that marketers are trying to achieve. There are so many brands in the market that consumers face difficulties when comparing and differentiating one brand from the other; therefore, marketers spend considerable resources to assess and advertise their brand. Nonetheless, it is widely known that these techniques are not enough. With so many recognized brands it is difficult for marketers to make their brand stand out, improve, and ensure their sales over time.

Consumers are not only looking for the practicality of a product but also for the emotional experiences (Walter, Cleff, and Chu, 2013); as a result, brand experience has been attracting a lot of attention in the marketing business.

Various studies showed that brand experience had a positive effect on consumer satisfaction and loyalty. Also, current studies revealed that switching costs acted as an antecedent for consumer satisfaction and loyalty. Long has been said that switching costs are crucial in maintaining long-term profitability and locking-in consumers (Chen and Hitt, 2000). However, there is surprisingly little empirical evidence about the effects of switching costs in the sporting goods market.

## **1.2 Research Motivation**

The golf population has been decreasing over the last decade. According to Pellucid, a consulting company specializing in the golf business, the number of United States golfers dropped 24% percent in 2002 to about 23 million golf players last year. It also states that there was a decrease of 1.1 million players in 2013. According to the Korean Leisure Industry (2013), the amount of golfers playing 18 holes was 59,000 a year decreasing 15.9% from 2007, which was 70,200 players. Also, the report makes a forecast that the total of golfers playing 18 holes would decrease to 47,300, almost 20% less than 2012. The constant decrease in golf players is not only seen in Korea but the same condition can be seen in Japan. Japanese Social Life Survey stated that there was a decrease of 8.9% of total golf players from 1.01 million in 2006 to 0.92 million players in 2011.

Additionally, the number of people playing 25 times or more a year fell to 4.6 million in 2005 from 6.9 million in 2001. According to the NGF (National Golf Federation), the number of golfers playing 8 times or more a year has fallen from 17.7 million in 2000 to 15 million in 2006.

The main reason for the decline in golf participation is due to a broader participation of outdoor activities - such as tennis, swimming, hiking, and biking. Also, young people are occupying their leisure time with other types of entertainment. Economic motives are another big reason for golfers to stop playing. According to the NGF, since nowadays people have more than one job, they do not have enough time to spend it on leisure.

With the decrease of the golf population and rounds played, as consequence there is a reduced purchase of golf products. Progressively, golf players do not feel the need to buy or change their clubs. The global golf equipment manufacturing market declined during 2008-2013.<sup>2</sup> In fact, industry-wide equipment sales - as compiled by Golf Datatech - have declined by about 18% since 2007.<sup>3</sup> Revenues from high-margin drivers and metal

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<sup>1</sup> Vitello, P. (2008, February 21). More Americans are giving up golf. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com>

<sup>2</sup> Reportlinker. (2014). Global Golf Equipment Manufacturing Market 2014-2019: Trend, Profit and Forecast Analysis. Available from <http://reportlinker.com>

<sup>3</sup> Gamble, J. E. (2011, April 7). Golf equipment sales out of the bunker?. *BBC News*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbc.com>

woods fell by nearly 30%, sales of iron sets declined by 20%, and putter revenues dropped 24% between 2007 and year-end 2010.<sup>4</sup> However, despite the fact that the golf population decreased in the past years, the golf market is still big enough (with big opportunities in Asia, such as China and India), and there are golf players who need to buy golf clubs. So, it is important for golf companies to know how to market their brand.

For golf players buying a new set of clubs is always a difficult task since they have to decide which brand and model to buy. Golf consumers invest a lot of time and effort when examining, comparing, and measuring among different brands and despite the time and effort spent, they are not confident which brand to purchase due to the considerable amount of golf club brands in the market. Many brands offer the same characteristics – distance, precision, technology, fashion, and customization; therefore, since most brands have the same utilitarian features, consumers tend to switch from one brand to another. In order to retain the current customers and increase long-term profitability, it is important for companies to create a segment of loyal customers (Walter, Cleff, and Chu, 2013; Brakus, Schmitt, Zarantonello, 2009).

Another main reason to conduct this research was the lack of empirical

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<sup>4</sup> Gamble, J. E. (2011, April 7). Golf equipment sales out of the bunker?. *BBC News*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbc.com>

study regarding the influence of brand experience on brand related factors. Up-to-date, limited studies confirmed the positive influence of brand experience over brand loyalty, brand awareness, brand trust, and satisfaction with some limitations such as sample size (Walter, Cleff, and Chu, 2013; Sahin, Zehir, and Kitapci, 2011; 2012) and one brand measurement (Walter, Ceoff, and Chu, 2013). Brakus, Schmitt, and Zarantonello (2009), developers of brand experience scale, stated that brand experience has a behavioral impact that affects consumer satisfaction and loyalty directly and indirectly through brand personality. Also, Sahin, Zehir, and Kitapci (2012) confirmed the positive effect of brand experience on satisfaction and commitment.

Specifically, satisfaction has been considered as a driver in the creation of loyal customers. Sambandam and Lord (1995) stated that satisfied customers stay with the brand and they are likely to purchase the same brand over the time. However, Sharma and Patterson (2000) showed that purchase of a specific brand is not always because of loyalty and satisfaction, but because the uncertainty and the psychological costs that one should invest when purchasing a different brand. They stated that regardless of a customer not being satisfied with a specific brand product, the customer would choose that brand because the cost of choosing another one is more costly.

Despite former literature on brand experience and switching cost

independently, no research has been carried out regarding the relationship or actual influence of brand experience on switching costs. One of the reasons for this could be due to the recent concept of brand experience in the literature field. As a result, there is a notable lack of empirical studies on its effects (Skard, Nysveen, and Pedersen, 2011). However, many research have been executed in the last few years regarding the positive influence of brand experience on brand loyalty, satisfaction, brand trust, brand attachment, and brand awareness.

Therefore, the main reason for carrying out this study is because: first, there is a lack of literature explaining the relationship between brand experience and switching costs with some limitations on sample size and brand. Second, there is a saturated but big golf equipment market, which marketers should approach the customers with a new concept to maintain not only their sales but also the customers over time.

### **1.3 Purpose of Study**

Nowadays, creating loyal customers has been a difficult task for marketing managers; therefore, Brakus, Schmitt, Zarantonello (2009) state that it is important to create an especial bond with the consumer through experience. Their study showed that brand experience has a behavioral impact on consumers through sensations, feelings, cognitions, and behavioral responses which derives in actual purchase. Therefore, exposing consumers to brand experience is the ultimate resource in this period to create a long lasting relationship. There are various research regarding the positive effect of brand experience in goods -such as cars, sneakers, and laptops. However, little or no study has been carried out within the sporting goods market.

Moreover, switching cost theory express how companies can accomplish advantages by making more costly and difficult for consumers to switch from a brand to another. Many researchers showed that switching costs represent an important possibility to retain customer in loyalty programs (Bendapudi and Berry, 1997; Guiltinan, 1989; Polo and Sese, 2009). Therefore, achieving customer retention is indispensable for many firms to increase revenue and profitability especially in the information-intensive market (Polo and Sese, 2009). Numerous researchers developed switching costs measurements to evaluate what in fact affects consumers switching motives. Yet, no study has

been executed with sporting goods. Thus, there is a need for research that examines the relationship between brand experience and switching cost in the sporting goods market.

With this background, the main purpose of this study is to examine the influence of brand experience on switching costs among golf equipment consumers. To be more specific, this study aims to determine the influence of brand experience on different types of switching costs.

## **1.4 Research Question**

The following represents the research questions that will be addressed in this study:

1. What is the influence of brand experience on switching cost for golf equipment depending on golfers' expertise and switching experience?

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Brand Experience**

According to Walter, Cleff, and Chu (2013), the growing for the brand experience interest is based on three arguments. First of all, excessive exposure to advertising from traditional media channels causes communication to focus on new methods to acquire consumers' attention and reach them with their messages (Brakus, Schmitt, and Zarantonello, 2009). Second, globalization and saturation of markets contributed to competition between companies for a limited market (Walter, Cleff, and Chu, 2013). The rationale for this is that product benefits are becoming more interchangeable; as a result, companies are facing hardships when it comes to differentiating themselves from other companies on functional product features. And third, consumers are looking for more hedonistic, new, and exciting experiences (Walter, Cleff, and Chu, 2013).

When consumers search, shop, and consume brands they are not only exposed to utilitarian product features, but also to various brand-related stimuli, such as brand-identifying colors (Bellizzi and Hite, 1992; Meyers-Levy and Peracchio, 1995), shapes, slogans, mascots, and brand characters (Keller, 1987). According to Brakus, Schmitt, and Zarantonello (2009), brand-

related stimuli appear as part of brand's design and identity (e.g., name, logo, signage), packaging and marketing communications (e.g., advertisements, brochures, web site), and in environment where the brand is marketed (e.g., stores, events). These stimuli constitute the major source of internal consumer responses referred as brand experience.

Brand experience is represented as “sensations, feelings, cognitions, and behavioral responses induced by brand-related stimuli that are part of a brand’s design and identity, packaging, communications, and environments” (Brakus, Schmitt, and Zarantonello, 2009). Alloza (2008) defines brand experience as “the perception of the consumers at every moment of contact they have with the brand, whether it is in the brand images projected in advertising, during the first contact, or the level of quality concerning the personal treatment they receive.”

Brakus, Schmitt, and Zarantonello (2009) developed a brand experience scale that captured the dimensions of brand experience and the experience level of the brand. Their study conceptualized brand experience into four different dimensions –sensory, affective, intellectual, and behavioral. Sensory dimension refers to the tactile, auditory, visual, olfactory, and gustative stimulations presented by a brand; affective dimension is the feelings provoked by the brand and the emotional bond with the consumer; intellectual

dimension is the ability of the brand to involve convergent and divergent thinking of the consumer; and behavioral dimension refers to the bodily experiences, lifestyles, and interactions with a brand (Zarantonello and Schmitt, 2010). Therefore, marketers do not only have to handle traditional brand activities but manage the process of customer experience (Frow and Payne, 2007) at all customer touchpoints. In the case that the consumers perceive a positive and pleasant perception of the experience, then it is possible to suppose that they would like to repeat purchase and be loyal (Iglesias, Singh, and Batista-Foguet, 2011).

Iglesias, Singh, and Batista-Foguet (2011) measured brand experience with Brakus, Schmitt, and Zarantonello's (2009) scale on affective commitment and brand loyalty of cars, laptops, and sneakers. Their study showed that affective commitment mediates the relationship between brand loyalty and brand experience on the three products. Sahin, Zehir, and Kitapci (2011; 2012) using Brakus, Schmitt, and Zarantonello's (2009) scale concluded that there was a positive effect of cars brand experience on satisfaction, brand trust, and brand loyalty. Walter, Cleff, and Chu (2013) found a significant influence of brand experience on brand loyalty for BMW cars using Brakus, Schmitt, and Zarantonello's (2009) scale. Also Cleff, Vicknair, and Walter (2013) found that both sensory and affective dimensions

had a positive effect on satisfaction. There are some arguments stating that the scale provided by Brakus, Schmitt, and Zarantonello (2009) does not cover all relevant dimensions of brand experience in the service context (Nysveen, Pedersen, and Skard, 2012) since the measurement excludes the relational brand experiences; however according to Nysveen, Pedersen, and Skard (2012) the scale developed by Brakus, Schmitt, and Zarantonello (2009) represents a valuable instrument to test customers' experiences with a brand. In this study, the scaled developed by Brakus, Schmitt, and Zarantonello (2009) will be applied since golf clubs are considered as non-convenience experience products.

### **Golf Equipment as Experience Goods**

According to Nelson (1970), experience goods have qualitative characteristics that cannot be determined by the consumer prior to purchase. In other words, product's quality or performance information can be gathered only through purchase and using the item, in other words experience. Porter (1976) classified items as convenience and non-convenience product, where convenience products have low unit price and high purchase frequency, and non-convenience products are expensive products with low purchase frequency. Moreover, despite the fact that golf players could ask for other's experiences, they do not know how the club will perform until it is tasted,

causing uncertainty on the product's quality. Liebeskind and Rumelt (1989) stated that uncertainty appears when the provider does not have the ability to measure and control the quality of its products. In the golf market, golf clubs companies can determine the products' quality; however, cannot determine the performance since they depend on the player who utilizes the club. Therefore, it can be said that due to the golf clubs characteristics; just only relying on the search of golf club information is not enough for a player. Golfers have the need to try and find the club which provides the best performance. Hence, it is important not only for golf players to find their right fitting club, but also for golf companies to create brand sensations, feelings, cognitions, and behavioral responses to build customers that would develop some kind of attachment with their brand; and consequently, create high customer satisfaction building a segment of loyal consumer (Brakus, Schmitt, and Zarantonello, 2009; Cleff, Vicknair, and Walter, 2013; Sahin, Zehir, and Kitapci, 2011) to maintain or increase profits.

## **2.2 Satisfaction**

Satisfaction has been the focus for many studies since 1970s and continues to be a key objective for marketers since it works as an antecedent (switching cost, brand loyalty, repurchase intention, brand commitment, consumer retention) and subsequent for (brand experience, service quality, product knowledge) many variables. Customer satisfaction is defined as the customer's psychological response to its positive evaluation of the purchase outcome (Babin and Griffin, 1998; Anderson and Narus, 1990). In other words, satisfaction is a positive affective reaction to an outcome of a prior experience (Ganesan, 1994) and it is achieved when the expectations of a customer is met creating sensations and feelings by emotional aspects of the product (Anton, Camarero, and Carrero, 2007).

According to Olsen (2002), satisfaction acts as a mediator between customers' experience and their behavior. In his study, he demonstrated that satisfaction mediated service quality and repurchase intention. Sahin, Zehir, and Kitapci (2012) showed that satisfaction acted as mediator between brand experience and repurchase intention. Sambandam and Lord (1995) found that prior experience had a positive influence on satisfaction and a negative relationship with switching behavior. According to Matzler, et al. (2015), and Patterson and Johnson (1995) stated that prior experience is an important

determinant of customer satisfaction since the personal experience is more vivid and salient. Their research showed that the experience of a focal brand (the prior usage of a brand) had a greater impact of consumer's satisfaction compared to experience of similar brands (Patterson and Johnson, 1995). Also, Edward and Sahadev (2011); Anton, Camarero, and Carrero (2007) found that customer satisfaction influenced customer's switching costs for goods and services. With all the studies mentioned above and validated evidence regarding satisfaction as a subsequent of brand experience (Sahin, Zehir, and Kitapci, 2012; 2011; Brakus, Schmitt, and Zarantonello, 2009) and antecedent of switching cost (Edward and Sahadev, 2011; Sambandam and Lord, 1995), it can be stated that there would be a positive influence of brand experience on switching costs.

### **2.3 Switching Costs**

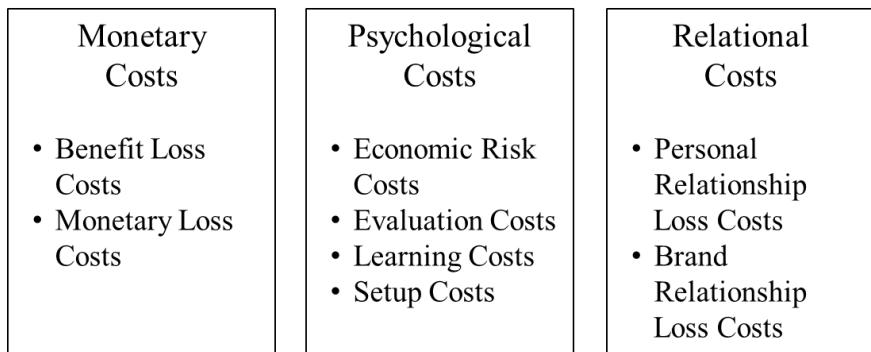
There has been carried out several research related to switching costs (Burnham, Frels, and Mahajan, 2003; Chen and Hitt, 2000; Klemperer, 1987; Bell, Auh, and Smalley, 2005; Polo and Sese, 2009; Jones, Mothersbaugh, and Beatty, 2002; Porter, 1980). Porter (1980) defined switching costs as "onetime costs facing the buyer of switching from one supplier's product to another". All researchers share that the definition of switching is regarded as consumer's time, effort, and psychological cost when changing providers. When

consumers switch providers they experience several costs from time spent acquiring information about possible alternatives to lost benefits that require continuous transaction of an existing provider (Jones, Mothersbaugh, and Beatty, 2000). Therefore, is important for firms to induce high switching costs in order to retain customers for a long lasting relationship (Morgan and Hunt, 1994). Comprehending how customers perceive switching costs should be a major concern for companies wanting to avoid customers from switching (Matzler et al., 2015).

According to Burnham, Frels, and Mahajan (2003), switching costs has been associated with brand loyalty (Chen and Hitt, 2000), customer satisfaction (Matzler et al., 2015), higher profits (Beggs and Klemperer, 1992), and inelastic response to price (Klemperer, 1987). In order to manage switching costs, firms should understand the various types of costs that consumers perceive when changing brands. Klemperer (1987) classified three different types of switching costs: transaction costs, learning costs, and artificial or contractual costs. Jones, Mothersbaugh, and Beatty (2000) divided switching costs into six different dimensions relevant for services: lost performance costs, uncertainty costs, pre-switching search and evaluation costs, post-switching behavioral and cognitive costs, setup costs, and sunk costs. Many research has been executed in the service field, however limited

or no research has been implemented for the sporting goods market.

Burnham, Frels, and Mahajan (2003) developed an eight distinct facets model to measure consumer's switching costs after revising former switching costs models whose typology provides a foundation for both consumer's product –goods and services. Their research broadly divided switching cost into three different types. Firstly, procedural switching costs which involves economic risk, evaluation, learning, and setup costs, this type of switching cost comprises time and effort. Second, financial switching costs which consist of benefits loss and financial loss costs, this type of switching costs includes the loss of financially quantifiable resources. And third, relational switching costs, personal or brand relationship loss costs involving psychological or emotional discomfort because of identity loss and breaking of bonds. However, a more recent study carried out by Barroso and Picon (2011) divided switching costs into monetary costs, psychological costs, and relational costs.



*Figure 1.* Switching Costs (Barroso and Picon, 2011)

Monetary costs, differently from Burnham, Frels, and Mahajan (2003) model, is composed by two types: (i) the loss of benefits related with abandoning the current relationship such as contractual costs which create economic benefit when staying with an incumbent firm (Guiltinan, 1989), and (ii) financial losses acquired in the short term when beginning a new relationship such as onetime monetary expenditures incurred while switching providers rather than expenditures used to purchase the new product per se (Klemperer, 1995). Switching to a new provider often consists of onetime expenditures such as initiation fees or deposits for new customers (Guiltinan, 1989; Barroso and Picon, 2011).

Psychological costs, which refers to the feelings and/or attitudes when switching suppliers, includes uncertainty –also known as economic risk costs, and the costs related to the inconvenience and effort of learning about a new

provider and the anxiety generated by the customers' inability to predict the choice's outcome (Barroso and Picon, 2011) –considered as procedural costs (Burnham, Frels, and Mahajan, 2003; Aydin and Oezer, 2005). These psychological costs include: (i) economic risk costs related to the costs of tolerating uncertainty with the possibility for a negative outcome when switching to a new provider when the consumer has insufficient information (Klemperer, 1995); (ii) evaluation costs which are time and effort costs related with search, analysis, and collection of information to fully evaluate the potential of alternative providers (Samuelson and Zeckhauser, 1988); (iii) learning costs associated with time and effort costs to acquire new skills or know-hows for using a new product or service effectively (Guiltinan, 1989); and (iv) setup costs which are the time and effort costs when initiating a relationship with a new provider or when setting up a new product for initial use (Klemperer 1995).

Relational costs, which are closely related with psychological switching costs, include costs resulting from breaking affection bonds. There are two type of relations: (i) personal relationship loss costs are affective costs related with the break-up of personal bonds formed with people who the customer interacts such as staff (Klemperer 1995), in other words, the level of comfort that a customer creates with provider's employees that is not offered with the

new provider; and (ii) the brand relationship loss costs which are affective costs related to the break-up of personal bonds that consumer has formed with the brand (Porter, 1980).

Most research selected switching costs measurement with a greater attention to procedural switching costs, however in the present day there is the need to further study the importance of psychological and affective impacts that brands can create and provoke in switching costs. As mentioned before in the literature review of brand experience, golf clubs are experience goods. That is to say, the outcome of a golf club cannot be determined prior to purchase (Nelson, 1970); therefore, quality, efficiency, performance, and durability can only be obtained through product's usage or purchase. According to this rationale, uncertainty costs will be triggered when the golf player does not have a prior experience with the brand. Nonetheless, brand relationship loss costs will be higher for golfers with prior brand experience, since they know and experienced the brand. On the other hand, there will be costs that would not influence switching costs for golf clubs. To be more explicit, learning costs, benefit loss costs, and monetary loss costs would not affect the switching costs of a golf consumer. The player does not have to spend either time or effort acquiring new skills to hit the golf ball. Also, switching to a new golf club brand the consumer does not lose any benefits –

such as millage or points- nor face any initiation expenditures.

## **2.4 Expertise**

According to Burnham, Frels, and Mahajan (2003), expertise allows consumers to accurately evaluate options and learn product's information. Bell, Auh, and Smalley (2005) define expertise as customer's accumulated knowledge about how a product should perform and an overall understanding of similar brand products' performance. Consumer judgment standards change when customers gain expertise with a product. Consumers with low expertise will face difficulty when assessing the product's quality, therefore they should rely on the tangible and functional aspects of the product (Bell, Auh, and Smalley, 2005). In other words, low skilled consumers will spend more time and effort when searching for the products attributes. On the other hand, expert consumers will be able to see beneath the functional aspects of the product and be more proactive in the relationships (Bell, Auh, and Smalley, 2005).

Moreover, research in cognitive psychology revealed that novices and experts focus on different types of information. According to Taylor and Cracker (1981), experts acquire information that is relevant to the problem. Alba and Hutchinson (1987) suggested that experts look for information particular of a product, and non-experts seek more superficial aspects.

Additionally, experts acquire more sensory information than non-experts. For example, a non-expert may not detect the superiority of the performance of a Porsche, or skiing excellence of Rossignol, or judge the quality of a wine for its pricetag showing that novices and experts focus on different attributes. According to Selves and Troye (1989), non-experts can more easily be directed by marketing efforts. Past research reported that non-experts are more likely to use heuristic processing and utilize information cues such as price and brand image (Jamal and Al-Mari, 2007), and put more emphasis on non-functional attributes because of their lower ability to evaluate and comprehend product related facts (Brucks, 1985; Park and Lessig, 1981).

Bell, Auh, and Smalley (2005) measured expertise in their research of retail financial services industry. They evaluated the influence of expertise on functional and technical service quality. The former represents the nature between the customer and the service provider by which the service is delivered. The later refers to the service output's quality (Bell, Auh, and Smalley, 2005). According to Bell, Auh, and Smalley (2005) study, customers with high expertise make their decisions upon the technical service quality rather than the functional service quality. In other words, expert clients assess the outcomes while non-expert clients focus on the functional aspects of the service. Also, Wirtz and Mattila (2003) stated that individuals with higher

knowledge and expertise level would have lower risk perceptions and switching costs. According to this, in golf it can be stated that the less expertise –skill and knowledge- the player has, the more it will depend on the holistic and functional features of the product. On the other hand, golf players with higher skills will be able to assess and evaluate the brand's product on the technical features. According to this statement, golf players with less expertise will seek information from other's opinions and functional characteristics such as price, brand name (Alba and Hutchinson, 1987), and word-of-mouth (Yoh, Pedersen, and Park, 2006). Contrarily, expert golfers would not choose a product by the brands attributes rather by product and brand outcome.

## **2.5 Switching Experience**

Switching experience is defined as “the extent to which the consumer has switched between providers in the past” (Burnham, Frels, and Mahajan, 2003; Matzler et al., 2015). More experience with switching reduces switching cost due to the increase on consumer’s familiarity with the process of learning how to use new providers (Nilssen, 1992).

According to Burnham, Frels, and Mahajan (2003), consumers with former switching experience will have less benefit loss costs due to reduced duration with the provider and accumulated benefits. Also, increased

switching experience induces customers to develop less brand and personal relationship bonds compared to low switching experience customers (Bhattacharya, Rao, and Glynn, 1995). According to this, Ganesh, Arnold, Reinolds (2000) claimed that customers with high former switching experiences have a higher set of accessible alternatives, and a higher probability that they would know the outcomes of other brands. Burnham, Frels, and Mahajan (2003) measured the customers switching experience on procedural, financial, and relational switching costs; and their result showed that former experience on switching had a negative relationship with all three types of switching costs. In other words, customers with former switching experience between brands develop less procedural, financial, and relational switching costs. Hence, it can be assumed that golf players who switched golf clubs brands before would have lower psychological switching costs.

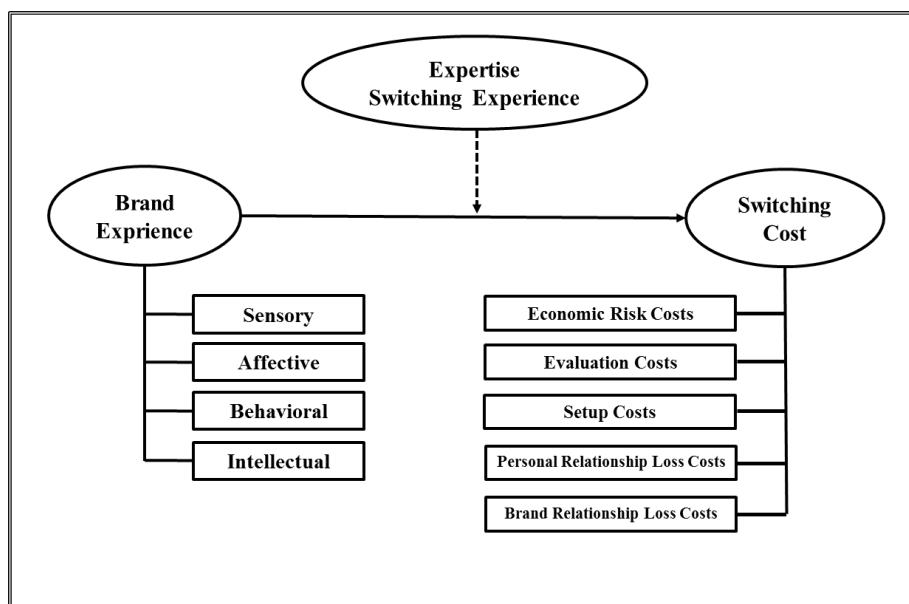
### **3. Research Model & Hypothesis**

#### **3.1 Research Model**

The research model consists on variables such as brand experience and switching costs. Brand experience will be the independent variable measuring the effect on switching costs, which will be the dependent variable. Both variables are subject to correlation analysis. The items measuring brand experience consist of 4 sub-dimensions including sensory, affective, behavioral, and intellectual. The dimensions are represented by 3 items each, with a total of 12 items a scale developed by Brakus, Schmitt, and Zarantonello (2009) who modelled the brand experience construct as a second-order variable. All variables were measured in 7 point Likert-scale. Meanwhile, 17 items were selected to measure switching costs distributed in psychological costs –economic risk costs, evaluation costs, setup costs, personal relationship loss costs, and brand relationship loss costs- determined by Burnham, Frels, and Mahajan (2003) and Barroso and Picon (2011) measured in 7 point Licker-scale. As control variables, expertise and switching experience (Bell, Auh, and Smalley, 2005) will be applied to examine the isolated effect and potential influence of brand experience on switching costs.. Expertise will be measured by 3 items to determine the expertise of the golf player. Also, the amount of irons sets changed in the past

will be included in the study to measure the switching experience. Sambandam and Lord (1995) measured switching experience as yes or no question, however in this study the switching experience will be measured in times changed golf irons in the past.

The following represents the model to be employed at in this study:



*Figure 2. Research Model*

It is noteworthy to remark that current relationship marketing literature come short in explaining the causal relationship between the variables. No empirical study has measured the influence of brand experience on switching costs for sporting products so far. However, in several circumstances

researchers have proven the relationship between brand experience and satisfaction, and the relationship between satisfaction and switching costs. Also, Sambandam and Lord (1995) identified the positive relationship between prior experience and satisfaction, and the negative relationship between satisfaction and switching behavior. As mentioned before, no practical study has been carried out in terms of the relationship between brand experience and switching costs for sporting goods so far. Therefore, a thorough empirical examination of brand experience and switching costs is essential to further marketers' objectives of retaining customers and increasing profits.

### **3.2 Hypothesis**

The hypothesized research model proposes that consumer's brand experience with a product will influence the consumer's switching cost. The effect of brand experience on switching costs will be discussed depending on the psychological sub-dimensions controlled by consumer's expertise and switching experience.

When consumers shop and search for brands, they are not only exposed to utilitarian features of the product but also to different brand related stimuli.

Brakus, Schmitt, and Zarantonello (2009) divided the consumer's internal responses into four different dimensions: sensory, affective, behavioral, and intellectual, referred as brand experience. So far, the positive relationship between brand experience and satisfaction has been recognized among many researchers; and also the positive influence of satisfaction as an antecedent of switching costs has been verified. Thus, it can be assumed that brand experience as consumer's emotional and cognitive response will positively influence the psychological switching costs.

Barroso and Picon (2011) developed a multi-dimensional model to measure switching costs. Their dimension is composed by: (i) monetary costs composed by benefit loss costs and monetary loss costs; (ii) psychological costs which are the economic risk costs, evaluation costs, and setup costs; and (iii) relational costs referring to personal relationship loss costs and brand relationship loss costs. According to Barroso and Picon (2011) close links exist between the psychological and relational costs. Since brand experience is an internal response to brand stimuli, this study wants to measure the brand experience influence on psychological switching costs.

According to Bell, Auh, and Smalley (2005), expertise is the knowledge accumulated by a customer about product's outcome and a general understanding of the average performance of analogous brands in a product

category. Consumer's evaluations about a product change as customers gain expertise with the product (Alba and Hutchinson, 1987). Sharma and Patterson (2000) showed that consumers with low expertise rely on the relational and tangible characteristics of the product. On the other hand, consumers with higher expertise are able to see beneath the functional features focusing their evaluation on the technical attributes of the product (Bell, Auh, and Smalley, 2005). Consumers with low expertise are more likely than consumers with high expertise to engage in holistic features of the products. In other words, novices are more likely to use heuristic processing and utilize brand image, price, and country of origin (Jamal and Al-Mari, 2007); put more weight on non-functional attributes (Brucks, 1985); and emphasize on the attributes that have been made significant through promotion and advertising (Alba and Hutchinson, 1987).

According to Garnesh, Arnold, and Reynolds (2000), consumers with an extensive product experience develop a different comparison standard compared to consumers with restricted experience. Moreover, Edward and Shadov (2011) stated that product experience has a positive link with relational interactions with a provider. Communications among consumers and providers can lead to closer personal bonds, creating familiarity with the company and the employees (Polo and Sese, 2009). In other words, consumers

with high switching experience did not stay in the relationship with the provider long enough to develop brand and personal relationship bonds, hence they are less likely to recognize the current provider relationship as unique (Burnham, Frels, and Mahajan, 2003). Moreover, customers with high switching experience reduces switching costs by the process of both switching and learning to use new providers (Nilssen, 1992).

As mentioned before, the influence of brand experience on switching costs has not yet been studied; therefore, the study proposes the following hypothesis:

H1: There will be a significant economic risk costs difference among those with low, middle, and high brand experience levels controlling for expertise and switching experience.

H2: There will be a significant evaluation costs difference among those with low, middle, and high brand experience levels controlling for expertise and switching experience.

H3: There will be a significant setup costs difference among those with low, middle, and high brand experience levels controlling for expertise and switching experience.

H4: There will be a significant personal relationship loss costs difference among those with low, middle, and high brand experience levels controlling for expertise and switching experience.

H5: There will be a significant brand relationship loss costs difference among those with low, middle, and high brand experience levels controlling for expertise and switching experience.

## **4. Methodology**

### **4.1 Sample and Data Collection**

As mentioned before, there are no practical studies that measured the influence of brand experience on switching costs. Data were collected specially from golf players, however since this study wants to measure the relationship within golf players who possess iron clubs, players without iron clubs were excluded. An online survey was carried out providing information about the purpose of the survey, period, and content. The survey was held for a week from March 18<sup>th</sup> to March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2015. A total of 400 surveys were collected from where 386 were considered usable because of insincere answers. Also the survey was designed to be uploaded once the participants completely answered the survey.

### **4.2 Item Development**

Survey items were developed after further revising an extent of relationship and marketing related articles. The items were revised by sport marketing experts for correct translation from English to Korean and proper transmission of the questions' meaning. All items are represented in a 7-point Likert scale borrowed from existing scales to be adapted to the research. Brand

experience was measured with 12 items developed by Brakus, Schmitt, and Zarantonello (2009). Items measuring switching costs were modified in order to fit the survey from Barroso and Picon (2011). The only measurement excluded to fit this study was the monetary costs order since brand experience is an emotional and psychological experience; therefore, only psychological and relational items were measured. Switching costs items were slightly modified to suit the golf background. As for expertise, 2 items were borrowed from Bell, Auh, and Smalley (2005) and one item adapted and modified from Chiou and Droege (2006). Switching experience was measured by the times the participant changed iron sets in the past before buying the current one. Moreover, five scholars who have expertise on research method and subject knowledge conducted the review of the items. Subsequently, a pilot study was conducted to revise and test the measurement items, wording and meaning problems during translation, and to discover any latent complications to further carry on this research.

Table 1

*Summary of Item Development*

Variable	Higher order	Items	Total	Source
Brand Experience	Sensory	3		
	Affective	3	12	Modified from Brakus, Schmitt, and Zarantonello (2009)
	Behavioral	3		
	Intellectual	3		
	Economic Risk Costs	4		
	Evaluation Costs	3		
Switching Costs	Setup Costs	3	17	Modified from Barroso and Picon (2011)
	Personal Relationship Loss Costs	4		
	Brand Relationship Loss Costs	3		
Expertise		3	3	Modified from Bell, Auh, and Smalley (2005); adapted from Chiou and Droege (2006)

## **4.3 Measurement**

In order to test the hypothesis presented in this study, the analysis was executed using SPSS 20.0.

### **Descriptive Analysis**

A descriptive analysis was carried out in order to identify the frequency and the demographic characteristics of the sample (mean and standard deviation).

### **Reliability**

Reliability is the lack of distortion or precision for a measuring instrument (Kerlinger & Lee, 1992). It evaluates whether a set of variables is reliable in what it measures. This study measures Cronbach's alpha methods to evaluate reliability. Cronbach's alpha is one of the most popular methods to measure internal consistency of a scale among other methods of analysis such as test-retest reliability and other alternate forms of reliability (Hair et al., 2006; Bae, 2002).

## **5. Results**

The study conducted data analysis in several stages. First, descriptive analysis was performed in order to confirm data coding error and normality. Second, Cronbach's alpha was used to test internal consistency (or reliability) of the measured items. Third, multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) was conducted for brand experience and switching costs, and control variables were included in order to assess the relationship between brand experience and switching costs. Finally, Bonferroni post-hoc analysis was carried out to examine where the significant differences lie.

### **Descriptive Statistics**

Demographic characteristics of the participants ( $N=386$ ) are presented in Table 2. Gender difference of the participants was male 85.5% and female 14.5%. The average age was 46 years old ( $M= 46.36$ ,  $SD= 8.69$ ) and participants with income over 100,000 Won consisted of 10.1% of the participants.

Table 2

*Participants Demographics*

Variable	Group	N	Percentage
Gender	Male	330	85.5
	Female	56	14.5
Age	Less than 30	13	3.4
	31~40	82	21.2
	41~50	172	44.6
	51~60	98	25.4
	More than 60	21	5.4
Occupation	Undergraduate Student	2	0.5
	Graduate Student	0	0
	Professional	56	14.5
	CEO	65	16.8
	Worker	236	61
	Part-time Worker	0	0
	Housewife	12	3.1
	Not Working	3	0.8
	Retired	7	1.8
	Others	6	1.6
Income (Won)	Less than 10,000	1	0.3
	10,001 ~ 20,000	5	1.3
	20,001 ~ 30,000	11	2.8
	30,001 ~ 40,000	40	10.3
	40,001 ~ 50,000	76	19.6
	50,001 ~ 60,000	75	19.4
	60,001 ~ 70,000	56	14.5
	70,001 ~ 80,000	40	10.3
	80,001 ~ 90,000	24	6.2
	90,001 ~ 100,000	20	5.2
	More than 100,000	39	10.1

The measures of mean, mode, median, range, variance, standard deviation, kurtosis, skewness, and correlation coefficient were acquired through descriptive statistics. The survey data was screened for inappropriate data entry. Subsequently, data normality was confirmed by skewness and kurtosis analysis. In order to obtain normality, the absolute value of both skewness and kurtosis is recommended lower than  $\pm 2$ . The study displayed absolute values lower than  $\pm 2$  both for skewness and kurtosis; therefore, the items used in this study suffice data normality. Detailed information is demonstrated in Table 5.

The study utilized Cronbach's alpha coefficient to examine the reliability of all measurement items and the result displays that all factors generated above .60 which is the standard level of internal consistency. The values ranged from .668 being the lowest for evaluation costs (switching costs) and .927 being the highest for personal relationship loss costs (switching costs) (See Table 3).

Table 3

*Reliability Test of Measurement Items*

Variable	No. of Items	Name of Items	Cronbach's $\alpha$
Brand Experience	Sensory	BE_sen1	
		BE_sen2	0.907
		BE_sen3	
	Affective	BE_aff1	
		BE_aff2	0.859
		BE_aff3	
	Behavioral	BE beha1	
		BE beha2	0.833
		BE beha3	
	Intellectual	BE_int1	
		BE_int2	0.902
		BE_int3	
Switching Costs	Economic Risk Costs	SC_econ1	
		SC_econ2	0.894
		SC_econ3	
		SC_econ4	
	Evaluation Costs	SC_eval1	
		SC_eva2	0.668
		SC_eva3	
	Setup Costs	SC_set1	
		SC_set2	0.880
		SC_set3	
	Personal Relationship Loss Costs	SC_pers1	
		SC_pers2	0.927
		SC_pers3	
		SC_pers4	
	Brand Relationship Loss Costs	SC_brand1	
		SC_brand2	0.866
		SC_brand3	
Expertise	Expertise	Exp_1	
		Exp_2	0.895
		Exp_3	

In addition to Cronbach's alpha test for internal consistency, AVE (average variance extracted) for all factors were examined to confirm construct reliability. The AVE scores were generated according to the method provided by Hair et al. (1998) which the recommended standard is greater than 0.5. The scores ranged from 0.84 for behavioral brand experience to 0.98 sensory brand experience; hence, exceeding the recommended score construct reliability was confirmed, shown in Table 4.

Table 4

*Average Variance Extracted*

	Brand Experience				Switching Costs				
	Sensory	Affective	Behavioral	Intellectual	Economic	Evaluation	Setup	Personal Brand	
AVE	.977	.959	.839	.964	.954	.869	.938	.947	.954

Table 5

*Measurement Variables: Correlation Coefficient, Mean, Standard Deviation, Skewness, and Kurtosis*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32											
1 BE_sen1	1.00																																										
2 BE_sen2	0.76	1.00																																									
3 BE_sen3	0.73	0.76	1.00																																								
4 BE_aff1	0.79	0.74	0.79	1.00																																							
5 BE_aff2	0.66	0.67	0.64	0.68	1.00																																						
6 BE_aff3	0.62	0.66	0.67	0.66	1.00																																						
7 BE beha1	0.51	0.52	0.56	0.53	0.47	0.47	1.00																																				
8 BE beha2	0.60	0.64	0.66	0.64	0.58	0.59	0.61	1.00																																			
9 BE beha3	0.65	0.65	0.64	0.67	0.59	0.58	0.53	0.69	1.00																																		
10 BE_int1	0.54	0.53	0.59	0.58	0.54	0.60	0.46	0.62	0.59	1.00																																	
11 BE_int2	0.59	0.59	0.61	0.63	0.59	0.63	0.46	0.62	0.60	0.81	1.00																																
12 BE_int3	0.62	0.65	0.59	0.65	0.63	0.68	0.45	0.66	0.64	0.67	0.78	1.00																															
13 SC_econ1	0.36	0.38	0.34	0.37	0.34	0.32	0.18	0.33	0.30	0.28	0.30	0.36	1.00																														
14 SC_econ2	0.32	0.42	0.36	0.32	0.39	0.39	0.21	0.42	0.36	0.38	0.42	0.43	0.72	1.00																													
15 SC_econ3	0.29	0.35	0.33	0.33	0.28	0.34	0.17	0.37	0.32	0.33	0.38	0.39	0.59	0.70	1.00																												
16 SC_econ4	0.24	0.29	0.26	0.25	0.20	0.30	0.14	0.35	0.28	0.32	0.34	0.32	0.55	0.65	0.78	1.00																											
17 SC_eval1	0.16	0.14	0.15	0.15	0.12	0.16	0.09	0.18	0.14	0.23	0.19	0.20	0.40	0.45	0.37	0.36	1.00																										
18 SC_eval2	0.28	0.24	0.23	0.24	0.16	0.21	0.09	0.26	0.23	0.23	0.24	0.24	0.26	0.30	0.31	0.30	0.27	1.00																									
19 SC_eval3	0.27	0.25	0.28	0.25	0.21	0.32	0.15	0.35	0.26	0.35	0.36	0.38	0.54	0.63	0.56	0.56	0.56	0.28	1.00																								
20 SC_set1	0.22	0.22	0.24	0.23	0.32	0.27	0.12	0.28	0.19	0.37	0.34	0.31	0.42	0.48	0.51	0.52	0.44	0.42	0.48	1.00																							
21 SC_set2	0.23	0.21	0.24	0.24	0.27	0.26	0.06	0.29	0.21	0.37	0.37	0.34	0.47	0.59	0.56	0.54	0.42	0.43	0.52	0.76	1.00																						
22 SC_set3	0.21	0.22	0.24	0.25	0.26	0.28	-0.02	0.28	0.20	0.40	0.38	0.37	0.54	0.60	0.54	0.51	0.41	0.29	0.59	0.60	0.74	1.00																					
23 SC_pers1	0.21	0.22	0.23	0.22	0.28	0.27	-0.05	0.27	0.21	0.38	0.36	0.32	0.51	0.59	0.50	0.50	0.40	0.28	0.52	0.48	0.62	0.77	1.00																				
24 SC_pers2	0.24	0.22	0.24	0.24	0.27	0.30	0.04	0.26	0.23	0.39	0.36	0.34	0.44	0.56	0.45	0.48	0.40	0.26	0.54	0.49	0.55	0.64	0.71	1.00																			
25 SC_pers3	0.27	0.25	0.29	0.29	0.30	0.29	0.01	0.30	0.26	0.40	0.38	0.35	0.44	0.52	0.48	0.49	0.33	0.26	0.50	0.49	0.55	0.66	0.75	0.79	1.00																		
26 SC_pers4	0.31	0.32	0.32	0.33	0.29	0.36	0.07	0.25	0.30	0.42	0.44	0.41	0.45	0.58	0.49	0.51	0.31	0.30	0.48	0.45	0.55	0.65	0.73	0.76	0.85	1.00																	
27 SC_brand1	0.48	0.49	0.47	0.50	0.44	0.42	0.35	0.44	0.42	0.42	0.40	0.48	0.41	0.45	0.44	0.43	0.23	0.27	0.37	0.33	0.34	0.37	0.36	0.38	0.44	0.48	1.00																
28 SC_brand2	0.51	0.53	0.51	0.49	0.41	0.45	0.49	0.51	0.46	0.42	0.45	0.51	0.33	0.40	0.36	0.37	0.16	0.24	0.31	0.31	0.26	0.21	0.19	0.30	0.32	0.32	0.64	1.00															
29 SC_brand3	0.51	0.54	0.51	0.53	0.40	0.46	0.46	0.49	0.47	0.42	0.47	0.48	0.34	0.40	0.39	0.38	0.20	0.30	0.31	0.32	0.33	0.27	0.25	0.34	0.36	0.37	0.66	0.76	1.00														
30 Exp_1	0.37	0.35	0.31	0.33	0.28	0.26	0.27	0.28	0.33	0.28	0.36	0.28	0.20	0.28	0.24	0.24	0.15	0.22	0.20	0.15	0.10	0.16	0.21	0.22	0.25	0.35	0.30	0.31	1.00														
31 Exp_2	0.26	0.30	0.25	0.26	0.27	0.28	0.24	0.26	0.27	0.22	0.29	0.19	0.26	0.22	0.21	0.13	0.07	0.22	0.14	0.14	0.12	0.16	0.17	0.20	0.21	0.30	0.23	0.25	0.73	1.00													
32 Exp_3	0.34	0.34	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.31	0.29	0.29	0.26	0.34	0.30	0.19	0.24	0.22	0.19	0.17	0.12	0.25	0.14	0.15	0.08	0.17	0.17	0.18	0.22	0.28	0.24	0.26	0.73	0.77	1.00											
M	4.91	4.99	4.95	4.89	4.85	4.77	5.30	4.89	4.99	4.69	4.71	4.72	4.05	4.01	4.25	4.22	4.29	5.05	4.11	4.31	4.14	3.80	3.55	3.90	3.77	3.69	4.57	4.78	4.69	4.39	4.27	4.14											
SD	0.86	0.91	0.94	0.90	1.02	1.02	1.09	1.01	0.98	1.09	1.13	1.09	1.14	1.27	1.33	1.22	1.30	0.93	1.20	1.25	1.30	1.32	1.53	1.35	1.36	1.09	0.94	1.00	1.06	1.17	1.23												
S	0.86	0.91	0.94	0.90	1.02	1.02	1.09	1.01	0.98	1.09	1.11	1.09	1.14	1.27	1.33	1.22	1.30	0.93	1.20	1.25	1.30	1.32	1.53	1.35	1.36	1.09	0.94	1.00	1.06	1.17	1.23												
K	-0.26	-0.25	-0.54	-0.19	0.29	0.04	0.12	0.26	-0.28	-0.21	-0.37	0.18	0.17	-0.34	-0.14	0.09	0.15	-0.02	0.06	0.09	-0.26	-0.34	-0.78	-0.02	-0.33	-0.37	0.14	0.05	0.21	0.05	-0.02	-0.45											

M=Mean, SD= Standard deviation, S= Skewness, K= Kurtosis

## **Multivariate Analysis of Covariance between brand experience and switching costs**

The study performed multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) to determine if different levels of brand experience influenced switching costs. Expertise and switching experience was controlled in order to examine the absolute influence of brand experience on switching costs. The participants were classified into three levels: low ( $N = 134$ ), middle ( $N = 123$ ), and high ( $N = 129$ ) of brand experience; and as stated in the research model section, there are 5 types of switching costs (economic risk costs, evaluation costs, setup costs, personal relationship loss costs, and brand relationship loss costs). Outliers were taken out during data cleaning; data was normally distributed for each groups, as assessed by skewness and kurtosis ( $\pm 2.00$ ) shown in table 5. Data is presented as mean, and standard deviation. Additionally, post hoc analysis was performed with a Bonferroni test to observe where the differences were located.

Hypotheses from 1 to 5 are presented bellow with each of the results:

**H1:** There will be a significant economic risk costs difference among those with low, middle, and high brand experience levels controlling for expertise and switching experience.

Table 6

*Effects of brand experience on economic risk costs*

Dependent Variable: Economic Risk Costs

Source	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial $\eta^2$
Corrected Model	4	24.356	26.793	.001	0.220
Intercept	1	225.358	247.904	.001	0.394
Sw. Experience	1	6.055	6.66	.001	0.017
Expertise	1	13.091	24.4	.001	0.036
Brand Experience	2	26.581	29.24	.001	0.133
Error	381	0.909			

\*R Squared = .220 (Adjusted R Squared = .211)

Economic risk costs score was significantly different among different brand experience levels [ $F(2, 381) = 26.793, p < .001$ ], partial eta square = .220.

Post hoc comparisons using Bonferroni indicated that the means for economic risk costs increased from low ( $M = 3.58, SD = 0.88$ ) to medium ( $M = 4.12, SD = 0.89$ ) to high ( $M = 4.71, SD = 1.12$ ) brand experience, in that order. The level means were statistically different at  $p < .05$  (see table 11 for descriptive statistics and table 12 for Bonferroni post hoc analysis results). Moreover, profile plot (Figure 3) shows that there is a progressive influence

of brand experience on economic risk costs.

**H2:** There will be a significant evaluation costs difference among those with low, middle, and high brand experience levels controlling for expertise and switching experience.

Table 7

*Effects of brand experience on evaluation costs*

Dependent Variable: Evaluation Costs

Source	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial $\eta^2$
Corrected Model	4	12.853	19.704	.001	0.171
Intercept	1	303.441	465.185	.001	0.550
Sw. Experience	1	5.431	8.326	.004	0.021
Expertise	1	5.515	11.521	.001	0.029
Brand Experience	2	13.375	20.504	.001	0.097
Error	381	0.652			

\*R Squared = .171 (Adjusted R Squared = .163)

Evaluation costs score was significantly different among different brand experience levels [ $F(2, 381) = 19.704, p < .001$ ], partial eta square = .171.

Post hoc comparisons using Bonferroni indicated that the means for evaluation costs increased from low ( $M = 4.09, SD = 0.78$ ) to medium ( $M = 4.50, SD = 0.80$ ) to high ( $M = 4.88, SD = 0.88$ ) brand experience, in that order. The level means were statistically different at  $p < .05$  (see table 11 for

descriptive statistics and table 12 for Bonferroni post hoc analysis results).

Moreover, profile plot (Figure 4) shows that there is a progressive influence of brand experience on evaluation costs.

**H3:** There will be a significant setup costs difference among those with low, middle, and high brand experience levels controlling for expertise and switching experience.

Table 8

*Effects of brand experience on setup costs*

Dependent Variable: Setup Costs

Source	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial $\eta^2$
Corrected Model	4	15.296	12.98	.001	0.120
Intercept	1	286.32	242.96	.001	0.289
Sw. Experience	1	1.603	1.36	.244	0.004
Expertise	1	1.579	1.34	.248	0.004
Brand Experience	2	22.805	19.351	.001	0.092
Error	381	1.178			

\*R Squared = .120 (Adjusted R Squared = .111)

Setup costs score was significantly different among different brand experience levels [ $F(2, 381) = 12.98, p < .001$ ], partial eta square = .120.

Post hoc comparisons using Bonferroni indicated that the means for setup costs increased from low ( $M = 3.65, SD = 0.96$ ) to medium ( $M = 4.02, SD =$

1.02) to high ( $M = 4.60$ ,  $SD = 1.26$ ) brand experience, in that order. The level means were statistically different at  $p < .05$  (see table 11 for descriptive statistics and table 12 for Bonferroni post hoc analysis results). Moreover, profile plot (Figure 5) shows that there is a progressive influence of brand experience on setup costs.

**H4:** There will be a significant personal relationship loss costs difference among those with low, middle, and high brand experience levels controlling for expertise and switching experience.

Table 9

*Effects of brand experience on personal relationship loss costs*

Dependent Variable: Personal Relationship Loss Costs

Source	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial $\eta^2$
Corrected Model	4	23.921	17.632	.001	0.156
Intercept	1	183.429	135.203	.001	0.262
Sw. Experience	1	5.403	3.982	.047	0.010
Expertise	1	10.949	8.07	.005	0.021
Brand Experience	2	27.464	20.243	.001	0.096
Error	381	1.357			

\*R Squared = .156 (Adjusted R Squared = .147)

Personal relationship loss costs score was significantly different among different brand experience levels [ $F(2, 381) = 17.632$ ,  $p < .001$ ], partial eta

square = .156.

Post hoc comparisons using Bonferroni indicated that the means for personal relationship loss costs increased from low ( $M = 3.19$ ,  $SD = 1.04$ ) to medium ( $M = 3.70$ ,  $SD = 1.12$ ) to high ( $M = 4.32$ ,  $SD = 1.35$ ) brand experience, in that order. The level means were statistically different at  $p < .05$  (see table 11 for descriptive statistics and table 12 for Bonferroni post hoc analysis results). Moreover, profile plot (Figure 6) shows that there is a progressive influence of brand experience on personal relationship loss costs.

**H5:** There will be a significant brand relationship loss costs difference among those with low, middle, and high brand experience levels controlling for expertise and switching experience.

Table 10

*Effects of brand experience on brand relationship loss costs*

Dependent Variable: Brand Relationship Loss Costs

Source	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial $\eta^2$
Corrected Model	4	30.002	60.041	.001	0.387
Intercept	1	220.893	662.198	.001	0.635
Sw. Experience	1	2.161	4.325	.038	0.011
Expertise	1	3.268	6.541	.011	0.017
Brand Experience	2	41.069	82.188	.001	0.301
Error	381	0.500			

\*R Squared = .387 (Adjusted R Squared = .380)

Brand relationship loss costs score was significantly different among different brand experience levels [ $F(2, 381) = 60.041, p < .001$ ], partial eta square = .387.

Post hoc comparisons using Bonferroni indicated that the means for brand relationship loss costs increased from low ( $M = 4.04, SD = 0.62$ ) to medium ( $M = 4.68, SD = 0.75$ ) to high ( $M = 5.34, SD = 0.78$ ) brand experience, in that order. The level means were statistically different at  $p < .05$  (see table 11 for descriptive statistics and table 12 for Bonferroni post hoc analysis results). Moreover, profile plot (Figure 7) shows that there is a progressive influence of brand experience on brand relationship loss costs.

Table 11

*Descriptive Statistics*

Dependent Variable	Brand Experience Level	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Economic Risk Costs	Low	3.584	0.888	134
	Middle	4.120	0.893	123
	High	4.705	1.114	129
	Total	4.130	1.074	386
Evaluation Costs	Low	4.087	0.780	134
	Middle	4.493	0.800	123
	High	4.884	0.881	129
	Total	4.483	0.883	386
Setup Costs	Low	3.654	0.959	134
	Middle	4.022	1.012	123
	High	4.594	1.258	129
	Total	4.086	1.151	386
Personal Relationship Loss Costs	Low	3.192	1.044	134
	Middle	3.699	1.117	123
	High	4.316	1.348	129
	Total	3.729	1.261	386
Brand Relationship Loss Costs	Low	4.040	0.619	134
	Middle	4.678	0.756	123
	High	5.344	0.781	129
	Total	4.679	0.898	386

Table 12

*Bonferroni post hoc analysis*

Dependent Variable	Brand Experience Level		Mean Difference (I - J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval for Diff.	
	(I)	(J)				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Economic Risk Costs	High	Low	0.964	0.120	0.000	0.661	1.267
		Middle	0.482	0.126	0.000	0.184	0.780
Evaluation Costs	High	Low	0.682	0.107	0.000	0.425	0.939
		Middle	0.315	0.105	0.009	0.063	0.567
Setup Costs	High	Low	0.890	0.144	0.000	0.554	1.235
		Middle	0.539	0.141	0.000	0.200	0.878
Personal Relationship Loss Costs	High	Low	0.980	0.154	0.000	0.610	1.351
		Middle	0.523	0.151	0.002	0.159	0.886
Brand Relationship Loss Costs	High	Low	1.198	0.094	0.000	0.973	1.423
		Middle	0.597	0.092	0.000	0.376	0.817

\*The mean difference is significant at the .05 level

\* Covariates: Expertise, switching experience

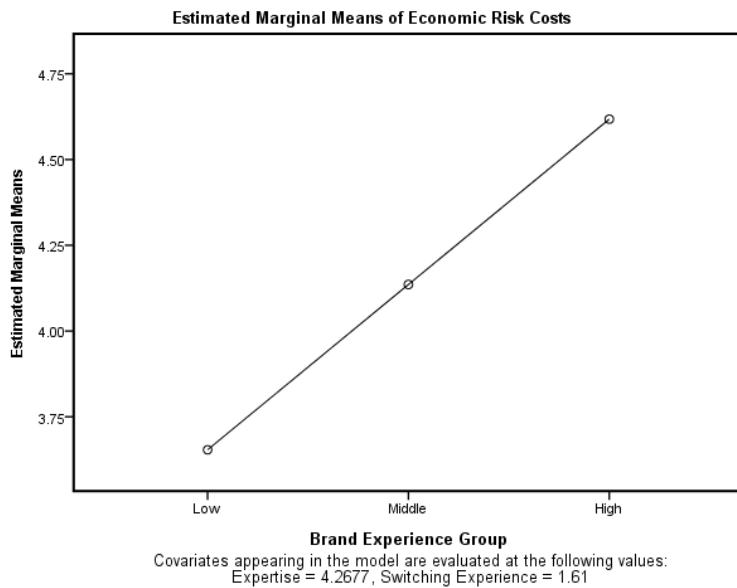


Figure 3. Profile plot: Brand Experience and Economic Risk Costs

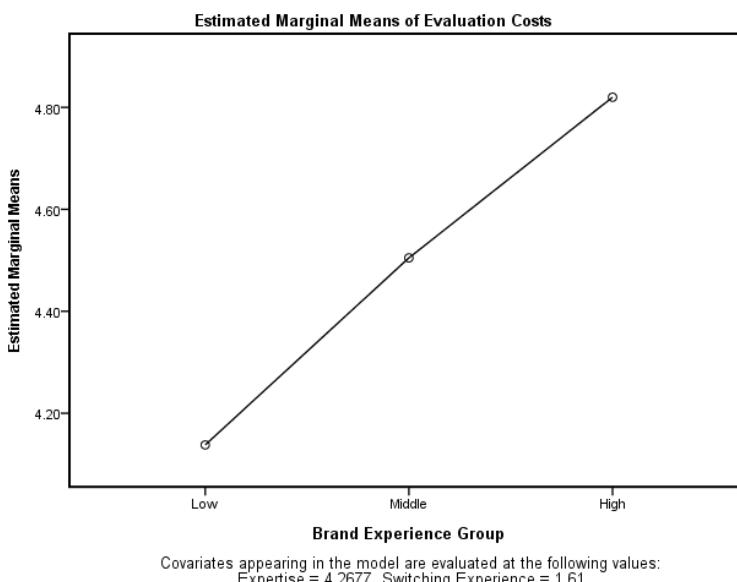


Figure 4. Profile plot: Brand Experience and Evaluation Costs

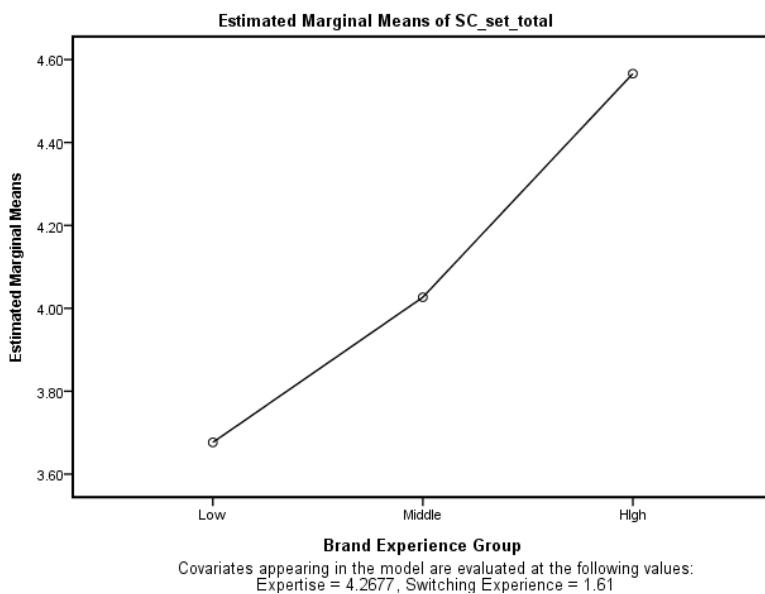


Figure 5. Profile plot: Brand Experience and Setup Costs

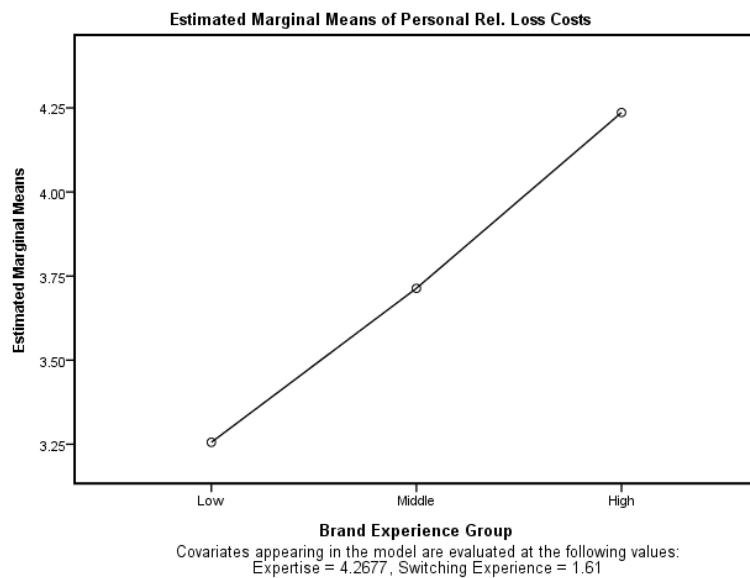
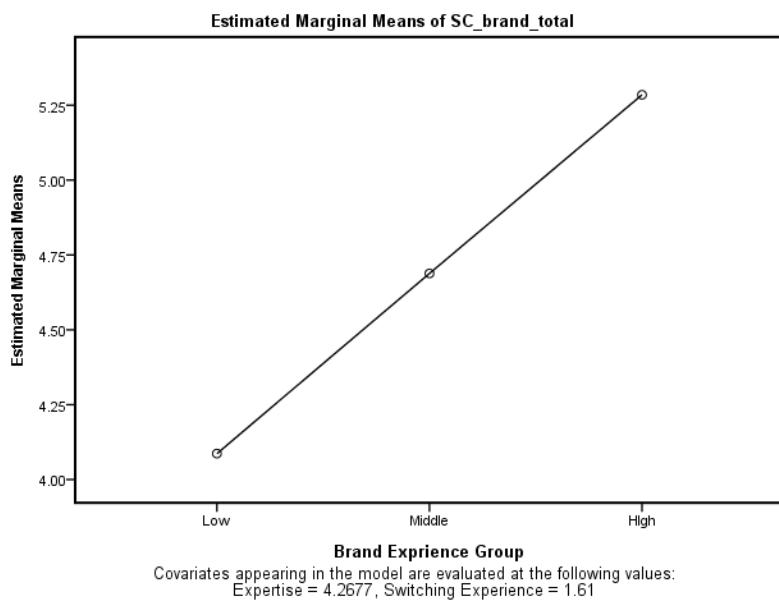


Figure 6. Profile plot: Brand Experience and Personal Rel. Loss Costs



*Figure 7.* Profile plot: Brand Experience and Brand Rel. Loss Costs

## **6. Discussion & Conclusion**

### **Discussion**

The primary purpose of this study was to examine the influence of brand experience on switching costs in the golf equipment context. The outcome of the research revealed several worthy issues that should be addressed for future marketing management.

According to the results of this study, brand experience had a positive effect on switching costs over all as proposed in the hypotheses. A closer look was taken among those who have low, middle, and high levels of brand experience to demonstrate that there is a difference between the levels of brand experience and influence of them in switching cost. That is to say, MANCOVA analysis clearly showed that there is a difference between the means of low, middle, and high levels of brand experience in all five types of switching costs (economic risk costs, evaluation costs, setup costs, personal and brand relationship loss costs). After post hoc analysis, it can be seen that there is a big variance between low and high level, and smaller variance between middle and low level of brand experience. In other words, participants who had higher brand experience have higher switching costs than those who experienced low brand experience. Interestingly, it can be seen that the higher mean difference

was found in brand relationship loss costs. There is a close relationship between brand experience and brand relationship loss costs; in other words, the higher the level of experience of a brand the consumer experiences, the higher the cost of switching between brands. This is an important matter found in this study since it can be determined that brand as studied before takes an important part when deciding which product to buy. On the other hand, the lowest mean difference was for setup costs. Setup costs are the time and effort costs related with the initiation of a relationship with a new provider or the set-up of a new product for initial use (Klemperer 1995). It is apparent that the reason for the setup costs to be the lowest is that in golf there is rarely any costs regarding the establishment of a golf club. However, the influence could be explained since clubs need to be customized for the player, in other words needs to be fitted according to the player's height, swing speed, and strength.

Moreover, the effect size was shown by the partial eta squared. Brand relationship loss costs demonstrated to have the largest relation representing 30% of the total variability attributable to brand experience, followed by economic risk costs, evaluation costs, personal relationship loss costs, and setup costs showing the smallest portion of 9.2%. The results of this analysis supported the hypothesis that brand experience would influence switching costs along the three levels of brand experience.

Park and Stoel (2005) stated that when a consumer intends to buy a product, it will experience psychological risk and hence internal information will be gathered by retrieving knowledge from memory such as prior brand experience. The more experience a shopper has with a brand, the less risk it perceives (Howard, 1973), and hence triggering the costs of switching to another brand. This is constant with the outcome of this study, the more brand experience the consumer has, the higher the switching costs would face the buyer when it comes to purchase. Also Villas-boas (2006) stated that when purchasing a product, a consumer learns about its valuation. Then, in future periods this product has an informational advantage in the sense that a consumer knows more about the products and brand that the consumer has tried than about the products that it has not tried. Some consumers when trying the first product have such a good experience so that they choose not to try any other product and stick with the first product tried through their lives (Villas-boas, 2006).

### **Limitations and Future Research**

This study can be regarded as providing an important step to understand the influence of brand experience on switching costs, which has never been carried out so far. Despite it has been the first study wanting to examine the relationship between both variables, it cannot be ignored the fact that the

influence only limited for golf irons. Therefore, there is a need for future research to take into account other types of clubs such as golf drivers, woods, and putters.

Furthermore, the influence of brand experience and switching cost should be applied not only for the golf equipment market, but also for other sports market such as baseball, tennis, between others. Also, it would be interesting to investigate how brand experience affect switching costs in non-sports related market to examine whether brand experience influences switching costs.

The results of this study controlled the factor of expertise and switching experience. Former studies revealed that both expertise and switching experience had a negative influence on switching costs (Bell, Auh, & Smalley, 2005; Burham, Frels, & Mahajan, 2003). Therefore, both variables have been taken into account to examine the absolute influence of brand experience on switching costs.

Finally, expertise was measured according the participant's feeling about his knowledge and skills related to golf. Nonetheless, in this case, the level of expertise is very subjective since it measured the perception of its own knowledge about golf. In order to be more accurate with the golf player's level

of expertise, it should be measured through handicap since it could evaluate the unbiased and objective level of expertise.

## **Conclusion**

Many companies offer products with similar or even same quality and characteristics. When the consumer has to decide which one to buy, it will pick the brand that he knows more, or has experienced. Brand experience is a new concept that is gaining popularity among researchers and marketers nowadays. The brand experience scaled developed by Brakus et al. (2009) is the single theoretically and empirically tested experience scale within the marketing literature (Skard, Nysveen, and Pedersen, 2011). This new approach was examined in this study and supports that brand experience in the golf market increases the players' time and effort costs when switching brands.

This research make three important contributions. First, it establishes a new literature model to be further studied and examined in marketing research. So far, only interactions between satisfaction (Cleff et al., 2013; Sahin, Zehir, & Kipaci, 2011), brand loyalty (Sahin, Zehir, & Kitapci, 2011; Iglesias, Singh, & Batista-Foguet, 2011; Walter, Cleff, & Chu, 2013); brand trust (Ha & Perks, 2005; Sahin, Zehir, & Kitapci, 2011); purchase intention (Sahin, Zehir, Kitapci, 2012; Park & Stoel, 2005) had been examined. However, no study was carried

out regarding the interaction between brand experience and switching costs. Second, it provides a better understanding of consumer behavior when it comes to purchase. Literature state that companies should create loyal customers in order to maintain or increase profits, however it is not always the case. Even loyal customers could end up not purchasing the company's product. Another way to consider this matter is by making customers difficult to change to other brands. It has been identified that repurchase intention is linked with switching costs regardless of satisfaction or loyalty. Third, it presents a new marketing communication method to target entrant players in the market. The first experience is really important for golfers since they usually consume the brand that they tried before having an informational advantage over brands that it had not tried (Villa-boas, 2006). Therefore, according to this study golf companies should try to make their best to be the very first brand that the golfer tries with a satisfying experience.

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## APPENDIX

### Survey Item (Korean)

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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**<설문지>**



안녕하세요. 본 연구의 목적은 브랜드 경험이 전환비용에 미치는 영향을 알아보고자 하는 연구입니다. 본 설문지는 54개의 선택 문항으로 구성되어 있으며, 각 문항에 대한 옳고 그름이 없으니 솔직하고 빠짐없이 답해 주시길 부탁드립니다. 귀하의 소중한 의견은 순수하게 연구 목적만을 위해 사용될 것입니다. 설문지 작성 중 궁금한 사항이 있으시면 연구원에게 질문해 주시기 바랍니다. 설문에 응해주셔서 대단히 감사합니다.

서울대학교 스포츠 경영전공 석사과정 정미령

SQ1. 귀하의 성별은?

- ① 남성
- ② 여성

SQ2. 귀하의 연령은? (만나이 기재해주시기 바랍니다)

(                          )

SQ3. 귀하는 현재 골프를 치거나 과거에 골프를 쳐본적이 있습니까?

- ① 예
- ② 아니오 (→ 설문종료)

SQ4. 귀하는 골프 클럽을 소유하고 하고 계십니까?

- ① 예
- ② 아니오 (→ 설문종료)

SQ5. 귀하의 골프 경력은 어떻게 되십니까?

(        )년 (        )개월

SQ6. 귀하의 핸디캡은 얼마입니까?

(        )

SQ7. 귀하게서 아이언 세트를 처음 구매하신 년도는 어떻게 되십니까?

(        )년

SQ8. 귀하의 첫 아이언 세트는 어떤 브랜드였습니까?

(        )

SQ9. 귀하의 현재 사용하는 아이언 세트는 어떤 브랜드입니까?

(        )

SQ10. 귀하의 현재 사용하는 아이언 세트를 어디서 구매하셨습니까?

- ① 프로샵
- ② 브랜드 공식 매장
- ③ 온라인
- ④ 기타(        )

SQ11. 귀하게서 현재 사용하는 아이언 브랜드(SQ9 응답값)를 인지하신 년도는 어떻게 되십니까?

(        )년

Q1. 다음은 귀하가 앞서 현재 사용하고 있는 (SQ9의 응답값)에 대한 **브랜드 경험을** 알아보기 위한 질문입니다.

귀하의 생각을 가장 잘 나타내는 정도를 선택해주시기 바랍니다.

①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
전혀	그렇지	조금	보통	조금	그렇다	매우
그러지	않다	그렇지	이다	그렇다		그렇다
않다		않다				

- 내가 현재 사용하고 있는 아이언 브랜드는 나의 감각을 자극한다  
①--②--③--④--⑤--⑥--⑦
  - 내가 현재 사용하고 있는 아이언 브랜드는 나의 감각을 자극하여 관심을 갖게 된다  
①--②--③--④--⑤--⑥--⑦
  - 내가 현재 사용하고 있는 아이언 브랜드는 나에게 감각적으로 어필한다  
①--②--③--④--⑤--⑥--⑦
  - 내가 현재 사용하고 있는 아이언 브랜드는 나의 느낌과 감정을 자극한다  
①--②--③--④--⑤--⑥--⑦
  - 내가 현재 사용하고 있는 아이언 브랜드에 대해 감정을 갖고 있다  
①--②--③--④--⑤--⑥--⑦
  - 내가 현재 사용하고 있는 아이언 브랜드는 감성적이다  
①--②--③--④--⑤--⑥--⑦
  - 내가 현재 사용하고 있는 아이언 브랜드를 가지고 골프를 친다  
①--②--③--④--⑤--⑥--⑦
  - 내가 현재 사용하고 있는 아이언 브랜드는 신체적인 경험을 가져다준다  
①--②--③--④--⑤--⑥--⑦
  - 내가 현재 사용하고 있는 아이언 브랜드는 활동지향적이다  
①--②--③--④--⑤--⑥--⑦

10. 나는 내가 가진 아이언 브랜드를 사용할 때 많은 생각을 하게 된다  
①--②--③--④--⑤--⑥--⑦
11. 내가 현재 사용하고 있는 아이언 브랜드는 생각을 하게끔 만든다  
①--②--③--④--⑤--⑥--⑦
12. 내가 현재 사용하고 있는 아이언 브랜드는 나의 호기심과 문제해결욕구를 자극한다  
①--②--③--④--⑤--⑥--⑦

Q2. 다음은 **귀하가 앞서 현재 사용하고 있는** (SQ9 의 응답값)에 대한 전환비용을 알아보기 위한 질문입니다.

귀하의 생각을 가장 잘 나타내는 정도를 선택해주시기 바랍니다.

①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
전혀	그렇지	조금	보통	조금	그렇다	매우
그러지	않다	그렇지	이다	그렇다	그렇다	그렇다
않다		않다		않다		

1. 새로운 아이언 브랜드로 바꿀 경우 내 기대에 미치지 못할 것 같다  
①--②--③--④--⑤--⑥--⑦
2. 새로운 아이언 브랜드로 바꿀 경우 나한테 맞지 않을 것 같다  
①--②--③--④--⑤--⑥--⑦
3. 새로운 아이언 브랜드를 바꿀 경우 예기치 못한 상황이 발생 할 수 있을 것 같다  
①--②--③--④--⑤--⑥--⑦
4. 새로운 아이언 브랜드로 바꿀 경우 예상치 못한 결과가 나타날 것 같다  
①--②--③--④--⑤--⑥--⑦
5. 다른 아이언 브랜드를 완벽하게 평가할 수 있는 정보를 찾아볼 시간적 여유가 없다  
①--②--③--④--⑤--⑥--⑦

6. 새로운 아이언 브랜드를 제대로 평가하기 위해서는  
얼마나 많은 시간과 노력이 필요하다고 생각하십니까?  
(매우 적다 – 매우 많다) ①--②--③--④--⑤--⑥--⑦
7. 내가 현재 사용하는 아이언 브랜드와 새로운 아이언  
브랜드를 비교하는 것은 힘들다 ①--②--③--④--⑤--⑥--⑦
8. 새로운 아이언 브랜드를 현재 아이언 브랜드만큼  
다루기 위해서는 시간이 필요할 것이다 ①--②--③--④--⑤--⑥--⑦
9. 새로운 아이언 브랜드로 바꿀 경우 적응하는데  
노력이 필요할 것이다 ①--②--③--④--⑤--⑥--⑦
10. 새로운 아이언 브랜드로 전환 할 경우 적응하기  
어려울 것이다 ①--②--③--④--⑤--⑥--⑦
11. 새로운 아이언 브랜드로 바꾸는 과정에서 많은  
시간이 소요될 것이다 ①--②--③--④--⑤--⑥--⑦
12. 새로운 아이언 브랜드를 사용하기 시작하는 것은  
어렵고 오래 걸릴 것이다 ①--②--③--④--⑤--⑥--⑦
13. 새로운 아이언 브랜드로 바꾸기 위한 절차는  
복잡할 것이다 ①--②--③--④--⑤--⑥--⑦
14. 현재 이용하는 아이언 브랜드를 바꿀 경우 이  
브랜드에서 일하는 직원들이 그리울 것이다 ①--②--③--④--⑤--⑥--⑦
15. 새로운 아이언 브랜드 직원들보다 현재 이용하는  
아이언 브랜드의 직원들이 더 편하다 ①--②--③--④--⑤--⑥--⑦
16. 현재 이용하는 아이언 브랜드에서 일하는 직원들은  
나에게 중요하다 ①--②--③--④--⑤--⑥--⑦
17. 현재 이용하는 아이언 브랜드의 직원들과  
이야기하는 것을 좋아한다 ①--②--③--④--⑤--⑥--⑦

DQ. 마지막으로 인구통계학적 요인과 관련된 질문입니다.

DQ1. 귀하의 직업은?

- ① 대학생
- ② 대학원생 (석사/박사)
- ③ 전문직
- ④ 자영업자
- ⑤ 화사원
- ⑥ 아르바이트
- ⑦ 주부
- ⑧ 무직
- ⑨ 퇴직
- ⑩ 기타

DQ2. 귀하의 월간 가계 소득 수준은?

- ① 100만원 미만
- ② 100만원 이상~200만원 미만
- ③ 200만원 이상~300만원 미만
- ④ 300만원 이상~400만원 미만
- ⑤ 400만원 이상~500만원 미만
- ⑥ 500만원 이상~600만원 미만
- ⑦ 600만원 이상~700만원 미만
- ⑧ 700만원 이상~800만원 미만
- ⑨ 800만원 이상~900만원 미만
- ⑩ 900만원 이상~1000만원 미만
- ⑪ 10000만원 이상

## 국 문 초 록

브랜드 경험의 전환비용에 미치는 영향:

골프 용품 산업 중심으로

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체육교육과

기업의 마케팅 담당자의 경우 수익 증대와 연계될 수 있는 강한 브랜드 구축을 위한 노력을 지속하고 있다. 이와 관련하여 강한 브랜드를 구축할 수 있수 있는 요인들로서 브랜드에 대한 충성도, 만족도 그리고 인지도 등이 제시되고 있으며 브랜드 경험과 이러한 요인들 간의 관계 검증을 위한 연구가 활발하게 진행되었다. 하지만 특정 브랜드의 고객을 유지하는데 있어서 중요한 역할을 하는 전환비용과 브랜드 경험 간의 관계에 대한 연구는 미흡한 실정이다.

이와 같은 배경과 기존 연구들의 제한점을 바탕으로 본 연구 목적은 골프 산업에서 중요한 위치를 차지하고 있는 골프 용품 산업 맥락에서 공급자가 소비자에게 주는 브랜드 경험이 전환비용에 미치는 영향을 검증하는 것에 있다. 이를 통해 기존 연구의 브

랜드 경험과 전환비용 간의 관계 검증에 대한 미흡한 측면을 보완 할 수 있을 것으로 판단된다. 또한 마케팅 담당자가 고객을 유지 및 수익 증대를 위한 마케팅 전략 수립 시 이를 활용할 수 있다.

연구목적을 달성하기 위해 본 연구에서는 골프채를 소유한 골퍼들을 대상으로 설문 조사를 실시하였다. 회수된 설문지 400부 중 불성실하게 응답한 14부를 제외한 386부를 최종분석 자료로 활용하였다. 수집된 자료는 기술 통계, 신뢰도 분석, 다변량 공분산 분석 및 Bonferroni Test를 통하여 분석되었으며 이를 위해 IBM SPSS 20.0 통계패키지를 활용하였다. 분석을 진행하는데 있어서 브랜드 전문성과 브랜드 전환경험을 통제하였다. 이는 골퍼들의 전문성과 브랜드 전환경험이 전환비용에 부정적인 영향을 미친다는 선행연구들이 제시되었기 때문이다.

이를 통해 도출된 분석 결과는 다음과 같다. 첫째, 브랜드 경험은 전환비용에 긍정적으로 유의한 영향을 미치는 것으로 도출되었다. 둘째, 높은 수준의 브랜드 경험을 가진 골퍼의 경우 전환비용 역시 높은 것으로 나타났다. 셋째, 낮은 수준의 브랜드 경험을 가진 골퍼의 경우 전환비용이 낮은 것으로 제시되었다.

본 연구의 결과를 통해 마케팅 담당자들은 브랜드 경험이 소비자에게 미칠 수 있는 영향을 이해할 수 있다. 또한 이를 통해 기존

소비자들이 다른 브랜드로 전환하는 것을 방지하기 위한 마케팅 전략 수립의 근거로서 활용할 수 있다. 이러한 본 연구의 결과를 이해하고 활용함으로서 산업 내에서 경쟁우위를 달성할 수 있고 지속적으로 고객 유지를 위한 발판을 마련할 수 있다.

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주요어: 브랜드 경험, 전환비용, 골프 용품, 전문성, 전환경험

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