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**Vibe Marketing in the Global Marketplace: Emotional Engagement and
Experiential Brand Strategies**

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Abstract

In today's highly competitive and digitally driven marketplace, consumers are no longer influenced only by product features, price, or promotional messages. Instead, they are increasingly drawn toward brands that create emotional meaning, immersive experiences, and a sense of belonging. This shift has given rise to a new marketing approach known as *vibe marketing*, which focuses on building emotional and experiential connections between brands and consumers. This paper explores the concept of *vibe marketing* in the global marketplace and examines how leading international brands use atmosphere, storytelling, design, and digital engagement to create powerful brand experiences. Using a conceptual and case-based approach, the study analyses how companies such as Starbucks, Apple, Nike, Spotify, and Red Bull cultivate distinctive brand "vibes" that influence consumer perception, loyalty, and purchase behaviour. The findings suggest that *vibe marketing* goes beyond traditional advertising by shaping consumer emotions, identities, and lifestyle associations with brands. The paper also discusses the strategic implications of *vibe marketing* for global businesses and highlights its growing importance in an era of social media, experiential consumption, and digitally mediated interactions. The study concludes that *vibe marketing* represents a significant shift in contemporary marketing practice and offers valuable insights for brand managers seeking to build long-term consumer relationships in an increasingly experience-oriented global economy. engagement

Introduction

The global marketplace is undergoing a profound transformation driven by digital technologies, artificial intelligence, and the growing emphasis on human-centric innovation under Industry 5.0. Consumers today are no longer passive recipients of marketing messages; they actively seek emotional meaning, identity, and immersive experiences from the brands they choose. In this evolving environment, traditional marketing approaches that focus primarily on product features, price, and promotional tactics are increasingly insufficient. Instead, brands are now

required to create deeper emotional and experiential connections with consumers in order to remain relevant and competitive.

This shift has led to the emergence of what can be described as *vibe marketing* — a strategy that emphasizes atmosphere, mood, aesthetics, storytelling, and emotional resonance as central elements of brand communication. *Vibe marketing* goes beyond conventional branding by shaping how consumers *feel* about a brand, how they experience it across digital and physical touchpoints, and how it fits into their lifestyle and self-identity. Through carefully designed

environments, visual language, music, social media presence, and personalized digital interactions, brands construct distinctive “vibes” that influence perception, engagement, and purchase behavior.

The rise of artificial intelligence and data-driven technologies has further accelerated the importance of vibe marketing. AI enables brands to analyze consumer emotions, preferences, and behavioral patterns at an unprecedented scale, allowing them to personalize experiences and craft emotionally relevant content in real time. Platforms such as Spotify, Instagram, and Netflix, for example, use algorithms to create mood-based recommendations, while global brands such as Apple, Nike, and Starbucks integrate digital and physical experiences to reinforce their brand identity. These developments reflect a broader Industry 5.0 perspective, in which technology is used not only to enhance efficiency but also to support human experience, creativity, and emotional connection.

In this context, vibe marketing represents a strategic response to the changing nature of consumer engagement in the global economy. While the concept draws from emotional branding and experiential marketing, it extends these approaches by offering a more integrated and continuous framework. Emotional branding primarily focuses on affective connections, whereas experiential marketing emphasizes individual interactions and sensory engagement. In contrast, vibe marketing brings together emotional atmosphere, experiential design, digital interaction, and cultural meaning into a unified brand ecosystem. It shifts the focus from isolated experiences to a sustained and consistent brand “vibe” across all consumer touchpoints.

The integration of artificial intelligence further strengthens this approach by enabling real-time personalization and adaptive brand experiences. Rather than functioning as a separate element, AI acts as an enabling layer that enhances emotional relevance and engagement. Therefore, vibe marketing can be understood as an evolved and holistic marketing paradigm aligned with the principles of Industry 5.0, where technology supports human-centric experiences and meaningful brand relationships.

Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of this study are:

- To examine the concept of Vibe Marketing as an emerging strategy in global brand management.
- To analyze how emotional engagement and experiential branding influence consumer behavior.

- To explore the role of Artificial Intelligence in shaping personalized and immersive brand experiences.
- To evaluate how global brands use vibe-based strategies to build loyalty and differentiation.
- To assess the relevance of vibe marketing in the context of Industry 5.0 and the future of marketing.

Scope of the Study

This study focuses on:

- Global brands operating in competitive and digitally driven markets.
- The role of emotions, experiences, and community in modern brand strategy.
- The integration of Artificial Intelligence with experiential and emotional marketing.
- Case-based analysis rather than primary survey data.

The study does not aim to measure numerical impact but seeks to provide theoretical and strategic insights into vibe marketing as a future-oriented branding approach.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because:

- It introduces Vibe Marketing as a structured academic concept rather than a marketing buzzword.
- It links emotional branding, experiential marketing, consumer psychology, and AI under one integrated framework.
- It provides a future-ready perspective aligned with Industry 5.0, where technology and human emotions converge.
- It helps marketers, educators, and researchers understand how brands can build deeper engagement in global markets.

Research Methodology

This study adopts a conceptual and multiple case study approach to examine how vibe marketing is applied by global brands in the contemporary marketplace. Since vibe marketing is an emerging and experiential concept, it cannot be adequately captured through standardized quantitative measures. Therefore, qualitative analysis using secondary data is considered most appropriate.

The study draws on:

- Academic literature on emotional branding, experiential marketing, consumer psychology, and digital marketing,

- Company reports, websites, and marketing campaigns of selected global brands,
- Digital platforms, social media presence, and customer engagement practices.

Three internationally recognized brands — Apple, Starbucks, and Tesla — are selected as case studies because they represent different industries but share a strong focus on emotional and experiential branding. The selection of case study brands followed purposive sampling based on specific criteria: (1) strong global or national presence, (2) demonstrated emphasis on emotional and experiential branding, and (3) active use of digital and AI-enabled engagement strategies. This ensured that the selected cases provide relevant and diverse insights into the application of vibe marketing across industries and markets.

The data were analysed thematically to identify how each brand creates, communicates, and sustains its unique brand vibe.

As the study relies on secondary data sources such as company reports, academic literature, and digital content, efforts were made to ensure credibility by using verified and widely cited sources. However, the reliance on secondary data may limit direct insights into consumer perceptions, and findings may reflect publicly presented brand narratives rather than internal strategic processes.

Review of Literature

1. Emotional Branding

Emotional branding focuses on creating deep emotional bonds between consumers and brands rather than relying only on product features. Gobe (2001) argued that modern consumers do not buy products; they buy meanings, feelings, and identities associated with brands. Brands that connect emotionally are more likely to build loyalty, advocacy, and long-term relationships.

In global markets, emotional branding has become increasingly important because consumers are overwhelmed with choices and information. Emotions help simplify decisions and create stronger memory associations. Brands that successfully appeal to emotions can command premium prices and develop loyal communities rather than just transactional buyers.

However, emotional branding alone does not fully explain how brands maintain consistency across multiple touchpoints, highlighting the need for a more integrated framework such as vibe marketing.

Vibe marketing extends emotional branding by not only appealing to feelings but also creating a

consistent emotional atmosphere across physical, digital, and social spaces.

2. Experiential Marketing

Experiential marketing focuses on creating memorable experiences rather than simply communicating product benefits. Schmitt (1999) emphasized that consumers seek sensory, emotional, cognitive, and relational experiences when interacting with brands. Experiences shape how people feel about a brand and strongly influence repeat purchase behavior.

In the digital era, experiences are no longer limited to physical stores. Social media, brand apps, online communities, and influencer collaborations now form part of the brand experience. This makes experience management a strategic priority for modern firms.

Vibe marketing builds on experiential marketing by ensuring that every touchpoint—visuals, tone of communication, store design, digital content, and customer interaction—creates a unified emotional and experiential “vibe.”

3. Consumer Psychology and Mood-Based Decision Making

Consumer behavior research shows that emotions and moods strongly influence purchasing decisions. According to Kahneman (2011), much of consumer decision-making is driven by fast, intuitive, and emotional thinking rather than rational evaluation. Positive moods increase impulsive buying, brand liking, and willingness to pay.

Music, color, social presence, and brand storytelling can subconsciously influence how consumers feel, which in turn affects their buying behavior. This is why modern brands invest heavily in store ambience, website design, and digital content aesthetics.

Vibe marketing uses these psychological principles to intentionally design environments and communications that trigger desired emotional states such as excitement, belonging, aspiration, or comfort.

4. Digital Culture and Community-Based Branding

With the rise of social media and digital platforms, brands no longer communicate in a one-way manner. Consumers now co-create brand meaning through comments, shares, reviews, and user-generated content. Muniz and O’Guinn (2001) introduced the concept of brand communities, where customers feel emotionally connected to both the brand and other users.

Modern brands aim to build cultures rather than just sell products. Communities, fandoms, and lifestyle branding are becoming central to

competitive advantage. This is particularly visible in global brands that position themselves as symbols of identity and belonging.

Vibe marketing aligns strongly with this shift by focusing on creating a shared emotional and cultural space where consumers feel part of a brand-driven lifestyle.

5. Artificial Intelligence and Personalized Brand Experiences

In the Industry 5.0 era, Artificial Intelligence enables brands to understand consumer emotions, preferences, and behavior in real time. AI-powered tools analyze browsing history, social media activity, and purchase patterns to personalize content, recommendations, and communication tone.

This allows brands to deliver emotionally relevant experiences at scale. For example, music recommendations, customized advertisements, and personalized shopping interfaces create a feeling that the brand “understands” the consumer.

Vibe marketing becomes more powerful when supported by AI, as it allows brands to adapt the emotional tone of their messaging and experiences to different cultural and individual preferences in global markets.

6. Research Gap

Although existing marketing literature extensively discusses emotional branding, experiential marketing, and customer experience management, these studies largely examine emotions and experiences as isolated constructs rather than as an integrated strategic approach. The emerging concept of vibe marketing, which deliberately combines emotional atmosphere, experiential design, cultural resonance, and non-traditional brand communication, remains insufficiently conceptualized and empirically explored. Moreover, prior research is predominantly Western-centric, with limited comparative analysis of how global and Indian brands create and adapt brand vibes across diverse cultural and digital contexts. There is also a lack of clear conceptual frameworks explaining how intended brand vibes translate into perceived consumer value and buying motives. Addressing these gaps, the present study positions vibe marketing as a holistic strategic capability and illustrates its application through selected global and Indian brand cases.

Based on the analysis, vibe marketing can be conceptualized as an integrated framework consisting of four key components:

- Emotional Design – creation of mood, storytelling, and affective appeal,

- Experiential Touchpoints – physical and digital interactions shaping consumer experience,
- Technological Enablement – use of AI data analytics for personalization and real-time engagement
- Cultural and Identity Alignment – development of community, belonging, and lifestyle association.

These components interact to create a consistent brand atmosphere or “vibe,” which influences consumer perception, emotional attachment, and behavioral outcomes such as loyalty and purchase intention. This framework positions vibe marketing as a continuous and ecosystem-driven strategy rather than a set of isolated marketing activities.

Case Studies

1. Apple: Design-Driven Emotional Connection

Apple is one of the most powerful examples of vibe marketing in the global marketplace. The brand does not simply sell technology; it sells a lifestyle based on simplicity, creativity, and elegance. From product design to packaging, retail stores, and digital interfaces, Apple creates a consistent aesthetic and emotional experience. Apple’s minimalist design philosophy, intuitive user interface, and storytelling around creativity make customers feel inspired and empowered. Products like the iPhone, MacBook, and Apple Watch are positioned not just as devices, but as personal companions that reflect the user’s identity. Apple’s retail stores further reinforce this vibe by offering open, clean, and interactive spaces that encourage exploration rather than pressure selling.

Through its ecosystem of hardware, software, and services, Apple maintains a seamless and emotionally engaging user experience, strengthening customer loyalty and brand attachment.

Eg: “Shot on iPhone” campaign

2. Starbucks: Creating a “Third Place” Experience

Starbucks has successfully built a global brand by focusing on atmosphere, comfort, and emotional belonging rather than just coffee. The company positions its stores as a “third place” between home and work, where customers can relax, socialize, or work in a welcoming environment. Elements such as music, lighting, interior design, aroma, and friendly service are carefully curated to create a warm and familiar vibe. Even in digital spaces, Starbucks maintains emotional engagement through personalized rewards, mobile apps, and customized offers.

By making consumers feel comfortable and valued, Starbucks turns routine coffee purchases into meaningful daily experiences, strengthening emotional loyalty and repeat visits.

3. Tesla: Innovation, Identity, and Future-Oriented Vibe

Tesla's brand vibe is built around innovation, sustainability, and futuristic thinking. The company markets not just electric cars but a vision of a cleaner and technologically advanced future.

Tesla's minimalist car design, cutting-edge software, and direct communication style create a sense of exclusivity and progressiveness. The brand attracts customers who see themselves as early adopters and environmentally responsible individuals.

Tesla's strong digital presence and the personal brand of its CEO further reinforce a powerful emotional connection between the company and its global audience.

4. Vibe Marketing in Indian Companies: Emerging Global Perspectives

Indian companies are increasingly adopting vibe marketing strategies to connect with emotionally driven, digitally active, and experience-seeking consumers. As Indian markets become more integrated with global consumption patterns, brands are shifting from functional communication to emotionally resonant and experience-based branding approaches. This transition reflects the broader Industry 5.0 emphasis on human-centric innovation and personalized engagement.

5. Tata Starbucks: Localized Global Experience

Tata Starbucks represents a successful fusion of global brand identity with Indian cultural sensibilities. While maintaining the global Starbucks vibe of comfort, personalization, and the "third place" experience, Tata Starbucks adapts store design, menu offerings, and ambience to suit Indian consumer preferences. Elements such as regional flavors, localized music, and culturally familiar store layouts help create emotional familiarity and belonging.

Digital engagement through loyalty programs and mobile ordering further enhances personalized experiences. By blending global consistency with local emotional relevance, Tata Starbucks demonstrates how vibe marketing can be effectively localized in emerging markets.

Eg: Warm Up Wednesday campaign of Tata Starbucks

6. Zomato: Digital Vibe and Consumer Relatability

Zomato has built a strong brand vibe through humor, informality, and constant digital engagement. Unlike traditional food delivery platforms that focus only on efficiency, Zomato uses social media content, push notifications, and app communication to build emotional connections with users. Its witty tone, relatable messaging, and meme-driven campaigns resonate strongly with younger consumers.

The brand's ability to create a casual, friendly, and culturally relevant digital vibe has helped it stand out in a highly competitive market. Zomato's approach highlights how vibe marketing can be effectively implemented in purely digital service environments.

7. Nykaa: Beauty, Community, and Empowerment

Nykaa has successfully positioned itself as more than an e-commerce platform by creating a community-driven beauty ecosystem. Through influencer collaborations, tutorials, content marketing, and curated digital experiences, Nykaa creates a vibe of empowerment, self-expression, and trust.

The brand's seamless integration of content, commerce, and community engagement reflects experiential and emotional branding principles. Nykaa's vibe marketing strategy strengthens consumer confidence and loyalty, particularly among young and aspirational consumers.

Eg: Pink Friday sale campaign

8. Tata Motors (EV Segment): Sustainability and Future Orientation

Tata Motors' electric vehicle segment reflects a future-oriented brand vibe focused on sustainability, innovation, and national progress. Through design aesthetics, messaging around environmental responsibility, and technological innovation, the brand appeals to consumers who identify with sustainability and forward-looking values.

This approach aligns closely with Industry 5.0 principles, where technology supports societal well-being and emotional purpose. Tata Motors demonstrates how vibe marketing can be applied even in traditionally functional industries such as automotive manufacturing.

9. Amul: Cultural Relevance and Topical Emotional Recall

Amul's longstanding advertising strategy uses topical, culturally resonant messaging delivered through the iconic Amul Girl across print and digital platforms. The brand's use of humor, social commentary, and cultural familiarity

evokes nostalgia, trust, and emotional loyalty across generations. This demonstrates that vibe marketing is not limited to modern digital contexts; it can also be embedded in culturally

rooted, long-standing brand communication practices that continue to emotionally engage audiences.

Brand	Core Vibe	Key Elements of Vibe Marketing	Role of AI/Digital	Consumer Impact	Strategic Insight
Apple	Minimalist, creative, premium	Design aesthetics, seamless ecosystem, storytelling	Personalization through ecosystem integration	Strong identity, brand loyalty, aspirational value	Competitive advantage lies in experience consistency across touchpoints
Starbucks	Comfort, belonging, "third place"	Store ambience, service, sensory experience	Mobile app, rewards, personalized offers	Emotional attachment, repeat visits	Value shifts from product to experience design
Tesla	Futuristic, innovative, sustainable	Product design, brand vision, leadership narrative	Software updates, digital interface	Identity alignment, early adopter appeal	Strong ideological branding reduces need for traditional advertising
Zomato	Fun, relatable, conversational	Humor, tone, social media engagement	Push notifications, app interaction	Engagement, relatability, brand recall	Digital vibe is linguistic and interaction-based
Nykaa	Empowerment, beauty, community	Influencer content, tutorials, curated platform	AI recommendations, content-commerce integration	Trust, confidence, community belonging	Vibe marketing thrives in community ecosystems
Tata Starbucks	Localized comfort with global consistency	Cultural adaptation, store design, menu localization	Digital loyalty programs	Emotional familiarity, cultural connection	Success depends on glocalization of brand vibe
Amul	Cultural, humorous, nostalgic	Topical ads, consistent messaging, humor	Limited digital but strong recall	Trust, long-term emotional connection	Vibe sustained through cultural continuity and consistency

The comparative analysis reveals that while the core elements of vibe marketing remain consistent, their execution varies across industries and platforms. Product-based brands such as Apple and Tesla emphasize design and identity, whereas service-oriented brands like Starbucks focus on experience and environment. Digital platforms such as Zomato and Nykaa highlight the importance of communication tone and community engagement. This reinforces the argument that vibe marketing is adaptable and context-dependent, yet unified by its emphasis on emotional and experiential consistency.

Discussion

This section moves beyond case description to synthesize insights and develop a deeper conceptual understanding of vibe marketing as an integrated strategic approach. The analysis indicates that contemporary branding is shifting from transactional communication to immersive and emotionally driven engagement ecosystems.

1. Vibe Marketing as an Evolution of Marketing Thought

The findings suggest that vibe marketing represents an evolution of emotional branding

and experiential marketing. While emotional branding focuses on building affective bonds and experiential marketing emphasizes sensory and immersive interactions, vibe marketing integrates both by creating a consistent emotional atmosphere across all consumer touchpoints. This atmosphere influences not only purchase decisions but also how consumers perceive themselves in relation to the brand.

Brands such as Apple and Nike create aspirational vibes that align with creativity and performance, while Starbucks and Tata Starbucks emphasize comfort and belonging. Indian digital brands like Zomato and Nykaa demonstrate that vibe marketing can be effectively applied even in app-based environments, where tone, humor, and community play a significant role.

2. Role of Technology and AI in Vibe Creation

Artificial Intelligence plays a crucial role in enabling vibe marketing at scale. AI-driven analytics allow brands to understand consumer preferences, moods, and engagement patterns, enabling personalized content and recommendations. Platforms such as Spotify and Netflix illustrate how mood-based algorithms contribute to emotionally relevant consumer experiences.

In the context of Industry 5.0, technology is no longer used solely for efficiency but to enhance human experience. Vibe marketing aligns with this philosophy by using AI to support emotional engagement rather than replace human creativity. Personalized playlists, customized notifications, and tailored digital interfaces help maintain emotional relevance in global markets.

3. Global and Indian Brand Convergence

A key insight from the analysis is the convergence of global and Indian branding strategies. While global brands emphasize consistency and scale, Indian brands demonstrate agility and cultural sensitivity. Tata Starbucks exemplifies this convergence by blending global brand values with local emotional cues.

This suggests that vibe marketing is not culturally limited but adaptable across markets. Successful implementation requires an understanding of local emotions, cultural symbols, and consumer behavior, supported by digital and AI-enabled tools.

4. Managerial Implications

From a managerial perspective, implementing vibe marketing requires a shift from campaign-based thinking to experience ecosystem design. Managers should focus on:

- Designing multi-sensory brand environments across physical and digital platforms
- Ensuring consistency in tone, aesthetics, and communication across all touchpoints
- Leveraging AI and data analytics to deliver personalized and emotionally relevant experiences
- Building community-driven engagement rather than one-way promotional communication
- Continuously evaluating and maintaining brand “vibe consistency” across channels

Such an integrated approach can enhance customer loyalty, strengthen brand identity, and create sustainable competitive advantage.

5. Challenges and Ethical Considerations

Despite its advantages, vibe marketing presents challenges. Over-personalization may raise concerns related to data privacy and consumer manipulation. There is also a risk of creating superficial emotional appeal without authentic brand values, which can lead to consumer distrust.

Therefore, transparency, ethical data use, and authenticity are essential for sustainable vibe marketing strategies.

Conclusion

The study establishes vibe marketing as a significant contemporary marketing approach that reflects the changing dynamics of consumer engagement in the global marketplace. As consumers increasingly seek emotional resonance, authenticity, and meaningful experiences, brands are compelled to move beyond traditional promotional strategies toward holistic experience creation. Vibe marketing addresses this shift by integrating emotional engagement, experiential design, and digital interaction into a unified brand ecosystem.

The analysis of global and Indian brands demonstrates that successful vibe marketing is not confined to a particular industry or geography. Companies such as Apple, Starbucks, Nike, Zomato, Nykaa, and Tata Starbucks illustrate how emotional atmospheres, cultural sensitivity, and consistent brand tone contribute to long-term consumer relationships. These cases highlight that vibe marketing is most effective when it is deeply embedded in brand values rather than treated as a short-term communication tactic.

Technological advancements, particularly in artificial intelligence and data analytics, have

further strengthened the relevance of vibe marketing. AI enables brands to personalize experiences, anticipate consumer moods, and deliver emotionally relevant content at scale. In alignment with the principles of Industry 5.0, technology in vibe marketing functions as an enabler of human-centric engagement rather than a substitute for creativity and empathy. From a managerial standpoint, the study underscores the need for an integrated approach to marketing strategy. Managers must align design, technology, storytelling, and customer experience to cultivate a coherent brand vibe across both physical and digital platforms.

However, the study also cautions against ethical risks such as excessive personalization, data misuse, and inauthentic emotional appeal, emphasizing the importance of transparency and trust.

In conclusion, vibe marketing represents a forward-looking paradigm that blends emotion, experience, and technology to create sustainable competitive advantage. As markets become increasingly experience-driven and digitally mediated, vibe marketing is likely to play a central role in shaping the future of global brand strategies.

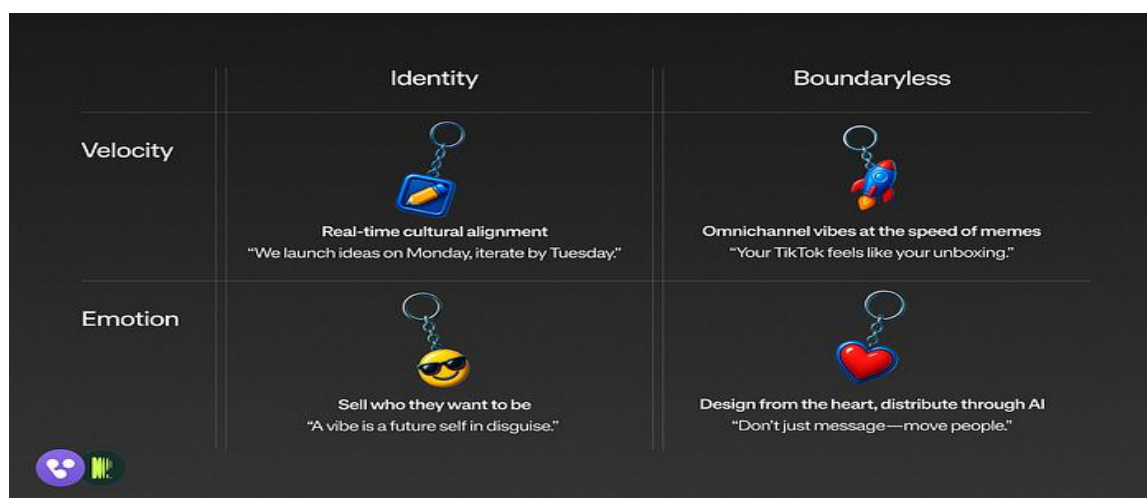


Fig 1: Identity vs Boundaryless Model

Source:<https://ehandbook.com/wtf-is-vibe-marketing-and-why-is-it-the-future-of-brand-building-c215509c9582>

Future Directions

The evolving nature of consumer expectations and technological innovation presents several promising avenues for future research in the domain of vibe marketing. As emotional engagement and experiential branding gain prominence, scholars and practitioners must explore how these strategies can be refined, measured, and ethically implemented in diverse market contexts.

One important direction for future research lies in empirical validation of vibe marketing outcomes. While conceptual and case-based evidence highlights its effectiveness, quantitative studies examining the relationship between brand vibe, emotional attachment, and long-term customer loyalty would strengthen theoretical grounding. Future studies may employ mixed-method approaches to measure emotional resonance across digital, physical, and hybrid brand touchpoints.

Another emerging area is the integration of artificial intelligence and emotion analytics in vibe marketing. With advancements in sentiment

analysis, facial recognition, and behavioral tracking, brands can increasingly respond to real-time consumer emotions. Future research should investigate how AI-driven personalization influences perceived authenticity, trust, and emotional well-being, particularly in the context of data privacy and ethical marketing practices.

Cross-cultural and emerging market perspectives, especially from countries like India, offer significant scope for exploration. Cultural values, social norms, and regional aesthetics play a crucial role in shaping brand vibes. Comparative studies between global and Indian brands can provide deeper insights into localized emotional branding strategies and culturally adaptive marketing frameworks.

Future research may also examine the role of vibe marketing in sustainability and purpose-driven branding. As consumers become more socially and environmentally conscious, brands are expected to align emotional appeal with ethical responsibility. Investigating how sustainable narratives, community engagement,

and inclusive brand experiences contribute to positive brand vibes would be a valuable extension of current research.

Finally, there is scope to develop theoretical models and managerial frameworks that integrate vibe marketing with contemporary management paradigms such as Industry 5.0, experiential economy, and relationship marketing. Such frameworks can assist educators, policymakers, and managers in adopting vibe marketing as a strategic capability rather than a tactical trend.

In summary, future research on vibe marketing should move toward empirical rigor, technological integration, cultural sensitivity, and ethical accountability, positioning it as a transformative approach in global marketing and management scholarship.

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