



The Effect of Experiential Marketing on Revisit Intention at Mars Cafe Pomalaa in Kolaka Regency

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Abstract. *This study aims to analyze the effect of experiential marketing on customers' revisit intention at Marz Cafe Pomalaa in Kolaka Regency. The study is motivated by the increasing importance of customer experience in shaping revisit intention, particularly in the café business, which offers not only food and beverages but also atmosphere, comfort, service quality, and social interaction space. Experiential marketing in this study is measured through five dimensions, namely sense, feel, think, act, and relate, while revisit intention is measured through customers' willingness to revisit, invite others, share positive stories, and place Marz Cafe Pomalaa as a priority destination. This study employs a quantitative approach with an explanatory research design. Data were collected through questionnaires distributed to 250 respondents selected using purposive sampling. The data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Square (SEM-PLS). The results indicate that all dimensions of experiential marketing have a positive and significant effect on revisit intention. The sense dimension is the most dominant factor in shaping customers' revisit intention, followed by act, relate, think, and feel. The R-Square value of 0.717 indicates that the five dimensions of experiential marketing explain 71.7% of the variance in revisit intention, while the remaining percentage is explained by other variables outside the research model. These findings confirm that customer experiences involving sensory, emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and social aspects play an important role in encouraging customers to revisit. Practically, the management of Marz Cafe Pomalaa needs to maintain consistent taste quality, spatial design, atmospheric comfort, service speed, music suitability, and positive social interaction in order to strengthen customers' revisit intention.*

Keywords: *Café; Customer Experience; Experiential Marketing; Revisit Intention; Sense.*

1. BACKGROUND

The café industry has undergone a significant transformation over the last decade. Cafés are no longer perceived merely as places to purchase food and beverages; they have become social spaces, informal workplaces, leisure venues, and arenas where consumers express lifestyle preferences and social identity. This transformation indicates that consumers do not only evaluate cafés based on product functionality, but also on atmosphere, comfort, spatial design, service interaction, emotional impressions, and the overall experience received during the visit (Schmitt, 1999; Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Kotler & Keller, 2016; Lemon & Verhoef, 2016; Rather, 2020). In service-based businesses, customer experience has become a strategic source of competitive advantage because consumers tend to remember places that provide positive sensory, emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and social impressions (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Brakus et al., 2009; Klaus & Maklan, 2013; Hwang & Seo, 2016). Accordingly, experiential marketing has become an important approach for explaining how customer experience shapes revisit intention.

Revisit intention refers to consumers' willingness or tendency to return to a place they have previously visited. In the café business, revisit intention is a strategic behavioral indicator because repeat visits reflect consumers' acceptance of the experience offered by the business. Customers who have positive experiences are more likely not only to revisit, but also to invite others, share positive stories, and place the café as a priority destination when they need a place to eat, relax, work, or socialize (Zeithaml et al., 1996; Oliver, 1999; Stylos et al., 2017; Han & Hyun, 2018). Revisit intention is also closely related to satisfaction, emotional attachment, trust, perceived value, and place image formed through previous consumption experiences (Chen & Chen, 2010; Abubakar et al., 2017; Abbasi et al., 2021; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2021). Thus, customers do not return solely because of rational needs, but because the previous experience was perceived as pleasant, meaningful, and worth repeating.

Experiential marketing is rooted in the idea that modern marketing should move beyond product-oriented and transaction-based approaches. Schmitt (1999) proposed that customer experience can be developed through five main dimensions: sense, feel, think, act, and relate. The sense dimension refers to sensory stimulation, such as visual design, aroma, music, taste, texture, and physical comfort. The feel dimension concerns customers' emotional responses, including happiness, comfort, satisfaction, relaxation, or disappointment. The think dimension reflects the cognitive process through which consumers evaluate quality, compare benefits, and make consumption decisions. The act dimension represents behavioral responses, such as trying products, purchasing again, recommending, and spending more time at the venue. The relate dimension reflects consumers' social connection with the brand, community, friends, family, and the social environment in which consumption takes place (Schmitt, 1999; Gentile et al., 2007; Brakus et al., 2009; Rather, 2020; Suparno & Aksari, 2023). These five dimensions work collectively in creating memorable experiences that may encourage customers to revisit.

Marz Cafe Pomalaa in Kolaka Regency provides a relevant research context because it operates in a local café market that faces increasing competition, changing consumer preferences, and the need to provide consistent customer experiences. Based on the preliminary data in the research manuscript, the revenue and number of visitors at Marz Cafe Pomalaa during the 2024/2025 period fluctuated. Visits increased during holidays, New Year periods, and certain events, but decreased in several months, such as September and April. This condition indicates that customer visits have not fully developed into stable repeat behavior; rather, they are still influenced by external moments and situational factors. This phenomenon is important because strong revisit intention should not only emerge during peak moments, but

should be shaped by consistently positive experiences in every customer visit (Chen & Rahman, 2018; Han et al., 2019; Suhartanto et al., 2020; Abbasi et al., 2021).

From the customer experience perspective, Marz Cafe Pomalaa has several elements that support experiential marketing. Spatial arrangement, visual design, coffee aroma, food and beverage taste, staff friendliness, indoor and outdoor areas, and the presence of an ornamental fish pond contribute to customers' experiential evaluation. The preliminary survey in the manuscript shows that some respondents made purchases because they were attracted to the café layout and visual design, while others were influenced by the taste of food and beverages. These findings indicate that the sense dimension plays an important role in attracting customers. Nevertheless, several service-related issues remain, including long waiting time in the ordering process and music selection that does not fully match the café atmosphere or customer preferences. These issues may disturb customers' emotional comfort and reduce their intention to revisit (Klaus & Maklan, 2013; Lemon & Verhoef, 2016; Hwang & Seo, 2016; Trianovita et al., 2024).

Previous studies have shown that experiential marketing positively affects revisit intention, particularly when customers perceive the consumption experience as enjoyable, distinctive, and valuable (Rather, 2020; Suhartanto et al., 2020; Suparno & Aksari, 2023; Fernando & Mulyono, 2023; Atmaja et al., 2024). Several studies also demonstrate that the dimensions of sense, feel, think, act, and relate may influence revisit intention differently, depending on the characteristics of the object, service type, and consumer context (Pratisti et al., 2024; Masrokhah et al., 2025; Solihah & Zulfi, 2025). These inconsistent findings indicate a research gap. Some studies confirm that all experiential marketing dimensions significantly influence revisit intention, while other studies suggest that only certain dimensions have significant effects, and some findings even show that experiential marketing does not always directly influence revisit intention. This gap provides an opportunity to examine experiential marketing in the context of a local café located in a non-metropolitan area, such as Pomalaa, Kolaka Regency.

Based on this background, the present study aims to analyze the influence of experiential marketing on revisit intention at Marz Cafe Pomalaa in Kolaka Regency by examining sense, feel, think, act, and relate as independent variables. This study offers theoretical value by enriching consumer behavior and experiential marketing literature in the context of local café businesses. Practically, the findings are expected to provide useful recommendations for Marz Cafe Pomalaa's management in designing a more consistent customer experience strategy, including spatial design, service quality, atmosphere

management, product taste, and social interaction. Through this understanding, the café is expected not only to attract occasional visits, but also to build stronger customer attachment that encourages sustainable revisit intention.

2. THEORETICAL REVIEW

The theoretical review of this study is grounded in the concepts of experiential marketing and revisit intention. In modern marketing, consumers are no longer viewed merely as buyers who evaluate products based on function and price, but as individuals who seek meaningful experiences during the consumption process. Experiential marketing places experience at the center of marketing strategy because consumers form their evaluations of a brand or place through sensory stimulation, emotions, thoughts, actions, and social relationships. Schmitt (1999) explains that consumer experience can be developed through five main dimensions: sense, feel, think, act, and relate. These five dimensions are known as Strategic Experiential Modules and serve as the foundation for creating a comprehensive customer experience.

The sense dimension refers to sensory experiences received by consumers through the five senses. In the café context, sense may appear through interior design, lighting, coffee aroma, food and beverage taste, room cleanliness, seating comfort, and background music. A strong sensory experience can create a positive first impression and strengthen consumers' memory of the place they visit. When consumers feel comfortable visually, aromatically, auditorily, gustatorily, and physically, their likelihood of revisiting becomes stronger. At Marz Cafe Pomalaa, this dimension is reflected in the café layout, design, food and beverage aroma, and the physical atmosphere that shapes customers' initial perceptions.

The feel dimension refers to emotional experiences felt by consumers during their interaction with products, services, and the café environment. Positive emotions such as happiness, relaxation, satisfaction, appreciation, and comfort can strengthen the psychological relationship between consumers and the business. Conversely, negative emotional experiences such as disappointment, anxiety, discomfort, or disturbance may reduce consumers' intention to revisit. In the café industry, friendly service, a relaxing atmosphere, reasonable waiting time, and music that suits the atmosphere are important elements in shaping customers' emotional experiences.

The think dimension is related to consumers' cognitive process in evaluating the experience they receive. Consumers compare price with quality, menu variety with their needs, and perceived benefits with the sacrifices made. When consumers perceive that price, product

quality, atmosphere, and service are worth what they pay, a positive rational evaluation is formed. At this point, think is not only related to purchase logic, but also to how the café encourages consumers to feel that visiting the place is the right decision.

The act dimension describes consumers' actual behavior as a response to the experience they receive. This behavior may include trying new menu items, repurchasing, spending more time at the café, inviting friends, sharing experiences on social media, or recommending the café to others. In service marketing, the act dimension is important because a good experience does not stop at satisfaction, but continues into actual behavior. The more positive the experience, the greater the possibility that consumers will take further actions leading to revisit intention.

The relate dimension is associated with social relationships and consumers' sense of attachment to a place, brand, or community. Cafés often function as social spaces where consumers meet friends, hold discussions, work, celebrate moments, or build closeness with their groups. When consumers feel that a café fits their social identity and lifestyle, a sense of belonging and connectedness may emerge. At Marz Cafe Pomalaa, the relate dimension can be seen in customers' habit of visiting with friends, family, or colleagues, and using the café as a place for gathering and social interaction.

Meanwhile, revisit intention refers to consumers' willingness or tendency to revisit a place based on their previous experience. This concept is an important indicator in service marketing because it reflects the ability of a business to create satisfaction, trust, and customer attachment. Revisit intention is commonly indicated by consumers' willingness to return, invite others, share positive stories, and place the destination as their priority choice. In the café context, revisit intention is strongly influenced by the overall quality of customer experience.

The relationship between experiential marketing and revisit intention can be explained through the assumption that positive experiences create positive evaluations, which then encourage behavioral intention to return. Consumers who receive pleasant sensory experiences, positive emotions, satisfying rational evaluations, comfortable consumption behavior, and strong social attachment tend to have a stronger intention to revisit. Thus, experiential marketing functions as a strategy to create experiences that are not only attractive during the first visit, but also capable of retaining customers through subsequent visits.

Based on this theoretical framework, this study assumes that sense, feel, think, act, and relate may influence customers' revisit intention at Marz Cafe Pomalaa. If these five experiential dimensions are managed consistently, customers will be more likely to develop positive impressions and have a stronger desire to revisit. Conversely, weaknesses in service,

atmosphere, comfort, or social interaction may disrupt customer experience and weaken revisit intention. Therefore, this study positions experiential marketing as the main theoretical foundation for explaining customers' revisit behavior.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a quantitative approach to examine the effect of experiential marketing on revisit intention among customers of Marz Cafe Pomalaa in Kolaka Regency. A quantitative method was considered appropriate because the study focused on measuring relationships among variables using numerical data collected from respondents. The independent variables consisted of five dimensions of experiential marketing, namely sense, feel, think, act, and relate, while the dependent variable was revisit intention. This study adopted an explanatory research design because it aimed to explain the effect of each customer experience dimension on customers' intention to revisit. The research was conducted at Marz Cafe Pomalaa, Kolaka Regency, Southeast Sulawesi.

The population consisted of customers who had visited and purchased products at Marz Cafe Pomalaa. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling, in which respondents were selected based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives. The criteria required respondents to have visited Marz Cafe Pomalaa, purchased food or beverages, and agreed to complete the research questionnaire. The sample consisted of 250 respondents, as stated in the research design. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire with a Likert scale. Each statement was developed based on the indicators of each research variable. Respondents were asked to evaluate their experience during their visit to Marz Cafe Pomalaa, including sensory, emotional, cognitive, behavioral, social, and revisit intention aspects. Primary data were obtained directly from respondents' answers, while secondary data were collected from documents, literature, and other supporting information relevant to the research object. The data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Square, or SEM-PLS.

This technique was used because it allows simultaneous testing of relationships among latent variables and is suitable for research models involving multiple constructs and indicators. The analysis consisted of two main stages: outer model testing and inner model testing. The outer model was used to assess indicator validity and reliability through outer loading, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), cross loading, HTMT, Composite Reliability, and Cronbach's Alpha. The inner model was used to examine the strength of relationships among variables through R-Square, path coefficient, t-statistic, and p-value.

Table of Variable Operationalization

| Variable | Operational Definition | Indicators | Scale |
|-----------------------|--|---|------------|
| Sense (X1) | Customer experience formed through sensory stimulation during the visit to Marz Cafe Pomalaa. | Sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch. | Likert 1-5 |
| Feel (X2) | Customers' emotional responses to the atmosphere, service, and overall visit experience. | Happiness, comfort, satisfaction, disappointment, anxiety. | Likert 1-5 |
| Think (X3) | Customers' cognitive process in evaluating, comparing, and considering the quality of the experience received. | Evaluating quality, comparing alternatives, considering decisions. | Likert 1-5 |
| Act (X4) | Customers' actual behavior as a result of the experience received at the café. | Visiting, trying menu items, purchasing, participating, recommending. | Likert 1-5 |
| Relate (X5) | Customers' social and emotional connection with the café, management, and environment. | Feeling connected, willingness to social share, sense of belonging. | Likert 1-5 |
| Revisit Intention (Y) | Customers' intention to revisit Marz Cafe Pomalaa based on previous experience. | Willingness to visit again, willingness to invite, willingness to place the positive tale, willingness to place the visiting destination as priority. | Likert 1-5 |

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results show that the structural model has strong explanatory power. The R-Square value of 0.717 indicates that the variables sense, feel, think, act, and relate explain 71.7% of the variance in revisit intention, while the remaining 28.3% is explained by other variables outside the model. This finding indicates that experiential marketing is an important factor in shaping customers' intention to revisit Marz Cafe Pomalaa.

Hypothesis Testing Results

| Hypothesis | Variable Relationship | Path Coefficient | T-Value | P-Value | Decision |
|------------|----------------------------|------------------|---------|---------|----------|
| H1 | Sense → Revisit Intention | 0.509 | 5.324 | 0.000 | Accepted |
| H2 | Feel → Revisit Intention | 0.104 | 1.663 | 0.049 | Accepted |
| H3 | Think → Revisit Intention | 0.108 | 1.756 | 0.040 | Accepted |
| H4 | Act → Revisit Intention | 0.151 | 1.809 | 0.036 | Accepted |
| H5 | Relate → Revisit Intention | 0.119 | 1.731 | 0.042 | Accepted |

The hypothesis testing results indicate that all independent variables have a positive and significant effect on revisit intention. This is shown by t-values greater than 1.64 and p-values lower than 0.05 for all structural paths. *Sense* is the most dominant factor, with a coefficient of 0.509, followed by *act* at 0.151, *relate* at 0.119, *think* at 0.108, and *feel* at 0.104.

The effect of *sense* on revisit intention indicates that sensory experience is the strongest factor encouraging customers to revisit. Café visual design, cleanliness, food and beverage aroma, seating comfort, lighting, and product taste are elements that customers easily perceive and remember.

This finding suggests that Marz Cafe Pomalaa should maintain the quality of its visual atmosphere, taste, aroma, and physical comfort because these elements contribute most strongly to revisit intention. The effect of *feel* on revisit intention shows that customers' emotions during their visit also influence their decision to return. Feelings of comfort, happiness, relaxation, and satisfaction can strengthen customers' attachment to the café. Although *feel* has the lowest coefficient among the variables, the result remains significant.

This means emotional aspects must still be considered, especially through friendly service, responsive staff, efficient ordering processes, and appropriate music management. The effect of *think* on revisit intention indicates that customers evaluate the café not only through atmosphere, but also through rational considerations. Price, menu quality, product variety, taste consistency, and perceived benefits influence customers' judgment.

When customers perceive that the experience is worth the cost and time spent, their intention to revisit becomes stronger. The effect of *act* on revisit intention shows that customer experience encourages actual behavior, such as trying new menu items, repurchasing, spending more time at the café, and recommending it to others.

As the second strongest coefficient, *act* demonstrates that customer behavior during and after the visit is an important indicator in strengthening revisit intention. The effect of *relate* on revisit intention indicates that social connection and customers' sense of attachment to the café also play an important role. Marz Cafe Pomalaa functions not only as a place to eat and drink, but also as a space for gathering, discussion, and social interaction. Customers who feel socially connected to the café atmosphere are more likely to choose Marz Cafe Pomalaa for future visits.

Overall, the findings confirm that experiential marketing significantly influences revisit intention. The five experiential dimensions complement one another in creating positive customer impressions. Practically, Marz Cafe Pomalaa should prioritize strengthening the *sense* dimension as the dominant factor, while maintaining *feel*, *think*, *act*, and *relate*. Recommended strategies include maintaining taste consistency, improving interior design, adjusting music to visiting hours, accelerating service processes, and creating a comfortable social atmosphere for customers.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study concludes that experiential marketing has a positive and significant effect on customers' revisit intention at Marz Cafe Pomalaa in Kolaka Regency. The five experiential dimensions, namely sense, feel, think, act, and relate, are proven to encourage customers' intention to revisit. Sense is the most dominant factor, indicating that visual design, aroma, taste, cleanliness, comfort, and the physical atmosphere of the café play a major role in shaping positive customer impressions. Practically, Marz Cafe Pomalaa needs to maintain consistent customer experiences by improving service quality, atmosphere management, ordering speed, music suitability, menu variety, and comfortable social spaces. This study is limited to one café object and five experiential marketing dimensions; therefore, future research may include other variables such as customer satisfaction, customer engagement, brand image, or electronic word of mouth.

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