

Mediating Role of Satisfaction in The Influence of Experiential Marketing on Behavioral Intention of Vegan Products Consumers

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Abstract The plant-based food industry is one of the most trending businesses in culinary. This trend is growing along with consumers' health and life sustainability awareness. This research aims to analyze the role of consumer satisfaction in mediating the influence of experiential marketing on consumer behavioral intention. This research is rooted in the framework of experiential learning theory. The distribution of questionnaire links carried out data collection through questionnaires. The research method used is a purposive sampling of 100 respondents. Data were processed using SPSS version 30 to obtain the results of path analysis and Sobel test. The results showed that experiential marketing has a positive and significant effect on satisfaction, experiential marketing has a positive and significant effect on satisfaction can mediate the effect of experiential marketing on behavioral intentions. The practical implications of this study support restaurant vegans in marketing their products and experiences by considering experiential marketing and consumer satisfaction so that they can influence increasing consumer behavioral intentions.

Keywords: Experiential marketing, Satisfaction, Behavioral intention

1. INTRODUCTION

The demographics of Indonesia and the revolution of consumption patterns among the younger generation, notably Millennials and Generation Z, present a significant opportunity for entrepreneurs to develop businesses (Malini, 2021). Indonesia's current demographic composition is dominated by Millennials (born between 1981-1996), accounting for approximately 65,78 million people, and Generation Z (born between 1997-2012), totaling around 66,74 million people, out of a total population of 275,77 million (BPS, 2022). Furthermore, the consumption patterns of Millennials and Generation Z have evolved, with a preference for spending money on exciting experiences, such as tourism destinations or culinary adventures, rather than saving or investing (Respati, 2022). One of the emerging trends in the culinary business is plant-based food, including vegetarian and vegan diet-based restaurant industries (Dhont & Ioannidou, 2024).

Indonesia ranks as the 16th most vegan-friendly country out of 138 countries, with Ubud, Bali, being the region in Indonesia that has the highest number of vegan restaurants and is a major producer of tropical fruits (The Vegan World, 2023; Oliver's Travel, 2017). The number of vegan restaurants has since expanded significantly in the Badung and Denpasar areas (BPS Bali, 2023). The goal of these vegan restaurants is not only to provide a culinary experience but also to promote a sustainable lifestyle for consumers (Dutkiewicz & Dickstein, 2021).

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The needs of consumers in the modern era are highly diverse, as they are rational and emotional decision-makers who no longer purchase goods or services solely based on features and practical benefits (Schmitt, 1999; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). Instead, they seek enjoyable experiences. Engaging visitors directly through two-way communication in the shopping experience is a key aspect of modern marketing, known as experiential marketing (Smilansky, 2017). The concept of customer experience has emerged as a crucial dimension in contemporary marketing due to its ability to drive competitive advantage, differentiation, and business success (Borishade et al., 2019). This perspective suggests that consumer experience influences their behavioral goals. For example, consumers may buy vitamins for health benefits or groceries to enjoy a meal. Whether consciously or unconsciously, consumers set their goals and use consumption as a tool to achieve them (Bagozzi & Dholakia, 1999). Behavioral intention is the outcome of the consumption experience; the tendency of these behavioral intentions determines whether the experience generates positive results for the company or not (Leoma & Subagio, 2014).

As a vegan restaurant, KooD has implemented experiential marketing through a unique self-service canteen concept, distinguishing it from other vegan restaurants that focus more on traditional dining experiences. At KooD, customers serve their meals, offering a more personal and flexible dining experience. KooD is inspired by the philosophy of KUD, or *Koperasi Unit Desa* (Village Unit Economic Activities), meaning that KooD's products are made in villages, by villagers, to advance rural economies (KooD, 2020). However, the effectiveness of this strategy remains vague due to diverse consumer responses to the KooD brand. Consumers frequently complain that vegan food lacks variety in flavor and is often bland, failing to meet their expectations. Besides, although KooD offers a wide selection of high-quality vegan products, its pricing is highly competitive with other vegan restaurants that provide similar offerings. Some cases have also shown that visitors have expressed dissatisfaction with unwelcoming service during their visits and inadequate information provided by staff, which impacts the overall experience negatively.

Understanding consumer behavior is essential to designing effective consumer retention and satisfaction strategies (Rather & Hollebeek, 2021). The greater the company's capability to offer experiences desired by consumers, the more likely it is to succeed in the global market. This study uses KooD as the research object due to its innovative operational approach. This approach provides a more personal and flexible dining experience for consumers, making it an interesting case to study in the context of consumer satisfaction and behavior. The effectiveness of this strategy will be evaluated by assessing the level of consumer

satisfaction with KooD's products, specifically whether the products meet consumer expectations, as well as other phenomena related to visit experiences and consumer behavioral intentions post-visit. This research aims to explore the extent to which KooD's innovative operational marketing contributes to the success of vegan restaurant businesses, with the expectation that the findings will offer new insights for the vegan food industry as an entity.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Experiential learning theory

Experiential learning theory emphasizes building knowledge and understanding through direct involvement in life experiences, with participation being a key element (Yardley et al., 2012). The experiential learning model, developed by Kolb in 1984, consists of four stages: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation (Kolb, 2014). Concrete experience, this stage involves an individual's direct participation in relevant and meaningful experiences. Reflective observation, after the experience, individuals reflect on what happened, analyzing and interpreting the experience to gain insights. Abstract conceptualization, the results of reflection are then processed into theories or abstract concepts, enabling individuals to generalize their experiences into a broader understanding. Active experimentation, finally, these concepts are tested through active experimentation, where individuals apply their newly acquired knowledge and insights in different situations or contexts.

The concept of experiential learning has evolved into experiential marketing in the field of marketing, as introduced by Schmitt in 1999. Experiential marketing emphasizes direct consumer involvement in experiencing a brand. Additionally, the concept of the experience economy, proposed by Pine and Gilmore (1998), highlights how the experiences offered by a brand serve as added value that can enhance emotional engagement and consumer loyalty. The development of experiential learning theory in marketing is considered effective in helping businesses create meaningful experiences for consumers. When experiential marketing successfully fosters active consumer engagement, it becomes easier to build positive perceptions and cultivate loyalty.

Experiential marketing

Experiential marketing is the process of identifying and fulfilling consumer needs by directly involving through two-way communication to enhance brand image and value, ensuring it aligns with the target audience (Smilansky, 2017). Unlike traditional marketing,

which views consumers as rational decision-makers focused solely on a brand's features and practical utility, experiential marketing considers consumers both rationally and emotionally (Schmitt, 1999). Experiential marketing is a marketing concept that incorporates elements designed to enhance direct interaction with consumers through experiences (Tsaur et al., 2007). These experiences are processes aimed at fostering direct engagement with consumers across various dimensions sensory experiences (sense), affective experiences (feel), cognitive-creative experiences (think), physical, behavioral, and lifestyle experiences (act), and experiences related to culture or reference groups (relate) (Rather, 2020; Schmitt, 1999).

Sense involves creating experiences related to the five senses—sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell. It aims to stimulate sensory perceptions to enhance the consumer's experience with a brand. The *feel* focuses on influencing consumer emotions through elements such as communication (advertisements), product attributes (packaging and contents), and brand identity. The goal is to evoke emotional responses and connections. *Think* strategy encourages consumers to think creatively and engage intellectually. It motivates them to contribute ideas or reevaluate a business concept or initiative, fostering a deeper connection and interest in the brand. The *act* creates consumer experiences through physical engagement, behavioral patterns, and lifestyle elements. It also emphasizes experiences derived from interactions with others, promoting a sense of participation and activity. *Relate* combines the four dimensions of experiential marketing—sense, feel, think, and act. Its objective is to connect consumers with the culture and social environment reflected by a brand, fostering a sense of belonging and alignment with the brand's values.

Satisfaction

Consumer satisfaction is the attitude, evaluation, and emotional response presented by consumers after a purchase (Minarti & Segoro, 2014). Satisfaction reflects an individual's assessment of a product's performance referring to expectations (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018). Research by Canny (2013) revealed that key indicators of a culinary experience include product quality, service quality, and the quality of the physical environment.

The quality of the physical environment involves creating an atmosphere through space design to evoke specific emotional responses in buyers, increasing the likelihood of a purchase (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018). When consumers perceive the physical environment as reflecting quality—such as through appealing design, music, colors, lighting, and attractive interior décor—consumer satisfaction tends to rise (Ryu & Han, 2010). Service quality refers to the company's efforts to meet consumer expectations regarding the service provided, enabling the

company to remain competitive in the market and build consumer trust (Tjiptono, 2015). Product quality is defined by a product's ability to perform its intended functions and meet the needs and desires of consumers (Jones *et al.*, 2020; Kotler & Armstrong, 2018).

Behavioral intention

Behavioral intention is the result of the consumption experience process; the tendency of this intention will determine whether the experience results in something positive or negative for the company (Leoma & Subagio, 2014). Consumers demonstrate loyalty when their expectations of a product are met or exceeded (Naini et al., 2022). In such cases, consumers are more likely to return for repeat purchases or become regular customers (Rachmawati, 2014). Research on Kobe consumers shows positive responses regarding their loyalty to repurchase, as Kobe products are high quality (Lina, 2022). A study of first-class restaurant consumers in Izmir, Turkey, explains that customer satisfaction can enhance positive behavioral intentions, such as repurchase intentions, word-of-mouth recommendations, and the willingness to pay more (Araci et al., 2017).

Based on the background, problem formulation, and theoretical review, this study proposes the following four hypotheses:

- H₁ Experiential marketing positively affects consumer behavioral intentions
- H₂ Experiential marketing positively affects consumer satisfaction
- H₃ Consumer satisfaction positively affects consumer behavioral intentions
- H₄ Consumer satisfaction mediates the relationship between experiential marketing and consumer behavioral intentions

3. METHODS

This study employs a quantitative and associative approach to examine the influence of experiential marketing on visitor satisfaction and behavioral intentions at KooD. KooD is located at Kutat Lestari Street, Sanur Kauh, South Denpasar, Bali. The independent variable in this research is Experiential Marketing (X). The dependent variables are Satisfaction (Y1) and Behavioral Intentions (Y2).

The population in this study comprises all visitors who have consumed or purchased KooD products at least once. The sample for the study was determined using non-probability sampling with the purposive sampling method to ensure a representative sample. The sample size is set at 100 respondents. The data collection method involves a survey using a questionnaire as the research instrument. The collected data will be analyzed using SPSS software version 30.

4. **RESULTS**

The results of the respondent characteristics show that KooD's products are particularly popular among women. The majority of respondents fall within the 18–27 age range (Generation Z), indicating that KooD's products appeal to younger consumers who enjoy exploring unique and novel culinary experiences, including vegan options. Furthermore, most respondents are working individuals with an income, aligning with KooD's primary concept as an employee canteen. This suggests that KooD's marketers have effectively targeted their brand toward the appropriate consumer segment.

Table 1 presents the distribution of respondents' answers regarding experiential marketing, revealing that respondents perceive the quality of KooD's product offerings to be in line with the prices charged. Overall, respondents have had positive experiences through the implementation of experiential marketing as a direct communication tool between KooD and its customers. However, KooD's efforts to encourage consumers to adopt healthier eating habits require a more refined approach to enhance effectiveness.

Statement		re				Avonago	Category
		2	3	4	5	Average	Category
The products offered by KooD meet expectations	0	5	20	54	21	3,91	Good
KooD's building design is comfortable, with good air circulation	0	2	22	38	38	4,12	Good
The prices offered by KooD are appropriate for the products provided		3	4	35	58	4,48	Very Good
After visiting KooD, I feel motivated to adopt healthier eating habits		17	37	31	15	3,44	Good
KooD's self-service canteen concept aligns well with my cultural values		5	20	41	34	4,04	Good
Total Average						3,99	Good

 Table 1. Description of Respondents' Answers to Experiential Marketing

Statements

Source: Primary data, 2024

Table 2 displays the distribution of respondents' answers regarding satisfaction, showing that respondents received optimal service that met their expectations. Overall, respondents expressed satisfaction with their visit. However, KooD needs to improve its efforts to enhance customer comfort, encouraging them to spend more time at KooD.

Statement		re				Avonago	Category	
		2	3	4	5	Average		
The comfortable interior design of KooD makes me want to spend more time there	0	16	29	28	27	3,66	Satisfied	
The service performance at KooD is optimal in meeting my expectations	0	1	8	51	40	4,30	Very Satisfied	
The quality of the ingredients used by KooD makes me happy		1	16	40	43	4,25	Very Satisfied	
Total Average						4,07	Satisfied	

Table 2. Description of Respondents' Answers to Satisfaction Statements

Source: Primary data, 2024

Table 3 displays the distribution of respondents' answers regarding behavioral intentions, showing that respondents are determined to recommend KooD to their relatives. Overall, respondents exhibit positive behavioral intentions toward the KooD brand. However, KooD needs to improve its efforts to encourage visitors to spend money on other products from KooD to increase significance.

Table 3. Description of Respondents' Answers to Behavioral Intentions

Statement		re				A	Catagowy
		2	3	4	5	Average	Category
I want to buy KooD products again	0	5	26	30	39	4,03	High
I want to recommend KooD to my relatives	0	0	10	53	37	4,27	Very High
I want to spend my money on other products from KooD		5	23	40	32	3,99	High
Total Average						4,09	High

Source: Primary data, 2024

The hypotheses were tested using path analysis to determine whether there is a direct influence between the experiential marketing variable and the satisfaction and behavioral intention variables. Below are the results of structural calculation 1 to identify the influence of experiential marketing (X) on satisfaction (Y1).

 Table 4. Results of Path Analysis for Regression Structure 1

Model	Unstand Coefficie		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.		
	В	Std. Error	Beta				
(Constant)	1,867	0,942		1,982	0,050		
Experiential Marketing	0,517	0,047	0,746	11,090	<0,001		
Dependent Variable: Satisfaction							
$R^2 = 0,557$							
Sig. F = <0,001							

Source: Primary data, 2024

The data processing results show a significance value of less than 0,05, indicating that the experiential marketing variable has a significant positive effect on satisfaction. The regression coefficient value for experiential marketing (β_2) is positive at 0,746, meaning that if experiential marketing increases, satisfaction will increase by 0,746. The total determination

value (R Square), representing the influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable, is 0,557 or 55,7%. This means 55,7% of the satisfaction variable is influenced by experiential marketing, while the remaining 44,3% is influenced by other factors outside the research model. The structural equation 1 obtained is as follows:

$$\mathbf{Y}_1 = \boldsymbol{\beta}_2 \mathbf{X} + \mathbf{e}_1$$

$$Y_1 = 0,746 + e_1$$

Here are the data processing and calculation results from structural equation 2 to determine the influence of experiential marketing (X) and satisfaction (Y1) on behavioral intentions (Y2).

Model	Unstand Coeffici	lardized ents	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.		
	В	Std. Error	Beta				
(Constant)	2,324	1,161		2,002	0,048		
Experiential Marketing	0,240	0,085	0,322	2,838	0,006		
Satisfaction	0,423	0,122	0,393	3,462	<0,001		
Dependent Variable: Behavioral Intentions							
$R^2 = 0,447$							
Sig. F = <0,001							

Table 5. Results of Path Analysis for Regression Structure 2

Source: Primary data, 2024

The data processing results show that the significance value is less than 0,05, indicating that the variables experiential marketing and satisfaction have a significant positive effect on behavioral intentions. The regression coefficient value for experiential marketing (β_1) is positive at 0,322, meaning that if experiential marketing increases, behavioral intentions will increase by 0,322. The regression coefficient value for satisfaction (β_3) is positive at 0,393, meaning that if satisfaction increases, behavioral intentions will increase by 0,393. The total determination value (R Square) is 0,447 or 44,7 percent. This means that 44,7 percent of the variables experiential marketing and satisfaction are influenced by behavioral intentions, while the remaining 55,3 percent are influenced by other factors outside the research model. The structural equation 2 obtained is as follows:

 $Y_2 = \beta_1 X + \beta_3 Y_1 + e_2$

 $Y_2 = 0,322 + 0,393 + e_2$

The indirect effect of the experiential marketing variable (X) on behavioral intention (Y2) through satisfaction (Y1) as a mediating variable can be calculated using the following formula:

Indirect Effect = $\beta 2 \times \beta 3$

$$= 0,746 \times 0,393$$

= 0,293

The total effect of the experiential marketing variable (X) on behavioral intention (Y2) through satisfaction (Y1) can be calculated using the following formula:

Total Effect
$$= \beta 1 + (\beta 2 \times \beta 3)$$

= 0,322 + (0,746 × 0,393)
= 0,615

Based on structural equations 1 and 2, the path coefficient model diagram can be constructed. However, the *error* variable values need to be calculated first using the following formula:

$$e = \sqrt{1 - R^2}$$

$$e_1 = \sqrt{1 - 0.557} = 0.665$$

$$e_2 = \sqrt{1 - 0.447} = 0.744$$

From the calculation of the *error* influence (*e*) above, the *error* influence (*e*₁) is 0,665 and the *error* influence (*e*₂) is 0,744. Therefore, the total determination coefficient can be calculated using the following formula:

$$R_m^2 = 1 - (e_1)^2 (e_2)^2$$

$$R_m^2 = 1 - (0,665)^2 (0,744)^2$$

$$R_m^2 = 1 - (0,442225) (0,553536)$$

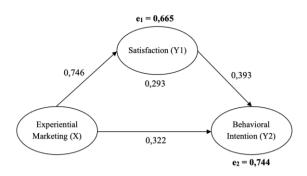
$$R_m^2 = 1 - 0,24$$

$$R_m^2 = 0,76$$

The calculation of the total determination coefficient above indicates that 76 percent of the experiential marketing variable is influenced by satisfaction and behavioral intentions, while the remaining 24 percent is influenced by other factors not included in the model.

Figure of the Final Path Model Diagram shows the magnitude of the effect of experiential marketing on satisfaction and behavioral intentions, as well as the magnitude of the effect of the satisfaction variable on behavioral intentions, obtained from the *standardized coefficients* Beta and the magnitude of each *error* variable from each structural equation.

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Source: Primary data, 2024

Figure 1. Final Path Model Diagram

Based on the data processing and calculations above, the score of the direct influence, indirect influence, and total influence of the variables experiential marketing, satisfaction, and behavioral intention can be summarized in Table 6 as follows.

Table 6. Direct Influence, Indirect Influence, and Total Influence

Variable	Direct Influence	Indirect Influence	Total Influence				
$X \rightarrow Y1$	0,746		0,746				
$Y1 \rightarrow Y2$	0,393		0,393				
$X \rightarrow Y2$	0,322	0,293	0,615				

Source: Primary data, 2024

The Sobel test is used to examine the strength of the indirect influence of the experiential marketing variable (X) on the behavioral intention variable (Y2) through the satisfaction variable (Y1). The indirect effect is calculated by multiplying the unstandardized path coefficient from X to Y1 (a) with the path coefficient from Y1 to Y2 (b), represented as ab. The standard *errors* of coefficients a and b are denoted as S_a dan S_b , respectively, while the standard *error* of the indirect effect is denoted as S_{ab} .

$$Z = \frac{ab}{S_{ab}}$$

$$Z = \frac{ab}{\sqrt{(b^2 S_a^2) + (a^2 S_b^2)}}$$

$$Z = \frac{0,517 \times 0,423}{\sqrt{(0,423 \times 0,047)^2 + (0,517 \times 0,122)^2}}$$

$$Z = \frac{0,218691}{\sqrt{0,019881^2 + 0,063074^2}}$$

$$Z = \frac{0,218691}{\sqrt{0,000395 + 0,003978}}$$

$$Z = \frac{0,218691}{\sqrt{0,004374}}$$

$$Z = \frac{0,218691}{0,066133}$$

$$Z = 3,307$$

Based on the z-value results 3.307, which is greater than 1.96. Thus, it can be concluded that H_0 is rejected, and H_1 is accepted. This means the satisfaction variable is considered capable of positively and significantly mediating the influence of experiential marketing on behavioral intention toward the KooD brand.

5. DISCUSSION

The analysis results for H_1 regarding the influence of experiential marketing on behavioral intention demonstrate that experiential marketing has a positive and significant effect on consumer behavioral intention, thus supporting the first hypothesis. Behavioral intention is the result of the consumption experience process, where the tendency of this intention determines whether the experience provides positive outcomes for the company. Positive behavioral intention is explained through the outcome indicators used in this study, including repurchase intention, intention to recommend through word-of-mouth, and willingness to pay a premium price. The findings support the theory of experiential marketing as an effective strategy for creating positive consumer behavioral intentions by delivering meaningful experiences through deep emotional, sensory, and social engagement with consumers. This study's results are consistent with previous research, which indicates that experiential marketing positively and significantly impacts consumer behavioral intentions (Julyastini et al., 2023; Achmad & Aruan, 2023; Rather & Hollebeek, 2021).

The analysis results for H₂ regarding the influence of experiential marketing on satisfaction demonstrate that experiential marketing has a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction, thus supporting the second hypothesis. This finding aligns with the experiential marketing theory, which emphasizes direct customer involvement in experiencing a brand. It is consistent with the research indicators, which include sense, which focuses on products and experiences that meet customer expectations, enhancing their satisfaction. A feel is related to the emotional stimuli that make customers happy with the brand's influence. Think, reflecting consumers' enjoyment of the ideas presented by the company. An act is associated with the impressions consumers gain regarding the intent to change behavior and lifestyle following their interaction with the brand. Relate refers to the impression that the business concept aligns with the customers' culture. This study's findings also align with previous research, which has shown that experiential marketing has a positive and significant impact on customer satisfaction (Soliha et al., 2021; Urdea et al., 2021; Araci et al., 2017).

The analysis results for H_3 regarding the influence of satisfaction on behavioral intention demonstrate that satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on customer

behavioral intention, thus supporting the third hypothesis. The increasing complexity of consumer purchasing behavior indicates growing consumer demand. Companies that can ensure consumer satisfaction are deemed capable of fostering positive behavioral intentions. These findings align with consumer satisfaction theory, which explains consumer attitudes, evaluations, and emotional responses following the purchasing and process of consumption. This study's findings also align with previous research, which has shown that experiential marketing has a positive and significant impact on customer satisfaction (Dewi & Giantari, 2022; Tran & Le, 2020; Annaraud & Berezina, 2020).

The analysis results for H₄ regarding the mediating effect of consumer satisfaction between experiential marketing and consumer behavioral intention demonstrate that satisfaction positively and significantly mediates the influence of experiential marketing on behavioral intention, thus supporting the fourth hypothesis. This study is consistent with previous research, which concludes that satisfaction mediates experiential marketing and consumer behavioral intention (Yogiswari et al., 2023; Respati, 2022; Syachadi & Widyastuti, 2021).

The theoretical implications of this research are rooted in the framework of experiential learning theory, which posits that experiences influence consumer behavioral intentions based on knowledge and understanding derived from direct involvement. Experiential marketing is an extension of this theory, emphasizing that effective experiential marketing can foster high satisfaction with a product, ultimately encouraging positive behavioral intentions. On the practical side, this research offers actionable recommendations for KooD to design consumer experiences focusing on the think element. For example, present to consumers the quality of raw ingredients, production process, and health benefits of KooD's products so that they better understand and appreciate the pricing offered. Another recommendation for the company is to ensure customer satisfaction by focusing on service elements. For example, the restaurant can conduct regular employee evaluations and training to provide friendlier, more responsive, personalized service. This reference aims to encourage consumers' behavioral intentions to make repeat purchases or recommend KooD products to others.

6. CONCLUSION

This study proves that experiential marketing has a positive and significant effect on customer behavioral intentions, experiential marketing has a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction, satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on customer behavioral intentions, and satisfaction positively and significantly mediates the relationship between experiential marketing and behavioral intentions. KooD management is endorsed to actively encourage customers to adopt healthier eating habits after their visits and improve customers comfort through better interior design to encourage longer stays. For future research, explore different variables or models and expand the study scope to provide broader perspectives and more comprehensive benefits.

LIMITATION

This study has been proposed and conducted by scientific procedures. However, it has several limitations. These include a sample size of only 100 respondents and a discussion limited to consumer perceptions of KooD's vegan products. Therefore, the findings of this study cannot be generalized to other business environments, and there may be additional variables influencing purchasing decisions beyond the model used in this research.

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