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Building Loyalty Amid Café Competition: The Role of Experiential Marketing through Customer Engagement, Self-Expression Value, and Hedonic Value in Cafés in Jambi

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the effect of experiential marketing on customer loyalty through customer engagement, self-expression value, and hedonic value at cafés in Jambi. The study is motivated by the rapid growth of cafés and coffee shops in Jambi City, which has intensified business competition. This research employed a quantitative approach using a survey method. The population of this study consisted of café customers in Jambi City, with a total sample of 135 respondents. The data analysis technique used was Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS). The results indicate that experiential marketing has a positive and significant effect on customer engagement, self-expression value, hedonic value, and customer loyalty at cafés in Jambi City. Furthermore, customer engagement does not have a significant effect on customer loyalty. Meanwhile, self-expression value and hedonic value were found to have a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty. Therefore, customer loyalty at cafés in Jambi City is more strongly influenced by emotional experiences, enjoyment, and the alignment between customers' lifestyles and the café concept.

Keyword: Experiential Marketing, Customer Engagement, Self-Expression Value, Hedonic Value, Customer Loyalty, Cafe.

INTRODUCTION

The development of the café and coffee shop–based culinary industry in recent years has shown remarkably rapid growth, particularly in urban areas. Cafés are no longer viewed merely as places to enjoy food and beverages; rather, they have evolved into social spaces, workplaces, entertainment venues, and mediums for self-expression in modern society, especially among younger generations. This phenomenon has intensified competition among café businesses to create unique and memorable experiences for customers. In the context of the experience economy, modern consumers tend to place greater emphasis on emotional, symbolic, and hedonic aspects rather than solely on the functional benefits of the products or services offered (Rashid et al., 2021).

A similar phenomenon can also be observed in the development of cafés in Jambi, which has experienced significant growth in recent years. The emergence of various café concepts, such as Instagrammable cafés, live music cafés, coworking coffee shops, and community-based cafés, indicates that business competition is no longer focused solely on product quality and pricing, but also on the ability to create unique customer experiences. This condition has made customer loyalty a major challenge for café business owners. In an increasingly competitive market environment, customers have numerous alternative choices; therefore, business owners need to build emotional connections that encourage repeat visits and maintain customers' attachment to a particular café (Fakhrurozi et al., 2025).

From the perspective of modern marketing, the experiential marketing approach is considered one of the most effective strategies for creating emotional connections between customers and companies. Experiential marketing emphasizes the creation of sensory, affective, cognitive, behavioral, and relational experiences that can shape customers' positive perceptions of a brand or business establishment (Guillen et al., 2025; Feng et al., 2025; and Lu et al., 2023). Research by Rashid et al. (2021) found that experiences created through service interactions and the physical environment of cafés positively influence customer loyalty through the formation of experiential value. These findings are supported by Setiawati (2025), who stated that experiential marketing is able to enhance customer loyalty by increasing perceived service value in the restaurant and café industry. Therefore, customer experience has become a crucial element in sustaining café businesses amid increasingly intense competition.

In addition to customer experience, current café consumer behavior also highlights the importance of customer engagement in building long-term relationships with a brand or business establishment. Modern customers are no longer passive; instead, they actively engage through social media interactions, digital reviews, recommendations, and participation in café communities. Research by An and Han (2020) demonstrated that an experience-based retail environment can encourage the development of customer engagement, which ultimately enhances customer value and repeat purchase behavior. Meanwhile, Ting et al. (2021) and Dananjoyo et al. (2024) stated that customer engagement functions not only as a form of ordinary interaction, but also as a mechanism for fostering sustainable customer loyalty. In the café context, customer engagement has become increasingly important because customers' activities on social media can influence the café's image while simultaneously expanding digital promotion through electronic word of mouth.

On the other hand, contemporary café customer behavior cannot be separated from the need for self-expression value. Customers choose certain cafés not only because of product quality, but also because they feel that a particular brand is able to represent their identity. As a result, a strong emotional attachment emerges, leading customers to maintain long-term relationships with the brand (Rather et al., 2022).

Cafés with aesthetic designs, unique concepts, and distinctive atmospheres are often used as a means of self-actualization as well as a representation of customers' lifestyles, particularly among younger generations. This phenomenon indicates that consumption behavior in the café industry has shifted from a utilitarian orientation toward symbolic and emotional consumption. In this context, customers are not only purchasing products, but also buying experiences and the social meanings attached to the cafés they visit (Rashid et al., 2021).

In addition, hedonic value has also become an important factor in the behavior of modern café customers. Consumers tend to seek experiences that provide pleasure, entertainment, comfort, and emotional satisfaction while spending time in cafés. Rashid et al. (2021) stated that modern coffee shop customers place greater emphasis on hedonic attributes rather than functional attributes in the consumption process. This condition indicates that

customer loyalty is influenced not only by product and service quality, but also by the café's ability to create enjoyable and memorable experiences for customers. Therefore, emotional and hedonic aspects have become essential elements in building customer loyalty in the modern café industry (Tyrväinen et al., 2020).

Empirically, numerous previous studies have examined the relationship between experiential marketing and customer loyalty (Guillen et al., 2025; Feng et al., 2025; Lu et al., 2023; Indahsari et al., 2023; Mahmudah et al., 2024; Chen et al., 2022; Muljani, 2021; and Ali et al., 2021). However, most previous studies have primarily positioned customer satisfaction and service value as the main mediating variables. Research that simultaneously integrates customer engagement, self-expression value, and hedonic value as mechanisms for shaping café customer loyalty remains relatively limited. Furthermore, most prior studies were conducted in the context of large restaurants, modern retail businesses, and international brands, with relatively few studies specifically examining the behavior of local café customers in developing regions such as Jambi.

Based on the above discussion, there appears to be a research gap, both explicitly and implicitly. Explicitly, previous studies have rarely examined the relationship between experiential marketing and customer loyalty through the combined roles of customer engagement, self-expression value, and hedonic value within a single integrated research model. Implicitly, the transformation of café consumer behavior, where cafés function as social spaces and mediums for self-expression, indicates a shift in consumption behavior that has not been widely explored in café marketing research in Indonesia, particularly within the local context of Jambi.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze: (1) the effect of experiential marketing on customer engagement; (2) the effect of experiential marketing on self-expression value; (3) the effect of experiential marketing on hedonic value; (4) the effect of experiential marketing on customer loyalty; (5) the effect of customer engagement on customer loyalty; (6) the effect of self-expression value on customer loyalty; (7) the effect of hedonic value on customer loyalty; (8) the effect of experiential marketing on customer loyalty through customer engagement; (9) the effect of experiential marketing on customer loyalty through self-expression value; and (10) the effect of experiential marketing on customer loyalty through hedonic value.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative approach using a survey method to analyze the effect of experiential marketing on customer loyalty through customer engagement, self-expression value, and hedonic value at cafés in Jambi. A quantitative approach was chosen because this study aims to objectively examine the relationships among variables through numerical measurement and statistical analysis. According to John W. Creswell, a quantitative approach is used to test theories by investigating relationships among variables through research instruments and statistical data analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The population of this study consisted of all café customers in Jambi City. The sample size was determined based on the recommendations for Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) analysis. According to Hair et al. (2021), the minimum sample size for SEM-PLS ranges from 5–10 times the number of research indicators. Since this study employed 27 measurement indicators, the recommended sample size was 135 respondents ($27 \times 5 = 135$). Because the exact population size was unknown due to the absence of official data regarding the number of café customers in Jambi City, this study used a non-probability sampling technique with a purposive sampling approach. This technique was selected because the researcher established specific criteria for respondents in accordance with the objectives of the study. The respondent criteria included customers who had visited cafés in

Jambi City at least twice within the last six months and were at least 17 years old. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2019), purposive sampling is used when researchers require respondents with specific characteristics relevant to the research objectives.

The data analysis technique used in this study was Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) with the assistance of SmartPLS software. SEM-PLS was chosen because it is capable of analyzing complex relationships among latent variables, including mediating effects, simultaneously within a single research model. In addition, SEM-PLS is suitable for exploratory research and theory development, particularly when data distribution does not necessarily have to be normal (Hair et al., 2021). The stages of analysis included outer model testing, consisting of validity and reliability tests, as well as inner model testing to examine the relationships among variables and the mediating effects within the research model.

This study consists of five variables: one exogenous variable (Experiential Marketing), three intervening variables (Customer Engagement, Self-Expression Value, and Hedonic Value), and one endogenous variable (Customer Loyalty). The measurement indicators for each variable are presented in the following table.

Table 1. Operational Variable

Table 1: Operational Variable		
Variable	Measurement	Indicator
X_ Experiential Marketing	Sense Experience (EM1)	1. Attractive design and atmosphere
	Feel Experience (EM2)	2. Feeling comfortable and pleasant
	Think Experience (EM3)	3. A unique and creative experience
	Act Experience (EM4)	4. Supporting lifestyle
	Relate Experience (EM5)	5. Social interaction
Source: Schmitt (1999)		
M1_ Customer Engagement	Cognitive Engagement (CE1)	6. Have an interest
	Emotional Engagement (CE2)	7. Paying attention to developments
		8. There is a feeling of joy
Source: Hollebeek et al (2014)	Behavioral Engagement (CE3)	9. Having emotional closeness
		10. Actively interact
M2_ Self-Expression Value	12. Reflection of Lifestyle (SEV1)	
	13. Self-image (SEV2)	
	14. Self-expression (SEV3)	
	15. Reflection of personality (SEV4)	
	16. Social identity (SEV5)	
M3_ Hedonic Values	17. Pleasure (HV1)	
	18. Entertainment (HV2)	
	19. Fantasy (HV3)	
	20. Excitement (HV4)	
	21. Escapism (H5V)	
	22. Enjoyment (HV6)	
Y_ Loyalty	23. Repeat Visit Intention (LY1)	
	24. Recommendation Intention (LY2)	
Source: Oliver (1999)	25. Preference Commitment (LY3)	
	26. Relationship Continuity (LY4)	
	27. Emotional Attachment (LY5)	

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Profile

The characteristics of respondents in this study include gender, age group, and occupation. This information is important because it helps explain the characteristics of café consumers in Jambi and provides an overview of the dominant customer groups represented in this study. The respondent profiles in this study are presented in Table 2 below.

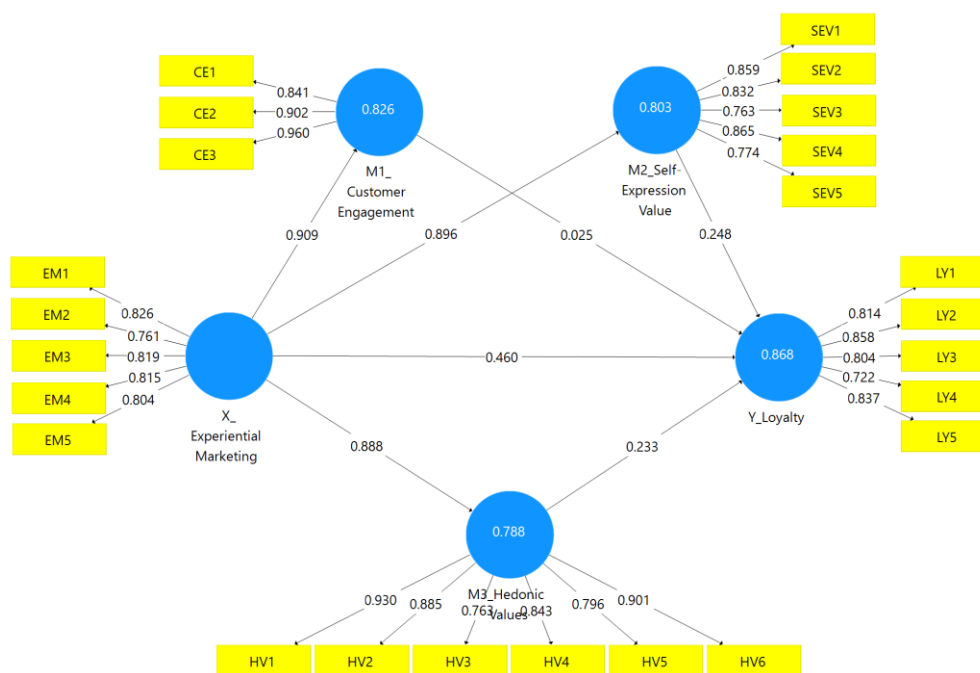
Table 2. Respondent Profile

No	Respondent Profile	Amount	Percentage (%)
1	Gender		
	Man	84	62.22
	Woman	51	37.78
	Amount	135	100
2	Age Group		
	< 25 Years	73	54.07
	25 – 35 Years	33	24.44
	36 – 45 Years	18	13.33
	> 45 Years	11	8.15
	Amount	135	100
3	Work		
	Civil Servant	12	8.89
	Army/Police	9	6.67
	Private Employee	19	14.07
	Self-Employed	26	19.26
	Students	69	51.11
	Amount	135	100

Source: Primary Data (2026)

Evaluation of the Measurement Model (Outer Model)

Before analyzing the relationships among variables in the structural model (inner model), it is necessary to evaluate the measurement model (outer model). This evaluation aims to assess the relationship between the indicators and the measured latent variable constructs. In Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) analysis, outer model testing is conducted to measure the validity and reliability of indicators through outer loading values. These values indicate how well the indicators reflect their corresponding latent variables. According to Hair et al. (2021), an indicator is considered to meet convergent validity if its outer loading value exceeds 0.70. The higher the outer loading value, the better the indicator represents the research variable construct. The results of the full outer model testing in this study are presented in the following figure.


Figure 1. Full Outer Model

Based on the results of the full outer model shown in the figure, all indicators of the research variables have outer loading values above 0.70. Therefore, all indicators are considered valid and appropriate for use in this study.

Another method that can be used to test the discriminant validity of reflective constructs is by comparing the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct with the correlations among constructs in the model. Good discriminant validity is indicated when the square root of the AVE for each construct is greater than its squared correlation with other constructs (Ghozali & Latan, 2015). The results of the discriminant validity test are presented in the following table:

Table 3. Fornell-Larcker criterion

	M1_ Customer Engagement	M2_Self- Expression Value	M3_ Hedonic Values	X_ Experiential Marketing	Y_Loyalty
M1_Customer Engagement	0.902				
M2_Self-Expression Value	0.832	0.850			
M3_Hedonic Values	0.815	0.805	0.855		
X_Experiential Marketing	0.809	0.816	0.788	0.835	
Y_Loyalty	0.780	0.792	0.725	0.711	0.808

Source: SmartPLS 3 output (2026)

Based on Table 3, all constructs in this study meet the Fornell-Larcker criterion. This can be seen from the square root of the AVE values on the main diagonal, which are consistently higher than the correlations among constructs. The square root of the AVE for M1 (0.902) is higher than its correlations with other constructs (maximum 0.832). Likewise, M2 (0.850) is greater than its highest correlation (0.832). M3 (0.855) also exceeds its maximum correlation value (0.815). The value for X (0.835) surpasses its highest correlation (0.816), while Y (0.808) is also greater than its maximum correlation (0.792). Therefore, all constructs demonstrate good discriminant validity.

After confirming that convergent and discriminant validity have been achieved, the next step is to assess the reliability of each construct. Reliability was measured using two criteria: Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR). According to Hair et al. (2021), a construct is considered reliable if the values of Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability exceed 0.70. The results of the reliability testing in this study are presented in the following table.

Table 4. Reliability Test Results

	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Result
M1_Customer Engagement	0.884	0.929	Reliable
M2_Self-Expression Value	0.877	0.911	Reliable
M3_Hedonic Values	0.925	0.942	Reliable
X_Experiential Marketing	0.864	0.902	Reliable
Y_Loyalty	0.866	0.904	Reliable

Source: SmartPLS 3 output (2026)

Based on Table 4, the results of the reliability testing indicate that all constructs in this study are considered reliable. This is because all constructs have Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) values above 0.70. Therefore, it can be concluded that the indicators forming each construct demonstrate good internal consistency. Thus, the measurement model is considered to have met the reliability criteria.

Structural Model Test Results (Inner Model)

After the measurement model (outer model) was confirmed to meet the validity and reliability criteria, the next step was to test the structural model (inner model). Inner model testing aims to evaluate the relationships among latent variables or constructs that have been hypothesized in the study.

The R-Square analysis aims to assess the quality level of the proposed research model. An R-Square value of 0.75 indicates a strong relationship, a value of 0.50 indicates a moderate relationship, and a value of 0.25 reflects a weak relationship (Ghozali & Latan, 2015). The results of the testing are explained in detail in Table 3 below.

Table 5. R-Square Test Results

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
M1 Customer Engagement	0.826	0.825
M2 Self-Expression Value	0.803	0.802
M3 Hedonic Values	0.788	0.787
Y Loyalty	0.868	0.864

Source: SmartPLS Output 3 (2026).

The R-Square test results presented in Table 5 above indicate that Experiential Marketing is able to explain 82.6% of the variance in Customer Engagement (M1) (R-Square = 0.826), while the remaining 17.4% is explained by other variables outside the model. For Self-Expression Value (M2), the R-Square value is 0.803 or 80.3%, while for Hedonic Values (M3), it is 0.788 or 78.8%. Meanwhile, the R-Square value for Loyalty (Y) reaches 0.868 or 86.8%, which is the highest value among all endogenous variables.

After determining the predictive capability of the model through the R-Square analysis, the testing proceeded with structural model (hypothesis) analysis to examine the relationships among constructs. The results of the structural model testing were obtained through bootstrapping after removing invalid items from the model. The results of the structural model testing are presented in Table 6 below.

Table 6. Path Coefficients

	Original Sample (O)
X Experiential Marketing -> Y Loyalty	0.460
X Experiential Marketing -> M1 Customer Engagement	0.909
X Experiential Marketing -> M2 Self-Expression Value	0.896
X Experiential Marketing -> M3 Hedonic Values	0.888
M1 Customer Engagement -> Y Loyalty	0.025
M2 Self-Expression Value -> Y Loyalty	0.248
M3 Hedonic Values -> Y Loyalty	0.233
X Experiential Marketing -> M1 Customer Engagement -> Y Loyalty	0.023
X Experiential Marketing -> M2 Self-Expression Value -> Y Loyalty	0.223
X Experiential Marketing -> M3 Hedonic Values -> Y Loyalty	0.207

Source: SmartPLS Output 3 (2026).

The path coefficient results indicate that Experiential Marketing (X) has a very strong direct effect on M1 (0.909), M2 (0.896), and M3 (0.888), as well as a moderate direct effect on Y (0.460). The direct effect of M1 on Y is very weak (0.025), whereas the effects of M2 (0.248) and M3 (0.233) on Y are considered moderate. Through indirect pathways, the effect of X on Y through M2 (0.223) and M3 (0.207) is greater than the effect through M1 (0.023). Therefore, M2 and M3 serve as more effective mediating variables in this model.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing aims to examine the relationships among constructs, where the model is tested using the bootstrapping procedure. The significance of the relationships is determined based on the p-value. If the p-value is less than 0.05 at a 5% significance level, the relationship is considered positive and significant, and the hypothesis is accepted. Conversely, if the p-value is greater than 0.05, the relationship is considered not significant. A summary of the test results is presented in Figure 2 and Table 7.

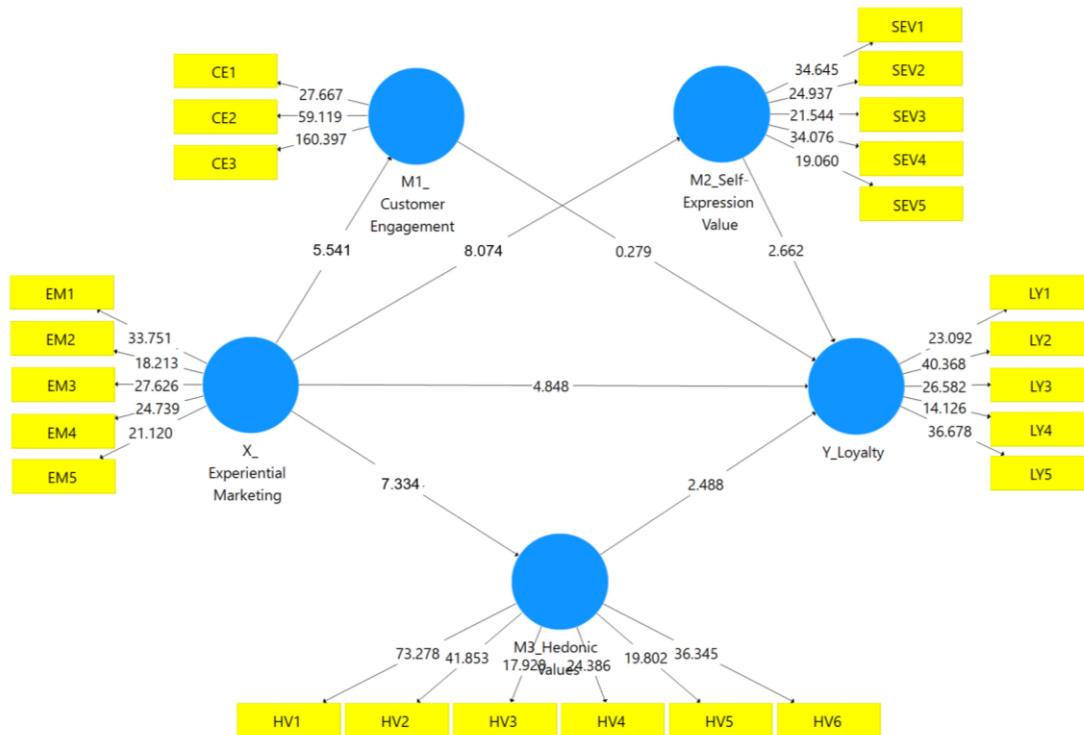


Figure 2. Research Construct Relationship Model Using the Bootstrapping Method

Table 7. Direct and Indirect Influence

Hypothesis	Variabel Laten	T Statistics	P Value	Results
H1	EM → CE	5.541	0.000	Accepted
H2	EM → SEV	8.074	0.000	Accepted
H3	EM → HV	7.334	0.000	Accepted
H4	EM → LY	4.848	0.000	Accepted
H5	CE → LY	0.279	0.780	Rejected
H6	SEV → LY	2.662	0.008	Accepted
H7	HV → LY	2.488	0.013	Accepted
H8	EM → CE → LY	0.278	0.781	Rejected
H9	EM → SEV → LY	2.642	0.008	Accepted
H10	EM → HV → LY	2.458	0.014	Accepted

Note: EM = Experiential Marketing; CE = Customer Engagement; SEV = Self-Expression Value; HV = Hedonic Values; LY = Loyalty

Source: Smart PLS Output 3 (2026).

Discussion

1. The Influence of Experiential Marketing on Customer Engagement

The results of the first hypothesis test indicate that Experiential Marketing has a positive and significant effect on Customer Engagement among café customers in Jambi. These findings suggest that the better the experience provided by the café to its customers, the higher the level of customer engagement with the café. This result supports the theory

proposed by Schmitt (1999), which explains that customer experiences through the dimensions of sense, feel, think, act, and relate are able to create emotional connections between customers and companies. In the context of this study, the experiences provided by cafés were able to encourage greater customer engagement.

The findings of this study are also consistent with several previous studies. Research conducted by Rather (2020) found that customer experience significantly influences customer engagement in the hospitality and tourism industries. Furthermore, An and Han (2020) explained that enjoyable consumption experiences can enhance customer engagement in experience-based environments. Research by Rather and Hollebeek (2021) also demonstrated that experiential marketing has a positive effect on customer engagement through the interactive experiences perceived by customers.

Similar findings were reported by Rasool et al. (2023), who stated that strong experiential marketing is capable of enhancing customers' emotional and behavioral engagement in the service industry. In addition, research by Cheung et al. (2021) showed that customer experiences created through interactions and consumption value can encourage customers to participate more actively with a brand or place of consumption. Therefore, the results of this study reinforce previous findings that Experiential Marketing is an important factor in building Customer Engagement.

2. The Influence of Experiential Marketing on Self-Expression Value

Based on the results of the second hypothesis test, it was found that Experiential Marketing has a positive and significant effect on Self-Expression Value among café customers in Jambi. These findings indicate that the better the experience provided by the café to its customers, the higher the level of self-expression value perceived by the customers.

The results of this study support the theory proposed by Schmitt (1999), which explains that Experiential Marketing is capable of creating emotional experiences. These experiences enable customers to build personal relationships with a brand or place of consumption. In the context of this study, the experiences provided by cafés encourage customers to view cafés as a means of self-actualization and as part of their lifestyle.

In addition to supporting the theory, the findings of this study are also consistent with several previous studies. Research by Wallace et al. (2014) explained that customer experience and engagement with a brand can strengthen self-expressive brands, namely a brand's ability to represent customers' identities. Furthermore, research by Kim and Sullivan (2019) found that unique and symbolic consumption experiences can enhance customers' self-expression toward fashion and lifestyle brands. Research by Roy et al. (2020) also demonstrated that customer experience influences the formation of consumer identity through symbolic consumption.

Similar findings were reported by Hwang and Choi (2020), who explained that emotional experiences and the atmosphere of a consumption venue can strengthen customers' psychological connection to their social identity. In addition, research by Iglesias et al. (2020) showed that strong brand experiences can create identity-based relationships between customers and brands, making customers feel that the brand is able to represent themselves. Therefore, the results of this study reinforce previous findings that Experiential Marketing is an important factor in shaping customers' Self-Expression Value.

3. The Influence of Experiential Marketing on Hedonic Values

The results of the next hypothesis test in this study indicate that Experiential Marketing has a positive and significant effect on Hedonic Values among café customers in Jambi. These findings suggest that the better the experience provided by the café to its customers, the higher the hedonic value perceived by the customers.

The findings of this study support the theory proposed by Schmitt (1999), which explains that Experiential Marketing focuses on creating experiences. These experiences are

capable of generating pleasure and emotional satisfaction for customers. In the context of this study, the experiences provided by cafés enhance customers' feelings of enjoyment, excitement, entertainment, and escapism, thereby encouraging the formation of hedonic value.

The results of this study are also consistent with several previous studies. For example, Jain et al. (2020) found that customer experiences created through atmosphere, interaction, and sensory experiences can enhance customers' hedonic value in the context of modern consumption. Pleasant experiences allow customers to gain feelings of enjoyment, entertainment, and emotional satisfaction during the consumption process. In addition, research by Busalim et al. (2021) explained that emotional and interactive consumption experiences have a positive effect on the formation of customers' hedonic value, particularly in lifestyle- and customer experience-based industries.

Similar findings were also reported by Rasool et al. (2023), who explained that experiential value has a positive influence on customers' emotional value during the consumption process. Furthermore, research by Khan et al. (2020) found that strong customer experiences can increase customers' feelings of enjoyment and emotional value in the context of retail and lifestyle consumption. Therefore, the results of this study reinforce previous findings that Experiential Marketing is an important factor in shaping customers' Hedonic Values.

The findings of this study indicate that amid increasingly intense café competition in Jambi, café managers need to pay attention to the overall customer experience, not merely product quality. Cafés that are able to create comfortable, aesthetic, and enjoyable atmospheres are more likely to provide hedonic value to customers. This condition is important because modern café customers tend to view cafés as places for entertainment, relaxation, and enjoyable emotional experiences as part of their lifestyle.

4. The Influence of Experiential Marketing on Loyalty

Based on the results of the fourth hypothesis test, it was found that Experiential Marketing has a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty at cafés in Jambi. These findings indicate that the better the experience provided by the café to its customers, the higher the level of customer loyalty toward the café.

The results of this study support the theory proposed by Schmitt (1999), which explains that Experiential Marketing focuses on creating experiences. These experiences are capable of establishing emotional connections between customers and companies, thereby encouraging the formation of customer loyalty. In the context of this study, the experiences provided by cafés are able to create emotional comfort and customer attachment to the café, leading customers to maintain long-term relationships with the establishment.

In addition to supporting the theory, the findings of this study are also consistent with the study conducted by Rather (2020), which found that customer experience has a positive effect on customer loyalty in the hospitality and tourism industries. Pleasant experiences are able to create emotional satisfaction, encouraging customers to revisit and maintain relationships with the company.

Research by Khan et al. (2020) also showed that positive customer experiences can enhance customer commitment and loyalty in the context of retail and lifestyle consumption. Furthermore, research by Iglesias et al. (2020) found that strong brand experiences can strengthen customers' emotional relationships with brands, thereby fostering customer loyalty. Similar findings were reported by Brakus et al. (2009), who explained that positive brand experiences are capable of increasing customer loyalty through emotional attachment and memorable consumption experiences. In addition, research by Nysveen and Pedersen (2014) found that strong customer experiences can strengthen customers' emotional relationships with a brand, thereby encouraging the formation of customer loyalty.

Therefore, the results of this study reinforce previous findings that Experiential Marketing is an important factor in building customer loyalty. Amid increasingly intense café competition in Jambi, café managers need to create unique, comfortable, and memorable customer experiences so that customers not only visit to consume products, but also gain emotional and social experiences that encourage them to remain loyal to the café.

5. The Influence of Customer Engagement on Loyalty

Based on the results of the fifth hypothesis test, it was found that Customer Engagement does not have a significant effect on customer loyalty at cafés in Jambi. These findings indicate that customer engagement with cafés has not been able to directly increase customer loyalty.

The insignificant effect of Customer Engagement on customer loyalty suggests that customer involvement with cafés in Jambi City remains situational and has not fully developed into long-term commitment. Customers may actively interact with cafés, follow café updates on social media, or share their experiences, but such engagement does not necessarily lead them to remain loyal to a particular café. This condition may occur because the intense competition among cafés in Jambi City provides customers with many alternative choices, causing them to easily switch places in search of new experiences.

This phenomenon indicates that modern café customers tend to exhibit dynamic and exploratory consumption behavior. Many customers visit cafés not because of strong attachment to a particular establishment, but rather due to trends, new atmospheres, aesthetic designs, or social media recommendations. As a result, although customers may demonstrate a certain level of engagement with cafés, such engagement is not yet strong enough to directly create loyalty. In this context, customers are more attracted to new experiences than to maintaining long-term relationships with a single café.

The results of this study are not consistent with the theory proposed by Hollebeek et al. (2014), which explains that customer engagement can build customers' emotional and behavioral relationships with a brand, thereby encouraging customer loyalty. However, the findings of this study indicate that, in the context of cafés in Jambi, customer engagement alone is not necessarily able to directly establish loyalty without the support of other factors such as emotional experiences, hedonic value, or the alignment between customers' identities and the café.

The findings of this study also differ from several previous studies that found Customer Engagement to have a positive effect on customer loyalty. Research by Rather and Hollebeek (2021) demonstrated that customer engagement can increase customer loyalty in the hospitality and tourism industries. Similarly, research by Islam et al. (2021) explained that high customer engagement can strengthen customer relationships with companies, thereby enhancing customer loyalty.

Nevertheless, the results of this study are consistent with several other studies that found Customer Engagement does not always directly affect customer loyalty. Research by Hammedi et al. (2021) explained that, in certain service contexts, customer engagement tends to influence loyalty more through mediating variables such as customer experience and emotional value. In addition, research by Fernandes and Moreira (2019) found that customer engagement does not always create loyalty when customers have a strong tendency toward variety-seeking and new consumption experiences.

Therefore, the results of this study indicate that Customer Engagement has not yet become the primary factor in shaping customer loyalty at cafés in Jambi. Customer loyalty is likely to be more strongly influenced by other factors such as consumption experiences, hedonic value, and the café's ability to represent customers' lifestyles. Consequently, café managers should not focus solely on increasing customer engagement but also need to create

unique experiences and emotional values that are capable of building long-term relationships with customers.

6. The Influence of Self-Expression on Loyalty

Based on the results of the sixth hypothesis test, it was found that Self-Expression Value has a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty at cafés in Jambi. These findings indicate that the greater a café's ability to represent customers' identities and lifestyles, the higher the level of customer loyalty toward the café.

The results of this study support the concept of self-expressive brands proposed by Wallace (2014), which explains that consumers tend to develop stronger relationships with brands that are able to represent their identities. In the context of this study, cafés are not merely viewed as places of consumption, but also as means of self-actualization and part of customers' lifestyles. Therefore, the higher the level of self-expression value perceived by customers, the higher their loyalty toward the café.

The findings of this study are also consistent with the research conducted by Wallace et al. (2014), which found that self-expressive brands have a positive effect on emotional attachment and customer loyalty. The study explained that customers tend to remain loyal to brands that reflect who they are and how they wish to be perceived by their social environment.

In addition to supporting the theory, the findings of this study are also in line with several previous studies. Research by Wallace et al. (2014) found that self-expression value positively affects customer loyalty through customers' emotional attachment to brands. Furthermore, Kim and Sullivan (2019) explained that customers tend to be loyal to brands that align with their self-image and lifestyle. Research by Roy et al. (2018) also demonstrated that symbolic consumption and customers' self-identity have a positive relationship with customer loyalty. In addition, Hidayat and Setiawati (2021) found that the congruence between customers' identities and the image of a coffee shop (self-congruity) positively influences customer loyalty.

Therefore, the results of this study reinforce that Self-Expression Value is one of the key factors in building customer loyalty at cafés in Jambi. The more customers feel that a café is able to represent themselves, the stronger their tendency to remain loyal to that café.

7. The Influence of Hedonic Values on Loyalty

Based on the results of the seventh hypothesis test, it was found that Hedonic Values have a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty at cafés in Jambi. These findings indicate that the higher the hedonic value perceived by customers, the higher the level of customer loyalty toward the café.

The results of this study support the theory proposed by Babin et al. (1994), which explains that hedonic values are associated with feelings of pleasure, entertainment, and enjoyment experienced by customers during the consumption process. In the context of this study, customers who obtain enjoyable experiences from cafés are more likely to become loyal customers.

These findings are also consistent with several previous studies. Research by Khan et al. (2020) found that customers' emotional experiences positively influence customer loyalty in the context of retail and lifestyle consumption. Furthermore, Ozturk et al. (2021) explained that hedonic value can increase customer loyalty because customers tend to maintain relationships with places that provide comfort and emotional enjoyment. Research by Rasool et al. (2023) also showed that enjoyable experiences can strengthen customers' relationships with a brand or place of consumption.

Therefore, the results of this study reinforce that Hedonic Values are one of the key factors in building customer loyalty at cafés in Jambi. The more customers feel that they gain

pleasure and positive emotional experiences, the stronger their tendency to remain loyal to the café.

8. The Influence of Experiential Marketing through Customer Engagement on Loyalty

The results of the subsequent hypothesis test indicate that Customer Engagement is unable to mediate the effect of Experiential Marketing on customer loyalty at cafés in Jambi. These findings suggest that Experiential Marketing implemented by cafés has not been able to increase customer loyalty through Customer Engagement.

The results indicate that although Experiential Marketing is capable of increasing customer engagement, such engagement has not been able to significantly encourage customer loyalty. Café customers in Jambi City tend to exhibit dynamic consumption behavior and are easily attracted to trying new cafés that are currently trending. As a result, customer engagement activities such as following café social media accounts, sharing experiences, or interacting with cafés do not necessarily make customers remain loyal to a particular café.

The findings of this study contradict the results of the study conducted by Rather and Hollebeek (2021), which found that customer engagement is able to mediate the relationship between customer experience and customer loyalty. Nevertheless, the results of this study are consistent with the research by Hammedi et al. (2021), which explained that customer engagement does not always directly lead to customer loyalty, particularly in industries driven by trends and consumption experiences.

Therefore, the findings of this study indicate that customer loyalty at cafés in Jambi is more strongly influenced by emotional experiences, hedonic value, and the alignment between customers' identities and the café, rather than by customer engagement alone. Consequently, café managers need to create more memorable experiences with strong emotional value in order to foster stronger customer loyalty toward their cafés.

9. The Influence of Experiential Marketing through Self-Expression Value on Loyalty

The results of the ninth hypothesis test indicate that Self-Expression Value is able to mediate the effect of Experiential Marketing on customer loyalty at cafés in Jambi. These findings suggest that Experiential Marketing is capable of increasing customer loyalty through Self-Expression Value.

The results of this study support the concept proposed by Schmitt (1999), which explains that Experiential Marketing can create emotional relationships with customers through the experiences perceived by them. In addition, the findings of this study are also consistent with the research conducted by Wallace et al. (2014), which found that customers tend to be more loyal to brands that are able to represent their identities. Research by Hidayat and Setiawati (2021) also demonstrated that self-congruity, or the alignment between customers' identities and a brand, has a positive effect on customer loyalty.

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the experiences provided by cafés are able to increase customer loyalty when customers feel that the cafés align with their identities and lifestyles. Comfortable café atmospheres, aesthetic designs, and attractive concepts make customers feel more confident and comfortable expressing themselves. When customers feel that a café is able to represent who they are, they tend to revisit and remain loyal to the café.

10. The Influence of Experiential Marketing through Hedonic Values on Loyalty

The results of the final hypothesis test in this study indicate that Hedonic Values are able to mediate the effect of Experiential Marketing on customer loyalty at cafés in Jambi. These findings suggest that Experiential Marketing is capable of increasing customer loyalty through the Hedonic Values perceived by customers.

The results indicate that the experiences provided by cafés are able to increase customer loyalty when customers feel pleasure and comfort while spending time in the café. Comfortable café atmospheres, attractive interior designs, music, and pleasant environments

provide customers with positive emotional experiences. When customers feel happy and enjoy the café atmosphere, they tend to revisit and remain loyal to the café.

The findings of this study support the concept proposed by Schmitt (1999), which explains that Experiential Marketing is capable of creating emotional experiences for customers. In addition, the results of this study also support the theory proposed by Babin et al. (1994), which explains that Hedonic Values are associated with the pleasure and enjoyment experienced by customers during the consumption process.

Research by Khan et al. (2020) also found that enjoyable customer experiences can increase customer loyalty through the emotional value perceived by customers. Furthermore, Rasool et al. (2023) explained that consumption experiences that provide emotional pleasure can strengthen customers' relationships with a brand or place of consumption.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. There is a positive and significant effect of Experiential Marketing on Customer Engagement at cafés in Jambi.
2. There is a positive and significant effect of Experiential Marketing on Self-Expression Value at cafés in Jambi City.
3. There is a positive and significant effect of Experiential Marketing on Hedonic Values at cafés in Jambi City.
4. There is a positive and significant effect of Experiential Marketing on customer loyalty at cafés in Jambi City.
5. There is no positive and significant effect of Customer Engagement on customer loyalty at cafés in Jambi City.
6. There is a positive and significant effect of Self-Expression Value on customer loyalty at cafés in Jambi City.
7. There is a positive and significant effect of Hedonic Values on customer loyalty at cafés in Jambi City.
8. There is no positive and significant effect of Experiential Marketing on customer loyalty through Customer Engagement at cafés in Jambi City.
9. There is a positive and significant effect of Experiential Marketing on customer loyalty through Self-Expression Value at cafés in Jambi City.
10. There is a positive and significant effect of Experiential Marketing on customer loyalty through Hedonic Values at cafés in Jambi City.

This study still has several limitations that need to be considered. First, this study was only conducted on cafe customers in Jambi City, so the results cannot necessarily be generalized to other regions with different consumer characteristics. Second, this study only used the variables of Experiential Marketing, Customer Engagement, Self-Expression Value, Hedonic Values, and customer loyalty, so there is still the possibility that other variables can influence customer loyalty, such as service quality, customer satisfaction, price, and brand image. Third, this study used a quantitative approach with a survey method through a questionnaire, so respondents' answers are highly dependent on each respondent's subjective perception. Furthermore, this study was conducted over a single time period (cross-sectional), so it is not able to observe changes in customer behavior in the long term.

Based on the research results, cafe managers in Jambi City are advised to focus more on creating unique, comfortable, and memorable customer experiences through attractive cafe concepts, aesthetic ambiance, excellent service, and enjoyable emotional experiences. This strategy is crucial because today's cafe customers are not just looking for products, but also for experiences and places that reflect their lifestyles.

Furthermore, cafe managers should also consider Self-Expression Value and Hedonic Values, as these two variables have been shown to play a significant role in building customer loyalty. Cafes need to create an identity and concept that aligns with the characteristics of their target consumers so that customers feel the cafe represents them.

For future researchers, it is recommended to include other variables that could potentially influence customer loyalty, such as customer satisfaction, service quality, electronic word of mouth (e-WOM), and brand image. Future research could also expand the research area to other cities or regions and use a longitudinal approach to more deeply examine changes in customer behavior.

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