

## The Influence of Experimental Marketing on Purchasing Decision: The Mediating Role of Brand Identity

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### Abstract

*This study explores the impact of two primary factors, namely experimental marketing and brand identity, on purchasing decisions within micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs). The main aim of this investigation is to assess how experimental marketing and brand identity affect purchasing decisions, with a specific focus on how brand identity moderates the relationship between experimental marketing and purchasing decisions. Employing partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM), the study analyzes data collected from 633 research subjects who are consumers of the brand mixue. The findings reveal that experimental marketing significantly and positively influences purchasing decisions, while resources also have a notable positive impact on purchasing decisions. Moreover, experimental marketing significantly impacts brand identity. Of particular interest is the discovery that brand identity can bolster the positive association between experimental marketing and purchasing decisions. These findings contribute substantially to our comprehension of the intricate factors shaping purchasing decisions in the Indonesian MSME context, particularly through the interaction between experimental marketing and brand identity. Consequently, the implications of this research can serve as a foundation for future marketing strategies that are both more effective and contextually appropriate.*

**Keywords:** *experimental marketing, brand identity, purchasing decision.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Consumer purchasing decisions represent a critical stage in the consumer process, where individuals must choose products or services that best suit their needs and preferences from various alternatives available in the market. Factors influencing purchasing decisions can vary, including brand identity and experimental marketing. Brand identity encompasses various attributes such as logos, colors, and overall messaging that differentiate a product or service from others, while experimental marketing emphasizes creating memorable experiences for consumers through creative and interactive activities. Both have a significant impact on consumer perceptions and preferences when selecting particular products or services. A strong brand identity can help build emotional connections between the brand and consumers, while experimental marketing can influence perceptions of product value and quality as well as create emotional drives for purchase. Thus, a deep understanding of how brand identity and experimental marketing

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influence purchasing decisions can be key to designing effective marketing strategies and winning consumers' hearts in a competitive market.

Some previous studies have shown that brand identity has a significant influence on purchasing decisions. Research has indicated that brand identity plays a critical role in building brand loyalty and fostering a positive brand identity among consumers (N. Irawan & Pu, 2020; Wang, 2021). For example, studies on cosmetic brands have shown that perceptions of brand identity directly impact purchase intentions, particularly in the Chinese and Thai markets (Y.-S. Chen et al., 2016; Mao et al., 2020). Additionally, corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives can contribute to brand identity, influencing consumer tendencies and purchasing decisions. These findings emphasize the importance of developing a strong brand identity that aligns with consumer values and preferences, thus increasing customer engagement and driving sales.

Experimental marketing is an additional factor that influences consumer behavior in the decision-making process. This approach involves experimenting with new products, services, pricing models, promotions, and other aspects through innovative methods such as gamification, immersive experiences, pop-up stores, and social media campaigns. Its goal is to emotionally engage consumers and provide them with unique interactions that foster positive associations with the brand. By creating unforgettable experiences, companies can influence customer perceptions and preferences, ultimately increasing sales and loyalty.

Essentially, experimental marketing allows brands to engage more closely with consumers, form strong emotional bonds, and strengthen long-term relationships with their customer base. Thus, experience-focused marketing strategies are key to creating differentiation in an increasingly competitive market and winning customer trust and loyalty.

Additionally, some research findings indicate how socially responsible consumption behavior (SRCB) moderates the relationship between predicted guilt and ethical consumption (Linares & Pozzo, 2018). This study revealed that some marketing appeals targeting environmental or social concerns may have different impacts depending on existing consumer purchasing identities. In other words, consumers who have a tendency to act responsibly may be more receptive to marketing strategies that emphasize environmental or social concerns, whereas others might not be as affected by such strategies. This underscores the importance of considering consumer purchasing identities when designing marketing strategies aimed at raising awareness of social or environmental issues, and how socially responsible consumption behavior can moderate the effectiveness of such strategies (Spence et al., 2016). Thus, this research provides important insights for marketing practitioners to better understand and adapt their marketing approaches to existing consumer values and purchasing identities. In summary, brand identity and experimental marketing play important roles in shaping consumer purchasing decisions.

A strong brand identity establishes trust and recognition among customers, while experimental marketing provides opportunities for engagement and meaningful interaction with the brand. Together, these factors contribute to business success in the current competitive market. While research on purchasing decisions, experimental marketing, and brand identity is crucial, research in this context is still very limited, especially in the scope of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in Indonesia. This indicates a significant knowledge gap regarding how MSMEs can effectively implement marketing strategies and brand development to enhance consumer purchasing decisions. In order to help Indonesian MSMEs grow and successfully compete in both domestic and international markets, more research is necessary to understand the specific dynamics faced by MSMEs in the local market, including difficulties and

opportunities in creating strong brand identities and implementing experimental marketing that can positively influence consumer purchasing behavior.

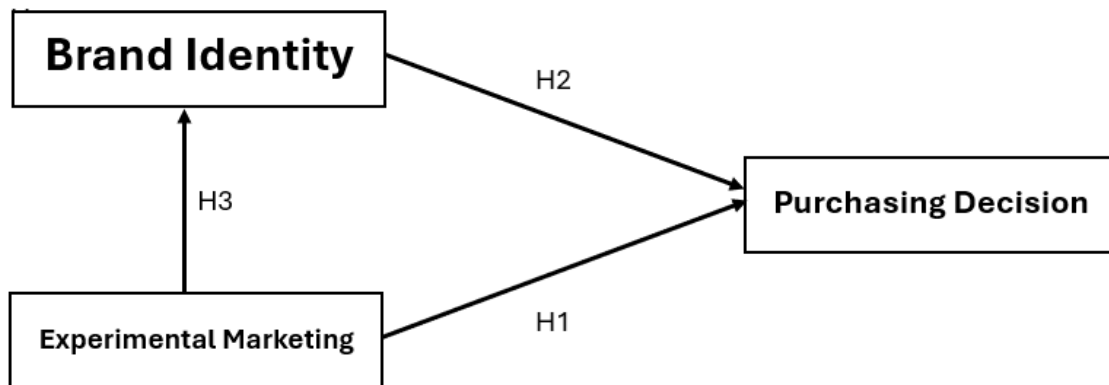
Based on the explanations above, the hypotheses of this research are:

H1: Experimental marketing has a significant influence on purchasing decisions.

H2: Brand identity has a significant influence on purchasing decisions.

H3: Experimental marketing has a significant influence on brand identity.

Fig 1: The Research Model



## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### Purchasing Decision

Purchasing decisions refer to the cognitive process involved in selecting and acquiring goods or services to fulfill specific needs or desires (Supiyandi et al., 2022). This decision-making process involves various stages, including identifying needs, evaluating alternatives, comparing features and benefits, choosing among options, and ultimately making a purchase.

Indicators of purchasing decisions are diverse, depending on the context and type of product encountered, but some common factors play a key role in influencing this process. Firstly, effective attention captures buyers' interest, bringing them closer to the offered product or service, which is a crucial initial step (T. Chen et al., 2022). Next, generated interest creates curiosity and desire, prompting buyers to delve deeper into the information about what is being offered (Zuliawaty Rajasa et al., 2023). The desire created connects buyers with the product or service on a deeper emotional level, making them more engaged and inclined to move on to the next stage. Finally, action serves as a drive for buyers to take concrete steps towards a purchase, turning interest and desire into a tangible decision to buy (Yodi et al., 2020). These four indicators work simultaneously to guide consumers through the purchasing decision-making process, from initial interest to the final decision to make a purchase.

### Experimental Marketing

Experimental marketing refers to the application of scientific methods to test various marketing strategies, tactics, and ideas in a controlled environment to gather data on their effectiveness (Hernandez et al., 2014).

Indicators of experimental marketing often involve metrics that help assess the success of specific campaigns or initiatives. Some common indicators include sales figures, which measure the volume of sales and revenue changes associated with the tested marketing strategies; customer engagement, which tracks customer interactions with marketing

materials such as website visits, email open rates, and social media engagement; brand awareness, which evaluates increases in brand recognition and recall among the target audience; and purchase intention, which monitors shifts in consumers' intent to purchase products or services after exposure to marketing campaigns (Fauzi, 2021; Linares & Pozzo, 2018; Yulisetiari et al., 2020).

#### Brand Identity

Brand identity refers to the visual and verbal elements that articulate a brand and differentiate it from its competitors. This encompasses elements such as typography, color, imagery, and their application across various forms and media, as well as brand name, logo, letterhead, business cards, tagline, packaging, and website (Foroudi et al., 2017; Mao et al., 2020). Brand identity is a way to communicate with the world and create brand experiences that drive engagement.

There are five indicators of brand identity (Essamri et al., 2019; Foroudi et al., 2017; Wang, 2021), namely place image (in the form of reputation), materiality, institution (law, regulations, organizations), relationship (power, class, gender), and society and culture (traditions, daily life). These indicators are used to analyze organizational brand identities on social media platforms such as YouTube.

### **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### Research Design and Sample

This study adopts a quantitative approach to explore the relationships between variables and measure phenomena in the form of percentages within predefined groups. The quantitative approach enables clear measurement and statistical analysis of the collected data, providing a solid foundation for drawing conclusions. The primary data collection tool used is a specially designed questionnaire aimed at measuring the variables under study. The Likert scale (ranging from 1: strongly disagree to 5: strongly agree) was employed during the data collection process to assess respondents' responses in detail. The distribution of questionnaires was carried out among Mixue customers who voluntarily participated in filling out the questionnaire, ensuring that the participants represented a sample relevant to the research topic. The research sample consists of 633 individuals, providing diversity in the obtained data and enhancing the reliability of statistical analysis. By using a specifically designed questionnaire and an adequate sample size, this study can offer valuable insights into the relationships between the variables under investigation in the context of Mixue brand customers.

#### Data Collection

This study collected data through a specially designed questionnaire aimed at exploring respondents' perceptions regarding three main variables: purchasing decisions, brand identity, and experimental marketing. The questionnaire was carefully crafted and detailed before being distributed to the research sample. By involving respondents from various diverse Mixue outlets, the study aims to obtain a representative and comprehensive understanding of the roles of purchasing decisions, brand identity, and experimental marketing in the context of MSMEs. The data collected from these questionnaires will be thoroughly analyzed to investigate the relationships and impacts of these variables within the established research framework. Thus, the meticulous and representative data collection method is expected to provide deep insights into the dynamics between purchasing decisions, brand identity, and experimental marketing in the MSME industry, which, in turn, can support the development of more effective and sustainable marketing strategies.

## Data Analysis

To analyze the collected data, this study adopts the structural equation modeling (SEM) method, specifically implementing partial least squares (PLS) analysis. A reflective PLS approach is utilized to evaluate the data. Convergence validity is assessed by measuring the correlation between indicators and latent variables through factor loading checks. Within the PLS framework, factor loading values exceeding 0.600 are considered ideal to ensure that the indicators accurately reflect the intended latent variables (B. Irawan et al., n.d., 2024). Hypothesis testing is conducted by examining path coefficients, where values less than 0.050 indicate a significant relationship between the variables under study. Conversely, if the path coefficient value exceeds 0.050, the relationship between variables is considered not significant (Harahap, 2018; Sander & Teh, 2014). This meticulous analytical approach and careful hypothesis testing are expected to yield accurate results and lead to a profound understanding of the relationships between variables in the context of this research.

## 4. RESULT

### Measurement Model

The measurement model section discusses two crucial elements, namely validity and reliability, which serve as the fundamental basis of scientific research. Validity ensures that the measurement instrument accurately measures what is intended by its constructs. In this regard, factor loadings and average variance extracted (AVE) are evaluated. Factor loading measures how well each indicator reflects the construct being measured, while AVE measures the amount of variance in the construct explained by its indicators. If both factor loadings and AVE exceed the threshold of 0.500, then it can be said that the instrument is valid.

Meanwhile, reliability measures how consistent the measurement instrument is in producing similar results when tested on the same sample. This is assessed using Cronbach's alpha (CA) and composite reliability (CR). Both metrics are expected to exceed the threshold of 0.700 to indicate an adequate level of reliability. CA and CR provide information about how well indicators within the same construct correlate with each other.

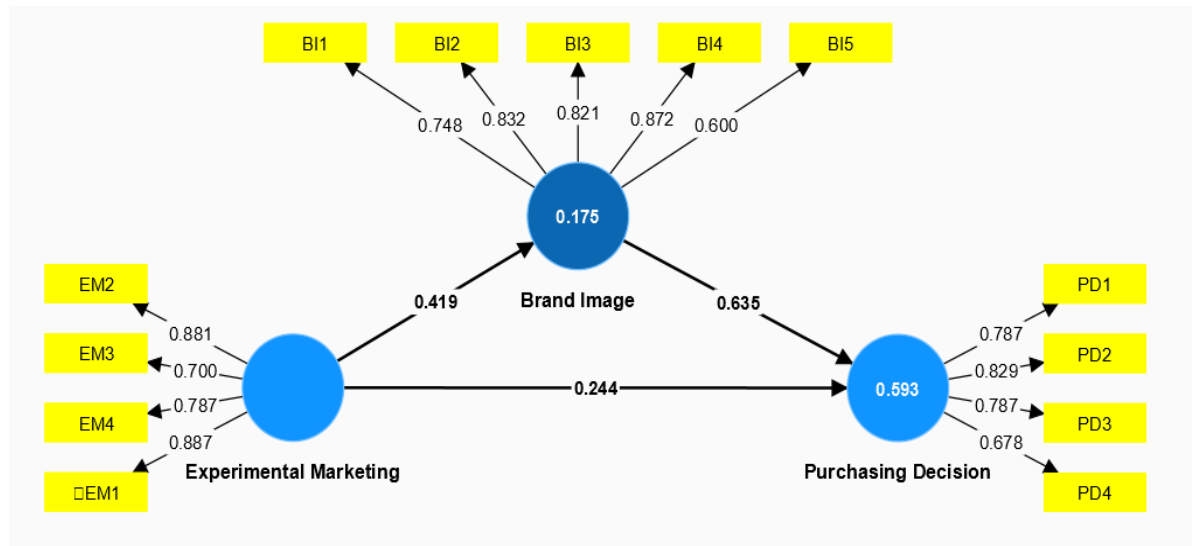
Additionally, the validity and reliability values presented in Research Table 1 demonstrate the precision and consistency of the measurement instrument. High values in these metrics indicate that the measurement instrument can be relied upon to produce accurate and consistent data. Therefore, the analysis of these metrics supports confidence in the reliability and validity of the data derived from the questionnaire used in this study.

Table 1. Measurement model

Construct	Factor Loading	CA	rho_a	CR	AVE
Purchasing Decision		0,772	0,771	0,855	0,596
PD1	0,787				
PD2	0,829				
PD3	0,787				
PD4	0,678				
Experimental Marketing		0,835	0,876	0,889	0,669
EM1	0,887				

Construct	Factor Loading	CA	rho_a	CR	AVE
EM2	0,881				
EM3	0,700				
EM4	0,787				
Brand Identity		0,837	0,865	0,885	0,609
BI1	0,748				
BI2	0,832				
BI3	0,821				
BI4	0,872				
BI5	0,600				

Fig.2: Factor Loading



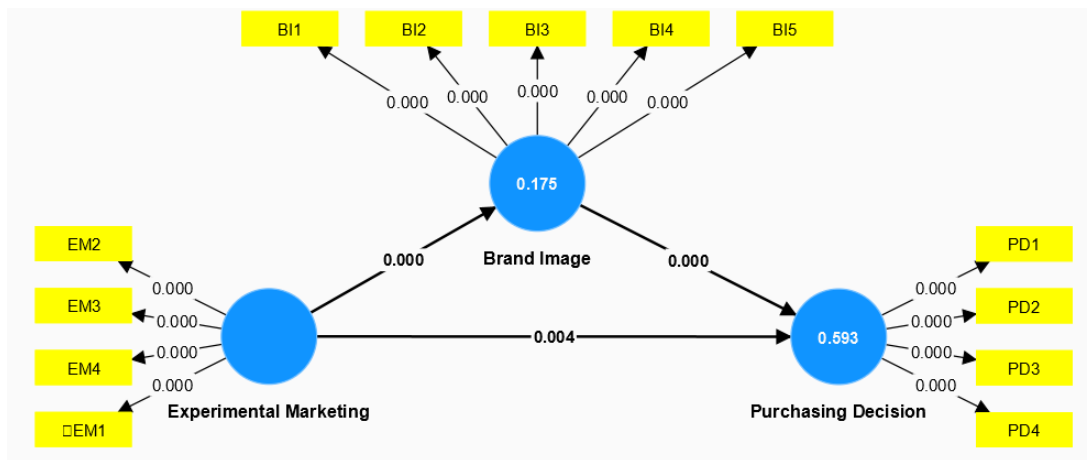
### Structured Model

The results of hypothesis testing from a survey of 633 Mixue brand customers in Indonesia have been outlined in Table 2. Data analysis yielded significant findings regarding the influence of experimental marketing and brand identity on purchasing decisions, as well as the impact of experimental marketing on brand identity. Firstly, Hypothesis 1 (H1), stating that experimental marketing has a positive and significant impact on customers' purchasing decisions, was accepted. This is evidenced by a p-value of 0.004, indicating strong statistical evidence supporting this hypothesis. It confirms that the experimental marketing strategies employed by the Mixue brand are effective in influencing consumer purchasing decisions. Furthermore, Hypothesis 2 (H2), proposing that brand identity has a significant impact on purchasing decisions, was also accepted, with a highly significant p-value of 0.000. This indicates that customers' perceptions of the brand play a crucial role in shaping their purchasing decisions. Finally, Hypothesis 3 (H3), stating that experimental marketing has a significant impact on brand identity, also received strong support, with a p-value of 0.000. These results suggest that experimental marketing not only influences purchasing decisions but also significantly contributes to the brand identity of Mixue. Thus, the overall findings from the hypothesis analysis underscore the importance of experimental marketing strategies and the formation of a strong brand identity in guiding consumer purchasing behavior.

Table 2. Path Analysis

Path Analysis	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics ( O/STDEV )	P Values	Decision
H1: Experimental Marketing -> Purchasing Decision	0.244	0.250	0.085	2.859	0.004	Support
H2: Brand Identity-> Purchasing Decision	0.635	0.638	0.090	7.071	0.000	Support
H3: Experimental Marketing -> Brand Identity	0.419	0.427	0.102	4.096	0.000	Support

Fig 3. Path Analysis



The study also provides insights into the influence of experimental marketing on brand identity and the combined influence of these two variables on purchasing decisions. The analysis results indicate that brand identity is influenced by experimental marketing with an R-squared value of 0.175, meaning that 17.5 percent of the variation in brand identity can be explained by experimental marketing. This suggests that while experimental marketing plays a role in shaping brand identity, there is still 82.5 percent of the variation explained by other factors beyond the scope of this study. Furthermore, the analysis reveals that purchasing decisions are influenced by a combination of brand identity and experimental marketing, with an R-squared value of 0.593. This means that 59.3 percent of the variation in purchasing decisions can be explained by these two variables. It indicates that brand identity and experimental marketing together have a significant influence on purchasing decisions, while the remaining 40.7 percent is explained by other variables not included in this study

Moderating analysis

The moderation effect is assessed using the Sobel test, which was conducted online at <https://quantpsy.org/sobel/sobel.htm> (B. Irawan et al., 2024). The results of the Sobel test calculations are presented in Figure 4.

Fig. 4: Sobel Test Result

	Memasukkan:		Statistik uji:	Std. Kesalahan:	p -nilai:
A	<input type="text" value="0.244"/>	Tes sobel:	<input type="text" value="2.65894273"/>	<input type="text" value="0.05827128"/>	<input type="text" value="0.00783863"/>
B	<input type="text" value="0.635"/>	Tes Aroian:	<input type="text" value="2.63632116"/>	<input type="text" value="0.05877129"/>	<input type="text" value="0.00838104"/>
$s_a$	<input type="text" value="0.085"/>	Tes orang baik:	<input type="text" value="2.68215681"/>	<input type="text" value="0.05776694"/>	<input type="text" value="0.00731492"/>
dengan $b$	<input type="text" value="0.090"/>	<input type="button" value="Reset all"/>	<input type="button" value="Menghitung"/>		

From the results of the Sobel test, a p-value of 0.007 was obtained. This indicates that brand identity has the ability to moderate the relationship between experimental marketing and purchasing decisions. The significance lies in the fact that the p-value is less than 0.050. This finding suggests that, statistically, brand identity plays an important role in moderating the influence between experimental marketing and purchasing decisions in the context of this study.

Thus, this discovery reveals that brand identity not only directly influences purchasing decisions but also has the ability to strengthen or weaken the impact of experimental marketing activities on purchasing decisions. The implication is the importance of brand identity in guiding experimental marketing strategies to achieve the desired impact on customer purchasing behavior.

## 5. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study confirms the clear and significant influence of experimental marketing and brand identity on purchasing decisions. Furthermore, analysis was conducted to explore the potential moderating role of brand identity in the relationship between experimental marketing and purchasing decisions using the Sobel test. The results indicate that brand identity has the ability to moderate this relationship, enhancing our understanding of how the interaction between these factors affects consumer purchasing behavior. These findings consistently affirm previous research results that highlight the importance of brand identity in the context of marketing strategies and consumer purchasing decisions. Thus, this research not only contributes to our understanding of the roles of experimental marketing and brand identity in the realm of purchasing but also reinforces conclusions that have been established in previous literature.

The relationship between experimental marketing and purchasing decision is highly significant because experimental marketing aims to emotionally engage customers with a brand, which can influence their purchasing decisions (Chao, 2015; Shirley Kuo et al., 2018). Emotions play a crucial role in decision-making, and people often make purchasing decisions based on how a product or brand makes them feel. Experimental marketing leverages consumer emotions by creating memorable and immersive experiences, eliciting positive emotions such as joy, excitement, or nostalgia, which can foster a lasting emotional connection between consumers and a brand, thereby increasing the likelihood of purchase and fostering loyalty (Hazrati Havidz & Mahaputra, 2020). Research also supports the idea that experimental marketing has a positive and significant relationship with purchase intention (Hernandez et al., 2014; Shirley Kuo et al., 2018). Furthermore, experimental marketing is proposed as a result of consumer exposure to a series of stimuli, driving consumer behavior that enhances the value of products or services, which can influence customers' purchase intentions (Hazrati Havidz & Mahaputra, 2020). Therefore, it is clear that there is a strong relationship between experimental marketing and purchasing decisions.

Furthermore, brand identity can have a significant impact on purchasing decisions. Brand identity refers to the overall perception and feelings of consumers about a brand and



influences customer behavior, with much of it being influenced by brand identity (M. Guliyev, 2023; Muhammad Furqan et al., 2023). Brand identity is the value added by a brand to a product or service and is shaped by various factors such as perceived quality, promotion, and brand trust (Muhammad Furqan et al., 2023). Studies have shown that brand identity can positively impact purchase intentions, regardless of whether the brand is domestic or foreign (WU et al., 2022). Additionally, brand identity can be influenced by factors such as brand community, brand narrative, and consumer ethnocentrism (N. Irawan & Pu, 2020; Muhammad Furqan et al., 2023). Overall, brand identity is an important aspect that can influence consumer behavior and purchasing decisions.

In conclusion, from the discussion above, both experimental marketing and brand identity play important roles in consumer purchasing decisions. Experimental marketing provides consumers with memorable and emotional experiences, which can influence their perceptions of the brand and increase the inclination to purchase. On the other hand, brand identity reflects the overall perception of consumers about the brand, which can influence their purchase intentions. Therefore, in designing marketing and branding strategies, it is important to consider the crucial roles of experimental marketing and brand identity formation in influencing consumer purchasing decisions.

## 6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMENDATION

From the findings of this research, it can be concluded that there are significant findings regarding the influence of experimental marketing and brand identity on purchasing decisions, as well as the relationship between them. Firstly, it was found that experimental marketing has a significant influence on purchasing decisions, emphasizing the importance of marketing strategies focused on creating memorable experiences for consumers. Secondly, brand identity also proves to have a significant influence on purchasing decisions, highlighting the importance of building and maintaining a positive brand identity in influencing consumer preferences. Furthermore, the findings indicate that experimental marketing has a significant influence on brand identity, affirming its crucial role in shaping consumer perceptions of the brand. Lastly, this research also shows that brand identity has the ability to moderate the relationship between experimental marketing and purchasing decisions, indicating the complexity of interactions between these factors in the context of consumer decision-making.

In the context of MSMEs, these recommendations can be tailored to align with the scale and resources available to MSMEs. MSMEs can leverage experimental marketing in ways that are suitable for their capabilities, such as hosting promotional events in the local community or providing unique customer experiences in their physical or online stores. Additionally, MSMEs should focus on building a consistent and authentic brand identity through clear and consistent communication of brand values and delivering satisfying customer experiences.

Integrating experimental marketing strategies with simple and easily implementable branding strategies can help MSMEs enhance the appeal of their brand. Moreover, MSMEs need to actively engage with customers, listen to feedback, and understand their preferences and needs to ensure the relevance of the products or services offered. Finally, MSMEs should remain flexible and responsive to changes in the market and consumer trends, and continuously monitor the performance of their marketing strategies to make necessary adjustments. By carefully implementing these recommendations, MSMEs can enhance their competitiveness and strengthen relationships with customers, ultimately supporting their business growth.

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