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The Influence of Social Media Marketing on Purchase Decisions with Experiential Marketing as a Moderator

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Abstract. This study aims to propose experiential marketing variables as moderating variables and provide new perspectives in understanding the influence of Social Media Marketing / SMM on Purchase Decisions in the context of food and beverage MSMEs in Blora Regency. In addition, this study also aims to provide new insights into the strategic role of experiential marketing in the context of digital marketing. This study uses an explanatory research design with a population that includes all people in Blora Regency who use social media or the internet, the number of which is unlimited. The research sample consists of 119 respondents selected through The sampling method in this study is using a purposive sampling technique, namely where the research sample uses certain criteria in the study. Data were collected using a questionnaire with an interval scale from 1 to 10, which describes the level of agreement from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (10). Data analysis was carried out using the Partial Least Square (PLS) method. The results of the study indicate that Social Media Marketing carried out by Food and Beverage MSMEs in Blora Regency has a significant effect on Purchase Decisions from potential consumers. Also, the experiential marketing variable moderates by strengthening the relationship of the Social Media Marketing variable to Purchase Decisions. This research contributes to the development of the role of experiential marketing variables in moderating the relationship between social media marketing and purchasing decisions for food and beverage MSMEs. It also provides practical recommendations for food and beverage MSMEs in Blora Regency regarding marketing strategies through social media.

Keywords: Experiential; Marketing; Purchase.

1. Introduction

The development of digital technology has brought significant changes to the world of marketing, including for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). One of the most influential aspects of technology is social media. With the number of social media users continuing to increase, these platforms have become effective tools for promoting products and reaching a wider market. In Blora Regency, food and beverage MSMEs utilize social media



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platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok to market their products. Based on observational data from secondary sources through social media platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook, several food and beverage MSMEs in Blora Regency utilize social media to promote their products.

Based on Blora Statistics Agency (BPS) data, in 2023, the population of Blora Regency aged 5 years and above who had used the Internet (including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, WhatsApp, etc.) was 64.67%. This figure is still below the percentage of Central Java which was 70.00%. In the same year, as many as 65.53% of the population aged 5 years and above who were male, had used the Internet (including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, WhatsApp, etc.). This percentage is still higher than the percentage of the female population who had used the Internet which was only 55.01%. (BPS Blora, 2025)

Blora Regency has great potential in the development of the food and beverage MSME sector. With a population of around 850,000 people, the need for comfortable and innovative places to eat and drink is increasing. Data from the Blora Central Statistics Agency (BPS) shows that the average per capita expenditure of the people of Blora Regency in 2024 was IDR 1,093,858, and in 2024 it increased by IDR 1,180,266, with a composition of IDR 634,428 (53.75%) spent on food needs and IDR 545,837 (46.25%) for non-food needs. Also, the Percentage of Monthly Per Capita Expenditure According to Commodity Groups in Blora Regency in 2024 that of the 53.75% expenditure on food needs, 37.74% was for processed food consumption and the rest was for other consumption. (BPS Blora, 2025). This reflects a huge opportunity for local MSMEs to attract consumers through effective marketing strategies, including SMM and experiential marketing.

Social Media Marketing (SMM) has significant potential to influence consumer purchasing decisions. SMM activities such as the use of engaging visual content, direct interaction with customers through comments or messages, and promotions in the form of special discounts announced through social media have been proven to attract consumer attention. Based on testimonials, consumers often purchase food or beverage products at MSME cafes after seeing promotions on social media. This demonstrates that SMM can be a determining factor in attracting buyers.

Although MSMEs in Blora Regency have utilized social media as a promotional tool, the content they produce is generally informative and one-way, such as only displaying products, prices, or locations, without addressing the emotional experience that can build closeness with potential consumers. Based on the results of a study by Handoyo et al. (2024), many MSMEs in Blora are not widely known by the public due to the lack of an integrated and open digital information system, which also reflects their suboptimal online communication strategies. The lack of experiential marketing-oriented content, such as storytelling, consumer interactions, authentic testimonials, or representations of product consumption atmospheres (e.g., the ambiance of a warung/cafe), causes consumers to become passive viewers without emotional motivation or a lasting experience. As a result, even though they are exposed to social media content, potential consumers are not yet motivated to make a purchasing



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decision. This phenomenon indicates a gap between social media marketing efforts and expected results, and reinforces the urgency of incorporating an experiential marketing approach into every digital content produced by MSMEs. In the context of MSMEs in Blora, the application of experiential marketing can take the form of product design, friendly service, and special things that directly involve consumers.

2. Research Methods

This type of research is Explanatory Research. Explanatory research is a research method that aims to explain the position of the variables studied and the influence between one variable and another (Sugiyono, 2017). The main reason this researcher uses the explanatory research method is to test the proposed hypothesis, so it is hoped that this research can explain the relationship and influence between the independent and dependent variables in the hypothesis. This study examines the role of Experiential Marketing variables in moderating the influence of Social Media Marketing variables on Purchase Decision variables. This study uses a quantitative method because this research is presented with numbers and calculations using statistical methods. Quantitative data is data in the form of numbers or qualitative data that is scored (Sugiyono, 2016). Data collection techniques are techniques or methods used by researchers to obtain data that will be analyzed or processed to produce a conclusion (Bawono, 2006).

3. Results and Discussion

This study involved 119 respondents from Blora Regency who use social media and the internet. A general overview of the respondents, or their profile, regarding age, gender, social media platforms used, and food and beverage MSME products purchased, is presented in the table.

Respondent Profile Table

No.	Respondent Characteristics	Amount	%		
1.	Age (years):				
	<18 Years	7	5.88%		
	18 – 25 Years	83	69.75%		
	26 – 35 Years	20	16.81%		
	36 – 45 Years	5	4.20%		
	>45 Years	4	3.36%		
2.	Gender:				
	Woman	76	63.87%		
	Man	43	36.13%		
2.	Frequently Used Social Media Platforms:				
	Facebook	27	13.04%		
	TikTok	77	37.20%		
	Instagram	89	43.00%		
	Others (Line, LinkedIn, WA, X, Youtube, Shopee, Twitter)	14	6.76%		
4.	Food and Beverage MSME	Amount	%		



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Products Ever Purchased:		
Dim Sum	42	18.34%
ced tea	85	37.12%
Mochi	31	13.54%
Meatball Soup	57	24.89%
Meatballs	2	0.87%
ruit juice	1	0.44%
ried Grasshoppers	1	0.44%
empeh Chips	1	0.44%
ela-tela	1	0.44%
Gedebog Chips	1	0.44%
oto Kletuk	1	0.44%
ebew Noodles	1	0.44%
Potato Donuts	1	0.44%
Donuts	1	0.44%
otato Donuts	1	0.44%
Chicken noodle	1	0.44%
Batagor Siomay	1	0.44%

Source: Processed primary data, 2025

Based on the age of respondents, the majority of Blora Regency residents who use social media and the internet are aged 26-35 years, this shows that social media users in Blora Regency are mostly in the productive age group. They understand and often use social media either for entertainment or to find preferences. Based on gender, the majority are female, namely 63.87%, this shows that the group of female social media users in Blora Regency mostly use social media for entertainment or to find preferences.

Based on the social media platforms frequently used by the people of Blora Regency, Instagram and TikTok are the most frequently used social media platforms by the people of Blora Regency, indicating that these two platforms are considered the most capable of providing entertainment and information. Furthermore, based on the products of Food and Beverage MSMEs in Blora Regency that have been purchased, namely Pentol Kuah and Iced Tea, this indicates that the people of Blora Regency purchase MSME products that are food and soft drinks.

The description of the research variables includes three categories: Social Media Marketing, Experiential Marketing, and Purchase Decision. The variable descriptions are grouped into three categories: low category, with a score of 1.00–3.00; medium category, with a score of 4.00–4.699; and high category, with a score of 7.00–9.99. The complete description of the variables is shown in the table.

Research Variable Description Table

No.	Variables and Indicators	Mean	Standard Deviation	
1.	Social Media Marketing(SMM)	7,174	1,979	
	Context	7,782	1,706	
	Communications	6,647	2,202	
	Collaboration	7,126	2.105	



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	Connection	7,143	1,902	
2.	Experiential Marketing(EM)	7,479	1,814	
	Sense(Indra/Five Senses)	8,000	1,635	
	Feel(Emotions/Feelings)	7,311	1,837	
	Think(Mind/Cognitive)	7,395	1,884	
	Act(Consumer Actions/Behavior)	7,387	1,879	
	Related(Relationship/Social)	7,303	1,836	
3.	Purchase Decision(PD)	7.145	1,920	
	Product Selection	7,126	1,977	
	Brand Choice	6,882	2,099	
	Purchase Time	7.109	1,762	
	Payment Methods	7,462	1,842	

Source: Processed primary data, 2025

The table shows that the average overall response of respondents to the Social Media Marketing (SMM) variable was 7,174 and is included in the high category. This indicates that the people of Blora Regency use social media a lot of social media that contains marketing content for MSMEs in the Food and Beverage sector, by looking at the contextual aspects of the content, the communication elements in the content, the collaboration elements in the content, and the connectedness with the product due to the content on social media.

The overall average respondent response to the Experiential Marketing variable was 7,479, falling into the high category. This indicates that Blora Regency residents who use social media experience the content provided on social media, whether it's through engaging the five senses, touching emotions or feelings, touching thoughts, impacting behavior, and creating a connection between social media content and social media users.

The average overall response of respondents to the Purchase Decision variable was 7.145, which is considered high. This indicates that consumers of MSME products in Blora Regency who use social media are able to make product choices, choose brands, determine purchase times, and choose appropriate payment methods when making purchases.

The Partial Least Squares (PLS) approach was used to analyze the data obtained in this study. The software used to analyze the collected data was SmartPLS (Hair et al., 2017). The variance-based PLS approach is preferred over the covariance-based method because its application has fewer limitations on the size and distribution of the samples used (Chin et al., 2003). PLS is defined as a SEM technique in which the measurement model and the theoretical structural model are assessed simultaneously (Chin et al., 2003). PLS is also able to resolve the problem of multicollinearity that often arises in multivariate regression analysis, namely by converting predictor variables into orthogonal components called PLS (Chin et al., 2003). Prediction of measurement and structural parameters occurs simultaneously, so the measurement model is usually carried out in two stages. The first stage is called the outer model, which assesses the measurement model using confirmatory factor analysis to assess the reliability and validity of theoretical constructs. The second stage is called the inner model, to estimate the structural



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model, namely the paths or influences between research variables. The structural model is used to test the hypotheses proposed in this research model.

Path Coefficient Table

Path coefficients - Mean, STDEV, T values, p values							
•	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (ST	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values		
Social Media Marketing -> Purchase Decision	0.291	0.292	0.104	2.798	0.003		
Experiential Marketing x Social Media Marketing -> Purchase Decision	0.128	0.124	0.047	2.738	0.003		
Experiential Marketing -> Purchase Decision	0.571	0.575	0.094	6.108	0.000		
Influence		Path	Coef. t-va	lue p-value			
Social Media Marketing -> Purchase Decision 0.291 2,798 0.003							
Experiential Marketing -> Purchase Decision			1 6.10	8 0.000			
Social Media Marketi	ng x Exper	riential 0.12	8 2,73	8 0.003			
Marketing -> Purchase Decision							

Based on the results of the Path Coefficient analysis with a significance level of 10% (α = 0.10), it was found that all independent variables in the model have a positive and significant influence on Purchase Decision.

- 1) First, the Social Media Marketing variable has a positive and significant effect on Purchase Decision, with a path coefficient value of 0.291, a t-value of 2.798, and a p-value of 0.003. This indicates that the more intensive and effective marketing activities through social media, the more it will encourage consumers to make purchasing decisions for food and beverage MSME products in Blora Regency.
- 2) Second, the Experiential Marketing variable also has a positive and significant effect on Purchase Decision, with a path coefficient of 0.571, a t-value of 6.108, and a p-value of 0.000. This means that consumer experience in interacting with products or services offered by MSMEs can create a strong impression and increase consumer tendency to make a purchase.
- 3) Third, the interaction variable of Social Media Marketing × Experiential Marketing on Purchase Decision has a positive and significant influence with a path coefficient value of 0.128, a t-value of 2.738, and a p-value of 0.003. These results indicate that Experiential Marketing moderates the relationship between Social Media Marketing and Purchase Decision. In other words, the influence of Social Media Marketing on purchasing decisions will be stronger when accompanied by positive experiences from consumers with the products or services offered.

Thus, it can be concluded that both directly and through interaction, the variables of Social Media Marketing and Experiential Marketing play an important role in influencing consumer Purchase Decisions towards food and beverage MSME products in Blora Regency.

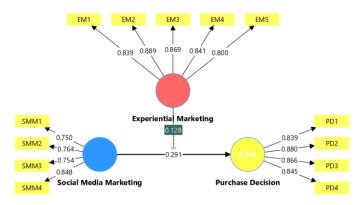
Graphic Output of PLS-SEM Algorithm

Results	
R-square	0.744
R-square adjusted	0.738
Composite reliability (rho_a)	0.881
Average variance extracted (AVE)	0.735
Cronbach's alpha	0.880
Composite reliability (rho_c)	0.917



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Discussion:

a. The Influence of Social Media Marketing on Purchase Decisions of Food and Beverage MSME Products in Blora Regency

The results of the study indicate that the Social Media Marketing variable has a positive and significant effect on Purchase Decision, as indicated by a path coefficient value of 0.291, a t-value of 2.798, and a p-value of 0.003 (<0.1). In addition, the F Square value of 0.114 indicates that the influence is relatively weak but statistically significant. The R Square value of 0.744 also indicates that Social Media Marketing, along with other variables, is able to explain 74.4% of the variation in consumer purchasing decisions. This finding strengthens the hypothesis that marketing activities through social media contribute to increasing purchasing decisions for food and beverage MSME products in Blora Regency.

In this context, social media marketing encompasses various content strategies distributed through platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok, ranging from product photos and customer testimonial videos to promotions packaged in an engaging and interactive manner. This content plays a crucial role in building positive product perceptions, expanding market reach, and generating awareness that can lead to purchases. This aligns with Kotler & Keller's (2016) argument that social media serves not only as a means of conveying information but also as a two-way interaction channel capable of shaping consumer perceptions and emotions.

Furthermore, the results of the outer model analysis indicate that the Social Media Marketing construct has good measurement quality. All indicators (SMM1–SMM4) have loading values above 0.7, an AVE of 0.609, a Composite Reliability value of 0.861, and a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.806. This indicates that this construct is valid and reliable in representing aspects of social media marketing as perceived by consumers.

The success of social media in driving purchasing decisions is also inextricably linked to how messages are conveyed visually and emotionally. Content that showcases local elements, the story behind the business, and testimonials from real consumers can create emotional connections and increase potential buyers' trust. Purchasing decisions for food and beverage MSME products are often influenced by affective factors, not just functional information.



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Thus, it can be concluded that social media marketing plays a significant role in influencing purchasing decisions, as it can directly reach consumers, shape positive product perceptions, and engage their emotional well-being through engaging and credible content. Food and beverage MSMEs in Blora Regency that actively and creatively manage their social media accounts will have a greater opportunity to increase sales volume and consumer loyalty.

b. The Moderating Role of Experiential Marketing in the Influence of Social Media Marketing on Purchase Decisions of Food and Beverage MSME Products in Blora Regency

The results of the study indicate that Experiential Marketing acts as a moderating variable that strengthens the relationship between Social Media Marketing and Purchase Decision. This is indicated by the results of the interaction test, where the Social Media Marketing × Experiential Marketing variable has a path coefficient of 0.128, a t-value of 2.738, and a p-value of 0.003, which means it is significant at the 10% level (α = 0.10). In addition, the F Square value of this interaction is 0.070, which although in the weak category, still indicates a positive moderating effect.

These findings reinforce the view that social media marketing strategies are more effective when supported by meaningful consumer experiences with the products or services offered. This concept aligns with Schmitt's (1999) theory, which states that experiential marketing creates holistic experiences through elements of sensation, emotion, cognition, action, and relationships. In this context, the presence of enjoyable and memorable experiences, both in person and through social media, can strengthen the influence of digital content on purchasing decisions.

From the measurement aspect, the Experiential Marketing variable shows high construct validity and reliability, with all indicators (EM1–EM5) having loading values above 0.8, an AVE value of 0.719, a Composite Reliability of 0.928, and a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.905. This means that consumers feel a fairly strong real experience from their interactions with MSME products, both directly and through narratives presented in digital content.

In practice, this moderation is evident in content that engages consumers emotionally and sensorially, such as videos of food preparation processes, customer testimonials describing taste experiences, narratives about product localization, and two-way communication between sellers and buyers on social media. When these experiential elements are present, consumers see the product not simply as a commodity but as a pleasurable experience worth sharing or repeating. This is what drives purchasing decisions more strongly.

Furthermore, the moderating role of experiential marketing also impacted the increase in the R-square value of the purchase decision. Overall, the model showed that 74.4% of the variation in purchase decisions can be explained by the combination of social media marketing, experiential marketing, and the interaction between the two. The goodness of fit (GoF) value of 0.716 also indicates that the model has high overall predictive ability.



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Thus, it can be concluded that experiential marketing is a key element that strengthens the effectiveness of social media marketing in driving purchasing decisions. In the context of food and beverage MSMEs in Blora Regency, a digital strategy that is not only informative but also provides a comprehensive experience, both visually, emotionally, and interactively, will increase product appeal and significantly encourage purchases. This experiential engagement is key to building a deeper connection between local products and consumers.

4. Conclusion

Based on the results of the discussion of the relationship between the variables studied, namely Social Media Marketing, Experiential Marketing and Purchase Decision on Food and Beverage MSME products in Blora Regency, it can be concluded as follows: Social Media Marketing has a positive and significant effect on Purchase Decision, meaning that the higher the effectiveness of marketing through social media (in terms of context, communication, collaboration, and connection), the greater the likelihood of consumers to make a purchase decision on food and beverage MSME products in Blora Regency. Experiential Marketing is proven to moderate the influence of Social Media Marketing on Purchase Decision, meaning that experiential marketing strengthens the relationship between Social Media Marketing and Purchase Decision. The better the consumer experience formed through sense, feel, think, act, and relate, the stronger the influence of social media marketing content on purchasing decisions. MSMEs that actively use social media but do not integrate experiential marketing tend not to be able to optimally drive purchasing decisions. This shows the importance of an emotional experience approach in digital marketing strategies. MSMEs that combine the power of informative and engaging social media content with experiential marketing strategies such as evocative product visualizations (sense), touching testimonials (feel), product benefit education (think), interactive invitations (act), and building social closeness (relate), will be more successful in influencing consumer purchasing decisions. This study confirms that experiential marketing not only stands as an independent variable with a direct impact, but also as a moderating variable that strengthens the effectiveness of Social Media Marketing on consumer purchasing decisions.

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