

Analysis of Culinary Experience Development Strategies to Enhance Restaurant Brand Value in Bali

Unggul Putra Jaya*¹

Politeknik Omna Trisakti¹
Email: unggulputra30@gmail.com

Abstract

In recent years, the culinary landscape in Bali has evolved far beyond the simple act of serving food. As the island continues to draw visitors seeking authentic and memorable experiences, restaurants are faced with a new challenge: creating culinary encounters that not only satisfy the palate but also engage the senses, evoke emotion, and shape the identity of a brand. Travelers today often arrive with expectations that stretch beyond taste—they look for atmosphere, cultural expression, meaningful interactions with staff, and visually compelling dishes that capture the essence of the place. This shift in consumer behavior highlights the growing importance of understanding how a holistic culinary experience can contribute to brand value. Yet, despite the prominence of gastronomic tourism in Bali, empirical research that examines the influence of four key dimensions—sensory experience, emotional experience, service interaction, and food presentation—on restaurant brand value remains limited. This study employs a quantitative approach using purposive sampling to gather responses from 150 individuals who had dined at restaurants in Canggu, Ubud, Kuta, and Seminyak. Multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the contribution of each dimension of the culinary experience to brand value. The findings reveal that all four dimensions exert a positive and significant influence, with food presentation emerging as the strongest predictor. These results illustrate that culinary experience is not a peripheral element but a central component in shaping a restaurant's brand identity. When thoughtfully curated—from the aesthetics of the dishes to the emotional tone of service interactions—culinary experiences enhance perceived quality, strengthen brand recognition, and foster long-term consumer loyalty. The study provides both conceptual insight and practical guidance for hospitality practitioners in Bali, emphasizing the role of culinary experience as a strategic pillar in developing and sustaining brand value within a highly competitive tourism environment.

Keywords: Culinary Experience, Brand Value, Hospitality, Restaurant Bali

A. INTRODUCTION

The restaurant industry in Bali has shown very dynamic growth over the past decade, driven by the increasing flow of both domestic and international tourists who have made the island a culinary and cultural destination. The shift in tourist behavior in enjoying food has also broadened the meaning of the activity of eating itself. Food consumption is no longer understood solely as a physiological need, but has shifted into a social and esthetic activity that unites taste, atmosphere, and emotional experience. This change aligns with the Experience Economy framework introduced by Pine and Gilmore (1999), which explains that modern consumers are increasingly seeking experiences that are not only satisfying but also leave a deep impression and provide additional emotional value.

From a culinary and hospitality perspective, the concept of culinary experience encompasses more than just the quality of the food's taste. This experience is formed thru a series of interactions between consumers and various supporting elements, such as the space's atmosphere, food presentation design, interactions with staff, and the narrative associated with the dishes. Schmitt (1999) emphasizes that deliberately designed experiences—through the five senses, emotions, and even cognitive and social engagement—can influence how consumers perceive a product or service. Bali, as an international tourist destination, has its own unique advantages because it is able to combine local culinary traditions with global gastronomic innovations, making it an interesting stage to research how culinary experiences are formed and responded to by tourists.

* Corresponding author

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However, the restaurant's ability to consistently package that experience is uneven. Amidst increasingly fierce competition, brand value has become a crucial factor in influencing consumer decisions. Aaker (1991) explains that brand equity is not merely a visual identity, but a set of perceptions encompassing brand awareness, perceived quality, emotional associations, and customer loyalty. In the context of Bali, where culinary options are incredibly diverse within a relatively short distance, brand value becomes an important differentiating element for restaurants.

Brand value itself can be formed from consumers' experiences when interacting with the restaurant. Previous studies have shown that culinary experiences influence perceived quality and brand associations (Kivela, Inbakaran & Reece, 1999), as well as create emotional connections that foster customer loyalty (Ryu & Jang, 2007). Nevertheless, empirical studies that simultaneously examine the influence of the four main dimensions of culinary experience—namely sensory experience, emotional experience, service interaction, and food presentation—on brand value in the context of Balinese tourism are still relatively limited.

The research gap becomes increasingly apparent when considering the development of social media, which amplifies the role of visuals in culinary experiences. Spence (2015) emphasizes that the visual aspect of food not only influences taste expectations but also shapes perceptions of quality and brand image. This condition is highly relevant in Bali, where the culture of sharing culinary experiences thru digital media is very strong among tourists.

Based on industry phenomena, theoretical needs, and the research gap, this study was conducted to provide a deeper understanding of how culinary experiences can be optimized as a strategy to strengthen restaurant brand value in Bali. This research is expected to contribute to the development of knowledge in the fields of culinary arts and hospitality business, while also offering practical recommendations for industry practitioners to design more meaningful and competitive culinary experiences.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

The research methods are designed to ensure that the process of obtaining data, testing relationships between variables, and drawing conclusions is carried out systematically, measurably, and scientifically accountable. Therefore, this section outlines the research approach, design, population and sample, instruments, and analysis techniques used, referencing relevant methodological and theoretical literature.

This study uses a quantitative approach with an explanatory design, as the main objective of the research is to understand how the dimensions of culinary experience contribute to shaping restaurant brand value. The quantitative approach allows for the objective measurement of consumer perceptions thru numerically scaled instruments, and provides a basis for conducting inferential analysis to test causal relationships between variables (Creswell, 2014). Thus, this approach is suitable for answering research questions that are causal in nature.

An explanatory design was applied to test the relationship between culinary experiences and brand value. The independent variable analyzed is culinary experience, which consists of four main dimensions based on consumer experience theory developed by Pine and Gilmore (1999) and Schmitt (1999):

- X₁: Sensory Experience
- X₂: Emotional Experience
- X₃: Service Interaction
- X₄: Food Presentation

Meanwhile, the dependent variable is brand value, which refers to Aaker's (1991) Customer-Based Brand Equity framework, which includes four components: brand awareness, perceived quality, brand associations, and brand loyalty.

The research design was deliberately chosen because it allows the researcher to examine the simultaneous influence of all dimensions of the culinary experience on restaurant brand value in the Bali tourist destination area. The population in this study consists of domestic and international tourists, as well as local consumers who have enjoyed meals at restaurants located in Canggu, Seminyak, Kuta, and Ubud. These four areas were selected because they represent restaurant growth centers with diverse tourist segments.

The sample selection used a purposive sampling technique, which is a technique that considers specific criteria to ensure the respondents' suitability with the research objectives (Patton, 2002). As for the criteria, they include: 1). Have you eaten at a Balinese restaurant in the last 6 months; 2). Be at least 18 years old; 3). Berseida filled out the questionnaire completely.

The sample size was set at 150 respondents, based on the recommendation of Hair et al. (2010), who stated that multiple regression ideally uses a minimum sample size of 5–10 times the number of independent variables.

The instrument used was a questionnaire based on a 1–5 Likert scale. The choice of this scale was based on the consideration that numerical responses make it easier for consumers to assess their level of agreement with each statement (Likert, 1932).

The Culinary Experience instrument indicators were adapted from several previous studies to ensure content validity: 1). Sensory and emotional experience: Kivela et al. (1999); 2). Service interaction: Namkung & Jang (2007); 3). Food presentation: Schifferstein (2019).

The Brand Value indicator instrument is compiled based on the Customer-Based Brand Equity dimension according to Aaker (1991). Instrument validity was tested using Pearson Product Moment, with an r value > 0.30 as the eligibility threshold (Ghozali, 2018). Reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha, with a value > 0.70 as an indicator of internal consistency (Nunnally, 1978).

Data analysis techniques in this study were carried out thru several systematic stages to obtain accurate and scientifically accountable results. The first stage is descriptive analysis, which is used to describe the demographic characteristics of the respondents as well as the response trends for each research variable. This analysis aims to provide an overview of the respondents' profiles and their patterns of perception regarding the experiences being studied.

Next, classical assumption tests were conducted to ensure that the regression model used met the criteria for Best Linear Unbiased Estimator (BLUE). Normality testing was conducted using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov method to determine whether the data was normally distributed. Multicollinearity testing is performed by examining the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) value, where a VIF value less than 10 indicates no multicollinearity issues between the independent variables. Meanwhile, the heteroskedasticity test was conducted using the Glejser test to ensure that the residual variance is constant.

The next step is multiple regression analysis, which is used to test the simultaneous influence of independent variables on the dependent variable. The regression model used in this study is formulated as follows:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \varepsilon$$

The formula above explains where X_1 represents sensory experience, X_2 is emotional experience, X_3 is service interaction, and X_4 is food presentation, while Y represents brand value. Multiple regression analysis was chosen because it can explain the influence of each independent variable, both partially and simultaneously, on the dependent variable (Gujarati, 2003).

This research was conducted while adhering to the basic principles of social research ethics. All respondents were given an explanation of the research objectives and asked to provide consent (informed

consent) before participating. The confidentiality and anonymity of respondent data are fully protected, and the information obtained is used solely for academic purposes. Respondent participation is voluntary without any pressure, coercion, or specific rewards. This ethical procedure refers to the generally accepted ethical standards for research in social and behavioral sciences.

C. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to test the extent to which each dimension of culinary experience contributes to the formation of restaurant brand value in Bali. The test results show that all independent variables, consisting of sensory experience, emotional experience, service interaction, and food presentation, have a significant influence on the dependent variable, brand value. This finding indicates that multidimensional culinary experiences play a significant role in building perceptions of restaurant brand value.

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Based on the estimation results, the constant value (β_0) of 0.417 indicates that even when all independent variables are zero, the restaurant's brand value remains at a certain baseline level. The regression coefficient for sensory experience ($\beta_1 = 0,204$; $p < 0.01$) indicates that an improvement in the quality of sensory experiences—such as taste, aroma, and ambiance — contributes positively and significantly to an increase in restaurant brand value. This confirms the importance of sensory stimulation in creating a strong initial impression for consumers.

The emotional experience variable has a regression coefficient of 0.291 with a high level of significance ($p < 0.001$), indicating that emotional experience has a stronger influence compared to some other dimensions. This finding indicates that customer emotional engagement, such as feelings of comfort, enjoyment, and attachment to the restaurant, is a key factor in shaping overall brand value perception.

Furthermore, service interaction shows a regression coefficient of 0.176 ($p < 0.05$), which means that the quality of interaction between customers and restaurant staff also significantly contributes to brand value, although with a relatively more moderate influence. Friendly, responsive, and professional service interactions remain an essential element in strengthening the restaurant's brand image in consumers' minds.

Meanwhile, food presentation is the variable with the largest regression coefficient ($\beta_4 = 0.315$; $p < 0.001$), indicating that the visual and esthetic aspects of food presentation have the most dominant influence on the formation of restaurant brand value. These findings confirm that the visual appeal of food not only enhances consumption satisfaction but also strengthens the identity and differentiation of restaurant brands, particularly in the context of culinary tourism destinations like Bali. The coefficient of determination (R^2) value of 0.684 indicates that the four dimensions of the culinary experience are able to explain 68.4% of the variability in restaurant brand value. Thus, the regression model used can be said to have strong explanatory power and is suitable for explaining the relationship between culinary experience and brand value. Overall, the results of this study confirm that a comprehensive and integrated culinary experience plays a substantial role in shaping and strengthening restaurant brand value in Bali. Sensory Experience and Brand Value Reinforcement, the research results show that emotional experience has a significant and relatively strong influence on brand value. This finding reinforces the theoretical perspective that emotions play a central role in the brand evaluation process and the formation of customer loyalty (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). Emotional experiences allow consumers to build a more personal and deeper connection with brands, going beyond purely functional considerations.

In the context of restaurants in Bali, emotional experiences are often shaped by an atmosphere that provides a sense of comfort, relaxation, and happiness, aligning with the motivations of tourists seeking an escape from their daily routines. The typical Balinese hospitality, the cultural narrative conveyed thru the restaurant concept, and warm social interactions can create a strong sense of emotional connection. Pine and Gilmore (1999) assert that experiences capable of evoking positive emotions tend to be more memorable and have higher economic value.

Furthermore, positive emotional experiences contribute to the formation of emotional attachment, which in turn strengthens brand value perceptions and increases the likelihood of positive word-of-mouth. In global tourism destinations like Bali, where personal recommendations and online reviews have a significant impact on tourists' decisions, the emotional dimension becomes a strategic element in building sustainable brand value. Restaurants in Bali need to manage the sensory environment holistically, not just focus on the taste of the food. Atmospheric consistency and the esthetics of space can implicitly strengthen brand identity.

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The service interaction dimension also shows a significant influence on brand value, which confirms that the quality of interaction between customers and restaurant staff is a direct representation of brand value. This finding aligns with service-dominant logic theory, which views value as the result of a co-creation process between service providers and consumers (Vargo & Lusch, 2008).

In the restaurant industry, service interaction encompasses not only technical aspects like speed and accuracy of service, but also interpersonal aspects such as empathy, friendliness, and the staff's ability to understand customer needs. In the context of Bali, the friendly and attentive service character often serves as a key differentiator compared to other culinary destinations. Positive service interactions can strengthen the brand image as a professional, trustworthy, and customer-experience-oriented restaurant.

Although the contribution of service interaction in the regression model is relatively more moderate compared to other dimensions, its statistical significance indicates that this aspect remains a key factor in maintaining consistency in brand experience. Failure in service interaction can potentially damage overall brand perception, even when the quality of food and restaurant atmosphere are rated well. Therefore, service interaction serves as a balancing element that ensures a harmonious culinary experience and contributes positively to brand value. Staff training focused on service personalization,

hospitality ethics, and cross-cultural communication is essential to ensure that service interactions maximize their contribution to brand value.

The analysis results show that food presentation is the dimension with the most dominant influence on brand value. This finding confirms the importance of visual aspects in the culinary experience, particularly in the highly visual era of social media and digital culture. According to visual esthetics theory, the appearance of food can shape taste and quality expectations before the consumption process begins (Zampollo et al., 2012).

In the context of restaurants in Bali, food presentation often adopts an artistic approach that combines modern esthetics with local traditional elements. The use of natural colors, creative plating, and photogenic presentation not only enhances visual satisfaction but also strengthens the restaurant's brand identity. This phenomenon is relevant to the behavior of tourists who enjoy documenting and sharing their culinary experiences thru social media platforms, thus food presentation indirectly contributes to brand promotion.

Furthermore, the dominance of food presentation influence indicates that a restaurant's brand value is not only built thru taste and service, but also thru the ability to create memorable and easily recalled visual experiences. In the highly competitive culinary market of Bali, food presentation serves as a strategic differentiation tool that strengthens brand positioning in the minds of global consumers. Plating, food photography, esthetic consistency, and the visual identity of a dish need to be managed as strategic branding assets.

Overall, the results of this study confirm that culinary experience is a multidimensional construct that significantly shapes restaurant brand value in Bali. The four dimensions tested—sensory experience, emotional experience, service interaction, and food presentation—work simultaneously to create a holistic and meaningful consumption experience. This finding reinforces the view that brand value in the culinary industry is not built solely thru product quality, but thru the integration of sensory, emotional, social, and visual experiences perceived by consumers.

In the context of Bali as a global tourism destination, culinary experiences have a strategic function as part of destination branding. Restaurants are not only perceived as places to eat, but also as spaces for cultural and emotional experiences. Therefore, a restaurant's brand value is formed thru the accumulation of consistent, authentic experiences that meet the expectations of increasingly experience-oriented tourists.

From a theoretical perspective, this research contributes to the development of literature on experiential marketing and brand value within the context of the culinary and tourism industries. Empirical findings reinforce the conceptual framework proposed by Schmitt (1999) and Pine and Gilmore (1999), that brand value is formed thru experiences that simultaneously involve sensory, emotional, and interactional dimensions.

Additionally, the dominant influence of food presentation and emotional experience indicates that affective and visual aspects play an increasingly important role in shaping brand value in the digital age and experience-based tourism. This research also expands understanding of service-dominant logic (Vargo & Lusch, 2008) by positioning service interaction as a mechanism for value co-creation in culinary experiences. Thus, this study confirms that restaurant brand value should be understood as the result of an integrated experience, not as a standalone construct.

From a practical perspective, the findings of this study have several important implications for restaurant managers and owners in Bali. First, enhancing the sensory experience needs to be a strategic priority thru consistent management of the restaurant's atmosphere, including interior design, lighting, aroma, and music that align with the brand identity and local cultural character.

Second, restaurant managers need to consciously design emotional touchpoints that can create a sense of comfort, enjoyment, and emotional connection for customers. This approach can be realized through brand narratives, authentic restaurant concepts, and personal and memorable service experiences.

Third, although service interaction shows a more moderate influence, the quality of service interaction remains crucial in maintaining consistency in brand experience. Therefore, investing in human resource training, particularly in the aspects of interpersonal communication and service mindset, becomes a strategic step to strengthen brand perception in the minds of consumers.

Fourth, the dominance of food presentation influence indicates that the esthetics of food presentation cannot be viewed as a secondary aspect. In the age of social media, visually appealing food presentation can increase brand exposure through user-generated content. Therefore, restaurants need to integrate visual presentation strategies with digital marketing strategies to strengthen their brand positioning in the global market.

D. CONCLUSION

This study aims to analyze the influence of four dimensions of culinary experience—sensory experience, emotional experience, service interaction, and food presentation—on the formation of restaurant brand value in Bali as a global tourism destination. The results of the multiple regression analysis indicate that all dimensions of culinary experience have a positive and significant impact on restaurant brand value, suggesting that consumption experience plays a central role in shaping consumer perceptions and evaluations of the brand.

Among the four dimensions, food presentation emerges as the most dominant factor in strengthening brand value. These findings underscore the importance of visual aspects in the culinary experience, particularly in the context of tourist destinations and the digital age, which highly prioritize esthetics and sharing experiences through social media. Meanwhile, emotional and sensory experiences play a crucial role in building emotional attachment and quality perception, while service interaction serves as a supporting element that maintains the consistency and credibility of the brand experience.

Theoretically, the findings of this study confirm Pine and Gilmore's (1999) view of the experience economy, where experiences are the primary source of value creation in modern industries. The results of this study are also consistent with the experiential marketing framework proposed by Schmitt (1999), which emphasizes that brand value is formed through the integration of sensory, emotional, cognitive, and social experiences. In the context of Bali, which has long been known as an experience-based tourism destination, this research confirms that culinary experiences are not merely complementary attributes, but rather a strategic element in shaping restaurant brand identity and value.

Overall, this research indicates that a restaurant's brand value cannot be built solely on the quality of the food's taste. Brand value is formed through a holistic series of experiences that involve sensory stimulation, emotional engagement, the quality of service interaction, and the visual appeal of food presentation. These four dimensions complement each other in creating a complete, memorable, and valuable culinary experience for consumers. Thus, this research provides empirical and conceptual contributions to the development of culinary arts and hospitality management studies, particularly in understanding the role of culinary experiences in building restaurant brand equity in tourist destinations.

Based on the research findings, several suggestions can be made from both a practical and academic perspective. For restaurant managers and owners in Bali, the results of this study highlight the importance of designing a unified and strategic culinary experience. Strengthening the aspect of food presentation needs to be a top priority, not only from a visual esthetic perspective, but also for consistency in presentation that reflects the restaurant's brand identity and positioning.

Additionally, restaurant managers are advised to pay more attention to creating a positive emotional experience thru a comfortable atmosphere, authentic brand storytelling, and a personalized service approach. Investing in human resource training is also crucial for improving the quality of service interactions, ensuring that every point of contact between staff and customers strengthens the restaurant's brand image and value.

From a policy and destination development perspective, the results of this research can serve as a reference for tourism stakeholders in Bali in formulating strategies for experience-based culinary tourism development. Restaurants, as part of the tourism ecosystem, are expected to be not only product-oriented but also focused on creating sustainable and globally competitive experiences.

For future research, it is recommended that this study be expanded to include other variables, such as brand loyalty, customer satisfaction, or word-of-mouth intention, in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of culinary experiences on consumer behavior. Further research could also consider qualitative approaches or mixed methods to explore the meaning of culinary experiences more deeply, as well as expand the research location to other tourist destinations to improve the generalizability of the findings.

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