





“Culinary connections: The mediating role of customer brand co-creation behavior in gastronomic and revisit intentions”

AUTHORS	Ni Made Purnami  Ni Wayan Mujiati  Ayu Putu Laksmi Danyathi  Uswatun Siwi Kartika Sari Desak Komang Dea Marcellina Putri Darmada
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Ayu Putu Laksmi Danyathi, Uswatun
Siwi Kartika Sari, Desak Komang Dea
Marcellina Putri Darmada, 2024

Ni Made Purnami Dr, Lecturer,
Faculty of Economics and Business,
Department of Management, Udayana
University, Indonesia. (Corresponding
author)

Ni Wayan Mujiati, Master, Lecturer,
Faculty of Economics and Business,
Department of Management, Udayana
University, Indonesia.

Ayu Putu Laksmi Danyathi, Master,
Lecturer, Faculty of Law, Udayana
University, Indonesia.

Uswatun Siwi Kartika Sari,
Undergraduate Student, Faculty of
Economics and Business, Department
of Management, Udayana University,
Indonesia.

Desak Komang Dea Marcellina Putri
Darmada, Undergraduate Student,
Faculty of Economics and Business,
Department of Management, Udayana
University, Indonesia.



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Ni Made Purnami (Indonesia), Ni Wayan Mujiati (Indonesia),
Ayu Putu Laksmi Danyathi (Indonesia), Uswatun Siwi Kartika Sari (Indonesia),
Desak Komang Dea Marcellina Putri Darmada (Indonesia)

CULINARY CONNECTIONS: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF CUSTOMER BRAND CO-CREATION BEHAVIOR IN GASTRONOMIC AND REVISIT INTENTIONS

Abstract

The increasing competition in the culinary tourism industry highlights the need for businesses to better understand customer behavior to encourage repeated visits. This study investigates the mediating role of customer brand co-creation behavior in the effect of gastronomic experience on revisit intention among Generation Z café visitors in Bali, Indonesia. Data were collected from 250 respondents via an online survey and analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling. The analysis reveals that gastronomic experience has a significant positive impact on revisit intention ($\beta = 0.479$, $p < 0.05$) and customer brand co-creation behavior ($\beta = 0.534$, $p < 0.05$). Additionally, customer brand co-creation behavior positively influences revisit intention ($\beta = 0.380$, $p < 0.05$) and mediates the relationship between gastronomic experience and revisit intention ($\beta = 0.203$, $p < 0.05$). These findings suggest that providing high-quality gastronomic experiences, focusing on food, service, and environment, and encouraging active customer participation in co-creation activities can significantly enhance the likelihood of repeat visits. By fostering deeper customer participation and brand co-creation behavior, businesses can significantly enhance revisit intention, which is essential for long-term success in the competitive culinary tourism sector. These findings contribute to a better understanding of the dynamics between gastronomic experiences, customer brand co-creation behavior, and revisit intentions.

Keywords

customer participation, behavioral intention,
Generation Z

JEL Classification

M31, Z33, L66

INTRODUCTION

The gastronomic experience has become a vital component of the food and beverage industry, especially in the context of tourism. As consumers increasingly seek more personalized and memorable dining experiences, the role of customer engagement has become more prominent. In highly competitive markets such as Bali's café culture, businesses must adapt to the changing preferences of younger generations, particularly Generation Z. This generation not only values unique culinary experiences but also actively participates in brand interactions, primarily through social media platforms. Generation Z's receptiveness to gastronomic experiences and their active participation in customer brand co-creation behavior position them as a crucial demographic for businesses seeking to enhance revisit intention.

Despite the increasing attention given to customer engagement and experience, there is a significant gap in understanding the mediating role of customer brand co-creation behavior in the relationship be-

tween gastronomic experience and revisit intention. Bridging this gap is essential for developing effective business strategies in the highly competitive culinary tourism industry. By addressing this problem, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of how businesses can leverage customer interactions to drive repeat visits. Furthermore, exploring this mediating role offers valuable insights into the mechanisms through which positive dining experiences can foster long-term customer loyalty. The findings of this study are expected to assist businesses in formulating strategies that enhance customer engagement and retention in the evolving culinary market.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

The gastronomic experience, encompassing activities such as tasting regional delicacies and interacting with local food practices, plays a critical role in shaping customers' dining experiences. This multidimensional experience, which includes the quality of food, service, and ambiance, influences customer satisfaction and revisit intention (Cankül et al., 2024). The impact of gastronomic experiences on revisit intention within culinary tourism is a multifaceted phenomenon influenced by several interrelated factors. Positive dining experiences and the quality of food play a pivotal role in shaping customers' loyalty to culinary destinations. The studies have demonstrated that high levels of approval of gastronomic offerings significantly boost tourists' intentions to revisit and recommend the destination to others (Chang et al., 2021; Dedeoğlu et al., 2022; Khoshkam et al., 2022). Emotional attachment to memorable food experiences further enhances the likelihood of tourists returning to relive these experiences (Afaq et al., 2022). Additionally, the quality of food and service, along with sensory food descriptors, are critical components that influence tourist experiences. These factors, in turn, affect the intention to revisit and the propensity to engage in word-of-mouth recommendations (Bhat, 2024; Garaus et al., 2023; Lee, 2024). Authentic and innovative food offerings are particularly influential (Forlani et al., 2022; Gómez-Rico et al., 2021).

The gastronomic experience significantly influences customer brand co-creation behavior in culinary tourism, encompassing various dimensions such as development, feedback, and advocacy. Key components such as the quality of the physical environment, food, and service impact customer loyalty towards a destination (Cuadra et al., 2023). Gastronomy serves as a strategic element in tourism destinations, attracting various types of

tourists and enhancing their overall experience (Seyitoğlu & Ivanov, 2020). Food quality is a crucial factor affecting brand trust and willingness to pay, underscoring its importance in customer perceptions and behaviors (Moon et al., 2022). Customer enjoyment of gastronomic experiences is vital for a destination's success and the development of branding strategies (Choi & Jeon, 2020).

Service quality, physical environment, and food quality are essential attributes in creating a positive gastronomic experience for customers (Afaq et al., 2022). The quality of the physical environment significantly influences consumer perceptions of the dining experience, providing a unique and memorable experience (Slack et al., 2020). Gastronomy acts as a motivating factor influencing tourist contentment and destination competitiveness. Food quality is a critical aspect of the consumer experience in the restaurant industry, influencing overall contentment (Wu & Lin, 2022). Additionally, food quality significantly affects consumer enjoyment, indicating its importance in evaluating dining experiences (Sharma, 2023). In Michelin-starred restaurants, attributes like error-free service and a well-curated wine list contribute to achieving culinary excellence and positive customer reviews (Barrera-Barrera, 2023). Sensory food descriptors on menus influence positive word-of-mouth, highlighting the importance of food quality in consumer perceptions (Garaus et al., 2023).

The impact of customer brand co-creation behavior on revisit intention in culinary tourism is significant and multifaceted. Customer brand co-creation behavior encompasses four dimensions: development, feedback, advocacy, and helping (Sung & Lee, 2023). In development, customers engage by reposting or retweeting content created by their favorite restaurants on social media, sharing new ideas and suggestions with the brand and

others on social platforms, and actively sharing photos of themselves at their favorite restaurants with the brand and their network (Rachão et al., 2020). In feedback, customers provide feedback when they have positive experiences, offer useful ideas for improvement, report issues they notice, and share their thoughts for enhancements with the brand (Hoyer et al., 2020; Prentice & Nguyen, 2020). In advocacy, customers recommend the restaurant to others, speak positively about their experiences, spread good word-of-mouth, and encourage friends and relatives to visit (Nadeem et al., 2021; Yasin et al., 2020). In helping, customers assist the brand by offering support, providing recommendations to new customers, and helping other patrons have a positive experience (Gómez-Rico et al., 2022).

The studies have demonstrated that such co-creation behaviors significantly enhance the intention to revisit culinary tourism destinations. Engaging in co-creation activities fosters a deeper emotional connection between customers and the brand, leading to increased loyalty and a stronger desire to return. This emotional bond is further reinforced by positive social interactions and the validation received from the brand and fellow customers on social media platforms (Foroudi et al., 2021). Additionally, the active participation of customers in co-creating their dining experiences contributes to a sense of ownership and pride in the brand, further motivating revisit intentions (Gómez-Rico et al., 2022).

Furthermore, the collaborative nature of co-creation allows customers to feel more valued and heard, enhancing their overall experience and increasing the likelihood of them revisiting the destination. The reciprocal relationship between customers and brands, facilitated by co-creation, helps in building trust and loyalty, which are critical drivers of repeat visits. By continuously engaging customers in the brand narrative and incorporating their feedback, culinary tourism destinations can create a dynamic and responsive environment that encourages repeat patronage (Gómez-Rico et al., 2022; Khoshkam et al., 2022). In conclusion, customer brand co-creation behavior plays a vital role in shaping revisit intentions in culinary tourism. The dimensions of development, feedback, advocacy, and helping not only enhance

customer experiences but also foster loyalty and emotional connections, driving repeat visits and positive word-of-mouth recommendations.

Customer brand co-creation behavior plays a crucial role in mediating the impact of gastronomic experiences on revisit intention in culinary tourism. The research shows that customer co-creation experiences positively influence customer brand engagement, emotional attachment to the brand, and satisfaction (Hussain et al., 2020). Additionally, the co-creation experience in dining has a positive impact on perceived personalization and brand love (Mohammad & AbouElez, 2020). This underscores the importance of involving customers in the creation process to enhance their connection with the brand. Customer value co-creation is considered an essential manifestation of customer engagement behaviors (Mane & Diop, 2017), emphasizing the relationship between engaging customers in value creation and fostering brand loyalty and revisit intentions.

In the context of the hospitality and tourism industry, customer value co-creation has been identified as a key factor in enhancing brand loyalty (Lin & Choe, 2022). By actively involving customers in the co-creation process, businesses can improve brand experiences, leading to stronger brand attachment and customer citizenship behaviors. Additionally, a systematic literature review on customer value co-creation in the hospitality and tourism industry identifies the dimensions, antecedents, and outcomes of customer value co-creation, providing valuable insights for businesses in this sector (Carvalho & Alves, 2022). Overall, customer brand co-creation behavior serves as a vital relationship between gastronomic experiences, customer engagement, and revisit intentions in culinary tourism. By fostering co-creation experiences that enhance brand engagement and satisfaction, businesses can cultivate loyal customers who are more likely to revisit, thereby contributing to the success of culinary tourism destinations.

Building upon the existing literature on gastronomic experience and customer brand co-creation behavior, this study aims to investigate how these factors influence revisit intention among Generation Z café visitors in Bali. Specifically, the study explores the mediating role of customer

brand co-creation behavior in this relationship. Based on this objective, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- H1: *Gastronomic experience has positive significant impact on revisit intention.*
- H2: *Gastronomic experience has positive impact on customer brand co-creation behavior.*
- H3: *Customer brand co-creation behavior has positive impact on revisit intention.*
- H4: *Customer brand co-creation behavior mediates the impact of gastronomic experience on revisit intention.*

2. METHODOLOGY

This study employs a quantitative research design to investigate the role of customer brand co-creation behavior in mediating the impact of gastronomic experience on revisit intention. In this case, the focus was on Generation Z café visitors in Bali, Indonesia, a demographic well-known for frequent café visits and active brand engagement. The target population consisted of Generation Z individuals, born between 1993 and 2006, who regularly visit cafés in Bali. A purposive sampling technique was employed to re-

cruit 250 respondents who met these criteria. Data collection took place over two months via an online survey using Google Forms. The survey first gathered demographic information about the respondents, followed by questions measuring their experiences and behaviors related to the constructs of interest. Prior to the full data collection, the survey’s validity and reliability were tested on a sample of 30 respondents to ensure the accuracy of the measurement instruments.

The survey measured three main constructs: gastronomic experience, customer brand co-creation behavior, and revisit intention. Gastronomic experience was evaluated using a multi-dimensional scale that assessed the quality of the physical environment, food, and service, with items adapted from previous research (Cankül et al., 2024). Customer brand co-creation behavior was measured across four dimensions: development, feedback, advocacy, and helping, using items adapted from Sung and Lee (2023) and France et al. (2020). Revisit intention was assessed using a 5-point Likert scale adapted from Konuk (2019), with response options ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” After collecting the data, validation checks were performed on the responses to ensure completeness and accuracy. Out of 250 surveys, all were deemed valid, resulting in a final data set of 250 responses. The data were then analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural

Table 1. Respondent characteristics

No.	Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
1	Gender	Male	79	31.6
		Female	171	68.4
Total			250	100.0
2	Last education	Diploma	15	6.0
		Bachelor	66	26.4
		High school	169	67.6
Total			250	100.0
3	Occupation	Student	192	76.8
		Private employee	34	13.6
		Entrepreneur	16	6.4
		Others	8	3.2
Total			250	100.0
4	Frequency	1-2 times a month	169	67.6
		1-2 times a week	68	27.2
		More than 2 times a week	13	5.2
Total			250	100
5	Duration	Less than 1 hour	15	6.0
		1-3 hours	177	70.8
		More than 3 hours	58	23.2
Total			250	100

Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 3.0, involving the measurement model assessment and structural model assessment.

The demographic characteristics of the respondents are presented in Table 1. The sample consisted of 250 respondents, with 68.4% being female and 31.6% male. Most respondents had completed high school education (67.6%), followed by bachelor's degree holders (26.4%) and diploma holders (6.0%). Regarding occupation, most respondents were students (76.8%), followed by private employees (13.6%) and entrepreneurs (6.4%). In terms of café visit frequency, 67.6% visited their favorite café 1-2 times a month, 27.2% visited 1-2 times a week, and 5.2% visited more than twice a week.

3. RESULTS

This section presents the findings from the analysis of the measurement model and the structural model, focusing on the relationships between gastronomic experience, customer brand co-creation behavior, and revisit intention. The measurement

model was evaluated for its reliability and validity using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM).

Table 2 provides the results of the reliability and convergent validity of constructs, including Gastronomic Experience, Customer Brand Co-creation Behavior, and Revisit Intention. All constructs demonstrate acceptable reliability, with Cronbach's alpha, rho_A, and composite reliability values exceeding 0.7, as recommended by Hair et al. (2017). The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for all constructs also meets the recommended threshold of 0.5 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The results of the SmartPLS test for the structural model are shown in Figure 1, demonstrating the relationships between the constructs.

Discriminant validity was assessed using cross-loading values, as shown in Table 3. Each indicator's cross-loading with its respective construct was higher than its cross-loading with other constructs, confirming good discriminant validity. For example, PEQ1 had a loading of 0.816 with Gastronomic Experience, which was higher than

Table 2. Measurement model (reliability and convergent validity)

Variables	Dimension	Items	Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	CR	AVE
Gastronomic Experience	Physical environment quality	PEQ1	0.816	0.884	0.886	0.920	0.743
		PEQ2	0.768				
		PEQ3	0.816				
		PEQ4	0.845				
	Service quality	FQ1	0.868	0.924	0.924	0.952	0.868
		FQ2	0.853				
		FQ3	0.881				
	Food quality	FQ1	0.858	0.888	0.889	0.930	0.817
		FQ2	0.797				
FQ3		0.856					
Customer Brand Co-Creation Behavior	Development	D1	0.727	0.804	0.805	0.885	0.720
		D2	0.760				
		D3	0.732				
	Feedback	F1	0.793	0.890	0.892	0.932	0.821
		F2	0.748				
		F3	0.792				
	Advocacy	A1	0.743	0.918	0.918	0.948	0.859
		A2	0.746				
		A3	0.749				
	Helping	H1	0.792	0.862	0.863	0.913	0.784
		H2	0.762				
		H3	0.759				
Revisit Intention		RI1	0.938	0.837	0.882	0.903	0.760
		RI2	0.939				
		RI3	0.720				

Table 3. Discriminant validity

Variables	Items	Gastronomic Experience	Customer Brand Co-Creation Behavior	Revisit Intention
Gastronomic Experience (GE)	PEQ1	0.816	0.417	0.582
	PEQ2	0.768	0.518	0.565
	PEQ3	0.816	0.432	0.598
	PEQ4	0.845	0.425	0.562
	SQ1	0.868	0.400	0.541
	SQ2	0.853	0.449	0.521
	SQ3	0.881	0.428	0.565
	FQ1	0.858	0.489	0.569
	FQ2	0.797	0.429	0.573
Customer Brand Value Co-creation (CBC)	FQ3	0.856	0.486	0.635
	D1	0.220	0.727	0.354
	D2	0.244	0.760	0.360
	D3	0.459	0.732	0.584
	F1	0.269	0.793	0.351
	F2	0.356	0.748	0.404
	F3	0.270	0.792	0.367
	A1	0.579	0.743	0.633
	A2	0.614	0.746	0.642
	A3	0.575	0.749	0.622
	H1	0.384	0.792	0.461
Revisit Intention (RI)	H2	0.336	0.762	0.423
	H3	0.512	0.759	0.555
	RI1	0.661	0.593	0.938
	RI2	0.667	0.608	0.939
	RI3	0.421	0.447	0.720

its loadings with Customer Brand Co-creation Behavior (0.417) and Revisit Intention (0.582). This pattern was consistent across all indicators, indicating that each construct is distinct and well-defined, providing a reliable basis for further analysis.

The structural model was analyzed to test the hypotheses and examine the relationships between Gastronomic Experience (GE), Customer Brand Co-creation Behavior (CBC), and Revisit Intention (RI). Table 4 summarizes the path coefficients, t-values, and p-values for each hypothesized relationship.

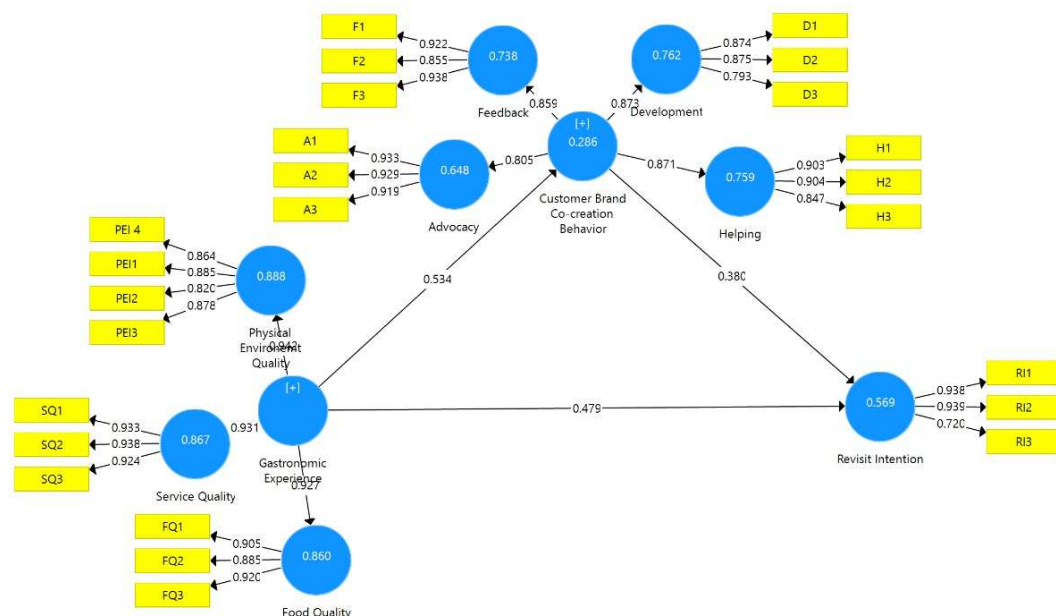


Figure 1. Report SmartPLS

Table 4. Result of hypotheses testing

	Hypothesis	Original sample	t-value	p-value	Supported
H1	GE → RI	0.380	6.028	0.000	Yes
H2	GE → CBC	0.534	12.306	0.000	Yes
H3	CBVC → RI	0.479	7.895	0.000	Yes
H4	GE → CBC → RI	0.203	4.880	0.000	Yes

4. DISCUSSION

The hypothesis testing results indicate that Gastronomic Experience (GE) significantly positively influences Revisit Intention (RI) (*H1*). The path coefficient for this relationship is 0.380, with a t-value of 6.028 and a p-value of 0.000. This supports the hypothesis that positive gastronomic experiences increase customers' likelihood to revisit culinary destinations. Previous studies have similarly highlighted the importance of dining experiences in shaping revisit intentions, emphasizing factors such as food quality, service quality, and the physical environment (Chang et al., 2021; Dedeoğlu et al., 2022; Khoshkam et al., 2022). This is consistent with the findings of Foroudi et al. (2021), indicating that a high-quality gastronomic experience greatly enhances tourists' intentions to revisit and recommend destinations.

Aligning with these findings, this study reveals that the quality of the gastronomic experience is crucial in encouraging repeat visits. Generation Z, the primary respondents in this study, particularly appreciate unique and memorable dining experiences. They value superior food preparation, healthier menu options, enhanced dining environments, and exceptional customer service (Choi & Jeon, 2020). This demographic's preference for sustainable and authentic food options further influences their revisit intentions, consistent with the emphasis on food quality and service standards observed in previous research. The high frequency of café visits among respondents, with 67.6% visiting their favorite café 1-2 times a month, 27.2% visiting 1-2 times a week, and 5.2% visiting more than twice a week, underscores the importance of these factors in their dining choices.

The impact of Gastronomic Experience on Customer Brand Co-creation Behavior (CBC) is significant, as demonstrated by a path coefficient of 0.534, a t-value of 12.306, and a p-value of 0.000 (*H2*). This suggests that enjoyable dining experi-

ences encourage customers to engage more actively with the brand through co-creation activities. This finding is supported by Cuadra et al. (2023) who identified that the quality of the physical environment, food, and service are key components that enhance customer loyalty towards a destination. Additionally, Seyitoğlu and Ivanov (2020) emphasized the strategic role of gastronomy in attracting various types of tourists and enhancing their overall experience. Moon et al. (2022) also highlighted that food quality is crucial for brand trust and willingness to pay, further underscoring the importance of positive gastronomic experiences in fostering customer brand engagement.

In this study, Generation Z respondents demonstrated a high propensity for engaging in brand co-creation behaviors, such as sharing their dining experiences on social media, providing feedback, and participating in brand-related activities. This aligns with the findings of Mohammad and AbouElezz (2020) who noted co-creation experiences in dining enhance perceived personalization and brand love, particularly among younger demographics. The active participation of Generation Z in brand co-creation underscores their desire for a more personalized and interactive dining experience, which in turn, fosters stronger brand loyalty and revisit intentions. The respondents' significant engagement in cafés is reflected in the duration of their visits, with 70.8% spending 1-3 hours per visit, 23.2% spending more than 3 hours, and 6.0% spending less than 1 hour, indicating that cafés serve as popular venues for socializing and studying.

Customer Brand Co-creation Behavior (CBC) significantly affects Revisit Intention (RI), with a path coefficient of 0.479, a t-value of 7.895, and a p-value of 0.000 (*H3*). This indicates that when customers feel involved in brand activities or co-creation initiatives, they are more inclined to revisit the restaurant. This finding is consistent with the results of studies by Gómez-Rico et al. (2022) and Nadeem et al. (2020), which demonstrated that

engaging customers in co-creation activities fosters a deeper emotional connection between customers and the brand, leading to increased loyalty and a stronger desire to return. Furthermore, customer involvement in co-creating their dining experiences contributes to a sense of ownership and pride in the brand, which further motivates revisit intentions (Foroudi et al., 2021).

This study reveals that Generation Z's engagement in brand co-creation activities significantly enhances their loyalty and revisit intentions. This demographic's active use of social media and digital platforms to share dining experiences and interact with brands aligns with the findings of Sung and Lee (2023) who emphasized the importance of development, feedback, advocacy, and helping behaviors in fostering revisit intention. By involving Generation Z in the brand narrative, culinary destinations can create a dynamic and responsive environment that encourages repeat visits. The high level of social media activity among Generation Z and their inclination towards digital interactions make them ideal participants in brand co-creation, further solidifying their loyalty and increasing their likelihood of revisiting.

The mediating role of Customer Brand Co-creation Behavior (CBC) in the relationship be-

tween Gastronomic Experience (GE) and Revisit Intention (RI) is confirmed with a path coefficient of 0.203, a t-value of 4.880, and a p-value of 0.000 (*H4*). This suggests that part of the effect of gastronomic experiences on revisit intentions is facilitated through enhanced brand engagement and collaborative interactions. This finding aligns with the literature, indicating that effective customer engagement can lead to increased co-creation activities and positive behavioral outcomes such as revisit intention (Rather et al., 2022). Lin and Choe (2022) also identified customer value co-creation as a key factor in enhancing brand loyalty within the hospitality and tourism industry. By actively involving customers in the co-creation process, businesses can improve brand experiences, leading to stronger brand attachment and customer citizenship behaviors (Carvalho & Alves, 2022). This study highlights the importance of customer brand co-creation behavior as a mediator in the relationship between gastronomic experience and revisit intention. For Generation Z, the ability to actively participate in and contribute to the brand experience is crucial in forming strong emotional bonds with the brand. This Generation's preference for interactive and engaging experiences aligns with the findings of Hussain et al. (2020) who noted that customer co-creation experiences positively influence brand engagement.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to investigate the mediating role of customer brand co-creation behavior in the relationship between gastronomic experience and revisit intention among Generation Z café visitors in Bali. The results demonstrate that gastronomic experience significantly influences both revisit intention and customer brand co-creation behavior. Additionally, customer brand co-creation behavior plays a crucial role in mediating the effect of gastronomic experience on revisit intention. These findings suggest that providing high-quality gastronomic experiences, along with fostering active customer participation in brand co-creation, can significantly increase the likelihood of repeat visits. This is particularly important for businesses targeting Generation Z, a demographic that values engagement and personalized experiences. By understanding and leveraging these behaviors, café operators and other businesses in the culinary tourism sector can enhance customer satisfaction and encourage long-term success.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Conceptualization: Ni Made Purnami, Ayu Putu Laksmi Danyathi.

Data curation: Ni Wayan Mujiati, Uswatun Siwi Kartika Sari, Desak Komang Dea Marcellina Putri.

Formal analysis: Ni Made Purnami, Desak Komang Dea Marcellina Putri.

Investigation: Uswatun Siwi Kartika Sari, Ayu Putu Laksmi Danyathi.

Methodology: Ni Made Purnami.

Project Administration: Ayu Putu Laksmi Danyathi, Uswatun Siwi Kartika Sari.

Resources: Ni Wayan Mujiati, Ayu Putu Laksmi Danyathi.

Validation: Ni Wayan Mujiati.

Supervision: Ni Made Purnami.

Vizualization: Ayu Putu Laksmi Danyathi, Desak Komang Dea Marcellina Putri.

Writing – original draft: Ni Made Purnami, Desak Komang Dea Marcellina Putri.

Writing – review & editing: Ni Wayan Mujiati, Uswatun Siwi Kartika Sari.

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