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# BOOSTING CUSTOMER TRUST: PRICING, EXPERIENCE AND VALUE IN ENCHANTING WEST JAVA TOURISM

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigates the influence of experiential marketing and price on customer trust, with customer value as a moderating factor. Employing a sample of 200 respondents using proportionate stratified random sampling, data is collected through a survey with a structured questionnaire. Analysis via Structured Equation Modeling (SEM) using LISREL software highlights significant effects. Price exhibits a notable impact on customer trust, emphasizing its role in shaping perceptions. Furthermore, the joint influence of experiential marketing and price underscores a holistic approach. The study contributes to understanding the nuanced interplay among these variables, aiding businesses in refining trust-building strategies. By recognizing customer value's moderating role, this research provides valuable insights for effective customer relationship management.

**Keywords:** experiential marketing; customer trust; price; customer value

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15549/jeecar.v10i6.1497>

## INTRODUCTION

According to a recent study by León-Gómez et al. (2021), sustainable tourism development significantly influences economic growth. The study provides a comprehensive evaluation of the impact of sustainable tourism

development on economic growth, highlighting the positive relationship between the two factors. Another study by Alhawaish (2016) investigates the role of tourism in promoting economic growth in Saudi Arabia and finds empirical evidence supporting the

contribution of tourism to economic growth (Naseem, 2021). These findings emphasize the importance of tourism development as a catalyst for economic development and growth in various regions (León-Gómez et al., 2021).

The success of Indonesian tourism is determined by at least three central pillars, namely success in product development, success in marketing, and success in producing human resources, which includes the tourism community (Satti et al., 2019). One of the marketing concepts that can effectively influence consumer emotions, particularly in sales, is experiential marketing. This concept goes beyond simply providing opportunities and information for customers to experience the benefits of a product or service. It also aims to evoke feelings and emotions that significantly influence marketing outcomes (Hadiwidjaja & Dharmayani, 2018).

Among the provinces on Java Island in Indonesia, West Java Province stands out with the most significant economic growth, accounting for 5.45% in 2022. Various research studies have consistently demonstrated that tourism is constructive in driving economic expansion in West Java (Hakim et al., 2021). The provincial government of West Java has notably embraced digital tourism strategies to enhance visitor promotion, thereby contributing to the growth of potential visitors (Putra et al., 2018). Furthermore, West Java boasts considerable MSME potential, and to generate income beyond online sales (Wirdiyanti et al., 2022), they engage in selling around tourist destinations (Susilowati et al., 2019). MSME participants conduct marketing activities in the vicinity of their business establishments, thereby boosting economic engagement at tourist destinations.

Marketers use experiential marketing to comprehend, interact with, and empathize with consumers for them to become loyal, willing to have relationships in the long term, use the company's services and as well as products regularly, and recommend them to friends and family. Experiential marketing is a popular model for approaching, acquiring, and retaining customers. As a result, it is not surprising that many businesses are attempting to build and market a distinct, good, and memorable experience for their

customers.

Price perception is the worth of quantitative and non-quantitative sacrifice customers offer to receive a product (Patrik, 2014). Price becomes an extrinsic signal to consumers, forming an important part of the 'perception of monetary value (Zeithaml et al., 2016). Price perception can also reflect a customer's emotional experience of purchasing a product, which can be seen as a positive or negative signal to act. Recent studies have shown that a favorable price perception positively affects consumers' purchasing intentions (Yasri et al., 2020). In a recent study, Salem & Kiss (2022) found that customers' perceptions of pricing considerably affect their intention to repeat orders, and that price perception serves as a significant variable of such intention. Furthermore, the study concluded that the perception of price partially mediates the connection between customers' perception of service quality and their intention to repurchase.

The customer's perception of their worth is described in a contrast between the quality or profit they perceive in the goods and the sacrifice they perceive when paying the price of the product. Customer trust reflects all customer information and consumer judgments about products' features, benefits, and traits (Izogo et al., 2018). This paper investigates several variables of MSME customers in the West Java tourism environment.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Experiential Marketing

Experiential marketing is a type of marketing that aims to analyze consumers by applying psychological models to analyze consumer behavior. This kind of marketing involves appealing to consumers' five senses, the heart and the mind, when developing goods or services (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). Advances in consumer neuroscience research have allowed marketing researchers to effectively utilize psychophysiological measures such as heart rate variability to understand consumer behavior (Kakaria et al., 2023). Retailers can use unconventional marketing approaches more extensively within an omni-channel market, as numerous avenues exist to engage with consumers (Kim & Sullivan, 2019). Sensory marketing engages and triggers consumers'

senses, and retailers who direct their strategies toward meeting these consumer desires have been successful via storytelling, sensory branding, cause branding, and empowerment (Kim & Sullivan, 2019). The product can positively impact positive emotional value, creating a memorable interaction between the client and the business. Experiential marketing is a type of marketing utilized today that uses psychological models to examine consumer behavior to understand consumers. In this strategy, marketers develop goods or services by appealing to customers' five senses, hearts, and minds. An emotional connection between the firm and the client can be made if the product can favorably affect their emotional value. Because happy clients frequently recommend the services of one firm to others, this has a very positive impact on the business.

Experiential marketing, a marketing strategy, encourages consumers to engage with a brand on a sensory, emotional, and cognitive level. The primary goal of this marketing approach is to enhance the consumer's overall purchasing experience (Wibisono & Yahya, 2019). In today's digital age, customers actively seek ways to improve their online shopping experience (Hsu et al., 2021). However, traditional web-based interfaces often fail to deliver a memorable and satisfying experience due to their limitations in providing information, media variety, technological innovation, interactivity, and visual impact (Riar et al., 2021). Augmented reality technology has emerged as a promising solution to bridge this gap.

## Price

Kotler & Armstrong (2016) state that the amount of money exchanged for a product and service is another pricing definition. Additionally, prices are a variety of values that consumers exchange for various benefits associated with owning or using goods and services. The measurement employed implies that price denotes the monetary value assigned to a particular good or service. It represents the cumulative worth that consumers exchange to obtain the benefits associated with owning or utilizing said good or service. Given that customers meticulously evaluate whether they are obtaining maximum value in relation to their expenditure, price substantially influences

both satisfaction and brand loyalty.

Price tiers, discounts, rebates, repayment durations, and credit terms are some of the components of pricing that are included in price variables, according to Kotler & Armstrong (2016). There are additionally 4 indicators that define the pricing, including:

1. **Consumer Accessibility to Money.** Prices may rise to the levels the business has established. Generally, a single brand provides a diverse range of product types, from the most affordable to the highest-priced options.
2. **Price-to-Product Quality Ratio.** Consumers frequently view price as a quality indication. Individuals frequently choose the more expensive one because they can tell that the two products are of different quality. Many people believe that the price reflects its quality, which means the higher the price, the better quality.
3. **Price and Benefits Compatibility.** If the perceived benefit of a product outweighs or is equivalent to the cost of acquiring it, the buyer will choose to purchase it. Customers will presume that the product is pricey and will think carefully before making a repurchase if they feel that the product's benefits outweigh the cost.
4. **Ability-based Pricing or Price Competition.** Consumers frequently assess a product's cost in comparison to other products. In this instance, shoppers give a product's high price a lot of thought before purchasing it.

## Customer Value

Lemon and Verhoef (2016) pointed out that customer value is the customer's perception of what he wants to achieve using a product or service in each situation to use the help of product or service to achieve the desired purpose or goal. Eggert et al. (2018) stated that customer value shows the difference between total customer value and total customer cost. Emotional branding has been identified as an essential determinant in developing brand loyalty, conceptualized in the long-run, committed, and affect-laden partnership devised to characterize

consumer-brand bonds (Kim & Sullivan, 2019). Elevated loyalty driven by emotional branding leads to more sales.

### Customer Trust

Walter et al. (2016, p.5) point out that trust positively impacts engagement. Trust reduces vulnerability and perceived risk in a relationship, leading to greater commitment. In addition, trust lowers transaction costs because fewer costly control mechanisms need to be established. In turn, lower costs increase the likelihood of continuing the relationship, thereby increasing commitment to the relationship. Trust reduces perceived risk and vulnerability in a relationship, leading to greater commitment. In addition, trust lowers the costs of transactions because few costly control mechanisms need to be established. In turn, lower costs increase the likelihood of continuing the relationship in the future, thereby increasing commitment to the relationship.

Customer trust is a foundational element in relationship marketing, playing a pivotal role for businesses in cultivating and sustaining a long-lasting bond with their clientele. Trust plays a significant role in customer relationships and influences customers' perceptions of their interactions with organizations. Building trust is important for customer engagement and loyalty (Agyei et al., 2020). Recent research has examined the impact of trust on customer engagement and loyalty in various industries, including the insurance industry. Trust dimensions have been found to influence customer engagement and loyalty positively (Agyei et al., 2020). Additionally, trust has been identified as a key factor in building brand relationships with customers in the retail industry (Cardoso et al., 2022). Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, consumers have been worried about the safety and cleanliness of the dining environment due to the potential threat of contracting the virus (Jeon & Jeong, 2017).

Based on the description, the hypothesis in this study is as follows:

H<sub>1</sub>: There is an influence of experiential marketing and customer relationship marketing on customer value in Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprise (MSMEs) in the tourism environment.

H<sub>2</sub>: There is an influence of experiential marketing and customer relationship marketing on MSME customers' trust in the West Java tourism environment.

H<sub>3</sub>: There is an influence of customer value affecting customer trust in MSMEs in the West Java tourism environment.

H<sub>4</sub>: Experiential marketing and customer relationship marketing influence customer trust through the value of MSME customers in the West Java tourism environment.

### METHODOLOGY

The data sources in this study are mainly consumers who have or are using Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprise (MSME) products in the tourism environment in West Java, in addition to MSME actors in the tourism environment in West Java and derived from literature research obtained by studying, researching, and studying various literature, as well as the results of previous research that are relevant to this research topic. Consumers who have used and are now utilizing MSME products in the West Javan tourism industry are the unit of analysis in this study since their numbers are too enormous to be quantified or altered. Various types of commodities are traded by MSMEs in the West Javan tourism industry, including food, beverages, tobacco, plantation products, miscellaneous goods, handicrafts, chemicals, nonmetallic excavated materials, metals, textiles, transportation, and electronics. MSMEs are dispersed across many districts and cities in West Java. The proportion of MSMEs in West Java's tourist industry.

200 MSME clients—who use MSME items in the West Java tourism industry—were given questionnaires. Statements addressing respondents' opinions on the aspects of experiential marketing, customer relationship marketing, customer value, and consumer trust are included in the questionnaire. Each sentence has five possible responses on a Likert scale.

Interviews with MSME players in the West Java tourism industry. Interviews were performed to gather first-hand information about the organization's mission, goals, and operating procedures as well as the



- Select the type of input matrix and determine the forecasted model.

For non-metric measures to be used in SEM and Lisrel it is carried out by measuring Polychoric, Polyserial, Tetrachoric, and Biserial correlations. Polychoric and Polyserial correlations are not the correlations that were calculated from actual scores but rather theoretical correlations of the underlying variables. This correlation is from the observation pairs of contingency tables of ordinal variables.

- Model Estimation

Li (2016) suggests that the Weighted Least-Squares (WLS) technique is suitable for estimating ordinal data and polychoric correlation. Due to the abnormal distribution of ordinal data, the WLS method gives better results. The downside of WLS measurements is that they must have a relatively large number of samples. The estimation method used for research with a sample below 500

usually uses the Maximum Likelihood (ML) estimation method.

- Check model Conformance Results

SEM aims to test whether the model proposed in the path diagram (theoretical model) is appropriate to the data. Evaluation of the Kinerja model is carried out thoroughly (overall *test*).

### Experiential Marketing

Based on Table 1, respondents' responses to the Experiential Marketing variable have a total score of 20054 from an ideal score of 25650 with a percentage of 78%. The results of collecting overall data on respondents' responses to experiential marketing can be determined from the scores obtained based on the research score recapitulation data presented above. Based on the number of scores from data collection, the dimensions are classified as Good, from the maximum criteria that can be achieved, which is 100%.

**Table 1.** Recapitulation of Respondents' Response Scores to the Overall Dimensions of Experiential Marketing

No	Statement	Total Score	Average Score	Score Ideal	%	Criteria
1	Sense Marketing	5298	3,92	6750	78	Good
2	Feel Marketing	3133	3,87	4050	77	Good
3	Think Marketing	5297	3,92	6750	78	Good
4	Act marketing	3172	3,92	4050	78	Good
5	Relate marketing	3154	3,89	4050	78	Good
TOTAL		20054	3,90	25650	78	Good

Source : Authors' Findings

Recent research has shown that experiential marketing meets the expectations of tourism MSME visitors (Chen et al., 2022). Experiential marketing is a marketing approach that involves the feelings and emotions of consumers by generating unforgettable positive experiences (Batat, 2019). Experiential marketing in cultural tourism cities aims to enhance tourists' consumption encounters throughout their travel, fostering a positive experience that prompts them to share recommendations with their social circles. This, in turn, encourages repeat visits and contributes to a growth in tourist numbers and consumption revenues within these cultural tourism

destinations (Chen et al., 2022). Experiential marketing can be divided into several categories: sensory marketing, emotional marketing, cognitive marketing, and behavioral marketing. The effect of experiential marketing will show different research conclusions because of different industries (Xu et al., 2022).

### Price

Based on the respondent's response to the price variable, the total score obtained was 13904 from the ideal score of 17550 with a percentage of 79.2%. The results of collecting

overall data on respondents' responses to price can be determined from the scores obtained based on the research score recapitulation data presented above. Based on the number of scores from data collection, the dimensions are classified as Good, from the maximum criteria that can be achieved, which is 100%. Pricing is an important decision for management. The price set must be able to cover all costs, or even more than that, that is,

to make a profit (Salvator, 2012). One of the principles for management in paying this price is to focus on the willingness of buyers for a predetermined price with an amount that is sufficient to cover costs and generate profits. In the context of MSME that operating within business premises in tourism areas, prices can become highly competitive due to the relatively low barriers for entrepreneurs to enter and exit these markets.

**Table 2.** Recapitulation of Respondents' Response Scores to the Overall Dimensions of Price

No	Statement	Total Score	Average Score	Score Ideal	%	Criteria
1	Affordability	3167	3,91	4050	78,2	Good
2	Suitability With Product	4309	3,99	5400	79,8	Good
3	Suitability With Benefits	3216	3,97	4050	79,4	Good
4	According To Ability	3212	3,97	4050	79,3	Good
TOTAL		13904	3,96	17750	79,2	Good

Source: Authors' Finding

### Customer Value

Based on Table 3, respondents' answers to the Customer Value variable have a total score of 15760 from the ideal score of 20250 with a percentage of 77.8%. The results of collecting overall data on respondents' answers to

Customer Value can be determined from the scores obtained based on the research score recapitulation data presented above. Based on the number of scores from data collection, the dimensions are classified as Good, from the maximum criteria that can be achieved, which is 100%.

**Table 3.** Recapitulation of respondents' response scores to the overall customer value dimension

No	Statement	Total Score	Ideal Score	Average Score	%	Criteria
1	Benefit	11500	14850	3,89	77,4	Good
2	Cost	4260	5400	3,94	78,9	Good
TOTAL		15760	20250	3,92	77,8	Good

Source: Authors' Finding

### Customer Trust

Based on Table 4, respondents' answers to the Customer Trust variable have a total score of 9,443 from the ideal score of 12,150, with a percentage of 77.7%. The results of collecting overall data on respondents' answers to Customer Trust can be determined from the scores obtained based on the research score recapitulation data presented above. Based on the number of scores from data collection, the dimensions are classified as Good, from the maximum criteria that can be achieved. These

findings demonstrate that visitor confidence in tourism MSME meets customer trust. Trust is described as client faith in the quality and dependability of the services given by the organization, according to Ellen & Johnson, Mark S. (2014). Like overall satisfaction, perceptions of the service experience's key elements will impact trust in quality. Like overall happiness, perceptions of important aspects of the service experience will impact trust in quality.

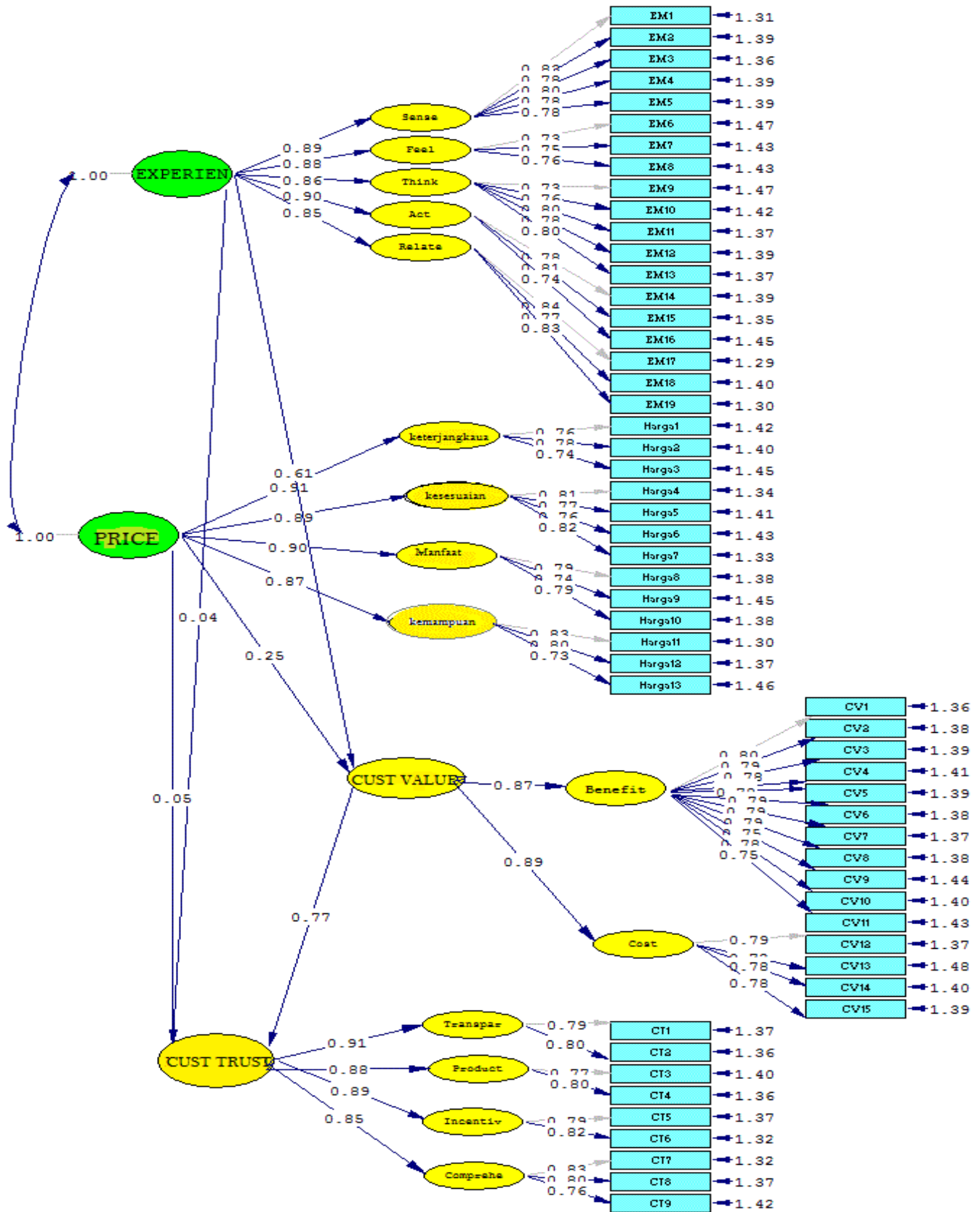


**Table 4.** Recapitulation Table of Respondents' Response Scores to Overall Customer Trust Dimensions

No	Statement	Total Score	Ideal Score	Average Score	%	Criteria
1	Transparency	2122	2700	3,93	78,6	Good
2	Product service and quality	1070	1350	3,96	79,3	Good
3	Product comparison	1042	1350	2,86	77,2	Good
4	Incentives	1071	1350	3,97	79,3	Good
5	Partnering	1037	1350	3,84	76,8	Good
6	Comprehensive	3101	4050	3,83	76,6	Good
TOTAL		9443	12150	3,73	77,7	Good

Based on Figure 2, which displays the outcomes of processing primary data using the SEM method and Lisrel 8.8 programming tools, all the employed indicators are shown. All variables were observed, and it was determined that none of them had negative error variance, standardized loading factor values greater than 1, or a significant standard error. This shows that, in the absence of an incorrect estimate, each variable observed in this study has complied with the requirements, allowing for additional testing. (2) Chi-Square and (2) Normed Tests. This test determines if the sample covariance matrix and the population covariance matrix differ. According to this test, the sample covariance matrix and the population covariance matrix

are equivalent. A model is deemed to be good if the Chi-Square value is low and the probability has a cut-off value of  $p > 0.05$ . In other words, if the model under test is deemed suitable. The ratio of 2 divided by its degree of freedom is known as a normed 2 test. A Normed 2 between 1 and 2 characterizes a good model. However, the ratio of 2 to 3 shows that it satisfies the requirements for a good model.



Chi-Square=653.35, df=1463, P-value=1.00000, RMSEA=0.000

Figure 2: Complete SEM Model (Estimation Coefficient)

DISCUSSION

The following describes the results of the

study, including testing the hypotheses that have been previously described (see Figure 3).

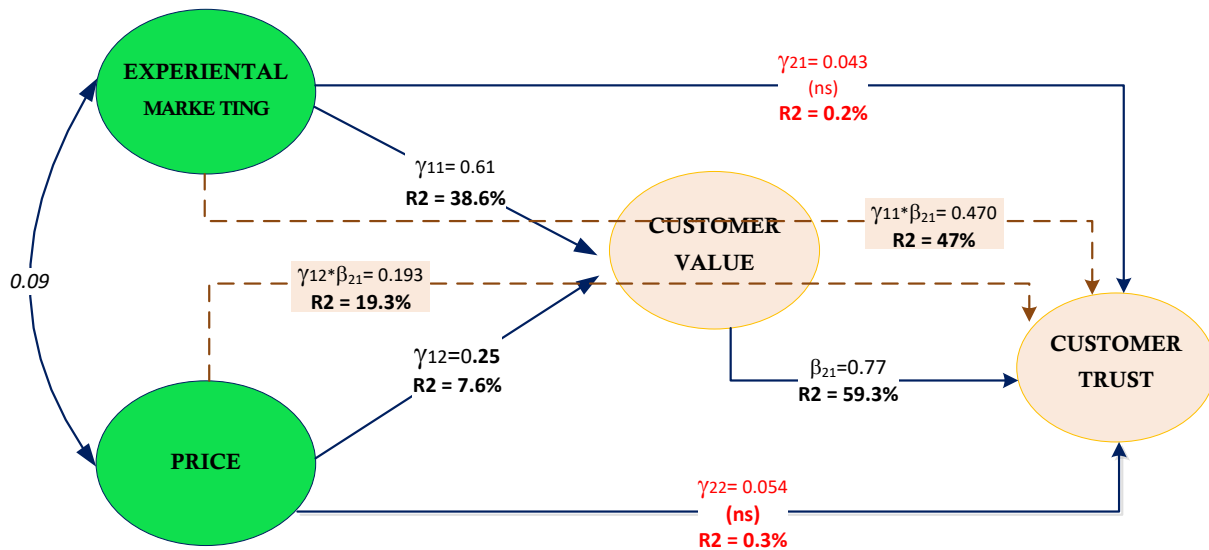


Figure 3: Research Result

The findings of the study showed that: experiential marketing had a greater influence (38.7%) than customer relationship marketing (7.27%) in increasing customer value; but neither variable has a significant effect on increasing customer confidence; experiential marketing has an indirect influence on customer trust by 46.4% through customer value; and customer relationship marketing has an indirect influence through customer value on customer trust of 18.2%.

The results showed that directly, customer value has the highest influence in increasing customer trust, but the indirect influence of experiential marketing is the highest in increasing customer trust through customer value. It can be stated that experiential marketing plays a dominant role compared to customer relationship marketing in increasing customer value which is able to increase customer trust. These findings are consistent with a previous study conducted by Kanopaita (2015), which highlighted the significance of experiential marketing in enhancing customer value. Experiential marketing involves imparting more than mere information about a product or service; it focuses on delivering valuable experiences to customers (Zena and Hadisumarto, 2013). For instance, tourist destinations frequently host

pop-up events, and MSMEs can participate to capitalize on the substantial foot traffic in those areas.

The development of customer value is more dominant in terms of cost than benefit. Meanwhile, experiential marketing relies on the act aspect, supported by aspects of sense, feel, think, and relate. The high contribution of the act aspect shows that creating experiences related to physical, behavioral, and long-term lifestyle by Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprise (MSME) actors is the highest aspect that customers perceive in terms of experiential marketing.

Customer relationship marketing contributes little to increasing customer value and customer trust. This Customer Relationship rests on aspects of marketing activities geared towards establishing, developing, and maintaining relational exchanges. Based on research findings, the increase in customer trust is influenced by how the development of customer value is predominantly influenced by experiential marketing and is supported by customer relationship marketing. This argument is in line with Indonesian context based on research conducted by Abadi et al. (2020).

Recent research has shown that experiential marketing has a direct influence on customer

trust (Carmo et al., 2022; Xu et al., 2022). Experiential marketing is a marketing approach that involves the emotions and feelings of consumers by creating unforgettable positive experiences (Xu et al., 2022). Another study examined the impact of experiential marketing and relationship marketing on hotel customer loyalty (Estikowati et al., 2020). The study found that experiential and relationship marketing have

a significant positive influence on customer loyalty in tourism area. This could be attributed to the fact that tourist attractions typically promote their locations in an enticing manner, which, in turn, effectively promotes MSMEs. This enhanced visibility can foster greater customer confidence in MSME products, despite occasional higher prices in tourist areas compared to non-tourist regions.

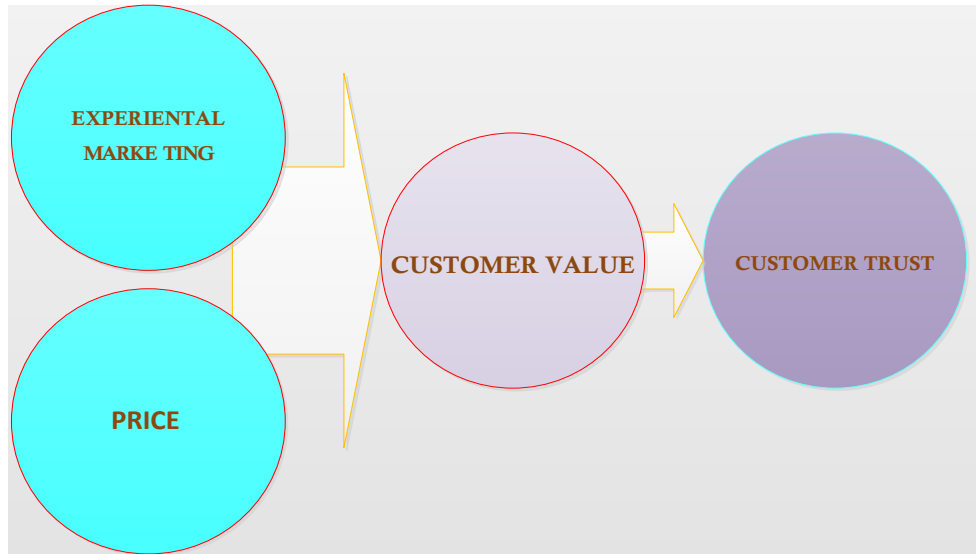


Figure 4: Building Trust Based on MSME Business Value Model

**CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

This study shows several conclusions: 1). Experiential marketing and customer relationship marketing affect trust through the value of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprise (MSME) customers in the tourism environment in West Java. Experiential marketing has a greater role than customer correlation in increasing customer value, which has implications for increasing customer trust. Experiential marketing has a dominant influence on aspects of the Act by creating experiences related to behavior and lifestyle, which plays a major role in increasing value, further implying an increase in customer trust. Customer relationship marketing affects trust through the value of MSME customers in the tourism environment in West Java, where the marketing aspect of the customer chapter, Understanding Customer expectations, namely the efforts of producers/companies in identifying the desires and expectations of consumers who play a big role in increasing customer value further has

implications for increasing customer trust. 2). Experiential marketing and customer relationship marketing affect the value of MSME customers in the tourism environment in West Java, where experiential marketing is predominantly influential, with aspects of the Act playing a major role in increasing value. The aspects of experiential marketing that increase customer value are Act, Sense, and Feel, while the lowest are Think and Relate. In marketing, customer relations that play the highest role in increasing customer value are Understanding Customer expectations and Total Quality Management and Building services partnership, while the lowest is empowering employees. 3). Experiential marketing and customer relationship marketing have no effect on MSME customers' trust in the West Java tourism environment. 4). Customer value affects MSME customers' trust in the West Java tourism environment. Trust is the company's success in creating benefits or value for consumers by reducing costs (Cost). MSME parties always

maintain and increase the commitment that has been promised to tourists, namely, carrying out advertising, promotion, and sales activities.

Collaborative promotional efforts should be coordinated between the tourism area management and MSME owners, as effective promotion can benefit both tourism traffic and MSME customer numbers.

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