CAN PERCEIVED EXPERIENTIAL MARKETING OF NUTRITIONAL MEAT-BASED FOOD ENHANCE REPURCHASE INTENTION? THE ROLE OF CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT

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Abstract

Understanding the consumption experience plays a critical role in building customer-product relationships and effectively meeting customers' changing demands. This study aims to investigate the impact of experiential consumption on customer engagement and repurchase intentions, with a focus on the high nutrient meat-based food setting. To examine this issue, this study collected data from 487 consumers who had purchased and consumed high nutrient meat (e.g., the Thai native chicken, namely Pradu Hang Dam Mor Kor 55 chicken). Using structural equation modelling with partial least squares in ADANCO software, the study found that experiential marketing dimensions exert differential effects on engagement. The results also indicate a more strongly significant effect of consumers' behavioral (behave) experience and intellectual (think) experience on engagement, while consumers' sensory (sense) experience and affective (feel) experience were not significant for engagement. Moreover, the effect of customer engagement on repurchase intentions was positive. The study concludes by outlining key implications that arise from the analyses, followed by avenues for further research.

Keyword: Experiential marketing, customer engagement, repurchase intentions, satisfaction, service-dominant logic

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, the creation of strong customer experiences has emerged as a pivotal topic in the marketing field, consistently linked to customer commitment, engagement, and behavioral intentions (Lim et al., 2022; Rather & Hollebeek, 2021). Both academics and practitioners have increasingly focused on customer experience as it is a critical issue contributing to firm growth and profitability (Gao et al., 2020; Keiningham et al., 2020). For example, when customers have a favorable experience with a company, they are willing to repurchase products and services in the future, as they may generate post-consumption evaluations after experiencing those offerings (Tsaur & Lo, 2020). As such, offering good

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products and services can create a memorable customer experience, which drives the customer's journey and leverages a competitive advantage in the market (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). Scholars have also documented that the value created through strong customer relationships is amplified when customers receive a positive experience (Roy et al., 2022).

Existing literature has demonstrated that customer experiences arise from direct or indirect interactions with market actors and are shaped by cognitive, emotional, physical, sensory, and social elements (Schmitt et al., 2009). Research in consumption experience has explored how companies create experiential marketing by engaging customers to think, sense, feel, and ultimately connect with companies and products (Chang, 2020; Yuan & Wu, 2008). Specifically, experiential marketing focuses not only on the functional value of a product, but also on consumers' feelings, from initial awareness to post-purchase behavior (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). For these reasons, the concept of experiential marketing has been applied in various contexts to understand customer-focused marketing activity that creates a customer-product connection (Schmitt, 2011). Therefore, experiential marketing has undoubtedly become a prevalent trend as part of business strategies globally.

Contemporarily, the competitive food industry has seen increasing demand for meat consumption across developing Asian countries, with growing concern over health benefits (Llauger et al., 2021). More importantly, people may seek products that provide greater nutritional value with higher animal protein content, as well as meeting other preferences and sensory properties, when selecting meat products (Font-i-Furnols & Guerrero, 2014; Hawkesworth et al., 2010). Some scholars also suggest that consumers are careful when selecting food ingredients and healthier meat products (Shan et al., 2017). Consequently, producers and manufacturers are increasingly leveraging new ideas to develop healthier meat products with necessary nutritional ingredients (Meeprom & Pungprasert, 2021; Randers et al., 2021), resulting in increased competitiveness within the food industry. Therefore, in light of these challenges in the food industry, understanding post-consumer behavior provides better insight into consumer experiences. Specifically, when customers perceive a higher level of positive experience with the products, they are motivated and encouraged to engage with those products (Meeprom & Pungprasert, 2021; Santos & Schlesinger, 2021).

Prior research suggests that engaging with meat products while eating can lead to corresponding emotional and behavioral states, which in turn leads to customer loyalty and repurchase intentions (Ho & Chung, 2020). Engaging customers naturally leads to photos and videos being shared on social media, expanding brand reach organically. Exciting experiences are more likely to be discussed with friends and family, creating valuable word-of-mouth promotion (Haenlein & Libai, 2017). Existing literature on customer experience predominantly focuses on satisfaction, value, image, and loyalty, as consequences of customer experience in diverse contexts (e.g., Chang, 2020; Lee et al., 2020; Yuan & Wu, 2008). However, there is limited knowledge on how specific marketing activities align with particular contexts, situations, and types of customers (Becker & Jaakkola, 2020), and few studies empirically examine the relationship between experience and customer engagement. Therefore, understanding customers' perceptions of their experiences plays a critical role in creating strong relationships between products and customers, driving engagement, and ultimately repurchase intentions (Roy et al., 2022). Therefore, the aim of this research is to investigate the role of experiential consumption of high nutrient meat-based products and their impact on customer engagement and its consequences (e.g., repurchase intentions). The results of the study will add knowledge to the existing consumption experience literature and fill a research gap by studying this phenomenon in the context of a developing country. Moreover, the findings of this study will benefit industry players by helping them develop marketing strategies which implement the findings to achieve their objectives. The paper, therefore,

contains a literature review, methodology, results/findings, discussion, and conclusion, in the following sections.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Service-Dominant Logic (S-D Logic)

Vargo and Lusch (2016) developed the view of Service-Dominant Logic (S-D Logic) as a novel dominant logic for creating marketing strategies. The concept of S-D Logic involves redefining the role of manufacturing companies as "service providers" and customers to "service users," focusing on service users becoming co-creators of value according to their own context and needs. This co-creation is facilitated through platforms or channels that the service provider has already prepared (Dahl et al., 2021). Thanks to advances in modern technology, companies can now easily connect with their customers.

The perspective of S-D Logic provides a framework for understanding how customers engage with products and exchange benefits through the use of resources and capabilities (Schmitt et al., 2015). It emphasizes the importance of service (in its broadest sense, encompassing experiences) in marketing strategies. Accordingly, the S-D Logic perspective can connect experiential marketing and customer engagement (Rather et al., 2022). More importantly, S-D Logic differentiates between operative value (functional benefits) and relational value (social and emotional benefits). Moreover, experiential marketing can contribute to customer and product transactions, which increase behavioral responses by engaging their experiences. Strong customer engagement in the product offering may enhance product functionality (operative value) while fostering emotional connections, ultimately leading to customer loyalty (relational value) (Silanoi et al., 2022).

This study focuses on the experiential marketing of high nutrient meat (namely Pradu Hang Dam Mor Kor 55 chicken) and customer engagement behavior in the post-consumption stage of the consumer decision-making process. Customers, through obtaining the benefits of the product, may actively contribute to the development of experiential value. By actively engaging in their consumption experiences and sharing their opinions, consumers participate in creating experiential value through psychological interactions, including cognitive actions such as learning, collecting, and sharing information (Prebensen & Xie, 2017). Customer-to-customer interaction allows others to receive inspiration and information about certain products, which is particularly valuable for experiential products such as high nutrient meat (namely Pradu Hang Dam Mor Kor 55 chicken). Drawing on S-D Logic, this study examines the influence of experiential marketing of high nutrient meat on customer engagement and repurchase intentions, focusing on how customers perceive the benefits of the product through consumption evaluation in the post-consumption stage. Therefore, the application of S-D Logic is useful to explain the theoretical framework for this area of research, as presented in Figure1.

2.2 Experiential Marketing (EM)

Customer perception of consumption experience is an important factor for new products or services in the marketplace (Jiang et al., 2018). Moreover, understanding consumption experience from the customer's perspective can provide benefits and help attract the target consumer, as they are able to recognize the image and characteristics of a certain product (Schmitt & Zarantonello, 2013). More importantly, offering a unique experience for the target consumer group can motivate them to make a purchase decision (Stein & Ramaseshan, 2020) whereby consumers' evaluation of the product, based on their expectations compared to what they actually receive from the manufacturer, achieves satisfaction) Troy & Kerry, 2010). The

perception of newly produced products depends largely on consumers' emotional states (e.g., image, taste, smell), cognitive focus (e.g., knowledge about the product), and behavioral responses (e.g., recommending products, exchanging opinions, exposure to product-related information) (Schmitt et al., 2015). In this way, consumption experience may extend from initial awareness to post-purchase behavior (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016).

Figure 1 Theoretical Framework
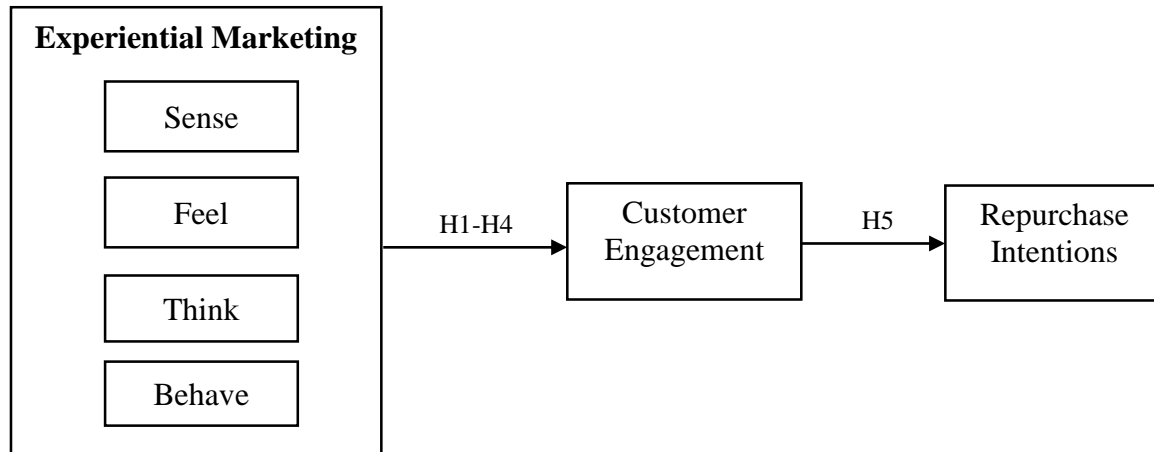
Schmitt (2011) developed the elements of perception through experiential marketing, which include sense, feel, think, and behave. These four dimensions of experiential marketing are used to predict consumer behavior, which results in consumers' willingness to purchase products due to positive perceptions. Prior research suggests that experiential marketing is primarily used as a strategy to deliver offerings that dazzle the customer's senses, touch their hearts, and stimulate their minds. In other words, designing superior experiential modules can create differing types of customer experiences, including sensory experiences (sense), affective experience (feel), intellectual experience (think), and, behavioral experience (behave), which result from relating to a culture or reference group (Rather & Hollebeek, 2021). Therefore, experiential marketing provides the holistic experiences that appropriately integrate the qualities of sensing, feeling, thinking, and behaving.

According to the literature review, customers frequently lack knowledge about production processes, storage, production costs, and the health benefits associated with organic foods (Sultan et al., 2020). Simply offering delicious products is insufficient. Experiential marketing can be a powerful tool for fostering deeper connections with consumers, driving engagement and, ultimately, repurchase intentions (Meeprom et al., 2023; Meeprom & Pungprasert, 2021; Wiedmann et al., 2018). Therefore, experiential marketing goes beyond traditional advertising. It focuses on creating interactive experiences that engage consumers on a sensory and emotional level. These experiences create positive memories and emotional connections with the product, fostering a sense of loyalty and encouraging repeat purchases (Majeed et al., 2022; Meeprom & Suttikun, 2024).

2.3 Customer Engagement (CE)

The concept of customer engagement has been recognized as a strategic imperative in recent years (Kumar et al., 2019), contributing to long-term customer-product relationships. Van Doorn et al. (2010) defined customer engagement as the behavioral expression of customers toward a brand or business, beyond the purchase, resulting from motivational

drivers. The characteristics of this concept reflect a customer's voluntary resource contributions (e.g., knowledge, experience, energy, or time), including suggestions, feedback, and complaints shared with both firms and other customers (Barari et al., 2021). Prior research suggests that customers may exhibit either positive or negative engagement toward focal products or services (Do & Bowden, 2023). Existing engagement literature suggests that higher levels of positive engagement while consuming a product, enhance product- or service-related contributions, leading to favorable consumer behavioral responses such as word-of-mouth and repurchase intentions (Rather & Hollebeek, 2021; Roy et al., 2022). The level of engagement may depend on customer characteristics and their perception of product experience, satisfaction, trust, and value (Roy et al., 2022) .To boost engagement, some businesses create platforms that allow customers to share their knowledge and generate ideas, such as suggestions for new products (Gruner et al., 2014), which can lead to behavioral loyalty, such as repurchase intentions (Ng et al., 2020).

Previous research has demonstrated that customers' satisfactory experiences are related to recommendation behaviors, helping firms, and positive advocacy (Dhasan & Aryupong, 2019). According to the Service-Dominant Logic perspective, when customers are satisfied with the product or service, they may view the company as fulfilling its promise of exceptional service. As a result, customers are motivated to return the favor by voluntarily engaging in extra-role behaviors (Roy et al., 2022). During product consumption, customers may exhibit various types of engagement behavior depending on their perception of the experience. Sensory (sense) experience represents the manipulable aspects of taste, smell, and flavor, of a product that are capable of influencing a customer's attitude toward product offerings. These experiential elements primarily evoke sensory experiences through sensory stimuli (Anaza & Zhao, 2013). Roy et al. (2022) also suggested that customer experience and engagement behaviors reveal that sensorial experiences can shape customer behavior and lead to diverse customer-level outcomes, including behavioral intentions. Moreover, some scholars have suggested that consumer experience and customer engagement can optimize consumer–product interactions from both consumer and firm viewpoints (Rather & Hollebeek, 2021). In the current research, when customers perceive a high level of sensory appeal in high nutrient meat-based food, such as good appearance, taste, touch, or smell, they may consider engaging in referrals or recommending a particular high nutrient meat-based food (e.g., Pradu Hang Dam Mor Kor 55 (PD) chicken meat). In other words, if customers have a favorable sensory perception, they may be inclined to promote the product, maximize their co-creation value, and change their purchasing behavior. This research proposes that the sense experience dimension can be considered an important predictor of customer engagement with high nutrient meat-based food. Thus, the following hypothesis is suggested.

H1: Sense experience has a positive effect on customer engagement.

Affective (feel) experience within the customer journey lies at the heart of the customer experience. Review of the prior literature indicates that customers aren't solely rational decision-makers driven by functional features and benefits in products (Schmitt & Zarantonello, 2013). When customers purchase a product and experience positive emotional responses, they are likely to repeat the purchase (Shahid et al., 2022). Moreover, the study of Merrilees et al. (2021) found that high-quality food ingredients can enhance the customer experience, making customers more likely to refer the product to others as it stimulates positive emotions at the time of purchase. For example, customers may prefer to be extensively informed, connected, empowered, and active, and these experiences impact customer feelings positively. Applying this to the current study, when customers become attached to high nutrient meat-based food (e.g., Pradu Hang Dam Mor Kor 55 (PD) chicken meat), they can develop either positive or negative feelings toward the product. Specifically, positive feelings from

customers can lead to both short- and long-term consequences for the company, including financial and non-financial benefits, such as sustained customer engagement with the product over an extended period. In line with the findings of Prentice, et al. (2019), customers' positive emotional experiences and attitudes toward their product selection can turn into behavioral engagement with the product and, ultimately, loyalty behavior. Thus, a subsequent hypothesis is suggested as follows.

H2: Feel experience has a positive effect on customer engagement.

Moreover, customers' interactions with the product, reflected in their frequency of use or consumption, allow them to gain knowledge from the consumed product, especially high nutrient food products. As the customer's level of experience, knowledge, and identification increases, so does their engagement, and vice versa. Ahmed et al. (2022) found that "thinking" is considered the most important component of customer experience, as it highlights the role of the product's benefits. When customers are more knowledgeable about products, they become strongly engaged with those products. By buying high nutrient meat-based foods (e.g., Pradu Hang Dam Mor Kor 55 (PD) chicken meat), consumers actively learn about these products, shaping their expectations. An increased focus on the utilitarian aspects of product consumption can enhance cognitive behavior toward the product. Moreover, if customers gain greater knowledge about high nutrient meat-based food (e.g., Pradu Hang Dam Mor Kor 55 (PD) chicken meat), they may actively engage with this product by informing others about its benefits. Thus, the following hypothesis is suggested.

H3: Think experience has a positive effect on customer engagement.

Behavioral (behave) experiences encompass the actions, decisions, and patterns exhibited by consumers when purchasing products. Behavioral experience is defined as the collaborative creation between customers and firms, realized through the sharing of ideas, co-designing, or participation in the production of related products (Van Doorn et al., 2010). Consequently, when customers engage spontaneously and independently, collaborative creation offers a customized product experience. Diverse experiential consumption components of high nutrient meat based foods may motivate customer engagement (e.g., comments, assisting others, word-of-mouth publicity, and suggestions) in different ways based on the customers' perceptions of the experience (Kaur et al., 2020). Physical (behavior) experiences act as a facilitating condition, impacting customers' commitment to product delivery. Customers who purchase high nutrient meat-based products (e.g., Pradu Hang Dam Mor Kor 55 (PD) chicken meat) experience facilitating conditions, such as health benefits and product features, that together increase shopping efficiency and pleasure, resulting in enhanced meat consumption experiences and a stronger orientation toward high nutrient meat-based food. There may be a positive impact on customers' engagement-related outcomes. Therefore, the following hypothesis is suggested.

H4: Behave experience has a positive effect on customer engagement.

2.4 Repurchase Intention (RI)

Repurchase intention refers to the likelihood that a customer will repeatedly purchase a product from the same company (Trivedi et al., 2023). For example, when customers perceive the benefits of a product (e.g., positive experience and quality), they are motivated to form both purchase and repurchase intentions (Meeprom & Suttikun, 2024). Some scholars suggest that the intention to repurchase a product is part of the cognitive judgement process, which indicates how a consumer is expected to purchase a particular product. This is recognized as a key step in determining actual purchase behavior (Dabbous & Barakat, 2020; Ho & Chung, 2020).

Repurchase intentions are a critical factor in sustaining firms' growth and profitability across various marketing research contexts (Ho & Chung, 2020).

Previous research suggests that customer engagement is one of the most powerful factors influencing consumer behavior, including repurchase intentions (Shabankareh et al., 2024). For example, customers who are highly engaged are more likely to feel empowered through their interactions, which can lead to a variety of positive transactional outcomes, such as repurchase intentions (Rather & Hollebeek, 2021). In other words, customers who engage with a product are more likely to develop positive beliefs about the firm's offerings than those who do not (Harrigan et al., 2018). Moreover, as the level of customer engagement with the product increases, the proximity strengthens, which in turn influences their willingness to modify their purchase behavior (Shen et al., 2022). Similarly, Hosany et al. (2020) confirmed that customer engagement can emerge when consumers feel attached to the products they purchase. Therefore, the following hypothesis is suggested.

H5: Customer engagement has a positive effect on repurchase intentions.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Measurement

All measurement items were adapted from prior marketing literature to measure the variables or constructs included in the proposed conceptual model, as shown in Figure 1. The measurement items for the four dimensions of customer experience, sense (3 items), feel (5 items), think (2 items), and behave (4 items), were adapted from Schmitt et al. (2009). Four items that measure customer engagement were adapted from Harrigan et al. (2018) and Verleye et al. (2014), and two items that measure repurchase intentions were adapted from Singh and Alok (2022). Since the data were collected from Thai consumers, all items, which were first developed in English, underwent a backward-forward translation process to ensure the quality of the survey. All measurement items were designed for evaluation on a five-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Demographic variables (gender, age, education, personal monthly net income, and occupation) were also measured. Before data collection, three marketing academics assessed the content adequacy of the instrument. Modification of measurement items (i.e., wording, content relevance) was made based on the feedback.

3.2 The Sample and Data Collection

The targeted respondents of this study were Thai chicken consumers. Thai native chickens (Pradu Hang Dam Mor Kor 55 chicken) were selected as the meat product for this study due to their favorable taste and flavor characteristics (Chankitisakul et al., 2024). Specifically, with growing concerns about health, consumers are increasingly interested in natural foods or foods containing special nutrient content and bioactive compounds, which benefit human health and wellbeing, known as functional foods (Charoensin et al., 2021). Thus, Thai native chickens, specifically Pradu Hang Dam Mor Kor 55 (PD) chickens, are appropriate for this study due to their higher antioxidant properties compared to commercial broiler chickens. Pradu Hang Dam Mor Kor 55 chicken meat therefore serves as a functional meat source (Charoensin et al., 2021). To ensure the eligibility of the targeted respondents, participants were asked to confirm prior experience of consuming or purchasing Pradu Hang Dam Mor Kor 55 chicken meat, ensuring relevance to the study's objectives. This thorough screening process helped ensure that data were collected from qualified participants, thereby enhancing the validity and reliability of the survey findings. Purposive sampling via a self-

administered survey was conducted. The survey questionnaires were distributed to individuals who met the criterion of having prior experience consuming Pradu Hang Dam Mor Kor 55 chicken meat. A total of 500 questionnaire responses were collected. After eliminating responses containing incomplete and missing data, 487 responses were retained for data analysis. The demographic characteristics of the respondents showed that there were more females (69.8%) than males (30.2%). Additionally, the average age of respondents was 38 years of age, 27.7% were private employees, and 62.76% had a monthly income of THB 20,000 (approximately 560 USD) or more.

3.3 Common Method Bias Testing

As this study used an anonymous survey and varied the questions, efforts were made to minimize common method bias (CMB). Following the procedure of Podsakoff et al. (2003), the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants were maintained. CMB is considered negligible if correlations do not exceed 0.9 (Hair et al., 2017). As presented in Table 2, the correlation matrix shows a lack of excessively high correlation values in the survey data, indicating that CMB is not an issue in this study.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

Partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) was used to evaluate the measurement model, and structural model, and to test the hypotheses using ADANCO software. Valaei and Jiroudi (2016) suggested that PLS-SEM is considered an advanced approach, comparable to SEM. Moreover, PLS-SEM is recognized as the best technique in cases of non-normal distribution (Hair et al., 2017). Following the recommendation of Hair et al. (2017), a two-step approach was used for model testing and data analysis using PLS-SEM. In the first step, the measurement model was assessed to verify the validity and reliability of the research constructs .In the second step, the relationship between the constructs was tested using the structural model.

4.1 Measurement Model Evaluation

As presented in Table 1, the measurement model was evaluated as the first step before conducting the structural model evaluation. In assessing convergent validity, the factor loadings and average variance extracted (AVE) were found to be higher than 0.50. Construct reliability was verified using Dijkstra–Henseler's rho (ρ) with a threshold of 0.60 (Hair et al., 2017; Sathatip, 2024), which is considered satisfactory to ensure convergent validity. In addition, the Fornell-Larcker criterion was calculated to assess discriminant validity. As shown in Table 2, the correlation between constructs was always less than the square root of the AVE, indicating adequate discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Table 1 Measurement Items, Scale Reliabilities, AVE, and Composite Construct Reliabilities

Construct and Item	Mean	SD	Kurtosis	Skewness	FL	VIF
Sense (α = 0.84, Dijkstra–Henseler's rho = 0.85, AVE = 0.76)						
PD meat makes a strong impression on my visual sense or other senses.	4.17	0.58	-0.55	-0.49	0.87	1.91
I find PD meat interesting in a sensory way.	4.17	0.53	2.09	-0.93	0.88	2.15
PD meat appeals to my senses.	4.32	0.46	-0.78	-0.50	0.86	2.01

Table 1 (Continued)

Construct and Item	Mean	SD	Kurtosis	Skewness	FL	VIF
Feel (α = 0.82, Dijkstra–Henseler's rho = 0.84, AVE = 0.59)						
PD meat induces feelings and sentiments.	4.10	0.60	-1.08	-0.25	0.73	1.64
I have a strong emotion for PD meat	4.34	0.56	1.86	-1.13	0.79	1.99
PD meat is an emotional meat	4.31	0.53	-0.95	-0.54	0.84	1.98
PD meat put me in a certain mood.	4.12	0.59	-0.31	-0.51	0.69	1.34
PD meat makes me respond in an emotional manner.	4.34	0.43	-0.50	-0.53	0.78	1.64
Think (α = 0.66, Dijkstra–Henseler's rho = 0.67, AVE = 0.74)						
I engage a lot of thinking when I consume PD meat.	4.18	0.57	0.68	-0.78	0.83	1.31
PD meat stimulates my curiosity.	4.20	0.66	0.71	-0.86	0.89	1.31
Behave (α = 0.82, Dijkstra–Henseler's rho = 0.82, AVE = 0.64)						
I engage in certain behavior when I consume PD meat.	4.07	0.67	0.49	-0.67	0.81	2.27
PD meat results in consumption experiences	4.11	0.61	0.19	-0.58	0.83	2.49
I have a positive orientation toward PD meat.	3.94	0.95	-0.17	-0.61	0.81	1.64
I would like to share what I experienced with PD meat consumption	4.17	0.67	0.06	-0.72	0.75	1.51
Customer engagement (α = 0.86, Dijkstra–Henseler's rho = 0.84, AVE = 0.70)						
I recommend PD meat to people interested in purchasing chicken meat	4.05	0.64	0.96	-0.69	0.84	1.89
I say positive things about PD meat to others	3.87	1.04	0.38	-0.80	0.85	2.43
Whenever I am purchasing chicken meat, I usually buy PD meat	3.78	1.09	0.17	-0.72	0.83	2.36
PD meat is one of the chicken meat ingredients I usually buy when I cook food related to chicken meat	3.97	0.65	0.18	-0.44	0.83	1.79
Repurchase Intention (α = 0.84, Dijkstra–Henseler's rho = 0.84, AVE = 0.86)						
I will consume PD meat again	4.11	0.60	-0.32	-0.51	0.93	2.07
I will consider PD meat as my first option for purchasing meat in comparison to others.	4.16	0.61	-0.86	-0.43	0.93	2.07

Notes. SD = Standard Deviation; FL = Factor loadings

Table 2 Correlations Matrix

Constructs	Mean	S.D.	CE	RI	Sense	Feel	Think	Behave
Customer Engagement (CE)	3.99	0.71	*0.70*					
Repurchase intention (RI)	4.14	0.72	0.43	*0.86*				
Sense	4.22	0.63	0.10	0.06	*0.76*			
Feel	4.24	0.56	0.12	0.14	0.50	*0.59*		
Think	4.19	0.68	0.21	0.18	0.24	0.45	*0.74*	
Behave	4.06	0.60	0.30	0.22	0.05	0.06	0.16	*0.64*

Note. Numbers in bold italics represent the square root of the AVE.

4.2 Structural Model Evaluation

When computing the composite-based structural model, collinearity issues and the relevance of path coefficients must be examined (Hair et al., 2017). The variance inflation factors (VIF) were assessed and found to range from 1.31 to 2.49 (see Table 1), and thus all were lower than the recommended threshold (i.e., 3.3), indicating no sign of collinearity issues (Diamantopoulos & Siguaw, 2006; Pinthong et al., 2024). Bootstrap resampling with 5,000 iterations was used to verify the significance and relevance of the path coefficients (Hair et al., 2017). H1-H4 predicted that sense experience (H1), feel experience (H2), think experience (H3), and behave experience (H4) would positively influence customer engagement. As presented in Table 3 and Figure 2, the results of the structural model reveal that H1 and H2 are statistically not significant (sense experience :β. = 08, p =>0.50; feel experience :β. = 04, p =>0.50), thus H1 and H2 are not supported. However, H3 and H4 are supported (think experience :β. = 22, p < .001; behave experience :β. = 43, p < .001).

Table 3 Path Coefficients and Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Relationship		Coefficient	t-value	Result
H1	Sense experience	→ Customer engagement	.08[ns]	1.45	Not Supported
H2	Feel experience	→ Customer engagement	.04[ns]	0.72	Not Supported
H3	Think experience	→ Customer engagement	.22[***]	4.27	Supported
H4	Behave experience	→ Customer engagement	.43[***]	10.76	Supported
H5	Customer engagement	→ Repurchase intention	.66[***]	21.23	Supported

Notes: 'ns' implies not statistically significant; ***implies significant at p < 0. 001.

Figure 2 Structural Model Results
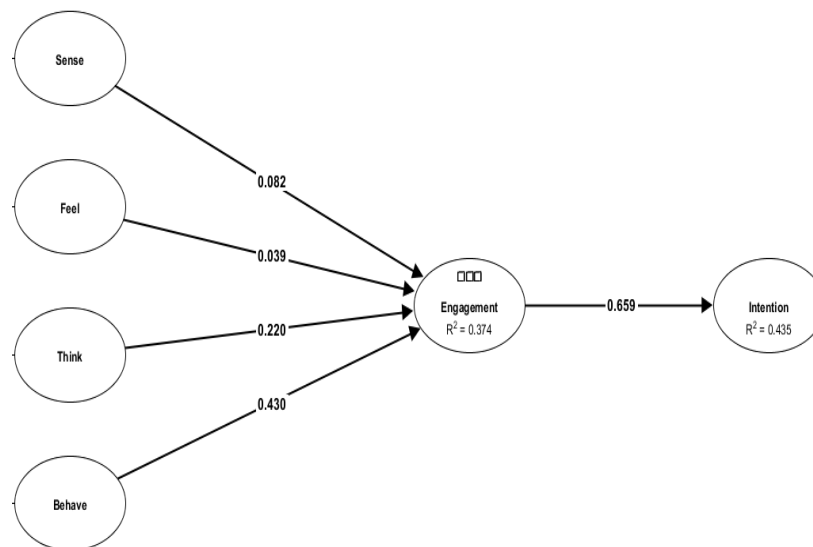
The R² value for customer engagement was .37, with a large effect size (~ 25%) (Cohen, 2013), which was greater than the recommended cut-off of .01 (Falk & Miller, 1992). The strong relationship indicates that customer engagement is well explained by the elements of

experiential consumption of high nutrient chicken meat-based food (Pradu Hang Dam Mor Kor 55 chicken). H5 predicted that customer engagement positively influences repurchase intentions. The results of the path coefficients are summarized in Figure 2 and Table 4, supporting H5 (β. = 66, p < .001). The R^2 value for repurchase intentions was .43, with a large effect size (~ 25%) (Cohen, 2013). This strong relationship indicates that repurchase intentions are well explained by customer engagement with the Pradu Hang Dam Mor Kor 55 chicken. Furthermore, the effect size (f^2) was examined to assess the predictive power of the structural model .The effect size values ranged from 0.01 to 0.77, indicating an acceptable level of effect size (Benitez et al., 2020) and suggesting a good fit for the structural model.

Table 4 Mediating Role of Customer Engagement

Relationship	Coefficient	t-value	Confidence Interval LCL (2.5%)	UCL (97.5%)
Direct effect				
Sense experience → Repurchase intentions	0.10[ns]	1.45	-0.03	0.23
Feel experience → Repurchase intentions	0.06[ns]	0.72	-0.09	0.19
Think experience → Repurchase intentions	0.24***	4.27	0.14	0.36
Behave experience → Repurchase intentions	0.47***	10.76	0.38	0.55
Indirect effect				
Sense experience → Customer engagement → Repurchase intentions	0.06[ns]	1.46	-0.02	0.15
Feel experience → Customer engagement → Repurchase intentions	0.04[ns]	0.71	-0.06	0.13
Think experience → Customer engagement → Repurchase intentions	0.15***	4.32	0.09	0.23
Behave experience → Customer engagement → Repurchase intentions	0.30***	10.07	0.24	0.36

Notes. 'ns' implies not statistically significant; ***implies significant at p < 0. 001.

4.3 Post-hoc Mediating Role of Customer Engagement Between Experiential Consumption and Repurchase Intentions

Previous research suggests that customer engagement can be considered a key mediating variable in the relationship between customers and product offerings (Li & Wei, 2021). On this basis, customer engagement has been identified as a mediating variable between the four dimensions of consumption experience and repurchase intentions (Prentice et al., 2019). The mediating role of customer engagement was examined by investigating the mediating effect and bias-corrected bootstrap confidence intervals (Nitzl et al., 2016). As presented in Table 4, the results show that the indirect effects of the two dimensions of experiential consumption (i.e., think experience and behave experience) on repurchase intentions are significant, indicating that customer engagement is a significant mediator between experiential consumption and repurchase intentions. Table 4 suggests that the direct effects of these two experiential consumption dimensions on repurchase intentions are also significant, indicating that customer engagement plays a role of complementary mediation (Zhao et al., 2010). As the bias-corrected bootstrap confidence intervals for customer engagement do not include zero for think (intellectual) experience (.09 to .23) or behave (behavioral) experience (.24 to .36), customer engagement can be said to be a significant mediator between these two experience dimensions and repurchase intentions. On the other hand, the bias-corrected bootstrap confidence intervals for customer engagement as a mediator include zero for sense experience (−.02 to .15) and feel experience (−.06 to .13), indicating that engagement is not a significant mediator between these two experience dimensions and repurchase intentions.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

The study found that customer engagement among high nutrient chicken consumers is driven by two elements of experiential marketing: intellectual experience and behavioral experience dimensions. This finding is consistent with previous research by Gupta et al. (2012), which found that active engagement in food consumption increases customer experience in restaurants and leads to a higher level of behavioral intentions. Altschwager et al. (2017) demonstrated how positive perceptions formed through customer experiences translate into increased engagement, which supports this finding. Contrary to our expectations, sense and feel experiential marketing perspectives did not impact customer engagement. The results suggest that consumers are not willing to engage with the sense and feel experiences of high nutrient chicken meat-based food products by sharing this information about the product with others. These results may be explained by the fact that nutrient meat products tend to have decreased meat quality attributes, such as juiciness and flavor, due to lower intramuscular fat content (Hathwar et al., 2012). Consumers of high nutrient meat may not be interested in interacting with others about the product's sensory characteristics, but they are more likely to engage based on product curiosity and consumption experiences. Therefore, customer engagement with high nutrient chicken meat-based food products is driven by other experiential marketing dimensions, such as intellectual (think) experience and behavioral (behave) experience. Furthermore, this research confirms a positive and significant relationship between customer engagement and repurchase intentions. This aligns with prior findings by Harrigan et al. (2018), who suggested that engagement fosters positive customer perceptions compared to disengaged customers. Similarly, Majeed et al. (2022) found that elements of customer engagement significantly predict a customer's likelihood to repurchase. More importantly, experience positively affects customer engagement, which in turn positively affects repurchase intentions.

5.1 Theoretical Implications

Drawing on the Service-Dominant Logic (S-D Logic) perspective, this study provides a foundation for understanding how experiential marketing strategies contribute to customer engagement (Vargo & Lusch, 2016). Experiential consumption goes beyond simply selling products; instead, it creates memories and emotional connections with the product (e.g., high nutrient chicken meat, namely Pradu Hang Dam Mor Kor 55 chicken) while fostering behavioral intentions. The findings of this research contribute to the theory of S-D Logic and customer engagement by highlighting the importance of engagement strategies for Thai consumers of high nutrient chicken meat. It specifies a unique consumer segment, potentially filling a research gap on this specific demographic—customers who prefer high nutrient chicken meat-based products—and advances understanding of how customer perceptions of meat experiences differ based on preferences and characteristics through experiential marketing. Specifically, the results show that intellectual experience and behavioral experience play an important role in increasing consumers' knowledge about meat consumption, particularly regarding nutritional content and health benefits. Moreover, some consumers may feel inclined to advocate for and refer the product to others based on their personal experiences (Pongwat & Talawanich, 2024). Additionally, this study strengthens the understanding of the link between customer engagement and repurchase intentions. The positive and significant relationship found here reinforces the role of engagement as a driver of customer loyalty and repeat business. It positions customer engagement as a crucial factor influencing both repurchase intentions and customer loyalty.

5.2 Managerial Implications

Based on the findings of this research, creating interactive and engaging experiences for the Pradu Hang Dam Mor Kor 55 chicken consumption experience can significantly boost customer engagement. This could involve experiences related to actions and behavior, such as cooking demonstrations, DIY dipping sauces, or interactive games, that align with Pradu Hang Dam Mor Kor 55 chicken cuisine. In addition, managers can consider tailoring experiences to different customer segments for more impactful engagement. Furthermore, managers should focus on measuring customer satisfaction by implementing surveys or feedback mechanisms to identify areas for improvement and create experiential marketing campaigns tailored to the preferences of Thai chicken consumers. This could involve interactive elements, cultural references, or creating a sense of community. For example, offering high-quality and delicious food alongside interactive components.

Managers can cultivate high repurchase rates by fostering strong customer engagement. This can be achieved by implementing various strategies to boost engagement, such as loyalty programs, interactive social media campaigns, personalized recommendations, or hosting events. Additionally, tracking key engagement metrics, like social media interactions, app usage, or repeat visits, helps gauge the effectiveness of these strategies. Managers should also continuously gather customer feedback to understand preferences and tailor engagement strategies accordingly. Therefore, firms should develop distinct measures for customer experience to accurately capture various types of customer responses. Relying on perceived quality or customer satisfaction as proxies for measuring customer experience restricts understanding of the true nature of the experience that an offering evokes.

6. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This research employed a quantitative survey methodology for data collection. It is suggested that future studies incorporate qualitative data collection methods to supplement and enrich the research findings. For example, future studies could explore whether the emphasis on action and participation is specific to Thai chicken consumers or applicable in a broader cultural context. The findings can contribute to the development of a more nuanced model of customer engagement that incorporates cultural factors and specific experiential marketing elements. Future research should investigate the effectiveness of different types of action-oriented experiential marketing for Thai chicken consumers or other demographics, and delve deeper into the mechanisms behind these interactions. Further studies could investigate whether the strength of the relationship between engagement and repurchase intentions varies depending on factors such as product type, customer segment, or purchase frequency, and explore the generalizability of the findings (Pongwat & Talawanich, 2024). Does the positive relationship hold true across different industries and customer contexts?

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