

# Exploring the mediating role of purchase experience between marketing mix, social factors, and consumer purchase behavior



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**Abstract** The bakery industry in Indonesia has experienced rapid development in recent years, creating increasingly intense competition and reinforcing the need to understand the determinants of consumer purchase decisions. This study aims to clearly examine the effects of the marketing mix and social factors on consumer purchase decisions for Rotiboy in Surabaya, while also analyzing the mediating role of purchase experience. Using a quantitative research design, data were collected through a structured survey distributed to Rotiboy consumers, and analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS). The results show that both the marketing mix and social factors have a significant and positive effect on consumer purchase decisions, indicating that product quality, pricing strategies, promotion effectiveness, and social interactions remain influential in shaping consumer behavior. Furthermore, purchase experience is found to significantly mediate the relationship between the marketing mix and purchase decisions, demonstrating that positive experiential value strengthens the effectiveness of marketing strategies. However, the study reveals that purchase experience does not mediate the effect of social factors on purchase decisions, suggesting that social influences—such as family and peer recommendations—work independently of consumers’ personal experiences. These findings contribute theoretically by clarifying the role of experiential factors in consumer behavior research, particularly within the bakery industry in emerging markets. Practically, the results offer important insights for Rotiboy management, emphasizing the urgency of enhancing product consistency, service quality, and in-store atmosphere to foster stronger and more memorable consumer purchase experiences. Overall, this study highlights that integrating effective marketing strategies with superior purchase experiences is essential for strengthening consumer purchase decisions and maintaining sustainable competitiveness.

**Keywords:** retail strategy, customer journey, behavioral intention, experiential value, service quality, SEM-PLS

## 1. Introduction

The food and beverage (F&B) industry in Indonesia has shown rapid growth, particularly in the bakery segment. Bread has become not only a substitute for rice but also a practical choice as both a snack and a staple food across various age groups. Its practicality, affordability, and relatively long shelf life make bread increasingly popular in modern consumer lifestyles. According to Bakery Magazine (2023), household expenditure on food and beverages in Indonesia accounts for 41.7% of total spending, underscoring the significant role of bakery products in consumer consumption patterns.

The expansion of the bakery market is also influenced by health trends and growing nutritional awareness, which shape consumer preferences for products with added value in terms of nutrition, taste variety, and brand image. Within this context, Surabaya—one of Indonesia’s largest metropolitan cities—represents a dynamic and highly competitive bakery market. Rotiboy, a well-established brand with a strong product identity and its signature “coffee bun,” operates eight outlets across major shopping centers in Surabaya. However, the brand only ranks third in the bakery category according to the Top Brand Award (2024), behind Mako and Holland Bakery. This indicates that Rotiboy faces considerable challenges in maintaining market share and strengthening consumer loyalty.

Previous studies highlight the importance of the marketing mix (Kotler & Keller, 2016) and social factors (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007) in shaping consumer purchase decisions. However, much of the existing literature predominantly investigates the direct effects of these factors, with limited attention given to purchase experience as a mediating variable. Yet, prior research suggests that positive purchase experiences enhance consumer satisfaction, loyalty, and decision-making (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). Furthermore, most related studies focus on digital commerce contexts (e-commerce, online platforms, and digital wallets), whereas research on offline retail and bakery industries in emerging markets such as Indonesia remains scarce. Addressing this gap, the present study offers several contributions. Theoretically, it extends consumer behavior literature by incorporating purchase experience as a mediator in the relationship between marketing mix, social factors, and purchase decisions. Contextually, it provides empirical evidence from the Indonesian bakery industry, which is underexplored despite its



rapid growth and unique consumer dynamics. Practically, it offers managerial implications for Rotiboy and similar bakery businesses, emphasizing the importance of enhancing product quality, service excellence, and overall customer experience to achieve sustainable competitiveness in an increasingly saturated market.

In summary, purchase experience is a multidimensional construct that integrates functional, emotional, and symbolic aspects of consumption. While classical models emphasized service quality, contemporary research highlights its mediating role in connecting marketing strategies and social influences with purchase decisions. This study adopts that perspective, positioning purchase experience as a mediating variable to provide a more comprehensive understanding of consumer behavior in the competitive bakery market.

## 2. Materials and Methods

This study employed a quantitative research design, which enables the collection and analysis of numerical data to examine relationships among variables and test hypotheses in a systematic manner. Quantitative approaches are grounded in the philosophical paradigms of realism, positivism, behaviorism, and empiricism, and are commonly used to test theories, develop facts, estimate causal relationships, and predict outcomes. In line with these principles, the present study adopts an explanatory survey research design, which not only describes the phenomenon but also explains the causal relationships among variables (Arifin et al., 2023). The strength of this design lies in its ability to generalize findings beyond the sample studied, providing managerial implications for broader application

### 2.1. Population and sampling

The population of this research consists of consumers who have purchased and consumed Rotiboy bakery products in Surabaya, Indonesia. Due to the lack of a complete sampling frame, this study used non-probability sampling, specifically accidental sampling. Respondents were selected randomly from consumers encountered at Rotiboy outlets, with the condition that they had prior experience purchasing and consuming Rotiboy products. This method is suitable for exploratory consumer studies where respondents are chosen based on availability and relevance to the research objectives (Etikan et al., 2016). A total of 210 respondents participated in this study, all of whom met the sampling criteria. The questionnaire was distributed to 210 potential respondents, and all questionnaires were returned and usable, resulting in a 100% response rate. The inclusion of this information ensures transparency in the sampling process and strengthens the statistical validity of the findings. The minimum required sample size was determined using the rule of thumb for Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), which recommends a sample size at least 10 times the maximum number of paths directed at any latent construct (Hair et al., 2013). Based on this guideline, the chosen sample size was deemed adequate to ensure statistical validity and reliability of the findings. However, it is important to note that the use of non-probability accidental sampling also presents limitations, particularly regarding the generalizability of the findings. Because respondents were selected based on convenience and availability, the sample may not fully represent the broader population of bakery consumers in Surabaya. This issue is addressed and discussed more critically in the limitations section of this study

### 2.2. Data collection

Data were collected through a structured questionnaire distributed directly to Rotiboy consumers at multiple outlets across Surabaya. The questionnaire items were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5). The instrument included indicators of the marketing mix (product, price, place, promotion), social factors (family, reference groups, cultural influence), purchase experience, and purchase decision. Prior to full distribution, a pilot test was conducted to assess the clarity and reliability of the instrument

### 2.3. Descriptive statistical analysis

Descriptive statistics were employed to provide an overview of respondent characteristics and to summarize the distribution of responses for each variable. The analysis included frequency distributions, mean scores, and standard deviations. For variable measurement, the grand mean approach was used to interpret the central tendency of each construct.

Data Analysis Technique: Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)

To test the proposed hypotheses, the study applied Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) using SmartPLS software. This technique is appropriate for predictive models and exploratory research, particularly when dealing with complex models involving mediating variables (Hair et al., 2017). The analysis followed a two-step approach:

Measurement Model Evaluation (Outer Model) : The reflective measurement model was assessed in terms of validity and reliability. Convergent validity was tested through factor loadings ( $>0.70$ ) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE  $>0.50$ ). Discriminant validity was confirmed using the Fornell-Larcker criterion and cross-loadings. Composite reliability (CR  $>0.70$ ) was used to ensure internal consistency (Hair et al., 2013).

Structural Model Evaluation (Inner Model)

The inner model was evaluated through several tests: (1) Collinearity test using Variance Inflation Factor ( $VIF < 5.00$ ) to check for multicollinearity. (2) Coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) to measure the explanatory power of independent variables. (3) Effect size ( $f^2$ ) to assess the relative impact of each exogenous construct. (4) Predictive relevance ( $Q^2$ ) using Stone-Geisser's test. Goodness of Fit : Model fit was evaluated through the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR), with values below 0.08 indicating a good fit (Henseler et al., 2016). Hypothesis Testing: The significance of path coefficients was assessed using the bootstrapping resampling procedure (5,000 subsamples). A one-tailed t-test was applied, with significance determined at  $p < 0.05$  and t-values greater than 1.645 (Geisser & Stone, 1974).

### 3. Results and Discussion

The results of the Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) analysis provide strong evidence regarding the determinants of purchasing decisions for Rotiboy products in Surabaya. The empirical findings reveal that the Marketing Mix significantly and positively influences purchasing decisions ( $\beta = 0.450$ ;  $t = 3.997$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ), affirming that strategic management of product, price, place, and promotion directly shapes consumer behavior. Likewise, Social Factors exert a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions ( $\beta = 0.298$ ;  $t = 3.031$ ;  $p = 0.002$ ), underscoring the role of family, peers, and cultural norms in driving bakery consumption.

More importantly, Purchase Experience not only exerts a strong direct impact on purchasing decisions ( $\beta = 0.746$ ;  $t = 5.438$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ) but also mediates the relationship between Marketing Mix and purchasing decisions ( $\beta = 0.515$ ;  $t = 3.853$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). This suggests that customer experience acts as a critical transmission channel through which marketing efforts are transformed into actual consumer behavior. However, the mediating effect of Purchase Experience on the relationship between Social Factors and purchasing decisions is statistically insignificant ( $\beta = -0.078$ ;  $t = 0.868$ ;  $p = 0.385$ ). The structural model yields an  $R^2$  value of 0.647, indicating that approximately 64.7% of the variance in purchasing decisions can be explained by the Marketing Mix, Social Factors, and Purchase Experience—an indication of moderate explanatory power (Hair et al., 2022).

#### Inner Model Evaluation

The structural or inner model can be evaluated by analyzing the significance of the relationships between variables using the bootstrapping method. The stages used in this structural or inner model are to look at the goodness of fit and significance values using the path coefficient test. The following is Figure 1 of the Results of the Inner Model Test (Hypothesis Test).

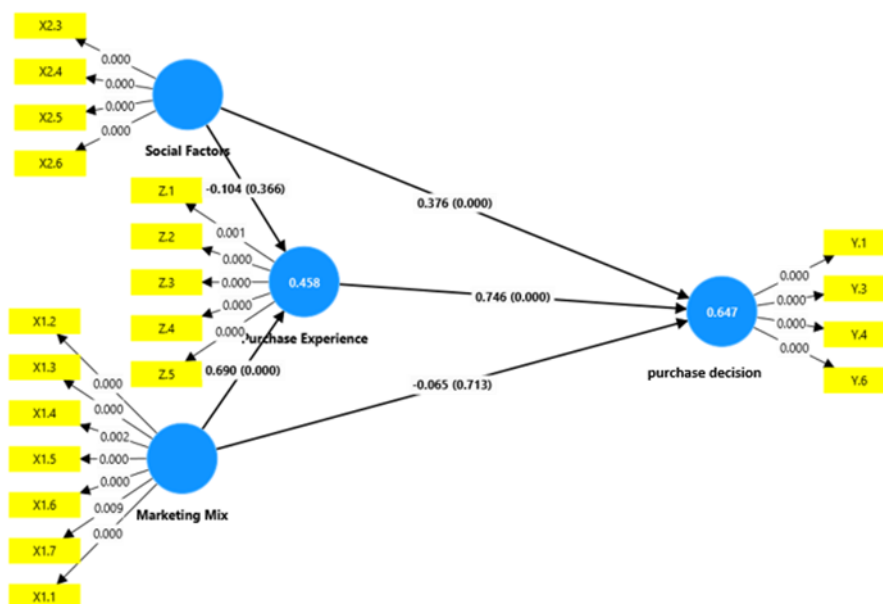


Figure 1 Inner model test results (hypothesis test).

The results of the Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) analysis provide a clear picture of the relationships among the latent variables: Marketing Mix (X1), Social Factors (X2), Purchase Experience (Z), and Purchase Decision (Y). The measurement model demonstrates that most indicators have significant loadings ( $p < 0.05$ ), confirming the validity of the constructs in representing the latent variables. In the structural model, the findings reveal that the Marketing Mix significantly influences Purchase Experience with a path coefficient of 0.376 ( $p = 0.000$ ). This indicates that marketing strategies encompassing product quality, pricing, distribution, and promotion contribute positively to enhancing consumer purchase experiences. Moreover, Purchase Experience exerts a strong direct influence on Purchase Decision ( $\beta = 0.746$ ;  $p = 0.000$ ), making it the most dominant factor in explaining consumer behavior toward Rotiboy products in Surabaya.

Additionally, the Marketing Mix also directly affects Purchase Decision ( $\beta = 0.376$ ;  $p = 0.000$ ), suggesting that effective marketing not only enhances purchase experiences but also directly drives consumers to make purchasing decisions. In



contrast, Social Factors have no significant effect either on Purchase Experience ( $-0.104$ ;  $p = 0.366$ ) or on Purchase Decision ( $-0.065$ ;  $p = 0.713$ ). This is a notable finding, indicating that in the bakery context, social influences such as peer or family recommendations are not sufficiently strong to enhance experiences or directly trigger purchase decisions. The  $R^2$  value for Purchase Experience is 0.458, meaning that 45.8% of the variance in purchase experience is explained by Marketing Mix and Social Factors. Meanwhile, the  $R^2$  value for Purchase Decision is 0.647, suggesting that 64.7% of the variance in purchase decisions is explained by Marketing Mix, Social Factors, and Purchase Experience. This is considered a moderate level of explanatory power, implying that the model adequately captures consumer decision-making behavior (Hair et al., 2022).

From a theoretical standpoint, these findings reinforce Kotler and Keller's (2016) assertion that the Marketing Mix remains a fundamental determinant of consumer behavior, while also supporting the literature on the pivotal role of customer experience in the decision-making process (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). The non-significant role of Social Factors—both directly and through mediation—offers a novel contribution: in collectivist cultural contexts such as Surabaya, social recommendations may be present but are insufficient if not supported by rational considerations such as product quality and actual customer experiences. From a managerial perspective, the results suggest that Rotiboy management should prioritize strategies that enhance customer experiences through service quality, store atmosphere, and product consistency. While social influence can still be leveraged through community- or family-based promotions, such efforts should be reinforced by strong experiential value, ensuring that consumers are not only motivated by recommendations but are also encouraged to repurchase based on their own positive experiences.

The present study provides robust evidence on the determinants of consumer purchase decisions in the bakery industry, specifically Rotiboy in Surabaya. The findings demonstrate several important relationships that contribute to both theoretical and managerial insights.

First, the results confirm that the Marketing Mix exerts a significant and positive effect on purchase decisions. This finding underscores the classical argument of Kotler and Keller (2016) that product quality, pricing, place, and promotion remain the cornerstones of consumer decision-making. The evidence from this study highlights that Rotiboy's success lies in maintaining the fresh-from-the-oven concept, ensuring product freshness and quality, while offering competitive prices and attractive promotions. The findings are consistent with Kanetro et al. (2023), Kurniawan (2022), and Widayanti (2020), who all found that well-designed marketing strategies directly enhance consumer purchase intentions. Importantly, our results further confirm that flavor innovation and perceived price–quality congruence are critical drivers in consumer choices for bakery products in emerging markets (Arifin et al., 2022).

Second, the results indicate that Social Factors positively influence purchase decisions. This aligns with the consumer behavior perspective of Schiffman and Kanuk (2007), who emphasize the role of family, reference groups, and cultural values in shaping consumer behavior. In the context of Rotiboy, many consumers purchase the product as a snack while shopping in malls or gathering with friends, confirming the social consumption pattern typical in collectivist societies such as Indonesia. These findings support Monica et al. (2020) and Purwanto (2023), showing that social influence remains a significant determinant of food purchasing behavior.

Third, this study reveals that Purchase Experience mediates the relationship between the Marketing Mix and purchase decisions. This suggests that marketing strategies must not only be designed effectively but also be translated into meaningful customer experiences. The use of high-quality ingredients, competitive pricing, strategic store locations, and engaging promotions all contribute to a positive purchase experience, which in turn strengthens consumers' purchasing decisions. These findings echo Lemon and Verhoef (2016) and Rahmiati et al. (2023), who argue that positive experiences create emotional bonds with consumers, ultimately fostering loyalty and repeat purchases.

Fourth, contrary to expectations, Purchase Experience does not mediate the relationship between Social Factors and purchase decisions. While social influence remains significant, its impact is direct rather than experience-dependent. This finding contributes a novel nuance to the literature: in collectivist cultures, social norms and family recommendations may override individual experiential evaluations. In other words, once consumers are persuaded by their social environment, their personal experience plays a less central role in shaping their decision. This diverges from findings by Rosalind et al. (2023) and Widarto (2023), who observed that positive experiences tend to reinforce social influence. Such contextual differences highlight the importance of cultural factors in moderating the impact of experiential variables.

Finally, the study confirms that Purchase Experience directly influences purchase decisions, making it the strongest predictor in the model ( $\beta = 0.746$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Consumers who enjoyed Rotiboy's unique flavor, consistent quality, and positive service interactions were more likely to engage in repeat purchases. This supports prior research by Caruana (2002), Gwinner & Gremler (2002), and Baker (2022), which emphasizes the critical role of experiential value in shaping satisfaction, loyalty, and positive word-of-mouth. The strong effect of Purchase Experience also highlights the necessity for firms in the bakery industry to prioritize service quality, store ambience, and product consistency as part of their strategic priorities.

## 4. Final Considerations

### 4.1. Theoretical implications

This study contributes to the advancement of consumer behavior and marketing theory in several ways. First, it extends the traditional Marketing Mix framework by demonstrating that its effect on purchase decisions is not only direct but also mediated by customer purchase experience. This finding enriches the theoretical understanding that marketing strategies must be evaluated not merely by their design, but also by how they shape experiential outcomes that influence consumer loyalty. Second, the study introduces a novel insight regarding the role of Social Factors. Contrary to several previous studies, the mediating role of purchase experience was not supported, suggesting that in collectivist cultural contexts such as Indonesia, social influence operates independently of individual experiential evaluations. This nuance provides a new theoretical lens for examining consumer decision-making in emerging markets. Finally, the strong and direct impact of Purchase Experience highlights its centrality as a construct in consumer decision-making theory, supporting and extending prior literature on customer experience, satisfaction, and loyalty.

#### 4.2. Practical implications

The findings of this study also generate significant managerial insights for practitioners, particularly in the bakery and food retail industry. For Rotiboy, the results emphasize the importance of enhancing consumer experiences through product quality, freshness, store ambiance, and service excellence, as these elements directly drive purchase decisions. Moreover, while social influence does not require mediation through experience, it remains a critical factor; therefore, management should leverage word-of-mouth marketing, referral programs, and community-based promotions to capitalize on peer and family recommendations. Additionally, aligning promotional strategies with cultural values such as family togetherness and communal consumption can strengthen consumer engagement in collectivist societies. More broadly, the study suggests that businesses in emerging markets should integrate experiential strategies with culturally sensitive marketing approaches to achieve sustainable competitive advantage.

#### Ethical Considerations

Respondents participated voluntarily, and anonymity was assured to encourage honest responses. All data collected were used solely for academic purposes.

#### Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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