

Optimizing Sensory Marketing and Brand Experience: The Case of Kajoetangan Heritage Village

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Abstract

Kajoetangan Heritage Village is a tourist destination in Malang City, East Java Province, Indonesia with a heritage concept that highlights cultural, historical and economic elements. The effective strategic actions of tourist destinations are essential to maintain relevancy amidst competition. One of the strategies that can be implemented is optimizing sensory marketing. Sensory marketing is a marketing strategy that maximizes the stimuli of various senses, namely visual, auditory, olfactory, tactile, and gustatory. This study aims to determine the role of sensory marketing on brand experience and loyalty. This study uses a quantitative approach. A total of 102 respondents who were visitors to Kajoetangan Heritage Village participated in this study utilizing purposive sampling as the sampling technique. Path analysis is used to examine the conceptual model of research. The results provide valuable insights for Kajoetangan Heritage Village to enhance loyalty through brand experience and optimized sensory marketing strategies. Furthermore, this study enriches the theoretical understanding of brand loyalty within the tourism sector by offering strategies to maintain a competitive edge. It demonstrates that marketing activities incorporating sensory stimuli, spanning visual, olfactory, auditory, tactile, and gustatory elements, the more it will enhance the brand experience, thereby fostering deeper loyalty.

Keywords: Sensory Marketing; Brand Experience; Loyalty; Heritage Village

Introduction

Emerging trends in sensory marketing indicate a new era in marketing, focusing on consumers' five senses in marketing strategies (Dusauw, Mangantar, & Pandowo, 2023). Companies develop sensory strategies to differentiate their brands from competitors, especially when functional or rational attributes such as price and quality are nearly identical (Mbatha, Koopman, & Chuchu, 2023). In physical

locations, store atmospheres, such as aroma, lighting, interior design, music, and others, are provided to enhance customer shopping experiences and purchasing behavior (Murwani, Rooseno, Cakramihardja, & Widjaja, 2023).

There is an interesting relationship between sensory marketing, brand experience, and customer loyalty (Riza & Wijayanti, 2018). Sensory marketing in marketing has emerged as an influential tool by influencing the human mind to create a brand experience (Panicker & Siddharthan, 2024). Sensory marketing positively contributes to enhancing the brand experience (Shahid, Paul, Gilal, & Ansari, 2022). The sensory aspects of a product and its presentation (scent, sound, touch, taste, or appearance), individually or collectively, form a holistic customer experience (Krishna, Cian, & Aydınoglu, 2017). Sensory marketing also influences customer loyalty (Torabi, Hamidi, & Safaie, 2021). Marketing that utilizes the senses of sight, smell, hearing, touch, and taste can effectively increase customer loyalty (Chen, Zhang, Zhang, & Zou, 2021). Creative industry businesses can provide positive experiences to foster customer loyalty (Utama, 2022).

The tourism industry in Indonesia makes a significant contribution to the country's economy (Adristi, Setiawan, & Wijoyo, 2025) and plays a very important role in the development of a region (Indawati, 2024). Tourism is an inseparable part of human life and in a country, especially in relation to social and economic activities (Belia, 2023). The growth of tourism is very important for developing countries (Ahmadin, 2022). Development of the tourism sector also needs to pay attention to the concept of sustainable tourism development (Putra, 2022). The development of tourism potential is intended for both natural tourism and man-made tourism (Dewi, 2023).

Malang is one of the cities in Indonesia experiencing rapid growth and development, both in terms of physical and economic growth (Primasari, Muchsin, & Sekarsari, 2023). Kajoetangan Heritage Village is a heritage-based tourist destination in Malang, East Java Province, embracing cultural, historical, and economic elements. The village features numerous houses constructed in the 1920s, which have been well-maintained and renovated, becoming a popular tourist destination known as the "Kajoetangan Heritage Area" (Kemenparekraf, 2025).

The rise of numerous tourist attractions has highlighted the importance of the tourism sector in promoting the concept of sustainable tourism. Sustainable tourism is the development of travel concepts that aim to minimize negative impacts on the environment, society, culture, and local economy (Hira, 2023). Providing socio-economic benefits to residents living in tourist destinations, bringing tourists and local communities together for mutual benefit, preserving cultural heritage, and creating authentic tourism experiences are some of the primary responsibilities of sustainable tourism (Hira, 2023). As a tourist destination that carries cultural, historical, and economic elements, Kajoetangan Heritage Village needs to implement sensory marketing.

Limited research has been conducted on the topic of sensory marketing. There are some gaps within the field of sensory marketing. First, based on research

by Chen, Zhang, Zhang, & Zou (2021) which examines the relationship between multisensory marketing and customer loyalty in luxury hotels. Chen, Zhang, Zhang, & Zou (2021) mentioned that sensory marketing is needed to be expanded in different contexts, industries, and sectors. Furthermore, Dusauw, Mangantar, & Pandowo (2023) mentioned that to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of sensory marketing's impact, future research should explore additional variables. Accordingly, the present study incorporates the brand experience variable.

In the context of brand experience, Shahid, Paul, Gilal, & Ansari (2022) examined brand experience and brand loyalty in a luxury retail store setting. They mentioned that shoppers' experiences could also differ based on the purchases made and that was the opportunity for future research. The brands included on that study were Chanel, Dior, Louis Vuitton, Jimmy Choo, Burberry, and Gucci. Therefore, they conducted research on the consumer's brand experience regarding the purchase of the luxury brand. The brand experience associated with luxury retail differs from tourist attractions. This disparity presents a compelling opportunity for further empirical investigation. In response to these findings, the aim of this research is to examine the role of sensory marketing, brand experience on loyalty in Kajoetangan Heritage Village. This study seeks to ascertain the role of sensory marketing in enhancing experience and establishing loyal customers.

Method

3.1. Research Design

This study is an explanatory study with a quantitative approach, using a survey method, aimed at examining the relationship between sensory marketing, brand experience, and loyalty in Kajoetangan Heritage Village, Malang City, East Java Province, Indonesia.

3.2. Population and Sample

The population in this study was visitors to Kajoetangan Heritage Village, Malang City. The study was conducted at Kajoetangan Heritage Village, Malang City, East Java Province. The sample in this study consisted of 102 people selected using a purposive sampling technique. For multivariate data analysis, the sample size should be 10 times greater than the number of variables (Roscoe, 1975, as cited in Memon, et al., 2020). Given 3 variables in this study, the sample size of 102 is more than sufficient.

The sample determined in this study met the following criteria: (1) having visited Kajoetangan Heritage Village within the last 6 months; (2) having spent at least 30 minutes at Kajoetangan Heritage Village; (3) having enjoyed food and drinks around the Kajoetangan Heritage Village area; (4) having visited riverside spots. Primary data was obtained through the distribution of closed-ended online questionnaires using the Google Form application in June 2025.

3.3. Measurement and Instrumentation

The sensory marketing variable consisted of visual, olfactory, auditory, tactile, and gustatory indicators, measured with 10 closed-ended questionnaire items. The brand experience variable consisted of sensory, affective, behavioral, and intellectual indicators, measured with 8 closed-ended questionnaire items. Meanwhile, repeat purchases and positive WOM are indicators of loyalty, measured using a six-item questionnaire. All items used a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree).

3.4. Validity and Reliability

Instrument validity was tested using Pearson Product Moment correlation. All items were valid. Reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha, with all constructs were reliable. The results of validity and reliability are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Validity and Reliability Results

Variable	Indicator	Item	Validity		Reliability	
			r	Conclusion	Cronbach's Alpha	Conclusion
Sensory Marketing	Visual	1	0.497	Valid	0.668	Reliable
		2	0.520	Valid		
	Olfactory	3	0.482	Valid		
		4	0.535	Valid		
	Auditory	5	0.401	Valid		
		6	0.431	Valid		
	Tactile	7	0.557	Valid		
		8	0.653	Valid		
	Gustative	9	0.492	Valid		
		10	0.498	Valid		
Brand Experience	Sensory	1	0.491	Valid	0.717	Reliable
		2	0.629	Valid		
	Affective	3	0.608	Valid		
		4	0.680	Valid		
	Behavioral	5	0.663	Valid		
		6	0.577	Valid		
	Intellectual	7	0.471	Valid		
		8	0.509	Valid		
Loyalty	Repeat Purchase	1	0.742	Valid	0.855	Reliable
		2	0.794	Valid		
		3	0.864	Valid		

Positive WOM	4	0.733	Valid
	5	0.711	Valid
	6	0.752	Valid

Source: Processed Data, 2025

3.5 Research Model

Sensory marketing is a marketing technique that targets the responses of the senses of sight, smell, hearing, touch, and taste so as to effectively increase customer loyalty (Chen, Zhang, Zhang, & Zou, 2021). Companies develop sensory strategies to differentiate their brands from competitors, especially when functional or rational attributes such as price and quality are almost similar (Mbatha, Koopman, & Chuchu, 2023). When evaluating a product involves the interaction or integration of five senses, it is a multisensory evaluation of the product (Anetoh, Okolo, Mmamel, Obikeze, & Oranusi, 2020). The sensory marketing era is an era when companies think carefully about the role of the senses in products (Solomon, 2018). Sensory marketing has positive effect on consumers' brand experience (Riza & Wijayanti, 2018) and customer loyalty (Torabi, Hamidi, & Safaie, 2021). A similar study also found that there is a positive influence of sensory marketing cues on brand experience (Chandra & Balqiah, 2023).

Brand experience reflects the cognitive, affective, behavioral, and sensory responses that customers have to stimuli associated with a certain brand (Brakus, Schmitt, & Zarantonello, 2009). It is the perception of consumers at every moment of contact they have with a brand (Gupta & Mishra, 2020). From a customer perspective, brand experience can be a multidimensional construct that focuses on consumers' cognitive, emotional, behavioral, sensory, and social responses to a company's offerings throughout the entire purchase journey (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). Experience occurs when a company creates something memorable for customers (Hawkins & Mothersbaugh, 2010). Many retailers and event planners focus on enhancing customer experience in stores, dealerships, and other forms of retail (Solomon, 2018). Brand experience has a significant direct impact on brand loyalty (Alfikry, Widodo, Silvianita, & Rubiyanti, 2024).

Loyalty has been defined as a deeply held commitment to rebuy or repatronize a preferred product or service in the future despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behavior (Hamel, 1996). Companies that want to form strong, tight connections to customers should heed some specific considerations (Kotler & Keller, 2015). The term loyalty emerged from the concept of relationship marketing (Chen, Zhang, Zhang, & Zou, 2021). Customers with high levels of loyalty tend to repeat purchases of a particular product or brand (Samboro, Hadi, & Pribadi, 2021), or decide to use a particular service or brand continuously (Torabi, Hamidi, & Safaie, 2021).

Based on this theoretical foundation, the hypothetical framework in this study is as follows:

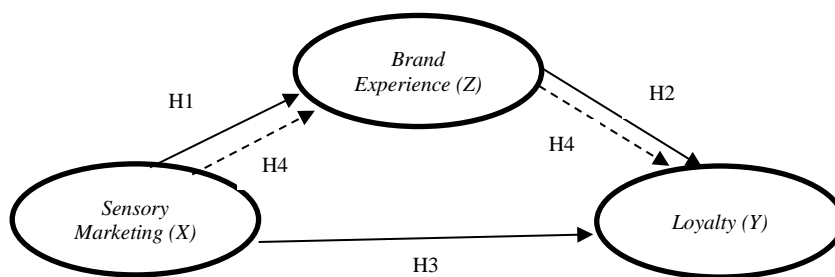


Figure 1 Conceptual Model

- H1 Sensory marketing has a direct and positive impact on brand experience
- H2 Brand experience has a direct and positive impact on loyalty
- H3 Sensory marketing has a direct and positive impact on loyalty
- H4 Sensory marketing has an indirect and positive impact on loyalty through brand experience

Results and Discussion

4.1. Descriptive Statistics

This study was incorporating three variables, namely sensory marketing, brand experience, and loyalty. For the sensory marketing variable, the visual indicator received the highest mean score (4.14), suggesting that most respondents agree the design of the houses in Kampoeng Heritage Kajoetangan is interesting and the photo spots at Kampoeng Heritage Kajoetangan are visually appealing. The highest mean score for the brand experience variable was found in the affective indicator (3.94), indicating the majority of respondents agree that visiting Kampoeng Heritage Kajoetangan creates positive feelings and stirs the emotions of visitors in a positive way. Meanwhile, the indicator for positive WOM with the highest mean score was loyalty (4.06), suggesting that most respondents agree to give a positive comment about Kampoeng Heritage Kajoetangan on the internet and they would like to recommend Kampoeng Heritage Kajoetangan to others.

The variable of sensory marketing is constructed of five indicators with a total of 10 statements. Descriptive analysis results showed a mean score of 38.34, with a standard deviation of 4.55. The brand experience variable, constructed of four indicators with a total of eight statements, obtained a mean score of 30.19 with a standard deviation of 4.47. The loyalty variable, constructed of two indicators with a total of six statements, had a mean score of 24.14 with a standard deviation of 3.27. The results of the correlation test between the variables indicated a positive correlation. A statistical description of each variable can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	Correlation		
Sensory Marketing	38.34	4.55	1		
Brand Experience	30.19	4.47	0.714	1	
Loyalty	21.14	3.27	0.623	0.577	1

Source: Processed Data, 2025

This study involved 102 respondents, namely the visitors of the Kajoetangan Heritage Village in Malang City, East Java, Indonesia. Among 102 respondents, the majority of respondents were female (67.6%) aged 18-22 years (82.4%), had monthly expenses of less than Rp 3.000.000 (86.3%), and were university students (83.3%). All demographic statistics are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Demographic Data

Characteristics	Number	%
Gender		
Male	33	32.4
Female	69	67.6
Age (years old)		
<18	8	7.8
18-22	84	82.4
23-27	4	3.9
28-32	3	2.9
33-37	2	2.0
38-42	1	1.0
>42	0	0.0
Monthly Expenses		
<Rp 3.000.000	88	86.3
Rp 3.000.000 – Rp 6.000.000	10	9.8
Rp 6.000.001 – Rp 9.000.000	3	2.9
>Rp 9.000.000	1	1.0
Occupation		
Full-time employed	5	4.9
Part-time employed	5	4.9
Entrepreneur	3	2.9
University Student	85	83.3
Other	4	3.9

Source: Processed Data, 2025

4.2. Classical Assumption Testing

The results of the classical assumption test indicate that the research data are normally distributed, with no indication of heteroscedasticity or multicollinearity. Thus, the classical assumption test in the path model test has been fully met.

4.3. Path Analysis

Path testing was conducted using two equations: the influence of sensory marketing on brand experience, and the influence of sensory marketing and brand experience on loyalty. The analysis results showed a positive influence between the variables, both directly and indirectly.

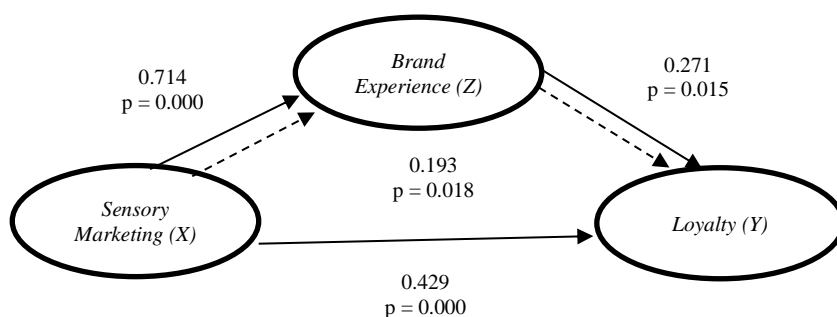


Figure 2 Path Diagram
Source: Processed Data, 2025

The resulting equations are:

$$Z = 0.714 X + 0.7$$

Whereas:

Z = Brand Experience

X = Sensory Marketing

The R square in the first equation is 0.510, resulting in $\epsilon_1 = 0.7$.

$$Y = 0.271 Z + 0.429 X + 0.759$$

Whereas:

Y = Loyalty

Z = Brand Experience

X = Sensory Marketing

The R square in the second equation is 0.424, resulting in $\epsilon_2 = 0.759$.

4.4. Hypothesis Testing

This study tested four hypotheses. Hypothesis 1 is the influence of sensory marketing on brand experience. In this part, a path coefficient of 0.714 and a p-value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$) were obtained, indicating a positive and significant influence. The better the sensory marketing perceived by tourists, the higher the brand experience. Hypothesis 2 is the influence of brand experience on loyalty, where the path coefficient is 0.271 and a p-value of 0.015 ($p < 0.05$). This proves a positive and significant influence between the variables. The better the brand experience perceived by tourists, the higher the tourist loyalty. Hypothesis 3 is the influence of sensory marketing on loyalty, with a path coefficient of 0.429 and a p-value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). This positive and significant influence demonstrates that the better the sensory marketing perceived by tourists, the higher the tourist loyalty. Finally, hypothesis 4 is the influence of sensory marketing on loyalty through brand experience. The path coefficient is 0.193, and the p-value is 0.018 ($p < 0.05$), indicating a positive and significant effect.

Statistically, the direct effect of sensory marketing on loyalty is $0.429^2 = 0.184$, while the indirect effect of sensory marketing on loyalty through brand experience is $0.714 \times 0.271 = 0.193$. The results of the hypothesis test can be seen in Table 4.

Table 4. Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Path	Path Coefficient	p-Value	Conclusion
H1	$X \rightarrow Z$	0.714	0.000	Supported
H2	$Z \rightarrow Y$	0.271	0.015	Supported
H3	$X \rightarrow Y$	0.429	0.000	Supported
H4	$X \rightarrow Z \rightarrow Y$	0.193	0.018	Supported

Source: Processed Data, 2025

4.5. Discussion

This study has significant theoretical implications. First, based on the research results, it was found that sensory marketing has a direct and positive impact on brand experience. These findings are consistent with previous research which states that sensory marketing has a positive effect on consumers' brand experience (Riza & Wijayanti, 2018). Chandra & Balqiah (2023) also revealed that sensory marketing cues have a positive influence on brand experience. This means that the more a product provides sensory stimuli in marketing activities, the more it will enhance the brand experience of that brand. Sensory stimuli may be delivered through visual, olfactory, auditory, tactile, and gustatory channels. By engaging with these stimuli, consumers undergo a comprehensive brand experience through sensory, affective, behavioral, and intellectual engagement. It is important for a brand to pay attention to the visual aspects that customers can enjoy in terms of design and visual balance, paying attention to the olfactory aspect by providing a

scent that fits the company's branding concept, or simply ensuring it can provide a pleasant and non-disturbing scent. In addition, it is also important to pay attention to the auditory aspect by providing stimuli in the form of sound that is comfortable for customers to hear. The tactile aspect also needs to be considered by providing comfort for the sense of touch, namely by ensuring that everything that touches the customer's skin is something that does not cause discomfort. In terms of gustatory, the final touch that a brand can do to provide a good brand experience is to pamper the sense of taste. Companies can serve delicious food or drinks that leave customers impressed with the experience provided by the brand.

Second, brand experience has a direct and positive impact on loyalty. Previous research findings also suggest a similar finding: brand experience has a significant direct impact on brand loyalty (Alfikry, Widodo, Silvianita, & Rubiyanti, 2024). Riza & Wijayanti (2018) found that consumers' experience on brands and has a positive effect on customer loyalty. Brand experience has a behavioral impact, it affects loyalty (Brakus, Schmitt, & Zarantonello, 2009). Stronger cognitive, affective, behavioral, and sensory responses to brand stimuli significantly increase a customer's likelihood of returning and offering positive word-of-mouth. Third, sensory marketing has a direct and positive impact on loyalty. Previous research findings also suggest a similar positive effect on customer loyalty (Riza & Wijayanti, 2018). A study by Torabi, Hamidi, & Safaie (2021) confirmed, that there is a direct and positive effect of customer sensory experience on customer loyalty. A loyal customer is one who is willing to make repeat purchases and spread positive word-of-mouth. This means the customer has a desire to repurchase in the future, or in the context of a tourist destination, a desire to revisit the place in the future. Furthermore, the product or service is considered a customer's preference when faced with future purchasing or visiting decisions.

Last, sensory marketing also has an indirect and positive impact on loyalty through brand experience. Research findings indicate that the indirect influence of sensory marketing on loyalty through brand experience is greater than the direct influence of sensory marketing on loyalty. This means that customers will be more loyal if they are given sensory stimuli, then these stimuli make the customers feel the brand experience that is felt through cognitive, affective, behavioral, and five senses. Customers will be more loyal if the sensory stimulus creates a strong impression on the five senses, is engaging, creates a positive impression, and evokes positive emotions. Furthermore, customers will be more loyal if the stimulus engages them physically, engages them in positive thinking, and stimulates their curiosity.

This research carries significant managerial implications as well. As one of the tourist destinations in Malang City, Kajoetangan Heritage Village needs to maintain sustainability. Development of the tourism sector also needs to pay attention to the concept of sustainable tourism development (Putra, 2022). Sustainable tourism must prioritize the integration of environmental, social, and

economic considerations. Integrating sensory aspects is essential to sustainable tourism, as it enhances brand experience and fosters visitor loyalty.

Kajoetangan Heritage Village needs to maintain its visual aspects, namely keeping the houses in the area attractive and aesthetically pleasing. This is in line with the demographics of visitors to Kajoetangan Heritage Village, who are young people who have a passion for taking photos and posting them on social media. The olfactory aspect also needs to be considered by ensuring the aromas in the tourist area are pleasant to visitors' senses. Kampoeng Heritage Kajoetangan needs to pay attention to the aroma found in the tourist area. Kampoeng Heritage Kajoetangan tourist area is indeed a tourist spot consisting of residential areas where it is natural that there is household waste. Local governments need to collaborate with residents in waste management to prevent odors that disturb visitors. In terms of auditory aspects, Kajoetangan Heritage Village needs to incorporate the natural sounds of the river flowing in the area. The way to do this is by not making sounds louder than the sound of the river flowing, which has the potential to distort the natural sound and cause noise. Kajoetangan Heritage Village also needs to pamper visitors' sense of touch by providing seating made of comfortable and safe materials for visitors' sense of touch. Giving souvenirs in the form of postcards is appropriate, considering that postcards are made of materials with a comfortable texture to the touch. In terms of gustatory aspects, Kajoetangan Heritage Village needs to maintain the culinary businesses in the area. Thus, visitors are not only pampered in terms of sight, hearing, smell, and touch, but also pampered in terms of taste by enjoying delicious snacks.

Kampoeng Heritage Kajoetangan needs to provide visitors with an experience that is interesting in terms of sensory, able to evoke positive feelings, and arouse visitors' emotions. As a heritage tourist area consisting of residential areas, visitors are required to engage in physical activities, such as walking around the residential areas. This provides a behavioral experience. Meanwhile, Kampoeng Heritage Kajoetangan strives to foster an intellectual experience by stimulating the cognitive side. By displaying photos and brief descriptions depicting the village in the 13th century, visitors will engage in positive thinking while visiting Kampoeng Heritage Kajoetangan. Furthermore, this can stimulate curiosity, which is a cognitive experience. The higher the experience provided by the Kajoetangan Heritage Village tourist attraction to visitors, encompassing sensory, affective, behavioral, and intellectual experiences, the higher the visitor loyalty, resulting in a willingness to revisit and positive word-of-mouth.

Furthermore, visitor loyalty is something that the management of Kampoeng Heritage Kajoetangan need to strive for. Among the many destination options, Kampoeng Heritage Kajoetangan needs to create visitor loyalty by implementing sensory marketing strategies and providing a positive brand experience. Management should focus on cultivating visitor loyalty to encourage repeat visitation and make Kampoeng Heritage Kajoetangan a preferred destination for future visits. Furthermore, visitor loyalty is not only measured by repeat visits

but also by a willingness to provide positive comments and a willingness to recommend Kampoeng Heritage Kajoetangan to others. Beyond leaving a positive impression on visitors, managers also need to encourage those visitors to share that impression with others.

Conclusion

This study contributes to the fields of marketing and consumer behavior, serving as a valuable reference for future research. Based on the research results and discussion, it can be concluded that (1) sensory marketing has a direct and positive impact on brand experience; (2) brand experience has a direct and positive impact on loyalty; (3) sensory marketing has a direct and positive impact on loyalty; (4) sensory marketing has an indirect and positive impact on loyalty through brand experience.

Tourists hope for a memorable sensory, affective, behavioral, and intellectual experience from destinations they visit. Therefore, the management of Kampoeng Heritage Kajoetangan must pay attention to sensory stimuli: visual, olfactory, auditory, tactile, and gustatory. In addition, the tourism sector in Malang, East Java, is highly competitive. This forced the management to build tourist loyalty to achieve sustainable tourism. Sustainability in tourism requires a balance of environmental, social, and economic priorities. On the other side, if Kampoeng Heritage Kajoetangan is well-managed, the local community will also reap significant social and economic benefits. By incorporating sensory marketing, destinations can create a more resonant brand experience that secures visitor loyalty. Future research should explore the impacts of sensory marketing on customer loyalty in different fields to provide a comprehensive understanding.

This study's scope carries certain limitations, highlighting several opportunities for future investigation. First, the focus of this research was on sensory marketing, brand experience, and loyalty of visitors of Kampoeng Heritage Kajoetangan. Due to differences in characteristics of tourism object, location, and activities offered, different results may be obtained. Thus, future research could explore this topic in other tourist destination. Second, while this research focuses exclusively on tourism industry, it is important to acknowledge that the effects of multisensory marketing, and brand experience on customer loyalty may vary across different contexts, industries, and sectors. To broaden the scope of this research, future studies should examine different contexts, industries, and sectors. Last, future researchers can also study the scope by using a qualitative approach, since the present study adopted a quantitative approach. Utilizing a qualitative approach facilitates a deeper exploration of the underlying complexities within the research findings.

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