

Influence of Experiential Marketing Practices of Blue Ocean Food Brands on Buying Behaviour: The Mediating Role of Customer Engagement among Gen Z Consumers in Ahmedabad

Trisha Mirchandani and Priyanka Shah

*Chimanbhai Patel Institute of Business Administration
Sardar Vallabh bhai Global University*

Aunkita Sharma

School of Management, JG University

Abstract: The Indian food industry has witnessed a strategic shift toward Blue Ocean branding, wherein firms seek uncontested market space by offering differentiated value through innovative and experience-driven strategies. Blue Ocean food businesses use experiential marketing to attract younger customers in urban marketplaces like Ahmedabad. For Gen Z consumers, who have different expectations and engagement styles, experiential marketing—which includes sensory, emotional, cognitive, behavioural, and relational aspects—is especially pertinent. Nevertheless, little empirical research clarifies how this experience technique affects consumer involvement and purchase behaviour. This study fills this gap in the context of the food sector in Ahmedabad. The study employs a quantitative research design using a structured questionnaire administered to Gen Z consumers of Blue Ocean food brands in Ahmedabad. Data were analysed using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) with multi-group analysis to examine mediation effects on gender effects. The findings show that Blue Ocean food businesses' experiential marketing strategies greatly increase consumer involvement, which in turn has a major impact on purchasing decisions. It has been discovered that the relationship between experiential marketing strategies and consumer behaviour is partially mediated by customer engagement. Additionally, female consumers show better engagement-driven purchasing responses to experiential marketing methods

Keywords: Experiential Marketing, Blue Ocean Food Brands, Customer Engagement, Buying Behavior, Gen Z

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