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Brand experience and consumer inspiration: The mediating role of openness to experience

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Abstract. The introduction of new technologies provides consumers with additional shopping opportunities and allow them to test new products. The study was conducted to determine the effects of brand experience on customer inspiration and behavioral intention and to establish the mediating role of openness to experience. The theoretical framework of the study resides in the theory of marketing and cognitive appraisal theory. Convenience sampling method and structural equation modelling were used within the study. The population of the study consists of customers who order from the online takeaway portal yemeksepeti.com. The data were gathered using questionnaires collected online in June, 2023. A total of 416 valid responses were received. Smart PLS 4 statistical program was used to test the hypotheses. As a result of the tests, it was found that brand experience has a positive effect on customer inspiration and openness to experience. It was also determined that openness to experience has a positive effect on customer inspiration by partially mediating the positive effect between brand experience and inspiration. Furthermore, the hypothesis that customer inspiration positively affects behavioral intention was also confirmed. The research will contribute to expanding the literature on consumer inspiration and openness to experience. Among possible directions for further research is to test the proposed model in relating industries or using statistical data from other countries.

Keywords: brand experience; customer inspiration; openness to experience; behavioral intention; cognitive appraisal theory; Turkey.

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Влияние опыта взаимодействия с брендом на мотивацию клиента к покупке: роль открытости новому опыту

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Аннотация. Внедрение новых технологий предоставляет потребителям дополнительные возможности для совершения покупок и приобретения опыта использования новых продуктов. Статья посвящена изучению влияния опыта клиента по взаимодействию с конкретным брендом на его мотивацию к совершению покупки. Предпринята попытка определить, играет ли значимую роль в данном взаимодействии фактор «открытость опыту», под которым понимается способность клиента к познанию нового и уровень его адаптации к изменениям. Методологической базой исследования выступили классическая теория маркетинга и теория самоопределения в части положений когнитивной оценки. Применялись методы удобной выборки и моделирования структурными уравнениями. Информационную базу составили данные онлайн-опроса 416 пользователей портала по доставке готовых блюд yemeksepeti.com, проведенного в Турции в июне 2023 г. Тестирование гипотез осуществлялось в статистической программе SmartPLS 4. Результаты исследования демонстрируют положительное значимое влияние опыта клиентов по взаимодействию с брендом на их мотивацию к совершению покупки и рост уровня открытости новым потребительским впечатлениям. Также доказано положительное влияние фактора «уровень открытости клиента новому опыту» в связи переменных «отношение клиента к бренду – уровень мотивации клиента». Подтверждена гипотеза о зависимости между мотивацией клиентов к совершению покупки определенного бренда и реализацией их поведенческих намерений. Теоретический вклад исследования заключается в пополнении массива эмпирических знаний о параметрах «потребительские мотивы» и «открытость клиента опыту». Среди возможных направлений дальнейших исследований – апробация предложенной модели на примере альтернативных отраслей экономики или с использованием статистических данных других стран.

Ключевые слова: опыт взаимодействия с брендом; потребительские мотивы; открытость опыту; поведенческое намерение; теория когнитивной оценки; Турция.

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INTRODUCTION

Customers actively seek unique and inspiring experiences in the consumption process [Becker, Jaakkola, 2020; Farrelly, 2019; Homburg, Jozic, Kuehnl, 2015; Hosany, 2011]. Thrash and Elliot [2003] define inspiration as a specific type of intrinsic motivation that is driven by external stimuli and leads to the realization of new ideas. Customer inspiration is recognized as a way to strengthen customer relationships [Ki, Park, Kim, 2022]. Customer inspiration evoked by brand experiences is treated as an intrinsic motivational state. Brand stimuli such as name, logo, packaging, advertisements, brochures, websites, etc. are the main source of subjective, intrinsic customer reactions called "brand experience" [Brakus, Schmitt, Zarantonello, 2009]. Hence, brand experience is conceptualized as subjective and intrinsic customer reactions (sensational, emotional, and cognitive) and behavioral reactions evoked by the design, communication and stimuli related to a brand [Sahin, Zehir, Kitapçı, 2011]. On the other hand, "inspiration" as a motivational approach suggests that customers seek to understand new experiences. The use of applications that affect our lives as customers (such as Yemeksepeti) can provide inspirational experiences by mediating the purchase of goods or services [Libaque-Saenz, Hernani, Noel, 2019]. Several studies have determined that aforementioned technological applications can increase customer inspirations [Chuah, 2019; Hinsch, Felix, Rauschnabel, 2020; Riegger et al., 2021].

The digital transformation happened due to the Covid-19 pandemic and also caused change in customer habits. One of these transformations is the introduction of online delivery applications. According to data from the Ministry of Trade, the volume of Turkey's online food industry grew by 99% in the first half of 2022, exceeding 12 billion TRY¹. Yemeksepeti.com, founded in 2001, was the first in Turkey to implement the e-mediator model, which enables online food ordering. Yemeksepeti is one of the first players in the sector and is also the market leader. Brands such as Getir Yemek, Trendyol Yemek and Fuudy have also taken their place in the online food sector [Tomaş, 2014; Çakaröz, Civek, 2021]. As of 2022, Yemeksepeti has more than 30 million users, and the number of restaurants using this platform exceeded 79.879, breaking the record of 1 billion food orders in 2022². Turkey's first and largest online takeaway portal yemeksepeti.com is an organization that brings local food businesses and chain food and beverage businesses together with customers. The portal allows customers to select and order food and beverages of their choice from different cuisines, benefit from promotions and discounts across the country and in their region, and rate the goods and services

they purchase by rating service quality, speed and food quality after purchase [Kılıçalp, Özdoğan, 2019]. Successful brands have an aspirational quality that symbolizes desirable personality traits such as sophistication and competence that can inspire targeted behavior [Aaker, 1997]. For this reason, it is important for Yemeksepeti, which includes many digital restaurants, to continue its existence by being inspirational and creating desire in customers. In this context, the study was conducted with users of yemeksepeti.com, a widely used online ordering system in Turkey.

With the rapid increase in information and communication technologies, customers' desire to save time for different reasons, such as busy work schedules and the search for new flavors increases the tendency to order food online. This research is unique in the fact that it aims to understand the effects of openness to experiences on behavioral intention by examining the mediating role of experiential openness in the interaction of customers with the source of inspiration in this brand experience. According to Böttger et al. [2017], customer inspiration is an important motivational factor in customer behavior literature. Inspiration significantly affects customers' affective, attitudinal, and behavioral intentions [Böttger et al., 2017]. Therefore, it is important to understand the role of openness to experiences by determining the effects of brand experience on customer inspiration and behavioral intention in the online food ordering market. The study was conducted to determine the effects of brand experience on customer inspiration and behavioral intention and to determine the mediating role of openness to experience. The results of the study are considered to have implications for the literature and relevant stakeholders.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Brand experience. Brand experience is defined as the emotions, cognitions and behavioral responses evoked by a brand's identity, communication and environment [Brakus, Schmitt, Zarantonello, 2009]. Brand experience is related to a customer's intrinsic, personal response when interacting with a brand [Morgan-Thomas, Veloutsou, 2013] and is also defined as the set of responses that customers evoke at every point of contact with brands and are stored in long-term memory [Huaman-Ramirez, Merunka, 2019]. Unlike product experience, shopping experience and consumption experience, brand experience is considered as the notion that captures subjective customer reactions to brand-specific stimuli [Ishida, Taylor, 2012].

Brakus, Schmitt and Zarantonello [2009], divided brand experience into four dimensions, such as sensory, emotional, intellectual, and behavioral. The sensory dimension relates to the degree to which a brand appeals to customers' senses and whether the brand creates strong and engaging impressions on them. The emo-

¹ T.R. Ministry of Trade. (2022). E-ticaret bilgi platformu-İstatistikler. <https://www.eticaret.gov.tr/istatistikler>.

² Webrazzi. (2023). Yemek sepeti rakamları. <https://webrazzi.com/2022/12/30/30-milyondan-fazla-kullaniciya-sahip-yemek-sepetinin-2022de-one-cikan-rakamlari/>.

tional dimension relates to how strongly a brand evokes emotions and feelings in customers. The intellectual dimension relates to the extent to which a brand stimulates curiosity, thinking and problem solving in customers. The behavioral dimension is about how strongly a brand can engage customers in physical activities [Zarantonello, Schmitt, 2010].

Customers can have different types of experiences with a brand through sensations, emotions, behaviors, and intellect [Ong, Lee, Ramayah, 2018]. Customers' brand experience refers to their knowledge and familiarity with a brand or brand category [Alba, Hutchinson, 1987]. Brand experience can influence certain aspects of customer behavior (brand personality, satisfaction and loyalty) [Schmitt, 2009; Brakus, Schmitt, Zarantonello, 2009]. Brand experience, which is the sum of customers' experiences with a brand, plays an important marketing role in influencing customer behavior [Yu et al., 2020] and can create brand loyalty [Jung, Soo, 2012], satisfaction, trust and commitment [Başer, Cintamür, Arslan, 2015; Nysveen, Pedersen, Skard, 2013] by influencing customer behavior [Ha, Perks, 2005].

Customer inspiration. Inspiration is the experience of discovering new insights and understandings suddenly [Oleynick et al., 2014]. The concept of inspiration has become an important source of improvement for sustainable customer behavior [Kwon, Boger, 2021]. Customer inspiration is considered as a state, an intrinsic motivation evoked by the brand experience (external stimulus). Böttger et al. [2017] adapt customer inspiration to the marketing context, defining it as "a transient motivational state that facilitates customers' transition from the reception of a marketing-induced idea to the intrinsic pursuit of a consumption-related goal". Inspiration is a motivating state that mobilizes the person experiencing it [Liang, Chen, Lei, 2016; Thrash, Elliot, 2003]. The full occurrence of inspiration is attributed to the realization of the inspired by and inspired to reactions [Thrash, Elliot, 2004].

Inspired by reflects the acceptance of a marketing idea and the transition to new possibilities in customer awareness [Böttger et al., 2017; Thrash, Elliot, 2004]). Inspired by is the stage at which customers experience the urge to realize an idea. It therefore typically reflects the internal pursuit of a consumption-related goal [Thrash et al., 2014]. The first stage of inspiration refers to a process by which individuals form or change their minds or thoughts, evoked by external stimuli (e.g., brand experiences). Inspiration reflects a state of intentionality that underlines the urge (i.e. motivation) to act or do something [Thrash, Elliot, 2004]. Inspiration to is characterized by motivation that leads people to positive emotions and the urge to take action [Kwon, Boger, 2021]. When customers are exposed to exciting new ideas, they move from being "inspired" by external stimuli to being "inspired" to realize the idea embedded in the stimuli [Böttger et al., 2017]. While the inspired by state is related to the receipt of new

ideas leading to the awareness of new and better possibilities, the inspired to state is linked to the urge to realize suddenly discovered ideas [Thrash, Elliot, 2003].

Inspirational emotional reactions attributed to an event can be explained by cognitive appraisal theory of emotions in literature. Cognitive appraisal theory (CAT) aims to explain individuals' subjective evaluations of events that evoke different emotions [Lazarus, 1991; Roseman, 1996]. In other words, CAT defines emotions as mental states resulting from the evaluation or appraisal of personally relevant information [Smith, Ellsworth 1985]. CAT was developed to determine how the evaluation of an experience elicits emotions by evaluating a stimulus [Smith, Lazarus 1993]. According to the theory, an emotional response to an event (e.g., an inspirational experience) is a result of cognitive appraisal based on the individual's reference system. More specifically, individuals evaluate how an experience affects their goals, benefits, and value pursuits using various evaluative dimensions [Roseman, 1996; Choi, Choi, 2018]. Customers are likely to have different interpretations and emotional responses to the same stimulus. Brand managers should ensure that their interactions with customers evoke positive emotions such as "having fun" [Choi, Choi, 2018]. An inspirational shopping experience, which occurs when inspirational brands evoke high levels of surprise, joy and flow, fuels purchase motivation [Park, Eisingerich, Park, 2013]. Inspiration is also closely linked to quality moments, as well as the need and desire to indulge customers. This is characterized by the feeling of satisfaction generated by the consumption process [Manasseh et al., 2012].

Openness to experience. Openness describes the breadth, depth, and variability of one's ambition for new ideas and is a personality trait that refers to the degree to which a person is creative, open-minded, intelligent, and artistically sensitive [Kvasova, 2015; McCrae, Costa, 1985; Zhang et al., 2019; Barrick, Mount, 1991]. Individuals with high openness to experience tend to be insightful, curious, intelligent, creative and have different interests [Costa, McCrae, 1992; Kuo et al., 2015; Rose et al., 2010]. Openness to experience refers to intellectually curious and creative individuals [Costa, McCrae, 1992; Moghavvemi et al., 2017; Matzler, Bidmon, Grabner-Kräuter, 2006]. This personality trait explains an individual's receptivity to learning new things and adapting to change [Rothman, Melwani, 2017; Moghavvemi et al., 2017]. Customers with high openness to experience are more likely to immerse themselves in the local atmosphere and show a marked interest in discovering more about a destination, leading to intention effects [Khoi, Phong, Le, 2019].

Behavioral intentions. Behavioral intentions are conceptualized as self-given directions to behave a certain way [Çavuşoğlu, Demirağ, 2021]. Behavioral intention, defined as the confirmation of the probability of engaging in a certain behavior, is an indicator of the future behavior of customers [Lai, Chen 2011]. Customers' direct and indirect in-

teractions with a brand create brand experiences [Schmitt, 1999; Brakus, Schmitt, Zarantonello, 2009]. This means that while several experiences could be positive, others could be negative. When customers experience or consume goods and services, they have behavioral intentions to experience, purchase, pay a higher price and recommend the goods and services they experience [Sahin et al., 2017].

When customers have a pleasant or unpleasant experience with a brand, they readily express behavioral responses, which can have a direct impact on their future behavioral intentions in terms of repeated visits, recommendations, and willingness to pay a higher price [Risitano et al., 2017]. These value measures also reflect three dimensions of behavioral intention. The tendency formed as a result of customers' positive or negative experiences with the brand is called revisiting or not revisiting the brand [Wang, Choe, Song, 2020; Dağ, 2022]. Accordingly, the intention to revisit is the individual's decision to purchase the service from the same company again taking into account the current situation and possible conditions [Çavuşoğlu, Bilginer, 2018]. Recommending, which is another dimension of behavioral intention, reflects customers' intention to purchase the same product again by recommending it [Sotiriadis, 2017]. If the brand experience is positive, customers may express their behavioral intention by recommending the product [Risitano et al., 2017]. The last dimension of behavioral intention, willingness to pay more, is expressed as the continuation of the preference of a business by buyers despite the price being set at the maximum price [Didier, Lucie, 2008]. A positive brand experience even influences the customer's willingness to pay more by causing them to react favorably to the purchase price [Ha, Perks, 2005].

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Brand experience and source of customer inspiration.

Brand experience, which relates to the customers' intrinsic, personal response when interacting with a brand [Morgan-Thomas, Veloutsou, 2013], has shown that resources in the consumption environment (e.g., print advertisements, interior design, personalized messages, or interaction with frontline employees) significantly influence customer inspiration [Böttger et al., 2017]. In addressing the connection between brand experience, customer inspiration, and intention, Kwon and Boger [2021] discovered that brand experience affects customer inspiration. The way in which intrinsic motivation (e.g., customer inspiration) connects the relationships between brand experience, customer attitude and behavior is important for determining the development of comprehensive brand experience knowledge [Andreini et al., 2018]. Inspiration can, therefore, be seen as the transmission process that connects the stimulus (e.g., brand experience) and inspiration-related activities [Kwon, Boger, 2021].

Wang, Zhou and Liu [2018], emphasized the importance of inspiration in enhancing the brand experience.

Jeong et al. [2014] suggested that hospitality businesses should inspire customers to create positive attitudes and behaviors towards the green business environment. This is because customer inspiration refers to a state of intrinsic motivation [Böttger et al., 2017; Thrash, Elliot, 2004]. Therefore, this intrinsic motivation is positively related to brand experience and leads customers to create and act on their thoughts [Liu, Sparks, Coghlan, 2017]. For these reasons, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H1: Brand experience positively affects the source of customer inspiration.

H1a: Brand experience positively affects the source of inspired by.

H1b: Brand experience positively affects the source of inspired to.

Brand experience and openness to experience.

Brand experience refers to customers' emotions, cognitions and behavioral responses stimulated by their environment [Brakus, Schmitt, Zarantonello, 2009]. According to these behavioral responses, customers who are highly receptive to new experiences are more likely to be persuaded [Khoi, Phong, Le, 2019]. Openness to experience, which explains customers being receptive to learning new things and adapting to change [Moghavvemi et al., 2017], can be affected by brand experience. Customers with high openness to experience tend to be insightful, curious, intelligent, creative, and have different interests [Costa, McCrae, 1992; Kuo et al., 2015; Rose et al., 2010]. Therefore, a good brand experience positively affects customers with high openness to experience [Hernani-Merino, Libaque-Saenz, Dávalos, 2023]. Openness to experience also reflects customers' preference for innovation and change [Komarraju et al., 2011], reflecting original and creative customers. Therefore, openness to experience is associated with brand experience by manifesting itself in a wide range of ways, from fantastic experiences, creative ideas and products to a high level of tolerance towards the thoughts and experiences of others [Özhan, Altug, Deniz, 2018]. For these reasons, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H2: Brand experience positively affects openness to experience.

Openness to experience and source of customer inspiration.

Openness to experience is characterized by being imaginative, insightful, non-traditional, having broad interests and having a preference for diversity [McCrae, John, 1992]. Openness to experience refers to intellectually curious and creative individuals [Costa, McCrae, 1992; Moghavvemi et al., 2017]. Therefore, openness to experience is associated with inspirations such as thinking creatively and differently, pursuing aesthetic goals and engaging in creative activities [Westjohn, Singh, Magnusson, 2012]. In other words, individuals with high openness to experience have multiple interests, flexible thinking and are open to new ideas [Hee, Johari, 2014]. These customer characteristics related to openness to ex-

perience may have an impact on inspiration. Inspiration is a motivating state that mobilizes the person who experiences it [Liang, Chen, Lei, 2016; Thrash, Elliot, 2004]. Thrash and Elliot [2003] provide theoretical evidence that openness to experience facilitates inspiration. Hermann and Nadkarni [2014] suggest that personality traits such as openness to experience can positively influence the initiation of change. They also argue that divergent thinking and creativity can be transformed into motivating and mobilizing inspiration. Similarly, Khoi, Phong and Le [2019] put forward an idea that openness to experience positively affects customer inspiration. For these reasons, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H3: Openness to experience positively affects the source of customer inspiration.

H3a: Openness to experience positively affects the source of inspired by.

H3b: Openness to experience positively affects the source of inspired to.

The mediating role of openness to experience. He, Liu and Li [2021] state that openness to experience plays a positive mediating role in brand experience and customer inspiration. Brand experience can influence customers with high openness to experience. Customers with high openness to experience tend to be insightful, curious, intelligent, creative and have different interests [Kuo et al., 2015; Rose et al., 2010]. Graham and Smith [2021] state that inspiration is a source of motivation influenced by openness to experience. People who are more open to experience are more willing to share their experiences and ideas with others [Tan, Tang, 2013]. According to Hee and Johari [2014], attitudes towards customer-oriented behaviors are positively correlated with customers' or service providers' openness to experience personality traits. Openness to experience can directly influence experiences with a brand [Tarka, Kukar-Kinney, Harnish, 2022] because this trait represents an intrinsic need, which may mean that customers are more likely to seek new experiences and enjoy them more [McCrae, Costa, 1997; Olsen et al., 2016]. There is a significant relationship between openness to experience and customer behavior [Kvasova, 2015] and it is suggested that openness may play a mediating role [Shalley, Zhou, Oldham, 2004; Baer, Oldham, 2006; Van Tilburg, Sedikides, Wildschut, 2015]. Openness to experience is strongly and consistently associated with attitudes and behaviors that have a positive effect [Hirsh, 2010; Milfont, Sibley, 2012]. For these reasons, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H4: Openness to experience partially mediates the positive effects between brand experience and the source of customer inspiration.

Source of customer intention and behavioral intention. According to [Liang, Chen, Lei, 2016; Thrash et al., 2014; Böttger et al., 2017; Park, Eisingerich, Park, 2013; An, Youn, 2018], customer inspiration has a significant impact on emotional responses like positivity and satisfaction,

which in turn affect behavioral intention. According to Kwon and Boger [2001], the transmission process that influences behavioral intention is the inspiration produced by a positive brand experience. In the opinion of Böttger et al. [2017], customer inspiration, which significantly affects customers' emotional, attitudinal and behavioral intentions, is considered an important motivational factor in the literature on customer behavior. Therefore, it is stated that this motivation supported by inspiration means that customers will behave in a certain way to realize an idea [Kwon, Boger, 2021]. Customer inspiration affects behavioral intention depending on the brand experience [Liang, Chen, Lei, 2016; Çavuşoğlu, Bükey, 2022]. Being inspired to and having inspired by are strongly related to each other, as they are sufficient conditions for the customer experience of inspiration [Thrash, Elliot, 2003]. It has been stated that both dimensions of inspiration have a significant potential to dominate in generating customers' emotions (e.g., pleasure) and eliciting their subsequent behaviors (e.g., revisit, recommendation, and intention to pay more) [Çavuşoğlu, Bükey, 2022]. For these reasons, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H5: The source of customer inspiration positively affects behavioral intention.

H5a: The source of inspired by positively affects the intention to revisit.

H5b: The source of inspired by positively affects the intention to recommend.

H5c: The source of inspired by positively affects the intention to pay more.

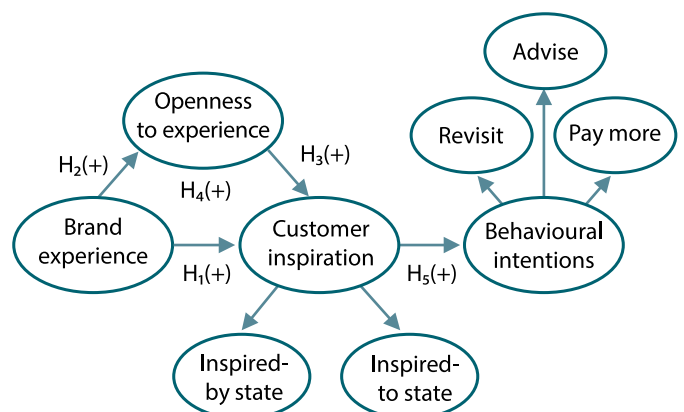
H5d: The source of inspired to positively affects the intention to revisit.

H5e: The source of inspired to positively affects the intention to recommend.

H5f: The source of inspired to positively affects the intention to pay more.

RESEARCH METHOD

The study is conducted to determine the effects of brand experience on customer inspiration and behavioral intention and to understand the mediating role of openness to experience. The research model is presented in Figure.



Research model
Модель исследования

The population of the study consists of customers who order from the online takeaway portal yemeksepeti.com.

Sample. The data for study were gathered using the questionnaire technique. The questionnaires, which were collected using the convenience sampling method, were collected online in June, 2023. A total of 416 valid responses were received.

Scales. The questionnaire form includes demographic characteristics and the statements in the model. The variables consisted of statements to measure brand experi-

ence, openness to experience, customer inspiration and behavioral intention. Variables and statements are presented in Table 1.

The scale expressions using a five-point Likert scale were directed to the participants in the range of 1 – strongly disagree to 5 – strongly agree.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Demographic findings. Table 2 presents the socio-demographic characteristics of participants.

Table 1 – Research model variables
Таблица 1 – Переменные модели

Variables	Dimensions	Statements	Reference
Brand experience	One dimension	This brand leaves a strong impression.	Brakus, Schmitt, Zarantonello [2009]
		I find this brand to be sensory engaging.	
		This brand appeals to my senses.	
		This brand stimulates my senses and emotions.	
		I have strong feelings about this brand.	
		This brand is sentimental to me.	
		Using this brand pushes me to engage in physical actions and behaviors.	
		This brand results in bodily experiences.	
		This brand is action-oriented.	
		Thoughts cross my mind when I come across this brand.	
		This brand makes me think about a lot of things.	
This brand encourages my curiosity and problem solving.			
Openness to experience	One dimension	I am seeking out fantasy.	Khoi, Phong, Le [2019]
		I am seeking out aesthetics.	
		I am seeking out feelings.	
		I am seeking out ideas	
Customer inspiration	Inspired-by state	This takeaway portal fired my imagination.	Böttger et al. [2017]
		I appreciate the new ideas in this takeaway portal.	
		I got new ideas unexpectedly and spontaneously by looking at this takeaway portal.	
		I admire the new idea shared on this takeaway portal.	
		I feel as if I have discovered something new from this takeaway portal	
	Inspired-to state	This takeaway portal inspired me to do something.	
		This takeaway portal made me want to do something.	
		This takeaway portal increased my interest in doing something.	
		This takeaway portal motivated me to do something.	
Behavioral intentions	Visit intention	I would like to revisit this takeaway portal.	Han, Hsu, Lee [2009]
		I plan to revisit this takeaway portal.	
		I will make an effort to order from this takeaway portal again	
	Word-of-mouth intention	I will encourage my friends and relatives to dine out by ordering from this takeaway portal.	
		If someone is looking for a restaurant, I will suggest that they order food from this takeaway portal.	
		I will say positive things about this takeaway portal	
	Willingness to pay more	I will pay more for the services of this takeaway portal.	
		It is acceptable to pay more for the services of this takeaway portal.	
		I am willing to pay more for orders from this takeaway portal	

Table 2 – Socio-demographic characteristics of participants
Таблица 2 – Социально-демографические характеристики респондентов

Participant characteristics		N	%
Age range	18–24	105	25.2
	25–34	113	27.2
	35–44	84	20.2
	45–54	63	15.1
	55–64	30	7.2
	65+	21	5.0
Gender	Male	206	49.5
	Female	210	50.5
Marital status	Married	294	70.7
	Single	122	29.3
Education	Primary school	23	5.5
	High school	69	16.6
	Associate degree	122	29.3
	Bachelor degree	135	32.5
	Postgraduate	67	16.1
Income perception	Very low	111	26.7
	Low	142	34.1
	Average	138	33.2
	High	21	5.0
	Very high	4	1.0
Frequency	Yes	332	79.8
	No	84	20.2

Following an analysis of the demographic data from 416 participants and drawing conclusions based on the results obtained, it was found that 27.2% (n: 113) of the participants' age range fell between 25 and 34. Consider-

ing the gender of the participants, 49.5% were male and 50.5% were female. When marital status was analyzed, 70.7% of the participants were married. As for the education level, 32.5% of the individuals (n: 135) held undergraduate degrees. Regarding the income perceptions of the participants, 34.1% (n: 142) stated that they had a low level of income. In response to the question "Do you often shop online?", 79.8% of the participants answered "yes" (n: 332).

Data analysis. Partial least squares regression (PLS) and structural equation modeling (SEM) analyses were conducted to evaluate the theoretical hypotheses formulated on brand experience, source of customer inspiration, openness to experience, and behavioral intention. PLS-SEM can retain a large number of reflective materials per dimension compared to other statistical methods (CB-SEM) [Çavuşoğlu, 2021a]. Leguina's (83) two-stage method was adopted to evaluate the collected data. In this method, the measurement model (referred to as the external model) is assessed for reliability and validity, and then the structural model (referred to as the internal model) is tested to support or reject the proposed hypotheses. To test the external model in PLS-SEM, standardized factor loading (>0.7), composite reliability ($CR > 0.7$), average variance explained ($AVE > 0.5$), normed fit index ($NFI > 0.9$), Standardized root mean square errors ($SRMR < 0.08$) values suggested by Hair et al. [2014] were calculated.

Measuring model results. Various cut-off thresholds were followed to assess the validity and reliability of the external measurement model (Table 3). These criteria include composite reliability (CR), Cronbach's alpha, rho_A, discriminant and construct validity. As shown in Table 3, Cronbach's alpha, CR, and AVE values for all latent dimen-

Table 3 – Validity and reliability test results
Таблица 3 – Результаты проверки валидности и надежности

Variables	Dimensions	Factor loadings	CA	rho_A	CR	AVE
Brand experience			0.929	0.930	0.939	0.562
	BE 1	0.683				
	BE 2	0.694				
	BE 3	0.706				
	BE 4	0.688				
	BE 5	0.801				
	BE 6	0.767				
	BE 7	0.807				
	BE 8	0.806				
	BE 9	0.763				
	BE 10	0.763				
	BE 11	0.776				
BE 12	0.723					
Openness to experience			0.908	0.917	0.936	0.786
	OE 1	0.912				
	OE 2	0.897				
	OE 3	0.813				
	OE 4	0.920				

Table 3 (concluded)
Окончание таблицы 3

Variables	Dimensions	Factor loadings	CA	rho_A	CR	AVE
Inspired-by state			0.867	0.873	0.905	0.658
	I-by 1	0.822				
	I-by 2	0.866				
	I-by 3	0.866				
	I-by 4	0.823				
	I-by 5	0.659				
Inspired-to state			0.889	0.892	0.918	0.692
	I-to 1	0.840				
	I-to 2	0.869				
	I-to 3	0.865				
	I-to 4	0.798				
	I-to 5	0.783				
Visit intention			0.950	0.951	0.968	0.909
	VI 1	0.956				
	VI 2	0.959				
	VI 3	0.945				
Word-of-mouth			0.855	0.856	0.912	0.776
	WOM 1	0.843				
	WOM 2	0.906				
	WOM 3	0.892				
Willingness to pay more			0.913	0.913	0.945	0.852
	WPM 1	0.892				
	WPM 2	0.938				
	WPM 3	0.939				

sions exceeded the recommended cut-off level, indicating that the scale items have appropriate internal reliability and construct validity.

Furthermore, all standardized factor loadings exceeded 0.70 [Kaiser, 1974], providing further evidence

supporting the adequacy of scale reliability. In the study, discriminant validity was calculated based on two criteria: (1) Fornell-Larcker criterion and (2) Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT). Discriminant validity results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4 – Discriminant validity results
Таблица 4 – Результаты дискриминантного анализа

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<i>Fornell-Larcker criterion</i>							
BE	.749						
OE	.637	.886					
I-by	.470	.415	.811				
I-to	.442	.400	.631	.832			
VI	.229	.390	.596	.656	.953		
WOM	.255	.419	.602	.674	.870	.881	
WPM	.242	.390	.582	.649	.848	.861	.923
<i>HTMT criterion</i>							
BE							
OE	.690						
I-by	.531	.468					
I-to	.483	.439	.752				
VI	.245	.418	.713	.713			
WOM	.285	.473	.772	.867	.857		
WPM	.262	.426	.720	.862	.887	.767	

Notes: Values written in bold represent the square root of the average variance extracted (\sqrt{AVE}).
Chi-Square: 5410.394; SRMR: 0.073; NFI: 0.664.

As shown in Table 4, the AVE square root values highlighted in bold are greater than the correlation coefficient between variables, indicating a high level of discriminant validity [Garson, 2016]. Finally, HTMT values were analyzed to ensure the accuracy of the Fornell-Larcker criterion [Çavuşoğlu, 2021b]. It is recommended that HTMT values be lower than 0.90 [Henseler, Ringle, Sarstedt, 2015]. HTMT levels were found to be lower than 0.90 (Table 4). The previous results showed that the measures have sufficient reliability, discriminant and construct validity. Therefore, we proceeded with the internal model evaluation for hypothesis testing.

Structural model results. In the last step of the Smart PLS4 calculations, the 5000 bootstrapping approach was applied to assess path coefficients and t-significance values for direct effects (Table 5). First, whether there is a linearity problem between the variables in the model is checked in this approach, and the relationships and path coefficients in the structural model are evaluated. Table 5 shows the VIF values of the constructs. VIF values are recommended to be below 5 [Gujarati, 1999]. Since there is no VIF score above this threshold in the model, there is no linearity or bias problem in the model. R^2 value was examined to calculate the coefficient of determination. The results show that the independent variables generally moderately affect the dependent variables. Table 5 presents the R^2 results.

The results of the structural equation model showed that brand experience had a positive effect on customer inspiration and its sub-dimensions of source of inspiration and enthusiasm. Therefore, hypotheses H1, H1a and H1b were accepted. On the other hand, it was determined that brand experience had a positive effect on openness

to experiences; in this respect, hypothesis H2 was accepted. Similarly, it was determined that openness to experiences had a positive effect on customer inspiration and its sub-dimensions of source of inspiration and enthusiasm. Therefore, hypotheses H3, H3a and H3b are also accepted. As a result of the analyses, it was determined that customer inspiration and its sub-dimensions had positive effects on behavioral intention and its sub-dimensions: intention to revisit, intention to recommend and intention to pay more. In this respect, hypotheses H5, H5a, H5b, H5c, H5d, H5e and H5f were accepted.

The mediating effect of openness to experience between brand experience and customers' inspiration was tried to be determined. Zhao, Lynch and Chen [2010] state that in mediating effect analyses, mediating effects can be found if the indirect effects are significant. If the indirect effect and direct effect are significant and the total effect is positive or negative in this context, the mediating effect is partial. If the indirect effect is significant and the direct effect is insignificant, the mediating effect is full. Since the indirect ($\beta = .36, p \leq 0.001$), direct ($\beta = .63, p \leq 0.001$), and total effects ($\beta = .13, p \leq 0.001$) in the path BE>>>OE>>>CI are significant, the analysis determines the partial mediation effect of openness to experience in the relationship between brand experience and customer inspiration. In this context, hypothesis H4 was also accepted.

RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study was conducted to determine the effects of brand experience on customer inspiration and behavioral intention, and to understand the mediating role of openness to experience. Our study is unique in that it looks at

Table 5 – Structural equation modeling results

Таблица 5 – Результаты моделирования структурными уравнениями

	Hypotheses	β	S.S.	t-values	p-values	R^2	VIF
H1	BE>>>CI	0.365	0.059	6.226	0,000***		
H1a	BE>>>I-by	0.344	0.064	5.448	0,000***	0.24	1.682
H1b	BE>>>I-to	0.315	0.058	5.485	0,000***	0.22	1.682
H2	BE>>>OE	0.637	0.033	19.268	0,000***	0.41	1.000
H3	OE>>>CI	0.218	0.058	3.791	0,000***		
H3a	OE>>>I-by	0.196	0.061	3.194	0,001**		1.682
H3b	OE>>>I-to	0.199	0.058	3.438	0,001**		1.682
H4	BE>>>OE>>>CI	0.139	0.039	3.594	0,000***		
H5	CI>>>BI	0.719	0.038	19.105	0,000***		
H5a	I-by>>>VI	0.304	0.060	5.021	0,000***	0.48	1.662
H5b	I-by>>>WOM	0.294	0.056	5.217	0,000***	0.51	1.662
H5c	I-by>>>WPM	0.288	0.063	4.593	0,000***	0.47	1.662
H5d	I-to>>>VI	0.464	0.062	7.515	0,000***		1.662
H5e	I-to>>>WOM	0.488	0.053	9.171	0,000***		1.662
H5f	I-to>>>WPM	0.467	0.061	7.643	0,000***		1.662

Note: *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$; CI is Customer inspiration; BI is Behavioral intentions.

how openness to experience mediates the way that customers interact with the brand experiences that inspire them to understand the effects of openness to experience on behavioral intention. According to the results of the research, all of the hypotheses were supported.

The study results supported the brand experience affects the source of customer inspiration hypothesis. In addition, the sub-hypothesis brand experience positively affects the source of inspired by and inspired to was found to be significant. The obtained results correspond to the literature [Böttger et al., 2017; Kwon, Boger, 2021; Liu, Sparks, Coghlan, 2017; Thrash, Elliot, 2004]. Kwon and Boger [2021] state that brand experience affects customer inspiration. Similarly, Böttger et al. [2017] put forward the idea that positive brand experiences significantly affect customer inspiration. Therefore, the effects of a positive brand experience for businesses are apparent. The online takeaway portal yemeksepeti.com is an organization that brings local food businesses and other restaurants together with customers. The platform, which includes many businesses, offers different experiences to customers. Such experiences help create a positive source of inspiration for customers. It is important for yemeksepeti.com to provide a positive brand experience, especially to keep service quality, speed and food quality at a high level, to enable customers to evaluate the goods and services they purchase to ensure sustainability.

As a result of the analysis conducted, brand experience positively affects openness to experience hypothesis was also supported. The obtained results correspond to the literature [Khoi, Phong, Le, 2019; Moghavvemi et al., 2017; Özhan, Altug, Deniz, 2018]. Furthermore, openness to experience positively affects the source of customer inspiration and openness to experience positively affects the source of inspired by and inspired to hypothesis were also supported. The obtained results correspond with the literature [Westjohn, Singh, Magnusson, 2012; Liang, Chen, Lei, 2016; Thrash, Elliot, 2003; Khoi, Phong, Le, 2019; Hermann, Nadkarni, 2014]. Hermann and Nadkarni [2014] mention that openness to experience will create a change in personality traits and this will turn into inspiration.

The analysis results determined that openness to experience partially mediates the positive effect between brand experience and customer inspiration. The obtained results correspond to the findings by [He et al., 2021; Shalley, Zhou, Oldham, 2004; Baer, Oldham, 2006; Van Tilburg, Sedikides, Wildschut, 2015; Kvasova, 2015]. He et al. [2021] mention the mediating role of openness to experience and put forward that if customers have high levels of openness to experience, significant and positive correlations may be formed between experience and inspiration.

The last hypothesis, that customer inspiration positively affects behavioral intention, was also supported. Inspiration to and inspired by, which are the sub-dimensions of customer inspiration, were found to positively affect the intentions to revisit, recommend and spend more.

The obtained results correspond to [Liang, Chen, Lei, 2016; Böttger et al., 2017; Park, Eisingerich, Park, 2013; An, Youn, 2018; Çavuşoğlu, Bükey, 2022; Kwon, Boger, 2021]. In their study, Böttger et al. [2017] state that inspiration is an important motivational factor affecting customers' behavioral intentions. Customers will act in the ways that help an idea come to fruition because they are inspired and motivated to do so. Similarly, Park et al. [2013] put forward that an inspirational experience positively affects purchase behavior.

CONCLUSION

Theoretical implications. The study was conducted to determine the effects of brand experience on customer inspiration and behavioral intention and to understand the mediating role of openness to experience. Furthermore, the study was administered to enrich the existing literature and to determine the possible effects of customer behavior by considering cognitive appraisal theory of emotions. The research has contributed to the literature gap in this field by focusing on the mediating role of openness to experience.

The first theoretical implication is that the study provides evidence for the field to research openness to experience as an interdisciplinary concept in marketing. Theoretically, the research deepens our understanding of these concepts in the marketing context. It is understood that the interaction desired to be created through the brand experience may be more effective on customers who are open to experiences. As brand experience influences customer inspiration and behavioral intention, it is important to understand the potential benefits of customer interactions with inspiring brands.

Another theoretical implication that our study confirms is the correlation established by openness to experience between brand experience and customer inspiration. Since the stimuli produced by brands reflect customer senses in relation to the overall brand experience Krishna, Cian, Aydınoğlu [2017], it is important to understand the individual characteristics of customers. Brand experience can impact behavioral intention depending on the characteristics of customers with high openness to experience by revealing the source of inspiration.

Practical implications. The study results provide noteworthy recommendations for brand managers, e-commerce businesses and online retail stakeholders. Results show that brand experience can positively influence customer inspiration and behavioral intention. The study also shows that openness to experience plays a mediating role between brand experience and customer inspiration. Brand managers can use this as an important source of improvement for sustainable behaviors by providing unique and impressive experiences to their customers and influencing the motivational state of customers with high openness to experience. In this respect, customer inspiration evoked by the unique differences of experien-

tial marketing can be effectively utilized by online service providers.

By focusing on actions such as leading customers to a motivating response through brand experience, understanding the behavioral responses of customers ordering from yemeksepeti.com (e.g., purchase of products, delivery time, quality, and hygiene), the basis for providing customers with a memorable experience while interacting with the brand can be established. Customers ordering from the online takeaway portal yemeksepeti.com may be able to generate inspiration, which is the intrinsic motivation of customers with high openness to experience through sensory, emotional, intellectual and behavioral brand experiences. Behavioral intention formation as a result of brand experience basically becomes more effective with the realization of customer inspiration. Especially during the first stage of inspiration, which is enthusiasm, it is recommended to offer exciting new opportunities to customers since this is the stage where people will associate positive or negative thoughts with the brands. In addition, it is recommended to evaluate the comments made by customers on different platforms and to establish strong relationships with customers through improvements made pursuant to the evaluations. It is important to develop and facilitate the use of websites and mobile application programs. Increasing diversity by expanding the product line and product mix is especially important in terms of inspiration. When forming behavioral intentions, e-trust, e-satisfaction and e-loyalty programs should also be established. It is recommended to improve

the security infrastructure of electronic payment systems used by customers and to offer the opportunity to order food using different payment methods. In addition, the timely and complete delivery of the ordered products is also very important for ensuring customer continuity. Managers who want to turn these and similar situations into opportunities can influence behavioral intention by creating a source of inspiration, which is the acceptance of a marketing-based idea. The results of the study also confirm that openness to experience partially influences customer inspiration by affecting the way customers process brand-related stimuli. Therefore, marketing managers can use the construct of openness to experience (i.e., customers who emphasize traits related to imagination, creativity and innovation) as a segmentation variable. That is, they can target customers with low openness to experience and thus design advertising campaigns to present new ideas that motivate customers.

Limitations and directions for future research. The data for the study were collected from customers who order from the online takeaway portal yemeksepeti.com in Turkey. Therefore, the results of the data collected in different regions and countries may differ. Conducting future studies by collecting data from portals offering similar services in different countries will enable comparability of the results. Another limitation is that the study focuses only on content related to the service sector. Future research could include other sectors as well. In addition, comparative research can be performed with a diversified sample and in relation to different variables. ■

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