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The Mediating Role of Perceived Enjoyment in the Effect of Coffee Shop Atmosphere Perception on Behavioral Intentions: A Study of University Students

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Abstract

This study examines the effect of coffee shop atmosphere perception on university students' behavioral intentions and the mediating role of perceived enjoyment in this relationship. The study employs a quantitative survey design with data collected face-to-face and online between February and June 2025 from 400 students of Kırklareli University in Türkiye who frequent coffee shops. Coffee shop atmosphere, perceived enjoyment and behavioral intention were measured with adapted five-point Likert scales, and the data were analysed with SPSS for descriptive statistics and with partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) in SmartPLS, using 10,000 bootstrap subsamples to test the hypotheses. The results show that coffee shop atmosphere has no significant direct effect on behavioral intention ($\beta = -0.069$; $p = 0.429$), whereas perceived enjoyment has a positive and significant effect on behavioral intention ($\beta = 0.741$; $p < 0.001$). Atmosphere also has a significant indirect effect on behavioral intention through perceived enjoyment ($\beta = 0.490$; $p < 0.001$), and the model explains 43.7% of the variance in perceived enjoyment and 48.6% of the variance in behavioral intention. The findings of this study suggest that perceived enjoyment mediates the relationship between atmosphere perception and behavioral intention, so that students' intentions to revisit or recommend coffee shops are shaped more by the enjoyment the atmosphere creates than by the atmosphere itself.

Keywords: Coffee shop; Atmosphere; Perceived enjoyment; Behavioral intention; University students.

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1. Introduction

Coffee shops, which are public spaces, function as social spaces where individuals engage in social interaction, have the opportunity to relax, and experience various aspects of life, beyond being mere coffee consumption areas (Bayındır and Çalışkan, 2022; Hanafi et al., 2025; Lee et al., 2018). In this respect, coffee shops stand out as places where individuals strengthen their social bonds and gain different cultural experiences in their daily lives (Ferreira et al., 2021). Especially for university students, coffee shops have become important socialization spaces that are not only places to consume beverages, but also where friends meet, where people choose to study or work on projects, where social networks are expanded, and where individuals or groups spend time (Bayındır and Önçel, 2019; Lee, 2022).

The atmosphere of a food establishment consists of components such as decoration, lighting, music, and scent (Antikasari et al., 2021; Saputra, 2023). These elements directly shape consumers' perceptions of the establishment, their emotional states, and their overall experience (Saatci and Temeloğlu, 2019). These atmospheric elements play a critical role in determining consumers' satisfaction levels, their loyalty to the venue, and their intention to revisit (Çanakçı, 2023; Rahayu et al., 2018; Wowor and Kurniawan, 2025); while also affecting social interaction levels and the quality of time spent in the space (Tan et al., 2024). The literature emphasizes that atmosphere is a decisive factor in the service sector on consumer satisfaction, perceived value, brand image, and behavioral intentions (Athallah and Sunanto, 2025; Adveni and You, 2024; Najhan et al., 2022). Various studies have shown that, especially in businesses offering experience-based services such as coffee shops, atmospheric elements create positive emotional responses in consumers, strengthening customer loyalty and increasing the likelihood of repeat visits (Ismail et al., 2025; Kamila et al., 2024).

The psychological and behavioral effects of atmosphere in the service industry on customers have long been a subject of research (Wowor and Kurniawan, 2025), while the decisive role of the pleasure or enjoyment these elements create

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in individuals on their ultimate behavioral intentions is also gaining increasing importance (Astrini et al., 2022; Bilal et al., 2023). The main objective of this study is to determine the effect of perceptions of coffee shop atmosphere on the behavioral intentions of university students and to examine the mediating role of perceived enjoyment in this relationship. In this regard, the study investigates how atmosphere shapes behavioral intentions, both through its direct effect and through the feeling of enjoyment it creates in individuals. The study aims to reveal the significance of emotional experiences in explaining behavioral tendencies, particularly those related to repeat visits, recommendations to others, and positive evaluations. While existing studies generally address coffee shop atmosphere in terms of variables such as customer satisfaction or service quality, this study offers a more in-depth approach by focusing on the mediating role of an emotional variable such as perceived enjoyment. Furthermore, by presenting empirical data on the young consumer group of university students, it fills gaps in the literature and generates strategic implications for businesses.

2. Literature Review

The role of environmental and emotional factors in understanding consumer behavior in the service sector is becoming increasingly important (Singh et al., 2022). Particularly in experience-based consumption areas, the impressions left by the physical environment on individuals and the process by which these impressions turn into emotional responses are decisive in shaping behavioral outcomes (Gardner, 1985). In spaces focused on social interaction and relaxation, such as coffee shops, atmospheric elements not only create an aesthetic environment but can also influence the consumer's psychological state and perceived level of enjoyment. In this context, theoretical models explaining the interaction between service environment components and individual experiences provide a strong foundation for understanding consumer behavior.

In service marketing literature, the physical environment in which the service is delivered is considered a fundamental element that directly shapes consumers' perceptions, emotional responses, and behavioral tendencies (Rahayu et al., 2018; Rathnasiri et al., 2025). The coffee shop atmosphere consists of multidimensional components such as decoration, lighting, music, scent, and staff attitude. These elements can create positive perceptions among consumers, increasing satisfaction levels and strengthening behavioral intentions such as revisiting and recommending to others (Wowor and Kurniawan, 2025). Previous studies in the field have shown that atmospheric elements enrich the service experience by creating positive emotional responses in consumers, thereby increasing behavioral intentions (Tular, 2023). It is predicted that positive perceptions of coffee shop atmosphere will also support consumers' behavioral intentions, such as revisiting the venue and engaging in positive word-of-mouth communication. In this context, the following hypothesis was developed to examine whether coffee shop atmosphere perception has an effect on behavioral intention:

> ***H₁:*** *Perceptions of coffee shop atmosphere have a positive and significant effect on individuals' behavioral intentions.*

Perceived enjoyment is a concept closely related to hedonic value, expressing the pleasure, satisfaction, and emotional fulfillment an individual derives from a service experience (Huang et al., 2024). Especially in experience-based services, the pleasure felt by the consumer constitutes an important component of the total perceived value of the service (So et al., 2021; Weerasinghe and Samarathunge, 2020). Enjoying time spent in social spaces such as coffee shops shapes consumers' attitudes toward the venue in a positive way and increases the likelihood of these attitudes translating into behavioral intentions. The literature contains various studies showing that perceived enjoyment strengthens behavioral tendencies such as revisiting, recommending to others, and engaging in positive word-of-mouth communication (Chaudhry et al., 2023; Hasan et al., 2021; Ulaan et al., 2016). In this context, it has been observed that consumers who derive a high level of enjoyment from the service experience develop stronger loyalty towards the service provider in question and exhibit positive behavioral intentions (Zulqarnain et al., 2023). Therefore, it is predicted that perceived enjoyment in coffee shops will increase consumers' future visit intentions and positive recommendation behaviors. Therefore, to examine whether perceived enjoyment has an effect on behavioral intention, the following hypothesis has been developed:

> ***H₂:*** *Perceived enjoyment has a positive and meaningful effect on individuals' behavioral intentions.*

In the literature on service marketing and consumer behavior, it is emphasized that the physical environment has both direct and indirect effects on shaping consumer responses (Heung and Gu, 2012; Nusairat et al., 2020). In particular, various studies have shown that the atmosphere influences behavioral intentions through the emotional experiences it creates in consumers (Jalil et al., 2016; Ryu et al., 2021). In this context, positive perceptions of the coffee shop

atmosphere can elevate the consumer's internal emotional state, particularly the perceived level of enjoyment, and this situation can facilitate the strengthening of behavioral intentions. Therefore, perceived enjoyment is expected to serve as an important emotional bridge in the relationship between coffee shop atmosphere perception and behavioral intention. It is predicted that the effect of coffee shop atmosphere on behavioral intention will be meaningfully shaped through the pleasure the consumer derives from the experience. Therefore, the following hypothesis has been developed:

> **H_3:** *Perceived enjoyment plays a mediating role in the relationship between coffee shop atmosphere perception and behavioral intention.*

The existing literature reveals that the atmosphere of a coffee shop is a significant factor shaping the consumer experience, and that this effect is often achieved through emotional processes. In this regard, it is considered that the level of enjoyment the consumer derives from the experience is a critical factor that strengthens this relationship, rather than the perception of atmosphere alone directing behavioral intentions. Therefore, this study aims to make important contributions to both theory and practice by examining the mediating role of perceived enjoyment in the relationship between coffee shop atmosphere perception and behavioral intention.

3. Research Method and Materials

3.1. Variables and Measurements

The coffee shop atmosphere scale was adapted from Hussain and Ali (2015) and consists of five statements that allow participants to evaluate environmental elements such as cleanliness, music, smell, temperature, and lighting in their preferred coffee shops. The perceived enjoyment scale, adapted from the studies by Hasan et al. (2021) and Rouibah et al. (2021), consists of three items that measure participants' emotional evaluations of their experience of spending time in coffee shops. The behavioral intention scale consists of four items developed by Bayındır and Çalışkan (2022) and aims to measure participants' future intentions and recommendation behaviors regarding coffee shop use. Participants rated all statements on a 5-point Likert scale (1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree). The questionnaire form was evaluated through a pre-test process, and necessary adjustments were made considering the comprehensibility of the statements and measurement reliability. Information about the scale used in the study is presented in Appendix 1.

3.2. Research Model

The model to be tested in the study is presented below (Figure 1).

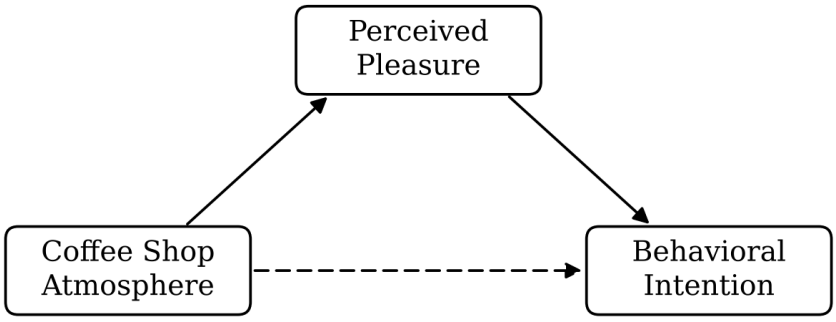


Figure 1. Research model

3.3. Sample and Data Collection

The population of this study consists of university students enrolled at Kırklareli University in Turkey. The sample consists of Kırklareli University students who frequent coffee shops in the city center of Kırklareli and who voluntarily agreed to participate in the study. Participants represent a target group suitable for the purpose of the study in terms of their experience of spending time in coffee shops.

A non-probability random sampling method was used in the sample selection. Accordingly, students were selected at random, regardless of their faculty or class level. Data collection was conducted both through face-to-face surveys and online survey forms. Data collection began in February 2025 and continued until the end of June. A total of 407 survey forms were obtained as a result of the data collection process carried out within the scope of the research. However, some of these surveys were excluded from the evaluation because they contained incomplete answers to basic questions. After eliminating forms containing incomplete or incorrect data, the number of valid surveys included in the analysis process was determined to be 400. Accordingly, the statistical analyses of the research were performed on a valid sample of 400 participants.

3.4. Data Analysis

SPSS and SmartPLS software were used together to analyze the data obtained within the scope of the research. First, descriptive statistics were presented by calculating frequency and percentage distributions using the SPSS program to analyze the participants' demographic information and general descriptive characteristics. The construct validity and internal consistency of the scales used in the study were evaluated using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) through SmartPLS software. In this process, criteria such as factor loadings, composite reliability, and average variance explained (AVE) were taken into account. To test the relationships included in the research model, path analysis was performed using the Partial Least Squares (PLS) approach, and the developed hypotheses were analyzed accordingly.

4. Results

4.1. Profile of the Sample

Table 1 shows the distribution of demographic characteristics of the individuals participating in the study. When examining the gender distribution of participants, 46.5% were female and 53.5% were male. By age group, the highest participation rate was 41% in the 21-23 age range, followed by 38.8% in the 18-20 age range and 15% in the 24-26 age range.

Table 1. Demographic data of the sample group

Demographic Characteristics		Frequency	Percentage	Demographic Characteristics		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	186	46.5	Education Level	Associate Degree	54	13.5
	Male	214	53.5		Bachelor's Degree	324	81
Age	18-20	155	38.8		Graduate Degree	22	5.5
	21-23	164	41	Monthly Income Level	Less than 22,000 TL	256	64
	24-26	60	15		22,000-30,000 TL	81	20.3
	27-29	16	4		30,001-40,000 TL	44	11
	30 and over	5	1.3		40,001-50,000 TL	16	4
					More than 50,000 TL	3	0.8

When examining educational status, undergraduate students constitute the vast majority of participants at 81%; this is followed by students pursuing associate degrees at 13.5% and graduate-level education at 5.5%. Looking at monthly income, 64% of participants have an income below 22,000 TL, 20.3% have an income between 22,000-30,000 TL, 11% have an income between 30,001-40,000 TL, 4% have an income between 40,001-50,000 TL, and only 0.8% have an income above 50,000 TL.

4.2. Information on Coffee Shop Preference Habits

Tables 2 and 3 present findings regarding participants' frequency of choosing coffee shops and the most preferred coffee types in these establishments.

Table 2. Frequency of participants' preference for coffee shops

Frequency of preference	Frequency	Percentage
Once a month	103	25,8
1-2 times a week	171	42,8
3-4 times a week	97	24,3
Once a day	29	7,2

Table 2 shows that 42.8% of participants prefer coffee shops 1-2 times a week. This is followed by those who visit once a month (25.8%) and those who visit 3-4 times a week (24.3%). The percentage of participants who go to coffee shops once a day is the lowest at 7.2%. These results show that the majority of participants prefer coffee shops on a weekly basis and that the daily usage rate is low.

Table 3. Type of coffee participants usually prefer at coffee shops

Type of Coffee	Frequency	Percentage
Turkish coffee and its varieties (menengiç, dibek, damla sakızlı, etc.)	92	23
Espresso or espresso-based beverages (latte, mocha, americano, cappuccino, etc.)	228	57
Filter coffee	77	19.3
Other	3	0.8

According to Table 3, the most preferred type of coffee in coffee shops is espresso or espresso-based drinks (latte, mocha, americano, cappuccino, etc.) at a rate of 57%. Turkish coffee and its derivatives (menengiç, dibek, damla sakızlı, etc.) rank second at a rate of 23%. While 19.3% of participants prefer filter coffee, the percentage of those who prefer coffee types in the "other" category is quite low at 0.8%. These findings reveal that modern and espresso-based beverages are more popular than traditional coffee types among university students' coffee preferences.

4.3. Measurement Model Assessment

Before testing the research model, validity and reliability analyses were conducted on the constructs used in the study. In this context, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity criteria were considered. Cronbach's Alpha and composite reliability (CR) values were examined to assess internal consistency. In determining convergent validity, the average variance explained (AVE) values with factor loadings were used as a basis. The relevant literature indicates that factor loadings of at least 0.40, Cronbach's Alpha and composite reliability coefficients above 0.70, and AVE values above 0.50 are acceptable levels (Hair et al., 2006; Hair et al., 2014). In line with this, the findings regarding internal consistency reliability and composite validity obtained in the study are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Factor analysis results of the scales

Construct	Item Code	Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Coffee Shop Atmosphere	CSA1	0.674	0.789	0.789	0.512
	CSA2	0.727			
	CSA3	0.684			
	CSA4	0.693			
Perceived Pleasure	PP1	0.824	0.761	0.773	0.518
	PP2	0.652			
	PP3	0.672			
Behavioral Intention	BI1	0.781	0.820	0.821	0.603
	BI2	0.753			
	BI3	0.795			

An examination of Table 4 shows that the factor loadings for the coffee shop atmosphere variable range between 0.674 and 0.727. The Cronbach's Alpha and composite reliability values were found to be 0.789, while the AVE value was calculated as 0.512. These results indicate that the scale has an acceptable level of internal consistency reliability and that convergent validity is achieved. For the perceived pleasure variable, the factor loadings range from 0.652 to 0.824. The Cronbach's Alpha value is 0.761, the composite reliability is 0.773, and the AVE value is 0.518. These values demonstrate that the construct possesses adequate reliability and convergent validity. Finally, the factor loadings for the behavioral intention variable range between 0.753 and 0.795. The Cronbach's Alpha value was calculated as 0.820, the composite reliability as 0.821, and the AVE value as 0.603. These results indicate that the construct has high internal consistency and strong convergent validity.

In determining discriminant validity, the criteria proposed by Fornell and Larcker (1981) and Henseler et al. (2015) were considered. According to the Fornell and Larcker (1981) approach, the square root of the AVE value for each construct should be higher than its correlations with other constructs. Table 5 presents the analysis results obtained based on the Fornell and Larcker (1981) criteria.

According to the HTMT (Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio) criterion proposed by Henseler et al. (2015), the ratio between the average correlations of indicators across different constructs and the average correlations of indicators within the same construct is taken into consideration. In this approach, an HTMT value below 0.90 is recommended; for conceptually distinct constructs, the threshold is expected to be below 0.85. The HTMT values obtained in the study are presented in Table 6.

Table 5. Discriminant validity results between constructs (Fornell–Larcker criterion)

	Perceived Pleasure	Behavioral Intention	Coffee Shop Atmosphere
Perceived Pleasure	(0.720)		
Behavioral Intention	0.695	(0.777)	
Coffee Shop Atmosphere	0.661	0.421	(0.712)

The values in parentheses in Table 5 represent the square roots of the AVE. The findings indicate that the square root of the AVE for each construct exceeds its correlations with the other constructs, thereby demonstrating that discriminant validity is achieved.

Table 6. Discriminant validity results between constructs (HTMT criterion)

	Perceived Pleasure	Behavioral Intention	Coffee Shop Atmosphere
Perceived Pleasure			
Behavioral Intention	0.700		
Coffee Shop Atmosphere	0.654	0.421	

The HTMT coefficients reported in Table 6 are below the threshold values. Evaluated together with Table 5, these results show that the constructs examined in the study are sufficiently distinct from one another and that discriminant validity is confirmed.

4.4. Test of Hypotheses

For testing the proposed hypotheses, the resampling technique was employed. A total of 10,000 bootstrap subsamples were selected for the resampling procedure. The standardized path coefficients, p-values, and R^2 values of the tested model are presented in Figure 2.

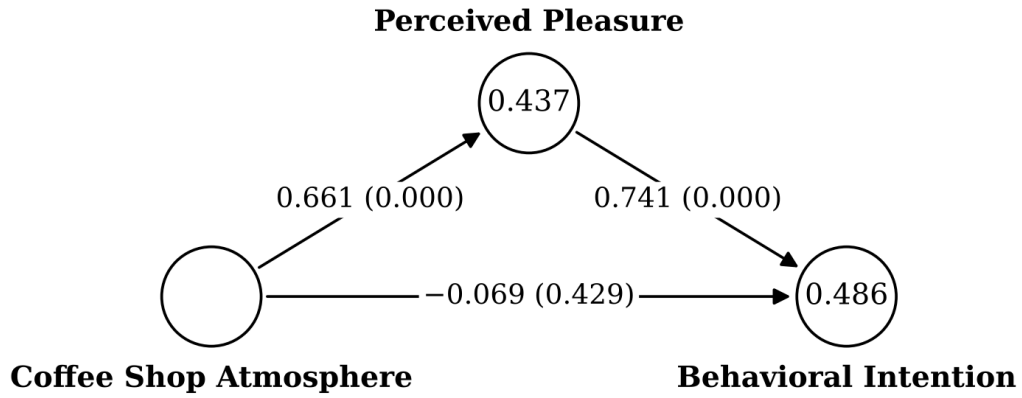


Figure 2. Structural equation model

Note: Values on the paths are standardised path coefficients with p-values in parentheses; values inside the circles are R^2.

The direct effects obtained from the testing of the structural model are presented in Table 7, and the indirect effects are shown in Table 8.

Table 7. Path analysis results for direct effects

Path	β	Standard deviation	t-value	p-value	Hypothesis result
Coffee Shop Atmosphere → Behavioral Intention (H1)	−0.069	0.088	0.790	0.429	Not supported
Perceived Pleasure → Behavioral Intention (H2)	0.741	0.086	8.655	0.000	Supported

According to the path analysis results presented in Table 7, the direct effect of coffee shop atmosphere on behavioral intention was not found to be statistically significant ($\beta = -0.069$; $p = 0.429$). This indicates that the H1 hypothesis proposed in the study is not supported. In contrast, the effect of perceived pleasure on behavioral intention is positive and statistically significant ($\beta = 0.741$; $p < 0.001$). This finding reveals that the level of pleasure students experience in coffee shops has a strong influence on their behavioral intention.

Table 8. Path analysis results for indirect effects

Path	β	Standard deviation	t-value	p-value	Hypothesis result
Coffee Shop Atmosphere → Perceived Pleasure → Behavioral Intention (H3)	0.490	0.079	6.243	0.000	Supported

According to the results presented in Table 8, the mediating role of perceived pleasure in the effect of coffee shop atmosphere on behavioral intention was found to be statistically significant ($\beta = 0.490$; $p < 0.001$). The standard deviation was calculated as 0.079, and the t-value as 6.243, indicating that the mediation effect is strong and significant. This finding reveals that although the coffee shop atmosphere does not have a significant direct effect on behavioral intention, it indirectly influences behavioral intention through the sense of pleasure it evokes in students. In other words, a positive atmosphere enhances the pleasure students derive from their time spent in the venue, and this feeling of pleasure strengthens their behavioral intentions, such as revisiting and recommending the coffee shop.

As stated by Zhao et al. (2010), if indirect effects are found to be statistically significant, the presence of a mediating effect is accepted. In this regard, the mediating effects obtained in the study were evaluated within the framework of the mediating effect decision tree proposed by Yıldız (2021). The analyses revealed that perceived price played a full mediating role in the relationship between physical environment quality and customer loyalty. As a result of the findings, the study's H3 hypothesis was supported.

5. Discussion and Conclusions

The purpose of this study is to reveal the effect of perceptions of coffee shop atmosphere on university students' behavioral intentions and to examine the mediating role of perceived enjoyment in this relationship. The findings from the research show that the coffee shop atmosphere does not have a direct significant effect on behavioral intention, but it creates a strong and significant effect on perceived enjoyment. However, it was determined that perceived enjoyment has a positive and significant effect on behavioral intention. The analyses revealed that the effect of the coffee shop atmosphere on behavioral intention occurs indirectly through perceived enjoyment, and that this mediating effect is statistically significant. Accordingly, it appears that students' behavioral tendencies, such as revisiting coffee shops or recommending them to others, are shaped more by the feeling of enjoyment created by the atmosphere than by their direct perception of the atmosphere.

The results obtained from this study are consistent with findings in the literature that suggest service environment elements influence consumer behavior not so much by directly affecting it, but rather by guiding it through emotional processes (Handriana et al., 2020; Prameswari et al., 2019; Tan et al., 2024). The fact that the coffee shop atmosphere does not have a direct significant effect on behavioral intention shows that students do not rely solely on their perception of the physical environment when choosing a place, but that the emotional satisfaction they derive from the experience is more decisive. In particular, the fact that perceived enjoyment is significantly influenced by the perception of atmosphere and strongly explains behavioral intention emphasizes the strategic importance of hedonic experiences in service marketing. In this context, the research findings indicate that coffee shop operators should focus not only on aesthetic design elements but also on factors that increase the enjoyment derived from the time spent in the space in order to increase customer loyalty and positive word-of-mouth communication.

The findings of the study show that emotional experiences play a central role in the coffee shop preferences and behavioral intentions of young consumer groups, particularly university students. This reveals that visual aesthetics or physical comfort alone are not sufficient in service environment design, and that enhancing the enjoyment consumers derive from their time spent in the space can strengthen loyalty and recommendation behaviors. Therefore, coffee shop operators can contribute to customers developing positive emotions by combining elements such as appropriate lighting, pleasant scents, harmonious music selection, and friendly service into a holistic atmosphere strategy. Such an approach will not only increase customer satisfaction but also provide a differentiation advantage in a highly competitive market. By examining the mediating role of perceived enjoyment in the relationship between coffee shop atmosphere and behavioral intention, this study also contributes to the literature on service marketing and consumer behavior. Thus, the study fills a gap in the literature by demonstrating that atmospheric elements should be evaluated not only in terms of aesthetics and functionality but also in terms of the emotional experience dimension.

This study has certain limitations. First, since the research is limited to data obtained from students at Kırklareli University, the generalizability of the findings may be restricted for different demographic groups or geographic

regions. The research model only includes certain variables (perceived coffee shop atmosphere, perceived enjoyment, and behavioral intention), while other possible influencing factors such as price, brand image, and service quality are not considered. Future research should use broader and more diverse samples from different universities or cities to examine the results comparatively. Furthermore, qualitative research methods (interviews, focus group studies, etc.) could be used to collect more in-depth data on students' coffee shop experiences. In conclusion, this research contributes significantly to the literature, both theoretically and practically, by examining the effect of coffee shop atmosphere on university students' behavioral intentions in the context of the mediating role of perceived enjoyment. The findings highlight the need to prioritize emotional experiences, particularly in service environment design, and provide strategic insights for businesses to enhance customer loyalty.

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Appendix 1. Items of the scales used in the questionnaire

Scale	Item Code	Items
Coffee Shop Atmosphere	CSA1	The coffee shop I usually prefer is clean.
	CSA2	The music played in the coffee shop I usually prefer is relaxing.
	CSA3	The scent of the coffee shop I usually prefer is pleasant.
	CSA4	The temperature of the coffee shop I usually prefer is appropriate.
Perceived Pleasure	PP1	Spending time in coffee shops is enjoyable.
	PP2	Spending time in coffee shops is interesting.
	PP3	Spending time in coffee shops is exciting.
Behavioral Intention	BI1	I plan to drink coffee at a coffee shop soon.
	BI2	I am considering increasing the frequency of drinking coffee at coffee shops in the future.
	BI3	I can recommend drinking coffee at coffee shops to my friends or others.