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Enhancing consumer purchasing behavior in café businesses through digital marketing capabilities: Insights from Northeastern, Thailand

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Abstract

This study conducted a comprehensive investigation of various digital marketing tactics that can significantly influence coffee shop patrons' purchase decisions in the Northeastern region of Thailand. Data were collected from 384 coffee shop customers, focusing on four key components: social media engagement priority, influencer marketing dynamics, brand awareness, and brand loyalty. The study examined both direct and indirect relationships among these factors using a standardized structured questionnaire. Structural equation modeling, performed with Jamovi software, was employed for data analysis. The results indicated that emphasizing social media and influencer marketing strategies notably enhanced brand visibility, which is essential for cafes aiming to foster long-term customer loyalty. These findings underscore the importance of implementing agile and engaging digital marketing strategies to establish enduring relationships between brands and consumers.

Keywords: Brand awareness, Brand loyalty, Digital marketing capabilities, Influencer marketing, Social media orientation.

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1. Introduction

In the contemporary digital epoch, advancements in technology have significantly influenced the lifestyles of individuals on a global scale. The integration of internet connectivity has emerged as a vital component of everyday

existence, reformulating modes of communication, professional practices, and educational endeavors [1]. The internet serves as a crucial mechanism in promoting the dissemination of information, thereby empowering consumers to readily access data pertaining to products and services while offering a diverse array of choices. This enhanced accessibility has markedly transformed consumer expectations and requirements, compelling enterprises to adapt expeditiously [2]. The swift transformations instigated by digitalization not only impact consumer conduct but also incite considerable changes across various business domains. Organizations must adjust their strategies and business frameworks to adapt to changing consumer preferences and navigate the intensifying competition in the digital marketplace [3]. Consumers are progressively gravitating toward online platforms to seek information, peruse reviews, and finalize purchasing decisions [4]. Social media networks, such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, have evolved into essential arenas for marketing and brand development, fostering enhanced customer engagement [5]. Furthermore, content marketing assumes a pivotal role in capturing consumer interest and establishing brand reliability by providing valuable, pertinent information specifically tailored to target demographics [6]. As we look at the landscape of digital marketing, it has truly risen to be an indispensable means for smoothly engaging and building rapport with consumers [7]. Within this framework, digital marketing competencies are indispensable for enterprises. These capabilities empower organizations to broaden their outreach, interact with audiences more adeptly, and improve sales efficacy through targeted and responsive marketing strategies. The cultivation of such competencies enables businesses to engage with consumers more proficiently and sustain competitiveness in the ever-evolving digital marketplaces.

Digital marketing capabilities denote an organization's proficiency in utilizing digital marketing instruments, including websites, social media platforms, and analytical tools, to augment customer engagement and fortify competitive advantage within the digital landscape [8]. These capabilities encompass a wide array of dimensions, including content creation, adept use of social media, email marketing strategies, and digital data interpretation [7]. Each component significantly impacts consumer perceptions and purchasing decisions, becoming a crucial factor in the success of food and beverage enterprises, especially cafés that must compete by attracting customers through online channels [9]. Comprehending the interplay between digital marketing capabilities and consumer purchasing behavior is imperative for formulating effective marketing strategies. This synergy has a direct bearing on business performance, especially within service industries, where consumer engagement is of paramount importance [10]. As consumers progressively depend on digital platforms for information, evaluations, and decision-making, enterprises must perpetually enhance their digital tools to cultivate brand recognition, entice customers, and encourage purchasing decisions [11]. Moreover, discerning the variables that affect purchasing decisions in the context of digital marketing enables cafés to tailor their offerings more adeptly to fulfill consumer demands [12]. Ultimately, digital marketing capabilities not only improve communication with customers but also fundamentally influence purchasing behavior, serving as a crucial element in propelling business success [13].

The investigator endeavors to explore the impact that digital marketing competencies exert on the purchasing behaviors of patrons in cafés, with a specific focus on the data accrued from a representative cohort of individuals residing in the Northeastern region of Thailand. In the framework of the coffee shop industry within this geographical locale, the aim of this inquiry is to analyze the mechanisms and extent to which digital marketing expertise influences consumer decision-making regarding café enterprises. We project that the outcomes will guide business leaders in crafting marketing strategies that better align with consumer demands, thereby increasing the overall value of the business. Furthermore, this study's findings could offer valuable insights for crafting contextually relevant marketing strategies, enabling café enterprises to navigate the complexities of the digital environment and achieve long-term success.

2. Literature Review and Research Hypotheses

This study investigates the impact of digital marketing capabilities on consumer purchasing behavior within the café business sector. To establish a solid foundation for the research, the authors have thoroughly reviewed relevant concepts, theories, and previous studies. These frameworks serve as guiding principles for the research design and methodology. We develop the conceptual framework for the study based on this comprehensive review.

2.1. Theories and Concepts Related to Digital Marketing Capabilities

2.1.1. Digital Marketing

Digital marketing holds a critical position within contemporary corporate strategy. Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick [7] define digital marketing as the use of technological resources to achieve marketing objectives. This notion bolsters Sawicki [14] assertion regarding the significance of digital platforms in consumer engagement. Kannan and Li [15] promote the use of big data analytics to improve marketing performance and define digital marketing as including both online and offline channels. Ryan [16] underscores the necessity of comprehending digital consumer behavior for the formulation of effective marketing strategies. The existing literature indicates that digital marketing is increasingly pivotal for fostering customer engagement and cultivating brand loyalty. Bala and Verma [17] demonstrate that digital marketing enhances consumer loyalty and strengthens connections. Veleva and Tsvetanova [18] highlight the advantages and disadvantages inherent in digital marketing. Technology possesses the capability to effectively target specific audiences; however, concerns regarding information security and privacy represent significant challenges. In the contemporary commercial landscape, consumers are increasingly demanding enhanced safety and transparency, thus underscoring the significance of these matters. Wind and Mahajan [19] predicted that digital technology would revolutionize the interactions between enterprises and consumers in the early 21st century. They posited that digital marketing could revolutionize organizational operations. This foresight has materialized, as digital marketing has become integral to the global interplay between consumers and corporate practices.

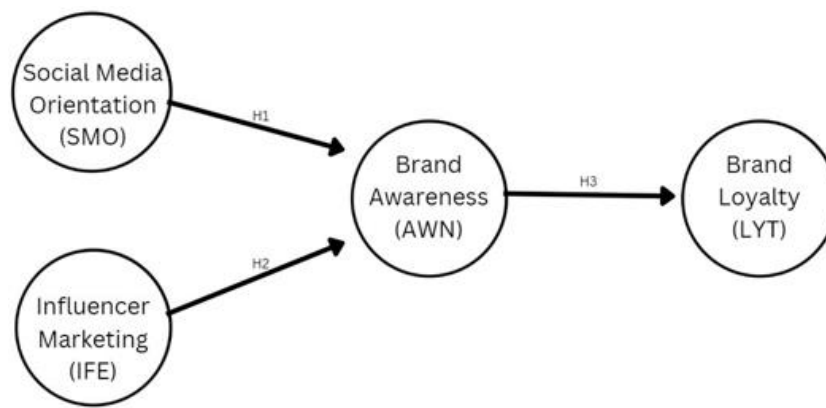


Figure 1.
Conceptual framework.

2.1.2. Marketing Capabilities

The acquisition of marketing skills has emerged as a predominant theme in scholarly investigations concerning the domains of marketing and strategic management. Morgan et al. [20] characterize marketing capabilities as an integrative framework that utilizes an organization's intellectual assets, competencies, and resources to meet market demands, generate consumer value, and successfully navigate market opportunities. Day [21] underscores the necessity of bridging deficiencies in marketing skills through the implementation of an "outside-in" approach, which prioritizes the understanding of market dynamics and the prompt adaptation to such changes. Merrilees et al. [22] conducted research on the impact of marketing skills on organizational performance in the digital era, specifically focusing on the interplay between marketing and innovation. Moreover, these authors underscore the importance of innovations in the marketing domain. Herhausen et al. [23] assert that the digital marketing capabilities held by organizations are insufficient, and they advocate for strategies to enhance these capabilities to mitigate the challenges posed by digital technologies. The possession of marketing skills, particularly in the realm of digital marketing, represents a critical determinant of a contemporary firm's success. This proficiency augments their marketing effectiveness, enhances competitiveness, and fosters adaptability to evolving organizational landscapes. Consequently, it is essential for organizations to partake in the ongoing refinement and advancement of their competencies to guarantee sustained competitiveness and viability.

2.1.3. Social Media Orientation and Influencer Marketing

Orientation of regard to social media: Social media orientation plays a crucial role in helping enterprises establish robust relationships with their clientele and promote the rapid and efficient dissemination of information about their products and services. Kaplan and Haenlein [24] assert that enterprises engaging in bidirectional communication with consumers on social media platforms can improve their brand visibility and customer satisfaction levels. Prior to making purchasing decisions, consumers typically consult social media platforms for product reviews and feedback from fellow individuals [25]. Therefore, social media platforms significantly affect consumers' purchasing decisions. Alves et al. [26] engaged in a detailed literature survey regarding social media marketing and adeptly recognized the considerable influence it exerts on consumer behavior and brand growth. With respect to enhancing customer engagement and facilitating interactive dialogue between organizations and consumers, Alalwan et al. [27] underscored the essential function that social media occupies in these domains. In addition to serving as a communication medium, social media also operates as a strategic instrument for relationship cultivation, the collection of vital consumer insights, and the augmentation of brand equity. Furthermore, to ensure a sustained meaningful impact over time, the effective implementation of social media requires meticulous planning, the creation of substantive content, and continuous performance assessment.

The phenomenon known as influencer marketing has, in recent years, emerged as an exceedingly vital and strategic approach within the expansive realm of contemporary digital marketing practices. As articulated by Brown and Hayes [28] the fundamental principle underpinning influencer marketing revolves around the identification and collaborative engagement with individuals who possess a considerable degree of influence over specified target audiences, thereby creating a more impactful marketing strategy. This particular methodology significantly enhances brand credibility and fosters consumer trust in a manner that surpasses the efficacy of traditional advertising techniques, primarily because consumers are more inclined to place their confidence in recommendations provided by individuals whom they admire and closely follow. Additionally, Leung et al. [29] provide an in-depth analysis of the significant and extensive impacts that influencer marketing has on brand awareness and consumer purchasing behavior, both of which are essential elements of consumer-brand interaction. Their research notably emphasizes the effectiveness of influencer marketing in shaping various stages of consumer decision-making processes, which encompass awareness, consideration of options, and ultimately the decision to make purchases. Jin et al. [30] conducted a thorough investigation on Instagram, one of the most extensively used platforms for influencer marketing. The results show that an influencer's credibility and perceived attractiveness significantly influence consumer perceptions and their intentions to engage in purchasing behavior. Influencers with directly relevant product expertise and appealing personal characteristics significantly influence their followers' purchasing decisions, underscoring the complex dynamics of this marketing strategy.

2.1.4. Content Marketing Creativity

The creativity inherent in content marketing constitutes a fundamental element of digital marketing frameworks. High-caliber, captivating content adeptly secures the attention of customers and cultivates significant interactions. Exceptional content not only creates a durable impact but also propels consumer engagement and incentivizes dissemination across social media platforms Pulizzi [31]. Du Plessis [32] identified creativity as a pivotal determinant that affects the efficacy of content marketing initiatives. This perspective is congruent with Lieb [33] who accentuated the necessity for enterprises to embrace a “publisher mindset” to generate content that is both valuable and appealing. Ho et al. [34] advanced a conceptual model for improving content marketing competencies, highlighting the necessity of merging creativity with corporate strategies. Content marketing creativity transcends the mere generation of engaging material. It necessitates a profound comprehension of the target demographic, the formulation of pertinent and valuable content, and its dissemination through suitable channels at opportune moments. Organizations aiming to succeed in the domain of digital marketing must emphasize continuous education, practice, and adaptation to the perpetually changing technological environment. This proficiency is essential for sustaining a competitive advantage in an increasingly dynamic digital environment.

2.2. Conceptual and Theoretical Framework of Brand Awareness

Brand awareness, an essential and critical component in the quest for marketing efficacy as well as the development of sustained brand loyalty among consumers, assumes a crucial function in this framework. Gustafson and Chabot [35] accurately define brand awareness as the ability of consumers to recognize and remember a specific brand, which significantly contributes to creating a lasting competitive advantage against market rivals. In their empirical research, Bernarto et al. [36] explored the complex interrelationship between brand awareness and a variety of other relevant factors, ultimately uncovering its positive impact on the facets of brand image, consumer trust, and brand loyalty. Bilgin's [37] study also demonstrated that the strategic implementation of social media marketing strategies positively influenced brand awareness, brand image perception, and the maintenance of consumer loyalty. Moreover, Tchelidze [38] emphasized the proposition that brand-centric activities executed on social media platforms are instrumental in shaping consumer awareness, particularly by enhancing brand recognition and encouraging increased consumer interaction with the brand. This specific investigation not only underscores the paramount significance of effectively utilizing social media platforms but also highlights the necessity of such engagement to enhance brand awareness in the contemporary digital environment that defines the present era. Strong consumer-brand relationships, which significantly influence consumer attitudes, trust levels, and subsequent purchasing behaviors, rely on robust brand awareness as their fundamental foundation. As a result, companies looking to forge a competitive position in the quickly evolving and dynamic market landscape of today must adopt a broad marketing strategy, especially one that takes advantage of the opportunities provided by digital and social media platforms.

2.3. Concept of Consumer Behavior

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) represents a crucial theoretical framework within the discipline of social psychology, formulated by Ajzen and Fishbein [39]. The fundamental aim of TPB is to clarify and predict human conduct across various contexts through the introduction of essential elements that affect decision-making mechanisms and subsequent behavioral results. The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) primarily discusses voluntary behaviors. The Theory of Perceived Behavioral Control (TPB), on the other hand, incorporates the idea that individuals might not always be in control of their actions. This integration significantly enhances the model's effectiveness in predicting behavior by considering not merely attitudes and subjective norms but also the individual's assessment of their capability to perform the behavior in question.

Key Components of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

- 1) **Intention:** This refers to a person's innate drive or preparedness to carry out a particular action. Because it represents the person's commitment to engaging in that action, it serves as the most reliable indicator of the likelihood that the behavior will materialize.
- 2) **Attitude toward the conduct:** This component captures a person's beliefs and feelings about the particular activity in question. The incentive to engage in the behavior is increased by positive attitudes, whilst it may be decreased by negative views. Attitudes are shaped by the expected advantages or repercussions of the conduct. Subjective standards, subjective norms refer to how a person perceives social pressures or expectations from significant individuals, including friends, family, or coworkers, on whether or not they should engage in a particular behavior. The intention of the individual to engage in the conduct can be greatly influenced by the endorsement or disapproval of these prominent figures.
- 3) **Subjective Norms:** People are aware of the expectations or social pressures placed on them by classmates, family, or coworkers to perform certain behaviors. The goals connected to the behavior in question might be greatly impacted by the endorsement or disapproval of these powerful individuals.
- 4) **Perceived Behavioral Control:** This element relates to the person's confidence in their capacity to regulate or control their actions. Higher levels of perceived behavioral control increase the likelihood that an individual will carry out the behavior, which affects both the intention and actual performance of the behavior. For instance, people are more inclined to engage in a behavior if they think they possess the requisite skills and resources.

Brand loyalty constitutes a well-entrenched notion within the field of marketing that has attracted scholarly attention for numerous decades. Guest [40] research played a pivotal role in demonstrating the significance of brand loyalty in consumer behavior. He found that people tend to buy from the same brand even when there are easy-to-find alternatives on

the market, which demonstrates their loyalty to the brand. Ishak and Abd Ghani [41] established a positive correlation between brand loyalty and customer loyalty, which in turn facilitates enhanced business performance via increased market share, diminished marketing expenditures, and elevated profitability. In a more contemporary context, Parris and Guzmán [42] conducted a review of the progression of research pertaining to brand equity, brand loyalty, and brand image, revealing that current expectations and the parameters of brand identity have undergone significant transformation in the contemporary market environment. Despite the advancements in the business and technological landscape, brand loyalty continues to be an indispensable concept within marketing discourse. Current scholarly investigations have expanded beyond the traditional emphasis on repetitive purchasing behavior to incorporate more intricate variables such as trust, perceived value, and the degree of consumer engagement with the brand. This extensive viewpoint encompasses the numerous challenges and opportunities that organizations face in their efforts to foster and maintain brand loyalty within the framework of the digital era.

2.4. Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Social media orientation has a positive effect on brand awareness.

Hypothesis 2: Influencer marketing has a positive effect on brand awareness.

Hypothesis 3: Brand awareness has a positive effect on brand loyalty.

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Population and Sample

The demographic for this investigation comprised consumers who frequent café establishments in the Northeastern region of Thailand. Researchers used Cochran's formula for sample size estimation due to the uncertainty surrounding the precise population size. This statistical formula presupposes a 95% confidence interval and a 5% margin of error [43], culminating in a requisite minimum sample size of 384 participants. To enhance data analysis and guarantee adequate representation, the researcher augmented the sample size to 400 participants.

3.2. Research Instruments

The study employed a structured questionnaire to gather data on the impact of digital marketing capabilities on consumer purchasing behavior within the café sector. The questionnaire was systematically divided into four distinct sections. The first section collected fundamental demographic data, including variables such as gender, age, educational attainment, monthly income, frequency of café patronage, and geographical location, comprising six questions that required respondents to select the most relevant responses. The second section included eight questions focusing on social media engagement (three questions) and influencer marketing strategies (five questions). The third section assessed brand awareness through three targeted questions, while the fourth section examined brand loyalty with five specific inquiries. All responses were recorded using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). A preliminary assessment was conducted with 50 café consumers from Northeastern Thailand to verify the instrument's reliability. The analysis yielded a Cronbach's alpha coefficient exceeding 0.70, indicating strong internal consistency [44], thereby supporting the approval of the questionnaire for the main data collection phase. This study utilizes Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to examine direct relationships between variables and to empirically validate the conceptual model. SEM allows for the simultaneous analysis of latent constructs and observed indicators, enabling a comprehensive understanding of behavioral patterns in digital marketing environments.

3.3. Data Collection

This study employed a convenience sampling technique to gather data from the designated sample population. Researchers collected data from café patrons in the northeastern region of Thailand by asking them to complete a questionnaire via Google Forms and continued collecting data until reaching the predetermined sample size of 400 participants. The researcher recognizes the inherent limitations associated with this sampling methodology and will meticulously consider these constraints when analyzing and referencing the research outcomes.

4. Research Results and Discussion

4.1. Research Findings

Most respondents were female (54.7%), with 34.8% aged between 21 and 30 years, followed by 19.8% aged 31 to 40 years. In terms of education level, 51.5% held a bachelor's degree, followed by 37.5% with education below the bachelor's level. Regarding monthly income, 25.5% earned less than 10,000 baht, followed by 22.8% earning between 15,001 and 20,000 baht. The frequency of café visits was predominantly 1-3 times per week (67.3%), with another 19.7% visiting 4-7 times per week. Geographically, 36.9% of respondents were from the Lower Northeastern region, followed by 32.3% from the Upper Northeastern region.

Table 1.

Variables and Measurement Items.

Variables	ITEM	Factor loading	Cronbach's Alpha	AVE
Social Media Orientation (SMO)	SMO1	0.648	0.75	0.527
	SMO2	0.703		
	SMO3	0.821		
Influencer Marketing (IFE)	IFE1	0.668	0.862	0.561
	IFE2	0.761		
	IFE3	0.868		
	IFE4	0.891		
	IFE5	0.549		
Brand Awareness (AWN)	AWN1	0.64	0.808	0.505
	AWN2	0.723		
	AWN3	0.763		
Brand Loyalty (LYT)	LYT1	0.646	0.808	0.505
	LYT2	0.671		
	LYT3	0.686		
	LYT4	0.637		
	LYT5	0.803		

Note: AVE = Average Variance Extraction. All factor loadings and AVE were significant at $p < 0.01$.

Table 1 shows that the observed variables influence the latent variables, ranging from 0.549 to 0.891. This is greater than the minimum threshold of 0.40 [45], which means that the model is statistically valid. In addition, the assessed Cronbach's Alpha coefficients surpass 0.70 [44], denoting an acceptable standard of reliability. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values range from 0.505 to 0.561, thus exceeding the established minimum criterion of 0.50 [46]. Such findings suggest that the model maintains adequate convergent validity.

Table 2.

Descriptive Statistics.

Variables	\bar{x}	S.D.	SMO	IFE	AWN	LYT
Social Media Orientation (SMO)	3.710	0.788	1			
Influencer Marketing (IFE)	3.369	0.918	0.436**	1		
Brand Awareness (AWN)	3.835	0.650	0.283**	0.419**	1	
Brand Loyalty (LYT)	3.695	0.698	0.445**	0.357**	**126.0	1

Note: ** $p < 0.050$.

Based on Table 2, the findings indicate that the level of perception toward the brand was high ($\bar{x} = 3.835$, $SD = 0.650$), followed by brand loyalty ($\bar{x} = 3.695$, $SD = 0.698$). The next highest score was observed for social media focus ($\bar{x} = 3.710$, $SD = 0.788$). Lastly, influencer marketing received a moderate level of perception ($\bar{x} = 3.369$, $SD = 0.918$).

The analysis of the relationship regarding the focus on social media, influencer marketing, and brand perception, as illustrated in Table 2 demonstrates correlation coefficients that range from 0.283 to 0.436, all of which remain below the threshold of 0.8. This finding signifies the absence of multicollinearity [44], thereby permitting the dataset to advance to subsequent analyses utilizing Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). Moreover, the investigation into the association of the independent variables with the dependent variable, brand loyalty, underscores a noteworthy positive relationship.

4.2. Evaluation and Hypothesis Testing

Table 3 reveals the outcomes obtained from the structural equation model (SEM) analysis, signifying that the model presents an adequate fit. The documented CMIN/DF ratio is 2.636, below the predefined threshold of 3.00 [47]. The CFI value is 0.942, surpassing the crucial minimum criterion of 0.900 [48]. An RMSEA value of 0.064, falling below the acceptable limit of 0.080 [49]. The TLI value is presented at 0.921, surpassing the necessary minimum of 0.900 [50]. Furthermore, the SMAR value is observed to be 0.050, which is inferior to the established benchmark of 0.080 [51]. All these results suggest that the structural equation model is a good fit, which facilitates testing and analyzing all the hypotheses that have been proposed. Table 4 details the establishment of the significance level at 0.05.

Table 3.

The result of the Model Fit of the Structural Equation Model.

Goodness of fit	Recommended Values	Result
CMIN/DF	1.0 - 3.0 (46)	2.636
CFI	≥ 0.900 (47)	0.942
RMSEA	≤ 0.080 (50)	0.064
TLI	≥ 0.900 (48)	0.921
SMAR	≤ 0.080 (49)	0.050

Every goodness-of-fit index represents a distinct facet of model fit: residual error is measured by RMSEA and SRMR, model improvement over null is assessed by CFI and TLI, and parsimony is reflected by CMIN/DF. The values obtained indicate that the suggested model meets the criteria suggested by Hu and Bentler [51] and matches the observed data well.

Table 4.
Results of Estimation Structural Model.

Hypothesis	Path from		Path to	Estimate	S.E.	β	z	p-value
1	Social Media Orientation	----->	Brand Awareness	0.188	0.0511	0.288	3.69	0.001**
2	Influencer Marketing	----->	Brand Awareness	0.197	0.0441	0.405	4.47	**0.001
3	Brand Awareness	----->	Brand Loyalty	1.099	0.2374	0.838	4.63	**0.001

Note: ** p < 0.050.

Table 5.
Summary of the hypothesis testing results.

Hypothesis	Results	
	Accept	Reject
H1: Social media orientation has a positive effect on brand awareness.	✓	
H2: Influencer marketing has a positive effect on brand awareness.	✓	
H3: Brand awareness positively influences brand loyalty.	✓	

4.3. Results of the Structural Equation Model

From Figure 2, SEM can be analyzed to test the hypotheses, with the following details:

4.3.1 The focus on social media and influencer marketing positively impacts brand perception. The beta coefficient results indicate that influencer marketing has a stronger effect on brand perception (Beta = 0.405, p-value = 0.001) compared to the focus on social media (Beta = 0.288, p-value = 0.001).

4.3.2 Brand perception positively influences brand loyalty. According to the beta coefficient results, brand perception significantly impacts brand loyalty (Beta = 0.838, p-value = 0.001).

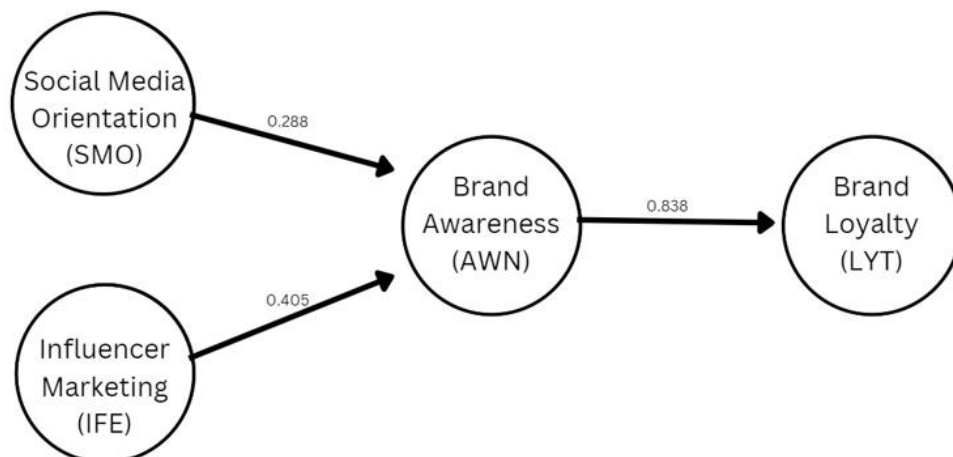


Figure 2.
Results of the Structural Equation Model.

4.4. Discussion

The study of the influence of digital marketing capabilities on consumer purchasing behavior in the café business revealed the following insights:

The examination of social media and its impact on brand recognition. Social media serves an integral function in the enhancement of brand recognition and the construction of brand image from the viewpoint of consumers. Engagement through these platforms allows brands to extend their reach to target demographics more extensively and swiftly, thereby promoting increased interaction between consumers and the brand. This observation is consistent with the findings of Kaplan and Haenlein [24], which propose that social media utilization promotes bidirectional communication between enterprises and clients, thereby yielding beneficial outcomes for both brand recognition and consumer satisfaction.

Research evidence demonstrates that influencer marketing significantly impacts brand perception, as influencers play a crucial role in shaping brand image and consumer awareness. Influencers often hold a prominent position in the digital landscape, and their endorsement of products or services enhances a brand's ability to effectively engage target demographics and increases their credibility. This observation aligns with the findings presented by Leung et al. [29], which emphasize that this strategic method substantially influences brand awareness and consumer purchasing behavior, particularly in relation to the awareness, consideration, and decision-making stages of the purchasing process.

The research's empirical evidence reveals that brand perception, a critical determinant that directly influences consumer loyalty, significantly affects brand loyalty. It encapsulates the way consumers discern and appraise the brand

based on personal encounters, promotional materials, evaluations from peers, or various other communicative media. These elements are instrumental in the development of brand identity and cognitive retention. Bernarto et al. [36] conducted an investigation that confirms the positive correlation between brand perception and ancillary factors with brand image, brand trust, and brand loyalty. In a similar vein, Bilgin [37] established that activities related to social media marketing exert a favorable influence on brand perception, brand image, and brand loyalty.

Findings show that the role of digital platforms in building brand connections transcends context, although this research is restricted to the Northeastern area of Thailand. The approach presented here may be used for cross-cultural comparisons, particularly in ASEAN markets [52].

5. Contributions and Recommendations

5.1. Contributions

The outcomes of this investigation will furnish a more profound understanding of consumer behavior within the context of the digital age, thereby enabling café enterprises to formulate marketing strategies that are not only effective in the immediate term but also adaptable for long-term sustainability. By capitalizing on these insights, enterprises can continually refine their strategies to align with the shifting preferences of customers, thereby driving enduring improvements in sales and market share. Furthermore, the findings will inform the creation of products and services specifically designed to meet consumer demands, thereby enhancing competitiveness and promoting long-term organizational resilience. From an academic standpoint, this inquiry presents significant contributions, functioning as a foundational reference for subsequent research on digital marketing in the food and beverage sector while facilitating the ongoing development of strategic frameworks for industry practitioners.

5.2. Recommendations for Future Research

In order to get a more complete picture of which digital communication channels have the most significant effect on people's buying habits in cafes, future research should look into a wider range of channels, such as different social media platforms, websites, mobile apps, and new food delivery services. Also, using longitudinal research projects could help effectively record and understand how consumer tastes change over long periods of time. This is especially true now that new technologies like AI-driven suggestions and interactive digital menus are slowly making their way into the market. The insights and knowledge derived from these meticulous investigations will not only serve to enrich academic discourse significantly but will also yield practical benefits, as they will aid cafes in fine-tuning their marketing strategies, personalizing customer interactions more effectively, and judiciously allocating resources, thereby fostering sustainable growth and enhancing long-term competitiveness in an ever-evolving and dynamic marketplace.

5.3. Practical applications in Real World Café Marketing

The study provides useful information for independent cafés and SMEs in emerging economies like Thailand. Café entrepreneurs may increase their exposure at a reasonable cost and build deeper relationships between brands and customers by prioritizing social media strategies and collaborations with local influencers. Additionally, managers who want to deploy their digital marketing resources more efficiently may use the proven SEM model as a decision-making tool.

6. Limitations

This academic inquiry is characterized by a number of intrinsic limitations that must be acknowledged. Primarily, it employed a convenience sampling strategy, which inherently restricts the extent to which the findings can be generalized beyond the specific cohort of café patrons surveyed in the Northeastern region of Thailand, thereby potentially limiting the broader applicability of these results to other demographic segments. Furthermore, the research's concentrated geographical focus inherently narrows the relevance of the findings when evaluating other locations that may exhibit significantly different consumer behaviors and preferences. In addition to these concerns, the study prioritized social media interaction, influencer marketing tactics, and food delivery services, while regrettably overlooking emerging digital marketing tools such as AI-driven chatbots and augmented reality innovations, which could provide a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the digital marketing landscape. The choice of a cross-sectional design as a research method is particularly significant because it examines consumer behavior at a single point in time. This approach limits the depth of insights regarding changes or trends that may occur over a longer period. Moreover, reliance on self-reported surveys as the primary data collection method introduces potential biases, including social desirability bias, which may significantly affect the accuracy and reliability of the data collected.

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