
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Social Media Review and Its Effect on Customer Purchase Decision in Selected Coffee Shops

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| ABSTRACT

Social media has significantly shaped consumer decision-making across various industries, including coffee shops. In Cagayan de Oro City, the rise of coffee culture parallels consumers' increasing reliance on online reviews. These reviews, characterized by content, source credibility, format, and platform, serve as forms of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) that influence perceptions and purchase intentions. This study examined the impact of social media reviews on consumer purchase decisions while considering demographic variables such as age, gender, civil status, and income. A descriptive-correlational research design was utilized, involving a survey of 156 randomly selected customers from three coffee shops near Limketkai Mall. A structured and expert-validated questionnaire measured the perceived influence of social media reviews and customer purchasing behavior using a 4-point Likert scale. Data were analyzed through descriptive and inferential statistics, including t-tests, ANOVA, and Pearson correlation. Results showed a high level of influence from social media reviews (mean = 3.19) and a high level of purchase decision-making (mean = 3.24). However, the Pearson correlation revealed only a weak positive relationship ($r = 0.37941$, $p > 0.05$), indicating no statistically significant effect between the two variables. Demographic analysis revealed that age and civil status significantly affected trust in social media reviews, while gender and income had no significant influence. Among the dimensions of eWOM, the content and format of reviews, particularly those with visuals and emotional tone, were found to have a stronger impact, especially among young adult females. Despite the influence of online reviews on consumer perception, factors such as in-store experience, product quality, and personal word-of-mouth remained the primary determinants of purchase decisions. The study concludes that while social media reviews enhance visibility and shape perceptions, they are not the dominant factor in final purchasing choices. Coffee shop owners should integrate social media strategies with high service quality, experiential marketing, and personalized customer engagement. Future research should further explore sensory and experiential factors and long-term brand interactions influencing coffee shop consumer behavior.

| KEYWORDS

Social media reviews, customer purchase decisions, consumer behavior, customer perceptions.

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

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1. Introduction

Digital technologies' quick development has changed how customers communicate with companies and make decision about what to buy. Social media is one of the most powerful of these online platforms. Social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok have become essential in influencing how consumers view products

because they provide a platform for users to share their opinions and offer suggestions in the form of online reviews. Social media encourages user-generated content, which serves as a more genuine and convincing communication medium than traditional advertising, which is company-driven. Electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), a phenomenon where consumers base their own decisions on the digital experiences of others, is a result of this trend, according to marketing scholars.

Social media use is especially widespread in the Philippines. According to data, Filipinos spend one of the highest amounts of time on social media platforms on a daily average worldwide. This consistent online presence has created a marketplace where customer opinions spread swiftly and extensively. This implies that for companies, online reviews have the ability to improve brand recognition, increase visibility, or, in the event of unfavourable feedback, undermine customer trust. Reviews serve as indicators of reliability and quality for consumers, who frequently use them to determine whether a product or service is worthwhile. Impact is particularly noticeable in sectors like restaurants and coffee shops that mainly rely on experience-based consumption, where it is impossible to fully assess ambiance and service without firsthand observation.

In recent years, Cagayan de Oro City, a rapidly growing urban center in Northern Mindanao, has experienced a surge in coffee culture. Specialty coffee shops such as Coffee Project, Figaro Coffee, and Milestone Coffee have become popular not only as places to consume beverages but also as spaces for socialization, remote work, and lifestyle expression. The rise of "third-wave coffee" culture has made coffee consumption a lifestyle choice, prompting businesses to compete not just on product quality but also on branding, customer service, and digital presence. In this competitive market, social media reviews play a pivotal role, as potential customers often consult online platforms before deciding which coffee shop to visit. The abundance of choices makes it necessary for consumers to rely on digital cues—reviews, ratings, and multimedia content—to reduce uncertainty and make more informed decisions.

Theoretically, this study is grounded in Social Proof Theory (Cialdini 1984), which explains that people tend to model their behavior on the actions and opinions of others, especially in uncertain or ambiguous situations. Applied to consumer behavior, social proof theory manifests when individuals read online reviews and interpret them as guidance for their own choices. A highly rated coffee shop with numerous positive reviews signals to prospective customers that it is worth visiting, whereas negative reviews may create doubt and hesitation. This process demonstrates how collective behavior in the digital sphere shapes individual decision-making.

The study is also anchored in the concept of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), which extends the traditional idea of word-of-mouth into online contexts. Originally defined by Brooks (1957) as face-to-face, noncommercial exchanges of information, word-of-mouth has evolved into a far-reaching mechanism in the digital age. As Erkan (2016) emphasized, eWOM is more powerful than traditional forms due to its amplified persistence, accessibility, and multimedia capacity. Consumers are no longer limited to recommendations from friends and family but are now exposed to reviews from a broad range of individuals, influencers, and communities. This increased exposure enhances the perceived credibility of reviews, although it also raises challenges concerning authenticity and trustworthiness.

Despite the acknowledged influence of social media reviews, their actual impact on purchase decisions remains debated. Some studies highlight a strong correlation between reviews and consumer actions, suggesting that positive feedback increases sales and customer loyalty. Others, however, point out that offline factors, such as service quality, product excellence, and overall in-store experience, remain more decisive in shaping final choices. For example, Fernandes et al. (2022) argued that while reviews are useful in forming an initial impression, consumers ultimately base their loyalty on lived experiences. This inconsistency in findings creates a research gap, especially in local contexts like Cagayan de Oro City, where cultural practices, economic conditions, and lifestyle differences may influence how consumers interpret and act upon online reviews. Moreover, demographic characteristics may play a moderating role in the reliance on social media reviews. Younger consumers, who are generally more digitally literate, are more likely to value multimedia content such as photographs, videos, and

emotional tone in reviews. Older consumers, on the other hand, may prioritize credibility and balance in written feedback, often relying less on digital cues and more on word-of-mouth from personal contacts. Gender, civil status, and income levels may also shape consumer perceptions of online reviews, with some groups being more responsive to digital marketing strategies than others. Understanding these differences is crucial for businesses seeking to design targeted marketing campaigns that resonate with diverse customer segments.

This study seeks to address these gaps by exploring the effects of social media reviews on customers' purchase decisions in selected coffee shops in Cagayan de Oro City. It specifically examines how different aspects of reviews—content, source, format, and platform—influence decision-making, and whether demographic profiles moderate this relationship. By analyzing these factors, the study aims to provide a clearer picture of the role reviews play in guiding consumer behavior in the local coffee market.

The research carries significant practical and academic implications. For coffee shop owners and managers, understanding the influence of reviews offers guidance in formulating marketing strategies that balance online reputation management with offline service excellence. Businesses can benefit from encouraging authentic, visually engaging, and detailed customer reviews while simultaneously improving service quality to ensure consistency between online impressions and actual experiences. For consumers, the findings shed light on how reviews can be interpreted critically and used as reliable tools in decision-making. Academically, the study contributes to the growing literature on digital consumer behavior in the Philippine context, where research on localized consumer markets remains limited.

Ultimately, this study highlights the interplay between online perceptions and offline realities in shaping customer purchase decisions. While social media reviews undoubtedly enhance visibility and brand reputation, they must be understood as part of a broader ecosystem of factors that influence consumer choices. By situating the research within the cultural and economic landscape of Cagayan de Oro City, the study emphasizes the need for businesses to adopt holistic approaches that integrate digital strategies with authentic customer engagement. In an increasingly competitive coffee industry, such insights are essential not only for attracting new customers but also for building lasting trust and loyalty.

1.1 Research Questions

This study aims to evaluate purchase decisions in terms of perceived trustworthiness, review sentiment, and review volume; determine the demographic profile of customers in terms of age, sex, civil status, and monthly income; determine the relationship between social media reviews and customer purchase decisions; and make recommendations that coffee shop owners can use to maximize social media reviews to increase customer purchase decisions.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to examine the effect of social media reviews on customers' purchase decisions in selected coffee shops in Cagayan de Oro City. It aims to analyze how different elements of reviews—such as content, source, format, and platform—influence consumer behavior and decision-making. The study also seeks to determine whether demographic factors like age, gender, civil status, and income affect the extent to which customers rely on these reviews when choosing coffee shops. By doing so, the research intends to provide valuable insights for coffee shop owners to refine their marketing strategies, strengthen customer engagement, and develop approaches that align with consumer preferences and online behaviors. Ultimately, the study explores how electronic word-of-mouth through social media can shape purchasing decisions, and how businesses can use this tool alongside quality service and customer experience to foster trust, loyalty, and competitiveness in the local market.

1.3 Significance

The study would benefit various stakeholders, including coffee shop owners, customers, researchers, future researchers, and the local community, by providing a deeper understanding of how social media reviews influence customers' purchase decisions in coffee shops in Cagayan de Oro City. For coffee shop owners, the findings can

guide them in refining marketing strategies, targeting specific customer groups, and strengthening their online presence, while also enabling them to focus on customer satisfaction, address negative feedback promptly, and enhance service quality for improved loyalty and competitiveness. Customers, on the other hand, can make more informed choices by relying on reviews that reflect the actual experiences and preferences of others. Researchers may gain valuable data on consumer behavior, social media influence, and trends in the food and beverage industry, contributing to theory development and practical applications. Future researchers can use this study as a reference for exploring related topics, while the local community may benefit from the economic growth driven by improved customer satisfaction, stronger local businesses, increased tourism, and an overall uplift in the quality of life in the city.

2. Methods

2.1 Research Design

The study employed a descriptive correlational research design, which served as a scientific guide for empirical research by explaining the relationship between two or more variables without assuming cause-and-effect. This design involved collecting and analyzing data to provide a full account of how the variables relate, specifically focusing on social media reviews and their effects on customer purchase decisions in selected coffee shops in Cagayan de Oro City. The methodology included identifying the research problem, conducting a literature review, and applying appropriate data analysis methods such as frequency distributions, percentage distributions, and standard deviations to ensure valid results, with an emphasis on continuous statistics and interval measurements for deeper insights. Respondents were selected from a larger population using proper sampling methods, and the importance of normality in hypothesis testing was considered. Various statistical techniques relevant to descriptive correlational studies were applied, while ethical guidelines and professional standards were strictly observed throughout the process to ensure the study's accuracy, reliability, and scientific soundness.

2.2 Participants and Sampling Method

The respondents of this study were the 156 average number of daily customers in the totality of 3 selected coffee shops, as identified as Coffee Shop A, Coffee Shop B, and Coffee Shop C, located in Cagayan de Oro City. Respondents used Slovin's formula. These respondents, who were regular customers of the different coffee shops, were the primary source of data concerning the effect of social media reviews on customer purchase decisions in selected coffee shops in Cagayan de Oro City.

Inclusion criteria included:

- (1) Customers went there just to take in the atmosphere and engage in conversation with friends.
- (2) Coffee lovers who had a very specific idea of what they wanted.
- (3) Others simply required something delightful and sweet.

These customers were selected as they use social media reviews in their customer purchase decisions.

2.3 Research Instrument

Data were gathered using a **structured questionnaire** with two main sections:

Part I: contained items pertaining to the demographic profile of the respondents as to age, sex, civil status, and monthly income.

Part II. Covered questions relating to the assessment of the influence of social media reviews and its effects on customer purchase decisions were adapted from Alfira et al. (2024), which was modified to suit the variables of the present study. The researcher sought permission.

2.4 Data Gathering Procedure

The researchers sought the approval of the different managers of selected coffee shops to formally inform them regarding the intention to conduct a survey and, consequently, the inclusion of the selected customers as respondents of the study. The aforementioned letter was supported by the endorsement of the Research Adviser.

2.5 Ethical Consideration

The study ensured ethical compliance by:

- Securing informed consent from participants,
- Guaranteeing **anonymity** and **confidentiality** of responses,
- Allowing voluntary participation with the option to withdraw at any time.

2.6 Data Analysis

Collected data were encoded and analyzed using **SPSS software**. The following statistical tools were used:

- **Descriptive statistics:** Frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation to describe the demographic profile and assess responses.
- **Pearson r:** To examine the relationship between the social media reviews and customers' purchase decisions.
- **T-test and ANOVA:** To determine significant differences based on demographic profiles.
- Responses were quantified using a **four-point Likert scale**, interpreted as follows:

Scale	Range of Means	Response	Interpretation
4	3.26 - 4.00	Strongly Agree	Very high social media review
3	2.51 – 3.25	Agree	High social media review
2	1.76 - 2.50	Disagree	Poor social media review
1	1.00 – 1.75	Strongly Disagree	Very poor social media review

3. Results

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents

Profile	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Sex		
Male	58	37
Female	98	63
Age		
Below 20 years old	16	10
20-25 years old	47	30
26-30 years old	32	21
31-35 years old	25	16
Above 36 years old	36	23
Civil Status		
Single	102	65
Married	50	32
Widow	3	2
Separated	1	1
Monthly Income		
Php10,000 and below	30	19
Php10,001 – 15,000.00	19	13
Php15,001 – 20,000.00	35	22
Php20,001 – 25,000.00	35	22
Php25,001 and above	37	24

Table 2. Summary of Mean Distribution of Respondents' Assessment of Social Media Review
Social Media Review was evaluated in four domains: **content, sources, format, and platform**

Question	Mean (M)	Std. Deviation	Description	Interpretation
Content	3.4	0.60	Strongly Agree	Very high social media review
Sources	2.98	0.78	Agree	High social media review
Format	3.47	0.65	Strongly Agree	Very high social media review
Platform	2.92	0.81	Agree	High social media review
Average	3.19	0.71	Agree	High social media review

Table 3. Summary of Mean Distribution of Respondents' Assessment of Customer Purchase Decision

Question	Mean (M)	Std. Deviation	Description	Interpretation
Perceived trustworthiness of reviews	3.04	0.73	Agree	High customer purchase decision
Review Sentiments	3.36	0.67	Strongly Agree	Very high customer purchase decision
Review Volume	3.31	0.69	Strongly Agree	Very high customer purchase decision
Average	3.24	0.70	Agree	High customer purchase decision

Table 4. Significance Difference on the Effects of Social Media Reviews on Customers’ Purchase Decision when the Respondent Group According to their Profile

Profile	Customer Purchase Decision					
	Perceived Trustworthiness of reviews		Review Sentiment		Review Volume	
	p-value	Decision on H0	p-value	Decision on H0	p-value	Decision on H0
Sex	>0.05	Accept	>0.05	Accept	>0.05	Accept
Age	<0.05	Reject	<0.05	Reject	<0.05	Reject
Civil Status	<0.05	Reject	>0.05	Accept	>0.05	Accept
Average Monthly Income	>0.05	Accept	>0.05	Accept	>0.05	Accept

Table 5. Significant Relationship between Social Media Review and Customer Purchase Decisions

Variable	CUSTOMER PURCHASE DECISION	
	r	P
Social Media Review	0.37941	>0.05
Strength	Weak	
Interpretation	Not Significant	

4. Discussion

The study found that social media reviews hold a generally high level of influence on customers’ perceptions, as shown by the overall mean of 3.19. Respondents particularly valued review sentiment and review volume, which were both rated as “very high,” suggesting that customers are more likely to be persuaded by the emotional tone and the quantity of reviews available online. This highlights the role of social proof, where customers perceive a business as more credible when there is a significant number of consistent and emotionally engaging reviews. Despite this, the results showed only a weak positive correlation between social media reviews and actual purchase decisions ($r = 0.37941$, $p > 0.05$), implying that while social media reviews shape attitudes, they do not necessarily convert into factors such as product quality, ambiance, and personal recommendations, which are central to the coffee shop experience. Additionally, the demographic profile analysis revealed that age and civil status significantly influenced trust in reviews, whereas sex and income did not, indicating that certain customer groups process online information differently.

4.1 Interpretation of Results

The findings suggest that social media reviews primarily function as a tool for awareness and perception-building rather than a direct determinant of consumer action. The weak correlation between reviews and purchase decision implies that reviews may serve as an initial filter for options, but are not sufficient to finalize purchasing intent. This

interpretation is reinforced by the observation that respondents' trust levels in reviews were rated only as "high" and not "very high," meaning there remains a degree of skepticism in online feedback. The stronger influence of review sentiment and review volume suggests that customers prefer platforms where they can access not only more reviews but also ones that convey rich, emotional, and experience-based content. This supports the idea that consumers are looking for reassurance and validation before engaging in a purchase, yet their ultimate decision is grounded in personal experience and physical interaction with the coffee shop.

4.2 Comparison with Existing Literature

These findings are consistent with prior research emphasizing the role of social media reviews as a source of social proof but not as the sole determinant of purchase decisions. For instance, Erkan & Evans (2016) and Liu et al. (2020) highlighted the role of eWOM in shaping perceptions and attitudes, which aligns with this study's finding of a high mean score for reviews' influence. Similarly, Filieri et al. (2021) and Leong et al. (2021) asserted that review volume increases consumer trust, which matches this study's results. However, the weak correlation between social media reviews and purchase differs from Fernandes et al. (2022) and Garcia & Ramos (2021), who reported stronger effects of online reviews on buying behavior. This discrepancy may be attributed to contextual differences, as coffee shop purchases are often driven by sensory factors and in-person experiences, which cannot be fully captured online. The present findings therefore refine existing literature by suggesting that in service-oriented industries, digital reviews act as enhancers rather than primary motivators of purchase decisions.

5. Conclusion and Implications of the Findings

The study offers practical implications for coffee shop owners and marketers. While social media reviews should continue to be encouraged to boost visibility, they must be complemented by excellent service delivery, unique in-store experiences, and consistent product quality to influence actual purchase behavior. Marketing strategies could focus on encouraging customers to post detailed and visually engaging reviews to maximize the effect of review sentiment and format. For theory, the findings contribute to the understanding of eWOM by emphasizing its supportive role rather than its determinative power in purchase decisions, particularly for experiential products like coffee. Future research can explore integrating online engagement strategies with sensory marketing and customer loyalty programs to strengthen the conversion from online interest to actual purchase.

5.1 Limitations

The study analyzed how social media reviews affect consumer purchase decisions, considering the impact of digital platforms on modern consumer behavior. The research explored the relationship between online reviews and customers' purchase decisions to offer insights into changing consumer trends. The data collection selected three coffee shops randomly in Cagayan de Oro City, specifically around the Limketkai Mall, as representative samples, and also considering the same level of services, coffee prices, and online engagement. The coffee shops were namely Coffee Project, Figaro Coffee, and Milestone Coffee. The research aimed to understand local factors that might influence consumer purchase decisions in a targeted way.

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