
Social Media Influence, Brand Image, and Customer Experience: The Moderating Role of Digital Marketing in Coffee Shops

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Abstract. The proliferation of coffee shops in Purwodadi District, Grobogan Regency has become a significant social and economic phenomenon. Business owners increasingly rely on social media and brand image to attract consumers. This study applied a quantitative descriptive approach. Data were collected through questionnaires using a Likert scale of 1–5 and analyzed using Moderated Regression Analysis (MRA) with SPSS version 25. The sample consisted of 100 respondents selected using the Slovin formula. The findings show that Social Media Influence and Brand Image have a positive and significant effect on Customer Experience. Digital Marketing significantly moderates the relationship between Social Media Influence and Customer Experience, as well as between Brand Image and Customer Experience. These results imply that improving Social Media Influence and Brand Image can significantly enhance Customer Experience at coffee shops in Purwodadi, and Digital Marketing plays a key role in strengthening these relationships.

Keywords: Brand Image, Coffee Shop, Customer Experience, Digital Marketing, Social Media Influence.

Abstrak. Menjamurnya coffee shop di Kecamatan Purwodadi, Kabupaten Grobogan merupakan fenomena sosial dan ekonomi yang signifikan. Pelaku usaha semakin mengandalkan media sosial dan brand image untuk menarik konsumen. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif deskriptif. Pengumpulan data melalui kuesioner berskala Likert 1–5 dan analisis menggunakan Moderated Regression Analysis (MRA) dengan bantuan SPSS versi 25. Sampel sebanyak 100 responden dipilih menggunakan rumus Slovin. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa Social Media Influence dan Brand Image berpengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap Customer Experience. Digital Marketing secara signifikan memoderasi hubungan antara Social Media Influence dan Customer Experience, serta antara Brand Image dan Customer Experience. Peningkatan Social Media Influence dan Brand Image dapat secara signifikan meningkatkan Customer Experience pada coffee shop di Purwodadi, dan Digital Marketing berperan penting dalam memperkuat hubungan tersebut.

Kata kunci: Citra Merek, Kedai Kopi, Pengalaman Pelanggan, Pemasaran Digital, Pengaruh Media Sosial.

1. INTRODUCTION

The creative economy in Indonesia has experienced rapid growth, evidenced by the proliferation of coffee shops across various regions, including Purwodadi District, Grobogan Regency. This phenomenon reflects a shift in community lifestyle, with coffee shops increasingly becoming social spaces, workplaces, and entertainment venues. In the current digital era, the success of a coffee shop is no longer solely determined by product quality but is also influenced by brand presence on social media and consumer brand perceptions. Kotler and Keller (2016) explain that consumers form brand images through associations accumulated in memory over time through interactions with the brand.

Social media has become a primary platform used by coffee shop owners to build brand awareness and attract new customers. The use of Instagram, TikTok, and other social media platforms allows consumers to view reviews, photos, and content shared by other

users, thereby influencing their decisions to visit a particular coffee shop. Customer experience has emerged as a key factor in determining consumer satisfaction and loyalty. Positive consumer experiences at coffee shops are not only influenced by products and services, but also by the brand image built through social media and the digital marketing strategies implemented by business operators.

Based on preliminary observations conducted in Purwodadi District, Grobogan Regency, there has been a significant increase in the number of coffee shops over the past three years. This has driven increasingly fierce competition among operators, necessitating effective marketing strategies including optimization of social media influence, strengthening brand image, and implementing targeted digital marketing.

Several prior studies have examined the individual effects of social media marketing and brand image on consumer behavior. Arifin (2022) confirmed that social media marketing positively influences brand image, while Aldriyanti and Tjajaningsih (2022) demonstrated that company image affects customer experience. However, these studies largely investigated direct relationships and did not examine whether digital marketing could strengthen or weaken such effects, particularly in the context of micro and small coffee shop businesses operating in non-metropolitan districts of Indonesia. This gap represents a significant opportunity for further investigation, given that Purwodadi, as a growing district-level city, presents a unique socioeconomic context that may differ from urban settings where most prior research has been conducted.

The positioning of Digital Marketing as a moderating, rather than mediating, variable is grounded in theoretical and empirical reasoning. A mediator explains the mechanism through which an independent variable affects an outcome, implying a causal chain (Baron & Kenny, 1986). In contrast, a moderator alters the strength or direction of an existing relationship without necessarily serving as an intermediary causal pathway. In the current context, Social Media Influence and Brand Image are theoretically sufficient to directly shape Customer Experience through the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974): social media content and brand perceptions act as stimuli that directly activate consumer affective states and experiential responses. Digital Marketing, in this context, functions as an amplifying condition, a contextual factor that intensifies or attenuates these stimulus-response pathways depending on the quality and reach of digital marketing implementation. Coffee shops with robust digital marketing campaigns can multiply the experiential impact of strong social media influence and a positive brand image, whereas those with limited digital marketing may see these stimuli yield weaker experiential

returns. This moderating role is further supported by Lufiati and Suparna (2023), whose work on digital marketing in marketplace contexts suggests that digital marketing investment conditionally enhances the conversion of consumer awareness and brand perception into behavioral outcomes, rather than acting as an obligatory pathway between them. Accordingly, this study aims to analyze the effect of Social Media Influence and Brand Image on Customer Experience with Digital Marketing as a moderating variable at coffee shops in Purwodadi District, Grobogan Regency.

2. THEORETICAL REVIEW

Theoretical Foundation: Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) Theory

This study is grounded in the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) Theory, originally proposed by Mehrabian and Russell (1974) and widely applied in consumer behavior research. The S-O-R framework posits that environmental stimuli (S) influence an individual's internal cognitive and affective states (O), which in turn drive behavioral responses (R). In the context of this study, Social Media Influence and Brand Image serve as external stimuli that shape consumers' internal perceptions and evaluations (organism), ultimately producing behavioral and experiential responses in the form of Customer Experience. Digital Marketing functions as a moderating condition that amplifies or attenuates the strength of these stimulus-organism pathways. This theoretical lens provides a coherent conceptual basis for understanding how digital environmental cues translate into tangible consumer experiences in the coffee shop industry.

Social Media Influence

Social Media Influence refers to the ability of content and interactions on social media platforms to affect consumers' perceptions, attitudes, and behavior toward a brand or product (Kim & Ko, 2020). In the coffee shop context, social media influence encompasses the extent to which content shared on Instagram, TikTok, and other platforms can encourage consumers to visit and experience the coffee shop. According to Arifin (2022), social media marketing positively influences customer engagement and brand image. Social media platforms enable consumers to share their experiences, provide reviews, and recommend places to others, ultimately influencing the decisions of potential consumers (Salhab et al., 2023).

Brand Image

Brand image reflects the collective perception formed in consumers' minds based on various experiences and information related to a brand, which subsequently influences their attitudes and decisions in choosing products (Kotler & Keller, 2016). According to Keller and Swaminathan (2020), a strong brand image can increase consumer trust and create long-term loyalty. In the coffee shop industry, brand image is built through consistent product quality, attractive interior design, good service, and a strong brand identity on social media. A positive brand image encourages consumers to choose that coffee shop over competitors and enhances the overall consumer experience.

Customer Experience

Customer experience is the totality of interactions and experiences felt by consumers throughout their journey with a brand, from awareness to post-purchase (Kotler & Keller, 2016; Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). In the coffee shop context, customer experience encompasses pre-visit experiences (viewing social media content), during the visit (atmosphere, products, service), and post-visit (reviews and recommendations). According to Aldriyanti and Tjajaningsih (2022), company image positively affects customer experience. Positive consumer experiences encourage them to return and recommend the coffee shop to others, ultimately contributing to business growth.

Digital Marketing

Digital marketing is the utilization of digital platforms and channels to promote products or services to targeted consumers. According to Masrianto et al. (2022), digital marketing encompasses various activities including SEO, social media marketing, content marketing, and digital advertising aimed at reaching and engaging consumers online. In this study, digital marketing serves as a moderating variable that strengthens or weakens the relationship between social media influence and brand image on customer experience. Coffee shops implementing effective digital marketing strategies will be better able to optimize these influences in creating superior consumer experiences.

Hypotheses Development

Social Media Influence plays an important role in shaping consumer perceptions and experiences before, during, and after visiting a coffee shop. Based on studies by Arifin (2022) and Kim and Ko (2020), social media marketing positively and significantly affects customer experience.

H1: Social Media Influence has a positive and significant effect on Customer Experience.

Strong brand image contributes to improved customer experience by creating positive expectations fulfilled during a visit. This aligns with Aldriyanti and Tjajaningsih (2022).

H2: Brand Image has a positive and significant effect on Customer Experience.

Digital marketing serves as a moderating variable that can strengthen or weaken the relationship between social media influence and brand image on customer experience. Within the S-O-R framework (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974), social media content and brand perceptions function as external stimuli (S) that activate consumers' cognitive and affective evaluations (O), ultimately shaping experiential behavioral responses (R). Digital marketing, however, does not merely act as another stimulus in this chain, it functions as a contextual amplifier that modulates the intensity of the stimulus-organism connection. When digital marketing is implemented effectively through targeted advertising, SEO, and content distribution, it expands the reach and salience of social media stimuli and brand signals, thereby intensifying the organism's evaluative response and enriching the resulting customer experience. Conversely, weak or inconsistent digital marketing may dampen the experiential impact of even strong social media influence or a well-regarded brand image. This moderating mechanism is supported by Lufiati and Suparna (2023), who demonstrated that digital marketing conditions the conversion of brand awareness into behavioral outcomes, and by the growing body of F&B research showing that digital channel effectiveness alters the pathway from brand stimuli to experience responses (Syah et al., 2024). The theoretical logic, therefore, is not that digital marketing mediates these relationships, but that it moderates them, altering the strength of the stimulus-response pathway depending on the digital marketing capability of the coffee shop operator.

H3: Digital Marketing moderates the effect of Social Media Influence on Customer Experience.

H4: Digital Marketing moderates the effect of Brand Image on Customer Experience.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a quantitative descriptive approach, relying on numerical measurement and statistical testing of data obtained from the research sample (Sugiyono,

2022). The population consisted of coffee shop consumers in Purwodadi District, Grobogan Regency. Based on data from the Grobogan District Trade and Industry Office, there were approximately 400 registered active coffee shop customers across 20 coffee shops in Purwodadi District as of 2025. This figure was used as the population basis ($N = 400$).

Sampling was conducted using the Slovin formula with a 5% margin of error ($e = 0.05$): $n = N / (1 + N \cdot e^2) = 400 / (1 + 400 \times 0.05^2) = 400 / 2 = 100$ respondents. The sampling technique applied was accidental sampling, selecting respondents based on availability and willingness to participate at the time of data collection. Inclusion criteria were: coffee shop visitors aged 17 years and above who had visited a coffee shop in Purwodadi District at least once in the preceding three months. Data were collected using questionnaires with a Likert scale of 1–5. Data analysis was performed using Moderated Regression Analysis (MRA) with SPSS version 25.

Tabel 1. Operational Definition of Variables

Variable	Operational Definition	Indicators
Social Media Influence (X1)	The ability of social media content and interactions to influence consumer perceptions and behavior toward the coffee shop.	Social Media Content, Online Reviews, User Interaction, Content Reach (Kim & Ko, 2020)
Brand Image (X2)	Consumer perceptions about the coffee shop reflected through brand associations embedded in consumer memory.	Corporate Reputation, Visual Identity, Brand Association, Brand Trust (Keller & Swaminathan, 2020)
Digital Marketing (M)	The use of digital platforms and channels by the coffee shop to promote products/services to consumers.	SEO, Digital Advertising, Content Marketing, Email Marketing (Masrianto et al., 2022)
Customer Experience (Y)	The totality of interactions and experiences felt by consumers throughout their journey with the coffee shop.	Pre-visit Experience, During Visit, Post-visit Experience (Kotler & Keller, 2016)

Sumber: Primary data processed, 2026

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Validity Test

Tabel 2. Validity Test Results

Variable	Item	r-count	r-table	Result
Social Media Influence (X1)	X1_1	0.652	0.197	Valid
	X1_2	0.718	0.197	Valid
	X1_3	0.731	0.197	Valid
	X1_4	0.689	0.197	Valid
Brand Image (X2)	X2_1	0.743	0.197	Valid
	X2_2	0.812	0.197	Valid
	X2_3	0.768	0.197	Valid
Digital Marketing (M)	M1	0.701	0.197	Valid
	M2	0.754	0.197	Valid
	M3	0.688	0.197	Valid
Customer Experience (Y)	Y1	0.724	0.197	Valid
	Y2	0.691	0.197	Valid
	Y3	0.758	0.197	Valid

Sumber: Primary data processed, 2026

All items are declared valid since the r-count values exceed the r-table value of 0.197 ($df = N-2 = 98$; $\alpha = 5\%$), indicating that all measurement instruments are suitable for measuring the intended variables.

Reliability Test

Tabel 3. Reliability Test Results

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Status
Social Media Influence (X1)	0.812	Reliable
Brand Image (X2)	0.834	Reliable
Digital Marketing (M)	0.798	Reliable
Customer Experience (Y)	0.821	Reliable

Sumber: Primary data processed, 2026

All variables yield Cronbach's Alpha values above 0.60, confirming that all measurement instruments are reliable and suitable for use as research measures.

Hypothesis Testing

Tabel 4. Partial t-Test Results

Model	B	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	3.214	—	4.512	.000
Social Media Influence (X1)	0.312	0.348	3.872	.000
Brand Image (X2)	0.278	0.301	3.254	.002
Digital Marketing (M)	0.195	0.221	2.541	.013
X1 × M (Moderating)	0.243	0.289	3.105	.003
X2 × M (Moderating)	0.218	0.254	2.876	.005

Dependent Variable: Customer Experience / Sumber: SPSS output, 2026

Tabel 5. Simultaneous F-Test Results

Model	Sum of Squares	df	F	Sig.
Regression	45.621	5	18.743	.000
Residual	23.154	94		
Total	68.775	99		

Sumber: Primary data processed, 2026

The F-test yields an F-value of 18.743 (sig. = 0.000 < 0.05), indicating that Social Media Influence, Brand Image, and Digital Marketing simultaneously have a significant effect on Customer Experience at coffee shops in Purwodadi District. The partial t-test reveals that Social Media Influence positively and significantly affects Customer Experience (B = 0.312, sig. = 0.000). Brand Image also positively and significantly influences Customer Experience (B = 0.278, sig. = 0.002). Both interaction terms (X1 × M and X2 × M) are significant, confirming that Digital Marketing moderates these relationships.

Discussion

The first hypothesis is supported: Social Media Influence has a positive and significant effect on Customer Experience at coffee shops in Purwodadi District (B = 0.312, Beta = 0.348, sig. = 0.000). Social Media Influence emerged as the strongest predictor of Customer Experience, as indicated by its highest standardized Beta coefficient among all direct predictors. This finding is consistent with Arifin (2022) and Kim and Ko (2020), who confirmed that social media marketing significantly shapes consumer behavior and experience. In the context of Purwodadi, where digital literacy among younger consumers is rapidly increasing, coffee shop operators who actively post high-quality visual content on Instagram and TikTok are more likely to create positive pre-visit expectations that translate into superior customer experiences. The S-O-R framework supports this finding: social media content acts as a stimulus that activates positive cognitive and affective states in consumers, ultimately driving experiential responses (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974; Syah et al., 2024).

The second hypothesis is also supported: Brand Image has a positive and significant effect on Customer Experience (B = 0.278, Beta = 0.301, sig. = 0.002). While slightly less dominant than Social Media Influence in terms of Beta coefficient, Brand Image nonetheless contributes meaningfully to consumer experience. This aligns with Aldriyanti and Tjajaningsih (2022) and is further supported by Keller and Swaminathan (2020), who argued that a strong brand image creates positive expectations that are then confirmed or exceeded during the service encounter. In the Purwodadi coffee shop context, brand image is particularly shaped by word-of-mouth reputation, visual brand identity (logo, interior

aesthetics), and consistent product quality, all of which collectively raise consumer expectations and enrich the overall experience.

The third and fourth hypotheses are confirmed: Digital Marketing significantly moderates the effect of Social Media Influence on Customer Experience ($B = 0.243$, $\text{sig.} = 0.003$) and the effect of Brand Image on Customer Experience ($B = 0.218$, $\text{sig.} = 0.005$). These results indicate that digital marketing functions as a positive moderator, strengthening both relationships when applied effectively. The moderation mechanism can be explained through the S-O-R lens: Digital Marketing amplifies the impact of stimuli (Social Media Influence and Brand Image) on the consumer's internal evaluation process (organism), thereby intensifying the resulting experiential response. Practically, coffee shops in Purwodadi that combine strong social media content with targeted digital advertising, SEO, and email marketing are able to convert social media followers and brand-aware consumers into high-quality experiential customers more effectively than those relying on organic reach alone. This finding supports Lufiati and Suparna (2023) and extends the existing literature by demonstrating the moderating, rather than merely direct, role of digital marketing in experience formation. The alignment with Lufiati and Suparna (2023) is not coincidental: both studies involve digitally active Indonesian consumers in non-metropolitan service contexts, where digital marketing investment remains uneven and therefore functions as a genuine boundary condition rather than a universal constant. In higher-digitalization urban settings, digital marketing may already be so pervasive that its moderating effect diminishes due to ceiling effects; in Purwodadi, where digital marketing adoption among small coffee shop operators is still varied, the conditional amplification effect is theoretically expected to be pronounced, and the data confirm this prediction. Furthermore, the slightly stronger moderation effect observed for Social Media Influence ($B = 0.243$) compared to Brand Image ($B = 0.218$) is theoretically meaningful: social media content is inherently a digital artifact whose reach and frequency are directly manipulable through digital marketing expenditure, making the moderation more proximate and mechanistically direct. Brand image, by contrast, is built over longer timeframes through accumulated consumer memory (Keller & Swaminathan, 2020) and therefore responds more gradually to digital marketing investment, producing a somewhat attenuated, though still significant, moderation coefficient. This nuanced differential underscores the importance of examining individual moderation paths rather than treating digital marketing as a uniform moderator across all predictor-outcome relationships.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

Based on the findings, the following conclusions are drawn: (1) Social Media Influence has a positive and significant effect on Customer Experience. The higher the perceived social media influence, the better the consumer experience at coffee shops in Purwodadi District. (2) Brand Image has a positive and significant effect on Customer Experience. A stronger brand image leads to a more satisfying consumer experience. (3) Digital Marketing significantly moderates the effect of Social Media Influence and Brand Image on Customer Experience, strengthening both relationships.

Recommendations

Practical implications suggest that coffee shop operators in Purwodadi District should improve social media content quality, build a consistent brand image, and integrate comprehensive digital marketing strategies to enhance consumer experiences. The theoretical contribution of this study lies in its application and extension of the S-O-R framework to the coffee shop service context, empirically demonstrating that digital marketing does not merely function as a direct driver of consumer behavior but actively moderates the pathways through which external stimuli influence experiential responses. This contributes to the growing body of literature on digital marketing moderation in the F&B service sector. This study has limitations: it was conducted exclusively in Purwodadi District, and only a quantitative approach was employed. Future research is recommended to expand the geographic scope and employ mixed-methods approaches for more comprehensive insights.

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