

Unlocking Purchase Intention: The Role of Value, Brand Awareness, and e-WOM in the Café Industry

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Abstract

This study aims to empirically investigate the impact of café-relevant values (CRV) and brand awareness (BA) on electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) and purchase intention (PI) within the café industry. Additionally, it examines the mediating role of e-WOM in these relationships. The study employed a cross-sectional survey design, collecting data from 246 café customers in Central Java, Indonesia. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was used to analyse the relationships between CRV, BA, e-WOM, and PI. The results revealed that both CRV and BA had significant positive effects on e-WOM and PI. Furthermore, e-WOM partially mediated the relationship between CRV and PI, as well as between BA and PI, suggesting that e-WOM enhances the influence of value perceptions and brand awareness on purchase decisions. This study contributes to the existing literature on Service-Dominant Logic by exploring the interplay between perceived value, brand awareness, and e-WOM in the café sector, which has not been extensively examined in previous research. Given these findings, café managers should focus on enhancing perceived value and brand awareness through quality services and strategic brand communication to increase consumer engagement and purchase intentions. Future research should explore these relationships in other industry contexts and consider longitudinal approaches for deeper insights.

Keyword

Café Relevant Value, Brand awareness, Electronic Word of Mouth, Purchase Intention

INTRODUCTION

Creative economic growth offers a platform for businesses to innovate and co-create value with their consumers, particularly by leveraging competitive advantages. The demand for coffee transcends demographic boundaries, making the café industry a promising market globally, including in Indonesia. According to Toffin, a provider of business solutions for hotels, restaurants, and cafes, the number of cafés in Indonesia surged from approximately one thousand in 2016 to nearly 2,950 outlets by 2019. Data from the Global Agricultural Information Network (2019) confirms this growth, reporting a 13.9% increase in coffee consumption in Indonesia, reaching 294,000 tons in 2019/2020.

Café operators strive to enhance their offerings by co-creating appealing menu items, improving service quality, and creating unique display concepts, all of which contribute to a competitive marketplace. This intense competition plays a crucial role in shaping marketing strategies and influencing consumer purchase intentions. In theory, purchase intention reflects a consumer's desire to obtain a particular product or service and acts as an indicator of their readiness to make a purchase (Liu et al., 2019). Given these dynamics, an urgent question arises: do café-relevant values and factors such as brand awareness and brand image significantly impact electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM)?

Purchase intention, originally conceptualized within psychological frameworks, has been widely adapted to analyze consumer behavior (Riaz et al., 2021). It is often seen as a precursor to actual purchasing decisions. Supporting this view, Kytö et al. (2019) describe purchase intention as a general measure for evaluating buying behavior, driven by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Pham et al., 2022). These three factors collectively influence intentions and predict subsequent consumer behavior.

In a competitive landscape, cafés aim to secure their market position by focusing on co-creating value with customers to enhance satisfaction (Kim et al., 2019). To achieve a sustainable competitive edge, cafes must invest their resources in value co-creation efforts that directly contribute to consumer satisfaction (Mulyana et al., 2019; Shulga & Busser, 2020). This aligns with the Service-Dominant Logic, which emphasizes the importance of collaborative efforts between businesses and consumers in creating shared value.

Previous research has highlighted the significance of e-WOM in shaping consumer purchase intentions (Zhao, von Delft, et al., 2020). Kuo and Nakhata (2019) found that positive e-WOM interactions increase the likelihood of consumers making more frequent purchases. Erkan and Evans (2016) conceptualize e-WOM as a form of peer-to-peer communication within communities. Ngarmwongnoi et al. (2020) explain that e-WOM allows customers to share their discoveries, whether novel, unique, or entertaining—with their peers, thereby fostering a new type of engagement. Unlike traditional word-of-mouth, which is transient, e-WOM's digital footprint is preserved in blogs, reviews, and social media platforms (Donthu et al., 2021).

The prevailing model of brand loyalty centers around brand awareness, brand image, and brand community (Ansari & Riasi, 2020; Tasci, 2021). In the context of Semarang, Indonesia, a diverse range of cafés compete to establish a distinct identity in the minds of consumers. Establishing a robust attitudinal brand loyalty remains essential for maximizing e-WOM and enhancing purchase intention (Kaur et al., 2021). As market competition intensifies, and as consumer preferences evolve, the need for strong brand identities is increasingly evident (Casidy et al., 2019; Ward et al., 2020).

Café-relevant value plays a pivotal role in influencing both e-WOM and purchase intent. From a Service-Dominant Logic perspective, value is co-created through the interaction between consumers and the services they receive. emphasize that customers tend to share information when they perceive that the services align with their self-concept and values. Vakulenko et al. (2019) extend this idea by suggesting that café-relevant value reflects a perceived quality tied to a specific price level, fostering a stronger connection between customers and businesses. Although there is limited research on the direct relationship between café-relevant value, e-WOM, and purchase intent, its importance in the context of value co-creation cannot be overstated.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Café-Relevant Value

The literature on value creation within the café industry, framed by Service-Dominant Logic (SDL), emphasizes co-creation between service providers and customers as essential for competitive advantage (Alajhar et al., 2022). Product attributes and customer experience significantly influence loyalty, highlighting the dynamic role of interactions in enhancing satisfaction (Amrie et al., 2021). Leadership and innovation adoption foster value co-production, positively impacting café performance (None et al., 2024). Additionally, the application of collaborative methods, such as the world café approach, reinforces relational dynamics in delivering exceptional service. A comprehensive focus on service experiences and aligning strategies with customer expectations can enrich customer value (Sukwadi et al., 2012). Technological integration and the exploration of "value-in-being" deepen the understanding of subjective customer experiences (Alimamy et al., 2024; Scarlett et al., 2022). Collectively, these insights suggest that future research should explore emerging technologies, evolving consumer expectations, and the potential for innovative co-creation strategies to reshape value experiences

in the café sector. This integrative review acknowledges prior research and underscores the evolving landscape of value creation.

Attitudinal Brand Loyalty

Attitudinal brand loyalty within the Service-Dominant Logic (SDL) perspective emphasizes the significance of co-creation, emotional attachment, and consumer engagement in value creation. In the context of café brands, co-creation experiences, such as online brand community (OBC) engagement, play a vital role in enhancing customer satisfaction and loyalty by fostering value interactions and emotional connections (Wang et al., 2023). Emotional attachment to a brand strengthens attitudinal loyalty, positively impacting purchasing behaviors, price sensitivity, and customer retention (Hemsley-Brown, 2023; Khandai et al., 2022). Research highlights that brand trust and social endorsements significantly contribute to loyalty formation, particularly when hedonic and emotional experiences are involved (Na et al., 2023). However, challenges such as brand betrayal may undermine this loyalty, underscoring the complexity of managing café-brand relationships in competitive environments (Robertson et al., 2022). This synthesis provides crucial insights for marketers aiming to deepen consumer-brand connections and suggests that focusing on emotional and experiential engagement is key to enhancing café brand loyalty.

Electronic Word-of-Mouth (e-WOM)

Electronic Word-of-Mouth (e-WOM) within the Service-Dominant Logic (SDL) framework highlights the critical role of consumer interactions in value co-creation, especially in the context of cafés and similar service-oriented businesses. Studies emphasize that e-WOM, defined as digital consumer exchanges regarding products or services, can profoundly impact brand perception and consumer behavior (Akbari et al., 2022). Particularly, positive e-WOM driven by satisfying experiences can enhance brand loyalty, as supported by findings in the tourism and hospitality sectors (Setiawan et al., 2021). Moreover, the credibility of e-WOM sources significantly shapes consumer trust and perceptions (Ismagilova et al., 2020). However, negative e-WOM remains a challenge, highlighting the importance of proactive reputation management and sustainability initiatives (Halim et al., 2022). This review underscores the necessity for service providers to strategically manage e-WOM interactions to foster brand engagement and adapt to evolving digital platforms, thus aligning with SDL's emphasis on co-created value through consumer experience.

Purchase Intention

Recent literature on SDL emphasizes the co-creation of value through interactions, particularly relevant for the café industry where service quality and customer satisfaction are crucial. SDL shifts focus from goods to relationships, underscoring the importance of interactions in enhancing purchase intentions (Vargo et al., 2023). Social media interactions (SMIs), such as Consumer-to-Consumer (C2C) communications, amplify source credibility and content quality, thereby influencing purchase intentions (Onofrei et al., 2022). Additionally, perceived service quality plays a significant role in shaping purchase intentions, with elements like employee behavior and environment acting as mediators (Ha et al., 2014). Trust emerges as a crucial factor in this context, linking perceived quality to purchase decisions, especially in digital interactions (Putra & Lestari, 2023). Furthermore, integrating SDL with customer-centric perspectives enhances understanding of value creation in cafés, where external factors like convenience and perceived benefits significantly influence purchase intentions (Matos & Krielow, 2019). Thus, SDL offers a cohesive framework for exploring service-driven purchase behavior in cafés.

Hypotheses Development

The study employs the following hypotheses based on the problem formulation, research objectives, and the proposed conceptual framework:

1. Café-relevant value and brand awareness have a significant impact on e-WOM.
2. Café-relevant value and brand awareness affect purchase intention.
3. e-WOM has a significant influence on purchase intention.
4. Café relevant Value and Brand Awareness on purchase intention – electronic word of mouth

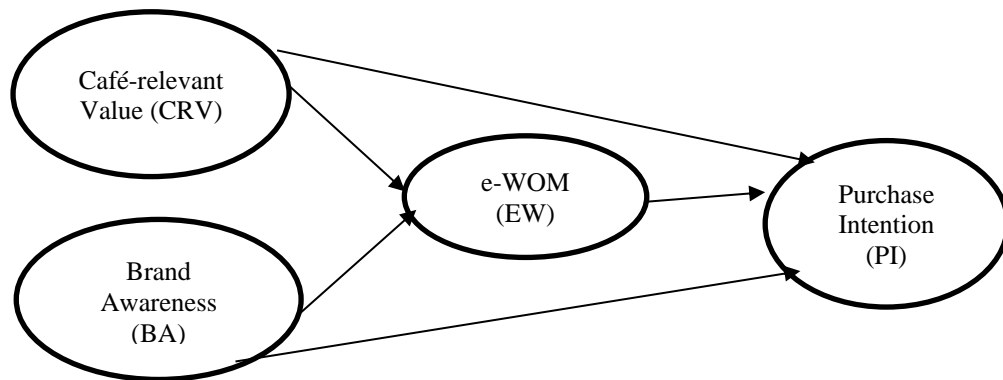


Figure 1. Conceptual Model

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses an explanatory approach to examine the impact of specific factors. The independent variables are café-relevant value, brand awareness, and eWOM, while the dependent variable is purchasing intention. Table 1 presents the operational definitions of the independent, dependent, and mediating variables. All variables are measured using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree).

Table 1. Measurement Constructs and Indicators

Construct	Indicator	Sources
Café-relevant value (CRV)	Reflected self-appraisal (CRV.1)	Kim et al. (2014); Vakulenko et al. (2019)
	Conspicuous value (CRV.2)	
	Café quality (CRV.3)	
	Price fairness (CRV.3)	
Brand Awareness (BA)	Ability to recall the brand at the top of the mind (BA.1)	Hwang and Zhang (2018); Zhang et al. (2017)
	Ability to recognize the brand (BA.2)	
	Consumers' ability to remember the brand (BA.3)	
	Brand characterization (BA.4)	
e-WOM (EW)	Intensity (EW.1)	Erkan and Evans (2016); Pyle et al. (2021)
	Valence of opinion (EW.3)	
	Content (EW.4)	
Purchase Intention (PI)	The brand creates a positive buying attitude (PI.1)	D. H. Tien et al. (2019); Zhu et al. (2019)
	Preference for the brand despite the availability of similar quality options (PI.2)	

	Consistent purchase and use of the brand (PI.3)	
	Desire to own the product (PI.4)	

Techniques for Data and Sample Collection

The primary research instrument used in this study was a questionnaire. Trials, validity testing, and reliability tests were conducted to verify the quality of the instrument. The original English version of the questionnaire and its Indonesian translation were carefully cross-checked by the author to ensure that the original meaning was preserved. The participants in this study consisted of coffee drinkers who regularly visited cafés in Central Java. Based on Hair Jr et al. (2020) recommendation, the minimum sample size required to achieve significant statistical power (with five independent variables) was at least 45 respondents. Consequently, the total sample size for this study was 246 participants. The questionnaires were distributed through a structured survey conducted between February and March 2022.

Table 2. Demographic Profile

No	Characteristics		Total	%
1	Sex	Male	145	58.9
		Female	101	41.1
2	Education	Senior High School	47	19.1
		Bachelor's degree	85	34.6
		Master's degree	55	22.4
		Doctoral Degree	23	9.30
		Others	36	14.6
3	Occupation	Student	63	25.6
		Entrepreneur	95	38.6
		Employee	65	26.4
		Others	23	9.30
4	Income/month	less than 7 million	67	27.2
		more than 7 - 15 million	129	52.4
		more than 15 - 25 million	36	14.6
		more than 25 million	14	5.7

Source: Collected data (2024)

The data provides a demographic overview segmented into four main characteristics: sex, education, occupation, and monthly income. The distribution of sex shows a higher percentage of males (58.9%) compared to females (41.1%). In terms of education, most individuals hold a bachelor's degree (34.6%), while a smaller proportion possesses a Doctoral Degree (9.3%), indicating the highest and lowest values in this category, respectively. Among occupations, the majority are entrepreneurs (38.6%), whereas the smallest group falls into the "Others" category (9.3%). Regarding monthly income, the largest group earns between 7 to 15 million (52.4%), while only a minority earns more than 25 million (5.7%). These insights help to identify predominant traits within the demographic groups, as well as the less represented segments in each characteristic.

RESULT

The results showed that all constructs and their respective indicators met the validity and reliability criteria based on established research standards. The highest standardized loading was found in the e-WOM variable for indicator EW.1 with a value of 0.900, indicating a strong

relationship between this indicator and its construct. On the other hand, the lowest standardized loading was recorded for indicator CRV.1 under CRV with a value of 0.771. Despite this variation, all loadings exceeded the minimum threshold of 0.5, confirming the reliability of the indicators (Hair Jr et al., 2021). For convergent validity, all variables demonstrated an Average Variance Extracted (AVE) greater than the recommended cut-off of 0.5 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The AVE values ranged from 0.685 CRV to 0.743 e-WOM indicating that more than 50% of the variance for each construct was explained by its indicators. Additionally, the Construct Reliability Index (CRI) exceeded 0.7 for all variables, with the highest CRI recorded for BA at 0.919, and the lowest for CRV at 0.897, which demonstrated strong internal consistency (Hair et al., 2010). Thus, the data confirmed that all variables were valid and reliable based on recognized thresholds.

Table 3. Measurement of Validity and Reliability

Construct	Indicator	Outer Loading	P-Value	Status
Café-relevant Value (CRV)	CRV.1	0.761	0.000	Valid
AVE = 0.685	CRV.2	0.853	0.000	Valid
CRI = 0.897	CRV.3	0.865	0.000	Valid
	CRV.4	0.841	0.000	Valid
Brand Awareness (BA)	BA.1	0.881	0.000	Valid
AVE = 0.739	BA.2	0.834	0.000	Valid
CRI = 0.919	BA.3	0.840	0.000	Valid
	BA.4	0.841	0.000	Valid
Purchase Intention (PI)	PI.1	0.864	0.000	Valid
AVE = 0.727	PI.2	0.826	0.000	Valid
CRI = 0.914	PI.3	0.852	0.000	Valid
	PI.4	0.847	0.000	Valid
Electronic-Word of Mouth (EW)	EW.1	0.901	0.000	Valid
AVE = 0.743	EW.2	0.836	0.000	Valid
CRI = 0.896	EW.3	deleted	-	-
	EW.4	0.847	0.000	Valid

Notes: AVE: Average Variance Extracted; CRI: Construct Reliability Index

Source: Data Processed (2024)

The results showed that the R-Square value for e-WOM was 0.776, indicating that 77.6% of the variability in the dependent variable could be explained by e-WOM. However, the Adjusted R-Square value for e-WOM was slightly lower at 0.772, suggesting a slight adjustment to account for the number of predictors in the model. In contrast, the PI variable had an R-Square value of 0.774, which was like that of e-WOM. Interestingly, the Adjusted R-Square for PI was 0.782, indicating a slightly better fit when adjusting for model complexity. According to Cohen (1992), R-Square values above 0.26 are generally considered substantial in social science research, implying that both e-WOM and PI had a significant explanatory power for the model. The relatively high values of R-Square and Adjusted R-Square for both variables suggested that they were strong predictors in this context.

Table 4. Summary of R-Square and Adjusted R-Square

Construct	R-Square	Adjusted R-Square
e-WOM	0.776	0.772

PI	0.774	0.782
Notes: e-WOM: electronic word of mouth; PI: Purchase Intention Source: Data Processed (2024)		

The results showed that the diagonal values, representing the square roots of the AVE, exceeded the inter-construct correlations in each case, indicating good discriminant validity among the constructs. For instance, the square root of AVE for BA was 0.836, which was higher than its correlation with CRV at 0.578, e-WOM at 0.810, and PI at 0.834. Similarly, the square root of AVE for CRV was 0.833, which was higher than its correlations with e-WOM at 0.845 and PI at 0.824. The square root of AVE for e-WOM was 0.868, which surpassed its correlations with BA, CRV, and PI, and the square root of AVE for PI was 0.851, also exceeding its inter-construct correlations. According to Fornell and Larcker (1981) discriminant validity is confirmed when the square root of AVE for each construct is greater than its correlations with other constructs, suggesting that the constructs in this study were distinct and measured different underlying concepts effectively.

Table 5. Discriminant Validity Analysis

Construct	BA	CRV	e-WOM	PI
BA	0.836			
CRV	0.578	0.833		
e-WOM	0.810	0.845	0.868	
PI	0.834	0.824	0.849	0.851
Notes: e-WOM: electronic word of mouth; PI: Purchase Intention; CRV; Café-Relevant Value; BA: Brand Awareness				

Source: Data Processed (2024)

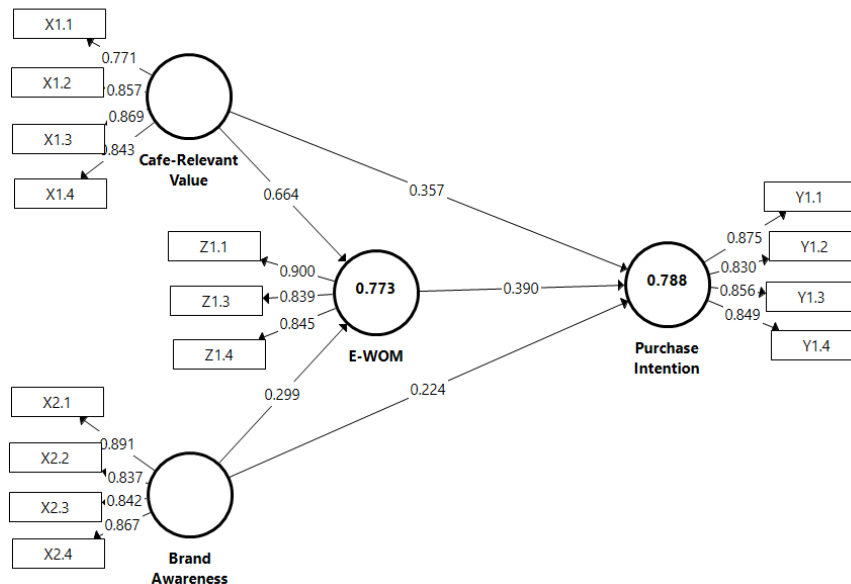
The results showed that CRV had a significant positive effect on e-WOM with a path coefficient (β) of 0.297 and a T-Value of 9.834, indicating a robust relationship ($p < 0.05$). Additionally, BA also demonstrated a positive and significant impact on e-WOM, with a β of 0.221 and a T-Value of 4.974. Moreover, CRV had a strong direct influence on PI, evidenced by a β of 0.661 and a T-Value of 4.556. Similarly, BA directly affected PI with a β of 0.351 and a T-Value of 3.624. The path analysis also revealed a significant relationship between e-WOM and PI ($\beta = 0.389$, T-Value = 4.056), suggesting that e-WOM played a crucial role in driving purchase intentions. Furthermore, the indirect effects of CRV and BA on PI through e-WOM were also significant, with path coefficients of 0.253 and 0.114, respectively, both showing T-Values above the critical threshold of 1.96 ($p < 0.05$), indicating a mediating effect. These findings align with standard statistical practices where T-Values above 1.96 and P-Values below 0.05 are typically considered significant (Hair Jr et al., 2020).

Table 6. Path Analysis Results

Path	β	T-Values	P-Values	Conclusion
CRV \rightarrow e-WOM	0.297	9.834	0.000	Accepted
BA \rightarrow e-WOM	0.221	4.974	0.000	Accepted
CRV \rightarrow PI	0.661	4.556	0.000	Accepted
BA \rightarrow PI	0.351	3.624	0.000	Accepted
e-WOM \rightarrow PI	0.389	4.056	0.000	Accepted
CRV \rightarrow e-WOM \rightarrow PI	0.253	4.153	0.000	Accepted
BA \rightarrow e-WOM \rightarrow PI	0.114	4.189	0.000	Accepted

Notes: *** $p < 0.005$; e-WOM: electronic word of mouth; PI: Purchase Intention; CRV; Café-Relevant Value; BA: Brand Awareness

Source: Data Processed (2024)



Gambar 1. Full-Structural Model

DISCUSSIONS

In this study, the hypothesis stating that Café-Relevant Value (CRV) positively influences electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) was accepted ($\beta = 0.297$, $p < 0.001$). This finding suggests that a higher perceived value of café experiences encouraged customers to share their experiences online. This result aligned with Donghee Kim et al. (2015), who demonstrated that positive perceptions of service increased participation in e-WOM. However, indicated that dissatisfaction with price could discourage sharing. This contradiction may have occurred because this study focused on quality and experience over pricing strategies. The implication of this finding emphasizes the need for cafés to prioritize perceived value to optimize e-WOM and strengthen competitive positioning.

The study demonstrated that brand awareness (BA) significantly influenced e-WOM ($\beta = 0.221$, $p < 0.001$). This finding indicates that higher brand awareness led to greater customer engagement in e-WOM. Graciola et al. (2020) similarly emphasized that strong brand recognition increased customer trust and sharing behavior. In contrast, Cheng et al. (2019) suggested that excessive brand exposure could decrease consumers' interest in sharing. The results from this study imply that effective brand communication played a key role in fostering e-WOM.

The findings revealed that CRV significantly impacted purchase intention (PI) ($\beta = 0.661$, $p < 0.001$). This suggests that a higher perception of value increased consumers' willingness to make a purchase. Kusumawati and Sri Rahayu (2020) similarly highlighted that enhancing perceived value directly influenced purchasing decisions. However, cautioned that inconsistency in delivering perceived value could reduce purchase intentions. The contrasting results in this study may be due to rising customer expectations amid increased competition. The implication here underscores the importance of innovation and co-creation to sustain purchase intentions.

The results indicated that BA positively influenced PI ($\beta = 0.351$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that strong brand awareness enhanced consumers' intentions to purchase. This finding corroborated who demonstrated that BA fostered trust, leading to higher purchase intentions. Conversely, Cheng et al. (2019) argued that excessive familiarity could result in consumer fatigue.

This divergence could be attributed to differing branding strategies. The study's findings suggest that tailored branding approaches are crucial for maintaining consumer interest.

The study confirmed that e-WOM significantly influenced PI ($\beta = 0.389$, $p < 0.001$). This suggests that positive online interactions encouraged consumers to make purchase decisions. N. H. Tien et al. (2019) reported similar findings, showing that positive e-WOM strengthened buying behaviors. On the contrary, noted that negative e-WOM could erode trust and deter purchases. This study highlights the dual impact of e-WOM, indicating the need for effective reputation management in cafes to maximize purchase intentions.

The study demonstrated that e-WOM mediated the relationship between CRV and PI ($\beta = 0.253$, $p < 0.001$). This finding suggests that positive value perceptions not only directly increased PI but also indirectly through enhanced e-WOM. supported this mediating role of e-WOM in value-based purchasing decisions. However, Vakulenko et al. (2019) found that inconsistent value perceptions could disrupt this pathway. The results of this study imply that consistently delivering perceived value is crucial for leveraging e-WOM's mediating role in driving purchase intentions.

The study confirmed that e-WOM mediated the relationship between BA and PI ($\beta = 0.114$, $p < 0.001$). This finding indicates that heightened brand awareness not only directly influenced PI but also indirectly by encouraging e-WOM engagement. Nam et al. (2020) similarly found that brand communities promoted e-WOM, which in turn strengthened purchase behavior. In contrast, Frempong et al. (2020) that neglecting e-WOM channels could weaken this link. The study's findings highlight the importance of actively cultivating brand-focused e-WOM strategies to boost purchase intentions.

CONCLUSION

This study revisited the issue of whether café-relevant values (CRV) and brand awareness (BA) significantly influence electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) and purchase intention (PI) in the café industry. The research objective aimed to understand these direct relationships and the mediating role of e-WOM. The findings demonstrated that CRV and BA both positively influenced e-WOM and PI, confirming the importance of perceived value and brand awareness in shaping consumer interactions and decisions. Additionally, e-WOM was found to mediate the relationships between CRV, BA, and PI, indicating that positive online experiences further reinforce purchase intentions. From a theoretical standpoint, the study contributes to the Service-Dominant Logic framework by emphasizing the co-creation of value between businesses and consumers, where perceptions of value and brand awareness play crucial roles in fostering customer engagement through e-WOM. Practically, these findings suggest that café operators should focus on enhancing perceived value and brand recognition to boost consumer purchase intentions. This can be achieved through strategic brand communication, quality service, and consistent value delivery. Nevertheless, the study faced limitations due to its cross-sectional design, which restricted observations to a specific period. Additionally, the sample size and scope were limited to the café industry context, potentially affecting the generalizability of results. Future research could benefit from employing longitudinal designs to explore these relationships over time and expanding the sample to diverse industries to validate and extend the findings.

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