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SOCIAL INFLUENCE AND SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT AS DETERMINANTS OF BRAND EQUITY AMONG COFFEE SHOPS IN TAGUM CITY

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ABSTRACT

Brand equity enhances customer loyalty and differentiates them in a competitive market, especially when influenced by social influence and social media engagement. The main purpose of this study was to determine how social influence and social media engagement determine brand equity among coffee shops in Tagum City. The researcher used a quantitative design, particularly a descriptive-correlational approach. There were 300 respondents which were selected through quota sampling Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics such as mean, standard deviation, Pearson r, and regression analysis. The result of the study revealed that the overall level of social influence is often favorable. Further, the study yielded that the level of social media engagement is rated as often evident which indicates that social media engagement is consistently prominent and influential. The level of brand equity is categorized as often manifested. This high rating signifies that brand equity is frequently evident, reflecting a strong presence in the market. Further, only social media engagement could significantly influence brand equity independently. This future investigation could delve into the remaining 34 percent, examining factors not accounted for in this study that might predict brand equity.

KEYWORDS: *Business Management, Social Influence, Social Media Engagement, Brand Equity, Descriptive-correlational design, Coffee Shops, Tagum City, Philippines*

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

A strong brand is crucial for the company's and consumers' benefit. Brand equity is a product's differential preference and responsiveness to marketing activities due to its brand recognition (Datta et al., 2017). In the highly competitive world of coffee retail, particularly for top-tier coffee shops, a key challenge in creating and maintaining brand equity is finding the correct balance between providing a consistent global brand experience while at the same time catering to various local cultural interests (Anderson & Turner, 2020)**.** This predicament is aggravated by the growing influence of online reviews and social media platforms, providing consumers with a platform where they can share their experiences and opinions (Clarkson et al., 2021). In the digital age, a single unfavorable review can quickly destroy a brand's reputation, affecting client perceptions and loyalty (Watson & Wu, 2021). As these brands expand globally, the risk of diminishing distinctive brand property by over-standardizing or over-customizing its services becomes a significant worry (Song, 2021).

The research on brand equity is critical not only for coffee shop owners and marketers but also for Tagum City's local economy. Coffee shops play an important function in creating a social hub for inhabitants and contributing to the cultural identity of the city (Keller, 2001). Understanding the intricacies of brand equity in this setting is critical to sustaining a vibrant coffee shop culture and supporting local companies. In an increasingly globalized marketplace, the measurement and management of brand equity across different countries and product categories are essential for guiding strategic decisions and ensuring effective brand positioning and communication. Therefore, (Parris & Guzman, 2022) understand and harness the power of brand equity is not only a challenge but also a critical opportunity for businesses to thrive in a complex and evolving market landscape.

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The relationship between social influence and brand equity impacts customer perceptions and behaviors. Social influence via sources such as social media, word-of-mouth, and community involvement has a significant impact on brand equity. Positive interactions and endorsements from influencers or peers can boost a brand's reputation and trustworthiness, hence increasing its total equity (Ahmad & Guerrero, 2020). Friendships and community connections, can significantly enhance brand equity by fostering deeper emotional relationships between consumers and brands (Almestarihi et al., 2021).

On the other hand, the relationship between social media engagement and brand equity is critical in today's digital marketing world. Brand equity, which encompasses a brand's perceived value and strength, is heavily influenced by the brand's visibility and interactions on social media platforms. A good social media presence can boost brand equity by improving brand image, increasing brand awareness, and building a more personal connection with customers (Zia et al., 2022). Through interactive and real-time involvement, social media platforms serve as effective instruments for generating brand loyalty and advocacy. Moreover, according to Johnson et al., (2020) likes, shares, comments, and user-generated content all contribute to social proof and strengthen brand equity by demonstrating a business's relevance and appeal.

There is a significant study gap in the examination of social impact and social media participation as factors of brand equity, particularly in the setting of coffee shops. While some studies have looked at the effect of social media on brand equity (Masa'deh et al., 2021), and others have looked at social influence and consumer behavior in the hospitality industry (Li, 2018), there is a lack of research that looks specifically at how social influence and social media engagement shape brand equity for coffee shops. The work of Masa'deh et al., (2021), undertook a comprehensive analysis on the impact of social media on brand equity, whereas Li (2018) focused on social influence in consumer decision-making in the hotel sector as a whole. importance of conducting specialized research. This research gap emphasizes the need for a specialized investigation into the unique dynamics of social influence and social media engagement in the coffee shop industry, which would provide valuable insights for coffee shop owners and marketers looking to optimize their brand equity strategies in the digital age.

This study's findings will be communicated through a variety of methods to guarantee their practical use and contribution to the larger academic community. The researcher wants to publish research papers in peer-reviewed journals. Findings will be presented at local business groups, academic conferences, and engage with Tagum City coffee shop owners to give practical ideas. In addition, a public seminar will be held to involve the local community and raise awareness of the study's findings. The researcher would also provide a copy to the University of Immaculate Conception that could be used by future researchers.

Statement of the Problem

The main purpose of this study was to determine how social influence and social media engagement determine brand equity among coffee shops in Tagum City.

Specifically, this study addressed the following:

1. What is the level of social influence among coffee shops as rated by patrons in Tagum City in terms of: 1.1 informational influence; and
   1.2 normative influence.
2. What is the level of Social Media Engagement among coffee shops as rated by patrons in Tagum City in terms of:
   2.1 affective engagement;
   2.2 cognitive engagement; and
   2.3 behavioral engagement.
3. What is the level of Brand equity among coffee shops as rated by patrons in Tagum City in terms of:
   3.1 brand awareness;
   3.2 brand associations;
   3.3 perceived quality; and
   3.4 brand loyalty.
4. Is there a significant relationship between:
   4.1 social influence and brand equity; and
   4.2 social media engagement and brand equity.

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5. Which between Social influence and social media engagement determines brand equity among coffee shops in Tagum City?

Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on the Theory of Brand Equity Model by Keller (1993), which comprises four steps that correspond to consumer requests, forming a branding ladder. Each step is contingent upon the accomplishment of the preceding one. Salience; performance and imagery; judgments and feelings; and resonance, these six brand building blocks with several subdimensions make up four steps, which are identity, meaning, response, and relationship. Achieving a healthy relationship with clients is the goal of developing a powerful brand.

Further, Keller (2003) added that identity, as the first step, aims to establish a connection between the brand and a certain product category or need. The second step, which is meaning, creates a mental image of the brand meaning by associating specific attributes with the brand. The next step is a brand response, which elicits the proper customer responses to the recognition and importance of the brand. This step is completed by using the judgments and feelings. The last phase is the brand relationship, where customers and the brand have a strong, active loyalty relationship as a result of the brand response.

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research design particularly the descriptive approach. -correlational research design. Calderon (2006), defined that descriptive research is defined as a purposeful process of gathering, analyzing, classifying, and tabulating data about current conditions, practices, processes, trends, and cause-effect relationships, followed by adequate and accurate interpretations of such data, with or without the use of statistical methods. In this study, the researcher highlighted the level of social impact and social media participation in relation to brand equity in Tagum City coffee shops. This method enabled a meticulous description of the key characteristics, practices, and preferences of the respondents within Tagum City's coffee shop scene. On the other hand, correlational research design measures more than two closely connected variables and evaluates the relationship among these variables (Stangor & Walinga, 2019). This study utilized a correlational design to examine the relationship between social influence, social media engagement, and brand equity.

Research Locale

The study was conducted among coffee shops customers of known coffee shops located in Tagum City. These coffee shops should have been operating for more than three years, classified as small and medium-scale enterprises. There are nine (9) established sole proprietor coffee shops in Tagum City.This study focused on Four (4) randomly selected coffee shops in Tagum City. With this, the location is the most suitable and convenient source of information where possible issues of organizational commitment occur along with the outgrowing number of coffee shops in the city (Department of Trade and Industries, Tagum City)

Research Respondents

The respondents for this study were coffee shop patrons who had been regular customers at selected coffee shops in Tagum City, with a minimum requirement of one year of engagement to ensure they had formed a meaningful relationship with the establishment. The study aimed to collect responses from at least 300 participants, which was deemed adequate for business research, this sample conforms with the recommendation of Hair et al. (2017). The inclusion criteria focused on individuals who actively contributed to the coffee shop through regular annual purchases, ensuring that the insights gathered reflected the experiences and preferences of dedicated coffee lovers.

A quota sampling method was employed, allowing the researcher to select four different coffee shops based on location, popularity, and client demographics. Specific quotas were established to ensure a diverse representation of the coffee-drinking population, enabling systematic selection within each quota without bias toward age, gender, or frequency of visits. Data were collected using specialized questionnaires tailored to capture relevant perspectives from the respondents, with ongoing monitoring to ensure that the quotas were met and detailed reporting of respondents' characteristics maintained for transparency. In the analysis phase, the collected data were reviewed to derive insights specific to each coffee shop, contributing to a nuanced understanding of the local coffee culture within the broader context of Tagum City. This methodology was designed to gather valuable information from avid coffee lovers who frequented the selected coffee establishments.

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Research Instruments

The researcher adapted questionnaires from different published journals. A 5-point Likert Type Scale of which 5 – strongly agree and 1 – strongly disagree was used to evaluate the items in each variable in the survey questionnaires. The first survey questionnaire for brand equity was adapted from Cadogan, et al. (2015) in his study "Consumer-Based Brand Equity Measurement: Lessons Learned from an International Study*"*. The questionnaire has 35 items and categorized into four indicators and it has a Cronbach alpha result of 0.93. The level of brand equity was interpreted using this matrix. The next survey questionnaires focused on the social influence where survey questionnaire was adapted from Hsieh & Tseng (2018) in their study "*Exploring Social Influence On Hedonic Buying Of Digital Goods - Online Games Virtual Items*" comprised of four indicators and has 18 items and it has a Cronbach alpha of 0.92. The level of organizational climate was interpreted using this matrix. The last survey questionnaire measured the level of social media engagement of the respondents where it was adapted from Dessart (2017) in the study "Social media engagement: a model of antecedents and relational outcome*"*. It has 22 item questions and it has a Cronbach alpha result of 0.93. The level of employee retention was interpreted using this matrix.

Data Collection

The researcher collected relevant data from the respondents by following the correct processes to obtain the information required for the study. In addition, the data collection commenced after the UIC-Research Ethics Committee releases the ethics clearance. Before collecting the data, the researcher sent a letter of permission to formally conduct the gathering of data from the Dean of the Graduate School. After the approval to conduct the survey, the researcher sent a letter to ask permission to the respective branch managers of the coffee shops selected in this study. Once approved by the branch managers from the different coffee shops, the researcher have conducted face-to-face surveys with prospective respondents. Contact details were collected during these in-person interactions. Direct communication was established through traditional methods, such as sending physical survey questionnaires to the respondents. Participants were guided through the survey process, and completed questionnaires were collected on-the-spot. The researcher ensured that each participant can comfortably complete the survey within a brief timeframe of 5 to 10 minutes. After the survey period concludes, the researcher have compiled and organized the collected data for subsequent analysis and interpretation using appropriate statistical tools.

Statistical Tools

Mean. This was used to determine the level of social influence, social media engagement, and brand equity, among customers of Coffee Shop.

Standard Deviation. This was utilized to measure consistencies and inconsistencies of respondents' responses in both dependent and independent variables.

Pearson-r Correlation. This was employed to determine the significant relationship between the social influence, social media engagement, and brand equity among customers of coffee shops.

Multiple Regression. This was used to determine which between, brand equity and social influence significantly predicts social media engagement among customers of coffee shops.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Level of Social Influence Among Coffee Shops as Rated by Patrons in Tagum City

Revealed in Table 1 is the social influence level as rated by patrons among coffee shops in Tagum City. It can be observed that the overall mean is 4.09, described as high. This result connotes that social influence is among the coffee shops in Tagum City is oftentimes favorable. In essence, this indicates that patrons are highly responsive to the behaviors, choices, and recommendations of others when it comes to their coffee shop experiences whether it's through word of mouth or social media posts. On the other hand, the standard deviation ranges from 0.73 to 1.14 in which items 3 and 6 suggest heterogeneous while the rest of the items are homogeneous.

The high result in social influence supports the findings of Wagner (2018), that social influence within coffee shops can impact consumers' choices of coffee blends, food selections, and even the decision to visit a particular establishment.

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Informational Influence. The category mean resulted 4.11, very high (very favorable). This signifies that customers in Tagum City are not only influenced by their personal preferences but are also heavily swayed by the opinions and behaviors of their friends and people around them. This result support with the study of Zhang & Benyoucef (2016), that reference group play a key role in shaping an individual's actions, habits, and lifestyle, significantly impacting their choices and decisions. These social connections provide trusted information that can strongly influence preferences, making decisions feel more confident and aligned with their social circles.

The statement with the highest mean score is item 1, *seeking information from friends as experts who know about coffee shop products*, described as very high. Peer recommendations shape coffee shop preferences as individuals trust and follow the choices of friends and colleagues. The result aligns with the study of Maspul & Almalki (2023) who highlighted that social interactions, especially among younger generations, significantly influence coffee shop choices, highlighting the impact of social influence in this environment.

On the other hand, statement 3, *depending on the choices of their friends at all times*, obtained the lowest mean although described as high (favorable). This result corroborates with the research conducted by Bearden et al., cited by Tjokrosaputro & Cokki (2020) proving that an individual's behavior is influenced by others around them. Individuals frequently rely on their friends' recommendations when choosing coffee shops and blends, valuing the familiarity and trust these opinions bring.

Table 1

Level of Social Influence Among Coffee Shops as Rated by Patrons in Tagum City

	Mean	SD	Description
Informational Influence			
As customers, they are…			
1. seeking information from friends as experts who know about coffee shop products.	4.33	.73	Very High
2. frequently gathering information from friends about coffee shop products before they buy them.	4.31	.77	Very High
3. always depending on the choices of their friends	3.67	1.14	High
4. making sure they buy the right items from a coffee shop as they often observe what their friends are buying and using.	4.12	.84	High
Category Mean	**4.11**	**.62**	**High**
Normative Influence			
As customers, they are…			
1. being influenced by the preferences of their friends to satisfy their expectations.	4.10	.92	High
2. being influenced by the preferences of their friends who have social interactions with them in deciding when to purchase coffee shop products.	4.06	.88	High
3. purchasing or consuming coffee shop products which enhance the image their friends have of them.	4.08	.92	High
4. considering their friends who purchase or consume coffee shop products as someone who possess the characteristics that they would like to have.	4.06	.99	High
5. having the belief that people who purchase coffee shop products are admired or respected by their friends.	4.03	1.02	High
6. having the notion that purchasing coffee shop products helps them show their friends who they are.	4.06	1.14	High
Category Mean	**4.07**	**.79**	**High**
Overall Mean	**4.09**	**.66**	**High**

Normative Influence. The category mean resulted in 4.07, high (oftentimes favorable). This showed that in essence, these findings emphasize that customers in this context are deeply affected by the choices and opinions of their social circles, often tailoring their own decisions to match or satisfy the expectations of their friends. This finding agrees

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with the study of Ciranka & van den Bos (2019) which stated that a normative influence is the pressure on individuals to conform to the norms and expectations of others that are implicit or explicit in the choices of a reference.

The statement with the highest mean score is item 1, *being influenced by the preferences of their friends to satisfy their expectations* is expressed as high. People often align their choices with their friend's preferences to meet shared expectations and enhance social connection. This influence creates a sense of belonging, as selecting similar experiences or products reinforces bonds and other's satisfaction. Aaker & Akutsu (2009) found that peer influence shapes brand preferences, as individuals often conform to the choices of those they value or seek to impress.

Meanwhile, item 5 *having the belief that people who purchase coffee shop products are admired or respected by their friends* got the lowest mean of 4.03 which is still classified as high (favorable). Individuals believe that purchasing products from popular coffee shops enhances their social standing, leading to admiration and respect from their peers. This perception is supported by research indicating that social identity and group norms significantly influence consumer behavior, prompting people to choose brands that align with the expectations of their social circles (Amati et al., 2018).

The Level of Social Media Engagement Among Coffee Shops as Rated by Patrons in Tagum City

Presented in Table 2 is the level of social media engagement among coffee shops in Tagum City, with an overall mean rating of 4.17, categorized as high . This high score indicates that social media engagement in the coffee shops in Tagum City is often evident. Conversely, the standard deviation from 0.79 to 1.03 as indicated in items 1 and 6 are alike while the rest are different. This signifies that social media engagement is consistently prominent and influential in the local coffee shop.

The findings confirmed the study of Ahmad et. al (2018) expressing the role of technology through social media engagement, that small businesses often use social media to increase awareness among customers, disseminate information, develop customer relationships and loyalty, and lower marketing and communication expenditures.

Table 2

The Level of Social Media Engagement Among Coffee Shops as Rated by Patrons in Tagum City

	Mean	SD	Description
Affective Engagement			
As frequent customers of coffeeshops, they are …			
1. being enthusiastic about the coffee brand.	4.31	.78	Very High
2. gaining an interest in anything about the coffee brand.	4.18	.80	High
3. finding the brand interesting.	4.36	.71	Very High
4. feeling happy when interacting with the coffee brand.	4.29	.77	Very High
5. getting pleasure from interacting with a coffee brand.	4.28	.81	Very High
6. considering their interaction with the coffee brand as something like a treat for themselves.	4.29	.78	Very High
Category Mean	**4.29**	**.57**	**Very High**
Cognitive Engagement			
As frequent customers of coffeeshops, they are …			
1. spending a lot of time thinking about the coffee brand.	4.09	.96	High
2. forgetting everything else around them when they are interacting with the coffee brand.	3.78	1.02	High
3. thinking that time flies when they are interacting with the coffee brand.	4.03	.95	High
4. getting carried away when they are interacting with coffee brand.	4.05	.95	High
5. considering it difficult to detach themselves when interacting with a coffee brand.	3.96	1.03	High

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Category Mean	**3.98**	**.81**	**High**
Behavioral Engagement *As frequent customers of coffeeshops, they are …*			
1. sharing their ideas about the coffee brand.	4.30	.84	Very High
2. sharing interesting content about the coffee brand.	4.29	.84	Very High
3. helping the coffee brand.	4.15	.89	High
4. asking coffee brand questions.	4.16	.83	High
5. seeking ideas or information about the coffee brand.	4.37	.75	Very High
6. seeking help for a supply of the coffee brand.	4.09	.99	High
7. promoting the coffee brand.	4.20	.90	Very High
8. trying to get others interested in coffee brand.	4.26	.87	Very High
9. actively defending the coffee brand from critics.	4.16	.89	High
10. saying positive things about the coffee brand to other people.	4.49	.69	Very High
Category Mean	**4.25**	**.64**	**Very High**
Overall Mean	**4.17**	**.61**	**High**

Affective Engagement. This indicator resulted a category mean of 4.29, very high (evident at all times). This expressed that customers experience a strong sense of positivity and enthusiasm when interacting with this particular coffee shop. This result is in line with the study of Bonnefoy-Claudet & Ghantous, 2013; Sandström et al., 2008; Yang et al (2011), claiming that customers will associate notions like product quality and value with an emotional experience that a product can provide them.

The statement with the highest mean score is item 3 *finding the brand interesting*, with a mean of 4.36, listed as high. Coffee shops can increase customer involvement through personalized education and experiences. As a matter of fact, when customers feel more informed and involved, their emotional bond with the brand grows. These studies collectively imply that coffee brands can boost consumer interest and loyalty by fostering significant emotional experiences and educational exchanges (Sánchez & Martínez, 2021).

Notwithstanding, statement 2, *gaining an interest in anything about the coffee brand*, got the lowest mean of 4.18 although described as high (often evident). Supported by the research conducted by Samoggia et al. (2020), emotions play a critical role in coffee consumers' brand loyalty and overall brand perception, highlighting the appeal of coffee as part of a lifestyle associated with social status and satisfaction.

Cognitive Engagement. Results of this indicator showed It is highlighted by a high category mean rating of 3.98, categorized as high (often evident). These ratings suggest that the impact of coffee shops on patrons is profound and immersive. This affirms that the ambient noise in coffee shops has been studied for its effect on cognitive performance (McGrath, 2018).

The item with the highest mean score is item 1, *spending a lot of time thinking about the coffee brand*, described as very high with a mean of 4.09. Spending significant time thinking about a coffee brand can indicate a strong cognitive engagement with the brand, where a customer is deeply invested in its qualities, reputation, or values. Supported by the study of Dessart et al. (2015), highlighting that consumer involvement with companies, finding that customers who frequently think about or interact with a brand online create stronger loyalty and connection.

On one hand, item 2 *forgetting everything else around them when they are interacting with the coffee brand* obtained the lowest mean of 3.78 yet still classified as high. In line with this is the research conducted by Keller (2001) noted that strong brand associations can result in a concentrated customer experience in which people become absorbed in their encounters with a brand, such as coffee.

Behavioral Engagement. It is characterized by a very high (evident at all times) category mean rating of 4.25. This suggests that positive experiences drive customer advocacy, boosting marketing efforts, brand visibility, and reputation. The study of Sikandar & Ahmed (2019) pointed out that if social media is trending, it is deemed 'cool' to

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use social media platforms for self-reflection; customers will engage more with the advertisement, resulting in increased conversion rates.

Item 5 *seeking ideas or information about the coffee* acquired the highest mean of 4.37, very high (evident at all times). Consumers increasingly turn to social media to seek ideas, recommendations, and information about coffee, leveraging platforms to explore new blends and café experiences that align with their preferences and lifestyle. Supported by the study of Müller & Möller (2018) stating that the online behaviors of coffee enthusiasts, showing how they utilize social media to share ideas, seek product recommendations, and gather information about different coffee brands and brewing techniques.

In contrary, item 6 *seeking help for a supply of the coffee brand* with a mean of 4.09 got the lowest mean but, was suggested as high (often evident). Baldinger & Rubinson (1996) asserted that brand loyalty in consumer behavior include how loyal customers actively seek assistance and information about supply from their preferred coffee brands. Certainly, customers are actively seeking assistance to ensure a steady supply of their preferred coffee brand, highlighting their desire for reliable access to high-quality products that meet their consumption needs.

The Level of Brand Equity Among Coffee Shops as Rated by Patrons in Tagum City

Illustrated in Table 3 is the level of brand equity among coffee shops in Tagum City. It can be discerned that the overall mean is 4.14, classified as high. These results connote that brand equity is often evident, reflecting a strong presence in the market. On one hand, the standard deviation from 0.44 to 1.05 in which items 5 and 6 are homogenous while the rest of the items are heterogenous.

This high result supports the findings of Hayes (2021) indicating that the value provided to a product or service is a result of good consumer impression and emotional attachment to a specific brand, which influences purchasing decisions and fosters brand loyalty.

Table 3

The Level of Brand Equity Among Coffee Shops as Rated by Patrons in Tagum City

	Mean	SD	Description
Brand Awareness			
As customers of coffee shops, they are…			
1. acquiring a general awareness of the coffee brand.	4.39	.70	Very High
2. receiving sufficient awareness information about the coffee brand.	4.27	.69	Very High
3. getting familiar with the coffee brand.	4.28	.76	Very High
4. hearing a lot about the coffee brand.	4.29	.77	Very High
5. perceiving that most people are aware of the coffee brand.	4.31	.82	Very High
6. patronizing the coffee brand among other coffee brands.	4.28	.82	Very High
Category Mean	**4.30**	**.58**	**Very High**
Brand Associations			
As customers of coffee shops, they are…			
1. having the capacity to remember quickly the characteristics of the coffee brand	4.35	.77	Very High
2. finding it difficult to imagine something about the coffee brand *	2.99*	1.04	Moderate
3. having strong coffee brand associations.	4.20	.87	Very High
4. establishing unique associations with the brand.	4.16	.92	High
5. associating themselves favorably with a specific coffee brand.	4.19	.88	High
6. quickly recalling the symbol, logo, or color of their coffee brand.	4.45	.72	Very High
7. having a clear understanding of what their coffee brand stands for.	4.28	.76	Very High
Category Mean	**4.09***	**.59**	**High**

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Perceived Quality *As customers of coffee shops, they are believing that the coffee brand is…*			
1. of good quality.	4.49	.68	Very High
2. consistent in quality.	4.37	.73	Very High
3. having excellent features.	4.42	.66	Very High
4. of very high quality compared to other coffee brands	4.36	.77	Very High
5. the best in its category.	4.32	.78	Very High
6. consistently performs better than all the other coffee brands in its category.	4.45	.44	Very High
7. having a consistent high-quality.	4.37	.74	Very High
8. performing well.	4.43	.70	Very High
9. effective.	4.48	.66	Very High
10. living up to its promises.	4.33	.76	Very High
11. serving them well.	4.45	.65	Very High
Category Mean	**4.41**	**.62**	**Very High**
Brand Loyalty *As customers of coffee shops, they are …*			
1. being loyal to their coffee brand.	4.28	.81	Very High
2. considering their coffee brand as their first choice.	4.20	.77	Very High
3. willing to pay a higher price for their coffee brand over other brands.	4.11	.91	High
4. intending to keep purchasing/using their coffee brand.	4.31	.79	Very High
5. Being committed to their coffee brand.	4.16	.85	High
6. Intending to buy/use their coffee brand the next time they need similar product/service.	4.35	.74	Very High
7. considering themselves myself loyal to their coffee brand.	4.23	.92	Very High
8. Intending not to buy/use other brands if their coffee brand is not available.	4.03	1.05	High
9. thinking that if their coffee brand were not available, it would make little difference to them if they had to choose another brand.*	4.12*	.92	High
10. seeing themselves as being loyal to their coffee brand.	4.17	.87	High
11. intending to more likely purchase a coffee brand that is on sale than their coffee brand. *	4.16*	.90	High
Category Mean	**3.78**	**.45**	**High**
Overall Mean	**4.14**	**.49**	**Very High**

Brand Awareness. The category mean resulted 4.30, classified as very high (manifested at all times). This signifies, these ratings suggest that customers possess a strong understanding and recognition of the coffee shop, which significantly enhances the brand equity of the product. This finding is in congruent to the study of Rangkuti (2016) underscoring that brand awareness is defined as a customer's capacity to remember a specific brand or commercial spontaneously or as a result of stimuli in the form of key words.

The statement with the highest mean of 4.39 is item 1, *acquiring a general awareness of the coffee.* This awareness helps consumers form initial impressions and influences their perception of the brand's quality, identity, and potential fit with their preferences, making it easier to consider the brand when making purchasing decisions. In relation with this findings, Patterson & O'Malley (2006), asserted that consumers build general brand awareness through repeated exposure and interactions, focusing on how these impressions contribute to brand familiarity and influence purchase intentions.

The item 2 *received sufficient awareness information about the coffee brand* having the lowest mean of 4.27 yet is considered as very high. The study of Guzman & Paswan (2009) indicated that consumers acquire information about

cultural brands, including coffee brands which is a sufficient awareness that leads to a stronger brand image and greater acceptance in both domestic and international markets.

Brand Associations. The category mean was computed resulting to a 4.09 described as high. It implies that the brand's visual cues provide excellent visibility and familiarity to the customers. Confirmed by the study of Wright et al. (2015), stating that brand associations pertain to brand features, the intended consumer market, and the benefits that customers require. Brand associations provide consumers with purchase reasons, which serve as the foundation for brand loyalty and consumer purchasing decisions.

The item 6 *quickly recalling the symbol, logo, or color of their coffee brand* obtained the highest of 4.45 very high (manifested at all times). This instant recognition can significantly influence their purchasing behavior, as familiar visual cues often evoke positive associations and memories related to the brand's quality and experience. Consequently, when consumers encounter these familiar elements, they are more likely to choose that particular coffee brand over others. The finding affirms the study of Gao & Zhang (2020), emphasizing that visual identity elements, such as logos and colors, impact brand association in the coffee sector, finding that effective design can significantly enhance recall and consumer preference.. In contrast, *finding it difficult to imagine something about the coffee brand* of item 2 acquired the lowest mean of 2.99 moderate (often manifested).

Perceived Quality. It has garnered a very high (manifested at all times) category mean rating of 4.41. This suggests that the strong perceived quality of the brand has a competitive advantage, as high-quality perceptions not only promote repeat sales but also set it apart from competitors. This verifies the study of Ludwikowska (2022) which revealed that perceived quality and customer satisfaction had a positive effect on brand preference, and brand preference had a positive effect on repurchase interest.

The statement 1 *as customers of coffee shops, they are believing that the coffee brand is good quality* got the highest men of 4.49 very high (manifested at all times). Coffee shop that maintains high standards in these areas, it fosters loyalty and encourages customers to return, confident that they will receive a quality product each time. This confirms the study of Teleaba, & Popescu (2021) customer's beliefs about consistent quality significantly influence their overall satisfaction and likelihood of repeat visits.

Item 5 *the best in its category* obtained the lowest mean of 4.32 yes considered very high (manifested at all times). Cheung et al. (2020), showed that brand perception is shaped by customer's beliefs about quality in the coffee industry, emphasizing that coffee shops perceived as the best often have a strong quality reputation and customer loyalty.

Brand Loyalty. It revealed that its category mean is 3.78 described as high (often manifested). This implies that their loyalty is primarily driven by convenience or preference. Ultimately, while quality is important, the ease of access and a seamless experience can greatly enhance customer loyalty, making convenience a powerful motivator in their coffee shop choices. The findings is congruent to the study of Juwaini et al. (2015), asserting that brand trust and effect has a substantial impact on attitudinal and behavioral loyalty.

The statement 6 *intending to buy/use their coffee brand the next time they need similar product/service* acquired the highest mean of 4.35, very high (manifested at all times). The findings showed that customers who have experience in the coffee shop have a strong level of brand preference and loyalty. This intention often arises from positive experiences with the brand, such as satisfaction with the taste, quality, and overall service, which reinforce their likelihood of repurchasing. This is supported by the study of Poturak (2022) who emphasized that customers who have positive experiences with a particular coffee brand are more likely to develop strong loyalty toward it. As a result, these positive interactions not only enhance customer satisfaction but also significantly increase their intentions to repurchase the brand in the future. Consequently, satisfied customers become brand advocates, often recommending the brand to others and contributing to its long-term success in the competitive coffee market.

Meanwhile, the statement 8 *intending not to buy/use other brands if their coffee brand is not available* acquired the lowest mean of 4.03, but still classified as high (often manifested). This is congruent to the research conducted by Thomson, et al. (2005) stressing that customers with a deep emotional bond with a brand tend to demonstrate heightened loyalty, prioritizing the brand over competitors regardless of situational factors. When such customers

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encounter temporary unavailability of their preferred brand, they are less inclined to switch to alternative options, often opting to wait for the brand's return instead.

Significance of the Relationship of Social Influence, Social Media Engagement, and Brand Equity

The result of the correlation analysis is revealed in Table 4. The data shows that social influence and social media engagement significantly correlate with brand equity ($p<.05$). It means that when each of these factors improves, brand equity is also enhanced.

Table 4

Significance of Relationship of Social Influence, Social Media Engagement, and Brand Equity

	Brand Equity		
	R	p-value	Remarks
Social Influence	.71	.00	Significant
Social Media Engagement	.81	.00	Significant

Specifically, table 4 shows that social influence has a positive strong relationship to brand equity with R-value of .71. Also, it reflects a p-value of .00 which is less than the alpha set at .05, two-tailed supporting a significant relationship. It means that as the level of social influence increases the level of brand equity significantly increases.

It implies that when friends, family, and peers impact an individual's decision about coffee shops, a brand's perceived worth is typically increased. This social influence operates through trust and shared experiences, with recommendations from people closest to the. People tend to trust the opinions of their immediate circle because they are perceived as more real and accessible, delivering insights that are consistent with their ideals or experiences.

As a result, when a brand is linked to positive experiences in a trusted social network, it earns legitimacy and emotional resonance, which can dramatically increase its appeal. The brand is no longer simply a commodity or service; it has evolved into a symbol of common connection and trustworthiness. This social proof encourages others to learn more about the company, encouraging loyalty and long-term partnerships, so strengthening its market position. Thus, the influence of friends, family, and peers not only boosts the brand's perceived worth but also contributes to the economy of a country.

It corroborates with the study of Abdallah et al. (2022) highlighting that social influence acts as a catalyst, priming consumers with positive perceptions of a brand based on recommendations from friends, family, online reviews, or influencer endorsements. This initial trust lays the foundation for brand equity, the overall value and positive associations consumers hold toward a brand.

Concurrently, social media engagement reveals a significant positive strong relationship with brand equity ($r = .81$, $p < .05$). It means that as the level of social media engagement increases the level of brand equity significantly increases. Thus, this expressed that as social media platforms evolved and increased their reach, the relationship between a brand's presence on these platforms and its brand equity became more aligned. Social media enables brands to connect with large and diverse audiences in real-time, providing new potential for engagement, interaction, and tailored communication. Brands may magnify their message and strengthen emotional relationships with customers by creating consistent, authentic content and strategically using marketing.

The more a brand is seen, liked, shared, and supported on platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok, the greater its exposure and credibility. This raises brand equity, ensuring a consistent presence in customer's everyday digital life. As a result, if customers interact with the brand through likes, shares and comments, it becomes more relatable and accessible, thus increasing perceived value. Social proof is important in this context because individuals are more likely to believe a brand that is widely approved and discussed in their social networks. As a result, social media becomes a tremendous instrument for not just boosting brand recognition, but also developing loyalty and ultimately increasing brand. The result agrees with the view of Cha et al. (2022) that social media engagement and brand equity have a demonstrably positive relationship, with engagement acting as a key driver of several key brand equity components.

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Significance of the Influence of Social Influence, Social Media Engagement on Brand Equity

The result of the regression analysis is presented in Table 5. It can be gleaned that only social media engagement could significantly influence the brand equity independently ($p<.05$).The beta coefficient of .75 connotes that a unit increase in social media engagement results in a .75 improvement in brand equity.

As to the regression model, the r2 of .66 connotes that 66.0 percent of the variation in brand equity could be attributed to the combined influence of brand equity ($p<.05$). This result suggests that 34.0 percent of other variables that may significantly influence the study.

The findings corroborate with the study of Sikandar & Ahmed (2019) confirming that he link between social influence and brand equity extends to customer perceptions. Positive suggestions and endorsements on social media impact consumers' impressions of a brand. Social impact acts as a lens through which customers perceive a brand's value, personality, and general attractiveness. These views, when positively impacted, contribute greatly to the growth of brand equity. Consumers are more likely to attach more value and favorable connections to a brand that has received social acceptance, stressing the importance of social influence in changing consumer views and, as a result, increasing brand equity.

Table 5

Significance of the Influence of Social Influence, Social Media Engagement on Brand Equity

		Brand Equity			
Singular Influence of the Predictors		Standardized Coefficients	T	p-value	Remarks
Social Influence		.07	1.13	.26	Not Significant
Social Media Engagement		.75	11.78	.00	Significant
Combined Influence of the Predictors					
R	.81				
R^2	.66				
F	288.51				
P	.00				Significant

CONCLUSION

The following conclusion were drawn from the findings of the vis-a-vis the research questions:

The level of social influence among coffee shops in Tagum City is high which means these are oftentimes favorable. Among its domains, Informational influence got the highest category means score which indicates that this practice is very favorable. This suggests that consumers in Tagum City are influenced not just by their own preferences but also significantly swayed by the opinions and behaviors of their friends and social networks, underscoring the importance of social influence in their purchasing decisions. However, normative influence got the lowest category mean which nonetheless means that this practice is oftentimes favorable. These findings reveal that consumers are strongly influenced by their social circles, often modifying their purchasing decisions to align with peer expectations, which emphasizes the need for marketing strategies that leverage social proof and community engagement to enhance brand loyalty and equity.

On the other hand, social media engagement among coffee shops in Tagum City is high which means these are often evident. The affective engagement indicator got the highest category mean which illustrates that these activities are evident at all times. This suggests that customers feel a heightened sense of positivity and enthusiasm during their interactions with this particular coffee shop, experiencing not only satisfaction with the products but also a welcoming and vibrant atmosphere that enhances their overall experience. However, the cognitive engagement dimension got the lowest category mean which is often evident. Revealing the strong impact coffee shops have on patrons, suggesting that these spaces regularly foster thoughtful and focused interactions that enhance customers' connection to the experience.

Consequently, brand equity among coffee shops is very high, which indicates that it is manifested at all times. Perceived quality indicator has garnered very high which means manifested at all times. This suggests that the strong

perceived quality of coffee shops provides a competitive advantage, as high-quality perceptions not only encourage repeat visits and customer loyalty but also distinguish these coffee shops from competitors, making them more attractive to patrons. Meanwhile, the brand loyalty domain revealed that its category mean is high which means often manifested. This suggests that customer loyalty to coffee shops is deep by convenience and personal preference, while quality is important, easy access and a seamless experience play a crucial role in enhancing loyalty, making convenience a key factor in their choice of coffee shop.

Notably, this study found that social influence and social media engagement had a significant relationship with brand equity in coffee shops. This relationship revealed the importance of both informational and normative influence in shaping customer perceptions and loyalty to coffee shop brands. Furthermore, having an improved social media engagement showed that active communication and emotional relationships with customers helped boosts brand equity. Overall, the findings indicated that coffee shop owners may use social influence and successful social media engagement to build brand equity and cultivate long-term customer relationships.

Furthermore, the findings suggest that social media engagement had a significant influence on brand equity in coffee shops. Active and meaningful interactions between coffee shops and their customers enhanced brand awareness while also strengthening emotional relationships and loyalty, demonstrating the affective side of engagement. As customers connected more with brands on social media, their understanding and assessment of the brand's quality and value improved, indicating cognitive engagement. Furthermore, customer activities such as sharing information and participating in promotions strengthened their overall connection with the coffee business. As a result, coffee shop owners may benefit from implementing social media interaction strategies that boost brand equity, resulting in higher customer satisfaction.

The findings of this study corroborate the Theory of Brand Equity Model by Keller (1993), which comprises four steps that meets consumer requests and form a branding ladder. Each step is contingent upon the accomplishment of the preceding one. These six brand development blocks include salience, performance and imagery, judgments and sentiments, and resonance. with several subdimensions make up four steps, which are identity, meaning, response, and relationship (Keller, 1993).

Recommendations

Based on the findings, coffee shops in Tagum City may implement targeted marketing strategies that leverage the high level of informational influence among consumers while addressing the lower normative influence. To do this, they may create referral programs that incentivize customers to share their positive experiences on social media and within their social circles, effectively harnessing word-of-mouth marketing. Additionally, hosting community events, such as coffee tastings or local artist showcases, can foster a sense of community and encourage peer engagement, making the coffee shop a preferred choice for group gatherings. By integrating these strategies, coffee shops can enhance brand loyalty and equity, capitalizing on the influence of social networks while simultaneously building a vibrant local presence.

To enhance customer engagement and address the cognitive dimension, coffee shops in Tagum City may consider implementing loyalty programs that reward customers not only for purchases but also for participating in educational activities. For instance, offering coffee brewing workshops or tasting sessions can provide patrons with valuable knowledge about coffee, thereby stimulating cognitive engagement and enhancing their appreciation for the products. Further, integrating interactive elements into social media platforms, such as guessing the flavor of coffee knowledge or polls on favorite menu items, can encourage customers to think critically about their choices while reinforcing their connection to the brand. By adopting these strategies, coffee shops may create a more engaging environment that fosters both emotional and intellectual connections with their customers.

To leverage the high brand equity and perceived quality among coffee shops in Tagum City, it is essential to focus on enhancing customer loyalty through convenience and seamless experiences by implementing a mobile app for pre-ordering and payment can streamline the customer experience, allowing patrons to skip queues and enjoy their favorite beverages more efficiently. Additionally, establishing incentive programs to reward frequent visits or purchases may incentivize repeat business while reinforcing the perception of quality. Hosting community events collaborating with barangay annual activities, such as promotions or customer appreciation days, can further enhance customer

relationships by providing a welcoming atmosphere that encourages patronage. By adopting these strategies, coffee shops can strengthen their competitive advantage and foster deeper customer loyalty.

Given the findings that had a significant relationship between social influence and social media engagement on brand equity, coffee shop owners/managers may focus on incorporating social influence and increasing social media engagement to effectively establish brand equity and foster long-term customer relationships. This may be accomplished by actively connecting with customers, though the strategies and activities mentioned above. Furthermore, developing referral schemes that compensate customers for recommending their favorite coffee shops to friends can leverage both informational and normative factors. Coffee shops may increase customer loyalty and brand visibility by fostering a welcoming environment and establishing emotional ties via personalized encounters.

Lastly, future investigation may delve into other factors not accounted for in this study that might predict brand equity. Researchers may also contemplate employing alternative research designs such as qualitative or mixed methods approaches to extensively and thoroughly investigate the topic.

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